

EXPLORING THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF EGYPTIAN NATIONAL
EDUCATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Ajay Sharma)

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I will explore the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education to understand the paradoxical existence of a Secular Humanist rooted national education system in a Muslim-majority country (MMC). Such an inquiry is critical at a juncture that Egyptians are beginning to unshackle themselves from a thirty-year puppet regime. Given the return to an Islamic identity since the 1970s 'Islamic Awakening', it is expected that such newfound freedom could give national education a more Islamic hue. This investigation will start with a discussion of the complex relationship between Secular Humanist philosophy (SH) and Western colonization. Given the colonizing effect that I have found in utilizing SH worldviews in discussing indigenous peoples, I will suggest Critical Indigenous Methodology (CIM) as the least restrictive approach in breaching the gulf between SH and indigenous worldviews such as Islam. I will argue the latter to be the most relevant indigenous worldview for better understanding Egyptian conceptions of identity, knowledge, and education. It is through this worldview that I will investigate the repercussions of SH discourse on the

intellectual foundations of national education in Egypt. Specifically, this part of analysis will involve the ideological influences of French colonization and the events thereafter on Rifaa'a Raafi' At Tahtaawee, the Egyptian responsible for laying the intellectual foundations of the current Egyptian national educational system. Lastly, I will present an analysis of At Tahtaawee's two most important educational texts, *Takhlees Al Ibreez fee Talkhees Baarees* (A Golden Nugget on the Essence of Paris) and *Al Murshid Al Ameen lil Banaat wal Baneen* (The Honest Guide for the Boys and Girls). This last analysis will explore his reconstruction of the concepts of knowledge and education to align with the objectives of the new identity of Egypt as a nation-state. Despite the traditional narrative thus far in academia, I will argue that French colonization and the events thereafter had a significant impact on the eventual intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education.

INDEX WORDS: Egypt, Islam, Education, Colonization, Enlightenment, Secular Humanism

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I have noticed that no author writes a book and finishes it, except that the next day he says, ‘If I had only changed this part, it would have been better; and if only I had added this fact, it would have been appreciated more; and if I had only made this section earlier, it would have been easier to comprehend; and if I had only left this section out, it would have been more beautiful.’ And this, in fact is one of the greatest lessons and points to ponder over, for it is a clear indication of the inferiority of the nature of man [sic].

Al ‘Imaad Al Asfahaanee (d. 597) (Qadhi, 1999, p. 15)

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF EGYPTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION

Egypt (90% Muslim) has gotten a lot of attention recently (Khorshid, 2012; Pickett, 2012) due to the fact that many are now calling for actual implementation (of what was mostly ignored except for family laws under Hosni Mubarak) of the constitution's second article. This article states that "Islam is the official state *Deen*¹, and *Shari'a*² is the primary source of legislation" (Arabic Republic of Egypt). Is Egypt a theocracy, a democracy, or something different altogether? Such a change in implementation of an entire country's legal and political system would undoubtedly have tremendous influence on its educational system. For example would such changes make 'Egyptian' identity a 'Muslim or Islamic' identity; what about non-Muslim Egyptians? More importantly, how does one define all the terms of such a discussion outside the parameters of the English speaking Western world? What is meant by such concepts; are there 'universally' recognized conceptions of these English words in other languages, cultures, or world-views?

Anyone familiar with Egypt's recent history will realize that the root of these questions could be traced to one integral question: *what is Egyptian identity in light of Egypt's colonial past and present?* Through exploration of this question it can be surmised what is the *indigenous*

¹ 'Way of Life' in Arabic. As a side note, there will be times when my transliteration will differ from Western academic norm. Since the meaning of a word in the Arabic language depends on how the letters are pronounced, transliterations that can provide better pronunciation will be prioritized systematically.

² A technical term for Islam in general, but which postcolonialization and secularization in MMC, is now commonly used to refer to only the sociopolitical aspects of Islam in isolation for political reasons outside the scope of this dissertation.

from the *colonial* in discussing the conceptions of knowledge and education in the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education. As will be shown, how Egyptian identity was defined after French colonization was largely related to the conception and structure of the newly established educational system thereafter. Explicitly, this discussion will highlight how the conceptions of knowledge and education radically transformed among the intelligentsia most responsible for the ideological foundation of Egyptian national education. Such changes will be argued to have been largely related to the macro level sociopolitical changes occurring in Egypt that transformed Egypt into a nation-state. Such a study is important since it might provide historical insight as to what types of educational changes might be expected under the new political regime. However, before addressing these issues, which reach to the core of this study, I will provide a small review on what has already been written on the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education and what dearth this study hopes to fill.

Generally speaking, there does not seem to have been anything written dedicated to the intellectual roots of Egyptian national education in the English language. This claim rests upon a careful search of everything written about 'Egyptian education' in WorldCat, one of the most wide-ranging (if not most comprehensive) databases available to University of Georgia Students. However, from what has been found none of this deals specifically with what type of ideologies existed or what the general conceptions of knowledge and education were at the establishment of the national education system. What has been written (i.e.: Heyworth-Dunne, 1968; Lane, 1860; Sulayman, Rushdie and ShufShuq, 1972; Salamah 1962) regarding the start of the national educational system in 1868 has tended to be very logistical like the specific and most immediate

sociopolitical reasons leading to its establishment; these reasons are summarized later in this chapter.

By labeling the above literature as ‘logistical’, I also mean the exact names, dates, and places where various schools were opened, the number of students, the names of staff members, and the like. What this literature does not include is the effects of the sociopolitical changes taking place in 19th century Egypt directly on the ideologies found in the first educational documents. This literature will be pulled on as necessary in discussing the intellectual concerns in chapters six and seven of this dissertation. Since the sociopolitical changes that occur in what has been dubbed the ‘long 19th century’ are critical to understanding the intellectual changes that will be discussed in this dissertation, a word on this context and the resources used to discuss it seems to be the most logical starting point.

As is usual with important historical events, there are many disparate accounts regarding Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798, his withdrawal in 1801, and the era of Muhammad Ali Pasha thereafter. The same could be said for the era after this regarding the rest of the Ali dynasty (his descendants) who rule after him (with questionable sovereignty) until 1882, the official date of British occupation. In terms of primary resources³, one is able to find *indigenous*⁴ Egyptian primary resources by famous 19th century Egyptian historian Abdur Rahman Al Jabartee for the period of the Napoleonic invasion and Ali’s rule, but more often than not indigenous Arabic resources after Al Jabartee tend to use English or French imperial records as their primary resources (Dykstra, 1998, vol. 2, p. 114; Toledano, 1998, vol. 2, p. 253) which of

³ *Primary resources* is used in this dissertation in the general sense of works written during the events taking place. *Secondary documents* has been used for everything else.

⁴ *Indigenous* is being defined as anyone writing from an Islamic perspective in this dissertation as will be discussed.

course limits the perspectives that can be discussed. While the following points will provide some of the main substance of the dissertation, there are probably at least two main reasons for this trend. The first is the fact that statistically speaking 93% of the Egyptian population was illiterate at the turn of the 20th century (Toledano, 1998, vol. 2, p. 293); what intelligentsia did exist up until this point was at either the state-controlled Al Azhar University or the Western Civil Schools that became the gateway to the Westernized elite ruling the country. As for Al Azhar, although it was technically be the only indigenous institution of higher education in Egypt at the beginning of Ali's reign, swaths of its *ulamaa*⁵ were progressively sent to European countries, particularly France, and re-educated in European knowledge; hence, although such resources have been found in Arabic and used, the label indigenous becomes problematic. The works of these *ulamaa* are what have been found from the U.S. As for the Westernized elite of the civil schools that came to rule the country as the 19th century progressed, a label of indigenous becomes all the more unlikely for them. One English primary resource has been found and used, which is Edward Lane's *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1860). Non-English primary resources (i.e.: French) are of course inaccessible to me, but widely relied upon in the secondary literature.

In respect to English secondary resources, these are widely available and relied upon. In terms of indigenous Arabic secondary resources, I am limited to Western databases like WorldCat, which although comprehensive, rarely offer documents from Egypt outside of the

⁵ *Ulamaa* (sg: *alim*) is used in this dissertation to refer to Muslim scholars who write from an Islamic perspective, regardless if their specialization is Islamic theology or not. 'Academics' will be used for those who write from an Enlightenment perspective. 'Scholars' will be used as a general default for any kind of scholar (even if they do not write from either of these two perspectives)

official government presses controlled by the Mubarak regime until recently. However, I have also been able to access the small but growing indigenous secondary historical texts that have appeared in recent years during trips to Egypt.

In sum, I have attempted to prioritize indigenous historical resources (primary or secondary) when possible given the Critical Indigenous lens being used (see chapter two), but have not neglected to address mainstream accounts from Western academia since they cannot necessarily be discounted as false despite their expectedly different interpretations of historical events.

At the wake of the 18th century, although it is well known the Ottoman caliphate itself had largely dwindled in sociopolitical and economic strength, Egypt remained its most important province due to having a strategic geographic position and being a fount of natural resources to other regions of the caliphate, and Europe thereafter. However, due to Europe's economic expansion, various environmental disasters, and raging feuds among the ruling Mamluk elite all throughout the latter part of the century, Egypt became in particularly weak sociopolitical condition (Crecelius, 1998, vol. 2).

The French occupation of Egypt from 1798 to 1801 has often been discussed as a watershed moment in recent Egyptian history since it removed the Mamluk rule that left the vacuum for Muhammad Ali to take rule and initiate the vast modernization of Egypt into a centralized nation-state independent of the Ottoman empire (Dykstra, 1998, vol. 2; Fahmy, 1998, vol. 2). Although this traditional narrative of the French occupation has highlighted the sociopolitical and economic effects of the occupation, little importance has been given to the "cultural and intellectual impact" of it. This has been due to the argument that the vast canon of

French literature written about Egypt during this time “had an immense impact on what Europeans knew about Egypt—but that impact was upon Europe, not Egypt” (Dykstra, 1998, vol. 2, p. 137). Dykstra’s argument seems to be premised on the effects of the French Egyptology movement—study of ancient Egypt—on the Egyptian masses of that time. If this is what Dykstra is alluding to, which seems to be the most likely scenario since this is the bulk of what was written about Egypt at this time and will be discussed, then I undoubtedly agree with this claim. However, it has also been shown that aspects of this literature later formed an important component of the curriculum of some of the most important reformers of the late 19th and early 20th century nationalist movement in Egypt; this movement in turn claimed a ‘Mediterranean’ (Greek-Roman-Ancient Egyptian) identity. Moreover, it is in the context of this early 20th century nationalist movement that more Islamic approaches to reform were pursued in the shape of the Ummah party, Muslim League, and Muslim Brotherhood (Hourani, 1970; Hussein, 2008; Maghraoui, 2006; Wendell, 1972).

The traditional interpretation of the French occupation also eschews attributing ideological influence to Egyptian society through French occupation since purportedly “such a view belittles both the fact that Egypt continued to form part of the Ottoman empire, and the role of local traditions regarding religion, thought, culture, economics, and human relations” (Toledano, 1998, vol. 2, p. 253). Again, such a statement might be true regarding comprehensive influence on the Egyptian populace of that time, but fails to consider the wider repercussions of the Western Enlightenment discourse that will be argued to have influenced Egyptian intelligentsia from the start of the early 19th century and became embedded into institutions that remain to this day. The institution of national public education will be the focus of this study.

What the traditional narrative of the French occupation also lacks is consideration of the sheer psychological shock of the advanced military technology and strategy of the French on Egypt, which prompted the Ali dynasty to pursue the Europeanization (read modernization) they did of the 19th century (Al Sirjaany, 2005). This process of Europeanization became the primary vehicle for the simultaneous intellectual and cultural changes that occurred among Egyptian elite (Hourani, 1970; Hussein, 2008; Maghraoui, 2006; Wendell, 1972).

It seems the primary shortcoming in devaluing the French occupation's intellectual and cultural influence is a limited conception of intellectual or cultural change occurring within the immediate three-year period of French occupation. This dissertation argues for a more holistic look at the connections between the various sociopolitical events of 19th century Egypt, starting with the French occupation. It seems accurate to conclude that the intellectual transformation that occurred among Egyptian elite did not significantly start to affect the illiterate rural masses⁶ until the late 19th century and the early 20th century; this was probably due to the spread of various mediums commonly associated with the nation-state like communications technology, printing, and national schooling (Toledano, 1998, vol. 2). Nonetheless, it will be argued that the ideas that were planted during the French invasion and the cozy nature of the Ali dynasty thereafter in implementing many of the sociopolitical changes that the French had sought (with European, largely French guidance), make the Napoleonic invasion an important component of the narrative in this dissertation. It seems a short foreshadow of the events being alluded to is appropriate at this point.

⁶ Egypt would remain with less than ten percent of its population in urban areas by the end of the 19th century (Toledano, 1998, vol. 2, p. 254). The illiteracy rate has been mentioned.

When Napoleon Bonaparte came to Egypt one of the narratives he was guided by was a book of travels by Volney. Volney remarked that if France was to invade Egypt, it needed to be prepared to engage in three wars—against the Ottoman empire, Britain, and the Muslims (by which was mostly likely meant the Muslims of Egypt and surrounding areas) (Said, 1978, pgs. 81-82). Napoleon took such a challenge seriously and justified his invasion of Egypt with two main premises: that the French came to liberate the Egyptians from the tyranny of the Ottoman representatives, the Mamlukes; and that the French were categorically unhostile to Islam, the primary loyalty of the majority of the Egyptian people. In fact, this second premise was taken to the extreme claim that the French were supposedly better Muslims than the Mamlukes (Al Jabartee, 2001). As will be discussed Napoleon was able to make such a claim through an attempt to redefine Islam itself. Napoleon spread the two premises above strategically. He introduced the first printing press to Egypt, which he had stolen from the Catholic Church and brought with him. On this printing press, he printed, distributed, and had read aloud to Egyptians propaganda leaflets with the two premises above (Al Jabartee, 2001). By analyzing Napoleon's discourse with the Egyptian populace, I will argue that Napoleon utilized the above Islamic discourse to mask the introduction of a new concept of national identity and an Enlightenment worldview in general.

The ideological aspect of Napoleon's campaign also appeared in the *diwan* system (a sort of representative parliament for each of the governates Napoleon split Egypt into). In this diwan system, Napoleon attempted to justify his rule through local ulamaa; some ulamaa colluded with this process and some fled or led the rebellions that took place in places like Al Azhar (Al Jabartee, 2001; Dykstra, vol. 2, p. 125). The ulamaa who cooperated with the occupation

received history lessons on a new Egyptian national identity based on ancient Egyptian civilization, theoretically tying Egypt to Greco-Roman civilization. This history was later taught to Egyptian elite in France like the Egyptian responsible for laying the foundations of Egyptian national education, At Tahtaawee. In fact At Tahtaawee's academic advisor in France played a pivotal role in the knowledge used to carry out the French invasion and the compilation of the *Description de l' Egypte* (hereafter *The Description*); this text articulated the ancient Egyptian identity constructed by Napoleon's cadre of academics), among other issues which will be discussed. Napoleon also left behind an Egyptology institute, the Institute d' Egypt (hereafter 'The Institute') before leaving Egypt; The Institute had important visitors from Egyptian intelligentsia like Al Jabartee and Hasan Al Attaar. The latter was the most influential teacher of At Tahtaawee. Napoleon's interaction with the general Egyptian populace, the diwan system, The Institute, *The Description*, and the French study abroad experiences of At Tahtaawee will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

The next phase of the sociopolitical changes that shaped the intellectual transformation of Egyptian elite in the 19th century is that of the rise of a highly centralized nation-state under Muhammad Ali--one of the Ottoman soldiers Saleem III had sent to expel the French and thereafter became ruler. In the wake of French withdrawal, Ali attempted to completely modernize Egypt and reform the military with new European (mostly French) technology and expertise. He imposed universal military conscription, heavy taxes, opened a national newspaper, started vaccination and censuses, opened government schools, and initiated missions of Egyptian students to study in Europe and bring back vocational and technical expertise. It is these latter education related reforms that will be of concern from Ali's reign. Fahmy (1998) notes,

The hundreds of students whom the Pasha [Ali] sent to Europe had a significant impact in reorienting *Egyptian culture* from the Ottoman empire with its Islamic heritage to a more European, mostly French, model. The *new cultural elite*, backed, as it were, by the entrenched linkage of the Egyptian economy to the European market, was to decide Egypt's future orientation and lay the groundwork for a later cultural movement that would insist that Egypt had a Mediterranean [Greek-Roman-Ancient Egyptian] identity, rather than an Oriental, Ottoman one (p. 179, emphasis added).

Fahmy seems to make a somewhat exaggerated claim in equating the Egyptian culture of the masses with that of the new elite nationalist movement that emerged by the early 20th century. Although Fahmy seems accurate about the European impact on this elite, it was the more mass-oriented institutions like national education that naturally had more influence on the populace throughout the 20th century (particularly post WWII) as opposed to the aristocratic nature of the liberal nationalist movement that occurred in the early years of the 20th century. This is the movement alluded to above that promoted an Egyptian national identity based on ancient Egyptian civilization and its purported connections to Greco-Roman civilization. While the scholarship of 19th century ulama played an integral role in birthing this nationalist movement as mentioned above, it does not seem the idea of nationalism in general could have been seriously pursued without the secularization of the basic concepts of knowledge and education, which can be found at the start of the first national education system.

Also important is that the role of national education in general in spreading various ideologies makes it arguably more important than the innovations of an elite intelligentsia, despite the obvious influence (not control) the latter has on the former. When there is too vast of

an intellectual gap between the intelligentsia of a people and the people themselves (an expected trait of colonization), it seems a natural consequence is resistance. This is one possible interpretation of the wide variety of Islamic-oriented movements that sprouted throughout the 20th century in Egypt. However, what concerns this dissertation's narrative is how various actors understood or did not understand the general importance of limiting the intellectual gap between the elite and the masses. This idea seems to be at least one important factor in analyzing the effect of intelligentsia on the masses in Egypt.

Concerning the remainder of Ali's rule, the aggressive use of the population by Ali for his modernization efforts as discussed above, made the Egyptian populace realize that they were just a source of cheap labor for his aspirations. Khaled Fahmy (1998) captures this trend concisely saying,

Muhammad 'Ali was truly the founder of modern Egypt, an Egypt in which the Egyptians found themselves silenced, exiled, punished, and robbed of the fruits of their labor, an Egypt to be ruled as he had wished by his descendants for a hundred years after his death (1998, p. 179).

Fahmy is referring here to the 1841 London treaty that guaranteed his dynasty's rule (under British colonization starting in 1882) through the 1952 coup d'état; Ali's rule ended in 1848.

The eras of Ali's first two successors Abbaas I (1848-54) and Sa'eed (1854-1863) did not see particular changes to education; however, during this era Europe (particularly Britain) powerfully expanded the capitalist roots, particularly commercial and finance, that had been planted earlier in the century (Baer, 1969). Due to heavy loans invested in Egypt, which were of

course particularly mismanaged, the Ali dynasty encountered its demise by the end of Ismaa'eel's reign (1863 to 1879) (Hunter, 1998, vol. 2). Such a pattern is not unlike that which occurred throughout the 20th century between Egypt and less than neutral organizations like the World Bank and IMF. It is Ismaa'eel's reign that will be the climax of the narrative for this dissertation.

It is interesting that just like Ismaa'eel's reign saw the most attempted foreign imperialistic ventures into neighboring lands like Ali's (Ibrahim, 1998, vol. 2), it also saw a similar expansion of European knowledge and technologies associated with the nation-state, including the start of a national educational system. Official support for what has become labeled the Arab Renaissance (Al Nahda), for reasons that will be discussed, peaked under Khedive Ismaa'eel (1863-1879). During Ismaa'eel's reign, national reforms took place through mediums like Al Azhar University, the press, telegraph offices, translation bureaus, state and missionary schools, as well as study missions to Europe among others (Ezzelarab, 2002). The main protagonist that will bring the effects of Enlightenment philosophy among Egyptian intelligentsia to the masses for this era will be Rifaa'a Raafi' At Tahtaawee.

Although At Tahtaawee is by no means an obscure figure in the English literature, what he is most known for is introducing nationalist ideology and constructing a specific Egyptian identity based on ancient Egypt—which would theoretically separate Egypt from its wider Arab and Islamic identities. Given At Tahtaawee's importance to this dissertation, these ideas of his will be discussed in this study; however, what will be of more interest are the possible reasons why one does not see the first theme (nationalism) as prominently, and the latter theme (ancient Egyptian identity) in his educational works at all. While nationalist identity is of course an

important product of Enlightenment thought as will be discussed, At Tahtaawee also re-defines the meaning of knowledge and education itself according to Enlightenment values. This is what is found in his educational texts. However, since it seems these aspects are what have not been discussed in the English language, I will provide a brief summary of what has been written on At Tahtaawee.

The most concise summary of At Tahtaawee's impact on Egypt is that by Muhammad Muhammad Hussein, the late Egyptian alim. He notes,

For the first time in this environment [the Muslim world], we find talk about 'al watan' [the nation], 'al wataniyya' [nationalism], and 'hubb al watan' [love for the nation] in the modern European sense that is established upon ta'asub [fanaticism] to a piece of land in particular, tying its ancient history to its contemporary one, creating one unified identity distinguishing it from the other Muslim and non-Muslim lands. And for the first time we find special attention being given to ancient history in order to support this new conception of al watan" (Hussein, 2008, p. 21).

The above quote symbolizes the general idea that many scholars have attested to (Hourani, 1970; Maghraoui, 2006; Wendell, 1972), that upon At Tahtaawee's return from France he became the founder of Egyptian nationalism. At Tahtaawee was the first to use the term 'watan' (homeland) for Egypt as an area defined by territory (national identity) as opposed to the existent Islamic identity of Egypt just being a part of the wider Ottoman caliphate (Mondal, 2003, p. 150). At Tahtaawee's concept of wataniyya (patriotism/nationalism⁷) lead to the

⁷ In this study it will sometimes be unavoidable to not use slash (/) translations of Arabic words, if not outright sentences, since Arabic functions off of roots that can convey multiple meanings simultaneously. This issue of

primary objective of At Tahtaawee's later educational theory, the creation of '*al muwaatin al mukhlis*' (the sincere citizen), one whose entire purpose in being educated was the progress of '*Al Manaafi*' *Al Uloomiyya*' (the public or social good). However, what is 'the public or social good?' Although such a concept would probably seem a 'universal' sort of objective to the contemporary reader, as is usual with many paradoxes of Enlightenment thought the social good was limited to the 'national good'. This paradox is an apt opportunity to foreshadow a main theoretical contention in this dissertation.

While these issues will be elaborated upon (see chapter two), the conflict inherent between the universalist worldview that symbolized Enlightenment thought (as will be highlighted in the work of At Tahtaawee) and the practical prioritization of a people of their more local interests (i.e.: the nation⁸), almost necessitates the political use of knowledge to represent one's national interests as universal. During the Western Enlightenment, knowledge was claimed to be universally applicable (under the assumption that it was based upon objective abstract reason and/or empirical investigation); however, the philosophical assumptions behind knowledge production will naturally differ from one group of people to another (Kuhn, 1962). Whether intended or not, it seems the natural consequence of this contradiction is that certain groups of people will claim their knowledge to be the objective Truth about the world and that

translation could be seen as part of the wider imperial nature of translation itself where concepts must conform to the language (and corresponding culture and worldview) of the receiving (language being translated to) language (Tageldin, 2011). I am highly indebted to Tageldin's inspirational attention to what could be termed 'format' vs. 'content', in regards to words and their meanings, and many other parallels I have tried to draw in this dissertation.

⁸ Local interests could of course also be a number of other things (i.e.: particular ethnic group, academic discipline, profession, or even the extreme example of just the individual themselves), but this discussion would become unmanageably complex in an attempt to expand the discussion outside the above dichotomy.

others' knowledge is subjective. This claim presumes my assumption that humans will naturally seek to reconcile the cognitive dissonance of multiple Truth claims, even if this is not due to conscious imperial intentions (as found in the Western Enlightenment). The contention here is that knowledge cannot be claimed as universal and simultaneously not hegemonic. Peoples' disparate conceptions of the purpose of life, knowledge, education, and the like will undoubtedly shape the nature of what they claim to know about the world; hence, any claim by one group that their knowledge is universal must demote or invalidate completely all other contradicting conceptions of life, knowledge, and education.

As these ideas relate to this dissertation, it seems the pattern found in Egypt is that as Egyptian elite realized that their selective application of the Islamic conception of knowledge and education—pursuing solely theological knowledge at the neglect of empirical knowledge—was in one part the reason for their defeat during the French invasion, this elite looked to their most recent occupier as the logical source for empirical knowledge. Ali sent certain members of Egyptian elite to France for higher education where they were exposed to an Enlightenment worldview. This worldview sanctified human reason as a sufficient and objective criterion for defining all aspects of how humans should live in the world--without the need for Divine Guidance (despite the various limitations imperfect humans might have). Ali, his European coordinators, and his newly French educated Egyptian intelligentsia transformed indigenous education dramatically. Indigenous higher education institutions (madrasas) were unilaterally closed (except for Al Azhar University), and replaced by new secular⁹ European institutions to

⁹ As will be discussed, these new European higher education institutions taught Islamic Studies (essentialized into one course as one part of an otherwise secular European curriculum), not Islamic theology. The former has been

take their place. A new term was eventually (it seems after the time period of this study) constructed to envelope Al Azhar and the new European institutions, *Al Jaami'a*.

However, it seems it would have been hard to remove a peoples' old referent to higher education (madrasa) completely from their vocabulary; hence, the term madrasa (indigenous higher education defined primarily by theological knowledge) was at some point de-evolved to its new contemporary meaning—schools (but now used to refer to secular K-12 national education). In this way, indigenous higher education (theological knowledge) was removed, and even the old word for it demoted to a lesser level of intellectual development. Hence, if one was to think linguistically about the last two hundred years of Egyptian history, it could be said that in the long run the Enlightenment belief--which will be discussed--that non-Europeans were less evolved forms of human beings (Europeans) in one sense constructed a self-fulfilling prophecy. Although 'madrasa' no longer refers to any type of theological knowledge in Egypt, one technically does now need to graduate from 'madrasa' to evolve to higher forms of Western knowledge¹⁰. Analysis of the transformation of the concept of madrasa is outside the time range for this study, but it seems the transformation of the concept of knowledge and education might have been highly related to it.

Before French colonization in Egypt, there were also kuttaab--the pre-colonial form of elementary education, which taught Qur'an memorization, basic arithmetic, and reading and writing (by reading and writing the Qur'an, but without comprehension); this was the pre-

highlighted by indigenous authors as teaching a Western view of Islam (the Enlightenment concept of 'religion' as a social construct and object of critique), unlike the latter indigenous study of Islamic Orthodoxy and its various branches (Hussein, 2008).

¹⁰ For the Western nature of contemporary Egyptian Education refer to (Cook, 2001; Hussein, 2008)

requisite stage to madrasa higher education (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). There was no form of what is called ‘middle school’ or ‘high school’ nowadays. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries these kuttaab were mostly replaced by the secular national education system (except for those that still exist as summer camp options). However, this dissertation will also not be able to trace this disappearance of kuttaab. These points are only mentioned to provide some general context for what happened to indigenous education beyond the time period of this study. What does concern this study is exploring how theological knowledge became demoted to a lower status of knowledge than human knowledge in 19th century Egypt, the complete opposite of the situation prior to French colonization, and the complementary nature of this transition for traditional conceptions of nation-states as secular.

Furthermore, as the concept of knowledge became exclusive to European forms of knowledge, and indigenous forms of knowledge were eliminated throughout 19th century Egypt, European-educated people acquired a monopoly over the right to produce Truths in the country. Thus, education would become a colonial medium. A similar claim has already been well established by international higher education experts in noting that higher education institutions globally were almost unilaterally based upon (intellectually and structurally) models of their most recent European colonizers for the very purpose of neo-colonization (Altbach and Kelly, 1984). What this dissertation seeks to illustrate is specifically how knowledge and education were redefined along European lines and at the same time represented as universal objective knowledge in Egypt. For example, if knowledge is by definition secular and can therefore only be produced in the Imperial metropolis (due to the lack of indigenous non-theological knowledge), any contradictory conceptions of knowledge will be delegitimized. The solution

offered in this dissertation for not repeating such imperial ambitions in the present is to explicitly acknowledge the interests we (contributors to academic scholarship) hope and claim to represent and not presume our academic contributions are relevant for others. Such decisions should be left up to those who find certain or all aspects of our scholarship beneficial and relevant for their interests.

As can be seen, a main theme in this dissertation is Enlightenment philosophy and its use in colonization; therefore, it is unlikely the aforementioned topics can be usefully discussed without an exploration of this theme. However, given that I also seek to not continue the process of intellectual colonization by undertaking a study from an Enlightenment worldview myself, this will require a discussion thereafter of what theoretical options might be available in articulating an Islamic worldview. Importantly, the point here will not be to argue the validity or lack thereof of Islam as a belief system, but merely the importance of understanding Islam through the perspective of its adherents in order to better understand the changes that Enlightenment philosophy brought to 19th century Egyptian conceptions of knowledge and education. Such an inquiry is pivotal to discussing what educational changes might be expected if Egypt's national educational system were to pursue a more Islamic framework in the present.

CHAPTER 2: WESTERN ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHY AND DECOLONIAL METHODOLOGIES

Western Enlightenment Philosophy

Before discussing the connections between Western Enlightenment philosophy¹¹ and colonization, it seems logical to first provide a brief summary of the main theme of Enlightenment philosophy, a secular use of the intellect. Even more fundamental to this issue is merely understanding what Enlightenment means in Enlightenment philosophy. One of the most quoted answers to the question ‘What is Enlightenment?’, is the response of Immanuel Kant to the question in his essay of this title in 1784. Kant explained,

Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man’s inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it *without direction from another*. Sapere aude! [Dare to know!] ‘Have courage to *use your own reason!*—that is the motto of Enlightenment (Kant in Smith, 2008, p. 139 emphasis added).

As will be thoroughly explained below, one of the meanings behind ‘without direction from another’ was the resort to metaphysical beliefs in understanding the world; humans could

¹¹ ‘Modernism’ is used in many disciplines to refer to Western Enlightenment philosophy, but in the field of education mostly to refer to Positivism. There is also the more limited in scope sub-theory of Modernization Theory in international development. Hence I will use Secular Humanism (SH) or Enlightenment philosophy as to not confuse Positivist modernity with SH as a whole; the terms ‘modernization’/‘modernism’ will be avoided completely.

understand the world sufficiently and how best to live in it by themselves. If there was only one common theme among the various strands of Enlightenment philosophy, it seems it was this *secular approach to using one's intellect in understanding the world as the True and real application of reason*. True reason was considered the use of one's intellect without reference to metaphysical beliefs. The Enlightenment is also widely known as the Age of Reason, probably due to this theme. This process was carried out either through empirical investigation and/or the production of various philosophies about how humans should interact with each other and the world. Chairman of the Council for *Secular Humanism* (a term that some like Kurtz use to argue that Enlightenment philosophy is the foundation of all Western academia to the present) Paul Kurtz (2007) argues in his work *What is Secular Humanism* that

Humanists wished to use reason (as with Rene Descartes) or experience (as with Sir Francis Bacon, John Locke, and David Hume) to account for natural processes and discover causal laws. This meant that appeals to the authority of religious revelation and tradition were held illegitimate as a source of knowledge (p. 14).

What concerns this study is not arguing for a particular understanding of the Enlightenment or which philosophers were most representative of any particular stage of it, but merely to highlight some general themes that were common among Enlightenment philosophers under the general belief that the human was considered sufficient for understanding and determining how best to live in the world. Generalities such as this are important for this study since the end goal is merely how such general themes of Enlightenment philosophy appeared at the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education. Of even more explicit concern will be how these ideas interacted with the process of European colonization.

Nonetheless, it is also important to emphasize before discussing Enlightenment philosophy, a main contention necessary for future arguments: that Enlightenment belief in the secular use of intellect was a *belief*, a truth claim about how best to understand and live in the world. Gregory (2012) highlights this often overlooked point that

Whether overtly or not, those who reject religion often make a different truth claim: that no religious claims are true, all religious beliefs are subjective, no religious doctrine is more than a human construct, and/or that all religion is to be explained exclusively in terms of its social, political, and psychological functions (p. 76).

One should not misunderstand Gregory's argument to imply that all Enlightenment philosophers were necessarily atheist, but simply that if someone truly believed in a particular metaphysical belief system as a perfect, absolute and universal Truth that explains how the world functions and how humans should live in it, it does not seem logical to him that they would completely dismiss it from the entire public sphere. This understanding is clear from the objective of his genealogical study on *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*. Obviously many would disagree with his deduction, which is built on his belief that modern day secular answers to "Life Questions" in the West are "some combination of personal preferences, inclinations, and desires" (Gregory, 2012, p. 77). The very fact that many obviously disagree with his position on the logical role of metaphysical beliefs confirms his more fundamental premise and mine, that

appeals to reason denote not a common method of argument or shared standard of adjudication—a point lost on moral philosophers and political theorists who continue to employ a question-begging 'we' in their arguments-but rather open additional, vexing

questions about different traditions of practical rationality and perspective, related conceptions of justice (Gregory, 2012, p. 181).

It is Enlightenment philosophy's conception of an abstract universal reason, which is nonetheless defined by a very limited population of the universe that this discussion of Enlightenment philosophy hopes to struggle with.

It is difficult to generalize much more than the above about Enlightenment philosophy due to the vastly different shapes it took from the 17th to 19th centuries, and even the delineation of this time period is not unproblematic. For example, Enlightenment historian Peter Gay divides Enlightenment thought into three generations: one represented by figures such as Montesquieu and Voltaire (who were largely influenced by the work of John Locke and Isaac Newton; a second generation consisting of famous figures like Franklin, Hume, and Rousseau; and a third generation including figures like Jefferson, Kant, and Holbach. Gay marks the Enlightenment as starting and ending in 1688 and 1789 (1969). However, what is of concern here is not a comprehensive history of the Enlightenment, but merely to highlight some main themes of it since they are necessary for this dissertation.

The human-centered worldview summarized above could really be traced as far back as the Greco-Roman philosophy of scholars such as Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle; its more recent revivers encompassed a wide spectrum of European philosophers such as Descartes, Nietzsche, Comte, Bacon, Hegel, and Kant (Nemo, 2006; Samman and Zo'by, 2008; Zarabozo (2), 2010). The above summarized set of beliefs about how humans should understand and best live in the world was re-borne during the European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries due to tensions like the perceived contradictions between various aspects of Christianity and empirical

science and/or reason, as well as the centuries old religious-based conflicts between France and Britain and between sects of Christianity (Gregory, 2012). For example, many academic works that seemed to contradict The Church's interpretation of the Bible were considered blasphemous and its sponsors liable to punishment by The Church, if not death; an example was the case of Galileo's 'discovery' that the sun was the center of the galaxy instead of the earth. Hence, religion was argued to put limits to empirical inquiry by neglecting the material causes of events, since so many avenues for inquiry in the Natural and Social Sciences had supposedly already been explained by metaphysical interpretations like Divine Will (Gay, 1969).

Christian theologians called for "higher criticism" of the Bible and came to the conclusion that not all aspects were appropriate for all time; hence, individual followers of the faith could choose the aspects of the faith they personally deemed appropriate for their particular time and location. This new *individualist* approach to Christianity, which was a prime trait of the protestant reformation, was justified by a belief that 'religion' (as a category that encompasses all metaphysical belief systems) is an *evolutionary process* (Zarabozo, 2010). This approach to Christianity has caused some to argue that "Western individualism is at the very least 'residual 'Christianity...[and that] the ethical identity of Western society will remain discernibly Christian for as long as the individual has higher moral status than the group'" (Graeme, 2008, pgs. 154-156). The point here is that the Bible was no longer treated as an ultimate objective Truth in academic discourse. Secularism was promoted as the ideal solution to rid the public sphere of what had become viewed as subjective "tales of the ancients" (Moore, 2007, pgs. 36, 57-58) concocted by our predecessors to explain the world and maintain hegemony through concepts like the Divine Right of kings to rule (Gay, 1969).

Secularism was argued to free people to achieve *rational* truth through philosophy and scientific investigation. However, it is been argued that secularism's objective was not as is popularly conceived just to confine religion to the private sphere and restrict the influence of The Church, but as philosophers of that time attested, to cause a wide scale recession or elimination of any sacred or normative ideas in society (Abu-Rabi, 2003, p. 100; Wallerstein, 2008). This "secularization theory", was that since science and technology are so important to 'modern' [industrialization onward] economy, and science conflicts with religion, then people will secularize (Gellner, 1992, p. 4). Importantly in the case of Islam however, as Gellner has argued, Islam has gained wider influence with technology and science, not the opposite and that even as MMCs amassed greater wealth and literacy than ever before this last half century¹², the pattern did not cause a recession in Islamic identity and practice, but actually increased it (Gellner, 1992). If the secularization theory above was correct, then Islam should no longer qualify as a 'religion' for example. Understanding whether Islam is a religion or not will be central to later analysis. Irrespective of the theory, given the specific sociohistorical conditions for the emergence of secularism (the specific experience of Christians in Europe) and the fact

¹² Importantly, these assumptions are almost exactly like those of Western 'development' programs—even when pursued by supposedly 'multilateral' institutions such as the UN, IMF and World Bank—of postwar U.S. interventions thought to quell anti-Americanism and spread liberal democracy (the political correlate of SH) in MMCs. Scheur notes, "Whether in Washington, London, or the Hague, the most basic assumption of nation-building is that if poor, illiterate, unhealthy Muslims are given potable water, schooling, prenatal care, and voting booths, they will abandon their faith, love Israel, demand visits by Salman Rushdie, and encourage their daughter to be feminist with a moral sense alien to most of the Islamic world—that is, they will try to become Europeans. This, of course, has never occurred in the wake of a Western intervention in a Muslim country. Islam invariably becomes more, not less, important to the inhabitants of an invaded Muslim country...this type of thinking will ultimately prove calamitous for the United States and Europe because it assumes Muslims can be bribed from their faith by imposed material improvements and because it continues to ignore the source of Muslim animosity toward the West: the impact of our foreign policies and our increasing military presence in the Islamic world" (Scheur, 2008, pgs. 108-109).

that it hasn't become a global or 'universal' stage of development that all humans evolve to (despite the existence of the supposed material causes for it), secularism does not seem to be a universal objective that all humans strive toward. Talal Asad notes, "If anything is agreed upon, it is that a straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular is no longer acceptable" (Asad, 2003, p. 1). Rather, secularism has been posited as part of, or *the* most recent interpretation of Christianity (Asad, 2003; Gregory, 2012; Smith, 2008).

However, this does not mean that secularism has not affected Western academic discourse towards other metaphysical belief systems. Asad (2003) highlights for example that "What is distinctive about 'secularism is that it presupposes new concepts of 'religion', ethics,' and 'politics,' and new imperatives associated with them" (pgs. 1-2). Asad develops his argument to conclude that secularism requires a particular attitude towards metaphysical belief systems called religion; he argues, "the concept of the secular cannot do without the idea of religion" (p. 200). This idea will be important to the question of whether there is anything called religion in an Islamic worldview.

"Cultural modernization' [became defined as] the redefining of religious values in a direction that was parallel to the dominant evolving theology of liberal Protestantism or general anti or non-religious worldviews" (Wallerstein, 2008, p. 26). Such a response to religion became interpreted as a 'Universal' sign of a peoples' *evolution* to a 'Modern' (as opposed to the 'traditional' beliefs in Truths derived from metaphysical sources), more *human* way of being (Abu-Rabi, 2003, p. 101; Cannella and Viruru, 2004). Graeme Smith concludes that "liberalism is an expression of secular Christianity...[since] Christian ontology provided the foundation for what are usually described as liberal values in the West" (Smith, pgs. 153, 156). Others have

discussed liberalism in a different way, as a post-hoc response to justify society's changing religious attitudes utilized to fill the vacuum that religion had left behind in the public sphere of Western Europe (Zaragoza (1), 2010). Whatever the interpretation of liberalism, what concerns this discussion is the Enlightenment philosophy idea of evolving to Western understandings of being in the world.

A relevant example of this sort of Social Darwinism is that which has already been mentioned by Immanuel Kant, in his definition of "Enlightenment" as, "Man emerging from his self-incurred immaturity [selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit]" (Aravamudan, 2012, p. 4). Srinivas Aravamudan in her latest work, *Enlightenment Orientalism*, analyzing the effect of Enlightenment philosophy oriented imaginative fiction (i.e.: Behn, Montesquieu, Swift, and Voltaire) on European understandings (particularly British and French) of 'Oriental' cultures defines Kant's understanding expressed above saying "humanity emerges from immaturity (Unmündigkeit, or unworldliness) [i.e.: belief in metaphysical issues] into rational power, becoming an end unto itself after having previously undermined itself (selbst verschuldeten)" (Aravamudan, 2012, p. 4). This should not sound unfamiliar to the ideas that Karl Marx and much of the neo-Marxist followers that came after him expressed about humans' 'self deception' in oppressive economic or ideological structures.

This evolutionist interpretation of linear progress from the less civilized to a European worldview was symbolic of the influence of Darwinism at the time as a central theory underlying Positivist science and was used to justify direct and in-direct colonization of "others" internationally who were further down the evolutionary ladder (Smith, 1999). Said refers to this sort of social Darwinism as "second-order Darwinism" (Said, 1978, p. 206). Indicative of

Darwin's (arguably Herbert Spencer's) conception of the 'survival of the fittest', the 'fittest' was the one who 'survived' which was indicative of their cultural or racial superiority (Willinsky, 1998, pgs. 165-166). As even the most conservative of policy makers and political consultants of our days, Samuel Huntington (1996), has admitted,

The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion, but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do"; "Western belief in the universality of Western culture suffers three problems: it is false; it is immoral; and it is dangerous . . . Imperialism is the necessary logical consequence of Universalism" (pgs. 51, 310).

Other aspects of Enlightenment philosophy were alternative forms of identity being constructed to take the place of religion in the public sphere like nationalism and a national culture. A national identity became considered one's primary identifier as a human, with things like race, religion, and ethnicity as possible 'sub-compartments' of a person's identity (class and gender drew more attention in Western thought in later centuries) (Gellner, 1992). One example of Enlightenment thought persisting to the present is expectedly found in one of the most popular analyses of nationalism, *Imagined Communities* (Anderson and Davidson, 2006). Anderson and Davidson attribute lack of belief in secular Liberalism in MMCs to, among other things, the idea that MMCS do not have freedom of information. Presumably, if there was free flow of information, MMC populations would *rationaly* choose secular Liberalism or create their own SH interpretations of religion that would satisfy Western notions of civility. However, as some have argued at least in the case of Islam for example, it seems nationalism has not been a

substitute for Islam as a primary identifier in most MMCs, and has not compartmentalized religion as a discreet personal aspect of identity (Veer and Van, 2002).

Nonetheless, the mere idea that Liberalism is still argued by some as the rational conclusion humans would come to if they were ‘free’ is symbolic of a major concern here, the Enlightenment belief in a universal “human nature” that supersedes all cultural and ideological obstacles, but is paradoxically defined by European conceptions of the world. Philippe Nemo in his *What is the West?*, which has “appeared to acclaim in half a dozen languages in Europe” (Nemo, 2006, ix) traces this conception not just back to the Enlightenment, but to the enlightenment’s roots in ancient Greco-Roman civilization. He notes that the Romans built off the “Stoics [of Greek philosophy] postulated that all of humanity comprises a single community with one nature. Social relations in the community result from ‘natural law’, of which the positive laws of each city-state are only a tracing or an approximation” (Nemo, 2006, pgs. 21-22). The natural consequence of course of having one group of people in power identifying what human nature was, and the corresponding “universal law” for everyone who came under the Roman Empire’s rule, was the need to apply Roman law in terms that territories of the Roman Empire could understand (Nemo, 2006, pgs. 18-23). Nemo (2006) notes,

It became necessary to use ordinary words and formulas without reference to the religions or institutions of specific ethnic groups so that they could be understood by everyone. This, in turn, encouraged the formulation of an increasingly abstract legal vocabulary (p. 19).

Nemo’s synopsis of universal law in Greco-Roman civilization should not seem strangely distant from modern day international law that is ‘translated’ to the world using what could be

considered as “empty signifiers” (Laclau and Moiffe, 2001). As Asad notes, “Especially over the past fifteen years, the analyses and prescriptions by international agencies dominated by the United States (OECD, IMF, the World Bank) have been remarkably similar regardless of the country being considered” (pgs. 14-15).

Nonetheless, what concerns us here is the Enlightenment use of broad and general words that would probably have positive connotations in most societies, like justice, freedom, and the like, but defining these words in very Eurocentric ways. This pattern was used to justify colonialism in the ways being discussed here.

A complementary concept to nationalism that assisted in the replacement of religion in the public sphere during the Enlightenment was that of ‘culture’. This would make sense since the word identity could be said to normally refer to individuals in the English language, so it seems ‘culture’ became the identity of the nation. Presumptions aside, it seems more than a coincidence that the concept of culture emerged in Europe the same time period as the Enlightenment.

It is said that the word ‘culture’ in the English language emerged in the 18th century, and by the 19th no longer meant the original definition of plant cultivation, nor the later definition of upbringing of children, but rather “something that defined class, education, and specific forms of knowledge” (Samman and Zo’by, 2008, p. 5). This pattern of ‘one-way’ conceptual shifts (i.e.: Biology to Education) from the natural sciences to the social sciences seems to be a powerful one post Enlightenment given the emphasis of Darwin and those that came after him on seeing humans just like any other organism. It does not seem coincidental that this is the same pattern discussed above when the belief in biological Darwinism was re-framed as social Darwinism for

imperial interests abroad. ‘Culture’ became a category that scholars could study ‘a people’ with (a relatively recent phenomena in Western academia) as imperial Anthropology and Archaeology occurred in colonial contexts (Samman and Zo’by, 2008, p. 38; Willinsky, 1998). This usage is aside from the role the concept of culture played domestically in Europe in protecting elite status by privileging more aristocratic forms of knowledge in higher education —i.e.: the humanities (usually not a utilitarian field the ‘hungry masses’ could feed themselves from)—while promoting widespread inculcation of such values through primary education. Such values of course included a national culture based upon the primary references for the Humanities, Greek-Roman civilization. What seems to be the implementation of an appropriation of this approach to education in Egypt, and the construction of a national identity will be important themes in this dissertation.

At this point, it seems relevant to connect the diverse ideas discussed above to the objective of this section of the chapter, discussing the connections between Enlightenment philosophy and colonization. Essentially, anything that was characteristic of Western culture during the Enlightenment was presented as “Human” and “Universal” objective Truth, and everything else was subjective uncivilized notions of culture, bias, or even savageness (Cannella and Viruru, 2004; Mignolo, 2011; Smith, 1999). An apt summary of the “Colonizer model of the world” in this regard is described by Samman and Zo’by (2008) in their work *Islam and The Orientalist World System* as:

A clear distinction between the rational, scientific, enlightened, and ‘developed’ nations of Western civilization and the undeveloped, particularistic, religious, sensuous, and emotional civilizations of Islam and all Others.. this colonialist narrative implies,

implicitly, that the global South sits far behind the West not because of a historical system organized on an unequal foundation, but simply the result of the distinctive and political qualities ‘we’ possess.(p. 5).

Understanding the aforementioned is important because there is still a strong tendency in some parts of academia to view any attempt to praise any aspect of life before the Western Enlightenment as characteristic of a romantic Luddite. Even the pronunciation of the term the ‘Medieval Ages’ says a lot about the connotation the word in fact carries as the ‘Dark Ages’ for Europeans. Nonetheless, what is of concern here is that the above claims were not done haphazardly, but rather through tremendous and intricate effort to justify Western notions of being through Positivist science and particular philosophical arguments as the *True* understandings of reality (Cannella and Viruru, 2004; Said, 1978; Smith, 1999).

While Liberalism is a much smaller product or part of the dialogues that occurred among Enlightenment philosophy (Gregory, 2012; Nemo, 2006; Smith, 2008), its use of seemingly neutral “Universal” statements of Truth are relevant here since they are an apt example of the pattern of “empty signifiers” quoted above. One of the most important concepts in Enlightenment philosophy was undoubtedly the task of defining justice. An example of the oversimplified universal definitions that were given was that justice was essentially Liberalism. Liberalism was said to be “built, after all, upon the simple consideration that the world is likely to be more happy if it refuses to build its institutions upon *injustice*” (Abu-Rabi, 2003, p. 31 emphasis added), without any consideration that people outside of Western Europe might differ

on the *meanings* of such a broad and general term¹³ as justice. We have no record to date in written human history where humans have unanimously agreed upon the definition of a set of ‘basic’ ‘fundamental’ or ‘Universal’ values (this grandiose term purportedly even assures us of extraterrestrial agreement with our ways of being and experiencing the world). Reaching a ‘purely rational’ (as SH philosophy defines itself) agreement on such nebulous concepts requires a dialogue in some other worldly ‘culture-free’ space unaffected by cultural perceptions of ‘good’, ‘bad’, etc. Such a place is yet to be discovered.

One may conclude at this point that Enlightenment philosophy contributed nothing but harm to the world given the above synopsis, but this has not been the intent. One could easily argue that many benefits were reaped for Europe—at least in terms of *material* wealth, control, and power for example. The intent in the above discussion is not an evaluation of the overall value or worth of Enlightenment philosophy in any objective or general sense, but exclusively an exposition of how such values and ideas were used to justify European colonization. This is pivotal to understanding the later discussion of how the concepts of knowledge and education were transformed throughout the 19th century in Egypt, as well as some theoretical complexities related to writing this dissertation.

¹³ It does seem however that whatever the definition was, there was an understanding that Muslims and Islam could not embody these values. Chateaubriand notes for example, “this book [the Qur’an] preaches neither hatred of tyranny nor love of liberty...[Islam is] a cult that was civilization’s enemy, systematically favorable to ignorance... when they go for long periods without seeing conquerors who do heavenly justice, they have the air of soldiers without a leader, citizens without legislators, and a family without a father” (Said, 1978, pgs. 171-172). Lord Cromer heading the British colonization of Egypt would later use strikingly similar arguments, that Muslims needed to be colonized so they could be free (Samman and Zo’by, 2008).

On the most fundamental level, the primary obstacle that theories based on Enlightenment philosophy principles impose is the recurring theme that has been seen above in utilizing Western (irrespective of whether one defines these as Christian or cultural, etc.) definitions for very important concepts, while simultaneously presenting them as ‘universal’. The most foundational hegemonized concept from Enlightenment philosophy it seems, is that the use of reason was defined as only valid when used in secular human-centered ways. The fact that the humans involved in defining what were these universally valid ways of using reason was limited to a select European few, resulted in expectedly Eurocentric and Christian understandings of True Reason. This pattern obviously has dramatic repercussions on any group of people hoping to maintain non-secular, non-Christian, or non-European ways of viewing the world since they are now viewed as irrational, inferior, and needing to be controlled as seen above. As has been briefly mentioned, hegemonizing the most basic definition of what is the appropriate manner of using one’s intellect can also have various consequences for what are defined as legitimate forms of identity, culture, religion, ethics, and politics. Such repercussions will of course be relevant for what is considered true knowledge or a real education—the primary concern of this dissertation.

However, it is important to emphasize that the aforementioned discussion could also raise intellectual complexities not just for far-away third-world countries, but graduate academic study in the West as well. If ‘theory’ has become hegemonized and limited to certain beliefs about the world articulated by an elect few in many parts of academia and is ritually passed on without questioning the validity of its main premises, academia becomes a process of internal colonization where the minority that decide to believe in these beliefs (or at least purport to in

their academic scholarship) gain positions of power over the majority of the population who will not join the ivory tower.

I have tried to show some of the ways that Enlightenment philosophy still shapes how many of us (contributors to Western academia) still might view some of the most important concepts that occur in almost any field of the social sciences (i.e.: identity, culture, religion, ethics, politics, and reason). Other academics have done the same. Some view Enlightenment philosophy in a positive light (Kurtz, 2007; Norman, 2004; Nemo, 2006); others note the negative consequences of such an approach (Cannella and Viruru, 2004; Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008; Gregory, 2012; Mignolo, 2011; Samman and Zo'by, 2008, Smith 1999). Some have even suggested explicitly teaching about Enlightenment philosophy as one does about other 'religions' so that citizens may choose whether to believe in it or not as just another belief system (Pike, 2009). And lastly, some of those who approve of the Enlightenment philosophy approach to academia have taken all this a step further and used a more encompassing term for Enlightenment philosophy that includes what they believe to be more recent use of such ideas, Secular Humanism (Kurtz, 2007; Norman, 2004). Such a term also seems to be useful for those wishing to decolonize from such a belief system since the term's 'timeless nature' seems to psychologically dislodge the misconception that this worldview was a movement that merely existed during a specific time period about 200 years ago. The identification of Enlightenment philosophy as merely a philosophical movement long gone with no pressing influence on the present might make it difficult to argue the importance of critiquing the influence of Enlightenment philosophy epistemological, ontological, and ethical assumptions on the present. For those that do not believe in a secular approach to using the intellect, even the label SH might

help highlight what many might see as the contradiction of imperfect humans being able to understand the world and how best to live in it on their own.

One could inquire why there has not been more macro-level institutional effort in decolonizing academia. Some academics argue that the very disciplinization of academic knowledge narrows comprehension of the world, which prevents academics from realizing the Enlightenment philosophy foundations of their disciplines; this pattern is seen as in the interests of governments and businesses who have similar limited interests (Cannella and Viruru, 2004, pgs. 46-47). However, the reason for disciplinization of academia is not as important here as its effects on how scholars conduct research.

Brad Gregory (2012) argues,

Numerous academics in various disciplines, traditionally and above all in philosophy, purportedly base their truth claims relevant to the life questions on reason as such. But the sheer diversity of rival, conflicting assertions ostensibly rooted in reason casts grave doubt on its vitality as a ground for such claims (p. 80).

Gregory's argument is that no discipline can do any type of research without assuming some basic beliefs about the world; these 'life questions' seem to be covered under the concepts normally referred to as epistemology, ethics, ontology, and methodology. It does not seem possible to do research without making some basic, often implicit, assumptions about what humans are, the meaning of life and how humans should interact, what knowledge is, and how they should consequently seek to understand the world better in some way.

Gregory continues the above line of reasoning to note that modern day undergraduate and graduate courses do not teach students how to reconcile the various and contradictory truth

claims that various disciplines are based upon despite the increasing acknowledgement that the solutions to life problems that academia seeks are interdisciplinary. The end result is academics who have lost interest in reconciling a composite picture of reality through academic research (Gregory, 2012, pgs. 302-303). Instead they confine themselves to “what is rewarded most highly in the academy: the creation of new-highly specialized—knowledge within one’s own discipline” (Gregory, 2012, p. 303).

Hence, the paradox here is that even though there seems to be a widespread implicit assumption in Western academia on a secular approach to the use of intellect, the lack of an objective way to appraise the various truth claims (epistemological, ontological, ethical, and methodological) that disciplines substitute for metaphysical truths results in the near impossibility of reconciling what are treated as mutually valid, but contradictory truth claims. One may add that this dilemma is multiplied by the obvious fact that many disciplines do not adhere to one ‘theory’, but countless sets of truth claims. I have attempted to reconcile between the various philosophical assumptions underlying the scholarship from a wide variety of fields and disciplines (i.e.: education, history, theology, political science) cited in this dissertation by merely accepting those assumptions at face value. This means I have allowed each discipline or field to dictate its own philosophical assumptions about epistemology, ontology, ethics, and methodology so that I can benefit from the research in such disciplines and fields for my wider objective, better understanding the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education. I am reliant on research that depends upon a wide variety of contradictory claims about reality, knowledge, the human, and how to do research. If I do not presume the ‘irrational’ simultaneous validity of all the different truth claims underlying these disciplines and fields, I will be limited

to a very one-dimensional interpretation of the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education.

As for my representation of what seems to be the most important indigenous worldview that is needed to understand this dissertation's inquiry, Islam, I have discovered what seems to be the most relevant theory for decolonizing from a SH worldview. It seems to be the best theory found that sets parameters for doing research, while simultaneously not requiring SH beliefs about the world is CIM. It seems the reason behind its description as 'methodology' is that it is a methodology for how scholars can use more indigenous theories or worldviews. This approach provides wide possibilities for intellectually decolonizing from Western Enlightenment philosophy since it leaves undefined categories for epistemology, ontology, ethics, and methodology, while simultaneously these minimal components for useful theory. However, before discussing CIM, a word should be mentioned about Decolonial methodologies in general.

Decolonial Methodologies

Decolonial authors, as discussed below, tend to refute SH (or what some still refer to as 'modernity') as a 'Universal' worldview and offer examples of substitutes that can be more relevant to non-Western contexts. Mignolo argues that "the first decolonial step is delinking from coloniality and not looking for alternative modernities but for alternatives to modernity" (Mignolo, 2011, xxviii); I would add to this, it is first necessary to boycott the word 'modernity'. Continuing to label SH as modernity affords it a hegemonic capability to be the only worldview for all time, since no one can but live in the 'modern' present and its connotation implies that no matter when the word is used SH is always the 'modern' way to live (Meuleman, 2008, p. 145).

As Mignolo notes how tradition was invented as a foil for modernity, something to define civilization in opposition to (the Middle Ages, etc.); defining ones' values as something supposedly outside the fold of time is truly a hegemonic approach, since people can relocate to other areas, but it is quite unthinkable to argue for not living in the present (Mignolo, 2011, p. 160).

The word 'Modernity' hegemonies one abstract worldview, SH, as the only choice for living in the present, irrespective of geographical location as opposed to a belief system, an option among others, called SH, which is why I have preferred the latter term in this paper. This seems better suited for Mignolo's other suggestion that scholars not even call these other worldviews 'alternatives' since such entails a center reference point of SH, but rather 'options' (Mignolo, 2011, xxviii). Such an approach is also better suited to the end objective of such research, that intellectuals in academia follow the lead of the already existing indigenous social movements of resistance to such discourses since scholars in Western academia can "contribute not by telling indigenous scholars, intellectuals, and leaders what the problem is, since they know it better than we do...but by acting in the hegemonic domain of scholarship" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 10). Through such an approach, one can engage in "epistemic disobedience"; such is necessary for civil disobedience, since the latter, as Mignolo argues, can "only lead to reforms, not to transformations" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 139).

In sum, "the decolonial confronts all of Western civilization...and it does it from the perspective of the colonies and ex-colonies rather than from the perspective internal to Western civilization itself" (Mignolo, 2011, xviii). One could scarcely find things in the English language

from what could be labeled indigenous perspectives until recently¹⁴ (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008; Mignolo, 2011; Smith, 1999). Such might be due to the fact that the audience previously was just a Western SH academia (Mignolo, 2011, xxvi), but now it seems scholars from decolonizing approaches such as Critical Indigenous (CIM) are pushing to change this. It seems that a Decolonial or Critical Indigenous Methodology on the macro level provides the most freedom in questioning the hegemony of Enlightenment thought in modern day academia.

Critical Indigenous Methodology

The Critical Indigenous paradigm came about during what has been called the “Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples” (1994-2004); it was said that a “full scale attack was launched on Western epistemologies and methodologies” (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008, p. 3). While the confrontational language seems to be counterproductive since it is well known oppression produces oppression, these scholars have provided one of the most accommodating paradigms yet for those who seek to decolonize.

Critical Indigenous methodology (CIM) “understands that all inquiry is both political and moral...it values the transformative power of indigenous, subjugated knowledges” (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008, p. 2). For example, one of the things CI places the most importance on is using indigenous languages since they “offer not just a communication tool for unlocking knowledge; they also offer a theory for understanding that knowledge” (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008, p. 504). The point here is not that a scholar needs to create a new theory about the indigenous language, but that the indigenous language itself is full of epistemological,

¹⁴ That is as indigenous as one can hope to be given that at least the write-up of any research will pragmatically have to be in English if one is in Western academia, but the emphasis throughout these authors’ works are an effort to introduce non-SH worldviews into academic discourse.

ontological, ethical, and methodological assumptions and beliefs about the world. These points are followed closely in this research in analyzing past documents, ideas, and experiences.

Nonetheless, as can be expected when using any foreign theoretical framework, some indigenous scholars have argued that some versions of CI methodologies “diminish the importance of indigenous concepts of identity, sovereignty, land, tradition, literacy, and language...[some] persist in imposing Western, Enlightenment views” on the indigenous experience (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008, p. 8). However, used in as general a sense as possible, CI does seem to offer the most potential for being the least colonizing theory under which indigenous concepts must conform. The freedom CI offers by requiring a bare minimum presentation of indigenous “ethics, epistemology, ontology, and methodology” (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith, 2008, p. 22) provides an apt method for decolonizing from the truth claims and beliefs of SH. It should be emphasized that leaving truth claims to be defined by the indigenous does not imply less rigor or quality in research, but merely more freedom to accommodate indigenous ways of viewing the world. This is critical since as has been argued, analyzing how indigenous concepts of knowledge and education became colonized by a SH worldview by the start of Egyptian national education, cannot be pursued merely by understanding SH. Hence, a rigorous treatment of the indigenous worldview and its effects on indigenous conceptions of knowledge and education is needed. While CIM as a methodology does not seem very ‘rich’ in comparison to typical theoretical frameworks, since it literally leaves even the most basic concepts to be defined by the indigenous, the value of CIM really depends on how the indigenous in question uses it as a methodology to express their own views about the world. I will turn to such an exposition now.

CHAPTER 3: AN ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW VIS A VIS MUSLIM PRACTICE

At the outset of a discussion that assumes ‘Islam’ as the most important worldview that needs to be taken into consideration in understanding an indigenous Egyptian worldview there are at least two theoretical complications. Namely these are: the justification for neglecting the worldviews of non-Muslim Egyptians that lived in Egypt during the 19th century; and the question of whether discussing Islam as one entity will lapse into essentialism and generalization about Muslim identity. All of the following regarding the first theoretical complexity will be fully elaborated in the following chapters and is therefore just mentioned in passing here; some of the following has already been mentioned in chapter one. The answer to the first complication has several answers. Egypt is currently around 93% Muslim and given what is known about Egypt at the time of the French invasion—even though there are no statistics to rely on until much later in the 19th century—is that the percentage of non-Muslims was also very small in quantity (Al Jabartee, 1997). This brings us to an even more complex issue, the fact that there was no such thing as a non-Muslim Egyptian, since there was no such thing as an Egyptian until the late 19th to early 20th century in Egypt—after the time range of 1798 to 1876 which this dissertation discusses.

It is critical to keep in mind that there was no such thing as Egypt in the sense of a nation-state in most of 19th century Egypt, and even the term ‘Egypt’ denoted different geographical boundaries than the present. The non-Muslims that did live in Egypt and were not foreigners there for other purposes like business, could really only be subsumed under a category of

‘Egyptian’ in the sense that Muslims and non-Muslims were ruled by the Mamluk dynasty which were the local representatives of the Islamic caliphate. This all took place in a territory that resembles what is now a nation-state called Egypt. Napoleon was the first to ideologically unite the residents of Egypt under a title of ‘Egyptian’. At Tahtaawee seems to be the first to introduce the concept of an Egyptian into the Egyptian national education much later as will be seen.

Identity in 19th century Egypt was based on belonging to groups centered on ‘religions’ or metaphysical belief systems. An Egyptian national identity only became possible after Muhammad Ali took over control from the Mamluk dynasty controlling the territory now known as Egypt, and separated from the Ottoman caliphate creating the nation-state of Egypt. A national identity was constructed throughout the 19th century, and promoted by the early 20th century nationalist movement as has been mentioned; however, this was largely an elite fascination. Even throughout most of the 20th century as well, as will be shown, ‘religion’ continued to be the primary identifier of people who lived in the geographical territory now known as Egypt.

As has also been mentioned, the Egyptian populace was almost unilaterally illiterate in the 19th century and most of the 20th. The one Egyptian historian whose documents are available from the West and are relied upon in almost any Western study of 19th century Egypt, Al Jabartee, also wrote from an Islamic perspective. More importantly, the Egyptians found involved in the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education were also all Muslim. This is particularly relevant regarding the two educational texts written by the intellectual founder of Egyptian national education, At Tahtaawee (a Muslim), which are replete with explicitly SH and Islamic worldviews. This is why these two belief systems have received the

most attention in this dissertation and are viewed as the most important in comprehending the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education.

Essentialism and Representation

In discussing the theoretical complexities of essentialism and representation that have gained strong currency in postmodern circles in recent years (Said, 1978, 1994), there are several points of contention relating to Islam itself and the prioritization of the relevant disciplines in such discussions. The most important tension in a discussion about essentializing Muslims is the fact that in order to be Muslim, a person has to consider Islam their identity above all other tribal, national, or ethnic affiliations and the like. Hence the notion of essentializing Muslims to Islam becomes sort of an oxymoron.

Also, Islamic revelation is essentially an entire body of generalizations about how the world functions: humans are incapable of devising the way of life that is in their best interests by themselves; humans will usually prefer what brings them pleasure and removes pain and focus on the short term; most people will never become Muslim historically; what humans' greatest weaknesses are; the reasons for social ills; the solutions to societal problems, etc. The whole premise of revelation in Islam is that such generalizations are valid until judgment day. However, there is an important difference to highlight between saying Muslims believe in Islam and how much they actually decide to learn or apply it.

One of the most basic concepts in Islam is that someone has to believe in and accept the entire revelation or they are not Muslim. One becomes Muslim by truthfully saying one sentence, the testimony of faith, which is a statement that implies he/she believes in and submits to

(meaning there are some required basic actions to qualify for the label ‘Muslim’ and claim faith) the entire Qur’an and Sunnah (Islamic revelation—discussed below). The *extent* to which a Muslim actually lives according to Islamic dictates is something Allah (lit: ‘The One True God’) will hold them accountable for and what determines whether they enter paradise directly or must be punished in hellfire first (for their sins) before entering paradise. All of this may sound strange to a Western academic audience. It is important here to once again highlight the importance of not homogenizing Islam into Western concepts of ‘religion’ since the word does not even exist in the Arabic language, the Qur’an or Sunnah.

On the second note of prioritizing the appropriate disciplines when discussing essentialism, there is a somewhat more banal, but important point to highlight. Almost anything written in the English and Arabic language acknowledges that the 90% Orthodox portion of the Muslim population defines Islam as Orthodox Islam according to Islamic texts and the scholarship that has developed around them which state that Islam is a complete *way of life* that addresses even the most minute aspects of daily life; Most Muslims want to live by this definition of Islam as academics from Islamic studies to Philosophy (i.e.: Esposito 1999; Gellner, 1992; Hodgson, 1974), and even retired CIA experts outside of academia have acknowledged (Scheur, 2008). Hence, it is important to discuss an Islamic worldview in properly analyzing 19th century Egypt or Egypt in the present. This does require generalizations, but some minimalist summary of Islam is essential for understanding Islamic concepts of knowledge and education prior to French colonization and the current context of Egypt as well.

A good summary of what is intended here is a quote by Michael Scheur, a historian of the Muslim World and retired 25 year CIA specialist on MMCs. Scheur (2008) notes with his usual cynicism,

Now the use of the term Muslims is often criticized as a stereotyping mechanism that demeans Muslims through its implicit assumption that every Muslim thinks alike. Such criticism usually comes from the staunchest multiculturalists, but they also know it is almost impossible to have a substantive conversation or debate if generalizations cannot be used...so great is the diversity of the Islamic world that any kind of unity...would be almost impossible to achieve if it were not for the one universal motivating factor that U.S. leaders refuse to acknowledge and talk about: the Islamic faith...*one that is more pervasive and durable in its influence on individuals, personal relationships, community affairs, and international relations than any of the current iterations of the world's other great religions.* Now, before the multiculturalists go berserk, it must be recognized that Muslims are not an unthinking monolith action on a single theological script as a 1.3 billion-person automaton. Yes, the practice of Islam varies in different regions of the earth, mixing, for example, with millennia-old local traditions and mores...there are numbers of Muslims who have fallen away from their faith or are at best sporadic participants in its rituals. But at day's end, each Muslim's identity is grounded in his faith, its requirements, and the culture it has produced (pgs. 152-153 emphasis added).

As a Muslim, I completely agree with the postmodern critique of claiming perfectly 'true' representations; however, in Islam this just falls under the basic understanding of human fallibility. Hence, one finds at the end of almost any book written from an Islamic perspective the

phrase “*Allahu A’lam*”—Allah knows best. Nothing in this dissertation claims to be a perfect representation of anything. The objective in this chapter is merely to provide some general frame of reference for the inquiry at hand. As will be discussed, saying there is one Islam does not even imply that Islam will look the same in practice from context to context.

As Edward Said (1997), one of the staunchest opponents of essentialization has also noted,

By using the skills of a good critical reader to disentangle sense from nonsense, by asking the right questions and expecting pertinent answers, anyone can learn about either ‘Islam’ or the world of Islam and about the men, women, and cultures that live within it, speak its languages, breath its air, produce its histories and societies (lix).

This is what I believe I have done over the last 11 years aside from my studies and experiences physically in MMCs. Here I will attempt a brief summary of Islam from Islamic sources—those produced through the indigenous lens of the Islamic sciences elaborated below—in order to understand how such a worldview might affect Egyptian education. Before going any further it should be noted that while this last section of the paper will cite Islamic texts as an example of the texts related to the topic, fully comprehending the nuances of the texts¹⁵ can only

¹⁵ For example, verse 4: 86 in the Qur’an is translated into English as “When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally. Undoubtedly, Allah is and always will be The One who will hold people accountable for all things.” We know from the Sunnah that this is not referring to just any type of greeting, but the Islamic greeting or version of ‘hello’ which is, ‘May the peace and mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you.’ However, a person can initiate or respond to the greeting with less than this full version. For example, a person could say ‘May the peace be upon you’ (intending the same meaning above), but the responder is recommended to say at least this much or increase to ‘May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you’, (or even add the ‘mercy’ part). The point is to do better than what people do to you, which is derived from a concept known in Islam as *ihsaan*—to worship Allah as if you see Him in all your daily actions, and even though you do not

be achieved in the original Arabic versions so the reader is advised to access an exegeses or just refer to the ‘introduction to Islam’ texts referenced to get a wider explanation of the ideas in this section. Also as will be found in such texts, the Islamic approach to a full understanding of the ‘Islamic stance’ on a topic is not to just cite one verse or hadeeth (pl: ahadeeth; pieces of the *Sunnah* explained below) in passing out of 6,232 Qur’anic verses and over 20, 000 ahadeeth. Rather in the Islamic sciences one is to present all the ‘evidences’ related to the topic in a systematic manner, hence, the citation of verses and ahadeeth is merely an attempt to provide a *representative* example of the Islamic stance on the topic in question.

The ‘Personal’ Aspects of Islam

Sunni ‘Orthodox’ Islam makes up roughly 90% of the Muslim world and is how this paper will also define Islam. The other eight percent of the Muslim world consists of a mixture of various sects (Shiism, varieties of Sunni like Sufism, etc.) which generally have some different fundamental beliefs. This being said, the most important thing to note about Islam is that it is a complete way of life—a system with its own individual, social, economic, and political aspects—not a religion. The closest word for ‘religion’ in the Arabic language (the language of the two sources of Islam and the Islamic sciences) is *deen*, which means a way of life. Allah says what means, “This day, I have completed/ perfected your deen for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your deen” (Qur’an, 5:3). As

see Him, you behave under the recognition that He sees you. While all of this falls under the category of ‘recommended’ actions (see below), a constant theme in Islam is to never belittle the seemingly little deeds, always being a role model of Islam in even the most minute aspects. Also, another example of the numerous Arabic meanings that would not be gleaned from the English version of this verse is that the word ‘greeting’ (tahiyya) in Arabic comes from the same root as ‘to bring something to life’ as if one is bringing life to their society by spreading these greetings.

mentioned above, the two sources of Islam are the Qur'an (believed to be the literal Words of Allah) and the Sunnah (the collection of the teachings and sayings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him¹⁶, on how to practically and contextually apply this message). A famous saying in MMCs that summarizes the Islamic approach to speaking about Islam related to this is *Ad-deenu qaal Allah, qaalal rasool*, "this deen is 'Allah said', 'the messenger [Prophet Muhammad] said...'" Namely, the number one sign of an Islamic approach to discussing Islam is by textual proof.

The word Qur'an has among its most important meanings 'that which is recited'; orally is the way that the Qur'an was spoken by Allah to angel Gabriel who in turn taught it orally to Prophet Muhammad (who was unlettered). Accordingly, although the Qur'an and Sunnah were written down by the companions of Prophet Muhammad and still exist, the Qur'an and Sunnah have been passed down from 'heart to heart' (at least one aspect of the intellect is in the heart in Islam) over the generations as this was the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. This is a pedagogical approach found historically and to this day in MMCs. The Qur'an and parts of the Sunnah are memorized by millions of Muslims around the world to this day.

Another word the Qur'an uses to describe itself is Al Furqaan (Qur'an, 25), which is 'that which differentiates between Truth and Falsehood' since the Qur'an also describes itself as a *guidance* for the entire universe until Judgment Day (Qur'an, 2: 185). This is important to highlight the 'circular' (as opposed to SH linear progressive) perspective towards time in Islam. Basically, the belief is that although the names and places change, the general patterns of human social interaction stay the same. This is different from the SH perspective towards history since

¹⁶ Muslims are encouraged to say this at least the first time his name is mentioned in a paper or lecture.

“secularism disowns both the past and the sacred scripture as the basis of belief” (Abu-Rabi, 2003, p. 100).

In regard to interpretation, Islam does not recognize any official ‘Mosque’ (an equivalent of the Catholic Church), which necessitates somewhat of a ‘literalist’ understanding of the verses so that any lay person (even illiterate) with knowledge of how to speak and understand classical Arabic can understand enough to apply the basics of the message in their daily life in a practical fashion. The Qur’an does not rely on any parables that require one to seek out any saint or Mosque for interpretation as was one of the reasons for the re-birth of SH in the case of Christianity, but does tell a Muslim to consult those better versed in Islam when they do not understand an issue (Qur’an, 21: 7). The Qur’an however, can be viewed as relatively general in comparison to the Sunnah, which provides very specific and directive guidelines for practical application depending on one’s context (location, culture, customs, etc.). Simply put, all humans are believed to be required to use their intellect to seek out the Truth about the purpose of their creation; this importantly implies that there is no contradiction between reason and revelation if one were to sincerely and fully research the claims and logic of the system as a whole. The Qur’an mentions two types of ‘signs’ provided for this process (Ashqar, 2003).

A verse in the Qur’an is called an *ayah*, which is the same word for ‘sign’. Throughout the Qur’an, two main methods are used to try to prove its validity to the listener or reader. One method calls the listener or reader to contemplate the signs in the universe around as proof of a Creator who sustains every living thing and causes it to die at some point; and that since He does create and sustain every one and thing, one should reflect on the purpose of his/her creation and whether there has been any guidance provided on how they should live. The Qur’anic emphasis

on investigating the natural world was a prime impetus for the scientific revolution that occurred within the first century of the Qur'an's revelation (Iqbal, 2007). The other type of guidance is in fact the 'signs' (verses) in the Qur'an which are believed to be the proof of the Qur'an's divinity, a miracle.

Regarding miracles, the belief is that every Prophet was given a miracle (something that gave them social capital amongst the *ummah*¹⁷ they were sent to) to prove to people that they were a messenger of Allah (i.e.: Jesus and his various miracles like healing people at a time medicine was looked up to in the Jerusalem area, etc.). For Prophet Muhammad, he was given the Qur'an due to its unmatched eloquence and style in Arabic. The choice of the Qur'an as Prophet Muhammad's primary miracle was due to the fact that an Arab's cultural capital at that time was their oratory skills (poetry, etc.), as well as the fact that this was supposed to be a miracle 'transferable' for others to witness until Judgment Day (being words anyone can read until Judgment Day as opposed to historical events that no one can prove happened or not empirically) (Ashqar, 2003). This is important due to the belief that Prophet Muhammad is the last messenger. Accordingly, Muslims do not view belief in such metaphysical issues as 'tales of the ancients', even though the Qur'an does interestingly cite that this will be one of the primary accusations leveled against it.

While a book intended to guide humans' interaction with Allah and then each other--not a science book--the Qur'an does discuss very explicit scientific facts and processes that humans did not discover until the last two centuries. Examples of these facts and processes are the minute details of the embryological process through MRIs, hail formulation, etc.), as well as the

¹⁷ Lit: 'nation' or 'people'; a wider discussion will follow below regarding nationalism

prediction of specific historical events that happened years after the Qur'an's revelation. Such aspects are believed to be proof of the Qur'an's miraculous nature (Ibrahim, 1997), which means that such 'worldly' issues were obviously not considered irrelevant to a practical functioning society.

Something that has often stigmatized 'religion' as a category is a perceived belief in what has been often called 'blind faith'. Muslims believe that the Qur'an does not ask anyone to blindly believe *in a general sense*, as is common belief about 'religion', and in fact explicitly admonishes those who simply follow what their ancestors or parents believe without questioning (Qur'an, 2: 170). Rather, the Qur'an calls people to contemplate both types of signs described above to come to the rational conclusion that it is from Allah. If they believe this, then they should logically try their best to follow it completely by dedicating their lives to the worship of Allah. This is the point where one could say that Islam does require total 'submission' to Allah in worship as the word 'Islam' means in Arabic. Allah says what means¹⁸, "And I have not created the *jinn* (see exegesis) and humans except to worship Me" (Qur'an, 51: 56).

'Worship' is defined as anything that pleases Allah as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah, which can be 'traditional' conceptions of worship like the five pillars of Islam---praying five times a day, fasting the month of Ramadan (a month on the Islamic lunar calendar), giving 2.5% of one's wealth in charity (if one has a certain minimum extra in assets), doing the pilgrimage rites known as Hajj, and of course acceptance of all this depends on the first pillar, that they

¹⁸ Since the Qur'an is defined as the 'literal words of Allah revealed in Arabic to Prophet Muhammad', any translation, while praiseworthy in spreading the message, is technically not considered the Qur'an given the introduction of a human translator (see Qadhi, 1999), hence the common usage of 'what means' in Islamic scholarship, which I will just presume understood from this point forward for lack of space.

believe that ‘No one or thing is worthy of being worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger’. But worship also includes non-traditional conceptions of worship as well, like moving something obstructing the road, ruling a country justly, etc. Two examples from the Sunnah will highlight this.

One hadeeth states that Prophet Muhammad was sitting with his companions and asked them, “did you know that even the sexual relations you have with your spouse counts as an act of worship?” They looked surprised and said “How?” He replied, “If you had done this outside of marriage [which Islam acknowledges as a natural desire] would not you have gotten a sin for it?” They said “yes”. He said, then why would not you get rewarded for it when you fulfill this desire in the proper manner of marriage” (Muslim, 1990, vol. 2A, p. 187)? In fact, if one of the spouses decided they never wanted to have sexual relations with their spouse again, then this is grounds for a divorce under Islamic law since such is among the rights that they have over each other. Another example from the Sunnah related to this is how to prioritize one’s life of worship since undoubtedly there will be conflicts of interest between different types of worship in life.

Three men had come to Prophet Muhammad’s house to ask his family about the nature of his worship, and since they were used to the more traditional form of ‘worship’ legislated for many previous ummahs (which actually was more limited to an individual approach to worship through more strenuous prayer, fasting etc.), they were not very impressed with the amount of prayer and fasting he did and the fact that he was married (which implied he was not celibate). When Prophet Muhammad came home and heard about the mens’ visit, he told them “I pray some part of the night [extra prayers], but I also sleep some of it, I fast some days, and some

days I do not, and I marry; so whoever abandons my Sunnah then he is not from me [following his path].”

The point here is that Islam is referred to in the Qur’an as the ‘middle and best’ path¹⁹ (Qur’an, 2: 143), meaning that it is believed to be innately ‘moderate’ in that it does not ask a person to spend their life sitting in a room and praying abandoning all worldly issues, nor drowning oneself greedily in luxury. The principle is to enjoy of life’s bounties in a moderate fashion (which should enhance gratitude to Allah), but not let one’s heart become attached to the world as if it is the only end objective, which would deceive the point alluded to when Allah commands Muslims in the Qur’an to “Say [tell people]: ‘Undoubtedly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds’” (Qur’an, 6:162). Subsequently, any act that is done sincerely only for the pleasure of Allah and according to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad then it is considered ‘worship’. This is the meaning of ‘*Islam*’ (‘submission’), that one has submitted to the Will of Allah in all their affairs, and hence achieves ‘*salaam*’ (‘inner peace’), which comes from the same linguistic root (1995).

So if a person does not submit to Allah’s Will does that mean they are ‘free’? The first chapter of the Qur’an (The Opening), which is considered by ulamaa to be a summary of Islam, notes two main reasons why a person would not submit to the Will of Allah: either ignorance by neglecting to search out their purpose in life (those who have ‘went astray’, 1: 8); or purposely

¹⁹ Note that there are countless verses and ahadeeth in Islam that attest to this fact that Muslims believe there is only one normative Islam, orthodox Sunni Islam. Much of scripture emphasizes this point re-iterating that without a lack of unity on this one “straight path”—which Muslims ask Allah to be guided to and stay consistent upon when they recite the ‘summary of Islam’ (chapter one) a minimum of 17 times per day in the five obligatory prayers. Muslims will be disunited which is viewed as one of the integral sources of problems for Muslims. This does not preclude the fact that application of Islam will look very different based on context; however, the fundamentals of the faith do not change with time/location or otherwise it would cease to be a recognizable entity.

disobeying despite knowing the Truth (those who ‘have earned Allah’s anger’, 1:7). Both types of disobedience (or disbelief depending on how far one follows these paths) are described in the Qur’an as following one’s *hawaa* or ‘lowly desires’²⁰ (Qur’an, 45: 23).

The opposite of ‘submitting’ in Islam is referred to in the Qur’an as following one’s ‘hawaa’ (lowly desires/instincts), in the sense that since they have no Divine Guidance, they will usually do what seems to offer the most benefit or pleasure for them. However, this will usually not be what is best for them and everyone or everything in the universe they affect either through their actions or inactions on the macro level simultaneously. This is probably one of the fundamental differences between Islam and SH, that although Islam recognizes that everyone is born with free will and physically free, Islam notes that they can really only choose to ‘enslave’ themselves (the word *ibaadah*, worship, also has the connotation of being a *Abd*, slave) to various human social constructs (i.e.: various cultures, customs, ideologies, etc.) or submit themselves in servitude to Allah (Ashqar, 2003). This is of course in contradiction to the notion of abstract reason immune from such influences. A relevant verse here is when Allah says,

Have you seen the one who has taken their own desires as his/her god, so Allah has left him/her to go astray since he/she knew the Truth [but did not follow it]; so Allah has set a seal/veil upon his/her hearing, heart and vision. Then who will guide him/her after they have lost the guidance of Allah? Won’t you then be reminded? (Qur’an, 45:23)

In essence, they have taken themselves as a god by choosing to not follow what they know Allah has revealed, but at the same time, they have really just enslaved themselves to other

²⁰ In the Islamic science of Tafseer (exegesis), to know the meaning of a Qur’anic verse, one looks in the rest of the Qur’an first, where it is often elaborated upon in detail; otherwise one would look in the Sunnah, etc. (see Phillips, 2005).

peoples' interests. They will most likely just choose whatever system the people in power at that time have constructed to protect their interests. This brings us to one last fundamental difference between the SH approach to reason and the Islamic one.

Islam teaches that if one has searched out the Truth and comes to believe that the Qur'an and Sunnah are *truly* from Allah, then it would only make logical sense to follow them completely; it would be illogical for them to be from an Omnipotent Perfect God and not be perfect and rational. The question of whether the wisdoms behind every minute detail of the Islamic system would be understood by every individual in the world would be seen as impossible and irrelevant since humans will vary astronomically in their knowledge of Islam and conception of the world ('right' and 'wrong', etc) due to their diverse upbringings and context throughout history. Hence, the Qur'an and Sunnah are very explicit that disbelief in any part of Islam is disbelief as a whole since essentially it either is from Allah or it is not (Qur'an, 4: 150-151).

As well known Islamic Studies historian William Hodgson (1975) notes, In the Qur'an, it was early made clear that human beings face a fundamental moral choice. They cannot hover halfway ...they may choose to stand in awe of their Creator and accept His moral demands...or human beings may turn away from their Creator...accordingly Muhammad insisted on the moral responsibility of human beings. Life was no matter of play, it called for sober alertness; men dare not relax, secure in their wealth...all these things would avail nothing at the judgment (p. 11).

While humans are regarded as the best of Allah's creation in the Qur'an (95:4) and the ones entrusted as guardians over the rest of creation (2: 30), they are believed to never be able to

‘reason’ out the best way of life that is in the best interest of all of creation simultaneously since they are imperfect and such requires omnipotent knowledge. At the same time, this does not mean Islam is against the use of one’s reason; every couple of pages in the Qur’an one finds admonishments of those who do not ‘ponder, reflect, etc.’ However, the first objective is to use one’s reason to discover the guidance that *has* been provided. *Then* one is to use their reason to address the contextual variables they live in.

Those who ‘submit’ to what is believed to be Allah’s Will are united upon a normative body of knowledge in regard to metaphysical issues, even though they will naturally differ on other ‘worldly’ issues which are inconsequential to their eternal welfare. There is a wider consensus among Muslims on a much wider set of ‘constants’ compared to other faiths as many Western scholars have noted (Gellner, 1992; Hodgson, 1974; Scheur, 2008). The SH approach however, as stated above, allows the individual to construct their own belief system by choosing the parts they personally view as ‘rationale’ or ‘relevant’ or go by their interpretation of the ‘spirit’ of the corpus as a whole even when there is already a particular command on an issue (Zarabozo, 2010). There are such exceptions for abnormal circumstances, but this is not the default. Subsequently, the more individualistic approach to values in many Western societies is not necessarily a ‘natural evolved’ state of human existence but rather a product of a particular intellectual tradition.

The Sociopolitical and Economic Aspects of Islam

In order to discuss the sociopolitical and economic aspects of Islam, an introduction is needed to the Islamic concept of *ummah* (lit: nation or people) as opposed to the nation-state. Muslims believe that all the prophets (i.e.: Adam, Abraham, Jesus, Muhammad, etc.) all originally came with the same central message of *Tawheed* (worshipping only Allah), but different ‘branches’ or details (how to pray, etc.) contextual to their time period and location; each Prophet had their own ‘branches’ for their particular ummah (the ummah of the Jews, of the Christians, etc.), but all still technically ‘Muslims’ as long as they followed whatever legislation (*Sharia*) their Prophets came with at that time. Basically, they chose to do ‘istislaam’ or ‘Islam’ (which means submission) to the message their Prophet came with; hence, they were Muslim. Prophet Muhammad is believed to be the final Prophet from his time until judgment day for humanity. The Muslim *ummah* refers to the Islamic belief that all humans born after Prophet Muhammad’s prophethood are technically considered from the ummah of Muhammad in a general sense (the *ummat al dawa* or ‘invitation’), but those who choose to accept this invitation by believing and following him are the more specific *ummat al ijaaba* (ummah of those who responded), who are called Muslims today. Differences between the three major world religions over even the central meaning of *Tawheed* today (the status of Jesus being more than a Prophet, etc.) are believed to be due to tampering and alterations of the older scriptures by various theologians and others throughout history. For a fuller discussion, see Dr. Umar Ashqar’s *Belief in Allah*

The important point here is that one's primary identity in Islam is faith²¹ (not citizenship, ethnicity, race, social class, gender, etc.). Hence, throughout this dissertation, I might refer to the Muslim ummah as the 'Muslim civilization' if something can reasonably be generalized about it. Given the aforementioned then, what is the closest thing to an Islamic conception of 'citizenship'?

It seems that Islam functions closest to (out of the SH options regarding the topic) the idea of 'communal citizenship' based on "organic communities" within a nation-state (Kadioglu, 2005). In the case of Islam, all citizens of an Islamic state are supposed to receive free public education, health care, ability to participate in politics, and practice their religion. This includes each religious community's right to their own private educational systems, legal codes, criminal system, etc. However, each 'community' of people (i.e.: religious minorities) are treated as their own cultural 'ummahs' (nations or communities) within the wider state. For example, in return for the above 'rights', citizens have the 'duty' to pay either *zakat* (an Islamically required 'charity') or *jizya* (a tax that non-Muslims pay since they can't be compelled to Islamic acts of worship—Qur'an, 2:256) which is roughly 2.5% and 1.5% for Muslims and non-Muslims respectively out of their assets *if either of them have a certain extra amount of assets* (Al Hashimi, 2007).

²¹ This does not necessitate any conflict of interest for Muslim minorities in non-Islamic nation-states as Islam stipulates that Muslims that choose to live in non-MMC have to live by the citizenship contract they agreed to -- either explicitly by choosing to immigrate to one, or implicitly by choosing to remain after puberty in the case of the one who was brought there prior to puberty for whatever reason (parents, etc.). The Qur'an requires fulfillment of contracts (5:1), and the Sunnah is quite unequivocal in specifically stating that a Muslim must follow the laws of the land they choose to live in, which is why they are encouraged to reside in the place that is best for their practice of their faith to begin with. For a fuller discussion, see Dr. Muhammad Ali Hashimi's *The Ideal Muslim Society*.

In regard to the political, instead of SH being the basis of the constitution in a MMC, Islam is, and minorities are able to live their lives as they wish within the ‘federal law’ as would be the case in a Western country. For example, the federal law would outlaw alcohol for all Muslims, which means alcohol could only be sold to non-Muslims (Al Hashimi, 2007).

Economically, Islam has an investment-based economic system that prohibits interest, which is seen as an oppressive system. Interestingly, the longest verse in the Qur’an outlines detailed legislation for business transactions (Qur’an, 2: 286). There is also a concept of *shura* that resembles the democratic concept of the electoral college, being an elected consultative body for the ruler, with the important caveat that the general Muslim populace as a whole including the government has the responsibility (part of CGFE explained below) to prevent laws that contradict Islam. Other than these basics politically, Muslim societies can create whatever other institutions and laws as contextually needed within the parameters described (Al Hashimi, 2007).

What might be termed the Islamic concept of ‘civil society’ seems to be one of the strongest branches of the Islamic paradigm due to the principle of ‘Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil’ (CGFE), which is the manifesto of many of the civil society organizations and NGOs currently in MMCs, not unimportantly those founded and headed by women to teach the citizenry about Islam like in Egypt (Mahmood, 2005). In other places, such organizations protest governments’ encroachment on their right to practice Islam as in Turkey and Pakistan (Jamal, 2010; Kadioglu, 2005). The principle of CGFE is so important that obedience to the ruler in an Islamic state is conditional upon the ruler’s obedience to the Sharia, which includes overseeing public interest and creating the conditions for citizens to have their basic needs (i.e.:

food, clothing, shelter, medical, education) (Al Hashimi, 2007). The concept of commanding the good and forbidding the evil can be seen throughout the Qur'an in verses like²²,

Stand firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, or your relatives, and whether it be against the rich or poor, for Allah can best protect both. Do not follow your own lowly desires and lusts over following the course of justice (Qur'an, 4:135).

Along with the aforementioned, there is the concept of '*fard kifaaya*' duties in Islam (communal obligations like being a witness in court cases, producing academic specialists to serve citizens' needs, etc); whereby, if enough Muslims do not fulfill them, the whole community of Muslims is sinful. This relates to the importance of 'moral education' as part of citizenship under Islamic governance; each 'nation' or community within the state has its own moral education to provide citizens *internal motivation* to abide by the laws and contribute to society, while simultaneously not compelling minorities to believe in supposedly 'neutral' belief systems or laws imposed from above by the state (i.e.: SH).

These last two concepts—the Islamic concept of 'civil society' and *fard kifaaya* duties—seem quite similar to the Western concept of volunteer or non-profit organizations, which makes it not surprising that they are also the main two sociopolitical aspects of Islam found most cited in English literature that discusses such aspects in modern-day MMC as seen above.

²² The principle in this verse is explained by the hadeeth of Prophet Muhammad that one has to "change any evil within your capacity physically, if it is outside your control, speak out against it verbally, and if even this is not possible, then at least hate it in your heart, and this last level is the bare minimum in claiming to have faith". As other verses and *ahadeeth* (pl. of hadeeth) illustrate, this is all under the condition that one does not do something that would create a bigger harm (see Ibn Taymiyya's treatise *Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil* for a wider discussion).

In concluding a brief summary on Islam, a couple of concluding remarks should be made regarding how Muslims deal with novel issues (technological transformations, eugenics, etc.), and the relationship between Islamic scholars and laypeople.

Based on the two sources of Islam explained above, a specific approach to deducing laws was deduced by the companions of Prophet Muhammad and their students, and became broadly known as *Al Uloom Ash Shar'iyya* ('Islamic sciences') or just *Ash-Sharia* ('Sharia') when spoken of on the theoretical level, and *Fiqh* ('jurisprudence') when spoken of in terms of practical application, prioritization of interests, weighing benefits and risks, and the like (Kamali, 2003, 2008). The Islamic Sciences are known for their clear reliance on the actual revelation as evidence when they write about anything regarding Islam, since one of the biggest sins mentioned in the Qur'an is to "talk about Allah without definite knowledge" (Qur'an, 6:144). Within these sciences, four jurisprudence schools of thought: Hanafi, Maaliki, Shaafii, and Hanbali (named after the companions of Prophet Muhammad or the formers' students that explicitly laid their foundations), have been the most popular in MMCs historically. They vary slightly in their approach: for example if there is no explicit ruling in the Qur'an and Sunnah about an issue some might prioritize using 'analogy' to derive a new ruling; whereas others might refer to the *fatwas* (rulings) of the companions, etc.; but generally speaking given the very explicit ways in which the Sunnah explains the intent of the Qur'an, the scholars from these four schools to this day agree on about 70% of issues, with the other 30% comprising very minute details (like whether to put one's hands on the chest or stomach area during prayer) (Phillips, 2006). The agreed upon issues in regard to Islam is what I have focused on in this chapter. Anyone can learn these sciences; there is no special elite class or official 'Mosque' of scholars

that needs to be referred to. Also, given the straightforward nature of the Qur'an and Sunnah, rarely does someone proficient in classical Arabic need to actually consult a scholar except in 'new' or nuanced issues.

Regarding the relationship between Islamic scholars and laypeople, although Islamic scholars are usually highly respected in MMCs, it has not been infrequent historically to have seen Muslims stand up against a given scholar, or just ignore and lose all respect for him when it seemed they had started to 'sell their religion' in support of a ruler. The latter is a perfect example of what happened when *Al Azhar*, Egypt's main University in respect to Islamic sciences, was taken over by the Mubarak dictatorship post WWII. This trend actually became very common given the post WWII U.S policy of pressuring Arab states to threaten their scholars into rulings that support U.S policies in the region (Scheur, 2008, p. 159).

A last point of benefit that can be cited regarding this relationship between 'laypeople' and Islamic scholars is that it highlights a central principle in Islam, that "No one from the creation is to be obeyed in disobedience of the Creator." This principle is repeatedly emphasized in the Qur'an. In one verse for example, Allah responds to the claims that some made against Prophet Muhammad that he might have introduced something into the Qur'an from his own opinion. Allah refutes this accusation saying that if he had even thought of doing such a thing, Allah would have snapped his jugular vein (Qur'an, 69: 44-64). Such verses are very powerful to Muslims since Prophet Muhammad is believed to be the most beloved human to Allah and the one whom Allah has legislated as the best role model for them to follow (Qur'an, 33: 21). Subsequently, in Islam the Truth is to be followed regardless of its source. This concept of following what one believes to be the Truth is critical to understanding the Islamic perspective

on the adoption of non-Muslim educational ideas, namely that there is no text in Islam that prohibits the use of ideas of non-Muslims or developed based on un-Islamic philosophical assumptions as long as in the end, they do not go against the Islamic foundation of the society. This is the meaning of the hadeeth that “wisdom is the lost item of a believer; he or she takes it where he or she finds it.” This hadeeth comes secondary of course to what Allah refers to as “*the wisdom*” in the Qur’an, the way of Prophet Muhammad, who is considered the ultimate role model. The definite article here indicates the belief in Prophet Muhammad’s model as superior over any other type of information one may view as wisdom.

In conclusion, in Islam, there are some things that have been widely accepted in Muslim controlled lands as ‘constants’ and do not change with context (time or location), and others that do. Muslims themselves are required as part of their duty in “commanding the good and forbidding the evil” to protect these essentials of their faith while utilizing what is considered ‘variable’ to adapt to their various needs. However as will be argued, it seems that at least in the case of French colonization in Egypt, the impact of the experience caused some Muslim intellectuals to challenge the very definitions of some of the most basic concepts—knowledge and education. Now that I have discussed the general basics of Islam, I will now turn to a discussion of the Islamic concepts of knowledge and education since they will be important to understanding the discussion of the context before the French invasion.

Knowledge in Islam

What is *knowledge* (*‘Ilm* in Arabic) in Islam? The first words revealed of the Qur’an to Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century C.E. were, what means, “Read/Recite! In the name of

your Master, who has created all that exists...” (Qur’an, 96:1). The word *Ilm* is mentioned 750 times in the Qur’an, ranking it third behind ‘Allah’ (2,800 references), and *Rubb* (which is usually translated as “Master”, but has wider pedagogical connotations as will be explained) at 950 references (Boyle, 2006, p. 484). This is the essence of Islam, knowledge; but what kind and for what purpose?

Knowledge has been defined by Arab linguists as “the opposite of ignorance... anything that can be conceived of or known... [and] more obvious than to need to be defined” (Mutawalee, 2005, p. 177). There are two types of knowledge in Islam, “that which is known”—what humans have the ability to comprehend in this worldly life—and “that which is hidden” (*Al Ghayb*). Regarding both types there are also two subdivisions, that which benefits (helps one to worship Allah better) and that which does not (Uthaymeen, 2004, p. 33). Regarding knowledge that which is hidden but mentioned *by name* in revelation, either in the Qur’an or Sunnah, (i.e.: the true nature of Allah, the angels, heaven, hellfire, etc.), Muslims are still obligated to believe in it—the first characteristic mentioned of the characteristics of the believers in the beginning of the Qur’an is that they believe in “the hidden” (Qur’an, 2:2).

Some knowledge might be unbeneficial or could even harm humans. For example, when some polytheists from Prophet Muhammad’s tribe came to ask him about when the “Final Hour” (Judgment day) would be, *Allah* (Arabic for ‘The One True God’) told him to “Say the knowledge thereof is with my Master (alone). None but He can reveal as to when it will occur”—Allah goes on to explain that humans knowing when Judgment Day is would be a huge burden on them (Qur’an, 7:187). Allah kept this knowledge hidden so that humans would keep competing in righteousness until death, because in reality it is unbeneficial knowledge since a

person's opportunity to perform good deeds will end at death and they will not be resurrected until judgment day. Nonetheless, the Islamic perspective of knowledge is that Allah has made available the two types of knowledge that can be of benefit to humans (if they use them to improve society), revelation and the ability to use our senses to gain empirical knowledge. I will elaborate on the former, then the latter.

In Islam, acquisition of knowledge (*‘Ilm*)—the two types that can be known being that gained through revelation and that gained through the senses—is justified and directed by the provision that all knowledge gained be used in worship of the Creator (Halstead, 2004, p. 520). The most important type of knowledge in Islam is theological, what pleases Allah through the Qur'an and Sunnah so that one may live by it (Uthaymeen, 2004). Only after a theological foundation would an individual know how to live their life Islamically (meaning proper moral conduct) no matter what field or practice they went into professionally.

Proper character ensures knowledge is used for the benefit of society; a chemical scientist with the *intention* to build the most dangerous weapons for the highest bidder does not benefit society with his/her academic knowledge. Hence, character education in Islam is analogous to the role played by civic education in Western secular societies. Emphasizing the importance of moral education, Prophet Muhammad said “I have only been sent to correct people's manners” (Al Shareef, 2010). In fact, it is through these proper “manners” (understood broadly from the original Arabic *khuluq* to mean proper interaction with Allah, then one's family, society, etc.), that Allah would teach humans that which would benefit them (Qur'an, 2:282). The process of acquiring these mannerisms is called *ta'deab*.

Allah even commands his own Prophet, considered the best of humankind, in the Qur'an, to ask Allah for even more knowledge (Qur'an, 20:114). Ibn Abbaas, the companion of Prophet Muhammad who Prophet Muhammad named *Turjamaan* ("the explainer") of the Qur'an for the entire *ummah* (Al Bukhari, 1997, vol. 1, pgs. 100-102), narrated that when *knowledge* is mentioned in the Qur'an, that it refers to "beneficial knowledge of Islam", meaning that which is lived by, and righteous deeds (Al Jawziyyah, 2004, p. 58). In support of this, one will rarely find a verse in the Qur'an of those that start with "those who have true belief..." not immediately followed by a phrase akin to "and do righteous good deeds" before delving into descriptions about them (going to paradise, etc.). Subsequently, Prophet Muhammad described the "circles of knowledge" (this was the structure of the gatherings) as gardens of paradise (Al Bukhari, 1997, vol. 4B, pgs. 233-235).

Regarding a hierarchy of importance for the individual, there are two broad categories of theological knowledge. The first type is that which is obligatory on every individual (*fard ayn*), the bare minimum of understanding one's obligations as a Muslim: basically the six articles of faith, rights of Allah, then others' rights over a person (like their family and community), and the five pillars of Islam so that he or she can worship Allah properly. This knowledge is obligatory and a person could sin by not learning it. The 2nd type of knowledge is that which is recommended but not obligatory as long as someone in the community attains it (*fard kifaaya*), like inheritance and business laws or empirical science, where if some do it, then it is not required of the rest of the community—except if they specifically deal with the issue (like a family lawyer knowing inheritance laws for example). In sum, whatever knowledge one has,

they should use it to please Allah by acting upon it, in which case it would be a proof that attests to their faith on judgment day; and if they did not act by it, then it would be a proof against them.

As mentioned above, the most obvious example on the importance of empirical knowledge in Islam is that in the Qur'an, Allah describes things that are supposed to prove Allah's Oneness to humans as *ayaat*. These *ayaat* (lit: signs, proofs, verses [of the Qur'an], evidences) that are mentioned in the Qur'an and are supposed to lead humans to acknowledge Allah are of two types: things that can be sensed (i.e.: empirically) and textual revelation itself. The Qur'an describes with intricate detail: human embryonic development (stage by stage), how the mountains serve as pegs in the earth so that it does not shake, the origins of the universe, functions of the cerebrum, the "zone of separation" between fresh and salt water in the pacific ocean, the "internal waves" of the ocean, and the precipitation process—details and processes that humans did not discover or fully comprehend until science of the 20th century (Ibrahim, 1997, pgs. 5-27). This raises an important question; why would such things be mentioned which no one would be able to prove until hundreds of years later? At the same time, there are countless Qur'anic injunctions questioning humans, after mentions of Allah's signs, "do they not listen, ponder, see, reflect, etc." (*yasma'oon, yatafakuroon, yubsiroon, yatadabbaroon*) on these signs? One can rarely go more than twenty pages without coming across such verses. In one chapter, Allah mentions that some of his signs are in *al afaaq* (depths of space) (Qur'an, 41:53), which humans have not been able to get a glimpse of until modern technology was developed. Without a doubt, if humans were not to use their senses to discover the world around them, they would never have realized these amazing miracles and signs all around them.

Throughout most of history since the Qur'an's revelation, most of the aforementioned scientific phenomena would have been taken at face value to be true as part of believing in the Qur'an, but not empirically "proven" until the work of various Muslim scientists much later. No one would have benefited from these particular *signs* of Allah's existence (and for Muslims, additional scientific evidence of the Qur'an's Divine Origin) without empirical research (Iqbal, 2007). Evidence that Muslim ulama responded to the aforementioned exhortations to research, inquire, and examine the universe is seen in the many scientific contributions in Muslim societies throughout history as will be discussed.

However, in general, the Qur'an and Sunnah are not particularly worried with ensuring humans seek empirical knowledge because it is taken for granted that humans will not forget or neglect worldly issues since they are all around them. As Prophet Muhammad mentioned, "I do not fear for you poverty, but rather I fear for you that worldly issues will overwhelm you" (Muslim, vol.4B, 1990, pgs. 738-740). Hence, the Qur'an and Sunnah focus on teaching proper moral conduct as a constant, so that humans will use any other types of knowledge they acquire throughout time for societal benefit.

As supportive evidence to the aforementioned perspective toward the empirical and scriptural forms of knowledge is the principle in Islamic *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) known as *maa laa ya tim al wajib illaa bihi fahuwa waajib* (lit: "whatever obligatory deed cannot be accomplished except through a particular method, then that method also becomes obligatory")²³ There is no way to establish rule of law and the social services that Islam guarantees

²³ See *Al Wajiz fi Sharh Al Qawaid Al Fiqhiyah* by Abdul Karim Zaidan for a concise summary of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*Usool Al Fiqh*).

to people in Muslim societies—like for example free education and healthcare, *Zakat* (an obligatory form of charity for the poor), etc.—without Muslims who care about these moral issues and then take the means to develop them. This would not contradict the research cited on Higher Education today in the Muslim world which showed that students become more Islamically oriented upon entering Higher education (which is almost unilaterally limited to secular knowledge), the complete opposite pattern of what happens in the West (Cook, 2001, p. 382).

In sum, proving one's sincerity to Allah requires *action*. Exegesis ulamaa have highlighted how this characteristic is so important that Allah has mentioned action at times before faith itself (Qur'an, 3:110), not because it is more important in general, but as a rhetorical strategy in the Arabic language used to emphasize a particular concept. In another verse, Allah specifically commands "Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining goodness, and forbidding all evil. And it is they who are successful" (Qur'an, 3:104). But as I have mentioned, there is no beneficial action without proper knowledge. It is not hard for some people to be *saalihoon* (righteous people; sg: saalih), but Allah praises even more in the Qur'an the *Muslihoon* (those who call to righteousness in the society; sg: Muslih). In many verses Allah enumerates accounts of evil and righteous people in the past and how they received their due recompense; however, despite the existence of large amounts of evil people at a particular time, Allah vows to not destroy an area as long as there are still some *Muslihoon* among them (Qur'an, 11:117). Al Jabartee recited a similar verse upon the Napoleonic invasion of 1798; this highlights how far away from the principles mentioned here Al Jabartee considered

Egypt had become. Given the discussion on knowledge, a word should be said on three Arabic words that fall under the term *tarbiyya* (education).

Education in Islam

Tarbiyya, the closest parallel to “education” in Arabic comes from the root *rubbaa* which means to educate, discipline, cultivate, and raise caringly to maturity in stages (Al Khattaabi, 2006, p. 226). The difference between *Tarbiyya* and *Ta’leem* (learning) in Islam is that *Tarbiyya* is a planned, organized holistic cultivation (theological, psychological, intellectual, physical), while *Ta’leem* is simply learning some sort of new information; it could happen in a structured fashion with certain objectives, or by mere coincidence (Al Khattaabi, 2006, pgs. 227-229). As for whether MMC educational systems today constitute *tarbiyya* or *ta’leem*, then this depends on how much their educational systems still mirror those created under Western colonization. Prior to the Western colonization of Egypt in the 18th and 19th centuries *tarbiyya* was perceived as a cumulative societal endeavor. However, with the start of national schooling things became much different. How much importance the above Islamic stance on different types of knowledge was given and actually practiced in MMC, as usual depends on the historical era and will be explained more in detail below.

Education in the Muslim World²⁴ during the Middle Ages

Education has had its own distinct character in what is now commonly called the Muslim world, particularly since the advent of what is usually considered²⁵ to mark the advent of Islam, the first Qur'anic revelation in the seventh century

Read/Recite! In the name of your Master who has created all that exists, created the human from a clinging blood clot. Read/Recite! And your Master is the Most Generous. He is the One who has taught with the pen, taught the human that which he/she did not know (Qur'an, 96:1-5) (Mutawalee, 2005).

As discussed, Knowledge in Islam—the two types being that gained through revelation and that gained through the senses—is based on a foundation of using all knowledge in worship of the Creator (Iqbal, 2007). The most important type of knowledge in Islam is theological, meaning knowledge of the Qur'an (believed to be the literal word of Allah) and Sunnah (the way of Prophet Muhammad on how to apply the former) (Uthaymeen, 2004).

Throughout Muslim history, once scholars mastered foundational texts in theology, they produced various fields of knowledge based on this Islamic worldview. There was never an artificial barrier constructed between empirical sciences and revelation because Islam legislated that two Truths cannot contradict each other—and that *Tawheed* (the belief that no one or thing

²⁴ This phrase will be used in the early part of this section simply because there were no MMCs in the sense of nation-states yet during the Middle Ages; hence, it seems more appropriate to use this term instead.

²⁵ As explained above, Muslims would consider 'Islam' to have technically started with Adam given the belief that Prophet Muhammad is just like all the previous messengers that came calling their people to submit themselves in total servitude only to Allah (only different in the 'details'/law of what that worship entails). Since traditional SH narratives define reality through social practice, mainstream academia would point to the emergence of a distinct world civilization with the coming of Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an as proof of the emergence of a new 'religion'. However, this point should have little practical significance for this dissertation other than to highlight the difference in perspective.

is worthy of being worshipped except Allah) implied a certain unity and intrinsic harmony in the universe due to the oneness of the Creator (Iqbal, 2007). This assumption is important because for At Tahtaawee, there will be a very different attitude towards science and religion that he will discover in France. Muslim civilization advanced tremendously in the sciences between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, flourishing in a wide variety of sciences from Biology to Astronomy (Hodgson, 1974); research had a very practical approach starting with the most pressing problems existing in the surrounding society (Iqbal, 2007).

Empirical science was never a shunned endeavor in the Muslim world. One could cite numerous cases in the fields of History like that of Ibn Athir and Ibn Kathir, in Ophthalmology like Ibn Al Haytham, in Sociology like Ibn Khaldun (who is considered the founder of modern Sociology), in Medicine, like Al Nafisi, or Al Jabbar, who invented Algebra. In fact, ulamaa rarely specialized in just one field of the empirical sciences, but rather many. An example of this is Abu Biruni who specialized in Chemistry, Physics, and Astronomy (and was one of the leading ulamaa to invent the scientific method). Muslim ulamaa are said to have constructed the first public hospitals during the Baghdad caliphate (Al Najeebabadi, 2000, vol.1).

During the early Middle Ages, roughly the first 400 years of Islam (7th century-11th century), education in MMCs revolved around the mosque. The first Mosque was built in 623 CE in Medina (modern day Saudi Arabia). By the 14th century, Alexandria, Egypt alone had approximately 14,000 mosques (Szyliowicz, 1973, p. 53). Not only a place for ritual worship, the mosque was where Muslims irrespective of²⁶ ethnicity, origin, age, or gender gathered to learn

²⁶ The use of barriers between the two genders would start during the Middle Ages.

Islamic knowledge of various types—proper recitation of Qur'an, *Tafseer* (exegesis of the Qur'an), *Hadeeth* (the narrations of the Sunnah and their sub sciences), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence, meaning the various rulings derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah), Arabic language and poetry, History, Medicine, etc. (Mutawalee, 2005).

It was not uncommon to find thousands of students, from students who were scholars themselves to laymen, in one gathering called a *halaqah* (a circle of people around a scholar giving a lecture) with 'repeaters' that repeated what was being said to those further out in the circles). Islamic education in a mosque was very informal with most decision-making regarding everything from curriculum to schedules carried out by the individual scholars offering the lectures. It is said that this method of education forged a strong Islamic identity and reinforced social cohesion (Mutawalee, 2005, pgs. 47-68).

Specifically for children, a system of elementary schools also existed, called *Kuttab*. *Kuttaab* socialized students into a Muslim identity by memorizing the Qur'an by the time they were 8-9 years old, and taught them general skills like learning how to read and write, basic Geography, and Math (Salamah, 1966). Teachers at these schools were expected to maintain high moral character as role models, have memorized the Qur'an, and know the basics of non-theological subjects (Szyliowicz, 1973, pgs. 54, 57).

Discipline was a pivotal moral principle taught in schools and teachers did not hesitate to beat their students for moral infractions, as theological knowledge was learned to be applied; however, discipline was relaxed as one matured, advanced in their education, and fully comprehended the importance of their studies (Mutawalee, 2005, pgs. 55-59).

Upon finishing elementary school (*kuttaab*), students could either enter directly into various trades and professions or continue onto *madaaris* for higher education which consisted of a base of one or more *Sharia* based—theological—sciences. Thereafter, students could choose to either specialize within this general theological base or within the empirical sciences (Gesink, 2006).

The *madrassa* (pl.*madaaris*, lit: “a place of study”) was the central formal Higher Education institution throughout roughly the second half of the Middle Ages in Egypt (11th century to 16th century) (Salamah, 1966). *Madaaris* were places of higher education usually attached to a mosque, and were funded by *awqaaf* (sg: *Waqf*)—religious endowments from charity contributions, usually in the form of a building or piece of land preserved to be used for religious purposes. *Awqaaf* were protected from taxes and state seizure (Gesink, 2006, p. 326). The term “*madrassa*” was used interchangeably with “mosque” since in reality a formal location was irrelevant to the learning process; hence, *madaaris* still provided the same de-centralized structure as mosques (Gunther, 2006).

Decision-making regarding the structure and components of Islamic Higher Education was still made locally by the (usually unpaid) *ulamaa* who taught in the *Madaaris*. Accordingly, *madaaris* were only as good as their teachers, the *ulamaa*; ergo, after students had memorized the *Qur’an* and a certain amount of *hadeeth* they started studying various treatises or books with their *Shaykh* (usually a synonym for an *alim*) (Gunther, 2006). Ideally, texts were memorized as they were learned in depth—for example a *hadeeth* might be explained in regard to its place in *seerah* (the Prophet’s biography), jurisprudence rulings, grammar, points of benefit, etc. Also, given that most *ulamaa* were not paid for their services, usually performing other forms of

manual labor to fund themselves, ulamaa were more likely to be learning and teaching Islamic knowledge for metaphysical rewards as opposed to material ones (Hefner and Zaman, 2007, pgs. 45-47).

Quality of education is said to have been praiseworthy at these schools given the high appreciation for knowledge that the above-mentioned principles promoted (Gesink, 2006). Whatever the exact historical causes, the sheer quantity and quality of work produced during the Middle Ages is like a drop in an ocean compared to what currently exists in MMC.

As it has probably been noticed, there were no ‘middle school’ or ‘high school’ stages of education between elementary school and higher education mentioned here; this is because there was no concept of adolescence in most pre-modern societies. Therefore, graduates of kuttabs and others around the age of puberty either entered directly into madaaris and mosques or into the ‘working world’. Even those that entered the formal labor force still participated in Islamic education given its central role in Muslim societies (Gunther, 2006; Mutawalee, 2005).

The main characteristics of pre-colonial education can be summarized as follows: informal (people were not expected to go in any systematic way), decentralized (no standardized national system of curriculum or pedagogy), and most importantly integrated (between metaphysical and empirical branches of knowledge), which implied a ‘holistic’ objective of a ‘good human’ as opposed to a more limited ‘good citizen’ by nation-state standards. However, all of these characteristics changed dramatically in the aftermath of the French colonization of Egypt with the creation of a formal national education system designed on what the French Enlightenment considered ‘universal’ principles of centralization, order, and most importantly, the intellectual foundation of a philosophically materialist worldview.

Education in the Muslim World compared to Europe

In relation to Europe at the time, it is important to note that by the time of the industrial revolution, and Western Enlightenment in Europe, the Muslim world had fallen tremendously 'behind' in the realm of education. It would be difficult to compare theological knowledge given the vast differences of conception on metaphysical issues; however, from an Islamic perspective at the least, indigenous writers (from the Middle Ages to the present) describe Islam having been reduced to mere rituals among most of the population with no practical effect on their daily lives and behavior. Scholarly theological work becomes reduced to 'commentaries on the commentary of...', meaning there was little reference back to primary sources, but more of a splitting hairs approach while neglecting larger issues affecting the Muslim population. In fact, many scholars themselves became isolated from the population (Ali, 2009). This could be thought of as the perception of academia as an 'ivory tower' in the West.

Concerning empirical knowledge, Muslims had also encountered a long standstill in innovation; many attribute this slow decline to the slow political collapse of the Ottoman caliphate during the second half of its reign. The most common argument has been that due to increasing political instability and anxiety about the accompanying influx of Western beliefs due to constant Ottoman reforms based on European models. Muslim intelligentsia became increasingly conservative in entertaining any 'new' conceptions of doing things (Al Salaaby, 2001; Al Sirjaany, 2005). This 'educational gap' between Europe and the Muslim world however had dramatic consequences for Egypt.

Once the French entered Egypt, the educational gap between the French and the Egyptians allowed the French to dazzle the indigenous with technology that would have seemed

almost 'alien' at the time. When the French enter Egypt with advanced cannons, the Egyptians' traditional canons were no match; the average resistance or rebellion was marked by the use of swords, javelins, and knives on the part of the Egyptians (Al Jabartee, 2001). It is these advanced cannons that would in fact bomb Al Azhar, the premier Egyptian madrasa at the time, and later the neighborhood of Imbaba—one of the defeats that historians have considered the turning point in instilling a psychological defeat (inferiority complex) among the local populace that was rarely seen before in not just Egyptian, but Muslim history (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 98-99; Al Salaaby, 2001; Al Sirjaany, 2005).

Muslims had undoubtedly suffered countless defeats before (usually due to lack of numbers on a material level as seen in the famous examples of the Tatar and Mongols historically), but never before, it has been argued, that Muslims were so outmatched in terms of weaponry despite the fact that the enemy was numerically much smaller than the local populace. This inferiority complex was only increased by the routine French military drills that were purposely performed in front of the local populace to terrorize the local population (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 112, 114). This tyranny extended to raping and looting, after which French soldiers burned entire villages down (Al Salaaby, 2001, pgs. 329-331, 335).

However, even more 'innocent' technology superseded anything the Egyptians had encountered before like hot air balloons, the printing press, and the like; the dramatic nature of French colonization was so awe inspiring that it allowed Napoleon to accomplish something that had not been accomplished in a Muslim land prior to this, the replacement of Sharia law with French law (aside from personal status laws) (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 106; Al Salaaby, 2001, pgs. 336-337).

During this time, Saleem the Third (the caliph of the Ottoman caliphate) proclaimed a *jihad*²⁷ against the French and sent troops which were followed by droves of Muslims emigrating from Al Sham²⁸, North Africa, and Al Hijaz²⁹ to fight the French in Egypt until the French were finally expelled in 1801. Saleem also relied on British and Russian help in this effort as well (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 8; Al Salaaby, 2001, pgs. 330, 335).

Nonetheless, before the expulsion of the French, Napoleon left behind a European blueprint for a centralized bureaucracy in the form of a nation-state with its own national identity, upon which ‘Egyptian’ national education was expected to develop. This became critical to the long-term hegemonic influence of Europe (and the U.S thereafter) on Egypt since one of the core principles of French colonization was to create a similar culture in the colony that raised the rank of those who participated in it as local representatives of the previous colonizer and spread their culture (what is commonly referred to as a ‘puppet regime’) (Memmi, 1967). Typically, such a regime protected the colonizer’s interests in the colony even after the colonizer was gone. These interests usually included providing raw resources to the industrialized nation and an open market for Western ‘products’—intellectual (i.e.: higher education for the Westernized elite) or tangible (i.e.: manufactured products, services, etc.), which were also largely influenced by the former (Altbach and Kelly, 1984).

²⁷ There are 13 types of *jihad* (lit: struggle). Some types are physical; others include things like struggling against your human lowly desires (gluttony, fornication, etc.), deceptions of Satan, etc. (see Tareek Al Hijratayn by Ibn Al Qayyim Al Jawziyyah). *Jihad* is different from the political science definition of ‘war’ since the latter can be done for material reasons (power, wealth, etc.).

²⁸ This area roughly correlates to parts of modern day Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Jordan.

²⁹ This area roughly correlates to parts of the modern day Arabian peninsula.

The general importance of a common 'culture' between a leader and his/her people is hardly 'new' as it could be traced at least as far back as the political tracts of Machiavelli in his emphasis on the importance of 'religion', or at least the appearance of it, as an important bond between the ruler and the ruled. Regarding the post Enlightenment 'religion' of SH, the colonizer's worldview is secreted to the colonized in the preliminary stage through a common 'format' called nationalism through which further cultural assimilations become much more probable (Mitchell, 1988, pgs. 104-105). As Shaden Tageldin (2011) notes,

The nation is a model--it posits an example that its would-be members must emulate—and a telos: it presents itself as destination, the destination of the universal toward which it calls its particularities to move [read conform]. It demands that its members make their particularities coincide with the universal, that they foreignize the familiar...familiarizing the foreign (incorporating the universal logic of nationhood as an element of the self), such that the foreign and the familiar become nearly indistinguishable (p. 219).

CHAPTER 4: FRENCH COLONIZATION OF EGYPT AND THE FIRST SEEDS OF SECULAR HUMANISM.

In October 1798, France colonized Egypt. Egypt at this time was technically part of the Ottoman empire, but due to the Ottomans' long standing de-centralized (almost *laizze fairre*) policy of non-interference in their territories' internal affairs—aside from heavy taxes—Egypt enjoyed considerable sovereignty being locally ruled by the Mamlukes³⁰ (Al Salaaby, 2001). Robert Tignor notes that Napoleon Bonaparte, wishing to strike at British interests in India and Asia, decided to colonize Egypt given its strategic location along main trade routes at the time (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 7). However, it is clear that Napoleon and his cadre of scientists (particularly archaeologists)—freshly infused with the ideals of the French Revolution (SH)—also had long-term objectives in mind given the tremendous effort they put forth in constructing a 'national entity' out of Egypt upon their arrival³¹. I will walk through this process step by step to highlight the natural repercussions this process would later have on the national educational system that would be premised on such an identity. However, before beginning I will mention a word on the primary resources used for re-telling this history.

³⁰ The Mamlukes (lit: one who is owned) were previously imprisoned captives from the Caucasus that had been trained as soldiers and later took control of Egypt.

³¹ Europeans, including French, were already living in Egypt at this time but not in major quantities or organized fashion as would happen later with the establishment of embassies and missionary institutions (Ramadan, 2007). As a side note, despite common folk assumptions, the Middle Ages conflicts between Muslim and Christian states was not a 'black and white' era of ideological conflict between Christian and Muslim empires. While beliefs undoubtedly played a role on both sides, like most of human history, political alliances of convenience (based on material motivations) between Muslim and Christian states against states of the same faith was a common norm (Al Sirjaany, 2005).

Indigenous Intellectuals

Praised by Middle Eastern Studies guru Robert Tignor as “Egypt’s unrivaled chronicler of the eighteenth century” (Al Jabartee, p. 5), the more detailed parts of the historical account given here are drawn from Abdur Rahmaan Al Jabartee’s *Tarikh muddat Al faransis bi misr* (*Tarikh* hereafter), which covers the first six months of French colonization along with Al Jabartee’s most immediate reactions to the unfolding events. The ‘*Tarikh*’ has usually been preferred to Al Jabartee’s more well-known but less detailed chronicle written much later in his life after French withdrawal *Ajaaib Al aathaar fit tarajim wal akhbaar* (*Ajaaib* hereafter). This is due to the fact that the former covers the general history of Egypt from 1688 to 1821 and has increased detail and commentary (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 5).

As for Al Jabartee himself, he seems to have a controversial reputation in terms of his loyalty, which in fact makes him an ideal prototype for introducing the type of ambiguity that surrounded many Egyptian intelligentsia during and after colonization due to the varied ways they negotiated between Western ways of being and Islamic ones. Arabic language and literature academic Shmuel Moreh goes as far as to label Al Jabartee the “first herald of the Arab Renaissance” (a term widely used among Western academics to refer to these controversial figures referenced above); however, Moreh’s claim that Al Jabartee participated in the ‘third diwan’ under Napoleon makes him conclude that Al Jabartee might have had some suspicion around his loyalty (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 184). Of course given the reliance on Al Jabartee’s chronicle, exploring this accusation is important. Robert Tignor does not mention having any doubts about Al Jabartee’s loyalty to Islam and the Muslims in Egypt at the time of colonization in his commentary to *Tarikh*. However, history books that cover this time period written in the

present-i.e.: Raaghib Al Sirjaany's *Al Tarikh Al Islaamy*, Ali Al Salaaby's *Al Tarikh Al Uthmaany*, etc. do note such a concern given the radically different nature of *Ajaaib* from *Tarikh*. I will mention what the diwan system entailed in evaluating this claim. Regardless, the diwan system will play a central role in the introduction of SH ideas later in this analysis.

Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution of progress through organized and centralized administration in social affairs, the zealous Napoleon set to work immediately upon reaching Egypt dividing it into more easily manageable governates, creating administrative and legislative councils; this 'diwan system' utilized 'shyuookh' who acquiesced to his plans as 'governors' or 'representatives' that reported directly to a central office in Cairo (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 8, 14). The way this diwan system functioned was with 'secret' ballots (written down) and giving preference to majority will (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 75,76) This process allowed Napoleon to introduce the democratic principles of the French revolution to the puppet regime he had established to give a sense of normalcy to the occupation.

It is important to note that the mere use of the diwans did not entail abolishment of the Sharia at first; it was not until later that Napoleon actually started to apply French law and abolish the Sharia completely except for personal status laws (i.e.: marriage, divorce, etc.). Mohammed Ali, his successor, took this process a step further by preparing the political platform for the development of a distinct Egyptian national identity by revolting against the Ottoman empire. These steps caused a totally different and hostile response from Al Jabartee towards Mohammed Ali, one that was so critical that it got his books banned and his son executed (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 184). Hence, it is imagined that if Al Jabartee participated in one of the above mentioned diwans, it was probably in an attempt to reduce the harm of the occupation—which

was one response among Al Azhar ulamaa given the Islamic concept of masaalih and mafaasid³² (lit: interests and harms). What aids such an interpretation is that Robert Tignor has noted that many orthodox ulamaa like Al Jabartee were the key leaders in popular resistance, leading numerous rebellions against the French, using mosques as rallying places (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 9). However, this is all under the assumption that Al Jabartee actually participated in the diwan system, but even this, Moreh does not provide any evidence for.

One probability as to what might have caused Moreh's speculations is that Al Jabartee does in fact seem quite fascinated by different aspects of French knowledge (like that of the diwan system, the empirical sciences and even of Islam and Muslims; the French had seemingly researched even the most minute aspects of Islamic theology prior to their arrival in Egypt (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 109-110). However, it does not seem that intellectual appreciation for foreign innovations or intellectual rigor (even that of an occupying force) should undermine his loyalty to Islam and Muslims given that such innovations did not contradict local values. This is not like the more philosophically oriented forms of knowledge that would be introduced by French educated Egyptian ulamaa later. Other aspects of Al Jabartee's writings will be referred to below that seem to vouch for the position that Al Jabartee's loyalty seemed to be sincerely for Islam and Muslims, but it will suffice for now to say that actions speak louder than words. If Al Jabartee participated in armed struggle against the French then this would seem to attest to his sincerity to Muslims at least during the early years of the 19th century. As for whether he later followed the pattern of the other members of the Arab Renaissance like Al Attaar and At

³² This entails simply taking the lesser of two or more evils when one is limited to undesirable choices.

Tahtaawee (see Chapters five and six), this would require further research. I will now turn to the actual events of the French occupation.

First contact: Re-defining The Masses

At the time that Napoleon and his soldiers stormed the Alexandrian coast, Egypt had no semblance of an organized military to the extent that it has been recorded by famous historians of the time like Al Jabartee that the canons on Alexandria's shores had become so neglected—out of fear of local rebellion against the Mamlukes—that those wishing to fire them on celebrations had to borrow gunpowder from the pharmacist (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 22-23). Although the Mamlukes were known for their ferocious fighting abilities, they were no challenge for the superior organization, numbers, and weaponry of the French battalions as the primary aspects of the initial resistance was suppressed within days.

Al Jabartee reports that on Wednesday, the twentieth of Muharram³³, “news and letters arrived” that the French had invaded Al Ajami (part of modern day Alexandria), and were “advancing on the town at daybreak by land like a swarm of locusts” (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 20). Al Jabartee recounts in painstaking detail the humiliating defeat that ensued as French armies are depicted ‘swarming’ through the towns with tremendous precision and organization, knocking back any attempts at resistance efficiently, demanding money, and forcing the local population to

³³ The first month of the 12 month Islamic lunar calendar which functions according to the lunar cycle (29-30 days/month), but starts with the immigration of Prophet Muhammad and his companions to Medina to start the first Muslim society there, about 623 years after the start of the Gregorian calendar.

wear French pins demarking their defeat. However, what surprised the Egyptians³⁴ even more, as chronicled by Al Jabartee, was the paradoxical ‘religious’ justification proclaimed for the invasion, not that the French were coming to ‘spread the word of Christ’, but that Napoleon and his army were coming to: save the Egyptians from the injustice of Mamluk rule; and doing so out of their ‘mutual goodwill’, not only for the Ottoman caliphate and its rulers, but presumably out of honor to Allah, Prophet Muhammad and the Qur’an. I will allow some of Napoleon’s first letter circulated among Egyptians to speak for itself before commenting. It states:

In/By the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate [Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem]. There is no god worthy of worship except Allah [laa ilaaha il Allah]. He has no son, nor any associate in His Dominion. On behalf of the French Republic which is based upon the foundation of liberty and equality [al hurriyya wal tasweeyah], General Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the French armies makes known to all the Egyptian people... Oh Egyptians [yaa ayyuhal masreeyoon], they may say to you that I have not made an expedition here for any other reason than abolishing your deen; however, this is a pure falsehood so do not believe it. Rather, tell the slanderers that I have not come to you except for the purpose of restoring your rights from the hands of the oppressors and that I worship Allah—may He be praised and exalted above the imperfections attributed to Him— more than the Mamlukes and revere His Prophet and the Glorious Qur’an. And tell them also that all people are equal in the eyes of Allah except for those with superior reason, virtue, and knowledge. But amongst the

³⁴ This term will be used loosely just to refer to permanent residents of Egypt in this dissertation since as mentioned, an ‘Egyptian citizen’ did not exist yet.

Mamlukes, what is there of reason, virtue, and knowledge, which would distinguish them from others and qualify them alone to possess everything which sweetens life in the this world?...the *intelligent and virtuous and learned ulamaa amongst them will regulate their affairs*, and thus the whole *ummah* will be rightly adjusted. Formerly, in the lands of Egypt there were great cities, and wide canals and extensive commerce and nothing *ruined all this* but the avarice and tyranny of the Mamlukes. Oh *Shaykhs, Qaadis, and imams*; Oh you Jurbaajiyya and men of position tell your *nation [ummah]* that the French are *also sincere Muslims*, and *in confirmation of this* they invaded Rome and destroyed there the Papal See, which was always exhorting the Christians to make war with Islam. and then they went to the island of Malta, from where they expelled the Knights, who claimed that Allah the Exalted required them to fight the Muslims. Furthermore, the French at all times have been the *most loving and sincere* friends of the Ottoman sultan and the enemy of his enemies, may Allah ever perpetuate his empire! And on the contrary the mamluks have withheld their obeisance from the sultan, and have not followed his orders. Indeed they never obeyed anything but their own greed! *Blessing on blessing [toobaa thumma toobaa]* to the people of Egypt who will cooperate with us without delay, for their condition shall be rightly adjusted and their *rank raised*. Blessing also on those who stay in their homes, not siding with either of the two warring factions; however, when they know us better, they will hasten to us with all their hearts. But woe [*wayl*] upon woe to those who unite with the Mamlukes and assist them in the war against us, for they will not find any way to escape, and no trace of them shall remain (Al Jabartee, 1997, pgs. 4-6 emphasis added).

After this main body of the text, the letter goes on to enumerate five articles detailing French demands for the surrender of Egyptian property and protocol for how each village is to signal that they have peacefully submitted to French rule. This letter from Napoleon to the Egyptian people has some amazing qualities that need to be discussed: Napoleon claims he and the French are Muslims loyal to the Ottoman caliphate and are coming to fight the injustice [dhulm] of the Mamlukes; he interweaves classical theological Arabic that resembles a typical Friday khutba [lecture] with SH concepts, sometimes even placing such concepts within allusions to specific Qur'anic verses themselves; and he repeatedly addresses Egyptian intelligentsia as his primary audience whom he has interestingly chosen as his new representatives in the country. As will be shown, this is an example of how it has been noted that “orientalist discourse attracted Egyptian intellectuals because it appeared to validate the Arab-Islamic even as it denigrated it, putting European and Egyptian on an illusory footing of “equal” exchange” (Tageldin, 2011, p. 9). The most critical part of this discourse is that although Napoleon does enter Egypt through military force, ideologically he is very cautious in using Islamic categories or theoretical constructs on the macro level as frames of reference, while simultaneously colonizing the ‘slots’ of Islamic discourse with SH understandings. I will analyze the letter piece by piece in order to illustrate this main point and some of the reasons why this approach might have been utilized.

Napoleon starts his letter with the default Islamic greeting for documents (or almost any other process and endeavor customarily speaking), *In/By the name of Allah, the most Gracious,*

*most Merciful*³⁵ (the basmalah), meaning a person is hoping for the assistance and blessing of Allah in his/her endeavor by claiming that the intention behind this act is His pleasure. This is among the many stylistic choices that Napoleon makes in formatting this and the rest of his announcements to the people of Egypt in theological language that would place the listener at ease. For example, Napoleon uses phrases like *'tooba thumma toobaa (blessing upon blessing) to the people of Egypt who will cooperate with us without delay, for their condition shall be rightly adjusted and their rank raised'*. While one meaning of toobaa is blessing, this is very ancient classical Arabic that regular Egyptians would not commonly use outside of knowing the famous hadeeth of Prophet Muhammad "Toobaa to the strangers". It was asked "Who are the strangers oh messenger of Allah?" He responded "Those who continue to try and fix the moral condition of the people even though everyone around them starts to go corrupt". Another hadeeth explains that 'toobaa' is also a special tree in paradise that its inhabitants will be awarded. It appears that Napoleon wishes to convey the message that he has come to reform the corruption and injustice he has referred to above. Also, it is as if Napoleon has substituted the common understanding of this word (reward in the hereafter) for a worldly reward or blessing from himself for those who not only do not resist the French occupation (since this is the last option he gives) but in fact cooperate. They will have their *'rank raised'*. Having one's 'rank raised' is also a very common Qur'anic phrase for having one's status raised in paradise for various good deeds they do.

However, Napoleon not only promises paradise to those who cooperate, but hellfire (*wayl*; which is commonly translated as 'woe upon woe') *'to those who unite with the Mamlukes*

³⁵ The importance of this phrase is that it is technically the response to the first revelation of the Qur'an mentioned above, "Read in the name of your Master", among other reasons.

and assist them in the war against us, for they will not find any way to escape, and no trace of them shall remain'. Again, this is clear Qur'anic vocabulary. The logical reference point a Muslim would have for this word is the numerous verses of Qur'an where it is used to refer to hellfire; this interpretation is even more supported by the ending words that are common endings for many verses of the Qur'an—words to the effect of *for they will not find any way to escape, and no trace of them shall remain*. The choice here is clear, either you are with Napoleon in which case you'll be granted earthly paradise, or you're not in which case you will be punished. True to his word, Napoleon 'raised the rank' of those who supported his campaign by appointing them as leaders of military brigades—like some of the Coptic Christian minority in Egypt that supported him led by 'Teacher ya'qoub', as well as some of the Greek minority at the time—or appointed them as political leaders, like the shyookh of the diwans mentioned above.

Other points of interest here are not just Napoleon's choice of words, but the fact that even the themes that he presented resemble Muslims' weekly Friday lecture (khutba). For example, he refers to Mamluk injustice being a cause for removed blessings from the land, a common Qur'anic theme ("Dhahar al fasaadu..."); and that he is '*restoring rights from the hands of the oppressors*', a common theme in the Sunnah. He even declares that *Rubb Al Aalameen* (lit: the Master of all that can be known) has decreed the end of Mamluk rule, a reference to Allah that is mentioned by Muslims seventeen times a day during the five daily prayers. Napoleon also attempts to legitimate the Sufi³⁶ conception of pre-destination and 'complete reliance' on Allah

³⁶ Sufism was promoted by Orientalists historically as the 'Christianity within Islam' due to the individualistic and monastic nature of most Sufi orders as a way to pacify Muslim resistance (Said, 1978). This pattern has expanded to include the promotion of all kinds of other (now marginal) non-Orthodox groups in the West and MMC in recent

(not doing anything). He does not leave anything to the imagination as he bluntly declares “he who is inimical to me and who opposes me...he opposes the destiny of Allah...” (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 113-114).

Hence, Napoleon attempted to justify his occupation of Egypt as Allah’s Will, and therefore tantamount to blasphemy for those who challenged it. This conception of pre-destination of course contradicts the orthodox perspective that part of Allah’s pre-destination is that He has given humans Free Will which he will hold them accountable for using. Namely, one knows that something was part of Allah’s Will after it has happened, but it could also be part of Allah’s Will that a person resists or changes this event thereafter. From an orthodox perspective, everything that happens is Allah’s Will, but Muslims are required to utilize the Free Will granted by Allah to resist or change Islamically undesirable situations. As seen above, Napoleon’s use of Islamic discourse was meant to hide the fact that French colonization was such a situation.

As Said notes, “Napoleon tried everywhere to prove that he was fighting *for* Islam; everything he said was translated into Qur’anic Arabic, just as the French army was urged by its command always to remember the Islamic sensibility” (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 170). Even Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, Napoleon’s private secretary, notes in his personal memoirs,

A wise conqueror supports his triumphs by protecting and even elevating the religion of the conquered people. Bonaparte’s principle was, as he himself has often told me, to look upon religions as the work of men, but to respect them everywhere as a powerful engine of government (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 153)

years as part of the famous “War of Hearts and Minds” as more Secular Humanist oriented alternatives (Sabrin, 2012).

All of this is in accordance with Napoleon's main premise, that he is in fact merely taking the place of the colonizer that was already there as an alien force, the Mamlukes. Rather, Napoleon argues that if there is going to be a 'representative' of the Ottomans as prince or governor over Egypt, it should be the French since they are more loyal to the caliphate, Islam, Muslims, etc. However as will be illustrated, the costume is Islamic but the content is SH³⁷.

Although Napoleon presents himself and the French as Muslims loyal to the Ottoman sultan, he makes some paradoxical claims that did not go unnoticed by many of Egypt's intelligentsia at the time (whom he refers to as shyuookh, qudaa', and aimmah³⁸). For example, Napoleon does not put the standard "*May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad*" after the basmalah mentioned above. This is probably why Al Jabartee comments about Napoleon's stance toward Prophet Muhammad saying

his statement 'I revere his Prophet' is joined to what has been mentioned before [in Al Jabartee's critique] as one lie joined to another, because if he respected him, he would believe in him, accept his truth, and respect his nation (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 31)

What contradicts Napoleon's claim to Islam even more is his clear omission of the basic "*May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you*" (the Islamic greeting) since among the objectives of this phrase is to put the listener at ease that a person comes in peace, which quite obviously Napoleon does not. This would have been the expected phrase to go after the basmalah

³⁷ In fact, at one point Napoleon goes as far as to have Islamic dress made, complete with a matching turban.

³⁸ Plural of shaykh, qaadi, and imam respectively. The first and last are usually used interchangeably depending on the context, but generally used to refer to the leader of the Muslim community in some way (i.e.: of the local mosque, Grand Mosque of the city/country, etc., not necessarily a government appointment). Qaadi is a judge appointed by a governmental authority who, prior to colonization at least, would judge court cases according to the Sharia.

above, even more than the basmalah itself, since one might not always put the basmalah at the beginning of all informal correspondence, but would at least be expected to say ‘hi’. However, ‘hi’ in this context would have had more ideological implications than Napoleon would have been willing to adhere to.

Napoleon continues his opening words after the basmalah by oddly reciting half of the testimony of faith—testifying that none is worthy of worship except Allah—without the second half “and that Muhammad is his slave and messenger”. In fact, the whole opening is typical of that used at the beginning of Islamic lectures and books aside from the glaring omissions discussed thus far. This convoluted opening does not go uncommented upon by Al Jabartee. Al Jabartee notes

In mentioning these three sentences [through ‘dominion’] there is an indication that the French agree with the three religions, but at the same time they do not agree with them, nor with any religion. They are consistent with the Muslims in stating the formula ‘in the name of Allah’, in denying that he has a son or an associate. They disagree with the Muslims in not mentioning the two articles of faith. In rejecting the mission of Muhammad, and the legal words and deeds which are necessarily recognized by religion. They agree with the Christians in most of their words and deeds, but disagree with them by not mentioning the Trinity, and denying the mission and furthermore in rejecting their beliefs, killing the priests, and destroying the churches (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 28)

Thus, it seems clear that although Al Jabartee does not believe Napoleon’s ridiculous claims for the occupation, he also does not abide by the standard response among Al Azhar scholars that Napoleon invasion was a Christian crusade in the traditional sense (Al Salaaby,

2001, pgs. 329-331, 335). This is probably due to the fact that Al Jabartee is not just a historian of Egypt, but rather he seems to know French history very well including the most recent events of the philosophy of the French revolution. Proof of this is his (2001) comments on Napoleon's 'confirmation' of his goodwill

As for his statement 'and [Napoleon] destroyed there the papal see', by this deed they have gone against the Christians as has already been pointed out. So those people are opposed to Christians and Muslims and do not cling to any deen. You see that they are materialists who deny all of Allah's attributes, the hereafter and resurrection prophethood and messengership (p. 32)

Since Al Jabartee rarely comments on the events he chronicles, it is telling of the importance he attributes to certain aspects that he comments on them at length like the aspects discussed in this dissertation (i.e.: the first letter from Napoleon, the French diwan system, and knowledge of Islam and the empirical sciences).

Al Jabartee (2001) comments on Napoleon's use of the term '*the French republic which is based upon the foundation of liberty and equality*' saying that this means that

This proclamation is sent from their republic, which means their body politic...For when they rebelled against their sultan six years ago and killed him, the people agreed unanimously that there was not to be a single ruler but that their state, territories, laws, and administration of their affairs, should be in the hands of the intelligent and wise men among them. They appointed persons chosen by them and made them heads of the army, and below them generals and commanders ...on condition that they were all to be equal and none superior to any other in view of the equality of creation and nature. They made

this the foundation and basis of their system. This is the meaning of their statement ‘based upon the foundation of liberty and equality’ (p. 28)

As is apparent, Napoleon’s letter takes a pedagogical tone very early in the letter. Teaching the Egyptian audience the professed principles of the French republic (‘liberty and equality’) is the first clear introduction of SH themes in this letter. It is important here to recall the secularization theory from above where the lack of evolution to a SH worldview was theorized to be due to a lack of information. However, it is clear that although the common masses were not keeping up to date with events in Europe, given Al Jabartee’s on the spot explanation of the French revolution about 30 years before, it seems that at least some Egyptian intellectuals had been exposed to the Enlightenment principles of the French revolution. Also, Al Jabartee here does not seem deceived that the French professed beliefs in liberty and equality are truly universal and apply to the Egyptians, but realizes that in fact these SH principles only apply amongst the French themselves. Al Jabartee does not premise this on the fact that they have de facto invaded Egypt (since this obvious contradiction is not even mentioned as a proof), but on his own knowledge of French affairs. Such an interpretation of Al Jabartee’s actions coincides with what Western academics have also said of Al Jabartee’s erudition in a wide variety of academic subjects (2001, p. 183). Al Jabartee apparently already knew from the lessons of history what Sartre would later note in his introduction to Albert Memmi’s (1967) *The Colonizer and the Colonized* “since the native is subhuman, the declaration of human rights does not apply to him.” (xxiv).

After this introduction of SH values, Napoleon does not waste a sentence colonizing his Qur’anic discourse with SH understandings. Within the very same first sentence of the body of

the letter, Napoleon refers to *'the Egyptian people'* as his first audience. All throughout the letter Napoleon also addresses the people of Egypt *'yaa ayyuhal masreeyoon'*, *'oh you Egyptians'*, which seems unlikely to have been a common way of speaking in 18th century Egypt as opposed to *'yaa ahl misr'*, *'oh people of Egypt'*. The former seems to presume the existence of a distinct Egyptian identity (like a nation-state) that one can refer to, while the latter seems to be a much more likely style of speech given common knowledge of Middle Ages Arab literature. In such literature people within the 'Dar of Islam' (lands of Islam) are historically referred to as the 'people of xyz' (i.e.: Misr, Al Sham, Al Hijaaz, etc.). Such a distinction may seem unimportant in English, but the Arabic language is very specific in meaning and such usage would not fail to capture the attention of an Arabic speaker. Other parts of Napoleon's letter confirm this interpretation that Napoleon seems to be constructing a national identity in his letter.

Even more fascinating is that by combining this new concept of 'Egyptians' with the Qur'anic term *'yaa ayyuhal'* which Allah uses to refer to various deens, not nationalities--i.e.: *'yaa ayyuhal' latheena ootul kitaab* (oh people of the book), *'yaa ayyuhal' latheena aamanoo* (oh you who believe [Muslims]), a new hybrid identity has been constructed. Napoleon has substituted the SH notion of nationalism (i.e.: an 'Egyptian' identity) into a slot that the audience would expect to hold a deen given his Qur'anic discourse. In fact, throughout the proclamation, Napoleon even directly constructs an Egyptian *'ummah'* (nation) and a French *'millah'* (deen). As discussed above, the word *'ummah'* historically referred to a group of people united around a particular metaphysical belief system, but here Napoleon has isolated 'the people of Egypt' from the wider *ummah* of Islam embodied in the Ottoman caliphate on a political level or any group of Muslims outside the rough geographical boundaries of what was referred to as Egypt at that time.

This can be thought of as the typical political strategy of ‘divide and conquer’; by dividing Islamic format from its related content on an ideological level, Napoleon can divide and conquer on a political level. Furthermore, positing France as a millah and Egypt as an ummah, Napoleon conflates the two terms as if they are the same concept.

Strangely however, Napoleon has referred to the French as a millah as if to conciliatorily imply that since he has compromised, so should the Egyptian audience. In fact, Shaden Tageldin (2011)—in her analysis of the above letter--argues such an interpretation of Napoleon’s entire proclamation, that it is as if Napoleon is saying “I am so like you that you should be like me” (p. 34). Tageldin supports her interpretation quite strongly by highlighting Napoleon’s imperial interpretation of ‘liberty and equality’ given in the document. Napoleon alludes to a Qur’anic verse that states that people are equal to Allah except in so far as they have more *taqwa* (God-consciousness through following Allah’s commandments and staying away from his prohibitions). However, Napoleon substitutes this metaphysical yardstick with a SH frame of reference when he states “*all people are equal in the eyes of Allah except for those with superior reason, virtue, and knowledge*”. Tageldin notes that by presuming a universal (which by necessity is a culture-free and abstract notion) frame of reference by which Egyptian and European cultures are similar enough to compare, Napoleon can easily assert European superiority according to a SH understanding of reason, virtue, and knowledge (2011, pgs. 40, 50).

As is seen in the letter, this is the criterion by which Napoleon justifies French superiority over the Mamlukes. This is also the criterion for the new puppet regime he is constructing by

stating that the ulamaa, shuyookh, and qudaa' that will lead Egypt will fulfill this new SH criterion.

However, even if one assumes the French and the ulamaa that will comply with them are superior in these criteria, this is not a justification for requesting power in Islam. I would add to Tageldin's analysis that there also seems to be an even deeper assumption of the protestant work ethic here, which is not strange given the role of the protestant revolution in causing the Enlightenment . In Islam, being superior to others in the eyes of Allah is something that is rewarded for in paradise, but has no necessary correlate to deserving power or position in this world. In fact, many verses of Qur'an and ahadeeth of Prophet Muhammad state concepts like "the biggest trial for my ummah is wealth", "you will chase after leadership, even though it is usually a cause for regret on judgment day", etc.. Hence, a truly pious person is supposed to try to avoid positions of power under the widely known notion that 'power corrupts'. Although, 'piety' is the number one quality sought after when the *people are seeking* a leader in Islam, it is oxymoronic for anyone to claim piety for themselves while *seeking* a position of power since the latter action contradicts the main definition of piety in regard to Islamic leadership.

Here, Napoleon is establishing a new sort of protestant understanding of the relationship between superiority in Allah's eyes and worldly position, namely that the former entails deserving the latter. By redefining this 'superiority' with 'abstract' notions of reason, virtue, and knowledge--although these are necessarily culturally biased to European understandings since there are no 'universally' agreed upon definitions for such broad concepts—Napoleon accomplishes at least two things. He justifies his own colonization through SH definitions of the above criteria, as well as sets the criteria for the puppet regime he will later establish in the

diwan system. This is apparent from the flattering adjectives he uses to describe the people that he expects to participate in such a system; the *'intelligent and virtuous and learned ulamaa amongst them will regulate their affairs'*. There will always be people from among the colonized who cooperate with the colonizer—as opposed to outright total resistance (and Napoleon clearly knew this). Such people might cooperate for personal interests, or the belief that they can sincerely minimize damage to local interests from inside the colonial regime, and the like. Colonial history teaches us this pattern globally, even to this day.

Albert Memmi (1967) in his insightful psychological and sociological analysis of colonization and its effects on those involved has the following to say about this pattern that was seen repeatedly in colonial contexts

The representatives of the authorities, cadres, policemen, etc., recruited from among the colonized, form a category of the colonized which attempts to escape from its political and social condition. But in so doing, by choosing to place themselves in the colonizer's service to protect his interests exclusively, they end up by adopting his ideology, even with regard to their own values and their own lives (p. 16).

This passage concisely captures what would later be seen among many of the Egyptian intelligentsia that sought to address what they perceived to be the weaknesses that led to Egypt's colonization. Such intellectuals would actively pursue (as far as France) the new SH definition of superiority that Napoleon had constructed. Previously known as *taqwa*, superiority would become re-defined for this elite by a European SH conception of 'reason, virtue, and knowledge' which now conveniently promised worldly superiority. Nonetheless, it would be unreasonable to discuss the colonizing effects of the Egyptian mission to France before discussing the intellectual

edifice of SH that Napoleon left behind in Egypt before he left. Benedict Anderson in his analysis of nationalism has discussed the artificial bonds that are constructed in creating nation-states; such ‘imagined communities’ have very tangible cultural and ideological products that are needed to sustain such an identity (2006).

As mentioned above, colonizing Egypt was strategically very different from Napoleon’s imperial endeavors in Europe. Edward Said and Robert Tignor note how Napoleon enlisted several dozen scientists for his colonization of Egypt; this cadre catalogued what Napoleon considered Egyptian ‘culture’ as part of The Institute d’ Egypt he established in Egypt. Many of Napoleon’s cadre were students of Sylvestre de Sacy, the leader of European Orientalism at his time (Al Jabartee, 2001, pgs. 5, 169, 171). At Tahtaawee would in fact later meet De Sacy in France. This cadre were also highly influenced by Prime thinkers of the French Revolution in general, like Rousseau, Montesqueiu, and Voltaire (Al Salaaby, 2001, p. 326), academics whose books would be found in Egyptian libraries by 1816 (Hussein, 2008, p. 20). Montesqueiu’s promotion of nationalism and patriotism in works like *The Soul of Legislation*, which would actually become one of At Tahtaawee’s favorite readings in France, required the existence of a national identity or culture. This is an interesting connection to the SH concept of ‘culture’³⁹ discussed above. By seeking to construct an Egyptian national culture, Napoleon and his cadre

³⁹ It should not be misunderstood here that I imply that Islam does not allow room for culture, but in the Islamic paradigm a Muslim is supposed to theoretically prioritize the Qur’an and Sunnah as their primary identity, and then whatever customs they have that do not contradict revelation are allowed. Given The Description of Prophet Muhammad as a ‘walking Qur’an’ in Islam, makes discussion of essentializing Muslims somewhat misplaced since a Muslim would theoretically aspire to be a ‘walking Qur’an’ (while acknowledging that this would never literally be the case).

hoped to address the resistance Volney had warned him about by cutting Egypt off from its wider Arab or Islamic identities.

Re-educating the Intelligentsia

As has been shown above, and was revealed by Bourrienne, Napoleon's personal secretary, Napoleon studied Egypt for long time before embarking on his mission to Egypt (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 144). However according to Said, aside from imperial interests (that were served by Napoleon's Islamic discourse above), Napoleon's only true cultural interest in Egyptian society was as far as Egypt was connected to European priorities (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 173). This can actually be seen quite clearly in the 'history classes' often taught during diwan meetings where Napoleon or his 'teachers' are seen instructing the shuyookh representatives of the diwan system in the purportedly more important 'material' importance of Egypt. With the instructor in the middle of the 'halaqah' sitting on an elevated structure, and a circle of turban wearing shuyookh with flowing thobes sitting on the floor around him leaning forward, one such lesson plan was read out to them:

Egypt was the sole centre (of commerce) and the most fertile of countries and that merchandise was brought to it from distant lands. Indeed the sciences, the arts, and reading and writing which people in the world have knowledge of at present were taken from the *forefathers of the ancient Egyptians*. Because the land of Egypt possessed these *qualities*, the *various nations* aspired to its conquest. So the Babylonians, the Greeks, *the Arabs and the Turks* held it at various times. The *nation* most destructive in its dealings with Egypt are the *Turks*, who in acquiring the fruit cut the roots, and for this reason only

a negligible portion remains in the hands of the people. (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 76 emphasis added,).

This class ends with the ‘take away’ for the day, that the shayookh and people of Egypt should cooperate with the French so they can “deliver Egypt from its sad state and to relive its people from the Ottomans who dominated it in ignorance and stupidity” (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 76). The most obvious thing that might jump out to the reader is that Napoleon abandons his narrative of claiming loyalty to the Ottomans and merely seeking to be a local authority. However, this is of little surprise since as he loses control over Egypt he even goes as far as to claim to be some combination of a Prophet, the Mahdi, and Jesus⁴⁰ (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 121). However radically insane some of Napoleon antics are, there is some intelligent ideological conditioning that goes on in diwan scenes like the one above in constructing ‘a people’.

First of all is that Napoleon is now using the concept of nation to refer to ethnic groups and he does so to re-iterate the constructed divide between the ‘Arabs’ as a ‘people’ and the ‘Turks’ as another, in contradiction to the Islamic concept of ummah discussed above (by deen affiliation) as this was embodied in the Ottoman caliphate. This is important because as is known ethnic groups or the idea of a common culture are the two leading theories for what European nationalism was premised upon (Gellner, 1992). Napoleon also mentions other ethnic groups (i.e.: ‘various nations’ like the Babylonians and Greeks) in his re-interpretation of history to create a ‘universal’ tone to the nationalist paradigm he’s using.

⁴⁰ Muslims believe Jesus was never really crucified but is supposed to return to lead the Muslims against the anti-Christ. The Mahdi has a similar role.

Moreover, all the contributions that Napoleon attributes to an Egyptian identity are ‘worldly’ definitions of ‘progress’ and ‘knowledge’—ie: economic flourishing (through the fertile land), progress of worldly knowledge, etc. However, not only is no credit given to the Muslim civilization of the last 1200 years in Egypt for contributions to the *empirical sciences and economy*, etc—these advances are presented as if they have not occurred anywhere in Egypt since the ancient Egyptian Pharaonic civilization—Muslim contribution to *societal values or morals* is not even a topic of discussion. The only Muslims given agency in Napoleon’s historical narrative are the Turks and the destruction they cause to Egypt. The Arabs merely *held it* for a time for example. Nonetheless, the pivotal point for the discussion here is the fact that Napoleon presents the advances above as a *product of the land* as he strangely claims ‘*the land of Egypt possessed these qualities*’ as opposed to the more logical attribution, the people that accomplished such advances on the land. It seems there is a wisdom to Napoleon’s emphasis on the uniqueness of Egyptian land as opposed to the constantly changing population historically. This emphasis seems to be important in constructing Egypt’s national narrative.

The idea of constructing the ‘Egyptians’ as ‘a people’ based on ethnicity would have been much harder to concoct as Napoleon himself seems to have realized. Egypt is a land that has been colonized by various groups of people from all around the world as far back as time can remember (Berkey, 1998, vol. 1 p. 381). Hence, ethnicity—in the sense of a common ancestry-- would probably have been the last thing ‘Egyptians’ would have had in common. If ethnicity is not going to function as a national unifier for Egypt, then the most logical reference point for Napoleon to ‘find’ or construct is a common culture for the piece of land he wishes to isolate as a nation-state. The only option Napoleon has is to construct a makeshift identity around the

geographical location of Egypt. As for the various ethnic groups known to have inhabited Egypt, Napoleon focuses primarily on the ancient Egyptian Pharaonic civilization, since it has many of the cultural markers that SH holds as signs of ‘achievement’—ie: art, architecture, etc., and is often argued to have historical roots to Greek civilization in European historical narratives.

There are other macro level aspects that could be discussed in more depth regarding Napoleon’s use of nationalist discourse and ancient Egyptian identity for Egypt’s new identity—like the general romanticism that existed lusting for the re-creation of a traditional world given the chaotic changes taking place post-revolution in France (Reid, 2002). However, given Napoleon’s imperial biography, it is assumed that Napoleon was only concerned with such ideas as they represented pragmatic military strategy not as philosophical or cultural movements.

Lastly, the invasion of Egypt was not decided overnight. Needless to say, Napoleon and his cadre of scientists did not haphazardly guess that Islam was important enough of a factor for their conquest to memorize major portions of the Qur’an and Sunnah by heart and bring translations of many of the most historically important works of Islamic scholarship from various fields to Egypt (Al Jabartee, 2001). Since Napoleon realized that one of the biggest obstacles to nationalism in Egypt was its current (at that time) Islamic identity, Napoleon largely ignored and glossed over the Islamic identity of Egypt of over 1200 years in his history lessons. This created the impression of a cultural ‘vacuum’ that needs to be filled by ‘re-discovering’ Egypt’s Pharaonic past. This is a convenient culture to choose since a people that have not had anything worthwhile to contribute to human civilization for thousands of years leaves an opportune space for Napoleon to fill with a more ‘modern’ culture. A cultural identity based on ancient Egyptian civilization is exactly what Napoleon and his cadre of scientists go to work in creating in their

monumental Description de Egypte (hereafter the Description) at the Institute d' Egypte (hereafter the Institute).

The Material Culture of The Proposed New Egyptian Identity

The last important point to mention in reference to Egypt's exposure to SH discourse through French colonization is the founding of the Institute in Egypt by Napoleon and his cadre—an institute that Al Jabartee and Hassan Al Attaar both visited during Napoleon's stay in Egypt (Reid, 2002, p. 37). Napoleon's six questions at The Institut's inaugural meeting make it very clear that Napoleon's last interest in founding The Institution was a contribution to a universal abstract category of knowledge called 'science'. Napoleon was concerned with: How could the army make beer without hops, improve its bread ovens, purify water, and manufacture gunpowder locally?; should the army build windmills or water mills?; and lastly "*what reforms in local law and education might be feasible and popular?*" (Reid, 2002, p. 32, emphasis added). It seems this last point encompassed the two most important fields Napoleon saw in sustaining intellectual colonization in Egypt, law and education. Napoleon aptly combined these two points by utilizing the diwan system as a pedagogical medium to educate Egyptian ulamaa on an Egyptian national identity and a process of representative government and voting (i.e.: democracy) This is aside from the introduction of Egyptian national identity and SH ideology in the first letter analyzed. Almost all of these concepts are found later in At Tahtaawee's concept of national education.

Personal secretary Louis informs us that "In founding this institute, Bonaparte wished to afford an example of his ideas of civilization" (Al Jabartee, 2001, p. 150). And this in fact he did.

Napoleon's cadre launched what would later be dubbed 'Egyptology', particularly after Champollion would decipher the Rosetta stone that French soldiers had stumbled across (Reid, 2002, pgs. 32, 40). The Description produced at The Institute by Napoleon's cadre of scholars attempted to construct a new 'national' history for Egypt. Commenting on the later role of Egyptology under Ali's rule Colla notes, "Thus the [ancient Egyptian] artifact was becoming not just a crucial object for producing solid knowledge about the ancient past, but also an instrument of colonial intervention sixty years before the start of direct British rule in Egypt" (Colla, 2007, p. 10).

The Description d' Egypt focused purposefully on only Western conceptions of culture, which interestingly could mostly only be found literally underground given the overwhelming emphasis on 'archaeology' in The Description. Although other 'Descriptions d' Egypte' had been made by European visitors prior to this text (Reid, 2002), it does not seem there was any significant effect on Egyptian intelligentsia until the massive reforms of the Muhammad Ali dynasty in the 19th century (discussed below) which included sending students abroad where they would discover an Egyptian identity.

An excellent summary of the paradoxical nature of the national identity Napoleon sought to create is captured vividly in the frontispiece of The Description. Donald Reid (2002) in his insightful work *Whose Pharaohs* muses,

A richly decorated frame invites the viewer into to a nostalgic Nile landscape stretching from Alexandria to Aswan [the northern and southern frontiers of Egypt]. This is an antique land, abounding in Pharaonic ruins. There is no sign of Islamic monuments, Cairo, or modern inhabitants. Atop the frame, a nude Bonaparte in the guise of Apollo or

Alexander brandishes a spear from his chariot as Mamlukes go down before him. Twelve Muses in the hero's train return the Arts to Egypt, their legendary land of origin. (pgs. 2-3).

This frontispiece of *The Description* is an excellent example of the historical narrative that Napoleon set in motion in Egypt through his interaction with the indigenous population as seen above, and the entire intellectual corpus his cadre devised in sustaining such an Orientalist image: The only 'progress' Egypt has ever achieved in anything was thousands of years ago, and even then this was only through its connection to Europe. This is seen here in ideologically privileging European notions of civilization and 'culture' (i.e.: the Arts), 'saving Egypt' from the barren landscape pictured. This of course gives the allusion to the traditional Western narrative that Greek-Roman based rule (the newest version being Napoleon) was the only way Egypt could prosper. This narrative would in fact be later re-iterated in At Tahtaawee's first history book where he would spend twice as many pages on the Greco-Roman-Byzantine era than Pharaonic civilization, the claimed roots of Egyptian identity (Reid, 2002, p. 146).

Aside from natural observations (i.e.: plants, wildlife, topography etc.), the main observations in *The Description* focus on archaeological relics of ancient Egyptian civilization or architecture (Reid, 2002, pgs. 27, 32-35). Conveniently, the history lessons taught to Egyptian intelligentsia in the diwan above, were the same messages 'unearthed' in French research of Egypt—namely, that Egypt itself was of no real worth compared to Europe except in so far as the ancient Egyptian civilization had similarities to the SH definition of 'culture' and/or important events of European history happening there. According to this narrative, *The Description* is one

of the ways that Napoleon and his entourage sought to save Egypt, by allowing it to be born again, reconstructed in a European light.

Lest the reader think that Western discourses have progressed beyond such Eurocentric thinking, it is worth mentioning that this narrative that Islam and Muslims contributed nothing to the human race is repeatedly re-iterated to this day in mainstream discourse to justify cultural imperialism—the premise that the ‘Western world’ is ‘ahead’ due to its cultural attributes, not its military conquests. This discourse is recycled from the limelight of political speeches to the most mundane of family entertainment. As for the former, an example is seen in Barack Obama’s 2009 Cairo speech. When discussing the well-known preservation and translation of Greco-Roman knowledge by Muslims during the European ‘Dark Ages’, Obama noted, “It was Islam -- at places like Al-Azhar—that *carried the light of learning* through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe’s Renaissance and Enlightenment.” (Obama, 2009, emphasis added). As is well known, Europe’s Renaissance and Enlightenment were premised mainly on a return to various forms of Greek and Roman knowledge. Muslim contribution to the European Renaissance and Enlightenment in the empirical sciences is rarely if ever acknowledged in English literature; usually all that is acknowledged is Muslim translation of Greco-Roman scholarship during the Middle Ages while Western Europe awoke from the slumber of its ‘dark ages’ (Iqbal, 2007).

Sadly, this myth is found even in family entertainment. The Epcot center at Disney presents Islamic civilization’s only contribution to the world as being to ‘hold the torch’ of civilizational progress for the West during the dark ages (by translating the old Greek/Roman texts). Samman and Zo’by (2008) note in their insightful collection of works entitled *Islam and the Orientalist World System* about this image,

Once 'we' have recuperated from this temporary illness, the Islamic Other simply hands the torch back to its rightful owner, unchanged, and the West continues upon its path of Enlightenment and progress, developing its science, its printing, its philosophy, and its creative arts (p. 5).

A concise summary of the effects of French colonization in producing the 'Arab Renaissance' that occurred in Egypt is provided by Schulze who notes,

It was Europeans who 'discovered' the decadence of the Arabs. Indeed, to legitimize his invasion of Egypt in 1798, Napoleon worried that the country had been driven to barbarism and decay by the Turks and that it was the duty of France to liberate its population. Islam was seen as the cause of decadence, so, the missionary aim was no longer Christianization, but modernization. The tradition/modernity dichotomy was born (Samman and Zo'by, 2008, p. 38).

It was due to this newly rooted inferiority complex that many Egyptian intellectuals became convinced that they also needed a Renaissance like that of Europe; this transformation would completely challenge the foundations of education in Egypt, affecting everything from theology to Arabic studies and literature (Barkaat, 2003; Hussein, 2008). We will now turn to the pioneers of this transformation of Egyptian education, Muhammad Ali and his intellectual protégé Riffa'a Raafi' At Tahtaawee.

CHAPTER 5: RIFAA'A RAAFI' AT TAHTAAWEE

The Socipolitical, Economic, and Historical Context of At Tahtaawee's Study Abroad

As briefly discussed above, after the initial invasion of the French into Egypt, the Ottoman caliph Saleem the Third proclaimed a jihaad and an influx of Muslims migrated from different parts of the Muslim world (mostly from Al Sham, North Africa, and Al Hijaaz) to help the Egyptians in attempting to expel the French. However, it seems that this was not enough since Britain and Russia also offered their support to Saleem, which was accepted; British and Muslim (local Egyptians and foreign forces) would expel French forces from Egypt by 1801. Napoleon himself was long gone by this time, pursuing other military ventures in the East, after having left his deputy Kleiber in charge. Paradoxically, Britain and Russia would themselves plan to invade Istanbul, the Ottoman capital, immediately upon the withdrawal of the French from Egypt—this plan would fail due to the two parties not being able to reach a common agreement (Al Sirjaany vol. 2, 2005, p. 196). Ironically, this time France offered its assistance to Saleem in repelling Russian and British pressure and driving the British fleets from the waters surrounding Egypt (Al Sirjaany vol. 2, 2005, p. 197). As can be seen from this almost comical 'swinging' pattern of alliances of convenience, international powers were taking a keen interest on the events going on in Egypt. Something that would draw even more international scrutiny would be the emergence of a firebrand in Egypt called Muhammad Ali.

Dubbed as everything from an 'untrustworthy, lying villain', to even the 'Arab Machiavelli', among the Ottoman forces sent by Saleem the Third was an ambitious soldier by

the name of Muhammad Ali who would attempt to break off from the caliphate and expand control as far as possible over Ottoman territory (Al Salaaby, 2001, pgs. 342-343). Ali wasted no time in power-grabbing on the expulsion of the French. He immediately went to work networking with the remaining Mamlukes and ulamaa (Al Sirjaany vol. 2, 2005, p. 197), the main sources of influence the Egyptians looked to for direction this century (Mondal, 2003). However, Ali would reveal his power hungry ways very quickly, slaughtering the Mamlukes (Al Sirjaany vol. 2, 2005, p. 198) and attempting to reduce the influence of the ulamaa and Islam in general in Egypt by effectively shutting down the madrasa system. Ali removed funding from all madrasas except Al Azhar to draw the people around him (Al Salaaby, 2001, pgs. 342-343). It does not seem that Ali would in fact gather much public support since the local population at the time were said to consider him an oppressor and consider hypocritical any ulamaa that acquiesced to his rule (Gesink, 2010, p. 13). Furthermore, the extent to which Ali would in fact implement much of the ideological reconstruction that Napoleon started on a wide scale in Egypt and the ways that European leaders would praise his 'revolutionary' reforms, left a lot of question marks around Ali's allegiances among Western and Indigenous historians (Al Salaaby, 2001, p. 349; Al Sirjaany vol. 2, 2005, p. 199).

Even on the economic front, arguably one of the most important aspects of colonization, Ali destroyed what little existed of Egypt's economy. He centralized the state on a European model (Gesink, 2010, pgs. 11-12) and exploited Egypt's resources by imposing policies that required selling Egyptian crops to Europe with little to no money to Egyptian farmers, while simultaneously requiring the purchase of European goods (Al Jabartee, 1997). Ali in fact forced city dwellers and rural farmers to build and produce at high quotas, before they could even eat

from their own crops in the case of the latter. Added to this was the implementation of overbearing taxes that caused much of rural Egypt to flat out ‘flee’ their own farmland (Mitchell, 1988). These reforms wreaked havoc on the working class agricultural peasantry, the basis of the Egyptian economy at the time (Al Salaaby, 2001, pgs. 348-349). The pattern is not dissimilar to the structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank and IMF in Egypt until recently.

On the educational front, in an attempt to develop Egypt’s military capabilities and industrialization, Muhammad Ali substituted a Western (French, British, and Italian) model of secular higher education in place of Al Azhar madrasa system that existed in Egypt. These “military colleges” (vocational technical institutes), created between the 1810s to the 1840s, trained students in military skills, engineering, medicine, foreign languages, and agriculture among other things. However, Ali effectively closed down (by removing funding) madrasas, except one branch of Al Azhar higher education and its system of kuttaab in the country (Hussein, 2008, pgs. 16-17). This trend would cause drastic cases of overpopulation and underfunding by the late 19th century at this last institution of indigenous higher education (Gesink, 2010). Western academics were brought in to teach at these military colleges and the technically trained graduates even replaced Al Azhar graduates in many aspects of Azhar administrative employment as well (Gesink, 2010, pgs. 20-21).

Upon realizing that the Al Azhar controlled ‘primary schools’ (kuttaab), would not provide the preparation necessary for the new military colleges, Ali, with the assistance of Ibrahim Adham, created twelve one-room ‘model schools’ (primary level schools) based on the British Lancaster model in 1834. The military nature of these schools is explained in broader detail by Timothy Mitchell in his insightful work, *Colonizing Egypt* (1988). Mitchell describes a

very strictly organized and bureaucratic model of education centered on efficiency and conformity. Students were to follow rules that governed everything from personal appearance to demeanor in class to progression through lessons. Lessons themselves were written on boards along the walls and students would have to move from 'center' to 'center' while standing and listening to the instructor lecture. 'Monitors' would move the students from one station to the next and evaluation would be performed through periodic oral and written assessments at determined times (Mitchell, 1988, pgs. 35-36). This is of course a stark contrast to the more decentralized and informal style of education prior to French colonization described above.

Mitchell illustrates that throughout the 19th century, Egyptians were being 'modernized' into soldiers; no longer would soldiers merely be foreigners from abroad (i.e.: the Mamlukes). Now military service was obligatory on all Egyptians. Now, similar to the nature of Napoleon's regime discussed above, which was highly praised by Al Jabartee, the new Egyptian military could also function like 'one body' (Mitchell, 1988, pgs. 35-39). However, the expansion of these schools into a national system would not take place until the 1870s. As Mitchell notes, 'education', as an isolated process of formal schooling in Egypt with standardized curriculums for all students and a complementary teaching profession started in the 19th century (Mitchell, 1988, p. 85). These model schools above themselves would be mostly shut down after some time during the reign of Ibrahim (1848); Ali's ancestors like Abbas Hilmi I (1848-1854) and Sa'eed (1854-1863), favored leaving education in general to the ulamaa. Nonetheless, Isma'il after them (1863-1879) would establish a school system (based on the above military model) reforming and expanding it into the national public educational system with the help of At Tahtaawee (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). This is the reason that the two educational works of At Tahtaawee are

central to this study. The structure and format of national education would fluctuate chaotically from the 1840s through the 1952 coup de' tat or what is referred to as the 'free officer's revolution'. However, the SH ideology that takes firm root during the study abroad adventures of Al Azhar intelligentsia throughout the 19th century, particularly to France, provide some consistent themes that can be traced despite the tumultuous reconstructions and reforms that mark this period. It is some of these Al Azhar intelligentsia that would have the most influence on not only the reforms at Al Azhar and the national education system—many of them becoming appointed as ministers of education and other state positions—but literate culture in general in Egypt.

As for Al Azhar, Ali had even placed this under state control. Gesink notes that he and his descendants “now subjected higher –level religious offices to state control, placing in them men who were receptive to the European models of education and reform” (Gesink, 2010, p. 13). These men were Al Azhar ulamaa whom Ali had sent to France from the moment he started creating the above civil colleges. These scholars would be highly affected by the positivism of Auguste Comte and the Saint Simonists for example, believers in the “religion of social science” to culturally and industrially *develop* Egypt. The Saint Simonists would try to effectively replace religion with Western philosophy—particularly the concept of nationalism (contrary to the Islamic precept of identity based on Faith above any territorial or cultural labels) (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2004, pgs. 142-144). Nationalism was a key concept of the secularization process as discussed above.

Al Azhar alim Hasan Al Attar for example would be sent to learn French knowledge in Paris and later return to teach Rifaa'a At Tahtaawee, who would be key in establishing a national education system based on various Secular Humanist values.

The key themes throughout the 19th and 20th centuries related to the neo-colonization of the Egyptian educational system would be: reforming the way Arabic, History, and Islam were taught along very SH lines. Language, history, and 'religion' are well known points of interest in imperial politics (Al Najaar, 2010; Hussein, 2008; Ramadan, 2007). Many of these ulamaa would gradually change the focus of higher education away from technical subjects and into the humanities (Szyliowicz, 1973, p. 129).

Under de facto British control throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, various descendants of the Ali dynasty—and their intellectual reformers like At Tahtaawee protégé Muhammad Abduh—would continue this intellectual colonization as most remnants of local 'history', 'culture', and 'religion' would be removed from education⁴¹ (Gesink, 2006, pgs. 329-330; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2004, p. 129).

At the time that Ali originally sent them, historical accounts of his plans indicate that he simply intended to gain 'scientific' (as in the empirical based, not the more philosophy based social sciences) expertise from the West, but it seems those sent abroad also received the 'hidden curriculum' of Western Liberalism (Hussein, 2008, pgs. 19-20). It seems that in arming Egypt with the previous colonizer's intellectual structures to fend off their canons, Ali replaced Islamic education with Western cannons which might have been more detrimental to 'national interest'

⁴¹ Of course, this is in reference to the indigenous conception of these words, not the Pharaonic based national identity that would be later constructed.

in the long run (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2004, p. 128). Military colonization or warfare only harms a peoples' physical or 'material' assets, but intellectual colonization can erase an entire people out of existence; in the case of a people whose eternal damnation or bliss depends on sustaining a particular way of life (i.e.: Muslims), the latter situation offers much more catastrophic consequences.

Even though Britain would physically colonize Egypt longer than France, the higher education and experiences Egyptian intelligentsia would have in France (after the rattling effects of Napoleon's invasion on Egyptian consciousness) seem to have been more detrimental than British colonization. Although Riffa'a At Tahtaawee would be the first to thoroughly theorize a national Egyptian identity for Egypt, in keeping with this dissertation's objective of looking at the roots of SH in Egyptian education, a word should be said about Riffa'a At Tahtaawee's most influential teacher--Al Azhar alim Hassan Al Attaar. Al Attaar is the first alim Muhammad Ali would send abroad,. Although rejected and humiliated by most Egyptian intelligentsia of his time, his students would become some of the most influential journalists, translators, and ulamaa in literate intellectual culture of the 19th and 20th centuries. Riffa'a At Tahtaawee would in fact be handpicked by Al Attaar out of all the students at Al Azhar to lead a foreign study abroad (Gesink, 2010, pgs. 25-28).

Like Teacher like Student: At Tahtaawee's teacher, Hasan Al Attaar

Hasan Al Attaar, 'the shaykh of' (rector of) Al Azhar from 1830 to 1834 was born in Cairo around 1766 and pursued his elementary and higher education at Al Azhar. During the French occupation, Al Attaar was in frequent dialogue with Napoleon's cadre of scientists, even

teaching many of them Arabic (Gesink, 2010, p .24). It seems he would be heavily influenced by these discussions since Al Attaar would become from the first Egyptian ulamaa to be “seduced”—as Shaden Tageldin puts it—by French interest in Islam and Muslims (Tageldin, 2011).

Tageldin (2011) notes that the attention paid to Islam and Muslims by British and French orientalist—like Carlyle and the like--infatuated some Egyptian ulamaa to the extent that these ulamaa started to write about Islam, Muslims, and even European culture, literature, and religion using European frames of reference. One main cause of this trend was European praise of various aspects of Islam and Muslim history, as seen with Napoleon above. The inferiority complex that would develop among Egyptian ulamaa from the Napoleonic invasion and Egyptian studies abroad would cause many ulamaa to believe that not only were Islam and Muslims similar enough to the abstract ‘universal’ conceptions of religion, nation, and culture that Europeans had introduced, but that many British and French scholars might have been only a step away from converting to Islam themselves. However, what would seem to be a recurrent theme among such ulamaa throughout the 19th and 20th centuries was that they did not seem to realize that aside from the inherently different beliefs of SH and Islam, the de facto colonial relationship between Egypt and Britain and France throughout most of this time period would necessarily bias any intellectual exchange as a prior condition of such exchange taking place. A clear example of this is provided by Tageldin regarding Al Attar.

In Hassan Al Attar’s *Maqamat Al Faransis* (1799), Al Attaar becomes infatuated by a French scholar’s address to him using an extract from *Al Burda* to the extent that he hallucinates he has seduced the French through his ‘culture’—Islam; however, “by tale’s end we find him

working with Napoleon's orientalists on a bilingual French-Arabic dictionary and composing an Arabic panegyric [in tribute] to the French scholar himself, 'containing a word or two of their language [French].'" (Tageldin, 2011, p. 15).

This is undoubtedly a telling response of the extent to which Al Attaar was mesmerized by French culture and knowledge. *The Burda* is a thirteenth century poem—with certain Sufi tendencies--written in honor of Prophet Muhammad, one out of a long line of such literary works to the extent that they are their own genre. However, even if one supposes that the French scholar in question had become Muslim, this would not have technically benefitted Al Attaar in any way aside from the happiness that the former would have been saved from hellfire according to the latter's belief system. Al Attaar not only worked with the colonizing regime on academic endeavors—which could be overlooked if he might have been thinking that he was contributing to some 'neutral' universal body of knowledge as opposed to strengthening the colonizer's database of knowledge about the colonized—but wrote his own tribute to the scholar as if a sort of analogy to the panegyrics historically written in praise of Prophet Muhammad. This is indicative of how highly Al Attaar must have thought of the French that he appraised their opinions of Islam and Muslims so highly. Al Attaar's intellectual lean towards French thought would later be seen in his own academic work; however, I will start with a 'negative case' that indicates that resistance from Al Attaar's contemporary colleagues towards his ideas was probably not just a general resistance to all types of change (a common perception about ulamaa in Western literature).

In Al Attaar's *Jam' Al jawaami'*, a text on the fundamentals of jurisprudence (Usool Al Fiqh), Al Attaar provided a sharp critique of Al Azhar education. In regards to empirical

knowledge, he complained that the ulamaa of his time were not reading about the latest advancements in foreign works even though there were even translations of them available (Gesink, 2010, p. 24). It does not seem that this critique would have been received very negatively since there is record of ulamaa like Al Jabartee being very well versed in French knowledge, not only of empirical science, but seemingly to some extent the more controversial Enlightenment philosophies surrounding the French revolution. Also, in general Muslim intelligentsia had already been translating, utilizing, and building upon various forms of Greco-Roman knowledge all throughout the ‘Dark Ages’ that occurred in Western Europe as discussed above. Hence it is unlikely Al Azhar ulamaa would have been unaware of this long history. Nonetheless, academics like Gesink do argue that while Azhari ulamaa were not against empirical science itself, being that Al Azhar was the last ‘madrasa’ format of higher education available with Ali’s reforms, they might have wanted to keep Al Azhar dedicated solely to theological study so students would not ‘spread themselves too thin’ trying to focus on too many fields. Gesink in fact provides many narrations of Azhari ulamaa claiming just this (Gesink, 2010). Although not taking place at Al Azhar, Al Attaar was probably at least pleased by the massive influx of foreign empirical knowledge that Muhammad Ali introduced with his military colleges. This might indicate why by the end of the 1820s Al Attaar was doing “his most serious teaching at home, outside what he perceived as the constrained atmosphere of Al Azhar...the subjects he wanted to study had fallen under the purview of the military colleges [i.e.: The Arts and Sciences]” (Gesink, 2010, p. 25).

In terms of theological knowledge, Al Attaar also complained in *Jam’ Al Jawaami’* that ulamaa were merely confining themselves to the study of ‘explanations of explanations’ of very

recent scholarship and not referring directly to the primary sources of such knowledge, like the Qur'an, Sunnah, and scholarship of the companions of Prophet Muhammad. He noted that this had created shallow scholarship, and even worse an edifice of Middle Ages scholarship (as embodied in the developed canons of madhab jurisprudence mentioned above) that was being treated as unquestionable as actual revelation (Ali, 2009). This language was similar to the language being expressed next door in the Arabian peninsula with Muhammad Abd Al Wahhab's reform movement to purify local practice from the Sufi superstitions and idolatry that had become widespread among many parts of the Muslim World (Al Jabartee, 1997). More importantly, the aforementioned had been a critique of many ulamaa as far back at least as Ibn Taymiyya, Al Subki and Ibn Khaldun (Ali, 2009; Daly, 1998), and hence probably not as controversial as Al Attaar's protestant methodology—as it would literally be called by Al Azhar ulamaa in critiques of second and third generation intellectual disciples-- at addressing these issues (Hussein, 2008).

An example of Al Attaar's approach regarding the theological realm—Arabic language is considered part and parcel of this domain--is found in his work titled *Inshaa'*, 'Composition of Letters', which he wrote for Muhammad Ali's college of war and promoted a more efficient and unambiguous use of language. Indira Gesink (2010) argues that

Al-Attar's letters do not subordinate meaning to form as was typical in older examples—the meaning is readily apparent to the reader. This had profound implications: Al 'Attar's superlative use of this genre challenged his contemporaries to *subordinate form to meaning* (p. 25 emphasis added),

a clear theme of the protestant reformation—following the spirit of the law as opposed to the letter of the law. Given Al Attaar’s numerous government appointed positions under the unpopular Muhammad Ali as editor of the government newspaper and ‘Shaykh Al Azhar’, it seems his ideas would be developed within more macro-level calls for reform (Gesink, 2010).

As mentioned above, when Muhammad Ali asked Al Attaar to choose a student to lead a student group to France, Al Attaar chose Rifaa’a At Tahtaawee for the endeavor. At Tahtaawee is the pivotal figure for a discussion on the birth of Egyptian national education. He would not only write the theoretical foundation for its establishment as the first ‘Minister of Education’ (not to mention being a textbook writer, editor of the student magazine, and being a principal and supervisor of some colleges), but also help establish the first teacher education college, Dar Al Uloom (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). While It seems many scholars have acknowledged At Tahtaawee as the preeminent theorist to introduce the concept of ‘nationalism’ and Pharaonism in Egypt in general (Hourani, 1970; Maghraoui, 2006; Wendell, 1972), it does not seem much attention has been devoted to his key educational works through which his SH leanings and promotion of a national identity would have had the most influence due to his role in almost every aspect of Egypt’s first national education system. I will now take a step by step look at At Tahtaawee’s life stopping to analyze his key educational ideas.

At Tahtaawee before France

Egyptian educationalist Sa’eed Ali notes in his *A’laam Tarbiyya fil Hadaarah Al Islaamiyya* (Education Ulamaa in Islamic Civilization) that the most common name that comes to mind when one hears the words Renaissance, Enlightenment, modernization, and progress is

Rifaa'a At Tahtaawee, to the extent that he has become an accompaniment to almost any discussion on 'Westernization' (Ali, 2008, p. 257). Ali describes At Tahtaawee's general approach as being one of looking for an Islamic corollary to any Western idea he came across, regardless of whether it was in the realm of empirical or theological sciences, politics, etc. As Abdesalam Maghraoui notes in his study of nationalist thought in Egypt, *Liberalism Without Democracy*, (2006), cultural 'modernization' (Europeanization) would become a substitute for material modernization (i.e.: the development of industrialization, literacy, empirical sciences etc.) for much of Egyptian intelligentsia. Maghraoui (2006) notes

Scores of European-educated Egyptians, including teachers, doctors, engineers, and public officials, were trained to teach natives the social manners and cultural customs of modern European life. ...they trained in the modern educational system; became familiar with the ideas of the Enlightenment; read Rousseau, Montesquieu, Auguste Comte, Saint-Simon, and the French constitution... (p. 44).

At Tahtaawee was one of these Egyptians sent abroad. Rifaa'a Raafi' Badawee Muhammad Ali was born in the town of Tahta—hence the addition of At Tahtaawee to the end of his name as was commonly practiced in the Muslim world historically depending on where one spent the most of his/her life or was born—in the year 1801, the year of official French withdrawal from Egypt. At Tahtaawee came from a poor family with a long tradition of Islamic scholarship with whom (particularly his uncles after his father died) he spent his early years memorizing the Qur'an and learning the basics of Islamic theology to meet the conditions for entering Al Azhar. In 1817, At Tahtaawee moved to Cairo to study at Al Azhar for about five years where he was greatly influenced by Shaykh Hasan Al Attaar, particularly in the latter's

zeal for pursuing the Arts and Sciences being taught outside of Al Azhar in the civil institutes. As mentioned above, Al Attaar was greatly influenced himself by his experiences with Napoleon's cadre and his visits to Napoleon's Institut d' Egypt. It is during this period that At Tahtaawee was nominated by Al Attaar (to Muhammad Ali) as the imaam (leader) of the group being sent to France to learn French science and military strategy (At Tahtaawee, 2012, pgs. 29-47).

However, It is clear from several incidents between Muhammad Ali and the 'students' being sent abroad that there was a clear conflict of interest between Ali and the students. Ali clearly was not interested in acquiring French culture, philosophy or 'Arts', but rather military expertise and industrialization methods, while the students were trying to create time for the former during their busy study abroad curriculums.

On one incident for example, a student who had just returned from France came to boast to Muhammad Ali about the French political theories he had just learned; on hearing this Ali yelled "I'm the only one who rules around here; go to Cairo ..." (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 48). Also, during At Tahtaawee's stay in Paris, Ali rebukes At Tahtaawee for wasting time with things other than vocational and technical skills. However, as will be illustrated French SH thought was entering through the French advisors Ali had appointed at his civil colleges, as well as through the French coordinators of the study abroad in Paris. This is aside from the obvious fact that did not seem to have been well perceived by Ali: some kind of theory is always behind practice. The entire conception of 'modernization' was based on years of intellectual transformations that had been taking place in Europe, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment; hence, Ali's copy and paste approach to incorporating such ideas would

inevitably bring ‘cultural baggage’ to his reforms. It seems the juggling act that many students, like At Tahtaawee, tried to perform with their time between the industrial/empirical knowledge they were being held accountable for, and ‘squeezing in’ their personal inquiries into French thought and culture would be the cause behind much of the contradictions in their intellectual works (Hussein, 2008, pgs. 19-20).

As mentioned above, in 1826 At Tahtaawee was sent to Paris as the ‘imam’ for the Egyptian military study abroad. Although this term is commonly used in reference to a ‘religious leader’, like one who leads the communal prayers, etc. at a local mosque as discussed above, it seems it was merely being used in the linguistic sense of leader since At Tahtaawee gives no mention in Takhlees about participating in or leading any ‘religious events’. In fact he almost never mentions any other student in the group and focuses on his personal experiences with French institutions, knowledge, people, etc. Given At Tahtaawee’s correspondence with his local French supervisors and Ali in Egypt, and the fact that he himself had a rigorous curriculum of classes, guided readings, and examinations on various aspects of French knowledge, language and culture while he was there (At Tahtaawee, 2013), it seems At Tahtaawee was the leader of the Study Abroad in a general sense.

However, how much Ali’s plan for At Tahtaawee included the courses and readings that ended up in his actual program of study in Paris (given Ali’s rebukes above) does leave question marks about who exactly was coordinating the details of the student missions’ curriculum. This does not seem to be a question that has been raised thus far in any English or Arabic studies on Egyptian nationalism or At Tahtaawee in particular, but a preliminary analysis of the findings thus far hint that the curriculum was clearly French designed, and at least on the practical level of

application was enforced by French study abroad coordinators like Edme-Francois Jomard, the primary supervisor for most of At Tahtaawee's experience. As a side note, Edme-Francois Jomard was also the one to map Cairo for Napoleon to use in his invasion (Reid, 2002, p. 215). We will now turn to At Tahtaawee's first work which At Tahtaawee started writing upon reaching Paris in 1826 and published shortly after his return to Egypt in 1834, an in-depth description of his study abroad entitled *Takhlees Al Ibreez fee Talkhees Baarees* (A Golden Nugget on the Essence of Paris).

At Tahtaawee's first work of educational criticism: *Takhlees Al Ibreez fee Talkhees Baarees* (A Golden Nugget on the Essence of Paris)

Knowledge and Education in Paris

Takhlees Al Ibreez fee Talkhees Baarees (hereafter *Takhlees*) is a truly fascinating recount of an Egyptian perspective of French society because it clearly shows the vast gulf of difference between France and Egypt at the time, and particularly in regard to education at all levels. *Takhlees* is in fact At Tahtaawee's first attempt at educational criticism as Gesink notes (Gesink, 2010, p. 29). *Talkhees* in general provides the reader a step-by-step description of At Tahtaawee's journey to France, his experiences there, and his return to Egypt. France would have importantly just experienced, and was continuing to experience, the industrial revolution and the accompanying ideological revolution expressed in works like that of Montesquieu, and Voltaire. At Tahtaawee explains in minute detail things like the landscape he sees in France, the local events he witnesses—which importantly include the revolution, the government apparatus,

local culture and customs, and his own personal experiences as a student there (which will be the focus here).

In the first ‘section’ (fasl) of his sixth ‘article’ (maqalah) of the Talkhees —entitled *Fee taqseem Al Uloom wal Funoon alaa tareeq al ifrinj* (the separation of the sciences and the arts according to the methodology of the Europeans/French⁴²) is the first dramatic difference At Tahtaawee encounters between the SH approach to knowledge and the Islamic one. The first obvious difference that At Tahtaawee describes in Al talkhees is that the French divide al ma’arif Al bashariyya (‘human knowledge’) into two types, Al Uloom (the Sciences) and Al Funoon (the Arts). At Tahtaawee himself prioritizes the sciences by placing them before the Arts in his translation (Al Uloom wal Funoon), a grammatical way to emphasize the more important concept in Arabic, even though one normally speaks in the opposite order in English (i.e.: the Arts and Sciences) (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 261). The importance of this move (whether conscious or sub-conscious) and the basic split of human knowledge into sciences and arts will become clearer in the following discussion.

At Tahtaawee goes on to say that the French Arts are divided into rational/intellectual and practical. The practical Arts are trades; these would have been learnt in Egypt through apprenticeship at the time (i.e.: medicine with doctors, etc.) as seen in Al Jabartee’s *Ajaaib*. French intellectual Arts include things like poetry, literature, rhetoric, grammar, logic, drawing, carving, and music, which as At Tahtaawee mentions some would have been taught at Al Azhar

⁴² The word ‘ifrinj’ (similar to the historical use of ‘Al Room’—the Romans) has been used to refer to European peoples in general since at least as far back as Salaah Al Deen (Saladin). Such terms would later fade into things like al ajaanib (the foreigners), and then the now more recent ‘al gharbeeyoon’ (the Westerners). Here, one would assume that he is using the term to refer to the French.

as independent entities, and others as tools needed for other fields (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 261). Needless to say some would not have been taught at all in Islamic education like music (being prohibited in Islam and no concept of it being a ‘field of study’ existing), and carving and drawing (being more likely to fall under a practical ‘trade’ or craft in Egypt).

As for the ‘sciences’, they are divided into ‘math-related’ and ‘non-math related’ sciences in the French intellectual structure that At Tahtaawee describes. Under the math related sciences are subjects like accounting, arithmetic, engineering, and algebra; and under the non math-related subjects are the physical sciences (which includes things like biology, ecology) and the metaphysical sciences (At Tahtaawee, 2013). The notion of an objective (as is the normal connotation of a ‘science’) topic of study entitled ‘metaphysical sciences’ (plural definitions of the metaphysical are imagined here) being colonized ‘under’ a category labeled ‘non-math sciences’ within an intellectual structure that is entitled ‘human knowledge’ en toto is an excellent segway to discussing the fascinating assumptions of how At Tahtaawee represents the French intellectual structure.

After this description of the types of Sciences and Arts taught in Paris, At Tahtaawee (2013) concludes by exclaiming “Haatha huwa taqseem hukamaa’ al ifrinj! Wa ilaa faindanaa an Al Uloom wal Funoon fil ghaalib shaay’an waahidan, wa innama yufaruq bayna qawn al fen ilman mustaqillan binafsihi wa aala lighayrihi.” The translation of this would be

This is how French *philosophers organize/separate [their human knowledge]*. However, *for us*, the sciences and arts usually are one entity except for the arts which are differentiated between those that are independent [entities] and those that are only tools for others (p. 261).

The points of interest here are: At Tahtaawee uses the word hukamaa'' (translated here as philosophers) to refer to those who created and organized the French intellectual structure; he uses the Arabic term taqseem for divide/separate to describe the process of organizing the structure of different types of human knowledge (Al ma'aarif Al bashariyya) into the framework that these philosophers have developed; At Tahtaawee uses the term Ilm (knowledge) to refer specifically to empirical sciences; in the French paradigm the concept of revelation is not a foundation for human knowledge as a universal truth, but an object of study under some other philosophical Truth (s) assumed about the world. Some general comments about the subjects taught themselves will also be needed. I will turn next to these observations.

At Tahtaawee uses the word hukamaa'' (translated here as philosophers) to refer to those who created and organized the French intellectual structure. The word hukamaa'' (singular hakeem) is derived from the root for hikma (wisdom) similar to the Greek meaning of philosopher (lover of wisdom). However, At Tahtaawee also considers all French academics as 'philosophers' by the very nature of their approach to knowledge since he uses the word hukamaa'' to refer to any French academic irrespective of their discipline throughout the text. One example is that At Tahtaawee notes that "there are no French hukamaa'' [scholars] that can even compete with those of Paris [in 'human knowledge'], or even among any of the ancients as it seems" (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 186). This is because, according to At Tahtaawee, as some hukamaa' (philosophers) have noted, "things are judged according to the state of their completeness/perfection at the end, actions/works by their results/conclusions, and industry by how long it lasts" (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 186). The linear narrative of progress inherent in At Tahtaawee's words will not be lost on the reader. At Tahtaawee views Parisian knowledge as the

final result of a long journey of progress since ‘the ancients’. As will become clearer in At Tahtaawee’s conception of nationalism, he views all European (which for him ironically includes Egypt) civilization to be rooted in the past great achievements of Greece and Rome which have continued to progress non-stop until reaching the perfection he claims to witness in ‘Enlightened’ France. However, for now what concerns us is that although At Tahtaawee acknowledges French knowledge in its totality as based on some philosophic blueprint, as will be shown he also perceives such ideas as objective science by default.

At Tahtaawee largely attributes French progress to the fact that they’ve mastered the “secrets of the tools/methodology for knowledge known since ancient times [i.e.: Greco-Roman]... but have misguidances and errors stuffed in their *sciences of philosophy* [Al Uloom Al Hikmiyya] that are contradictory to all the heavenly revealed books [ever revealed]” (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 186). As will be explained, At Tahtaawee views all knowledge as science, and even philosophy as a type of science.

This notion that philosophers created the above intellectual structure implies that there is some hidden hikma (wisdom) or rationale behind it, but since At Tahtaawee does not verbalize what that is (whether he learned this structure from a book or personal experience in some way), it seems At Tahtaawee merely takes this philosophy for granted as something ‘objective’ or scientific that need not be questioned. This is apparent in his conception of philosophy as a science, and mastering methodology (positivism) in particular, to be the ‘secret’ to French progress. Such an interpretation is also supported by the fact that while At Tahtaawee’s own educational theory written later will contain many aspects of the epitome of wisdom in Islam on the theoretical level (the Sunnah), and he will claim that theological knowledge is the key to

social progress, *the French blueprint for 'human knowledge'* is what will be transplanted en toto to Egypt as the guiding rationale or wisdom behind the educational system.

At Tahtaawee also uses the term hukamaa'' at one point in Takhlees to refer to medical doctors, in which case he explicitly clarifies this intent. Such use of hukamaa' for doctors is understandable given the philosophical 'speculative' approach of early Greco-Roman medicine and the much fuzzier line between 'science' and 'philosophy' in early Greco-Roman civilization in general. As At Tahtaawee describes in the Takhlees, Greco-Roman history and knowledge were prime readings in his curriculum in France. Nonetheless, the default definition for a hakeem--including the way At Tahtaawee uses it above as is obvious from the list of disciplines he provides as examples of French arts and sciences the hukamaa' have organized—has generally been that of a philosopher.

In his own educational theory for Egypt, written later upon his return to Egypt, At Tahtaawee will repeatedly stress the need for Islamic theological knowledge as the foundation for Egyptian education, and things such as the Arts and Sciences being mere methods for obtaining the ultimate goal of knowledge, the worship of Allah. However, paradoxically the central role that philosophy seems to play as the intellectual framework of French education elaborated above, will not find an Islamic analogy in the theory At Tahtaawee later develops since it will essentially replicate the system above. Not only will Islam not be the intellectual foundation for Egyptian education in general, but in fact it will not even be an 'object' of study in the public system.

The French intellectual structure is importantly not *literally* secular in the sense that 'religion' is not discussed. Rather religion becomes the object of study of the unknown

philosophical or scientific theories that will be utilized for analyzing this category. One can imagine these theories at least including the likes of Rousseau or Voltaire if not being the primary lenses. That there does seem to be some sort of systematic and comparative method in mind for analyzing the ‘metaphysical sciences’ is evident given the plural reference to studying various metaphysical belief systems in one universal way. Since the field is a ‘non-math’ form of ‘science’, one would assume there to be a standardized empirical method for study (given the generally accepted concept for a ‘science’).

The aforementioned is a perfect example of the SH approach to religion that has been discussed thus far since religion is obviously not being assumed to be a universal truth found in a book with its presumed proofs for validity to be found in the universe itself (i.e.: a creation). Rather metaphysical beliefs in this intellectual structure are a ‘subjective’ human activity that are to be analyzed through their various forms of social practice either through an ‘objective’ empirical methodology (i.e.: science) or human opinion (i.e.: philosophy). Either way the net sum of the above approach is that of a human-centered approach to knowledge as opposed to one centered on a belief in a supernatural power, the key epistemology of the Western Enlightenment. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that there is no separate intellectual structure for ‘non-human knowledge’ for example; rather metaphysical issues are one block of content in a wider network of ‘human knowledge’ studied from a SH lens. Interestingly, it is such an approach that will characterize Egypt’s first teacher education institution opened by At Tahtaawee, Dar Al Uloom, which will later be incorporated into Egypt’s first official public university, Cairo University (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). Having discussed the overall framework above, there are some important points related to the content.

Although At Tahtaawee reads many philosophical works during his stay that particularly influence his educational ideas for Egyptian education, *philosophy* interestingly does not appear as an explicit subject matter of his understanding of the French intellectual paradigm outlined above. There could be a mere methodological mistake here. The omission of philosophy as a subject in the French intellectual structure of knowledge At Tahtaawee describes could merely be a generalization he is making from one particular institution that he had visited in Paris or a certain text about French knowledge.

What academics or which experiences and institutions informed At Tahtaawee's understanding of French knowledge is hard to clarify since At Tahtaawee, as many *ulamaa* historically and to this day, did not provide references or footnotes to their work⁴³. In fact, most of the chapter titles, all the footnotes, and the few references that exist in Dr. Muhammad Imaara's *The Complete Collection of the Works of Riffaa'a At Tahtaawee*, do not exist in the original text (2011).

Hence, a final judgment on the mysterious omission of philosophy as a subject in At Tahtaawee's conception of French education at the time he wrote the early part of *Takhlees*--despite the fact that *Takhlees* and his later works are full of the examples of the SH and even Ancient Greek Roman Philosophy that he was most interested in and utilized for his own educational theory--will have to remain a mystery for the time being. What I can say more

⁴³ One argument has been that any beneficial knowledge produced was for the general benefit of the Muslims and hence it did not matter who 'originally' came up with a certain idea. This approach would be expounded by the fact that all research/learning, like other aspects of life, was considered an act of worship to Allah and hence not to acquire fame or gratitude. There were some exceptions to this like the *hadeeth* sciences since one was relating the teachings and sayings of Prophet Muhammad, which centered on the authenticity of the narration itself (which there was certain procedures for), and an 'authentic' chain of narrators (i.e.: no people known for being untrustworthy or having a bad memory).

assertively is that the above described intellectual structure seems to have at least captured the essence of Parisian education if one assumes the worst case scenario, that At Tahtaawee's conception of the French intellectual structure is one of the points of Parisian life that he was 'liberal' in generalizing to wider French society.

If the above intellectual structure is representative of Parisian academia at the time, it seems that by replicating such an intellectual structure in Egypt in combination with a primary educational objective of 'submission to Allah' and prioritization of Islamic theological knowledge for the progress of Egypt (as will be discussed), At Tahtaawee did not fully realize the contradictory assumptions behind the philosophic 'hidden curriculum' of the French intellectual structure—i.e.: the worldview inherent to such a structure. There are more aspects to At Tahtaawee's description of French knowledge that support such a conclusion.

The fact that philosophy does not appear as a subject matter in At Tahtaawee's outline of French education could be another indication that At Tahtaawee did not conceptualize the works he read on nationalism, government, politics, and education, as philosophy per se as much as mere 'science' about these various topics. It seems only the philosophical ideas in Medicine captured his attention enough as 'misguidance and errors that contradict all heavenly revealed books' as stated above. The most conclusive evidence to suggest the aforementioned is At Tahtaawee's statement in chapter 13 of *Takhlees, Fee thikr taqadeem ahl baarees fil Uloom wal Funoon wal sanaa' wa thikr tarteebuhum wa eedawh maa yata'aluq bee thaaliq* (Discussing the progress of the people of Paris in the sciences, arts, and industry/trade, the way they organize/coordinate [the study of these things], and other issues related to this). At Tahtaawee (2013) notes

As for the majority of the theoretical sciences, then they are known to them [the French] to the fullest extent; however, they have some philosophical beliefs that are contradictory to the *law of reason to [people] of other nations*. Nonetheless, they pretend an authority/power to these beliefs until they appear to a person as true and valid (At Tahtaawee, p. 173).

One imagines ‘theoretical sciences’ here refers to the social science works At Tahtaawee read like those addressing nationalism, government, and politics. By stating that such philosophical beliefs are contradictory to the law of reason to people of other nations, but obviously not France, At Tahtaawee clearly sees flaws in an absolute understanding of an abstract universal ‘reason’. Nonetheless, it is clear from his actions upon return to Egypt—copying the French education system as is—that he did not notice the contradictions between the physical structure he theorized for public education and the intellectual assumptions underlying it. Despite aberrations like the above, it seems At Tahtaawee definitely walks away from his study abroad experience closer to a positivist approach to knowledge than an interpretivist one. A positivist leaning could in fact explain why At Tahtaawee names science as knowledge itself (*Ilm*), the most fascinating aspect to At Tahtaawee description of French knowledge and the most influential one to his own conception of education.

At Tahtaawee uses the word *taqseem* (divide or separate) as a synonym for ‘organize’ to discuss the organizational hierarchy of French knowledge into various disciplines or branches. As is discussed by Mitchell in *colonizing Egypt*, the idea of ordering, disciplining, and organizing every aspect of life from the private to the public was pivotal to the SH understanding of ‘modernizing’ (1988). Such a positivist lean is also seen in At Tahtaawee’s use of the Arabic

word *Ilm*. Muhammad Imaara (2011)—widely acknowledged as an expert on Egyptian intelligentsia of the last roughly 200 years--argues, “At Tahtaawee is the first alim we know of ever referring to the empirical sciences using the generic term *Ilm* (knowledge) as if it epitomizes knowledge itself” (p. 8). At Tahtaawee does not refer to the empirical sciences as a type of *Ilm*, but *Al Uloom*; the addition of ‘the’ (*Al*), which has a similar purpose in English in making a noun definitive, has a very powerful tone in Arabic that denotes that the thing being referred to is the epitome of such category of things. No doubt, At Tahtaawee has explicitly said *science is ‘the knowledge’*.

While I agree with Imaara in that ‘knowledge’ was not used in such an exclusive sense prior to the French invasion, except maybe the generalizing of *Al Uloom Al Sharia* (theological knowledge) as ‘*Al Uloom*’, it seems more likely that such usage was picked up by some Muslim alim, like *Al Attaar* or *Al Jabartee* (who would pass it on to the second generation like At Tahtaawee), during the French invasion from the diverse French cadre of scientists, supervisors, and translators, etc. What hints to this is that even Muhammad Ali referred to the sciences and arts as *Al Uloom and Al Funoon* in the above quoted rebuke of At Tahtaawee. Even if Ali got such usage from his European advisors and employees (which were brought in to lead his reform efforts), the usage must have been present enough among the elite for Ali to use it and At Tahtaawee to know exactly what he was referring to. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that At Tahtaawee’s work is what would by far become the most widely read of French educated Egyptian intelligentsia in the early 19th century, and hence the one most likely to spread the idea of science as ‘the knowledge’ in print. Lastly, the fact that At Tahtaawee’s academic supervisors all approved *Takhlees* for publication and highly praised it interestingly shows that they had no

reservations about At Tahtaawee walking away from his study abroad with the understanding that philosophy is a science which is knowledge itself.

Undoubtedly, the re-defining of knowledge as a whole as philosophy or empirical science would become very disempowering for any Muslim land at this time. Philosophy was a shunned endeavor in most of the Muslim World historically except for the aberrations often cited in English literature like Ibn Sina, Al Farabi, and Ibn Rushd (Halstead, 2004). Science had become almost obsolete by the 19th century in the Muslim world (Iqbal, 2007), meaning that according to At Tahtaawee's new definition of knowledge (Ilm), Muslims could be defined as in a state of absolute ignorance. The expected inferiority complex that would result from this would bear its fruits well through until the early 20th century when the roots of the oft-cited 'Islamic awakening' in the Muslim world would take place. This new concept of knowledge and how parts of it relate to one another, in combination with a new national identity that At Tahtaawee would help construct, are the two most important aspects that At Tahtaawee will base his own educational theory on: primary education for all, for the objective of creating 'good citizens'. I will now turn to the second fundamental lesson At Tahtaawee walks away with from his study abroad in France, nationalism as a social bond.

Nationalism as Egyptian Identity

For the first time in this environment [the Muslim world], we find talk about al watan ('the nation'), al wataniyya ('nationalism'), hubb al watan ('love for the nation') in the modern European sense that is established upon ta'asub (fanaticism) to a piece of land in particular tying its ancient history to its contemporary one creating one unified identity

distinguishing it from the other Muslim and non-Muslim lands. And for the first time we find special attention being given to ancient history in order to support this new conception of the watan” (Hussein, 2008, p. 21).

The above quote symbolizes the general idea that many scholars have attested to (Hourani, 1970; Maghraoui, 2006; Wendell, 1972), that upon At Tahtaawee’s return from France he would become the founder of Egyptian nationalism. At Tahtaawee was the first to use the term ‘watan’ (homeland) for Egypt as an area defined by territory or national identity as opposed to the existent Islamic identity of Egypt just being a part of the wider Ottoman caliphate (Mondal, 2003, p. 150). At Tahtaawee’s concept of *wattaniya* (patriotism/nationalism) would lead to the primary objective of At Tahtaawee’s later educational theory, the creation of *al muwaatin al mukhlis* (the ‘sincere citizen’), one whose entire purpose in being educated would be the progress of the ‘public/social good’. Although such a concept would probably seem a ‘universal’ sort of objective to the contemporary reader, as is usual with many SH paradoxes the public good was defined as the ‘national good’. I will pause analysis of French influence on At Tahtaawee’s conception of the purpose and identity of Egyptian national education for a theoretical and practical discussion on how such ideas might have been received.

As seen in Hussein’s quote above, Hussein uses the word *ta’asub* to express the attachment that At Tahtaawee constructed. The word *ta’asub* as Hourani notes regarding Ibn Khaldun’s discussion of ‘*asabiyya* (the noun version of *ta’asub*) was historically used to refer to the connection between a group related by blood or the natural affinity people felt by people who live together (1970, p. 79). Hence it is not surprising that At Tahtaawee would later claim in *Manaahij Al Albaab* that the “physical constitution of the people of these times is exactly that of

times past [ancient Egypt], and their disposition is one and the same” (Imaara, 2011, p. 187). As mentioned by Wendell, the term *watan* historically merely referred to a person’s homeland or place of birth, but by the time At Tahtaawee would use it, it would have the added emotional connotation of one’s primary identity to which loyalty was due as in the French term *la patrie* (Wendell, pgs. 123-124). At Tahtaawee in fact, like Napoleon, uses the terms *ummah* and *millah* interchangeably all throughout *Takhlees*. While At Tahtaawee also praises loyalty to the wider *ummah* in his later works, the new SH geographical based national identity is what receives his primary attention.

To understand the importance of this innovation it might be important to highlight that historically the Islamic position on ‘*asabiyya*—as more generally defined as placing any social relations (i.e.: ethnicity, family, tribe, and more recently nationality) above the Islamic bond of faith—as one of the primary characteristics of *jaahiliyya* (non-Islamic practice) (Baz, 1985). The classic example for the above position is the famous incident when two companions of Prophet Muhammad from two different groups (*Al Muhajiroon* and *Al Ansaar*) got into an argument and were about to fight and called on their respective groups to fight each other. The response of Prophet Muhammad was “Are you already going back to the customs of Jahiliyya while I’m still alive among you” (Baz, 1985, p. 22)? This is among the tens of examples of verses and ahadeeth that label the prioritization of any affiliation above that of faith as an act of *jaahiliyya*, and in some instances an example of one “who is not one of us” and the like (Baz, 1985, p. 24).

The first example is particularly powerful and calls for elaboration. The titles ‘*Al Muhaajiroon*’ and ‘*Al Ansaar*’, were names Allah and His messenger used to praise these groups of Muslims. The first title was given to those who had migrated (made ‘*hijrah*’) from Mecca to

Medina and the second label was given to those who were already living in Medina at the time of the immigration and supported/gave victory ('nasr') to Prophet Muhammad and the other Muslims that arrived. Although these were labels established after the Prophet-hood of Prophet Muhammad, and Allah even praised his companions using these labels they became known by (Qur'an, 9: 117), Prophet Muhammad illustrated that even these identifying labels became blameworthy when prioritized over the bond of faith.

Although many writers merely translate jahiliyya as 'tribalism' or 'nationalism', the Qur'an and Sunnah in fact refer to any un-Islamic practice in such a matter (Baz, 1985). Some writers even translate jaahiliyya as 'pre-Islamic', but this is also incorrect as the above example shows that the companions of Prophet Muhammad did not refer to their pre-Islamic tribal names (Aws, Khazraj, etc.), but ones they acquired after becoming Muslim. Hence, the 'custom of jaahiliyya' was not in the labels used per se, but prioritizing them over the bond of faith.

Interestingly, given that this is a dissertation about the intellectual foundations of Egyptian education, the term jaahiliyya actually comes from the root of j-h-l, which means ignorance. The connection here could be due to the Islamic belief that ignorance of the reality of Allah, Judgment day, and the like, or the lack of accepting or applying the repercussions of such a belief are considered an 'ignorance' to the reality of things. Hence, such usage would be connected to what are considered the two reasons for disbelief discussed in chapter three; 'belief' is often expressed as not just an emotional inclination, but having true knowledge and certainty of such a reality.

Whatever the reason, it is interesting that the ideal social bond for the Western Enlightenment, and which At Tahtaawee might promote as the primary reference for identity for

his national education system, would have been considered by most Egyptians to be the prototype of ignorance. As Maghraoui notes, “until the collapse of the Ottoman empire after world war I, in most parts of the Muslim world, religion [sic] was the primary source of common identification and subjective understanding amongst the inhabitants” (Maghraoui, 2006, p. 70). However, Maghraoui is saying this in the context of a discussion about the nationalist movement of intellectuals against Britain of the early 20th century which would have been the final fruits of the ideas that ulamaa like At Tahtaawee had brought back from France.

Regarding this nationalist movement, aside from the few exceptional cases in the first generation of such students that graduated from Al Azhar madrasa’s higher education, the latter generations were almost unilaterally graduates of the first ‘public education’ system built. Others from this nationalist movement received a European education literally in Europe. Either way, graduates of these European systems were an even more minute elite percentage of the population than the ulamaa at Al Azhar (Hourani, 1970; Wendell, 1972). Even the newspapers, book translations, and own writings that this Western educated intelligentsia produced would not have been accessible to a nation largely illiterate well into the 1970s (ironically the start of the ‘Islamic awakening’) despite the existence of the national educational system.

The fundamental question then arises what were the specific experiences that led to At Tahtaawee’s innovation of a national identity? Just like there does not seem to be any one particular ‘educational theory’ book or experience that made At Tahtaawee envisage French education as he did above, his conception of nationalism also seems to be a conglomerate of a number of factors. These include: his exposure to SH French philosophy, the national identity constructed by Napoleon (through his interaction with French museums containing Egyptian

artifacts in France), and his general experience of nationalism in France, particularly the July Revolution (At Tahtaawee, 2013, pgs. 229-259).

It seems that as At Tahtaawee began to be convinced of the need for a more ‘material’ ideological bond based on physical proximity and exclusivity to a particular location (i.e.: nationalism as opposed to the wider Islamic concept of ‘ummah’) for a society to progress, he would search for a tangible culture to construct a national identity upon. He would find this—ironically in France--in the ancient Egyptian artifacts taken during the Napoleonic invasion and the detailed Greek-Roman mythology based historical narratives that had been developed around them in his studies. As highlighted above, who controlled the artifacts of Egyptology determined the historical interpretations and significance allotted to them. Given the SH premises inherent to nationalism and the fact that Ancient Greek-Roman philosophy was the foundation for the SH of the Western Enlightenment, ancient Egyptian identity would in fact be much more ‘European’ than ‘Egyptian’.

In Takhlees, At Tahtaawee narrates a mammoth of texts that he reads in France, for a short period of time in Marseilles but mostly in Paris. At Tahtaawee reads on his own, in libraries, group readings with mission supervisors, and even translates many such books during his stay and upon his return from Paris. In fact, At Tahtaawee exerts himself so much in his studies that he starts to develop eye problems from reading in the dark after official hours at his host’s home in Paris—students were only given a limited amount of wood to burn for light. This might be why his supervisors repeatedly attest to his impeccable assiduousness and manners in the ‘letter of recommendations’ At Tahtaawee includes in the Takhlees (At Tahtaawee, 2013). However, it seems as alluded to above, that his independent readings outside what Muhammad

Ali considered the ‘real’ Uloom and Funoon, he was sent to study (math, engineering, and drawing), are what put so much pressure on him, but nonetheless, had the most impact on him and Egyptian society thereafter.

In terms of content, At Tahtaawee reads works on ancient history (particularly Greek and Roman), Greek philosophy and mythology, arithmetic, logic, geography, French poetry, Enlightenment philosophy, and even the French constitution. Interestingly however, At Tahtaawee’s curriculum reveals either At Tahtaawee or his supervisor’s strong bias towards the arts in general and almost nothing resembling what Ali sent him to learn. The choice of books At Tahtaawee later translates upon his return to Egypt hints that the curriculum bias towards the arts might have been at least partially student-directed (At Tahtaawee, 2013). For example, in section five of chapter four where At Tahtaawee discusses what he read in Paris, he discusses the history and philosophical works he read in two to five times more space than the roughly seven lines he spends discussing what he studied in math, engineering, and geography (At Tahtaawee, 2013).

Also, a casual look at the table of contents of Takhlees will reveal a similar pattern. Chapters one and two are dedicated mostly to describing At Tahtaawee’s trip and sights on the way; chapter three has sections on landscape, local customs, food, clothes, religion--which he describes as more or less atheist claiming “they do not have any connection to Christianity except the name” (p. 97)—showing the role of Paris as the cultural and intellectual center of SH thought in Paris at the time⁴⁴; chapter three also includes French progress in knowledge (Uloom), volunteer citizen activities, and particularly French governmental practices; chapter four

⁴⁴ One of At Tahtaawee’s supervisors who proofread Takhlees for publication would in fact criticize At Tahtaawee for generalizing this to France, since according to him such an attitude toward religion was most prototypical of Paris.

discusses what he read and his correspondence with French academics (ulamaa)⁴⁵; chapter five provides intricate detail on the July revolution taking place during his stay there; and lastly chapter six gives a more detailed exposition on various Uloom and Funoon (Sciences and Arts). Interestingly, only Math falls under the realm of what Ali sent At Tahtaawee to learn—military related science and arts. In fact, all the other sections of chapter six are Arts: the intellectual structure of French knowledge (discussed above), French language, a comparative discussion of various European-rooted languages and Arabic, writing, logic, the ten forms of Aristotle, and math.

In terms of philosophy, most academics note At Tahtaawee being influenced the most by Enlightenment philosophy while in France, particularly the works of Comte, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Voltaire (Hourani, 1970; Maghraoui, 2006; Wendell, 1972), ideas which would find good company with the Saint Simonists already living in Egypt upon At Tahtaawee's return. The Saint Simonists already had wide influence among Egyptian elite with their ideas of leading 'social scientists' as the ideal elite to rule a country (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). One could also add Pearl-Macken to this list of SH thought whose work *Natural Rights* (by which he probably meant human rights given the way At Tahtaawee uses his ideas in his later work), At Tahtaawee notes that he translated and "understood well" (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 222). At Tahtaawee summarizes this text as being about "the art of judging/appraising as good or bad according only

⁴⁵ At Tahtaawee takes pain to explain to the reader that these ulamaa are not like 'our' usage of the term; rather, they are specialized in the sciences and usually know almost nothing about the 'branches' of knowledge like Christianity. Although At Tahtaawee acknowledges that this is not the indigenous approach to knowledge, it seems he does not notice that he himself has accepted this new conception of knowledge in referring to the SH foundation of the Arts and Sciences (or at least the sciences) as a default type of knowledge, and 'religion' as a branch of knowledge.

to the mind which the French make [this ‘art’] a foundation in their political rulings, which [these rulings] they call laws [shar’yya]” (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 222).

At Tahtaawee also notes that he reads parts of Montesquieu’s *The Soul of Legislation* which At Tahtaawee describes as a

balance between the methodologies of Sharia and politics [and also] based upon judging/appraising as good or bad according only to the mind; the French call Montesquieu the French Ibn Khaldun...and similar to this I read a book called *The Social Contract* by an author named Rousseau, and it is great in its meanings (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 222).

Interestingly, Voltaire’s *Encyclopedia of philosophy* is the only thing that At Tahtaawee places in a category of philosophy. Nonetheless, what concerns us here is how At Tahtaawee was influenced by SH thought. Arab and Islamic History Guru Albert Hourani (1970) summarizes these influences as

Rousseau’s Conception of the legislator, the man who has the intellectual ability to conceive good laws and is able to express them in the religious symbols which the generality of people can understand and recognize as valid...that the people could and should participate actively in the process of government; that they should be educated for this purpose; that laws must change according to circumstances, and those which are good at one time and place may not be so at others. [also] the idea of the nation [from Montesquieu which]...emphasized the importance of geographical conditions in molding laws...the geographically limited community, the society constituted by living in one place; and he taught too that the rise and fall of states was due to causes, that the causes

are to be found in the ‘spirit’ of the nation, and that the love of country is the basis of the political virtues... (p. 70).

These ideas can in fact be seen quite clearly in At Tahtaawee’s later works. As will be shown, At Tahtaawee clearly has a European frame of reference for most of the theoretical constructs in his works that are merely expressed in Islamic language as was the case with Napoleon, an indigenous format with colonial content. As seen above the idea of dressing ‘good ideas’ in religious symbols could have been derived from Rousseau. This will also be the case for what is presented as an indigenous cultural vehicle around which At Tahtaawee constructs a ‘national identity’, ancient Egyptian civilization.

Ancient Egyptian civilization as Egyptian Identity and the Missing Pharaoh in the Educational Curriculum

What had before been a rubbish heap of broken ‘idols,’ resin-soaked corpses, and building material left behind by ‘Pharaoh’ and his infidel hosts, to even the best-educated Egyptian, was now suddenly transmuted to the imperishable works of art and architecture of a mighty people, and the preserved remains of distant ancestors (Wendell, 1972, p. 122).

These words by Charles Wendell in his classic *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image* (1972) aptly capture the task that At Tahtaawee had in front of him in constructing a national identity based upon ancient Egyptian civilization. What Wendell is referring to is the prohibition on statues, monuments, and pictures that depict a living creature (particularly its

face) in Islam⁴⁶ (i.e.: the sphinx, etc.) which would have largely affected the existence of what is commonly considered ‘Art’ in Western societies. Even the pyramids for example would technically have been considered giant gravestones or shrines which would probably have been demolished, had ulamaa known there were dead corpses under them given the Islamic prohibition on erecting structures of any sort above graves (aside from a stone or marker to indicate its existence and deter people from walking over it or disrespecting it). All of this of course due to the strict ahadeeth related to these topics.

As mentioned above regarding prohibitions in Islam, they are due to the existence of a prohibitive text in some way, and the ultimate reality of the ‘wisdom’ or reason behind a matter is deemed to be never completely accessible to humans. Nevertheless orthodox scholarship considers such prohibitions most likely due to fear of the sanctification and divination of humans as was common throughout history, including what is believed to be the first version of polytheism on the planet (i.e.: sanctification of a particular group of righteous people). This is all theoretically speaking of course.

Practically speaking, Egypt, including much of the Muslim world, became a bastion for Sufi superstitions and shrines throughout the second half of the Middle Ages (Berkey, 1998, vol. p. 410), so it is unlikely common folk would have concerned themselves, aside from finding the whole practice of statues and pyramids rather strange as will be noted below in Muhammad Ali’s response to the European notion of archaeology. Out of all things to preserve however, it is likely that the claimed tomb of Pharaoh would probably have seemed the strangest to the Egyptian

⁴⁶ Most ulamaa of the last century have allowed its use for overriding necessities using the concept of maslaha mursala in Usool Al Fiqh (i.e.: educational books, etc.)

populace in being the center of a ‘national culture’. The term Pharaoh, as alluded to in Wendell’s quote above, would automatically bring to mind one of the worst oppressors in human history (repeatedly discussed in the Qur’an) for the average Muslim (irrespective of whether the Pharaoh in the Qur’an is in fact the same in the tomb unearthed by Napoleon’s cadre⁴⁷). As for intelligentsia (ulamaa), who were the most common reference point for a largely illiterate population well into the 1970s, largely ignored ancient Egyptian civilization. Arguably the most popular Islamic historical work written, Al Tabaree’s *Tareekh*, skips over ancient Egypt history with little more than a list of kings (Reid, 2002, p. 30).

These obstacles are in addition to the fact that as mentioned ‘Egypt’ at this time was not defined by its present-day geographic boundaries. Egypt had up until this point included parts of Al Sham and Sudan –places unlikely to hold semblances of ancient Egyptian artifacts aside from the latter’s ‘mini pyramids’ from the ancient Kush civilization. Nonetheless, At Tahtaawee would find sufficient inspiration in his Egyptology experiences in France and history curriculum to construct a national identity. However, some claim there was even an incident prior to this to inspire At Tahtaawee’s interest in ancient Egypt.

Donald Reid argues that the first evidence of At Tahtaawee’s interest in ancient Egypt is when he published an Arabic translation of Joseph Agoub’s Dithyrambe Sur l’ Egypte in 1827 (a year into At Tahtaawee’s mission). Agoub’s family had been living in Egypt during Napoleon’s invasion and fled with the French when the latter left. Reid (2002) notes that Agoub

studied languages, taught Arabic, frequented literary salons, assisted Edme-Francois

Jomard with *The Description*, and tutored Al-Tahtawi and the Egyptian students in Paris.

⁴⁷ Pharaoh is not a name, just a title for rulers of ancient Egypt, like Caesar among the Romans, etc.

Agoub's Dithyrambe was an exile's romantic lament for his lost homeland, 'mother of the gods, heroes, and sages' amid whose ruins 'forty centuries assembled' (p. 53).

The connection of Agoub to Edme-Francois Jomard (At Tahtaawee's academic supervisor), who helped compile *The Description* and tutored At Tahtaawee will not be lost on the reader. However, as mentioned above, At Tahtaawee's curriculum in France also included a vast array of Greek-Roman history that would emulate the European narrative of Egypt's decline and hence need for imperial European control discussed above. At Tahtaawee notes in *Takhlees* for example that he read a "general history consisting of the ancient histories of the Egyptians, the Iraqis, the people of Al Sham, Greece, the non-Arabs [he probably means Persians by this], the Romans, and the Indians [not to be confused with the Native Americans] (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 220). There is the expected SH approach to history here in outlining the histories of various ethnic groups as opposed to what would have been more common in Egypt up until this time, a concept of 'Islamic history' or the local history of Muslims in a particular area.

Also of note is the fact that Greece is the only entity not listed as 'Greeks' for example, as if they are an ethnic group. This could be an example of the perception of Athens or Greece as the first nation-state, but at the very least shows the special status At Tahtaawee affords to Greece as will show in his own history book. This is critical because as Reid (2002) notes, since At Tahtaawee was

taking his cue from nineteenth-century Europeans, he took literally Herodotus' tale of Sesostris's (Ramses II) vast conquests in Europe and Asia as well as Greek legends of Egyptian colonies in prehistoric Greece. 'Greece,' declared Al-Tahtawi simply, 'is the daughter of Egypt' (p. 146).

At Tahtaawee (2013) also notes in Takhlees that he reads a piece in the “science of mythology [which At Tahtaawee takes care to define for the reader saying] this is the science of the un-Islamic period [jaahiliyya] of Greece...” (p. 220). one can almost read between these lines—declaring Greek mythology as the period of jaahiliyya for Greece--the famous narrative in Europe at this time that societies started off as polytheistic then gradually ‘evolved’ to a category of belief systems called ‘monotheistic religions’, since At Tahtaawee is implying that there was a period after ancient Greek mythology where Greece was not ‘jaahily’. However, Greece became Christian afterwards not Muslim. Such language is telling of the SH current in Europe at this time since there is no narrative of one Truth here, neither Christianity nor Islam. Christianity has become interchangeable with Islam for At Tahtaawee. At the least Christianity has become just as Islamic as Islam itself, just like the French were just as Muslim as the Mamlukes (and even better) in the case of Napoleon.

Moreover, this is of course contrary to what is assumed would have been well-known to At Tahtaawee, the Islamic belief that human civilization started monotheistic with Adam. It is passages like these that make the reader conclude that either At Tahtaawee did not realize he was losing all trace of Islamic identity in France, or that he had converted to SH ideology intentionally and was developing his own Rousseau ‘hidden curriculum’ for Egypt. After French approval for publication, Takhlees would be distributed to the first Egyptian national education system upon At Tahtaawee’s return as mentioned above.

As has also been mentioned, At Tahtaawee’s supervisor Edme-Francois Jomard was not only the most influential person in constructing At Tahtaawee’s Arts-based curriculum, but also one of the prime contributors to *The Description*. Jomard is also the one to introduce At

Tahtaawee to de Sacy in Paris (the teacher of many of Napoleon's cadre), the one to draw up the maps that Napoleon used during his invasion, and not surprisingly join At Tahtaawee's Egyptian society upon the latter's return to Egypt. Hence, there is a consistent SH source of influence on At Tahtaawee throughout much of his life.

Given that for the most part the achievements lauded by the French as 'evidence' of Egypt's greatness were only so from a SH worldview, it is not surprising that At Tahtaawee had to come to Paris to discover Egypt's greatness. As Reid (2002) notes, 'national museums' played a role as "expressions and shapers of industrial capitalism, *nationalism*, and democracy" during the 19th century (p. 95 emphasis added). Many of the artifacts collected from Egypt (like obelisks and the Rosetta stone) during Napoleon's expedition were placed in Parisian museums (Colla, 2007). At Tahtaawee was not far from such events. Upon realizing the great importance the French held for ancient Egyptian artifacts, At Tahtaawee develops very strong feelings regarding this new phenomena called 'archaeology'. At Tahtaawee (2013) frankly demands the return of these artifacts saying,

Now that Egypt has taken the means for *becoming civilized and learned according to the manual of Europe*, it [Egypt] has more of a right to what its predecessors have left for it of all kinds of designs and products... this is closer in resemblance to ghusb [theft with a connotation of rape] (p. 294).

Nonetheless, although At Tahtaawee will develop this notion of ancient Egyptian civilization as the root of Egyptian identity and greatness (in his famous history book among other mediums), in the two textbooks that were actually distributed to the schools—*Takhlees* and *Al Murshid Al Ameen* lil Banaat wal Baneen (hereafter *Al Murshid Al Ameen*)—there is almost

no mention of ancient Egyptian civilization. The possible reasons for this decision might be found in the conclusion of Takhlees.

Given that I have thoroughly discussed the main explicit points of French influence on At Tahtaawee's educational thought while in France—his new conception of nationalism as the most advanced social bond and ancient Egyptian civilization as the ideal cultural vehicle for its establishment in Egypt--I will end this chapter on At Tahtaawee's study abroad with some important points from his conclusion to Takhlees.

In the conclusion of Takhlees, At Tahtaawee describes his mission's trip back to Egypt and the sights they see; I will only analyze that which At Tahtaawee stops to spend significant time on himself. As the mission is traveling to Marseilles to board the ship back to Egypt, At Tahtaawee notes that they pass by Fontainebleau which is popular for being the place that Napoleon was defeated. At Tahtaawee (2013) notes that there is a giant tower like structure there with inscription of the names of the Bourbon family. Interestingly, he notes, that the French have done this taking as a role model [ta`aseeyen] their predecessors from those that have passed from the people of Egypt and others. Look how the people of Egypt have built obelisks and the pyramids of Giza. Undoubtedly, they only built them so that they would leave a trace [aathaarun] of [themselves] for those that come after them to see" (p. 294).

At Tahtaawee goes on to note that whatever other myths the reader might have heard from historians (he probably means Egyptian ones since Egyptians are his primary audience) about the origins of the Egyptian pyramids and obelisks, French ulamaa (scientists) have discovered the reality behind these artifacts, that they were constructed by ancient Egyptian

kings (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 296). However, aside from this comment and the one above regarding French archaeology consisting of theft, Takhlees, is virtually free of any references to Pharaonic culture. It seems the answer to this mystery lies here in the very same conclusion of Takhlees. Although *Mabaahij Al Albaab* (his theory for Egyptian progress in general) and *Anwar* (his history text) are full of references to Pharaonic culture, both of his texts specifically dedicated to educational issues give such culture almost no mention. While much attention has been paid to At Tahtaawee's *Mabaahij* and *Anwaar* (Hourani, 1970; Reid, 2002; Wendell, 1972), this dissertation hopes to focus more on the texts that were more dedicated to At Tahtaawee's educational ideas.

Teaching Multiple Audiences

The conclusion of Takhlees points to a possible reason for the awkward lack of Pharaonic identity that At Tahtaawee has become known for introducing to Egypt. This reason seems to be At Tahtaawee's multiple audiences, namely Muhammad Ali, the general Egyptian public, and Jomard (or the French academics de facto leading Ali's reforms in Egypt). At Tahtaawee (2013) starts the conclusion of Takhlees noting that

what is known is that the soul of the reader must want to know what has been the results of this trip that there has never been anything like before, nor such money spent on a trip before, nor anything seen like it before except that [people] would call it tales of the ancients! (p. 294).

At Tahtaawee continues with pages of description of the high status that other French educated Egyptians he's met in France have been appointed to, given the priceless educational

expertise they've acquired in France; he however, "the poor slave" is returning to finish the objective of his trip" (At Tahtaawee , 2013, p. 295). At Tahtaawee is presenting this narrative as a sort of job application to Muhammad Ali. The melodramatic episode At Tahtaawee narrates in these pages combined with the similar one depicted in his entire chapter dedicated to his final exam (which even the Russian Minister of Information supposedly attended), the strange inclusion of the 'letters of praise' from French supervisors, At Tahtaawee's vividly elaborate poetry praising the "light"⁴⁸ he's brought back from France (that "no one can deny except the blind") , and the 'doctor's note' attesting to the extreme diligence he displayed in his studies included in the Takhlees, testify that At Tahtaawee's primary audience was first and foremost his employer, Muhammad Ali. Before being an outline for Egyptian reform, Takhlees is also a report of what At Tahtaawee has accomplished.

At Tahtaawee's second audience seems to be the general Egyptian audience. After more details of At Tahtaawee's trip he notes

there is nothing remaining except for us to provide a summary of our journey. It has become evident to me after contemplating the manners of the French and their political conditions that they are much closer to the Arabs in nature than the Turks or any other groups of people and this conclusion is based upon certain factors among the most prevalent of which are: [their position towards] *honor, freedom, and pride*—in fact they name honor pride and swear by it at important occasions, when they swear they fulfill their oaths, and when they enter covenants they fulfill them, and no doubt honor is one of

⁴⁸ 'Light' is usually associated with revelation in the Qur'an and one of many metaphors At Tahtaawee uses throughout his works to displace Islamic concepts of light, guidance, wisdom (as seen above) with SH definitions of these concepts as being science, philosophy, etc.

the most important characteristics of a human to the true Arabs as is proven by their poetry and sayings. One poet says...[poetry] (p. 298, emphasis added).

Importantly, one could argue from the quote above that At Tahtaawee is trying to connect French to Arab culture through the *Maqaasid Al Sharia* (objectives of Sharia)—protection of Islam, peoples’ lives, wealth, intellect, and families (ird)⁴⁹. The maqaasid Al Sharia are five things that many ulamaa historically theorized was the gross sum of what Islam seeks to protect (given their understanding of revelation), but importantly is just human opinion which cannot override clear-cut laws in Islam. This is a problem that At Tahtaawee will run into in his later works which he will not find a solution for except to imply that he is the mujadid al asr (‘revivalist of the century’)⁵⁰ (Imara, 2011). Based upon this claim and that he has achieved the status of ijtihaad mutlaq—the ability to derive *new principles* for deriving rulings from the Qur’an and Sunnah (the ‘Usool Al Fiqh’ discussed in chapter three)—At Tahtaawee will *claim the right to change the very principles of legislation and that the ‘human rights’ of Europe are ‘natural rights’ that everyone is born with, and in fact take the place of Usool Al Fiqh* (Imara,

⁴⁹ An important difference as has been noted throughout this paper is that these concepts already come defined in the actual laws of Islam, as opposed to the more protestant approach of SH that allows individuals to change the laws to agree with changing societal definitions of these concepts. Moreover, these objectives themselves are merely a theory that some ulamaa had about Islamic legislation historically (not revelation, ergo not binding on Muslims), but was only taken into consideration when there was not a clear law about an issue and they had to perform ijtihaad (hypothesize a ruling based upon the body of revelation using the principles for deriving legislation).

⁵⁰ The *Mujadid Al Asr* is the concept is based upon a hadeeth that each century Allah will choose a person to re-strengthen Islam depending on what the Muslims’ greatest weakness is at that particular time. Ulamaa usually have various lists about who have been perceived to be such people historically; they generally tend to be either ulamaa (like Ibn Taymiyya) or courageous warriors like Salaah Al Deen (Saladin). Their interpretation probably goes back to the central concern of *Al Fatiha* mentioned above (the opening chapter considered the summary of Islam), that the two main patterns of misguidance are not understanding reality (knowledge) and/or not acting upon the repercussions of that reality—interestingly not too far from the Western academic conceptions of *theory and practice*.

2011). The resemblance of such ambitious claims to Napoleon's claim above of being the 'Awaited Mahdi' to justify power will not be lost on the reader; At Tahtaawee did study Napoleon's biography in Paris after all. As will be seen, these two claims are closely connected to the fact that At Tahtaawee acquires an incomplete understanding of the SH conception of *freedom*—which he believes is the cultural 'methodology' for progress and one of the three French characteristics he claims above. These connections will be further discussed in At Tahtaawee's definition of a sincere citizen in Al Murshid. Although numerically freedom and honor only comprise two of the five objectives of Sharia outlined above, At Tahtaawee in fact considers freedom by itself to be the comprehensive word that defines all aspects of French society as he notes in his discussion of the French constitution in Takhlees.

Nonetheless, the concept of Maqaasid, like ancient Egyptian civilization, are concepts that will be promoted in At Tahtaawee's books that seem to be directed towards the intelligentsia of his time as more 'long-term' societal changes (i.e.: Mabaahij). Proof of At Tahtaawee's plan for slow change is the poetry he ends with on the last page of Takhlees reassuring the reader "the blue of the morning sky comes before the white part [the better brighter part], and the abundant rain [Arab symbolism for goodness, provision, etc.] starts with just small drops" (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 310).

Although At Tahtaawee realizes that Pharaonic culture would be the ideal national culture of Egypt--given that such cultural artifacts would not be found in other areas of 'Egypt' up to this point (i.e.: parts of Al Sham and Hijaz) and correspond to the ideal of a Montesquiean geographically defined nation-state--Arab culture is the closest *most practically relevant* culture At Tahtaawee can use to scaffold the SH ideas he is bringing to a Muslim audience. From a

Rousseau perspective, At Tahtaawee has to speak to people according to concepts they deem valid⁵¹. The Egyptian population of the time as mentioned knows absolutely nothing about ancient Egyptian civilization aside from the story of Pharaoh in the Qur'an. On the other hand, many aspects of Arab culture were approved of by Islamic legislation—like most of the characteristics At Tahtaawee claims about the French above--depending on one's definition⁵². This is one reason Arab culture would be a more practical ideal for Egyptian Muslims to aspire to.

Practically speaking, At Tahtaawee's utilization of Arab culture as the basis for an official Egyptian national identity will accommodate At Tahtaawee's latter definition in *Al Murshid* of a national identity being one that unites people around a language and submission to a particular law (Sharia). Although Egyptians by this time would be significantly far removed from the 'traditional' Bedouin sort of Arab culture that At Tahtaawee reminisces about in his works, it is still culturally the closest frame of reference for Egyptians of this time. A theoretical return to this classical literature representing Muslims' early days would be At Tahtaawee's imitation of the European Renaissance. However, as will be seen, given that At Tahtaawee is pursuing reform on the European model of civilization as he states above, At Tahtaawee's return will be to Greek-Roman civilization more than Arab culture. It seems by following the European model for renewal, he copied it with little customization.

⁵¹ This latter concept is actually a prominent one in Islam as well, but given that At Tahtaawee's works contain nowhere near the amount of verses and ahadeeth as they do role models of Greek-Roman-French civilization, it is assumed the latter is At Tahtaawee's main frame of reference.

⁵² One clear exception is pride which although was a characteristic of pre-Islamic Arabs, is considered a major sin and from one angle the first sin by Satan.

Furthermore, in the above quote At Tahtaawee seems to have wholeheartedly not only absorbed the SH conception of identity (ethnicity) he read in his history curriculum. He even argues a claim similar to that which Napoleon attempted to justify colonization with, that since the Mamlukes were supposedly just as foreign as the French, and that the French were much closer to local values (better Muslims than the Mamlukes, etc.), the French would fill the Mamluke's role much better. The only difference here is that At Tahtaawee takes Napoleon's rationale one step further and claims that in fact the Turks leading the Muslim caliphate at the time were just as much a 'foreign' and hence colonial entity in Egypt as the French were. It is doubtful Ali would have been offended in any way by At Tahtaawee's preference of French to Turk culture since although Ali himself came to Egypt as part of the Ottoman army, he himself was trying to split from the Muslim caliphate and start his own empire. The more links to the Muslim caliphate that At Tahtaawee can sever, the better politically for Ali. The convenience of At Tahtaawee's nationalism for Ali's dynasty is similar to the role of the Western educated elite that would participate in the ruling regimes of the 19th century, if not to the present.

One last point of mention from the above quote is that by using Arab culture as the cultural bridge between Egyptian and French cultures, At Tahtaawee has significantly softened the blow of his claim: that the culture of the country that just occupied Egypt in recent years is more similar to 'Egyptian culture' than the Turks'. Since Arab culture would have been associated with Islam, it served as a bridge between Egyptian and French cultures for At Tahtaawee. Moreover, the mere use of the ethnic label 'Turks' as opposed to 'the Ottomans' for example would frame the entire change of reference as one that is based on real ethnic and cultural differences as opposed to merely the name of the dynasty ruling the Islamic caliphate.

Again, here the point is to use *secular identifiers, not deen ones*. Suggesting that Muslims abandon the Islamic culture of the caliphate for French culture would have been much more difficult task than framing the switch as ethnic and secular.

Although Napoleon's colonization included military and educational components; At Tahtaawee only required the latter. It is this type of role that Egyptian elite would play in the colonization of Egypt up until the present. On one level, they represent the famous "callers on the gates of hellfire" that Prophet Muhammad warned Muslims to be careful of since "although they speak our tongue and look our appearance, they are not from us." In contemporary discourse, such people are also known as the infamous 'fifth column'⁵³.

Another fascinating theme in At Tahtaawee's conclusion to Takhlees is his refutation of what he believes lay Egyptians might say about his correlation between French and Arab culture; he in fact spends most of the rest of the conclusion defending his claim. At Tahtaawee (2013) starts by saying

And let not anyone think that because of their [the French] lack of jealousy over their women that they have lost their honor because if they ever found out that one of them had done something [been promiscuous], they are from the most evil of people on them [these women], themselves, and the ones that have cheated them [the male participant in the adultery] (p. 298).

While this may not seem like an issue particularly relevant to an 'educational work', one must remember that no such field exists yet in Egypt and At Tahtaawee has been trained as an Al

⁵³ There is generally two lines for each gender to stand in when receiving state or federal services of some sort in Egypt; this term hints at the alien nature such people represent in Egyptian society until the present.

Azhar alim, ulamaa whose works would seem very ‘un-linear’ and resemble those of a polymath to the contemporary reader. This is aside from the issue of the Arabic language itself historically being used in such fashion in Arab literature. Hence, as will be seen in *Al Murshid*, there is no conception here that policy issues need to be discussed separately from how children should be raised at home, separately from how men and women should interact with each other in society or even in marriage. At Tahtaawee views his ideas as parts of a general guideline of suggestions for how Egyptian society can progress; concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ space and ‘secularism’ are still being introduced during this century. At Tahtaawee is addressing anticipated concerns about his national reform of *tarbiyya* for Egypt, not just *ta’leem*. In this text, At Tahtaawee is justifying the adoption of French ideas and culture and he realizes that one of the most observable cultural differences is related to the physical appearance and interaction of the genders. As will be mentioned in the discussion of *Al Murshid Al Ameen*, the Islamic face veil for example was seen as a clear sign that Muslims had not culturally assimilated into French culture in other French colonies. As will be seen, French concern over face veils was not far from educational discussions on getting Muslim women ‘educated’, and the colonial intentions behind the *type of education* implied. As is seen here, the difference in physical appearance and behavior of French women from Egyptian women draws significant attention for At Tahtaawee who seeks to re-frame the ‘external’ barriers (the ‘format’) embodied in Islamically unappealing aspects of French culture, to ease insertion of French knowledge and culture in the internal intellectual sphere.

Most Egyptian women rarely left the home or spoke to the opposite sex (aside from *mahaarim*⁵⁴) during this time period as Lane records in his observations of 1820s Egypt (Lane, 1860), let alone touched or danced with the opposite gender with someone else's spouse as At Tahtaawee describes in Takhlees about French society. Hence, At Tahtaawee spends significant time in the conclusion of Takhlees defending French women for the Egyptian reader since in fact women will be a critical topic of his national educational policy in Al Murshid Al Ameen. Here in the conclusion of Takhlees, At Tahtaawee goes on to try and justify the above 'lack of jealousy'⁵⁵ of French men by quoting one alim's opinion on the Qur'anic story of Joseph that due to the response of the Egyptian king to his wife's attempt to fornicate with Joseph, this must be a quality of Egypt (i.e.: little jealousy) (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 299). This notion of the people of a country having certain innate qualities is critical to the philosophical works At Tahtaawee read in France like the work of Depping, which At Tahtaawee was so captivated by that it was the first work he translated upon his return to Egypt as will be seen. At Tahtaawee goes on to reassure the reader that even though "it is always brought up the issue of French women not being covered", their middle class is chaste and in fact since they have "good *tarbiyya*" and only love *one* significant other, such issues do not lead to promiscuity (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 300 emphasis added).

⁵⁴ The best English translation for this might be 'un-marriageable family' since there is technically no explicit prohibition in Islamic revelation on marrying cousins;; however, some ulamaa have discouraged it under the presumed validity of some empirical science that shows possible harmful genetic effects in children.

⁵⁵ Praiseworthy jealousy for one's spouse in Islam is being protective and not liking to see one's significant other behaving outside of plutonic behavior with a 'marriageable' person of the opposite sex; this is what it seems is being referred to here as opposed to the blameworthy jealousy of being suspicious or even accusing the other of promiscuous conduct without proof. The latter is actually a punishable crime and major sin for the accuser.

Interestingly, in this issue of women is one of the few times (and the only time in the conclusion) the word *tarbiyya* is used. All while discussing the various types of public secular schooling of presumably objective knowledge and education in France At Tahtaawee uses the more limited term Ta'leem (from the root of Ilm as discussed in chapter three); whereas, here when he is talking about learning that includes moral issues, he uses the more comprehensive word *tarbiyya* (discussed in chapter three). Ta'leem is just the formal schooling part of *Tarbiyya* for At Tahtaawee; the latter requires societal support from all sectors including the home. The home was in fact the most important place *tarbiyya* would have taken place in the Muslim world historically given there was no conception of systematically educating the populace en masse; the notion of primary education for all arising from the SH impulse to produce active citizens needed to participate in a democracy did not exist yet in this context.

Although the specifics are not of particular concern here, the methodological approach At Tahtaawee follows above by trying to predict the 'wisdom' or objective behind Islamic guidelines for dress, polygamy, and unnecessary interaction between genders provides a very powerful pedagogical lesson here. Typical of the SH belief that philosophers can devise better laws than the 'tales of the ancients', the SH methodology searches for the objective behind the law under the premise that better means can be constructed. Logically speaking, if revelation is a human construct, then there is no reason to believe that a better human construct can't be created. The case At Tahtaawee provides of appropriate dress for example assumed that outright physical fornication was the only thing detrimental to the society and therefore prohibited, as opposed to the Islamic approach noted above that any prohibition by default contains more harm than benefit within and of itself, even if one does not know the wisdom behind the prohibition. The

specifics are not of as much concern here as the new SH methodology At Tahtaawee is teaching the reader.

At Tahtaawee proceeds to give examples of Arab pride, honor, and freedom through various Arab tales and poetry throughout most of the conclusion, but I will stop at just one example since it is related to At Tahtaawee's conception of 'freedom' which will be central to his definition of a citizen in *Al Murshid Al Ameen*. Probably the most powerful example that At Tahtaawee provides from what he considers 'Arab culture' is a story about Umar ibn Al Khattaab—one of the 'four rightly guided caliphs' who are considered the best Muslims in history after the prophets.

The story is one of an Egyptian man who comes and complains to Umar (who is caliph at the time) that after the man beat Amr ibn Al 'Aas's (the governor of Egypt and a companion of Prophet Muhammad) son in a horse race, the son beat the man with a whip; upon Amr ibn Al 'Aas hearing this he imprisoned the whipped man out of fear that the man would complain to Umar. Umar was known for his justice. The man flees from prison and complains to Umar who calls Amr and his son to come to pilgrimage (to Mecca) during the pilgrimage season to meet with him. When they come Umar commands the Egyptian to whip Amr's son, which he does for some time as Umar encourages him, and then tells the Egyptian he can even humiliate Amr by pulling off his turban. The man however declines. The climax of the story is that Umar turns to Amr ibn Al 'Aas and asks him "Have you taken people as slaves even though their mothers gave birth to them as *free people*" (pgs. 305-306 emphasis added).

This is one of the main examples At Tahtaawee provides of what he claims to be the Arab stance towards freedom; however, the most paradoxical part is that other companions of

Prophet Muhammad themselves described that this was in fact an unheard of approach in the pre-Islamic era. The norm and pride for Arabs was that the strong oppress the weak and that this did not change except among those who became Muslim. This would of course contradict the very definition of ‘freedom’ that At Tahtaawee has sought to attribute to Arab culture⁵⁶ at large and in fact just be a similarity between what At Tahtaawee implies is SH France’s concern for equal accountability to abide by the law irrespective of social status, and that which is found in certain parts of Muslim history as well. In reality, At Tahtaawee’s example is a much better example of the Islamic concept of justice than freedom; although the word ‘free’ is used, the story is primarily concerned with people getting their rights. At Tahtaawee’s conception of ‘freedom’ will be returned to in Al Murshid Al Ameen.

At Tahtaawee concludes Takhlees with the logical outcome that At Tahtaawee has been leading up to through his various arguments for the similarity of Arab and French cultures, that France (as represented by Jomard) is the ideal country to define and direct every aspect of Egypt’s *development*. At Tahtaawee concludes with an eight point plan suggested by Jomard for the development of Egypt and Al Sham. The eight point plan involves: improving trade and industry in Egypt; transforming Egypt into a trade route between all known continents at the time; industrializing Egypt’s agricultural production; spreading the knowledge of Public Health, philosophy, logic, empirical science and French and eastern eloquence to the populace; and a couple of points of particular interest here. These points are,

⁵⁶ It is important to note that although ‘Arabness’ was traditionally considered something only attainable through ethnicity, as Islam spread and intercultural exchange happened among the Ottoman caliphate, it became more defined by the language.

The Science of knowing the conditions of monarchies and states, and what makes them prosperous in this world and the next; giving birth to males and females; organization and coordination of state affairs; and the fundamentals of French politics which are human rights, legal rights, and international rights (At Tahtaawee, 2013, pgs. 306-307, quote from p. 307 emphasis added).

At Tahtaawee concludes this list of suggestions with the reassurance that Jomard is one of the most sincere people to Egypt and its ruler “in actions and intentions.” (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 307). At Tahtaawee’s third audience, Jomard (or the French elite in Egypt coordinating Ali’s reforms) will probably have significant influence on whether At Tahtaawee gets appointed to some position in Ali’s reforms and hence At Tahtaawee seems keen to promote French ideas for Egyptian reform. As for At Tahtaawee he concludes Takhlees reassuring the reader in vivid pages of poetry, with traditional philosophical high-handedness, that whatever he/she does not understand then it is due to their own lack of perception of the ‘bigger picture’ behind things to be found in knowledge of *politics and Sharia*, in which case they should ask a *hakeem* (philosopher). After all At Tahtaawee concludes, actions are to be judged by their intentions⁵⁷ (At Tahtaawee, 2013, p. 307).

I will start with some general observations about Jomard’s reform suggestions, before discussing them in detail, along with At Tahtaawee’s concluding words. As is evident from this list and known from the pattern of European colonization in general, the main thrust of colonial

⁵⁷ This is a reference to a hadeeth that is considered one of the two most important ahadeeth of the Sunnah; however, what At Tahtaawee has conveniently not mentioned is that the second condition for any act of worship to be accepted (which is what the hadeeth is referring to) is that one worships Allah according to the way of Prophet Muhammad. As is shown throughout this dissertation, it is this Islamic version of wisdom that At Tahtaawee neglects for a more Machiavellian Napoleonic approach of utilizing ‘religion’ for worldly gain.

endeavors was not to outright destroy their own colonies, but rather to ‘develop’ them to European ways of living as to take advantage of their resources (natural and human) and sell their intellectual and tangible products and services to them. This has been discussed at the end of chapter three. Egyptians become absolutely reliant on European powers in trying to nationally reform their country according to a European blueprint. What At Tahtaawee might not be fully aware of, but has been discussed above is that components of this blueprint are already in motion since Saint Simonist and European (also mostly French) intelligentsia in general are coordinating all of Ali’s national reforms (Colla, 2007). The fact that Europeans are already coming and creating railroads and other transportation infrastructure all throughout the 19th century to better transport goods to Europe and transport European tourists around the country in the flourishing tourist industry created by Napoleon’s archaeology is another sign of Egypt’s transformation into a colony (Reid, 2002). Colonization is on the most basic level, exploitation for the benefit of the imperial elite coordinating the system and the indigenous participating in it (Memmi, 1967). This concept is beautifully captured in the contrast between the word Europeans introduced into the Arabic language for colonization, *isti’maar* (purposeful continuous development), and the word the indigenous population came to use afterwards, *istikhraab* (purposeful continuous destruction).

While no one can deny that European colonization brought some benefit to indigenous populations—an indigenous perception that the colonizer desires only outright destruction will only fuel outright revolution--the capital holding elite of the capitalist wave flourishing this century are the primary beneficiaries (Baer, 1969). While the indigenous elite that cooperate in

this colonization feel empowered through the trivial power allotted to them, they are in fact mere intermediaries between the colonial power and the indigenous⁵⁸ (Memmi, 1967).

As for the parts of the above quote that deserve comment, they are several. First is that one of Jomard's recommendations for Egypt is almost word for word the title of Montesquieu's book that At Tahtaawee read in Paris and translated upon his return—*The Reasons for the Rise and Decline of civilizations*; according to At Tahtaawee, Jomard recommends the “*Science of knowing the conditions of monarchies and states*”. However, there is a sort of interesting ‘sub-title’ in this recommendation “*and what makes them prosperous in this world and the next.*” Montesquieu's theory of course has no particular interest in what makes a people prosperous in an afterlife, but again here there is a pattern of format-content incongruence similar to that which there was with Napoleon. However here, the format is now SH with some metaphysical content ‘thrown in’ for good measure. Hence, Jomard concludes his list of suggestions with a promise that there will even be some metaphysical reward due to the implementation of his national reform plan. However, there is another strange ‘outlier’ component to this list that can hardly be interpreted as more than a ‘concession’ to the racist notion that ‘Easterners’ were more sexual and emotional than the rational West (i.e.: birthing boys and girls). What concerns us here of course is more in the last phrase quoted above, “*the fundamentals of French politics which are*

⁵⁸ A perfect example of this is seen as early as 1835, roughly four years after At Tahtaawee's return to Egypt. In the decree of Muhammad Ali on August 15th, 1835 He deplors:

Foreigners are destroying ancient edifices, extracting stones and other worked objects and exporting them to foreign countries...Europeans have buildings dedicated to the care of antiquities...Having considered these facts, the government has judged it appropriate to forbid the export abroad of antiquities found in the ancient edifices of Egypt...and to designate in the capital a place to serve as a depot...it has decided to display them for travelers who visit ht country (Reid, 2002, p. 55).

However, even after this declaration, the plundering of Egyptian property continued and all Ali could say in response was that since the people stealing were Europeans (one assumes these were European academics or tourists), it was out of his control (Reid, 2002, p. 55).

human rights, legal rights, and international rights.” Although At Tahtaawee will almost never discuss the last type of right in this list, the first two will draw attention in *Al Murshid Al Ameen*.

Lastly, concerning At Tahtaawee’s own ending comments in *Takhlees*, it seems At Tahtaawee has thoroughly internalized the Saint Simonist conception of a secular social science clergy developing the country. However, one cannot help but notice that the high handedness At Tahtaawee portrays is not very different from what was perceived by most French as a hegemonic Catholic Church that the French revolution sought to overthrow. While At Tahtaawee will supposedly espouse the cause of freedom, it seems that he’s created a new elite monopoly on not only theological knowledge, but at least one aspect of empirical knowledge, politics, which like all branches of the French educational structure would stand firmly on philosophy. Whoever does not understand or find undesirable the ideas in his book, At Tahtaawee has decreed that there is no questioning of authority; such a person should ask a *hakeem* (philosopher). While of course, most of the Egyptian public at this time probably did not understand, or more importantly care, about the SH ideas At Tahtaawee had brought back, he did not even consider it necessary in *Takhlees* to mention any Islamic justification for this knowledge. While it would only make sense to ask one knowledgeable of the things At Tahtaawee discusses in his text if one had a question—presumably he now considers himself a philosopher since they are needed to understand his work. At Tahtaawee’s silence, at least in this text, on what Sharia proofs support his ideas is telling. It is as if there is now a ‘Mosque’ that At Tahtaawee has in mind for Muslims that has *ulamaa* inside that are really philosophers, and they are the ones that Muslims should turn to in deciphering their metaphysical or worldly texts. This

is similar to the situation preceding the French revolution when Catholics had to refer to the Church to have their texts read to them; however, At Tahtaawee has added another field of knowledge that also needs a priestly intelligentsia for interpretation--education.

What might have started as an attempt to simply ‘acquire’ some Uloom and Funoon (academic content) slowly transforms the entire theoretical framework of Egyptian intelligentsia throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Commenting on this pattern in a different context, Tageldin argues that the intelligentsia of Egypt throughout the 19th and 20th centuries mimicked the image of themselves that Europeans Had already created for them. Through the translation of Arab literature, Europeans acquired Egyptian culture and re-represented it. Subsequently, these academics tried to become civilized (read Europeanized) intellectually while wearing an outer garment of Islamic identity externally. Tageldin (2011) notes “the cloak of the Azharite is but a royal robe whose folds drape loosely around the original—the European undergarment” as was the case of Azhari Al Manfaluti who literally wore European underwear under his Azhar clothes (p. 3). Although Tageldin (2011) speaks in the context of Arab literature, she makes an insightful conclusion that seems just as relevant here,

As Egyptian intellectuals came to see their colonizers and themselves as translatable—or exchangeable—terms, they could in turn ‘love’ those colonizers enough to translate French or English idioms and ideas. In so doing, they negotiated a complex and often conflicted surrender to the ideology of European supremacy and to the imperatives of European colonialism...cultural imperialism [in Egypt] might be better understood as a politics that lures the colonized to seek power through empire rather than against it, to translate their cultures into an empowered ‘equivalence’ with those of their dominators

and thereby repress the inequalities [read differences] between those dominators and themselves...translational seduction (p. 10).

There are many other fascinating aspects to At Tahtaawee's observations of French education like: his praise of Rousseau-ish speaking to small children as if they are adults as part of 'home education' (which he actually gives examples of dating back to ancient Greek-Roman civilization); the use of age-appropriate curriculum; theatre as a school for the ignorant and educated, and the seeming superiority of French for 'human knowledge'⁵⁹—which would cause atrocious acts on the Arabic language until the present by many of At Tahtaawee ideological children⁶⁰. However, the focus in this dissertation will try to avoid micro level issues that do not directly deal with the macro-level SH conceptions of knowledge and identity in the foundations of Egyptian education and the role of the latter in spreading these values in Egyptian society. We will now turn to an analysis of Al Murshid Al Ameen, At Tahtaawee's theory of tarbiyya which he writes shortly upon return from France in 1831.

⁵⁹ These first two could actually easily be supported from the Sunnah; whereas, the use of theatre and claim of French as superior for 'human knowledge' would need further research.

⁶⁰ At Tahtaawee's use of European reference points in trying to conform Arabic language to languages of Greek-Roman origin (read 'universal' linguistics) would become a common starting point for this controversial battle field among Egyptian intelligentsia after him (Hussein, 2008).

CHAPTER 6: A LOOK AT RIFAA'A RAAFI' AT TAHTAAWEE'S INTELLECTUAL BLUEPRINT FOR EGYPTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION IN AL MURSHID AL AMEEN LIL BANAAT WAL BANEEN (THE HONEST GUIDE FOR THE BOYS AND GIRLS).

Upon returning from France, *Takhlees* would be published. Reid (2002) considers At Tahtaawee's *Takhlees*, published in 1834 by the government press at Bulaq "the first of three landmark book of the decade in which Egypt and the West took each other's measure"; He considers the other two books to be Lane's *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), and Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1837) (Reid, p. 52). Interestingly, as discussed above, it seems At Tahtaawee wrote one genre of literature for intelligentsia (that matched Wilkinson's interest in ancient Egyptians) and another for a more lay audience (that corresponded with Lane's interest in *modern* Egyptians). Reid considers *Takhlees*, which would be distributed to the civil schools and officials free of charge, the sister book to Lane's text (Reid, 2002, pgs. 52-54).

This does not mean that At Tahtaawee gave less attention to ancient Egyptian civilization upon his return; as mentioned, nationalism in general and the idea of ancient Egyptian civilization as the identity behind it is what At Tahtaawee is most known for and these ideas would not be far from his educational work as will be seen. At Tahtaawee, 'the poor slave', would in fact get his desire and be very active in numerous spheres of influence like translation, journalism, and general works on Egyptian society which could fall between the modern day disciplines of sociology and philosophy. Throughout these positions, as Mona Abu Zaid notes in

her introduction to Al Murshid Al Ameen, At Tahtaawee attempted to create an Egyptian Renaissance using the French ideas and knowledge he had learned and “*inserting* them into the Islamic system and life [in Egypt]” (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 27). At Tahtaawee saw his role under the Ali dynasty (Ali, Abbaas I, Sa’eed, and Ismaa’eel) like that of the ulamaa under the Abbasid dynasty of the 9th century (At Tahtaawee, 2012), probably due to their heavy governmental support of the ulamaa in empirical and theological sciences.

At Tahtaawee was first appointed as a translator between Egyptian students and their foreign teachers in the Medical College which led to him teaching translation and several pre-requisite classes in the preparatory school that became attached to the college (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 28). Gesink (2011) argues that At Tahtaawee’s first work translated was “Depping’s *Apercu Historique sur les Moeurs et Coutumes des Nations*—suggesting to his contemporaries that their inferiority to the French was due to their non-industrious natures” (p. 33). If this was the case, then this would be one more example of the Social Darwinist lean in his later work. Between 1831 and 1836, At Tahtaawee was also appointed as a translator for the War College and made head of the new College of Languages (established to prepare students for the civil schools and train officials and translators) (At Tahtaawee, 2012, pgs. 28-29). During this time At Tahtaawee also acted as inspector of schools, member of the educational commission (which would become the ministry of education), and editor of the official newspaper, *Al Waqaa’I Al Misriyya*; Hourani notes that At Tahtaawee would translate over 20 works during this time including Montesquieu’s *Considerations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Decadence* (*The Causes of the Rise and Fall of the Romans*), a work that had significant impact on him (Hourani, 1970, p. 71).

At Tahtaawee would even be sent Egyptian artifacts by Ali to lead an initiative for the first Egyptian museum, but this would fail since the plan would be the same year as a decree for 18 saltpeter factories and some of these monuments became used as resources (Reid, 2002, pgs. 55-56). Expectedly, it is clear where Muhammad Ali's priorities lay. During the 1830s At Tahtaawee supervised or directed roughly 2,000 student translations and established a College of Islamic law and jurisprudence attached to the College of languages and accounting (which had Azhari instructors and a curriculum with theological knowledge as well as empirical knowledge from France) (Gesink, 2010, pgs. 38-41). One can only imagine how chaotic this decade's reforms must have seemed to the local population given Lane's account of the 1820s. Lane describes almost no empirical sciences or philosophy in Egypt; rather there is theological knowledge, folk superstition, magic, and sorcery. Now a slew of foreign empirical sciences and philosophy is being introduced into country through mediums that did not exist before.

During the 1840s Ali's rule becomes much weaker until he is forced to acquiesce to the 1840 treaty of London where a British-Ottoman led European coalition⁶¹ allotted Ali hereditary control over Egypt under the condition that he forfeits lands like Al Sham and Al Hijaz. Interestingly, such a move made At Tahtaawee's geographical ideal for a state upon present day boundaries much more pragmatic for his later intellectual descendants. Due to finances during this period, Muhammad Ali closed most of the military colleges and appointed graduates from the student missions abroad and military colleges (like At Tahtaawee) to re-organize remaining

⁶¹ The nuances of the relationship between the Muslim caliphate, European states, and Egypt are complex this century due to waning power of the Ottoman family, the apprehension on both sides (Ottoman and European) about Ali's ambitions, and the tremendous fear felt by European elite (church and hereditary royalty) due to the danger posed by the SH revolutionary ideology demanding rights for the masses, democracy, and the like.

ones under a civilian department of schools. Gesink (2010) notes that this re-organization allowed Ali's reformers "unprecedented access to positions of determinative authority over the entire Egyptian educational system. These reformers began a campaign against the halqa⁶² [sic] system (pgs. 38-39). These new civilian schools would be expanded the most under Isma'eel as will be discussed.

During the 1850s—if one skips over the one year reign of Ibraheem (1848) since it does not seem anything particularly new happened regarding education that year--'Abbaas Hilmi I (1848-1854) and Sa'eel (1854-1863) left things as Ali had regarding the civil schools and put their attention towards improving the Al Azhar system. More conservative rulers of the Ali dynasty who were much more affectionate towards Al Azhar, like Abbaas, took an unfavorable position towards At Tahtaawee, demoting him, closing his College of Islamic law and jurisprudence (including its College of Languages and Accountancy), and sending him to Sudan to head a primary school; At Tahtaawee had "developed a reputation as a critic of Azhari legal education" by this point (Gesink, 2010, p. 40). Thus, it seems At Tahtaawee had met resistance similar to that of his teacher Al Attaar. Sa'eel would recall At Tahtaawee from the Sudan and appoint him as supervisor of the War College, College of Accountancy, College of Civil Engineering, Translation Bureau, and inspector of the building department (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 6).

As Reid (2002) notes,

official patronage of the Arabic Renaissance (nahda) peaked under Khedive Ismaa'eel (r. 1863-1879)...[during this time period] the Renaissance flourished not at Al –Azhar but in such new or reformed milieus as press, state and missionary schools, study missions to Europe, telegraph offices, translation bureaus, and the offices of judges, lawyers, and import-export merchants (pgs. 96-97).

While it would be impossible to do justice to providing a close analysis of all these mediums of change, this part of the dissertation plans to closely analyze just the ideas of At Tahtaawee as expressed in his main educational text written during this period since he is the minister of education and a textbook writer during the early portion of Isma'eel's reign (Mitchell, 1988, pgs. 76-77, 80; Reid, 2002, p. 98). Ismaa'eel makes At Tahtaawee head of the translation bureau, a supervisor of Arabic instruction in schools, and editor of a school magazine called *Rawdat Al Madaris*. At Tahtaawee also gives numerous lectures at schools throughout the educational system he will help develop (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 8). Although it is not certain specifically what textbooks he was responsible for writing during this period, the main educational piece he wrote after his return from France, *Al Murshid Al Ameen* (1872), seems appropriate for analysis since it was distributed to schools as has been mentioned.

Mitchell in *Colonizing Egypt* (1988) notes that under Isma'eel's organic law of 1868, a plan for new elementary instruction was proposed implementing three types of elementary schools depending on the size of the towns, each type with three stages--primary, preparatory, and final (pgs. 76-77, 80). While not much is known about the curriculum of this system, it is hoped that an analysis of At Tahtaawee's work *Al Murshid Al Ameen* will shed light on the ideological commitments this first national education system had.

Al Murshid Al Ameen contains seven chapters (aside from the introduction and conclusion) with various sections in each chapter: chapter one is “On the Reality of the Human being and His Relation to Other Creatures and the Virtues of Males and Females and the Repercussions of [each of these sets of virtues]; chapter two is “The Shared Characteristics Between Males and Females and What is Particular to Each [Gender]”; chapter three is “On Teaching and Instruction” (At Ta’alum wat Ta’leem). chapter four is “On the Nation and Civilizing it and Showing that From the Greatest of Ways to Accomplish This is Through Education and Learning and Completing Basic Knowledge for the Public”; chapter five is “The Ways to Build the Homes and Houses and the Virtuous Results of Educating Women”; chapter six is “On Family Ties and its Members’ Rights Over Each Other” (At Tahtaawee, 2012).

As can be gleaned from the chapter titles, Al Murshid Al Ameen reads more like national policy suggestions by contemporary standards, but as mentioned, this text and Takhlees are what were distributed to schools and specifically addressed what one would nowadays consider an ‘educational theory’. As has been mentioned, At Tahtaawee views Tarbiyya (education) as a holistic initiative that is not just called national education, but literally calls for every part of the nation to play its role (not just schools). Nonetheless, At Tahtaawee makes two critical yet paradoxical claims throughout his work: that primary education for all is the most important aspect of national tarbiyya; and that knowledge of Islamic theology is the ultimate goal of national tarbiyya as a whole. The paradox lies in the fact that At Tahtaawee allocates this latter objective of theological knowledge completely to parents, and allots the responsibility of empirical knowledge to schools. We will turn to Al Murshid Al Ameen to trace this pattern. For

lack of space, the discussion will focus mostly on the introduction, and chapters three and four, which strike at the core of his educational theory in general, and its role in national progress.

In the first section of the introductory chapter entitled “On the *Soul* of Education (Tarbiyya)” At Tahtaawee starts by noting that

Some of them define At Tarbiyya as the development of the limbs of the newborn until he/she grows up, and development of his/her *soul* with the deen and sustenance [i.e.: human] forms of knowledge. Subsequently, At Tarbiyya has become divided into two parts: [one] physical, and this is the growth (tarbiyya) of the body; and one symbolic, and this is the growth (tarbiyya) of the soul (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 11 emphasis added).

The first point of analysis here is the fact that At Tahtaawee attributes these ideas (which he adopts as his own in Al Murshid Al Ameen) to an unnamed group of people. This is a strange way to start a text in English but is common in Arabic in denoting that these people are obviously experts on the issue at hand. However, normally one would say ‘*qaala ba’d...al mufasssireen, an nahweeyeen*’, etc. (some of the exegesis ulamaa said, some of the Arabic grammar ulamaa said, etc.). One would normally state what kind of ulamaa are being discussed. The only phrase I know of similar to At Tahtaawee’s language is *qaala ba’d al ulamaa’ or qaala ba’d ahl al ilm*⁶³ (some of the ulamaa said or some of the people of knowledge said) common in theological literature used in this general sense, but understood to refer to the experts of the

⁶³ Quite the opposite of At Tahtaawee usage, this is the only time I know of ulamaa generalizing one type of knowledge (theological) as ‘the knowledge’, but even then it’s in the singular tense ‘Al Ilm’, meaning it’s not necessarily the only one, but the most important. However, with At Tahtaawee usage science becomes the knowledge (s), Al Uloom, in the plural tense, not that it’s the most important one, but that science encompasses everything that can be called ‘knowledge’. Science is all the types of knowledge that exist. This makes something like theological knowledge of course outside the realm of ‘certain knowledge’, which seems to indicate that it is in the realm of ignorance or maybe the less objective connotation of ‘beliefs’.

theological field being discussed for example. However, the topic here is not just theological knowledge, nor a branch of it. It seems At Tahtaawee does not quite know what to call these people that are apparently experts at theological and human knowledge. It does not seem he can just call them the default ‘ulamaa’ since such are rarely knowledgeable of human knowledge in this century (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). The net result conceptually however is the same; the responsibility has been lifted off of At Tahtaawee and placed upon these other people who presumably have authority to speak on the subject as experts. At Tahtaawee adopts the ideas of this ‘some’ without any justification for why their ideas are relevant. The question arises who are these experts?

As mentioned above, At Tahtaawee’s new promotion of science as *Al Uloom* (*The knowledge*) denotes exclusivity in Arabic, while other forms of knowledge still require an adjective—i.e.: theological knowledge remaining labeled *Al Uloom Al Shar’iyya*. Hence, the only way linguistically for any form of knowledge to be knowledge is if it is colonized under a scientific framework (see Takhlees above). The example of such a framework was seen in the French intellectual structure above designed by *hukamaa*’ (philosophers) since At Tahtaawee considers philosophy as a form of science.

The natural consequence of the following premise would be that the experts denoted by ‘the some’ in the quote above are scientists in the Tahtaaweeyen sense; Western educated ‘academics’ in general contemporary terms. Although At Tahtaawee does not have a name for these academics here, At Tahtaawee will solve this conundrum by labeling such academics as the real *ulamaa* later in *Al Murshid Al Ameen*. Specialists in only theological knowledge are actually not even considered *ulamaa* anymore by the time he writes *Mabaahij*; there he argues

for re-naming them ‘*Preservers of Deen*’ (‘Umanaa’ Ad Deen). Hence, this new human knowledge which was said to be constantly ‘increasing’ for example in Paris⁶⁴ is in contrast to the static knowledge of Deen that is needed to be kept ‘preserved’ by the new ‘Mosque’ At Tahtaawee implied the need for in the conclusion of Takhlees and recommended in *Mabaahij* (Imara, 2011). This innovation in terminology is one of At Tahtaawee’s that apparently did not find a wide following in the Muslim world.

One might question however, what kind of scientists preach about enriching the soul, that the development of the *soul* requires deen and sustenance [i.e.: human knowledge, but particularly that which can acquire wealth for sustenance] forms of knowledge? This is a strange concoction that seems to eliminate the SH oriented sort of scientists At Tahtaawee studied under in France, and the traditional ulamaa of Al Azhar. Although no doubt important in an Islamic paradigm as mentioned above, one would be hard-pressed to find a alim in Islamic history saying that biology or chemistry, or even directly ‘sustenance’-oriented manual skills of agriculture or trade being *required* to feed the soul. The most logical interpretation here seems to be that the ‘some’ referred to above are students from the European missions sent to Europe, including At Tahtaawee, since he builds upon these ideas as his foundational understanding of education in Al Murshid Al Ameen. While useful human knowledge is praiseworthy in an Islamic paradigm (see Ch 4), for At Tahtaawee it takes the place of revelation in a St. Simonist sort of paradigm.

The last point about the above passage is that although the idea of the human being consisting of a soul and a body is commonplace in Islamic texts, At Tahtaawee has innovated a

⁶⁴ This shows its objective nature since what has been ‘discovered’ as science can supposedly never turn out to be wrong and decrease—evolution and progress is a one way endeavor in SH narratives.

strange new sort of content into the soul slot of this framework, that the soul *needs* human knowledge (in addition to revelation) for nourishment. This is a good example of the ‘melting’ of ideas At Tahtaawee attempts in most of his works⁶⁵.

At Tahtaawee (2012) goes on to explain the above structure of tarbiyya further saying
 And among these [two types of tarbiyya], there are three types of nutrition for the infant, each related to one or the other of these two types of tarbiyya: the first is the nutrition of the *one breastfeeding the baby with milk*; the second is the nutrition of the guidance of a *guide [murshid]* that *disciplines [ta’deeb]* the infant for the early part of life, cultivates its manners, and accustoms it to praiseworthy disposition and behavior. *The third [type of nutrition] is giving nutrition to their intellects [‘uqool] by learning [ta’leem] knowledge that completes them and this is the role of the teacher [ustadh]*, who takes the role of the guide that was guardian over the child prior to that. Hence, the relation between these three [types of nutrition] is that the breastfeeder handles the breastfeeding, the *educator and guide [murabee murshid]* addresses the second stage of education, and the *teacher [ustadh] handles the final phase of education [primary education]* (p. 315).

At Tahtaawee’s proofs for these particular types of ‘nutrition’ seem to be the Greek-Roman history he learned while in Paris since later chapters of this text overflow with Greek-Roman examples of child-rearing practices like Plato’s fascination with the education that the elite received at his time and desire to make such education for all citizens. In the bigger picture,

⁶⁵ One added twist to this narrative is that in Islam, the intellect (aql) is different from the mind (thihn). The intellect exists in the brain and heart, while the mind is only in the brain. However, this last connection is beyond the scope of this dissertation and would require further research.

what At Tahtaawee is attempting here is a Renaissance upon the ‘European manual’ as he explicated above in Takhlees. As will be elaborated, this is also the first foreshadow in Al Murshid Al Ameen of the secular national educational system At Tahtaawee promotes in later chapters. In the above paradigm, a breastfeeder addresses the physical first part of tarbiyya, a ‘guide’ addresses the second stage of discipline, manners, and good conduct (which is referred to as ta’dib, which is a component of tarbiyya), and a teacher addresses the third stage of intellectual development (which is the only stage limited to ta’leem). Interestingly, the first stage is described by the comprehensive *tarbiyya* (education), the second by *ta’dib* (manners) (with no intellectual aspects), and the last stage as *intellectual* (ta’leem) with no ta’dib as if the child has developed the manners he/she needs by primary school. Oddly enough, there are no parents explicitly mentioned in this picture. I will analyze his explanation of this framework step by step.

At Tahtaawee’s stance on breastfeeding and the second stage of tarbiyya is that irrespective of who does the breastfeeding, the mother or women in general should handle the first two stages of tarbiyya. The mother must at least participate in tarbiyya, even if she uses a wetnurse. Why it does not matter if the mother does the breastfeeding will be delayed to discuss the general concepts of these first two stages of education (tarbiyya). At Tahtaawee (2012) says

And from the examples of bad education (tarbiyya) is that the mother leaves the education of her children solely to others. This is because the mother has had put into her a [natural] care and gentleness for her children so she is the most suitable for being kind and gentle in adjusting her childrens’ dispositions. So if a woman raises (rubbat) her children to the age of tamayuz (8-9) a good *education (tarbiyya), the physical and symbolic kind*, [teaching them] good manners, habits, and overall gentleness and

compassion, which are the characteristics of civilization, [these things] will be etched into the minds (adhaan) of the children (p. 324).

At Tahtaawee (2012) provides more detail on these first two stages of education that their objective is to have the child

submit to what the mu'adib and murshid commands as happens with animals, through practice and drilling; as for [later] development of the intellect (aql) where feeding it knowledge is just as important as feeding the body with food, then this aspect is specific to humans. Just like the nutrition of the body is food and it strengthens it, similarly the nutrition of the soul with knowledge (ma'aarif) develops and strengthens it [the soul] on the condition that these knowledge (ma'aarif) are reasonable and acceptable. Therefore, symbolic tarbiyya increases the development of the intellect (aql) of the children with knowledge and good manners which makes the roles of the guide (murshid) and teacher (mu'alim) complimentary. This is why it is said to he/she who acquires these two branches, that they have gotten good tarbiyya (p. 327).

The first point to highlight here is that mu'adib is used in the above quote in addition to specifically saying that such a person is a murabee (even though ta'dib is part of tarbiyya) to emphasize the mudab role of the murabee--ie: the one who gives aadaab (manners) and disciplines the child, which according to At Tahtaawee is women. This takhsees (specification) in Arabic grammar emphasizes the cultivation of manners and values that ta'dib implies in this stage of tarbiyya. Although 'manners' here are just as important and complementary to the knowledge of public education; and in other places, the most important thing for the ummah's freedom and preventing it from disappearing from existence (At Tahtaawee, 2012, pgs. 317-

318), this is not the importance At Tahtaawee allots to this side of symbolic tarbiyya in places like this.

This is the first of many examples where At Tahtaawee takes animals as a starting point for understanding how humans should address education, and at one point even calls humans a “type of animal” which resonates with obvious Darwinist values. The mu’adib and murshid above (women) apparently do not have a very high motivation for becoming educated in the national education that he will call them to below since their role is little more than animal trainers according to the above system. Also, there is no ta’leem involved to women’s role in teaching values and manners; rather, ta’deeb is presented as something that will just happen ‘naturally’ as if through imitation or a Skinner-inspired behaviorism of rewards and punishments.

It is not surprising that one finds such a Darwinist leaning among many of At Tahtaawee’s intellectual descendants; the famous Muhammad Abduh (who would be third in influence chronologically on Egypt’s educational system after At Tahtaawee and Ali Mubarak) will make special arrangements to meet Herbert Spencer in England (Hussein, 2008, p. 28).

The third point of analysis is that At Tahtaawee uses the intellect (aql) and soul (rooh) as interchangeable terms, which are two quite different terms in Arabic as discussed above. This is similar to how At Tahtaawee replaced all knowledge with science as ‘the certain knowledge’ in Takhlees. In fact, the above quote is clear in its premise of an objective universal reason that scientifically assesses ideas as ‘acceptable and reasonable’ or not. There is no bias from personal preferences, lowly desires (hawa in the Islamic paradigm), political or other interest, or mere cultural influence to this godly and disinterested intellect. One can literally imagine a giant brain

just hovering above the earth that humans posit ideas into to check validity of human knowledge or revelation. There is in fact a vivid image of just this when At Tahtaawee discusses that a person should not be attached to worldly issues too much, since all physical things will disappear from this worldly existence (meaning at judgment day) and that the “only constant thing that will remain will be in the world of the intellect (aql)” (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 320). This is a clear allusion to the Islamic narrative in Qur’an which says that “Everything will perish except the face of Allah [just Allah]” at that moment (Qur’an, 55: 26-27); however, the Tahtaaweeyen narrative draws an image of everything being destroyed but a giant brain (assuming his understanding of intellect as human knowledge) left hovering. This is in fact almost identical to the Aristotelian Absent Watchmaker image of God; At Tahtaawee did spend a significant portion of Takhlees explaining the 10 forms of Aristotle as mentioned. In sum, metaphysical beliefs seem to have no role here as well in this discussion of intellect and the soul.

The soul by theological definition is nourished through worship and theological knowledge. As seen in the earlier quote, At Tahtaawee has completely reversed this paradigm to say that the soul and intellect will be nourished by human knowledge only (secular ta’leem from teachers in schools). The tarbiyya from women in the first two stages through the age of tamyeez (8-9), according to At Tahtaawee, is to merely learn values and manners which is not ‘real knowledge’ (ilm) but ta’dib—the murshid murabees above whose particular concern was to discipline and teach manners. The teacher thereafter teaches real knowledge (Ilm, the objective of the verb form of this root ta’leem above) for the intellect. Although At Tahtaawee has earlier stated that the physical and symbolic (human knowledge and revelation) are needed, knowledge of revelation has been limited to learning some general ‘good behavior’ (personified by

obedience to human authority) at home and is not seen to take part of the ‘real knowledge’ that will occur at schools.

Another important layer to this puzzle is that At Tahtaawee calls for the importance of *teaching* girls as is alluded to even from the book title. By placing girls before boys in the sequence of the title, this shows his prioritization of the former linguistically (despite the fact that he does not maintain this pattern consistently). At Tahtaawee (2012) notes

Subsequently, the good education (tarbiyya) of individuals, *males and females*, and the spread of this tarbiyya within themselves causes good cultivation of the entire society, meaning the entire nation (ummah). Thereafter, the nation (ummah) that perfects its education (tarbiyya) of its sons and daughters and are prepared to benefit their nation (watan), is a nation (ummah) that is happy and a nation (ummah) that is praiseworthy (p. 317).

At Tahtaawee goes on to further say in this chapter that the purpose of educating girls is to teach them just like boys since they will be mothers who will raise the next generation, so their education (tarbiyya) should also be “inclined to learning the love of courage and heroes to motivate the children and teach them the importance of benefitting the nation (watan) (p. 324).

In later chapters, a second reason is given for women’s education, to be good wives and keep them busy from mischievous behavior like gossip, but the former point is what concerns us here.

A contradiction here is that At Tahtaawee has argued that women are responsible for both types of symbolic education (deen and human knowledge), but has only provided them the ta’leem of the public school. If the public school is limited to human knowledge (limited to

Western knowledge at this point, if not to the present), even when girls would start going to school, they will just be a medium through which to colonize children with European knowledge of the civil schools⁶⁶. This is in addition to the fact that in regards to women he has already challenged the Islamic conception of ‘modesty’ and dress code in his discussion in Takhlees. There At Tahtaawee posed the premise that as long as people do not commit fornication and adultery then anything ‘less’ than this in terms of mixing of the genders and being nude (from an Islamic perspective) should be acceptable. The role of Muslim women in general, but particularly their dress and education has not been an infrequent colonial tool in other contexts of the Muslim world and hence requires some comment. Fanon (1965) notes regarding the case of Algeria under French colonization,

The role of the Algerian mother, that of the grandmother, the aunt and the ‘old woman,’ were inventoried and defined. This enabled the colonial administration to define a precise political doctrine: ‘if we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight.’

It is the situation of woman that was accordingly taken as the theme of action. The dominant administration solely undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered... (pgs. 37-38).

Fanon (1965) goes on to note that “with infinite science” this “technique of infiltration” was carried out through various mediums—like schools, mutual aid societies and even at

⁶⁶ This approach to intellectual colonization seems still very relevant given the common Liberalist Crusades lead by Western imperial powers in the present to ‘educate’ women in MMCs into non-Islamic worldviews.

company gatherings where Algerian employees are “called in to the director’s office and invited by name to come with ‘your little family.’ ‘The firm being one big family, it would be unseemly for some to come without their wives, you understand?’”⁶⁷ (pgs. 38-40, quote from p. 40). On the part of the man, if he

comes with his wife, it means admitting defeat, it means ‘prostituting his wife,’ exhibiting her, abandoning a mode of resistance...every face that offered itself to the bold and impatient glance of the occupier, was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer (Fanon, 1965, pgs, 40, 42).

In terms of education, Fanon (1965) notes

Schools for young Moslem [sic] girls’ [primary schools] are multiplying. As their pupils’ approach to puberty, the teachers or the nuns exercise a truly exceptional activity. The mothers are first felt out, besieged, and given the emission of shaking up and convincing the father...it is none too subtly hinted that it would be criminal if the child’s schooling were interrupted” (p. 39).

Importantly, the discussion here is not a simplistic notion of whether boys or girls should be educated, but the *type* of education. The issue is one of identity and cultural imperialism-- assimilation to the colonizer’s culture. Fanon (1965) captures the crux of the matter quite succinctly, saying that since

⁶⁷ In regard to the distribution of food subsidies “every kilo of semolina distributed was accompanied by a dose of indignation against the veil and the cloister” (Fanon, 1965, p. 38).

the woman constituted the pivot of Algerian society...converting the woman, winning her over to foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical, effective means of deconstructing Algerian culture” (pgs. 38-40).

The attention that At Tahtaawee puts towards womens' education in Al Murshid Al Ameen is particularly because of his semi-Islamic understanding that women are the foundation of a Muslim society as was understood in Algeria, but not due to their income, due to their role in tarbiyya of children. Where At Tahtaawee steers away from the Islamic paradigm of course is his low view of the worth of the tarbiyya that occurs at home as something that can be accomplished without any formal education in theological issues and dismissed as mere discipline and teaching of basic values and manners. This latter aspect of his view towards the worth of womens' education could be similar to the masses of illiterate Egyptians at the time but seems incongruent to his 'middle class' objective that this home tarbiyya is complimentary and supposed to prepare children for the primary school of the state. The illiterate masses would not have been learning any theological or empirical knowledge this century, aside from very basic concepts that would be gleamed from memorizing portions of the Qur'an and the like in the case of the former. However, the fact that At Tahtaawee is playing a role in the creation of a comprehensive social institution that promises reform through 'ta'leem' on a national scale, but does not include theological ta'leem is disturbing. What concerns us here is that while At Tahtaawee is proposing a national education system for a Muslim population, the system that will be described will pay close attention to human knowledge and almost no attention to theological knowledge despite repetitive claims to the contrary on the part of At Tahtaawee.

Such contradictions could be dismissed under the premise that At Tahtaawee has become fully committed to the SH vision, but the paradox is that major portions of his text claim otherwise, which allude to what has been argued here, that At Tahtaawee does not realize these contradictions since he views all Western knowledge as objective science that can merely be copied to Muslim contexts without any epistemological, ontological or theological contradictions. I will highlight some of At Tahtaawee's stances on Islam's role in education in the very same introductory chapter that has been the focus of this discussion on "On the Soul of Tarbiyya". Throughout this chapter At Tahtaawee discusses Islam as very diverse things, defining it as not just Qur'an and Sunnah, but at times abstract reason, or merely manners limited to the human aspect (with other humans).

Chronologically, the first mention of the importance of Islamic theology is in regard to its role as the prime concern for a nation's well-being since it is the essence of tarbiyya and shapes peoples' manners and their attitude towards Islamic prohibitions. Immediately after the earlier quote that "tarbiyya of individuals, males and females" leads to a happy and praiseworthy nation, At Tahtaawee (2012) argues that this is in contradistinction to

Bad tarbiyya that becomes spread in a nation (ummah) among nations where bad *manners* on the part of its children condemns it to disappearing out of existence; this is because they [citizens of the nation in question] become immersed in their own lowly desires and transgressing the things *prohibited by Islamic law* [muharramat], and they become accustomed to this (p. 317).

Al Jabartee in Al Ajaib quotes Qur'anic verses to the above effect upon the entrance of the French, that Allah is punishing the Muslims for their distance away from Islamic practices as

will be discussed. Al Jabartee was one of the ulamaa that was most critical in his outspokenness against the Sufi superstitions and other non-orthodox practices that had become widespread amongst the Egyptians, many of which consisted of acts of disbelief through association of partners with Allah, the greatest sin from an Islamic perspective. However, if Egyptians, despite identifying with Islam as a primary identity, had fallen into a myriad of various unIslamic practices like magic, superstition, Sufism, sorcery, fortune-telling and the like (Al Jabartee, 1997; Lane, 1860), then how does At Tahtaawee expect an ummah to move away from these prohibitions they've become accustomed to without including Islamic theology in his blueprint for national education?

The answer to this question is that as has been mentioned, At Tahtaawee is trying to reform Egypt on a European manual that he sees based upon objective reason and science, while simultaneously attempting to stay true to Islamic objectives. Another example of this pattern is found in the same chapter, in a section entitled "On accustoming children from the beginning of their puberty stage on the Islamic creed and providing them nutrition with the milk of Islamic laws"

Given the title to this section, one would expect to read a plan for educating children in Islamic theology in primary public schools since this is where he says they should be going after the age of tamayuz (8-9 years old) as discussed above; this is under the logical assumption that children will reach puberty after the ages of 8-9 of course. Rather this entire section says nothing of the sort and implies that 'natural' and 'objective' logic and reason will lead children to the only logical conclusion of the existence of Allah. This positivist approach to Islam of course negates the obvious pivotal role of Divine Guidance, and the important question as to what

children will do with this information that of course could just be taught by an uneducated Muslim, male or female). As mentioned in chapter three, the testimony of faith in Islam is a belief that no one is worthy of being worshipped but Allah (and actually doing that worship), not merely using logical deductions to try and prove the existence of a god. As mentioned above, the problem in this century is not getting Muslim Egyptians to believe that there is some sort of god, but to learn what Allah ('The One True God') commands from them and apply that, which would seem to require some education. At Tahtaawee places himself in this contradiction further when arguing for the justification of pursuing various empirical sciences *as long as they are permissible* within the Sharia (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 326). If Muslim Egyptians are never going to have any formal education in Islamic theology, where will they learn what is permissible or prohibited among all the new various European sciences he discusses, aside from those that will be disguised as sciences--philosophy and even ancient Greek-Roman culture in general as will be discussed--according to his theory of knowledge.

The only tarbiyya presumed as needed (in At Tahtaawee's framework in this section) for the process of learning a complete Islamic way of life in a country being enveloped in European technology, empirical sciences, philosophy, and culture is the role of women in 'accustoming children' to various good manners in the behaviorist manner quoted above. It is as if Islamic values and knowledge will somehow secrete from a mother—who will also receive no Islamic education in the national educational system—to a child in the 'milk' imagery captured in the section title. The latter role of women in tarybiyya has been thoroughly discussed, but the former notion requires further elaboration due to its importance to the overall objective in this dissertation—the secular humanist foundation of Egyptian national education.

Starting with the classical argument discussed above (chapter four), that the entire universe is a series of ayaat (signs) that prove Allah's existence, At Tahtaawee starts the above section with verse eight from chapter 'The Romans' (Ch 30) in the Qur'an. The verse says what means,

Do they not think deeply about themselves (how Allah created them from nothing, and similarly He will resurrect them)? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, except with truth and for an appointed term. And undoubtedly, many of humankind deny the meeting with their Master (Qur'an, 30:8).

Although there are at least tens of verses like this in the Qur'an, it is interesting that At Tahtaawee particularly picked the one from chapter "The Romans" since the verse is exactly after the first few verses which state that "The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest and lowest land [modern day Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine], and they, after their defeat, will be victorious. Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after [these events] is only with Allah. *And on that day, the believers (Muslims) will rejoice [at the victory given by Allah to the Romans against the Persians]* (Qur'an, 30: 2-4 emphasis added).

This choice of verses seems to be a conscious choice on the part of At Tahtaawee. The historical understanding of this verse as is seen in exegesis texts highlights that the reason for this rejoice was that the Romans--being People of the Book—still possessed and/or followed some parts of their original revelation and were thus closer to the monotheism in the revelation Prophet Muhammad had brought. Thus, the companions of Prophet Muhammad were pleased with the victory of the Romans since they were closer to monotheism than the fire-worshippers of Persia. More importantly, Allah nor His messenger disapproved of this happiness on the part

of the Muslims. At Tahtaawee is attempting to show that the ‘Romans’--which has historically been understood to include all European-based peoples (i.e.: Greeks, whom At Tahtaawee prefers, and any later derivations)—were the closest people in values to the Muslims.

As will be seen, At Tahtaawee starts the chapter with the above verse since he argues that Muslims should adopt Western knowledge as long as it does not contradict Islam. From an Islamic perspective, this proposal should not as a default require the long tangent (which will be discussed) he pursues with the above verse on the importance of critical thought and intellect in Islam to contemplate the signs of Allah’s existence in the universe. However, practically speaking there is a general animosity in Egypt towards the presence of French and British troops this century as captured in *Al Ajaib*. This is aside from the Napoleonic expedition at the beginning of the century in the case of the French, and the official British colonization starting in 1882, shortly after the publication of *Al Murshid Al Ameen*. Moreover, the practice of Islam itself would have become confined to imitation of Islamic practices as mere tradition for many if not most by this century as mentioned in chapter three. Hence, one imagines that most of the Egyptian population by this point would reject European knowledge based, not on a critical examination of whether each component contradicted Islam or not, but as a lump sum refusal of foreign ideas. Such factors probably would make the application of such an ideal (the permissibility of borrowing non-Muslim ideas that do not contradict Islam) receive more resistance and be the cause of At Tahtaawee’s many intellectual gymnastics in conforming Islam to European knowledge.

At Tahtaawee (2012) utilizes the above affirmation of the closeness of the ‘Romans’ to Islam combined with the general verse on the importance of the intellect to contemplate the universe to make the argument alluded to earlier saying,

So whomever sees a magnet and its effect on metal, and diamond which can’t be broken by metal and is broken by lead, and pierces steel, but cannot pierce lead knows that the one who placed this secret is capable over all things, so *do not disbelieve in what you might not understand the wisdom behind* because Allah says ‘Never, they have denied the knowledge that they could not comprehend and what has not yet been fulfilled [*i.e.: their punishment*]’ [Qur’an, 10:39]. Therefore, *the intellectual* is the one that if he/she hears or sees something or is called to something or commanded to do something or prohibited from doing something, *and this thing is permissible in the Sharia* (Islam), irrespective of whether it is in accordance with his/her preferences or nature, and he/she does not know whether the correct course of action is to come closer to it or flee from it. He/she should contemplate that thing *first with the intellect* (aql) that Allah The Most High has provided and contemplate of the positives and negatives of that thing, whether it is guidance or mistakes and misguidance. Subsequently, he/she decides with the *enlightened intellect* (*aql nooraanee*) that has been placed in the heart of the human being and does not look to what the lower self (al nafs al amaara bis soo’) or weak intellect calls them to because both of them are in a war with the enlightened intellect and this is what is called peoples’ struggles against their lower selves (jihaad an nafaos) (p. 326).

At Tahtaawee goes on to provide proofs for the importance of jihaad an nafaos in Islam and acts out a sort of imaginary theatre conflict between a ‘lower self’ and an ‘intellect’ within a

person. The first point to highlight from the above quote is that At Tahtaawee uses a Qur'anic verse that has historically been understood (in exegesis) to command not disbelieving in what one does not understand of revelation to argue that the same should apply to empirical science and Muslims should not disbelieve in science they do not understand. Hence, At Tahtaawee presumes that his audience will perceive the no doubt fascinating aspects above as an issue of belief, and not something intellectual; or irrespective of his audience's perception he is making the claim that they should believe in European science blindly as they should do with revelation.

Without the need for exegesis, the above verse is preceded by, "Or do they say: 'He (Muhammad) has forged it (the Qur'an)? Say (to them Muhammad): Then bring a surah (chapter) like it, and call upon whosoever you can besides Allah, if you are truthful!'" The context of the verse is a discussion between Prophet Muhammad and a group of disbelievers in his message; At Tahtaawee uses the verse quoted after it to almost argue that to disbelieve in empirical science is to disbelieve in the entire deen. While such a dramatic argument would surely capture Muslims' attention, he adjusts this premise to a more realistic one, that such new knowledge needs to be Islamically permissible. However again, At Tahtaawee has placed himself in a predicament. Just like the use of intellect in At Tahtaawee's national tarbiyya does not make its first appearance until students engage a largely secular education in the state system, his first use of aql (intellect) in the above quote is after an assumption that the thing is permissible or prohibited. One must use the word assumption here since again At Tahtaawee leaves the reader oblivious as to how a largely illiterate Egyptian populace will make such decisions on new types of European knowledge entering the country. This is not the culture of 'seeking knowledge' (theological or empirical) as was the case more so in the early Middle

Ages—or particularly in the case of the even earlier Abbasid dynasty he views as a role model. The time of the Abbasids was a time rich with a thirst for theological and empirical knowledge (Iqbal, 2007); this is hardly the case in 19th century Egypt.

The last point is that while At Tahtaawee has correctly captured the Islamic position of the intellect being in the heart (or at least one aspect of it given the verses on the topic), his concept of ‘enlightened intellect’ (aql nooraanee) is quite secular and provides an image of a human independent of God given his explanation of it below. Sandwiched between the opening verse from ‘the Romans’, and the later attitude towards science above, is a strange innovation into the concept of intellect. At Tahtaawee (2012) argues that

Allah has placed the enlightened intellect in the heart of the human as a mirror for the intelligent and virtuous to differentiate between truth and falsehood, just like he sent physical messengers to explain the apparent knowledge to *those people whose lower selves are constantly commanding them with evil...enlightened intellect is a messenger before the intermediaries of Prophet messengers or angels...this is why blame and disassociation from [these people] is due to many people in issues of deen, because of their weak intellect, like the people of misguidance and polytheists and statue worshippers* (pgs. 322-323).

At Tahtaawee’s position on intellect being a ‘messenger before messengers and angels’ is quite strong from an Islamic perspective. At Tahtaawee is ‘re-educating’ the Egyptian populace that the default for distinguishing truth from falsehood is a secular intellect (no doubt a symbol of SH), while messengers are for those whose lower selves have gotten the better of them and are therefore ignorant; such people are just as bad as polytheists. This is a very extreme statement.

While, the Qur'an does repeatedly stress that the 'natural' logical conclusion people should come to is that there is One God, the messengers and their revelation play the critical role in explaining the Will of that God and what He commands from humanity. Obedience to that One God according to the dictates of revelation is what earns a person Allah's mercy and enters them into paradise, not merely intellectually realizing that there must be a god of some sort. While one would eventually enter paradise with Islamic belief alone, even a sincere Muslim believer in Allah's Oneness could spend billions of years in hellfire first if their actions deserved this. Moreover, this latter position has no role for Divine Guidance or pre-destination of any sort but is more of an Aristotelian conception of God that has no concern for creation but remains in constant contemplation. This is similar to the earlier image of a giant brain as God.

However, At Tahtaawee has placed the intellectual on a pedestal all on their own and excommunicated the general Muslim masses (who of course are susceptible to lowly human temptations just like polytheists and all other humans) as being just as bad as polytheists. Tellingly, there is a foundational premise to such claims, that mere intellectual belief in the existence of God (without necessarily submitting to Him, etc.) will attain salvation, a non-Islamic belief but that is resonant with some forms of Protestantism. As mentioned, the protestant reformation was of course pivotal to the later events of the Enlightenment. This position on the intellect of course is much different from the previous one that is at least concerned with the position of revelation on a topic before using intellect to decide whether to 'come close' or 'flee'. At Tahtaawee's new⁶⁸ conception of 'salvation' that does not require an

⁶⁸ It seems valid to say 'new conception of salvation' since he did graduate from an orthodox education at Al Azhar, even if like Al Attaar, he was not from those who excelled in theology as he did in Arab literature and poetry.

Islamic lifestyle, but mere intellectual affirmation of a god, would be a logical reason why At Tahtaawee would not see the need for Islamic theology in public education. The repetitive need that At Tahtaawee feels in convincing the Egyptian masses of the validity of using one's intellect and not disbelieving in science is also telling of the science vs. religion narrative At Tahtaawee would have acquired in post-revolution France since there was not any mass or intelligentsia movement against empirical science in Muslim societies historically.

In sum, the aforementioned discussion of the introductory chapter of *Al Murshid Al Ameen* highlights that At Tahtaawee's primary concern is a hybrid of Islamic and Western conceptions of education, but nonetheless concludes much closer to a human-centered worldview than an Islamic one. At Tahtaawee's references for such ideas do not have to be guessed at haphazardly or even just compared to his experiences in France. He provides some explicit references in the end of the introductory chapter in a section entitled "The necessity of education [tarbiyya] for all".

After stating the apparent from the section title and arguing that since every nation "raises animals" for their needs, it is only logical that humans do the same with their children, At Tahtaawee (2012) proceeds to highlight his source of inspiration for his educational theory. He argues,

And the nation (ummah) of Greece, which is popular for its philosophy in ancient times, perfects the education (tarbiyya) of the royalties' children to the epitome of perfection. So when Plato came about and was amazed by this excellent education (tarbiyya) and refinement of manners with *the way that is best*, he sought to have this type of education

as a role model for that which should be provided to the children of every king or citizen (p. 321).

As is seen above, At Tahtaawee seems to even assume the same sort of objectivity about Western culture as he does to Western knowledge, that the Greek way is the best way. In this section, At Tahtaawee goes on to explain how Greek children were raised on the outskirts of the city to be taught courage, discipline, and strength and that wet nurses and personal “teachers” trained them on bearing hardships and difficulties. Not far from modern day practices, all students were to be held to one level of expectations and standards so that those who excelled would be placed in positions of leadership. Children were treated like adults to help their growth and women would be educated to earn the respect of their husbands and ‘toughen up’ themselves and the children. At Tahtaawee gives various examples of Greek moral values, marriage practices, work ethic and even faults contemporary Europeans for not living up to some of these standards like their apparent use of nannies even though Greek women were involved in their childrens’ education (tarbiyya). (At Tahtaawee, 2012, pgs. 331-334). At Tahtaawee even goes as far as to argue that the Greeks of Sparta would be forbidden from “human knowledge” (Al Uloom ad dunyaaweeyah), especially that which was not necessary to focus on poetry since this motivated courage (and apparently is not ‘human knowledge) (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 332).

An apt example of At Tahtaawee’s preferences is that he ends this long narrative with one story of courage among early Arab Muslims and a Qur’anic verse in a half-hearted attempt to make connections, but in only about one-fifth the space (pgs. 334-335). While no doubt many more connections could have been made between Islamic and Greek history, At Tahtaawee

finishes the section somewhat abruptly reminding the reader of one last objective behind national education, that contemporary civilized nations are doing it.

Boys and girls go to schools (madaaris) that have been prepared for them [after home tarbiyya]” in Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Belgium, and America among other countries; this consists of primary education for the “general masses”, and “intermediate and higher education for their elite (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 335).

On this note, I will now turn to At Tahtaawee’s version of this public education aspect of Egyptian national education. Although it does not provide much new conceptually, it does provide the general logistical framework for the public education system.

In the third chapter of Al Murshid Al Ameen, “Learning and Its Types”, while At Tahtaawee once again reminds of the importance of theological knowledge, there is no such priority in the public aspect of national education (tarbiyya) At Tahtaawee envisions. At Tahtaawee notes (2012),

From what is well known is that the *fundamental objective* of all types of knowledge (Al Uloom wal Ma’arif) is only to submit to the command of Allah the Most High...*every sane person above the age of puberty is obligated to know (ta’alum) what is prohibited and what is permissible and live by it”* (p. 131).

The reader will not miss the clear contradiction in these words and the words from the introduction implying that one could just intellectually acknowledge or believe that there must be a god of some sort and move on with their life. We will assume At Tahtaawee’s stance here to be the most representative since it is in the section on “Learning and Its Types” and theoretically the

one dedicated to his discussion of public education. At Tahtaawee takes this stance further by stating (2012),

The Islamic Sciences (Al Uloom Al Shar'ee) are that which the laws of the lands and the comfort of the slaves [of Allah] rotate and these are *to truly know Allah the most High, exegesis, jurisprudence, and Hadeeth since these are what are sought in and of themselves while all other types of knowledge (Uloom and Funoon) are merely tools and supports towards this objective.* The Islamic sciences are more important than anything other than it, *and studying them is the most compulsory due to the urgent need for them to know what is permissible and what is prohibited* (p. 133).

Aside from the obvious contradiction in these words and the introductory chapter's conception of knowledge and education, this vision is not even implemented within the same chapter in At Tahtaawee's actual framework for what Egyptian public education (ta'leem) should look like. Where are Egyptian Muslims going to learn this obligatory knowledge in the detail that he has described?

After similar praise of Islamic theology, At Tahtaawee (2012) describes the structure of what the Egyptian national education system should look like saying,

As for primary education, this is for the *people of the republic* equally, general for all people, *everyone participates in it* from the rich to the poor, males and females, and it consists of *learning how to read and write by reading and writing the Qur'an*, the fundamentals of arithmetic, and grammar (p. 151).

This curriculum does not seem any different than what already exists in the Egyptian kuttaab at the moment as was even recorded by Lane as far back as the 1820s (Lane, 1860). In

fact, as Lane was adamant to point out with the Qur'an, arithmetic, and grammar taught at the kuttaab, the concept of 'reading and writing the Qur'an' did not actually imply comprehension of the Qur'an, let alone anything other than it.

On the other hand, even if one assumes that At Tahtaawee intended a more comprehensive approach, this would in fact only make matters worse. Placing power over primary education in the hands of a highly westernized state as embodied in Khedive Isma'eel or his intellectual cadre of reformers, the SH hidden curriculum (as embodied in the foreign beliefs of Al Murshid Al Ameen) that would have been taught by state teachers would have been a hidden form of intellectual colonization.

Also important is that despite the limited nature of the curriculum at this point, teachers graduating from institutions like Dar Al Uloom (or the later teacher preparation institutes of the early 20th centuries that would actually teach pedagogy) would become totally independent on Western knowledge given the British colonial actors--like the famous Lord Cromer or Dunlop—that would dictate education (Heyworth-Dunne, 1968). These actors would also seek intellectual colonization as captured in Lord Cromer's famous statement for example that he wanted that "de-moslemized moslems' undergo a literal reformation by de-Christianized Christianity" (Tageldin, 2011, p. 30). Cromer would find the ideal medium for this in national primary education (Hussein, 2008).

Hence, the recurring pattern of utilizing an Islamic format or theory, with secular humanist content, among the actors responsible for the intellectual roots of Egyptian national education would repeat itself at least through official de-colonization from British control in the 1952 so-called "free officers" coup d'etat. However important events in the early 20th century

that will be discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation highlight that what might have started as a medium for mass control in the Egyptian nation-state, national education, might have been the very source of undermining the SH worldview that initiated it.

In terms of preparatory education At Tahtaawee (2012) notes that people will have to be motivated to pursue this stage of education since it is difficult, but necessary to “civilize the nation (ummah)” (p. 153). This stage should prioritize what the nation needs the most, like various types of math, geography, history, logic, management, agriculture, composition, lecturing, various physical sciences, and some “foreign languages that benefit the nation” (p. 153). This attention to the nations’ needs will be given further attention in a section of chapter four of *Al Murshid Al Ameen* which discusses the Children of the nation (watan) and what rights and duties they have. At Tahtaawee seems to have however adjusted the importance of preparatory education in the Egyptian model as opposed to what would have been commonly considered the critical stage that produces the intelligentsia that ‘make or break’ the nation in Europe—higher education. Higher education (discounting Al Azhar, since this system will essentially be swept to the side compared to the national public system) is mostly still being taught through European instructors at this point in Egypt (Sulayman, Rushdie and ShufShuq, 1972; Salamah 1962). It would be well into the early 20th century after the creation of Cairo University (1919), the first Egyptian university, before Egyptian instructors would start to have a mentionable presence. The framing of preparatory education as ‘the stage’ critical for civilizing the nation is symbolic of the paternalistic relationship of Egypt to Britain at this point since higher education would be largely limited to European academia in Egypt.

As can be seen from the subject list in the preparatory stage as well, there are no types of theological sciences--i.e.: Fiqh, Hadeeth, Tafseer, etc. The only subject in the above list that even resembles a theological science would be history or composition; however if the former resembles At Tahtaawee ancient Egypt oriented history text (Reid, 2002) or the latter his ideas on reforming the Arabic language (Tageldin, 2011, p. 135), it is unlikely such would include Islamically relevant ideas. What should theoretically be a foundation for education in a MMC and be the root of progress from an Islamic perspective, one's relationship with Allah (and through this one's relationship to one's society), is nowhere to be found in At Tahtaawee's blueprint to civilize.

Also, given that in general Egypt is importing all 'human knowledge' from Europe at this point, and actually the West in general through the present as will be discussed in the conclusion, it is unlikely even human knowledge will be taught from a holistic worldview that only pursues those types of human knowledge that pragmatically improve Muslims' ability to live an Islamic way of life—only part of which is intended to provide for ones' immediate worldly needs. This point will be elaborated upon more as well in At Tahtaawee's chapter on the purpose of education for citizens.

Ironically, the third last stage of public education, higher education, is where there is another mention of theology (Islamic jurisprudence), along with medicine, astronomy, geography, and history; this of course preserves the place of the 'preservers of deen' he's constructed in his other works (Imara, 2011). This last stage is limited to a "couple of individuals from the republic" (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 154). The idea of limiting higher education to an elite was a prime characteristic of Greek-Roman civilization according to At Tahtaawee since as

discussed earlier he argued that it was presumed the intellectual elite of any given era were the ‘cream of the crop’ and those best fit to lead the people. This concept was seen in At Tahtaawee’s earlier description of Greek-Roman society--the reference point of the Renaissance that developed the cultural and ideological base for the Enlightenment. At Tahtaawee’s attachment to early Greek-Roman civilization is also emphasized through his constant insistence on naming Egypt ‘the republic’ like the above quote.

As is apparent, At Tahtaawee spends much more time in *Al Murshid Al Ameen* on theoretical aspects of knowledge, reason, and education than on issues of practical application and logistics (like how and where these three stages of education should be implemented in Egypt). One assumes that this is outside his field of power since the commissions that organized such logistical issues like the organic law of 1868 were led by mostly European intelligentsia and ‘native’ political elite like Isma’eel (Ali, 2009). In At Tahtaawee’s work of creating an Egyptian identity, which also does not rely on his more elite oriented ideas of ancient Egyptian identity as national culture as found in his other texts, At Tahtaawee will utilize a much more practical conception of nationalism. I will now turn to this concept in chapter four of *Al Murshid Al Ameen*, “Discussing the nation and civilizing it and clarifying that the best process for doing so is education (*Al Tarbiyya wat ta’leem*) and acquiring complete knowledge for everyone.”

In the above named chapter, At Tahtaawee proceeds to utilize poetry to construct a nationalist identity based on Arabic literature, with some Islamic pieces, as the cultural bond between citizens. Although At Tahtaawee frequently utilizes poetry and Arabic sayings throughout most of his works, including other sections of *Al Murshid Al Ameen*, the chapters on nationalism are the most filled with poetry on almost every page of the text. This is not be

surprising since Arabic literature, particularly poetry, has acted as a prime medium for Arab culture—from moral exhortation to historical tales to a wide variety of genres. Moreover, language will be one-third of At Tahtaawee’s definition of Egypt’s national identity that will be discussed in coming chapters of the text. However, this pattern also suits well with what At Tahtaawee would have learned in post revolution France of Greek-Roman civilization in the use of poetry and literature as a social bond. As mentioned above, At Tahtaawee went so far as to claim that the Spartans considered poetry a ‘non-human knowledge.

While it is true that At Tahtaawee is somewhat obsessive with his use of poetry and uses it to construct a non-Islamic bond (nationalism), one must take into consideration the historical circumstances socio-politically at this point. Egypt has had questionable sovereignty since the Napoleonic invasion and European influence on Isma’eel’s reign is on its tipping point, as manifests with the official British colonization of 1882. For all practical purposes, by creating an Egyptian national identity based upon Arab literature, submission to a particular law, and rights and duties between the ruler and ruled—the framework in this chapter of Al Murshid Al Ameen—At Tahtaawee is much more likely to be decreasing European hegemony through a centralized local identity than breaking off any connections with the Islamic identity of the wider caliphate. By the 1870s, Ottoman influence is so weak in Egypt that if At Tahtaawee was to sever any connections with the new national identity he’s constructed, they would be connections with the British empire before the Ottoman caliphate.

Throughout section one of chapter four Al Murshid Al Ameen, “Some words on the nation”, At Tahtaawee fills his pages with poetry that highlights: the love various poets had for the place they were born, (“it was the place I was raised, and the first place my skin touched”);

followed by poetry claiming the uniqueness of Egypt, since there is “no consideration for those who preferred Baghdad”; that Egypt is a “piece of paradise on earth”; continuing with poetry praising famous Muslim heroes that lived in Egypt; and ending the chapter with the well-known, but fabricated hadeeth⁶⁹, that “hub al watan min al imaan” (loving one’s watan is a part of faith) (pgs. 256-276).

In the following section of chapter four, “On the children of the nation (watan) and what is compulsory upon them”, At Tahtaawee starts to outline his conception of nationalism. His opening words are “Undoubtedly, the *Divine Wisdom has decreed* that the children of a nation (watan) are always united upon *one language, one ruler, one law (Sharia), and one politics (siyaasa)*” (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 278). At Tahtaawee goes on in Napoleonic fashion to declare that “it is as if Allah has purposely prepared them to cooperate on making the nation (watan) better; it is as if they are like one family and the *nation is the house of their parents where they were raised (tarbiyya)*” (At Tahtaawee, 2012, p. 279). At Tahtaawee goes on to argue that it is due to these reasons that citizens should be like one heart against their enemies, who might try to divide or cause difference of opinion among them, or dissent against their ruler since this would put their freedom at risk. Of interest here is that At Tahtaawee is careful to include an Islamic concept in the above four components of nationhood (Sharia), but in fact the Sharia has already been abolished in Egypt by this point and the only politics that exists is not one of an organized parliamentary democracy or anything of the sort. There is not even an official constitution yet

⁶⁹ A fabricated hadeeth (mawdoo’) is the lowest classification (of the five levels) in the science of hadeeth that highlights that although a saying has been attributed to the Prophet, it is a fabrication with no proof to consider it a part of revelation.

around which At Tahtaawee can claim a ‘politics’ exists. For all practical purposes, the nation is a common language and a ruler to submit to—an ideal formula for dictatorship.

At Tahtaawee (2012) goes on to describe the ‘son of the nation’ to the reader and instruct how one should refer to a person that lives in Egypt, one can add a ‘yaa’ to the end of misr (Egypt) and

call the person a misry (Egyptian). What this means is that the person has rights, and the greatest of these rights is freedom in all affairs as long as the person follows the law...once a person does this then they are like a limb to the body of the nation and this is the ideal relation between the individual and the state among civilized nations...many people did not enjoy this right historically to challenge their leaders’ whims and desires or the law (Sharia)... hence the sincere citizen is one who sacrifices everything for his/her nation, everything he/she owns, everything of benefit to them, their soul, like a father would sacrifice for his child, and his/her intention is always to benefit the nation’s right to honor and dignity (p. 281).

At Tahtaawee ends this chapter with an example of the Roman pledge of allegiance and a Napoleonic claim that of course the ruler Isma’eel is the ‘revivalist of the century’ (see discussion above). At Tahtaawee’s simplistic definition of citizenship as rights, particularly the unrealistic notion of freedom in all affairs, with the expectation that citizens will then sacrifice everything, including their lives for an imaginary ‘nation’ seems to be a perfect example why nationalism as a primary identifier would never take strong hold in Egypt at least until the 1970s (if even then). In reality, the above relationship between ruler and ruled is resonant of the authoritarian regimes that would rule even after independence from British rule in 1952, since

loyalty is de facto just to the ruler, not an agreed upon and strongly conceived notion of a national identity nor an enforceable constitution.

While At Tahtaawee provides a largely secular conception of true knowledge and education convenient for a nation-state in *Al Murshid Al Ameen*, his conception of citizenship and nationhood is drastically lacking in any depth. His ideas on the topic seem to be merely a tangential rant at salvaging unity amongst a populace (behind Isma'eel) that has become particularly weary of European presence and influence by this point, a presence Isma'eel has come to represent (Sulayman, Rushdie and ShufShuq, 1972; Salamah 1962). It might be that At Tahtaawee was unable to construct a feasible national identity since, the promotion of nationalism (being the very definition of ignorance from an Islamic perspective) without at least a convincing attempt to ascribe an Islamic garb, seemed destined to fail. However, the idea of a 'religious nationalism' has gained strong frequency around the world in recent years (Juergensmeyer, 1993) and it is this context that Egypt seems to be the closest to at the moment—leaving aside the thoroughly elaborated theoretical complexities involved in the terminology.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION:
STRUGGLES AND ASPIRATIONS FOR EGYPTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE
NEAR FUTURE

In this dissertation, I have attempted to trace the intellectual roots of Egyptian national education. These roots grow out of the sociopolitical context of the Napoleonic invasion as the jolt that made rulers like those of the Ali dynasty thereafter, and Egyptian intelligentsia that aided them in their reform efforts, aware of the very real need for change. The Napoleonic invasion--with climaxes like the bombing of Al Azhar and the massacre at Al Imbaba--made clear that the spears and javelins of the Egyptians against the advanced weaponry of the French was a clear example of the 'educational gap' that existed between French and Egyptian vocational, military, and technical expertise. The only system of education in Egypt at this time was that of Al Azhar, which was uniquely theological. Although Al Azhar remained the center of Islamic culture in the Ottoman empire by the 19th century, the horrible sociopolitical conditions of Ottoman rule compared to the early Middle Ages of the Islamic caliphate made even this acknowledgement of little value. Islamic practices had become even more ritualistic and spiritless than they had ever been, probably due to the fact that theological knowledge (the theory behind the practice) had become reduced to the repetition of outdated texts and discussion of obscure irrelevant points that were far removed from their primary resources.

From an Islamic perspective, Muslims themselves weren't living up to their own professed values which require investigation of human knowledge and deem sinful the entire

community of ones that do not fulfill this collective obligation. Intelligentsia in general were not playing the role of leadership that is expected in human societies, not just from a SH perspective, but even according to Islamic standards and examples of such practices historically. In hind vision, these are the general ideas behind what could be deemed an Islamic narrative of the historical events; analogies to such a narrative have been recorded by Muslim ulamaa of various specializations throughout history. While many academics have quoted Al Jabartee's famous words about the year of the Napoleonic invasion, that it was "a year of horrible events, a sign of things to come, the reach of destruction", none of the academics that I have come across have mentioned the words he stated right after this sentence. He quoted the Qur'anic verse, "And your Master would not destroy the towns while their people were muslihoon" (those who cause righteousness/reform in society), as opposed to for example saalihoon (those who are righteous in and of themselves) (Al Jabartee, 1997, p. 4). This is important because the Islamic concept of Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil discussed above in chapter three is that oppression and hardship is the natural consequence of any society that does not look after its interests—fulfilling their rights to Allah, then their rights to other humans.

During the Napoleonic invasion, Napoleon did not leave the Egyptian population to make these connections on their own, but concocted his own version of this narrative of decline that conveniently introduced the idea of a national identity based on geographic boundaries and an ancient Egyptian civilization that had once lived in the same area. This civilization was supposed to have been the 'real' Egyptian identity due to its connections to important Western secular achievements (mainly Greek-Roman). Moreover, Napoleon himself instructed the local populace and ulamaa in the ideals of the French revolution and Egypt's own ancient Egyptian 'history'

through public correspondence and history lessons in the diwan system respectively. Ulamaa like Al Attaar and Al Jabartee became infatuated with some of this French knowledge--like the diwan system, French empirical science, and the importance of ancient Egyptian civilization to the French. Al Attaar worked closely with the occupation in Egypt and even afterwards in France during his own disciple's studies there (Imara, 2011). At Tahtaawee played an integral role in the final implementation of SH principles in the Egyptian national educational system.

While it is true that Napoleon's narrative did not have immediate influence on the Egyptian populace at large, he constructed entire edifices of knowledge that represented an ancient Egyptian based national identity—the Institute d' Egypte in Egypt and the Description d' Egypte that would be later published in France. This Egyptian national identity would later be 'discovered' by Egyptian intelligentsia (not only in these bodies of knowledge, but all throughout their curricula) studying abroad in France under the tutelage of some of the same intellectuals that coordinated the technical knowledge needed to orchestrate the invasion (i.e.: Jomard).

Not all these ideas were copy and pasted to Egyptian society in the same way. At Tahtaawee, the ideological pioneer of the Egyptian national education system for example pursued Westernization as the key to reforming Egypt in general, but isolated ancient Egyptian ideology for his more elite oriented texts. At Tahtaawee concocted a much less sophisticated conception of nationalism for the local masses based upon rights and duties and a fragile cultural glue of Arab literature. However, the inferiority complex sparked by the Napoleonic invasion that caused At Tahtaawee to be sent to France to acquire French knowledge ended in his implantation of a different SH ideal that does not seem to have been discussed in English literature—science as the epitome of knowledge itself. In fact, for At Tahtaawee all European

knowledge was science. This innovation allowed At Tahtaawee to make the second conceptual connection that since real knowledge was European secular knowledge, and such knowledge was only accessible through state-provided education, all other types of knowledge (i.e.: theological) could be dismissed as replaceable with the human knowledge of national education. Any need for moral or values education (the other and more important components of tarbiyya from an Islamic perspective) could be addressed at home by women, by teaching whatever customs they had learned as a child or were prevalent in their society. While the repercussions of this innovation might not be particularly fascinating to a Western audience long experienced with what is, at least officially, secular public educational systems, At Tahtaawee's invention of science as knowledge (Al Uloom) has particularly interesting implications to this day for Egyptian education. The most important of these implications is that there will always be a psychological barrier to intellectual decolonization if the very meaning of knowledge is something that the indigenous do not have their own version of (science). I will elaborate on this point below in the synopsis of modern day Egyptian education.

Nonetheless, the generation of intellectuals that At Tahtaawee was a part of also taught others and led all sorts of reforms in Egypt until the ancient Egypt (Western) oriented nationalist movement of the early 20th century that attempted to escape British rule. Even though this movement would fail, it would spark competition for more Islamic oriented reform movements which would become embodied in social movements like the Ummah League, Muslim Brotherhood, and the like (Mondal, pgs. 166-167).

Without a re-conceptualization of knowledge and education, it is unlikely that Egyptian national education would have been able to play the role it did, as one avenue among others in

opening the door to European knowledge and values in Egypt. However, some recent research also points to the fact that national education itself became one of the primary tools in spreading Islamic theological knowledge to the populace. This literature argues that due to the inability of the Egyptian state to effectively sponsor and coordinate primary national public education, it was forced to recruit teachers from organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the early 20th century (Langohr, 2005). The Muslim Brotherhood's role in the renewal of Islamic identity throughout the 20th century is an undisputed component of the global so-called 'Islamic awakening' that occurred throughout the 1970s⁷⁰. Anwar Sadat for example would give considerable support to such social movements post WWII in curbing the influence of leftists in the country (Abu-Rabi, 2003).

Simultaneously however, the post WWII era also saw a giant surge in American influence in Egypt. The Mubarak dictatorship would start to receive the highest U.S foreign aid package globally, second only to Israel, showing the strategic importance Egypt still held for Western powers (Boustany, 2008; Kelly, 2006; Zuhur, 2007, pgs. 2, 18). Even on the 'unofficial' level, there has been a significant amount of research (Al Matbooli, 2003; Berman, 1984; Roelofs, 2003) since the 1980s on philanthropic associations like Fulbright, Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller for their role in the 'cultural cold war' globally. Interestingly, Carnegie Corporation funded the edition of *Al Murshid* found and used for this dissertation. The common approach of these institutions is said to have been to "serve the *orderly evolution* of the unindustrialized

⁷⁰ As a side note, when ulamaa like At Tahtaawee 'went back' to Greek-Roman culture, pagan ancient Egyptian culture, or even his own construction of an Egyptian/Arab culture, in search for inspiration for a cultural revival, it was praised as a 'Renaissance' like that of Europe. However, the return to an Islamic identity as a source of inspiration has been deemed a turn to 'fundamentalism' in popular media and academia.

countries” (Berman, 1984, p. 262, emphasis added). This has been largely through study abroad grants to elite intelligentsia of third world countries to travel and receive higher education in the U.S, particularly at institutions that serve as bedrocks of the humanities like Columbia University, and educate them in Western ways of thinking (Berman, 1984). Hence, it is not surprising that almost every English dissertation found on the topic of Egyptian education carried out in the U.S has been by an Egyptian at Columbia university (i.e.: El Negehi, 1958; Salem, 1966). Egyptian research surrounding the above philanthropic associations also highlights their role in the dispersal of literally boatloads of textbooks post WWII free of charge to countries like Egypt, probably to stem the influence of Russia in the region post WWII (Al Matbooli, 2003).

The effects of these disparate influences are noticeable in the research carried out by Egyptian academics of the post WWII era. One such dissertation for example on the assignment of student teachers in Egyptian universities carried out at Columbia university noted that

The primary school is the first stage of education which saturates the children with the values and principles of the 1952 *revolution*, which is still changing the features of society and accelerating its *development*. The primary school represents the minimum preparation of children 6-12 years of age, if they are to become *enlightened* citizens and to contribute to the development of *human resources* (Salem, 1966, pgs. 23-24, emphasis added).

The SH language of *change* as positive *progress by definition* (i.e.: ‘development’), humans as resources that can be developed, and ‘enlightenment’, will not be lost on the reader. This is aside from the framing of the 1952 coup d’etat as a ‘revolution’, as has happened with previous coups d’etat, probably in imitation of the French revolution. The only thing missing is

the often placed pre-fix of ‘free officers’ before the word ‘revolution’ to emphasize that this academic’s objective is to ‘saturate’ Egyptians with SH ideology. Primary education is noted as the key medium for the enlightenment and development that will occur.

Only three years prior to the publication of the above dissertation, the governor of Assuit, Egypt would declare that “in the *battle of evolution* we are more in need of well-prepared school teachers than of any other educational plans or curriculum” (Salem, 1966, pgs. 23-24, emphasis added). Examples of this sort of SH ideology are common in the literature. A casual perusal of the titles of graduate research being conducted at American University of Cairo since the 1980s will also see a noticeable campaign for the teaching of Egyptian dialect as the ideal medium for national education (i.e.: Khadrawi, 1983), or even English as early as pre-school as, ironically, a means to acquire standard Arabic better (Salem, 1997). This would be the equivalent of using slang for instruction in Western contexts. Such calls have been viewed by many Egyptian scholars as attacks on Islam, since the Arabic language (standard Arabic) is the most cherished of Islamic sciences in accessing all branches of Islamic theology and a fundamental tie that connects Egypt to other Arab nation-states (Al Najjaar, 2010; Hussein, 2008; Ramadan, 2007). The Western concern with maintaining an ‘Egyptian’ identity distinct from other wider ‘Arab’ or ‘Muslim’ identities is still quite visible.

However, one does not have to look this far in the past for examples of the most immediate concern of this dissertation—intellectual colonization. A perusal of the collection of master’s and doctoral dissertations kept at Helwan and Ain Shams universities’ Colleges of Education, the two most important Egyptian universities in the field, reveal similar concerns. Almost every study stored is from a positivist, predominantly quantitative, perspective, and

overflows with complaints of student ‘deficits’ and the like (Ali, 2004; Esaa, 2007), hegemonic approaches to educational research and discourses in Western academia until recently. Common conclusions of course ‘confirm’ the supposed importance of play and drama in children’s’ cognitive development (Abo Al Fetouh, 2008; Mosa, 2005), also one of the latest trends in Western education. Textbooks published as late as 2007 and used at Helwan university for example are overflowing in the educational philosophies and psychological approaches of John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and Jean Piaget (Abd Al Haleem, 2007; Abd Al Ghafaar, 1999). The mere fact that Egyptian educational texts can be purchased with pictures of American children playing on the cover is telling (Khaleel, 2009; Naajee, 2005). As for the national curriculum, then the title of the most recent U.S/Canada constructed Kindergarten curriculum was entitled “It’s my right to play, learn, and create” (Al Farmaawy, personal correspondence). All of this is aside from the fact that most sciences, if not outright taught in English, have a significant amount of English terminology; the psychological effects of language on one’s worldview and beliefs are well known aside from the highlights of this dissertation.

Such trends make it hard to reconcile with what little research exists in the English language on Egyptian college students ideological leanings which show that students identify more with Islamic identity upon entering Higher Education (which has been almost completely secular), and consider it too westernized; this is the complete opposite pattern of what happens in the West in respect to ‘religion’ (Cook, 2001, p. 382). One imagines that the sheer magnitude of explicit attacks on Islamic identity in Egyptian media and education particularly since the 1990s has had quite the opposite effect. The post WWII one-way intellectual exchange between the U.S and Egypt seems to highlight that little has changed in the colonial relationship between Western

imperial powers and Egypt. If anything, it seems there are now merely more mediums to pursue intellectual colonization. Despite the shift in focus from ‘less’ military colonization to ‘more’ intellectual colonization (education and media) post WWII, it seems the ‘information age’ however, has also allowed people to realize the nature of their subjugation.

As has been shown in this dissertation, Egypt does not seem to fall neatly into any of the existing political categories of theocracy or democracy. This is part of what has been a wider theoretical contention in this dissertation, that the mainstream conception of ‘theory’ in Western academia is thoroughly dominated by a SH worldview that tends to marginalize and delegitimize other worldviews, similar to its historical role in justifying European colonization. The use of Critical Indigenous Methodology as a method for utilizing indigenous worldviews (Islam) in conducting research and analyzing data in this dissertation has provided one example of incorporating non-SH worldviews into academia in seeking to better understand the world. Obviously discussing Islam as a *deen* (Way of Life) as opposed to a *religion* in this dissertation, has been one of the primary points in highlighting the tremendous differences that universalist SH categories hegemonize. I have shown such differences to be a critical point of departure for understanding the role of at least one metaphysical belief system (Islam), in the lives of Muslims—including their conception of knowledge and education.

Metaphysical belief systems of some sort are an important aspect of Egypt’s social fabric and it does not seem Egypt is going to become secular anytime soon. Students currently have a ‘religion class’ in public education where Copts and Muslims learn their respective theologies; however, many have considered this not enough, citing the fact that the class is very general, unchallenging, and does not even count for a grade. This is aside from the fact that aside from

this one class period each day, the rest of the system is more or less secular. I personally see much potential for at least increasing the importance of the existing classes and even adding more if time permits; a metaphysical intention for academic excellence could even be a method for overcoming the physical and more material challenges of the educational system described below. It seems more widespread transformation of the intellectual foundations of Egyptian national education deserves further research in this capacity.

There are also, as there is probably for most countries of the world at the moment, serious other problems in Egypt's educational system and demands for all types of change have been monumental in recent years. I will briefly outline the current status of the Egyptian educational system before some concluding thoughts.

Egypt has the largest educational system in the 'Middle East' (Sadik, 2006, p. 87). Education in Egypt is very centralized and controlled by the Ministry of Education—with two “sub” ministries. The main educational system in Egypt is governed by a sub ministry called the Ministry of Education and Learning and is divided into two stages: the first compulsory stage, from ages six to fourteen, is split into two cycles, primary for five years followed by preparatory for three years (only about ten percent of the population can afford any level of private education). At the end of the second preparatory cycle, students take a high-stakes national final exam which will essentially determine the rest of their life, whether they go to general or technical secondary education (Leavitt, 1992, pgs. 96-97). If admitted to general education, the second stage is two years of general studies and one year specializing in a particular subject. The type of certificate granted at the end of the third year depends on the score achieved on the final national exam which will determine potential entrance into a university, and if admitted, the field

qualified for out of the student's list of preferences (i.e.: Arts, Engineering, Medicine, etc.). For the other half of the student population that get tracked into technical secondary education, about one percent get admitted to a university while the rest usually enter a trade or end up unemployed (Leavitt, 1992, pgs. 96-97). From primary through secondary education there is a 'religion' course that one is not required to pass each year where Coptic Christians and Muslims attend respective theological courses.

There is also the parallel Islamic educational system of Al Azhar, which is administered by the sub ministry Al Awqaaf, and was established 975 CE. Al Azhar has a four-year primary stage, a three-year preparatory stage, a four-year secondary stage, and higher education (Leavitt, 1992, p. 97). Both the main educational system and the parallel Al Azhar system have public, private, and semi-private branches with the main difference between these being that the size of the classroom decreases and use of international languages such as English (for instruction) increases as one moves down the spectrum from public to private. Correspondingly, under both ministries public schools are also either free, semi-private at varying costs, or private (rarely within reach except for the elite class). Of course, aside from tuition, there are numerous indirect expenses like transportation, uniforms, books, and other materials.

Regarding Universities in particular, Said (1978) laments:

Universities in the Arab world are generally run according to some pattern inherited from, or once directly imposed by, a former colonial power...classes populated with hundreds of students, badly trained, overworked, and underpaid faculty, political appointments, the almost total absence of advanced research and of research facilities, and most important, the lack of a single decent library in the entire region...the few

promising students who manage to make it through the system are encouraged to come to the United States to continue their advanced work...the patronage system in scholarship, business, and research makes the United States a virtual hegemonic commander of affairs...the Arabic and Islamic world remains a second-order power in terms of the production of culture, knowledge, and scholarship (pgs. 322-323)

This is how Edward Said described Higher Education in the 'Middle East' in 1978 and it has not particularly changed much except for the fact that all of these issues have only gotten worse (Christina, 2003). As can be seen there are significant issues that need to be addressed in Egyptian education, but the traditional complaint from colleges of education in Egypt has been particularly limited to funding. While funding of the educational sector has been quite horrid, at least leading up to the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, it does not seem many academics from colleges of education have challenged the intellectual foundation of the educational system in official publication. Such a statement must be qualified of course with the caveat that such would have been highly unlikely under the Mubarak regime given the system of government approvals for higher end academic appointments and the general climate of authoritarianism in the country. Considering the mythic cycle of 'science as objective knowledge' that education students seem to be indoctrinated with in their collegiate experiences, it seems unlikely that calls questioning the philosophical assumptions of the entire educational system would come from within a positivist oriented college of education. Time will only tell how and in what ways the national educational system will change under the new political regime of Muhammad Morsi, a Muslim Brotherhood member. However, since it seems there is considerably more academic freedom under the new

regime, the coming years will show how and if Egyptians decide to define knowledge and education in more holistic ways.

The importance of spiritual or moral education in educational systems, particularly in regard to citizenship (Gates, 2006), seems to be receiving global attention recently as gleaned from international conferences such as “Building A Culture of Peace for a Civil Society” (Foo and Starlin, and WCCI, 2008). The argument has pragmatically been that citizenship without some sort of philosophy or belief system towards life will always be superficial (Gates, 2006, p. 575). There is an increasing consensus that SH is just as much a belief system as ‘religion’ is (Gates, 2006, p. 574; Juergensmeyer, 1993, p. 15)—some even suggesting it be taught about as such in the West as a part of critically deciding whether to believe in it or not (Pike, 2009). The concept of SH citizenship has been argued to be impractical without some minimal common culture that sustains the social fabric in a nation (Isin and Turner, 2007; Kadioglu, 2006; Turner, 1997). In Egypt, Christianity and Islam are known to play major roles in peoples’ lives; there has also been a global turn to pre-modern “organic” communities as the basis for citizenship in recent years (Kadioglu, 2006, p. 3). Does some conception of ‘religiosity’ play such a role as a ‘common culture’ in Egypt? As even scholars with connections to less than neutral organizations like the UN have attested, there has been a pattern of emphatic refusal of making ‘modernization’ (usually associated with mass production, information age services, technology, and the like) coterminous with ‘Westernization’ in regard to values (Falk, 2000, p. 13). Such populations have viewed the imposition of SH as little more than neo-colonization (Juergensmeyer, 1993, pgs. 15-20). It seems a fundamental step for any intellectual decolonization will require a re-examination of a peoples’ conception of knowledge and

education. Probably one of the most significant places such re-examination needs to take place is at the intellectual foundations of what is often referred to as 'state', 'public', or 'national' education.

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