

**Perceptions of Women and Love in Selected Poems**

**by Nizar Qabbani and Thomas Hardy:**

**A Comparative Study**

إدراك مفهومي المرأة والحب من خلال قصائد مختارة لنزار قباني

وتوماس هاردي: دراسة مقارنة

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**Department of English Language and Literature**

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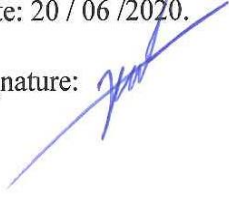
**June, 2020**

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## Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis entitled “Perceptions of Women and Love in Selected Poems by Nizar Qabbani and Thomas Hardy: A Comparative Study”, was successfully defended and approved on 13 / June / 2020.

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this modest effort to my parents and to my beloved husband and kids (Layan, Omar and Kenan) whose support still lights the darkness. Their prayers have never stopped.

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# **Perceptions of Women and Love in Selected Poems by Nizar Qabbani and Thomas Hardy: A Comparative Study**

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## **Abstract**

The subjects of women and love are not only tightly related together but also one of the most influential themes in literature. Women have always been depicted as dominated by masculinity and restricted by social customs and traditions. Still, poetry and poets responded to their oppression in many ways, criticizing and spreading awareness to draw a new image of women and encourage them to rebel against inequality and gender discrimination.

Qabbani and Hardy lived in restrictive societies for women and love. Both of them lost their wives suddenly and had a difficult time coping with this loss, but while Hardy went with vague and implicit expressions, and expressed his feelings of loss with regret and nostalgia, which make the tone of his love poems melancholic and gloomy, Qabbani after the death of his sister and beloved wife, wrote one of his most unforgettable poems entitled 'Balqees,' in which he voiced his bold views of love and women, using sensational language full of rebellious expressions to invoke women to call out for their freedom.

**Keywords: Comparative literature, Perception of women, Perception of love.**

**إدراك مفهومي المرأة والحب من خلال قصائد مختارة لنزار قبّاني وتوماس هاردي:**

**دراسة مقارنة**

**إعداد ريم مومني**

**إشراف: الدكتورة نادية حمدي**

**الملخص**

المرأة والحب من المواضيع وثيقة الصلة ومن أكثر المواضيع المثيرة في الأدب. لطالما كانت المرأة خاضعة لهيمنة الرجل والعادات والأعراف المجتمعية إلا أن الشعراء استجابوا لمعاناة المرأة بأساليب مختلفة من حيث نقد ممارسة القمع على المرأة ونشر الوعي لرسم صورة جديدة للمرأة ولتشجيعها للتمرد على عدم مساواتها بالرجل ورفض الظلم الواقع عليها.

عاش قبّاني وهاردي في مجتمعات محافظة تفرض قيوداً على المرأة والحب، وكلاهما عانى من فقد الزوجات المفاجئ الذي احتاج وقت طويل لتجاوزه.

ذهب هاردي للتعبير عن مشاعره في الفقد والنّدم بصورة غامضة وغير مباشرة لتفرض حالة من الحزن والكآبة على قصائده بينما قبّاني وبعد وفاة أخته وزوجته الحبيبة ذهب للتعبير عن مشاعره بكتابة قصائد لا تنسى ومنها قصيده حملت عنواناً باسم زوجته ' بلقيس ' مفصلاً بكل جرأة عن حبه لها كما لم يتوان في شعره عن التعبير لحبه للمرأة مستخدماً التعبيرات الحسيّة تحفيزاً للمرأة للثورة والمطالبة بالحرية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب المقارن، مفهوم المرأة، مفهوم الحب**

## Chapter One

### 1.0 Introduction

This study explores the portrayal of women and love in selected poems by Nizar Qabbani and Thomas Hardy. Women are unique figures, so it is of little wonder that many works in poetry portray women in different forms, depending on the social attitude towards the feminine in a specific period of time and the poets emotional state and experience.

Love is a combination of emotions, behaviors, and thoughts connected with strong feelings of passion, protectiveness, warmth, and respect for another person. Love has been a favored topic of poets for generations, in different cultures, and people have often struggled about its definition as Love implies strong feelings, a willingness to prioritize someone else's well-being or happiness above one's own.

Women and love are among the most popular themes in poetry, both in Arabic and English languages, as poets' personal life experiences usually affect the topics and attitudes towards their work. Women occupy a large part of Nizar Qabbani's poetic works, as women occupy a distinct position in his life. When tracing the image of women in Qabbani's poetic works, one finds that the image of woman has changed due to the death of his sister and his wife, Balqees.

## **1.1 Nizar Qabbani**

Nizar Qabbani is an Arab poet of Syrian origin, who died in London in 1998 at the age of 76, remains a most distinguished poet for almost half a century. He criticized the aspects of injustice, corruption and carelessness in Arab society. Qabbani's poetry sparked powerful reactions in nearly every corner of Arab society. But despite that, Qabbani courageously continued to write poems in which he brought the social ills of the Arab world to the fore.

Qabbani treats women in his poems with sensitivity, sincerity and moral courage, by refusing the injustice, and the particular repression of women with regard to the relationship between men and women. Qabbani, one of the great Arab poets who stood against the masculine society, wishes to free love from the chains of cultural customs, and to do so, he must destroy the previous image of love and create it anew.

## **1.2 Thomas Hardy**

Thomas Hardy is an English novelist and poet who sets his work in the semi-fictionalized county of Wessex. Hardy was born in Dorset, England, in 1840 and died in 1928, and his ashes are in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, and his heart is buried in Stinsford with his first wife, Emma.

Hardy is one of the most distinguished love poets in English as he explored all the phases of love in his poems, and he takes great delight and derived poetic satisfaction in exploring the moments of joy, harmony, and dissatisfaction in the hearts of lovers.

The similarities between the two poets in terms of the impact of women in the poet's life and the attitude toward women as influenced by factors such as social conflict, romantic status, or death of their wives.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem:**

This study investigates the perceptions of women and love in Nizar Qabbani's and Thomas Hardy's poetry, by exploring the images of love and women throughout different periods and by tracing the changes of their perceptions in their poetry.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study:**

This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. Discussing perceptions of women and love in selected poems of Nizar Qabbani.
2. Discussing perceptions of women and love in selected poems of Thomas Hardy.
3. Discussing the similarities and differences of perceptions of women and love in Qabbani's and Hardy's selected poems.

### **1.5 Questions of the Study**

1. How does Nizar Qabbani portray women and love?
2. How does Thomas Hardy portray women and love?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the portrayal of women and love between Nizar Qabbani and Thomas Hardy?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study:**

This study aims at analyzing and comparing the selected poems of Qabbani and Hardy to trace the changes in their perceptions of women and love due to life crises, conflicts, and death. Its significance stems from the fact that it is among the first studies to attempt at doing a comparative study of Qabbani and Hardy.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study:**

The study is limited in terms of the selected poems that, will be analyzed, therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized.

## **1.8 Limits of the Study:**

The study is conducted in Amman during the first semester of the academic year 2019/2020.

## **1.9 Definition of Terms:**

**Comparative literature:** “Comparative literature is the theoretical as well as methodological approach to help the researcher to understand varieties of cultures, languages, literatures and other different aspects”. (Francois Jost, p.26, 1974)

**Perception of women:** “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman. No biological, psychic or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine”.

(Simone de Beauvoir, p.330, 1993).

**Perception of love:** is about people attitude and passion towards love in relation to the rules and expectations they have been provided with by previous generations in their cultural environment. “It means that information about love is received directly from others or by interpreting practical situations in the light of one’s values, norms and knowledge about love”. (Eva Borch Pierrakos p.3).

## Chapter Two

### 2.0 Review of Related Literature:

This chapter consists of two sections, the theoretical literature and empirical studies.

### 2.1 Theoretical review of literature:

Mahmoud Shoush (2018) states that, Nizar Qabbani develops an extraordinary writing style by writing about sexual desires and woman's body which go beyond the limits of Arab traditions and customs to declare his point of view about women and criticize the masculine society.

Dr. Andrzej Diniejko (2016) mentions that, Hardy's life was profoundly affected by women and admired them as he wrote poems about them. Tryphena, is one of the women who affected Hardy's life and he wrote after her death a poem which portrayed his memories, entitled 'Thoughts of Phena'. Hardy fell in love with Emma when he was in his mid-twenties, and they got married at the age of thirty years old. After Emma's death Hardy wrote many poems alluding their olden days, when they were young and happy together. Hardy was entirely attracted by women, and he held many of his female friends in high regard. All these relationships and feelings toward women produced in Hardy the sentiments expressed in 'The Ruined Maid'. Hardy uses the conversation between two women to point out the gender inequity in the society as he uses a woman who does not seem to mind being "ruined" to point out that not all women are the same, and that not all women are desolate if they don't behave the way of social customs and traditions.



Ariel Loya (2014) states that, Qabbani speaks on behalf of Arab women by using the first person feminine in most of his poems to reflect her social struggle, mood, experience and repression which Arab youth has undergone in the last three or four decades in respect to their relations with men.

Loya believes that, Qabbani's writings about love and women, makes him the object of severe criticism on the part of the traditional elements of Arab society. However, he keeps publishing his poems to describe his feelings and attitude toward women against the injustice of men toward her.

Fatmah Moradi (2013) notes that, Qabbani's work experience as a diplomat and his familiarity with other cultures, literature and his modernistic tendency make him exceed the traditional structure of Arab poetry. Qabbani creates his own style and content of writing which make his poetic works easy to be recognized even for those who are not interested in poetry. He uses a language in his poems that takes its deepness from an eloquent style full of warmth and courage.

Mohja Khaf (2000) states that, Qabbani's poetry reveals that he has vividly created four types of women characters that express his vision of the oppressive nature of the Arab world. Those women are the sultan's wife as a conformist oppressed female, the sultan's daughter who suffers from her slavery, the reckless woman who handles all moods of men, and the lady friend in exile, the mature of female who leaves nothing to be desired after her.

Tim Dolin (2000) writes about Thomas Hardy's work that, his work was more like an initial tentative experiment in what would become the major undertaking of his life's literary

expertise. Hardy's works aims were not to write about his own life at all, but to prevent anyone else from doing so by trying the production of widow's life to the execution of his will, in order to ensure that his papers did not fall in the wrong hands when he died.

## **2.2 Empirical Studies:**

N Ben Lazreg and Housseem (2016) note that, Nizar Qabbani (1923–1998) was one of the most famous Arab poets of the 20th century, as he spent a lifetime fighting for Arab women's liberation and empowerment through his writings. The themes in his poems range from passionate and revolutionary verses about love and feminism, to constant criticism of Arab leaders and the conservative traditions of Arab society. "A Woman Moving Within Me" by Nizar Qabbani, expresses his feelings of love and passion towards his beloved using highly poetic images, some of these images are related to Arab culture, like reading one's fortune in a cup of coffee. Qabbani uses sensual language which evokes the beauty of woman through her body or at least some parts of it. In the last part of the poem, Qabbani expresses his rejection of the sexual politics in the Arab world which is restricted by political and emotional repression.

Andrew Green (2014) states that, in 'The Voice', Hardy uses effective writing technique, the sense of loss both of the woman and of the delusion that kept her present. The impression of a barren landscape at the end, when Hardy comes to realize that Emma has truly left his world sums up the emotions tied in with being lost as to how to cope with the death of a loved one.

Thomas Hardy and his first wife, Emma, had long been estranged when she died in 1912; but her death prompted a series of poems by Hardy which are viewed as being among his best

work as he revisiting his early courtship and marriage, knowing that those times – and the woman with whom he shared those memories – will never return. ‘The Voice’ is perhaps the best-known of all these poems as its language demands to be analyzed closely and given the attention it deserves.

Peter Widdowson (2006) states that, ‘The Voice’ is written in an unusual style for English poetry, which gives the poem a vitality that seems strange with the nostalgic and sorrowful tone of the poem, but it succeeds in capturing the sense of confusion and excitement that Hardy feels at supposedly hearing the voice of a woman he knows is dead. However, he can analyze his reaction to keep a little piece of hope alive.

Andrew Moore (2002) believes that, Hardy explores the guilt he feels toward his first wife Emma, for his neglecting her over the latter years of their marriage. He uses his writing to absolve himself of this guilt and come to terms with it. ‘The Going’ and ‘The Voice’ contain many questions to Emma, she alone can give the answers to, and recalls the beauty of his loved one’s youth, when he first knew her. Hardy imagines Emma trying to communicate with him to tell him that she is not the woman she had become after forty years of marriage, and she regained the beauty of her youth.

## Chapter Three

### 3.0 Methodology of the Study

This study adopts a descriptive analytical and comparative approach to compare the works of the two poets and their biographies.

### 3.1 Sample of the study:

The sample of this study are three poems for each poet which are related to different periods of time, before and after the death of Balqees and Emma. The selected poems are, 'Balqees', 'When I Love', and 'Rebel' by Nizar Qabbani and 'The Voice', 'The Ruined Maid', and 'I Said to Love' by Thomas Hardy.

### 3.2 Procedures of the study:

To achieve the goals of the study are the following steps:

1. Reading the selected poems of Nizar Qabbani and Thomas Hardy.
2. Doing a textual analysis of the poems, 'Balqees', 'When I Love', and 'Rebel' of Nizar Qabbani and the poems, 'The Voice', 'The Ruined Maid', and 'I Said to Love' of Thomas Hardy.
3. Reading the previous studies that are related to the main poems of the study.
4. Reviewing the theoretical and empirical studies.
5. Discussing and analyzing the topics of the study.
6. Drawing conclusions and recommendations.
7. Writing the study and its references according to the APA style.

## Chapter Four

### 4.1 The Image of Love and Woman in Poetry

Women in classical literature were portrayed as sexual objects, blamed for wars and the death of men and their rights were very limited. The women of the medieval time were torn between the ideal and physical desires. In a thoughtful reading of the literature of that time you can find the first buds of feminist literature move out the pages. In the Elizabethan era, women were considered as a necessity for the reproduction process, but the gender equality was not presented within that time. Women in the Victorian era were increasingly portrayed as protagonists more than before, yet they were still conquered, and they cannot break their social restrictions. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century women have become strong, independent and called for women's right and they established their identity apart from social and gender considerations.

Literature reflects societies' attitudes and perceptions and portrays human life in words, to deliver a message and document specific periods of time to trace societies' changes and development. Since most of the published writers were men until recent times, the portrayal of women was without doubt biased. Literature has witnessed the roles of women evolving throughout the ages, and since the time of the first explorers to the present, women's roles and portrayal in literature reflect the changes occurring historically for women. The insignificance and oppression of women prior to the mid-19th century is related by the small roles of females in literature. (Vyomakesisri, 2017, p.19)

Women are source of inspiration for poets and an influential factor in shaping female character and identity. Women are affected by gender inequality as a result of social attitude

toward women in specific periods of time as women are underestimated by men and their role described only as an object of pleasure for men.

The changing image of women in poetry from the past to present indicates the development of their role and the social attitude toward them. Women's rights are limited, and they are not allowed to practice and express their freedom as they practice strict roles of being wives, mothers and householders. "Literature has witnessed the roles of women evolving through ages, most of the published writers were men until recent times, therefore the portrayal of women was without doubt biased" (Vyomakesisri, 2017 p.19).

Women are restricted by the dress code as fashion is formed with fixed features, and hats and dress sizes are used to shape women's behavior, social class and limit women's conduct. "Over the last 150 years, novelists, whether male or female, have explored the psychology and social roles of women with increasing depth: Thomas Hardy, D H Lawrence, E M Forster and Virginia Woolf have all made significant contributions to the perception of women in the literary canon, particularly in challenging traditional perceptions about the purity of women" (Crossref-it.info).

Love is presented in many different forms and genres, as love is an interesting and attractive subject that everyone likes to know about. People experience love in different historical periods of time, but these feelings were usually shaped by variable cultural attitudes. "For centuries, romantic love has been explored by writers, philosophers, artists, and musicians who have described its various aspects and revealed multiple emotions and feelings related to this type of love" (Karandashev, 2017, p.3).

Romantic love has been dominated by cultural traditions and values and these factors shaped human behaviors and influenced the expression and experience of love and transformed love, from passionate or sexual attraction into romantic love. “The universal features primarily relate to love experience, while culturally influenced features are ones that pertain to the expressions of love: cultural rituals of love. The experience of being in love is colored by one’s cultural values and the society to which one belongs” (Karandashev, 2017, p.15).

While love is supposed to speak about romance and passion from one to another with hearts and roses as love poems traditionally used to describe the beauty of a beloved and describing his/her attributes. Nevertheless, love has different perceptions and concepts as it is portrayed as romantic and caring, passionate and sexual, sometimes even destructive and heartbreaking.

## **4.2 Thomas Hardy:**

Thomas Hardy was born in Higher Bockhampton, Dorset, England on 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1840. Hardy received a great deal of his grandmother's passion for reading books and his love of isolated life on the open fields of the region enhanced and deepened this love for reading books and what his attachment to rural life where he grew, the setting that forms much of his novels. “He rejected the Victorian belief in a benevolent God, and much of his poetry reads as a sardonic lament on the bleakness of the human condition”. ([www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org))

By 1862, at the age of 22, Hardy started working in London in the office of Arthur Blomfield, where Hardy was influenced by the works of Charles Swinburne, Robert Browning, and Charles Darwin. In 1870, Hardy began a restoration project of the St. Juliot Church in Cornwall, and met his first wife, Emma Lavinia Gifford. Emma gave Hardy the needed momentum to write. By 1872 the embryonic career of Hardy started to develop into memorable

novels and poems. The couple got married in 1874. “Hardy and Emma Gifford were married, against the wishes of both their families” (Michael Millgate, n.d.)

Hardy’s poems about Emma show his loneliness and his nostalgic, regret and loss feelings.

([www.ukessays.com](http://www.ukessays.com))

Hardy’s old poems were published in an anthology, called *Wessex Poems* (1898) and *Poems of the Past and Present* (1902). He continued publishing his shorter verse in *Time's Laughingstocks* (1909) and his most famous single volume of poems, *Satires of Circumstance*, appeared in 1914. It shows the extremes of Hardy's emotional range in the short, bitter poems referred to in the title and the longer poems about his first wife, who died in 1912. *Selected Poems* (1916), *Moments of Vision* (1917), *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922), *Human Shows* (1925) were published during the remainder of his life and *Winter Words* (1928) after his death.

He built Max Gate near Dorchester, where he lived from 1886 until his death. At Max Gate he frequently used to meet poets, like Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), Robert Browning (1812–1889), Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), and others.

In 1906 Hardy met his second wife Florence Emily Dugdale and they got married in 1914, while she was 35 years old and he was 74 years old. The age gap did not stop a good matrimonial relationship as she was a wife, secretary, housekeeper and nurse when he was suffering from melancholy and depression.



Hardy's body was laid to rest on January 11, 1928 at Westminster Abbey in Poet's Corner, while his heart was buried in Stinson, England, near the grave of his first wife Emma.

Hardy's relations with women and his marriages shaped his personal philosophy on love in general and marriage in particular. Socially, marriage as an institution, legally and traditionally endorses the relationship between men and women, but this union, religiously called a sacred bond, is often plagued by over regulations and the forcible framing of human relations. Hardy feels dismayed by this contra human freedom that places obedience to values before response to passion and free expression of love. The image of this socially acceptable contract, the socially approved façade, may be hiding behind it loads of misery, pain and disturbed relations. This view of complaint against the institution of marriage could have been a backlash provoked by Victorian negative stance against divorce, regarded as socially inappropriate. "Hardy exposes the harm and torture inflicted on people by the marriage system in the Victorian patriarchal society and the hypocritical morality" (Yu-hua, 2017, p.514).

Hardy's philosophy on marriage and relationships is simple, as he believes that if two people have similar interests and work well together, they should be united by marriage in order to enjoy the physical pleasures of a relationship in a socially acceptable way. While if two people should drift apart and be utterly miserable with one another due to irreconcilable approaches, then Hardy believes that the only option left is the practical one, that is separation, and eventually divorce. This philosophy is presented in his literary work, where most of his novels develop to sad ends. Hardy believed that love is an affinity of the mind and spirit. He is clear in his opinion that a marriage, to be happy should be based on love and not a temporary attraction or romance. (Hameed, 2008, n.p).

However, he never closed the door on happy ending, but he keeps an optimistic space for hope where he calls himself a "Meliorist," one who believed that man can be made better by human efforts and live with some happiness if he understands his place in the universe.

#### **4.2.1 “The Voice”**

Love, grief, and memories are the major themes of the poem. The title of the poem suggests a concerto of voices playing to enchant listeners as if they were maids at Greek Temple singing to Apollo. Hardy shows mastery at introducing various voices. In his address to his deceased first wife, he talks to her as if she is listening to him. He sets up a unique communion with a dead woman and addresses to her sounds either breathing life back into her or into him, or in a mythological style, coming out of the ashes of sadness. “In The Voice, Hardy shows us the loneliness that he felt when his wife Emma died and it makes me think that he was a man in love despite of his pessimist thoughts about love”. ([www.ukessays.com](http://www.ukessays.com))

He claims that he can hear her voice telling him that she is not the woman she once was. His talking to her helps him regenerate a new love for her. The death of Hardy’s wife in 1912, evokes his talent into writing his poem “The Voice” which is published in an elegiac sequence. “The poems of 1912-13 are mostly poems of memories. They are also called love poems or elegies in some of the poetry anthologies. The best of them are written to the memory of his wife and refer to events forty years earlier” (Hameed, 2008 p.148).

Hardy blamed himself for losing Emma’s love. He is living with her voice and he can hear it everywhere and anywhere he goes. There is no past and also there is no future. The voice transcends the natural borders of time and hence his voice now can be with Emma, calling her, talking to her and even listening to her. He commences his poem with a neutral word, saying

"woman." This start has its message as he does not say my wife nor my beloved to free himself of any commitment to a certain woman, and to say that Emma is all women.

Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me,

Saying that now you are not as you were

When you had changed from the one who was all to me,

But as at first, when our day was fair.

Hardy misses Emma and all he wants is to feel that he is going to meet her and be together again. The first line expresses how time has been long without her, as if there is a gap between time and logic. This request to "Call me" entails meeting in a neutral zone, a twilight one, between life and death where the dead is alive and the alive is dead to say how they spend their life in misery and how he is spending his lifetime wishing to see her again. It is a stream of nostalgia for the olden days and memories. He shows an inexhaustible desire to keep loving her as before.

Grief and mourning represent the other face of love because true love must be painful. There is a distance in these first words, which is reinforced by the repetition of "how you call to me, call to me". It is "now" that his unfortunate present with her has become incompatible with the merry past "now you are not as you were." Implicitly he blames her, "When you had changed." He misses that moment when time with her "was fair" and their relationship was merry and memorable. Grief and sadness strike a note of confusion and distress. Hardy said about love: "Love is a terrible thing, sweet for a space and then all mourning, mourning" (Persoon, 1992, p.74).

He again feels detached from his real world where he evolves to the hereafter world. Seeing her image and hearing the illusion of her voice may give a moment of respite from the pain of her absence, a brief lull, but only to go back to reality once more with more doses of pain. An attempt to reunite with her accentuates the gap between the illusion grappling him and reality which he cannot escape. He tries to dwell in an illusion serving only to bring fresh memories and eventually more pain simply because he cannot fully recognize her unless he crosses the line to eternity. He only can recall memories and voluntarily keep sojourning in doubt, where he, at least, can be with the shadow and memory.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,

Standing as when I drew near to the town

Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,

Even to the original air-blue gown!

Hardy starts the second stanza with a question. The lyrical voice has doubts about the woman "Let me view you, then." "I" addresses the "Her" waiting for a confirmation, and again there is a neutral voice and space keeping them apart. Now he joins time and space into recalling memories with her. He says, "Standing as when I drew near to the town". There is another remembrance, where the same happy relationship has been evoked: "Where you would wait for me". He opts to stay in the subjective mode and leaving to objectivity stipulates a shift in the tone. The voice of "would" should sound different, i.e. striking a merry tone, a conclusion he cherishes despite the fact that he cannot realize her, he needs to stay in the neutral zone to keep looking up to the unrealizable image. It is an approach similar to viewing the image of the Virgin Mary. She is beyond reach and equally beyond forgetfulness. The "original air-blue gown" relates to the idea of wind that is insubstantial and indispensable; an idea that is going

to be expanded in the next stanza suggesting both: the joy of the moment next to the lyrical voice's inability to hold on to the relationship and sustain it. This is accentuated by the use of the exclamation mark, which suggests peaking emotion.

Or is it only the breeze, In its listlessness

Travelling across the wet mead to me here,

You being ever dissolved to wan wistlessness,

Heard no more again far or near?

The wind imagery breaks into more uncertainty and the questioning makes the woman's existence and her return not sure.

Thus I; faltering forward,

Leaves around me falling,

Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,

And the woman calling.

In this stanza Hardy heads to the moment of illumination, where he is going to realize the futility of any verbal encounter let alone a physical reunion. The tone sounds winding downward and easing to a sort of submission with a closing note. The scene looks like the dance of the wind around dead leaves. "Leaves around me falling, Wind oozing," the image goes into yet a deeper sense of sadness. Wind sounds comforting the poet and the dance of death has become different, "Wind oozing." Wind is wet and humid perhaps because of the tears being shed on the poet's pain. Yet, and despite pain, love is still sustaining the poet. This

stanza shows that the poet is conscious to the reality of death and he is not going to meet her, but his sub-consciousness refuses to accept it. “This final scene conveys the tone of the entire poem, a sense of grief and emptiness towards the loss of the woman and, moreover, the lyrical voice’s longing to keep her alive in his memories” (Abella, 2017, n.p).

The woman is still "calling", that reminds of a hibernating heart where keeping alive in winter is possible but only through the memory of the woman he loves. Hardy feels the monotonous call of his heart beating for her, sustaining him in this wilderness of sadness. “In short, this poem is full of ironies and the poet’s emotions about the love for the woman are complex. He remembers beautiful memories of their life together, yet he is racked with guilt about losing her” (Jacqueline, 2016, n.p).

#### **4.2.2 “I said to Love”**

“I said to love” deals with love, regret and pain. Hardy starts the poem with the pronoun "I," to address love, possibly blaming him for being unfulfilled and thus, instead of being an enjoyable experience, love is a painstaking engagement. Love has been personified like an addressee, a woman or a beloved. In "I said to Love", Hardy maneuvers in time and shuttles between its zones and the emotions it betrays. Love has changed for it used to be adorable in a reference to his wife, Emma, the woman who glorified the past. “It also suggests that the only way to cope with his pain is to personify the emotion that has caused him the pain” (Green, 2015, n.p).

In this poem Hardy sounds regretful and remorseful at his deplorable experience with love. His great love for Emma is insistently creeping into his mind and emotions. Recalling his memories with her is a self-punishment process and enjoying his love for her causes pain. Pain

of love is essential to smooth it and make it memorable, and so is the case in Hardy's love. Emma, the wife he lost, is his pain and pleasure. Love gets solidified with pain, which is why he feels a combination of pain and pleasure.

“It is not now as in old days  
 When men adored thee and thy ways  
 All else above;  
 Named thee the Boy, the Bright, the One  
 Who spread a heaven beneath the sun,”  
 I said to Love.

Addressing and personifying love is a move from the objective to the subjective. He adored her and her love and addressing love is addressing her herself, an approach that may keep him in a safe distance from depression and melancholy and their fits.

Personifying love seems to be the suitable method to help the poet cope with pain. Chatting to love helps to ease the tension, and it serves to prepare the poet to brace himself against any potentiality. The use of the word Heaven suggests the joy of love, a feeling that leads to heaven, paradise. Christ, the boy suggests the child that Hardy never had and indicates his regret, for he wished to have a child with Emma. “The reference to ‘the Boy’ could suggest a child, created together in love. However, Thomas Hardy never had any children so this could be referring to a regret of his that he wished he did have a child with Emma since he talks about the Boy as ‘the Bright, the One,’ he gives some importance to the ‘Boy’ – it could well be seen as a symbol for love between people” (Green, 2015, n.p).

At the end of the first stanza, he refers to a masculine love, "I said to him", the third personal pronoun changes from him to love. He repeats the same closing line in each stanza. In 'I said to love', him is replaced by love. Shifting from him to love shows love as a masculine and dominant figure.

Hardy might have been possessed by the feeling of masculinity due to his failed love. He seems aware that love is heaven, but he had no real chance to live love, but his love lies in heaven where his deceased wife has gone. He stresses this concept of love that it sounds more sublime than that of humans by repeating it to remind the reader of the nature of the boy, "Bright" and located "beneath the sun". Repetition suggests consistency and Hardy stresses his philosophy of love which is narrowed down to one primary one; that is love has a heavenly dwelling, the motherly lap.

Allocating the residence to heaven, shifts love from its masculine connotation to its feminine traits. Love is a protective umbrella or lap, just like mother. Unlike tender nature of the female, masculinity makes love seem harsh.



I said to him,  
 “We now know more of thee than then;  
 We were but weak in judgment when,  
 With hearts abrim,  
 We clamoured thee that thou would’st please  
 Inflict on us thine agonies,”  
 I said to him.

Now he claims that he becomes knowledgeable of the nature of love more than before. Comprehending love is an evolvment of the mind to heavenly status, i.e. bringing the immortal out of the mortal. He himself should become angelic in nature to feel true love. This is because of the weakness of man before the might of love that dwarfs the all but limited emotions of man. “Straight away, by referring to love as ‘him’ gives Love masculinity. This was an interesting choice since Love has more feminine traits than masculine traits. However, by choosing Love to be male makes love seem quite harsh and less forgiving” (Green, 2015, n.p).

Now the loss of Emma makes him realize his weaknesses and limitations. Mundane love lives in the domain of the unrealized impulses of man. However, weakness is a positive note, as love is divine and man needs to humble himself before the might of God's love to learn, and equally important, to feel attached to love as an essential need for life and its continuity into the hereafter being.

Love inflicts its own agonies and man needs to feel it all around should he head for union with the arch source of love, the divine, whose image is reflected in the face of Emma that, like the face of the virgin Mary, that despite pain still manages to bestow solemnness and peace.

Hardy forwards the image of a man who has been enriched by love and his heart now becomes full to the brim "With hearts abrim," he and she "clamoured".

I said to Love,  
 “Thou art not young, thou art not fair,  
 No faery darts, no cherub air,  
 Nor swan, nor dove  
 Are thine; but features pitiless,  
 And iron daggers of distress,”

I said to Love.

The flow of images and their related feelings and emotions continue highlighting the poet's mood which fluctuates from relaxed and happy with the memories to a negative one. Love has caused Hardy great pain. This is not to suggest that he enjoys his pain, but he is helpless to change. Living with pain is not an option, but it can bring the angelic out of the human. Accepting pain affiliates man with religious doctrines as is the case with Christianity which teaches the pain of Jesus as its basic principle. The use of the word, "cherub" a religiously associated word, releases an angelic air making man look like an angel. Hardy borrows this religious image as a theme of purity. Swan and dove stand for peace, love and purity, and so is love which is not always a happy experience, but indispensable despite the pain it causes. Down to the closing lines of the poem Hardy regains control of his masculinity and his defiant mood.

“Depart then, Love! . . .

– Man’s race shall end, dost threaten thou?

The age to come the man of now

Know nothing of? –

We fear not such a threat from thee;

We are too old in apathy!

Mankind shall cease—So let it be,”

I said to Love.

Despite his old age, Hardy does not fear love and asks love to leave him, because he does not believe in love anymore, but in his old age he has reconciled with himself as love is risky and painful and affects his existence as a man. Hardy sounds defiant and refuses to be intimidated by love. As an old man he feels that man needs to take control of love not vice versa. This defiance is simply his fighting back against frustration at the loss of Emma who passed away so that he personifies love as a male because love lives for and with woman and is protected by a man. He doesn't personify love as a female because he doesn't want to fight the woman that he loves, as woman is given to conquering man by love rather than be conquered. “Ultimately, Thomas Hardy has had a bad experience with love. By looking at his historical context, it is clear that he had a strong love for Emma. Due to this, when she died, he was heart-broken and struggled to comprehend with the loss” (Green, 2015, n.p).

According to Patil, “I Said to Love”, “conveys a philosophic profile of regret, pain, defiance, old age and happiness of love to create a unique synthesis of conflicting emotions resolved at the end. “I Said to Love” might have been penned by Hardy when he was in a gloomy mood. It seems right that when his private life with Emma went wrong, he might have written such poems, like “I said to Love” and “The Division” out of an embittered heart” (Patil, 1997, p.47).

He and his beloved have become fully aware of love which numbs people's awareness and denying one's mistakes is not abnormal when man loses his sense of judgment from loving the

other. Thoughtlessness leaves no doubt that Hardy is astray but not oblivious to the full development of love.

Hardy is personifying Love, achieved by capitalizing the ‘L’, to make it sound like he is having a conversation with Love, so Love is more a name in this context than an emotion. This could be because he cannot talk to his love, Emma, he expresses his emotions by personifying the emotion that is causing his pain. It also suggests that the only way to cope with his pain is to personify the emotion that has caused him the pain. He wants to fight and take out his frustration and emotions out on Love to cope with the pain of losing Emma. “His final scene conveys the tone of the entire poem, a sense of grief and emptiness towards the loss of the woman and, moreover, the lyrical voice’s longing to keep her alive in his memories” (Green, 2015, n.p).

### 4.2.3 “The Ruined Maid”

Hardy shows that society is blind to the truth that women are driven to be ruined due to the social attitude towards them. “Thomas Hardy’s poem ‘The Ruined Maid’ introduces its reader to the harsh reality of lower-class Victorian Women. Critical scrutiny through a feminist lens helps widen the scope of understanding to reveal beyond the satirical irony of the writing and bring to light the deep-rooted social issue of Victorian England’s paralyzing poverty and its effects on women” (Egbert & Holt, 2018, n.p).

“O ‘Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!

Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?

And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?” —

“O didn’t you know I’d been ruined?” said she.

“The Ruined Maid” addresses a woman, named Melia, and she was called “my dear” by the speaker which means they know each other well. The speaker looks surprised at meeting this friend in town and more shocked at Melia’s “fair garments” that points out that she has some “prosperity”. Melia answers that she is “ruined”. The term “ruined” in that specific era is indicative of a woman who had pre- marriage relation to find financial and social success by being ruined.

— “You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,  
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;  
And now you’ve gay bracelets and bright feathers three!” —  
“Yes: that’s how we dress when we’re ruined,” said she.

The speaker gives the readers more details about Melia’s past by using the exclamations about Melia’s transformation from wearing “tatters, without shoes or socks” to wearing “gay bracelets and bright feathers.” Melia replied that is the way ruined women dress.

— “At home in the barton you said thee’ and thou,’  
And thik oon,’ and theäs oon,’ and t’other’; but now  
Your talking quite fits ‘ee for high compa-ny!” —  
“Some polish is gained with one’s ruin,” said she.

The speaker suggests Melia has become more proper and “quite fit” for “high company.” Melia responds that some glossy speech comes along with being ruined.

— “Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak

But now I’m bewitched by your delicate cheek,

And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!” —

“We never do work when we’re ruined,” said she.

The speaker keeps indicating all the changes in Melia’s appearance, including the transformation of her tough hands to a lady wearing gloves. Melia comments that the ruined woman never does any work.

— “You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,

And you’d sigh, and you’d sock; but at present you seem

To know not of megrims or melancho-ly!” —

“True. One’s pretty lively when ruined,” said she.

The speaker keeps commenting on Melia’s physical appearance, and attitude. These comments reveal that the relationship between them is close enough to notice all the changes and transformation. The speaker notices that Melia is no longer “melancholy.” Melia replies that a ruined woman can be “pretty lively.” Melia’s answers are dull as she does not give details about her new life, nor does she carry on a conversation with the speaker. She keeps replying by saying, “that’s what it’s like when you’re ruined.”

— “I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,

And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!” —

“My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be,

Cannot quite expect that. You ain’t ruined,” said she.

The last stanza shows the first woman's desire to have "feathers" and "a fine sweeping gown" so that she "could strut about Town." However, Melia responds that "a raw country girl" cannot have luxuries without being ruined. The strange thing about Melia, is that she seems happy with being "ruined". She seems to be enjoying her new look and her fine speech.

"The Ruined Maid" shows the gap in the treatment of men and women. Hardy uses the conversation between two women to reveal the unfair attitude toward men and women. He also shows that the woman does not mind being "ruined" to show that not all women are the same, and not all women are devastated if they don't behave in the way that society expects them to behave.

In the poem "The Ruined Maid", Thomas Hardy shows the opposite of the expected reaction of Melia, as the reader expects of her to be ashamed and suffering as a result of being ruined. However, Melia shows her friend that "one's pretty lively when ruined" and that "some polish", is gained with one's ruin which means that she does not regret being ruined.

In "The Ruined Maid," one of Hardy's early sarcastic poems, the reader encounters a portrayal of a prostitute that differs from common descriptions of condemnation or redemption for which works of art were accused (Stojkovic, 2015, p.20).

#### **4.2.4 Perceptions of Women and Love in Thomas Hardy's poetry:**

Thomas Hardy's life was greatly influenced by a lot of women and he wrote many poems about them. He fell in love with Emma, and due to her death, he wrote many poems referencing the olden days with Emma when they were young and happy together. "Hardy also had relationships with many young artistic ladies, and these relationships cause him to become estranged from his wife in the latter years of their marriage" (Diniejko, 2010, n.p).

Love, tragic loss, memories, regret and true love are all expressed in Hardy's selected poems, especially after the death of his first wife Emma. Hardy reflects his emotions and feelings toward Emma who makes him describes the olden days with her. Hardy expresses his regret for not being happy with Emma as a couple. "It can be said with conviction that the personal poems of Hardy, which have reference to Emma - are inspired by the poet's experience of his love for Emma and his married life with her. But it cannot be said that all his poems and novels dealing with the theme of love and marriage are influenced by his own personal experience of married life, or his estrangement from his wife (Patil 1997, p.355).

Emma's death and his love experience, which were frustrating to the poet motivated him to go back to his past memories rather than his miserable present state. These feelings of both happiness and sorrow made him suffer from confused memories of, both nostalgia for the past and regret at the present, which led him to live in the past and become an arrested man to his sorrow and regret. All these factors make Hardy attached to his disappointing love. In "The Voice," Hardy expressed his feeling of loneliness after the death of his wife as he is evidently in love, despite his pessimistic thoughts about love.

Throughout "The Ruined Maid," Hardy makes the reader realize that the "ruined maid" is not actually ruined but is kind of rebellious to find her opportunity to overcome all the social obstacles. Hardy shows the negative attitude toward women at that time and highlighted women's problems which he hopes to solve. Hardy used poetry to highlight the social illness and the suffering of women in those conditions.



Women are portrayed as fragile, weak, innocent and fully relying on men, while men are seen as powerful and leaders and that is the common perception at that specific period of time. Women are innocent, pure and struggling to cope with the social chains and conditions as they were unable to react against their husbands.

Hardy is entirely attracted to women, and he clearly holds many of his female friends in high regard. All of these relationships and feelings toward women produced in Hardy the sentiments expressed in “The Ruined Maid,” where Hardy stands up for women in a unique way, as he criticizes men and the double standard which has been practiced on men and women.

### **4.3 Nizar Qabbani:**

Qabbani was born in 1923 in Damascus to a middle-class family. He attended the University of Damascus from where he finished a law degree. While doing his degree, he started writing poetry and published his first romantic collection of poems entitled *The Brunette Told Me* in 1944. The collection attracted young readers for it as it is written in the common language in addition to Qabbani stepping into the world of the taboo by writing about femininity. “It was a collection of romantic verses that made several startling references to a woman’s body, sending shock waves throughout the conservative society in Damascus” (Jaara, 2019, n.p.).

Qabbani started his diplomatic career after his graduation, which enabled him to travel to and live in different places such as, Madrid, London and China. His life outside of the Middle East has enabled him to express himself openly, free of his cultural restrictions and regulations.

Qabbani went through many of life crisis starting early at age 15 when he lost his sister who committed suicide as she refused a loveless marriage. (Britannica, 2020). This incident influenced Qabbani to speak out against Arab traditions, social regulations and attitudes toward women and he referred to his sister as the martyr of love. Qabbani stated after his sister's death "Love in the Arab world is like a prisoner, and I want to set [it] free. I want to free the Arab soul, sense and body with my poetry" (Mohammad, 2017, n.p). Then he suffered the loss of his oldest son, Tawfiq Qabbani, who died of a heart attack at the age of 22, and finally the loss of his beloved wife, Balqees, in 1982 by bomb attack on the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War, "Her death left a psychological impact on Nizar and he mourned her with a famous poem with her name 'Balqees'" ( Jaara, 2019, n.p).

All of these conflicts shaped Qabbani's personal worldview. After a month of Balqees' tragic death, Qabbani's heart condition worsened as he had a successful bypass surgery and slowly coped with his crisis of losing his beloved Balqees (AlKhalil,2016, pp.276-277).

Qabbani's second collection, written from a woman's viewpoint, aroused women to fight against gender discrimination and to stand up for their social rights. Though he is considered a feminist poet and a fighter for women's liberation, and his second collection of poetry, *Childhood of a Breast* (1954) has established his reputation as a poet who is not afraid to explore female femininity, but he has been criticized for focusing on the beauty of women and female body and ignoring her identity. "Nizzar Qabbani viewed women as an image of a beautiful being, a woman who's only role is a lover in his poems. He uses the notion of romantic love to paralyze her resistance of oppression. Not to forget, he fails to address women for their intelligence, personalities, and beings. Qabbani relates women to nature and he

objectifies her body. He further asks for the right of love, but he misses all the other rights that are not granted for women” (Mohammad, 2017, n.p).

Qabbani criticizes the inequality between men and women in some poems, as in “A Letter from a Stupid Woman,” which shows how men do not understand women unless they’re obedient to them. Qabbani lamented the double standards of Arab society where males were treated better than females with more money spent on their education.

Qabbani died in London at age of 75, and he asked to be buried in Damascus. He wrote “I want my body to be transported after my death to Damascus to be buried there with my folks, the womb that taught me poetry, taught me creativity and granted me the alphabet of Jasmine... This is the way a bird returns home and a baby to his mother’s bosom” (Nizar Qabbani’s Will, 1997).

#### **4.3.1 “When I love You”**

The poem “When I Love You” is translated into English by B. Frangieh and C. Brown, (nd). The poem is about how a deep love captivates a lover’s mind and senses, and the strength of love gives power to a lasting existence despite repressive and destructive societies. The poem is about a man and woman’s relationship and how language, words and grammar cannot control us if we are in love. At the end of the poem Qabbani, by using descriptive imagery and oversensitive emotion, shows that the lover is unable to express or find the right words for love and its effects (Bhatt, 2013, n.p).

When I love you  
 A new language springs up,  
 New cities, new countries discovered.  
 The hours breathe like puppies,

The first stanza shows how the lovers emotions and senses are engaged and how they enchant his thoughts and emotions, which drive him to start a journey of discovering new things, like a new-born baby who is full of active vitality. In the second verse, the poem transformed from the sensual emotions to the social aspects of the relationship.

Wheat grows between the pages of books,  
 Birds fly from your eyes with tidings of honey,  
 Caravans ride from your breasts carrying Indian herbs  
 The mangoes fall all around, the forests catch fire  
 And Nubian drums beat.

Vital life is expressed with fantastical and sensual images, so there is wheat growing from book pages which indicate the confused mind of a lover who cannot start his love journey of adventuring and dreaming. Birds flying from the lover's eyes "with tidings of honey" remind us of old traditions of sending secret love letters by birds.

In the lines "Caravans ride from your breasts carrying Indian herbs/ the Mangoes fall all around," Qabbani draws a vital image of how women's eyes are full of secrets. Qabbani invokes the senses of tantalizing smell and taste from woman's body as the fruit falling is a symbol of a wonderful season for lovers to gather. "Forests catch fire" indicates the warm reactions of lovers in their meeting. "Nubian drums beat" invokes the wild desert tribes of

Nubia and the sound of drums like lover's heart beats and a reminder to finish their meeting quickly.

When I love you your breasts shake off their shame,  
Turn into lightning and thunder, a sword, a sandy storm.  
When I love you the Arab cities leap up and demonstrate  
Against the ages of repression  
And the ages  
Of revenge against the laws of the tribe.

Qabbani describes love as being a motivating power for women rather than being unable to express emotions of love because of the unfair and repressive society. Qabbani describes woman's body as lightning, thunder, a sword, and a storm to invoke both women and men to believe in woman's power of beauty and femininity. "This part could be read negatively that the male lover is suggesting that the woman is powerful BECAUSE of his love. But this is where knowing Qabbani's own background and how he viewed and treated women throughout his life comes in handy" (Bhatt, 2013, n.p).

and I, when I love you,  
 March against ugliness,  
 Against the kings of salt,  
 Against the institutionalization of the desert.  
 And I shall continue to love you until the world flood arrives;  
 I shall continue to love you until the world flood arrives

Qabbani shows that love is strong enough to stand up against repression, regulations and tribal traditions. Love gives the strength to stand up against the world. The last two lines, he repeats “I shall continue to love you” twice, even as God punishes the world most harshly, that much stronger, that his love can endure even such a world that is destroyed twice over.

#### **4.3.2 “Rebel”**

Qabbani has exposed women’s problems and raised their awareness of their value. He expressed women’s deep feelings of oppression and underestimation and highlighted their psychological and sociological struggles to make men realize their responsibility for women’s misery. “Rebel,” one of Qabbani’s poems, addressed women directly and invoked them to rebel against male oppression. The poem was written on behalf of a frustrated Arab woman, criticizing women’s position in the east in all aspects. “In this collection, he expressed himself in the first person feminine. He spoke for the generations of silenced women.” (Abdul Qadeer, n.d, p.5).

Qabbani writes in his book *Diary of an Indifferent Woman*, in the introduction, translated by Giovani, 2019, “It is not a novel deed that a woman burns in this East of ours... half the dust of our deserts is kneaded with the ashes of long locks of hair... and stabbed throats. (p25).

His anonymous female narrator goes on to mourn the “female martyrs/Who were buried/Nameless/In the cemetery/Of ‘traditions’”. “As if was not enough this rebellion was intensified and aggravated by a disturbing vital problem: the relation of the generation of young Arabs with their feminine counterparts” (Loya, 1975, p.482).

Rebel! I love you rebelling  
 Rebel against the East of slaves  
 Incense and hospice  
 Rebel against history against mystery  
 Fear none  
 Who but eagles approach the sun?  
 Rebel against an East  
 For which you're just a feast  
 Of bed-time fun

Qabbani asks women to rebel against the old traditions and masculine domination. He motivates woman's strength by overcoming her imaginary fear of traditions and society. Qabbani describes women as slaves and freedom needs a revolution. In “Rebel” you can find that Qabbani is evoking and persuading women to rebel and resist against all customs and traditions of the society which restricted them with so many rules and traditions while men can practice their freedom as they were relying sometimes on the social customs or religion (Abdul Qadeer, n.d., p.12).

Qabbani “addressed women’s psychological and sociological problems and tried to make men realize that they are responsible for every wrong done to women in the Arabian Society” (Abdul Qadeer, n.d, p11). After listening to him, the woman replies:

O my Lord

I am afraid to say all the things I have (in my mind)

I am afraid if I do the sky will be set on fire

O my Lord your East

Will Confiscate the blue letters

And the dreams from the coffers of women

And will use the knife and chopper

To address the women and slaughter the spring and the yearnings therein and the dark plaits

O my Lord your East will make

Its high honoured crown from the skulls of women

Qabbani again highlights the psychological and sociological struggles in eastern families. He says that the society “Will Confiscate the blue letters/ ...will use the knife and chopper,” to criticize male attitudes towards women, who with terrible domination force them to stick to their regulations and customs by force. He criticizes men’s oppression and women’s misery bitterly by saying “your East”, thereby blaming the eastern traditions and culture for the injustice and abuse of women. The end of any submissive woman is to be executed before



opening her mouth. Qabbani stated, during a lecture at the American university of Beirut in 1968, that “Is it not the irony of fate that I should cry out with a woman’s voice while women are unable to speak with their own natural voice?” (Giovani, 2019, n.p).

### 4.3.3 “Balqees”

In 1969, Qabbani fell in love again with a young Iraqi woman whom he met during a poetry recital in Baghdad. Balqees was the name of Qabbani’s beloved wife, and the Iraqi woman who captured Qabbani’s heart, and who left him a heartbroken man after her tragic death in 1981, as she died in a bomb inside the Iraqi embassy in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War. This tragic loss caused him deep depression which forced him to leave Lebanon to stay in Europe for a long time. “Nizar Qabbani never recovered after his wife died in an explosion in the Embassy” (Alsa’di, 2019, n.p). After her death Qabbani dedicated his well-known elegy, “Balqees” to her, which has been translated into English by Yasser Aman of King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.

Thank you.

Thank you.

For killing my Balqees.

Go, have a drink,

On the martyr’s grave’s brink.

My poem is assassinated.

For no nation but ours

Has such powers!

Balqees ...

Qabbani starts his poem by expressing his grief, sorrow and traumatic heart as the one who lost the beloved wife. He expresses, in complicated emotions of grief and anger the way in which she was killed. In an ironic way he invites the killers to celebrate his sadness and loss. “Balqees was written in the emotionally charged days following the death, registering an emotional outpour that exceeded anything he wrote before” (Giovani, 2019 n.p). Qabbani blames the killers and commemorated his fabulous wife. “Balqees” is a turning point in Qabbani’s love poems’ writing style, as he blamed Arab governments for killing his beloved wife.

How did you take away my days, and dreams.

And crossed off gardens and seasons?

Oh, my wife;

My love; my poem and my eyesight.

You were my beautiful bird.

How did you leave me without a word?

Balqees..

Grief penetrates me.

Balqees ...

Oh, Balqees ...

Oh, Balqees ...

Over you, every cloud weeps buckets.

Who will cry for me?

Qabbani keeps expressing his frustration and loss, “Grief penetrates me”, and thinking about the memories of the olden days and their daily routine and blaming her for leaving him alone. “How did you leave me without a word?” life seems meaningless and dull after Balqees. He seems in a melancholic mood and needs support to go out of his loss and grief.

Balqees:

I ask forgiveness.

Maybe your life was for mine, a sacrifice.

I know well that

your killers’ aims

were to kill my words.

My beautiful, rest in peace

After you, poetry will cease

And womanhood is out of place.

Generations of children’s flocks

Will keep asking about your long hair locks.

Generations of lovers

will read about you, the true instructor.

One day the Arabs will get it

That they killed the prophetess.

That they killed the prophetess.

Killed the prophetess.

Killed

The prophets.

Qabbani expresses his grief and guilt, as he is pretending that the killers aimed to kill him instead of Balqees, “Maybe your life was for mine, a sacrifice”, as they killed his lovely words and feelings of love and blaming himself for bringing her to live in Beirut where she died. Qabbani shows that Balqees means to him a life and feelings which stopped after her death as she left him heartbroken and a speechless man. “A bomb blast at the Iraqi embassy in Beirut left nothing of her but her passport and her handbag. I do not know whether the bomb had been intended for him” (Valjan, 2012, n.p).

Qabbani mentioned that he would never write about love and beauty after his beloved wife since for him, they killed beauty and femininity. “After you, poetry will cease” and “womanhood is out of place.” Qabbani uses the religious term “prophetess” as an indication to her previous work as a teacher. Balqees will never be forgotten as a beautiful teacher and her students will keep her in their memories for upcoming generations.

“Balqees” shows that Qabbani was against the social and political laws and even his love poetry had a political view, as he blamed Arab regimes for killing his beloved wife and delivered a message of refusing the political conflicts in the East.

#### **4.3.4. Perceptions of Women and Love in Qabbani’s Poetry:**

Nizar Qabbani is the most popular Arab poet who fought for women liberation. He established a school of thought that aims to expose inequality between men and women, to discuss feelings of love and passion without shame, and to free the Arab women’s spirit from the old traditions and restrictions.

Qabbani's love poetry is a combination of elegance, transparency, sexuality, and piety. Qabbani aimed to criticize the social repression and the harsh attitude towards women and love. His poems present frustrated females because of their social customs, traditions, and beliefs in a rigid society, that treats women as slaves who are dominated by men. However, women in Qabbani's poetry were suffering from disappointment, despair, anger, and discouragement, but he encouraged them to be aware of their bodies, their femininity and to rebel for their freedom and to take them away from the taboos of society, and make them aware of the fact that they are under gender discrimination treatment and pressure. Qabbani evoked women's consciousness about their social rights. He speaks in the voice of the Arabic woman, which becomes the main theme of his poetry. "To poetry lovers, the Qabbani baptism is like a tattoo on the spirit. It cannot be removed" (Jayyusi, 1987, n.p).

Qabbani's loss of his sister influenced him to speak about love and how it is affected by social beliefs that had existed for centuries in Arab culture. Qabbani mentioned in his book, *"My Story with Poetry"* (2000), were they to avenge her death from a society that rejects love and chases it with axes and guns". (p.74) "Qabbani was unable to view women as entities in themselves or to be concerned for their inner spiritual life. They were just beautiful females, alluring and disturbing, who he seemed unable yet to see as equals." (Arieh Loya, 1975, p.486)

Romance, love, passion, women and anger are all presented in Qabbani's poems, as he loved and adopted a female voice to change the social attitude towards women and woman's attitude towards herself. Jayyusi said about Qabbani in her introduction to *Modern Arabic Poetry* (1987) "his abundant love poetry is the major source of hope that the human heart can finally transcend pain and fear and dare to assert its capacity to summon joy and engage passion. His poetry brings freedom from tension, liberation from gloom, a refreshing release

of laughter and gaiety. Above all, it proudly proclaims a new reverence for the body; it washes away the traditional embarrassment, now many centuries old, which was linked to woman's physical passion." (n.p)

#### **4.4 Comparison**

Both Qabbani and Hardy adopt the female voice which becomes the major theme in their poetic works. Although they are in two different periods of time, place, culture and religion but women and love are their literary themes as they evident women's suffering during their times and highlight the social obstacles that represented by the gender roles and cultural traditions and customs. Both Qabbani and Hardy are not attached to their religion, community traditions and regulations. They reveal their awareness of the inequality and injustice against women as they sympathize with the women who are subject to social and sexual repression. Hardy "critically depicts that we live in a gendered society which is male dominant and where women occupy subordinate position". (Manzour & Zaidi, 2015, p165), while Qabbani's "poetry reflects not only her problems but also the mood, experience and agony which our youth has undergone in the last three or four decades in respect of their relations with the opposite sex" (Loya, 1975, p.481).

The differences between Qabbani and Hardy vary due to their social, cultural, educational and career backgrounds. Hardy is best known as a novelist and gains his reputation as a writer from his novels and plays. However, Hardy turns to poetry writing at the age of 55 especially after the death of his first wife Emma. "Hardy started writing poetry at the age of 55. At the end of 1898 he published his first volume *Wessex Poems* which gained mixed critical reception" (Pathak. 2018, n.p). "Emma's death thus represented a double challenge and a double grief, comforting Hardy with the truth of his marriage" (Roberts, 2003, p.2). After

Emma's death greatest elegies of death celebration that written in emotions, language and writing style.

While Niazr Qabbani is a prominent poet who gained his reputation from his poems for their revolutionary attitude towards the social repression against women. "Qabbani always lived in this feminine universe which includes contradictions, feelings, and stories. So, he tries to convey Eastern/ Arab women's voice to the world of men, who still viewed women as bodies to make love with whenever they wanted" (Almazaidh, 2019, p.104).

Qabbani starts his poetic work as a romantic poet, with love poems and heart's adventures, and he criticizes the manifestations of injustice, corruption and apathy in Arab society. "He has been dubbed in some circles both as women's champion and detractor. He has adopted the feminist cause, defended their usurped rights, and called for them to rebel and take up arms" (Biographical Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa, 2020).

Amongst Qabbani's best-known themes is the Arab women and their freedom and his inner feelings of love and respect towards them. He treats women in his poems with sensitivity, sincerity and moral courage, by showing the inequity of dealing with women in Arab society.

Hardy's best love poems are after Emma's death in an elegiac mood as his inner feeling of regret dominated his language. Hardy's course of true love never does run smooth. For "Hardy, theme (a unifying observation about the human condition) is generally implicit (understood) rather than explicit (overt or stated)" (Allingham, 2015, n.p), while Qabbani's writing language is known for its simplicity and beauty with elegant themes as he is titled as 'The Women's Poet'

for his romanticism and powerful role of calling for women's freedom. (Qawar & El Miniawi, 2014, pp165-166).

Both Qabbani and Hardy try to celebrate their memories after death of Balqees and Emma and show their sympathy and endless love but in a different style of writing. However, they express their feelings and thoughts gently. Hardy seems longing for his past and usually uses themes of regret, loss, sadness and melancholy as noted in his poem 'The voice'. "Poems about Emma, his first wife shows his loneliness in which he lived after the death of his wife. In these poems appear feelings of nostalgia, regret, and also a feeling of fault because of the loss of her soul of the poet" (UKessays, 2017, n.p), while Qabbani is celebrating memories and trying to cope with his melancholy by changing the social repression which causes his sister's suicide and the Arab political worldview after the death of his beloved wife Balqees.

Both poets deny the fact of Balqees and Emma's death indicate that they have physically left but their memories would never leave. However, Qabbani expresses his emotions clearly as he writes his poem 'Balqees' and the title is the name of his wife to immortalize her memory forever by his words. While Hardy never declares the name of his wife and he kept mentioning her by 'You' to keep the woman to whom speaks vague or meant to be women in general.



## Chapter Five

### 5.1 Conclusion

Comparative literature is a universal discipline that allows us to learn of other cultures and literatures. Both Qabbani and Hardy are deeply affected by their loss, grief and their social cultures and customs. It is clear that they were profoundly affected by death of their beloveds, Emma, Qabbani's sister and Balqees. The poems are filled with sadness, memories, regret, melancholy and anger. Both poets endeavor to accept their loss but both of them expressed their affection in their ways and according to their perceptions and attitudes towards their experiences.

Qabbani, after the death of his sister, rebels against his society's traditions and female oppression by his sensual words and encouraging women to revolt for their own freedom. Qabbani criticizes the inequality between men and women in some poems, as in 'Rebel,' and he defends women's right for love. However, Qabbani after the death of Balqees turns to the political poetry as he felt that love and femininity stopped after his beloved wife.

Hardy's work reveals his awareness and attitude towards the inequality against women. Hardy sympathizes with the females who are socially repressed and blamed the society for women who are ruined due to their culture and traditions. Hardy's style of writing about love is full of sadness, regret and melancholy due to his love and marriage experience which seems happy while he and Emma are separated before her death. Hardy expresses his love and feeling of loss and nostalgia by memories and longing for the past.

## 5.2 Recommendations

After studying the poems of both Qabbani and Hardy, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

1. Conduct further studies to discuss Qabbani and Hardy's writing style, content and their affection on the women's liberation and societies till nowadays.
2. Conduct further studies on the position of women in society and how women are perceived by men.

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