

Arabic Education and Modernity in the Thought of Taha Hussein

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Received: 17/04/2024

Published: 06/05/2024

Abstract:

This paper comes within the framework of the search for the justification of a contemporary Arab educational project, as different intellectual projects of various stripes are often the building blocks on which applied philosophy in ethics, education, politics, etc. is based, despite their scarcity and incomplete establishment in the Arab world, and as I speak in this article, I notice that the thinker and writer Taha Hussein is among the few who presented an intellectual vision and a practical justification intended to establish a philosophy of education, even if he did not publicly acknowledge it. In this article on Arab education, I noticed that the thinker and writer Taha Hussein is among the few who provided an intellectual vision and practical justification intended to establish an educational philosophy, even if he did not publicly acknowledge this, as evidenced by his book *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, in which he included a number of educational, intellectual and civilisational reformist views. Although he had nothing to draw from but the modernist West versus the heritage from which he was cut off and which also needs to be re-examined and resurrected, neither the times nor the nature of the transformations allow for this, especially in light of the accelerated development from modernity to postmodernity to globalisation.

Keywords : (Taha Hussein, education, modernity, Arab thought, philosophy)

Introduction:

The development of societies is measured by the ideas of their scientific and intellectual elites who lead reform and renaissance and keep pace with local human aspirations and global transformations, a dual responsibility imposed by human consciousness rather than the laws of society, which are often stagnant and imitative until someone distinguished comes to question them and bring them out of their slumber. However, the Arab thinker has nothing to draw from but the modernist West, as opposed to the heritage from which he was cut off and which also needs to be re-examined and resurrected, but neither the times nor the nature of the transformations allow for this, especially in light of the accelerated development from modernity to postmodernity to globalisation. The Arab thinker had no choice but to try to replicate, imitate, or rather adapt Western philosophy and modern and contemporary approaches, despite the difficulty of the task. This does not detract from their diligence in any way, as thought refines each other, and the key is continuity and direction in thinking.

In this context, this topic comes to take a closer look at one of the educational and political intellectual projects at the same time, which is Taha Hussein's project to reform education. Indeed, the research on Arab education is no different from other research as it is all subject to the indicator of Arab thinking or the civilisational situation among other peoples, a situation that is behind its time given European modernity, but belongs to a distinct cultural and value heritage, and the issue here lies in the keys to civilisational take-off in all fields. In thought, education, culture and creativity.

This educational project, which he proposes with his literary boldness through his writings, scientific and literary activity, and his critical practice in this regard. He was distinguished in the field of literature, thought, politics and history, influenced by the Cartesian method (systematic doubt), and had the audacity since his exposure to Western philosophy, especially French and influenced by Descartes and his philosophy, to represent and emulate the European civilisation and its rationality, an intellectual position regardless of its cultural consequences, and the criticisms that will affect "Taha Hussein" by various currents, whether religious currents, or intellectual orientations opposed to him, perhaps the most pressing question in this regard is : Did Taha Hussein carry an intellectual and educational project for the Arab world and Egypt in particular, as it belongs to this world? Or did he call for a European intellectual orientation and thus for the imitation of a cultural educational pattern born in a different context ?

These questions do not mean that I will judge Taha Hussein as much as I want to put the reader in the intellectual context of the topic, especially since the topic of Arabic education has not yet found its intellectual niche. Thus, this essay will be a reading in an intellectual perspective from the angle of the renewal vision rather than focusing on inter-religious and ideological differences.

1- Intellectual and civilisational nature:

Taha Hussein found his calling in Western rationalism and took the Cartesian critical scepticism approach as a way to criticise the Arab intellectual heritage and its associated axioms. He rejected and questioned the inherited mental and historical axioms of the ancients and the need to change them with modern Western standards and methods, using modern historical criticism, scientific research tools, and rational thinking instead of surrendering to tradition, sanctification and acceptance without scrutiny. In this line of research, I will follow the path of the modernists of science and philosophy, in what they deal with science and philosophy, I want to create ... this philosophical method that Descartes developed to search for the truths of things at the beginning of this era"1

Here we find him explicitly calling for the necessity of adopting the Cartesian rationalist approach that has come to frame the modern European man, because this approach is not based on any of the previous heritage knowledge, nor on prejudices or superstitious and theological thinking that has dominated the European mind for centuries. Perhaps Taha Hussein does not wish to clone as much as he looks at the matter from the epistemological perspective of human knowledge, because the mind is the same for all human beings and the

question of its use remains different from one person to another and one society to another according to the degree of rationality and method of thinking.

The basic rule of this approach is to approach the subject of research without prejudice, so that the mind alone is fully prepared to study it according to its specific rules, which are the same for all minds. Despite the indignation that Descartes and many rationalists after him met with by dogmatists and heirs of the ancient heritage due to the explicit call for rationalism and the rejection of the misuse of Aristotelian logic, the rational approach was one of the most fertile approaches in the modern era, so that he was called the father of modern philosophy.²

After all intellectual productions were subject to heritage evaluation and theological sifting, reason became the actual ruler of knowledge and thinking, through scepticism and criticism, everything is subject to criticism and rational examination.³ Descartes made reason the basis for everything he encountered in knowledge, science and values, and since people differ in their use of it, there must be a methodology, which he referred to in his essay on the method.

Taha Hussein presents his historical and civilisational comparisons with a historical-critical approach aimed at convincing potential opponents, or bringing the vision closer to understandings and clarifying his intellectual project, as there is no difference in his opinion between the contact of Christianity with the Greek mind, and what it produced in the modern European mind. Islam's contact with Greek philosophy and the need for interaction and fertilisation, which actually occurred in Islamic civilisation, in turn fertilisation also occurred in European civilisation in its contact with Greek philosophy.⁴

However, Taha Hussein's idea of the neutrality of Greek philosophy and that it offers a fertile mind through what he calls criticism is somewhat overlooked by the historical necessity between the Islamic mind and the European mind, which took philosophy from the Islamic civilisation in its eclectic and systematic form. Perhaps the question here is whether another fertilisation of the Arab-Islamic mind can take place as it did for the European one ?

In order to convince his citizens of the project, he says: "The Egyptian should not understand that there is a strong or weak mental difference between him and the European, nor should the Egyptian understand that the East mentioned by Leibling in his famous verse East is East and West is West and they will not meet. Egypt has always been a part of Europe in all that relates to mental and cultural life, in all its various branches and colours".⁵ From this point of view, our thinker has eliminated any doubt about the inevitability of following the rational approach as it is in Europe, and since it offers models of higher thought, it is the ready and closest alternative for the Arab world and Egypt in particular.

2- Calling for the rationalisation of the state through education and modern education:

When we reflect on Taha Hussein's thesis, we find that he shook some certainties in Arabic literature, an unprecedented act, especially his use of Cartesian doubt in his literary writings such as the Jahili poetry, we find that he uses the same historical critical method in

The Future of Culture in Egypt when he presents his educational project, but in the latter he does not stop at the limit of the critical approach, but rather proposes an essentially educational project, a scientific and pedagogical work that he presented at the time as a recommendation to the Ministry of Education when he was assigned to it and aimed at two things:

On the general level, he calls for a modern civic education influenced by the French school, and on the other hand, he aims to produce an elite of thought leaders in Egyptian society, or what he calls "enlightened people" according to Taha Hussein's word, which is essentially "enlightenment".

In the first part of this project, we return to Taha Hussein's writings on the question of education, which revolve around a number of fundamental ideas, including firstly, free education, which is the principle of Taha Hussein and the basis and essence of democracy, as it provides education for all within a framework of equal opportunities in education and its outputs.

Secondly, the unification of the national school by abolishing the differences between all types of education offered in Egypt, whether official governmental education, Udeni Azhari, private education, and foreign education, and the aim of unification here is to create an Egyptian mentality that is harmonious and compatible with the times on the one hand, and then assign the task and responsibility of education to the national state by establishing unified national schools and carrying out the task of monitoring informal education so that there is no conflict with what the national educational project aims at.⁶

As for the university, it must maintain its independence from the state, ensuring freedom of knowledge and scientific research ⁷, similar to what was achieved in Enlightenment Europe, when Enlightenment thinkers called for the independence of the university, and the independence of philosophy in particular, as it is the bastion of ideas and their convergence, the mind of the nation and its human component.

In this context, Taha Hussein's question is the same as that of most Arab modernists : why has the East lagged behind the West ?

They attributed the reason to the nature of the political system, which is an authoritarian system. This is the core of the problem in their view, and the starting point for any future reform. What is required is to transform the absolute authoritarian system into a system that is limited by a constitution that regulates everyone, but the obstacles do not only come from an authoritarian ruler whose mission is to ensure that no one else participates, but also from his subjects themselves, who are not yet ready to move from the level of subjects to that of citizens and exercise their legitimate rights and active democratic participation, so a national education is needed to prepare the citizen.

In his view, Egypt can only truly enter the modern era if it embodies the values of democracy in the manner in which liberal democracy in Europe is based, which is the current and successful model for it. The question is how this can be achieved? It is the educational

path by which a generation that leads the nation and continues to consolidate the pillars of democracy can be created. 8

In his book "The Future of Culture in Egypt", Taha Hussein goes against the prevailing tradition in Arab culture when he argues that there is no connection between the Egyptian mind and the Eastern mind, as the Egyptian mind, in his opinion, has not had a dangerous contact with the mind of the Far East. He is European or rather a shadow of the Mediterranean basin and Mediterranean culture. 9

"He did not live a life of peace and co-operation with the Persian, but a life of war and rivalry."10 On the other hand, he had regular contact with the peoples of the Near East, which influenced his life and was influenced by them, as well as contact with Greek thought since its early ages in a framework of cooperation and continuous exchange of benefits in political, artistic and economic matters.11

George Tarabishi does not find any justification for this imitation and copying of Egyptian civilisation and history, and that modernisation, in his opinion, should not imitate but rather renew, study our heritage and connect with it in order to renew what can be renewed and not a complete break.12

With this characterisation, he wants to deny the character of Orientalism and all that is attached to it on Egypt, and that Egypt is not like other nations in the East, that is, it was as active, influential and influenced as the Greek civilisation, so Taha Hussein finds no embarrassment in demonstrating that Egypt was not Oriental, but an integral part of Europe in all intellectual, cultural and artistic aspects in all their diversity.13

It is this premise that led him to call for the need to establish the national state and governance on a civilian basis in which religion is more of a cultural element than a source of governance, or, more precisely, to push Egypt on a path to "become a Ladinist government".14. This is a call for decentralisation not only in the philosophy of government, but also in education, which he would place in the hands of the nation-state rather than individuals.

Taha Hussein's urgent desire to extricate Egypt from the civilisational situation in which it finds itself, living outside of history and the age moving towards rationality and liberal democracy. In his view, the path of renaissance is the European way of life, "clear, straight and straight, with no crookedness or crookedness, which is to follow the path of the Europeans and follow their way to be their equals and be partners with them in civilisation, the good, the bad, the bittersweet, the likes and dislikes, the praiseworthy and the disgraceful".15

Taha Hussein bases his call on the inevitable influence and impact between civilisations and peoples, as no civilisation came from nothing, so European life is not all sinful, but much good, as it has provided many things and a happy and prosperous life for the European man in general and every civilisation has something to be proud and happy and has shortcomings and pitfalls, "And if the wonderful Islamic civilisation ... The Muslims did not bring it from the Arab countries, but they brought some of it from this country, some of it

from the Persian Magi, and some of it from the Christians of Rome" 16, so it is necessary to seek and take Western civilisation, which, in his opinion, was not spared from some of the influence of philosophy, heresy and hedonism in their civilisation 17, thus referring to a part overlooked by those who boycott the West, namely the pitfalls of civilisation, whatever its values are subject to deviation and correction.

This is because Taha Hussein kept searching through his writings for a mentality that existed in Egypt but was absent in his era, because it coexisted with all cultures and interacted with them positively and with its independent personality, and that it is not suitable for cultural isolation from the peoples and cultures of the Mediterranean basin, which is an important element in it 18, and therefore he focuses especially on education as the entry point for every future civilisational change, and the state as the sponsor of education to ensure its democratisation and universal application.

3- The national state as the sponsor of the democratisation of education:

On the issue of education, he believes that the state must supervise education and all its institutions, but that this education gives it the character of generality, modernity, unification and free of charge, so that it becomes a national national education in the modern sense, that is, the state assumes full responsibility as the sponsor of education and its curricula, and is responsible before individuals and groups for the formation of the Egyptian man to suit the needs of the new national state. 19

This shows the extent to which Taha Hussein is influenced by Western secularism and his serious attempt to establish education on a Western secular basis, and even wants it to be a mirror image of Europe, because it is no secret to the wise that the development in modern human life is that political unity is no longer based on unity of religion and unity of language and is never a basis for the formation of states based on the establishment of states outside these components with multiple languages and different nationalities. Moreover, even Muslims, from the beginning, based their politics on interests and departed from the pattern of basing it on religious, linguistic and national unity, before the second century of the Hijrah, when the conflict between the Umayyad state in Andalusia and the Abbasid state in Iraq. Thus, the political scene evolved and moved towards a political practice outside the so-called components of unity until they ended up with the emergence of nationalisms and geographical borders. 20

Although in this argument, Taha Hussein makes an unbalanced historical comparison given the nature of the political structure of the Islamic world, on the other hand, he has touched the real significance of the existence of the so-called modern state, which is founded not only on the slogans of unity but also on the foundations of rationality, democracy and education. Thus, he views religion as a mere historical phenomenon in terms of a system of government, and thus a historical development that should reach the latest systems that man has reached.

In his opinion, Muslims have long ago realised one of the most important foundations of modern life : that politics is one thing and religion is another, that the system

of government and the establishment of states are based on practical matters, and that politics is a kind of art or industry that needs to be practiced like any other art. What needs to be established here, in Taha Hussein's view, is to recognise liberal democracy as the successful model in Europe today.²¹

3.1 The role of education in establishing a democratic state:

This principle of democracy requires an integrated project, starting with education, and seeks to form an "enlightened scholarly class" that will bear the burden of the renaissance and modernisation process in the future. There are overlapping, interacting and dialectical elements in Taha Hussein's modernisation project: modernising and unifying education, modernising the state and its institutions and its responsibility to form the important element of "thought leaders" or the "enlightened elite" and then the relationship of this to the entry into modern or modern society.

This dialectical and continuous process is based on the act of formation and renewal. The more the state pays attention to education, reforming it, renewing its contents, and democratising it, the more urgent the need to update the knowledge and contents in schools and universities, and thus the more the state and its institutions are modernised and strengthened with an enlightened elite capable of carrying out this burden. It is this enlightened elite that will bridge the civilisational gap between society's past and present, and between society's present and the modern, developed and civilised world of the West.

Taha Hussein, being familiar with the nature of Western systems in their modern political and educational aspects, saw that his society does not only need a similar modern system like this without providing the necessary conditions, but also requires the modernisation of education and education systems in a way that is compatible with this modern state, i.e. the condition of forming this human being, who will undertake the tasks of construction and modernisation in all aspects.

Any thought of modernity and modernisation requires the state to create a modern society and modern education, which is the condition of modernity, and since the state is responsible for this transition, it is required and even obliged to carry out the act of educational modernisation and then democratic political modernisation.

In Taha Hussein's usual eloquence, he draws an analogy between the condition of education and the condition of defending and defending the homeland, which in his view should be of the same strength and determination, thus placing education in the same category as the defence of honour and the homeland when he says: "We need the strength of national defence... This means that the defence of our possession and the defence of our sanctuary, all of which cost us and force us to prepare for the matters of war as the Europeans prepare for them, and to direct one of the colours of education and education in us, the same face that the Europeans direct when they prepare their children to defend the homeland".²²

If this independence and defence is what everyone wants, it is necessary to look for the means to achieve it. If the state wants a strong army to defend the homeland like the armies of modern Europe, it must look for the means that made the armies of Europe strong: education

and modern education. This condition is set by Taha Hussein, fully aware that education and its modernity can solve many problems in the Arab world, including Egypt.²³

Taha Hussein continues to analyse his interconnected conditionality in how to achieve an integrated modernity, as if we need a strong and independent economy like the European economy, we must also provide the causes, including education and training. Here, he is referring to the necessity of establishing an economic project in addition to education and training, because this is an integrated whole for the process of modernisation, and then entering the pattern of modernity according to the successful rational European model.

In Taha Hussein's view, independence is protected by providing strength and forming and upgrading the army according to the European model, as well as the independence of the economy and the protection of wealth, etc. "Our means of protecting the national economy are the same means that the Europeans and Americans use to protect their wealth, so we must prepare our youth for economic jihad in the same way that the Europeans and Americans prepare their youth".²⁴ This is why "we must establish schools and institutes that prepare our youth for this jihad in the same way that Europeans and Americans have established their schools and institutes, because whoever wants the end, wants the means. It is neither sufficient nor righteous in the mind to want independence and walk the path of slaves...".²⁵ This is how Taha Hussein weaves in all matters and fields, keeping in mind the superiority and modernity of Europe, which must be the example to be followed, but at the same time he does not call for blind adoption, but rather requires insight, as he knows that behind modern Europe is a history, ideas, and victories.

"If we want this mental and psychological independence, which can only be achieved through scientific, literary and artistic independence, we want its means, of course, and its means are to learn as the European learns, to feel as the European feels, to govern as the European governs, to work as the European works, and to spend life as the European spends it. Democracy, in Taha Hussein's understanding, is not a safe haven for individuals through slogans, but it must have a strong and modern education behind it. "Democracy cannot guarantee people life, freedom, or peace unless it guarantees them an education that allows them life, allows them freedom, and enables them to have peace, but this education must be disseminated by the democratic state to the people and taken by them to ensure these three purposes we have mentioned".²⁶ Perhaps the first such education "is that which enables the individual to know himself, his natural and national environment and to match his needs with this natural and national environment, and if we want to explain this small amount of knowledge, we think that the individual needs first of all to write, read and calculate...".²⁷

3.2 State sovereignty over education:

The modernising national educational project requires the state to educate the individual on the fundamentals of citizenship or membership within society, a fundamentally Durkheimian idea.²⁸ He is required to know his national affiliation, that he is a member of it, that it precedes his existence, and that it remains after him, he is required to know the history of his nation, its state and conditions, feel its hopes and contribute to its preservation and development for a better future.²⁹ In this way, Taha Hussein establishes a national education

project that includes the concept of the state and the nation at the same time, and draws its slogans and civic education from the modern French state, especially with regard to the concept of the nation based on common hopes and feelings.

With regard to religious education, he believes that the state has full responsibility in approving religious education, and it has the choice of either approving it and then teaching it in public schools for all, or leaving it to the family. If it - the state - wants to establish education according to the civil perspective, it leaves it to the family, without any embarrassment or difficulties, because in his view the family is safer for this type of education, especially in the case of multiple religions within society, and if it - the state - wants to establish religious education according to the civil religious idea, it develops studied pedagogical programmes for religious education.

According to Taha Hussein, the state is not only responsible for the mental, cognitive and psychological formation of the child, but it is also responsible for taking care of his body from diseases and ailments, and helping him to develop fully so that he is not exposed to disturbances and risks: Therefore, he calls for physical education in primary education in particular, in order to ensure that the nation raises generations with healthy minds and bodies.³⁰ Thus, Taha Hussein lays out the initial programme for the education of children in the early years.

Considering this, the process of modernising and universalising education is not an easy task for the will of the state and its democratic political project when it holds it fully responsible for education, which is the essential condition it must provide to become a state with political sovereignty, economic independence, scientific, artistic, literary and other creativity, and the condition for its success here and in this modern and civil context is democracy. Hence, he emphasises the dialectical relationship between the state, democracy and education when he says: "...a democratic system must guarantee life, freedom and peace for all the people, and I do not think that democracy can guarantee any of these purposes for the people if it fails to universalise primary education and take all people to it voluntarily or involuntarily."³¹ Education is indispensable for any democratic political project on the horizon.

We have already said that Taha Hussein holds the national state responsible for undertaking and supervising education, so the state should take control of all educational matters in Egypt, but at the same time he does not exclude private education and their role in spreading education and building schools, but the purpose of state supervision is purely democratic and in the interest of citizens and the state.³²

This is justified for two reasons : the first is that the majority of Egyptians are still in a state of absolute ignorance, and democracy will contribute to their education, as appropriate to the principles of democracy and equal opportunities, and the second is that the state is able to develop curricula and programmes and supervise and monitor their implementation alone, so that education does not deviate from its intended path, both in terms of principle and outcomes. Other justifications for state supervision of education include the need to rescue

current education from its chaos and linguistic, religious, and content diversity, and to reunite this fragmentation with a unified and democratic education gradually.³³

3.3 Towards a public and democratic school:

Taha Hussein enumerates the types of education to which young people are exposed : "There is the official civilian education, which is established and maintained by the state... There is also the foreign education "which was established in Egypt under the shade of foreign privileges, unconcerned with the state and subject to its authority ... concerned only with spreading the culture of the country from which it came, proselytising in that country, and training Egyptian students in a purely foreign manner ..."34

This multiplicity and duplication of education, curricula and goals is bound to confuse learners and will not serve democracy and equal opportunities. He observed that there is French religious education, there is French civil education, there is Italian, Greek, English, American and German education, all these types of education do not serve Egypt and the Egyptian people, but serve the country of origin, France, America, Germany, Italy and so on.³⁵

This points to an important sociological and psychological issue related to the impact of multilingualism within the same society. This multilingualism has positive aspects, but the negative side has a great impact, especially when we find linguistic chaos between educational institutions and the graduates they produce, each one speaking a different language and thinking differently from the other, and here the negative impact on the individual, society, and the nation-state.

Despite the advantages of foreign education, in his view, it moulds learners differently "...they think differently than those who come out of Egyptian institutes, they think differently, and the results of this different thinking appear in their daily practical life and in their appreciation and judgement of things."³⁶

These justifications and more detailed justifications are cited by Taha Hussein in his defence of the democratisation of education and the need to unify its curricula and state supervision. He did not exclude Al-Azhar, which is considered independent in all its educational activities. In this regard, Taha Hussein says : "There is another education that the state supervises and does not supervise, supervising it because it is ultimately subject to its authority, but not because it is in fact very independent, which is the religious education provided by the Holy Azhar".³⁷

Criticises the Azhari education for representing the old ages and outdated thinking rather than the modern age, modern thinking, and modern man. This is another dilemma faced by Taha Hussein, as it is difficult to modernise this education in all respects,³⁸ "A long and careful evolution is required before Al-Azhar can reach the harmonisation of its thinking with modern thinking, and the natural consequence of this is that if we leave boys and young people to purely Azharite education, and do not include them in the care and attention of the state and its careful and continuous observation, we expose them to an old formulation and old formation and distance them from modern life..."³⁹

Although it (religious education) is highly popular, in his view it still represents traditional medieval education, "...subjected by virtue of this conservatism to many of the burdens of medievalism. The students formulate a special formula that is contrary to the formula adopted by civil education...".⁴⁰ Taha Hussein credits the modernist Enlightenment movement, which sought to spread new ideas through newspapers, books and articles, with saving education in Egypt. He calls this the renaissance. In his opinion, this renaissance raised the value of reading newspapers among Egyptians and a not insignificant group began to take an interest in reading them and following them with books with modern and enlightening content, otherwise education would have remained traditional and obstructed the project of entering the modern age and representing it.⁴¹

Taha Hussein deals with the issue of teaching religion with skill and a persuasive argument that makes the reader choose one of the two things with conviction. For example, he says "...it is unreasonable to ask Egyptians now to establish public education in their country on a purely civil basis and leave the teaching of religion to families...".⁴² In this speech addressed to Egyptian intellectuals, conservatives and the general public, we notice that he addresses their feelings more than their minds. The phrase "it is unreasonable" suggests that Egyptians will not accept in the first stage the issue of extracting the teaching of religion from public education. Then, in the same context, he says, "...then there should not be Egyptians who graduate from Egyptian schools having learnt the national religion, the national language and the national history, and others who graduate from foreign schools without any religious education".⁴³

Taha Hussein thus confronts those in charge of education with a *fait accompli*: either not teaching religion in public education and leaving it to families, or generalising it to all national and foreign schools, thereby democratising education. This is, in Taha Hussein's view, the sound thinking and logic that must be supported if society is to progress, and if the national state is to enter the modern age, as is the case in modern Europe.⁴⁴

4- A reading of the justifications and implications of the project:

With this, Taha Hussein has drawn his educational and political project at the same time, which was strongly objected to not only by his intellectual opponents, but also by Arab cultural and ideological groups, regardless of whether the criticisms are objective or not, the project is justified given the civilised state of the Arab peoples, and not only him, but all those who went in the liberal direction, as Khaldoun Hassan al-Naqib criticises this choice "If Taha Hussein and the men of his generation, such as Ali Abd al-Raziq, Salama Moussa and the liberal movement in Syria and Lebanon represent the new, this new represents a revolution that made things stand on its head and not on its feet",⁴⁵ because in his view it is a revolution that moved the Arab world from the fundamentalism of the Dar al-Ulum method to the fundamentalism of Western positivist methods.

Science has become the preserve of an elite that is the locomotive of society. They believe that Western culture is the basis of progress and advancement, and thus the Arab baccalaureate curricula have been crowded with a hybrid mixture of Westernising currents to reinterpret the heritage or read it according to the tools of Western positivism, which brought

the Mu'tazila and the Serenity Brothers back to the forefront with a different perspective, questioned the credibility of the ancient Jahiliyya poetry, and argued for a return to the source. The interest in Western schools of thought such as idealism, materialism, socialism and nationalism has become unparalleled, and this trend, in their opinion, may be in line with the definition of progress and advancement, i.e. catching up with the West, its culture, liberalism or socialism, and they have formed followers and disciples scattered according to these currents coming from overseas.⁴⁶

Taha Hussein, a thinker and writer who was educated in the French liberal and secular school, wanted to investigate what was wrong with his nation's transformation and found the cause in its traditional political and educational system, and that the only way out of this duality and tradition was to impose a state-led educational system, sponsored and guided by the state in order to democratise education and adopt the public school and its curricula. However, Taha Hussein was far-sighted in his educational project, as he did not only want a formal modern education, but an education whose purpose is to produce thought leaders and an enlightened elite that achieves the modernist and modernising act in the sense of creating that historical and communicative dynamic between generations that develop and at the same time bring about positive change within the structures of society, including the political system.

In this, he was influenced by the ideas of Durkheim, the sociologist, Saint-Simon, Condorcet and others. A modern society should be led by scientists who practice science in its modern sense. Here, Taha Hussein stipulates the principle of democratisation in civil life, especially in education, which is the basis of this social project.

Taha Hussein says: "It is one of the easiest and most favourable to the nature of things under democracy that individuals from the poorest members of the people rise to become the elite of the nation and its managers".⁴⁷ Thus, Taha Hussein drew within his educational and social project a political goal, which qualifies it as a real project despite the fact that he was heavily influenced by Western civilisation, in which he did not see any shortcomings as long as the West had developed its humanism, the lives of its individuals, and its educational and political system within the framework of civilisation.

The act of modernity and modernisation is established through rational thinking and the creation of a critical epistemological dynamic between the authority and the intellectual, and the more the state as an authority is interested in modernising education and education, the more it is reflected in the modernisation of the state itself, its institutions, and its elites who will be entrusted with the leadership of state institutions and its mind, as political democracy is achieved through the democratisation of education and education. According to Hourani, Taha Hussein makes the primary purpose of education the teaching of culture and science, but he also believes that it has a vital role in teaching civic virtues and creating the conditions in which a democratic government can live, so the bulk of his book *The Future of Culture in Egypt* is a critique of Egyptian education and an alternative and modern educational reform programme.⁴⁸

Conclusion:

The fundamental question that haunts Taha Hussein, the critical thinker and literary revolutionary, is how to move from a stagnant traditional situation to a modernist situation as witnessed in Europe while preserving the features of privacy, although at many stations he tries to put Arab Egypt in the same Western approach, which made him receive several objections, but Taha Hussein was more daring in raising the issue of Arab education and the backwardness and tradition that surrounds it, he was concerned on the one hand that he belonged to this culture, and an intellectual imbued with abundant and renewed modernist thought. His proposal was timely, but the means, reality, and the Arab civilisational legacy weighed heavily in preventing change or at least contributing to the crystallisation of an educational vision with practical resonance.

The idea of forming enlightened leaders is perhaps a pure idea of Taha Hussein when he proposes the graduation of an elite of the nation's sons who will take upon themselves the act of continuous modernist change, this elite of society imbued with critical enlightened thought whose mission is to move society from one state to another. However, this task is not the task of individuals, but rather the task of the national state, which has the responsibility of carrying the social democratic educational project, a task that requires vision, effectiveness and awareness. Here, the idea is essentially educational and political, and the political cannot be separated from the educational, as the process is integrated as long as the politician is an educational and educational product.

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