" زمن عصيب "

دراسة فى الاختلال والعزلة

للدكتورة نور شريف

تحليل ونقد لرواية "زمن عصيب" لتشارلز ديكنز التى لم يفطن النقاد الى أهميتها الفنية فأهملوها . والرواية مبنية على فكرة التناقض بين المشاعر الانسانية والحب من ناحية والعقل والمصلحة الذاتية من ناحية أخرى ، وما يحدث لكل من الفرد والمجتمع فى حالة تجاهل الناحية الأولى والتركيز على الثانية . والنتيجة الحتمية التى يراها ديكنز لذلك ، هى اختلال المجتمع وعزلة الفرد . فاذا ما أفكر الفرد مشاعره الانسانية أصبح شخصا غير متكامل يعيش أول الأمر فى حالة حرب مع نفسه الى أن يتغلب على مشاعره نهائيا فينعزل عن بقية الناس ويصبح وحيدا . وهذا ما يحدث أيضا فى مجتمع بنى على المصلحة الذاتية ، فأفراد الطبقة الواحدة فى صراع دائم ، كما أن طبقة العمال فى نضال مع طبقة الرأسمالية . وهدف ديكنز فى هذه الرواية تصوير العزلة القاتلة التى تصيب الفرد الذى كبت عواطفه ثم رد فعل هذا على المجتمع بأسره .

وقد استخدم ديكنز جميع عناصر الرواية من شخصيات وحوار وأحداث وجو وحركة وحبكة لتجسيم هذه الفكرة ، فجاءت الرواية ذات وحدة عضوية بناء محكم وشخصياتها المتناقضة المتصارعة الرمزية وثيقة الصلة بالفكرة التى تصورها .

وبذلك فرواية "زمن عصيب" ذات الصبغة الشعرية فى رموزها وصورها وتركيزها مثل حتى لوعى ديكنز الفنى الذى أخذ فى النضوج على مر الأيام .

by drops through such small means. It was even harder than he could have believed possible, to separate in his own conscience his abandonment by all his fellows from a baseless sense of shame and disgrace.[1]

Again this situation is repeated in a nightmare which Stephen has :

They stood in the daylight before a crowd so vast, that if all the people in the world could have been brought together into one space, they could not have looked, he thought, more numerous; and they all abhorred him, and there was not one pitying or friendly eye among the millions that were fastened on his face.

In this dream Stephen foresees his death :

He stood on a raised stage, under his own loom; and, looking up at the shape the loom took and hearing the burial service distinctly read, he knew that he was there to suffer death. In an instant what he stood on fell below him, and he was gone.[2]

And the darkness which again recurs in the dream is now associated with death. The last stage of isolation is reached in actual death after Stephen has fallen down the dark pit. From the darkness of the pit his message to the world is an expression of what Sissy achieves through her own person and actions :

I ha' seen more clear, and ha' made it my dyin' prayer that aw' th'world may on'y coom together more.[3]

With complete disintegration — of the individual, the family and society — the urgency of intergation becomes apparent, and the star which brightens the darkness of Stephen's last moments inspires him with this message of light, even in the same way as in her darkest moments Louisa's shattered life is brightened by the presence of Sissy as the "once deserted girl shone like a beautiful light upon the darkness of the other".4 Only with light can we "connect".

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1. Book II, ch. IV.
2. Book I, ch XIII.
3. Book III, Ch. VI.
4. Book III, ch. I.

By denying the worker's humanity, complete disintegration ensues. Here, there is no question of inner conflict, as in the case of Louisa, where there is still an attempt at holding the individual together, the battle not yet having been lost. Stephen Blackpool's drunken wife, on the other hand has reached the stage where there is little left to bind her to her fellow creatures and nothing to keep her alive as a human being. The horror of these working-class conditions is driven home with great force when the dead machinery takes on a life of its own, and the piston of the steam-engine is shown "working up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness".[1] Thus, the dead machinery comes to life in a nightmare fashion, while life itself spells death. "It's aw' a muddle" as Stephen Blackpool puts it.

The streets of Coketown are representative of the general discord and disintegration in this society of laissez-faire economics :

> they had come into existence piecemeal, every piece
> in a violent hurry for some one man's purpose, and the whole
> [was] an unnatural family, shouldering, and trampling, and
> pressing one another to death.[2]

Once again Dickens reverts to the idea of the family, here used as a metaphor for the streets, but also associated with the state of society in general with its class struggle and the conflict within each class. The reference to the family here brings to mind its use in connection with the circus group with its connotations of harmony and integration. In Coketown where there is no room for anything but the individual in his life - and - death struggle for existence, the whole family of society breaks down. Often, there is not even room for the individual, as in the case of Stephen Blackpool crushed between the conflicting forces of capital and labour. Stephen who has opposed both his fellow-workers and the master of Coketown finds himself rejected by all. The terrible sense of isolation is again driven home, this time felt not against the background of the family, but against that of a whole class. The isolation of a human being in the midst of a crowd is even more terrible and leads, as Dickens with psychological insight noted, to a sense of guilt and shame : Stephen

> had never known before the strength of the want in
> his heart for the frequent recognition of a nod, a look, a word;
> or the immense amount of relief that had been poured into it

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1. Book I, ch. X.

2. Loc. cit.

When Harthouse asks Mrs. Sparsit if the place is "always as black as this", her answer is "In general much blacker".[1]   Coketown is as "impervious to the sun's rays" as Bitzer is.   This brings to mind Sissy and the circus group, showing up the contrast between their lives and that of the working class, while the emphasis on darkness links Coketown with the Gradgrind - Bounderby group.   With Coketown and its inhabitants, however, we come much closer to the darkness of death, the greatest of all isolaters. This idea is conveyed by reverting once again to the use of the window. Whereas with Gradgrind the overshadowed windows temporarily cut him off from life and his fellow beings, in the case of the workers, the window, normally a source of light and means of contact, opens out on to death.   Rachael's home is

> in one of the many small streets for which the favourite undertaker (who turned a handsome sum out of the one poor ghastly pomp of the neightbourhood) kept a black ladder, in order that those who had done daily daily groping up and down the narrow stairs might slide out of this working world by the windows.[2]

The only light in Coketown is the artificial light of the factories and the fire of the furnaces which cast "titanic shadows of the steam engines". The fire of the Gradgrind home associated with that synthesising faculty, the imagination, now becomes the destructive fire of industrial Coketown which not only destroys the lives of the workers, but threatens to blow up the whole of society: "There seems to be nothing here but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out".

This remark applicable to Louisa is equally applicable to the working class.   Like her, they are thwarted human beings who have not been allowed to develop naturally.   If she has been treated as the possessor of a mind only, they have been treated as a form of lower being with neither head nor soul.   They are the "hands" and with them we reach the final stage of dehumanisation.   The workers are a race

> who would have found more favour with some people, if providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs.[3]

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1. Book II, ch. I.

2. Book I, ch. X.

3. Loc. cit.

With Bounderby there is complete darkness. The shadow which overhangs the brother and sister is associated with him :

> fanciful imagination — if such treason could have been there — might have made it out to be the shadow of their subject [Bounderby], and of its lowering association with their future.[1]

And we know what to expect of the future as Louisa, watching the red sparks dropping out of the fire, sees them whiten and die while the shadow of Bounderby looks on. We also know what to expect of his relationship with the workers as Stephen Blackpool approaches Bounderby's home with its "black outside shutters" and "black street door"[2]. This is the home of a man who welcomes nobody near him, a man in darkness and isolation.

The shadow of Bounderby hangs over the lives of the workers just as it does over the lives of Louisa and Tom. Darkness is associated with their existence even more so than with Louisa's, and the effect is more far - reaching; now a whole town and class are swallowed up in darkness :

> A sunny midsummer day. There was such a thing sometimes, even in Coketown.
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> Seen from a distance in such weather, Coketown lay shrouded in a haze of its own, which appeared impervious to the sun's rays. You only knew the town was there, because you knew there could have been no such sulky blotch upon the prospect without a town. A blur of soot and smoke, now confusedly tending this way, now that way, now aspiring to the vault of Heaven, now murkily creeping along the earth, as the wind rose and fell, or changed its quarter : a dense formless jumble, with sheets of cross light in it, that showed nothing but masses of darkness : — Coketown in the distance was suggestive of itself, though not a brick of it could be seen[3].

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1. Book I, ch. VIII.

2. Book I, ch. XI.

3. Book II, ch. I.

their form. His short - cropped hair might have been a
mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and
face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural
tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed
white.[1]

Thus, the sun which helps to define objects, and at the same time shows
their relationship to one another, hardly succeeds in distinguishing Bitzer's
features. This absence of definition becomes more apparent with dark-
ness and shadows where objects lose all individuality and their relationship
to one another is obscured.

In a scene between Louisa and Tom they are shown enveloped in
the darkness of their own shadows on the wall which blend with those of
the high presses in the room. The idea of darkness, already present in
the description of Gradgrind and stone Lodge[2] is repeated at least twice
in this scene: Louisa sits "in the darker corner by the fireside... looking
at the bright sparks as they dropped upon the hearth"; she is again referr-
ed to as "speaking thoughtfully out of her dark corner"[3]. It is note-
worthy that although darkness is associated with the middle class group,
with the younger generation, and particularly with Louisa, the idea of
light is not altogether excluded. Here it appears, not in the shape of
the life - giving force of the sun, as in the case of Sissy, the true child of
nature, but in the form of the fire which Dickens often associates with the
imaginative faculty of the child.[4] Louisa is not beyond redemption and
can still see objects in the fire. Tom, on the other hand, is completely
lost and can see nothing there: "Except that it is a fire", says Tom, "it
looks to me as stupid and blank as anything else looks". He then goes
on to ask her what she sees in it, appropriately adding : "Not a circus ?",
a remark which links the imagination with the circus people, one of whom
has already been associated with the sun, the greatest fire of all. Thus
Louisa, whose nature is cruelly divided and who suffers from a conflict
between the imagination and the reason, the heart and the head, is seen
both in darkness and in light, while the inner conflict is itself expressed
in these terms as we see the "doubtful flashes" on her face, "which had
something painful in them, analogous to the changes on a blind face gro-
ping its way".

1. Book I, ch. II.

2. See above pp. 30 - 31.

3. Book I, ch. VIII.

4. See also *Dombey and Son* where Paul is often seen gazing at the fire.

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success. If this is the inhuman attitude of a son to a loving mother, how much more inhuman will be his attitude to those who work for him and are at his mercy.

Bounderby is an embodiment of the inhuman spirit of Victorian England which exalted rugged individualism at the expense of human relations. This is the spirit which atomised society and reduced everything to material values. Through Bounderby we see the breakdown of human relations in all spheres: in the family and in society. The inner conflict from which Louisa suffers because she still has a heart and is striving to contact the "mainland", no longer exists in Bounderby. The conflict in his case is externalised. Louisa withdraws into herself and suffers from the discord within: Bounderby who goes on inflating himself, inevitably clashes with others, with Louisa his wife, Tom her brother, Gradgrind the family man, Stephen Blackpool the working class character, and ultimately, once the "fire bursts out" as a result of too much friction and suppression, with the workers of Coketown. Thus Bounderby's presence, like Sissy's, is felt reaching across both the middle and the working class groups. These two characters, however, stand at opposite poles; the one being the force of disintegration and destruction, the other the force of union and wholeness. As Sissy, regarded at first as an odd little creature who does not fit into the middle class Gradgrind group, gains power, gathering around her more and more people, Bounderby, all powerful at the begining, is left deflated at the end with no one by his side, his bank robbed and the workers uniting against him.

These two opposite poles are symbolically associated with light and darkness. We first see Sissy bathed in a sunbeam which brings out the beautiful colouring of the dark-haired girl : she "was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun"[1]. Bitzer, on the other hand, the Bounderby of the next generation, having imbibed his philosophy of self-interest, draws no life from the sun : he was

> so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed

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1   Book I, ch II.

that some change may have been slowly working about [him] in this house, by mere love and gratitude; that what the Head had left undone and could not do, the Heart may have been doing silently ?[1].

But if in Gradgrind's household there is still room for Sissy, in Bounderby's there is room for no one but himself. This "big, loud man ... made out of a coarse material which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him"[2], has inflated himself to such a degree that the existence of others becomes uncomfortable and sometimes impossible. Whenever he opens his mouth he all but crushes the stunned Mrs. Gradgrind who collapses at every fresh remark he makes. So full is Mr. Bounderby of himself that he is incapable of establishing contact even with his closest friend :

> Mr. Bounderby was as near being Mr. Gradgrind's bosom friend, as a man perfectly devoid of sentiment can approach that spiritual relationship towards another man perfectly devoid of sentiment. So near was Mr. Bounderby — or, if the reader should prefer it, so far off [3].

Every fresh contact proves a failure for he owes allegiance to no one but himself. With the breakdown of his marriage to Louisa, he is left completely on his own at the end of the novel. His isolation however, is of his own making. Bounderby whose heartless individualism replaces the fascinating individuality of Sleary, significantly the only character in the novel in the tradition of the early Dickensian odd character, never tires of boasting that he has got on in life without aid from anyone. He constantly repeats the false story of how his mother deserted him as a baby, leaving him to the mercy of his more depraved drunkard of a grandmother. In fact, his parents had sacrificed much for him, and his mother who loved him was prepared to live in obscurity, surreptitiously going to see him at a distance once or twice a year. This she was required to do because he wanted to vaunt the lie that he was a self-made man. Thus, he deliberately destroys a disinterested relationship in order to inflate his own self-importance by boasting of his hardship, struggle and

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1. Book III, ch. I.
2. Book I, ch. IV.
3. Loc. cit.

appears in the passage where Gradgrind's room full of blue books is compared with an "astronomical observatory... without any windows"[1]. Here, where the reference is to the relationship between the middle and the working class, the windows disappear altogether and darkness reigns, the darkness which is associated with both these classes.[2]

Though the windows of Gradgrind's home may be darkened, they at least still exist. As far as this family man is concerned, personal relations have not been altogether destroyed. He has not allowed for the incalculable in himself, but as it takes possession of him in his suffering, the kindness which is not altogether absent in the early part of the novel bursts forth into a depth of feeling, which brings his alienated daughter close to him. He who stands alone through the greater part of the novel, stretches out his hand to his daughter at the end. At first, Louisa cannot bear to have her father support her for she still thinks of him as the hard Gradgrind who would have her renounce the heart :

> He tightened his hold in time to prevent her sinking on the floor, but she cried out in a terrible voice, 'I shall die if you hold me. Let me fall upon the ground'[3].

Only if she falls can she rise again. And in a symbolical gesture he lays her down at his feet, a symbol of the failure of his system and of his renunciation of it. But his moment of defeat is also his moment of triumph, for after this point in the novel he does not stand alone. Once his heart is moved by the suffering of another, contact is established. Several times their hands meet and once he "softly moved [Louisa's] scattered hair from her forehead with his hand"[4]. The significance of his physical contact is great, for "such little actions, slight in another man, were very noticeable in him; and his daughter received them as if they had been words of contrition"[5]. In spite of the suffering that this change has brought about, Gradgrind is grateful to the hidden force that had been working towards it, the force embodied in Sissy. Could it be, he wonders

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1. Book I, ch. XV.
2. See below pp. 34 - 36, 38.
3. Book II, ch. XII.
4. Book III, ch. I.
5. Loc. cit.

desire to become part of a vaster humanity, that "wider and nobler humanity"[1] in which she had believed as a child. The rose, the symbol of love, is torn to pieces by Tom, the one and only person for whom Louisa has any affection, and her last hope of contact with another human being. Tom sits plucking the buds and "picking them to pieces"[2]. He bites them "tearing them away from his teeth", and finally scatters them about "by dozens". But even as he does this, they form a little island which drifts towards the mainland, thus contradicting Harthouse's words "every man is selfish in everything he does". Every man may be an island in this utilitarian society, but as the movement of the scattered rosebuds shows' he is not so by nature.

Louisa is not the only island in the middle class group even though she is the only island conscious of its yearning for the mainland and for the need to "connect". Thomas Gradgrind, her father and educator, is imprisoned within the walls of the mind and is incapable of reaching out to any other human being. We never know what his relationship to his wife is, if it exists at all. Both his children are frustrated and ruined socially, but he does not realise this until it is too late. Gradgrind of the fact - stored mind is impervious to life. His appearance and that of his home are of a piece: both blank and lifeless with no contact with the outside world. He has "a square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for it base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall".[3] Thus, the eyes which are the windows of the soul are caves darkened by the blank impentrable wall of the mind. The emphasis in this description is significantly laid on the bald head which is as bare and hard as the mind enclosed within it. Here there is no room for growth or development; everything is already set and determined. Even the wind is prevented from floating over the bald head lest it should encourage some natural growth which would signify contact with the outside world. The same impenetrability is repeated in the description of Stone Lodge where the dark windows replace the overshadowed eyes, both normally a means of contact with the world outside: Stone Lodge is "a great square house, with a heavy portico darkening the principal windows as its master's heavy brows overshadowed his eyes".[4] The failure to look outwards and to establish contact again

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1. Book II, ch. VII.
2. loc. cit.
3. Book I, ch. I.
4. Book I, ch. III.

The impossibility of penetrating to the father's understanding becomes apparent when Louisa, using a figure of speach to express the idea of the danger of suppressed emotions, discovers that she might well have been speaking a foreign language. When, in a last attempt at revealing her heart to her father, she says, looking at the Coketown chimneys :

> There seems to be nothing here but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out, father[1].

Gradgrind who can only take things at their face value, answers :

> Of course I know that, Louisa. I do not see the application of the remarks.

Her last appeal fails as the language of the heart and of poetry pass Gradgrind by.

Louisa accepts her fate which condemns her to isolation. The face she turns to the world is as cold as marble, but within the war continues. Her nature long accustomed to self - suppression is torn and divided. Emotionally, she is a stumped human being wearing an appearance of hardness even to those nearest to her, but she has "grown up, battling every inch of [her] way"[2]. Her life has been one of conflict and discord : when she compares her own unhappy state with the happy state of her younger sister, she speaks of the "harmony awakened in her young breast" and the "discord" in her own. She has never really been at peace ; "the hunger and thirst... have never been for a moment appeased" [3].

Dickens is not allowed sufficient space to present a detailed psychological study of the character, but he succeeds in conveying the yearning in her soul through the use of imagery and symbolism. Among these is the symbol of the rosebuds being thrown into the pool in her garden which form a little island "always drifting to the wall as if it wanted to become a part of the mainland"[4]. This is a symbol of Louisa's strong

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1. Book I, ch. XV.

2. Book II, ch. XII.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Book II, ch. VII.

terrible isolation of the child existing in a kind of limbo removed from the world of childhood because of its upbringing and from the world of adults because of its tender years. When Louisa grows up, she continues to exist in isolation, becoming as impenetrable as a statue :

> Utterly indifferent, perfectly self - reliant, never at a loss, and yet never at her ease, with her figure in company with them there, and her mind apparently quite alone... she baffled all penetration.[1]

She has no attachments, either to father, mother or husband. Except for her love for her brother which becomes a destructive force as it turns against her and ruins her life, the family tie has broken down completely. This is apparent in the chapter ironically entitled 'Father and Daughter' where Louisa and her father discuss her marriage to Bounderby. The hidden irony in everything that she says, which reveals her true feelings, is altogether lost on her father who cannot read deep into her meaning or her soul. Whereas she is trying to make him understand that she is a creature with feelings as well as a mind, he sees her only as his own blind reason makes it possible for him to see her. The deliberate and constant repetition of the word "father" is itself ironical, and throws the reader back to the earlier use of the word[2] in connection with the circus group but with an altogether different purpose. Here it drives home the terrible isolation of a living human being clinging desperately to the faint hope of rousing a father's paternal feelings. As the scene advances and all hope is lost the word is employed to indicate the breakdown of the relationship. The father cannot understand his daughter ; both apparently speaking the same language, they are not, in fact, doing so, for the feelings, the one unerring universal language and point of contact between people, have been crushed. To understand Louisa, Gradgrind

> must have overleaped at a bound the artificial barriers he had for many years been erecting, between himself and all those subtle essences of humanity which will elude the utmost cunning of algebra until the last trumpet ever to be sounded shall blow even algebra to wreck. The barriers were too many and too high for such a leap.[3]

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1. Book II, ch. II.

2. See above p. 23.

3. Book I, ch. XV.

stares wonderingly into the fire, but her imagination is so starved that she is unable to see very much there. The starvation of the child's heart and soul is fully expressed in the hungry groping look on her face which already reveals an inner disturbance and discord :

> struggling through the dissatisfaction of her face, there was a light with nothing to rest upon, a fire with nothing to burn, a starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow, which brightened its expression. Not with the brightness natural to cheerful youth, but with uncertain, eager, doubtful flashes, which had something painful in them, analogous to the changes on a blind face groping its way.[1]

Louisa, like Paul Dombey, is a child grown old before she has enjoyed the pleasures of childhood. Speaking to her father and educator, she says :

> The baby - preference that even I have heard of as common among children, has never had its innocent resting-place in my breast. You have been so careful of me, that I never had a child's heart. You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear.[2]

Thus, whereas Sissy is the eternal child, Louisa, denied a free natural growth, has never really been a child. A child in years, she suffers from the world - weariness of the old and experienced, the weariness of a Stephen Blackpool who is himself an old man at the age of forty. Her words : "I was tired father, I have been tired a long time... I don't know of what of everything, I think"[3], are an indictment, not only of a system of education, but of a whole civilisation which makes its people old before their time.

The impression we have of Louisa is always one of isolation. The image of the blind person shrouded in his world of physical darkness and cut off from others best conveys this sense. Added to this is the

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1. Book, I, ch. III.
2. Book I, ch. XV.
3. Book I, ch. III.

Already at this early age the children are imbued with the philosophy of self-interest which atomises society :

> The whole social system is a question of self-interest [says Bitzer]. What you must always appeal to, is a person's self-interest. It's your only hold. We are so constituted. I was brought up in that catechism when I was very young.[1]

Thus the children instead of being shown at play in groups are presented as identical inanimate objects cut off from one another :

> A plane of little vessels... arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.[2]

The violence done to the child's nature by denying the imagination and thus separating him from the world around him is driven home by the image used to describe Mr. Gradgrind. He is "a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge."[3] The image suggests that not only are the children brutally forced out of the state of childhood but in being so forced are shattered both as individuals and as a group. With a cannon discharge complete disintegration ensues.

All the characters in the middle class group are damaged isolated figures who know no joy in life. This is painfully true of the younger generation. The fact-storing system of education has a disastrous effect upon Louisa. As whole tracks of her nature are laid waste, she reacts to her education in a similar manner to John Stuart Mill ,but with more reason, for, whereas Mill was encouraged to read literature, Louisa's imagination is completely starved. When she is caught peeping through a hole at the circus people she is severely reprimanded by her father who says : "I should as soon have expected to find my children reading poetry".[4] The sensitive Louisa, with father, mother, brother and sister is the truly lonely child, the real orphan in *Hard Times*. She has known nothing to enrich her life as a child. At times, she, like little Paul Dombey,

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1. Book III, ch. VII.
2. Book I, ch. I.
3. Book I, ch. II.
4. Book I, ch. IV.

name of the worker by discovering Stephen Blackpool in Hell shaft-pit before he dies. Thus Gradgrind's grateful remark : "It is always you, my child !" takes on a symbolic significance. Here is the all-pervading spirit of love which excludes none and saves all.

Not only does Sissy move freely amidst the three groups, but by so doing she helps to enlarge the unit of the individual to that of the family as when she brings father and child together. Furthermore, in her integrating power lies the promise of a more harmonious society where the unit is neither the individual, the family, nor the class, but the whole. For once the Gradgrind system of education is proved a failure, through the symbolic Sissy, there will be no more little Gradgrinds, no more Toms to bring destruction to the workers, no more Bitzers with their philosophy of self-interest, no one rating the working class "as so much power, and reglatin"em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines... wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope".[1] Gradgrind will no longer educate the "heads" which produce the "hands". The well-integrated middle class individual will treat the worker as a complete human being, and there will be harmony where previously there had been conflict and discord.

Meanwhile, the Gradgrind system of education reigns. The imagination and the feelings, the two synthesising forces, are completely destroyed :

> Herein lay the spring of the mechanical art and mystery of educating the reason without stooping to the cultivation of the sentiments and affections. Never wonder. By means of addition, subtraction and multiplication, and division, settle everything somehow, and never wonder.[2]

No allowance is made for the incalculable; the imagination is substituted by hard facts, the only thing that will be of service to the children in the future :

> Now what I want is Facts [says Gradgrind]. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts.[3]

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1. Book II, ch. V.

2. Book I, ch. VIII.

3. Book I, ch. L

at the age of three, the circus children learn to ride so well that they almost become part of the horse : Childers' boy "thtikth on to any pony you can bring againtht him"[1], while the other children are capable of doing anything on horseback. Likewise, Merrylegs, the dog, is as much of a character and performer as any of the circus men and women, and his instinct for love and affection is as strong as theirs. When old Jupe dies, the dog, years after it has left the circus, now lame and blind, finds its way back to his old friends. Its instinctive love is, in many ways, not unlike Sissy's love for her father. The dog's return proves "that there ith a love in the world, not all thelf interctht after all, but thomething very different"[2]. This is the all binding love which takes everything in its embrace, the philosophy of which Sleery expounds and Sissy Jupe gives us in action.

Sissy, like her own people, is a living embodiment of the philosophy of the heart and its integrating power. The daughter of a dancer and a circus performer, she is brought up during the formative years of her life in the most natural manner among the circus folk. Her early upbringing comes near to Froebel's theory of education which Dickens knew and in which he showed a great interest, the theory which denied that the mind of a young child should be trained at the expense of its body. Her imagination in those early years, unspoilt by the fact - storing kind of education, is nourished by her reading about the fairies, the Dwarf, the Hunchback and the Genies, and her feelings which are unsuppressed are allowed to flow naturally. Unlike the characters in the other groups who have had their feelings and imagination suppressed, a fact which has not only cut them off from others but has made their own lives incomplete in themselves, Sissy is a perfectly intergrated human being. She is as Louisa puts it, "pleasanter to herself"[3] than Louisa is to herself. although to all intents and purposes an orphan. she is not one of Dickens' lonely children. She is the one character in the novel which is allowed to move freely and naturally amidst the three groups, symbolically leaving her mark on them. Wherever she may be, even with the Gradgrinds, a people as remote from her as they are from the circus people, she never fails to establish contact. It is she who saves Louisa by sending Harthouse away and Tom by helping him to escape, and she also redeems the good

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1. Book III, ch. VII.

2. Book III, ch. VIII.

3. Book I ch. IX.

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In the circus group which embodies the philosophy of the heart, the members are close to one another. There is no suggestion of discord in this little community. Personal relations based on love are strong and lasting; these people show "an untiring readiness to help and pity one another."[1] Where there is marriage it is productive, unlike Louisa's and Stephen Blackpool's childless marriages. The close bond between them is carried over into the ring where the members of the different families work together in close co-operation :

> The father of one of the families was in the habit of balancing the father of another of the families on the top of a great pole; the father of a third family often made a pyramid of both those fathers, with Master Kidderminster for the apex, and himself for the base.[2]

Their very livelihood and often their lives are dependent on one another. Theirs is a life of team-work where the interest of the one is inseparable from that of the others. The insistence here on the use and repetition of the words "father" and "family" draws attention to the unit of the family as opposed to that of the individual in the Gradgrind - Bounderby group of characters. This, in its turn, is extended to the yet larger equally harmonious unit of the circus group at work. The close communion among these folk does not, however, exclude a bond between them and the rest of society to which they have something valuable to offer. They provide entertainment and amusement for people whose existence would otherwise be empty and drab, thus contributing to their happiness. The circus group takes even more in its embrace; it is part of a vaster whole than that of society, the world which includes animals as well as human beings. These agile and handsome people who represent the vitality of a life more natural than that of any of the other groups in the novel are, through the very nature of their work, in close communion with animals. The animal imagery introduced into some of the passages referring to the working class[3] gives way here to actual live animals among the circus people. The unnatural comparison drawn between machinery and animals is replaced by a natural harmony between the animal and the human being which hardly distinguishes the one from the other. Thus,

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1. Book I, ch. VI.
2. Loc. cit.
3. See below p. 37.

The title of *Hard Times* suggests a fundamental difference between it and such earlier works as *Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, Barnaby Rudge, Martin Chuzzlewit* and *David Copperfield* where the picaresque form is still dominant and the central character helps to provide artistic unity. It is now no longer a matter of "I thought of Mr. Pickwick", but of "an idea lay[ing] hold of [Dickens] by the throat in a violent manner".[1] "What this central idea was", writes Humphry House, "there is no means of knowing".[2] If, however, we look at two of the suggested titles of the novel which appear in the manuscript[3], we may be clearer on the subject. *Hard Heads and Soft Hearts* and *Heads and Tales* suggest the theme of the opposition of the reason and the feelings and the reason and the imagination respectively. The feelings and the imagination in the novel are equated in so far as they are synthesising forces; the reason with its power of analysis stands alone. As these forces are set to work among the characters and the groups which they form, there emerges a clear pattern: integration versus disintegration; harmony versus conflict and discord.

Dickens sets out to indict a whole civilisation based on material values and self - interest which not only atomises society breaking it up into warring factions, but splits the personality of the individual[4] so that he is either at war with himself or, where the battle has been won, or rather lost, he is an incomplete stunted human being. The three groups into which the characters fall are clearly representative : the circus group whose life is based on the feelings and the imagination represents a state of perfect integration and harmony; the middle class group whose life is inspired by the Manchester school philosophy of self-interest, represents a state of disintegration with its members living in isolation from one another and from the other two groups; and the working class group, which is the outcome of the second, reflects the same state now seen in its final stage of break-up and dehumanisation. Thus, the all-embracing ring of the circus group disintegrates into muddle and shapelessness, and the sun and light associated with Sissy Jupe give way to the darkness of Coketown and of the death - in - life of its inhabitants. Light connects, darkness isolates.

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1. Humphry House, *The Dickens World*, p. 205.

2. Loc. cit.

3. John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, op. cit., p. 202.

4. See also the character of Wemmick in *Great Expectations.*.

HARD TIMES

A STUDY IN DISINTEGRATION AND ISOLATION.

By

NUR SHERIF

Hard Times remained one of Dickens' most neglected novels until F.R. Leavis, terming it a masterpiece[1], pointed out its qualities as a finished work of art. Writers interested in social reform, such as G.B. Shaw, had commented on the social content of the novel, but it was not until Leavis that the artistic value of the work was stressed :

> Of all Dickens' works [he writes] it is the one that has all the strength of his genius, together with a strength no other of them can show — that of a completely serious work of art.[2]

To single out *Hard Times* as Dickens' one "completely serious work of art" is to be unfair to the novelist, particularly now that recent research[3] has revealed that Dickens was a much more conscious artist than many, previous critics have given him credit for. To do justice to F.R. Leavis' estimate, however, it would be true to say that the conciseness of *Hard Times*, dictated by the form of the weekly serial which forced Dickens to curb his characteristic exuberance responsible for much diffuseness in his other novels, and which led him to charge the novel with as much meaning in the shortest possible space, makes the artistic consciousness at work more easy to detect — in fact, at times, a little too obvious. The following points which reveal its carefully thought out structure and its organic unity are meant to supplement what F.R. Leavis has already said about the novel.

1. *The Great Tradition*, ch. V.

2. Loc. cit.

3. See John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, *Dickens at Work.*

20. Ibn Sallam, 'Abu Abd-'Allah Muhammad : "Tabaqat Fuhul al-Shu'ara,". Cairo·

21. Ibn Sinan al-Khafaji : "Sirr al-Fasaha". Cairo.

22. Khalafallah Muhammad :

    1. "Min al-Wijha al-Nafsiyya". Cairo.

    2. "Badi'" (Art. Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed.).

    3. "Qur'anic Studies as an Important Factor in the Development of Arabic Literary Criticism" (Art. Alexandria University, Faculty of Arts Bulletin, 1952).

    4. "'Abd'al-Qahir's Theory in his Secrets of Eloquence " (Art. Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 1955. U.S.A.).

23. Mandour M. : "Al-Naqd al-Manhaji 'Ind al-'Arab". Cairo.

24. Nawful, Sayyed : "Al-Balagha al'Arabiyya fi dowr Nash'atiha" Cairo

25 Qudama Ibn Ja'far :

    1. "Naqd al-Shi'r". Constantinople, Cairo.

    2. "Naqd al-Nathr". Cairo.

26. Richards, I.S. : "The Philosophy of Rhetoric". London.

27. Saint-Hilaire, J. Barthélemy : "Rhétorique d'Aristote". Paris.

28. Saintsbury, George : "A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe". London.

29. Von Grunebaum, Gustave : "Arabic Literary Criticism in the 10th Century A.D" (Art. J. Am. Orien. Society, 1941).

30. Zaghlul Sallam M. :

    1. "Athar al-Qur'an fi Tatawwor al-Naqd al-'Arabi". Cairo.

    2. "Dia' al-Din ibn al-Athir wa Juhudu fi-l-Naqd". Cairo.

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2. Al-Amidi, al-Hasan ibn Bishr : "Al-Muwazana bayna Abi Tammam wa al-Buhtury". Cairo.

3. Al-'Askari, Abu Hilal : "Al-Sina'atayn". Istanbul.

4. Al-Baqillani, Abu Bakr : "I'jaz al-Qur'an". Cairo.

5. Al-Isfahani, Abu-l-Faraj 'Ali ibn al-Bahr : "Al-Aghani". Cairo.

6. Al-Jahiz, Abu 'Othman 'Amr ibn Hasayn "Al Bayan wa-l-Tabin". Cairo.

7. Al-Jurjani, 'Abd al-Qahir :
   1 "Asrar al-Balagha" Cairo
   2 "Dala'il al-I'jaz" Cairo

8. Al-Jurjani, Al-Qadi Abu-l-Hasan 'Ali Ibn' Abd-al-'Aziz : "Al-Wasata bayna-l-Mutanabbi wa-Khusumih" Cairo

9. Al-Maraghi, Ahmad Mustafa : "Tarikh 'Olum al-Balagha" Cairo

10. Al-Marsufi : "Al-Wasila al-Adabiyya" Cairo

11. Al-Qazwini, al-Khatib : "Talkhis al-Miftah" Calcutta, Cairo

12. Al-Sakkaki, Abu Ya'qub : "Miftah al-'Olum" Cairo

13. Al-Taftazani, Sa'd al-Din :
    1 "Al-Sharh al-Kabir" Constantinople.
    2. "Al-Sharh al-Saghir". Cairo, Calcutta.

14. De Tassy, M. Graein : "La Rhétorique des Nations Musulmanes" (Articles in J. Asiatique, summarised from "Hada'iq al-Balagha" by Amir Shams el-Din Faqir al-Delhi).

15. Ibrahim, T.A. : "Tarikh al-Naqd al-Adabi 'Ind al 'Arab". Cairo.

16. Ibn al-Athir, Dia' al-Din : "Al-Mathal al-Sa'ir". Cairo.

17. Ibn-al-Mu'tazz, 'Abd-Allah : "Kitab al-Badi'". London, Cairo.

18. Ibn Qutayba, Abu Muhammad 'Abd-Allah ibn Muslim : "Mushkil al-Qur'an". Cairo.

19. Ibn Rashiq, al-Hasan : "Al-'Omda". Cairo.

way of examples from contemporary authors we may mention the following : — Taha Hussayn's critical study of "al-Mutanabbi", in which he analysed al-Mutanabbi's chief poems composed in the successive stages of his life, and applied in their appreciation a joint critical method of classicism and modernism. 2 — Al-Akkad's study of ibn al-Rumi, using a modern psychological approach to portray ibn al-Rumi's life and personality from his poetry, 3 — Taha Ibrahim's pioneer book on the "History of Arabic Literary Criticism till the 4th Century A.H.", 4 — Mandour's academic thesis on "The Methodical Criticism of the Arabs in the 4th century A.H.", 5 — Khalafallah's attempt at applying the "Psychological Point of View to the Study and Criticism of literature", 6 — Ahmad Amin's comprehensive book on the "History of Literary Criticism", 7 — Al-Shaib's studies on "the Style", 8 — Shawqi Dayf's several studies on "Art and its Techniques in Arabic Literature", 9 — Sabir al-Qalmawi's study of "Theory of Imitation".

These are only part of a wealth of critical material produced by Arab scholars of varying approaches and tendencies in the different regions of the modern Arab world.

tiveness. To this dual division, al-Sakkaki appended a samll section on the special aids to speech beautification which later became the domain of a third separate science, namely Badi'. This process of narrowing the critical field to Balagha and of demarcating its sciences was completed and standardised a century later by al-Khatib al-Quzwini (d 739 A.H.), who condensed al-Sakkaki's "Miftah" into a text book called "Matn al-Talkhis".

From there down to a century ago, Arabic books on rhetoric were confined to the formal study of Fasaha and Balagha, and the displaying of ingenuity in defining rhetorical figures and artifices and how to search for them and analyse them in a set rigid way. The energies of Balagha scholars, generation after generation, from practically all Muslim areas, all through those centuries were mostly spent on explaining, commenting on, enlarging, and then condensing again the books of al-Sakkaki and al-Quzwini. The science of Balagha, during that period, had very lillto relation to literature and literary taste.

7. It was not until the end of the last century that a general movement of reawakening in the Muslim world began to stimulate creativeness in literature and liberation from the shackles of formal rhetoric. A pioneer in this movement on the rhetorical side was al-Marsafi of Egypt (d 1307 A.H.) who reverted to the classical way and in the manner of ibn al-Athir produced a very instructive book entitled "al-Wasila al-Adabiyya" which was built on his lectures and lessons in criticism given in "Dar al-'Olum" the newly established college for Arabic teachers in Cairo. It was not long before the movement for modern university eduaction started in the Arab world and the study of Arabic literary criticism began to avail itself of the methods of modern academic research. This was aided and stimulated by two other important factors : the growth and development of modern Arabic literature especially in the narrative field; and 2— the study and assimilation, by many Arab poets and writers, of schools and systems of Western literary criticism. The last fifty years have definitely seen the rebirth of Arabic criticism and the determined effort on the part of Arab writers and critics to repeat the performance of their predecessors of the classical period in developing a comprehensive Arab system of criticism, faithful to the spirit and character of their linguistic and literary heritage, and harmonising the philosophy of their ancient Balagha with the methods and approaches of literary criticism in the modern world. Already some outstandring results in this direction have been achieved in the form of academic reasearches and books or practical criticism. By

or Imām in the same way as the founders of Muslim schools of jurispru-
dence : Malik, and al-Shafi'i, for example, were regarded by posterity.

We may end this series of the great minds by Yahya ibn Hamza
al-'Alawi (d 729 A.H.) one of the Imams of Yemen, and the author of
"al-Tiraz al-Mutadammin li Asrar al-Balagha wa 'Olum Haqaiq al-I'jaz".
The author criticises books on the subject of literary criticism as being
too detailed and thus boring, or else too brief and consequently insuffi-
cient. He acclaims 'Abd al-Qahir as the founder of the science but con-
fesses that he knew of his two books only indirectly through references
to them in the writings of other scholars. He mentions some of the au-
thors with whose books he was acquainted, including ibn al-Athir. The
motive for writing his book, he indicated, was to help his students to under-
stand al-Zamakhshari's approach to Qur'anic exegesis and I'jaz. Acco-
rding to al-'Alawi, the Arabic literary sciences are four : the science of
language which deals with the significances of separate words; the science
of grammar which deals with words in composition and predication; the
science of syntax which deals with the morphology of single words and
their conformity to regular patterns in the Arabic language; and lastly
the combined two branches of Fasaha and Balagha which are called Ma-
ani and Bayan respectively, and which are the highest of the literary scien-
ces. After a long introduction the book proceeds to deal theoretically
with cardinal questions in the rhetorical sciences : such as truth and
metaphor, kinks of truth, kinds of significances, divisions of metaphor,
lingusistic sounds, single words and compositions and their charcteristics,
and requirements and examples of excellence in the various literary
arifices.

6. But here we seem to have reached a parting of the ways between
rhetoric and criticism. The separation is supposed to have been started
by Abi Ya'qub al-Sakkaki al-Khuwarismi (d 626 A.H.) the author of
"Miftah al-'Olum". He is credited with the delineation of the boundaries
of the literary sciences in the manner referred to above which al-'Alawi
must have followed in al-Tiraz. In the third division of these sciences,
al-Sakkaki puts 'Ilm al-Ma'ani and 'Ilm al-Bayan conjointly, the first
dealing with the characteristics of speech composition by virtue of which
they conform to the requirements of the occasion, and the second dealing
with the different ways of expressing the meaning to complete the desired
conformity. By this division al-Sakkaki seems to have carried to a logical
conclusion the distinction which 'Abd alQahir indicated between questions
of speech structure and composition, and those of signification and effec-

do not diminish the claim of our later Arab author to originality. It is to his lasting credit that he tried in a literary study, and succeeded to a marked degree, to harmonise the rigour of scientific thinking with the spontaneity of literary taste.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries A.H., although they did not produce another great figure in the study of rhetoric like 'Abd al-Qahir, nor even a vigorous follower of the founder of the science to develop further his ideas and to widen the scope of their application, yet continued to add to the wealth of Arab achievement in literary criticism, mostly in general comprehensive surveys. One of the great minds of that period is ibn Rachiq al-Qayrawani (d 436 A.H.) the author of a standard book on the art of poetry, entitled "al 'Omda fi Mahasin al-Shi'r wa Naqdih". It is one of the fullest treatments of the technicalities of Arabic poetry and its principal kinds. Another 5th century critic is ibn Sinan al-Khafaji al-Halabi (d 466 A.H.) the author of "Sirr al-Fasaha" Ibn Sinan's chief contribution is in the domain of linguistic criticism where he deals with the sounds of the Arabic language, their classifications, and their characteristics. The Qur'anic commentator, al-Zamakhshari of Khuwarism (d 538 A.H.) deserves a special mention here because of his consistent application of the rhetorical approach to the explanation and interpretation of the Qur'an. His book "al-Kashashaf" claims a high place among Qur'anic commentaries. He is also the compiler of "Asas al-Balugha", an Arabic dictionary which is unique in its attention to original and metaphorical usages of the Arabic language. A later author and critic Dia' alDin ibn al-Athir (d 637 A.H.), left us a most valuable and interesting book on the Two Arts of the Writer and the Poet, which he called "al-Mathal al-Sa'ir". He dealt with the literary art in two divisions : one on verbal expression, and the other on meaning, and managed to include under these two headings all the artifices and figures of speech, which previous authors since the beginning of the 3rd century A.H. had been exploring, defining and illustrating. He also restated the problems of word and meaning, plagiarism, and norms of comparison in a masterly manner, exhibiting searching analytical power and independence of thought. Moreover he invented a practical method, for the training of the undeveloped literary talent, which relied on two factors : the natural aptitude, and nourishing of the ability on classical models. The method is explained in detail, and illustrated from the history of literature as well as from the personal experience and literary works of the author. Ibn al-Athir was so convinced of the originality and applicability of his method that he claimed for himself the title of Mujtahid

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literature is part of a wider field, namely art. Occasionally in his analysis and argumentation he would appeal to other fine arts such as painting and sculpture. His approach in the second enquiry gave later authors the basis for creating the two separate rhetorical sciences of : Exposition (Bayan) and Embellishments (BADI'). Put together, the results of his two enquiries could be summarised as follows : "(a) Excellence in literature should be judged by the quality of the structure of the expression and its pleasing effect on the mind and soul of the reader (or listener) rather than by the verbal aspects. (b) The beauty of metaphors lies in the fact that they give to style novelty, vigour, and movement, and that they bring out the hidden shades into a perceptual relief. (c) Composite comparisons by similitude please the human understanding for a varieties of reasons : all human souls enjoy being transferred from the hidden to the visible, from the abstract to the concrete, and from what is known by reflexion to what is known intuitively or through sense perception ; man naturally enjoys seeing different things unified by links of similarities, and the enjoyment is enhanced when the discovery is reached after a reasonable amount of intellectual activity; if the intellectual activity involved is too little or too exacting the enjoyments is diminished or marred ; the functions of the intellect are thinking, reflection, analogy and inference ; and all these are exercised in creating and perceiving relations between different things ; the rhetorical figures are the embodiments of all these considerations ."

In assessing the value and place of 'Abd al-Qahir's contribution to the theories of Arabic criticism, we must bear in mind two considerations : The first is that certain Arab scholars of the flourishing period of the 3rd and 4th centuries A.H.. did anticipate 'Abd al-Qahir in some aspects of his theory. Al-Jahiz, for example, discussed at length the art of oratory from the point of view of its relation to the crowds, and expressed, though briefly, the idea that good speech affects the heart in a variety of ways. Al-Qadi al-Jurjani also showed his interest in the psychology of literature by advocating the method of introspection in literary appreciation, and, as mentioned earlier, analysed in a psychological fashion the poetical ability into natural and acquired elements. The second consideration which has been explored by modern research is that 'Abd al-Qahir must have been acquainted with the Arabic versions of Aristotle's Poetics and Rhetorics where the First Master probes the effective side of literature both in his treatment of tragedy, and in his exposition of the art of metaphor. These various probable anticipations, however,

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meanings are defined in the intellect in their proper order, their verbal expressions follow obediently in a determined fashion. A literary composition will achieve its end if it is properly and suitably constructed. It becomes vague, obscure, complicated and generally defective when the verbal elements do not harmonise with the meanings, or when the meanings themselves are not clear and coherent in the mind of the speaker or the writer. Hence it follows that our main concern in rhetoric should be with techniques of sturcture, such as junction and disjunction, mention and omission, definite and indefinite... etc. Our chief occupation here should be the study of the characteristics of meanings in construction, which is a combination of language and grammar. This new technique was ably and effectively applied by 'Abd al-Qahir to the study of the Qur'-anic composition and consequently to the analysis and appreciation of specimens of the highest literary models, and yielded a complete system which later authors turned into a definite rhetorical branch, namely the Science of Meanings (Ma'ani).

But in this analysis of the "Dala'il" 'Abd al-Qahir, found himself repeatedly resorting to the process of introspection, and suggesting that the best way to discover the secret of literary excellence is to look inwardly into oneself and find out what impressions, satisfactions, emotions and excitements the whole composition left on one's soul. It appears as if this aspect of literary art directed Abd al-Qahir, in his second book "Asrar al-Balagha; to go deeper into the aesthetic side of literature and to find out the secrets behind the feeling of enjoyment produced by beautiful literary words. Thus the field of research was transferred to the laws of human thought. What goes on in our minds and souls when we hear a beautiful literary passage. Why do such artifices as alliteration and assonance please us ? And why do such phenomena as superfluity and obscurity of expression displease us ? What is the secret behind the aesthetic effect of a good metaphor or a cleverly conceived compound simile ? Which is more appealing to our taste : the spontaneous and easy-flowing poetry of al-Buhturi, or the deep and meditative poetry of Abu Tammam ? And why ? If we can refer such questions to some inherent charachteristies in our perceptions and conceptions, in our cognition and imagination. we can be assured of a solid foundation for a study of literary appreciation. In this part of his enquiry 'Abd al-Qahir shifts the emphasis from constructing and conveying the meaning, to communicating it in an effective and pleasing way. His new domain of study becomes the varieties of ways and means of expressing the meaning in an artistic fashion. In this he showed himself clearly aware of the fact that

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poets, system of building up his poem, and his use of badi‘, all received a masterly analysis at the hands of al-Jurjani. The book succeeds in giving a general picture of literary criticism in that period. It abounds with opinions of critical scholars, and recalls many famous comparisons which were held between poets, both past and contemporary. In short, the Wasata of al-Jurjani, along with the Muwazana of al-Amidi represent the peak of practical Arabic criticism and illustrate the Arabs' mature efforts in that field of literary study.

4. But the climax of Arab achievement in the field of literary criticism is still to be reached in the fifth century A.H. (11th A.D) at the hands of Abd-al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d 471 A.H./1078 A.D.), the author of the two well-known critical books : "Dala'il al-I'jaz" and "Asrar al-Balagha". The first book, although primarily concerned with explaining the secrets and signs of Qur'anic I'jaz, faces the wider issue of literary excellence in general, and reaches a fundamental theory of structure; while the second searches deep into literary images and discovers in the form of a psycho-literary theory, what the author took to be the real secret of eloquence. Each of the two volumes advances a thesis, explains it, discusses its applications in the different rhetorical species, and answers any adverse criticism which it might arouse. They survey the field of Arabic literary criticism at the author's time, point out the lack of pure scientific thinking, and the preoccupation of authors with the unessentials in the literary art, and try to lay the foundations for a new science which would satisfy both the objective and the subjective aspects of literary appreciation. A modern reader of the two books feels inclined to presume that ‘Abd al-Qahir thought of literary composition in a two-fold division of structure and beauty. But it is also possible that when the author wrote his first book he was mainly occupied with and guided by one thesis, namely that eloquence is a product of correct structure and signification. At a later stage, and perhaps owing to other cultural influences and maturation of thought, he found that an important aspect of literary art, namely its impact on the reader or the listener, still called for a separate and fuller treatment. The starting point in his line of thinking in al-Dala'il was the consideration of the place of words and meanings in the art of expression. Some of the ancients, e.g. al-Jahiz, considered eloquence as mainly dependent on the quality of the verbal element which is the words. But, argued ‘Abd al-Qahir, words in themselves do not make language. They only do so when organised in a system of construction according to the requirement of the meaning. The important element then, in literary composition is structure, and the essence of structure is meaning. Once

and his disciple and kinsman al-Buhturi is the first systematic treatment of that kind in Arabic criticism. The author collects the common meanings between the two poets, and on the basis of a rigid comparison between each two similar meanings decides who is more poetical in that particular case. He takes account of the supporters of each poet, reproduces the reasons given by either party for their stand, and brings into relief the faults and plagiarisms of each of the two great poets. Although the subject of al-Amidi's study was a particular case of comparison, and the features it concentrated on were the artistic and poetic ones only, it claims a high value because of its success in going beyond the particular comparison to a more general comparative study. It adopted the method of adducing comparable examples from the poetry of the forerunners of the two poets, thus enlarging its scope and claiming a larger share of critical accuracy. It exhibited the traditional literary models and revealed its author's wide knowledge of Arabic poetry and his cultivated analytical literary taste. It also gave one of the best practical accounts of the phenomenon of Plagiarism, which greatly occupied the attention of Arab critics, permeated a good deal of their comparative studies, and to some extent coloured their judgments of literary values.

The other valuable contribution by a 4th century author to methodical criticism is the Wasata (arbitration) of al-Qadi al-Jurjani between al-Mutanabbi the famous Arab poet of the Eastern Arab world of Islam and his antagonists. Al-Mutanabbi, by his arrogant personality, wide ambition, and forceful poetry succeeded in creating adversaries to himself as well as staunch supporters wherever he went. Many grammarians, linguists, critics and rival poets, shared in finding faults with his poetry and revealing plagiarisms, which ,they claimed, he committed against previous masters of Arabic poetry, while others hailed him as the greatest Arab poet ever lived. Many treatises were written about him. The situation called for a sympathetic arbiter, and al-Jurjani tried to play the role. His introduction to Wasata contains a good deal of theorising about literature. An example of that is his interesting,and almost modern, analysis of the poetical ability into its four component factors : natural aptitude, intelligence, acquaintance with and memorisation of past models and practical training. These he maintained were factors of a general nature, applicable to all humanity, and not confined to a certain age or generation. Another example is the discussion of the influence of environment on poetry, with illustrative examples from the poetry of Bedouins and city dwellers. The different aspects of al-Mutanabbi's poetry : his philosophising, tendency to complication, occasional leaning on previous

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(d. 356 A.H.) the writer of the Book of Songs, a unique book of its kind in the literatures of the world. And the second is Abu Hilal al-'Askari (d 395 A.H.) who attempted to give a complete systematic manual of Arabic rhetorical and critical principles as they were known in his time. Now to take the general contributions first. The Book of Songs (al-Aghani) is a literary encyclopaedia, of twenty volumes dealing essentially with lyrical poetry which was set to music and singing by the musicians and singers of the early centuries of Islam. But around this theme the author collected a large amount of critical and biographical information of a great number of Arab poets. The critical aspect of al-Aghani has received the attention of modern academic research. The wealth of narratives and biographical data contained in the book has been a boon to modern Arabic play and story writers.

Al-'Askari made the two arts of poetry and prose the subject matter of his treatment and tried to systematise and enlarge upon the earlier general attempts of al-Jahiz, ibn al-Mu'tazz and Qudama. The two Arabic rhetorical conceptions of FASAHA and BALAGHA received at his hands a satisfactory definition, the first being connected with elegance and purity of syle, and the second with communicating and conveying the desired meaning in a convincing and effective manner. Long chapters on distinguishing the good from the bad in speech, on the nature of literary art, and on the technique of composition and good description, with copious examples of excellent poetry and prose, occupy about half the book. The rest is an enumeration and elucidation of literary artifices, the number of which al-'Askari raised to thirty five, which is more than double the number given earlier by ibn al-Mu'tazz.

Al-Baqillani's treatise on I'jaz takes its place among Arabic critical books on account of its attempt of applying the critical concepts to revealing some of the secrets of the Qur'anic literary excellence. In doing this the author subjected some of the highly esteemed Arabic poems to a severe test of criticism to show the fallibility of human products. Qur'anic I'jaz, he maintained, was something more than, and above that which critical standards could explain, something that could be felt more than known by the expert and cultured reader or listener. This theory of I'jaz, peculiar to Muslim culture will meet us again, in a different setting when we come to Abd-al-Qahir al-Jurjani.

The two treatises which exemplify Arabic criticism proper in its methodicl form are those of al-Amidi and al-Qadi al-Jurjani referred to earlier. Al-Amidi's Muwazana (comparison) between abu Tammam

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buoting copious examples from the Qur'an, the Hadith, the speeches of the Prophet's Companions, and the language of the Bedouin, ibn al-Mu'tazz tried to show that the use of the figures of speech was inherent in the nature of poetry, and that the Arabs practised the art long before the time of Bashshar, Muslim ibn al-Walid, and Abu- Nuwas. These modern poets of the Abbasid period did not invent the art but simply extended its use until it was thought a new creation. It is an open question whe. ther Ibn El-Mu'tazz was influenced - in his Badi'- by Aristotle's writings, especially the "Rhetorics" which were translated into Arabic during the third and fourth centuries A.H. But the treatment of ibn al-Mu'tazz has the unmistakable stamp of originality, and the subject seems to have begun to interest Arab critics in the second century as an Arabic literary phenomenon. The influence, if any, might be sought in the prominence given to metaphor and in the attempt at definition and division of literary artifices.

But the real disciple of the philosophical sciences, and the author who manifested Aristotle's influence very clearly was Qudama ibn Ja,far (d. 337 A.H.). His book "Naqd al-Shi,r" is perhaps the first Arabic book to carry in its title the word "Naqd" which is the Arabic equivalent to criticism. It is conceived and planned in the Aristotelian fashion of logical divisions and definitions. The author begins by defining poetry as regular speech with metres, rhymes, and meanings; proceeds to explain and justify this definition on logical grounds, and then adds words as the fourth element constituting poetry. But out of the relations between these four simple elements he creates four complex ones, which evolve out of the harmony between them. He points out that earlier Arab authors have neglected the critical side of the studies of the poetical art, and directed their energies to the less important aspects, namely prosody and linguistic considerations. His, then, was an attempt to create a real science of criticism and set the norms of excellence in the principal categories of Arabic poetry.

3. The Arab contribution to literary criticism assumes clearer and maturer forms in the 4th century A.H. (10th A.D.). On the specialised side we meet with al-Baqillani (d 403 A.H.), who gives a scholarly account of the Qur'anic I'jaz; al-Amidi (d 371 A.H.), who leaves us the best classical Arabic comparison between two great poets representatives of two schools of poetical art; and al-Quadi al-Jurjani (d 366 A.H.) the writer of the earliest critical treatise on a great Arabic figure in the literary history of the Arabs. On the general side, at least two contributions must be mentioned here. The first is that of Abu-l-Faraj al-Asfahani

numbers of people attended in quest for knowledge. Anyone who spoke before the audience in the mosque had to possess the ability to express himself clearly, to attract and persuade. Thus a new kind of study came into being to show the qualities an orator needed, and to point out the defects of different speeches. Observations on effective and defective public speaking. contained in al-Jahiz's book can be grouped under the following headings :

1. correctness of pronunciation, and defects caused by deformities of the vocal organs; 2— proper and improper employment of language, and harmonious and disharmonious use of words; 3— syntax and the relations between words and their meanings; clarity, conciseness, suitability of expressions to different occasions and audiences, and of speech to its intended objective; 4— the appearance of the orators and the agreableness of his gestures and mannerisms.

Another 3rd century A.H. literary celebrity was the Sunni (Orthodox) writer ibn Qutayba (d 276 A.H.) the author of many books on literature and Qur'anic usages. In one of his books : "al-Shi'r wal-Shu'ara " he urged people to form independent judgments and use their own power of appreciation. He attacked the philosophers' approach to criticism and their use of logical method in the appreciation and analysis of literary texts. One of the critical problems he raised was that of the division of poets into those who deliberate over, revise. and perfect their poetical works, and those who depend on the spontaneity and the easy flowing of their poetical inspiration. He also opposed the tendency to always give preference to the ancient just because they were ancient. Literary talent, he argued, was not confined to any particular period. A modern poet might easily surpass an ancient in literary creativeness and workmanship.

The contribution of the Poet Prince "'Abd Allah ibn al-Mu'tazz" (d 296 A.H.) who lived in the same century, and his influence on the development of Arabic criticism, were of a different character. He made a study of what was considered in his days, in the poetical art, as innovation or BADI' and set out to prove that it was not a new creation at all. His book "al-Badi'" was the first attempt at a systematic treatment of the figures of speech, which he divided into three main categories : — the metaphor which is the pillar-stone of poetry; 2 artifices connected with the form only and not with the essence of poetry, such as assonance (Tajnis) and antithesis (Mutabaqa); and 3— thirdly the dialectical style which takes the form of a logical argument (al-Mathab al-Kalami). By

that poetry, like the sciences and other arts, needs its own special technique and culture. He was aware of the established truth which says that abundance of practical study is worth more than all academic knowledge.

The second point stressed by Ibn Sallām in his book is the importance of verrifying the poetical texts and of ascertaining their origin. This is the first step in textual criticism and must be the foundation on which any such criticism is based. He directed a violent attack on the manner in which some Arab chroniclers accepted and narrated ancient poetry, and therefore questioned the authenticity of many of the texts.

The other important point in ibn Sallam's book is the division of poets into classes. With regard to time the poets were either Islamic or pre-Islamic. He tried to classify the poets of either era according to the abundance and excellence of their poetry. In this classification he also took into consideration the place of origin.

Although ibn Sallām, failed to support judgments he passed on poets and poetry by analysing the texts or describing the qualities of each particular poet, yet it must be admitted that Arabic criticism at his hands took a step forward, expecially as regards questions of verification and the classification of poets. What we miss in his book, however, is criticism in the sense of a discerning study and a methodical approach. The first attempts at methods are not to be found earlier than the 4th century A.H.

Al-Jāhiz (d 255 A.H.) who was one of the leading Mu'tazelites and writers of the 3rd century A.H. tried in his book "al-Bayān wa-l-Tabyin", to give a picture of criticism in the pre-Islamic times and the 1st century A.H. The criticism of that period, he maintained was elementary, but, to a marked degree, sound and convincing, as it emanated from genuine practical literary taste. The critics of that period, according to him, managed to discover a number of defects in poetical craftsmanship and to give valuable practical advice to orators and poets.

Al-Jahiz's book was an echo of the Arabic intellectual life of the 3rd century A.H. At that time the mosques of Kufa and Basra were not only places for worship and administration of justice, but also schools for the teaching of language, grammar, Hadith, and jurisprudence, as well as platforms for narratore to relate to the assembled audiences the story of the Prophet's life and conquests. Leaders of theological schools and religious divisions used to go there for dialectical discussions, and

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excellence; 7 - originality and imitation, and the phenomenon of Pla-
giarism; 8— nature of speech and articulation; 9— meaning and
essence of literary excellence, in starcutre, signification, effectiveness and
formal beauty; 10- definition of the figures of speech; 11 - standards
for the comparison between rival poets; 12— norms of excellence in
the chief poetical arts, such as panegyric, satire, and elegy; 13- linguistic
aspects of literary art.

These various critical angles were treated sometimes separately in
a specialised fashion, and sometimes generally in the form of manuals or
textbooks. The stylistic aspects in particular, received a large share of
the Arab authors' attention, and the researches around them grew until
they formed a separate critical branch under the name of BALAGHA.
This was mainly the outcome of the Muslims' preoccupation with prob-
lems of Qur'anic exegesis and I'jaz. Greek writings on Rhetorics which
were translated into Arabic as early as the 3rd century A.H., also contrib-
uted to the growth of the science of BALAGHA. In fact that science
dominated the Arabic critical field all through the later centuries of Islam
from the seventh to the twelvth (13th to 18th A.D.).

The above enumeration of the different aspects of Arabic critical
writings will indicate the immensity of its wealth, and the difficulty of
separating the Arab contribution in this field from their general contrib-
ution to the sciences of language and literature. Many a general book
on literature. such as the "Book of Songs (al-Aghani)" by Abu-l-Faraj
would also claim a place among the books of literary criticism. The
same can be said of books, such as al-Bquillani's "I'jaz al-Qur'an, which
dealt exclusively with Qur'anic unique excellence.

But in the following survey of the main features of Arabic literary
criticism we shall limit ourselves to singling out some of the outstanding
landmarks and making a brief halt at each of them.

2. One of the early grammarians, philologists and literary critics
of the first stage in Arabic authorship was ibn Sallām (d. 231 A.H.). His
book "Tabaqat al-Shu'ara' " is representative of the critical attainments
of his period. Criticism, he maintains, needs long training and experience,
and a critic must be an expert on his subject and well-versed in the practice
of his art. In other words taste alone does not meet the requirements,
but must be supplemented by experience and long study. He also adds

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by the early authors of the general sciences of Arabic language and literature. For some time before Islam there grew a number of market places in Hijaz where people of different tribes used to assemble for trade as well as for literary contests. Names of recognised arbiters in those contests, such as that of al-Nabigha al-Thubyani, and their judgments and criticisms were handed down to posterity by the 'Rawis'. Naturally very little explanation or justification was offered for such judgments, and very often one verse or one poem would be given as a ground for a high praise of a poet or for a comparison between two contestants in the market place. Some of the Prophet's companions, were known for their appreciation and sound judgment of pre-Islamic poetry. The second Caliph 'Omar, for instance, was reported to hold that al-Nabigha was the greatest of the Jahiliyya poets, and when he was asked the reason for this pronouncement, he answered : al-Nabigha never used redundant words, always avoided the uncouth in poetry, and never praised a person except his merit.

By the end of the first century of Islam, however, Arabic culture had spread outside Arabia in various directions with the spread of Islam. The minds of the new Muslim Community were getting ready for a general intellectual awakening. The first fields to yield the benefit of those efforts were the religious on one side and the linguistic and literary on the other. Some scholars busied themselves with the explanation of the Qur'an and the understanding of its miraculous challenging literary excellence. Others concentrated on tracing pure linguistic usages of the Arabic language and standardising its grammar and syntax. Some directed their efforts to collecting pre-Islamic poetry and preserving it from being lost.

The stage was now set for the beginning of a golden era in authorship which lasted several centuries. The critical problems raised by the Arab authors during that period could be summed up under the following main headings :

1 — the literary aspect of the Qur'anic I'jaz, and the extent to which literary criticism could aid in discovering the secrets of that I'jaz; 2 — the unique and some time obscure usages of the Qur'anic style; 3 — the authenticity of literary texts transmitted by the 'Rawis' from pre-Islamic and early Islamic times; 4 — the classification of the Arab poets, both Islamic and pre-Islamic; 5 — the merits and demerits of the ancients and moderns in Arabic literature, and the controversies between traditionalists and innovators; 6 — the claims of meaning and expression to literary