Chapter-I

Introduction

Arabic literature, literary works written in the Arabic language. The great body of Arabic literature includes works by Arabic speaking Turks, Persians, Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Jews, and other Africans and Asians, as well as the Arabs themselves.

The first significant Arabic literature was produced during the medieval golden age of lyric poetry, from the 4th to the 7th cent. The poems are strongly personal *qasida*, or odes, often very short, with some longer than 100 lines. They treat the life of the tribe and themes of love, fighting, courage, and the chase. The poet speaks directly, not romantically, of nature and the power of God. The *qasida* survive only through collections, chiefly the Muallaqat, Hamasa, Mufaddaliyat, and Kitab al-Aghani. The most esteemed of these poets are Amru al-Kais, Antara, and Zuhair.

With the advent of Islam, the Qur'an became the central work of study and recitation. Extra-Qur'anic poetry underwent a decline from which it recovered in a far different form. The Qur'an supplanted poetry by becoming the chief object of study of the Muslim world. Poetry regained some prestige under the Umayyads, when al-Akhtal (c.640-c.710) and al-Farazdaq (c.640-732) wrote their lyric works.

Under the Abbasids (750-1258), Hellenic, Syrian, Pahlavi, and Sanskrit works became available in translation, and the Arabic language further developed as a vehicle of science and philosophy. Among the pioneers of Arabic prose were Ibn al-Muqaffa, the translator of the Indian fables of *Kalila wa Dimna*, and al-Jahiz (d. 868), an influential figure in the establishment of the *belles-lettres compendia* (*adab*) as a dominant literary theme.

The next great period of Arabic literature was a result of the rise of the new Arabic-Persian culture of Baghdad, the new capital of the Abbasids, in the 8th and 9th cent. Philosophy,
mathematics, law, Qur'anic interpretation and criticism, history, and science were cultivated, and the collections of early Arabic poetry were compiled during this period.

At the end of the 8th century in Baghdad a group of young poets arose who established a new court poetry. A prominent court poet was Abu Nuwas. Asceticism, not yet developed into Sufism, evolved into a poetic genre with Abu al-Atahiya. Among the most popular of Arabic poets, Mutanabbi (915-65) wrote some of the most complex, and most eloquent, Arabic poems. The poet Hariri sought to combine "refinement with dignity of style, and brilliances with jewels of eloquence." Abu al-Ala al-Maarri was an outstanding Syrian poet of great originality. The greatest mystic poet of the age was Omar Ibn al-Faridh (1181-1235).

The influence of India and Persia is seen in Arabic prose romance, which became the principal literary form. The greatest collection is the Thousand and One Nights. The major writers of historical and geographical works in Arabic include Bukhari, Tabari, Masudi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn al-Athir (d. 1234), and Ibn Batuta. The foremost Arab theologian was al-Ghazali; Avicenna, the great physician, wrote on medicine. The central Asian scholar al-Faralsi, wrote fundamental works on philosophical and musical theory. In the field of belles-lettres, essays and epistles of great wit and erudition, known as risalas, were composed on subjects as diverse as science, mysticism, and politics. Chief practitioners of the genre include Ibn al-Muqaffa (d. 757), the unsurpassed al-Jahiz, and Ibn Qutayba (d. 889).

The Western center of Arab culture was Spain, especially Córdoba under the Umayyads. The Spanish Arabs produced fine poets and scholars, but they are less important than the great Spanish philosophers-Avempace, Avérroës, and Ibn Tufayl. Their works became known in Europe chiefly through the Latin translations of Jewish scholars. Since 1200 in Spain and 1300 in the East, there has been little Arabic literature of wide interest.

During the 19th century A.D., printing in Arabic began in earnest, centered in Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus. Newspapers, encyclopedias, and books were published in which Arab writers tried to express, in Arabic, their sense of themselves and their place in the modern world. Simultaneously with a reaction against Western models in Arabic literature, the novel and the drama, forms never before used, developed. The first modern Arabic novel is generally recognized to be Zaynab (1912) by the Egyptian Muhammad Husayn Haykal. Arabic fiction was
virtually unknown in the West, with fewer than five novels translated into English by the 1950s. Interest in modern Arabic literature increased after 1988 when the Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Other notable 20th- and 21st-century writers in Arabic include the novelists Abdelrahman Munif, Sonallah Ibrahim, Yahya Hakki, Ghassan Kanafani, Alaa Al Aswany, Elias Khoury, and Mahmoud Saeed and the short-story writers Mahmud Tymur and Yusuf Idris. Interest in Arabic fiction has been further stimulated by the establishment (2007) of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction, an award aimed at securing recognition, readership, translation, and publication of outstanding contemporary Arabic fiction. Funded the the Emirates Foundation of Abu Dhabi, it is modeled after the Man Booker Prize. Notable playwrights in Arabic include Ahmad Shawqi and Tawfiq al-Hakim; notable poets, Hafiz Ibrahim, Badr Shakir as-Sayyab, Nazik al-Malaika, Abdul Wahab al-Bayati, Nizar Qabbani, Mahmoud Darwish, and Adonis.

Drama as an activity may be as old as humanity, and as diverse as human behaviour. It enacts and expresses relationships between people and their surroundings, and it also expresses human desires inactivities that can be both participatory and observed. Drama is a social activity that uses symbols and ideas with the potential to inspire purposeful action in the real world, from enacting a successful hunt to a successful harvest. Human purpose encompasses a perception of a future, and a perception of human ability to influence a desired future to a varying extent. Human purpose actively seeks results that fulfil desires, from the immediate to the long term. This applies particularly to young people about to embark on adult life as members of a social community.

Drama is a way of demonstrating that, at least theoretically, desired situations can exist, even if only in a temporary make believe manner. Drama can express human purposes and relationships, and enact visions of desired futures. The academic study of Drama in high school explores and discovers how performances may be created and shared, and can also investigate Drama that has an overt political purpose, a desire to influence a future through sharing a performance. The relationship between Drama and human purpose for the future is explored in this thesis, through an investigation into the teaching of Drama that deals with visions of a variety of futures.
The history of Arabic literature is about two thousand years old. Naturally, it had, like other languages, to pass through various stages of decay and fall. It made considerable progress during the Umayyad period, and it was during the Abbasid period, which is called its golden age, that it reached its zenith. During this very period it was also influenced by Persian literature and culture, which lent freshness and artistic temperament to it. Besides, the translations of Greek philosophy and Sanskrit works into Arabic provided it with vastness and philosophical depth. 

Baghdad — the capital of the ‘Abbasid caliphate — was regarded as the highest seat of learning and knowledge. Aleppo was another seat of learning where it flourished. It reached Africa by way of Cairo. Even the Persians who feel boast of their race and culture, took to learning Arabic and produced several unforgettable works in different fields of its literature. With the downfall of Baghdad in 1258, there began a period of decay in Arabic literature. In 1260 Tatars suffered defeat at the hands of Mamluks who were Turks by race. Despite this, they patronized Arabic by learning it and encouraging its writers.

With the Ottoman Turks coming to power and getting full control over the occupied Arab lands, Arabic received a severe blow. The earlier rulers who manifested a keen interest in promoting Arabic were tolerant to a great extent. And to some of them such as Sultan Ahmad I (1603 -1617), an ode is ascribed. But after Mahmud II (1808 – 1839), the situation changed and the policy of tolerance almost ended.

Arabic drama found its way into schools, colleges, and societies as well. A play in both Arabic and French was put on after the examinations at the Greek Orthodox School (Madrasat al-Thalthat al-Aqmar) in Beirut on Sunday, 12th February, 1860. Written by Ilyas Habalin (1839-1889), it was performed before the Greek Orthodox Bishop, the Russian and Greek consuls, and others. It was followed by plays which were gain presented in Arabic and French, before Khurshid Pasha, the Russian Consul General, and an audience of dignitaries. In 1865 a two-act play, Yusuf al-Hasan (The Handsome Joseph) was performed by the pupils of Butrus al-Bustani's al Madrasat al-Wataniyya at the end of the school year before Mukhlis Pasha, Governor of Syria. Based on the Biblical story of Joseph, this play was written in prose and verse either by the priest Nimat Alla al-Bijani or by Shaykh Khattar al-Dahdah (1840 -1922).

The western influences which led to the gradual substitution of the novel and short story for traditional Arabic prose narrative forms also bore fruit in the establishment of western-style
drama in the Middle East. The first experiments along these lines took place in Beirut in 1847; but for most of the 19th and early 20th c. productions were largely confined to farce and melodrama, together with free adaptations of western plays. Moves towards the establishment of a serious Egyptian theatre started with the efforts of Muḥammad Taymūr, Anūn Yazbak, and Ibrāhīm Ramzī around the time of World War I, and reached fruition with Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, who dominated the Egyptian theatre from the 1930s until well after the Free Officers' Revolution in 1952.

Although early 'intellectual' plays such as Ahl al-Kahf (1933) and Shahrazād (1934) remain among the most interesting of Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm's works, many were written to be read rather than acted, and recent translators have tended to focus on his later works, which—from the early 1960s—show the influence of techniques derived from avantgarde western theatre. Outstanding among these works is Yā Ṭabīṭ al-Shajara (1964, The Tree Climber), the first play by al-Ḥakīm to show the influence of the Theatre of the Absurd. The play is characterized by lively and fast-moving dialogue, the freshness and lively tone of which is well captured by Denys Johnson-Davies, whose translation has been successfully produced on the English stage.

Al-Ḥakīm was one of the favourite authors of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had come to power during the revolution of 1952, and he was perhaps the major Egyptian cultural figure in the following decades. The enormous process of social and political change in Egypt provided a rich backdrop for the development of a new tradition of theatre, and the cultural apparatus of the government provided abundant funding for that process. Theatre was apparently regarded as one of the few allowable outlets for the expression of public concerns and doubts that were rigorously controlled elsewhere. In retrospect, the two decades after 1952 have come to be regarded as a kind of "golden era" for not merely Egyptian drama but Arabic drama as a whole. Virtually every aspect of the theatrical community—the cultural apparatus of the state, a relatively large cluster of playwrights, a cadre of producers and directors (many of them trained in Europe and, most notably, the Soviet Union), and a group of well-qualified and involved critics—seemed to be working toward common goals. Beginning in the 1950s and '60s with Nuḥmān Āshūr, who used a series of plays to present the Egyptian public with insightful
analyses of its own class structure and values, a series of dramatists, among them Sāḥid al-Dīn Wahbah, Māmmūd Diyāb, and ʿAlī Sālim, penned in the colloquial dialect of Cairo dramatic texts that were highly successful on stage. Another contributor to this rich period in Egyptian theatrical life was Yūsuf Idrīs, whose celebrated play Al-Farāfīr (1964; The Farfoors, or The Flipflap) combined elements of traditional comic forms of dramatic presentation with such Brechtian effects as the presence of an “author” as a stage character and the use of theatre-in-the-round staging. Alfred Faraj took a somewhat different course, invoking tales and incidents from history and folklore (and especially from The Thousand and One Nights) in order to illustrate contemporary political and social realities. Faraj chose to follow al-ʿakīm in selecting as his language medium a more literary level of Arabic than that adopted by his fellow dramatists and yet one that was readily adaptable to acting onstage. This gave him the additional advantage of affording his plays a broader audience throughout the Arabic-speaking world. Even within the less-fertile environment of the 1980s and '90s, a younger generation of Egyptian dramatists made notable contributions to the genre. Of these, Muḥammad Salmāwī and Lenin al-Ramlī were the playwrights whose works were most often performed.

These patterns of development in Egypt were echoed elsewhere in the Arab world, albeit within differing time frames. Following the early stages that have been sketched above, further developments were, more often than not, tied to the processes of nation building that followed the achievement of independence during the 1950s and '60s. In Syria Sādallāh Wannūs made use of his strong interest in the theory of drama, and particularly in the relationship of stage to audience, to compose a series of works that made important contributions to the development of experimental theatre in the Arab world. Staged in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War of June 1967, ʿaflat samar min ajl al-khamis min ʿuzayrān (1968; “Soirée for the 5th of June”) was a devastating commentary on the Arab defeat and on the Arab leaders who for several days had used the media to claim that victory was at hand (leading, almost automatically, to the play’s being banned). Mughāmarat raḥās al-mamlūk Jābir (1971; “The Adventure of Mamlûk Jābir’s Head”) and Al-Malik huwa al-malik (1977; “The King’s the King”) continued his ongoing experiments with theatre dynamics through what he termed masrāḥ al-tasyīs (“theatre of politicization”). Because Wannūs was such a crucially important figure, other Syrian and Lebanese dramatists of the latter half of the 20th century operated
somewhat in his shadow, but Muammad al-Mubah, Dam Mamduh, and Mamduh Adwan wrote significant plays that were successfully performed at theatre festivals.

The lot of the Palestinian literary community, which reflected the turmoil that affected the larger community throughout the second half of the 20th century, was such that the promotion of a dramatic tradition proved extremely difficult and often impossible. However, there were plays that reflected the trials and conflicts that were part of daily life, such as Mu'in Basisu's Thawrat al-Zanj (1970; “The Zanj Revolt”) and the poet Sami al-Qasim's Qaraqash (1970). The tightly controlled circumstances in which the Palestinians lived their lives also led to the appearance of one of the most interesting and creative theatre troupes in the Middle East, the akawatt troupe (named for the akawatt, or traditional storyteller), which emerged from an earlier group known as Al-Balalnin (“Balloons”). An itinerant troupe established in 1977, akawatt toured villages and performed its own plays in a variety of public spaces through the turn of the 21st century.

Tunisia and Morocco provide some of the best examples of a thriving theatre tradition. The Tunisian writer Izz al-Din al-Madani, one of the most fruitful contributors to the history of modern Arabic drama during the 20th century, composed a series of plays that were both experimental and popular; they included Thawrat 'Ayn al-Qimār (1971; “The Donkey Owner’s Revolt”) and Dīwān al-Zanj (1973; “The Zanj Collection”). Moroccan theatre was represented at the turn of the 21st century primarily by the multitalented al-Dayyib al-Di'dīqi, who adapted textual materials culled from the heritage of the past, as in Dīwān Sidi Abd al-Ra'mān al-Majdhub (1966; “The Collection of Sidi Abd al-Ra'mān al-Majdhub”), and produced them with his own troupe, often casting himself in a role in which he would exhibit a unique comic flair.

The theatre movement in Iraq was also constricted by political circumstances, but the dramatic tradition continued even so through the 1990s; an Iraqi play won first prize at the prestigious Tunisian Carthage Festival in 1999, for instance. Most prominent among 20th-century Iraqi playwrights was Yusuf al-Annī, whose Anā ummak yā Shākir (1955; “Shākir, I'm Your Mother”) graphically portrays the misery of the Iraqi people in the period before the downfall of the monarchy in the revolution of 1958. Elsewhere in the Arabian Gulf, theatre remained, where it existed at all, a very young cultural phenomenon, and efforts in the early 21st
century to foster a dramatic tradition vied with the popularity of forms of entertainment readily available via television, CDs, DVDs, and the Internet.

Arabic drama seemed likely to remain a problematic genre in the 21st century, but one fulfilling an important cultural function. By daring to raise issues of political and social importance in a public forum and by testing the limits of the local and the pan-Arabic worlds through experiments with language, it showed signs of illustrating many of the larger areas of concern within the Arabic-speaking countries. While the status of drama and its practitioners varied widely across the region, it remained an invaluable outlet for popular sentiment and creative energy.

Therefore the present Thesis has been divided into six main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which gives an idea about 'Drama' brief analysis of the thesis in each chapter.

The second chapter is entitled "Drama, its origin, growth and development". In this chapter an analytical study has been made about the etymology of the word 'Drama' including its origin and development.

The title of the third chapter is "Literary Activities in Arabs". Here brief discussion has been made about the Arabic literature specially prose, fiction, play and outside views of Arabic literature. The history of Arabic literature is about two thousand years old. Naturally, it had, like other languages, to pass through various stages of decay and fall. It made considerable progress during the Umayyad period, and it was during the Abbasid period, which is called its golden age, that it reached its zenith.

The fourth chapter is entitled as "Arabic Dramatists After World War - II". This chapter deals with the Critical Perspectives on Arabic Literature specially the prose. About some important Arabic dramatist like KHALIL MUTARAN (1872-1948), MA'ROF AL-RUSAFI (1876-1945), ABBAS MAHMUD AL'AQQAD (1889-1964) etc. have also been mentioned.

The fifth chapter is entitled as "Analytical Study of Tawfiq al Hakim and Ahmed Shawqi". In this chapter an analytical study about Life, Works and the contributions of
Tawfiq al Hakim and Ahmed Shawqi in field of Arabic Drama has been discussed. The sixth chapter is the conclusion which generally brings out an idea about the Arabic Drama which has been occupied an important position in the development of Arabic literature. It has opined that the eminent dramatist like ‘Tawfiq al Hakim’ and ‘Ahmed Shawqi’ has played an important role to promote the Arabic drama.

In the last page the bibliography has been included systematically.