CHAPTER-3

Ahmad Shawqi's contribution to modern Arabic verse dramas.

Ahmad Shawqi was one of the greatest Arabic poets laureate. He was an Egyptian poet and dramatist who pioneered the modern Egyptian literary movement, most notably introducing the genre of poetic epics to the Arabic literary tradition. He was nicknamed Amir al- Sho'araã which literary means the prince of poets.

Shawqi's contribution to modern Arabic literature is tremendous. He contributed immensely to the development of verse drama of modern Arabic literature. In some plays, he describes the national struggle and in others he depicts the village life and the simple folk burdened with superstitions and legends. In regards of literary production, Shawqi excelled all his contemporaries.

Ahmad Shawqi's Life and works :

Ahmad Shawqi is a well known modern Arabic poet among the neo-classicists who were bent on reviving the cherished traits of classical poetry after half a millennium of decadence and rigidity in Arabic poetry. Born in 1868 of fairly wealthy parents of mixed Arab, Turkish, Circassia and Greek origins, he was brought up in the modern secular schools of Egypt in addition to his Qur'anic training. After his secondary education in Egypt, he was sent to Europe by the Khedive Tawfiq,' ruler of Egypt (1879-92) to study law and literature. The poet was to spend two years in Montpellier and

two years in Paris. On the day of his departure from Cairo, the Khedive gave him one hundred pounds and promised to pay him a sum of sixteen pounds monthly. He warned the Paris bound budding poet not to worry about his parents. Whenever he needed money Khedive was ready to take full responsibility of all his financial needs. This undoubtedly had a great impact on the mind of Shawqi. Little wonder then that he showered his encomiums upon the Khedive and his successor.

When the poet returned to Egypt in 1891, he was appointed to a high office in the court and soon became the favorite bard of the Khedive Abbas Hilmi, as M. M. Badawi puts it. In September 1894, Ahmad Shawqi was delegated to represent Egypt in the conference of Orientalists held in Geneva. During the conference, the poet recited an elegant poem captioned *Kibar al-hawadith fi wadi al-Nil* (Great Events in the Nile valley), in such a brilliant manner that won him the hearts of his audience. Thus much of the poet's time was consumed by his office at the court which he occupied for over twenty years, and which, although conferred prestige and power upon him as 'Shair al-Umara' (poet of the princes) in Egypt, also cost him some of his freedom. Nevertheless, Shawqi tried at the same time to compose a multiplicity of poems which were outside the scope of his official functions.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, the British government prevented the Khedive, Abbas from entering Egypt. He was deposed in his absence while on a visit to the Ottoman Caliph in Istanbul. The action was due to the Khedive's known solidarity with the Ottoman government which was in alliance with Germany, Britain's deadly foe. Sultan Hasayn Kamil (1914-17)

was appointed in his place. The British promptly annexed Egypt and declared it a protectorate.

Ahmad Shawqi's attachment to the Khedival court and his sympathy for the Ottoman Caliphate were no secret. He could not pretend to be neutral, for his vituperative attacks on the British in his much publicized poetry were clear evidence of his stand. As a security measure, the British wanted to exile him to Malta in 1915, but some state dignitaries interceded for him; he was then given the option to choose where he would like to be exiled to. He chose Barcelona in Spain, and was promptly sent there in the company of his family. He was allowed to return to his home country towards the end of 1919.

In Spain the poet's virtuosity was enhanced. He developed great interest in Spanish Arabic poetry, particularly that of Ibn Zaydun. He composed many poems on the past glory of the Arabs in the Iberian Peninsula and gave vent to his deep nostalgia for Egypt in meditative and highly emotional poetry.

At the end of the war, the poet returned to Egypt. At this time he was no longer the partly restricted poet of the court. He became more and more attracted by the nationalist aspirations of his people. He, like Hafiz Ibrahim, became one of the mouth-pieces of Egyptian nationalists more especially in the 1919 insurrection by the youths against British imperialism. Thus it was evident that Shawqi's exile to Spain was a blessing in disguise. He learnt much and perhaps, discovered his natural talents more than ever before, and strove vigorously to attain the title of Amir al-Shu^{c}ara (the prince of poets). This second phase of the poet's life was also noted for the writing of his poetic plays, the only exception being *Ali Bey al-Kabir* (1893).

The poet was married to a young lady from a well-to-do family. She brought a lot of wealth to the matrimonial home from her father. This further augmented his comfort and stability. He had three children by her; a girl, Aminah, and two boys whom he named Ali and Husayn respectively.

Shawqi continued to enjoy an unmitigated flow of poetic inspiration and the adoration of Egyptians and other Arabs until his death in October 14th, 1932. Funeral citations were made in the Royal Opera House under the auspices of the $$$$Ministry of Education and a group of literary dignitaries. Many scholars from all over the Arab world were invited to the ceremony and the Egyptian monarch, King Fu'ad, was represented at the ceremony.

Everyone knows that Shawqi has been rewarded as the prince of poets; in the field of poetry. In 1927 Shawqi achieved the summit of his fame during a ceremony in Cairo to which guests from the entire Arab world were invited and where he was honored as "the prince of poets" amir al-shu 'ara'. The festival lasted from April 29 till May 2nd even the distinctly modernist magazine al-Siyasah al-Usbu'iyah devoted a special issue to it. His twofold contribution to the Arab literary tradition resides not only in a sizable body of poems published in an anthology known as "Sawqiyyat" , but also in his pioneering introduction of poetic drama into the Arabic literary tradition. Commenting on Shawqi's use of rhymed verse in drama for the first time, critic Taher at-Tanahi (1967) points out that Shawqi did for Arabic literature what Shakespeare had done for English literature.

Shawqi's work can be categorized into three main periods during his career. The first coincides with the period during which he occupied a position

at the court of the Khedive, consisting of eulogies to the Khedive: praising him or supporting his policy. The second comprised the period of his exile in Spain. During this period, his feeling of nostalgia and sense of alienation directed his poetic talent to patriotic poems on Egypt as well as the Arab world. The third stage occurred after his return from exile, during that period he became preoccupied with the glorious history of Ancient Egypt and Islam. This was the period during which he wrote his religious poems, in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. The maturation of his poetic style was also reflected in his plays, the most notable of which were published during this period.

Arabic verse dramas as a new literary form in modern Arabic literature has not been discussed exclusively by most of the historians and critics of modern Arabic literature. 'Ahmad Shawqi' occupied a distinct position in the field of modern Arabic literature and became one of the major figures in 20th century in Egyptian poet. He was known as a leading figure in the 20th century Arabic verse drama. He had a good command over writing dramas in verse forms. He was not only the prince of poet but also the pioneer of modern Arabic verse dramas.

Shawqi was a versatile poet. He wrote eight verse dramas, among them six are tragedies and two are comedies. Among them three are on Egyptian historical subject- *Masra Kilyubatra* (the fall of Cleopatra, 1929), *Qambiz* (Cambyses 1931) and *Ali Bey al-Kabir* (Ali Bey the great, 1932). Three more on ancient Arab themes- *Majnun al-Layla* (Mad lover of Layla, 1931), *Antra* (Antara, 1932) and *Amirat al-Andalaus* (the princess of Andalusia 1932). The seventh and eight were a verse comedy- *Al-Sitt Huda* (Lady Huda) and *Al-*

Bakhila (the misery woman) almost all are outstanding in literary merit. His writings in the fields of verse dramas were influenced by the western literature in general and by Shakespeare's dramas in particular. His writings reflect historical touch; he derives his themes either from the history of Ancient Arabs or from Islamic history or from the current *social* life. His writings skill, expression and language used in his verse dramas are really fantastic.

Ahmed Shawqi was a prolific poet, he has written more than any of his successive writers in the field of verse dramas and poetry. In fact he is a person who paved the way for others to write dramas in the verse form in modern Arabic literature. His writing consists of social theme elegies, descriptions, political and occasional issues. Shawqi was one of the first Arabic language poet and dramatist in the modern Egyptian literary movement, most notably introducing the genre of poetic epics to the Arabic literary tradition. Shawqi used in almost all his verse dramas very simple language and very short meter. It is commonly accepted that Shawqi was under the influence of Racine, Cornile and Shakespeare's tragedies when he wrote his verse plays. In this chapter, I have tried to express the value of verse drama and its development, through the contribution of Ahmed Shawqi in the field of verse drama in modern Arabic literature.

Poetical contribution of Ahmad Shawqi :

Shawqi's poetry reflected the political and social environment of his time and the history of Egypt as well. Political history begins with Shawqi and Hafiz. Though many modern poets wrote political poetry but they could not reach the high mastery and skill of these two poets. Shawqi's diwan covers wide and

varied subjects. His poetry collection (diwan) runs into thousand pages. The titles of some of the poems are Mustafa kamil; Dhikra Maulid Nabi; The Nile; Damascus; Good bye to Lord Cromer; Knowledge and Teaching and the Teachers Task.

He is known in modern Arabic literature as Amir al-Shuara, (the prince of poets) whose poetry is more comprehensive than any other poet's - both past and present-as far as the Arabic language is concerned. There is no doubt that in addition to his poetic virtuosity, his contact with some other cultures, particularly French and English, helped him in no small measure to widen his horizon and fertilize his ideas. The poet believed very strongly in God and did not fail to express this unshakable belief in his poems. He also loved Islam very much and tried not to compromise his faith whatever be the situation. Hence he regarded Islam as the seal of religion.

The famous Shawqiyyat :

The poet published the first volume of his poetry captioned al-Shawqiyyat in 1898. His poems, like his contemporaries', generally appeared first in the newspapers, magazines and journals of the time such as:

- Al-Ahram,
- Al-Mu 'ayyad,
- Al-Liwa,
- Al-Majallat al-Misriyyah,
- Ukaz, and al-Zuhur.

It was much later that his selected works were published in four volumes called alShawqiyyat.

In the new edition of volume I of al-Shawqiyyat (1925) which was introduced by Dr. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, the most spectacular poems in this collection of sixty-one poems are *Kibar al-hawadith fi wadi al-Nil* (Important Events in the Nile Valley), *Sada al-harb* (the Echo of War), and *Nahj al-Burdah* (in the manner of the Mantle) which is a eulogy of the Prophet Muhammad meant to be read during the Mawlid al- Nabi celebrations.

Treated in this part also are socio-political and historical themes such as poems on Mustafa Kamil's victory over the Greek, a lamentation of the abolition of the Caliphate by Mustafa Kamal of Turkey, a halt at the graveside of Napoleon Bonaparte, and a poem entitled *al-Andalus al-Jadidah* (The New Spain).

The second volume of the Diwan (1930) contains one hundred and seven poems arranged under three headings:

- Al-Wasf (descriptive poems),
- Al-Nasib (elegiac reminiscence at the beloved one's deserted encampments), and
- Mutafarriqat (miscellaneous odes).

Poems in each section are arranged alphabetically. Conspicuous among the poems in this part are *Ayat al-asr fi sama Misr* (the sign of the Time in the sky of Egypt), *al-Busfur Ka-annaka tara-hu* (The Bosphorus as if you are seeing it), *al-Siniyyat al-Andalusiyyah* (The Andalusian Ode in S-Rhyme), and

Khada ʿuha (They Deceived Her). Panegyric poems have been omitted from this part, but the nasib, as has been mentioned, remains. It is here that one finds Shawqi's famous elegant verse which summarizes a typical love story.

This volume of the Shawqiyyat also contains *Marra' al-Lurd Kitshinar* (The Fall of Lord Kitchener), *al-Nasr al-Misri* (The Egyptian Eagle), and *Saqr Quraysh* (the Hawk of Quraysh) which is a story about Abd al-Rahman al-Dakhil in strophic Andalusia verse.

In 1936, the third volume of the poet's anthology was published; this contains fifty-nine elegiac poems. It was befitting tribute to Ahmad Shawqi that his elegies on notable personalities both in the Arab and Western worlds were published in one volume four years after his demise. These elegies follow the traditional pattern, and the bard's neo-classicist proclivities are glaringly noticeable here as in many other genres of Arabic poetry he treated. Some of the elegies are on people like Hafiz Ibrahim, Said Zaghlul, Mustafa Kamil, Muhammad Abduh, Qasim Amin, Jurji Zaydan, Victor Hugo, Tolstoy, Verdi, Tharwat Pasha, Yaqub Sarruf, Sultan Husayn Kamil, al-Manfaluti, Butrus Ghali, and the poet's own mother who died when he was away in Spain.

The fourth volume appeared in 1943. The 129 poems in this volume are classified under the following headings:

- Mutafarriqat fi al-siyasah wa al-tarikh wa al-ijtima (Miscellaneous poems on political, historical and social issues);
- Al-Khususiyyat (personal notes);
- Al-Hakayah (Fables);

- Diwan al-Atfal (Children's Anthology);
- Min Shir al-siba (Of childhood verses), and
- Mahjubiyyat (Light-hearted poems on his good friend, Dr. Mahjub Thabit)

In 1961, a scholar named Muhammad Sabri published two further volumes entitled "Al-Shawqiyyat al-Majhulah" (the Unknown Shawqiyyat), but the authorship of some of the poems in the book, according to Dr. M. M. Badawi, has not yet been established beyond all doubt. Until the authenticity of the volume's content is proved, by further research, let us be contented for now with the known Shawqiyyat.

Shawqi's Political poetry :

The political poetry of Shawqi retained the elaborate classical style of their authors. Shawqi's famous political poem was, The wake of the French bombardment of Damascus in 1926. In this poem entitled, The calamity of Damascus a new style of political poetry is discernible. Words and phrases drawn from the modern political vocabulary make an appearance in this poem and other poems of 1920s.

Historical Poetries :

Some critics mentioned that Shawqi's poem was modeled on Victor Hugo's Legende des siecles. This might be true as regards the actual idea of writing a 'survey' of National history, but the spirit and language of Shawqi's poetry do not betray the impact of non-Arabic model. In many sense, this poetry

is one of the outstanding products of early neo-classicism. Shawqi wrote several long poetries on the history of Islam and its Prophet (for example, Al-Hamziyyah al-Nabawiyyah and Nahj al-burdah). Shawqi's Islamic poetries, which engendered a trend among his contemporaries and successors to produce long narrative poems on the history of Islam.

Marginal types :

Shawqi was particularly fond of this genre, and a posthumous volume of his al-Shawqiyyat (vol-4) includes some sixty short fables in verse. Thirty six of these fables have the 'non-canonical' rajaz meter, and in most of them rhyming couplets rather than monorhymes are employed. Another type is anashid (sing) that is, short march-like poems composed to be sung or recited on patriotic or communal occasions. Most of the anashid of the neo-classicists use a 'European' strophic scheme, which historically preceded the adoption of strophic poetry by romantic Arab poets in the inter-war period. Marginal verses represent a far-reaching departure from the tenets of classicism. A close study of their language may show that they were instrumental in the rise, several decades later, of a new, non-classical poetic language in modern Arabic literature.

Shawqi's poem is important historical documents since many poems are said relating to many historical events. He also wrote occasional poetry to celebrate particular occasion of public interest. Shawqi always keep his mind inter related with society or common people. He used his writings (poetry) like a weapon which a soldier uses to dominate his enemy. Shawqi tried to express every aspect through his poem in his time. Though literate people easily

understand the hidden meaning of his poetry but illiterate people some time did not catch the real fact of his poetry. That's why he wrote eight poetic dramas to remove this problem. So, for those who did not know writing or reading properly, for them he arranged poetic plays where they can see and understand the inner meaning exactly. So, during his study he read more than enough books from western writers and made his mind in a different way, which is poetic play. So, in between four years of his life he wrote eight outstanding plays, verse plays which gave a new direction to develop modern Arabic literature.

Shawqi's Prose Works :

Ahmad Shawqi is known all over the Arab world as a poet who tried his hand at every imaginable poetic theme known in Arabic literature. In addition to his undying fame as a poet, he wrote the following five prose romances:

- Adhra al-Hind (1897). This work introduces the reader to the ancient history of Egypt.
- Ladiyas (1899). This romance is about the last of the Pharaohs of Egypt.
- Shaytan Binta'ur (1899); this was published in al-Majallat al-Misriyyah.
- Waraqat al-As (1904). This work has less rhyming prose than others. It treats ancient history as far back as the time of Sabur, the King of Persia.
- The poet also wrote an ornate work of rhyming prose entitled Aswaq al-Dhahab (the Markets of Gold).

The book appeared in 1932. It contains articles in which the writer expressed his views on topics like freedom, the nation, Suez Canal, the Pyramids, death, the Unknown Soldier, etc. It also contains proverbs and

aphorisms some of which are drawn from Shawqi's personal experience. The title of the book reminds one of al-Zamakhshari's work *Atwaq al- Dhahab* (The Collars of Gold) which is a classical collection of proverbs written in the early part of twelfth century.

'A pen is more powerful than swords: Shawqi really proved it through his writings. He want to show by his plays the Egyptian society and specially the character of women of Egypt, how much they suffered by rule and regulation made by man. He wanted to support woman and reduce their problem through his writings. In the field of poetry Ahmad Shawqi was rewarded by the name the Prince of poet. But he also called the Pioneer of modern Arabic verse drama.

Concept of a historical plays:

History represents the social, political and economic life of man. It is a written document of the incidents that take place in human life. Society of the particular age is reflected on every line of the drama. The writer does not distort the historical truth, though he embellishes it with his own imagination and the philosophy of his life. Arabic civilization is very old. The story of the Arabian epics deals with the historical facts. History records the upheavals and prosperity which occur in human life. When a dramatists uses any historical fact in his drama he makes it attractive and charming. He mixes imagination within historical incidents. Historical plays in Arabic literature are generally romantic. Ancient historical dramas are full with sentiments. Though *Masra Kilubatra* a

politics based historical drama, having history of patriotism. In his play *Masra Kilubatra* he paints his heroine as a great patriot.

The author should be well- acquainted with history of the drama and much exaggeration should be avoided by the dramatists. From this point of view this selection may be of four kinds-

- From the original source.
- From the historical facts.
- From the non stories traditionally come down.
- From some famous fables and legends or contemporary legends.

When the theme is taken from the original sources the playwright is very alert to portray the correct image. The historical facts become interesting with the touch of imagination. It is the responsibility of the playwright to make the fact believable. Sometimes the fables serve as the source of the historical dramas. Attraction of the drama depends on the proper presentation of actors and actresses. The playwright is able to make acquaint the people with the society through this important media with the socio- political, economic and religious condition of the country. Playwrights of such drama always take such themes and by virtue of imagination make the drama believable and acceptable to their readers and viewers.

Shawqi felt that historical plays were something of a luxury as far as the Arabs were concerned, and in their usefulness to them could not be compared with those which treated matters of relevance to contemporary society. If history had to be introduced into drama it should be treated as a subsidiary

element since a play should revolve round social ideas and principles. Showqi's most of the subjects were clearly to point out the need for the Egyptians to unite in order to get rid of the western imperialists. In this respect Shawqi following a fairly common trend in the Arab theatre of dramatizing glorious events from Arab and Islamic history.

Shawqi was a prolific poet with a fine command of rhyme and diction, his themes ranging from conventional eulogy to poetic plays following such Western models as Shakespeare, Corneille, and Racine. While his efforts at imitating the ancient Arabic poets were unsuccessful, he adapted traditional poetic meters to dramatic dialogue in several poetic plays, such as *Maṣra Kliyūbātrā* ("The Fall of Cleopatra").

Thematically analyze on Shawqi's verse dramas :

Ahmad Shawqi first published Ali Bey al-Kabir (in Beirut in the year 1888 and represented it in Cairo in 1902 by Khalil al-Yazizi. Which deals with a well known legendary event the conversion of a king to Christianity in early Arab history. The later modification done by Shawqi are polishing the poetry, use of more elevated style changing the name of heroine but he left the original plot substantially unchanged. As seen in his other plays, this play was adapted from an event that took place in Egypt around 1769. That was rebellion against the ambitious Mamluk ruler Ali Bey the great who was becoming more autonomous. Muhammad Abul Dhabab, one of his treacherous protégé instigated him and after murdering him became the heir to the king to induce lone interest treachery he introduced a beautiful slave girl offered to Ali Bey. To satisfy Amal he made her free and married her. They go off to Syria soon after

their marriage to meet his faithful friend Ally Dahir of Acre. Another protégé of Ali Bey, his adopted son Murad Bey has become captivated by Amal and had an illicit relation with her. But she remained faithful to her husband and before she and Murad could discover it was too late, that they are infect brother and sister, whose father Mustafa had sold them as slaves. Thus there is every element that is mystery, suspense, intrigue adventure, love test and repentance to strengthen the plot and give life to the story. Murad resist himself to the last moment from committing incest, when he discovered that his father Mustafa and his brother Ali Bey the great contains albeit anachronistically and impassioned criticism of the practice of slaver and a plea for Arab and Egyptian nationalism and points a vivid picture of the self seeking Mamluk rulers of Egypt. While portraying the character Shawqi has experimented lot. He wanted portray Ali Bey the protagonist as a pious man struggling to overcome the ups and downs of his life. But behind the image of this generous man there was a shady post and grave in consistence. Likewise while depicting the character of Amal, Shawqi left many opportunities of inner conflict, but he felt to do this and he has not created Amal as an intellectual woman who has time enough to analyze herself critically. Thus the possibility of conflict between the claims of love and call of duty is lost. The inner conflict of the character which has been commonly used on liked by the Elizabeth's and modern dramatist also having an invisible presence here which is the most serious defect of *Ali Bey al-Kabir*. Shawqi has stared the play with a promising subject matter besides that it couldn't keep the full attention and appreciation of the reader or audience due to

the take of dramatic activities. Events move too fast and people fall on love decide too many go off to wars or suffer changes of heart for too suddenly.

In ***Masra-Kilyubatra*** (The Fall of Cleopatra) Shawqi tried to reflect clearly the Egyptian society. Basically Egyptian women have good qualities with patriotism. In this story Shawqi described the last days of the Egyptian queen. The second major character Antony also suicide due to a policy. Though he has died for his country and completed his work but in the other hand he also expressed that how much he loved her and missed her. The story started with the battle of Actium, with the populace singing a song of victory in which Shawqi showed effectively how easily the people are manipulated by their rulers and forced into believing that an ignominious retreat was a military triumph. In this play Cleopatra committed suicide due to her sacrifice for her country. Rather than accepting the shame of surrendering her country and herself to Roman tutelage, she preferred to die. The second major character Antony likewise died to save himself from the consequences of his defeat at Actium. As his breathing, his last breath he announces proudly that he is a fighter whom has failed to subjugate and has chosen to die under the banner of love.

The basic theme of this play is conflict, mainly spiritual conflict. It is this conflict that works out the theme in action. The conflict in Antony and Cleopatra centers on a choice that Antony faces and has to resolve. Antony is divided into two words- the world of power and domination and the world of love and imagination.

Shawqi's play can be regarded as a defense of the Egyptian queen showing the fate of Egypt at heart. He depicts her as a proud queen who prefers suicide to being taken as prisoner. Her last soliloquy is really a masterpiece.

Majnun Al-Layla (The Mad lover of Layla) is the sad tale of the two semi legendary Arabian Desert lovers, Qays and Layla. Shawqi places them in early Umayad ruler in the seventh century; the story has been the subject of many works in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Indian literature also. Shawqi derives his material mainly from the well known medieval compendium of knowledge about classical poetry; 'Kitab al- Aghani' (the books of songs) by al-Isfahani. The play contains some of Shawqi's best poetry in which he describes in moving the controversy of love and duty. Qays wanted to marry with Layla who was also from the same tribes, but her father refused that only because of status. Her father did not wanted to marry his only daughter Layla with the poor man Qays. Inevitably he is therefore not allowed to marry her, and she in turn, despite her overwhelming love for him, marries the good Ward, who cherishes her, but, having regard for her feeling for Qays, does not touch her. She dies of grief, still a virgin. Shawqi pointed the Egyptian women vary widely, who did not take any decision by heart. The appeal of The Mad Lover of Layla is not of a play but of a moving love story in which the Arab legend is fused with elements from the tales of Orpheus and Romeo: the archetypal connection between love and death.

The desire to popularize poetic drama by using a kind of verse which can be sound like prose , but which rise to poetic heights and gains more intensity if a given situation demands it. In Layla wal Majnun Abd al-Sabur does not

choose mythical, Hypothetical or folktale characters as he dose in Bad an Yamut a-Malik (After the king is dead, 1973) and al-Amirah Tanagir (the princess is waiting 1971)

Shawqi's play that the two lovers are separated by prohibited conventions. In Abd al-Sabur's the cause of the lovers misfortune is both personal and political. Poverty, social injustice and lack of decision are national melodies which sow dissention and treason in the ranks of the revolutionaries. In some ways Layla is seen as a symbol of Egypt.

Antra (Antara) a play also based on legendary pre- Islamic hero who became the subject of much popular romance literature. Antara, a manumitted black slave of indomitable spirit and unparallel military processes in love with Abla the daughter of his ex-masters cousin who returns his affection. He asks her father for her hand in marriage, but her father will not have a black for his son in law and agrees to marry her to a rich young man.

But the play ends happily with a successful trick by which he marries Abla and Sakhr marries Abla's friend Najia, who is deeply in love with him. The play is presented in four acts, each consisting of a series of short scenes, the action advancing with breathless speed, within crips, fast moving dialogue, due to Shawqi's choice of short meters in general. Yet the characterization is extremely superficial and the whole work never rises above the level of popular romance. In this play we can see the differences between statuses. At that time there was a great racial discrimination. The play has a happy ending due to the positive light of Shawqi. The play Antara was thematically related with his other plays.

The play ***Cambysis*** is also a patriotic drama as like the fall of Cleopatra. Here two girls (princess) dedicated their life for their country. The Persian king, Cambyasis was offered princess Nifrit the daughter Egyptian Pharaoh. But Niffrit did not want to marry with him but accept that proposal only for save her country from destruction.

Princess Natitas, the daughter of the previous Pharaoh who have been murdered and replaced by the present Pharaoh (the father of Nifrit). Natitas sacrifices herself posing as Nifrit and Married with Cambysis. Cambysis discovers the deception and invades Egypt, committing countless atrocities. Cambysis was a very cruel person or king and he kill his own brother and sister at home. He showed the extreme leniency towards the Egyptians, particularly after he has slaughtered Abis the sacred deity of Egypt. He is subsequently troubled by his madness sees the ghost of his victims which like the furies drive him to stab himself death with the very dagger which he often used to kill others. Feeling guilty for being the cause of her country's untold sufferings, princess Nifrit commits sucide. Queen Natitas, however goes off to upper Egypt in order to organize resistance to get rid of the Persian army of occupation. Interwined with this patriotic theme is the usual love theme. Actually the two girl both Natitas and Nifrit love the same young man name Tasso who at last for sake Natitas in favour of the new Pharaoh's daughter.

This melodramatic play is episodic in structure. Princess Nifrit makes speech before throwing herself into the Nile, but the audience not shown the process of thoughts and feeling that have led her to take the decision. But the play contains with some excellent descriptions, particularly of the wedding

banquet and the magic on the Persian solders in their sleep. Shawqi also manages to create dramatic suspense before the revelation of the true identity of the Persian queen and give an impressive verbal deal between the proud Natitas and the outraged Cambysis. Shawqi draw in his play lots of different character in a stage at same time. He always skillfully arrange all of the character and dialogue of their like as real one.

Ahmad Shawqi's historical drama ***Amirat al-Andalus*** (Princess of Andalusia) derived from Islamic history, which deals with the sad reign of the poet al- Mutamid Ibn Abbad. This is the only play which is not written in verse and as a historical drama in prose it does not either in language or dialogue, in dramatic structure or characterisation, rise to the level of Ibrahim Ramzi's good historical dramas, such as the heroes Mansurea, written much earlier. Princess of Andalusiya is also a love story. The king al-Matamid ibn Abbad, love with the petty monarchs of Seville. The dialogues of this play's are not at verse form. So, among the other plays of Shawqi it is not so attractive or famous. But Shawqi simply introduce one kind of love which is called pure love without any effort. The king loved that particular girl as same way. Basically the themes of Shawqi's plays are related with love matters though it may social, political and different categories of societies.

Al- Sitt Huda (Lady Huda) and ***Al- Bakhilai***, (The Misery women) both are comedy verse dramas written by Shawqi. Lady Huda is a rich woman, who after the death of her husband manages to re – marry. The play is an amusing satire on men who marry women only for their wealth. Lady Huda marries a series of nine men, all of whom are after her money. Here shawqi shows the

character of women, they always hide their original age. In this play Lady Huda pretending that she is only twenty years old. Shawqi's other verse dramas, Lady Huda is written throughout in a simple language, and very short meters, with the result that the dialogue moves very fast and is more dramatic in nature. Lady Huda despite its rather simple episodic structure, a striking example of the use of verse drama to express contemporary Egyptian social reality. It seems a pity, that Aziz Abaza who followed in the footsteps of Shawqi, imitated the rather antiquated historical dramas, rather than Lady Huda.

The dialogues of Shwaqi's plays are very easy. Themes are related with historical love matters though it may social, political and different categories of society. Audience fully enjoyed every plays. Actually he tried in his all play to reflect the Egyptian women character. How much they suffer for their tribe, society and sacrifices for their country.

Ahmad Shawqi must be reckoned one of the most significant figures in twentieth century Arabic literature. The triumphs and failures that are represented by the reception of his enormous output of plays are emblematic of the issues that have confronted the poetic drama genre as it has endeavored to adapt its complex modes of communication to the societies of the Arab world.

Though Ahmad Shawqi introduces verse drama in modern Arabic literature, but his contemporary writers help him to developing it and successfully occupied an important position in the history of Arabic literature. The followers like Aziz Abaza, Ali Ahmad Bakathir, Abd al-Rahman al-Sarqawi, Salah Abd al-Sabur etc. were following Shawqi's writing, his skill, theme, style all everything in the later period.

Shawqi's Islamic Works :

Shawqi the poet is firm believe in Islam. Shawqi wrote much about Muhammad and Islam. His strong sympathies with the Ottoman Caliphate made him attach great importance to Islam as a necessary political force to prevent the Ottoman Empire from disintegration.

Islam as a religion and way of life influenced the poet greatly in his literary works. He was learned in Islamic Studies such as the Qur'an, Sirah (the biography of the Prophet Muhammad) and the Hadith (the Traditions of the Prophet P.B.U.H.). Shawqi's knowledge of these branches of Islamic Studies was not just a superficial one'. Rather his Shawqiyyat are replete with Islamic elements which portray his Islamic background. In the poems which are specifically devoted to the Prophet Muhammad, e.g. Nahj al-Burdah - a poem of 190 verses composed in 1910; *Dhikr al-Mawlid* (1911) which contains 99 verses; and *al-Hamziyyat al-Nabawiyyah* (1912) which contains 131 verses, the poet's deep knowledge of the Sirah of the Prophet is indubitably established. In these works, Shawqi showered all imaginable praises upon the Prophet in a manner that equaled the renowned al-Busiri.

Shawqi proved in his works that he was an outstanding, eulogist, didactic poet, social critic, outspoken politician, bucolic singer, and bacchanalian bard, and fabulist, writer of juvenile stories, play-Wright, historian, and Islamic Scholar with a bias to the field of Sirah (biography of the Prophet Muhammad). Indeed his emergence as a poet marked the maturation of modern Arabic poetry, a phenomenon whose foundation was laid by literary figures liKe Nīsif al-

Yaziji, Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and al-Barudi in the early years of the renaissance of Arabic literature.

Shawqi's Islamic poetry, namely, a defensive, polemic note. It is Shawqi's response to the attacks by Christian missionaries and western orientalists and it concerns the use of the sword by Muhammad and the position of the sword in Islam. This is found most clearly addressing the Prophet, he says:

"They say you have raided and God's apostles were
never sent destroy souls, they never came to shed
blood. This is mere ignorance, falsification and
sophistry, for you have conquered by the word
before conquering by the sword."

As a versatile artist, he frequented social gatherings, cinema and dance houses. But as he advanced in age, his appetite for these fleeting things decreased. In his last days, he had dramatically cut down his hedonistic engagements. He contented himself with the study of Islamic religious books such as al- Ghazali's and repented fervently for his past indulgences.

Ahmad Shawqi has proved through his poetic experimentation in Arabic that the language is capable of expressing almost everything under the sun appropriately. He used the classical language to express modern terms and this he did admirably.

Shawqi’s language of poetry is dramatic especially in his tragedies. He relies on the imagination of the spectators in putting the scenery he could not have on the stage into the body of his verse. Shawqi’s poetic devices reflect his conscious dramatic art in verse dialogue, relations of characters, rhythm of iambic or in the rhythmic stresses. In the course of action, most of his characters are brought to critical test in delicate and effective use of figurative language. He offers us a picture of life as it is with all its contradictions and incoherence and his individuality asserts itself on the form of the plays, on their style and verse. Three of his violent plays are related to Egyptian history: *Masra Kilyubatra* (the fall of Cleopatra, 1929), *Qambiz* (Cambysis, 1931), *Ali Bey al-Kabir* (Ali Bey the Great, 1932).

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Among the characteristics which he gave his poetic drama its great dramatic effectiveness is the variation on the basic rhythm of iambic pentameter, the abundance of the popular imagery and figures of speech besides Shawqi's control on the use of dramatic soliloquies.

We noted above the early tendency of theatre directors to incorporate musical episodes into performances and the desire of early pioneers to move away from the apparent inevitability of this association in audience expectations. Ahmad Shawqi's plays, full as they were of beautiful poetry, tended to follow this practice. During the golden age of Egyptian drama that we have been exploring here, at least two writers, `Abd al-rahman al-Sharqawi (d. 1987) and Salah `Abd al-Sabur (d. 1981), succeeded in making contributions that both avoided the linkage with music and were successfully performed on stage. Of the two `Abd al-Sabur was certainly the more accomplished, most especially in his remarkable play, *Ma`sat al-Hallaj* (The Tragedy of al-Hallaj, 1965), which retells the true story of the famous mystic, al-Hallaj, who was crucified in A.D. 922.

Ahmad Shawqi was most imaginative poet of Arab world. He was also a successful dramatist of modern Arabic literature. Shawqi's verse plays explore in an amusing, yet rather obviously didactic, fashion, patriotic and symbolic the ways in which these apparently useless individuals set about identifying roles for themselves in the new socialist context. While this play may be somewhat lacking in subtlety, it clearly illustrates in the context of Shawqi's development as a playwright the way in which he had developed his technique in order to broach topics of contemporary interest, not least through a closer linkage between the pacing of dialogue and actions on stage. Shawqi was to provide further illustration of this development in technique with another play set in an earlier period of Egyptian history.

While Shawqi’s earlier plays were all composed in the literary language, he was to conduct a number of experiments with different levels of dramatic language. In the play, *Amirat al-Andalus*, for example - with its themes - he couched the dialogue in something he termed a third language, one that could be read as a text in the standard written language of literature, but that could also be performed on stage, it is the only one which was written in prose. There is perhaps an irony in the fact that another of Shawqi's plays of that period, *Al-Sitt Huda*, was one of his most successful works, among his plays, precisely because its use of the literary language in the dialogue was a major contributor to the non-reality of the atmosphere in this absurdist drama involving extensive passages of non-communication between husband and wife.

Shawqi is one of the major pioneer figures in modern Arabic literature. In the particular realm of theatre, he fulfils an overarching role as the sole founder of an entire literary tradition, as Taha Husayn had earlier made clear. His struggles on behalf of Arabic drama as a literary genre, its techniques, and its language, are coterminous with the achievement of a central role in contemporary Arab political and social life.

Egyptian dramatists Shawqi was able to write plays, both in the classical and the colloquial language. Ahmad Shawqi was a prolific poet that why he armed the name of prince of poets but he was not a prolific dramatist. Because we know that he wrote only eight dramas in his life. But these eight dramas gave him a special place in modern Arabic literature. People knows him as the pioneer of modern Arabic verse dramas,

Audience fully enjoyed the play of Shawqi. He always used very carefully the general elements of dramas. His theme of dramas deals with historical events. He wants to show the real picture of that period or the people of Egypt. Actually he tried in his all play to reflect the Egyptian women characters. How much they were daring, patriotic and loving and how they sacrifice their life for their country. In *Masra Kilubatra* and *Cambysis* we can realize the ultimate sacrifice and the patriotism. Shawqi represented his historical play including the political and social condition of that period.

Shawqi influenced by Racine, Corline and Shakespeare. He influenced by their tragedies. So among the eight six are tragedies and only two are comedy. But both have tragic elements also. Shawqi always want to touch the inner feelings of the audience by his writings. He added and delegated some characters as he like, which makes his play more attractive and more touching. He introduced the different stages of women life. How she have to face in her life, so easily and simply. His verses help him a lot to express his feelings in front of his audience. Actually the themes of his plays were full of event aspects of a society.

Like Lady Huda he wants to show the people who want to use woman only for wealth and property and on the other hand in *Cambysis* Tasso the real lover, who married with his beloved though she married earlier with Persian king Cambysis. But Tasso knew her sacrifice and supports her. In *Majnun Layla*, Shawqi tried to show the ultimate love among them. But he also described that Layla dies of grief and was still a virgin. Here Shawqi also cleared that pure love doesn’t want physical touch. To some extent Love is also

one kind of sacrifice. Though Majnun and Laya both died, they are still alive among us as pure and true love. In *Masra Kilyubatra* they loved each other but they did not leaved their duty also. For their country they died but their love was not a fake one. *Antara* was one of his different plays which he completed with at the happy ending. Though Antara faced a lot of problem but at the end of the story he was able to marry with his beloved. So, after a thematic study we can say that Ahmad Shawqi was not only a poet but also has a very good command on verse dramas.

Here I have introduced all of his dramas thematically which were related with Egyptian society. It would be unfair to say that modern Arabic verse dramas developed and got its impetus with the growth of Ahmad Shawqi as a playwright. The pioneer of all invention is universally graded the highest rank whether it is in the field of science and technology or in the field of Art and culture. The same throne is occupied by Ahmad Shawqi in the invention of modern poetic drama with his first attempt. *Ali Bey al-Kabir* 1893 which was loss recognized. After a gap of few years he returned with a bank of his continuous serious of seven plays taking the theme from ancient Egyptian History. Thus he showed his magic in his verse dramas with the same excellence with which he memorized the whole Arab as well as Egypt.