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NOVEL IN ARABIC LITERATURE AND TAHA HUSSAIN'S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT:

There is a long story of novel in Arabic literature. Arabic novel came out in the middle part of the 19th century. Arabic novel was born out with the dynamitic conflict between eastern and western culture. The Arabian influenced by the European novel till the 19th century. In 1798-1800 Napoleonic occupied Egypt cause of in the development Arabic novel. In 1907 A.D. Muhammad Muwailihi wrote Hadidh Isa-Ibn Hisham on Maqama style is consider as beginning of modern Arabic novel. Arabic novel started in Egypt between the first and second world wars (1914-1945). It is period of significant, political and social changes. During this period Arabic novel its apex position with different forms and techniques. The Arabic novel mostly translated in the European, England and France language specially Lebanon and Egypt. Taha Hussain, the giant hero of modern Arabic literature was born in 1889 A.D. in Maghaghah about 100 miles south of Cairo. He had a surprising quality of merit. The contribution of Taha Hussain to the Modern Arabic Novel is remarkable one. He had occupied a special place in the field of Arabic novel. He wrote many novels by which he portrayed his

Egyptian society very clearly. By these writings, he occupied as a famous novel writer in Arabic literature. Taha Hussain developed his novel further though the application of a new or more appropriate technique every mastered which shows in his novels *al-Ayyam* and *al-Adib*. The motto of this study is to bring a historical perspective of Arabic novel in general and the contribution of Taha Hussain to the Arabic novel in particular.

KEYWORDS: Novel, Napolionic, Taha Hussain, *al-Ayyam*, *al-Adib*.

INTRODUCTION:

During the period, end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Arabic literature in general and narrative art in particular were going through what may be described as stagnation and general weakness. The subjects tackled were in the main simplistic, mostly presented in stilted forms such as the traditional *rasaa'il* (epistles) and *maqamaat* (story with a moral). To put life in what was almost totally inventive, literary productions resorted to embellishments. The result, however, was structurally not well



thought out (Heikel 1993: 38).

In this period and that which proceeded, the narrative (al-qaSaS al-shaCbii) was the predominant form, revolving around heroes and villains, myth and legend, as well as the life of popular characters such as Ali al-Zaybaq, Sayf bin dhii Yazun, al-Malik al-Dhaahir, Bani Hilaal, al-Ziir Salim. The aim of such narrative forms was mere entertainment and pastime. It may be safe to assume here as Heikel (1993: 18) does, that such light narratives were probably sought by an Arab who at that time wanted to lighten the burden of the unhappiness he mostly found himself under: a general deterioration of cultural conditions, rampant illiteracy and lack of schools, and a deplorable political situation due to Ottoman rule which was similar to feudalism in Europe.

In the midst of all this, the influence of Western civilization reached Arab society represented by those western powers that competed to occupy and exploit Arab land economically. On the cultural front, another form of occupation was making itself felt in the form of the French cultural campaigns which arrived in Egypt carrying a new culture. The French established research centers and chemical labs and factories. They also carried out all kinds of studies into the social, economic and cultural conditions. A printing press was established, and newspapers were published. This period also saw the establishment of a theatre with a new French play presented every ten days or so. New schools for the children of the French expatriates were opened, and a library was built to house the hundreds of books which the French brought with them, as well as those collected from Egyptian mosques. The attention which the French paid to scientific and cultural activity eventually led to awakening the Egyptian people to the need for change and for breaking the state of stagnation and impoverishment.

Soon after this, Mohammed Ali assumed power and strongly felt the need to build a powerful army, representing in this the desire of the people. He also began the educational process by building schools and recruiting teachers from Lebanon and Syria. But his greatest achievement in this field was the numerous missions he sent to Europe. This was one of the first immediate contacts which Arab civilization had with Western civilization. The scholars sent on these missions opened up to the West, its literature and its science, seeking upon their return to improve conditions in their country. Schools began to be opened, and particular attention was paid to translation and publishing. The foundations were laid for a truly modern Arab literary and cultural movement, ridding the Arabic language of the stagnation which surrounded it. This was achieved through the use of new terms and through dealing with new subjects and ideas that were felt to be in harmony with modern life.

In any historical survey of the development of the novel, Muhammad Hussain Haykal's *Zaynab* in 1913 clearly occupies an important position; some critics have gone so far as to claim it to be the first real Arabic novel. Unlike its predecessors, it depicts Arab characters in a contemporary and indigenous setting. *Zaynab* is the first major original Egyptian novel. Through this novel Haykal tried to express his strong nationalist feelings. So, one can say that the novel is reflections of the author's nostalgia which he felt while he was abroad. *Zaynab* is written outside the pale of the traditional maqama. It has no rhyme and no rhetoric. The language is simple, close to everyday speech. At the same time the influence of French literature is evident in the use of long and complex sentences. Haykal thought that the use of classical Arabic for dialogues between rural characters was highly artificial; so he resorted to easy and simple style of writing in his novel. This novel portrays Egyptian rural life.

TAHA HUSSAIN AND HIS NOVELS

Taha Hussain (1889-1973) was one of the most influential Egyptian writers and intellectuals. He was a figurehead for the modernist movement in Egypt. Taha Hussain was born in the village of Izbet al Kilo in Minya Governorate in central Upper Egypt. He contracted an eye infection as a child, and faulty treatment rendered him blind at the age of three. He went to an Islamic kuttab (a traditional school where children learn to read, write, and recite the Quran), and then was sent to Al-Azhar University, where he was educated in religion and Arabic literature.

In 1914, he became the first graduate to receive a Ph.D., with a thesis on the skeptic poet and philosopher Abu-Alala' Al-Ma'ari. He went on to become a professor of Arabic literature there. In 1919, he was appointed a professor of history at the Cairo University. Additionally, he was founding Rector of the University of

Alexandria. He was appointed as a professor of Roman and Greek history in Cairo University, and became the Dean of the Faculty of Literature on 1930. On 1950 he was appointed as a minister of education during which he advocated the necessity of free education for every citizen.

An important episode in his life was the writing in the 1920s of "on Pre-Islamic Poetry" *في الشعر الجاهلي* in which he expressed doubt about the authenticity of much of traditional Arabic poetry, claiming that it may have been faked during ancient times due to tribal pride and competition between those tribes. In this book, he also hinted indirectly that the Quran should not be taken as an objective source of history. Naturally this book aroused the intense anger and hostility of al-Azhar and many other traditionalists. He was prosecuted with the accusation of insulting Islam, but the public prosecutor stated that what Taha Hussein said was the opinion of an academic researcher and no legal action was taken against him. His book was banned but was later published with slight modifications under the title "On Pre-islamic Literature" *في الأدب الجاهلي*.

Taha Hussein was an Egyptian renaissance intellectual and a proponent of the ideology of Pharaonism, believing that Egyptian and Arab-Eastern civilizations were diametrically opposed, and stressing that Egypt would only progress by reclaiming its ancient roots. He wrote many novels and essays, though in the West he is best known for his autobiography, *El-Ayyam* which was published in English as *An Egyptian Childhood* (1932) and *The Stream of Days* (1943).

Taha Hussain was a greatest scholar, Prose writer, critic and novelist of Modern Arabic literature. The works of Taha Hussain have been divided into four Categories. These are - (a) Literary Works (b) Social Works (c) Historical Works and (d) Fictional Works. Though he was famous as a prose writer and critic, he wrote some novels also. His autobiographical novel *al-Ayyam* was published in 1927 in three volumes. His others two novels are - *Shajarat al-Bus* (1944) and *Dua al-Karawan* in 1934 A.D. His novel *al-Adib* was published in 1935 A.D. in which Hussain portrays about his friend Shuayb whom he met in Azhar university. Al-Mazini, a revolutionary of Dewan Movement says that Dr. Taha Hussain is an excellent Storyteller and learned novelist of higher class. For his contribution to Modern Arabic literature, today Taha Hussain is known in the Arab World as *amid al-Adab al-Arabi*.

It is clear that novelist may have some ideas. And this is very important for novelists and perhaps it may be essentials for novelists or imaginative writer. Their ideas are divided into two types. One of them is thematic material, the organizing motives, the central pre occupations of a literary work. There may be called its 'internal' ideas. The other kind is the ideas that could be ineligiably expressed and discussed outside the novel, that which have nothing to do with the particular 'world' of a particular novel. Truly the heart of the matter is that the Novel is thought to be the supreme form because it is the closest to human realities. It is true to life, in which other kinds of literature are not true of life.

The novel dealt with people as they are, unique individuals; life not are on the other hand, other literature had dealt in norms and standards, moral and social types. Novel is the realist genre par excellence and it may also literary realism: truthfulness to individual experience. Dr. Johnson says that if realism is not seen in a novel, then a sufficient vindication of a character, that is drawn as it appears; for many characters ought never to be drawn". He urges the novelist to use the opportunity of fiction to display ideal types of human life, he further states, the new art of fiction as exhibiting 'life in its true state, diversified only say accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind. The province of the novel, he says to bring about natural events by easy means and keep up curiosity without the help of wonder.

The novelist requires experience that cannot be learned from books; from solitary diligence, but mix up from general converse and accurate observation of the living world. Since they deal with ordinary life, the ordinary reader a fair judge of novels. They are engaged in portraits of which everyone knows the original and can detect any deviation from exactness of resemblance. From the whole discussion about the concept and definition of novel, it is said that, in a novel there should be some plot, characters, facts and actions. And there should be a special relationship between the facts and reality in the portraits of human life and the plot and the character may be primitive notions, but they seem to refer to something fairly definite. On the other hand, the author's style, or point of view or sensibility or quality of feeling or his ideas in the main thing of a novel. I think, the heart of the matter is that the novel is thought to be supreme form because it is the closest to human

realities. The story and the character of a novel may be factious. Many novels have a firm basis in the authors early life-sons and levers, portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Tolstoy's fiction is known to be the very autobiographical one. He used real-life models in this novel.

In the autobiographical novel of Taha Hussain's *al-Ayyam* shows a good social reality during those days of Egyptian people. Hussain focused the culture of the society by this novel. He published it hoping to escape the realities of the present by contemplating the past. *Al-Ayyam* is an autobiography of Taha Hussain in three volumes. It is the major master piece of his imaginative works. He dictated his first part of *al-Ayyam* in France. There he serialized his everyday life in the journal *al-Hilal* from December 1926 A.D. to July 1927 A.D. Then he published it as book form which is known as first part of *al-Ayyam*. In this part he describe about his life up-to thirteen years of age in Upper Egypt. He wrote his second part of *al-Ayyam* when he was the student of Al-Azhar from 1902 A.D. to 1921 A.D. In this part he describe about his student life, traditional mode of teaching and the close relationship between students and teachers. And he published *Mudhakkirat Taha Hussain* (The memories of Taha Hussain) in 1967 which is considered as the third part of his *al-Ayyam* in this part describe about his life and society till to his last part of life. Those who have vast knowledge on Quran, Hadith, and Arabic grammar and Islamic jurisprudence, they were highly respected by country dwellers who had no knowledge of public education. Hussain admired these men and even believed they were cut from a different mold. Yet many charlatans presented to be learned men, duping the taigas (religious brotherhood) who held diverse views, whose votaries believed in their sanctity and miraculous powers. Many of these Shaykhs knew title of the religion and simply strained the financial resources of families like Husain's which offers them hospitality. These reflect the clear pen picture of Egyptian societies during those days which we found in *al-Ayyam*.

Taha Hussain offers a true portrait of the mentality of country people in Upper Egypt, who were interested not only in religion but in, magic also. He relates that peddlers roamed the country side, peddling religious wares and books of magic Hussain had a friend, having acquired some of these books, recited incantations and cryptic phrases as they burned incense. They hoped a genie would come out of the wall to obey their requests, but nothing of the sort happened. He describes the consternation of the people on hearing that a meteor was about to appear; some thought it was a sign of the end of the world, while others disagreed. People also believed in the supernatural power of amulets mascots. Some even swallowed pieces of paper prepared by allegedly religious men, containing invocations in a language thought to be Syrian, to prevent diseases or avert misfortune. Women huge split pieces of onion in the doorways of their homes or ate only broad beans, to drive away demons.

Taha Hussain wrote the whole story in the third person. The first part of *al-Ayyam* covers Hussain's life up to the age of thirteen years in Upper Egypt. Taha Hussain says in this part about his early life, till he was sent by his father to study the religious institution at al-Azhar University. He was very high ambition for higher study. After taking his elementary education, he took his religious education. So, he memorized the Holy Quran and some books of poems etc. Then he was sent of Cairo at the age of thirteen years under the guidance of his elder brother, to study at the Muslim University at al-Azhar. Taha Husain devoted himself on the study of religious education and linguistic at al-Azhar University. This university is not a simply a narrative, but also realistic view of the social, religious and the educational aspects of his society.

The master Sayed al-Marsafi was teaching the literature and he became satisfied with him and made compulsory for him its study which he was reading i.e. *al-Kamil* of al-Mbarid. He did not stay there because he felt disturbed in environment of the reformative movements which was calling out the students of Mahammad Abduhu, like as Qasim Amir who was demanding liberties of women and Lutfi al-Sayed who used to demand in the news papers of new adaptation in the politics, the moralities and social life. Taha Hussain pursuit a thesis on Dhikra-Abu-Ala-Maarri a medieval writer who like Hussain himself was blind passionate and unorthodox. On this thesis he had got his first doctorate in 1915 A.D. While he in France, Hussain fell in love with a married a reader 'Suzanne Bressewy' call him 'sweet voice'. The couple returned to Cairo and began to touch history and literature in Cairo University, where he published much pre-Islamic poetry. He was appointed as the dean of faculty in 1929 A.D. In some years he published his autography 'Al-Ayyam'. Taha Hussain forced out from university and join in journalism for a living. He also wrote novel *The call of the Curlew* in 1934 and *Adib*.

In the novel *Dua al-Karwan* Dr. Taha Hussain describes about the misfortunes of a rural Egyptian family.

After the death of the father, the Bedouin mother Zahra and her two young daughters, Amina and Hanadi were moved from one place to another place for work. Eventually they settle in a small town where they earn their living as maid servants to different households and usually meet only during the weekends. The younger sister Amina works for the Sharif where she is treated more or less as a member of the family. Handi's elder sister who works in the house of a young handsome bachelor irrigation engineer (whose name is never given) is seduced by him. When this news lightened her mothers, then the mother has to rough with her daughters away from town to return home. The mother also sends a word to her brother who meets them on the way, apparently to escort them. But before they reach home him (i.e. Nasir who was the uncle of Hanadi) kills the disgraced girl in the darkness of night.

Adib (Man of letters) is another novel of Taha Hussain which was published in 1935 A.D. in this novel he describes about his friend Jalal Shuayb. Shuaybwrote so many writings but he did not try to publish them. Hussain calls him an Adib. Hussain gathered of all of them in a book from which is known as al-Adib. Taha Hussain spent much of his period writing in education producing the future of culture in Egypt in 1938 and eventually becoming education minister in 1950. He helped spread primary and secondary education throughout Egypt. In the later years of his life he edited a daily news paper and continued writing he died in 1973 A.D.

CONCLUSION

After a brief study it becomes clear that novel, the chief element of Arabic literature has got the real maturity after the invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte to the Egypt and imparted qualitative knowledge and wisdom to the inhabitants of Egypt as well as the Arab countries giving birth of some new trends to the educational system and ideology. Subsequently the great and remarkable Arabic litterateur Taha Hussain introduced his unique novels to the Arabic literary world and promoted the Arab thinking with new thought and ideas.

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