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إلى أمي وأبي واخواتي...
قرة عيناى ...
أهدى اليهم هذى المحاولة المتواضعة...

سارة منير

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Introduction: *An Exordium to the Framework of Study*

The matrix of cultures, when closely observed, are as expressively overwhelming as the lines of time carved on a face or the ancient drawings on the exhausted city walls. In fact, it is these lines and drawings that mark events, situations, challenges, weaknesses and growth of a being which allow the jazzed audience to see how a character was put together like puzzle pieces, one at a time. It is this scene, that enables peoples, cultures and generations to perceive each other in the extent of their growth, as well as their mutual contributions, and yet different fates throughout history and into the future. Genuinely, it is the inspiration behind this cinematic illustration that shapes the track of my thesis.

Modern-day societies and cultures have grown to be rather variant and yet close at the same time; exemplified in Global History as a field of historical studies. Cultures are variant in the sense that every culture and society has its historical variables and components that make it distinguished from another, even from other countries in the same region. While close from the perspective that communication, globalisation as well as the ever-changing conception of time and space have brought people along with their cultures to be more influenced by one another than ever before; for many societies it has meant more negative implications than the positive ones, and vice versa. This goes perhaps as far back as imperialism in all its forms; starting from the beginning of the history of mankind until the great emancipation and independence movements that started from the 50s of the 20th century, through to our present day.

Undoubtedly, the ace method of understanding this movement and its implications is through seeing how these “lines” and “drawings” were literally translated in reality, particularly in the past; that is surely if one aims at perceiving the present connections and happenings inside and outside of a society through a deeper insight. I believe that no culture exists in a vacuum. In fact I find it unconceivable to believe that anyone would disagree with this simple, yet realistic statement. In further legitimising this point, I firmly accredit the path of studying a culture through its historical contextualisation, in which ideas, notions and perceptions are adjusted in such a dimension so as to enable the reader to see a particular angle, yet in a rather enlightening and comprehensive manner with an edge that magnifies it to give it its due.

Logic and Aim of the Thesis

The work of Prof. Louis Awad¹ and the questions he posed in his book, *التاريخ الفكري المصري* (History of the Modern Egyptian Thought: From the Era of Isma'il to the 1919 Revolution) served as a gear for tackling this thesis and striving to answer the given thesis question, as Awad catechises the existence of the modern day Egyptian reality (politically focused in my case) and pulls the reader back into history to comprehend the present and the future. After Egypt's defeat on the 5th June 1967, the general Egyptian masses had but inhibited questions on their circumstance, as pinpointed by Awad² in his book in which he says, “*بعد هزيمة ٥ يوليو سنة ١٩٦٧ والكل ممزق يسأل: ماذا جرى؟ ولماذا جرى؟ وكيف؟*” (“What has happened?”, “Why have we reached this level of defeat now?”, “How can we get out of this pitfall?” these were questions that intellectuals at the time tried to solve and provide answers for). The defeat created a massive stir in the Egyptian society and opened doors for in-depth doubts regarding their belief system of the mission and strategy that the country was following, since the Egyptian independence that came along with the 1952 military-based socialist revolution and coup d'état⁴. “Though the Egyptian efforts and accumulation on the intellectual level have begun to re-emerge once again before the arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte 1798, yet this point marked an important stance towards the explanation of the Egyptian cultural and social history”⁵, says Awad. It is with the assistance of this reflection, that I became determined to take the thesis as far back as the 18th century attached to the 19th century to compose a spotlight over this critical period in the Egyptian modern history, while keeping Awad's questions in mind.

The sketch of my topic is marked by several statements that must be taken into consideration. They are as follows:

Statement One: The duty, or rather the purpose, of my thesis, is neither to explain the reason or the philosophies behind the interaction between cultures, nor to blame or point fingers at

¹ **Prof. Dr. Emeritus Louis Awad** (1915-1990) was a prominent Egyptian intellectual in the 20th century. He is viewed as one of the few Egyptian thinkers during the 20th century who paved the way for modernised and scientific historic writings in the fields of political science with respect to Egypt and the Arab world in general. Between the years of 1945-1950, Awad was among those young Egyptians who were calling out for a reformed Egyptian society following the Marxist indoctrination and other approaches. His work reflected a constant attack and critique on traditionalism and the Egyptian education system. Still until today, Awad is taken as one of the few modern activists who strived to call out for reforms in his phase.

² Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptian* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2003), VI.

³ Louis Awad, *التاريخ الفكري المصري الحديث: من عصر إسماعيل إلى ثورة ١٩١٩* (The History of the Modern Egyptian Thought: From Isma'il's Reign until the 1919 Revolution) (Cairo: Dar Al-Hilal, 2001), p. Awad, p. 9.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p.10.

the colonisers of a particular country or region. On the contrary, my thesis tackles an angle or rather one piece of the whole picture regarding the political history of Egypt in the modern era. With that respect, the thesis discusses the dimension regarding the nature of the political institution and its interaction with the religious in the modern era of the Egyptian history, commencing from the 18th through into the 19th centuries through the eyes of selected intellectuals and their milieus.

Statement Two – The significance of the 18th Century Islamic Scholarship and contributions in relation to the 19th century: Special significance is to be drawn to the choice of referring to the 18th century as a base and forefront of al-Nahda and political and philosophical contributions in the Egyptian society at the time. In fact, the 18th century in Islamic studies and the Arab region has fallen out of historical studies; or rather correctly put: it has gained very little attention from the European or the western world as well as the Arab and Arab-Muslim intellectuals until the dawn of the mid 20th century and more strangely also today. Reference in that regard is to be made to the reasons why the 18th century Islamic history was neglected, and accordingly the framework within which this era has been misplaced.

Reinhard Schulze (1953-) a German specialist in Islamic Studies and author of the books *Geschichte der islamischen Welt im 20. Jahrhundert* in 1994, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischen Weltliga* in 1987, and *Die Rebellion der ägyptischen Fallahin 1919: Zum Konflikt zwischen der agrarisch-orientalischen Gesellschaft und dem kolonialen Staat in Ägypten 1820-1919* in 1981, to mention a few – is a renowned reference point with respect to this issue. He is among the few, if westerners or Arab-Islamic thinkers, who discussed the problematic of viewing and studying the 18th century and the momentous urge for changing perspective towards the employment of this period in history.

Schulze, in his article *Das Islamische Achtzehnte Jahrhundert: Versuch einer Historiographischen Kritik*, adopts the central theme, that he later on deconstructs, that the 18th century is exhibited to the Europeans as the century in which major social, economic and political realms were revolutionized and put into the practice; having the 19th century serving as a proof for the importance and the base served by the 18th century.⁶ It is mainly the nature of the Islamic society during that period of time that is being questioned as to whether or not its construct was of eminent value and reflection onto the 19th century and later periods in the

⁶ Schulze page 141

Islamic World in general, and in Egypt in specific. Schulze's article displays how a set of connotations given to the Islamic intellectuals as well as the contributions at the time became as dominant as diluting many modern day thinkers for the backward status of the Islamic world. Schulze argues that the rise and fall of this region and many of its countries during the Ottoman Empire devoted them with characteristics such as the lack of wit and spiritlessness of the Islamic intellectuals, the backward thinking as well as their attempts to copy off the European intellectual contributions⁷.

Further arguments, he proposes, are related to the incomparability between the two worlds, as the European culture was strong and dominant, revolutionized and "enlightened" as well as paving its path towards world domination⁸. On the other hand was the Islamic World, which was oppressed and viewed as the "orient", which confined it in the position as lacking might and ability to be of sovereignty in its region and the world in general, and was primarily positioned in a picture fitting and in many regards solely associated with the story-telling and belief in the magic Arabian nights, to mention the least. It is also commonly believed that it was through the encountering with the European civilization, that the Muslims and the Islamic intellectuals were forced to modernize their tools and cultures so as to cope⁹ with the changes and current status quo of the world system (primarily the European and the Ottoman Empire as directly related to the theme of the study). According to these sets of arguments, or accusations if one may say, the natural conclusion would be to assume that the 18th century of the Islamic world was rather useless¹⁰ in many respects and had no separate identity; or rather it lacked a proof of its existence among the intellectual contributions of the west at the time. It is through the reference of works such as that of Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) as well as Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-), in the European context, that evoke the essential roles and dimensions played by dynasties and regions throughout history¹¹. This, when closely observed, do shatter the absolute autonomy or perfection of the European monopoly in the modern world¹².

Schulze illustrates, furthermore, that the Muslim world went through two phases, which were totally different in structure and base yet did not collide with one another or rather question

⁷ Ibid., p. 142.

⁸ Ibid., p. 143.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.144.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

each other's existence.¹³ He refers to the period prior to the 17th century as a rather enlightened one, I may rather say it was up to the late 15th century, where contributions and works was the gear for the surrounding cultures at the time and a phase in which the Islamic intellectual and the world were playing a pivotal part in the shaping of world history and regional history. That was followed by the second phase, as it was contaminated by the Ottoman oppression on various conceptual spheres, that it became neglected (the Islamic world) and the prime available evidence for its existence and its functions or being were through the occidental works and stories (mainly the French) at the time. This in return brought back stereotypical frameworks about the orient, picturing it rather as a submitting being under the mercy of the hegemonic European unit at the time. In addition, conceptions such as secularity and enlightenment were mainly viewed as contributors and attributes that construct the European identity.¹⁴ While on the other hand was the despotic orient, illustrated in this way through images and illustrations.

In summary, the phase between the late 17th until the 20th centuries sought the contributions and the structure of the European contributions as the prime focus and the nexus of understanding the rest of the world. It was through this that the works and the status of the Islamic world was left neglected, causing an intense chasm in the weight of this region and its regional and international esteem and renowned intellectual excavations prior to the Ottoman Empire and during the neglected and forgotten 18th century. In other words, the study of the Islamic world carries significance in its very essence and in every single way, which is legitimized by the importance of the region that cannot be nullified. Although the endeavours in this field are not absent, yet they are rather imbedded with methodological problematic primarily traced back to the malfunctioning of literature employment. Schulze in that sense refers to the attempts carried out by Peter Gran's *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt 1760-1840*, Roger Owen and Ibrahim Abu-Loghoud¹⁵, to which he explains "Zaghafte Ansätze, wie... scheiterten nicht so sehr aus mangelender Plausibilität, sondern wegen einer sehr unzureichenden und oft willkürlichen und methodologisch wenig abgesicherten Quellenarbeit. Zu Recht haben Kiritiker wie Gabriel Baer, Fred de Jong und Ewald Wagner auf diese faktischen Unzulänglichkeiten und die methodologischen Schwierigkeiten hingewiesen"¹⁶(Diffident approaches such as those introduced by ... did not exactly suffer from the lack of plausibility, but rather the inability to reach rare, inaccessible literatures,

¹³ Ibid., p. 145.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.145.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 146.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.146-147.

which usually resulted in a set of work by these authors that is based on a weak methodological structure. It is thanks to figures and critics such as Gabriel Baer, Fred de Jong and Ewald Wagner that these points of malfunctions have been brought into the life.)

In short, Schulze mentions an important point that he re-emphasizes throughout his article, that the prime aim of studies should be to be aware of the past and the trends of historiography that was primarily Eurocentric at heart in representing the rest of the world, if not mainly the Far East and the Islamic World. There is a grave need to position regions and give them their due, in that respect also give the Islamic works and contributions their worth back during this phase, namely the 18th century, so that proof for their dynamisms and creativity can be renowned by them through historiography and other disciplines.¹⁷ Technically, as I may agree also with Schulze's reasoning, the Islamic studies of the 18th century will only gain plausibility and its position back on the pages of historical and political studies, when attempts have been given enough thought so as to illustrate and reflect on this period of time based on methodological and scientifically proven efforts. It is through the enriching energy invested in this field that the Islamic identity¹⁸ can be preserved in historiography and the historical context of events.

This point, the second statement of this section, has taken up ample space to explain and justify the need or the legitimacy for utilizing the Islamic contextualization of the 18th century. The fact is, however, that even this thesis has faced similar problems, perhaps of a different nature or form at times, but mainly associated with the gathering process of primary sources as well as enough evidence to proof to the reader why the 18th century is actually the entrance into the new or second Islamic and Arabic enlightenment phase¹⁹. As illustrated, the limited availability of the sources and studies about this period restrain one from giving all the needed justifications which could be given in many other cases and regarding other topics, regions and themes as well. However, that in its very essence is not enough reason to stop or limit studies in this field and on this period in particular. Efforts and attempts should be made to assist in pushing doors open for research and paving the way for further explanations as a result of accumulated scholarship in this field.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁹ By the "second", I mean that the first phase of enlightenment of Islamic scholarship and studies was during the phase of the 8th until the 15th century, followed by the domination of the Ottoman Empire and long years of intellectual deterioration or rather oppression, then an emergence in the 18th century followed by al-Nahda pathways paved furthermore throughout the 19th century (reference in that sense is made for the phase towards the second half of the 18th century where the important developments direction reform took part, and not only towards the end of the 18th century with the French Expedition/Occupation in Egypt).

Statement Three - Al-Azhar as the mainstream of continuation between the 18th and the 19th century: With respect to the second statement, one must also add that the study at hand emphasises that the two centuries, namely the 18th and the 19th century, did not face a break in between, or as some choose to define the “in between” as the French expedition. So, if I would use this aspect (the French invasion, although I do not agree on its inevitable pivotal positioning in the study of the Egyptian modern history) as a central point in determining the continuation of reform and scholarship in Islamic studies and in particular in Islamic scholarship in Egypt, it would be followed by saying that the French invasion in itself did not change or cause a continuation nor the lack of in the Egyptian scholarship of the 18th onto the 19th century. The prime reason behind my statement is that the nexus of the two centuries was al-Azhar as an institution. There are certainly may be other features that represent the continuity between the two centuries, but I believe al-Azhar is the most plausible example and pillar in explaining and clearing up this point. It played religiously intellectual duties, as well as empowering political participation and awareness, with al-ulama as mediator between the rulers and the people. This role was already carried out since the dawn of al-Azhar, and so certainly also throughout the 18th century. The difference is seen in the studies that were supported by al-Azhar which are seen to be primarily spiritually and religiously driven and shaped up to become of a modern nature including modern sciences. One must add in this regard however, that the call for modern sciences did not commence through the French and their presence in Egypt (see chapter two). Perhaps the difference is not imbedded in the question of whether or not there was continuity or a break between the two periods. The main issue in that sense should be the nature of the functionality of this institution (which will be answered throughout the chapters of the thesis).

Statement Four: The intellectual and his thought and surroundings are the nexus of the thesis and its structure. Egypt, known for being one of the oldest world civilisations, and like many cultures, was shaped within the complex of variables that it got exposed to. This shaping process is marked and carved in the history of its people and by its people. And since I believe this is the most fruitful angle to convey the matter of the thesis through, the intellectual as a person and an active member of the system will serve as the centre point in answering the questions posed. This will be through two founding pillars: the contexts and the contents. The context evokes the status of the society, the people and the culture particularly from a political and religious viewpoint, hence the milieu. The content on the other hand, conveys the ideas, notions and perceptions that the intellectuals and scholars use or extract through their reality.

Samples of Previous Contributions

Surely the political history of Egypt has been tackled by an endless number of intellectuals, historians and figures of various fields of interest. It has surely also been worked on not only in the Arabic speaking regions. But Egypt's political and historical position is a magnetic field for many contributions and attention for those specialised in the region.

Coming to observe the contributions related to my field of interest, and seeing that the list is vast in general and in relation to the references used for the thesis, it would be impossible to trace all the names and contributions and individually discuss them. Nevertheless, some names were more frequently used as central sources such as Peter Gran²⁰ and Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot²¹, Muhammad Afifi,²² Muhammad Emara²³, Abdalla al-Azabawi²⁴ and Muhammad Zakariya al-Shalaq²⁵ to mention the least, who tackled the 18th and the 19th century Egyptian culture.

The focus has previously only been on an overall explanation of the period of the 18th and the 19th centuries rather than an explicit analysis of the vast range of phenomena that were experienced. Also, most of the references and original texts of the Arab-Muslim thought are widely available to the public, especially those reflecting on the second half of the 19th century. Thus, the studies that are overtly carried out therefore are rather limited. Through the exposure to certain figures and the period itself, it was therefore seen that the period of the 18th and the 19th centuries are of fundamental value to the interpreting of the contemporary Arab reality. The nexus of the thesis, baring in mind its special and time frame, was limited

²⁰**Peter Gran** - (Ph.D., University of Chicago). He is a professor of History with research interests in the fields of: Modern Arab Studies, Comparative Third World History and Political Economy Theory. He is author of the famous *Islamic Roots of Capitalism, Egypt, 1760-1840* published in 1979. (<http://www.zmo.de/veranstaltungen/2006/Vortrag%20Prof.%20Peter%20Gran.pdf>).

²¹**Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot** was born on October 29, 1933, in Cairo, Egypt, of Egyptian parents. Marsot's work has focused on the roles that gender, class, culture, and religion have played in the history of Egypt since the 18th century. She has emphasized comparative studies as well as critical analyses of Western views of the Middle East. The work she is most proud of is her *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, "because his rule of Egypt in the first half of the 19th century has not been appreciated in the West." (Online Encyclopedia, <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/>).

²²**Muhammad Afifi** is a professor at Cairo University. Specialises in the field of Egyptian cultural history, which include the roles of Muhammad 'Abduh and the period of Muhammad 'Ali. One of his many works contributions is *عرب وعثمانيون* ('*Arab wa 'Othmaniyyun* - Arabs and Ottomans) – see bibliography list. Furthermore, another important piece he wrote was *المستبد العادل* (*Almustabid al-'Adil* - The just tyrant).

²³**Muhammad Emara** is an Islamic thinker and is an active member of the Islamic Research Academy in Cairo. His research field has covered a great level of Islamic thinkers since the dawn of Islam such as al-Kindi, al-Kawakibi, Abduh and al-Afghani. Also Egyptian cultural history is also one of his research fields.

²⁴**Abdallah al-Azabawi** is a professor specialised in history of Egyptian thought and Egyptian Islamic history. One of his major works is *الفكر المصري في القرن الثامن عشر* (*Al-Fikr al-Masriy fi al-Qarn al-Thamin 'Ashr* 2006 (Egyptian Thought of the 18th Century).

²⁵**Muhammad Zakariya al-Shalaq** is a professor of history and Egyptian historiography.

down to the study of the politics – religion problematic. That also involves, perceiving the nature of the interacting elements, parties and intellectuals that shape the reality not just during the period under study, but also how it affects and reflects on today's Egyptian society.

The addition that my thesis is aiming for is not a process of inventing or rather discovery of a new phenomenon. On the other hand, my thesis aims at gathering dimensions together of different parts to compose one piece of work. This means, I am focus on the political element on one side. At the same time, my thesis is perceiving the political history from the dimension of political thought and philosophy at a respective time; a period that marked the beginning of a change in the modern political history of Egypt. Unlike Gran, I did not aim at tackling the economic or trade dimensions of the Egyptian history. Instead I tried to answer certain common arguments that were posed in my surrounding study and work environment that the modern Arab thought only commenced through the “revival” initiated by Napoleon, rather deconstruct it in my second chapter which tackles the 18th century. Perhaps the closest intellectuals to my nature of work were Abdallah al-Azabawy as well as Muhammad Emara and Louis Awad. And so in that sense, I perceive my thesis as a “flashback study” in the hope of further interpretations through more and detailed in-depth studies. Since, a nation and a people cannot learn and understand themselves and their present unless they are able to interpret the events of the past that shaped them and led them to where they are.

Research Question

Throughout the 18th and the 19th centuries, there were various forms of relationships that transformed within the realm of politics and religion (Islam in the sense of the thesis theme). This reality has been explained through the thoughts and ideas of figures such as Hassan Al Attar (1766-1835), Abdulrahma al-Jabarti (1753 – 1825), Mohammed Abduh (1849 – 1905) and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838 – 1893).

How was the Egyptian reality of the politics-religion relationship, during an era of Islamic civilisation and thought in the 18th and the 19th centuries, reflected through the works of the respective philosophers and thinkers? What does this intellectual nexus reveal about Egypt in the present?

Own Theoretical Position

The theoretical position that has been chosen will be a display of the thinkers within their respective phases; displaying their thoughts and contributions and how that mirrors the reality at that time. This will be through reflection on how concepts and ideas were established and employed by the intellectuals in their social political context through their worldview of an Islamic-Arab realm of thought and the socio-political construct. This method and theoretical position will be rather apparent in its application throughout the chapters two and three where there will be a thorough analysis and interpretive display of the intellectuals' worldviews and agendas regarding the Egyptian reality with respect to the political religion problematic. The theoretical position also comprises the selecting of certain events that will be put under observation to explain the milieu of an intellectual and a phase, and hence to depicts the reasons of such thought to have come about. Hence, it will not tackle every single event throughout the whole 200 years.

Methodology

The purpose of the use of a methodology in the thesis is not to simply have a complicated structure or complex in the paper, rather the aim through it is to sketch out the general outline of how the topic of the thesis will be tackled and within what general dimensions it shall be tackled and depicted. That means that the method that will be used is rather a structure which will be filled out with the components employed, as the tools of the method, in order to continuously answer the general thesis question. That is a mixture between a concept and context analysis approach, within which I will tackle the notions and conceptions that were used by a selected set of thinkers (historians and philosophers) who were prominent at that period of time. The use of their notions and ideas will be the reason for seeing reality through their eyes and being able to determine how reality back then was, how their philosophies and theories explained events and whether or not they actually do reflect the existential reality of the events at the time. In that sense, I will be working on Arabic based terms and ideas that emerged as a results of the works of intellectuals. I will be explaining them within the context of their happening and evaluate them. I will also be proving arguments and points of views that are evident in the above seen part "the Initial Problem" which will be asked at the beginning of every chapter. These points will be answered throughout the paper, either as arguments or as points tackled throughout another context.

Research Questions

There are a number of questions and queries, which have served as the background for the interest in this field of study in general, and the topic in particular. These are as the following:

- When perceiving the level of “thought initiation process” in the region (as in the Arab countries), was its development really solely relying on the constant colonial conquests and its inputs to the respective culture? Or did countries such as Egypt, Morocco and Al-Sham initially have a thought base, yet needed the “west” to come and polish it or give them the initiative to build upon it?
- To what extent has the role of the Ottoman Empire actually really affected the roots of the shaping of the culture and the idea of *al-fikr* in the associated Arab-Muslim countries? Was the Islamic approach for the Arab thinking, including thought initiation and philosophy as a principle or field of practice, perhaps the reason why *al-Nahda* did not continue its expected success within its evolution?
- What is the actual reason behind Egypt being the centre of the cultural developments (within the Arab world)? Do all the invasions, cultural interventions and the like, as well as their effects that authenticate the fact that Egypt is a “perfect” example of a melting pot to make Egyptian thought and history too diverse? To what extent does this diversion also include harmony and how does is all of that reflected on today’s Egyptian society and reality?
- To what extent did the contemporaries benefit from that thought in the Egyptian reality?
- Are these thoughts like building blocks or were they ideas and they ended or were they demolished?

Summary of the Chapters

In the light of the thesis question, *the first chapter* is a rather theoretical background about main key issues and conceptions that revolve around the thesis topic in general. The purpose is to give a surrounding idea, and to shed the light on crystallised concepts, without which particular issues throughout the coming chapters may not be clarified. I find the nature of the first chapter particularly important, as it serves like the theatrical setting for a play. This chapter conveys the meaning of ideas such as: Islam and its relation with political philosophy and thought, the role of al-ulama and al-muttakalimun, the totality of Islam as well as the texture of al-nahda and reforms with respect to their trends in the 18th and the 19th centuries.

The second chapter builds upon the first in which it starts by giving an overview about the nature of the 18th century politically and especially also intellectually. It tackles certain questions and argumentations and aims at proving that sciences and intellectual contributions and reform programs did exist before the French expedition and invasion of Egypt. It discusses reform programs of the religious and the political institutions through resorting to two prominent intellectuals and thinkers of the time to reflect on the phase of the second half of the 18th century; namely Hassan al-Attar and Abdulrahman al-Jabarti. Although their life time extends into the 19th century and many of their works were produced in the early 19th century, yet their reflections cover the period of the 18th century to a vast extent, the sphere of the Ottoman and Mameluke rule and the implications of the French occupation. The chapter exposes conceptions and ideas that were first introduced on interpretations writing about the 18th century Egypt such as the Egyptian Ummah by al-Jabarti, educational reform and religious modernity by al-Attar, to mention a few; resembling the stance of the mature stage of al-nahda.

The third chapter is a follow up on the 18th century in which it conveys the reform programs and al-nahda appropriations into the 19th century. It also begins with an overview on the status of Egypt politically and religiously at the time and then going into the intellectual contributions and interpretations of the reality of Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. Similarly, the introduction of their notions and beliefs regarding reform are introduced. Concepts such as education reform is being introduced further and enhanced upon overtly by Muhammad Abduh while al-Afghani discusses concepts of nationalism and Arabism, amongst other concepts. There will be a conveying of the application and practice mechanisms employed by the two activists and intellectuals; Abduh following the maintenance of the status quo while changes through importation of ideas and experiences,

while al-Afghani seen to be a rather radical modern reformer seeking a change from the roots of the system to achieve the appropriate Muslim Ummah from his perception.

Throughout the two chapters there will be internal analysis and comparisons between the thoughts of the intellectuals, in order to convey the tackling of the issue of reform and al-nahda on the political and the religious levels alike. In addition, at the end of every chapter there will be an overall evaluation and analysis of the phase covered and conceptions tackled by the respective chapter.

The thesis is then concluded by an overall reflection on the main “lessons” learned from the thesis and the overall statements and results reached. In addition, it tackles the question which Louis Awad poses, it being: “What happened and where are we today? What is the way out?” as mentioned previously. Through the conclusion I will try to reflect on what “was” and what “is” today with respect to the roles of the intellectual and the al-ulama within the circumference of political thought and philosophising in modern day Egypt, in the year 2010. Supporting material will include a bibliography, a list of further readings recommended and an appendix list with short comments in order to explain and support explanations and topics tackled in the second and the third chapters of the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Chapter One: Key Players, Movements and Trends

Introduction

One should emphasise that though the reform movement had various implementation strategies - educational reform, socio-political reform, “religion-political” institutional psychology reforms or even self-determination and emancipating the self from the invader – they were all still governed by a rather defined mission: seeking to empower and solidify Egypt’s position and being in the light of dominant occupations (intellectually and socio-politically); beginning with Napoleon’s French Expedition, the dominion of the Ottoman Empire throughout, up to the British occupation followed by the “emancipation” in 1952.

In the light of these events, I believe it is crucial to give a brief account of the central conceptions and role players that existed during the studied period to provide an encapsulating perspective as to the surrounding conditions that triggered the thoughts that came into their being back then. How did these conditions cause the importance of reform (with its different colours and shades)? And how did it become employed to serve the need for a *nahda*²⁶?

This will be conveyed through two main parts:

- 1.1. The Islam – Political Philosophy / Thought Relation
- 1.2. Trends of Reform and al-Nahda throughout the 18th and the 19th Centuries’ Egypt

²⁶ The Arabic terminology for the Arab based renaissance and enlightenment movement. According to the thesis, attempts for building up to this phase start from the first half of the 18th century, yet mainly through the second half of the century.

1.1. The Islam – Political Philosophy / Thought Relation

A compelling point worth clarifying at the beginning of this part is that the study will not revolve around the concept of philosophy in terms of its nature as a science or art of thought²⁷ in the Islamic or Arabic context as such. Rather, the purpose is to display how political philosophy and thought were utilised as tools and mechanisms to translate reality and observations into ideas and thoughts of intellectuals and thinkers at the time in the 18th and the 19th centuries in Egypt. Ergo, the point of convergence is the intellectual and his *Weltanschauung* accordingly. Nevertheless, it still remains of prime importance to discuss the nature of the concept of philosophy or *al-falsafa* within the following respects: the background, nature of its purpose in Islamic and Arab thought, the relationship between Islamic philosophy and politics (which is particularly related to the title and the thesis question), as well as the methods or rather trends that have been used to using and employing it for various pursuits and circumstances. Importantly enough, this segment of my thesis serves as a supportive base for the coming chapters to come.

1.1.1. The Background

It is important to note, seeing that it is the soul of the thesis, the actual relation that emerges and governs the use of Islam as a religion along with philosophy; in return resembling the construction of the concept “Arab-Islamic Philosophy” within the political context. This is believed to be an improvement that the thesis provides as a tackling point in addition to previous studies carried out to the same research period and the region chosen as well.

However, before going on to defining, it must be highlighted that philosophy as a concept can no longer be used solely to justify and answer the still remaining open questions regarding Man and his relation to the surrounding environment of his existence. Let this surrounding environment be of political, economic or social significance, the need for another pillar is crucial in order to mingle the being of philosophy with the nature of the Arab-Islamic societal

²⁷ Louis Awad, *تاريخ الفكر المصري الحديث : من عصر إسماعيل إلى ثورة ١٩١٩* (Tarikh Al-Fikr Al-Masriy Al-Hadith: Min 'Aasr Isma'il ila Thawrat 1919 - The History of the Modern Egyptian Thought: From Ismail's Reign until the 1919 Revolution) (Cairo: Dar Al-Hilal, 2001), p. 15.

milieu²⁸. So, though Islam has placed out into the “Hellenistic cultural area”²⁹ (having the original aim of spreading the message of *al-islam*³⁰ and taking over the Hellenistic region of southern Europe³¹), yet the nature of the Greek philosophy can no longer be the tool to explain the temperament of Islam and the societies following it³². The relationship between the existence of the Arab-Islamic thought and philosophy and the Greek antiquity is yet still a point worth mentioning that traces back the interactions during the development process of the Arab-Islamic thought³³.

This influence had spread to cover the area of the Mediterranean Sea. At this point one may mention important Muslim thinkers and philosophers such as al-Farabi of the late ninth to mid tenth century. One of his major works, namely on the description of the virtuous state also known as *al-Madina al-Fadila*, was greatly influenced by the work of Plato’s *The Republic*. On the other side, however, figures such as Gerhard von Cremona (1114-1187)³⁴ translated a minimum of 71 scientific works from the Arabic language into Latin (through the assistance of Jewish scholars)³⁵. These works included fields as diverse as medicine, the famous *Almagest*, and cosmology,³⁶ to name just a few.

Furthermore, in adding to the background of the concept Islamic Political Philosophy, there will be a general division of two parts here to facilitate the explanation of the nature of the concept. These are both: The Philosopher – muttakalimun relationship, and the Totality of Islam.

1.1.2. The Philosophers (Falasifa) and al-Muttakalimun

The philosophical thought in Islam, had a very self-conscious nature and construct. Political philosophy, as a matter of fact, existed in Islamic thought since the dawn of the ninth century AD through the works of al-Kindi³⁷. This indicates that, as early as the ninth century and even before that along with the dawn of Islam and the muttakalimun, there were works available

²⁸Anke Graness and Jamaledine Ben-Abdeljelil, “Editorial.” *Polylog. Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren*, no. 17 (2007): 3-7.

²⁹Geert Hendrich, *Arabisch-Islamische Philosophie: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2005), 15.

³⁰Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, “The Meaning and Role of ‘Philosophy’ in Islam”. *Studia Islamica* 37 (1973), 57-80, www.jstor.org/stable/1595467 (accessed February 25, 2010).

³¹Ibid, p.16.

³²Ibid, p.15.

³³Ibid, p.14.

³⁴Ibid, p.130.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid, p.10.

(still strongly influential today) which highlight the fact that no society or religion exists without a base of thought and ideas. That form of political philosophical thought was particularly influential in structure “during the period from al-Farabi (died 950) to Ibn Rushd (1126-98) where the theme that existed was a basic distinction between - at least – two groups of people. One group is made up of intellectuals, people who are capable of understanding theoretical arguments of the demonstrative kind. Demonstrative argument is reasoning which starts from certain premises and proceeds by valid logical method to certain conclusions. This form of reasoning represents the acme of philosophical process ...”³⁸.

Based accordingly, al-falasifa or philosophers believed that there are various groups of people that need to be tackled according to their own level of intellectual being. This idea is particularly evident in al-Farabi’s *al-madina al-fadila*, where he goes on explain that various methods are to be used in order to reach the minds of the people, while remembering that the faculties of the mind and intellectual capabilities vary in many degrees due to many factors. Hence, reason is a prime determinant in that process, not just in philosophising but also in the dissemination of the thought and political ruling and awareness. This will be particularly seen with the intellectuals chosen for study in the second and the third chapter of my thesis. It will be evident through my arguments, that a figure such as Hassan al-Attar³⁹ took on a mission to argue the vitality of educational reform and that this can not and will not be understood by the general masses, since the knowledge is mainly embedded on the intellectual levels of the *ulama* and the *mota’limun* from al-Azhar. They had the responsibility to disseminate the knowledge without resorting to any foreign assistance or helping hand. Attar’s perspective was similarly shared, directly and indirectly, by the rest of the reformers in the Egyptian realm (if not even in the Arab world in general) during the given two centuries under focus.

Certainly this took on different trends and forms of application, however, the traditional political philosophy and thought toward perceiving people as different intellectually, was still the same one governing the reform period as well. Hence, the prime functions still remained to govern the role of the intellectual: the role of reason, the strength of the faith in religion and its application in interpreting life and its relation to man, as well as the significant role of the *al-ulama* and *falsafa* in the Islamic political sense.

³⁸ Leaman, Oliver, “Continuity in Islamic Political Philosophy: The Role of Myth”. *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 14 (1987), 147-155, www.jstor.org/stable/194380 (accessed February 25, 2010).

³⁹ See details in the second chapter

Important is still to note the political problems derived from the clash between the philosophers and the muttakallimun.⁴⁰ Here came the development of the art of al-kalam (the art of talking and telling).⁴¹ This technique was important in its ways to transfer the message of the “absolutism of the written fate” and eternity of life and life after death. This was carried out by the Mutazila sect of Islam.⁴² The aim was to resort the processes of telling and talking in order to rationalise the thoughts of the respective text and rules ordained under al-Qur’an, al-sharia and al-sunna.

One of the important historical facts about the relationship between the falasifa and the muttakalimun, is the scorn that governed it. “The muttakalimun, or scholastic theologians ... resented the importation of foreign and non-Islamic concepts into an area of metaphysical and political speculation which they had regarded as entirely their own”⁴³. They were seen by the falasifa as the reason why doubtful and false information was being transmitted amongst the Muslims, hence also causing a weakening of their faith and commitment toward their religion and beliefs⁴⁴. Perhaps these controversies that kept on going back and forth between the two groups, al-muttakalimun and the falasifa, were the reason of two main declarations: al-Ghazali was one of the figures who charged the falasifa as “putting forward dangerous and heretical doctrines” according to which the general masses had to follow. On the other hand was Ibn Rushd (in his *فصل المقال* *Fasl al-Maqal*) who believed that “only philosophers can make acceptable use of *tawil*, or allegorical interpretation, in dealing with scriptural difficulties”⁴⁵. He goes on to explain that the philosopher is meant to have the acceptable tools, according to his own society and the people confronted by his thought, in order to resolve problems and tackle issues of fundamental problematic natures. This also includes issues of significant importance to the people in the general Islamic community⁴⁶ who he is responsible to intellectually.

Along with the former, comes as I believe the core of the Islamic philosophy, especially on the political level. If I may overtly state, the general game in politics is which level of the

⁴⁰The reader here may notice that the text is still tackling the roles of the different figures responsible for the knowledge generations and disseminations through their use of philosophy as a tool not an end, to transmit their message of the religion and similarly also of the reform processes. The role of the Falasifa and al Muttakalimun is very important when discussing the background of the initiation of philosophy as a highlight in Islamic thinking.

⁴¹Leaman, op.cit., p. 147.

⁴²Seeing that details on the nature and historical background of the Mutazila will be outside the track of the thesis at hand, more details can be thoroughly read in texts such as Hendrich 2005 and Shalaq 2006.

⁴³ Leaman, op.cit 148

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

society and which stratum becomes superior over the rest, gains more interests and benefits through its position and claim for power, as well as subordinating the rest of the society mostly under its own service. I would also like to add this, though a simple statement, yet in a great part of the world it simply is applicable and seen as second nature with respect to these societies' realities. Now, the stance and original aim from the Islamic political thought and philosophy was rather different.

This aim did not simply originate over night, yet it came along with the messages sent and the very nature of the religious texts governing the realm and circumference of practice in fields of thought and philosophy. The issue in that sense becomes simple. The aim of al-falasifa is to assist people, of all levels in the society, to reach happiness through his or her own route in finding the truth. At the end, the truth is still the one and the same, since the rules and laws that govern the space, nature, the life of mankind and everything else surrounding it is always one and the same. In that sense, happiness is attainable to all Muslims through al-falasifa and their intellectual messages. This is particularly backed by "one of the excellences of Muhammad as a lawgiver and his ability to legislate in such a way to enable the whole of the community to live well and understand how they ought to behave. He had a variety of ways to express himself. Sometimes he appeals to his audience's reason ... and sometimes he uses rhetorical and poetic language to get across a difficult idea to the largest possible audience"⁴⁷.

It could safely be said that it was a solid pillar of the nature of political praxis in Islam which means the mercy in governing the people, and the fairness of distribution of information and guiding them to find the truth and happiness through the use of reason. Hence, that is the role the intellectuals play as well on the philosophical and praxis levels. Their ideas, when they analyse political realities, are meant to be based on the aim at guiding the people to find the truth through faith and through their own personal observations, using reason. In addition, for the purpose of further justifying my argument, it is known that the Islamic philosophers and particularly those of the later period were resorting to the use of traditional philosophy as their path for the truth as provided by the Islamic revelation⁴⁸. Thus, the political reality and benefit, directed at the entirety of a society, is supposed to be reached through "the truth of religion ...expressed in the language of intellectual and rational discourse"⁴⁹. "The truth that is reached by traditional philosophy is for the *hukama* an aspect of the truth itself, of *al-haqq*,

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Nasr, op.cit., p. 61.

⁴⁹ Ibid

which is a Divine Name and therefore the source of all revealed truth”⁵⁰. Though this was the main aim behind the role of the philosopher particularly, as I believe, in the political and societal realm, in the 18th and the 19th centuries, their role became less dominated by the spiritual aspect as earlier. Though, many of the intellectuals were viewed as the solid religious figures in Egypt (since that is my focus in the thesis) such as al-Attar and Rifaa al-Tahtawi.

From here comes the idea of the role of thought and philosophy in their application to the political milieu in the Islamic societies in terms of how they are aimed at reaching the people, and hence also how they are aimed at reaching change and awareness. This will thus be the core of the coming chapters in seeing how this theoretical explanation in this part of the thesis, is being applied on a rather wider scope of analysis and through the utility of a large sphere of methodologies accordingly; depending on the worldview a respective intellectual shares.

1.1.3. The Totality of Islam

Furthermore, another aspect worth considering during the viewing of the general framework of study is that containing the nature of Islam, an Islamic society, the dimensions that govern the following of Islamic thought and also the need to produce reform movements and developments in such societies. In that sense, when talking about the Islamic revelation itself, the possession of a set of aspects that one must understand when aiming at looking at the functionality of Islam in relation to political philosophy and thought is very fundamental. Islam was introduced to man through various dimensions which one can basically divide into two, as presented by Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s essay on “The Meaning and Role of Philosophy in Islam”⁵¹. Nasr, I quote him, explained that these dimensions are represented “on the basic levels of *al-islam*, *al-iman*, and *al-ihsan*, and from another perspective as *shariah*, *tariqah* and *haqiqah*”⁵².

Furthermore he goes on explaining that one common pitfall most researches fall into while analysing a contextually fragile theme related to thought and its contextualisation in the Islamic realm by saying: “when we speak of the role of philosophy in Islam we must first of all ask which aspect of Islam we are dealing with. In any case we must avoid the mistake made only too often by many Orientalists during the past century of identifying Islam with only the *shariah* or *kalam* and then studying the relationship of philosophy or metaphysics

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Nasr, op.cit.,57.

⁵² Ibid.

with that particular dimension of Islam”⁵³. On the contrary, and I do share Nasr’s opinion in that respect, the depth and dimensions of Islam must be digested by the researcher in such a sense as to be able to mould his thought and interpretations according to the variables that represent a holistic understanding of Islam, hence becoming rather realistically emphatic to the soul of the respective society and religion at hand. In that sense, and through the use of precision of observations, the intersection point between traditional philosophy and metaphysics does become apparent. For example, one cannot only perceive Islam as dar al-Islam or similarly also as dar al-harb.

Another aspect in this part is also the way the Islamic philosophy is perceived as a distinct type of traditional philosophy due to its nature and particularly due to the qualities that are to be pertained in the intellectual. In Nasr’s article, he stresses out mainly on two qualities which are reflected in the importance of the *Weltanschauung* of the intellectual as well as his discipline in the technical sense while applying his thought and interpretations. Adding to the totality of Islam, the meaning of Islamic philosophy is not just simply the role of intellectuals in the transmission of messages and interpretations particularly in the political realm. Rather, it also reflects the strong bond in the Qur’anic concepts when translated into the reality of the human reason and its intellectual interpretations. For example, the word *hikma* “appears in several places in the Qur’an, of which perhaps the most often cited us ‘He giveth wisdom (hikmah) unto whom He will, and he unto whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good’ (Qur’an, II: 269 Pickthall Translaton)”⁵⁴. In fact, traditional philosophy is marked by the particular name given to it, namely “al-Hikmah al-Ilahiyya” or “theosophy”⁵⁵.

Two perhaps very important opinions as to the definitions and the positions of Islamic philosophy in the political reality, as my personal analysis, are those of al-Kindi and a-Farabi. Al-Kindi’s elaboration on the meaning of Islamic philosophy is represented in the following idea: “Philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of things within man’s possibility, because the philosopher’s end in his theoretical knowledge is to gain truth and in his practical knowledge is to behave in accordance with the truth”⁵⁶. Al-Farabi’s perception towards Islamic philosophy and the role of the philosopher is rather a bit complimentary yet deviant. Which means that al-Farabi accepted al-Kindi’s perception only in principle; however, he believed that there is a noteworthy distinction between the philosophy that is “rooted in

⁵³ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

certainty” (falsafah yaqiniyyah)⁵⁷ and that which is characterised by being one “derived from opinion” (falsafah maznunah)⁵⁸. In my personal perception, these two opinions mark a rather controversial matter, since the post-Ibn Rushdian phase of philosophy, moving on into the modern era of the Islamic thought and theorising, for that matter also the Egyptian one, al-falsafa al-maznunah has become a prime function of the interpretations of reality. Hence, the Weltanschauung of any respective intellectual of the ones that will be under observations, and their perceptions towards the religion-political dimension, is mainly based on each intellectual’s perception of the reality and his own experience in the process toward the acquisition of the truth.

In addition, the nature of the newer generation of intellectuals represented also the reality of many factors: The two levels of sciences, of the Islamic sciences (intellectual and the transmitted one) had found their own ways of following their course of development⁵⁹. Also, according to al-Ghazali, peripatetic philosophy had become by far less important than back then during the times of Ibn Rushd. The birth of new intellectuals of different outlooks and perceptions towards reality also marked an end to many traditions followed during the traditional philosophy and its early phases⁶⁰. Furthermore, the integration of the Muslim world had come to an end after the fall of the Abbaside caliphate by the Monguls⁶¹ “and the emerging of a new pattern which led to the emergence of the Ottoman Empire”⁶² (speaking in general in that sense not just about Egypt). In that sense, falsafa started to become a different colour to it and hence also a different functionality in the Islamic world, and particularly in the regions that became part of the Ottoman Empire. The message now, specially to Egypt and the neighbouring North African (with exception to Morocco) and al-Sham regions, had a prime focus of emancipating themselves of the failure that had come upon them after the fall of the Abbaside caliphate. The rule of the Ottoman Empire was regarded as a plight of destructive nature that had to be overcome. This in its essence gave birth to the new schools of thoughts and trends of political thought and intellectual work in Egypt, mainly through al-Azhar along with some independent works outside of it.

Adding to the political nature of the Arab-Islamic philosophy in the thesis, and following the sequel of ideas so far, I wish to move on to briefly displaying the personality of reform

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.,p.65.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,p.77.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

attempts and development that took place in Egypt during the rules of the Ottoman Empire through to the English occupation.

1.2. Trends of Reform and Al-Nahda throughout the 18th and the 19th Centuries' Egypt

The nature and the trends that al-nahda takes throughout the works of the intellectuals and the scholars are certainly more apparently throughout the second and the third chapters of the thesis as they discuss it in greater details. However, this section introduces briefly the general traits that will be found and aimed at tackling in the second and third chapters alike. The reform programs that are introduced by al-Attar, al-Jabarti, Abduh and al-Afghani are primarily related to education and educational reforms, which they believe, serve as the base for any religious reform and hence emancipation from the occupant. This idea of reform is the founding principle behind reaching the nahda.

According to the thesis, one of its principles is that al-nahda did not commence by the end of the 19th century. Its roots and beginnings do lay in the 18th century's call for the introduction of the modern sciences, religious reforms at al-Azhar and educational reform by Hassan al-Attar. It also is related to the previous works, prior to al-Attar on matters such as introducing new scientific principles into al-Azhar as discussed in chapter two's introductory. The centre point in that regard is, the same aim of reform was called out for throughout the two centuries, or from the second half of the 18th century until the end of the 19th century (and even into the 20th century as well) to be precise. Only, the context and the structure of these reform programs and how they were suggested and called out for vary from one scholar to another depending on many variables and depending on the discourse of the scholar and his conceptual framework alike.

However, it will be seen that there are "mild" reformers like for example al-Attar, who despite of his work being seen as unorthodox at the time, he was still not a radical when it came to applying his ideas and putting them into reality. While al-Jabarti became rather unorthodox in his method of historical writing which is still being questioned until today in terms of how it came to being and was challenging its surrounding environment at the time, while the Egyptian milieu was not encompassing for attempts like his. The same is also applicable in the cases of Abduh and al-Afghani, in which Abduh was a modern liberal reformist who

intended at changing but yet by remaining friendly and perhaps without a root-based change of the current status quo in Egypt. On the contrary was al-Afghani in his radical call for Islamic reform and educational change, and a call for a just tyrant leader to bring about the solidity of a Muslim Ummah and an Egyptian successful political system. Hence, the discourse of working towards the nahda and reform varied in its nature from one scholar to another.

The next chapter will be tackling questions such as the following: what are the interpretations of the parts played by the role players (the Ottoman Empire, the British Occupation)? Did the Egyptian intellectual and scientific contribution and thought really begin to emerge through the interaction with the French Expedition? Or did it actually exist prior to the 18th century? Why were there many attempts to cover up this fact, and what did these earlier intellectual works and contributions tell about the Egyptian Islamic and Arab political thought and philosophising attempts? To what extent does it inform us about the identity shaping of an Egyptian Arab Muslim intellectual and his world view towards the society and its people, and the ruling elite he lives among?

Chapter Two: Political Reform Philosophies of the 18th Century Egypt

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter has been rather questioned by many, as to whether or not the 18th century does play a significant role in the shaping of al-nahda, and whether this period should really be viewed in its aggregate form or rather only starting from the French expedition in 1798. In fact, the 18th century has played a fundamental role in serving as a juxtaposition of events that paved the way for the reform initiatives before and after the French expedition to Egypt, as illustrated in the introductory chapter's second statement.

This century evokes a rather significant shift in the thought and interests mirrored by the religious institution and its representatives; the roles played by al-Azhar and the ulama at the time. This is importantly enough viewed in relation to the interactions and the problematic and at times even cooperation between the religious institution and politics, or rather the political nature of the state and its policies exerted onto the lands and a people. This shift is driven by the interest and belief in the validity and legitimacy of the studying of a certain form and nature of science, namely the Islam and Arabic related sciences and explanations, while the rest of the knowledge-driven sciences were seen as `foreign` and hence also forbidden. One will see how the shift from this perspective was originally caused by acute and selected events throughout the century. This in its very essence explains the rise of a selected few of influential thinkers and philosophers, who gave us contemporaries, the ability to view their realities through their eyes and explanations. Over and above, these selected few, which will be tackled in this chapter, demonstrate the intellectual and conceptual social construct of the Egyptian society at the time, namely through the axial role that the ulama played in the 18th century as rather opposed to the 19th century for reasons explained further on.

2.1. Historical Background: The Politics – Religion Problematic

2.1.1. Milieu of the 18th Century

Though the thesis at hand revolves around the nature of the Arab Islamic philosophy and thought of the two chosen centuries in Egypt, one can not escape a bird's eye view over the stance overall in the rest of the world in brief (namely the west resembled in the being of Europe as the most influential power, especially in relation to the events taking place in Egypt and the rest of the Arab countries at the time and later on in the 19th century in particular). After all, an important component of Global History as a discipline is to evoke the relations between cultures and how they are related or influencing one another in a given space or at a given period of time. Though given the span and the flexibility of the thesis does not enable much discussion in that regard, it is still believed that this point will add an overall perspective on the positioning of Egypt in the world during that point in history.

Important Dates in Brief

When one views the western version of the periodisation of the 18th century, it will be rather noticeable that there are various versions, which are determined primarily by the scientific works and political interests of those who wrote and made history at the time, causing rather a problematic. One version of this is that the 18th century commenced with the death of Louis XIV of France in 1715 and ended with the break out of the French revolution in 1789.⁶³ It can be said that this is rather a political or economic division of the century. A rather historical perception, however, takes a more expanded span of the 18th century and thus views it as beginning as from the glorious revolution in 1688⁶⁴, and ending with the battle of Waterloo in 1815.⁶⁵

Furthermore, the 18th century is also marked as the period within which the role of philosophy and the emergence of the enlightenment teachings began to flourish, at the same time where the role of the Catholic Church and Christian fundamentalism was forced to decline. The set of the dominant philosophical ideas at the time were governing the perception of the west also

⁶³ Roy Porter, *The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 4, Eighteenth –Century Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 45.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p46.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

towards their “other”. This can be very evident in the Orientalist works at the time that were mainly driven by imperialist interests and excavation desires⁶⁶.

On the other side, and rather outside of the Monarchies in Europe, perhaps one may need to see what the Ottoman Empire was experiencing seeing that it was the ruling umbrella under which Egypt existed at the time. The Ottoman Empire was experiencing rather turbulent events of its own. Starting the century with a Russo-Turkish war between 1710 and 1711⁶⁷, followed by the Tulip Period between the years “1718 and 1730, and three wars against Russia; 1733-1739, 1768-1774 and 1787-1791”.⁶⁸ Following that were the French Revolution and its intervention in Cairo under its “grandeur” Expedition and the Rosetta Stone discovery and decoding.

This information may seem rather basic and perhaps simplistic in display. However, though its simplicity, it is seen as rather fruitful in perceiving the positions of the important building blocks of the region and their interactions at the time, while at the time same keeping an eye on the status of Egypt.

The Status of Egypt

The Nature and Roles of Scientific Fields and Intellectual Contributions

While evoking the quandaries of Egypt during the 18th century, the covering of all the dimensions will be rather unrealistic given the span of the thesis. However, since the research problematic is related to the politics-religion dynamic and nature, hence, the main focus should be invested in that direction. In this part of the thesis, I will focus on the nature of the sciences and engagement in them alongside with the role played by al-Azhar as a religious institute. In that sense, also the role of the ulama comes to question during the 18th century in terms of the changes in their direction and their views towards the west (primarily limited to Europe at the time) and the employment of the modernised ideas with Islam as the nexus.

There is a dominant thought supported by historians and philosophers alike, that the 18th century Egypt, and the Arab sphere in general, was rather of a stagnant and backward nature.⁶⁹ In fact the main impetus is the Ottoman domination since 1517 which lasted until the

⁶⁶ Abdallah Al-Azabawi, *الفكر المصري في القرن الثامن عشر بين الجمود والتجديد* (Al Firk Al Masry fi Al Karn Al Thamin `Ashr bein al Gomud wa al Tagdid - Egyptian Thought of the 18th Century between Stagnation and Renewal) (Cairo: Dar Al Shoruk Press, 2006), p.18.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

English invasion (a joint rule between the British and the Ottoman rule) towards the second half of the 19th century; an approximate four centuries under the Ottoman domination. And as mentioned earlier in the introduction, the Islamic Golden Age faced a dramatic decline towards the mid 15th century, across the Muslim countries, with the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate and rule – mainly positioned in Baghdad and evident through *bit al-hikma*. The Ottomans, however, brought about coercive actions against freedom of thought and innovation and brought about an interminable and wearisome period of submission of thought and inventions. Similarly was the case in Egypt as well. Yet, although the attempts continued even throughout the Ottoman domination and before the 18th century, the actual fruit of these attempts were rather invisible due to the immense pressure through *النياب العالي* (*al-bab al-Aly*)⁷⁰ or the Topkapi.

Having said that, the reality and according to many historical evidence and intellectual texts, Egypt throughout the 18th century was not as historically absent in its works and contributions as believed.⁷¹ As a matter of fact, the Arab sciences revolved around the religious and jurisprudence explanations, elaborations and thought. In that regard, in order to explain the nature at the time, one must realise the classifications of the fields of knowledge at the time.

Abdalla al-Azabawy, a contemporary Egyptian political and social intellectual, categorised the fields of scientific engagement of the Arabs and Muslims in general into two main groups: *العلوم النقلية* (*al-olum al-naqliyya* - the sciences of religion and Arabic grammar and jurisprudence) and *العلوم العقلية* or *العلوم التطبيقية* (*al-olum al-tatbiqiyya* or *al-olum al-aqliyya* - applied and imported sciences).⁷²

The basic Arab sciences were rather confined to the Islamic and Arabic grammar related knowledge fields. However, through the Islamic expansions and the *fottuhat*⁷³ the adoption and inclusion of other sciences took place, which is the typical stance of any dominant body at any given point in history. This was the case through the Islamic *fottuhat* from the Pakistani province Sindh to the far west as far as *al-Maghrib* and *al-Andalus*.

⁷⁰ Al-Bab al- 'Ali is an Arabic concept used in order to refer to the Ottoman rule and its base in Istanbul also known as the Topkapi Palace (1465 – 1856); see Mohamed Afifi, 2008. It was established and maintained for the purpose of ruling and governing the affairs of the Ottoman Empire outside Turkey as well as the direct policy initiations in the Ottoman domains.

⁷¹ Azabawy, loc.cit.

⁷² Ibid, p.11.

⁷³ *Fottu'hat* is a plural concept taken from the Arabic of *Fat'h* which is *the opening*. This term is primarily used when referring to the Islamic expansions as a form of opening up new regions to be included under the reign of the Islamic cultural circumference.

Al-Olum al-Naqliyyah:

Al-Olum al-Naqliyyah represented the dominant scientific domain at the time of the beginning of the 18th century, manifested in the religious thinking, which extended as far back as the introduction of Islam. That is primarily going back the domination of Islamic thought on the Muslim countries, as well as the organisation of the man-God relationship on one side and on the other side also the nature of the inter-individuals' interactions, hence, the man-man relation. As a matter of fact, Egypt's ulama's engagement in them played a fundamental role amidst the intellectuals and religious leaders in the rest of the Muslim ulama at the time.

Among these sciences are fields such as the Qur'anic tafsir⁷⁴. This included the formation of particular workshops related to the teaching and practices of this science and field of knowledge, which was the complex resulting in the birth of many famous and significant Qur'anic reciters. In fact, during the 18th century there was an overall amount of 45 books⁷⁵ authored on the Qur'anic explanation which was spread throughout the Muslim world. Similarly was also the role the علم الحديث (*eilm al-hadith* - science of al-hadith) which includes the telling and the elaboration on them alike⁷⁶. This part of Islamic studies is also known as *eilm osoul al- hadith*⁷⁷ (علم أسلول الحديث), or the science of hadith roots and origins.

This type of studies took on a very important part in the Egyptian society of the 18th century. In that realm it is also significant to refer to the role played by Modern Indian School which was the most active Islamic school in the 18th century regarding Islamic researching. It was a school that advocated the importance of analysis when it comes to hadith and to go beyond the casual and overt meaning of it, since contextual analysis is rather crucial to transmit the correct information to the leader and the people. As *Ibn Khaldun* says about the importance of the awareness of al-hadith, that it is the source that the al-ulama need to use as a tool in order to guide the leaders and the folk of a people so that religion can serve as the guide of the political life⁷⁸. Perhaps the most important remembered names in eilm al-hadith who contributed their thoughts and interpretations during 18th century were persons like: *Al-Sheikh Muhammad Mortada al-Zebeidi* (1732-1790) who is of Indian origins and lived a long time in Egypt until his death, working on introducing the analytical thought into religious works and

⁷⁴ Tafsir is the Arabic for explanation. This concept when used in conjunction with the Qur'an, it is then taken as the explanation of the Qur'anic texts and contexts and the A'hadith which are the sayings and Qur'anic interpretations by Muhammad and his followers.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.19.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

hadith⁷⁹. Also, *Al-Sheikh Muhammad al-Zharqani* (1645 – 1710) who was an Egyptian scholar writing about fiqh and as well as its correlations with al-hadith. He was described by *al-Jabarti* (later on discussed and introduced) as the last of his kind who contributed with modernity, illumination and linguistic eloquence in the field of al-hadith. *Al-Sheikh Ahmad al-Damanshouriy* (1689 – 1778) is also another important figure as he was the grand imam of al-Azhar during the time of 1767- 1776. He was known for his mastery of the science of medicine as well as the science of Islamic jurisprudence and hadith, which were both his professions. In addition, *al-Damanshouriy* also wrote in geology, about the manners and customs of the modern Egyptian society (the 18th century), in the field of chemistry, the *Hanbaliy Fiqh* and the *Hanafiyy Fiqh*, as well as political contribution which was “*Manhag al-Solouk fi Nasihat al-Molouk*”⁸⁰ (منهج السلوك في نصيحة الملوك - the guide of manners to be used for the process of advising the Kings and rulers, and how they should advise their people). Most importantly as well were the contributions of *al-Sheikh Hassan al-Jabarti* (1698-1774), the father of the great historian *Abdulrahman al-Jabarti*. Al-Sheikh Hassan al-Jabarti’s contributions found place in the fields of mathematics, astronomy as well as fiqh.

Ilm al-Tawhid wa Ilm al-Kalam (علم التوحيد و علم الكلام - monotheism and theology); see al-Azabawy (2006), is also another very dominant field of study under this category. It is the field of conducting research related to the transformation of the theoretical proof of the oneness of God, into practical proof as well as scientific. Due to the incredible and vast range of details that belong in this part, it will be rather impossible to merge them all into the thesis. However, in reference to the details given to this point earlier on in the first chapter, it is also crucial to add and demonstrate a selected list of important figures of Egyptians of the 18th century in this field. *Al-Sheikh Aliy al-Amrousy* (late 16th century until 1759)⁸¹, was perhaps the first scholar to engage himself in the writing and about monotheism and the singularity and oneness of God during the 18th century. Also, again, *al-Sheikh Ahmad al-Damanshouriy* had his share of contributions in this direction of studies as well which included his writing about the relationship between the ruler and the “creator” as well as other explanations and elaborations on the role of the ruler towards his people in relation to the existence of the one and only God. Furthermore, is also *al-Sheikh Muhammad al-Jawhariy* (died 1800)⁸² who contributed with his works on the role of psychology and the belief in the oneness of God, the

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.40.

⁸² Ibid., p.42.

explanation of the greatness of God in relation to the status of paradise and there hereafter and many more contributions.

In addition to the above, the fields of the Sufi order in Egypt during the 18th century, the studies of the Arabic grammar, philology and rhetoric, linguistics⁸³ as well as the use of dictionaries were all immensely substantial during the 18th century Egyptian intellectual contributions by the ulama; see Azabawiy (2006).

Al-Olum al-Tatbiqiyya or Al-Olum al-Aqliyya

This field of sciences refers to the spheres of knowledge that were not used by the Arabs during *al-jahiliyya*⁸⁴ (الجاهلية) and which became integrated into the Arab and Muslim cultures during the *fotouhat*. This includes all of the following disciplines: philosophy, reason and research disciplines, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, geography and history. After the first period of the spread of Islam, these disciplines not only became integrated as part of the Arab and Muslim societies, new discoveries and corrections upon the previously discovered rules and ideas were implemented as well.⁸⁵ Following the role of the Arab Golden Age, and the flourishing of the various sciences during that period, the decline of the role of intellectual contributions and works during the Ottoman domination over Egypt caused a massive downturn in the various scientific fields. This brings us to the fact that philosophy, as well as the then regarded as the “western sciences”, became rather untouched on an intensive basis like the case used to be before the Ottoman rule.

Al-falsafa was rather opposed by the Sunni scholars during the 18th century Egypt. Their main argument was that philosophy was a major threat to the stability and the solid foundation of Islam and its practice. They also believed that it would leave space and room for doubts and falsifications of the words of God in the holy book of al-Qur'an as well as the sunnah, to the extent that scholars forbade students from interacting with philosophers or even engaging in philosophical debates or studies. One of the resorting documentations at the time was that written by *Ibn Khaldun* towards the lack of importance of philosophy since it is the science that studies the metaphysical, which as a Muslim, is highly unimportant and misleading to the

⁸³ Ibid., p.45.

⁸⁴ Al-Jahiliya is the time before Islamic awareness, hence pre-Islamic era. It comes from the concept al-Jahl which means ignorance or unawareness. See al-Azabawiy and Shalaq.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.63.

nature of the good Muslim society⁸⁶. Similarly was *Al-Ghazaliy*'s perception towards the philosophers, in his book "*Tihafut al-Falasifa*" (تهافت الفلاسفة), describing them as fools and negating the mercy of God as well as arrogant and mainly believing in the functionality and the sole role of the mind and hence also seen as disbelievers. That was the case, while on the other hand *Ibn Rushd* was a great advocate of the role of philosophy and its importance, when responding to *al-Ghazaliy*'s stand points towards philosophers and the science of philosophy in his work "*Tahafut al-Tahafut*" (تهافت التهافت).

Egypt specific, however, there are several reasons why the role of philosophy was diminished during the 18th century and before that since the 15th century, as well as why the role of the ulama was mainly related to the teachings of religion and the guiding of the *hokkam*⁸⁷. These reasons can be set as the following:

- During the first and the second centuries *hijri* (the 8th and 9th centuries AD), the Alexandria school of thought faced a decline for the interest towards her since the population was diverting its focus towards religious and Islamic research. This caused the majority of those engaged in it to be of Jewish and Christian religious orientations at the time, who were primarily engaged in the studies of medicine and astronomy at the time⁸⁸.
- The Egyptians by nature did not like to vary and dispute concerning religious opinions and matters. Hence, the field of reasoning did not find much success during the 18th century, while it succeeded in other parts of the Muslim world where debating and discussions of philosophical natures were accepted and integrated in the societal structure.
- The main achievement of the Egyptians in the field of philosophy was in the direction of analysing and commenting on the previously established works and literatures in that field from earlier centuries and contributions.

However, despite of these remarks, there were important contributions that took place that showed the gradual, and in some cases independent from al-Azhar, movements and initiatives taken to shed light on this field of knowledge and push it up to the surface yet ones again in the Egyptian cultural and political history.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.63.

⁸⁷ Arabic for rulers.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

In that regard there are important names of Egyptian scholars who contributed with their works from which a sample would include: the rewriting of the works of *Muhammad bin Ashraf al-Husseiny al-Samarqandiy* (died 1355)⁸⁹ on the rules and laws of researching, *al-Sheikh Ahmad al-Seheimiy* (died 1764)⁹⁰ on al-‘Hadith, al-Taw‘hid and reason as well as his famous work called “*Kawakib al-Mantiq*”⁹¹ (كواكب المنطق - The Planets of Reason), *al-Sheikh Youssuf al-Hifny* (died 1764)⁹² and one of his famous works on the disciplines and premises of methodology and philosophical research, also *al-Sheikh Ahmad al-Millawiy* (died 1767)⁹³ whose work evokes his belief in the significance of the engagement in the science and field of logic as it is the key for understanding the rest of the sciences and comprehending the basic laws and rules that govern the employment of them in our lives, and also *al-Sheikh Hassan al-Attar*.

Though it is not directly related to the theme of the thesis at hand, it is still worth mentioning the vast group of contributions in the fields of **mathematics** (*al-Sheikh Hassan al-Jabarti*, *al-Sheikh Mohammad al-Ghamriy*, *al-Sheikh Ramadan al-Saftiy al-Khawankiy*, *al-Sheikh Ahmad al-Damanhouriy* as well as *al-Sheikh Muhammad bin Moussa al-Jahiy*, to mention a few. In the field of **astronomy** also *al-Sheikh Hassan al-Jabarti* who discussed the balance of the universal aspects in relation to spirituality and the unseen and the metaphysical, also the scholar *Rizq* (date known) who was an Egyptian Coptic scholar, and was amongst the importantly referenced intellectuals in the field of astronomy and astrology for the *Muhammad bik the Great*. In addition to the mentioned is the renowned Egyptian astrologist *Radwan Afandiy al-Falakiy*⁹⁴ who was the establishing pillar of the Egyptian modern astrology and astronomy school in the 18th century. Most of the scholars that followed him were either directly educated by him, or directed through his scholars, and he was seen as the most respectable and highly renowned modern scholar in the field of astrology as well as theology at the time as referenced by *al-Sheikh Hassan al-Jabarti*⁹⁵. Finally also are the fields of **chemistry, medicine and pharmacy**. They resemble Egypt’s interest and engagement,

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p.66.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.84. Al-Falakiy as a last name was given to him due to his profession which is in Arabic ‘Alim al-Falak, or a scholar in the field of astronomy.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.88.

since the dawn of the 18th century, in the old school of chemistry; see al-Azabawiy (2006) and Jamal al-Din al-Shayyal (1950)⁹⁶.

The brief display of the science fields and the contributions given to them, since part of this paper is about intellectual and scientific contributions in the Egyptian society and proving that it existed long before the entrance of Napoleon, leads us to question the position and the roles of al-*ulama* and scholars at the time of the 18th century during the Ottoman domination over Egypt, especially on the political and religious fronts.

The Position and Roles of al-Ulama

“*Ulama*” is one of the pivotal conceptions in the Islamic history, as it is directly denoted to a particularly unique stratum in the Egyptian 18th century society. They were always viewed as *the people of the pen* or *ahl al-Qallam*⁹⁷ (أهل القلم), meaning the protectors of the word written and responsible for the knowledge that is disseminated as well the information transmitted to and from the rulers and the people. The members of this stratum are primarily chosen from the members of the legislative courts as well as members of the religious and educational institutions⁹⁸. Hence, in that sense, the scholars or *ulama* represented the people including the layman of the Egyptian streets and were not directly necessarily related to royalties or any ruling position in the country. The importance of the *ulama* represented the reason that led to their engagement in various segments of the society.

Hence, their function should not be seen as merely restricted to the writings and intellectual contributions they made throughout the 18th century or even long before that, but also regarding the societal, religious and political activities; thus exceeded the scribal functionality. That is primarily the case when a scholar is publicly accepted on the popular level. One important example that can be given in that regard is that of al-Sheikh al-Deridiy in 1786⁹⁹, a prominent scholar at the time at al-Azhar, who was calling out for the Egyptian people during a time of severe disputes among the Mameluke and their corrupt practices regarding the ruling as well as the stolen lands and the deprived farmers. Al- Deridiy said: “I am with you moving toward a tomorrow where we gather the people of all the regions of

⁹⁶ See Bibliography.

⁹⁷ Muhammad Afifi, *عرب وعثمانيون: رؤى مغايرة* (Arab wa Othmaniyyun: Roaa Moghayira - Arabs and Ottomans: Different Perspectives) (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouq, 2005), p.75.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.77.

Egypt and the ghettos and alleys in Boulaq and Masr al-Qadeema. I will ride with you and we shall rob their homes as they have robbed our homes. We shall die as martyrs or may God grant us emancipation!”¹⁰⁰.

Related to the previous point, Afaf Marsot in her article “*Religion or Opposition? Urban Protest Movements in Egypt*” tackles the active role of al-*ulama* in mass mobilisation as well as elite participation,¹⁰¹ as seen in the case of al-Deridiy. Perhaps this is the main point that will be used as a guide in manoeuvring and understanding the thought of the scholars of the 18th century and later on in the 19th century as well. Driven from that, the extent to which their mobilisation affected the establishment of a revival of the Egyptian thought and philosophies towards their already existing *Weltanschauung*.

It is seen that “... by virtue of their position as teachers, scholars, lawyers, judges, and interpreters of religion, as well as the guardians of traditions, the *ulama* played a major part in every aspect of social and political life (...) and ... played an economic role as well”¹⁰².

Specifically speaking, the *ulama* did have a pivotal role in the Egyptian society since they were the domestic rulers during the domination of the country by “aliens”¹⁰³ which gave them a wider scope of acceptance and legitimising their word and spreading their message. In many cases that is, the *ulama* were looked at as spokespersons since they were mediators in many cases between the rulers and the ruled. Hence, that facilitated the functioning of the religious dimension in Egypt to exist alongside and parallel to that of the political institutions and practices giving them actual power which “was seldom, however, turned into seizure of actual power, except in times of crisis; for it was in the nature of the institution to proffer advice and guidance, and to influence the rulers rather than to take actions themselves”¹⁰⁴, at least throughout the 18th century. As we see later on in chapter three, the roles of the *ulama* changes with the new political practice and rules of Muhammad Ali.

In addition also, the roles of al-*ulama* were crucial terms of riots and protest movements against the Mameluke during the 18th century¹⁰⁵. A possible interpretation would be that their stand against the Mameluke were not solely directed towards fighting their abuse of power, but also due to the fact that any exceeded portion of power in the hands of the aliens would

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Marsot, Afaf, “Religion or Opposition? Urban Protest Movements in Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.16, No.4 (1984), 541-552, www.jstor.org/stable/163157 (accessed May 10, 2009).

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 542.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

mean less domination and less effectiveness of the roles and central position held by the ulama. However, in that regard one must also direct attention towards the difference between the al-ulama and their intentions, since it is rather unrealistic to claim that they represented a homogenous sect of the society or even a homogenous establishment¹⁰⁶.

Despite their differences, they always acted as mediators between the people and the rulers. Not only so, but al-ulama and the mystics of the Sufi orders in Egypt played a fundamental part in the “affairs of the state, and represented the native elite element in government”¹⁰⁷. In addition, they also represented the voice of the shariah and represented a set of theoretically idealistic terms and notions of the just Muslim society in many cases. Those of them who managed to be close to the rulers in terms of influencing the decision making mechanisms and achieve a tighter knot between politics and religion, were able to somewhat push their ideal notions into practice¹⁰⁸, though that was not successful in the usual sense as seen in the case of Hassan al Attar and al-Sheikh Rifaa al-Tahtawiy. As the circle of the Mameluke became more fragmented with many divisions and disputes in the inner structure, the ulama became more powerful in return, since they were legitimately seen as the only body that could interpret the sharia. Hence, they were the capable and legitimately able “to declare a Mameluke as an outcast, or could declare his actions contrary to the sharia (...) and (...) oppositions generated by matters of politics and economics were discussed and presented as a matter of religion and law, thereby granting the ulama a right to intervene in the political process.”¹⁰⁹ The power of al-ulama has actually extended that far as to have played a pivotal part in the support given to Muhammad Ali which helped him come to power.¹¹⁰

Having said that, this part only serves as a layout of the Egyptian scholarly fabric, which is similarly also the key to understanding the reality at hand at a given point in time. Since, the focus is on the holistic view and the construction of the fabric, it is rather imperative to view the stance of the French expedition and intervention in Egypt as well as that of the Ottoman rule. By that it is meant, what was the overall agenda of each and how did the country look like during their presence in the 18th century? However, for the sake of avoiding repetition, the following section will only tackle the role and nature of the French expedition in Egypt. The reason being that as the 18th century will be displayed through the eyes and reflections of Hassan al-Attar and Abdulrahman al-Jabarti, I decided to evoke the common experience they

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 543.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

had and lived throughout it while reflecting, which was the French invasion. This will also be examined in terms of how each viewed them and reflected upon. However, the Ottoman domination will be displayed separately since the works conducted by both thinkers were different in that regard, and the works of al-Jabarit in particular was holistic and tackling the entire Ottoman rule since the dawn of the 18th century until his death towards the first quarter of the 19th century.

While serving the purpose of avoiding repetition, it is still worth mentioning that unlike al-Jabarti, al-Attar, due to the nature of his works and specialisations did not overtly reflect on the French in an excessive manner. Yet that will be further discussed in section 2.2.

2.1.2. The French Expedition and Egypt

When discussing the role of the French in Egypt during the 18th century, the main argument that one would encounter is that the enlightenment period of the Egyptians in modern history began the moment the French set foot on Egyptian soil. In that sense, not only does this thesis have a partial aim of deconstructing this argument, through the previously mentioned parts (see 2.1.1. Milieu of the 18th Century), but it also aims at evoking the sphere that paved the path for the intellectual outburst leading to al-nahda and the call for emancipation. The French expedition is one main building block in the Egyptian intellectual history in that sense. Hence, the intention is not to discuss the establishment and the development of the French expedition and hence the French domination over Egypt between the years 1798 until 1801, but rather to illustrate the nature of their invasion in terms of their aims and agenda towards their intervention in Egypt, tackled on the intellectual level.

As already mentioned, there is an argument shared among the western and the eastern thinkers and historians alike that al-nahda in Egypt began with the French invasion, which also marks the beginning of the Egyptian modern history¹¹¹. In that sense, it is henceforward argued, that through the French, Egypt was able to successfully gain a chance that otherwise would have been uncovered; namely, to become emancipated, modernised and walk down the path and through the gate of being acknowledged and seriously as an enlightened construct. Hence, it is

¹¹¹ Ahmad Zakariya Shalaq. *الحداثة والإمبريالية: الغزوة الفرنسية وإشكاليات نهضة مصر* (Al-Hadatha wa al-Imberiyaliyya: Al-Ghazwu al-Firinsiyy wa Ishkaliyyat Nahdat Masr - Modernity and Imperialism: The French Invasion and the Problematic of Egypt's Nahda) (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouq, 2005), 7.

seen as the “sole” reason for the beginning of Egypt’s modern intellectual thought.¹¹² One is urged to also bring in the conception of the Eurocentric construct in the picture, as it explains this perception rather well. In many aspects, the reference to Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is imperative as it explains the positions of figures such as Ernest Renan and more of the present Orientalist thinkers and how they viewed the “orient-occident” relationship, let alone the “orient” as a construct in itself. The Egyptians, according to the French advocating Orientalist thinkers, are hence being “cleansed” and “placed in a higher intellectual standard”¹¹³ than their previous deteriorating status was. Were the Egyptians at the time perceived as “deteriorating” and rather “backward” because their intellectual works revolved around linguistics, religion and partially philosophy since the beginning of the 18th century? So what was the standard of determination if even religion for Europe at the time was no longer central, hence not really determinant? In fact, though these questions may not be directly pivotal regarding the thesis question and main theme, yet they are certainly worth a thought by a historian or a philosopher among the readers in the field.

Having looked at an example of the Orientalist perception towards the French expedition and invasion, the other side of the coin is also very crucial to be placed in the picture. This is a rather conservative and nationalist in dimensions and believes that the French invasion brought nothing less but cultural and ethical destruction of the Egyptian milieu. The belief is also that the French carried out a “blind” importing process of their culture and their attitudes into the Egyptian social fabric.¹¹⁴ As a matter of fact, this intervention caused the gradual break up or decay of the societal structure, resulting into more damage along with the societal deterioration the Ottoman domination had caused already since the dawn of the 16th century in Egypt.¹¹⁵ One may also perceive that this event performed a rather “cultural copy and paste” project onto the Egyptian society, along with the rest of the North African region it dominated during then as well as later on, too. In addition, the Egyptian nahdawiyy¹¹⁶ thought was evidently present long before the French invasion, and hence this shows that the Egyptian culture and society was essentially capable and ripe for intellectual additions and production before the French, as history has proven to be the case.¹¹⁷ Therefore, self-emancipation and determination is seen as the pivotal aspect and hence the driving motive for many of the intellectuals at the time to fight the French and the Ottoman existence at the time.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Arabic: adjective describing the nature of being part of al-nahda or rather being enlightened.

¹¹⁷ Al-Shalaq, op.cit., p.8.

When one reflects on the French rule in Egypt, and the agenda that was at hand at the time, in brief, it would bring to the realisation that even the French, at least intellectually, knew that the bare intervention into a non-Francophone country will cause more problems than pleasant outcomes. In that realm one can refer to Maximillien Robespierre (1758-1794) who was an influential figure of the French Revolution and controlling the committee of public safety, he said that “the most extravagant idea that can be born in the head of a political thinker is to believe that it suffices for people to enter, weapons in hand, among a foreign people and to expect to have its laws and constitution embraced. No one loves armed missionaries; the first lesson of nature and prudence to repulse them as enemies”¹¹⁸.

Accordingly, what took place in Egypt by the French was the opposite of that what they expected. Bonaparte invaded the Egyptians by force, promising them endlessly to “enlighten” them as well providing them with the “never before-existent” education they should have had¹¹⁹. He planned a movement to publish and print out flyers explaining to the Egyptians in “simplistic language”¹²⁰ the reason for the French invasion, as well as the promises he gave to enhance and educate the people. That was surely the case after the powers of the Mameluke were withdrawn, which was followed by the fleeing of many back to Istanbul.

Important in that regard is to keep an eye on the relation of that part with respect to the main theme of the thesis, namely the roles of the intellectuals and the background and motives they had to rebel and shout out for reform and emancipation. This leads to the next point with that respect namely the agenda of the French towards the Egyptians in order to win them over and to calm down the voices of al-ulama as well as the laymen who dominated the Egyptian streets. Hence, there are two dimensions that form the French agenda in that sense: the *Dawawin* and the shape of “religious politics”¹²¹.

Al-Dawawin was a name given to a forum that serves a certain purpose, made out of an agenda and a regularly followed up issue of discussion. In that sense, the diwans that were initiated by Bonaparte had one main purpose; it being ruling the Egyptians through their own sources on the frontline. In other words, he resorted to sheikhs and al-ulama in order to put the diwans together, as well as to use them as mediators between the French occupants and the

¹¹⁸ Bookrags Archives, “Maximilien Robespierre Quotes,” [a list], (Wikiquote, revised 2006), http://www.bookrags.com/quotes/Maximilien_Robespierre, (accessed May 08, 2010).

¹¹⁹ Al-Shalaq, op.cit., p.67.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.85.

people of Egypt¹²². Their positions revolved around the administrative aspects which were initially carried out by the Mameluke of the Ottoman Empire. In that regard, a curious reference was written by Bonaparte, which was part of his regularly kept notes during his expedition. He said: “The Arabs view the Ottomans and the Mameluke since they ruled them by force. The original rulers of the Arab Ummah (he meant Egypt) are the al-ulama who enjoy the asset of great trust from the part of the masses”¹²³. Again, the pivotal role of the al-ulama and the intellectuals come ones again to the foreground. He went on further by saying, which adds more to understanding the overall French occupant’s agenda: “... in order to dominate and rule Egypt, we need (mediators) as leaders, and I preferred the ulama and the fuqahaa¹²⁴ of the sharia since they understand and interpret the Qur’an and since the biggest obstacles we faced so far are of religious nature, so we need to win them over on our side. They are also of great and polite manners and love justice and peace and are partially rich¹²⁵. I will be using them in order to communicate to the public. Through them I have created the dawawin and they are the channel through which I will govern and rule the lands ...”¹²⁶.

These dawawin had many functions, surely primarily the ruling of Egypt through the executive, legislative and judicial functions. Al-Jabarti, who is known as *Muarikh al-Hamla al-Ferinsiyya* (مؤرخ الحملة الفرنسية - historian of the French Expedition and Occupation), commented that the functionality of the diwans was rather fictional. By that he meant, that the speeches given by Bonaparte mainly included references made on Egypt’s civilisation and history, and that, as al-Jabarti believes, is a reason to doubt their intentions and their desires to improve the Egyptian status as they claimed they would want to.¹²⁷ Al-Jabarti also said that the promises and the plans were over exaggerated, since the French believed they could win the Egyptians by their gentile talk while praising the Egyptian culture.

As a matter of fact, this over exaggeration even reached the level of the lack of actual functioning of the dawawin. Their role was primarily also to serve as a dialogue hub between the Egyptians and the French colonialists. As al-Jabarti and Louis Awad agree, this dialogue faced a miserable failure¹²⁸. The reason being that the involved parties were unable to

¹²² Ibid., p.68. [translated quote]

¹²³ Ibid., p.69. [translated quote]

¹²⁴ Scholars

¹²⁵ Louis Awad in his arguments mentions that it is rather unclear how Bonaparte could have seen a generalized trend that all the scholars and the ulama were rich at that time, since their main problem was that they were not well paid and yet they continued their professions as it is the profession they do best and believed in. See Awad, 1969.

¹²⁶ Al Shalaq, op.cit., p. 69.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.83.

¹²⁸ Awad (2001), op.cit., p. 19.

communicate and transmit their ideas and needs in order to establish a proper dialogue to start with. In many aspects, the dialogue forum which Bonaparte strived for was viewed by al-Jabarti as a big joke and a charade¹²⁹ like the rest of his agenda and that which his army followed alike.

The religious politics was another fundamental factor that shaped the policy of Bonaparte and the French crew in their invasion over Egypt. With the absence of the Mamelukes in Egypt and their roles being set and put aside, there was an urgent need for the religious factor to enter the agenda of the French in order to be able to get through to the Egyptians via a path they were strongly attached to; Islam. Reference will be made about al-Jabarti's perception towards that point. However, what should be said is that the French used many mechanisms to prove to the Egyptians that they respect and admire the Islamic civilisation and religion alike. Al-Shalaq explains that within the dimensions that Bonaparte believed that claiming his belief in the "life of Muhammad" would be a leading and key point for his hegemonical plan.¹³⁰ Once there was an approval from the French government that he may march out with his army and to head to Egypt and northern Africa, Bonaparte was more than passionate towards the idea of taking over the old world and the old civilisation of the east. One argument is even given by Awad is that Bonaparte was astonished by the mechanisms which were used by Muhammad in building up the Muslim Ummah which included an enormous amount of people. He believed that the only method to establish an empire from scratch is to become and be one of the aimed targets.¹³¹

This point on the French agenda was followed by the Islamisation of their policies. By that one can understand various points or rather expect the possible actions and sequence of events that had taken place. Not only did Bonaparte bring along an entire and complete crew of researchers and scientific tools in many if not all fields to carry out a study about the Egyptians and their culture and life in general, but he was also capable to employ other elements that would enable him to solidify his military aims and practices in Cairo and in the regions surrounding it. A vital component of this discourse was also the celebrations of the Muslim events such as Ramadan and al-mawlid al-nabawi (the birth of Muhammad)¹³². Here, however, appears a problematic that Awad tackled which is, "if the French emancipated themselves from the influence of religion through their revolution and also the renaissance

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Al-Shalaq, op.cit., p. 86.

¹³¹ Awad (2001), op.cit., p.20.

¹³² Al-Shalaq, op.cit., p. 87.

movement, would it be plausible to believe their practice and belief in Islam or any religion at all?”¹³³ These practices were performed, as ordered, by both of the generals Jean-Baptiste Klébre (1753-1800) and Jacques Francois Menou (1750-1810)¹³⁴. This charade, as referred to by al-Jabarti, was taken as far as the prayers and the fasting of Ramadan. It even went to the extent of Menou converting into Islam and marrying a Muslim “because he wanted to revenge and hated her family and her religion”¹³⁵. In that regard the French scholar, Orientalist and historian André Raymond (1925-)¹³⁶, discussed the role of the intellectuals during these circumstances and said that the influence they had was they were forcing the outburst of rebellions towards emancipation and protection of their customs and religion, since it was being offended by the practices of the French¹³⁷.

Furthermore, the failure of the French expedition in term of its occupational purposes came about through elements that demonstrate the essentiality of the role played by the Egyptian intellectuals at the time. The defeat of the French does not take on the nature of a sudden event that took place. On the contrary, the Egyptians had refused since the beginning of the French occupation and Bonaparte’s entry to Egypt, that they would be ones again occupied but a non-Muslim, hence a non-believer, and a non-Arab. Their refusal was translated into the existence of many rebellious movements against the status quo at the time. As a matter of fact, the French present in Egypt was always perceived as endangered and threatened, as explained by the French historians and scientist present during the expedition¹³⁸. The most famous and known rebellions against the French are the first Cairo revolution in October 1798 and the second Cairo revolution in March 1800¹³⁹. Again, since the theme of the thesis and hence also the thesis question, are revolved around the role of the Egyptian Muslim intellectual and thus the crystallisation of the relationship between politics and religion, these two revolutions evoke this very statement and its nature.

The First Cairo Revolution took place approximately three months after the French invasion of the capital city. Al-Shalaq states that most of the consulted historical sources agree on the motives that would have caused the revolution to take place; them being administrative and financial reasons as well as the rebellion against tyranny or *istebdad*¹⁴⁰. That was particularly

¹³³ Ibid.,p.88.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.89.

¹³⁵ Awad (2001), op.cit., p.

¹³⁶ Al-Shalaq., op.cit., p.89.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.126.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.127.

the case towards the amount of taxation which Bonaparte had imposed upon the Egyptian farmers on their properties which included shops, buildings, public services and more of the like. It was simply seen, as referred to by Awad (see Awad, 1969) that the French had introduced new customs and activities that did not suit the cultural heritage of the Egyptians¹⁴¹. That brings us to the note, that although the Ottomans had dominated Egypt for nearly three centuries, yet the Egyptians were at least capable of maintaining their own customs and traditions, despite of the decay occurring on the intellectual level in comparison to the Muslim Golden Age which Egypt had also participated in. Hence, the French invasion was one of a cultural nature, as seen throughout the rest of the North African regions dominated by France in terms of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco¹⁴².

While the penetration of the French enforced taxation and corrupt administrative systems continued, the al-ulama and the scholars pursued a fundamental role in contacting scholars and Mameluke who had fled the country on the dawn of the French occupation¹⁴³. The purpose and motive was clear: to gather the possible amount of power in order to fight back against the occupants. That included strong and well planned mosque speeches by the sheikhs in order to motivate and to engage the public in a national purpose¹⁴⁴. Again, this point goes back to the idea discussed by Marsout regarding the mass mobilisation role of the sheikhs and significantly also al-ulama throughout the 18th as well as the 19th centuries in approaching the public on political matters through their earned public trust and recognition. The mobilisation speeches included ideas such as the French being non-believers and manipulators of religion since they personally do not have any religious beliefs, hence lack the sense of religious respect and dignity¹⁴⁵. The role of the Muslim, henceforward, is greater since it was seen to have the duty to be directed and invested toward fighting them as they are bringing about false ideas and customs to the Egyptian society that in return may and in fact will cause further decay, not only on the intellectual level but on the religious as well.

Here also comes the role of the religious institution in relation to the political matters that took place at the time in the country. Al-Azhar carried out an important project in terms of the creation of specialised councils responsible for the organisation of the revolution. It also equipped the public and the participants with weaponry to fight the French with¹⁴⁶. The

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.,p.130.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

revolution, despite of all the motivation and inspiration behind it, failed as the French administration tried to calm down the boiling Egyptian blood by pleasing them with a new diwan that was going to pay more attention in dealing with their problems thoroughly¹⁴⁷. However, matters got worse as al-ulama and the rebellious movements and outcries were not put to rest, as was also the case with the Syrians rebellions against the French and their attempts and desires to spread to al-Sham¹⁴⁸. In the light of all these complications, Bonaparte believed that he should no longer stay and hence, fled back to France leaving his troops behind in Egypt, which gave an overall impression that it was time the French, were to retreat to prevent further losses and defeat as from August 1799¹⁴⁹.

The Second Cairo Revolution had its special milieu from which it had emerged. After Bonaparte's departure, Klébre was in official charge of the French troops. That was followed by the battle at Ain Shams, which led to the outbreak of the Ottoman troops and them entering Cairo to encourage an upraise ones again against the French. This one, more than the first, was backed up by a stronger base of Egyptian intellectuals who on the 20th of March 1800 stood side by side calling for a freedom for Egypt¹⁵⁰. The advocates of the revolution were not only intellectuals; however, the base was much wider. It also included tradesmen, fishermen, carpenters and the like. They were all led by important intellectual and scholarly figures particularly Omar Makram¹⁵¹. Klébre was assassinated by Sulaiman al-Halaby¹⁵², with the aim of putting an end to the French occupation in Egypt and from spreading in the region in general.

The administration was then moved to the authorities of Menou and his fellow generals¹⁵³ who were counter fought by the English, who had the aim to expel the French from Egypt and take over it instead¹⁵⁴. The prime motive for the English was that the Ottomans were rather weak to control Egypt. Following long debates and manoeuvres, the Ottomans entered Egypt

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.128.

¹⁴⁸ Greater Syria

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.135.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Omar Makram, was an Egyptian revolutionist at the time of the French invasion over Egypt. He headed a rebellious group to force the French to let go of many of their Egyptian possessions and hence to gradually force them out of the lands. He is known for his rebellious and nationalistic trends and directions of political and social activism; see Awad, 2001, and this report on him in Arab Times Online. (http://www.arabtimes.com/portal/article_display.cfm?Action=&Preview=No&ArticleID=14511).

¹⁵² A Syrian political activist.

¹⁵³ Al-Shalaq, op.cit., p. 140.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

ones again and took control over in May 1801¹⁵⁵, which resulted in the complete retreat of the French.

The French occupation marked an imported developmental point that shaped the nature of the need of al-ulama to shape their ideas and modernise according to the needs they saw was essentially needed to rebuild and regenerate the damaged aspects of the Egyptian culture. The damage caused is not only through the French occupation of course, but rather also the accumulation on top of that incited by the Ottoman domination since the early 16th century. This will be depicted through a carefully selected sample that are viewed to at least partially represent the status of the intellectual and the role of the religious and political institution in the 18th century, baring in mind the limited circumference a thesis holds in the amount of personalities and information that can be included and tackled. These selected figures are al-Sheikh Hassan al-Attar and al-Sheikh Abdulrahman al-Jabarti.

A methodological reflection

A quick reflection should be made here with respect to the methodological approach that is used in the thesis and has been explained in the introductory chapter. As mentioned, the approach used to study the thesis is composed out of two parts: the content and the context analysis. The contextual analysis was all which was displayed throughout the first and the entire second chapter up until this current section. The aim of which was to evoke the surrounding environment of the case study at hand: the intellectual contributions regarding the Islamic political philosophising (theorisation and thought) in Egypt throughout the 18th and 19th centuries with respect to religion-politics problematic. Having thoroughly authenticated the surrounding environment of the 18th century and that which surrounded al-Attar, within the limitations of a master thesis, the content analysis approach comes to place. That will be displayed through the discussion al-Attar's background and Weltanschauung, his argumentations and concept, the agenda followed, the solutions and open questions left unsolved.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

2.2. Al-Sheikh Hassan Al-Attar

”إن بلادنا لا بد أن تتغير أحوالها، ويتجدد بها من المعارف ما ليس فيها“¹⁵⁶

حسن العطار

“Our land needs to change its matters and status, and particularly to alter the sciences it has not and introduce that what it needs to.”

Hassan al-Attar

2.2.1. The Context: Attar’s being and Weltanschauung

Al-Attar’s Background

Hassan al-Attar was the son of an Egyptian herbalist who invested his life and time in seeking knowledge and studied at al-Azhar. He was born at the beginning of the last third of the 18th century, in the year 1766 which was 23 years before the French invasion.¹⁵⁷ By that time, it had already been approximately three centuries since the beginning of the Ottoman domination over Egypt by Sultan Selim al-Othmaniy in 1517¹⁵⁸. These centuries, as previously discussed, were periods of deterioration and intellectual downturn. It is perhaps crucial to mention the stance of the Ottoman rule in Egypt before and during the time of al-Attar in brief to give the reader an overall understanding of the motives that lay behind the formation of his Weltanschauung and agenda.

Before his time, Egypt was governed by three major bodies, them being: al-waliy, heads of the military and the Mameluke princes¹⁵⁹ who had the role to keep the balance in tact between former two bodies. The second half of the 17th century witnessed an immense clash between the three bodies which resulted into the attainments of the full power by the Mamelukes and

¹⁵⁶ Arabic Wikipedia. Hassan al-Attar.
http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86_%D8%A8%D9%86_%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1 (accessed March 25, 2010).

¹⁵⁷ Muhammad Abdelghaniy Hassan. حسن العطار (Hassan Al-‘Attar) (Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, 1993), p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

the bakawats in the year 1672¹⁶⁰ over ruling Egypt under the overall umbrella of the Ottoman Empire. According to the scholar Johann Michael Vansleb (1635-1679)¹⁶¹, it was said that there was approximately 16 Mameluke¹⁶² all together who have positioned themselves in charge of Egypt. With the dawn of the 18th century their amount was reduced to 4 Mameluke, as reflected upon by al-Jabarti¹⁶³.

During this period, the Ottoman Empire was too preoccupied with its own dismantling societal and political status that it lost focus over the reform processes that were needed in Egypt and the rest of the dominated regions at the time. That was particularly the case with the alliance that was established between Russia and Austria against the Ottoman proliferation in the regions¹⁶⁴. Along with the entirety of the turbulent milieu, *Ali Beik al-Kabir* (Ali Bey the Great) was appointed the Mameluke leader of Egypt at the time between the years of 1760 until 1772¹⁶⁵, who in return deposed the Ottoman governor and assumed the post of acting power in the year 1768¹⁶⁶. The main aim was to seek Egypt's independence and autonomy away from the direct rule of the Ottoman Empire. Following that was his campaign in al-Hijaz in 1770 and in Syria 1771, serving his agenda to reconstruct the Mameluke state that disappeared in 1517¹⁶⁷, which was followed by his assassination after the expedition to Syria.

Important is also to note the intellectual nature as well as the economic nature of the time in which al-Attar was living in and that surrounded him throughout the Ottoman rule, seeing that the French rule is something him and al-Jabarti both encountered yet we will see how they dealt with it differently. Economically, Peter Gran's *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840* explains how the nature of the Egyptian society at the time was gradually involved in the capitalist system which commenced through the interactions between the "Muslim merchants and Mameluke rulers in the eighteenth century"¹⁶⁸. This was also particularly heightened through the invasion of the French for Egypt which created more trading links in dimensions that are explained by Gran as the exporting by the Egyptians of corn and rice, although, not enough evidence is given by Gran's book regarding that. However, the fourth book of the Arabic translated version of *The Description of Egypt*, written by a large range of

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.15.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Crecelius, Daniel, "Review of Books: Islamic Roots of Capitalism, Egypt, 1760-1840 by Peter Gran". *The American History Review* 85 (1980), 182, www.jstor.org/stable/1853556 (accessed May 01, 2009).

French scientists, explains the exact economic nature at the time of Egypt and even before the French invasion and some time after it; covering a period until 1801 and some months following it.

While tackling the political dimension and hence also the awareness related to it that al-Attar was able to gain at the time, one will see that al-Attar in fact witnessed the re-entrance of the Ottoman domination back to Egypt to regain its authority over it in 1786. That was marked by Ibrahim and Mourad Beik's fled to Upper Egypt during the time of Hassan Basha al-Jasairly's rule in Egypt¹⁶⁹. They then returned, however, to split authority and hence end al-Jasairly's authority and ending his legitimacy. That was in return followed by the Napoleonic invasion in 1798.

With the outbreak of the French invasion of Egypt, al-Attar along with many at the time (including al-Jabarti) fled to Upper Egypt fearing harm from the French. After 18 months,¹⁷⁰ al-Attar returned and established close ties with the French scientists and scholars who enabled him to be exposed easily to the books and resources they had as well as their experiments and get to know and learn from their scientific techniques.¹⁷¹ In relation to that, it would make sense to note that before the time of al-Attar, the intellectual status of Egypt was rather limited to the role played by al-Azhar in the shape of the writing of notes and references about previously and already written notes and books limited to the fields of fiqh and tafseer¹⁷². Hence, rewriting and reviewing notes and scripts were the main intellectual contributions at the time, during the beginning of the 18th century and even before that.

Although the first part of this chapter evokes the availability of other sciences and disciplines, yet the level of these contributions were not as influential in the sense of reaching the rulers in terms of rebellious acts calling out for independence and emancipation of the Egyptian thought and practicing modernity in religious forms as that introduced by al-Attar. In other words, his works in the field of politics and historical referencing did make a difference in terms of an addition and innovative fruit among his colleagues. Certainly this did not come abruptly. The role of al-Azhar at the time was very critical in the shaping of his mind and the scholars and roles performed by al-ulama was significant in how he gained his intellectual reservoir, which enabled him to pursue his direction in observing the reality from rather a series of dimensions.

¹⁶⁹ The sons of Muhammad Ali.

¹⁷⁰ Hassan, op.cit., p. 11.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.10., also Crecelius,1980.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Al-Attar, as an alim, was not only politically engaged, but he was also a poet, an author, he wrote rules and remarks on the rules of Arabic grammar and philology, as well the laws and rules of researching and archiving¹⁷³. Al-Attar also wrote in the fields of surgery, pharmacy, medicine, architecture, mathematics and astronomy as well as many notes he did as a reflection on previous works and literatures done¹⁷⁴. His poetic contributions were particularly distinguished with their holistic nature as they tackled different angles of different topics that represented the societal status of Egypt at the time. This poetry included issues related to explaining the interactions that took place with the French as well as the Ottomans, interactions with his friends, family and the Egyptian laymen, etc.. Hence, all in all, it contained al-Attar's observations.¹⁷⁵

Furthermore, important is to note, that the significance of al-Attar is that he was the first Egyptian intellectual and scholar whose ideas and thoughts philosophised about the urge and the demand for a modernised Egyptian society that enables the practice of Muslim sciences and placing Islam in conformity with modernity. This statement sheds light on al-Attar's Weltanschauung. In many aspects, it also gives the reader, and those exposed to his thoughts, an idea on the direction he would have taken in order to make this perspective come true. As previously mentioned, al-Attar came closer to the French and the expedition's scientists in order to comprehend their ideas and be exposed their scientific research methodologies and tools. The events that take place in a respective society are hence the factors that shape the perspective of the intellectual. This brings us to the next part in al-Attar's analysis, namely his arguments and main ideas.

2.2.2. Argumentations and Concepts

This part should be divided into his *stand points* towards a society of multidimensional engagements, as well as his beliefs in terms of the *arguments and statements* that mark his thought which entail particularly unprecedented *conceptions* for his time.

Al-Attar, like many of the prominent Muslim scholars and philosophers, was an all inclusive scholar. As previously evoked, he was engaged in various fields such as poetry, philology,

¹⁷³ Hassan, op.cit.,p.35.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately the ones are all in classic Arabic which made it difficult for interpretations. Seeing that the original references of the poetry are available in Boulaq-Cairo, it was caused difficulty in gathering all the material as further facilities were not available. The works of Attar are rather rare and hard to gain. It needs longer time to gather. Due to space constraints, that was not entirely possible.

astronomy, surgery, etc. Hence, his argumentations and central concepts were rather scattered around his contributions in these fields. Yet, at the end they served one and the most important common purpose, it being the modernisation of the Islamic teachings and society through the reform of al-Azhar as the central tool of accomplishing the agenda of his thoughts and contributions.

The first set of argumentations is regarding **methodology and academic contributions**. One of al-Attar's works in philosophy is called *Hashiya ala al-Tahthib lel Khabisiy* (Notes and remarks on discipline according to al-Khabisiy)¹⁷⁶ which he explains as rather a piece of work that is not following the appropriate methodology of philosophical referencing and writing. By that, al-Attar made a statement and argument clear within which he believed that the ideas and thoughts displayed academically should be referenced scientifically in order to preserve the rights and the intellectual contributions of the scholars represented by their works, unlike that performed by al-Khabisiy in his original philosophical writings on discipline and reason.

The discipline of **methodology** shaped al-Attar's perception towards the intellectual contribution as well, in the sense that accuracy and precision are the prime functions of the existence of any nation through its intellectual works and projects. This concept, methodology, represented a science that was always innovating itself and has an immense richness in tools and approaches that must be adopted and studied as well as understood in order to be applied in the various fields of sciences, as well as understanding the self and hence also the other. Perhaps, that is the main reason, or one of which, why al-Attar was moving away from the "classical Azhar school" of simple notes and acknowledgements, to actual deconstructions of ideas and notions and the rebuilding of it. In that he is quoted to have said, "It is a science that enriches the thought and solidifies it, the debater becomes richly equipped whilst battling in the debating field, and he becomes more careful and attentive and confident. The only reason which he could blind himself is if he neglects the gratefulness of the contributions of his predecessors and forgoes mentioning and citing them".¹⁷⁷ The books and notes he orchestrated were further taught in Turkey, as he resided there for some time, as well as Damascus in 1810¹⁷⁸, where his notes and remarks were furthermore developed upon and enhanced.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Azabawiy, op.cit., p.68.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.73. [translated]

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.74.

It is seen that al-Attar's philosophical contributions were rather limited to the fields of methodology and reason, while avoiding the contribution to the fields of wisdom fearing that he would be looked at as a non-believer and infidel by the al-ulama at the time. The reason being that it would tackle issues associated to metaphysical matters questioning the existence and presence of God.

Intellectual contribution and innovation vs. Notes is the second field for arguments set by al-Attar¹⁷⁹. Unlike the scholars prior to his time, al-Attar believed that there is no possibility Islam and the Muslim thought and sciences could ever evolve and develop, unless when new contributions and innovations are implemented and born, in addition to that previously introduced, parallel to maintaining the cultural traditions of the Egyptian society. That was put to practice through his works, particularly starting off with *Hashiya ala al-Tahthib lel Khabisiy* as it marked al-Attar's argument that notes alone on scholarly contributions are not enough. In fact, they cause gradual decay of the innovative mind and hence the culture itself through time. One may also assume, given the historical background of the society during that period, that the prime motive behind such a thought is Egypt's submission to and intellectual stagnation under and during the Ottoman domination since its beginning in the 16th century. It was believed by al-Attar, through a rather nationalist perspective, that Egypt can and will only prove its existence yet ones again through its intellectual and scholarly works. In fact, the innovation and intellectual contributions serve as one of al-Attar's reform elements in scholarly writings. This included the thorough analysis and addition to the works of al-Sheikh al-Sigaiy¹⁸⁰ and the introduction of methods to improve the writings and update it; an approach that was neither carried out by his fellow scholars at the time nor by those before him.

A further standpoint is that regarding **modernity and Islam**. As mentioned previously, al-nahda and the reform project from the viewpoint of the 18th century al-ulama which started through al-Attar resided mainly on the idea that Islam can and is highly conformable with Modernity as Islam is a religion and practice based on moderate interpretation peaceful praxis. In addition, al-Attar also believed that seeing that Islam is a religion that is all encompassing (economically, socially and politically) that means that the only aspect needed is the revision of the application methodology and the use of modern day sciences along with Muslim sciences to enhance the status of the Muslim society. With that respect the role of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁸⁰ A prominent Azhary scholar at the time before al-Attar and who wrote in the discipline of reason and logic.

sciences and knowledge is integrated with respect to learning the other. Al-Attar believed in the preservation of the original tradition and Egyptian customs. The *raison d'être* is the circumstances he lived through and the developments throughout the 18th century which he studied and read during his studies at al-Azhar and travelling abroad that made him perceive the presence of the occupant, let it be Ottoman or French. This particular point of modernity and the integration of modern sciences with traditional sciences was the key that attracted and drew much students' attention to his school of thought and intellectual projects. Particularly the nahdawy ideas, baring in mind that his conceptual framework was not strictly confined to his career before becoming al-Azhar Chief, but particularly during his Azhar service as well; inside or outside Egypt alike¹⁸¹.

Furthermore, his standpoints and argumentations with respect to **al-Azhar as an institution** and the need for a reform program in order to achieve al-nahda, evoked his discontent towards the functioning program of the institution during his time and prior. Al-Attar had a significant stand point towards the construction of the Azhar as an institution as he believed that the religious institution should also be politically active in a rather organised manner.¹⁸² He was a very well aware intellectual at the time, which was highly engaged in all dimensions and aspects of the Egyptian society and was also well aware of the defaults that were caused due to the political stances¹⁸³ at the time through the Ottomans and the French. His plan was composed primarily out of the educational reform, as well as the structural reform of al-Azhar. The prime motive was that he saw that al-Azhar lacked functionality with respect to interacting with the other cultures and sciences. Hence, in order to cope with modernity and achieve al-nahda and a revival of the traditional sciences in the modern realm, Egypt and hence also al-Azhar had to act within a reformist structure that enables it to face the challenges of the modern world and the domination it faces. While it is greatly unfortunate that the most valid sources regarding al-Attar are extremely rare and were not all available within the range and time of research¹⁸⁴, one can still extract the main traits related to the religion-political relationship /dialectic as per al-Attar, through the direct translation and rewriting of his works and ideas through the late *al-Sheikh Adelrazaq al-Bitariy*.

¹⁸¹ Hassan, op.cit., p. 29.

¹⁸² Ibid., p.30.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.25.

¹⁸⁴ Seeing the time and distance (Austria and Egypt) as constraints, the original sources were not available to further the research in that regard. The work of Peter Gran was also not sufficient in that respect since it was primarily engaged with the trade and merchant relationships at the time. Most of his arguments are also invalid and lack justifications as previewed by many scholars in the western as well as the Egyptian intellectual levels. It is hoped that the reader may intensify the research and as well the time span available for a PhD study would intensify these points that are to be extracted directly from the Arabic language.

Perhaps in relation to the reform as a perception for al-Azhar was that, al-Attar had a strong belief that education is the spine of a nation and hence the prime function that would enable a country to move forward. It is the key for awareness, and the motive for understanding the other so the country and the Egyptian society can move itself forward to reach a point where it would no longer need an “other” to lean on. All is meant to be extracted from within, and here is another important aspect he believed in which is the originality of the Egyptian culture and the strong structure of the Egyptian society which did not become influenced culturally as deeply as many other north African nations were rather more vulnerable to the colonialist especially regarding the language, while the invader would become Egyptianised to suit and fit the Egyptian society. An example of such is given previously related to the French’s Islamisation of their expedition to make believe that they have become a solid part of the Egyptian societal construct, knowing the degree of piety of the Egyptian people.

Furthermore, **the concept of the state** played an important role in the crystallisation of al-Attar’s thought in which it demonstrated his views and political interactions with the ruling elite at the time. This perception should be viewed over two difference phases. The first of which is towards the end of the 18th century which evokes al-Attar’s interaction with the French at the time. In that sense, although he believed that Egypt is for the Egyptians and that no foreigner should be the tool for the Egyptian modernisation, he still believed that the only method to emancipated ones’ self is through the use of the tools of how the others invaded the Egyptian self. The relationship and interaction of his regarding the French is evident in his poetic writings such as that in *Al-Askar al Firinsiy* (the French Soldiers) in which he explains how they were taught to treat the Egyptian laymen, and how their own cultural awareness is not that rich themselves yet they lack cultural loyalty and respect for other religions (Islam in that sense). That is also backed up by him in how they would dress up as sheikhs and pretend and imitate the Muslim while they got rid of God and religion in their own country, yet while believing that the Muslims and Egyptians are backward, they still resort to the use of religion to pretend that they are one of them Egyptians.¹⁸⁵

Regarding the Ottomans, the idea of the state and the ruler is evident rather towards the beginning of the 19th century, with the demolition of the French rule in Egypt and the taking over by Muhammad Ali over the rule of Egypt. For al-Attar, unlike al-Jabarti, close ties with the Ottoman ruler, Albanian in that sense, was essential and crucial for the application of his belief which is the reform program of al-Azhar and the education program within it,

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 38.

institutionally and methodologically. This standpoint and perception is also rather clear in furthermore many of his poetic writings such as that written in praise for Ibrahim Basha¹⁸⁶ (the son of Muhammad Ali Basha) on his return from his battles in al-Sham (Greater Syria) admiring his strong features that of a warrior and his kind characteristics¹⁸⁷.

Back to the call for reform at al-Azhar, al-Attar is famous for a quote used and employed in a wide range of books written about him and his works as well as his own reference notes regarding the status quo of Egypt at the time of the 18th century. In that regard, given the authenticity of the statement it has to be placed in Arabic first before being elaborated upon in which he states, “إن بلادنا لابد أن تتغير و،أحوالها يتجدد بها من المعارف ما ليس فيها”¹⁸⁸ (The stance of our lands must be changed which requires the acquisition of the sciences it originally did not have). Although he said it during his service at al-Azhar during Muhammad Ali’s rule, al-Attar was primarily not solely referring to the 19th century, yet strongly to the 18th century and the deterioration that had faced the Egyptian society at the time of the Ottoman rule and the limited academic and intellectual contributions in terms of innovations and additions.

Having examined the attainable ideas and standpoints of al-Attar, the agenda of his thoughts and hence his plans and performed or failed projects are the next step that will work towards completing the conceptual framework of al-Attar.

2.2.3. Agenda

With respect to al-Attar’s agenda of actions and plans related to his thought and perceptions mentioned above, one would need to perceive his agenda with respect to the achieved and the not achieved plans in relation to reform, on one side, and in relation to how his agenda reflects his understanding and perception of the religion-politics relationship or problematic in that sense. Does this problematic become reflected in his thought and ideas that were implemented or attempted to become implemented?

Al-Azhar and Secularism as a Notion

Al-Attar was known for being the first dominant leading voice in having called out for a reform on the educational and political basis at al-Azhar in the modern historical era of Egypt,

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ See page 38 of Muhammad Abdelghaniy Hassan. *Hassan Al-‘Attar*. Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif. 1993 for the exact Arabic text of the poetic extraction. [translated]

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

and amongst the rest of the Arab countries at the time. His comprehensive awareness of the Egyptian social and political status as well as the status of that of many neighbouring Arab and Muslim countries enabled him to also become more intensified in his knowledge regarding various sciences and fields of academic research along with his prime focus being poetry and philological researching and scholarship.

Despite his attempt to call out for a reform action plan and actually putting one together indeed, al-Attar was unable to implement it. The reasons are many-fold, and primarily discussed throughout the analysis of his works and the works of Rifaa al-Thatawiy. Al-Attar's agenda included new programs for educational reform¹⁸⁹, the introduction of modern methodological studies that are taught as part of the university, the studying of the modern sciences, hence western sciences, and integrating them in the understanding as well as the analytical projects.¹⁹⁰ He also called out that al-Azhar needs to become more politically active yet in an organised institutional manner, which was evidently the case during the first and the second Cairo revolution against the French¹⁹¹. Perhaps that did not necessarily represent an institutional reform but it showed a certain partial capacity of al-Azhar for change in that direction, namely for a religious institution to become politically active and hence using the legitimately acknowledged role of al-ulama in public mobilisation¹⁹² with respect to political activities and decisions in the Egyptian society during the Ottoman and the French occupation alike. As a matter of fact, this institutional reform was aimed at by al-Attar in order to gradually position Islam in a modernised context as well as one that calls out for the Egyptian emancipation and to confront the regional changes and the western imposition of their thoughts and culture.

The failure to apply this point on his agenda was related to the fact that during his time prior to becoming the Grand Imam of al-Azhar he was seeking to apply this program on an individualistic level and hence was able to influence his students and draw their attention and awareness towards this issue. During his time as a direct advisor for Muhammad Ali, and during his years as the Grand Imam, al-Attar had to submit to the rules set out by Ali towards the roles of al-ulama, namely to limit their roles in terms of mass mobilisation and direct intervention with the institutional structure unless directly advised or demanded by him

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁹⁰ Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p. 69.

¹⁹¹ Hassan, op.cit., p. 72.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 73.

personally.¹⁹³ Although al-Attar would have been able to still apply this project of reform and hence commence the stepping stones towards al-nahda, through utilising his direct strong contacts with Muhammad Ali, yet he submitted to the orders at hand and taught his students these principles instead so they would be able to continue the academic track he would have left behind after his time and walk through the path of reforms themselves. However, even his prominent student and later on famous scholar Riffa al-Tahtawy did not take on his project as a path to walk either. The prime reason for this stance was that the policies implemented by Muhammad Ali were based on the belief that neither the society nor al-Azhar were ready for such constructional changes.

I believe that the delay in such cases throughout the 18th century into the 19th century were the prime reasons why not much has changed in the role and the intersection between the tasks carried out by al-ulamā on the political and religious realms, and in that sense also resulted in the delay of social movements based on a strong urge for emancipation and self-determination geared by the intellectual few, if one may call them so. Perhaps the most supporting material to this statement is Awad's quote in his book (see Awad, 2001) in which he says, "the study of any society is reflected through the study of the people who marked the period under study. This shows the extent to which they were mobilised, particularly the intellectuals and the scholars of our country, and how they represented the prime motive for mobilising the people (...) which distinguishes the works and contributions of one scholar from the other and reflects the limitations which the oppressor had on the oppressed while limiting his call for freedom."¹⁹⁴ Meaning, had the Azhar become reformed, the people of Egypt would have been able to become intellectually stronger and hence also challenging the respective ruling power at hand. They would have henceforward been able to seek their independence, in many respects, sooner than waiting until the dawn of the 20th century. Or to avoid the exaggeration, one may say, had the reform really began towards the end of the 18th century as per al-Attar, al-Azhar would have become the first religious institution to take a step forward towards reform and al-nahda; assisting a stronger base into the 19th century.

In conjunction to that, al-Attar's encyclopaedic writings, as part of his teaching career at al-Azhar as well as after that as the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, were a reflection on his desire to strive towards secularity within the Muslim context and the Egyptian societal circumference. As Peter Gran discusses in his book, al-Attar's works in the different disciplines and fields

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁹⁴ Awad (2001), op.cit., p.11.

represented his desire for modernity and the learning from the French in the sense of how they managed the political and private affairs of the state and the public in the 18th century. In that sense one may extract and hence add upon Gran's perception that al-Attar was seeking an Islamised version of secularism. By that it can be understood his desire to seek the solid role of al-Azhar as a religious institution while also having a governing elite reformed into a structure so as to tailor the society in a modernised compound to make it fit and become more engaged in the modern sciences in order to excel and evoke the soul of Islam and its all encompassing nature with respect to sciences and the other cultures alike. Hence, the need for the governing chair to interact with al-Azhar in engaging science with the seeking of religion as it all in all serves the oneness of God and the improvement of the country and the rest of the Muslim World with respect to al-nahda and hence political and religious reforms. Surely this approach as part of al-Attar's agenda had also failed as he was no longer actively engaged in the reform agenda of al-Azhar, causing in many respects massive decline in the reform spirit at the time. Even Riffa al-Tahtawy strived towards modernisation yet from within and through the teachings of al-Attar, not through the aspirations of the European influence.

Translation Movement

Translation was a very crucial aspect regarding the agenda of al-Attar as it put his belief in the contact between the Egyptians and the other into practice. During the French expedition, and hence also invasion over Egypt, al-Attar was engaged in exploring their methodologies and books and tools used in scientific researching¹⁹⁵. He was more engaged into his connections with the French than the other al-ulama at the time. It was from this direction that al-Attar took on to satisfy the urge to become ones more exposed to the other sciences which were not dominantly practiced throughout the 18th century Egypt in terms of the modernised tools engaged in these sciences.

Through that, he became engaged in carrying out translation projects through his fellow al-ulama and al-Azhar at the time which would bring about scholars aware of the foreign language and would, through consultations for the appropriate Arabic terminology,¹⁹⁶ which would include the translating of scientific books and references in various disciplines into Arabic. This movements is seen to be a revivalist one since the Muslim Golden Age, hence also a step forwards in the reform agenda of al-Attar at the time. Nevertheless, this served as a primary motion towards al-nahda and a new age of Muslim enlightenment. The purpose

¹⁹⁵ Hassan, op.cit., p. 73.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

through such was to be exposed to the knowledge of the other as well as to become acquainted with the developments that were reached in various scientific fields while intellectuals and scholars in Egypt were unable to carry out such throughout the intellectual oppression under the Ottoman rule.

Scientific Research, Methodology and Documentation

Sending out **regiments of young scholars** to conduct and learn the disciplines of scientific research in the west was certainly also another major aspect of his agenda, which goes hand in hand with the translation movement carried out by al-Attar. As part of his reform program (scientifically, politically and educationally), the desire to establish an institutional link with the West for modernisation of sciences and al-Azhar was only partially fulfilled during his period in the late 18th century. Al-Attar was rather limited and restricted to his writings and poetic attacks on the Ottomans and hence, later on as well, on the French (See Muhammad Abdelghaniy, 1993 for various poetic excerpts and explanations). That was the stance in the late 18th century, despite the fact that the educational movements of sending out scholars to the West, to assist them bring in more expertise and knowledge regarding the researching tools and methodology of the modern and “western” science, only took place and succeeded during the era of Muhammad Ali also through the supervision of al-Attar. Al-Attar in return assigned al-Tahtawiy in charge of the school of History and Geography as well as al-Alsun school (Linguistics).¹⁹⁷

In addition to the scientific expeditions which al-Attar had planned much earlier than Ali's era, was with respect to the **encyclopaedic worldview**. And this perception was applied in this works as well especially the selection of the poetic topics he would tackle through the mechanisms of ‘briefing’ and ‘coverage’¹⁹⁸. This explains the fields of his writings which were discussed in more detail in the introduction of this section of the chapter. This can also be seen in his critique which he introduced on the military role in Egypt during the 18th century.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.76.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.77.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.86.

The Newspaper

In some of the references and books discussing the period of the second half of the 18th century, it is affirmed that Hassan al-Attar has been aiming at establishing a newspaper which consolidates his belief²⁰⁰. By that we can understand that his motive was to spread the need and the significance for the modern sciences and the western thought, yet in a constructive manner so as to assist the nature of the Islamic culture and the Muslim identity of the Egyptians at the time. Due to the restrictions and the limitations available during the 18th century and which were also exceeded and intensified during the French invasion, Attar was unable to implement his ideas and thoughts at the time regarding the publication.²⁰¹ Again this reflects on a lot of disciplines and doctrines of intellectual oppression by the Ottoman domination before the French as well, which is reflected on the span of scientific research throughout the first half of the 18th century. However, the works of the newspaper became realised under the rule of Muhammad Ali at the dawn of the 19th century in the year 1828, in which al-Attar was employed as an assistant to the Khedive and also the initiator of the first printed newspaper in the East called *al-Waqai-Masriyya*²⁰² (The Egyptian Chronicles).

The author of the reflection on al-Attar, Muhammad Abdelghaniy, clarifies that there are not enough details on the description of the problems that were encountered by al-Attar during the 18th century, nor how the exact details were regarding the development of such an event and hence also the implications of it even throughout the beginning of the 19th century.²⁰³ However, the word of mouth, due to insufficient documentation, through the Poet Shihab al-Din²⁰⁴ as well as the historian Jurji Zaidan (1861-1914)²⁰⁵, played an important part in the overall understanding and apprehension of the nature of the newspaper and the important role it had developed from the late 18th century into the early 19th century. Throughout this journey

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.76.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.34.

²⁰² Ibid., See also Walz, Terence. Book Review "Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt 1760-1840". *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13 (1980), 542-544, www.jstor.org/stable/218959 (accessed May 01, 2009).

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Precise period is unknown, except that he tackled the 19th century literatures and poets and contributions and their roots in the 18th century. He is reflected upon in more details in a book by Father Louis Shikho al-Yasouy's *الاداب العربية فالقرن التاسع عشر* (*Al-Adab al-'Arabiyya fi al-Qarn al Tasi' 'Ashr - Arab Literature of the 19th century*)(Beirut: 1924).

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Zaidan was a Lebanese born prolific writer who introduced the historical novel writing into the Arabic literature, with the prime purpose of national education. Although his work and life was taking place throughout the 19th century, he still had his reflections upon the deterioration of the Arab literature and hence also novel writing during the 18th century. In that respect, he also reflected upon the works and poetry written by 'Hassan al-'Attar and al-Jabarti in his works and newspaper articles. See 'list of further readings' for recommended readings by Zaidan on that matter.

of the first newspaper in the East, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi was chosen as the editor in chief by al-Attar, due to his respect and appreciation for his efforts²⁰⁶.

2.2.4. Conclusion

Al-Attar took on the position of the Grand Imam of al-Azhar since 1830 until his death in March 1835. He is the first Egyptian and Arab in the modern era of the Muslim world to call out for the introduction of modern sciences, particularly in Egypt. Al-Attar is also the first Egyptian voice to have called out for modernisation of al-Azhar and called out for a reform program educationally (hence ultimately also politically) as well as on the level of the religious institution, during the time he lived in the 18th century and continued his programs in the first part of the 19th century.

This placed him in a highly recognised position in the Muslim World in general at the time. In spite of his position, however, he was unable to carry out and implement his reform plans for various reasons. The first one being that during the second half of the 18th century al-Attar was more concerned with being engaged with the acquisition of scientific tools and becoming acquainted with the sciences practiced in the west through the French. One can say that for al-Attar it was a phase of collection rather than a phase of implementation. In another respect, it is that the political and cultural milieu at the time did not really permit and give sufficient space for an actual reform with respect to actions. But as it will be seen with al-Jabarti, he succeeded to add a revolutionary step in academic and scientific historical thought and writing while his forefathers in the field were not up to that level yet due to the Ottoman oppression on opinion and intellectual contributions in Egypt. Perhaps another important limitation also mentioned, was that related to Muhammad Ali imposing on the roles played by al-*ulama* as explained previously. It was the ideas of al-Attar that was built upon by the intellectuals and scholars who followed him and this paved the path for a pre-*nahda* stage of conceptual construction in the Egyptian culture and comprehension regarding a reform action in the two prime institutions at the time; al-Azhar and the political rule over Egypt. Hence, while reflecting on the thesis question about the nature of the religion-politics problematic, one can say that as for al-Attar's contribution there certainly was a problematic in the interaction between the two dimensions. The reason for such a problematic was the lack of proper reform application from al-Attar's side regarding his agenda due to the political restrictions that were

²⁰⁶ Hassan, op.cit., p. 34.

imposed on the roles played by al-ulama, which will be shown to have been similarly the case with al-Jabarti.

Having perceived al-Attar's thought, al-Jabarti will take us into another sphere of reform. Although still tied to political and religious reform, yet the mechanism was rather different. It moved from an action based agenda of actual reform, into the introduction of unorthodox notions such as the Egyptian Ummah and the importance of accurate historical writing and a historical school as well as emancipation off the invader. It was a rather radical perception for change and relating to the Egyptian political and intellectual reality at the time, not practiced by his historian predecessors before.

2.3. Al-Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Jabarti

Tackling the personal background of al-Jabarti as well as the nature of the contextual surrounding of his time in the Egyptian society in specific would be the prime aim of this section. Important to note, however, that since al-Jabarti existed around the same period of Hassan al-Attar, the need for the re-mentioning of the role of the French and the Ottoman dominations would be rather repetitive, since the stance and the events were the same. The only difference that will be marked is that related to the content analysis of his thought. An important note in advance is, the writings and works of al-ajaib (1822) reflected on the 18th century as well as before in the Egyptian history and culture. The presence of the French in Egypt did not cause a change in his writing; in fact the stream of his work did not pick up on historiography as his track due to this event, but rather to other factors that will be illustrated throughout this section.

2.3.1. The Context: Al-Jabarti's Being and Weltanschauung

The contextual setting of al-Jabarti can be segmented into two parts; his personal surrounding and the societal and intellectual milieu both having shaped the status of his intellectual formation and his works and Weltanschauung towards the Egyptian society and its political and religious variables. It is important to note though, that the details about his actual upbringing and his background are rather limited since not all too much information was discussed about him by his contemporaries at the time²⁰⁷. Hence, this makes it more difficult to trace the exact details. However, through the traits and specifications he explains throughout his works about himself and his life, as well as that found about him - by his colleagues and old writings at al-Azhar - does give a somewhat sufficient explanation about his background.

Personal and Family Context

Abdulrahma al-Jabarti cannot be viewed as less than a giant among the historians of his time. Clearly stated, al-Jabarti was the first comprehensive historian at the time and, hence,

²⁰⁷ Ayalon, Davis. "The Historian Al-Jabarti and his Background". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23 (1960), 217-249, www.jstor.org/stable/609695 (accessed May 01, 2009).

regarded as “one of the few greatest historians in the Muslim world”²⁰⁸. The prime reason for this is that he wrote his chronicles during a rather challenging period of the Egyptian history in the modern time. Particularly, it becomes rather an enigma to understand how he would have been able to put his chronicles together.²⁰⁹

The family of al-Jabarti was a large family, of Somali origin, residing close to the Red Sea (positioned in the Somali city Zeila) that followed the Hanafi School²¹⁰. His father, Hassan al-Jabarti (died 1774)²¹¹, played a fundamental role in the shaping of Abdulrahman al-Jabarti’s (1753-1825)²¹² historical achievements, starting with his primary education until the writings and his historical contributions. His father was influential in the sense that, unlike his predecessors, he was not only just engaged in religion but he was also a learned scholar and an alim amongst the military ruling class who was teaching and lecturing them.²¹³ Hassan also “studied and taught mathematics (riyadiyat), geometry, algebra, astronomy and other sciences”²¹⁴. In addition he was also fluent in many languages as well as an “expert who held authority in the fields of calendar studies and systems, calligraphy, engraving and carving and on the steelyards”²¹⁵. Hassan Al-Jabarti, as documented through Abdulrahman’s writings and references, is believed to have “saved Egypt’s prestige as a centre of learning in the eyes of Ahmed Basha al-Kebir, who was greatly disappointed with the low standard of knowledge of the riyadiyat”²¹⁶ in Egypt.

In general, giving the role of the father and the surrounding environment of his upbringing, and the role his father played in the Egyptian society and intellectually, Abdulrahman al-Jabarti was capable of gaining an exceptional capacity in establishing his historical career. The status of his family throughout many centuries was famous for its ulama and the roles they covered within the Egyptian society. This is another prime reason that paved the way for al-Jabarti to reach where he landed on the intellectual basis. That is particularly marked by the close ties and connections his father had with the Mameluke princes and Ottoman

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.220.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.218.

²¹⁰ Ibid., See also Louis Awad. *تاريخ الفكر المصري الحديث: الفكر السياسي والاجتماعي (Tarikh Al-Fikr Al-Masriy Al-Hadith; Al-Fikr Al-Siyyasi wa Al-Igtimaiy - The History of the Modern Egyptian Thought: Social and Political Thought)*, 1969. Also, Lane’s *Manners and Customs*, 2003, p. 216.

²¹¹ Ibid., p.238.

²¹² Al-Gharabawy, op.cit., p. 67.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 239.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 239.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

personalities²¹⁷, enabling him to become deeply acquainted with the details of the ruling class in Egypt.²¹⁸

With respect to al-Jabarti's **friendships**; as previously mentioned, al-Attar and al-Jabarti were close friends since their lives before their scholarly active lives. In addition to the two, there was also another important figure, (that will however not be separately discussed in the thesis as his works are not directly associated with scholarly augmentation for political and religious reform), who contributed toward their nature of being and hence also the personal space that shaped the minds of the two intellectuals chosen to represent the reflections over the 18th century. This influential character is *Ismail al-Khashab* (died 1814)²¹⁹ who was an alim with a vast knowledge in the fields of poetry, Sufism and adab²²⁰ as well as history. In addition, he was rich with strong connections with the "scribes, the amirs, and the merchants"²²¹. He was also engaged in the supervision of the French interactions with the diwans as previously discussed in the 18th century, and hence he had direct exposure to the political and economic events and highlights in the Egyptian society. It is through that that it can be seen how enriching this friendship was for al-Jabarti, in terms of adding to his already existing historical reservoir and knowledge base he had gained through his family.

The Nature of Historical Studies before al-Jabarti

Abdulrahman al-Jabarti was not a philosopher in the modern day sense of the understanding of the concept. He was the most influential historian at the time of modern day Egypt, towards the periods of the late 18th and early 19th century. That does explain the reason why he was employed in the thesis with represent to the 18th century. Al-Jabarti and al-Attar's writings, though they extended into the 19th century, yet their reflections were primarily regarding the 18th century Egypt and its circumstances. Since the references gained and gathered regarding al-Attar are rather limited to their availability and space and time constraint, the works of al-Jabarti do mirror his historical works and reflections regarding that of the 18th century Egypt rather strongly. It is in my opinion, however, that although al-Jabarti did not aim at philosophizing, his ideas and perceptions exerted in his works reflect a set of a comprehensive framework of a conceptual basis, that does not only give an account of events and their analysis, but it also resembles reflections and theories of the existence of such. Hence, one

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 241.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Arabic word for "literature".

²²¹ Ibid.

cannot negate his theoretical and philosophical augmentation with respect to the apprehension of the Egyptian milieu and tendencies at the time.

Important in that regard, therefore, is to add the nature of the historical studies prior to al-Jabarti's contributions, and their trends as well as their efficiencies or lack of during the period of the Ottoman domination. Also, the stolen records and academic documentations at the time which were illegally removed, on which al-Jabarti refers to during a statistical calculation of the documents available documents, he said "what remained were just names without their works and contributions. We did not get to become acquainted with their works except through some partial sections remaining in old school and awqaf archives, which were the remainders of the originals that were moved to the lands of al-Maghrib and al-Sudan"²²². Another drawback of the Ottoman period, with respect to al-Jabarti's perspective is the vast discrepancies between the different Ottoman sects and the Mamelukes that caused the loss of many references and books due to wars and various disputes²²³. As a matter of fact, this stance of intellectual deterioration which al-Jabarti was referring to, was the case in many of the Ottoman dominated regions at the time, particularly also in al-Sham²²⁴. It must be admitted, however, that philosophical as well as historical works were highly dominant and rather intertwined during the Mameluke era especially during the 15th century²²⁵ where a vast amount of historians and intellectuals such as al-Maqrizy (1364-1442)²²⁶, Ibn Taghriy (1410-1470)²²⁷ and Ibn Iyas (1448-1523)²²⁸ existed.

In addition, there were historical study directions or rather principles during 18th century Egypt, which can be summarised into two main ones, namely: *Madrasit al-Agnad*²²⁹ (School of Troop telling) which was focusing on no particular historical contribution but rather a popular account telling of events which was rather dominant throughout the first half of the 18th century. It primarily covered the aggressions and disputes that were transpiring between the Ottomans and the Mameluke troops²³⁰. Incipiently, this stream of historical studies comprised the notes taking and listing of political, as well as economic and social interactions

²²² Ibid. [translated]

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p. 111.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., p.112.

²³⁰ Ibid., Also see Al-Azabawy, 2006, Chapter Three, *Ilm al-Tarikh qabl al-Jabarti* (The Science of History before al-Jabarti) for more details regarding the Mamluk interactions and resulted havoc between them and the Ottoman domination in Egypt concerning the intellectual deterioration in the first half of the 18th century. See also Khalil Shyoub's *Abdelrahman al-Jabarti*, 1948.

at the time of the first half of the 18th century. *Madrasit al-Mo'arakhin al-Taqlidiyyin*²³¹ was the second major historically related school at the time which was functioning under the authority and supervision of a group of 'Ullama. The prime difference between the two schools is two-fold: مدرسة الأجناد *Madrasit al-Agnad*'s prime focus was revolved around the concepts of "war" and "dispute", and hence the notes and accounts taken were not generally describing Egypt's status at the time. On the other hand مدرسة المؤرخين التقليديين *Madrasit al-Mo'arakhin al-Taqlidiyyin* was angling toward a general and rather holistic account on Egypt's internal and external affairs.²³² The second major difference was the linguistic dimension used. And by that is meant that the ulama used a complicated employment of the traditional Arabic language in its classical sense and in a rather complicated structure, while the *Madrasit al-Agnad* used the rather common Egyptian language, which reflects the educational level on one side and the purpose of the writings on the other²³³.

Having perceived a rather broad sketch of the milieu within which al-Jabarti prevailed, as well as the influences and variables that were related and constructed the nature of his field of specialisation, moving on to the arguments and conceptions related to his thought and world view would be the next logical building block. While tackling that, one must bare in mind the prime difference between him and his friend and intellectual colleague al-Attar. It is summarised in the fact that while al-Attar befriended the French for the sake of becoming more intensively exposed to their knowledge and the other and modern sciences which shall and must be included in the modern studies of Egypt, as well as Attar's praise for the some of the Ottoman authorities and later on Muhammad Ali, al-Jabarti was on the opposite side of the spectrum, in a rather radical sense which is magnificently reflected in his works as will be demonstrated.

2.3.2. Argumentations and Concepts

Perhaps the most essential element or rather the element that should be looked upon is that related to his methodology, which will be more apparently set out throughout the agenda section. It is due to his methodology in historiography and its difference in structure and approach in comparison to his contemporaries; primarily following the classical school and

²³¹ Ibid., p. 128.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., p.129. For further reading refer to Al-Azabawy, 2006, Chapter Three, علم التاريخ قبل الجبرتي (*Ilm al-Tarikh qabl al-Jabarti*).

approach of historiography, al-Jabarti remains rather an enigma to contemporary scholars as to how he would have been able to provide the structures and conceptualisation of his works.

Having said that much regarding his methodology, before tackling it, there are central concepts and perceptions that al-Jabarti has made evident throughout his writings. They, henceforward, contribute and shape the structure of his theorisation and historical philosophising with respect to the structure of the Egyptian society at the time of the 18th century, and the early 19th century (will be rather focusing on the 18th century in that respect in addition to his stance from the ruling system of Muhammad Ali).

Historical writing is regarded as the starting conceptual block in al-Jabarti's thought. Al-Jabarti did not start his historical works through personal direct motivation. Rather, the context he was placed in made him perceive al-Shafi's notion of devotion²³⁴ in which he said: 'The people of the past, since God had created mankind, took care to write history age after age and generation after generation, until the people of our time have left history and neglected it and discarded it and cast it off and considered it the business of the persons without employment, saying: "History is nothing but legends of the ancients *واده من شغل البطالين* *وقولوا أساطير الاولين* (*wa-adduhu min shughl al-battalin wa-qulu asatir al-awalin*)". By my life! The people of our time are excused [in their attitude towards history]. They are preoccupied with more important things and, therefore, they do not want to tire their pens with such a kind of scrutiny. Time's conditions have been turned upside down. Its shades have shrunk. Its foundations have been shattered. Its events are, therefore, not recoded in a register or a book. Occupying one's time without benefit is sheer loss. Whatever happened and passed will never come back. It is only a person like myself – secluded as I am in the corner of obscurity and neglected and retired from employment unlike other people – who would alleviate his loneliness by enumerating the Good and the Evil of Time.'²³⁵

Al-Jabarti's depth of historical writing which assisted the formation and emphasis of his thought, ideas and notions throughout his works, existed without a phase of time in which Egypt was facing a deterioration of historical writings and schools under the Ottoman domination. As previously mentioned, the directions of academic writings were rather limited to two schools, both of which actually did not mark a significant analytical nor interpretive or philosophical contribution to the political and religious reality at hand. That in itself resembles his stand points towards the necessity of historical writings and hence

²³⁴ Ayalon, op.cit., p. 218.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp.219-220.

methodological contributions, similarly to the intentions of al-Attar only with different mechanisms.

Al-Jabarti, in that respect, was a radical figure in his writing regarding his overt critiques regarding both the French and the Ottomans. Seeing the limitations that were implemented throughout the phase of the Ottoman and Mameluke domination, al-Jabarti was forced to attack the persisting administration at the time of the French as well as the Ottomans, under Muhammad Ali, later on²³⁶. As a matter of fact, that is the reason why the release of his chronicle was delayed, since not only does it give a detailed account on the 18th century and partially the roots before it, but it was gravely criticising the tools and mechanisms of the Mameluke administration. In fact, al-Jabarti believed that it was the main method and tool that he could use and employ to document the events in the Egyptian society. Hence, his aim was the revival of the historical school in the 18th century, which he also extended into the 19th century Egypt, in order to make up for the lost documentations of the 18th century Egypt and the misplaced biographies which are methodologically essential for the interpretation and the analysis of the political as well as the religious circumstance in Egypt.

Furthermore, his stand points and conceptions toward **the French and the Mameluke** is also another important aspect of his perceptions, which assist in understanding the need for a scientifically structured historical writing, evident in his chronicle or العجائب - *al-Ajaib* which he completed in 1822. However, al-Jabarti did not only write *al-ajaib*, he also wrote تاريخ مدة هجرية إلى سنة ١٢١٦ هجرية الفرنسية في مصر من سنة ١٢١٣ (Tarikh Maddat al-Ferinsis bi Masr min Sanat 1213 Hijri ila Sanat 1216 Hijri)²³⁷ - History of the French Presence in Egypt from 1798-1801) which is a remarkable addition and prediction of his thought and notions with respect to the French in particular. In that, attention must be drawn that there were many parts of these notes lost during the French invasion and expedition in Egypt²³⁸. In depicting his anger towards the French invasion and the absence of the Mameluke and Ottoman role during that time, al-Jabarti describes the importance of the role of al-*ulama*. I believe that al-Jabarti was depicting his call for national unity at that time or rather a call for national integration for the sake of fighting the foreigner on the Egyptian land. The reason for such a statement is evident in his book *al-ajaib* in which he calls out for the first time for the notion of **the Egyptian**

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 229.

²³⁷ Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p. 154.

²³⁸ Ibid., p.155.

Ummah “al-Ummah al-Masriyya”.²³⁹ The context of this concept is rather apparent and clarified by the commentator on the book, Adelaziz Gamal al-Din, in which he explains the original text of al-Jabarti and highlights that “lahiz al-Jabarti yastakhdim mostalah al-Ummah al-Masriyya lelmarra al-Ula wa li awel marra fi al-Tarekh almasry al-Hadith”²⁴⁰ (note that al-Jabarti uses the concept of the Egyptian Ummah for the first time, and also it is used for the first time in the modern Egyptian era, particularly also under the Ottoman Empire and domination).

Al-Jabarti does not explain or comment about the use of this concept, but rather continued with his explanation and the account telling, as well as the analysis of the French and the Ottomans at the time. However, even if he personally does not deconstruct the concept to make the readers and hence the scholars apprehend the holistic meaning, and despite the fact that it appears ones and in a rather concealed manner, still a stand has to be made here in order to see the entirety of the picture. This concept, as a matter of fact, plays a fundamental role for many reasons, I believe. First of all, it justifies his radical stance towards the French and the Mameluke in Egypt; the French for their foreign culture and “infidel identity regarding religion”²⁴¹, while toward the Mameluke leaders it was a sense of aggressive admonition for their lack of proficiency in governing the people of Egypt and hence in leaving a gap for the French invasion.²⁴²

Furthermore, al-Jabarti’s conception of the French goes on further in which he calls them *Dajalin*²⁴³ (charlatans), as he explains in al-Ajaib. This conception and his explanation also serve the notion he introduces of al-Ummah al-Masriyya. Al-Jabarti explains, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, that the French are pretenders and hence *Dajalin*, as they act and preach what they do not believe in as long as it serves their interests, and hence if they pretend and claim to be Muslims and initially have converted, that is only the practice of an “infidel” who wishes to take over a land that is not his.²⁴⁴ He continues to analyse the character of the French *dajalin* by saying in his chronicle “وتشددوا في ذلك الرجل المغربي الملتفة عليه” وهو ... فإن بيها يتوصل لم يريده من النهب والسلب ... أخلت الأعمى وندى من عند نفسه الصلح المنقود، وعليكم بالجهاد

²³⁹ Abdelaziz Jamal Al-Din, *عجائب الآثار في التراجم والأخبار: الجزء الرابع عن الغزوة الفرنسية (Abdulrahman al-Jabarti: Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, Al-Juz al-Rabi: Al-Ghazwa al-Firinsiyya - simplified as al-Jabarti’s History of Egypt, Part Four: The French Invasion) (Cairo: Maktabat Madbouly, 1997), 250.*

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p.158.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 156.

²⁴³ Abdelaziz Gamal al-Din, op.cit., p. 352.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

(*wa tashadada fi zalika alrajul almaghribiy almultaf alih akhlat alalam wa nadi min and nafsuh alsulh almanqud, wa alikum beljihad, wa min takhur anh dar unqih (...) fain biha yatawasal lima yariduh min alnabh wa alsalb (...) wa hua lis miman lah min masr ma yakhaf alih min maskan aw ahl aw mal aw gheir zalika*²⁴⁵ - the Western man who is of mixed beliefs and also holds a contradicting character, you have to fight him in the name of Jihad and to cut his throat – get rid of him – for he has nothing to fear harm for in Egypt, no home, no family, no belongings he would protect from harm).²⁴⁶

Another justification for the argument given and the conception demonstrated related to the Egyptian Ummah, is that which al-Jabarti illustrated in his work *Mazahir al-Taqdis biziha Dawlat al-Frinsis*²⁴⁷ (Illustrations of Sanctifications by the time of the End of the French State in Egypt). Although this book was written in 1801 with the retreat of the French from Egypt, al-Jabarti still also aimed to dedicate the notes and the explanations in this book to further discussions and analysis of his conceptions and beliefs regarding the stance of the French and the Egyptians at the time. He says, “إن شهر رمضان مقدمة شهر العيد، إذاً هو موسم السرور المدير وقد كان” (*in shahr syam Ramadan muqadimat shahr al'id iza huwa mousim alsurur almudir, wa qad kan qudum almushar ilih muftah abwab almasarat alaty tal inghilaqaha, wa mu'id bahgat masr alaty kusif bekhalam alkafara (...)*)²⁴⁸ - in the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, happiness spreads in the lands of the Muslims yet ones again with the entering of the Ottoman Vizier Yousuf Dia Basha and his Ottoman troops into Egypt after the exit of the infidels, who caused nothing less but darkness and depression). In addition he also goes on illustrating the status of the Egyptian street by explaining, “استنارت بما قدمت البلاد وابتهجت بالسرور جميع البلاد فأعد لمصر معد ... وطلعت شمسها المنيرة بعد الظلام وأراد إليها ما استلبت منها الأيام ... الاهرامات شبابها واعادت العافية فيها عند طلوع ...” (*istanarat bimaqdimat albilad, wa ibtahagat belsurur gami' albilad fa'ad limasr ma'd alharam shababiha (...) watala'at shamsiha almunira ba'd alalam war ad iliha ma istalabat minha alayam (...) wa 'adat al 'afiya fiha 'ind tolu' nigm 'asakir fi afaq*

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p.344.

²⁴⁶ The concept of Jihad here does not resemble the modern day understand of Jihad or rather the perplexing reflections on the concept. Rather, it means, since the dominating conceptual framework at the time was the Islamic, hence the Jihad was used to reflect on the efforts put in the name of Allah and the name of the country or the land of the people to protect the oneness of God from the “infidels” (as he uses in his works) and to emancipate the Egyptians from the French rule. That is because any rule by a Muslim dominator is much more preferred than that of a non-Muslim.

²⁴⁷ Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p. 156.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

*nawa'hiha (...)*²⁴⁹ - the sun is shining over the lands ones again (...) now Egypt has regained its youth the moment the stars - the Ottoman soldiers - enter Egypt after the darkness it has lived in and after the days have stolen away its pride and its worth). These two quotes, resemble the nature of al- Jabarti's thought towards the nature of the relationship between religion and politics, and hence also the stance towards the Egyptian Ummah, which is also a structure of a political-religious relationship. He resembles, through his thought, a rather positive relationship according to his conception of reality. That is particularly evident when he mentions the name of Allah and Ramadan, while discussing a politically intensive matter (and socially as well as economically), as the reasons for looking at the end of the French oppression in Egypt as a positive and promising matter; them being replaced by the Ottomans yet ones again as long as they are Muslims.²⁵⁰ Perhaps, the missing aspect in that regard for al-Jabarty was the institutionalisation of his thoughts, since he was the only historian and politically active intellectual with respect of writing (while tackling many other dimensions other than politics as well).

Accompanying the previous, al-Jabarti is found to more clearly stress out on the nature of the Copts and Jews in Egypt and their duties and societal as well as their political status during , before and after the French rule, also to be found in his al-ajaib. This point is particularly found and made clear through is illustration of documentations that were written by Coptic leaders at the time during the French invasion, in which they overtly ask General Minot to not leave Egypt and not leave them as Copts behind for the Muslim, or rather the Ottomans, in which they will be humiliated and treated as slaves in their own lands. Al-Jabarti's al-ajaib includes a copy of this text (see appendix), part of which says “نوضح لكم ما نحن فيه من قهر فنحن “ (nowada'h lakum ma na'hnu bih min alqahr fana'hnu qabl al-an la naqsud kashf jira'hana (...) na'hnu nastaghithu bekursikum (...) min Malta wa Anwan²⁵¹ - we want to clarify our status to you for we have kept our silence for too long and disguised our pain and suffering – from the Ottomans – we ask you for your mercy and for assistance to not leave us behind in this land with oppressions – since the Ottoman domination and the Mameluke would treat the Cops as “different” than the rest of the Muslim Egyptian society, and hence that led to an oppressive nature of their being in their society, partially the reason why this deepened into the Egyptian society and perhaps also how it developed into further complications later on).

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 158.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 174.

²⁵¹ Abdelaziz Gamal al-Din, op.cit.,p. 787. (See appendix item number 2 for the Original text).

Having depicted that, it becomes clear that the status of the Copts in Egypt and al-Jabarti's critique towards their resorting to the French for refuge, as well as the nature of the French rule and their introduction of foreign concepts and customs to that of the Egyptian Muslim nature resemble the reasons for which he believed a united Egyptian society, or rather الأمة المصرية - Ummah Masriyya needs to exist, in order to demolish factors of distraction from bringing back a Muslim ruler and hence, ultimately also, a reform process of the political as well as the societal and intellectual system alike. This in its essence intensifies the idea, though vaguely overly discussed yet overtly apparent through all the factors mentioned and analysed in his work, that al-Jabarti's thought revolved around a nationalist idea in a rather radical sense towards the French during their rule, and towards the Mameluke and hence also the Ottomans during their neglect of the Egyptians. In a sense, I believe that al-Jabarti preferred any Muslim ruler as long as the rule or domination is not associated with a non-Muslim or "infidel". This idea is also supported in Al-Azabawiy's work, in which he explains that al-Jabarti was rather optimistic, as he also quoted in his own al-ajabib, yet hoped for an emancipated Egypt.²⁵²

Having discussed the structure of al-Jabarti's perception and thought, as well as philosophical contextualization of his ideas, the agenda of his thought and how he tackled his ideas becomes essential in understand many aspect. These include, the reason for and behind his strong belief in the chronicle and why it became an important piece of reference for understanding the 18th century, as well as his psychological construct with respect to religion and hence also his understanding of the political as well as the societal matters alike.

2.3.3. Agenda

Abdulrahman al-Jabarti did not have a particularly set or defined action plan or agenda as it maybe relatively the case with al-Attar. His works and historical writings (methodology) represent his agenda as well as his occupation or position as a minister or active member of the diwan established by the French during the rule of Menou or Abdalla Menou as he called himself after converting into Islam²⁵³.

The methodology of al-Jabarti was embedded in various aspects related to his ajaib. First of all, the data collection mechanism he used to put the chronicle together relies on the collection

²⁵² Al-Azabawiy, op.cit., p. 174.

²⁵³ Awad (1969), p. 9.

of biographies and autobiographies of earlier accounts written as preliminary sources.²⁵⁴ It all began with the Syrian historian al-Muradi who was “author of the biographical dictionary of the famous people of the twelfth Hijra century”,²⁵⁵ was the main reason why al-Jabarti chose this track of historical expression and writing. As al-Muradi was approaching his death, he called out for a follower of his track of historical writing. As a matter of fact, al-Muradi until his death had only collected biographies and nothing was written until that time.²⁵⁶ Calling out for his assistant, al-Muradi requested from Murtada al-Zabidi (author of تاج العروس -Taj al-Arous which is the largest Arabic dictionary of almost 48 volumes)²⁵⁷ to search for a scholar to continue. As al-Jabarti’s teacher, al-Zabidi selected him to take on the collection and writing processes. It was from hereon in, that an internal urge was the motive to write the chronicles as al-Jabarti became aware of the lack of biographies as well as the lack of sufficient material that explains the historical contextualization of the Muslim world in general.²⁵⁸

Secondly, for al-Jabarti, he believed that another aspect of his works and ideas is that it should serve as an advice of a historian to the rulers.²⁵⁹ That is supported in which he says “ولعل أن يكن (wa la’ala an yakon haza lel’hakima darsa wa yakon laho fiha ‘ibra”²⁶⁰ - it is hoped that the leader finds lessons and tracks to show him the way through my works). Hence, it can be said that al-ajab was a tool, amongst others, that al-Jabarti resorted in order to realize his conceptions, notions and ideas that were displayed in the previous section, on one side. On the other hand, it also serves as a reform mechanism, however tackling intellectually or rather, scholarly.

Furthermore, al-Jabarti’s belief in القضاء والقدر or al-qadaa wa al-qadar (predestination) was very obvious and clear in his works illustrated before²⁶¹. It symbolizes his strong spiritual connection to that what he writes, for starters. In addition also, it shows the great role religion plays in his mind even during historicizing. Rather, it becomes apparent that it is a spiritual domination of his thought and works which he aimed at disseminating it among the people; depicting his role as an alim. One should not perceive his notion of predestination as a connotation for passivity, or for a call by al-Jabarti to not fight the oppressor since it the

²⁵⁴ Ayalon, op.cit., p. 225.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 224.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 225.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.226-227.

²⁵⁹ Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p. 165.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 175.

people have been preordained to be oppressed and hence that is the will of God²⁶². But rather on the contrary, al-Jabarti uses this tool as an indication that a strong Muslim country is that which perceives its predestination and realizes it; being Egypt is an Islamic oriented country and hence it needs to realize the will of God, which is the original predestination (it being a Muslim country and ruled by Muslims). The fact that it has been occupied by non-Muslims is against the norms and hence needs to be fought²⁶³. In his belief, he was sending his messages through his writings and displaying of the truth, to serve as a changing mechanism by the ruler and the people.

2.3.4. Conclusion

Al-Jabarti's contributions about the French, al-ajab and his general notes and observation, mark a special turning point in the life of historical writing in Egypt. Hence, one cannot say that it was due to the French that he started to write and add to the scholarly field and historiography, as many Orientalist would claim and argue. Rather, his work was the end product of a long collection process carried out by his teachers and supervisors al-Mouradi and al-Zabidi, which extended long before the presence of the French in Egypt. Over and above, al-Jabarti added a dimension to the work that al-Attar was doing and carrying out, which is academically approaching invasion through historical writing.

The writings about al-Jabarti are rather plenty, unlike the amount written on al-Attar, and so it was rather difficult to trace all his writings in my master thesis. So, the most important or rather shaping instrumental points were employed to convey to the reader the structure of his conceptual framework and thought at the time. It is for the greatness of his work that he was called "the giant among the dwarfs" by Awad and Ayalon in their writings on al-Jabarti. And it is for this particular reason why it is immensely difficult to gather all in one work.

However, having tackled the points in this section, some questions may still be raised to raise attention for further research in this field. How did the notion of al-Ummah al-Masriyya come about and in what context for al-Jabarti? It was clear when he said it and what was meant by it. But what is rather confusing is how he reached such a conception if at his stage the calling out for an Egyptian identity was very uncommon, let alone an Egyptian nation was certainly unorthodox to the entirety of the political and cultural milieu in general. Although it emerges

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

approximately ones in his work, was he cautious so as to not give it more weight and highlight it in his works? What was the general reaction of those exposed to his writings and particularly this concept?

2.4. Chapter Conclusion

After illustrating the nature of the 18th century Egyptian political and religious reform attempts, it is rather useful to demonstrate the learned lessons or outcomes through this and hence in answering the thesis question.

The Egyptian political thought at the beginning of the 18th century was not mature enough, nor were the modern sciences sufficiently practiced, except notes and summaries as well as further interpretations of already existing works of earlier predecessors in the fields of linguistics and the like, as illustrated at the beginning of the chapter. However, education was a crucially embedded aspect of the Egyptian society despite of the stagnation in the intellectual contributions and innovations. Modern sciences were not obsolete. In fact they were taught and tackled by scholars, yet their circumference of practice and teaching was not as concentrated and wide spread as it should have been during that time, in comparison to the status in Europe for example.

Historical writing was not famous during the first half of the 18th century, and it took a rather formal structure which was serving the nature and the purposes of the Mameluke military. While on the other side, the works and additions of the Egyptian intellectual contributions and scholarly innovations starting from the second half of the 18th century was not only due to Egyptian efforts, but rather scholars from around the Muslim world in general due to the status and centrality of al-Azhar as an intellectual hub.

Furthermore is the roles played by the foreign occupation over Egypt. Apart from the scientific researches conducted by the French about the Egyptians, resulting in one of the best historical master pieces, the non-Egyptians and particularly the Europeans did not contribute toward the establishment of the enlightenment thinking during the second half of the 18th century. The contributions were all Egyptian based as well as Muslim and Arab-based contributions. As a matter of fact, the enlightenment thinking and intellectual pick-up process commenced with the dawn of the 18th century, which was in no way related to the French occupation or expedition.

In conclusion, it must be mentioned that the results of the fruit of the intellectual contributions of the 18th century was not exactly visible even throughout the phase of Muhammad Ali. The seeds that were planted in the 18th century, reaching their peak at the end of it, could be reaped in the second half of the 19th century through the works of Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, as will be introduced in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Political and Al-Azhar Reform Philosophies and Ideas of the 19th Century Egypt

Introduction

It is perceived to be rather apprehensive that when discussing the beginning of modern-day Egypt that the 19th century would be the logical marking point at the forefront which represents such. The purpose of the previous chapter was to show and proof otherwise, on one side, as well as to pose the significance of going back to the roots of events and happenings in order to understand the present stance. The studies and accounts given on the 19th century in general are countless, and hence contributed in numerous directions, especially that regarding al-nahda and the various reform movements that took place throughout the Arab and Muslim World altogether. The purpose of this chapter, however, is not to trace back previous works and summarise them as a list of accounts on that particular period in modern-day Egypt. Rather, it is on the contrary. The prime focus of this is to show the connection between events between the two centuries and how al-nahda and hence reform attempts and projects did not start suddenly and only due to the French expedition and invasion to Egypt. It is also to show that the 19th century and its roots lay and would not have developed unless the intellectual base and works of al-Attar, al-Jabarti and many others were initially present in the different scientific fields; respecting the fact that the thesis as well as the thesis question revolved around the political philosophies or thoughts of the respectively selected intellectuals throughout the two chosen periods of history of Egyptian thought.

In that regard, this chapter will be tackling the following core aspects:

- The historical background of the 19th century (Milieu and the rebel movements)
- Al-Sheikh Muhammad Abduh: an analysis of his thought and conceptual framework
- Al-Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: an analysis of his thought and conceptual framework

Throughout the chapter the methodological approach of context then content analysis and display will be applicable. Like the previous chapter, the contextual part finds place throughout the first section of the chapter regarding the circumference of the Egyptian society at the time. This also takes place throughout the discussion of the ideas and thoughts of our authors and intellectuals in order to display the context within which their thoughts took place

and hence also their perceptions of reality. Throughout this, the agenda, conceptual notions and Weltanschauung of the intellectual will be displayed and discussed; representing the content analysis of the approach.

Before commencing I would like to pose the following question which the reader should bare in mind and consider throughout the chapter. They are as follows:

- Is there a scientific validity in measuring the achievement of a Nahda? Was it actually achieved, or was the achievement relatively partial with respect to the circumstances that preceded the 19th century? In other words: were the reform programs and thoughts perceived as nahdawy plans due to the deterioration that Egyptian intellectual contributions were in throughout the Ottoman domination? And if so, was it really that influential? And wouldn't the measure of something described as "influential" include the effect a particular region had over its neighbouring regions?
- Figures such as Abduh and al-Afghani gained experiences, with relative and different outcomes reflected in their practices, from the west with respect to certain aspects of their thoughts and hence their established contacts with figures such as Ernest Renan. Was the west relatively influenced by them?

3.1. Historical Background: Religion - Politics Problematic

3.1.1. Milieu of the 19th Century

Similarly to the previous chapter, it is important that as part of a Global History paper, that there is a brief yet present display of the overall picture of the 19th century in the influential parts related to the region under study. Hence, what are the major events that took place throughout the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire and Europe? Who were the prime figures and names of the European intellectuals at the time regarding the Renaissance?

Important Dates in Brief

The 19th century is marked for being the era of inventions and discoveries that are built upon the scientific contributions of the European continent at the time of late 18th century. These discoveries included the developments of the studies of maths, physics, chemistry, biology and the like²⁶⁴. It was the period of the commencement of the European widespread new settlement foundations as well as the outbreak of the European industrial revolution, both of which marked the hegemony of the European imperialism.

Further important facts regarding that phase include Napoleon's crowning of himself as the Emperor of France (1804) followed by Muhammad Ali's rule over Egypt (1805-1848). The industrial revolution began approximately around 1820. Following that, Algeria becomes invaded by France (1830) and the Slavery Abolition Act was introduced and applied in the British Empire in 1833²⁶⁵. On the other side, Egypt specific, the year 1869 marked the linking of the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the opening of the Suez Canal, and in 1882 Britain officially invades and sequentially occupies Egypt. During this century also, the world comes to hear the names and subsequently read the works and becomes influences by many preeminent figures: Napoleon I, Karl Marx, Nietzsche, Alexander Graham, Abraham Lincoln, Vincent van Gogh, Mozart, Darwin, Søren Kierkegaard, and Otto von Bismarck to mention the least.

²⁶⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica, "liberalism.", Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/339173/liberalism> (accessed May 29, 2010).

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

Having perceived a general, rather brief picture of the overall portrait of the European and regional status, one can now sharpen the lens, yet ones again, direction Egypt's contextual being at the time from various angles.

The Status of Egypt

The dawn of the 19th century commenced with the end of the French invasion over Egypt in 1804 and their partial defeat by the Egyptians, and the British and Ottoman agreement to withdraw and to hand over the authority to the Ottomans yet ones again. The “advent of Muhammad Ali and his bureaucracy”²⁶⁶ introduced an uncommon class of rulers into Egypt. With that respect, Muhammad Ali used various tools in employing his methodology in ruling the country which included various aspects as follows:

Perception towards al-Ulama

Ali employed native Egyptians and Turco-Circassian elites²⁶⁷ that led to the centralization of the government, leading to the Egyptianisation and the Arabisation of the government²⁶⁸. This administration used al-ulum as a link between them and the public in matters associated with religion in particular (as was also the case back then in the 18th century) which led to the appointment of Hassan al-Attar as the Grand Imam of al-Azhar. In other words, the main power and authoritative decisions were taken and implemented by the administration itself, while all the “ancillary roles” that the ulama had played in the past became one of the prime functions of the civilian administration at the time²⁶⁹. Having come to power, Ali deprived the ulama of their authorities with respect to decision making and mass empowerment and mobilization, while it was rather dominant during the 18th century. The reason being, although he came to power through the ulama, he aimed at halting and abolishing any potential existence for antithetical moves against him that may be yet to come²⁷⁰. This part also included that the ulama were not only prevented from their decision making roles and functions, they were also turned into dependent elements on the administration itself. That was carried out through limiting their incomes to be only that received by and through the government only.

²⁶⁶ Marsout., op.cit., p. 543.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., See also M.M.Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of Other Disciplines and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands. Volume Two.* (Kempfen: Allgäuer Heimatverlag, 1966).

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 544.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

As mentioned earlier, the prime role of the ulama in the 18th century was revolving around the spiritual sciences and intellectual contributions with few yet rich exceptions. Lane explains this status by saying, “the Muslim ulama are certainly much fettered by their religion in the pursuit of some of the paths of learning; and superstition sometimes decides a point which has been controversial for centuries.”²⁷¹

One can perceive that the policy agenda of the new government was to communicate directly to the people without the need or the resorting to any mediators, or so they claimed to aim at.²⁷² However, this was perhaps only successful on the urban level while on the rural facet the “village alim”²⁷³ still had a dominant function along with the central role mysticism played among the *fellahin*.²⁷⁴

As for the intellectual status of the ulama, despite their contributions in many scientific and academic fields throughout the 18th and the 19th century as well, primarily through their exposure to the modern sciences and the initially existing works, as evoked throughout the second chapter, the European Orientalist perception is rather contrary to this elemental status of the Egyptian ulama. As Lane mentions in his *Egyptian Manners and Customs*, “it is a very prevalent notion among the Christians of Europe, that the Muslims are enemies to almost every branch of knowledge. This is an erroneous idea, but it is true that their studies in the present age, are confined within very narrow limits. Very few of them study medicine, chemistry (for our first knowledge of which we are indebted to the Arabs), the mathematics....”²⁷⁵ Furthermore, that form an Orientalist view at the time, a very few Egyptians knew their own history, primarily due to the lack of efficient documentations, most of which were abolished or lost throughout and due to the Ottoman rule and domination. With that respect, he believes, that due to this barrier of knowledge, the Egyptians also lacked a proper understanding of the other regions outside their own walls.²⁷⁶ Perhaps that was the position where the enhanced reform programs which were imposed as plans in the late 18th century would have been handy for the role of al-ulama.

²⁷¹ Lane, op.cit, p. 213.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. (Arabic term for farmers).

²⁷⁵ Lane, op.cit., p.217.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

3.1.2. The Nature of the Ottoman Rule, the British Invasion: the Birth of Nationalism

The rule of Muhammad Ali applied the conception of *مصر للمصريين - Masr lel Mariyyin* (Egypt for the Egyptians)²⁷⁷, as a matter of fact he is seen to be the first to introduce the action conception of nationalism²⁷⁸. In that respect the nexus of this conception is to build a country and a society that is not solely relying on the Topkapi, rather the gravity for establishing a solid infrastructure by and for the Egyptians. In fact, “the rise of a new native elite from among the population of administrators (...) acquired new concepts of authority and power (...) derived from secular practice and the actual wielding of authority (...) were the outcome of accommodation to economic reality and the necessities of a state (...) rather than religious teachings.”²⁷⁹ Marsout states in her article that “many of these notions were also derived from the West and were secular notions that displaced theoretical Muslim ideals (...).”²⁸⁰ That to an extent explains also the status that Hassan al-Attar was attempting to carry out the same principle of secular ideals through the introduction of modern sciences and the setting of religion aside within the circumferences of al-Azhar in a rather modernized and properly institutionalized matter, as Gran also mentioned previously in the second chapter. Hence, having al-Attar as the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, was perhaps an assistant factor for the plans and administrative projects of Muhammad Ali. With that respect the changes during Ali’s phase towards the ulama and towards the people and the administration “lay in the fact that the new practitioners (...) were (...) ready to ignore theoretical principles of government in favour of realpolitik. Ethics and morality were to be set aside in favour of practical politics based on secular notions.”²⁸¹

It is significant to note that the relationship between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire remained until 1882 which defined Egypt’s political status through Muhammad Ali’s family and his followers.²⁸² In addition, there was also a lack of the notion of a separate Egyptian nationality,²⁸³ but rather a national being for emancipation and rather self-development. In fact, despite the direct rule and domination of the Ottoman Empire over Egypt and its autonomous authority and practice of power of the Egyptian territories, the British

²⁷⁷ Marsout, op.cit., p. 544.

²⁷⁸ Amal Fahmy, ١٩١٤ - ١٨٨٢: *العلاقة المصرية العثمانية على عهد الإحتلال البريطاني: 1882-1914 - The Egyptian-Ottoman Relations during the Era of the British Occupation: 1882-1914* (Cairo: Al Hay’a Al Masriyya Al - Ama lil Kitab, 2002), 17.

²⁷⁹ Marsout, op.cit., p. 544.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Fahmy, op.cit., p. 17.

²⁸³ Ibid.

administration did not retreat from attempting numerous in politically hegemonistic imperialism and expansionist mechanisms over Egypt. As a consequence to the changes of the nature of the people and their political and economic, as well as societal status and structure, “a new form of protest appeared in the first of the national movements that overwhelmed the country”²⁸⁴ that was embodied in the Urabi revolution. This in its very sense, served as the centre point for the birth of a crystallized notion amongst the political stance of the ulama along with the intellectuals of the nationalists, which was the Egyptian nationalism.

The Urabi revolution (1878-1882)²⁸⁵ by Colonel Ahmed Urabi, came as a result of the disputes and the oppressions practiced by the Khedive as well as the indirect, and in many cases also direct, British intervention in Egypt. This movement signed a remarkable shift in the presence of the Egyptian society and the will of the people in Egypt at the time. The paramount scene that is found on that event is that the people of Egypt did come together in harmony united for one aim which is self-emancipation from the tyrannical rule as Marsout implies, “(...) military and civilians combined together, not as members of separate classes within society coming together to right an abuse of power, but as difference classes, united in their anger as natives of the country, wanting to wrest from their ruler a right to which they felt entitled: self-government, under a constitution.”²⁸⁶

Albeit it failed, yet “for a multiplicity of reasons”²⁸⁷, al-Urabi revolution evoked a turning point in the history of Egyptian people taking matters into their own hands and fighting for self-determination and hence also self-governance. Perhaps one recalls that the same event took place in the first and the second Cairo Revolution by the Egyptians with the support of al-ulama and al-Azhar against the French. Hence, it was not the first attempt in modern day Egypt to fight the existing rulers by dint of the people and the masses. Following the British ruler over Egypt, officially commencing in 1882, some almost thirty years later, and after several failed attempts, the same pattern of emancipation took place by the dawn of the 20th century in the 1919²⁸⁸ revolution by Saad Zaghloul. These events mark the changing in the roles of the social actions and hence also explain the background which gave birth to the intellectuals at the time and their prime motive that guides their thoughts.

²⁸⁴ Marsout, op.cit., p. 544.

²⁸⁵ Fahmy, op.cit., p.18.

²⁸⁶ Marsout., op.cit., p. 544.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 545.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., Please see Awad, 2001 for more information about the 1919 revolution.

Although this period of time is incredibly rich with intellectual contributions on the levels of Egyptian identity and the need for self-government and the like, which were the notions introduced by Muhammad Ali's administration, the intellectuals that are selected to reflect upon the 19th century do resemble a rather different pattern of intellectuals. In other words; the nature of the intellectuals of the 18th century, I believe, was rather perhaps less rebellious and although aiming for the acquisition of knowledge and modern sciences from the West, it was still limited to the radius of space it was set in and did not become directly exposed to the idea of tangibly living and seeing the western societies. By that I aim to say, although Hassan al-Attar and al-Jabarti interacted with the French while on the Egyptian lands, and although they travelled outside Egypt for some period of time, this interaction did still not reach the actual being and interacting with the European civilisation and cultures, which was the case in the second half of the 19th century with Abduh and al-Afghani. This in itself played a significant part in their perception of the Egyptian identity, the methods and the way to deal with the invader and how the Egyptian society and nationalism should actually be perceived as, baring in mind, that the 18th century Egypt did not discuss Egyptian nationalism nor the Egyptian identity bluntly, yet al-Jabarti mentions the notion "an Egyptian Ummah" for the first time in modern times and perhaps only ones throughout his chronicle. This perception, from domestically sought emancipation, to the exposure to the "other" on his own lands in the 19th century, shows the development of the intellectual inputs in the sphere of reform and hence also the commencement of al-nahda in its practical and measurable form. This will be now displayed through the thoughts and notions of Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani.

3.2. Al-Sheikh Muhammad Abduh

النظر واجب بالاجماع فايك أن تجعل العجز فطرة.

(محمد عبده)

“Sight is a unanimous duty. Never permit inability and blindness to become your instinct.”

(Muhammad Abduh)

3.2.1. The Context: Abduh’s Being and Weltanschauung

Abduh’s Background

Al-Sheikh Muhammad Abduh was born in the year 1849 in the Nile Delta and died in the year 1905 in the city of Alexandria²⁸⁹. He was a prominent Muslim thinker, religious scholar and alim of the 19th century and is the personified stepping stone for Egypt toward al-nahda and reform; seen as the initiator of Islamic modernism as a liberal reformer, while following the principles of the mutazala sect which led him to founding the neo-mutazala school of religious teachings and thought²⁹⁰.

He studied at al-Azhar where al-Sheikh Darwish was his prime instructor and relative,²⁹¹ who was responsible for his teaching and planting in him the preliminary seeds of knowledge in the various fields of sciences as well as particularly the shariah and the fields of adab, history and politics as well as economics²⁹². This was followed by his studies at Cairo University, in 1866, in the fields of logic, mysticism and philosophy which added to his conceptualization of reality and how he views the status quo at his time²⁹³. Following his graduation from Cairo University, Abduh pursued his academic career as teaching at al-Azhar in 1877²⁹⁴ which comprised the fields of *al-mantiq* (logic), *al-kalam* and *al-akhlaq* (manners and discipline).²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ Adelhalim El-Gindy, p. 13, also see Abdel Karim Abu Sefsaf. حركة محمد عبده وعبد الحميد بن باديس وابعداه (Haraket Muhammad ‘Abduh wa ‘Abd Al Hamid bin Badis: wa Ab’adiha al Thakafiyya wa Al Igtema’iyya wa Al Siyasiyya 1849- 1940, Al Juz’ Al Awal - The Movement driven by Muhammad Abduh and Abdel Hamid bin Badis: and its Cultural, Social and Political Dimensions from 1849 – 1940, Part One) (Cairo: Al Hay’a Al Masriyya Al ‘Ama lel Kitab, 2008), 196.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p.7.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 10.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Abusefsaf, op.cit., p.248.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

He was known for his motive to call for the walking out of the traditional educational path, similar to that of al-Attar and al-Jabarti. However, Abduh had a stronger and daring spirit in the vision he had the desire behind it; justifying him being a liberal and modern reformist which posed a challenge, yet ones again, upon al-Azhar.

Due to the intellectual framework he was born and brought up in, Abduh directed his focus towards two prime elements, they are: 1) teaching the doctrines while employing proof and empirical studies as tools, which he has been taught by al-Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and²⁹⁶ 2) teaching the disciplines of reason, logic and philosophy which were fields eliminated by al-Azhar, as illustrated in the previous chapter.²⁹⁷

Following this, Abduh began his career as an editor of الوقائع المصرية - *Al-Waqa'i' al-Masriyya* (The Egyptian Chronicles) in the year 1880²⁹⁸, in which he applied his modernized thought. In addition he also established, in the year 1881, what was back then known as مجلس المعارف - *Majlis al-Ma'arif al-A'la*²⁹⁹ (The higher council of education: today known as the Ministry of Education). This assisted him to go the extra mile of bringing al-Azhar and the new educational system he strived at implementing closer together with respect to al-Azhar's acknowledgement and acceptance.

His acquaintance with al-Afghani crystallized a lot of the ideas and thoughts which Abduh adopted throughout his path; in fact it also opened up many doors and intensified his thought. During Abduh's engagement in paving the path for modernized education, he was politically active with al-Afghani in تنظيمات سياسية سرية - *Tanzimat Siyasiyya Siriyya* (secret political societies) which al-Afghani had established, which included freemasonry which he joined urging to find answers and solutions for the Egyptian political reality. Facing all the dangers both had encountered, they left the society, and joined what was back then called الحزب الوطني الحر - *Al-Hizb al-Watany al-Hur*³⁰⁰ (The Free National Party) which adopted Muhammad Ali's notion and call for masr lil masriyyin.³⁰¹

If we look at the most important literature contributions he produced, they can be mainly marked to be the following, as agreed upon by Charles Adams and Abdelkarim Abu Sifsaf: “*Taqliz Garidat al-Ahram* (Raves about Al-Ahram Newspaper), *al-Kitab wa al-Qalam* (The

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p.249.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p.251.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p.255.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

Pen and the Book), *al-Olum al-Kalamiyya* (Verbal Sciences), *Al-Dawa ila al-Oloum al-Shariyya* (A call for the legitimate sciences), articles at *al-Orwa al-Wuthqa* (The trustworthy Robe) as well as *Falsafit al-Sinaa* (The philosophy of production) and *Risalet al-Taw'hid* (The Message of Consolidation)",³⁰² to mention the least.

In short, Abduh's engagement in the educational reform was continuous and persistent except during the years of exile between 1882 and 1889³⁰³ in Paris followed by Beirut. This has also added to his conceptual framework towards how has to structure his thought, as well as carry out his plans and agenda regarding the reform plans he had taken the aim of applying in Egypt. This brings us to the next part of the chapter in which the illustration of Abduh's conceptions and agenda take place.

3.2.2. Argumentations and Concepts

I believe that the most influential writing regarding the conceptions and notions illustrated and believed in by Muhammad Abduh is that provided by Charles C. Adams in his book *Volume X: Islam and Modernism in Egypt* in the collective works of *Orientalism: Early Sources*. the prime reason is that Adam, as an Orientalist, lived throughout the period of Abduh, and in the light of there being many discrepancies regarding the exact dates and sequence of information on how events took place, Abu Sefsaf in his works on Abduh mentions several times that Adams is one of the most trusted sources with respect to discussing Abduh's works and character³⁰⁴. For that reason I will rely on Adams in the illustration and analysis of Abduh's notions and beliefs, hence his conceptual framework with respect to education, religion and political reforms, as well as his agenda in the section that follows. A point that must be noted is that the following points, traits between his beliefs in that regard, should be seen as reasons that justify his stand position towards reform educationally and his political as well as religious perceptions.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 256.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 248.

Abduh's views on Theology and Philosophy

In his رسالة التوحيد - *Risalat al-Taw'hid* Abduh evokes a vast set of his perceptions on the relationship with God and man, as well as how the role of philosophy should be utilised and employed. In fact, the studies and the teaching that Abduh performed during his stay in Beirut made him realise that what he was resorting to was insufficient in the teachings of Islam, hence also in the understanding and dissemination of the beneficial aspects of Islam.³⁰⁵ It was his aim in that sense to adjust this discovery as part of his modernist or rather liberal education reform as well as for his return to al-Azhar. Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935)³⁰⁶, a disciple of Muhammad Abduh and one of the most prominent scholars at the time who was of Syrian origin, reflected on Abduh's observation in which he says, "the centuries has passed, and there has been no work which was suitable as a presentation of a summons to Islam in the for required by the dogmatic theologians (...) until Muhammad Abduh came and wrote *Risalat al-tawhid*."³⁰⁷

In addition, Abduh's perception is that in order to transfer the appropriate message to the masses regarding the true Islam, meaning an Islam that within itself calls for renewal, tolerance as well as the use of reason, simplification has to take place in transmitting these ideas to the students and the people in general.³⁰⁸ Hence, "it is sufficiently evident (...) that the form of statement in which his views on religion and theology are cast was determined by his desire to make what he conceived to be the simplest and the most essential form of Islam available for the masses of the people".³⁰⁹

Abduh's understanding and conception of theology in relation to reform was also associated with how he views the relationship between man and God. I believe that this is one of the main pillars that explain his desire for modernisation and political reform as well in his work and his philosophical explanations. By that I mean that Abduh believed that the role of philosophy should not be that regarding the questioning of the being of God and the reason behind it which crystallises the nature of the metaphysical studies taking place at the time also in Europe, represented by thoughts such as the death of God by Friedrich Nietzsche for example. Abduh believes that the position of God should be kept untouched since the scientists of other culture who questioned and searched in this field and put refutations to

³⁰⁵ Charles C. Adams, *Orientalism: Early Sources, Volume X: Islam and Modernism in Egypt*. (London: Routledge. 2000), 112.

³⁰⁶ Abusefsaf, op.cit., p. 350.

³⁰⁷ Adams, op.cit., p. 113.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 114.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

accept the being of God as it is, ended up exactly on the exact same point they began from. Hence, as Muslims, the Islamic religion does actually rely on reason and the use of man for his intellect to apprehend and comprehend reality in its natures and aspects. It is, according to Muhammad Abduh, the philosophical analysis and interpretation with respect to the nature of man and the relationship between man and his nature that should be studied and put into practice to apprehend its components and hence also to reform and change where needed. This point can be explained through Abduh's reference saying in his *Risala*, "to reflect upon the essence of the Creator, is, in one respect, an attempt to penetrate its reality; and this is forbidden to the human intellect, because of the severance of all relation between the two existences (i.e. between God and his creatures), and because of the impossibility of composition of parts in his essence.

In another respect, to reflect about it is to proceed to length which the power of man cannot reach. It is, therefore, futile and harmful; futile, because it is an endeavour to comprehend the incomprehensible; harmful, because it leads to confusion of belief for it is the definition of what it is not permissible to define, and the limitation of what it is not proper to limit."³¹⁰ In other words, and as Horton³¹¹ indicates, that for Abduh this was a deviation away from religion and hence practical explanations were of more value in order to add to scientific research, and hence surely also reform.

Abduh's Conception of Social Sciences

This is conception for Abduh can not be separated from understanding the latter point on philosophy and religion. As mentioned, for Abduh, man is created with reason and the intellectual capacity to test and hence to also understand and apprehend the surrounding environment he is created in. In that, one can derive from Abduh's thoughts, that his aim was also to justify the need to use this faculty for change and reform of the current status quo; explaining the practical side of sciences and philosophy rather than the metaphysical aspects that are not productive for the nature of the Egyptian and Muslim society in specific, and for man in general.

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 119.

³¹¹ Max Horton is a German Orientalist who lived between 1874 until 1945. He was a professor of Orientalistic and Philology in Bonn.

In Abduh's article at al-Ahram, which was written on the issue of 'speculative theology and the demand for the contemporary sciences'³¹², he says "the science of logic has been developed for the purpose of setting up proofs and distinguishing ideas, and to show how the premises should be ordered to arrive at a conclusion after proof (...) if we do not devote thought to setting up proofs and correcting them, and to the proper method of discovering truths and defining them, then to what shall we devote it?"³¹³ His strong belief in the indispensable presence and for the engagement in sciences, in order to change and hence also to reform through the use of proof, challenges the metaphysical studies and their relevance for Abduh.³¹⁴ In that sense, he believes that the study of history and scientific research in that regard, to understand the past and hence comprehend the status of the present will assist in the directing of the nature of the future. This also explains the reason why Abduh pushed forward for the application of modern sciences, the same al-Attar was striving for and al-Jabarti as well through historical writing and methodology.

The True Islam and the Nation

Muhammad Abduh perceived Islam as holding the truth of the existence of man and hence also the logical explanation to his relationship with God. In that sense, it also explains for him the holistic perception of Islam with respect to the other religions as Egypt did not only comprise Muslims, but people of Jewish and Christian faiths as well.³¹⁵ Hence, he believed that within this oneness nature of Islam and God, a people can only be successful when it reaches together the nature and the status of happiness and truth through the employment of their reason, since "God is a fundamental article of faith"³¹⁶. This justifies Abduh's belief, and his followers alike, in the need for testing and examination as well as independent investigation to find the modernised structure to suit the needs of a better Egyptian structure of social and political enhancements using the religious mechanisms and disciplines of reason³¹⁷.

Furthermore, this brings us to the understanding of the society and the nation in Abduh's thought and perceptions. He believes that with the principles of "struggle for existence"³¹⁸ as he calls it, the Qur'an leaves room for man to strive for the best and improved alternative for

³¹² Ibid., p. 122.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Al Imam Muhammad Abudh, *Risalat Al Tawheed* (Cairo: The General Egyptian Council for Books, 2005), 35.

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 124.

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 132.

³¹⁷ Abduh, op.cit., 40.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 140., also see Abusefsaf, part one, p. 450.

his already existing condition. It is through the law of God that man can understand the nature of his being and hence find and draw paths to walk³¹⁹. In that sense, the will of man in determination is open and left for choices to be met through the use of the faculty of reason³²⁰, yet at the same time “more frequent attention is to be given to the laws of society”³²¹ which are provided in the Qur’an. He says “mankind has special laws (the sunan)³²² in their social life, by which they are governed. Thus their strength and weakness, wealth and poverty, might and humiliation, domination and subjection, life and death, all these furnish illustrations which should induce men to obey the laws of God. Those who live according to the law of God continue to be the ones who hold the widest dominion of all the nations”³²³.

It is therefore in Abduh’s prime belief, that the people, who decide to take their fates in their hands, are those who can do the change they deserve for themselves, their nations and also their society. This statement is supported by a quote Abduh says, which is repeating a verse in the Qur’an saying “verily God does not change the fate of a people until they change their own state”³²⁴. By explaining his strive towards reform and educational change and modernisation as well as the introduction of modern sciences, following the principle of al-Attar in that regard, Abduh states the indispensable need for strength of implementation and to take ones’ fate into ones’ own hands. In that respect he states, “Nations have not fallen from their greatness nor have their names been wiped off the state of existence, except after they have departed from those laws which God prescribed with supreme wisdom. God will not change the state of a people from might and power and wealth and peace, until that people change their own state of intellectual knowledge (hence for Abduh it means scientific research and educational and later on also political reform through his ideas developed along with al-Afghani) and correctness of thinking and perception, and considerations for the previous nations who went astray from the path of God and therefore perished (...).”³²⁵ From here on, the principle of the struggle for existence becomes, I believe, a strong driving force for not only the conceptual framework of Muhammad Abduh, but also the agenda of his thought he used to realise his conceptions.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 140.

³²⁰ Al-Farabi’s *Al-Madina al-Fadila* also tackles the use of the different faculties in order to reach the virtuous city state, as originally taught by Plato, only in an Islamic context. Although the time difference between al-Farabi and Muhammad Abduh is grand, yet this still reflects on the original principles imbedded in the Islamic belief system of the Muslim society and hence the Muslim intellectual mind structure.

³²¹ Ibid., p.141.

³²² Plural for Sunnah

³²³ Ibid., taken by Adams from Abduh’s notes المنار (*al-Manar* - The Lighthouse).

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 141.

³²⁵ Ibid.

3.2.3. Agenda

Having perceived the illustrated conceptual framework that shape Abduh's views towards reform and educational change as well as the introduction of the scientific methodology and research, the agenda becomes substantial to see how his thought was put into action. In fact, he moved from the principle that education was the only way for political reform as well as al-Azhar reform. Before commencing, however, it is useful evoke the main intellectual influences, other than al-Afghani, over Abduh's thoughts and agenda or plan or action. Muhammad Abduh was a good reader of the European literature and scholarly contribution. This was represented through the works of "Rosseau (1712-1778), Spencer (1820-1903), Tolstoy (1828-1901) as well as Ernest Renan (1823-1892)"³²⁶ to mention the least. This exposure, permitted him to become acquainted with the European school of modern thought, and hence the employment of the modern sciences as well, including philosophy, since unlike al-Afghani and the al-ulama before him, Abduh cannot be classified as an encyclopaedic intellectual or scholar with respect to the natural sciences, but rather confined to social sciences and philology.³²⁷

Having displayed that, Abduh's agenda covered various aspects which included: religious reform, political reform, linguistic reform and grammatical enhancements, economic and social reform programs, as well as educational reform.

Abduh's **religious reforms had al-Azhar** as the central focus in mind, which comprised two major aspects: reviving the Islamic principles in a comprehensible sense so as to introduce it to the people and the new scholars in Egypt, as well as motivating the public for accepting such,³²⁸ which was explained in the previous parts regarding Abduh's thoughts. **The political reform agenda** of Abduh's, was revolving around the notion of constructing a nation and a modernised society based on reason and the teachings of Islam³²⁹. Abduh's prime aim was not to directly reject the foreign invasion of Egypt, but rather to utilise them as tools to empower the Egyptian political system. In that sense, he created the first ministry in charge of education. He also wrote his notes regarding his advice of directed to the rulers at the time in Egypt as well. And it was due to his strong and positive relationships with the Ottoman ruler at the time that he was able to apply at least a part of his agenda in that respect. Hence, one

³²⁶ Abusefsaf, op.cit., p. 348.

³²⁷ Ibid., p.354.

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 360.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 370.

could clearly state that the educational reform was the key in Abduh's agenda regarding religious as well as political reform.³³⁰

3.2.4. Conclusion

Muhammad Abduh's contributions were rather on a level that was not as radical as those following him. Instead, his reform agenda and perception was based on the need of educational change, like his predecessors mainly al-Attar and al-Jabarti. In fact, he was able to implement the reform agenda into practice, unlike the former two mentioned. Unlike al-Attar and al-Jabarti, Muhammad Abduh did not only become engaged into the intellectual writings and contributions regarding Islamic philosophy as well as political matters at the time in Egypt, he also applied his ideas into practice through the introduction of a ministry of education. He also put his thoughts into practice through his acquaintance with al-Afghani through العروة الوثقة (al-Urwa al-Wuthqa) as well as the introduction of modern sciences and their practice in the Egyptian and Muslim society, which was also supported by al-Afghani.

Muhammad Abduh's work is regarded as revolutionary; seeing that he was Egyptian and the first one after al-Jabarti and al-Attar before that, to call out for a modernity of the Islamic application in Egypt. It is also very clear the extent of the accumulation of work that is based on previous ideas and notions introduced by intellectuals of the late 18th century. This shows the reliability and the effectiveness or rather the criticality of the thought introduced in the second half of the 18th century Egyptian scholarship.

³³⁰ Ibid., p. 375.

3.3. Al-Afghani

*‘If someone says: If the Islamic world is as you say, then why are the Muslims in such a sad condition? I will answer: When they were [truly] Muslims, they were what they were and the world bears witness to their excellence. As for the present, I will content myself with this holy text: “Verily, God does not change the state of a people until they change themselves inwardly”’.*³³¹

- Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (*Keddie, An Islamic Response to Imperialism*, p. 173)

3.3.1. The Context: Al-Afghani’s Being and Weltanschauung

Background

Al-Afghani’s (1839 – 1897)³³² exact place of birth is one of the issues about him that are and have been under controversy. However, the single reliable source with that respect was Abduh as his entrusted researchers, student and fighter for one mission, the fighting of tyranny and the implications of reform. According to Abduh, al-Afghani was born in a town called Asadabad. In addition to Abduh’s sources, about al-Afghani’s life, various other sources agree that he did live in various places³³³, including “Kabul, Afghanistan, Qazwin and Teheran”.³³⁴ It was since the dawn of his youth, that al-Afghani’s family’s residence was always limited to places and time limits, which was marked by Dost Muhammad Khan (1793-1863)³³⁵, the Emir of Afghanistan, who forced al-Afghani’s family to move from their original residence and ownerships and to move to Kabul in order to remain under his own control and

³³¹ Ibrahim Kalin, “Sayyid Jamal al-Din Muhammad b. Safdar al-Afghani (1838-1897)”, Centre for Islam and Science, revised 2007, <http://www.cis-ca.org/voices/a/afghni.htm>, (accessed May, 08, 2010). See also: Keddie, Nikki, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din “al-Afghani”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

³³² Al-Sheikh Muhammad Abduh *الثوري الإسلامي جمال الدين الأفغاني* (*Al-Tha’ir al-Islamiyy: Jamal al-Din al-Afghaniy - The Revolutionary Islamic: Jamal al-Din al-Afghaniy*) (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1979), 17.

³³³ See, Emara’s *Afghani* pp. 97-104 and Abduh’s *Al-Tha’ir Al-Islamiy: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani*, p.16-24.

³³⁴ Ibrahim Kalin, op.cit.

³³⁵ Ibid.

observation. It was from this moment, that al-Afghani felt and became acquainted with the notions of tyranny and oppression as a child, which grew with him only deeper during his adulthood.³³⁶ That resulted into his writing of the famous *The Truth about the Neichari Sect and an Explanation of the Necharis*³³⁷ in 1881 in rejection of the thoughts and ideas of Sayyid Ahmed Khan and his followers.³³⁸ It was later on that Muhammad Abduh translated his works into Arabic under the title of *The Refutation of the Materialists* (al-Radd ala al-Dahriyyin) in 1886.³³⁹ Crucial to add is also al-Afghani's stay in Cairo in 1870 in which he was very "welcomes by the Ottoman officials and intellectuals particularly in Istanbul who were instrumental in the creation of the tanzimat reforms."³⁴⁰ He returned yet ones again to Egypt after Istanbul between "1871 and 1879 in which time he began to spread his philosophical and political ideas through his classes and public lectures."³⁴¹ Following that, he travelled to Paris, with Muhammad Abduh in which they both worked in the newspaper al-urwa al-Wuthka (the firmest robe or handhold).³⁴² Along with the famous al-urwa, he was also giving lectures and spreading his thought which included essays in which he critically deconstructs Ernest Renan's notions of modernity and view towards the Orient.

In fact given his background, his experience with tyranny was unfathomable to describe his stand and views towards the oppressive nature of the ruling and governing systems in the Muslim world. From this regard, his perception towards the fighting of the oppressor, and the strive for a fair and merciful ruler explains the statement he says, which I believe was his driving mechanism for his life as modernised yet politically radical Muslim philosopher as well as activist. This statement is supported by the quote in which al-Afghani says, " لا تحية مصر ولا تحية الشرق بدوله وماراته إلى إذا اتحا لكل منها رجلٌ قويان عادلاً يحكما بأهلها غير طارق التفرد بالقوة لأن بالقوة المطلقة الاستبداد ولا عدل إلى مع القوة المقبضة، وحكم مصر بأهلها إنما أعاني به الاشتراك ... والسلطان (la ta'hya masr wa la ya'hya al-sharq bidawla wa imaratih ila iza ota'h Allah likul minha rajulan qawiyyan 'adilan, ya'hkuma bi'Ahlih 'ala gheir tariq altafarud belquwa wa alsultan. Li'an belquwa almotlaqa alistebdad, wa la 'Adl ila m'aa alquwa almoqbada. Wa 'hukm masr bi ahliha, inama a'any bih alishterak alahly belhukm aldustury alsa'hih - ³⁴³ neither Egypt nor the East will survive and be able to rebuild itself yet

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Muhammad Emara. *Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghaniy: Mawqith Al-Sharq wa Faylasouf Al-Islam* (Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghaniy: The Awakener of the East and the Philosopher of Islam) (Cairo: Dar Al-Sharq, 1988), 20.

³⁴⁰ Ibrahim Kalin, op.cit.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid., pp.98-99.

ones again, unless Allah provides it with a just and strong leader, to guide its people without taking advantage of the lands and practice tyranny and monopoly of decision making. Ruling Egypt will only be successfully achieved when the people are part of the decision making process and the ruling system).

I believe that this statement was directly and indirectly always engaged in al-Afghani's thought and agenda derives from his background and observations. Based on that, studying the entirety of the picture of his philosophical contributions towards the roles of religion and politics with respect to reform, leads us to come to observe his argumentations and conceptions as well as his agenda of actions.

3.3.2. Argumentations, Conceptions and His Agenda

With respect to al-Afghani, I have found it rather difficult to illustrate him by giving in two sections, one related to his conceptions and another related to his agenda of actions. The reason being that unlike the other intellectuals demonstrated, al-Afghani was an activist in which his ideas were directly translated into action plans and programs of reform. In that sense, it will be more effective if the two sections are combined.

Al-Afghani's belief in the need for a just Muslim ruler for the east, and in our case for Egypt in particular, is exemplified through the following ideas of his:

Nationalism and Arabism

With respect to this discourse, al-Afghani is famous for a quote in which he says, “إنه لا سبيل ... والامة العربية هي عرب قبل جل دين ومذهب وهذا العمر من الوضوح ... إلى أمة عن أخرى إلا بلغتها بما لا يحتاج ... ³⁴⁴(*Inah la sabil ila Ummah 'an okhra ila beloghatiha ... wa al-Ummah al-'arabiyya hiya 'arab'*) qabl kol din wa mazhab. Wa haza al-amr min al-wodo'h wa al-zohor lil'yan bima la ya'htag ma'oh ila dalil aw borhan- there is no other alternative for the Ummah to flourish except through its language as the Arab Ummah is “Arab”, which is by far more important and is prioritised than any religion or sect. It is for this matter that no more clarification is needed since it is obvious and needs no justifications or elaboration). In that respect it must be noted that there are different notions used here that resemble a development in the use of certain ideas to that of Abduh on one hand, and to those used by al-Jabarti and al-

³⁴⁴ Emara (1988), p. 157.

Attar on the other. The use of the ummah al-arabiyya (الامة العربية) is rather new. Muhammad Abduh, due to the intensive work and life interaction with al-Afghani, as his student and follower, allowed him to perceive the similar notion by calling out for a unity among the Arab countries but rather on an Islamic ground, while al-Jabarti was calling out for an Egyptian Ummah and an emancipations of the Egyptians through being ruled by Muslims, and hence he did not overtly state the necessity of them being Arabs. Al-Attar on the other did not exactly stress out on these notions in his writings or poetry. This brings us to the next point in that regard and that is, for al-Afghani the religious base for unity was not of great importance as he says “*qabl kol din wa mazhab*”(before any religion or sects).

On another side, he calling for Arabism is all inclusive within the realm of Islamic practices³⁴⁵. Through this, al-Afghani evokes that the revival of the Arabic language, and the maintenance of the Arab ethnicity, do take as much importance in implementation as the Islamic unity, since Islam is all inclusive.³⁴⁶ In fact, through his deep understanding of the structure and nature of nationalism and hence pan- Arabism as well as his understanding of the deep and exact meaning of the Islamic teachings, al-Afghani was able to discuss and argue that there are actually no discrepancies between the two directions. One can say that for al-Afghani Islam was the large umbrella under which the discourses of nationalism and Arabism are always all embedded into it.³⁴⁷ For al-Afghani there are 5 determinants for the formation of nationalism or that caused him to believe in the necessity of supporting this belief. They are: religion, the tongue (the language), manners and customs, the contextual benefit of belonging to a certain group, and also the regional determinants³⁴⁸.

It must be noted that the conception of nationalism for al-Afghani was not associated with a regional circumference. For him the defining of an area as a nation or a country as a nation is rather limiting to the human intelligence since nationalism does not relate to a piece of land.³⁴⁹ Mohammad Emara quotes the scholar Mustafa Abdelraziq in which he says: “*إنه لم يطلق*”³⁵⁰ (inaho lam yata’alaq bibalad min albilad ‘ala inoh watan walam tadhkol fikrat alwataniyya bi haza alma’na fi mazhaboh aligtema’y - he did not consider the principle that a country represents one nation, and this thought never resided in his societal conception of a nation). With that

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 164.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., p.166.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

respect, it is already seen that this principle of a nation for him does not reside in a regional being but rather the characteristics that shape a belonging of a people with one another as بني انسان - *bani insan*³⁵¹ as he calls it, or the son of humanity. By that it means that a nation is the belonging to a people who share common elements, all of which including also religion. From that direction derives his belief in an Arab Ummah not an Egyptian Ummah in the sense of the concept like that mentioned by al-Jabarti. But rather, for al-Afghani there were two broad ummahs he believed in, the Muslim Ummah and the Arab Ummah. It is hence a construct that is held together by religious, as well as political thought that pushes the construct of a nation together forward.

Al-Afghani – Renan Debate

The famous debate between Ernest Renan and al-Afghani published in the *Journal des Débats*, is one that marks an important highlight over the thinking and conceptual structure of the two intellectuals³⁵². Both intellectuals and philosophers discussed their conceptions of a nation. Ernest Renan's famous "Qu'est-ce que une nation?" (What is a nation?) was an essay and lecture taught and fed into the nationalist trends of the classical nationalist thought in France. The debate between the two intellectuals reached too much light to the extent that it became known outside of the European boundaries and attracted many other opinions and critique to theirs.

Ernest Renan in the explanation of the nation, his main focus was the race and the status and the nature of the race that determines the types of nations and his classifications for them. This in a form can also relate to al-Afghani in which he states, as mentioned before, that race or groups are part of what forms a nation however not all of what defines one. The pivotal point of discussion was the role of sciences in Islam. For Renan he believes that Islam not a science-friendly religion and hence not modernity encompassing.³⁵³ Al-Afghani in return answered explaining that there is neither religion nor civilization that would have accepted modern sciences during the "building stage" of this culture. Everything needs teaching and a construct.³⁵⁴ In fact, al-Afghani advocated that sciences and modern knowledge-based fields

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Brigit Schäbler, "Religion, Rasse und Wissenschaft: Ernest Renan im Disput mit Jamal al-Din al-Afghani", [an essay], Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, http://www.europa.clio-online.de/Portals/_Europa/documents/B2007/E_Sch%C3%A4bler_Religion.pdf (accessed May 28, 2010).

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

are to be used when associated or as long as they are associated with the building and empowerment of the Islamic construct or rather the Islamic Ummah and nation.³⁵⁵

While Renan was trying to explain the European contextualization of Religion and science and knowledge, al-Afghani was aiming at legitimizing and explaining why it is of a rather unprofessional nature to call upon the Muslim world as backward scientifically. “Had the Christian culture begun as late as the Muslim one, then it would have still been battling to reach the modernity it has reached today (...) I will not let nor allow the hope and the aim that the Muslim countries will not reach the developments the Europeans have reached despite the intolerance and the rigidity the church has always been posing for sciences, and yet they made it still”³⁵⁶, said al-Afghani in response to Renan.

The discussion and the debate between the two intellectuals was established and reached its peak in 1883, which contains various exchanged aspects and points of discussions, which is very relevant in a comparative study if carried out on them.

Political Construct

تنظيم العروة الوثقة - *Tanzim al Urwa al-Wuthqa* was the most dominant underground organization or political construct since the year 1883 which was established by al-Afghani.³⁵⁷ This point also belongs and includes part of his agenda setting towards his thoughts and practices. The aim of the organization was to set a political sample of a perfect Muslim society that is based on modernity and yet on a politically just system without an oppressor. Rather what was known as الحكيم العادل - *al-Hakim al-Adil* (the just ruler). This construct involved aspects such as: popular empowerment of the people in order to engage them into the ruling system itself,³⁵⁸ the engagement of the Egyptian intellectuals and thinkers³⁵⁹.

It also involved an instruction on the importance of a solid political construct and organization that will assist in the ruling of the Muslim nation and hence he called out for what was called حكم دستوري نيابي - *hukm distury niyaby*³⁶⁰ (a ruling system by and according to the constitution) in which the ruling and the governing would be chosen by the people and

³⁵⁵ Ibrahim Kalin., op.cit.

³⁵⁶ Brigit Schäbler, op.cit., p. 5.

³⁵⁷ Emara (1988), op.cit., p. 232.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 236.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

through the people (min al-Sha'b wa ila al-Sh'ab)³⁶¹. He aimed at implementing a democratic political system based on the Islamic overall aim, which were the establishment, unity and empowerment of the Muslim countries and Egypt as the centre in particular.³⁶²

Al-Jamia al-Islamiyya

Al-Afghani was a well established Islamic philosopher who believed that Islam, through philosophy, will be all encompassing and well furnished since that is the status that Islam deserves and hence also the Muslims following it.³⁶³ While establishing it, al-Afghani was planning that this would be including intellectuals from around the Muslim world. And so it happened indeed, Muslim intellectuals from around the Muslim world gathered in it for the aim of enriching the Muslim world's scholarly contributions in the field of modern sciences, as well as working towards fighting the reign of imperialism³⁶⁴ and Europeanization and their cultural and societal construct that does not fit into the Arab and Islamic Ummah.³⁶⁵

The organisation was aiming at a collectively of sciences and specialisations in various fields that aimed at empowering the Muslim Ummah and emancipation at large. One of the quotes that al-Afghani says that support the idea of al-Jame'a al-Islamiyya was, “واعتصم بحبل الالرابطة... الدينية التي هي أحكام رابطة إجتمع فيها التركي بالك عربي والفارسي بالهندي والمصري بالغربي وقامت لهم مقام... الدينية التي هي أحكام رابطة إجتمع فيها التركي بالك عربي والفارسي بالهندي والمصري بالغربي”³⁶⁶ (wa itasimu bihibal al-rabita aldiniyya, alaty hiya ahkam rabita igtama fiha al-turky bel Arabiy, walfarisy belhindi, walmasry belgharbiy ... wa qamat lahom maqam alrabita alnisbiyya - hold on to the robes of religion for it is the only promise for development and empowerment. It is within this societal compound that the Turk met the Arab, where the Farsi met the Hindi and where the Egyptian met the Westerner. It is this bond that should not be neglected or broken). An important point here that is worth noticing is that al-Afghani did distinguish, at least through using two concepts, between the Egyptian and the Arab. Not much elaboration was found on that point, but what was understandable from his ideas was

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ilham Zohniy, *روية الرحالة الأوروبيين لمصر: بين النزعة الإنسانية والاستعمارية* (Ro'yat Al-Ra'hala Al-Orobiyyin li Masr: Bein Al-Naz'aa Al-Insaniyya wa Al-Iste'mariyya - Perspectives of the European Travelers toward Egypt: A Perspective between the Humanitarian and the Invasion Oriented Motives) (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorouq, 2005), 76.

³⁶⁴ Emara (1988), p. 118.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 113.

that he saw or perceived Egypt as the centre of the intellectual world with respect to modernity and cultural richness.³⁶⁷

3.3.3. Conclusion

Al-Afghani's prime motive for his thought was to fight the materialists and hence also the westernised thinkers and imperialists with their misconceptions towards the Orient and the lands of the Muslims as he would call them. Al-Afghani's work and concepts served as the most radical application for reformist ideas with respect to religious as well as political reforms in Egypt and the Arab and Muslim world in general. His thought are still being studied and interpreted until today, and in many cases, they are still being used as the base for many neo-Islamic revivalist thinkers, let it be in Egypt or in the Muslim and Arab world all together.

Afghani's contributions, unlike those of Abduh, were radical and therefore aiming at reform from the roots and not the maintenance of the status quo. As a matter of fact, it can be thought and perceived that if he had the option he would have directly stated that a coup d'état is the most effective option against the imperialists, and he would have taken that on as his empowering discourse.

Al-Afghani's work, although limited to only two major books (one on the history of Afghanistan and another is a literary piece of writing), he still affected the shaping of the nahda movement from its roots and added an empowering angle and a conceptual framework which his followers used to continue the nahdawy path.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 109.

3.4. Chapter Conclusion

The 19th century Egyptian intellectual contributions, through and before Abduh and al-Afghani, were based on the central notions introduced in the 18th century (particularly the second half of the 18th century). Notions such as educational reform was the central point of the century towards which Abduh was striving, establishing the first educational ministry, and towards al-Afghani was also empowering the nation to work toward; scientific research that empowers the development of the Islamic Unity through the Jamaa al-Islamiyya.

The 19th century Egypt is also marked by the direct interaction with the imperialist and it was not only revolving around written ideas and working on methodological writings. Although the works of al-Jabarti are of incredible value in account taking and telling, the agenda did not include actual implementation of the written ideas and beliefs. However their voices cannot be denied for being the enlightened establishment for the Nahwady school of thought which evolved throughout the 19th century.

With respect to reform and al-Nahda, one can safely declare that al-Nahda was at its first stages during the 18th century and did reach its peak of structure and construction during the second half of the 19th century. In addition, the 19th century witnessed a new phase of political and religious expressions which were not present during the 18th century. These are marked by the rebellious or rather revolutionary calls for reform by al-Afghani for a root based political reform and the calling out for a just ruler and dictator who rules and governs the Muslim Ummah and the Islamic unity into the right track. The right track was viewed as modernity with the mingling up of modern sciences for the sake of empowering Islam and the Muslim nations, including the Arab countries of them and Egypt in particular. Abduh's perception was also reform oriented through education, however it was not rebellious as that of al-Afghani.

The 19th century marked the spark and the hope for the Muslims and the Egyptian society and culture in particular that it could rise intellectually yet ones again after the lost Islamic Golden Age before the Ottoman domination. This belief served as a building block and a pathway into the 20th century Egypt to fight and expel the British occupation, defeat imperialism and the Ottoman Empire alike, seeking an Egyptian-Arab-Muslim nation.

Conclusion

“Ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied”.

- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978)

It is not a facile task to compartmentalise the elements of a complex structure of a respective society. But it is rather on the contrary. When coming to understand and study the Egyptian culture, in fact I was conscientious on the nature of the Egyptian culture which is rich with mazes of thoughts and philosophical complexities that are scattered throughout the path of any researcher. I really believe that the prime reason of this complexity is the long periods of dominations which Egypt encountered; from the Byzantine and the Greco-Roman era in Egypt until the end of the British occupation in the 20th century. Throughout these phases the face and the character of Egypt was shaped and carved, not only in its culture but also in its people and their mentality regarding their being and their surrounding in return.

My thesis picked a particularly carefully chosen period of the Egyptian modern history, with the central theme of perceiving the intellectual and philosophical contributions that reflect the reality of the Egyptian society (politically and religiously). The prime aim of the thesis was not to tackle every single event that took place throughout the two hundred years of Egyptian history. Rather, and as highlighted in the introduction, the purpose was to endeavour particularly influential events that took place during this period, shed light upon them, and perceive how the selected sample of particularly distinguished intellectuals (despite the richness and the overwhelming amount of the intellectuals during this long period of time) viewed their reality in which the character of modern day Egypt was structured.

All of this was following the scheme of how reform took place on the institutional level, and the nature of the relationship between the two religion and politics, leading to the realisation of al-nahda (reaching its peak by the end of the 19th century and extending into until the 1952 revolution which allowed the Egyptians to celebrate both the emancipation from the British colonialism, as well as being ruled ones again by an Egyptian after nearly 2400 years since the last Ancient Egyptian ruler). Hence, answering the grand thesis question of “*How did the Egyptian reality, during an era of Islamic civilisation and thought, reflect the politics-religion relationship at the time within the works of the respective philosophers and thinkers? And,*

what does that tell about the intellectual political – religious nexus in Egypt during the 18th and 19th century in relation to today especially with respect to the intellectual pattern change? Has the intellectual pattern changed totally or only the invader?”

From here, comes the focal point of the conclusion which is confined in the matter of the extent to which the reform structure and its elements in the 18th and 19th century does mirror the status of Egypt's political and religious reform today, 2010, from a personal point of view. How did certain concepts evolve throughout this period, such as **education, reform, the role of religion and al-ulama through al-Azhar**? How did the notion of **Nationalism** develop throughout the two centuries that established al-nahda during the domination of three immensely influential powers (the Ottoman domination, the French invasion and the British Empire)? What does all that reflect about today's Egyptian intellectual status?

I would like to answer this by reflecting on Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah in which he explains the idea of the rise and fall of empires and cultures. This can be employed to explain the nature of the Egyptian political status, as well as the society as a whole, throughout the 18th and the 19th century in comparison with prior and after the Ottoman domination and the English invasion alike. The Muslim and the Arab world reached the tip of the ice berg during the Islamic Golden Age, from the 8th until the beginning of the 15th century, through their inventions and innovations in sciences of many dominant fields and disciplines. By the end of the Mameluke era, the Ottoman Empire caused a deterioration of the scientific and intellectual contributions that were produced by the regions under its domination in general, and those performed in Egypt in specific. Despite this, there were national movements and attempts to liberate Egypt from its dark ages of intellectual oppression and lack of exposure to the modern sciences, which led to the outburst of scientists and al-ulama who fought with their pens and words to introduce a new conceptual framework of actions and beliefs in order not only to liberate Egypt intellectually, but also politically and existentially from the foreign invader; the prime reason for the backward status and thus reaching the nahda. Following that was the emancipation of Egypt in the 1952 revolution led by Gamal Abdel-Nasser, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the Suez Crisis in 1956, 1967 defeat or al-nakba, 1973 Egypt-Israeli war, the 1979 Camp David Peace treaty which was followed by the return of Taba in 1989 to Egypt.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸Al-Azabawy, op.cit., p. 150.

What I am aiming to illustrate is that the prime reason why Egypt was capable to get itself out of the dark ages of its intellectual and political being, was through a common goal that united the Egyptians throughout these phases and dates mentioned. In each and every stance the goal was clear and there was a movement as one people, including the mass mobilisation of the intellectuals and the scholars in every phase. In the 18th century there were figures such as al-Attar, al-Khashab, al-Tahtawy and al-Jabarti. In the 19th century there were Abduh and al-Afghani, as well as al-Kawakiby to mention just a few. In the 20th century there were Mustafa Kamel, Saad Zaghloul, Talat Harb, Edward Said, and Louis Awad, also to mention the least. The intellectuals were always the prime motivators of the people and hence of the common goal of the people and the society, and the government and the politicians in return, which was particularly evident in the 19th century.

This brings me to education, which was the prime and common factor between all the reformers discussed. For them, education was the prime function that can reach and lead to reform on an institutional basis as well as on the intellectual level. The idea changed gradually from one scholar to another though. With al-‘Attar it was the idea of introducing modern sciences to the education system at al-Azhar, while for al-Jabarti it was the need for a historically accurate education and contribution so as to maintain events and archives of documentations. For Muhammad Abduh was a liberal reformist and believed in the need to open eyes on the European experience and to apply the reform experiences they carried out while maintaining a calm milieu on a domestic level with the existing system in Egypt. While al-Afghani on the other hand believed in radicalism of thought and the need for an Islamic education and a more coherent Muslim structure.

Along with education comes the nature and role of al-Azhar. Although the Azhar did not have an independent role away from the Ottoman, French or English invasions, it still did hold a significant status in relation to the birth of scholars who were motivated by the will for reform; distinguished by their encyclopaedic knowledge. Today, however, the roles of al-Azhar are no longer as crystallised as they were in the 18th and the 19th century, and it has become rather limited to the religious duty of teaching and ifta. Hence, it no longer serves as an intellectually producing institution for the rulers and leaders of the people as it used to be.

I believe that at least one main consequence and cause at the same time is the relationship between the modern day intellectual and nationalism. In today’s highly challenged and competitive nature of the world, the scholars (when applying this perception on Egypt) no longer has directly relate himself to his national origin. That does not negate that nationalism

still plays an important part in the Egyptian identity and personal traits, however, on the contrary to the 18th and 19th century, the Egyptian society today is not based on institutionalised mobilisation towards reform (intellectually or politically) sufficiently enough. Due to the premature state of democratisation in Egypt, those calling for mass mobilisation find not many supporters for their call due to the complexity of today's political life in Egypt and the region all together. This in itself resembles the need for a stronger vision by the scholars and intellectuals today, as well as a strategic plan so as to push forward for reform and changes. However, this will take its course of time in the implementation. That is one level of looking at the intellectual stagnation of thought and innovation.

Another level is that the notional of internationalised institution of scholarly works and intellectual construction has taken place gradually through a common bond such as the globalisation. The lack of appropriate research funding and an academically competitive environment drives many Egyptian rich minds outside of their country. And ironically enough, in many cases, they do leave Egypt in order to travel to the West, aiming at studying their country from abroad. In addition also, the internationalisation of ideas such as capitalism, socialism, communism, and the like, became imported while in most cases not suitable for the domestic structure of respective societies. Democratisation is now one of the main ideas that are being imported and exported for example, which in return causes nothing less but domestic intellectual and popular deterioration and destruction. This I believe is a new or rather modernised version of cultural hegemony or invasion. Challenges today in Egypt are deeper and by far more complicated than their nature in the 18th and the 19th centuries for sure. Egypt needs a better political institution that in itself gives a greater role for today's intellectuals.

In that sense, one may come to the final stage of the thesis in saying, that surely Egypt would not have been able to reach the level of intellectual expertise it reached by the end of the 19th century into the early 20th century, if it had no cultural and intellectual richness and base from before. No culture reaches a peak without having an accumulation of thought. However, I hope I was able to portrait a picture of the Egyptian intellectual history from a political thought dimension; one which has been tackled rather on a limited basis. At the same time, these angles and previously raised questions throughout the thesis could serve as fields of further research in this rich field of discovery.

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I hope that through my thesis, I was able to provide a work that is up to the expectations of all those who supported me throughout it.

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Appendices

- 1) A letter written from the Egyptian Copts to the French ruler. It is a one page letter (see translation in the second chapter). The source was scanned from the fourth part of al-Jabarti's *Ajaib* on the French occupation. See reference: Jamal Al-Din, Abdel'aziz. *Abdulrahman al-Jabarti: Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, Al-Juz al-Rabi: Al-Ghazwa al-Firinsiyya* (simplified as al-Jabarti's History of Egypt, Part Four: The French Invasion). Cairo: Maktabet Madbouly. 1997, p. 787.
- 2) Al-Attar's notes to al-Azhar on al-Azhar grammatical reforms: *Hashiyat al-Sheikh Hassan al-Attar Ala Sharh al-Azhariyya*.
Added are three pages from the original documents directed from al-Attar to al-Azhar on reform suggestions and solutions with respect to educational purposes. The original document was obtained from the site of Kind Saud University. The homepage being: <http://makhtota.ksu.edu.sa/makhtota/4260/1>. The notes of al- Attar are 175 pages.
- 3) English Abstract of the Thesis
- 4) German Abstract of the Thesis
- 5) Biography of the Author of the thesis

تولى في عهد بونابرت رئاسة «محكمة القضايا» بالقاهرة، وهي تكون من اثني عشر عضواً. وكذلك كان أنطون من كبار الأقباط الجيرتي / ملحق (١)

رعاة الأقباط إلى الجنرال منو

عنكم المباشرين
عظم القطن*

هذه حاشية
العلامة الشيخ حسن
المطار علي شرح
الارضية على
القائم والكمال
الحمد لله

ان هذا الكتاب من كتب
الشيخ العلامة
الحمد لله

مكتبة جامعة الرياض - قسم المخطوطات

رقم	3963
تاريخ	٥/٧٤٨
ملاحظات	حاشية الشيخ محمد المطار على شرح الارضية
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ملاحظات	مكرر من نسخة المخطوطات في انفس
عدد الاوراق	١٧٤
عدد جلدات	٤١٥
عدد جلدات	ع-ع

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The original document was obtained from the site of Kind Saud University. The homepage being: <http://makhtota.ksu.edu.sa/makhtota/4260/1>. The notes of al- Attar are 175 pages.

Appendix Item 3: The English Abstract

The scope of the thesis involves tackling the theme of introducing a historical perspective of Islamic political thought and philosophies which are produced through scholarly and intellectual contributions in the 18th and the 19th centuries' Egypt. Through this theme, the conception of political and religious reforms is being illustrated in relation to how it contributed to the realisation of al-nahda. The focus develops on to elucidate a sample of significant scholars whose work represent and reflected on the happenings of the two centuries; al-Sheikh Hassan al-Attar and al-Sheikh Adulrahman al-Jabarti for the 18th century as well as al-Sheikh Muhammad Abduh and al-Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani for the 19th century. The thesis conveys notion such as the role of educational reform as well as the evolution of the "nation" and "ummah" as concepts to demonstrating the nature of the relationship between the religious and the political institutions. The method that the thesis employs is a study conducted through a content and context analysis of the thinkers and their works; explaining the Egyptian religious and political milieu throughout. After portraying this theme, the thesis comes to an end in which it extracts that the common reform factors suggested, and put into practice among the intellectuals through the two centuries were manifold; represented in education, emancipation from the materialists and the imperialists, Islamic modernisation and nationalism as well as detachment from the west after introducing modern sciences to al-Azhar and the democratisation of the political institution. The thesis utilising the nature of the political and religious reforms that were employed to reflect on the current affairs of the Egyptian political and reform system, suggesting that the achievements of al-nahda in the 18th and 19th centuries was caused by a common goal and mission of a nation, which is lost today due to the reduced efficiency of intellectual institutionalisation and the role of political empowerment. The thesis aims at leaving questions open and angles introduced that open the chance for further research and investigation, since the theme and sphere chosen is still rich and ripe for manoeuvrings.

Appendix Item 4: German Abstract

Der Anwendungsbereich dieser Masterthese umfasst die Einführung der historischen Perspektive des islamisch-politischen Denkens und deren Philosophien, die durch die wissenschaftlichen und intellektuellen Beiträge im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert Ägyptens hergestellt wurden. Dadurch wird das Verständnis der politischen und religiösen Reformen illustriert im Verhältnis zur Verwirklichung von al-Nahda. Im Schwerpunkt steht die Darstellung einer Stichprobe von bedeutenden Gelehrten, deren Werke und Interpretationen die Ereignisse der zwei Jahrhunderte reflektieren; al-Sheikh Hassan al-Aattar und al-Sheikh Adulrahman al-Jabarti für das 18. Jahrhundert, sowie al-Sheikh muhammad Abduh und al-Sheikh Jamal al-Din al-afghanischen für das 19. Jahrhundert. Die These ist fokussiert auf im Mittelpunkt stehende Begriffe, wie die Rolle der Reform des Bildungssystems sowie die Entwicklung der "Nation" und "Ummah" als Konzepte. Dadurch werden die Art des Verhältnisses zwischen den religiösen und politischen Institutionen veranschaulicht. Die Methode, mit welcher sich diese Masterarbeit beschäftigt, wird in einer Studie dargestellt, die eine inhaltliche und kontextabhängige Analyse reflektiert, welche die Konzepte und Meinungen der Denker durch ihre Werke und Initiativen analysiert und erklärt. Diese wird durchgeführt in Konjunktion mit einer Erläuterung des ägyptischen religiösen und politischen Umfelds. Die These kommt zu einem Ende, in dem sie extrahiert, dass die Reform-Faktoren der Intellektuellen, die entweder durch Praxis oder Theorie verwirklicht wurden, auch vielfältig sind. Diese sind in den folgenden Konzepten vertreten: die Bildungssystemreformen, Emanzipation von den Materialisten und Imperialisten, islamische Modernisierung und Nationalismus, sowie die Freisetzung vom Westen. Die Ideen der Implementierung von moderne Wissenschaft in al-Azhars Bildungssystem fokussierten sich auf eine Verwirklichung der Demokratisierung der ägyptischen politischen Institutionen. Die These kommt zum Schluss, indem sie die Art und Weise der politischen und religiösen Reformen erklärt, um Reflektionen über die aktuellen Angelegenheiten der ägyptischen politischen Reformen anzuregen. Sie beschreibt, wie die Errungenschaften von al-Nahda im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert durch ein gemeinsames Ziel und eine Aufgabe der Nation das ägyptische Volk erreicht haben, welche heute verloren sind aufgrund der geringeren Effizienz der geistigen Institutionalisierung und der Rolle der politischen Macht. Die These zielt auf offene Fragestellungen ab, die in der Studie dargestellt werden, um neue bzw. unterschiedliche Blickwinkel zu präsentieren, ebenso um eine Möglichkeit anzubieten, weitere Forschungsideen und Initiativen in diesem immer noch reichen Forschungsgebiet zu erzeugen.

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