CHAPTER-2

EMERGENCE OF NEO-CLASSICISM IN INDIA AND EGYPT

2.1: EMERGENCE OF NEO-CLASSICISM IN INDIA

The first instance of written Assamese literature is found in the Caryāpadas. These were written in the form of lyrics mainly with a view to publicist the primary rules, regulations, chief customs and traditions of Buddhism. These lyrics, sung according to different classical ragas are also known as Caryāgit or Bouddhagan or Doha. These Caryāpada[7] were written during the period from 8th century A.D. to 12th century A.D.

2.1.1: PRE-VAISHNAVITE-CLASSIC

Instances of pure written Assamese literature are hardly to be found in a chronological order after the Caryāpada upto the fourteenth century A.D. Of course it was in the fourteenth century itself that a number of poetic geniuses like Hem Saraswati, Rudra Kandali, Harihar Bipra, Kaviratha Saraswati and Madhava Kandali were born. It was during this period that the written literature evolved. Before this period, there was only the oral tradition of literature except the Caryāpada. The works of Hem Saraswati were generally recognized as the first written literature in Assamese language. Of the pre-Vaisnavite Assamese poets, Madhava Kandali deserves

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[7]. K. N. Choudhary, *Mysticism in Indian Poetry*. p.57

special mention, for it was during this period that Madhava Kandali translated the Ramayana by Valmiki into Assamese language. Incidentally, this translated version of the Ramayana is the first one among the modern Indian languages and also the regional languages of the Northern India. Before this, the Ramayana was translated only into Tamil and Kannada languages.

2.1.2: VAISHNAVITE-CLASSIC

The literature produced during the period from the last part of the fifteenth century A.D. to the last part of the seventeenth century A.D. has been termed as the Vaishnavite or the Neo-Vaishnavite literature. Because Srīmanta Saṅkardeva was the "Guru" of the poets of this period, some scholars have termed this age as the "śankari Age". Srīmanta Saṅkardeva (1449-1568) was the founder of this age. He was the writer who gave Assamese prose a concrete literary status for the first time. The greatest contribution of śaṅkardeva to Assamese literature is the Kirtana[8] and the Dasama. The Kirtana is a favourite reading for readers of all ages mainly because of its captivating theme and lucid description. This work infact contains the essence of the Gita, the Bhāgawata and the Purānas. On the other hand, the Dasama may be given the first place among the translated works of Saṅkardeva. This book contains the stories of the birth of Lord Sri Krishna, his childhood and many other attractive stories related to his life and miraculous activities. Some of the other major literary works of Saṅkar deva are - Ram Vijaya, Pārijāt Haraṇa, Patni Prasād, Kāliyā Damana, Keli

[8]. Ibid p.65

Gopāla, Rukmiṇi Haraṇa and Cihna Yātrā. All these are plays. His other prose works are Haricandra Upākhyān, Bali Chalan, Guṇamāla and Bhakti Ratnākar.

Saṅkardeva was the founder and the chief publicist of the Vaishnavite religion. The lyrics composed by Sāṅkardeva may be classified as the Bargīt and the Bhatima. He composed about 250 Bargīts. But most of these Bargīts were burnt down and only about 35 remained orally. These lyrics do have a special distinction of their own because of the sublimity of the themes, lucidity of expression, gravity of the classical ragas and restraint of imaginative power. This is why these lyrics have been called "Bargīts" (Noble Numbers). Saṅkardeva was also the pioneer in the field of Assamese dramatic literature. He composed his plays and also introduced the theatrical performances of "Bhaona" (A Type-Assamese-Drama).

Another prominent figure in the field of Assamese literature during this period was Mādhavdeva[9] (1489-1596), disciple of Saṅkardeva, who also author of several books, Bargīts and Bhatimas. His major works are: Namghosha, Chordhara, Pimpora, Guchowa and Bhumi Letowa.

After Saṅkar deva and Mādhavadeva, the written Assamese literature took a concrete shape both in terms of form and content. Some other major writers of this period are – Ananta Kandāli, Rām Saraswati, Ratnākar

[9]. Ibid. p. 67

Kandāli, Gopāl Ātā, Srīdhar Kandāli and Bhattadev. Of them, Rām Saraswati created a class of poetry called the 'Badhakāvya', which had a distinctiveness of its own. He took the stories of the killing of the asuras or the demons from mythology as the themes of his 'Kavya'. Bhaṭṭadeva, for the first time took prose as the sole medium of expression in literature. Therefore he is called the 'Father of Assamese prose'.

2.1.3: PANCHĀLI-CLASSIC

Although most of the poets during the Vaishnavite age created their literary works being influenced by the Vaishnavite ideology, still there emerged a number of poets who were not directly influenced by that ideology-rather they stood aloof from the Vaishnavite ideology. This is why these poets are known as the non-Vaishnavite poets of the Vaishnavite age while their literary works are called "Panchāli literature". The word panchāli has been derived from Sanskrit Panchāli or Panchālika, meaning "a puppet". It may be due to the fact that their poems (mostly lyrics) were sung or recited by the 'players' with poses and gestures and with the help of dance and music taking the puppet dance as the model and so came to be known as 'Panchāli literature'. The distinguished poets belonging to this class are - Pitāmvar, Mānkar, Durgavar and Sukabi Nārayandeva.

2.1.4: CARIPUTHI-AND-GENOLOGY-CLASSIC

A particular category of written Assamese literature came into being during the period from the last decade of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century. This category came to be known as Caritputhi, containing the biographies of the religious preachers like Srī Srī Śaṅkardeva and Mādhavadeva. The two main characteristics of the Caritputhi are that the writers of a Caritputhi were led by a tendency of hero worship, making their subjects above all kinds of criticism on one hand. On the other hand, they presented the subjects as more than human, having the power and capability of performing miraculous tasks. In any case, these may be said to be the earliest instances of biography in Assamese literature. Most of these works are written in poetic form while a few of them are in prose. Datas are available till date reveal that these works will be around 30 in number. Like the Caritputhi, the genealogies composed in poetic form are also a distinctive class of literature written during this period. In these genealogies, one may find chronological description of a royal family or some feudal and aristocratic families like those of the religious Guruand Mahāntas.

2.1.5: LITERATURE DURING THE AHOM AGE

It was during the Ahom age that the scope of written Assamese literature got noticeable expansion. The Ahoms contributed a lot in giving the royal status to the Assamese language. Dramas, Poems, lyrics and prose works were composed during this age too. Moreover, charit literature,

historical works, Sakta literature, literature related to practical aspects of life and Islamic literature were also developed during this period. Similarly, prose works also saw its noticeable development. A good number of works composed in Sanskrit language related to Medical Science, Astronomy, Mathematics, Dance and Architecture were also translated into Assamese language. However, the most notable and infact a unique contribution of the Ahoms to Assamese literature was a kind of historical literature known as the "Buranji". Although, their works cannot be said to be the scientific history in modern sense, the fact, however, remains that there are much materials of modern history in these works.

2.1.6: The Socio-Economic Cultural conditions of Assam in the late Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Centuries

The 'Treaty of Yandaboo" between the Burmese rules and East India made on February 24, 1826, bought Assam into the colonial sway of the East India Company.The history of Assamese language and literature passed through a 'dark age' because of the introduction of Bengalee as the language of courts and schools in lieu of Assamese in 1836. As for the economic condition of the people of Assam, Captain Welsh's introduction of opium cultivation in 1794 in Assam led to the ruinous of opium-eating among the Assamese people. Later, the 'Company Rule' underwent some quick changes after the 'Sepoy Mutiny' of 1857 as the Indian Domimon had been taken over by the 'Crown of England'. The impact of mutiny in Assam and execution of Maniram Dewan, Piyali Barua, the detention and dethronement of the Ahom King Kandarpeswar Singha on the 7th September, 1857,

brought Assam under a complete rule of the British Empire. Thus, with India also Assam was under the foreign yoke from 1826 to 15th August, 1947, i.e., till the Declaration of Indian Independence.

The British Rule in Assam had both destructive and regenerative results on the Assamese life and society. There were some changes in the socio-economic conditions of the people. Besides the freedom being lost, the economic resources were exploited for the profit of the Britishers. The age-old 'Paik' system of the Ahom days replaced by a new agrarian system. A new system of payment of revenue for land was also introduced.

However, the very blessing of the British Rule in Assam was the new awakening among the Assamese people in the nineteenth century. As the British were advanced people in science, education and culture, they introduced the western science and the system of education as well. The educated men received enlightenment and an inter-relationship grew between the western culture and the Assamese people. As Prof. K. N. Dutt observes,

"The British administration maintained a parental attitude to the people in ministering to their progress"[10].

So far as the restoration of the Assamese language was concerned during the 'dark age' from 1836 to 1873, when Bengali language displaced Assamese from the courts and the schools, the contribution of the missionaries can never be denied. Modern Assamese language owes much to

[10]. K. N. Dutta, *Land and Marks of Freedom Struggle in Assam*, p.356

the American Baptist Mission at 'Sibsagar', which first published the Assamese Periodical *Orunodoi* in January, 1846. In this connection, Dr. Banikanta Sharma rightly observes that the missionaries' right from the beginning had studied and practiced Assamese language in silence and founded the life-source of the modern Assamese language and literature.[11]

Because, some of the Assamese writers like Gunabhiram Barua, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya began their literary career with Orunodoi. Even Anandaram Dhekial Phukan published his articles through Orunodoi.

The greatest contribution made by the missionaries to the cause of Assamese is their long and sustained Endeavour to see the Assamese language restored to the schools and the courts of Assam. Dr. Nathan Brown, for example, established through his writings that Assamese is an independent language. Dr. Miles Bronson too, rendered yeoman's services as a friend, philosopher and guide to the Assamese throughout the period of language controversy in Assam from 1836 to 1873.[12]

Dr. Bronson made persistent efforts to restore Assamese in the courts and schools of Assam. He made discussion with young Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and made joint efforts to convince the British government for restoration of the Assamese language in Assam. As their writing bore no fruit, Phukan submitted a long memorandum to the judge Mr. Moffatt Mills who had been sent from Calcutta to enquire into the affairs of Assam. The Baptist missionaries too submitted their individual view-points regarding the

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[11]. B. Sharma, *Asamiya Bhasha aru Sahitoloi Missionaru Sokolor Abodan*. Ch.iii. p. 3
[12] . K. N. Choudhary, *Mysticism in Indian Poetry*. p.8

just cause of the Assamese. Mr. Mills sympathized with the views and recommended the matter to the British Administration, but there was no positive response from the Government.

Dhekial Phukan, in addition to his several writings in Orunodoi, published a book under the pen-name, 'A Native': "A Few Remarks On the Assamese Language and on the Vernacular Education in Assam" (1855) which was printed by the British Mission Press at 'Sibsagar'[13]. In this book, Phukan made efforts to prove the distinctly separate identity of the Assamese language.

As against the "Grammar of the Assamese Language" (1839) by William Robinson, the then Inspector of Schools of Assam, Dr. Bronson wrote an Assamese Dictionary, "Axamiya Aru Ingraji Abhidhan" (1867).

Through Dr. Brown left Assam in 1956 and Anandaram Phukan died in 1859, yet Dr. Bronson resumed his strong and steadfast fight after his return from America in 1867 after four years of his stay there. His dictionary as Maheswar Neog observes, 'became a veritable fortress for the welfare he was facing.' [14]

Meanwhile, various representations from all ends were made to the British Government. Most of them were in favour of restoration Assamese. But the rival group also submitted a memorandum arguing that even the dictionary of Bronson contained 591 Bengali words out of the 688 words.

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[13]. Ibid. p.9
[14]. M. Neog, *"Introduction"* Orunodoied. p.64

The British Government sent the dictionary to the eminent ICS Bengali scholar, Ramesh Chunder Dutt to examine. He observed that the words marked out as Bengali in Bronson's dictionary were really Sanskrit and he could not make out the meaning of the Assamese words. He vehemently protested against the view of the opponents and strongly put forward his opinion about Assamese as an independent language distinct from Bengali.

Now, Dr. Bronson started a new method for the restoration of Assamese. It was made by exposing public opinion through memoranda. A memorandum under the title, "The Humble opinion of the Assamese community at Nowgong, Assam", with Dr. Miles Bronson as the head of the committee and with signatures of 216 leading persons, was submitted to the British Government on 9 March, 1872. Similar memoranda were submitted from some other places like Sibsagar, Guwahati with the inspiration from the Baptists. All these proved effective in removing the misunderstanding that was lurking inside the Government at the contrivance of the officers like Mr. Robinson. In the long run, the British Government declared the official use of Assamese in the schools and the courts of Assam.

The Assamese people are, therefore, ever indebted to the Beptist Missionaries of Assam for their benevolent role in reviving a new life and vigour to the Assamese language.

Of course, the missionary literature was didactic, as it intended to preach the gospels of Christ. The evil sides of Hinduism were also shown with a view to making Christianity popular among all. Still, the truth of the

fact of their contribution to the Assamese language and literature cannot be defined. It was the western missionaries that laid the basis for a later growth, development and efflorescence of Assamese literature under the impact of English education. Dr. Satyendranath Sarma states that the 'Missionary Literature' did indeed lay the foundation of Modern Assamese Literature, although it was mainly didactic.[15]

[15]. S. N. Sarma, *Asomiya Sahitor Samikhamulok Eti briti.* p.227

2.2: EMERGENCE OF NEO-CLASSICISM IN EGYPT

2.2.1: INITIAL STAGE OF CLASSIC

After the Copts converted to Christianity in the first centuries A. D, their Coptic Christian literature became separated from the paranoiac and Hellenistic literary traditions. Nevertheless, scholars speculate that ancient Egyptian literature, perhaps in oral form, had an impact on Greek and Arabic literature. Parallels are drawn between the Egyptian soldiers sneaking into Jaffa hidden in baskets to capture the city in the story Taking of Joppa and the Mycenaean Greeks sneaking into Troy inside the Trojan horse. The Taking of Joppa has also been compared to the Arabic story of Ali Baba in One Thousand and One Nights. It has been conjectured that Sinbad the Sailor may have been inspired by the pharaonic Tale of the shipwrecked sailor. Some Egyptian literature was commented on by scholars of the ancient world. For example, the Jewish Roman historian Josephus (37-c. 100 AD) quoted and provided commentary on Manetho's historical texts.[16]

The most recently carved hieroglyphic inscription of ancient Egypt known today is found in a temple of Philae, dated precisely to 394 A.D., during the reign of Theodosius I (r.379-395 AD).In the 4th century A.D., the Hellenized Egyptian Horapollo compiled a survey of almost two hundred Egyptian hieroglyphs and provided his interpretation of their meanings,

[16]. Ancient Egyptian Literature, p .20

although his understanding was limited and he was unaware of the phonetic uses of each hieroglyphs. This survey was apparently lost until 1415, when the Italian Cristoforo Buondelnonti acquired it at the island of Andros. Athanasius Kircher (1601-80) was the first in Europe to realize that Coptic was a direct linguistic descendent of ancient Egyptian.[17] In his Oedipus Aegyptiacus, he made the first concerted European effort to interpret the meaning of Egyptian hieroglyphs, albeit based on symbolic inferences.

2.2.2: ENFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC CLASSIC

In the Arabic literature, it was influenced and led to the emergence of Islam that was responsible for the rise of the Arabs starting in seventh century. Till the middle of the thirteenth century, they remained a world power, asserting unchallenged their political, linguistic and culture superiority. With the passage of time, there set in a regression from the forward tempo of the Islamic spirit followed by a series of negative or non-developments. This around 1200 A.D. led to the completed domination of scholasticism over radical and scientific enquiry leading to absolute stagnation. In historical period Haulage's sack of Baghdad in 1258 A.D. marked the beginning of the decline of Arab Power[18]. This was followed by the other Mongol invasions.

Although some contact between the Arab and the outside world were maintained in the Levant from the sixteenth century onward in the form of

[17] Ibid, p.21
[18] . Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature,* p.01

scholarly exchanges with the Church of Rome, it was only a clash of arms that finally broke down the insulation of the Arab world. Napoleon conquered in Egypt in 1798, during reign of Muhammad Ali, which was the beginning of the revival of Arabs.

Modern Arabic Literature has developed during a period of violent political, Social and intellectual upheaval in the Middle East due to contact with west which aroused Arabic literature from its stupor and torpor. Hardly were the Arabic liberated from Turkish domination in 19th century than they were subject to Anglo-French control. Western technology was introduced in the Arab world along with scientific and critical approach culture.

In the 19th century Beirut was the first center for publishing classical texts. The famous Bulaq press in Cairo followed. Education began to spread through the Arab countries. The spread of literary education including girl's education and the founding of the press played vital role in the literary renaissance. The first point of contact with the west was Cairo followed by Beirut. Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798[19]. The Catholic Missionary made its first contact in Beirut. When Napoleon came to Egypt he broke the power of Mamluks and presented himself as a champion of Arabs.

[19] .Ibid. p.02

2.2.3: NEO-CLASSICISM IN THE PERIOD OF NEPOLEON

Napoleon took with him to Egypt not only an army but two printing presses and a number of scholars. The presses had their primary function of printing proclamations and other official matter. Through the chief language used was French, Arabic translations were provided. The French gave the Egyptians first experience of a news paper in the “Courier de’l Egypt” which appeared every five days from 29 August, 1798 onwards. It was an official and military newspaper but included some Cairo and provincial news beside propaganda for French revolutionary was also in circulation from 1798 onwards. The above two journals did not survive after British occupation of Egypt in 1801. The French occupation had opened the eyes of Egyptians to French culture and European science and made them aware of a civilization different from theirs and made them reactive to foreign ideas. It was the first step towards ending literary stagnation of the Arab countries.

2.2.4: CONTRIBUTION OF MOHAMMAD ALI

The rule of Mohammed Ali Pasha a Turkish governor over Egypt acted as an internal stimulus for a literary revival. His educational policy of sending missions to Europe assisted Western influence on the literature. Mohammed Ali organized a strong army and established military schools along with a medical school. Foreign instructors were employed to train the army. Egyptians were sent by him to study in Britain, France and Italy. The necessity to adapt Arabic to modern Science led to the combing of old literature for technical terms. It also led to somewhat to less ready acceptance of high flown literary style. Of the 44 officers who went to the

West, the most prominent one Rifaet Tahtawi made remarkable contribution to Arab literary awakening, having descended from a conservative family in Upper Egypt the worked with an army battalion as its chaplain. He was educated in Azhar University and was part of an educational mission sent to Paris where he remained from 1826 to 1831 and learned enough French to be able to translate from it to Arabic accurately. On his return to Cairo, he taught French in the medical school and then worked in a military academy. Translating mathematical and military works in to Arabic, in 1836 he was appointed director of a new school of languages. A Bureau of translation was attached to the school. Tahtawi, apart from planning and supervising the translation of others himself translated a number of works on geography, history, logic engineering and metallurgy. He had some 27 published works to his credit whether original or translated.

In 1828, Mohammed Ali founded the first official Arabic newspaper *Alwaqac al-Misiriyya* for which Tahtawi edited. He changed it from a dry official organ to a modern newspaper publishing articles, Discussions and translations as well as official news. Thus Tahtawi is considered a pioneer not only of the Nahda in general and of translation in particular but also of Arabic journalism. In 1863 he became the head the translation department of the Ministry of Education. It was by his promptings the government press of Bulaq was established in Cairo in 1822 to publish literary classics[20]. He called for girl's education and a year before death founded the first Egyptian girl's school. Tahtawi believe in modern education without abolishing

[20]. V. P. Abdul Hameed. *An Introduction to Modern Arabic Literature*, p.20

religious knowledge. We have in him a text book figure of the enlightened Arab of the early Nahad taking the best from the west to revive Arabism. His contribution to Arabic literature was great. His student translates more than 2000 books into Arabic. The effect on Arabic literature was not immediate but bore fruit in the second wave of the revival under khedive Ismail the Egyptian monarch.

Mohammed Ali's role in getting the literary renaissance underway was indirect. He introduced modern education established Arabic in Bulaq encouraged translation from European languages. Sent official to study in Europe and founded the first Arabic newspaper. But above all he created a new environment following the French occupation. He instilled in the minds of Egyptians a sense of purpose.

Among the writers of this period, the name of Shaikh Hasan Al Attar is outstanding[21]. He wrote in prose and verse and was the principal of Azhar and Tahtawi was his disciple. He wrote on variety of subjects such as religion, grammar, rhetoric and logic. He wrote poetry in a simple style. Sheikh Hasan Quawaidir was another writer of merit during this period. Like his master Al Attar he wrote on grammar and philology. Another contemporary, Sayyid Ali al-Darwished wrote poetry and *maqama* on the Hariri model besides editing Mutanabbi's poetry. Jabarti was another author of the period. He wrote a historic biographical work which dealt with history of Egypt from 1708 onward. It also included biographies of several authors.

[21] . Ibid. p.20

From what has been said above, it will be seen that in the first half of the 19th century the renaissance had only just begun in Egypt. It has been often pointed out that Muhammad Ali's revival of the culture was largely confined to science. The books published were scientific-translations.

2.2.5: CONTRIBUTION OF KHEDEIVE ISMAIL

In Egypt under the rule of khedeive Ismail, Who was the grandson of Mohamed Ali great changes took place and literature flourished. He sent out thoroughly to modernize Egypt and to complete the work of his grandfather. He carried out great public works in education and infrastructure. Over 4000 primary schools were opened during his reign and this was of itself a fillip to literature. Under the Khedive Taufeeq Western control tightened and it was to end in British occupation. Egyptian nationalism was reflected in literature also in conspiracies and rebellion. In 1881, a national revolt took place under the leadership of the military colonel Arabi pasha which ended in British intervention and occupation of Cairo[22].

The Egyptian attitude to British domination is revealed in the literature, especially in poetry. The incident of Dinshawai[23] which resulted from death of a British military officer leading to public hanging of four nationals left an almost indelible mark on Egyptian minds. After the outbreak of the world war of 1914-18 Egypt was declared a British protectorate with a nominal monarchy. Fuad I who ruled from 1917 to 1937 assumed the title of king in Egypt in 1922.

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[22] .Ibid. p.24
[23] Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*. p.63

2.2.6 NEO-CLASSICISM IN MODERN AGE

A panoramic view of poetry in Egypt in the early revival period date 19th and early 20th century gives the impression of adherence to traditional form with nostalgic feelings to past Arab greatness which formed a natural prelude to a call to Arabs to reassert themselves and carve out for them a respectable place in the modern world. Some poetry mourns for the lost youth of Arab nation. It seems to symbolize the Arab predicament at the time of its composition. Such nostalgia is an inevitable ingredient in revivalist poetry. Poetry in general it laminated the role of the poet in modern literary renaissance. Much of the poetry of the late 19th century and earlier part of 20th century was the product of particular events and situations. The general picture is of old forms and language with new themes especially nationalism. This nationalism was sometimes Arabism sometimes Islamic showing loyalty to Turkish Sultan. Frequently it was more Egyptian either specifically or by implication, despite the limitation of traditional from and style[24]. There were several outstanding poets notably Al-Barudi, Ahmad Shawqi, Hafiz Ibrahim, Shawqi Produced poem of nationalism laments the Apollo of caliphate in Turkey by Mustafa Kemal and eulogize tan of Turkey from 1914 to 1917.

[24] V. P. Abdul Hameed. *An Introduction to Modern Arabic Literature*, p.24

The poets though traditionalists by inclination were thoroughly up to date in their themes and spirits. For example Al-Jarim who was a great pedagogue and a gifted prose writer was in poetry the epitome of brilliant craftsmanship of antique flavour. This would apply to Ahmed Shawqi. His children's verse was written in quatrains such as the poems titled "The Nile" "Song of Egypt" and "Scout Song". Ahmed Zaki Abu shadi experimented with personified poetry. Ali Abu al Nasr a close confidant of the ruler khedive Ismail wrote traditional type of poetry which was preoccupied with verbal virtuosity. He was a prolific poet who left behind him a copious diwan. A poem was written after that he visited Istanbul in 1872 praising the city showed skill of language. A typical verse is as follows:-

(Egypt the Fortunate we thought a paradise supreme, to every other place superior; But when the caliph's seat appeared before our eyes. We clearly saw it was Cairo which war inferior.)

Another poet who belonged to the close circles of the palace was Ali al-Laith (1830-98). He has written an ode in praise of Sultan Abdul Aziz, the Ottoman ruler of his time.[25] He also wrote poems sympathizing with Arabi rebels.

Mahmud Safwat al saati (1825-80) is another court poet of distinction. He was the forerunner and pioneer of the whole Nahda poetical movement; his poems were conventional type. On the other hand Abdulla Fikri(1834-90), his contemporary, imitated 10th century poets- Fikri also wrote prose, some in *maqama* style, some less ornate. He is chiefly remembered for his

[25] Ibid. p.25

services to education. After serving as head master he became Minister of education and devoted himself to improving syllabus and text books.

2.2.7: PIONEER OF NEO-CLASSICISM

2.2.7.1: SAMI AL- BARUDI

Al-Barudi was the first great modern Arab poet one of finest Arab poets since al-Mutanabbi. He was both a soldier and a statesman, Prime Minister of Egypt for a short spell. On the literary side we see him adapting old themes and forms to contemporary situation. In poetry he was a towering figure. He might be described as a dilettante of genius. Idealism was plan in his poem. He was poet of patriotism which was the source of his strength. He found the means of expressing his patriotism with the classical qasida form and in Hamasa poetry. Though a political poet he also excels in description, whether of nature, antiquities or modern invention. He was the verbal armory of the pre- Islamic and Umayyad poets. His poem on Pyramid of Gizeh shows his ingenuity in verse when he describes pyramids as follows:-[26]

(Like twin breasts, pouring forth milk from Nile moistening dry soil where it flows for a while. Between them the sphinx stands a crouching beast. Its fore-paws out stretched, lying on its chest. Turning a tender glance towards the East a waiting the dawn with eager interest.)

[26] Ibid. p.26

Al-Barudi represents the first stage of the literary renaissance in poetry the stage in which subject matter is modern but forms and language traditional. He wrote every type of poetry hamaza satire, gazel, fakhr, elegy and eulogy.

2.2.7.2: AISHA AL-TAIMURIYA

In poetry of Egypt Aisha al Taimuriya a contemporary of Barudi was the first Arab woman writer to achieve distinction. Though her style of poetry was old fashioned she wrote on social problems and verses of sufistic nature. Her prose shows maqama influence. Ismail Sabri is a more important figure in poetry. Nationalism was one of the main themes of his poems. But he was also noted for description and philosophizing. He was a strong nationalist and had close friendship with Mustafa Kamil. In writing about events of political importance he would also concentrate on non-political aspects such as humanitarian. The following verse expresses his idealism:-

(When some firm old friend betrays me in defiance disobeys me. Once I raise my arrow ready and hand to shoot is steady. Then the ghost of affection comes between me and him which break my arrow-so retiring me for bears no arrow firing.)

2.2.8: NEO-CLASSICISM BETWEEN 1890 AND 1930

Egyptian poetry between 1890 and 1930 was dominated by two giants- Ahmad shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim.[27] Khalil Mutran was also another important figure in poetry. Shawqi and Hafiz were the twin geniuses who were for long considered the spokesmen of Egypt and to a lesser extent of the whole Arab world. At times also they were champions of the Turkish Sultans, of the caliphate of the whole world of Islam. No them of current interest economic, political, personal or social was beyond their range. Both of them occupied a dignified stature in literature. The history of Egypt during their life time is well reflected their verse.

A hundred books or more have been written about them, separately or jointly; while hundreds of articles have dealt with various aspects of their works. Both left a substantial output, Shawqi a diwan of about 1000 pages and Hafiz rather more than half that size. Hafiz in addition produced an Arabic version of Hugo's Les miserable; while shawqi was the greatest exponent of verse- drama and wrote six tragedies and one comedy.

What is important about these two poets- particularly Shawqi is that they were no mere clever word spinners but used language and poetical technique as a means to an end. To express thought. This thought at once echoed and stimulated the thoughts of educated and informed Egyptian in general. Political poetry began long before them. But with two poets it reached its apogee. Subsequent poets have written about contemporary political events but rarely with the same assurance and authority combine

[27] . Ibid. p.28

with absolute mastery of the form they used. Political events hand influenced their writing. For example the incident of Dinshaway[28] was expresses in the poem of Hafiz as:-

I wish I Knew was that the inquisition

Returned, or Nero's reign in repetition.3

Shawqi on it wrote a 14 verse poem largely concerned with he plight of widows and the imprisoned in connection with the incident. He then echoes Hafiz especially in the reference to Nero:-

(Had Neron Known Lord Cromer's regime without a doubt he would have known how sentence should be carried out.)

Shawqi's poem could be considered as an important historical document. He was also a careful and perceptive observer, who must be accorded an eminent position among Arab descriptive poets of all ears.

We quote here from one of his poems which plead for solidarity, national unity and tolerance.

(Till when the discord among you, till when? And for what cause this tumult? Why do conspire against one another? And display your controversies and your enmity. We came to power party after party. But we

[28]. Ahmad Haykal, *Tatawwur al-Adab al-Hadith fil Misr*, p.106

were not reforming or noble. We made our rule a matter of appointment and dismissal. We did not seek beyond revenge.)

Shawqi tried his hand at heroic drama. Of his seven plays, three are on Egyptian historical subjects Cleopatra Cambyses and Ali Bey al-Kabir. Three more are on ancient Arab themes- 'Majnun Laila', Antara' and 'Amirah al-Andalus', The sevent was a verse comedy 'Al sitt-Huda'[29].

Shawqi's plays make him to occupy an important position in the history of Arabic drama. Hafiz represented the feelings of Egyptian people more closely than shawqi. He became recognized as a national poet. The extent of his nationalist feelings is well reflected in his poetry. Like shawqi he expressed admiration for the Turkish Sultan as Caliph of Islam. As a loyalist of Muhammad Abduhu he recognized the need for social reform and education. The bulk of his poetry consists of political and social themes.

If shawqi and Hafiz closed the era of classical revival in Arabic poetry, Mutran sealed it and foreshadowed poetical modernism. Literary historians regard him as the third of the trio. Though born in Lebanon lived most of his life in Egypt. He was a supporter of Islamic solidarity and Arab independence. He favoured reform in Turkey-Apart from his great poetical output he also translated several plays from English and French. His importance in the Nahda is evident from his literary output. With his experience of French literature he is lyrical in poetry. Like others he wrote nationalistic odes and elegies and eulogies of Arab leaders. His poem

[29] V. P. Abdul Hameed. *An Introduction to Modern Arabic Literature*, p.30

"Yaqza al-Arab' stresses the need for Arab awakening which begins as follows:-[30]

(Oh. Noble company of Arabs! You are my pride and boast. Long I have chided your carelessness and sloth but not as one that might despise or loathe.)

Mutran's weightier poems inspired the Arbs and made a great impression on his contemporaries. He is noted for his shorter and lyrical poem. He wrote lyrical ballads like Wordsworth and experimented with personified poetry (free verse)[31].

Selected verses from Mutran's poem: - "Do you remember"

(Do you remember when we both were children? Those happy days in Zahla, when two shadows met exchanging laughter, amidst the grape vines secrecy, Do you remember how we rushed joys to pack the best of the grapes and paid for them with our smiles.)

His poetry smacks of modernism especially his later poems. This is ascribed to French influence. The nuances and finesse of French poetry are evident in his verses. His poetry reflected two sides. On the one hand the traditional Arab writers ready to indulge in long odes; on the other there was the lyrical poet with light touch and delicate stanzas.

Other noted poets of the period were Abdul Muttalib, Mustafa Sadiq al Rafie and Wali-al Din Yakan. All Egyptian poets mentioned previously

[30] . Ibid. p.31
[31] . Ibid. p.32

combined in them traditionalism and modernism- Khalil Mustran is more of a mujaddid and less of a muqallid than others. The last of the Egyption traditionalists Ali-al Jarim 1881-1949 wrote fine poetry in classical type and was a brilliant prose writer. In his poems he dealt with modern subjects.