

Dr. Mariam Baghdadi

Saudi Arabia



Mariam Baghdadi is a Saudi Arabian writer and poet who received her doctorate in Arabic Literature from Paris. Upon her return she joined King Abdul Aziz University in Djeddah where she is currently professor of Arab Literature and Dean of the Literature Department.

Dr. Baghdadi is an active member of several women's organisations. One of her most popular collections of poetry, entitled «Awatef Insania» (Human Emotions), was published in 1980 by Al Kitab Al Arabi As-Saudi.

Talking about her literary career Dr. Baghdadi said:

«I started writing «prose that rhymed» when I was at intermediary level in school. With time I became surer of myself but I believe I am still at the beginning of the road and compare myself to a toddler playing with rhymes, because the road to poetry is hard and long and one should write for years and years before considering oneself a poet.»

When asked whether she believed there is a female literature and a male literature she answered:

«This question has been debated too much and I don't

have anything new to add to it. I don't believe there is a male/female literature because creativeness and excellency can be found in both men and women. However, the fact men have been longer in the literary field and women only allowed recently in, gives numerical advantage to men.»

Commenting about the literary scene in Saudi Arabia she declared:

«There are many signs of change in Saudi Arabian literature as well as in our society. There is no doubt that many more doors have been opened to Saudi women nowadays. Newspapers have welcomed women journalists and many have excelled, like professor Khayriyyah as-Sakkaf, Juhair al-Musaid, Sharifa ash-Shamlan, Thorayya Kabel and Abidiyya Khayyat.»

As for her favorite Saudi Arabian women writers they include:

«Fakhriyya as-Sakkaf, Hana' Abdel-Malek, Reem as-Sahra' and Fatima as-Sudayri».☆

☆ (Sayidati, Vol. 3, No. 135, 1983).

For more information on Women's Literary Output in Arabia and the Arabian Gulf see *Al-Raida*, Aug. 1, 1983, p. 12.