Discourse on Women's Education in Egypt During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: A Convergence of Proto-feminist, Nationalist, and Islamic Reformist Thought.

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Abstract of Thesis

Discourse on Women's Education in Egypt During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: A Convergence of Proto-Feminist, Nationalist, and Islamic Reformist Thought

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This thesis explores the development of women's education in pre-independence Egypt from the mid-nineteenth century to 1922. It looks at women's educational facilities and women's access to education through the reigns of Muhammad Ali, Said, Ismail and the British occupation. While the rise in women's educational concerns on a formal level parallels the growth of modernist, Islamic reformist, and proto-feminist thought in the late nineteenth century, the relationship among the three groups vis a vis their respective positions on women's education differs and is therefore examined in the thesis.

Research on this topic reveals a correlation between the early women's movement, a strong proponent of women's education, and Egypt's national and Islamic reform movements. As each group espoused a vision of change for Egypt, one secular and the other decidedly more religious, the common denominator for social progress was the unanimous support for advancements, although conditional, in educational policies regarding women. Couched in a context of modernism, the pursuit of freedom from foreign control and the desire for Egypt to develop into a fully productive society, were indispensable aspects of the development of women's education.

Résumé

Cette thèse explore le développement de l'éducation des femmes en Égypte pour la période précédant l'indépendance, soit à partir du milieu du 19e siècle jusqu' en 1922. Elle examine plus particulièrement la disponibilité et l'accessibilité des services d'éducation destinés aux femmes sous les règnes de Muhammad Ali et Ismail ainsi que sous l'occupation britannique. La croissance de l'intérêt en faveur de l'éducation des femmes s'effectue conjointement à la montée des courants de pensée "Moderniste", "Réformiste Islamique" et "Proto-féministe" de la fin du 19e siècle. La relation entre ces trois groupes concernant leur position respective sur la question de l'éducation des femmes est aussi examinée.

La recherche à ce sujet démontre une corrélation entre les débuts du mouvement des femmes (fortement en faveur de l'éducation de celles-ci), le mouvement national Égyptien et le mouvement de réforme Islamique. Chacun de ces groupes possède une vision différente du changement pour l'Égypte, plus séculière ou plus religieuse selon le cas. Le dénominateur commun pour le progrès social est un support unanime, bien que conditionnel, pour l'avancement des politiques d'éducation et d'accessibilité pour les femmes. Dans un contexte de modernisation, la recherche de libération du contrôle étranger et le désir de l'Égypte de se développer en temps que société pleinement productive constituent des aspects indispensables au développement de l'éducation des femmes.

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INTRODUCTION

The turn of the twentieth century witnessed a tidal-wave of nationalist movements giving voice to the long-stifled aspirations of the colonies of European powers. The dual task that lay ahead in the construction of emerging ideologies focused on national independence and the creation of modern, viable societies. In the world of Islam, Egypt, following the lead of Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, pursued a like process. For such traditionalist societies of the Muslim world, however, the factor of modernism in their nationalist agendas was itself a foreign construct as its very existence was defined by Western criteria and Western values. Indeed change, as per the social, political, and economic affairs of the state came with such rapid speed that perhaps an understanding of 'how to modify the phenomenon of modernism for Muslim society?' was brushed aside or given but cursory thought and attention paid instead to the outcome of success.

The incorporation of women in modernist/nationalist movements as prescribed by Western ideology was an inextricable component of the very caustic dynamics of progress. The voice of women (perhaps synchronous to the cries of colonial oppression and their ensuing, inevitable emancipation) on the social and political stage was in and of itself tantamount to an effect of revolutionary proportions. Yet for lack of support or cohesion as a developed movement it could not stand on its own. As such, rather for reasons

of survival than ideology, the early women's movement forged an alliance with Egypt's nationalist movement, involving itself in demonstrations against British occupation- not on behalf of the rights of women, but advocating the nationalist agenda alongside their male counterparts. The activity of these women was intended to convey a dedication to the nationalist cause as the primary concern of the day; its rank far superseding the level of public support for the still nascent women's movement. Ideologically, therefore, Egyptian feminism was linked with Egyptian nationalism, and thus supported the country's pursuit of freedom from foreign control as well as the desire to see Egypt develop into a fully productive, progressive society through their own interpretation of modernism. The nationalist dimension of the feminist cause granted it an air of legitimacy it may have otherwise lacked given that the public addressing of women's concerns was not prevalent in customary debate. It is also the case that Egypt was not alone in its efforts at coming to terms with women's concerns. Countries both in and outside of the Muslim fold were faced with similar proto-women's movements which found themselves a popular ideological framework within which to operate. The constitutional movement of 1905-1911 in Iran, for instance, was a forum where women demanded legal expression of their rights as mothers, and their rights of inheritance. In the United States at this time, not only was the abolishment of slavery (1865) struggling to take shape in the American psyche, but this self-same atmosphere of change and progressive human expression found its way into the American women's movement as well.

As feminism only emerged in its nascent form during the final decades of the nineteenth century, a clear definition of proto-feminist thought had yet to be employed.[1] It was understood in terms of the discourse identified with early feminist expressions of women's segregated voices; essays, letters, and poetry that had previously been invisible. Lines such as,

> *I challenge my destiny, my time*
> *I challenge the human eye*
>
> *I will sneer at ridiculous rules and people*
> *That is the end of it; I will fill my eyes with pure light, and swim in a sea of unbound feeling*
>
> *I have challenged tradition and my absurd position, and I have gone beyond what age and place allow.*[2]

from early feminist Aisha al-Taimuriyya's poetry found their place within a growing body of feminist literature and expressed an awareness that had yet to be named. Indeed, the very issue of visibility, versus invisibility, has been discussed by Margot Badran in terms of public feminist consciousness. She notes that it is Qasim Amin and his publication of *Tahrir al-mar'a* (Liberation of the Woman) in 1899 that has traditionally been credited with pioneering the feminist discourse in Egypt. While it is accepted that his male

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[1]The term 'feminism' was first used in its official capacity in 1923 with the establishment of the Egyptian Feminist Union. With French as the dominant language of the union's members, given its upper-class affiliations, there was a clear understanding of the words *feministe* and *feminisme*. The Arabic translation, however, was and remains ambiguous. The word *nisai* (women) is the Arabic equivalent which must always be clarified in its 'feminist' context to be properly understood. See Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke, eds. in Opening the Gates, xiv.

[2]Ibid, xxx.

proto-feminist stance was a pioneering act, it was done so in full public view. The invisible, the seclusion of women and their expression, however, appeared three and four decades earlier between women within the confines of the upper-class harems.[3]

While accepting the world-wide diversity of the feminist experience within its respective historical context, the term feminism in this paper will denote an individual and collective awareness of the traditionally oppressed position of women. It will further encompass an analysis of this oppression through male and female activism-- understood as simple dialogue or as widespread protest. Although the issue of feminism is not the focus of this paper, understanding its development as a response to women's social, economic, psychological and religious awareness is at the crux of the relationship among the protagonists named: the proto-feminists nationalists, and the Islamic reformists.

It will be understood that women's feminism emerged from its hold in pre-colonial Egypt preceding the rise of capitalism and nationalist/modernist thought. As such, women first sought support for their feminist convictions in Islam itself, (the traditional jury of Muslim activity), with the element of modernism only being introduced decades later. Social change in the cast of Islamic reform will be discussed as the branch of modernism introduced by Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The western concept of modernism will be more fully explored while viewing the Egyptian context as a product of the western phenomenon and as its own adaptation. 'Abduh's understanding of

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[3]Ibid, xv-xxvii.

the modernist philosophy in Islamic terms reconciled the religion with progressive thought through a reinterpretation of the Qur'an. The use of *ijtihad* (independent inquiry), as 'Abduh advocated, allowed women to discover that practices of seclusion (particularly of veiling and segregation), were not, in fact, ordained by Islam as had been previously accepted. Instead, women found that Islam guaranteed all Muslims, both men and women, basic rights. Although the debate that surrounded women's and feminist cries for change had supporters and critics from every political and social platform, all groups struck a chord of agreement in their espousal of the education of women, viewing it as an indispensable aspect of social development. For reformers and nationalists alike, from the progressivism of Muhammad 'Ali and Qasim Amin to the conservatism of Mustafa Kamil and Talat Harb, the success and ultimate survival of the future of Egypt as a modern, Islamic society lay in making literate the majority of the population The issue of women in the social domain was by definition a very modern one. The education of these women, therefore, was a compounded challenge of breaking with cultural propriety and traditionalist tendencies.

In my thesis I will discuss the three (perhaps) competing, yet interwoven agendas on women's education advanced by the then proto-women's movement, the Egyptian nationalists, and Islamic reformers from the late nineteenth century through 1923. I will investigate the preceding period of the educational system under Muhammad Ali with specific reference to women's education, and then document the developments of successive regimes and the

British occupation. I will examine the concept of Egyptian modernism, and discuss the ideology of the more prominent figures of each of the movements with specific reference to women's education. In broaching the issue of modernity and Islamic reform in the Egyptian context, I shall attempt to create a more lucid frame of understanding in the role of each (the proto-feminist movement, the nationalists, and Islamic modernists) as underwriters to the ultimate establishment and development of the Egyptian Feminist Union with very explicit goals towards the modern education of women.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, both the women's movement and the Egyptian nationalist movement began to cultivate their respective domains in response to a burgeoning demand for social identity. "They were different expressions of the same profound problem of contact and confrontation with modern civilization".[4] Egypt had been exposed to the impact of the West earlier than any other Arab country and was the first to experience direct domination during its occupation by Britain (1882-1922). This overwhelming presence of Europe "and collapse of much of the traditional order led to a reconsideration of Egypt's own position and identity in relation to the West".[5] There exists an integral and complex history behind the relationship of modernism to the women's movement and the nationalist and reform movements in terms of their respective positions towards women's education. To better understand their alliance, it is important to examine not only the existing social environment, but the response of successive regimes to the western influence of progressive educational systems.

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[4]Philipp, Thomas, "Feminism and Nationalist Politics in Egypt", Women in the Muslim World. Nikkie Keddie and Lois Beck, eds., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 277.
[5]Philipp, "Feminism and Nationalist Politics in Egypt", 277.

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Muhammad Ali

In the early nineteenth century the Egyptian state began to establish European-style schools on the model of secular and practical instruction.[6] To this extent the influence of the French presence, albeit brief (1798-1801), was the turning point in the history of modern Egypt.[7] Napoleon's invasion brought Egyptians into immediate contact with Western military, scientific, and educational institutions. When Muhammad Ali[8] officially became *wali* (viceroy) of Egypt in 1805, his first and exclusive order of duty was to increase state revenue to gain strength and, ultimately, independence for Egypt, still under de jure suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire.[9] Part of this drive took the form of a direct, although sporadic, interest in the development of education. It appears,

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[6]Baron, Beth, The Women's Awakening in Egypt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, p. 126. Not only were the schools secular in nature, but most were based on French models. Instruction was entirely in French, the teachers were French (initially), and the dynamism of Gaulic influence from returning missions served to reinforce French (foreign, western) culture and thought. Traditional schools were then reassembled under this system.

[7]Elnashar, N. Abdulhameed, "Islamic Education: A Resource Unit For Secondary Schools in Egypt". Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1982, 8.

[8]Muhammad Ali was the commander-in-chief of the Albanian forces, the mercenary wing of the Ottoman army. When the Ottomans drove the French out of Egypt in 1801 they, alongside British and Mamluk forces, fought to put their candidates into power as governor of Egypt. Despite a lengthy conflict with the Porte, Muhammad Ali claimed the title in 1805 and maintained the position until 1848. "He founded a dynasty that was to rule Egypt until 1952, and started a process of modernization and the development of a modern state system." Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, A Short History of Modern Egypt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 51-53.

[9]Tucker, Judith, Women in 19th Century Egypt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 25.

however, that due to his desire to have an educated population, [10] educating Egyptians was a necessary factor in realizing his primary concern: the building of a modern army and navy to support his wars of conquest in Arabia, Greece, the Sudan and Syria.[11] As the feasibility of importing enough foreign experts to modernize his armed forces (which depended on modern technology) was not only impractical but a near impossibility, Muhammad Ali was forced to train Egyptians and use them as his source of technological man-power[12]. The Egyptians' traditional background of religious education, however, was not sufficient to allow them to comprehend the technical military and secular curriculum that Muhammad Ali had aspired to.[13]

Until the reforms of Muhammad Ali, the only public institution for primary education was the '*kuttab*', school for Qur'anic instruction.[14] For both boys and girls, the mosque was the first school for all Muslim children where they learned to read, memorize portions of the Qur'an, and tenets of the creed. Girls, however, were traditionally only admitted into the *kuttabs* until puberty, at which time they were segregated and taught at home. Institutes of higher learning, such as al-Azhar and its affiliated schools, served as the

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[10]Little maintains that although Muhammad Ali worked hard to build a strong, modern Egypt, he "wasn't concerned with the emancipation of the Egyptian people, except insofar as it could serve his ambition to build his own empire", 21.

[11]Cochran, Judith, Education in Egypt. London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1986, 4.

[12]Ibid., 4.

[13]Ibid., 5-6.

[14]The idea of an institution (mosque) as a center of reading, writing, learning the Qur'an began with the second caliph 'Umar who appointed teachers in all major cities of the caliphate- -Medina, Kufa, Basra. See Ghulam Nabi Saqib, Modernization of Muslim Education in Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey. Ph.D. Dissertation (London: University of London, 1989), 67-70.

guardians of classical Arabic and orthodox Islam for the educational elite.[15] With Muhammad Ali's reforms, both new and traditional systems of education now functioned alongside each other, with the latter having little use in Muhammad Ali's spectrum of economic and social development.

As this was the working background of his population, Muhammad Ali sent missions of Egyptians to be trained and educated abroad, primarily in France and Italy, to learn appropriate, functional skills.[16] At home he founded high schools to produce infantry and other military officers to man successfully his growing army. His troops soon required assistance from medical personnel, engineers, pharmacists, veterinarians,[17] and so he established training facilities to accommodate such disciplines. He opened two army schools in the citadel (a cadet school in 1816 and a school for mathematical sciences in 1821), schools of medicine, arts, administrative law, music, midwifery, and engineering .[18] Other private and missionary schools-- the Armenian private school, schools of language, Greek schools and Jewish and Catholic missionary schools-- were also established, but they were primarily

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[15]Elnashar, "Islamic Education: A Resource Unit For Secondary Schools in Egypt", 10.

[16]Saqib notes Muhammad Ali's lack of concern with extracting from Europe virtually anything it could offer for the development of Egyptian society. As it was purely functional, he did not view it as cultural treason to adopt such western practices. See Ghulam Nabi Saqib, 83-84.

[17]Cochran, Education in Egypt, 4.

[18]Elnashar, "Islamic Education: A Resource Unit For Secondary Schools in Egypt", 11-13. It is significant to note that Muhammad Ali's initial attempts at founding schools such as those in the citadel employed "Christian priests as teachers, even for teaching Arabic. (He) never made any attempt to employ a native teacher", 10.

by-products of Muhammad Ali's educational zeal as they did not fall under his jurisdiction.

Muhammad Ali's educational policies were inherently tied to his economic interests. All strategies and development had been designed entirely "to increase state revenue and bolster Egypt's military might and independence."[19] The country's growth had been channeled through its rising participation in the world market beginning in the early 1830s. Even sectors of society traditionally dominated by women, such as the textile craft and trade industry, felt the effects of economic expansion.[20] These women, however, were never trained in the specialized fields Muhammad Ali had introduced, and the new mechanized labor remained the exclusive domain of men. "Male advantage in the realm of unskilled labor became male monopoly in skilled work."[21] When, in the latter part of the century, Egyptian industry could no longer compete with European products, indigenous production eroded. While any skilled labor at this time went to men, women were forced into domestic service as household maids and servants to the urban bourgeoisie. [22]

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[19]Tucker, 71.

[20]Women laborers at this time were highly organized in guilds. It was a safety net that supplied work, set wages, and fixed taxes for the women merchants. Baron notes that lists of guilds from the nineteenth century-- cotton workers, green grocers, milk sellers, bakers, midwives-- show that some urban tradeswomen and craftswomen had been organized collectively. See Baron, 144-167.

[21]Ibid, 88.

[22]The growing ranks of female intellectuals of the upper-class remained generally unaffected by Egypt's economic trends. They did not have to work. The importance of this distinction will be addressed later when outlining upper-class status of early feminists. As their concerns about female labor were more abstract, work conditions and wage inequities were never issues. Instead, they dealt with the preoccupations of their class.

Elnashar properly sums up the intellectual and educational situation in Egypt during Muhammad Ali's reign (1805-1848) as a four decade-long engagement of developing the country to use its resources for war. It was solely in this context that he established a system of military education.

> He did not work on any kind of education that would enable the Egyptians to set up any private enterprise for themselves. No provision was made for the peaceful development of the country, either culturally, socially, or economically. The old mosque system of education had been almost destroyed in the rush to build an army. When the system broke down after his death, all the Egyptians who were employed in the army had nothing to do but try to resume their normal life as far as possible.[23]

Muhammad Ali's Successors

By the time of his death in 1849, Muhammad Ali had made significant changes in the life of the Egyptian middle-class: in them he established an educated population.[24] Under his immediate successors, the khedives 'Abbas and Said, however, the near-revolutionary strides of the educational system waned and a period of stagnation, neglect, and bridled optimism began which continued through the end of Said's reign in 1863.[25] While these two rulers did

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[23]Elnashar, "Islamic Education: A Resource Unit For Secondary Schools in Egypt", 16-17.

[24]Cochran, Education in Egypt, 4.

[25]Tucker, Women in 19th Century Egypt, 123. In conflicting and counterproductive policies, for instance, 'Abbas closed many of the state schools while retaining a Ministry of Public Instruction and under Said's leadership, the ministry was dismantled and a number of the schools were re-

little to promote the development of education in Egypt, Fritz Steppat points out that it was during the reign of Said that Ibrahim Adham, the British-trained head of the School Department, successfully submitted a project for educational reform. Adham's intention was to gradually integrate traditional schools with those established on a European curriculum. The result, Steppat maintains, "would give all children a good general education, useful in all fields of life."[26] Although the project was never carried through owing to Said's lack of commitment to educational reform, the favorable public response to its possibility was realized in the marked increase in foreign and missionary schools.[27]

Private educational facilities were certainly not new to Egypt. A Greek Orthodox school had been in Cairo since the middle of the seventeenth century, and the Franciscans had been running a Catholic school, primarily for Christian emigrants from Syria, since the middle of the eighteenth century.[28] The other mission and private schools established under Muhammad Ali, as mentioned earlier, now found community amidst the rising popularity of foreign

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opened. It was during this period of "stagnation" of secular, state-sponsored education that the further development and subsequent flourishing of the foreign-language schools increased. Although many had been successfully functioning since the rule of Muhammad Ali, they gained not only enrollment due to the closing of secular schools, but also received financial support from the Ottoman governors- especially Ismail Pasha, Said's successor- who desired a foreign educational policy to compliment his 'westernization' of Egypt. See Cochran, Education in Egypt, 5-7.

[26]Steppat, Fritz, "National Education Projects in Egypt Before British Occupation" in Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East. William Polk and Richard Chambers, eds., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, 282.

[27]Ibid. Steppat notes that in the Egyptian archives are several petitions signed by parents in support of the new schools and a eagerness to have their children attend them. He remarks that the petition may be the proof that Said required to determine if the public was truly interested in the project.

[28]Ibid., 282-283.

schools. "Since the state was unwilling to meet the growing demand for girls' education, ... missionaries (and other private institutions) found a ready market for their schools."[29] Baron notes that for a time, Christian missionaries taught a larger number of girls than any other institution in the country. When Said died in 1863 there were 59 foreign and non-Islamic schools in Egypt. By contrast, even thirty years later state schools had only ten teachers in three schools teaching 242 female students.[30] The government's faltering efforts on behalf of women's educational concerns were no match for the privately-funded, widely respected, and versatile curriculums offered by the foreign and mission schools. "Private schools rather than state ones provided the bulk of girls' education in Egypt... especially at the upper levels where state secondary schools were noticeably lacking."[31] Many early feminists, women's advocates, and journalists were able to take advantage of the opportunities of private schools (as will be discussed later) which early on exposed them to western experiences. The very existence of the schools was, in fact, an influence towards progressive ideals for women's education.

The growth of foreign schools in Egypt paralleled the general rise of foreign influence in that country. European immigration to Egypt began at the turn-of-the-century during the French expedition

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[29]Baron, 135..

[30]Ibid. Despite the popularity among Egyptians in sending their children to missionary schools, until the second decade of the twentieth century it was rare to find a Muslim girl in such an institution. When Muslim parents "were more willing, or compelled due to lack of alternatives, to send their daughters than their sons to (missionary) schools," the percentage of Muslim girls in attendance was higher than that of boys. Ibid., 136.

[31]Ibid., 137.

and continued under Muhammad Ali. The construction of the Suez Canal during Said's reign witnessed another rise in foreign settlement, which was further accelerated by the favorable economic circumstances that the American Civil War (1861-65) created for Egypt.[32] The dramatic fall in American cotton shipments to Europe, chiefly to England, created opportunities for exporting Egyptian cotton to European nations. This was immediately followed by an influx of foreigners to the country.

> From 1857 to 1861, an average of 30,000 foreigners came into (Egypt) each year; in 1862 they numbered 33,000; in 1863, 43,000; in 1864, 56,500; in 1865, 80,000. These immigrants quickly won control over commerce, industry and finance. No doubt they owed their superiority... partly to their education. Those who wanted to stand up to them, to follow their example, had to strive for a similar education.[33]

Steppat points to this "admiration" of Western education as the formal catalyst for Egyptians to send their children to foreign schools.

As this was the public sentiment towards Egyptian educational aspirations, it was only the luxury of families who could afford to send their children to foreign schools. When Ismail came to power in 1863 the state-run school system was, for its part, in appalling condition and in desperate need of revival. It consisted of a single primary and secondary school, one military school and a school of medicine, and a trade school for navy training.[34] Ismail realized that in order to conduct a successful campaign for modernization, as this

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[32]Steppat, 283.
[33]Ibid., 283-284.
[34]Tucker, Women in 19th Century Egypt, 123.

was his vision for Egypt, reinstalling a well-disciplined school system should be among the first orders of business. Egyptian schools, he maintained, should be able to provide Egyptians with the same tools as offered by foreign and missionary schools, but with a Muslim and nationalist emphasis.[35] In the early years of his reign he founded a number of new schools (primary, medicine, polytechnic, military) and reopened many of the professional schools that had been established under Muhammad Ali. By the end of his rule, Ismail had opened thirty modern primary schools under government control, nearly all of them in Cairo. Fritz Steppat mentions that statistics for this particular class of schools in 1875 show that they were attended by 5,362 students, 890 of whom were girls.[36] Although more attention was paid to the modern style of teaching and organization in these schools (such as European language instruction and the attachment of secondary schools to certain national primary school programs), traditional methods based on Qur'anic instruction remained prevalent.[37] Ismail's efforts at assimilating modernization into Egyptian education were short-lived, however, as the fiscal crisis of the 1870's forced the closure of most of these institutions.[38]

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[35]Steppat, 284. Steppat outlines the growing conception in Egyptian society which aligned people with the concept of belonging to a class, a religious community and a nation. It was a trend that Ismail latched on to, if only for reasons of social progress than an interest in Egypt's nationalist developments.

[36]Steppat, 293.

[37]Ibid., 294.

[38]Tucker, Women in 19th Century Egypt, 123. Despite the fact that there were universal crises debilitating the world market, from the aftermath of the American Civil War to the Crimean War, Ismail's extravagant spending left Egypt bankrupt. Foreign loans could be neither found nor bought for any price, and the excessively low flooding of the Nile in 1877 reduced Egypt's crop yields to a state of near desperation.

Although the state schools were shutting down, 129 new foreign and private schools were opened and flourished as a result of the closure of the former. For the year 1878, statistics show a total of 146 non-Islamic and foreign schools with 12,539 students; 1,139 of them Muslims.[39] Clearly, the influence of foreign schools increased as Egypt's economy faltered and imposed limitations on educational possibilities for the majority of Egyptians.

British Occupation

British rule was no more successful in facilitating a revival of state schools. As Tucker notes, during the first decade of British control,

> the Egyptian government almost completely neglected education. In 1892 the entire state-run school system consisted of 33 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, teacher-training and military schools, and schools of medicine, law and engineering... with British officials denigrating the role of the State and placing their hopes in a private (educational) initiative... (which was) lauded as the solution to educational problems.[40]

This absence of a commitment by the State towards educational development necessarily affected the scope and quality of existing female education as well. The structure of government policy had always maintained a gender-specific orientation with the nation's men being the near-exclusive consideration when formulating any

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[39]Steppat, 283.
[40]Tucker, 123.

political, social, or educational agenda. Even during Muhammad Ali's westernization and development campaign, the institutions he set up were not intended to improve the intellectual outlook of the people. Owing to this limited vision, female education remained beyond the scope of his educational policies.[41] Although, the first educational institution for women was set up as early as 1830-- a school of midwifery attached to the medical college, newly established under Muhammad Ali--[42], the interest in women's education, as earlier noted, was not so much due to systematized plans for social development, but to the desire to maximize practical services to strengthen the country.[43] Despite this conscious encouragement for the general education of women, women's schools, too, suffered the already-mentioned relative neglect of education under Abbas and Said. Under Ismail, however, so eager was he to conform Egypt to western standards that renewed official support of women's education became a primary ambition. He promptly ordered the *waqf* (charitable trust) administration to open a school for girls. Women's education had further support from Ismail's third wife,

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[41]See J. Heyworth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt, London: Luzac & Co., 1938, 229.

[42]Wahaib, Education and the Status of Women in the Middle East, 45. Elnashar states that upon graduation, the midwives were given the same rank as men of the medical school. See Elnashar, "Islamic Education", 12.

[43]It is interesting to note the difficulty confronted in attempting to attract women to secondary schools because of the social stigma attached to females conducting life outside the confines of the home. Because of this, the School of *Hakimas* (female health practitioners, 1832), for instance, was forced to recruit women from the lower classes and Abyssinian and Sudanese slave girls. See Tucker, Women in 19th Century Egypt, 120. See also Wahaib, Education and the Status of Women in the Middle East, 45.

Tcheshme-Afet, who founded a school for the daughters of the elite.[44]

During the British occupation, government policy towards women's education revealed dissenting attitudes, with the evident uncertainty lying ultimately in the manner with which "the woman question" should itself be dealt. Lord Cromer, the former Sir Evelyn Baring, British agent and consul general of Egypt (1883-1907), in his Annual Report of 1891, expressed, "I wish to state my very strong conviction... that the East can never really advance unless some thorough- but, of course, gradual- change be made in the position of women. Education is only a part- albeit an important part- of the general question".[45] He was certainly an advocate of women's education and welcomed state expenditure in the area. His strongest argument was that university education deserved the greatest attention. Cromer, therefore, "endorsed the nationalist demand for an Egyptian university in terms which further underscored his vision of education as a pillar of the prevailing social order."[46] Such an order, however, tolerated the absence of higher educational opportunities for women who were not included in the nationalist program.[47] First and foremost, however, Cromer wished to see the

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[44]Cochran, Education in Egypt, 11. In 1873 Tcheshme-Afet sponsored one of only two state-sponsored primary schools for girls (with the exception of the School of *Hakimas*) to educate slaves and daughters of royal and official families. The suppression of the slave trade in 1877 caused the school to lose its main clientele and with the deposition of Ismail, Tsheshme-Afet was forced to withdraw her patronage. See also Baron, The Women's Awakening in Egypt, 128. On the establishment of a girls' school by the *waqf* administration, see Tucker, 125.

[45]Tucker, 125.

[46]Baron, 129.

[47]Ibid. Cromer's emphasis on the importance of higher education echoed the policies of Muhammad Ali of 70 years earlier. Attention given to primary and

university organized "in such a way as to attract the sons of wealthy Egyptians... who will come to regard the time spent in study at the university as a necessary part of their intellectual equipment for life, in the same way as- in Europe- the training at great universities is regarded by the sons of higher classes".[48] Not only is this official expression an apparent limiting of the scope of public education, but it seems to resonate with the contradictory nature of the state's position on the education of women. This is especially apparent in light of the fact that Cromer initially took it upon himself to grant a large number of women free entry into government schools to promote enrollment. After the attendance quota was met, however, he gradually eliminated free education for girls because it was no longer deemed a necessity in attracting students, and the female student population once again dropped.[49] Although the government realized the social importance of educating women, it only did so to the extent of satisfying a limited need. Anything over and above that need would be accommodating a dispensable saturation.

Towards the latter end of British rule a restrictive element within the existing scope of women's education took firm hold on Egyptian society. Certainly, the "uses" of female education, in reference to the previous mention of its "necessity", gradually came to be defined in terms of how educational training would fashion better mothers out of its female students. Although opportunities for

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secondary schools was for the most part neglected in favor of higher education. Such a system has been called a "reverse educational pyramid" and by all counts works to the detriment of women in retarding the development of their educational opportunities- especially when access into the system is denied. See also Cochran, 4-5.

[48]Tucker, 124.

[49]Ibid., 125.

female elementary education undoubtedly expanded under British rule both at the primary and secondary levels, the nature of their training, however, remained limited. The emphasis shifted from practical, technical instruction to curriculums based on cookery, needlepoint, and laundry "which aim(ed) at preparing them for the duties of home life."[50] It was a shift towards a more conservative, traditional orientation.[51]

Despite Cromer's claims extolling the strident advances in women's education, "there is little evidence that British policies much advanced the cause of female education; on the contrary, the overall effect may have been... to siderail women's schooling" for the better part of 40 years.[52] Philipp notes that a qualified examination of this institutionalized gender-molding and similar educational policies shows that the demands "were strictly oriented toward the better fulfillment of the 'natural tasks' in house and family." He notes that a woman's right to education was based on the requirements of tasks within the social unit of which she is a member ["the family unit, not a human individual (unit)"], and "not on her potential capabilities as an individual".[53] There was no intention to lead the woman out of her traditional realm into a more public arena of positions and professions; "any such intention is explicitly denied".[54] And as these

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[50]Ibid., 126.

[51]Tucker further notes that by the 1900s, "the State was more concerned with the type of education offered and strove to develop basic literacy and domestic skills in girl students while guarding against too much education of an impractical nature which would divert them from their 'natural avocation'", 127.

[52]Ibid., 129.

[53]Philipp, 286.

[54]Ibid.

schools increasingly demanded tuition fees, necessity being sidelined for social conservatism, those unable to pay were effectively denied attendance.[55] It would, therefore, follow that with the elimination of this notion of "necessity", any provisions made by the state towards women's education would be excessive. Accordingly, women who did not feel the effects of school closings and state budget cuts were from the upper and middle classes of society because they had the resources to pay for private or other instruction.

THE PROTO-FEMINIST DIMENSION

The economic dynamics here outlined that had come to form the very classist reality of educational access for women was further responsible for the growing nucleus of the then proto-feminist movement. It should be understood that the directives of such a campaign do not necessarily mirror those of western culture. Although it is traditionally accepted that the notion of feminism is a western phenomenon (itself a debate which is beyond the framework of this paper), its eastern and specifically Egyptian counterpart was fashioned out of a different pattern of cultural, social, and religious criteria. Essentially begun as a non-political and largely non-confrontational movement (although the very notion of a "woman issue" in a patriarchal Islamic society is by nature an aggressive concept as it rocks the status quo of the established socio-economic system), early feminist circles were almost exclusively

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[55]Ibid.

restricted to women (and a few men) of the upper and middle classes. By and large, it was not a unified movement with a solitary voice. It was, in fact, divisive within and between nationalist, reformist, and early feminist platforms. The importance and social necessity accorded to women's education was taken up by a wide spectrum of groups as an essential factor of their respective agendas, but with different emphases. Not all agreed upon the extent and dimensions of women's education (an issue which will be discussed at greater length in the following chapters), but the common components, women and education, would later serve as a subtle yet significant factor in unifying the country in its journey towards independence.

When discussing emergent feminism concurrently with education in Egypt, one must realize that as the latter gradually came to be the exclusive domain of the upper and middle classes- urban women living within the conventions of the harem system- it was within this atmosphere that feminist ideology took stronger root.[56] According to Philipp, such a phenomenon "does not seem surprising, considering that a certain amount of education and exposure to Western features were needed to be able to question the traditional position of women. Such opportunities existed only in the upper and middle classes at the time".[57]

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[56]The harem system, devoid of all the imaginary settings that pop-culture idealizes, enforced domestic seclusion and segregation of the sexes. According to Margot Badran, "this institution for the control of women by the patriarchal family was linked to class. Seclusion in the home was not possible for lower class urban and peasant women because their daily work necessitated a certain amount of interaction between the sexes". See Badran, "Origins of Feminism in Egypt", 157-159.

[57]Philipp, "Feminism and Nationalist Politics in Egypt", 283. Cole also makes pointed references to the economic dimensions of Egyptian society as a whole

Women living in the isolation of the harem, therefore, were the first to manifest an awareness of the circumstances of their gender. They transcribed books of prose and poetry, published biographical dictionaries, wrote articles confronting women's domestic seclusion and their social strangulation, and exchanged letters with each other. This expression of a shared and burgeoning mutual consciousness with other women in seclusion was perhaps the foundation of a sisterhood; the first steps towards the development of a more concrete union.[58]

As these early protagonists of women's emancipation represented a small percentage of the bourgeois elite, however, they naturally addressed themselves to women of similar backgrounds. The topics dealt with, as shown by Philipp and Sullivan, displayed the exclusive nature of these women's concerns, emphasizing the fact that "the emancipatory movement had no intention of being a mass movement addressing women from all classes of the nation."[59] Among the concerns, for instance, were such popular subjects as the issue of breast-feeding (that it should be done by the mother herself and not a wet nurse despite the inconvenience), the education of children (which should not be overseen by servants as it would ill-

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and ultimately notes that the country's position in the world market not only shaped its internal development and structure, but "had a major impact on the position and status of traditionally underprivileged groups like women... It seems probable that state capitalism in the 19th century had the effect of actually increasing the exclusion of middle-class women and restricting them to household management". Cole, "Feminism, Class, and Islam in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt", 390. Badran further notes economics as a factor in feminist awareness. She points to increased travel to Europe by wealthier Egyptian women, "where they experienced first-hand life outside the harem system." See Badran, "Origins of Feminism", 158.

[58]Badran, "Feminists, Islam and Nation", 15.

[59]Philipp, "Feminism and Nationalist Politics in Egypt", 284.

influence them with lower class attitudes), and other privileged issues such as the management of large households and the supervision of servants.[60] No doubt, it was due to this very issue of their heightened status that these women were able to express their concerns and advocate their ideas in public in the first place. However, as Sullivan remarks, "while class provided a certain freedom, it may also have reinforced conservative restraints and caused them to restrict their agenda... What they did not advocate is probably as important as what they supported", as the above examples demonstrate.[61] Sullivan points out, for instance, that marriage was not discouraged, nor was there support for women of the lower classes who typically feel the economic burden of large families. There was no suggestion that women should seek independence from men, but instead work to earn their respect.[62] With the institution of marriage and children being the assumed future for most women, the early feminists turned their attention to these, more domestic matters. Sullivan notes the rationale: "the family had to be strong, educated men needed educated wives... to raise their children...". If anything other than this prescribed course of events were to occur (i.e. divorce), it would "weaken the family and ultimately weaken Egypt".[63] In terms of practicality, it could be

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[60]Ibid., 283-284.

[61]Sullivan, Women in Egyptian Public Life, 31.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid. In this respect, with the safety and unity of Egypt being of primary importance, the early women's movement came to be viewed as part of the liberal nationalist cause-- an issue that will be later addressed. What is noteworthy here is simply that these nationalists (versus the more conservative ones who represented a counter-response to the growing women's movement) recognized the importance of an educated population to develop the country's strength to its full potential. If women felt the benefits

assumed that this demand for education maintained national support of paramount importance for the entire population. However, as earlier mentioned, not only did education come to be virtually restricted to the upper classes, but it became a focus of feminist concerns-- a further indication of its exclusivity. Basic problems of health care and child-rearing, and economic duress as suffered by the lower classes were not even on the agenda. They were certainly issues that could be confronted through education-- an education that, again, these women did not have access to.

With this increased expression and interchange from the growing literacy of upper-class women, the communion of future feminists expanded and assumed broader, more visible and vocal identities. When Eugenie Le Brun, a French woman and Muslim convert, opened the first salon for women in the early 1880s, "upper-class Egyptian women pioneered in collective debate on their lives".[64] It was a setting that fostered debate over issues of veiling and seclusion (again, upper-class concerns), both being of particular interest to Le Brun after her study of Islam and subsequent discovery that neither were religious prescriptions, as is commonly accepted, but social conventions.[65]

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of this drive by extension and not through their independent recognition as human beings, then so be it. The result was the same: granting, albeit slowly, educational opportunities for women.

[64]Badran, Feminists, Islam, and Nation, 15.

[65]Ibid, 15.

Women's Journals

The foundation of the women's press by Hind Nawfal (1860-1920) in 1893 was the next step as it established an official forum for larger numbers of women, literate women, to address their concerns and be heard.[66] Women had been contributing to journals founded by men since the 1880s, but the existence of an exclusively women's publication was not only radical and potentially inflammatory, but "it remained anathema to entrenched male patriarchy which has linked female immorality with literacy... (women) could absorb subversive ideas and engage in dangerous communication which would lead to unseemly behaviour."[67] The magazine's editor even attached a disclaimer to the introduction of her publication after the manifesto described its "sole" purpose as "defend(ing) the rights of the deprived and draw(ing) attention to the obligations due... express(ing) (women's) ideas... and take(ing) pride in publishing the best of their work"; furthermore, she stated, "but do not imagine that a woman who writes in a journal is comprised in modesty or violates her purity or good behaviour."[68] As a result, since the content was not as revolutionary as the

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[66]Talhami describes how women's literature around this time was "tolerated as long as it conformed to the recognizable themes floating in the sphere of male literary activity... (Women's journalism in Egypt) typified both the rising self-confidence of women and their continued subordination to the male power structure". Talhami, Ghada Hashem, Mobilization of Muslim Women in Egypt. Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1996, 7.

[67]Badran and Cooke, eds., Opening the Gates, xxix.

[68]Badran, Feminists, Islam, and Nation, 15-16. Badran notes that through the medium of an official publication and despite the potential character stains that women's expression might result in, "they collectively transcended their domestic confinement and by claiming their names and voices women took responsibility for themselves and accepted accountability".

publication itself, the women's press dedicated its pages to helping improve women's family roles, and to the importance of women's education.[69]

There existed certain members of conservative factions (a platform soon to be discussed), however, who believed that the women's press and other female magazine publications espousing women's new-found discourse and early feminist ideology were simply plots to weaken the unity of Egypt. They pointed to the foreign origins and non-Muslim identities of the founders and editors of women's magazines (Hind Nawfal, for instance, was a Syrian Christian; see Appendix, Table I). Of the 14 women founders of pre-World War I Egyptian women's magazines, "one was Copt, two were Jewish, six- probably eight- were Christian, and two were Muslim... nine, perhaps ten, of the women were from Syria. Only three were definitely Egyptians".[70] Not only is this an obvious reflection of the situation of the Egyptian press at the time (that there is such a predominance of foreign editors), but this emphatic foreignness of the early feminist movement was the precise element that such Egyptian nationalists as Mustafa Kamil viewed with "unveiled

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[69]Ibid., 16. It must be understood and the importance must be stressed that although the issues addressed in early vocal feminist consciousness were not political in nature, demanding the franchise or social parity, the very confrontation of the status quo-- female domestic imprisonment-- [a term used by the early feminist writer Aisha al-Taymuriyyah (1840-1902)] and their emergence from being vocally and visibly silenced, was in and of itself near-tantamount to social revolution.

[70]Philipp, "Feminism and Nationalist Politics", 281. Arab intellectualism was spurred on much earlier in Syria and Lebanon than in Egypt. Jesuit missionary schools flourished in the Levant in the seventeenth century. American Presbyterian missions landed in Beirut two hundred years later and established themselves as a bedrock of educational proliferation in Maronite and other Christian communities.

hostility" as it fed into his perceived weakening of the Egyptian national identity.[71]

At this point, it is important to address the reasons behind the opposition to even bridled steps towards women's emancipation in Egypt. What were the elements in society that regarded female expression and communication as radical and as a potential threat? Why was women's education, the chord of agreement, the middle ground from which a common goal could be directed? There was an agreement in principle, but a divergence in interpretation by the parties involved vis a vis women's educational progress. An understanding of the rapid change of events-- from the shedding of colonialist rule to the formation of a separate, independent modern state-- that Egypt underwent, and the subsequent questioning of its Islamic identity were the more fundamental challenges of which women's emancipation formed a by-product. It was not the time for the latter issue to take precedence in the actions of the state, or within the greater conscience of Egyptian society. The course the women's movement followed, however, managed to run parallel to the more imminent affairs confronting a people on the brink of independence. To illustrate this and clarify the seemingly formidable commonality between the two groups, the issue of modernity within the Islamic context must be explored while discussing the more reactionary response to the growing woman question.

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[71]Ibid. Mustafa Kamil was the leader of a faction of Egyptian nationalists (I say faction simply because no single group represented a unified platform) whose primary aim was the immediate and absolute evacuation of the British and the eradication of anything that hinted of western influence.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

The tumultuous events that rocked the Egyptian state throughout the nineteenth century were to unleash their full impact on Egyptian society by the turn of the century. The developments left the nationalists and the Islamists alike in a sea of contention as to how to resolve the most pressing and critical issue that had occupied the minds of Egyptian intellectuals. What had expressed itself in the form of apparent incompatibilities and contradictions over the traditional role of Islam in Egyptian life was the result of a prolonged exposure to foreign influence.

As the final arbiter of public and private life, Islam, its conveyors, and its interpreters, had maintained their supreme position as executors of the faith. Now, however, a much greater and integral social reality flourished behind the floodgate of eroding traditionalism: the *dar-al-Islam* (house of Islam) was on the verge of a near-total collapse. It was a house that was decaying from within. The events that led up to Egypt's independence, culminating in the withdrawal of foreign intervention after World War I, and the developments thereafter, seemed mere components of an underlying and immediate need for the renovation and reform of Islam. Although based on a more historical probe of Islamic identity, the questions generated were equally as apropos as when broaching the

cause from the then-contemporary perspective of foreign influence. The two are not mutually exclusive, and are, in fact, implicitly interrelated.

WESTERN INTERVENTION AND THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY

The process of Western intervention, effectively beginning with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, began what was to result in the greatest challenge ever encountered in the Islamic world; "gradual colonial economic control gave way to political and military dominance in the nineteenth century. Thus, for the first time in Islamic history, Muslims found themselves ruled by the Christian-West...".[72] In the face of a cracked and fallen *umma*, Muslims considered the question of their identity at the hands of their colonial masters: "what had gone wrong in Islam? Was there any contradiction between revelation and reason, science and technology? Was the Islamic way of life capable of meeting the demands of modernity?"[73]

1). A Definition

The notion of current or 'modern' events had never before been equated with such a degree of change. One must consider, therefore, a definition as the starting point to understanding its

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[72]Esposito, Islam in Transition, 5.
[73]Esposito, 5.

significance. Cyrill Black, an historian who recognizes the importance of historical evolution, has defined modernity as

> the process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge, permitting control over his environment, that accompanied the scientific revolution[74].

Under these terms, a system allows for flexibility and potential for development. Modernity and tradition are not antithetical, but are inherently part of the "infinite continuum". Black patterns modernizing societies through four phases that delineate change:

1. "*The Challenge of Modernity*- the initial confrontation of a society within its traditional framework of knowledge, with modern ideas and institutions, and the emergence of advocates of modernity;
2. *The Consolidation of Modernizing Leadership*- the transfer of power from traditional to modernizing leaders in the course of a normally bitter revolutionary struggle often lasting several generations;
3. *Economic and Social Transformations*- the development of economic growth and social change to a point where society is transformed from a predominantly rural and agrarian way of life to one predominantly urban and industrial; and
4. *The Integration of Society*- the phase in which economic and social transformation produces a fundamental re-organization of the social structure throughout the society."[75]

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[74]Black, Cyrill. The Dynamics of Modernization. London: Harper & Row, 1967, p. 7.
[75]Black, 67-89.

Modernization as conceived above first took place in Europe, most extensively in England and France, as an outgrowth of the Industrial Revolution. Countries that fell under the colonial domain of the two 'modern' powers absorbed, or had imposed upon them, the latent after-effects of 'modernizing' developments. Nations with a similar social and cultural makeup as their European brethren may have been more amenable to evolutionary transformations, or at least had a working model in England or France which they could emulate. Such was not the case with countries whose tradition, religion, language, and very concept of being was cut from a different mold of understanding. In Egypt, Islam had been the dominant force from which all life, law, rationale, tradition and communication had generated. The French occupation by Napoleon's forces, therefore, was much more than simply a foreign tenure. It challenged the nature, value system, and social structure of 1200 years of Islamic/Egyptian history. Egypt had been challenged before, by the Mongols (1258) and the Ottomans (1517), and had survived 300 years of Ottoman occupation with their Islamic/Egyptian identity active and intact. Forced once again to question this same ego with the prospect of certain change, Egypt buckled under the pressure producing generations of intellectuals who rose to answer the awesome call of the 'challenge of modernity'.

2). The Egyptian Context

Before discussing those individuals who stood at the forefront of modern thought and actively advocated modernization, I would like to refer back to Black's four phases of modernity with respect to the Egyptian experience. Bearing in mind that the time sequence involved for our purposes does not extend beyond 1922, Egypt prior to this period was acutely and aggressively involved in the first phase of transformation, the 'challenge of modernity', for the century and a score that it had been exposed to foreign rule. As Black's categories constitute a completion of the outlined terms, it is important to recognize that although Egypt only realized the first phase of transformation, it experienced a range of tremors from the following three. The fact that there was no consolidated leadership (phase two), revolutionary social or economic changes (phase three), or a full integration of these transformations into society (phase four), only means that they were never brought to completion as Black's definition would require. 'Modernizing leadership', as such, existed as more of a nebulous movement in intellectual circles.

Based on the ideals of al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh, modernizing thought among political leaders gained notoriety at the end of the last century while placing itself at the front of national debate. (This it managed to do with greater facility during the early 1880s and 1890s because of a popular antipathy towards the British occupation. The issue of leadership, therefore, was already on the national table.) The ideals gained momentum under the disciples of these men, such as Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, Qasim Amin, and

Muhammad Rashid Rida, spawning official opposition from the more conservative voices of Mustafa Kamil and Talat Harb.[76]

With respect to the third watershed mark of modernity, it is again true that economic and social transformations never manifested themselves at this time in creating an urban and industrial-centered society (from one predominantly rural and agrarian). However, it was another 'phase' that Egyptian society was familiar with. Cole notes that, "under British colonial rule, the process whereby the power of elites in the countryside had begun to reverse and the center of gravity swung toward the large urban areas".[77] Although this is very much an upper-class dominated migration, it outlines the introductory steps taken towards this particular transformation.[78] The fourth phase, even today, is difficult to evaluate, particularly as it implies a social reorganization based on the completion of the previous categories. The characteristics of phases two and three are, therefore, what must be

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[76]The purpose here is to demonstrate that although modernizing leadership was not yet consolidated as a national directive, it was recognized as a viable political force. The creation of political parties in 1907, such as the People's Party under the friends of Muhammad 'Abduh, the Nationalist Party of Mustafa Kamil, and the Constitutional Reform Party of Sheikh 'Ali Yusuf, crystallized this reality and gave it an official forum from which to launch the debate on modernity. See Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp 193-221, and J.M. Ahmed, Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism. London: Oxford University Press, 1960, pp 58-84.

[77]Cole, 388. He later points out that Egypt was intentionally kept on the periphery of the developing world industrial market, so Britain could maintain its own security and perpetuate the cycle of economic dependence that it had created for Egypt (Ibid).

[78]Both Cole and Judith Gran have described how it was the upper-class landholders who became the nouveau capitalist bourgeoisie; from producing cotton for the world market and branching out into banking and commerce once urbanized. See the introduction by Lois Beck and Nikkie Keddie to Women in the Muslim World, pp. 1-34, and Judith Gran, "Impact of the World Market on Egyptian Women", MERIP Reports, 58 (June 1977), 3-7.

further clarified in order to understand more fully the social and political thought behind the development of women's education in pre-independence Egypt.

3). Modernity and Social Progress

Pursuing Black's pattern of modernization, point two, "the consolidation of modernizing leadership", would necessarily have to take place before any thought of social progress was addressed. In terms of social, modernizing change (possibly an event of revolutionary proportions, as Black had implied in his definition), the manner in which change occurs and is achieved, therefore, depends largely on the policies of the leadership. As such, the simple fact that Egypt may have been confronted with modernizing thought and developments (for example, the realization of the necessity of educating the nation's women), was not enough to drive the population to act on the requisite transitions involved in implementing policy. A society first has to be made aware of and then to accept the need for change before it is realized, as in phase one. The priorities of leadership, however, will dictate how, when, and with what speed the process will occur. Modernization in Egypt was a product of radical thought-- which, by definition, implies that it rested on the periphery of social acceptance. In the matter of women's education, the reconciliation lay between the traditional male power structure and Islamic conservatism, on the one hand, and the 'modernized' view of women in the public arena, on the

other.[79] The value system that is here confronted belonged to the rural and agrarian majority frame of reference. The tradition and the ideology of the Egyptian majority was the status quo. They were not the very finite segment of the population that had access to modern thought and Western standards. The setting, therefore, is one in which the systematized understanding of the need for change lagged behind the dominant ideology based on tradition.[80]

Migration to urban centers by the new middle class, the land-holders, was the impetus that broke the hold of tradition on Egyptian consciousness. This move by the nouveau-riche placed them at the epicenter of modern trends and development-- a characteristic of urban culture--, and with respect to women's education, forced direct acknowledgment of its importance. However, as Cole notes, even the leadership of professionals and intellectuals, the presumed champions of this modern enlightenment, held contradictory views as to how to realize the recent trends and were forced to compromise

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[79]Leila Ahmed has noted this to be the fundamental heart of the conflict maintaining that, "Islam and feminism are naturally incompatible... the literalism of Islamic civilization and the complete enmeshing of the legal tradition with this literalism means that this incompatibility can only be resolved... by the complete severance of Islamic tradition from the issue of the position and rights of women." Leila Ahmed, "Early Feminist Movements in the Middle East", Muslim Women. Freda Hussein, ed., London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984, 121. Yvonne Haddad notes, however, that throughout what she has termed "the western challenge" and the realization of the urgent necessity for radical social change in pre-independence Egypt, there was a common recognition by both nationalist and Islamist revolutionaries that the oppression of women in Arab societies is a crippling and degenerative disease. She states that all sides "have appeared to agree that the prevailing condition of the Muslim woman is unacceptable and that her transformation is crucial to the transformation of society as a whole" ("Islam, Women and Revolution", 140-141). Disagreement lies in the manner and process of this transformation. This will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

[80]An acknowledgment further supported by Black outlines that as these value systems are so enmeshed in the collective historical psyche, tangible change in said system will be slow in coming. See Black, 80.

with their traditional tendencies. As such, "they supported the liberal ideal of greater education for women while simultaneously arguing for strict veiling and seclusion";[81] the latter being the traditional existence for most Egyptian Muslim women. Despite the reticence of even the most ardent supporters of modernization to more wholly and swiftly embrace the changing tides, the important factor is that they did recognize the need for a social change. Whether or not they compromised on their traditional ideals of conservatism and propriety out of a recognition of progress or out of practicality (recalling, of course, Muhammad Ali's use for women in a more educated and participatory fashion for the national good), women, by extension, benefited from the process.

MODERNIZATION AND EDUCATION

With resolutions for change rising in public sentiment, perhaps the issue here is not one of gender acceptance in role-playing by a patriarchal society, but the grudging admission from the conservative corner that the bedrock of Islamic tradition is being questioned. The suggestion that change was a secondary consequence of conservative accession indicates a lack of awareness of the implicit mutual involvement between modernization and education. The defenders of tradition or of maintaining the status quo, such as the *'ulama*, may have given a strained and cursory nod to advancements in women's education while at the same time

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[81]Cole, 391.

desiring the passage of modernity to fall by the wayside. This, again, defies the interdependent relationship between education and modernization. Not only is education a variable of modernization, but it becomes an object of the process even before the full force of progress is realized.[82] Shipman categorizes education as "an integral subsystem" of the modernization process and suggests that "education can only be meaningfully studied as a part of many social institutions... and in light of the functions that it serves during modernization".[83] Simply, education in a modernizing society serves as the link between the "modernizing personality" and his "surrounding socio-cultural environment".[84] Saqib has pointed out that in this respect education is "consciously employed by modern societies as an instrument of change in the political and economic social systems... For this reason, the priority assigned to education in the programme of modernization is not out of place".[85] Despite arguments defending and criticizing the role of education in developing countries, that there is a significant interaction between education and the changing system is generally accepted.[86] The precise significance of the extent of the role of education within a particular modernizing society largely depends on its stage of development, as outlined in Black's phases.[87]

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[82]Saqib, 12.

[83]Shipman, Education and Modernization, 10.

[84]Shipman, 10.

[85]Saqib, 12.

[86]Most scholars seem to assert that "education is the key that unlocks the door to modernity", as Shipman does. Others maintain, however, that "in spite of the apparent economic superiority of the best-education nations... there is little direct evidence of the contribution that education has made to modernization". See C.A. Anderson in M.D. Shipman, 43-45.

[87]Saqib, 13.

When the relationship between education and modernization is realized in a developing society and the transition from phase two to phase three is underway, only then can the society fully realize its human potential. As Anderson has argued, "the best assurance for a stimulating and constructive educational system is to surround it with a society that has vigorous impulses towards change and initiative. Schools alone are weak instruments of modernization; but when well-supported they are powerful."[88] Again, the implication is that it is the policies of leadership that will determine the success of an educational program-- Black's second point. However, the awareness and activities that exist prior to official recognition of the importance of education are equally if not more important in terms of hastening the process of change and bolstering an initial level of support. In the case of Egypt, certainly Muhammad Ali had enforced the notion of educating women and successive regimes followed in his footsteps with varying degrees of interest and success. Yet, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that women and men alike more vocally and visibly reacted against women's traditional roles. The establishment of women's journals and salons as wider forums for the expression of women's voices, as mentioned earlier, is an example. The added support of male modernists like Muhammad 'Abduh and Qasim Amin, who will be discussed later, gave the women's movement a validity and strength that it may have otherwise lacked if women had to struggle for their rights on their own within the patriarchal system. In this respect, it must be

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[88]Anderson, C. Arnold, "The Modernization of Education", Myron Weiner, ed., Modernization. The Dynamics of Growth. New York: Bazic Books, 1966, 68-80.

understood that the process and interrelationship between modernization and education had a supplemental hurdle when women were factored into the equation. It was not that male secularists or Islamists were simply opposed to the notion of educating women: most realized the social value in this.[89] The point of contention was that the call for the education of women, from both male and female corners, came under the rubric of 'women's liberation'-- an issue which has generated some of the most caustic discussion and controversy in Egypt over the past century. The weight of this term, which levied radical associations on women's liberties, encompassed a wider spectrum of more caustic demands. The seemingly innocuous call for educational rights was, correctly or not, judged in this context.[90] The basic conflict, as Haddad notes, is, that "the heritage of social and cultural institutions of men's honor, pride and dignity has been inextricably bound to the modesty and chastity of their women."[91] Consequently, any attempts at modification or 'innovation' (categorized as 'unlawful' in Islamic jurisprudence), to custom and tradition, which for thirteen centuries had been sanctioned by religious authorities, resulted in fierce debates by all parties. The issue was not whether Islam was the source of restrictive elements against women, but how society came to interpret Islamic injunctions as inherent obstructions.

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[89]"The content of education was debated with traditional Muslims insisting that women's education should be restricted to the study of religion, reading, writing, geography, history, and mathematics" (Haddad, 145). It was a controlled allowance, but an allowance nonetheless by a group who traditionally believed in women's domestic seclusion and whose primary function they thought to be the bearing of children (Ibid., 144).

[90]Ibid., 139.

[91]Ibid., 142.

The outcome of these debates was naturally of a decidedly religious nature. The quest for an Islamic mandate sent the respective parties back to the religious sources, the Qur'an, the hadith, and the shari'a, to substantiate their convictions.[92] In the course of this pursuit, many produced findings and literature detailing the virtuous and elevated role that Islam had granted to women (perhaps defending what was perceived as a challenge or criticism to the justness of Islamic teaching) and the rights accorded to her therein: the right to inherit, to maintain wealth and carry out business transactions, and the right to be educated.[93] Indeed knowledge and its possession is highly esteemed in Islam. The very purpose of "Divine revelation and sending down prophets has been explained in the Qur'an as the communication of knowledge: 'The prophet recites unto people God's revelation: causes them to grow, and imparts them knowledge and wisdom' (Sura 3:164)"[94]. Other such verses exhort the *ahl al-Umma* [people of the (Islamic) community] towards the path of knowledge, and even the Prophet

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[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid. Haddad further notes that when dealing with speculative or comprehensive change, the parameters of such reform have been bound by the fact that, "out of the 100 verses in the Qur'an believed to be proscriptive or prescriptive in nature and not subject to change, eighty percent deal with issues relating to women... This means that all proposed changes, regardless of their source, can only generate conflict since they trespass on the domain of revelation.". See p. 143.

[94]Saqib, 42.

has said that it is the duty of every Muslim man and woman to seek knowledge. There are other famous hadiths that state this explicitly:

> *Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave, and acquire it even though it be in China.*
>
> *He who leaveth his home in search of knowledge, walketh in the path of God.*
>
> *Acquire knowledge: it enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lighteth up the path to heaven. It is your friend in the desert, your society in solitude, and your companion when you are friendless. It guideth you to happiness; it sustaineth you in adversity. It is an ornament among friends, and an armour against your enemies.*[95]

The Qur'an has said that:

> *God will raise in rank those of you who believe as well as those of you who are given knowledge.*[96]
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> *God bears witness that... men embued with knowledge maintain His creation in justice.*[97]
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> *Say, shall those who know be deemed equal with those who do not!*[98]

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[95]Pickthall, M.M., "The Islamic Culture", in Islamic Culture, I (1972), 151-163.

[96]Qur'an, 58:2.

[97]Ibid., 3:18.

[98]Ibid., 2:269. The very notion and importance accorded to Muslim education, as is here evidenced, goes back to the Prophet himself who first taught his companions the Qur'an and its meaning. Even later, before the formation of the first Islamic state in Medina, Muhammad asked the literate among the prisoners of war at the battle of Badr to teach the Medinan children to read and write. As Saqib notes, "the Prophet's example as an educator and teacher inevitably became the most pious act for his followers, and his khalifas and rulers after them regard (the continuance of education) as their sacred duty". Saqib, 66.

Such scripture is pointed to as evidence that the very nature of Islam is righteous and just in its treatment of women, hailing their social worth alongside that of men, and emphasizing the strictest adherence to an educated populace. It was not Islam that needed to be restructured. The calls for social change and rejuvenation merely pointed to a religion that no longer existed. Critics and reformists maintained that Egypt had abandoned the essence of Islam and was now a product of its decay. The tenets of the faith had the essential components of equality that those in favor of modernization sought.[99] It was, therefore, only the religion itself that had to be read anew within a progressive context in order for the Egyptian nation to be restored to its glorious former self. This, the traditionalist rationalization against modernization, decrying its loathsome, degenerative characteristics as antithetical to the Islamic tradition, demonstrates the lack of understanding of the nature of progress and social transformation. 'Education' could not happen in a vacuum, in exclusivity, while denying its accompanying agents that are an implicit part of the modernizing process. Women, therefore, could not simply 'be educated' and later be expected to ignore the ground swell of new thoughts and ideas they had witnessed and ingested as the traditionalists, the maintainers of the status quo, may

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[99]Even the modernists and secularists, as will be later discussed, adopted the religious argument that Islam itself needed to be reexamined within a modern context. They maintained that ideal Islam employed rationality and castigated the stagnant nature of *taqlid* (traditionalism). "The Qur'an repeatedly exhorts its adherents to observe, to reflect, to think, to ponder, to reason, and to learn from the natural phenomena that are patterned to change and alternate: 'The creation of heaven and earth, of night and day, the vessels that cross the seas for the use of men, the fall of rain which brings life to a dead earth; the animation of the creatures, the orientation of the winds and subjection of the clouds between heaven and earth- all are signs for those who reason'." Sura 2:164 in Saqib, 39.

have desired. That there was a general consensus on the need of social restoration (traditionalists recognizing a religious, and hence social decay, and modernizers desiring various degrees of social overhaul) was an important unifying realization as it gave the country the impetus for change. The Qur'anic verse: "God will not alter what is in people until they alter what is in themselves,"[100] was the religious justification the Islamic state required to advocate such a process. The way in which this change would take place, however, was the focus of contention.

The nature of such transformative thoughts expressed by both modernists and Islamists constituted revolutionary activity. However, all sides in Egypt "have recognized and challenged the oppression of women," citing their lack of education as a primary cause of this social ill.[101] Yet revolution, which by definition connotes a certain degree of upheaval, has traditionally been frowned upon by Sunni Islam, viewing it as disruptive to the social order.[102] "Qur'anic injunctions to obey God, the Prophet, and those in positions of leadership" may have been employed by the *'ulama* to maintain the status quo, but "revolutionaries of various allegiances in the twentieth century have idealized revolution as a positive agent in the transformation of society."[103] Whether viewed as a volatile

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[100]Qur'an, 13:12.

[101]Haddad, 140.

[102]Saqib, on page 59, quotes Nikkie Keddie pointing out that the *'ulama* had become reconciled "to the acceptance of almost any nominally Muslim authority as a preferable alternative to discord or revolt". In Scholars, Saints, and Sufis, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972, 1-14. The reference is over Ottoman control of the Egyptian state, but the aversion to revolution despite foreign occupation is what is significant.

[103]Haddad, 138-139.

process or simply a mechanism of change, the ideology of revolution was adopted by nationalists and modernists as a vanguard in the struggle to redefine the Egyptian state. The opposition they confronted from the Islamist platform merely echoed the opposition they maintained to the wider context of modernization.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION

Egypt's contact and confrontation with the West, epitomized by social transformations, presented a challenge for the country's intellectuals and nationalist leaders. "Divergent discourses arose in the context of modern state and class formation and economic and political confrontation with the West."[104] Throughout the nineteenth century, the 'woman question' came increasingly to the fore as a public issue, one that each group believed crucial enough to confront. It had become a visible and vocal concern, and the realization of the potential social contribution of women propelled men to take greater interest in developing an acceptable role for them within the changing Egyptian state. Several contenders and ideologues appeared in the latter decades of the previous century positing various theories on how best to shape social discourse in general and women's discourse in particular, within the volatile boundaries of Egyptian consciousness. "With the broadening of opportunities for education and the rise of women's feminist awareness, women who had previously been the objects of prescriptive pronouncements began to challenge patriarchal domination."[105]

The challenge was within a system that complemented a growing need for women's issues to be addressed. With alternating

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[104]Badran, "Competing Agenda", 201.
[105]Badran, 203.

interest and lack of concern, Egypt, since Muhammad Ali, had been promoting new, more extensive educational facilities and work opportunities for women, particularly in medicine and teaching.[106] Similarly, the growing arena of feminist discourse, both within the urban harem and later in women's magazine publications, gave women a wider exposure to the social circumstances of their female counterparts in modern societies. It presented the members of the feminist movement with the impetus to react to their own conditions. During colonial occupation and prior to the establishment of political parties, the women's movement in Egypt was not connected to any organized public movement; " it was (instead) the articulation of a broad new philosophy"[107] that developed out of its own necessity. Although immediately criticized as part of the "Western challenge", the earliest articulation of women's feminist discourse preceded colonial occupation, the rise of nationalism and Islamic modernist thought, and therefore predated the rationale for criticism as a foreign import.[108] However, as Margot Badran notes, while the earliest Muslim feminist expression "may not have been immediately inspired by Islamic modernism, it was not long before it developed within this framework."[109] The importance of this distinction was the possibility that there might have been native development of feminist thought. The internal dimension to the movement may be what granted it a form of legitimacy in later discourse, as the

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[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid., 206.

[108]As mentioned in the first chapter, published essays and poetry from the 1860s shows the first discernible public expression of feminist thought. See Philipp, 279-282, and Baron, 13-37.

[109]Badran, 204.

response by reformist and nationalist men (such as Qasim Amin and Mustafa Kamil) was situated within the context of Islamic modernism. Whether it was a response by male intellectuals or an evaluation of their own accord by women of what they perceived as a social ill (the condition of women in Egyptian society), the woman question became part of public debate.

The polemics that plagued, and continue to do so, feminist and Islamist positions produced political consequences in official discourse. The implications of cultural authenticity, modernity, and Islamic identity, vis a vis expanding feminist concerns (particularly on the educational front) for women, occupied center stage in the discussion over its legitimacy. The immediate response of the debate was understood as a very broad ideology; the particulars of women's concerns were as yet to be addressed. Although Muslim reformists were the originators of the discussion of women's emancipation at a public level, it soon widened to include nationalist opposition. As Thomas Philipp observes,

> the picture that presents itself at the end of the nineteenth century is indeed a confusing one. Every shade of opinion regarding the emancipation of women was represented, and nationalists themselves were far from agreeing on the matter. Only one fact can be established immediately: the issue was an essential one, directly touching the life of everyone.[110]

Whether viewed as a threat to the social fabric of Muslim Egyptian identity, as was the case with nationalists such as Mustafa Kamil and Talat Harb, or embraced as a positive step towards the country's

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[110]Philipp, 278.

development as a progressive force in liberating the whole of society, the issue of women's emancipation in Egypt took hold of the nation's consciousness, paralleling the rise of independence sentiments among the same parties.

MUSLIM REFORMISTS

As mentioned earlier, the initial debate by male intellectuals over women's emancipation originated among Muslim reformists. They were part of a movement that would later become known as Islamic modernism, a doctrine enunciating the reconciliation of Islam with contemporary change. It maintained that, "an Islam correctly interpreted and set free of traditional ballast was able to provide a viable system of beliefs and values even under the changed circumstances of modern times."[111] It was, therefore, necessary to answer the predicaments of modern life and behavior by examining the original sources of Islam. Accordingly, believers-- whom Margot Badran describes as "the learned" since they were the ones most in touch with and most knowledgeable of religious law and tradition--, could go straight to the Qur'an and the Hadith to find direction in

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[111]Ibid. As Albert Hourani notes that by 1860 there was recognition by a small group of officials and teachers of the importance of reforming the empire; a feat which could not be undertaken without borrowing from European society. Questions arose as to the manner of reform and whether or not it should, in fact, be derived from European teachings or from Islamic law. Hourani maintains that the nature of the questions demonstrates both a commitment to reform as well as a desire to maintain Islamic tradition: "that modern reform was not only a legitimate but a necessary implication of the social teaching of Islam." Albert Hourani. Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 67-68.

their daily lives as Muslims, and balance their discovery with modern circumstances. The use of *ijtihad*, or independent inquiry, would allow Muslims to find a middle ground between tradition and modernism without having to rely on the exclusive interpretation and guidance of the established religious authorities. The contention of the reformist was that Muslims had strayed from the righteous path of their religion, and that original Islam must be returned to after so many centuries of its misinterpretation. Many of the ills that were brought to public attention through this new philosophy of re-(self) examination, were associated with the practice of the oppression of women by men in the name of Islam. The position of women had suffered in much the same way as greater Islam-- again, through its misinterpretation, and, later, un-Islamic additions.[112] Abuses connected to polygamy and divorce, for instance, were considered gross and harmful distortions of original Islamic doctrine.[113]

The intellectual leader of the reformist movement was Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), renowned scholar of al-Azhar and Mufti of Egypt (1899) , a position which de facto placed him in the position of supreme (religious) authority of Islamic law. Albert Hourani characterizes 'Abduh's thought as manifesting a consciousness of "inner-decay" of Muslim societies and the realization of the need for a self-styled revival.[114] He states that the orthodox

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[112]Philipp, 278.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age., 136. This notion of revival is attributed to the radical ideals of 'Abduh's mentor, Sayyid Jamal al-Din "al-Afghani". (1839-1897). Afghani believed that "Muslim lands had lapsed into ignorance and helplessness to become the prey of Western aggression." Once

Muslim belief is that Muhammad was sent not only for the individual believer to find salvation, but to institute a virtuous society.

> It followed that there were uncertain ways of acting in society which were in conformity with the Prophet's message and the will of God, certain others were not. But as the circumstances changed, society and its rulers inevitably found themselves faced with problems not foreseen in the prophetic message, and acting in ways which might even appear to contradict it.[115]

The issue was then, finding a way for Muslim society to accommodate itself to the true and original precepts of the faith while accepting that the same society had evolved into another form. 'Abduh was not opposed to the essence of this evolution, but maintained that with increasing and deeply penetrating westernization, social changes and developments were not only inevitable, but were quite possibly beneficial. He was well-aware, however, of the possible danger this may have posed: "the division of society into two spheres without a real link- a sphere... in which the laws and moral principals of Islam rules, and another... in which principles derived by human reason from considerations of worldly utility held sway;"[116] the former, ever-decreasing, and the latter,

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freed from foreign domination and when Islam had reformed to present-day conditions, Muslim peoples themselves could dictate their future affairs. His aims of political revolution as an instant means of change, a reconciliation of philosophical Islam and modern scientific thought, and the belief that Islam (under a pan-Islamic umbrella of a Shi'a-Sunni union) was capable of adapting to "the now", are indications of his religious tolerance and practical idealism. Charles C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt. London: Oxford University Press, 1933, 13-15. See Nikkie Keddie, Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani". Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, 81-128.

[115]Hourani, 136.

[116]Ibid.

always growing. Essentially, it threatened to secularize a society whose very nature and history is antithetical to anything but a religious tradition. Although 'Abduh held great admiration for European achievements-- having spent much time there, both as an exile and as a student of law in France--, he did not believe that all manners of law and custom could be transplanted to Egyptian soil. There was, in fact, a danger of exacerbating the situation which was already misunderstood as it existed outside of its natural context. The modernizing influences of Europe, though not natural outgrowths of the Egyptian experience, had great potential in Egypt. When mismanaged, however, the deleterious effects of foreign persuasion could create a situation of greater chaos.

A primary example was the existing system of education in Egypt. 'Abduh saw the country as operating under two separate academic mentalities and set institutions that held no real relationship to one another. The first, the oldest system of learning, was the religious schools. 'Abduh felt that they "suffered from stagnation and slavish imitation, the characteristic of traditional Islam."[117] Their exclusive concentration on teaching the religious sciences led to the chronic neglect of the harder sciences and understanding the terms and impact of modernity. The second system was the more modern; instruction based on a European model in the foreign missions and government academies. 'Abduh maintained that the mission schools estranged Egyptian students from their own religion, culture, and native mentality, and implanted a dependency on foreign understanding. The government schools

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[117]Hourani, 137.

"had the vices of both", being the imitations of the foreign schools, but with no religious instruction, and therefore "no social or political morality."[118] The critical issue behind this clash was the cause of Egypt's social, and more specifically spiritual, division. Each system produced its own separate educated class, each with its own spirit; "one was the traditional Islamic spirit, resisting all change; the other, the spirit of the younger generation, accepting all change and all the ideas of modern Europe."[119] For 'Abduh, this represented the ultimate division; not only "the absence of a common basis... (but also) the danger that the moral bases of society would always be destroyed by the restless spirit of individualism."[120] If allowed to continue, and if left in the hands of men who did not fully understand the danger of this growing dichotomy, the destructive force of an intellectually divided nation could sacrifice the unity of Egypt. 'Abduh's purpose, therefore, in bridging this gulf in society involved a two-fold task: first, a reevaluation and expression of the true essence of Islam; second, "a consideration of its implications for modern society,"[121] the former being the more significant. In his own words, 'Abduh outlined the importance:

> First, to liberate thought from the shackles of *taqlid*, and understand religion as it was understood by the elders of the community before dissension appeared; to return, in the acquisition of religious knowledge, to its first sources, and to weigh them in the scales of human reason... and to prove that, seen in this light, religion must be counted a friend to science, pushing man to

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[118]Hourani, 138.
[119]Ibid.
[120]Ibid.
[121]Hourani, 140.

> investigate the secrets of existence, summoning him to respect established truths, and to depend on them in his moral life and conduct.[122]

He wanted Muslims to believe that when understood in its purest form, Islam contained the mechanisms to explore rational behavior and thought, with a moral code that could act as the ultimate guide for modern life. This was not to say that he believed that the ideals of modernism and progress were pre-approved by Islam. On the contrary, "Islam, as he conceived it... would enable Muslims to distinguish what was good from what was bad among all the suggested directions of change."[123]

Yet the reforms would have to be implemented at every level of society starting with al-Azhar and the 'ulama'. In addition to being the highest and oldest seat of traditional Islamic learning, al-Azhar was also responsible for producing the majority of the country's teachers and judges. They were the religious, and therefore the legal, authorities of Egypt. It only made sense that, "the starting point of all awakening was al-Azhar. "Reforming it," wrote 'Abduh, "amounts to reforming the Muslim world."'[124] Such a reformation could only take place through an intense process of social re-education; judges and religious authorities, for instance, would need to be *re*-educated in order to *re*-interpret the law to enable them to discern what was acceptable in European morality so as to assimilate it into Egypt's expanding mental culture.[125] This was

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[122]Hourani, 141.
[123]Ibid.
[124]Ahmed, 37.
[125]Hourani, 156.

the nation's path towards restoration. Through a period of national education, 'Abduh believed that every social and political ill could successfully be addressed. The resulting communal understanding of Egypt's circumstance would allow the country to grow in the strength of its unity.[126]

Although the focus of 'Abduh's reformist philosophy was not education, or even specifically women's educational rights, he did outline it as a primary means of social change. He advocated the necessity of training girls, "no less than of boys" and reforming the social conditions affecting Muslim women.[127] Despite the fact that he did not make direct overtures for the emancipation of women, he did emphatically express concern at their ill-treatment and subjugation at the hands of men. His particular concerns were polygamy and "other harmful social customs (which) have affected unfavorably the social and moral status of women... It is essential that these conditions be corrected... by improved opportunities for education."[128] It is important to note that he made these statements as Mufti (supreme legal authority) of Egypt, and without the support of the traditional-minded 'ulama'. It may not seem a radical departure from the patriarchal status quo. However, the recognition and expression of a need for a social overhaul regarding the

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[126]It seems to be reiterated throughout discussions of 'Abduh's philosophy that his strong convictions for national unity-- "not only the place they lived in, but the locus of their public rights and duties, the object of their affection and pride"-- between Muslims and non-Muslims, and those of differing political ideologies, was at the center of his nationalist leanings. His sense of importance of unity influenced his views of Islamic reform. We also see the emphasis he placed in the use of reason-- through reason we may understand the role of modern civilization in Islamic life. See further, Hourani, 156-158.

[127]Adams, 230.

[128]Ibid.

treatment of women, coming from a man of such prestige, opened the debate on a national and political level for his opponents and disciples to address.

The most prominent of 'Abduh's disciples, certainly the most controversial, was Qasim Amin (1865-1908). Educated in France and trained as a lawyer, Amin widened the reformist debate to include a greater focus on women's education. It was an education " based on reason and independent judgment, postulated for men as well as for women, in order to bring about a better understanding of the true Islamic precepts and to create a more viable society."[129] It was not, in other words, education for its own sake, but for the greater good of society. Such a concern was addressed within the wider context of social and religious decline, as was discussed by 'Abduh. Amin accepted that the Islamic community was in decline, but altered course from the traditional explanations as to the causes of the descent. Albert Hourani notes that Amin neither believes the natural environment nor Islam itself is responsible for the disappearance of 'social virtues' and 'moral strength'. Islamic decline is, in fact, a result, not a cause of the demise of these merits. The true culprit is ignorance.[130] It is the ignorance, Amin feels, of

> the true sciences from which alone can be derived the laws of human happiness. This ignorance begins in the family. The relation of a man and a woman, of a mother and child, are the basis of society; the virtues which exist in the family will exist in the nation... The work of women in society is to form the morals of the nation.[131]

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[129]Philipp, 278.
[130]Hourani, 164.
[131]Ibid.

It is here that the importance of not only education, but the education of women came into play. "It is impossible to raise successful men, if they do not have mothers capable of preparing them for success."[132] With statements such as these, Amin outlined the progress of society as contingent upon the progress of women.

With such radical ideas inciting storms of controversy that have yet to be resolved, Haddad points out the necessity of Amin's eliciting the support of the male hierarchy. In order to do so, he showed that the primary beneficiary of the liberation of women is the man. Issues related to the status of women, therefore, became more palatable. Amin's views as to the degree of women's educational reform, however, may not seem to vary too greatly from those of the patriarchal intellectuals he was trying to persuade. True, Amin believed that the heart of the social problem was the position of women, and that the only remedy was through their education. He never suggested, however, that women should be as highly educated as men, but only given an equal opportunity at the primary stage of instruction. "He refuted the idea current at the time that chastity would be endangered by education. 'That some people use education for unworthy ends does not justify their being deprived of it.'".[133] In fact, according to Hourani, Amin's suggestions for women's education "are so modest as to seem timid."[134] He argued that they should at least have elementary schooling in order to manage their households and to play more effectively their social

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[132]Haddad, "Muslim World", 144.
[133]Ahmad, 48.
[134]Hourani, 165.

role.[135] In delineating the precise type of education a woman should receive, Amin exposes his Europeanization. In addition to basic reading and writing skills, as well as religious education, women should be schooled in the notions of the natural and moral sciences, the "true sciences" of which none should be ignorant. This type of knowledge, while it may have been prompted by the indigenous motivations of the growing awareness of women's issues, "was also in part an emulation of the English ruling class... There is no doubt in his mind the high degree of civilization he ascribed to European society;... the same scientific minds that invented steam power and electricity also advocated women's emancipation."[136] It appears that Amin drew a direct correlation between civilization and a society's treatment of women.

For Egypt, then, to rise to the same degree of civilization, it must implement radical change. In describing his views of this need for change, Amin wrote:

> This is the disease which we must proceed to remedy; there is no medicine but that we teach our children about western civilization... then we will know the value of it and realize that it is impossible to reform what is around us if it is not founded on modern scientific knowledge... This is what leads us to cite Europeans as an example and urge that they are emulated, and it is for this that we have undertaken to call attention to European women.[137]

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[135]Ibid. On this, also see Ahmad, 47-50.
[136]Cole, 394-395.
[137]Haddad, "Muslim Women", 143-144.

Juan Cole points out that Amin delineated four stages in the evolution of women's status in society. Amin argued that

> in primeval societies, women were equal to men. After the establishment of the family, women were reduced to slavery. When some progress toward civilization was made, they regained a few rights. Now, he states, mankind has actually attained a measure of civilization and consequently women are regaining their complete freedom. While Europe has reached stage 4, he says, Egypt is still for the most part in stage 3.[138]

Again, Amin sees a clear relationship between a society's civilization and its treatment of women.

Although the primary issues articulated in Amin's two pro-emancipation books, *The Liberation of the Woman* (1899) and *The New Woman* (1901), which caused an immediate uproar and produced a ground-swell of criticism from his opponents,[139] articulated an insistence on education for women, the abolishment of the veil and women's social seclusion, and an opposition to polygamy and divorce, many of these issues were not relevant to all classes of women in Egypt.[140] It is a further reinforcement of the bourgeois exclusivity of the women's movement at the time. Amin make this apparent when he outlines the economic concerns and benefits of

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[138]Cole, 394. See further Hourani, 165-166.

[139]J. Muhammad Ahmed has described the response to the publication of *Tahrir al Mar'ah* as near earth-shattering; "religious institutions were shaken to the core, the educational classes were deeply disturbed... the khedive made it known he was dissatisfied... (and even) the poets of the period joined in the general uproar." Ahmed, J. Muhammad, The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism. London: Oxford University Press, 1960, 47.

[140]Cole, 394-395. Working-class and peasant women, for instance, did not practice veiling and seclusion. However, such concerns on Amin's part, again, help ascribe the upper-class status of the women's movement in Egypt.

educating women. Judith Gran has pointed out that the women who managed households in the new agrarian capitalist class were faced with new responsibilities. Amin described these responsibilities and emphasized the fact that they required a new education for the women who were undertaking them: constructing a budget, overseeing servants, educating the moral and intellectual development of the children. Cole describes one of Amin's major points as that educated European women of the same class are better housekeepers, have superior material domestic taste, and are better able to maximize their income than their uneducated Egyptian counterparts.[141] What is more, Amin argues, "the practice of maintaining separate compartments in the house for separate sets of servants, separate coaches, and so on, involves the useless expenditure of a great deal of money."[142] Although Amin's argument for women's education in this instance is very much a class-based demand, he believes that many lower-income families could improve their situation financially if the women were educated to various fields of work and bring in a second income.[143] It is an avante garde advocation of open economic activity for women.

This seemingly total overhaul towards westernization that Amin advocated was not as comprehensive as it may initially appear, and maintained only selective demands for women's emancipation. On the issue of the veil, he only sought that women uncover their

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[141]Cole, 397.

[142]Ibid.

[143]Cole, 401. Even al-Afghani, for as radical as his ideals were, espoused an educational doctrine for society's elite; a "special class whose function would be the education of the rest of the people, and another class (to train) the people in morals." The instructor and the disciplinarian would supply the nation with some of "the most important provisions of Islam." See Adams, 16.

faces, not the entire head scarf. On polygamy, although he called for restrictions in the practice, he allowed it under certain circumstances. For all matters, Amin allows for the maintenance of some degree of the status quo. He proceeds much like his mentor Muhammad 'Abduh with "a cautious definition of Islamic practice rather than abandoning it... [By so doing] he is appealing to those who still accept Islam; at every point he takes his stand on the Qur'an and Shari'a' interpreted in the right way."[144] He has thus attempted to pacify the whole of the hierarchy, male and religious, by showing that women's education is beneficial to men, and by underlying his arguments with Qur'anic injunctions.

Amin concluded that ultimately all women should be educated in order to grant them a basic right to work, especially if they should be widowed or for other reasons need to support themselves.[145] All women, then, "if educated, could make an active contribution to society rather than being dependents and drain resources. The unused capital represented by women should be put to work, and women should be freed of their financial dependence on men."[146]

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[144]Hourani, 166. He maintains, for instance, that there is nothing in the Qur'an about seclusion except for the wives of Muhammad. With regard to polygamy he upholds the Qur'anic verse, ' and if you fear you will not act equitably, then only one.' Ahmad, 48-49.

[145]Cole, 400.

[146]Cole, 401. Cole notes that Amin's "unabashedly capitalist rationale for women's education and emancipation (fails) to reckon with the realities of Egypt's dependency relationship with the core economies of the West." Industrialization had not occurred in Egypt such as would demand an urban work force which might have drawn women into the labor market. It was also the case that British colonial policy refused government subsidies for education, and restricted enrollment in government schools to those who could successfully contribute to the nation's economy. "Amin's hopes of educating the women of Egypt were wholly unrealistic in a situation where only a few thousand men were receiving a modern education." (401).

ISLAMIC NATIONALISTS

Qasim Amin's feminist proposals, related to the status of women and to his radical philosophy for the future of Egypt, created a response that extended far beyond the issues of women's emancipation and education. This explains the strong opposition he received upon publication of his books.[147] Badran notes that his discourse was perceived as more dangerous than women's feminist writings, not as visible at the time, because of the extent and potential influence of readership of a respected member of the establishment.[148] Ahmad attributes the criticism and dissension in conservative response to "the fear of the impact of his personality and the mental attitude he brought into the social scene."[149] It was a situation that Amin, more than any other, was implicitly aware of, and even cautioned his readers as to the consequences and extreme difficulties of social change, and revolution. In the closing pages of *The New Woman*, Amin writes:

> There are those who say to you, purify your souls and you will realize yourselves. They urge you to serve your people and country, We believe this to be only talk, For changing our ways and modes of behaviour we need more than preaching. We want definite ends and means, and we need to prepare the young for the new life. No amount of talking across pulpits or orders from authorities can transform

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[147]Even Muhammad Ali and successive regimes called for women's education while outlining the benefits of their heightened social participation. It seems, however, that Amin's condition that educational reform be focused on the natural sciences and progressive foreign technologies was the point of contention. See Haddad, "Muslim World", 145 and Philipp, 279.

[148]Badran, "Women, Islam and the State", 204-205.

[149]Ahmad, 51.

> us, nor can magic or intercession from above. To change we have to work.[150]

It was precisely this notion of change from the heavy hand of European influence that the leaders of the nationalist opposition responded to. Women's emancipation, they argued, was just another imported plot to bring about the demise of the Egyptian nation through immorality and decadence.[151] The primary opposition of women's emancipation was issued from the intellectuals of the petite bourgeoisie, and the religious authorities. The 'ulama' called Amin a heretic while arguing that the status quo regarding women's educational ignorance was based on a hadith report from the Prophet Muhammad that women should not be taught to read or write.[152] There was also criticism against women's liberation, with particular reference to women's education, as being part of the 'missionary conspiracy'. The perceived objective of Christian missionary policy was the destruction of Islam, "using its own people to uproot it from within."[153] Haddad maintains that Muslim women in Egypt were the target of missionaries and were the focus of a definitive strategy aimed at contributing to the degradation of society. In terms of women's missionary education she quotes Muhammad Qutb: 'When they 'educated' her, they taught her knowledge and mastery of

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[150]Ibid.

[151]Philipp, 279.

[152]Cole, 393. Cole makes an interesting observation as to why Amin, father of two daughters, may have held such an interest in women's emancipation and the development of his ideas (coincidentally or not) occurred during changes in his relationships with women. Cole notes that Amin's first book, which defended traditional Egyptian values, was published prior to his marriage (his wife had been raised by an English nanny, as were his children) and that his shift of opinion developed swiftly thereafter. See Cole, 394.

[153]Haddad, "Muslim World", 154.

corruption, a corruption based on 'principles', educational principles at times, psychological, sociological or intellectual at other times... [but] at all times principles of corruption.'[154] She points out that Etienne Lamme is cited as proof of missionary intent to use Muslim women to undermine the 'pillars' of Islam. He is reported to have said of the parochial schools run by nuns, "the education of girls in this manner is the only way to eradicate Islam by the hand of its own people."[155] Haddad quotes another well-known missionary, Samuel Zwemer, who reportedly stated that, "we have learned that there are other means besides direct attack on Islam... We must search for the crack in the wall and place the rifle. We know the crack is in the heart of the women of Islam. It is the women who fashion the children of the Muslims."[156]

Despite these attacks on Amin which amounted to criticism of the education of women, it was primarily the issues of veiling and seclusion that his adversaries objected to; again, practices that were confined to women of the upper-class-- an estimated ten percent of the population in 1899.[157] One of Amin's more reactionary opponents was Mustafa Kamil (1874-1908), the nationalist leader whose primary goal was the immediate evacuation of the British

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[154]Haddad, 155.

[155]Ibid.

[156]Haddad, 155-156. She states that proof is later cited to demonstrate the success of western and missionary education in the actions of Hoda Sha'arawi and Ceza Nabrawi, two founders of the Egyptian Feminist Union (1923), and their dramatic removal of their veils. Both women had extensive contact with the West and had received a French education. The success of foreign-owned women's magazines (as discussed in chapter one) was also cited as proof; literary, educated women undermining the Egyptian core.

[157]Cole, 393.

presence in Egypt.[158] The so-called 'counter-nationalism' that Kamil espoused was primarily "a reaction against foreign domination or the threat thereof rather than a concern with the political and social structure of the society itself."[159] Egyptian independence was, therefore, the most pressing concern, more so than any moves for social change or reorganization. Such 'innovation' was, for Kamil, too representative of foreign intervention with the ultimate purpose being the corruption and downfall of Egyptian society. The rationale behind women's emancipation fell into the same category, and Kamil was opposed to it. An example he used to point out that women's emancipation was a foreign plot was the non-Egyptian origins of the founders of women's magazines. His preoccupation with national independence made him "regard social change as secondary in importance and possible only as a consequence of independence. As long as this goal was not obtained social change was eyed suspiciously as a means to divide society and to weaken its moral fiber."[160]

On the issue of education, Kamil's sentiments were better enunciated by his perhaps more vocal colleague Muhammad Talat Harb (1867-1894). Harb, whose primary concern was Egypt's economic independence, joined forces with Kamil in his overall opposition to women's emancipation.[161] He too maintained that women's emancipation was a foreign plot designed to weaken, if not

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[158]Philipp, 279.
[159]Philip, 279-280.
[160]Philipp, 282.
[161]Cole, 402. Like Kamil, Harb had a French education in law. His involvement in Egypt's economic affairs proved formative when he later became an important financier and founded the country's first bank, Bank Misr.

destroy, the social unity of Egypt. It was a Western import that, like all things that smacked of Western influence, should be eradicated from the system in order for the country to rebuild itself. Harb severely criticized Amin for his emulation of European civilization, its presumed glories of modernity, and he wrote two books refuting Amin's publication of *Tahrir al-Mar'a*. His primary criticisms were of Amin's demands for the abolishment of seclusion and veiling, which Harb staunchly defended. Moreover, he maintained that the only reason Amin's books caused such an outrage was because Amin cited Qur'anic injunctions to support his claims. Harb insisted, however, that Amin's assertions were misguided and that the true Islam explicitly states that seclusion and veiling should be practiced.[162] Cole points out, however, that Harb in a "revealing passage... unwittingly shows the extent to which his conviction of the need for seclusion and veiling is based on social as well as religious factors."[163] Harb maintained that seclusion and veiling could only be abolished if the Qur'an were replaced with another holy book and the hadith were proven false. He later stated that even this scenario would uphold the true path of Islam on the bases of manner and etiquette (if nothing else) even if religion were not in the equation.[164]

The advocacy of women's education seems to be the issue that received the least amount of opposition. Both Kamil and Harb were

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[162]Cole, 402-403. Cole describes how Harb, in an attempt to deflate Amin's growing notoriety, pointed out that Amin's position "was neither original nor unprecedented" regarding his views towards women's emancipation. He makes clear the fact that Marqus Fahmi, a Coptic lawyer, was publicly advocating women's reforms as early as 1894.

[163]Cole, 402.

[164]Cole, 403.

in agreement with Amin for more and better education for women. It was a shared belief between the reformer and nationalist at the turn-of-the-century that "education... frequently seemed to be the magic cure for the various social, economic, and political ills of society."[165] Harb, however, was afraid that higher education might result in the possibility of women circulating more visibly in society. Women's education, therefore, came with two conditions. The first was that education take place without altering the sacred values of modesty that are held within the practices of veiling and seclusion. The second was that the education be severely limited to what is necessary to maintain a household and raise children.[166] Neither seclusion nor veiling need be abolished for women to be successfully educated, he argued, especially since a woman's teacher could be anyone in whose presence she could lawfully appear.[167] Again, the essence of the opposition was not to education itself, but to what it entailed. Harb urged women to assume greater roles as teachers and administrators in Muslim girls' schools, despite the fact that he recognized that there were not enough educated Egyptian women to fill such positions. Rather than bring foreign instructors from non-Muslim countries, which would contradict his fiercely nationalistic Islamic tendencies, Harb advocated importing Muslim women from other Islamic countries to teach Egyptian girls.[168]

Despite the educational endeavors on the part of reformers, Harb's harshest commentary was reserved for Amin himself and for

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[165]Philipp, 285.
[166]Cole, 403.
[167]Ibid.
[168]Cole, 403-404.

what he believed was Amin's ignorance of Egypt's social condition. Harb criticized Amin for his emulation of European civilization and its wonders of modernity, and maintained that despite Amin's recognition as a reformer of Muslim women, the reforms, in fact, failed. He asserted that "manners were deteriorating, licentiousness was on the rise, wine drinking was spreading, indebtedness had become commonplace, squandering money was more common, and educational achievements were declining."[169] Such deterioration was clearly the result of European interference.

Juan Cole makes an interesting observation as to the basic differences between who he refers to as "upper middle class reformers like Amin, and lower middle class intellectuals like Harb." With respect to their sentiments towards European influence, Cole notes that initially, both men rejected British rule in Egypt. As Amin grew older, however, he came to believe that European rule in Egypt was more beneficial to his own class than the previous rule of the khedives. Harb, likewise, reflected the sentiments of his class background with criticism towards colonial rule which did little to improve the circumstance of the Egyptian poor and working classes. In their respective stances towards European intervention, each expressed his views as a manifestation of his own social condition.[170]

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[169]Ibid.
[170]Cole, 404.

WOMEN ACTIVISTS

Men's emergent feminism is said to have risen out of the aftermath of Amin's publications. It was, after all, men with their audible voices in public forums that brought women's concerns to the national arena. It was men who most strongly impressed upon society the importance of educating women to raise their own status and consequently that of their children and the greater Egyptian society.[171] The women involved in the process, however, must be credited with first planting the seeds of feminist discourse in Egypt. Women's journals and salons, and early publications of poetry expressing nascent feminist ideology have already been discussed. The efforts of individual women and the examples of their lives, however, must be recognized and named.

Public feminist activism was legitimized after Egypt's independence in 1922 with the establishment of the Egyptian Feminist Union the following year. The first generation of women activists were, therefore, raised during the final decades of the harem legacy before the turn-of-the-century. "By that time, changes in the every-day lives of upper and middle-class women were marked. Some constraints of the harem system had lessened, yet basic control over women remained firm."[172] It was a time when women's feminist writing and concerns became more visible, due in large part to the discourse initiated by 'Abduh and Amin. They were concerns that demanded response and public participation by the

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[171]Ahmed, Leila, 116.

[172]Badran, Margot. "Origins of Feminism in Egypt", 160.

'subjects' at the heart of the controversy. The women, like the men associated with the movement, represented the same kind of divergent opinions as to the extent and manner that women's feminism should embrace. Conservative voices, as well as those who were less so, became prominent representatives of their respective groups. Malak Hifni Nasif (1886-1918), known by her pen name 'Bahithat al-Badiyah ('Searcher in the Desert'), whose views were slightly more conservative, was probably the most outspoken writer on the subject of women's emancipation.[173] Her articles were first published in the nationalist party paper, *al-Jarida*, that expressed the conservative views with which she tended to more closely associate. Thomas Philipp notes that her choices of issues were clearly influenced by the writings of Qasim Amin. For instance, she bitterly criticized polygamy (based, no doubt, on her personal experience of unwittingly entering into a polygamous marriage with a man who already had a wife and child).[174] She favored a gradual reduction of gender segregation and demanded that women be allowed to enter mosques and sermons-- providing that they enter through separate doors from the men, and arrive and leave earlier.[175] Although she called for women's right to public space, she never advocated their unveiling.[176] Margot Badran notes that this was a "tactical move" and that Nasif "actually opposed the unveiling of the face that male feminists advocated... [she wanted instead for] women to gain more

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[173]Philipp, 283.
[174]Badran, Margot. Feminists, Islam and Nation, 54.
[175]Baron, 184.
[176]Badran, "Competing Agenda", 205.

education and reclaim public space before they unveiled.[177] Nasif's concerns for the necessity of women's education underscored their social advancement. The educational and employment demands that she sent to the Egyptian National Congress in 1911 were, in fact, the cornerstones of her feminist goals.[178] She even acknowledged the social strides that European women had gained through education, but cautioned against 'blind imitation' of Western practices; an admonishment which kept her in acceptable standing with nationalists such as Mustafa Kamil who criticized the 'aping' of Western ways. Egyptian women, she wrote, "must find their own national mode of expression and Muslims must remain true to their religion."[179] The discretion of her demands, not desiring to act too precipitously in her visions of Egyptian reform, "was essential to some of those demands being granted."[180] That it was perhaps a matter of political expediency in deferring to men as the lawmakers of social policy is best exemplified in her final demand at the 1911 congressional meeting. Her first nine points, five of which are dedicated to educational reforms for women, include maintaining Egypt's welfare and refusing to adopt foreign customs or practices The tenth and final point designates men to see that the demands are carried out.[181]

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[177]Ibid. Badran also points out that unveiling for progressive men had crucial symbolic value, while for women it was more a matter of practicality that they themselves would have to initiate, "... with the attendant risks of taunts and assaults on their reputations," (205-206). See also Cole, 401-402.

[178]Badran, "Origins of Feminism in Egypt", 163

[179]Badran, Feminists, Islam and Nation, 54.

[180]Leila Ahmed, 120.

[181]Ibid. Baron notes that Nasif submitted her '10 Points' to the congress, but was forced to have a male proxy deliver the speech on her behalf. "That she

Nabawiyyah Musa, a contemporary of Malak Hifni Nasif's, was another middle-class "first generation activist." Although of a slightly more modest background than Malak, it was a sufficient enough humility to direct her sensitivities to the plight of the poorer women in Egyptian society. (Until this time, the mainstream, and certainly more vocal directives of the women's movement concerned those in society's upper strata). It was these women, Musa felt, who were forced to work for low wages at servile jobs where they were often sexually and economically exploited. Like Malak, she maintained that through education and more appropriate work opportunities for women, exploitation could be avoided and women could begin to define their own means of liberation.[182] Musa's concerns also echoed those of her colleague, and both operated their consciousness-raising activities through publications and public lecturing.[183] Because of their own middle-class status, they were able to secure special classes, composed primarily of upper-class women, and instruct women at the Egyptian University. Badran notes that these classes were forced to stop, however, when the university cut its funding. The money that was saved was used to send three men to study abroad.[184]

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did not read this oft-cited speech herself illustrates the reality of segregation in 1911 and places her demands in a different light," 183.

[182]Badran, "Origins of Feminism in Egypt", 162.

[183]Unlike Malak, however, was Musa's removal of the veil in 1909. It was not a public event and she removed only the face scarf. By so doing, however, she became an exception among Muslim feminists-- and certainly Muslim women who continued to cover their faces until the 1920s-- who acceded to wearing the veil "to facilitate their forays into public space... It is significant, however, that when Nabawiyyah Musa unveiled, she had neither father nor a husband... to control her life." Badran, Feminism, Islam and Nation, 48.

[184]Badran, "Competing Agenda", 205. Nabawiyyah Musa already had experience with state funding cuts for women's educational activities. She was

Both Nabawiyyah Musa and Malak Hifni Nasif were products of the demands each espoused for women's emancipation. They had both experienced schooling through the secondary level and had been able to work in social capacities as educators and lecturers. Education and labor were simple enough demands, the advantages of which these activists believed "were the cornerstones of their feminist goals for women."[185]

In summary, most early Egyptian feminists prior to 1923, as Baron notes, "wrote mainly as modernists or Islamists, although the line between the two positions seemed somewhat blurred at times. Both groups argued within the context of Islam, with the intention of revitalizing and strengthening religion."[186] They seemed to differ primarily on issues they chose to emphasize rather than the substance of the issues themselves. For instance, while modernists "sought expansion in the realm of education and reform in marriage and divorce laws... Islamists... sought enforcement of Islamic laws including women's right to education, but encouraged women to learn the law to know their rights, not to modify them."[187] It was the closeness of their ideological position on the necessity of addressing women's, therefore society's, educational rights that brought the groups to common ground.

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the first and last Egyptian woman (until after independence) to pass the secondary school examination-- (she had already graduated, as had Malak, from the Saniyya Teacher's School in 1905); "colonial authorities with their policy of training men for practical administration were not prepared to subsidize women's secondary education," and the program for funding women's secondary education was halted. Badran, 205.

[185]Badran, "Origins of Feminism in Egypt", 162.

[186]Baron, 111.

[187]Ibid.

The furor raised over the broader significance of women's emancipation seems to have overshadowed any positive elements that may have been generated by women's education alone. Perhaps it was because it was a concern that received little opposition. Criticism and social dichotomizing over interpretive tenets of Islam (seclusion and veiling), primarily by the nationalist opposition, prevailed over an issue that all agreed upon in principle but were less moved to change. It was not as caustic, it did not grab immediate attention as a religious prerogative-- women *were* veiled and secluded and they *were not* being educated at acceptable levels. That the rigidity of veiling and seclusion might ease was unacceptable to nationalists such as Mustafa Kamil, as such liberation was thought to be reflective of foreign control. That the rigidity of women's educational opportunities did not change-- or changed visibly little until pro-active women, such as Malak Hifni Nasif and Nabawiyyah Musa, aggressively sought after women's educational opportunities-- is perhaps an indication of the real efforts and concerns on the part of the male hierarchy of the necessity of reevaluating the status quo; even for issues (women's education) that are Islamically ordained.

CONCLUSION

Within this setting, the ideologies of the protagonists were granted but limited time to cultivate themselves or to be disseminated as developed philosophies (recall Cyrill Black's criterion for developmental success). They seemed to rotate in their own boundaries, reinforcing their beliefs by positing themselves against the other. The agendas of each, the proto-feminists, the nationalists, and the Islamic reformists, were precariously interwoven on the subject of women's education. Theirs was not a relationship of aggression or of competition, and only appeared to vie for public support on an intellectual level. The conservative response of outrage to the publication of Qasim Amin's books, for instance, was actual and tangible, but there was no formulated movement to take arms for an active response against what Amin espoused in women's liberation. Again, it was ideological in content, realized in the form of subjective academic debate and editorial battery. The allowance for this type of attention is indicative of the exclusivity of its content. The social elite had the luxury of such thought and it was for their sakes that any such discussion was initially generated-- particularly in the upper-class strata of the early women's movement.

The move from ideology to actuality occurred with the Egyptian revolution of 1919. With specific reference to the women's movement, it is significant that it played no part in nationalist or Islamic reformist politics prior to this date. That the women's movement did not advocate its position from a political basis perhaps

added a certain amount of credibility and tolerance to the cause. The movement's primary concerns were of educational availability and access to welfare. The nationalist-reformist Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid outlined this fact (in an address of praise for Egyptian women who, unlike their Western counterparts, did not demand the franchise) by writing, "Our women, God bless them, do not put up such demands, which would disturb the public peace... They only demand education and instruction."[188] As Christine Sproul notes, although this seems to be a conservative position for a progressive philosophy, "one must realize that the early supporters of women's liberation needed some moderation to counterbalance and survive the extreme conservatism opposing that social movement."[189]

When, in 1919, women rose in protest against British occupation, they did so as Egyptians, not as women with a singularly feminist agenda. The nationalism and frenzy of modernism and reform of the earlier part of the century quickly changed to revolution. Prior to 1919 the three groups converged on an ideological level with regards to women's issues, each holding very different notions as to how to deal with the early feminist concerns. The reality of the rebellion brought their relationship to a tangible center in a common desire for independence. Women emerged from their seclusion and took to the streets in active demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts against the British. Their actions were received with overwhelming support from the male establishment. The entrance of women into the public arena and the force of their

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[188]Philipp, 287. Quoted from Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, al-Muntakhabat, 81-82.
[189]Sproul, Christine. The American College for Girls, Cairo, Egypt. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983, 22.

political involvement would never have previously sanctioned. Sproul notes again, "husbands, who in normal times would not have tolerated their wives' public activity, now approved of women's... active protests. Thus, the radical shock of a nationalist uprising launched harem ladies into public life and also launched their emancipation movement".[190] Because women's protest was viewed as an act of national loyalty, it was generally condoned.

With the success of the revolution, and Egypt's declaration of independence in 1922, women gained legitimacy in launching the directives of the women's movement. This was realized in 1923 with the establishment of the Egyptian Feminist Union by Hoda Sha'arawi, an early feminist pioneer. The Union, which soon became the leading women's organization in Egypt, put forth a detailed agenda of women's demands. While actively campaigning for improved social welfare programs, donating money to the poor, and demanding new regulations for marriage and divorce laws, the Union's primary interest, outlined in the first two articles of its constitution, was the education of women: "[to] raise women's intellectual and moral level so that they may realize their political and social equality with men... and demand free access to schools of higher education for all girls who wish to educate themselves."[191]

The latter demand was partially granted in 1924 when equal opportunity for education to boys and girls was included in the Egyptian constitution. Women soon began to participate in study missions abroad as only male academics had done since Muhammad

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[190]Ibid., 23.
[191]Ibid., 25.

Ali. The first government secondary school for girls was established in 1925, and in 1929 women were admitted to the University of Cairo. (al-Azhar did not allow women students until 1965).[192] Although girls' and women's education began to rise in popularity, (See Appendix, Table II)) flourishing particularly in foreign and private schools[193], few women were entering the public domain of the work force Some became active in social welfare organizations, but women's education was viewed more as "a social and cultural value for marriage."[194] The official establishment of the Egyptian Feminist Union and the growing public acceptance of the women's demands could not change cultural affiliations with the accepted conventional role of women in society. The notion of modernity and the complexity of progressive thought in a culture entrenched in tradition was not going to change because of a constitutional mandate and the apparent musings of the social elite. The public role of women, perhaps beginning with their own desires to be educated and a collective understanding of progress within a modern context, would take time to be realized. Commenting on the need for primary education for girls, the Director of the American College for Girls in Cairo in 1930 stated that, "the public is not ready for the economic liberty of women. It will be another 25 years before women will be in many professions in Egypt. We are pushing

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[192]Ibid.

[193]The earlier-mentioned popularity of foreign schools and the prestige attached to them did much to advance women's education prior to and during the turn-of-the-century and did so further after Egypt's independence. Both Islamic and government schools began to vie for the status of the foreign schools in an attempt to cultivate an *Egyptian*-educated populous.

[194]Ibid., 70.

for vocational training for boys, of course, as an economic necessity."[195]

Despite the fact that the tables indicate a dramatic increase in vocational training for girls in a shorter time-span than the Director of the girls' school predicted, Christine Sproul notes that as late as 1974 women still complained that "despite legislation for social change, traditional attitudes and prejudices perpetuate the idea that women are inferior... only a well-planned educational process can bring about those legislative changes."[196] It is an indication that development, in this case a modernization of religious and social norms, is in constant motion, receding and progressing as people and circumstances dictate. It can not be forced. To change, or effect to question, the mentality of a Muslim society that had come to accept the position of women as Islamically ordained was the task of visionaries. That men and women, who held vastly different agendas as to how to employ Egypt's version of modernism, were able to unite in silent and unwitting collaboration on the social necessity of women's education, proved to be a decisive platform from which the women's movement was able to embark.

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[195]Woodsmall, Ruth Frances. Moslem Women Enter a New World. New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1936, p. 178.

[196]Sproul, 71. Quoted from Sumaya Fahmy's "The Role of Women in Modern Egypt" in Education and Modernity in Egypt, ed. Yusef Saleh el-Din Kotb. Cairo: Ain Shams University Press, 1974, pps. 73-79.

APPENDICES

Table I[1]

Pre-World War I Egyptian Women's Magazines

Year Founded	Magazine	Founder	Religious Background
1892	al-Fatah	Hind Nawfal	Syrian Christian
1898	Anis al-jalis	Alexandra Aviernoh	Syrian Christian
1901	al-Marah fil' Islam	Ibrahim Ramzi	?
1901	al-Marah	Anisa 'Ata Allah	Syrian
1901	Shajarat ad-durr	Sa'adiya Sa'd ad-Din	?
1902	az-Zahra	Maryam Sa'd	Syrian
1902	as-Sa'ada	Rujina 'Awwad	Syrian Christian
1903	Majallat as-sayyidat wa-al-banat	Ruza Antun	Syrian Christian
1904	al-'A'ila	Esther Moyel	Syrian Jewish
1906	Fatat ash-sharq	Labiba Hashim	Syrian Christian
1908	al-Jins al-latif	Malaka Sa'd	Syrian Christian
1908	Majallat tarqiyat al-mar'a	Fatima Rashid	Egyptian Muslim
1909	Murshid al-atfal	Anjilina Abu Shi'r	Egyptian Copt
1912	al-Jamila	Fatima Tawfiq	Egyptian Muslim?
1913	Fatat an-nil	Sarah Miyiya	Egyptian Jewish?

[1]Quoted in Sproul, 20.

Table II[2]

Number of and enrollment in public, private, and foreign schools in Egypt, 1913-1944-45

Schools	1913-1914				1944-45			
	No. of Schools	Enrollment			No. of Schools	Enrollment		
		Boys	Girls	Total		Boys	Girls	Total
Elementary and Compulsory:								
*Private	3,577	87,250	4,666	91,916	737	79,525	31,800	111,325
*Public	3,669	205,944	26,541	232,458	3,985	467,835	418,254	805,089
*Foreign	...	...	...	...	...	2,777	1,252	4,029
*Total	7,246	293,194	31,180	324,374	4,722	559,137	451,306	1,020,443
Kindergarten and Primary:								
*Private	615	52,358	13,735	66,093	400	56,978	31,353	88,331
*Public	94	11,810	2,168	13,978	216	48,319	11,620	59,939
*Foreign	302	21,615	19,896	41,511	...	33,627	12,678	46,305
*Total	1,011	85,783	35,799	121,582	616	138,924	55,651	194,575
Secondary:								
*Private	5	2,238	14	2,252	74	13,513	893	14,406
*Public	6	2,532	...	2,532	53	33,322	3,332	36,654
*Foreign	10	2,879	1,467	4,326	...	6,298	5,032	11,330
*Total	21	7,629	1,481	9,110	127	53,1133	9,257	62,390

[2]Roderic Matthews and Matta Akrawi, Education in Arab Countries of the Near East (Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1949), p. 34.

Table II-- Continued

Schools	1913-1914				1944-1945			
	No.of Schools	Enrollment			No.of Schools	Enrollment		
		Boys	Girls	Total		Boys	Girls	Total
Vocational, Special and Teacher Training:								
*Private	12	878	220	1,098	22	184	1,875	2,059
*Public	45	5,124	594	5,718	136	16,940	8,762	25,702
*Foreign	11	1,820	125	1,945	...	1,582	789	2,371
*Total	68	7,822	939	8,761	158	18,706	11,426	30,132
Higher Schools:								
*Private	1	70	...	70	...	...	...	...
*Public	8	1,554	...	1,554	11	14,035	1,140	15,075
*Foreign	1	410	...	410	...	14	...	14
*Total	10	2,034	...	2,034	11	14,049	1,140	15,089
Religious: Primary, Secondary, Higher:								
*Private	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14,023
*Public	354	21,608	...	21,608	1	14,023	...	...
*Foreign	1	12	...	12	...	...	...	...
*Total	355	21,620	...	21,620	...	14,023	...	14,023

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