

Faith as a Liberating Force
in the Poetry of Mariam Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte

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Abstract

This dissertation is a comparative study of the importance of faith in the poetry of two female writers, Mariam Al-Baghdadi (M. Al-Baghdadi) and Emily Bronte. The first one is a contemporary Arab (Saudi Arabia) writer and the second is a Victorian British writer. I was moved by some similarities between their religious poetry especially their poems in which they enchant about their faith in the Creator of the universe. Faith gave the two writers the drive to strife against the unjust concepts of their rigid patriarchal societies. It enabled the poetesses to be liberal in expressing their views and to have a career in creative writing despite the misconception of their society that did not think of it as appropriate for women. Though distant in time, place and culture, the two poetesses shared ideas regarding their identities and rights as human beings that can be thought of as feminist in hindsight. Both writers were brought up by religious but not conventional fathers. So they were also to develop a very special relationship with Allah or God (the Creator of the universe), which did not concur with the dominant beliefs and attitudes of their two different societies. Both of them think of the Creator as the shelter, refuge and source of strength when challenged by unfair people and difficult circumstances. Emily Bronte's dilemma was far more

complicated than Mariam's for the latter's problem was rather social not religious. Mariam has very explicit verses from the Qur'an and many of Mohammad's Traditions (Hadeeth) and teachings, that affirm the equality of men and women.

Nevertheless, the independent protestant heritage, enabling a way of questioning things, was accommodating for Emily. The enlightened approach that Mariam Al-Baghdadi's and Emily Bronte's fathers exercised in the bringing up of their children was one of the factors that empowered the two writers. The idea that writing poetry was a sinful (Bronte's case) or shameful (Al-Baghdadi's case) act for women might be one cause behind the two writers' clinging to the spiritual side of religion, and turning their backs on its cultural side. No wonder that anything they wrote was received with severe criticism and sometimes rejection.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte, in their quest for liberty from the constraints of their respective societies and the oppressive interpretation of religion, were pioneer writers (each in her time and culture) in writing about liberty as a right for them as human beings.

Introduction

The central thesis of this dissertation is a comparison between two distant female writers, Mariam Al-Baghdadi (M. Al-Baghdadi) and Emily Bronte. I noticed some similarities between their religious poetry especially their poems in which they express with great enthusiasm their love and faith in the Almighty God. Faith gave the two writers the drive to discord against the unjust concepts of their rigid patriarchal societies. Though distant in time, place and culture, the two poetesses shared ideas regarding their identities and rights as human beings that can be thought of as feminists in perception. The special relationship they could develop with Allah or God was considered radical in discourse as well as in action.

Background of the study

Long before reading Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*, I began to notice similarities among the writings of some women writers in the East and the West. However, reading the book gave me the real incentive to pursue and investigate this idea. The fact that M. Al Baghdadi and Emily Bronte could achieve good poetry under difficult social systems, might make us wonder how,

for how long and to what extent can an individual stand defiant to social order, and what sustains her/him in such a struggle? The answer to these questions lay in the word "FAITH" in God that transcends into faith in one's self, one's abilities and it could be the source of strength and endurance that made these women attain themselves despite their difficult circumstances.

The first poetess is a contemporary Muslim Arab and the second is an English Christian who lived in the Victorian era. Chronologically speaking, I should have begun with the nineteenth century poetess, but I chose to begin the dissertation with the less known poetess, because of her apparent contradictory attitude which is not contradictory at all in essence. Her being a religious Muslim who demands to have her rights as they are explicit in the Qur'an and Mohammad's (pbh) discourse, is the novel thing that I thought of beginning my dissertation with. Yet, despite all the differences arising from the remoteness of their cultures, their poetry express similar points of view concerning faith and liberty. Both poetesses establish a unique relationship with God based on their understanding of the essential tenets of their faith rather than the dogmas of institutional religion (in Bronte's case) or the moral and social assumptions culturally attached to it by their contemporaries (in Al-Baghdadi's case). Predictably, both women were considered radicals and severely criticised by their society in their time and by their contemporaries.

The second poetess is the Victorian Emily Bronte. Emily Bronte's personal faith in God is close to that of Mariam Al-Baghdadi, for both of them think of Him as the shelter, refuge and source of strength when challenged by unfair people and difficult circumstances. Yet, her dilemma was far more complicated than Mariam's. Mariam has very explicit verses from the Qur'an and many of Mohammad's Traditions (Hadeeth) and teaching, that

affirm the equality of men and women. Nevertheless, the independent protestant heritage, enabling a way of questioning things, was accommodating for Emily. The enlightened approach that Emily Bronte's father exercised in the bringing up of his children was one of the factors that empowered Emily Bronte. Like Mariam, Emily rejected the meekness imposed on Victorian women in general and the confinement placed on poetesses in particular. She rejected cultural restrictions imposed in the name of religion, but, as with Mariam, her faith in the power of the Almighty gave her the courage to persist in a man's world.

One might ask, why is the comparison not between poetesses of the same age and period of time. The answer to such a crucial question is going to be detailed in the section titled: "Patriarch and the Saudi Poetess". Yet, the thing I can say now as a brief answer to this question is that I could infer that the social hypocrisy wearing the mask of religion in the two patriarchal societies that which the two remote poetesses suffered from, is very similar. Hence, faith in the holy texts and the respect with which Jesus and Mohammad (pbthem) treated women with, worked like a saviour for the two poetesses.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi:

Poetic achievements and Prose Works:

Mariam Al-Baghdadi Al-Hassani Al-Kilani is a pioneer Saudi poetess who has published her first collection of classical Arabic poetry and many other poems since 1980. She was a university professor in the Arabic department and asked for an early retirement in 1999. Mariam Al-Baghdadi (as she is known in Saudi Arabia) writes in Arabic and I'll translate some of her poems which appeared in her first collection of poems *Awatif Ensania*, Human

Emotions, 1980, and other poems that she published in different newspapers and literary magazines, as well as the ones that she handed to me (I have a written permission from her). I will also translate parts of the recorded interview I made with her, and parts of the interviews and articles written about her and her poetry in different Arabic, especially Saudi, newspapers, periodicals, popular and literary magazines- into English.

M. Al-Baghdadi is not only a Muslim poetess, but a critic as well. Some of her three critical books are being taught in different Arabic universities, such as Yarmook University in Jordan, Kuwait University in Kuwait, and Umm Al-Qura university in Makkah in Saudi Arabia, in the B.A. and M.A. levels (Okaz, 1982 and Al-Madina, 1982). These books are: *Shu'ara Al Torbadour*, Troubadour poets, 1981, *Madkhal fi Derasat Al-Adab*, An Introduction to Literary Studies, 1982, *Min Al-Adab Al-Kadeem*, From Old Literature. She has three other books under publication: one is her second book of classical Arabic poetry and the other two are investigations on very old hand written manuscripts. She also published eight researches about the following themes: "Motherhood in Myth and Epic", 1984, Cairo University, "The Hidden Meaning between Love poetry and Elegy for Ibn Sana'a Al-Malik", 1984 Cairo University, "Stereotyping in Jahili(period before Islam) Love Poetry", 1986, Yarmouk University, "The Artful Originating for Old Crying in Jahili Poetry", 1986, Cairo University. "The Philosophy of Resurrection and Immortality: A Cultural Heritage in Jahili Poetry," 1986, "Human Values in Proverbs and Idioms"(a comparative study) 1991, Cairo University, "Living Nature and the Dimensions of the Artistic Picture" (comparative study) 1991, Teshreen University, Syria, "Sound and Audio Picture in Jahili Poetry, Darat Al-Malik Abdul-Aziz, Al- Rhyiad 1992, and "The Heritage among Jareer, Al- Farzadak, and Al-

Akhtal, Darat Al-Malik Abdul-Aziz, Al-Rhyiad, 1994.

M. Al-Baghdadi's formal Arabic style beside her clinging to Islamic ideas, made her far more respected than other Saudi contemporaries such as: Fawzia Abo-Khalid: A daring poetess of Bedouin origin whose books are banned in Saudi Arabia. Thuria AlOriad: A poetess, a painter, a Ph.D. holder and an expert in planning who works as an administrative in ARAMCO. Ashjan Hendi: "The coming Saudi Poetess" as Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosibi calls her (Al-Gosibi, A Voice from the Gulf, 7). She is one of Mariam Al Baghdadi's clever and talented students. Badia Kashgari: A Saudi poetess who has published three books of poems. On January/ 2001, her translated Arabic poems into English (she translated her poetry) were published by Dar Al-Saqi in London (Okaz, 12595, 2001 25). The introduction of this book was written by the Canadian poet Patrick White.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi Among other Saudi Poetesses:

Fawzia Abo-Khalid:

M. Al-Baghdadi's books were not band, like other Saudi poetesses such as Fawzia Abo- Khalid, because of her diplomatic attitude that did not antagonize the officials and this attitude might be hereditary for her ancestors go back to the prophet through his grandson 'Al-Hasan' who gave up ruling the Muslims and gave it to Mu'awia the head of the Oomiya in that time to stop blood shedding. The reason behind the banning of F. Abo-Khalid's book might be her crude style in stripping the bad side of her society and her tackling topics like politics, sex, women physique and

giving birth frankly; a way that the Saudi Bedouin's, who are in a high rank, mentality could not tolerate. We should not forget that F. Abo-Khalid 's belongs to a Bedouin family in Riyadh the main city in the middle region and recent capital (after Makkah) of the whole country. Bedouins have a very strict almost a fanatic way in dealing with things especially with anything related to their women, for instance, veiling to them means covering the face of the woman; a tradition that existed before Islam in some parts of that middle region of Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan. It was also common among some Jewish sectors and Christians to some extent (Ahmad, p. 199). Yet they insist to impose their ideas on other Muslims who have good evidence that covering the face is not compulsory in Islam. F. Abo-Khalid was brought up in such a society and expressed her opposing ideas with the same enthusiasm of theirs; something that deserved punishment and banishment in their point of view. Hence, her books were banned and later she lost her job as a lecturer in King Saud University. She is studying for her Ph.D in either U.K or U.S.A now(Arebi, p. 65). Let's take a look at parts of her daring poems such as "Ghwaia Ula, First Temptation":

غواية أولى
إمتشق عشقا لا يرحم دهشة المراهقة
...ولا يشفق على رعشة الاكتشاف الأولى.

Full of a desire
that has no mercy,
on the astonishment
of the teenager,
he does not sympathize
with the shivering
of the first discovery

The poetess continues describing the savage attitude of the man before he could reach to the last stage with his prey. The poetess

ملك
يملك كل ما يملك
ولكن
لا ملك يمكن أن يملك به
ملكة لا تملك بالملك.

He owns whatever
he owns,
but
whatever he owns
can not include
a queen whom
can not be owned
or
be a part of his kingdom. (Abu-Khalid, p. 26).

Whom can not be owned ? is it the country land, or the woman or the spirit of any human being.? Is it a political poem ,or a poem about the free spirit of a noble woman whom a man can not own by his financial abilities nor social status, but can only be embraced by pure love? Another symbolic and sexual poem of Fawzia Abu-Khalid : “Downfall” reminds us with John Donne’s “ Th

تهلكة

اكلتها الحكة
وكيمياء دمها
أمامها
تحالف البعوض

Burning need is eating
her from within,
her blood's chemistry
is signing a treaty,
as she is watching,
with a mosquito(ibid, p. 13).

yet F. Abu-Khalid has some romantic poems such as "Tajali";
"Ecstasy":

تجل

صحونا على حب يتحدى
مصائب لم نحسب حسابها
ومن يومها لم ننم .

You and I woke up
to embrace a love,
that encourages,
that challenges,
disasters we did not think of
thence, we did not sleep. (ibid, p. 68)

Her venturing nature appears very clearly in this poem and she found a suitable man for her nature, for he also did not think of the result of their passion and is willing to pay the price of anxiety for such a choice. F. Abu-Khalid sympathizes with the man in her country and considers him a victim of the situation of her country as well as the country which is the victim of western power and

greed for the oil (Arebi, p.66). Her sympathy is also with rebellious daring women who have similar quest like hers. In “Ma’a Al-Mausim,” “Season’s Water”, F.Abo-Kalid describes her friend as delicate as a flying kiss:

ماء الموسم
رقيقة كالقبة في الهواء
الرياحين تشبه بنحولها
مليحة من شمس الجزيرة
جامحة
مرحة
حزينة
من مزاج الزنجبيل والعناب
كلما هلت الوسمية
أطلت الأميرة من
طاقة القدر
وأمرت القلب.

Delicate as a kiss in the air,
Basils imitate her slender body,
A pretty sun from Arabia
Wild
Merry
Sad
A mixture of Ginger and Jujube,
Whenever the princess
Peeps from the window
Of destiny
The heart obeys.
(Abu-Khalid, p. 15)

What a woman is this Arabian woman, and what a mixture; similar to the perfumes of Arabia; sad and merry, wild and soft just like Abu-Khalid’s poetry. The intensity and honesty of feelings in her free verse makes the Arabian reader forgets all about rhythm and rime that she/ he almost adores in classical poetry.

Thuria AlOriad

A poetess, a painter, a Ph. D holder and an expert in planning who works as an administrative in ARAMCO, The First Saudi Company and one of the biggest Oil Companies in the world. She is one of the daughters of a famous Arabic poet who lived most his life in Bahrain. Gaining fame easily because of her father's fame, she wrote so many poems in a short time. Some are meaningless and some are mature. She has published a lot of poems some of them are included in two books of poetry: "Ela ain Etejah Al-Shajar, Where is the trees direction?" 1995, and "Emra'a bedoon Esm, A woman without a Name" 1999. She writes free verse and the length of her poems vary from lengthy to extremely short ones(Arebi, p. 69-75). I chose to translate one of her recent poems:" "Kulhn ana"; " All of them are me" from an internet magazine, because it is mature, moving and related to my thesis. It is about women's social sufferings and this is very suitable to the topic of this dissertation:

كلُّ هذي الوجوه .. أنا
التي الحلم بأعماقها لا يموت
و التي دفنت حلمها في البيوت
و التي تتأرجحُ
بين الحقيقة و الحلم
دون زمن
كل هذي الوجوه أنا
تحاصرني أينما أتجه
بأحلامها .. بجداولها ..
بالعيون
يكحلها الحزن كلُّ صباح
يغلفها الياس كل مساء
من يعاتب من؟
من يحارب من ؟
كلهنَّ .. أنا
في ثيابي الموشاة تنبض آلامهن
تلهث أناتهن
بصوتي أنا .. كلهن
وجوه مشوّهة فيالمرايا القديمة
محاصرةٌ بين خوفٍ و ظن

كلّ هذي الوجوه أنا
التي أشعل الحلم بأحداقها محرقة
و التي لم تزل
في متاهاتها غارقة
كلّ هاذي الوجوه أنا
تطاردني
في الدروب العتيقة
لتفضي إليّ العيون الحزاني
باسرارها تطالبني أن أثور
أحطم أسوارها
تحملني عارها
ثارها
من يحاسب من ؟
من يعاقب من ؟
و لأي جريمة .. ؟
الصراخ .. ؟
السكوت .. ؟
قبول الهزيمة .. ؟
التناقض في اللحظات الأليمة .. ؟
التعلق بالرغبات السحيقة .. ؟
تبيثُ بأعماقنا التار عبر العصور
تنقّب في اللا شعور
تواجهنا بالحقيقة
و تفتح باب الزمن
من يطالب من ؟
أنا كل مؤدّة لم تكن
كلّ ذاتٍ تطالب ألا تموت
وتنضو الكفن
من يطالب من ؟
كلهن أنا ..
.. و أنا كلهن
فهل ستولد أحزانهن
بضعفي أنا صرح قوّة ؟
و هل بأظافر آمالهن
أنحت في صخرة الموت كوّة ؟
بأحلامهن المضيئة
أشعل في ظلمة الليل جذوة ؟
أفجّر في قنوات الجفاف بأعينهن
ينابيع نشوة .. ؟
بحلقتي أنا تتأزم صرختهن
و أحبس اصداها في الشرايين
حتى أكاد أموت
فهل سأمرّق ها السكوت
باسناني العارية
و أطلقها صرخة داوية
يهزّ صداها البيوت
تحطم كل المرايا الرديئة

و تمحو عن الجبهات ندوب التشوّه
تحرّر وجهي
و كل الوجوه البريئة
من وصمة الخوف و الظنّ
و العقد البالية .. ؟
د. ثريا العريض , مجلة دروب الإلكترونية , 16,2006

All of these faces
are me,
I am the woman
whose dream does not
die in her very depth
the one who buried
her dream inside homes
who swings between
dream and reality
in no time.
all of these faces are me
surround me wherever I go
with their
dreams,
brads,
and eyes
that sadness is their kohl
every morning,
and despair is their cover
every night,

who blames who?
who fights who?
I am all
Of them

i all of these faces
dream burnt
care of mine
is what they wear
care for their
pain
sighs
in my voice
they all exist
distorted faces reflected
in my old mirror

surrounded by fear and doubt
all of these faces are me
dream has burnt
in their bulbs
a holocaust
and still are
sinking in their wilderness
all of these faces are me
chasing me
in old lanes
to tell, my sad eyes,
all of their secrets
demanding me to rebel
to destroy their fences
forcing me to carry their
shame,
fire
who judges who?
Who punishes who?
And for what crime?
silence,
screaming
or accepting defeat?
Contradiction in

التناقض في اللحظات الأليمة..؟
التعلق بالرغبات السحيقة..؟
تبتُّ بأعماقنا التار عبر العصور
تنقّب في اللا شعور
تواجهنا بالحقيقة
و تفتح باب الزمن
من يطالب من؟
أنا كل موؤدةٍ لم تكن
كلّ ذاتٍ تطالب ألا تموت
وتنضو الكفن
من يطالب من ؟
كلهن أنا ..
.. و أنا كلهن
فهل ستولد أحزانهن
بضعفي أنا صرح قوّة؟
و هل بأظافر آمالهن
أنحت في صخرة الموت كوّة؟
بأحلامهن المضيئة
أشعل في ظلمة الليل جذوة؟
أفجّر في قنوات الجفاف بأعينهن
ينابيع نشوة..؟

Ashjan Hendi:

“The coming Saudi Poetess” as Dr. Ghazi Al-Gosibi calls her and quotes the following lines from her poem (Al-Gosibi, A Voice from the Gulf, p. 7).

:

I'll come to you
From the very depth of my:
Being;
Root;
Essence,
Nothingness,
Pain,
Repentance,
Arms,
Feet,
I'll choose from my trouble what I desire
To seduce you when the eve sigh
And sing you temptation to make you enchanted
And around you their sins dance
So I'll assassinate them
A planet after the other (Dream Has the Smell of Rain, p. 20).

One of Mariam Al Baghdadi's clever and talented students. She was born in 1968 in Jeddah. She got her M.A from Saudi University and works a lecturer in King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. Her M.A thesis: Application of Culture in Saudi Poetry was published as a critical study by the Cultural Club in Riyadh. Her first book of poems: " Lelholm Ra'ehat Al-Matar ,Dream Has a Rain Smell" was published in 1998. Her Ph.D. dissertation is on Arabic literature from SAOAS in London.

Like many poets, she is a poetess full of contradictory feelings and this connect her with most women in her culture. Her poetry evoke in the reader a deep feeling for women's sufferings in a man's world. Unlike her teacher M. Al Baghdadi, Ashjan Hendi cared for

tradition and what people may say about her. Since she was a poet, she had her share of aspiration for freedom. Hence, we see her wavers between her need to belong to a society that had a kind of rigid customs and tradition, and her need for freedom to write daring love poems. The conflict between modernism and classicism is the core of Ashjan's poetry. It is reflected beautifully on her poetry and colour it with is a mixture of classical and modern in discourse and tone.

يا جارة الأحلام

Dear neighbor
I am chained
and rain invaded
my very gown
my palm is dirty
from snow
I
don't know
why
tears filled my eye
what is the secret
of the extinguishing
of his lightening
when both of us
wanted intimacy.

Your gray clouds,
and at your door,
there is light
that does not light
on the top of the crown
of my night gown
there are jasmines
be generous
pour out
rain
Spring like
make stories;
the myth comes true
so that birds

like me fly through
long distance.
tell our story
to story tellers
so that coffee
will be sweeter
the face of the desert
will be
prettier
each atom of sand will turn
to a butterfly
mingled colours will ornate
your coming caravan.

Neighbor of the valley
I let go
my palm is doomed
to be sterile,
to suffer
from hunger
for his words.
I woke up
not on his voice,
but on the possibility
that still hangs
in between,
the shoulders of darkness
the braids of drops
are dancing in the bottom
braided by thirst
fear is a ghoul
at my door
fear from my past
that keeps on coming back
every time I cut
its fingers tips
it grows again
and my eyelashes
are becoming my pillow
when I cry
neighbour of the dales
now I know
I wished I knew not (Lelholm Ra'ehat Al-Matar, p.25).

01

وهكذا بدأت قصتي معك
لوحت بالنجوم لي فرحت أتبعك.

02

أهديتني الشموع والمكان ،
والكأس ،
والأنفاس ،
والإحساس ،
واحتمال هجعة الزمان
لكنما
حين انطفأت راحلا
سرقت من جميع ما أهديتني الأمان .

03

بدا المكان باردا
بدوت فيه احتسي سخونتي ،
وألعن الضجر
أضأت شمعتين
تساقطت ذاكرتي
وصفق المطر .

Extinguishing:

Thus my story
With you has begun;
You showed
A necklace of stars,
And blindly I followed,
Your gifts were:
a place,
Glass,
Breath,
Feelings,
And a possibility
To have tranquility,
But you got extinguished,
And left,
You snatched safety
From all of your gifts,
The place is cold,
I drank alone
My warmth
Cursing boredom,
I let my candles
Memories fell

And tears
Like rain
Clapped (Lelholm Ra'ehat Al-Matar, p. 10).

Badia Kashgari:

A Saudi poetess who has published three books of poems: "Al-Raml iza Azhar, When the sand flourish" in 1994, "Masra Al-Rooh wa Al-Zaman, The Path of The Soul and Time" in 1997, and "Shai'e men Tokoos, Something from Rituals" in 2000. On January/ 2001, her translated Arabic poems- by herself were published by Dar Al-Saqi in London (Okaz, 12595, 2001 p. 25). The introduction of this book was written by the Canadian poet Patrick White.

يين آدم وحواء

إني أتيتك لا من سكونك او سكوني
من قمة عقلي!
ربما
أو من قاع جنوني.
من طقس أمطاري

[وم أتيتك كانت لي قضية
وكننت أنت هدمع الكحل في عيني
توقده فتحضر النيازك
وهبتك انسانية أنوثتي
وأنت تزف لي حواء بدتك
كتواشي
كناسك
أنا مثلك
في البدء كنت
تسعا حملت
مخاضا حملت
الى دنياي
بعينين
مغمضتين جئت
لماذا واحد منا يكون الضحية!

حين أتيتك لم
يكن بعيني
مقال الرواة على
امتداد القرون

تلوتك غصنا
تباركه السنابل
تفاحة عشق ترتلها
الحناجر

وهنا وعبئنا حملتك تسعا
حملتك فصلا وموجا يسافر
فأين ابن آدم عصفور جوي!
يغرد صوتي قبل احتياجه
أين ابن آدم في بوح سر!
وفي سري بوح جراحه!

يوم جئتك ما كان يعنيني
ان اكون دونك او تكون دوني
مكر حواء أو كيد ظنوني
ما كان يلغيني
حذفوا تاء التأنيث أم في قيدها
ربطوني

ينبثق حضوري من صوتي
لا من ألف "تاء نسوية" أو "نون"
لأنشدك صباحا عذريا جئت
لن يثنيني
سكن دوني يصك
بأقبية الحريم
سيظل سهيلك في
قافيتي
كرجع الالحن يستنق
انيني

يا فجر فاتحتي وشعار
حدسي

اليوم جئتك كي اناجي فيك نفسي
واحرر الغد المقبل من جهل أمسي
لأنك أنت الآن أنت يومي وغدي
وعيناك حقلي وشمسي
بأنس بوحك توجت مملكتي
لتعود كما كنت
على أرض يقيني.

Between Adam and Eve

I came to you,
Not because
Of your silence,
Or mine,
But from the top of my mind,

Or it might have been
From the bottom
of my madness,
from my rainy weather,
no,
from the clarity of my clouds.

When I came to you
I had a cause,
You were the tears
With "kohl" in my eyes,
You put flame
In to them;
They flourished
And became green
A gift to you
Was my human femininity
Your gift was
Eve in tulle
As a hermit

I am like you
In the beginning
I was nine month
Of pregnancy,
I was delivered to my world
With closed eyes,
Why should one of us
Be a victim

When I came to you
Nothing of what the story tellers
Was in my mind,
I recited you as a branch,
Grains blessing it
An apple of passion
Sung by throats
Weak and in burden
I carried you for nine
You I carried
A season;
A traveling wave,
Where is Adam's son
Who is the sparrow of my air
My voice sings
welcoming his invasion

where is Adam's son,
A secret in my confession
To me in secrecy he confesses
His wounds.

When I came to you
I never cared whether
I was less than you,
Or you less than me,
The foxy Eve,
Or my teasing doubts
Cancelled me not,
Whether they cancelled the "suffex"
That shows my femininity,
Or made it a rope
To tie me down
My presence is in my very voice
Not in thousands of affixes
To sing you a virgin morning,
I came and nothing
Will stop me
Even a humble lodging
For harem will not
Make my voice cease to be,
Your vice will echo
In my rime racing
With my sigh.

Dawn of my beginning,
Emblem of my intuition,
I came to you today
To whisper and say
To myself,
To set free my tomorrow
From the ignorance
Of my yesterday
Because you are my today
And tomorrow;
Your eyes are my field and sun,
From your friendly confession
I made the crown
Of my kingdom
So that you may
Come back as you were
On the land of my trust(Okaz, 2001).

Emily Bronte and other Victorian Poetesses:

Emily Bronte is well known for her novel *Weathering Heights*, yet not many people are aware of her greatness as a poetess. Few articles, researches were written about her poetry, and only two chapters in two different books were written about her poetry in the last fifty years. She, like M. Al-Baghdadi, is different from her contemporary poetesses. Other Victorian poetesses such as her two sisters: Charlotte and Anne, Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Browning (Langland 2). Contemporary critics of their poetry were very aware of the fact that Emily was a far better poetess than her sisters, though the three sisters shared themes and conventional poetic technique and regular metrical form (Davies 10). All of these poetesses wrote about freedom like Emily Bronte. But when it came to expression, they were much less than her especially her sisters who were living with her in the same period of time and environment. The profundity and the choice of words – though they were almost the same words- and putting them in a certain context to produce a very special echo, sound and meaning effects on the reader, could not be done except by a genius like her.

Emily Bronte and other Victorian Poetesses:

Emily Bronte, like M. Al-Baghdadi, is different from her contemporary poetesses. Other Victorian poetesses such as her two sisters: Charlotte and Anne, Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Browning shared ideas with her. But when it came to expression, they were much less than her especially her sisters who were living with her in the same period of time and environment. Their contemporary critics of their poetry were very aware of this fact as we will see later. The profundity; the choice of words – though they were almost the same words- and putting them in a certain context

to produce a very special echo, sound and meaning effects on the reader, could not be done except by a genius like her.

Though the three talented sisters dealt with almost the same themes in their poetry, the tension and gap among their discourses and attitudes are so obvious to the ordinary non specialized reader, but ' [less attention has been paid to the tension and divergent interests among the three famous women'(Langland, p. 2). Actually the difference in poetic level was acknowledged- yet without much analysis- by critics of their time as quoted in the Introduction and Ellis i.e. Emily was thought to be the best in their first and last collection of poems: *The Poems of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell* which appeared in 1846. I will try to see why Emily was thought to be better as a poetess than her two sisters though they shared themes and conventional poetic technique and regular metrical form(Davies, p. 10). By examining a portion of their poetry about the theme of freedom, I will try to trace the difference. "Emily greatest poetry has an individuality which makes it arresting by any standard; it posses qualities which are scarcely noticed in that of Charlotte, or Anne or even Branwell"(Pinion, p. 190). Hence, the comparison between the poetry of the three Bronte sisters is a difficult task because they almost dealt with similar themes, and it is an easy task at the same time, for the difference in their impact on their reader is obvious; the comparison is always for the good of Emily's poetry which evokes in the reader feelings and thoughts that her sisters' poetry is incapable to. The riddle of this complex issue is understood, when one looks closely at their parallel poems that tackle almost the same themes with similar macabre images, gloomy tone and the general back ground of their life. The personal life of these sisters is reflected in a way or another in their poetry sometimes directly and in other times indirectly. Yet before tackling certain feminist

poems that are about the theme of liberty in the poetry section, I will try to analyze in this introduction in a rather general way Charlotte's and Anne's poems about their brother(the same theme of Emily's stanzas to).

Charlotte:

There's no use in weeping,
 Though we are condemned to part:
 There's such a thing as keeping
 A remembrance in one's heart:
There's such a thing as dwelling
 On the thought ourselves have nursed,
 And with scorn and courage telling
 The world to do its worst.(re writ later 2 erase colour)

Charlotte, the writer of Reason, does not rely mainly on reason in order to break from the chain of pain from the death of her brother and pain of life in general, while the most tender poetess of the three sisters; Emily analyzes the whole experience in a very logical and objective way; they seem as if they partly exchanged ways of self expression. For instance Charlotte's Parting(which might had been written after the death of their brother), begins with the idea of rejecting 'weeping' as if showing emotions is a detestable thing, it then retreats and expresses how the heart does not forget good memories. Then this gives her the courage to challenge the world to bring out its worst. This wavering between the heart and the mind reflects Charlotte's deep emotional distress from losing her one year junior brother who was very close to her. Yet there is still a connection and a bond between her heart and mind which is reflected by the word 'nursed'; women's breasts, which they nurse babies with, are the closest part of their bodies to their hearts. When Charlotte connects thought to heart, she shows how circumstances are against her heart wish to the extent she uses

reason as a shelter to protect herself from severe sadness. Steve Davies analyzes the role of 'Reason' in Charlotte's poems as "never other than a coerced one. If circumstances were different, they would divorce and never communicate again. But as things are she unwillingly embraces Reason."(Davies p. 15). But Reason here plays an additional role to its usual one because of its bond with the heart; it is not as cold as its case always to be. The unique bond here drives the poetess to conquer grief by resolving to be merry.

In the fourth stanza, Charlotte mentions the word 'brother' directly -which shows her emotions towards what happened to Branwell -even more directly than Emily and just the opposite of Anne who preferred not to give a glimpse of her brother in her poem after and about his death. Then Charlotte retreats to reason that will combine her in thinking of her dead brother. It seems that by bringing both(heart and thought) together, her memory could reconcile the problem between her logical thinking and feelings for a brother who ruined his own life. Nevertheless she goes forth and back again between the heart for warmth and thought for comfort until she reaches to the conclusion that she began the poem with. The last stanza enjoys the combination of the heart and mind again; the logic thinking behind seeing the uselessness of weeping ignites hope in the heart to expect a better future than the sad present.

The quatrain poem rhyming abab is short when compared to that of Anne, yet it is of the same form. It is closer in length to that of Emily's. Parting is a direct expression of the permanent conflict between heart and mind with almost no images. The poem ends as it began with reaching to a resolution of combining both logic and emotion in order to endure pain and achieve a better life.

Anne:

WHEN sinks my heart in hopeless gloom,
 And life can show no joy for me;
 And I behold a yawning tomb,
 Where bowers and palaces should be;
In vain you talk of morbid dreams;
 In vain you gaily smiling say,
 That what to me so dreary seems,

The lover of control (Davies, p. 26), could not control her contradictory feelings which were described in a rather more naive and lengthier way when compared with her sisters' poems especially that of Emily. With all the respect to Davies points of view about the three sisters' poetry, I disagree with her view that Anne's poetry is very similar to if not identical with Emily's. It is true that they sometimes share ideas, titles and even phrases, but there is a philosophical aura about Emily's poetry that her sisters' poetry seems to be lacking when compared to hers. Even when it comes to the classical form that the three sister stick to, Anne is the one of the three who tries least to break the chain of the quatrain which confine their poetry and makes it sound closer to monotony.

A 'Views of Life' is a poem about inner struggle. It is written after the death of their only brother Barnwell, yet Anne does not mention him directly or indirectly. The reason of ignoring such an important detail in what is supposed to be an elegy about the only brother might be "[t]he sense of social shame the family was forced to undergo during the period of Barnwell"(Gordon p.44). Anne's reaction to the fact that Barnwell " terrorized his family with his drunken fits" was almost explicit " in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, an indictment of the frightful toll taken by an inadequate and egotistical personality on those around him" (Ibid). It seems that

Anne's confused feelings towards her brother (for after all there must have been a kind of affection for him) made her keep going back and forth between despair and hope in this particular poem, but in a rather repetitive way. By doing so she seems to be trying her best to reach to a deeper philosophy about life so that she might be able to avoid expressing her anger at his way of living. Yet she fails to do so because of redundancy. Stanzas 4,5,6 and 7 give examples about the same idea which is the impossibility of permanence in this world. 'Parting' is also a kind of struggle not between hope and despair but between Reason and heart. Compared to Anne, Charlotte managed to achieve her aim in writing a kind of elegy about Branwell's death, but in a concise method that makes her poem superior to Anne's.

Anne's sense of insecurity is revealed through her pain from the fading away of beauty in this life and her insisting need for permanence in a world that is going to be annihilated sooner or later according to what astrologists have proved since the invention of microscopes. This kind of feeling reminds the reader of Wordsworth's sense of heaven truly lying about us in our infancy: in his Romantic view, it is an experience that obscures the truth.

Anne thinks that her 'keener sight' or rather pessimism cannot be blamed for its wisdom. Every time she describes any kind of pleasure, she confirms the fact that it is feeble and never lasting. In this she is unlike Charlotte, who finds the fact about this continuously changing world an encouraging reason to have hope in the future-which will end the pain of the present moment -Anne say that too and reaches to the same conclusion, but only at the very end- Yet in certain lines she writes the same ideas of Charlotte as in "Then let us not enhance our doom/But e'en in midnight's blackest gloom/Expect the rising morn." In other lines such as "Because the road is rough and long/ Shall we despise the skylark's

song/ That cheers the wanderer's way", she writes ideas similar to some of the second stanza in Emily's poem: "Do I despise the timid deer/ Because his limbs are fleet with fear". (Might be worth a comparison with Wordsworth's sense of heaven truly lying about us in our infancy: in his Romantic view, it is experience that obscures the truth. Nevertheless, her tone and logic sound much less convincing and persuasive than her sisters especially Emily's. Anne's use of metaphors such as " Experience tells", " birds refused", " Nature mourned" is more in number than that of Charlotte's, but much less in effect than the images in the second stanza of Emily's poem.

Christina Rossetti(1830-1894)

I took my heart in my hand
(O my love, O my love),
I said: Let me fall or stand,
Let me live or die,
But this once hear me speak
(O my love, O my love)—
Yet a woman's words are weak;
You should speak, not I ([www. poetry x.com](http://www.poetryx.com)).

Such as the ending sentence of this poem: " Twice" by Christina Rossetti, could have never been uttered by Emily Bronte, though the issue of liberty one of Christina Rossetti's concern. Yet she was not as interested in it as Emily Bronte. Hence, she was a much more famous poetess than Emily Bronte in the Victorian era.

Elizabeth Browning (1806-1861)

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right.
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Sonnet 18 - I Never Gave A Lock Of Hair Away:

I never gave a lock of hair away
To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,
Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully,
I ring out to the full brown length and say
'Take it.' My day of youth went yesterday;
My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee,
Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,
As girls do, any more: it only may
Now shade on two pale cheeks the mark of tears,
Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears
Would take this first, but Love is justified,—
Take it thou,—finding pure, from all those years,
The kiss my mother left here when she died (www. poetry
x.com).

With all of her fame in her time, Elizabeth Browning's poetry is much less appealing to the modern reader than Emily Bronte's poetry. It lacks the depth and genuine feelings that moves the reader of Emily Bronte's poems

The Scope of the Study

My central thesis is that 'FAITH', the major element of religious belief, gave the two writers the force to struggle against the unfair social concepts of their patriarchal rigid societies. It enabled them to be liberal in expressing their views and to have a career of

creative writing which many people in their societies did not think of as appropriate for women. Throughout the discussion of the two poetesses' background and poetry, I'll try to answer questions such as: Is faith and religion as a whole an obstacle in women's way to fulfill themselves or the vice versa? What kind of power does faith give to women especially Muslim ones? Did Allah or God create women to be abused? Did He forbid them to be creative? And what are the boundaries of creativity for religious artists in general?

Brooks believes that poetry:

needs religion; even nonreligious poetry needs it even poetry subversive of religion needs it. For how can one be properly subversive if there nothing to subvert? Poetry needs religion for the same reason that it needs other concrete expressions of human life, other human actions; for poetry is a dramatization of, and thus an indirect commentary upon, characteristic human action (Brooks 1).

Faith or original religion as it is understood from The Qur'an (and Mohammad's-pbh- teachings), the Bible and ideas about the merciful and Almighty Creator, God or Allah, in my opinion, served M. Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte as a natural and strong escape from social limitations and obstacles which they suffered from in their conservative societies. It is only normal for sensitive human beings, as poets, to try to fill the vacuum in their hearts and the gap between them and people with other things that make up for what they lack. The agonizing nostalgia for the pure past of Mohammed in M. Al-Baghdadi's poetry is similar to that of Emily Bronte when she describes her feelings for her religion. Let's examine as an example M. Al-Baghdadi's opening lines of her poem "Mohammed Virtues":

Ye lord, on thy threshold I stand
With shoulders laden with my burden
Ye whom I beseech his forgiveness, bestow it,
You all knowledgeable of my repentance and fate

Ye whom I retreated to, seeking his pardon
For what I committed in my yonder age and youth
From oblivion, a notion or a plight (Al-Arbe'a Literary Magazine
20)

These lines of M. Al- Baghdadi might differ a bit in tone from the next lines by Emily Bronte, but they are similar in the subject matter. Both poets are talking to God directly and with great love:

Oh, God within my breast,
Al mighty, ever present Deity
Life- that in me has rest,
As I – undying Life have power in thee.(Gezari 220)

Brooks, also, says that “happy is the man who possesses both: religion and poetry, faith and imagination” (Brooks 61). And I think this idea is applicable to the two poetesses, Eastern and Western, for they found in both faith and poetry a good refuge from life’s enigma. In addition, theme of isolation, dream and death are found in M. Al Baghdadi's poetry as it is found in Emily Bronte's poetry. They serve as forms of liberation from social chains. Though these sensitive poetesses withdrew from physical contact with people because of lack of understanding, they did not withdraw from them mentally. Hence, isolation to them is a means that they use to contemplate over life and people. It gave them the tranquillity and solitude that they needed to come to terms with the self that is somehow disturbed by the human contact. Hence, despair from failing to communicate with people drove the poetesses to dream of love and the life they longed for in a man’s world. Through these dreams we can see the burden of womanhood and woman centred growth from innocence to experience. Hopefully, this will shed some light on the points of similarity in female thinking between the Eastern and Western

cultures. Furthermore, the theme of death which is used by the poetesses as a form of liberation from the human ordeal, reminds us of "Because I could not stop for death" and "The Self Selects its Own Society" by Emily Dickinson on the other side of the ocean. Though Dickinson is not included in this dissertation, I thought it is worthwhile to mention her to show the similarities among females' thinking "Death" by Emily Bronte like M. Al-Baghdadi's elegies about her father and the late King Faisal will be discussed in each chapter about each poetess's poems to show their use of similar themes and ideas. Hopelessness makes these poetesses unafraid of death, on the contrary they look at it as a peaceful way of salvation.

Literature Review

In spite of the limited number of books and specialized articles that have been written about Mariam Al-Baghdadi's and Emily Bronte's poetry, there are some texts that have been beneficial in establishing the effects of the so called feminist concepts in both writers'. Muslim and Western feminists' books like *Women and Gender in the Middle East* by L. Ahmad and *Mad Woman in the Attic* by S. Gilbert and S. Gubar were extremely significant to this dissertation. They up-held my idea that culture, not the divine religions, was the source of unjust notions and attitudes that created obstacles preventing women from being treated as equal human beings. Feminists' books, in general, provided me with the evidence that clearly show how those assumptions regarding women are erroneous despite hiding behind the mask of religion. Those assumptions made their way into the two different societies. Muslim feminists' books such as Leila Ahmad's *Women and Gender in the Middle East*, Fatma Mernissi's *Women and Islamization*, and Miriam Cooke's *Women Who Claim Islam*, provided me with the historical background that the readers

needed to understand Muslim feminists , past or present. They furnished my dissertation with the foundation necessary for ideas regarding women's rights as equal human beings that stemmed from Islam.

Leila Ahmad's *Women and Gender in the Middle East* in particular and her lengthy analysis of Lord Cromer's double standard concerning Eastern and Western women, made me aware that there are some fine notions that are used as masks for reasons that are not fine at all. His "schizophrenic" standard made him use feminism politically as a weapon to invade the Middle East and impose his control on its land and people:

This Champion of unveiling Egyptian women was, in England, founding member and sometime president of the Men's League for opposing women's suffrage. Feminism on the home front and feminism directed against white men was to be resisted and suppressed; but taken abroad and directed against the culture of colonized people, it could be promoted in ways that admirably served and furthered the project of the dominance of the white man (Ahmad 153).

This very same idea is stressed by Haideh Moghissi 's *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, who repeats Malti-Douglas's words that, "against the colonial backdrop, the role and status of Muslim women would become a stick with which the West could beat the East", she adds saying, " [the] Muslim woman was to be exploited by the Western man but protected from enslavement by the Muslim man; she was to be liberated from her own ignorance and her culture's cruelty (Moghissi 16).

Both writers confirmed the idea that no one can get for another her/ his rights. Women, in any society, should struggle to make

their societies aware of the importance of their roles in their families as well as in their jobs. They should do so to get their rights and to be treated in a respectable way. Furthermore, if we take M. Cooke's definition in *Women Who Claim Islam* and "use of the word 'feminist' to refer to women who think and do something about changing expectations for women's social roles and responsibilities", then the influence of shallow ideas about women's rights will disappear

(Cook ix).

Moreover, Fatma Mernisse affirms that:

We Muslim women can walk into the modern world with pride, knowing that the quest for dignity, democracy and human rights, for full participation in the political and social affairs of our country, stems from no imported Western values, but is a true part of the Muslim tradition" (1998 viii).

This awareness of the historical background of Muslim women's valuable religious heritage since the prophet's time, is what Muslim women need to know and be sure of in our time. The above mentioned book in particular supported my idea that faith is a positive factor that helps women get their rights. The fact that Arabs (fourteenth centuries ago) changed their attitude towards women because of Allah's instructions in the Qur'an and Mohammad's (pbh) detailed teaching, should make us realize the main reason for Arabs' and Muslims' general deterioration. Once they do not understand and apply what they read in the Qur'an and Mohammads' (pbh) teachings, they will return to their worst habits including being unjust with women.

Long before reading Sandra M. Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's following words in *Madwoman in the Attic*:

Reading the writing of women from Jane Austen and Charlot Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar te Bronte to Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, and Sylvia Plath, we were surprised

by the coherence of theme and imagery that we encountered in works of writers who were often geographically, historically and psychologically distant from each other(Gilbert and Gubar xi).

I began to notice similarities among the writings of some women writers in the East and the West. But reading this book gave me the real incentive to pursue and investigate the idea. Their idea supported my idea about the similarity of themes and some imagery in the poetry of Mariam Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte.

In her great book *Veiled Half Truth*, Judy Marbo asserts the idea that: "Women were no more passive victims in one society than they were in the other"(Marbo 23). I also believe that the weaker sex, physically speaking, is a victim wherever awareness and just rules are lacking whether in the East or West.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* (1759-1797) provided me with the historical background and the logical reasons that caused the beginning of the Western Feminists' Movement. In Chapter two of *A Vindication* (which is one of the milestones in the history of feminism)(Lamont 290), in a passage beginning "These may be termed Utopian dreams", she discusses that it is God who gave her Reason. Mary Wollstonecraft is known as a freethinker, and yet she refers frequently to God. Her feminist ideals of women's liberty and equality in relation to her sense of the divine being show us her effect on Emily Bronte.

Though Mill(1806-1873)came after Emily Bronte's death, his books such as *Liberty* display the intellectual atmosphere of Victorian female and male feminists. He did not, however, stop at discussing liberty and the rights of men, but extended his discussion to include the rights of women and attack old customs that oppressed them. In *On Liberty*, Mill defines social liberty as: "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately

exercised by society over the individual"; he elaborates on the subject of the different levels of freedom and presents it as an essential need for the well being of the human being and a valuable source of happiness. All of this will be discussed fully in "Conceptual Theory". Actually my idea about the similarity between the Victorian and Arabian social attitudes towards women, took a shape after reading the above two pioneer Western feminists' books.

On the other hand, Said's Culture and Imperialism, and Orientalism, were, for me, like a middle ground between East and West. These books enlightened me and supported my argument with deep historical understanding of what was really going on between East and West during the colonial period. The importance of this period for my dissertation is that it marks the beginning of Arab and Muslim feminist movement.

In Culture and Imperialism, Edward Said maintains that the “ the study of comparative literature originated in the period of high European imperialism and is irrecusably linked to it” but “ when most European thinkers celebrated humanity or culture they were principally celebrating ideas and values ascribed to their own national culture”(Said 49,51). Moreover, Occidental “culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 16). Hence, and from here, the blind imitation for whatever is "Western ", was born in the East. It is a common idea that the defeated follow the defeater thinking that such an attitude will improve his/her state.

The difference between my dissertation and these books on feminism and culture, is that I'm applying some of their general ideas on specific incidents, poems and other achievements of M. Al-Baghdadi's and that of Emily Bronte's. I tried my best to be

neutral and not biased i.e. not totally with nor totally against. I'll discuss constructive and destructive criticism on both poets and try to pin-point the strong and weak aspects in their poetry.

M. Al-Baghdadi said, in my first interview with her on (April 2001), that women attacked her in Saudi newspapers saying that M. Al-Baghdadi's emotional poems unveiled Saudi women and caused them a scandal. On the other hand, Dalal Dia'a who works in Saudi Official Radio, valued M. Al-Baghdadi's ability in writing classical poetry that has no mistakes in language, nor in rhythm and rhyme (Dalal Dia'a 1981).

There were also men, who claimed themselves to be critics, writing lengthy passages against her in different Saudi newspapers such as Hamad Al-Kadi (Al-Jazera, newspaper 1981) and Abdul Fatah Abo-Median did in (Al-Bilad 1981). They claimed that her poetry is not poetry at all. I disagree with their superficial criticism, because it was not professional and it mainly to be little her as a poetess and as a professor.

Yet, there were constructive critics such as Azia Dia'a, who uncovered Al-Kadi's jealousy of M. Al-Baghdadi's high qualifications and academic position saying that "this is her only sin". I do agree with him, because their destructive criticism was lacking in rational analysis and rather insulting to which M. Al-Baghdadi never replied. Despite the fact the he greatly appreciates that M. Al-Baghdadi was not influenced by "Western immoral temptation" (Okaz 1981), and says that he values her poetry. Another writer, Ali Bin Mohammad Al-Hazmi, writes about the Saudi men's and women's love for the desert which reminds him of " Al-Khansa", the pioneer and famous Arab poetess, hinting that M. Al-Baghdadi is an extension to her and that she is a living and true model for women of her generation (Al-Jazera 1981).

Positive and negative criticism of M. Al-Baghdadi's discourse (as

discussed later in details in the dissertation in the section on Patriarchal Criticism) made me see the hardships she passed through in order to develop women in her society and was able to make me see the depth behind her words both in poetry as well as articles.

Juliet Baker's *The Brontes*, is the revolutionary book that changed readers' (including myself) unwarranted ideas about the Bronte's father and showed with evidences, the healthy intellectual and emotional atmosphere in which Emily Bronte was brought up in: "In every other detail of his life, Patrick Bronte was proved to be just the opposite of the tyrannical father whose daughters were brought up to fear so much. This is clearly evident in how he took care of the minute details of their life, such as sending them with the maids 'to take an airing on the common' in the moors" (Baker 108, 130). Though Barker's book is about the whole Bronte family, yet I could detect Emily's actions and reactions in such an open family.

Lyn Pykett's *Emily Bronte*, 1989 did help me to understand Emily Bronte's poetry in general and her heroin in particular, on a much deeper level:

Emily Bronte's powerful women offer female versions of the romantic exile, that outcast, outlawed, or otherwise isolated figure, the lonely bearer of the truth who rejects or rebels against the society from he has been exiled. Ultimately, however, the assertiveness of Bronte's powerful women is problematic, and is accompanied by a sense of isolation which shared by many of her dramatic voices in both the Gondal and the non-Gondal poems(Pykett 47).

Pykett's analysis of the romantic outcast as a powerful being rather than a passive one, strengthened my thesis that one's belief in Almighty and oneself is a force even if society as a whole disagree with such ideas.

All of Davies's books on Emily Bronte in 1988, 1998, 2001 added a further dimension in my understanding of Emily Bronte's attitude towards religion, family, animals and society. Davies's *Emily Bronte: The Artist as a Free Woman*, 1993 and *The Bronte Sisters: Selected Poems*, 2002 in particular are texts that facilitate the understanding of Emily Bronte's character and revolutionary nature.

While Marianne Thormahlen's *The Bronte's and Religion*, Elizabeth's *No Body's Angel*, and John Maynard's *The Bronte's and Religion*, are texts explore the Bronte's relation , as freethinkers, with religion and society.

However, Karen Armstrong's *Muhammad. A biography of the Prophet*, is a milestone for any one writes about issues related to Islam. Though I did not quote from this book, but reading a book about the prophet of Islam written by a non biased Western writer, was a solid support especially because her pitfalls are minor ones. Articles that appeared in periodicals such as *Literature and Theology*, *Bronte Studies*, and *Review of Bronte Studies* whether on *Wuthering Heights* (Wang 2000), or *Jane Eyre* (Peters 2000) and (Peters 2005), were so helpful in understanding the intellectual suffering of women in that era.

Conceptual Theory

"I am no body, who are you?". So said Emily Dickinson in one of her poems, and so were women supposed to think of themselves, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argued in that seminal feminist text, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the Victorian era. The mere idea of self-fulfilment, whether through work or creative art, was a forbidden fruit for the Victorian woman: it meant that she was stepping into the domain of men. Therefore, a woman's identity especially that

of a creative writer (and a poetess in particular) was torn between self-assertion and submission to whatever her society imposed on her, producing a distorted or troubled sense of self. The vanity of self-assertion and self-gratification are “not good for maidens”, as Christina Rossetti reminds herself in “Goblin Market”, telling us that a nineteenth-century Christ-like poetess could survive only “through doses of paradoxically bittersweet pain” (Gilbert and Gubar 572-73). The concepts of gender imposed on men and women in the Victorian era were underpinned not only by a patriarchal society but by certain interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. Women carried on their shoulders the guilt and burden of being the cause of Adam’s downfall. In texts that elaborated on the Bible, like Milton’s “Paradise Lost”, Eve was represented as being incapable of understanding directly the words of God so that Adam had to interpret for her; it seems that unjust ideas about the intellectual incapability of women, sank deeply into the culture. Since Eve was the cause of Adam's downfall in the Book of Genesis, women were considered to be creatures who tempted men to commit sins. In the Qur'an the story of Adam and Eve is told differently, stating explicitly that it was Adam's sin not Eve's. Yet, some Muslims do perceive women as sinful and inferior. The reason behind this is cultural rather than religious, for many pre Islamic ideas are planted deeply in different Muslim societies. However, the fact that women are to be blamed for men's shortcomings appears to be adopted in old patriarchal societies, and is used to justify men's tendency to belittle women's abilities. Consequently, women were to think badly of themselves and be submissive to the better sex; or reject such an idea and revolt against the society that believed in it.

Hence the very nature of lyric poetry, which often begins with an “I”, is in contradiction with the very nature of what was supposed

to be feminine. For this reason women's intellectual gifts were supposed to be "a curse rather than a blessing" (ibid 543). The conclusion that Virginia Woolf drew about the "highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry", and "must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty" is supposed to be expected in a Patriarchal society, for "[w]ho shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?"(quoted by Gilbert and Gubar 539). But why this "violence"? It seems that the case was so, because a poetess had to go against herself and her upbringing before she could go against her society. That is why the pioneer poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who has no model woman poet before her, said: "England has many learned women...and yet where are the poetesses? I look everywhere for grandmothers and see none" (quoted by Gilbert and Gubar 539). But she was herself a poetess, though when she was praised it was for being feminine.

What did "feminine" mean in such a context? An earlier writer, the radical Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), explicitly attacked her society's gender definition of the female as "innately emotional, intuitive, illogical, capable of moral sentiment but not of rational understanding" (Mellor 33). How humiliating it must have been for intellectual women to be defined in this way. They had no choice; they had to cut away a part of their identity in order to be accepted as normal human beings in their societies. According to this definition, they had to be either female without rational understanding, or capable of rational understanding, and therefore not feminine. Hence, feminism is defined by Morris in a very logical way as "a political perception based on two fundamental premises: 1. that gender difference is the foundation of structural inequality between men and women, by which women suffer systematic social injustice, and 2. that the inequality between the

sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the cultural construction of gender differences. This perception provides feminism with its double agenda: to understand the social and psychic mechanism that constructs and perpetuate gender inequality and then change them”(Morris 1). Mary Wollstonecraft had also “argued, against Rousseau, that women should be accorded the same rights and freedom based on rational principles that were being demanded for men”. In Chapter two of *A Vindication* (which is one of the milestones in the history of feminism)(Lamont 290), in a passage beginning “These may be termed Utopian dreams”, she discusses the God who gave her Reason. Mary Wollstonecraft is known as a freethinker, and yet she refers frequently to God. Her feminist ideals of women’s liberty and equality in relation to her sense of the divine being show us her effect on Emily Bronte

In 1843, for example, Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine published an article by an anonymous woman writer entitled “Woman’s Rights and Duties”, which upholds the right of women to hold a respectable status in society:

Woman is, we firmly believe, neither intended for a tyrant nor a slave—not a slave for till she is raised above the condition of a beast of burden, man her companion, must continue barbarous—not a tyrant . . . (Blackwood’s, 1843, Vol. 54, p. 373)

The woman writer’s tone in the above essay shows how hard she struggles to prove that women are human beings, the way men are. She is not asking for total equality; she only asks that they be considered a part of humanity.

Such language could have been found even in the eighteenth century. The notion of equality made its first appearance in the

seventeenth century and reached a peak during the era of enlightenment in the eighteenth century' in the West (In the East the case is different; it is almost the opposite, for it began with enlightenment during Mohammad'(pbh) time and the four centuries that followed and ended in the eighteenth century with total deterioration).

Social Liberty and the Subjection of Women

In *On Liberty*, Mill(1806-1873) defines social liberty as: "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual"; he elaborates on the subject of the different levels of freedom and presents it as an essential need for the well being of the human being and a valuable source of happiness. He attacks rooted prejudices that "have clouded reason" and explains how men tried for ages to use the very same reason to justify their "narrow views", or rather half truths, that result from "intellectual cowardice" (www.Bartleby.com). He did not, however, stop at discussing liberty and the rights of men, but extended his discussion to include the rights of women and attack old customs that oppressed them. In *The Subjection of Women*, with the support of Harriet Taylor Mill, he rejected the prevailing view of the time and "called for an end to the subjection of women through an extension to women of equal rights and equal opportunities" (Jagger 500). He begins the essay with discussing the validity of the very social "principle" that makes it legal for one sex to be subordinated by the other and confirms that such an idea is "one of the chief hindrances to human improvement". He adds that such an axiom should be changed by a law of perfect equality. Mill proceeded to discuss old constitutions and customs

that confine women's rights. He claims that "God has made all things right, and that errors has been introduced by the creature, whom he formed". He confirmed the idea that "old institutions and custom" are not less barbarous just because men cling to them much longer. In another article of his, *The Right of Men*, Mill said that : "the despotism of customs is on the wane"(HimmelkFarb 166). Mill's essay continued a debate about women that had been going on long before the birth of Emily Bronte and would not cease with her death. He did not stop at discussing liberty and the right of men, but he extended his discussion to include the rights of women and to attack old customs that oppressed them. He later discussed the subjection of women.

Poetesses suffered the consequences of such prevailing dogma, that oppressed women and stripped them of their right to express themselves passionately or give their creativity full play. A good example of the difficulty caused by the double standard for male and female writers is the sufferings of the Bronte sisters in order to get their literary works published. In an attempt to escape from the dependent position imposed on women by her culture, Charlotte Bronte sent a selection of her poems to Robert Southey, the poet laureate of that time, who replied to her need for intellectual support as follows:

Literature can not be the business of a woman's life and it ought not be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation(Gordon 125).

From where did Southey get the authority to define for women what they were supposed to do and not do, even in their leisure time? It must have been from society that gave men authority over

women. Women writers had to struggle hard against this intellectual heritage in order to change their miserable confining situation. Even intellectuals such as George Eliot, could not but bow their heads to their society's way of thinking to the extent of adopting a male pen name for her fiction, so that she might get her artistic work published, and read with respect.

The idea that writing poetry was a or sinful act for women might be one cause behind women writers like Emily Bronte clinging to the spiritual side of religion, and turning their backs on its cultural side. Emily Bronte's firm faith in the God's justice made her unable to accept people's biased notions about creative women. No wonder that anything she wrote was received with severe criticism and sometimes rejection.

Emily Bronte, in her quest for liberty without rejecting "FAITH" together with her constant refusal of the constraints of her society imposed on women especially poetesses, beside her in acceptance of the oppressive interpretation of Christian teaching, was a pioneer poetess in writing about faith combined with liberty as a right for her as a human being.

M. Al-Baghdadi's Islamic Feminist Ideas:

M. Al-Baghdadi has written in the seventies of the last century; during the postcolonial period that coincides with feminism's second wave in the West which began in 1963 and continued to the present (though it began to take a different shape recently). This is considered a very important period of time especially for women writers; a time that is far from the periods when Emily Bronte published her poetry in (1846). Thus the Arab, and British poetesses are not contemporaries, writing about the same issues from different socio-cultural and religious contexts. Hence, their

poems are not tackled according to chronological order, because their importance lies in their themes that had been written across time and cultures rather than the specific period of time in which they were written.

Is M. Al-Baghdadi a feminist in the familiar Western sense or is she a feminist in a peculiar Muslim and Oriental sense? And why she did not adopt the Western Model of feminism? These important questions that I will try to answer throughout this thesis. Muslim feminists such as Fatma Mernisi and Zinab Al-Ghazali, demand to be treated as equal human beings and support their demands with verses from the Quran and Mohammad's teachings (Ahmad 27). In her book *Re-Orienting Western Feminism*, Chilla Bulbeck quotes and affirms Gayatri Spivak's suggestion: "Learn her mother-tongue," adding if you wish to feel solidarity. She analyzes the sentence encouraging Western feminists to : "Learn about the other woman, not as the stereotype we see in the popular media, either oppressed by foreign customs or as the exotic other, clad in colourful difference" (Bulbeck 1). Hence, through M. Al-Baghdadi's love, social, religious and political poems, we might see an Arabian feminist who insists to get her rights as a full and capable human being; a different model that is far from stereotypes and clichés that are used when describing Oriental women.

Yet, and we should be aware that the modern Arabic feminism is not a unified league and might be considered like a fetes that is not yet complete. The shy efforts of individuals whether of women or men are scattered between the Eastern and Western countries of the Arabic and Muslim worlds. Most contemporary efforts are sincere and their claim for Islamic justice for women -as displayed in the Qur'an and Mohammad's(pbh) teachings- is justified, but the road before them is difficult and long. The reason is the

difficulty of change of old customs and tradition especially in countries that still have tribes' regulations. All prophets (pb them) especially Mohammad were fought and some were killed, because they wanted to change illogical traditions and customs. It will be a long time before we could really compare Eastern feminism with Western feminism that began in the seventeenth century.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said maintains that “ the study of comparative literature originated in the period of high European imperialism and is irrecusably linked to it” but “ when most European thinkers celebrated humanity or culture they were principally celebrating ideas and values ascribed to their own national culture”(Said 49,51). Here lies the perplexity of this research which is how to tackle the field of comparative literature without being affected by the imperialist ideas of the field that it originated from. In other words how to avoid imperial misconception of Islamic ideas and practices when analyzing and comparing the poems of a true Muslim, but not a fundamentalist, poetess such as M. Al-Baghdadi with a Western poetess. Especially when some very Muslim writers like H. Moghissi “confound Islam and Islamic fundamentalism, as though the two were the same” as M. Cooke says (Cook 58). Actually the very term “fundamentalism” came from the other religions and does not exist in Islamic terminology, since Islam considers itself as the religion of mercy and middling, and if Muslim fundamentalists began to exist in the postcolonial period, it would have been a result of the Western military power and political pressure on the Muslim world which lost the political and spiritual strength it had when Europe was in the Dark Ages.

Objective of the Study

I wish to try to prove through my discussion of women's poetry and citations from the holy books that Jesus and Mohammad's discourse (pb them) and actions, which represent divine religions, did not oppress women, but some societies did. Faith is thought to be a part of the ideological system that oppresses women, but that same belief, stripped of many of the cultural assumptions associated with it, is actually a source of empowerment for both of these writers. Hence, both poetesses broke the chain of the cultural aspect attached to faith and shunned most people's customs and social rituals in worshipping God. They preferred to go back to the original religion as manifested in the holy books. In Mariam Al-Baghdadi's case, she followed Mohammad's teachings as well. For her, like many other Arab women writers, poetesses and feminists, Islam is a dynamic and powerful motive. These facets of religion provide a target, means, perspective and motif to power expression even though religious guilt is an occasional motivator to write.

The Significance of the study

This approach might be an innovative work, for there is no prior research within this domain of comparative poetry between Saudi poetesses and British ones. Each poetess (the Occidental and the Oriental one) mentioned above wrote poems with themes of faith and liberty, which will be discussed in eight chapters including an introduction on each of the poetesses; her family background and readings, and the conclusion.

Now to analyze certain themes of some poems of this oriental poetess which are affected by her Islamic identity, morals and ideas and compare her way of thinking to show elements of convergence and elements of divergence with a well known

colonial Occidental poetess whose “culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 16) is not going to be a mundane topic of investigation, because it deals with two apparently paradoxical ideas: women control over themselves when they face the West, and their right to express their need for a change in their societies in order to be able to express their need for sexuality (according to religious rules) in such a historic moment in which the Muslim world is torn between its need for social and political reformation and technological development on one hand, and its necessity to protect its identity in such a period of time. A period that is called by many Arab thinkers such as Haleh Afshar: “neo- colonialism” (Afshar 143).

Lack of Modern Model

Actually Mariam Al-Baghdadi is the pioneer woman in writing Classical Arabic poetry in Saudi Arabia and may be in the Gulf area. She had no woman model to follow in her country (and this adds to the significance of her poetry); her main models are past Arabic poetesses such as Al-Khansa’a and Walada Bint Al-Mustakfi. She might have been affected by her readings for other modern Arabic poetesses like Nazick Al-Malikhah (Iraq), Mai Ziada (Lebanon), and Rawhia Al-qalawini (Egypt). In my interview with her she said that she finds Lame’a Omera (Iraq) the closest Arabic poetess to her. And I find her close to Rawhia Al-qalawini, for both write passionate classical Arabic poetry.

Limitation of the study

In dealing with Saudi women writers especially poetesses, I face

the same problems that Dhabia Khamis faced when writing her book about Arabian Gulf Writers: "Al'ana Al onthawia ,The Feminine Ego"; which is the limited number of books, research and critical studies made about their literary works [with the exception of some critical and non critical articles written in daily newspapers and few magazines](Khumis 10). No one before me has translated any of M. Al-Baghdadi's poems into English and all of her poetry that is analysed in this dissertation is translated by me. This adds to the difficulty of this research, but understanding the value of her poetry and desiring non Arabic speaking scholars to see the beauty and the daringness of a true Muslim writer, sustained me in the process.

Methodology

My approach is analytical and is that of a Muslim feminist, and my dissertation is original in comparing a Victorian poetess with a modern Saudi poetess. Yet, the works of western critics like Pykett, Barker, Davies and Lewis have proved very helpful in developing my ideas on Emily Bronte's liberty. Mariam Al-Baghdadi's basic personal religious belief is to follow Islam in a way that liberates her from patriarchal authority, especially when a man tries to exert his power over her, as if it were a divine right, without following God's path as described in the Qur'an and by Mohammad's teachings. Therefore, she criticizes the man she loves, just as she criticizes her society and the political attitudes of some Arab political leaders in her poetry. Mariam's background is similar to that of Emily, since her liberal father had a knowledge of the reality of Islam that was not distorted by customs. Her faith in God gave her the power to reproach her beloved in her poetry, and the freedom to control her sexuality so that it did not go astray from

the very flexible rules of marriage and divorce in Islam. This very power also sustained her in writing passionate and very daring love poems while being attacked by women- even more than men- for exposing her feelings.

Since my dissertation is a comparative study of poetry by the Saudi contemporary poetess: Prof. Mariam Al- Baghdadi Al-Kilani Al- Hassani on the one hand, and the British Victorian poetess: Emily Bronte on the other; while the topic of this dissertation is the theme of faith and liberty in their poetry, I'll be using few quotations from the Holy Books: The Qur'an and the Bible. While my intentions are not of theological doctrine , I deal with original divine religions as presented in the texts in order to show how unreasonable customs and tradition deprived women from freedom. My dissertation is rather on women's intellectual and social liberty in patriarchal societies and it is not on theological doctrine in anyway despite the fact that I discuss freedom in the original religion. Nonetheless, it holds no enmity towards men for it shows how good fathers brought up their daughters to be independent women writers and to be able to challenge whatever they think is not right. The support of good positive fathers who almost went against the established social systems in supporting their daughters in order to educate them and helping them to choose to be independent writers, is a very important factor in M. Al-Baghdadi's and Emily Bronte's characters and careers. Negative fathers can be a challenge to women that which make their daughters become fighters of some sort. Though suffering and lack of protection might make some people less productive, it can push others to be successful human beings. Yet effects of bad fathers are not part of my study and I'll concentrate on the role of good fathers in the two writers' life.

Chapterization:

The general introduction is going to introduce both poetesses but it will deal mainly with the less known poetess in the West: Mariam Al-Baghdadi; her family and cultural background and the Arab different countries where she studied and worked along with the theory- if she adopted any- that is applicable to her writings, so that I may be able to introduce her to the Western reader. In this Introduction, I'll also try to situate both M. Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte among their contemporary poetesses(Saudi and Victorian) to show the reasons behind choosing them as the principal characters in this comparison and will discuss the criticism around some of their writings. This introductory chapter will define the outline of the discussion of the themes about liberty, faith, customs and tradition. The connection and connotation among the themes and the above poetesses will be includes as well.

Chapter two will explore patriarchy and the Saudi poetess. It will show M. Al-Baghdadi's suffering as a creative writer in a conservative society. Women as well as men in such a society believe that women should not write about their feelings. M. Al-Baghdadi's challenge to such confining ideas is limitless.

Chapter three will explore the language of liberty in contemporary Saudi Arabia. It will concentrate on Dr. Al-Baghdadi's spiritual and religious philosophy about faith and liberty in order to observe the similarity between them and those of Emily Bronte. It will also examine the Troubadours' influence on her poetry. I will be analyzing M. Al Baghdadi's reasons for rejecting most customs and tradition in her society.

familiar themes to those of Emily Bronte.

Chapter four will explore patriarchy and the Victorian poetess. It will show Emily Bronte's suffering as a creative writer in a man's world which believed that poetry is not supposed to be the business of women.

Chapter five will analyze Emily Bronte's background, upbringing, and reading including her father's effect on her way of thinking.

Chapter six will deal with the theme of faith and liberty in Emily Bronte's poetry. I will be discussing possible reasons behind her rejecting most of her people's ideas while accepting the Romantics that influenced her writings.

The conclusion will draw on the inference that poetesses, whatever the differences among their cultures, time and place are, share specificities concerning ideas about liberty and religion that are peculiar to women.

Conclusion

Faith is a kind of power that gave the distant poetesses, Mariam Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte, the drive to strife against the unjust concepts of their rigid patriarchal societies. It enabled the two women writers to be liberal in expressing their daring or rather radical views and to have a career in creative writing despite the limitations imposed on women in their too conservative societies. Though distant in time, place and culture, the two poetesses shared ideas regarding their identities and rights as human beings that can be thought of as feminists in perception. I could conclude that women writers, whatever the differences among their cultures, time and place are, share specificities concerning ideas about liberty and religion that are peculiar to women. They were also able to develop a very special relationship with Allah or God; The Creator of the universe, which was considered radical by their contemporaries.

Chapter 2

The making of a poetess in a Patriarchal Society

Mariam Al-Baghdadi's Upbringing and Educational Background:

M. Al-Baghdadi's last two names are mentioned because they show some hereditary qualities from her far grandfather Al-Hassan- such as the ability to reform people with a diplomatic style- that seem to have made her choose certain themes to concentrate on in her writings. These qualities might have helped her to persist under difficult circumstances in a conservative patriarchal society as will be discussed in details in the following chapter. Nevertheless, the effect of artistic heritage do exist in the case of the British genius as well; Emily Bronte belonged who to a family that all of its members were writers(Bernard, p.7)

M. Al-Baghdadi's actual surname (Al-Hessiani) shows that her ancestors go back to prophet Mohammad through his grandson Al-Hassan who is famous for resigning the caliphate in order to end fighting between two different Muslim political parties. This rare amalgamation of strength and gentleness beside the ability to sacrifice one's desire for power for the sake of doing what is right for one's people according to religious instructions, are qualities that can be traced in M. Al-Baghdadi's poetry. Furthermore, the importance of mentioning the Arabian poetess's roots lies in displaying some of her honest, frank yet diplomatic qualities, as manifested in many of her poems, which might be hereditary as

well and this will be shed light on alongside her poetry throughout in the chapters about her in this dissertation with a specific care in the section dealing with the criticism of her poetry.

M. Al-Baghdadi who is originally from Arabia lived a big portion of her youth in previously colonized countries and got her Ph.D. from the West(France), yet she retained her Islamic identity and morals in a moderate way. She is not a fanatic except for Mohammad and his immortal moral teachings. She declares her admiration for certain Western attitudes that do not contradict with her basic creed such as responsible freedom of expression as declared in her poem The Sigh of an Eastern Donkey. All of this is going to be analyzed later in the poetry section. Her multi- cultural philosophy beside her tackling different themes and styles (classical and semi modern) in her poetry made her a model for other Saudi poetesses. She is the pioneer woman writer and poetess of the modern Saudi Arabia. And since she had no close model before her, she chose her model to be from the far past of Arabia; namely Al-Khansa.

Family Background and Father's Influence:

In all of my interviews with her, M. Al-Baghdadi kept on mentioning her father and his open and moderate religious way in bringing her up. Mohammad Hashim Al-Baghdadi Al-Kilani was born in 1910 in Baghdad. He was from a grand family that goes back to Prophet Mohammad through his grand son Al-Hasan whose mother is Fatima Al-Zahra; Prophet Mohammad's youngest and dearest daughter. Both of his parents memorized The Qura'an and his father was a famous 'Alem'; teacher of religion, in his society. He learned and memorized The Qur'an at the age of seven and studied different branches of 'Shari'a'; Islamic studies at the hand of different 'Ulama', and Sheikhs; teachers of religion in Iraq,

Jordan and Syria. He was an excellent arguing Sufi from the first degree, highly cultured in: religion, Arabic language, Psychology and Sociology. His defeating logic sprang from his culture and far sighted personality. He was almost a moderate Sufi, hence, his daughter; our poetess Mariam could not bring his writings and books from Jordan to Arabia where a lot of people misunderstand good Sophism, thus, they are against it. He has written many books and manuscript such as:

'Resalat Dustoor Al-Welaia wa Maraqa Al-Enaia'; The Target and Plans of Coming Closer to God(Allah; The Creator). It was in two volumes and its subject is how to abandon sins and adopt good morals. It is about the real Sophisms which is defined in the book as : ' The need for God which makes the person has a good bond with God and all creatures that enables him to be of high, generous, good morals, actions and behaviour that depend on The Qur'an, Sunna and Hadeeth; what the prophet said and did or agreed to be done before him'. The morals that the books encourage are similar to the morals in the other two Divine Religions in origin such as:

To believe in the oneness of God(Allah) and that He has no equal in his names or qualities, to guess and predict that God is good and that He lacks nothing, to believe in destiny whether good or bad and that all creatures are under His control, and that Mohammad is his final prophet who came to complete what other prophets such as Moses and Jesus began.

To avoid committing sins and to struggle with evil, to regret and repent when one makes mistakes or commits a sin and to have courage to try as much as possible to fix these mistakes or sins, to work hard without any laziness yet depend on God for results, to love goodness, to have good conduct and not to annoy or hurt people(Muslim and non Muslim as well) and un harmful

creatures, to be proud and have self confidence but to be modest as well.

The real Sufi is then is the person who adopts prophet Mohammad's Conduct and Morals and that of his companions and followers who realized good human values and rights, spiritual brotherhood, and great principles.

The Second Book: 'Resalat Al-Bian'; The Target of Clarification. It is about Adam; the first prophet and the story of the first creation and his coming down to earth and the wise thing, as he understands, behind the whole Qur'anic story.

The third book: 'Sigh Al Salwat Ala Said Al-Sada (Sala Allah Aliah Wa Salam)t'; created prayers for Prophet Mohammad(bph) by the author.

The fourth book, (A book of religious poetry): Al-Noor Al-Maknoon Fi Sharh Fawateh Suar Al-Qur'an Al-Kareem; The Hidden Light in Explaining the Beginnings of the Quranic Chapters.

The Fourth and sixth books: They are books about the religion of Islam which M. Al-Baghdadi forgot their titles.

He encouraged his daughter M. Al-Baghdadi from the final years of the elementary school to listen to the news and summarize it for him. He used to give her religious and political papers to read and encourage her to try to understand what she reads, though they were difficult for her to understand. He encouraged her to read papers by parties he was against such as that of the so called Hesb Al-Tahreer; Freedom party to which one of his relatives belonged. She did so beside reading for those he was not against. He convinced her to read such difficult readings sometimes by encouragement and sometimes by reproaching. He did so, as she said, to encourage her to think for herself, to have deep meditation and so that he could guide her to see their philosophical, thinking and methodical mistakes. Even man and woman relationship was

discussed in a respectable way sometimes directly and sometimes not directly to enable her to choose the right man for herself. He did all of this to make her get used to think and analyze ideas and friends in order to accept who and what is logical and not deviating from the right path for all human beings. His democratic way in educating Mariam remind us of Emily Bronte's father in bringing up his children.

M. Al-Baghdadi's Readings:

M. Al-Baghdai told me in my second main interview with her on in April 2006 that she reads every books and periodicals including military periodicals. Like Emily Bronte, there were no restrictions or censorship. Since childhood, her readings covered different fields like: Literature, Religion, Psychology, Sociology, Linguistics, Politics, and general cultural books about: administration, spiritual books as books about jinn , science, history, divine books as the Bible and the Old Testament, other creeds such as Buddhism, geography, education, law and human rights, nutrition, general health, civilization and human heritage, cooking, Arabic heritage and civilization, old Arabic translation books. But her concentration was on literature, poetry and criticism.

Examples of what M. Al-Baghdadi read in childhood and adolescence during elementary, Intermediate and high School:

Mohammad Abdo's and Jamal Al-Deen Al-Afghani's periodical or magazine: Al-Orwa Al- Wothqa(The closed Bond). Its topics were about were about different subject and both of its writers were free thinkers and highly educated in Arabic and Western cultures.

Mijalat Al-Arabi(Arabian Magazine) whose writer was the famous

theatre writer: Ahmad Zaki Tulimat. It was a highly cultured magazine whose topics were varied.

A translated magazine "Instruction" whose topics were also varied ones.

In The University level:

She read the following periodical and magazines:

Al Manhal(the Spring), Al-Arab(the Arabs), Al-Faisal(the right path), Mejalat Al-Mejalah(the magazine of magazines) and she reads it no more, Sydati(my Lady) and she reads it no more, Al-Majalat Al-Arabia(the Arabic Magazine), Alem Al-Kutub(the World of Books) and all of them are Saudi. She also used to read the Egyptian magazine: Al-Hilal(the moon) but not any more.

Extract from what she read (and is still reading) and lines from poems she likes:

My translation for an Arabic extracts M. Al-Baghdadi sent me from:

Adab Al-Hewar fi Al-Islam(The politeness and courtesy of argument in Islam) by Saif Al-Deen Shaheen: The augmenter should be very quick in understanding and realizing for the ideas of the people he is talking to.

Alem Al-Jinn(The World of Jinn) by Faisal Al-Eraqi: Some people imagined that those hidden creatures could participate in forming life's matters as if they were able to really do good or bad things to people without Almighty's permission, and other imaginative ideas that are unable to realize God's wisdom in creating the world. The jinn have are unseen bodies that we can not see and they are created from flame, but devils creatures that have ugly heads etc...

Al-Sulook Al-Ensani(Human Behaviour) by Intisar Younis: The Signs of Psychological Problems are: (a) Illusion and hallucination; deception of the senses. (b)

Tareekh Al-Madinah Al-Munaourah Kadiman wahadithan(The History of Al-Madinah; Old and New.

A'alam Fi Dae'rat Al-Ightial(Famous people Asininitied) by Saleh Al-Jaser.

Al-Tanseer Fi Al-Karn Al-Afiki(Christianization of Africa); it discusses Christianization in all domains and fields.

Haikal Wa-Alsiasa(Haekal and Politics); it discusses all journals and politics fields that Haekal wrote about and other very important articles.

Al-Tareek ela Na'm; Fan Al-Tafawood(The way to Yes; The Art of Arguing) by Roger Fisher and William Yuri; a translated virsion and it discusses the problems and situations and how the arguing person wins the round.

Aklak Al-Rlah Wa-Adatehim(The Morals of The Rolah and their customs; it is a book about sociology that discusses the tradition of Alrola Tribe.

The periodical of Al-Jeel; it contains different articles one of which about La fontain and Ayoob which Jabra Ebraheem Jabra traced back to its Arabic roots.

Kalilah Wa Demnah; a book that Animal Farm took its ideas from) by Al-Jahiz(comparative literature).

Al-Siasa Al-Dawliah(International Politics); it contains different political issues.

The old Testament and the Bible.

Examples of Poems M. Al-Baghdadi likes:

1. Despair might push a person to hope,
And you might be rescued when unaware,
While you might get lost by too much caution;
Thus is Life; it gives honour to some people,
And humiliates others.

2. She likes so much the following lines by Yahia Ibn Al-Hakam(Andalusia):

من الافات ظاهره
صحيح
فإن قالوا نعم
فالقول ريح
و عند الله أجمعنا
جريح
بأن ذنوبنا
ليست تفوح

إذا اخبرت عن رجل بريء
فسلهم عنه: هل هو آدمي؟؟
ولكن بعض أهل استتار
ومن انعام خالقنا علينا

If you were told a man is innocent
From all flaws and he looks so.
Ask them is he a good human
If the say 'yes', then consider it
Gone with the wind,
For some of us can hide,
But God knows the hidden;
One of his blessings that
Our sins do not have smell or so(handed to me)

Waiter to you I complain,
I call you though I know
You do not hear or listen.

The following lines are about liquor, nevertheless, she enjoys the artistic beauty though she is religious and never tasted alcohol. The poet is the Andalusian poet, doctor and philosopher: Al-Washah Abo-Bakr Mohammad Bin Zahr who lives between Morocco and Andalusia and died at the age of ninety:

A lover and a friend,
I fell in love with her fore hair,
She made me get drunk with her,
Every time we get our senses back,
She pulls the glass of liquor back,
To make me again drunk,
Oh my eyes are miserable,
From beholding

Her beauty,
And denied the moon's light beauty,
If you wish listen to this:
I am blind from weeping,
And parts of me are complaining
From the others.

ونديم همت في غربه
وسقاني الراح من راحتيه
كلما استيقظ من سكرنه
جذب الزق اليه واتكأ
وسقاني أربع في أربع
بالعين شقيت بالنظر
أنكرت بعدك ضوء القمر
فإذا ما شئت فاسمع خبري
عشيت عيناى منطول البكا
و بكى بعضى على بعضى معى.

Classical forms and new daring ideas:

M. A. Baghdadi does not like free verse and writes it only to entertain her self, but she admits that free verse has its own rules and there are people who like it (Middle East, 1982). The modern type that she does not shy away from is "Taf'ela poetry" which began to be popular during Abbasid's time i.e. it is still classic. Yet she is not a fanatic of any kind for once she is affected by a different kind of poetry that is good, she responds immediately. She was moved by the sincerity of a Nabati (Nomad's poetry) poem and wrote a reply to it. The poem is in Bedouin accent which has its own rules, grammar and spelling, by prince Musa'ed Bin Abdul Aziz: "Fakeer, I'm Poor"; it reflects the Saudi religious mentality and values and that is the reason of the extremely good reception it had:

فقير وعندي المال الكثير
فقير وملبسي غالي حرير
وياصاحبي الحافي الفقير

أبنشدك .. أسألك
و شو الحصير
وبسألك
و شلون أنا

.....

أبنشدك
و الموت بدد فرحت
لا من جفتني دنيتي
و ابتدا الدرب الطويل
اللي أبدأ ما ينتهي
وانتهى العز القديم
و ما كنت أظنه ينتهي
والموت بدد فرحتي
وحطوني في قبر صغير

وحزنوا علي .. وبكوا هلي...الخ (الأربعاء , 1994)

Poor, though I have a lot of money,
poor, though my clothes are expensive and silky,
my shoeless poor friend,
I beg you....I ask you
how does a straw mat looks like?
You I ask
how comes I order and disallow
with out saying a word
and if I talk ,
I hear “yes” or “every thing will be
done for you”
before I even end my talk,
and if I complain
from my forgetfulness,
they say to me: “don’t complain,
“ complaining is not for a prince”.
and I ask you:
“ how comes I am poor,
though I have all of this?”
my friend
if laughter has a price
and I have plenty friends but with a price
faithfulness is also with a price,
will I not be poor(Al- Arbe'a, 1994).

The poem continues to describe the suffering of death and grave

questions asked by certain angels that which makes the poet poorer than when he was alive, because of the sins he had done. Grave, to Muslims as the poem manifests, is the gate to The Day of Judgment which is followed by rewards or punishment according to one's deeds. Now such a poem won't pass without M. Al-Baghdad's poetic comment. Four days after this poem was published in 1997, she replied to the Prince's poem saying:

<p>ما أنت في عيني فقير و بروحكم حزت الكثير الصادقين ذوي الضمير والقلب الكبير مطرزات من حرير (1449)</p>	<p>يا واقعيًا ي أمير أنت الغني بوعيكم حزت احترامي واحترام يانبئة للخير والإيمان يامن نبذت من النفاق</p>
--	---

Hail realistic prince,
In my eyes, you are not poor,
You are rich by your awareness,
You could own more
By such a good soul,
You got my respect
And the respect of the truthful
Who has a conscience
You are a plant of goodness,
Faith and a great heart,
You rejected hypocrisy
With all its temptation that are silky,
You poured a lot to my thirsty
Spirit for honesty(ibid).

She continues agreeing with the prince Islamic ideas about the Hereafter, and wishes the people of her country think the same as the prince. This reply displays that she is an active poetess who acts and reacts poetically to what people in general write, care for, say and do especially in her society.

Patriarchy and the Saudi Poetess

Poetry, Gender and Double Standard:

Like many other parts of the world, people in Arabia have a kind of double standard when they analyze women's and men's poetry. According to Islamic equality rules, there is no difference between the two sexes in doing good or bad things. The only priority a man gets is in the family domain and when he is the only financial and supporter of the family. But social concepts sometimes wear the mask of religion in order to justify patriarchal injustice towards women.

Hence, when a contemporary famous religious scholar 'Alem' such as Aid Al-Garni says in a Saudi popular magazine: " The pure chastity woman does not publish her poetry", he is replied to by a woman writer saying he is just voicing his personal opinion not that of religion. She mentions other poetesses such as Al-Khansa' who lived during the prophet's time and that Al-Garni can not say they were not pure and full of chastity for they were among the prophet's companion (Al-Hayat Newspaper 38). But the fact that he is a religious scholar might blur many people's vision and make them take his opinion as if it were that of religion, while it is only personal. Yet, M. Al-Baghdadi can never be confused about her Islamic rights and has pride in her Arabic identity and clings to the rights that Islam has given her as a full capable human being who is free to practice her creative writing as long as she is not using decedent expressions. All of this adds to the positive picture in which a woman writer can be open to the Western ideas without melting in the them or losing her Muslim and Arabic identity.

M. Al-Baghdadi, like many other Arabic writers, is against words that indicate the gender of the writer; she said in an interview with her " there is nothing to be called "woman literature" or "man literature", for there is only one literature" (Al-Nadwa :1981). In Al-

mar'a Walketabah; "Woman and Writing", Rashida Bint Mas'ud analyzes the reason behind the reluctance of other Arabic women writers such as Ghada Al-Saman and Emily Nasr Allah to accept the term saying that: " It is [the reluctance] an emphasis that such a reality exists, but Arabic criticism did not realize it yet" (Mas'ud 83). She also affirms that women fear for their writing to suffer from the same inferior look of the Patriarchal society, since it still looks at women and whatever they do as much less than men and their action. This notion might be unconsciously the reason behind M. Al-Bughdadi's refusal of the term. Gender and the biological difference between man and woman were used " throughout history and across societies to justify women's subordination" (Morris 2). In addition to this argument, Pam Morris's very definition of "feminism" might make us understand the fear behind the Arabic writers' rejection of gendering literature and the term : " women writer". Her definition of feminism is: " a political perception based on two fundamental premises: (1) that gender difference is the foundation of a structure inequality between women and men, by which women suffer systematic social injustice, and (2) that the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but produced by the cultural construction of gender differences(ibid. 1).

The Role of Poetry for the Arabs specifically Arabic Women:

Poetry in general and classical poetry in particular is the most important mode of expression throughout the history of the Arabs. Handal affirms that "Poetry is the most revered and the most developed art form of the Arab peoples, occupying pride of place in a classical literary heritage which, along with Islam, provides the

only persistent tie Arabs have with the past”(Handal 1). Unlike free verse and other modern Western poetic forms, classical Arabic poetry demands along side the talent a high mastering of the language and a supreme linguistic ability in using rhythm and rhyme. Beside the position of Arabic classical poetry all through the Arabs history, there is another reason for Muslim women’s choice of this genre to express their ideas and feelings; this genre is linked with the prophet’s appreciation and encouragement for a great woman’s, Al-Khansa’a, efforts in this field, which proofs not only women’s intellectual equality with men, but their superiority as well. Perhaps some women chose this genre to stress their position as equal if not better human beings than men.

Historical Background:

“But why is the comparison between a Contemporary and a Victorian poetesses and not poetesses who belong to the same period of time?”, is a logical question that might be asked. The answer is that with all the historical gap between the two periods of time, there is a rather historical reason for this choice; for Arabia like England passed through different periods of development but in the opposite direction. I mean that the fast educational, social and political development which the illiterate Arabia and most of the Middle East countries passed through and after Mohammad, peace be upon him, was sent a prophet to the world, versus a lack of development in Europe during the Middle Ages. The progress continued to be during the time of the four Caliphs after the prophet. It also persisted to be- though there were some kind of gradual deterioration especially in women's sphere and " Ejtihad": open thinking domain- during the Ommiads, and Abbasids reigns until Islam reached China, the Far East, most of India, southern Spain(Andalusia) and southern

France. The vast area and lengthy time of Muslim's control of the most important parts of the old world could never be except through the good conduct of the people who have faith in it, not sword. Even when there were wars, they took place either to defend the national land or when Muslims were forbidden to clarify their religion to other nations; the aim was never to gain more land or wealth. Preaching is not acceptable in Islam but clarification: "Da'wa" is. Fair Orientals such K. Snuk Hurkhrunyah who lived in Makkah under the disguise of an Indonesian Muslim and called himself: " Abdul Ghafoor", do confess about the real good Muslim conduct that sustained Muslim's reign for ages. Even during Fatimids' reign which suffered from many political, religious and social problems and set backs, the Muslim Arabs could maintain power to the extent that they defeated the Tatar who could control the old world for some time. During the first four hundred years of the Ottoman's reign, Islam reached Europe through Turkey; sometimes through wars and sometimes through the moral attitude of Muslims that attracted many Eastern European nations to Islam such as the nations of Middle Europe e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina Macedonia, Albania and Polonius, and Central Asia such as Azerbaijan and Chechnya.

Yet, and gradually, as the case with of most human civilization that gets affected by its gains and forget its main principles, deterioration began to creep into Islamic countries until it reached its final form during the last years of the Ottoman reign which was characterized by intellectual stagnation and lack of religious "Ejtehad"; open thinking i.e. new solutions, based on the essential doctrine for new matters that did not exist in the first Islamic period. Awakening began to take place during the colonial period and it got stronger in the post-colonial one(Yaghi 208).

Overwhelmed by the new Western technological power, some

educated Muslims e.g. Refa'a Al-Tahtawi(1801-73), Qassim Amin who published in (1899) Tahrir Al-mar'a(The Liberation of Woman) which had a strong impact on some women who followed him like Huda Sha'rawi and Amina Al-Sa'eed who became later totally westernized. Amin's apparent feminist ideas were not in fact feminist at all. He cared for lifting women's traditional veil more than educating them. Even when he was advocating his ideas about elementary education for women that was only to serve their men and children and not to support themselves as independent human beings. Others could adopt Western ideas that did not contradict with the basic Islamic Faith e.g Shikh Mohammad Abdo(1849-1905), Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani(1839-79) Aisha Taymour and Hind Nufle who were helped by men like the above onesii to present their own case in the newspapers and magazines about women like Al-fatat; The Girl(1898), Al-Nile; The Nile(1892) and Al-lata'if; The Softness(1888)(Ahmad 171- 181).

But the blood shedding caused by the English, French and Italian invaders in different Middle Eastern countries e.g. Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Labia and India, caused many people of these countries to be anti-Westerners. Arabia was not directly occupied, for its desert did not attract the colonial power of the nineteenth century. Oil was discovered in the late thirties of the twentieth century, hence the Western influence in the nineteenth century was much weaker in Arabia than the other Islamic countries. People retained almost all of the apparent Islamic conduct with some minor differences. The Victorians also kept the apparent Christian conduct and care for religion, ignoring the changes that were taking place from within the society which produced later on secular system. The two distant societies in time and place share to some extent ideas about nobility, chastity, and religion. Therefore, the comparison between the contemporary Arabian

poetess and the Victorian ones emerges from this point. Yet, the confinement of women to their houses is no more the ideal situation in contemporary Arabia as it used to be the case of the so called 'angel in the house' in the Victorian era(Gilbert and Gubar 17, Auerbach 12), specifically after the religious education for women which made them know that their religion is neither against their education nor work. There are still some voices, in Egypt which claim that they are religious and demand women to go back and settle in their houses to serve their families, but the real financial needs of the Saudi society especially after the Second Gulf War makes the echo of such voices very faint.

At the beginning of her going out of her house to work during the first financial boom in the seventies of the last century, the Saudi woman studied and worked mainly for the sake of self-fulfillment, assertion and independence but mostly not out of financial needs. Yet if her work is at the expense of her husband's and children's welfare, the Saudi woman is brought up to give her family the priority of her interest unless there is a strong financial need for her to work. Such an idea is expressed directly by M. Al-Baghdadi in an interview with her in (1983 5). She is a highly educated and ambitious woman, yet, for her, family comes before any other issue including self fulfillment. This shows that the family still plays a very important role in the Saudi Society as the case used to be in the Victorian society.

Sexuality and Discussions about it in Saudi Society:

Nevertheless, sex and decent discussion about it is not a taboo in the Saudi society nor it is considered as a shameful practice as it used to be to the Victorians. But, practicing it outside marriage is considered shameful as it is one of the main seven sins in Islam as in original Christianity and Judaism. Actually talking about sex

and the human private parts was never a taboo since the prophet's days when women used to ask him about the right Islamic method to clean themselves from their menstrual period and after intercourse in order to be able to perform Islamic rituals. Another example that is almost still practiced in Saudi courts, shows how women were not oppressed at all in the first Islamic period during the prophet's days is that a woman came to the prophet asking to divorce herself from her second husband because of his impotence; the woman acted before the prophet holding a part of her dress to describe her husband's not functioning organ. The prophet smiled because he knew that the second husband was not impotent and that the woman was in love with her first husband who could not control his nerves and divorced her three separate times. The prophet's reply to her queries was "no, until you taste his honey 'juice' and he –the second husband- tastes yours" (Al-Bukhary, p. 165). The prophet was talking about orgasm and reaching the peak of physical pleasure by the couple in a very natural way. The punishment for such hastiness, the husband's divorcing the wife, in Islam is that the husband can not remarry his wife, whom he divorced, until she gets married and get divorced(without planning for it) by another man. This is also should happen after she reaches with her second husband to the peak of enjoyment. The literal translation of the prophet's figurative words is "not until you taste his honey and he tastes yours" shows that old Muslim and contemporary ones who still study and discuss this tradition in high schools(unlike the Victorians). Muslims do not complicate things concerning sex for marriage and divorce rules are very simple in Islam, but they are very rigid about the boundaries in practicing it; it is of primary importance. During the sixties such ideas were considered backwards in the West, but after the fast spread of Aids, the modern West is trying to teach its youth to

follow more conservative limits for practicing sex. In addition, committing the sin of adultery- especially in the case of the wife- makes Arabian contemporary Muslim society horrified in a way similar the to Victorians' horror and detestation when they speak about sins (Houghton, p. 356).

General Saudi Women Situation:

I will emphasize ahead of time and in great pride that I am a woman though I am not of those who believe that politics is a man's preserve. . . I do not like to wait for 'the man' to talk and then nod my head back and forth in agreement or repeat in a strangled voice what he says in the manner that many expensive parrots would repeat after their masters in many of our luxurious homes. And I refuse to surrender my mind to the man allowing him to think for me only because I am a woman (Arebi 3).

This passage appeared in Okaz in 19978 and was translated by Al-Baddi from whom Arebi quoted, and it shows the beautiful stubbornness of a woman thinker who clings to her right to have her own way of thinking in different matters including politics. We can only imagine such a woman's suffering in a patriarchal society that worships customs and call it religion, while religion is totally innocent from its shallow way of living.

Women in Saudi Arabia played a clear and an important role in trying to be connected to the world with awareness to get rid of the cuffs of illiteracy and the results of ignorance and social backwardness, before the legal and formal government education system(Essa, p. 8).

With the gradual deterioration of the Muslim world, women had to struggle a lot to get their minimum rights as equal human beings; these rights were given to them by Islam, but were taken away from them with the expansion of Islam in non Arab areas and with

Muslims gradual abandonment of Islamic principles. My mother told me that her father did not let her go to school as a child, though he was a lawyer, so that she might not write a love letter to a lover later on. Though there is nothing in Islam against the emotion of love and its solution to such a normal human feeling is marriage. People all over the world including Muslims complicated things for themselves by looking upon racial and economical difference that are kind of obstacles in marriage.

The first organized school for girls in Saudi Arabia was in Makkah (Mecca) in 1957, as the first school for boys " Al Falah" was in Makkah as well. It was built and directed by Omar Abdul-Jabbar and later his daughter Faikah. He was 'the author of many educational books in Yemen, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia'. Actually he was the pioneer writer in Arabia and his school " Al-Zahra'a" was the first highly organized school that could be compared to other schools in more advanced countries in the Arab World such as Egypt and Lebanon. It was the only school whose owner was a highly educated person who did not care for financial profits, hence allowed many students to register without paying the fees. It contained five buildings one of which was for teachers from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. There were a theatre, a library, art centre, and a restaurant attached to the school that began with elementary school, then opened an Intermediate school then a high school. There were other attempts to have schools for girls in 1952: 'Dar Al Oloom Al-Deniah'(School for religious sciences) and Al-Fatat A-Ahliya(School for girls), but they were so limited in their syllabus according to Makkah's closed society at that time. In Jeddah there were 'Dar Al-Hanan'(School for Tenderness) whose owner was Princess (people call her Queen) Effat; King Faisal Al-Saud's Turkish wife(H. Abdul-Jabbar 71).

M. Al-Baghdadi's points of view:

Unlike most women of her generation, M. Al-Baghdadi was never confined to theories. In her work she was as practical as a strong active man, for she applied practically some of her teaching and administrative ideas through holding the chair of the Vice Dean in KAAU. She also shared in improving the syllabus of different governmental universities, and exceeded that to private universities. In a letter sent to her from the Acting Dean of Effat College, a private college for women in Jeddah, Marcia A. Grant who says: "I can not thank you enough for your special efforts and cooperation in the preparation of the curriculum, which will always be the foundation for our Arabic Studies program here at the College" (27 Sept. 1999).

In addition to that, M. Al-Baghdadi is aware of the problems Muslim women suffer from and she thinks that women all over the world suffer from almost similar things because they are the weaker sex(from the physical point of view) in general. In my discussion with her in 2003, she said "it is well known that women are victims of sexual harassment and are beaten by their husbands in many Western countries including the U.S.A; a country that proclaims to protect human rights especially for women. But there are leagues that try to protect them; they have at least a practical law that tries to help them and that what Muslim women need; they need an improvement of the interpretation and application of the human law derived from Shari'a; God's law as it appears in the Qur'an and Sunna(Mhammad's sayings and actions), in order to make it in real connection with the original religious system that did and does

not leave a room for injustice”.

Reception and Patriarchal Criticism of Mariam Al-Baghdadi's Poetry:

No Publication problems

Seven years before M. Al-Baghdadi first collection of classical poems, Fawzia Abu- Khalid published her first collection of free verse: “ Ila Mata Yakhtatifunaki Lailatal-urs? (Until When will they Abduct you on your Wedding night, Beirut, 1973). But F. Abu-Khalid’s book “was attacked by critics in Lebanon and banned entry into Saudi Arabia”(Handal 5), while M. Al-Baghdadi’s book was not banned; it was controversial and was received with both sever criticism and appreciation from both sexes, yet it was highly appreciated by critics and poets out side her own country especially Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yaman. Unlike Emily Bronte, she did not face publication problems, for the Minister of Information and Media supported her efforts and wrote athe Introduction to her very first book. But the case with people from her own sex was different and I'll try to analyse the reason. M. Al-Baghdadi said, in my first interview with her in(April 2001), that a woman attacked her in a Saudi newspapers saying that M. Al-Baghdadi’s emotional poems unveiled Saudi women and caused a scandal to them. So, some women are not that supportive of women writers in the case of Saudi Arabia. The cause might be jealousy from her daringness that which many women lack. It might be a sign of insecurity and lack of self fulfillment. Yet there were also men, who claimed themselves to be critics, writing lengthy passages against her. Two amateur critics, who did not study criticism, wrote insults to M. Al-Baghdadi in person as well as a very superficial criticism

of her poetry which concentrated on one poem as the case of Hamad Al-Kadi, or on the typing mistakes as Abdul Fatah Abo-Median did in (Al-Bilad Newspaper 1981). In his sarcastic and destructive critical article: “ My apology, but this is not Poetry you Dr. from Sorbon” (Al-Jazera, newspaper 1981} Hamad Al-kadi an amateur and not highly educated critic who read only one poem of the whole collection as he himself said in his essay, said that he wasted his precious time, because he spent a night trying to figure out what M. Al-Baghdadi really means by certain sentences in the first love poem of her book. Jealousy from her high academic position and Western certificate is very clear in his words, for he says in the introduction of his article: “ I would not have cared for her collection of poems, if she was not a professor and did not hold the position of the Dean of the college of Arts and Humanities”. This critic sees every one studied in France a graduate from the university of Sorpon; he did not even read the sentence on the cover of the book correctly, for it says that M. Al-Baghdadi’s certificate is from the University of Paris. Was it blind jealousy from a highly educated and creative woman? Or was it, as M. Al-Baghdadi said in my interview with her, a plot by some envious female enemies of hers. Yet a more than four male critics and poets e.g. The poet: Hasan Faqi and the critic and writer: Aziz Dia’a wrote criticism of the criticism defending her and her poetry in the very same newspaper as well as other newspapers. Sa’d Abdul-Rahman attacked in a very logical method H. Al-kadi’s criticism saying that it is prejudiced (Al-Jazera, 1981). In another article in the same newspaper (1981) Al-Fadl Musa’ed Al-Fadl, a famous critic, analyzed critically most of the lines of the same poem that Al-Kadi criticized, manifesting the extreme beauty of the images used in the poem. He shows as an example, the delicacy of the poetess asking her lover to give her back her heart, which she

gifted to him, but he did not treasure it. The critic is so moved by the poetess image in depicting herself like a baby who leaves reluctantly his mother's arms. Another very famous writer and critic, Azia Dia'a, uncovered Al-Kadi's jealousy from M. Al-Baghdadi's high certificate and academic position saying that "this is her only sin". He also appreciates very much the fact that M. Al-Baghdadi was not influenced by "Western immoral temptation" (Okaz Newspaper 1981), and says that he evaluates very much like his daughter Dalal, who works in Saudi official Radio, M. Al-Baghdadi's ability in writing classical poetry that has no mistakes in language, nor in rhythm and rime. Moreover, he compares her with Saudi great [male] poets such as Hasan Abdullah Al-Qurashi, Taher Al-Zamakhshari and Abo Al-Eila; he says that the beauty of her poetry reminds him of theirs. Othman Al-Saleh, a famous critic in the country, cited prophet Mohammad's (peace be upon him) tradition which is an advice to be delicate in treating women. Another writer, Ali Bin Mohammad Al-Hazmi, Writes about the Saudi men's and women's love for the desert which reminds him of " Al-Khansa" hinting that M. Al-Baghdadi is an extension to her and that she is a living and true model for women of her generation (Al-Jazera Newspaper 1981). The second not highly educated critic Abul-Fatah Abo Madian(mentioned above) praised her and her Arabic linguistic abilities, when she defended him against someone who criticized his grammatical ideas (Okaz Newspaper 1975); but turned extremely against her when she published her first collection of poems. The Funny thing is that after twenty years of his unfair article about her, this critic could not forget nor forgive his hatred for a creative woman whose only sin is having a Ph. D in Arabic Literature. When I contacted the Literary Club whose Head is Abo Madian, asking them for information about M. Al-Baghdadi, they ignored my request though she is the only

poetess in Saudi Arabia who published classical Arabic poetry. M. Al-Baghdadi has also told me that a Syrian critic wrote in the Saudi literary magazine: Al-Faisal an article about motherhood in her poetry. Hassan Faqi a great Saudi poet wrote an article which borrowed its title from the prophet's Hadeeth 'tradition', " Be Delicate with Bottles". Bottles are made of glass which can be easily broken, and this is an Arabic symbolic way to warn men from injuring women's feelings that can be hurt by a glare or a harsh tone of a voice. This article shares the same title of another article, but the content and the writer different. The poet here highly evaluates her poetry and says that even if there are certain element that are not liked by some readers, the criticism should not be sever and should depend on certain acceptable rules. To all unfair criticism, M. Al-Baghdadi has answered only once saying that criticism is not insulting and it has its own rules. Yet she sent letters thanking those who supported her like Aziz Dia'a(Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper 1982 (12).

Chapter 4

The Language of Liberty

To see women discussing liberty and their right to be independent in choice as well as career, is not a new issue in the Muslim world. It began with prophet Mohammad (pbh) and continued until the Ottoman ruled the Muslim countries. Though deterioration began to creep to the Muslim world in some aspects of life gradually after the rule of the four caliphs, women were never forced to be confined to their houses and not to be able to voice their opinions in social and political life. There were many poetesses during Umayyad and Abbasid reign in Arabia such as Arwa Bint Al-Harith and Asma' Bint Abi Bakr Al-Seddek and AlJaziah Al-Helaliah, Baghdad such as Asia Al-Baghdadiah, Damascus such as Bint Aslam Bint Abd-AlBakri and Andalusia such as Ommaima Khathma'I, Ammat Al-Aziz and Walada Bint Al-Mustakfi.

M. Al-Baghdadi's attitude in declaring her views about her right to express her views and feelings freely in her poetry and writings and to be independent in her life, is very Islamic in roots. Her faith, like Emily Bronte, gave her the power to swim against the prevailing patriarchal trends. Her romantic attitude which was influenced by her reading of the French Troubadours, beside her pain from injustice, ideas about love,

freedom, faith, strength are reflected beautifully in her poetry. She lived and writes in a free from guilt way, because she read in the Qur'an – which she has faith in- that she is not the cause of Adam's fall. The prophet whom she follows his teachings and tradition, supported feminism against social, patriarchal and cultural customs and traditions. Hence, she held her head erect in her battle against unfair and non Islamic social attitudes towards women. She unmasked the so called religious thinking and evolved much stronger to the extent she became a model for many Saudi poetesses and women writers.

Definition of Liberty and Freedom of Expression in Islamic Faith:

Liberty in Islam stems from equality; all people from all races: men and women (except when the man is the only financial provider; then his word has the priority) black, coloured and white, rich and poor are equal in Islam (Al-Wafi, p. 7).

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا يسخر قوم من قوم عسى أن يكونوا خيرا منهم
ولا نساء من نساء عسى أن يكن خيرا

منهن ولا تلمزوا أنفسكم ولا تنابزوا بالألقاب بئس الاسم الفسوق بعد
الإيمان ومن لم يتب فاولئك

هم الظالمون (الحجرات, 11)

You who believe, men should not laugh at other men, for it may be they are better than them; and women should not laugh at other women for, they perhaps be better than them. Do not slander one another, nor give one another nick-names. After believing, it is bad to give (another) a bad name. Those who do not repent behave wickedly. (49, 11).

Equality and respect are also supposed to be among Muslims and non Muslims, especially those living in the Muslim country that applies the Islamic law "Sharia". Not only this, but Islam encourages Muslims to respect and not insult other non Muslims whether living or not living in a Muslim country- even when insulted- in order avoid having God insulted:

ولا تسبوا الذين يدعون من دون الله فيسبوا الله عدوا بغير علم كذلك
زيننا لكل أمة عملهم ثم إلى ربهم

مرجعهم فينبئهم بما كانوا يعملون (الأنعام , 107)

Do not insult those who do not believe in God, so that they may not insult God without real knowledge and with ignorance (5. 107).

Furthermore, all Islamic morals and ethics depended on this law as their source. It is essential to affirm that: " [d]espite vast cultural differences, Islamic law has provided an underlying sense of identity, a common code of behaviour, for Muslim societies (Espisto, p. 75).

However, because the Quran does not provide an exhaustive body Laws the desire to discover and delineate Islamic law in A comprehensive and consistent fashion led to the development of the science of law, or jurisprudence (fiqh). Fiqh, " understanding" is that science or discipline that sought to Ascertain, interpret, and apply God's will or guidance (Sharia) As found in the Quran to all aspects of life (ibid, p. 78).

Social Liberty and the Islamic Equality between the sexes:

إن المسلمين والمسلمات والمؤمنين والمؤمنات والقانتين
والقانتات والصادقين والصادقات

والمتصدقين والمتصدقات والصائمين والصائمات والحافظين فروجهم
والحافظات والذاكرين

الله كثيرا والذاكرات أعد الله لهم مغفرة وأجرا عظيما (الأحزاب, 35).
Verily men and women who have come to submission, men and women who are believers, men and women who are devout, truthful men and truthful women, men and women with endurance, men and women who are modest, men and women who give alms, men and women who observe fasting, men and guard their private parts, and those men and women who remember God a great deal, for them God has forgiveness and a great reward(33, 35).

Men and women are equal before God as well as before the Islamic law.
They enjoy the same rights and are supposed to do the same duties with

minor differences according to the difference in sex. There is one exception in which the man has the priority in taking decision which is when he is equal to the woman in very aspect and is the sole provider for the family:

الرجال قوامون على النساء بما فضل الله بعضهم على بعض وبما انفقوا من أموالهم (سورة النساء , 34) .

Men are the support of women as God gives some more means than others, and because they spend their wealth(to provide for them)(4 34).

The Troubadours' (French Romantic poets) Influence on M. Al-Baghdadi's Poetry:

He proceeds in great pain,
Hands, knees, and feet are wounded
But what strengthens and heals him
Is the love that drove and brought him
All of that pain to him is a pain
That is so kind (Al-Baghdadi, p.116).

يتقدم , وبألم كبير
الأيدي والركب والأقدام مجروحة
ولكن الذي يقويه ويشفيه
هو الحب الذي ساقه واقتاده
وكل ذلك بالنسبة له لطيف الألم (مترجم من اللغة الفرنسية) .

If Emily Bronte has a kind of a romantic general attitude towards the issue of liberty, M. Al-Baghdadi has a more specific attitude that is concerned with women's freedom of expressing their feelings and in their

choice of the men they love and marry. Yet, both writers' their motif is similar, for it is to stand firmly against the cultural suppression and oppression that women suffer from in the two patriarchal societies. And if Emily Bronte's poetry- with its romantic traits and all of the tensions that manifest in it- stands as a connection between Victorianism and Modernism, M. Al-Baghdadi's poetry with all the mixture of influences on it- whether Arabic and Islamic classical traits, or the influence of her French studies and readings-stands as a bridge between the East and the West.

In her book: The Troubadours(1981) Al-Baghdadi discusses the origin of the word, which is Arabic, women's position in the 11th century, the law and courts of love, the troubadours and love songs. This displays that she is influenced by the French romantic poetry of that age. In the first collection of her published poetry , she mentions the law of love in one of her most beautiful poems: "I am a Muslim Woman" which shows the beauty of the amalgamation between East and West in her poetry:

جبروتا ظلما أو أشأم	يامن قد ظن الحب جفا
قانون العشق ألا تعلم	الحب وصال يفرضه
حنان يعطي لا يسأم	والحب رقيق جانبه
أو ثوابا أو ما هو أعظم	تضحية لا ترجو ردا
وجزائي هجرا, لم ينعم	لا يامن همت به حقا

You who thought love
Is to threat,
To desert,
To be unfair,
Love's Law,
Is not so;
Love is communication,
Love is connection,
Love is tenderness,

Love is elevation
Of all desires,
Love is softness
Love is tolerance,
Love is to be
Warm not cold,
Or indifferent (Al-Baghdadi, p. 48).

She believes in the Troubadour Love's law- without violating Islamic law- yet and in the same time she is a Muslim woman who does not: 'lie or betray' as she concludes the poem. This combination of her being a Muslim woman who is proud of her identity and who clings to her morals and values, though she adopts some of the Troubadours' ideas about love, makes of her a unique modern poetess.

Furthermore, M. Al-Baghdadi is affected in her love poems by the Troubadours and the Arabic poetry of Andalusia more than the traditional and classical Arabic poetry of women. Dr. Helal states that there was a place for women's love poems in the Troubadours poetry and the Arabic poetry of Andalusia more than what was common in the Arabic poetry in general(Helal, p. 275, 276).

Faith and Liberty

Faith in Allah; Almighty God, is a liberating force indeed for both poetesses; it made M. Al-Baghdadi able to confront her society with its un-Islamic behaviour in order to enlighten and change her people's illogical attitudes. Faith in God as well, mad Emily Bronte not affected by her society's ideas about women writers especially poetesses and held to her faith to give her strength in swimming against the trend.

Feminism and Women's Freedom Islamic Roots:

Though Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula had some fine qualities like courage, nobility and hospitality before Islam, they had no sense of human equality between men and women just like the ancient Greeks and Romans. Moreover, Before Islam some(not all) Arab tribes used to bury their daughters alive for fear that they might taken as prisoners in a war and become slaves; thus bring shame to their tribes. This brings to mind the ancient Greek tradition of disposing of weak infants, especially females, by throwing them off a mountain top.

Omar Bin Al-Khatab, the second Islamic Khalyfat; caliph who ruled after the passing of Prophet Muhammad, said: “ I swear by God that in "jahilia" pre Islamic days of ignorance, We considered women nothing until Allah said(in the Qur'an) and gave to them whatever he gave them”(Haikal, p. 445); pre Islamic Arabs used to inherit women like goods before Islam. A son would even inherit his stepmother among other “items”. This pre-Islamic tradition clearly demonstrates that women were no more than an object, a possession. Nonetheless, Arabs never sold their wives like some of the Victorians(Hardy, p.300).

Allah changed all these traditions by addressing both males and females in the same content. This move elevated women from being possessions and unaccountable to the same place as men and into accountability as responsible individuals regardless of the sex. The Women’s wisdom as well as their remarkable capabilities in both poetry and cognitive inquisitions were well received and acknowledged by the very Arabic prophet of Islam. The case of Umm Salama whom the prophet sought her advice when his very companions disobeyed him for signing “Al-Hudibia” unfair treaty with Quriash, is an example of the esteemed status of women in Islam (Al-Bukhari, p.189).

Umm Salama once asked the prophet: “Why God does not direct his words to us as he does with men”? The answer was contained in the

revelatory verses in The Allied Troops chapter that is quoted above. It confirms the Islamic fact that states that men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe are equal in God's eyes as well as in the Islamic law that the Qur'an established. The prophet when reciting the verse, continued in this vein until he came to the end of the passage where it is said: that Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness. ¹

In the real tradition of Islam there is the anecdote of prophet who was helping his wife Aa'isha clean their room. Sweat dropped from his forehead. Aa'isha described the drops of sweat as pearls in a short poem. The prophet's reaction was to stop his work and thanked her with a kiss.

Reflecting on this in the interview and also in her poetry M. Al-Bughdadi suggests that today that kind of delicacy and creativity expressed by women suffers under the accusation of frivolousness of romanticism. She is concerned that the value of the woman is centred on the sexual services she provides her man. As expressed in her poem, "Fear God" where the man's reaction towards a woman's purity, platonic love and poetry is doubt and the phrase " get lost".

Prophet Mohammad's also belonged to Quraish, the noblest tribe in Arabia, which was renowned for its linguistic abilities. So, the prophet is seen correcting the poet 'Adi Ibn Hatim Al-Ta'ee' who said that the best Arabic poet was 'Emro' Al-Kais Ibn Hajr'; another eloquent Arab poet, the prophet rebutted him, proposing instead that the most sublime

¹ Though the Arabic word "ensan" and its plural form "nas", which is used most of the time in Qur'an, has the same meaning of the English word "Man" i.e. human beings in general, women wanted specific verse for them as if they were able to fore see women's future sufferings from inequality.

_expression of Arabic poetry was that expressed by Al-Khansa'a"; a female Arab poet. He clearly demonstrated that even women can and do surpass men in a traditionally male arena. As written in Mawsua'at Shae'rat Al-Arab, Arab poetesses Encyclopedia (2001 : 3).

"Thus it is not surprising that this is the genre[poetry] most chosen by women"(Handal:1). Al-Khansa'a(575-646) the greatest Arab and Hejazi (she belongs to Bany Saleem; a tribe that lived between Makkah and Madinah at the boundries of Najd- the middle part of Arabia-) poetess was famous before Islam for her lengthy elegy of her brother 'Sakhr', yet when her four sons died in 'Al-Kadisia'; the battle in which the Monotheist Arab Muslims defeated the Fire-worshipping Persian when they attacked the borders.

The mother gave way to the poet in her realizing that this occasion will be forever marked in history and future women and mothers especially. So, she became a role model for every Muslim women by thanking God for their martyrdom and did not cry over their death, though she was blind, very old: surpassed one hundred years and in need of their companionship.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi's Liberty (Islamic ideas on Liberty):

Though different in time, place, religion and culture Emily Bronte and M. Al-Baghdadi share ideas and attitudes towards religion and society that their male counterparts do not usually enjoy; this might prove that women writer have things in common that link them in an admirable way. Different women writers living a time in which their expressions were confined found subtle and not so subtle creative ways to rebel.

Like Emily Bronte, M. Al-Baghdadi deviated from the superficial religious ideas and practices of her society. Yet, M. Al-Baghdadi was never against

the pure and basic theological ideas that are presented in the holy Qur'an and the practices of the Prophet Mohammad for she believes as it appears from her religious poetry that faith is something that innate and essential for human beings to live in a peaceful way with the self before the others. In her poem: Makkah(Mecca), she describes the freedom and peace that not only believers enjoy, but even birds feel:

يا بلدة الأجداد والأولاد	يامكة الإسلام و الأمجاد
في الأمن ترتع لاتخاف أعادي.	حتى الطيور تحوم حولك حرة

Ya, Makkah, the city
Of Islam and pride
City of grandfathers
And Sons
Even birds fly freely
Enjoying peace
And fear no enemies(Al-Baghdadi, p. 135).

God or rather Allah in Islam, unlike Christianity, is sexless. All human beings- as prophet Mohammad said- are Gods offspring (Al-Bukhari, p.267). M. Al-Baghdadi thinks her religion bestowed on her and other women the liberty, equal to that of men. She aspires for as a poetess of ideas. Freedom- within the broad boundaries of Islam- is something so crucial for her to fight for as it was the case with Emily Bronte. M. Al-Baghdadi clings to her right as a liberal human being, poet and thinker. Therefore, she writes love poems, an act which was regarded as offensive and shameful by rigid society. For a woman to stride boldly into the gap was an act of social heresy.

In a recorded interview with M. Al-Baghdadi in which the themes of liberty and were discussed, she said:

Suhila Zain Al-Abdeen wrote in Okaz saying M.Al-Baghdadi's poetry encourage women to be impolite, and that my love poems are a kind of letting women's private secret out. However, I did not care because I firmly believes that my religion did not forbid her to feel and to express what she feels; it only organized human emotions and sexuality within marriage to protect women's and children's rights.

Islam is a dynamic and powerful motive for Arab women writers, poetesses and feminists. These facets of religion provide a target, means, perspective and motif to power expression even-though religious guilt is an occasional motivator to write.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi's Liberty

Mariam Al-Baghdadi is a representative of the category of writers who cling to their rights in Islam. She utilizes the Islamic religious paradigm to free herself and her text from the barriers of social prejudice particularly those constructed and enforced by male hegemony. She argues against cultural practice which masks itself as religious norm while upholding the dominant male status quo.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi is not alone in wielding faith as a liberating device. The consciousness of numerous Arab women, who have made the religion their own and have found in it a way of transcending social constrictions, wrote about it.

Saudi Arabian Women's and Feminists' Use of Islam:

Through analyzing M. Al-Baghdadi's love and religious poetry, one can see that Islam provides the haven and safety net for personal freedom and expression. In her book *Feminism and Islam* (1996), Mai Yamani says, " In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the current social circumstances of the country have caused an identifiable strand of Saudi women to make of

Islam the vehicle for _expression of feminist tendencies. They have, in an alluring way, sought their sense of power, their sense of identity, their freedom, and their equality with men through the basic percepts of Islam” (Yamani, p. 112).

A similar idea is reflected in the text by Fatma Mernisse- in 1998- who states that: “ We Muslim women can walk into the modern world with pride, knowing that the quest for dignity, democracy and human rights, for full participation in the political and social affairs of our country, stems from no imported Western values, but is a true part of the Muslim tradition”(Mernisse, p. viii).

Historical Background of Feminism in Arabia

The first Arab feminist, as a spokesperson for women’s rights, goes back to the days of the prophet of Islam, when a virgin came to Mohammad, peace be upon him, complaining against her father who made an oral marriage contract with her cousin without asking her opinion. The prophet answered her saying that such a marriage is annulled. Her reply was that she likes her cousin and wants to marry him, but she spoke up assure both men and women of their right of approval(Al-Bukhary, p.367). Nevertheless, Mariam Al-Baghdadi , in my recorded interview with her in April, 2001, said that she does not think of herself as a feminist, because the definition of feminism means that woman does not have rights but are awarded upon demand. However, Islam gives her all rights as a human being regardless of her gender, rights that even a Western woman does not have. Her cautiousness from applying the Western terminology on herself reminds us of Leila Ahmad's words(1992) about feminism and how it was used by some Westerners to interfere and impose certain political and social notions on Muslim’s life. The Western perception of woman’s rights is a new and alien notion to them but in the East, it is part of the belief itself.

Lord Cromer whose double standard concerning Eastern and Western women made him use feminism politically as a weapon to invade the Middle East and impose his control on its women (Ahmad, p. 51-153); Lord Cromer was against the veil in Egypt and encouraged women's rebellion against their religion and their men, while at the same time he was against women's freedom in England and became the Head of a League that put obstacles in women's independence path. The very same idea is stressed by Haideh Moghissi(1999) who repeats Malti-Douglas's words that, "against the colonial backdrop, the role and status of Muslim women would become a stick with which the West could beat the East", she adds saying, " [the] Muslim woman was to be exploited by the Western man but protected from enslavement by the Muslim man; she was to be liberated from her own ignorance and her culture's cruelty(Mogissi, p. 16). But if we take M. Cooke's definition(2001) and "use of the word 'feminist' to refer to women who think and do something about changing expectations for women's social roles and responsibilities" (Cooke, p. ix), then M. Al-Baghdadi is certainly a feminist. First of all, she is one of the very few pioneers in the Saudi feminine literary movement which began in the late seventies and gradually got stronger in the eighties. Secondly, through her poetry, writings and activities. In addition, her profession first as a professor, then as a full professor and earlier as the Vice Dean of the women's campus in King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. She raised the profile of women through critical books, social lectures, literary articles in newspapers, and programs, and practically speaking through her teaching. Her life as an administrator also stimulated changes within the institutional structures which was an increase in the employment of women.

A social activist for the cause of women, expressing anger against social practices like dowry paid by men for the women they marry, she said, in our interview that " high dowry was the cause of women's sexual

deprivation and condemned women to spinsterhood. She feels that this was a 'jahili's'² causing a significant discussion arena for her. She notes that the value of a female was in the fact that she would be a source of dowry³ for her family. She observes that in the Ninth century it was common practice to celebrate the arrival of a female child as a great opportunity for future family wealth.

Mariam Al-Baghdadi notes that the prophet reviled the custom and said in many Hadeeth (Tradition) that the best woman is the one whose dowry is affordable and that Muslim should let daughters get married as soon as a pious man whose morals and behavior are good, proposes. She continued saying that the prophet psychological teaching is to prevent emotional deprivation and its counterpart promiscuity, which are results of delaying marriage. Mariam Al-Baghdadi also says that in Islam marriage is the only out let for sexual instinct for both sexes and that's the reason for its simple procedures that we complicate by following irreligious tradition , beside that marriage gives a woman the chance to fulfill her natural need to have a family and children. (Okaz, 1984). Yet M. Al-Baghdadi's efforts were not merely theoretical, but she began with herself in applying her reforming ideas; in a poem that is full of apparent contradictory elements, political symbols and sense of humor : “ My Lover's War” حرب حبيبي , she considers her lover's ability to put flame into her blood as the best dowry:

أهداني النار لقلبي
مهر

قد خط قران مودتنا

He signed our love bond,
In a way accepted by God,
And flame in my heart,
Was his gift;
My dowry (Al-Baghdadi, p. 85).

² pre-Islamic cultural ignorance

³ Dowry in Islam is paid by the groom to the bride herself as a gift and a compensation for leaving her family.

The idea of a symbolic dowry which, M. Al-Baghdadi accepted in this poem, goes back to the prophet's time when an honorable rich non Muslim proposed to Umm Saleem. She answered him saying ,”You are an honorable man whom no woman should refuse but I cannot marry you, because you are a non Muslim 4(Al-Bukhari, p. 107)”.

Umm Salem's suitor tries to tempt her by offering of gold and silver as a dowry. She did not give in to this temptation and asks him to be a Muslim as her dowry and the prophet agreed to her action and demand. The marriage was successful. Note that M. Al-Baghdadi's models are daring women of Arab history.

Religious presence inspires M. Al-Baghdadi in her exploration of the boundaries of feminine _expression and feeling particularly in matters of relationship with men and the negotiation of love in all its social ramifications; dowry, marriage and divorce.

I propose to specify similar questions as those that M. Cooke asks about Muslim women in general as a method of discussing M. Al-Baghdadi's social and religious poems. These questions are, “How do new technologies and cultures and values they [women] entail will be adapted to a well-understood notion of the Qur'an and the Sunna as everlasting. How can one be modern, global, and yet conscious? What role will Islam play in shaping ethical, modern citizens who are able to survive in, as well as to critique, a rapidly transforming world?(Cooke, p. xix).

It is worth noting that in a newspaper interview with her in “ Al-Madina,1982” M. Al-Baghdadi takes up the issue of perspectives that Arab women and women from the West take with regard to each other's

⁴ Kafer

social conditions. Mariam admonishes young Arab women who take up what they perceive as western feminine modeling as a way of life. She observes that women from the west are as subject to exploitation as are women in other societies. The pity she expresses at the 'plight of women from the west' paradoxically mirrors the pity with which numerous Western women regard issues that concern Muslim women such as the veil (hijab), polygamy, inheritance, and witnessing laws. The issue seems to be one of an absence of appreciating context and environment. In her great book *Veiled Half Truth* (1991), Judy Marbo asserts, "Women were no more passive victims in one society than they were in the other" (Marbo, p.23). It seems that the idea of victimization is the same every where and only torture methods are different. Stereotyping is behind such notions that do not conceive differences within the same category. It is my contention that women in global society remain subjected to the manifestations and implications of male hegemony whether it is in the areas of finances or family hierarchy, education and work.

Edward Said (1993), Gayatri Spivak (1988), Leila Ahmad (1992), Dennis Kandiyoti (1996), and Fatma Mernisse (1993) argued that women's oppressions are varied and multiple, requiring specific local treatment designed for the particular situation that women face.

Unfolding the different forms of oppression women endure across the various cultures, whether Arabian or Western, which are sometimes expressed in their poetry, will help us to see whether the religions and societies of these poetesses dealt with all that limited their fullest expression, suppressed their femininity and oppressed their freedoms.

In the case of oppressed Muslim women, they use the very same weapon - that their oppressors distort and use - to defend themselves, religion itself. Going back to the early time of Islam to investigate women's religious, social and political place in human life in order to compare it with women

situation in communist societies which were built around denying the existence of God beside Marx's theory about religion as opium, and Western secular ideas that separate religion from life and exploits women; all of this give modern Muslim women a support that shake their oppressors from the very root. "By description of religious belief, practices, motivation and perception among women" Fatma Mernissi (1998) confirms that religion is " something that actually takes place in human life" (Mernissi, p. vii), the idea of religion as something that unfolds in each and every individual's existence, reveals itself even as a part that is so deeply imbedded in our essence. She manifest ideas that are against secular thinking which tries to blind itself in order not to see the decadent practices in reality and the spiritual needs of its very nations. The actual human events since the nineties, exposes people's return to different religions in both positive and negative ways.

Fundamentalism in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim societies are causing a lot of blood shedding to impose their ideas on the world. Fanatic sectors whether in Israeli, Irish, or Afghani societies are good examples of the negative side of the recent return to religions which lacks the grasp of real spirituality. Instead of searching for the expansion from within, they seek to impose on the other, the "different"

In Mariam Al-Baghdadi's poem: " I Am a Muslim Woman" أنا مسلمة published in 1980, the woman in the poem is reproaching her lover who shocked her by his violent reaction to her purity and his deserting her because of her chastity. She explains to him that she cannot accept cheap or vulgar⁵ ways in love, for being a respectable human being is the most important part of her identity as a passionate Muslim woman who is free from guilt and dignified. But why is guilt such a factor for the woman in the poem and M. Al-Baghdadi's attitude in general? The answer lies in her

⁵ Illegitimate relationships

In “ Taha Sura, Qur’an asserts that Adam is the first one who disobeyed God and was tempted by Satan’s words. Haleh Afshar’s discussion(1999) of Muslim’s ideas says, “Most importantly Islam is, they[Muslims] argue, one of the rare religions that does not single out women as the cause of all evil. Unlike her Christian counterpart the Muslim Eve is, like Adam, led astray by the serpent. The Qur’anic text is quite explicit” :

Then Satan whispered to them that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shame and he said: Your Lord forbade you to eat from this tree less you should become angels or become immortals (7:22) Thus did he lead them with guile. And when they tasted of the tree their shame was manifest to them and they began to hide ([by heaping] on themselves some of leaves of the garden (7:22) (Afshar, p. 9).

فوسوس إليه الشيطان قال يا آدم هل أدلك على شجرة الخلد وملك لا
يبلى. فأكلا منها فبدت لهما سوءاتهما و طفقا يخصفان عليهما من
ورق الجنة وعصى آدم ربه فغوى. ثم اجتبه ربه فتاب عليه فهدى.
قال اهبطا منها فإما يأتينكم مني هدى فمن اتبع هداي فلا يضل ولا
يشقى (سورة طه , 120-123).

Ali's Translation is much simpler and is worth quoting here:

But then Satan tempted him by saying:
"Oh Adam, should I show you the tree of immortality, and
A kingdom that will never know any wane?"
And both ate of (its fruit)
And their hidden parts were exposed to one another,
And they patched the leaves of the garden (to hide them).
Adam disobeyed his Lord and went astray.
Then his Lord chose him and relented towards him,
And showed him the way;
(And) said: "Go down hence together,

One the enemy of the other,
Then guidance come to you from Me;
And whoever follows my direction
Will neither be disgraced nor be miserable(20, 120-123)

So, the Muslim woman in M. Al-Baghdadi's poem: " I am a Muslim Woman" does not feel guilty nor hides her suffering from her longings for communicating with the man she loves and her need for his arms and physical contact.: "Longing wakes me". Yet, her needs do not make her bend to his unfair attitude nor push her to break her promise with The Creator as a Muslim who submitted her desires to the orders and discipline of God:

والصدق غذائي لم أفطم
لا أغدر مهما أتألم
هل يغدر او يكذب مسلم
إنني صادقة في وعدي
لا أنكث عهدا أو وعدا
إنني مسلمة في كل

I am a Muslim;
In every aspect
I can not stab in the back,
Can she
Lie or betray
Who claims that,
She is a true Muslim?! (p. 48)

Nonetheless , this Muslim woman is a normal human being after all, so she does not deny that for a short time, she contemplated over going astray and thought whether or not values and principles deserve this painful price:

يملاه العجب ولا يدري
كان الأجدى لو قد سلم

“ My heart is wondering/ It does not know whether/ It would have been better/ Had I surrendered/ And my body to you yielded”.

However, virtue is always victorious with such a woman whose passion is the source of her agony because it is in a constant contest with her faith, and such an idea does not take but seconds in her heart not mind. If we read the poem carefully, we will see that the heart is the weak organ not the mind and certainly not the will. The previous lines remind us of a poetic soliloquy in which a woman was speaking to her self during Omar Bin Al-Khatab's reign⁶. He was walking around the houses to check on his people's needs, when he heard a woman saying,":

وأرقني ألا خليل
ألاعبه

تطاول هذا الليل تسري كواكبه

لزلزل من هذا السرير جوانبه

فوالله لولا الله لا شيء غيره

This night is becoming so long/ Planets, in their orbit, are moving/
Sleepless is my night/ I wish there were a lover to be/ Playful with
or hug/I swear if I believed not/ In God nor worshipped Him with awe/ I
would have broken His law/And shaken this bed and cover/ making love
with a paramour/Who can satisfy me(Al-Akaad, p. 225). When Omar
asked about the woman situation, he was told she was a wife of a soldier
who went to Jihad to defend the country's borders. So, he went to his
daughter 'Hafsa', one of the prophet's wives, and asked her about the
maximum period a woman can bear to be without having sex, she
answered him that a woman begins really to suffer if she does not have
sexual intercourse for more than four months; accordingly, he ordered
that no soldier should be away from his wife more than that period. This
story not only shows the similarity between M. Al-Baghdadi's attitude and
this historic woman, but it displays the original Islamic care for women
and their basic needs; something might explain to us the reason of M. Al-
Baghdadi's clinging to Islamic, and anti pragmatic ideas and ideals. These

⁶ The second caliph after the prophet

principles are also expressed in her article: "Idealism in Realizing a Complete Humanity". Certainly spiritual and intellectual women can stay without sex not only for some months but for years, as the case of the prophet's wives after his death, especially if they do not find suitable partners who can satisfy their spiritual, mental before physical needs. The example 'Hafsa' gave seems to be more applicable on common women. Then we see in " I am a Muslim Woman" a woman teaching a man the real meaning of love and giving him a dignified, noble and extremely civilized model(This poem will be analyzed in details in the poetry section).

The phrase "love's law" shows the effect of the French culture on M. Al-Baghdadi. In her book "Troubadours" which is a translation from French literature that she introduced with a lengthy analytical introduction, she translates the rules of love that appeared in *De Arts Amandi* by A. le Chepelain and compares them to the Arabic philosopher's: "Ibn Hasm" ideas about love which appeared in his book: " *Tawk Al-Hamama*, the Necklace of the Pigeon", to show how the Western culture was influenced by the Arabic one through Spain and after that through the Cross aid War(Al-Baghdadi, p. 24-27).

In addition, this poem makes the reader see how faith plays an important role in this Muslim woman's life as a cause for living, endurance and creativity; it is her source of wisdom and self control. This Muslim woman's liberty and freedom is different from the Western one, for it does not include promiscuous sexuality outside the marriage. Free sexuality to M. Al-Baghdadi, like most Muslims, is degrading to human dignity and brings them down to animals which run after satisfying the instinct without care for religious rules or logic. She prefers to simplify things against the irreligious tradition of her society. Hence, we read between the lines a timid, refined and loaded with emotions proposal for marriage as a

solution for their intensive feeling instead of going astray. In this Khadija, the first prophet's wife, is her model. Khadija did not complicate things for Mohammad whom she loved because of his honesty and straight behavior. So did M. Al-Baghdadi who is aware that marriage is not complicated in her religion. She is very aware that human laws added complications to marriage, dowry and divorce which press weak people to go against God's simple law as the case of the woman's lover in this poem. Her over simplification of things made her set her own definition of a dowry as I will discuss in another poem later on. However, in this poem she uses the word "wesal" many times. The full connotation the Arabic word "wesal" which literally means "connection", is the physical contact that is a natural out come of strong emotion usually felt between a man and woman in love. The word and its equivalent are used many times in the poem to emphasize the idea that the woman in the poem does not feel guilty about her desire but the method applied to fulfill such a desire is of a primary importance and that is the reason of mentioning religion here, because her religion offers a very simple and noble solution. It is this unique, strong headed, strong willed and emotional woman's way to say to a confused man that she loves and desires him; she understands his passion and needs, but this is her manner so that she might not loose self respect nor violate God's laws which are the essence of her strength and identity. Though she is out spoken and daring; she initiates a rank conversation about her feelings and proposes to him, she passes through moments of bashfulness.

In the context of the Arab world, these words situated in its history are almost revolutionary. They sustain the idea that this purity and chastity alongside with modernity, clarity and sophisticated awareness and enlightenment is the core of the flaming beauty of the modern Arab woman writers especially in Saudi Arabian and Mariam Al-Bughdadi is a very good example for them. However, and simultaneously this might be

the very reason for translators shying away from translating her poetry to other languages such as English for fear that she won't be understood by the Western reader whose mode of living is just the opposite of her ideas and ideals and might not reach to a level of understanding of her passion for chastity at the expense of her physical desire which she controls with the power of her spirituality.

Religion to M. Al-Baghdadi, like most Saudi people in general and writers in particular is the most important issue, for she believes in the Hereafter and whatever she suppresses herself from doing in this life, because of God's discipline, will be rewarded greatly in The Day of Judgment as she voices this idea in her poem "Days' Betrayal". This poem expresses Muslim women's dilemma that lies in how to drive their society and especially their men to apply the Islamic rules concerning their rights as human beings; the creative ones use their art to participate in changing non Islamic attitudes in their societies as M. Al-Baghdadi did in many of her poems e.g " I am a Muslim Woman" which is discussed above.

These poetesses seek to transform their societies and also improve, particularly, the communication relationships between men and women. Like the Kuwait's princess and poetess Su'ad Al-Sabah, M. Al-Baghdadi is very eager to be listened to by the man she loves and respects. In her great and famous free verse " Be My Friend" which is sung by the famous Lebanese singer who has a soprano voice: Magda Al-Romi, Su'ad Al-Sabah states directly what M. Al-Baghdadi expresses indirectly in many poems of hers. "Be my Friend" is not in the same linguistic nor intellectual level of M. Al-Baghdadi's classical poem, yet it is worth quoting, because it depicts the challenge the subject in the poem, a woman from the Gulf, faces in trying to communicate with her man. It echoes the experiences

that numerous women from the Arabian Peninsula encounter in seeking to manage their social relationships:

How beautiful it would have been,
if we remained friends,
every woman needs
a man friend's hand;
be my friend,
ah, be my friend.
My hobbies are natural,
my interest are simple,
my ambition is to walk
with you for hours
under the rain,
when I am overwhelmed
by sadness and cry when
I listen to a sad tune,
so why you care
for how I look
and ignore how I think,
be my friend,
ah, be my friend.
I need so much
a harbor of peace,
and I am tired
from passionate love stories,
and amour anecdotes,
so speak , speak,
why do you forget,
when we meet
half of your words,
and why do you care
for how I look
and ignore how I think,
be my friend,
it won't make your
manhood lacking,
but an Oriental does not
accept anything
other than a role
of a hero.

The detailed self Explanation of qualities and needs show us the depth of the agony of the Muslim Intellectual and modern woman who needs love and intimacy, but can not give up dignity and self assurance so that she might please her man to convince and make him sympathetic enough to feel her human and feminine needs and do his best to satisfy them.

Conclusion

A strong, faithful, creative and liberal woman whose heritage is as rich; a daring poetess, so is M. Al-Baghdadi who believed in Allah's justice. A feminist whose need for freedom in choosing the right kind of love does not make her fight against man, but against ignorance in both sexes in her society. Enlightened by the true faith and logical religious teachings and intellectuality, M. Al-Baghdadi paved the way for the new generation of writers and poetesses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Section 11

Patriarchy and the Victorian Poetess:

I am no body, who are you?' So said Emily Dickinson in one of her poems, and so were women supposed to think of themselves, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argued in that seminal feminist text, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the Victorian era. The mere idea of self-fulfilment, whether through work or creative art, was a forbidden fruit for the Victorian woman: it meant that she was stepping into the domain of men. Therefore, a woman's identity - especially that

of a creative writer, and a poetess in particular -- was torn between self-assertion and submission to whatever her society imposed on her, producing a distorted or troubled sense of self. The vanity of self-assertion and self-gratification are 'not good for maidens', as Christina Rossetti reminds herself in *Goblin Market*, telling

Chapter 3

The Making of a Poetess:

Emily Bronte's Upbringing and Intellectual Background

Our understanding of a writer's work is deepened by examining background information: heredity, upbringing, social milieu, and other elements in her/his life which might have moved or inspired them to write, especially their exposure to literature. In the case of Emily Bronte, various elements formed her identity as a writer besides, of course, her God-given talent. It used to be assumed that Emily and her sisters suffered from intellectually stifling circumstances, but recent biographers, notable Juliet Barker, have freed the Bronte family from this myth.

Emily Bronte seems to have inherited from her father, and indeed her paternal grandfather, that kind of courage, which enables people to believe and behave in ways that are not accepted. Both her grandfather and father rebelled in love. Her grandfather, a

Protestant, eloped with a Catholic bride and set up home in that tiny cottage in Ireland (Cannon, p. 7). Patrick's own independent attitude was also evident in his early love attachment to one of his students around the age of twenty, for which he refused to apologize and consequently lost his teaching job.(Cannon, p. 84) Patrick eventually married Emily's mother: Maria.

Emily Bronte never knew of the existence of the love letters that her father handed to Charlotte, yet, it seems that she inherited her mother's tendency to have a kind of fancy and a rare passion for love. Many readers may be able to reach to such a conclusion after reading Maria's letters to Patrick.

Maria was a writer too. Emily did not remember her mother's face, but might have had the chance to read her writings. Maria "left one unpublished literary work, ' The Advantage of Poverty in Religious concerns'. Maria's simple but sympathetic argument states that poverty is not a pure evil when accompanied by religion, but offers the poor man the opportunity not to sin like the rich one. With all its naivety, this argument was a kind of female literary model that was followed by her daughters later on(Barker, p. 69).

It seems that the attraction between Emily's parents was intellectual and spiritual beside the normal physical one. This is displayed in Maria's love letters, that proved that she was not only 'a woman of spirit' as Davies call her(Davies, p. 3), but a very daring and frank one when it comes to expressing her emotions. In one of her love letters to Patrick, Maria explains to him, in quite a philosophical way, the reason for her fears she suffers from every now and then: "Real love, is ever apt to suspect that it meets not with an equal return; you must not wonder then that my fears are sometimes excited". She concludes the same letter with words that reveal the hopes she longs to fulfill from their union:

I long to improve in every religious and moral quality, that I may be a help, and if possible an ornament to you. Oh let us pray much for wisdom and grace to fill our appointed stations with propriety, that we may enjoy satisfaction in our own souls, edify others, and bring glory to the name of Him who has so wonderfully preserved, blessed and rought us together. (Barker, p. 56).

The first sentence suggests a typically nineteenth-century acceptance of the wife's role, a sense of an almost divinity ordained doctrine of 'separate sphere's for men and women. Emily did not inherit such a conformity with organized orthodox Christian way of thinking from her mother especially that concerning women's limited role in life. Emily was not only a writer, but she was a poetess and not an ordinary one.

But Maria also had a kind of conflict with some fixed religious belief; she expressed in one of her letters to Patrick. Maria had told Patrick during their courtship that she sometimes felt that she was more attached to earth than to heaven, a not very Christian feeling echoed by Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*. Maria's rare moments of weakness was displayed in her shrieking, 'Oh God my poor – Oh God my poor children' described by her husband as a result of 'the great enemy' disturbing her mind 'in the last conflict'. This is a very normal motherly reaction and does not change the fact that Maria had a very strong character which her Emily might have inherited (Baker, p. 69 & 104) and (Davies, 1989, p. 3,4).

Charlotte, described her thoughts about her mother's mind, saying: 'a mind whence my own sprang -- and at once strange and sad and sweet to find that mind of truly fine, pure and elevated order(Davies, p. 4). Apart from Charlotte's sadness at not knowing her mother, which was Emily's loss as well, and from which she never recovered, is reflected in many of her writings. We can see in Charlotte's delicate analysis of her mother's mind and her respect

for such a mind the Bronte children's respect for independent way of thinking.

Maria had taken up her own pen in support of Patrick's twin passions for conversation and education', ' Maria was setting an example of female literary activity to her daughters which, together with Patrick's publications, was to be an inspiration to the future novelists'(Barker, p. 69, 79).

After Emily's mother death- leaving very young five children, the eldest of them was before school age and Emily was only three years old -Patrick took over his fatherly responsibilities very seriously and honestly. Education of his children seems to have been his priority, for he "gathered the children about him for 'recitation and talk', giving them oral lessons in history , biography or travel". Not only education for the whole family, including servants, used to gather in the father's study to pray together and ' for Bible study and catechism: the servants were again included' and 'they were always treated as superiors in the presence of the children'. He played with them and listened to their ' arguments and weighing their merits'(Barker, 109-111). Emily's father, Patrick, who was treated unjustly by biographers for a long time was an Evangelical clergyman and a living model of applying principles for his children. He graduated from St. Jones College, Cambridge, after working hard to fulfill his ambition. He preached sincerely and eloquently the same ideas as other evangelical clergymen who:

preached a faith of personal commitment which began with a positive act of conversion. Habitual self-examination, a sense of one's own sinfulness and an awareness of the imminence of the day of judgment, all combined to ensure that a life once dedicated to God remained positively and actively employed in His service.

Because the Evangelical placed great emphasis on the Bible,

their ministers were particularly enthusiastic about the need for education and literacy among their congregations, promoting Sunday schools, holding 'cottage meetings' and producing simple, didactic pamphlets(Barker, p. 5).

Yet, with all of his Evangelical zeal for ' the necessity of inward conversion as well as outward of the forms of religion' (Barker, p. 44), he was never a Calvinist, for he believed in 'Christian love'. He brought up his children to believe in 'the love of God, rather than the fear of hell, the ruling motive for obedience'. Furthermore, ' he unequivocally condemned Calvinist ideas of predestination, referring to them as "the appalling doctrines of personal Election and Reprobation" (Thormahlen, p. 22). His ideas about Calvinism are reflected in his daughter's novels e.g. 'Joseph' in *Wuthering Heights*.

Yet, she neither wrote preaching poetry nor about the glory of Britain nor Jesus' second coming like her father, because she had her own independent way of looking at religion and land.

Nevertheless, Emily was brought up by a father who cared so much for the sensitive young minds of children and who practised literally what he believed in. His philosophy about teaching religion to children is different from his immediate environment, which tells us that Emily inherited his ability to think independently. Actually Patrick's revolutionary attitude was evident all through his life especially in his upbringing of his children and not only in his early love attachment to one of his students as mentioned above.

In every other detail of his life, Patrick Bronte was proved to be just the opposite of the tyrannical father whose daughters were brought up to fear so much. This is clearly evident in how he took care of the minute details of their life, such as sending them with the maids 'to take an airing on the common' in the moors(Baker , p. 108, 130).

In her introduction to *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte wrote: “ We had very early cherished the dream of one day becoming authors”(Cannon, p.2). This sense of their identity as writers was never blocked by the unacceptability of women writers in their society, since they were brought up by a father who rebelled against many things that were practiced by his society, whether Irish or English, for example, bringing up children in a very strict religious way.

Barker’s carefully documented argument convincingly succeeds in dispelling the many myths that distorted the image of Patrick Bronte. She portrays him as a loving, liberal and supportive father, who brought up his children in a way that helped their genius to take a concrete form in their books of fiction and poetry. It seems that a small portion of his life – when he was mourning his wife - had been taken as if it were representative of his whole life. His children became ‘the frequent companions of his walk’, and they enjoyed his company in their games and little debates as well. Even gender issues concerning the difference between men and women’s physical and intellectual abilities were brought to their games and talks in an easy-going way at variance with Victorian society’s usual way of dealing with taboo or rather fixed matters for example the mask game in which he asked Branwell: ‘ What was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellects, of men and women’(Barker, p. 109).

Patrick’s advanced views on bringing up his family extended to the vital matter of faith such as discussing with them: Calvinism, major literary books of their time and their writings without telling them what they are supposed to write or not to write.

The amazing intellectual and spiritual freedom which Patrick bestowed on his children, enabling them to enjoy every aspect of their religious development, displays the radical nature of his method in his conservative age, all the more surprising since he

was a clergyman. Indeed the fact that his philosophy about teaching religion to children is so different from his immediate environment suggests that Emily inherited her ability to think independently from her father. Marianne Thormahlen, in *The Brontes and Religion*, notes that Patrick had ‘at least one predecessor among the Evangelical clergymen he knew and admired’ who, like him, believed in ‘parental non-inference with children’s spiritual progress’ and was ‘very much against the religious indoctrination of children’. She quotes Henry Venn’s words to illustrate Patrick’s method in educating his children:

The great danger is from surfeiting a child with religious doctrines or over much talk. Doctrines they are too young to understand; and too frequent talking to them is wearisomeness to them.

Too many parents greatly err, in expecting the religion of a child should be nearly the same as their own. Much have I thought on the subject; and much pains, indeed have I taken with my children; and, God knoweth, desiring his one thing—that He would give them the knowledge and love His ever blessed name. But I did not give them formal instructions till they were eight years old; and then, chiefly set them the striking facts in the Old Testament, or the miracles in the New; and laboured much to set before them the goodness of our God, In things they could understand (Venn, quoted by Thormahlen, p. 16).

Patrick Bronte had many intellectual and political interests beyond his parish role. Juliet Barker describes him as ‘a leading figure in Haworth. He emerges as a tireless campaigner and reformer, a man of liberal beliefs’ ‘whose activities were constantly recorded and whose letters were regularly published’. All of the mentioned above intellectual atmosphere furnished the ground for Patrick and later his daughters to write. (Barker, p. xix).

Barker’s research also presents a very different picture Haworth, the village where the Bronte children grew up from that of Mrs.

Gaskell. In her biography about Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell portrayed to her reader the 1700s Haworth rather than the Haworth of the 1820-50, in which The Bronte family lived. In the new biographical Bible about the Brontes, Juliet Baker changed the stereotypical picture of their father, as well as that of 'Haworth' the village in which the Bronte family spent most of their lives. It is proven to the reader that the village was not a legendary remote 'isolated', 'solitary', 'lonely' village, as depicted by most of their biographers who followed blindly Mrs. Gaskell's first biography about Charlotte Bronte. Haworth was an important city 'choked with coaches and cars', and full of industrial and intellectual life as well. 'It was an ideal place to site factories'. In her successful attempt to scotch the myth about the Bronte village background, Juliet Barker affirms that Haworth was more developed , industrially and culturally, than readers of Mrs Gaskell's account might imagine((Barker, p. 92).

Patrick Bronte was a writer and a poet too, though he might not have been able to be as great as his daughters. Yet, by having that enthusiasm for education, reading and writing, he furnished the ground for their creativity. He practiced writing early in his life. 'The Irish Cabin', is a poem in Cottage poems (1811) that is romantic in the sense that it idealizes a poor situation. It was written long before his genius daughters were born and other poems were written long before they were able to practice what they inherited from him and their mother, i.e. the ability to write creatively:

A neat Irish cabin, snow proof,
Well thatched, had a good earthen floor,
One chimney in midst of the roof,
One window, and one latched door.

This verse by Reverend Patrick Bronte describes the cottage in which he was born. Though he idealized the picture of the two rooms in a small house that he called a cabin in an attempt to show its beauty in his romantic descriptive poem, in fact, he could not wait for the chance to leave it for England to improve his life's condition through education. Like his daughters, his romantic tendency did not block him from being practical in looking for a better life. Thus by combining both what he wanted to do and what he needed to do, he could free himself from many of the complexities of his time. This is exactly what his daughters did when they submitted their poems to publishers. His romantic attitude in idealizing the peasants' life is rather Wordsworthian in spirit:

Our peasant long was bred,
Affliction's meager child,
Yet, gratefully resigned,
Loud hymning praises, smiled
And like a tower
He stood unmoved
Supported by
The God he loved. (Davies, 1998, p.3).

He kept his romantic attitude after marriage and did not lose it just because the object of his affection was next to him and lived in his house, nor did he lose his love of nature, which was influenced by the moors close by :

Maria, let us walk, and breathe the morning air,
And hear the cuckoo sing,--
And every tuneful bird, that woos the gentle spring
Through out the budding grove,
Softly coos the turtle- dove
The primrose pale,
Perfumes the gale.
The modest daisy, and the violet blue,

Inviting, spread their charm for you.

How much enhanced is all the bless to me,
Since it is shared, in mutual joy with thee (Barker, p. 58).

Whether Emily read her father's poetry or not, and whether this poem and the others are great English poetry or not, is of little importance since the echoes of his sincere love for nature are there in her poetry. Scientifically speaking, it is not proved yet that artists do inherit talents from their ancestors, but, realistically speaking, it is a well-acknowledged fact..

To both Emily and her father, nature was a manifestation of God's greatness and creativity to which they responded with love and creativity as well. Emily might be much less direct in her poetry than her father in deducing God's greatness from his creatures and far more creative. Patrick's love for God and nature prevailed in the following lines:

As roves my mind, o'er nature's works abroad,
It sees, reflected, their creative God,
The insects, dancing in the sunny beam,--
Whose filmy wings, like golden atoms gleam,
The finny tribe, that glance across the lake,
The timid hare, that rustles through the brake,
The squirrel blithe, that frisks on yonder spray,
The wily fox, that prowls about for prey,
Have each a useful lesson for my heart,
And sooth[s] my soul, and rural sweets impart (Barker, p. 59).

Similar ideas about the beauty of nature are displayed in some of Emily's poems and show her love for nature in both opposite seasons, summer and winter. About summer, she wrote:

A waking morning laughs from heaven
On golden summer's forests green
And what a gush of song is given
To welcome in that light serene

A fresh wind waves the clustering roses
And through the open window sighs (ed. Gezari, p. 48).

Her keen eye for colour('golden', 'green'), her sensitive ears that are able to detect delightful music in nature, her ability to feel the wind and to describe it in such a mirthful picture, which combines both the beauty of the design of roses plus their colour, are indeed unique in their sensual simplicity.

In another short poem about winter, she writes about nature with the same zeal as her father in the same romantic tone. Yet her ability to describe opposite and contrasting kinds of beauty is unrivalled. After perceiving the beauty of golden sunshine and the deep- coloured roses, she describes the beauty of the soft cold clear colours of sky, lake and moon :

Cold clear and blue the morning heaven
Expands its arch on high
Cold clear and blue Lake Werna's water
Reflects that winter's sky
The moon has set but Venus shines
A silent silvery star (ibid, p. 32).

It is very hard to imagine that the self-same pen wrote many sad poems about death and graves, but these are the eyes of a true artist that perceive delicately the different scenes that life produces before her.

The stretching beautiful deeply -coloured moor lands round Haworth are rather described in a romantic way that suits the mentality of many of those who are interested in the artistic works of the Bronte family. It seems that the inspiration such a landscape could provide to writers of a Romantic persuasion like Patrick and Emily is limitless (Wuthering Heights is the obvious

example.) Apart from its' supply of poor quality water that 'even cattle refused to drink' (Barker, p. 96), the village and the area around it looks to be a perfect place for writers to grow up and live in.

Love of nature and writing poetry about it were not the only things that Emily shared with her father. She shared with him love of freedom for the self as well as for others, and love for reading without much care for the social restraints that imposed a kind of censorship on female reading. If not for the father who was the main figure in their lives, his daughters would have become influenced by the restrictions that confined their gender at that time. Besides the religious freedom he gave them, their free upbringing made them able to think for themselves, and so they began to pass judgment on other writers early in life. Censorship and editing of what 'delicate female minds' were supposed to read or write about was common in the Victorian era (White, p. 32). Yet the daughters of Patrick Bronte had '[f]ree access to their father's library, which contained among other works, aside from the Bible that was their daily fare, The Arabian Nights, John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, The Methodist Magazine, Blackwood's Magazine, The Times, and the writings of Byron, Wordsworth, Scott, Southey and Ossian (Knapp, p. 21). Scott's writings 'ran in Emily's bloodstream', and drew her attention to German literature (Davies 1998, p. 48 & 49); she set herself to learn enough German to read works in the original language, and her reading of the masters of French and German literature 'led her to produce some of the best work of her life' (Allen, p. 349).

The sisters read and liked religious authors, including Coleridge and F.D. Maurice, but were able to differ from their views. Their father not only bequeathed them an enthusiasm for inquiry, a zest for learning, but by giving them liberty in intellectual and religious

thinking, encouraged them to keep their own ideas, even though these might differ from majority opinion.

It is impossible to read Emily Bronte's poetry without thinking of the influence of romantic discourse on her poetic philosophy. In Byron, 'the champion of unsociable men', Emily found a kind of model (Ghnassia, p. 10) His characteristic traits, such as unconventionality, lawlessness, pride, wilfulness, independence and rebelliousness, matched hers, hence the influence was great. Wordsworth, of course, and his poems about nature in particular, had a great effect, not only on Emily, but on Anne and Charlotte as well, to the extent that the three sisters wrote poems that echo Wordsworth's natural scenes and the echo of 'Lucy' is clear in Emily's and Anne's elegies, such as Emily's 'Remembrance' and the poem by Anne that begins: ' Cold in the grave for years has lain/The form it was my bliss to see' (Gizari, p. 229).

However, some critics have gone too far in stressing the romantic influence on Emily Bronte. John Hewish has accused Emily of copying from Byron (Hewish, p. 37); though it is true that Emily read and admired Byron, Wordsworth and the ballad tradition, she tackled similar ideas in her very own special style. They served as models in a peculiar way to her:

she transformed their traditional female muses to male muses that spoke to her, such as the wind and Imagination (in the poem 'To Imagination'), thus creating a kind of female romantic tradition within the main male romantic tradition - not an easy task and certainly a very brave one. This daring invention of a male muse, might be the reason behind Charlotte's analysis of her sister's poetry as being not 'at all like the poetry women generally write' (Pykett, p.38).

Hence, she was paving the road for female romantic poets in the absence of "grandmother" poetesses.

Early reviewers were aware of the influence of the romantic discourse on the three sisters' poetry, but recognised that it was

the result of admiration, not copying. For after all poets are human beings who cannot be cut off from the influence of their immediate environment and culture, nor from the literary heritage before them. This dashed Charlotte's dream of making of her sisters a kind of a myth by representing them as isolated beings in her Biographical Notice:

Neither Emily nor Anne was learned; they had no thought of filling their pitchers at the well-spring of other minds; they always wrote from the impulse of nature, the dictates of intuition, and from such stores of observation as their limited experience had enabled them to amass. (ibid, p. 191).

This portrayal of the two sisters' inspiration as totally free from any literary influence is rather a romanticizing of two intellectually aware writers. It cannot be believed that they did not read the books that Charlotte and Branwell read. A reviewer in the Critic, after claiming that the poetry of the three poets is 'genuine poetry' amid the heaps of trash and trumpery in the shape of verse, weighed up the extent of romantic influence on their poetry:

The triumvirate have not disdained to model after great masters, but then they are in the manner only, and not servile copies. We see, for instance, here and there traces of an admirer of Wordsworth and perhaps of Tennyson; but for the most part the three poets are themselves alone; they have chosen subjects that have freshness in them, and their handling is a fashion of their own (Barker, p. 497).

So, for all the influence of a great literary heritage, the subject matter and the style were the Brontes' own invention. More than a century later, the same idea was enforced by a modern critic: She speaks in so assimilated a style that any foreign influences seem fused together in it, presenting an accent, a rhythm, thought and

diction peculiarly and personally her own (Spark and Stanford, p. 150).

This independent method of thinking prevailed in all of life's domains in the Bronte household, and encouraged the Bronte children to write. In her introduction to *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte wrote: "We had very early cherished the dream of one day becoming authors" (Cannon, p.2). This sense of their identity as writers was never blocked by the unacceptability of women writers in their Victorian society which had a 'sexual double standard in general'(Thompson, p. 43) . Hence we see Emily and Anne portray very daring women characters who are full of passion and sexual desires in their Gondal stories, and discuss their poetry with their father and brother. Though 'in Victorian times, many young women could not approach male members of their family and discuss certain doubts, not even simple, physical female problems. Both youth and sex played against them. But Emily and even the so called "conventional" Anne 'who has a remarkable capacity for emotional concealment'(Langland, p.63) did not yield to the oppressiveness of their society either in life or in their writings. So, when their 'yearning for the absolute could not find its way out, in public, it found it on paper'(Ghanassia, p. 14). This view is similar to Pykett's analysis, which is based on Gilbert and Gubar's theory about the situation of female writers in the 19th century. Pykett discusses the value of the imaginary world of the Gondal poems, which offers a solution under the circumstances of a patriarchal society which practised, without guilt, the exclusion of female poets and in the absence of poetic female tradition. Thus, Emily Bronte had to 're-invent' her own 'mythological tradition' to construct for her poetry a basis from which she could borrow ideas and to which she could return to escape from the trap into which Victorian society pushed women :

Emily Bronte is thus doubly an author. She is the first authors the world which subsequently becomes the subject of, and provides the mythological structure for the poems she authors. Looked at in this light, Emily Bronte's commitment to the private Gondal world appears to be positively empowering rather than a self-indulgent escape. (Pykett, p. 44).

Pykett's case is less persuasive when she argues that Emily Bronte's powerful women were created as a sign of conflict, 'the conflict of a woman who in phantasy imprisons or destroys men because she cannot be a man'. (Pykett, p.46) The idea of conflict is certainly there, but it is with the social constraints imposed on her intellectual fulfilment that Emily is battling. However, she is convincing when she says:

Emily Bronte's powerful women offer female versions of the romantic exile, that outcast, outlawed, or otherwise isolated figure, the lonely bearer of the truth who rejects or rebels against the society from he has been exiled. Ultimately, however, the assertiveness of Bronte's powerful women is problematic, and is accompanied by a sense of isolation which shared by many of her dramatic voices in both the Gondal and the non-Gondal poems (Pykett, p.47).

The story of 'Prophet- Maiden': 'Cassandra' which Emily read to her father from Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (November 1842) is used Davies to illuminate the situation of Victorian poetesses. It is the story of a female genius who is doomed to end in insanity and untimely death. Cassandra's story adds a spiritual dimension to the limitations imposed on women by those who thought that women were incapable of spirituality as well as intellectuality, for even as a prophet- who is supposed very spiritual- the female genius is portrayed to be unable to handle her intellectual abilities and died young. (Davies, 1998 , p.50). This powerful sense of the

horrible end that might overwhelm women who attempted to take up the pen might be responsible for women's withdrawal from writing, especially poetry. Yet the case with Emily Bronte was different, for she did not withdraw from writing. On the contrary, she persisted to write even after being attacked for writing 'Wuthering Heights' whose reception 'was dominated by sexual prejudice' (Thompson, p. 43). Her determination to continue writing might have stemmed from the constant need for liberty which Emily Bronte mentioned repeatedly in her poetry. The following pages will try to investigate this need and its reasons.

Patriarchy and the Victorian Poetess:

'I am no body, who are you?' So said Emily Dickinson in one of her poems, and so were women supposed to think of themselves, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argued in that seminal feminist text, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the Victorian era. The mere idea of self-fulfilment, whether through work or creative art, was a forbidden fruit for the Victorian woman: it meant that she was stepping into the domain of men. Therefore, a woman's identity - especially that of a creative writer, and a poetess in particular -- was torn between self-assertion and submission to whatever her society imposed on her, producing a distorted or troubled sense of self. The vanity of self-assertion and self-gratification are 'not good for maidens', as Christina Rossetti reminds herself in *Goblin Market*, telling us that a nineteenth-century Christ-like poetess could survive only 'through doses of paradoxically bittersweet pain' (Gilbert and Gubar 572-73).

Hence the very nature of lyric poetry, which often begins with an 'I', is in contradiction with the very nature of what was supposed to be feminine. For this reason women's intellectual gifts were

supposed to be 'a curse rather than a blessing' (ibid 543). The conclusion that Virginia Woolf drew about the 'highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry', and 'must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty' is supposed to be expected in a Patriarchal society, for '[w]ho shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?' (quoted by Gilbert and Gubar 539). But why this "violence"? It seems that the case was so, because a poetess had to go against herself and her upbringing before she could go against her society. That is why the pioneer poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning said: "England has many learned women...and yet where are the poetesses?, I look everywhere for grandmothers and see none' (quoted by Gilbert and Gubar 539). But she was herself a poetess, though when she was praised it was for being feminine.

What did 'feminine' mean in such a context? An earlier writer, the radical Mary Wollstonecraft, explicitly attacked her society's gender definition of the female as 'innately emotional, intuitive, illogical, capable of moral sentiment but not of rational understanding' (Mellor 33). How humiliating it must have been for intellectual women to be defined in this way. They had no choice; they had to cut away a part of their identity in order to be accepted as normal human beings in their societies. According to this definition, they had to be either female without rational understanding, or capable of rational understanding, and hence not. Hence, 'feminism is defined by Morris in a very logical way as" a political perception based on two fundamental premises: 1. that gender difference is the foundation of structural inequality between men and women, by which women suffer systematic social injustice. And 2. that the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the cultural construction of gender differences, This perception provides feminism with its double

agenda: to understand the social and psychic mechanism that constructs and perpetuate gender inequality and then change them(Morris 1)

In such a male dominated society, the ideal situation for middle-class women was not to work at all, for women were to be protected by men. In the realm of education, 'middle class girls, unlike their brothers, could not go to university, engage in business or enter the learned professions.' Not only that, women were deprived of their right to vote, to have control over their property, to seek divorce, or to have custody of their children (Gordon xxx). In brief, women suffered tremendously from traditional sexual attitudes and prejudices in the domain of family, work and social activity in all class divisions of Victorian society. They were supposed to be selfless and angelic, or rather dead people walking, in order to give a sense of security to others, especially the males in the family. Yet there was -as the case usually is with rigid views- a conflict between theoretical thinking and practice. When financial circumstances were too pressing for men, women were allowed to work in limited fields like teaching, domestic services and factories; so everything depended on men's needs, not women's.

Nevertheless, not all men subscribed to these patronizing opinions of women. Two opposing points of view concerning women's role in life are juxtaposed in a poem written by the great male poet Tennyson. The following lines display the conservative viewpoint about women's function in society held by most men and many women at that time:

Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword, and for the needle she;
Man with the head, and with woman with the heart;
Man to command, and women to obey;

All else confused. (quoted by Houghton 348).

These sentiments are set against the passionate words of Princess Ida, used by Tennyson to display his ideas about the role of the new woman:

Everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummet dropt for one to sound the abyss (ibid).

This shows that these unfair and superficial ideas were rejected by some intellectual men as well as women, sowing the seeds of change that flourished in the succeeding century.

Such advanced opinions could not undermine the prevalent Victorian belief that women were created to amuse men, and were not supposed to experience pleasure, whether physical or intellectual. Doctors like William Acton considered women's sexuality as a disease that was close to madness, and writing poetry was treated as an allied sin, since the pen could be regarded as a metaphorical penis (Gilbert and Gubar, p.xxx; Stevens 216-17). Stereotypical social myths divided women into two types, either angels or demons (Gilbert and Gubar, p. 63): good women were assumed to be without libido, persuaded to be submissive and passive receivers of sex that gave pleasure only to men. Hence, poetesses who not only asserted themselves in writing but dared to express their need for sex were supposed to be wicked creatures, who interfered in two fields created by and for men only. From belittling women's intellectual abilities to refusing women the pleasures of sex, Victorian culture reveals a hidden fear of women's power, which must be imprisoned and confined so that it cannot pose a threat to men.

Poetesses suffered the consequences of such prevailing dogma, that oppressed women and stripped them of their right to express themselves passionately or give their creativity full play. A good example of the difficulty caused by the double standard for male and female writers is the sufferings of the Bronte sisters in order to get their literary work published. In an attempt to escape from the dependent position imposed on women by her culture, Charlotte Bronte sent a selection of her poems to Robert Southey, the poet laureate of that time, who replied to her need for intellectual support as follows:

Literature can not be the business of a woman's life and it ought not be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation(Gordon 125).

From where did Southey get the authority to define for women what they were supposed to do and not do, even in their leisure time? It must have been from society that gave men authority over women. Women writers had to struggle hard against this intellectual heritage in order to change their miserable confining situation. Even intellectuals such as George Eliot, could not but bow their heads to their society's way of thinking to the extent of adopting a male pen name for her fiction, so that she might get her artistic work published, and read with respect.

The concepts of gender imposed on men and women in the Victorian era were underpinned not only by a patriarchal society but by certain interpretations of the Holy Scriptures. Women carried on their shoulders the guilt and burden of being the cause of Adam's downfall. In texts that elaborated on the Bible, like Melton's Paradise Lost, Eve was represented as being incapable of understanding directly the words of God so that Adam had to

interpret for her; it seems that unjust ideas about the intellectual in capabilities of women, sank deeply into the culture. Since Eve was the cause of Adam's downfall in the Book of Genesis, women were considered to be creatures who tempted men to commit sins. In the Qur'an the story of Adam and Eve is told differently, stating explicitly that it was Adam's sin not Eve's. However, the fact that women are to be blamed for men's shortcomings appears to run deep in old patriarchal societies, and is used to justify men's tendency to belittle women's

abilities. Hence women were to think badly of themselves and be submissive to the better sex; or reject such an idea and revolt against the society that believed in it.

The idea that writing poetry was a sinful act for women might be one cause behind women writers like Emily Bronte clinging to the spiritual side of religion, and turning their backs on its cultural side. No wonder that anything she wrote was received with severe criticism and sometimes rejection.

Since it was a time when society was rapidly changing, the Victorians could not be satisfied any more with the old way of thinking. If the Victorian era was looking for a new identity by breaking from the past, so were many women writers, especially poetesses, who were trying hard to break away from the female - confined spheres and attitudes accepted by most women of their time. Hence, the complex identity of Victorian poetesses is the outcome of a complex age. Furthermore, poetry written by women makes the contemporary reader feel as if they were paving the way for a future identity for women to become aware of their rights, the same notion expressed by Arab women more than 1400 years ago. Emily Bronte, in her quest for liberty from the constraints of her Society and the oppressive interpretation of Christian teaching, was a pioneer poetess in this domain.

Religion and Liberty in Emily Bronte's poetry

Introduction

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest indungeons, Liberty' thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart---
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;

.....
And freedom fame finds wings on every wind
Chillion thy prison is a holy place,

.....
I suffered chains and countered death,
That father perished the stake,
For tenets he would not forsake,

.....
They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet each alone;(J.E. Morpurgo, pp 326-327).

The above quote from Shelly's poem: "Sonnet of Chillon", shows the effect of Romantic poet: Shelley on her poetry. But no poem can describe Emily Bronte more looks than the following lines from Kubla Khan in which he describes the looks of a genius poet:

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise

(Kubla Khan, [HYPERLINK "http://www.poetry.com"](http://www.poetry.com)).

These lines by the great romantic poet Coleridge seem to me very suitable in describing the liberal romantic poetess Emily Bronte whose discourse regarding liberty was greatly affected by the Romantics' vision

of liberty and freedom. Emily Bronte had “romantic features” especially her "unbecoming hairstyle" and her "very beautiful eyes – kind, kindling, liquid eyes" and the awe that her poetry- which is a product of a genius- evokes in those who read it, is a phase by itself that shows her as a romantic poet. (Barnard, p. 21).

In reality, everything about Emily Bronte was romantic; beginning with her beautiful big eyes and their special glances, and rebel hair, her long walks in the nearby moors, to her attitude towards faith, in conjunction with her liberal ideas especially the combination of God and freedom which she clings to as a right. The inseparability of “Reformation” and “Protestantism” adds another dimension to Emily Bronte's stream of thinking regarding freedom, which did not deviate far from the main stream of protestant thinkers.

However, before delving too far into Emily Bronte's reforming discourse, liberal practices and analyzing the romantics' influence on her, I will attempt to discuss various definitions of liberty; old and new, so that I might be able to attain what she precisely meant by her right to have liberty in an age like the Victorian age.

Definition of liberty:

Liberty is defined in Oxford Wordpower as, "the freedom to go where you want, do what you want etc" and freedom is defined as " the state of being free, i.e. of not being in prison or under the control of some body else". However, this is a vast definition that does not reveal the magnitude of the responsibility that always accompanies liberty and does not show that an individual's liberty ends where other individuals' liberties begin. A more precise modern definition of liberty is discussed by Nadeau. He begins with the notion that is well known nowadays to distinguish between negative and positive conception of liberty. "Positive liberty is usually seen as a civic ideal where citizens fulfill their freedom through active participation in political institution". The concept of negative liberty, on the other hand, is "traditionally referred to as the absence of arbitrary interference in the agent's sphere of liberty". I would

like to add Pettit's opposition in which he sees 'liberty as non-domination'.

The idea of 'domination' supposes the exercise of a broad power by a specific agent – on another agent. 'Broad power' should be understood as a power that goes beyond a given interference, one which subordinates the will of a specific agent to the will of another (Nadeau, 2004, p. 121,22).

It seems to me that the liberty that Emily Bronte denoted to in her poetry was rather the 'negative liberty', since the subjection- their being under the control of "another agent"- of women was a major problem for women writers in her time that prevented most of them from living a normal life. Such a dilemma could never pass by a revolutionary personality as Emily Bronte without being alluded to extensively in her writings.

Emily Bronte mentions liberty in general in her poetry without limiting it to a certain kind, I can argue that she mainly meant 'negative liberty' i.e. the domination of one person of another's will. Women's liberty in Emily Bronte's Victorian Patriarchal society was an issue that undoubtedly deserved a great sacrifice to obtain. As mentioned in the introduction the Victorian illogical customs imposed a lot of confinement on women writers in general especially poetesses. Actually ideas about liberty were in the turmoil all through the nineteenth century, but began to take a definite form towards the end of it. In an article that does not show the name of its author and the reader knows only her gender, a woman wrote arguing to give women a respectable status in society:

Woman is, we firmly believe, neither intended for a tyrant nor a slave—not a slave for she is raised above the condition of a beast of burden, man her companion, must continue barbarious—not a tyrant, for terrible as are evils of irresponsible authority, with whoever it may be vested, in her hands it becomes the most tremendous instrument that Providence in its indignation

can employ to crush, degrade, and utterly to paralyze the nations within its reach (Blackwood, 1843, p. 373).

The discussion about women's liberty began with Mary Wollstonecraft long before the birth of Emily Bronte and did not cease with her death. Yet the unique thing about Emily Bronte's philosophical ideas about liberty is that she mingles it with her ideas about religion and love for God in a time which faith began to lose its grip on her people.

If the beginning of the twentieth century displayed a form of tide that made many people had ebb from religion, the last decade of the same century and the beginning of the twenty first century brought a kind of flow that fueled peoples' return to religion in a rather overwhelming and sometimes fanatic way. I perceive what is happening as a normal reaction to suppression. Spirituality is innate to human beings and ignoring it as a human need or suppressing it can only result in a severe reaction.

In his attempt to analyze the "Meanings and source of religion liberty", Professor Garcia begins his defense of religion with the negative definition of religion in Communism. It is well known that Karl Marx considered religion as the opium of people. Communists see religion in general as "a barrier to human freedom, and the influence of dominant expression of religion in the affairs of state was a barrier to democracy and social equality". Under the name of freedom, Communist rulers tried to eliminate religion; they oppressed their nations and forbid them from practicing their religious rituals freely; hence it was doomed to fail due to the paradox between its theory and innate human needs:

Communism failed in its attempt to eliminate religion. It failed to achieve its stated aim of a form of democracy which would put the oppressed in control of their own destiny. Its notion of freedom proved to be pure ideology and led finally to its collapse(Garcia, 1998, p.1).

Instead of using the wealth of faith to improve people's life, Communism chose to blind its self in order not to see the power that religion has to free the human spirit by depending, as a justification for its limited view, on the conditions of local societies.

Definition of Religion:

But Why Religion together with liberty, are not they an odd amalgamation?? The reason is that the combination of religion and liberty is unavoidable in Protestantism and its historical arena especially if we detect the origin that the word stems from as will be discussed later which shows that the key point of Protestantism is liberty or rather revolution. In order to focus, I have to define so that I might be able to analyze religion to understand 'the cosmic drama of God's dealing with man throughout time'(Clark, p. 30), This very drama is one of the motives behind writing poetry and literature in general. The 'observer who underestimated the role of religion were denied a crucial insight into events.' This can be easily in everyday life and literature whether in the East or even in the West. In fact religion meant and embodied many things which cannot be separated from political discourse, for 'Orthodoxy has made many Tyrants, and exceeded all'. So if tyrants, who distorted the essence of the beauty of religion -which is freedom- by their unfair practices in the name of religion, are to be defeated in core, nothing can conquer them as the sword they used-religion- to bend people's heads, but of course without their distortion of it. Religion meant: 'formal public worship', 'informal meetings for worship' in which buildings or ministers are not available, 'the practice of private piety and family observance', 'the expression given to deep psychological needs and aspiration'. 'It involved each denomination in patterns of daily' 'life which distinguished it them from other denominations.' Religion 'embodied a society's or sect's sense of its historic trajectory, both its past experience and its future expectations'. 'Religion thus acted as a definition an a symbol of group identity. (Clark, p. 35).'

General Religious background on liberty in Protestant Victorian England:

The first realistic steps towards the issue of social freedom in the Nineteenth Century was in John Stuart Mill's book: *On Liberty*, in which he elaborated on the subject of the different levels of freedom and presented it as an essential need for the well being of the human being and a valuable source of happiness. He attacked well rooted prejudices that 'have clouded reason' and explained how men tried for ages to use the very same reason to justify their 'narrow views' or rather half truth that is a result of 'intellectual cowardice' which 'are frequently very plausible because they are built on partial experience'(Mill, p. 1). Mill defines social liberty as:" the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual"(Mill's *On Liberty*, p. 1). Mill's books were published after Emily Bronte's death, and they elaborated on the ideas of liberty which she mentions as a right; this exhibits that she was ahead of her time. Since Mill lived in the same time frame, his books can be used to shed light on her notion of liberty which was a kind of dream for women of her time:

And like myself lone wholly lone
It sees the day's long sunshine glow
And like myself it makes its moan
In unexhausted woe

Give we the hills our equal prayer
Earth's breezy hills and heaven's blue sea
We ask for nothing further here
But our own heart and liberty (Gezari, ed.: 1290)

The above lines seem to display Emily Bronte's romantic definition or rather quest for liberty in which she combines herself with birds. This urge to be boundless in nature might be a kind of normal reaction against social constrains which were imposed on women in her time.

Beside herself and the birds, there are other combinations in the poem which are that of liberty and woe, liberty and loneliness and liberty and the heart. In an attempt to analyze Emily Bronte's dreamy conception of freedom, I will attempt to discuss these combinations in the section regarding the effect of the Romantics' discourse on Emily Bronte's writing and attitude in life.

I will limit myself, in this part, to just introducing her idea of liberty as a rather romantic theme. The atmosphere of the poem is certainly has a romantic aura that reminds us of that of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." The loneliness stresses the idea of romantic isolation. However, why 'isolation'? Was it a kind of despair in reforming a rigid society though it was based on a liberal doctrine i.e. Protestantism? In the following lines I will try to investigate the connection between liberty and Protestantism.

Actually, the very idea of reformation is an incarnation of liberty, and the very root of the noun Protectionism is driven from "to protest", which shows the essence of this revolutionary development within the Christian creed. "Protestantism, as a special development with in Christianity, was caused and conditioned by a variety of intellectual, social, economic, and political factors. These factors are explored in an illustrated article on the Reformation (Collier's Encyclopaedia, p. 432)." Not only that, but:

Protestantism had fostered the growth of liberal ideology (evident in those constitutions) which emphasizes the rights of citizens—the rights of persons. Legal scholars gave theory of subjective rights its basic formulation during the 19th century(The Journal of Institutional Religious Liberty Association 1998, p. 1).

Before Luther and Anabaptists, there had been some heretic voices within the Catholic Church. But the major rise for Protestantism in Germany, began with him. Calvinism prevailed in Geneva and other sects such as Methodists and Quakers which developed their own religious doctrines and rituals spread in Europe and America later on. "But the

British revolt against Rome was not the work of the Reformers and was not caused by theological consideration (Collier's Encyclopedia, p.695)." It started when" King Henry VIII broke with the Pope and established the Church of England"(Powell, libertystory. net 2001, Collier's Encyclopaedia, p. 432, and Rhymer, p. 53)." Yet the practice of religious liberty was not really applied as it was wished to be. There were a lot of constrains on the reformers and a lot of contrasting operations within liberty application took place (Collier's Encyclopaedia, p. 693):

The Church of England cut off the ears of religious dissenters. The aim of each religion was to crush rivals, but because there were pioneered religious liberty, it was long time before religious toleration prevailed in the West. Martin Luther and John Calvin were every bit as intolerant as their Catholic contemporaries. Luther approved the slaughter of some 100,000 German peasants. Calvin ordered many a religious slacker to be burned (Powell, liberty story.Net 2001)

Mill did not stop at discussing liberty and the right of men, but he extended his discussion to include the rights of women and to attack old customs that oppressed them. He later discussed the subjection of women. In his essay *The Rights of Men*: Mill proceeds to discuss women's rights. He claims that 'God has made all things right, and that errors has been introduced by the creature, whom he formed'. He confirmed the idea that 'old institutions and custom' are not less barbarous just because men cling to them much longer. In another article of his, Mill said that : 'the despotism of customs is on the wane'(Himmelkarb, p. 166).

Conclusion

If we consider the beginning of the Twentieth Century as the true application of secularism in the West, which its seeds were planted in the Nineteenth Century, we can undoubtedly look at the Twenty-first Century as the time of reverting to religion in a rather fanatic way. It seems that humanity tried but failed in living in a world that does not believe in the Almighty's controlling power. Numerous mistakes were committed under the name of freedom which a non-fanatic faith could save humanity from. After passing through difficult experiences with

controlling priests, it seems that those who were against the idea of religion tried hard not to acknowledge the power of moderate religion in freeing the human spirit. As if past pains sank in the collective human consciousness and made it resist automatically the idea of spirituality without looking at the reality of the beauty of religion once it has been liberated from customs and traditions. Not only Communism blinded itself to the capabilities of faith, but also Capitalism as well as other materialistic ideologies. "Capitalism is blinded by a narrow ideological construct of freedom of the individual and unable to understand any role for religion other than that which prevails in its own societies". I can conclude by saying that any neglect of the components of a human being will result in deprivation leading to severe retaliation.

Emily Bronte as a Woman writer and The Theme of Religion and Freedom:

Coleridge's descriptive lines, quoted previously, of the awe that a genius, free-spirited poet evokes in the people around him which he ended his awesome fragmentary poem "Kubla Khan" with, remind us of Emily Bronte's depth of eyes had a tremendous effect on people around her, which seems to me like Coleridge's image of the genius poet. By reversing the image of those lines to make it suitable for describing the motive of a liberal religious but anti-traditional poetess rather than a poet, I am trying to follow what Emily Bronte did in reversing the romantic female muse and the use she made of it for a female writer. Hence, the task will be perplexing as well, especially when 'the influence of religion on the Brontes is both obvious and obscure' (Winnifrith, p. 28). This is the general picture of the Brontes and religion and above all, the theme of religion in Emily Bronte poetry. Furthermore, 'discussions of the Brontes' religion have been few and unsatisfactory' (Thormahlen, p. 221-22). Even Thormahlen's book, which is dedicated to investigate the theme of religion in the Bronte writing, concentrates on Emily Bronte's novel rather than her poetry. But What is the effect of religion on a literary genre such as poetry, that is usually loaded with emotions? Does religion pertain to the mind, or the heart or both? What is its effect on sensitive people, such as poets in general and poetesses in particular, especially in non-secular countries? According to the concise definition of the Advanced Oxford dictionary, mentioned above, I will try to see the

effect of feeling the presence of the greatest power on Emily Bronte (as I did with Mariam Al-Baghdadi) as expressed in her poetry and some of her writings.

In trying to resolve the enigma of Emily Bronte's attitude towards the themes of liberty and religion, I will do my best to minimize the paradox as much as I can, so that I might be able to discuss the issue of freedom as a right that does not contradict with the essence of religion in Emily Bronte's poetry. While proceeding to analyze the cause and effect of the awe her genuine romantic discourse- which sprang from her genius character and radical belief- I will try to investigate or at least display the impact of her philosophical mind and emotional faith on her poetry. As a reader who is affected by Emily Bronte's firm attitude towards the issue of liberty that makes me ponders, reflects and responds to it rather romantically too.

Emily Bronte's romantic quest for liberty was a kind unceasing fire that rekindled her soul and made her produce great poetry. Half a century ago, C. Day Lewis, wrote: " Emily Bronte was all her life consumed by a passion for freedom". The book was reprinted in 1969, yet nothing much has been written about this important theme in Emily Bronte's poetry since that time. Her profound religious Protestant and revolutionary way of thinking was belittled as pagan or anti-Christian by many of her contemporaries and many modern critics have followed the same pattern with almost no analysis of such a way of thinking- that is related so much to the essence of Christianity and the Bible- or the motive behind it. Thormahlen quotes Hoxie Neal Fairchild's viewpoint about each of the Bronte's religious views and I will quote the part which is about Emily : " Emily, so pure a romantic that she reminded Mathew Arnold of Byron, cared nothing about Christianity". Thormahlen attacks this description as "over-simplified by any standards" (Thormahlen, p. 13), and I will try to see the reason behind that. It seems that she stood alone as a Victorian woman writer in confirming the sexlessness of God: "But God is not like human kind; Man can not read Almighty mind"(Lewis, p. 7).

Every thing around Emily Bronte moved her to be so and made her demand that her passion for freedom be fulfilled in every aspect of her life , beginning with the Doctrine itself and its interpretation of the Holy

Book to the vast open background of the green moors close to her home. The very Protestant doctrine encouraged liberty, as discussed before, in addition, of course, to Patrick Brontë's liberal attitude in bringing up all of his children, encouraging them to read and investigate things for themselves. These factors beside the 'diversity of Christian religions' in the United Kingdom furnished for her liberal attitude a suitable atmosphere to have her own view of religion and relation with God. Not only Emily, but the whole of the family 'like Mathew Arnold, show ways in which liberalising religion could also be reinscribed within a more secular culture, with inner experience replacing institution, rituals and myth as the location of the sacred'(Maynard, p. 139). This attitude was not completely new, for the Romantics had had a similar attitude towards religion. Yet her being a woman and so positive in refusing institutional religion, as well as social constraints on her as a female, are the unique aspects about her.

The difference between attacking male and female writers:

This novelty of her attitude, is the cause of the attack against her because of her womanhood. A romantic poet whose ideas were radical too, could find a justification for his radicalism because of his manhood. In an article in Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine, a critic attacks other critics for criticizing Byron and who 'heaped upon his youth all the charges'. He called them 'hypocrites' and 'stupid sinners' for not being able to see Byron as 'a fallen brother like themselves'(Blackwood Magazine, p. 389). I can not but wonder: why Emily Brontë critics were not criticized in the same way? The possible answer is that she was a woman who was supposed to follow others without thinking or objection. Nonetheless, her intense liberal spirit and creativity flourished in her close environment and could jump over all the restrictions, to the extent that she learned shooting from her father as if she wanted to prove to herself that she could guard her liberty with force if needed. It seems that there was a conflict inside her between her love and attachment to her family and home versus her romantic need to be independent and to discover the world outside her limited environment. Hence she writes about liberty, yet falls ill when away from home.

General Religious and Intellectual background of liberty in
Protestant Victorian England:

The real first practical steps towards the issue of social freedom in the nineteenth century was in John Stuart Mill's book: *On Liberty*, in which he elaborated more on the subject of the different levels of freedom and presented it as an essential thing for the well being of the human being and a source of happiness. He attacked well rooted prejudices that 'have clouded reason' and show how men tried for ages to use the very same reason to justify their 'narrow views' or rather half truth that is a result of 'intellectual cowardice' which 'are frequently very plausible because they are built on partial experience'(Mill, p. 1). Mill defines social liberty as:" the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual"(Mill's *On Liberty*, p. 1)). Mill's books were published after Emily Bronte's death, and they gave more elaboration to the ideas of liberty which she mentions as a right; this exhibits that she was born before her time. Since Mill lived in the same time, his books can be used to shed light on her notion on liberty which was a kind of a dream for women in her time:

And like myself lone wholly lone
It sees the day's long sunshine glow
And like myself it makes its moan
In unexhausted woe

Give we the hills our equal prayer
Earth's breezy hills and heaven's blue sea
We ask for nothing further here
But our own heart and liberty (Gezari, ed. : 129)

The above lines seem to display Emily Bronte's romantic definition or rather quest for liberty in which she combines herself with birds. This urge to be boundless in nature might be a kind of normal reaction from social constrains which were imposed on women in her time that had pushed her to take liberty as an absolute. Beside herself, her heart and the birds, there are other combinations in the poem which are that of liberty and woe, liberty and loneliness and liberty and the heart. In an

attempt to analyze Emily Bronte's dreamy conception of freedom, I will try to discuss these combinations in the section about the effect of the Romantics' discourse on Emily Bronte's writing and attitude in life. I will be confined, in this part, to just introduce her idea of liberty as a rather romantic theme. The atmosphere of the poem is certainly a kind of romantic aura that reminds us of that of Wordsworth's "Daffodils" and Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." The loneliness stresses the idea of romantic isolation. But why 'isolation'? Was it a kind of despair in reforming a rigid society though it was based on a liberal doctrine. In the following lines I will try to investigate the connection between liberty and Protestantism.

Protestantism and Liberty:

Actually, the very idea of reformation is an incarnation of liberty, and the very root of the noun Protectionism, which is based on reformation, is driven from "to protest", which shows the essence of this revolutionary development within the Christian creed. "Protestantism, as a special development with in Christianity, was caused and conditioned by a variety of intellectual, social, economic, and political factors. These factors are explored in an illustrated article on the Reformation (Collier's Encyclopaedia, p. 432)." Not only that, but:

Protestantism had fostered the growth of liberal ideology (evident in those constitutions) which emphasizes the rights of citizens—the rights of persons. Legal scholars gave theory of subjective rights its basic formulation during the 19th century (The Journal of Institutional Religious Liberty Association 1998 , p. 1)

Before Luther and Anabaptists, there had been some heretic voices within the Catholic Church. But the major rise for Protestantism in Germany, began with him. Calvinism prevailed in Geneva and other sects such as Methodists and Quakers which developed their own religious

doctrines and rituals spread in Europe and America later on. "But the British revolt against Rome was not the work of the Reformers and was not caused by theological consideration (Collier's Encyclopedia, p.695)." It started when " King Henry VIII broke with the Pope and established the Church of England"(Powell, libertystory. net 2001, Collier's Encyclopaedia, p. 432, and Rhymer, p. 53)." Yet the practice of religious liberty was not really applied as it was wished to be. There were a lot of constrains on the reformers and a lot of contrasting operations within liberty application took place (Collier's Encyclopaedia, p. 693):

The Church of England cut off the ears of religious dissenters. The aim of each religion was to crush rivals, but because there were pioneered religious liberty, it was long time before religious toleration prevailed in the West. Martin Luther and John Calvin were every bit as intolerant as their Catholic contemporaries. Luther approved the slaughter of some 100,000 German peasants. Calvin ordered many a religious slacker to be burned (Powell, liberty story. Net 2001).

Mill did not stop at discussing liberty and the right of men, but he extended his discussion to include the rights of women and to attack old customs that oppressed them. He later discussed the subjection of women. In his essay *The Rights of Men*: Mill proceeds to discuss women's rights. He claims that 'God has made all things right, and that errors has been introduced by the creature, whom he formed'. 'old institutions and custom' are not less barbarous just because men cling to them much longer.

The social/Religious Conflict in the Victorian Society, "Time of Trouble":

“Until well into the twentieth century, religion provided meaning to the Western world” (Labyrinth, 2000 p.1-10). So, no wonder that religion played an important part in Emily Bronte's poetry, for Emily Bronte lived and wrote poetry in a period when religion prevailed in most, if not all, of daily life practices. With all of their mingled contradictory attitudes, many Victorian people might have lost faith in the Church, but they did not lose faith in God, for spirituality is argued to be an important factor

in human life that can not be erased easily from the human consciousness. The following lines by display the undying faith in God that managed to survive all the materialistic change which was flourishing at that time:

It might be that in deed and not in fancy
A hand that is not ours up stays our steps,
A voice that is not ours commands the waves,
Commands the waves, and whispers in our ears,
O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?
At any rate—That there are beings above us, I believe,
And when we lift up holy hands of prayer
I will not say they will not give us aid.

Clough's above lines summarize of the 'two horns of the dilemma' that the intellectual suffered from in the Victorian era. The believers had the aspirations of the non believers and '[t]he unbeliever had the emotions of the believers' (Houghton, pp.106-8).

Yet “the move towards a more austere, ‘rational’ and ‘bookish’ kind of Christianity had an appeal to scholarly Englishmen”(Rhymer, p. 38). Nonetheless some clung to dogmatism for “ dogmatism was delightful and comforting, and gave [a] sense of security”(Houghton, p. 155). Hence, ' [a] gentlemanly religious indifference combined with the punctualities exercise of ritual duties'(Hobsbawm, p. 267) prevailed. Nonetheless, ' their views on traditional religion were contemptuous and often frankly hostile, and their views on traditional religion would have been no different had they been ready to declare themselves frank atheist'(*ibid*). 'At the dawn of the century', Joseph Addison regretted that England has less manifestation of religion than any neighbouring state. Montesquieu's comment after visiting England was a sarcastic when for he said that religion in England 'excites nothing but laughter'. Nonetheless, 'beneath all the rationalism, worldliness and indifference, religious urges remained deep and strong'(Povetwe, p. 169). Moreover, I think one of the main confusion in human societies is to keep a kind of enthusiasm for religion and rituals after cutting them from the logical belief they stemmed from which forms a rather shaky attitude that could

not last for ever. The cause of all of this is 'the utter failure of the traditional established churches to cope with agglomerations, the proletariat, which were foreign to their routines and experiences (Hobsbawm, p. 271).' At the same time the age was moving rapidly towards science and rationalism. It is true that religion inherited from ancestors was considered a source of comfort, especially for conservative people, because it does not require deep thought or taking responsibility for the risk of dealing with change. In addition, "the pain of doubt and the intense will to believe made the dogmatic assertion of a doctrine a positive virtue"(Houghtton, p. 154). The contradictory Victorian feelings for and against change is an odd thing to investigate. Change often offers a kind of threat to conservative people and a kind of challenge to rather adventurous ones. Hence, the social atmosphere was pregnant with a kind of non-Siamese twins: fear of change and the urge for change simultaneously. The result of such a conflict was that, despite all of the Victorians' enthusiasm for religion, there was unavoidable rapid social change including religious thinking. Science offered new effective methods in the materialistic side of life, especially after the industrial revolution; therefore, great expectations were formed as to what improvements that change could bring to their lives. The opposite of such a trend was that a large number of people retained their enthusiasm for religion. Such juxtaposition and fluctuation between opposites in the age marked it by opposing forces: one pushing towards departing from the old attitudes to new ones and displaying a powerful enthusiasm for extraordinary ideas as well, while the other was trying to resist change and stay attached to the old mode of living. Conflict also prevailed in the domain of religion and it was characterized by opposing trends, such as the tendency to retain dogmatic Christianity versus the tendency to liberate Christianity from overly strict doctrine and make it more spiritual. As a result of all the above-mentioned conflicting trends, hope was present in the social atmosphere versus anxiety, and the rigidity of religious thinking versus flexibility in looking at religion, all of which were tinted by doubt and fear of change. Instead of facing their essential and crucial social problems that were the result of the process of moving from a stable way of living to a totally new one, the Victorians chose to invade the world. The following lines reflect the amount of

conflict that might have made the Victorians use force against other nations instead of solving their problems:

I too have long'd for trenchant force
And will like a divine spear/
Have praised the keen, unscrupulous course,
Which knows no doubt, which feels no fear(Ibid, p.333).

Nonetheless, patriarchal Victorian society was more comfortable with a fixed bias, especially in the realm of dealing with women. Moreover, very few women were aware of their stagnant situation and tried to change it. Such a lack of awareness in social beside, the possibility of hidden fear of change in female activities was the reason of the sever criticism that women writers who were aware of the need for change in the way women used to be raised up in families or schools and work limited domains.

Religion and the holy scriptures did not lose much of their effect as they would do later, and continued to give meaning to life in the West in general and to the majority of the conservative nation in England. This means that religion coloured every aspect of people's life from government to social customs concerning weddings and the upbringing of children. Matthew Arnold's poem "Farewell", mentioned above, confirms such ideas about the age.

Liberty and The Original Christian Creed:

In this chapter about liberty, I argue that in essence, all Devine Religions supported freedom in general including women's freedom. This does not mean that religions did not put regulations to protect people from chaos just like any law that organizes human societies.

People's different customs and traditions were imposed on social practices that confined weak people especially women and made of them slave like followers. In addition to this, biased male interpretation of the holy texts of the three religions added a kind of aura to the abuse of women and displayed it as if it were a man's right that is bestowed on

him by God. In the chapter about Muslim poetesses, there is an elaborated discussion on women's freedom in Islam. I argue here that the core of Christianity and Judaism- before it- were not oppressive to women, just like that of Islam. In An interesting discussion of women status in the preexilic Israel, there lies the evidence about the freedom women enjoyed in an Early Israeli society that was later changed with new customs and traditions created under the Babylon slavery conditions:

Before the Babylonian exile in 587/586 BC, women in Israel enjoyed a status and freedom comparable to that of men. Israel lived in a patriarchal world, but her society was always informed by a faith that gave equality to women in the eyes of God. Thus, the woman is understood in the tenth-century BCE story of Genesis 2.1 8 as the necessary complement of the man and as helper in a relationship of mutual companionship (cf. Mal. 2.14) and assistance, just as male and female both are necessary to the image of God in sixth-century BCE account of Genesis.

In (Exod. 15.20; 2 Kings 22.14-20), (Judge. 4-5), and (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 11) "women are found serving as prophets, judges and queens". And "[t]he Subordination of women to men is considered a sin". The same thing can be said about Christianity in its early state:

"[t]he actions of Jesus of Nazareth toward women were therefore revolutionary. He did not hesitate to engage even unclean foreign women in public conversation (john 4.27). He ignored all strictures of ritual impurity (Mark 5.25 -34, 35-43). He himself taught women (luke 10.38-42) gave Them equal rank with men as daughters of Abraham (Luke 13.10-17), openly ministered to them as "children of wisdom" (Luke 7.35-50), and afforded them the highest respect as Persons(Matt. 5.28).
(The Oxford Companion to The Bible, p. 806).

Since the Old Testament is important to Christians as well as Jews, the above quotations show that the original Christianity was not at all oppressive to women, just the opposite of what had taken place later in the name of religion.

Not only women role that is so liberal in the original creed as mentioned before, but the essence of the creed is free from the complications of 'Trinity'- which Emily Bronte's mind could not accept and had a lot of struggle within- that were added to it after Christ. In A Simple Guide to The Protestant Tradition, David Rhymer states that :

The Creed of the Church are a product of the early centuries of Christian theological debate, and state doctrines, or teachings, that are not necessary found in the New Testament but which may (sometimes with a Considerable amount of imagination) be derived from it. 'Not good enough!', some said. The doctrine of 'God in three person' the Trinity – not explicitly stated in the New Testament. Neither is there any clear unequivocal assertion of the divinity of Jesus Christ (nowhere does it say precisely, 'Jesus is the eternally divine Son of God' (Rhymep.43), (Italics are mine).

Since the very essence of Protestantism is reformation and liberty that free people from '[t]he pressure of religious customs or convictions'. Such a pressure and stagnant or rather illogical old ways of living and thinking were not going to be appreciated in a world that science prevailed. Even 'ordinary people looked into their hearts and souls and wanted a religion which would speak to them in their own depth'. Hence, Protestantism in practice looked at salvation to be 'achieved not by God but by the individual's emotional faith' (Edward, 1997, p. 282).

Emily Bronte's Christian Creed:

When we objectively investigate Christianity, we find the so-called 'pagan' or anti-Christian writer did not deviate from the Bible, the main source of the Christian religion for the Protestants. The idea of the Trinity which she doubted and almost rejected it and she continued refusing to accept it until her death as she declared in her poem 'The Philosopher':

'So said I, and still say the same,
Still to my death, will say--
Three gods, within this little frame,
Are warring night and day;
Heaven could not hold them all, and yet
They are all held in me;
And must be mine till I forget
My present entity!
Oh, for the time, when in my breast
There struggle will be over!
Oh, for the day, when I shall rest,
And never suffer more!'(Gezari, p. 7).

And this what happened for she did not change her ideas about religion until she died, as we can deduce from her final poem "No Coward Soul is Mine". She affirms in this final poem of hers that:

'vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest forth amid the boundless main(Gezari, p. 221).

As stated before(in the section about the original Christian creed) the idea of Trinity is not mentioned in the New Testament; It is rather a formation of organized religion made long after Christ. The amount of the conflict in ' The Philosopher' did not come out of a vacuum. It came from a thinking and an investigating mind which read the Bible and could not accept people's interpretation of it. Hence we see the confirmation of an

idea, as she declares in the 'Philosopher', that she would never consider changing it until she her death. Furthermore, the fact that she rarely went to church proves that she did not do things unless was really convinced.

In her search for an identity, Emily Bronte displayed a profound interest in combining the idea of liberty in her poetry with the idea of spirituality, which makes her a pioneer woman writer in tackling such themes in such an age: the Victorian age. "Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils"(Davies, p. 28), according to her sister Charlotte , who felt Emily's desire for freedom growing along with her genius in writing poetry. At the same time, as with many Victorians, religion played a big role in the Brontes' life - though " each of the sisters seems to have evolved a personal form of religion (ibid, p. 73)" – and Emily held firmly to the 'God within [her] breast':

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life --- that in me has rest,
As I – undying Life – have power in thee!(Gazari, p. 220).

Institutional Religion and Clergymen in Emily's Writings:

Though her poetry contains many religious references, such as faith, God, forgiveness and life after death, some aspects of the Christian life are absent, such as the church and clergymen. The Church of England clergyman's daughter rejected her father's church and God in favour of the " God within my breast", and refused to practise "regular church attendance" (Davies, p. 19 - 32). Nonetheless, although she did not write much about clergymen, her novel was full of religious connotations and clergymen are not mentioned at all in her poetry (Thormahlen, p. 175). Such a free spirit would rather speak to God directly. More astonishing is that the father, a clergyman, never reproached her for such a lack in her life or writings. The reason for this might be her

father's pluralistic attitude shown in 'the disparities between his religion as profession, on which of course the family welfare depended, and his vigour body, his interest in firearms, his youthful compositions of moralistic Evangelical poems and tales' must have struck all of his children, including Emily (Maynard, p. 195). Not only *The Blackwood Magazine*, which cared mainly for literary and social topics, did the Bronte read, but other newspapers such as the two Leeds news papers that offered national political and local economic news. Actually the whole family 'were involved in the local network' and the father in particular. He supported the Reform Bill and his speech in *The Times* in 1832 and 1837(Sally Shuttleworth, pp.20-21). This close model of Liberty might have enhanced her liberal tendencies in life, fiction and poetry.

Divine Love and Human Love

' Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help'(David 22nd Psalm, V. 11). God's request for man to be close to Him is a request for love. All divine religions preach the idea that creating this world is an act of love which God bestows on all creatures: man, nature, animals etc as well. This liberating feeling is also adopted by the person who believes in God. Because 'Evangelical Christianity in the nineteenth-century Church of England was a profoundly emotional faith', Emily's emotions for God could find listening ears. (Thormahlen, p. 53).

It is true that Emily Bronte was brought up by a clergyman and she would have never tackled spirituality as one of the most moving themes of her poetry, had she not been brought up in an Evangelical home which paved the way to and provided a suitable atmosphere for writing about religion. But Patrick Bronte "appears to have made the 'love of God, rather than the fear of hell, the ruling motive of obedience in teaching his flock', as he often called his children. He unequivocally condemned Calvinist ideas of predestination, referring to them as 'the appalling doctrine of personal Election and Reprobation'"(Thormahlen, p. 22- 43). Hence, Emily's rebellious attitude towards religion is a kind of hereditary thing.

This life and the next:

Emily shared with her sisters the idea that the death of the physical body is not the end of the person's life, but her approach to it is different differs slightly, for to her the soul is still alive and watching her beloved and dear loved ones, guiding them

Remember still she is not dead
She sees us Gerald now
Laid where her angel spirit fled
'Mid heath and frozen snow

And from that world of heavenly light
Will she not always bend
To guide us in our lifetime's night
And guard us to the end(Gizari, p. 137).

So, and according to these lines ; 'lifetime' is the dark night, while the bright day is the other world after death. And that's the reason of her seeing the 'end' as the 'beginning' especially in the following lines:

Thus truly when the breast is called
Thy prisoned soul shall rise
The dungeon mingle with the mould –
The captive with the skies – (Gezari, p.131)

as it is for Catherine in Wuthering Heights who considered her end is the true beginning: (Thormahlen, p.101).

Rebellious attitude in General:

Being an emotional, free-spirited poetess who hated things or people to be imposed on her and with all her hatred for institutional religion, Emily Bronte practiced original religion in her own loving way. Charlotte

Bronte described Emily's attitude by advocating that: " It is best usually to leave her to form her own judgement, and especially not to advocate the side you wish her to favour; if you do, she is sure to lean in the opposite direction, and ten to one will argue herself into non-compliance"(Pinion, p. 28). When her teacher, M. Heger, suggested that " they should follow these French masters, then analyze them, and finally suggest they should follow these French models in expressing their own thoughts", Mrs Gaskell writes:

Emily spoke first; and said she saw no good to be derived from it; and that by adopting it, they should lose all originality of thought and expression. She would have entered into an argument on the subject , but for this M. Heger had no time(Chitham, p. 144).

The above-mentioned passage shows the very special traits of her character which beside the general home atmosphere and her loving upbringing seem to have had a powerful impact on Emily. She reacted with a loving attitude to those around her and her love for her family and environment including nature and animals, for example her dog the way 'Keeper', is displayed in her life as well as poetry and writings in general. Words like ' dear moon' display the flow of love out of her loving heart for those around her. Yet when unable to convince her sisters she was capable of opposing them without wounding them (Gezari, p. 37).

White attacks Emily many times in her short and very interesting biography, describing her as stubborn to the extent of foolishness(White, p. 38), but I see her attitude as that of a thinker who could infer things logically. Even in her refusal to see a doctor during her last illness, is to me a very logical attitude, not a stubborn one. For her two elderly sisters had died from the same disease and doctors could do nothing for them. Besides, Anne tried every possible medicine and doctor but had met the same end. I think that Emily saved her time and energy by not consulting doctors when her time came. It was like a cry for help when in severe pain, when she asked for a doctor two hours before her death.

Emily Bronte's definition of Liberty:

Liberty seems to be an absolute request that surpassed all other demands for Emily Bronte as I infer from her poetry especially the one mentioned before: We ask for nothing further here/But our own heart and liberty(Gizari, p. 129). She mentions freedom many times in different poems, but in a rather general way; without clarifying or limiting it to a certain kind. I can argue that she mainly meant 'negative liberty' i.e. the domination of one person of another's will. Women's liberty in Emily Bronte's Victorian Patriarchal society was an issue that undoubtedly deserved a great sacrifice to obtain. As mentioned in the introduction the Victorian illogical customs imposed a lot of confinement on women writers in general especially poetesses. Actually ideas about liberty were in the turmoil all through the nineteenth century, but began to take a definite form towards the end of it. In an article that does not show the name of its author and the reader knows only her gender, a woman wrote arguing to give women a respectable status in society:

Woman is, we firmly believe, neither intended for a tyrant nor a slave—not a slave for she is raised above the condition of a beast of burden, man her companion, must continue barbarious—not a tyrant, for terrible as are evils of irresponsible authority, with whoever it may be vested, in her hands it becomes the most tremendous instrument that Providence in its indignation can employ to crush, degrade, and utterly to paralyze the nations within its reach(Blackwood, 1843, p. 373).

The discussion about women's rights which included liberty to some extent began with Mary Wollstonecraft almost a century before the birth of Emily Bronte and did not cease to be after her death. Wollstonecraft was the first Western woman to voice her ideas about women rights. Not only that but she declared her criticism of and disagreement with famous male writers' about women such as Milton, Pope, Rousseau and Dr. Gregory. In her great pioneering essay " A Vindication of the Rights of Women", Wollstonecraft quotes from Milton's Paradise Lost two passages

to show his illogical inconstancy that is the result of senses control not mind:

To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty Adorn'd
'My author and Disposer, what thou bidst
'Unargued I obey; So God ordains;
'God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
'Is Woman's happiest knowledge and her praise'
(Abrams, p.118) (Wollstonecraft's italics).

Wollstonecraft's comment on the above lines saying: " These are exactly the argument that I have used to children". This show her objection to the belittling attitude of men towards women. Yet she quotes other lines from Paradise Lost that shows Adam's role in life- i.e. " to co-operate" with the supreme Being- which she thinks is also applicable to Eve:

'Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
'And these inferior far beneath me set?
'Among unequal what society
'Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
'Which must be mutual, in proportion due
'Giv'n and received; but in disparity
'The one intense, the other still remiss
'Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
'Tedious alike: of fellowship I speak
'Such as I seek fit to participate
'All rational delight—(*ibid*) (Wollstonecraft's italics).

Not only that but she criticized fixed ideas about women's education as well. Nonetheless, she did not discuss women's right from a religious point of view. The reason behind such a lack might be the apparent biased stand of traditional religion for men, though they- not women- who were contemptuous of traditional religion. Women " like all their sex, remained far more pious (Hobsbawm, 1977, p. 267). Around the mid of the eighteenth century, when religion began to be something like 'a bank

of clouds' for many men. 'Polite and educated men' retained their belief in a supreme being, '[b]ut their views on traditional religion were contemptuous and often frankly hostile, and their view would have been no different had they been ready to declare themselves frank atheist;(ibid).

Hence, we can see that Emily Bronte, unlike other women, was able to voice her objection to and ideas about traditional Christianity e.g. her poem: The Philosopher. Not only this, but the unique thing about her philosophical ideas on liberty issue is that she mingles it with her firm faith and love for God in a time that faith began to lose its grip on her society.

Emily Bronte's quest for "Liberty":

Emily Bronte's never-ceasing thirst for freedom was not understood by a male critic, who objected to Emily's emphasis on freedom saying: "Why all the fuss?, She wanted liberty. Well didn't she have it? A reasonably satisfactory home-life, a most satisfactory dream- life – why then all this beating of wings? What was this cage, invisible to us, which she felt herself to be confined in?"(Pykette, 67). I might partly be able to answer his query with an exclamation of a female writer well-known for her depth of thinking and analysis: Virginia Woolf. She might have summed up a large part of the solution to the above questions by saying: " Who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body(Gilbert and Gauber, p. 539). The heat and violence in Emily Bronte's case was double since she had to go against her wishes to confine herself to her house as well as against her society's confinement for women. This is a conflict that I will try to analyze in a while.

Certainly it is not expected of a man to understand the depth of such a dilemma for a woman, especially for a sensitive poetess who seemed to have been wanting women -or rather people in general- around her to be as free as herself. This is revealed by her good treatment of the female servants in the house, just like the other members of her family (Barker, p. 111). The happiness of the young servant, Martha Brown, for example, reflects the degree of love that the servants had for their employers;

something which can not be obtained without kindness and certainly not under oppressive working circumstances:

Martha came yesterday—puffing and blowing and much excited—‘I’ ve heard sich news,’ she began – ‘What about?’ ‘Please ma’am, you ‘ve been and written two books, the grandest books that ever was seen. My Father has heard it at Halifax(White: 3).

Such genuine kind and liberal human beings, of whom Emily was one, did not enjoy freedom for themselves only; they made it prevail in their surroundings and they were rewarded by genuine love, even from those who were less fortunate than them, such as their servants. ‘I see around me tombstones grey’, displays Emily’s feelings for other human beings and reveals her care for human suffering as well as her own. She declares her philosophy in life saying:

We all in life’s departing shine
Our last drear longings blend with thine;
And struggle still, and strive to trace
With clouded gaze thy darling face(Gezari, p. 132).

Hence, we see that Emily together with her sisters plan to open a school (Benvenuto, p. 14) maybe to share their knowledge, which is a source of independence and freedom, with other younger women, to help the younger generation, and also because they hated ‘submitting themselves to another’s regulations’ (ibid, p. 8). In my view, part of the answer to the critic’s exclamation about her constant need for freedom, though she already had it in her father’s house, is also implied in the word “wings” that the questioner used. ‘Wings’ symbioses the female poet’s continuous need for freedom in a man’s world that confined her with a certain role in life that she would rather not choose for herself.

Furthermore, Emily Bronte was ahead of her time by looking at the

issue of total freedom -without limiting it to certain aspects in life- as a right. Freedom, by legal definition, is an invention of the previous century (Jaggar, ed. P. 500). However, Emily Bronte recognized its importance for living contentedly to the extent that she would have 'freely' and 'gladly' sacrificed her very life for its sake as she declares in her poem 103 which is about liberty as a right that is going to be quoted later; in the discussion about the influence of the Romantics on her. Nonetheless, she bravely declares in poem 103, her calm reaction or rather indifference to the objection to her views from men around her. Her not being affected by men who are 'vain' and 'fool', as she describes them, is the cause of her silence ,not her feeling ashamed of her liberal way of thinking. In an interview with her, Stevie Davise answers a question about the title of one of her biographies about Emily Bronte, saying:

By "heretic," I mean a person who has consciously rethought the Assumptions and tenets and theologies that she has inherited from her Culture, and of course through her family. I think there's a fairly strong Religious aspect to that heresy but this is associated with all the quite Anomalous positions that Emily took in her life on more or less the full Spectrum of the issues(Bronte Newsletter, p.3).

Such an analysis seems to be agreeable and seems to fit Emily Bronte's condition. Then, according to Davise, it is Emily's ability to think for herself independently and the courage to be different from the majority of people around her, which is the major characteristic reflected in her poems about liberty, that makes her a very special writer. Emily Bronte's strength in her battle and going against the social trend and common social ideas and attitude is proudly expressed in poem No 30:

Strong I stand though I have born
Anger hate and bitter scorn
Strong I stand and laugh to see
How mankind have fought with me(Gezari, p. 56)

The above lines display Emily Bronte's awareness of her going against the common trends of her society which she calls here 'mankind'. She describes her resistance her as 'strong', for she laughs at her hardship. What gives her this kind of strength is her belief in her right to be free as one of her poems say.

To define liberty as a right is the key word to the radical young Victorian poetess who sowed the seeds of feminism, whether consciously or unconsciously. 'The notion of equality made its first appearance in the seventeenth century and reached a peak during the era of enlightenment in the eighteenth century' in the West. In the East the case is different; it is almost the opposite, for it began with enlightenment and ended in the 18th century with total deterioration. Fourteen centuries ago, Mohammad, peace be upon him and all of God's prophets, acknowledged women's rationality from the first moments of the Qur'anic Revelation, when he went to 'Khadija', his first and elderly wife, to consult. She had a relative who converted to Christianity and comforted them that he saw the Angel "Gabriel", who was sent to all prophets before him. All through Mohammad's life and the four Caliphs after him, his tradition and teachings stressed the issue of independence of women (as discussed in the introduction about Arab women identity and religion and in the chapters about Mariam Al-Baghdadi). Mary Wollstonecraft who "argued, against Rousseau, that women should be accorded the same rights and freedom based on rational principles that were being demanded for men". Yet, it had not begun, until late in the nineteenth century(1869), with John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill who rejected the prevailing view of the time and 'called for an end to the subjection of women through an extension to women of equal rights and equal opportunities' (Mill & Jagger ed., p. 500). It is not an easy task to try to define the term 'feminism', for it passed through different stages of development in the West and in some Eastern countries, but I find the words of the actress Rebecca West worth quoting: " I myself have never been able to find precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat" (Pinion, p. 28). But if we want to look at a more accurate and non

sarcastic definition of the term "feminism" is that:

It is a political perception based on two fundamental Premises: (1) that gender differences is the foundation a Structural inequality between men and women, by which Women suffer systematic social injustice, and (2) that the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the cultural construction of gender differences(Morris, p.1).

To change and to understand before change the miserable social concepts and application, and the psychic mechanism of gender Inequality, feminists- women or men- passed through many difficulties. The cause of the difficulties in general is that it is not an easy matter to tell the physically stronger privileged side to give up what he think is his deserved right.

But the case was not so during the life time of Emily Bronte, though she enjoyed a great deal of liberty in her father's house. The idea of 'liberty' mentioned in Emily Bronte's poem as a 'right' is what makes some of her readers aware of her feminist tendency before the official birth of Feminism in the sixties of the twentieth century.

Emily was a rare church-goer and it seems that believing in God was a religion in itself to her, but this does not mean she was pagan as is affirmed in *The Cambridge Companion to the Brontes* (Maynard, p. 196). The author contradicts himself in the same page when he says that the Bronte children " could be easily to side with their father in placing emphasis on religion as a living force within the individual, as a living connection between individuals, rather than as an institution or a set of belief or dogma"(Ibid). I can argue by asking: what is religion if not ' a living force' that guides a person in life rather than mere rituals?! Spiritual rituals are good for human inner comfort, but certainly not social rituals that in the name of religion- which does not provide a correct understanding of religion- confine human freedom in no logical way. In 'No Coward Soul is Mine', Emily declares that:

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest forth amid the boundless (Gezari, p. 221).

Emily Bronte's framework of thinking, as can be concluded from her poetry and writings, broke away from "the traditional frame work of thought [that] was [already] breaking down" (Houghton, p. 8). So her rebellious attitude was a result of a collective attitude of her society in general. In addition, she tackled in her poems and prose written in French issues that manifest she is not happy with the 'identity' that is imposed on her by a society whose reformation was beyond her reach. That is why she would rather die, so that she might be able to lose such an identity. It seems that death was far easier for Emily Bronte than changing a society with a fixed attitude towards women, especially creative women. A free soul like hers could not accept such ideas and so she chose to live most of her life in seclusion. The notion of Emily Bronte's need for oblivion is confirmed clearly in *The Philosopher* : "Oh, for the time when I shall sleep/
Without identity,/ And never care how
rain may steep,/ Or snow may cover me! (Gezari, p. 7). This death wish might be a reaction to the despair she feels when confronting the inflexible constraints that her society imposed on women just for being females and having a different body shape than that of men.

Because of their limited framework of ideas about women's role in life, as Tennyson's poem quoted in the introduction shows, 'Man for the field etc..', the Victorians could not attempt at all to improve women's conditions in general or especially in family and work situations. Yet their endeavour for change was almost limitless in other areas of life that concern men. This social conflict mainly affected in a negative way the life of the physically weaker sex, that is, women. Furthermore, any middle-class woman who dared to violate established social boundaries to satisfy herself rather than her male relatives, whether father or husband, risked being a victim of severe criticism. However, in the very same poem, it is possible to find the seeds of equality and the new woman to come, presented in Ida's passionate oration. It displays the ideas that were lingering in the back of the minds of some thinkers at

that time. These ideas were confirmed later by Emily Bronte as a 'right'. Like her sister ideas in Jane Eyre, the question of feminism is enlarged to a much broader question of equality and the path to achieve such a difficult equation in the human world is spirituality:

[I]t is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed Through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, -- as we are!'. Society did not consider Jane and Rochester equals, because of both Gender and class, but Jane asserts that they were equals 'at God's feet', a belief she calls elsewhere Helen's 'doctrine of the equality of disembodied souls(John G. Peters, p. 61).

Nevertheless, the mere notion of being a writer, let alone a poetess, in a time that considered holding the pen for a woman is similar to committing a sin. This might tell us about the cause behind Emily Bronte's clinging to the spiritual side of religion rather than its social side, which was illogical in its unjustness to women. An earlier writer: Anne Finch's words- quoted in the introduction to Victorian women writers- Countess of Winchilsea, show that not only men held to illogical semi-religious ideas about women writers, but women did as well, which means that Emily's battle was doubled.

The Romantics' Influence on Emily Bronte's Ideas about Liberty:

Ah could my hand unlock its chain
How gladly would I watch its soar
And ne'er regret and never complain
To see its shining eyes no more
But let me think that if today
Its pines in cold captivity
Tomorrow both shall soar away
Eternally entirely free

Beside her quest for liberty, Emily Bronte displays a lot of natural sceneries e.g. the sun, the moon, the wind and the meadows, animals and birds and many other romantic ideas such as imagination and chains in her poetry. This makes of her discourse a kind of romantic one.

In the first stanzas of poem 120, quoted before, she combined her definition of liberty with romantic famous themes such as loneliness, woe and the heart with the emotions that dwell in it. In poem 103, she mentions that she is not ashamed of her ideas and in poem 30 she talks about her strength in swimming against the current of 'mankind'. If we take a close look at the following lines of *The Revolt of Islam*, we can see the similarity in Emily Bronte's discourse and that of the romantic poet Shelley:

So without shame, I spoke: "
" I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
Without reproach or check." I then controlled
My tears, heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold
(Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam*)

In an earlier letter to a publisher, October 13, 1817, Shelley wrote commenting on his poem " *The Revolt of Islam*" saying:

The whole poem, with the exception of the first canto and part of the last, is a mere human story without the smallest intermixture of supernatural interference. The first canto is, indeed, in some measure a distinct poem, though very necessary to the wholeness of the work. I say this because, if it were all written in the manner of the first canto, I could not expect that it would be interesting to any great number of people. I have attempted in the progress of my work to speak to the common elementary emotions of the human heart, so that, though it is the story of violence and revolution, it is relieved by milder pictures of friendship and love and natural affections. The scene is supposed to be laid in Constantinople and modern Greece, but without much attempt at minute delineation of Mahometan manners. It is, in fact, a tale illustrative of such a revolution as might be supposed to take place in an European nation, acted upon by the opinions of what has been called (erroneously, as I think) the modern philosophy, and contending with ancient notions and the supposed advantage derived from them to those who support them. It is a Revolution of this kind that is

the beau idéal, as it were, of the French Revolution,
but produced by the influence of individual genius and
out of general knowledge().

The echo of the above lines by Shelley can be seen clearly in the following
lines written by Emily Bronte:

For truth, for right, for liberty
I would have gladly freely died
And now I calmly hear and see
The vain man smile the fool deride
Though not because my heart is tame
Though not for fear though not for shame (Gezari: 116).

Like Shelley, she stresses the idea that liberty is a right, and that she will
be bold and shameless in confronting people about her right to be free. I
argue that the fact that he is a man made him dare to talk about political
tyranny in a more explicit way something a woman could not do in the
Victorian era for even the queen was described as a sweet lady(Langland
p. 63); liberty is stressed in many of Emily Bronte's poems in a rather
general way without specifying it to a particular domain of life.

Certainly there was a great influence of the Romantic poetry on Emily
Bronte's discourse. She was a kind of incarnation of whatever is
romantic in mind as well as in appearance. Her ideas are very much like
theirs; the only difference was that she was a female while they were
males. We can see the same idea of freedom and Man's right to free
himself from illogical customs is explicit in Wordsworth, Byron as well as
Shelley. In the Prelude, Wordsworth says: "Customs lie upon thee with a
weight/ Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life." And Byron exclaimed: "
Yet, Freedom, yet banner, torn but flying/Streams like a thunder-storm
against the wind.--. He also stated his theory about freedom in a short
poem where he says:

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbors;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knocked on his head for his labors.

To do good to mankind is chivalrous plan,
And is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever can you,
And, if not shot or hanged, you'll get knighted
(Abrams ed., p. 517).

Between Byron's theoretical poems about freedom and Shelley's passionate expressions, Emily Bronte's poetic diction about liberty can be seen as an amalgamation of both. She is partly a theorist as Charlotte describes her and as can be deduced from her two prose articles in French: The Butterfly and The Cat. Yet she also a practical nonconformist who could express her ideas frankly and apply her belief and swim against the current. Shelley's practicality can be seen in Ode to Liberty where he describes his rebellious reaction to freedom:

A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And in rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering inverse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the Heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same(bartelby.com,
Italics are mine).

The idea that the soul suffers from "the icy chain of custom" is Carlyle's term who thought that ' [t]he traditional Christian coverings were worn out'. Like Coleridge, to borrow Carlyle's words, Emily Bronte had saved her crown of 'spiritual womanhood' (Mendilow, p.6, Abrams,p. 951-55).

Since religion was the dominant factor in the Victorian age and religious ideas were one form of expression available in that culture for

the desire of liberation, Emily Bronte made the best use of it. Though she did not share the mainstream religious beliefs of her society, she did not declare that directly except in two poems : My Comforter and No Coward Soul is Mine. Even her disbelief in Trinity was not a totally new revelation to the British people. The Romantic poets before her, such as Shelley and Byron, had deviated from the mainstream of Christianity as well.

Edward Chitham affirms the influence of Shelly in the following lines from 'My Comforter' and says that these '[t]here stanzas have not been given the prominence they deserve:

Was I not vexed, in these gloomy ways
To walk until so long?
Around me, wretches uttering praise,
Or howling o'ver their hopeless days,
And each with frenzy's tongue –

A brotherhood of misery,
With smiles as sad as sighs;

Their madness daily maddening me,
And turning into agony
Their Bliss before my eyes.

So stood I, in Heaven's glorious sun
And in the glare of Hell
My spirit drank a mingled tone
Of serph"s song and demon"s moan __
What my soul bore my soul alone
Within itself may tell.

"This is Shelleyan. It also reminds us of Blake, though there seems no way in which Emily could have read him. Clearly the 'wretches' must be Christians, 'howling' or 'uttering praise (Chitham, p. 156-163)' ”.

The following closing lines of the same poem tell us that Emily is not a pagan but a romantic philosopher who looks for logic in things including religion:

Like a soft air above a sea
Tossed by the tempest's sea

A thaw-wind melting quietly
The snowdrift on some wintery lea;
No – what sweet thing can match with thee,
My thoughtful Comforter?(Gezari, 30).

The above lines are not written by a mere poetess, but by a rebellious thinker as well. This thinker is not satisfied with following others without being convinced.

But Pykett affirms in a more logical way what Chitham negates that Emily Bronte read Shelly. I find it worthwhile to quote her lengthy argument about the influence of Shelley's ideas in which he describes death as it liberates the soul from the body that is like a prison: "Indeed, she seems constantly to have been writing Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind', most notably in 'Aye, there it is! It wakes tonight', which ends with a Shelleyan Platonic vision of the soul escaping from the imprisoning body:

Yes, I could swear that glorious wind
Has swept the world aside,
Has dashed its memory from thy mind
Like foam- bells from the tide –

Thus truly when that breast is cold
Thy prisoned soul shall rise,
The dungeon mingle with the mould –
The captive with the skies.

(H 148, 165).

Bronte's recurring preoccupation with the imprisoned soul and the neglected captive may be traced, at least in part, to Shelley's *Epipsychidion* (1821), a poem in honour of platonic love, addressed to the poor captive bird' Emilia Viviani, who at nineteen was incarcerated in a convent while her parents conducted negotiations for her marriage...

Be constrained, it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continent..."

(Epipsychidion, 1583ff.)
(Pykett, p. 30).

Yet, I side with Ghanassia's analysis of the romantic influence on Emily Brontes, in which she says:

Although Bronte probably assimilated congenial ideas as well as poetic diction from her perusal, it is difficult to tell what and how much of her metaphysical rebellion she owes and to whom; it is certainly akin to that of Romantics like Byron and Shelley as well as to Victorians such as Arnold and Tennyson. Some critics may possibly exclaim at these Comparisons and even vociferate that there is quite a difference between a Byron acting out of sexual and political rebellion and the Yorkshire playacting their "Gondal" saga without knowing anything of their characters' passions; the same critics' homilies may pursue with sororal old maidishness that such a difference could best be explored in terms of gender(Ghanassia, p. 6).

In most of Emily Bronte's poems in which she talks to the buried person, there is a kind of echo of Wordsworth's Lucy". She nonetheless kept her own voice and style. For despite all of their influence on her, Emily Bronte managed to differ with the romantics every now and then; indeed, some of her writings, for example. Wuthering Heights, can be seen as a critique of them. (Bloom, p.9). I can apply the same idea to the poem stanzas which begins with 'I will not weep that thou art going to leave me'. The following stanza from the same poem is rather anti - romantic and belongs to Emily Bronte's own way of thinking:

I'll not weep, because the summer's glory
Must always end gloom;
And, follow out the happiest story –
It closes with a tomb (Gezari, p. 29).

Furthermore, the following lines in which she reproaches her beloved for his weakness, are also very much the result of her method of analysis and thinking:

If hard command can tame your love,
Or prison walls can hold
I would not wish to grieve above
A thing so false and cold – (Gizari, p. 81).

Yet I differ partly with Bloom's comment that her difference with the romantics is 'hardly from a conventional feminist perspective'. I see that the feminist element exists in her poetry, whether she was conscious of it or not, as stated before. At the same time I agree with his denial of her conventionality, because nothing about her was conventional, from the clothes she wore to the way of her thinking and writing.(ibid).

The Romantics' ideas were not held against them though they were "Unable to find value, order, and meaning in the external world, metaphysically isolated and socially alienated, the Romantic writers strove to symbolize their anguish and their rebellion in their art, and attempted to come to terms with a world devoid of value and a life without meaning and simultaneously, to assert the self as a source of order, meaning, value and identity" (Ghnassia, p.7), Yet they were admired as poets and the attack against them was much less than the attack against women who held similar ideas. Emily was a woman and social constraints on poetesses were much stronger than on poets. According to her teacher, Mr Heger, who analysed her personality and came to the conclusion that it was her daring attitude, which was more like a man's, that sustained her in her uncommon path through life. (Chitham, p143).

Nonetheless, she could keep her clear independent way of thinking as a woman, who sees things differently from the common ideas of people in a patriarchal society of her time, with all the influence of her reading of the Romantics had on her. Thus, she did not substitute her love for God by a kind of affinity for nature as they did.

Emily Bronte and contemporary poetesses:

Since there was no other way for Emily to express her own daring philosophy about life, she made a good use of the only expression available for her so that she might be able to live happily while fulfilling her higher pleasure. Her method was totally new for the mentality of other Victorian women, especially poetesses. Even her poetry was different and Charlotte's comment on Emily's poetry as not being "at all like the poetry women generally write", seems to be good evidence that Emily's writing was different from that of other women in her time. Any way poetesses were not many in that Victorian period, because of the difficult social reception of poetry written by women as mentioned previously. Two examples of a woman's writing in her time are going to be quoted in the following lines from other poetesses. The first one is titled: The Requiem of Genius; an elegy to a dead husband by Mrs. Hemans:

Thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams—ah! thou has fled!
The brave, the gentle, the beautiful;
The child of grace and genius, 'Heatless things
Are done and said!' The world and mighty earth,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still her solemn voice—but thou art fled!

No tears for thee! — though light from us gone
With thy soul's radiance, bright yet restless one!
No tears for thee!

And love and Death by Mrs Hemans too:

By thy birth, so oft renew'd
From the embers long subdued,
By the life-gift in thy chain,
Broken links to weave again;
By the thine Infinite of woe,
All we know not, all we know, If there be

dieth not,
Thine affection! Is its lot!
(Lackwood Edinburgh Magazine, pp. 113, 561).

The above quotations show the limited sphere of themes that women were allowed to move within. The confinement affected their ability to be deep in displaying of their emotions for fear of society resentment. There is the word 'chain' in the second quotation, but the difference between this use of 'chain' and Emily Bronte's depth in using the very same term, is incomparable.

It seems that tackling the theme of religion helped her poetry- to some extent- to be read and not to be totally rejected. It might be argued that she did not want her poetry to be published, but all of the Bronte children had 'cherished' the dream of becoming authors -as mentioned in the introduction- since early childhood. Charlotte Bronte described Emily's ambition saying: " I knew, however, that a mind like hers could not be without some latent spark of honourable ambition, and refused to be discouraged in my attempts to fan that spark into flame (Pykett, p. 38). Since she agreed in the end to have her poetry published and under a man's pen name, this means that at least part of her – consciously or unconsciously- was dreaming of being a famous writer. In some lines from *The Old Stoic*, which will be quoted below, she says that 'fame' was a dream for her. Emily's poetry was more acceptable to Victorian readers in a way that her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, was not: it was considered by many Victorians a 'coarse' piece of writing (Gordon, p. 67), whereas her poetry was received quite positively, as mentioned in the introduction. Thus the fact that her poems were tinted by spirituality protected them successfully from angry criticism. The apparent fake appearance at that time was faith, but the painful, unacknowledged reality was that some people's perception, especially thinkers, of religion was being eaten from within by new theories, such as Darwin's. Aware or unaware, Emily Bronte might have been attempting to step into the forbidden domain for women. Therefore, like most reforming writers, she needed readers – an audience- to whom she could direct her words; religion was the acceptable topic through which her ideas could be read

and be a factor in changing a society that was trying to rise up from a stagnant way of thinking. In her poem *The Old Stoic*, she writes about her disappointment with worldly desires, saying:

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream
That vanished with the morn: (Gezari, p. 30).

So lust of fame to her was just like a dream; the word 'lust' shows that dream was so powerful. It seems that Charlotte was fully aware of the hidden desire in her sister's chest to be read, appreciated and become famous ; this is the reason for her success in convincing her to publish her poetry.

Conclusion

If the beginning of the Twentieth Century is the true application of secularism in the West, which its seeds were planted in the Nineteenth Century, then the Twenty-first Century is the time of reverting to religion in a rather extremism attitude. It seems that humanity tried but failed in living in a world that does not believe in the Almighty's controlling power. Numerous mistakes were committed under the name of freedom which a non-fanatic faith could save humanity from. After passing through difficult experiences with controlling priests and irreligious politicians, it seems that those who were against the idea of religion tried hard not to acknowledge the power of moderate religion in freeing the human spirit. This resulted in the migration of past pains into the collective human consciousness and made it resist automatically the idea of spirituality without looking at the reality of the beauty of religion once it has been liberated from customs and traditions.

Islam is a dynamic and powerful motivator for Arab women writers, poetesses and feminists. These facets of religion provide a target, means, perspective and motif to power expression. This rich heritage could produce strong, faithful and daring poetesses in early and modern times such as Alkhansa and our poetess Mariam Al-Baghdadi. Mariam Al-Baghdadi is a free-thinking woman who believed in Allah's justice. A feminist, whose need for liberty in choosing the suitable love, does not make her hate men but rather weary of the lack of knowledge between the sexes in her society. Enlightened by the true faith and logical spiritual teachings and intellectuality, M. Al-Baghdadi paved the way for the new generation of women writers and poetesses in Saudi Arabia .

M. Al-Baghdadi is a contemporary Saudi Arabian poetess whose poetry is characterised by many modern traits, despite being written in classical

form. The mere fact that she studied in the West with all of her Arabic traits and identity, makes her poetry loaded with different tensions. The conflict inside her between her aspirations for people of the East and the painful reality of most of Muslim countries, is reflected in the tension between the words of the two donkeys that are full of sarcasm. All of this in contrast with her admiration for certain Western traits enhances the conflict that her poems display. The tension between Eastern attitude and Western one is an effective and moving result of this conflict. Another factor that adds to the tension in her poetry is her Islamic ideas about liberty and her clinging to the principle of practicing the freedom that her faith bestowed on her in a rigid patriarchal society. This makes her in constant conflict with her rather conservative environment whether social or intellectual, and this conflict is reflected beautifully in the form of tensions between diverse ideas as seen in many of her poems.

M. Al-Baghdadi's attitude in declaring her views about her right to express her views and feelings freely in her poetry and writings and be independent in her life, is very Islamic in roots. Her faith, like Emily Bronte, gave her the power to swim against the prevailing patriarchal trend. Her romantic attitude which was affected by her reading of the French Troubadours, beside her pain from bias, while beautifully preserving ideas about love, freedom, faith, strength in her poetry. She is living and writing in a guilt free way, because she read in the Qur'an that Eve and therefore all women, are not the cause of Adam's fall. The prophet whom she follows his teachings and tradition, supported feminism against social and patriarchal customs and traditions. Hence, she held her head high in her battle against unfair and non Islamic social attitudes towards women. She unmasked the so called religious thinking and evolved much stronger to the extent she became a model for many Saudi poetesses and writers.

Emily Bronte, in her quest for liberty from the constraints of her society and the oppressive interpretation of Christian teaching, was a pioneer poetess in this domain. I see that the feminist element exists in her poetry, whether she was conscious of it or not. At the same time I agree with the critics' denial of her conventionality, because nothing about her was conventional, from the clothes she wore to the way of her thinking and writing.

Similarly, Emily Bronte followed the path of the Romantic writers when they strove to represent their pain and their rebellion in their art, while attempting to come to terms with an opposing world devoid of value and a life without meaning, as they perceived it. She kept her undivided love for God by a kind of affinity for nature as they did.

Yet a controversial point here is that they were admired as poets and the attack against them was much less than the attack against women who held similar ideas. Emily was a woman and this involved social constraints on poetesses were much stronger than on poets. According to her teacher, her main personality strength was her daring attitude, which was more like a man's, that sustained her in her uncommon path through life.

Hence, Emily uses masks not to hide bad traits of Victorian age, but to hide a vulnerable heart and a sensitive soul in order to protect them from being torn apart in an age that is torn between conflicting trends. It is important to reassert that she was partly a daughter of her time, which was unfair to women, but partly the daughter of her own way of

novel thinking; her multifaceted identity was the product of a complex age and her complex, independent and self-made personality as well.

Nevertheless, being a Victorian, she was at the forefront of Victorianism at the same time, making the reader feel as if she were paving the way for future feminist identities, when more women would come to be aware of their rights and try hard to apply them. Despite the hardships that follow.

The mere fact of conflict of ideas in her poetry, classifies her poetry as rather modern. Because of the tension between conflicting trends /ambiguity in Emily Bronte's poetry, the reader encounters numerous romantic ideas and at the same time cannot avoid feeling that her poetry is a kind of modern.

In short, I can point out that the rare combination of liberty and religion in Emily Bronte's poetry makes her poems unique. It is very hard to read almost any of Emily Bronte's poems without thinking of religion as one of the motives , if not the main one, for writing poetry whether she is talking to her self, her father, her lover or even her prisoner to the extent that she makes her reader wonder about her ability to combine both in an age which considered the women who attempt the pen as sinners. Also, the mere idea of her, as a woman, using the weapon of courage challenging the convention of her society and isolation is a clear indication of her affliction as a Victorian poetess.

Emily Bronte's own religious belief in God is close to that of Mariam Al-Baghdadi. Yet her dilemma was much more complicated than Mariam's, for Mariam has very clear verses from the Qur'an and many of Mohammad's Traditions (Hadeeth) and teachings, that declare the equality of men and women. Nevertheless, the mere doctrine of her

protestant heritage encouraged questioning the Church's dogma provided support for Emily's inquisitive mind. In addition, the enlightened approach that Emily Bronte's father exercised in bringing up his children was one of the factors that empowered Emily Bronte. Like Mariam, she rejected the submissive imposed on Victorian women in general and the confinement placed on poetesses in particular. She rejected cultural limitations imposed in the name of religion, but, as with Mariam, her faith in the power of the Almighty gave her the courage to persist in a man's world.

In addition, the force that faith gave the two distant creative writers and poetesses- Mariam Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte- the coerce to strife against the unwarranted concepts of their rigid patriarchal societies. It enabled the two women writers to be liberal in expressing their radical views and to have a hurdle in creative writing despite the restriction imposed on women in their strict societies respectively. Though distant in time, place and culture, the two poetesses shared ideas regarding their identities and rights as human beings that can be thought of as feminists in awareness. I could infer that women writers , whatever the differences among their cultures, time and place are, share specificities regarding ideas about liberty and faith that are peculiar to women. Their special relationship with divinity: Allah or God; The Creator of the universe, was considered unacceptable novelty by their orthodox patriarchal generation.

Mairiam"s background is similar to that of Emily, since her liberal father had a knowledge of the reality of their religions that was not distorted by customs. Their faith in God gave them both the power to reproach their beloved in their poetry. This very power also sustained their in writing passionate and very daring love poems

So, faith was a motivating force for the two poetesses: the contemporary Muslim Arab and the English Christian who lived in the

Victorian era. Yet despite all the differences arising from the remoteness of their cultures, their poetry expresses similar points of view concerning the creator; Allah or God. Both poetesses established a unique relationship with God based on their understanding of the essential tenets of their faith rather than the dogmas of institutional religion (in Bronte's case) or the moral and social assumptions culturally attached to it by their contemporaries (in Al-Baghdadi's case). Unsurprisingly, both women were considered radicals and severely criticised by the society of their time, their contemporaries.

Faith became for both of these writers a kind of force and actually a source of empowerment. Hence, both poetesses broke the chain of stereotype: the cultural tradition that wore the mask of religion and shunned most people's customs and social rituals in worshipping God.

Belonging to the less powerful sex, both M. Al-Baghdadi and Emily Bronte made tremendous endeavors to voice their feminist views about their right as free human beings, and to choose their way of living as independent intellectual women which is clearly visible in their writings. As mention earlier, our poetesses own their two religious but very open fathers for their support as individuals and not merely women born into patriarchal cultures.

This conclusion drew the inference that poetesses, despite their differences among their cultures, time and place are, share a specificities concerning liberty and faith that are atypical to women.

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