

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM
A STUDY IN THE NOVELS
OF YŪSUF AS-SIBĀ^CĪ

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and of my own execution and authorship.

Dhia Mohammed Siddeek

Dedicated to

The Memory of my Beloved Mother

My Father

Iraq

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TRANSLITERATION

The method of transliteration adopted by the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh has been followed in this thesis with certain modifications. In particular certain words and proper names which As-Sibā^ḥī writes in a colloquial form, for example Saqqā (not Saqqā') and ^ḤĀyda (not ^ḤĀ'ida) have been transliterated accordingly.

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A B S T R A C T

In this thesis the first academic attempt has been made to throw light upon the life and works of As-Sibā^{Cī}, one of the prominent figures of the university generation; the generation of Mahfūz who, with their novels, contributed to the creation of a fully developed narrative form in Arabic. The present study attempts to discuss two European literary schools - Romanticism and Realism - and their influences upon modern Arabic literature, investigating in particular their role in the novels of As-Sibā^{Cī} and his contribution to the Arabic novel.

The study is divided into three main parts, each one consisting of three chapters. The first part deals with the biography of Yūsuf As-Sibā^{Cī}. The second part discusses Romanticism and Realism in Europe and the Arab world to the time of As-Sibā^{Cī}, and the third part explores the Romanticism and Realism in As-Sibā^{Cī}'s novels.

In Chapter One, the private life and character of As-Sibā^{Cī}, including his childhood and youth, his family, his education and his character are discussed.

Chapter Two deals with his political, cultural and literary activities, and discusses his views on politics, society, and culture.

Chapter Three is devoted to his relationship with contemporaries and literary influences on him; influences which include his father, environment, reading, relationships with contemporary writers, and finally the influence of the critics upon his literature.

In Chapter Four, Romanticism in Europe is dealt with, including its varied meanings, the historical background of its rise, its developments and offshoots, and its most distinctive aspects.

Chapter Five discusses Realism in Europe, and follows the same method as the previous chapter.

Chapter Six attempts to throw more light on modern Arabic literature from the beginning of the Arabic revival until the sixties of this century, pointing out the most significant historical events and the contacts between Europe and the Arab world, and showing the influences of these literary schools upon Arabic literature in particular where the novel is concerned.

The last three chapters (Seven, Eight and Nine) attempt to show the romantic and realistic aspects of As-Sibā^Cī through seven selected novels.

In the conclusion of this study, the nature and extent of romantic and realistic trends in As-Sibā^Cī's works are evaluated and summarised.

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

<u>Adab</u>	Khidr	<u>al-Wāqī^Ciyya fī l-Adab</u>
<u>Age</u>	Hemmings	<u>The Age of Realism</u>
<u>^CĀlam</u>	Wahīd	<u>^CĀlam Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī</u>
<u>Ard</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Ard an-Nifāq</u>
<u>Aspects</u>	Forster	<u>Aspects of the Novel</u>
<u>ATLA</u>	Hourani	<u>Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age</u>
<u>Ayyām</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Ayyām Tamurr</u>
<u>Bayn</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Bayn al-Atlāl</u>
<u>CEWL</u>		<u>Cassell's Encyclopedia of World Literature</u>
<u>Decline</u>	Lucas	<u>The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal</u>
<u>Documents</u>	Becker	<u>Documents on Modern Literary Realism</u>
<u>Egyptian</u>	Sakkut	<u>The Egyptian Novel</u>
<u>European</u>	Furst	<u>European Romanticism</u>

<u>Fadaytuki</u>	As-Sibā ^{Cī}	<u>Fadaytuki Yā Laylā</u>
<u>Fajr</u>	Haqqī	<u>Fajr al-Qiṣṣa al-Miṣriyya</u>
<u>Fann</u>	Rāghib	<u>Fann ar-Riwāya^C Ind Yūsuf As-Sibā^{Cī}</u>
<u>Fikr</u>	Shukrī	<u>al-Fikr wa-l-Fann fī Adab Yūsuf As-Sibā^{Cī}</u>
<u>Gates</u>	Levin	<u>The Gates of Horn</u>
<u>Guide</u>	Bernbaum	<u>Guide Through the Romantic Movement</u>
<u>Ghaym</u>	As-Sibā ^{Cī}	<u>Min Warā' al-Ghaym</u>
<u>Handbook</u>	Holman	<u>A Handbook to Literature</u>
<u>Hist.Mod.Cri.</u>	Wellek	<u>A History of Modern Criticism</u>
<u>History</u>	Suchkov	<u>A History of Realism</u>
<u>Innī</u>	As-Sibā ^{Cī}	<u>Innī Rāhila</u>
<u>JAL</u>		<u>Journal of Arabic Literature</u>
<u>Madkhal</u>	Wādī	<u>Madkhal ilā r-Riwāya al-Miṣriyya</u>
<u>Meaning</u>	Lukács	<u>The Meaning of Contemporary Realism</u>
<u>Min</u>	As-Sibā ^{Cī}	<u>Min Hayātī</u>

<u>Mind</u>	Schenk	<u>The Mind of European Romanticism</u>
<u>Miṣr</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Miṣr ... al-Mushkila wa-l-Hall</u>
<u>Modern</u>	Haywood	<u>Modern Arabic Literature</u>
<u>Movement</u>	Thorlby	<u>The Romantic Movement</u>
<u>Mudhakkirāt</u>	Shukrī	<u>Mudhakkirāt Thaḳāfa Tuḥṭadar</u>
<u>MW</u>		<u>The Muslim World</u>
<u>Nahnu</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk</u>
<u>Nā'ib</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl</u>
<u>Namādhij</u>	ash-Shārūnī	<u>Namādhij min ar-Riwāya al-Miṣriyya</u>
<u>Nāṣir</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Ayyām ^CAbd an-Nāṣir</u>
<u>OM</u>		<u>Oriente Moderno</u>
<u>Qissa</u>	an-Nassāj	<u>al-Qiṣṣa al-Qaṣīra fī Miṣr</u>
<u>Reader</u>	Beckson	<u>A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms</u>
<u>Revolt</u>	Vaughan	<u>The Romantic Revolt</u>
<u>Revolution</u>	Jones	<u>Revolution and Romanticism</u>
<u>RI</u>	Chiari	<u>Realism and Imagination</u>
<u>Riwāya</u>	Shukrī	<u>ar-Riwāya al-^CArabiyya fī Rihlat al-^CAdhāb</u>

<u>Rom.Imag.</u>	Bowra	<u>The Romantic Imagination</u>
<u>Rom.Mod.Ego</u>	Barzun	<u>Romanticism and the Modern Ego</u>
<u>RR</u>	Frye	<u>Romanticism Reconsidered</u>
<u>Saqqā</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>as-Saqqā Māt</u>
<u>Studies</u>	Gibb	<u>Studies on the Civilization of Islam</u>
<u>Suwar</u>	As-Sibā ^C ī	<u>Suwar Ṭibq al-Aṣl</u>
<u>Tāhā</u>	Cachia	<u>Tāhā Husayn</u>
<u>Tatawwur</u>	Marzūq	<u>Tatawwur an-Naqd wa-l-Tafkīr al-Adabī fī Miṣr</u>
<u>Wāqi^Ciyya</u>	^C Abd Allāh	<u>al-Wāqi^Ciyya fī r-Riwāya al-^CArabiyya</u>
<u>YSDU</u>	Group of Writers	<u>Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī fī Dhikrāh al-Ūlā</u>

I N T R O D U C T I O N

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Arabic novel today occupies a highly regarded position in modern Arabic literature, almost equal to that of Arabic Poetry. This literary form came into existence as a result of the influence of European literature from the beginning of the Arab renaissance in the nineteenth century, and although we do not deny that there were some narrative genres in Classical Arabic literature, the European influence in this case was the predominant one. This influence went through many stages, starting with the processes of translation, adaptation and imitation, until it reached the final stage which is that of original writing.

Egypt came earlier to this field on the whole than other parts of the Arab world, and embraced European influences more thoroughly, so that it is in Egypt that the modern Arabic renaissance struck root most firmly. In particular, Egypt occupies the forefront in any studies concerned with the history of the Arabic novel. In Egypt we find a great number of writers who contributed to the development of the Arabic novel, until we reach the generation of writers known as the university generation, the generation of Maḥfūz. Writers of this generation specialized in the novel, and attempted to create a developed narrative form

in Arabic. This is not to deny the role of the pioneer writers of the generation of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and al-^CAqqād, but with Maḥfūz's generation, the Arabic novel became more popular and readable, and may be regarded as an art form which has its influence and its well-known practitioners. Although Maḥfūz is the most outstanding writer of his generation, because of his distinctive talent and his full awareness of the art of the novel and its role in society, we must not ignore the contributions of the other novelists of his generation, whatever their level of artistry and thought.

From among the novelists of this generation we have selected as the subject of this study Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī, whose writing had a great influence upon the younger Arab generation in the forties and fifties of this century, and who occupied many important cultural, social and political positions up to his death in 1978.

As-Sibā^Cī is an extremely prolific writer, having produced novels, short stories, plays, and cultural and social essays, but the novel is the mainstay of his output, and he himself prefers the novel to any other genre. For this reason we have restricted our study to the narrative part of his writings.

If we consider the production of this generation, we may notice their awareness of the technical aspects of novel-writing and their debt to European literary schools, which is apparent in their attempts to create a perfect Arabic novel. This influence by the literary schools is no doubt associated

with the general influences of European culture since the beginning of this century, but we may see the reflection of these schools more clearly in the output of this generation. The Romantic and Realistic schools in fact played a great role in the literature of this generation, so that we find some Romantic aspects dominating the writing of As-Sibā^{Cī}, ^CAbd al-Ḥalīm ^CAbd Allāh and some others, while at the same time we see Realistic aspects dominating the writing of Maḥfūz, Idrīs and others. In the case of As-Sibā^{Cī}, although Romantic aspects dominate most of his writing, Realistic aspects may be noted in certain of his works. For this reason, the present writer has confined his study to exploring the Romantic and Realistic aspects of the novels of As-Sibā^{Cī}.

This thesis has accordingly been divided into three parts, each one consisting of three chapters. The first three chapters deal with the biography of As-Sibā^{Cī}, in view of the fact that the biography of any writer, artist, or litterateur, including his life, character, education, relationship, and political and cultural activity and attitudes, has undoubtedly a great influence upon his works. Thus the study of a writer's life, both private and public, is very necessary to the scholar, because it is one of the many ways by which we may understand and interpret the characteristics of his literature.

In the first chapter his private life, family, education, and character, are discussed. The second chapter deals with his various activities. This chapter consists of three sections, firstly his political and cultural activities and the positions which he occupied; secondly his literary output,

and thirdly, his political, social and cultural views. In the third chapter, we have tried to show his relationships with contemporaries and the literary influences on him; this chapter is divided into two main sub-headings, the first dealing with the direct influence which is that of his father and the environment, and the second with the indirect influence which consists of his reading, his relationships with contemporary writers, and finally the attitude of the critics towards him.

Before proceeding to a discussion of As-Sibā^{Cī}'s novels, Part Two is devoted to a discussion, first of European Romanticism and Realism which is intended to give the reader a general idea of these schools in their original literature, and then of their development in Arabic Literature. In Chapters Four and Five we attempt to explain briefly the varied meanings of these literary schools, and the historical background of their rise, development and offshoots, and their most distinctive aspects. In these chapters we have mentioned no more than what these schools are, since the present study is concerned with modern Arabic literature rather than with comparative literature. Finally, in Chapter Six, we attempt to throw more light on modern Arabic literature, in which of course Egypt has occupied the main part. In this chapter the development of modern Arabic literature is traced from the beginning of the Arab revival until the sixties of this century, and an attempt is made to point out the most significant historical events, and the channels of contact between

Europe and the Arab world and the political and cultural influences of the former upon the latter. Next we have tried to show the influences of these literary schools upon Arabic literature, in particular where the novel is concerned. The chapter is concluded by pointing out the main features of these schools in Arabic literature and the divergences between the original schools and the adopted tendencies.

In the last part we have selected seven from among the fifteen novels of As-Sibā^{Cī}, because, we believe, they are the most obvious examples showing his romantic and realistic tendencies. In the first chapter of this part (Chapter Seven) we deal with his first two novels, which are the initial stage of his development. Although he employed the fantasy form and expressed his ideas in an idealised form, we find that they expose social and political reality with sharp criticism and even with cynicism, and because of this these novels are discussed in a separate chapter under the title 'Fantasy'.

In Chapter Eight, 'Romanticism', we attempt to show his romantic aspects through three selected novels, which are regarded as representing the romantic stage of his development. The reason for this choice is that firstly, although As-Sibā^{Cī} maintained certain romantic features in his other novels, the romantic features are shown more obviously in these novels. Secondly, they were published in one period, from 1950 to 1953, and thirdly, their main subject is almost the same in each novel,

this being an emphasis on individual freedom, an attack on social traditions, and a concentration on the relationships between men and women.

In Chapter Nine 'Realism', we deal with two novels in which many realistic aspects can be identified. In these novels he attempts to throw a strong light on reality, especially Egyptian society between the twenties and fifties of this century, and depicts the lower and middle classes and their problems. We consider these novels as a realistic stage of his development, although he has some realistic features in other novels.

The method of dealing with the novels of As-Sibā^{Cī} in this part is, firstly, to mention briefly the plots of the novels separately, in order to give the reader a general idea about the novels, and then to discuss separately the main parts of the novel; parts such as characters, events, thoughts, narration, description, and dialogue. Each of these topics is studied separately, but not in complete isolation from the novel as a whole. Throughout this process we have tried to point out the most distinctive romantic and realistic aspects. This method is followed in all the novels dealt with here, except the last novel Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, whose construction forced a different approach. In this case we have followed the life of the focal character, which is divided into four stages, and dealt with the characters, events, and thoughts in each stage separately to some extent, after which other features of the novel, such as narration,

description, and dialogue are discussed.

In the conclusion of this study, the nature and extent of the romantic and realistic trends in As-Sibā^{Cī}'s works are evaluated and summarised.

In addition to the bibliography, the works of As-Sibā^{Cī} have been listed in a special appendix. Although we have occasionally quoted from works other than the novels which are studied here, these quotations are only used either to prove a point under discussion or to throw a light on some sides of his career. It is in no sense intended that these other works should be discussed as such in this thesis.

We conclude by expressing the hope that the present study will make a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge of an important figure in the literary life of Egypt during a period of over thirty years.

PART I

BIOGRAPHY OF YŪSUF AS-SIBĀ^CĪ

Chapter One

L I F E A N D C H A R A C T E R

Chapter One

L I F E A N D C H A R A C T E R

1. H I S L I F E

In the poor and crowded Darb al-Ahmar quarter of Cairo, Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī was born on the 10th of May 1917. His father was a teacher in a secondary school, and his family may be described as belonging to the lower middle class.¹ His father Muhammad As-Sibā^Cī, who was of Circassian extraction, was one of the pioneers of the modern Arabic cultural renaissance. He was an essayist, short story writer and translator, and he translated, from the English, many different cultural and literary works by English, French and Russian authors. He also wrote many various cultural and social articles and some short stories.²

Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī had only two brothers, Maḥmūd who was older than him, and Ahmad who was younger. In 1919 the small family moved to as-Sayyida Zaynab, one of the bigger and more crowded quarters in Cairo where he spent his childhood and boyhood.

1. For further details about his private life see Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, Wahīd, C-Alam, Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī Bayn al-Ayyām wa l-Layālī, and YSDU.

2. For a full discussion of Muhammad As-Sibā^Cī, see pp.54-8 below.

In the early years of his life As-Sibā^{Cī} studied the Qur'ān in the Kuttāb (Qur'ān School) in which he spent two years before joining primary school. Yūsuf, however, was a very quiet child, more so than his brothers and schoolmates, and lived in fear of his grandmother who was living with them most of the year. She used to be very kind to his older brother and hard with him because she loved Mahmūd more than him, and in his own words "she created fright in myself".¹ He was also scared of his father who used to hit his children to discipline them, but he found his happiness in meeting his other grandmother (the mother of his father) who loved him and used to relate to him imaginary anecdotes. He says "I was not pampered in my childhood except by a paralyzed grandmother".²

In 1928 As-Sibā^{Cī} joined secondary school, and at this early age entered upon a process of self-education which began when he developed a taste for reading. He discovered that his father had a large library containing books on different subjects, Arabic and European, ancient and modern. He read as many of these books as he could, beginning with his father's works, in addition to the studying of Arabic literature at school. Another factor encouraging As-Sibā^{Cī} to read was his father, who became more friendly with his sons, especially Yūsuf. Muhammad As-Sibā^{Cī} was a Bohemian, who was not really interested in teaching and schools;

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.360.

2. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Ayyām, p.9.

he used to joke with his children, while their mother shut them up to study. As-Sibā^{Cī} mentions that his father gave some money to his younger brother because he punched the son of a neighbour, and once his father chided him because he was studying.¹ As-Sibā^{Cī} came to love his father for his character, writing and thought, and considered him as his ideal. His father himself took more interest in Yūsuf than his other children, reading his articles to him before he published them, and asking him to take his essays to the printers. This early relationship between As-Sibā^{Cī} and his father had a great influence upon his interest in literature, reading and writing.

After reading many literary books As-Sibā^{Cī} attempted to write. First he wrote, for himself, a whole magazine consisting of an article, short story, poetry, Zajals (popular Arabic poems in strophic form) and some jokes, also drawing some coloured pictures and caricatures, and decorating and binding it himself. After he had shown it to his brothers and cousin he exchanged it with one of his friends who had the same interest in creating his own magazine.²

As-Sibā^{Cī} suffered a very great shock in his early life when his father died in 1931. This event cast a shadow over his life; he could not believe that his ideal was dead, and in addition the family were reduced to very hard circumstances, the mother and three boys living on eleven pounds a month. Because

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Suwar, pp.237-8.

2. Wahīd, Ālam, pp.8-9.

of this As-Sibā^{Cī} failed the examinations in his fourth year in secondary school. However, in the next year he became aware of his responsibility towards his family and, therefore, he devoted himself to study in order to become a first-rate student, since these were usually exempted from fees. From that time, about 1932-1933, As-Sibā^{Cī}'s school career became outstanding. He joined the hockey team, and later became the sports captain of the school; he joined a painting group in the school and was also appointed a vice-chief editor of the school magazine by a teacher of Arabic language. This was because he used to write excellent compositions, similar in some degree to his father's style; he even attempted to sing and act in the end-of-school party. The most significant of his activities at this stage was his contribution to the school magazine. He played a major role in its arrangement and wrote most of its contents, such as a patriotic poem which became the school anthem, Zajals, articles about the beauty of painting, and a short story under the title Fawq al-Anwā', which is the first story he published. In addition he designed, drew and painted some caricatures for the magazine.¹ As-Sibā^{Cī}'s ambition was not confined to his school magazine. He also began to publish some short stories, from 1933, in prominent magazines of that time such as Majallatī, al-Majalla al-Jadīda and al-Imām. The satisfactory accomplishment of these various tasks was a first sign that As-Sibā^{Cī} had a remarkable capacity for engaging in many different activities simultaneously.

1. See Wahīd, CĀlam, pp.19-20, and Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.360.

At that time, the only way for Egyptians to express their national feelings was street demonstrations in which students of the university, secondary and primary schools took part. As-Sibā^{Cī}, however, did not join in as he thought that smashing buses and breaking lights, which the demonstrators used to do, were to the disadvantage not only of the King, Government or the British occupation, but also of the Egyptian people, and "inclined to reformation and rationalism more than revolution and violence".¹ Although he attempted to persuade the students that no benefit could be gained from demonstrations, and helped the teachers to prevent the students demonstrating, this did not mean that As-Sibā^{Cī} was against the independence of Egypt. As he said later, "we were - some students - dreaming of an independent Egypt, or of dismissing the British occupation, and establishing factories".²

In 1934 after his graduation from secondary school he joined the Military College, while his brother joined the Police College. He was accepted in the Military College for several reasons. First, the government at that time had begun to allow the sons of the middle class to join the army and police; second, he was one of the top students in his school; and third, his uncle, Tāhā As-Sibā^{Cī}, was a member of the Wafd party and a minister for a period before the revolution of 1952.

1. Wahīd, Ālam, p.14.

2. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Nāṣir, p.133.

Throughout his years at Military College As-Sibā^{Cī} did not write any literary works, and devoted his time to study in order to be one of the first four students in his group whom the College usually sent abroad to specialise in one of the military fields; he failed however because, he says, he was unable to concentrate on the text books.¹

In 1937 he graduated as a cavalry officer, beginning a new stage in his life which provided some luxury for him and his family; he also returned to writing and published short stories portraying his childhood, adolescence and environment.

During his military career, from 1937 to 1956 when he resigned, As-Sibā^{Cī} obtained two military certificates. The first was in armoured warfare in 1943 from the Middle East Military Institute, and the second from the Staff College in 1944. In addition he was appointed to various military posts, the most important ones being those of the Headmaster of the Military Secondary School in 1949, Director of the Military Museum in 1952 and Deputy Director of Cavalry.

Throughout the Second World War the Egyptian government was on the allied side, and concentrated its troops in the Western Desert to counter the threat from the Italians in Libya. As-Sibā^{Cī} was one of the officers who was posted there, and later contributed to the Palestinian War of 1948.²

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Min, p.66.

2. YSDU, p.416.

From 1950 to 1952 political and economic conditions were very confused in Egypt with demonstrations and disturbances against the British occupation, the King and even political parties. In addition the Fidā'īyyīn, in late 1951, began to attack British Forces and camps; the government were unable to control the troubled situation which reached its peak with the Cairo Fire on 26th January 1952. Ultimately the Free Officers, who had been planning a coup for some time, led the revolution of 23rd July 1952. As-Sibā^ḥī was not associated with the Free Officers and did not contribute to the revolution, although he was a friend of most of them, but he supported the revolution from the beginning.

As-Sibā^ḥī was a successful officer, accomplishing his tasks seriously and faithfully. His military life gave him, he says, discipline and the idea of responsibility.¹ He classified and arranged the history of the Military College which was published in a sumptuous volume in 1949.² Because of his military success he had been nominated in 1939 with two other officers for a military mission to England, but he failed at the interview with the Minister of War.

In addition to his military positions As-Sibā^ḥī continued to write short stories, articles and novels, his first novel being published in 1947. In 1952 he acquired a diploma in Journalism from Cairo University. In 1953 he began his

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.357.

2. YSDU, p.262.

cultural activity when he established, with Ihsān ^CAbd al-Quddūs, the Nādī l-Qiṣṣa, an organisation which is concerned with the short story and the novel. He also contributed to the establishment of many cultural foundations, such as the Writers' Union, the Union of National Culture and others, being voted secretary-general of each of them. In 1954 he founded a literary magazine under the title ar-Risāla al-Jadīda which became one of the most famous periodicals in the Arab World during the fifties. In the same year he established the Higher Council for Arts and Letters of which he became secretary general in 1956. As-Sibā^Cī, throughout the fifties, was well known as a novelist and short story writer and his works occupied a leading place among Arab readers.

After his resignation from the army, because of his reputation as a writer and his close friendship with most of the new political leaders such as ^CAbd an-Nāṣir, Sādāt and others, in addition to his experience and success with the administration of many institutions both military and cultural, he was assigned a number of political and cultural positions, to the extent of controlling four or five of these positions at the same time. These included the posts of secretary general of the Higher Council for Arts and Letters, the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Movement, the Arab Writers' Union, etc.¹

1. We shall deal with his political and cultural activity in greater detail later on.

The last important cultural positions As-Sibā^Cī occupied were those of Minister of Culture from 1972 to 1976 and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the al-Ahrām Foundation from 1976 to 1978.

As-Sibā^Cī continued to write for different newspapers and magazines, producing political and cultural articles and short stories and novels, but the great number of positions he held, in addition to his constant travelling and attendance at conferences, had a great influence upon his literary output. Where he had been accustomed to publishing three or four books a year, including essays, short stories and novels, in the later years, especially in the seventies, he rarely produced more than one book a year because he could not find enough time to write or even to read. He says:

"Writing is impossible for me now What I need is isolation: the least time is enough for me. I no longer read now except on aeroplanes during my long journeys."¹

On 18th February 1978, when As-Sibā^Cī was attending a conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Movement in Cyprus, he was assassinated at the door of the Conference Hall. With his death the life of the officer, novelist and man of different cultural and political positions, Yūsuf Muhammad As-Sibā^Cī was ended.

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, pp.356-7.

2. HIS CHARACTER

From the works of As-Sibā^{Cī} and his own writing about himself, in addition to some studies and critical analyses which have been written about his works, and finally my meeting with some of his friends and writers who had known him for a long time, it seems that the crowded quarter in which he lived the early years of his life, his father's behaviour with his family and with other people and his military life, all had a great influence upon his character. As-Sibā^{Cī} was a very quiet and shy child. He differed from his brothers and other children. He mentions, for example, that his mother forbade her children to ride a bicycle but once, when he rode a bicycle for the first time, encouraged by his brother, he fell down and injured himself. He says: "My family could not believe this incident because it came, especially, from me, who was a good, quiet and obedient boy".¹ Even in his arguments at conferences he seemed to be mostly very quiet. The quietness and shyness of his nature were reflected in the quiet and shy characters of his novels and short stories, in particular in his romantic works.

Another characteristic which accompanied him from childhood was cheerfulness. He was well known for his smile which - as his friends say - never left his face, and for laughing at any joke. Perhaps this manner was inherited from his father

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Min, p.54.

who was also well known for his joking and laughing. He remarks that he and his boyhood friends were a "joking, laughing group, who did not know that there were sorrows in life, and our slogan was ^{smiling over lips and guffawing} ↑ from the heart before the mouth".¹ This side of his character is very clear in his works, in most of which he creates a character whose role is to modify the dramatic atmosphere by his humour, in addition to the ironic style used by As-Sibā^{Cī} throughout the narration.

Cheerfulness accompanied him all his life, except for some years after his father's death, which he passed in very difficult circumstances caused by his grief at the loss of his father, his failure in the fourth year examination at secondary school, and the sufferings of his family from financial hardship. He was, at that time, so unhappy that his friends at school used to call him a 'sad student'. But his sadness had a positive influence in that it made him conscious of his responsibility towards himself and his family, and as a result he devoted himself first to studying and second to his activities at school, whether in the school magazine or in the sports team.

The earnestness and perfectionism in all the tasks and positions which were assigned to him is the most prominent characteristic of As-Sibā^{Cī}. He was a successful administrative officer, and although he had many different positions he had a

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Suwar, p.244.

remarkable ability to keep control over them. Some of his friends said that:

"He had a rare ability to bring together several contrasting things ... military discipline in keeping appointments, and firmness in giving orders, and the easy-goingness of artists in personal transactions ... his official position with his social role as a litterateur, a writer and journalist."¹

He himself said:

"I probably have two personalities, the administrator and the litterateur ... time is very important for me so I work according to a specific timetable."²

His time-table began at eight o'clock in the morning and went on until ten o'clock in the evening, divided into two hours for Nādī l-Qiṣṣa, two hours for the Higher Council, three hours for the magazine Ākhir Sā'a, and so on.

With regard to his relationships with writers and journalists, As-Sibā^Cī was magnanimous with all of them. All the writers of different generations were convinced that he liked to help others. He was, in fact, a connecting link between the writers and the government, attempting to protect them from the oppression of the government. Even the leftist writer ^CAbd ar-Rahmān ash-Sharqāwī mentioned that As-Sibā^Cī was spending his

1. YSDU, p.307.

2. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, pp.355-6.

own money on the families of some of the communist writers who were in prison.¹ Ihsān CAbd al-Quddūs says that he was a friend of everybody, of all different political tendencies, and never adopted any violent attitudes against anyone.² Moreover, he says himself: "I naturally hate violence, hate whatever causes violence and the consequence of it".³ Many different journalists who differed in opinion politically from him worked in the newspapers and magazines of which he was the editor. It would seem that As-SibāCī was a liberal, idealistic and non-violent type of person. Perhaps his religion had a big effect on his character. He mentions that he used to go, as a child, with his friends to the Sayyida Zaynab mosque to pray, to recite the Qur'ān and to listen to the Shaykhs. One writer described him in these simple and brief words:

"He prays, fasts, and does not smoke or drink, not even tea or coffee He is very quiet; he seems very serious on the outside but inside he likes cheerfulness, laughter and jokes."⁴

As-SibāCī was a very elegant and fashionable man and used to publish his books in de-luxe editions with gold embossed covers. He considered his books as his sons, except for one which

1. YSDU, p.74.

2. Ibid., p.212.

3. As-SibāCī, Min, p.54.

4. Shukrī, Fikr, p.82.

was published in a bad edition. As-Sibā^Cī, however, was very emotional with his family. He loved his son and daughter deeply. When his son, for example, spent two months in hospital because his leg was broken, As-Sibā^Cī lost his distinctive smile and became sad, haggard and unwell. This extraordinary compassion for his children was probably a compensation for the loss of his father. As-Sibā^Cī had no hobbies except football and hockey which he abandoned after secondary school, but he used to exercise every morning until he died.

Chapter Two

POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND
LITERARY CAREER

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1. POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The name of As-Sibā^Cī was connected with many cultural and political organisations, which he himself established, contributed to or directed from the fifties, especially after the revolution of 1952. His enthusiasm for founding so many cultural establishments, whose aim was to encourage and protect writers, can perhaps be traced back to two reasons. The first is to do with his father, whose works were virtually unknown when he died, even though he is mentioned as having been one of the pioneer writers and translators. Indeed, if As-Sibā^Cī had not concerned himself with gathering and publishing his father's works, no attention would have been paid to them, and he was anxious that a similar fate should not overtake other writers. The second reason is that As-Sibā^Cī's generation, consisting of such men as Najīb Maḥfūz, Iḥsān ^CAbd al-Quddūs, Muḥammad ^CAbd al-Ḥalīm ^CAbd Allāh, ^CAlī Ahmad Bākathīr, Amīn Yūsuf Ghurāb and others, did not find encouragement from the pioneer writers such as Ṭāḥā Ḥusayn and al-^CAqqād who might have helped them to publish their works at the beginning of their careers. In fact, Maḥfūz and Iḥsān ^CAbd

al-Quddūs and others had to establish a publishing house with their own money in order to publish their works.¹ For this reason the tasks of the cultural foundations which As-Sibā^{Cī} established were to take care of men of letters, journalists, artists and actors, and to help and encourage them, financially and in other ways. According to As-Sibā^{Cī}, it was because of the difficulty which his generation faced that he attempted to help the next generation, either privately or through his public positions.² The reasons which enabled As-Sibā^{Cī} to play a great role in the cultural realm in Egypt were, perhaps, first his good relationships with the authorities, and second his own nature, which was marked by continual activity.

As-Sibā^{Cī} began his literary activity when he was fourteen years old, when he attempted to write an entire magazine, whose contents were a short story, a poem, an article, jokes and caricatures. Later, in the last two years of secondary school, he became deputy chief editor of the school magazine, in addition to his other activities. His activities found a wider scope when he published some of his short stories in famous magazines of the time. His varied activities in this early period of his life were perhaps a reaction against the loneliness in which he lived after his father's death.

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Ayyām, p.403.

2. Ibid., p.403, and see ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.194.

After graduation from the Military College As-Sibā^Cī continued writing and publishing short stories, novels and plays. The first literary foundation he established was Nādī 1-Qiṣṣa (1953) which was concerned with the short story and novel. The Nādī succeeded in publishing the works of several generations of writers in an inexpensive series of books such as al-Kitāb adh-Dhahabī, al-Kitāb al-Fiddī, or Majallat al-Qiṣṣa. It also encouraged the young generation of short story writers and novelists by means of competitions and annual prizes, in addition to literary discussions between the writers and the readers from time to time. The members of the Nādī were from different generations of writers, having Ṭāhā Ḥusayn as president, and Tawfīk al-Ḥakīm, As-Sibā^Cī, Ihsān^C Abd al-Quddūs and others as members. Until the present day the Nādī has had a great influence on modern Egyptian writers. To quote al-Ḥakīm:

"It (Nādī 1-Qiṣṣa) was a literary organisation which had a great share in the development of the short story and the novel and supporting the new generations of their writers."¹

Yūsuf Idrīs is one example of a writer who is now one of the most prominent short story writers and novelists in the Arab world who began his literary career in Nādī 1-Qiṣṣa.

In addition to Nādī 1-Qiṣṣa, As-Sibā^Cī contributed

1. YSDU, p.159.

to founding many literary unions such as Jam'iyat al-Udabā', Nādī al-Qalam ad-Duwalī, and Dār al-Üdabā', becoming secretary-general to each of them. These different positions were given to him by the government. President Nāṣir himself gave a wing of one of the royal palaces as a centre for Nādī al-Qiṣṣa,¹ and encouraged him to found more cultural and literary establishments, newspapers and magazines. Thus in 1954 he issued a new literary magazine under the title ar-Risāla al-Jadīda which became very famous and widespread throughout the fifties, not only in Egypt but in the rest of the Arab world as well. Many different generations of Arabic writers, whatever their literary and political ideologies, have written in this magazine. As he found success in this field his ambition increased, and in 1954 he asked President Nāṣir to found an official establishment of culture associated with the cultural revolution which was declared by Nāṣir at that time. In the same year the Higher Council for Arts and Letters was established. This was directed by one of the Free Officers for two years, and then in 1956 As-Sibā^{Cī} was appointed Secretary General of the Council. The tasks of the Council were, first to study the cultural situation; secondly to plan a new cultural policy which would be suitable for the post-revolutionary situation; thirdly to apply this policy; and finally, to supervise the application of this policy.² The Council was connected officially

1. Interview with Husayn Rizq, the secretary of As-Sibā^{Cī}.

2. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Nāṣir, p.38.

with the Revolution Command Council and its secretary was regarded as a minister. It consisted of twenty committees for different kinds of arts, literature and social studies. As-Sibā^{Cī} adopted and applied many projects and made them a task of the Council. These projects included a foundation to consolidate the Egyptian cinema, a competition in different kinds of culture for young writers, whether Egyptian, Arab, Asian or African, a project for an Arab library which would publish Arabic classical works, awards to encourage and show appreciation for litterateurs, artists and actors, scholarships for postgraduate study; a project for publishing the first book of a young writer and giving him financial support, and finally the provision of facilities for certain famous men in the realms of literature, art and social studies to join the council, not to accomplish any official tasks but to devote themselves to their work.¹

In 1957 As-Sibā^{Cī} entered the world of foreign policy when President Nāṣir appointed him Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Movement. Later he became secretary of the Union of Afro-Asian Writers and chief editor of its magazine, Lotus. This was an important position which he occupied, and because of his great efforts he was awarded the Lenin Medal in 1970 by the USSR. He retained his position as Secretary of the Movement and the Union until he was assassinated.

1. YSDU, pp.400-1.

As-Sibā^Cī's activities were not confined to the direction of cultural establishments or to writing short stories, novels, articles and plays.¹ He also worked in the field of the cinema as a script-writer, either for his own novels, most of which were made into films, or for those of other writers. For these efforts he was awarded the Prize of the Ministry of Culture in 1959. His last work in the cinema, a month before he died, was the script and screen play of the film Habībī Anā.²

With respect to his activities in the journalistic field he became, as mentioned above, chief editor of the magazine ar-Risāla al-Jadīda in 1954. From this time until his death As-Sibā^Cī contributed to many literary, cultural and political magazines and newspapers whether as editor or a chief editor. Among these magazines were Musāmarāt al-Jayb, At-Tahrīr, Rūz al-Yūsuf, Ṣabāḥ al-Khayr, al-Akhbār, al-Muṣawwar and Ākhir Sā^Ca. He was also secretary of the Arab Writers' Union. In 1960 he became a member of the board of directors of the Rūz al-Yūsuf Foundation, which is one of the great Arab journalistic organisations. Some years later, in 1971, he was appointed president of the board of directors of the oldest and best-known journalistic foundation, al-Hilāl. At the same time he was the secretary of the Egyptian Hockey Union.

Finally As-Sibā^Cī reached the most important cultural position in Egypt when he was appointed Minister of Culture in

1. We shall deal with his writing more elaborately in a separate section.

2. YSDU, p.70.

1972. Three years later he became Minister of Culture and Information. In 1976 he resigned from the Ministry and was appointed president of the board of directors of the al-Ahrām foundation (the biggest journalistic organisation) and chief editor of the newspaper, al-Ahrām. At the same time he was secretary of the Higher Council of Broadcasting and Television. The last additional position he occupied was that of President of the Union of Journalists.

As-Sibā^{Cī} received many different awards. In addition to the Lenin Peace Medal (1970) he also obtained the following awards:

- (i) Order of Merit (first class) from Egypt in 1962.
- (ii) Order of Merit (first class) from Italy in 1963.
- (iii) Award for Contribution to Literature from Egypt in 1973.
- (iv) Republican Medal (first class) from Egypt in 1975.
- (v) After he was assassinated, President Sadat gave him a posthumous Republican Chain.

This extensive activity and the different responsibilities in the cultural and political realms which As-Sibā^{Cī} undertook since the revolution of 1952 lead one to ask how it was possible for As-Sibā^{Cī} to maintain his positions for such a long time under three Presidents, Muhammad Najīb, Jamāl ^CAbd an-Nāṣir and Anwar as-Sādāt, who were very different politically. In fact As-Sibā^{Cī}'s character may be summed up as follows:

- (i) He was a successful administrator in all the positions

which he occupied, whether in Egypt, the Arab world, Asia or Africa. This is confirmed by all the Egyptian writers and journalists interviewed, whatever their political and intellectual tendencies, and by members of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Movement, both Arab and non-Arab.

- (ii) *Ās-Sibā^{Cī}* himself was concerned to gain the friendship of all the different writers, journalists, artists, actors and others, whatever their attitudes towards him. We find in most of the magazines of which he was chief editor many different writers and journalists working with him. ^C*Abd ar-Rahmān ash-Sharqāwī* states that the government through the fifties wanted to dismiss the left-wing writers from the Union of Egyptian Writers, but that *Ās-Sibā^{Cī}* insisted on keeping them in the Union and even on the Union Board of Directors.¹
- (iii) He was closely associated with those in power in the country. He had known the Free Officers when he was in the army and for this reason was respected and trusted by Presidents *Nāṣir* and *Sādāt*.
- (iv) In addition to these, there was another factor which is no less important than the others which allowed him to retain his position for twenty-six years. He did

1. YSDU, p.323.

not join any political party either before or after the revolution, and he had no clear-cut leaning, although he may be regarded as a right-wing writer. This mentality allowed him to turn whenever the policy of the government did. In Nāṣir's time he supported strongly any decision which Nāṣir adopted. He stood with him in 1954 when he suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood and supported him against the communists and Marxists whom Nāṣir imprisoned. In 1961 when Nāṣir declared his socialist principles, As-Sibā^{Cī} wrote many articles praising and supporting them and even after the defeat in the 1967 war, As-Sibā^{Cī} justified the policy of Nāṣir. Many other examples could be cited to show As-Sibā^{Cī}'s attitude during the time of Nāṣir. After Nāṣir, As-Sibā^{Cī} took the same attitude towards Sādāt, supporting him and criticising the policy of Nāṣir. When Sādāt started negotiating for peace with Israel As-Sibā^{Cī} wrote articles supporting Sādāt and explaining his policies, and even asked Sādāt to take him to Jerusalem. Although he had more freedom than other writers to say "No" or to reject and condemn government policies, he never availed himself of this freedom in the way that Maḥfūz, for example, did. Thus the government trusted him and was not afraid of him.¹

1. Interview with Tharwat Abāza (an Egyptian novelist).

2. LITERARY ACTIVITIES

As-Sibā^{Cī} was among the most prolific Egyptian writers, in that he published more than fifty books, consisting of fifteen novels, twenty-one collections of short stories, eight collections of articles and five plays. His short stories, articles and most of the novels were published in many magazines. Perhaps the fact that he was editor of or contributed to so many magazines had something to do with this enormous output, as he was constantly called upon to contribute material. This may have had a negative influence upon the quality of his works, to the extent that one critic says: "if he had proceeded slowly and deliberately in his works, they would have been excellent".¹

As we have seen, he began writing when he was at secondary school, his first short story being published in his school magazine in about 1933 under the title Fawq al-Anwā', and he published some short stories in different cultural magazines at that time. He stopped writing for three years during his studies at Military College, but he continued publishing after his graduation.

His writing was concerned at first with the short story because this genre was easier to get published in the magazines and created a wider readership. He collected his early short stories and in 1947 published them in two collections entitled Atyāf and

1. YSDU, p.77.

Ithnatā ^CAshar Imra'a (1949). In the same year he published his first novel, Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl, and continued writing many different genres, especially after he launched his magazine ar-Risāla al-Jadīda in 1954. This large output was maintained throughout the fifties during which period he wrote short stories, novels, articles and plays. In addition, his books became extremely popular among Egyptian and other Arab readers, and he re-published his works several times.

After the fifties he began to devote himself more to novels than to other genres, other than journalistic articles. In this he is like the majority of his generation of writers who were novelists more than short story or play writers. Discussing this shift of emphasis As-Sibā^Cī himself says: "I found the novel to be more suitable for me because it does not impose restrictions on me whether in limitation or construction".¹ He abandoned writing plays after 1953, except for one which was published in 1964 under the title Aqwā Min az-Zaman, and stopped writing short stories after 1955.

As mentioned above, the extensive activities of As-Sibā^Cī had a negative influence upon the quality of his production, and during the sixties and seventies his output diminished whereas previously he used to publish three or four books every year. We do not find in the last eight years of his

1. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.189.

life more than two novels, two collections of articles, and one travel book entitled Tā'ir Bayn al-Muḥīṭayn. Speaking in 1973 he says: "I feel that my writing for journalism and the cinema, especially during the last years, has exhausted a great part of my energy",¹ and indeed, since 1972 when he became a minister until he died in 1978, he did not write any work except for some articles, although six months before his death he planned an outline for four novels, promising the publisher to give him two novels each year.²

He used to begin all his books with a dedication and an introduction, usually dedicating his books to one of his relatives, friends, fellow-writers and artists, or to his readers, although we sometimes come across a strange dedication such as, to himself, to the hypocrites, to Azrael, or to his dog. One could perhaps interpret these unusual dedications in the light of the cynical tone of those of his works which appeared before the revolution. Thus, in the introduction to one of his books, he says: "If I were not sure that I am not the only deceitful person in this country I would not publish this book".³ This feature may have come from the influence of his father's works which were imbued with cynicism. In the introductions, however, he usually explains to the readers the subject of the book, or the

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.363.

2. An interview with Ḥusayn Rizq, Secretary of As-Sibā^Cī.

3. As-Sibā^Cī, Ṣuwar, p.166.

reasons which led him to publish the book, or sometimes discusses literary issues, giving his opinion.

In the short stories and novels which were published from 1933 to 1954, As-Sibā^Cī treated many various subjects, attempting to move on different levels whether in content or in form. In his collections of short stories, Yā Ummatan Dahikat (1948) and Bayn Abū r-Rīsh wa Junaynat Nāmīsh (1950) and his novel as-Saqqā Māt (1952) he wandered in the most crowded and poor quarters attempting to describe with photographic realism the people of these quarters and their life, behaviour, ignorance, dirtiness and good and bad characteristics. In the other works he broke the wall between reality and imagination in a tragical atmosphere of fantasy. In his first novel Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl (1947) he describes a journey between Earth and Heaven. In the collections of short stories Min al-^CĀlam al-Majhūl (1949) he enters a metaphysical world, the world of devils, spirits and jinns. In his novel Ard an-Nifāq (1949) he supposes that nobility of character is a medical powder which can be swallowed. In other works he moves to a world of love, the problems of the Arab girl and the relationships between man and woman. In these works we notice a tragic romanticism both in the treatment and style; among them are the collections of short stories such as Fī Mawkib al-Hawā (1949) and Mabkā al-^CUshshāq (1950), and the novels Innī Rāhila (195)), Bayn al-Atlāl (1952) and Fadaytuki yā Laylā (1953).

In all these works, whether marked by photographic

realism, fantasy or tragic romanticism, As-Sibā^Cī attempts to criticise the defects of society, and government and political parties of the pre-revolution period. These defects were chiefly ignorance, hypocrisy, bribery and the corruption of governments, elections and journalism. He also dealt with the social values which appeared as a result of the conflict between old and new generations and the struggle between the aristocratic and bourgeois classes, making the emotional relationships between the characters a reflection of the conflict of values of two social classes.

From 1954 to 1978 As-Sibā^Cī began to concentrate on novels more than other genres with the exception of political and literary articles. In this period he published nine novels, one collection of short stories, one play and seven collections of articles. He was concerned in these novels with portraying the most prominent happenings which took place in Egypt and the Arab world after the revolution. Many novels were published picturing the situation of pre-revolutionary Egypt, for example Sahh an-Nawm by Yaḥyā Ḥaqqī, Fī Baytinā Rajul by Iḥsān ^CAbd al-Quddūs and others, but As-Sibā^Cī continued in this trend to the extent that some critics regarded him as an historian of the revolution. He himself has commented that circumstances have given him an opportunity to live in the period of the revolution and he states his belief that the aim of this trend is to: "include in our literature a reality which might be neglected, in the manner of the Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, in which he recorded the French Revolution".¹

1. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.196.

Thus he recorded the revolution of 1952 in his novel Rudda Qalbī (1954), the Palestinian War of 1948 in his novel Tarīq al-^CAwda (1956), the Suez War of 1956 in the novel Nādiya (1960), the unity between Egypt and Syria in 1958 in the novel Jaffat ad-Dumū^C (1961), the separation between Egypt and Syria in 1961 in the novel Layl Lahu Ākhir (1963), the war of 1967 between the Arabs and Israel and the struggle of the Palestinian Fedayeen against Israel in the novel Ibtisāma ^CAlā Shafatayh (1970), and finally described the situation of the Egyptian army on the eve of the war of 1973 in his last novel al-^CUmr Laḥza (1972). His novel Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk (1968) is an exception to the historical sequence of his post-revolution novels as he portrays in this novel Egyptian society since the first decade until the fifties of this century. The one novel which is completely different from the others in its subject is Lasta Waḥdak (1969) in which he treats the influence of the development of science in the realm of cosmic discoveries on the mind of the human being and his belief in God; this novel however is related formally to his first novel in that it is in the form of fantasy, although it is more mature in both thought and technique.

It will be noticed that the post-revolution novels are very long, five of them extending to about one thousand pages and being divided into two volumes, while the other four novels extend to about four hundred pages. In these novels, however, he deals with some events of contemporary history within the form

of an imaginative story which is built around the theme of love. Although he touches reality by means of the description of historical events or including real characters, he sometimes enters a world of excessive imagination. He also attempts to show historical happenings objectively, but he often, through his characters, supports or condemns, or takes an attitude towards or against, such political situations.

In addition to his short stories and novels *As-Sibā^Cī* has written five plays, four of them being written between 1951 and 1953, and all of them related to the first stage either in content or style. In the first play Umm Ratība (1951) he makes fun of spiritualism. The second play Warā' as-Sitār (1952) exposes the defects of journalism under the monarchy with a heavily ironic style. In the third play Jam^Cīyyat Qatl az-Zawjāt (1953) he pictures some aspects of poor people's lives, and in the fourth play al-Bahth ^CAn Jasad (1953) returns to the world of fantasy which he uses to criticise the life of King Fārūq. The fifth play which was published in 1964, entitled Aqwā Min az-Zaman, is related to the second stage, and records one of the achievements of the revolution, the building of the High Dam. He returns in this play to the form of fantasy as well so that we find a love affair between a woman of the Pharaonic period and an Egyptian man working as an engineer on the High Dam. Although his plays were acted they were not really successful from the artistic point of view. He recognised that he was unsuccessful as a

dramatist and gave up writing plays.

From that time As-Sibā^Cī began to edit the magazine ar-Risāla al-Ĵadīda in 1954, and began writing literary and political articles, not only in his own magazine but in many other different magazines and newspapers. He published most of his articles in eight collections from 1952 to 1971. Most of his articles were cultural, social, literary and general memoirs, while his political articles are fewer in number and do no more than support government decisions or justify them. The emphasis is on Arab unity, fighting against Israel before the visit of Sādāt to Jerusalem in 1977 but then supporting the peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. In his last collection of articles, which was published a month after he died under the title Miṣr: al-Mushkila Wa - l-Hall, he deals with the problems of the increase of population in Egypt and the simultaneous decrease of production, explaining the reasons for the problem, criticising the wrong policy of Nāṣir, and finally offering a solution for this problem.

Because of his different political and cultural positions he used to travel to many Eastern and Western countries, and as a result he published a book in 1971 under the title Ṭā'ir Bayn al-Muḥīṭayn, describing his journeys and impressions.

In addition to his various literary works he participated in writing for the cinema, whether to prepare one of his novels for the screen or to write a script, scenario or dialogue for a film.

With respect to his style, As-Sibā^Cī is a writer whose style is very simple and straightforward, avoiding any rhetorical flourishes and complicated grammar. His language, in fact, may be considered an intermediate level between classical Arabic or the language of Ṭahā Husayn and al-^CAqqād, and the colloquial language; he used this simple language in all his works except the earlier short stories in which we find the clear influences of his father's style and language. It is worth mentioning that there is a variation in his style from work to work; in his earlier works, for example, he inclines to the use of very simple and understandable phrases without any rhetorical devices and employs a considerable amount of colloquial dialogue on occasion. When he moves to the world of imagination and sentiment in his romantic novels he uses a poetic style and harmonious phrases with some rhetorical embellishment. In spite of these differences his language is still simple; it "whispers and does not shout, fascinates and does not grab you, it gives you a feeling that you are a good reader by reading a thousand pages within one or two nights".¹ His simple style could be one of the many reasons for the striking vogue his works enjoyed among Arab readers throughout the fifties of this century. In addition to simplicity, mockery is another characteristic of his style. As-Sibā^Cī is one of the most successful writers to use an ironic style, whether in

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.11.

narration, description or dialogue, especially in his realistic works. Although his ironic style extended even to some of his articles it is a characteristic inherited from his father.

Most of his heroes and characters are based on real people, and sometimes he takes them from people he knows. Sometimes he creates a character who is distinctly similar to one of his relatives or friends; in other words he derives a character or event from his career. He himself says: "All of my works are taken from my life, and I cannot stop my voice from speaking on behalf of the character or even of an animal".¹

3. HIS POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL VIEWS

We have seen the varied activity of As-Sibā^{Cī}, whether as a writer, politician, journalist or head of numerous cultural and political establishments. We shall deal here with his most important opinions as regards politics, culture, literature and society as found in his articles and interviews.

With respect to his political opinions As-Sibā^{Cī} began writing political articles after the revolution when, in fact, most of his articles were written. Throughout our study of his articles we find that he seemed unable to reject the policy of any government, whether in the time of Nāṣir or Sādāt. In Nāṣir's era As-Sibā^{Cī} stood behind Nāṣir supporting him in every position,

1. ash.Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.195.

justifying any decision which Nāṣir adopted and, in fact, considering Nāṣir a President who was created to be a leader.¹ When Nāṣir suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood whose members attempted, in 1954, to assassinate him, As-Sibā^Cī wrote as follows:

"I hate rulers and hate to acclaim them, ... but today after I have discovered my feelings when I almost lost him ... I find no embarrassment in acclaiming him from my heart ... Long live Nāṣir."²

When Nāṣir leaned towards the Soviet Union, As-Sibā^Cī praised the friendship of the Soviet Union and attacked America, and regarded the first visit of Nāṣir to the Soviet Union as a "wider step towards peace".³ He also said, "The friendship between the Soviet Union and the Arab world is an expression of common aims, that is the struggle against colonialism",⁴ and considered that a new page of history began with the Soviet revolution.⁵ When Nāṣir suppressed the Communists and Marxists in Egypt and adopted an attitude of opposition towards the Iraqi revolution of 1958, As-Sibā^Cī as usual supported him,⁶ while on the other hand

1. As-Sibā^Cī, Nāṣir, pp.133-4.

2. Ibid., pp.25-6.

3. Ibid., p.85.

4. As-Sibā^Cī, Ghaym, p.24.

5. Ibid., p.100.

6. As-Sibā^Cī, Nāṣir, pp.122-3.

As-Sibā^{Cī} regarded the socialist decrees issued in 1961 by Nāṣir as one of his dreams which Nāṣir had achieved. He also rejected, as Nāṣir did, the idea of the multi-party system and thought the Socialist Union established by Nāṣir a better substitute.¹ With regard to the Palestinian problem and the fight against Israel he also adopted the attitude of the government; thus he says in 1957:

"... weapon after weapon to the Arabs, generally and especially to the refugees ... their land will return by force ... whatever may be said about peace their return must come first and peace second ... For if not how can man live in peace ... if he does not live in his land?"²

He thinks that Israel is an "instrument in the hand of imperialist forces to cheat Arabs and steal their wealth",³ and he considers the Palestinian problem to be the concern of all Arabs to the extent that when the Khartoum Summit Conference produced three important points which were, no reconciliation with, no negotiation with, and no recognition of Israel, As-Sibā^{Cī} said, "I felt that there are three forbidden things which we have to eschew".⁴

After the war of 1967 he also said that Israel could not be resisted

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Nāṣir, p.347; Ghaym, pp.68 and 75.

2. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Ayyām, p.124.

3. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Ghaym, p.34.

4. Ibid., p.201.

except by military force,¹ justifying the defeat by saying that the Arabs had not fought Israel but America as well. He thought that only a "united Arab state would be able to oppose the aggression of the United States of America".²

After Nāṣir's death As-Sibā^Cī turned towards Sādāt, criticising the policy of the previous government, although he did not criticise Nāṣir himself. He supported Sādāt when he arrested associates of Nāṣir in the so-called "Revolution of Rectification" of 1971. Writing at this time As-Sibā^Cī says,

"The revolution of 1952 started with a new leadership which was able, without doubt, to change the form of society, but it had many negative aspects which led to the defeat of 1967, and which imposed a new correction on the 15th May."³

He also says that the authority of 1952 was,

"... one group without any opposing groups, it was always action without reaction ... therefore the positive things went to their full extent without any impediment, and the negative things went to their full extent without limit or criticism or opposition ... but impelled by hypocrisy and fear."⁴

1. As-Sibā^Cī, Ghaym, p.210.

2. Ibid., p.18.

3. As-Sibā^Cī, Miṣr, p.150.

4. Ibid., p.151.

With regard to the Palestinian problem he continued to emphasise the fight against Israel to recover the land, glorifying the war of 1973, but when Sādāt began to move away from military confrontation to peace negotiations with Israel As-Sibā^{Cī} strongly supported him, justifying this by saying that the war against Israel had led Egypt to bankruptcy:

"We entered three wars, and we helped the Arabs and Africans to obtain independence ... therefore we became bankrupt because we spent more than we had. These are the obvious reasons for our bankruptcy ... not the ministers' Chevrolets."¹

He believes as much as Sādāt does that there should be a Palestinian state side by side with Israel,² and moreover calls the attempt of Sādāt to achieve peace a "brave step",³ assuring Sādāt that the whole Egyptian people trusts and supports him. On the basis of his cultural and literary positions he claims that the litterateurs support the peace initiative in their writing and says,

"A writer has a great role, to pave the way for peace; throughout history literature is always an expression of peace."⁴

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Miṣr, p.150.

2. a1-Ahrām, (newspaper) 19-2-78, p.5.

3. YSDU, p.9.

4. Ibid., pp.10-11.

Although As-Sibā^{Cī} was an army officer he seemed to adopt in his political views non-violent attitudes like those of Gandhi, but unlike Gandhi he was non-revolutionary as well. As early as 1958 he says: "I naturally hate violence, hate whatever is caused by violence and the consequence of it".¹

By virtue of the many positions he held As-Sibā^{Cī} had a major role in moulding cultural and literary opinions in Egypt. He, for example, attacked the belief of left-wing writers in "literature for life's sake" and "committed literature" saying

"I hate any restriction which is imposed on the writer except what he feels ... there is no literature without an aim of some kind even if it is amusement only",²

while he, himself, emphasised more than once that he could not write any work unless he felt free from any bond. He thinks that the aim of the Writers' Union, of which he was secretary, should be to resist any restriction on the writer's freedom.³

He prefers the simple and easy style and accuses the works of young writers of showing the phenomenon of ambiguity and unreality which is divorced from the real world, calling their works a literature of lunatics.

"Literature and art should be understandable, but the production of young writers which is marked by

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Min, p.54.

2. As-Sibā^{Cī}, ar-Risāla al-Jadīda (magazine) July 1956, p.3.

3. As-Sibā^{Cī}, ath-Thaqāfa al-Jadīda (magazine), January 1956, p.3.

complexity is a kind of literature of fools and drug addicts, because life naturally is clear and simple."¹

Of himself he says,

"I think that I have achieved more than I dreamt. As far as my generation is concerned I believe that I am one of ten writers I have obtained more than I deserve, and luck has helped me, and I think it is a sort of kindness or inclination of God to man."²

Dealing with his thoughts about love, women and marriage, which he was concerned with in most of his works, he says:

"Love is a sensation of something which increases the way we are affected by every event, for it makes our joy in life greater and our feeling for beauty greater, and our normal anger and jealousy and sadness greater and greater Woman is the tenderest companion who can turn into the most dangerous enemy Marriage is a contract of companionship more than a permission for enjoyment."³

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.358.

2. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, pp.197-8.

3. Ibid., p.198.

As-Sibā^Cī is a religious man, and his thoughts about metaphysical matters such as death, fate, and God are coloured by religious views. He thinks that death is an "emancipation from all the shackles of life",¹ while life is a "relaxation period between birth and death".² God, he says, "is existent, I believe, and he responds to our wishes but in his own way".³ Although fate has played a great role in most of his works it seems that he gave up his belief in fate later when he said:

"Any living being is a moving power which moves constantly, and its destiny depends on its collision with other beings. This collision has its effect on it and changes its direction, and other beings collide with it, and push it up or down, or stop it moving. In other words, people are like billiard balls; they strike one another and in the end we find that they have taken up their positions. There is nothing called fate, and nothing called inevitable destiny."⁴

In accordance with this belief he thinks that the difference between common people and the writer, artist, scientist or philosopher is

1. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.198.

2. YSDU, p.391.

3. As-Sibā^Cī, Min, p.15.

4. Shukrī, Fikr, p.84.



the difference between "a simple car and a car called Tawfīq al-Hakim for example ... who exploited his energy ... the most important factor for the car is not to be fast but to avoid crashes as much as possible".¹

These are some of As-Sibā^Cī's political, cultural, literary and social opinions which sum up his wavering attitude; we find him a leftist sometimes and rightist at other times, revolutionary sometimes and non-revolutionary at other times. These different attitudes were adopted by him according to the position of the government. With such frankly opportunist attitudes As-Sibā^Cī, who occupied many different positions, culminating in the post of Minister of Culture, cannot be said to have exercised a positive influence on cultural life in Egypt.

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.85.

Chapter Three

HIS RELATIONSHIP
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In this chapter we shall deal with the different relationships of As-Sibā^Cī with ordinary people, with writers and with his environment, and their influence upon his cultural background and his works. We can identify two kinds of influences upon him, first the influence of his father and his environment which reflected directly on his works in particular in his earlier period, and secondly the indirect influences of his reading, relationship with contemporary writers and criticism of his works.

I. DIRECT INFLUENCES

1. His father: Muḥammad As-Sibā^Cī (1881-1931)

Muḥammad As-Sibā^Cī was one of the pioneers of the modern Arab renaissance. He obtained a certificate in English Literature from the Dār al-Mu^Callimīn and worked as a teacher in different secondary schools. He later gave up teaching in order to devote himself to literature, and worked as an editor of many magazines and newspapers including al-Bayān, al-Jarīda and al-Balāgh. He translated from English many cultural and literary works whether English, French or Russian and even translated the

Rubā^Cīyyāt of ^CUmar al-Khayyām from English. At a period when standards of translation were not always high, his translations were considered very accurate and he was regarded as knowledgeable in both Arabic and English to the extent that al-^CAqqād, commenting upon his translation work, said that "If their authors had written them in Arabic they would not have been better than his translation".¹ Among his translated works were A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, On Heroes by Thomas Carlyle, a selection of articles by prominent English thinkers on many different subjects of literature, history, sociology, morals, aphorism and proverbs, and finally, an anthology of Russian short stories.

In addition to his translation which comprises most of his output he wrote many essays on different subjects which were published together with three short stories in three collections entitled aṣ-Ṣuwar, as-Samar and Mashā^Cir Wa-Afkār. He began work on a novel entitled al-Faylasūf but he died before it was completed.

In his contribution to literature and in his style Muḥammad As-Sibā^Cī was one of the writers who managed to make the Arabic language sufficiently flexible to accommodate the contemporary demands of modern literature;² his style is distinguished by rhetoric, harmonious phrases, imagination and irony. As a stylist he glorified the language as much as al-Manfalūṭī, Ṭāha Ḥusayn and

1. Quoted by ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.185.

2. M. Taymūr, Ittijāhāt al-Adab al-^CArabī, p.157.

al-^CAqqād, and since he regarded language as an end more than a means he used to select his words and phrases carefully, attempting to combine the two cultures, Arabic and English. This rhetorical style sometimes made As-Sibā^Cī difficult to understand. Muhammad Mandūr says, no doubt exaggerating somewhat,

"When we were in secondary school we could not read and understand properly the translation of A Tale of Two Cities; it was as difficult as the English text with which we were faced."¹

In his short stories most of his characters can be divided into two kinds, a man who is good and educated but poor, and a rich but ignorant man upon whom these intellectuals are dependent. It seems that his life had a great influence on his stories, for although Muhammad As-Sibā^Cī was an educated man he was poor. Among other characteristics of his stories are the happy ending, the frequent quotation of poetry and lengthy descriptions with little dialogue.

Muhammad As-Sibā^Cī lived a Bohemian life, not attaching much importance to the conventions of society but acting in the way that best suited himself. Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī mentions that his father and uncle resigned from their jobs because they wanted to memorise the poetry of Ibn ar-Rūmī when they were the only two family providers. When his father was a teacher in Alexandria he used to

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.64.

bring together all the classes of the week in one day in order to stay in Cairo for the rest of the week, and even on the day when he used to take the train to Alexandria he would sometimes leave the train halfway and return to Cairo.¹ Another example which shows the Bohemianism of Muḥammad as-Sibā^{Cī} is quoted by al-Māzinī, one of his contemporaries, who says,

"A typical example of his scorn for what other people are proud of is that he left his graduation certificate with a coffee-house owner whom we used to frequent."²

Turning to the relationship between As-Sibā^{Cī} the father and his son, we are told that Muḥammad As-Sibā^{Cī} was well known for his joking, cheerfulness, goodness and modesty. His relationship with his sons, especially Yūsuf, was very friendly and he used to read him his essays, sending him with his articles to the printing house, and encouraging him to read cultural and literary works. Yūsuf, in his turn, loved his father very much and later said that his admiration for his father led to his enthusiasm for literature.³ As a result the unexpected death of Muḥammad As-Sibā^{Cī} had a great influence on Yūsuf and on his works. He deals with the subject of death, in particular unexpected death, in many short stories and novels, and says,

1. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Ṣuwar, p.230.

2. As-Sibā^{Cī}, Min, p.8.

3. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.185.

"My father's death had a limitless influence on me ... I saw him when he died ... this picture settled in my consciousness and did not leave it. It gave me a particular view of death. If you refer to my novels Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl and al-Baḥth ^CAn Jasad you will find that I scoff at death I regard it as an enemy which I would like to fight."¹

Muhammad As-Sibā^Cī was the first writer who influenced the work of Yūsuf, both in his language and in his ironic style, especially in the earlier works. Although Yūsuf dispensed with his father's influence as far as his rhetorical language was concerned he continued to show some characteristics of his father's style, among which were the ironic style, certain of his ideas, and the use of poetry in his novels and short stories. He says, "My father was a Bohemian writer, and thus my younger brother inherited his Bohemian characteristics, while I inherited a talent for writing from him".²

2. His environment

As we have seen As-Sibā^Cī spent part of his early life in as-Sayyida Zaynab, one of the most crowded quarters of Cairo, which was inhabited by members of the middle and lower classes. Like any slum it was characterised by dirtiness, disease and

1. YSDU, p.388.

2. As-Sibā^Cī, Ayyām, p.9.

ignorance, but its most notable feature was the holy shrine and large mosque of the prophet's grand-daughter, and as usual in the Arab world many poor people, insane shaykhs and dervishes who used to practise their religious customs lived in the neighbourhood. The conflict among the various social classes in the quarter was clearly observable.

The influence of the environment can be clearly seen both in the formation of the personality of As-Sibā^Cī himself, and in his works. This influence relies on three bases. The first of these is religious, and as we have already mentioned he used to go, as a child, with his friends to the Sayyida Zaynab mosque to pray, to recite the Qur'ān and to listen to the shaykhs.¹ He remained a practising Muslim until his death. This is reflected in his works, so that in most of his short stories and novels we notice a religious tone and a concern with the spiritual side of man. In his collection of short stories Nafha Min al-Īmān he deals with the role of Islamic belief in the life of ordinary people, while his novel Lasta Waḥdak is built on the role of the belief in God in the heart of the human being. Most of his characters in almost all his works believe in God, and some of them practice religious traditions.

From the atmosphere of the shrine of as-Sayyida Zaynab and others, and from their visitors who believe in their miracles

1. See p.23.

and fabulous stories, As-Sibā^Cī adopted most of the plots of his collection of short stories Min al-^CĀlam al-Majhūl in which he deals with spirits, ghosts and jinns.

This environment which was redolent of religion did not lead As-Sibā^Cī to draw merely photographic pictures; on the contrary he takes a very positive attitude, criticising many of the blemishes which have become associated with religion, making fun of many of the religious traditions which are practised inside these shrines, and condemning all kinds of religious hypocrisy. In his short story Yā Unmatan Dahikat, one of the collection of short stories which has the same title, he criticises severely the Zār, describing the people who practice this as ignorant. He returns to this subject in many short stories and in his novels as-Saqqā Māt and Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk. In Abū r-Rīsh, one of the short stories of the collection Bayn Abū r-Rīsh wa Junaynat Nāmīsh, he deals with those who adopt religion as a profitable business. His approach to all of these religious matters which he deals with in his works can be summed up as follows, that the spiritual factors

"... can only spring from the sources of truthfulness, faithfulness, and self-sacrifice. These things cannot be changed, while they carry their characteristics, into commercial articles for selling and buying in the market."¹

1. Wahīd, ^CĀlam, p.182.

Secondly, this district, which is full of various types of people, differing in their cultural, social and economic levels, is a fertile field from which he adopts many of the plots, characters and events of his short stories and novels. Perhaps his experience of this area was one of the many reasons behind his rejection of governments and conflicting political parties, and his drastic criticism of the poor quarters and their people and problems.

In his article on as-Saqqā Māt, in which As-Sibā^{Cī} portrays the quarter of as-Sayyida Zaynab accurately with full details of its houses, alleys, people and their traditions and language, Muhammad Mandūr says:

"I was in doubt as to which of the human examples in which As-Sibā^{Cī}'s as-Saqqā Māt abounds to choose, because this writer is one of the popular writers who have no link with the writers of the towers ... but goes down to the bazaar, wanders in the streets and alleys ... and associates with their residents to the extent that gives us an impression that he lives among them, participates in their lives and almost shares in their happiness and grief, listening to their conversation and recording it in their language in which he is a master in a way that reminds us of the mastery of his father, Muhammad As-Sibā^{Cī}, in the classical language."¹

1. Shukrī, Fikr, pp.63-4.

In addition to as-Saqqā Māt there are Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, and his three collections of short stories Yā Ummatan Dahikat, Bayn Abū r-Rīsh wa Junaynat Nāmīsh, and ash-Shaykh Zu^Crub, all of whose events take place in this area and all of whose characters are taken from this area. These may be real characters, like the madman ash-Shaykh Ahmad who fights an imaginary enemy with his wooden sword. We meet this character in more than one short story, and he also is among the characters of the environment of Sayyida, the heroine of Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk. Alternatively he creates imaginary characters, but they have their counterparts in real life. Even in his romantic works he creates a character, or sometimes more than one, who is taken from this particular area and has the characteristics of this environments, such as the janitor of the institute in Bayn al-Atlāl.

This environment did not provide As-Sibā^Cī with characters alone, but also gave him the element of place. Place in most of his works is not far away from Cairo in general, and is generally confined to a certain geographical area around the quarters of the Sayyida Zaynab and al-Husayn. It is enough to read as-Saqqā Māt to find a complete picture of Cairo forty years ago when these quarters were the active centre of Cairo. This led ^CAbd al-^CAzīz Sharaf to use the words "Aswār al-Madīna" (Walls of the city) in describing the element of place in the works of As-Sibā^Cī. He remarks that the picture of the city in his literature seems almost literally surrounded by very high walls. This shows that,

"The city in his works is not related, in the narrative concept, to the element of place only, but also linked, inside these walls, with the relationships of effectiveness (interaction among its people) at the same time ... so that he crystallizes the human being as a developed social being, not merely a photographic picture inside the walls of the city."¹

Thirdly, the influence of the environment extended to the style of As-Sibā^{Cī} himself, a style which is marked, especially in his realistic works, by social and political criticism. This criticism is conveyed by the irony and humour which is considered to be one of the most important characteristics of his style.

The irony which is scattered throughout his works takes many different shapes, whether in the caricature portrayal of some of his characters, or in the description, narration and dialogue, or sometimes in a use of ^{incongruity} ~~dissimilarity~~ (mufāraqa) or exaggerated inflation of reality, such as are found in Nā'ib^C Izrā'īl and Ard an-Nifāq and, as much as they arouse the laughter of the reader, diffuse a sad atmosphere hidden under the smiles. Perhaps irony is one of the obvious characteristics of the individuals of these areas.

Humour in the works of As-Sibā^{Cī} has many different roles. It can be an expression of an actual reality which is

1. Sharaf, "Aswār al-Madīna fī Adab Yūsuf As-Sibā^{Cī}", al-Kātib 204 (March 1978) Cairo, p.21.

transmitted by the writer accurately, for example, the habit of telling jokes among people of the quarter at their regular meetings at the café in as-Saqqā Māt. Sometimes he uses it to establish the nature of a character such as Hamdī's father in Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, and sometimes it seems to be a compensation for the hard life of a character, such as Shihāta Afandī in as-Saqqā Māt, who attempts to console himself for his hardships with cheerfulness. This humorous style, which becomes irony or even cynicism occasionally, is employed as an instrument by which the writer criticises specific social and political phenomena, as is the case with most of the irony which is used in Ard an-Nifāq.

Irony, as mentioned above, is an important characteristic of As-Sibā^Cī's style, which he uses as a means of criticism on the one hand, and of persuading the reader to accept his criticism indirectly, on the other.¹ He could not escape this style completely even in his romantic novels which are marked by a dramatic and sad atmosphere, so that he creates some secondary characters whose role is to modify the dramatic events, for example Madbūlī, the servant of Ibrāhīm in Fadaytuki Yā Laylā.

Although this ironic style is a result of his personality which was inclined to joking, and of the influence of the style of his father and of Tawfīq al-Hakīm, the environment seems also to have had a noticeable role in forming this style in his

1. See p.223.

works.¹

II. INDIRECT INFLUENCES

1. His reading

While all of the general reading of the writer will have some indirect influence upon his own works, we sometimes find that he may admire the works of a specific author to the extent that they have an observable effect upon his works or style of writing. As-Sibā^Cī, however, does not seem to be influenced directly by any writer in particular, with the exception of his father and especially by his ironic style, and by Tawfīq al-Hakīm to some extent. But it is difficult to say that As-Sibā^Cī's style, thoughts or characters are closely modelled on any of the above.

As-Sibā^Cī studied the Qur'ān at the Kuttāb (Qur'ān school) before starting at primary school, and for the rest of his life he retained a devotion to the Qur'ān and religious works and performed his religious duties to the best of his ability. This

1. For the influences of the environment upon the style of As-Sibā^Cī see the article of M. Mandūr in Gh Shukrī's al-Fikr wa-l-Fann fī Adab Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī, pp.63-74; Y. ash-Shārūnī in his article "Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī fī Rihlatih al-Adabiyya", ath-Thaqāfa 55 (1978) pp.24-30; A. Sharaf in his article "Aswār al-Madīna fī Adab Yūsuf As-Sibā^Cī", al-Kātib 204 (1978) pp.14-27; and Zaki N. Abdel-Malek in his article "The Influence of Diglossia on the Novels of Yuusif Al-Sibaa^Ci", JAL 3 (1973) pp.132-141.

had an influence upon his writing, in which we often find verses of the Qur'ān quoted, and most of his characters believing in God, repeating frequently the verses of thankfulness in prosperity or adversity, as is the case with the hero of his novel as-Saqqā Māt for example. Indeed, he devoted his novel Lasta Waḥdak and some short stories to the influence of belief in God upon man. He derives his thoughts from the Qur'ān, and he himself regarded the prophetic tradition which says "God desires that if one of you perform a deed that he should perform it perfectly" as his principle in life.

In his secondary school As-Sibā^Cī studied Arabic literature from the Jāhiliyya period to modern times, supplementing his reading with the books contained in the collection of his father, whether Arabic or western, classical or modern, poetry or prose, literary or cultural. Of this he says that the works of his father, both his own works and his translations, were of tremendous value. "I read all these great names in western literature such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Anatole France, and Shakespeare.¹ This stage perhaps encouraged him to write short stories, starting from 1933. As-Sibā^Cī however continued reading literary and cultural works, whether published in book form or in newspapers and magazines, following the work of contemporary writers such as Ṭāhā Husayn, Taymūr, al-^CAqqād, Haykal, al-Hakīm and their

1. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.185.

generation of writers, in addition to western writers, and attempting to diversify the subjects about which he read, especially when he came to occupy many different official positions.

Constant reading is very important for the writer; it plays a great role in forming his vision and developing his art, since talent alone is not sufficient to create a litterateur. But because of the large quantity of As-Sibā^{Cī}'s responsibilities, especially throughout the seventies, he had to give up serious reading, and he mentions that he arranged for his time to be organised for the accomplishment of all his tasks except his reading and writing.¹ This had a negative influence, not just upon the development of his work but also on his output, so that we find a very small number of works produced in the last seven years of his life.

2. His relationship with contemporaries

Because of the different positions As-Sibā^{Cī} occupied he had wide relationships with all Egyptian contemporary politicians, thinkers, writers, journalists, artists and actors, and with many representatives of these fields of activity from other Arabic countries and elsewhere.

In the field of culture he was concerned with the idea of the coming together of the generations, and he used to assemble

1. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.197.

writers of different generations working together in every cultural and literary position which he occupied. An example of this was the Higher Council for Art and Letters which consisted of various writers of different generations. He was also a link between writers and the government, attempting to help them publish their works and protecting them from any decision which the government might take against any one of them, to the extent that Tawfīq al-Hakīm said, "We always remembered As-Sibā^Cī when we needed him; he was a leader of cultural security for thirty years".¹

With the older generation of writers such as Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, al-^CAqqād and Ḥaykal, As-Sibā^Cī adopted an attitude of reverence, confessing their mastery and trying to honour them. For example, he appointed Ṭāhā Ḥusayn secretary of the Nādī l-Qiṣṣa, transferred al-Hakīm from his job in Dār al-Kutub to the Higher Council, and founded awards in appreciation of their contribution to literature. Even before he occupied these cultural positions he used to dedicate his works to some of them or give them copies of his books asking for advice and expecting them to write about him. In return some of them wrote critical articles about his works. He mentions that al-Māzinī, who was one of the pioneer novelists, complained to him of the young writers of As-Sibā^Cī's generation who abandoned writing novels for the short story and asked him to return to the novel, and that As-Sibā^Cī wrote his novel Innī Rāhila in compliance

1. YSDU, p.47.

with al-Mazinī's demand.¹

The generation of writers who grew up during the thirties and occupied the foremost place throughout the forties and fifties were a coherent generation; all of them have described the crisis of the Egyptian middle class in which they grew up, each one in his own way, and all of them suffered for a long time from the fact that no famous writer at that time would pay attention to them or heed their works. ^ʿAbd al-Halīm ^ʿAbd Allāh, who is one of As-Sibā^ʿī's generation, says: "Our generation preferred to be quiet ... seeking justice and shedding tears",² while As-Sibā^ʿī says: "We used to ask for help but we could not find anyone to notice us".³ Even Maḥfūz, who was noticed by the critics more than other novelists of his generation, continued to write for fifteen years before anybody paid any attention to his works. Thus the novelists of this generation depended on themselves, supporting one another. Maḥfūz, Iḥsān, Bākathīr and others, for example, established a publishing house with their own money and As-Sibā^ʿī and Iḥsān established Nādī l-Qiṣṣa. Maḥfūz says, "The most prominent characteristic of our generation was to believe in and persist in hard work".⁴

1. Introduction of Innī Rāḥila.

2. A. ^ʿAbd Allāh, Qadāyā wa-Ma^ʿārik Adabiyā, p.21.

3. As-Sibā^ʿī, Ayyām, p.402.

4. Y. Nawfal, al-Qiṣṣa wa-r-Riwāya Bayn Jīl Tāhā Ḥusayn wa-Jīl Najīb Maḥfūz, pp.139-40.

Nevertheless the Arabic novel was firmly established by their generation, whose writers specialised in the novel, whereas it was but one of many genres with which the preceding generation concerned itself. It is another characteristic of these novelists that despite the fact that they were different ideologically they did not attack one another, in contrast to the well known literary fights which took place among the writers of the preceding generations.

As-Sibā^{Cī}, by his positions, attempted to rehabilitate the novelists of his generation by appreciation and reward and by appointing them to good positions. With regard to the younger generation he offered them many facilities and much assistance including publishing their works, giving special awards to encourage them, and appointing them to posts in literary and cultural foundations.

3. As-Sibā^{Cī} and the critics

The disagreement between As-Sibā^{Cī} and most of the critics extended over a long period. It is perhaps political, ideological and personal reasons which have played the greatest role in making the gap between them very deep. The negative attitudes of both As-Sibā^{Cī} and the critics towards each other have, in fact, had a negative influence upon his works, albeit indirectly, as we shall see.

At the beginning As-Sibā^{Cī}, like other writers of his

generation, complained that no critic would heed his works. This is confirmed by Tāhā Husayn who says, "As-Sibā^Cī is one of the young litterateurs who has not been taught and studied with justice by the critics".¹ ^CAbd al-Halīm ^CAbd Allāh mentioned that a Spanish critic had published an analytic study of his own novels while no Egyptian critic paid attention to his works.² When As-Sibā^Cī began writing he wished, like any other writer, to know the views of the critics about his works and he used to present his works to them asking them to write some critical articles but did not receive any reply. As-Sibā^Cī continued writing and his works became successful and popular among Arab readers throughout the forties, while he was still an officer. It seems that the critics at that time could not believe that an officer could write successful short stories which were admired by their readers and attributed his works to his uncle, or sometimes to his father.³

Throughout the fifties a very strong strain of vilification and abuse dominated criticism in Egypt. It became a kind of political, ideological or personal attack more than objective criticism, to the extent that Ghālī Shukrī, who collected in a book some critical articles about the works of As-Sibā^Cī by different critics, says in the introduction that the important characteristic

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.16.

2. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.303.

3. As-Sibā^Cī, Ayyām, p.236; and YSDU, p.71.

of this book is that most of the articles avoided the immoral writing which marked criticism in those days.¹ At that time the literary and critical views of the leftists prevailed and called for committed literature, art for life's sake and socialist literature. Because of As-Sibā^C's indifference to leftist thought, which we have seen above, the leftist critics attacked his works with suspicion and without impartiality and sometimes simply ignored him. He, as a reaction, attacked them and their views strongly:

"I and others were amazed by Fathī Ghānim and Rashād Rushdī who wrote in Ākhir Sā^C a set of artistic principles for writing the novel which were like the Ten Commandments The book Fī th-Thaqāfa al-Miṣriyya was a manifesto of the left on literary criticism whose authors² said that Tawfīq al-Hakīm and Najīb Maḥfūz were bourgeois writers, while ^CAbd al-Halīm ^CAbd Allāh was merely described by them as negative, and as for myself and Iḥsān (^CAbd al-Quddūs) we were below the level of criticism

I asked Maḥmūd Amīn al-^CĀlim once whether he had read my books and the following conversation took place between us, word for word:

'Maḥmūd, have you read Ard an-Nifāq? I have read your book.

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.12.

2. Maḥmūd Amīn al-^CĀlim and ^CAbd al-^CAzīm Anīs.

Have you read Warā' as-Sitār, Yā Ummatan Dahikat and as-Saqqā Māt?'

'No, by God.'

'Why, then, do I not deserve to be written about by you?'

'I am sorry, it is because your books are expensive and it is difficult to get hold of them.'

'I will give you a set of my books.'

That happened, but he did not write a word. And when one of the left-wing publishing houses published a selection of short stories by various authors and chose my story Nābighat al-Mīda ... al-^CĀlim introduced this collection of stories and tore my story to pieces in a way which I could not understand. Then I felt that this process has two faces: one literary and the other political. And I am not a leftist."¹

Thus As-Sibā^Cī was concerned only with the relationship between him and his readers, considering the critics as intruders whom he divided into four kinds. The first kind he called al-Khattāfūn (brisk critics) who read the literary work quickly and without deep study then issued their judgements. Second were the opportunists who used to praise in order to obtain some benefits, and third were al-Haddāmūn (destructive critics) whose works nevertheless achieved some reputation. Finally there were the critics who write any strange thing in order

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, pp.352-3.

to be distinguished critics.¹ At last As-Sibā^{Cī} renounced all critics and criticism to the extent of believing that they were non-existent, and he thought that the critics also renounced him.²

As-Sibā^{Cī} was grateful for certain favourable critical articles written about his works, especially by such famous writers as Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, al-Ḥakīm and Mandūr, which he thinks restored his self-confidence,³ but on the whole the criticism of that time was characterised by personal, political and ideological attacks, and by lack of objectivity. In addition most of As-Sibā^{Cī}'s works were criticised by leftist critics which created a deep gulf between As-Sibā^{Cī} and the critics. There was an objective criticism of his works aiming to study his literary output and to clarify its positive and negative aspects, but because of As-Sibā^{Cī}'s attitude towards criticism he was not encouraged even by this constructive criticism to develop his technique. Among the bad features of his works pointed out by these critics, was his quickness in writing, which was a consequence of the many magazines of which he was chief editor. Some critics say,

"As-Sibā^{Cī} has not the time to muster enough artistry to satisfy me as a reader; he is such a prolific writer that I cannot help fearing that his prolificness will impel him to repeat himself."⁴

1. YSDU, p.165.

2. Ibid., p.169.

3. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.190.

4. Shukrī, Fikr, p.97.

Another critic mentioned the good points of Innī Rāhila⁽¹⁾, but among the things which he criticised, in a way which may be regarded as objective, are the negativism of the heroine, the coincidences which control the events, and the interference of the writer in the narration. Muḥammad Mandūr criticised As-Sibā^Cī's novel Tarīq al-^CAwda impartially, but As-Sibā^Cī, instead of deriving advantage from this positive criticism in order to develop the artistry of his works and to avoid weaknesses, assailed these critics in very harsh articles which were characterised by abuse and personal attacks.

(1) See 'Abd al-Qādir al-Qutb, Dirāsa Tatbīqiyya
Limushkilāt Mu'āsira fī l-Adab wa th-Thaqāfa
fī Miṣr

PART II

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM IN EUROPE
AND THE ARAB WORLD TO THE
TIME OF AS-SIBĀ^CĪ

Chapter Four

ROMANTICISM IN EUROPE

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ROMANTICISM IN EUROPE

Romanticism is a cultural movement which dominated life throughout Europe from about 1770 to 1830 and which occupied the fields of philosophy, literature, music and art.

The movement emerged as a reaction against Neo-Classicism (which reached its height in the seventeenth century), and as a literary revolution, casting aside the bonds of Classicism and its unswerving laws in the fields of literature, philosophy, religion and art.

DEFINITIONS OF ROMANTICISM

What then is Romanticism? It is difficult to define it in a way that is both brief and comprehensive, considering the great variations among its numerous aspects and qualities, not only with regard to the different branches of European literature but even among the many Romantics themselves. C E Vaughan says:

"We are bound to admit that we apply the term 'romantic' to Wordsworth in a sense very different from that in which we use it of Coleridge; to Rousseau or Herder in a sense very different from that in which we give it to Chateaubriand or Bürger or Tiech."¹

1. Vaughan, Revolt, p.5.

It is considered to have been a Christian and a heathen movement at one and the same time, both revolutionary and conservative, republican and monarchist, pessimistic and optimistic, inspired and created. Its meaning differs so much that A O Lovejoy thinks that "The word 'romantic' has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing. It has ceased to perform the functions of a verbal sign".¹ J Barzun, in his book Romanticism and the Modern Ego, gives examples of the word used as a synonym for the adjectives: 'attractive', 'unselfish', 'exuberant', 'ornamental', 'unreal', 'realistic', 'irrational', 'materialistic', 'futile', 'heroic', 'mysterious and soulful', 'noteworthy', 'conservative', 'revolutionary', 'bombastic', 'picturesque', 'nordic', 'formless', 'formalistic', 'emotional', 'fanciful', 'stupid'.² Thorlby thinks that "A substantive definition of Romanticism, however, has as yet not been generally agreed upon. Some scholars think that the term should therefore be dropped".³

Indeed, if we take into consideration the following definitions, which are mentioned in the book of E Bernbaum, we shall discover just how difficult it is to limit the meaning of the word Romanticism:

"Romanticism is disease, Classicism is health" (Goethe)

1. L Furst, Romanticism, p.1.

2. Barzun, Rom.Mod.Ego, pp.213-7.

3. Thorlby, Movement, p.1.

"Romanticism is disorder in the imagination, the rage of incorrectness. A blind wave of literary egotism"

(Brunetière)

"Liberalism in literature. Mingling the grotesque with the tragic or sublime (forbidden by Classicism); the complete truth of life" (Victor Hugo)

"The re-awakening of the life and thought of the Middle Ages" (Heine)

"An effort to escape from actuality" (Waterhouse)

"Sentimental melancholy. Vague aspiration" (Phelps)

"The fairy way of writing" (Ker)

"Emotion rather than reason; the heart opposed to the head" (George Sand)

"Extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility"
(Herford)

"The addition of strangeness to beauty" (Pater)¹

It may be that no other literary ideology has presented so much confusion and complication as Romanticism, not only as regards the difficulty of defining it but also in its own essential characteristics. L R Furst says:

"Many of those poets and thinkers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries whom we generally regard as Romantics were themselves perplexed by this word."²

1. Bernbaum, Guide, pp.301-2.

2. L Furst, Romanticism, p.6.

Victor Hugo, in the preface to *Hernani*, said

"Romanticism, so often ill defined, is in the final analysis, and here is its real definition, if one considers only its militant aspect, nothing other than liberalism in literature."¹

Another example is Alfred de Musset who said that, until 1824

"We did not understand what this word 'Romanticism' meant",²

and he related how they believed in many confused definitions until 1830 when they

"... came to believe that this word 'Romanticism' was no more than a word; we thought it beautiful, and it seemed a pity that it meant nothing."³

Perhaps it will be useful here to mention something briefly about the history of the rise and development of the Romantic movement, beginning with the derivation of the word Romanticism. It is taken from the old French word 'Romanz' which

"... originally meant 'the speech of the people' or 'the vulgar tongue' in contrast with the written form of literary Latin. Its meaning then shifted from the language in which the work was written to the work itself."⁴

1. L Furst, European, p.43,

2. Ibid., p.45.

3. Ibid., p.47.

4. E Vinaver / F Whitehead, "Romance (Literature)", Encyc.Brit., 15th Edition, 1974, pp.1020-5.

C H Holman considers that,

"Romance was first used for old French as a language derived from Latin or 'Roman' to distinguish it from Latin itself."¹

With the passing of time its meaning has been extended so that in modern French the term 'Romance' means,

"... a novel, whatever its content and structure, while in modern English the word 'Romance' can mean either a medieval narrative composition or a love affair."²

Later, Romance was applied to any work written in French and

"... as stories of knights and their deeds were the dominant form of old French literature, the word romance was narrowed to mean such stories."³

So the terms Romanticism in English, Romantisme in French, Romantik in German, and Romanticismo in Spanish and Italian,
all have their origin in the word Romance, which is applied to narrative prose and poetry of the Middle Ages, whose basis lies in myth, platonic love, chivalry and adventure. Perhaps H Eichner in his book 'Romantic' and Its Cognates: The European History of a Word, gives the fullest account of the meaning, derivation and development of the word 'Romanticism' in England, Germany, France,

1. Holman, Handbook, p.459.

2. Encyc.Brit., op.cit.

3. Holman, op.cit., p.459.

Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, and Russia.¹

Romanticism, which emerged as a revolutionary literary movement in Europe in the late eighteenth century, was preceded by a great process of development and change, starting with the beginning of the century when Neo-Classicism began to decline, which led to the questionings of the 'Enlightenment', which in turn led to the appearance of new thoughts which dominated literary works during the second half of the eighteenth century. This period is considered by European scholars as 'Pre-Romantic'. In addition the American revolution in 1765, and the French revolution in 1789, had the effect of urging the Romantic Movement forward.

In fact, the eighteenth century was the age of revolution in the fields of politics, society, thoughts and industry. It was an age of changing values and readjustment of the social classes. Thus the Bourgeoisie arose, striving for intellectual and political emancipation from the Aristocracy. It was an age of the triumph of the Bourgeoisie.

Since the Renaissance period Europe had devoted itself to the study of ancient Greek and Latin literature and culture.

"Since the revival of Classical standards in the Renaissance, the main concern had been the establishment, elaboration and spread of a view of literature inherited from Greek and Roman antiquity."²

1. See also Lucas, Decline; Vaughan, Revolt.

2. L Furst, Romanticism, pp.15-16.

Aristotle's theories became the basis of Classicism, with the result that Romance was frowned upon and anyone who chose to write in this genre was regarded with contempt.¹ Among many aspects of classicism, in addition to the revival and imitation of the Ancients, was the domination of mind. Classicists were concerned with mind as a source of inspiration and knowledge. Therefore they attempted to establish rational standards and laws in literature and art, as the French classical poet Boileau did. They did not pay attention to the rôle of imagination and emotion.

"The outlook of the classical writer had been characterised in general by a balance of all his faculties which did not allow feeling and imagination to outweigh reason; reason governed thought and common sense was its most modest but most reliable expression. Reason was the essential thing in man, his substance; feeling and imagination were by comparison merely accidents arising from physical elements exterior to the mind The task of literature was to express this superior and noble part of ourselves even where unbridled passions seemed to obscure its light. The classical outlook had also been typified by an acceptance of life and of society despite their imperfections, and by the search

1. Thorlby, Movement, p.62.

for moral perfection within this unquestioned framework."¹

This Neo-Classicism began to decline as a result of the development of society and thoughts in the early eighteenth century when 'Enlightenment' began. This was a philosophical movement which appeared in France and spread across Europe and America. This movement was influential directly or indirectly in undermining many classical doctrines, and as a result we find a new type of literary works beginning to appear from the fifties of the eighteenth century. These works, which became known as 'Pre-Romantic', emphasized emotion and imagination as opposed to the emphasis on the mind in Classical literature.²

The literary works of the Pre-Romantic period, which appeared with the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, had a great influence upon the Romantic Movement. This period was an age of change.

"With the middle of the eighteenth century a great change began to make itself felt in the thought and literature of Western Europe - a change from the

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1. Thorlby, Movement, p.22. For fuller details see also J A Thomson, The Classical Background of English Literature; and I Simon, Neo-Classical Criticism.
 2. For fuller details see H M Jones, Revolution and Romanticism; M Peckham, Romanticism: The Culture of the Nineteenth Century.

spirit of criticism to that of creation; from wit to humour and pathos; from satire and didactic verse to the poetry of passion and impassioned reflection; above all, a change from a narrow and cramping conception of man's reason to one far wider and more adequate to his powers."¹

Works of such writers as Rousseau (1712-1778), Goethe (1749-1832), E Young (1683-1765), Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814) and Lessing (1728-1781), emphasized sensibility, emotion, feeling, imagination, the return to nature, individualism, subjectivism, primitivism and melancholy, which became the most important aspects of the Romantic Movement later.²

Finally, we must not forget the influence of the French revolution of 1789 which accompanied the rise of Romanticism. To quote C Vaughan:

"During the years immediately preceding the Revolution, the air was full of revolt against the classical canons. All the more vigorous minds were in eager quest of new forms, new methods, new sources of inspiration."³

1. Vaughan, Revolt, p.3.

2. For more details see H Eichner, 'Romantic' and Its Cognates; Bernbaum, Guide.

3. Vaughan, Revolt, p.435.

Thus we come to the Romantic Movement itself which emerged from about 1770 to 1830. The first real appearance of the Romantic Movement was in Germany, F Schlegel being perhaps the first person to use the term 'Romantic' in his articles on Romantic poetry in the journal Athenäum.

SOME ASPECTS OF ROMANTICISM

Although the Romantic Movement produced poetry, narrative, drama, and criticism, the lyric is regarded as the best product of Romanticism. In Schlegel's opinion Romantic poetry is:

"... a progressive universal poetry. It is destined not merely to reunite the separate genres of poetry and to link poetry to philosophy and rhetoric. It would and should also mingle and fuse poetry and prose, genius and criticism, artistic poetry and natural poetry, make poetry lively and sociable Romantic poetry alone can, like the epic, become a mirror of the whole surrounding world, an image of its age."¹

Moreover, he even demands that poetry be Romantic.

However, the most distinctive feature of the Romantic Movement is that it is a reaction against all traditions, bonds,

1. L Furst, European, p.4.

and laws of classicism in literature, art, and life.

"Everywhere they brought a reaction against the Classical conventions. Everywhere, directly or indirectly, immediately or in the long-run, they resulted in throwing the nation upon its own resources, in restoring to it the heritage of its own soil."¹

The ideas of Madame de Stael on the distinction between Romantic and Classical literature are expressed in religious terms, and she thinks that Classical poetry "must filter through memories of paganism to reach us",² while Romantic literature "reflects our religion".³ Victor Hugo thinks that Romanticism has a common goal which is "warfare against the rules, the rules of convention",⁴ while Stendhal criticized Classical literature as being an imitation of the Ancients and thinks that Romantic literature is modern:

"Romanticism is the art of offering people the literary works which, in the present state of their customs and beliefs, can give them the greatest pleasure. Classicism, by contrast,

1. Vaughan, Revolt, p.500.

2. L Furst, European, p.28.

3. Ibid., p.28.

4. Ibid., p.45.

offers them the literature which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their great-grandfathers."¹

He considered the ancient Greek writers as romantic in their time because they showed in their works their nation's manners, religion, and concepts of human dignity, but

"To imitate Sophocles and Euripides today, and to pretend that these imitations do not make nineteenth-century Frenchmen yawn, that is Classicism."²

However, the most striking difference between Romanticism and Classicism, and perhaps other literary schools, is that Romantics lay emphasis upon the imagination, strong emotion, spirituality, individualism, and subjectivism in their literary works. These features played a great role in Romantic literature. Schlegel thinks that Romantic poetry is the poetry which

"... portrays emotional matter in an imaginative form What then is meant by the Emotional? That which appeals to us, wherein feeling is predominant, not a sensual but a spiritual feeling."³

For Blake the imagination is nothing less than God:

1. L Furst, European, p.40.

2. Ibid., p.40.

3. Ibid., p.8.

"This World of Imagination is the World of Eternity; it is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the Vegetated body. This World of Imagination is Infinite and Eternal whereas the World of Generation or Vegetation is Finite and Temporal. There Exist in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see reflected in the Vegetable Glass of Nature."¹

While Coleridge thinks that:

"The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."²

And Keats, in the poem Sleep and Poetry, asks why the imagination has lost its old power:

"Is there so small a range
In the present strength of manhood, that the high
Imagination cannot freely fly
As she was wont of old? Prepare her steeds,
Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
Upon the clouds? Has she not shown us all?
From the clear space of ether, to the small

1. William Blake's Writings, Vol.II, p.1010.

2. S T Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Vol.I, p.202.

Breath of new buds unfolding? From the meaning
Of Jove's large eye-brow, to the tender greening
Of April meadows?"¹

C M Bowra, in his book The Romantic Imagination, thinks that the belief in imagination of the Romantics is part of their belief in the individual, that imagination for them is

"... fundamental, because they think that without it poetry is impossible. This belief in the imagination was part of the contemporary belief in the individual self. The poets were conscious of a wonderful capacity to create imaginary worlds, and they could not believe that this was idle or false. On the contrary, they thought that to curb it was to deny something vitally necessary to their whole being. They thought that it was just this which made them poets, and that in their exercise of it they could do far better than other poets who sacrificed it to caution and common sense."²

He even makes imagination a single criterion to distinguish between English Romantic poets and other poets of the eighteenth century.³

1. John Keats, The Poetical Works, verses 162-171, p.94.

2. Bowra, Rom.Imag., pp.1-2.

3. Ibid., p.1.

Individualism and subjectivism are important features of Romantics and a part of their reaction against Classicism. They exalted the individual, and wept for his lost rights, "feeling themselves independent of society and considering their individual rights to be superior to any claims that society might make on them".¹ Perhaps one of the expressions of individualism and subjectivism in their literary works is their writing of autobiography in the form of narrative and confessions. This may be under the influence of Rousseau who emphasizes in his confessions, subjectivism and the ego:

"I desire to set before my fellows the likeness of a man in all the truth of nature, and that man myself. Myself alone! I know the feeling of my heart, and I know men. I am not made like any of those I have seen. I venture to believe that I am not made like any of those who are in existence. If I am not better, at least I am different."²

Madame de Stael formulated the main principle of Romanticism:

"Great genius or great passions are laws unto themselves; in their case no petty considerations like social conventions must prevent the individual from expressing his ego."³

1. Thorlby, Movement, p.26.

2. Jones, Revolution, p.233.

3. F C Green, French Novelists, p.51.

Romantics were eager to establish their world of ideals, and because they could not achieve it in reality they escaped to the world of imagination. Faguet wrote that:

"The basis of Romanticism is a horror of reality and the desire to escape from it ... (it is the desire) to liberate oneself from the real by means of the imagination."¹

Abercrombie goes to the extent of calling the subjectivism of Romantics egoism:

"I suppose Romanticism takes its most obvious form in egoism. But if it is its most obvious form, it is by no means a form necessary to Romanticism. By egoism I mean an inordinate consciousness of self-importance. There was hardly anything of this in Shelley; and yet Shelley knew scarce anything of the world but his own fantasies about it: the world he hated and the world he longed for were both impossible, except in a Romantic's imagination. He lived almost wholly in his own inner experience. So did Byron."²

This excessive preoccupation with subjectivism, individualism and idealism coloured their literature with sadness

1. Thorlby, Movement, p.23.

2. L Abercrombie, Romanticism, pp.135-6.

and melancholy. They often complain of reality and social traditions, show dissatisfaction with the contemporary world, restless anxiety in the face of life, and sadness without cause, as Thorlby thinks.¹ From this came their hatred of civilized life, and they prefer the primitive life, glorify nature, and love the past, especially the Middle Ages. H Schenk thinks that the Romantic nostalgia for the past appeared in three main variations:

"First the exhortation to an age of spiritual insecurity and dwindling faith to look with reverence to the example of the Christian Middle Ages. In the second place, nations could be made to look back to times when they had reached their political or cultural apogee. Finally, the passing of an age of feudalism and chivalry could be deplored by those who, like Alfred de Vigny ... belonged to the elites of the past, or even by others who had no axe to grind."²

On the other hand, N Frye thinks that:

"... the search for a visible ideal society in history leads to a good deal of admiration for the Middle Ages, which on the Continent was sometimes regarded as the essential feature of Romanticism."³

1. Thorlby, Movement, p.22.

2. Schenk, Mind, p.34.

3. Frye, RR, p.13.

The longing of Romantics for Nature is one of the essential characteristics of their literature. They love nature, in response to Rousseau's famous expression "The return to Nature", and abandon city life to find delight in the lap of Nature, and seclusion from their fellow man. Nature for them is the loving and tender-hearted mother, and they take refuge in her whenever the world grows oppressive. From this love of nature comes their passion for the countryside and its people, flowers, lakes and the green woods, as is evident in Wordsworth's poetry. Blake, for example, associated Nature with imagination, saying in a letter to Dr Trusler:

"Some see Nature all Ridicule and Deformity and by these I shall not regulate my proportions, and Some Scarce see Nature at all. But to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination Nature is Imagination itself."¹

Blake, and perhaps most of the Romantics, project their feelings upon Nature, so that we find Blake himself asking:

"When the sun rises do you not see a round Disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea? 'O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying 'Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty!' I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro it and not with it."²

1. William Blake's Writings, Vol.II, pp.1526-7.

2. Ibid., p.1027.

Wordsworth, the foremost Romantic prophet of Nature, as Schenk called him,¹ used to commune with Nature.

"He knew with certainty that joy is at once the mainspring and the crown of all human effort. He knew with no less certainty that nothing can keep the heart of man so open to the visiting of joy, that nothing can strengthen so deeply his power to receive it, as the habit of communion with nature."²

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."³

But their passion for nature was branded with sadness, and because of their complaints and dissatisfaction with reality they escaped to Nature, although in different ways. Chateaubriand, who portrayed and praised the life of the savage in Atala, nevertheless said:

"I am not like Rousseau, an enthusiast for savages, and though I have perhaps as much reason to complain of society as that philosopher had to thank it, I do not believe that pure nature is the most beautiful thing in the world."⁴

1. Schenk, Mind, p.162.

2. Vaughan, Revolt, p.64.

3. W Wordsworth, Poetry and Prose, poem "The Tables Turned",
Lyrical Ballads, p.124.

4. F C Green, French Novelists, p.65.

J Barzun thinks that Rousseau, whose term "Back to Nature" affected all Romantics,

"... never intended that we should go back to nature in the sense of living in caves and wearing skins. He clearly saw that this is neither possible nor desirable, but he also saw that the complication of life resulting from civilization disturbs or destroys in man something valuable, something that can not be flouted with impunity. This he calls nature."¹

However, whether the Romantic escapes to nature or the past, or prefers to withdraw into himself or to be absorbed in imagination, searching for the world of ideals as opposed to the real world, E Bernbaum thinks that Romantics were:

"... keenly conscious of the difference between two worlds. One was the world of ideal truth, goodness, and beauty: this was eternal, infinite, and absolutely real. The other was the world of actual appearances, which to common sense was the only world, and which to the idealist was so obviously full of untruth, ignorance, evil, ugliness, and wretchedness, as to compel him to dejection or indignation Man was gifted with a higher reason, called the imagination, which enabled him

1. Barzun, Rom.Mod.Ego, p.32.

to see that the good, the true, and the beautiful were not removed to a sphere unattainable to him in this life, but were interwoven with his human existence and earthly environment. It was the highest function of literature and art to portray man and his world in such a way that the presence of the infinite within the finite, of the ideal within the actual, would be revealed in all its beauty In short, most of the Romantics, after passing through the Slough of Despond, found somewhere the possibility of happiness. Wordsworth found it in nature and in the moral nobility of the simple life; Lamb, in the delightful variety of individual characters and in the amenities of urban existence; Scott and Lauder, in historical epochs and traditional types of character; Coleridge, in the revelation of the Eternal in literature; Keats, in Universal Love as manifested in nature, friendship, and art; and Shelley, in contemplating the glorious future of humanity."¹

Barzun thinks that Romantics sought and found "not a dream world into which to escape, but a real world in which to live".²

1. Bernbaum, Guide, p.304.

2. Barzun, Rom.Mod.Ego, pp.81-2.

Among other topics which Romantics dealt with were the question of love and marriage. Woman is considered as one of the sources of inspiration for the Romantics, and their hearts respond to the call of love, nature, and humanity. Their attitudes towards woman varied among themselves, and some of them allowed her a very elevated position in their literature and revered, praised and submitted themselves to her. She was one beloved rather than the lover, and was seen as an angel, making hearts pure, soothing emotions, and sharpening awareness. Others regarded her, on the contrary, as a devil, leading men astray. Some others do not find woman attractive without inner beauty; Adam Mickiewicz expressed this view in his letter to Margaret Fuller:

"The time will come when the inner beauty, the inner life of the soul will be the first and foremost attribute of a woman. Without this inner beauty a woman cannot even physically be attractive."¹

But whatever their views toward woman they emphasized love and freedom of love. Shelley said:

"Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman, is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed. How long then ought the sexual connexion last? What law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as

1. Schenk, Mind, p.153.

they love each other; any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection, would be an intolerable tyranny and the most unworthy of toleration."¹

George Sand, who was the foremost spokesman, as well as practitioner, of Romantic love, revolts against the law of Christian marriage, and claims the right of divorce which had already been legalized during the French revolution, but abolished later:

"Her novel 'Jacques' boldly argues that in future the law would have to be adjusted to fit human emotions and not, as hitherto, emotions subordinated to law."²

She even makes a connection between the progress of the human being and love:

"As human beings progress, their love will become more worthy of enduring interest and mutual intensity, so that the power of love will increase in proportion to the development of intelligence."³

These, then, are some of the most distinctive characteristics of Romanticism. J A Cuddon attempted to summarize some of the Romantic elements as follows:⁴

(i) An increasing interest in Nature, and in the natural, primitive and uncivilized way of life.

1. Works of P B Shelley, Notes to Queen Mab, p.22.

2. Schenk, Mind, p.157.

3. Ibid., p.158.

4. J A Cuddon, A dictionary of literary terms, p.576.

- (ii) A growing interest in scenery, especially its more untamed and disorderly manifestations.
- (iii) An association of human moods with the 'moods' of Nature - and thus a subjective feeling for it and interpretation of it.
- (iv) A considerable emphasis on natural religion.
- (v) Emphasis on the need for spontaneity in thought and action and in the expression of thought.
- (vi) Increasing importance attached to natural genius and the power of the imagination.
- (vii) A tendency to exalt the individual and his needs and an emphasis on the need for a freer and more personal expression.
- (viii) The cult of the Noble Savage.

Romanticism, as we have seen, was a very extensive and diverse movement. It extended to many aspects of knowledge, whether in literature, art, philosophy, and religion, and its influence was felt in most European countries. Although it may be different from one country to another, or from one work to another, nevertheless, as N Frye points out, the Romanticism of one country has something in common with that of another,¹ in that it emphasizes individualism, nature-worship, primitivism, an interest in medieval, oriental, philosophic idealism, revolt against political

1. Frye, RR, p.107.

authority and social convention, the cultivation of emotion and sensation for their own sakes, and a persistent attraction to the supernatural, the morbid, the melancholy, and the cruel.

Historically, although Romanticism flourished from the late eighteenth to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, it occupied, in fact, a whole century. However Romanticism was attacked or praised by European critics and scholars, it remains a distinctive period in European cultural history. Romanticism was an expression of the moods and desires of the rising middle class and of its triumph, and at the same time it is an expression of Nationalism; thus its rise was not mere coincidence, but accompanied the rise of the middle class and the growth of national sentiment.

After 1830, Romanticism began to decline and to be rejected by other literary schools, such as Realism, Naturalism and Parnassianism, and some writers, for example Balzac, turned from Romanticism to Realism.¹ A K Thorlby thinks that the weakness and decline of Romanticism came from the "instability and insubstantiality of its inwardness, that subjective realm which it tries to make its own."² J Barzun, on the other hand, does not think that Romanticism died after 1850 but that it branched out under different names like a delta; he thinks that:

"... all the forms, ideas, perceptions, tendencies, genres,

1. Lucas, Decline, p.43.

2. Thorlby, Movement, p.9.

and critical principles have been put forward which the rest of the nineteenth century is to make use of in its further development. What I am suggesting is that the first phase of romanticism is one of extraordinary, unremitting, unspecialized production in all fields. The next three phases which we are about to examine, are efforts at specialization, selection, refinement, and intensification. Romanticism sounds all the themes of the century in its first movement. The next three movements develop one theme each. These next three movements are: Realism, symbolism, and Naturalism."¹

Indeed, according to some writers, the Romantic characteristics were developed by Baudelaire and through him passed to the Decadents, the Symbolists and the Surrealists.²

1. Barzun, Rom.Mod.Ego, pp.137-8.

2. See W R Benet, The Reader's Encyclopedia, p.872; L Furst, Romanticism, pp.67-68.

Chapter Five

REALISM IN EUROPE

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In this chapter we may well find the same difficulties which we had to face when trying to define the meaning of Romanticism in Chapter Four. The problems will confront us from a different angle however, for Realism is naturally concerned with reality and has been studied since the time of Aristotle who first turned the eyes of the philosophers from heaven to earth, and thus the connection between Realism and Philosophy arises. Most of the sources dealing with Realism will, in fact, use terms such as 'Realism as a literary convention' or 'Realism in literature' in order to make this distinction from Realism in its philosophical sense, which comprises both positivism and Empiricism. Indeed such writers as D Grant thinks that "if one wishes to achieve a genuine discrimination between the unruly meanings of Realism as they jostle and overlap then one must accept the necessity of going back to the philosophers".¹ Historically, J P Stern says that the uses of 'realism' and 'realistic' were non-literary; the term was first used to "designate one of the two branches of medieval philosophy, the other being nominalism".²

1. D Grant, Realism, p.3.

2. J P Stern, On Realism, p.38.

By the eighteenth century 'realism' in its philosophical sense had come to be opposed to 'idealism' and by the end of that century 'realism' had come to be used in a literary sense also. Thus it would be justified to hold that philosophical studies were among the many factors to contribute to the rise of European Realism.

What we are concerned with here, of course, is the literary form of Realism which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and accompanied many literary trends, such as Romanticism, Symbolism, Parnassianism, and others.

What then is Realism? It is the literary ideology whereby one seeks to portray life in all honesty and exactitude, it is

"... in the broadest sense, simply fidelity to actuality in its representation in literature ... and in this sense it has been a significant element in almost every school of writing in human history Realism defines a literary method, a philosophical and political attitude."¹

The American novelist and critic, William Dean Howells, defines Realism as a "device for depicting simple, everyday people with 'work-worn, brave, kindly faces'".² F Hemmings reports that the earliest recorded use of the word, as referring to a specific literary trend, was in a Parisian periodical, Le Mercure Français,

1. Holman, Handbook, p.433.

2. Beckson, Reader, p.179.

in the year 1826. The journalist, having defined realism as a

"... literary doctrine ... which would lead to the imitation not of artistic masterpieces but of the originals that nature offers us', went on to predict that 'this might well emerge, to judge by certain signs, as the literature of the nineteenth century, the literature of truth'."¹

Two decades later, Edmond Duranty, who edited seven numbers of a little magazine, Réalisme, described it as "the exact, complete, sincere reproduction of the social milieu and the epoch in which one lives".² On the other side we may see some writers and critics who do not find it useful to define such words, among them, J P Stern, who states in his book On Realism that,

"... any attempt to 'define' realism (or tragedy, or whatever) by enumerating 'all its qualities', or by confining it to specific situations or formal structures, seems to me doomed to failure."³

He denies that Realism is a 'school' or a 'method' but describes it as "rather a disposition of mind and pen, something like a humour - in brief - a mode of writing".⁴ Indeed, G J Becker

1. Hemmings, Age, pp.9-10.

2. Levin, Gates, p.69.

3. J P Stern, On Realism, p.28.

4. Ibid., p.52.

states that some critics have gone so far as to deny that there was such a thing as a realistic movement in literature, while others even deny the possibility of a realistic work. Although "the words Realism and Naturalism are freely, even rashly, used, there is no general agreement as to what they mean".¹ The Russian writer, B Suchkov, connects Realism with the development of the society; in his book A History of Realism, he states that:

"Realism as a creative method is an historical phenomenon that arose at a certain stage in human intellectual development, at the time when people began to feel a pressing need to understand the nature and direction of social development, when people began to realise, at first vaguely, then more clearly, that human actions and feelings do not derive from wild passions or a divine design, but are determined by real, or more precisely, material causes."²

Even at the present time, the word Realism still causes confusion; it is:

"... one of the vaguest terms of art criticism, and in its everyday use, whether in politics or in the arts, it has very little in common with the philosophical creed from which it originated. In our

1. Becker, Documents, p.3

2. Suchkov, History, p.10.

time it has become part of a group of terms carelessly bandied about, which are used mainly in order to call forth certain stock responses."¹

From the above definitions and others, we can assess the close relationship that exists between Reality, Realism, and Philosophy. Realism is the objective portrayal of Reality, which neither undervalues nor exaggerates the true facts.

The foundation of Realism, as a literary movement, has been generally attributed to the French novelist Balzac, in the mid-nineteenth century. The nineteenth century, in fact, was a time of scientific discoveries and biological, philosophical, artistic and literary studies, an era of new colonization.

"The Age of Realism was the age of railways and of wireless telegraphy and of countless other mechanical inventions that collectively revolutionized the nature of society and the quality of human life within a short span of time. It was the age during which what used to be called 'natural philosophy' was rechristened 'science', having finally yielded itself of the few shreds of speculative idealism that still adhered to it. It was the age of the expansion of Europe into Asia and Africa, after which the legend 'terra incognita' disappeared from the atlases. It was the age of nationalism

1. J Chiari, RI, p.7.

and rampant commercialism, but also the age when international revolutionary movements began to threaten the security of the wealthy governing classes. The Age of Realism was, in short, the age of George Stephenson, Marconi, Darwin, Cecil Rhodes and Karl Marx; it was the nineteenth century."¹

The distinguishing features of the nineteenth century were in themselves a strong foundation for the establishment of the Realistic movement.

As regards scientific inventions and industrialization, the whole century witnessed the arrival of the telephone, loud-speaker, electric light, and gramophone. In 1825 the first steam-locomotive railway line was opened between Stockton and Darlington, steam was harnessed in Nasmyth's steam hammer in 1842, gold was discovered in California in 1848, and in Australia in 1851, and oil in the USA in 1859. The morse telegraph was introduced in 1837, regular steamship services to America in 1838, the penny postage in 1840; a submarine cable was laid between Dover and Calais in 1851, and the following year saw the first airship flight by Giffard. Photography had been invented by Saint-Victor in 1824 and developed in 1839 by Daguerre, which was to suggest to the author "a style which should be exact, representational and close to

1. Hemmings, Age, p.9.

reality",¹ and by which Naturalists, in particular, were inspired.²

This industrial and commercial movement accompanied, or rather caused, many political events, such as the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, Louis-Napoleon's coup of 1851, the unprecedented outbreak of class warfare represented by the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871, publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1847, the founding of the First International in 1864, the growth of the trades union movement throughout Europe; the founding of the Co-operative Society in England in 1843; of a trade union in Germany in 1844 and of the Labour Association in Berlin in 1848, while in the same year Louis Blanc published his book, The Right to Work.

Insofar as the nineteenth century was an age of imperialistic expansion, it was the period of the conflict between capitalistic and petty Bourgeois classes, of the establishment of corporations and the right to vote, revolutions against monarchist families, the rejection of the prevailing economic systems and the condemnation of any philosophy and literature which might attempt to justify and support them. Finally, the balance of social and political power was changing so that the class which had emerged particularly during the course of the French Revolution was now

1. CEWL, p.478.

2. L. Furst, Naturalism, p.13.

beginning to assert itself and had taken a prominent position on the world stage as a direct result of the Paris revolt of 1848.

Industrialization, in fact, had a great effect on society:

"... with such staggering progress no wonder that prosperity and happiness appeared to be within man's reach - or at least within the reach of some men. For this upsurge had its reverse side in the misery of the masses, the human fodder of the industrial machine. The proud catalogue of advance is partnered by the grim one of social unrest: the Luddite shattering of machines in England in 1811-15, the revolts of the silk-weavers in Lyons in 1831 and 1834, the weavers' riots in Silesia and Bohemia in 1844."¹

Discussions upon contemporary philosophy led to the development of a Realistic literature. Auguste Comte (1798-1857), for example, in his series of works published between 1830-1857, applied the idea of evolution to human thought. Emphasising his Positivist ideas, he proclaimed that

"... the basis of positive philosophy is to see all phenomena as subject to constant natural law, and its aim is the exact discovery and schematization of those laws."²

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.11.

2. Ibid., p.19.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was the originator of a new scientific philosophy which introduced the method of induction and experiment, and "drew attention to the importance of experience in taking cognizance of the world, revolutionised scientific thought, opening the way for its penetration into the nature of things".¹ Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) based his philosophy on evolutionism; he regarded all development as a "process of change from homogeneity to heterogeneity and he applied this principle to psychology, sociology and ethics as well as to biology".² From the beginning of the nineteenth century studies on the nature of society were being carried out in the same depth, and thus philosophy itself became more concerned with these sociological implications. We may take as an example Ludwig Feuerbach's (1804-1872) anthropological criticism of religion, Saint Simon (1760-1820) and his concept of society, John Stuart Mill (1800-1873) and his Empiricist philosophy, Ernest Renan (1823-1892) who denied miracle or mystery of any kind in his rationalistic biography of Jesus in 1863, and finally, Karl Marx (1818-1883) whose book Das Kapital provided the framework for a new economy based upon principles of public ownership.

Perhaps the greatest biological theory witnessed in the nineteenth century was that presented by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) in his Origin of Species (1859) and later The Descent of Man (1871).

1. Suchkov, History, p.11.

2. L Furst, Naturalism, p.20.

which had a profound influence upon Realistic writers, especially with regard to Naturalism.

Studies in the field of literature also contributed to the formation of the Realistic movement, and perhaps had stronger influences than those of either philosophy or scientific advance. The French critic and literary historian Ferdinand Brunetière (1849-1906) tried to offer a work similar to the Origin of Species. Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893), another French critic, endeavoured to interpret the literary work on three levels, namely Race, Milieu, and Moment, by which he affirmed the relationship of the physical and apparent to the spiritual, hidden qualities, and used the external as a means to express the nature of the internal; he is known as the founder of a sociological science of literature.¹ Perhaps Taine's theory had an influence on Realistic writers, and he himself referred to Stendhal and Balzac as anatomists and physicians,² but his studies had an especial effect on Naturalism. Champfleury (1812-1889), another French critic, demanded that the novel "should discard the exceptional or monstrous hero in favour of the ordinary man".³ Finally, we may consider the rise of journalism as a profession which inspired close observation and discernment.

1. Wellek, Hist.Mod.Cri., p.27.

2. L Furst, Naturalism, p.21.

3. CEWL, p.478.

After this brief exposition of the main historical points which provided a background to the age of Realism and influenced the rise and development of its literature, we may conclude that, if the nineteenth century is to be called the age of scientific discovery, social change, materialism, and the middle classes, then Realism is by analogy the product of those same elements.¹

European Realism or critical Realism blossomed in the mid-nineteenth century, as we have already stated, although its roots go back as much as one century before that date.

"It was in England during the first half of the eighteenth century that the first two really influential novelists of the modern age - Richardson and Fielding - emerged."²

W R Benet considers that Realism began with such early English novelists as Defoe, Fielding and Smollett and became a definite

1. For more details about the whole process of nineteenth century in the fields of industrialization, commerce, politics, and the studies of philosophy, biology, and criticism, see: D Grant, Realism; R Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism; L R Furst, Naturalism; A McDowall, Realism; F W Hemmings, The Age of Realism; R Suchkov, A History of Realism; J Chiari, Realism and Imagination.

2. Hemmings, Age, p.11.

literary trend in the nineteenth century,¹ whereas F Hemmings thinks that the writer who gave Stendhal and Balzac the stimulus they needed was Walter Scott (1771-1832),

"... the last of the trio of novelists writing in England (the others being of course Richardson and Fielding) whose art can be said to have made a significant contribution to the development of European Realism."²

Fielding himself, in the preface of his novel Joseph Andrews (1742) refers to "this kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language".³ In the works of writers such as Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), Daniel Defoe (1659-1731) and Henry Fielding (1707-1745) (who described the novelist as "the historian of private life") we do not find critical Realism as later defined by Balzac and Flaubert, but we are presented with reality in its most basic form, and a description of contemporary society and daily life as the author himself might have experienced it. Many aspects of their writing, however, have been perpetuated in the works of authors such as Dickens and Balzac, aspects which include limitation of time sequences in the course of the novel,

1. W R Benèt, The Reader's Encyclopedia, p.844.

2. Hemmings, Age, p.38.

e. Henry Fielding, The Adventures of Joseph Andrews, introduction by L Rice-Oxley, 1942, p.1.

attention to very small detail, concern with the lower classes, rejection of the imaginative world of Romanticism and a disregard for the embellishments of literary style. These qualities in the earlier writers no doubt influenced the leaders of critical Realism.¹

In the nineteenth century the word Realism came from France. For R Wellek the term emerges in 1826, when a writer in Le Mercure Français asserts that,

"... this literary doctrine, which gains ground every day and will lead to faithful imitation not of the masterworks of art but of the originals offered by nature, could very well be called realism."²

Then later, in 1846, Hippolyte Castille - Wellek thinks - connects Balzac with a 'realistic school'. G Becker thinks that the first use of the term 'realism' in England occurred in a Westminster Review article on Balzac in 1853, although the phrase 'realist school' had been used but not defined in Fraser's Magazine two years earlier.³ In fact, Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel were the first to apply the term to literature; in 1798 Schiller, in his letter to Goethe, said the "French are 'better realists than

1. For full details see F W Hemmings, The Age of Realism, pp.14-43.

2. Wellek, Hist.Mod.Cri., p.1; Levin, Gates, p.68; J P Stern, On Realism, p.38.

3. Becker, Documents, p.7.

idealists', which to him is convincing proof 'that realism cannot make a poet'.¹ In 1842, in the preface to his Comédie Humaine, Balzac stated his ambition to write "the history so often forgotten by historians, the history of manners".²

However, most of the critics agreed that Realism as a movement began about the mid-nineteenth century.

"It is said that to have been on September 21st 1850, to be exact, that 'Realism' was first used to describe a form of art by the French novelist Champfleury."³

But it was new in French in the early 1850s and was often italicized as a neologism.⁴ In 1855 the painter, Courbet, placed the sign 'Du Réalisme' over the door of his exhibition. In 1856 Edmond Duranty began a short-lived review called Réalisme, then in 1857 the novelist Champfleury, who was an enthusiastic supporter of Courbet and of the new literature, brought out a volume of critical discussions entitled Le Réalisme.⁵ In 1858 "Realism had fully crystallized when Taine's essay on Balzac appeared".⁶ And, finally, we must not forget the appearance of Madame Bovary by Flaubert in 1857.

1. J P Stern, On Realism, p.38.

2. Wellek, Hist.Mod.Cri., p.3.

3. A McDowall, Realism, p.22.

4. Becker, Documents, p.7.

5. Ibid., p.7; D Grant, Realism, p.21.

6. Levin, Gates, p.71.

It may be valuable to note here that whereas Classical literature was channelled primarily into the dramatic arts and Romanticism found its means of expression more readily in lyrical poetry, the novel was in turn to become the broadest realm of Realistic literature. Thus, if the novel owed its rise in popularity to Romanticism, the consolidation and refinements of its aesthetic and artistic qualities was achieved by the Realistic movement.

'Pure truth' was a phrase much emphasized by Maupassant to the extent that it became a slogan for the Realistic movement. Thus they were concerned with objective facts, relating cause and effect, and taking reality as a basis for their work rather than the dream world of Romanticism. Zola, in his Lettre à la Jeunesse, attacked Romanticism and lyricism which he says,

"... invest everything in words. Words swell to fill the whole picture, and finally give way under the baroque exaggeration of the idea ... it is a verbal construct built on nothing."¹

In the same article he asserts his belief in facts:

"No more lyricism, no more big empty words, but facts, documents; believe only in facts, the only need now is the strength of truth."²

1. D Grant, Realism, p.39.

2. Ibid., p.40.

Although some critics have seen in Realism a continuation and extension of the preceding movement, G J Becker maintains that although romantic expansiveness led straight to the area of local colour¹ and the primitive, which is one of the avenues to Realism, this was not an inevitable outcome of Romanticism. Interest in the exotic is not enough to bring the two movements together, for:

"Romanticism must ultimately be found to rest on an idealist metaphysics and its view of art to be one that is consonant with that metaphysical position. Realism came into being in the ferment of scientific and positivist thinking which characterized the middle of the nineteenth century."²

F W Hemmings attempted in his book The Age of Realism to point out the differences between Realism and Romanticism as follows:

"The realist is supposed to deal with contemporary life and commonplace scenes; the romantic succumbs to the lure of the past and delights in dreaming of

1. On this point Harry Levin thinks that these intermixtures are strikingly evident in the romantic realism of Dickens, the 'fantastic' realism of Dostoevsky, and the 'poetic' realism of Otto Ludwig. See H Levin, The Gates of Horn, p.67.

2. Becker, Documents, p.6.

far-off places. The realist fixes his gaze on the world of men, the streets where they jostle and the rooms where they meet and converse; the romantic seeks solitude and finds it in nature, in the woods, the fields, the lonely seashore and the lonelier mountain crag. The realist is drawn into the social vortex, charts the cross-currents of ambition and self-interest, is familiar with all the processes of getting and spending; the romantic disclaims such prosaic preoccupations; instead, he idealizes the purer passions and cultivates the darker ones, having leanings towards the satanic as well as the spiritual; whereas the typical realist, more especially in France, levels passion down to the play of the senses and has no patience with intimations of immortality. The romantic exalts the creative spirit and puts his faith in intuition; the realist's approach to his material is detached and analytic."¹

The Russian writer, Boris Suchkov, although he points out the similarity between romanticism and realism, so that romantic elements may be seen in the works of Pushkin, Balzac, Dickens, Gogol and Stendhal, while Balzac, he thinks, has features of both 'the literature of images', that is, of romanticism, and of

1. Hemmings, Age, p.36.

the 'literature of ideas', maintains that the difference is that, "... while the progressive romanticists simply made a social criticism of capitalism, the realists added social analysis, which brought them ... very tangible results But the fact that the two artistic movements shared common features did not mean that the revival of realism consisted in the wholesale adoption of the ideological and aesthetic innovation of romanticism. Realism asserted itself by making use of these innovations and went on to overcome romanticism's one-sided view of life."¹

Perhaps realists rejected the most distinctive feature of Romanticism, the imagination and dream. Zola said, "only children and women dwell on dreams; men should busy themselves with realities",² and P Limayrac, as early as 1845, complained that "if the imagination had 'played an important and enriching role in the modern school', it was also true that it had 'deceived our hopes'".³

Realism in literature shows a fascination with minute details, insisting that familiar objects from everyday life be most faithfully reproduced in writing. The writer must be discerning and have a keen eye for truth that can penetrate all surface values

1. Suchkov, History, pp.80-81.

2. D Grant, Realism, p.22.

3. Ibid., p.29.

and touch the soul while still remaining aloof and refusing to involve himself in anything other than pure description. The accuracy of detail is one of the important elements of Realism,

"... the effort at accuracy in the description of human behavior and human motives, including transcription of vulgar speech, undoubtedly was of primary importance to many in an ancillary effort to free literature."¹

M Bradbury described Realism in its simplest sense as meaning,

"... that exactness and fullness of rendering, that detail of life, which is one of the things we associate with fiction."²

Because Realism was concerned with reality, and "lies essentially in the treatment of the actual",³ it emphasises objectivism. The realists strove to eliminate all personal sentiment from their work and refused to moralize on any subject. They protested against the intervention of personal opinion, to the extent that Stendhal considers the novel as "a mirror carried along a highroad".⁴ Flaubert wrote to George Sand saying,

"I feel an absolute abhorrence about putting anything of my feelings down on paper. I believe, even, that

1. Becker, Documents, p.27.

2. M Bradbury, What is a Novel?, p.22.

3. A McDowall, Realism, p.277.

4. Hemmings, Age, p.48.

a novelist does not have the right to express his opinion on anything whatsoever."¹

G Becker described the works of Tolstoy and Flaubert as objective:

"... they broke new ground for prose fiction on a basis of observation and objectivity. They more consciously photographed the life around them than did their predecessors."²

J P Stern thinks that Realism paid creative attention to the visible rather than the invisible; "an unabating interest in the shapes and relations of the real world, the system that works",³ while A McDowall maintains that the realistic artist is not only a paradox but an impossibility, "because he can only write when moved by an emotion, while if he feels an emotion in writing he cannot be a realist".⁴ Thus McDowall rejects Stendhal's point of view when he compares the novel with a mirror, and supports the view of Faguet who

"... sees that the artist must deal with the real by means of choice and arrangement; and that he employs these precisely for the object which lies beyond the reach of photography - to concentrate our attention on what signifies."⁵

1. Becker, Documents, p.95.

2. Ibid., p.7.

3. J P Stern, On Realism, p.171.

4. A McDowall, Realism, p.35.

5. Ibid., p.39.

Was realistic literature in fact completely neutral?

From a study of realistic novels we notice one thing, that a realistic concept exists, although determined by the author's personal viewpoint. Thus it differs from personal opinion for, while the latter gives expression to the author's individuality, the viewpoint is something more objective and independent of a need for proof or justification.

The realist was concerned with society, dealing in his work with social and economic situations and the problems which rise from them. The writer is as Gorky thinks "a man of his time, an eye-witness",¹ and Realism as a literary term "has its parallel in life";² thus realist writers were concerned with human experience, and "realism began its road in the realm of everyday life",³ concentrating on social analysis, the study and depiction of the life of man in society, of social relations, the relationship between the individual and society and the structure of society.

"The realists turned their attention to every sphere of private and social life and, perfecting the realist method, left a truly encyclopaedic record of a whole historical epoch, its life and morals, and its ideas and types of people."⁴

1. Levin, Gates, p.84.

2. J P Stern, On Realism, p.37.

3. Suchkov, History, p.11.

4. Ibid., pp.122-23.

Balzac described his aim as being "to write the history that so many historians have forgotten about, the history of manners".

Balzac meant that he

"... wanted to describe how people lived and how they behaved towards others, to enumerate and analyse the social and economic factors that controlled to a large extent the way they lived and behaved; he wanted to achieve for his own age what academic social historians are compelled to attempt, usually with inadequate data, for past periods."¹

Through description and analysis of society, the realist's attention was drawn to the lower classes, from which he chose his characters and which he saw as being so frequently exploited by the Bourgeoisie. The growth of this latter element of society had earlier stimulated the Romantic movement, but as it gained political and economic power it became as overbearing as the aristocracy had been. For this reason it was now attacked by the realists who rose to defend the rights of the suppressed lower middle classes and proletariat.

"The scramble for money and power through commercial expansion is the explicit theme of Zola's L'Argent, Dreiser's The Financier, and The Octopus, and The Pit by Norris, to name only a few."²

1. Hemmings, Age, p.44.

2. L Furst, Naturalism, p.12.

B Suchkov, writing from a Marxist point of view, thinks, however, that they "did not look deeply enough into the contradiction between capital and labour to discover the right way to solve it".¹ "They presented the clash of opposing interests which divided and alienated people, to reveal the class struggle."²

As a result of the realist's concern for the less privileged members of society, and considering that his source of inspiration was in reality rather than the imagination (as is the case with Romanticism) we find that in realistic literature there is no traditional hero as such. This does not mean, however, that the focal character disappears entirely from realistic literature, but if we consider, for example, the protagonist in works by Balzac, Dickens and Tolstoy, we see that he does not stand alone. He is surrounded by a group of characters who all bring some influence to bear upon him, while he in turn influences the development of their lives.

"Each realistic hero is unique, but his uniqueness does not isolate him. Or rather: it may isolate him but not for us who are always seeing his isolation in the perspective of the world he has left."³

We may also note here that the protagonist of the realistic novel, selected as he is from among the ordinary people,

1. Suchkov, History, p.122.

2. Ibid., p.123.

3. J P Stern, On Realism, p.104.

bears the mark of his social class, as opposed to the romantic hero who stands apart from all other characters.

"What the Realists and the Naturalists have in common is the fundamental belief that art is in essence a mimetic, objective representation of outer reality (in contrast to the imaginative, subjective transfiguration practised by the Romantics). This led them to choose for their subject matter the ordinary, the close-to-hand."¹

G Becker says,

"Realism seems to contain a kind of implicit Benthamite assumption that the life lived by the greatest number is somehow the most real. Maupassant said that the writer 'should always incline to the mean, to the general rule'."²

This attitude of concern with ordinary people led them to describe ugly things and bring out details of an unsavoury sort. They often chose as their principal characters the sick and the physically or psychologically abnormal.

"There was almost immediate protest that the realists were violating their own principles by concentration on 'the lower elements' ... of course realism should

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.8.

2. Becker, Documents, p.25.

reach to the drawing room as well as the stable, but at the same time most human behaviour takes place at a level rather lower than that admitted by sterile principles of decorum."¹

Gorky reports a significant conversation with Tolstoy on this subject in which the latter said to him:

"'You've seen many drunken women?'

'Many - my God!'

'You must not write about them, you mustn't.'

'Why?'

'Why?' Tolstoy repeated, then continued thoughtfully and slowly: 'I don't know. It just slipped out ... it's a shame to write about filth. But why not write about it? Yes, it's necessary to write about everything, everything'."²

Balzac, in the preface of the Comédie Humaine in 1842, attempted to draw the parallel between man in society and the animal kingdom in nature.

"I saw that society resembled nature. Does not society make of man, according to the environment in which his life is lived out, as many different kinds of men as there are species in zoology?"³

1. Becker, Documents, p.25.

2. Ibid., p.25.

3. D Grant, Realism, p.37.

Finally, Stendhal, justifying his statement that "a novel is a mirror carried along a highroad", says that the novelists,

"... held a mirror up to the public; is it their fault if people with ugly faces walked past the mirror? What are the political allegiances of a mirror? ... His mirror shows the mire, and you blame the mirror! Oughtn't you rather to blame the road with the pot-holes, or even better, the inspector of highways who lets the water gather and the pot-hole form?"¹

But if Realism claims a position of literary neutrality, representing society exactly as it is, it should take a broad cross-section of that society without distinction to comprise all elements of good and evil.

With regard to style, the realists did not over-indulge themselves as the romantics had done, since they looked upon it as the means rather than the purpose in literature. A concern for style, they claimed, is a form of interference in the novel and on these grounds they rejected it. It was perhaps their wish to deny all emotional involvement and to refrain from didacticism, that influenced their approach to writing. "Realism exalts life and diminishes Art, exalts things and diminishes words."² Flaubert, in his letter to Louise Colet in 1852, says,

1. Hemmings, Age, p.48.

2. D Grant, Realism, p.43.

"The same thing is true in art. Passion does not make poetry, and the more personal you are, the more feeble you will be."¹

The exploration of new subject matter demands also the application of a new method, as G Becker suggests:

"The facts in realistic work should speak for themselves as they do in life. There should be no authorial voice raised in way of commentary or exhortation, no authorial elbow nudging the reader in the ribs. In fact it is necessary to avoid 'all poetic and rhetorical devices for obscuring the main issue'."²

Flaubert, in a comment on Madame Bovary, says:

"I have put into it nothing of my feelings or of my experience. The illusion (if there is one) comes, on the contrary, from the impersonality of the work. It is one of my principles that you must not write yourself. The artist ought to be in his work like God in creation, invisible and omnipotent. He should be felt everywhere but not seen."³

1. Becker, Documents, p.91.

2. Ibid., p.28.

3. Ibid., p.94.

With regard to the language, J P Stern observes that, "... language, life and the forms of literature at a certain point in history are available to the realistic writer. Consequently there are three kinds of expectation to which a realistic text addresses itself: verbal, social-existential, and formal. They overlap each other and are not easy to separate, because they have their common ground in the historicity of all literature."¹

This disregard for artistic style was, perhaps, a feature of the earlier realistic novelists, but later they took an interest in combining realistic observation with artistic style. Flaubert himself says that he had two distinct personalities as a writer:

"... one who is fascinated by bombast, lyricism, great eagle flights, all the sonorities of style and the high summits of ideas; another who burrows and digs for the truth as far as he can, who likes to give the small detail as much emphasis as the significant fact, who wants you to feel the things he represents with an almost physical immediacy",²

while in another place he says that "there are no beautiful ideas

1. J P Stern, On Realism, p.76.

2. D Grant, Realism, p.60.

without beautiful forms and vice versa".¹

Realism, from its first appearance in the eighteenth century as 'Naive Realism', reached its climax in the nineteenth century when it became known as 'Critical Realism' and with its decline at the beginning of the twentieth century has been superseded as an ideology, although it remains to the present day a literary trend. In spite of objections, many developments and changes began early to affect the basic principles of Realism, and these developments are represented in the Naturalism of Zola, the Socialist Realism of Gorky and the psychological novel as conceived by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. It must be said, however, that all these modernizing trends are merely streams which flow from the one vital source, Realism. G Becker thought that Realism did not die after the death of Zola in 1902, but remained until about 1930, and

"... in recent years we have seen what purports to be a neo-realism practised and upheld by Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet",²

while F Hemmings looks at the decline of Realism socially and makes a connection between the disintegration of realism and the decline of self-confidence among the middle classes at the end of the nineteenth century:

"We have seen how during the first half of the eighteenth century, realism evolved in response

1. Wellek, Hist.Mod.Cri., p.10.

2. Becker, Documents, p.10.

to the unexpressed need for a new kind of literature capable of illustrating the values and aspirations of a middle class which had still to assert its supremacy. A hundred years later, by which time all the apparatus of the nation-state, political, economic, industrial and cultural, had fallen under the control of the successful bourgeoisie, realism acquired a new function: it became critical and deflationary Even so, it is important to note that it remained in every sense a bourgeois literature, created by members of the same class as it was directed against. Scarcely one among all the writers who made their reputation during the age of realism came from the working classes."¹

However, we shall try to throw some light upon each of these developments individually.

NATURALISM

The Naturalistic movement began in France in the latter half of the nineteenth century when Emile Zola, the great theorist of Naturalism, published his essay 'Le roman experimental' (1880), which became the manifesto of the new literary school. We face here the same problem, which is that it is impossible to give an

1. Hemmings, *Age*, pp.360-61.

exact definition of the word 'Naturalism'. It is a "deceptive term",¹ often used loosely as a synonym for Realism, which can in fact describe any form of extreme Realism. Like the latter term, it has links with philosophical terminology. In the eighteenth century Naturalism, as elaborated by the thinker Holbach, was a "philosophy system that saw man living solely in a world of perceived phenomena".² Diderot, in the nineteenth century, wrote of Naturalists as "those who do not admit God but who believe instead in material substance".³ At the same time it has a link with the scientific advance of the nineteenth century, and thus Naturalism came onto the literary scene already loaded with meaning derived from philosophy and the sciences. "Naturalism took its name from science - the naturalist as observer of natural phenomena".⁴ A McDowall defines Naturalism as,

"... the school of literature which holds that art should be governed by scientific method, because its human subject-matter can be measured and analysed in just the same way as the materials of the physical sciences."⁵

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.1.

2. Ibid., p.2.

3. Ibid., p.3.

4. D Grant, Realism, p.40.

5. A McDowall, Realism, p.153.

The factors which led to the rise of Realism and Naturalism are identical, except that Naturalism applied a purely scientific approach: from Newton was gained a sense of mechanistic determinism, from Darwin an awareness of biological determinism, from Marx a view of history as the background to vast economic and social forces, from Taine a concept of literature as the produce of deterministic elements and from Comte a regard for social and environmental determinism.

"The social, scientific, philosophical and ethical trends of the nineteenth century are not just the background to Naturalism; they are the crucial shaping factors that gave the movement its content, its method, its direction and even its mood."¹

As mentioned above, the Naturalistic movement grew out of Realism and extended the tradition of Realism, so it was tied strongly to Realism from its first appearance with Zola, to the extent that some critics have not considered there to be any difference between Realism and Naturalism; C Beuchat, for example, thinks that both schools "are merely one and the same thing".² Brunetière praises Madame Bovary as a "masterpiece of the realistic novel", while in the same book he says that Flaubert is "the true harbinger of Naturalism, just as Madame Bovary will probably remain

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.10.

2. Ibid., p.6.

its masterpiece".¹ This in fact points out that the two terms appear to have been synonymous. Thus most of the principles of Naturalism have been derived from Realism. In spite of this close connection between Realism and Naturalism, there are, however, very fundamental differences between the two schools. To begin with, Naturalism depends entirely on scientific determinism to record its observation of human life, whereas Realism relies more upon man's moral and intrinsic qualities as a basis for study.

"Naturalism is an attempt to apply to literature the discoveries and methods of nineteenth century sciences."²

Paul Alexis, Zola's closest ally, described Naturalism as

"... a way of thinking, of seeing, of studying, of making experiments, a need to analyse in order to know, rather than a particular style of writing",³

and perhaps their biological and philosophical assumptions separate them from realists. The realistic attitude is one based on observation, whereas to the Naturalists experimentation with analysis is preferable, and realistic novelists were expected to describe reality and go no further, while naturalists would reject any portrayal of that reality without a personal interpretation based on scientific facts. Thus Grant describes Realism as an

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.6.

2. Ibid., p.9.

3. Ibid., p.9.

"... objective, the attainment of the real,
naturalism ... as a method which shall conduce
to the attainment of the real."¹

J Chiari draws attention to another difference between the two schools, which is that Naturalism

"... is really a kind of materialism, denying the existence of any spiritual principle and, therefore, fundamentally opposed to realism and to its Christian belief in an informing substance Realism is essentially Christian, while naturalism or materialism is a complete denial of Christianity or of any form of transcendence."²

Finally the French critic L Deffoux compares Realism with the French Revolution of 1789, and Naturalism with the 1793 "Reign of Terror".³

The most distinctive aspect of Naturalism is its emphasis on science. Taine attempted to bring all subjects of study into the province of science, and believed that everything, including man and all his life and works, could be understood in terms of cause and effect. Thus he says:

"The research into causes come after the collection of facts, it doesn't matter whether the facts are

1. D Grant, Realism, p.33.

2. J Chiari, RI, p.17.

3. L Furst, Naturalism, p.8.

physical or moral, they will still have causes; there are causes for ambition, courage and truthfulness as there are for digestion, muscular movement, and animal warmth."¹

Zola, in his article Le Roman Experimental, says "As a rule, it will be enough for me to substitute the word 'novelist' for the word 'doctor' in order to make my meaning clear and give it the precision of scientific truth."²

In the preface of his novel Thérèse Raquin, Zola continues to expound his scientific method:

"If this novel is read with care, it will be seen that each chapter studies one particular curious physiological case. I have tried to do one thing: given a vigorous man and an unsatisfied woman, to look for the beast in them, to shut my eyes, even, to anything that is not the beast, to cast them in a violent drama, and scrupulously to note the actions and sensations of these creatures."³

This scientific conception led Zola to "identify mechanically the human body and human society".⁴

1. D Grant, Realism, p.36.

2. A McDowall, Realism, p.155.

3. Hemmings, Age, p.183.

4. G Lukacs, Studies in European Realism, p.86.

In the Naturalistic view man's life and action are determined by environment and heredity. This idea, perhaps, was inspired by Darwin. Taine in his Essais de critique et d'histoire (1866), says

"... the human animal is a continuation of the primitive animal ... the primary molecule is inherited, and its acquired shape is passed on partially and gradually by heredity ... the molecule as it develops only under the influence of its environment."¹

B Suchkov says that Zola saw the human being as

"... biologically static, prevented by heredity from escaping the power of social environment and exerting an influence on it, to change it. Zola's insistence on the power of environment and heredity often approaches fatalism."²

Zola himself applied theories of heredity in thirty-one stories of a French family 'Rougon-Macquart'. This view of man as an animal whose course is determined by his heredity, environment and the pressures of the moment, was attacked by many critics.

"Its conception of man is so narrow - and so tendentious - as to form a straitjacket. The writer in fact has no more liberty than his character."³

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.17.

2. Suchkov, History, p.164.

3. L Furst, Naturalism, p.18.

A McDowall says,

"Zola, following his scientific mentor, is careful to say that determinism only shows us how things happen, it does not show us why, ... if Zola could carry out his dream, he would be drawing literature further away from the living reality, further still from the aesthetic whole of art, towards the laboratories and dissecting-room of science."¹

Their views on heredity, however, gave them a predilection for uncomplicated characters, often drawn from the lower strata of society, and their belief in the overpowering effects of the environment led them to select its most oppressive aspects, concentrating especially on the impoverished, and underprivileged, the ugly and the diseased. The title of one of Zola's novels is The Human Animal.

"The Naturalists even seem to reverse the process of evolution by showing the degeneration of man into a sub-human state, as in Norris' Vandover and the Brute, Zola's L'Assommoir and Hauptmann's Vor Sonnenaufgang. Particularly in a crisis, under some stress or the impetus of the sexual urge or the influence of alcohol, man (as Freud was to show a little later) reverts to the primitive brutalism latent within himself."²

1. A McDowall, Realism, p.160.

2. L Furst, Naturalism, p.16.

Because of its whole attitude towards the human being and life, Naturalism was attacked by many writers and critics. Brunetièrè criticised Zola's Le Roman Experimental as saying "very little in a great many words".¹ Henry James' gentle comment is that "M Zola reasons less powerfully than he represents".² A McDowall thought that what Zola calls for belongs to psychology and sociology, not to the novel or any form of art. "What we ask for is a new experience, imaginative in form and appealing to our imaginative reason. It may make us wiser in knowledge of the world."³ Writing as a proponent of Socialist Realism, Suchkov remarks:

"While the realist method enables the writer to single out and stress the most important features of character or environment, and thereby understand and present correctly their trends of development, naturalism precludes the presentation of life as a changing category."⁴

Most critics, however, have a less extreme attitude towards Naturalism. L Furst, in her book Naturalism, states:

"Naturalism thus arose in respect to the stimuli of the age which it reflected in its matter as in its

1. L Furst, Naturalism, p.29.

2. Ibid., p.30.

3. A McDowall, Realism, p.157.

4. Suchkov, History, p.161

manner Indeed its aims and its general tendencies have - not unjustly - often been attacked as utterly non-aesthetic, even inimical to the arts. In actual fact Naturalism was never as rational or as logically consistent as it may at first seem. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of bewildering contradictions, of which Naturalism had its fair share. It was ... torn between its theory and its practice, between materialism and idealism, between pessimism and optimism. On the one hand it faced the iniquities of a rapidly industrialized world while on the other it placed boundless faith in the future progress of that world with the help of scientific advance. The Naturalists did not go as far as Marxists in reviling the present and nurturing Messianic hopes for the future, but they did try to combine high-minded idealism with the sobriety of detached observers, ... they despaired and hoped at one and the same time In this respect too Naturalism is as much an expression of its age as the socio-political system of Marx and the philosophy of Nietzsche."¹

1. L Furst, Naturalism, pp.22-23.

SOCIALIST REALISM

In Russia, Socialist Realism was born, particularly in the works of Maxim Gorky (1868-1936).

"After the triumph of the October Revolution in Russia and the building of socialism, at the juncture when a new social reality made its appearance in the world, with concomitant new relations between man and society, a new social ethic, a new understanding of the social aims and task of art and literature, a new literary method corresponding to the historical conditions and the historically-conditioned needs of the new society, Socialist Realism, began to develop."¹

Socialist Realism differs from Critical Realism philosophically, although artistically the two have much in common. "If naturalism was a rigidification of realism, then socialist realism is a rigidification of nineteenth-century novelists, particularly Tolstoy."² The Marxist Suchkov suggests that "Critical realism also foreshadowed socialist realism in the method of artistic investigation of reality and in the social views it expressed",³ while G Becker maintains that the most important development of Realism in the twentieth century is "anti-realistic" meaning by this Socialist Realism.⁴

1. Suchkov, History, p.192.

2. D Grant, Realism, p.76.

3. Suchkov, History, p.123.

4. Becker, Documents, p.21.

What then are the differences and the resemblances between critical and socialist Realism? Georg Lukács in his book, The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, attempts to point out the most distinctive features of both Realisms in order to show their similar and different points. At the beginning he states that "the perspective of socialist realism is, of course, the struggle for socialism",¹ and he thinks that Socialist Realism differs from critical Realism, not only in being concerned with a socialist perspective but also in using this perspective to describe "the forces working towards socialism from the inside"² but also in their approaches to description. He emphasises two kinds of descriptions, 'inside' and 'outside', the difference between them being that

"By the 'outside' method a writer obtains a typology based on the individual and his personal conflicts; and from this base he works towards wider social significance.

The 'inside' method seeks to discover an Archimedian point in the midst of social contradictions, and then bases its typology on an analysis of these contradictions."³

Although many realistic writers, for example Dickens and Tolstoy, use both methods in their description of characters from different classes, the critical realists have been unable to apply the 'inside' method to their conceptions of the future. He then says:

1. G Lukács, Meaning, p.93.

2. Ibid., p.93.

3. Ibid., p.94.

"In socialist realism, this barrier is removed. Since its ideological basis is an understanding of the future, individuals working for that future will necessarily be portrayed from the inside Socialist Realism is able to portray from the inside human beings whose energies are devoted to the building of a different future."¹

This point leads him to lay emphasis on the ambition of Socialist Realism to depict society comprehensively, although he admits that neither Socialist Realism nor Critical Realism are able to portray the totality of a society in the full sense of the word, although "socialist realism is certainly committed to the achievement of such totality more strongly than was critical realism".² He finally concludes by discussing the future of critical realism in a Socialist society. First,

"As the perspective of socialism changes, as it is gradually translated into concrete reality, either the result will be growing approximation or, alternatively, a violent estrangement."³

However, the main problem will be the inability of Critical Realism to depict from the inside the social forces on which socialism is based. "Socialist reality confronts the critical realist with a society he is unable to describe from the inside".⁴

1. G Lukács, Meaning, pp.95-96.

2. Ibid., p.100.

3. Ibid., p.107.

4. Ibid., p.107.

The task of Socialist Realism is to represent reality in its revolutionary development:

"It is not enough to represent life as it is; it is necessary to show where it is going and that is toward the inevitable future of the communist society."¹

A A Zhdanov, at the First All-Soviet Congress 1934, says that Stalin calls writers "the engineers of human souls".

"It means, in the first place, to know life, in order to depict it truthfully in works of art, to depict it not scholastically, not lifelessly, not simply as 'objective reality', but to depict actuality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of artistic description must be combined with the task of the ideological transformation and education of the working people in the spirit of socialism."²

Maxim Gorky, whose works are considered a prominent example of Socialist Realism, stated that the purpose of Socialist Realism, is not

"... to depict the past critically, but chiefly to promote the consolidation of revolutionary achievement in the present and a clear view of the lofty objectives of the socialist future."³

1. Becker, Documents, p.21.

2. Ibid., p.487.

3. Ibid., p.487.

The emphasis on the connection of literary writing with political conflict, especially the struggle of the classes, is made yet more clear by P Suchkov. He even claims that the writer should identify his outlook completely with the outlook of the working class in their struggle and victory, to be able to respond to life's phenomena and to accept Communism as the real goal of historical development.

"Thus, socialist realism cannot be unless the writer shares the outlook of the revolutionary working class, in the case of capitalist countries, or the outlook of the working class that is the ruling class in socialist countries."¹

Perhaps because of this attitude, Socialist Realism has been heavily criticized:

"With socialist realism the synthesis is illusory, or at least artificial, because the 'absolute reality' which shall be discovered by the process of dialectic is pre-determined; it must be a socialist reality, conforming to a political ideal."²

Despite the great number of trends and tendencies which emerged in Europe and America from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present time, Realism, which had ceased as a literary ideology in the late nineteenth century, still continues to the present day as a literary trend, and there are many writers keeping the traditions of Realism alive in the contemporary novel.

1. Suchkov, History, p.191.

2. D Grant, Realism, p.77.

"Yet whatever our current allegiances and aspirations in literature, our roots are there in the nineteenth century where a massive body of critical discussion remains to remind us of the strenuous and widespread effort at literary renovation. Without too much oversimplification it is possible to say that the writing of our own day may be seen either as a conventional continuation of the realistic mode ... or as a reaction against it which cannot be fully understood unless we are aware of the realistic elements residually present Surrealism has come and gone, as have other unrealistic efforts; it is difficult to find a term other than post-realistic to describe the writing of our time."¹

1. Becker, Documents, pp.3-4.

Chapter Six

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM

IN ARABIC LITERATURE

Chapter Six

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM IN ARABIC LITERATURE

It should be pointed out at the outset that the Arabic literary tradition, throughout its long history, did not experience those literary tendencies which emerged in European literature between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries, tendencies such as Classicism, Romanticism, Realism and Symbolism. However, it discovered and began to embrace some of them during the Arabic literary renaissance in the nineteenth century.

Perhaps the dominant factor which led to the rise of literary schools was the introduction of Arab scholars to European culture in the course of the nineteenth century. This was to lead to the translation of European works into Arabic, and a growing acquaintance with European writing. However, this is not to deny the influence of political and social circumstances which acted as catalysts to this interaction of two distinct literary traditions.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the Romanticism and Realism in Arabic literature which emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, it would be useful to dwell upon the beginning of the Arabic renaissance in the nineteenth century and its political, social, economic and cultural accompaniments.

The French military expedition to Egypt (1798-1801) is conventionally considered as marking the beginning of the contact between expanding Western civilization and the under-developed structure of Arab society of that time, and also as marking the beginning of the Arab renaissance in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields. It is well known that Napoleon Bonaparte brought over scientists to study the antiquities of Egypt. They founded the Institut d'Égypte, formed a library from the books they had brought with them, created a physics and chemistry laboratory, launched into archaeological research, and studied the irrigation systems of Egypt. Napoleon also brought a printing press, with which he attempted to communicate with the populace, and published a newspaper, Le Courrier d'Égypte and a periodical, La Décade.

"What Napoleon's venture undeniably did was to reveal to the Egyptians that there were other ways of life than their own, new things that others considered worth looking into, worth learning, worth doing."¹

The French expedition, however, did not stay long, and it is obvious that the mere presence of Europeans for a few years "could not of itself lead to a literary revival. There had also to be a stimulus from within. This was encouraged by Muhammad ^CAlī

1. Cachia, Tāhā, p.6.

Pasha".¹ who took the reins of power in 1805. Muhammad ^CAlī (1769-1848) attempted to construct a new Egypt. Realizing that the Ottoman empire was weak and unable to intervene or protect him, he turned to Europe in order to establish an Egyptian army on the lines of European armies, and therefore sent several military missions to Europe, and France in particular. This quest for military expertise was to necessitate further missions to create an infrastructure for the development of Egypt. These missions sought to acquire the elements of European knowledge and technology and ultimately led him to build schools, establish a printing press, and pay great attention to the task of translation, to the extent of placing it under his own patronage.

Even in this early period we find many educated Egyptians, the most eminent of these being Rifā^Ca at-Tahtāwī (1801-1873) who studied in France, and is regarded as an important pioneer in the Arabic cultural renaissance. He was concerned with education and the task of introducing European culture to Arab society, side by side with the revival of classical Arabic literature. He wrote several works, among them Manāhij al-Albāb al-Miṣriyya fī Mabāhij al-Ādāb al-^CAṣriyya (1869) in which he discussed and suggested methods by which Egypt should seek progress in the future. He emphasized the need for modern education for the Ulema and political education for all citizens and wanted primary education for all, girls as much as boys.²

1. Haywood, Modern, p.31.

2. Hourani, ATLA, pp.76-77.

In 1836 he founded the Madrasat al-ʿAlsun (school of languages) where the process of translation was centred. He himself translated several books of which most were concerned with geography, history and military science, and he supervised all the books which the students at the school were translating. He also became a schools inspector, and editor of the official newspaper al-Waqāʿi^c al-Miṣriyya which was founded by Muḥammad ^cAlī in 1828, and later he also established a newspaper under the title Rawdat al-Madāris (1870) which attracted contributions from educated people of the time, such as Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī and ^cAlī Mubārak. Because of his wide activity, J Haywood considered him not only a pioneer of the renaissance in general, but also of translation in particular and of Arabic journalism.¹

Egypt was not the only point of contact with the west, for Syria had indeed established relations with Europe before Egypt, not however by virtue of a military expedition but by missionaries, who were working mainly among the Christian population. The missionaries established schools in which were taught European languages, French first and later English, and with these they introduced printing presses and published many newspapers such as Nafīr Sūriyā (1850) and al-Jinān, both edited by Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819-1883).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, we notice an increasing momentum in this movement marked by a wider scholarship

1. Haywood, Modern, p.33.

in different subjects, and a greater effort in the work of education and the revival of the Arabic literary legacy. ^CAlī Mubārak (1823-1893) founded in 1870 Dār al-Kutub, and other learned societies, such as Jam^Cīyyat al-Ma^Cārif, founded in 1868, were "undertaking the tasks of reviving old works and editing manuscripts".¹ In addition to the many schools founded, Dār al-^CUlūm was established in 1872.

During this time it should be noted that many Syrians, mainly Christians, had emigrated because of aggravated circumstances in the province, some of them to America while others travelled to Egypt. Among these were many educated men, who were to have a great influence on Egyptian culture and society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth.² They had a decisive influence on the spread of literary journalism and the diversity of newspapers, and also contributed to the translation movement which became, in their hands, more precise, as they possessed a good command of French. From these facts, K Schoonover made two observations: first,

"... the influence of the Lebanese literary awakening upon Egypt, especially in the early stages and ... (second) the fact that the modern literary movement began in Egypt under the influence of journalism."³

1. Sakkut, Egyptian, p.4.

2. Marzūq, Tatawwur, p.39.

3. Schoonover, "Some observations on modern Arabic Literature", MW, p.22.

Among these emigrants were Farah Antūn (1873-1922) who edited the journal al-Majalla (founded 1899) in which he discussed European ideologies such as socialism, communism and capitalism. He also translated many French works such as Paul et Virginie and La Chaumièr by Bernadin De St Pierre, Atala by Chateaubriand, Le fils du peuple by Alexandre Dumas the younger, and the trilogy of Alexandre Dumas the older. Ya^cqūb Şarrūf (1852-1927) edited the journal al-Muqataṭaf, first in Beirut (1876) and then in Cairo (1885), Adīb Ishāq (1856-1885) edited the newspaper Miṣr (1877), Salīm Taqlā (1849-1892) edited al-Ahrām (1875) and Ṣadā l-Ahrām (1882) and Jurjī Zaydān (1861-1914) edited al-Hilāl (1892).

In addition to the contribution of Syrian immigrants in the field of translation, the students of Madrasat al-ʿAlsun translated more than two thousand works into Arabic and Turkish.¹ This time was the age of journalism, and by 1898 there were 169 newspapers and magazines;² H Gibb maintains that

"... the part played by journalism in the development of modern Arabic literature is almost impossible to overestimate. The journals not only supplied a school for the training of young writers, but impelled Arabic style along a line of evolution to meet the daily needs of the press."³

1. Gibb, Studies, pp.247-8.

2. Cachia, Tāhā, p.27.

3. Gibb, Studies, p.251.

At that time many social and religious reformers emerged, such as Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1898), who came to Egypt in 1871 and espoused Pan-Islamism and the emancipation of Islam from traditional bonds. His disciple Muhammad ^CAbduh (1849-1905) continued in his teacher's path, calling for the adoption of modern civilization in accordance with Islam. There were two important and independent things:

"Islam with its truths and laws revealed by God, and modern civilization with its own laws discovered by sociology. But what to do when there seems to be a contradiction between the two? ^CAbduh resolved it by saying that true civilization is in conformity with Islam."¹

^CAbduh had a great influence upon men who occupied very prominent positions in the politics and culture of Egypt.

As a result of these various cultural activities, and in addition to people's concern for reading, learning and discussion, political and national consciousness began to take hold of the people, who embraced a twofold ideological identity, pride in Egyptian nationality and pride in Islamic unity. This situation was to lead to the 1882 revolution associated with Ahmad ^CUrābī, which did not claim more than identification of the Egyptian personality within Islamic unity and the emancipation of the Egyptian

1. Hourani, ATLA, p.162.

on an equal footing with Turks and Circassians.¹ However, Ḳurābī's revolution was suppressed by British intervention in support of the Khēdive.

"At about the same time there was the first sign of a national reaction against the policy of Egypt's rulers and their western creditors on the part of young Muslim intellectuals who wished to reform their country and free it from western domination ... and this contributed to the development of a national consciousness and discontent which were one of the causes of the revolution of 1882."²

Ḳurābī's defeat was to have a great influence on the general situation in Egypt;

"... we find an integrating movement which had emerged and flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century, but Ḳurābī's defeat delayed it. However, it did not take long before it flourished again during the first decade of the twentieth century, reaching its peak after the 1919 revolution."³

After Ḳurābī's defeat, there began in Egyptian history

1. A I al-Hawārī, al-Baṭal al-MuḲāṣir fī r-Riwāya al-Miṣriyya, p.59.

2. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.2.

3. ḲAbd Allāh, WāqīḲiyya, p.85.

the British occupation which remained for seventy years (1882-1952). It encouraged the immigration of Europeans and Syrians who dominated the social, cultural, economic and administrative positions, as chief executives and owners of most big business houses, directors of government offices, counsellors of ministries and chief editors of newspapers and magazines, to the extent that ^CAlī Yūsuf, an Egyptian writer, commented when attempting to publish his newspaper al-Mua'yyad (1898),

"I hesitated greatly, because I knew that it would be the first newspaper published by a Muslim Egyptian. For seven years, there has not been any Muslim newspaper throughout Egypt."¹

These conditions were to have a serious and bad influence on Egyptians, who were seized by a kind of pessimism, hopelessness, introversion and lack of confidence. It is worth noting here that a new social class emerged and began to combine its strength and to organize itself after ^CUrābī's defeat; this was the Egyptian middle class which was to play a significant role during the 1919 revolution and afterwards.

As a result of contact with western culture, in particular the translation movement and the publishing of the Arabic legacy, we find a literary movement rising and flourishing in the late nineteenth century. With regard to poetry, we see Maḥmūd

1. Marzūqī, Tatawwur, pp.11-12.

Sāmī al-Bārūdī (1838-1904) considered as the principal agent in the revival of Arabic poetry. He rejected the poetry of his time which was very poor in its style and content, and was much concerned with rhetorical devices and embellishment. al-Bārūdī returned to Arabic poetry its authentic beauty, adopting the form of the great Abbasid poets, in an attempt to save poetry from its decline.

But the influence of European literature may be seen most clearly in the field of prose, and the whole literary output of the nineteenth century,

"... swaying between a lifeless reproduction of medieval Arabic models, and an imitation of Western models without sufficient intellectual preparation could not but be feeble and unfruitful. The whole intellectual life of the people was thrown into confusion by the contradiction in principle between the old system of thought with its dogmatic basis and the intellectual freedom of Western scientific methods."¹

The translation movement had brought a new genre to Arabic literature, the story, which they tried to imitate without complete awareness of its principles at first, and still using a classical style, in which rhetorical devices (Badī^C) could be found. These works were written either to present to the population European culture, books such as Aṭ-Ṭaḥṭawī's work Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīṣ Bārīz, and the work

1. Gibb, Studies, p.259.

of Alī Mubārak Alam ad-Dīn (1883), or with a didactic aim, works such as Majma' al-Bahrayn by Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī (1800-1871) and as-Sāq alā s-Sāq by Aḥmad Fāris ash-Shidyāq (1804-1887). But with the passing of time both the style and the idea expressed began to undergo a slow transformation at the hands of Salīm al-Bustānī (1848-1884) in narrative works such as al-Huyām fī Jinān ash-Shām (1870) and Budūr (1872) in which he proposed social reform, or of Jurjī Zaydān who presented Arabic and Islamic history in a narrative form.

But the writer whose works most approximate to European standards of narrative was Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī¹ (1858-1930). His work Hadīth 'Isā Ibn Hishām was published in Miṣbāḥ ash-Sharq in 1899 in serial form. Although it is presented as a kind of Arabic Maqāma, it has a new form and neo-classical style in which al-Muwayliḥī tried to reconcile western and Arabic forms; it "forges together all the best characteristics of the maqāma prose with a modern smoothness and humor",² although he still takes pride in elegant language and the classical style. Through his hero al-Muwayliḥī criticizes the social defects and religious standards of the time, for he has to some extent been influenced by al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh, to whom he dedicates his work. His purpose is social reform, and he thus emphasizes moral righteousness and urges his reader to embrace Islam fervently, while at the same time

1. See 'A ar-Rā'ī, Dirāsāt fī r-Riwāya l-Miṣriyya, p.19; P Cachia, Tāhā Husayn, p.34; I Adham, "Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm al-Fannān al-Ḥā'ir", al-Hadīth, p.312.

2. Gibb, Studies, p.290.

accepting western civilization although with reservations.¹

The works of these pioneers have many weak points both in form and concept: among these are,

"... the creation of characters which are often lifeless puppets in the writer's hands, or the depicting of superficial characters in black-and-white terms, which are unconvincing in their behaviour and motives, and whose personalities are not deeply probed.

Events do not follow a logical pattern, unity of plot is absent."²

Nevertheless, they began the first steps in the field of the Arabic story which was to flourish later on, and moreover, they managed to create a readership who were attracted by this genre, whereas Arabic poetry had previously dominated literature. To them goes the credit for whetting the appetite of the reader for such works.

With the beginning of the twentieth century we find Egyptian society in turmoil, a virtual colony of Britain which attempted to control the activities of Arab intellectuals. With the growing resistance against the occupation the British authorities, through the office of the Khedive, suppressed Egyptian attempts to establish an authentic identity.

In fact, this period witnessed an increasing number of Syrian and western immigrants, while on the other hand, cultural

1. ^CA Ibrāhīm, al-Qiṣṣa al-Miṣriyya wa-Ṣūrat al-Mujtama^C, p.135.

2. Moreh, "An Outline of the Development of Modern Arabic Literature", OM, p.18.

activity did increase, especially in respect of the work of translation, of which we find three kinds; first the accurate translation such as that of Najīb al-Ḥaddād (1867-1899) of The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas, and ^CAlī Adham's René by Chateaubriand; secondly, the bad translation such as Ḥāfiz Ibrāhīm's Les Misérables by Victor Hugo, and thirdly, the loose translation in which the translator paraphrases the original in his special style, and may abridge or expand portions according to his own taste, works such as most of al-Manfalūtī's translations. In the field of journalism, we find many cultural newspapers emerging side by side with political journals, among them ad-Dustūr (1900), al-Bayān (1913), as-Sufūr (1915) and Ākhir Sā^Ca (1914), in addition to those which were already established. P Cachia states that by 1913 there were 282 newspapers and magazines.¹

As a result of increasing political awareness, four political parties were established, and each was to have its own newspaper. The first of them was al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī, under the leadership of Muṣṭafā Kāmil (1874-1908), one of Muhammad ^CAbduh's students, its newspaper being al-Liwā' (1900). Kāmil demanded the departure of British forces, and believed that,

"... there was an Egyptian nation, but it was part of a large whole, or rather of several: it was Ottoman, Muslim, Eastern, and should strengthen its links with all three worlds."²

1. Cachia, Tāhā, p.27.

2. Hourani, ATLA, p.200.

The character of this party was predominantly religious. The second party, al-Umma, was established in 1907 by large landowners whose leader, Aḥmad Luṭfī as-Sayyid (1872-1963), called for the separation of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire and the adoption of European civilization; al-Umma's newspaper was al-Jarīda (1907). The third party was al-Isḫāh, established by Khedive ^CAbbās himself as his political machine. The fourth, al-Hizb al-Waṭanī al-Hurr, was established by Lord Cromer, the British High Commissioner, to justify the British occupation. Its newspaper was al-Muqaṭṭam. But as might be expected the first and the second parties were more important and influential than the others.

It is clear that political conflict is conducive to the formation of contradictory intellectual trends, and we naturally find several in Egypt at that time: firstly a religious trend which believes Islam to be the only basis for an Arabic renaissance. Muṣṭafā Kāmil is the propagandist of this path, his aim being the establishment of a new Islamic Egypt. There was also a rational trend, which called for the adoption of European civilization in order to build a new Egyptian society similar to European society, and this trend was not so exclusively concerned with the Arab cultural heritage but favoured Egyptian nationalism as its fundamental doctrine.

"Around Luṭfī as-Sayyid gathered the young Muslims of the new generation in Egypt who were not only inspired by the growing nationalist ideals, but who had been more

thoroughly educated on western lines than their predecessors, and had in many cases absorbed much of the spirit of western culture through prolonged contacts with it during student years The aspiration of these young writers was to see their country not only politically free, but able to take a worthy place in world civilization. At the same time, they were Muslims, but Muslims in whom the legacy of Muḥammad ^CAbduh was working towards a new adaptation of the fundamental position of Islam to the demands of modern life and thought ... they were yet convinced that it could and must be resolved, not by return to the past, nor, like the Syro-Americans, by cutting adrift from the past, but by the slow process of education and reform."¹

Aḥmad Luṭfī as-Sayyid, who has been called Ustādh al-Jil "Master of the present generation", is the greatest representative of this trend, having a great influence on such Egyptian writers as Haykal and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn.

"The various thoughts of as-Sayyid were the subject for many novels which were published in the first decades of this century, novels such as Zaynab by Haykal and Awdat ar-Rūh by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm."²

1. Gibb, Studies, p.270.

2. Marzūq, Tatawwur, pp.11-12.

Another intellectual trend aiming at a synthesis of European culture with Islamic principles was represented by Qāsim Amīn (1865-1908) who was one of Muḥammad ^CAbduh's students. He demanded the emancipation of Islamic women in his two books, Tahrīr al-Mar'a (1899) and al-Mar'a al-Jadīda (1900), and believes that

"... the relation of man and woman, of mother and child are the basis of society; the virtues which exist in the family will exist in the nation, he claims, the Sharī^Ca was the first law to provide for the equality of women with men."¹

His demand for women's liberation showed later in the first demonstration held by Egyptian women protesting against the exile of Sa^Cd Zaghlūl, and "witnesses the beginning of the demand for a reappraisal of their role in society".²

The fourth trend is radical, rejecting Arabic classical works completely and adopting European civilization as a foundation on which to build modern Egyptian society. Salāma Mūsā (1887-1957) is the foremost proponent of this radicalism. Although there is a great difference in viewpoint between these tendencies all of them may be seen as a struggle for the independence of Egypt, each one in its own way aiming at crystallizing the Egyptian personality, in order to arrive at an Egyptian identity.

1. Hourani, ATLA, p.164.

2. ^CAbd Allāh, Wāqi^Ciyya, pp.101-2.

Between 1914 and 1918, the period of the First World War, Egypt was ruled by martial law under a British protectorate, with military conscription and new taxes. This was also a period of rule by nominal Sultans (as Khedives were now known), with weak governments which had little control over the political situation.

"The years 1914-1918 were a time of rapid social change, because although Egypt did not formally declare war she was obliged to contribute men, animals and materials to the war effort. The poor suffered from the rise in prices and the injustice of the system of requisitioning The Egyptian landowning class generally became richer, the economic difference between it and the Turkish aristocracy tending to disappear, while the middle class increased with the growth of industry. British administration deteriorated and the behaviour of the troops stationed in the country fanned anti-foreign feeling, so that these four years saw moderate nationalism discredited."¹

This led to an increasing demand for independence by a group of Egyptian leaders who established the Wafd party in 1918. They petitioned the British for an end to the protectorate and evacuation of British troops, but Britain refused and sent the group into exile. This was followed by massive demonstrations demanding their return.

1. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.4.

In fact it was the Egyptian middle class who led this struggle against the occupying forces, demanding the right of self-determination while still searching for a national identity and aiming to achieve this through the support of the Wafd party. The outcome of this struggle, the 1919 revolution, is regarded as a middle class revolt.¹

In the period between the beginning of the twentieth century and the 1919 revolution, we may see strong features of Romanticism in literary works. Among the many factors which led to the spread of this trend are the following:

1. Translation: as we have already noted, the literary translations of this period are concerned with the French Romantic works. Muhammad Yūsuf Najm lists about seventy novels and short stories as examples of translated works which were published in Egypt in the period from 1870 till 1914,² although most of these translations had little literary value and included "not only love stories but also oriental tales, historical, picaresque and detective novels".³ The main proponent of this literary ideology was Rawhī al-Khālīdī (1864-1913) who laid out the principles of European Romanticism in the magazine al-Hilāl.

2. Mahjar (Emigré) poetry: as has already been mentioned above, some Syrians emigrated to America, where they pioneered a

1. R an-Naqqāsh, Udabā' Mu^Cāṣirūn, p.116.

2. Sakkut, Egyptian, p.5.

3. Ibid., p.8.

literary revival, particularly in poetry. A school of educated writers formed a literary club called ar-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya. The leader of this group was Jibrān Khalīl Jibrān (1883-1931). As a result of their contact with western literature, together with a longing for their homeland, Romanticism was to dominate their works which were imbued by sentiments of love, dependence on the heart as a source of inspiration, and a return to nature. Their poetry is full of suffering, complaint, nostalgia, and sadness, and others have mystical tendencies. They drew attention to the dreadful underdevelopment of their society and revolted against social traditions, perhaps too strongly, and as a result were rejected and derided for their views. Their revolt thus turned to a resentment against their people, as when Jibrān says "Oh ... my people, how I loved you! ... But now I hate you".¹ They also rejected the classical bonds of Arabic literature, especially in the poetic realm and they

"... succeeded in advancing the development of modern Arabic verse by adapting it from being a means of expressing the external world to being a tool by which the poet could explore the inner world of his soul and feeling; from its being a tool in the hands of the authorities, a means of embellishing celebrations, to a vehicle for introspection and the expression of ideas; from long drawn-out metres in a monotonous and

1. ^CI Y Balāṭa, ar-Rūmāntīqiyya wa-Ma^Cālimuhā fī sh-Shi^Cr al-^CArabī al-Hadīth, p.99.

grating pace, which gave the ornate style a rhetorical and declatory tone, ... to short metres with a lyrical or melancholy tone, which reflected the sadness and corrosive longings of the poet for his true homeland ... from petrified rhetorical devices and style, from a language of clichés, of hoary patterns of expression, whose aim was the preaching of morals and whose set subjects were praise or lamentation, to a simple, lucid style, which flowed from the poet's emotions, and penetrated the reader's heart."¹

Ihsān ^CAbbās states:

"We could not find a distinct school of Romanticism in Arabic literature, except in a recent period, and it was established by Jibrān who is entirely a Romantic writer."²

J Haywood describes him as a "rebel and individualist", and he maintains,

"... in fact, in both life and art, he represents the 'Romantic agony' through which Europe had passed during the nineteenth century. Both the contemplation and personal experience of suffering in some way uplifted him. Some would call it morbidity."³

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1. Moreh, "An Outline of the Development of Modern Arabic Literature, OM, pp.15-16.
 2. ^CI Y Balāta, op.cit., p.97.
 3. Haywood, Modern, p.129.

However, their works had a great influence on Arabic writers of that time, as is clear in the works of Mayy Ziyāda (1886-1941) and their influence extended to the thirties and forties of this century in the critical school of ad-Dīwān and the poetical school of Apollo.

"Much modernization claims its origin in the emigré writers of the Arabic world, whose claims were supported in Egypt by Syrian writers who also revolted against the metres and rhyme of poetry and against the traditional values of expression."¹

3. The general situation: as we have seen, after the defeat of ^CUrābī's revolt in 1882, the British occupation began to exert control over many aspects of Egyptian life, and British policy toward the Egyptian was felt to be increasingly oppressive, as witnessed by the Dinshawāy incident of 1906 which "brought to the surface the feeling of national humiliation";² Qāsim Amīn wrote, when Muṣṭafā Kāmīl died, that "twice only he had felt the heart of Egypt was beating - at Danishway (sic) and when Muṣṭafā Kāmīl was buried".³ Among the other factors which influenced the writers of this period were the diversity of political parties and their conflicts, the ultimate betrayal of the Arab revolt of 1916,

1. Marzūq, Tatawwur, Intro., p. Yā'

2. Hourani, ATLA, p.201.

3. Ibid., p.202.

the British occupation of other Arab lands, and the social and economic results of the First World War. All these events created a feeling of pessimism, desperation, grief, and a loss of confidence, and in particular the Egyptian writer felt a sense of alienation from his own backward society in which he could not find a free atmosphere, except in the imagination; thus the world of fantasy was the surest refuge for the suffering writer.

"The crisis of the intellectual was very drastic; they knew that their society was controlled by many forces such as colonialism, feudalism, reaction, and old customs, and they were unable to resist them; thus, the Romantic trend in which they became occupied was the direct reflection of their anxiety."¹

4. Nationalism: The concern for national ideas, the search for Egyptian identity and the attempt to crystallize it, were factors which had a great influence on the cultural movements of the period, and the claims and ideals of men such as Muṣṭafā Kāmil and Luṭfī as-Sayyid were to extend to other Arab countries. Such revolutionary ideas, as indeed these were in the context of early twentieth century Egypt, as propounded by Muṣṭafā Kāmil, were couched in an emotional rather than a rational language. These ideals accompanied the rise of the middle class, and perhaps here there is a close connection between this social-economic

1. A al-Mu^Caddāwī, Kalimāt fī l-Adab, p.101.

phenomenon and the search for a national identity which accompanied European Romanticism from the beginning.

5. Particular factors: in addition to the national ideal, there were other ideals of which the most prominent was Islam, which was perhaps stronger than the former, and certainly the influence of Islam on the ideals and spiritual life of the Arabs cannot be denied.

There is another factor particular to the Arab world, and that is the poetry; no other genre can attract Arabs as much as poetry which is perhaps the genre in which Arabs have excelled. Arabic poetry is largely lyrical and through it the Arab expresses his emotions, and appeals to the hearts of others. Naturally the Egyptian was attracted by the Romantic ideals expressed in European literature, which he easily accepted and absorbed into his own writing through the process of translation, adaptation, and finally inspired originality. This literary mode allowed writers to express their individuality by an appeal to the emotions, serving to express the grief and frustration which the country was experiencing, and certainly Muṣṭafā Kāmil was more influential than Luṭfī as-Sayyid with his overly rational style of writing.¹ Yaḥyā Haqqī recounts that so strong was the influence of the romantics that a publisher refused a collection of short stories, under the title of Yuhkā Anna (It is Told That) by Lāshīn, unless he changed the title to Dumū^c al-Ushshāq (Lovers' Tears).²

1. ^cAbd Allāh, al-Wāqī^ciyya, p.221.

2. Haqqī, Fajr, p.253.

Bearing in mind the factors which were conducive to the adoption of Romanticism by the Egyptians, we can now proceed to identify some of the aspects of this literary mode in the works of writers such as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (1888-1956) who wrote Zaynab (1912) in which we can observe a romantic atmosphere whether it be in the description or the characters or the plot. Haykal portrays the nature of the Egyptian countryside and his characters in a romantic way, "its mode is rather romantic; the village scenes are painted as idyllic, pastoral tableaux".¹ The heroism in Zaynab is concerned with individuality, the hero Ḥāmid having been educated as a bourgeois in whom has been inculcated an attitude of haughtiness towards the ignorant members of society; he cannot accommodate himself to society while all the time he "asks society to change instead of changing himself, and this in fact is the flaw of the romantic hero".² Thus he isolates himself from society and moves away in his meditations, and at the same time, he blames his personal problems on reality. attacking the social traditions which do not appeal to his sensations.

"In him (Ḥāmid) elements of the romantic hero, with his melancholia and his appreciation of nature, co-exist with traits inspired by specifically Egyptian circumstances.

1. Milson, "Some Aspects of the Modern Egyptian Novel", MW, pp.238-9.

2. A I al-Hawārī, al-Baṭal al-Muḥāsir fī r-Riwāya al-Miṣriyya, p.80.

Hamid, like the author, is one of the new class of young Egyptians who have received a modern education which has separated them physically and mentally from their families and society."¹

The novel attempts to deal with love between men and women, in a way in which is offered a romantic description of the fascination and the dignity of love and its purification of the heart.

However, Haykal overstates this theme to the extent that it overshadows all other human problems, and in it one "is reminded of French Romantic fiction of the nineteenth century".² Love therefore plays an important role in Romantic literature.

Another writer was Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdī Ḥammād who published many short stories and novellas, a collection of which was published under the title Aḥsan al-Qiṣaṣ (1910). Influenced by French and German literature, he adopted the romantic style in his portrayal of the characters and events which are much concerned with nature. But a didactic tone is sounded in his works, into which he often introduces himself as an element in the story, controlling the dialogue, the behaviour of the characters and narrating the events.³

The most famous Romantic writer of that time was Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī (1876-1924) who is considered the leader

1. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.21.

2. Haywood, Modern, p.136.

3. an-Nassāj, Qiṣṣa, p.73.

of the Romantic movement. Unable to read French, much of his literary energy was spent in rewriting French Romantic works which had already been translated, as mentioned above, and he also published many literary and narrative articles, later collected under the title al-^CAbarāt (1909), Mukhtārāt al-Manfalūtī (1912), and al-Nazarāt (1914). He revolted against the classical style of Arabic prose, avoiding rhetorical devices, and attacking the obscurities of the accepted written language. He adopted a different style, with simple and fluent phrases:

"Manfalūtī had a clear perception of the need for a change in Arabic literary methods and repeatedly expressed his conviction that the secret of style lay in the truthful representation to the reader of the ideas which occupied the writer's mind For himself he disclaimed any sort of imitation; he expressed his ideas with complete freedom in the language which pleased his own ear. This resulted, as might be expected, in a characteristic mixture of medieval and modern. Modern is the general smoothness of his writing, especially in narrative passages, and the framework of the essays With all this, he could not completely throw off inherited mannerisms. Though he criticized rhymed prose, he fell into it automatically whenever the emotional tone of his writing rose."¹

1. Gibb, Studies, pp.265-6.

However, he struggled to liberate Arabic prose from its classical bonds, and for this he is considered the father of the essay style, of whom al-^CAqqād was to comment:

"No one among our prose writers could combine the essay and literary style as well as al-Manfalūṭī."¹

His writing is full of fiery emotions, unrestrained imagination, and Romantic description, wherein he revolts against the mind and prefers the domination of the heart, justifying himself on the grounds that intellectual literature is a mere creation of the mind, an intellectual challenge which goes under many names.² For him literature should be subjective, inspired by the heart, not disciplined by the intellect.

With regard to his subjects, he touched on important social, cultural, and political themes, such as misery, suffering, love, patriotism, courage, sacrifice, and freedom, treating them in a very sympathetic way; relying on imagination and the world of dreams, he avoids reality, attempting to expose the problems of his time through his sentiment, without deep study or analysis, but in sad, pessimistic, and hopeless tones. His characters are from the lower classes, of whom he says "when I begin to write, I imagine a poor man coming to me, then I talk to him about everything in my mind",³ picturing them as crying, weak, and lost people, none

1. Marzūq, Taṭawwur, p.188.

2. M L al-Manfalūṭī, an-Nazarāt, p.35.

3. Ibid., p.40.

of them responsible for his failures or able to obtain his rights. Fate is, in fact, the force controlling the behaviour of his characters, and al-Manfalūṭī himself does no more than feel sorry for them, weeping for their suffering and stimulating the grief of the readers who are sharing his pain. He dedicates his al-^CAbarāt (Tears) to "all the miserable of this world whose misery I cannot eliminate because I am one of them; so the least one can do is to shed these tears for them".¹ H Gibb states that,

"... the natural tendency in him to melancholy and sentimentality led him to take the most pessimistic view of humanity. Life was indeed to him a vale of tears, from which he sought to escape in imagination. 'I love beauty in imagination more than in reality.'²

However, al-Manfalūṭī's stories are not bound by limitations of time or place, and he continually intervenes in the plot to digress into a moralistic commentary on the actions of his characters. In fact most of his stories also have a didactic purpose.

"In the al-^CAbarāt, on the other hand, Manfalūṭī abandoned himself to the sentimental pessimism of the extreme romantic school, with the same absence of light and shade in his character drawing which he had already displayed in the Nazarāt."³

1. M L al-Manfalūṭī, al-^CAbarāt, Dedication.

2. Gibb, Studies, p.265.

3. Ibid., p.268.

In spite of this, he manages to pave the way for the acceptance of the short story which was to flourish later, and he also renders the language more flexible, so that his style may be considered as an intermediate stage between at-Tahtāwī's style in the nineteenth century and that of Maḥfūz's generation. al-Manfalūṭī, however, was to influence not only the writers of his time but also those of the next two or three generations of Arabic writers, particularly in matters of style. A writer like Maḥmūd Taymūr is greatly in debt to Manfalūṭī, in particular for the romantic inspiration and delicate style.¹ Haykal too was influenced by his style and even those writers who attacked his writing, authors such as Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and ar-Rāfi^Cī, could not escape his influence,² and his works such as al-Nazarāt, al-^CAbarāt, Fī Sabīl at-Tāj, and Mājdūlīn have, until recently, been "a literary nourishment for many an educated youth".³

In addition to this Romantic trend in the literature of this time there were other trends, the first being an imitation of the Arabic Maqāma, similar to the work of al-Muwayliḥī, but less artistic. Among these we can count Layālī Saṭīḥ (1907) by Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm (1871-1932) in which Saṭīḥ, the hero, discusses matters of religion, society, and economics with the eye of the

1. an-Nassāj, Qiṣṣa, p.74.

2. ^CAbd Allāh, Wāqi^Ciyya, p.161.

3. M Khalfallāh, "Literary life in Modern Egypt, MW, p.33.

critic, attempting to promote an Islamic viewpoint. Another work, Layālī r-Rūḥ al-Hā'ir (1912) by Muḥammad Luṭfī Jum^{Ca} (? -1953) is imbued with Romantic characteristics. This trend, however, could not continue in the face of the influence of western stories which was stronger and more widespread. A second trend was that of Realism, which grew as a reaction to the dominance of Romanticism. However it did not manage to supplant the dominant influence of the period. The foremost example of this trend is the novel Fī Wādī l-Humūm published by Muḥammad Luṭfī Jum^{Ca} in 1905, in the introduction to which he declares himself to have adopted Realism. This is the first Arabic work to discuss Realistic ideology, of which he was to say that the art of the story is divided into two parts, the first of which he terms (Rūmāntīk) which for him is the imaginative (khayālī) story, and the second he calls (Rīyālistīk) which for him represents the true (ḥaqīqī) story. The first portrays people as they should be, not as they are; the second describes them in both their good and bad deeds, in other words, as they really are. Among the famous imaginative writers, he enumerates Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas. He believes that to write this kind of story the writer sits in his room, trying to imagine green valleys, beautiful gardens, streams, songbirds, moonlit nights, courageous cavaliers, attractive women, love, and lovesickness, and then begins to write his story. The writing of the true story (Realistic), however, requires that the writer puts his clothes on and wanders the streets, the various quarters of the town, and the railway

stations, to watch people in their various conditions, whether in bars, gambling houses, or public gardens, and to note what he sees and hears through his wandering; then he attempts to study the traditions and habits, and only then begins to write his story.¹

Although we may notice some naiveté in his definitions of these two literary schools, it shows that he realises generally the distinction between them, and knows their writers in the west. But in spite of this, his Realistic manifesto did not herald a revolution in literary trends. Even his own novel lacked some artistic characteristics of the novel, and he himself turned to poetic language and romantic description in his later work Layālī r-Rūh al-Hā'ir (1912).

The author attempts to follow the technique of the Maqāma when he gives the narrator a similar role to that of the Maqāma. The writer, throughout Fī Wādī l-Humūm which relates the story of a corrupted family, aims to expose in detail the influences of moral corruption upon man and woman, and as a result the novel is full of exhortation and advice delivered in an oratorical tone, and in addition many quotations from the Qur'ān and poetry are used. Fī Wādī mentions several defects of the novel, among them his reliance on narration with little use of dialogue, the fact that the writer did not select anything from the life of his two heroes except their errors, deviation and irregular life, and the fact that the

1. Khidr, Adab, pp.19-20.

description of the characters is from outside. Wādī comes to the conclusion that this attempt

"... did not add any significant influence to the history of the Egyptian novel ... and its value is no greater than that of the amusing novels which were contemporary to it."¹

In 1906 we see some aspects of Realism appearing in a book by Maḥmūd Ṭāhir Ḥaqqī (1884-) under the title ‘Adhrā’ Dinshawāy. It describes the Dinshawāy massacre and portrays the life of the peasants and their problems. Although this attempt was more successful in using artistic devices, including narration, description, dialogue and monologue than the novel of Luṭfī Jum^Ca, the effort of the writer relies almost entirely on recording the Dinshawāy affair as it happened, and he

"... did not create his characters, but adopted them with their names and places from real life, so that his description was more or less that of a journalist or historian."²

Although Yaḥyā Ḥaqqī notes the novel's simplicity, he attempts to excuse the author on the grounds that he was twenty-one when he wrote it and had not completed his education.³ In spite of

1. Wādī, Madkhal, p.26.

2. Ḥaqqī, Fajr, p.155.

3. Ibid., p.165.

this Ḥaqqī and Wādī agree that ‘Adhrā’ Dinshawāy prepared the mind of the readers to accept Haykal's Zaynab later, by its description of rural society and its frank treatment of the subject of love.¹ In the opinion of Ḥaqqī the novel "touches Realism while Zaynab is engaged in Romanticism".²

However credit is generally given to Muḥammad Taymūr (1892-1921), acclaimed as the father of the short story in Arabic, for introducing realism to Arabic literature. His collection of short stories published under the title Mā Tarāh al-‘Uyūn (1917) is seen as the foundation of this genre of Arabic fiction, much as Zaynab by Haykal was acclaimed as the first Arabic novel.

"Largely under the influence of Maupassant and Chekhov, the Arabic short story has made great headway, chiefly thanks to Muḥammad Taymūr."³

In this collection Taymūr selects his characters from the middle and lower classes, being concerned with describing accurately their external characteristics, and dealing with social problems; we also find limitations of time and place, a large quantity of detail, a proliferation of secondary characters, and a simple style, all marked by humour.⁴

1. Ḥaqqī, Fajr, pp.156-9; Wādī, Madkhal, p.27.

2. Ibid., p.159.

3. Moreh, "An Outline of the Development of Modern Arabic Literature", OM, p.24.

4. an-Nassāj, Qiṣṣa, pp.91-2.

It would appear that although these writers were familiar with European Romanticism and Realism, and tried to imitate them, they were not, however, completely aware of the principles underlying these two literary schools. Furthermore this period was marked, at least for the intellectuals, by a certain anxiety and hesitation in terms of cultural orientation between the Arabic and Islamic legacy, and the powerful western influences. We may observe this anxiety expressed in their works. Thus the Romanticism of Haykal, Ḥammād, and al-Manfalūṭī, were not without some traces of Realism; in Zaynab, for example, we find Realistic portrayals of some of the characters, expressed in minute detail and simple style. While al-Manfalūṭī criticizes the political and social establishment, the Realism of Luṭfī Jum^{Ca}, Maḥmūd Ṭāhir Ḥaqqī and Taymūr has some Romantic elements as when they describe the plight of the poor. However, social reform was an aim for both these groups and their works are consequently marked by moralising and exaggerated emotion and characterization, as when al-Manfalūṭī exaggerates his sadness, and Taymūr exaggerates his characters to the point of reducing them to caricatures.

However, most of this fiction is not original, but rather the result of adaptation of European models to an Egyptian environment in which the names, places, and even the subjects, are changed to suit Arab society. Muḥammad Taymūr describes one of his short stories as

"... by de Maupassant, a famous French writer, of which

the characters, time, place and subject have been changed by the translator, so that everything in it is Egyptian."¹

With respect to poetry, we see, at this time, Ahmad Shawqī (1888-1932), Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm (1871-1932), and Khalīl Maṭrān (1872-1949) following in al-Bārūdī's footsteps and trying to modernize the language. However they still write classical Arabic, the language of Abū Tammām and al-Mutanabbī, and still show concern for the beautiful phrase more than other aspects of expression. Their poetry, however, became "the vehicle not of individual, but of national self-expression".² Among all Egyptian poets of this time, Maṭrān may be singled out as being different in some aspects. He wrote lyrical and narrative poetry, and broke away from the single rhyme of the traditional ode; he is "more of a mujaddid (modernist) and less of a muqallid (traditionalist) than the others".³

After the revolution of 1919, Britain abolished the protectorate in 1922, and gave Egypt independence, but reserved to herself four points until agreement could be reached on them.⁴ A constitution was promulgated in 1923 and, in the following year, elections were held and parliamentary life began with Sa^Cd Zaghlūl,

1. Ḥaqqī, Fajr, p.159.

2. Cachia, Tāhā, p.29.

3. Haywood, Modern, p.104.

4. Hourani, ATLA, p.213.

the leader of the 1919 revolution, becoming Prime Minister. At the same time, the economic situation ameliorated with the establishment of an Egyptian Bank for the first time in 1920. The Egyptian university came under the supervision of the government in 1925, and the Cooperative movement was to become more active. Through this period the middle class started to take its position in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields and adopted the slogan 'Egypt for the Egyptians'.

But these gains which were achieved by the 1919 revolution did not remain for long, and after the death of Sa^Cd Zaghlūl in 1927, a weakness began to spread among the Wafd party,¹ so that some of its leaders concluded agreements with the British, while the people were aiming to gain freedom from Britain. The economic crisis which faced the world in the thirties had its effect on Egypt as well, where prices rose and employment fell, and many workers were dismissed by the government, most of them being from the middle class. Thus the middle class collapsed economically, and this collapse was followed by social decay, and disturbances and corruption became widespread in Egypt,² in addition to many workers' strikes. Furthermore, Britain, in accordance with the 1936 treaty which gave Egypt a greater degree of formal independence, still retained the right to station troops in Egypt, and this led to

1. A group of Wafdists separated from it, some of them establishing al-Kutla al-Wafdiyya, and others establishing al-Hay'a as-Sa^Cdiyya.

In addition many other groups were established, among them The Muslim Brothers (1927), and Miṣr al-Fatāt (1933).

2. R an-Naqqāsh, Udabā' Mu^Cāṣirūn, pp.117-8.

country-wide demonstrations demanding complete independence for Egypt.

The period 1920-1939 was one of wide cultural activity, with an increase in contact with European culture. As regards translation, we find it more accurate and more diverse, and with respect to literary translation we find a number of translators whose education was European, men like Ahmad Hāfiz^C Awad, Muhammad as-Sibā^Cī, ^CAbbās Hāfiz, al-Māzinī, and others, who translated many short stories, novels, and plays by Dickens, Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Chekov, Corneille, and Voltaire. In the field of journalism we find an increase in newspapers and magazines, such as al-Akhbār (1920), al-Balāgh (1923), as-Siyāsa (1922), and al-Balāgh al-Usbū^Cī (1926), in addition to those which were already established. This period also witnessed the foundation of many cultural and literary journals such as al-Fajr (1925), ar-Risāla al-Jadīda (1929), ar-Risāla (1933), Apollo (1932), and ath-Thaqāfa (1939). Beside journalism we may observe the beginning of an Arabic theatrical and cinematic tradition, and the establishment of a broadcasting service in 1932 which was placed under government patronage in 1934.

The cultural movement at this time was marked by different trends. The first is that represented by Luṭfī as-Sayyid and his disciples, such as Ṭāhā Husayn and Haykal, who continued to defend modernism with their rational and analytical style of writing which may be seen in such works of Ṭāhā Husayn as Fī sh-Shi^Cr al-Jāhilī (1926) in which he tried to adopt western principles in

his approach to classical poetry, and Mustaqbal ath-Thaqāfa fī Miṣr (1938) in which

"... he attempted in terms of the liberal ideas of Lutfi Al-Saiyid and his generation to answer the questions: what does the independence of Egypt really mean, and what should she try to do with it?"¹

Even in Islamic studies, we find Shaykh ^CAlī ^CAbd ar-Rāziq (1888-1966) in his work al-Islām wa-Uṣūl al-Hukm (1925), concluding that the Caliphate is not a necessary part of the Islamic religion.² On the other side we find al-^CAqqād, al-Māzinī and Shukrī forming a critical school called ad-Dīwān, which rejected the classical style of Shawqī and Hāfiẓ, and also attacked the neo-classicism of al-Manfalūṭī's style, emphasizing the organic unity of the poem. They held that the poet must express his sensations and emotions through his own experiences, and were in fact influenced by English romantic thought.³ The other trend which may be seen in cultural activity was the leftist tendency represented by Salāma Mūsā.

H Gibb classified men of this time into four categories:

"Shaikh Mustafa abd ar-Raziq and professor Mansur Fahmy are still to a large extent in touch with conservative feeling; al-Aqqad and Dr Haykal are less so, while Dr Taha Husain inclines still more

1. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.12.

2. For an account of his book see Houranī, ATLA, pp.182-189.

3. See Sakkut, Egyptian, p.10; Kilpatrick, Novel, p.7.

to the left. The extreme left wing of Egyptian modernism, however, is formed by another group, composed hitherto largely of Egyptian Christians, in which the principal figure is Salamah Musa, ... (who) first came into prominence by his writings in defence of the theory of evolution and of socialism."¹

This diverse cultural movement led to new literary forms and values, and new thoughts and expressions came into existence. We may see a Realistic trend especially with the works of the Modern school in short stories at the beginning of this period, as well as in some novels. This trend may be seen side by side with a Romantic trend in the poetry of the Apollo school, and we also may see Romantic aspects in some later novels, some of which are concerned with individual emotion, while others deal with the autobiography of their writers. At the same time we may observe plays dealing with philosophical ideas. The writers of this period, perhaps because of their deep concern with western culture, try to deal with various cultural forms and ideas. Being concerned with culture in general, and not being specialists in any one field, they worked in translation, journalism, poetry, the short story, drama, the novel, and political literature, as well as in other cultural fields. All of them,

1. Gibb, Studies, p.284.

"... are conscious that they stand at the beginnings of this development, that they are precursors of that newer Arabic literature yet to be They know that what they are expressing is not the feeling of the people as a whole, but the view of a small minority who are striving, with increasing success and a strong assurance of ultimate victory, to convert and educate the people."¹

However, the first trend we find in literature at the beginning of this period is the Realistic, especially in the form of the short story. Perhaps the reasons which led to the rise of this trend were, besides the wide cultural movement which was marked by modernism, the translations of this time which were more diverse and comprehensive, so that besides the French Romantic works we find Realistic works from English, French, and Russian literature. Secondly, the revolution gave the Egyptian middle class a renewed sense of confidence and created an atmosphere of stability, in addition to the effect of the partial emancipation of women which is reflected in the establishment of the Union of Wafdist Women in 1922.² Finally, there is an increasing preoccupation with Realistic novels, short stories, and plays, and an attempt at the creation of an Egyptian creative literature.

1. Gibb, Studies, p.286.

2. A Haykal, al-Adab al-Qaṣaṣī wa-l-Masrahī fī Miṣr, p.61.

At this time (1921) ^CĪsā ^CUbayd published a collection of short stories under the title Ihsān Hānim, in the introduction to which he claimed to be writing Realistic literature. Expounding the principles of Realism, he writes

"... the literature of the future will be based on observation, psychoanalysis, and the description of life as it is ... it is called the ideology of facts (Madhhab al-Haqā'iq)."¹

He asks that other novelists study the hereditary influences on their characters, and their circumstances, which he believes to be the method of Balzac, Flaubert, Dickens, and Zola. At the same time he attacks the Romantic trend, accusing al-Manfalūṭī of retarding the development of Egyptian literature. His brother, Shihāta ^CUbayd, who published a collection of short stories under the title Dars Mu'lim, also claimed, like his brother, to study the characters deeply, and to follow their lives in order to know their tendencies and attitudes.² Maḥmūd Taymūr published many collections of short stories, among them Ash-Shaykh Jum^Ca and ^CAmm Mitwallī (1925), Ash-Shaykh Sayyid al-^CAbīṭ (1926), and al-Hājj Shalabī (1930), in which he portrays some social problems, concerning the lower class.

"The realistic trend came into being in the nationalistic atmosphere of the nineteen-twenties and thirties, which

1. Khidr, Adab, p.20.

2. Nassāj, Qissa, p.145.

led writers to try to give expression to the Egyptian personality by writing on themes presenting the everyday life of the Egyptian peasants and lower classes. Writers like ʿĪsā ʿUbayd criticized the tendency of most authors to depict the beautiful and the ideal, and said that this was hampering the development of the new Egyptian literature, which must be based on the portrayal of life as it was without exaggeration."¹

In 1925, a number of young writers who had been publishing their short stories in different newspapers came together, bought a press and published a newspaper which they called al-Fajr (1925-1927). They themselves were known as al-Madrasa al-Hadītha (The Modern School) and their motto was Hadm wa-Binā' (destruction and creation). Among those belonging to the modern school were Ahmad Khayrī Saʿīd, Maḥmūd Taymūr, Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī, Ḥasan Maḥmūd, and Maḥmūd Ṭāhir Lāshīn who published two collections of short stories, first Sukhriyyat an-Nāy in 1926, and second Yuhkā Anna in 1929. This group, in fact, were influenced by western writers such as Shakespeare, Dickens, Thackeray, Balzac, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov. Taymūr mentioned that his reading of works of de Maupassant and Chekhov influenced his move from Romanticism to Realism,² while

1. Sakkut, Egyptian, p.85.

2. ʿAbd Allāh, Wāqīʿiyya, p.433.

Yahyā Haqqī says "I will be not wrong if I say that the Russian literature had a great influence on the output of the modern school".¹ They did not pay attention to Arabic classical literature; "it is very rare to hear them talking about al-Jāhiz or al-Mutanabbī for example",² and moreover some of them attacked the Arab heritage. They wanted to create a Realistic Egyptian literature whose subjects were taken from the Egyptian environment, and the slogan of 'Egypt for the Egyptians' popularized by Muṣṭafā Kāmil, had a great influence without doubt, on their aim. To quote Kilpatrick:

"A group of somewhat younger writers, influenced by the nationalism which found its expression in the 1919 revolution, set out to create a modern realistic literature; for them the reassertion of national independence went hand-in-hand with liberation from outworn literary traditions and with the questioning of accepted beliefs and values."³

They attacked the Romantic trend and al-Manfalūṭī's style, and regarded the poetic style and imaginative subjects as reactionary.

It will be noticed that the output of these writers consisted mainly of short stories. Perhaps journalism had a great role here, as we find many newspapers and magazines publishing short

1. Haqqī, Fajr, p.82.

2. Ibid., p.81.

3. Kilpatrick, "Hawwa Bila Adam: an Egyptian Novel of the 1930's", JAL, p.48.

stories, even the political newspapers, and thus novels, such as Thurayyā, by ^CĪsā ^CUbayd (1922) and Rajab Afandī by Taymūr (1928), were very few in number in the twenties.

The writers of this period tried, in their works, to portray their society within the Realistic style; they criticized, with powerful humour, social problems such as polygamy and superstitious beliefs, and selected their characters from among the middle and lower classes, "having an attitude towards the character, either to support him or to condemn".¹ Lāshīn, for example, describes the ignorance of the peasants and their fondness for supernatural tales. Their works are characterized by accurate observation, elaborateness in detail, concern with external description, such as the clothes of the character and his outward appearance, and the limitation of the time and place of the happenings. They criticized the pashas, religious shaykhs, Turks, and Circassians, attacked the administrative system, exposed the ambition of the middle class to reach aristocratic status, and were concerned to give their personal experiences a social meaning. J Haywood observes that the characters of Taymūr

"... are taken from the poor classes, or the least respectable - even the sleazy and disreputable.^{ut} There is the decayed, morphine-addicted prostitute Taymūr appears to be apologetic about depicting the seamy side of life: but he considers it his duty as a story-writer to depict society in all its aspects."²

1. ^CAbd Allāh, Wāqī^C iyya, p.377.

2. Haywood, Modern, p.205.

With respect to their style, they used a simple language without embellishment and, perhaps in search of greater realism, they even sometimes wrote the dialogue and the monologue of their stories in colloquial language, in addition to using colloquial phrases in the narrative.

The modern school, however, has some of the characteristics and mistakes of the preceding stage; for example, they could not avoid completely the Romantic style of al-Manfalūtī, so that we find a tone of sadness and crying for miserable people:

"The stories of Taymūr and Lāshīn incline sometimes to Realism, and sometimes incline to the imaginative world, stimulating griefs".¹

They could not avoid certain Romantic subjects, for example their sympathy for the prostitute, trying to hold society responsible for her deviation. This Romantic subject, in fact,

"... became a great favourite, to the extent that we do not find a young writer who, in his beginning, does not write about the prostitute."²

They also pictured love as a device to reconcile the distinctions between the social classes, and were concerned with social purposes in general. Thus their stories were full of advice. As Taymūr says, "we were always asking about the moral of the story".³

1. Haqqī, Fajr, p.85.

2. M Gh Hilāl, al-Mawqif al-Adabī, p.152.

3. M Taymūr, Muhādarāt fī l-Qaṣaṣ fī Adab al-^CArab, p.65.

We may also note their concentration on the character more than events, the exaggeration in the description of some characters and events, and the concern with some worthless details. Most of their characters are settled and satisfied; they do not revolt, or reject, even though some of their characters are frustrated, such as Lāshīn's heroine in Hawwā' bilā Ādam who ends by committing suicide. To quote Haqqī, "the Modern school has not got a pickaxe, but they have a camera";¹ their stories have a touch of pessimism, selecting evil things and eccentric characters.

The Modern school, however, managed to strengthen the basis of the short story and to pave the way for the novel, and they in fact contributed to the creation of the artistic story even though they were faced by many difficulties, such as the problems of publishing, a society which did not admit the story as a literary form but as a kind of amusement, and the attacks upon their works by some writers such as al-^CAqqād who characterizes them as ignorant, and the early Yaḥyā Haqqī who says that their expression is weak.

With respect to poetry in this period, Shawqī and Hāfiz were continuing in a neo-classical style, inspired by classical Arabic poetry, but Shawqī began to write many poetic plays such as Maṣra^C Kilyūbātrā (1927) and Majnūn Laylā (1931). Maṣrān, on the other hand, was considered more modernist than the others, as mentioned above, and produced Romantic poetic stories in which he

1. Haqqī, Fajr, p.255.

emphasised the return to nature, glorified love, and condemned the traditions which separate lovers. In addition he was more modernist in poetic forms, although he was not as free from social tradition in his literature as Jibrān.¹ At this time we observe the poetic output of the Dīwān group who were influenced by western poetry and demanded that the poet should express his personal feelings and experiences. Maṭrān and the Dīwān group were to have a great influence on the young poets who were known as the Apollo group. Perhaps the Romantic trend, in this period, found its expression in poetry with this group. Aḥmad Zakī Abū Shādī (1892-1955) who follows the Romanticism of Maṭrān and who was influenced by his study of European Romantic poets, was the leader of this group, which consisted of ^CAlī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā (1902-1949), Ibrāhīm Nājī (1898-1953) and others, and in 1932 started the Apollo magazine. This group emphasized the personal experience of the poet, demanding that the poet should express his sentiments and sensations, and being influenced by the Romanticism of European poets.

"Writers in the early thirties were inclined to express themselves through a tortured individualism and romanticism which were encouraged by the repressive political atmosphere. The best example of this is in poetry, where Abū Shādī and contributors to the Apollo magazine developed the ideas of al-^CAqqād and

1. Balāṭa, op.cit., p.166.

al-Māzinī and achieved results of a lyrical and sensitive beauty, although they sometimes became a prey to overwhelming pessimism."¹

They dealt with Romantic subjects such as sympathy with prostitutes, complaints against a society which does not heed their suffering, the feeling of loss, the return to nature, and giving exaggerated freedom to their passion. The Apollo group influenced many poets in the Arab world such as the Lebanese poet Ilyās Abū Shabaka (1903-1947), the Tunisian poet Abū l-Qāsim ash-Shābbī (1909-1934), and the Syrian poet ^CUmar Abū Rīsha, and even the pioneers of the free verse movement such as as-Sayyāb (1926-1964).

With respect to novels in this period, as we have mentioned above, the members of the Modern School were mainly concerned with the short story, although some of them like Lāshīn and Taymūr wrote novels. We may notice, however, that such famous writers as Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, al-^CAqqād, al-Māzinī, and Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm engaged in writing novels, although the novel was not the main subject of their concern. The novels of this period showed many different tendencies, and we may see novels concerned with social problems such as Thurayyā (1922) by ^CĪsā ^CUbayd and Rajab Afandī (1928) by Taymūr, or others which portray the ambitions of the middle class to reach the rank of the aristocracy, as in Lāshīn's Ḥawwā' Bilā Ādam (1934) or which describe society and its struggles

1. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.11.

as in ʿAwdat ar-Rūh (1933) by Tawfīq al-Hakīm who is inspired by a Pharaonic idea about the unity of the Egyptian people. On the other hand we may see novels concerned with psychological and philosophical analysis; al-Māzinī in Ibrāhīm al-Kātib (1931) analyses the emotion of love between man and woman, and Tāhā Husayn and al-ʿAqqād analyse their heroes in their novels Adīb (1935) and Sāra (1938) psychologically. We also see novels of autobiography such as al-Ayyām (1926) by Tāhā Husayn, and Yawmiyyāt Nāʿib fī l-Aryāf (1937) and ʿUṣfūr min Ash-Sharq (1938) by Tawfīq al-Hakīm.

The novels of the period, in fact, portrayed the middle class and its aims and behaviour in a critical and humorous style, and are "a true expression of the middle class and its hopes, suffering, and values".¹

The writers were concerned with the artistic form of the novel, and saved their novels from the many defects of the preceding stage, although they could not avoid some faults, such as direct interference by the novelist, fewness of events, great description and analysis in some cases, and occasional artificial happenings. With respect to their style they managed to create a modern prose, avoiding the classical style of al-Muwayliḥī and the neo-classical style of al-Manfalūṭī. H Kilpatrick maintains that,

"... they are the product of the first attempts to develop a tradition of the novel similar to that which their authors knew in France, England and Russia. As a result, the writers show signs of uncertainty about

1. A Yāghī, al-Juhūd ar-Riwāʿiyya, p.72.

various aspects of the craft of novel writing; their understanding of plot and characterisation is limited, and their use of dialogue restricted, while they do not appear to have a clear conception of the specific subjects which the novel is suited to deal with."¹

But most of the novels of this time are given over to subjectivism and individualism expressing personal feelings with some Romantic features. Perhaps the discussions about the personality of Egypt which occupied Egyptian society at that time led the writers to emphasise personality, but political confusion and its influence on society made them extravagant in this subjectivism. Thus their novels were taken from the personal experience of the writer, and so "we find a novel of individuals not groups, in other words individual heroism is the dominant type which concentrates on the focal character, and justifies his behaviour".² Their heroes are intellectual men who find their skills transcending their society, and thus prefer to remain isolated, until their seclusion leads them to pessimism and hopelessness like that of al-Māzinī's hero, or to introspection like that of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in his novel al-Ayyām, or excess of self-reliance like al-^CAqqād's hero. A T Badr describes this generation as follows:

"... they looked down upon reality from above and in

1. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.19.

2. Ibrāhīm, op.cit., p.54.

the light of ideas derived from their western culture. Their ideas were the product of a civilization not their own, and their reality was incapable of responding fully to their ideas. They were incapable of living or practising their ideas on the level of reality and sensation, and so they remained on the level of theory."¹

Ṭāhā Wādī classifies ʿAwdat ar-Rūh and Duʿāʾ al-Karawān as "sentimental social novels", and Sāra and Ibrāhīm al-Kātib as "analytic Romantic novels", and maintains that the novels of this time are either taken from the experiences of the novelists themselves, in which case we find autobiography as in ʿAwdat ar-Rūh and ʿUṣfūr min ash-Sharq and even those novels which incline to realistic treatment, or taken from the environment of the novelist such as Duʿāʾ al-Karawān and the collections of short stories by Taymūr.²

Perhaps this concern with subjectivism and individualism was one of many reasons which led to the popularity of the Romantic trend in the novel during the Second World War and immediately after, as will be discussed below.

Beside these different cultural tendencies, the classical school was still alive with writers such as Aḥmad Ḥasan az-Zayyāt (1885-1968), who edited the magazine ar-Risāla (1933) and translated

1. A T Badr, Ṭaṭawwur al-Riwāya al-ʿArabiyya al-Ḥadītha fī Miṣr, p.296.

2. Wādī, Madkhal, pp.59-70.

Raphael by Lamartine, and Goethe's The Sorrows of Werther.

az-Zayyāt in his essays followed al-Manfalūṭī's style, and was concerned not only with

"... elegant prose of the grand old style but a continued defense of the beauty and dignity of the classical modes of expression and the richness of classical literary illusion."¹

Another such writer was Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq ar-Rāfi^Cī (1880-1937) who was concerned with the form more than the content, and in his essays under the title Wahy al-Qalam dealt with many different subjects in the romantic style of al-Manfalūṭī.

Between 1939 and 1945 the atmosphere of the Second World War settled over the Arab world. If the Arab world had been influenced by the First World War indirectly, it was affected directly by this war, as it became one of its battlefields in addition to being subjected to its influence on social, economic and political conditions. This situation created an atmosphere of pessimism, hopelessness, and depression, although the demand for independence did not cease but in fact became more pressing, especially after the war, and developed into a bloody clash between the people and the British forces to the extent that Britain was obliged to abandon the 1936 agreement completely in 1951, after many alterations. But the demand for independence still continued

1. Schoonover, "Some Observations on Modern Arabic Literature",
MW, p.24.

and the Fedayeen, in the Suez Canal Zone, destroyed weapon stores of the British forces, and in Port Said fighting between Egyptians and British soldiers broke out. The internal situation was very confused and came to a head with the fire of Cairo on the 25th January 1952. Thereafter martial law was declared and four governments came into power successively between the fire and the revolution of the 23rd July 1952.

As a result of the confused situation before and during the war together with the defeat in the Palestinian war of 1948 and the psychological results of this, we observe the Romantic trend dominating literature, especially the novel, although we find the phenomenon of escapism occurring in different ways; some writers prefer the imaginative world in order to throw off their suffering, for example Muḥammad ^CAbd al-Ḥalīm ^CAbd Allāh, while others concentrate on romantic love and treat it as a main problem, for example as-Sibā^Cī and Iḥsān ^CAbd al-Quddūs. Some of them return to the past, ancient or Islamic, like Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, and others withdraw to their ivory tower, absorbed in their philosophical meditations like Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm. All of these are, in fact, an escape from reality. This torrential romantic stream which reached its climax during the war period was, however, stronger and more mature than the first Romantic phase and constitutes a feature of modern Arabic literature which we cannot overlook.

Although the Realistic trend was to be found with some writers like Maḥfūz,

"... it soon became clear that the romantic, vie-en-rose style of fiction produced by Yusuf Al-Siba^Ci and Ihsan ^CAbd al-Quddus was more acceptable than the subtle realism of Yahya Haqqi or the straightforward Marxism of Al-Sharqawi."¹

Writers of this period, during the War and soon after, devoted themselves to dealing with problems of individuality and subjectivism, ^CAbd al-Halīm ^CAbd Allāh portraying in his novels emotional problems and adultery, As-Sibā^Cī treating the tragedy of love when it clashes with social traditions and class distinctions, and Ihsān ^CAbd al-Quddūs picturing the relationship between men and women. Some of the writers escaped to Islamic history; the Abbasid period like ^CAlī al-Jārim in his novel Fāris Banī Hamdān (1945), the Mamlūk period like Sa^Cīd al-^CUryān in his novel Alā Bāb Zuwayla (1945), or pharaonic history like Maḥfūz in his novel Kifāḥ Tība (1944), while other writers devoted their attention to dealing with rational ideas like al-Hakīm in his plays such as Bījmāliyūn (1942).

The prevailing trend throughout the war was a sad Romanticism, and the works which displayed the relationship between man and woman and its problems were in the Romantic manner, imaginative, far away from reality, and with heroes who are negative characters who move backwards to an imaginative world

1. Kilpatrick, Novel, p.16.

because they could not face reality, and justify their behaviour by a fate which is stronger than human ability. The writers who took their subjects from history tried to make a connection between historical events and their own reality, but it was a weak connection and was overwhelmed by a Romantic style. The works which treated rational subjects addressed, in fact, a very educated élite, not the whole of society. These works, however, have given expression to a feeling of anxiety and perplexity which dominated Egyptian society at that time.

Their Romanticism, however, was not without some Realistic touches, so that they discuss social problems, such as love, the contrast between the classes, and political corruption, and try to revolt against the old conventions; "it was a revolution of the contradictions between the old values and the new social relations".¹ But the Romantic vision led them to pessimism and hopelessness, to the extent that some of their heroes commit suicide because they are unable to coexist with reality.

After the war, however, many writers turned to the social reality and began to tackle the problems of that reality in their works from a realistic viewpoint, and thus the Realistic trend began to dominate the majority of literary works; moreover, many writers turned from their Romantic concerns to Realism, although the Romantic trend was continued by As-Sibā^Cī, Ihsān ^CAbd al-Quddūs

1. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.40.

and Muhammad ^CAbd al-Halīm ^CAbd Allāh until the 1952 revolution. However, the Realistic trend seen in such novels of Maḥfūz as al-Qāhira al-Jadīda, Zuqāq al-Midaqq and his trilogy, in Yusūf Idrīs in his al-Harām; and in ash-Sharqāwī in al-Ard and al-Fallāḥ, was more aware of the Realistic ideology than the Realism of the preceding generation. Their works are characterized by a concern with more than one character, with full details about the environment and its influences upon the characters, aspects of defects in the social system, and concern with the conflict between the social classes, as with ash-Sharqāwī's novels, and in addition the technique was much more refined. After the revolution, the Realistic trend began to be combined with other tendencies, so that in a single work tendencies like Naturalism, social Realism, Symbolism, and expressionism, and even, sometimes, Romanticism, may be found side by side.

The concern with the theatre began to increase, and in the sixties the Egyptian theatre flourished,¹ and many famous writers began to write plays, for example Idrīs, Maḥfūz, and Taymūr. Even Arabic poetry was affected by these new trends and new features emerged in the poetry of Ṣalāḥ ^CAbd aṣ-Ṣabūr and ^CAbd al-Mu^Cṭī Hijāzī, and a great number of poets were now writing free verse. This modernization in poetry, short stories, novels, and drama was accompanied by a parallel modernization in literary criticism, and

1. Shukrī, Mudhakkirāt, p.377.

we see many critics who apply the methods of European criticism, among whom were Muhammad Mandūr and Luwīs ^CAwad.

From this brief review of modern Egyptian literature from the nineteenth century Arabic renaissance to the sixties of this century, we may draw the following conclusions:

1. European influence on Arabic literature was not to be found only in the literary schools, but it also contributed to the creation of new genres such as the short story, novel, and play, and helped to develop other genres as well, such as political, social and cultural essays. European influence extended even to Arabic poetry which was almost the only important genre among the Arabs. This influence is obvious in the Mahjar school at the beginning of this century, and from then on appears in the Dīwān and Apollo schools, and the free verse movement, and it is still continuing in modern poetry.

2. With respect to literary schools, although we may see one or another of them dominating literary writing in a specific period for one reason or another, they were combined together not only in the literary works as a whole of a period, but even within a single work.

3. The first Romantic and Realistic tendencies were an imitation of the European schools, although it was not at that time a mature adaptation and therefore it is difficult to describe their Romanticism or Realism with the precision which is possible with European literature. In addition the circumstances which led to

the creation of these tendencies in Arabic literature differed from the conditions which existed in European literature, and Romanticism and Realism therefore are considered only as tendencies in Arabic literature and do not form a literary school.

4. It may be seen that the rise of such Romantic characteristics, especially the sadness, hopelessness and pessimism in Arabic literature, depends on social and other conditions, so that it prevails at the beginning of the twentieth century after 'Urābī's defeat and the British occupation, and during the First World War. The same conditions led to the spread of these characteristics through the Second World War, and for this reason, perhaps, we find works marked by these characteristics after the 1967 war between the Arabs and Israel.

Thus the approach to Romanticism and Realism in Arabic literature should be different from the treatment of these topics in European literature, since literary forms and movements adopted from other cultures will have a different function, history, and development from their prototype.

PART III

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM

IN AS-SIBĀ^CĪ'S NOVELS

Chapter Seven

FANTASY

Chapter Seven

FANTASY

As-Sibā^{Cī} began his literary career by entering the world of fantasy, attempting to break the wall between life and death in his first novel Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl and that between reality and ideal in the second novel Ard an-Nifāq. The form of fantasy gives an opportunity to the writer to look at reality in a way that is both objective and comprehensive. However before we deal with the fantasy of As-Sibā^{Cī} it is necessary to attempt to define the meaning of the term 'fantasy'.

To ÆM Forster fantasy

"... implies the supernatural but need not express it. Often it does express it, and were that type of classification helpful we could make a list of the devices which writers of a fantastic turn have used - such as the introduction of a god, ghost, angel, monkey, monster, midget, witch into ordinary life; or the introduction of ordinary men into no-man's-land, the future, the past, the interior of the earth, the fourth dimension; or divings into and dividing of personality; or finally the device of parody or adaptation. These devices need never grow stale;

they will occur naturally to writers of a certain temperament and be put to fresh use."¹

Although fantasy is based on excessive imagination it is still related to reality, because the starting point of the writer is fundamentally from reality. Fantasy

"... may be employed merely for the whimsical delight of author or reader, or it may be the means used by the author for serious comment on reality."²

This serious comment is the element which connects the work of fantasy with reality, even though it takes place in a non-existent or unreal world. The aim of the writer who employs fantasy is to throw a new light on reality; in other words the aim itself crystallises the writer's vision of reality, although he chooses fantasy as a form for his novel and as a framework within which to set forth his thoughts.

In the case of *As-Sibā^{Cī}* we must ask why he chose the form of fantasy and to what extent he managed to employ fantasy as a technical form. The Egyptian critic Ghālī Shukrī wondered whether *As-Sibā^{Cī}* had taken this form from the widespread science fiction in the west, or whether the dreadful social oppression inspired him to use this form.³ To these suppositions, if they

1. Forster, Aspects, p.106.

2. Holman, Handbook, p.219.

3. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.37.

are right, we may add another important reason which led him to employ fantasy; the unexpected death of his father. This problem occupied his mind throughout his life and led him to attempt to find logical answers for his metaphysical questions. Death, in fact, became an important factor in most of his novels, so that we meet him in his first novel facing death, discussing with ^CIzrā'īl, the angel of death, the philosophy of death, and trying to defeat the fear of death inside himself by making fun of it and by changing its rules. Thus the form of fantasy gave him more freedom to express his thoughts about this metaphysical problem and to criticise society broadly, since fantasy is not limited by time and place.

When considering the attempt of As-Sibā^Cī to enter the world of fantasy, although as Ghālī Shukrī says he was a pioneer in this realm of Arabic literature, we must not forget preceding attempts, including in classical Arabic literature Alf Layla wa-Layla and in modern literature Hadīth ^CĪsā Ibn Hishām by al-Muwayliḥī. In addition there are some short stories which were published before his novel, for example Nahr al-Junūn by Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm and ash-Sharr al-Ma^Cbūd by Najīb Maḥfūz.

If the form of fantasy was taken by As-Sibā^Cī from science fiction he did not borrow more than the framework which consists of an exaggerated picture of reality and does not reflect any futuristic inventions or introduce any fabulous elements, but simply shows Egyptian society before the revolution, attempting to expose its diseases to daylight and fresh air. In other words the

form of fantasy he preferred was no more than a "smooth mirror for true reality":¹ in this sense his fantasy novels approach critical realism but in an idealised form.² This form with which he embarked on his career as a novelist was extended to many of his short stories, although in the field of the novel he abandoned fantasy after his second novel Ard an-Nifāq (1949).

After this short exposition of the meaning of fantasy, and the fantasy of As-Sibā^cī, we shall attempt to follow his views on Egyptian society, by means of a separate discussion of these two novels.

1. NĀ'IB^c IZRĀ'ĪL (1947)

The writer divides his novel, which appeared in 1947, into eleven chapters which are in fact eleven scenes, and the narrator moves us from one picture to the other. In the first scene we meet the narrator,³ who has already died, waiting with many other people in the after-life to enter either paradise or Hell; later the angels discover a mistake, and it appears that

1. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.38.

2. We shall deal in detail with this question in our analysis of his fantasy novels below.

3. I shall use 'narrator' in this chapter in the sense of a person who uses a mixture of his own voice and that of others, including the writer himself.

another whose name is similar to that of the narrator should have died instead of the narrator. Although he would like to stay in heaven ^CIzrā'īl insists on bringing him back and correcting the mistake. On the way back to earth the narrator talks to ^CIzrā'īl about death, which he has discovered to be easy; it is no more than comfortable sleeping, he thinks, and if people knew this they would not stay one minute on Earth. Then ^CIzrā'īl realises how dangerous the situation is and that the narrator will spread the secret of death among people, if he brings him back, while the wisdom of God dictates that people should fear death.

^CIzrā'īl has a date with his lover who is one of the Houris of paradise, and at the same time he has been ordered to make some people die as a part of his duty, and he has not enough time to do this. So he asks the narrator to help him by taking over his duty so that he can go to his date. The narrator takes the list of names of people who are supposed to die and goes down to earth. In accordance with his belief that death always acts blindly he attempts to kill certain people who are more evil than those whose names are on the list, but first of all he decides to save the people on the list. Because of the different social positions of the names on the list the narrator wanders about poor and rich quarters, the beach, a party given by a wealthy family and a crowded bus, but before he can complete saving the people ^CIzrā'īl comes, discovers his failure to adhere to the list and replaces him. The narrator returns to heaven after having been

given two days of life by ^CIzrā'īl, as an opportunity to do good things in the life of the world and to be absolutely certain of paradise.

The narrator or rather the writer deals in the course of his wandering between heaven and earth with many different thoughts about death, life, human beings, society and politics. The most important problem discussed in his novel, however, is that of death. Since the death of his father As-Sibā^Cī had been occupied by this problem; what death is, why human beings should die, and why death is mostly senseless, taking kind people like his father and leaving evil people like the leaders of the world, those who create wars and lead the world to destruction. These questions are raised with ^CIzrā'īl, who is primarily responsible for death, by the narrator; "death used to be frivolous and foolish, a visitor which comes without appointment, which visits us with reason and without reason".¹ The narrator is very confused by the illogical basis of death.

"I used in the past to be astonished at the way in which death comes ... it is without rules or system, and I was not able even once to see it in the right place, and it has not satisfied me even as to its wisdom and deliberation. I am sure that life would

1. Nā'ib, p.22.

be much better if death had rules and systems."¹

For this reason he tries to establish a basis for death when he becomes ^CIzrā'īl's deputy.

Having died at the beginning of the novel the narrator has discovered that death is not a difficult process and that the hereafter is more excellent than the troublesome life of the world, and that life is either

"An enjoyment for man followed by grief and blazing hell-fire in the world to come, or grief and asceticism followed by enjoyment in Paradise ... in either case man will be afflicted by grief, either in this world or the next. But we see that in most cases he prefers the enjoyment of this world, and thinks that a bird in this world is better than ten in the next."²

This view is based wholly on religious ideas, but the narrator attempts to explain, from a religious viewpoint, the affection of the human being for life in this world, although it is a perishable and useless life; he thinks the reason is that "death frightens and terrifies him. so that he considers life, however bad it may be, better than death".³ He yearns to know why the human being should

1. Nā'ib, p.41.

2. Ibid., p.27.

3. Ibid., p.21.

be so misled by death that he cannot understand its true nature, why he does not realise how easy and pleasant it is so that he will never feel fear of it, and why he does not know that death is not as disgusting as he imagines.¹

^CIzrā'īl thinks that the wisdom of causing people to fear death lies in two things. The first is the need to restrict their disobedience and to decrease their evil doing, since otherwise all of them would be able to do good deeds rather than sin if they feel death approaching them. The second reason is that if people realised how easy and simple death was, what would keep them alive for a moment, induce them to remain in it and to endure its evils and unpleasantnesses?² This idealised view was the only way the writer found to defeat the fear of death in himself. Thus As-Sibā^Cī asks ^CIzrā'īl in the introduction to the novel to be his friend and hopes to meet him, addressing him thus: "I am waiting to meet you, Sir, either in the pages of another book or in heaven. I am not afraid because life and death are the same for me."³ As-Sibā^Cī returns indeed to meet ^CIzrā'īl again in his fantasy play al-Baḥth ^CAn Jasad (1953), and in addition the concept of death continues through most of his novels although it assumes different roles, such as the mortal enemy of the heroes of his

1. Mā'ib, p.23.

2. Ibid., p.26.

3. Ibid., p.9.

romantic novels, and as unalterable destiny in his realistic novels.

The narrator throws light on reality when he comes back to Earth invisibly, and the form of fantasy helps him to penetrate into society and his characters. We must mention here that after the marvellous life of the hereafter is discovered by the narrator he does not appreciate life in this world, and just points out the negative aspects of society and the individual. According to this negative view the individual as a type of human being is selfish, snobbish, hypocritical, evil and enamoured of wearing shining artificial masks. This pessimistic view of the human being was perhaps caused by the miserable situation of Egyptian reality from the end of the Second World War to the revolution of 1952. The conflict among great international forces on the one hand and among Egyptian political parties on the other hand had a very bad effect upon Egypt politically, economically and socially. The narrator is led to accuse all the leaders and rulers of the world, those who are called the "International Lunatics" who

"... have the ability to deceive people and to make them think that they are cleverer ... so they take power over them and dictate to them, and then lead them to destruction and cause them to perish."¹

1. Nā'ib, p.47.

These leaders fight each other for purely personal motives and to satisfy their own desires, while the victims are their nations; they would like humanity to commit suicide, to watch people eating each other. They also betray their nations in the name of patriotism which is actually an 'egotism of nation'.

"Egoism means that the individual says 'Me first' and the 'patriotism' which we mean here means that the nation says 'Me first'. This is where the struggle begins, and the fighting breaks out, for every nation wants to tear the biggest portion it can from the body of the world. The strong devour the weak, and then the strong clash with the strong, and the clash will destroy them"¹

The writer criticizes this kind of patriotism, attempting to replace it with 'human fraternity' which

'... will make the whole world one country, and will make man the brother of man, whatever his race, or his country. Then, and then only, the world will become safe from the evil of war."²

The narrator thinks that all the nations in this world are afflicted by these 'International Lunatics'; as for the leaders of Egypt, he compares them to mercenaries who are concerned with wealth, world-wide renown, and power. These Egyptian leaders pretend to defend

1. Nā'ib, p.48.

2. Ibid.

the country, as the best way to obtain their purpose. He weeps over this country in which values are lost, and the ignorant and foolish become the greatest heroes, and does not except any one of those who have responsibility in Egypt; all of them, in his view, are equal:

"All of them are ganging together to fight poverty, disease and ignorance, until these three words are the best known and most easily spoken. Nevertheless poverty, disease and ignorance are still flourishing. This is because our leaders, influential men, ministers, preachers, sheikhs, representatives, are all, without exception, nothing but mercenaries."¹

But what is the solution to these three problems?

As-Sibā^{-Cī} quotes a passage from one of his father's books entitled as-Samar:

"If people were to share equally, and the due of the poor were taken from the rich, and if treasures were saved from the storehouses of the base, and wealth were removed from the hands of the foolish, what prosperity would spread throughout the world."²

The writer deals with many different ideas and criticises many social problems, especially when the narrator returns to reality, but his view is superficial, idealistic and pessimistic. The problem as he sees it is a moral crisis in that personal aims control human beings and occupy the mind of leaders:

1. Nā'ib, p.72.

2. M as-Sibā^{-Cī}, as-Samar, pp.5-6, quoted in Nā'ib, p.33.

what he has in mind is, of course, the tragedy of humanity during two world wars. The narrator rebels throughout the novel and his upheaval is sad and full of sorrow, being a general revolution against the human being wherever he is and whatever his class is, against the negative part in the soul of the human being. All nations, leaders, parties are on an equal level and, therefore, the view of the writer is concentrated upon individual behaviour, and he restricts his solutions to individuals, neglecting the social roots of the problem.¹

The technical aspects of this novel are as immature as much as the thought. The novel consists of many different scenes showing social reality, but we do not find character, events, conflict, place and time sequence, or any connection between the scenes other than the moving of the narrator from one to another. The novel has similarities to the Maqāma, being full of poetry and classical Arabic and Egyptian colloquial proverbs; in addition the characters all talk in the same tone, the dialogue is extended to more than one page on occasions and the narration is marked by a spontaneity which suggests that the writer was still unable to organise and explain his thoughts properly. He does not care about the structure of the novel because he has already decided to employ the novel as an implement for social reform, and thus he utilises all the actions and events to raise social questions and

1. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.47.

sometimes even holds up the flow of the narration in order to talk to the reader directly and to draw attention to his social purpose. As a result he leans frequently on the device of moving from one idea or event to another, making frequent use of the expressions "however", "then I remember" and "I said that because".

Perhaps the language and the style of the writer protect the novel from narrative failure. His language is simple and clear without any vagueness or rhetorical devices which might bore the modern reader. In addition irony is one of the characteristic features of his style, and indeed is the most original element in the opinion of Maḥfūz.¹ He himself recognised the importance of comedy which impels the human being to make fun of himself and can compel him to change his behaviour. Thus As-Sibā^Cī says, addressing ^CIzrā'īl in the introduction:

"There is something else, Sir, which I fear will arouse your anger against me, and which I fear that you will understand in a way which I did not intend. This is that humour which you may notice between the pages of this book, and which you will put down to making fun, but I am sure you will excuse me if you know that I am a man who loves humour, and that man gains nothing from his life except some hours of laughter, and if you know also that man by his nature is a jesting creature, ...

1. Rāghib, Fann, p.330.

and if you want him to listen to you, you have to make him laugh first then tell him what you want to say."¹

In addition, this cynical humour is in harmony with both the writer and the reader, who have been psychologically exhausted by the war.² The writer attempts ironically to shed light on the defects of society by employing a realistic comedy to which the following words could well apply:

"Strongly satirical and sometimes cynical in tone, it is interested in both individuals and types of character and rests upon an observation of contemporary life.

The appeal is intellectual and the tone coarse."³

The ironic style is used in this novel not only during the narration and dialogue, but also during the description of characters and places; he sometimes draws a caricature picture of a character. For example, this picture of a poor man:

"Under his two thick eyebrows appear two eyes which have a very strong squint ... followed by a moustache which is the most distinct thing of the whole face. I will not be exaggerating if I say that his moustache was not grown on the face, but on the

1. Nā'ib, pp.8-9.

2. ^CAbd Allāh, Wāqi^Ciyya, p.446.

3. Holman, Handbook, p.435 (discussing realistic comedy).

contrary the face had definitely grown around the moustache and that the man was no more than moustache and eyebrows";¹

and he draws a rich man in a similar vein. In portraying places he draws a very disgusting picture of a poor area, for example:

"... narrow alleys between those houses which leaned on each other and from which a putrefying smell was spread; heaps of garbage upon which flies were feasting decorated their sides and stagnant, stinking washing-water lay motionless at the front doors. Among those things were small beings who had so much dirt accumulated on their bodies that they did not need to wear clothes, and the flies used their faces as a resting-place."²

This humour, however, will play a role to some extent in all his novels except the romantic novels.

Another important matter which plays a great role in all his novels is love between man and woman. In this novel he discusses the thought of love, listening to the viewpoint of ^CIzrā'īl who was a lover as well. ^CIzrā'īl thinks that love is very necessary to every existent being, that it is life itself and he rejects the view of people in this world as regards love, which is based on the necessity of procreation. In his opinion

"... all creatures are like the poles of a magnet; as soon as the positive pole approaches the negative pole

1. Nā'ib, p.78.

2. Ibid., pp.73-74.

they rush to each other. Yes, every soul has its mate with which it is familiar and feels happy in its company."¹

This view will be the basis of the relationship between man and woman in all the novels of As-Sibā^Cī, especially his romantic novels where we meet romantic heroes looking for their mate. This view also has religious roots as it is mentioned in the prophetic tradition that "souls are like recruited troops; those who are of like qualities are inclined to each other, but those who have dissimilar qualities differ".²

The fantasy wandering of the narrator, or rather As-Sibā^Cī, continues in his second novel Arḍ an-Nifāq.

2. ARD AN-NIFĀQ (1949)

In this novel we meet the same narrator, who is the writer himself. After he has eaten a big lunch the narrator leaves his home for a short walk; in the outskirts of the city he sees a small shop with a wooden plank on which is written 'Merchant of Morals'. He enters the shop and asks the merchant about his business and the merchant tells him the story that he used to sell a kind of powder which consisted of either good morals such as bravery and generosity or bad morals such as lies and disloyalty.

1. Nā'ib, p.33.

2. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol.IV, p.348, tr. M Muhsin Khān.

A long time ago, however, people bought all the bags of hypocrisy powder, except for one bag which was taken later and thrown into the river by the government, so that society as a whole became hypocritical. The narrator, curious, tries to drink one gulp of bravery which is sufficient to make him courageous for ten days. The bravery of the narrator leads him to fight his mother-in-law and the driver of the bus who does not stop at the station. Then he decides to use his bravery in the right place and goes to the headquarters of the Arab League with a complete plan for fighting Israel, but he is arrested by the police, who accuse him of plotting to blow up the building in order to kill the Arab leaders.

Next day during his work at the Ministry of Social Affairs, he begins to think about the routine of Government offices. This leads him to think of government, rulers and elections and he writes a report to the minister exposing the corruption of the government and suggesting a plan to reform the bad situation of society. His idea is to separate the government and the governors by appointing sincere people as rulers while the old governors remain in their positions as figureheads. The minister accuses him of insanity but he manages to escape. On his way back home he sees a demonstration and tries to save an old man whose shop is being attacked by demonstrators, but they give him a severe beating. He rushes immediately to the merchant asking him to replace his bravery by a gulp of cowardice, but the merchant has no more immoral behaviour so he gives him a gulp of generosity instead.

The generous narrator decides to go to the poor quarters in an attempt to use his generosity upon those in need. Then he sees a one-legged beggar and takes him to a restaurant instead of giving him money. The beggar realises that the narrator is very naive, so he steals his wallet to show him that he ought to be generous to those really in need, and takes him to his house which belongs to a group of beggars directed by an old woman. The narrator discovers that they are swindlers rather than beggars and that their physical disablement is artificially produced.

Then he remembers one of his poor relatives whose salary is not sufficient for his large family, and he visits him and gives all his money to this poor family. Later he returns to the merchant complaining of the generosity which led him to bankruptcy, and the merchant asks him to stay in the shop for a few days until the effect of generosity has disappeared from his body. The narrator discovers later that there is a bag of concentrated powder of good morals and asks the merchant to throw it in the river, but the merchant rejects the idea. One day the narrator takes the bag while the merchant is praying and throws it into the river. Then they begin to wander about to see the effect of the powder upon the people, making a comparison between the hypocritical and the sincere society. After only one day society is turned upside down; newspapers attack the government, people accuse the candidates in the election campaign, and so on. The disturbance becomes general and the police start to look for those who have caused this situation. Finally they

are arrested and convicted by the court. After many days the government feels that society has settled down, a truly democratic and peaceful way of life prevails, and for the first time society appears to be unhyprocritical.

Ard an-Nifāq, like Nā'ib 'Izrā'īl, strongly emphasises the need for social reform. Although both novels depend on the fantasy form and on the idealistic view of the individual and his evil nature the difference between the two novels is that the narrator of the first novel begins his wanderings in heaven and from there comes back to earth and returns again to heaven. He discusses general social and political problems, while the narrator of Ard an-Nifāq begins and ends his wandering on earth, concentrating his criticism on specific social problems, examining the society of Cairo with its poor and rich quarters, entering Egyptian and Arab policy and politicians, and drawing attention to Egyptian and Arab League offices, accusing Egyptian and Arab problems in the fields of policy, economy and society. To this extent the second novel is closer to reality than the first. As-Sibā'ī wanted his novel to end as a dream in the manner of imaginative novels but, as he himself says, "I think its factual side outweighs its imaginative side; it is a sincere word from the depth of my heart".¹ Indeed, even the title of the novel shows that it is more related to reality. In addition Ard an-Nifāq is more mature in its use of the form of fantasy than the preceding novel.

1. Ard, p.487.

The whole novel relies on social criticism in an ironic style; it aims at social reform and employs fantasy to reflect the relation between the individual and society and to show what would happen if some people gave up hypocrisy while others clung to it. After drinking a gulp of bravery the narrator reveals a comprehensive panorama of society, beginning with a personal comparison between his position before and after being brave. He confesses that he was a coward when he did not dare to contradict his mother-in-law even if her wish was different from his, and also when he used to praise the manager of his office although he knew that the latter was incompetent. Today, however, now that he is courageous, he decides to put them in their proper place and he fights his mother-in-law and criticises his manager frankly, as follows:

"I have never seen such an idiotic person as you. You waste three-quarters of the day in trivial conversation, while other people's interests are neglected. You are only concerned with complaining of your wife and mother-in-law You ought to thank God that you are a head of a department ... what more do you want than this position?"

With the same bravery he criticises the social situation, attacking so-called convention by throwing his tarboosh away, without which he used to be afraid to go out for fear of being regarded as not respectable. Now he does not see any connection between the tarboosh and

1. Ard, p.131.

respectability and does not even believe in it as being what people used to call 'the emblem of Egyptian nationality'. He assails this tradition vigorously and asks people to free their heads of the tarboosh because

"I believe it is the reason for your difficulties:
it goes to help you to lower your heads, hides the
radiation of your minds and surrounds your heads
with pitch darkness."¹

In the street he demonstrates the first example of disorder, the case of people who wait at the bus stop for a long time while the buses do not stop, either because they are full of people or because the driver does not feel like stopping, as though he were just driving for pleasure. From this scene the narrator moves on to criticise those responsible for transport services, who do not supply enough buses and who do not supervise the drivers. The narrator draws a terrible picture throughout his wanderings in the poor quarters, condemning the negligence of the government in doing its duty to these quarters, which seems as if they have complete independence. He asks:

"What has government to do with these rotten and filthy places? What has it to do with these piles of rubbish? What has it to do with these narrow alleys which are not wide enough for its long, wide luxurious cars? Why should it lose sleep and occupy its mind with that savage

1. Ard, p.57.

riffraff and their dwellings and their roads? Why should it worry about al-Qulalī¹ as long as al-Malika street, with its resplendence and magnificence, conceals its ruins and desolation? ... What has all this to do with these dark dens and ruined caves, as long as the steamrollers and workers are busy decorating az-Za^Cfarān and paving al-Khalīfa Ma'mūn, ad-Duqqī and az-Zamālik?^{2, 3}

The narrator imagines that Qulalī would be changed into a very luxurious and beautiful quarter if any minister moved to live there, because ministers are habitually concerned only with the area in which their houses are situated. He continues to attack the government with this sharp criticism, attempting to diagnose the basis of the problems and coming to the conclusion that

"... the malady of this country is that the one who feels suffering has no power to end it, while the one who has the power does not feel it."⁴

In other words, people who are suffering from ignorance, disease and poverty have very little power to change the situation, while the rulers who have the power do not reform a bad situation because they do not feel the suffering. The writer thinks that the best instrument to reform this country is fasting:

1. Poor quarter in Cairo.

2. Rich quarters in Cairo.

3. Ard, pp.190-191.

4. Ibid., p.59.

"All the rich people should abstain from wealth and luxury for one month and live on a total income of not more than four pounds a month, as the poor do."¹

Although he offers an ideal solution the writer here is approaching the view of realistic writers who emphasise economic aspects and their great effect upon society. He believes that social corruption springs either from an inability to gain money as a means to the good life or from an avidity for money as an end in itself to satisfy the natural impulse of possession. Thus we find the narrator talking to the beggar who collects money just for money's sake:

"The value of money is not in the money itself but in what money can do; you may collect all the wealth of the world and amass it in a hole inside your room ... and then where is the difference between you and a poor man who has nothing to spend? You are like most of our wealthy people who bury their wealth and deprive themselves and waste their lives to no avail."²

Among the many administrative problems in Egypt and the Arab world the narrator tackles the problem of autocracy, criticising the routine of the official system which he thinks is "a ruined, ancient implement, destroyed and shattered, built on a base of stupidity and complications".³

1. Ard, p.62.

2. Ibid., p.211.

3. Ibid., p.133.

He shows us the extent to which patronage and bribery play a role among those in positions of responsibility by quoting the case of a poor widow who claimed four pounds as her share of the superannuation of her husband. After two years her demand was rejected because the budget of the government could not bear such a burden. On the other hand the government agreed to pay two thousand pounds to the widow of so-and-so pasha. This case leads the narrator to think about all the unfair decisions of the government and he thinks that the whole regime is no more than a game which he calls "the game of government and governors" in which

"... the players are the politicians while the watchers are the miserable nation. This game with its apparatus such as election campaigns, parliament and political parties are the worst thing with which Egypt has been afflicted. They are the insurmountable obstacle and the heavy shackles which delay the advance of the nation."¹

The game begins, the narrator thinks, with laughable election campaigns among the political parties, after which the winner will occupy parliament; the representatives have no work except to acclaim enthusiastically the ministers while the other parties attempt to bring down the government by organising demonstrations and writing critical articles, and in the same way the game will be repeated. The writer again suggests a way to reform corrupt policy

1. Ard, pp.138-9.

by separating the government and the governors. He explains this idea as follows:

"Let elections take place and let ministries be formed, and let parliaments be held, and let the game of rule continue as it is, on the condition that there is no connection between them and between rule in fact. Leave them to their games, talking, agitation and speeches ... we must put men into power, and charge them with carrying out specific projects in a specific time."¹

The writer, pessimistically, cannot see any benefit in the political system in force in Egypt at the time and exposes only the negative side of the situation; moreover he extends his pessimistic attitude to the whole Egyptian reality. Perhaps the chaotic state of Egypt after the Second World War created this pessimism among most of the Egyptian writers. This negative view also affects the narrator when he discusses foreign policy and the Palestinian problem. This was the first important test for the Arabs, and he criticises Arab leaders who were wholly engaged in talking, holding conferences and sending admonitions while Palestine was stolen and the enemy fought and killed unarmed Palestinians. He utterly despairs of all the leaders and thinks that they are "sluggish and foolish, and there is nobody to prompt them to hurry up, but on the contrary all people acclaim them and applaud,

1. Ard, p.144.

cheering their meetings".¹ After becoming a courageous man he attempts to be a force which could wake the sleeping leaders, but when he moves around the Arab League Centre he is suspected and arrested by the police, who accuse him of attempting to blow up the building to kill the Arab leaders.

The writer does not distinguish in his criticism between the ruler and the ordinary man, the poor and the rich. All people are the same, because his starting point is the human being and the evil aspects which dominate him. He subscribes to the same view as those realistic writers who believe in evil as a part of human nature. The human being is always "an impostor, liar and hypocrite whoever and whatever he is."² Thus he thinks that the government is not uniquely responsible for the bad situation but that society is responsible as well, and that people who share with the government in playing the game of election campaigns are also responsible for this miserable condition. He criticises the Egyptian people with very sharp irony:

"The comical election campaign in Egypt is a very witty thing, instigating amusement among the masses ... we are a very naive nation."³

The writer again makes a very generalised judgement of the masses without looking to the deep roots of the problems. And when the

1. Ard, p.85.

2. Ibid., p.110.

3. Ibid., pp.140-1.

narrator shows the differences between the poor and rich quarters, he puts upon poor people the responsibility for their suffering, as well as upon the government. Throughout his wanderings in the poor quarters of Cairo he is shocked by the dirtiness of these quarters and their residents, describing in a very sarcastic style "the art of dirtiness". Dirtiness which was not only inside the souls but outside as well, this being an external reverberation of the vileness from inside the human being. The narrator draws a very disgusting picture of the dirtiness in these places and he realises that these people are accustomed to dirt. The seller of water melons, for example, is a typical example of impurity. He lines up pieces of melon on a table in front of him:

"The table itself seemed to be a trap for flies and the seller himself was a model of dirtiness. He used to blow his nose and spit at times, his hands were stained black by the melon juice mixed with dust and around him was a heap of melon rinds. Near to him there was a wall which was used as a urinal by people and beside that wall there was a window from which a woman used to throw dirty water."¹

This picture and many others portrayed by him creates a feeling of sadness among the readers and at the same time his portrayal of dirtiness in these ugly pictures is itself sharp criticism.

1. Ard., p.194.

However, the writer is not satisfied with portraying only, and we find him addressing the residents of these quarters directly and asking them to be clean.

"Be dirty but to a certain extent, choose one day a week to enjoy yourself with dirtiness while on the other days try to clean yourselves, your children, houses and alleys and try to bury the garbage. It would cost you nothing ... I will ask the government to prescribe a punishment for those who love dirtiness."¹

Dirtiness is not the only problem of the poor quarters for the most important problem is over-population which is, in fact, the most prominent problem in Egypt. The narrator thinks that there is a great disproportion between wealth and progeny, so that we find rich people either limiting the size of their families or not marrying at all, while poor people are used to marrying more than once, creating a large number of children, so that "between the egotism of rich people and the ignorance of the poor, the country will be lost".² As to what the solution will be it is noticeable that the narrator is used to offering a solution whenever he deals with social and political subjects. In this case the solution, he thinks, is to enact a law regulating procreation because "procreation is one of the nation's rights, not the individual's".³ This problem is also treated by As-Sibā^Cī in

1. Ard, p.195.

2. Ibid., p.237.

3. Ibid.

a separate book entitled Miṣr ... al-Mushkila wa-al-Hall, published in 1978.

The narrator realises that the individual alone cannot reform a corrupt society and so returns desperately to the merchant after every gulp of moral powder, and finally comes to the conclusion that the best way to change the hypocritical society is to throw the bag of concentrated moral powder into the river. After he has thrown the bag the narrator paints many different pictures comparing society with and without hypocrisy. Among these scenes we see the sheikh of the mosque who spent twenty years preaching to the people, and repeating some sermons, who is suddenly changed to a different person who talks about himself honestly. In another example the election campaign is rejected by the people and the newspapers which used to praise and acclaim the government and political parties become un hypocritical, critical and truthful in their journalism. All these things happen after the new water has taken effect on the people. The process of turning society upside down involves of course disorders and disturbances at the beginning, but later the situation settles down and people begin their new life without hypocrisy.

Arḍ an-Nifāq is based on the individual side of society, as we have seen, and individual egotism dominates the movement of society. Thus the crisis, in the view of the writer, is a moral

one and the individual has to change himself first and then society will be changed automatically. This view is originally a religious one; the Qur'ān says "Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves",¹ so that the change will arise from within the human being, not from without. Although he employs the fantasy form in portraying morals as a powder which can be drunk, he makes the merchant, at the end of the novel, address people who ask him for some moral powder as follows:

"These things are existent inside yourselves, but they were dormant, covered in rust because of their long idleness. There is one thing which can set them in motion, and that is for you to follow truly the word which says 'treat people as you would like them to treat you'."²

The attitude of ironic criticism is prevalent in the novel whether in dialogue, description or narration, and exaggeration also plays a great role, whether in drawing caricatures of characters or in attempting to describe defects in society. The writer aims, by using humour and exaggeration, to impel the reader to change the disgusting reality and so the purpose of social reform prevails in the two novels to the extent that he uses characters or events to propagate his ideas, while there is no conflict because there is no plot. The writer was not concerned with a plot which involves

1. Qur'ān, 13, 11, tr. A Y Ali.

2. Ard, p.485.

conflict among the characters as much as with attempting to expose society in every situation,¹ and all the characters, events and actions are employed to crystallize this purpose. It is indeed possible to consider Ard an-Nifāq as a Maqāma devoted to social criticism, or with Disūqī "a revolutionary Maqāma employing the same technique as the Maqāma, including the imaginative preface and technical tricks which were adopted by the pioneers to criticise reality".²

The two novels Nā'ib 'Izrā'īl and Ard an-Nifāq, together with the play al-Baḥth 'An Jasad, may be regarded as the stage of fantasy in form and critical realism in content among the works of As-Sibā'ī. This is the first stage in his literary development, after which he moves to another stage with the romantic novels which we shall study in the next chapter.

1. Rāghib, Fann, p.19.

2. Shukrī, Fikr, p.125.

Chapter Eight

R O M A N T I C I S M

Chapter Eight

ROMANTICISM

Romanticism played a great role in the literature of As-Sibā^Cī. Although he wrote many realistic novels and short stories romanticism is the backbone of most of his works and he may be regarded, as Rāghib believes, as a unique phenomenon in that he remained faithful to romanticism throughout twenty years.¹

The stage in his writing which will be dealt with in the present chapter consists of three novels, Innī Rāhila, Bayn al-Atlāl and Fadaytuki Yā Laylā, which may be regarded as the summit of his romantic tendency since they incarnate all the most important romantic aspects of his works.

The narrator, or rather the writer, who went up to heaven in Nā'ib Izrā'īl and who moved around in reality in Ard an-Nifāq in search of social reform, came back desperate, hopeless and pessimistic from this journey and now prefers to escape from reality and its problems to a world of imagination, dreams and desires.

As-Sibā^Cī, like other writers of his generation who began their literary life with the outbreak of the Second World War,

1. Rāghib, Fann, p.201.

felt the distressing realities of Egyptian society which were caused by the war, economically, politically and socially. As a result the main feature of their literature in this period was the emphasis on freedom, each one defining it according to his own vision of the problem. Most romantic and realistic novels from the end of the Second World War to the 1952 revolution reflected Egyptian reality with its conflicts and contrasts, searching for salvation from the critical situation of those years. The difference between the realistic novelists such as Maḥfūz and romantic novelists such as As-Sibā^Ḥī was that the view of realistic writers was comprehensive, portraying all the elements of the crisis, while romantic writers confined their view to part of the crisis, paying in particular, great attention to the problems of the Egyptian girl and her emotional life. The emotional problem is fundamentally a social problem through its strong connection with other social problems and it involves all social classes. Their idealised individual view of this problem led romantic writers to treat it as a problem of individual relations, far removed from society and its other problems. Because they were essentially concerned with individual feelings and not with social feelings, they portrayed the individual and his own relationships and anxieties, not society and its crises. The emphasis on individual freedom instead of subjection to social traditions is one of the most important bases of romanticism.

The novels of As-Sibā^Ḥī in this period cut off all connection with social reality, especially in the case of Bayn al-Atlāl

and Fadaytuki yā Laylā, which are concerned with individual freedom as opposed to society and its traditions and with idealism as opposed to the distressing reality. Their characters cannot confront society because they are absorbed in their subjectivism, wrapped up in their individual problems and are consequently negative characters; as a result, they prefer to escape to the world of imagination in order to discover their individuality. We shall deal with the romantic aspects of these novels below, but it is worth mentioning that the novels of As-Sibā^{Cī} at this stage were more mature than in the preceding stage. We meet growing and developed characters and events, contact among the characters causes conflict, the writer begins to be concerned with time and place and their role in crystallizing the conflict, and finally we find one subject dominating the whole novel whereas several subjects were dealt with simultaneously in the fantasy novels.

1. INNĪ RĀHILA (1950)

This novel begins at the end where we meet the heroine writing her memoirs having decided to commit suicide after her lover has died. In her memoirs, or confession as she calls it, she revolts against the social traditions which destroyed her life and led her to this tragical ending. The heroine comes from a rich family and lived with her father, grandmother and brother while her mother left home after falling in love with another man. Her father tended to teach her to believe in the material side of life

rather than the spiritual and emotional sides, but in her adolescence she fell in love with her cousin. Āyda, the heroine, describes the internal conflict between her material upbringing and the love which began to dominate her, a conflict between mind and heart. In the end the voice of the heart won and she describes the happy time she spent with her lover. Ahmad, her lover, was from a poor family. His father died when he was a child and his mother worked hard to enable her sons to obtain good positions in life. When Ahmad graduated from military academy he asked for Āyda's hand in marriage but her father refused, firstly because he was poor and from the same family as his faithless wife, and secondly because he wished to give his daughter in marriage to the son of his aristocratic friend. He accordingly made Āyda marry Tahānī Bey whose father was an ex-prime minister and a candidate to be prime minister again, and she submitted to her father's order. Ahmad also married another girl and thus the two lovers were separated although they promised to be faithful in their love for each other. After a few months of marriage Āyda realised that her husband was a trivial, ignorant and immoral person who did not care for family life, and she discovered from her meetings with friends of her husband that the characteristics of the aristocratic class as a whole were no better than those of her husband. In particular she noticed the phenomenon among the individuals of this class that they used to exchange their wives as a matter of course.

On one occasion Āyda discovered the disloyalty of her

husband when she caught him in bed with the wife of one of his friends. She left the house and went to the wife's husband to tell him about the scandal so that he could take revenge. She was shocked and disappointed when he accepted the situation calmly and attempted to persuade her to sleep with him as a kind of revenge. She left the house but did not know where to go; she was unwilling to go back to her father's house where she would face the social conventions and she did not want to go back to her husband's house because she was not treated with respect there. In this dramatic situation she preferred to return to the place in which she used to spend many happy hours with Ahmad and by chance met him there. His wife had died in childbirth, and they felt free and they decided to escape from this reality and its harsh traditions. They travelled to Alexandria where they spent two wonderful nights in a chalet outside the city. On the third night, however, Ahmad died from a ruptured appendix. Cāyda has decided to follow him but first she writes down their tragic story and throws the notebook out of the chalet, and then sets fire to the chalet with herself and Ahmad's body inside.

This is the brief plot of Innī Rāḥila which is in the form of memoirs written by the heroine, which relate the story of her life and the circumstances which led her to this grievous end. As a result the whole novel, including its events and characters, is founded on the feelings of the heroine. In other words we do not see any thing, event or character, except through the eyes of

the heroine herself, and the novel is more concerned with ^CĀyda than with other characters, even than with her lover.

^CĀyda is a negative character in her submission to social traditions and to her father's will. Although she is a rebel inside herself she cannot transfer her revolt into positive action and remains submissive throughout the novel. Her submission rises from herself more than from society; when her father, for example, refuses to give his consent to Ahmad when he asks for her and forces her to marry Tahānī, ^CĀyda submits to her father without a single word of protest although we know that she is from a class which gives its individuals freedom of choice. In addition, her grandmother and brother know of her relationship with Ahmad and they support her, offering to talk to her father to try to change his mind. She refuses, and because of her personal negativism she never tries to oppose her father's will, not even in a token way. As Sakkut says: "One would not expect a girl of her class and education to behave with such submissiveness over the matter of her marriage".¹ When she discovers the corruption of her husband's aristocratic friends who habitually exchange their wives she does not reject this strange phenomenon but simply prefers to withdraw from this group leaving her husband to do whatever he likes. Even when she finds her husband with Mahmūd's wife she does not go immediately to the wife's husband but rather finds herself accidentally near Mahmūd's house while on her way elsewhere. To this extent

1. Sakkut, Egyptian, p.39.

Cāyda is negative and unable to change her situation, and moreover her negativism influences even her lover. Cāyda telephones Ahmad after he has been rejected by her father and he asks her:

"What are you going to do?"

"I can do nothing except to leave the matter to God and circumstances."

"Do we have to submit?"

"Have we any alternative?"

"All right, as you think."¹

Her negativism leads her to become a romantic and dreamy character who cannot face reality and society with its difficult traditions represented by her stern father, and aristocratic society represented by her corrupted husband, and so she prefers to escape to the world of imagination and dreams to find her ideal which she does not attempt to achieve in reality. She feels that the stars sympathize with her more than reality.

"I felt when I was watching the stars, yearning for unknown things, that it seemed to me that I was an incomplete thing the rest of which was elsewhere, and I was eager to meet my other half."²

She finds happiness in releasing herself from reality.

"There was nothing I liked as much as to be alone

1. Innī, pp.236-7.

2. Ibid., p.68.

with myself, sitting on my favourite balcony moving around in a beautiful world of imagination throwing away my sadness and burdens, and feeling free from the material bonds in which I lived and the sternness with which I was surrounded."¹

Escapism and isolation are the main characteristics of the heroine so that before she began her relationship with Ahmad she used to incline to seclusion and introversion.

This is the focal character who contains all the actions and characterisation of the novel. Other characters are not very obvious because the heroine, who is the narrator as well, does not reveal the internal life of other characters. She does not describe in any depth their dispositions, attitudes and behaviour except for what is directly related to her own situation. Thus they are drawn to crystallize the conflict around the heroine or are an external repercussion of her internal conflict. Even her lover Ahmad is supposed to play a great role but is in fact totally dependant upon the heroine and is as submissive, idealised and romantic as she is. He succeeds at the beginning of his relationship with ^CĀyda in making her believe in emotion, feeling and love after she has been of a very materialistic frame of mind, looking at life from the point of view of advantage and following her father's ideas. He does not, however, continue to push her to

1. Innī, p.38.

stronger and more realistic attitudes; on the contrary her romanticism and negativism influence him throughout the novel. Thus his suggestion to her at the end of the novel that they should live together in a chalet outside Alexandria appears as decisive behaviour that no other attitudes of the character seem to justify.

The third main character is her husband who is drawn more accurately and clearly than her lover. This is firstly because the heroine's contact with him is greater than with the others, since she stayed about a year with her husband while she did not spend more than a few hours with her lover during their different meetings. Secondly she considers her marriage as a jail and her husband as a jailer who prevents her, of course, from meeting her lover, and thus her husband represents a point of conflict for her. Tahānī is a descendant of an aristocratic family, a hereditary member of the idle rich who does not consider life to be more than enjoyment, drinking, dancing and sex as long as he has the wealth to enjoy himself to the end of his life. Although living in Egypt he does not feel any relationship to Egyptian society, perhaps because of his Turkish origin, and thus he scorns everything Egyptian. "I hate everything Egyptian. This nation is still backward - it needs centuries to be civilized."¹

The other characters are very shadowy and we do not see even the viewpoint of the heroine concerning them. They either

1. Innī, p.151.

support her like her grandmother or stand against her wishes like her father, but otherwise we learn nothing of them.

The main action of this novel is love, the relationship between man and woman. Love has played a great role in romantic literature in that romanticism is an expression of individual freedom and the outstanding part of it is the freedom of love. Forster thought that birth, food, sleep, love and death are the main facts in human life, and of love he said:

"You all know how enormously love bulks in novels and will probably agree with me that it has done them harm and made them monotonous. Why has this particular experience, especially in its sex form, been transplanted in such generous quantities? If you think of a novel in the vague you think of a love interest - of a man and woman who want to be united and perhaps succeed. If you think of your own life in the vague, or of a group of lives, you are left with a very different and more complex impression."¹

Love in the literature of the pioneer romantic writers aimed at reform, change and revolution but love in this novel was unable even to change the negative attitudes of the heroine; it was not an impetus to revolt as much as to escape. Because the heroine was a negative and introverted character she hid love in a shell throughout the novel and so when it came out at the end of the novel to

1. Forster, Aspects, p.62.

prove its identity it could not stand up. On the other hand, the unrestrained sensation of love is often incompatible with established traditions of society and so it was impossible for two lovers to live together in their life of escape. As a result the novel ends in disaster and love is defeated by social traditions.

The heroine at the beginning did not believe in love but thought it

"... a necessity for those who are unable to control themselves - it is like gambling, people begin to play for pleasure then it becomes an inveterate habit until they destroy their life."¹

But when Ahmad enters her life, changing her concepts of love, C̄Āyda spends a period of internal conflict between the voices of the heart and of the mind, between obedience to what she was taught and to social traditions and revolting against them until at last the voice of the heart takes a part and she falls in love. Listening to the heart instead of the mind, however, is a romantic feature. Romantic love is marked by many special characteristics, such as an hour passing as if it were a minute during the lovers' meeting, the lover loving everything in his beloved, her shape, behaviour, conversation, laughter and smiling, and the conversation between lovers being carried out not just by the tongue, but also by the eyes and fingers. Thus C̄Āyda says,

1. Innī, p.24.

" I swear I have never felt more pleasure in my life than in the secret conversation of our hands on that evening ... I felt the palm of his hand gently touching my hand, then he began to push his fingers into mine touching them softly, then he embraced my hand, pressing it slightly as if he was shouting from the depth of his heart, 'I love you'." ¹

"He did not say that he loved me, but his eyes, lips, fingers and all his strength were shouting 'I love you'." ²

Romantic lovers customarily inflate the simple things which may happen between them and attempt to torment themselves because they are naturally delighted by suffering, especially if it comes from their lovers. Once ^CĀyda was sitting on the beach in front of her chalet when Tahānī, before he became her husband, came with his group, carrying a gramophone, and attempted to teach her to dance. Suddenly Ahmad came and was upset to see her among those corrupt people, but before she could explain to him her father came and Ahmad left them in anger. This simple occurrence was followed by a week of torment and at their meeting a week later we hear Ahmad describing his feelings during that week, saying that he was very sad, anxious, hopeless and carrying all the grief of this world. ³ Suspicion, jealousy, misunderstanding and mutual misunderstanding are very strong elements in the creation of sorrow and torment.

1. Innī, pp.83-4.

2. Ibid., p.133.

3. Ibid., p.185.

As ^CĀyda says, "the lover creates grief over a non-existent thing".¹ Idealism is one of the important characteristics of romantic lovers because they fundamentally search for an ideal which they cannot achieve in reality, so that they prefer to escape to the worlds of imagination, dreams and memories. The ideal heroes are always good, kind, quiet, peaceful and forgiving and their relationship with women is spiritual and far away from the materialism which they believe may corrupt the relationship. The lover here is looking for a spiritual beloved, similar to his soul; this is the same view as expressed by ^CIzrā'īl in the first novel when he explains the view of heaven as regards love. Thus love here is heavenly, ideal and lofty, and sex in this kind of relationship is a minor matter, a means to an end. For the lover it is a pleasure to sit down with his beloved, talking to her, looking at her, touching her hands and maybe kissing her, which is as far as the relationship goes. Thus ^CĀyda says "when I was listening to Aḥmad I felt a wonderful delight which replaced my preceding grief".²

Romanticists have a particular attitude towards time which they regard as one of their enemies because it is not concerned with their happiness or sadness. In their happiest moments they wish that they could stop time, but time passes without heeding their wishes and they come to hate it because it pulls them from their world of imagination to reality.

1. Innī, p.168.

2. Ibid., p.189.

"I wished our meeting could be extended to eternity but time was passing quickly ... it was a wonderful moment, full of gratification. I wished at that time that we could stop time or that we could be out of its circle to be one of the eternal things like mountains, rivers or stars, but the chimes of the clock reminded us that we were still human beings who had not been changed to stars yet - the chimes of the clock pulled us from the world of imagination to reality."¹

Thus imagination plays a great role as a substitute for reality and time in that it is not limited by time and place. In this novel imagination takes the heroine from her happy or sad reality to a stage of association of ideas ending with a dream or a day-dream. After becoming engaged to Tahānī, Āyda is lost in deep thought remembering Ahmad and the happy time she spent with him, moving on to the fate which put Tahānī in her way, then to her harsh father, to her brother and his close relationship with Ahmad, and then to her grandmother who preferred Ahmad, ending this association of ideas with a dream in which she finds herself with Ahmad in a boat in the middle of the sea. Suddenly the boat is turned upside down and after fierce struggles against the waves they sink and she leaps up shouting,² or rather she comes back from the world

1. Innī, p.189.

2. Ibid., pp.223-7.

of imagination to reality.

If romantic characters can escape from time and reality by entering the world of imagination they cannot avoid fate, which is their first enemy since, they think, it will not give them what they wish. E Muir distinguishes thus between fate in the dramatic novel and in the chronicle:

"In the dramatic novel fate is visible; we see it unfolding in the world on which beats for the time being a more intense light than that of ordinary day; and because we see it manifested we understand it and acquiesce in it. In the chronicle, on the contrary, while the human world is clear and immediate, fate remains a mystery and we can only submit to its unknowable laws by an act of faith. The chronicler's conception of fate, therefore, and especially in earlier times, has often been religious."¹

Fate in this novel is one of the characters, who takes the opportunity to destroy those who challenge him, as a result we find the characters having a strong awareness of fate. We hear CĀdya's grandmother advising her from the beginning,

"... do not trust destiny, be strong and courageous, habituate yourself to be content with reality, accept what is given to you and do not be imaginative, for fate is accustomed to disappoint us."²

1. E Muir, The structure of the Novel, pp.110-11.

2. Innī, p.212.

Fate is exceedingly powerful, forcing characters to be submissive. Although Āyda realises that the hostile attitudes of characters to her, whether intentional or unintentional, are implements of a fate which seeks to torment the helpless human being,¹ she does not follow the advice of her grandmother. It is because she derives so much happiness from her relationship with her lover that fate is punishing her, as she thinks, by forcing Tahānī on her as a husband instead of Ahmad. "Oh ... what a calamity, fate is laughing at me now I guess, and I remembered the words of my grandmother".² The characters are afraid of fate even in their happy moments and moreover they attribute every large or small event which occurs to fate. Thus it becomes the thing primarily responsible for all actions, behaviour and thoughts of the characters, and Āyda whose submission and negativism led her to grief, was not guilty, but

"... fate was guilty, fate which destroyed my life turning situations upside down, mismanaging my affairs to the extent that I could not avoid that tragedy ... but it is ridiculous that fate used to sin against us and we used to accept its crime."³

The power of fate comes to be similar to the power of God, or is itself the power of God, and when Ahmad dies in front of her at the

1. Rāghib, Fann, p.154.

2. Innī, p.221.

3. Ibid., pp.21-2.

end of the novel ^CĀyda does not accuse fate, because this is not a trivial matter but is a matter of death, and this is a power greater than the power of fate. In other words, the power of fate becomes God's power, and so we find ^CĀyda blaspheming God:

"Let God return Ahmad to me ... what is the benefit of his ability if he does not lend life to him ... but why did he take him and why did he give him to me ... why did he behave so with me who am a weak person ... oh I hate God as much as he hates me. I will not believe in him as long as he is hard to me."¹

Nature has played a great role in all romantic literary works since the time of the pioneers of romanticism, those who desired nature and adopted Rousseau's well-known "Return to Nature" as their basis. Perhaps the best example is Wordsworth who is regarded as the greatest poet in the description of nature. Nature, however, in romantic Arabic works from Haykal to As-Sibā^Cī, is static and described in isolation from the plot, and is often no more than decoration. However, As-Sibā^Cī attempts in this novel to employ this important element to give an extra dimension to the characters and their internal conflict and to events which have already happened, and to those which will happen. He sometimes succeeds in giving nature this role although occasionally he fails in the attempt. The heroine projects her feeling upon nature, which seems beautiful when she is happy:

1. Innī, pp.428-9.

"At that time when the moon was throwing its beautiful light over extended farms, the mosque was very white and clear as if washed by the moon's gleam, the trees threw their shadows on to the roads which seemed like a dappled carpet, and the breeze moved the leaves and aroused a rustle like smooth breaths."¹

This picture of the same scene will be changed when she passes the same place after she has discovered the infidelity of her husband and left home:

"The same mosque on the corner was covered by darkness, the road had become dreary and frightful, the winter had divested it of its red flowers and green leaves, and they became like graves or tombstones."²

The description of nature is continued in this style almost throughout the novel, but *As-Sibā'ī* employs it to a certain extent to embody the dramatic action or to reveal what will happen. For example, when Ahmad's appendix suddenly ruptures and he is struggling for life the description of nature is characterised by darkness and melancholy which presage disaster. *Āyda* gives a detailed picture of this moment:

"Darkness was spreading all over the room. The light of the hall was off, I tried to turn it on but it was

1. *Innī*, p.88.

2. *Ibid.*, p.348.

broken A very strong wind was outside, the sea was surging and heavy drops of water fell gradually on the glass of the balcony windows, ... suddenly a shining light gleamed then quickly disappeared, followed by long thunder, ... I do not think that I ever felt fear of rain, lightning and thunder as much as I did that time. It seemed to me that all these natural indications were part of a horrible plan in which I would be attacked by fate."¹

The romantic character who cannot bear the oppression of reality resorts to nature, searching for happiness and serenity among farms, green trees, flowers and rivers. Romantic lovers customarily adopt some natural features as a place for their meeting, loving and visiting these places frequently whenever they feel a yearning for their lovers who have moved away or whenever they wish to escape from reality to the world of memories. This arises from the romantic love of the past which consists of memories but exists not only in time but also in place. Thus the area around an old water wheel, a demolished wall or a huge mulberry tree serve in this novel as places in which the two lovers used to spend hours of happiness and these places are almost like temples; "the water wheel remained as our house of worship where we used to sit together hand in hand looking at each other and talking secretly".²

1. Innī, pp.417-8.

2. Ibid., p.140.

This is the same place in which ^CĀyda met Ahmad after she left her husband's house at the end of the novel, and in which they decided to travel to Alexandria. These places, however, are taken from the old tradition of western romantic literature.

The central conflict which creates the events and actions and develops the characters is the struggle of the individual against forces opposed to his wishes and freedom. Society is the first hostile power which restricts individual freedom, and so social traditions and laws are attacked in romantic literature, and the romantic character has to fight all these forces in order to assert his existence and the legality of his freedom. The conflict in Innī Rāḥila is on three levels, firstly the internal conflict of the heroine between her heart and mind, secondly the social conflict between the individual and society, and thirdly the conflict between two generations, the old one represented by the father and the modern represented by ^CĀyda. The heroine who is defeated by traditions attacks society violently, attempting to excuse and justify her defeat, and blaming society which condemns the individual if he demands his rights. The sin of the heroine in the view of society is her escaping from her husband to her lover, although she does not regard it a sin, but thinks of it as her right in this life. She laughs at people who accuse her of sin while they ignore the circumstances which led her to that end.

"How stupid they are; they sit down comfortably judging those who are suffering, to say easily that this person

is guilty ... when I committed what you call sin I was sure it was not sin, it was the best thing that I could do, it was my right in life."¹

She also criticises social traditions and laws which do not understand feeling and emotion, and attacks the marriage contract in a way that reminds us of the French romantic writer, George Sand, who attacked the Christian laws of marriage. ^CĀyda takes the same attitude:

"Is this marriage contract which seems to be like a title deed or a commercial bargain, to be set great store by while all my great feelings towards Ahmad are neglected? ... does not the conformity between spirits, hearts, souls give legality to the relationship which this turbaned sheikh permits? ... does this paper allow me to do such things which if I do them without it, even with Ahmad, I would be regarded an adulteress and punished by stoning? ... what foolish traditions."²

This romantic view of marriage takes a step further when ^CĀyda shares her bed with Ahmad at the end of the novel, in an attempt to emphasise the rights of the individual over social traditions.

"To hell with all of you and your agreements and conventions, ... I will not care any more for these

1. Innī, pp.28-9.

2. Ibid., pp.271-3.

silly things, my true husband is the one with whom I am connected by the contract of love. What I am doing with him now is legal in my view, while what I did before was, no doubt, adultery ... legal adultery by force."¹

However, this revolt against social traditions is defeated because the individual has already destroyed all the bridges with reality and thus cannot continue to face society. This is what Mahfūz also expresses in most of his realistic novels, although he turns the defeat of his heroes such as the fall of Nafīsa and the suicide of Hasanayn in his novel Bidāya Wa-Nihāya into an expression of remonstrance against society. At the same time, however, he condemns the individual revolt of Hasanayn and thus their defeat has an effect on the reader, while the reader of Innī Rāhila may not feel more than sadness at the disastrous ending. The death of the heroes is not a positive result which can force society to take an attitude towards this problem and this is not the kind of romanticism which can produce change, as the Egyptian critics al-Abyārī and ʿĪsā thought,² because the romanticism of Hasanayn, Mahfūz's hero, is produced by the characters, events and actions which the writer creates around him while sentimental matters remain a unique problem in the life of As-Sibāʿī's heroes. Further,

1. Innī, p.408.

2. YSDU, pp.36 and 120.

Ḥasṇayn committed suicide among society while Ḥāyda committed suicide outside society. In other words Ḥasṇayn faced and resisted society but was defeated while Ḥāyda remained far away carrying her problem within herself. When she had an opportunity to face society she preferred to escape, at the end of the novel, to a chalet in Alexandria; "the positive hero respects the values of society until he finds a substitute, while complaint, discontent and contempt are aspects of the aggrieved romantic".¹

The heroine attacks her father and his opportunist bourgeois class and its social traditions and she criticises her husband and his aristocratic class. Although she exposes many immoral defects of this class she exaggerates and thus the picture of this class which she draws is rather unreal, perhaps because her view of the aristocracy is unobjective and she looks on this class as one of the social pillars which restrict her individual freedom. Ḥāyda accuses all people of this class without exception, of triviality, foolishness and immorality and in addition claims that they have no connection with the Egyptian people because of their Turkish roots and the fact that they despise Egyptians. The selection of the husband of the heroine from among this class and its being distinguished by these bad qualities is a device of the kind which romantic writers employ as a counter to their kind, educated and ideal hero.

1. Wādī, Madkhal, p.48.

Language plays a great role in romantic literature. Romantic writers employ poetic language, delicate style and euphuisms because the thoughts they treat and the characters they draw are absorbed in their imaginative world, are angels rather than human beings, and thus their language should be heavenly. Realistic writers, on the other hand, are not excessively concerned with language and allow their characters to talk according to their positions. As-Sibā^{Cī}, although his education might be supposed to have led him away from a concern with euphuism, maintains this important romantic element in his romantic novels. The heroine, however, employs two kinds of style throughout the description, narration and dialogue. The first is a simple style used for portraying other characters of extraneous events while the other is a poetic style used for the expression of her sensations or the description of dramatic attitudes in which she chooses the most powerful words to embody her feelings. For example she describes her feelings when she learns from her brother of Ahmad's marriage as follows:

"How could he know (her brother) that his words set my heart on fire? ... how could he know that he had removed the pin and thrown the grenade? ... how could he realise that I was like a heap of firewood waiting for the spark?"¹

1. Innī, p.114.

Or she makes an excessive use of synonyms as in the following passage:

" انا الخريقة اللاهثة الانفاس ، المكروبة الصدر ،
المثقلة بالاحزان . . . الباكية حتى جفت منها .
المآقي ، ودميت الاجفان " ¹

In addition she frequently uses such rhetorical devices as metaphor, paronomasia, antithesis, and allegory, and frequent quotation of poetry; even the dialogue between the two lovers is in highly poetic language.

Innī Rāhila, however, is a link between the preceding stage (Fantasy) and the new stage (Romanticism). It is related to the fantasy novels by the revolt of the writer against the upper class of the bourgeoisie, and to the romantic stage by acute concern with sentimental problems or tragic romantic love. As-Sibā^{Cī} seems to be more mature than in the preceding stage. In this novel we find better-defined characters and events but he still falls into many artistic and technical errors carried over from the earlier stage. Among them are generalisations of judgement and the use of great numbers of coincidences, some of which approach the impossible. For instance, the meeting of Āyda and Aḥmad near the water wheel in the last quarter of the novel, stands without any justification. Although the heroine is herself the narrator we feel the voice of

1. Innī, p.20.

the writer outweighing the voice of the character and in fact this sometimes leads to the dialogue being out of character. At times she attempts to give additional explanation for a perfectly understandable event that has already happened and her comments in fact do not give the event any extra dimension.

The heroine also brings up the matter of illusion and sometimes attempts to assure the reader that her story is not imaginary but true, saying for example, "I do not want to be imaginative" or "these things do not exist except in fiction". Although As-Sibā^Cī has chosen the classical Arabic language and employs a poetic style, he occasionally falls into certain stylistic errors such as directly addressing the reader, the use of official jargon, conventional phrases and clichés, and frequent reliance on such words when moving from one event or point to another as "But", "However" and "However that may be".

2. BAYN AL-ATLĀL (1952)

In this novel the writer uses a particular kind of narrative technique. He begins his novel with present events, then stops the narration to go back to relate past events, and then again returns to continue with present events. Thus we have a kind of story inside another story, or what is called a 'Framework Story'. The writer divides the novel into three parts each consisting of five chapters. In the first chapter we meet Sāmiya, a young girl living with her mother after her father has died. She is a

university student, an intelligent and emancipated girl, aiming to continue her studies in order to obtain a great position in life and concerned with woman's emancipation. Thus she refuses to have an emotional relationship with any of the university students because she thinks that marriage delays the emancipation of woman. But she falls in love with one of her teachers in the institute at which she studies after leaving university, Kamāl, a young and educated man who has completed his studies in England. After a few months of their relationship Kamāl decides to propose to her, but it turns out that Kamāl is the son of her mother.

The second part of the novel begins by returning to the past of the mother and her life. In her youth she was an admirer of a famous writer whom she then met and fell in love with. The writer was older than her and married, but he was unhappy with his wife who was very kind and nice to him but was in delicate health and would lose her life if she became pregnant. The writer, however, and the heroine used to meet each other frequently and their relationship became very strong and, although they realised that their love had no hope or purpose, they kept up their relationship. Their love could not continue in this way and so they decided to separate. After this the writer went through a very hard time in which he was sad and distracted, and while he was driving his car he crashed and was taken to hospital where the left side of his body was found to be paralysed.

At this point the second part finishes, being in the

form of memoirs written by the writer before he died and which the heroine kept. In the third part the mother tells Sāmiya the story of her life and her relationship with the writer and that, after their separation, she married another man who worked in an Egyptian embassy in Europe. Thus she left Egypt, but although her husband knew of her relationship and was very kind to her in order to make her forget the writer, she could not manage to control her heart. While she was visiting Egypt with her husband and baby she heard that her lover was paralysed at the hospital, and an internal conflict arose between her social duty towards her husband and son and the voice of her heart. At last she sacrificed her husband and son for her lover and went to the hospital to nurse and take care of him, having been divorced, but soon the writer died. Then she moved to the writer's house to nurse his sick wife in accordance with the writer's father's request and in allegiance to her lover. Here she discovered that his wife, who had spent her life in self-reproach for being unable to have children, had sacrificed her life at last and become pregnant in order to bring happiness to him. The wife died in childbirth and the heroine stayed at the house to look after his daughter who was Sāmiya herself. Sāmiya grows up without knowing that the heroine is not her true mother until accidentally she falls in love with Kamāl who is the true son of the heroine. At the end the heroine decides not to destroy the future of her daughter and son, as her future was destroyed, and so she goes to Kamāl's father (her ex-husband) and asks him not to make the past a stumbling

block for the children. At last the two young lovers get married and the heroine remains in her lover's house with her memoirs.

The same problem which was presented in Innī Rāhila is returned to in this novel. It is a sentimental problem, that of the relationship between man and woman in a society which does not admit these kind of relations, and the same tone of individual freedom which was found in Innī Rāhila is met here. But the problem in this novel passes through two generations, the generation of the heroine whose freedom was rejected by society, and the generation of Sāmiya and Kamāl whose modern concepts are recognised by society. If the heroines of Innī Rāhila and Bayn al-Atlāl, who are from the same rebellious generation, were defeated in their love, Sāmiya and Kamāl, who represent the new generation, win their case because society has given them the right to choose their future.

The problem of the heroine here is not the contrast between social classes, as with ^CĀyda in Innī Rāhila, but the fact that the heroine is in need of love, being an orphan and having grown up in a boarding school where nobody cared for her. Thus the first thing she looks for when she grows up is love. She loves the writer through his romantic sentimental works and she loves him even more when she meets him. The famous writer is looking for love as well, although he is married, since his wife is always sick and cannot give him the kind of love that he needs. Therefore each of the two lovers finds their complementary half in the other and are attracted to each other. This is indeed the

same view which ^CIzrā'īl expressed in the first novel,¹ and which is an Islamic view originally.² The love here, however, is heavenly, noble and eternal, reaching the level of worship or even beyond; "It is more than worship ... through it I believed in God, religion and worship".³ The romantic lover is elevated to the level of a heavenly character; the heroine was, in the view of the writer, "the beloved of the spirit, the undying wish of the soul and the song of the heart, in every place and every time",⁴ while the writer, in the view of the heroine, was "the soul and life ... I was without soul and life before I met him".⁵ This is what we mean by saying that the problem here is unconnected with social reality. The aim of the heroes in their relationship is love for love's sake. We hear the writer saying to his beloved, "although I feel a violent and brilliant love for you, if I were to marry you, you would not be better than my wife and our glowing love would be dead after a few months".⁶ But the continuance of this relationship without any purpose, and the releasing of feelings without any limitation, would be incompatible with social traditions and would

1. See pp.225-6.

2. Ibid.

3. Bayn, p.310.

4. Ibid., p.221.

5. Ibid., p.309.

6. Ibid., p.187.

be rejected logically by society. In addition, their marriage is impossible romantically and ideally because their love would die if they got married. Thus they decide to separate, but they cannot bear the severity of the separation and in the end the writer dies and the heroine sacrifices her house, husband and son, to let love live.

These two romantic, negative and escapist characters are absorbed in their own individuality, establishing their own world of ideals in their imagination, dreams, and escape from reality. They do not even wish to change their ideal to reality when they have an opportunity to do so, since no distinctions between their classes, social laws or traditions of the family stand between their being married as in Innī Rāhila. But the heroes find pleasure in their world of imagination and this is indeed one of the distinctive elements of romantic characters.

With such characters and this kind of love the author concentrates on the aspects of romantic love, whether on the level of thoughts, of technique or even of language, especially in the second part of the novel, to the extent that this part could be considered an extreme example of romantic writing. The whole second part is in the form of memoirs written by the writer before he died and kept by the heroine who reads them whenever she remembers her deceased lover. Memoirs, in fact, are one of the important elements of the world of romantic imagination in that the memoirs are in the past and the romantic character usually finds his greatest

happiness in the past; and we see this clearly in this novel: "Let us forget our hateful present, and let us talk about our pleasant past, our beautiful hours when we were together".¹ "Now let us wander in the past, let us go back hand in hand and cheek to cheek as we used to do heretofore."² The past consists of their love story and the happy days they spent together, and when their relationship is defeated by the death of the writer, the heroine continues to live with the memories which are represented by her lover's notebook, or by sunset:

"... and when the red disk of the sun was about to set a whispering voice repeated 'watch it carefully and when you see it setting, remember me'."³

This ideal love is the pivot on which the novel turns and from which events develop. It is the power which dominates the characters and their behaviour, as the characters, who pay great attention to their world of sensation and their individual feelings, help love to play the main role in the novel:

"I can control all my behaviour except one thing, that is love; when I love no force can dominate my love because it is buried in my heart and mind."⁴

1. Bayn, p.218.

2. Ibid., p.145.

3. Ibid., p.445.

4. Ibid., pp.172-173.

The heroes at the beginning rush into love without thinking of its purpose:

"This is a way which one may begin without realising hope or waiting for aim",¹

and in romantic fashion listen to the voice of the heart, not to the mind, as with classical writers:

"... so she ignored her mind, closed her eyes and gave free rein to her heart."²

In this way love lifts the heroes, or rather the heroes lift love, to the spiritual or even to the mystical level. In fact, spirituality is one aspect of romantic love and, indeed, they are not concerned with the separation of their bodies as long as their souls are still connected:

"The separation of our bodies is possible and I can control my behaviour in front of people, but our spiritual separation is absolutely impossible."³

Thus the task of this kind of love is to purify souls from their sins. This thought of purification, in fact, is taken from romantic literature.

In order to maintain their spiritual love the heroes prefer to escape to their worlds of imagination and dreams far away

1. Bayn, p.158.

2. Ibid., p.313.

3. Ibid., p.173.

from reality, "to the end of the world, to farther than this world ... to heaven, to eternity",¹ and moreover they wish to die in their happiest moment as have many romantics like Chateaubriand. Thus the hero says:

"You wished that we could leave this life together ... your wish at that time was to be together in death, better than to be separated in life."²

This escapism of the characters is not only from places but also from time. All romantics are very sensitive to time because fundamentally they reject the limitations of place and time; the writer writes to his lover saying,

"I am afraid of the treachery of time, I hate its changes ... oh my sweetheart, nothing could betray us more than time. I hate time whose duty is to destroy our ideals and shatter our wonderful hopes."³

This is, no doubt, because their wishes are unconnected with reality. Not only time, however, is the cause of sadness, anxiety and annoyance for the romantic character, but also fate, circumstances and misunderstanding are factors which cause agonies for romantic lovers and change their happiness to suffering. Thus the hero says to his beloved, "Do you remember what I said once about the happiness which is turned into pain? ... the more fate gives us happiness the more it gives us misery".⁴ Because the romantic does not consider

1. Bayn, p.181.

2. Ibid., p.227.

3. Ibid., pp.200-01.

4. Ibid., p.244.

his excessive dependence on imagination, and his setting his aims and hopes in the world of delusion, to be illogical things he customarily blames his failures and defeats in life on fate. Thus the heroine is "no doubt created unfortunate, fate having written on her page of life two words - misery and defeat".¹ More than this fate is raised to the level of a supernatural power organising this life, something similar to God, and therefore characters can justify their escapism as long as life has no "organiser except ridiculous fate, except an unjust power which destroys our sensations and wishes".² However sadness, pessimism, melancholy, dissatisfaction with life and worry about the future are not caused by circumstances, misfortune or fate, but rise from inside the characters themselves.

The other elements of romantic love in this novel are similar to those in Innī Rāhila. The lover likes every thing in his beloved, even her sadness, and to touch the hand of the beloved is the lover's greatest wish. He wants to behave, eat and sleep in a manner similar to his beloved, and the lovers are in the habit of keeping simple things given by their lovers, such as a rose or a handkerchief, and all of these things being stock features in romantic literature.

Whereas nature was static to some extent in Innī Rāhila, As-Sibā^{Cī} manages to employ it here more than in the preceding novel so that the reader can feel its role, effect and interaction with the

1. Bayn, p.304.

2. Ibid., p.366.

characters. The description of nature here coincides with the attitude of the character. For example, the hero begins his memoirs before he dies like this:

"I am sitting now in a large and empty desert and in this tranquillity and loneliness where there is no friend, love, water, food, shadow or fruit I found a sheet of paper and pen, ... thanks to God that the storm did not tear the paper and break the pen",¹

and when the writer meets the heroine for the first time, "It was a windy day, full of dust, so that one could not open one's eyes".² Perhaps this picture of nature gives an intimation that this relationship will be doomed. This kind of gloomy picture, moreover, is associated with most of the meetings of the heroes, while we find that sunset, darkness and quietness and certain other natural phenomena are a symbol of recollection.³

If love, characters, events and actions are heavenly, then the style has to reflect this. It is poetry rather than prose, to the extent that all the second part of the novel consists of concentrated poetic language, intimation more than exposition, symbols more than explanation, full of poetic devices and even classical Arabic rhetoric. It seems that the language used here was polished and purified, and this is clear in the second part of

1. Bayn, pp.140-41.

2. Ibid., p.167.

3. Ibid., p.445.

the novel, in that part which begins with a concentrated introduction to prepare the reader to enter the poetic world; "In this settled tranquillity when I was lying on my bed exhausted, oppressed of heart and confused, I found at last a resort".¹ The hero does not imagine that even this poetic language will be able to express his sensations:

"These weak words cannot bear my tremendous feeling;
what I feel inside cannot be expressed."²

This poetic style is used in dialogue as well, although it is infrequent; the following dialogue is an example:

"It is true you do not possess the tangible things,
you do not possess the body, but you hold the heart,
the soul, excessive sensation and fiery emotion.'
'What I have is the best thing, which I wish to
remain for eternity; it is the last hope to me in
this life.'"³

The culmination of this part is the tragic end of the relationship with the death of the hero and the lost future of the heroine. The doom of the relationship was not caused by social traditions, although society is criticised by the heroes, and not because the heroine was forced to marry, although the laws of marriage are attacked by her as well. It arises from love itself, that kind of love which dominates the characters and overwhelms them

1. Bayn, p.141.

2. Ibid., p.196.

3. Ibid., p.180.

and changes them to heavenly creatures, instead of being a factor to develop them and push them to take their proper position in reality rather than in heaven, among society, not in the world of imagination. The negativism of the heroine and social traditions were the reasons for the defeat of the heroes of Innī Rāhila, and while the escapism of Innī Rāhila's heroine can be justified by the infidelity of her husband, the escapism of Bayn al-Atlāl's heroine is no more than craziness. Finally, the heroes of Innī Rāhila were thwarted by social traditions, contrasts between the classes and aristocratic bonds, things which connect the novel somehow to reality, while the heroes of this novel do not face reality at all and remain imaginative and unreal characters, to the extent that even their names are not mentioned throughout the novel.

However, in the first part of the novel we meet characters from a new generation. Sāmiya, the daughter of the hero, is a university student, an intelligent and ambitious girl who demands the emancipation of women and attempts to get rid of the female weakness inside herself, who looks at life and the student relationships in the university in a realistic way, although it may be extreme sometimes. After graduating from university she joins the Institute of Journalism, which she believes in as the best instrument to achieve her aim of emancipating women. The second character of the new generation is Kamāl, son of the heroine. He is a young man with a higher degree in English Literature and is a teacher at the Institute of Journalism. A friendship springs up

between Kamāl and Sāmiya and develops into a love relationship. These two characters, who represent the new generation with its modern concepts and aware views on reality, are strong characters. They force their rights on society and they are respected by people, but As-Sibā^{Cī} restricts their activity and stops their development and moves them from their comprehensive social views to the level of the individual, from reality to the world of individual imaginations, as soon as love appears between them.

Thus Sāmiya, who was aiming to emancipate the Arab woman and rejected the idea of marriage which she considered a prison for women, and who used to reject anyone in the university who tried to make overtures to her, and who wants to be conversant with politics, philosophy and sociology, as soon as she begins her relationship with Kamāl is turned upside down so that she cannot see any other aim than love and marriage, and says "thanks to God who created some women who cannot fall in love so that they can demand woman's emancipation".¹ This is what the Egyptian critic, Ghālī Shukrī, calls a romantic reaction, in that As-Sibā^{Cī} separates love, culture and work.² This is a dangerous view, for love should be a factor to incorporate the characters in society, to change and develop them, not to frustrate them.

The same attitude is reflected in Kamāl who studied in

1. Bayn, p.99.

2. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.70.

Europe and used to have many relationships with European girls, and indeed wanted to marry one of them except that his father refused. When he falls in love with Sāmiya he ends his relationship with this girl, or rather she does, because As-Sibā^Cī changes his character into an ideal as soon as he begins his relationship with Sāmiya, and so he cannot take the first step of freeing himself from the connection with the European girl. Furthermore Kamāl, the educated man, yet believes that the position of woman should be at home and that her concern should be with her husband and children. We may give as an excuse for this view the fact that in a sexually segregated society emotions assume an exaggerated importance, and the young man visualises women either as angels or as 'holy prostitutes' (to use the phrase of ash-Shārūnī) who have fallen despite themselves or have sacrificed themselves for the sake of their impoverished families.¹ This is one of the favourite subjects in the romantic writing in this period, but it is hard to justify this subjective and backward attitude in a society which has started to develop and in which a new generation has begun to aspire to modernisation and to building a new society. It is the narrow view of the writer himself towards society which confines itself to individualism and subjectivism.

However, the novel technically avoids many of the mistakes of the preceding novels. The structure seems to be more

1. ash-Shārūnī, al-Qiṣṣa wa-l-Mujtama^C, p.7.

accurate, the language more concentrated, and the events, action and narration are more in tune with the purpose of the novel, although it has some artistic errors such as unjustifiable coincidence, the occasional interference of the writer to give his opinion, long dialogue, especially in the first part, and finally irrelevant events in certain chapters, which give the impression of having been written quickly.

3. FADAYTUKI YĀ LAYLĀ (1953)

This novel is the third and the last one of this stage and it, too, deals with the relationship between man and woman in a society which has begun to change from old feudal values to new concepts of the future. The problem here is concerned with the hero, Ibrāhīm, a famous musician. He is shy, quiet and passionately fond of music since being a child, but is afflicted by a psychological guilt complex. This complex was caused by an accident which happened to his sister, Laylā, a long time ago and it has stayed with him throughout his life and settled in his subconscious. This continues until another accident, similar to the first, happens many years later. As a result Ibrāhīm is afflicted by amnesia and his friend, fiancée and psychiatrist co-operate together to treat him. The first accident happened when he and his sister were children. Once they were playing on the beach during their summer holiday when his parents asked him to take care of his young sister. Ibrāhīm suggested to her that she should climb an old windmill that was there

and she did, but fell down and died. From that time he has been carrying this complex in his subconscious.

Ibrāhīm becomes a famous musician and we meet him busy with the composition of a melody for a new opera. He travels to Alexandria and stays at the house of his friend who works in Cairo. This house is outside the town among the farms where quiet and silence can be found, so that it is a good retreat for him to work in. During the few months he spends there Ibrāhīm meets Rājiya, a young orphan girl who is living with her rich, feudal grandfather. A strong relationship develops between them and Ibrāhīm proposes to her, but her grandfather at first refuses because he wants her to marry his nephew and assistant in his business in order to keep the property in the family. Later, however, he agrees after being persuaded by Rājiya and his nephew. The two lovers spend a happy time together but after a few months Ibrāhīm, without any reason, suddenly breaks off the engagement and endures great unhappiness until he loses his memory.

After many attempts to treat him by the psychiatrist they find out that the reason is that Ibrāhīm used to walk on the beach every day early in the morning, and one day he met a beautiful girl who used to sit by the seashore. Her name was Laylā as well, and he got into the habit of sitting and talking to her for an hour a day until he came to believe that he loved her. However, he could not understand why she always insisted on him leaving her after an hour and one day, in order to find out

the reason he hid himself in a windmill near to the beach, and saw a car stopping near the girl and then two men carrying her to the car. He realised that the girl was paralysed and tried to run after the car to explain to her that he wanted to marry her, not because of pity for her but because he loved her. He came back home with a heart full of guilt and broke his engagement with Rājiya. The next day he went to the beach to meet her but discovered that Laylā realised that he knew she was paralysed and crawled on the sand to the sea and committed suicide. This occurrence is the cause of his amnesia. In the end they manage to treat him and he returns to Rājiya.

In Fadaytuki yā Laylā we meet again the problem of love, although the writer makes the relationship between the two heroes more active than in the two preceding novels. The problem here does not rise either from society, as was the case with Innī Rāhila, from inside the characters as in Bayn al-Aṭlāl, but comes from a psychological complex. However, if we set on one side the kind of narrative technique which is used by novelists who discuss psychological problems, the novel turns out to be basically concerned with the matter of love and its influence upon the romantic characters.

The main character here is the hero of the novel, the musician Ibrāhīm, who is a sensitive, delicate, kind, polite, quiet and successful person, but who is always worried, even about things of which he was not the cause, such as the death of his father.

His sensitivity, quietness and tendency to introversion create an idealistic character who attempts to build his own world through his music. He has not married although he has reached the age of marriage because he does not want to be restricted and is too busy with his musical career. Finally, he has not met a woman whom he loves passionately, this being the important point which all the romantic heroes of *As-Sibā^Cī* search for. Ibrāhīm finally meets the girl he can love deeply and it seems that he is very happy with her before the second accident happens.

The second character is Rājiya, who is an artistic, educated and rich girl. She admired Ibrāhīm through his music before she met him, like the heroine of Bayn al-Atlāl, but Rājiya has a strong personality and is freer to express her opinion than ^CĀyda in Innī Rāhila. Thus she does not keep silent as ^CĀyda did when her grandfather refuses Ibrāhīm, but revolts against her grandfather and explains her attitude frankly to her cousin, ^CAbd ar-Rahmān, who helps her to persuade her grandfather.

Other characters represent two generations, the old and conservative one like the grandfather, and the new generation like her cousin. The writer, however, does not throw enough light upon these two important characters because he concentrates on the hero and his problem, concern with the individual being one of the traditions in romantic literature.

Love in this novel is more positive than in the two former novels. It is an impetus to artistic creation for Ibrāhīm

in his music, and to the defence of individual rights for Rājiya, and thus love here is stronger and more determined than in the other novels and makes the characters more active in achieving their wishes. Ibrāhīm composes his best melody when he begins his relationship with Rājiya and she seems more confident through her relationship with him. But love here is not devoid of some romantic aspects and perhaps music seems to play a great role in the growth of love between the heroes. Rājiya is attracted to Ibrāhīm by the sound of the piano which he used to play, and in the meetings of the two lovers music expresses their feelings instead of speech. Thus when Ibrāhīm is rejected by the grandfather he plays a tragic melody to express his sadness. Even nature is coloured by music:

"One fascinating night when the moon stretched its light through the clouds and when the fresh breeze carried the fragrance of roses I sat down on my balcony and suddenly I heard wonderful tunes penetrating into my ears through the breeze."¹

Music, moreover, may be able to eliminate the sadness and desperation from the heart of the romantic lover:

"I was trying to listen sensitively to the tunes which were faintly penetrating through the closed window. When I heard them I felt that hopelessness was removed and my soul was returned."²

1. Fadaytuki, p.103.

2. Ibid., p.192.

We also find the same role given to love, that it is like a magic wand which can make a human being full of kindness, forgiveness and ideals, and may change the earth to a paradise full of happiness and pleasure.

"I know that Man in this life is like someone crossing a desert who cannot see any purpose or hope or anything except a mirage, and suddenly he feels everything around him becoming alive. The mirage becomes water, darkness becomes light, the desert becomes flower and unpleasant people become elegant, everything in this life becomes sweet."¹

The love which romantics seek is spiritual love, and the lover loves everything pertaining to his beloved. Love is life as is clear from this dialogue between Ibrāhīm and Rājiya:

"Usually one may love someone else, but for me I do not feel you are someone else. You are me, you are in my heart and blood."

"Me too, I feel that my life is derived from you, you are one of the elements of my life."²

The meetings of the romantic lovers usually take place among the fields and farms where the songs of the birds and the ripple of the streams are found, and where there is freedom and lack of restraint.

1. Fadaytuki, p.116.

2. Ibid., p.237.

The role of nature is to prepare the atmosphere for the meeting:

"During the daytime we used to roam in the gardens or on the beach. It was spring and the new shiny leaves on the branches of the trees and the banks of opening flowers, the moving white clouds in the exuberant blue sky, all these made nature a wonderful frame which embraced a spring of happiness which gushed from our hearts."¹

But nature may be censured sometimes:

"Even this setting sun tyrannises me without knowing ... it sinks quickly to the horizon as if it had a date, or as if it envied me for my meeting with you and refused to extend the time."²

These projections play a great role in forming the views of romanticists towards nature or towards certain things which may not be the cause of their happiness or suffering, according to their mood at a certain moment. Thus nature will be beautiful, wonderful and fascinating if they are in a happy moment, and vice versa.

Although love in this novel is natural and nothing can interfere with it since the old social traditions which are represented by the grandfather have been defeated, the heroine, as is the habit of romantic heroes, is very worried about the future and what it may bring and very cautious of fate and its random blows;

1. Fadaytuki, p.239.

2. Ibid., p.160.

"I am afraid of the future, it seems to me very ambiguous like this extended sea, and I am afraid of life in which happiness disappears quickly while the suffering remains among us."¹

This is because romanticists believe that their life is not controlled by themselves but by a mighty power which directs their life as it wishes. This power is fate, something frequently discussed in the last two novels.

As in his previous works the writer creates some secondary characters whose role is to warn the hero about his excessive imagination and dreaming, like the grandmother in Innī Rāhila, and the friend of the heroine in Bayn al-Aṭlāl. He creates the nursemaid of Rājiya here to play the same role and we hear her advising the heroine,

"I am apprehensive about your dreams. Dreams are sweet but the facts are bitter and the worst thing about dreams is that we face the severe reality as soon as we get up."²

Sadness is also one of the elements of the romantic character and although there is nothing in this novel to cause sadness or suffering for the heroes we find them inflating simple things into a cause of grief, because usually the romantic character finds enjoyment in pain. The heroine, for example, describes her state when she imagined that her lover would leave her:

1. Fadaytuki, pp.170-71.

2. Ibid., p.121.

"I went to my bed, and in the suspicions that were occupying my mind I feared that he would leave me. I felt as though I were falling into a very deep and dark well, then I hid my head in the pillow and began to cry."¹

Romantic aspects, or rather the elements of romantic love, complement in this part of the novel the style and the role of language. Because the two lovers are artists, Ibrāhīm a musician, and Rājiya a painter and an admirer of music, the language rises to the level of musical art, containing verses which are an integral element of music. We hear Rājiya, for example, describing herself:

"In this hard and material atmosphere I grew up like a beautiful rose among solid rocks. A fine tune may captivate me, a beautiful melody may enrapture me and a hard word may prevent me from sleeping, and thus I have to create in this desert a small oasis to which I resort, seeking its shadow and drinking its pure water."²

Although the novel is written in prose style the writer employs some aspects of a poetic style such as condensed language and poetic pictures. Rājiya relates with a very quiet and dreamy rhythm how she fell in love with Ibrāhīm, and even in the dialogue we find

1. Fadayetuki, pp.191-92.

2. Ibid., p.102.

Ibrāhīm choosing soft and melodious words when he talks to her.

"The sun you are talking about has taken its light from you, from your sensitive feeling, its light is your heart's light reflected on it."¹

And when Ibrāhīm meets Rājiya the writer draws in many pages a very poetic picture to move the reader to the same heavenly atmosphere in which the characters find themselves.

"This romantic texture which is made from dreams and imagination, and which extended throughout the novel, and which coloured the events, actions and characters was romanticism with all its negativism, lyricism, poeticisation, seclusion, illusion, imagination and sadness."²

Technically the writer employs the same method as in the two preceding novels in that he begins the novel from the end or from nearly half-way through. In this novel he employs a new technique which is that the novel is related by more than one character, each one giving the reader another dimension of the story. It is, no doubt, a very useful technique which gives the novel more suspense, but he is not fully able to control it. For example, he sometimes allows the characters to talk without restraint or limit. Although the structure of the novel relies on a psychological complex and concentrates on a psychological analysis of the characters,

1. Fadaytuki, p.161.

2. Rāghib, Fann, p.216.

exposing their conscious and unconscious thinking, especially in the case of the hero, Ibrāhīm, an approach which gives the novel more dynamism than the last two novels, the novel is not devoid of certain mistakes. For example, the writer spends many unnecessary pages describing how Rājiya is persuaded to help the doctor in his treatment of Ibrāhīm. He sometimes uses dialogue which is not appropriate to the educational level of the character, and sometimes resorts to unjustifiable coincidences, although not very often, and to extended dialogue most of which is dispensable.

Chapter Nine

R E A L I S M

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After the Second World War a new generation of novelists occupied the literary field, the generation of Maḥfūz, who are often called the 'University generation'. In the face of social, political and economic crisis in Egypt at that time there were two choices for the novelist, either to face the crisis, revealing its causative factors and criticising the miserable reality with an objective vision, this being the attitude of realistic novelists such as Maḥfūz, or to concern oneself with a part of the crisis, treating it in a sentimental manner, as was the way of the romantic novelists such as As-Sibā^ḥī and ^ḤAbd al-Halīm ^ḤAbd Allāh. The romantic novels, in comparison with the realistic novels, were flourishing and widespread, but later they became unable to reflect shifts within society and to embody the aims of new classes. This led to the flourishing of the realistic novels which were developed later by new novelists such as Idrīs and ash-Sharqāwī. These realistic novels are marked by the portrayal of the problems of reality on the basis of social classes, not of individuals as in the romantic novels; in other words, the characters in realistic novels represent social types who carry the characteristics of their social class and express its thoughts and values. Although the

novels of both types reflected the crisis of Egyptian reality at that time, the realistic trend became more common, especially among the younger generation of novelists, and even appeared in the works of the romantic novelists, although they still preserved romantic aspects in their works.

In the case of As-Sibā^Cī, who began his literary career by entering the world of fantasy with the two novels Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl and Ard an-Nifāq as we have seen above, we have observed some realistic aspects even in these works, which criticize social reality from an idealist point of view which reflects the confusion of educated Egyptians in the face of social crisis. Next we see him concerned with a world of imagination and dreams, in his three romantic novels, but he also wrote many realistic short stories and two realistic novels. The short stories were published in three collections, Yā Ummatan Dahikat (1948), Bayna Abū r-Rīsh wa-Junaynat Nāmīsh (1950), and ash-Shaykh Zu^Crub (1950), while the two novels are as-Saqqā Māt (1952) and Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk (1968). In all these works he portrayed the Egyptian reality, selecting his characters from the lower classes, revealing their problems, sadness and gladness, and adopting the well known poor quarters in Cairo as a setting for the events.

It may be noticed that his three collections and the first novel were published during roughly the same period, while the second novel was published about sixteen years later. In spite of this we consider these works to represent a realistic stage in

his development, firstly because, as he said, the thought and the framework of his second novel had been buried in his mind since the early fifties,¹ and secondly because the time of the events in all these works is the same, lying between the twenties and the fifties of this century, and thirdly because the poor quarters of as-Sayyida Zaynab and al-Husayn in Cairo are the scene of the events in these works, although his second novel is more mature, both in thought and technique.

1. AS-SAQQĀ MĀT (1952)²

Shūsha is a religious, kind, moral and poor man, who works as a water carrier in the twenties when there was just one main tap in the whole quarter under the control of a government official. The work of Shūsha is to carry water from this tap and distribute it among the houses for a small amount of money. Shūsha lives in a very old and dilapidated house in a poor quarter, and his family consists of one son, Sayyid, who is nine years old, and his mother-in-law, Umm Āmna, who is a blind old woman, his wife having died when she was young in childbirth. The death of his

1. ash-Shārūnī, Namādhij, p.191.

2. As-Sibā^Cī uses the term Saqqā rather than the literary form Saqqā' in allusion to the popular Egyptian children's saying: Abūk as-Saqqā Māt.

wife caused him sadness and depression, and he spends almost every night alone, crying and asking God the secret of his wife's death, and attempts to console himself with some verses of the Qur'ān, hanging them on the wall of his room. Shūsha's ambition is to become responsible for the main tap instead of the immoral employee who is from the same quarter. His son, Sayyid, helps his father occasionally and goes to the Kuttāb sometimes, and like other children in the quarter is quarrelsome and mischievous. But the life of Shūsha is changed when he meets Shihāta Afandī, another main character in the novel, who is also a poor and destitute man who works with al-Afandiyya.¹

After their meeting, Shihāta lives with Shūsha, and through their friendship each one influences the other; Shihāta, who never believes that there is any goodness in this life and looks on all people as evil because of his miserable and humble life, until he meets Shūsha who revives his trust in people, and Shūsha, who was afraid of death, and is affected by the viewpoint of Shihāta towards death. But Shihāta dies, and Shūsha decides to face death by working at the same job as Shihāta, even though he has been made responsible for the main tap instead of the former official. The

1. al-Afandiyya: a group of people whose work is to wear a smart black suit, holding a censer in their hands and walk in front of funerals to the cemetery for a small wage. This was a common job sixty years ago in Egypt.

people of the quarter who learn of his new work reject it, and his son, Sayyid, hates being despised by his friends because of his father's work and asks him to stop going with the Afandiyya. At the end of the novel, when Shūsha is ill sleeping in his room, the wall of the room falls down and he dies. Sayyid after him becomes responsible for the main tap in the quarter.

as-Saqqā Māt is the first realistic novel of As-Sibā^{Cī}, and is related to his collections of realistic short stories in that it is set in the same place and the same period. In this novel the writer attempts to come closer to reality and to take a more objective view, after having confined himself and his characters in the world of individuality in his romantic stage. as-Saqqā Māt was accepted and appreciated by Arab writers and critics to the extent that some of them considered it as one of the best contributions of Realism in the Arabic novel,¹ and that if As-Sibā^{Cī} continued in the same way in subsequent novels he would be regarded as one of the great Arab realistic novelists, since this novel proved his accurate observation, whether in depicting the characters or in description, narration and dealing with thoughts. We shall therefore study the realistic aspects in this novel in detail.

Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic in this novel is the way in which he sketches the characters. For the first time we do not find the individual hero who lives in his own world, isolated from reality as we have seen in his romantic novels.

1. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.85.

We do not find this hero overwhelming the attention of the writer and reader alike; rather we find here many different characters, both psychologically and socially. The characters here, as mentioned above, are social types rather than individuals. It is true that there are main characters who play a great role in the novel, but this does not mean that the other secondary characters do not contribute. Even Shūsha, the first main character, as Mandūr says:

"... who represents most of the characteristics of the lower class of Cairo, does not always occupy the stage of the novel, but frequently watches with us, like other people of the quarter, what the child Sayyid does, to the extent that the son is nearly equal to his father in attracting our eyes and sympathy",¹

and although the novelist himself throws a concentrated light on his main characters, he does not disregard the others, as he did in his romantic novels. Equally, he does not neglect the influences of the environment and its traditions upon the characters and their behaviour, thoughts, interactions and development, and this is the first major characteristic of his realism. The most important point here is that the writer succeeds, for the first time, in creating developed characters, not characters like his romantic heroes who never change throughout the novel; here the character

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.65.

is very different at the beginning and at the end of the novel. Another thing which we would like to mention here is that the absolute ideal view, in his romantic stage, urged the writer necessarily to introduce only one side of the character and thus we find them either good or evil, black or white, angel or devil, while the characters in this novel conform to R Liddell's prescription; they are,

"... neither to be 'unexceptionable' nor 'completely depraved', but a mixture of good and bad, like the characters we know in real life, from self-knowledge or from observation."¹

The novel is full of characters, but we may note that there are three main characters who form the backbone of the novel, and who convey the ideas of the writer to the reader; these three characters are Shūsha ad-Danak, his son Sayyid, and Shihāta Afandī. Shūsha is young, kind, forgiving and beloved by the people of the quarter. He works as a watercarrier and wishes to be put in charge of the main tap, and to be freed from carrying waterskins and wandering among the houses, since the present official is evil, immoral, a drunkard and hateful to the quarter. Shūsha is in the habit of spending a few hours in the cafe of the quarter in the afternoon, meeting his friends, talking, playing backgammon and smoking the narghile. This is one side of his life, the visible

1. Liddell, A Treatise on the Novel, p.96.

side, while the other hidden side is his private problem, the death of his wife. From the beginning of the novel he seems sad and gloomy, sitting in his room at night staring through the window at the sky, and sometimes crying.

We discover the reason for his sadness later, when he tells his son about his mother (Shūsha's wife) who was a young and beautiful girl who used to work as a maid with her mother in one of the rich houses, which was in the same quarter. Shūsha used to carry water to that house every day and irrigate its huge garden, and there he met Āmna (Sayyid's mother) who asked him to irrigate a tree which she had planted. With the passing of time a strong relationship between them grew up and once, when Shūsha was ill and could not leave his bed, Āmna came to visit him frequently to take care of him, and brought him some food from the rich house, until this was discovered and Āmna and her mother were dismissed. Then Shūsha, in order to keep faith with her and because he loved her, married her and she, with her mother, lived in his old house. He was very happy with his young wife, but she died in childbirth. He was shocked and could not believe that he could lose his faithful young wife so easily; her death, in fact, caused him all that sadness which we and his son have noticed. As a reaction, Shūsha hated his son at the beginning because he thought that his son was the reason for her death and would rather she had lived than his son, but the sadness of her mother was stronger and she continued to cry for her daughter for many years, until she lost her eyesight.

Shūsha did not marry again because he could not forget her and still loved her very much. In time he loved his son deeply, as a part of his deceased wife, as much as the grandmother did. Thus the relationship between him and his son is more than between father and son and he does not hit or scold him if the son does something wrong but prefers to leave him for a few days without any words until he realises his mistake, and at the same time does not grudge him anything he is able to give him. But the problem of death occupies his mind, raising many questions, such as why man should die and what his condition will be after death. We hear Shūsha talking to his son about the death of his wife:

"She also was kind, she had never done any evil thing, and she was not old or ill, also you and I were in need of her, but she died ... why? I do not know. I used to ask the stars, the sky, and God, why she died, but I could not find any answer except that death has no reason, it is just like life. Why are we born and why do we die? Who knows?"¹

But because Shūsha is a religious man who believes in fate and the divine decree, he attempts to be patient, consoling himself with some verses of the Qur'ān, hanging them on the wall in his room and in the tap shed, once he becomes responsible for it. Among these verses are:

1. Saqqā, p.38.

"Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who say, when afflicted with calamity: 'To God we belong and to him is our return'."¹

and

"... to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering), adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God fearing."²

This character who is preoccupied by death, who is afraid of and confused by the secret of death, believes at the same time that God has ordained that he should live so and accepts it. A main character enters his life and turns his thoughts upside down, this character being Shihāta Afandī. He is a whimsical person, representing the kind of poor people who attach no deep value to life and are concerned with the present rather than with the future.

Shihāta believes in God, although he perpetrates every kind of disobedience and does not find any sin in so doing as long as he does not hurt others; he does not even abstain from comparing a pimp with the angel of paradise in the hereafter on the grounds that the pimp "offers us the houris of earth and takes the fees in cash, while Radwān (the angel) offers us the houris of paradise and his fees are paid by God".³ He also respects and believes in the

1. Qur'ān, 2, 155-56, tr. A Y Ali.

2. Ibid., 2, 177.

3. Saqqā, p.265.

Qur'ān because he feels it is beyond his ability to understand.

Shihāta is poor, wretched and homeless, having neither a fixed place to stay or a steady job, and has practised many different professions before becoming one of al-Afandiyya. Because of his poorness, vagrancy, unrespectable work, and the harsh behaviour of people towards him, he hates and despises them. Because they do not admit his humanity he looks on them as evil, taking every opportunity to cheat them in reaction to their contempt. The meeting of Shūsha and Shihāta comes as a result of one of Shihāta's attempted deceptions. He appears in the quarter as a stranger wearing black trousers, black jacket, a white shirt and a tarboosh. Like anyone who wore such western clothes at that time he is called Afandī, although his clothes and appearance are not smart. He is very hungry and has not even a penny in his pocket. Then he finds a masmat (a kind of restaurant selling cooked sheep's heads and trotters) owned by a big, ugly woman who still behaves as if she was a young girl, and he thinks he has found a good opportunity to flirt with her in order to obtain a substantial meal. Accordingly he enters the masmat, eats a good meal and flirts with the woman, who enjoys the flirtation but nevertheless demands that he pay, and is on the point of taking his clothes off in lieu of payment. Shūsha, however, who is eating with his son in the same masmat, intervenes himself and pays on Shihāta's behalf. Shihāta, who has lost his trust in people, is taken aback by the kindness and generosity of Shūsha and promises himself to get some money by

selling some of his clothes in order to pay back the amount he owes to Shūsha.

A few days after their first meeting Shūsha finds out that Shihāta has no family and no home and, as he believes that there is a lot of good in him, he suggests to Shihāta that he comes and lives with him, offering him the store in which he keeps the water-skins as a room for very little rent. From the time when Shihāta begins to live with Shūsha the novel takes a very different course, to the extent that some critics consider the meeting of Shūsha and Shihāta to be the true beginning of the novel.¹ The interaction between the two men begins to take place; they are very different from one another although they like each other and seem happy in their friendship. The reason for this is that one finds in the other what they are looking for in life. Shūsha is kind, religious, patient and beloved by the people of the quarter and he respects society and its traditions, while Shihāta is irreligious and fights and cheats in order to live. He is spurned by society which casts him out and which, in turn, he rejects. Because of his religiosity, faithfulness to his wife and feeling of responsibility for his small family, Shūsha does not approach sins, disobediences and forbidden things, while Shihāta practices these things publicly as a protest against social traditions, and believes that most individuals in society practice such things as much as he does, in secret. Shūsha

1. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.81.

has no worries except about death, a problem which makes him afraid and confused, wishing to understand its secret, while Shihāta on the contrary, because his work compels him to deal with dead people all the time, has defeated the fear of death within himself.

Finally, Shūsha's work is to carry water to people, hence he is carrying life to them, while the work of Shihāta arouses repugnance among people and hence he robs people of life. Of course he is not himself responsible for death but he is still one of the main tangible faces for people involved in a death. Through the relationship between these two characters, each one affects the other, and Shūsha, who is afraid of death, begins to believe in the simple view of Shihāta about death, that everything in this world has an end and as long as the human being is one of these things he should have an end as well, and he should leave this life for another one to replace him.¹ On the other side, Shihāta begins to regain his trust in people and to believe that this life has some good things as long as kind people like Shūsha exist, and thus we find him carrying food and gifts to the family of Shūsha when he obtains some money. Moreover he even apologizes to Shūsha if he behaves wrongly in front of him, while before he did not care what he did in front of people. This is, in fact, an indication that the human soul is not difficult to deal with and that sympathy and sharing in hardship may reform a soul which seems evil or idiotic.

1. Saqqā, p.240.

Once, for example, Shihāta was sitting with Shūsha in the cafe of the quarter when suddenly a beautiful prostitute passed near to the cafe and Shihāta could not restrain himself and began to practise his usual habit of clapping his hands, moving his eyebrows, drawing a big smile on his face and saying some amatory words and poetic verses. This behaviour embarrassed Shūsha in front of his friends but when Shihāta realised his mistake, he apologized and moreover began to go with Shūsha to the mosque to pray, listen to the Qur'ān and participate in religious dancing, although he criticized it. The relationship of Shihāta with Shūsha and his family becomes stronger and at the same time Shihāta seems to be more wealthy since his work has become more prosperous so that sometimes he takes part in two funerals a day. He is still, however, continuing his personal life style, in which he drinks, smokes hashish and enjoys himself outside the house. Since seeing the beautiful prostitute at the beginning of his relationship with Shūsha, he works hard to achieve a pleasant night with her and manages to save some money. He then pays her pimp and arranges a time with him. In the morning he starts to prepare for his enjoyment that night. He buys a quantity of meat, some drinks and various drugs, and then goes to his work. Fortunately there is a rich funeral, but the distance between the house of the dead man and the cemetery is very long and he comes home very tired, eats the meat and fat which he bought, smokes some hashish and enters his room for a short nap. Later Shūsha discovers him dead.

With the departure of Shihāta from the life of Shūsha the problem of death inside Shūsha becomes more complicated. A few days later one of al-Afan diyya comes asking for Shihāta because they need him for a very urgent funeral. The Afandī suggests that Shūsha should replace Shihāta and, although he hesitates at first, he accepts in order to practice in reality what Shihāta told him about death - the necessity to face it. When Shūsha first begins working with al-Afandiyya, he cannot face death, but later he becomes accustomed to it. Although he is given responsibility for the main tap he is still working with al-Afandiyya in the afternoons, until his son asks him, at the end of the novel, to stop this work. He promises his son to leave al-Afandiyya as soon as he gets rid of the fear of death, but soon after Shūsha dies under the fallen wall of his room as he lies ill.

The third main character is the son Sayyid. He is an intelligent, clever boy, but he is very quarrelsome and has a sharp tongue. He is beloved and pampered by his father and grandmother because he is all that remains of their dead loved one. Sayyid hates going to the Kuttāb and so his father prefers to employ him as a water-carrier and gives him a small waterskin, but because of his cheekiness, Sayyid is continually getting into mischief, which embarrasses his father. Once, for example, after he has poured out his small waterskin over the garden of a rich house, he attempts to steal some fruit, and on another occasion he throws a stone at a tree laden with fruit but the stone breaks a window. After each

of these escapades Sayyid goes back to the Kuttāb fearing the punishment of his father, although his father does not punish him more than by leaving him for a few days without one word, which is hard punishment for him. Even in the Kuttāb, because he is cleverer and stronger than his friends, he leads some children to play tricks on the teachers, or to fight other boys. Sayyid, however, observes the sadness on the faces of his father and grandmother, noticing also his father sitting alone at night staring at the sky, and his grandmother bowing her head, talking to herself sometimes, but does not understand why.

This continues until his father starts to work with al-Afandiyya, and the boys begin to torment him.¹ He learns of the popular superstition that those who work with al-Afandiyya will soon die themselves and he feels that he will not be able to bear the loss of his father as easily as that of Shihāta. He implores his father to stop and then his father tells him the story of his mother and how he worked with al-Afandiyya to defeat the fear of death. From that time Sayyid understands the sadness of his father and grandmother. Indeed Shūsha, who believes in Shihāta's view of death, transmits the same view to his son and thus we find Sayyid wearing the uniform of al-Afandiyya and walking in front of the funeral of his father and hear him saying to the people of the quarter what his father taught him:

1. By chanting "Abūk as-saqqā māt, yamshī fī l-janāzāt, wa-ḥayhaṣṣal al-amwāt".

"I am not sad, he is not the first dead father and I am not the first orphan. These things happen regularly in this life."¹

The novelist thus manages to employ this character as one of the main characters of his novel and to show us, through him, the children of poor people in all their circumstances.

These are the three main characters in this novel and on their lives the novel is founded. Thus the writer throws the strongest light on them, but although the other characters are secondary they participate in crystallizing the novel. Among these characters is Umm Āmna, the grandmother of Sayyid, who is old, blind, very kind, religious and patient; she takes care of Sayyid and pampers him more than his father. She also likes to help other people and through this character the novelist shows us many traditions of this society in poor quarters. The other character is al-Hājja Zamzam who is the contrary of Umm Āmna, representing the evil side among the individuals of this class. She is hateful in appearance and manner, has a very sharp tongue and will fight anyone, even the child Sayyid when he asks her to give him what she owes his father, to buy medicine for him, which she refuses. Thus most of the people of the quarter attempt to avoid her. Although she is a relative of Shūsha she tries to profit from the relationship to gain water without paying. During her life Zamzam marries three men, two of whom died while the third escaped from her evilness, and

1. Saqqā, p.429.

so she opened her masmaṭ to keep alive. She is not the only evil character for her assistant is similar to her; although he has been working with her for twenty years each one hates and wishes to kill the other, in fact both of them are one face of evilness.

Among other characters are the pimp, Sharaf ad-Dīn ad-Dabbāḥ, and the prostitute, ^CAzīza Nawfal, of whom Shihāta was enamoured. The appearance of the pimp, his smart clothes and his quiet sitting in the cafe, do not indicate his immoral job to the extent that when Shihāta flirts with ^CAzīza and the pimp glances at him, he thinks at first that he is her husband or relative. It would have been possible for the novelist to neglect these two characters because of their immorality but, in fact, he prefers to draw a true picture of the society he has selected in his novel and thus he describes all its characters and their good and bad deeds. There are other characters who complete the picture of the quarter, such as the butcher Maḥmūd Khasht the neighbour of Shūsha, Husayn, the poor man whose job is to make his monkey and goat perform to gain some money from people, Zakī and his assistant the owner of the fūl¹ and ta^Cmiyya² shop in which the people of the quarter come together to have their breakfast, ^CAlī Dinjil, the former official in charge of the main tap, who is divested of his job for his immoral behaviour and finally al-Shaykh Sayyid who is the senior member of al-Afandiyya, who carries many different kinds of drugs in his

1. Cooked broad beans with oil, a national dish in Egypt.

2. Patty made of beans and seasoned with onion, garlic and parsley, another national dish in Egypt.

pockets. There are also a group of children who are friends of Sayyid.

All these characters play different roles, each one according to his position in the novel, but all of them build up the reader's idea about the society from which the main characters are drawn and their traditions, customs, conversations, arguments, co-operation, hatred, kindness, naiveté, belief in God, and atheism, and they are still real characters who conform to Forster's criterion "that a novel is a work of art, with its own laws, which are not those of daily life and that a character in a novel is real when it lives in accordance with such laws".¹

The main preoccupation of the novel is the problem of death, which occupied As-Sibā^Cī himself in most of his works, but death here is not the mere controversy between ^CIzrā'īl and the narrator which we saw in the first novel. Nor is it a suitable end for a novel as in Innī Rāhila, but it does play a great role in changing the course of events and it effects the characters and their behaviour, and hence controls the novel, to the extent that Ghālī Shukrī considers it,

"... the true hero of the novel, not because it is a means of living for some characters, but because it is the link which connects the absent wife of Shūsha and the sad situation which reigns in the house."²

1. Forster, Aspects, p.69.

2. Shukrī, Riwāya, p.83.

It is worth mentioning that death in general, and unexpected death in particular, occurs in almost all the works of As-Sibā^Cī, this being presumably related to the unexpected death of his father who was apparently in good health and died suddenly.¹ Unexpected death occurs in this novel three times, first the death of Āmna, Shūsha's wife before the beginning of the novel, and then the deaths of Shihāta and Shūsha himself. Although all these deaths were unexpected, the novelist manages to employ the element of intimation to diminish the impact of the surprising event upon the reader, for example when Shihāta is at his last funeral, during all

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1. An interesting and revealing light on As-Sibā^Cī's attitude to death and bereavement was related to the present writer by the novelist's one-time secretary, Husayn Rizq, in Cairo in January 1980. On one occasion Rizq's wife begged As-Sibā^Cī not to let the heroine of Nādiya, which was being published in serial form at the time, die, to which he replied (in Egyptian colloquial) "Shut up or I will kill them all!" More importantly, the poet Fawzī al-^CAntīl asked him why he killed off Shihāta in as-Saqqā Māt without allowing him to enjoy the night of pleasure which he had been looking forward to so much. As-Sibā^Cī replied, "I want to deprive them of happiness as much as God deprived me". These anecdotes seem to indicate that As-Sibā^Cī had some fairly deep-seated psychological complexes in this area which go a long way to explaining his treatment of this theme in his novels.

the distance between the house of the dead man and the cemetery, he is dreaming of the enjoyment which he will obtain with ^CAzīza that night and thinking how much money he needs and whether this funeral will give him what he needs or not. We hear him addressing the dead man:

"If you saw ^CAzīza, you would not begrudge me a lot of money, but you are unfortunate and cannot see ^CAzīza because you are dead. Oh, this is the worst thing in death, that it will deprive us of enjoyment with ^CAzīza and her like",¹

and indeed he does not enjoy himself with ^CAzīza, for he dies on the same night of which he is dreaming. There is a similar intimation before the death of Shūsha. Shūsha goes with his son to the public bath where he tells his son about the death of his mother and death in general, then Shūsha's illness occurs and finally there is a dialogue between Zamzam and Sayyid, who asks her to give back what she owes his father, upon which she refuses and wishes Shūsha dead.

At the very beginning of the novel Shūsha is sad because of the death of his wife and is yearning to know the secret of this terrible problem. He remains in confusion and mourning for his wife until Shihāta comes. Although Shūsha likes Shihāta, he feels fear and foreboding when he discovers his job, like others who see an evil omen in this kind of work. Shihāta himself, however, does

1. Saqqā, pp.290-91.

not consider his work to be any different from the work of those who sing at wedding parties, except that "the singer brings man to a troubled life, while I bring him to a quiet life".¹ Because of this problem which is tormenting him, and because of his kindness, poorness and religiosity, Shūsha renounced pleasure in worldly things, believing that desires may humiliate the human being and make him a slave to his desires. He thinks that the person who can restrain himself from forbidden enjoyment is free and strong, always wishing that God should protect him from his evil desires. Shihāta, however, despite the hardness of his life, the contempt of people towards him and his resentment against them, rejects this view. We hear him saying to Shūsha:

"If you do not have anything to do and only wish to achieve, why then are you living? ... life is not worth living without those desires which you refuse, ... the joy of life is to run after something you need, to struggle to achieve your wish and if you have nothing to need and to run after, it means that you are dead."²

Although his social life is full of sadness and misery, Shihāta is full of joie de vivre and he pursues enjoyments as much as he can. The novelist tries to show all aspects of his character, describing his delight when he sees ^CAzīza for the first time and describing his fear of the pimp who is watching him, whom he supposes to be a relative of ^CAzīza.

1. Saqqā, p.233.

2. Ibid., pp.265-66.

This contradiction between the two characters is the main point of the conflict in the novel. When Shihāta realises that Shūsha is superstitious about his job and that he is afraid of death because of a problem in his own life, he attempts to convey to him his experience with death in order to soothe his friend's pain and to help to discover the real nature of this problem. He begins to minimize everything in this world, saying that everything in this existence has to come to an end including the human being and that every new thing will be worn out:

"Just like the body which cannot wear a worn garment, the earth cannot bear an old human and just as the garment may be torn while it is still new, so that one casts it off, the earth gets rid of its residents while they are still young."¹

Shihāta even rejects the religious view that bodies vanish, while their spirits live. He thinks that man invented this idea himself as a result of self-deception, because he is unwilling to compare himself with other created things. In any case,

"What is the benefit of spirit without body? All feelings, behaviour, desires, joys and pains of man are reflected from his body. He wishes because his body does, he feels appetite because his body does so and he loves because a part of his body sees a part

1. Saqqā, p.241.

of another body. Thus it is stupidity to separate spirit and body, or to imagine the existence of the spirit after the death of the body."¹

Because man will not accept death as an inevitable end he surrounds it with dreadful imaginings and feels a fear of it. Shihāta realizes that it is difficult for Shūsha to accept this idea when he has not accepted the death of his wife, and so he tells him his experience with death. He used to be afraid of it, and when he worked with al-Afandiyya for the first time he could not prevent himself from being affected by the sadness of the family of the dead man. He cried until his friends among al-Afandiyya laughed at him, but with the passing of time he managed to defeat the fear inside himself and even began to bring dead people into the tomb without feeling fright. In order to show Shūsha the equality in death among people of whatever rank they are, he tells him that all of them will be no more than a rotten corpse in which worms live and that there is no difference between this corpse and the body of a dead dog which is thrown on the open road. The only difference is that the human is searching for loftiness whether in life or death because that is his nature. The conclusion which Shihāta reaches is that death is "a natural end for unnatural creatures".²

This pessimistic view of the human being, as no more than a creature which will die but which ignores this fact because of his

1. Saqqā, pp.241-42.

2. Ibid., p.248.

self-deception, is not only the view of Realism which believes in the evilness of the human being, but also the view of the novelist himself who is influenced by the effect of the unexpected death of his father. Shihāta's opinions create an internal conflict within Shūsha, between his submission to this phenomenon religiously and his revolt against emotion, for although Shihāta minimises the phenomenon of death for Shūsha, he cannot diminish the impact of the surprise of death. Thus, when Shihāta dies, Shūsha cries:

"Oh, death, you are cowardly and treacherous, always coming suddenly, ... you seem far away, but you are hidden behind this knife or that stick, under this window or in that morsel Oh death, appear for us, we are not afraid of you but we are afraid of your taking us by surprise."¹

Shūsha takes his second step to facing death at the funeral of Shihāta when he wears the suit and walks in front of the funeral. This symbolises his acceptance of the view of Shihāta, that the human being likes pomp whether in life or death, and so Shūsha pays his deceased friend the last honours in the same way which Shihāta used to do for other people. In the cemetery he attempts to take Shihāta down in the tomb, but soon loses control and weeps in torment. Although Shūsha is thus defeated in his first encounter with death he insists on facing it again and again in order to be like Shihāta. Thus he does not hesitate when he is asked to replace Shihāta and begins facing death every day. At first he fails but in time he

1. Saqqā, p.308.

becomes accustomed to his new secondary work and realises the truth of what Shihāta told him, that it is nothing more than a matter of becoming accustomed. However Shūsha, who has defeated the fear of death in himself, also dies unexpectedly and this seems like an intimation from the novelist that anyone who attempts to challenge fate will himself die. Perhaps the novelist felt that this ending was too melancholy and pessimistic and so changed it by letting Sayyid take over his father's responsibility for the main tap, the giver of life. This conveys the meaning that the human being as an individual may die, but that mankind remains as long as life itself continues.

Although the problem of death is the main concern of the novel, the writer deals with many other ideas, portraying many different aspects of the society he has selected, sketching its people in their sadness and gladness, their work and relaxation, the worship and unbelief, and giving in fact a complete picture of this society. Among the matters discussed is stealing, which is almost a habit of poor children. The child, Sayyid, attempts to steal some fruit from the garden of a rich house, and in the Kuttāb he steals some food from the canteen, but all his attempts to steal are for food and the obvious suggestion is that poverty is the first reason for this unlawful behaviour. Sayyid likes to eat this kind of fruit or that kind of food but he cannot, because of his poverty, while he sees the garden of the rich people full of fruit, more than they need. Thus he justifies his stealing when

taken to task by his father in the following irreligious words:

"I think to take what other people have, if we are in need, is not stealing, it is in fact a help from us to God in order to distribute his bounty and establish his justice; we actually do not take what other people have, but we take what God has which is surplus to the others."¹

His father believes, on the other hand, that stealing whatever it is, is forbidden by religion and that we are

"... too weak to decide what people need and the egoism we have is enough to cover our eyes and for us not to see anything except what we need. None of us can feel what others need, none of us can see more than his own need; he is always in need while others are not."²

The argument between Shūsha and his son may be beyond the intellectual capability of a small child, but it is in fact an expression of the feeling of all impoverished and destitute people. Perhaps the comparison between Sayyid, his need for food and the rich heroine of another of As-Sibā^Cī's novels, Layl Lahu Ākhir, whose mother insisted when she was a child that she should eat different kinds of meat, of which the family dining table was usually full, in order to supply her body with protein, will serve to show the deep gap between

1. Saqqā, p.38.

2. Ibid., pp.38-9.

the two classes and its economic influence upon the characters with its obvious criticism of the contrast between the classes and its social influence.

Among other things the novelist criticizes is the role of the dervishes, who also play a part in his realistic works. This is perhaps because the writer himself is originally from one of these poor quarters which are full of shrines and are frequented by Shaykhs, holy men, ṣūfīs and lunatics who live around them. These people have their own life, traditions and customs. Among them we may find those who are faithful to their asceticism and hypocrites who adopt ṣūfism as an implement to reach their own aim, which is no more than to obtain enough food to keep them alive. Shūsha takes Shihāta along to a Mawlid,¹ and after the dinner men form a line in the mosque, led by their Shaykh, and begin their religious ceremony, mentioning God, moving from left to right, forward and backward,

1. It is a common practice, especially in Egypt, for people in a certain quarter, in which a shrine is situated, and those from neighbouring quarters to come together and celebrate the birthday of the person buried in the shrine. On that day food is distributed, processions of religious dancers come to the mosque, the biography of the Prophet is recited and around the mosque many things are to be found, such as swings for the children, musicians with female dancers, magicians, etc. In this way the people of the quarter used to spend an enjoyable night.

shouting frequently "God is alive ... God is alive". Shūsha and Shihāta, along with the others are completely engaged in mentioning God, but when Shihāta feels tired we hear him talking to himself, criticizing what he and the others are doing and thinking of the words "God is alive".

"Why do they insist on calling him alive, when any simple creature could be so described, and what benefit do they gain by describing God, who cannot be dead, as alive? ... but I do not think he is alive, for if he were, would he keep silent over this shouting, without destroying these people to keep them silent?"¹

The writer portrays accurately and elaborately the traditions of the society he has chosen, giving an idea of all the jobs of the people in this quarter and their social relations. We shall not be exaggerating if we say that what the novelist reports here is a historical document for the study of these societies in the twenties and thirties of this century and of traditions most of which have begun to disappear now. Indeed, accurate recording and fineness of detail is one of the most important elements which realist writers are concerned with.

Because his main character is a water carrier, the writer gives us an idea of this work and explains that because the water carrier goes into people's houses he has to be honest. The

1. Saqqā, p.214.

writer also gives details about the work of al-Afandiyya and their behaviour and traditions; for example they pretend sadness when they are walking in a funeral as a part of their duty, but when they feel tired because of the long distances they sometimes have to walk, they do not hesitate to abuse the deceased and his family secretly, or even openly sometimes. In the cemetery the writer portrays another group who have to do with the dead, the Qur'ān readers. These are poor people who stay in the cemetery waiting for the dead; whenever a new corpse is brought in they run and sit around the grave reading some verses of the Qur'ān for money which they may be given by the family. The writer describes this group ironically, attempting to show their misery and even portraying the way they read, the first one beginning with the first verse of the sūra, followed by another with the second verse, then by a third with another verse, and so on until they finish the sūra quickly, to the extent that even Shihāta himself condemns this kind of reading, until one of al-Afandiyya tells him that they are no better, and that all are ways of living.

The writer also describes the social links and co-operation among the individuals of the quarter. Although they are poor and some of them may behave badly, they are like one big family, helping each other. Shūsha, for example, lets his neighbour have his daughter's wedding party in his house because his neighbour's house is small. When Shūsha needs some money the butcher of the quarter lends it to him, although what Shūsha asks for is all that he has.

Another example is Shihāta's funeral; at the beginning only Shūsha and three other men precede the deceased, but as soon as they pass through the quarter, most of the people participate in the funeral. The realistic novelist does not ignore any element of reality and so, just as As-Sibā^Cī portrays the good side of this society, he also exposes the evil side and sketches many bad and immoral characters such as Zamzam and her assistant, the prostitute ^CAzīza and her pimp, and ^CAlī Dinjil who was formerly responsible for the main tap and who was immoral, bad-tempered and hated by the people of the quarter. He was not a water carrier but was appointed to his position by influence, or so Shūsha thinks, and here we find the role of patronage even among poor people and simple jobs. The picture of the quarter is completed by portraying the children in their playing, fights, enjoyment, study and work; through the children the writer records many children's games played at that time. We may notice that even their playing indicates their class so that, for example, they play football, not with a real ball but with a ball made from many different worn rags rolled up together, which in Egypt is called Kūrat Sharāb (sock ball).

The style which the writer follows here is realistic and he uses the elements of Realism, whether of narration, description, or dialogue. Among the most important elements are the definitions of time and place; at the beginning of the novel he spends five pages describing and delimiting the quarter exactly, showing two different pictures of the same place, the first in about 1920, the

time of the events of the novel, and the second in about 1950 when the writer came back to the same quarter. He also describes all the places to which the characters go and the houses in which they live, so accurately that the reader may feel bored sometimes. The time is defined by fixing it clearly in words or through the dialogue and the narration. This is similar to Balzac's technique for connecting the novel to reality by carefully defining time and place. As a result the reader is given an idea of the social background of the characters, and hence he may understand their behaviour.

Observation and accurate detail is another element to which realistic writers give great importance. The novelist should be conversant with his characters and must describe their physical appearance, their behaviour, education, inclinations and wishes, how they talk, how they sleep, what they wear and what their features look like when they are sad, angry or glad. The writer has recorded all the details of the life of his characters; he follows the people of the quarter, for instance, when they meet in the Fūl and Ta^cmiyya shop to have their breakfast, and after portraying them physically he mentions their clothes, the way they go around the shop, the food they eat, their way of eating, their behaviour with the owner of the shop, their talking and joking, and so on. This accurate observation gives the characters and events another dimension and hence the reader will be more familiar with them and their activities.

When talking about the realistic novel we should not ignore the language as an important element in it. Realistic writers

do not pay great attention to style, embellishment and bombast. The realistic style is nearer to reality than the romantic style and as long as the realistic writer attempts to record everyday life, his style will be drawn from reality, although of course the skill of the writer plays a role in the choice of suitable expressions. In this novel *As-Sibā'ī* is faced by a dilemma: if he uses the colloquial in the dialogue the novel will be confined to Egyptian readers only, while were he to write it in classical Arabic he would falsify the true reality of the characters. He himself raises this issue in the introduction to the novel and comes to the conclusion that the colloquial will not detract from the successful novel while the classical will not enhance the importance of a bad novel. He quotes Tawfīq al-Hakīm's *ʿAwdat ar-Rūh* as an example of the use of colloquial dialogue and he says that he attempted to write the dialogue in this novel in classical Arabic but "as soon as I began writing a few pages I found the characters, against my will, speaking in colloquial".¹

Although he prefers colloquial he intersperses the dialogue with classical language when dealing with intellectual concepts, such as the reflections of *Shihāta* upon death. The colloquial dialogue which is used in this novel is closer to reality than the classical because the entire novel, with all its characters, events, thoughts and places, is taken from the popular environment,

1. Saqqā, introduction, p.6.

whose people would never talk in their life except in colloquial. Thus, if he had written the dialogue in classical it would have been incongruous, while the colloquial dialogue makes the character more understandable for the reader. Even though all the characters speak in colloquial, we can certainly feel the differences between Shūsha, Shihāta, Sayyid and Zamzam in their conversation, because the characters are talking here, not the writer. This is why we feel the interference of the writer when Shihāta explains his point of view about death, because obviously it is strange when Shihāta, whom we know very well throughout the novel, suddenly talks in classical educated Arabic. However, the dialogue of as-Saqqā Māt indicates As-Sibā^C's thorough grasp of the colloquial language and his ability to distinguish between manners of speaking; there is a difference between the way men and women talk and between Shūsha the water carrier, and Shihāta the Afandī, to the extent that Mandūr thought that As-Sibā^C's grasp of the colloquial was as great as his father's of the classical.¹

Irony is one of the elements of As-Sibā^C's style in his realistic works and the ironic style which we observed in Nā'ib Izrā'īl and Ard an-Nifāq appears in this novel, even in the dialogue. His irony shows the influence of the environment and is an effective means of criticism, whether by drawing a ridiculous caricature of a certain character or by portraying a certain tradition sarcastically.

1. Shukrī, Fikr, p.64.

This characteristic feature of much of As-Sibā^{Cī}'s work is what we earlier described as his 'realistic comedy', which is strongly satirical and sometimes cynical in tone.¹ Zamzam, for example, is sketched in a comical way as an intimation that this character is unpleasant not merely in her character but in her appearance as well. This is how he describes her sitting in front of her masmat:

"Zamzam settled down on the bench with crossed legs, and the masses of fat which surrounded her hung down around her, fold upon fold hanging down upon the fold beneath it, and as she sat she looked like a pyramid, its base consisting of buttocks and thighs The second layer was formed of her stomach, and the surrounding fat which was wrapped around her waist ... and the third layer which followed the layer of the stomach was formed of her chest and the fat of her back which appeared prominently behind her neck and under her arms, like the hump of the camel",²

and he continues in his description of the various parts of her body, provoking mockery and disgust for this character at the same time. This accurate picture points to the skill of As-Sibā^{Cī} in description and observation, to the extent that ad-Disūqī thinks that As-Sibā^{Cī} has the brush of a painter and his experience in colouring, decorating and embellishing;³ in fact drawing was one of As-Sibā^{Cī}'s hobbies.

1. See Chapter Seven, pp.224-5.

2. Saqqā, pp.44-5.

3. Shukrī, Fikr, p.129.

The writer does not only use irony in his capacity as narrator but the characters also, and their words and actions, make fun of each other. Even the names of the characters, such as Shūsha ad-Danak, ^CAlī Dinjil, Maḥmūd Khasht, etc., are laughable, and at the same time these names give the impression that the characters are poor and from a poor quarter, compared with the soft names of the heroes of his romantic novels, such as Aḥmad, Sāmiya, Kamāl and ^CĀyda. These names are usually given to educated rich people from the upper class. Moreover he may use a name sarcastically to give the opposite meaning: the name of the pimp in the novel is Sharaf ad-Dīn ad-Dabbāḥ,¹ while he is, in fact, a pimp and a coward.

as-Saqqā Māt is a successful novel whether in exposition of ideas, control over the dialogue, narration, description of sequence or events, but it is not without certain technical defects, among them excessive elaboration in description of people and places; the dialogue is sometimes inappropriate and his transition from one subject to another is sometimes abrupt.

2. NAHNU LĀ NAZRA^C ASH-SHAWK (1968)

In one of the poor quarters of Cairo, Sayyida, a poor child of seven, lives with her father who is an old man, and her stepmother who is a disreputable dancer. Sayyida is treated roughly

1. Lit. 'Honour of the faith'; the name Dabbāḥ is Egyptian colloquial for dhabbāḥ (slaughterer) implying strength and courage.

by her stepmother who regards her as a servant. After the death of her father one of the neighbours takes her to live with his family which consists of the father, who is a kind religious man and has a printing press in the same quarter, his wife, who is more cruel to Sayyida than her stepmother, and their fourteen-year old son ^CAbbās, who is unsuccessful at school. Sayyida lives with this family and when she grows up ^CAbbās seduces her and encourages her to steal from shops and cheat the shopkeepers for his benefit, until she is caught by the shopkeeper and other people in his shop. They almost take her to the police-station but a young, well-dressed youth intervenes and pays for what she stole. Sayyida feels ashamed and asks him to employ her in his house as a maid. She begins working with this new family which consists of father, mother, their young daughter Samīḥa, and the young, gentle son Hamdī who saved her from the shopkeeper, and she feels happy with this kind family who respect her and sympathize with her.

After the death of the father, the family moves to another quarter to be near the grandfather. Sayyida is still with them and she is now relatively well-off because the mistress has saved her wages for her and used the money to buy her jewellery. Sayyida admires and loves Hamdī who treats her gently and respectfully and does not make sexual advances to her, but she realizes that the gap between an educated rich boy and a poor maid is too great and conceals her love in her heart. Time passes and Sayyida becomes a captivating woman, attracting men when she walks in the

street. ^CAllām, who is a seller of soft drinks near the house in which she works, falls in love with her and then marries her. She leaves the family to live in her husband's house with his family but soon an argument between Sayyida and her mother-in-law takes place and she asks ^CAllām to move away from his family. He refuses because he has no money and so she gives him her jewels to rent a separate flat. ^CAllām seems busy looking for a good flat but a few weeks later she discovers that he has used her jewels to marry another woman and to rent a flat for her. She demands a divorce and after the divorce leaves ^CAllām's house at midnight, thinking of her body which captivates men and which is the only property she has. She decides to employ it, and when a car containing two young men and a girl stops beside her and they invite her to get in, she joins them, and sleeps with one of the men. In the morning the other girl, who is a prostitute, invites Sayyida, after hearing her story, to work with her in a brothel. Sayyida begins a new life as a prostitute in a brothel run by a woman called Tawhīda. Although she earns a good deal of money, especially as she is the most beautiful woman in the brothel, she feels that it is a hard life. In this brothel she meets ^CAbbās again and he begins to visit her frequently, makes love to her and gives her, instead of money, cut-price tickets of the kind Tawhīda sells to regular customers. Then Tawhīda discovers that ^CAbbās has forged these tickets and accuses Sayyida of being in collusion with him and dismisses her.

Before she leaves the brothel, Sayyida meets Dalāl, her

previous stepmother, who has become the keeper of another brothel, and she asks Sayyida to work with her. Sayyida moves to the house of Dalāl which is in a rich quarter and seems better and cleaner than the former one, most of its customers being wealthy people. Sayyida settles down in the new brothel and meets Anwar Bāshā, who was a poor plumber in the same quarter as Sayyida when she was a child but is now a rich man. Anwar likes her and enjoys her company. He rents her a luxury flat, opens a bank account for her, gives her one hundred pounds a month and asks her to leave the brothel to be his only mistress. She stays with him for some time and becomes quite wealthy, but later she begins to think of getting married, settling down and having children. She asks Anwar to marry her but he refuses. Dalāl now asks her to return to the brothel, but she refuses. During her visit to Dalāl, however, she meets ^CAbbās, whose father has died and who has inherited all his father's property. He has purchased the rank of Bey and is now ^CAbbās Bey. He knows that Sayyida is rich and, hoping to exploit this, he forms a plan. He begins to visit her frequently, treating her gently and buying her gifts and food until she is convinced of his sincerity, and then he proposes to her and she accepts. ^CAbbās lives in her flat and for the first months of their marriage he behaves like a faithful husband and she becomes pregnant.

Later ^CAbbās begins to withdraw her money in a way which never arouses her doubts. He tells her that he is spending her money to buy a new printing machine, or to invest in a commercial

project, although in fact he has become addicted to gambling. Sayyida has a baby called Jābir and seems happy with her son. Later she discovers that ^CAbbās has lost her money and cheated her and that he also knows nothing about his father's printing press and has not even attempted to work. She tells him to leave, begins to sell most of her furniture, leaves the luxury flat and rents a small, cheap one. She thinks of working in a moral trade, even as a maid, in order to achieve a good future for her son. ^CAbbās visits her, asks for more money and hits her sometimes, so she goes to court to ask for a divorce. ^CAbbās manages to have the case rejected on the grounds of her disreputable past and so she takes her son and returns to the same kind family with whom she worked in her early life and stays with them. ^CAbbās brings a case of Bayt at-Tā^ca¹ against her and wins. She goes back to his house but later he divorces her in exchange for payment by her and she returns to her small flat with her son. She begins to work in the clinic of a doctor who lives in the same building. Her son, Jābir, goes to school and she seems very happy with her simple life and her son. But ^CAbbās again intervenes when his son reaches the age of seven, at which age he has the right to take him according to the law and indeed does so. Sayyida becomes sad and worried; the son escapes from his father and comes back to his mother but on his way back he is hit by a car and dies. Sayyida is deeply shocked and even ^CAbbās is shocked by this dramatic event which changes his life. He asks her to forgive him and attempts to return to his father's

1. Lit. 'The house of obedience'; under Islamic law a woman in a case of unlawful desertion must return to her husband's house.

printing press to work. Sayyida continues to work in the clinic until one day she is requested by a family to nurse their sick son. By chance it is the same family of Ḥamdī, whose son is sick. After the son recovers the family ask her to stay with them and she accepts. At the end of the novel she becomes ill with cancer and dies.

Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk is the second realistic novel of As-Sibā^Cī and is related to his first novel as-Saqqā Māt and his three collections of short stories, in that it takes place in the same environment, which is the poor area around al-Ḥusayn and as-Sayyida Zaynab in Cairo. The places in which the characters of this novel live and move are the same places in which As-Sibā^Cī himself lived, and most of the characters here are similar to those in his former realistic works and are based on real people. Sayyida, the main character for example, is similar to some extent to Fāṭima Shaykhūn, the heroine of Fī l-Māwardī, one of his short stories in the collection Bayna Abū r-Rīsh wa Junaynat Nāmīsh and to whom As-Sibā^Cī dedicated this novel. She was, in fact, a maid in the house of his family. Perhaps the life of Sayyida is not exactly the life of Fāṭima, but certainly both of them faced the same hardships. As-Sibā^Cī is one of those writers who adopt their characters from their life, relatives and friends, thus we find that the family of Ḥamdī is, almost, the family of As-Sibā^Cī himself. Nevertheless, the novelist does not simply transfer the real people to his novel but shapes and changes them into fictional characters. This

difference between people in life and people in books is emphasized by Forster. Discussing the character of Moll Flanders he says:

"The odd thing is, that even though we take a character as natural and untheoretical as Moll, who would coincide with daily life in every detail, we should not find her there as a whole."¹

He also says that:

"... a novel is a work of art, with its own laws, which are not those of daily life and that a character in a novel, is real when it lives in accordance with such laws."²

The most distinctive aspect of this novel is the fact that its structure is more firmly organised and that *As-Sibā'ī* shows a much greater control over characters and events. Characters are not completely delineated at a single time but we discover their full dimensions during the course of the narration, from behaviour, actions and reactions to events in the novel. They may meet each other in one part of the novel, then separate for some time, then come together again on a different level. For example Sayyida meets *Abbās* when she is a maid, he disappears from her life then meets her again as a prostitute, and he disappears again to meet her a third time when he becomes her husband. This happens not only with the main character Sayyida, but also with other characters, *Ḥamdī* for instance, who meets his love *Ṣafā'* in the second quarter of the novel,

1. Forster, Aspects, p.68.

2. Ibid., p.69.

who then disappears for many years. When Ḥamdī has reached a good position in life she returns to ask him to help her son find a job.

In addition to his success in using aspects of Realism, as will be discussed below, the writer also employs some aspects of Naturalism such as the influence of the environment and heredity upon the development of the characters. He also manages to use, to a certain extent, some techniques associated with the 'Stream of Consciousness' such as internal monologue, soliloquy and association of ideas.¹ These techniques contribute to the artistic success of the novel for they enable the writer to give another dimension to the characters and events, to make the reader more familiar with the characters by showing their internal mental processes and to move more easily from one thought, event, action and attitude to another. By means of interior monologue, whether direct or indirect, which he employs frequently, the writer moves from the present time of the focal character Sayyida as she is sick, lying in bed and about to die, to fifty years ago during her childhood.² Perhaps the basic difference between the two kinds of monologue is that the indirect monologue,

1. For a discussion of these terms, see Humphrey, Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel, pp.23-41.

2. Beginning the novel from the end is a favourite technique of As-Sibā^Ḥī which he uses in most of his novels and even short stories.

"... gives to the reader a sense of the author's continuous presence; whereas direct monologue either completely or greatly excludes it. This difference in turn admits of special differences, such as the use of third-person instead of first-person point of view; the wider use of descriptive and expository methods to present the monologue."¹

As-Sibā^{Cī} also employs the soliloquy which is, according to Humphrey:

"... the technique of representing the psychic content and processes of a character directly from character to reader, without the presence of an author, but with an audience tacitly assumed. Hence, it is less candid, necessarily, and more limited in the depth of consciousness that it can represent, than is interior monologue. The point of view is always the character's and the level of consciousness is usually close to the surface. In practice, the purpose of the stream-of-consciousness novel which employs soliloquy is achieved occasionally by the combination of soliloquy with interior monologue."²

Perhaps the first aspect of Realism which we may note in this novel is that the novel is full of characters, good and evil, religious and irreligious, educated and uneducated, and although

1. Humphrey, Stream of consciousness in the Modern Novel, p.29.

2. Ibid., p.36.

there are main characters on whom the writer throws a strong light the other secondary characters play a considerable role in influencing the main characters, especially Sayyida, and the development of the events and the characters all contribute to crystallizing the ideas which the writer wishes to convey. Secondly, the characters are either from the lower class like Sayyida, ^CAbbās, ^CAllām and even Anwar Bāshā who is originally from this class, or from the middle class like Hamdī. Thirdly, the writer depicts the slums and poor districts in which the characters live, and fourthly, he attempts to show the influence of the environment and of the characters upon each other.

The whole novel is a biography of a poor human being and her struggle to keep alive and to find happiness, freedom and status in life. It is the story of Sayyida Jābir, the poor uneducated maid who became a thief, prostitute, wife, mother, and nurse, before she finally died. Through her life, which occupies fifty years, from the first decade of the century to the fifties, the writer displays a wide panorama of Egyptian society with all its people, classes, quarters, traditions, problems, sadness and happiness. The detailed observation and accurate recording of this society shows As-Sibā^Cī at his peak as a realist.

Because the novel is a complete biography and is a long work it is divided into two volumes consisting of 47 chapters in all, and because of the varied nature of the characters and events and their development from one stage to another we prefer to divide

the life of the focal character into four stages in our analysis. These stages are first, Sayyida's childhood and adolescence which occupies ten chapters; secondly, the period spent as a maid in the house of the kind family of Ḥamdī, with whom she spent many years of her life returning at the end to die among them - this stage consists of seventeen chapters. Thirdly, her life as a prostitute in the brothels, which consists of nine chapters; and lastly, her marriage to ḤAbbās and her death. This does not mean that there is no connection between one stage and another for, in fact, each stage is integral to the other and the characters who appear in one stage may appear again in another stage.

Sayyida's childhood and puberty is the first step in forming her awareness and so the writer focuses on the influence of the environment and characters upon her and portrays accurately the quarter and people of al-Māwardī in which she lives. This is the quarter in which As-Sibā^Cī himself spent his childhood, and he attempts to acquaint the reader with its hidden and secret sides. Sayyida is from a poor family and lives with her father who is an old, religious, poor man, a weak person who is afraid of his wife who does not care for family life. His wife, Dalāl, Sayyida's step-mother, is a frivolous and disreputable woman who does not hesitate to make love with men even in the house, when her husband is absent, or to spend a whole night outside the house. She treats Sayyida harshly and looks on her as a maid. Sayyida hears the people of the quarter talking about Dalāl and her mother who were known for

dancing and prostitution. In this contaminated environment the child Sayyida grew up, between the grimness of her step-mother and the gossip of people about her and the weakness of her father who has lost the respect of people in the quarter. This environment is, in fact, one of the many factors which impelled Sayyida to be a thief and later a prostitute. This is what Naturalism emphasizes, that the environment has a great influence upon people; thus the fear of her stepmother incites Sayyida to lie, and being deprived of the good food which her stepmother enjoys drives her to steal.

On the day she is eight years old her father dies. The problem of death which occupied As-Sibā^Cī in most of his works rises again in this novel, in which death happens five times - the death of her father, the death of the father and mother of Hamdī, the death of her son, and finally her own death. But each time the feeling of Sayyida towards death is different, according to her development. On the first occasion the writer devotes more than two pages to describing the reaction of Sayyida to the death of her father:

"Your father has died, Sayyida, ... died ... what does that mean? It means he has gone ... but where, Sayyida? If only she knew where the dead go, it would not matter so much She would go with him or at least she would let him go and would go to him when she wanted, but those who die do not come back and do not take anyone with them and nobody knows where they are, so that they can go to them when they want. It is ridiculous."¹

1. Nahnu, p.66.

She feels lonely, after the death of her father who loved her:

"She looked at the funeral procession walking with its coffin ... your father has gone, Sayyida and he will not come back and you will not be able to go to him. You will have to face Dalāl alone, in fact you will have to face the whole world alone."¹

After the death of her father she goes to live with a neighbouring family which consists of the father, Bura^Cī, who is the owner of the printing press in which her father worked. He is kind, religious and serious in his work. There is also his ugly, rough and old wife, and their son ^CAbbās. This character will play a great role in the life of the focal character. We meet him first when he is fourteen years old. He is impudent, selfish, wicked and unsuccessful at school. He does not care about anything except enjoying himself and although his father attempts to chastise him, his mother spoils him by her pampering because he is the only son she has, and as a result he does not hesitate to steal some furniture from the house to sell it outside. However, Sayyida is treated badly by ^CAbbās's mother and she is made to work hard all day without rest or payment, except some food to eat and a place to stay. It seems to her that ^CAbbās's mother is more iniquitous than her step-mother. Before she sometimes used to play with the other children and receive some money from her father but now nobody cares for her.

1. Nahnu, p.78.

"Sayyida had not thought that a morsel of food could cost so much effort, she had come to wish that she did not need this morsel, for without dispute, it did not merit this effort and it was not really food, but the remnants of food. Nevertheless, she had no alternative, for she did not know, from her present world, anywhere but this place."¹

Being deprived of good food and the sweets which children enjoy is the first problem, as it drives the young Sayyida to steal. On the first occasion she steals some Ta^Cmiyya from a shop. ^CAbbās is another factor who encourages her to continue stealing. In addition to the influence of environment and characters upon her, another influence rises from inside herself when her body begins to grow up and she realises the beauty of her figure and is aware of the glances from the men in the street when she walks. She now needs more than food to eat and a place to sleep, these needs being created by her new feelings of adolescence:

"If only you had a mirror, Sayyida, in which you could look at your face ... if only you had a comb ... a headscarf, and a dress instead of this worn, pale one ... many things, Sayyida, if you had them, you would be something else. Although you do not have anything except this prominence in your chest and plumpness in

1. Nahnu, pp.82-3.

your buttocks, they attract the glances of men in the shops and on the street ... what do you suppose, if only you had the rest of these things, a comb, a mirror, a headscarf, a dress and perfume and soon things which are bought with money. Everything, food, clothes and make-up is obtained by money, but you do not have money."¹

The thought of money occupies Sayyida's mind. With money she can obtain anything. She can gain her freedom and this is, in fact, the first thing which leads her to prostitution later on. The first person to implant this idea in her mind is ^CAbbās, who seduced her in return for a small coin. After he has made love with her for the first time the writer devotes many pages to describing her feelings through an internal monologue, in which she reaches the conclusion that everything is obtained by money. She compares her hard life with the few minutes in which she tried what people call ^CAyb (disgrace),

"... for this piastre with which you can buy anything you wish and can acquire everything you are deprived of, you stood leaning against the wall, your dress raised up, and you bore the body of ^CAbbās for a few minutes ... Amazing! That life puts us in a position to compare what is natural with ^CAyb ... Inconceivable ... A few minutes of ^CAyb, Sayyida, gave you what years of toil, sweeping, polishing and washing did not give you."²

1. Nahnu, pp.163-4.

2. Ibid., p.133.

This way of thinking encourages her to search for another way to gain money and she attempts to use her beautiful figure to arouse the lust of men, particularly the owners of shops, in order to cheat and steal from them. She thinks that money is the only way to save her from the misery in which she lives, but ^CAbbās has a strong and dominating character and he encourages her to steal, begins to make love to her without recompense and takes what she gains from stealing. She gives it to him perhaps because, firstly, she does not hate him as he does not seem as evil as his mother and sympathizes with her sometimes, and secondly because she hopes that he will marry her, especially after he tells her that he will be the only inheritor of all the property of the family when his father dies. She even acquiesces in his point of view that he does not need to work as long as he can find what he wants. On one occasion she asks him:

"'But you take from the labour of others. Others have the toil and you have the enjoyment.'

'Why not? ... tomorrow I may have to toil without the enjoyment ... some people have the enjoyment and others expend the labour.'

Sayyida looked at him and gave a long sigh. There was no doubt that she was one of those who expend the labour ... would she enjoy herself tomorrow?"¹

1. Nahnu, p.188.

We notice here another feature in the delineation of the character of ^CAbbās, to which we drew attention above, which is that the character is not described at once completely, but we discover it gradually through its actions, conversation and thoughts. This is, in fact, one of the good characteristics of this novel.

The corrupt environment in which the focal character lives would not create an exemplary character, and Sayyida steals, lies, practices ^CAyb and hates people, regarding them as evil and justifying her stealing and lies to other people as a reaction against their inequity towards her. When she gains fifty pence for cheating a grocer, Sayyida has the following conversation with herself:

"But you have wronged ^CAbd as-Ṣabūr (the grocer) ... and you? ... has not the whole world treated you unjustly? Has it not robbed you of your freedom and return for your efforts? Has it not deprived you of everything you want and given everything from which you are suffering? ... But ^CAbd as-Ṣabūr has not wronged you! You have not wronged those who wronged you ... but they found it to their advantage to wrong you, and so did so, as you found it to your advantage to wrong ^CAbd as-Ṣabūr and so you did."¹

This perhaps is the feeling of the human being when he is oppressed by others.

1. Nahnu, p.172.

Such characters are not completely evil and can be reformed if someone treats them sympathetically and shows them the correct way. Thus Sayyida, whose hard life caused her to lose her faith in people, cannot lie to the young man who saved her when she was finally discovered stealing, and she confesses her thefts to him easily:

"For the first time she felt that a human was giving her this kind of feeling, standing beside her and protecting her from harm ... she wanted to hold on to something which would pull her out of the abyss of baseness in which she lived, where there was nobody to give her a kind word or a kind feeling ... all of them wanted her to work for them."¹

The second stage of her life begins when she starts to live with the new family, which has a great influence upon her and with whom she keeps in touch until the end of the novel. Before we deal with the members of this family we must point out that there is a similarity between them and the family of As-Sibā^Cī himself. He chooses for the home of this family the district of Junaynat Nāmīsh where his own family lived, he gives the father of this family a character similar to his father's, and he sometimes narrates events which happened to his family. It is not, in Forster's view, a weakness for a writer to select characters and events from his life, environment and experiences, provided he manages to change these

1. Nahnu, pp.207-8.

real people into narrative characters and form them according to the laws of the novel.¹ As-Sibā^Cī in this novel succeeds in creating narrative characters, except for the father who is a copy of his own father.

Muhammad as-Samādūnī, the father of this family, is a writer, journalist and translator, Bohemian in his behaviour, friendly with most people, especially the poor, and attempts to enjoy his life as much as he can. Although he is not rich he spends most of his salary generously on himself, his family and friends, while his wife is the opposite of him, being concerned with ensuring the future of her family by saving some money. She is a kind, religious woman who attempts to bring happiness to her family and treats even the maid Sayyida as a member of the family. Although there is a big difference between the writer as-Samādūnī and his uneducated wife, they love and respect each other. The third character of the family is the daughter Samīḥa who is young, kind and forgiving and takes Sayyida as her friend, especially as she has no sisters. But the important character among this family is the son Hamdī. His importance is, firstly, because he accompanies the focal character almost throughout the novel and although he may disappear from her life from time to time, he appears again; secondly, because she feels a kind of love for him, although she attempts to hide it. Hamdī is young, handsome, kind, gentle and religious, and likes and respects his family. Although he is still a student at

1. See Forster, Aspects, p.69.

secondary school he attempts to write short stories and poetry like his father. He has a relationship with the daughter of a neighbouring family called Ṣafā' and we notice here the same characteristics of love which we find in his romantic novels, although love here is neither the main problem in the life of the characters nor unconnected with reality; reality seems to be stronger, having more influence upon the lovers, and they accept it as we shall see.

Sayyida lives among this kind family for many years, being captivated by their kindness, morality and magnanimity which have a great influence upon her. We may observe different effects of the environment in which she now lives; Sayyida used to lie, steal and practise CAyb before she came to this family, when she was living in her former quarter, because people there used to do the same, while now, since she met Ḥamdī and as a result of her life with his family, she does not lie, or cheat, or steal because there is no reason to do such things; "we lie when we are scared, otherwise nothing would impel us to lie".¹ When she comes for the first time to this family and finds that they welcome her she feels the huge difference between her former life and this new one. We hear her talking to herself:

"These people are amazing ... they wanted her to be with them, as though she had the right to happiness ... they asked her to take a bath, comb her hair and change her clothes ... this was something new to her, something

1. Nahnu, p.214.

different to what she found in the house of her father with Dalāl, or the house of Bura^ḳī with ^ḳAbbās's mother ... she did not dislike work, but she disliked being terrified and humiliated."¹

Although she is still a maid and her work is still not easy she feels happy with the family, participates with them in their gladness and suffering, and is treated as a member of the family. She has her own bed, cupboard and clothes, and Hamdī's mother collects her wages for a few months and buys her golden earrings. We hear her talking to herself in spontaneous language which shows the simplicity of her character:

"Sayyida, you have come the owner of golden earrings, like ^ḳAbbās's mother. You are no longer destitute, you are not poor, but you have your own wealth and tomorrow you may marry and become a housewife, ... it is unbelievable Sayyida, but it can happen. In fact, it has begun to happen. Do you not have gold in your hands? Do you not have earrings? And tomorrow you will have bracelets."²

This new life of Sayyida leads to a change in her attitude towards other people and things, and when she visits her former quarter and meets its people she disapproves of its dirtiness:

1. Nahnu, pp.219-20.

2. Ibid., pp.276-7.

"Has this place changed? Sayyida, have these alleys become narrow? Have the dirtiness and shabbiness increased? ... No ... the place has not changed, ... but you yourself have changed."¹

Perhaps her hidden feeling towards Hamdī is one of the many factors which make Sayyida yearn for a better life, and brings her to leave after she marries. Her feeling begins when he saves her from the grocer, being at first a feeling of gratitude but soon becoming a kind of admiration and then love. The writer enters into her consciousness to show her feeling and its development towards Hamdī; when she learns of the relationship between him and Ṣafā' and his eagerness to meet and talk with her, she wishes that he would treat her in the same way, but we hear her consciousness saying:

"What have you got that he should give you what he gives Ṣafā'?' Ṣafā' is a lady and he is a gentleman."²

When she fails to learn to read and write, which Hamdī and his sister have made efforts to teach her, she thinks that the difference between her and Ṣafā' is in education, but then she realizes that many poor people in her quarter have become rich without education and so she concludes that the difference is money. With money she will be different, she will be educated, a lady and as rich as Ṣafā'. But she knows her position and so buries her feelings in her heart.

1. Nahnu, p.281.

2. Ibid., p.238.

"Yes, Sayyida, you are useless, you will remain humble as you are now, no money can lift you up because you have no money and no knowledge can benefit you, because you have no intelligence. You have to conceal these beautiful things inside yourself, because you feel it for a type which your type cannot rise to."¹

Sometimes she even thinks of her captivating figure which attracts the eyes of men, even Hamdī's father, and in this way the writer seems to be preparing the reader to accept Sayyida as a prostitute later on. For example, she asks:

"Is it possible that this body with its distinctive fullness is your only gift in life? Your way to what you want? And your stairway to rise up to it? Maybe, without a doubt it is attractive. It succeeds in attracting the glances of all the men. Without exception ... except for him. But does her body really not attract him ... or does he think himself above that?"²

Thus, as far as Hamdī is concerned, she accepts reality and keeps her love in her heart.

Hamdī also submits to reality when Ṣafā', with whom he is in love, marries a teacher while he is still a student. He

1. Nahnu, p.242.

2. Ibid., pp.272-3.

decides that love is valuable in the souls of those who love only, while in the face of reality and people whose life is controlled by many needs and requirements, it seems weak and ridiculous. Perhaps the hard circumstances in which his family live, after the death of his father, force him to adopt this attitude, so that he faces reality, buries his love and takes responsibility for his family. His sadness at the loss of his father and sweetheart lead him to take a pessimistic view of life:

"We are employees in this life, Hamdī, the greatest one of us is an employee. What we possess in life is delusion and the seizing of property which we think is ours, is the basis of life. It is taken from us without reason ... and you have to submit."¹

The illness and death of Hamdī's father is described in great and realistic detail by As-Sibā^Cī, because it is similar to the death of his own father. At the same time he describes in detail the thoughts of Sayyida, in order to show the different effects which the death of her own father and Hamdī's father have on her. She realizes that the latter's sickness has a different effect from anything she had experienced in her own home district. His illness is a cause of grief for all his relatives, friends and neighbours. She actually sees him dying; he inhales and exhales twice, but the third time he does not exhale again. Her thoughts are described as follows:

1. Nahnu, p.368.

"The man is dead, Sayyida. He died like your father, but this time you saw the dead man with your own eyes. You saw how people die. Death is not as dreadful as its name, Sayyida, at least as regards the person who actually meets it. With his quiet features ... and his pale peaceful face He took in two gasps and let them out as two sighs ... just as we do all the time Between you and the dead man, Sayyida, there is just one sigh."¹

After the death of the father she moves with the family to another quarter. In this period a new character appears in her life, ^CAllām, who plays a noticeable role in pushing her indirectly towards prostitution. He is a seller of soft drinks near the house in which she works and likes her and attempts to seduce her. Sayyida, however, who has had previous experience with ^CAbbās and whose relation with the family influences her behaviour, is too strong-minded to be cheated by ^CAllām and so he proposes to her at a time in which she is already dreaming of becoming a lady and a housewife and leaving the kind family. Perhaps it is human nature that Sayyida, who previously yearned to have money, beautiful clothes, good food and a comfortable life, is now eager to achieve something else. She is tired of her life as a maid and wants her own husband, children and house, in which she can be in control, and so when ^CAllām proposes to her she thinks:

1. Nahnu, p.339.

"This is the first proposal Sayyida, for you to go out into the wide world, whether serious or not. Whatever its results, it is a new tone in your life, different from the swear-words which you were accustomed to hearing from your stepmother and ^CAbbās's mother and different from the language of the master which, however gentle and soft they may be, had in their essence the style of a master."¹

She marries ^CAllām, but cannot achieve her dreams of mastery because she lives with her husband's big family and finds herself serving all of them, and in addition many problems arise between her and the family. Although she gives ^CAllām her jewels to rent a separate flat, he sells them and marries another woman. After she is divorced she thinks of going back to the kind family, but she feels she cannot do this:

"It is not easy to turn back when our steps forward are unsuccessful. Nothing in life comes again, just because we want to bring it back. Our steps forward are only followed by other steps forward, whatever the path we follow. There is no way to return, Sayyida ... continue your steps in your own way ... but where?"²

The third stage of her life begins, when she enters the world of prostitution. Although it has been prepared by two former stages, the writer describes the final stage in this process. On the very night of her divorce she is picked up by two men and a

1. Nahnu, p.393.

2. Ibid., p.562.

prostitute and she joins them:

"A few minutes ago you were standing on the pavement with nowhere to go ... but your body gave you the refuge. This body, Sayyida, you must subordinate to your will, it is always attractive."¹

Money is the basis which gives the human being rights, freedom and independence; this is the opinion which she had from the very beginning.

Thus Sayyida begins her new life as a prostitute.

The world of prostitution is a very strange one. The relationship between prostitutes, the brothel-keeper and the customers is very complicated, and everything depends on cheating, hypocrisy, stealing and trickery. This world is far removed from that of normal human relationships. Many Egyptian writers have portrayed in their works the brothels which were widespread and permitted in certain Arab countries during the thirties and forties of the twentieth century, when the government used to supervise them and raise taxes from them. Because Egyptian society was stratified, the brothels were divided into rich and poor brothels; thus for rich people there were magnificent brothels with beautiful girls whose manners towards the clients were different from what was found in the brothels of the middle and poor classes. The brothel-keepers were mainly women, each of whom had her own way of dealing with her prostitutes and her customers. For example Tawhīda, for whom Sayyida worked, used to sell tickets

1. Nahnū, p.568.

at reduced prices to her regular customers. Because the brothels were also places in which people indulged in drinking and smoking hashish, as well as sex, many problems and arguments arose inside the brothels and so the keepers employed strong-arm men to protect them and their prostitutes. An example of this, in this novel, is Abū Zayd, the bouncer who is supposed to be the lover of Tawhīda only, but is in the habit of chasing her girls. Because she does not want to lose him she prefers to dismiss any prostitute to whom Abū Zayd pays too much attention, and this is what happens to Sayyida.

As-Sibā^Cī manages to portray accurately this world and its people, problems, relationships and treatment of its customers, whether in rich or poor brothels, because he follows the focal character, Sayyida, who begins her life of prostitution in a poor brothel and then moves to a rich one. This attention to the actual details of life in the brothels, as opposed to the social effects of prostitution, is what distinguishes As-Sibā^Cī from other writers who have dealt with the subject, and is a striking example of his realism.

Although Sayyida becomes accustomed to her work and the atmosphere around her and obtains a good deal of money because she is more beautiful than the others, she realizes that the freedom and independence for which she is searching will not be found here:

"You are no longer in control of yourself and your time ... you cannot even think about them; you have no specific hours even to sleep, not even a private bed ... your bed is the place of your work ... your body is your profession,

you cannot even dispose of it as you wish It is the right of the customer to choose you, not yours, as long as they pay."¹

But whatever the case may be she continues her work because money still occupies her mind, especially when she moves to a rich brothel and becomes the private mistress of Anwar Bāshā, who offers her a luxury flat, a current account at the bank, and one hundred pounds per month:

"With unrestricted wealth you will be free from the dominance of others and by the need of others for you, you will have control over him, and the more your hand is full of money the more your ability to be independent and free will increase."²

Through her relation with Anwar, the writer reveals some social aspects of the class of people whom he represents. He was a poor plumber and became a rich building contractor by the use of bribery; as he says, "bribery is the very necessary profession for anyone who wants to be wealthy".³ This is the same way in which the poor Sayyida becomes rich and Anwar Bāshā is no better than Sayyida. She becomes rich through her body and he through bribery and the exploitation of opportunities, especially during the Second World

1. Nahnu, pp.586-7.

2. Ibid., p.660.

3. Ibid., p.652.

War, when a class of war profiteers appeared. It seems that the writer is condemning a society in which there are only two ways to become rich - either by cheating or by prostitution. Secondly, the considerable wealth of Anwar causes him problems in that he always needs to be cautious: "as I cheated people I have to be aware of their cheating, be aware of all those with whom I have dealings."¹ Thirdly, the writer emphasizes the contradictoriness of this character Anwar, who is married, faithful to his family and respected by people, at the same time rents a flat for a prostitute to enjoy himself secretly. However, Anwar has an influence upon Sayyida for, although he refuses to marry her when she asks him he brings her at least one step further away from the brothel and, as a result, she refuses to go back to this work when he leaves her.

In addition to Anwar there are two other important characters who appear in this stage of her life. The first is Hamdī, the only one whom she loves and to whom she looks as her ideal. The appearance of Hamdī reminds her that whatever position she has reached she is still debased, and when she meets him in the brothel she is as shocked to see him there as he is, and when he asks her why she chose this way she cannot answer, but her consciousness whispers:

"Why did you not love me? ... Do you realize that I have not loved anyone in my life except you? Why did all these things happen? ... Who cultivates thorns in our path?"²

1. Nahnu, p.654.

2. Ibid., pp.678-9.

Fate consists of many obscure and incomprehensible things to whose unknowable laws we can only submit by an act of faith; according to E Muir this is a religious concept, and it appears to be so here.¹

The third character is ^CAbbās, the first person who encouraged her to steal, used to make love with her and urged her to prostitution. When he meets her for the first time in this stage, in the poor brothel of Tawhīda, he encourages her to continue working:

"O Sayyida, you moved around as you wished, then at last you settled down in your right place. I knew you should be here, this is your place and you must not lose your life in vain."²

^CAbbās appears as he was before, living by cheating people, and once again attempts to take advantage of her to persuade her to adopt him as her protector, just as Tawhīda does with Abū Zayd, but she refuses. Soon ^CAbbās disappears, having been discovered forging Tawhīda's tickets and put in jail. He appears again when she is living in Anwar's luxury flat. Now he has become a Bey, having inherited all the property of his family after the death of his father. He is aware of her relationship with Anwar, who has now left her, and realizes that she is wealthy and so seizes this opportunity and proposes to her. Although she knows that he is still a useless and inconsiderate person she accepts his offer, firstly because she is beginning to think seriously of marrying,

1. Muir, The Structure of the Novel, p.111.

2. Nahnu, p.589.

settling down and becoming a mother, and also because of his respectful behaviour towards her, before their marriage. Although he knows her past he proposes to her when nobody else would be prepared to marry her.

"This is an amazing opportunity which has been offered to you. Give him a chance, Sayyida, and he may succeed. Enter with him through the door which he is opening for you ... who knows, maybe God will guide him and you He may re-establish his father's printing press and take care for his work and you will have children and draw a veil over your past, ... try, Sayyida."¹

Sayyida gets married to ^CAbbās, leaves her life of adultery and begins a new stage of her life as a wife and mother. She seems happy with her husband and son. But a few years later she discovers that ^CAbbās is cheating her and spending her wealth to enjoy himself. From this time problems begin to arise. The first thing that we may observe in this stage is the influence of their son upon her. Motherhood changes her outlook on life, wealth and people. She feels more responsible for her son than his father does, and when ^CAbbās steals most of her wealth she blames herself: "but what about this small child? You brought him to life, while you do not possess enough to feed him".² She

1. Nahnu, p.744.

2. Ibid., p.769.

does not even mind working again as a maid in order to provide a good life for her son, who has become a part of her. Even her ideas about the independence and freedom for which she was searching have changed:

"It is nothing, there is no mastery, no freedom in this life. After you have freed your body from being humiliated, you are enslaved by your feelings towards him; you are ready to sell your freedom and abandon your mastery to him."¹

Although she is in need of money she never returns to prostitution, either during her son's life or after his death, and instead she works as a nurse.

As a result of difficulties between her and ^CAbbās, she finally brings her case to the court with a demand to be divorced, but she loses the case. On the other hand ^CAbbās brings a case of Bayt at-Tā^C against her and wins. Through these cases the writer shows the contradictions of the law and attempts to criticize the Shari^Ca court;² when she loses her case we hear the writer accusing the law as a man's law through her consciousness:

"Let ^CAbbās be whoever he is in view of the judge, clever, reasonable and respected and let her be whoever she is, but she cannot associate with him, she rejects his company. Does she not have the freedom to separate from him? This is the law of man, he enacts it and he is the beneficiary of it."³

1. Nahnu, p.803.

2. Court dealing with family matters of Muslims.

3. Nahnu, pp.813-4.

As-Sibā^Cī, who supports the rights of woman and her emancipation in most of his works, rejects the institution of Bayt at-Tā^Ca and addresses Sayyida through another character, when she is taken by the police to her husband's house.

"Are you being taken to your husband by the police, Sayyida? At a time when the rights of woman and her equality with man are taught in the schools? This is a strange society."¹

Perhaps the main difference between Sayyida and ^CĀyda, the heroine of Innī Rāhila, in their criticism of their personal status, is that the case of Sayyida is a social phenomenon, while the case of ^CĀyda is an individual one. The exposing and criticising of social problems is an important aspect of As-Sibā^Cī's Realism.

The important event in this stage is the death of her son. This is the fourth time in which death occurs in this novel, but if we attempt to make a comparison between death, which is frequent in the works of As-Sibā^Cī and death in this novel, we may notice that death here is not a mere coincidence which may happen at any stage in the narrative, but has a narrative role; sometimes it conveys the sense of the passing of time, like the death of as-Samādūnī and his wife, and sometimes it makes the conclusion of narrative events. Thus the death of her father, for example, paves the way for her neighbour, the mother of ^CAbbās, to dominate her.

1. Nahnu, p.829.

Sometimes death is not the end of a particular character but the end of the novel itself (the death of Sayyida) and sometimes it is no more than an underlining of the recurrence of death as a motif in her life, like the fatal accident to her son. This shock is a repetition of former shocks caused by her marriage to ^ḤAllām, then by her relationship with her lover Anwar, and then by her second husband ^ḤAbbās, but the death of her son has a very strong impact for many reasons; as ash-Shārūnī remarks, "first it happened suddenly, secondly it happened when she was advanced in years, and thirdly it is the fourth shock in her life. Thus it destroys her soul and finally she faces fate directly".¹

However, if the death of her son creates a sadness which accompanies her for the rest of her life, it changes ^ḤAbbās himself completely and for the first time he feels regret for all his evil behaviour and accuses himself of being a murderer: "by your selfishness you killed him; what a wicked man you are ... the only good thing which you managed to generate unintentionally in this life, you kill".² Such a corrupt character cannot be reformed except by a strong shock. This impact of shock leads ^ḤAbbās to return for the first time to his father's printing press and to attempt to work and begin a new life. Although ^ḤAbbās deprived her of what she gained through her life of prostitution, he in fact saved her from prostitution itself, especially when she had her son. ^ḤAbbās and

1. ash-Shārūnī, ar-Riwāya al-Miṣriyya al-Mu^Ḥāṣira, pp.55-6.

2. Nahnu, p.906.

her son left her life, but their passing was not useless as it purified it from prostitution.

Sayyida spends the rest of her life among the same kind family of Hamdī, taking care of his son, and at the end she dies or, as the writer puts it, gains her freedom:

"She cannot feel anything Now Sayyida, you have your own freedom, you are no longer enslaved by your needs, wishes, feelings or sadness, now you are free from all suffering and pains of life."¹

We come to the end of the novel, with the end of the focal character and with the same sad tone which accompanied Sayyida from her childhood to her death. This is what the novel attempts to show, that the life of a human being on this earth is full of suffering and grief, and that he strives to achieve his needs, wishes and hopes with a struggle which does not end as long as he is alive. Although the life of Sayyida could be a symbol of the struggle of the human being in life, and his search for independence, nobility and freedom, he cannot find them except in death. Despite this we feel the greatness of the human being whose desire for life, in spite of all the determinism of fate and death, is stronger than anything else.

In Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, As-Sibā^Cī manages technically to strengthen the structure of the novel and to avoid many of the mistakes we may observe in some of his novels. The events do not

1. Nahnu, pp.946-7.

happen coincidentally and the movement from one scene to another is spontaneous. He manages to create an artistic form which conforms to Forster's comment:

"What is fictitious in a novel is not so much the story as the method by which thought develops into action, a method which never occurs in daily life everything is founded on human nature and the dominating feeling is of an existence where everything is intentional, even passions and crimes, even misery."¹

He also avoids addressing the reader directly, and although he sometimes allows a character to voice his views, the talking and the thinking of the character seem to be appropriate to the level of his development. The writer manages to make full use of the elements of time and place, which are important elements of the realistic novel. These elements are not mentioned as a separate part of the novel as happened in some of his earlier novels, but are indicated through the narration, monologue and dialogue. For example the time of the events is shown by the dialogue between Hamdī and his friends about politics, government, parliament and the Wafd party.² When Sayyida is in childbirth, the writer portrays the night as being one when warning sirens are on, all the lights in Cairo are off, the people rush to the shelters and bombs begin to fall.³

1. Forster, Aspects, p.56.

2. Nahnu, pp.288-90.

3. Ibid., pp.757-60.

From this it is clear that it is during the Second World War. As the writer follows the focal character and depicts all the places to which she moves, he limits the places geographically and describes the various classes and their behaviour and life. Sometimes, also, he reveals the consciousness of the characters and the influence of the place upon them.¹

The element of time and place participates in forming the descriptive scenes and the writer attempts to make a link between the character and the environment. Description here is transformed from a soaring in a romantic atmosphere to a solid reality where everything is subjected to the power of poverty, misery and suffering. The descriptive scenes are as dynamic as the characters are and he intimates the future of the character throughout his description of scenes. For example when Sayyida is a child she goes to a Mawlid, which seems full of coloured lights, flags, the yelling of the insane, the shouting of pedlars, the beating of drums, the sounds of pipes, etc.² This noisy scene is a premonition of her clamorous future. The description of the atmosphere when ^CAbbās makes love with her for the first time seems rough. It is summer when the sun is blazing and at a scorchingly hot hour of the day, and Sayyida is on the roof of the house when ^CAbbās goes up to her.³ Even springtime is not marked by a gentle breeze, but it,

1. Nahnu, pp.281 and 838.

2. Ibid., pp.53-7.

3. Ibid., pp.119-25.

"... knocks on the doors, with harsh blows which do not give evidence of it ... the buds on the trees are hit by a hard dusty wind and all the phenomena of spring disappear in front of the strong wind of al-Khamāsīn."¹

This dynamic description is connected with the youth and activity of Sayyida, while the autumn is a reflection of her old age. At last nature settles when the focal character settles, when she is lying in bed about to die:

"Her heart was filled with a feeling of calmness, her glance strayed out of the window, to the distant horizon, at the river of the Nile which shone under the rays of the sun, at the houses and trees lined up like statuettes. Through the other window, a cool breeze came from the garden, carrying the fragrance of jasmine, the grapevine with its hanging bunches of grapes and green leaves, clustering behind the window She gave a sigh of happiness and left her faded body, relaxing on the bed, ... it is beautiful for someone's life to end in such a place."²

Through the life of the focal character, who moves in many different places, the writer penetrates into Egyptian society, taking the reader to the lowest part of society, in which miserable people like Sayyida live, and attempting to portray the traditions,

1. Nahnu, p.244.

2. Ibid., pp.14-5.

habits and behaviour of people in poor and middle class areas. When the father of Sayyida dies, for example, we find all the people of the quarter participating in the preparations for the funeral. At the same time the writer shows another aspect of these people which is that rumours play a great role among them; for example, when ^CAllām has a relationship with Sayyida and then marries her, some people say that he was forced to marry her after he violated her, while others say that he married her because of her wealth. These two contradictory pictures are no doubt a real portrayal of the society. He also criticizes many social defects whether directly, for example the Zār (religious dancing) which we observed in Ard an-Nifāq and as-Saqqā Māt, or by means of description, narration, dialogue and internal monologue. Although he causes his focal character to enter the world of prostitution, he rejects it and holds society responsible for the degradation of prostitutes like Sayyida.¹

The ironic style can be an important element of criticism and it is one of the aspects of his style as we have seen in his former works. He employs irony here either to criticize social defects, or to draw a real picture of the society, even using some jokes which are widespread among Egyptian people, especially the lower classes, or to give the reader a chance to relax, as he follows the journey of Sayyida in life. In Rāghib's opinion, the jokes of Hamdī's father fulfil this function.²

1. See pp.362-3.

2. Rāghib, Fann, p.338.

Because he chooses lower and middle class quarters the writer attempts to employ a simple language with many colloquial words, whether in narration, description or dialogue. He also manages to allow the dialogue to correspond to the level and development of the character, and thus Sayyida never talks in a very highly educated language, and the speech of Hamdī is different from that of ʿAbbās.

C O N C L U S I O N

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In this study we have briefly attempted to explain the nature of Romanticism and Realism in European literature, and then to examine modern Arabic literature in order to trace the influences of these schools, and we came to the conclusion that, although Arabic literature was influenced by Western literary schools, and although many studies attempt to point out these influences, there is a general difference in the nature of these schools, or rather tendencies, in Arabic literature. This general difference is a result of the dissimilarity of Arab society politically, economically, socially and culturally, from European society. The writer is a member of this society and whatever his attempts to read, study, imitate and be influenced by Western culture and literature, he cannot be isolated from his society and his Arab cultural background and taste. Thus we are not inclined to describe such writers as Maḥfūz, Idrīs and others as mere copies of Western writers. However much Maḥfūz, for example, was influenced by European writers and attempted consciously to follow European Realism, Aḥmad ^CAbd al-Jawād, the main character of his trilogy, is still an Arab Egyptian character, and however much as-Sayyāb, to take another example, seems to derive from Eliot, Unshūdat al-Maṭar is still an Arabic Iraqi poem.

As for As-Sibā^{Cī}, the subject of this study, although we do not deny the influence of Western literature which comes from his reading of Western works or Arabic works which are influenced by Western works, the general features of his literature are Arab and Egyptian.

As a result of our study of representative types of his novels in which we find romantic and realistic tendencies, we would like to summarize in this conclusion the main characteristics of these two tendencies in his literature under a number of headings. The romantic aspects, which dominate the novels discussed above, can be classified as follows:

1. LOVE

Love plays a great role in the novels of As-Sibā^{Cī}, and has a different role from one novel to another. In the romantic novels dealt with here we see love as the main feature on which the novels are built, while love, in his realistic novels, yields in the face of the hard reality in which the characters live. It becomes a sad memory for Shūsha in as-Saqqā Māt, and a hidden desire in the heart of Sayyida, the heroine of Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk. Even in his other novels, love has different roles; in Rudda Qalbī love, which acts as a link between the poor officer ^CAlī and Anjī the daughter of the prince Ismā^{Cīl}, is a means of criticising the contrast between social classes before the revolution. In Ibtisāma ^CAlā Shafatayh, love is associated with the cause in which

the Palestinian hero believes. In Layl Lahu Ākhir, it is an expression of the unity between Egypt and Syria.

In the novels dealt with in the chapter on Romanticism we notice that love remains confined in the hearts of the lovers; the writer does not attempt to give a social dimension, and no sooner does it approach reality than it escapes to imagination, dreams and obscurity. Even when it touches reality at the end of Innī Rāhila it does not stay long and is an expression of the characters' weakness in the face of reality and of the author's inability to connect love with living. As-Sibā^Cī, at least in these novels, seems not to admit the social role of love but to be concerned with its spiritual and subjective side, and moreover this love is inflated to such an extent that it overshadows all other social matters. The characters search for love and cannot settle unless they meet their lovers, but the strange thing is that when they attain what they are searching for, their happiness does not stay long. Soon the two lovers die as in Innī Rāhila, or one of them does, as in Bayn al-Atlāl, or the hero is afflicted by a shock as a result of which he denies his beloved as in Fadaytuki Yā Laylā. We do not find any justification for this strange attitude except that the writer is inclined to colour his novels with romantic sadness and to stimulate the tears of the reader over the fate of his heroes. The separation between two lovers in his other novels has different roles; it is an expression of the separation between Egypt and Syria in Layl Lahu Ākhir, and a reverberation of the

contradictions of the reality surrounding the characters of al-Umr Lahza.

The other thing we may notice in these novels is that the heroines chosen are between seventeen and twenty years old, and are either orphans or have lost one of their parents, while their lovers are older than them by five years (Innī Rāhila) or ten years (Bayn al-Atlāl, Fadaytuki Yā Laylā). Thus his heroines seem to be searching for love as a substitute for the lack of love in their childhood.

This love is coloured by romantic elements. It is a dreaming love, flying in the world of imagination, and its role is to purify hearts and souls from evil. It finds its happiness in isolation from the world and the noise of the cities, rushing to farms and the greenery of nature, and it is a spiritual love, far away from material things and sexual lust, which is almost mystical in its nature.

2. INDIVIDUALISM

Among the romantic aspects in these novels is the emphasis placed by the novelist upon the individual and his freedom and rights which are not admitted by society. Perhaps the first element of this individuality is the concentration on the individual hero; the narrator of Innī Rāhila is the heroine herself, Bayn al-Atlāl is built on the memoirs and letters exchanged between two lovers, and the conversations of the characters are entirely concerned

with the hero Ibrāhīm who has lost his memory in Fadaytuki Yā Laylā.

Although emphasis on the individual is almost always one of the characteristics of As-Sibā^Cī's works, the character in his other novels, while his individuality is maintained, is integrated into society both by choice and by force of circumstances. The individual in his romantic novels, on the other hand, is removed from society and treated by himself, and his individuality reaches the point of egotism and inflates more and more until it bursts and destroys the life of two lovers as in Innī Rāhila, or destroys the future of the heroine as in Bayn al-Atlāl.

The individual freedom and rights which the heroes strive to wrest from the society which lies in ambush for them are no more than demands upon society to recognise their emotions and sensations. At the same time the individual does not attempt to acclimatise himself to society, or to change the reality which he rejects, but he asks society to change instead of changing himself. Perhaps his inflated individuality does not allow him to descend and participate in reality, so that he looks at society through himself and does not look at himself through society, and is thus always in the situation of rejecting society and never ceases to complain. The characters of his realistic novels, on the otherhand, although rejecting the reality in which they live, attempt to change it.

These characters, whose individual lamentations fill the romantic novels, are peripheral and dreaming characters, who wish to close their eyes and open them to find that what they wish

for has been achieved. They are submissive and yielding and even when they revolt they do not choose an appropriate time so that their revolt turns against them and destroys them.

3. IDEALISM

All three novels are coloured by idealism. The novelist's view of the subject with which he deals is idealistic, aiming to construct another world which cannot be achieved except in imagination, and his heroes are idealistic being depicted as perfect in character and physical appearance and without defect or shortcoming. They are always kind and forgiving, even to those who harm them. At the same time their antagonists are drawn in a very different way; they are always ugly in morals and appearance and every depravity is attributed to them. Thus the characters, either angels or devils, are white or black. The events are constructed to serve the purposes of the idealistic world in which the heroes wish to live and the heroes' attitudes towards each other, while the reality in which they live is coloured by an extremely idealistic view. ^CĀyda, the heroine of Innī Rāhila, justifies the disloyalty of her mother to her father on no other grounds than that her father does not accept her love; the heroine of Bayn al-Aṭlāl leaves her son and husband to nurse her sick lover and his wife and then his daughter; and Ibrāhīm in Fadaytuki Yā Laylā blames himself for an occurrence for which he is not responsible.

The idealism of the characters and events cause the general view of reality to be an ideal one. The novelist does no more than look at his characters through their own eyes and helps

them to create their ideal world, not on the soil of reality but completely outside it (it is noticeable that the meetings of the heroes always take place far away from society). This idealism is also responsible for blinkering the novelist so that he does not see what good characteristics the other characters may have. It is obvious that such heroes who are characterized by this idealism cannot coexist with reality and as a consequence they prefer either to escape (Innī Rāhila), or to live in a world of imagination and memories (Bayn al-Atlāl), or to take refuge in amnesia (Fadaytuki Yā Laylā).

4. ROMANTIC REVOLT

The characters of As-Sibā^Cī in these three novels are in constant revolt throughout the narrative. They revolt against the reality in which they live, against society, they revolt to obtain their freedom. But their revolt is romantic, is restricted to the part not the whole, and touches the emotional side of the human being, not his overall situation and his struggle in a society which lives in the conflict between the old generation with all its accumulated cultural background, and the young generation with its belief in new coming values. It is an individual and subjective revolt. ^CĀyda in Innī Rāhila, for example, refuses to cooperate with those of her relatives who are prepared to offer her support and she prefers to revolt inside herself against her stern father and her trivial husband and the marriage contract. Her revolt is

entirely within her own shell; she utters sad complaints and makes severe accusations against society but is unable to face reality. This romantic revolt becomes more and more inflated until it finally bursts and destroys the heroes themselves instead of changing their reality, as we have mentioned above.

The attitude of the writer is to stand warmly on the sides of his heroes, demanding their individual freedom and glorifying their romantic revolt, and even when their revolt fails, instead of criticising their individualistic revolt and arousing the reader's condemnation of their extreme subjectivism, he justifies their revolt, condemns society, and arouses a feeling of sadness and sorrow in the reader. If the contrast between social classes and the opportunism of the father in Innī Rāhila separates the two lovers, the tragic end of the heroine in Bayn al-Atlāl is caused not by society but by the heroine herself, who is deeply absorbed in her extreme subjective emotion. The attitude of the writer towards his characters, who look through themselves at the problem, who revolt emotionally against their reality and are unable to face reality, is an expression of the attitude of the writer himself towards society, and the thought of the middle class from which he comes.

5. THE STYLE

Although As-Sibā^Cī attempts to employ many different techniques in his three novels, such as beginning the novel from

the end in Innī Rāhila, relying on letters and memoirs in Bayn al-Atlāl, and narration by several characters in Fadaytuki Yā Laylā, the treatment is marked by a style and language which are close to those of Romanticism. He uses an imaginative style with fiery emotion, he brings together the threads of the novel in dramatic ways which lead to explosive situations and tragic scenes, and makes use of the romantic dream so as to concentrate the dramatic atmosphere, that kind of dream which is not clarified by the events and does not explain the events but simply goes to create a world of wishes, and transcends the present time to the invisible, misty future. He also makes use of the association of ideas, which gradually leads the character from his sad or happy reality to a journey into the past. Perhaps the fondness and love for the past of these romantic characters can be seen in the use made by the writer of memoirs and the exchange of letters among the characters. At the same time the language is filled with a great poetic quality, softness and transparency, in which use is made of poetry, rhetorical devices, use of emotive words, repetition of sentences which have the same meaning in order to emphasise what the character feels, and the drawing of pictures which depend on imagination.

The most important realistic aspects in his works can be treated under the following headings.

1. CRITICISM

Perhaps the first thing we notice in the realistic works of As-Sibā'ī is political and social criticism. His first

novels Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl and Ard an-Nifāq obviously show a direct critical tone, in that the writer chooses many social and political phenomena and attempts to explain their bad influences upon society, suggests a solution for all the problems he deals with and demands that they be adopted directly. In his novels as-Saqqā Māt and Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, on the other hand, although the tone of criticism does not disappear the writer employs indirect ways to criticise, whether in description or dialogue or in drawing an exaggerated caricature picture of some of the characters, or in allowing his characters to criticise so that he lets the reader sense his critical attitude without stating it explicitly as in the former novels.

The other important point we would like to mention is that the writer himself, or his characters, engage in criticism even in his romantic works, with the difference that the criticism in the realistic works applies to many sides of society and to characters representing social classes, while in the former works it is based on only one side of society and on his attitude towards the individual affairs of his characters or on a character who represents an individual not a social type. ^CĀyda's criticism of the marriage contract in Innī Rāhila is an emotional reaction to her own problem so that it is marked by individualism, while As-Sibā^Cī's criticism of Bayt at-Ṭā^Ca in Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk is a criticism of a social phenomenon or an aspect of the law which does not affect Sayyida alone but affects all women in her position

and is a particular problem in the social affairs of Muslim society.

Āyda criticises the aristocratic Tahānī as an individual, not as a person from a social class, and even justifies his class at the same time as she condemns him, while Abbās, who is criticised in Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, is not represented as an individual so much as a social group, and the writer creates many characters similar to him, like Alī al-Mubayyid, Allām and others.

Criticism is used by As-Sibā^Cī in association with a very noticeable element of his style which is the irony which, as much as arousing laughter, arouses disgust for the scene or the character he criticises. The ironic description of the Zār ritual is no doubt a criticism of this phenomenon, and the caricature portrayal of Abbās's mother is a criticism of the tyranny of those in a position of power over poor people.¹ Sometimes irony is used to face the most confused and complicated problems, for example the irony of the narrator in Nā'ib Izrā'īl in the face of death.

2. CHARACTERS

We may notice here the obvious differences in characters between his Romantic and Realistic works. His romantic characters are drawn in stereotypes, or in other words, are drawn from one specific side. They are either good or evil, white or black, so that his view is a partial one. In his realistic works, on the other hand, he looks at his characters comprehensively and he

1. Abbās's mother practised her authority over Sayyida, the poor maid.

exposes all their dimensions, following their lives, living with them and recording all their actions in times of happiness and grief, strength and weakness, religiousness and infidelity, and thus they come to be social types. In spite of Shūsha's goodness he is not without defects, and in spite of Shihāta's badness he is not without goodness in as-Saqqā Māt. Sayyida Jābir in Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk is another example for, although the writer is on her side and supports her, he does not shrink from portraying her with all her naiveté, defects and trickery, as well as her goodness.

The other difference we notice is that the romantic characters are isolated from the reality which they live in and withdraw inside themselves, so that we do not see the role of the society against which they revolt and its influence upon their behaviour, while the roots of his realistic characters extend into their society and cannot be separated from it. Although they criticise their reality we see the influence of this environment with all its traditions, habits, badness and goodness upon the characters, in addition to the influence of the characters on each other. Shūsha, who is isolated at the beginning of the novel, has the walls of his separation broken down by Shihāta. Sayyida, who is cheated and made a sex object by ^CAbbās, learns how to protect herself against the cheating of others. This confirms that these characters are living their reality and attempt to change it for the better, while the romantic characters are living far away from reality

and wish to remove it to their ideal world which they build in their imagination.

The other difference is that although the realistic novels are concerned with main characters upon whom a strong light is thrown and who dominate the novels, there are a great number of secondary characters who have an influential role upon the main characters, however long or short the role they have. ^CAlī al-Mubayyid in Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, for example, in spite of his short appearance which occupies only a few pages at the beginning of the novel, leaves a marked influence upon the mind of the child Sayyida when he tells her about her flirtatious stepmother Dalāl with whom he had sex and with whose mother he had done the same. In the romantic novels, because of the nature of the individual hero with his inflated ego which overshadows the novel and the other characters, we do not have any deep knowledge of the role of the other characters in Innī Rāhila, or of the relatives and friends of the heroine of Bayn al-Atlāl, except through some lines mentioned by the heroine in her letters to her lover.

3. DEATH

We have mentioned that love is the dominant problem in As-Sibā^C's romantic novels and we see that the problem of death takes its place in his realistic novels. This does not mean that other social problems are neglected but death plays a great role in these novels, as indeed it does in most of his works. The element

of loss and bereavement is among other things which As-Sibā^{Cī} emphasises and perhaps one of many reasons for this inclination is that he lost his father whom he loved and whose loss caused him deep sadness. Thus we meet the narrator of Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl in heaven after he has died, Shūsha has lost his wife before as-Saqqā Māt begins, then he loses his friend Shihāta, and then he dies. Sayyida lost her mother before the beginning of Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk, then she loses her father, her first husband ^CAllām, the second one ^CAbbās, then her son, then she also dies. Even in his romantic novels we may observe this phenomenon. ^CĀyda loses her mother before the first page of the novel Innī Rāhila, then she loses her lover Ahmad, and dies herself. The heroine of Bayn al-Atlāl loses her lover, husband, son, and future.

But the role of death is different between the romantic and realistic novels. It is a tool in the hand of fate to separate the lovers in the romantic novels so that fate is the first enemy of romantic characters on which they lay the responsibility for their failure and death. In the realistic novels, on the other hand, it has many different roles. It is the concern of the narrator of Nā'ib ^CIzrā'īl to discover its secret and then to organize it perfectly. Death, of which Shūsha is afraid in as-Saqqā Māt, is a means of living for others like Shihāta and it is one of the many natural phenomena which are out of the control of the individual, and is also an expression of the end of the human being as an individual, while mankind is eternal. Death in Nahnu

Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk is a fatal deterministic force which afflicts all people without distinction between good, like Hamdī's father, or evil like ^CAbbās's mother. It has a humanitarian role in making ^CAbbās abandon his sinful life, and purifying the life of Sayyida from prostitution in the case of the death of their son Jābir. It has also a narrative role, in that the death of Sayyida's father is the beginning of the novel and the beginning of Sayyida's entry upon the struggles of life, and her death is the end of the novel.

4. DETAIL

His realistic works are marked by a great number of details and characters. The first aspect of this element may be found in the accurate picture of the place and the delimitation of the environment from which he chooses his characters, and in which the events of his novels take place. The writer seems to concentrate on the element of place, so that we find him limiting the environment geographically first, in other words where this area is located within the large society of Cairo, and then limiting it locally, mentioning in detail the nature of its houses, streets, alleys, restaurants, and public baths. Then he limits it socially by discovering the types of the people who live there, their work, the way they live and behave, their serious and cheerful moments, and their cooperation and hatred. Then he limits it economically by mentioning the social classes which live there and among which

we find the impoverished people, the beggars, the owners of small shops, and the humble government officials. Then he comes to his main characters, describing them in full detail, their appearance and character and their action and behaviour, their treatment of others, their ignorance and awareness, to the extent that he sometimes, in his emphasis on picturing this environment accurately, transmits everything that happens among people of this specific society, even their worthless conversation.

This accuracy in detail and his desire to show the real picture, reaches the level of photography in some parts of as-Saqqā Māt, and is highly exaggerated in Ard an-Nifāq. This, as well as being a characteristic of realistic writing, gives the reader the opportunity to judge the characters and their attitudes, so that he opposes, supports, or condemns them, and then to take a certain attitude towards the whole novel. Details and accurate description disappear in his romantic novels, on the other hand, because the thing which polarizes the concern of both the writer and the reader in such novels is not the environment or the characters, but only the self-inflated hero. The writer concentrates on the hero alone and the dramatic events which happen to him, and the reader also is only concerned with what will happen to the hero.

5. STYLE

The reader of As-Sibā^Cī's works will notice the obvious difference in both style and language used between his

romantic and realistic works. We have already mentioned his romantic style which springs from his one-sided view not only of the problems of reality but also of the character itself. In his realistic works, however, we find the view more comprehensive and the vision deeper. We find that the view of the character is of a social type who represents the characteristics of his reality, and thus the treatment is different. The sadness of Shūsha because he lost his wife in as-Saqqā Māt is not similar to the sadness of the heroine in Bayn al-Atlāl because she lost her lover. This is because the sadness of Shūsha embodies the sadness of the human being at losing a person dear to him, while her sadness is individual. Shūsha, the human being, is pushed by his sadness and fear of death to persist in discovering its secret and to defeat the fear of it in himself, and he manages to do this, while she, in her sadness and isolation from society, continues to live on her memories.

The different elements of treatment which he uses in his romantic works concentrate the romantic atmosphere which surrounds his characters, while in realistic works they are used to connect the characters with their reality. The monologue is not employed in Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk as an instrument for the character to escape from his hard reality to the world of dreams and imagination, but to think of a new way to change his reality. This is not to deny that his realistic characters may dream and let themselves roam in the realms of imagination, but they do not wish for and seek for an ideal but are aware of their reality, so that Sayyida

prefers to bury her dream and love her master's son inside her heart, and Hamdī himself accepts the loss of Ṣafā'.

Another example of his style which we may observe is the use of coincidence. In the romantic novels it approaches the level of impossibility, as when Āyda in Innī Rāhila, having discovered the disloyalty of her husband and left the house at night, meets her lover Ahmad on the same night that his wife has died, so that they have both become free. In the realistic works we feel that coincidence is intended and has some basis in reality which justifies it, and it has also a narrative role so that the meeting of Shūsha with Shihāta is an intentional coincidence and indeed constitutes the real beginning of the novel.

The language which is used in these novels descends from the level of flying in the imagination, leaves its poetical words and becomes closer to reality. Thus it becomes natural, simple, unartificial and far away from embellishments; it conveys the idea to the reader easily and it treats the characters and the reader each according to his educational level. In the first novels Nā'ib Āzrā'īl and Ard an-Nifāq, language becomes a kind of direct speech, opening a conversation between the narrator and the reader, while in the other novels it talks to the reader as well, either indirectly through the characters, or through the description and narration. It is Classical Arabic (Fuṣhā) in its structures and phrases, but it is simple and has many colloquial usages which are adapted to the Faṣīh style, in other words it is almost spoken

language. We do not mean that it is very colloquial; it is, in fact, standard Arabic, although he writes most of the dialogue of as-Saqqā Māt in Egyptian colloquial.

After this exposition of the important elements of the Romanticism and Realism of As-Sibā^{Cī}, we ask: is he influenced by Western Romanticism and Realism? Actually it is not easy to judge whether an Arab writer is influenced by particular Western writers, or is imitating a particular Western literary school. Arab society, like any other society, has a cultural, religious and social legacy which cannot be denied and which, without question, can be seen in the production of all Arab writers. This does not mean that we deny any kind of interacting relationships among the diverse cultures of this world, for cultural production indeed is the legacy of humanity as a whole and literature is one of its aspects.

As-Sibā^{Cī} is like other contemporary writers. Since the beginning of the Arabic renaissance, when relationships between east and west took place, they read, studied and translated European literature with all its different genres and schools, and then they attempted to imitate and adapt it. As-Sibā^{Cī} no doubt read this literature and studied and understood it, since his father was one of the pillars of the translation process in Egypt, and when we read his output we may notice the influence of Western literature as we do in the production of most contemporary Arab writers, although the strength and depth of this influence may be different

from one writer to another. We do not deny that As-Sibā^{Cī} is influenced by his reading of famous Western writers. For example, the use of the theme of confession in Bayn al-Atlāl is no doubt a Christian idea adopted from Western literature, perhaps the first Muslim writer who used this being Haykal in Zaynab where Hāmid confesses to the village Shaykh. The emphasis on individual freedom and inflated ego, and the revolt against society and the old generation with all its values and ideals, and the attempt to build an idealised world in which the individual enjoys his unlimited freedom, all these features which we may notice in his romantic novels are a result of European romantic literature. The fondness of the character for the past and the dependence of most of the narration on the memoirs in which the past takes place, also reflects the influence of the concern of the European romanticist with the past and the glorifying of the past of the Romantic movement. The misty and melancholy pictures which he attempts to draw in the meeting of Ahmad and ^CĀyda near the old waterwheel in the path through the fields in Innī Rāhila, and the pictures of the balcony on which the characters release themselves to fly through the world in the imagination, and the houses which are always far away from the city, whether on the seashore or among fields, meadows and gardens, these pictures are also influenced in one way or another by romantic literature.

In spite of these examples and others, we cannot go so far as to say that As-Sibā^{Cī} absorbed the literature of the romantic

movement, or is influenced by a certain romantic writer, or attempted with full awareness to create a romantic literature with its own artistic norms and specific philosophy. Rather these seem to be influences which are secreted during the process of writing which is formed by many factors, among them western influence, the psychological tendency of the writer himself, and the influence of his environment, his reality, and his historical, religious and cultural legacy.

The same thing can be said about the inclination of As-Sibā^Cī to portray reality in his realistic works, although we do not deny the existence of the influences of Realism, including the drawing of the characters, the concern with details, the emphasis on social criticism, the attempt to show the influence of the environment upon the characters and the role of heredity and the interaction among the characters themselves, all of which are characteristics of European Realism.

Finally, we should like to make the point that the influence of Western literature is no doubt to be found in all his works, but it is still an indirect influence, and it remains one of the many factors which formed his vision and coloured his literature, as a tendency and inclination more than an ideology.

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A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX

WORKS OF YŪSUF AS-SIBĀ^CĪ

<u>Work</u>	<u>Genre</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Atyāf</u>	Short Stories	1947
<u>Nā'ib^C Izrā'īl</u>	Novel	1947
<u>Ithnā^C Ashara Imra'a</u>	Short Stories	1948
<u>Khabāyā ṣ-Ṣudūr</u>	Short Stories	1948
<u>Yā Ummatan Dahikat</u>	Short Stories	1948
<u>Ithnā^C Ashar Rajulan</u>	Short Stories	1949
<u>Fī Mawkib al-Hawā</u>	Short Stories	1949
<u>Min al-^CĀlam al-Majhūl</u>	Short Stories	1949
<u>Ard an-Nifāq</u>	Novel	1949
<u>Hādhihi n-Nufūs</u>	Short Stories	1950
<u>Mabkā l-^CUshshāq</u>	Short Stories	1950
<u>Bayn Abū r-Rīsh wa Junaynat Nāmnīsh</u>	Short Stories	1950
<u>Innī Rāhila</u>	Novel	1950

<u>Ughniyyāt</u>	Short Stories	1951
<u>Hādhā Huwa l-Hubb</u>	Short Stories	1951
<u>Ṣuwar Ṭibq al-Aṣl</u>	Short Stories	1951
<u>Umm Ratība</u>	Play	1951
<u>Summār al-Layālī</u>	Short Stories	1952
<u>ash-Shaykh Zu^Crub wa-Ākharūn</u>	Short Stories	1952
<u>Nafha Min al-Īmān</u>	Short Stories	1952
<u>Bayn al-Atlāl</u>	Novel	1952
<u>as-Saqqā Māt</u>	Novel	1952
<u>Warā' as-Sitār</u>	Play	1952
<u>Sitt Nisā' wa-Sittat Rijāl</u>	Short Stories	1953
<u>Hādhihi l-Hayāt</u>	Short Stories	1953
<u>Laylat Khamr</u>	Short Stories	1953
<u>Hamsa ^CĀbira</u>	Short Stories	1953
<u>Fadaytuki Yā Laylā</u>	Novel	1953
<u>al-Baḥth ^Can Jasad</u>	Play	1953
<u>Jam^Ciyat Qatl az-Zawjāt</u>	Play	1953
<u>Rudda Qalbī</u>	Novel	1954
<u>Layālī wa-Dumū^C</u>	Short Stories	1954

<u>Tarīq al-^CAwda</u>	Novel	1956
<u>Ayyām Tamurr</u>	Collection of Articles	1957
<u>Min Hayātī</u>	Collection of Articles	1958
<u>Laṭamāt wa-Lathamāt</u>	Collection of Articles	1959
<u>Nādiya</u>	Novel	1960
<u>Jaffat ad-Dumū^C</u>	Novel	1961
<u>Ayyām wa-Dhikrayāt</u>	Collection of Articles	1961
<u>Ayyām Mushriqa</u>	Collection of Articles	1961
<u>Ayyām Min ^CUmrī</u>	Collection of Articles	1962
<u>Layl Lahu Ākhir</u>	Novel	1963
<u>Aqwā Min az-Zaman</u>	Play	1964
<u>Nahnu Lā Nazra^C ash-Shawk</u>	Novel	1968
<u>Lasta Waḥdak</u>	Novel	1969

<u>Ibtisāma ^ḤAlā Shafatayh</u>	Novel	1970
<u>Min Warā' al-Ghaym</u>	Collection of Articles	1970
<u>Ayyām ^ḤAbd an-Nāṣir</u>	Collection of Articles	1971
<u>Ṭā'ir Bayn al-Muḥīṭayn</u>	Book of Travel	1971
<u>al-^ḤUmr Lahza</u>	Novel	1972
<u>Miṣr ... al-Mushkila wa-l-Ḥall</u>	Collection of Articles	1978