CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

A threadbare critical study relating to the present subject entitled "A critical study of the contribution of Dr. Taha Husayn to Modern Arabic Prose Literature" reaches conclusion that --

The movement towards Modernism in Arabic literature had a very critical growth. It encountered tough difficulty and stiff opposition from the traditional writers, who were keen to preserve their heritage and revive it while it is clear that Arabic literary forms have overcome their resistance and it is also apparent that the works of the traditionalists didn't meet with their contemporaries approval. The traditionalists however contributed in an indirect way to revive literature.

It is worth mentioning that the Arab world came in contact with the European thought, Culture and literary phenomenon while Nepoleon conquered Egypt in 1798 and it made an important phase of Arab revival. Nepoleon had brought with him a battalion of savants who established modern libraries and laboratories to prosecute scientific and literary research.

Literary renaissance in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt drew some of its impetus from renowned interest in the classical literature. The story, novel and drama paved their way to make entry in the Arabic literature in
the 'Modern Age'. Ahmad Shauqi (d. 1932 A.D.) wrote a fantastic novel called 'Adra al-Hind'- the maid of India, Ibrahim al-Mualilihi (d. 1906 A.D.) wrote in 'Hadith' the story of Isa Ibn Hisham, Hafiz Ibrahim (d. 1932 A.D.) wrote in 'Layali' (nights) of Satih and Mohammad Lutfi wrote in Jumahin Layali al-Ruh al-Hair (Nights of the perplexed spirit) and Najib Mehfuz wrote several novels and thereby he enhanced the literary stock of Modern Arabic literature. Among the drama writers the names of Qasim Amin (d. 1908 A.D.) for his dramatic work on al-Marah al-Jadidah (The new woman) Marun Nuqus (d. 1855 A.D.) who sponsored the staging of al-Bakhil (The Miser) and al-Harun al-Rashid, may be boastfully mentioned. So far our present study is concerned, it lays stress on the whole Arab writers in general and Egyptian writers in particular so long as the Egyptian literary development commences it counts date from Napoleon and Egypt came to the contact of Europe. In Egypt printing press was introduced by Napoleon but it didn't give any fruitful result to the new creativity of Arabic literature as the bulletins were published in France. Arabic was used in 1821 while Muhammad Ali established people's press later called 'al-Bulaq' and he stressed the need for scientific and technological education. It is reported that Dr. Taha Husayn was born in Egypt at the same century while he was a man of sharp intelligence and phenomenal memory while he spent his whole academic life to the creativity in Arabic literature. There is a certain pattern by reference to which the critical works of Dr. Taha Husayn may be better understood, a pattern which we conceive as a broad framework and not a strait-jacket while
stressing on the literary criticism in Arabic. This pattern emerges as a result of my study of the dominant features in the works of Dr. Taha Husayn in collaboration with the contemporary literary trend. Broadly speaking, we can deduce from the works of al-Aqqad, Haykal and Dr. Taha Husayn while they represent conflicting approaches to literature and the approach was distinguished by a tendency to formulate rules, to categorize and prescribe the study of literature to the precision of an exact science. The ideal was that criticism and literary history should be wholly objective, while underlying this ideal was a theory of determinism which assumed a direct causal relationship between literature and those external factors by which it was supposedly conditioned.

It is reported that Dr. Taha Husayn was one of the excellent critics, litterateurs and historians of the Arab worlds while representing the whole literary and cultural heritage of the Egyptian country. He is found to have followed the literary Philosophies of the Western orientalists and is reported to have put forth new and scientific approach in Arabic literature. He was found to have come into touch with prominent Arabic scholars while studying at the Azhar. Despite, he was equipped with knowledge in various languages and cultures. He had the occasion to study under the orientalists, Nallino and Guidi, who lectured in pure classical Arabic. Dr. Taha Husayn had aptness for writing different aspects like literary, social, autobiographical and historical aspects in Arabic while imparting bright and inspiring knowledge to the Arabic scholars and the laymen.
He had put forward the new literary method and critically investigated the ancient poetry. Instead, he applied self style and method to his prose works depicting much literary ornaments to the words and diction besides grammar. It has been noticed that a similar position was taken by al-Aqqad who, in common with Dr. Taha Husayn while many eminent writers such as Tawfiq al-Hakim and Mahmud Taymur sided with al-Aqqad and Dr. Taha Husayn.

Al-Aqqad is found to have evolved a theory of literature largely based on extra-literary knowledge especially on the analogy of the theories of natural sciences. In his studies of ancient Arab poets, he was more concerned with the personality and the Psychology of the poet than with his poetry, while Haykal considered literature only in terms of its relationship to society, his attitude to it was dictated by his striving after Egyptian national progress, and by a certain concept of Egyptian particularism. He consistently advocated "objective literary criticism".

It has been found that there were two phases in Dr. Taha Husayn's critical career. In the first phase, his belief in absolute determinism, which was asserted in his doctoral thesis on al-Ma'arri, lay behind his view that literary history was purely objective. He considered the poet to be the product of his environment in a deterministic world while insisted that all human activities should be retreated to their origins.
In the late twenties he changed his views and came to the conclusion that it was neither possible nor desirable to reduce literary history and criticism to an exact science. The development of Dr. Taha Husayn's theory and practice of criticism echoed the changes in the schools of French literary criticism. Dr. Taha Husayn's advocacy of artistic criticism, probably under the influence of Lanson, his teacher at the Sorbonne must be regarded as of great significance in the development of literary criticism in modern Egypt and was an approach to literature which opened up new vistas while for the exponents of this approach, the pursuit of beauty is the ultimate end of literature. By virtue of its artistic nature, literature conveys a certain emotional message, consequently, it should be investigated and judged in terms of its innate artistic features and its capacity to make a strong impact upon the readers. Dr. Taha Husayn is found to have pleaded the cause of the emancipation of the study of literature from the tyranny of scientific certainty while rejecting the deterministic outlook of the "extrinsic method" of literary criticism and the "causal explanation "of literature." Instead, he put forward the view that the nature and function of literature should determine the Particular method by which it is to be approached.

1. These are the apt expressions used by Welleck and Warren in their Theory of literature pp. 73, 74.
The emergence of artistic approach can be said to have been a healthy reaction against a literary criticism while Dr. Taha Husayn succeeded in striking a satisfactory balance between a too dogmatic adherence to "objective" standards and unchecked indulgence in personal likes and dislikes while he did not overlook external influence on literature his attention was focused on the literary text and its artistic qualities. So far the literary matters of al-Aqqad and Haykal are concerned, their preferences were strictly confined to a specific type of literary creation while Dr. Taha Husayn did not know such dogmatism and he was more capable of taking up to a balanced attitude towards the Arabic literary tradition, the vexed problem of mana and lafz in contemporary literature and the plea of young writers for innovation.

Dr. Taha Husayn fought the fallacy of the doctrine of objectivity in literary criticism held by al-Aqqad, Haykal and others with assertion that no literary critic can ever brush aside his personal learnings and impressions. No writer of the calibre of Dr. Taha Husayn, Taufiq al-Hakim Mahmoud Taymur, al- Aqqad has emerged in the past due perhaps to the atmosphere being uncongenial for such learning and effort while those writers are full of great promise in ushering commendable contributions to the literary field of modern Arabic.

Like all other modern literatures of the world, the position of Arabic is higher and more original while modern Arabic literature developed in the full glare of western literary assimilation. It reached its refinement
through imitation and translation to the literary aspect of drama, novel and short story. Although Arab creativity extended to each literary sphere from the very inception but it took a new shape and gave also a new structure to European literature.

It is one of Dr. Taha Husayn's lasting achievements that he strikes a happy balance between an admiration for the Arabic heritage and recognition of the need for a literature that depicts contemporary life. Thus he is found to have reconciled tradition with change, while bringing refreshment and continuity with legitimate expectations of progress in modern Arabic literature in general and prose literature in particular.