CHAPTER - III

A Study of the Prose Works of Dr. Taha Husayn and the Contemporary Literary Trend:

3.1 Dr. Taha Husayn as a Modern Prose Writer:

Dr. Taha Husayn, who is a prolific modern Prose writer has immensely contributed to the field of modern Arabic prose literature. He has touched through his writing, the field of literary research as well as social, autobiographical and historical arena. He had a tremendous hand over the story and novel, imparting bright and inspiring knowledge to the learned men and scholars as well. Al-Mazini, a revolutionary of Diwan movement says: "Verily Dr. Taha Husayn is an excellent storian and learned novelist of high class".¹

For the sake of convenience of study, the Prose literature of Dr. Taha Husayn may be divided into four categories.

A. Literary Studies:

B. Social Studies:

C. Autobiographical Studies:

D. Historical Studies.

¹ Al-Talawi, Dr. Muhammad Najeb Ahmad, Taha Husayn wal-Fann al-Qasasi, p. 3
A) Literary studies: (i) Research work: Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have specialised in literature and classical studies and was again, the first Egyptian, and the only member of the mission, to succeed in obtaining first his B.A. from Montpellier University, and then his Ph.D. from the Sorbonne. His doctoral dissertation written in 1917, was on Ibn Khaldun, the 14th century Arab Historian, the founder of Sociology and his teacher of literature was Gustave Lanson. Dr. Taha Husayn contributed much in various literary phases. He selected two of the greatest Arab masters, “Abu al-'Ala al-Ma’arri” and “Ibn Khaldun” for his research. In 1914 he completed his thesis entitled Dhikhra Abi’l-'Ala and obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for his commendable work. Dr. Taha Husayn adopted Scientific method and true feelings in his thesis. His keen sighted description and analysis confirm his scientific, experimental and innovative mind. It has been found that the life of Abu al-'Ala-al-Ma’arri was on quality basis and he had given much importance to the foreign culture rather than that of native culture and thus laid stress on western literature than Arabic itself ¹ while Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have dwelt at length on al-Ma’arri’s life, his political as well as intellectual conditions. Dr. Taha Husayn wrote three books on al-Ma’arri: (1) Tajdid Dhikhra Abi’l ‘Ala’ (Reminiscing Abil ‘Ala, 1937) (2) Ma’a Abil ‘Ala fi Sijnihi (with Abil-'Ala in his prison, 1935) and (3) Sawt Abil ‘Ala’ (The voice of Abil ‘Ala, 1944).²

1. Nadawi, Dr. Md. Rashid, Al-B’ath al-Islami, Part-II, p. 57
2. Mahdi, Ismat, Modern Arabic Literature, p. 107
Dr. Taha Husayn was fascinated by the Arabic skills and human eagerness of Abul 'Ala's verse and his defiant personality. When Dr. Taha Husayn was endeavouring to achieve his doctoral thesis, he used to go to one of his Azharite friends in most of the mornings to his abode at "Darb al-Jamamiz". His friend discussed with Dr. Taha Husayn the Contents of the famous books, the 'Luzumiyyat', "Saqt al-Zand" and also his other important works till late at-night. Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have read many times the poetry and prose of Abul 'Ala with his friend.

Dr. Taha Husayn is found to be highly influenced by the valuable writings of Abul 'Ala al-Ma'arri and he had the deepest faith on him. Moreover, he had been convinced of the way of life of Abul 'Ala al Ma'arri that he led.

In Paris, Dr. Taha Husayn spent most of the days with study while he studied Latin in the morning as well as reading the French translation of Ibn Khaldun's al-Muqaddama in the forenoon.

His thesis on Ibn Khaldun is entitled "Etude Analytique et critique dela Philosophie Sociale d' ibne Khaldoune", 1917. At the time of preparing his doctoral dissertation on the Social Philosophy of Ibn-Khaldun Dr. Taha Husayn had to study along with Arabic the French and other texts in European languages. Immediately after completion of any section of his writings he showed to his professor, the French orientalist, "Dr. Casanova" for necessary approval. After getting approval of the same by his professor, he approached for the next section.
Dr. Taha Husayn listened to the studies in sociology, given by professor Durkheim and was highly enamoured with this subject. While he wanted to participate in it under the professor's supervision. In regards to the theme of the thesis, Dr. Taha Husayn agreed with his professor and also for being supervisor of Dr. Taha Husayn from the philosophical point of view. Every part of the dissertation was read by both the professors, the Orientalists at first stage, Casanova and Durkheim later. The Doctorate degree in history which was conferred to him by the France University required 4 years duration. While presenting his dissertation on Ibn Khaldun, he faced a technical problem with the Sorbonne's University doctorate. Since Cairo reminded him, he had undertaken before leaving Egypt, not to present any doctoral thesis in a foreign University on any subject, until it was recognised by the Egyptian University. ¹

It is reported that after completing his second doctoral thesis on the Social Philosophy of Ibn Khaldun in 1918 and getting a diploma of higher studies in ancient history, Dr. Taha Husayn returned to Egypt in 1919.

A period of intense literary research and scholarly writing ensued. As editor of the literary journal al-Siyasa, Dr. Taha Husayn enabled his readers to have an insight into Greek and French literatures.²

¹. Husayn, Dr. Taha, A passage to France, (trans-Cragg, Kenneth), p. 120
ii) **Literary Books authored and published:**

Dr. Taha Husayn infused in his research the Philosophical views of "Descartes" an Orientalist as a base and he followed true Scientific method in his research.

'Hadith al-Arbaa' is authored by Dr. Taha Husayn. It gives an authentic picture on the doubt of Dr. Taha Husayn regarding the Pre-Islamic poetry and its exponents. "Suhuf mukhtarat min al-Sh'eer al-Tamthali indal Eunan" and "Nizam al-lthnayn" authored by Dr. Taha Husayn, while he introduced these two books only because of literary revival in Arab world just like that of Europe on the manners of Greek principles. Both Dr. Taha Husayn and Lutfi Sayyid acquainted with the Arab world the ancient Greek civilization. Dr. Taha Husayn published a book entitled "Min Hadith al-Sh'eer wal Nathr (1934) : in this book, Dr. Taha Husayn depicted the true picture of the beginning of Abbasid prose and poetry.

'Min Baid' is a collection of articles written in Europe between 1923-1930 and includes his essay on Descartes.


1. Daif, Shauqi, al-Adab al-'Arabi al- M'uasir, p.279
The literary acknowledgement of Dr. Taha Husayn came into focus in the muqaddama of “Tajdeed Dhikhra Abi al-'Ala”. His views in the muqaddama was that he had a taste in literature and criticism like that of Marsafi, his teacher. Dr. Taha Husayn was passionate enough for linguistic criticism. He followed the idea of al-Manfaluti and Rafaii', giving importance to the grammatical rules of the language and its words, diction and expression.

Dr. Taha Husayn published the book 'Fusul fil Adab wal-Naqd' it consists of the collected articles on criticism.

He took interest in writing articles on the newspapers regarding the Western litterateurs as well as Arabic literature. The collection of such articles published in the name of ‘Alwan’

“Jannat al-Hayan” is another book of his collective literary letters. In this book, Dr. Taha Husayn used to discard the uncouth measures and roots of Arabic language in general application.

Dr. Taha Husayn was the first Arabic scholar to make an analytical study of poetry. For his research on the ‘Abbasid period, he selected the work of those poets, who were known for their innovations like Abu Nuwas and his followers.¹

It has been found that Dr. Taha Husayn published the book (about French drama) i.e. ‘Qisas tamthilia’ in 1924, which deals with the group of eminent French Writers, while he imitated into Arabic the drama of ‘Rasin’ and of ‘Fulatir’, namely “Andarumak” and “Zadig” respectively.¹

‘Min Adabina al-Mu’asir’ is one of the modern literary books authored by Dr. Taha Husayn in 1958. It is found that Dr. Taha Husayn infused the modern trend of writing and the importance of modern outlook in Arabic literature in the said book. “Fil Dhawq al-Adabi”(1950) is one of the great literary articles written by Dr. Taha Husayn, this article deals with those Egyptians, who held fast to inherit Arab manners and values and those who fought for a complete break with traditional literature.²

². Semah, David. Four Egyptian literary critics, p.111
B. Social Studies: 'Ma wara an-nahar' is an important social book of Dr. Taha Husayn. This book deals with the Society and highlights a minute connection between words and deeds of the people of Society.

Dr. Taha Husayn consults in this book that the Social character reflects on the worldly affairs and its values are focussed through collections of Social pictures by novel. As Dr. Taha Husayn speaks about the critics, according to their eyes, there should have a minute and strong connection between words and deeds of the people.¹

Dr. Taha Husayn portrays a clear picture of Egyptian Society and narrates the ignorance, economic misery and the ill nature that bum the fertility of the land, Egypt.

Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have reformed the Society through his stories, he never hesitated in giving the description of the unluckies and the poors, rather, he brought them forward to each and every Social affairs. He mentioned in the book 'Ma wara an-Nahar' about two noted characters i.e. Na'im and Khadija and their relation in the sense of love and passion. How Khadija escaped from the village for the victory on her passion. And Naim sympathised with the peasants and got down from his position and determined himself to get married with Khadija.²

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1. Husayn, Dr. Taha, Ma wara an-Nahar, p.20.
2. Ibid, p.69
Dr. Taha Husayn portrayed the poverty and its bad influence on the individual of the Society. In this book, Dr. Taha Husayn depicted the events of the Society and narrated the condition of the relationship between Khadija and N’aim. He showed kindness to the woman and spoke about the sympathetic meeting held between the man and the woman. Dr. Taha Husayn tried his best to speak about the love as well as sympathy and weaving of the thread of patience between lover and beloved.

“Al-Muazzabuna fil Earth” is another Social book of Dr. Taha Husayn. In this book he relied upon the minute description and prescribed high picture of Egyptian Society.

The stories, in this book, were designed to portray the struggles of the lives of the poors, the sick, and the deprived of the Egyptian Society. He also infused a character like Saleh, who encountered with poverty and misfortune. In fact, he led his life in a very precarious condition in true sense. ‘D’ua al-karawan’ i.e. the call of the Curlew is a unique fictitious work of Dr. Taha Husayn. In which, he portrayed the rural and domestic lives of the Egyptian people along with their academic difficulties while the book , D’ua al-Karawan is a piece of poetry, which applies to both its romantic theme of the triumph of love over revenge as well as its highly elevated activation. Shajarat al-B’us is a prominent Social work written by Dr. Taha Husayn. In which, Dr. Taha Husayn portrayed a picture of a Sheikh, who borne a plant of misfortune in the happy family, and

1. Ibid, pp. 52, 69.
mentioned the asserted religious position of the Sheikh depicted his wicked means in attracting the people towards him. Dr. Taha Husayn expressed in this book the mother of Khalid whenever, she did never satisfy from the marriage of her son but she could never change the consent of her husband rather she remained satisfied with the hardships. Dr. Taha Husayn embodied the ignorance and the free succession in marriage while he expressed in this book that Khalid went out one night from his family and ascended to the ladder after hearing the choke of painful tears then he hastened and found a woman, while he scattered her poem and tore off her garment slapping on her cheek until the blood shed.

‘Ahlam Shaharzad’ is an eminent Social book. In this book, Dr. Taha Husayn brought a new structure of tales upon the legendary tales. He produced the geological system and the periodical problems. He tried hard to find out nobler human art in this book. Dr. Taha Husayn consulted in this book the criticism and witticism of the fictitious fence and displayed the difficulties of the time. The space of the legendary story of this book is found to have started with a beginning, middle and the end. The subject matter of such legendary story indicated two sides, which Dr. Taha Husayn portrayed in that Social book. First of which depends upon the imitative principles of his chief Shahriyar wa Shaharzad. And the other one i.e. the story of the young Gennii.

‘Jannat al-Hayan’ is an important social book of Dr. Taha Husayn. He portrayed a true Egyptian picture through this book displaying the
position of justice and government. Dr. Taha Husayn put on a perfect bravery for instigating the people to the revolution with boldness. He turned his face to the criticism of government and politics. He depicted in this book some politicians of the State as well.

'Naqd wa-Islah' is another Social book, written by Dr. Taha Husayn based on the practice of Social change through his revolutionary mind and is found to have dealt with the Social process and the Political system.

'Sawt Baris' is an important book of Dr. Taha Husayn, in which he showed his great skillfulness for the reformation of Society in general and his criticism on the ministry as well as the political liberty of France in particular.

'Mustaqbal al-Thaqafa fi Misr' is an eminent Social novel of Dr. Taha Husayn. In this book, Dr. Taha Husayn speaks about Egyptian Society giving importance to the culture and knowledge, which are the bases of civilization and independence. Dr. Taha Husayn ascertains that independence and freedom are a means of attaining perfection and a source of progress. The country like Egypt, which has regained her freedom through the revival of the constitution and her honour through the realization of independence.¹

¹ Husayn, Dr. Taha, the future of culture in Egypt, (trans.-Glazer, Sidney) p.1
A critical investigation has been made on moral and social life by Dr. Taha Husayn in the book "Mir'at al-damer al-Adabi" portraying a sophisticated social life with good moral character.

'Jannat al-Shauk' is another social book, in which, Dr. Taha Husayn tried best to wipe the evils out of the Society and desired much to bring the Society into transparency.¹

1. Daif, Shauqi, al-Adab al-'Arabi al-M'uasir, p.283
C. Autobiographical Studies:

Dr. Taha Husayn's autobiography is one of the acknowledged masterpieces of contemporary Arabic literature. His autobiography, 'al-Ayyam (the days) is the most celebrated book in modern Arabic literature and it consists of three parts.

The part-I tells the story of the author's early years in the upper Egyptian village where he was born. But the book is remarkable not so much for its Egyptian background as for the faithfulness and intensity with which it expresses the pathos of a life apparently blighted from the beginning by blindness. It is obvious in the book that the boy gradually and with difficulty becoming aware of the world around him, and more than making up by means of imagination for what he misses through lack of sight. It is fact that he goes to school, and oscillates like any other boy between work and play, success and humiliation. He learns the holy Qur'an by heart and he is to face the crucial moment when his father surprises him with a test.

Although Dr. Taha Husayn was blind but he had acute imagination about the world. He was equipped with great perception and conception to the atmospheric knowledge of the world, highlighting his love of feeling and thinking. Despite his blindness, he portrayed a nice scenery of the human Society being overwhelmed with severe adversity of life.
He had overcome his tragedy of life with sharp and brilliant mind. He pictured some things, which, really not seen by him for want of eyesight but stated in such a manner that he had himself seen. He told about the fence surrounded by green trees and buildings, that he imagined and is found to have seen a rabbit coming out of the door and stepped over the fence, then the rabbit entered the vegetation.¹

Dr. Taha Husayn is reported to have grown up in the midst of a large family. The opening is marked by a certain ambiguity in time and space with an emphasis on sound and the world of touch and feeling.

The brilliant and enquiring child grows up but he gets neither the care he craves for from his mother, nor is he his father's object of hope and pride.

In the end, his ambitions are realised and at the age of thirteen he is sent up to Cairo, in an elder brother’s charge, to study at the Moslem University of al-Azhar, and this is where the first book ends and the second begins.

The second part describes the years of his adolescence at the Azhar, stands by itself as an enthrilling picture of student life in the Egypt and the record of an unusually gifted personality in the process of formation and growth.

¹ Husayn, Dr. Taha, al-Ayyam, part-I, p.p. 3-5.
The boy following his brother to al-Azhar with high hopes. It depicts him grouping his way in Cairo, his loneliness and neglect by his brother the stagnant and narrow grooved life at al-Azhar, the drawl of the Sheikhs together with the resulting bitterness and despair.

Dr. Taha Husayn describes in the part-II about the three phases that he is to face, are at home, on the way to al-Azhar University, and at the University itself. In this book Dr. Taha Husayn gives the picture of the bubbling of the water pipe, prepared by the cafe proprietor, smoked by some district tradesmen. Dr. Taha Husayn draws a map of a Shop which takes a good position in the life of Dr. Taha Husayn that is the shop of "Hazz-Firuz", which plays an important role in his life in particular and the lives of the district people in general. The Shop, which facilitates every kind of beans to him and to people of Cairo. Dr. Taha Husayn in this part-II stressed on the difficulties and adversities which he had to face. He focussed on the condition of the noble Azhar and the defect of educational system along with the then cultural aspect of it in impressive manner.

The third part carried the story into the academic liberation afforded by the beginning of modern university life in Egypt and, thence, to the final attainment of a doctorate at the Sorbonne, while giving an elegant picture of the union, of Dr. Taha Husayn, with his French bride-heard only in this part as 'that sweet voice'. This third volume, factually, deals with the aspiration of the demands of French academic disciplines, the acquisition of new languages, the vicissitudes of the first world war and the striking hopes and fears of great ambition.
In 1930, Dr. Taha Husayn published 'Adib', in which there is a description of one of his friends and journey to Europe. Adib is actually partly autobiographical and partly analytical. It was written before 'al-Ayyam', but it can be regarded as the extension of 'al-Ayyam.1'

This book consists of constructive style with digression, synonymous in word and sentence. The book depicts the personality of one of his friends and the journey of France. It is found that Dr. Taha Husayn lived a life of constant struggles—political, social and personal. After his death, his biography was completed by his son-in-law, Mohamed al-Zayyat in a book entitled 'Mabad al- Ayyam' (Beyond the days).

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1. Mahdi, Ismat, Modern Arabic literature, p.107
D. Historical Studies:

The book "Qadat al-Fikr" (1925) authored by Dr. Taha Husayn. In this book, he expressed the historical glimpse of Western feeling and evolutionary stage of culture. The book is divided into four stages:

1. Poetic stage, whose representative is Homer.
2. Philosophical stage, in which, there is an expression of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.
3. Political stage, in which, there is the mention of Alexander, the great.
4. In fine, Religious stage is infused, where in, the specimen of Islam is treated.¹

Fi as-Saif (1932): one of the celebrated historical books authored by Dr. Taha Husayn.

This book deals with the pure remembrance of his voyage and its influential motion to him. It recalling his cool-mind for the first journey to France, portrays the starlit events of his youth.

'Ala-Hamish al-Sira (in three volumes) is another prominent historical book of Dr. Taha Husayn. This book retained a rememberable trace in history for depicting the lives and events of Hazrat Muhammad (sm) and his companions.

¹ Daif, Shauqi, Al-Adab al-'Arabi al-M'uasir, pp. 280, 281.
Through this book, Dr. Taha Husayn wanted to retain for a more intelligent population the deep cultural and spiritual significance of Islam, to which end he devoted his three volumes in the margin of the prophet’s story i.e. ‘Ala Hamish al-Sira, Cairo, 1933, representing tradition in more accessible and sophisticated form.¹

The book ‘al-Fitnat al-Kubra’ authored by Dr. Taha Husayn. In this book, he focussed the outlook of melancholic period of Hazrat Uthman. This book consists of two volumes. The first volume deals with the periodic situation of Hazrat Uthman. The second volume deals with the Hazrat ‘Ali as well as his sons.²

The book “Rehlat ar-Rabii” authored by Dr. Taha Husayn. In this book, he reduced to writing the conditions of his European tour in 1948.

‘Al-wad al-Haq’, a famous historical book authored by Dr. Taha Husayn. In this book, he consulted the growth and rise of Islam. He proclaimed in this book the method of the Socialism of Islam. Moreover, he enlivened the events of prophetic life in the fictitious manner. He took the theme of unforeseen as well as earnest events since the Past. He felicitated in this book the history, biography and the story with witticism.

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¹ Husayn, Dr. Taha, a passage to France (trans.-Cragg, Kenneth ), p. XV
³ Al-Talawi, Dr. Muhammad Najib Ahmad, Taha Husayn wal-Fann al-Qasasi. p. 36
Dr. Taha Husayn gives fillip to the human Society, by his famous historical books, for the intellectual development and thus gives impetus on the importance to the verses of the holy Qurán.

"وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا الْيَكْمَ اِيَاتٌ مُبِينَتٌ وَمَثَلًا مِنَ الْذِّينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قِبْلَاهُمْ"

"And verily, we have sent clear events and the examples of those, who went ahead of you".

Mir’at al-Islam, a prominent historical book, written by Dr. Taha Husayn. This book deals with the historical background of Islam. The pure Islamic structure is floated in this book. Furthermore, Dr. Taha Husayn expressed in this book, the Islamic sects and the miracles of the holy Quran, along with the Islamic beliefs, in a beautiful way. He included a collection of articles related to literature, criticism and social life as well.

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib’ and ‘al-Shaikhan’ are the two important books consist of the lives of the Islamic legends and the historical glimpse of the beginning of Islam.

‘Muqaddama tarikh al-Adab al-Arabiyya lil Mustashriq Nallino’ is another prominent historical book authored by Dr. Taha Husayn in this book, Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have expressed the Orientalist, Nallino and the impacts on Arabic literature under the the Orientalists.

We have already assessed the Prose works of Dr. Taha Husayn in the previous pages, now, we would like to discuss the Contemporary literary trend.

3.2 The Stories and the Human values:

It has been found a great development in the matter of a rich harvest of Arabic prose literature particularly in the field of novel and short story, and to a lesser extent, in Prose drama.¹

It is reported that a new artistic method came into light in the modern Egyptian Stories since the beginning of first World War. Verily this trend went ahead for materialism, which some writers selected in their stories from philosophical point of view. It has further been reported that Dr. Taha Husayn is the doyen of Contemporary Arabic literature and a Pioneer of enlightenment while he had excelled in various literary fields of modern Arabic.²

It has been found that the native story is developed in an easy manner in the stories of young writers, Dr. Taha Husayn, Husain Haykal, Taufiq al- Hakim, Mahmud Taymur. They gave birth to the imagery stories, and thus human values are determined.

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¹ Haywood, John A., Modern Arabic Literature, p. 191
They portrayed in their writings, the difficulties of the Society and stirred them up in national level while it is obvious in the stories of Dr. Taha Husayn too. So far as the stories of Taufiq al-Hakim are concerned, he enhanced the girdle of the story as well as drama equally. It is reported that the plate of exposition in connection with its expressions, personalities as well as novelties became ample. While it is the indicative Philosophical difficulties like the confrontation between the East and the West. The first one deals with spiritualism and the second one deals with materialism as the confrontation between the Western images and the ancient life in Egypt.
3.3 The Development of Native Story:

It is seen that Taufiq al-Hakim selected in his writing the tribal as well as racial difficulties while presenting the aspect of national glance. It is found that the native story, developed in the modern Arabic literature through Mahmud Taymur, an excellent modern writer while he tied up the local structure and its broad images from events concerned and thus passed through the symbolic and emotional interval, influenced by al-Manfaluti and Western romance. But al-Majani and al-Aqqad, both of them acquired the analytical knowledge of story while the new universal generation received the frame of the image with artistic obscurity. It has been found that most of the critics agreed that the book 'Zaynab' of Muhammad Husain Haykal is an opening artistic stories in modern Egyptian literature while it necessarily indicates to these preliminary efforts in the 19th century and these efforts had developed gradually, in the style of Maqamat form. Muhammad Husain Haykal made an indication to historical artwork stories starting apparently in the horizon of literature while these stories become most sensitive and historical in regards to the history of public development and beginning for the endorsement of high narration of the new art, as he exposed the practical situations of the Egyptian life. He followed its stature with emotional care, feeling of the puberty and inflammation of the youth. The care of emotion which spread in the books of al-Manfaluti while the human anxiety became colourful in French literature generally. It is reported that he had encompassed all the matters of
romantic strike by the story and made it strong for the feeling and emotion of the memory and the colours of the imagination. But the subject matter is love and it moves in a cultivated way of transparency and clarity despite the development of personalities and novelties. It is found that the novelties of the story are set up from the spiritual as well as native memories by Husain Haykal and painted the cultivated life naturally and eventually. As the character, Hamid, a youth of puberty and of true feeling represented the trap of Angel in the village while he used to return from the city at the time of yearly vacation and habituated to meet Zaynab, the nice hard working and the heart of Hamid opened for the love of Zaynab and loved her while she had inclined to him.¹

3.4 : The Modern Writers and their Literary Philosophy :

Taufiq al-Hakim, an Alexandrian famous writer, who continued his studies in Paris and is found to have imbibed French literary ideas and frequented the theatre. It has been found that he had devoted much to the cause of Arabic literature while he was in Egypt. He had written successful novels, short stories and essays but his main contributions had in drama while introducing a new type of drama in Arabic. It is reported that both Dr. Taha Husayn and Taufiq al-Hakim published the book 'Qasr al- Mashur' where, they drew a dramatic picture of the story of "Shaharzad". The first major play of Taufiq al-Hakim entitled 'Muhammad is something special depicting the life of the Prophet in epic drama, some

¹. Hamid Shaukat, Dr. Muhammad, Al-Qissa al-Arabiyya al-Haditha fi Misr pp.177-179
what on the scale of Hardy's The Dynasts. The Egyptian and the Arabic writers became successful in their sporadic attempts of writing under the influence of Western literature in the 19th and 20th Century. It has been found that the then writers tried best to writing valuable stories and stressed on the philosophy of life, society, politics and economics. In this context, mention may be made of writers like Dr. Taha Husayn, Farid Abu Hadid, Taufiq al-Hakim and Najib Mehfuz, who established the philosophy in life and the style in Art while showing the true literary guidance in the darkness. It is reported that those writers had made connection between the Eastern stories and the classical stories.¹

In addition to that, Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have highlighted some artistic beauties and external as well as internal affairs of lives of poets into two books namely- "Ma' al-Mutanabbi," and "Abu ala al-Ma'arri" and that could never be introduced by any other modern writers. Despite, it is reported that Dr. Taha Husayn had also studied some valuable works of modern writers and is found to have expressed views for literary excellency. It is found that he had considered the play, "Ahl al-Kahf" of Taufiq al- Hakim while expressing views about its importance in the history of Arabic literature.

¹. Ibid. p. 290.
3.5 The Upliftment of Modern Arabic Prose Style:

It has been found that in the middle of the 19th Century two forms of prose prevailed in Arabic i.e. 'Maqama' and 'Risala' while it is reported that Rifat-al-Tahtawi was the first of Arab writers, who came in contact with European culture and literature. He deviated from the traditional Maqama or Risala type of prose came to be based. It has been found that his works are considered as the earliest evidence of story writing in Egypt during the modern period. Parallel developments in modernising Arabic prose were taken place in the Lebanon also, among Lebanon writers 'Nasif al-Yazizi' wrote the prose work 'Majma' al-Bahrain' in the classical style of Maqama. Salim al-Bustani, another renowned writer made a break from the style of al-Yazizi and attempted a prose style free from rhetoric while his first story 'Ramaya min ghair Rami' is written in straight forward prose style. It has been found that Dr. Taha Husayn also brought a new style in modern Arabic literature by writing his masterpiece work, "al-Ayyam", and it is the most important, which enabled him to take place in the contemporary of modern literary trends. It is reported that Taufiq al-Hakim is the founder of contemporary Egyptian drama and a leading figure in modern Arabic literature. He is mostly honoured as a dramatist due to the book "Ahl al-Kahf" (1933) i.e. 'people of the cave', a study of the human struggle against
time and he was hailed by Dr. Taha Husayn for this book while this book traced as an event in the history of Arabic literature.¹

Al- Hakim made drama a respected Arabic literary genre. He wrote in a flexible, high-quality prose, often interspersed with colloquial Arabic. In addition to dramatic works, he produced an autobiographical novel, yawmiyat naib fi al-aryaf (1937) i.e. 'The Maze of justice', a satire on Egyptian Officialdom.²

Mahmud Taymur is an another prominent Egyptian writer, who presented a nice picture of authentic Egyptian environment through his modern style of writings and depicted different scene of human life which penetrating into their circumstances.

3.6 The Contemporary Literary Tradition:

It is reported that the interest of Dr. Taha Husayn in writing poetry with al-Aqqad centred mainly on Abbasid poetry and to a lesser degree on Umayyad poetry. It was only in 1935 that he took up pre-Islamic poetry discovering its charm to enchant the modern Arab reader. The series of articles on Pre-Islamic poetry which appeared in al-Jihad took the form of a reply from Dr. Taha Husayn to an unnamed friend who was one of

². Webster, Merriam, Encyclopedia of literature, P.507.
those who derided ancient Arabic literature, finding their satisfaction only in the literatures of Europe.¹

It has been found that the admiration for ancient Arabic poetry had been the target of bitter criticism while attacks made by Ahmad Amin and Taufiq al-Hakim ² may be said to have prompted him to adopt the role of guardian of the literary tradition. From a lecture given in 1932, it is found that he attached to it a considerable importance and considered it to be superior to the traditions of the Romans and the Persians. It has been found that despite the differences between Dr. Taha Husayn and Haykal over various issues, one can not fail to detect a certain similarity in the views that they expressed on Arab cultural heritage. Like Haykal, who maintains that there could be no future for a nation which repudiates its past,³ Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have opined that a true revival can only be achieved not by inflicting a death blow to the “old” but by utilizing the inherited values in building the “new”.

1. Hadith al-Arba’a, vol-1, PP. 9-12
2. Al-Risala, nos. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14 (Mar-Aug, 1933)
3.7 Contemporary Litterateurs and the Prose between the two World Wars:

It has been found that the emergence of prose between the two World wars is the supporting force vying with poetry for the pride of place in Arabic literature. The prose of this period enriched with a masterful adoption of Western forms and ideas. In fact a quest for regional and individualistic identity and an interest in Pre-Islamic history are of great significance.

These trends are best represented in the writings of Dr. Taha Husayn. As a scholar, he incorporates European methods of research and probes into the sensitive areas of Arab legacy, such as history and poetry. As a writer the account alone of his life in ‘al-Ayyam’ places him among the immortals of literature. It is reported that the selection of an authentic Egyptian environment is available in Mahmud Taymur’s writings. Introducing realism into fiction, Mahmud perfects the art of the short story with the focus on ordinary characters and situations and delineates them with compassion and fine subtlety.¹

It is clear that no writer of the calibre of Dr. Taha Husayn, Tawfiq al-Hakim or al-Aqqad has emerged in the last two decades due, perhaps to the atmosphere being uncongenial for such learning and effort. The younger writers are full of great promise.

¹ Mahdi. Ismat, Modern Arabic literature, p.104.
Time alone will testify to their stature and place in literature. A succession of wars have shaken the Arabs out of their lethargy, independence has brought in self-reliance. With increased mobility, writers can move to territories of their choice to seek freedom of the pen and press.

Authors like Dr. Taha Husayn, al-Mazini, Mahmud Taymur, and Taufiq al-Hakim have found means of writing stylish, well written expressive, attractive, yet easily understood prose. Their means are hard to define but they have depended partly on what for want of a better description, may be termed the witty turn of phrase and on succinctness which are extreme in tune with the genius of the Arabic language which had become hidden in the craze for rhetorical 'Jack Homer-ism,' qualities which had been much in evidence in some medieval prose writers such as Jahiz.¹