



**The Rationale of Architectural Discourses in Post-Independence Egypt:  
A Contrapuntal Reading of *'Alam Al-Bena'a* (1980-2000)**

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Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps. This problem animates all sorts of discussions—about influence, about blame and judgment, about present actualities and future priorities.

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 3.

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## **Notes**

For the convenience of the Arabic non-specialist, the Arabic transliteration or the Anglicized names were simplified according to the Egyptian pronunciation. The only Arabic diacritical marks used here are the ‘ayn (‘) and the hamza (’). Also, the letter gim, in the Egyptian pronunciation, has been transliterated as (j). All Arabic translations, unless indicated, are by author. The articles originally written in English in the local discourse will be identified with (E) in the footnote. The French-English translation, specifically for Mercedes Volait’s text, is revised by Dr. Peter Scriver.

## **Abstract**

This research analyses the rationale of the local architectural discourse in Egypt and how it reframes both local and global paradigms facing the profession within the local context. An unprecedented increase in the production of such discourse coincides with the process of establishing an Egyptian identity amidst an increasingly independent modern society.

The study focuses on ‘*Alam al-Bena’a*’ [*World of Construction*] (1980-2000), a specialized monthly journal, whose timely establishment coincided with the culmination of the infitah policy [openness to the foreign], a period which precipitated an upheaval of religious and national identities. Given this context, this study privileges the magnum opus of the eminent critic Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), and his method of ‘contrapuntal reading.’ According to Said, in the discourse, colonial experiences precipitated a “structure of attitude and reference” which seeks interactively to produce two discursive forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance.’ Inspired by Greig Crysler in *Writing Spaces* (2003), I argue that these discursive forces generated “space(s) of knowledge,” which must be understood through the contrapuntal reading against the backdrop of Egypt’s complex history and key international ideas and practices.

To analyse ‘*Alam al-Bena’a*’, the contrapuntal reading as a way to read the text within its historical and contemporary contexts will be undertaken in a tripartite process which considers: Egypt’s modern history, the evolution of local discourse since its inception in 1939, and the analysis of the international proceedings of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and *MIMAR*. Firstly, the analysis of Egyptian modern history since the French expedition (1798-1801) will trace the origins of the two forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ until the close of the twentieth century. Secondly, the evolution of the two forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ is traced through the analysis of the local architectural discourse since *al-‘Imarah* [*The Architecture*] (1939-1959), and journals published in the 1960s, specifically, the *Journal of Egyptian Society of Engineers* and the few available issues of the *Architectural Bulletin*. Thirdly, the interplay between ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ is analysed in the international discourse of the AKA (1978-) and *MIMAR* (1981-1992), with a particular focus on their representation of the Egyptian context.

This analysis reveals a potent shift in attitude, while *al-‘Imarah* championed international architecture, through the 1960s this emphasis was consistently eroded until the publication of ‘*Alam al-Bena’a*’ called for a ‘return’ to ‘Islamic’ architecture. Therefore, a “consolidated vision”<sup>1</sup> of modern Egyptian architecture unfolds to reveal the consensus between national and international canons. Hence, the tri-fold contrapuntal analysis provides an objective reading of twentieth century Egyptian architecture as it explores the relationship between intellectual individuality and global values. Furthermore, it reveals discursive historical encounters which are characterised by an unconscious adoption of the principles of the colonial past and, simultaneously, conscious resistance to dominant forces originating beyond Egypt and represented in internal regimes.

In this way, this research examines the multiple overt and covert influences which led to a shift in the Egyptian architectural discourses. The research thus highlights questions of imperialism and national identity and the concomitant, polarising discourses—tradition/modernity, East/West, global/local. This thesis interrogates the rationale of the local discourse and ‘*Alam al-Bena’a*’ in this context to highlight imperialism, as a global process, that has become a conduit for intellectual production in the professional sphere.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1993), 75.

## **Keywords**

Egyptian architecture, Modernism, *'Alam al-Bena'a*, *al-'Imarah*, *Medina*, *M'imaryah*, *Journal of Egyptian Society of Engineers*, *MIMAR*, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Edward Said, discourse analysis.

## **Declaration**

I, Marwa El-Ashmouni, certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Signed

..... (Marwa El-Ashmouni)

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Influence and Resistance: An Overview

Focusing on the particular domain of architectural discourse, this thesis has sought to better understand the deep impact of imperialism on the cultural identity of modern Egypt – an issue that has been thrust again into global media attention and political consciousness during the course of this research with the wave of revolutionary demonstrations that have swept the Arab world since 2010. Labelled the ‘Arab Spring’, this series of popular uprisings that started in Tunisia, followed by Egypt, Libya, and now Syria, have sought to topple the dictatorial regimes that emerged as the legacies of a complex and incomplete struggle to transcend the political and cultural impact of imperialism. Simultaneously, and seemingly paradoxically, these protests have aspired to attain the individual rights and liberties associated with the socio-economic progress of the West,<sup>1</sup> whilst striving to define and express the differences inherent in contemporary ‘Arab’ identity. As will be argued at length in this thesis, two polarized but interrelated forces of ‘resistance’ and ‘influence’ have formed Egypt’s chequered history of colonization and independence, which resulted in the first place from its allure to imperial powers. While the Arab Spring is beyond the scope of this research, it is yet another manifestation of the interplay between these two forces (influence and resistance) that has continued to ebb and flow throughout the history of modern Egypt but which gained particular momentum in the second half of the twentieth-century, after Egypt’s political independence.

Given this context, this thesis focuses on a comparison of representations of the ebb and flow of these forces of influence and resistance in the production and the published documentation and discussion of architecture—that is, what will be referred to hereafter as ‘architectural discourse’—in late twentieth-century Egypt and beyond. To interpret the architectural discourse of this period, the thesis goes beyond the geo-political boundaries of the case to analyse and illustrate a comprehensive view of local architecture in order to reveal an indispensable link between intellectual geographies and professional domains at the eve of the new millennium.

## 1.2 Discourse and the Crystallization of Identity

Historically, architecture in Egypt has been influenced by numerous cultures—not least, Greco-Roman, Mamluk, Ottomans, etc. Over time, these cultures have become localised to the

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis I use the common capitalization for the ‘West’ as a constructed entity that is antithetical to the ‘East’, which this thesis seeks to transcend; this common capitalization is not used in the conclusion.

Egyptian context. This cultural pluralism, and the architectural diversity it has generated, is complicated by more recent colonial contests by European nations vying for dominance since the nineteenth-century. This period of dominance which encompasses numerous influences resulting from either direct colonial or indirect postcolonial imperialism has led to an ongoing search for identity, in Egypt as in other nascent third world nations, that is also mirrored in the built environment. In this context, the crystallization of a distinctive identity was consciously manifested and institutionalized in two phases. Firstly, the socio-economic concept of “a forceful ideology,” posited in 1952 by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy, bounded these nations within a monolithic identity.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, this identity and the forceful resistance was institutionalised through the formation of the “nonaligned nations” who, after the first meeting between Nehru, Tito and Nasser in Bandung 1956, met periodically at Belgrade (1961), Cairo (1964), Lusaka (1970), and Algiers (1973).<sup>3</sup> Despite this rhetoric and the institutionalisation of identity in the period, the built environment has been characterised by diversity whereby the architecture of numerous cultures—within and beyond Egypt—has been emulated, and subsequently materialized in polarised representations of the built environment: tradition/modernity; or Western/Islamic.

Such dualities are evident in the architectural discourse of Egypt in the twentieth-century. Looking at this discourse, the two magazines of the most lengthy circulation period are, firstly *Majallat al-‘Imarah (The Architecture 1939-1959)*, and secondly, *‘Alam al-Bena’a (World of Construction 1980-2000*, which will be referred to as *AB*). Both journals frame a period of political and cultural flux. Each journal established different rationales as transitional devices in the discourse of architecture in the period of independence. *Al-‘Imarah* promoted an international impetus in contrast to *AB*’s call for a return to Islamic architecture. In order to challenge the status quo of practice, two oppositional and discursive forces of influence and resistance—not the simple inside/outside dipole that Frampton articulates—are immediately discernible within the discourse.<sup>4</sup> However, analysing each journal or ‘space of knowledge’

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<sup>2</sup> Duanfang Lu, “Introduction: Architecture, Modernity and Identity in the Third World,” *Third world Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*, ed. Duanfang Lu (London: Routledge, 2011), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Akhil Gupta, James Ferguson, *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (U.S.A: Duke University, 2001). The period (1955-1961), which contributed to the formation of this movement, witnessed the Suez Canal Crisis, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the independence of many African countries, and the initiation of the Cold War.

<sup>4</sup> According to Kenneth Frampton, “critical regionalism” is defined as a cultural resistance to the universalizing forces of technological civilization—as described by philosopher Paul Ricoeur—through varying architectural practices that strive to reconcile the following dipoles: space/place, typology/topography, architectonic/scenographic, artificial/natural, visual/tactile. See Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 313–327.

reveals the interplay and discrepancy of these two forces, which questions the role of imperialism in shaping the professional discourse.

### 1.3 Theoretical Background and Framework

Discourses can be a form of power in their own right. Discourse does not simply “translate struggles or systems of domination,” as argued by Michel Foucault, “but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.”<sup>5</sup> Discourse has been the focus of many theorists, beyond postcolonial studies. For example, Hayden White has studied the role of the historian’s or the author’s language in decoding the “real” meanings of such discourses. While White does not pay much attention to the socio-political context, the politically and socially situated nature of discourse is central to Foucault’s approach. Foucault argues that “in every society” discourse production is carefully regulated by “discursive systems” in order to “gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.”<sup>6</sup> The agency of these discursive systems or discourses and the relation between knowledge and power of Foucault was central to Greig Crysler’s *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Built Environment, 1960-2000* (2003). Crysler logically extended Foucault’s argument by following Paul Rabinow and Adrian Forty to analyse the historical, social, political, and economic representation of the built environment in the scholarly journals as they construct their “spaces of knowledge.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Crysler’s spatial analysis of the journals as “social and institutional worlds in themselves,”<sup>8</sup> with its discursive objects and events that transform over time, surpasses Foucault’s analysis that perceives the individual as dissolved in the “microphysics of power,” that is hopeless to resist.<sup>9</sup>

From this perspective, Said develops Foucault’s theory in his masterpiece *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), through his exploration of the role of resistance in discourse formation and his assertion of the discernible role of historical, cultural and geographical experiences. Said’s consideration of how the imperial enterprises consolidated in “recognizable cultural formations”<sup>10</sup> including, for example, education systems, literature, architecture or academic journals, is particularly well explained and it is articulated in terms of two crucial themes. The first theme which justifies and reinforces imperial power in cultural fields is the “general

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<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. R. Young (London: Routledge, 1981), 52-3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 48-9.

<sup>7</sup> Crysler, *Writing Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2003), 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 278.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 12.

worldwide patterns of imperial culture”; the second which resists this global theme of influence is the “historical experience of resistance against empire.”<sup>11</sup>

Said’s articulation of these two themes will be referred to as ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ to represent the cultural formations dominating the composition of architectural discourses in Egypt. The overlap of the two forces of influence and resistance, as Said argues, creates a “structure of attitude and reference”<sup>12</sup> through the authors’ “discrepant experiences.”<sup>13</sup> These two forces, this research argues, are two essentials of the formation of the space of knowledge, to borrow Crysler’s term, and the rationale of architectural discourse which is the focus of this thesis. Accordingly, the basic conception of the term ‘rationale’ in this research will reflect the tension between these two struggling essentials of discourse, influence and resistance. The discussion of the term ‘rationale’ will illustrate the way in which the two forces of influence and resistance are intertwined by way of showing the formation and transformation of the discourse. The intent is to determine the consequent unity or disunity of the discourse. It will be argued that the rationale of the discourse, in view of its “autonomous subjects,”<sup>14</sup> events, and sentiments, has been built upon forms of adaptation of structures of attitude and reference to the socio-political context and to imperial cultures. Such adaptation takes place especially when compelling sets of influences encounter ways of resistance, thus shaping the architectural discourse in Egypt in the post-independence era.

Focusing on *AB* magazine as a case study, this thesis employs Said’s method of analysis—the contrapuntal reading—which he applied to stylistic canonical literary works in view of their historical context and what he describes as associated ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ perspectives. Such a reading is intended to reflect sensitivity to a long view of the history of causes or ‘influences’ in their surrounding contexts (Chapter 4). However, the thesis departs from Said in his application of the method of contrapuntality and the structure of attitude and reference to Western imperial texts from different colonies: British such as Kipling’s *Kim*, Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Austin’s *Mansfield Park*; Verdi’s *Aida* (commissioned by Ismail Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, which opened in Cairo); and French with Camus’s *L’Etranger*. Instead this thesis applies a contrapuntal reading of a local Egyptian discourse which, as the research reveals, adapts or opposes various socio-political influences. The thesis argues that amid this process of adaptation of—or opposition to—the structures of dominance, the local discourse endeavours to develop its

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid, xii.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, xxiii.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 31.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, 13.

own structure of attitude and reference, which inadvertently adheres, at some points, to the colonizer's forms of dominance.

## 1.4 Aims and Questions of the Research

This thesis is about contemporary Egyptian architectural discourse with a particular focus on the Arabic professional magazine *AB* that has not been studied before.<sup>15</sup> This thesis aims to trace the influence of post-colonial discourse on the local architectural discourses with its trajectories. To do so, this research discusses the development and shift of these discourses since its resurgence in the nationalist era of the 1930s, which coincided with the diffusion of international modernism, and the resurgence of traditional and religious agendas in architectural periodicals in the 1980s. This examination will reveal the multiple overt and covert influences that led to these shifts and the development of the structure of attitude and reference within each discourse at different points in time. Focusing on the discourse of *AB*, this thesis seeks to illuminate the professional sphere in Egypt at the close of the twentieth-century. These aims are addressed in the exploration of three intrinsically linked questions.

- How has the post-colonial context, with its juxtaposed forces of 'influence' and 'resistance,' shaped the rationale of the national architectural discourse?
- How do these two forces form a structure of attitude and reference that is textured to serve either the beliefs and attitudes of its authors or those of 'influential' audiences?
- How are these two forces acknowledged or disputed in international periodicals?

These questions will be addressed through the contrapuntal reading employed throughout this thesis to analyse *AB* particularly, as a case study, in light of its past and present discourses.

## 1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Research

The focus of this thesis on *AB* is not because it is a legendary work in its own right, but rather because it is the only comprehensive archive of the last twenty years of the twentieth-century. The role that *AB* played over the course of two decades is very hard to assess in light of the limited space and time of this study. However, with proclaiming *AB* as a representative agency within the duration of that period, *AB*'s potent call for a return to Islamic architecture provokes

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<sup>15</sup>There is one Msc thesis by Wa'el Sheta, "Comparative Analytical Study of the Egyptian Architecture: A Literature Survey of Contemporary Thought," (al-Azhar University, 2005) that was a quantitative and qualitative analysis of '*Alam al-Bena'a* and *al-'Imarah*. By comparing the evaluation of contemporary academic architects to the actual building and its representation, Sheta investigates the impact of the architectural literatures on the architectural production.

such pondering on the impact of imperialism on discourse after almost half a century of political independence and nationalist debate in Egypt.

Revealing such impact, the contrapuntal analysis of the dialogue of *AB* with its past and present discourses required the collection and survey of the wider corpus of architectural articles published in other relevant periodicals since the resurgence of the specialized discourse. However, the lack of proper archiving in Egypt has been an impediment to coverage of this wider discourse of the sixties, specifically the *Architectural Bulletin* (1960-1979), issued by the Society of Egyptian Architects, from which only four issues were found. Given the relative absence and lack of access to published architectural discourse from the sixties it was critical, as an alternative tactic, to contact and interview pioneer architects such as Yehia al-Zeiny, ‘Aly Raafat, and Salah Hegab, as witnesses of that period. Also, the tireless desire to understand both *AB* with its surrounding context and how it was perceived by its contemporaries, and the overall discourse realm in Egypt necessitated contacting other pioneer architects and critics from more recent generations—such as Nezar AlSayyad, Salah Zaky, Ahmad Hamid, Dalila al-Kerdany, ‘Amr ‘Abdelkawi, and Seif Abu-alNaga. The difficulty to access the primary published sources as well as the contact information for some of these interviewees made a research trip to Egypt indispensable. This research trip was ultimately conducted relatively late in the study, due to cautionary delays obliged by the revolutionary disturbances, and additionally affected logistically by the ensuing chaos which disrupted railway schedules (as I am not a Cairene) and made movement within Cairo difficult.

In principle, being a native Arab speaker has facilitated a keen understanding of the main sources under examination. This process of translation, as Bhabha skilfully expressed, has facilitated a transition between two states of “establishing” and “empowerment.” By “establishing” he meant the state of conveying a sense of continuity/connection, while by ‘empowerment’ he meant the state of alteration and rediscovering a new self.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, conducting this present research from outside, while an insider, has enabled a stance of liberation from any ideological or biased monolithic representation of Islamic identity. Additionally, this dynamism of crossing between geographies has inspired the implication of the contrapuntal method of this research and facilitated the deconstruction of the chimera of binaries through the discovered shared values and aspirations between West and East.

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<sup>16</sup> Homi Bhabha, “Architecture and Thought,” *Intervention Architecture: Building for Change* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd. AKAA, 2007), 9.

## 1.6 Literature Review

An analysis of contemporary Egyptian architecture as part of the Islamic and Middle Eastern context has always been challenging, due to myriad efforts to represent and build unity (both physically and metaphorically) across diverse and dynamic contexts. Such diverse contexts will be analysed through a review of the following body of literature.

### 1.6.1 The Discourses under Examination

The first body of literature includes journals and publications focusing on Egyptian architecture in the second half of the twentieth-century. *AB* magazine, the case study, was published monthly and 216 issues were circulated between 1980 and 2000. *Al-'Imarah* magazine, published between 1939 and 1959, circulated 67 issues. In addition to these long-running periodicals, a number of articles focusing on Egyptian architecture were published in different journals between 1960 and 1979, such as *al-Ahram*, the *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Engineers*, and the *Architectural Bulletin*. Furthermore, two journals were published concurrently with *AB*: *M'imaryah* (1982-1989) and *Medina* (1998-2002).

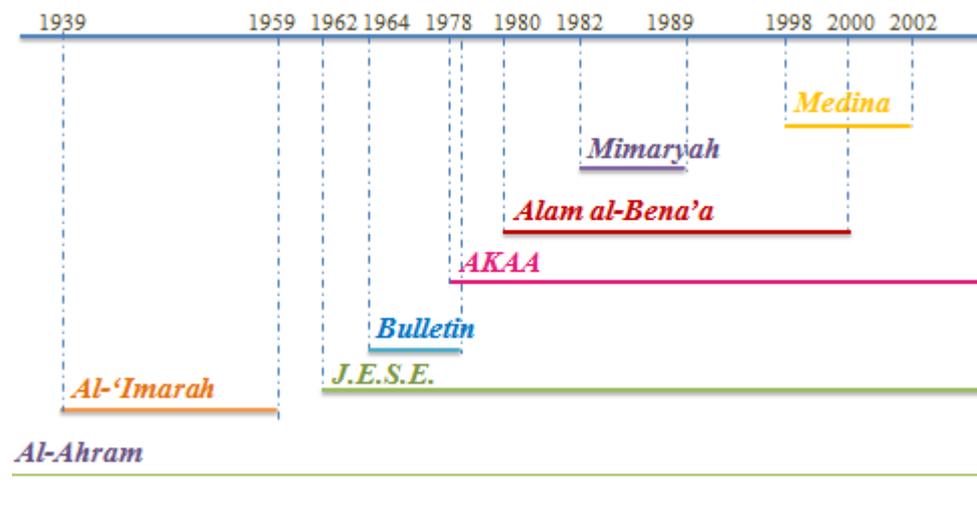


Figure 1. The Time Line of Discourse.

While the focus is on *AB*, these national magazines will be examined alongside two particular international forums which focused on architecture in developing countries in the same time frame. The ongoing discourse of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA), founded in 1976, and its magazine *Mimar: Architecture in Development*, first published in 1981 and comprising 43 issues will be analysed with emphasis on representations of Egyptian sites. This discourse has made a crucial contribution to architectural discourse which is distinguished by its focus on Muslim communities. The analysis of these forums will focus on the identity

conceptions as it is constructed through these journals' representation of contemporary and historical contexts.

### 1.6.2 Architecture within History

To contextualize the discourse, a historical review is vital which will be through consulting many other studies that illuminate different aspects of modern architecture in Egypt in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These include the following studies: Trevor Mostyn, *Egypt's Belle Époque: Cairo and the Age of the Hedonists* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2006); André Raymond, *The Glory of Cairo: an Illustrated History* (2002); Samir Raafat, *Cairo: The Glory of Years* (2003); Cynthia Myntti, *Paris Along the Nile: Architecture in Cairo from the Belle Époque* (1999); and Sakr Tarek, *Early Twentieth-Century Islamic Architecture in Cairo* (1998). Furthermore, a series of articles and book chapters by prominent Egyptian architects and critics must also be noted here, particularly the work of the two renowned Ashraf Salama and Khalid Asfour. These scholars cast light on socio-economic policies and the effect of cultural history upon the architectural practice and trends in Egypt. While Salama's identification of trends of architectural practice in Egypt in the nineties (discussed in chapter 6), materializes the discursive forces of influence and resistance that governs that practice,<sup>17</sup> Asfour perceives architectural practice in Egypt to be part of a cultural crisis that has resulted in mimicry due to intense Western influence.<sup>18</sup>

Studying the shifts of the contemporary Egyptian architecture discourses requires a thorough examination of the modern history of Egypt with its multidimensional socio-cultural and urban context as well as the hierarchies of influences on that context. Many comprehensive studies on Egyptian historical events include: Vatikiotis's *The History of Modern Egypt: from Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* (1991); and *The Cambridge History of Egypt Vol. 2: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century* (2008); Marsot, *A History of Egypt from the Arab Conquest to the Present* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2007); Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to Mubarak* (2010); and Robert Tignor, *Egypt: A Short History* (2010). Moreover, interdisciplinary studies on Egypt's socio-political and cultural context include: Diane Singerman and Paul Amer's edited book *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture and Urban Spaces in the New Globalized Middle East* (2006), which reveals new contours of modern political power in the urban frame. Additionally, Abu Lughod's classic text *Cairo 1001* (1971), analyses the changes in Cairo's diverse urban districts; the sociologist Ghannam's *Remaking the Modern* (2002) is another analysis, grounded in sociology, which focuses on the changes introduced by the state and by the

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<sup>17</sup> Ashraf Salama, "Contemporary Architecture in Egypt: Reflections on Architecture and Urbanism of the Nineties," *Architecture Re-Introduced: New Projects in Societies in Change*, ed. Jamal Abed (Geneva: AKAA, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Khaled Asfour, "Cultural Crisis," *Architectural Review* 1213 (1998).

global forces during Sadat's regime in an effort to modernise the nation; Deborah Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt: Literature, Culture, and Empire* (2009) examines the instrumentality of creative works (from architecture to cinematography) in shaping the relationship between cosmopolitanism and colonialism in modern Egypt.

### 1.6.3 Studies of Postcolonialism and Nation Building

Many scholars have taken the postcolonial theory and criticism, notably the oeuvre of Said, as their point of departure to interpret the architecture of the Middle East, notably: Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (2008); Sandy Isenstadt's edited volume *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (2008); Nezar AlSayyad's *Forms of Dominance* (1992) and his most recent study *Cairo: Histories of a City* (2011); and Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt* (1988).

Firstly, Vale examines a number of capitol complexes from Washington, D.C. to Abuja, Nigeria, and Kuwait to offer a compelling insight into the way architecture is inextricably linked to political aspirations. The projects examined are situated within the wider context of postcolonial struggles and the dilemma of 'national identity' as they seek to symbolize rapid democratic, political and economic change. Secondly, Isenstadt's study focuses on the development of modern architecture in many Middle Eastern sites including Jerusalem, Istanbul, Baghdad, Riyadh, and Cairo. The essays revolve around the intersections between the politics of nation-building and modernism and how the architecture materialised the forces that shaped the modern Middle East. This book reveals the dynamic use of modernization as a progressive tool in postcolonial policies. Thirdly, AlSayyad, who is very influential in the field and whose work has had a more significant impact in the field of architecture and other disciplines, explores the manifestation of dominance in the colonial context to reveal the power of architecture and urbanism. To this end, in *Forms of Dominance*, the collective essays examine the "implementation" of an architectural program with its "techniques, styles, choice of goals" and the colonizer's motivations to "facilitate subordination"<sup>19</sup> that resulted in particular architectural symbols or urban hierarchies. The book dealt with many cities and two main forms of dominance: the colonialism and modernity facilitated by national or capitalist objectives.

Furthermore, in *Cairo: Histories of a City* AlSayyad traces the history of Cairo since the Pharaohs through anchoring the city development to significant figures and places. He argues that the structure of the society is a product of "who governs it and how, is often reflected in the

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<sup>19</sup> AlSayyad, *Forms of Dominance* (England: Avebury, 1992), 8.

places this society produces.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, Mitchell in *Colonising Egypt*, deals with the process of modernization since Muhammad ‘Alī’s rule at the beginning of the nineteenth century and how this process—through the practice of building model villages and instituting military initiatives—flourished with British colonialism. For Mitchell, the process of modernization as a new style was implemented through the imposition of order, discipline, and uniformity, to satisfy the ruling regime which was unofficially British and ostensibly Ottoman.

These sources have focused on the distinctive nature of the institutional systems, whether colonial or national, and how they mobilized modernity for political objectives. However, these rich studies do not delve into the micro “spaces of knowledge” that Crysler posits; the professional discourses that reveal how colonial and/or national structures have been mobilized within these discourses.

#### **1.6.4 Similar Studies of Magazine-based Discourse**

In recent years there have been a number of studies focusing on the discourse of professional architectural journals. Two studies are of particular relevance to the current thesis.

Far from the Egyptian context, Crysler in *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Built Environment, 1960-2000* (2003) discusses the formation (and transformation) of the field of academic knowledge in the discourse of five North American international academic journals. Since these journals relate the socio-historical settings to the analysis of the city space, he concludes that these discourses have become smaller constructed spaces of knowledge in their own defining disciplines within the context of dominant global influences. While Crysler argues that Journals aim to shape and define the academic and disciplines domain, the journals studied here, in this study, aim to fashion the cultural realm. Also, while Crysler’s study is an important precedent in terms of its symbolic framework of the space of knowledge through the domain of academic production, this study will differ from Crysler’s in its theoretical approach, which is Foucauldian in Crysler’s case, therefore it gives little consideration to cultural context.

Additionally, there are two unpublished dissertations which are pertinent to the current study. The first, by Erdem Erten, is entitled *In Pursuit of Cultural Continuity: the Architectural Review 1947-1971* (MIT 2004). Erden investigated the history of the prominent British periodical *Architectural Review*. His study shows that the goal of *Architectural Review* in the second half of the twentieth-century was to shape the British architecture as well as that of the whole world. The latter is by Shaji Panicker, ‘*Indian Architecture’ and the Production of a Postcolonial*

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<sup>20</sup> AlSaiyyad, *Cairo* (U.S.A: Harvard University Press, 2011), xv.

*Discourse: A Study of Architecture + Design (1984-1992)* (Adelaide 2008). Panicker examined Indian architecture and the production of a postcolonial discourse in a local Indian magazine. It is worth mentioning that Panicker's study built on Crysler's model of 'spaces of knowledge' within the cultural production framework of Bourdieu, the French sociologist.

In the Egyptian context, the two studies that have rigorously examined the micro "spaces of knowledge" of the architectural realm in Egypt are Mercedes Volait's French study and Shaima'a 'Ashur's Arabic text. Volait's elegant study, entitled *L'architecture Moderne en Égypte et la Revue Al-'Imarah 1939-1959* (1987). Focusing on the first Egyptian architectural journal *al-'Imarah*, Volait examined the development of modernism in this period, stressing the evolution and birth of the architectural profession in Egypt. Volait declared *al-'Imarah* as "the archive of modern architecture in Egypt, allowing us to follow its evolution, its production and discussions."<sup>21</sup> She argues that *al-'Imarah* manifested a "complex process" through which a "transfer of ideas" ensued.<sup>22</sup> Part of this "complex process" was the theme of nationalism, Volait's examination of this theme was not from a post-colonial perspective but in terms of architecture's social and technological role—a fundamental difference between the current study and Volait's. In this way, Volait's study differs from the current thesis in the scope and method which adopts Said's contrapuntal reading to analyse *AB*'s subjects thematically. Subsequently, the shifts and developments in the Egyptian architectural discourse will be examined from a postcolonial perspective.

In *The Pioneer Egyptian Architects in the Liberal era between the two revolutions of 1919 and 1952* (2011), 'Ashur focused on the impact of the liberal context, which prevailed between 1919 and 1952, on the architects' production. She singles out 'Ali Labib Gabr and Antouin Selim Nahhas as two pioneer Egyptian architects who exemplify the shifting trends in architectural production in this period. She highlights the "duality" of the architectural production as a reflection of the "dual-intellectual attitude between the *T'aseel* and *Taghreeb* [rootedness and Westernization]"<sup>23</sup> in the socio-cultural context.

Hence, this brief overview of the existing literature emphasizes the potential contribution of the analysis of the discourse in the present study and the method of contrapuntal reading that will allow the juxtaposition of past and present, as well as national and international discourses. This juxtaposition through Said's lens will reveal the structure of attitude and reference that resulted from the two forces of influence and resistance that continued to inform the rationale of the

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<sup>21</sup> Volait, *L'Architecture Moderne en Égypte*, 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 88.

<sup>23</sup> 'Ashur, *The Pioneer Egyptian Architects in the Liberal Era between the Two Revolutions of 1919 and 1952* (Cairo: Madboly, 2011), 223.

architectural discourse since its inception within the inside and outside domains. A critical comprehensive picture of the rationale of the local architectural discourse is hence required in order to understand the forces that have shaped the representation of the contemporary state of architecture.

## **1.7 Importance of the Research**

This study will enable a deeper understanding of the intentions that informed the development of Egyptian architecture in the late modern era, and the conceptual frameworks in which it was shaped. More generally, the study will highlight trends in the architectural thinking of post-independence Egypt and assess their contribution to architectural production. To study the architectural development of late twentieth-century Egypt, with its unavoidable space and time dimensions, is also to study how Egypt's historical legacy of imperial socio-cultural hierarchies and influences was materialized. But the proposed contrapuntal reading of the *AB* professional magazine will enable a more comprehensive interpretation of recent Egyptian architectural discourse in the light of both its colonial-modern and its contemporary influences. Such a contrapuntal reading, with its inside/outside perspective, will reflect the desires and paradigms through which architecture has been associated with the construction of a contemporary Egyptian identity that attempts to resist the neo-imperial assumptions of universal modernity. The inside/outside perspective of the study is additionally important, however, as it discerns enduring global interrelationships.

## **1.8 Thesis Outline**

This thesis will be divided into three main parts dealing with the emergence of architectural discourse and the shifts in the discourse transformation beginning with *al-'Imarah* until the close of the twentieth-century, with special focus on *AB*.

### **Part I: Theoretical Framework**

The introduction consists of 3 chapters. Chapter 1 articulates the research topic, aims, questions, previous studies, and the importance of the research. Chapter 2 articulates the theoretical framework of the contrapuntal reading. It also examines Edward Said's significance to this research. Chapter 3 investigates the role and implication of the key terms of the global debate that goes hand in hand with the postcolonial constellation of the local debate, and considers for it a main source of aspiration.

## **Part II: Overlapping Territories of Influence**

This part focuses on the influences between and around the overlapping territories (national, regional and international) that have shaped the architectural discourses that seemed to adapt to the national and international imperial powers. Chapter 4 articulates the origins of influence and resistance and sheds light on the matrix of economic, political, and socio-cultural influences that have undoubtedly affected the production and transformation of the discourse in the history of post-independence era. Chapter 5 surveys the representations of the local settings in the Western architectural discourse particularly *MIMAR*, and the AKAAs proceedings.

## **Part III: The Rationale of the Local Discourse**

This part comprises Chapter 6: Covers the local architectural discourse since *al-‘Imarah* (1939-1959); the dispersed discourse of the period (1960- 70); and the discourse concurrent with *AB*, particularly *al-M‘imariyah* (1982-1989) and *Medina* (1998-2002). Chapter 7 introduces the principles and objectives of *AB* with a focus on its editorial board and contributing authors. Chapter 8 examines the themes of the dominant subjects, projects, and personalities in *AB*, with respect to the two forces of influence and resistance according to the theoretical framework of *Culture and Imperialism*.

To conclude, Chapter 9 reflects on the rationale of the discourse and recapitulates the results of examining the history of Egyptian architectural discourses. It details responses to the research questions, giving its concise claims to the realities, challenges and major shifts facing the rationale of architectural discourse in Egypt in the present and the prospective future with suggestions for further research.

## 2 The Methodology of Edward Said: Contrapuntal Reading

## 2.1 Introduction

As the thesis examines the architectural discourse of postcolonial Egypt and the reciprocal formation of its rationale by the two forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance,’ it attempts to explore the emergence and institutionalization of ‘counter hegemonic’ discourses across the architectural profession. The chosen architectural magazine ‘*Alam al-Bena’a*’, through which this discourse is most closely examined, is an example of knowledge production within the Egyptian architecture profession at the close of the twentieth-century, after almost fifty years of Egypt’s independence. This thesis argues that this journal was an instrumental agent in fashioning a new sense of self and other for its postcolonial professional readership which challenged the hegemony of Western architectural history and theory. Examining literary texts through a method he called “contrapuntal reading,” Edward Said argued, similarly, that Euro-American history had fashioned “stereotypes about ‘the African’ ‘or Indian or Irish or Jamaican or Chinese’ mind.”<sup>1</sup> This contrapuntal reading articulated a number of themes in Said’s work of particular relevance to the argument of this thesis including the relationship between power and knowledge, the structure of attitude and reference, and the concepts of imaginative geography and resistance. Said’s contrapuntal method and his articulation of these subtle concepts pertain to “adjacency, multiplicity and complementarity,” that are emphatically intended to stress “the bond (and the distance) between ... the particularity of the intellectual and the universality of the values she or he is urged to uphold,”<sup>2</sup> is of significance to this research. These emphatic concepts will enable the location of the marginalized postcolonial architectural discourse of Egypt (as a rich dimension of the discourse of marginalized third world nations) within a global context to facilitate an understanding of the rationale of this discourse.

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<sup>1</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xi.

<sup>2</sup>Abdirahman Hussein, *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* (UK: Verso, 2002), 308. For a survey of Said’s work see: Mustapha Marrouchi, *Edward Said at the Limits* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004). Timothy Brennan argued against the idea of Said as the progenitor of postcolonial studies. He suggests that although it has come to seem almost common-sensical the basic differences between Said’s work and that of postcolonial studies more generally are so marked that it cannot be sustained, in ‘The illusion of a future: Orientalism as Traveling Theory,’ *Critical Inquiry* 26, no.3 (Spring, 2000):558-68. Cited in Stephen Cairns, “The Stone Book of Orientalism,” *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon*, eds. Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash (London: Routledge, 2007), 64.

## 2.2 Representation, Institutional Power, and Said's Resistance

Rethinking the literary production of discourse and academic writing generally, without reference to architectural discourse, has been the focus of many theorists employing different methods of analysis from different perspectives. For the current research, the substance of the themes of resistance and influence employed by Said must be interpreted in light of White's investigation of the role of representation in history and Foucault's analysis of institutional power and knowledge.

For White, in *Tropics of Discourse* (1979), the "real" meaning of discourse fundamentally depends on the figurative language and metaphors. Therefore, his interpretation of discourse entirely depends on the language as mediator. Discourse for White is "a mediative enterprise" that is "both interpretive and preinterpretive."<sup>3</sup> White perceives that the language employed in the writing of history, or any discourse, constitutes in itself a field of objects that is 'tropical' or figurative, not necessarily logical.<sup>4</sup> In this way, he constructs discontinuity, disruption, and chaos, in the historian's interpretation (similar to Foucault's method of archaeology). White's argument based on his perception that historians or authors invent the past by the way they narrate that past. White's analysis highlights the significance of the contrapuntal reading which narrates the past by juxtaposing different narratives or discourses. White's Foucauldian definition of discourse is void of any influences on such narratives; such definition divorces the discourse of its spatiotemporal context, and notably, the relational systems of power.

However, Foucault, whose approach is a forerunner to postcolonial discourse, has constructed the intimate relationship between knowledge and power through discourse production. Foucault argues that "in every society" discourse production is carefully regulated by "discursive systems" in order to "gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality."<sup>5</sup> This relation underpins modernity through a discursive practice of exclusions and inclusions that help to define its others: madness, health, etc. To logically reveal the interplay between power and discourse, in the way knowledge "operates as part of a system or network propped up by social and political structures of power,"<sup>6</sup> Foucault creates his potent

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<sup>3</sup>Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 4. For the development of White's ideas since 1950s see Herman Paul, *Hayden White* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup>White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 6.

<sup>5</sup>Foucault, "The order of discourse," *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. R. Young (London: Routledge, 1981), 48-51. For discussion about the significance of Foucault's approach in contemporary critical theory see Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2002); and Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (Canada: Routledge, 1997) for examination of history in postmodern age and criticism of White's approach and the way Foucault extends White's approach.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Hiddleston, *Understanding Postcolonial* (UK: Atheneum Press Limited, 2009), 76.

method of archaeology. Archaeology, a new approach to history that “receive[s] every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption,”<sup>7</sup> so it is an identification of the mechanism of these ruptures and discontinuities within discourses. Foucault’s method of archaeology is to conduct a vast investigation and analysis of both the relations between effective discourses’ statements as well as the discourses’ conditions of production. In this way, archaeology establishes “a formal arrangement into an energy-laden spatio-temporal theatre...and ‘a new habit of thought’-or discourse.”<sup>8</sup>

Foucault’s conception of the formation of a discourse nevertheless, relies on the belief that the subject is conceived as entirely formed and determined by dominant institutions of power, an interpretation that is based on the “specific intellectual,”<sup>9</sup> who is aware of these institutions. But this specificity, indeed, turns towards “moralism high and low,” as it “give(s) voice” to the vulnerable individual, the critic Paul Rabinow affirms.<sup>10</sup> For Foucault, “the individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces.”<sup>11</sup> Foucault’s work focuses on the individual as dissolved in a “microphysics of power” that it is hopeless to resist.<sup>12</sup> Said departed from Foucault’s mere fascination with the way power operates in his effort to change power relations in society. Foucauldian power, for Said, is a “conception [which] has drawn a circle around itself, constituting a unique territory in which Foucault has imprisoned himself and others with him.”<sup>13</sup> While Said uses Foucault’s notion of discourse to construct links between the literary work and the world (culture and politics), Said intended, contrary to Foucault, to highlight the existence of potential resistance—a major concern of this thesis. This potential has been praised by Gayatri Spivak, a pioneer postcolonial discourse theorist, who notes that colonial discourse study released by Said’s work “blossomed into a garden where the marginal can speak and be spoken, even spoken for.”<sup>14</sup> As a new theme in postcolonial discourse, the resistance that was implicit in *Orientalism* has been explicitly highlighted in *Culture and Imperialism*.

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<sup>7</sup>Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2001), 25.

<sup>8</sup> Hussein, *Edward Said*, 132.

<sup>9</sup>Foucault, “The Political Function of the Intellectual,” *Radical Philosophy*, no.17(1977), 12-4.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Rabinow, “Representations are Social Facts,” *Writing Culture*, eds. James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 258.

<sup>11</sup>Foucault, “Questions on Geography,” *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 74. Foucault’s insistence on Western cultural hegemony and the concomitant marginalization of colonized peoples, represented as submissive, was criticized by Spivak in her influential article “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke, 1988), 271-313.

<sup>12</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 278.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 245.

<sup>14</sup>Gayatri Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 56.

### 2.3 *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism*

*Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) have placed Said in high esteem in the relation to the interdisciplinary field of post-colonial studies. On the one hand, *Orientalism* has been welcomed by many third world anti-imperialist intellectuals like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Partha Chatterjee, for whom the book's critical argument is powerfully convincing.<sup>15</sup> However, Bhabha and Spivak criticized the notion of a unidirectional force (from West to East) and the polarised dominant/subordinate positions within Orientalism, affirming the transformative effects on both sides (the colonizer and colonized). Most recently, Bhabha emphasized such argument in the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, in his proposal of the "transitional/translation dynamic of contemporary culture." He deconstructs the monolithic preconceptions by highlighting inseparable global connectedness in the "historical fate and contextual 'meaning' that require us to revise our methods of judgement and interpretation."<sup>16</sup>

*Orientalism* introduced a rigorous hard-hitting criticism not only because of its political "interventionist" argument that showed "asymmetrical" socio-cultural powers, but also because of its theoretical complexities and statements which were "intended as a dramatized retrieval of a contested past," and present status quo.<sup>17</sup> For example, *Orientalism* has actively criticized domains of modern non-orientalist thought (i.e. post-structuralism and neo-Marxism), as being advocates of orientalist beliefs, a fact that is denounced by the Marxist critic Aijaz Ahmad.<sup>18</sup>

Said's *Orientalism* examines Western perceptions and the "fictional reality" of the Orient.<sup>19</sup> As *Orientalism* construes the origin and development of a body of knowledge that represented the Arab-Islamic world which is traced to the nineteenth-century, it triggers a revolutionary insight into the craft of representation. While Said continues to chart the Orientalist work of Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan in France, and Edward William Lane in Britain, he succeeds to link the orientalist's exploration of the non-European world with the Western intentions of

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<sup>15</sup> Partha Chatterjee, "In their own Words: An Essay for Edward Said," *Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Homi Bhabha, "Architecture and Thought," 7.

<sup>17</sup> Hussein, *Edward Said*, 229.

<sup>18</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2000), criticized Said for being reductive of Marx's complex writing about India, that the passage of Marx "on the role of British colonialism in India can be lifted out of the presuppositions of political economy and seamlessly integrated into a transhistorical Orientalist Discourse," 166. Ahmad also criticized the combination of Foucault, Gramsci, Lacan and Auerbach that makes Said's humanist approach appear to be contradictory to his engagement with poststructuralists such as Foucault. However, Mary Pratt, "Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*: A Symposium," 7, describes Said's humanism as "new humanism," that is considered as, quoting Said a "pull away from separatist nationalism toward an integrative view of human community and human liberation." Also, William Spanos, *The Legacy of Edward W. Said* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), perceived Said's ambivalent attitudes sympathetically. Said developed this humanistic notion in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004).

<sup>19</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 54.

domination. *Orientalism* constructs a juxtaposition of culture and politics by analysing the colonial discourse-based texts (literary, historical or popular) in the context of the territorial conquest and economic exploitation. Said's analysis shows how these texts meant to disseminate false images in order to serve the colonial power structure operating at the time, it is certainly "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient."<sup>20</sup>

Although, in Said's opinion, Orientalism was never meant to be a mere discourse, but rather "the more visible actions of Western imperialism on the East,"<sup>21</sup> he based his argument on Foucault to be able to move from a text to the power of knowledge. Based on Foucault's texts *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2001b) and *Discipline and Punish* (1991), Said theorized Orientalism, as a discourse that discursively restructured the Orient as an object of knowledge. However, Said's understanding of discourse is more historically grounded than Foucault's systems of power. Foucault's notion of discourse has been further expanded in a way that evoked taxonomy and categorization to reinforce the colonial project. In fact, Foucault's work was never intended to be political in the context of imperialism; he focused on institutional authorities but he never examined the colonial discourse, and hence Said added a new twist to the Foucauldian argument.

But Said's definition of Orientalism not only loaded the material culture of Orientalism with colonial objectives but also discerned the fractured geography that the Occident is materializing. Orientalism for Said is "a representational chimera" that was enabled by the "long-standing and informal geopolitical knowledge of the Orient and its 'basic geographical distinction' from the Occident"—a distinction that was enforced by the collected scholarships and literature.<sup>22</sup> Defining the Orient, in this way, is based on the Western belief of the former's unique place in relation to their experience "the Orient is an integral part of European *material* [original emphasis] civilization and culture."<sup>23</sup> In other words, the orient is the source of the West's images of the Other as it helps to define Europe by self-comparison with the other. By emphasizing the imbalance of power between Occident and Orient, Said provides one of his unique aphorisms: the concept of "*imaginative geography* [emphasis added]" a term that evokes the "arbitrary" dichotomy between "our" and "their" land.<sup>24</sup> By illuminating these geographic distinctions inscribed in Orientalists' discourse and its infiltration into cultural performance, Said asserts, it becomes easy to reinterpret "the Western cultural archive as if *fractured*

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 3.

<sup>21</sup>Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996), 5.

<sup>22</sup>Cairns, "The Stone Book of Orientalism,"

<sup>23</sup>Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, 54.

*geographically* [emphasis added] by the activated imperial divide.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, Said’s argument is certainly about “rethinking geography”—one major concern in both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. *Culture and Imperialism*, in a unique development of *Orientalism*’s argument about colonial resistance to imperialism, traces imperialist complicities in the literary works of modern European canonical writers. However, the central argument of *Culture and Imperialism* is to reconcile ruptures between cultures.

The reconciliation of these cultural ruptures comprises three important metaphors that altogether offer a dynamic methodological guide for his text and thus will be adopted in this research. Those three metaphors are: ‘structure of attitude and reference,’ the reconstruction of historical understanding ‘geographically,’ and the melodic coexistence of counterpoints in ‘contrapuntal’ consistence. These three metaphors represent “and fine-tune in specific ways ... a confrontation which has epistemological, historical, cultural, and ethico-political implications.”<sup>26</sup>

The structure of attitude is based on Raymond Williams’ concept of ‘structures of feeling’ which is considered to be one of the most important themes in *Culture and Imperialism*. Said used this concept to highlight the impact of imperialism in shaping the modern experience by “sending its ripples through the culture of the modern West and from there back to the empire.”<sup>27</sup> From this perspective, Said develops Foucault’s theory in particular ways that help construct the necessity of the interpreter’s historical, cultural and geographical experiences. These experiences, Said asserts, interact to develop two forces of influence and resistance, as two main constituents of the structure of attitude and reference—these two forces are stressed in this research as the two essentials of architectural discourse. Said sought resistance in his attempts to reinterpret history through the contrapuntal reading “that tacks back and forth across the “activated imperial divide [East and West].” By crossing this divide, this reading seeks to uncover the expressions of ‘resistance’ as a process of “decolonizing knowledge.”<sup>28</sup> This mode of reading, described as “contrapuntal” by Said, and credited by Crinson as “[t]he most stimulating idea in Said’s book, if perhaps also the most elusive,” is “to see imperial themes as playing off domestic or metropolitan themes, with order and meaning created by and within this very interplay.”<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the method of contrapuntal reading enables one to ‘rethink

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<sup>25</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 50.

<sup>26</sup>Hussein, *Edward Said*, 250.

<sup>27</sup>‘Informal imperialism’ refers to particular economic and political relationships between Britain and large parts of the Middle East, as well as those between Europe and South America. This term was coined by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *Economic History Review*, no. 6 (1953), pp. 1-15. Cited in Crinson, *Empire Building*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce Robbins, Mary Pratt, Jonathan Arac, and R. Radhakrishnan, “Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*: A Symposium,” *Social Text* 40 (1994), pp.1-24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466793>, (accessed 14/07/10).

<sup>29</sup>Crinson, *Empire Building*, 6.

geography' that Said has developed to rethink the imagined/constructed divide between the East and the West.

## 2.4 Architecture and *Orientalism*

This idea of rethinking geography has stimulated cross-cultural studies which—to the argument of this research as I argue—have examined the influence of the discursive relationship between East and West on architecture. Said's *Orientalism* has influenced many disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography, historiography, and architecture.<sup>30</sup> Although *Orientalism* is the colonizer's discourse with its hegemonic inequalities, as Said argued, it still articulates discursive cross-cultural objects and events, and thus it will continue to be fundamentally important to architectural discourse. Therefore, the question of *Orientalism*, in view of geographic rethinking and relational power, has stimulated different historical studies, such as Crinson, *Empire Building*; Alsayyad, *Forms of Dominance*; Mitchel, *Colonising Egypt*; Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*.<sup>31</sup>

However, Mackenzie is sceptical about the validity of Said's argument in architectural discourse. Mackenzie extends *Orientalism* through a critique not only of architecture, but art, music, design, and theatre. Mackenzie romanticizes the material culture of *Orientalism* and defends it as a positive cultural and creative practice that is removed from forms of dominance or imperial exercises. Mackenzie's critique stems from his belief in the hybridity between West and East and he criticizes Said for his application of late twentieth-century sensibilities to nineteenth-century art. He argues that this has led to a lack of clarity.<sup>32</sup> For Mackenzie, Said's view of *Orientalism* as an imperial project "fails to recognise that the arts and dominant political ideologies tend to operate in counterpoint rather than conformity."<sup>33</sup> In his refusal to see imperial intentions in the material culture of *Orientalism*, Mackenzie stresses that "no true art can ever be founded upon a perpetual parade of cultural superiority...Nor are the majority of consumers likely to purchase it."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Mackenzie argues that the creation of "a monolithic and binary vision of the past," as Said favoured, means that the intercultural relations that historians "seek to

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<sup>30</sup>For example, Bryan Turner who develops Said's thinking in the context of globalization in his book *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (1994).

<sup>31</sup> Many scholars have questioned the role of architecture and design in the post-colonial context including, for example, Peter Scriver "Placing In-between: Thinking through Architecture in the Construction of Colonial-Modern Identities," *National Identities* 8, no.3 (2006), 207-223; and Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (London: Routledge, 1996). Also, in French colonial architecture: Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991).

<sup>32</sup>John Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), xvii.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid, 14.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, 213.

place on a more sympathetic basis for the future,” will be shattered.<sup>35</sup> However, it is worth mentioning that Mackenzie praises Said’s utopian vision in *Culture and Imperialism* in which he slew “the dragon of imperialism.”<sup>36</sup> But one may think that Mackenzie’s argument that divorces art and architecture from its socio-political imperatives downgrades and limits architecture to a stylistic container. Paradoxically, as Stephen Cairns asserts, Mackenzie’s architectural examples prove Said’s claims.<sup>37</sup> However, Cairns criticizes the Orientalism accountability on architecture for its potentiality and mobility between “material and representational worlds”<sup>38</sup>

The assumptions of this thesis are largely based on this intrinsic relationship between not only culture and imperialism but also architecture and imperialism. This is similar to the assumptions of many other scholars including Crinson<sup>39</sup> who empirically extends Said’s argument to architecture by testing it in projects rather than in totalities, shifting the focus from imperial discourses to imperial projects. Crinson argues that “accounts of architecture are incomplete without asking to whom buildings were addressed and how they were understood.”<sup>40</sup> The difference between Said’s claims about the production of Orientalism and Crinson’s application of such arguments to architecture, as Crinson asserts, relates to the audience. While the orientalist discourse is directed to the West the oriental or imperial architecture in general is directed to the Orient.<sup>41</sup> Crinson’s investigation of British architecture in the “Near East” deploys the relationship between orientalist fantasies and the architecture in the Victorian period. Crinson affirms the intrinsic relationship between architectural representation and imperial ambitions—through which the British sought to “negotiate the transition into formal rule.”<sup>42</sup> The process of negotiating a design that addresses both local and imperial notions, took nine years in the case of the church of St Mark in Alexandria and ten years in the case of the consulate in Alexandria. These areas of contact, reveal “motivating forces of religion and imperialism, and the drive to define nation and race, which underlay architecture as an area of knowledge and a form of representation.”<sup>43</sup> Here, *AB*, the case study of this thesis, is an anti-colonial project that was

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid, 215.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid, 20.

<sup>37</sup> Cairns, “The Stone Book of Orientalism,” 59.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Crinson’s text was criticized by Çelik for the interchangeable use of the terms empire, colonialism, and imperialism. She asserts that Crinson, aware of the blurred boundaries, used the term “informal imperialism” which was, however, undefined. “Hence, its significance in “empire building” and relevance to the architecture discussed in the book are not clear.” Zeynep Çelik, Book Review *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56, no. 4 (1997), pp. 511-512. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/991325>, (accessed 17/09/2010).

<sup>40</sup>Crinson, *Empire Building*, 7.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid, 232.

directed to the local audience, motivated by these forces of religion so as to fashion the eastern 'self' in response to the Western 'other' in the aftermath of the neoliberal infitah policy.

The extension of Said's argument to architecture and urban form is also evident in the edited volume *Forms of Dominance*, which builds an argument of dominance on Said's articulation of 'otherness.' AlSayyad states "this artificial and superficial juxtaposition of "us" and "them," or "us" and the "other," was perpetuated in administrative policies, in literary discourse, and in architecture and urban form."<sup>44</sup> While AlSayyad focuses on the identification of forces of change and the impact on post-colonial architecture and urbanism forms, he discerns, Said's contribution in revealing the power of representations in producing an imagined image of the 'self' and the 'other.' The importance of this volume is that it affirms the intrinsic existence of dominance within the society, that "the rise of civilization and the organization of localities into urban units continues to be based on various forms of dominance: dominance of the city over the countryside, of landlords over peasants, of noblemen over the populous."<sup>45</sup>

Orientalism has also been adopted and strengthened in two important works that investigate Orientalism in architectural representations. Çelik and Mitchel<sup>46</sup> examine representations of Islamic culture in the Western universal expositions of the nineteenth-century. These expositions acted as "great new rituals of self-congratulation" which redefine the global power structure.<sup>47</sup> While both authors investigated the production of modernity in the East as a response to Orientalism, as a political project, neither of them have explicitly presented any analysis of Orientalism's effect on architecture. Çelik quite directly transposes architecture into Said's terminology as she asserts: "examining the exchanges between Islam and the West acknowledges the existence of communication, discussion, and mutual recognition among these unequal partners, helping to refute the "silent" and "frozen" status given to Islam in Western discourse."<sup>48</sup>

This intrinsic relationship between architecture as a form of representation and imperialism—as addressed by Crinson or AlSayyad—is part and parcel of the Egyptian history that will be discussed in Chapter 4. This intrinsic relationship, in this research, is materialized in the architectural discourse which cultivates forces of influence and resistance that construct structures of attitude and reference to imperialism. But most importantly, Edward Said's robust

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<sup>44</sup> Nezar AlSayyad, "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity," *Forms of Dominance*, ed. AlSayyad, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Mitchel, *Colonising Egypt*.

<sup>47</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 3.

articulation of resistance which emerges in his elusive method of contrapuntal reading<sup>49</sup> provides the pivot for the case study of this research.

## 2.5 Contrapuntality of Knowledge

Said's methodology of contrapuntal reading that he followed to interpret the English novels that provided new narratives of the colonies and resistances as "they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities"<sup>50</sup>, and this is coherently explained in the following view by Said:

As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not *univocally* but contrapuntally [original emphasis], with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and those other histories *against* which (and *together* with which) the dominating discourse acts [emphasis added]. In the counterpoint of the Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is a concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work.<sup>51</sup>

This definition stresses the significance of this methodology to this research as it constructs a dialogue between cultures and "overlapping histories."<sup>52</sup> This overlapping is intended to conceal the ruptures between cultures that have resulted from the imperialism's classifications and hierarchies. Thus, he suggests a tangible contrapuntal history which is made out of unity,<sup>53</sup> as in the closing statement of *Culture and Imperialism*:

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind.

In this way, contrapuntality is an attempt to "blur the distinction between the so-called center and periphery"—a "political/polite" centrality which is discerned by the institutional marginalization of the subaltern<sup>54</sup> in Western academia.<sup>55</sup> This reading is based on notions of counterpoint, and integration which reiterate the historical experience of imperialism as a history of overlapping

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<sup>49</sup> Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, trace this contrapuntal notion back to the influence of the pianist Glenn Gould's contrapuntal musical performances. The plurality of vision allowed by this contrapuntal method, they highlight, originates in the complexity of Said's identity.

<sup>50</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 51.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 51.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Said's adoption of in-betweenness approach for reconciling cultures has been criticized from different ideological perspectives. For example, Jewish intellectuals found in his defense of Islam and Palestine an unjust characterization of Israeli politics, such as Mark Krupnick "Edward Said: Discourse and Palestine Rage"; and Edward Alexander "Professor of Terror," (both 1989), Hussein, *Edward Said*, 269-308. Also, his defense of Islam was criticized as overtly conservative by many Arab liberal intellectuals (Abaza and Stauth 1990). Paradoxically, Said was criticized by many Muslim fundamentalists for being Westernized (Little 1979; Wahba 1989), Ashcroft, 10. For a counter-argument, see Paul Bove, "In Defense of Edward Said," *Boundary 2*, vol. 18, no.1 (1992): 11-12.

<sup>54</sup> 'The Subaltern Studies Collective' formed in 1982. In an attempt to rewrite the political history of India from the natives' perceptions, Guha with contributions of Parthes Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty founded an annual publication *Subaltern Studies*.

<sup>55</sup> Hussein, *Edward Said*, 263-64.

domains. The ‘Contrapuntal Reading’ was also explained as a reading that cross the rupture of West-East to enable ‘resistance’ that is essential in liberating knowledge.<sup>56</sup> Contrapuntality is, therefore, a “convocation of multiple cultures and canons,” that limits the reinscription of ‘old hierarchies and exclusions, hence reinforcing old essentializations and misrepresentations.’<sup>57</sup> These hierarchies were manifested through structures of attitude and reference that are based on presuming power, privilege, and dominance. These structures of reference and attitude, consist of “a web of affiliations, connections, decisions, and collaborations,”<sup>58</sup> are investigated in the contrapuntal reading.

When investigating the structure of attitude and reference in Verdi’s *Aida*,<sup>59</sup> for example, which was based on ‘disparities and discrepancies,’ the political intention of *Aida*, as a composite work, becomes discerned. Such disparities and discrepancies are materialized in *Aida*’s hybridity whose counterpoint incorporates “the history of culture and the historical experiences of overseas domination.”<sup>60</sup> To materialise such counterpoint, Said contrapuntally read its history, author’s perspectives, and composition; scenario, costumes, and music. This reading connects the peculiarity of Verdi’s superiority feeling as an intellect and the universality of imperial values that devalues the modern life of Egypt.

In July 19, 1871 Verdi wrote a letter to Draneht, the Cairo Opera Manager, asserting “*Aida* is in effect a product of my work. I am the one who convinced the Viceroy to order its presentation; *Aida* in a word, is a creation of my brain.”<sup>61</sup> Verdi’s superiority and separation from the Egyptian contemporary context is denoted in assigning the scenario to the Egyptologist Auguste Mariette “whose French nationality and training were part of a crucial imperial genealogy.”<sup>62</sup> Mariette influenced by scenes and costumes of *La Description de l’Égypte*, transformed the pre-historic Egypt into modernized style (common to 1870) and Europeanized faces. Also, Verdi, after studying some documents sent to him from Ricordi about ancient Egypt’s religious ceremonies, has converted some priests to priestesses, in display of “feminine eroticism a l’orientale ‘articulated power relations and revealed a desire to enhance supremacy through representation.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the story of *Aida* projects the Khedive’s colonial ambitions while

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<sup>56</sup> Bruce Robbins, et al, “Edward Said’s Culture and Imperialism: A Symposium.”

<sup>57</sup> Hussein, *Edward Said*, 263-64.

<sup>58</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 125.

<sup>59</sup> While Said asserts the falsity of the Opera, he referred to it as an ‘Egyptian opera,’ a paradox that has been criticized by Lydia Goehr, “Aida and the Empire of Emotions (Theodor W. Adorno, Edward Said, and Alexander Kluge)” *Current Methodology* 87 (2009):133-59.

<sup>60</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 114.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 121.

dramatizing the success as perilous; whilst the Egyptian army achieved victory in conquering Ethiopia, the leader/hero of the Egyptian force was attacked as a traitor and sentenced to death.

Consequently, *Aida* became an orientalised work that is similar to Egyptology but it has nothing to do with Egypt.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, Said contends that the same political intentions, which falsified *La Description de l'Égypte*, proved true for *Aida*.<sup>65</sup> In this way, while Khedive Isma'īl's commission to Verdi to make a spectacle opera to introduce Egypt's wealth to Europe, Verdi, influenced by Egyptology, puts Egypt's importance before Europe to indicate their own power. In this way, in this reading of "*Aida's* peculiarities—its subject matter and setting," its visual and musical effects, and its author's perspective, the contrapuntality<sup>66</sup> revealed *Aida's* discrepancy and how it "is not so much *about* but *of imperial* domination [original italics]." Indeed, as Said affirms, "*Aida* embodies, as it was intended to do, the authority of Europe's version of Egypt at a moment in its nineteenth-century history, a history for which Cairo in the years 1869-1871 was an extraordinarily suitable site."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid, 117.

<sup>65</sup> Verdi's lack of connection to Egypt was affirmed in his writing to Camille du Locle, a friend who had just returned from a *voyage en Orient*, Verdi remarks on February, 1868: "you must describe all the events of your voyage...the beauty and ugliness of a country which once had a greatness and a civilization I had never been able to admire. *Culture and Imperialism*, 115.

<sup>66</sup> Said's contrapuntal analysis of *Aida*, which he concluded is a "cold opera" and orientalist work, has been criticized by Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* as a bizarre analysis (p.155). Another critique of Said's interpretation of *Aida* is provided by Nicholas John (series editor), *Aida* (London: Opera Guide Series, 1980) and Julian Budden, *Verdi* (London, 1985). Paul Robinson further affirms *Aida's* political intentions, "Is *Aida* an Orientalist Opera?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5: 1993.

<sup>67</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 125.



**Figure 2. Frontispiece to *Description de l'Egypte*.**

This contrapuntal reading has been criticised for its uncertainty. Hussein states that “the ‘total’ effect of the repetitions, distanciations, doublings, dissonances, and juxtapositions is cumulative rather than narrowly logical. It is also for that same reason open-ended.”<sup>68</sup> Sabry Hafez has noted the same point about the contrapuntal reading: “although Said’s project is passionately persuasive, it defies closure and certainty.”<sup>69</sup> However, Hafez affirms that the secular trajectory of that reading enhances “its relevance to the contemporary Arab scene,” which began the modern era with an obsolete acceptance of the Western model. Said’s contrapuntality provides a breeze that balances this obsolete acceptance or total rejection that emerged between some intellectuals. Said’s development of such a method was mainly a result of his argument for “liberation from the dogma of theory.”<sup>70</sup> In essence, this thesis is about the modern era of an Arab scene (Egypt) and as it hopes for a clear-cut investigation of its hypothesis, therefore, it is indispensable to be free from any (Eastern or Western) theory. Accordingly, the contrapuntal reading used in this thesis as a method of analysis is discernible.

<sup>68</sup>Hussein, *Edward Said*, 264-65.

<sup>69</sup>Sabry Hafez, “Edward Said’s Intellectual Legacy in the Arab World,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33, no.3 (2004), 67-90. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3247643>,(accessed 08/08/2010).

<sup>70</sup> According to Sabry Hafez, Said’s effort to liberate Arab critical discourse from theory which has been mainly a Western dogma has been adopted by many Arab critics: Jabir Asfur (Egypt), Muhammad Barrada (Morocco), Yumna al-’Id (Lebanon), Subhi Hadidi (Syria), and Fakhri Salih (Jordan), 84.

## 2.6 The Research Method

Given this definition of contrapuntal reading, and the example of *Aida*, the work here that will be read contrapuntally is the local discourse of *'Alam al-Bena'a (AB)*, which acts as an agent in fashioning the sense of 'self' and the 'other,' and materializes resistance to common praxis. The implication of Said's contrapuntality as a research method in this thesis arises mainly from two analogies between Said's problematic perceptions about the Western imperial representations and the editor 'A.Ibrahim's problematic representation of the local architectural sphere. One is the notion of resistance, which is reflected in Said's choice of contrapuntality to avoid the pitfalls of various centrism, which manifested itself in 'A.Ibrahim's call for "a return" to "civilizational spring of our Islamic heritage"<sup>71</sup>— as it is represented in the Qur'an. The second is the fine tuning of this early attitude of resistance, as both Said and 'A.Ibrahim never rejected the West as an entity. Both the attitude of resistance and its fine tuning resulted in a discursive spatio-temporal connection,<sup>72</sup> which was reinforced by Said's contrapuntality. Hence contrapuntality, one contends, provides a solid ground for materializing the discursivity of the examined local discourse in this research.

However, a major point of departure from Said's method here is that while his project aims to identify the imperial aspirations during a period of informal imperialism, the project here aims to record the culminated results of imperialism and the dominant impact on local and global discourses alike. Thus, recording the forms of dominance through investigating structures of imperial attitudes and tracing forces of influence and resistance, the local discourse is at the centre of the contrapuntal reading of this thesis, unlike Said's reading of the nineteenth-century Western novels.<sup>73</sup> Materializing such forces will illuminate the rationale of the discourse which, this thesis argues, seeks to oppose the structures of domination within the socio-political context, while unconsciously conforming to its perceptions. Hence, in this process of opposition or unconscious adoption of the structures of dominance, one contends, the local discourse endeavours to develop its own structure of attitude and reference, which denotes "authority [or authorities] of recognizable cultural formations."<sup>74</sup> Therefore, these local discourses, one

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<sup>71</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Editorial," *AB* 1 (1980).

<sup>72</sup> Jonathan Arac elucidates that the term "*connection* is not at all incidental;" it is "the prime gesture" of Said's criticism 'contrapuntal' that he used "to construe the very large, but by no means all-comprehending, cultural edifice of imperialism." Bruce Robbins, Mary Pratt, Johanthan Arac and R. Radhakrishnan, "Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*: A Symposium"

<sup>73</sup> Kennedy expressed a concern about Said's focus on canonical texts, in both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, as this marginalized non-Western writers. Valerie Kennedy, *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).

<sup>74</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 12.

contends, are “institutionalized or discursively stable entities,” which are “determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance.”<sup>75</sup>

Therefore, the examination of the structure of attitude and reference will go through a two-fold process. The first is the overlap of spatio-temporal territories of past and present discourses, as well as Western and local canons to “expand the *overlapping* community between *metropolitan and formerly colonized* societies [emphasis added].”<sup>76</sup> Said’s approach of the contrapuntal reading of figurative texts attempts to “see them into their context as accurately as possible ... as figures whose writing travels across temporal, cultural and ideological boundaries in unforeseen ways.”<sup>77</sup> For Said, any literary text “is something which has connections with many other aspects of the world—political, social, cultural—all of which contribute to make up its *worldliness* [emphasis added].”<sup>78</sup> Hence, the thesis will trace origins of the structure of attitude and reference not only in its socio-political historical context (Chapter 4) but also in past and present local architectural discourses (Chapter 6), and locate them in the global discourse (Chapter 5). This will review the earlier discourses like *al-‘Imarah*, and the *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Engineers*, and *al-Ahram*, as well as other coincident discourses, such as *al-Mimariyah*, and *Medina*. Also, the local discourse of *AB* will be situated within the coincident international discourses such as *MIMAR* and *AKA Proceedings*, as outsider agencies of discourse in the region. This meticulous survey of the past and present, as well as the national and international architectural periodicals surrounding *AB* will help to determine the structure of the architectural discourses in Egypt after independence with the inevitable ‘overlapped histories.’ This will eventually illuminate the discursive and discrepant encounters of the local context amid the universal process of modernization. The inside/outside perspective of this study is additionally important, however, because it discerns enduring global interrelations.

The second process in the contrapuntal reading of *AB* is to investigate its composition and its intellectual ‘particularity.’ The contrapuntality is “a technique of theme and variation by which a counterpoint is established between the imperial narrative and postcolonial perspective.”<sup>79</sup> This technique of theme is meant not only to “warrant multiple *thematizations* or renditions of the same note,” but also “to dramatize the project of imperialism and its interlocution as an ongoing process that links the present with the past and the future.”<sup>80</sup> With this thematization the Contrapuntality here is like a fugue, which can consist of 2, 3, 4, or 5 voices; they are all part of

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 90-91.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>80</sup> Hussein, *Edward Said*, 264-65.

the composition, but each one is distinct. In underpinning the relationship of the contrapuntal reading to *AB*, there are four main recurring voices/themes. These voices/themes are vestiges of key discrepant issues that occupied the architectural praxis of the twentieth-century, and therefore these themes crystallize the rationale of the discourse.

In this way, by reading *AB*'s discourse, four recurring voices/themes become discerned (Chapter 8). Firstly, the 'Western Voice' or influence is materialized in both the review of foreign books and projects, and conducting interviews with Western architects. This Western Voice embodies the concept of cultural juxtaposition as it appears to be an integral part in the so-called the "Voyage in," as termed by Edward Said. Secondly, the 'Historical Voice' or resistance is materialized by revisiting Egyptian historical sites as an inspirational source of indigenous identity and other times to shed light on the roots of the challenges facing the profession of architecture in Egypt. Thirdly, the 'Contemporary Local Voice' is materialized in the review of local projects and current events, contextualizing the local profession's challenges, including those relating to identity, education, and publication. Lastly, the 'Return/ Editorial Voice' is materialized mostly by the "Editorial" entitled "Notion," which seeks to thoroughly elucidate how the notion of return has been constructed between the various standpoints of *AB*'s participants. This notion of return takes place by provoking the legitimate need for Islamic architecture for consistency with both the Qura'nic principles and the principles of functionalism, from a modern secular perspective.

Therefore, the representation of these four themes, indicated above, will work as a vehicle to explore the effect of the continuous shifting contexts on the architectural profession in the post-independence era. These voices will also enable a deeper understanding of the conceptual frameworks that formed the development of Egyptian architecture in the late modern era. More generally, these voices will highlight not only trends in the architectural thinking of post-independence Egypt, but also the shared paradigms in the formation of a dominant consensus on the rationale of the architectural discourse throughout Egypt's history. Such contrapuntal reading, with inside/outside perspectives, will reflect the paradigms that face contemporary Egyptian architects in the endeavour for identity formation.

### **3 Modernism and Identity**

### 3.1 Introduction

When one thinks of modernism and identity, one immediately considers a tense historical relationship between modernity and tradition. Both are main constituents of the postcolonial constellations, as representatives of the two forces of influence and resistance, which have shaped the rationale of twentieth-century local and global architectural debates and the agencies of discourse. In this connection, this thesis aims to move beyond polarised representations of tradition and modernity, as a dimension of the East-West dichotomy. As part of the contrapuntal reading, this chapter tacks across these East-West and modernity-tradition debates to investigate the connections between these postcolonial constellations. This crossing between boundaries will situate the local intellectual attitudes and references within the larger international landscape that has shaped this identity debate over the past decades.

Two main points have been central to identity debates in their intersection with twentieth-century architectural discourse and its agencies. The first point to understand is the pervasive dichotomy of tradition and modernity. The second point relates to key themes that enable resistance to this dichotomy in the effort to construct in-between space(s). These themes, under the umbrella of post-colonial architectural discourse include, not least, postmodernism, nationalism, and regionalism. Each theme resonates in both the international discourse (Chapter 5) and the local discourse in Egypt (Chapters 6, 7, 8). However, in the local context these key themes were often disguised by—often tyrannical—religious, national or even ideological consensus. The shifting values that characterise the debates of modernity and identity, as well as the widespread concern with the universalisation of economies and styles, have resulted in multiple modernisms and identities that often compromise cultural distinctiveness under the banner of modernism. These multiple shifts were highlighted in Duanfeng Lu, *Third World Modernism* (2011), in her investigation of the impact of the modernist architecture, emerged in postwar Europe, on the experiences and knowledge of the Third World, as a result of both the nationalist and global aspirations. The shifts in the impact of modernism, for AlSayyad, question the end of tradition and its dual existence with modernity.

### 3.2 Tradition/Modernity: A Polyphonic Debate

In the twentieth-century, the role of dominance and power is currently undergoing an enormous change, a change in form not content, in policy not targets, as a new means to the same long-

lasted ends of the West.<sup>1</sup> The history of most pre-colonized countries shows that “domination and inequities of power and wealth are perennial facts of human society.”<sup>2</sup> Immediately after independence, Said asserted, the natives have realized their need to “the West,”<sup>3</sup> and that “*total* [original italics] independence was a nationalist fiction designed mainly for what Fanon calls the ‘nationalist bourgeoisie,’ who in turn often ran the new countries.”<sup>4</sup> (see Egypt’s case in chapter 4). Until the late twentieth-century, Said convincingly argued that this history of domination is not over yet and the act of globalization greatly contributes to its reiteration, without new settlements and “frontiers”: “[w]e live in one global environment with a huge number of ecological, economic, social, and political pressures tearing at its only dimly perceived, basically uninterpreted and uncomprehended fabric.”<sup>5</sup> Said draws particular attention to the phases that appeared in the course of a nations’ history, one that has been further defined by AlSayyad as four main phases that shaped the built environment. In my interpretation, these phases are implicit in the *AB* discourse and they underpin the discourse rationale.

These four phases can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the “Insular Period” is characterized by indigenous architecture that is largely determined by local forces.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the “Colonial Period” is distinguished by hybrid architecture in both the colonizer and colonized sites that were “irreparably altered in an unequally representative synergy.”<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, the period of “Independence and Nation-Building” in which both modernism and nation-building worked simultaneously to reinvent traditions, with the chimera of social cohesion “to a global audience.”<sup>8</sup> Fourthly, the “Globalization Period” characterized by being “less rooted in place and more

<sup>1</sup> Colonialism is a recent (short-term) player in the world-system that only came to existence in the late eighteenth-century, see Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (California: University of California Press, 1998). Similarly, see Samir Amin, *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of Global Failure* (1990).

<sup>2</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Reference made here and throughout the thesis to “the West” as an entity is based on Said’s use of this reference based on his analysis of literary works referring to the empires of Britain, France, or U.S.A. In Egypt’s case right after independence, to resist the British and the American powers, Nasser took from Russia an ally to modernize the country. In spite of Nasser’s pan-Arab dogma and his rejection to political or economic American alliance, the American impact appeared in buildings such as the Hilton Hotel. After Nasser’s era, Sadat replaced Russia’s alliance by the U.S.A which continued until the present time. However, the impact of the British and French has never ceased as the educational missions were directed to Liverpool and Beaux-Arts and the influence of the American school started late 1940s in people like Salah Zaytoon who graduated from Illinois (1947).

<sup>4</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>6</sup> AlSayyad analysis was not particularly about Egypt. It should be highlighted here that AlSayyad by insular meant the process of decision making of the architecture; how it is autonomous and not controlled by colonizer or global market. It is worth noting here that Egypt has never been isolated from other influences, even in the Pharaonic or prehistoric ages, during which trade was active between the Pharaonic and Mesopotamian civilizations, see Joan Aruz, Ronald Wallenfels, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 251; Richard Smith, *Premodern Trade in World History* (Canada: Routledge, 2009), 41.

<sup>7</sup> Nezar AlSayyad, “The End of Tradition, or the Tradition of Endings?” *The End of Tradition*, ed. N. AlSayyad (London: Routledge, 2004), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 10.

informationally based.”<sup>9</sup> These four phases that have shifted from comparatively closed societies to open and hybrid ones, correspond to the complicated transition from traditional architecture to modernism and how “‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ have come to be inextricably linked.”<sup>10</sup>

The perceived transition from traditional relative insularity to hybridity in the colonial period, particularly in Egypt, is the result of what Mitchell calls “enframing” which means that dismissing what was considered chaotic in contemporary life, would logically transform what is traditional to modern.<sup>11</sup> It is worth mentioning here that Starr’s argument, of the tangled linkage between colonialism and cosmopolitanism, extended the post-colonial studies—Said and Mitchell’s historicism of the East-West encounters—by her analysis of the societal interactions within literary works. However, as the thesis examines the impact of colonial history on the agencies of architectural discourse, I argue that the process of enframing is an enduring process in the discourse of Egypt which adopts the principles of imperialism that impose identity throughout a justified order.

In the post-colonial era, the process of enframing was polished and transformed to ‘Cascadia,’ argues the geographer Sparke. The Cascadia is aimed to promote a natural modernization to post nation-states as a reflection of the “transnational potency of neoliberal ideology and the power of this ideology to transform the meanings of concepts like freedom and democracy.”<sup>12</sup> Here, Cascadia resulted from the dependency of “the present ‘borderless-world’ discourse ... on geography,” and the dependency of “postmodern gestures of regional invention are on modernist strategies for bounding space with maps and exhibitionary views of people and place.”<sup>13</sup> In this way, although Cascadia challenges the “national sovereignty” in “postnational” societies, it has never drastically obliterated the regional forces invoking opportunities for traditions to be fashioned.

This notion of ‘fashioning’ tradition echoes Hobsbawm and Ranger’s argument for the ‘invention of tradition’ in 1983 which has been well articulated as a critical theme in the transformation of different societies.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Benedict Anderson stressed the idea of ‘imagined communities.’<sup>15</sup> Building on these ideas, AlSayyad argues that the concept of tradition is often “deployed” to form “the rhetoric for both inclusion and exclusion, and is explicitly

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Sparke, “Nature and Tradition at the Border: Landscaping the End of the Nation State,” *The End of Tradition*, ed. AlSayyad, 93.

<sup>13</sup> AlSayyad, “The End of Tradition,” 16.

<sup>14</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (U.K: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>15</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (UK: Verso, 1983).

dissected as the product of particular vested interests' aspirations to capital accumulation."<sup>16</sup> Thus, perceiving tradition as a cohesive entity and reevaluating its regeneration and "its relative efficacy of transmission," signifies its "possible end" "in the face of globalization."<sup>17</sup> Yet, tradition has not ended. Importantly, AlSayyad concludes instead that the conventional "idea of tradition as a harbinger of authenticity" is at an end.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, since "fashion [or modernity] is not innocent of history," and it rather "continually scavenges the past for props," tradition today is perceived as "transient," and "contingent."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, Upton invokes a turn from authenticity and purity to "the impure, seeking settings that are ambiguous, multiple, often contested, and examining points of contact and transformation."<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, asserting the dynamism of tradition, from a sociological perspective, Giddens argues that whilst tradition is a way to represent time and space, it is "not wholly static." The significance of tradition is clear even in the "most modernised of modern societies," as it is latent in the "inertia of habit."<sup>21</sup> The continuation of tradition within the modern societies has been also asserted by the sociologist Edward Shils—the first to extensively contribute to the multifaceted understanding of tradition—who highlighted the inheritance of rules in enduring institutions.<sup>22</sup> Also, for the architect and critic Canizaro, each new generation can "reinvent" tradition as it is not static but rather dynamic and "it takes over its cultural inheritance from those preceding it."<sup>23</sup> In this way, architects like AlSayyad and Canizaro, and the sociologist Giddens all acknowledge the interplay between both modernity and tradition. They recognise that today's present modernity is tomorrow's past tradition. This invention and regeneration of tradition emphasizes the idea that, in the built environment, "no tradition... holds permanent meaning;" as it "can become whatever particular societies want to make of them."<sup>24</sup> This prompts two questions. 1. How did Egyptian architects view tradition in Egypt? How has tradition been reinvented throughout the twentieth-century? In Egypt, practicing architects have always been trying to align contemporary architecture with either modern or traditional architecture. However, as the Egyptian urban critic, Khaled Adham argues, nowadays architects who claim to be traditionalists

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<sup>16</sup> AlSayyad, "The End of Tradition," 15.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Dilip Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," *Public Culture* 1, no.1 (1999), 1-18.

<sup>20</sup> Dell Upton, "The Tradition of Change," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 5, no. 1 (1993), 9.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 37.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Shils, *Tradition* (University of Chicago press, 1981).

<sup>23</sup> Vincent Canizaro, *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 23.

<sup>24</sup> Nezar AlSayyad, "Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism," *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, ed. AlSayyad (NY: Routledge, 2001), 2.

are, “indeed, producing hybrid architecture and urbanity—not “pure,” “uncontaminated,” “authentic” buildings they usually claim to be designing.”<sup>25</sup>

Modernity has always been interpreted from two main perspectives: one is possessed by its development and its luminous promises for humanity and the other is cautious about its subtle influence on traditional culture. While Habermas was possessed by the universalization of these two aspects that provoked modernity as they may result in progress and wellbeing, many others have criticized them. Horkheimer and Adorno in their *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972) argued that the logic behind Enlightenment rationality is a mere desire in domination of human beings. Max Weber, aligning with Adorno, argued that the Enlightenment was mainly “purposive-instrumental rationality.”<sup>26</sup> Also, Nietzsche views modernity as “nothing more than a vital energy, the will to live and to power, swimming in a sea of disorder...dominated by knowledge and science.”<sup>27</sup> The domination of knowledge and science that has been “tamed” and “institutionalized as the international Style, dominating the skylines of every modern city,”<sup>28</sup> resulted in a sense of “creative destruction,” according to Harvey.<sup>29</sup> This notion, as Harvey asserted, was embodied in Haussmann’s work in Second Empire Paris and Robert Moses in New York after World War II. Thus, Modern architecture has always been “confronted-from within-with its own contradiction.”<sup>30</sup>

Retrospectively, many philosophers, such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger—endorsed in the works of such prominent postmodern theorists as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and Richard Rorty—attributed the demise of modernism to the rise of new collective identities and cultural transformations. Thereby, despite their different approaches, they critically attacked the modern notions of a rationally centred ego that caused a definite epistemological crisis. Thus, they all “attempted to replace the epistemologically sovereign subject of the Enlightenment with a subject constituted in the ‘always already present’ effects of discourse and power.”<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the sociologist Robert Dunn assigns this demise more broadly to the “structurally based destabilization of identity,” that is connected with the

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<sup>25</sup>Adham, “Global Tourism, Hyper-Traditions, and the Fractal Condition of the Sign,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlement Review*, 19, no.11 (2008), 9.

<sup>26</sup>Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 15.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, 15.

<sup>28</sup>Kenneth Thompson, “Social Pluralism and Post-modernity,” *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, eds. Stuart Hall, et al (Oxford: Blackwell, 2<sup>nd</sup>.ed 2006), 569.

<sup>29</sup>Harvey, 16.

<sup>30</sup>Hubert-Jan Henket, “introduction,” *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of the Modern Movement*, eds. Hubert-Jan Henket and Hilde Heynen (Rotterdam: OIO Publisher, 2002), 10.

<sup>31</sup>Robert Dunn, *Identity Crises: A Social Critique of Postmodernity* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 6.

transformation of economic and technological contexts of “cultural production and, especially, consumption.”<sup>32</sup>

Drifting away from the centrality of modernism, postmodern theory has taken heterogeneous attitudes which have become endemic where no single view dominates. These heterogeneous attitudes “are competing versions of reality in the postmodernist ‘sensitivity of inclusion’.”<sup>33</sup> Consequent to this heterogeneity, the debate of identity took from tradition a harbinger of authenticity, and formed borders between modern and traditional. However, most theorists have viewed post-modernism as “kind of transition period in which older systems of production are giving way to newer ones.”<sup>34</sup> Thus, post-modernism has “not yet established as a distinct period or single tendency.”<sup>35</sup>

In this way, modernity still plays a vital role that Giddens “considers globalization to be one of the most visible consequences of modernity.”<sup>36</sup> For Giddens, globalization “concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations ‘at a distance’ with local contextualities.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity* perceives globalization as a “changing experience” between both time and space, thereby it is “time-space compression,” that resulted from pressures of technological and economic change.<sup>38</sup> Despite the similarity between Giddens and Harvey’s analysis of globalization, Harvey’s analysis emphasizes “the ‘speeding up’ or intensity of time-space compression.”<sup>39</sup> Merging both views of Giddens and Harvey, McGrew asserts, globalization indeed has two inseparable dimensions: scope (or “stretching”) and intensity (or “deepening”).

The “stretching” is the global outreach of socio-political and economic activities, and the “deepening” or “intensifying” is the “interconnectedness, or interdependence between the states and societies which constitute the modern world community.”<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, this ‘stretching’ and ‘deepening’ reinforce Giddens’ argument: even though “everyone has a local life, phenomenal worlds for the most part are truly global.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, paradoxically, globalization involves a “global human condition with the particularities of place and individuality.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, one of the most important “dualities” embraced by the “dynamics” of globalization is

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid, 2.

<sup>33</sup>Canizaro, 16.

<sup>34</sup>Kenneth Thompson, “Social Pluralism and Post-Modernity,” Hall et al, 580.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid, 591.

<sup>36</sup> McGrew, “A Global Society?” Hall et al, 471.

<sup>37</sup>Giddens, 21.

<sup>38</sup>Harvey, 240.

<sup>39</sup>McGrew, 471.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid, 472.

<sup>41</sup>Giddens, 187.

<sup>42</sup>McGrew, 471.

the “universalisation versus particularization,” which is embodied in the simultaneous occurrence of universalization of social life (e.g. the nation-state, assembly line production, consumer fashions, etc.), and “particularization”/“uniqueness” (e.g. the resurgence of nationalism and ethnic identities).<sup>43</sup>

In conclusion, from this sweeping survey to the history and stages of modernity the complexity and interconnectedness of tradition and modernity has become discerned and provide new appreciation to that dichotomy. Tradition, on the one hand, has never been a mere ‘Past’ but rather it exists in our present as both the past and the present “are the carriers of cultural knowledge and the embodiment of a culture’s continual transformation.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, as Shils emphasizes, the subtraction of a tradition that holds enduring meaning is impossible. Modernity, on the other hand, is “reflexive” as a continuously scrutinized social practice—in light “of incoming information about those very practices.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, the polyphonic interplay between the two melodies of tradition and modernity offer the “necessary cultural continuity and the desire for progress and innovation”<sup>46</sup>; a polyphony composed of both particularization, continuity and universal progression. Within this polyphony there have been mid-tones that were played by the debates of revolution or resistance that still maintain at its centre binary positions between tradition and modernity.

### 3.3 Modernity/Tradition: Evolution/Revolution

The evolution of modernity and the linear representations of its formation, as an imposed force from Europe, have resulted in a revolution to resist the erosion of traditional culture. Mitchell argues that seeing modernity as a European product is imprecise. It is rather a product of the interaction between Europe and non-Europe cultures that inspired the creation of a new Europe.<sup>47</sup> The multidimensional process of the evolution of modernity highlights reasons of its dissemination around the world, as shared by the anthropologist Stuart Hall and the sociologist Giddens:

Modernity...was constituted by the articulation of a number of different historical processes...These processes were the political (the rise of the secular state and polity), the economic (the global capitalist economy), the social (formation of classes and an advanced sexual and social division of labor [sic]), and the cultural (the transition from a

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid, 478.

<sup>44</sup>Canizaro, 22.

<sup>45</sup>Giddens, 38.

<sup>46</sup>Canizaro, 22.

<sup>47</sup>Timothy Mitchell, “The Stage of Modernity,” *Questions of Modernity*, ed. Mitchell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 4.

religious to a secular culture)...no single “master process” was sufficient to produce [Modernity].<sup>48</sup>

The evolution of Modernity from within the Western domain has been challenged by many key scholars such as Janet Abu-Lughod, Gunder Frank, and Samir Amin. In *Before European Hegemony* (1989), Abu-Lughod highlights the role of the eastern progress in the modern world system of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Also, Gunder Frank —refuting Eurocentric history of Marx, and Weber—highlights the superiority of Asia (specifically Ming and Qing China and Mughal India), in the fifteenth century, in the world trade system.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Samir Amin, the Egyptian economist, through tracing the roots of the world capitalism, argues that, due to ceaseless “structural adjustment,” the periphery was equally modern.<sup>50</sup> These views reinforced by Hall who asserts that, while modernity has always been seen as the product of the colonizer West, it is in fact at the ‘intersection’ of both national and international processes:

The West forged its identity and interests in relation to endogenous developments in Europe and America, and through relations of unequal exchange (material and cultural) with “the Rest”—the frequently excluded, conquered, colonized, and exploited “other.”<sup>51</sup>

Most important, the exclusion of the east and the linear representation of the modernization are challenged by Duanfang Lu who highlights the entanglements of the process of modernization with developmental, imperial, and globalization processes. Highlighting these entanglements alleviates the modernization from the dominance discourse and stresses the emergence of ‘multiple modernisms’ in the Third World.<sup>52</sup>

Generally, these multiple modernisms emerged from key themes such as nationalism and regionalism. Nationalism, on the one hand, has been reflected on the architecture of the newly independent countries to demonstrate their modernity and progress in order to manufacture the “imagined communities” and the idea of nation-ness. Nation-ness or Nationalism is, Benedict Anderson argues, “cultural artefacts of a particular kind,” that should be historically examined to understand “in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, nationalism is “an idiom” that is meant to “construct a discrete, verifiable tradition invoked to confirm a particular political and

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<sup>48</sup>Hall, et al “Introduction,” *Modernity*, eds. Hall, et al, 426.

<sup>49</sup>Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (California: University of California Press, 1998). More recent studies based on Frank is John Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>50</sup>Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale*, 2 vols. (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1974). Amin’s argument has first appeared in 1957 in his PhD thesis in Paris.

<sup>51</sup>Hall, et al “Introduction,” *Modernity*, 426.

<sup>52</sup>Lu, *Third World Modernism*.

<sup>53</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (NY: Verso, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.1991), 6.

social vision.”<sup>54</sup> Towards the end of the eighteenth-century the manufacturing of these artefacts, Anderson elucidates, “was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces....”<sup>55</sup> However, once created, these artefacts would become “modular” and could be “transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness,” to correspond to different “political and ideological constellations.”<sup>56</sup> In this way, these ideological constellations are the main foundations of the ‘imagined community’ that become “evident in the resurgence of ethnic-religious nationalisms throughout the world.”<sup>57</sup>

Thus, resistance through nationalism has been delineated by both faith and nationhood. In the Arab region, faith pervades many layers of the society and is consequently discernable in the discursive construction of identity. Thus, Arab nationalism has always been trapped between both religion and the nation-state, as identified by the political scientist Bassam Tibi. Tibi affirms that the origin of Arab nationalism was in Syria, primarily between Christian intellectuals educated in the West. Meanwhile, in Egypt, “pan-Islamic ideology is still relevant to the struggle.”<sup>58</sup> This tradition of Islamic nationalism developed by the Islamic reformers Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897)<sup>59</sup> and his follower student Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905). For al-Afghani and ‘Abduh “Pan-Islamism was more an expression of anti-colonial solidarity than an irredentist movement.”<sup>60</sup> Their fear, which was amplified by British colonialism in 1882, of cultural domination precipitated a call for Islamic reform which sought to rejuvenate the Muslim society by educating it to adapt to the ideas “of the modern world,”<sup>61</sup> which “were imbedded in the very essence of the Muslim faith.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, he convincingly asserts that the inferiority and backwardness of the Islamic world was not because of Islam per se; rather, it is because of both “centuries of subjugation and neglect” to Muslim intellectuals, and “the disunity of the Islamic

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<sup>54</sup>Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics in Twentieth Century Egypt: Contesting the Nation* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 3. Gorman traces the contested meaning of nationalism within historical scholarship and asserts that the diversity of the Egyptian community prompted scholars to “divine the character of national unity, employing such concepts as ‘normative consciousness’ (Safran), ‘community of discourse’ (Gershoni and Jankowski), ‘collective consciousness’ (Kramer) and ‘Egyptianity’ to distil unity from diversity.

<sup>55</sup>Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid, 4.

<sup>57</sup>Thompson, “Religion, Values, and Ideology,” Hall et al, 420.

<sup>58</sup>Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-state* (NY: St. Martin Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1997), 178.

<sup>59</sup>For al-Afghani and ‘Abduh’s ideas see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 103–160; Majid Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World: The Role of Ideas and Ideals in Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 56–65; Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804–1952* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 43–46, 62–75; Sylvia Haim, ed. *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1962), 6–20

<sup>60</sup>Tibi, 181.

<sup>61</sup>Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth-Century: From Triumph to Despair* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 19.

<sup>62</sup>Hourani, 123.

Umma [community/nation].”<sup>63</sup> Therefore, they condemn mimicry of the West while urging Muslims to “delve into the real meaning of their religion,” and rationalize their lives based on its principles. This resolute rhetoric of authenticity, cultural independence, and superiority was initiated by Afghani and ‘Abdu contributed to the cause of twentieth-century Arab nationalists.<sup>64</sup>

As national cultures, Hall asserts, “are composed not only of cultural institutions, but of symbols and representations,”<sup>65</sup> the concept of nationalism was materialized in architecture through different stages and from different lenses. While Pharaonism and Islamic legacies have always been two main components of such nationalism in architecture, in Egypt in the beginning of the twentieth-century, paradoxically, modernism continued to play a role within the vocabulary of resistance in Nasser’s era (Chapters 4 and 6). A similar rally for modernism under the banner of nationalism occurred in Turkey, followed by Iran. Turkey, one of the earliest independent Muslim states (1923), was the first to promote ‘The First National Architecture Movement’ through a synthesis of “neo-classical Greek and Roman forms with symmetrical buildings, tall arched windows, wide eaves and sloping roofs.”<sup>66</sup> This synthesis became further Europeanised with the rise of Kemal Ataturk and subsequently modelled on North American precedents by the sixties, a shift that was influenced by the political situation and materialised in the work of Sedad Hakki Eldem and buildings such as Istanbul Hilton Hotel.<sup>67</sup>

However, modernism came to the fore in Egypt in the thirties and more specifically by the emergence of *Al-‘Imarah in 1939*. *Al-‘Imarah* disseminated modernism via the introduction of, Volait argues, “a particular mode of thinking and problem solving,”<sup>68</sup> that manifested a “complex process” through which a ‘transfer of ideas’ ensued.<sup>69</sup> This complex process, presented national and international architecture as “two conjunctions” that faced each other.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, she concludes, modern architecture in Egypt is “controversial—in the dialectic of a double movement whose terms could be summarized as”: 1. Solutions for contemporary rural and housing problems; 2. The institutionalization of “modernity as a principle of reality and a

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<sup>63</sup>Dawisha, 19.

<sup>64</sup>Elie Chalala, “Arab Nationalism: A Bibliographical Essay,” *Pan Arabism and Arab Nationalism: The Continuing Debate*. ed. Tawfic E. Farah. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1987), 24–25. Cited in Dawisha, 19.

<sup>65</sup>Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” *Modernity*, eds. Hall and et. al, 613.

<sup>66</sup>Hasan-Uddin Khan, “The Impact of Modern Architecture on the Islamic World,” *Back from Utopia*, 178.

<sup>67</sup> Sibel Bozdoğan, “Democracy, Development and the Americanization of Turkish Architectural Culture,” *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Sandy Isenstadt, and Kishwar Rizvi (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 118. Also, see Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2001).

<sup>68</sup>Volait, 13.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, 88.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid, 102.

principle of production.”<sup>71</sup> These two terms that Volait coins a double movement (a decision to accept this new knowledge or not) highlight how architecture in Egypt has been “confronted with the uniformity of constructed objects, or trivializing them.”<sup>72</sup> However, such complex process was reduced by ‘Ashur to a mere duality. She perceives that the architectural production in Egypt was characterized by “duality” as a reflection of the “dual-intellectual attitude between the T‘aseel and Taghreeb [traditionalization and Westernization]”<sup>73</sup> in the socio-cultural context. She asserts that as the socio-cultural liberalism was provoked by mimicry of Western models “not from internal forces within the society—as it is the case in the West...the architectural growth was also provoked by outside force which contradicts the civilizational process.”<sup>74</sup>

The influence of nationalism and politics on architectural representations has been the focus of many studies. In *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, Vale argues that governmental buildings serve as symbols of the state: “all buildings are politically engendered, but some buildings are arguably more political than others.”<sup>75</sup> Although Vale did not study Egypt specifically, his argument remains valid in the Egyptian context. Also, Crinson in *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire* examined “how modernism and other aspects of modern architecture are refracted through the prism of British imperialism and its dissolution and aftermath.”<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, Gwendolyn Wright, in her seminal book *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (1991), traces the distinctive nature of colonial design in the cities of Morocco, Indochina, and Madagascar, showing how French architects and administrators tried to diffuse both modernism and historic preservation, making it clear that neither approach is free of entanglement with imperial ambitions. The one focused study on the Egyptian context is by the political scientist Timothy Mitchell. In *Colonising Egypt* (1988) he traces the tactics of spatial organization of the modern state that evolved from political control throughout the Ottoman, Napoleonic and finally the British regimes to become key elements in the urban and architectural context. Also, from an archaeological point of view, the volume *Archaeology under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East* (1998) has discussed how this nationalist ideology in Egypt greatly influenced the sense of identity in Egypt in modern times. This ideology is not only manifested in “discourse” but also in “practice and

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>73</sup> Ashur, *The Pioneer Egyptian Architects in the Liberal Era*, 223.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 224.

<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2008), 323.

<sup>76</sup> Mark Crinson, *Modern Architecture and the End of Empire* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), xii.

materiality,” constituting “material icons of heroism” that were developed to be “embedded in a nexus of commercial, industrial, financial, and military activities.”<sup>77</sup> Many other scholars share this same view of the intrinsic relation between politics and architecture, for example, Sandy Isenstadt’s edited volume *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (2008); and AlSayyad in *Forms of Dominance* (1992).

On the other hand, the discourse of regionalism which binds architecture to its context contributed to the introduction of debates about resistance and identity into modern architecture. Regionalism manifests itself in various ways. But, it has been described as a “theory that supports resistance to various forms of hegemonic, universal, or otherwise standardizing structures that would diminish local differentiation.”<sup>78</sup> Regionalism is a self-conscious professional endeavour that differs from vernacularism. Despite its deliberate application in the architectural practice, its various positions resulted in its ambiguousness due to two main reasons. First is the plurality endemic to postmodern theory, and second is the existence of “as many regionalisms as regions, each specific to its locale and historical circumstance. As such, it is a kind of meta-theory that has only local application and meaning.”<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, the debates about regionalism have two main tendencies. One is represented by those who emphasise connection to place, including Christian Norberg-Schulz with his concept of *Genius loci*, and Tomas Valena’s concept of *Relationships: on the connection to place in architecture*. Neither use the term regionalism. Although it focuses on how architecture should harmonize with its surrounding landscapes, it has never developed any rules to achieve such harmony. However, the second tendency in regionalism represented by Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, Roberto Maria Dainotto, Alan Colquhoun, Friedrich Achleitner, and Alexander Tzonis. This tendency has always been criticized for the focus on the Western context: as it is “usually Western-dominated.”<sup>80</sup> They have also been criticized for their focus on “concepts which suggest and criticize constructive steps to be taken in order to create a connection between architecture and place, often done by individually analyzing buildings.”<sup>81</sup>

In fact, regionalism could be traced back to older and wider historical movements, such as romanticism, eclecticism, revivalism, modernism, and postmodernism. However, the concept of

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<sup>77</sup>Fekri Hassan, “Memorabilia Archaeological Materiality and National Identity in Egypt,” *Archaeology under Fire*, ed. Lynn Meskell (NY: Routledge, 1998, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2002), 213.

<sup>78</sup>Canizaro, *Architectural Regionalism*, 20.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid, 16.

<sup>80</sup>Stephanus Schmitz, “Identity in Architecture – A Construction?” *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Architecture: Case Studies from the South*, eds. Peter Herrle, Stephanus Schmitz (London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 22.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid, 22.

“critical regionalism” first coined by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in “The Grid and the Pathway” (1981) and subsequently by Kenneth Frampton in “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance” (1983). Developing Lewis Mumford’s idea of self-reflection and using the Frankfurt School’s “critical theory,” Tzonis and Lefaivre criticize the continuous use of Beaux-Arts architecture in the postwar period. Tzonis and Lefaivre explain critical regionalism to be “a bridge over which any humanistic architecture of the future must pass, even if the path may lead to a completely different direction.”<sup>82</sup> Critical regionalism for them is a resistance against the modernism standardizations with its alien economic interests, therefore, it “upholds of individual and local architectonic features,” against “the custodial effects of modernism.”<sup>83</sup>

In essentials, Frampton’s critical regionalism is about the orchestration of the structure, as he is so critical of the modern universalism and the polarization between ‘high-tech’ and the “‘compensatory façade’ to cover up the harsh realities to this universal system.”<sup>84</sup> Critical Regionalism, Frampton asserts, mainly deals with “resonance in an architecture of resistance,” and place-form.<sup>85</sup> Using Heideggerian terminology, “the nearness of *raum*, rather than the distance of *spatium*” Frampton asserts that the ‘place’ characteristic is the only principle that could be isolated in regionalism as it (the place) could be “construed as affording the political space of public appearance.”<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, for Frampton, “critical regionalism”—as described by philosopher Paul Ricoeur—strives to reconcile the following dipoles: space/place, typology/topography, architectonic/scenographic, artificial/natural, visual/tactile.<sup>87</sup> This is distinct from Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre’s, as a method of defamiliarization whereby regional fragments are extracted from their “natural” context as the principal tactic by which to transcend nostalgic essentialism.

On criticism of ‘critical regionalism’, William Curtis thinks it is superficial and expresses vague images of tradition. He develops “authentic regionalism” that instead of claiming to discover which values are intrinsically authentic to a region or a culture and apply it to modern architecture; “rigorous modernity and a rigorous understanding of the vernacular can be

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<sup>82</sup>Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, “The Grid and the Pathway: An Introduction to the Work of Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis, with Prolegomena to a History of the Culture of Modern Greek Architecture,” *Architecture in Greece* 15 (1981), 164-178; and Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, *Critical Regionalism: Architecture and Identity in a Globalized World* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2003).

<sup>83</sup>Ibid, 178.

<sup>84</sup> Kenneth Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance,” *The Anti Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend: Bay Press, 1983), 17.

<sup>85</sup>Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance,” 25.

<sup>86</sup> Frampton, “Prospect for a Critical Regionalism,” *Prospect: The Yale Architectural Journal* 20 (1983): 147-162.

<sup>87</sup>Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 313–327.

powerful allies.”<sup>88</sup> Moreover, Alan Colquhoun perceives both “regionalism” and “authentic regionalism”, in the light of romantic architectural principles, to be non-authentic as they try to manufacture a set of representations of authenticity. Tzonis and Lefaivre’s interpretation of the meaning of ‘critical’, as both resisting alienation and in the meantime escaping a nostalgic return to the past, is also criticized by Colquhoun for being contradictory and fragmented.

In conclusion, it could be argued that both nationalism and regionalism are superficial compositions especially constructed to resist universalisation and erosion of particularization. Nationalism, specifically, has resulted in two different waves. One is the repetition of traditional symbols and façades in order to resist modernism—for its possible evolution of the hated colonizer. The other, on the contrary, is the repetition of modern statements to denote an ability to progress as “players in the development of an internationalizing world.”<sup>89</sup> This emphasizes that architectural identity is constructed through symbols and signs that “must be further penetrated and questioned.”<sup>90</sup> The endless and various signs and symbols contribute to the creation of multiple modernities and identities.

### 3.4 Multiple Modernisms: Multiple Identities

The issue of symbols and signs brings into discussion the alternative modernities: as modernity is an indispensable “attitude,” the non-West sought to purify and alter its form in various ways that distinguish “what is necessary/unavoidable and what is optional/avoidable within the project of modernity.”<sup>91</sup> However, the creativity is not in the alteration of the form of modernity per se but rather in “the manifold ways in which a people question the present. It is the site where a people ‘make’ themselves modern, as opposed to being ‘made’ modern by alien and impersonal forces.”<sup>92</sup> This is materialized in the architectural discourse of Egypt, *al-‘Imarah*, and how distinctly it questioned modernity as an apparatus of problem solving through a structure of attitude and reference that controls inclusions and exclusions. A similar structure of attitude and reference has been implicated in *AB*, however, in the alteration of modernity it strictly adheres to Islamic architecture as a source of identity.

Such multiplicity in modernism heralds the fiction of the idea of Islamic architecture as an intrinsic and unifying cultural expression in a particular part of the world, represented by the Aga

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<sup>88</sup>William Curtis, “Toward an Authentic regionalism,” *Mimar* (1996), 27.

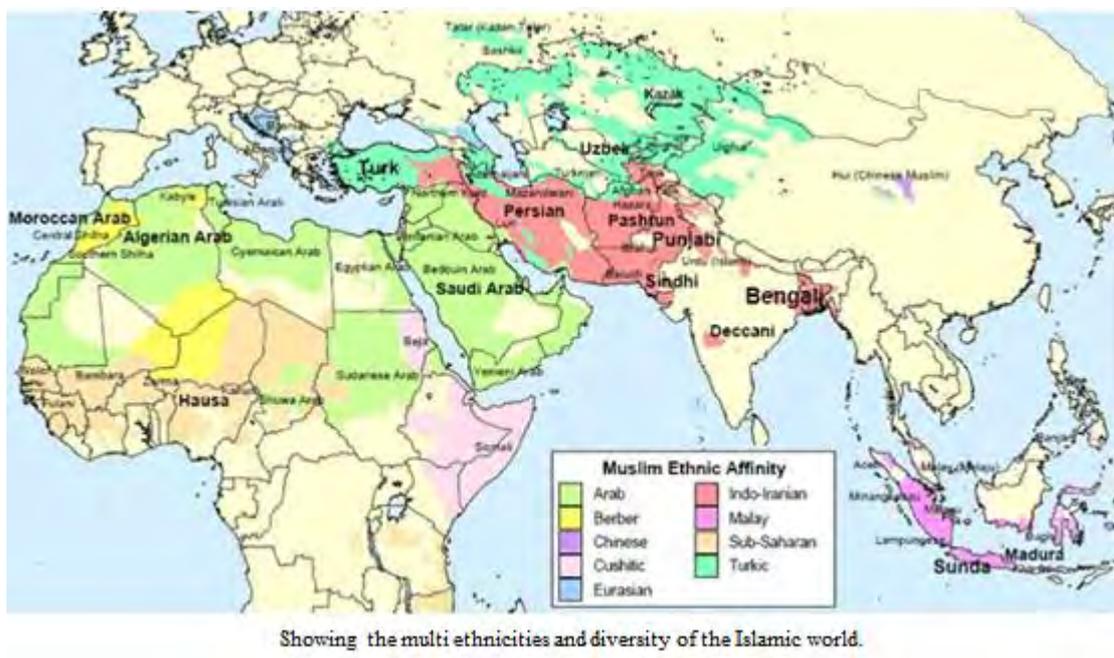
<sup>89</sup>Hassan Udin Khan, *Back from Utopia*, 181.

<sup>90</sup>Herrle, *Architecture and Identity*, 15.

<sup>91</sup> Gaonkar, “On Alternative Modernities,” 9. Alternative modernities is a notion developed by both Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid*, 16.

Khan organization, (Chapter 5). The analysis of Islamic architecture has predominantly been viewed from two major attitudes: one adheres to the unification of the characteristics of Islamic architecture in the Islamic world as a direct product of a singular Islamic culture identified through common formal and stylistic characteristics. The second acknowledges ‘multiculturalism’ within the same Islamic world and the distinctiveness of each style that is a product of particular building, social and patronage practices. It thus adheres to the delineated historical periods such as Abbasid, Mamluk, and Ottoman. Nonetheless, the typological review of Hillenbrand’s seminal work *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function, and Meaning* whose focus on the medieval period to 1700, reveals the ‘plurality’ and richness of Islamic architecture within the same period and even in each building type.<sup>93</sup>



**Figure 3. Map of the Islamic World.**

Such plurality emphasizes what, the historian architect Bartsch envisions: “efforts to write ‘Islamic’ architecture or to build ‘Islamic’ architecture are at odds with this phenomenon. The permanence of architecture is at odds with the mobility of identity.”<sup>94</sup> However, architectural production in the contemporary Islamic contexts is still, as the Islamic philosopher Arkoun asserts, divided between either “strengthening the dominant ideology” or “creating a breakthrough in the inherited, imposed system of values and beliefs.” This second trend which

<sup>93</sup> Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function, and Meaning* (Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>94</sup> Katharine Bartsch, *Re-thinking Islamic Architecture* (PhD diss., The University of Adelaide, 2005), 254.

aspires for revolutionary ideas is challenged by “the historical, intellectual, and cultural gap that separates them from Western societies, where ‘the jumping universe’ is explored.”<sup>95</sup>

It is likely that this rift between both the inherited traditions and the endless progress of the “jumping universe” resulted in an uncontested identity that eventually led to multiple modernisms in Middle Eastern cities. This rift is elucidated by the philosopher Mohammed Al-Jabri, there have always been two groups: one calls for the “return to the roots” and the other calls for Westernized modernity. Al-Jabri criticized such a clash for being a fundamental element in the Arab crisis that straddles the development that the Arab nation has been yearning for.<sup>96</sup> This clash has raised many questions by thinkers who are trying to look for a possible correlation between what has been known as the modern and the past. Ricoeur poses three controversial questions about the constituents including: the “creative nucleus of a civilization,” the conditions of such creativity, and the possibility of creative encounter.<sup>97</sup> These questions have also been echoed by AlSayyad—in a more applicable way to Egyptian history which has moved between both closed tyrannical regimes to capitalism: “how to imagine the spaces of utopia (a constructive imagining)” —in different ways, without the reiteration of capitalist openness, or reinforcing closures and difference?<sup>98</sup> However, Capitalism should not be seen as negative, AlSayyad highlights, to judge it as an “ultimately apocalyptic” dimension of human encounter is to be “caught in a bind vis-à-vis a consideration of the spaces of utopia.”<sup>99</sup>

Ricoeur’s attempts in answering these inquiries are of great relevance to the discourse of *AB* (the case study). As he touches on the ‘identity’ debate in general and the notion of ‘return’ as an apparatus of identity in the Islamic countries and in Egypt in particular. He quoted Heidegger’s emphasis that “in order to confront a self other than one’s own self, one must first have a self.”<sup>100</sup> In this way, this rediscovering of the self is a reiteration of the ‘return to the past,’ which *AB* provokes.<sup>101</sup> This ‘return’ to the past, which has always been central to the Egyptian multi-layered context, poses a major question: to which time in the past should we ‘return’? Thus, with reference to the phenomenon of multi-layering, Ricoeur states that these “successive layers...

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<sup>95</sup> Mohammed Arkoun, “Spirituality and Architecture,” *Understanding Islamic Architecture*, eds. Attilio Petruccioli and Khalil Pirani (Canada: Routledge 2002), 7.

<sup>96</sup> Mohammed Al-Jabri, “Clash of Civilizations: The Relations of the Future?” *Islam, Modernization, and the West: Cultural and Political Relations at the End of the Millennium*, ed. Gema Martin Munoz (London: I.B.Tauris, 1999), 65-80.

<sup>97</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 278.

<sup>98</sup> AlSayyad, *The End of Tradition*, 59.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 59.

<sup>100</sup> Ricoeur, 283.

<sup>101</sup> Heidegger provokes: “to go back to our own origins, that is, we have to go back to our Greek, Hebrew, and Christian origins so as to be worthy participants in the great debate of cultures.” Cited in Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, 283.

must be penetrated in order to reach the creative nucleus.”<sup>102</sup> Ricoeur asserts that the problem of such a return is that it is problematic and moves in “a vicious circle,” that is provoked by struggle against colonial powers. This struggle eventually results in claiming detached personality that is ostensibly rooted in the past supported by nationalism spirit. Therefore, “discourses of alterity, authenticity and origins,” emerge by weaving past and present to construct an ‘identity.’<sup>103</sup>

Yet, it is true that universalization as has been philosophically interpreted by Ricoeur is a natural “phenomena” that is because lifestyles are spontaneously restructured around techniques that forms production, transportation, human relationship, comfort, and leisure.<sup>104</sup> This again raises up the paradox of non-fatal encounter, paradox that results from the pressure of influence that varies from one culture to another as not all cultures “have the same capacity of absorption.”<sup>105</sup> In this way, not every culture could be accustomed to world civilization, only the creative ones are able to absorb and rationalize this encounter.<sup>106</sup> By sustaining a creative meaning for the cultural encounter, it could be argued, ‘spaces of hope’ may be created, that is as Harvey argues, a socio-spatial and dialectical utopia which allows closures of various kinds, but meanwhile, they are not restricted closures but rather ones that transcend the self limitations of its exposure to continuous self critique.<sup>107</sup>

In conclusion, “modern identities are being de-centered.”<sup>108</sup> In the twentieth-century, the absolute belief “in a substantial identity determined by birth or inner life experience” has been proven to be erroneous.<sup>109</sup> Thus, we can say that there have been definite multi-modernisms that resulted from strategies of appropriation and various degrees of absorption. This makes the identity “an elusive phenomenon that resists crystallization in text or materialization in architecture”<sup>110</sup> that came to the fore by the rise of postmodernism in cultural studies. Advocates of postmodernism, whether architects or clients, “provide short-lived packages with identities...with contents and wrapping occasionally contradicting each other.”<sup>111</sup> In this way, these contradictions highlight realistic multi-modernisms, that makes the clash happening within

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid, 279.

<sup>103</sup>Lynn Meskell, “Introduction: Archaeology Matters,” *Archaeology under fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, ed. Lynn Meskell (London: Routledge, 1998), 4. Meskell perceives archaeology as an apparatus that shapes national and colonial discourses.

<sup>104</sup>Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, 275.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid, 281.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid, 277.

<sup>107</sup> Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (California:University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>108</sup>Hall, “The Questions of Cultural Identity,” *Modernity*, eds. Hall, et al, 596.

<sup>109</sup>Dunn, *Identity Crises*, 2.

<sup>110</sup>Barsch, “Re-thinking Islamic architecture,” 254.

<sup>111</sup>Herrle, *Architecture and Identity*, 14.

national levels a matter of “authentic anxieties.”<sup>112</sup> Therefore, one may also affirm that modernity and tradition find in each other their necessary way of expression, as a representational apparatus for human progress. This debate of modernity and tradition is visible throughout Egyptian history and it is true that it “will continue ...[and] there never will be an answer to the correct way of designing within any one culture ... .”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Del Upton, “Authentic Anxieties,” *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, ed. N.AlSayyad (NY: Routledge, 2001), 299.

<sup>113</sup>Oleg Grabar forward to *Understanding Islamic Architecture*, x.

## **PART II: OVERLAPPING TERRITORIES OF INFLUENCE**

## 4 Historical Territory

## 4.1 Introduction

The contrapuntal reading, as described earlier, is to read the text with “awareness” of both “the metropolitan history that it narrates,” and “of those other histories against which” it acts.<sup>1</sup> A historical survey of the two forces of influence and resistance is indispensable to situate the discourse “in the history and world of empire.”<sup>2</sup> Situating the discourse within history discerns the continuation of the two forces of influence and resistance, which have shaped the Egyptian history and continued to do so throughout the discourse of the twentieth-century. This continuation of these two forces not only manifests Said’s “uncertainty...whether the past really is past...or whether it continues,”<sup>3</sup> but it also reveals the entrenched contrapuntality of Western and historical voices that were played in the local discourse of *AB*.

The French were the first to play the Western voice, since then Egypt has never turned back to the purely dominant Islamic status that prevailed since the Arab conquest. Muhammad ‘Alī and Isma‘aīl succeeded in maintaining such connection to the outside world embraced an unusual architectural cosmopolitanism—varied between European neo-classicism and classical Ottoman and Arab vocabulary—which continued until the British occupation. Even after the independence of Egypt, the three native Presidents, Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak, although they did not have a definite vision to the country’s architecture, the influence and resistance forces were reinforced. Modernism was the patent for progression while Pharaonism was the haven to assert superiority. The application of Pharaonism was as superficial as Orientalists’ understanding of that history. This superficial retreat to the Pharaonic glory materializes the thesis argument of the unconscious adaptation of imperial vocabulary.

### 4.1.1 Contextual Influences

Since its antique trade with Nubians, Phoenicians and Greeks, Egypt has been the locus of diverse cultural intersections which have given rise to a distinctive character. Whether they were lured by the riches of the fertile floodplains of the Nile or antique treasures, numerous invaders of different ethnicities have prized the grain basket of imperial Rome, leading to intermittent periods of colonization and creating a country that transcends conventional political boundaries. Amidst this rich pageant of peoples, not least, Abbasids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks,

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<sup>1</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, xii

<sup>3</sup>Ibid,3.

Ottomans, French and British, historians tend to identify three major cultural influences: “the Arab-Islamic conquest”<sup>4</sup>; “the non-Arab Islamic conquests” (including Kurds, Turks and Ottomans); and “the European encroachments.”<sup>5</sup>

Despite the rich and dynamic architectural heritage, architectural historians have singled out certain periods of conservatism. For example, the Ayyubid period (1171-1250) has been identified as conservative in Creswell’s *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* and Behrens-Abouseif’s *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, due to the “continuity of existing [Fatimid] stylistic elements [which] prevailed over innovations.”<sup>6</sup> The Mamluks (1250-1517)<sup>7</sup> also perpetuated a style that was perceived to be indigenous, even after the Ottomans seized power (1517-1879).<sup>8</sup> This ostensible “architectural conservatism”<sup>9</sup> endured in the Ottoman period, stresses Behrens-Abouseif, until a break with the neo-Mamluk style which occurred in the late eighteenth century with the Napoleonic campaign.<sup>10</sup>

The most enduring and influential cultures are Arab-Islamic and European, one contends. Although the Arab-Islamic conquest has permanently transformed the linguistic and religious identity of the country, the later European encroachments had simultaneous and enduring influence on the institutional structure. It is logical to affirm that both cultures, particularly in Egypt, formed two poles—despite the dynamic evolution of each—within the socio-cultural context. In Egypt, while the West (specifically French and the British encroachments) has succeeded to influence and even rival Arab power, Arab culture in the East continues to resist such intense influences.

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<sup>4</sup> See, Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (NY: Greenwood Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad ‘Alī to Mubarak* (London: Butler & Tanner, 1991, 4th ed.), 10.

<sup>6</sup> The arguments by Creswell and Behrens-Abouseif were condemned by Lorenz Korn’s meticulous analysis of the design elements of the façade of the Ayyubid Madrasa of As-Salih ‘Ayyub. Lorenz Korn, “The Façade of As-Salih ‘Ayyub’s Madrasa and the style of Ayyubid Architecture in Cairo,” *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk eras III: Proceedings of the Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, eds. Urbain Vermeulen, and J. Van Steenbergen (Belgium: Peeters, 2001), 103.

<sup>7</sup> For the Mamluk period see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and its Culture* (London: Tauris, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> The continuation of the Mamluk style during the Ottoman period was studied by Ülkü Ü. Bates, “Two Ottoman Documents on Architects in Egypt,” *Muqarnas* 3 (1985), 121-127. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523088>, (accessed 15/07/2012). Bates confirms that the continuity of a local style under a new imperial power was due to both the strength of the regional power as well as the patrons’ lack of commitment to any imperial style. Also, Tignor argues that the Ottoman conquest was never complete due to the ongoing Mamluk presence, Robert Tignor, *Egypt: A Short History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 178.

<sup>9</sup> André Raymond, “Cairo under the Ottoman,” *The Glory of Cairo: An Illustrated History*, ed. André Raymond (Cairo: American University Press, 2002), 334.

<sup>10</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Visual Transformation of Egypt during the Reign of Muhammad ‘Alī,” *Islamic Art in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, eds. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, Stephen Vernoit (Boston: Brill, 2006), 115.

## 4.2 Intense Influence: West Comes East

Most historians date the modern era in Egypt to the French Expedition, followed by the reign of Muhammad ‘Alī. However, Abu-Lughod asserts that discontinuity (or the rupture with the past that is often attributed to modernity) had occurred in the medieval past long before the arrival of the French. Moreover, “‘modernization’ or ‘Westernization’ was not truly under way until the reigns of Muhammad ‘Alī’s successors.”<sup>11</sup> In spite of her assertion that modernization began with Muhammad ‘Alī, she affirms that the French had laid the foundation of modernity in the country. Similarly, Moreh affirms that the French expedition was a significant factor in the success of Muhammad ‘Alī’s modernization venture.<sup>12</sup> This parallels with Marsot’s conviction that “change can never be forced by outside forces,” but it instead appears from “a recognized need” from internal forces.<sup>13</sup> The change in society was provoked by the fact, one claims, that this expedition is an epic that brought the country face to face with the dilemma of globalization: comprising imperial expansion and civilizational struggle. Since the French invasion, Egypt’s demarcation on the map of imperialism coincided with its struggle with the complex themes of modernity and tradition following the recession of the Ottoman period.<sup>14</sup>

The modernization initiated by the short-lived expedition did not immediately affect architecture. However, it brought technological advancement that triggered a desire for progress and was seen by contemporaries, such as Abdul Rahman Al-Jabartī, as beneficial. Al-Jabartī in his chronicle, *‘Aja’ib al-athar fi al-tarajim wal-akhbar* [*Points of Wonders of the Biographies and News*], recorded his admiration of French progress, the printing press, and particularly the Institut d’Égypte (which occupied the house of the Mamluk Hassan al-Kashif and was open to public). In this Institute *La Description de l’Égypte* was produced, intended to document Egypt in its entirety,<sup>15</sup> in twenty-three volumes published between 1809 and 1828. While the

<sup>11</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 83.

<sup>12</sup> Shumuel Moreh, “Napoleon and the French Impact on Egyptian Society in the Eyes of Al-Jabartī,” *Napoleon in Egypt*, ed. Irene Bierman (UK: Ithaca Press, 2003), 94.

<sup>13</sup> Afaf Marsot, “Social and Political Changes after the French Occupation,” *Napoleon in Egypt*, 112.

<sup>14</sup> The debate about this perceived stagnation in the Ottoman period is beyond the scope of this research. However, many scholars indicate that this stagnation is always highlighted in comparison to either the preceding or following periods, such as Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1981), 26. Also, Michael Winter “Ottoman Egypt 1525-1609,” *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, ed. M.W. Daly (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), who stresses that this stagnation was unintentional, 25; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries* (NY: Brill, 1994); and André Raymond, *Cairo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> The description in its twenty-three volumes was, as Said noted, a “great appropriation of one country by another” to demonstrate the French’s modern power through focusing on Egypt’s rich monuments excluding its realities (*Orientalism*, 84-5).

devastation resulting from the French campaign is indisputable,<sup>16</sup> the *Description* is its “permanent by-product.”<sup>17</sup> The French expedition, with the preparation of the *Description*, precipitated the emergence of the discourse of Orientalism. However, it also heralded “a new chapter in the relations between Western Europe and the Islamic world.”<sup>18</sup> The French considered themselves as guardians of a “universal patrimony,” which sought to regenerate a rich Egyptian civilization out of the glorious Pharaonic history rather than the “decadent Islamic presence.”<sup>19</sup>

Although the French had no influence on the architectural context per se, they planted the seeds of modernity in the city’s infrastructure and organization. Napoleon himself occupied a house belonging to the Mamluk elite, Muhammad Bey al-Alfī, which overlooked al-Azbakiyah Lake and was built a year before the expedition. The Azbakiyah area,<sup>20</sup> as an extension of the Frank quarter which had developed since the late sixteenth century, was an area for the bourgeois that was reclaimed in 1776 by the Mamluk merchants and leading Beys.<sup>21</sup> This area, that continued to be a place for expatriates, accommodated the house of al-Alfī Bey which became Shephard’s Hotel in 1841.<sup>22</sup> Also, according to Al-Jabartī, the Nasiriyah quarter was set aside for the scientists and savants of Bonaparte's Institut d’Egypte which occupied Ibrahim al-Sinnarī’s house. They reused many existing structures as defensive buildings, and observatories, particularly in the minarets of the mosque of Baybars, which had been abandoned for a long time.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Details of this destruction are identified by Al-Jabartī’s eyewitness chronicle *‘Aja’ib al-athar fi al-tarajim wal-akhbar*. On Al-Jabartī see: Robert Tignor, *Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabartī Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798* (NY: Markus Wiener, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Abu Lughod, *Cairo*, 55.

<sup>18</sup> Geoffrey Symcox, “The Geopolitics of the Egyptian Expedition,” *Napoleon in Egypt*, 26. The influence of the French expedition on institutionalizing Orientalism, as a venture of a European political outreach in the East, was rigorously studied by Edward Said in his classic book, *Orientalism*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

<sup>20</sup> For al-Azbakiyah see: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and its Environs: From Azbak to Isma‘aīl, 1476-1879* (Cairo: IFAO, 1985).

<sup>21</sup> Al-Jabartī, vol 3, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Shephard was reconstructed in 1892 and enlarged in 1899, 1904, 1909, and 1927. For more details about the history of this hotel see Nina Nelson, *Shephard’s Hotel* (NY: Macmillan, 1960).

<sup>23</sup> Al-Jabartī, 33-4.



**Figure 4. The Headquarters of the French Army in Al-Azbakiyah in the Eighteenth-Century.**

A further dimension of modernisation was evident in the demolition of the urban fabric for military and surveillance purposes. According to André Raymond, the engineer Sanson reported to Napoleon that Cairo's streets need to be embellished.<sup>24</sup> The French levelled the streets and hills and removed any obstacles along the streets. This included the demolition of many homes, mosques, and alleys' [hara] gates.<sup>25</sup> The Azbakiyah district, specifically, had undergone serious modifications as it housed the French expatriates; its streets were widened, straightened, and connected to different parts of the city via new bridges and roads such as a small bridge connecting al-Azbakiyah to Bulaq, and the road that ran along the Nasiri canal. The French also allocated specific areas of the city for carpenters, ironmasters, and craftsmen. They also introduced divisions between districts for management purposes. These have been retained with minor modifications more than a century and a half after the departure of the French.<sup>26</sup>

One of the major physical changes that not only affected the built environment but also the socio-cultural setting was the introduction of restaurants and clubs. As Al-Jabartī describes, "the French opened houses that make and sell cooked food according to their home recipes...it has many tables with different prices."<sup>27</sup> Also, near al-Azbakiyah the French introduced brothels or "places in which men and women meet for amusement and recklessness."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the Club Le Tivoli, with its coffeehouse, European restaurant, dance band, library (open to Egyptians as

<sup>24</sup> André Raymond, "Cairo at the time of the French Expedition," 352.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Jabartī, vol3, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Abu Lughod, *Cairo 1001*, 84. The eight divisions introduced by the French were: al-Azbakiyahh, Bab al-Shariyah, al-Jamaliyah, al-Darb al-Ahmar, al-Khalifah, al-Muski, 'Abdīn, and al-Sayidah Zaynab. These districts [qism] still exist, Misr al-Qadimah and Bulaq districts were added to them in the twentieth century.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Jabartī, 112.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 33.

well as expatriates), and pleasure garden, was “the first in a long line of ‘clubs’”<sup>29</sup> that served “homesick European clientele.”<sup>30</sup> This was a tradition that continued in the twentieth-century including Gezira Sporting Club and Shepherd’s Hotel among others. The introduction of these urban interventions and venues together with technological progress “shook” the Egyptians from their “traditional rigidity,” and it also stimulated a new tendency to explore the outside world.<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 5. Shepherd's Hotel in 1870.**

In this way, the French provoked not only a sense of modernity, but also a sense of belonging and nationalism. Upon Napoleon’s arrival, the country was under Mamluk rule but nominally an Ottoman province. In his first proclamation, Napoleon sought the Egyptian people’s acquiescence to get rid of the Mamluks by showing respect for Islam, the ‘Ulama, and the Ottoman Sultan:<sup>32</sup> “‘Ulama, Judges, Sheiks, and elites, say to your people that the French are faithful Muslims...All Egyptians should praise God for the Mamluk’s downfall and say ‘may God maintain the glory of the Ottoman Sultan and the French army’.”<sup>33</sup> Therefore, Napoleon sought to prove his allegations by taking advantage of the status of the ‘Ulama’s prestige in his first council [dīwan].<sup>34</sup> The French also hired Egyptians in construction work paying them high

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<sup>29</sup> Andrea Beatie, *Cairo: A Cultural and Literary History* (UK: Signal Books Limited, 2005), 144.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>31</sup> Vatikiotis, 46.

<sup>32</sup> According to Darrell Dykstra, “The French Occupation of Egypt,” *Cambridge History of Egypt*, Napoleon had an ‘Islamic policy’ in mind that was explained in François Charles-Roux, *Bonaparte, gouverneur d’Egypte* (Paris: Plon, 1936).

<sup>33</sup> The detailed proclamation is in al-Jabartī, vol 3, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Jabartī, 5. For the role of ‘Ulama during the French expedition see Afaf Marsot, “The Political and Economic Functions of the Ulama in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 16 (1973), 130-54; and Marsot “The ‘Ulama of Cairo in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century,” *Scholars, Saints and Sufis*. Nikki Keddie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 149-65.

rates.<sup>35</sup> In this way, the French precipitated consciousness of “the native leadership”<sup>36</sup> and “a local patriotism.”<sup>37</sup> One may say that Napoleon’s ultimate goal to dominate the country was based on a pragmatic socio-cultural and enlightening agenda. The French agenda, the precipitation of modernism, and the consequent national awakening had a lasting influence that, as Abu-Lughod affirms, the country in the twentieth-century is “stamped in the French rather than the British mold.”<sup>38</sup>

The second direct European experience for the Egyptians was British colonization. A conspicuous British presence took place after 1879 as a result of Khedive Isma‘aīl’s extravagant Europeanization and his inability to pay the interest on the related debt. At this time, Sir Evelyn Baring, known as Lord Cromer, a member of the banking family which owned a large proportion of the debt, put pressure on both Isma‘aīl to declare bankruptcy and on his government to oust the Khedive. Ismail was forced to sell his shares in the Suez Canal to the British in 1875 and to give up his power to his son Tawfīk in 1879. The imperial ambitions of Cromer became evident when he became the British Consul-General and implemented Isma‘aīl’s financial plan that Cromer had previously turned down as impossible.<sup>39</sup>

The collapse of the monarchy between 1875 and 1879 was a result of European ties of the ruling elite, “which weakened their loyalties and attachments to the ruler.”<sup>40</sup> This weak loyalty, one contends, became blatant when Khedive Tawfīk in 1882 called on the British support to defeat the nationalist rebellion by ‘Urabī in order to restore Tawfīk’s authority. The official occupation of the British started in 1882 after the defeat of ‘Urabī’s forces in al-Tal al-Kabīr, al-Isma‘īliya—after a strong hold of the country’s administration since 1879. Capitulations due to the European power made the Egyptians’ competence impossible in large-scale commerce or construction.<sup>41</sup> According to Reid, until 1882 the number of Europeans who occupied the country’s upper bureaucracy totalled one thousand; they represented only 2 percent of the total number of officials, whilst “drawing 16 percent of the payroll.”<sup>42</sup> During Isma‘aīl’s reign the

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Jabartī, 33.

<sup>36</sup> For details on the influence of the *Description* on the field of Orientalism, the discipline of archaeology, and the influence of the French on social and political life see, Irene Bierman and Afaf Marsot in *Napoleon in Egypt*.

<sup>37</sup> Vatikiotis, 39.

<sup>38</sup> Abu-Lughod, 84.

<sup>39</sup> Marsot, *A History of Egypt from the Arab Conquest to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives 1805-1879* (American University Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>41</sup> The capitulations provided benefits to European residents in three areas: law, economics and conditions of residence. European merchants of capitulatory countries were exempt from paying certain types of taxes and benefited from a reduction of customs duties. The capitulation system was abolished in Egypt in 1937.

<sup>42</sup> Reid, in *Cambridge History of Egypt*, 219-20.

population of the British community in Egypt reached 90,000.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, Hunter logically asserts the complexity of imperialism in Egypt which is a “subtle phenomenon...with profound cultural as well as economic roots, and a strong indigenous base...bent upon reform.”<sup>44</sup> The British rescue mission, justified in a report by Lord Dufferin, was rejected by Cromer, who insisted on a long stay to educate the Egyptians about “how to rule themselves.”<sup>45</sup> In 1882, the British seized the principal barracks from Kasr al-Nīl, constructed by Khedive Said, and located near the railway station in Tahrir Square (the epicentre of Egypt’s mass protest in 2011). These barracks were the first thing to be demolished to herald the country’s independence in 1948.



**Figure 6. Kasr al-Nīl / the British Barracks.**



Bayt al-Lord, located near Kasr al-Doubara, symbol of British rule that did not suffer the fate of the Barracks. The neo-classical facade dates to 1892

**Figure 7. Lord Cromer’s Residence and Workplace.**<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 126. For details about the British community in Egypt during the British occupation, history “from below,” see Lanver Mak, *The British in Egypt: Community, Crime and Crises 1882-1922* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2012), 5.

<sup>44</sup>Hunter, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Marsot, *A History of Egypt*, 89.

<sup>46</sup>See the website of Cairo’s British Embassy <http://ukinegypt.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/our-ambassador/residence>, (accessed 04/06/2012).

In this context, the economic system aligning with world markets changed from feudalism to one of privatisation. This coincided with the development of the irrigation system and the expenditure on administration. While the British ignored public education, educational missions continued but with a shift in the destination and the field of studies. Before the occupation 80 percent of students were sent to France and 96 percent learned technical subjects. Under the British, 75 percent were sent to Britain and 65 studied humanities and social sciences.<sup>47</sup> The elites who studied at their own expense continued to send their children to France.

The most significant influence of the British on the city was represented in Cairo's first tramline and the appearance of the automobile which made the "peripheral" areas within reach of the city centre's "urban expansion."<sup>48</sup> Development in these peripheral areas of the city was shadowed by the deterioration of the traditional city. This led to "deep cleavages" between both the western part, occupied by expatriates, and the eastern parts of Cairo, a problem that started during Isma'ail's reign.<sup>49</sup> The expansion in the city was represented in new suburbs, such as Garden City and Ma'adi<sup>50</sup> in 1905. Both districts possessed Cairo's most elegant collections of villas designed by Cairo's elite architects, of different nationalities, who "battled over who was going to erect the grandest and largest."<sup>51</sup> The influx of foreigners during this era, under the nominal rule of Khedive Tawfik, was due to a flourishing agricultural system that made Egypt "the land of opportunity, an eastern El Dorado, and foreigners came from near and far to share in the fortunes about to be made."<sup>52</sup>

However, the British vision of architecture in Egypt, as Crinson affirms, in contrast with Egypt's rapid urban expansion, appeared to be "deeply uncertain of itself."<sup>53</sup> This uncertainty was manifested in 1859 when a decision was made to construct a British consulate in Alexandria. This building was built at the centre of the European quarter surrounded by other European consulates. It was built after eight design proposals created during eleven years by five different architects. Crinson argues that "a distinctive colonial project is hard to define."<sup>54</sup> Given this deliberation over the design, the influence of the British on architecture was minimal and existed mainly in some red brick residential blocks of flats or cottage architecture.

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<sup>47</sup>Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804-1952* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1981), 57.

<sup>48</sup>Abu-Lughod, *Cairo 1001*, 134.

<sup>49</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 224.

<sup>50</sup>See Samir Raafat, *M'adī 1904-1962: Society & History in a Cairo Suburb* (Cairo: Palm Press, 1994).

<sup>51</sup>Samir Raafat, *Cairo: The Glory Years* (Cairo: Harpocrates, 2003), 99.

<sup>52</sup> Raafat, *M'adī*, 12.

<sup>53</sup>Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism & Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996): 168.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid, 168.

The French and Italian aesthetics continued to spread, demonstrated by mixes of “neo-classical, Venetian palladium and Gothic pastiches amidst a festival of art deco.”<sup>55</sup> The French inspiration was blatant in department stores such as Omar Efandi (1909) by the French architect Raoul Brandon, and Sednoui Store (1913) by George Parcq who was the architect of most of the houses of Garden City’s Francophile Syrio-Lebanese elites. Many well-known buildings that still occupy downtown Cairo are landmarks of this period of the British occupation, including the Misr Insurance Company with its semi circular façade, designed by Desire Wartzza in 1927-8; Swiss Chocolatier’s Art Deco Groppi Building, inspired by neo-baroque elements, designed by A. Castaman in 1924.<sup>56</sup> The Semiramis Hotel is one of the most important buildings in this period, which was described by *The Egyptian Gazette* in 1906—on the verge of completion—as the “Monster Cairo Hotel.”<sup>57</sup>



**Figure 8. The French Inspired Buildings During the British Colonization.**

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<sup>55</sup> Raafat, *Cairo*, 100. Same view was asserted by Mercedes Volait, “Cairo,” *Encyclopaedia of Twentieth Century Architecture*, ed. Stephen Sennott (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004), 201.

<sup>56</sup> Raafat, *Cairo*, 21.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 81.



It was torn down in 1970 and replaced by the Intercontinental Semiramis Hotel, one of many new high-rises built on the banks of the Nile.

**Figure 9. The Old Semiramis Hotel Built in 1906.**

### **4.3 Discursive Influence: Western Supremacy through Eastern Monarchy**

Muhammad ‘Alī Pasha (1805-1849),<sup>58</sup> who succeeded the French, established a dynasty which continued to rule Egypt for over a century. He was destined to be the first ruler to contain the nascent modernity introduced to Egypt by the French. Given that Muhammad ‘Alī was not “a legitimate monarch,” as non-native who was born in Kavala, as well as the rivalry between France and Britain, his reign was marked by a lack of security and uncertainty.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Muhammad ‘Alī sought to maintain good relations with the Ottoman Porte, in order to ensure a significant ally, without sacrificing a centralized authority. This complex political sphere prompted him to consolidate the country’s independence through subtle, diplomatic strategies. His plan was to create “a modern state equipped with an apparatus that would make it independent from the Porte.”<sup>60</sup>

The modern state created by the Pasha was discursively shaped by both forces of resistance and influence. The ‘resistance’ to imperial Europe was still under the umbrella of the Pasha’s ‘influence’ from their modernity. Muhammad ‘Alī approached modernity uniquely, without blindly following the West that he highly appreciated. His awareness of the European imperial ambitions made him reject any Western debts to finance his reforms. He also considered the

<sup>58</sup>Pasha was a Turkish title given to military officers of high rank since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>59</sup>Afaf Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad ‘Alī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 100.

<sup>60</sup>Behrens-Abouseif, “The Visual Transformation of Egypt during the Reign of Muhammad ‘Alī,” 113.

proposed Suez Canal to be a political threat rather than an economic opportunity, and hence the proposal was rejected.<sup>61</sup>

However, the European ‘influence’ was significantly materialized in the fields of architecture and education. Both aspects were instrumental in the Pasha’s need to fortify his own ‘empire,’ and rival not only external forces, but also internal conflicts. Given the fact that the internal context was for so long controlled by the Mamluks and mobilized by the ‘Ulama, through a “series of ad hoc decisions”—applied taxes and the massacre of 500 Mamluks<sup>62</sup>—to establish “law and order” as the “corner-stone” of his reign, the Pasha has eventually “created the trappings of a modern state.”<sup>63</sup>

On the one hand, these decisions to end the Mamluk’s rule were embodied in the architecture of the Pasha’s reign. He attempted to eradicate the Mamluk’s influence by demolishing many of their structures and introducing new architectural styles. As such, the Pasha discouraged the forms of traditional houses, and encouraged the Europeanized house designed to accommodate individual families rather than extended families.<sup>64</sup> Most importantly, when he was seeking to establish a mosque symbolizing his authority, he chose the site of the citadel which was the preferred location of the bygone rulers. Thus, the Pasha rejected Pascal Coste’s proposal, which made explicit references to Mamluk architecture, although, this would have mingled with the urban context. At the same time, while the design is clearly inspired by Istanbul, it did not emulate the baroque and rococo flamboyance of contemporary Ottoman architecture, such as the Nusretiye Mosque (1823-1826). Instead, the “formal choices” of Muhammad ‘Alī were to return to a period of “Ottoman supremacy and splendor,” and to increase the height of the minarets to (84m) to surpasses that of “their Ottoman counterparts,” a juxtaposition that declares a new era in Cairo.<sup>65</sup>

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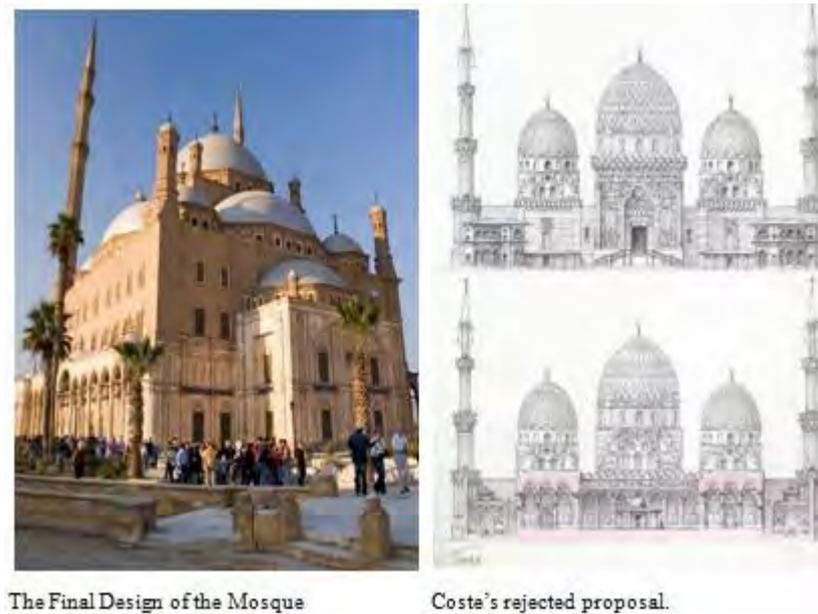
<sup>61</sup> Arthur Goldschmidt, *A Brief History of Egypt* (New York: Infobase, 2008), 70.

<sup>62</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 187.

<sup>63</sup> Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad ‘Alī*, 100.

<sup>64</sup> Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing and Librating Egypt 1805-1923* (California: California University Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Asad, “The Mosque of Muhammad ‘Alī in Cairo,” 44-5.



**Figure 10. Muhammad ‘Alī’s Mosque.**

Other significant structures distinguish Muhammad ‘Alī’s reign such as Shubra Palace 1809, al-Gawharah Palace 1812, and Ra’as al-Tīn 1817. He imitated the design of his childhood home in Kavala in many palaces, especially Ra’as al-Tīn Palace, where Greek and Italian artisans worked under the supervision of the Italian designer Pietro Avosciani.<sup>66</sup> When the “Ottoman fleet pulled into the port in 1839, and its officers stampeded the entrance doors to his palace,” affirms the Pasha proudly, “they have reason to want to enter. They want to see something that is not seen everyday.”<sup>67</sup> Also, the gardens of Shubra palace designed by Coste, which were laid out by gardeners from Chios in the spirit of a small Versailles, according to his memoir. Coste draws attention to the irrefutable link between these gardens and messages of power: “The Pasha wanted to make a miniature Versailles, with groves, labyrinth, hippodrome, a large piece of water surrounded by galleries, pavilions.”<sup>68</sup> The Pasha’s desire to emulate Versailles and the integration of striking visual axes which can be compared to the garden of the Sun King, must not be underestimated as demonstration of Muhammad ‘Alī’s ambitions.

In the field of education, Muhammad ‘Alī secularized the system because of both his hostility to the ‘Ulama and modernization’s ambitions. Secularizing the educational system was an indispensable instrument to stabilize and disseminate modernity throughout society. He was the first to send educational missions abroad, mainly to France. One of those who were sent to

<sup>66</sup>Sayyed Karim, “Muhammad ‘Alī,” *al-‘Imarah* 3 (1941), 14.

<sup>67</sup>Johnston, *Egyptian Palaces and Villas*, 26.

<sup>68</sup> Pascal Coste, “Les Mémoires d’un Artiste en Égypte,” *Toutes les Égypte*, ed. Dominique Jacobi (Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses, 1998): 40. Trans. by El-Ashmouni. For a detailed description see Johnston, *Egyptian Palaces and Villas*, 21.

Paris and was influenced by the European civilization to become “a symbol of the Egyptian awakening,” is Rafa‘aal-Tahtawī (1801-73).<sup>69</sup> The military school was indeed the centre of his attention, and the new schools of medicine, engineering, and foreign languages were subservient. One of the most important schools that was established during his reign, headed by Charles Lambert and modelled on the Parisian *École*, was Cairo’s *École Polytechnique*. In a report to the Pasha, Lambert declared: “what Egypt like the rest of the Levant has never possessed is order.”<sup>70</sup> Therefore, Jeremy Bentham, Muhammad ‘Alī’s advisor, wrote approvingly, “you have acquired great power...but it remains to determine the plan.”<sup>71</sup> In this way, Muhammad ‘Alī developed two separate systems for religious and secular schools, which later contributed to a split within the Egyptian intellectual Egyptian sphere.<sup>72</sup> Logically, new industries and developments, as well as the peasants’ participation in the army and their victories created a sense of Egyptianization (even if they hated the army).<sup>73</sup>

It is true that, before Muhammad ‘Alī, both “Egypt’s provinciality” and “the general decline of the arts” offered sound justification for the Pasha’s insistence “to start something new.”<sup>74</sup> Yet, “the choices he made or delegated to others,” as Behrens-Abouseif perceives, stemmed from the same vein of adopting European technology, which was inseparable from global trends.<sup>75</sup> However, one contends, that the Pasha’s adoption of technology as indispensable to modernity did not automatically lead him to adopt purely European architecture.

Muhammad ‘Alī died in 1849 and none of his successors had “his political skill,”<sup>76</sup> but, before his death, particularly in 1840, Britain succeeded to weaken his monopolies on industry and the army under the Treaty of London.<sup>77</sup> Muhammad ‘Alī’s first successor was his son Ibrahim,<sup>78</sup> who ruled for a very short period in 1848, during Muhammad ‘Alī’s illness, and passed away shortly before Muhammad ‘Alī’s death in 1849. Then, the Pasha’s grandson,

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<sup>69</sup>Behrens-Abouseif, “The Visual Transformation of Egypt,” 110. Al-Tahtawī praised the Pasha’s modernization scheme in *Takhlis al-Ibreez fi Talkhis Paris*. Tahtawī stressed that for “Kings who want to be remembered, building should be their concern. (Cairo: Bulaq Press, 1834). For English translation of Al-Tahtawī’s text see Daniel Newman, *An Imam in Paris: Al-Tahtawī’s Visit to France (1826-31)* (London: Saqi Books, 2002).

<sup>70</sup>Alain Silvera, “Edme-François Jomard and the Egyptian reforms of 1839,” *Middle East Studies*, 7 (1971), 314; on Lambert see Carré, *Voyageurs et écrivains*, 1: 264-73.

<sup>71</sup>J.B. au Pacha’, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1828. Bentham archives, University College, London. Cited in Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 33.

<sup>72</sup>Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community*, 32.

<sup>73</sup>Marsot, 2007, 77.

<sup>74</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, “The Visual Transformation of Egypt,” 120.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid, 120.

<sup>76</sup>Marsot, 2007, 78.

<sup>77</sup> To protect the growing industries, Muhammad ‘Alī controlled all imports and exports by placing embargoes and allowed only one English merchant, Samuel Briggs, to buy and sell in Egypt. The quality of Egypt’s long-stable cotton worried the British as it presented a rivalry to their goods. The treaty enacted in 1840 to limit Muhammad ‘Alī’s strength and the Egyptian economy.

<sup>78</sup> Ibrahim reigned as Wāli from (1 September 1848 – 10 November 1848).

‘Abbas I, son of Tusun, who died in 1816 due to illness,<sup>79</sup> came to power between (1848 -1854) before he passed away.

‘Abbas, unlike his grandfather, adopted an explicit anti-European, “antimodernization stance,”<sup>80</sup> as he “wanted a return to the Ottoman fold.”<sup>81</sup> He dramatically diminished the military and industry due to his agreements with the Ottomans, and his desire to economize their expenditure that he considered as a waste of money. ‘Abbas did make two of the major changes in Cairo: one is the foundation of the ‘Abbasiyya district in the northeast of Cairo, which turned that part of the city into a well-populated district; and the second was the railway line. The project of the railway was under pressure from the British who sought to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea by train. ‘Abbas succumbed to that pressure in 1851, however, as an anti-European, he insisted on promoting his “isolationist agenda” allowing only Egyptian labour and capital for the construction of the railway line. Also, resisting European intervention, ‘Abbas insisted on replacing the original plan of a direct railway from Alexandria to Suez, with two separate routes, one from Alexandria to Cairo and the other from Cairo to Suez. These two routes, as they meet in Cairo, brought a new wave of “modernization” after ‘Abbas’s reign.<sup>82</sup>



**Figure 11. Railway Station, Known as Bab al Hadid.**

‘Abbas’s reign has shown also one major sign of modernization: the construction of the first hotel, Sheppard Hotel, was inaugurated in 1860 and lasted for almost a century, until it was burned in the revolution of 1952. The land overlooking al-Azbakiyah Lake, which was dried by

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<sup>79</sup>Tusun Pasha (b.1794-1816), his historical significance was in the Ottoman–Saudi War in 1811, which he led by the Egyptian army. Mark Weston, *Prophets and Princes: Saudi Arabia from Muhammad to the Present* (New Jersey: John Wiley Publishing, 2008).

<sup>80</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 203.

<sup>81</sup>Marsot, *A History of Egypt*, 78.

<sup>82</sup>AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 203.

Muhammad ‘Alī, was offered by ‘Abbas to Samuel Shephard, a British sailor.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, despite ‘Abbas’s animosity to European influence the architecture in his reign remained in the custody of a mixture of Ottoman-European vocabulary.<sup>84</sup> ‘Abbas’s successor was S‘aīd (r.1854-1863), who had almost no effect on the built environment. However, his reign has permanently changed Egypt’s history and brought one more attraction to the foreign ambitions by his agreement to the digging of the Suez Canal with Ferdinand de Lesseps, who was his friend. Work continued in the Canal until it opened in the reign of Ismail in 1869.

Khedive Isma‘aīl (r.1863–79), an “Impatient Europeanizer,”<sup>85</sup> was “haunted” by “France, the Emperor, the Empress...as they had haunted that of Said, it was this fatal attraction that was to be Ismail’s undoing.”<sup>86</sup> Isma‘aīl sought to be equal to the kings of Europe, and liked to think of himself as having a “mission civilisatrice.”<sup>87</sup> Cairo became an amalgamation of Mecca and the “stillborn” Rue de Rivoli, as described by Lord Cromer.<sup>88</sup>

Isma‘aīl was part of the Exposition Universelle held in Paris (1867), in which he was introduced to Baron Haussmann, the organizer of the exhibition. This exhibition increased Isma‘aīl’s enthrallment with France that he announced “Egypt is no longer part of Africa. It is part of Europe.” A decade later, the French writer Paul Ravaisse described Egypt as “politically a part of Europe, and to a certain extent the common property of all nations’.”<sup>89</sup> The Suez Canal’s inaugural celebration in Egypt, a decade later after the exhibition, offered the Khedive a chance to show Egypt’s significance for the Western world. Cairo underwent radical changes between the exhibition and the opening of the Canal that were achieved in line with Haussmann’s inspiration. The Canal celebrations acted “as a catalyst for a *belle époque*” that lasted until “King Farouk’s tired reign brought it all tumbling down, to be replaced by the stern new order” of Nasser.<sup>90</sup>

To achieve this *belle époque*, Isma‘aīl enlisted the talent of ‘Alī Mubarak (1823-1893), the minister of public works,<sup>91</sup> who was sent to France by Muhammad ‘Alī in an educational

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<sup>83</sup>The land included the house of al-Alfy Bey that served as Napoleon’s headquarters and the school of foreign languages during Muhammad ‘Alī’s reign.

<sup>84</sup>Behrens-Abouseif, “The Visual Transformation of Egypt,”120.

<sup>85</sup>Vatikiotis,83.

<sup>86</sup>According to Nubar Pasha, prime minister. Cited in Trevor Mostyn, *Egypt’s belle époque: Cairo and the Age of the Hedonists* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2006), 42.

<sup>87</sup>Safran, 34.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid, 34.

<sup>89</sup>Mostyn, 44.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid, 2.

<sup>91</sup>Mubarak was a colleague to Isma‘aīl during that mission. He wrote twenty-volume detailed description of Cairo, *Al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiya al-Jadida*, stressing the necessity of such innovations and saw the split in the city’s fabric as necessity of progress. See: N.AlSayyad, “‘Alī Mubarak’s Cairo: Between the Testimony of ‘Allamudin and the Imaginary of the Khatat,” *Making Cairo Medieval*, eds. N.AlSayyad, et al (NY: Lexington Books, 2005).

mission due to his exceptional performance in Muhandiskhanah, the first school of engineering. Mubarak and Khedive Isma‘aīl decided to develop Cairo to the West following Haussmann’s model,<sup>92</sup> to be named Isma‘aīliya, after Isma‘aīl’s name, as a compensation for changing the medieval eastern part from Cairo. Isma‘aīl rebuilt the al-Azbakiyah district, and created a master plan to unify medieval parts with the new extensions.<sup>93</sup> For Isma‘aīliya, Isma‘aīl granted the land for anyone ready to erect any structure that cost more than two thousand Egyptian pounds, but settlement remained slow. For al-Azbakiyah, the demolition of the old Mamluk palaces that overlook the shores made way for the first picturesque garden to be designed by the landscape architect Barillet-Deschamps and modelled after Parc Monceau in Paris.<sup>94</sup> New municipal policies and building codes were applied by the new central bureaucracy of Mubarak’s administration, creating a new map of Cairo. Thus, Isma‘aīl recruited French and English consultants, such as the civil engineer Pierre Grand to whom he was introduced in the Exposition and to whom he later assigned many projects.

These renovations included not only new boulevards but also new public buildings, the only recorded works designed by named British architects, according to Crinson, were the New Hotel (1865) and Palace Hotel (1869)<sup>95</sup> by Christopher Wray, a post office by T.L. Donaldson at Suez (1862), and a hospital built by Colonel Collyer also at Suez (1867). The Oriental Hotel was one of very few works of British architects at this time, and its design was closer to an exhibition building, as Crinson asserts. This same approach is also evident in al-Gezira Palace (1863) located on the island of the same name. This was designed by the German architect Julius Franz to impress Princess Eugenie, its rooms are “exact replicas” of Princess Eugenie’s private apartments in the Tuileries. As Mitchell argues, it was as if he wanted to “return the favor of the imitation medieval palace that had been constructed for his use at the Paris exhibition.”<sup>96</sup> Julius Franz decorated the Palace with Islamic motifs and elements of Moorish fantasy (apparent in a pavilion within the palace designed by Owen Jones) with imported lavish furnishings from France.<sup>97</sup> The Palace’s garden was designed by the landscape architect Barillet-Deschamps.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time & Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (5<sup>th</sup> ed. U.S.A: Harvard University Press, 2008), 745-46. Giedion citing Haussmann’s policy from E.M. Boullat, *Georges-Eugene Haussmann* (Paris, 1901), 8-9: Haussmann’s schemes in Paris (1853-1869) were for surveillance purposes, fearing riots after the riots of 1852. Therefore, two and one-half billions of francs were allocated to ensure lucid circulation by disencumbering palaces, barracks, and railways.

<sup>93</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 213.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 210.

<sup>95</sup> The Palace Hotel is not mentioned in Crinson but mentioned in Volait, “Cairo,” 201. For the description of the Oriental Hotel see Crinson, *Empire Building*, 174.

<sup>96</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 17.

<sup>97</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 211.

<sup>98</sup> Barillet-Deschamps continued to work in Cairo until his death in 1874, according to AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 213.

This Oriental fantasy distinguishes the Khedive's works from projects patronised by Muhammad 'Alī. The architecture of the later was outward looking rather than an imaginative representation of the orient.<sup>99</sup> The Paris exhibition had a greater influence on the Khedive, rather than the tactical approach of modernization of Muhammad 'Alī. The lure of the orient culminated in 1881 when the first Committee for the Conservation of Monuments of Arab Art, dominated by European officials to "secure [cultural authority] for the next fifty years."<sup>100</sup> However, 'Abdīn Palace could be considered as "an appropriate modern setting to symbolize the state's power,"<sup>101</sup> as Isma'aīl, for the first time in Egypt's history, moved his throne from the Citadel to 'Abdīn in 1874, which was designed by the Italian architect De Curel Del Rosso.<sup>102</sup> The Palace's significance comes from the fact that it was "a stage for events marking the end of Egypt's independence—and, almost a century later, its reemergence as a modern sovereign nation-state."<sup>103</sup>



**Figure 12. Gezira Palace of Khedive Isma'aīl at the End of Nineteenth-Century.<sup>104</sup>**

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<sup>99</sup>Crinson, *Empire Building*, 177.

<sup>100</sup> Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi, "Modernism Architecture and the Middle East: The Burden of Representation," *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi (U.S.A: The University of Washington Press, 2008), 9.

<sup>101</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 213.

<sup>102</sup>Tarek Sakr, *Early Twentieth-Century Islamic Architecture in Cairo* (Cairo: American University Press, 1993), 9.

<sup>103</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 213.

<sup>104</sup> Since 1952, the Palace was converted to Omar al-Khayyam hotel and later to The Marriott hotel with the addition of two modern towers. See Ken Frizzel refer to "Opulence on the Nile: Cairo Marriott Hotel," *Architectural Record* 172: 7 (1984), 108-11.



**Figure 13. ‘Abdin Palace of the Khedive Isma‘il at the End of Nineteenth-Century.**

Many other building typologies emerged within the Khedive’s Europeanization venture, such as residential buildings with commercial arcades, the Theatre National de la Comedie, town houses, and the Opera.<sup>105</sup> The Opera building was designed by the architect Pietro Avoscani (1869), to accommodate celebrations for Suez Canal, with a classic monumental influence that was modelled on La Scala, Milan. The building manifests the revolutionary transition from the old Medieval city to new European city; its longer side faced the new planned Azbakiyah district with its English park and its rear to the old part of Cairo.



The main façade with a tripartite volume composition, and Ionic columns. A statue was made in the centre of the square of Ibrahim Pasha, Isma‘ail’s father, made by Charles Cordier (1872).

**Figure 14. Khedival Opera House.**

With Isma‘ail’s dream to make Egypt part of Europe, expatriates grew from 3,000 in 1836 to 68,000 in 1878, settling mainly in the large cities. The imposition of new building types and new

<sup>105</sup> Volait, “Cairo,” *Encyclopaedia of Twentieth Century Architecture*, ed. Stephen Sennott, 201.

designs were “far from resembling Paris, but an enduring pattern was set among local elite: the importing of the latest fashions from influential European capitals.”<sup>106</sup> Egypt’s viceroys in order to alleviate “their power in the short run,” became “the intermediaries between Egypt and the capitalist economies of Europe.”<sup>107</sup> The importance of this period, especially in the beginning of 1880s, lies in the fact that it ripened the sense of nationalism and is considered to be, “a truly formative period in the ideological and historical evolution of modern Egypt,” due to the infinite communication with the West.<sup>108</sup>

#### 4.4 Egypt for the Egyptians: Embracing Resistance

Resistance to Western influences, specifically European, is an ongoing sentiment in the context of the nationalist movement.<sup>109</sup> The interaction with the ‘other’ has precipitated the process of nation formation or as Starr declares, the “process of differentiation.”<sup>110</sup> Nationalism in Egypt has gone through various phases since its inception in the nineteenth century. The French had a strong impact on its creation, as Al-Jabartī affirmed that it was a new era of knowledge, as well as war and revolution. According to Muhammad Sabry, *Tareekh al-‘Asr al-Hadith: Misr mn ‘Aahd Muhammad ‘Alī hata al-Youm* [*The History of the Modern Age: Egypt from Muhammad ‘Alī until the Present*] (1927), there are some documents that were released by the British ministry of foreign affairs, affirming that a group of the Egyptian Coptic elite had secretly headed to Britain to establish agreements for the independence of Egypt from the French.<sup>111</sup>

The notion of the nation state can be traced to Muhammad ‘Alī’s reign, with the development of education and the participation of the Egyptians in the military. In fact, Muhammad ‘Alī’s, “entirely acquisitive” ambitions of defining an empire, distinct from the Ottoman Empire, carved out a renaissance in the Arab nation, which was seen by George Antonius, in his influential book *The Arab Awakening*, as “a false start.”<sup>112</sup> This was the first time that the idea of an Arab empire

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid, 201.

<sup>107</sup>Hunter, 4.

<sup>108</sup> Safran, 54

<sup>109</sup>Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry*, ed. and trans. Marion Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett (NY, 1981); Rashid Khalidi, et al, eds., *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1991); Sharabi, *Arab intellectuals and the West: the formative years, 1875-1914*(Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970); George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: H. Hamilton, 1938).

<sup>110</sup> Deborah Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt: Literature, Culture, and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2009), 18.

<sup>111</sup> This group has never reached Britain as their leader, Y‘aquop al-Qipty, has died on the ship after telling the reason behind their trip to the ship captain. Muhammad Sabry, *Tareekh al-‘Asr al-Hadith* (Cairo: Misr Printing Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1927), 29-30.

<sup>112</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 33.

had emerged; “formed out of time, in advance of the birth of Arab national consciousness.”<sup>113</sup> For Antonius, this was a false start because it was limited to the ruler’s ambitions and thus vanished, “not to be heard again as a problem in world politics until the War of 1914.”<sup>114</sup> However, one may argue, the sense of patriotism flourished during the reign of Saïd Pasha (r.1854-1863) who, according to Sabry, was very proud of being Egyptian and he permitted, for the first time, the Egyptian soldiers to be promoted as officers. One of those who became an officer in the army was Ahmad ‘Urabī, the leader of the first nationalist movement in Egypt. According to ‘Urabī’s memoir’s, as discussed by Sabry, Saïd had a great sense of patriotism and he was infuriated by the French expedition despite his friendship with de Lesseps. This patriotism became conspicuous in one of his speeches presented at an official dinner at the palace of Kasr al-Nīl where he laid the foundation for the nationalist movement with the slogan ‘Egypt for Egyptians.’<sup>115</sup> This slogan stimulated the hopes and ideas of ‘Urabī’s movement nearly two decades later.

‘Urabī led one of two opposition groups rallying against the dual control of the British and French over the country’s economy, which caused the demise of Isma‘aīl. The movement of military nationalism defined itself vis-a-vis Khedive Tawfīk (1879–1892), and the British intervention. This movement found appeal not only in the Cabinet, but also in the streets of Cairo and Alexandria. Finally, the nationalist movement culminated in the British bombardment of Alexandria and in the Battle of al-Tal al-Kabīr in 1882, and the reformation of British rule in Cairo by Lord Dufferin in 1882. The second opposition group saw the liberation of Egypt in religious and ideological terms. This group was originally founded by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897),<sup>116</sup> who visited Lord Randolph Churchill, in 1885, to discuss the future of Egypt’s independence.<sup>117</sup> Al-Afghani “encouraged the rise of a constitutional movement and got a younger generation of intellectuals to found newspapers and preach liberal ideas.”<sup>118</sup> In fact, as Marsot affirms, Tawfīk was influenced by al-Afghani and the constitutional movement when he came to power, but his constitutional request was turned down by a British counsel.<sup>119</sup> One of al-Afghani’s most important followers was Muhammad ‘Abduh who believed, after ‘Urabī’s

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid, 33.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid, 33-4.

<sup>115</sup>Muhammad Sabry, *Tareekh al-‘Asr al-Hadith*, 93-4. This dinner included his family members, military and government statesmen who were mostly European and all of them became furious after the speech.

<sup>116</sup>Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, 123.

<sup>117</sup>Hourani, 111. Al-Afghani wrote *al-‘Urwa al-Wuthqa* aiming to arouse Muslims’ spirits. Al-Afghani’s call does not evolve around Islam as a religion but “rather Islam as a civilization,” influenced by Guizot’s ideas of civilization, Hourani, 103-129.

<sup>118</sup>Marsot, *A History of Egypt*, 85.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid, 85.

experience and exile, that any violent movement is futile, thereby he did not support Mustafa Kamil's movement. 'Abduh's nationalist ideas were more focused on the reformation of society rather than a mere opposition to the regime.<sup>120</sup> 'Urabi's movement, for 'Abduh, was a temporary uprising provoked by the poor treatment of the Egyptian officers. In the first ten years after the British occupation the nationalist movement was dormant, as the Egyptians believed the British promises and waited to see democratic institutions."<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, the British weakened the Egyptian army, "leaving them at the mercy of the British army," and sentenced nationalists to death or exile.<sup>122</sup>

However, Khedive 'Abbas II (r.1892 –1914) was "a thorn in the flesh of the British rule." Therefore, the British replaced him with Hussain Kamil in 1914, while 'Abbas was visiting Istanbul.<sup>123</sup> During 'Abbas II reign, Islamic references were incorporated into many buildings, most importantly, the Egyptian Museum which was built in 1902 by the Italian firm of Giuseppe Garozzo & Francesco Zaffarani and designed by Frenchman Marcel Dourgnon.<sup>124</sup> Also, under his rule, Mustafa Kamil carried the nationalism torch and founded both the National Party and *al-Liw'a* newspaper. In 1908, in a treatise entitled *Modern Egypt*, Cromer perceived Egypt as "a place of no fixed identity," that is "composed of a conglomerate of racial, religious, and linguistic groups."<sup>125</sup> Egypt's diversity, in Cromer's view, is a main reason behind its inability to have an "overarching direction" and hence its inability to rule itself.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, Kamil had to propagate Egypt's glory and imagine a homogenous identity to justify the irrelevance of the foreigners' rule. This significant contrast between nationalist and imperialist perceptions became more significant after WWI. This awakening and the desire for independence went hand in hand with the modernisation of Egyptian society.<sup>127</sup> The modernization ambitions were reflected in domestic and familial practices of the bourgeois, such as the monogamy, which illustrates, as Pollard affirms, "the complex ways in which ideas are circulated in societies under foreign occupation as well as the opaque boundaries between colonial and indigenous discourses."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community*, 63.

<sup>121</sup> Marsot, *A History of Egypt*, 90.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid, 89.

<sup>123</sup>Tignor, *Egypt: A Short History*, 236.

<sup>124</sup>Raafat, *Cairo: The Glory Years*, 16.

<sup>125</sup>Tignor, 237.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid, 237.

<sup>127</sup>Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 6.11. Also, for the development of Egyptian society before the 1952, see Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy Johnson, Barak Salmoni, eds. *Re-envisioning Egypt 1919-1952* (Cairo: AUC, 2005).

<sup>128</sup>Ibid, 11.



**Figure 15. The Egyptian Museum in 1908.**

By the end of WWI, “every segment of the Egyptian society held deep grievance against the British.”<sup>129</sup> In 1917, Woodrow Wilson’s doctrine of ‘self-determination’ of the central authorities (Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman), found a great appeal in Egypt.<sup>130</sup> Sa‘ad Zaghlul, a disciple of ‘Abduh, raised the Egyptians’ demands for ‘self-determination’ at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918. Zaghlul’s exile sparked a mass revolution amongst the population. The protest continued even after the liberation of Zaghlul after which he took the case to Versailles. Therefore in 1922, Britain had to declare, what Tignor described as a “unilateral” independence that was carefully circumscribed. This careful circumscription left Egypt as a partially independent constitutional monarchy, with most of the sectors under British control, such as “defence, the security of communications, and a continuation of the Capitulations system.”<sup>131</sup>

After the death of Zaghlul in 1927, the construction of his mausoleum heralded the impact of revolution on art and architecture. The design of this mausoleum was neo-Pharaonic with some Roman motifs.<sup>132</sup> The Party condemned the use of any Islamic references in the design influenced by the slogan of Zaghlul’s revolution in 1919, which signified a pluralist idea of nation: ‘religion for God and the homeland for all.’

A direct consequence of the 1919 revolution was taken by Tal‘at Harb, Egypt’s entrepreneurial economist, who established the first national bank of Egypt, Bank Misr. The Bank was founded on the capital of 124 wealthy Egyptians who contributed 80,000 Egyptian pounds, a revolutionary step to support the national manufacturing companies. It is worth mentioning here the parallel case of the Deutscher Werkbund (German Association of

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<sup>129</sup>Tignor, *Egypt: A Short History*, 241.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid, 241.

<sup>131</sup>Ahmed Abdalla and Manar Shorbagy, *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt, 1923-1973*

<sup>132</sup>*Al-Ahram*, September 22 and 26, 1927, interview with the well-known sculptor Mahmoud Mukhtar for his views on the mausoleum’s design.

Craftsmen) which was established in Dresden in 1906. The Werkbund was also intended to contribute in a socio-political way to enhance life.<sup>133</sup> Amidst this context, it is conspicuous that between “Ism‘aīl’s demise” and “the Liberal Age (1881-1952)” when Egypt was under complete British occupation, “development did not cease, but it was a development mostly initiated by an alien power, designed to serve its interests.”<sup>134</sup> Until this time the foreign communities in Egypt, the Syrians, Italians, Greeks, and Armenians, had greater territorial rights, even more than the majority of natives.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, these communities were able to contribute to flourishing economic and developmental projects, such as Heliopolis.

Heliopolis, the city of the sun, was intended to be an oasis in the desert, comprising a residential expansion of Cairo founded by the Belgian businessman Baron Édouard Empain.<sup>136</sup> Despite the Pharaonic reference, the buildings of the city were designed in an oriental or neo-Moorish style, with domes, columns, and arcades, which Empain had dreamed of when he first visited the desert plateau in 1905 with the Belgian architect Ernest Jaspar. The dream came true and the city, far from congested Cairo, housed the elites of foreign communities. The palace of Empain himself in Heliopolis was built in 1907-1910 in a loosely Indian style. This Arab renaissance continued in this era, under the patronage of both foreigners and elites, including the villas of Prince ‘Amr Ibrahīm (by Garo Balian, a namesake of the famous Ottoman architect, at the present time, “Al-Gezeira Center for Arts”)<sup>137</sup> and Prince Yousif Kamal designed in the 1920s. This Arab style culminated in the design of the Institute of Oriental Music by Ernesto Verruci with its Mamluk influence. Shortly afterwards the King Fou’ad I University (later Cairo University) was built by the English architect Eric George Newnum in 1925-35.<sup>138</sup> Until 1950 the university professors were mostly European—Germany, Italy, Britain and France—including the orientalist Enno Littmann and Carlo Nallino, who received a special mention in Taha Hussein’s speech in the twenty-fifth jubilee.<sup>139</sup> The first Egyptian architects employed in this

<sup>133</sup> See John Maciuiika, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and German state, 1890 – 1920*, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>134</sup> Sa‘ad Eldin Ibrahim, “Cairo: A Sociological Profile,” *The Expanding Metropolis: Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Singapore: AKAA, 1985), 25-33.

<sup>135</sup> Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt*, 23.

<sup>136</sup> Agnieszka Dobrowolska, and Jarostaw Dobrowolski, *Heliopolis: The Rebirth of the City of The Sun* (Cairo: AUC Press, 2006). The book traces the re-creation of Heliopolis in 1908 which is located on the edge of the original Heliopolis, a predynastic city that was named after the Pharaonic god and creator, according to their myths, the Sun.

<sup>137</sup> According to Samir Raafat, [www.egy.com](http://www.egy.com).

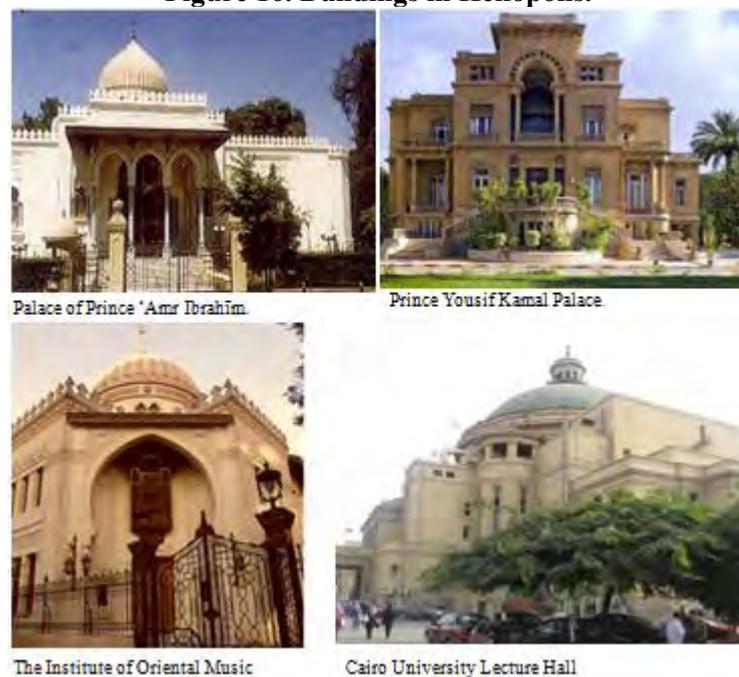
<sup>138</sup> Volait, “The Age of Transition,” *The Glory of Cairo: An Illustrated History*, ed. André Raymond, 425.

<sup>139</sup> Donald M.Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 2.

University in 1925 were Mustafa Fahmy and ‘Alī Labīb Gabr, who began to develop architectural education.<sup>140</sup>



**Figure 16. Buildings in Heliopolis.**



**Figure 17. The 1920s Neo-Islamic Architecture.**

However, French and Italian variations—either historical ones (neo-classic, renaissance, Baroque, or Gothic) or modern ones (eclectic or functional)—continued to influence palaces, villas, apartment blocks, departmental stores, such as Groppi, and Sednoui. Foreign architects continued to practice exclusively in Egypt until the 1920s until the profession started to develop and the first Royal Society of Engineers was formed in 1923, under the patronage of King Fou’ad. Like the earlier trends by predominantly European architects, the designs by pioneer

<sup>140</sup> Abdel-Mun’im Haikal, *‘Ali Labib Gabr wa Fan al-‘Imarah* [‘Ali Labib Gabr and the Architectural Art] (Cairo: General Egyptian Organization for books, 1973). For samples of their work see Appendix III..

Egyptian architects were divided between Pharaonic and Islamic architecture as symbols of nationalism.

The first decision which materialized this division was the policy of Egyptianization enacted by Othman Muharam, minister of public services, in 1922, which recommended the Pharaonic style in public buildings in the southern provinces of Egypt, and the use of the Islamic style in northern Egypt. Classicism (symmetric brick facades and balanced masses) and revivalism (Islamic or Pharaonic) were the dominant design themes. The Pharaonic style remained limited to few public buildings, according to ‘Ashur, such as Giza Railway station, Farouk’s rest house (1946), Kobri al-Quba railway station (1927), all designed by Mustafa Fahmy, and the Lawyers Syndicate by ‘AlīLabīb Gabr. The neo-Islamic style begun in the late nineteenth-century by Europeans who were fascinated with Egypt’s Islamic heritage, found more appeal in the design of private villas. It should be noted, Mustafa Fahmy’s “attempts to synthesize the Pharaonic and Islamic legacies into modern designs,” such as the Museum of Modern Art (1936)—eventually mixed with Art Deco stylizations of the Mamluk repertoire [like] Doctors’ Syndicate offices (1941).”<sup>141</sup> The attention to Islamic architecture in this era preceding WWII, could simply be assigned to Creswell’s magnum opus *Early Muslim Architecture* in 1932-40. However, the work of Creswell could not have been possible without the help of King Fou’ad, to whom Creswell highlighted his intentions “to inspire the future.”<sup>142</sup>



**Figure 18. Classical and Neo-classical Designs in 1920s -1930s.**

<sup>141</sup>Volait, “Cairo”, 202

<sup>142</sup> Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi, “Modernism, Architecture and the Middle East,” 10.

In 1936, King Farouk came to power at the age of thirteen. Because he spoke Arabic unlike his father, the Egyptians had great national hopes, but he had proved irresponsible during WWII and during the defeat of the Arab army in Palestine in 1948. Therefore, riots erupted in the country and rioters set fire to the European district and European signposts such as the Shepherd Hotel, an event that is known as Black Saturday. The independence did not occur until 1952, six months after Black Saturday, which was the beginning of the rhetoric of postcolonial Egypt.

## 4.5 Western Influence through Egyptian Rulers

### 4.5.1 Nasser (1952-1970).

The Free Officers, as they called themselves, succeeded through a secret assembly in 1939 to organize a coup d'état in 1952 which forced King Farouk to abdicate.<sup>143</sup> They claimed to change the past reliance on the West and end the multiple loyalties of the monarchy. Nasser's regime (1954-1970) was a new epoch of self-rule characterised by the rhetoric of resistance and self-pride.

The declaration of a new era began by erasing colonial and Khedival imprints first by renaming the Khedival Isma'iliyah square in Cairo to Tahrir square [liberation]. In Manshiyah square in Alexandria, also renamed Tahrir square, the Bourse building was transferred to the Socialist Union Building where Nasser delivered his speeches, especially his nationalization speech.<sup>144</sup> The properties of the elites were taken; villas were converted into overcrowded schools, apartment blocks were converted to public sector offices, all "receded into xenophobia."<sup>145</sup> Moreover, aneoclassical marble colonnade with a statue of Khedive Isma'a'il at its center, a gift from Italy to King Fou'ad in 1935, was converted to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.<sup>146</sup> In 1966, the statue was removed from its plinth and the inscriptions of the dedication were replaced by Qur'anic verses about martyrdom.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, rewriting history was central to the revolution of 1952.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>Anwar al-Sadat, *Revolt on the Nile*, trans. Thomas Graham (London: Allan Wingate, 1957), 14. The English of *Asrar al-Thawra al-Masryah Bawa'ethaha al-Khafyah wa Asbabaha al-sycologyah*, (Cairo, 1954), introduced by Nasser.

<sup>144</sup>Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt*, 56.

<sup>145</sup>Samir Raafat, *Cairo: the Glory Years*, 10.

<sup>146</sup> Starr, 32.

<sup>147</sup> Hala Halim, "Dance to the music of time," *Al-Ahram Weekly* 384 (1998).

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1998/384/cu1.htm>, (accessed 06/06/2012).

<sup>148</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 244.



**Figure 19. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Alexandria.**

After a long colonial history, Nasser identified himself as “a unifier against Western imperialism,” who sought to “build a democratic, socialist, and cooperative society.”<sup>149</sup> The breakdown between Egypt and the West, represented in Europe and United States, escalated in 1956 when the agreement to provide Egypt with loans for Aswan’s High Dam—Nasser’s revolutionary achievement to industrialize the country—was annulled. Consequently, Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal, a decision that caused the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956. However, nationalization was perceived as a decision that ended the colonial influence and regained self-pride for people who virtually deified Nasser for his deed. After the Aggression, which ended with the Israeli invasion of Sinai, Nasser expelled all the foreign nationals, specifically French and British. Despite this intolerance, some foreign businessmen continued their business, which was nationalized by the Egyptianization policy in 1958, as Starr asserts “Egypt’s so-called cosmopolitan era had come to an end.”<sup>150</sup> But Nasser’s intolerance of foreigners can be perceived as a tendency toward supreme power in a monolithic state, especially when we look at the confiscation of the native elite’s power by the agricultural Reform Law.

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<sup>149</sup> Molefi Asante, *Culture and Customs of Egypt* (U.S.A: Greenwood Press, 2002), 30. Also see *Rethinking Nasserism: Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt*, eds. Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2004), which started by the divergence of Nasserism definition which was seen by some as an ideology, however, more logically the author, aligning with Vatikiotis, and Khalidi, argues that it was not consistent like communism, or socialism, etc. to be considered as an ideology.

<sup>150</sup> The Jewish community diminished after establishing Israel, and left completely after the Aggression. Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt*, 23. However, Mohamed Said, “Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Autarky in Egypt,” *Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Authenticity in the Middle East*, ed. Roel Meijer (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), argues that Nasser’s fight with the West could not limit the cosmopolitanism that “held sway in some sectors of official political ideology...culturally, Egyptians continued to harbour strong positive feelings toward the West as the civilisation closest to their own habits,” 189.

Although this has reduced the social enclaves between rich landowners and poor farmers, it led to the flight of many elites oppressed by Nasser's authoritative rule.<sup>151</sup>

The previous rhetoric of resistance of Nasser's regime coincided with the influential standardization of design. Although Nasser was a pan-Arab entrepreneur, his ambition did extend to a new version of Arab modernity; his goal was to be on an equal footing with the West, but did not necessarily differ from it.<sup>152</sup> As Mitchell asserts the "ability to rearrange the natural and social environment became a means to demonstrate the strength of the modern state as a techno-economic power."<sup>153</sup> Nasser's modernization, indeed, was not as rigorous as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, who completely eradicated the Turkish traditions in every aspect of society.<sup>154</sup> Every aspect of Egyptian society as a result of Nasser's socialist policy, as the scholar Doreen Warriner remarked after her visit in 1956, was "disciplined and standardized," and the "settlers had been subjected to complete human reconditioning."<sup>155</sup> This standardization was also imposed through Nasser's socialist policy which was manifested in the housing projects, as Warriner describes, rows of identical houses, "consisting of two rooms, a hall, a kitchen, and a bathroom... a front terrace and a backyard."<sup>156</sup>

Manufacturing sites were established, during the 1960s, in satellite sites such as Shubra al-Khayma, and Imbaba and most importantly in the suburb of Helwan, replacing the quiet retreat built in Khedive Tawfik's reign. These included large steel mills and car factories. As a result, Nasser aimed to build housing for the working class, as a "socialist ideological platform."<sup>157</sup> Public housing was controlled by the government after an agreement to exchange cotton and textiles for prefabricated building components, a technology that later proved wasteful.<sup>158</sup> These standardized designs provoked Fathy to write to Nasser urging him for a shift in the rural development with local solutions and warning from the "self colonization," which results in following the colonizer even after independence.<sup>159</sup> Therefore, Nasser's socialism was not

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<sup>151</sup> According to Osman, there are no studies on the diaspora of the Egyptian capital to Europe in Nasser's era except in some artistic movies, by Atef Al-Tayeb and Radwan Al-Kashef. Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: from Nasser to Mubarak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 258.

<sup>152</sup> Galal Amin, *Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? Changes in Egyptian Society from 1950 to the Present* (Cairo: AUC, 2000), 46.

<sup>153</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Rules of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (California: University of California Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>154</sup> See Patrick Kinross, *Ataturk* (UK: Hachette, 2012); and Jacob Landau, *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Leiden: Westview Press, 1984).

<sup>155</sup> Omnia El-Shakry, "Cairo as Capital of Socialist Revolution?" *Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the new Globalized Middle East*, eds. Diane Singerman, and Paul Amar (Cairo: AUC Press, 2006), 73.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>157</sup> AlSayyad, 247.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, 247

<sup>159</sup> Hassan Fathy, Letter to Nasser Regarding Rural Development. 23 Mar. 1963. Hassan Fathy Archives in AKTC [http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document\\_id=12931](http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document_id=12931)

successful in hindsight. Raafat identifies two decades of “ill-managed socialism” due to inconsistent legislation regulating housing and rent control. This unfortunately resulted in “more long-term architectural devastation than Black Saturday.”<sup>160</sup> But one of Nasser’s socialist but aesthetically positive projects is Cairo’s Nile promenade (Corniche), which made the Nile accessible to the public rather than the exclusive domain of the previous villa owners.<sup>161</sup>



**Figure 20. Public Housing in Imbaba.**

Many of the buildings in Nasser’s era embody his progressive aspirations, as well as his nationalist intentions such as the Arab League building, and many skyscrapers including the Radio and Television building, and al-Ahram building. The Nile Radio and Television building overlooks the Nile with its modernist cylindrical façade designed by Galal M’omen in 1956. Also, the Socialist Union, with its functional mass façade, is “the very emblem of Nasser’s nascent socialism,”<sup>162</sup> signals the Soviet alliance and his central authority. Many other structures materialized this approach of modern functionalism, such as the two 22 storey modernist skyscrapers by Naum Shebib, on Saha Street in downtown Cairo (1954) and Sabet Sabet or Belmont Building.<sup>163</sup> More importantly, according to Baker, *Al-Ahram’s* editor-in-chief,

<sup>160</sup>Raafat, Cairo. *The Glory Years*,10.

<sup>161</sup> Volait, “The Age of Transition,” ed. André Raymond, 441.

<sup>162</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 231. This building in Mubarak’s era accommodated the National Party, the single ruling party since 1978 in Sadat’s and Mubarak’s eras. The building was burned on the ‘Friday of Anger’ 28/01/ 2011, the third day in the revolution that ousted Mubarak regime.

<sup>163</sup>Naum Shebib webpage [http://naoumshebib.com/pages\\_en/gratte\\_ciel\\_1\\_en.html](http://naoumshebib.com/pages_en/gratte_ciel_1_en.html),(accessed on 12/07/2012).

Nasser's potent spokesman, Muhammad Hassanien Haikal, asserted that Al-Ahram "would be one of the clusters of 'islands of excellence,' along with the public sector, the Suez Canal Authority, and the High Dam, that would serve as signposts of Egypt's future."<sup>164</sup>



**Figure 21. Modernist Buildings in Nasser's Era.**

However, many modernist buildings announced the identity of the new era, whilst maintaining national references, echoing Said's assertion that independence forges "new and imaginative reconceptions of society and culture."<sup>165</sup> The Hilton is located in Tahrir Square, close to the old British barracks replaced by the Mugammaa',<sup>166</sup> with its pastel-blue and cream façades represented the "modern social practices that it housed," and "monumentalized Egypt's ambition to acquire international political status through modernization."<sup>167</sup> While the façade is unmistakably modernist the interiors with lotus columns and furniture display the local with an orientalist taste. Adopting the rhetoric of orientalism materializes intentions to redefine the 'self' through combining the modernist image with the Pharaonic glory. This further complicates the

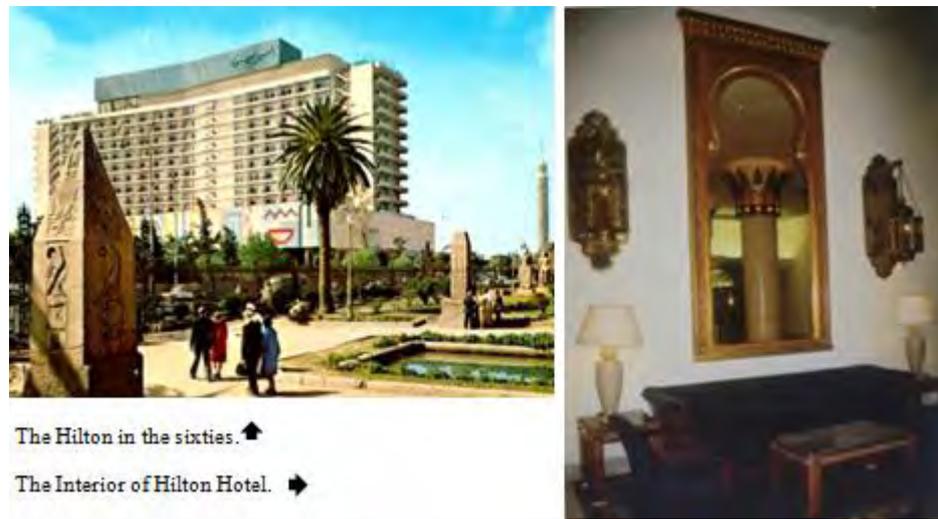
<sup>164</sup> Raymond Baker, *Sadat and After: Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1990), 179.

<sup>165</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 218.

<sup>166</sup> Many historians assign al-Mugamma'a to Nasser for its significant Soviet reference, such as AlSayed in *Cairo* (2011). But many others assign it to King Farouk, such as André Raymond, *The Glory of Cairo* (2002). Also, Roger Owen cited in *Musawer Journal* 1947 which describes the original project of replacing the Barracks with two buildings a municipality and a parliament, Roger Owen "The Metamorphosis of Cairo's Midan al-Tahrir as a Public Space: 1870-1970" *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4: 1/2 (1997/98), according to Fatemah Farag, "A myth dismantled," *al-Ahram weekly* (764) 2005 <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/764/feature.htm>, (accessed 14/07/2012).

<sup>167</sup> Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 46.

material culture of orientalism and reinforces the argument of this thesis that the rhetoric of resistance was always implemented through imperial principles that aim to redraw a monolithic image for the ‘self’.



**Figure 22. The Hilton Hotel.**

This postcolonial rhetoric of resistance becomes more conspicuous in the Cairo Tower [al-Borg] and the Soviet-Egyptian Symbol of friendship. The height of the tower, as one discerning feature, is 187 meters high, which rivalled the height of the Great Pyramid. Designed by Naum Shebib (1961), a concrete mesh opening up into a lotus plant, topped with a rotating restaurant, Nasser used “a three-million-dollar bribe” from the CIA provided by Kermit Roosevelt, therefore, Nasser called it “Roosevelt’s erection,”<sup>168</sup> and the American’s later referred to it as “Nasser’s prick.”<sup>169</sup> Cairo Tower conforms to what Isenstadt described as “traditional forms...reintroduced by modernism itself; the immediately recognizable motifs could appear as proof of their persistence, however denatured.”<sup>170</sup> Also, the monumental friendship symbol, located on the western side of the High-Dam commemorating the Soviet help and cooperation, took from the lotus plant source of aspiration.<sup>171</sup>

The vocabulary of the tower reproduced ancient references into the modern aesthetics that he signalled in the interiors of the Hilton building. Nasser’s supremacy and ambitions for resistance were evident in both the inclusive clone of the vocabulary of standardization and power, and the reproduction of ancient references. In fact, I align with the views that Nasser was largely similar to Muhammad ‘Ali, both yearned for an autonomous modern country, hence, Nasser’s

<sup>168</sup>Matthew Holland, *America and Egypt: From Roosevelt to Eisenhower* (United States: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 60.

<sup>169</sup>Kai Bird, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956 -1978* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 180.

<sup>170</sup>Isenstadt and Rizvi, “Modernism Architecture and the Middle East,” 20.

<sup>171</sup>Jill Kamil, *Aswan and Abu Simbel: History and Guide* (Cairo: AUC Press, 1993), 107.

implication of pan-Arabism and socialism will never be seen “as a manifestation of ideological convictions but rather as a convenient means for achieving modernization.”<sup>172</sup>



**Figure 23. The Cairo Tower and the Symbol of Friendship.**

Weakened by the defeat of 1967, Nasser’s regime no longer had the political or economic, capacity “to expand its role in production and the redistribution of income to the poor...Nasserism as an Arab revolution faded.”<sup>173</sup> Nasser’s rule, with its pronounced resistance that “played the major Cold War powers against each other”<sup>174</sup> ended in 1970 with his death.

#### **4.5.2 Sadat (1970-1981)**

Sadat, one of the Free Officers and Nasser’s vice president, strenuously opposed Nasser’s pan-Arabism and socialist policies by launching the ‘Reformation revolution’ in 1971. For economic reform, Sadat knew that Israel’s existence in Sinai would lead to a possible war and thus encumber investments. Trusting America’s powerful role in solving such a problem, he expelled the Russian military experts, brought by Nasser, and proposed the reopening of the Canal if America would put pressure on Israel to withdraw from Sinai, lost in 1967. The refusal of this proposal prompted Sadat to prepare the 1973 War in which the Egyptian forces achieved partial victory, by crossing the Canal to Sinai and obliterating the Bar-Lev Line. However, the UN ordered a ceasefire and the result was the partial evacuation of Israeli forces. The war, which began in October 1973, was mainly to ensure the Infitah policy,<sup>175</sup> which was in fact a “political rather than economic strategy.”<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Podeh and Winckler, “Introduction: Nasserism as a Form of Poulism,” 3.

<sup>173</sup> Baker, 102.

<sup>174</sup> Gwendolyn Wright, “Global Ambition and Local Knowledge,” eds. Isenstadt and Rizvi, 239.

<sup>175</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, 134-35.

<sup>176</sup> Tarek Osman, *Egypt on the Brink: From Nasser to Mubarak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 117.

After the 1973 war, Sadat aimed not only to establish diplomatic relations with the US, but also to attract multinational corporations to invest in Egypt. Therefore, the Infitah, (in Arabic Opening)<sup>177</sup> policy, which began in 1974, eradicated Nasser's Arabism and socialism and turned Cairo into a capital global city. The area overlooking the Nile began to be studded with hotels, skyscrapers, shopping malls, and fast food franchises. Unfortunately, these plans had no place for the poor, and thus a justified 'cleansing' process for the sake of modernization took place by the expulsion of the low income families of Bulaq and al-Zawiya al-Hamra, to public housing, which was established recently in the vicinity of the city.<sup>178</sup> The ambitions of modernity and the consequent infitah policy resulted in abandoning the poor and the social "solidarity," "a founding principle of the 1952 revolution)."<sup>179</sup>



**Figure 24. Intercontinental Hotel.**

Sadat's dream, in his book *In Search for Identity*, was to enable all Egyptian youths to "get married, own a villa, drive a car, possess a television set and a stove, and eat three meals a day."<sup>180</sup> This dream is an Americanized dream that not only manifests his planned allegiance, opposing Nasser's Soviet alliance, but also heralds his plans to conquer the deserts. Sadat's dreams of American villas resulted in the satellite cities and desert reclamation, the Sixth October and Tenth of Ramadan (both commemorating the victory of 1973), and new highways penetrating the heart of Cairo: "Front-page pictures in the mass dailies showed President Sadat

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<sup>177</sup> The Infitah's formula: "Arab capital + Western technology + abundant Egyptian manpower and other resources = development and progress." (Baker, 1990), 16. The policy was highly criticised by Mohamed Heikal in his Arabic text the *Autumn Fury: The Rise and Fall of Sadat* (London: 1983).

<sup>178</sup> Farha Ghannam, *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

<sup>179</sup> Osman, *Egypt on the Brink*, 127.

<sup>180</sup> Anwar Sadat, *In Search for Identity* (Cairo, 1978), 12.

standing on a new bridge spanning the Nile ...and driving an American tractor in the greened acres... .”<sup>181</sup>

Eighteen new cities were built by the private sector, while the government only financed low cost housing, which remained unaffordable and abandoned. At the same time, the migration of many Egyptians, including professionals, workers, and peasants to the Gulf countries enabled large numbers to purchase units and land in the big cities. As the scale of urban migration increased, a new fashion of unauthorized housing appeared in the agricultural land, using the soil surface for the brick.<sup>182</sup> This consequently led to increased urbanization, and inflation in the price of housing, land, and commodities “almost quadrupling” in less than ten years.<sup>183</sup> The gap between social enclaves exploded as the largest number of people could not afford housing while many luxurious apartments remained vacant. Sadat’s request for assistance from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), were intended to solve the economic problems. These organizations, in fact, cut down many governmental subsidies, the thing that led to a mass protest in 1977, which ended by force.<sup>184</sup> Hence, people found in the Islamists’ movement an escape from the consumer lifestyle of these movements that had played a supporting role in “redefining what should be valued.”<sup>185</sup>



**Figure 25. Unauthorized Settlement on Agricultural Land.**

Sadat’s Infitah policy did not encourage productive investments, as he had dreamed, as the investors believed that Israel’s existence in Egypt was a threat to their investments. Thus, Sadat found it indispensable to evacuate Israel from Egypt, even if he would travel to Israel. His

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<sup>181</sup>Baker, 15.

<sup>182</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 260.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid, 259.

<sup>184</sup> Rabab El-Mahdi and Philip Marfleet, *Egypt: the Moment of Change* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2009), 3.

<sup>185</sup>Carrie Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (NY: Colombia University Press, 2002), 169-70.

proposal was welcomed by America and Israel and his historic visit led to the Camp David peace accord in 1979. This agreement was, however, a cause of friction between Egypt and the Arab countries who decided to move the Arab League Headquarters from Egypt to Tunisia.

Both Sadat's recognition of the state of Israel and shelving of the Palestinian case, and his 'Openness' policy with its consumerism lifestyle, has led to his assassination on the hands of an extremist group in October 1981 during a celebration of the anniversary of 1973.<sup>186</sup> Sadat's body was "laid to rest under a pyramid, the most recognized symbol of ancient Egypt," which was built as a memorial of the Unknown Soldier for martyrs' in commemoration of the 1973 war.<sup>187</sup> Within this tension between the openness of Egypt and the conservative Islamist movements, the second architectural magazine *'Alam al Bena'a'*, the focus of this thesis, was founded, to resume its publications over twenty years during Mubarak's regime.



**Figure 26. Sadat's Tomb.**

#### **4.5.3 Mubarak (1981-2012)**

When Husni Mubarak rose to power, not only were Sadat's diplomatic relations with the Arab countries disastrous because of the Camp David treaty, but also the country's debt increased and the inflation was unprecedented. It is true to argue that Sadat's Western ambitions have not only blinded him from the chaos in the society, but also from the reality of Egypt being a non-Western country. Once Mubarak rose to power, he took balanced steps to strengthen diplomatic relations with the West, and resume good relations with the Arab countries. In this way, Egypt was allowed to rejoin the Arab League, whose headquarters were transferred back to Cairo in

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<sup>186</sup>Ibid, 163.

<sup>187</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 256.

1990. At the domestic level, he not only promised democratic parties and free press, contrary to his precedents Abdel Nasser and Sadat, but also released political intellectual prisoners.<sup>188</sup>

Unlike Nasser and Sadat, who both had their own independent visions for the country, Mubarak continued Sadat's policy of openness. The soaring foreign debts led to the intervention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) into Egyptian economic policy in 1987. Also, through the signing of the Stabilization and Structural Adjustment agreement with the Fund in 1991, the government's role diminished in many sectors and subsidies were cut.<sup>189</sup> This led to, as the economist Galal Amin described, a "soft state" which is completely concerned with elite's commercial ventures, while neglecting the basic infrastructure of schools, hospitals, and so on.<sup>190</sup> As AlSayyad asserts, the country in Mubarak's era has been returned back to the wealthiest from whom it was taken in Nasser's era.<sup>191</sup> Also, with this soft state no visionary opposition is welcomed, and thus "many of those who assumed prominent positions over the last twenty years had attained a conspicuously lower level of education than those who held the same posts during the 1960s and 1970s."<sup>192</sup> Indeed, one can affirm that, both the softness and the lack of cultured personnel in high positions reflected on the architecture that is governed by investors' preference.

The soft state is materialized in the new phenomenon of gated communities and satellite cities, such Belle Ville, Dreamland, and al-Rihab, through which investors sought a "symbolic transfer of the power to innovate from the state's servants to the elites and entrepreneurs, and from the public to the private domain."<sup>193</sup> This new development typology is certainly what Dennis perceived as these cities have both introduced a new housing typology and added to the radical change in the face of Egyptian architecture. The villas in these communities are not only a visible "importation of a universal model," but also a "visible influence" of "Gulf oil monarchies' taste...grand embellishments of baroque gilding, imposing balconies, and neoclassic colonnades."<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> The freedom of cultural and political practice did not last long, as described in details in Samia Mehrez, *Egypt's Culture Wars: Politics and Practice* (NY: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>189</sup> These loan organizations in order to save the country's expenditures and guarantee future repayment of the loan forced the government to cut its expenditures in public services such as housing, and health. For details, see Galal Amin, *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak* (Cairo: AUC, 2011); and El-Mahdi and Marfleet, *Egypt: The Moment of Change*.

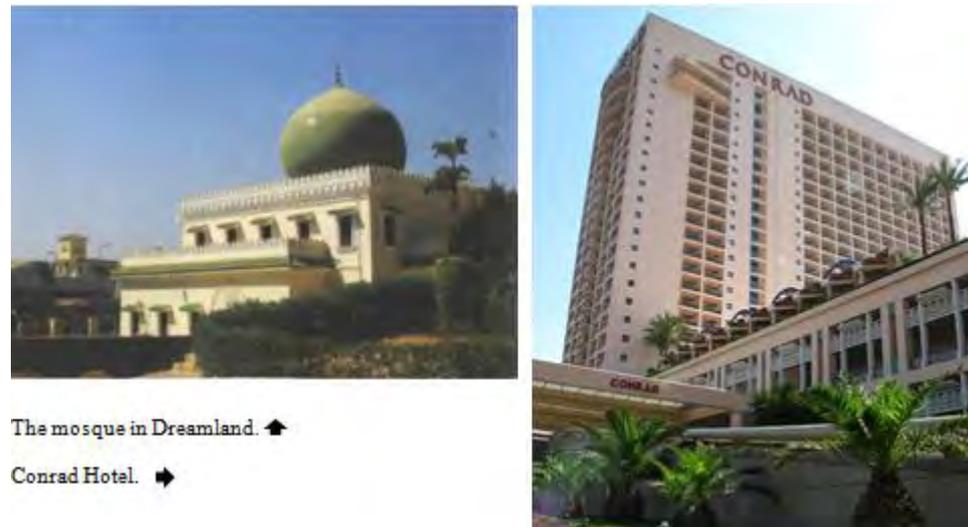
<sup>190</sup> Amin, *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak 1981-2011*, 11.

<sup>191</sup> AlSayad, Cairo, 277.

<sup>192</sup> Amin, *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak*, 17.

<sup>193</sup> Eric Dennis, "Cairo as Neoliberal Capital? From Walled City to Gated Communities," Cairo Cosmopolitanism, eds. Diane Singerman and Paul Amer, 63. Also see Mohamed Elshahed, "Facades of modernity: image, performance, and transformation in the Egyptian metropolis," (Msc. Thesis: MIT 2007). The thesis investigates the shifts in the "image of modernity" in the history of downtown Cairo since the nineteenth-century to the twenty-first century.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 53.



**Figure 27. Design Themes in 1980s and 1990s, Oriental and Modern.**

The new investors adopted, similar to Sadat, an Americanized scheme which dominated many hotels, some attempts were praised by Volait for their high quality designs, such as the World Trade Centre (1988) and the Conrad International Cairo (1999) by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill’s London office with Ali Nour El-Din Nassar. With these joint ventures “Cairo is definitely entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a fast-changing morphology.”<sup>195</sup> This fast-changing morphology is also visible in the phenomenon of shopping malls which continued to spread everywhere to “symbolize the growing alliance between foreign capital, foreign expertise, imports, and Egyptian capitalists.”<sup>196</sup> Nasr City is one of the suburbs, which witnessed an explosion in these centres especially in the 1990s, with the construction of nearly eight malls, such as Tiba Mall (1995), Geneina Mall (1998), and al-Sirag Mall (1999).<sup>197</sup> However, the architecture of these shopping centres is a collective artefacts; while Geneina Mall and Ma’adi Grand Mall, were inspired by the Far Eastern Malls of Singapore and Jakarta, the Wonderland Mall is closer to Hollywood themes.<sup>198</sup>

<sup>195</sup> Mercedes Volait, “Cairo,” *Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Architecture*, ed. Stephen Sennott (NY: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004), 203.

<sup>196</sup> Mona Abaza, “Egyptianizing the American Dream: Nasr City’s Shopping Malls, Public Order, and the Privatized Military,” *Cairo Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, 216.

<sup>197</sup> Abaza, “Egyptianizing the American Dream,” 205.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 208.



**Figure 28. Miscellaneous Vocabulary in the Malls of 1990s.**

Mubarak's era has also followed the path of openness but not only to 'other' cultures but also to the past, whether royal or colonial. This openness, in contrast to Nasser's regime, is materialized in, as Starr pointed out, the reappearance of the statue of Khedive Isma'il, who was removed by the Free Officers in 1952. It was re-installed at the centre of Alexandria in the 1998. The re-installation of the statue, was not to express any sympathies to the royal family but to restore a rich past whether royal or colonial.<sup>199</sup> However, the patriotism and rejection of foreign symbolism came to the fore again, stimulating a debate in the local newspapers, when the Egyptian Greek diaspora and the Greek Patriarchate in Alexandria gave the city a statue of Alexander the Great as a "harbinger of foreign rule."<sup>200</sup> Recycling the past was a main theme in this era "preserving Cairo for tourists,"<sup>201</sup> that is materialized in many rehabilitation projects, the most important of which was the creation of a cultural hub by the development of the former exhibitions' ground at Gezira. The place named the 'Project of Gezira Museum and the Museum of Egyptian Civilization' included many buildings that were restored such as the National Sound

<sup>199</sup> Starr, *Remembering Cosmopolitan Egypt*, 33.

<sup>200</sup> Shwikar 'Alī, "'Azmaḥ Hawl Temthaal al-Iskandryah," [Problems in the Statue of the Alexander in Alexandria] *Al-Ahram* (41430): 2000, URL <http://www.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2000/5/12/INVE3.HTM>, (accessed 08/05/2012). Cited in Starr, 34. For supportive opinions about the installment see articles by 'Abdelm'oti Hegazi, [Alexander has Rights in Alexandria] *Al-Ahram* (41337) 2000 <http://www.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2000/2/9/WRIT1.HTM>; and [Image of Alexander] *Al-Ahram* (41365): 2000 <http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/2000/3/8/WRIT1.HTM>, (accessed 08/05/2012).

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, 277.

Archives, Modern Art Museum, Gezira Museum, and new buildings were added such as the Opera House (1987-90), the new Nile Gallery (1997-98) by ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim.<sup>202</sup>



**Figure 29. The Complex of the Gezira Museum and Egyptian Civilization.**

In an attempt to disguise the present problems of overpopulation and sprawling capital with insufficient infrastructure, the regime was “escaping the present and consuming the past.”<sup>203</sup> The rhetoric of resistance was materialized in many public projects, such as the Alexandria library, Al-Azhar Park, the Constitutional Court, Sharm al-Sheik international hospital, and the Grand Egyptian Museum.<sup>204</sup> Most of these projects have articulated an adherence to the Pharaonic glory, the issue that was perceived by the critic Tarek Osman as an opposition to the growing Islamist movement in that era.<sup>205</sup> Whilst some of these attempts were exaggerated application of Pharaonic revival that never exceeded a Disney replica such as the constitutional court by Ahmed Mito,<sup>206</sup> others had an enhanced analytical application of heritage such as the Nubian Museum by Mahmud al-Hakim in 1985.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>202</sup>Volait, “The Age of Transition,” ed. André Raymond, 450.

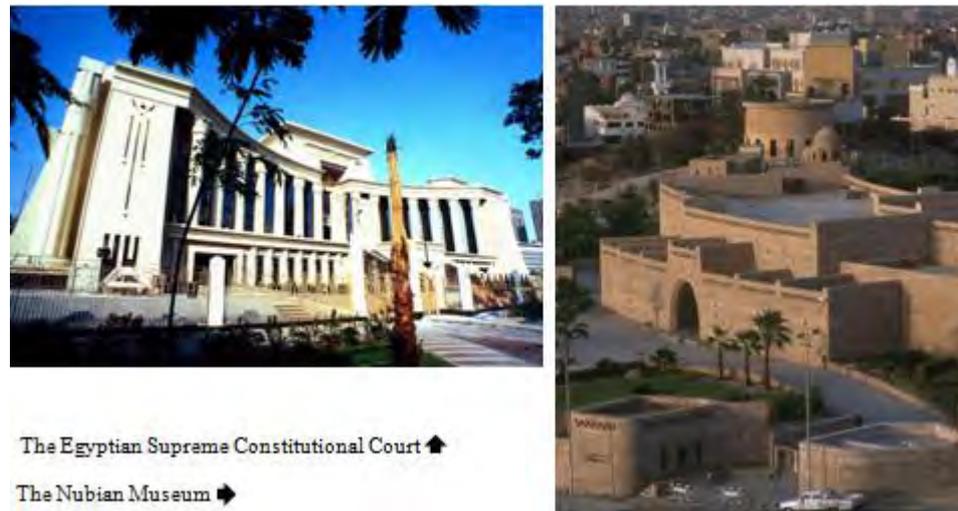
<sup>203</sup>AlSayyad, 255.

<sup>204</sup>According to archnet, the competition was announced in 2002 and the competition was won by the company Heneghan Peng from Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>205</sup>Osman, *Egypt on the Brink*, 138.

<sup>206</sup> The project was criticized by ‘Aly Ra’afat, in an interview Dec 2011, for the direct copying from the history at the end of the twentieth-century.

<sup>207</sup> See Aga Khan report [www.akdn.org/architecture/pdf/1447\\_Egy.pdf](http://www.akdn.org/architecture/pdf/1447_Egy.pdf), (accessed 04/07/2012).



**Figure 30. The Rhetoric of Resistance.**

Mubarak's demise in 2011, as a result of the public protest, is evidence of the oppression suffered from this soft state and the Americanized elite ventures. Mubarak's end, materializes the complexity that characterises the last third of the twentieth-century. The continuity of foreign debt, as the window through which the United State's hegemony finds its way, reflects the continuity of the colonial past in different forms, as Said addressed. This continuity animates the discursivity of "all sorts of discussions –about influence"<sup>208</sup> and resistance.

Given this discursivity, AlSayyad interestingly reflects on the capital's name, Cairo which in Arabic means both the 'Victorious', and 'the Oppressor.' This "name with a loaded double meaning," reflects that what became victorious is not the city or its people "but rather the forces of capital that seem to exist outside Egypt altogether."<sup>209</sup> To this end, this discursivity of 'influence' and 'resistance' throughout the country's history will be traced in the spaces of both local and western discourses by highlighting the 'structure of attitude and reference,' which is formed through the participants' colonialist allusions to reconstruct a legitimized identity.

<sup>208</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 3.

<sup>209</sup>AlSayyad, 277.

## 5 Western Territory: Deconstructing Boundaries

## 5.1 Introduction

After the previous survey of encounters with influence and resistance in historical territory, it is evident that the launch of *'Alam al-Bena'a* (AB) in 1980 coincided with the fore of capitalist 'influence' and the upheaval of Islamist 'resistance.' Since influence and resistance have been rooted within the history of this country, the quest to understand the rationale of the twentieth-century architectural discourse in Egypt requires crossing the national boundaries towards investigating the discourse in the western territory. Further encounters with influence and resistance will be investigated in this chapter by juxtaposing the local architectural domain with discursive constructions of Egyptian architecture in western texts not to reveal consistencies and contradictions but rather to reveal universal discursivity.

The aim of this juxtaposition, as part of the contrapuntal reading, is to go beyond the individual/local particularity to objectively explore the various interpretations of this local domain and the impact of the colonial history on both local and Western discourses. Crossing geographic boundaries and between discursive spaces will highlight the "particularity of the intellectual" and the "universality of the values," as a key component of contrapuntal reading.<sup>1</sup> The intent is to illuminate whether the rationale of the local discourse—in view of its "autonomous subjects,"<sup>2</sup> events and sentiments—has been shaped by specific socio-cultural encounters, by its authors' attitude of reference, or by shared global conceptions.

The analysis of the array of attitudes about Egyptian architecture represented in a number of international journals which form part of the western canon, a new space of connections, confrontations, and exchanges will chart a "consolidated vision"<sup>3</sup> about the local context and the impact of the colonial history on both local and western canons. Hence, this chapter questions "the western knowledge's categories and assumptions" in terms of its constructed exclusions or cultural assumptions.<sup>4</sup> These assumptions characterize modernity and identity, and form a "system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hussein, *Edward Said*, 308.

<sup>2</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 13.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, 75.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2004), cited in Antony King, *Spaces of Global Cultures* (2004), xiii. His publications include *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Culture, Theory and Race* (Routledge, 1995); and *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Blackwell, 2001).

<sup>5</sup>Ashcroft et al, (1998), 41–2. Cited in King, 49.

The examined western discourse (specifically English language journals are chosen although it is acknowledged that several French language publications discuss Egyptian architecture) coincided with the discourse of (*AB*). While the chapter will consult articles from various international agencies, it pays more attention to the proceedings of the symposia of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and its quarterly publication *Mimar: Architecture on Development*, as the most specialized in the architecture of the Islamic countries, within the period under examination (1980- 2000). The proceedings of the Award cycles were complemented by the inception of *Mimar* (1981-1992) whose contributors and advisory board are major members of the AKAAs committee.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the following analysis will consider both the AKAAs seminars proceedings and *Mimar* simultaneously. The focus on the AKAAs and *Mimar*, in the analysis of the international discourse based on both its coincident inception with the case study *AB*, began in August 1980, and the parallel concern about Islamic architecture and its contemporary conceptualization. The nationality of the authors contributing to the western discourse, whether Egyptian or foreign, is of little significance as it is an investigation of Egyptian architecture as it is represented in the so-called western canon.

## 5.2 The Western Canon

Before examining these texts it is important to set the scene in which the Western canon started to pay more attention to architecture in the developing world. The marginalization of the non-west in the western canon, and its representation as ‘other,’ has been discussed thoroughly by many historians in various disciplines. In architecture, key figures such as, Zeynep Çelik, Gülsüm Nalbantoğlu, and Sibel Bozdoğan. Urbanhistorians include Janet Abu-Lughod and André Raymond.<sup>7</sup> Bozdoğan, for example, addresses the challenges of architectural historiography and affirms the need to challenge the delineation of Eurocentric essentialist categories and urges historians to historically contextualize cross-cultural differences without

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<sup>6</sup> For complete list of the contributors’ biographies see PhD thesis of Katharine Bartsch, *Re-Thinking Islamic Architecture*.

<sup>7</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fair* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney, “Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Univerelles,” *Assemblage*, no.13 (1990), pp.34-59; Gülsüm Nalbantoğlu, “Toward Postcolonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher’s History of Architecture,” *Assemblage* 35 (1998), pp.7-17; and two articles of Sibel Bozdoğan “Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 41, no.4 (Summer 1988), pp.38-45, and “Architectural History in Professional Education: Reflections on Postcolonial Challenges to the Modern Survey,” *Architectural Education* 52, no. 4 (1999), pp. 207-15; Janet Abu-Lughod, “The Islamic City—Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no.2 (1987), pp.155-176; André Raymond, “Islamic City, Arabic City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views,” *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 21, no.1 (1994), pp.3-18.

“neutralizing” them.<sup>8</sup> By opening up this cross-cultural discourse, the modern architecture of the non-west will be recognized in a broader sense as “other modernisms” that “are neither simple extensions of western developments, nor completely independent of them.”<sup>9</sup> This recognition is recently highlighted by Duanfang Lu who raised a question of significance to this thesis: “is it possible to transcend binary oppositions such as modern/traditional and core/periphery while still recognizing the ongoing making of global modernity?”<sup>10</sup>

These cross-cultural approaches emerged in the seventies, a period of socio-economic reformation marked by the demise of modernization and the global recession of 1973-75. These tumultuous events shaped, as Harvey argues, both “the experience of space and time,” as well as “the internalized dialectics of thought and knowledge production.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, a revolutionary discourse questioning Eurocentric “patriarchal forms of knowledge” emerged and “led to counter-hegemonic analytic spaces that have in some cases become institutionalized themselves.”<sup>12</sup> This phenomenon can be identified in the discourse of *AB* in Egypt as well as the contemporary discourse of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture which attracted a global audience in the closing decades of the twentieth-century.

This revolutionary process of de-marginalizing the non-west in the discourse can be assigned to “the cultural power and confidence of Islam,” which Curtis asserts affected the relations between “industrialized and less industrialized nations.”<sup>13</sup> In the mid-1970s, the ‘Islamic revival’ took many forms, including a revolt against western materialism which resulted from the influences of modernization.<sup>14</sup> This consequently led to the “obsession with cultural representation,” a representation which “was ever in danger of ignoring issues of architectural quality and authenticity.”<sup>15</sup>

Hence, a revolutionary discourse emerged which aimed to negotiate both the technocratic ascendancy of modernism and the conservative conventions of Islamist ideologies. This negotiation, in 1976 under the patronage of His Highness Karim Aga Khan, forty ninth hereditary Imam of the Isma‘īlī Muslims, has gained international prominence through a number

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<sup>8</sup>Bozdoğan, “Architectural History in Professional Education,” 214.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Lu, “Introduction: Architecture, Modernity and Identity in the Third World,” 1.

<sup>11</sup>David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 345.

<sup>12</sup>E.Said, “Third World Intellectuals and Metropolitan Culture,” *Raritan* 9 (Winter 1990), 27-50.

<sup>13</sup>William Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1987), 365. Curtis devoted a chapter to “Modern Architecture and Developing Countries Since 1960.” It discussed the challenges of rapid industrialization in the developing countries. Also recent surveys: Francis Ching, Mark Jarzombek and Vikramaditya Parkash, *A Global History of Architecture* (New Jersey: Hoboken, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 365. The emergence of architectural surveys that widened research scope at this time was vital. One of these cultural forums in 1979, was The World of Islam Festival (chapter 7).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, 366.

of economic, social and cultural programs, that provoked shifts in thinking. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA) is one of the initiatives of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture which is a principle cultural agency in the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

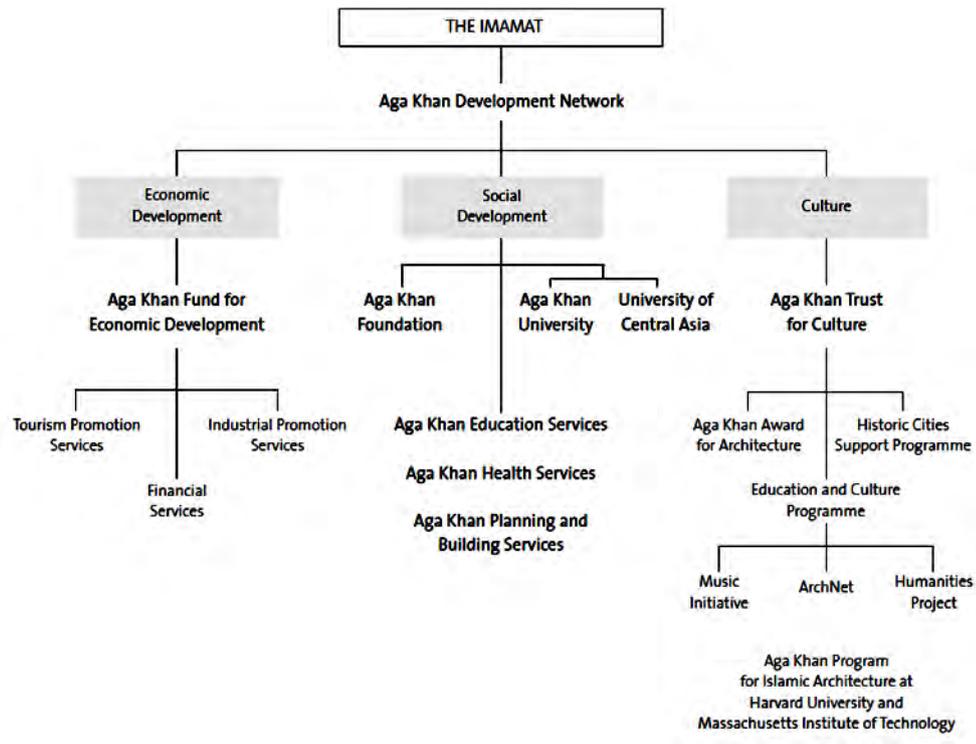
As part of his ambitious campaign to improve the quality of the built environment in Muslim communities, and to generate a global forum of debate on this topic, the Aga Khan explicitly established an affiliation with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University, two of the most prominent academic institutions in the United States. This led to the establishment of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture in 1977 and the foundation of the globally accessible ArchNet in 1998.<sup>16</sup> The Aga Khan's goal was to promote the outreach of the Aga Khan Foundation, and he has subsequently emerged as a guru in the representation of Islamic architecture. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture through a series of publication and symposia, which started in April 1978, claimed concern with "the future physical environment that Muslim should seek for themselves and future generations in their homelands, their institutions, their workplaces, their houses, their gardens and in their surroundings."<sup>17</sup> Despite this powerful intervention of the AKAA initiatives, its agents claimed to create a "space for freedom" that rivals "governments intent on pursuing ideologies that distort the truth by exclusion."<sup>18</sup> Through this discourse and the various activities initiated by the Aga Khan, there is an explicit reference to the forces that operate in every society.

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<sup>16</sup> ArchNet was established as a result of a series of discussions between His Highness the Aga Khan, the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Charles Vest, and the Dean of MIT's School of Architecture and Planning, William Mitchell to extend the efforts of the AKAA. <http://www.akdn.org/publications/archnet.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Aga Khan IV, "Opening Remarks," viii.

<sup>18</sup> Sherban Cantacuzino, ed. *Architecture in Continuity: Building in the Islamic World Today* (New York: Aperture, 1985), 20. This phrase could be traced back to the journalist Maurice Edelman. Edelman quotes Mohammed Arkoun in a discussion about the AKAA: Maurice Edelman, "Espace de la Tolerance," *Le Monde* (Paris) (Sept 10, 1983). (Cantacuzino, 184).



**Figure 31. The Aga Khan Programs in the Islamic Countries.**

However, in the AKAAs discourse, an identifiable contradiction that “belies the Award’s repeated rhetoric of identity” results from the “plural image of architecture and the participation of international scholars, combined with the Aga Khan’s reputation as a European socialite.”<sup>19</sup> The AKAAs emphasis on Islamic identity versus western influences has been viewed as a regeneration of the Orientalist discourse.<sup>20</sup> Hence, it may reinforce the West versus the “Rest”<sup>21</sup> cliché, unless the ‘Rest’ “is also able to represent itself and be understood on its own terms.”<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, in a critique of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Bozdoğan suggested that representing the so-called Third World as a geographical entity simplifies a complex history of colonization and oppression. This is besides the problematic binary between modernity and tradition which “uncritically assumed as monolithic, stereotypical, and painlessly reconcilable,”

<sup>19</sup>Samer Akkach, “Identity in Exile: The Aga Khan’s Search for Excellence in Islamic Architecture,” *On What Ground(S)?*, eds. Sean Pickersgill and Peter Scriver, (paper presented at Adelaide: University of South Australia: SAHANZ, 1997, July 17-20). The notion of hybridity was more overtly highlighted recently in the AKAAs in the writing/contributions of Homi Bhabha, “Architecture and Thought,” *Intervention Architecture: Building for Change* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2007), 9.

<sup>20</sup>Fatima Hijiri, “Reconstructing ‘Self’ and ‘Place’: The Aga Khan for Islamic Architecture,” (paper presented at the Self, Place and Imagination: Cross-Cultural Thinking in Architecture, 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium for CAMEA, Adelaide, 1999).

<sup>21</sup>Term refers to the non-West, used by Stuart Hall’s “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.”

<sup>22</sup>Gregory Caicco, *Architecture, Ethics, and the Personhood of Place*, 222. Caicco states that “‘Rest’ is a term that has been used in postcolonial and cultural studies. It is generally used in relation to the conception of the modern world as the West and its Others, the Rest, and the production of respective cultural identities. Also, see Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power,” *Modernity*, eds. Hall, et al.

and ignores the pluralism of Muslim communities.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, Bartsch asserts that the Award and its contributors continue “to wrestle with the complexities of the Islamic world.”<sup>24</sup> The AKAAs discourse, which differs from prevalent Eurocentric representations of Islamic architecture as ‘other,’ “evolved to articulate a multifaceted production of architecture that transcends previous dichotomies.”<sup>25</sup> Bartsch concisely proceeds to consider the Award in “its very organization and the dissemination of its material” as a “double-edged hegemony” in the sense that it is “neither ‘Islamic’ nor ‘Western’.”<sup>26</sup>

Among other international journals, focusing on the architecture of the Middle East, the British Journal, *Middle East Construction* (1970s) focuses on new developmental projects in the Middle East. Also, *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* (TDSR), a more recent journal founded in 1989, focuses mainly on the vernacular settlements defined by their “shared cultural values,” located primarily in the third world.<sup>27</sup> Significant journals have marginalized the non-west, such as the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (JSAH), although one of the oldest, only in 2000 it has expanded its discourse to include the non-Western domain. According to Crysler, a drastic paradigm shift occurred in this ideology of difference, especially due to the effort of Çelik as an editor. However, a sense of patronisation is evident in bracketing the term “non-West” in Çelik’s articles “New Approaches to the ‘non-Western’ City” and “Expanding Frameworks,” which accentuates the binaries between West and non-West.<sup>28</sup> The first issue undertook this survey emerged in 2002, although outside the period under examination (1980-2000), included four out of five articles examining the significance of imperialism on architecture and historical teaching. Accentuating the separation of the West and non-West and the focus on imperialism, reinforces the argument of this thesis of the continuing influence of imperialism history in the twentieth-century.<sup>29</sup> Given this context, it is the Aga Khan initiatives that place the most emphasis on the architectural debates relating to the context of the Middle East and the Third World. These initiatives include the proceedings of various regional and international symposia, as well as the quarterly magazine *Mimar* (‘Architecture’ in Arabic, 1981-1992).

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<sup>23</sup>Sibel Bozdoğan, “The Aga Khan Award for Architecture: A Philosophy of Reconciliation,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 45, no.3 (1992), 188. And notably overlooks iniquities existing in first world countries whether in Europe, North America or Australia.

<sup>24</sup>Katharine Bartsch, “Re-Thinking Islamic Architecture: A Critique of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture through the Paradigm of Encounter” (PhD dissertation, University of Adelaide, 2005), 126.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, 9.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, 256.

<sup>27</sup>Greig Crysler, *Writing Spaces*, 18. TDSR is one of five journals studied by Crysler.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid, 43.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, 47.

This review, then, will be divided into two interrelated sections: 5.3 The representation of the contemporary context; 5.4 Attitude of reference. The first section reviews the representation of the contemporary architectural status and the socio-economic problems in the Middle East in general and Egypt in particular. The second section reviews two main points: the efforts of the AKAA to institutionalize identity for the Islamic world via its implication of various ideological and theoretical approaches, and the discursivity of the two forces of influence and resistance and their manifestations within the discourse. The focus will be on the representation of the Egyptian context in the aforementioned journals. However, it should be highlighted here, that this section does not aim to analyse the discourse of the AKAA per se. It rather aims to examine the attitude of reference that formed the representation of the Egyptian context in the Aga Khan discourse in comparison with its representation in the local discourse in order to reveal shared or disputed values in both western and non-western discourses, which is critically part of the heterogeneous historical encounters. These shared values, I would argue, relate to the unconscious adoption of the principles of the colonial past with the simultaneous conscious resistance to present western hegemony.

### **5.3 The Representation of the Contemporary Context**

The representation of the contemporary context within the western discourse evolved around highlighting socio-political challenges, within local and global scenes, as well as ideological ruptures caused by these challenges. The representation reflected a shared discontent, between its participants, about the current status of architecture in Egypt and the Islamic countries. This discontent with the contemporary context was highlighted by Hassan Fathy, whose international fame, one argues, was invested by the Aga Khan in order to promote a modern identity of the Islamic world. In a lecture delivered in New Delhi in 1963, Fathy bemoaned that the Egyptian cities are “ugly” and “every attempt to remedy the situation only underlines the ugliness more heavily.”<sup>30</sup> Fathy raised his concern with extinction of the traditional architecture in face of foreign designs in different international occasions: “Modern Arab architecture is passing through a very critical stage of its history in almost all Arab countries. Indeed, we may ask if modern Arab architecture exists at all. Nowadays we can speak only of the Western house in Arab countries.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Cited in Udo Kulterman. *MIMAR*, no.4 (1982), 56.

<sup>31</sup> Hassan Fathy, *The Arab House in the Urban Setting* (Carreras Arab Lecture, London: Longman, 1972), 16. Published in ArchNet [http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document\\_id=12817](http://archnet.org/library/documents/one-document.jsp?document_id=12817), (accessed 08/08/2011)

Fathy's viewpoint is an important prelude to 'Abdelbaki Ibrahim's paper delivered in UIA, Paris 1968, which explicitly stated that there is a "state of architectural chaos" in Egypt. Therefore, he wondered "at what point national, cultural, and social stability is to be established."<sup>32</sup> This same paper was rejected by the staff of 'Ain Shams University (where Ibrahim was employed), who felt dishonoured that Ibrahim had revealed the complexities of dependence (on the West) and the chaos of the architectural profession in Egypt to the world. These complexities were also revealed by Abu Lughod in her influential book *Cairo 1001 Years* (1971), in which she likened the influence of modernity to a sword which split Cairo's structure. Together with the socio-economic deterioration, Abu-Lughod identified the "forces" which led to the stagnation of the historic areas, as well as the "metamorphosis of others into shoddy Western imitations."<sup>33</sup>

This architectural orientation towards the west, identified by Fathy, Ibrahim and others coincided with the social and ideological crisis in architecture due to the "vacuum" caused by the unfulfilled hopes in the Modern Movement.<sup>34</sup> In 1974, Malcolm MacEwen's book entitled *Crisis in Architecture* was "the first in a genre that establishes crisis itself as a subject, setting itself as a subject, setting the terms for future argument."<sup>35</sup> Hence, the crisis as viewed by the post-modernist Charles Jencks, is that the "vacuum surmounts to an original failure, a loss of nerve built on a mistake, leaving the field occupied for the moment by the unscrupulous, the developers."<sup>36</sup> This monopoly of capitalism, which is described by Jencks, was debunked by Harvey, who criticized the "caricaturing" of the modern movement as a whole, as he believes in the effectiveness of modernists to accommodate the capitalist explosions and organize the fast pace of urban life.<sup>37</sup> Echoing the same tone of blame as Jencks, Dennis Sharp, the editor of the British magazine *AAQ: Architectural Association Quarterly*, assigned the crisis of architecture at this time to "the loss of equilibrium and ideas in architecture" which resulted from following "the shadows of the modern movement."<sup>38</sup> However, even if crisis can be "fashionable" they are still threatening. Hence, Sharp called for a collaborative and "synthetic approach," questioning the ability of the "underprivileged" parts of the world to accommodate

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<sup>32</sup> A. Ibrahim, "The Formation of the Architect: with Reference to the Egyptian Architect," Part I, *AB*, no.78 (1978), 54.

<sup>33</sup> Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971).

<sup>34</sup> Charles Jencks, "Modern Architecture Collapses," Book Review: Malcolm MacEwen, *Crisis in Architecture*, *AAQ* 6, no. 2 (1974), 63.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>37</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 115.

<sup>38</sup> Dennis Sharp, *AAQ* 6, no.2 (1974).

the rapid change, is essential.<sup>39</sup> In this way, in the sixties and seventies, the world was divided between two contradictory processes: disbelief in modern materialism and capitalist monopoly; and the need for the ideal of modernity, especially for the growing consumerist communities.

In this period, in all Arab countries, the oil boom<sup>40</sup> enforced the culture of consumerism. In 1979, the editor of *Domus*, Cesare Casati described the explosive context of development as a “gymnasium for the exercise of architectural and entrepreneurial virtuosity.”<sup>41</sup> In Egypt at this time, the Infitah policy, which still stands at the heart of present-day events, urged consumerism that serves as an agent of modernity. One particular project built at this time that attracted the attention of the journal of *Middle East Construction* is Cairo Plaza, a multipurpose complex comprising apartments, offices, shops, restaurants, bars, conference and car parking facilities, emulated western modernism. This 39-storey twin tower, designed by Associated Continental Architects (Gulf) for the MISR Abu Dhabi Property Development Co, was appraised for the technological “momentum,” that would “pierce the Nile-side skyline.”<sup>42</sup> It is worth mentioning here that this same project received outrageous criticism in *AB*. Another Project, As-Salam hospital, is the first phase in the modernization process of Cairo’s Cornish, supported by Sadat and reviewed in the journal of *Middle East Construction* in 1978 as the “most modern” hospital in Egypt. These modernist projects were viewed by the American architect Stanley Abercrombie as a severe but normal evolution in civilization, he states: it is “not just a collision between its civilization and ours, but, even more wrenching and much more important, a collision between its civilization as it has been and its civilization as it is becoming.”<sup>43</sup>

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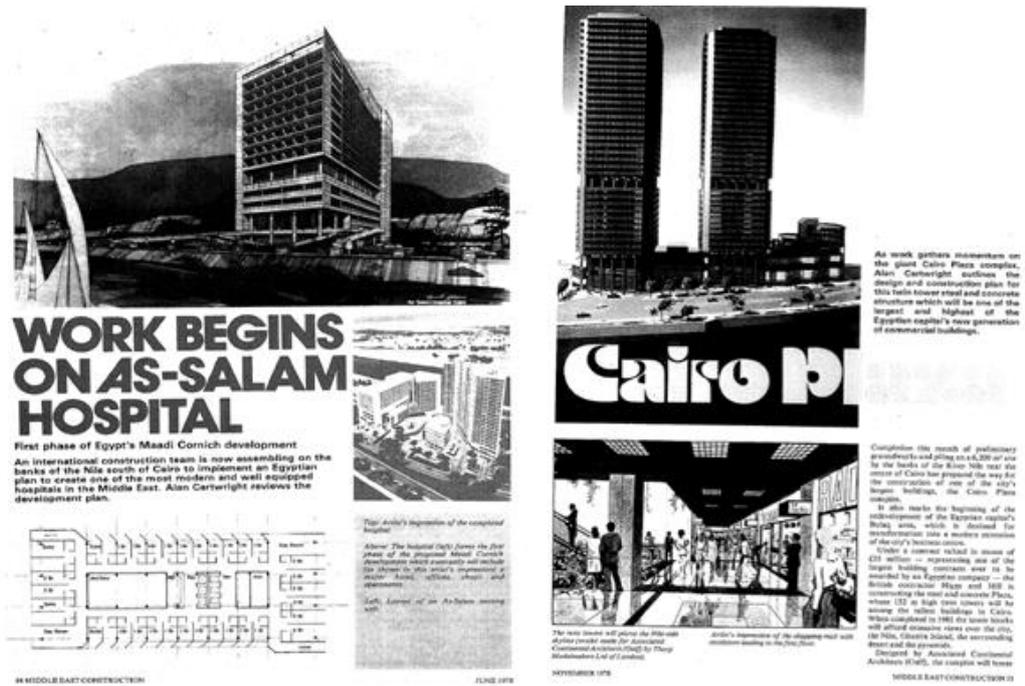
<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>During the oil boom, roughly from 1974 to 1984, oil money in the form of direct transfers between countries, international loans, and workers’ remittances temporarily alleviated local economic conditions. Small oil exporters or states that did not export oil (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and especially Yemen) sent millions of migrant workers. For details about the influence of this boom on Egypt see Gil Feiler, *Economic Relations Between Egypt and the Gulf Oil States, 1967-2000: Petro-Wealth and Patterns of Influence* (London: Sussex University Press, 2003); and for the influence of this boom on the social and Islamic resurgence in the Middle East and Egypt see Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>41</sup>Cesare Casati, “Il Nuovo Eldorado,” *Domus*, no.595(1979).

<sup>42</sup> Alan Cartwright, “Cairo Plaza: A Landmark in Egypt’s Commercial Development, Architects,” *Middle East Construction* 3, no. 11 (1978).

<sup>43</sup>Stanley Abercrombie, “The Middle East: Design, Politics, and Policy,” *Design Environment* 6, no.4 (1978).



**Figure 32. Buildings in 1970s Celebrated in International Journals.**

The style of these celebrated development and investment projects shows that the architecture in Egypt, and in the Islamic world in general, was moving in a vicious circle, which was condemned by several participants in the ACAA debate. Modern architecture was viewed by critics such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in the first ACAA proceedings (1978), as “hideous” or “at best bland” that destroys the “serenity and beauty of the traditional Islamic city” and eventually led to a definite “crisis.”<sup>44</sup> For Nasr, as the external environment reflects the society “as inside, so outside,” these projects reflect “inner chaos” in the “mind and soul” of Muslim societies today.<sup>45</sup> Connecting the built environment’s chaos with the wreckage of the internal mindset of the community aligns with what Fazlur Khan explained as a dangerous “philosophical devastation” caused by a serious desire to progress quickly while ignoring the real spiritual needs of the society.<sup>46</sup> Describing high-rises, “Manhattan sky-like architecture,” as a false “image for progress”<sup>47</sup> that represents a crisis is emphasized by the ACAA participants, such as Zahir-ud Deen Khwaja, Doğan Kuban, Ismail Serageldin, Mohammed Arkoun and many more.<sup>48</sup> The

<sup>44</sup>Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Contemporary Muslim and the Architectural Transformation of the Islamic Urban Environment,” *Toward an Architecture in the Spirit of Islam*, ed. Renata Holod (Philadelphia: ACAA, 1978), 1-18.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Fazlur Khan, “The Islamic Environment: Can the Future Learn from the Past?,” *Toward an Architecture in the Spirit of Islam*, ed. Renata Holod (Philadelphia: ACAA, 1978), 32-38.

<sup>47</sup>Ismail Serageldin, “Architecture and Society,” *Architectural Education in the Islamic World* (Singapore: Concept Media for the ACAA, 1986), 255.

<sup>48</sup> See Zahir-ud Deen Khwaja, “The Spirit of Islamic Architecture,” *Toward an Architecture in the Spirit of Islam*, ed. Renata Holod (Philadelphia: ACAA, 1978); and Doğan Kuban, “Symbolism in Its Regional Contemporary Context,” *Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity*, ed. Jonathan G Katz (Philadelphia: ACAA, 1980), 12-17.

deterioration of the built environment is caused by a rupture and lack of integration between the rapid technological advancement and the traditional environment, of the Islamic countries in general. This rupture, as Arkoun crystallized, as a physical and psychological break with the turath [past] and historical knowledge, is inflicted from outside.<sup>49</sup> He exemplified Gamaliya in Cairo as a traditional place that still attracts people by its rich Islamic symbolism. This symbolism, Arkoun asserted, became vague in the minds of the intellectuals and architects alike that became “ideologically oriented,” as a result of “political, economic, and social problems.”<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, in light of this discontent, concerns about identity, defined by the spatio-temporal delimitation of the socio-cultural context, was at the nexus of the AKA and *Mimar*'s discourse. The AKA Award sought “an architecture that is responsive to contemporary Muslim societies...rather than being locked into a sterile image of a bygone past.”<sup>51</sup> With a focus on Egypt, Kulterman (1982) highlighted the challenges facing architecture and asserted that “there are no easy solutions to this crisis” as architecture does not exist in a vacuum and the abject poverty and chaos have contributed to the loss of identity.<sup>52</sup> In 1984, a regional Aga Khan symposium focused on the expansion of Cairo with a range of topics that covered conservation, colonial architecture, urban and planning problems, and socio-cultural problems. In this cycle, Abdelhalim Abdelhalim, the Egyptian architect and Harvard graduate, philosophically affirms affinity between architecture and society by asserting that Cairo's architecture is the sum of three components “faith, will and imagination.”<sup>53</sup> Echoing Arkoun's idea of rupture, Abdelhalim asserted that the separation between “faith and action, or of culture from production” deteriorated our society's potentialities, and therefore questions relating to “the sentiments, feelings and identity of the city” should be raised.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the sociologist Ibrahim Saad Eldin

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<sup>49</sup>Arkoun, “Muslim Character: The Essential and the Changeable,” *The Expanding Metropolis: Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo*, Seminar 9 Nov 11-15, 1984 (Singapore: AKA, 1985), 233. Arkoun has numerous publications in Arabic and French. Within the Aga Khan proceedings he identified the reasons of the deterioration of the built environment in the postcolonial period in Arkoun, “Architectural Alternatives in Deteriorating Societies,” *Architecture for a Changing World*, ed. James Steele (London: Academy Edition, 1992), 41-9. He traced this rupture to AD 661 by the political triumph of Mu'awiya “when the political power began to use the Authority of God just as an idealized image to be manipulated by the ‘ulama to legitimize the so-called Caliphate,” Arkoun, “Islamic Culture, Modernity and Architecture,” *Architecture Education in the Islamic World*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Singapore: Eurasia Press, 1986), 20.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, 236.

<sup>51</sup>Ismail Serageldin and Said Zulficar, “A Living Legacy,” *Space for Freedom*, ed. Ismail Serageldin (Singapore: AKA, 1989).

<sup>52</sup>Udo Kulterman, *Mimar*, no.4 (1982), 56. For details on Egypt's economic conditions see: M.Gray. “Economic Reform, Privatization and Tourism in Egypt,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no.2 (1998). And for the housing challenges specifically see: Weal Fahmi “Greater Cairo's Housing Crisis: Contested spaces from inner city areas to new communities,” 2008.

<sup>53</sup>Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim, “Transformations in Architecture and Urbanism: Public Projects and Private Initiatives,” *The Expanding Metropolis*, 46.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid, 46.

in 1985 highlighted the impact of unequal social and developmental recourses between traditional and modern parts in the city's physical structure.<sup>55</sup> This social inequality is materialized in the spread of informal settlements in the traditional parts of the city, which was described by the Egyptian architect Barrada in 1986, as "a simple dichotomy: architecture versus no architecture." The "no architecture" category is the result of various factors such as building laws, harsh economy, and most importantly the lack of social awareness with "good or worthless architecture."<sup>56</sup> For Brian Taylor, *Mimar*'s executive editor (1986), this widespread construction practice by non-architects in developing countries both destroys the legitimacy of the profession and propagates ugliness and chaos in the urban landscape.<sup>57</sup> This non-architecture practice heralds a communication failure between architects and society.<sup>58</sup>

In 1986 these challenges motivated the ACAA committee to revitalize the profession and reconstruct a design pedagogy that responds to this context in a seminar entitled "Architectural education in the Islamic world."<sup>59</sup> In this seminar, Suha Özkan noted the problem of dependency on western educational models in modern Islamic countries.<sup>60</sup> In Egypt, Barrada confirmed that there are many other educational problems besides the issues of dependence.<sup>61</sup> He stressed the significance of the admission problem, which is one procedure common to all Egyptian universities whose only criterion is the standard grades of the student with no regard for his/her abilities and aspirations. Therefore, it is not only the issue of dependence, but also a variety of other problems, Barrada concluded, which created a gap between the profession and the socio-cultural context.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibrahim Saad Eldin, "Cairo: A Sociological Profile," *The Expanding Metropolis*. ACAA concern with the societal context was encapsulated in 1983 "Architecture and Community." One of these important articles about espousing social responsibility and aesthetic sensibility simultaneously – as articulated in Charles Correa, "Urban Housing in the Third World: The Role of the Architect." This position was reinforced in the ACAA (1980) by the decision to give the prestigious chairman's award to Hassan Fathy, whose internationally acclaimed "architecture for the poor" struggles to balance appropriateness and resources consciousness with a powerful aesthetic."

<sup>56</sup> Abdel-Mohsen Barrada, "Training Architects: Egypt," *Architectural Education in the Islamic World*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Singapore: ACAA, 1986).

<sup>57</sup> Taylor "Counterpoint," *Mimar* 22 (1986).

<sup>58</sup> Taylor, *Mimar* 26, (1987).

<sup>59</sup> Barrada "Training Architects: Egypt," *Architectural Education in the Islamic World*, ed. Ahmet Evin (Singapore: ACAA, 1986). For architectural education in Egypt see Heba Safey El-deen in *Architectural Education Today: Cross Cultural Perspectives* eds. Ashraf Salama, and Kaj Noschis (2002), in which she introduced "the concept of experiential learning in its broadest sense" and traced teaching styles and experiences in three Egyptian universities. For architectural education in the Arab World; Suha Özkan "Education of Architects in the Middle East," *Open House International* 14, no.2(1989), 9-12; Ashraf Salama, and A. Amir, (2005) "Paradigmatic Trends in Arab Architectural Education: Impacts and Challenges," for UIA Congress, Istanbul, Turkey; *Architectural Education in the Islamic World* (AKTC, 1986); and A.Salama *New Trends in Architectural Education: Designing the Design Studio* (1995).

<sup>60</sup> Suha Özkan, "An Overview of Architectural Education in Islamic Countries," *Architectural Education in the Islamic World* (Singapore: ACAA, 1986).

<sup>61</sup> Such as, the huge student numbers; the different background of the teaching staff of the design studio; and the wide varieties of topics that are being taught to the undergraduate students, Barrada "Training Architects: Egypt."

*Mimar*'s inclusive discourse was concerned with the reasons for the separation of the profession from the socio-cultural context. In 1990, *Mimar* launched a new debate urging architects to participate in the "new orders" that are rapidly changing the global socio-cultural, political, and economic levels, and resulted in "misplaced values"<sup>62</sup> and the "creed of greed,"<sup>63</sup> the principles governing society's priorities, and consequently its architecture. These changing values affect the developed and third world countries equally. In London, for example, Hackney bemoaned the deteriorated architecture of the eighties as a result of the developers' greediness: "they have not been keen to build ten charming homes with gardens and a carefully landscaped setting on a plot of land where it is possible to make more money from a concentration of 50 considerably smaller apartments."<sup>64</sup> This notion of greed was identified by Zygmunt Bauman, as a major output of globalization which created "progressive spatial segregation, separation, and exclusion," and overlooked the dehumanizing effect.<sup>65</sup> As the principles governing the world became exclusively commercial, the religious buildings which used to be the most influential edifices in the past centuries became marginalized compared to the hotels or shopping malls that attract business and tourism.<sup>66</sup> *Mimar* has pioneered debate about this rapid change in the world's values and the emergence of the 'new order' that has not been yet thoroughly expressed in the architectural discourse, which continues to conventionally discuss design practices.<sup>67</sup>

Such inability of the profession to cope with this 'new order' resulted in its increased marginalization—an issue that was discussed in *Mimar*'s discourse in its last issue (June 1992).<sup>68</sup> This issue highlighted the major players dominating the scenarios of the built environment of third world countries: government developmental policies (under the pressure of IMF and aid); tourism; investors; and the declining world economy. This is consistent with Giddens's analysis of the interrelated institutions associated with and formed by the rise of modernity in his book *Consequences of Modernity* (1991). Giddens charts four basic interrelated institutional dimensions of modernity: Capitalism, Industrialism, Military Power, and Surveillance.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>*Mimar* 34,(1990). See C.S. Jimmy Lim, "Misplaced Values," *Mimar*, no.36, (1990). According to *Mimar* the first international forum which distinctively provoked a discussion of the 'New Order' was the triennial congress of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in Montreal in May.

<sup>63</sup>Rod Hackney, "Modernism Is Dead," *Ekistics*, no.346/347 (1991), 111.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid*, 111.

<sup>65</sup>Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1998),3. Opposing the media's illusion which has often focused on the positive aspects of globalization, Bauman, from a social and cultural perspective, pinpointed the smell of "greed" and self-promotion covered by the illusion of modernization. This illusion promoted by political and economic globalization overlooked the demonic result of such a process on individual lives, which leaves the post-modern person struggling to differentiate wants and needs.

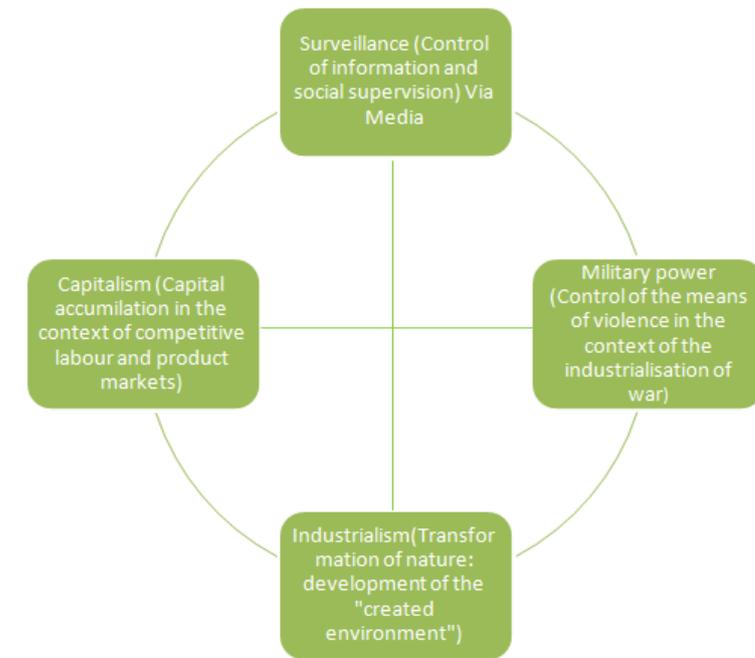
<sup>66</sup>Lim, "Misplaced Values."

<sup>67</sup>Hasan-Uddin Khan, "Editor's Note," *Mimar*, no.42 (1992), 7.

<sup>68</sup>*Mimar* 43(1992).

<sup>69</sup>Giddens, 58.

Similarly, in Egypt 1990, the economic boom reinforced neoliberalism that created many new spaces and new architectures manifesting a fractured society. These new spaces are the result of a coalition of political powers, capitalism and privatization, and the control of social interests, and this led to the divorce between both the professions' aesthetical and philosophical values and the society's needs.<sup>70</sup>



**Figure 33. The Institutional Dimensions of Modernity.**

The fractured relationship between architecture and society, in the case of world<sup>71</sup> architecture in general and Egypt in particular, was at the centre of the discourse in the nineties and was critically addressed, as a negative aspect of capitalism. In Egypt, the persuasion of society to believe in the “unilateral pressure or fear of not lining up with the advanced industrial nations” led to “the loss of established cultural values, including those of the built environment.”<sup>72</sup> Egypt’s participation in the “global race for investment and profit” provoked not only “spatially but also conceptually” separated spaces as an atmosphere of competition, the proliferation of tourism and entertainment sites.<sup>73</sup> This spatial separation is evident in the division

<sup>70</sup>Khaled Adham, “Globalization, Neoliberalism, and New Spaces of Capital in Cairo,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* xvii, no. 1 (2005), 19.

<sup>71</sup>The British architect Maxwell Hutchinson (1989), according to Hackney (1991), stresses that architects “achieve nothing of worth if the perception of our achievement is worthless. We fail in our duty to society if (for its part) society does not encourage and insist on the very best from us.” Hackney, “Modernism is Dead,” *Ekistics*, no. 346/347 (1991), 111.

<sup>72</sup>Florian Steinberg, “Architecture and Townscape in Today's Cairo: The Relevance of Tradition,” *Ekistics*, no. 346/347 (1991), 75.

<sup>73</sup> Petra Kuppinger, “Globalization and Exterritoriality in Cairo,” *The Geographical Review* 95, no. 3 (July 2005). The spatial and conceptual separation was also discussed in the AKA seminar nine in Cairo by SaadEldin Ibrahim, “Cairo: A Sociological Profile,” *The Expanding Metropolis: Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo*, ed. Ahmed

of the contemporary city into “three segregated cities,” as architect Malik identified: the inherited city which is “dilapidated, unkempt and disowned, but still a repository of knowledge and resonance”; the modern city which is a “meaningless construct of costly images”; and the vast slum, which is “made up of urban poor and rural migrants without help, skills or resources.”<sup>74</sup> In fact, the replacement of the image of the inherited city by the western images in the modern city and the deterioration of the city’s overall structure cannot be assigned only to architecture but more to:

complex questions about the nature of politics, about social and civic institutions, about the distribution of power, wealth and influence in society, and about those forces—local and global—which control what is and is not built and provided in the city.<sup>75</sup>

The relations connecting the third world countries with the whole globe and its associated power and inequality have produced a “cultural crisis,” as Khaled Asfour asserted, by copying and endless acts of insensitive “borrowing” from the past and from other cultures, which manifests a lack of critical inquiry.<sup>76</sup> This cultural crisis has generated an architectural crisis on the physical level, which is reflected in the loss of “imageability, legibility, and identity” in two decades of the seventies and eighties, due to the emulation of international postmodernism, instead of offering “a critical vision of previous local architectural thoughts (modernism).”<sup>77</sup> Although Salama, points to the existence of considerable experiences, he affirms that architecture in Egypt is “a continuation of the Westernization process” without consideration of the needs and desires of the users.<sup>78</sup> However, the eminent critics Edward Said and Mohamed Al-Jabri consider this borrowing as a “historic transfer of ideas from one setting to another” that has “the right to be judged on their own merit.”<sup>79</sup> This is so because in the course of this process of transferring ideas, there is a spontaneous interaction with different conditions, this interaction results in a particular reading and “self-sustainable” results.<sup>80</sup>

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Evin (Singapore: Concept Media, 1985). He asserted that this spatial separation was reinforced since the seventies and materialized in the rise in the number of newly established night-clubs, which was double the number of the previous twenty years.

<sup>74</sup> Ayyub Malik, “After Modernity: Contemporary Non-Western Cities and Architecture,” *Futures* 33(2001), 875.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 877.

<sup>76</sup> Asfour, “Cultural Crisis,” *Architectural Review*, no.1213 (1998).

<sup>77</sup> Salama, “Contemporary Egyptian Architecture in the Nineties,” *Architecture Re-Introduced: New Projects in Societies in Change*, ed. Jamal Abed (Geneva, Switzerland: The AKAA, 2004).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Asfour, 543.

<sup>80</sup> Mohamed Al-Jabri, “Ishkaliyat al-Asala wal-Mu‘asara fi al-Afekar al-‘Arabi al-Hadilh wal-Mu‘asir: Sera‘a TabaqiAm Mushkil Thaqafi?” (The dilemma of Tradition and Contemporaneity in Modern Arab Thought: Class Struggle or Cultural Problem?) *Al-Turath wa Tahadyat al-‘Asr: al-‘Asala wa al-Mu‘asarah (Tradition and Today’s Challenges: Authenticity and Contemporaneity.)* ed. al-Sayyid Yasin (Beirut, 1985), 51-52; and Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 239. Cited in Asfour, 543.

Similarly, with a glimmer of hope, Hasan-Uddin Khan in 1991 generally asserts that the architects of the third world today introduce new approaches that, if seen outside the binary of West versus East, present subtle solutions that is “relevant to decision-making process” in the built environment.<sup>81</sup> More specifically, Sorkin, in *Architectural Record*, outside the discursive space of the ACAA, asserted that Cairo “has embraced with great success a series of paradigms of modernity that might help guide its future.”<sup>82</sup> This repeats the nineteenth-century Egyptian experience that, as the historian Behrens-Abuseif concluded in her analysis of the European impact on the Egyptian architecture and the Muslim world, resulted in architecture that evolved from a decision-making process. The process was not a mere amalgamation of “ideological considerations,” but rather was based on particular motivations.<sup>83</sup> Since these motivations were desires to progress or for independence, they ultimately led to the embodiment of tensions between the forces of influence and resistance in the physical context.

The tension between the two forces of influence and resistance and its concomitant rupture in the contemporary context was materialized in the representation of the contemporary context within the western discourse. The representation of the rupture between society’s needs and aspirations, on the one hand, and the cultural values and economic investments, on the other, while it theoretically transcends the fallacies of Orientalism knowledge, it legitimizes the need for institutionalizing ‘an identity.’ This institutionalization is part of the attitude and reference to the colonial history as embedded in the local and western discourses. The contrapuntal crossing between the inscribed national boundaries and investigating this international canon with its insistence on posing an identity reveals limitation in the interpretation of Egypt’s image.

## 5.4 Attitude of Reference

### 5.4.1 Institutionalizing ‘Identity’

In this context, debates about identity were prominent in the early cycles of the ACAA and the associated publications which unintentionally served as an apparatus to institutionalize an identity for the architecture of the Islamic world. Although the ACAA endeavoured both to neutralize the boundaries between tradition and modernity, past and present, and to open up an ambitious ‘space for freedom,’ positing the identity question at its centre, one contends, still materializes the pitfall of this unconscious institutionalization. It should be noted that the

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<sup>81</sup> *Mimar*, no.43 (1992), 5.

<sup>82</sup> Michael Sorkin, “Deciphering Greater Cairo,” *Architectural Record* 189, no. 4 (2001).

<sup>83</sup> Doris Behrens-Abuseif, “Architectural Style and Identity in Egypt,” *Material Identities*, ed. Joanna Sofaer (Malden, MA Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 67-81.

AKAA's attempts in inscribing an identity to the so-called Third World has extended beyond its discourse space to finance conservation and rehabilitation programs,<sup>84</sup> which are besides its award, one claims to be, an integral pragmatic constituent in the institutionalization of 'identity.'

The identity debate in the first AKAA cycle revolved around the issue of spirituality and can be first identified in the essay by architect Fazlur Khan who asserted the importance of looking at the "spirit of the past" to create the "future of Islamic architecture."<sup>85</sup> Khan asserted that the "quality of space and the spirituality of the volume must be created by understanding the meaning of these values" while taking advantage of modern "technology and construction methods."<sup>86</sup> This implies a call for return, which underscores the ability of Islam to embrace modern ways of life, in ways similar to those of 'A.Ibrahim (AB's editor). Spiritualism was also highlighted through debates about symbolism in Islamic architecture. Extending Islamic vocabulary and symbols to modern conceptualization was also shared by Kuban and Grabar.

Grabar asserted that "Muslim tradition identified what is sacred or holy to it in a denoting rather than connoting fashion."<sup>87</sup> However, Grabar highlighted the clear visual symbolism in several instances: in monuments—that lost the "religious connotations" and "depth of meaning" in which they were created—such as the Dome of the Rock, Taj Mahal, the Ka'aba ("uncreated monument"), and Ottoman mosques in Egypt and Algeria (created to strengthen political prestige), and in elements such as the minbar, mihrabs and sanctuaries. While Grabar asserted that the symbolism exist in human "memories and events" rather than in "visually perceptible features,"<sup>88</sup> Ardalan suggested to set a lexicon of forms and elements (mihrab, domes, courtyard, and plinth) used to define Islamic vocabulary.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, Ardalan confines symbolism to generic forms and typology but Grabar deepened its societal and cultural relevance. Echoing Grabar, Kuban affirmed that "cultures operate in ambiguous visual systems,"<sup>90</sup> in which symbols and forms should have been the products of certain material, societal, religious traditions, and most importantly time and individual interpretations. Thus, Kuban concludes that "symbolism is

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<sup>84</sup> The second seminar of AKAA focused mainly on *Conservation as Cultural Survival*.

<sup>85</sup> Fazlur Khan, "The Islamic Environment: Can the Future Learn from the Past?" *Toward an Architecture in the Spirit of Islam*, ed. Renata Holod (Philadelphia: AKAA, 1978).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

<sup>87</sup> Oleg Grabar, "Symbols and Signs," *Architecture and Community*, eds. Holod, Renata and Darl Rastorfer (New York: Aperture, 1983), 28. Grabar based his conviction on the genre of Kitab al-Ziyarat (guidebooks to holy and memorable places), began in the twelfth century.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>89</sup> Nader Ardalan, "On Mosque Architecture," *Architecture and Community*, eds. Holod, Renata and Darl Rastorfer (New York: Aperture, 1983).

<sup>90</sup> Kuban, "Symbolism in its Regional Contemporary Context," *Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity*, ed. Jonathan Katz (Philadelphia: AKAA, 1980), 14.

subject to temporal and spatial delimitation and should be considered only in proper context.”<sup>91</sup> Also, *Mimar* in 1988, themed “Spiritual in Architecture,” extended spirituality as it “does not necessarily, nor even exclusively, involve organized religions, nor the realm of superstition and fantasy. It does not necessarily mean the opposite of rationality.”<sup>92</sup>

The identity issue was also represented in regionalism as well as technology debates. *Mimar* devoted an issue in 1986 for regionalism entitled “Questions of Regionalism and Architectural Identity.” In this issue, Hassan-Uddin Khan stressed “the idea of architecture as an enabler” to establish connections between technology and culture in order to secure authentic identity which already exists.<sup>93</sup> This search for identity was also criticized by the architect Yuswadi Saliya for its mere focus on “continuity and discontinuity,” as she emphasizes that “styles cannot be planned beforehand. They are something reserved, by nature, to human unpredictability.”<sup>94</sup> This recognition of plurality and the heterogeneity of identity were also asserted by William Curtis’ recognition of the plurality of regionalism in today’s architecture. Curtis calls for an authentic regionalism that not only stands against the cliché of cultural designs, whether nationalist or Pan-Islamist, but also sustains “spiritual forces and refuses to accept that tradition is a fixed set of devices and images.”<sup>95</sup> Therefore, he affirms that architects today need “to find the right balance between local, national and international” so as to achieve “a non arbitrary architecture.”<sup>96</sup> Preventing such arbitrariness, a balanced architecture, according to the Argentinian architect Miguel A. Roca, “that captures... a transhistorical future,” is indispensable.<sup>97</sup>

In general, issues of spirituality, regionalism, and identity were perceived by Arkoun, in 1998, as “unthinkable questions.”<sup>98</sup> He urged the need to get rid of any “tendencies” for the “routinization” of “the thinking process,” which are represented in “romantic, nostalgic, fundamentalist references to ‘the spirit of Islam’, ‘Islamic identity’ and ‘Islamic spirituality’.”<sup>99</sup> Therefore, although the identity dilemma has been sensitively represented in the discourse of AKA and *Mimar* and the variety of participants’ backgrounds enriched this debate, the non-architectural views were not incorporated in the process of re-thinking Islamic architecture, as

<sup>91</sup>Ibid,17.

<sup>92</sup>Brian Taylor, “Counterpoint,” *Mimar*, no.27(1988), 10.

<sup>93</sup>Hasan-Uddin Khan, “Editor’s Note,” *Mimar*, no.19(1986), 5.

<sup>94</sup>Yuswadi Saliya, “Notes on Architectural Identity in the Cultural Context,” *Mimar*, no.19(1986).

<sup>95</sup>William Curtis, “Towards an Authentic Regionalism,” *Mimar*, no.19(1986), 24.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid,26. In Dalibore Vesely “Architecture and the Conflict of Representation,” *AA Files* (January 1985), 21-38, Vesely refused arbitrariness as “style... must possess at least some of the powers which tradition once had,” 32.

<sup>97</sup>Cantacuzino, ed. *Architecture in Continuity*. In this volume Arkoun stressed that regionalism is the only way out of the nationalism trap and “spiritualist illusions,”16.

<sup>98</sup> Arkoun, “The Aga Khan Award as a Process of thinking,” *Legacies for the Future: Contemporary Architecture in Islamic Societies*, ed. Cynthia Davidson(London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 156.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid, 156.

Arkoun bemoaned. However, the notion on authenticity and cultural specificity was reiterated by Frampton's introduction to the 2001 prize-winners.<sup>100</sup> It was also emphasized by defining "authentic architecture" as the "appropriate architecture for a specific place linked to clear perceptions of independent cultural identity in the Muslim world."<sup>101</sup>

In addition, viewing Islamic architecture from the cultural perspective was criticized by Akkach as "western anthropological notion" that is imposed on the Arab context, and this limits the AKAAs debate.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the limitation in the AKAAs is also highlighted by Bozdoğan who asserted that the AKAAs overlooked both the diversity of the so-called Third World and its complex cultural politics.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, one contends that the emphasis on culture is part and parcel of the institutionalization of the identity of Islamic countries. Although the overall debate reconciles pluralism,<sup>104</sup> it is reconciled under the monolithic banner of Islam that establishes an opposition between both Islam and the west—which again materializes the resistance notion, as Bozdoğan highlighted. In this way, as a 'double-edge hegemonic' institution that "continues to evolve," as Bartcsch articulated, within a heterogeneous Islamic world and plural identities, the Aga Khan's debate, one argues, discursively interplays a conscious resistance and an unconscious influence with imperial history in reiterating its cultural institutionalization.

The unconscious institutionalization is materialized in the ongoing projects' review in *Mimar* convey a specific vocabulary and reconstruct a set of criteria for Islamic design that need to be followed in the Islamic countries. Focusing on Egypt, *Mimar* has published profiles of Egyptian architects whose work introduced subtle cultural reconfigurations that reconcile modern rigidity with social "spiritualization," particularly Hassan Fathy,<sup>105</sup> 'Abdel Wahid El-Wakil,<sup>106</sup> and Ramses Wissa Wassef – all of whom were recipients of the AKAAs. Wassef, in particular, in 1989 was awarded the AKAAs for his art centre, which started with a house and workshop as a nucleus, and was praised as an architectural masterpiece that serves as social infrastructure – has been criticized in *AB*.

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<sup>100</sup>Kenneth Frampton, "Modernization and Local Culture," *Modernity and Community: Architecture and the Islamic World*, ed. Kenneth Frampton, Charles Correa, and David Robson (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

<sup>101</sup>Aga Khan IV, "Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2001: Interview with Aga Khan IV," by Robert Ivy, *Architectural Record* 190, no. 2 (2002), 68.

<sup>102</sup> Akkach, "On What Grounds?," 5.

<sup>103</sup>Sibel Bozdoğan, "The Aga Khan Award for Architecture."

<sup>104</sup>See Michael Sorkin, "The Aga Khan Balancing Act: The Latest Set of Aga Khan Award Winners," *Architectural Record* 178, no. 4 (1990), 57-61.

<sup>105</sup>Guillermo Maluenda and Felipe Pich-Aguilera, "Hassan Fathy: Beyond the Nile," *Mimar*, no.33 (1989). The Prince of Wales in his provocatively conservative book on architecture, *A Vision of Britain* (London: Doubleday, 1989), referred to Hassan Fathy and El-Wakil to support his views of classical architecture.

<sup>106</sup>*Mimar*, no.16(1985).

One of the projects reviewed in *Mimar* is Bitter Lakes Villa by the architect Mohamed al-Husseiny who managed, as Asfour asserted, to avoid the “reductivist tradition” style which reduces Fathy’s architecture to images. The design of this villa was interpreted as a critical approach that “neither allowed, under the banner ‘Islamic character’, the hegemony of traditional images over contemporary criteria of living, nor overruled the outcome of centuries of experience, for the sake of ‘progress’.”<sup>107</sup> However, this design still within the approach of utilizing history that *Mimar* and AKA celebrate.

Same approach, albeit in a different vocabulary was praise by Asfour in his review of Abdelhalim’s design of Sayyida Zeynab Garden. Asfour perceived the design as a dynamic approach to utilizing history that “defrosted” history from its static condition already used by other architects. Abdelhalim, according to Asfour, “utilized history through conceptual and visual abstraction simultaneously.”<sup>108</sup> In Arab countries, utilizing history takes three approaches, Asfour highlighted. The first approach is confined to the visual vocabulary (such as domes, decorations, etc. as demonstrated in the work of Abdel Wahid El-Wakil’s); the second is confined to functional principles (such as the air circulation through wind catchers, courtyards, etc. as demonstrated in the SOM National commercial Bank of Jeddah); and the third is the absence of historical references neither visually nor conceptually, (such as Rasem Badran’s Queen Aliya Airport Estate).

The selective review process of *Mimar* of the Egyptian architecture also notable in Udo Kulterman’s series articles “Contemporary Arab Architects,” started in the third issue. These articles focused on the approach of utilizing history giving examples of Fathy, Wassef, Kamal alKafrawy (Qatar University), and ‘Abdelbaki Ibrahim (*AB* editor, his design of the CPAS, Chapter 7).

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<sup>107</sup>Khaled Asfour, “Bitter Lakes Villa: A Dialogue with Hassan Fathy,” *Mimar*, no.39 (1991), 54.

<sup>108</sup>Khaled Asfour, “Abdelhalim’s Cairo Garden: An Attempt to defrost History,” *Mimar*, no.36 (1990), 73. However, Besim Hakim criticized “Asfour’s categorization of Abdelhalim’s work as a work that uses history as a design criterion at the image and principle levels in addition to merging “into a ‘living’ process of design philosophy,” *Mimar*, no.38 (1991).

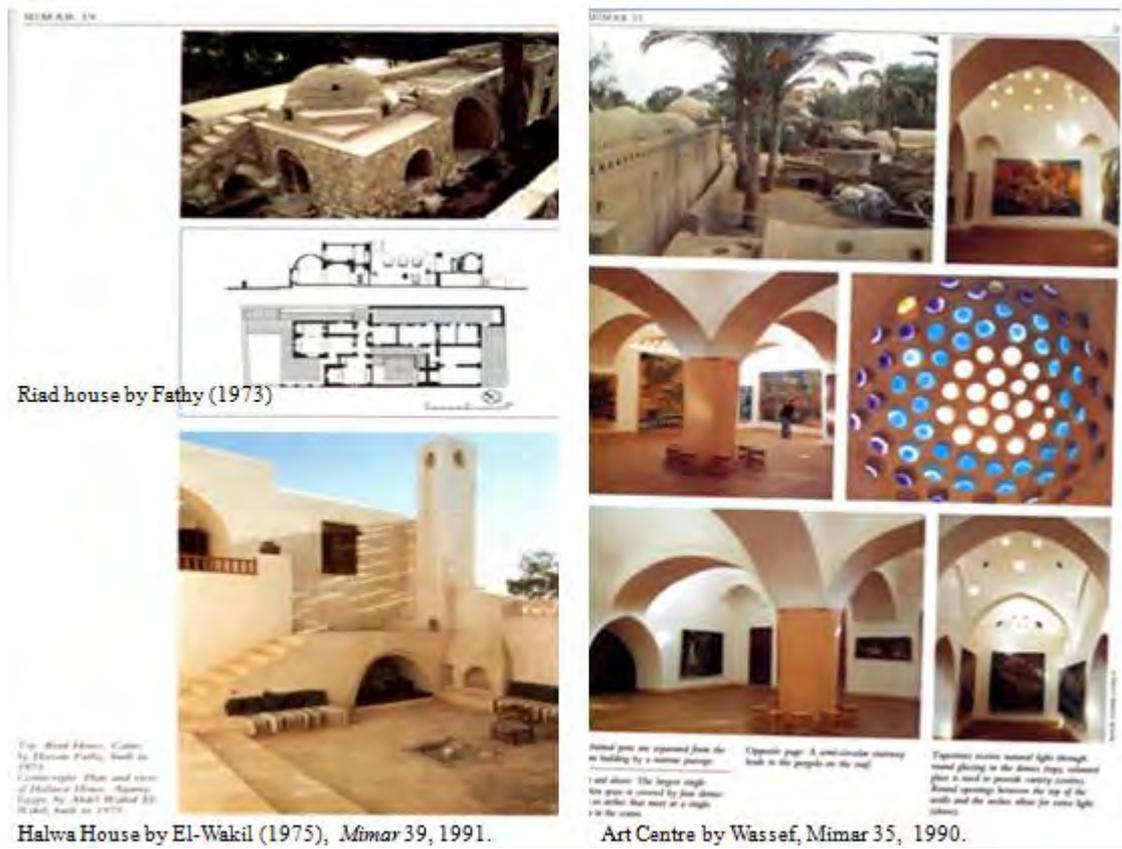


Figure 34. Egyptian Architects' Work Profiled in *Mimar*.



Figure 35. Bitter Lakes Villa in Egypt by Architect al-Husseiny.



**Figure 36. 'Abdelhalim's Design of a Garden in one of Cairo's Historical Districts.**

Although the discourse of *Mimar* and AKAAs has reflected the problems of the urban context in Egypt and elsewhere in the third world, for example, “Rehabilitation of ElSourougeya Quarter, Cairo” by Ayman Hamouda (*Mimar* 16, 1985); “Social Aspects of Urban Housing in Cairo,” by Nawal Hassan (*Mimar* 17, 1985); and the proceeding of the ninth seminar entitled “The Expanding Metropolis: Coping with the Urban Growth of Cairo,” it never opened to the hybrid design trends in Egypt. As highlighted by Caicco, organizations such as Docomomo International and mAAN (modern Asian Architecture Network,) “would offer AKDN a way to expand its current dialogue on modernism.”<sup>109</sup> While the AKA strove to resist dominant global forces and to express the pluralism of the Islamic world, it was trapped in the essentialism of the cultural perceptions of specific region. Using the banner of Islamic architecture has limited the criteria of good (to be published) design to a set of vocabulary (courtyards, wind catchers, mashrabiyas, and arches).<sup>110</sup> This banner reduced the Egyptian identity which is, more plural than any other Islamic country, aligning with Milad Hanna, based on seven pillars—the Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, Arab, Mediterranean, and African.<sup>111</sup> This “homogenizing view of Egyptian architecture” was the “same reason that contributed to the failure of Fathy’s new Gournah,”<sup>112</sup> who was a member of *Mimar*’s advisory board in the first year.

<sup>109</sup> Gregory Caicco, *Architecture, Ethics, and the Personhood of Place* (United States: University Press of New England, 2007), 222.

<sup>110</sup> Although the archives of the AKAAs are full of contemporary designs, the projects circulated in *Mimar* were limited to the above-mentioned designs.

<sup>111</sup> Milad Hanah, *The Seven Pillars of Egyptian Identity* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1st ed. 1989, 5th ed. Nahdet Misr, 1999).

<sup>112</sup> Panayioti Pyla, “Hassan Fathy revisited: Postwar Discourses on Science, Development, and Vernacular Architecture,” *Journal of Architecture Education* 60, no. 3(2007), 28.  
URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.108/13602360903357120>, (accessed 09/07/2010).

The discursivity of the discourse and the institutionalization process is reinforced with the call for formulating a new vocabulary of “cultural expression” that should move away from the western categorizations such as ‘regional’ and ‘authentic.’<sup>113</sup> This call of formulating a ‘cultural expression’ materializes the unconsciousness of the process of institutionalization that dominated the discourse of the AKAAs and *Mimar*, likewise *AB* (chapter 8). One concludes that institutionalizing the cultural perceptions is the cornerstone of shared values between western and non-western discourses. This institutionalization of cultural perceptions, I argue, basically stems from the unconscious influence of the colonial past which is accompanied with conscious resistance to that past.

#### 5.4.2 Influence and Resistance

This section highlights then the discursive interplay of the two forces of influence and resistance within the western-based discourse of AKAAs and *Mimar*. The continuity of these two forces in shaping the attitude and reference of the discourse to the colonial past, as Said highlighted, within western and local discourses, as we shall see, justifies the process of institutionalization and asserts the continuity of this colonial history.

At the first AKAAs seminar in 1978, His Highness Aga Khan IV materialized resistance by highlighting that: most of the Muslim nations “have emerged from a colonial era and are searching for an identity of their own,” an identity “against historical movement and contamination.”<sup>114</sup> In the same seminar, the forces of influence were, unsurprisingly, condemned by Fazlur Khan who highlighted the deceptive sway of modern technology that “is almost impossible to resist” its “temptation.”<sup>115</sup> He stressed that it is not only the attractive force of modern technology but also the “sheer force” of “the political and economic superiority of an alien world.”<sup>116</sup> Also, Arkoun highlighted that through the mass media the imposition and dissemination of alien values in traditional societies finds its channels.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, the society “must be shaken up, given dynamism, reorganized and mobilized for coherent achievement.”<sup>118</sup> This aligns with ‘A. Ibrahim’s (*AB* editor) conviction that the return call, he provokes, is a civilized call that should encompass the whole society.

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<sup>113</sup> *Mimar*, no.41, Call for a new vocabulary similar to *AB*, in its editorial.

<sup>114</sup> Aga Khan IV, “Opening Remarks,” *Toward an Architecture in the Spirit of Islam*, ed. Renata Holod (Philadelphia: Smith-Edwards-Dunlap, Seminar 1, 1978), viii.

<sup>115</sup> Khan, “The Islamic Environment: Can the Future Learn from the Past?” 32.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 32

<sup>117</sup> Arkoun, “Building and Meaning in the Islamic World,” *Mimar*, no.7 (1983).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Notably, these impositions find their way through international aid institutions, as Arkoun, highlighted:

When the World Bank finances a large project, we know that it imposes its own choices, its own programs and methods, and objectives which do not necessarily reflect the expectations of future users. Moreover, the creation of vast complexes unleashes economic rivalries, fixes standards, and provides markets which often benefit foreign interests.<sup>119</sup>

Contributing to a “powerful transformative movement of resistance,”<sup>120</sup> *Mimar* aspired to be, as the executive editor Brian Taylor stated, a “glimmer of hope in the unhappy meeting-ground of traditional cultures of societies on the path of progress, and Western industrialized societies.”<sup>121</sup> Therefore, the main objective of *Mimar* was to reconstruct a new space for “exchanging ideas and images” between industrialized and traditional societies, calling for “a new theory of architecture from within our societies, [and] to create viable directions for culturally rooted building,”<sup>122</sup> similar call was advocated by ‘A.Ibrahim’s in *AB* (no.202, 1998).

Therefore, *Mimar* continued to investigate the aptness “of imported technologies (and know-how) for the architecture of societies which can ill-afford to continue to pay the price economically, and ultimately culturally, of an uncritical bias.”<sup>123</sup> In the Egyptian context, almost all major commissions are handled either by foreign companies or by local firms which follow the foreign lead, which complicate the situation, as Kulterman asserted. The frequent cooperation between foreign and local firms can lead to “gigantic” challenges which might not be recognized as far as “there is no serious discussion of the needs of the society.”<sup>124</sup> The high quality of such foreign-made projects does not allow the country to “build up its own expertise” and consequently “perpetuating foreign presence in major building projects.”<sup>125</sup>

Examples of such foreign commissions are many, however, the AKA awarded ones particularly in Egypt is Biblioteca Alexandria, which raised controversy in the local discourse and *AB*. The project was scheduled to be completed in 1995 and the competition was sponsored by the Egyptian Government with the support of UNESCO and the International Union of Architects. The project was praised in the news of *Mimar* and the international discourse for its

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<sup>119</sup>Ibid, 14.

<sup>120</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 261.

<sup>121</sup>Brian Taylor, “Technology and Image: Architects Roles,” *Mimar*, no.1(1981), 24-25.

<sup>122</sup>Hasan-Uddin Khan, *Mimar*, no.1 (1981), 6.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Udo Kulterman, “Contemporary Arab Architecture: Toward an Islamic Identity,” *Mimar*, no.4 (1982), 56.

<sup>125</sup>Hasan-Uddin Khan, *Mimar*, no.6 (1982). In spite of the editor’s promise of covering the regional designs done by local architects who have a holistic vision of their design and the environment he admits the fact that these projects cannot be ignored because of their effect on developing countries.

“monumental” sun-disk that “appears both to descend below and rise above ground level.”<sup>126</sup> The ground level’s main entry represents the (present) as it “leads into the stepped interior where past, present and future symbolically connect in open space.”<sup>127</sup> The glass roof allows direct contact with the sky and “reinforces the importance of the sun and its associates—with the mind, will, sovereignty, and magnificence—reflecting the spirit and aims of the new library.”<sup>128</sup> It is “a construction of timelessness, enigma, memory, and serenity on the Egyptian shores of the Mediterranean.”<sup>129</sup> It is “a vital architecture for the maintenance of memory, the opening of minds, the struggle for identity, and yearning for place.”<sup>130</sup>

In fact, foreign commissions in Egypt go back to the Nile Hilton Hotel (1957-1959). Although many of them offering, Volait asserted in a later article outside ACAA domain, “good-quality design and fine execution,” for examples: the World Trade Centre (1988) or the Conrad International Cairo (1999) by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill’s London office with ‘Ali Nour El-Din Nassar, they were all absent from *Mimar*’s reviews and indeed the ACAA.<sup>131</sup>



**Figure 37. World Trade Tower, Cairo.**

In the Arab region in general, projects that was praised in *Mimar*, which provoked criticism in *AB*, are SOM’s Hajj Terminal (ACAA in 1983) and Gordon Bunshaft’s National Commercial

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<sup>126</sup>In the news of *Mimar*, no.34 (1990), 9-10.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid, 10.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid,10.

<sup>129</sup>Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture, “Analog Space to Digital Field: Asymptote Seven Projects,”*CoutureSource: Assemblage*, no.21(1993), 32.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid, 32.

<sup>131</sup> Mercedes Volait, “Mediating and Domesticating Modernity in Egypt: Uncovering Some Forgotten Pages,”*International Working-Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement* 35(sept 2006).

Bank.<sup>132</sup> In *Mimar*, the Hajj terminal was perceived as “a building that captures exactly the paradoxes and nuances of twentieth-century airborne travel in search of the essentials of Islam.”<sup>133</sup> In the case of the National Commercial Bank in Jeddah, “the imposing mass evokes ancient forts or bastions but without resorting to bogus historicism,” it “rises like a sentinel out of the flat landscape declaring wealth and self-assurance.”<sup>134</sup>



The Hajj Terminal by SOM (*Mimar* no. 4 and no.40).



National Bank of Jeddah (*Mimar* no. 16).

**Figure 38. Representation of the Megaprojects in the Middle East.**

*Mimar* did not only represent the influence of technology on the Islamic countries but it also devoted its thirteenth issue to the influence of “Colonial Architecture.” The issue studied different countries including Egypt. Voliat and Ilbert highlighted the emergence of Arab,

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<sup>132</sup>This building has not been awarded AKA and thus raised outrage about the AKA bias against Western architects practicing in the East. See “A Lively Debate,” *Space for Freedom*, ed. Ismail Serageldin, (London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989). Louis Khan’s Sher-E-Bangla Nagar (Bangladesh); and Henning Larsen’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Riyadh) are notably absent.

<sup>133</sup>Curtis, “Towards an Authentic Regionalism,” *Mimar*, no.19 (1986), 28.

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid*, 28. For more information about the design of both the Hajj Terminal and the National Bank see C.H.Krinski, *Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore Owings and Merrill* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988). There are many other buildings such as the Riyadh Hilton by Warner, Burns, Toan and Lunde (1976-1978), Hyatt Hotel in Jeddah by SOM and the Hilton Hotel in Jeddah, Sharaco Hotel in Riyadh and the Marriot Hotel in Jeddah, all designed by the German firm of Hentrich and Petschnigg. It is worth mentioning that the Meridien Hotel in Jeddah (1975) is the only major hotel designed by an Arab, the Lebanese Samir Khairallah and Rader Mileto Associates from Rome, *Mimar* 16(1985).

Saracenic, and neo-Moorish styles to accentuate the ongoing search for new architecture. Given the colonial context Volait and Ilbert asserted that:

even if European aesthetes were the first to draw attention to the need to think about a new Egyptian architecture, they corresponded in reality to men like ‘Ali Pasha Mubarak...who tried on their side in Egypt to facilitate efforts toward new urban forms.<sup>135</sup>

Although “the demand for the Arabic style was clearly one of the biggest,” as an expression of the national debate the Westernized villas continued in the architectural scene.<sup>136</sup> The architecture in this period 1920-1930, according to ‘Abdelhalim, embodied a

struggle between the *acquired* which is Western in its origin, secular in its thinking, materialistic in its economy and cumulative in its laws, and the *inherited* [original emphasis] which is Islamic in origin, religious in ideology, social in economy and regenerative in its laws.<sup>137</sup>

The inclusion of only two articles that represented the Arab style of the colonial period, without the inclusion of any other articles that elaborate the Western styles of that period, materializes a discursive structure of attitude and reference that shaped the space of the discourse of AKA and *Mimar*. This discursivity manifested through the articulation of political forces whilst being restricted to the illustration of Arab/Islamic architectural expression—in the articles focusing on Egypt, in particular. This also becomes evident in the historical review “Cairo: A Guide to the City,” (*Mimar* 14, 1984), which started from the seventh century and the Arab arrival.

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<sup>135</sup> Mercedes Voliat, Robert Ilbert, “Neo-Arabic Renaissance Egypt 1870- 1930,” *Mimar*, no.13 (1984), 34.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim, “Transformations in Architecture and Urbanism: Public Projects and Private Initiatives,” *The Expanding Metropolis*, 44.



focus on Muslim communities, and (in the early award cycles in particular and in *Mimar* an overt ‘Islamic’ architecture) ‘tradition,’ as it is materialized in the identified Egyptian projects, an ‘Islamic’ identity was selected. The selective review process has not only eliminated the everyday hybrid design trends and hybrid history (Pharaonic and Coptic heritage, pseudo Arab, modern, or post-modern). However, *Mimar* reasonably acknowledged the *mélange* of styles in the Islamic world in general and perceived it as a decision-making process, a process that resulted in new approaches and “viable” alternatives to Western ones—unlike the local discourse which highlighted a crisis.

Amidst the process of ‘architecture in development’ in the Islamic world and Egypt, the institutionalization of identity through the numerous AKAAs initiatives further complicates the issue of identity, through the juxtaposition of multiple authors’ voices and the recognition of numerous projects. This is so not merely because of the ambiguous connection between architecture and identity, but also because of the plural identity of the Egyptian context *per se*, and identity that is based on seven pillars. Therefore, similar to the local discourse that will be discussed in the following chapters, the AKAAs discourse unconsciously maintains the hegemonic institutionalization of dominant cultural concepts—as in the arches of Abdel Wahid El-Wakil and Ramses Wissa Wassef, or the *mashrabiya* in the Bitter Lakes Villa—as a common practice inherited from the colonial past, with the simultaneous, conscious resistance to dominant ideas.

## **PART III: THE RATIONALE OF THE LOCAL DISCOURSE**

## **6 Harvest of Sixty Years: Local Architectural Discourse**

## 6.1 Introduction: Contrapuntality and the Local Discourse

In attempting to examine the rationale of the local architectural discourse, the thesis traces the full trajectory of this discourse since its inception in 1939 until the end of the twentieth-century, as part of the contrapuntal reading of *AB* (1980-2000). Reading the twentieth-century local discourse before and along with *AB* from 1939 to 2000, not only provides an objective interpretation of twentieth-century Egyptian architecture according to its historical evolution, it also explores the development of the intellectual norm and its “discrepant experiences”<sup>1</sup> through the evolution of the two discursive forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’. Tracing these two forces within the corpus of the twentieth-century architectural discourse will collectively highlight the impact of imperialism as a global process and how it becomes a local intellectual conduit.

Apart from *AB*, this local discourse (ca. 1939-2000) comprised five other Egyptian periodicals that engaged to a greater or lesser degree with architectural content. For the purpose of analysis, it can be divided into three distinct periods of two decades each: two of these preceding *AB*, the final period coinciding with its publication. The first period was defined by the publication of the previous most ideologically pointed and influential architectural journal in modern Egypt: *al-‘Imarah* (1939-1959).<sup>2</sup> The second was a period of relative limbo in which architectural news and opinions were reported (if at all) in the *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Engineers*, the *Architectural Bulletin*, and *al-Ahram* newspaper. Finally, we will examine two additional short-lived local journals: *al-M‘imaryah* and *Medina* that contributed to the discursive discourse of the late twentieth-century architectural ideas and questions raised in the period that coincides with the continuous publication of *AB*.

## 6.2 *Al-‘Imarah* (1939-1959)

### 6.2.1 Influence and Resistance: The Resurgence of the Architectural Discourse.

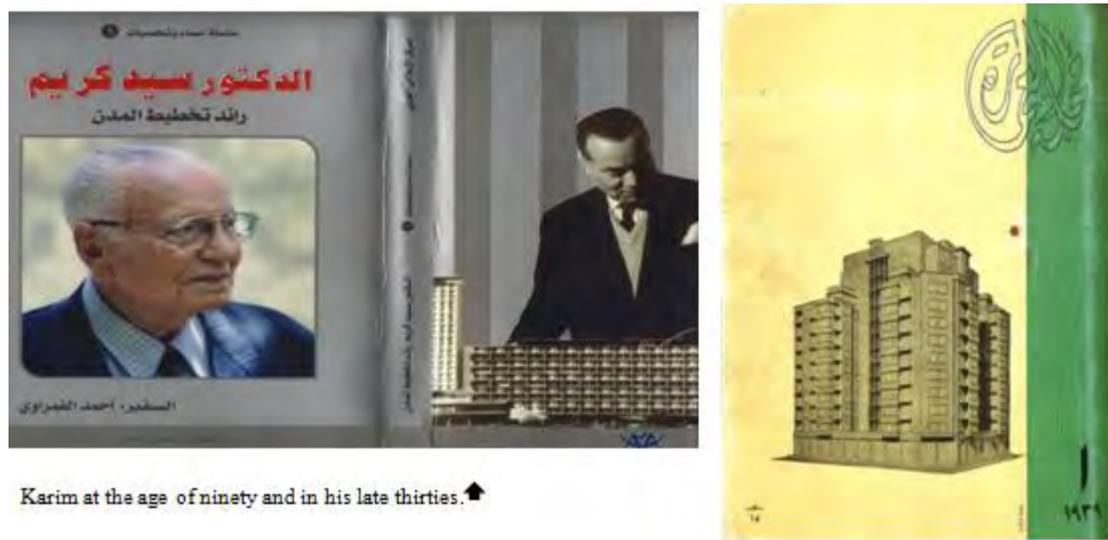
In 1937 Egyptian architect Sayed Karim was invited, together with other architects of different nationalities, to discuss contemporary architecture in Egypt during a session at The Architectural Universities Conference in Czechoslovakia. Each of the other panellists chose to illustrate their

<sup>1</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 32. The discrepant experiences, Said asserts, were not meant to “circumvent the problem of ideology.” But it meant to show the juxtaposition of different experiences to enhance interpretation.

<sup>2</sup>There was an architectural magazine edited by Ahmad Salama named *Dunya al-Mabani*, started in 1951. Only two issues were published and I was unable to locate them. Therefore the analysis of this period will rely on *al-‘Imarah*.

presentation with reference to their national architectural periodicals. However, with no Egyptian journal to refer to, the audience made fun of Karim, doubting if “the Egyptians have had any architecture other than the pyramids.”<sup>3</sup>This criticism was repeated at the 1938 conference in Warsaw. On this occasion Karim’s Swiss supervisor Otto Salvisberg whispered to him ““What is the name of the magazine that you will launch in Egypt when you return?” I wrote ‘*al-‘Imarah*, January 1939’...this was a pledge.”<sup>4</sup> For Karim, this was a critical moment in his career. A year later he returned to Egypt after earning his PhD and founded the journal *al-‘Imarah*.

Sayed Karim earned his architectural diploma from the Polytechnic Faculty, Cairo University (formerly KingFaudUniversity) in 1933, and subsequently the degrees of B.Sc., MSc. and Ph.D. in architecture from Zurich, Switzerland. He was the first Egyptian architect to earn a Ph.D. in architecture at the time. Following World War II, Karim served as one of the United Nation’s technical experts in the developing countries and thereby played a role in the modern planning of several major Middle-Eastern and North African cities including Baghdad (1946), Damascus (1947), Mecca and Riyadh (1953), and Algiers (1963).<sup>5</sup>



Karim at the age of ninety and in his late thirties.▲

**Figure 40. Two Portraits of Karim and Cover of the First Issue of *Al-‘Imarah***

Therefore, the establishment of *al-‘Imarah*, the first architectural journal in Egypt and the Arab region, was simultaneously motivated by Karim’s aspirations for progress (enhanced by his study abroad) and nationalistic sentiment. Upon his return to Egypt, Karim aimed to educate students at Cairo University about the international style. However, he was strenuously opposed to the constraints of academia which championed resistance to universal influences. He resigned

<sup>3</sup>Sayed Karim, “1939-1949,” *al-‘Imarah*, no.9 (1949), 6.

<sup>4</sup>Karim, “1939-1949,” *al-‘Imarah*, no. 9 (1949), 6.

<sup>5</sup>For a complete account about Karim see Tawfik Abdel-Gawad, *Amaleqat al-‘Imarah fi al-Qarn al-‘Ishreen*, 161-227; and his biography by Ahmad al-Ghamarawy, *Dr. Sayyed Karim: Ra’ed Takhteet al-Modon* (Cairo: Centre of Arabic Media, 2004).

and established his private firm *al-'Imarah* from which he launched the journal of the same name so as to construct his own 'space of knowledge.'<sup>6</sup> In order to challenge the status quo, Karim had to configure ways of disseminating his vision that have led to a unique and discursive relationship between 'influence' and 'resistance' which constituted the two essentials of discourse. The birth of *al-'Imarah* reveals, therefore, two recognizable forces of influence and resistance operating simultaneously, and in unexpected ways to generate a discursive structure which Said offers the critical impetus to investigate.<sup>7</sup>

### 6.2.2 Beyond *al-'Imarah*: Reconfiguration of Space

In the global context, the heyday of *al-'Imarah* coincided with the aftermath of the two world wars. While the architectural culture and discourses of Europe and America were already shifting to a new more critical ground between modernism and what would later be called postmodernism.<sup>8</sup> *Al-'Imarah* emerged at the time when the Modernist Movement had already been crystallized in Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* (1923) and his journal *l'Esprit nouveau* (1920-25); then by Wright's *Modern Architecture* (1931); and Gropius' *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (1935). However, the 'International Style,' as a consequence of the Modern Movement, was only propounded by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in 1931-1932. Their "denatured concept"<sup>9</sup> made architecture depends entirely on technological advances distilled from any contextual specificities. The dissemination of this style globally, and within newly independent countries aspiring to Western progress, was aided in Egypt by *al-'Imarah* and Karim as editor-in-chief.

Before *al-'Imarah*, at the beginning of the twentieth-century, Egypt witnessed not only the crystallization of nationalism, as explained in chapter 4 but also the expansion of nationalist influences to professional and intellectual fields which was specifically materialized in two aspects. Firstly, the establishment of syndicates as a result of "the growing self-consciousness of professions which were either lacking or quite different in the traditional Islamic world."<sup>10</sup> A Society of Egyptian Architects was formed in 1917 as a turning point for the engineering profession (to which Architecture belongs in the Egyptian context) which formed the Egyptian Royal Society of Engineers in 1920. However an engineering syndicate was organized in this

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<sup>6</sup> Interview by the author with Muhamad T. Abdel-Gawad, son of Karim's assistant T. Abdel-Gawad, Cairo (2011).

<sup>7</sup> The analysis of *al-'Imarah* was presented at *Fabulation: Myth, Nature, Heritage*: 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of SAHANZ, Launceston 2012. Paper by Marwa El-Ashmouni and Katharine Bartsch, "Influence and Resistance: The Rationale of *al-'Imarah* Discourse (1939-1959)," (available on CD-ROM).

<sup>8</sup> Joan Oakman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Reid, "The Rise of Professions and Professional Organization in Modern Egypt," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16 (1974), 24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178227>, (accessed 15/04/ 2010).

same period, but it was not officially recognized for political reasons, and shortly vanished.<sup>11</sup> The legal profession had been the first in Egypt to successfully form a syndicate, in 1912, but it would be another 28 years before comparable syndicates were formed, in short succession, for the professions of medicine (1940), journalism (1941) and engineering (1946).<sup>12</sup> This highlights the timely inception of Karim's journal that was established at a time when the architectural profession was still in its fledgling form. Second, the Egyptian intelligentsia in the 1920s were divided, expressing several different and predominantly reactionary attitudes towards modernity, which was perceived as a Western product. These different attitudes were manifested in a "polysystem"<sup>13</sup> comprised of three distinct intellectual tendencies or trends—the 'Egyptianists', the 'Islamists', and the 'universalists'—which were to remain highly influential in the architectural production of the twentieth-century and associated discourse.

The first trend disseminated Westernization while adhering to indigenous sources that collectively established 'Egyptianized' identity such as Nile Valley, Pharaonism, Hellenism, and Roman-Byzantine traditions, evident in the writing of Ahmad Lutfi Al-Sayyid and 'Abas Al-'Aqqad. The second trend focused on Islam and Arabism and strove to harmonize tradition with local modern perceptions,<sup>14</sup> as advocated by Mustafa Kamel, Ahmad Amin, and later Al-'Aqqad and Hykal. Both the Egyptianists and the Islamists were opposed to the third trend which sought Westernization as a sign of national progress. One of the key and controversial literary works at this time, urged by the Anglo-Egyptian treaty in London (1936), which manifested such ambitions was Taha Husayn's *Mustakbal al Thaqafah fi Misr* (1944) [*The Future of Culture in Egypt*].<sup>15</sup> Husayn stressed the fluctuation of Egyptian identity, claiming that the Egyptian mentality is mainly Western rather than Eastern. He concluded that the effect of the three criteria of geography, common language and religion in determining Egypt's Eastern roots is not quite accurate. He argued that Muslims have long realized that these criteria have always been less important in enforcing the establishment of their states than their common political interests.<sup>16</sup>

These three intellectual trends were materialized in twentieth-century Egyptian architecture. Prior to *al-'Imarah*, most of the national buildings demonstrated a compromise between Pharaonic and Islamic styles. Islamic revivalism was manifest in different buildings with

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>13</sup> Gershoni, "The Evolution of National Culture in Modern Egypt: Intellectual Formation and Social Diffusion, 1892-1945," *Poetics Today* 13, no. 2(1992),336. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772536> (accessed 20/09/ 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 329.

<sup>15</sup> Taha Husayn (1889 – 1973) is one of the most celebrated Egyptian intellectuals. His best known work is his autobiography, *al-'Ayyam*, published in English as *The Stream of Days* (1943).

<sup>16</sup> Sidney Glazer, trans. *The Future of Culture in Egypt* (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954),5.

different expressions such as Bank Misr by Antoin Lasiac (1920) and the Building of the Society of Egyptian Engineers by Mustafa Fahmy (1920). While the former façade was Islamic with an overall Renaissance expression, the latter was neo-Mamluk. There are also subsequent examples of revivalism in the administration building of al-Azhar by Ahmad Charmy (1936). On the other hand, the Pharaonic revival was at the fore after the excavation of Tutankhamon's tomb in 1925.<sup>17</sup> This style was manifested in Sa'ad Zaghlul's mausoleum designed by Mustafa Fahmy (1928); and Giza railway station by Fahmy (1925). Mustafa Fahmy worked towards the manifestation of a nationalist program even in small buildings such as the police station of al-Kalifa at the foot of the Citadel<sup>18</sup> and small railway stations such as the one at al-Qubah Bridge 1927.<sup>19</sup>

These architects, who championed a new 'national architectural style',<sup>20</sup> were exposed to the tenets of Modernism during their study abroad and formed the nuclei of the first generation of Egyptian architects. Through governmental positions, that used to be held by foreign architects, they were involved in the project of nation building for which they opted to abandon Islamic and Pharaonic revivalism in favor of classicism. Mustafa Fahmy (1886-1972),<sup>21</sup> for example, was a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux Arts (1912) who became the minister of public works in 1920 and the chief architect of the Royal Palaces (1930-52); 'Ali Labib Gabr (1898-1966), Liverpool (1924), was the head of the Architecture department at Cairo University; Muhamad Raafat, Liverpool (1923), was the supervisor of buildings and public works in the railways administration; and Mahmud Riad, yet another Liverpool graduate (1931), became the supervisor of the buildings department in the endowment ministry (1942). It is worth mentioning here that those architects (Mustafa Fahmy, 'Ali Gabr, and Muhamad Raafat), the allies of classical approaches, were the first Egyptians to lecture at Cairo University. They taught classicism to the next generation of architects who included Abu Bakr Khayrat, Ahmad Charmy, Mahmud al Hakim, and many others.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Fayza Hassan, "A Betrayal of History," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 462 (1999). <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/462/fayza.htm> (accessed 21/01/ 2012).

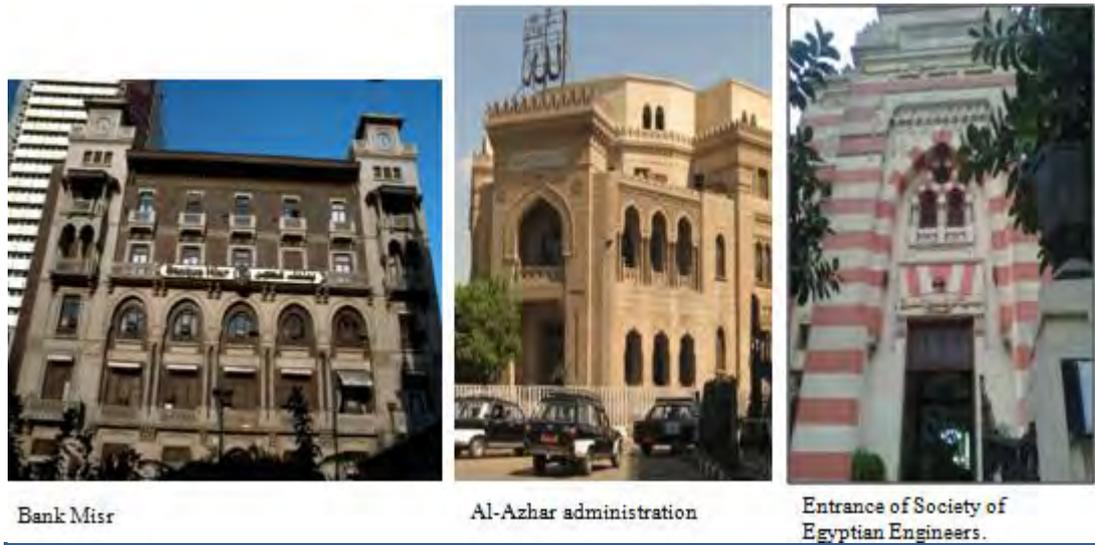
<sup>18</sup> Volait, *L'Architecture Moderne en Egypte*, 45.

<sup>19</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Misr Al-'Imarah fi Al-Qarn Al-'Ichreen*, (Cairo: Anglo Press, 1977).

<sup>20</sup> Abdel-Gawad, "School of Liverpool," *al-'Imarah* 4, 5/6 (1942). Other Egyptian graduates of Liverpool included Shrief No'maan 1928, Mahmud al-Hakim 1932, and T. Abdelgawad. French educated architects were Mustafa Fahmy, Anees Serageldin, Abu Bakr Khayrat, Ahmad Sharmy, Hassan Fathy, Kamal Ismail, Hassan Shafei, Mustafa Shafei, and Hussein Shafei, whilst Shafik al-Sadr, Yousif al-Sadr, Mustafa Shawky and Salah Zytoon were trained in America.

<sup>21</sup>For Mustafa Fahmi see Tarek Sakr, *Early Twentieth-Century Architecture in Cairo*, 1992; and the Arabic account of Abdel-Gawad, *Giants of Architecture in the Twentieth Century*, 148.

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix III for coloured plates of the work of some of the pioneer architects in Egypt.



**Figure 41. Islamic Revivalism.**



**Figure 42. Pharaonic Revivalism.**

This filtered nationalist vocabulary was not the only dominant vocabulary prevalent outside *al-‘Imarah’s* modernist boundaries. This domain, albeit nascent, sought appropriate expressions of national identity to resist internationalism. Art Deco’s eclectic vocabulary, which prevailed internationally in the 1930s, proved to be the most popular choice to articulate national identity. Khaled ‘Asfour argues that Art Deco, with its rounded corners, symmetrical massing, and floral ornament, complemented the formal language of architecture in Middle East.<sup>23</sup> In addition to Art Deco, however, this period—which ‘Asfour categorizes as the liberal era for the diversity of its styles—contained several other influences as well. These included the Mediterranean vocabulary which signaled regional and nationalistic messages. Prime exemplars of this tendency were the

<sup>23</sup> Khaled Asfour “Identity in the Arab Region Architects and Projects from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar,” *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Architecture: Case Studies from the South*, eds. Peter Herrle, Stephanus Schmitz (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009), 188.

Villa Muhamad Reda Zamalek; and Villa Green by the French architect Max Edrei (1889-1979); and Villa Mostafa Mohamad Pacha by Mohamad Raafat.<sup>24</sup>



Two facades of Bahari, the intersection of Muhammad Mahmud St., built in 1934 (1939, no. 10). Note the horizontal ornamented stripes around balconies as well as the floral decorative top.



Villa Om Kulthoom by Gabr Immobile de Bari by Parcq and Hardy, 1941.

**Figure 43. Examples of Art Deco.**



Villa Hussein 'Erfan in Maadi

Villa Green (1939, no.1)

Villa Mostafa M. Pacha, Dokki (1940, no.9/10)

**Figure 44. Different Vocabularies: Mediterranean References.**

This variety of approaches also extended to include the modernist vocabulary which is evident in Bahari's two apartment blocks by Antouin Nahaas,<sup>25</sup> Madam Enji (which was the first

<sup>24</sup>For work of European architects in Egypt between 1850 and 1950, see Volait's work such as, *Le Caire-Alexandrie: Architectures Européennes* (IFA/CEDEJ, 2001).

project reviewed in *al-Imarah*), and Metri in Garden City; in Immeuble de Bari by G. Parq and J. Hardy; and in Waqf Raafat Bey by ‘Ali Gabr. Here, T. Abdel-Gawad bemoaned the fact that, this first generation of Egyptian architects “unfortunately,...were busy in their higher positions with public buildings and left most private housing projects to foreign or half foreign architects,” who strove to satisfy various strata of clientele.<sup>26</sup> Their clients were “either foreigners or Egyptians who have had a ‘Western complex’.”<sup>27</sup>

However, this argument cannot be taken for granted, namely when comparing the practice of the foreigners’ Egyptian contemporaries who used different vocabularies in their public and private schemes. For example, the design vocabulary of ‘Ali Gabr’s Villa Hussein ‘Erfan and Waqf Raafat Bey Block were noticeably different. While the former maintained clear classical features, the later has apparent modernistones. Also, as Volait remarks, Mustafa Fahmy’s national designs in public buildings such as Zaglul’s mausoleum differ from his designs in private villas such as Louly Vailla, Alexandria 1931.<sup>28</sup> ‘Ashur, in this regard, argues that these differences can be attributed to the diverse experiences and backgrounds of each architect (and presumably a climate conducive to experimentation) in this liberal era.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 45. Modernist Approach.**

<sup>25</sup>Nahaas, born in 1901, was half foreign Lebanese. He graduated from l'Ecole Centrale des Art et Manufactures in Paris in July 1925. Subsequently, he enrolled in l'Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts where he taught after graduating in June 1930. Therefore he acquired both architectural and construction engineering skills. For details see the Arabic account Shaima' a' Ashur, *The Pioneer Egyptian Architects*.

<sup>26</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Giants of Architecture in the Twentieth-Century*, 139.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, 139.

<sup>28</sup> Volait, “Mediating and Domesticating Modernity in Egypt,” 31.

<sup>29</sup> Ashur, *The Pioneer Egyptian Architects*.

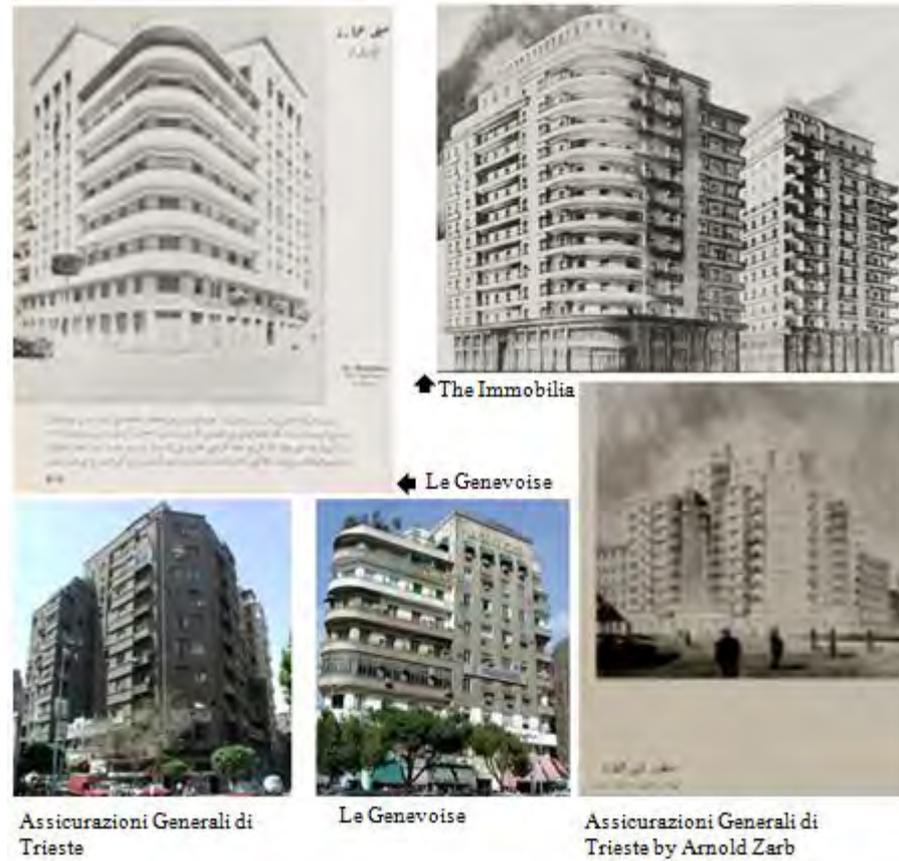
All these various approaches found a niche within *al-'Imarah's* space, as Karim discursively celebrated internationalism to deal with the discrepant professional practice at that time. Although *al-'Imarah* aimed to disseminate images of and knowledge about the international style to the resistant audience, it featured a significant number of neo-classical buildings. However, when classical buildings were reviewed in *al-'Imarah*, images of the classical façades were censored. These classical trends, which seemed to be 'resistive outsiders' to *al-'Imarah's* space, were thereby acknowledged but addressed in a strategically selective manner to focus on the success of the buildings' functions with reference to the main principle of Modernism which he wished to promote whilst minimizing their formal impact on the audience. Karim, in this way, was cautiously reconfiguring room for his approach within the domain of resistance, which lay beyond the space of *al-'Imarah*.

As Karim's constructed space celebrated the technological utopia, the skyscrapers were celebrated in many articles such as "Best projects from an economic perspective" (1941, no.2). The first skyscraper in Egypt and the Middle East was the thirteen-storey Immobilia building for which *al-'Imarah* dedicated over 50 pages providing a rigorous description of its history and construction details (1940, no. 7/8). The design, by the two French architects Max Edrei (1889-1979) and Gaston Rossi, won the design competition held in 1937 by The General Real Estate in Egypt (a shareholding company).<sup>30</sup> This imposing mass with continuous bands articulating its balconies characterized the technological advancement of the new era. Another high rise structure that was rigorously reviewed in *al-'Imarah* (1939, no.6) in almost 30 pages was the Le Genevoise apartment building. The building's architectural details were reviewed by Sayed Karim himself with technical aspects of the construction examined by the civil engineer Dr. William Hana. It was built by the Swiss insurance company in 1936/37 and designed by the Swiss architect Max Zollikofer. The Genevoise, which still stands in 26 July Street, is one of the earliest mixed-use buildings in Egypt, combining residential and office accommodation with a hotel. Another high-rise building reviewed in *al-'Imarah* and described as an "ideal example of modern building" was the (Assicurazioni Generali di Trieste) [general insurance] (1939, no.1) by the Maltese architect Arnold Zarb (1901-1969). This thirteen-story building is located at the

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<sup>30</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Giants of Architecture in the Twentieth-Century* asserted that the main reason for awarding the foreign architects Max Edrei and Gaston Rossi was due to the jury comprising mainly foreign businessmen: the jury included only one architect, Mustafa Fahmy (p.141). For Rossi, he designed the former Royal Automobile Club (currently the Egyptian Automobile Club) in Qasr al-Nil street; and the Grand Continental Hotel and Galleries in Opera square (1920s). The first building was built in Neo-Islamic style while the later was built in the neo-Classical. See, S.Raafat, "Cairo's Belle Époque Architects 1900-1950." Feature article in the following website [www.egy.com](http://www.egy.com); Scharabi, M. (1989); and Cultnat: [http://www.cultnat.org/Programs/Architectural%20Heritage/Application/Pages/Application\\_New.aspx?ID=51&ShowStreetBuildings=True](http://www.cultnat.org/Programs/Architectural%20Heritage/Application/Pages/Application_New.aspx?ID=51&ShowStreetBuildings=True) (accessed 10/08/2011).

intersection of Queen Faridah Street and ‘Imad Eldeen Street (currently corner of ‘Abdel-Khalek Sarwat and Mohammed Farid, downtown Cairo).<sup>31</sup> It was under construction when reviewed in *al-‘Imarah*. The building is an obvious example of adherence to the modern grid evident in its bland windows and arrangement of cantilevered balconies.



**Figure 46. High-rises in *Al-‘Imarah*.**

As an agent of modern principles, Karim celebrated his own designs and other projects of the new generation of architects that followed Modernist tenets. His designs were divorced of any stylistic references and were a clear manifestation of international principles that owed much to Le Corbusier. Most of his designs championed the modular technique and austere horizontal strips as in his Zamalek Tower (1957, no.1), Shams tower (1949, no.1/2); and Secretariat-General Building (1957, no.3). Karim’s designs were also accompanied on occasion by harmonious curves such as the Regional Hospital (1941, no 7/8, and Tobacco factory (1941, no.1).

Amongst the new generation of architects, who championed the international style and transcended formalism, were ‘Ali Nour al-Dein Nassar; Tawfik Abdel-Gawad (Liverpool, 1939), his assistant; Mustafa Shawqy; and Salah Zaytoon (Illinois, 1947). All of these Modernists

<sup>31</sup>Samir Raafat, *Cairo's belle époque architects 1900 - 1950*, compiled by: <http://www.egy.com/people/98-10-01.php#zarb> (accessed 10/08/ 2011).

projects were pragmatic examples of Karim’s ‘attitude of reference’ that aspired to modernization that he has skillfully integrated to reinforce *al-Imarah*’s space.



**Figure 47. Designs by Sayed Karim.**



**Figure 48. Designs by the New Generation of Egyptian Architects.**

### 6.2.3 Attitude of Reference: Boundaries of *al-'Imarah*

Karim's integration of his own modern designs, as well as those of the new generation of Egyptian architects, was not the only apparatus by which he signaled *al-'Imarah's* boundaries. There are a set of attitudes of reference, which were implemented to reinforce these boundaries. These attitudes included the association of revivalism with backwardness and efforts to indigenize modernity.

On the one hand, associating revivalism with backwardness was clear since his first article "What is architecture?" in which Karim's theoretical liberation of architecture from art, framed attitudes of rejection to revivalism that ensued from his Western influence. For him, architecture is not simply an art but a "scientific art": "architecture is no more an artistic oeuvre."<sup>32</sup> The initial effort to re-define the profession not only introduced Karim's strong attitude of rejection to the resistant revivalists, that he wished to eliminate, but also connotes a new order. Moreover, in the first editorial by architect Anees Serageldein (*al-'Imarah's* co-founder, who shortly broke with Karim), the journal is identified, as "a national aspiration," which aspires to be a "messenger of scientific and artistic culture."<sup>33</sup> The perceived limitation of revival styles was explicit in Karim's editorial (1949) in which he referred to the goal of *al-'Imarah*, as "liberating Egyptian architecture from its backwardness and to restore its old glory."<sup>34</sup> Karim's condemnation of any revivalism as being backward was reinforced in his celebration of the modern style in the design of the Muslim brotherhood print house (1946). He stated: "Islam has never been stagnant, it is a religion free from traditional styles, a religion of every age. In this way this building has been designed to explicitly express the age in which it has been designed."<sup>35</sup> Karim's notion of liberation and his claim to be the spokesperson of contemporary local architecture mirrors an imperial attitude which stems from a desire to modernize a backward society and to create a new order.

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<sup>32</sup>Karim, "What is Architecture?" *al-'Imarah* 1, no.1(1939), 12.

<sup>33</sup>Karim, "1939-1949," *al-'Imarah* 9, no.1(1949), 5.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Karim, "Muslim Brotherhood Printing House," *al-'Imarah*, no.6 (1946), 5/6.



**Figure 49. Muslim Brotherhood Printing House.**

Karim's rejection of the expressions that were steeped in revivalism crystallized with his scholarly contribution at a conference held in Cairo, 1940, by the Association of Social Reform. Karim's article "National style of architecture in Egypt" published in *al-'Imarah* (1940, no.5/6) was intended, as the prolific architectural critic Volait asserts, to represent a "manifesto of the new architectural options, put forward, for nearly two decades by the editor of the magazine."<sup>36</sup> This manifesto, however, was criticized by Ahmad Fikri, Director of the Arab Museum, in *Magallat Al-Shu'un Al-Igtim'aiyya* [*The Journal of Social Affairs*], whose article was never mentioned in *al-'Imarah*'s space. While Ahmad Fikri states that his conflict with Karim's ideas is not about Arab or Pharaonic style, he was highly critical of Karim's approach. Fikri's main objection as he expressed it in 1940, was that "Egypt [was] experiencing a profound "decay" in view of its splendid past. Thus, taking the 'universalist' position we have reached no more than to produce a bastardized architecture, a pale imitation of foreign styles."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, Fikri stressed the necessity that architecture should be a "language that better characterizes the evolution of a people, its ability to synthesize, in the works constructed, both natural and climatic constraints, as specific to each nation's spiritual, political, and social development."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Fikri stressed that "it is therefore by the rediscovery of Egyptian archaeological and Arab heritages only that a noble and worthy architecture of the nation may appear."<sup>39</sup> However, the article inspired a new generation of architects such as Tawfik Abdel-Gawad; and Yehia al-Zeiny.<sup>40</sup> Abdel-Gawad in the Fourth Arab Engineering Congress, Lebanon (1950), presented an

<sup>36</sup> Volait, *L'Architecture Moderne*, 86.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

<sup>40</sup> Yehia al-Zeiny, "Nationalism in Architecture," *al-'Imarah* 7, no.7 (1947), 14-17.

article entitled “Architecture of the East between the Appearance and the Substance.” He launched his scholarship with a spirit of enquiry: “Does Islam have a style?” (1950, no.6/7). The recommendations of this conference urged participants to follow the steps of “modern styles in the designs of any building as it is economical and suitable for the newly developed materials. Restrain the use of old styles to the national, religious, or monumental buildings.”<sup>41</sup> The recommendations of the fourth conference (1950) reinforced those of the second Arab conference of 1946 and reinforced Karim’s new stylistic order.

In order to anchor this new order, Karim endeavoured to stress the functionalist designs as a way to liberate the Egyptian society from its endemic problems. The continuous review of modern theoretical standards along with proposals by Karim and others was a manifesto of the claimed engagement in the society. This also materialized the unquestioned potency of the functional design which reinforced the modernist ideology with the extreme emergency at the end of World War II.<sup>42</sup>

1939, no. 3/4	“The Villa.”
1939, no. 5	“Exhibitions” New York International Exhibition: The World of Tomorrow.
1939, no. 7	“Fine Arts.”
1940, no. 3/4	“The Brick.”
1940, no. 7/8	“Skyscrapers: Immobile.”
1940, no. 9/10	“Architecture Outside [Egypt].”
1941, no. 3/4	“The Architecture In Muhammad Ali’s era.”
1942, no. 1/2	“In Honour of Otto Salvisberg”
1945, no. 2/3	“The First Engineering Congress.”
1945, no. 4/5	“The School of Beaux-Arts in Cairo.”
1945, no. 6/7	“Khedive Ismail,” in His Funeral Anniversary.
1947, no. 5/6	“The Third Arab Engineering Congress.”
1947, no. 7/8	“The Union of Beaux-Arts.”
1950, no. 6/8	“Urbanism.”
1950, no. 1/2	“The Villa.”
1950, no. 6/7	“The Fourth Engineering Conference”
1952, no. 5	“The Beaux-Arts.”
1952, no. 8/10	“Modern Architecture in Brazil.”
1953, no. 1/2	“The Reform of the Egyptian Village.”
1953, no. 5/6	“Planning and Transportation.”
1953/54, no. 7/8	“The Fifth Arab Engineering Congress.”

**Figure 50. *Al-‘Imarah*’s Special Issues.**

<sup>41</sup> Abdel-Gawad, “The Fourth Arab Engineering Congress, Lebanon,” *al-‘Imarah* 10, no. 6/7(1950),15.

<sup>42</sup> Joan Oakman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Columbia University, 1993), 14.

Many articles discussed pragmatic solutions to the problems of the village and were published in addition to the urban problems of transportation and economic housing. Karim had well-developed views about affordable housing, which he had initially explored in a book published in Arabic in 1938 entitled *The Socialization of the Villa*.<sup>43</sup> The arguments of the book were revisited nineteen years later in his article “Assembly theories in the socialization of villa.”<sup>44</sup> This empirical attempt to deepen the roots of the “villa” as a modern typology within the country’s transitional economy was one of Karim’s most important efforts to factor the poor economic conditions of the society in his conception of the transformative agency of modern architecture and planning. In trying to achieve modern housing standards and individuality, Karim sought to assemble villa units in different ways to share services and to maintain a degree of individual privacy at the same time.<sup>45</sup>



Figure 51. The Socialization of the Villa by Karim.

Urban problems and overpopulation were also frequent topics of discussion in al-‘Imarah prompting the publication of occasional articles that sought to explain the general principles and virtues of modern urban planning.<sup>46</sup> Karim himself proposed an urban development plan for

<sup>43</sup>Karim, *Ishtakryat al-Villa [The Socialisation of the Villa]*, (Cairo: al-Nahdah al-Misryah, 1938).

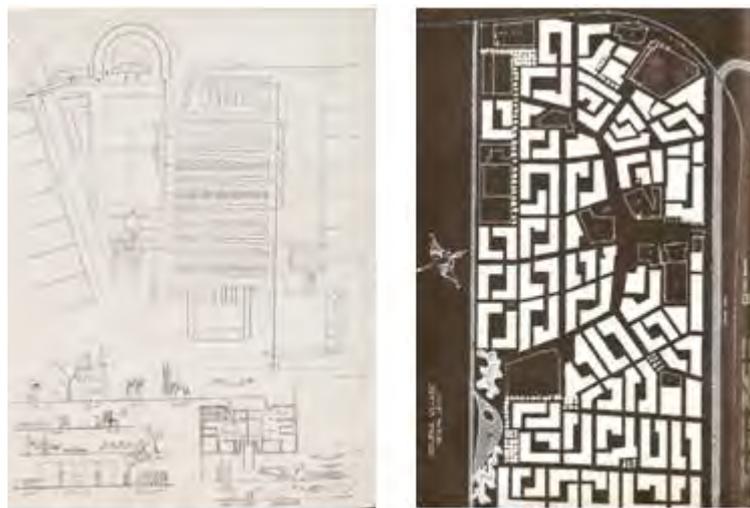
<sup>44</sup> Karim, “Assembly Theories in the Socialization of Villa,” *al-‘Imarah* 13, no.1/2(1957), 29-44.

<sup>45</sup>Karim acknowledged the influence of the German architect, Alexander Klein, who developed a low cost housing typology following World War I, while ensuring that minimum requirements for living, or “Existenzminimum,” would be respected. Marco Giorgio Bevilacqua, “Alexander Klein and the Existenzminimum: A ‘Scientific’ Approach to Design Techniques,” *Nexus Network Journal* 13, no.2 (2011).

<sup>46</sup> For example: ‘Ali al-Miligy, “Plannolgia,” *al-‘Imarah*, no. 1/2(1940).

Greater Cairo in 1952 to address its expected growth, but this proposal was perceived, by Nasser's government and its Russian consultant, to be contradictory to socialist principles.<sup>47</sup> As Karim later explained, in this urban plan he chose the northern (Shubra al-Kheima district) and the southern (Helwan) entrances to Cairo, to accommodate the most important hotels and recreational areas, which were later chosen by Nasser's government to accommodate the workers' housing.<sup>48</sup>

Also, Karim developed a village model which adhered to modern principles (grid, orientation), (1941, no.2).<sup>49</sup> In the case of village reformation, it is notable that Hassan Fathy's efforts have been completely marginalized. This marginalization provides evidence of the authoritarian editorship of *al-'Imarah*, and the aim to liberate society from old styles, which is at odds with Fathy's approach. Anthropologist Timothy Mitchel conceives Fathy's orderly and aesthetically designed model as a colonial manifestation, in light of the "model Villages" designed in the nineteenth-century colonial system to organize the village to be more productive to serve imperial ambitions. In this regard, Karim's ideas manifested a similar set of latent colonial attitudes regarding social organization and engineering. This is similar to many pre-colonized nations such as Algeria in which as illustrated by Lamprkos "the image of the colonizer became the self-image of the colonized."<sup>50</sup>



Shows the similarity of typology and the grid in the overall plan.

**Figure 52. Karim's Village Model; and Gournia Village.**

<sup>47</sup> *Al-'Imarah*, no.5/6 (1953).

<sup>48</sup> Al-Ghmarawy, *Dr. Sayyed Karim*, 104-05.

<sup>49</sup> The village model was Karim's contribution in the twelfth conference of the Egyptian Assembly of the Scientific Culture.

<sup>50</sup> AlSaiyyad, *Forms of Dominance*, 11. In Algeria, after independence the revolutionary regime continued the French Plan Obus to modernize the country. As detailed in Michele Lamprkos, "Le Corbusier and Algiers: The Plan Obus as Colonial Urbanism," *Forms of Dominance*, 183-210.

Indigenizing modernity by its association with history was meant to realign the international milieu with the local resistive milieu. *Al-‘Imarah*’s editorship strategically managed to associate modernization with particular indigenous activities as Karim sought the origins of modernity in the Egyptian past. For example, by highlighting the Pharaonic origins of both the principles of reinforcement (the use of vegetal reeds embedded in clay) and the pitched roof, in Mohamad Hammad, “Theory of Reinforcing in Pharaonic Egypt,” *al-‘Imarah* 4/5(1957); and Hammad, “the design of the Egyptian house with pitched roof in the first dynasty,” (1957, no.7). Also, articles such as “The Influence of Egyptian Architecture on Ancient Greek” and “The Impact of Greek Art on the Persian Style” by Alexander Badawi (1942, no. 7/8) and Kamal el-Deen Samih, Associate Professor in Cairo University, (1953/1954, no.3/4), highlight an emphasis on the influence of Egyptians on other parts of the world. Likewise, Karim’s attribution of the origins of skyscrapers to the desert of Hadramout, Yemen, whose fulfillment of the societal needs for defense were celebrated, is a reference to the same attitude of pride.<sup>51</sup>

This deliberate emphasis on the monumental history and the suppression of the prominent indigenous features of contemporary Cairo’s everyday urban fabric, such as the courtyard house, constructs, we may argue, a rhetoric of resistance to the architectural legacies of its more recent colonial past. Simultaneously this dissuaded the reader from following the local development of domestic hybridization, whilst reinforcing the deep interest of the participants in the modernization of the already modern parts of Cairo established since Khedive Ism‘aīl.

The magazine constantly celebrated different historical eras. The topic of Islamic architecture by the archaeologist Hassan ‘Abdel-Wahhab was given space in a series of articles tracing the chronology of its development from Tulunid (1940, no.2), Fatimid (1940, no.5/6), and Ayubid (1940, no.7/8) to Mamluk (1940, no. 9/10 - 1941, no. 2).<sup>52</sup> ‘Abdel-Wahhab’s review extended all the way to modern Egypt to include Mohammad ‘Alī’s architecture (1941, no. 3/4–no. 5/6) and projects patronised by Khedive Ism‘aīl’s. Karim himself acknowledged these more recent modernization efforts in two special issues: Mohammad ‘Alī (1939, no.3/4); and Khedive Ism‘aīl (1945, no.6/7) in which his respective editorials for each issue were written in the form of letters to King Farouk, Ism‘aīl’s grandson, acknowledging the ‘great favour’ of the monarchy to modernize the country.

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<sup>51</sup> Karim, “Skyscrapers of the Desert,” *al-‘Imarah* 2, no.3/4(1940),237.

<sup>52</sup> In 1946 ‘Abdel-Wahhab compiled these texts, supplemented by others, in his book *Tarikh al-Masagid Athariyya* [History of Monumental Mosques], “and remains to this day the reference book on the subject.” Volait, 70.



Figure 53. Origins of Reinforcement System and Pitched Roofs in Pharaonic Buildings.



Figure 54. Desert Skyscrapers in Hadramout.

Although Karim was greatly influenced by the West, reviews of Western projects in *al-‘Imarah* were actually quite limited and never exceeded 30 projects in total. They were primarily used as examples illustrating the transfers of techniques and industrialization. Western projects remained limited to Modernist pioneers, in particular, Frank Lloyd Wright (1957, no.5), Le Corbusier (1946, no.1/2); and, notably, the path-breaking South Americans, Oscar Neimeyer and Lucio Costa (1952, no.7/8/9), who were models to many other aspiring post-colonial modernists in the same era. Thus, it could be argued, that Karim entreated others to adopt modern architecture not as an imported foreign style but as the most appropriate style that should be adopted and nationalized.



Figure 55. Western Pioneers in *Al-‘Imarah*.

By this instrumental review of historical and Western norms along with the contemporary context, Karim implicitly reinforces the claim that the Modern style is a normal evolution of indigenous prehistoric technologies. The configuration of the relation between modernity as a new knowledge and its historical commonality was inherent in the ‘indigenizing’ attitude that the magazine disseminated. This indigenizing endeavour becomes more visible with Karim’s authoritative and consistent suppression of the term “Modern Movement.” The disappearance of this term disguised to some extent, one may argue, the Western influence that he tried to disperse in the outsider nationalist milieu. Indeed, as Volait has argued, “too much emphasis on ‘modernity’ would probably dilute the strength of his argument, and introduces significant confusion in the mind of his audience.”<sup>53</sup> This confusion was likely to happen as ‘modernity’ in the Egyptian context has always been attributed to Mohammad Ali. This, arguably, refers to an attitude of resistance to the perceived backwardness that provoked his claim to “liberate” local architecture. In this way, although Karim was influenced by universal principles, the rhetoric of resistance was embedded in the “structure of attitude and reference” that he constructed within *al-‘Imarah*; the resistance in Karim’s case was not to the universal scheme but rather to the idea of backwardness. While this structure was founded, in the first place, on his influences from the West and his perceptions of backwardness he maintained a resistive attitude, as a result of the colonial experience that both Karim within his space, and his audience outside his space, shared.

#### 6.2.4 The Demise of *al-‘Imarah*

Sayed Karim encountered many problems in the era of Nasser (1952-1970). Placed under guard, Karim was compelled to cease publication of *al-‘Imarah* in 1959. Karim noted that he was still

<sup>53</sup>Volait, *L’Architecture Moderne*, 87.

unsure of the reason for his arrest suspecting it was nothing more than a private dispute between him and the Minister of Tourism, Shams Badran, who wanted Karim to sell his apartment.<sup>54</sup> Logically, according to Volait, Karim and his magazine were perceived as vehicles of the old royal regime, which Nasser meant to obliterate.<sup>55</sup> Despite their common zeal for modernization, the rejection of Karim's comprehensive Cairo plan by Nasser's regime reflected the same political impasse. With the demise of *al-'Imarah* in 1959, Egypt was poised to enter the sixties suddenly deprived of any prominent local forum for architectural discourse.

### 6.3 The Sixties and the Dispersion of Discourse

Nasser's pan-Arab attitude crystallized in his enactment in 1956 of the nationalization law. This presented a direct assault on the private sector leading to the flight of a large percentage of Egypt's business and intellectual elite including many experienced architects who re-established their practices in the Arab Gulf states during this period. This "brain drain", argued Zaytoun,<sup>56</sup> contributed to a concurrent recession in architectural publication and associated discourse. Indeed, a survey of the archives of *al-Ahram*, a contemporary newspaper, reveals many repeated references during this period to the inadequate supply of engineers (which, as previously noted, included architects according to the Egyptian system). Calls for increases in the numbers of engineering graduates were countered by suggestions that mandatory retirement ages be extended to keep as many qualified professionals in the workforce as possible.<sup>57</sup> In light of the country's intensive construction priorities, another factor that allegedly contributed to the relative lack of published architectural discourse in Egypt in this period was the tendency of university promotion committees to reward academically engaged engineer-architects for their professional design output in lieu of publications.<sup>58</sup> This decision reflected the government's overriding concern with the production of buildings to the neglect of academic quality and cultural outcomes. This decision reinforces Ahmad Hamid's argument that there was a unified desire of Nasser's regime and the practicing architects to modernize the country, "this is the way we should be living."<sup>59</sup> It is indeed the "utopianization of modernity," as Lu squarely puts it.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Al-Ghamarawy, *Dr. Sayyed Karim*.

<sup>55</sup> Volait, "Mediating and Domesticating Modernity in Egypt," 30-35.

<sup>56</sup> Salah Zaytoun, *'Imaret al-Qarn al-'Ichreen [Architecture of the Twentieth-Century]* (Cairo: al-Ahram Press, 1993).

<sup>57</sup> "The Increase of Retirement Age for Engineers," *al-Ahram*, 1963; and "Realistic Image for the Problem of Lack of Engineers in Our Country," *al-Ahram*, 1965.

<sup>58</sup> A. Ibrahim, "Editorial," *J. E.S. E.*, no.4 (1972), 5.

<sup>59</sup> Ahmad Hamid, an interview by author December 2010. Architect Seif Allah Abu Alnaga, director of the Society of Egyptian Architects, assign this to the military rulers' negligence of culture and education, all the magazines that were produced are private endeavours. Al-Zeiny assigned this negligence to Nasser's pan-Arabism that led him to engage in different wars supporting Yemen and Algeria that exhausted the country's resources. See Appendix II.

However, in the Egyptian context, by investigating the scattered discourse of this period, similar to Cylon, “a nationalist spirit of indigenization and communal attitudes was certainly on the rise,” while “it was not visible in the aesthetics of development,”<sup>61</sup> as we shall in this chapter.

In this context there was little opportunity or incentive for any specialized magazines to emerge and take the place of *al-‘Imarah*. But as this thesis focuses on the reading of the local discourse contrapuntally, it was essential to extend the scope of inquiry to examine different sources. Unlike the previous part of the discussion which focused on *al-‘Imarah* as a singularly dominant agent of discourse over the preceding two decade period of its publication, the analysis of the 1960s discourse depends therefore on a broader survey of mainstream interests prevailing in this period as discernible in architecturally focused material published in a variety of other sources between 1960-1980. The following three sources will be examined in particular:

1. The quarterly *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Engineers* (hereinafter *J.E.S.E*) released in 1962. Examination of its entire collection during the twenty years under discussion 1960-1980, revealed approximately 48 architectural articles.
2. Four issues of the *Architectural Bulletin* issued by the Society of Egyptian Architects in 1964.<sup>62</sup>
3. The archives of the daily newspaper *al-Ahram*.<sup>63</sup>

The Egyptian Society of Engineers came into existence after the 1919 revolution (see Chapter 4) as a temporary committee of engineers.<sup>64</sup> This group thrived to promote this committee to an official society in 1920 under the patronage of King Ahmad Fou’ad. Although the Society formed its rules following similar societies abroad and conducted their first meeting in December 1920, the Arab style building it permanently occupied was designed by Mustafa Fahmy. The permanent Society, as we know it today, located at Ramses Street, was built after the decision of Othman Muharam, Minister of Public Service, in 1922.<sup>65</sup> The activities of the Society extended to the Arab countries and a Society of Arab Engineering was established in 1943. The Society of Egyptian Engineers was also the seed that formed the Engineering Syndicate in 1946 after a call in the first Arab Engineering Conference in Alexandria in 1945.

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<sup>60</sup> Lu, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Anoma Pieris, “Modernity and Revolution: The Architecture of Cylon’s Twentieth-Century Exhibitions,” *Third World Modernism*, ed. Duanfang Lu, 150.

<sup>62</sup> Searching the archives of the society of Egyptian Architects, the National Archives, none of the Bulletin’s issues were located. But the four located issues were in two different formats and were located in four different places: Yahia al-Zeiny’s private library, the private library of the late architect Tawfik Abdel-Gawad, Cairo University, and in an internet blog by Muhammad ‘Adel <http://arabarchitects.wordpress.com/>. Al-Zeiny asserted that this Bulletin didn’t continue for long and it was not widely distributed. Also, discussion with Seif Abu el-Naga, the director of the Society of Egyptian architects, revealed that he did not have any information about this Bulletin.

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix I for the index of the architectural articles published during that period in the three sources.

<sup>64</sup> No author, “Editorial,” *J. E.S. E* 1, no.1 (1972).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 4.



Figure 56. The Oppening of the Society of Egyptian Engineers by the King (*al-Musawer* 382, 1922).

A short-lived journal called *al-Muhandis* [the engineer] was issued by the group of engineers before formally establishing a Society in (1893-1894)<sup>66</sup> followed by another magazine with the same name (1920-1937). This was followed by *Majallat al-Muhandisin* (1945- ) which eventually became “the organ of the syndicate.”<sup>67</sup> The journal that is under examination is a more recent academic quarterly issued by the Society of Egyptian Engineers (1962- ) under the name *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Engineers*. This *J.E.S.E* consists of three sections: the first ‘Construction and Buildings’ specializes in architecture and civil engineering; the second specializes in mechanical engineering and focuses on industrial developments; the third is devoted to petroleum and mining. Unlike typical architectural magazines, there were no reviews of specific buildings and design projects, leaving the profession devoid of criticism and the opinions of architects were generalized. The effect of this disengagement of *J.E.S.E* with the empirical particularities of actual buildings was similar to that of a more recent interdisciplinary journal<sup>68</sup> which was criticized by Crysler as it might offer “a starkly different image of the city, its space, and their meaning.”<sup>69</sup>

A second source of architectural discourse in Nasser’s era was the Society of Egyptian Architects which was formed in 1917 by a group of architects that included Mustafa Fahmy; ‘Ali

<sup>66</sup>Reid, “The Rise of Professions,” 33.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid, 33.

<sup>68</sup>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (1977- ).

<sup>69</sup>Crysler, *Writing Spaces*, 15.

Farid; Abu-Bakr Khayrat; Ibrahim Naguib; and many others, who were working at the Maslahet al-Mabani al-'Ameriyah [Ameriyah Buildings Organization].<sup>70</sup> The Society's task, according to the law, is "to enhance the status of architecture as an art and promote the development of ideas through the exchange of knowledge between its members. It is also devoted to protect the rights of the architects."<sup>71</sup> Later in 1937, more tasks were assigned to the Society such as the supervision of architectural competitions; promotion of public awareness with the fine arts generally and architecture particularly; and architects' fees. The Society joined the Union of International Architects in 1948 whose slogan was "Architecture for human beings," a slogan which was considered revolutionary at this time.<sup>72</sup>

A third significant source in this period was the daily newspaper *al-Ahram*. This was established in 1875 by the Lebanese family of Taqla, that had long been based in Egypt. *Al-Ahram* is a state-run newspaper, which means that the only controlling agency was the regime in power at the time under consideration (1960-1980): Nasser's regime (1960-1970), followed by Sadat's (1970-1980), each of which differed completely from the other.



Figure 57. The Table of Contents of the First Issue of *Architectural Bulletin* 1964 ; and *Al-Ahram* August 1963.

Despite its dispersion between these different agencies, little inconsistency is observed in Egyptian architectural discourse in the period between 1960 and 1980, for three apparent reasons. First, the socialist politics of this period acted as a platform that unified the three agencies of discourse. For example, the socialist approach was constantly propagated in the daily

<sup>70</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Misir al-Imarah*, 22.

<sup>71</sup> Information about the Society of Egyptian Architects from the Society's conference proceedings 'Nahw Nahdah Hadaryah Gadeedah' [Towards a New Civilizational Awakening], 2002, trans.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

national newspaper *al-Ahram*, in the header of many issues in the sixties: “let’s make our country a home of shared happiness that will be built by liberty, thought, and industry.”<sup>73</sup> Second, the three agencies were governmental institutions, which again highlight the Nasserian centrism of the period. Finally, most of these articles are found to be by specific architectural figures, such as Hassan Fathy (1900-1989), Tawfik Abdel-Gawad (unknown-2000),<sup>74</sup> and ‘A.Ibrahim (1926-2000, future *AB* editor) who contributed to the discourse in this period through this variety of outlets. To extract the rationale of the discourse in this period a contrapuntal reading, necessitates an investigation of the dominant approaches beyond its boundaries.

### 6.3.1 Outside the Boundaries of the Sixties Discourse

The sixties in world architecture, in general, was the start of a period of uncertainty that had arisen as a result of Modernity’s unfulfilled promises. This uncertainty and confusion was highlighted in the introduction of the fifth edition in 1961 of Giedion’s *Space, Time and Architecture*, which first appeared in 1941 to represent the paradigm of high modernism in mid-twentieth-century architecture. Whilst Giedion (key polemicist of the CIAM) asserts the state of uncertainty and “fatigue” in the contemporary architecture of the sixties, he refused to affirm its death which was endorsed by the title of the symposium of Metropolitan Museum of New York in the spring of 1961 “Modern Architecture, Death or Metamorphosis?”<sup>75</sup> Announcing the death of Modern Architecture, as if it is an ephemeral fashion, Giedion argued, contributed to the state of confusion of this contemporary era, therefore, he rather proclaimed the emergence of a “new tradition.”<sup>76</sup> While the diversion between styles was perceived by Giedion as an act of “playboy,” he asserts that it is the main factor that stimulated the “new tradition.” Indeed, contemporary architecture cannot be assigned to a specific ‘style’ in the sense defined in the nineteenth-century; rather it is “an approach to life.”<sup>77</sup> This new tradition evolved from the changing definition of the concept of space throughout time and that has been unfolded during the sixties. The sixties was considered by K. Michael Hays as the beginning of the contemporary architecture, in his critical discussion of this period’s paradigm-change in

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<sup>73</sup> Quote from Rafa‘ah al-Tahtawy sayings, repeated in the 60s issues.

<sup>74</sup> Abdel-Gawad was the director of the architectural department in the engineering syndicate from the 60s to the late 70s and he contributed to legislation of the regulating rules of the profession in 1947 published in *al-‘Imarah* (1949, no 3/4), 50. He was also the director of the Arab Bureau for Designs and Technical Consultations. Abdel-Gawad was a member of the supervisory board of the *Architectural Bulletin*.

<sup>75</sup> A decade earlier, the postwar generation of emerging younger architectural thinkers (Aldo van Eyck in the Netherlands, and Alison and Peter Smithson in the UK) had begun to criticize the authority and orthodoxy of CIAM.

<sup>76</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time & Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (U.S.A: Harvard University Press, 2008, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.), xxxii – xxxiii.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, xxxvi.

American and European architectural thinking.<sup>78</sup> This paradigm-change was crystallized by Jane Jacobs in her classic book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and the architect Robert Venturi in his manifesto *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966). Both books, which marked the beginning of a new era, are unequivocal in their critique of the complexity of architectural and urban composition that ensued in this period and the need to value human, social and historical aspirations.

In the sixties, Egypt was no less complicated. The country was at the crossroads of reform and development that is characterized by revolutionary production. This revolutionary production, under the umbrella of the socialist regime and the turmoil of the warfare in the country, propagated a specific building typology that privileged functionalism and the principle of “less is more.” Nasser’s keen desire to develop resulted in major transitional decisions “new infrastructure, housing, administrative and educational buildings were constructed to accommodate new functions, new organizations, and new citizens.”<sup>79</sup> Before the revolution of 1952, as a major point of transition, the main organization which was responsible for the design and construction of all types of governmental buildings was Maslahet al-Mabani al-‘Ameeryah, the name changed to Maslaht al-Mabani al-‘Amah [Organization of Public buildings]. This organization was established during British colonial rule in 1888 under the direction of foreign architects and engineers until the arrival of the first generation of the Egyptian architects in the thirties 6.2.2(see 6.2.2), who became responsible for public buildings, such as Mugama’ al-Tahrir, Sa‘ad Zaghlul mausoleum, and the University of Alexandria.

After the revolution, according to Abdel-Gawad, the need for rapid constructions led to the creation of many other specialized organizations, such as the ‘Hay’at al-’Abnyah al-T‘aleemyah’ [The Organization of Educational Buildings], 1952; ‘Sherkat al-Ta’ameer wa al-Masaken al-Sha’byah’ [The Headquarters of the Development and Public Housing], 1954; ‘al-Maktab al-‘Araby le al-Istesharaat al-Tasmeemyah wa al-Istesharyah’ [The Arab Bureau for Design and Technical Consultations], 1961; and ‘al-Mu’asasah al-Misryah al-‘Ammah le Moqawallat al-Iskaan wa al-Mabany al-‘Aammah’ [The Egyptian Institution of Contracting Public Buildings and Housing], 1961. This institution later supervised many other companies, according to the presidential law in 1961.<sup>80</sup> Examples of buildings constructed at that time include ‘Mashro‘o al-’Alf Maskan’ [The Thousand Houses Project]; and ‘Mashroo’ Madenat Nasr le al-’Iskaan’ [Nasr

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<sup>78</sup>K. Michael Hays, ed. *Architecture Theory since 1968* (U.S.A: MIT Press, 1998).

<sup>79</sup> Lu, 9.

<sup>80</sup>*Architectural Bulletin* (April 1964).

City Housing Project].<sup>81</sup> These public housing schemes were later described by Abdel-Gawad as “chicken boxes,” and by Fathy in *al-Ahram* (1971), as “insults to the human dignity and cultural values.”<sup>82</sup>



The Egyptian Institution of Contracting Public Buildings and Housing announces the inclusion of many other companies and stresses the role of the “inspirational leader” ‘AbdelNasser.

**Figure 58. List of New Companies Established After the 1952 Revolution.**

Not only were Nasser’s principles of socialism implemented in these low cost housing schemes but it was also manifested in many public projects such as al-’Azhar University which was designed by Abdel-Gawad in the Arab Bureau for Design and Technical Consultations. Abdel-Gawad claimed that the design conformed to the “socio-economic socialism” and minimal cost, while maintaining the traditional character through the implementation of courtyards and other elements of the façade that reflect the role of the University in the Muslim world.<sup>83</sup> However, the façade definitely heralds modernist principles and the end of the stylistic era of the thirties and forties with its neo-Islamic, Mediterranean, and Art Deco forms.

<sup>81</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Amaleqat al-Benaa*.

<sup>82</sup> Hassan Fathy, “al-Tashweeh alazy Asaab al-Maskn al-Sh’aby” [The Deformation of Popular Housing], *al-Ahram* 25/06/1971, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Abdel-Gawad, “al-Azhar University: Gift of the Present to the Future,” *Architectural Bulletin* 1968, 22.



Nasr City Housing Projects



The One Thousand Houses Project



al-'Azhar University

**Figure 59. Building Typology in 1960s.**

### 6.3.2 The Sixties' Attitude of Reference

This socialist context and the overwhelming mass production resulted in two major attitudes of reference within the sixties discourse. The first is an attitude of resistance to backwardness or 'self-referent' resistance that stems from an influence from European standards. The second is an attitude of bi-directional resistance, towards both the internal regime's institutionalization of the socialist typology, and the European external technocracy.

The discourse entered a new phase marked by the recommendations of the Eighth Arab Engineering Conference in 1963 which highlighted the need to maintain, develop, and apply the Arabic architectural styles in public buildings such as museums, exhibitions, and libraries.<sup>84</sup> This conference also stressed the necessity of the Arabization of all foreign engineering idioms in curricula. These recommendations, not only opposed those of the Fourth Arab Engineering Conference in Lebanon 1950, which at that time crowned the efforts of *al-'Imarah*

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<sup>84</sup>J. E.S.E 3, no.1 (1964), 9.

(no.6/7,1950), but also emplaced the rhetoric of resistance into the agenda of the architectural discourse.

### 6.3.2.1 The Attitude of Self-referent Resistance

This attitude of self-referent resistance to local backwardness is based on European perspectives, therefore, paradoxically, stemmed from external influences. Thus, it demonstrated the continuation of the influence of colonial experience, as a shared experience between the discourse's participants and agency. This attitude was endorsed by the post-colonial sphere and the Socialist pan-Arab regime of Nasser.

This resistance to backwardness led to a desire to instil order and progress. The first article in the *Architectural Bulletin* in 1964 by Engineer Ibrahim Nageib, Deputy Minister of Housing, entitled "Housing and Production," manifests this self-referent resistance by affirming how the development of housing according to socialist principles will be reflected in the productivity of society. In this period productivity and extensive industrialization (with its associated rural emigration) were addressed in 1960 international assembly in Cairo entitled "The new capitals in the Arab world." This was convened by the supervision of the Society of Egyptian Engineers and the International Organization for Free Culture. Also, The Eighth Conference of Arab Engineering in 1963 highlighted the necessity of rural development and recommended moving the industrial organizations out of the central cities.<sup>85</sup>

This attitude is signified by highlighting the number of articles on rural development which reached 12 articles out of a total of 15 articles on architectural topics in both *J.E.S.E* and *al-Ahram* between 1961-1964. Discussions about new cities were limited to one article in *al-Ahram* (1977) by 'A.Ibrahim "In order not to repeat the mistakes in the new cities." Moreover, the first issue in *J.E.S.E* was devoted to rural housing, among its articles: "The Fundamentals of Rural Housing in Egypt," 'A.Ibrahim; and "Constant Lines in the Development Policy of Villages," Ahmad Sadek and 'Aly Bassuny. There are other articles in different issues, such as "Housing in Developing Countries," by Ibrahim Nageib (*J.E.S.E*, 1968, no.4). The focus of these articles was

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<sup>85</sup> Nasser's industrialization, between 1960 and 1966, resulted in an annual growth rate of Greater Cairo to attain 4.4%. This period marks the loss of agricultural land to informal settlements west of Cairo (Boulaq al-Dakrou, Waraq al-Hadr, Waraq al-Arab, Munira) and to the northern (Shubra al-Kheima, Matariya). "In spite of the good productivity of agricultural land, their sale for building was more remunerative than the revenues from farming, a fact that encouraged farmers to sell their parcels." (Galila Al-Kadi, *L'urbanisation spontanée au Caire*, 1987) cited in Marion Séjourné, "The History of Informal Settlements," *Cairo's Informal Areas between Urban Challenges and Hidden Potentials: Facts.Voices*. Published in the framework of the Egyptian-German Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas (PDP), 17.

[http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/CA\\_Docs/resources/Cairo's%20Informal%20Areas%20Between%20Urban%20Challenges%20and%20Hidden%20Potentials/CairosInformalAreas\\_fulltext.pdf](http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/CA_Docs/resources/Cairo's%20Informal%20Areas%20Between%20Urban%20Challenges%20and%20Hidden%20Potentials/CairosInformalAreas_fulltext.pdf), (accessed 08/04/2012).

on the utilization of industrialization and mass production to improve the conditions of rural areas. For example, in “The Fundamentals of Housing in Rural Areas in Egypt,” ‘A.Ibrahim discussed the standard size and arrangement of the units of rural housing according to the innate formation of the village, based on the peasants’ way of life. The self-referent resistance is highlighted by ‘A.Ibrahim’s emphasis that to overcome the rural problems and to “maintain a prolonged life of any new buildings,”<sup>86</sup> it is indispensable to “enlighten” the peasants.

The focus on rural settings embedded<sup>87</sup> the self-referent resistance which in turn manifests the discursive relationship between influence and resistance due to the discrepant experiences of post-colonial era. This dedication to reorder rural settlements—to indigenize progress—while ensuing from an anti-imperial position, it highlights how the discourse was inspired by the parable of modern European progress.<sup>88</sup> In light of this eagerness for progress, under the socialist umbrella, stylistic issues were marginalized resulting in the deterioration of the architectural aesthetics, and therefore a bi-directional resistance in the discourse boundaries has emerged.

### 6.3.2.2 The Socialist Impact: Bi-directional Resistance

The marginalization of stylistic issues is signified in the absence of project reviews in the journals, compared to 1940s and 1950s discourse.<sup>89</sup> This absence can be assigned to the suppression of criticism, in general, by the centralized regime which supervised the construction and design of all projects. The regime’s centralized outlook resulted in a notable cultural and intellectual struggle due to set of literary constraints.<sup>90</sup> However, the general cultural and literary scheme in Egypt, Kendall asserts, endeavoured to overcome such constraints “rather than to submit to” them.<sup>91</sup>

On the international level, late Modern architecture, was “technocratic in its social ideology.”<sup>92</sup> This, in the sixties, led indeed to “soft” and “fluid” identity, as geographer and critic

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<sup>86</sup> “Fundamentals of Rural Housing,” *J.E.S.E.* 3 no. 1, 37. E.

<sup>87</sup> This enlightenment based on the imperial power which, as Said argues “takes the discursive form of reshaping or reordering.” These orders “were under no obligation to please or persuade a 'native' African, Indian, or Islamic audience: indeed they were in most influential instances premised on the silence of the native.” *Culture and Imperialism*, 99.

<sup>88</sup> This notion of practicing imperial principles could be termed reflexive imperialism, which is a second stage of imperialism after independence. The notion of reflexivity is explained by Ulrich Beck, *Reflexive Modernity* (1996), as “self-confrontation” to move from a stage of modernity to another. This falls beyond the scope of this research.

<sup>89</sup> There could have been some reviews in the *Architectural Bulletin*. However, in the four issues that I located there was only one design review, of al-’Azhar University, which reflected an immature attempt to combine the standardization principles and the Islamic architecture specificities.

<sup>90</sup> Elisabeth Kendall, “Literature, Journalism and the Avant-garde: Intersection in Egypt,” *Literature, Journalism and the Avant-garde: Intersection in Egypt*, ed. Elisabeth Kendall (NY: Routledge, 2006), 110.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Jencks, “The Volcano and the Tablet,” *Theories and Manifestos* (England: Wiley-Academy, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2006), 6.

David Harvey asserts, which “had been rendered endlessly open to the exercise of the will and the imagination.”<sup>93</sup> Therefore, the resistance in Egypt in this period was a bi-directional resistance to internal institutionalization of socialist developmental typologies and to global external influence of technocratic rhetorics.

The question of identity, in Egypt, (despite the attenuation of stylistic notion compared to the 1940s and 1950s), it remained at the core of the discourse as part of the bi-directional resistance. The socialist technocratic utopia endorsed ‘functionalism’ as the mainstream typology. Functionalism,<sup>94</sup> as an influential theme of this postwar period, was re-examined by one of the influential academics in this period ‘Erfan Samy, in many text books<sup>95</sup> and articles such as “Functionalism in Architecture” (*al-Ahram*, 1965); and “Architecture is a scientific art” (*Architecture Bulletin*, 1968). In *Functionalism in Architecture*, he identifies the limitations of functionalism due to the dynamic character of the profession that combines construction science on one hand and art and humanity on the other. This position toward functionalism highlights resistance to the European theories despite their prominence.

Therefore, bi-directional resistance to socialism and mass production can be discerned from Hassan Fathy’s contribution to the discourse of rural housing based on his actual experience in Gournah, in 1945. Fathy did not oppose socialism per se, but he tenaciously opposed mass production as a principle to achieve affordable housing. Fathy, critically analyzed the current developing trends and highlighted the shortcomings of socialism applied in Egypt, particularly, construction loans that he perceived to be “capitalist oriented.”<sup>96</sup> Fathy elaborated, offering loans and machinery to peasants, who will not be able to hire builders or engineers, will result in abandoned agricultural land, therefore, he stressed the need to re-consider traditional houses for true socialist solutions.<sup>97</sup> Fathy stressed the drawbacks of capitalist practices in the rural settings as it diminishes the “co-beneficial” collaborative strategy of building among peasants as the best

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<sup>93</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 5.

<sup>94</sup> A key texts for the theory is Edward Robert De Zurko, *Origins of Functionalist Theory* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1957). The book demonstrates the antiquity of the functionalist ideas; the guises assumed by this theory; and the ideas which have characterized the theory. For the development of the concept the writing of Louis Sullivan, and Bruno Taut is very important. For its evaluation and criticism, see Lewis Mumford, *Function and Expressionism in Architecture*, *Architectural Record* X (Nov. 1951).

<sup>95</sup> ‘Erfan Samy has two volumes in 1962 and 1966 entitled *The Theory of Functionalism in Architecture*, and *Theories of Organic Architecture* (1968), all of them were part of the curriculum of Departments of Architecture. In *Functionalism in Architecture*, he studied the history of this movement and the diversion of pioneer architects like Le Corbusier and Gropius from this theory.

<sup>96</sup> Hassan Fathy, “The Problem is a Problem of Humane Settlement not an Exploitive Housing,” *al-Ahram* March (1962), 47.

<sup>97</sup> Fathy, “Peasant’s Environment has the Realistic Solution to his Housing Problems,” *al-Ahram* March (1961), 35.

way to create such humane settlements.<sup>98</sup> Fathy's view is consistent with the criticism that Egypt's socialism, particularly after 1961, was based on a dual system of communism and capitalism.<sup>99</sup>

Fathy carried the torch for this humanistic approach in many articles. He was not only concerned with social collaboration but also with artistic values within the cultural context. He affirmed that approaching our urban and architectural problems from a technological level will never result in a profound remedy unless the "human being enters into all our plans and calculations."<sup>100</sup> Therefore, emphasizing the substantial needs for preserving artistic values in architecture, Fathy condemns reducing "progress" to "only Westernization" and reducing architecture to "engineering."<sup>101</sup>

This cultural anxiety of Fathy has been further stressed by 'Abdelbaki Ibrahim who lamented that, amidst rapid mass production, "the emergent identity neither expresses our new society nor stems from our traditions."<sup>102</sup> However, he acknowledges, technological development is likely to cause a social transformation that in turn becomes reflected on the urban context. Therefore, the only way to sustain national identity while maintaining technological progress is to "respond to natural and climatic conditions, and elements derived from national heritage."<sup>103</sup> While the pioneer world architects were inspired by our traditions, such as Gropius's design of the University of Baghdad, 'A.Ibrahim also lamented, Arab architecture stems either from emotional reactions or from international theories.

'A.Ibrahim was exceptional in his unequivocal criticism of several contemporary buildings. He regarded the buildings of al-'Azhar University, for example as superficial in the derivation of traditional elements. He also criticized many other buildings for the same reason, such as Mugam'a al-Tahrir 1951; and railway stations that were designed with either Islamic or Pharaonic styles. Indeed, Fathy and 'A.Ibrahim were pioneer critics, in Egypt, who emplaced

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<sup>98</sup> Only around the sixties Fathy started to get some recognition in the local context. Hussein Fawzy reviewed Fathy's book of al-Gourna and bemoaned the outrageous oppositions Fathy faced in "Reflections on the countryside," *al-Ahram* (1962). Fawzy claimed Fathy's "revolutionary" ideas not only deserve recognition but should also be implemented. Fawzy asserted "it is not a call to give up reinforced concrete, and mass production, in a scientific age, it is a call for free discussions and renovation in all socio-economic and political aspects," 60.

<sup>99</sup> See 'Adel Ghunim, *The Egyptian model for capitalising the state: a study of economic and social change*, (Cairo: Mostaqbal El- Arabi, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1982) (in Arabic); and Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: Tauris, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2005), 143.

<sup>100</sup> Fathy, "Planning and Building in the Arab Tradition, the Village Experiment at Gourna," *J.E.S.E.* 3, no.1(1964).E. 101 Ibid, 12.

<sup>102</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Muhawalah le al-Kashf 'an al-Falsafah alaty Takhtafy war' a 'Imaratna al-Hadeethah" [An Attempt to Reveal the Philosophy behind Our Contemporary Architecture,] *al-Ahram* (August 1963). Only this article, in the sixties, revealed 'A.Ibrahim's cultural concerns. This was followed by his book in 1968, which will be discussed in chapter 7. Other articles by 'A.Ibrahim in that period such as "The Image of the New Village in Our Country, Future Studies" (*al Ahram*, 1961); "The Invasion of the Industrial Development on the Agricultural Land" (*al-Ahram*, 1963).

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

resistance through their adherence to identity and authentic vocabulary despite the internal socialist and global influences. Both of them cannot be considered as opposed to socialism per se, but rather to its consequent dull designs that require unavailable technology and material. While Fathy's use of traditional materials, traditional principles, and traditional forms was a direct manifestation of anti imperialism, Ibrahim combined Fathy's traditional principles with the principles of a technocratic utopia. Although Fathy and 'A.Ibrahim had acquired different means, they both acted as curators of the bi-directional resistance in the local discourse in that period. Their resistive voice was the most explicit that started to be shared between discourse participants in the 1970s.

### 6.3.3 Infitah Impact: Shared Resistance

This shared resistance emerged particularly after the defeat of 1967, when the Arab intellectuals sought to search for the self, and "for their place in the world."<sup>104</sup> This was materialized in conferences such as "Al-'Asalah wa al-Tajdid fi al-Thaqafa al-'Arabiyya al-Mu'assira" [Authenticity and Renewal in Contemporary Arab Culture] (Cairo, 1971); and "'Azamat al-Tatwwur al-Hadari fi al-Watan al-'Arabi" [The Crisis of Civilizational Development in the Arab Homeland] (Kuwait, 1974). In the 1971 Cairo conference, Zaki Naguib Mahmud presented his book *Tajdid al-Fikr al-'Arabi* [*The Rejuvenation of Arab thought*], in which he questioned how we can synthesize a modern Arab thinking.<sup>105</sup>

This resistance was reinforced by the drastic transition in the socio-cultural spectrum which emerged in 1971 with the political succession of Nasser by Sadat. This resulted in a comparably major shift in architectural discourse as well. Sadat's promotion of consumer capitalism tended to marginalize poor communities and glorified the American cityscape through unrestricted investments, shopping malls, and mega five-star hotels, that penetrated Cairo's skyline all along the Nile.<sup>106</sup>

Poor communities, under this Infitah policy, became suppressed as many were removed or walled, such as al-Tayybin in Giza (known as 'Ezbah, Arabic for an agricultural zone owned by an elite individual, who organizes the peasants' living arrangements). After the death of al-Tayybin's owner in 1920 the peasants made new informal enclosures. The area remained deprived of infrastructure services compared to nearby touristic elite areas such as Mena house Hotel. By the end of 1970s, al-Tayybin became surrounded by walls which were constructed to

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<sup>104</sup> *Al-Adab* 11 (1971), 2-17, cited in Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 117.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 120. Zaki Naguib Mahmud, *Tajdid al-Fikr al-'Arabi* (Cairo: al-Shrouk, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. 1993, 1<sup>st</sup> 1971).

<sup>106</sup> See Chapter 5 in Fou'ad Morsy, *Haza al-Infitah al-Iktesady* [*This is the Open Economy*] (Cairo: Daar al-Thaqafa al- Jadeedah, 1977) for the terms of the Infitah policy.

isolate newly erected public and private buildings.<sup>107</sup> On the contrary to these restrictions to poor communities the skyscrapers were haphazardly dispersed along the Nile, to globalize Egypt's economy and attract tourism. Perceived as inappropriate imported ideas, separating the technological advances from the social and cultural context, skyscrapers sparked an outrage debate that further punctuated a shared bi-directional resistance.



Zamalek Tower, Gamal Bakry licensed in 1972.

Sheraton Hotel.

Note the difference of height between these buildings and the buildings in the background.

**Figure 60. High-rise Buildings Overlooking the Nile, Built in 1970s.**<sup>108</sup>

The outrage, manifested in many articles, was not concerned with stylistic issue, it instead was pragmatic and focused on environmental and cultural values, such as 'Aly Raafat "Towards a Modern Arab Architecture and its Relationship with Tradition," (*J.E.S.E*, 1971). Raafat bemoaned the fact that the new technocratic housing typology caused a rupture, in the Arab culture, between privacy needs and social aspirations. He asserts that it is not possible to achieve a distinct Arab expression by romanticizing the past or the European import, but rather by studying the social and natural contexts. This distinct expression, however, cannot be achieved by a single generation, but it will come true throughout the "successive generations that are serious" in their desire to create this expression.<sup>109</sup> In the same vein, Tawfik Abdel-Gawad doubted that most of these large-scale buildings were deliberately being designed by the architect

<sup>107</sup> Petra Kuppinger, "Pyramids and Alleys: Global Dynamics and Local Strategies in Giza," *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the Globalized Middle East*, eds. Diane Singerman, and Paul Amar (Cairo: American University Press, 2006), 327.

<sup>108</sup> Zamalek Tower remained vacant see "Asrar Borg al-Zamalek al-Ghamed" [Secrets of the ambiguous Zamalek Tower], *al-Masry al-Yoom*, April 2011. <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/405108>, (accessed 05/03/2012).

<sup>109</sup> 'Aly Raafat, "Nahw 'Imarah 'Arabyah Hadeethah wa Mada Selataha be al-Toraath," [Towards a Modern Arab Architecture and its Relationship with Tradition], *J.E.S.E* (1971), 9.

or unconsciously driven by this technology. Abdel-Gawad stressed that the rapid capitalist developments led to the neglect of cultural and environmental settings and the decline in the values, “morality,” and “seriousness,” of the profession.<sup>110</sup>

Paradoxically, the two examples, which were given by Abdel-Gawad, as appropriate architecture that responds to the environments, present and future, are two high rises: one is Le Corbusier’s and the other is Sayed Karim’s Zamalek tower (reviewed in *al-‘Imarah* 1957, no.1). Another contradiction in the approach of Abdel-Gawad towards mass production can be identified in his enthusiastic appraisal of the achievements of the educational organization, which built hundreds of schools across the country in a short time, (mostly designed by him as director of that organization), following the “standardization and modular units.”<sup>111</sup> According to Abdel-Gawad, in his book [*Egyptian Architecture in the Twentieth-Century*], the Organization of Educational Buildings in the three years 1954-1957 established 1860 schools across the country.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, Abdel-Gawad’s perceived “seriousness” in design, from a modernist perspective, relates to the well-planned proportions, and pure compositions, which materializes the discursive influence with European modernity. This discursivity is also manifested in Abdel-Gawad’s efforts to feature designs by Western architects that he perceived to be inspired by Arab heritage such as Boston Town Hall, and Sussex University.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, the discursivity of influence and resistance is materialized in the critique of the perplexed state of practice in Egypt which was assigned to both the absence of buildings’ organizational rules and the competing non-associated municipalities, resulted in contradictory decisions.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, architects “endless” curiosity in new designs in new European designs could not be concealed without legislations that would protect the profession from any “exploitive” architect or investor and to manage the capitalist structures overlooking the Nile.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Abdel-Gawad, “The Influence of Technology on Architectural Creativity, Town Planning & Society,” *J.E.S.E.*, no.1(1975). This article was first presented in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Arab Engineers’ Conference in Tunisia, March 1975; and in the International Conference of the International Union of Architects in Madrid, May 1975.

<sup>111</sup> Abdel-Gawad, “Educational Buildings in the Country I,” *J.E.S.E.*, no.4 (1976), 4; “Educational Buildings in the Country II,” *J.E.S.E.* (1979), 14.

<sup>112</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Misr al-‘Imarah*, (1989), 26.

<sup>113</sup> Abdel-Gawad, [Trends of architecture in Arab cities: Its Disadvantages ... and Its Loss of a Distinctive Character], *J.E.S.E.*, no.3 (1975), 22-3.

<sup>114</sup> Yahia ‘Abdullah, “Architectural Image and Function: Applications,” *J.E.S.E.*, no.2 (1976).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 61. Examples for Serious Architecture, as Abdel-Gawad Perceived.

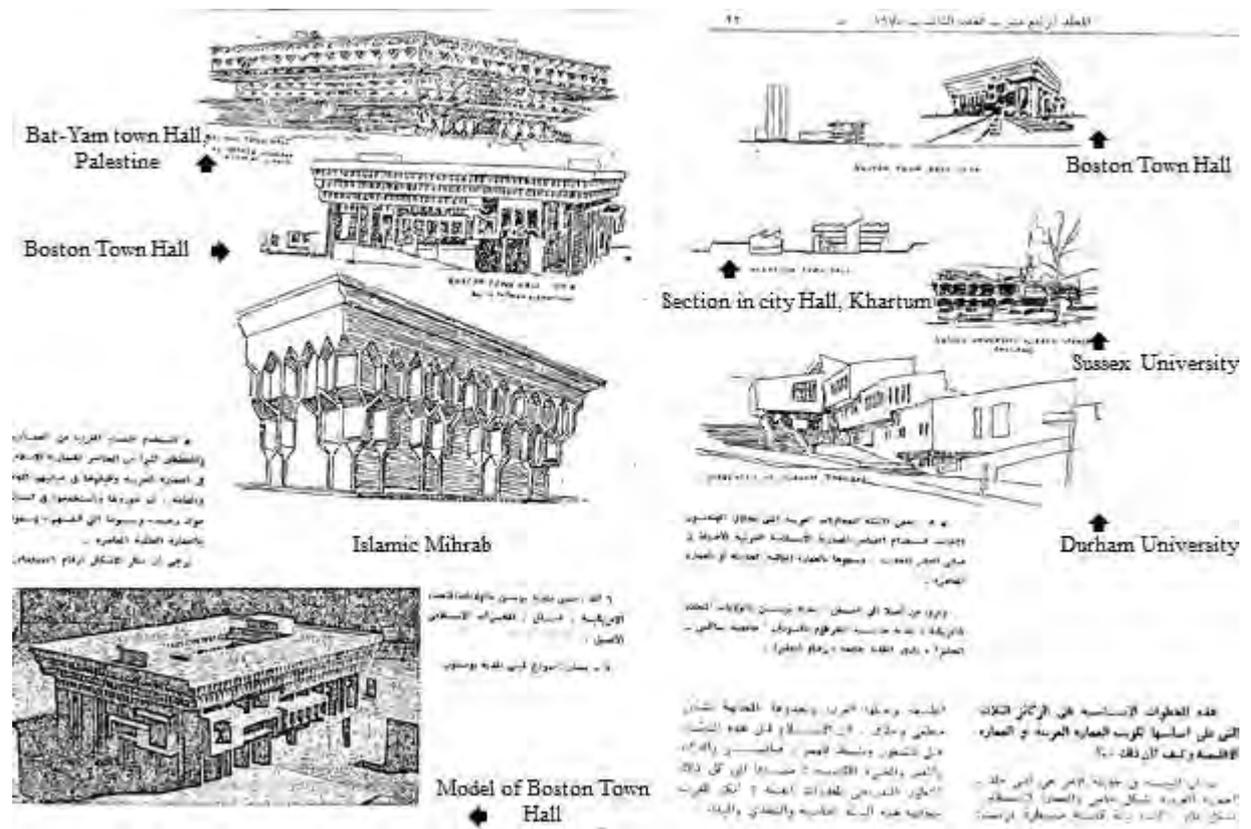


Figure 62. Projects Perceived as Being Inspired by the Arab Heritage.

At this time, resistance to technocratic dominance was so significant that the attempt to reconcile the technological utopia with humanistic and cultural values started to be at the centre of many conferences, such as two subsequent conferences in Pennsylvania (1973), and Cairo (1974), on the impact of high-rise buildings. However, the resistance in relation to cultural concerns were perceived from different perspectives. For example, in the 1974 conference in

Cairo, Sayed Karim proposed to incorporate all the services needed in a neighborhood within each high-rise to fulfill its residents' needs and to save commute time and energy consumption.<sup>116</sup> Karim's modernist attitude continued in the seventies and was discerned in an article that traces the pre-fabricated buildings and standardized modules to the Pharaonic era.<sup>117</sup>

The politicization of the resistance and the retreat to the past was evident in the 1978 decision of the Minister of Information to revive Islamic architectural heritage by the.<sup>118</sup> However, 'A.Ibrahim criticized this decision as it was not associated with any tangible reaction to increase awareness of the concept of 'Islamic architecture.'<sup>119</sup> These conferences and the Minister's decision not only heralded the uncertainty of social-cultural, economic, and environmental sequences of the current practice but also signaled the emergence of a new era of explicit resistance to technocratic utopia.

In conclusion, the dispersed discourse of the 1960s and 1970s—whether in *J.E.S.E*, *al-Ahram*, or the *Bulletin*—shared the attitude of resistance that took two phases. On the one hand, in the sixties, as a post-colonial era the attitude of resistance embedded influence with the principles of imperialism as it stemmed from an awareness of backwardness. This resistance was manifested in the focus on solving rural problems through technocratic typologies which, one contends, manifests the discursive relationship between the two forces of influence and resistance. Whilst challenging the backwardness marginalized stylistic issues and the discourse took a more pragmatic route, a sense of cultural anxiety reinforced by Fathy and 'A.Ibrahim's bi-directional resistance to both the attitude of the ruling socialist regime and the obscure technocratic alienation. Therefore, Asfour asserted, a "confused attitude of Arab cultures toward their traditional environments in the '50s and '60s" ensued from "senses of preservation, destruction, neglect, and remote respect."<sup>120</sup> The 1960s state of confusion and "apparent duality"<sup>121</sup> between technological progress and tradition took place in world architecture over the same period. It started to vanish gradually in the 1970s, when the bi-directional resistance started to be shared after the explosion of Cairo's skyline with Americanized high-rises. In the seventies, the concern was about tradition in general and there have been no calls for a specific style. This concern with tradition in the seventies could be the seeds of the eighties' heightened concern about Islamic architecture, which will be investigated in the following chapter.

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<sup>116</sup> Sayed Karim, "Ecology & Tall Buildings," *J.E.S.E.*, no.4 (1974).

<sup>117</sup> Karim, "The Egyptian Architecture & the Skyline of Civilizations," *J.E.S.E.*, no.4(1975).

<sup>118</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, *Mishwar al-Bahth 'an 'Osool al-'Imarah al-Islamyah*, translated by Ibrahim [In Search for the Roots of Architecture of Islam] (Cairo: CPAS, 2000), 13.

<sup>119</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Maza b'aad al-Qarar," [What is After the Decision?] *Akbaar al-Yoom* 7/8/1978.

<sup>120</sup> Asfour, "Cultural Crisis," 54.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 54.

## 6.4 Rebirth of Local Architectural Discourse (1980-2000)

After the dispersed discourse of the 1960s and 1970s the architectural discourse was reignited first by *'Alam al-Bena'a*, the case study, in 1980. As the thesis contrapuntally examines *AB*, with its clear pronunciation of bipolarity between the West and the East, which, paradoxically, was represented by the discursive 'influence' and 'resistance,' it will examine this discursivity in other coincident discourses such as *al-M'imaryah* and *Medina*.

### 6.4.1 Al- M'imaryah (1982-1989)

*Al-M'imaryah*, *The Architectural* in Arabic, was a professional quarterly magazine published by the Society of Egyptian Architects beginning in 1982. Like any magazine in Egypt, it faced financial difficulties and ceased in 1991 after 16 issues including special combined issues.<sup>122</sup> When first issued, the magazine's chief editor was Yahia 'Eīd<sup>123</sup> and the advisor was Mahmud al-Hakīm.<sup>124</sup> In 1987, Taher al-Sadek, Dean of the Urban Planning School at the University of Cairo in the period from 1993 to 1994, became the editor-in-chief.



Figure 63. Covers of *al-M'imaryah*.

<sup>122</sup> Combined table of contents in appendix I.

<sup>123</sup> The representative of the UIA in Africa since 1978, the general executive of the Society of Egyptian Architects, and a professor in 'Ein Shaams University.

<sup>124</sup> Mahmud al-Hakīm, head of the department of architecture, 'Ain Shams University, designed the students' hospital and clinic in the University of Alexandria, Ramses Telephone Central, al-Nasr street project in Alexandria, and Luxor Museum.

#### 6.4.1.1 *Al-M'imaryah* and the Contemporary Context

In the eighties, the Americanization that was imposed by Sadat's Infitah was epitomized by global capitalism, which began to dominate the world order and erased socialist systems after 1990. Capitalism, as an approach of productivity that meant to achieve profit from capital accumulation is promoted through new technologies, lifestyles, and colonies.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, capitalism relies on dominating far-reaching spaces and markets which was achieved in Egypt during Sadat's rule, especially after 1974 by the Camp David agreement and the consequent conditioned aid, and the Infitah policy. This American dominance was reinforced in Mubarak's regime by the privatization policy that sold both the public sector and public spaces to private mostly American enterprises. This policy, directed by the World Bank and the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), served as the main apparatus through which neo-liberalism, was implemented. The neo-liberalism limited the government's expenditures for housing subsidies, and increased the interest rate on its loans.<sup>126</sup>

Housing problems were at the center of *al-M'imaryah*'s discourse. This was crystallized in a book review by Galelah al-Kady of *Housing and Trap: the Problem and the Solution [al-'Eskaan wa al-Masyadah]*, 1986 by Milad Hanna, Professor of Construction at 'Ain Shams University and Chairman of the Housing Committee of Parliament, 1984-1986.<sup>127</sup> Hanna logically connects the previous definition of capitalism and the housing problem in third world countries, to what he coined the "mechanism of dependency."<sup>128</sup> He argued that by the replacement of traditional housing with foreign models will lead to a continuous reliance on the exportation of raw materials, whose cost led to the depletion of domestic income. According to Hanna, an unpublished study presented at the Conference of the Arab Contractors in Morocco 1983, 1000 milliard dollars, which represents 70 percent of the Arab world income, is spent on housing and 75 percent of this amount is spent to export foreign materials, machines, and technicians. This means that the resources of the Arab world are "transferred to the First World

<sup>125</sup> Peter Taylor, "World Cities and Territorial States under Conditions of Contemporary Globalization," <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/rb/rb9.html>. cited in Khaled Adham, "Globalization, Neoliberalism, and New Spaces of Capital in Cairo," *TDSR* xvii, no.1 (2005).

<sup>126</sup> F. Muselhy, *Al-'Umran Al-'Ashwai fi Misr*, Vol.1 (Cairo: Al-Maglis Al-'ala lel-Thaqafa, 2002). Cited in Adham, "Globalization, Neoliberalism," 22.

<sup>127</sup> Al-Kady, Director of Researches at Institut de Recherches pour le Développement (IRD) and Professor of Architecture, and Urban Planning at Cairo University. In *The Unplanned Urbanization* (1987) she proposes the removal of squatter settlements that invaded agricultural land, as it is "void of any historical, architectural, and human values." A proposal that was seen unfeasible for its expansive budget by Abu-Zaid Rageh, ex-president for the National Center of Housing Research. Cited in Asmaa Nassar, [Egypt Disappears Underneath the Squatter Settlements in 2070], *Rosalayousif* December 2009, <http://www.rosa-online.com/Weekly/News.asp?id=33331>, (accessed 30/04/2012).

<sup>128</sup> Al-Kady, *al-M'imaryah*, no.11/12 (1989), 108.

countries.”<sup>129</sup> Moreover, reports announced by Housing and Development Minister in 1976 mistakenly reported a shortage of 555,000 housing units, while, in fact, the number of units exceeded the number of households by 340,000 units.<sup>130</sup> These reports, “consciously or unconsciously” benefit those who work in the building sector rather than the public.<sup>131</sup> This housing problem was viewed by al-Kady as a new form of colonialism, none of the magazine’s articles stated this colonial impact directly more than al-Kady’s brief statement.

The ‘mechanism of dependency’ endorsed by the neo-liberal market was also materialized in the marginalization of the village from developmental schemes and consequently from *al-M‘imaryah*’s discourse—contrasting the sixties’ discourse. Nasser’s dedicated attention to the village was reflected in the discourse as it was the case in *al-‘Imarah* or in *J.E.S.E.* The village’s general negligence in Sadat’s policy, compared to Nasser who was “Alexandrian by virtue,”<sup>132</sup> as AlSayyad argues, can be assigned to Sadat’s aspiration to claim a place in the city, a claim that is true for Mubarak. Only two articles by Sha‘aban Taha discussed the village’s problems in light of neo-liberal and consumer policy: “The Egyptian Village to Where...” (1983, no.3); and “The Egyptian Village: Between Evolution and Change” (1984, no. 5). Taha discussed the social impact of abandoning traditional housing which promoted the rent system to offset the high building expenses. This led to the disappearance of both the traditional family houses and the co-operational construction practice between peasants. Moreover, Taha discussed the impact of electrical goods, such as televisions and fans, on the productivity of the farmers as it changed their lifestyle and diminished their enthusiasm for farming. However, Taha still views some positive aspects of capitalism, such as the increase in public awareness, which led to improved health and education.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid,108.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid,108.

<sup>131</sup> To correct these reports, Hannah stresses, the survey for the required units should be categorized according to its economic level.

<sup>132</sup> AlSayyad, *Cairo*, 259.

<sup>133</sup> “The Egyptian Village: Between Evolution and Change,” 22.



**Figure 64. View of the Egyptian Village in the Twentieth-Century.**

On the contrary, the boom of tourism and infrastructural services, as part and parcel of neo-liberal market,<sup>134</sup> constituted a very important part of the discourse of this journal. This contrast between marginalizing the village and the interest in tourism and services manifests the phenomenon of spatial segregation and inequality that was condemned by sociologist Mona Abaza. On the one hand, articles about tourism and development, such as “Tourism in Sinai,” (1982, no.1); “Climate and Touristic Housing in Egypt,” (1991, no.15/16); and “The Role of the Public Sector in Development: the First Five Year Plan” (1986, no.6). On the other hand, articles reviewing infrastructural projects such as “The Opening of the New Terminal Building at the Airport in Luxor,” (1987, no.7); and “Lounge no. 2 at Cairo airport: the Evolution and Growth of the Community.” In these articles the reviewers adopted a political position that sheds light on growth and development during that period, rather than professional review.

One of the developmental schemes that was at the center of *al-M‘imariyah’s* discourse is the new cities. The importance of new cities was demonstrated in the conference on “New Settlements and National Development in Developing Countries” organized by the Society of Egyptian Architects in December 1983. Several articles addressed the new cities’ scheme, such as “Planning of New Settlements,” Sayed Gaber (1982, no.1); and “Developing Agricultural and Industrial Self-sufficient Communities in Egypt: New Methods in Developing the Desert,” Mahmud ‘Abdellatif (1989, no.11/12). ‘Abdellatif’s paper condemns the establishment of new cities that rely entirely on large industries. Therefore, he proposed the replacement of large-scale

<sup>134</sup> Adham, “Globalization, Neoliberalism,” 25.

activities with small-scale ones as well as the accessibility of these new cities will present savings and reduced infrastructural costs. Also, with the use of solar energy these new cities will be self-sufficient communities. These proposals manifest the influence attitude as they overlap with the theories of Clarence Stein in Radburn as well as earlier ideas about cities by Corbusier, even as early as Garden City.<sup>135</sup>



Figure 65. New Cities' Proposal.

In light of the neo-liberal policy, low-income families could not withstand any of these housing plans in the eighteen new cities established in the period 1975-1980. Therefore, the problem of homelessness and informal settlements was represented in *al-M'imaryah*, for example “Planning perspectives for housing the homeless in the Egyptian urban context,” Taher al-Sadek (1987, no. 7); and “Informal housing versus public housing in Egypt,” Zakia Shafie (1989, no. 13-14). Shafie’s study is a comparison between the informal, traditional dwellings that have been designed by people, and public housing that was designed and built by governmental organizations. After comparing plans, materials, façades, and colors of the models used, she concluded that these public housing projects by local authorities were “dominated by Western

<sup>135</sup> See Renee Chow, *Suburban Space: The Fabric of Dwelling* (California: University of California Press, 2002). It is worth mentioning that Corbusier’s ideas were criticised by Lewis Mumford in *Yesterday's City of Tomorrow*, and Jane Jacobs’s seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

ideas, and ways of life,” and therefore, it failed to fulfill the needs of users for whom these “dwellings were designed.”<sup>136</sup>

These socio-economic challenges which aggravated the discourse of *al-M'imaryah* prompted the Fifteenth International Conference of UIA, “The role of the architect in the present and future” (Cairo 1985). In this conference it was agreed that the “profession is at the cross road” and the current mainstream architectural solutions are proved temporal in light of “a rapid changing society.”<sup>137</sup> Every civilization faced similar challenges, but these “challenges are now considered to be a measure of their strength.”<sup>138</sup> Charles Correa participated with a paperentitled “The role of the architect in present and future,” which manifested resistance as he stressed the importance of the discovery of common denominators among third world countries that may “involve a renewed interest in our roots.”<sup>139</sup> The beauty of heritage will continue to fascinate architects, and therefore, it is proposed that the next few decades “will bring a change of balance,” balance between heritage and modernity, as well as a balance in architects’ interest in serving the poor as well as the rich.<sup>140</sup> It is worth highlighting here that the recommendations of this conference focused on the training of architects as a prerequisite for a civilized architecture. There was not any explicit reference to any specific style or Islamic architecture, which reflects a blurred ideology of this journal.

#### **6.4.1.2 Attitude of Reference: Blurred Ideology**

Although *al-M'imaryah* covered many contemporary problems it never had an unequivocal stance in the stylistic debate on Islamic architecture. This blurred ideological stance is manifested in the lack of contemporary project reviews, likewise the *J.E.S.E* discussed earlier, as an important ideological apparatus of the architectural discourse. The blurriness of the journal’s collective ideology is evident in the printed statement on the cover page of each single issue: “the views in each article reflect the views of its author only.” This repression was also evident in the brief appraisal of the competition of the Bibliotheca Alexandria and the absence of the outrage generated by this competition (covered in *AB*, chapter 8).<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Zakia Shafie, “Informal Housing Versus Public Housing in Egypt,” *al-M'imaryah*, no.13/14 (1989), 122. E.

<sup>137</sup> D.Bahla, one of the UIA ex-presidents, “The role of the architect at present and future,” translated from Arabic translation by ‘Ali Sayed, *al-M'imaryah*, no.6 (1986), 36-7.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>139</sup> Charles Corea, “The role of the architect at present and future,” *al-M'imaryah*, no. 6(1986). E.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>141</sup> Political influence also become obvious when Mubarak’s speech at the opening of the UIA conference, was published in the editorial, a speech that was not related to architecture. This speech was overlooked in *AB*.

This blurred ideology led to a resilient approach that was heralded since *al-M'imaryah's* inauguration, in which Yehia 'Eīd, the editor-in-chief, avoided explicit reference to Islamic architecture. 'Eīd instead aspired "for architectural solutions that stem from the environment, the citizens' feelings, our daily traditions, and climatic functionalism," to avoid the loss of "cultural values and architectural character of the Egyptian city," amid the rapid developmental plans.<sup>142</sup> He called for a new vision to represent the country,<sup>143</sup> to avoid "contradictions and illogical practices," reflected in a planning crisis, as al-Sadek bemoaned.<sup>144</sup> This new vision was also represented in the call for a "national plan" which "stems from the contemporary reality, and must be supported by legislation to protect Egypt from the conquest of the profitable constructions."<sup>145</sup> The editor-in-chief, then Taher al-Sadek, proposed that this acquired national plan would need to: use modern vocabulary; integrate the environment, as well as humane, and indigenous values, and heritage; shape the city's functions; maintain aesthetics, public taste, and society's needs; incorporate architects' obligations to create a distinctive character for the different areas, especially monumental ones; and remediate informal settlements. This resilience and freedom of formalism that aspires for harmonious architecture can be identified in both the government suppression of Islamic ideologies, fearing extremist ramifications, which resulted in the assassination of Sadat, and to the attitude of influence. While this resilience was manifested in several articles, the attitude of resistance found room within *al-M'imaryah's* boundaries in only three articles.

This resilient ideology was manifested, for example, by Yehia 'Abdallah in "From Tradition." He highlighted the concurrence of both foreign and local influence in what he termed "the humane heritage," while he highlighted three other categories of heritage: local heritage (of a particular city, such as the heritage of Alexandria); regional heritage (of a specific region such as the Bedouin heritage); and national heritage (of a particular country such as the Egyptian heritage). The "humane heritage" accumulated the shared values of humanity that do not differ from one nation to another as "there is no civilization without external influences."<sup>146</sup> Therefore, he proceeded, any call for following precedents, to maintain an identity, without an inquiry in their favor to benefit our modern life is an elimination of freedom of choice, and thus it is "an illegitimate call."<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Yehia 'Eīd, "Editorial," *al-M'imaryah*, no.1 (1982).

<sup>143</sup> 'Eīd, "Editorial," *al-M'imaryah*, no.3 (1983), 5.

<sup>144</sup> Al-Sadek, "Editorial," *al-M'imaryah*, no.15/16 (1991).

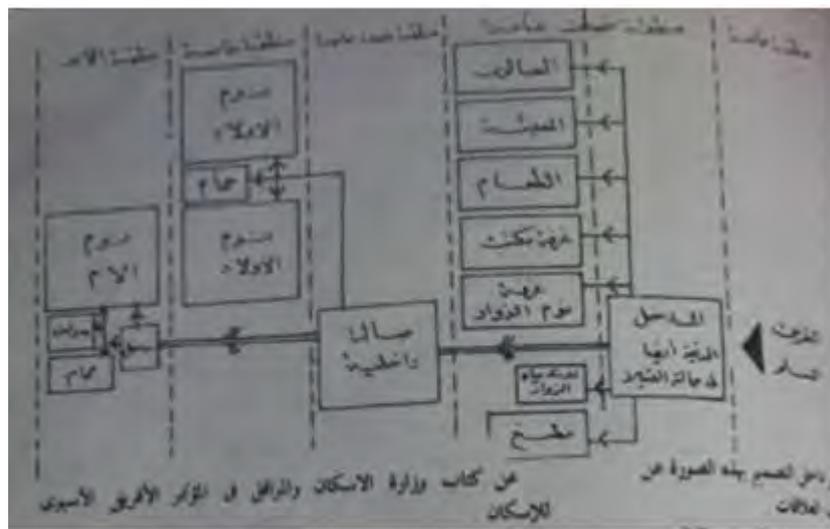
<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>146</sup> 'Abdallah, *al-Mimaryah*, no.9/10 (1988), 40.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 40.

Similarly, Abdel-Gawad logically attempted to prove that there is no civilization that is solely responsible for its own culture and the culture of globalization is an “accumulative shared culture” between the whole world.<sup>148</sup> Endorsing his views, he identified similarities between the influence of the contemporary culture of globalization and the Islamic culture in the past, as both sought to unify world culture. The “shaking self-image,” that was formed in most of the societies was a result of their interaction with global culture, which “is mirrored” on contemporary architecture, and which “resembles a collage of various styles of different histories.”<sup>149</sup> Therefore, “if there is anyone who aspires to return to Islamic architecture, it is easier to change the reality of the societies [which is reflected in the variations of contemporary architecture], and not the mirror itself.”<sup>150</sup>

The attitude of influence is also evident in the discussion of Ahmad al-Ibyary, who highlights the spontaneity of the arrangement of the contemporary house, similar to that of the traditional one as it is still based on societal habits. The only distortion that could have happened in the logic of the contemporary house is the result of neglecting social needs of residents, who after occupation attempt to alter their houses. He finally recommended the use of open systems to guarantee flexible plans for the occupants.<sup>151</sup>



From right to left: Public zone (the reception), flanked by semi-public zone (guest, office, dining rooms, kitchen, and bathroom,) followed by private zone (bedrooms and shower.) *al-M'imaryah* (no.5, 1984).

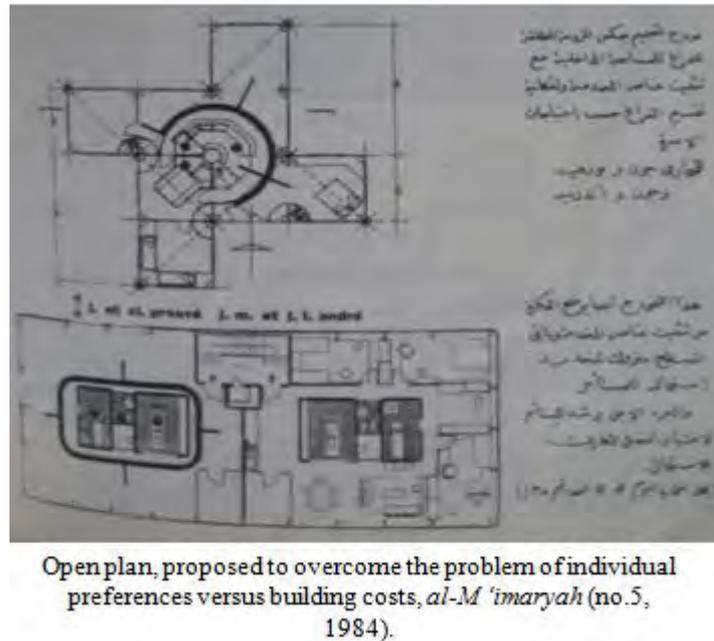
**Figure 66. The Zoning of Contemporary House According to Privacy Levels.**

<sup>148</sup>Tawfik Abdel-Gawad, “Islamic Architecture Thought and Civilization,” *al-Mimaryah*, no.11/12 (1989), 53. He also emphasized that Islamic monuments such as the Dome of the Rock, and Hagia Sophia was built by foreigners, as the Arab have no experience in brick buildings.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid,53.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid,54.

<sup>151</sup> Al-Ibyary, “Contemporary housing,” *al-M'imaryah*, no.5 (1984), 32.



**Figure 67. Examples of the Open System**

The attitude of resistance was manifested in three articles in *al-M'imaryah* which has reinforced the bipolarity between the West and the East. In “Culture and Art,” the first article in the magazine, Ghazy stated that:

Rebuilding Egyptian society requires surveying its properties and identity that had shaped the Egyptian doctrine. The success criterion of this doctrine is based on standards of proficiency rather than quantitative earnings of wealth or power in Western societies.<sup>152</sup>

The distinction of the “Egyptian doctrine” stresses unequivocal resistance which becomes more obvious in the definition of culture as the nation’s “strong impetus,” which generates “creative energy”<sup>153</sup> that establish “cogent connections between” natural and historical gifts, and the contemporary built environment. This connection was inspirational in the Pharaonic cities as well as in the splendour of the Islamic cities and its negligence is manifested in the architectural masses that “suffocate” the Nile and “diminish its pride.”<sup>154</sup> Whilst the poor economic conditions are very influential in the contemporary problems of the Arab world, he bemoans, the wealth of some other countries turned out to be a “temptation” to import alien models.

These imported models were condemned by ‘Aly Bassuny in “Architecture and the Western complex.” He criticized the designs of foreign firms, particularly Hilton Ramsees “the prison on the Nile” (also criticized in *AB*); and the very wide corridors of Holiday Inn. He called for

<sup>152</sup>Badr el-Dein Ghazy, *al-M'imaryah*, no.1(1982).

<sup>153</sup>Ibid,12.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid,12.

selective importation, if needed, and rejecting “the outdated ideas.”<sup>155</sup> He bemoaned the “Western complex” in the Egyptian perceptions that exempt foreign firms from taxations in addition to their five times higher rates than the Egyptian ones. This same approach from Western practice in Egypt has also been stressed in the article entitled “How can we allow foreign firms to practice architecture in Egypt?”<sup>156</sup> This attitude of resistance was also highlighted in “The Problem of Heritage and Civilization” by ‘Aly Bassuny who called for a lucid application of Islamic architecture and condemned the kitsch use of its visual elements. Stressing the functionality of these elements, Bassuny confirmed that its principles “still represent an essential part of contemporary ideas” compared with Pharaonic civilization, whose principles are worn out.<sup>157</sup>

Moreover, the limited review of Western projects, which did not exceed twelve articles and none of them discussed contemporary projects, materializes the attitude of resistance. These articles were mainly concerned with the basic concepts of international architecture, such as “functionalism,” “organic architecture,” and “Western Technology with Eastern Tradition: Lessons from Japan.”<sup>158</sup> This suppression of the Western canon can also be noted in the very limited reference to the Aga Khan Award and its winning projects, compared with *AB* (Chapter 8), with the exception of a brief mention of Halawa House of ‘Abdelwahid al-Wakil in the second issue.

In contrast to the lack of Western projects reviews, the historical reviews reached twenty-one including four articles of the twentieth-century pioneer Egyptian architects<sup>159</sup> (‘Ali Labib Gabr (1988, no.9/10); Abu Bakr Khairat (1989, no.11/12); Mustafa Shawky (no.15/16, 1991), and the review of one thesis focused on Coptic architecture “Evolution of the designs of the Orthodox Churches in Egypt,” (1982, no.2). The other articles are focused on Islamic architecture with its splendour and functionality such as “The constants and variables in the design of Mosques,” Kamal Abdel-Fatah (1982, no.2); “Sultan Qalauoon Compound,” Kamal al-Dein Sameh (1982, no.1); and “Architecture of Islamic societies in Cairo at the end of the Mamluks” by Muhamad Ameen (1989, no.11/12). The suppression of the Western voice and intensification of the Islamic

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<sup>155</sup> Bassuny, *al-M‘imariyah*, no.1, 21.

<sup>156</sup> Unknown author, “How do we Allow Foreign Firms to Practice Architecture in Egypt?,” *al-M‘imariyah*, no.1, (1982), 18.

<sup>157</sup> Bassuny, *al-M‘imariyah*, no.3 (1983), 6.

<sup>158</sup> Hesham Sameh, *al-M‘imariyah*, no.2, (1982). The article reviews projects that diffused new technological solutions with traditional ones in Japan, such as The Nakagin Capsule Tower (1972) by Kisho Kurokawa, one of the earliest examples of Metabolism. See Barry Bergdoll, Peter Christensen, *Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008); and Kisho Kurokawa, *Metabolism in Architecture* (Studio Vista, 1977).

<sup>159</sup> Hassan Fathy has not been mentioned except in a brief comment in the occasion of his reception of the title of the First Engineer in 1987. However, a special issue was devoted to Wissa Wassef (no.13/14, 1989), whose work was inspired by Fathy.

historical one reveals the attitude of resistance that was disguised by the resilient and ambiguous references.

The editor-in-chief, in the last issue (1991, no.15/16), acknowledged the failure of any attempts to resolve the problems of the profession unless we restructure both our legislations “and enlighten society.”<sup>160</sup> This is because there is a state of “duality” or “double standards” that allowed the coexistence of backward social development along with modernized infrastructure, which led to the separation between professional legislations from reality, a reality that is full of “contradictions and irrational practices.”<sup>161</sup> This sense of enlightenment, similar to *al-‘Imarah*, materializes the resistance to backwardness, which is measured by foreign standards that heightened the discursivity between the two essentials of discourse, resistance and influence.

The overall departure from both the explicit rhetoric of resistance and the question of formalism, compared with the beginning of the century, is crystallized in the recommendations of the Permanent Conference of the Egyptian Architects “Ewa’a Mn la M’awa Lahom” [House for the Homeless] (1987), which was pragmatically concerned with controlling capitalism and informal settlements. This heralded the demise of formalism, in contrast to the Fourth Arab Engineering Conference (1950) which called for the international style, and the Eighth Arab Engineering Conference (1963) which called for Arabization. But, will this demise of formalism lead to the demise of the rhetoric of resistance?

#### **6.4.2 Medina (1998-2002)**

*Medina* [Arabic for *City*], a short-lived bilingual and bi-monthly magazine, was first published in January 1998 and ceased in April 2002.<sup>162</sup> With a total of twenty-one issues, it is the third architectural magazine in the twentieth-century. *Medina*’s editorial board consists of: the American graduate, Dr. ‘Amr ‘Abdel-Kawi (chairman); Dr. ‘Ali Gabr; Dr. Tamer El-Khorazy; Hazem El-Mestikawy; and Said Sorour. In the first issue, the editor-in-chief asserted that *Medina* aims to develop an “understanding of ‘self,” as well as an “understanding of others.”<sup>163</sup> However, the rhetoric of resistance is implicitly materialized in his statement that the inception of the magazine was “triggered” by the question of identity which has “no acceptable excuses” whereby Egypt should contribute “its share to the international scene, on the conceptual level if

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<sup>160</sup>Al-Sadek, “Editorial,” *al-M‘imaryah*, no.15/16 (1991).

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>In *Medina*’s 12<sup>th</sup> issue, the editors bemoaned the difficulty of sustaining an ongoing publication in Egypt. They also bemoaned the demise of ‘*Alam al Bena’ a*, “For nearly two decades, ‘*Alam al-Bena’ a* forged a unique niche that catered to students of architecture in Egypt. In a field with essentially no forum for intellectual exchange, ‘*Alam al-Bena’ a*’s closure is especially tragic.”

<sup>163</sup>“Editorial,” *Medina*, no.1 (1997). All quotes used from *Medina* are originally in English.

not the technological one.”<sup>164</sup> Therefore, *Medina* is an “ambitious project” by a group of architects, designers, and artists to collectively present Egyptian architecture and the international architecture to each other.



Figure 68. The Cover of *Medina*'s Premier and Second Issues.

*Medina*, with its new and dynamic subjects, can be considered the vehicle through which the history of the architectural discourse moves into the twenty-first century. This magazine, like *al-'Imarah*, paid great attention to fine arts in many articles and many reviews of exhibitions' such as "Aswan International Sculpture Symposium," (1998, no.3); and "The 7th International Biennale of Cairo 15/12/98 to 15/2/99" (1999, no.6). *Medina*'s editors dedicated many articles to interior design, such as "A classically decorated apartment in Giza" (1998, no.2); and "Shops in perfect harmony" (1998, no.4). *Medina* is the first Egyptian architectural journal to pay attention to the profession of landscape architecture which is always perceived as "a superficial act" to plant outdoor spaces.<sup>165</sup> The journal reviewed many projects for functional landscapes that integrated nature with culture, such as the project of Shallot Hilton by Tarek Bashir (1998, no.3), and Port Said Historic Park by Dalilah al-Kerdany (1999, no.8). There was also a critique of the "cosmetic approach"<sup>166</sup> of Gulf course, a phenomenon that dominated the new cities, by Asfour in "Rendering Green: An Alternative to the Golf Course Solution" (1999, no.9). But, in light of this variety of interests and implicit resistance, how will *Medina*'s editors introduce the contemporary realm?; and which attitude of reference was embedded within the representation of this contemporary realm, to convey certain messages to local and international context?

<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Khaled Asfour, "Leisure at Shallot Hilton: Cascading, Sliding, Splashing!," *Medina*, no.3(1998),86.

<sup>166</sup>Asfour, 47.

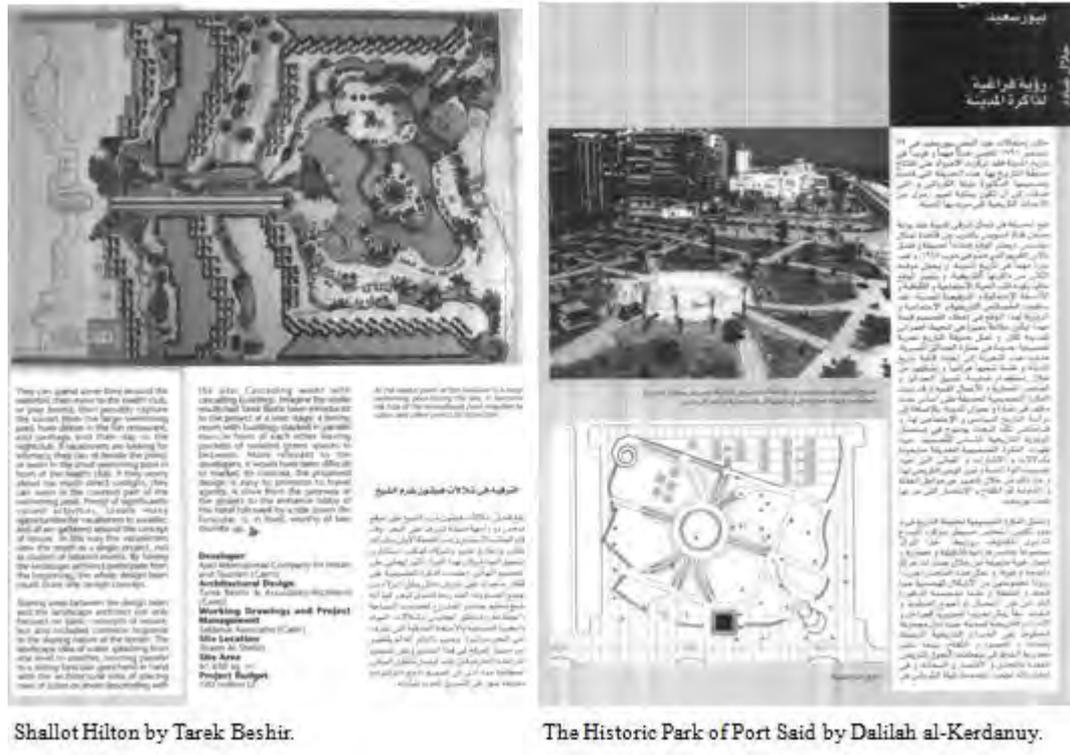


Figure 69. Examples of Landscape Projects Reviewed in Medina.

#### 6.4.2.1 Medina’s reformulation of the contemporary realm

The selective review of the contemporary local context frames Medina’s editors’ perceptions about this context and the image they decided to convey. Moreover, this selective process embodies the self-referent resistance attitude that tuned the local discourse and stemmed from the unconscious influence with European then American styles. The contemporary context in Medina was mainly represented through the review of large-scale projects that achieved success in integrating tradition with modern concepts. The reviewed projects were the ones perceived by the editors as valuable material that deserves “to become part of the international discourse.”<sup>167</sup>

Therefore, Medina focused on major large-scale projects, such as Bank Faisal al-Islamy (1998, no.3), and Qasr al-Funun (1998, no.4)—with relative suppression of endemic problems, such as housing or village epidemics. This construction of the contemporary context by Medina’s editors according to their aspirations not reality, epitomizes a resistance to backwardness. Moreover, the projects reviewed are mostly projects that are environmentally friendly or culturally responsible, which indicate an implicit resistance attitude. These projects are projects that either reformulate historical elements without copying the past, or re-appropriate

<sup>167</sup>Questionnaire completed by ‘Amr ‘Abdel-Kawi (September 2011), see Appendix II. He elaborated: “The Magazine is the kitchen [laboratory] that ensures that such material has value and is presented in the appropriate professional level to become part of the international discourse.”

innovative concepts without reiterating the international models. The extensive use of historical elements was highly criticized by the practicing architect Magda Mustafa who questioned the functional relevance of the kitsch of the “Egyptian theme-ing”<sup>168</sup> in touristic villages such as Golden Sheraton Soma Bay, the Red Sea, and designed by WAT &G. In contrast, the Coral Bay resort, Sharm El-Sheikh, by ‘Adel Mokhtar, is presented as a successful integration of historicalgeometric configurations of Andalusian Islamic Mediterranean heritage.<sup>169</sup>



**Figure 70. The Incorporation of Historical Elements in Touristic Villages.**

An examination of the work of Fathy’s disciples was relevant to the promotion of typical typologies of historic reformulation, which *Medina*’s editors aspired to endorse. Yasmeen Siddiqui devoted an article to Fathy’s disciples and how they maintained the notion of resistant architecture, following the path of their guru.<sup>170</sup> Studying Muhammed el-Sharkawy’s 6<sup>th</sup> of October residential block, and the design of Movenpick Quseir by the couple Ramy el-Dehan and Soheir Farid, Siddiqui affirmed, both designs are genuine attempts to reformulate traditional vocabulary. El-Sharkawy implemented the traditional house framework with the qa‘ah, iwān and windcatcher, as an example of rooting the typical modern housing within local heritage and environment. Also, in Movenpick Quseir, el-Dahan and Farid sensitively reformulated the dome in a way that “neither challenges nor obstructs local topography, nor upsets the social fabric.”<sup>171</sup> Siddiqui also discussed the two works of Gamal ‘Amer’s Fustat Pottery Center and of Ahmad

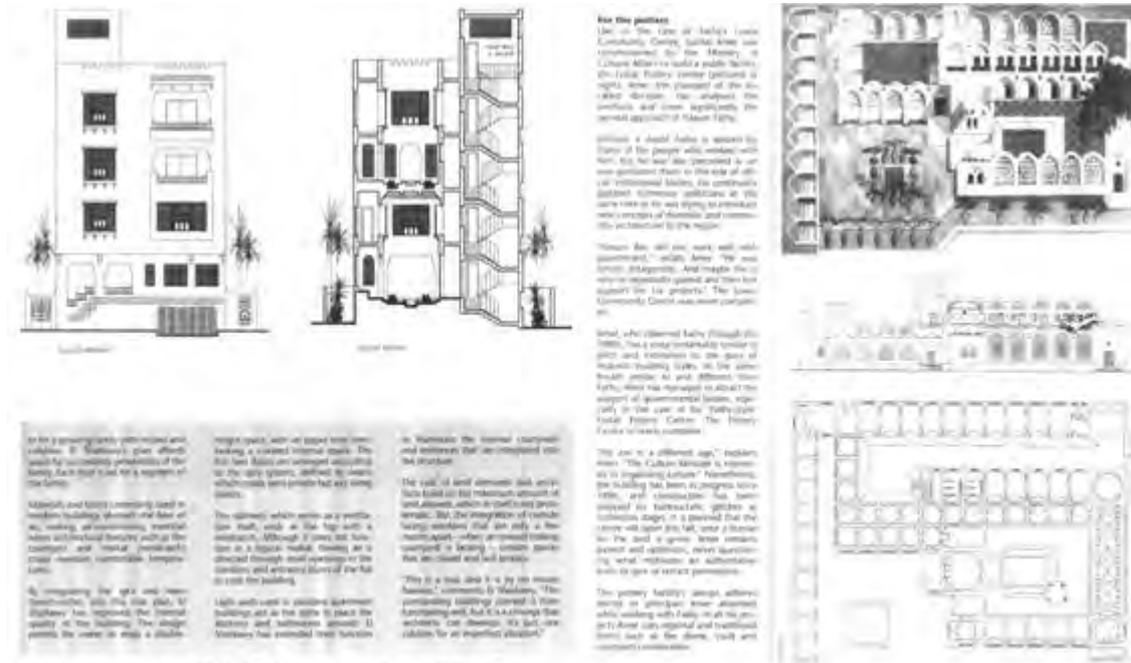
<sup>168</sup>Magda Mustafa, “Consumable culture,” *Medina*, no.15 (2000), 36.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 34, trans.

<sup>170</sup> “Through a Master’s Pupils: Four Projects by Disciples of Hassan Fathy,” *Medina*, no.15 (2000), 46.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 46.

Hamid's family house in Dahshur and the way they both more strictly adhered to Fathy's vocabulary.



Façade and section of el-Sharkawy's residential block  
Note: the use of the stairwell as ventilation shaft

Plans and façade of Fustat Pottery Center



Fustat Pottery Center with its domes, vaults and geometrical openings.

**Figure 71: The Work of Fathy's Disciples**

While *Medina*'s editors promoted successful ways of reformulating history it promoted the re-appropriation of new concepts, such as 'environmentally friendly' architecture and 'green architecture' in order to harmonize with the traditional context. In this way, the new concept of green architecture was perceived as an approach of resistance, as addressed in Asfur's article "Is it Green or Bleak?", presented at the Exhibition of the Trends of Contemporary Egyptian Architecture. While Asfur bemoaned the spread of passive-energy office buildings in Egypt and

described the current practice as “bleak,”<sup>172</sup> he highlighted some examples that achieved balance between green architecture as a modern concept and tradition, such as the Student Centre at the University of Helwan, by Muhammad Tawfik Abdel-Gawad and Gazali Kesseba’s design of Central Bank, branch of northern Cairo. Other projects which fall under the same theme of culturally integrative environmentally friendly design, include Misr University for Science and Technology,<sup>173</sup> and the new campus of the American University of Cairo (AUC). The notion of resistance becomes conspicuous when the editor in 2000 stressed the need for “Ideas for this Millennium,” ideas that connect “social aspiration and design quality.”<sup>174</sup> This social role of the architect has been perceived as “the only way to find a positive outlook to globalization, one that has an enriching role rather than threatening.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Asfour, “Is it Green or Bleak? This year’s Egyptian Contemporary Architecture Exhibition,” *Medina*, no.19 (2001), 44. He called for the inclusion of green architecture principles in the organizational building rules in Egypt.

<sup>173</sup> Designed by Professor Ahmad ‘Abdin and reviewed by Galal ‘Abada, “Misr University for Science and Technology,” *Medina*, no.11 (2000). This design was assigned to Boston Design Collaborative (BDC) in partnership with Carol R.Johnson Associates.

<sup>174</sup> Asfour, “Editorial,” *Medina*, no.11 (2000).

<sup>175</sup> Aly Gabr, “Interview with Chadirji,” *Medina*, no.6 (1999), 61.



New AUC Campus shows the connected courtyards

Misr University's central library, the roof successfully compensates modern and traditional formation

American University. ↑

Student Centre, Helwan University. ↘

**Figure 72. Examples of Implementing Green Architecture with Traditional Vocabulary.**

These ‘culturally and environmentally friendly’ projects present one of the contemporary design trends that Ashraf Salama highlighted in the exhibition of Trends of Contemporary Egyptian Architecture,<sup>176</sup> which have been perceived as the “architecture of resistance,” according to Heba Safey el-Deen. Salama confirmed that the nineties “have not produced developed trends, but a collection of attitudes.”<sup>177</sup> He categorized three current trends: 1. Designs that simulate history manifested in Ahmad Mito’s Pharaonic design of The Supreme Court of

<sup>176</sup> The curator of this exhibition was Dr. Yehia al-Zeiny, president of the Architectural Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture.

<sup>177</sup> Ashraf Salama, “Running with or against the wind: A closer look at the Egyptian architecture in the nineties,” *Medina*, no.19 (2001), 34.

Egypt, Farouk al-Gohary's design of Oriental Weavers' Heliopolis Headquarters, and Faisal Bank, which "reinterpret[s] the past," without copying, as Salama emphasized; 2. Designs that are based on personal impulses represented in Farouk al-Gohary's design of the Ministry of Finance and Tax Department; and Magd Masarra's design of the Integrated Care Society; and 3. The cultural and environmental based designs represented, in this exhibition, the "architecture of resistance."<sup>178</sup> Salama divided this third trend into four sub-categories: Collaborative design and building processes; Regional modernism; Rehabilitation by people participation; and Adaptive Re-use architecture. The collaborative design is illustrated in the design of Hagr el-Dabiah Village by Ahmad 'Abdou and Samy 'Abdel-'Aziz to accommodate the flood victims in Qena. Regional modernism is illustrated in 'Abdelhalim 'Abdelhalim's Qasr al-Funoun and Serena Beach resort by el-Dahan and Farīd. People's participation is illustrated in Salah Zakī's restoration of a group of nineteenth-century houses. The adaptive re-use is illustrated in the Ceramic Museum by 'Aly Raafat.<sup>179</sup> Finally, Salama summarized a mode to better achieve the "architecture of resistance," it is indispensable to support "the emergence of sincere architectural reactions to prevailing cultural and environmental demands."<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>Heba Safey el-Deen, "Reflections on the exhibition of the Contemporary Architecture," *Medina*, no.19, (2001), 26.

<sup>179</sup>Salama, "Running with or against the wind," *Medina*, no.19, 34.

<sup>180</sup>Safey el-Deen, "Reflections on the exhibition," *Medina*, no.19, 29.



**Figure 73. Design Trends in Egypt.**

This multiplicity of trends raised rigorous discussions that manifested the notion of resistance of leading intellectuals and architects in the exhibition. For Al-Zeiny, the deterioration of the built environment is due to the cultural chaos that the country suffers from.<sup>181</sup> For el-Sayed Yasin, Advisor of *al-Ahram* Center for Political and Strategic Studies, retrieving an architectural identity requires the creation of a shared “paradigm” that is centralized mainly around shared metaphysics, socio-cultural paradigms, symbolic principles, “and lastly shared constructs, representational apparatus and dominant aspects of performance.”<sup>182</sup> However, for ‘Aly Raafat, this pluralism of trends can be considered “a healthy phenomenon” if viewed as a third phase of the evolution from the first conceptual phase of modernist approach of the forties, to the second phase of duality between modernism and post-modernism.<sup>183</sup>

The inclusion of successful ideas and the exclusion of any critique of the real context while signifying an attitude of self-referent resistance that does not acknowledge the real challenges, conveys an image of a context that has the potential capacity to retrieve its identity. This reformulation of the contemporary realm is supported through a twofold process that transgresses

<sup>181</sup>Ibid, 29.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid, 29.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid, 29.

both time and national boundaries and embeds the Western and historical voices within the discourse.

#### **6.4.2.2 Medina and the Western and Historical Canon**

On the one hand, the national and cultural transgression is manifested in their influence with the international canon in spite of the resistance attitude manifested in the representation of the contemporary realm. On the other, transgressing time boundaries was reflected in the editorial commitment to review successful solutions for preservation projects that integrate history and present.

##### **Transgressing Cultural Boundaries**

Influenced by the new world globalization,<sup>184</sup> *Medina*'s editors, in the first editorial, expressed that traversing national boundaries is indispensable "to present a comparative portrait that is deeper and more meaningful than its unifocal counterpart."<sup>185</sup> Therefore, *Medina*'s editors affirm the importance of "keeping abreast" of international events, to keep the readers "on top of development."<sup>186</sup> The notion of transgression becomes explicit in the theme of the fourth issue "Transgressed cultural boundaries," which included two interviews: one with Franco Audrito and the other with 'Abdelhalim 'Abdelhalim.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, many international events were reviewed, such as 'Hannover Expo 2000,' (no.9: 1999); and 'Lisbon Expo 98,' (1998, no.4).

Most importantly, the reviewed international projects which conformed to the balance between cultural and environmental ideas sought by the editors, embodied the rhetoric of resistance, such as the Prophet's Holy Mosque in Madina and the el-Gouna's Golf Resort in Egypt. The review of the extension of the Prophet's Holy Mosque, designed by the Egyptian architect Muhammad Kamal Ism'ail, and its subcontractor is SL Sonderkonstruktionen Und Leichtbau GMBH (Germany), celebrated the integration of technological application in a traditional context.<sup>188</sup> The second project is by the renowned architect Michael Graves in el-

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<sup>184</sup> Globalization provoked outrage at this time, many books emerged in Egypt and the region: Muhammad al-Jabry, *Issues in Contemporary Thought* (Beirut: The Center of Arab Studies, 1997); Sayed Yaseen, *Globalization and the Third Way* (Cairo: The Egyptian Authority for Book, 1999); Burhaan Ghulyoon and Samir Ameen, *The Culture of Globalization or Globalizing Culture* (Beirut: Daar al-Fekr al-M'uaser, 1999). Also, conferences in Egypt, such as 'Trends of Economic Globalization and its Impact on Companies and Arab Institutions' 1996; and conference held by the Supreme Council of Culture in Egypt on "Globalization and Issues of Arab Identity," 1998.

<sup>185</sup> Editorial, *Medina*, no.2 (1998).

<sup>186</sup> Editorial, *Medina*, no.3(1998).

<sup>187</sup> 'Abdelhalim 'Abdelhalim, BSc. from Cairo University (1963), Msc. from Oregon University, U.S.A.(1970), and Ph.D from California University (1978). He was visiting professor at Harvard (1983-1989) and a recipient of AKAA in 1992.

<sup>188</sup> Muhammad Ashour "Technological Advances in the Extension of the Prophet's Holy Mosque in Madina," *Medina*, no.3 (1998). Architect K.Ismail (1908- 2008), PhD in Islamic architecture, Sorbonne

Gouna, which started in 1997 with a sensitive fusion between traditional elements and Graves' artistic vision. This is the second time Graves uses the traditional rural Egyptian architecture. The first time was the Sheraton Miramar Hotel.<sup>189</sup>



The combination of traditional domes with the postmodernist stamp of Graves.

**Figure 74. El-Gouna Resort by Graves.**

One of the best examples of the transgression of cultures in *Medina* is Le Corbusier's critical extraction of the 'machine for living' framework to harmonize with the Tunisian pure vernacular forms.<sup>190</sup> From 1921 to 1925, Le Corbusier's projects in southern France, particularly Marionettes, and Bordeaux, were built about the same time when his drawings of Seaside Villa at Carthage was released.<sup>191</sup>

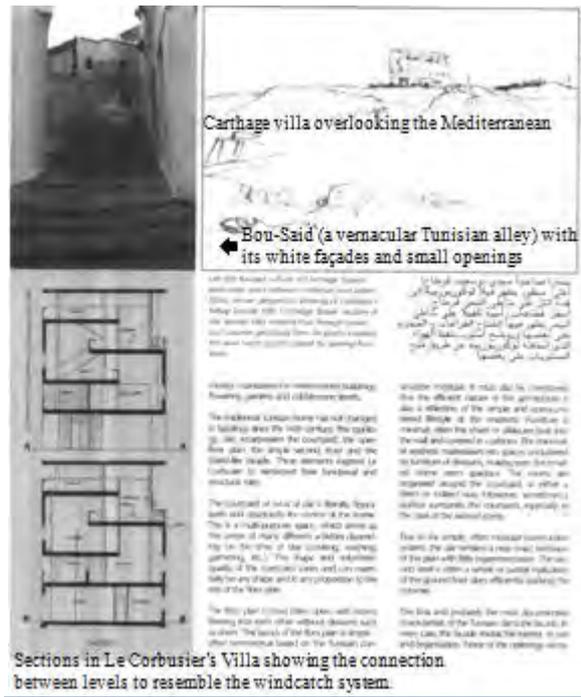
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University(1933).One of his well-known projects is Mugamm'al-Tahrir and Gamailan apartment block reviewed in *al- 'Imarah*, no.7/8 (1941) and *Medina*, no.4 (1998).

<sup>189</sup> Magda Mustafa, "Consumable culture," *Medina*, no.15 (2000),36.

<sup>190</sup> Tamy Gabr, "Le Corbusier rendition of the Tunisian Vernacular," *Medina*, no.18 (2001), 45.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 45.



**Figure 75. Le Corbusier’s Tunisian experiment.**

Furthermore, the ninth issue was devoted to international projects. According to the editorial, featuring international projects, side by side with local ones, is the only way to enable “a dialogue” between “equally strong discourses” of West and East.<sup>192</sup> The absolute rejection of forms such as Zaha Hadid’s LF building or Frank Gehry’s Bilbao Museum on the Egyptian landscape, not only disables such a dialogue but also disables the ability of the profession to “fashion” the development of society, and in return, fashion itself.”<sup>193</sup> While the notion of fashion here echoes the imperialist rhetoric of modernization and enlightenment, the resistance rhetoric is materialized in the editor’s emphasis on the need for a “conceptual” discourse that is indispensable to “this region if it is to regain its rightful position in the world of architecture and design.”<sup>194</sup> In this way, while the notion of transgression stems from the ‘influence’ by American designs as a source of inspiration in fashioning and reformulating the contemporary realm it yet embeds an attitude of resistance to backwardness.

**Transgressing Time Boundaries:**

*Mednia’s* editors also sought to cross temporal boundaries, through the review of preservation projects that successfully “intermingle” past and present.<sup>195</sup> The second issue was devoted to

<sup>192</sup>“Editorial,” *Medina*, no.9 (1999).

<sup>193</sup>Ibid.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid.

<sup>195</sup>Yasmeen Siddiqui, “Architectural Assaults: New buildings intermingle with historic assets,” *Medina*, no.13 (2000), 70.

reviews of preservation projects initiated by the government at that time. Reviewers were critical of the “museumification” approach, of transforming the urban area around the monument from its spontaneous vibe to an “urban utopia desecrated by modernity.”<sup>196</sup> For example, rejecting the removal of cemeteries, al-Ibrashy questioned the “modern stigma attached to the cemetery,” she proposed to “embrace the cemetery’s unique nature” and convert it to an educational place (for art students), and tourism facility.<sup>197</sup> Her proposal, although resistive as it protects the erasure of heritage, is still based on the modern rationale to authoritatively reorder the spontaneity. This “inclusion of social and environmental work in conservation” is the same approach of to rehabilitation of Bayt al-Suhaymy, which was reused for cultural meetings and celebrations,<sup>198</sup> and ‘Aziza Fahmy Palace which was converted into a restaurant.<sup>199</sup> In this way, *Medina*’s temporal transgression, manifested in the focus on the process of adaptive reuse for development, stems from the attitude of resistance to backwardness.



**Figure 76. Preservation projects in *Medina*.**

This attitude of challenging temporal boundaries is also manifested in the editors’ inclusion of the twentieth-century heritage which was marginalized in *al-M‘imariyah* and *AB*, such as ‘Aly Gabr’s series of articles “Ayrout Building, A Rediscovery” (no.2, 1998); “Immeubles Gamalian:

<sup>196</sup> May Al-Ibrashy, “Sabil Al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawun,” *Medina*, no. 2(1998), 36. E. Al-Ibrashy shows two juxtapositions of al-Mu‘iz Street in two different times: one in the reign of King Farouk, in which it was empty and cleaned by water every day, and the second, 600 years before Farouk, when it was vibrant with crowds, described al-Maqrizi.

<sup>197</sup> Al-Ibrashy, “The Cemetery of the Living: Cairo’s Al-Qarafa,” *Medina*, no.12 (2000). She condemns the views of the former Cairo governor ‘Umar ‘Abdel al-’Akhir’s, discernment that the cemetery has to be expelled from the capital along with its misery and poverty.

<sup>198</sup> Galal ‘Abada, “Al-Darb al-Asfar: Limited Restoration to Wider Conservation,” *Medina*, no.13 (2000), 60.

<sup>199</sup> Shahira Sami, “Resisting the Test of Time: Aziza Fahmy Palace, Alexandria,” *Medina*, no.5 (1999), 69.

A Rediscovery” (1998, no.4); and “L’Union Vie de Paris” (1999, no.7). These reviews logically stressed the editorial conviction that the country’s identity stems from the multi-layers of heritage rather than from the retreat to a specific style. This lack of belonging to a specific style becomes unequivocal in the analysis of the positions of contemporary historians of Islamic architecture. ‘Aly Gabr aims to locate Islamic architecture within the modern context.<sup>200</sup> With reference to Gulzar Haidar’s distinction between traditionalists’ approaches (divided between the pure historians, the spiritually inspired historians, and the Shar‘ia oriented historians),<sup>201</sup> Gabr concludes that “traditional Islamic architecture” is a religious sentiment that lacks the rational logic of contemporary modernity. Gabr’s modernist stance is reflected in the absence of calls for any style within *Medina*’s space, and reflects the discursive attitude of influence.

While the national and cultural “transgression” manifests the ‘influence’ of the modern West, the “transgression” of time manifests a ‘resistance’ to the erasure of the history by the modern architecture. The simultaneous existence of both notions in *Medina*’s discourse is also crystallized in its editors’ reformulation of the contemporary context, which complicates the rationale of *Medina*’s discourse. In this way, the two essentials of discourse, influence and resistance, worked side by side in the discourse since *al-‘Imarah*’s modernist discourse whose editor used both notions as an apparatus to implant his modernist agenda.

To conclude, the influence and resistance continue to discursively shape the local discourse. On the one hand, the influence continue to take the shape of the attitude of resistance to backwardness in solving indigenous problems since the 1940s in *al-‘Imarah* and until the closure of the century. This influence or the resistance to backwardness within the local discourse was characterized by a notion of enlightenment and reorder which unconsciously embodies the principles of imperialism. This resistance to backwardness in the 1940s and 50s, with the call for international style, took the shape of rooting modernism within heritage. Also, this this resistance to backwardness besides the regime’s institutionalization of technocratic socialism in the 1960s followed by technocratic capitalism in the 1970s led to the marginalization of stylistic issues and provoked bi-directional resistance, resisting both the impact of the internal regimes and external forms of progress. This resistance culminated in the eighties in *AB*, accompanied by attenuated ideologies in the discourses of *al-M‘imaryah*, and *Medina*. While *al-M‘imaryah*’s ideology, under the governmental agency, was blurred, both

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<sup>200</sup> Gabr, “Image or Essence?How to Look at Traditional Art and Architecture,”*Medina*, no.13 (2000).

<sup>201</sup> Gabr elaborates, according to symposium of AKAA: the pure historians analyse influences and precedents, such as Creswell and Grabar; the spiritually inspired historians construct correspondences between building’s motifs and sacred texts, such as Sayyed H.Nasr and Burckhardt; and the Shari‘a inspired historians construct connections between Shari‘a and urban architectural forms, such as Jamil Akbar.

## Local Discourse

attitudes of influence and resistance were embedded in the focus on solving contemporary problems as well as the emphasis on Islamic splendour. In *Medina*, the influence was embedded in the resistance to backwardness that provoked selective review of contemporary architecture accompanied by the notion of national transgression. Meanwhile, the resistance in Medina was embedded in the temporal transgression and the promotion of the adaptive reuse of heritage. *Medina*'s transgression of temporal and national boundaries was further highlighted in *AB*'s four voices: historical, Western, contemporary and editorial that unequivocally called for resistance which will now be discussed.

## **7 Introduction to 'Alam al-Bena'a**

## 7.1 Introduction

In the effort to track the rationale of the architectural discourse in Egypt in Part I and II, I intended to situate the two 'outside-in' and 'inside-out' perspectives within the historical context to investigate shared premises in constituting an 'identity', claimed in both Western and local discourses. I argued that the history of colonialism continued to play a decisive role in both perceptions of identity and constructions of identity, consciously and unconsciously. This argument will be further accentuated in the following section that rigorously examines one local space of knowledge, the discourse of '*Alam al-Bena*'a (*AB*), through a thematic investigation of its discourse and its particularity, as a case study. This chapter provides a historical overview of the journal and its founder's background to help in the contextualization of its content within the broader context discussed in the previous chapters. First hand interviews and questionnaires completed by pioneer architects and academics (see appendix II) provided significant insights into the impact and reception of the magazine and the aims and objectives of its editorship.<sup>1</sup>

## 7.2 '*Alam al Bena*'a's Board and Objectives

The journal published by the Centre of Planning and Architectural Studies (CPAS) in Cairo, was founded by two academics, Dr. 'Abdelbaki Ibrahim (1926-1999) and Dr. Hazem Ibrahim (1948-1988). While the former was a professor at 'Ain Shams University and Chairman of the Department of Architecture for a period of three years (1983-1986), the latter was a professor specializing in planning at Al-Azhar University. Most importantly, 'A.Ibrahim was both the director of CPAS, and editor-in-chief of *AB*.<sup>2</sup> He earned a Bachelor of Architecture twice, in 1949 from Cairo University and in 1954 from Liverpool University, England. He earned a master degree from Liverpool in 1955 and a doctorate from Newcastle, UK, in 1959. 'A.Ibrahim was the UN advisor for two years in Kuwait (1968-1970) and for six years in Saudi Arabia

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<sup>1</sup> There is an agreement between the interviewee and questionnaire participants on the significance of the experience of '*Alam al-Bena*'a's emergence in a period that did not pay attention to art, and architecture. See appendix II for a synopsis of the interviews. Approval to conduct these interviews was obtained from the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

<sup>2</sup> Publications of 'A.Ibrahim include: *Urban Heritage in the Contemporary Arab City* (1968); *The Islamic Perspective of Urban Development* (1993); *The Basics for Architectural Design and Urban Planning* (1990); *The Historic Perspective of the Architecture of the Middle East* (1986); *The Islamic Perspective of the Architectural Theory* (1986); *Housing in the Islamic City* (1986). For H.Ibrahim's books: *Town Planning in Kingdom of Saudi Arab* (Dar Al-Yamam press, 1981); and *Planning Standards for Commercial Services* (A manual compiled with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs in Saudi Arabia, and UN Development Program, 1979). [http://www.cpas-egypt.com/ENG/writings\\_eng.htm](http://www.cpas-egypt.com/ENG/writings_eng.htm), (accessed 27/01/2010).

(1973-1979).<sup>3</sup> Given 'A.Ibrahim's extensive overseas training at the height of the postwar international modernist movement in architecture and planning, his later professional and institution-building commitments through the CPAS and *AB* are intriguing.



**Figure 77. The Founders of 'Alam al-Bena'a.**

The editorial board of *AB* continued for a year exclusively under the editorship of 'A.Ibrahim, the chief editor, and his companion H.Ibrahim, assistant editor with the assistant of two architects Ayman Zaytoun and Hassan Abaza. However, there was also an alliance with Hassan Fathy, the pioneering neo-traditionalist Egyptian architect. Fathy also used to lecture in CPAS at the time. The collaboration with Hassan Fathy reinforced the magazine's intended path over the next twenty years. It is worth mentioning the youthfulness of the group gathered at Fathy's house who supported his call for a return to tradition, when he was not highly regarded in Egypt for such a long time by the modernist trained majority who were similar in age to Fathy.



The inauguration of CPAS, from left: A.Abdelhalim, Hassan Fathy, and A.Ibrahim

The staff of CPAS in Fathy's house collecting data for their intended mission of deepening tradition.

**Figure 78. Hassan Fathy and CPAS.**

After the first year the magazine formed an advisory board, including nine academics and one practicing architect. Their shared interests, according to the short biographies reviewed in

<sup>3</sup> CPAS website [http://www.cpas-egypt.com/ENG/baki\\_1\\_eng.htm](http://www.cpas-egypt.com/ENG/baki_1_eng.htm) (accessed 27/01/2010).

*AB* as well as the developments of their careers, are characterised by ambitions to reconcile tradition and modernity. The board included: Ahmad Kamal Abdelfatah, professor at 'Ain Shams University and the Institute of Archaeology in Cairo, PhD from Zurich, Switzerland, in 1961; As'ad Nadeem, anthropologist, PhD in Arab art and crafts; Abdelfatah alMausly, 'Ain Shams University and graduate of Catholic University U.S.A, 1965; Taher alSadek, professor in urban planning at Cairo University, Msc. and PhD from Illinois Institute, 1968; Salah Hegab, Msc. from Pratt Institute in environmental design for hot climates, 1965; Salah Zaky, Head of Architecture Department at al-Azhar University, Msc from Cornell University, 1960, and PhD in economic housing, from Catholic University, Washington, 1964; and Abdelhalim Abdelhalim, Cairo University and Oregon graduate in the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Abdelhalim is a 1992 Aga Khan Award winner for his design of a Children's Cultural Park in al-Azhar, Old Cairo.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, there were many architects involved in the magazine as assistants at different stages, such as Nora al-Shennawy, Anwar al-Hamaki, Maha Ismail, and HodaFawzy.



**Figure 79. First advisory board, started in (1981, no.13).**

*AB* recruited many other pioneering architects and leading scholars to join its advisory board at different points of its two-decade history, among these were the notable internationally known

<sup>4</sup>The magazine devoted a regular article about architects including each board member except Ahmad Khaled 'Alam, 'Azmy Musa, and Muhammad F. Amin. Dr. 'Azmy Musa is a head of the department of Architecture in Assuit University. Interviews by the author conducted with Salah Hegab and Salah Zaky revealed that 'A. Ibrahim was open towards other views, including support for Modernisation. However, Zaky asserts that most of the editorial board did not totally agree with 'A. Ibrahim's adherence with the application of Qur'anic principles in an architectural context.

<sup>5</sup> The magazine covered the projects by publishing an Arabic review in no. 102 (1989) and the English article of James Steele, "Cultural Park for Children: Cairo-Egypt," *AB*, no. 189 (1996).

scholars Ismail Serageldein, Basel AlBayati (England), and Nezar AlSayyad (U.S.A). Many academics also joined the advisory board, such as Galila el-Kady, Adel Yassien, Morad Abdelqader, Gouda Ghanem, and Abdel Mohsen Farhat (Saudi Arabia). *AB* was the only specialized professional magazine published continuously in Egypt during the last two decades of the twentieth-century, and was one of only three magazines which specialized in the architecture of the Islamic world published anywhere in the world in that period. The other two journals were *MIMAR* published by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, as well as the Saudi Arabian magazine, *al-Bena'a* [Construction].<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting here that 'A.Ibrahim and his colleague H.Ibrahim played an effective role in the foundation of the Saudi magazine and edited its first issues.

### 7.3 The Context of '*Alam al-Bena'a*

'*Alam al-Bena'a*' is a professional Arabic magazine released in August 1980 breaking a long silence in the architectural discourse in Egypt. The emergence of *AB* in 1980 was not only at the fore of al-Infatih and Islamic extremism in Egypt, it also coincided with the height of postmodernism and classicism. The latter was heralded by the first international exhibition of architecture at the Venice Biennale, organized by Paolo Portoghesi entitled "The Presence of the Past."<sup>7</sup> Most importantly, the emergence of the journal coincided with the emergence of several forums on Islamic civilization, such as the World of Islam Festival (1976) which was an outcome of the Islamic conference in 1969 (representing forty states in support of pan-Islamic unity). Moreover, outside the Arab world, the Islamization of Knowledge was ushered by Sayed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, in his book: *Islam and Secularism* (1978). In this book he emphasised the need for "the Islamization of knowledge" by which he meant the linkage of all professional and intellectual endeavours with Islam specifically the Qur'an. In the preface to the second edition of this book, 1993, he states that these ideas had begun in the mid-sixties, and were disseminated in numerous public lectures in Malaysia. Then, in early 1973 these ideas were internationally communicated to the Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah to urge the organization of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Mecca in early 1977. In fact, 'A.Ibrahim's ideas were encapsulated in the body of scholarship by many renowned scholars of international

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<sup>6</sup> Khaled Asfour, *The Villa and the Modern Egyptian Intelligentsia: A Critique of Conventionalism*. In this thesis Asfour compares Hassan Fathy and A.Ibrahim who both condemn the Egyptian version of modernity. Asfour also criticizes 'A.Ibrahim for being trapped in an "infinite regression" (PhD diss., MIT, 1983), 63.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Galinsky, *Classical and Modern Interactions: Postmodern Architecture, Multiculturalism, Interactions, Decline, and other Issues* (U.S.A: University of Texas Press, 1992), 3.

renown including Titus Burckhardt, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Keith Critchlow.<sup>8</sup> These events coincided with 'A.Ibrahim's stay in Saudi Arabia. However, it is worth noting that 'A.Ibrahim's principles had appeared earlier in *al-Ahram*.



Figure 80. Front Cover of the First Three Issues of *AB*.

In August 1963 in *Al-Ahram* 'Abdelbaki Ibrahim wrote an article entitled "Muhawalah le al Kashf 'an al-Falsafahalatyakhtafywarah' 'Imaratna al-hadeethah" [An Attempt to Reveal the Philosophy behind Our Contemporary Architecture], which was his first attempt to call for a return amid the standardization promoted by the socialization policy (Chapter. 6). This provoked much criticism at the time, and was misinterpreted as an idealistic and uncompromising appeal to abandon the advanced technology of the present in favor of returning to the past. In retrospect, it is apparent that 'A.Ibrahim had a more sophisticated and realistic notion of such a 'return,' a "modern scientific approach,"<sup>9</sup> as Kulterman perceived.

In 1964, 'A.Ibrahim sought to embody these principles empirically through the design of his residence which was later extended in 1975 to accommodate his centre, CPAS. The idea of the centre arose in 1975. The initial plan was only to construct the villa and the residential apartments. When 'A.Ibrahim was visiting the site at that time—on a visit from Saudi Arabia—he decided to replace part of the space allocated for the garden by the centre.<sup>10</sup> One may argue that the period 'A.Ibrahim spent in Saudi Arabia, no doubt, had a major impact on the evolution of his ideological ideas that began to take shape in the sixties—resisting the standardization schemes of the internal policy. The building of the CPAS was short-listed for the Aga Khan Award in 1983 and was described as a building that uniquely combines both technology and

<sup>8</sup> Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* (London: World of Islam Publishing company, 1976); Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns: An Analytical Approach* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976); Nader Ardalan and laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1973); Issam El-Said Ayse Parmen, *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art* (Palo Alto: Dale Seymour Publications, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> Udo Kulterman, "Contemporary Arab Architecture," *MIMAR*, no.4 (1982), 85.

<sup>10</sup> David Theoharis, *Contemporary Third World Architecture Search for Identity* (NY: Pratt Institute, 1983), 54.

traditional wooden infill panels and Mashrabyah, as the architect intended, whilst maintaining consistency with the surroundings.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 81. The CPAS Façade and Central Courtyard.**

The ideas of 'A.Ibrahim introduced in his article in *al-Ahram* newspaper in 1963 were followed by a research paper in 1967 in UIA, Paris 1968 (Chapter 5). These ideas were crystallized in his book *al-Toraath al-Hadary le al-Madinah al-'Arabyah al-Mu'aserah* [*Urban Heritage in the Contemporary Arab City*] (Kuwait, 1968). This book, according to 'A.Ibrahim, presents his collective search for identity. In this book, 'A.Ibrahim traces the evolution of the interest in preserving cultural heritage to the 1961 Free Culture Conference, which was held in Cairo and attended by pioneer participants including Maxwell Fry and Constantinos Doxiadis. To extract the principles and values of Islamic architecture, 'A.Ibrahim sought to review the development of the elements of Islamic civilization in city planning in the past, as well as in architecture. The book then interprets these principles and values in the work of contemporary architects such as Muhammad Makkia and Rifat Chadirji. 'A.Ibrahim acknowledges, in his autobiography *Mishwar al-Bahth 'an al-Zaat* [In the Search for the Roots of Architecture in Islam (A Journey)],<sup>12</sup> the impact of Chadirji on his philosophy and designs. 'A.Ibrahim concludes his book with two priorities for the revival of Islamic architecture in contemporary design: one is restrictive building legislations, and the other is the dissemination of awareness of the values of tradition. Therefore, one contends, 'A.Ibrahim sought to play a role in the dissemination of these values through his foundation of '*Alam al-Bena*'a. It is apparent from the content of *AB* that it was founded as a professional publication to engage with architectural practitioners and contemporary social, economic and cultural issues pertaining to architectural

<sup>11</sup> Darl Rastorfer, The Aga Khan Technical Review 1983. [http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file\\_id=698](http://archnet.org/library/files/one-file.jsp?file_id=698), (accessed 08/02/2010).

<sup>12</sup> Translation of the title is from the CPAS website.

production. 'A.Ibrahim's objectives were announced in no uncertain terms in his first editorial for the new magazine, entitled "Awdaela al-Naba' al-Hadary: ela Torathena al-Islamy," [A Return to the Origins: To Our Islamic Heritage]. Quoting a later issue of *AB*, 'A.Ibrahim declares:

If architecture represents the outer envelope encompassing the requirements of time, alike the costume man wears and as man appears in his traditional dress made of the current raw materials hence let contemporary architecture, too, appear with its traditional values using contemporary building materials and methods.<sup>13</sup>

In this way contemporary architecture would reflect the ethos of Islamic culture in Egypt, while adopting the most appropriate technology of the present time.

All 'A.Ibrahim's designs are clear reflections of his 'return' call. His designs in Saudi Arabia in the seventies materialized the same principles, whether in private buildings such as Refaat al-Ard Villa, Riyadh, or in public buildings such as the UN premises in Riyadh. A very important design is Al-Zharaa mosque in Nasr City, Cairo. The design of the mosque shows autonomous representations of traditional and modern elements. The design of the minarets derive from the Ottoman architecture, but its cap has an unmistakable Mamluk influence. The mosque was also designed to work as a local community and lecture centre, and thus 'A.Ibrahim included folding chairs, which become invisible in prayer times.



Mohye Sleem's Residential building, Nasr City 1970



Refaat al-Ard villa, Riyadh 1975



Rice Research Centre, K. el-Sheikh, Egypt 1982



United Nations Premises, Riyadh 1978

<sup>13</sup>'A.Ibrahim, "Architectural Tourism," *AB*, no.103 (1989), 50. E.



**Figure 82. 'A.Ibrahim's Designs.**

'A.Ibrahim was awarded the 'Architect Award' by the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities in 1988. The first award of this Organization was given to the Iraqi architect, Muhammed Makkia, in 1986. The jury's report<sup>14</sup> highlighted 'A.Ibrahim's strenuous belief in Islamic architecture and his patronage for this belief through his job as an educator, through his actual designs, and through the publications of CPAS that endeavors to deepen Islamic architectural roots in the contemporary practice. Indeed, CPAS is "considered to be the first integrated centre of its kind in the Arab world," which combines practice and consultation services with educational activities.<sup>15</sup> The educational activities were not confined to lectures and seminars, but also extended to publications and a joint Master program with the Pratt Institute in New York. *AB* was recognized internationally as a leading contribution to the professional discourse in the Arab world in light of what has been described as the architectural profession's "virtual disarray" in this period.<sup>16</sup>

The magazine and the contributions of 'A.Ibrahim, in particular, continued to be cited in national and international architectural discourse—as one of the most important sources of the late twentieth-century Egyptian architecture.<sup>17</sup> According to Serageldin, Director of The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, *AB* had a significant impact on an entire generation of students,<sup>18</sup> and *MIMAR* cited *AB* several times over its parallel publishing history as one of the main sources of contemporary architecture in Egypt.<sup>19</sup> The demise of *AB* in October 1999 was unclear. However, it is likely that the demise can be attributed to two primary factors: the death of the editor-in-

<sup>14</sup> The jury consisted of Saleh alHathloul (Saudi Arabia); 'Aly Rafaat (Egypt); Ibrahim Shabouh (Kuwait); Abdel-Latif alMagamy (Morocco). *AB*, no. 90 (1988), 13. The Organization of Islamic Capitals was founded in 1983 in Doha, as a patron for the revival of tradition in architectural design.

<sup>15</sup> Archnet online library [http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site\\_id=3935](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=3935), (accessed 25/01 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Amr 'Abdel-Kawi, "The Role of Magazines in Architectural Education: The Medina Experience in Egypt," *Architectural Education Today Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, eds Ashraf Salama and William O'Reilly (Compartmentes: Lausanne, 2002), 143.

<sup>17</sup> Ali Al-Thewainy, *Records on Modernity* (Beirut: Arab Scientific Publisher, 2009), 43.

<sup>18</sup> Ismail Serageldin, "Mosque of Al- Zahra, Cairo: 'Abdelbaki Ibrahim," *Architecture of the Contemporary Mosque*, eds. Ismail Serageldin and James Steele (London: Academy Editions, 1996), 64.

<sup>19</sup> James Steele, "The New Traditionalists," *MIMAR*, no.40 (1991): 40.

chief 'A. Ibrahim and increasing financial issues which were highlighted in the final melancholic editorial.



**Figure 83. 'A.Ibrahim Receiving his 'Architect Award' at the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities**

With this devotion to deepen the roots of Islamic architecture in contemporary practice A.Ibrahim in *AB* surprisingly was open to review Western designs. *AB*, in fact, has reviewed more Western projects than those reviewed by *al-'Imarah* journal, the one that called for an international style. Although Asfour criticized the inclusion of Western projects in *AB* as inconsistent with its call,<sup>20</sup> *AB* played a role in crossing geographies as well as histories, seeking to take advantage of both modern principles and local heritage. Therefore, whilst the magazine reflects the resurgence of religious and traditional agendas in its broader socio-political and historical contexts, the representation of contemporary architecture in Egypt that it constructed was not just a lopsided polemic about a return to neo-traditional building styles and principles. This chapter will argue, the journal's topics integrated numerous counterpoints, in which contrasting themes and possibilities for contemporary Egyptian architectural practice were juxtaposed, with both dissonance and harmony as a result of the discursive forces of influence and resistance, as will be explained in the thematic review of its content in the next chapter.

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<sup>20</sup>Asfour, "The Villa and the Modern Egyptian Intelligentsia," 1983.

## 8 'Alam al-Bena'a عالم البنياء

## 8.1 Introduction

After exploring the impact of imperial history on both the local discourse and the Western discourse through the discursive forces of influence and resistance, this chapter will focus on the discourse of '*Alam al-Bena'a*' and its particularity; its representation of contemporary architecture, and the attitude of reference that lies behind it. The variety of topics discussed in this journal, whose main objective was a call for a "return to our Islamic heritage," created a counterpoint amidst different voices and eventually formed a structure of attitude of reference through specific allusions, inclusions, and exclusions.

As Said asserts, the "imperial attitudes and references along with their authoritative centrality" is intrinsic to any literary work<sup>1</sup> through its discursive formation. As it is within discourse "the world comes into being," and the discourse of *AB*, I argue, adheres to the world's imperialist attitudes and references. Whilst *AB* seeks to provide an authentic representation of its surroundings, it consciously and consistently directs architects' attention to the extent imperialism is imposed on the architectural structures and systems in Egypt, and urges their resistance to such imposition. However, it unconsciously, this thesis maintains, imposes a specific architectural identity and a specific order upon a dynamic society.

These conscious and unconscious forces of resistance and influence, retrospectively, have contrapuntally played four voices, like a fugue, although distinct they are inseparable. These voices are: the Contemporary Local Voice; the Historical Voice; the Western Voice; and the Editorial Voice. They seek to materialize an inherent civilizational struggle in Egyptian society. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to examine, explore and critically engage with the issues raised by these four voices within *AB* and their implications in the search for identity (as claimed by its founder 'A.Ibrahim).

## 8.2 The Contemporary Local Voice

Beyond the space of *AB*, the Egyptian state has been submerged by the corrupt neo-liberal and authoritarian regime of Mubarak. The 'soft-state', discussed in Chapter 4, resulted in no clear direction for the architecture as most projects were planned either by Western corporations or as favours for the elite, or as part of opaque political and economic strategies, which resulted in

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<sup>1</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994), 239.

meaningless rhetoric of resistance that created kitsch Disneyesque replicas of Pharaonic monuments. However, this rhetoric can be perceived as an attempt to counter the Islamic identity which dominates Egyptian culture, and specifically, to suppress the vehement conservatism that led to the assassination of Sadat.



**Figure 84. The Constitutional Court by Ahmad Mitto, Absent from the Discourse of *AB*.**

Egypt's independence has never blocked foreign influences on architecture, especially in Cairo, as Volait argues. She identifies various "international trends of modernism (in a broad sense) across the entire 20th century."<sup>2</sup> Salama extends Volait's argument by highlighting specific trends in contemporary architectural practice. While Salama affirms the overwhelming task of classification of the multiple overlapping trends and opinions in the Egyptian context,<sup>3</sup> he specifies three main categories, as previously explained in Chapter 6: "historical revivalism"; "regional modernism"; and a group of designs that "resist categorization" due to "confusing symbolism" or "other influences."<sup>4</sup> This difficulty of classification, one may argue, manifests how the contemporary architecture in Egypt results from different socio-cultural interactions shaped by varying hierarchies of influence and resistance. This difficulty is also represented in *AB*'s review of these three categories of designs.

'A.Ibrahim's representation of these trends in the contemporary context reveals his openness to such trends. In this contemporary voice, 'A.Ibrahim focused on reviewing current projects and design competition, contemporary architects' profiles, as well as the reflection on many current rural and urban problems, such as "The New Architectural Style in the New Cities," Yehia al-

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<sup>2</sup> Mercedes Volait, "Cairo," *Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century*, 2005, 201.

<sup>3</sup> Ashraf Salama, "Egyptian Architecture between Identity and Plurality of (ISMS)," proceedings of XXII World Congress of Architects, 2005, Istanbul. This was reviewed by Heba Safey el-Deen, "Reflections on the exhibition of Contemporary Architecture," *Medina*, no.19 (2001). This last trend was described in *Medina* as a group of designs based on personal impulses.

<sup>4</sup> Salama, "Egyptian Architecture between Identity and Plurality of (ISMS)."

Zeiny (1996, no.181); and “The Need for an Environmental Approach in the New Settlements,” ‘A.Ibrahim (1998, no. 204, and 205). Although, the village problems appeared in *AB*’s space of knowledge, it was limited compared to the Islamic architecture and preservation topics. The articles focusing on the village did not exceed eighteen articles in twenty years, including topics about Egypt and abroad, specifically India and China. Examples for articles about Egyptian villages include “The Nucleus House between Theory and Practice in Rural and Urban Sites” (1980, no.1); “The Development of the Village and the Rural Planning,” Salah Zaky (1986, no.6); and “Rural Development in a Strategic Framework,” ‘A.Ibrahim (1981, no.8). Furthermore, the urban problems and slums have been part of ‘A.Ibrahim’s representation of the contemporary status of Egypt as manifested in articles such as “Developing the Garbage Area in Manshyet Nasser, Cairo” (1996, no.176); and “Utilizing the Areas Under Express Way Bridges: to Improve the Visual Image of the City” (1995, no. 166). The editor also announced a competition for young architects in 1995 on the design of housing for the homeless (1995, no. 169).



Figure 85. Competition Organized by *Alam al-Bena'a*’s Editors for Affordable Housing.

‘A.Ibrahim also reviewed contemporary architects’ profiles regardless their design approaches such as Yehia al-Zeiny (1981, no.9), ‘Abdel-Muhsin Barradah (1984, no.44), al-Ghazaly Kasseiba (1984, no.51), Gamal Bakry (1981, no.6), and ‘Aly Bassuny (1983, no.30); Arab architects such as Rifat Chadirji (1983, no.34), and Muhamad Makkia (1983, no.33); and

pioneer Egyptian architects such as 'Ali Labib Gabr (1981, no.13), Hassan Shafei (1983, no.39), and Sayed Karim (1980, no.5). Additionally, the editor has been keen to include the work of the Egyptian architects in the Arab world including Dr. Salah Shehata's design for the Egyptian embassy in Yemen (no. 82, 1987) and Abdelwahid al-Wakil's work in Saudi Arabia (no.52, 1984).

### 8.2.1 Contemporary Trends

The key recurrent theme within the contemporary local discourse of *AB* is resistance and the guru of resistance is Hassan Fathy (1911-1989), to whom the journal devoted many issues and articles.<sup>5</sup> Fathy's work, with its vernacular formal rhetoric and use of local materials and techniques, was based on a wide rich range of theoretical intentions that made its vocabulary of resistance very difficult to classify under one particular trend. Many scholars admit that Fathy's designs failed to serve the contemporary social values of the poor societies for which they were designed to serve.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, he is the only Egyptian architect who has continued to receive international acclaim due to the aesthetic values and the profound environmental and economic issues that his designs sought to address. In *AB*, 'A.Ibrahim was not subjective in the views published about Fathy. For example, in an investigation based on the discordant views towards Fathy held by Egyptian architects titled "Fekr Hassan Fathy fi al-Dakhel wa al-Khareg" [Hassan Fathy's Thoughts Inside Egypt and Abroad], Yehia al-Zeiny identifies the creativity of Hassan Fathy's designs in a time when his contemporaries were infatuated with European Modernism after World War I. However, al-Zeiny critically believes that "Fathy deals with his projects from an artistic point of view" and "personal feelings, thereby it exceeds the estimated costs and becomes economically problematic."<sup>7</sup> Thus, al-Zeiny wonders "what is the use of the mud if it exceeds the cost, especially if other clean materials are already available?"<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *AB*, no. 22, and 110 and other scattered articles.

<sup>6</sup> See T.Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, for a critique of Fathy's paternalistic views, p. 185 as well as a description of the alterations users made, pp. 193-94. For the alterations users made also see F.Hassan and C. Plimpton, 'New Gourn: Vernacular Remodeling of Architectural Space', *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Working Papers Series XVI* (1989), pp.47-77. For Fathy's cosmopolitan assumptions, see N.Alsayyad, "From Vernacularism to Globalism," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 7 (1995), pp.13-24 and H.Taragan, "Architecture in Fact and Fiction: The Case of the New Gourn Village in Upper Egypt," *Muqarnas* (1999), pp. 169-178.

<sup>7</sup> "Hassan Fathy's Thoughts Inside Egypt and Abroad," *AB*, no.22 (1982), 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

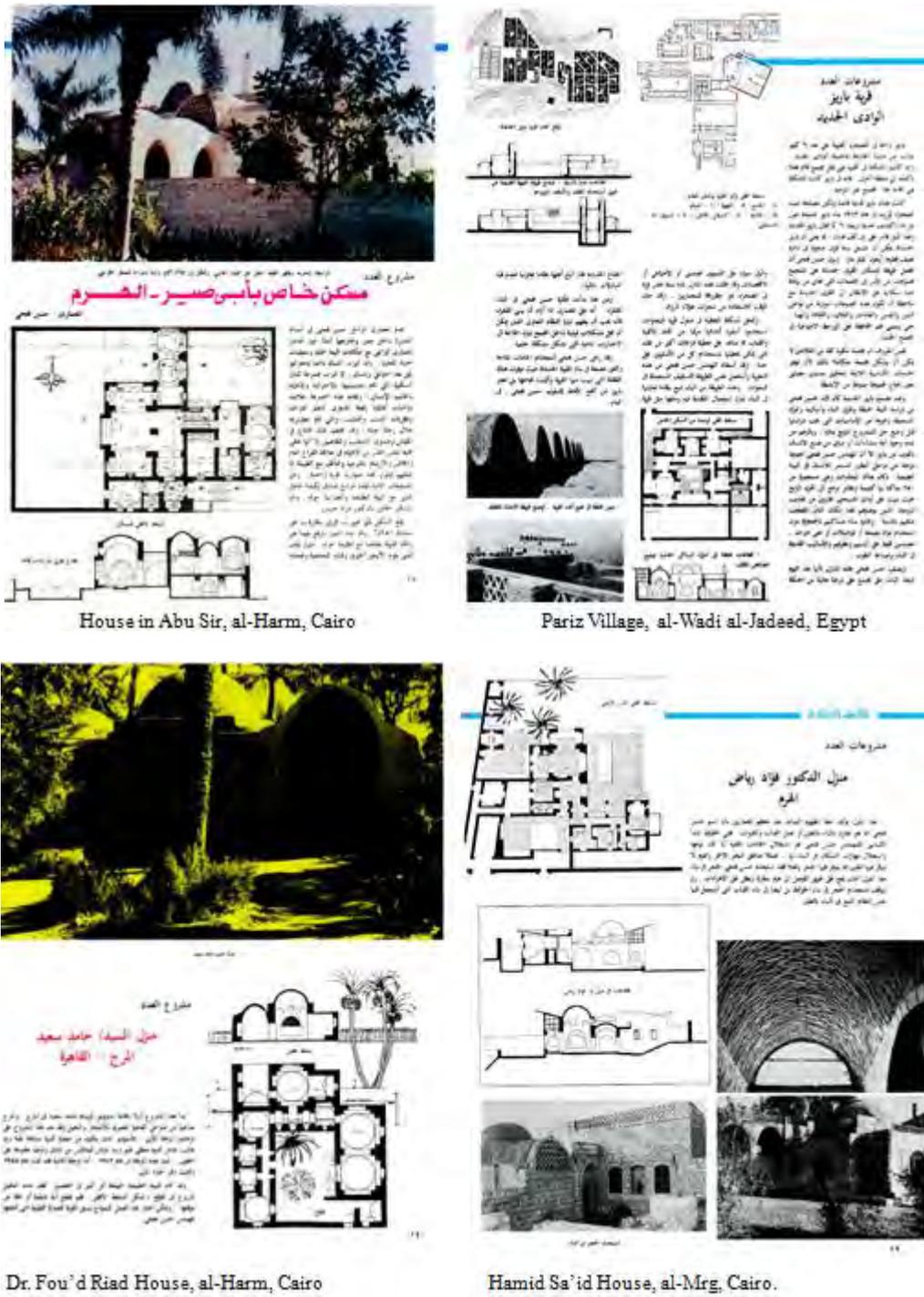


Figure 86. Hassan Fathy's Work Published in 'Alam al-Bena'a'.

However, Hassan Fathy has had an ongoing influence on many Egyptian architects. This was represented in *AB* in various projects including those by architects Rami al-Dahhan and Soheir Farid.<sup>9</sup> Fathy's influence is externally manifested in their design of many touristic villages like Serena Beach at al-Qusair on the Shores of the Red Sea, and Panorama Shakshuk at al-Fayum

<sup>9</sup>A couple who were Fathy's apprentices since 1979 until Fathy's death in 1989, worked with him in many important projects like Dar al-Salam Mosque, U.S.A.

Governate. For the village of Serena Beach (completed in 1994), “the aim was to use the most affordable materials.”<sup>10</sup> However, since the sandstone is the most predominant material and given it is unsuitable for vaulting, the two architects decided to transport the clay brick from Qena Governate. One contends that the transportation of materials contradicts Fathy’s principles of using an affordable local material resulting in a superficial adherence to Fathy’s principles.

Another important disciple of Hassan Fathy is Abdelwahid al-Wakil (1943-). Al-Wakil worked with Fathy between 1968 and 1973.<sup>11</sup> One of the most recognized endeavours of al-Wakil is Halwa House built in 1975 in Alexandria, Egypt, using the limestone—a design for which he was awarded the AKAAs in the 1980s. ‘A.Ibrahim criticized al-Wakil for his “adherence to the autonomous copying of the traditional architectural elements.”<sup>12</sup> This neo-vernacular style—resistance—predominantly influenced by Fathy, is mostly limited to country villas, and tourist villages.



<sup>10</sup> No author, “Serena Beach, al-Qusair,” *AB*, no. 215 (1999).

<sup>11</sup> Abdelwahid al-Wakil graduated in 1965 and was appointed as an administrator in Cairo University. He had hoped to make his Master degree about Fathy’s designs but none of Cairo University staff members agreed to supervise him! No author, “Personality of the Issue,” *AB*, no.54 (1985), 14.

<sup>12</sup> *AB*, no.110 (1990), 26-27.

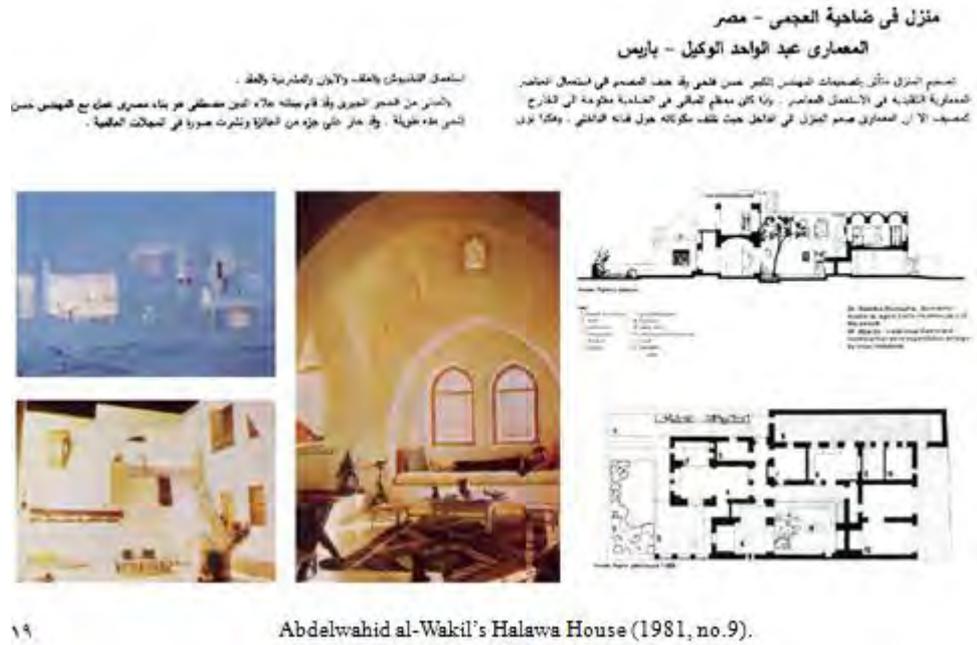


Figure 87. The Work of Fathy's Apprentices.

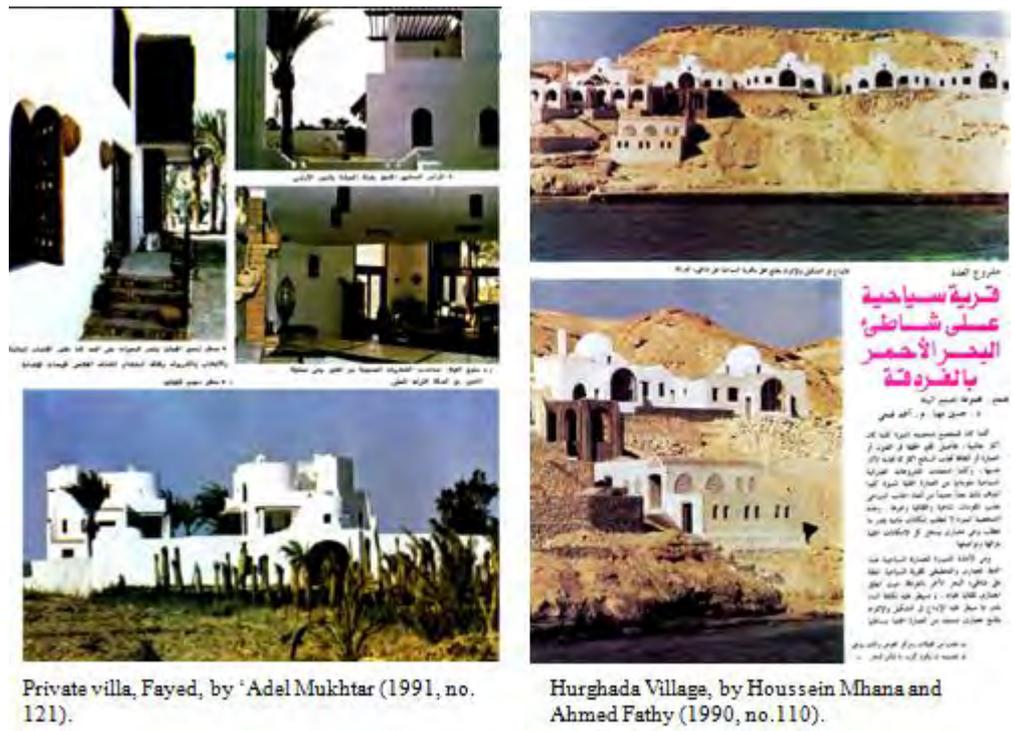


Figure 88. Further Designs Inspired by Fathy.

The attitude of resistance, in 'Alam al-Bena'a, was also materialized in efforts to emulate the architecture of Egypt's Islamic dynasties, evident in Ibrahim's call for a revival of Islamic architecture. This is evident in the regular review of many designs that attempts to stimulate history and bear Islamic references. At this point it is worth mentioning that 'A.Ibrahim has never specified a particular period in the Islamic heritage for the aspired return. From the

contemporary designs celebrated in *AB*, designs including Dar al-Ifta'a al-Masryah (The Islamic Counseling Headquarters, Cairo) and Mashiakhet al-'Azhar Building, both bear Fatimid vocabulary. However, the reason for such reference to Fatimid architecture can be due to the location of both buildings, designed by The Arab Bureau for Design and Technical Consultations, in Fatimid Cairo. The design of both buildings was considered to be successful as they blend with the surrounding context, according to 'A.Ibrahim, due to "the volumetric configuration of the building, internal and external courts, wooden grills, and triangular arches."<sup>13</sup> This approach has also been adopted in buildings designed by foreign firms including the School of Languages and Translation at al-Azhar University by the Consulting Bureau for Architecture and Planning in Cuba (1991, no. 125).



**Figure 89. Islamic Style in Public Buildings.**

This approach, which draws inspiration from Islamic precedents (more specifically Fatimid or Mamluk architecture—although such dynastic subtleties are not reflected on in *AB*), is also visible in some residential buildings in varying degrees. Some architects exaggerate the incorporation of forms and motifs that refer to Islamic precedents. This exaggeration is evident in, for instance, Ashraf Salah Abo-Seif's renovation of existing two-floor building, dates to the 1960s, through the use of repetitive arches along the façades. 'A.Ibrahim celebrates the colours used (white for the façade and turquoise ceramic roofing) as well as the use of courtyards. Soheir Zaki Hawas, the historian architect, although criticized Abo-Seif's design for the excessive openings of its façades, she asserts that it remains to be one of the serious endeavours toward the

<sup>13</sup> *AB*, no.123 (1991).

search for identity and the integration between the façade architecture and interior design.<sup>14</sup> There are also other moderate attempts, such as the residential and commercial building by the architects Murad Ragheb Bebawy and Mlekah Farah. This design was credited by 'A.Ibrahim as an honest attempt to represent traditional Islamic architecture in contemporary vocabulary. This is due to the integration between its composition and the contemporary function and aesthetics.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 90. Islamic Vocabulary in Residential Buildings.

AB's editors included debates about the emulation of historical elements in contemporary architecture. 'A.Ibrahim's views about emulation were based on those of Mies Van De Rohe. 'A.Ibrahim acknowledged, that "the distinguished architect should learn from ancestors then, in his production, add, renew, and creatively reinvent elements."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Gamal Bakry, an eminent Egyptian architect,<sup>17</sup> expressed his rejection of extreme adherence to the vocabulary of the past as it will produce an architecture that is suitable only to be exhibited in museums, he stated:

The difference between any two architectural works is how each superficially or deeply reflects time and place. But once we handle the issue of heritage, architects should differentiate between a human being who has traditional background and a human being who

<sup>14</sup> Soheir Hawas, *AB*, no.140 (1993).

<sup>15</sup> *AB*, no.80 (1987).

<sup>16</sup> 'Abdelbaki Ibrahim, "The Responsibility of the Architect in Present and Future," *AB*, no.52 (1984), 18.

<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of Bakry's work see: Khaled Asfour "Egypt's Don Quixote," *Medina* 21 (2002); Ashraf Salama, "Gamal Bakry: Master of Aesthetic Components," *Architecture + no. 2* (2002) (Dubai: InHouse Creative), 66-9; Salama, "The Architecture of Gamal Bakry: Thematic Impressions," *Medina*, no. 21 (2002), 28-32. Gamal Bakry viewed the call for a return to Islamic architecture "superficial and opportunist," according to a questionnaire completed by his wife Prof. Dr. Dalila ElKerdany, see appendix II.

is traditional. As a dynamic human being lives his time and space experiences, the tradition, which exists in my background, receives new updates. This is how to be alive and how to produce an architecture that has traditional background.<sup>18</sup>

Criticizing direct copying from historical examples, the journal celebrates the second approach of resistance “regional modernism,” which is more resilient and abstract. Although the editor’s call was for the revival of Egypt’s Islamic heritage he welcomed projects, such as the Commercial Center at al-Mariotyah by Gamal Bakry, which represented a thoughtful abstraction of New Kingdom dynastic Pharaonic era. The project was perceived as a profound connection with its local environment. The hierarchical façades and massing are a successful abstraction based on the pyramids which inspired this project and the yellow tones blend with the surrounding desert. Also, the motifs of the openings further accentuate the same Pharaonic vocabulary.<sup>19</sup>

Another project that attempts to interpret Pharaonic symbols, forms and motifs is Tebah Integrated Language School by the Egyptian architects Tarek Fathy, Hesham Fathy, and Esam Fathy. The buildings of the school were perceived as designs that have an “integrated civilized character, combining modern developments in education” while “reflecting Pharaonic Egyptian architecture.”<sup>20</sup> As the author identifies, the main façade resembles in a simple vocabulary the Dendera Temple, which dates back to the predynastic period and was reconstructed in the Ptolemaic era,<sup>21</sup> and the axis leading to the main entrance resembles “Tareeq Al-Kebaash” [corridor of Sphinxes] in Luxor Temple. The successful integration of the inner courtyards which are based on the principles of Islamic architecture which mediate the desert climate, is celebrated. As ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim asserted, the designs of Gamal Bakry and the recent attempts of Farouk al-Gohary, ‘Aly Ra’afat, and Salah Zaytoun demonstrate high interpretive attempts of the Egyptian Pharaonic history.

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<sup>18</sup> No Author, ed. “Hewar al -‘Imarah al-Misrya al-Mu‘aserah,” *AB*, no.123 (1991), 8.

<sup>19</sup> No Author, “Commercial Center at al-Mariotyah,” *AB*, no.204 (1998), 17.

<sup>20</sup> No Author, “Tebah Integrated Language School,” *AB*, no.119 (1991), 23.

<sup>21</sup> The most famous remains today date to the final phase of Dendera’s history built in the Greco-Roman period, See Kathryn Ann Bard and Steven Blake Shubert, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (London: Routledge, 1999), 298-301.



Figure 91. Abstract Resistance.

While these examples highlight the value placed on abstract interpretations of Egypt's architectural history, the indiscriminate moves from one moment of architectural history to another might be classified as postmodern as well as a return. However, the term postmodernism per se raised debate as it connotes adherence to the second stage of Western modernism. In this case, the call of 'A.Ibrahim was a 'return' to Egyptian heritage to accentuate localism, it is more about modern regionalism than a discriminate return to a specific era or dynasty. For instance, 'Abdelhalim 'Abdelhalim highlights the need to refer to local history in postmodern attempts while not to purely emulate such history. Therefore, he criticized both Magd Massarah's design

for computer classrooms which follows Venturi's vocabulary and 'Abdelwahid al-Wakil's design for King Saud mosque in Jeddah which copies Sultan Hassan's vocabulary.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 92. Criticized Postmodernism.

This attitude of resistance, whether it is an emulation of historical precedents (Pharaonic or Islamic) or the successful integration of modern elements with traditional forms and motifs, lies in distinct contrast to mega-projects in Egypt which pay little or no attention to the local setting. 'A.Ibrahim devoted significant space in *AB* to criticize such projects due to their repeated and uncritical emulation of the international style, with notable exasperation, as part of his representation of contemporary local architecture.

The representation of these projects in *AB*, modelled for the most part on North American precedents, consistently focused on structural and technical details. The only projects explicitly singled out and criticized for their lack of consideration of the local social and environmental costs are two high-rise projects: Cairo Plaza and Hilton Ramses.<sup>23</sup> Cairo Plaza, the mixed-use complex in Cairo designed by SOM, U.S.A., with local consultant 'Ali Nour al-Dein Nassar, is one of these investment projects that provoked outrage in *AB*. 'Abdelhalim asserts that Cairo Plaza together with the private high rise housing schemes which multiplied since the 1970s,

<sup>22</sup> "Hewar al-'Imarah al-Misrya al-Mu'aserah," *AB*, no.123 (1991), 12.

<sup>23</sup> H.Ibrahim, "al-Ahya'a al- Mutakhalefah al-'Istethmaryah" [Underdeveloped Investment Neighbourhoods,] in *AB*, no. 81 (1997), 46.

“insult the historical and cultural values.” ‘Abdelhalim compares these projects to the infamous Pruitt-Igoe complex of Saint Louis, Missouri, demolished in 1972 (one of many massive high-rises that were built to accommodate low-income families). ‘Abdelhalim elaborates, these high rise projects exemplify the failed schemes that were brought to Egypt in order to “change the characteristics of the Egyptian cities and villages and bear witness to the dependency [on the foreign theories].”<sup>24</sup>

This negative attitude to influence is also evident in the representation of the Ramses Hilton Hotel, which occupies 10,500 sq.m. The project was jointly designed in the 1970s by Warner Burns Toan & Lunde, New York, and the local consultant ‘Ali Nour al-Dein Nassar, one of the many architects who followed in Sayed Karim’s footsteps.<sup>25</sup> However, the shift in attitude from Karim’s support for Modernism is evident in the attitude of Karim’s assistant, Tawfik Abdel-Gawad, whose views were published in *AB* in 1982. Abdel-Gawad bemoans that “today’s architecture is nothing but an industry...what I see today is a nightmare.”<sup>26</sup> Abdel-Gawad highlights that although he is not opposing technological progress in buildings such as the Hilton Ramsees, the design itself is nothing but a mere industry that “kills Cairo.”<sup>27</sup>



Miscellaneous buildings (1986, no. 73)

Hilton Ramsees (1980, no. 9)

<sup>24</sup> ‘Abdelhalim, “Azmet al-‘Imarah fi Misr.” [Crisis of Architecture in Egypt.] *AB*, no.73 (1986), 10. Cairo Plaza was reviewed in *AB* no. 6 and criticized in no.73, and no. 110.

<sup>25</sup> Review of the project in *AB*, no.9 (1981).

<sup>26</sup> Omaina Kamal, ed. “How Can We See the Egyptian Society through the Architecture of Today?” *AB*, no.21 (1982), 9.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 9.



Figure 93. Western Trends in 'Alam al-Bena'a.

Criticizing the foreign practice within Egypt was a main concern in the journal, in many editorials such as; “Foreign Consultancy Firms in Arab Countries,” (1980, no.3); and “How to Receive the Newest in Building Technology?” (1981, no. 15). Also, it was a theme for discussion in several articles such as “The Work of the Foreign Planners and Architects in the Middle East” (1982, no.25); and “The Experiment of Organizing the Profession: Does it Need an Organization?” (1980, no.6). The latter included the views of many architects among them Tawfik Abdelgawad, the Chief of the Engineering Syndicate at that time. He criticized foreign practice due to the lack of serious interaction between the designers and the socio-cultural surroundings that creates a “deformed model of architecture.”<sup>28</sup> He adds that the Egyptian architect does not need the experience that the foreign firms claim to offer. In the same article, Muhmmad al-Hashimy, the General Deputy of the Society of Egyptian Engineers, affirms that even if we need the experience there are many other ways to learn from them rather than assigning vital designs to them.<sup>29</sup>

This fervent concern was reinforced in ‘A.Ibrahim’s insistence to publish the virulent local debate about Alexandria library, a building that was celebrated in national journals. The debate arose from the outset of the announcement of the competition whose jury consisted of seven professional architects (John Carl Warnecke, U.S.A. (Chairman); Charles Corea, India; François Lombard, France; Fumihiko Maki, Japan; Franco Zagari, Italy; Mohsen Zahran, Egypt; and

<sup>28</sup> AB, no.6 (1980), 15.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Pedro Ramirez Vasquez, Mexico), two librarians (Jean-Pierre Clavel, Switzerland; and Mohammed Aman, U.S.A.), and three professional advisors (Ahmed Helal, librarian, Germany; Harry Faulkner-Brown, architect, UK, and Jan Meissner, architect, Poland).<sup>30</sup> This same debate was fully ignored in specialized journals such as *M'imaryah*, as mentioned before. The Bibliotheca Alexandria was funded by the Egyptian government, UNESCO, and the United Nations Development Program. The estimated construction cost of this multi-award winning project was in the region of 160 million US Dollars according to local professionals. In addition to concerns about the cost, the historical and cultural significance of Bibliotheca Alexandria motivated many Egyptian architects to criticize the competition entries, for their disconnection from the local cultural and economic realities (1989, no.105).

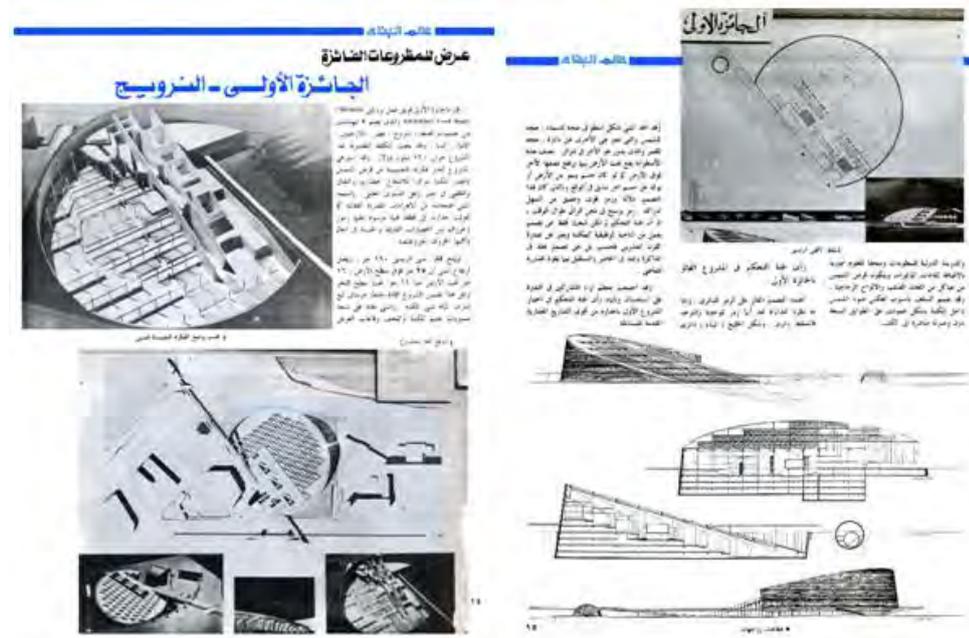


Figure 94. The Details of the Norwegian Wining Project in AB.

The critique of the project was published in many articles featuring different perspectives. For example, in “Bibliotheca Alexandria in the Experts’ Eyes: Perspectives about the Suggested Design of Bibliotheca Alexandria” (1990, no.113), the author argues that although the new design could be seen for the first instance as “a victory to the discipline of architectural engineering,” such a victory will quickly vanish with the ongoing progress in that field and what remains is the influence this building has on the surroundings. The design of the new library was criticized for its location on the royal historical site that used to be known as the Brouchion that was built during the reign of Soter Ptolemy I to replicate his homeland Greece. The new library

<sup>30</sup> Mohsen Zahran, *The New Bbiliotheca of Alexandria: Reflections on a Journey of Achievements*. (Alexandria: Bibiliotheca of Alexandria, 2007), 55.  
[http://www.bibalex.org/attachments\\_en/publications/files/1\\_newbibliothecaalexandrina.pdf](http://www.bibalex.org/attachments_en/publications/files/1_newbibliothecaalexandrina.pdf) , (accessed 05/11/2012).

will therefore be surrounded by Greek-style buildings. *AB* thus highlights the annulment of the cultural continuities.<sup>31</sup>

In another article entitled "The Evaluation of the Winning Project in the Competition of the Library of Alexandria," Abdel-Mohsen Farahat, a lecturer in the School of Environmental Designs, King Abdel-Aziz University, highlights an attitude of resistance. While Farahat starts his report by expressing gratitude to the UNESCO and the efficient organization of the competition and the jury, he demonstrates a rejection to give absolute consent to the jury's choice of "our future national symbol."<sup>32</sup> He asserts that "as a civilized society we should choose our grand national symbols without any arrogance or fanaticism."<sup>33</sup> Farahat also provides a detailed technical report about the winning competition entry. This report elaborates many technical deficiencies, which are considered to hinder the ideal use of the library, such as the lighting which is inadequate due to the dependence on the glass roof without any windows in the walls. Moreover, this glass ceiling is not efficient in the hot climate and fails to combat the street noise. The dominant form of the sun symbol was celebrated by the jury in favour of these deficiencies, which according to Farahat has "superficial origins and values."<sup>34</sup> Similar technical views were shared by the eminent Egyptian architect Salah Zaytoun who wrote a letter published in *AB* (dated 15 Nov 1989) to the architect Mohsen Zahran, the Executive Head of the Library of Alexandria, raising the same concerns about the design. Zaytoun also pointed at the problem of underground water that will increase the cost of the project. He elaborates, while the level of the underground water is 3.00 meters from the surface in this area close to the sea, the design needs to dig around 20.00 meters under the ground.<sup>35</sup>

Here, it is worth mentioning that these critiques were also published in the daily newspaper *al-Ahram* on the first of August, 1990, by Ahmad Abdelmu'oty Hegazy. Hegazy disagrees with these critiques which he attributes to a minor number of specialists. However, according to Farahat, in another article in *AB*, the number of specialists objecting to this design is significant. Although Farahat perceived the publication of this debate in a public journal as a civilized sign to open up the discussion to the unspecialized public intellectuals, he asserts that it is an attempt to suppress the technical views to satisfy the international funding organizations. Notably, the debate was acknowledged by the Norwegian competition winners who reduced the slope of the

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<sup>31</sup> Hassan Ragab, "Bibliotheca Alexandria in the Experts' Eyes: Perspectives about the Suggested Design of Bibliotheca Alexandria," *AB*, no.113 (1990), 23.

<sup>32</sup> Abdel-Mohsen Farahat, *AB*, no.109 (1990), 31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>35</sup> *AB*, no.106 (1989), 41.

library and hence the underground height from 20.75 meters to 12.00 meters. However, this was perceived to be inadequate by the critics as it did not address the other issues.<sup>36</sup>



Figure 95. Technical Report Criticizing the Winning Design of Alexandria Library.

'A.Ibrahim's views did not differ from these critiques. In his editorial "Bibliotheca Alexandria Project...The Language of Architectural Criticism," he criticized the unprofessional and biased response from the jury, quoted here:

I hope that we work together in Egypt to fulfill the aim without discord or dispute so that we may not allow the malevolent, the malicious, or the deniers in our homeland the chance to give the contributing quarters and individuals in various countries of the world an impression that we are disagreed over the project implementation, which may result in its setback or desistance from contribution, without which the Library of Alexandria shall not come to light.<sup>37</sup>

Although many of the Egyptian critiques has changed their perspectives after the construction and use of the project,<sup>38</sup> the jurors' reply materializes the fact that many architects were not willing to admit that architecture is implicitly shaped by the socio-cultural and political context and can, in turn, shape society's identities. The jurors fail to notice the state's "authoritative centrality," reiterating Said's view towards empire, "as if they were completely aloof from it."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Abdelmohsen Farahat, "al-Hewar Hawl Tasmeem Maktabet al-Iskandryah mn al-Motamdyen ela almomadyen," [The Debate of the Design of Alexandria Library from the Enlightened to the Enlightening] *AB*, no.121 (1991).

<sup>37</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, *AB*, no.109 (1990), 50, E.

<sup>38</sup> See appendix II for views of some of the architects who witnessed this competition.

<sup>39</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 239.

Therefore, 'A.Ibrahim asserts that foreign funded projects should not be an excuse for the architectural critics to blindly accept what is going on around them, to fail to resist:

In such an intellectual struggle, the Arab or Egyptian competitor is lost between the requirements of his poor country and the limitless breakthroughs made by competitors coming from the developed world. Besides, there remain further questions about the *cultural attitude of Egypt* in this period during which urban edifices are raised in Egypt with foreign design, technology, materials, and manpower, even if they are financed with foreign money [emphasis added].<sup>40</sup>

Thus, in the light of the Westernized urban edifices like the Bibliotheca Alexandria 'A.Ibrahim raises many questions that draw architects' attention to 'the cultural attitudes of Egypt', in many articles, such as the "Questions around Architecture Crisis in Egypt"<sup>41</sup> and "Egyptian architecture, Where to?", both of which encapsulate the contemporary voice in *'Alam al-Bena'a*. In the latter article, he stated that "all the Egyptian architects agree that architecture in Egypt is suffering from an artistic or intellectual crisis."<sup>42</sup> The architect 'Abdelhalim, squarely admits that the crisis of architecture, in the two basic dimensions of the architectural realm: education and architectural practice, lies in the "absolute dependency [of Egyptian architecture on the West] and the mirage of progress."<sup>43</sup> According to Crinson, the most regular flow of colonial students to Liverpool came from Egypt who had received an education abroad that was absolutely separated from their home country where they will practice.<sup>44</sup> 'A.Ibrahim highlighted that the key reason for the crisis in the contemporary profession was due to the emigration of many architects from the country.<sup>45</sup> This was also highlighted in Abdel-Gawad, *Egypt's Architecture in the Twentieth-Century* (1977), as the brain drain.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the representation of the 'hybrid practice' of design trends in Egypt, considered together, they reveal the priority placed on the search for identity as an implicit and explicit enquiry of *AB's* editors. Many articles explicitly discuss this search for identity and the challenges facing the contemporary profession, such as "The Problem of Egyptian Architecture and the Necessity of Looking for Identity," by Yehia Wazery (1986, no. 75/76); "Contemporary Architecture in Egypt" by 'A.Ibrahim (1999, no. 199). In this later article 'A.Ibrahim highlights that the hybridity of the styles is not the main problem per se but it is rather the 'debased' versions which ignore the context. According to 'A.Ibrahim this lack of contextualization has resulted in a "circus," as described by *Domus's* editor, who criticized the Arab region's

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<sup>40</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "The Library of Alexandria...Between Symbolism and Functionalism," *AB*, no.105 (1989), 50.

<sup>41</sup> *AB*, no.129 (1992).

<sup>42</sup> *AB*, no.72 (1986).

<sup>43</sup> In Arabic "Saraab al-Takadom Eghraak al-Tba3yah," *AB*, no.73 (1986), 11.

<sup>44</sup> Crinson, *Modern Architecture and the End of Empir*, 39.

<sup>45</sup> *AB*, no.72 (1986), 10.

<sup>46</sup> Abdel-Gawad, *Misr al-'Imarah* (Cairo: Anglo Press, 1977).

architecture.<sup>47</sup> The two primary, inspirational sources for architects, revealed above, found in either local or Western architecture, as represented in *AB*, exemplify the mosaic of influence and resistance shaping the architecture of Egypt, as well as the attitude of reference in its discourse.



Figure 96. Contrasting Two Different Trends in Adjacent Buildings.

### 8.3 Attitude of Reference: Past and Western Canons

A set of attitude of reference continued to play a crucial role in the rationale of the discourse of '*Alam al-Bena'a*' shaping and reinforcing its boundaries and the space of knowledge. The editor's strategy in stressing certain topics and reviews of selected historical and Western sites embeds his attitude of resistance in two voices: historical and Western. These two voices are played contrapuntally within the discourse of *AB*, purposefully, one argues, in order to root the principles of Islamic architecture not only within the heritage of the Egyptian society but also within a progressive Western image.

#### 8.3.1 The Historical Voice in '*Alam al-Bena'a*'

At this point it is useful to reiterate Said's assertion that the writers of the post colonial Third World "bear their past...as urgently re-interpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance."<sup>48</sup> This historical voice, which reinterprets and redeploys experiences, can be heard within '*Alam al-Bena'a*'s articles, one contends, to articulate resistance—through an implicit pride in Egyptian and Islamic civilization within the discourse—which has been represented through two major strategies.

<sup>47</sup> A.Ibrahim, "Contemporary Architecture in Egypt," *AB*, no.199 (1999).

<sup>48</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 212.

The first strategy is through the inclusion of various articles that highlight the derivation of Islamic architectural principles from Pharaonic civilization and the mosaics of mutual influences between Egyptian history and that of the West. The second strategy is the review of various Islamic historical sites and monuments as well as revitalization projects. The integration of both strategies reinforces the attitude of resistance, as part of 'A.Ibrahim's agenda to revive the principles of Islamic architecture within contemporary Egyptian society as a coherent constructed identity.

On the one hand, a serial published in three successive issues, entitled "The Impact of Historical Factors on Egyptian Architectural Identity," traces the impact of the influx of different civilizations into Egypt throughout history. The author traces the histories of conquest from the Ptolemies to the Islamic conquest and the subsequent dynasties—Tulunid, the Umayyad, the Ayyubid—and examines how each of them contributed to the development of Islamic architectural principles, particularly the courtyard. The author conceitedly highlights the continuation of Pharaonic features after the Greek and Roman invasions whose influence was limited to a few sites due to the isolated stability and strength of the Pharaonic system.<sup>49</sup> The influence of other cultures on Islamic identity is also highlighted in the article "The Islamic Identity in the Design of the Courtyard House" (1984, no.49). The historian Saleh Lam'ei highlights that whilst the courtyard appeared in older civilizations such as Pharaonic and Roman, it has evolved to become a main feature of Islamic architecture as it meets the religious principles of the Qur'an.<sup>50</sup> The origins of the courtyard was also studied in another article titled "The Development of the Courtyard," (1998, no. 204).

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<sup>49</sup>Unknown author, "Ta'theer al-Mokawemaat al-Hadaryah 'ala Shakhshyet al-'Imarah al-Masryah 'abr al- Tareekh" part III [The Impact of Historical Conitituents on the Egyptian Architectural Identity], *AB*, no.105 (1990), 45. In part III, *AB*, no. 107, accentuating the simplicity of Islamic architecture, the author highlights that Amr Ibn al-'Aas mosque, the first mosque to be built in Cairo after the Islamic conquest, was a simple rectangular plan built with adobes and roofed with palm branches. The mosque of Ibn al-'Aas has been developed later in the Umayyad era by adding four Minarets and the Mihrab. (paraphrased in the same article).

<sup>50</sup> Saleh Lam'ei, "al-Shakhshyah al-Islamyah fi al-Tasmeem al-M 'imary le al-Maskan zi al-Fena'a," *AB*, no.49 (1984), 23.

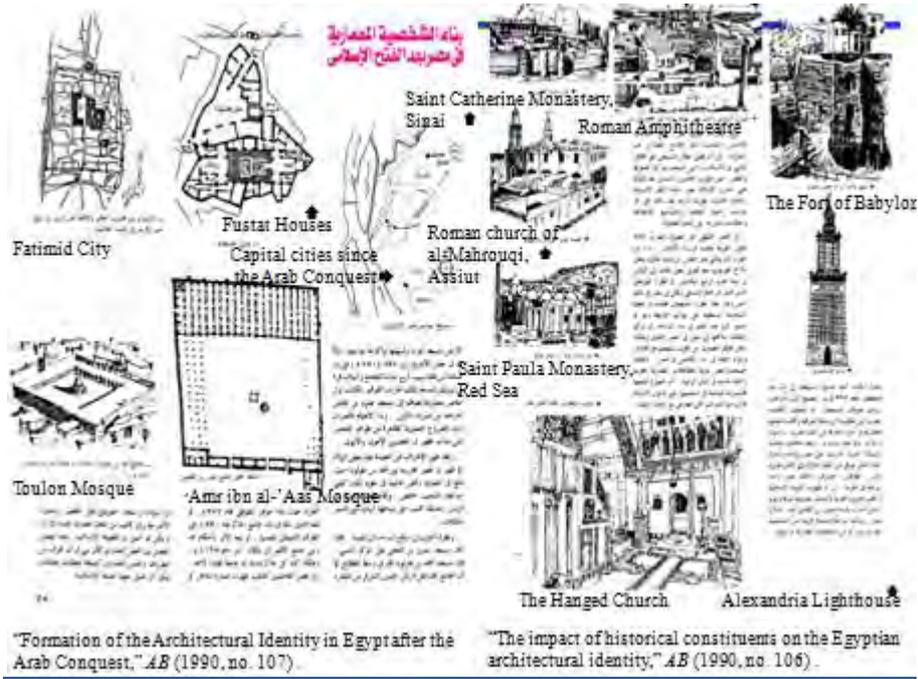


Figure 97. Architectural Influences from Different Eras in Egypt.



Figure 98. The Origins of the Courtyard House in Pharaonic and Roman Architecture.

On the other hand, the influence of Islamic art and architecture is highlighted in other articles such as “The Roots of Modern Art Theories within the Islamic Arts,” by Shafaq al-‘Awad al-Wakil (1984, no.41). She highlights the ingenuity of the Islamic arts and architecture which long before the recent theories of cubism, abstraction, and functionalism reached the same intellectual objectives: the refusal to mimic nature, the generation of unprecedented geometric patterns and functional climatic solutions. This pride in Islamic art and architectural principles is also evident

in the article “Local Architecture: Roots and Horizons,” by Shady al-Ghadban, Beirut University. In this article, al-Ghadban highlights that the architectural theories develop and change continuously as they prove insufficient to human needs. He argues that while the three conditions of architecture are ‘Firmness, commodity, and delight,’ affordability is the fourth condition, and recently after colonialism, the personal attitudes play significant role. While the Western theories continues to change, he concludes, throughout history the Arab local architecture—stimulated from our philosophy and heritage—thrived and each had its distinct character. This makes “our local architecture, until the recent past, an ideal model.”<sup>51</sup>

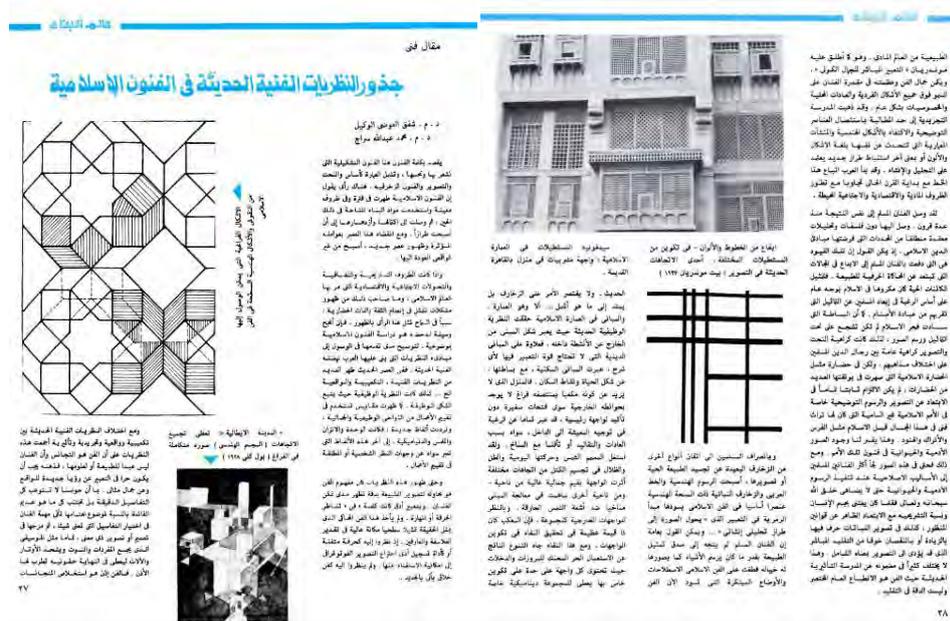


Figure 99. The Roots of the Modern Art Theories within the Islamic Arts.

The attitude of highlighting the Islamic influence on the West is further accentuated in a paper presented by ‘A.Ibrahim at the eighth congress of UIA, Paris 1965. In this paper he highlighted the Arab influence on Western architecture, condemning Banister Fletcher’s description of Saracenic architecture “as a non-historical style” that contributes little to Western art. ‘A.Ibrahim argued that Saracenic architecture influenced both aesthetic and spiritual architectural expressions as well as climatic responses. It is worth mentioning the following examples of the influences of Saracenic architecture as viewed by ‘A. Ibrahim:

It is safe to assume that the dome of San Lorenzo would never have been conceived had Guarino Guarini not seen the domes of the ‘Mihrab’—the praying niche—of the mosque of Al-Hakem in Cordova constructed in 965. The Cupolas of the praying niches in the mosque of Cordova, as described by Giedion, are the earliest known specimens in which the building arch is given a [construction] function. It has been asserted by some French historians that it was this Moorish invention which suggested to Gothic builders of a

<sup>51</sup> Shady al-Ghadban, *AB*, no. 69 (1986), 29.

century-and-a-half later the possibility of replacing the solid vault by a framework of ribs in stones.<sup>52</sup>

The aspiration of the editor-in-chief 'A.Ibrahim to represent Egyptian history on the pages of *AB* was significant. 'A.Ibrahim initiated an affiliation with the Ministry of Antiquity that had participated with CPAS in publishing the '*Alam al-A'athaar* supplement (1984-1988). The editorial board consisted of archaeologists such as: Dr. Ahmad Kadry (President of the Department of the Egyptian Antiquities), Dr. Shawki Nakhla, Mr. Mohammad el-Hadidy, and architects such as 'A.Ibrahim and Dr. Kamal 'Abdelfatah. '*Alam al-A'athaar* specialized in reviewing the restoration process of many buildings, its first issue, for example, reviewed the restoration of The Coptic Museum, The Hanging Church, and the Roman Castle of Babylon. 'A.Ibrahim's choice to publish '*Alam al-A'athaar* along with '*Alam al-Bena'a*, showed his openness to represent architecture that represented the diverse cultural histories of Egypt.<sup>53</sup> However, the articles published within the main journal of *Alam al-Bena'a* were exclusively about Islamic architecture, except for two articles: one about the project of saving the Philae Temple written by Mustafa Shawqy (1981, no.16), and the other entitled "Towards a Policy for Developing New Cities through the Reading of the History of Pharaonic Egypt" by Hazem Ibrahim (1985, no.62).

The second theme within the historical voice is the indispensable need to integrate monumental sites within the contemporary context through skillful conservation and revitalization projects. This is represented in the review of many Islamic historical sites such as Bayt al-Razaz (al-Razaz House, 1980, no.7); Bayt al-Sehimy (1998, no.200); "Souq and Wekalah in the Arab City across the ages" (1982, no.28); "Modern Changes in the old Islamic Souq" (1982, no.28); "Salah al-Dein Castle and the Mamluk Residencies" (1983, no.37); and "The Public Baths in the Arab City" (1984, no.49). The magazine also included projects from Arab and Islamic countries as successful examples that would suit the Egyptian context such as "The Preservation of the Old City in Istanbul" (1983, no.31); "Preserving Old Districts in Baghdad" (1983, no.31); and "The Preservation of the Islamic Heritage in the City of Fes" (1983, no.37). It also included many revitalization projects from Europe such as "The Experiment of Renovating Old Districts in Paris" (1990, no.109); and "The Architecture and the Conservation of Historic Buildings in Germany" (1990, no.115).

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<sup>52</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "The Formation of the Architect: with Reference to the Egyptian Architect," Part I, *AB*, no.78 (1978), 54. E.

<sup>53</sup> This supplement was the only place in which a comprehensive review of Pharaonic sites was made. '*Alam al-Bena'a* also contained a short-lived supplement was issued in 1989 by CPAS in collaboration with experts on tourism, *Tourism Development Review*. Also, after the sixth issue, the editors decided to separate the scientific publications in a supplement named *al-Maw'el*.



Figure 100. Al-Razaz House.

Concerns relating to the integration of monumental sites is also evident in the inclusion of detailed conservation debates in many articles. Key examples are the edited discussion-based article between several intellectuals including N'emaat A. Foa'ad, Badr el-Dein abu-Ghazy, and Hassan Fathy titled "Cairo's Islamic Monuments: How to Preserve Them?" (1980, no.7);<sup>54</sup> and a research paper presented at the First International Conference of Preservation of 'Islamic Cairo' was included in the same edition. This paper entitled "Revitalisation of Islamic Cairo" was prepared by the Arab Bureau for Design and Technical Consultation, al-Zeiny, 'A.Ibrahim, Kamal 'Abdel-Fatah, Raafat el-Zoghby, 'Abdelhalim 'Abdelhalim, Mamdouh Yaakob, and 'Abdullah el-Said. Other articles introduce pragmatic techniques and recommendations for revitalization and conservation, such as "Incomplete Preservation: Glimpses into Three Egyptian Experiments" by Nassamat 'Abdelkader and Sayyed al-Toony (1999, no.212, 213);<sup>55</sup> and "The Revitalization of Monumental Architecture" by 'Abdelqader al-Rehawy (1993, no.145).

In the first article, Badr Ghazy stresses the fact that there is a "direct assault to Islamic architecture which lies in the continuous creeping of modern architecture into the Islamic ancient areas," he points at al-Muez street in particular.<sup>56</sup> Ghazy asserts that the preservation of the

<sup>54</sup> Medhat el-Sirafi, ed. "Athaar al-Qahira al-Islamyah: Kayf Nohaafez 'Alyha." [Cairo's Islamic Monuments: How to Preserve Them?"] *AB*, no.7 (1980).

<sup>55</sup> The paper reviews three poor examples of the documentation and restoration of three different historical sites: 'Sour Magra al Oyuon'; 'the Hanging Church and Coptic museum'; and 'Pyramids' highland' which witnessed continuous disruptions to the process.

<sup>56</sup> "Cairo's Islamic Monuments: How to Preserve Them?" *AB*, no.7 (1980).

historic Islamic parts of Cairo should not be by isolating them but by “cautious integration with the modern architectural environment.”<sup>57</sup> For Hassan Fathy, integrating historical Cairo with “future Cairo as a viable part of it requires that any future extension of the city should be eastward not westward.”<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore in the co-authored article presented at the First International Conference of Preservation of “Islamic Cairo,” the authors highlight the complex task of revitalizing Islamic Medieval Cairo. They assert that the challenge of the revitalization process lies in “integrating and crystallizing the interaction between the restoration of monuments and the socio-economic and urban development of the communities related to the monuments.”<sup>59</sup> While this monumental restoration process is “mainly related to the cultural and aesthetic heritage of Islamic Architecture,” the urban development of the communities is mainly about upgrading people’s “socio-economic and cultural conditions.”<sup>60</sup> This process of integrating heritage preservation and development is termed “positive preservation”<sup>61</sup> by Nasmaat ‘Abdelkader, an architect and professor at Cairo University. She criticizes three preservation experiments in Cairo—Magara al-‘Uyoon Barrage (1999, no.212); Coptic Museum and the Hanging Church (1999, no.213); and the Pyramids’ plateau (1999, no.213)—because of the absence of a unifying concept in the process. The identification of a concept that unifies the process of preservation, according to the monument’s significance and context, sets priorities and determines the sequences of the process.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Proposal by Yehia al-Zeiny, ‘A.Ibrahim, ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim entitled “Revitalisation of Islamic Cairo,” *AB*, no.7 (1980), E.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 18, E.

<sup>61</sup> Nassamat ‘Abdelkader, and Sayyed al-Tony, “al-Hefaaz ghyr al-Moktamel: Lamahaat ela Thlaath Tagarob Masryah” [Incomplete Preservation: Glimpses into Three Egyptian Experiments], *AB*, no.212 & 213 (1999), 44.

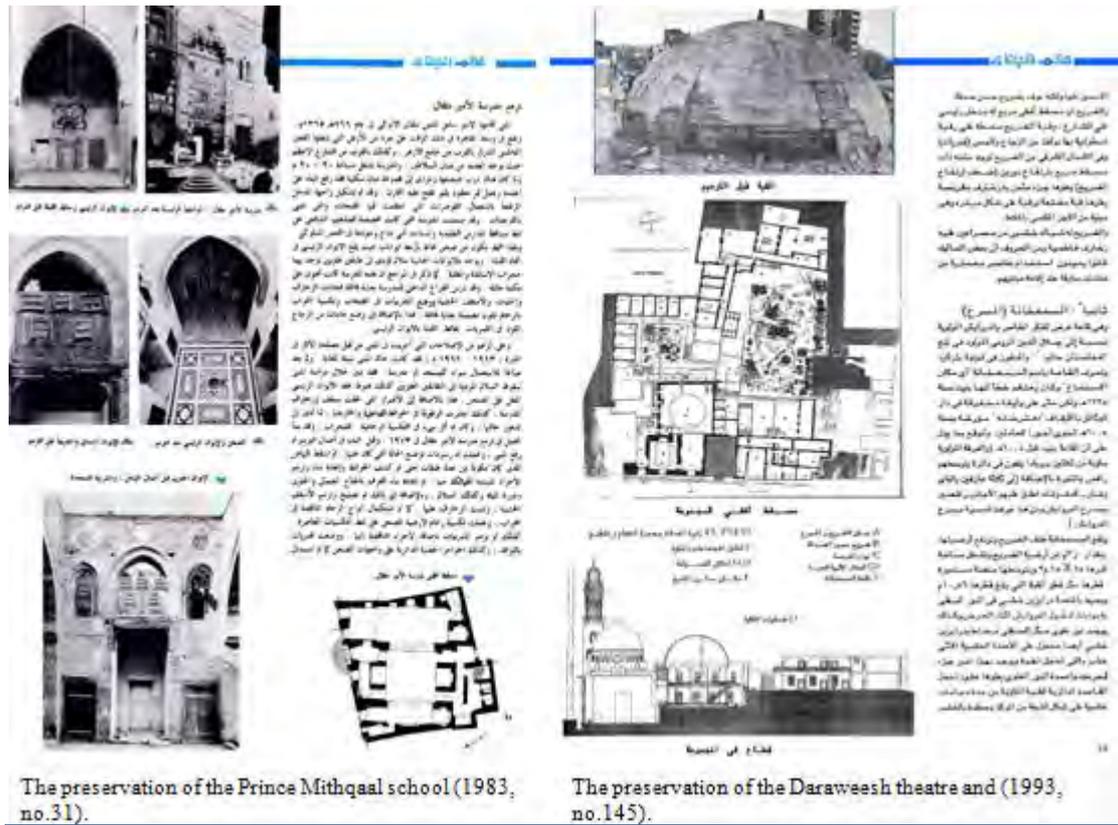


Figure 101. Islamic Architecture Preservation in 'Alam al-Bena'a'.

Several articles focus on the conservation of twentieth-century projects. These include “The Popular Architecture in the Thirties in Cairo” (1998, no.201); and an article reviewing the work of the first Egyptian architects entitled “A Tribute to Bygone Architects: Fundamental to Establish Architectural Awards” (1985, no.56). However, he includes an article by Doris Abu Yousif that criticizes the adoption of the European style by Khedive Ism‘aīl. In “Rivoli Street and Mohammed ‘Alī Street and the Blind Copying,” Doris Abu Yousif asserts that Cairo has never been in need of Rivoli Street, constructed in Khedive Ism‘aīl’s era, and that is why this European street with its French style buildings has been completely changed by people to the well known popular street of Mohammad ‘Alī, and Ism‘aīl’s ambitions for Europeanization failed. She condemns the way the socio-cultural differences resulting from this modernization project were trivialised by the Ism‘aīl whose project divided Cairo into two distinct characters: Eastern Islamic and Western European.<sup>62</sup> Despite the inclusion of this view, which rejects the process of Europeanization conducted by the Khedive, which materializes ‘A.Ibrahim’s attitude towards such process, ‘A.Ibrahim’s selective inclusion of and support for revitalisation projects of twentieth-century palaces within the space of *AB* is telling. His consistent conviction and the

<sup>62</sup> Doris Abu Yousif, “Rivoli Street and Mohammed ‘Alī Street and the Blind Copying,” *AB*, no.25 (1982), originally published in *The Economic Ahram*, no.708 (1982).

dominant message that emerges when the representation of conservation is considered in its entirety is that the conservation of European buildings will enable the continuation of Egypt's layered history. This is evident in his review of many revitalization projects, such as "The Development of the Mosques' Square in Alexandria" (1981, no.14); "Museum of Mahmud Khaleel" (1996, no.180); "The Museum of Modern Arts" (1992, no.131); "The Main Library of Cairo [Zamalek]" (1995, no. 166); and "The Islamic Museum of Porcelain" (1999, no.216).

In the case of the library, originally Princess Samiha's palace which dates to 1900, the rich Romanesque façades of the palace were left intact. The reuse of the spaces for reading areas was designed according to the existing openings and terraces. The Islamic Museum of Porcelain used to be Prince Amr Ibrahim's palace. It was built in 1923 with neo-Islamic façades and interiors. It is located on a distinguished site on the Nile River close to Cairo Tower, and the Marriot Hotel. For the palace's compelling interior design and what it contains from porcelain antiques (for example, the fireplaces), in 1966, the Egyptian Tourism Organization decided to consider the palace and its surroundings as a monument. The revitalization of the museum was completed by the eminent architect 'Aly Ra'afat (of Interconsult). He was also responsible for the revitalization of the Museum of Mahmud Khaleel, which has an eclectic façade that combines Art Nouveau and Baroque styles.<sup>63</sup>



Figure 102. Revitalization Projects in AB.

The representation of these very different revitalisation projects is indicative of 'A.Ibrahim's nomadism as he negotiates different eras. This inclusive nomadism brings together the heterogeneous experiences—a mosaic of cultures—that have influenced the architecture of

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix II for 'Aly Ra'afat's profile.

Egypt. Moreover, 'A.Ibrahim's attempts to depict these mosaics of cultures reveal the hybridization of contemporary architecture represented in the local context. These mosaics of cultures are further accentuated in the review of Western projects in a magazine whose main call is a 'return' to Islamic architecture.

### 8.3.2 The Western Voice

On numerous occasions, 'A.Ibrahim claimed that the role of *AB* was to enhance the society's awareness and search for identity. Therefore, in order to enhance this search, he sought to creating space for new lines of thought, lessons, and projects from the West. The previous discussion of the Contemporary and the Historical voices within *AB*, reveals how, in retrospect, the two forces of influence and resistance shaped the discourse. 'A.Ibrahim's discursive inclusion of Western reviews within the constructed space of 'return' is a powerful account of this search for identity, especially at a time when, as 'A.Ibrahim reflects, "contemporary Arab architecture passes through a critical stage [in which] Iron and glass conquer our architectural environment exactly as the case was in the fifties in the Western world."<sup>64</sup> He highlights his aspired selective adoption of such Western reviews: "the Islamic nation is not handicapped to adopt the scientific development that suits the values of its civilization."<sup>65</sup>

'A.Ibrahim's intended juxtaposition of local and Western projects, this thesis argues, embeds both resistance and influence within the discourse of *AB*. While 'A.Ibrahim consistently centralizes the necessity of a 'return', which will be discussed in the Editorial Voice (8.3.3), he actively supports cultural exchange in order to learn from the ingenuity of the contemporary ideas developed in the West. However, this exchange is tempered by what he posits as the centrality of Islamic architecture in relation to many Western projects and theories. Thereupon, this notion of studying the other appears to be embedded in what Said termed the "*Voyage in* [original emphasis]."<sup>66</sup>

#### 8.3.2.1 The Voyage In

The term '*voyage in*' often characterizes Said's fundamental view of the "cultural coalition" between "anti-imperialist resistance in the peripheries and oppositional culture of Europe and the United States."<sup>67</sup> Said's accounts of the term 'voyage in' are well represented in four diverse and important texts: C.L.R James's *The Black Jacobins*, 1938; George Antonius's *The Arab*

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<sup>64</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Formation of Architects and Planners" *AB*, no.2 (1980), 64, E.

<sup>65</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, editorial, *AB*, no.3 (1980), 4.

<sup>66</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 261.

<sup>67</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 261. It is worth mentioning that, as Said asserts, Basil Davison, Terrence Ranger, Johannes Fabian, Thomas Hodgkin, Gordon K.Lewis, Ali Mazrui and Stuart Hall held the catalytic discourse of the same voyage in, inaugurated by the four works James, Antonius, Guha, and Alatas.

*Awakening*, 1938; Ranajit Guha's *A Role of Property for Bengal*, 1963; and S.H Alatas's *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, 1977. Whilst each work belongs to a particular historical moment, they all share a similar story of cultural opposition. James focuses on the late eighteenth-century failed Black Caribbean insurrection and how the British exploited the beliefs of the colonized who adhered to the principles of the Jacobins propounded during the Enlightenment. Antonius narrates the resurgence of Arab nationalism, with a principal focus on Palestine, and the impact of colonialism on Arab nationalism. He highlights, one maintains, that this nationalism continued to be derived from uncritical opposition to the west, which led to two schemes, one is the Pan-Arab system, or a complete dependency on the west, both are governed by an authoritative single ruling party (as it is in the case in Egypt until the present time). Guha's work is about how the British empire successfully turns the native to a protagonist adopting its ideology to assure a continuous authority over its peripheral colonies. Alatas's is about the South Asian struggle of society with the ceaseless influence of the colonizer who succeeded in creating a "lazy native" who advocates "colonial capitalism."<sup>68</sup> In this way, while these authors highlighted, Said asserts, the imperfection of the independence process and the nationalist and cultural anxiety resulting from any Western affiliation, they anchored the "voyage taken by ideas and people."<sup>69</sup>

This *voyage in*, adopting Said's views, "constitutes an especially interesting variety of hybrid cultural work"<sup>70</sup> that, in this thesis, presents the current cultural preoccupation with the West in terms of the quest for self-realization through self-referent resistance. This view consistently aligns not only with that of Rasoul Nejadmehr who asserts that including "the other in the domain of knowledge is" essential to "the growth of our knowledge."<sup>71</sup> But also, it aligns with that of Sigfried Giedion who believes that this is indispensable to the stability of human knowledge.<sup>72</sup>

As such, this western voice within the discourse of *AB* reflects how 'Influence' continues to shape Egyptian culture, a culture that has always been oriented towards the West, as Taha Husayn asserts in *The Future of Culture in Egypt*. Based on the 'Voyage in,' the philosophical rationale of the representations of the West in *AB* has often been concerned with two perspectives that foreground a debate between the two forces of influence and resistance. The first encourages the potential benefits that can be derived from knowledge of developed Western technology materializing Giedion's view that in spite of the contemporary state of global

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>71</sup> Rasoul Nejadmehr, "Exile Culture and Identity," *Cultural Expression, Creativity & Innovation*, eds. Helmut Anheier and Yudhishtir Raj Isar (London: SAGE, 2010), 100.

<sup>72</sup> Giedion, *Space Time & Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, xxxviii.

homogenization “variety in unit will never cease to dominate the different aspects of life.”<sup>73</sup> The other supports a self-conceit while reviving a once strong heritage; Islamic architecture “our traditional origins.”<sup>74</sup> As ‘A.Ibrahim asserts: “we just look at the horizon waiting for what is offered to us by others while we are the owners of this artistic heritage and the deep rooted architectural history.”<sup>75</sup>

### **The Voyage in: Architecture and Technology**

The editor’s search for a mediatory relationship between architecture and technology is central to '*Alam al-Bena'a*'s discourse, in this thesis, this highlights the Western voice within this discourse. This is explicitly pronounced in many articles such as “Architecture between Nature and Human Technology” by Shafaq al-‘Awad al-Wakil (1984, no.45); and many editorials such as “How to Receive the New in Technology?” (1981, no. 15); and “Appropriate Technology ...What is After Hassan Fathy?” (1984, no. 64). Also, an article by ‘A.Ibrahim entitled “A Dialogue between East and West” (1997, no.195) encapsulates the Western voice. This article manifests the role of the discursive forces of influence and resistance in forming a resilient attitude rather than a strict one as might be expected from the magazine’s call for ‘return’. In this article, ‘A.Ibrahim highlights that the influence of the transformation of Western theories with its rapid technological advancement, caused an “intellectual shock, civilizational confusion, or the concoction of forms” in the architecture of the developing countries in general as well as the Egyptian architecture.<sup>76</sup> Looking at Europe, ‘A.Ibrahim bemoans the eradication of heritage by either the invasion of “architectural glass” in buildings such as the Commercial Centre in the Cathedral Square, Vienna, and the new Park Plaza Hotel Antwerp, Belgium, or by the extreme rationality in buildings such as the Water Treatment and Recycling Plant, Vienna. Similarly, in Egypt some buildings rigidly emulate Western architecture, with equally detrimental results, such as the mixed-use building in the Sixth of October new city, while other buildings are more conservative such as the medical center of Misr International University, also in the Sixth of October city.

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<sup>73</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “The Formation of Egyptian Architect,” *AB*, no.78 (1987), 55. E.

<sup>74</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, *AB*, no.1(1980).

<sup>75</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “Formation of Architects and Planners,” *AB*, no.2 (1980), 65. E.

<sup>76</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “A Dialogue between East and West,” *AB*, no.195 (1997), 31.



Figure 103. The Influence of Technology in Egypt and Abroad.

One of the important articles in the articulation of this theme of the relationship between architecture and technology is “Contemporary Architecture as an Art and Technology as It Has Always Been,” by Mohammed K.Mahmoud, Professor of Architecture at ‘Ain Shams University. Mahmoud holds the view that architecture is inseparable from technology and what shapes the architecture of each civilization is the degree of innovation in technology and the availability of materials. He affirms that an even balance between technology and art is indispensable in creating eternal architectural monuments such as the Pyramids, the Parthenon, or even Islamic monuments such as the Sultan Hassan Mosque. Since the beginning of the twentieth-century, he contends, “architecture has lost such a balance between technology and art.”<sup>77</sup> Al-Sheshtawi, Professor at Riyadh University, in his article entitled “Arab City between the Three Calls: Traditionalism, Contemporaneity, Conservatism” refers to this balance between technology and art as the conservative trend that is also a balance between the new and the old.<sup>78</sup> Such a balance, al-Sheshtawi asserts, will create new practical solutions that revive heritage and remove it from the past category of conservatism.<sup>79</sup> This balance is also highlighted in the first issue of *AB*:

adopting new technologies is indispensable. If we did not develop according to this technology and remained satisfied with our civilization, the development of the other civilizations will harm us, the same case happened to the disappearance of the Swiss

<sup>77</sup> Mahmoud, “Contemporary Architecture,” *AB*, no.80 (1987).

<sup>78</sup> Hassan al-Sheshtawi, “al-Medina al-‘Arabiah bayn al D‘awaat al-Thalathah: al-Salafyah, al-Moaserah, al-Motahafezah,” *AB*, no.15 (1981), 39.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

watches when the Japanese developed new ones...we already live in the other's civilizations: we...drive American and European cars...Thus it is important to assert that depending on the Western civilization is not undesirable because the principles of their civilization have spurred from the Arab's once developed civilization.<sup>80</sup>

Highlighting the necessity of new approaches, Mohammed M. Eweda, Professor at Cairo University, in "Architecture of the Future," reviews the development of the international theories from Wright and Corbusier in the first generation, to Kahn and Aalto in the second generation, and Stirling and Rudolph in the third generation. He perceives that although the ideas of the second generation were based on the first generation, the third generation sought innovations to fulfill post-war needs.<sup>81</sup> In this regard, the architect Carlo Testa asserts the explicit need for an appropriate architecture and technology which is efficient, functional and culturally accepted. Testa illustrates that the objective of appropriate technology is "to reduce as much as possible dependence on products and materials from outside and to make the best use of local materials," and this could be achieved by "the rediscovery of simple traditional technology."<sup>82</sup>

Thus, 'A.Ibrahim endeavoured to include articles about many new technologies including "The Experiment of Precast Systems: Do we Need it?" (1990, no.5); "Building by Tunnel System," (1980, no.5); "Developing Light-weight Structures," (1988, no.97); and "Fiber Glass Reinforced Concrete: GRC," (1999, no. 214).<sup>83</sup> This endeavour takes place by reviewing many buildings, such as the 'Century Tower' in Tokyo by the architect Norman Foster as examples of modern hi-tech. In examining all of the architectural elements of the Century Tower, *AB* assigns features of "rigour and clarity" to the building's "rational advanced technology that has been integrated with expressive aesthetic powers."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Research paper by CPAS, "Toward a Contemporary Urban Planning," *AB*, no.1 (1980).

<sup>81</sup> Eweda, 'Imaret al-Mustakbal,' *AB*, no.48 (1984), 45.

<sup>82</sup> Carola Testa, "Appropriate Architecture," *AB*, no.97 (1989), from *IDR 2* (1979), E.

<sup>83</sup> In "Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete: GRC" Reda Abu-Shosha asserts the applicability of GR to dome systems, mashrabia, and Islamic decorations. *AB*, no.129 (1992), quoting *A.R.* 1137.

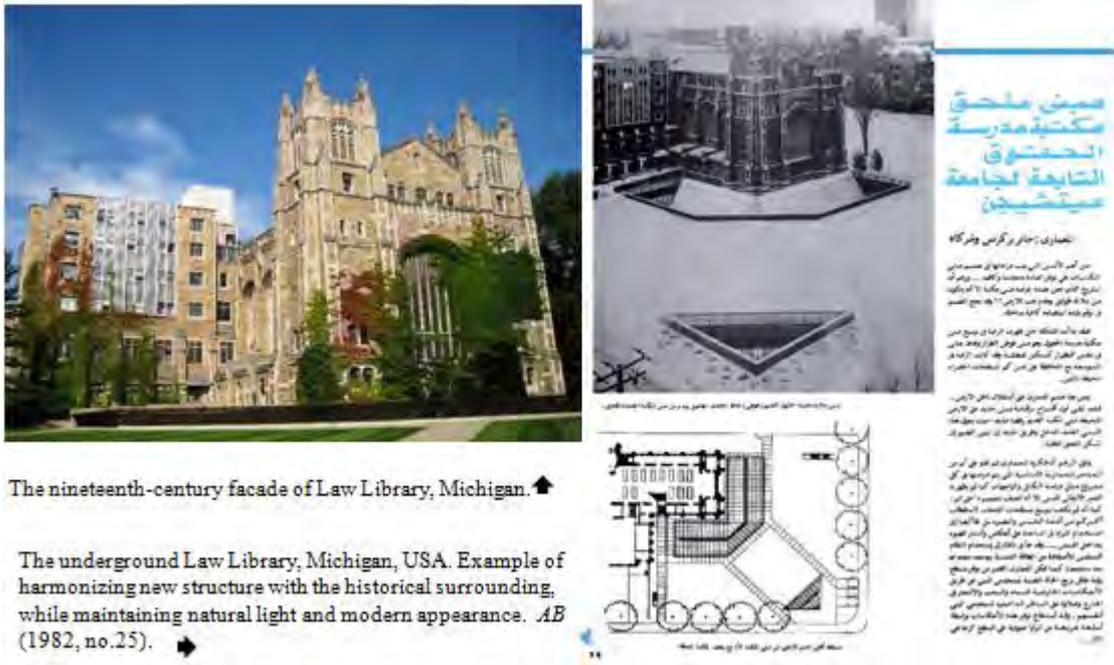
<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 104. The Century Tower, Tokyo.

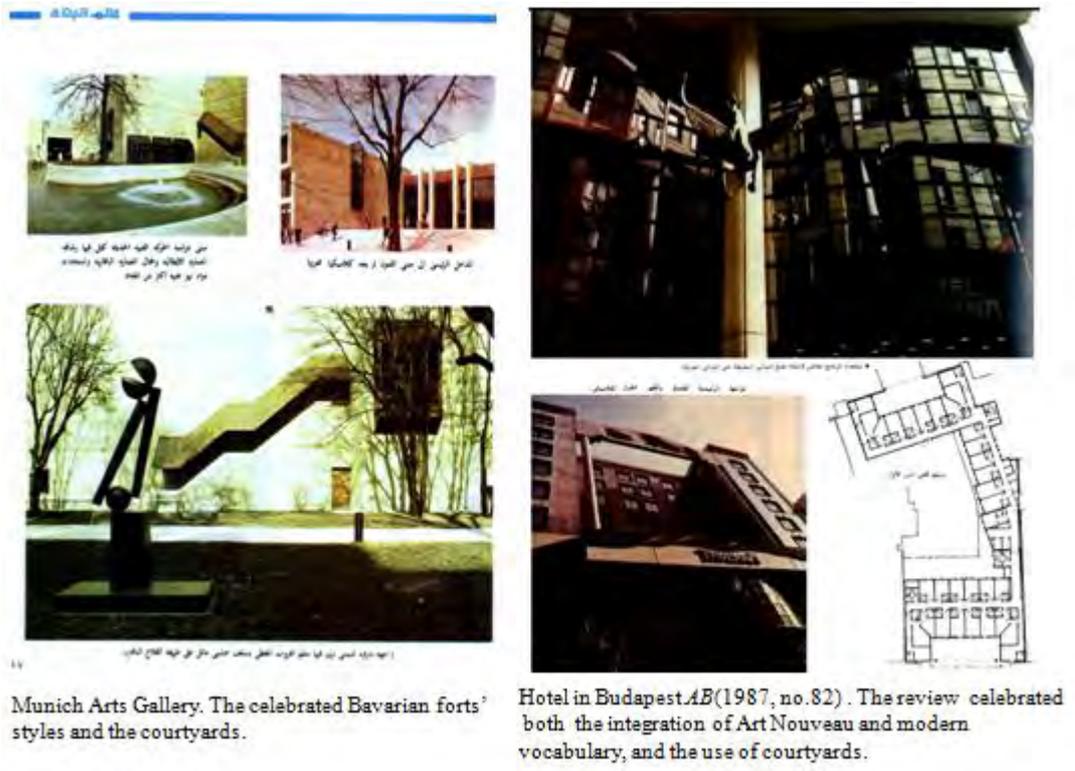
'A.Ibrahim also strives to review the benefits of technology to the preservation of heritage. Therefore, he provokes an appreciation of the Western technology while accentuating the historical value of buildings in western countries as well as Arabic ones. Examples of the preservation of many historical sites in relation to new buildings are published in *AB*. For example, the architect Alexander Von Branca won the competition for the design of the Arts Gallery in Munich, Germany in 1966, opened to the public in 1981. Since the building was located in front of the historical Arts' Building, built in 1833, the architect respected the heritage through his endeavour to accentuate the local Bavarian historical features. However, the building at that time, according to *AB* was criticized for its antiquated style.<sup>85</sup> Another creative way for preserving historical areas is implemented in the Law Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A. This project was designed by the architect Gunnar Birkerts, who sought to protect the nineteenth-century neo-Gothic heritage of the Law School Quadrangle by means of hiding this new structure underground. The ingenuity of this structure is highlighted: natural lighting, a crucial element in the design of any library, is achieved through the creation of a sunken lightwell surrounding the building.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *AB*, no.15 (1981),14.  
<sup>86</sup> *AB*, no. 25 (1982), 25.



The nineteenth-century facade of Law Library, Michigan. ↑

The underground Law Library, Michigan, USA. Example of harmonizing new structure with the historical surrounding, while maintaining natural light and modern appearance. AB (1982, no.25). ➔



Munich Arts Gallery. The celebrated Bavarian forts' styles and the courtyards.

Hotel in Budapest. AB(1987, no.82). The review celebrated both the integration of Art Nouveau and modern vocabulary, and the use of courtyards.

Figure 105. Western Experience in Building in a Historical Context.

Thereupon, 'A.Ibrahim seeks to motivate Arab readers to benefit from the West urging them to adopt principles or techniques that suit the needs of the specific locale. He also highlights the benefits of building exhibitions, which have long been implemented in many industrial countries, as an essential part of the building industry. 'A.Ibrahim articulated his hopes for "a pan-Arab building exhibition which reflects the achievements of the Arab nations in the building industry

which tries to compete with others.”<sup>87</sup> These examples highlight how the heritage is valued in many examples in Europe and North America and thus ‘A.Ibrahim, as editor, sets an example for local architects to emulate. ‘A.Ibrahim’s attempts were deepened by his strategy of highlighting the East-West cross fertilization in the contemporary era in order to highlight the value of the Islamic heritage that was ignored by many local architects.

### 8.3.2.2 East-West Cross Fertilization

#### The Western City as a Work of Islamic Art

Not only did the *AB*’s editorship attempt to show how Western architects valued their local history, but also how Western architects valued Islamic heritage. This attitude of conceit further promotes ‘A.Ibrahim’s attitude of resistance which was cultivated through his knowledge of the existing appeal of western values held by contemporary Egyptian architects. ‘A.Ibrahim affirms, in the 1950s, when the iron and glass towers started to proliferate in the East, “Western architects looked back for the cultural values in *our* architectural heritage to derive from it *its essence* [emphasis added] which is used in their buildings which dazzle [sic] us.”<sup>88</sup>

Many articles explicitly highlight ‘A.Ibrahim’s attitude of conceit, for example: “Japan Applies Islamic Principles in Building,” (1992, no. 108); and “Egyptian Architecture in the Eyes of British Youngsters,” (1993, no.140). In the first article, ‘A.Ibrahim discusses how the building regulations in Japan are not merely governed by the form, sanitary requirements, safety or structural considerations; but it also considers “human relations and communities,” based on the Islamic precept “there shall be no harming, in the first instance, nor in return.”<sup>89</sup> In this way, the neighbour has the right to agree or reject the building’s façades, especially color, openings, which should not disturb his right of privacy or cause to him any harm. As ‘A.Ibrahim perceives, this adheres to the Islamic precept “There shall be no harming, in the first instance, nor in return, in Islam.”<sup>90</sup> Through this example, ‘A.Ibrahim highlights how architecture can pursue authenticity through Islamic “teachings which determine human relations,” not through the form, which have always been subject to “external influences that hindered its cultural continuity.”<sup>91</sup> Here, ‘A.Ibrahim condemns the limited interest of Muslim architects to draw on the forms of Japanese architecture for the sake of progress at the expense of recognising “their related high

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<sup>87</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “Kayf Nastakbel al-Jadeed mn Technologya al-Bena’a,” [How Do We Receive the New Building Technology.] *AB*, no.15 (1981).

<sup>88</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “Formation of Architects and Planners,” *AB*, no.2 (1980), 64. E.

<sup>89</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “Japan Applies Islamic Principles in Building,” *AB*, no.108 (1992), 84. E..

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

human principles, which should have been considered by the Muslim architect in his cultural legislations.”<sup>92</sup>

*AB*'s editor continues to highlight the impact of Islam and Islamic architecture on the developed countries. In the latter article he asserts that the British youngsters have chosen their graduation projects from the center of Cairo, the very poor areas, i.e. garbage area and the citadel. Therefore, 'A.Ibrahim's conviction is that while the foreign universities insist on educating their "youngsters" about the problems and realities that exist in the world around them, "the Egyptian youngsters are being killed by frost while being closed on themselves not knowing what is going on around them or under their feet.”<sup>93</sup> These foreign students, he asserts, have learned that "Islam has economic, social, and moral values and patterns of living within the scope of which the Moslim [sic] society moves, guided by its traditions and customs.”<sup>94</sup> 'A.Ibrahim has also referred to many other North American and European universities<sup>95</sup> including the University of Sorbonne and the University of Huddersfield whose students were hosted by the CPAS for a four-week course which included lectures, workshops and field trips to the historic part of Cairo. 'A.Ibrahim highlights his conviction that these universities are interested in the Islamic and Arab principles because "Islamic culture is rich with its architectural and planning values. The world started searching for these values to take from them the assets which link man with his physical or environmental needs.”<sup>96</sup> Positing Islamic architecture as a main source of inspiration to many Western designs, religious or secular, was central to '*Alam al-Bena'a*'s editorship. On the one hand, there are many examples of religious buildings as reviewed in *AB* such as the centre in the new city of Evri France (1988, no.97); in Toronto by Zakarya Gahnem (1986, no.72); in Indianapolis (1987, no.78); and in Rome (1981, no.8).The Indianapolis Islamic Center is designed by the architect Gulzar Haidar. The "design idea of this project depends on the integration between the different functions as one unity," and the "successful morphological arrangement of spaces.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>93</sup> 'A.Ibrahim "Egyptian Architecture in the Eyes of British Youngsters," *AB*, no.140 (1993).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> There has always been a program of student exchange between the CPAS and Pratt Institute in NY; also recorded in *AB*, no.33, was a visit to CPAS by students from Sorbonne University, Paris and students from Berlin University in the company of their professor Janos Zimmermann.

<sup>96</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Arab architecture between locality and universality," *AB*, no.22 (1982), 50. E.

<sup>97</sup> "Two Islamic Centers in North America," *AB*, no.78 (1987), 21.



Figure 106. Islamic Centers in the West in 'Alam al-Bena'a'.

On the other hand, the inclusion of many western secular projects that were inspired by the Islamic architecture implicitly or explicitly, with features such as the courtyard or the arches, was a primary theme in the western projects reviewed in *AB*. In this way, 'A.Ibrahim highlights the value of Islamic architecture to architects in the West "on which we [Arab architects] keep our eyes."<sup>98</sup> The Islamic Arts Centre in the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (1998, no. 202), designed by Nicholas Hare, is offered as such an example. The building, completed in 1995, is inspired by Islamic precedents evident in its profile, the façades, and the courtyard which has Islamic fountain, as 'A.Ibrahim highlights. Highlighting this source of inspiration is reinforced by the view of its architect that it was designed to enhance "the sense of identity of the School."<sup>99</sup> It is notable here that 'A. Ibrahim's marginalization of the subtleties of such sources which originate from quite different parts of the Islamic World, is similar to the randomness of architectural orientalism, which makes his claim for the search for Identity quite superficial.

<sup>98</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "From the Street, Picture and Comment," *AB*, no.4 (1980), 15.

<sup>99</sup> Nicholas Hare webpage:<http://www.nicholashare.co.uk/project.php?p=0361&t=c>, (accessed 07/05/2011).



Figure 107. The Islamic Art Centre London University SOAS.

In the case of façade design, ‘A.Ibrahim featured two photos of two buildings: the dormitory building at Cambridge University in the heart of London, and the Tumours Centre in Houston, U.S.A. He argues that both refer to Arabic and Islamic principles in their designs: in the case of the former each floor extends beyond its lower one to create shade; the latter example, according to ‘A.Ibrahim, incorporates a type of mashrabiya in the detailing of the openings. Furthermore, the design of courtyards and arches are highlighted in reviews of many projects such as Sussex University (1983, no. 32); Hyatt Regency (1982, no. 25); the a mixed-use building that caters for commercial, administrative, residential and entertainment activities in Illinois (1984, no.42); and many other projects were featured in an article by Salah Zaytoun entitled “Internal Courts and Gardens,” (1987, no.80). In each case, the authors highlight the incorporation of forms and details that are identified as deriving from Islamic precedents, whether or not this is intended or by the architects of the buildings.



Dormitory in Cambridge (1980, no.4).

Tumours Centre in Houston (1982, no. 28).

Figure 108. Islamic Architecture in Façade Treatments Western Buildings.



Residential, commercial, entertainment, and office building, Illinois AB (1984, no.42).

Hyatt Regency AB (1982, no. 25).



Figure 109. Courtyards or Atriums in Western Countries.

The editor of 'Alam al-Bena'a' also highlights the implication of Islamic architecture in the interiors of many contemporary houses. He argues that while contemporary Arab architects ignored the use of courtyards, the western architect adopted the courtyard, specifically the principle of directing the house's spaces inward to achieve privacy. The two-storey house found in Wekalat al-Ghury in old Cairo has been applied in Le Corbusier's architecture in Marseille, 'Aly Bassuny, the Head of Architecture department at Cairo University, perceives.<sup>100</sup> Quoting *Manière De Penser L'Urbanisme* by Le Corbusier, he highlights Le Corbusier's positive appraisal of the Arab reasoning of architecture in his book based on his survey that "proved that the architectural reasoning of the Arabs was valid as far as environmental and human treatments are concerned."<sup>101</sup> It is of significance here to emphasize the universal origins of the courtyard as a residential element, which emerged as a "product of cultural polygenesis" since the Bronze Age, to the classical Greek and Roman houses for its appropriateness in the Mediterranean

<sup>100</sup> Le Corbusier's admiration with the Arab architecture was first recorded in his travel notes that appeared in *L'Orient* in 1911. See Zeynep Çelik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism," *Assemblage* no. 17 (Apr., 1992), pp. 58-77. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171225>, (accessed 16/10/2011).

<sup>101</sup> Bassuny, "Heritage in architecture," *AB* no.82 (1987), 64. E.

climate.<sup>102</sup> The significance of the courtyard comes from its simaltenous response to “cosmic, cultural and climatic forces,” as Petruccioli asserts.<sup>103</sup>



**Figure 110. Interiors of Western Private Houses.**

On the contrary, in the contemporary Arab cities, Western architecture finds more appeal than the local architecture, Udo Kulterman asserts that

foreign concepts of houses and cities continue to be accepted and even promoted by Arab governments, Arab clients, and the cultural elite who consider it prestigious to have Western type houses. These status seekers who want to demonstrate their wealth fail to acknowledge the false premise on which these inappropriate buildings are constructed.<sup>104</sup>

#### The Eastern City as a Work of Western Investment

‘A.Ibrahim highlighted his concern regarding the involvement of foreign firms and investment in building mega-projects in many articles and editorials, such as “The Situation of Foreign Consultancy in Arab Countries,” (1980, no.3); “The Alienation of the Arab Architect in his Home Country,” (1985, no.53); and “Designs of Western Architects in the Middle East,” (1982, no.25). The last article highlights that the first project designed by a foreigner (at the invitation of the Iraqi government) was Baghdad University in 1957 by Walter Gropius, in collaboration with The Architects Collaborative (TAC) established in 1945 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In

<sup>102</sup> Atillio Petruccioli, “The Courtyard House: Typological Variations over Space and Time,” *Courtyard Housing: Past, Present and Future*, eds. Brian Edwards, and et al (Canada: Taylor&Francis, 2006), 4.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid,18.

<sup>104</sup> Udo Kulterman, book review: *Houses and Housing in the Context of Islam*, AB, no.24 (1982), 49.

Egypt it was the Hilton and Marcel Breuers's design of the main buildings of Sadat City. This was followed by many commissions of two main firms: Skidmore Owings and Merill and Scott Caudill Rowlett.<sup>105</sup> This article highlights that in an economic survey done in 1980 in Saudi Arabia the gross contracts of the American architectural firms that were commissioned to work in Saudi Arabia were estimated to be 5,800,400 US Dollars, almost 87 percent of the gross contracts in the whole region of the Middle East.<sup>106</sup>



Figure 111. Foreign Firms in the Arab Countries.

Many projects were reviewed in *AB* that materialized Western intervention within the architectural context in the Middle East. Most important among these interventions is the editor's recognition of the Aga Khan awarded projects and the award itself, which was criticized in many articles such as "The Aga Khan Award for Architecture," (1981, no.9); "Islamic Architecture Awards," (1989, no. 101); "The AKA between Form and Content" (1983, no. 38); and Ismail Serageldin's book review by Basel al-Bayati, the Egyptian architect based in Britain (1990, no.109). While al-Bayati criticizes the jury for including Kenzo Tange who has no relation to Islamic architecture, he also criticizes their conceptualization of Islamic architecture. Moreover, he identifies the disparity between efforts to repeat the past or to ignore it. The "two extremist approaches: contemporaneity and traditionalism," in the 1990 award cycle manifested such

<sup>105</sup> It was mentioned in *AB* that the British magazine *Middle East Construction* in 1981 published a detailed article about the work of foreign firms in the Middle East. *AB*, no.25 (1982), 9.

<sup>106</sup> "Designs of Western Architects in the Middle East," *AB*, no.25 (1982), 10.

disparity, al-Bayati affirms.<sup>107</sup> The Aga Khan Awards in the years 1992, 1993, 1995, and 1998 were extensively reviewed in *AB*. In each case, 'A.Ibrahim highlights the way foreign firms interpret Islamic architecture in a way that manifests a superficial understanding of the principles of Islamic architecture that is reduced to formal experimentation.

Here, I will focus on the representations of two award-winning projects that materialize the problematic perception of 'A.Ibrahim with the interpretation of Islamic and traditional architecture by the contemporary architectural profession. The first project is the project of the Commercial Bank in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) by Skidmore Owings and Merrill, Chicago. "The design is a unique interpretation of Islamic architecture in high-rise buildings," as it uses the inner court to direct all the building's spaces inwardly.<sup>108</sup> This design exemplifies "the possibility of dealing with the contemporary architecture in a way to reflect the Islamic architecture and in the same time to fulfill the modern and technological needs."<sup>109</sup> However, this twenty-seven-floor, high-rise building was considered in *AB* to be out of scale with the traditional surroundings.

The second project is the new international Airport Terminal to cater for the Hajj in Jeddah. This tent like structure raised much debate about whether it really belongs to the Islamic context or not. The AKA's jury highlighted that the "magnificence" of this project lies in its "unprecedented roofing system that covers a huge area."<sup>110</sup> It affirms that "this design will remain an inspirational source for all the architects in the Islamic world."<sup>111</sup> However, 'A.Ibrahim criticizes this structure as "a huge cloud" which was designed mainly by imported technology: "the posts and the cables were made in Japan and all the materials were transported to the site without using any local materials or labor, except for the project's basic works...huge expenses that no other Arab country can ever afford."<sup>112</sup> Further, he highlights that the primary evaluation report was not done during the Hajj time to critically examine its functional efficiency. Therefore, he maintains the question of contextualization and whether this project was going to win if it was built in America, for example.<sup>113</sup> Such criticism of the AKA, 'A.Ibrahim maintains, does not diminish its effective role and efforts in reviving the Islamic architecture.<sup>114</sup> 'A.Ibrahim was challenging the award for Islamic architecture, which he

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<sup>107</sup> Basel al-Bayati, a review of Ismail Serageldin, "Space for Freedom: the Search for Architectural Freedom in Islamic Communities," *AB*, no.109 (1990), 22.

<sup>108</sup> "Synopsis from *Alam Al-Bena'a*," *AB*, no.4 (1980), 61.

<sup>109</sup> "The Commercial Bank in Jeddah" as one of the selected projects to review, *AB*, no.4 (1980), 32.

<sup>110</sup> "AKA for Islamic Architecture between Form and Content," *AB*, no.38 (1983), 13.

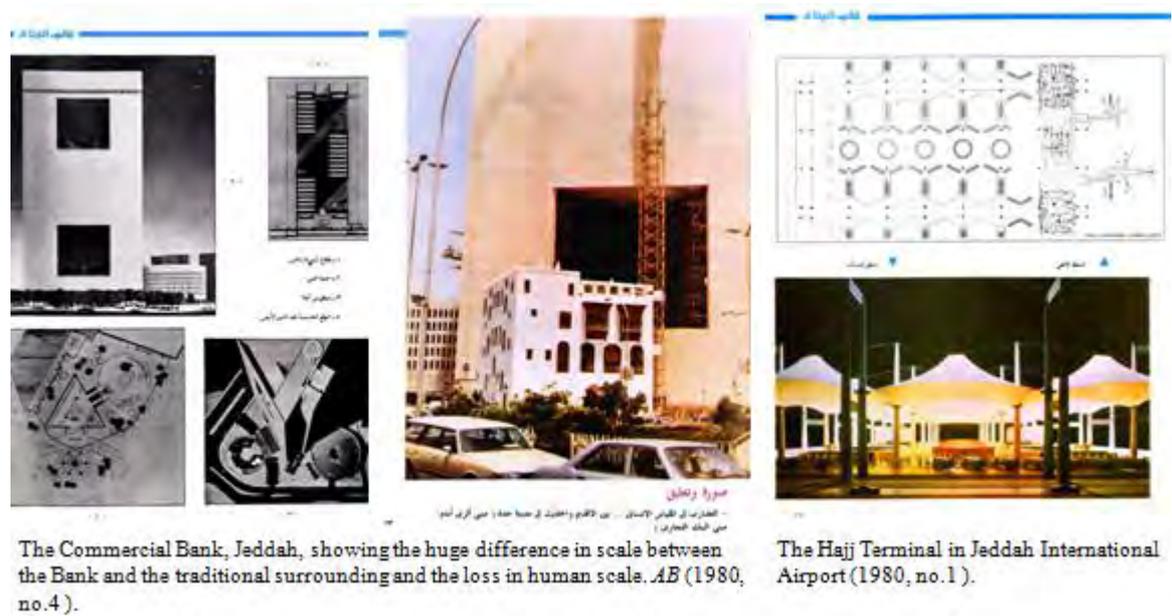
<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 13

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>114</sup> Thereby Hassan Fathy dedicated all his written works and designs to its archives. *AB*, no. 95 (1988), 7.

identifies as a Western award, and thus he announced a prize by CPAS in (1981, no.12) that is divided between architectural and planning design as well as research.<sup>115</sup>



**Figure 112. Western Projects with Islamic Claims.**

‘A.Ibrahim acknowledges the high quality of these foreign firms “with respect to their organisational and productivity aspects,” as well as their attempts to

reach an architectural formula to fulfil the Arabic environmental requirements. Such formula focused on the buildings’ functional [and environmental] needs by the use of solid walls, narrow windows and the use of the inner courts...However, these trials have never reached the civilizational depth of the Islamic architecture.<sup>116</sup>

In this way, while ‘A.Ibrahim highlights that these projects, celebrated elsewhere (and notably in an architecture award of world renown) fail to fulfil Islamic values, he acknowledges the functional efficiency. This view of ‘A.Ibrahim simultaneously interplays the forces of influence and resistance within the discourse of *AB*. Although he queries the superficiality of these designs, his celebration of influence is evident in his representation of Western professional regulations as indispensable to resolve Egypt’s twentieth-century architectural crisis.

### **Self-Referent Resistance: Regulating the Architectural Profession**

In continuation of the impact of colonial history, similar to the previously discussed local discourse (Chapter 6), the editor and participants of *AB* articulate a self-referent resistance to backwardness. But here ‘A.Ibrahim’s concern was more about regulating the profession to improve the quality of architecture, and more specifically to the authentic Islamic architecture

<sup>115</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “When an announcement for Islamic architecture award will be made” *AB*, no.12 (1981).

<sup>116</sup> “Designs by Western Architects in the Middle East,” *AB*, no.25 (1982), 10.

that he aspired to. This confirms Crysler's perception that all journal spaces are mainly initiated to criticize the current fields in order to define their internal space.<sup>117</sup> The editor discussed lessons from the West not only about technology or the implementations of Islamic architectural principles, but also about the organization of the profession in articles such as "How Do They Organize their Profession?" (1982, no.25); "Organizing the Architectural Profession," (1985, no. 54). Explaining the role of the Royal Academy for Architects (RAA) in Britain and comparing it with the Society of Architectural Engineers (SAE) in Egypt, both supposed to be equivalent, 'A.Ibrahim declares that, in Egypt, the architecture and the engineering professions are mixed up, "the situation that could be acceptable half a century ago," but not today after the increasing specialization within architecture itself.<sup>118</sup> 'A.Ibrahim gives many examples such as the Union of International Architects (UIA); Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA); the American Institute of Architecture (AIA).

Moreover, since increasing cultural and social awareness is part of the self-referent resistance as well as the organization of the profession, the editor offered a critique within the space of *AB*. He bemoans that while "civilized nations take an interest in architectural culture, as much as they do in the general culture," in Egypt as well as the Third World there is a "great disparity between the level of architectural culture of the community and the architectural thinking of architects."<sup>119</sup> There is a lack of cultural and social awareness, and absence of patronage in the development of the profession.<sup>120</sup> He argues that such cultural awareness in the developed countries has been maintained in various ways, one of which is the media. 'A.Ibrahim gives an example of the television series entitled "Architecture at the Crossroad" in which "arose a multitude of salient points, such as the architect's relation to both the owner of the building, and the community."<sup>121</sup> 'A.Ibrahim also gives the example of Prince Charles as a patron of classical architecture in his article "The Prince and Architecture," (1989, no.98), whose criticism is unrivalled by any intellectuals in any of the Arab countries.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Crysler, 24.

<sup>118</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "al-Mehna M'imary am Mohandes M'imary," [The Profession: Architect or Architectural Engineer,] *AB*, no.51 (1984), 2.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>120</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Society and Architectural Culture," *AB*, no.82 (1987), 66. E.

<sup>121</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Architecture at the Crossroad," *AB*, no.81 (1987), 50. E.

<sup>122</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "The Prince and Architecture," Prince Charles expressed his views on the television program "OMNIBUS" on the 28th of October, 1988. His views have pleased the head of the British Institute for Town Planning who described the program as a distinguishing mark, and said that the Prince had posed a multitude of points and aroused public opinion toward modern buildings. However, Maxwell Hutchinson wrote *The Prince of Wales: Right or Wrong? An Architect Replies* (1989) and referred to the principles of the Prince as the "commandments."

However, 'A.Ibrahim also highlighted the challenges facing Western countries, specifically Britain as a country with a long history of architecture as part of his *Voyage*. Therefore, there are many articles that demonstrate to an audience that aspired to adopt Western styles, such as "Contemporary Architectural Trends in the British Capital," (1983, no.39); "The Future of Architecture after the age of the Dinosaurs [pioneers],"<sup>123</sup> by Salah Zaytoun (1992, no. 126); "Classical Architecture," by 'Aly Bassuny (1992, no. 126). Also, to reinforce his attitude of the *voyage in* and overcome backwardness, 'A.Ibrahim republished interviews with architectural figures from around the globe discussing the challenges facing the national and international architecture.<sup>124</sup>

In his interview with Le Corbusier in July 1964, 'A.Ibrahim asked Le Corbusier about his views about architecture in Egypt or any other ancient country that has the same heritage. Le Corbusier thought that the way to clarify the architectural principles that suit the heritage values of such nations is to analyze the site's climate and culture. 'A.Ibrahim then discussed with him Frank Lloyd Wright's views in this regard. While Wright thought that it is necessary to return to the forms of the past, Le Corbusier, on the contrary, thought that a return to the Past in the second half of the twenty-century is an invalid solution and asserted the extreme need for the mechanism.<sup>125</sup> Here, the inclusion of these two views of Wright and Le Corbusier, particularly, considered as a further example of the editor's efforts to legitimize his call for 'return' which combine Le Corbusier's mechanisation and Wright's fascination with the forms of the past. All the previous examples of Eastern inspired architecture in the West as well as Western endeavours to contextualize hi-tech projects in the East manifest both 'A.Ibrahim's self-conceit to highlight the significance of Islamic architecture and his self-referent attitude to highlight the value of technology. Both attitudes of self-conceit and self-referent resistance to backwardness interplayed within the Western voice to discursively construct the need to resist and to make a 'return to our origins,' highlighted in the next voice, the Editorial Voice.

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<sup>123</sup> Salah Zytoun, "The future of architecture after the age of the pioneers [dinosaurs]." *AB*, no.126 (1992), trans. Zytoun used the term 'dinosaurs' to express that these pioneers are extinct. He mainly referred to the four architects (such as Wright, Le Corbusier, Meis, and Gropius) who have authored the first theories in modern architecture which continue in academia's syllabi until today.

<sup>124</sup> These interviews were published in the *J.E.S.E.*

<sup>125</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Interviews with Architecture's Pioneers," *AB*, no.100 (1989). Also, he and Y. al-Zeiny interviewed Sir Frederick Gibberd in Aug 1964, in *AB*, no.104 (1989). There are many other interviews with pioneer international architects published in different issues such as Louis Kahn, *AB*, no.102 (1989); Ernst Neufert, *AB*, no. 103 (1989); and Frederick Gibberd, *AB*, no.104 (1989).

## 8.4 The Editorial Voice

The three voices (contemporary, historical and western) were discursively constructed through a particular set of attitude and reference to establish the background for 'A.Ibrahim's main call for 'return'. While the first voice diagnosed the problematic status of contemporary architecture in Egypt as perceived by '*Alam al-Bena'a*'s participants, the two subsequent voices (historical and western) considered holistically in this thesis reveal 'A.Ibrahim's careful juxtaposition of the historical and western canons as a means to reinforce his call. 'A.Ibrahim's representation of a crisis in the contemporary architecture in Egypt serves his ultimate goal of reformulating a 'local theory,' that is, to construct an identity based on the 'return', one contends, to Qur'anic values.

### 8.4.1 Reformulating a Local Theory: the Return Call

The discursive construction of influence and resistance shapes both attitudes of self-referent resistance and self-conceit epitomized in the explicit call for return and the implementation of the Qur'an to reformulate the local theory and its consequential practice. Throughout the journal the editor was keen to reintroduce Islamic architecture through contemporary channels in order to re-construct the call for return. In this way, this voice highlights the rationale of the *AB* discourse as it epitomises the perceptions of 'A.Ibrahim, and other intellectuals who seemed to share the same attitude—an attitude that has been carried over *AB*'s 216 issues in which the message was clearly a "return to our origins."

'A.Ibrahim sought to unite the society's faith in Islam with the environment where they lived so that an imprint of the necessity of a 'return' could be established. In the first issue, 'A.Ibrahim wonders "Can the new Societies be Built Following the Islamic Typology?" He states: "If Qur'an is the main source of legislation in some Islamic countries, these Islamic values should have to appear in the architecture and urban planning so as to reflect the Islamic ethos of everyday life."<sup>126</sup>

In this article, he has implicitly sought to establish a local theory based on three main factors as cornerstones of his philosophy of the return: "1. "Harmonising with the nature and climate [environmental specifications]"; 2. "Fulfilling the contemporary needs of the Islamic society"; 3. "Extending the civilizational values."<sup>127</sup> From this, 'A.Ibrahim's call, one contends, is based on a civilizational realization, which interprets environmental specifications and contemporary needs from the lens of the religion of Islam as a main component of society's civilizational values. 'A.Ibrahim and H.Ibrahim, percieve that the return is a civilizational message (Da'wah

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<sup>126</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Hal yomkn bena'a al-mogtma'at al-jadeedah 'ala al-nmat al-Islamy," [Can the New Societies be Built Following the Islamic Typology?] *AB*, no.1 (1980), 27.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

Hadaryah) which will not be realized unless a parallel return in all aspects of life in the Muslim society (an awakening of the human conscience or in Arabic *al-dameer*) is maintained, as 'A.Ibrahim states in the first issue. This human conscience will eventually be reflected in every part of the society's life, namely education towards a better development of the architectural profession (theory and practice). He bemoans that any studies about a return to origins never introduced practical solutions—thereby, one contends, he carried the torch to introduce this practical solution. He states that the mere focus on the forms of Islamic architecture leads to the neglect of the civilizational structure, of the Islamic values of the community's behaviour and relationships, of social welfare as well as of the correct conception of worship. In the second issue, "An introduction to the Revival of Islamic Values in Cities and Contemporary Architecture," 'A.Ibrahim charts his agenda and the intended rationale of the discourse as he asserts that the revival of Islamic values should be through reading the present, retrieving the past, and "comparing Islamic values with the western theories."<sup>128</sup>

In this way, an authentic formal architectural vocabulary that can be used as a base for a local theory could have emerged. To establish such a theory, 'A.Ibrahim has a set of aims towards the past, present, and future, that has been inscribed throughout the *AB* discourse and epitomized in his co-authored book with H.Ibrahim, *AB* co-founder, *al-Manzur al-Islamy le al-Nazaryah al-Mimaryah*, 1984 translated as [*The Islamic Perspective to the Architectural Theory*].<sup>129</sup> These aims, which explicitly materialize resistance, are:

Searching for the self rather than the cultural and intellectual dependency in architecture; Rediscovering the cultural and scientific Islamic heritage to be used in the contemporary architectural theory; affirming the intellectual Islamic return and its revival in contemporary urbanism; resisting the Western cultural colonialism by reviving Arabic language; Introducing Islamic architectural theory as a universal theory; Encouraging freedom of expression and creativity within the Islamic values framework and through the inherited architecture; and stressing the fact that Islamic architecture is a social not an individual product.<sup>130</sup>

Whilst this book constructs contradictions between the individualism of Western theories and humane Islamic principles, the authors perceive Islamic theory to be a logical base that regulates

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<sup>128</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "An Introduction to the Revival of Islamic Values in Cities and Contemporary Architecture," *AB*, no.2 (1980), 37.

<sup>129</sup> This book, as Khaled Sultani described "tries to direct the academic curricula of the Western theory to an Arabic route which comes from the Arabic history and traditional heritage." Book review by Khaled Sulatni in an Iraqi Journal republished in *AB*, no.89 (1988). This book includes 22 chapters, most importantly: The development of the architectural theory in the West; The influence of the Western pioneer architects on the Arab architecture; Search for a theory in Ibn Khaldoun thought; Arab architecture in Tawfik al Hakim thought; Search for traditional values in Muslim's architecture; and chapters discuss the Islamic essence in the design of mosque, house, and public buildings.

<sup>130</sup> *AB*, no. 200(1998), 78.

the socio-economic life and the civilization that could be reflected in architectural production.<sup>131</sup> Herein, the editors endeavour to embed the idea that the building of new societies following the Islamic typology is a natural need and this makes the call for the building of new Islamic societies a true continuation of the comprehensive call of Islam as a civilization.<sup>132</sup> 'A.Ibrahim and H.Ibrahim assert that "the call for reevaluating the architectural theory in light of the local traditions and environment is not about enriching the debate between tradition and modernity but rather it is about researching the local theory."<sup>133</sup>

In 'A.Ibrahim's editorial (1983, no. 36) entitled "The Rules of Looking for a Local Theory," he bemoans "the absence of basic criteria and rules" in the Arab architects' thoughts, which are "based on personal interpretations and imagination and not [on] objective research."<sup>134</sup> He assigns this absence of basic criteria, as he often states in *AB*, to the subordination to the West:

Arab architectural and planning thinking, in the main, is still connected with or subordinate to the thinking of the West, represented in its theories, philosophies, achievements, and inventions. Reference is always to the Western book, the ideal is always the Western architect, and the praise always to the Western planner.<sup>135</sup>

'A.Ibrahim continued to review his own projects in order to materialize the return call and the local theory through the design vocabulary of contemporary buildings (see Chapter 7 for 'A.Ibrahim's designs). One of the first projects he designed in collaboration with the architects Yehia al-Zeiny and Fo'aad al-Faramawy for a competition in 1960 was the Cairo International Fair (after interruption due to the war the project was completed in 1980). It is a clear example of 'A.Ibrahim's implementation of the 'return to origins' call in which an abstraction of the Pharaonic Lotus flower is used.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, the buildings of the Fair systematically revive the past whilst proceeding towards "a modern Egyptian architecture," as Kulterman perceived.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Book review, *AB*, no.89 (1988).

<sup>132</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Can the New Societies be Built by Using Islamic Typology?" *AB*, no.1 (1980), 28.

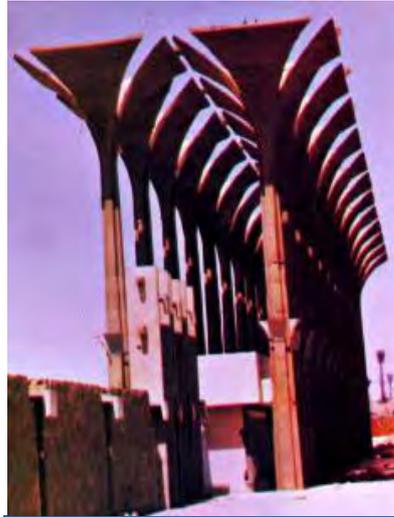
<sup>133</sup> Book review, *AB*, no.89 (1988).

<sup>134</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "The Rules of Looking for a Local Theory," *AB*, no.36 (1983), 50. E.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, 44, E.

<sup>136</sup> Cairo International Fair. *AB*, no. 2 (1980), 34.

<sup>137</sup> Udo Kulterman, "Contemporary Arab architecture," *MIMAR*, no.4 (1982), 85.



**Figure 113. Cairo International Fair.**

'A.Ibrahim continues through *AB* to define his call through a search for the essential principles of Islamic architecture and his attempt to reconceptualize Islamic architecture and to integrate it with contemporary theories.

#### **8.4.2 Essentials of 'Return': Self-referent Resistance**

The notion of resistance not only to western hegemony but also to backwardness was embedded throughout the discourse of '*Alam al-Bena'a*' as essentials of the 'return'. The self-referent resistance to backwardness was highlighted both implicitly in aspiration to reconceptualize Islamic architecture, and explicitly in the attempts to invigorate education and criticism in the profession.

##### **8.4.2.1 Conceptualization and Contemporaneity**

'A.Ibrahim repeatedly expressed his attitude toward the concept of Islamic architecture in different editorials such as "Architecture and Creed," (1983, no. 38); "Islamic Architecture or Architecture in Islam," (1996, no.176). There are many other scholars who shared 'A.Ibrahim's views and participated in the discourse of *AB*, such as Abdelkader Koshak, the Trustee of the Islamic Cities and Capitals, "The Contemporary Islamic Thinking" (1985, no. 56); and Soaad Maher "The Essence of the Islamic Thinking" (1982, no.25).

Since the first issue, 'A.Ibrahim strove to redefine Islamic architecture in an article entitled "What is Islamic Architecture?" In this article, he encapsulates his perception about the so-called 'Islamic architecture,' which for many people, "denotes tangible characteristics" including architectural features like the arch or the dome. However, 'A.Ibrahim still wonders: "where is Islam in all the [extravagance]?" of the monumental buildings built by Mamluk, Umayyad,

Abbasid, Andalusian or Persian rulers.<sup>138</sup> Although he perceives that, at this time, architectural extravagance “in mosques was a natural expression of the luxurious style of life,”<sup>139</sup> such great mosques or palaces did not “express the original essence of Islam.”<sup>140</sup> This is so because, traditionally, the “Prophet prohibits using colors in mosques, in order to attribute purity and holiness to the architecture of the mosque.”<sup>141</sup> This accordingly emphasizes the difficulty in finding “a general rule upon which we can define Islamic architecture.”<sup>142</sup> However, there are certain “stable factors” in all places and times that, ‘A.Ibrahim contends, exist in the teaching of Islam and may highlight fixed features of Islamic architecture such as “purity, simplicity, privacy, coherence, and spontaneous denotation of the needs and variations.”<sup>143</sup>

The views of ‘A.Ibrahim about Islamic architecture, one contends, signify both resistance to and influence from imperialistic principles. Whilst he resists the formally Western constructed category of ‘Islamic architecture,’ he imposes unification between the society’s creed and the built environment. This imposition signifies both ‘A.Ibrahim’s unconscious rejection of the society’s dynamism and his unconscious adoption of orientalist’s perceptions. ‘A.Ibrahim’s conservative perceptions are further highlighted in comparison to the view of Mohammed Metwaly al-Sh‘arawy, one of the eminent religious figures in the Arab world who was interviewed by *AB* in 1980 at the time of the foundation of the journal, to respond to the query of extravagance in the mosques as a place for worship. Al-Sh‘arawy highlights the importance of beauty in Islam and seems more resilient than ‘A.Ibrahim in stressing that art nurtures the sensations and that decoration is not a luxury if it suits the society’s economy.<sup>144</sup>

Rejecting the term ‘Islamic architecture,’ in an article entitled “Islamic Architecture or Architecture in Islam,” (1996, no.176), ‘A.Ibrahim elaborates that the “architecture in Islam is more concerned with *contents*, and more expressive of the Islamic view of the architectural theory, also more definite, worldwide, without being limited to the place [emphasis added].”<sup>145</sup> He argues that for the most part the heritage of Islamic architecture noted not reflect its time or society. Thus, he bemoans “several of [the monuments] cannot be described as Islamic” as, they commemorate “Princes and Walis with no contribution from the society itself.”<sup>146</sup> This view about Islamic heritage was opposed by Fathy, in a discussion sponsored by the Aga Khan held in

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<sup>138</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim “What is Islamic Architecture?” *AB*, no.1 (1980), 64. E.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Al-Sh‘arawy interview, *AB*, no.3 (1980), 11.

<sup>145</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “Islamic Architecture or Architecture in Islam,” *AB*, no.176 (1996), 40. E.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, E.

Paris (1976), to which he and Fathy among others were invited to investigate whether there is what could be called Islamic architecture, and if it exists, what are its criteria? In this discussion, 'A.Ibrahim expressed his conviction about architectural heritage in Islamic countries; he compared the mosques of Ibn Tulun and Sultan Hassan. For him, the simplicity of the Ibn Tulun Mosque reflected the simplicity of Islam by allowing worshippers to gain a sense of peace without fearing the supremacy of any force. In contrast, the extravagant Sultan Hassan Mosque, built in the Mamluk era, reflected, for 'A.Ibrahim, "the supremacy's relationship between the rulers and the society."<sup>147</sup> But for Fathy, the value of these monuments is in its genuine design and skilful craftsmen and Sultan Hassan Mosque "reached more than any other building, a magnificent connection between the earth and the sky and this is one of the Islam's fundamentals."<sup>148</sup>

Furthermore, Koshak, shares 'A.Ibrahim's rejection of the term Islamic architecture and perceives that it needs to integrate "both the inherited architecture and the contemporary one."<sup>149</sup> Koshak states that "Islamic architecture would be better called architecture of Muslim society in any specific period: there is no Islamic architecture that is *valid for all times and places* [emphasis added]."<sup>150</sup> Considering 'A.Ibrahim's phrase "architecture in Islam" and Koshak's term "architecture of Muslim society," one may think that both are based on the fact that "Islam has never given any directions for specific design or art, however, there are some Islamic *beliefs* that should affect the architecture of the Muslim society [emphasis added]."<sup>151</sup> Therefore, 'A.Ibrahim expressed the necessity to understand the Islamic content (i.e. beliefs and principles) in many articles such as "Can new societies be built by using Islamic typology?" (1980, no. 1); and "Islamic architecture and creed" (1985, no. 38). In the later article he clearly explains:

*Faith* should be maintained as a basis for the design values of Islamic community architecture, so that the form may not predominate over the *content*. Such maintenance must be through the recollection of Islamic values in every detail of the design process.<sup>152</sup>

Koshak aligns with 'A.Ibrahim and affirms that the architectural work "should adhere to the dogmatic content of the Islamic religion," even in their usage.<sup>153</sup> If there is a nightclub or a tomb designed to follow the so-called Islamic architecture style, he asks "should it be considered an

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<sup>147</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Zekryathom ma' Hassan Fathy," [Remembering Hassan Fathy,] *AB*, no. 110 (1990), 14.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 14. Reflecting on Hassan Fathy's admiration for this masterpiece was later a cause for regret for Ibrahim regarding his own statements and he later referred to the Sultan Hassan mosque as "Hassan Fathy's mosque."

<sup>149</sup> Koshak, "Contemporary Islamic thinking," *AB*, no.56 (1985), 33.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>152</sup> 'A.Ibrahim "al-'Imarah al-Islamiah wa al-'Akeedah" [Islamic Architecture and Creed,] *AB*, no.38 (1983), 50, E.

<sup>153</sup> Koshak, *AB*, no.56 (1985), 33.

Islamic architectural work?"<sup>154</sup> Here, one contends, 'A.Ibrahim rejects the stylistic side of the term Islamic architecture; he rather confines it and redefines it through the exclusion of certain principles. Since the term Islamic architecture denotes a deliberate separation between Muslim and non-Muslim architecture, he confines that the architecture of Islam is the "architecture that suits the Islamic spirit and values"—any other should be excluded.<sup>155</sup>

The Qur'an and Prophet's sayings (Hadith) represented a source of inspiration for many of *AB*'s participants in their efforts to redefine Islamic architecture and its content. This is evident in a series of articles by Hazem Ibrahim "Qur'anic Thoughts: Aesthetics and Function" (1984, no.43); "Qur'anic Thoughts: the Gradual Growth as a Methodology to Develop New Settlements" (1988, no. 89); and "Qur'anic Thoughts: The Concept of Islamic Architecture between Form and Content" (1988, no. 90); Saleh Lam'ei, "The Islamic Identity in the Design of the Courtyard House" (1984, no.49); 'Abdelmalik Hussein "The Impact of Islamic Shari'aa on the Architectural Form of the City" (1986, no.71); and N'emaat Ahmed Foa'ad, "Islam and Development" (1980, no. 3). Hazem Ibrahim constructed an analogy between the Prophet's Hadith "Allah doesn't look to people's appearances or colors but rather to their hearts and deeds"<sup>156</sup> and the necessity to look at the contents of Islamic architecture. H.Ibrahim also constructed an analogy between the gradual creation of the human body in the womb as described in Surat "Al-Mu'omnoon" [The Believers] and the way the growth and development of settlements and buildings should be.<sup>157</sup> Ne'maat Foa'ad similarly constructs an analogy between Qur'anic recitation, with its repetitive intonations, and the repeated units of the Islamic geometric ornament<sup>158</sup> or the repetitive rhythm of arches.<sup>159</sup> 'A.Ibrahim also included views of other non-Egyptian architects (whose writing was also published in *Mimar*) that conform to his

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Remembering Hassan Fathy," *AB*, no.110 (1990), 14.

<sup>156</sup> H.Ibrahim, *AB*, no.90, (1988), 16.

<sup>157</sup> Allah (SWT) says: "And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators," (Qur'an Surat No. 23 Verses No 12-14). H.Ibrahim, "Khawater Qur'anyah," [Qur'anic Thoughts], *AB*, no.89 (1988).

<sup>158</sup> Regarding the harmony of the Islamic architecture's decorations: in *AB*, no.96 (1988), in an article titled "al-Nesab al-Reyadyah fi al-'Imarah al-Islamyah" [Mathematic Portions in the Islamic Architecture] by 'AbdelRahman Soltan. He analyzed the common geometric proportions in five traditional houses (Katekhda, al-Zahaby, al-Set Waselah, al-Sehimi, al-Sennary) and he noticed that in each case the proportions between the width, length and height of each space are always equal to the same proportions used in natural plants. By this the author accentuates that Islamic architectural theory aims to create designs that harmonize with its surrounding nature "micro-macrocom relationship" not to challenge this nature as it is the case in the Western design theories, 39. Many other studies existed at this time—which were not acknowledged in this article—include studies of Okhwan Safa, Keith Critchlow, Ardalan, and Bakhtiar.

<sup>159</sup> N'emaat A.Foa'ad, "al-Islam wa al-T'ameer" [Islam and Development], *AB*, no.3 (1980), 42. Foa'ad is the author of many literary works, such as *Egypt's Personality* (Shakhsyiet Misr).

attitude, such as Khalil Karim Pirani and Doğan Kuban. Pirani constructs a relationship between the Muslim behaviour of honesty and the way it should be reflected in the design of the Muslim architecture that should “respect and appreciate nature; responds to the environment and cultural context of the region.”<sup>160</sup>

One may argue that the persistence of *AB* participants to evoke such an analogy between Qur’anic verses and architectural theory, and the perceived absence of faith in the Qur’an in the West, manifests resistance. This resistance subsequently formed the attitude of critiquing Western views of Islamic architecture as part of the delineation of the concept of Islamic architecture, which occupied the discourse of *AB*. This extends to Kuban’s conviction that the Western views of Islamic architecture derive from an “illusionary concept of unity of forms.”<sup>161</sup> Therefore, '*Alam al-Bena'a*'s participants criticized the Aga Khan Award; Ernst Grube’s introduction of *Architecture of the Islamic World*; and the design of the Roman Islamic Centre (1981, no.8).

First, the ACAA was criticized by *AB* participants in different articles (1983, no.38); (1989, no. 98). The main criticism was that the majority of the jury comprises non-Muslim architects who cannot understand the essence of Islamic culture. He perceives that these foreign organizations have reached this influential position because of their “material potentials and scientific means.”<sup>162</sup> This material potential enables them to access any source of information and to “give precedence to whatever they wish,” based on their “assumption that it amounts to the level of [originality].”<sup>163</sup> He elaborates, that these foreign organizations are in conflict with “the content of Islamic faith, thus separating form and content.” These organizations, the ACAA in particular, justify their separation between the content and the form where the content “in their view, is a sort of sectarianism that should not be included in the scientific and technical appraisal.”<sup>164</sup>

For example, 'A.Ibrahim refers to Ramsis Wissa Wassef’s Haraneya’s Art Centre whose purpose of making sculptures—figurative representation—contradicts Islamic principles and should not be considered as an example of Islamic architecture, although it has domes or arches.<sup>165</sup> But for Serageldein,<sup>166</sup> a Muslim architect who agrees with Charles Moore,

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<sup>160</sup> Khalil Karim Pirani, “Meaning of Islamic Architecture,” *AB*, no.166 (1995), 42-3. E.

<sup>161</sup> Doğan Kuban, “The Geographical and Historical Bases for the Variety in Muslim Architecture: Summary of a Conceptual Approach.” In an international symposium in 1980 in Damam, *AB*, no.109 (1990), 45.E.

<sup>162</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, “Architecture and Creed,” *AB*, no.38 (1983), 50, E.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

Harraneya's Art Centre "is a true masterpiece to be recognized."<sup>167</sup> In an article entitled "Architecture within the Context of Islam between Rejection and Approval," (1989, no. 106), 'A.Ibrahim condemns Serageldein's perception—in his book *Innovation and Authenticity in the Architecture of Muslim Societies*—that the architect's ability to design Islamic architecture is not necessarily confined to the architect's "place of birth, language, or location."<sup>168</sup> Also, 'Aly Bassuny states that "analytically, some of the projects winning the Aga Khan Award belong to Islamic character merely through the use of inherited ancient decorative features, such as domes and arches. Heritage revival should be a revival of intellectual reasoning of a culture, that is, to deal with the roots and not merely the skin."<sup>169</sup> Second, Ernst Grube, according to 'A.Ibrahim, misinterprets Islamic architecture as he criticized the lack of a clear structure in the architectural plans of Islamic buildings as the "non directional plan."<sup>170</sup> These plans, in Grube's view, are distorted and lack balance due to the maze of additional structure, such as in the case of the Sultan Hassan Mosque. Also, Grube's term "hidden architecture" is one that "reveals the ignorance of the author"<sup>171</sup> of Islamic content as it completely misses out the keen purpose of such orientation, "the privacy desire."<sup>172</sup> The architectural style of the Roman Islamic Centre in Italy, by the architect Samy Mosawy, is a mix between Islamic, Roman, and Baroque architecture that resulted in extravagant interiors that break with the assets of Islamic architecture.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Ismail Serageldein (1944- ), earned BSc in 1964 from Cairo University and PhD from Harvard University in 1972. He is currently the Director of the Library of Alexandria. He chaired two AKAA juries (1983 and 1992). See Serageldein's website <http://www.serageldin.com/Index.aspx>

<sup>167</sup> Interview by Zak Ghannem, *AB*, no.195 (1997),12, E.

<sup>168</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "al-'Imarah fi Etaar al-'Akeedah al-Islamyah Byn al-Rafd wa al-T'ayeed" [Architecture within the Context of Islam between Rejection and Approval,] *AB*, no.106 (1989), 8.

<sup>169</sup> Bassuny, "Heritage in Architecture," *AB*, no.82 (1987), 64. E.

<sup>170</sup> Unknown author, "Architecture of the Islamic World: Book review," *AB*, no. 2 (1980), E.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Nezar alSayyad, "Balance and imbalance: the Islamic Middle Eastern city between tradition and modernity," *AB*, no.159 (1994), 38, E. This lack of understanding the Islamic context is well represented in a great number of oeuvres, and here AlSayyad illustrates the example of "The Snake Charmer" painting by the French artist J.L.Gerome. This painting depicts a scene in which a nude body is entertaining a group of lazy smoking Arab men in the portico of the blue mosque in Cairo, and this scene could not have occurred in this setting. AlSayyad, *Forms of Dominance*, 1992.

<sup>173</sup> Unknown author, "Islamic Centre in Rome," *AB*, no.8 (1981).



Figure 114. Critique of Implication of Islamic Architecture in the West.

However, such explicit attempts to root Islamic architecture into the Islamic creed never prevented *AB*'s participants to endeavour to root its principles in contemporary theories. *AB*'s participants sought to reinvigorate the principles of Islamic architecture in technological and environmental terms and to align them with contemporary architectural theories and vocabularies. *AB* participants continued to affirm that learning from and reinterpreting the Islamic built heritage will eventually construct contemporary identity, which was perceived to be lost. Many articles represent a similar attitude towards reviving Islamic architecture such as Hassan al-Sheshtawi "Tradition, Contemporaneity and Conservatism" (1981, no.15); 'A.Ibrahim, "Comparative Reasoning in Architectural and Planning Thinking," (1982, no.20); 'Aly Bassuny, "Heritage in Architecture," (1987, no. 82); and Yehia Wazeri, "Islamic architecture is a Contemporary Theory," (1987, no. 81).

Al-Sheshtawi, for example, argues that the call for reviving Islamic architecture in contemporary architecture should integrate three fundamental principles: "the traditional... represents an adherence to ancestral heritage"; "the contemporary" as a desire for renewal; and "the conservative... represents a medium between the two previous calls."<sup>174</sup> This integration, in view of 'A.Ibrahim, could be realized if any architectural design is to stem from "comparative

<sup>174</sup> Al-Sheshtawi, "al-Salafyah wa al-Mua'aserah wa al- Mutahafezah," [Tradition, Contemporaneity and Conservatism] *AB*, no. 15 (1981), 39.

reasoning.”<sup>175</sup> This highlights the fact highlighted by Bassuny that architectural theories are changeable due to the “ideologies that change according to the prevailing intellectual thoughts,” and “could have been ideal in one age but may not have been so in another age.”<sup>176</sup> Bassuny affirms the invalidity of the Pharaonic architectural heritage in the contemporary designs because it is a discontinued culture, while the principles of the Islamic architectural heritage are still valid in contemporary lives and behavioural patterns.<sup>177</sup>

The architect Yehia Wazeri defines contemporaneity as the momentum corresponding to coincident experiences and needs and not only the mere coincidence of existence. He argues that the elements of Islamic architecture are contemporary because of their successful correspondence to the needs and experiences of the current age as have been in the past.<sup>178</sup> After excoriating modernity's problematic outcomes, Wazeri highlights the legitimacy of Islamic architecture, in general with no reference to specific era or dynasty, in relation to climate, noise and affordable housing solutions. For example, he further explains: the temperature difference between both the Islamic houses and the modern ones were found to be five degrees centigrade cooler in the summer and five degrees centigrade warmer in the winter.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, scientific research proved that the organization of spaces in traditional Islamic architecture would be much better dealing with the noise problem as a contemporary common problem in the Islamic cities due to the overpopulation. He also highlighted the appearance of the Doublex system, as a contemporary solution for saving space in light of high land values, for the first time in the Wekalah and Rab'e which enabled innovative organization of spaces in only thirty square meters.<sup>180</sup>

One of the innovative projects that was praised in the journal as it successfully translated the traditional element of the Wind Tower '*al-Malqaf*' is the design of the University of Qatar by the Egyptian architect Kamal al-Kafrawy. This project proves that Islamic architecture is not only a set of minarets and arches but rather it is based on a deep sensitivity to its local environment.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "al-Sanad wa al-Keyaas fi Bena'a al-Fkr al-Mi'mary wa al-Takhteety," [Comparative Reasoning in Planning and Architectural Thinking.] *AB*, no. 20 (1982), 49, E.

<sup>176</sup> Bassuny, "Ideology and Architecture," *AB*, no.35 (1983), 23.

<sup>177</sup> Bassuny, "Heritage in Architecture," *AB*, no.82 (1987), E.

<sup>178</sup> Yehia Wazeri, "al-'Imarah al-Islamiah Nazaryah 'Asryah" [Islamic Architecture is a Contemporary Theory,] *AB*, no.81(1987). Wazeri is an Egyptian architect and president and director of the Islamic Art House. He is also the author of the largest encyclopedia on Islamic decoration. He was awarded the architectural prize of Sultan Qaboos in 2002.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 11.



architecture, the return call itself manifested a monolithic perception of the term. However, unification can be assigned to his perception of the term as something that stems from the Islamic values rather than the vocabulary of specific dynasty or period. This reconceptualization of Islamic architecture was part of the editors' attempts to seek practical solutions that embed self-referent resistance to backwardness. This reconceptualization of Islamic architecture also extended to lively debates about education and criticism.

### **Invigorating Education and Criticism**

*'Alam al-Bena'a's* call for a 'return' was explicitly highlighted in frequent discussions focusing on education, particularly the dependency on western theory and the absence of architectural criticism in Egypt. 'A.Ibrahim was concerned about the isolation of Egyptian scholarship, affirming that local universities were isolated "from writing and publication, from interaction with what is erected or carried into effect, from regeneration through stimulation of the intellect."<sup>182</sup> He held the view that it is indispensable "to get to the roots of the local theory that stem from environmental and cultural factors."<sup>183</sup>

The Western influence in education and practice (and implicit concerns about its backwardness) provoked 'A.Ibrahim's call for regular local conference which led to the Permanent Conference for Egyptian Architects after 1985.<sup>184</sup> The recommendations of this first conference titled "Egyptian Architecture between Present and Future" addressed organisational problems relating to education as well as the profession. Both issues occupied the discourse of *AB* and departed from any stylistic issues that were examined in the fifties and sixties. The discussions in *AB* pursued two main routes: invigorating education and criticism to address society's needs and hopes; and the value of a steady evolving local architectural theory as a means to realise the quest for identity.

A great number of articles within the discourse of *AB* are devoted to education. These materialise resistance in their effort to tackle the influence of and dependency on the West. Notable articles include "The Development of Architectural Education," by Salah Zaky, 'Aly Bassuny, Mustafa Shawky, and Fou'ad al-Faramawy (1982, no.23); "The Education in Architectural Departments between the Obstacles and Solutions," by Mahmud Nofal (1992, no.129); "Architectural Education" (1993, no.141), and "Education and the Role of the Architect in Contemporary Society" (1999, no.210) both by Ashraf Salama; and "Architecture of the Poor in Educational Curricula" (1992, no.136); "The Future of Architectural Education"

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<sup>182</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Rules of Researching into the Local Theory," *AB*, no. 36: (1983), 44. E.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>184</sup> This was subsequently organized by the Union of Egyptian architects. A.Ibrahim "The First Conference for Arab Architects," *AB*, no. 72 (1986), 50.

(1994, no.159), and “Architectural Education at the Crossroad” (1996, no.183), three of them and many others by ‘A.Ibrahim.

In the discussion-based article “The Development of Architectural Education,” many Egyptian architects, such as Mostafa Shawky and Salah Zaky, introduced pragmatic solutions to improve architectural education—the main subject of the June issue in 1982. In their opinion, the pragmatic solutions lay in the separation of architectural departments from the Engineering schools; the engagement of universities with their respective communities and city development (1982, no.23); and the extension of architectural programs from four years to six years (Zaky, 1985, no. 56). ‘A.Ibrahim aligns with Zaky’s important view “to build up the foundation of a good architect.”<sup>185</sup> For ‘A.Ibrahim architecture should be treated “as a religion”: the architect should be familiar “with a wide range of education integrating the three aspects of knowledge (i.e. human science, technology, and planning) in a period of three years of architectural education to develop an architect “with deep belief.” He also suggests that the undergraduate course should be for ten years and coincide with secondary education.<sup>186</sup>

The discussions of educational problems evolved around the contextualization of architectural education. Emphasis was placed on knowledge of both local heritage and local socio-economic environment. For example, in “Education and the Role of the Architect in Contemporary Society” Salama highlights the necessity of a multi-disciplinary approach to enable the integration of logic and intuition. He argues for the necessity of developing the educational systems in relation to local and regional perspectives as well as the perspective of individual creativity. This approach was clearly distinguished from prevalent and incompatible curricula inspired by Beaux-Arts tradition and the Bauhaus.<sup>187</sup>

The integration of multi-disciplinary socio-economic aspects in education is also highlighted by ‘A.Ibrahim: “Socioeconomic Dimension in Architectural Education,” (1988, no.90); “Architecture for the Poor...and the Barefoot Architects,” (1995, no.166); and “People’s Opinion in Architecture,” (1998, no. 201). In these articles ‘A.Ibrahim asserts the need for “architecture of the happy medium without prodigality or triviality.”<sup>188</sup> He highlights the importance of developing the educational curricula to enable a new kind of architect, the “barefoot architect,” to cooperate and interact with the needs of the poor, referring to the UNESCO initiatives at this

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<sup>185</sup> Salah Zaky, “The Development of the Architectural Education in Egypt.” Paper submitted to the first Egyptian Architects’ Conference, Cairo, 1985. *AB*, no. 56 (1985), 41.

<sup>186</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “The Formation of Egyptian Architect,” *AB*, no. 79 (1987), E.

<sup>187</sup> Salama, *AB*, no. 251 (1998), 33.

<sup>188</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “al-Bo’d al-’Iktesady wa al-’Igtema’ei fi al-Taleem al-M’imary,” “Socioeconomic Dimension in Architectural Education,” *AB*, no.90 (1988), 50, E.

time.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, he condemns individuality in design and calls for designs that are based on interactive architecture between architect and people.<sup>190</sup> Accordingly, 'environmental architecture' was discussed in *AB*. For example, Mohammed Abdel'aal Ibrahim, Dean of Beirut University, explains that the environmental architecture creates "a harmonious association between any human and his social and historical reality that will lead to the alleviation of his feelings and thoughts."<sup>191</sup>

As a further dimension of this local context as an aspect of education *AB* calls for recognition of local history and local figures such as Hassan Fathy and Salah Zaytoun, as well as Arab figures such as Rifat Chadirji, Mohammed Mekkia, and Rasem Badran. For M. 'Abdelbaki this is critical to understand the socio-economic context.<sup>192</sup> By extension, Koshak stresses the need to integrate knowledge of Islamic architecture in architectural education and, furthermore, the crucial need to rewrite the history of Islamic architecture.<sup>193</sup> It is worth noting here that *AB* has celebrated the attempts of these Arab architects, for instance Rasem Badran's designs and views about Islamic architecture were addressed in "A Viewpoint of Islamic architecture," (1995, no. 170).

Similar views are highlighted in the "Importance of Including our Arab Architectural Heritage in the Curricula at our Universities," by Haider Kamuna, Baghdad University (1987, no. 81). He stresses that rewriting the curricula in this way would highlight regional architectural expressions of Muslim communities as well as their relationship to the architecture of (often prior) non-Muslim communities: which are sometimes harmonious and sometimes not. Kumana argues that this will not only change the way Western theories are evaluated but also assist the re-development of heritage areas in relation to contemporary needs and technologies.<sup>194</sup>

To date, these discussions about education have had little to no effect on education in Egypt. 'A.Ibrahim bemoaned how "conversation about architectural education drifts from one topic to another, without producing a tangible effect on the education."<sup>195</sup>

In the case of architectural criticism, the discourse referred to the necessity of invigorating the architectural criticism in Egypt in many articles such as 'A.Ibrahim "Comparative Reasoning

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<sup>189</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Architecture for the Poor...and the Barefoot Architects," *AB*, no.166 (1995), E. 'A.Ibrahim highlights the impact of Fathy's ideas on the Bare foot architects in India. "The world around Hassan Fathy's philosophy for Architecture for the poor," *AB*, no.143 (1993).

<sup>190</sup> 'A.Ibrahim "People's Opinion in Architecture," *AB*, no.201 (1998), E.

<sup>191</sup> Mohammed 'A.Ibrahim, "Influence of the Environmental Architecture on the Social Structure," *AB*, no.82 (1987), 58.

<sup>192</sup> Mohammed 'A.Ibrahim, "Educational Process and Practice in the Architectural Engineering," *AB*, no.188 (1997).

<sup>193</sup> Koshak, *AB*, no.56, 33.

<sup>194</sup> "Ahmyet tadmeen touraathena al-m'imary al-'Araby fi al-manaheg al-tadreesyah le-gamea'atena" [Importance of Including our Arab Architectural Heritage in the Curricula in our Universities,] *AB*, no.81 (1987), 43.

<sup>195</sup> 'A.Ibrahim, "Socioeconomic Dimension in Architectural Education," *AB*, no.90 (1988), 50, E.

Planning and Architectural Thinking” (1982, no.20); and “The Problem of Architectural Criticism,” (1998, no.203 and no.204); H.Ibrahim “Around the Issue of Evaluation and Criticism: Aim and Means” (1985, no.59/60); and Ali ‘Abdelra’of “Towards a Methodical Framework in the Criticism of Contemporary Egyptian Architecture” (1999, no.208).<sup>196</sup> These articles discursively construct the criteria for criticism focusing on contemporary Egyptian architecture. However, in the effort to create a space of resistance they draw on North American and European theories of “construction and deconstruction”. For example, ‘A.Ibrahim contends that architectural criticism should be based on new vocabulary that emerges from within the local surroundings as a means to resist foreign influences.<sup>197</sup> And yet, “The critic should have his construction and deconstruction tool kit that should be based on the shared threads between the successive civilizational changes and contradictions to interpret architecture with its spatio-temporal components.”<sup>198</sup>

These endeavours for independent education and criticism are the cornerstone in ‘A.Ibrahim’s ultimate aspiration—a local theory—which crowns his self-referent attitude of resistance. A.Abdelhalim asserts that since World War II the local theory is failing to respond to the society’s changing needs. Moreover, ‘Abdelhalim bemoans “this failure accompanied with the systematic and fast inroad of the Western hegemony.”<sup>199</sup> Therefore, *AB* participants share the consensus of the necessity to establish a local theory. However, while some scholars view the Qur’an as an indispensable source for such a theory, as previously discussed in the conceptualization of Islamic architecture, others are quite open and refute any religious limitations. Both views are represented in *AB*. The second attitude is implicitly presented in the views of ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim, Nezar alSayyad and Ismail Serageldein.

‘Abdelhalim’s philosophy is based on both *reality* and *practicality*: He makes a case for the reality of belonging to the third world as a whole but with a particular belonging to Arab society where this should be the main foundation for “the architectural intellect to stem from.”<sup>200</sup> By extension, this reality presents the grounds for “a scientific curriculum [that] carries the

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<sup>196</sup> Ali ‘Abdelra’oof, “Nahow Etaar Manhagy le- Nakd al-‘Imarah al-Misryah,” trans. [Toward a Methodological Framework for the Criticism of the Contemporary Egyptian Architecture.] He highlighted the Arab critics who represent a transformational point of departure in architecture Hassan Fathy, Rifat Chadirji, Jamil Akbar, ‘Erfaan Samy, ‘Aly Rafaat, and ‘A.Ibrahim. This is not to dismiss the worth of critics who are not architects such as Ahmed Baha’a Eldein, N’emaat A. Fou’ad, Ahmed ‘Abdelmo’ty Hegazy, Farouk Gewidah and psychologists such as Atef Ghyth and Sayyed ‘Ewys who have “raised up very critical and important issues in the architecture and urbanism of Egypt,” *AB*, no.208 (1999), 32.

<sup>197</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “al-Sanad wa al-qeyaas fi bena’a al-Fekr al-Mi’mary wa al-Takhteety,” [Comparative Reasoning in Planning and Architectural Thinking,] *AB*, no.20 (1982), 49, E.

<sup>198</sup> ‘A.Ibrahim, “Ishkalyet al-Nakd al-Mimary,” [The Problem of Architectural Criticism 2,] *AB*, no.204 (1998), 40, E.

<sup>199</sup> ‘Abdelhalim, “Azmet al-‘imarah fi misr,” “Crisis of architecture in Egypt,” *AB*, no.73 (1986), 8.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

societies' intellect from the imaginative level to the *practical* one ... this curriculum should combine knowledge from other disciplines ... to reconstruct the new communities or affecting the already built communities [emphasis added]." By this, 'Abdelhalim argues for the need to change "the perceptions about the heritage revival as it should not be a matter of satisfying the elites' and tourists' tastes but it should be a continuous process for the whole revival of a society."<sup>201</sup> Also, in alignment with the adoption of such a reality, AlSayyad who, in a critical article titled "Balance and Imbalance: The Islamic Middle Eastern City between Tradition and Modernity," accentuates that while some Muslim architects in the Middle East are

calling for a new authentic regionalism, they simply ignored that the western model will continue to shape their cities through inherited institutions and regulations. ...The contemporary Middle Eastern City is now acquiring quickly the habits of the western city ... the elements of the traditional Islamic city are now *acquiring a new reality* [emphasis added].<sup>202</sup>

This reality of the continuation of the influence of the western model on the Arab countries is also manifested in Ismail Serageldin's book "al-Tagdeed wa al-T'aseel fi Imaret al-Mogtmaat al-Islamyah", translated as [Renewal and Rootedness in the Architecture of the Islamic Communities.] In this book, he states that "rejecting modernity is like a slow suicide, and the denial of heritage is a self denial."<sup>203</sup>

To conclude, this wide range of views covered in *AB* materializes the discursive forces of influence and resistance operating within the discourse and the editor's conviction regarding the inevitable duality between modernity and tradition. However, he constructs an interrelation between modernity and tradition through a set of attitude and reference that was materialized in the strategic moves between geographies and histories. On the one hand, whilst *AB* attempts to implant Islamic identity as the only civilizational alternative to the western dependency, it skillfully adopts a strategic approach by highlighting specific elements in the western projects that buttress its overall allure with the Islamic identity, and embeds an attitude of self-conceit. On the other hand, the historical review not only attempts to highlight the grandeur of Islamic monuments but also to root the Islamic architectural elements within the Pharaonic and Graeco-roman cultures—considered as predecessors of the local heritage. The reviews of western and historical architecture materialize the western and historical voices in '*Alam al-Bena'a*' through both attitudes of self-referent resistance and self-conceit. Both render the impact of imperialism

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>202</sup> Nezar alSayyad, "Balance and Imbalance: the Islamic Middle Eastern City between Tradition and Modernity," *AB*, no.159 (1994), 38, E.

<sup>203</sup> Review of book Ismail Serageldin, "al-Tagdeed wa al-T'aseel fi 'Imaret al-Mogtm'aat al-Islamyah" [Renewal and Rootedness in the Architecture of the Islamic Communities,] *AB*, no.106 (1989).

visible. This impact provoked the editor's return call which exhorts "civilizational values."<sup>204</sup> These voices that were played contrapuntally within the discourse of '*Alam al-Bena*'a have not only crystallized the rationale I have been seeking to articulate within *AB*, but also offer insights into the influential hierarchies that are manifested in Egyptian architecture. The movement of this discourse, back and forth in the time, and in and out of its locale, represents the complexity of the contemporary local status of architecture as an inseparable entity of the local history and of the global context.

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<sup>204</sup> *AB*, no.108 (1990).

## **9 Conclusion: The Rationale of the Discourse**

## 9.1 Intertwined Histories and Perspectives

This study of twentieth-century architecture, through the analysis of its discourse, offers a new understanding of the forces shaping the kaleidoscopic shifts in Egyptian architecture. Since an unprecedented architectural discourse coincided with the period of Egypt's independence, this research revolves around the question of postcoloniality and how the professional discourse under examination has stemmed from or challenged such a question. Inspired by Said's analytical method of contrapuntal reading, as well as Crysler's spatial discourse analysis, the thesis investigates the structure of attitude and reference that resulted from the overlapping forces of 'influence' and 'resistance'—materialized in the author's "allusions to the fact of empire" in national and international discourses.<sup>1</sup> Highlighting these allusions as well as the exclusions and inclusions that defined the boundaries of the discourse's space, reveals this structure of attitude and reference.

Said's contrapuntal reading—that allows the juxtaposition of the historical context, past and present discourses, and the insider and outsider perspectives—reveals the interrelations between the space of the local discourse and the worldly space. This contrapuntal reading of the representation of Egyptian architecture has allowed a re-evaluation of the trajectories of its modernism. The discourse here collectively materializes the record of its participants who endeavoured to construct a distinct identity that led to the discursivity of the two forces of 'influence' and 'resistance'—two rooted forces within twentieth-century Egyptian history since the French expedition.

Throughout the history of Egypt, even after independence, the two forces continued to shape contemporary architecture and discourse. The discursivity of these two forces has made their separation an unfeasible task as influence is embedded within the rhetoric of resistance. In architectural practice, modernism was the patent for progress and equality, while Pharaonism, Islamism, or Arabism were, at different stages, the symbols of glory and difference. While the colonizer strove to chart a monolithic image for the colonized, to distinguish its other, after independence the colonized inherited such a model and followed up with steps to distinguish its 'self.'

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<sup>1</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 73.

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In the local discourse this struggle with self-identity manifested the interplay between influence and resistance. This self-identity was first articulated in *al-‘Imarah* (1939-1959) and it remained vital throughout the twentieth-century discourse. Sayed Karim’s modernist agenda—that stemmed from the European influence during his postgraduate studies—maintained an attitude of resistance in the effort to indigenize modernity. Karim’s attitude towards indigenizing modernity empowered both the limited representation of European examples and the focus on the local history, to promote modernity from within, such as the achievements of Muhammad ‘Alī and Khedive Ism‘aīl, and the achievements of Pharaonic architecture. For Karim, Islamic architecture was backward, and Fathy’s efforts were trivial, whilst the implementation of a modernist utopian rhetoric of technological and social priorities was seen as the sole means to develop. Therefore, the influence in *al-‘Imarah* stemmed from resistance to backwardness, which consequently materialized an unconscious adoption of imperialist principles and prejudices.

After the demise of *al-‘Imarah*, the local architectural discourse was dispersed amongst multiple government publications and newspapers, among them, the *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Architects*, *al-Ahram*, and the *Architectural Bulletin*. Nasser’s socialist regime with its mass utopian production provoked a technocratic pragmatic discourse that marginalized aesthetics and cultural needs. However, Fathy, later followed by ‘A.Ibrahim, provoked a bi-directional attitude of resistance within the discourse of the sixties, a resistance to the mass production endorsed by the internal policies and by European standards. In the seventies, capitalism took a toll and led to the arbitrary construction of skyscrapers overlooking the Nile. Thus, the same bi-directional resistance continued in the seventies discourse in order to invoke cultural priorities.

This local architectural discourse remained dispersed until the appearance of *AB* in 1980. On the one hand, the two architectural journals that appeared in the same period, *al-M‘imariyah* (1982-1989), and *Medīna* (1998-2002), had no specific stylistic calls, unlike *AB*. Since *al-M‘imariyah* was run by a state supervised organization, The Society of Egyptian Architects, it was superficially appraising the governmental projects and had no specific ideology of resistance or critique, with the exception of the first issue. The resistance is also embedded in the exclusion of foreign reviews from the journal’s boundaries—compared to the reviews of historical buildings. The private journal of *Medīna*, initiated in 1998 by ‘Amr ‘Abdel-Kawī, articulated influence and resistance through the provocation of a two-fold process of “transgression”: the national and cultural “transgression” and the “transgression” of time. Moreover, *Medina*’s discourse manifested the attitude of a self-referent resistance to backwardness in the aspiration to

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reformulate the contemporary context through the selective review of projects that had successfully synthesized history and modernity, at the expense of recognition of other contemporary problems.

For *AB*, on the other hand, it is certain that its conception was an act of resistance, explicit and implicit, as it coincided with the height of the Infitah policy to invoke a ‘return to our origins,’ mainly Qur’anic values and, by extension, Islamic architecture. Although this call for a return may be considered unnovel, the space of the discourse represents the culmination of the discrepant experiences rooted within the Egyptian history and the architectural profession. This discrepancy, as materialized in the contradiction between the explicit call for resistance and the extensive review of western projects resulted in a fugue of four voices—the contemporary, western, historic, and editorial—where each is harmonious but distinct. In principle, the inclusion of numerous western reviews highlights two attitudes that reveal the interplay of the two forces of influence and resistance: the attitude of self-referent resistance to backwardness highlighted in the keenness to benefit from western technology; and the attitude of self-conceit represented in efforts to foreground the principles of Islamic architecture in relation to international designs. Moreover, the resistance to backwardness was explicitly highlighted in both the call for return and its associated process of re-constructing identity, as well as in the debate about invigorating both education and criticism.

Hence, the ‘return’ call was implicitly rooted in the discourse through both attitudes of self-referent resistance to backwardness and self-conceit, and explicitly in the editorial voice. This return was epitomized in the call to formulate a local theory based on the Qur’an. This local theory manifested the discursive forces of influence and resistance that shaped the structure of attitude and reference and hence the rationale of *AB* as it fulfilled the perceptions of ‘A.Ibrahim and other intellectuals in their efforts to reconceptualize Islamic architecture in light of theories of functionalism and regional theories alike.

This call for a return was also realized in the international discourse in the 1970s by many scholars and in many forums. At the international level, this identity discourse was first institutionalized in the AKAA under the banner of Islamic architecture, and, second, through a structure of attitude and reference that was based on *Mimar*’s selective review process of contemporary projects that bear Islamic/indigenous references. This resulted in the exclusion of the plural history of Egypt as well as its contemporary *mélange* of trends. In this way, while both the discourses of *AB* and the AKAA pragmatically differed in their review process, they shared similar aspirations for Islamic architecture, which was reflected in the conceptual structure of attitude and reference.

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However, the conceptual openness (without the inclusion of these trends) within the space of the international discourse to various participants' backgrounds highlighted the divergence in perceiving this *mélange* of trends in the third world. While some architects see this *mélange* as crisis, such as Khalid Asfour and Fazlur Khan, others see it as a worthy enterprise, such as Ashraf Salama, and a third group see it as part of a 'decision-making process' that provides some "viable" alternatives to western ones, such as Mercedes Volait and Hasan-Uddin Khan. Contrary to these varied perceptions about the plurality of contemporary trends in the regional and international discourse, the participants of the local discourse, *AB* in particular, highlight a context of degradation and crisis.

Therefore, this thesis maintains that the perception of a 'crisis' downplays the challenges facing contemporary local architecture and marginalises any worthy attempts. These challenges are twofold: organizational challenges, stemming from the system of a 'soft state,' that led to the expansion of the role of the architect, and the challenges arising from the historical plural identity of Egypt. The perception of a failure to attain a monolithic image, per se, unconsciously stems from the inherited principles of imperialism. This analysis anchored the continuity of the history of colonialism and its decisive role in the perceptions of both Karim and 'A.Ibrahim and their endeavour to institutionalize the "staging of differences" between tradition and modern.<sup>2</sup> This signifies that modern architecture in Egypt has been an interactive process that is shaped by 'influences' and 'resistances.'

Here, the contrapuntal crossing between boundaries provided an insight into the historical role of imperialism in the identity struggle in the national and international spheres, as well as revealing the interaction of the two forces of 'influence and 'resistance.' This interaction continued to revolve mainly around utilizing technologies to solve contemporary problems while balancing traditional and modern standardization within both professional practice and the education sector. This shared interaction between influence and resistance within the national and international discourses was a result of the elastic boundaries of both agencies. While the AKAA's agency, on the one hand, stretches between borders pertaining to the Islamic background of the Aga Khan and the predominantly North American affiliations that he cultivated, the agencies of the local discourse, on the other hand, also cross boundaries due to the European or North American training of the editors (in the case of *Medina*) who could not detach themselves from global forces or national aspirations. This co-existence of the two opposing forces, whilst deconstructing the inherent boundaries which evolved from the constructs of the

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<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," 22.

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orientalist discourse, paradoxically stresses the lasting impact of imperialism on both cultures—visibly innate in shared perceptions of a monolithic identity.

In this way, then, the rationale of twentieth-century architectural discourse remains discursively embedded in imperial and national sentiments. The dearth of architectural publications and journals<sup>3</sup> and the continuous reference within the journals to their role in increasing architectural awareness affirms the embedded impact of imperialism on their aspirations to ‘enframe’ a homogenous identity. Nationalist sentiment, in *al-‘Imarah*’s case, is embedded in Karim’s attempt to indigenize modernity. In the case of *AB*, it is embedded in ‘A.Ibrahim’s attempt to Islamicize modern architecture. Both editors, Karim and ‘A.Ibrahim, sought to foreground their own beliefs. Both of them expressed bi-directional resistance to the blind imitation of international schemes as well as to the mainstream local sphere. Hence, the discourse of the two main journals was ideologically autonomous from the socio-political context which, at the time of *AB* and since the seventies, was separated from both Arab and Islamic identity, and was open to the west, specifically the United States.

This process of indigenizing modernity (Karim’s) and Islamizing modern architecture (‘A.Ibrahim’s) embedded a process of reconceptualization which conforms to Volait’s argument that modern architecture in Egypt has evolved from a complex process. In this process of institutionalization, the focus of this thesis, the rationale has always been caught between the thorny horns of imperialism. This dilemma, while shaping the internal socio-political sphere, established the rationale of the discourse by provoking the two opposing forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ that constitute the essentials of the discourse in the twentieth-century. Moreover this dialectic approach, while enriching the overall process of modernisation, highlighted how the discourse of architecture in Egypt has become both anti-imperial and imperial. In the case of *AB* in particular, as concluded earlier by Said, following his contrapuntal reading of *Aida*, the journal “is not so much *about* but *of imperial* domination [original emphasis].”<sup>4</sup> *AB* is not about resistance as such, it is rather a product of this resistance that became per se anti-imperial and imperial—in its imposition of specific aspirations for identity (inspired by faith) on a dynamic society whose identity is based on seven pillars (the Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, Arab, Mediterranean, and African).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The dearth of scholarship on modern Egyptian architecture is highlighted, according to Volait, in “a catalogue published by the American University in Cairo in three volumes between 1975 and 1983 under the title Catalogue of Egyptian Publications, Mansur Ahmad, ed.”

<sup>4</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 125.

<sup>5</sup> Hanah, *The Seven Pillars of Egyptian Identity* (Cairo, 1989).

The contrapuntal reading highlighted that the plural trends are a logical evolution of the two historical forces of ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ shaped by Egypt’s plural and colonial histories. The fluctuations in Egyptian history, which extends to the complex process of knowledge transference, and breaks up the binaries of west/east or occident/orient—exemplify Said’s witty and perceptive observation that “no one is apparently one pure thing.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the shared identity perceptions between local and international discourses of that period—which stemmed from the intertwined histories with the west (not least, France, Britain, Russia, and U.S.A.), and Egypt, with its plural history, as part of the east—not only soften the antithesis between both west and east but also unbound each entity such that both cannot be defined as cohesive, ‘pure’ entities.

## 9.2 Recommendations for Further Study

This comprehensive discursive analysis and its contextualisation to discern the rationale of the discourse of twentieth-century gives rise to many questions which have proved to be beyond the scope and scale of this research and which deserve further study.

Firstly, the impact of the emigration of architects (and other built environment professionals) to the Gulf, after the oil boom, as exemplified by Karim (dubbed by his peers as ‘the flying architect’) and ‘A.Ibrahim, will lead to new means of knowledge transference and interactions with the so-called west. Therefore, a comparative study of these journeys between Egypt and other parts of the Arab region, and their intellectual and professional implications, deserves further study.

Secondly, the thesis raised many questions about the freedom of architectural criticism and critical professional practice and the capacity for a lasting architectural revolution in Egypt. This question of criticality (or observations about the lack of it) was particularly noticeable in the interviews conducted with predominantly expatriate architects and scholars (see the interview synopses in Appendix II). The discourse examined is perhaps not as rigorous and controversial, as some of the expatriate scholars would like to see, but considering the political and financial constraints, as well as the freedom that critics such as Karim and ‘A.Ibrahim sought to maintain from their institutions, even amongst their small niche audience, is remarkable in their respective political climates. New liberties, opportunities or otherwise in relation to architectural criticism in Egypt remain to be seen; such liberties should never be taken for granted.

Thirdly, the most important question that has arisen during the course of this thesis that demands further study relates to architectural education. What is the nexus between education

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<sup>6</sup>Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 336.

## Conclusion

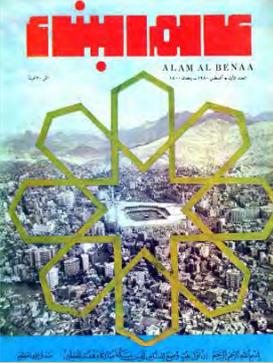
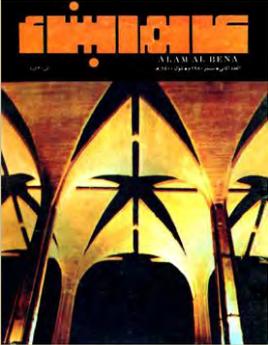
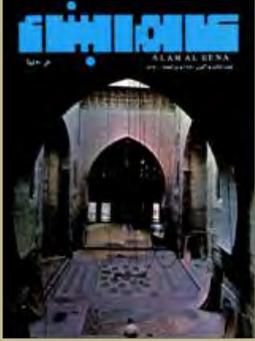
and power in the Egyptian context in the near future and what are the new possibilities arising in the context of the revolution instigated by the Egyptian people? As in the case of architectural criticism, how can education in Egypt and other Arab countries be liberated from the specific interests and agendas of local political systems to open up new channels of rigorous criticism?

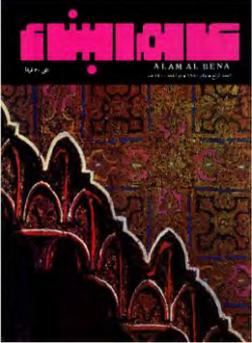
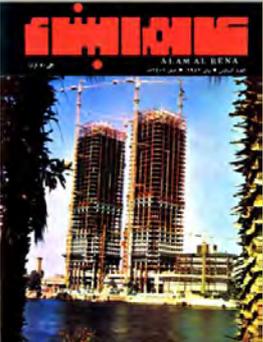
Considering the discourse as a whole, and specifically the interplay between ‘influences’ and ‘resistances’ (despite its imperial reference), as well as the consensus between western and local discourses, it is necessary—indeed indispensable—to question the positive ways in which these two forces can unfold in the future. How far will the discursivity of both ‘influence’ and ‘resistance’ play out so as to recognize the diversity of Egyptian identity: the seven pillars of Egyptian identity as Hanah contends? Can the Arab Spring, with its sheer force for social change, which epitomized the tension between ‘influences’ and ‘resistances,’ be reflected in architecture in the future?

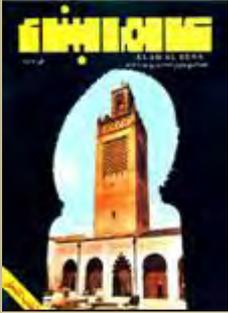
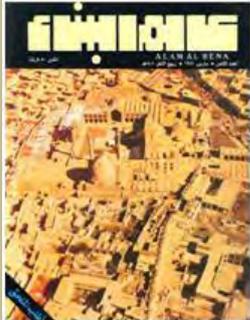
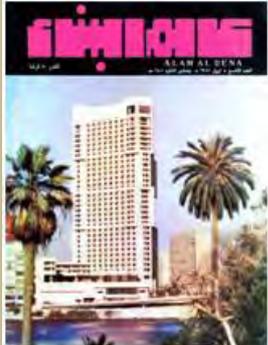
## **Appendix 1**

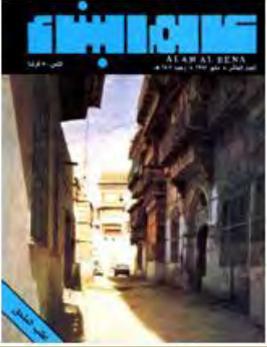
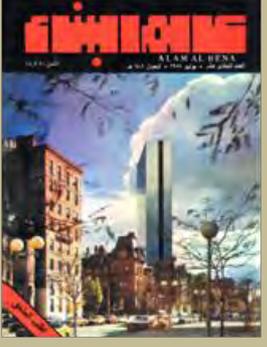
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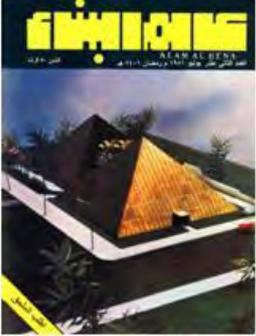
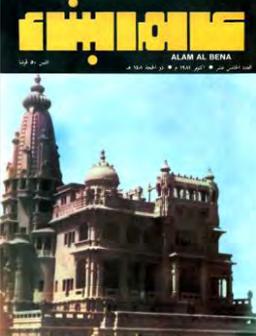
## 1. 'Alam al-Bena'a (1980-1999)

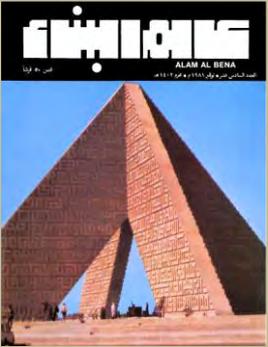
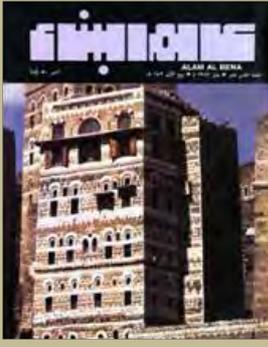
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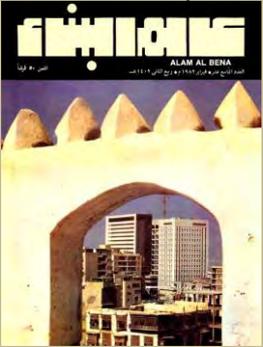
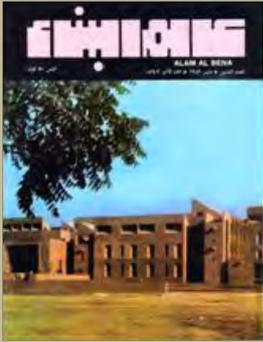
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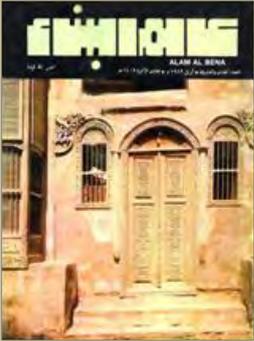
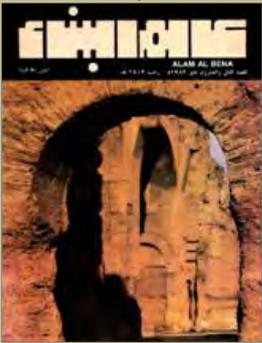
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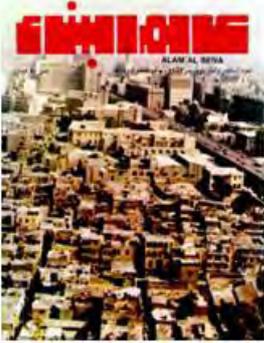
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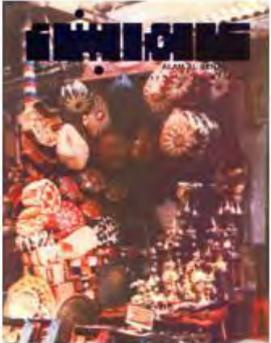
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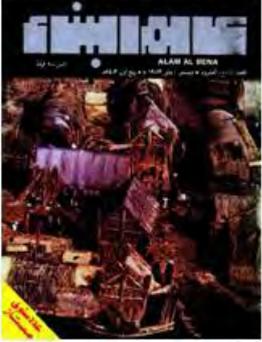
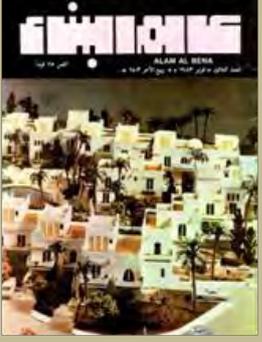
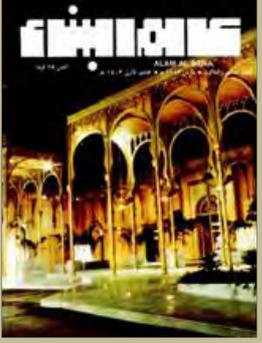
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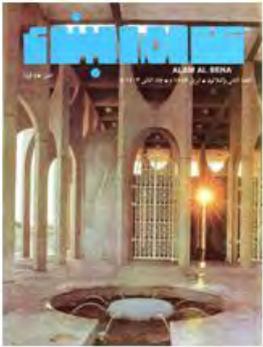
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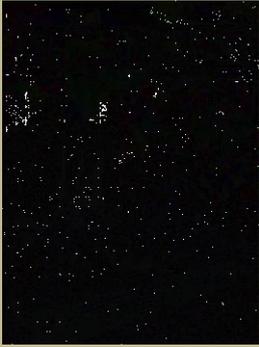
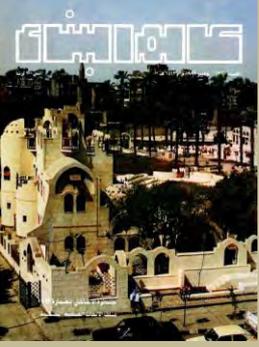
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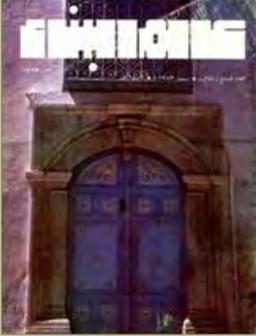
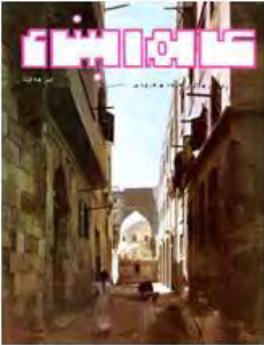
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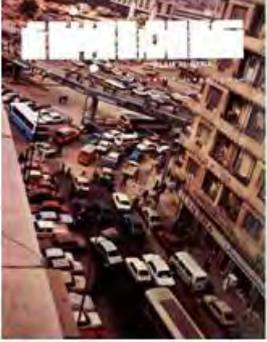
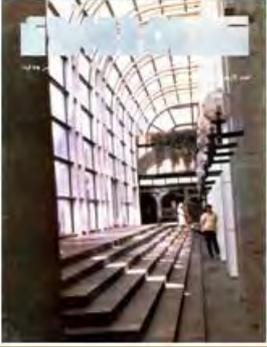
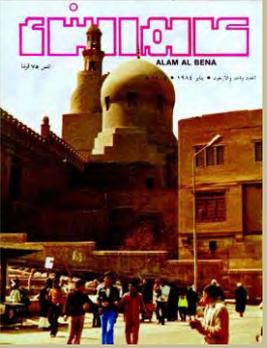
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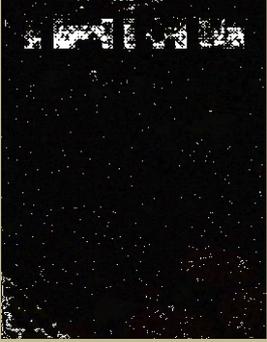
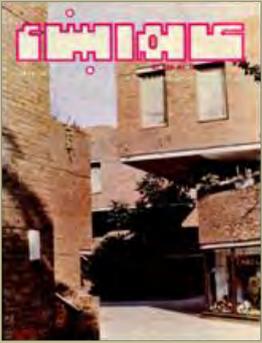
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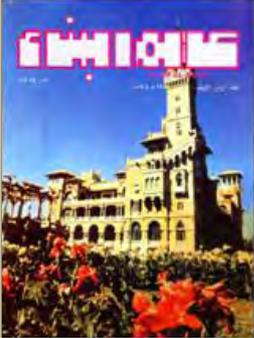
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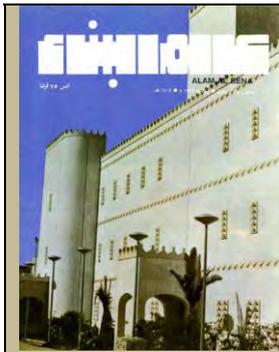
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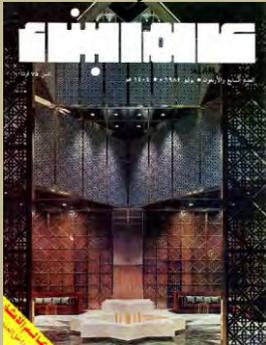
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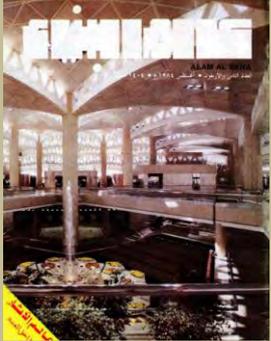
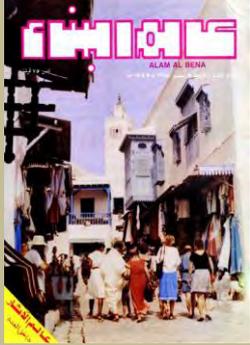
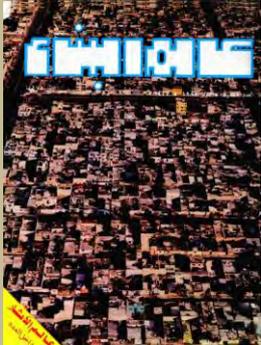
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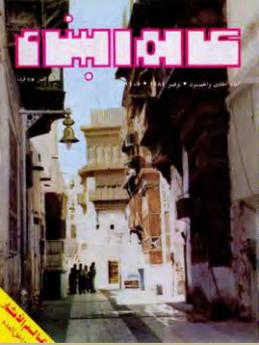
Terminal 2 of the new Cairo airport.

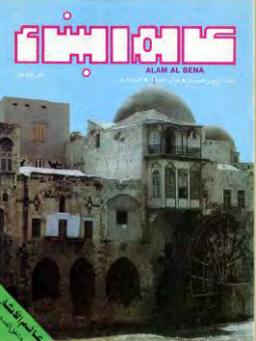
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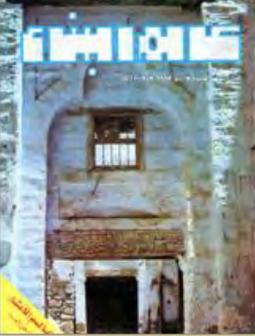
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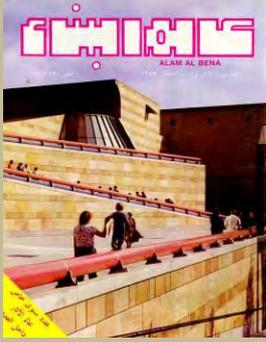
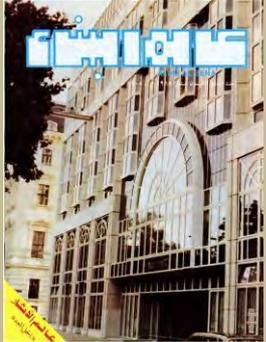
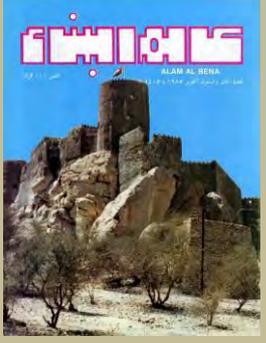
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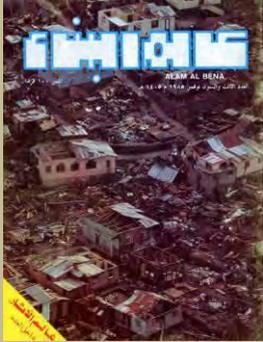
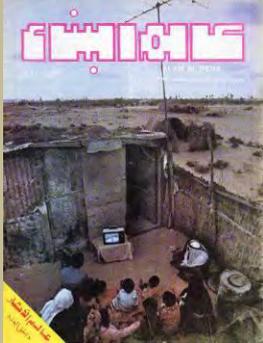
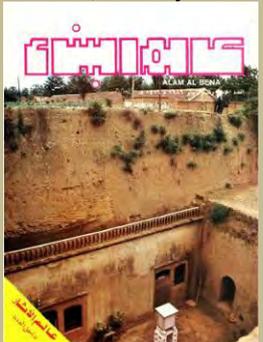
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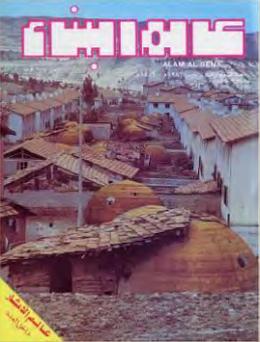
	<p><i>Al-Maw'el:</i> Reading the regulations of urban planning: The general principles of planning city divisions. Part VI. A Housing Project intentions, realities and alternatives, by Dr. 'Abdelmohsen Farahat and Numab Cebeci, King 'Abdulaziz university. Part II (in English)</p>
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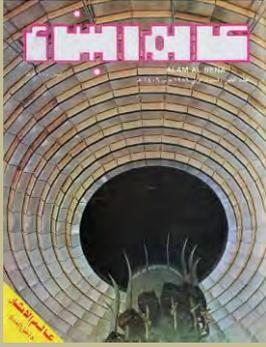
	<p><i>Al-Maw'el:</i> Divisions of industrial land, by Dr. Hazem Ibrahim. A Housing Project intentions, realities and alternatives (part IV), by Dr. 'Abdelmohsen Farahat and Numab Cebeci, King 'Abdulaziz university. (in English)</p>
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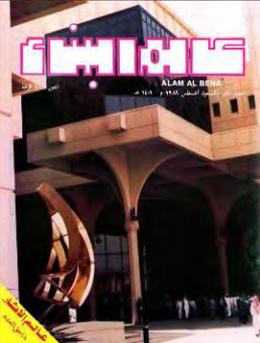
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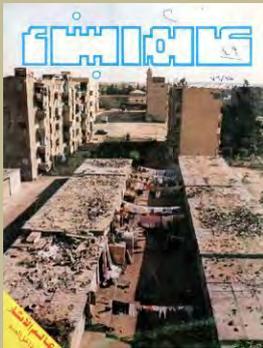
	<p><i>'Alam al-'Athar:</i>  Al-Rifa'ey great mosque, Mahmoud al-Hadidi, et al.  Gawhar Allala mosque and school 1427, by Muhammad Fawzy and Mohsen Gaber.  Al-Mahmoudiah mosque 1568, Mahmoud alHadidi, et al.  Imam Allayth Ibn S' Aad's Mosque and tomb, by Fahmy Abdelhakim, et al.  Low-cost housing and the factors that affect its budget, by Dr. 'Aly Basuny.  Mecca mechanical control centre. Architects: Sh'air and Associates.  Hypo Bank Headquarters Munich: architecture Walter &amp; BeaBetz.  Book Review: <i>Vegetation in Building Vegetation in Civil and Landscape Engineering</i>, by DH Bache and IA Meca Skill.  Recreational parks and Liverpool Festival park.  Housing and legislations, by Kamal Shaheeb.  Monchengladbach Museum. Architect Hans Hollein 1982.</p> <p><i>Al-Maw'el:</i>  The problem of evaluation and criticism: aim and method, Dr. Hazem Ibrahim.  Pre-cast—the Manufactured concrete, from concrete international magazine, deck 1981. (in English)</p>
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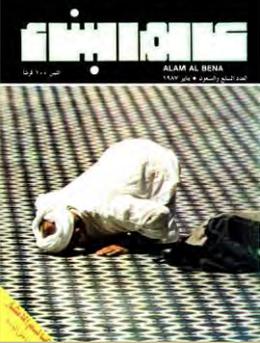
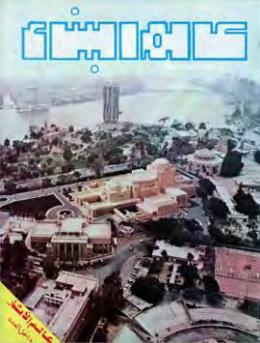
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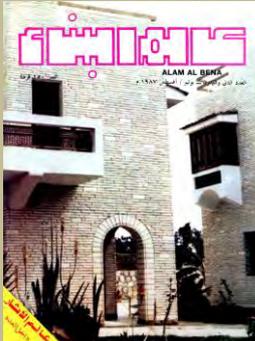
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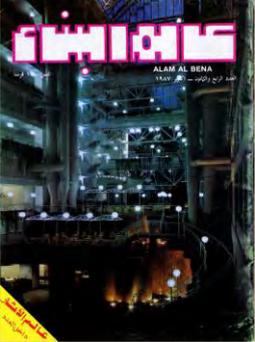
	<p><i>'Alam al-'Athar:</i> The restoration of al-'Ablaq palace in Salah al-Dein, by Mahmoud al-Hadidi and Fahmy 'Abdel-'Aleem. The restoration of the fresco paintings in the church of virgin Mary, by al-Sayed Ahmad al-Shahat.</p> <p>Al-Ferdouysh [paradise] theory in the Islamic architecture, by Yehia Wazery.</p> <p>Personality of the Issue: Qahtan and Hesham al-Madfa'ei, Iraq.</p> <p>The monument of the unknown soldier in Baghdad, by Khaled Mahdi and Marchillo Dolivio, Italy.</p> <p>Landmark of al-Qadesya Martyrs in Baghdad, Ismail F. al-Turk, Samman Asad Kamal, Saad al-Zubaidi, Wagdan Maher, and Ismail K. Zabouny.</p> <p>The history of hospitals' planning, Dr. Ahmad S. 'Atyah, al-Yarmouk University.</p> <p><i>Al-Maw'el:</i> The retarded areas in Egypt, by Khaled M. Abu Bakr. Contemporary Arab architecture in Iraq. (in English)</p>
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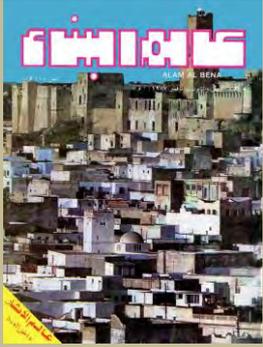
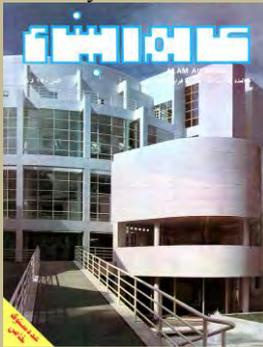
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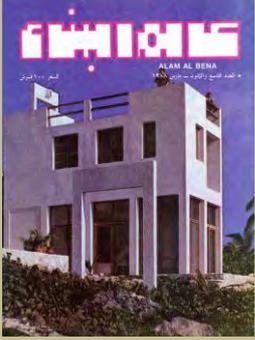
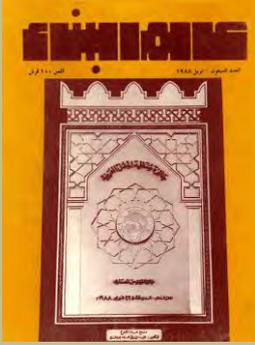
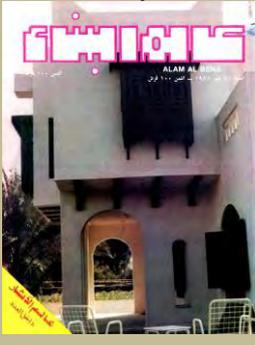
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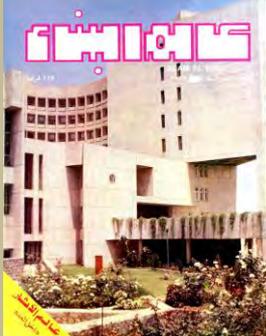
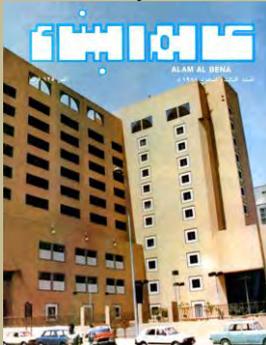
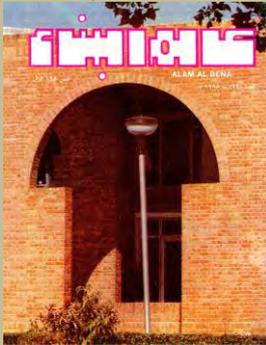
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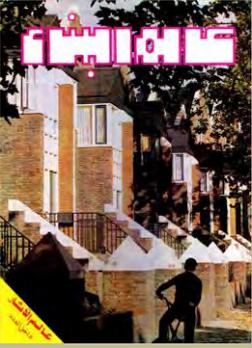
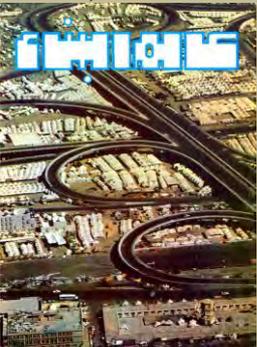
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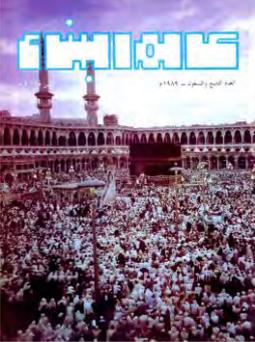
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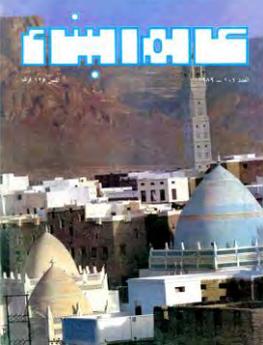
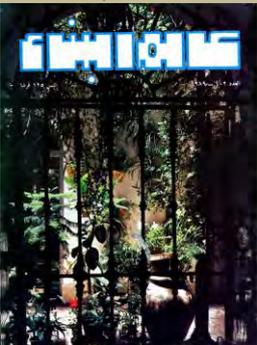
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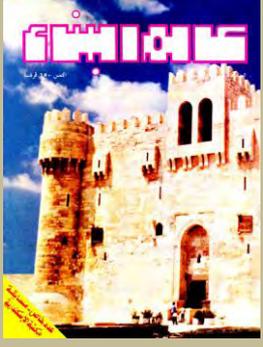
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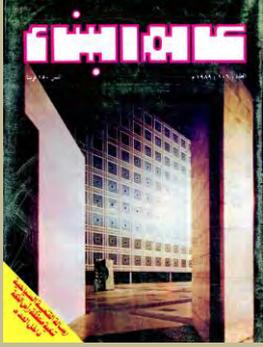
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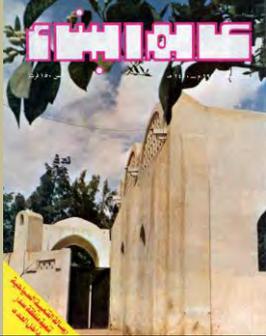
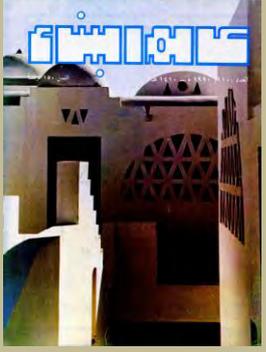
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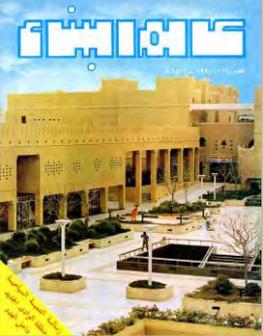
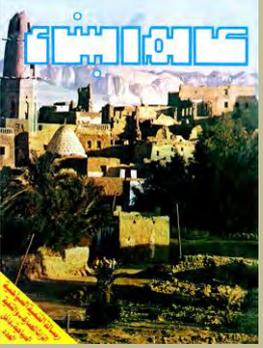
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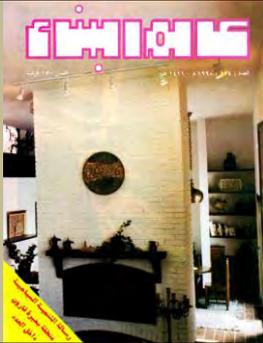
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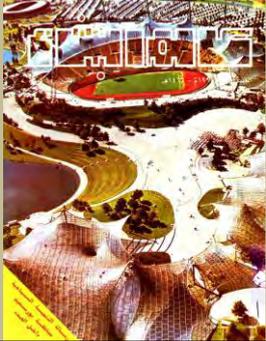
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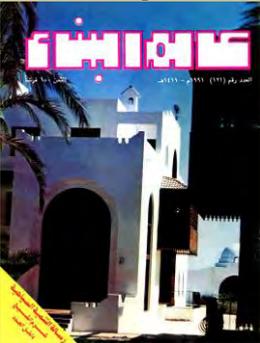
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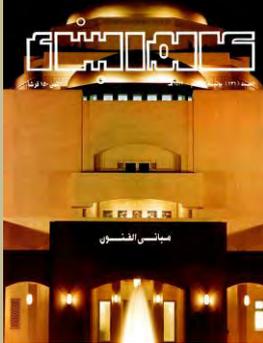
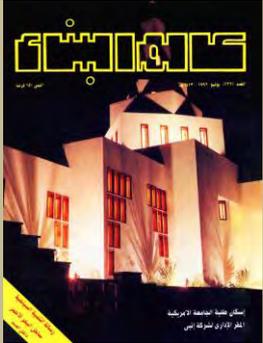
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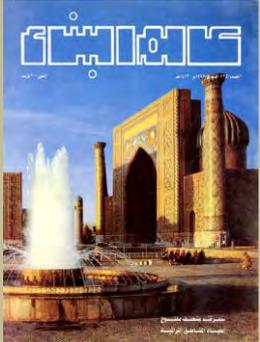
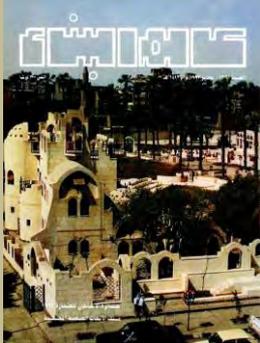
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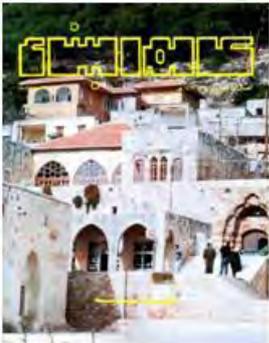
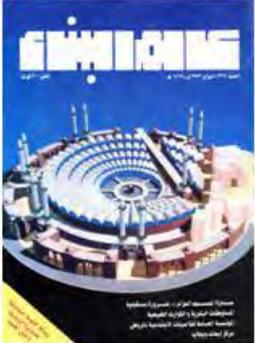
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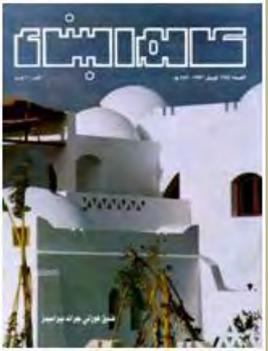
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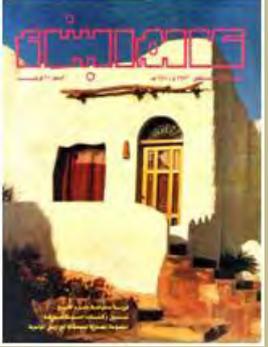
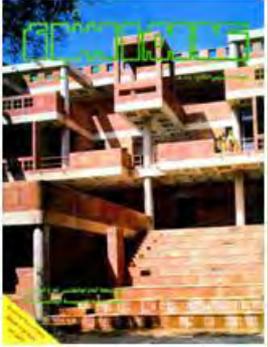
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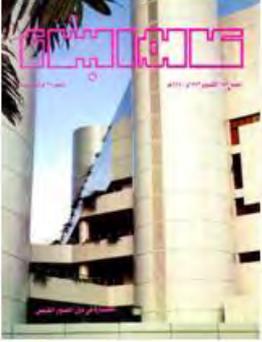
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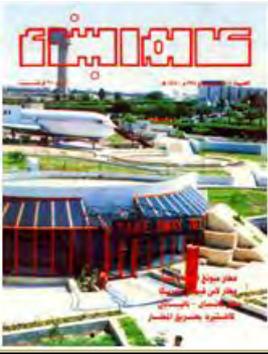
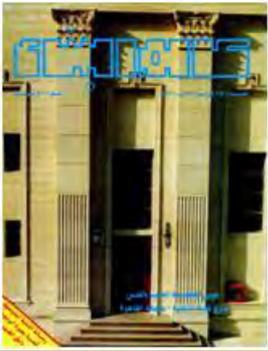
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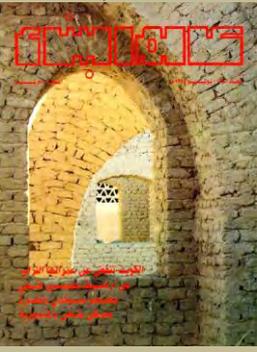
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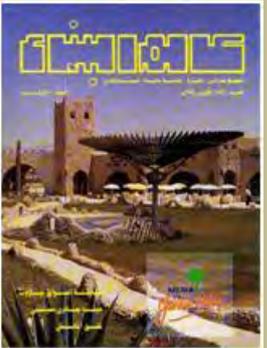
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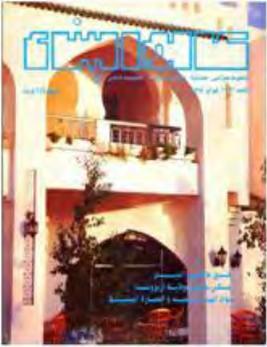
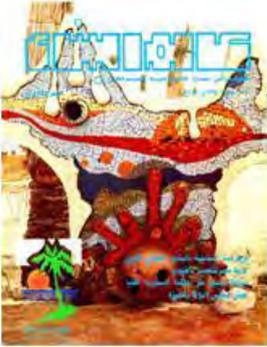
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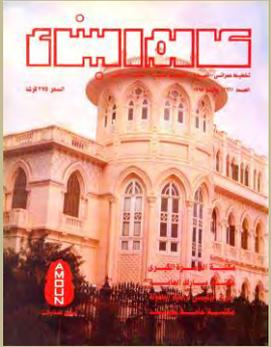
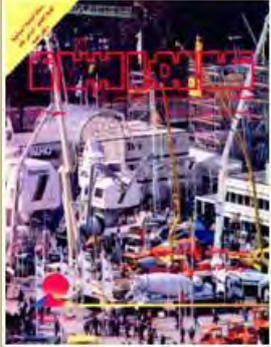
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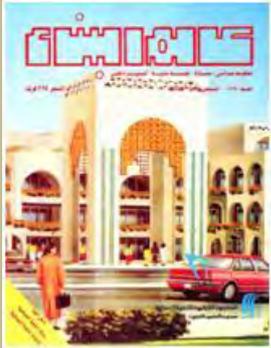
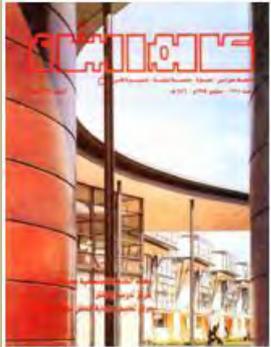
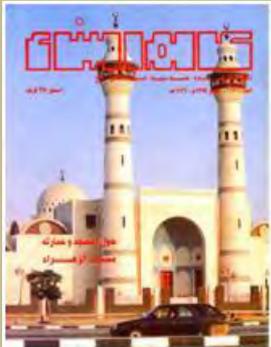
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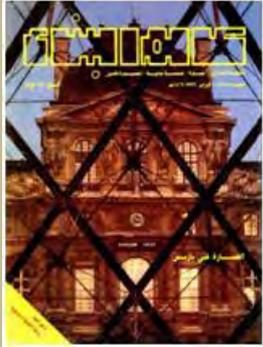
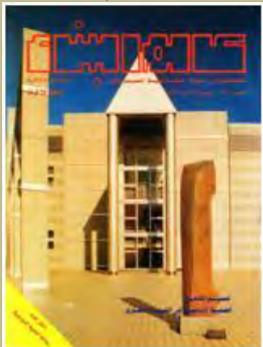
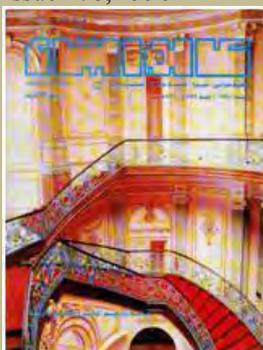
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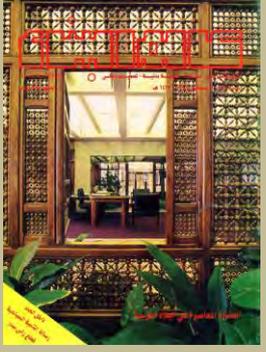
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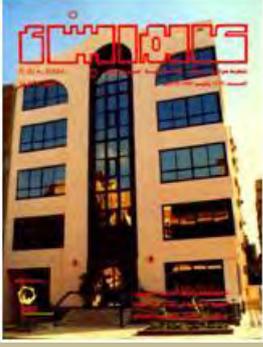
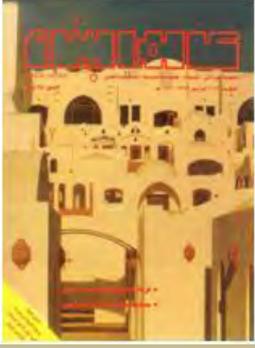
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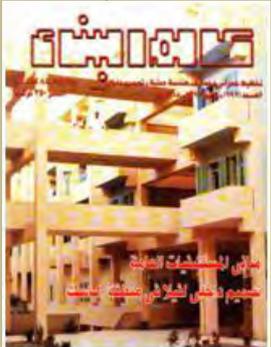
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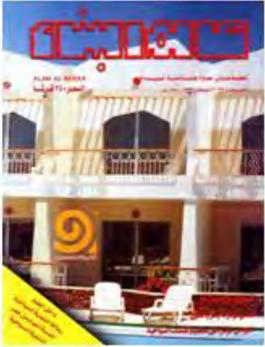
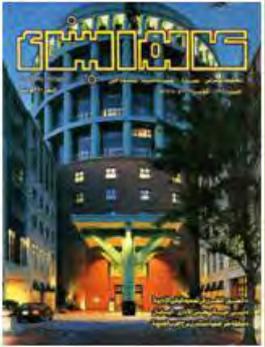
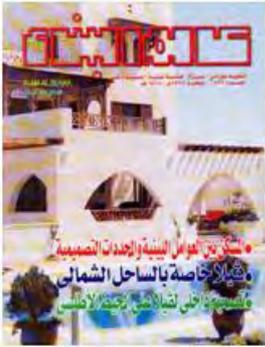
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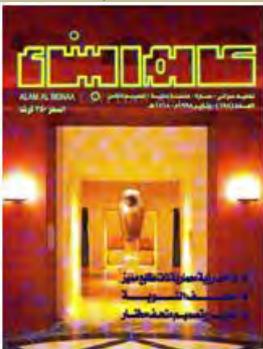
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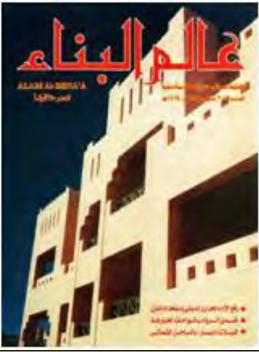
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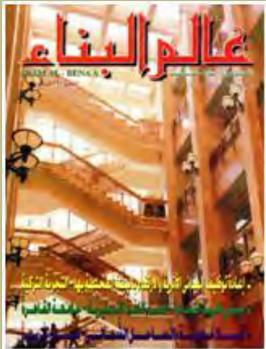
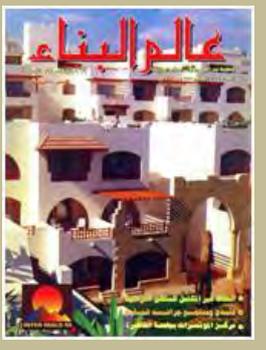
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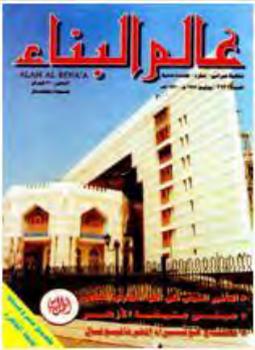
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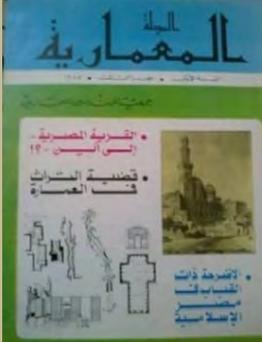
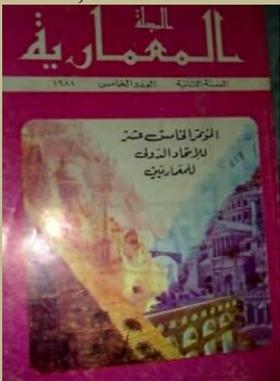
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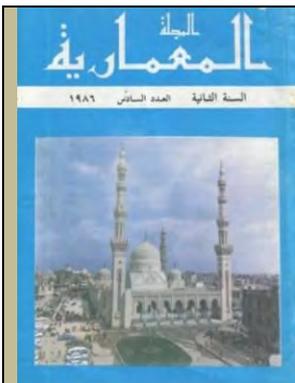
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	Report of the first architectural African conference and special General Assembly, AUA, Zimbabwe, May 1982, by Dr. Yahiya Eid.
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	Thesis preview: housing in Egyptian desert region, Shafak al Wakil, by Dr. Shafak Alwakil.
	The structure plan why? And how?, by Dr. E. Nabil.
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	Profession and Practice [voice in the air], Muhamad Sayed Sahab.
	Delineation of Land for Future Urban Expansion, by Ezzat Nabih.
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	UIA news and AUA news
	Towards the policy of building new cities in Egypt, T.Abdel-Gawad
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	Contemporary housing, by Dr. Ahmad al-Ibyary.
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	Project of Monkhafad al-Qatarah, by Muhamad Abdel Salam.
	Ideal size for the city, by Dr. Shafaq al-Awady al-Wakil.
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	Message of the president Husny Mubarak said by Kamal Hassan Ali, the prime minister.
Issue 6, 1986	General report of the 15 <sup>th</sup> UIA Conference, by Dr. Yehya Eid.
	The 15 <sup>th</sup> UIA Conference: a honoring the Egyptian architect, by Dr. Muhamad Sharif Abbas.
	Activities of the 15 <sup>th</sup> UIA Conference.
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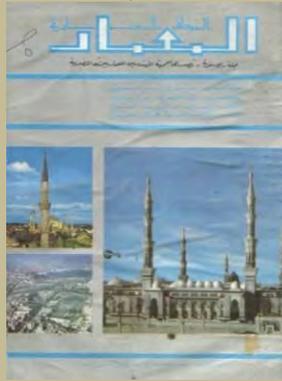
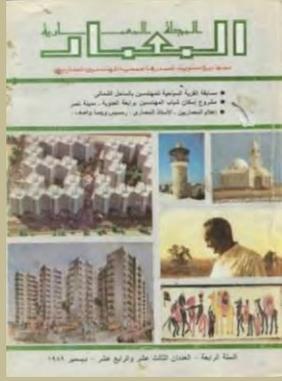


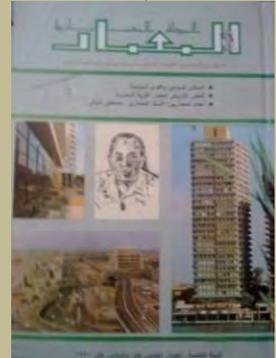
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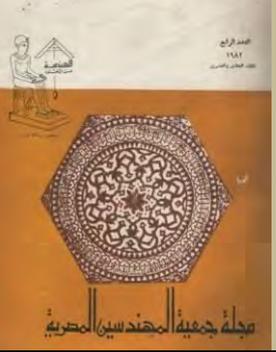
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	Module and the sixties ideas, by Dr. Muhamad Mahmud 'Ewaidah
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	The problem of San Estefano, Alexandria from an architectural perspective, by Dr. Muhamad Abdellatif Abu-Steet.
	Islamic architecture thought and civilization, by Tawfik Abdel-Gawad
	The experience of Misr algadedah-Heliopolis: a pioneer in new settlements, by Dr. Sameh al-'Alaily.
	Developing agricultural and industrial self-sufficient communities in Egypt: new methods in developing the desert, by Dr. Mahmud A. Abdellatif
	Urban planning as an effective solution to the problem of small industries in developing countries, Ahmad 'Ouf
	Dependent housing in developing countries, by Dr. Laila Muharam
	Natural lighting in architecture spaces: recommendations to the development of housing legislations, Dr. Murad abdel-Qader
	Economic studies for buildings, by Dr. Muhamad Mahmud 'Ewaidah.
	Book Review: <i>Housing and traps: the problem and the solution</i> : by Milad Hanna, by Dr. Galelah al-Kady
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	Recent concerns with the world city concept at international levels, Salah El-Shakhs
	Law is not a constraint, by Dr. Medhat Dera.
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	Architectural tour, by Seif abou al-Naga.
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	Elder care centres in Alexandria: an analytical study, by Dr. Ahmad Salah Atyah.
	Systemic design, by Dr. Ezz al-Dein Fahmy, and Dr. Mustafa Baghdady.
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	Climate and touristic housing in Egypt, by Dr. Ahmad Reda Abdeen.
	Study of the quantities and values of materials, by Dr. Mahmud M. Al-Alfy
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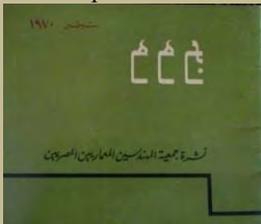
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	The role of the estate banks in funding housing, by El 'Attafi Sinbil.
	Urban reformation in villages, Ministry of housing and infrastructure.
	The role of the manpower in solving the problem of rural housing, by Mohamad Ameen Al-sellawy.
	Constant lines in the developmental policy of villages, by Ahmad Ehsaan Sadek and Dr. 'Aly Basuny.
	The development of the Egyptian village and the rural house, by Mohammad K. Zaitoun, Dr. Salah al-Dein M. Zaky, M. Salah el-Dein Hegab.
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<sup>1</sup> The *Journal of the Egyptian Society of Engineers* is still running until the current time but the thesis will focus on these issues to fulfil the gap period between *al-Imarah* discourse and *AB*.

	Samy al Shafi.
1968 issue no. 4	Housing in developing countries, by Ibrahim Nageib Ibrahim.
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	Economics and the construction project, by Dr. Gamal Nassar.
1976 issue no.2	Architectural image and function: applications, by Dr. Yahia Abdullah.
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	Wood characteristics.
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	The schools of al-Azhar, by the vice dean Dr. 'Abdel-Salam Fahmy
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	The design of the second prize winner: the Arab Bureau for design and technical consultations.
	Milk Factory of the company of Egypt Dairy and foods. Architects: Moustafa Shawky and Salah Zaytoun.
	Public housing in Egypt: the Tofgoman area in Bulaq, by Dr. Salah Zaky Said.
	The planning of the village of Paris in Egypt. Architect Hassan Fathy.
	The centre of the village and the services. Architect Hassan Fathy.
	Architecture is a scientific art, by Dr. 'Erfan Samy.
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	Project of Muhammad Tawfik Abdel-Gawad: Institute of antiques' studies.
	Project of Maher Deif: Sport centre for aqua-international sports, al-Timsah lake, Egypt.
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7/3/1961	Identifying the percentage interest of the building's owner, by Dr. Sayed Karim.
12/8/1961	<i>Islamic architecture</i> by Creswell, review by Farid Shaf'ei.
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3/3/1962	The environment of the farmer...is the one that has the realistic solution to his housing problem, by Hassan Fathy.
4/3/1962	The problem is a problem of human settlement not exploitive housing, by Hassan Fathy.
1963	An Attempt to reveal the philosophy behind our contemporary architecture
4/3/1963	The invasion of the industrial development on the agricultural land
27/12/1963	The State award to 'Ali Labib Gabr.
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6/3/1965	Brick, by Hassan Fathy.
7/3/1965	Brick 2, by Hassan Fathy.
8/6/1965	Function in architecture, 'Erfan Samy.
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17/6/1969	Conference for development of Cairo and increasing libraries and cinemas.
11/8/1969	Study of the establishment of tourist villages in the northern coast.
23/9/1969	New plan for greater Cairo.
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14/1/1971	The High Dam between the world dams, by Helmy al-Said, ministry of electricity.
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	'Aly Ra'afat.
30/10/1971	What did we do to avoid similar accidents in the future? by Dr. 'Aly Ra'afat.
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1/2/1972	Comprehensive developmental program...not just planning, by Tawfik 'Abdel-Gawad.
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4/13/ 1980	What happened in the meeting of Hassan Fathy and Sadat?

## **Appendix II:**

### **Interview Synopses**

This selection of the participants is based on their influential contributions to the Egyptian architectural profession and discourse whether this contribution was based in the local or international domain. This questionnaire begins with questions relating to the profession in order to ascertain and contextualize the influence and agencies of the local discourse (the area under examination). This contextualization formed the basis for a subsequent set of questions about the overarching challenges affecting the profession in Egypt. The interviewees were grouped into four generations: Generation 1 includes Yehia al-Zeiny (1919), and ‘Aly Ra’afat (1923); Generation 2 includes Salah Hegab (1932), Salah Zaky (1937), Mohamad Tawfik Abdel-Gawad (1944); Generation 3 includes Hamid (1956), Samir Gharib (1954), AlSayyad (1955), Dalila ElKerdany (1956); and Generation 4 includes ‘Amr ‘Abdel-Kawi. The discussion revolved around local architectural education; challenges of publications; local architectural practice; Alexandria library; the AKA; and the discourse of *al-‘Imarah* and *‘Alam al-Benaa*.

**Yehia al-Zeiny** (Interview in Arabic, December 2011)

Born in (1919-), with an Msc in Islamic architecture from Cairo University in 1947, Al-Zeiny graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris in 1952. Al-Zeiny isa student of Hassan Fathy and Wessa Wassif. Upon his return to Egypt he taught at Helwan University. He has designed many projects such as the Gumhurya Theatre (1960), and Cairo International Fair with A.Ibrahim and Fou’ad al-Framawy (completed 1980). He was the President of the Arab Bureau for Design and Technical Consultation, the major consultancy in Egypt from 1975-1981, President of the Development and Public Housing Administration from 1992-1996, and later the Head of the Architectural Committee in The Supreme Council of Culture. His most important publications are *The Thought of the Guru of Architects: Hassan Fathy* (2003); and a three-volume encyclopedia entitled *Educational Structures in Egypt throughout History* (2006): Volume I, Ancient Egypt (the Pharaonic Age until the Islamic conquest); Volume II, Middle Ages (the Islamic conquest-Mamluk); Volume III, Modern Age (the French expedition- Mubarak).



**Figure 117. The Educational Structures in Egypt throughout the History (2006) since the Pharaonic Ages until the Twentieth-Century.**

Summarizing the architectural shifts from the sixties to the end of the century, al-Zeiny stresses that Egypt is, quoting Prince Charles, “architecture at the cross-roads”, a hesitant architecture. The use of western theories in education is not the main problem. He maintains that it is normal we cannot separate ourselves. Al-Zeiny believes that Egypt reached this hesitant status, at the second half of the sixties, “when Nasser distributed his efforts to assist the independence of the Arab countries, instead of focusing on developing our own country.” Furthermore, “Nasser was not concerned with architectural style, he focused on solving the problems of post-colonial era, and the quality of architecture deteriorated on the account of quantity,” al-Zeiny affirms. Moreover, after Nasser, there was “a class of unintellectual rich which was blindly western oriented.” Al-Zeiny perceives that “the architecture in Egypt passes through the same problems as elsewhere in the world.” He points at a cartoon by Ironimus in the brochure *Nouveaux Plaisirs D’Architectures* which featured in the 1985 Pompidou exhibition in Paris, and perceives that “it summarizes the whole problem. The architect inherited a huge number of styles to the extent that he was unable to decide which one should be next.” However, al-Zeiny highlights, “Egypt’s continuous colonization has reinforced this hesitant status.”



**Figure 118. The Architecture at the Crossroad.**

For *‘Alam al-Bena’*a, al-Zeiny affirms, “while ‘A.Ibrahim’s attitude was to preserve an Egyptian identity, the magazine was very open to all the trends around the world.” However, al-Zeiny highlights “‘A.Ibrahim was not the only one, it was like a wave that came in and out during the twentieth-century.” In other words, al-Zeiny highlights that “‘*Alam al-Bena’*a mirrored the general tendency of Egyptian architects.” Al-Zeiny stresses that “A.Ibrahim believes in the normal development of modern architecture due to the industrial and technological boom.” But there are two dimensions for his ‘return’ call: The first, Al-Zeiny elaborates, was crystallized “after the 1952 revolution and the awareness of national identity.” The second “is the emergence of the debate of post-modernism, the desire to engage human needs, and desires for pleasure.” He elaborates “at this time, also, Prince Charles attacked modern architecture arguing that the world was bored of glass cubes, criticizing the imitation of buildings in Chicago and New York in a traditional city like London.” For Al-Zeiny, “A.Ibrahim and Fathy were not against the intermarriage between cultures but they were rather against marginalizing our own history in favour of the complete adoption of foreign culture.”

In Egypt, al-Zeiny perceives, “Islamic architecture is viewed from two perspectives: one as a style that uses decorative ornaments which was first adopted by Mustafa Pasha Fahmy who made this initiative in the neo-Islamic architecture in buildings such as The Women’s Union; Engineering Syndicate, Ramsees; and the Royal Agricultural Society, Gezirah. His Islamic style, al-Zeiny notes, was limited only to the façades of the administrative buildings as landmarks in the capital city.” Also, al-Zeiny highlights that “this trend had roots in the architecture of Heliopolis.” The other perspective, which is “based on concept rather than style,” is “the call for locally rooted architecture, represented in Hassan Fathy’s endeavours, which is concerned with the implication of the principles of traditional architecture in the plans and arrangements of the design not only the façades.” Therefore, ‘A.Ibrahim was not the one who launched that call for Islamic architecture as it was not new in the 60s. But the stance of ‘A.Ibrahim, al-

Zeiny points, “can be placed in-between the two stances of Mustafa Pasha Fahmy and Hassan Fathy in that he used both the façade and the arrangements but with modern materials.”

From a comparative perspective, al-Zeiny highlights that “Fathy viewed Sayyed Karim as a person who was self-colonized, and this is the greatest influence that the foreign culture could have left on someone.” For the demise of *al-‘Imarah*, al-Zeiny narrates that “Karim started to be occupied by the planning projects of Nasr City, the first expansion of Cairo towards the Eastern Desert. Karim had also expanded his activities in the Gulf States, so that we used to call him the “flying architect.” Therefore, al-Zeiny notes that the “last issues of *al-‘Imarah* were not as strong as the first issues.” And this state of the magazine was followed by problems with the regime that put him under guard. Al-Zeiny states that “the cost of the publication in general was very high and the writing itself was very limited. *Al-‘Imarah* and *‘Alam al-Bena’*a both encountered financial challenges. The income of the writing and publishing, in general, is limited such that no one could depend on writing as a source of living.”

Regarding the winning project of Alexandria library, al-Zeiny states that he “was a member of the Architectural Department in the Supreme Council of Culture and he was one of the architects who rejected the design.” His view, at this time, was that “this design exceeded our local technological and economic abilities. But after assigning the construction to the foreign company, there was more reassurance that it would be built properly. I also criticized the symbolic stance of the rising sun, but after its construction, its usage, and its interaction with the site, I found it acceptable especially as it does not emerge above the ground.” Regarding the AKAA, al-Zeiny praises the efforts of the AKAA in “trying to reinforce Islamic architecture as a concept rather than a style.”

Finally, reflecting on the potential implications of the 2011 Egyptian revolution on architecture, he concludes, that “this will never be known at the current time. This is because the architecture is the last subsequent result of any change of all the systems in general.”

#### **‘Aly Raafat (Interview in Arabic, December 2011)**

Professor of Architecture at Cairo University and a practising architect. He graduated from Cairo University with an B.Sc in 1949. Dr. Raafat was appointed as a lecturer at Cairo University in 1949, where he was promoted to Head of the Department of Architecture in 1988. He received a Fulbright Scholarship for graduate studies in the U.S.A., and received both his master's degree in 1955 from University of Michigan and his Ph.D. in architecture from Colombia University in 1957. His books of Architecture were published in Cairo, New York and Moscow. He has designed and supervised different public and private projects in Egypt and abroad. He received the Medal of Excellence in 1986, and the State Award of Appreciation in Architecture in 1990. Inter-Consult was established by Dr. Aly Raafat in Cairo in 1949. The firm’s activities soon extended to Jeddah in 1960, Riyadh in 1973, Dubai in 1974, Sharjah in 1975, Bahrain in 1976 and Abu-Dhabi in 1977 with established and operating branches.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more details about ‘Aly Raafat’s views see <http://www.ahram.org.eg/Al-Ahram-Files/News/88183.aspx>, (accessed 07/ 11/2012).



**Figure 119. Designs of ‘Aly Ra’afat: the Gumhurya Building and the Central library in Cairo University.**

Summarizing the shifts in the Egyptian context, Ra’afat asserts that Egypt moved “from Nasser’s socialism, to Sadat’s capitalism, and ended with Mubarak’s corrupt architecture.” For example, Ra’afat elaborates, “there is no place, in the new cities, in Mubarak’s era, for the working class. This marginalization of the working class, regardless of the need for them in the new cities led to such long commute distances every day and severe traffic problems. There is no vision for the long term problems. The only thing that the authorities and its investors aim for is quick financial gain.”

Regarding the influence of western architecture, he views that the shifts in Egyptian architecture “as a normal evolution based on the ruling regimes which were western oriented since the eras of Muhammad ‘Alī and then Isma‘īl.” Ra’afat highlights that “the real revolution in Egyptian architecture was launched by Hassan Fathy’s humanistic approach.” Ra’afat notes that “Fathy was an opponent of Sayed Karim and there was a fiery debate between them.” Ra’afat views “the shift from Karim’s international call to ‘A.Ibrahim’s call for return as a shift from the extreme rationalism to balanced romanticism.” Ra’afat believes that “this shift from rationalism to romanticism has always controlled all the international theoretical shifts.” He considers “A.Ibrahim’s call as a balanced call that combines technology and humanism.” A.Ibrahim is notably, Ra’afat affirms, “influenced by Fathy who was from his extended family.”

Ra’afat does not believe that the magazine had a great influence, and while talking about his personal experience, he states that “I use the symbolism and visual vigor that fit the context as well as the use of each project; I do not follow one specific style in all my designs. I try to transfer my personal pleasure in the design to the public by conveying a visual pleasure.” Ra’afat states that he “appreciates the abstraction and symbolism of Islamic architecture or, in general, the re-employment of historical themes using contemporary vocabulary” while he “refuses revivalism and the copying of the history such as the building of the Constitutional Court.” Ra’afat asserts that “the architect should be aware of, open to, and interactive with the contemporary context and not narrow-minded architects.”

However, Ra’afat asserts that “in Egypt the architecture built for the purposes of tourism is very successful because it has one specific target,” which is, he asserts, that “the problem with architecture in Egypt, in general, is the failure of the four corners of the profession {i.e. The lack of a specific target}: the client (ignorant), the authority (weak and subject to multiple laws), the architect (multi-oriented), the investor (exploitive).” He laments that “individualism has become the main character of our profession and society.” Ra’afat affirms that “the gap in publication is due to the system that does not appreciate the role of publication.” This is besides the deficiency of professional criticism. “The syndicates and unions in Egypt are inefficient,” Raafat perceives. In the case of education, “it is unsurprising that we depend on the western theories.” However, from his personal experience, he affirms that currently “there is a renovation in the curricula: I started to teach students about the rehabilitation of historical buildings, which is based on my experience in the Museum of Mohammad Mahmoud Khalil.”

IN the case of the AKAA, he perceives that “it is a great initiative,” however, he elaborates, “it is subject, to a great extent, to the personal and political relations between specific members and jurors.” Ra’afat appraises “the Hajj terminal in Jeddah as a very successful model.” He also considers that “the foreign firms in Egypt have contributed many successful buildings.”

Ra’afat concludes that “the lost identity is of course due to the insufficient economic abilities.” However, “not everything expensive is beautiful. For example, Hassan Fathy’s design is not expensive but beautiful.” He elaborates, “Egypt needs someone like Fathy who left the city to design for the poor. Egypt needs a guru that offers a model for people to give up their individualism and disseminate collaborative ethics. This will develop the country and move the whole system forward.”

### Salah Hegab (Interview in Arabic, December 2011)

Arch. Salah Hegab (27 December, 1932 -\_) earned his B.Sc in 1956 from the Department of Architecture, ‘Ain Shams University, Cairo. After graduation he was appointed as a researcher in the National Research Center when he accompanied Hassan Fathy in his surveying trip around Nubia. In 1965, he studied urban planning at California University, Berkeley. He earned his MSc. from Pratt Institute, New York in 1966. In 2010, he was awarded the Hassan Fathy Award (an award made in collaboration with Biblioteqa Alexandria; Mies Van de Rohe, Spain; and the AKAA). He is the author of a continuing series of columns titled ‘Amar Ya Misr’ [“And Always Prosperous Egypt”] in *al-Ahram* Newspaper since 1994. The purpose of this series of articles was to critique architecture and development in Egypt. His consultation company Sabour (currently Saleh & Hegab), established in 1979, has grown to offer expertise in all areas of engineering specialization. In corporation with the architect Benjamin Tomson Hegab participated in the design of Semeramis Hotel in the 70s.

For *al-‘Imarah*, Hegab narrates, “Sayed Karim established *al-‘Imarah* with Anees Serageldien, both were founders and owners. The problem with Sayed Karim is that he copied the architecture of a completely new culture regardless of any differences.” Sayed Karim was designing as if he was building from a tabula rasa.” Hegab continues, “if we look at Baron Empain when he came to build Heliopolis, he used the elements of the existing buildings first.” Hegab narrates, “I was with Fathy in 1962 documenting Nubian architecture. Fathy asserted, in essentials, there are 5 questions any architect should ask for himself: Where do I build? For whom? How do we build? Who will build? Who will maintain what I build?” Hegab elaborates his fascination with Fathy by stressing that “Fathy has no style: he never invented a style: it is all about these 5 questions, he looked at the architecture of the place... he took the existing elements and reapplied them.” In contrast, Hegab declares “Sayed Karim ignored all this!” For Karim, “It is not bad to learn abroad but it is important to think about the context and the 5 questions of Fathy.” For ‘A. Ibrahim “he did not mean Islamic architecture, what he meant is an Egyptian architecture that belongs to our culture and our roots. Look at al-Zahra’a mosque which transmits a very contemporary vocabulary.” Hegab asserts,” ‘A. Ibrahim is a very open personality, the CPAS centre was a phenomenon at that time, last year it was awarded the Hassan Fathy award in the Alexandria library. ‘A. Ibrahim offered ingenious ideas for the development of the al-Haram [Mecca] holy area, but it was not implemented. ”

With regard to the influence of *AB*, Hegab does not think that it is all about the architect, he states: “the architect cannot control the design process because there is a trilogy in our system which is compromised (the owner, the architect, and the contractor): The owner is always an investor who thinks of himself as the boss that should control

the architect, it is a culture of superiority not integrity. The owner does allow the architect to design.” Hegab affirms “it is this absence of the integrative system which is the problem of contemporary architecture.” He highlights, “The interaction in Egypt is always top-down, not bottom -up nor even it is horizontal.”

He assigned the shift in attitudes from *al-‘Imarah* to *AB* to “the political stance after 1952 that strengthened the ideology of Arabism on the account of the local distinctiveness of Egypt itself, ‘the mother of the world’. ...but at the time of Sayed Karim, he was also influenced by the western stance of the Khedives.” Commenting on the gap in architectural magazines in the sixties and seventies, Hegab stresses that “the society in general learned to be dependent on the government, holding to the notion that the government will make a magazine for us.”

The problem of publication in Egypt is that “people now have less concern for knowledge...lack of general culture. It is again a problem of materialism.” Through the political eras of Nasser to Mubarak “there was no concern for arts and architecture. It was all about cost, again, the materialistic value.” Commenting on the status of architecture in Egypt, Hegab elaborates, “since the revolution of 1952, the free officers had no administrative, economic, or scientific experience. They went to people who they trust even if they are unexperienced professors, who flattered them. The poor farmers travelled to the Gulf and absorbed the values of other cultures and forgot their own Egyptian balanced values. The farmer adopted the new building systems of reinforced concrete as the best. We have 140 research centres, but there is no interaction between them and the government. There is no systematic plan. In 1956, when I graduated and joined the national research centre, in the basement there was a unit that produced solar energy to operate a radio, now we import this knowledge.”

In the case of foreign practice in Egypt, Hegab asserts “the collaboration between the foreign and the local is not a problem, Hegab affirms, because “art has no nationality. It is just the problem of harmonization.” For example, in the case of the Semeramis Intercontinental, which “may have no Egyptian style per se, but it is harmonized with the place, due to the difference in height.”

Hegab concludes: “nothing comes to Egypt unless it blends within it or even takes away from it.” Hegab thinks that “the identity of Egyptian society started to be lost from the second half of the twentieth-century. People started to copy, we are using the pitched roofs in the new communities! This is because people do not know the value of their heritage. People want the things that the other has, not the things that can be harmonized with what they have themselves...Individualism is growing in the ethics of the whole society which leads to a lack of integrity and the degradation of the value of knowledge, compared with materialistic values.” Hegab asserts: “Architecture is the container of the culture...when the culture suffers, the architecture suffers consequently.”

**Salah Zaky** (questionnaire in Arabic, August 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Zaky is the Professor of Architecture at al-Azhar University. He graduated from the architectural school in Cairo University in 1958 and received his M.Sc and Ph.D. from Cornell University, New York in 1961 and 1964, respectively. He was a UIA board member and representative of Egypt (1985-1992) as well as the primary vice president and Africa’s representative in the UIA (1994-1999). In addition he was the head of work group of the Architectural Heritage in Africa (1992-1999). Prof. Zaky’s most important book is *The Nineteenth Century Houses in Old Cairo*. He is an active participant in the architectural discourse and a member of the editorial board of *‘Alam al-Bena’*a (1981-1994). He is a frequent contributor to *‘Alam al-Bena’*a in different

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<sup>3</sup> Image is sourced from [http://www.cpas-egypt.com/AR/S\\_Zaki\\_ar.html](http://www.cpas-egypt.com/AR/S_Zaki_ar.html)

issues such as architectural education; the development of the Egyptian village; and the status of architecture in Egypt. He is the Head of the Architectural Heritage Committee in the National Center of Urban Harmony and Cairo Heritage Building. Affiliated with the Ministry of Culture he has established, regulated, and supervised the Center for Studies and Development of Historic Cairo in 2001-2003. Consequently, he prepared several studies and the GIS database for historical Cairo, and he supervised the development of many historical districts such as al-Gamalyah and the area of al-Hakim mosque and al-Mu'ez street; the development of the Opera square; and al-Azhar area and al-Hussein square.

Zaky affirms that the problems of architecture in Egypt are similar to those of any developing country and they are inseparable from the impact of capitalism. Unfortunately, the lack of professional criticism and the ineffective role of syndicates in Egypt, he affirms, contributes to the degradation of the profession. He elaborates "the role of the syndicate does not exceed some social activities due to the suppression of Mubarak's regime which was worried about the spread of Islamic movements within these organizations." Zaky also highlights "the influence of foreign ideas in education." Therefore, Zaky assigned the crisis of the profession to the overall "cultural degradation." He ascribes the role of *'Alam al-Bena'a* in raising such challenges by urging "competitions, conferences, and education seminars." The inception of *'Alam al-Bena'a* was "phenomenal" as it came after 30 years of muted architectural discourse since "the 1952 Free Officers revolution that marginalized art and architecture." The absence of architectural magazines in the sixties was also due to the unsettled political atmosphere and the wars.

Zaky perceives A.Ibrahim's focus on the "national and Arab trends" did not have a strong impact on practice overall because there were other influential trends that were transferred through "academics in the architectural schools, such as Gamal Bakry, 'Aly Raafat, 'Abdelhakim Ibrahim, Ghazaly Kasseiba, Muhammad Tawfik 'Abdel-Gawad, Farouk al-Gohary, Ramy al-Dahhan, 'Abdullah 'Abdel-Aziz 'Atyah, Muhammad 'Awad, and others." Therefore, the influence of any magazine *al-'Imarah* or *'Alam al-Bena'a*, Zaky highlights, "is limited compared to the influence of those practitioners." Most of "contemporary architects did not agree with A.Ibrahim's juxtaposition of religion and architecture, which does not fit the contemporary society." "A.Ibrahim's extremist approach was manifested in his design of the buildings of Share'ah in al-Azhar University, Nasr City, which was introverted buildings with little or no windows." However, Zaky stressed, "the role of *'Alam al-Bena'a* was effective in reviewing national and international current architectural practices." This is beside the influential role of CPAS in organizing seminars that urged important debates.

For the financial difficulties that faced the editor of *'Alam al-Bena'a*, Zaky asserts that the lack of governmental support for A.Ibrahim was not connected to his Islamic approach, rather it was a general lack of support to the profession. However, he asserts that the government had no interest in any architectural trend and the few Islamic buildings that appeared in that era (1980s-2000) were due to a special context such as al-Azhar University, Nasr city.

Discussing one of the debates raised in *'Alam al-Bena'a*, Zaky argues that the architectural competitions are "an important forum that needs more attention." Zaky viewed some as successful such as "the competition for Alexandria library; the competition for the research institute, Ismailia Road (designed by Muhamad Hamza with others); and the competition of the international union of contractors, Nasr city (designed by Ghazaly Kasseiba), while others lacked organization such as the competition of the commercial chamber, Alexandria (the design of Salah Zaky); and the rehabilitation of Sidnaoui building, both were not completed due to insufficient funds. In the case of Alexandria library, in particular, he perceives the design to be successful and worthy of the huge expenses given its cultural impact.

Discussing other issues raised in *'Alam al-Bena'a*, Zaky did not agree with the criticism of the AKAA awards as an international organization that strives to make an impact." Zaky also did not agree with criticism of the of foreign firms in Egypt as they have played an effective role in the implementation of modern technology, even if they have had a negative impact on local architects who have "blindly" adhered to such technologies.

Zaky concludes that the identity, although it needs financial support, does not demand a huge expense. He asserts that we should not perceive Egyptian architectural practice in a wholly negative way as there are many positive endeavors. Considering the Hassan Fathy Award competition held in Alexandria Library, he highlights, one





**Figure 121. Egyptian Embassy in Syria; and Oracle's Headquarters in Cairo.**

M. Abdel-Gawad stresses the great achievements of Karim and 'A.Ibrahim "regardless of any downsides, it is phenomenal work. It is too hard to maintain a publication for twenty years in light of the various challenges the publication industry faces in Egypt: no organizational support and few readership." These challenges resulted in a growing sense of "individualism. No one wants to take from his time to volunteer to make a magazine that will have no materialistic benefit."

However, M. Abdel-Gawad thinks that both "A. Ibrahim and Sayed Karim have made these magazines for their own fame." For Karim, he elaborates, "when Karim came from Switzerland, he was fired from Cairo University for distributing the international style. But he was from one of the richest families at that time and thus he was able to start his own office, which was at that time a training office for young graduates and from which he published *al-Imarah*." Comparing the approaches of both 'A.Ibrahim and Karim, he states that "A.Ibrahim had some conservative ideas and he did not include any ideas that opposed these ideas, he was not as open as Sayed Karim. Karim was more objective than 'A.Ibrahim. For example, although Karim didn't continue in Cairo University because of the objections of 'Ali Labib Gabr and Hassan Shaf'ei, he used to publish their designs." The demise of *al-Imarah* could be assigned to two reasons: "one is Karim's focus on the work outside Egypt. The second reason is that there was a problem between him and Nasser's men, which I am not aware of its details." Generally speaking, he considers "all the architects in the sixties and seventies were driven by the exaggerated rates that they could earn from the Gulf." He highlights that "in the sixties and seventies, the gap period, the Gulf countries opened their doors widely and this enticed many architects to the Gulf region. Karim himself was called 'the flying architect', he left the magazine and his office in Cairo to my father Tawfik Abdel-Gawad to be able to work in the Gulf."

Commenting on the marginalization of Fathy in *al-Imarah*, M. Abdel-Gawad states that "Fathy was marginalized not only by Sayed Karim but also by all his peers until the seventies. The only school in Egypt in which students were free to design what they liked was the Fine Arts, but Cairo University was strictly dominated by Mies van der Rohe's style until the seventies. However, 'Ain Shams University was kind of in-between because most of its staff graduated from the Beaux Arts." Further, M. Abdel-Gawad elaborates: "after the war between Egypt and Israel in 1973 that led to the oil crisis in the western countries, the world started to consider the future of energy. This is when they acknowledged Hassan Fathy's attempts internationally, then nationally." He stresses that "the significance of Hassan Fathy as well as Wissa Wassef is that they both were western educated but they moved forward and charted their own principles to which they adhered and never gave up for the sake of the client or the sake of the mainstream." During this time, a shift in the design trends happened and M. Abdel-Gawad states that "there was an "awakening" between the Arab architects which stemmed from the postmodernism and the deconstruction movements. He highlights, "A.Ibrahim's 'call for return' was part of this movement."

In the case of 'A.Ibrahim, M. Abdel-Gawad perceives that "he never made *'Alam al-Bena'a* to benefit the profession. After his arrival from the Gulf he decided to make something new and it was the CPAS Centre. Aiming

for fame, ‘A.Ibrahim used to criticize everything without any objectivity.’ For example, M. Abdel-Gawad elaborates “in the competition for Alexandria library the criteria highlighted the significance of symbolism to this project which aimed to revive the history of Alexandria and promote Alexandria’s present and future.” But, he explains “because of Egypt’s economic conditions Egyptian architects, including ‘A.Ibrahim, used to prioritize the cost, and they were unable to free themselves from this habit. The result is that all the designs from the Egyptian architects did not address the criteria of the competition.” He stresses, “thus, the debate that was raised at this time, from my point of view, was subjective not objective.”

With regard to the debate on foreign practice, M. Abdel-Gawad maintains that it always revolves around “a kind of senseless national rhetoric.” He gives another recent example of such debate, the competition of the Japanese University in which the jury comprised 50% Egyptians and 50% Japanese but the winner was Japanese.” He bemoans how “many Egyptian architects perceived this result as a kind of softness of the Egyptian jurors who were unable to have an influential say because the Japanese government is the one that will fund the project. But in truth, and they did not want to admit, there was no Egyptian project qualified to be the winner.” M. Abdel-Gawad thinks that “talking about the nationality of the designer is senseless. Norman Foster designs in Germany and there was a war between Britain and Germany! Egyptians and the Arabs are so sensitive to these issues which should be surpassed by focusing on the professional efficiency of the design rather than its nationality.”

Summarizing the phases of Egyptian architecture, he states that “since Muhammad ‘Ali followed by Khedive Ismail, Egyptians and architects focused on the west as a source of inspiration. When Nasser came, architects knew Nasser’s inclination toward Russian styles, so Russia became their source of inspiration. But until this stage architecture in Egypt was almost at the same stage as the western countries.” M. Abdel-Gawad elaborates, “the problem in architecture started really after Sadat and the Infitah. The building regulations changed frequently to adapt to the needs of the investors. Since then money was the influential sole factor behind any development, and the profession lost its esteem. The regulations changed according to the investor’s needs.” Moreover, he states: “the consultant accreditation was given to any 15-year practitioner who graduated from the Engineering School regardless of his area. Thus, the consultants in the construction projects can be Civil or Mechanical engineers, not necessarily architects. Those unspecialized consultants reduced the criteria for successful design to affordability and the market became the ruler.”

However, M. Abdel-Gawad asserts that he is still optimistic about the future of architecture in Egypt. M. Abdel-Gawad stresses that he “steadily attempts to re-interpret the traditional vocabulary from contemporary vision. Also, we can witness great diligence in the work of many contemporary architects, such as ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim, or in the Arab region in general, such as Rasem Badran, and many others.”

**Nezar AlSaiyyad** (English questionnaire, November 2011)

Born in 1955, AlSaiyyad graduated from Cairo University in 1976. He is professor of architecture, planning and urban history and the chairman of the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. AlSaiyyad has authored and edited an extensive number of distinguished publications on the Middle East and Egypt, including his most recent book *Cairo: Histories of a City* (2011). AlSaiyyad designed a

number of residential tower projects in Egypt in 1977 and further projects in the nineties, such as Hadaik Towers, Cairo, 1996; Four Sails Resort, South Hurghada, 1995.



**Figure 122. Designs of AlSayyad in Egypt from left: Shubra 1979, and Hadaik Tower 1996.**

Criticizing architectural education in Egypt as “education without focus, intent or ethic” and the lack of effective criticism in the profession, AlSayyad affirms that the crisis of the architectural profession in Egypt started since the inception of the profession in 1920s. He elaborates, “however, the rigid but rigorous system of education—the main public university sustained the profession until the mid-1980s. The neo-liberalization of the economy, the privatization of education, and rampant corruption in the building professions accelerated the decline of the profession since then.”

His view about *‘Alam Al-Bena’*a is that it was a “naïve attempt to create a regional debate based on a very narrow understanding of tradition.” He perceives, “the conservative sentiment of its editor and his connection to the countries of the Gulf limited its prospects and influence.” He views the call of A.Ibrahim to ‘return to Islamic architecture’ as “superficial” and neither “grounded nor meaningful.” This is so because “none of the architecture that came before the modern era ever considered their buildings ‘Islamic architecture’?”

Comparing *‘Alam al-Bena’*a with the more recent magazine *Medina*, AlSayyad perceives, *‘Alam al-Bena’*a, on the one hand, “was used mainly by the editor to advocate the idea of returning to tradition. However, the tradition that Ibrahim was advocating was an invented tradition that had little resonance in history. ‘Tradition’ in *‘Alam al-Bena’*a was neither theorized nor problematized.” On the other hand, *Medina* “was beautifully produced with commercial ads that made it look like an American publication. Its themes were well researched and its editing was exceptional, reflecting the sophistication of its editor and its times. It connected itself to other arenas of practice and was aware of what was going on in the world of practice beyond the Arab world and Egypt.” While *Medina* was “unaffordable resulting in its editor closing it down after a few years of operation,” *‘Alam al-Bena’*a was a mass magazine that thrived in the opening years of a neo-liberal Egypt.” On the contrary, AlSayyad affirms that “*Medina* was a sophisticated magazine that fit within the culture of the elite few in the early 90s who attempted to globalize the architectural discourse in Egypt.”

One of the debates raised in *‘Alam al-Bena’*a was the design of the Bibliotheca Alexandria and its competition which AlSayyad describes as a “decent competition.” However, AlSayyad elaborates, “it was poorly managed by Mohsen Zahran of Alexandria University. The result was that many good projects were eliminated in the early rounds by his aristocrats and the jury never got to see them. However, as competitions go, the final result was satisfactory.” Aligning with A.Ibrahim that “the building was expensive and not very appropriate for the elite and the city,” however, “it gave Alexandria a very distinctive monument and a new image.” For the AKAA, that raised another debate in *‘Alam al-Bena’*a, AlSayyad continues: “AKAA has had a very positive influence on architectural

practice in the Muslim world with varying degrees of success in different Middle Eastern countries. Its impact on Egyptian practice was however minimal beyond a few architects who were part of the Aga Khan circle. Most of the projects that were awarded in the Arab world were deserving of recognition.”

AlSayyad concludes that the “local identity does not require natives to reproduce it. It may require architects who understand the context independent of their nationality.”

### **Dalila ElKerdany** (English questionnaire, November 2011)

Born in Cairo, 1956. Dalila ElKerdany is a practicing architect and professor of architecture at the Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University. She obtained her undergraduate studies, M.Sc. in architecture, as well as a Ph.D. from Cairo University in the years 1979, 1986, 1992. During the years 1989-1992 she was a visiting fellow at the University of California at Berkeley. Since 2006, she heads the Heritage Conservation Committee in Port Said Governorate, and she is an active member in the Historic Areas Committee in the Egyptian National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH). She is also a member of the Architecture Committee at the Egyptian Supreme Council of Culture. ElKerdany is a recipient of many competitions’ awards and actively involved in the architecture profession of Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Prof. Dalila ElKerdany is the widow of the renowned architect Gamal Bakry (1931-2006). Bakry was an architect whose designs stem from a keen philosophic and artistic consensus. Many architects tried to interpret Bakry’s works such as Khaled Asfour who described him as Don Quixote the hero of Miguel as Bakry used to fight the rigid binaries of tradition and modernity.<sup>6</sup> One of his most distinguished writings is his book *Architecture Picnic* (1985) which he dedicated: “To those who live the dilemma of the harmony between the existing [present] and the coming [future], some of them advanced and created...some failed and thus refused, maintained and resisted... to all of them as they represent the challenge and the humane fate.” Examples of Bakry’s designs include: Sadat Chalet 1979; Maadi Hotel 1979; Engineers Syndicate, Alexandria 1988; Mummification Museum, Luxor 1996; Scientific Museum; and the Commercial Centre at al-Mariotyah.<sup>7</sup>

ElKerdany argues that “architectural education in Egypt suffers from the lack of a critical approach, poor resources, and a large numbers of students.” The dependency on “Western Theories” in the local curricula is perceived by her “as a positive component because we cannot separate one culture from the other in the highly globalized atmosphere of today.” However, “it is expected that a critical approach would bring adaptation and even elaboration into the Egyptian context.” Therefore, she contends that this can also be “an indication of a defect in the criticizing abilities of the Arab intellect, which is a result of a parental stifled education system.” Also, local competitions, although “important mechanisms in the development of the profession,” are not progressive enough because...they depend on a small group—usually senior—professionals or professors in their juries.” Most importantly, ElKerdany states that the issue of foreign practice in Egypt is a useful “interaction” that adds to the “development of the profession.” She states that both she and Bakry view “this dilemma” as “invented and may be politicized.”

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://mimar-architects.com/people/dr-dalila-el-kerdany>, (accessed 09/10/2011).

<sup>6</sup> Khaled Asfour, “Egypt’s Don Quixote,” *Medina*, no.21 (2002). Also in the same issue see, Ashraf Salama, “Architecture of Gamal Bakry: Thematic Expression,” *Medina*, no.21 (2002).

<sup>7</sup> Reviewed in *‘Alam al-Bena’*.

She also highlights that the “architecture profession is a mere mirror for the Arab society and its underdeveloped state. Pretentious, unrealistic, undemocratic, among other diseases are the most obvious.” She assigns the marginalization of architectural criticism in Egypt “to media neglect, professional disregard, and unfamiliarity with criticism in society in general.” Therefore, she asserts that the “architectural profession in Egypt is in crisis” which was “noticed in the 80’s with the open door policy and the rise of consumer culture. But in general, it started earlier in the sixties and seventies with the mass housing and the disproportional expansion of the Metropolitan Cairo Area and neglect for smaller towns.”

In the case of the magazines she contends that *al-‘Imarah* was more influential than *‘Alam al-Bena‘a* and *Medina*. A.Ibrahim’s call for return, she perceives, is “a drift that was caused by the 1967 war, and later by the oil boom in the Arab states. Simply, it was the business of petro-capital states, which holds the main Islamic shrines that made this unbalanced superficial drift.” She views this call as “superficial,” because “Islamic culture is part of our heritage as much as the ancient Egyptian, or Coptic cultures,” all of this became rooted in every contemporary design, “even in the most aggressive westernized or modern attempts, the theme of recalling tradition never completely faded.” She further elaborates, “The Egyptian pioneers did not really overlook heritage completely. On the contrary, one could trace many profound and subtle gestures in their work.” She also noted that Gamal Bakry had the same perspective about the call for Islamic architecture and he viewed it as “quite superficial and opportunist.”

Asking her about designs that manifest Bakry’s philosophy of harmonizing modernity and tradition, she points at the Enpi competition, Alexandria Engineers Syndicate, and the Zaghoul residence. She highlights, based on the experience of her husband Bakry, that the practice in the sixties was not satisfactory as the regime left the decision in the hands of their trustworthies who are “not necessarily knowledgeable.” This motivated Bakry to “help the new generation...in different way.” The negatives of the regime continued to affect the practice in the form of “bad laws, corruption, lack of public awareness, and wrong priorities.”



**Figure 123. Designs of Gamal Bakry.**

Discussing some of the debates raised in *‘Alam al-Bena‘a*, she views the winning design of the Bibliotheca Alexandria as “a success in terms of an iconic scheme,” however, “it disturbed the urban harmony of the site.” But in general, she asserts, “the result gave a positive impact to the architecture profession.”

For the impact of the revolutionary change of regime, she asserts that “it is a challenge posed to the architecture profession to struggle for empowerment, structural changes, and profound change in awarding mechanisms.” She concludes that the “non-governmental associations, awareness institutions, educational reform and strong syndicates and architects unions are the main catalysts for change. Economic conditions cause pressure but are not the only factor which imposes a certain identity. I imagine that creating public opinion is more important in this phase.”

**Ahmad Hamid** (Interview in English, November 2010)

Born in 1956 and graduating from Cairo University, Department of Architecture in 1977, Ahmad Hamid began his professional career with Hassan Fathy. In 1984 he founded Ahmad Hamid Architects, a Cairo-based private interdisciplinary design office providing architectural services for residential and commercial projects, and public spaces, as well as product and furniture design. Furthering his own personal research into the indigenous art and architectural traditions of the Muslim World, he then pursued his post-graduate studies in architectural history at the American University in Cairo, graduating with a Master’s Degree in Islamic Art and Architecture. Hamid worked with Skidmore Owings and Merrill on the “World Trade Centre Cairo,” and several international consultants designing “Sadat City,” and has also consulted in Germany, England, Switzerland, Malaysia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Abu Dhabi.<sup>8</sup> He lectured in various international universities and institutes such as Los Angeles, USA, in 1982; London Polytechnic in 1987; MIT; and most recently at University of Geneva 2007. He was an international juror in the World Architecture Festival, Barcelona 2010. He is the author of *Hassan Fathy and Continuity in Islamic Arts and Architecture: the Birth of a New Modern*, published by the American University Press in Cairo, 2010.

Asking him about the marginalization of Fathy, his guru, Hamid narrates the sort of hassles he experienced as a student in Cairo University when he applied some of Fathy’s principles in his graduation project, a tourist village on the northern coast. Hamid states that his professor asked him to “meet the head of the department and get his consent for the design,” which only happens if the student’s project “is fancy.” He bemoans “I wanted to use stone as material, and courtyards!” The head of the department at this time said that: “Fathy is a friend...but he is a great artist not an architect.” The result is that his project was undervalued and received a ‘pass’ only instead of the credit that he used to get. The professors of Cairo University, Hamid regrets, “thought that my project was not the architecture they taught us: rigid modular designs.” This is back in 1977, Hamid elaborates, “it was my first encounter with “institutionalized ignorance.” This “rigid thinking...that hampers the youngsters,” Hamid believes, “is the origin of fundamentalism.” Hamid highlights that what opposed Fathy “was the hegemony of an authoritative academic system.” Hamid bemoans how in Egypt there is “an attitude of sabotage towards our icons,” while “icons need to be manufactured by the political decision makers.” However, Hamid elaborates that “in the late seventies, Fathy was invited by Hasaballah al-Kafrawy, the Minister of Housing, to design the northern coast of Egypt (a masterplan that was never completed).” Hamid assigns this shift to “post-colonialism” as he affirms that he is not in favor of the “term postmodern and more in favor of the term post-colonial.”

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<sup>8</sup> See [http://www.worldarchitecturefestival.com/judging\\_judges\\_detail.cfm?officeContactId](http://www.worldarchitecturefestival.com/judging_judges_detail.cfm?officeContactId)  
Also, for more details see <http://hebdo.ahram.org.eg/arab/ahram/2005/2/23/visa0.htm>

Hamid states that his new book “relates Fathy to a bigger context within the modern world, within the modern movement of architecture. Fathy was always labeled as the one who uses domes and vaults, and as a proponent of vernacular architecture, which is correct but confines Fathy’s extreme wide and plural approach.” The book also redefines “Islamic art and architecture, not quite as nostalgia, rather it “redefines the principles of Islamic art and architecture that bring back the role of this culture and religion in the making of western modernity.” The book “answers questions within the modern art and modern architecture crisis in the twenty-first century.” Further, Hamid states that “the historians, writers, and publishers of critical architecture in the last century are mainly western and it has become a problem because their bias is diffused to a much more general and broader public.” This made western architecture “absolutely superior to any other forms of architecture or any other civilization. It has been taken as a de facto result of the superiority of the west over the south, east, or any other cultures.” He affirms that his “book indicates that modernity is an evolving term, and there are extremely vital roles played by other cultures in the making of global or universal modernity.” In this book he also suggests “that Islam has answers directly related to the modern crises because Islam is not a religion of the past.”

After the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 revolution, Hamid thinks that “there might be a new orientation in architecture.” However, he states that “unfortunately, there are some thoughts about converting Tahrir square to memorial park, there are ideas that want to make from Egypt another Manhattan or so, but this is too early...how this will serve the people.” He affirms that “architecture is a very serious business, not about memorability [sic], it should directly serve the people.” Hamid elaborates, “Le Corbusier back in 1924 said it is either architecture or revolution.” Contextually, Hamid stresses that “we can relate this to the revolution that just happened in Egypt, no one yet has made such connection...if architecture has anything to do with development, development has anything to do with the social stability, social stability has anything to do with economy, or economy has anything to do with politics.”

For the problem of publication in Egypt, Hamid notes that it “is mainly a problem of vision.” Our society, Hamid bemoans, “always thinks of the glossy paper and expensive material...There should be small print houses, we should use recycled paper.” For *al-Imarah*, “it declared that it calls for international architecture that is why it ignored Fathy.” However, Hamid asserts, “I like *al-Imarah*, it did not turn its back on the village’s problems or the workers’ housing in the industrial cities, without hiding it, so from a western standpoint, it was a good adoption of western theories on us. It demonstrates the areas that need improvement, such as the village and industrial cities, unlike *Magaz* (a recent magazine).”

Considering *‘Alam al-Bena’*a, Hamid asserts that it “was a great miracle. However, the content was very controlled by ‘A.Ibrahim, he had an absolute authority.” ‘A.Ibrahim’s ‘return’ call, for Hamid, is a “postcolonial response and it was nationalistic.” He explains that “‘A. Ibrahim has claims for Islamic architecture. I can give ‘A.Ibrahim credit, with his engineering background and not *Beaux-art*, he gave a little depth to the Islamic architecture.” He himself agrees with ‘A.Ibrahim about the significance of Islamic architecture, but while “‘A.Ibrahim’s perspective is very nationalistic,” Hamid thinks “that we should look at Islamic architecture from a universal point of view.” ‘A.Ibrahim always made this divide between “us and them, them and us, a funny tribal war.” ‘A.Ibrahim’s standpoint “is very fundamental... Criticizing the attentions of the AKAA, and the Isma’ili sect is very subjective, as usual.” And “since the magazine was controlled mainly by ‘A.Ibrahim’s thought its influence [on the architectural practice] was minimal.”

Commenting on the gap of twenty years between *‘Alam al-Bena’*a and *al-Imarah*, Hamid narrates: Nasser’s need “to speak to Kennedy, Eisenhower, and de Gaulle with the same tone and the same level. This is Nasser’s charisma: We need to be good so we need to be western. I see this as ‘west-phobia’.” Therefore, Nasser wanted “to house the masses and make Egypt like Europe.” Both “Nasser and the practicing architects, nobody thought that this mass production is anti-modernism,” Hamid affirms. “Even after the revolutions in Europe that asked for the demolition of public housing where crime rates were increasing, even after the students’ 1968 revolution in Europe, no one thought that this is related to architecture.” Hamid asserts that “consequently nobody thought that there was a need for magazines: everything is set and concluded, the research has been finalized, and this is the way we should be living, why should we have a magazine.” Hamid highlights that “Nasr City (a model of Karim’s master in Switzerland), AUC in Maadi, and Cairo airport, all are great success. But they are all typical western models, there

was no time to assimilate and think that modernity even started early in the time of the king.” He affirms that the gap in architectural journals “was not a direct control by Nasser, but it was a unified approach in the sixties, who would criticize Nasr city [victory]!”

For Hamid, Islamic architecture “is the good life. It is the absolute good life that West and East are yearning for, exists in Islamic architecture.” Hamid explains “The modern movement used this term ‘the good life for the mass,’ to imply adequateness, appropriateness, social responsibilities. I see that Islamic architecture is the best application for the human yearning for the good life.” Therefore, “The clash between Islam and modernity is a fabricated one... this clash is the impact of post-colonialism.” Further, both ‘A.Ibrahim and Fathy believed in this clash and this is why they both were against buildings such as the National bank in Jeddah and World Trade Centre.

The National bank in Jeddah and World Trade Centre, Hamid emphasizes “although designed by foreigners, are very Islamic.” Hamid explains that “the design of the World Trade Centre is extremely successful, the façade is remarkably modulated.” As he highlights, “this is the first attempt, for a foreign firm, to skip international architecture and to speak a local language, it is very different from the Hilton Hotel. The World Trade Centre in Cairo cannot belong to any other context except Cairo.” From Hamid’s experience with Skidmore Owings Merrill, this old company with its collaborative organization manifests “a form of scientific credibility and gratitude, this is very Islamic. They are open-minded and they do not overpower the employees, employers are associates.” He elaborates that while Bruce Graham was the designer of the building in Cairo, Hamid, a junior architect back then, objected to specific points and the design was altered accordingly. In general the role of the foreign firms, Hamid asserts, “is very important in the large projects, they are very important for training like universities.” The role of foreign firms “deserves acknowledgment” and “we should not blame the west for any failure,” Hamid said.

However, Alexandria library “is a monument to the world not only to Alexandria or Egypt.” Hamid admits “the idea is so techno-oriented,” and “from an urban, visual, and interior point of view it is not a place for concentration, reading, and contemplating, for me, I would prefer it to be a gymnasium. Even if it is a gymnasium, it is not a gymnasium to be built close to al-Morsi Abu al-‘Abas and a marvelous building by Ezzat Abou Gad.”

Commenting on the dependence on western ideas, he states “the entire Middle East is still in the service of the colonizers.” Fathy used to call this “auto colonization, the colonized yearns for colonization.” For all academics, Hamid bemoans, “the entire academia is imitating the west, thinking we are in Milano or California. The West knows about us more than we know about ourselves.” However, “the western institutions (recently the ETH in Zurich) came here for alternative modernity.” For example, “I was in al-‘Ain University in UAE, the exhibition there was full of students’ works that mimic western architectural models, Frank Gehry or Zaha Hadid. There is nothing inspired by our tradition.” Hamid asserts that there is an extreme need to “restructure our architectural education.” Moreover, Hamid asserts that “the syndicate has no role at all in the profession.” Also, “the conditions of criticism need to be reset, as elaborated in the second chapter of my book about the criticism of the AKA.”

Reflecting on the AKA, for Hamid “is generally a positive institute.” There are many positive nominations such as al-Haranya project that “unfortunately stays very insular because it did not have any effect on its surrounding.” The project, he continues, “deserves attention and recognition for its architecture, craft, social value, and economic lifeline of an industry that can be in every village in Egypt...It is very modern in its intent, contextual in its focus, and this is enough to choose for a prize.” Also, as a user of the Hajj terminal, Hamid thinks that it is a marvellous place and “one of the best projects that was awarded the AKA.” However, he disagrees with some of their evaluations.” For example, the award of ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim for al-Houd al-Marsoud garden which “pretends that it is an echo of Ibn Toloun mosque...But, why would an architect build a garden?...a garden is to be planted...Building a garden for the children to play hide and seek, what is wrong with hide and seek between bush or between the oak trees.” Hamid exclaims, ‘Abdelhalim projects the “sophisticated pattern language of Christopher Alexander...what does this have to do with the child of Sayeda Zeinab.”

Hamid logically believes that “identity making needs people with conviction. It needs people that are convinced to be Egyptian. It has nothing to do with a big budget or small one.” Hamid bemoans the current “*Magaz* magazine and how it is very separated from the reality.” Hamid concludes: “our architecture in Egypt needs something like the

Bauhaus “a group of devoted students and professors who moved in the city on foot or by bike,” willing to sacrifice and to invent and to passionately “make from their crisis an opportunity for progress.”

**Samir Gharib** (Arabic questionnaire, September 2011)

Architectural critic, born in Assiut, Egypt in 1954. He received a Bachelor of Information, Cairo University, Faculty of Journalism Department's role in May 1975. Samir Gharib worked as a journalist in the Future weekly magazine, Paris from 1979 until 1983 and earned a diploma from the International Press Institute in Paris in 1985. He also obtained a diploma from the International Press Institute in 1978, Budapest, Hungary. He worked as a consultant and a technical adviser to the Egyptian Minister of Culture from 1987 to 1999. Chairman of the National Library and National Archives, Egypt from 1999 to 2002. He issued 11 books in the arts, culture, and thought, and curated the first “Surrealism in Egypt” exhibition. On every Tuesday, he writes “Look to the Future.”

Gharib criticizes architectural education in Egypt, which is part of a generally “retarded educational system,” of being dependent on the western curricula without constant developing. The entire system due to economic factors “expels excellence.” Commenting on the status of architecture in Egypt, Gharib states that “while capitalism and privatization is manifested in the architecture of the elites, the architecture of the middle class is archetypal and the architecture of the poor depends on their customization.” What makes the situation worse is, Gharib highlights, “the absence of architectural criticism and art criticism in general, with few irregular exceptions,” and the restrictions on the syndicate which accompanies it.

Commenting on the period between *al-Imarah* magazine and *‘Alam al-Bena‘a*, he asserts that this period was characterized by backwardness which we, until now, are trying to overcome.” He views both magazines as “critical endeavours” in the profession and “the profession is in bad need of such magazines, no matter what trend they will adopt.” He thinks that both magazines had little or no influence on the general practice at that time, with few exceptions. In the case of the call for ‘return’ to Islamic architecture, Gharib thinks, it is “impractical as the extraction from any civilization is a typical part of architectural creativity.” He elaborates that specifying ‘Islamic architecture’ in A.Ibrahim’s call is part of his search for identity.

For the design of the Alexandria Library, he views it as distinguished, although it is not related to Egypt or Alexandria. For the AKAA, it is definitely a “great contribution to architecture in general and to ‘Islamic architecture’ in particular, although these religious labels, in architectural achievements, produce constraints.” Also, he elaborates, “the award is sometimes driven by personal relationships.” Gharib criticizes the awarded project of ‘Abdelhalim ‘Abdelhalim’s Sayeda Zeinab Children Park, whose design “compromises the safety of children.”

He concludes that the problems in Egyptian architecture are due to the relationship between socio-political conditions and architecture, and in light of the turmoil in Egypt, will cause degradation of the entire profession.

‘Amr ‘Abdel-Kawi (English questionnaire, February 2012)

‘Abdel-Kawi is an Egyptian architect practitioner and academic born in Cairo. He received his Bachelor and Master of Architecture at Washington University in St. Louis, U.S.A, and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan 2008. ‘Abdel-Kawi returned to Egypt to teach at ‘Ain Shams University and later at the Arab Academy of Science & Technology; he is currently on faculty at the American University in Cairo. ‘Abdel-Kawi was the chairman of *Medina*, a bilingual magazine on architecture, interiors, and fine arts between 1997 and 2002. Since 2008 he has been the publisher and Editor in Chief of *Magaz* design Magazine. Through these publications and his design management firm Rhimal, ‘Abdel-Kawi attempts to restore what he sees as Egypt's rich design tradition while closing the gap between designers' visions and industrialists' products.<sup>9</sup>

For ‘Abdel-Kawi, “architecture education in Egypt like all education has suffered from decades of stagnation and loss of academic priorities and values. Our academic institutions have become transformed during the past decades into tools of control rather than education greatly undermining the value of free thinking and creativity. In a field like architecture this explains the superficiality of the architectural discourse that has emerged from the system for so long, where we are more interested in superficial aesthetics over meaningful conceptual values. It is unavoidable for architectural education to be affected and influenced heavily by western hegemony, for this is where the discourse is unfolding. We simply sit and watch and emulate or copy; this is what was taught in school.” However, ‘Abdel-Kawi does not agree that this copying has anything “to do with any deficiencies in Arab intellect, it only has to do with an educational system that is more concerned with producing: good boys and girls who are passive dependent followers than independent free thinkers.” Most importantly, “the suppressive atmosphere in Egypt has contributed in removing criticism from the profession, transforming it to mere personal criticism as opposed to professional criticism. In the absence of critical discourse ideas fail to grow because we stop questioning what we are doing. Absence of critical and influential forums of discourse contributed to the death of a critical discourse. Professional entities too became more like social service organizations than professional regulators and promoters.

The architectural profession for ‘Abdel-Kawi “is handicapped by many problems starting with the fact that architecture is perceived of and organized under the school of engineering,” and “one syndicate of engineering where all engineers are authorized to sign architectural documents.” In other words, ‘Abdel-Kawi elaborates, “the profession is positioned in a fairly low position in...a market where the bottom line is the cost, investment in intellectual design services was perceived as a superfluous expense by the majority of developers who were guaranteed sales of any products they produced.” Consequently, “the architectural profession had to adjust to these realities by shedding its concern with meaning and concepts to become more pragmatic and functional. The Arab world has left this train towards one that is more closely related to the Western discourse and hence surpassed its counterpart in Egypt exploring new grounds.” For the overall status of the profession, ‘Abdel-Kawi does not believe that the architecture is in crisis, he states: “crisis implies a steep falling down from a position of stability or growth. I believe the architectural profession in Egypt has been in stagnation for at least 40 years. It is only starting to show

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<sup>9</sup> See Annelle Sheline “Entrepreneur Profile: Amr ‘Abdel-Kawi: Out to change the design landscape,” Daily News Egypt (2010). <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/entrepreneur-profile-amr-abdel-kawi-out-to-chang> , (accessed 01/02/2012).

some signs of revival during the past decade. Yet it is still difficult to say that it has developed any measurable level of professional discourse. The stagnation probably started in the late 60s with the overall stagnation of the country, with steep decline and degradation taking place in the later 70s and 80s.”

For the architectural literature and discourse, “under the existing conditions,” they are destined to die from inception. In the absence of professional discourse, in the absence of real and effective professional bodies, and in the absence of academic priorities, it is very hard to build a committed readership to a professional magazine, in architecture or in any other field. For his experience with *Medina* and later *Magaz* (2008–present), he highlights, “governmental institutions have been aware of our efforts, and they have recognized our professional leadership, yet they have rarely given any real support to such efforts.” For the influence of the magazines in Egypt, he elaborates, “*Alam al-Bena’a* managed to create a niche especially in the academic community where students had no resource whatsoever at the time. *Medina* capitalized on that and took it to a higher level, because *Medina* achieved international recognition as well during its five years of existence. The challenge that they all face is the degree of professionalism they attempt to maintain and the contradiction that might present with the commercial priorities of a market more interested in things that sell and not things that have value.”

For the content and agency of the architectural magazines, he comments, based on his experience in *Medina* and later *Magaz*, “with *Medina* we had an editorial board that decided on the content and direction and commissioned the work. With *Magaz* we changed the format since we decided that *Magaz* should become more like a platform for expression by the young professionals seeking a voice to affect change and express themselves. So the content of the magazine is determined by the ideas and material that contributors choose to submit. The Magazine is the kitchen that ensures that such material has value and is presented in the appropriate professional level to become part of the international discourse.”

Summarizing the shifts in the architectural trends in Egypt, ‘Abdel-Kawi comments: “40s—50s— Egypt was open to the world and there was a cosmopolitan professional population with a group of pioneering Egyptians attempting to integrate within the broader international discourse; 60s—70s— the last years of the socialist modernism ideals reflected in all our creative endeavours. The government was a sponsor and regulator first encouraging and then (after the war) losing interest; 80s—90s— major changes in the Egyptian political and economic landscape. The culture of money is becoming the dominant one, and the government is abdicating from its role as a regulator. Architecture is reduced to building.”

For the change in attitudes from the call for international architecture in *al-’Imarah* to the call for Islamic architecture in *’Alam al-Bena’a*, he believes that “this is totally the choice of the editor(s) and their vision for the profession. Both magazines reflect the personal interests of their respective editors.” For the reason of the ‘return call’ of A.Ibrahim, he perceives that “the stagnation of the architecture profession and the ensuing death of any worthwhile discourse meant that the outputs lacked identity and values. Ibrahim saw that the way out of that towards an architecture with an identity was to return to the Islamic identity.” However, he asserts that he has “problems with any notion of “return” because it contradicts the need to continue forward.” Also, for ‘Abdel-Kawi “the notion of Islamic architecture and our pursuit of it is essentially a non-critical approach because it constitutes a pursuit of a non-existent dream that we fabricate to embody an identity that we want to associate with, and not a critical digging into the real identity that already exists.” The inclusion of international projects in *’Alam al-Bena’a* whose editor calls for a ‘return’ to Islamic architecture manifests, however, ‘Abdel-Kawi notes, “that return is a search for a contemporary identity, a task most serious designers are engaged in. The reviews of these projects I am sure reflect the editor’s choice because of his conviction with the cause.”

Commenting on the critique of the winning project of Alexandria library, from Egyptian architects “who saw many faults in the winning project,” ‘Abdel-Kawi believes that “the later success of the building” proves that “their criticism was mostly derived from their own limited perspective and approach which as expressed earlier was fairly detached from the critical international discourse.” Generally, he asserts that “architectural competitions in Egypt are a major problem because of their domination by a small group of academics who are highly inflexible in accepting any changes to their outdated approach. Competitions have lost a great deal of credibility because of the general lack of transparency, and the fixed list of jurors who fail to provide critical reviews that satisfy the

professional community and adds to the professional discourse that is intended with these competitions.” For example, he elaborates, “the current debate a group of us are having with the traditional guard regarding the design of the Tahrir competition where we are asking for a broader participation format for the public in the various stages of the competition starting with defining the competition objectives, the selection of the jury and the evaluation process. The resistance is amazing, and is mostly based on the premise that “this is not the way for it to be done.”

Regarding the debate about the AKAA, he believes that “the AKAA is one of the best things that happened to architecture in this region, effectively developing a respected international platform for the field (practically the only one). For that I highly respect the initiative. Disagreeing with some of the decisions is only normal and if anything is an indication of it being alive.” For example, for the winning project of Ramses Wissa Wassef’s Art Gallery in Harranya he views Wassef as “one of the few truly Egyptian architects who have succeeded in developing an Egyptian language emerging from the soul of the place. This language comes out very eloquently in Harraneya, its school and the private villas.”

Reflecting on the debate of foreign practice in Egypt, ‘Abdel-Kawi asserts that “it is important to have international firms practicing in the region so as to maintain a critical platform for benchmarking our work against. I believe however that due to our own uncritical (and hence undemanding) approach we allow these firms some leeway so that they do not feel they have to bring out their best.”

‘Abdel-Kawi highlights, although “architecture is affected by the political and economic state of the community,...architectural identity on the other hand is not dependent on economics.” He affirms, “Identity is a way of doing things whether they are expensive or cheap it should not matter. My work expresses my identity because I am critical enough to dialogue with it and hence expose it through this dialogue.

‘Abdel-Kawi believes that in Egypt “we are at the footsteps of some major transformations in the profession.” Currently, he perceives, “criticality is accepted and a new voice for the rebellious young minds will force change upon the petrified structures forced upon the profession by the older generations. The young professionals are now benchmarking themselves against their international counterparts and hence the local scene will have to move to meet these challenges.” Finally, ‘Abdel-Kawi concludes that the architecture in Egypt “needs more criticality, more political and social involvement; it needs to move away from the outdated academic context and develop a more critical relationship between academia and practice. It needs to invest in raising the communities’ awareness with the role design plays in shaping our lived environment.

## **Appendix III:**

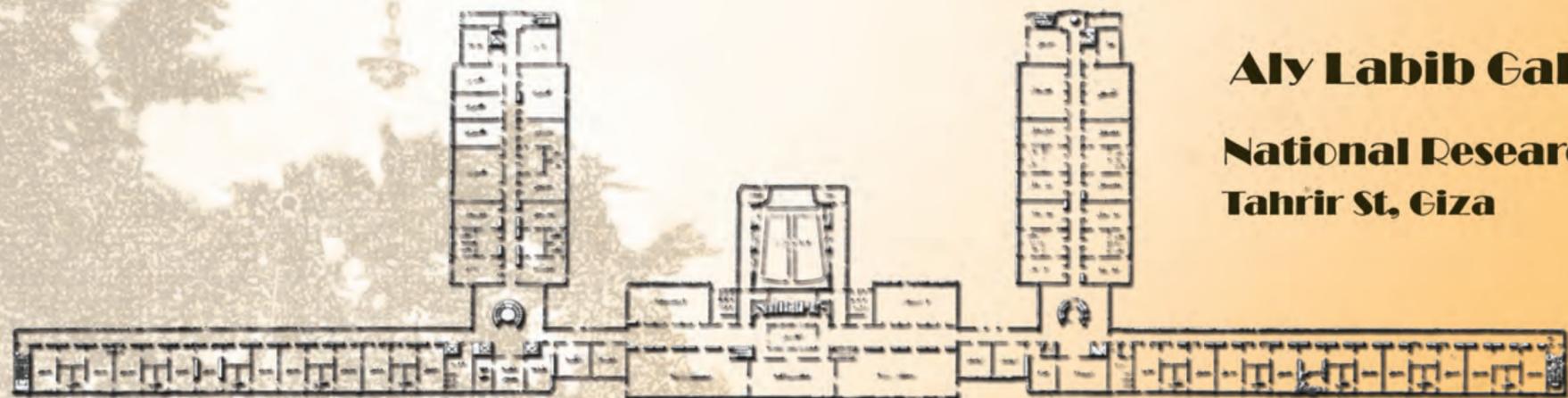
### **Plates of the Work of First Generation of Egyptian Architects**

**Aly Labib Gabr**

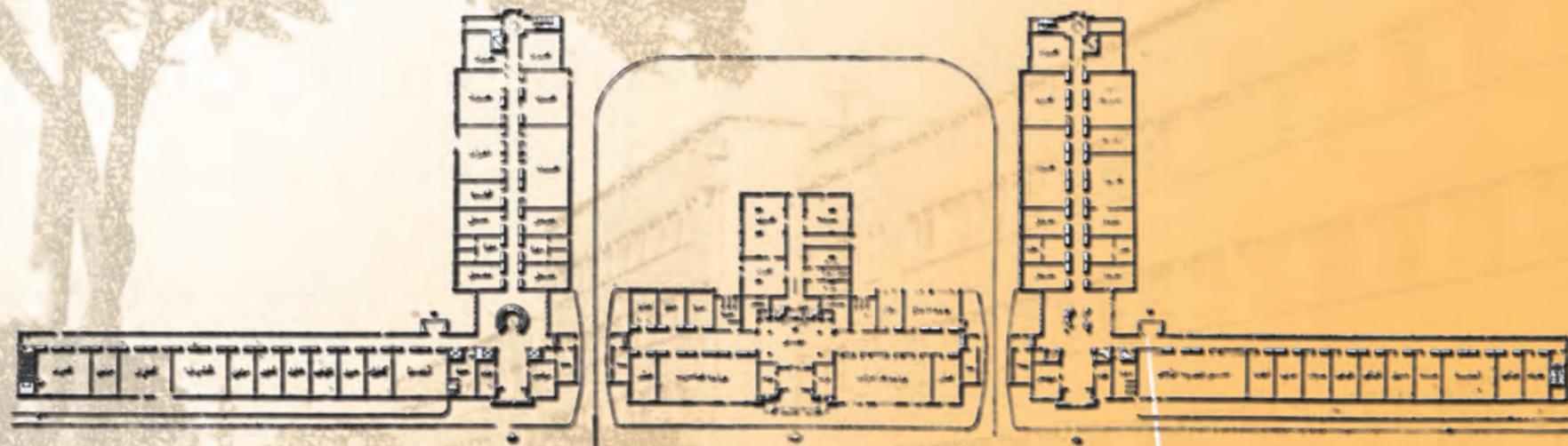
**National Research Center  
Tahrir St, Giza**

**على لبيب جبر**

**مبنى المعهد القومي للبحوث  
شارع التحرير، الجيزة**



مسقط الدور الاول



مسقط الدور الارضى

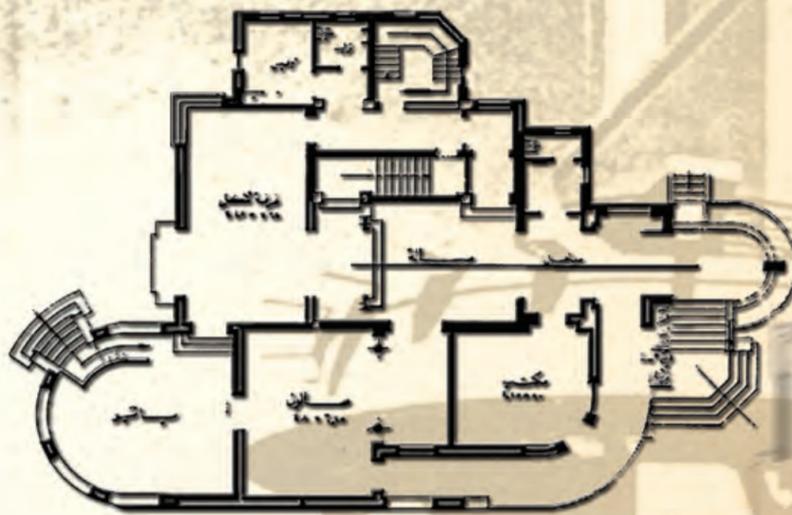


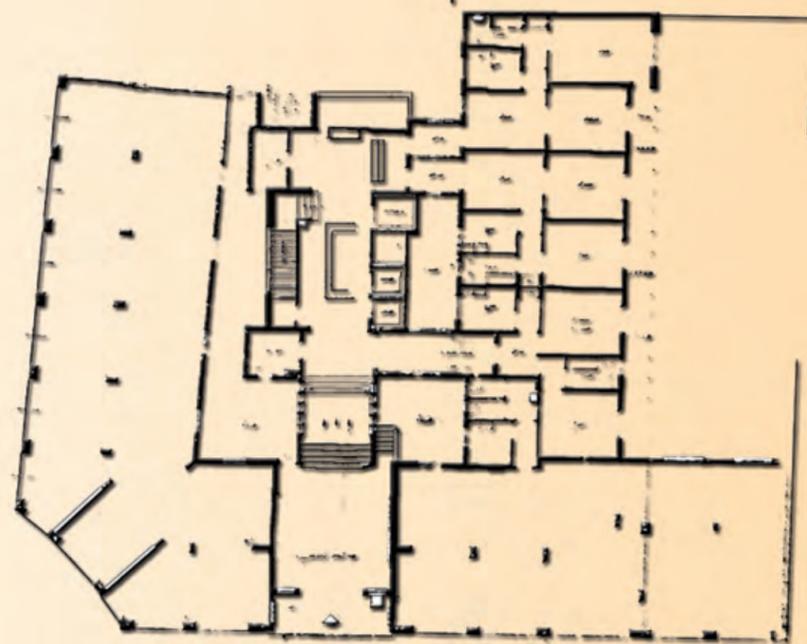


**Aly Labib Gabr**  
**Om Kolthum Villa**  
**Zamalek, Cairo**

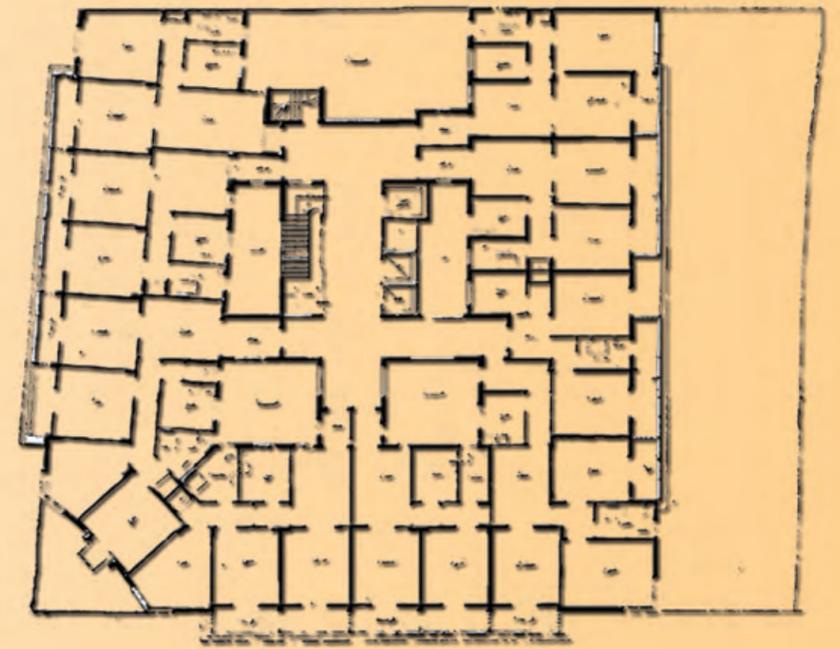
**على لبيب جبر**

فيلا أم كلثوم  
الزمالك، القاهرة





الدور الأرضي



الدور المتكرر

**Aly Labib Gabr**  
**Misr Insurance Company Building**  
**Giza Square, Giza**

**على لبيب جبر**  
عمارة شركة مصر للتأمين  
ميدان الجيزة، الجيزة

Aly Labib Gabr

على لبيب جبر

Husein Erfan Villa  
Maadi, Cairo

فيلا حسين عرفان بك  
المعادي ، القاهرة



الدور الاول

الدور الارضى

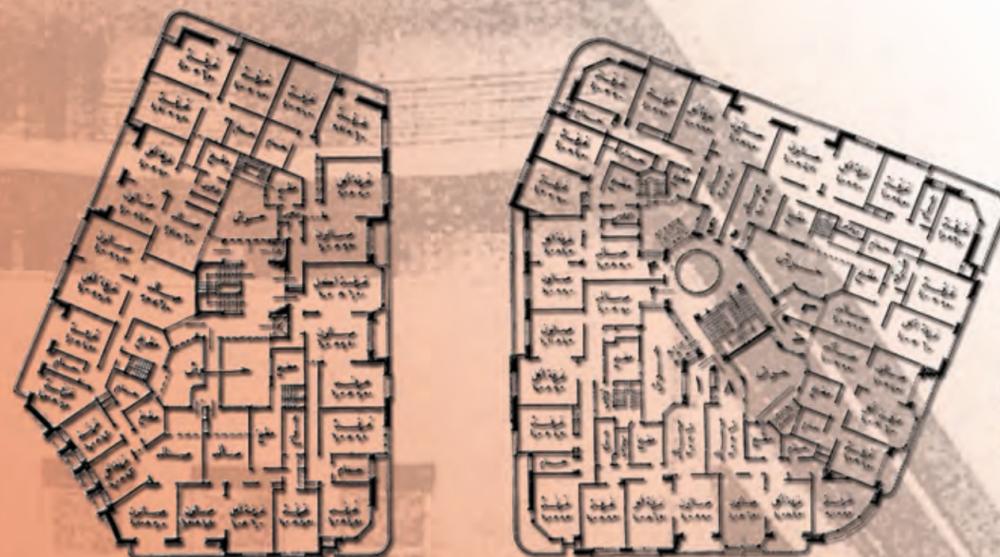
أنطوان سليم نحاس

عمارتى عزيز بحرى  
شارع قصر النيل ، القاهرة

Antoine Salim Nahas

Aziz Bahary Buildings

Qasr El-Nil, Cairo



مسقط الادوار الثالث إلى الثامن



مسقط الدور الاول



مسقط الدور الارضى

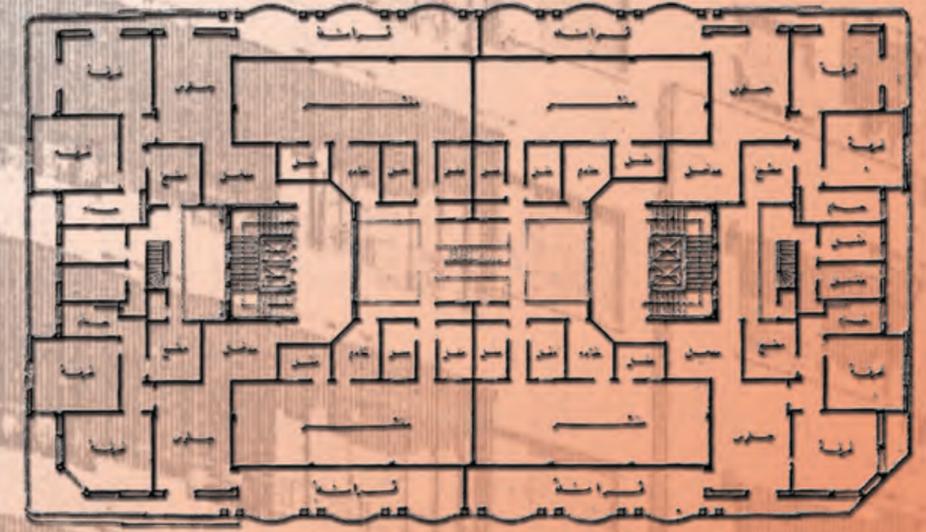


# أنطوان سليم نحاس

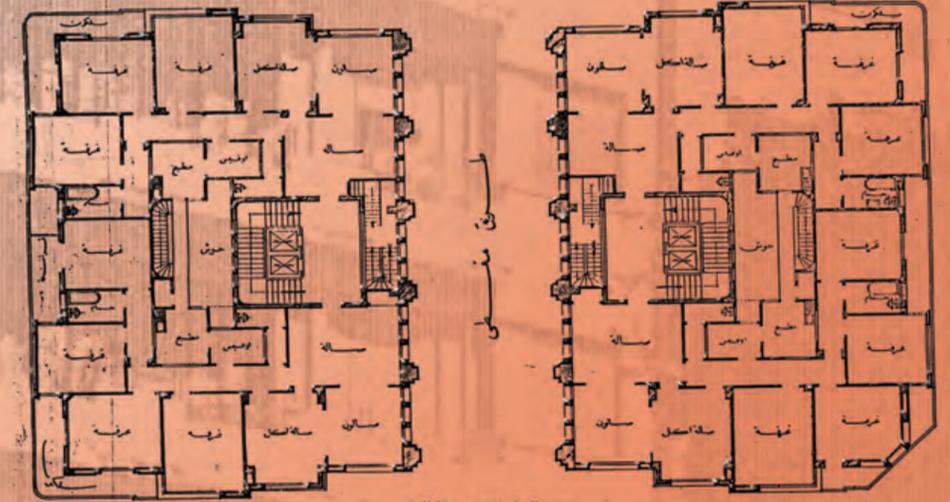
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ميدان التحرير ، القاهرة

Antoine Salim Nahas

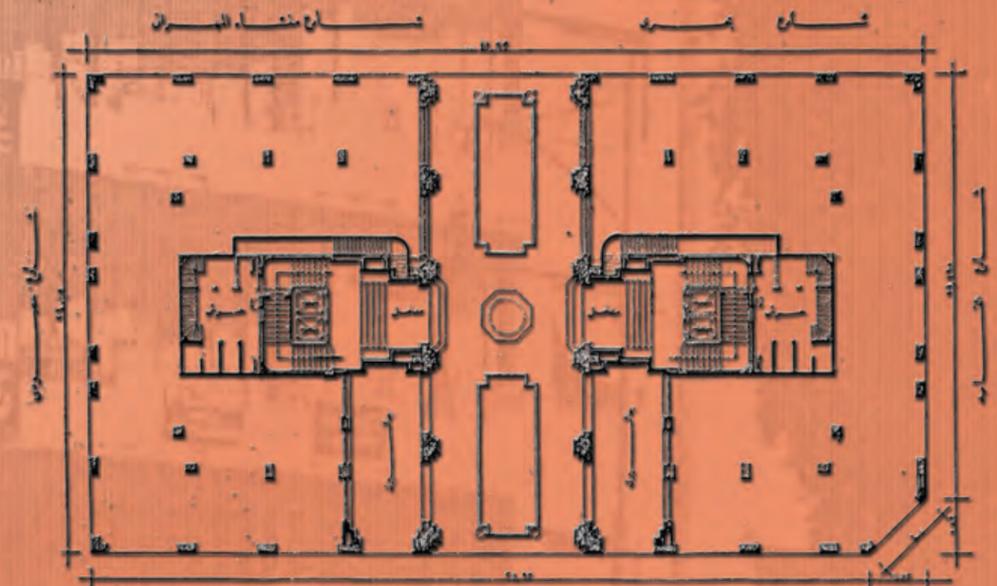
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Tahrir Square, Cairo



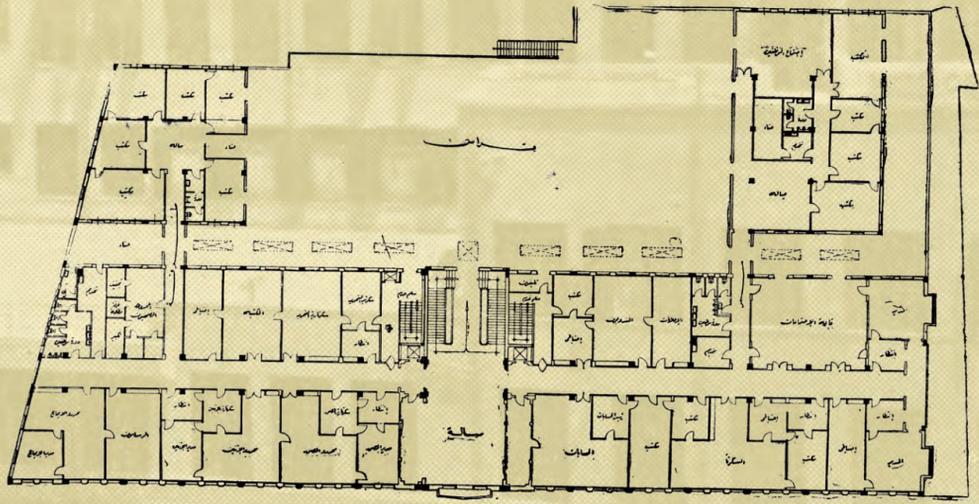
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مسقط الدور الاول

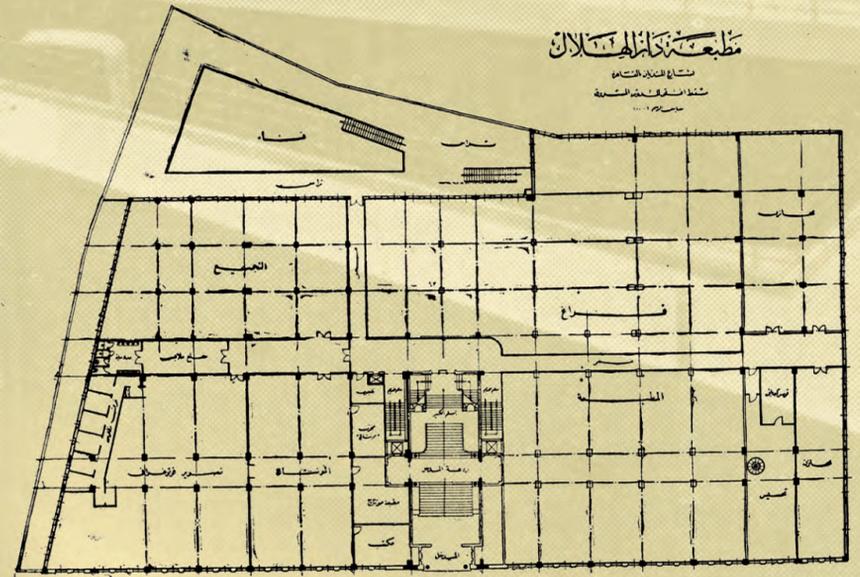


مسقط الدور الارضى

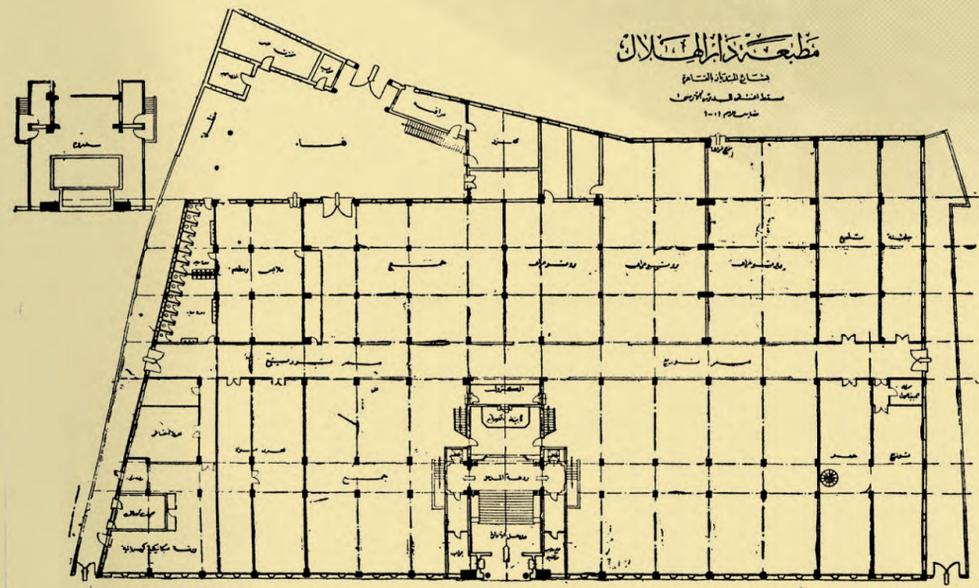


مسقط الدور الاول

مسقط الدور الاول



مسقط الدور المسروق

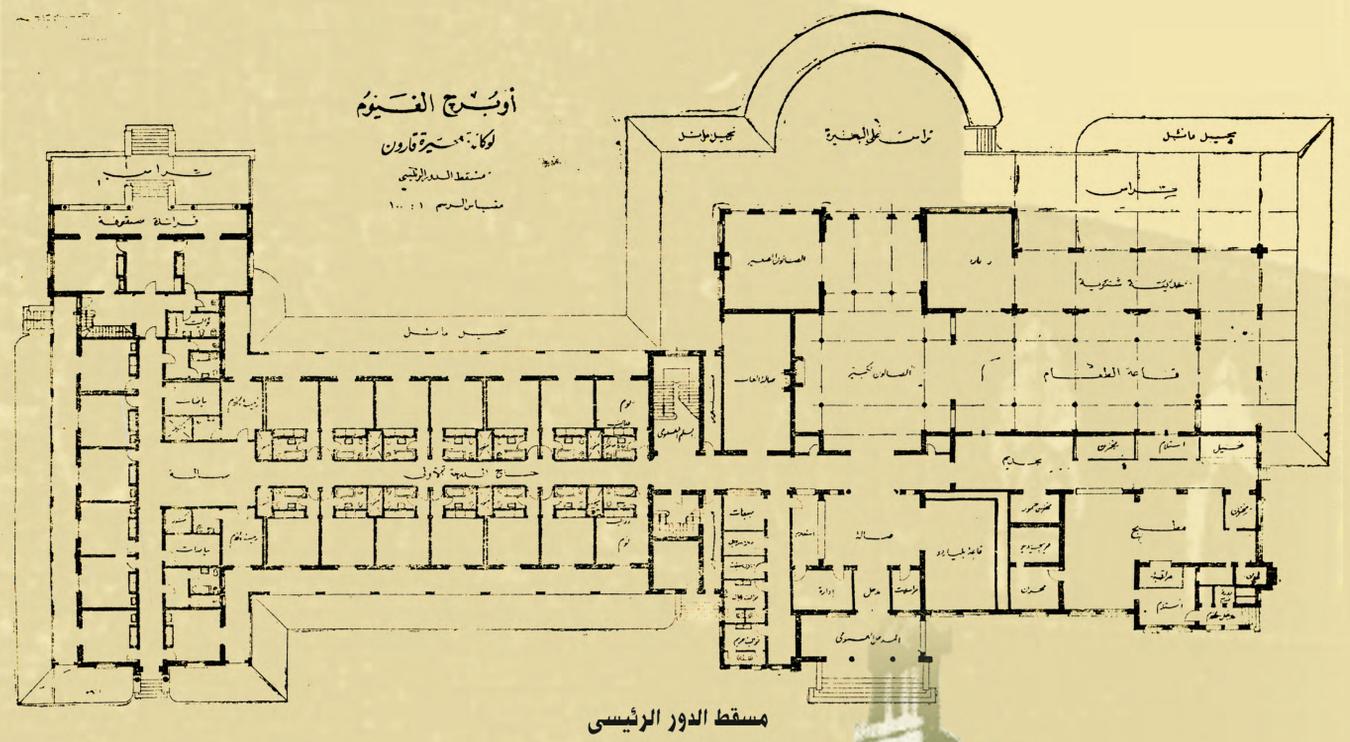
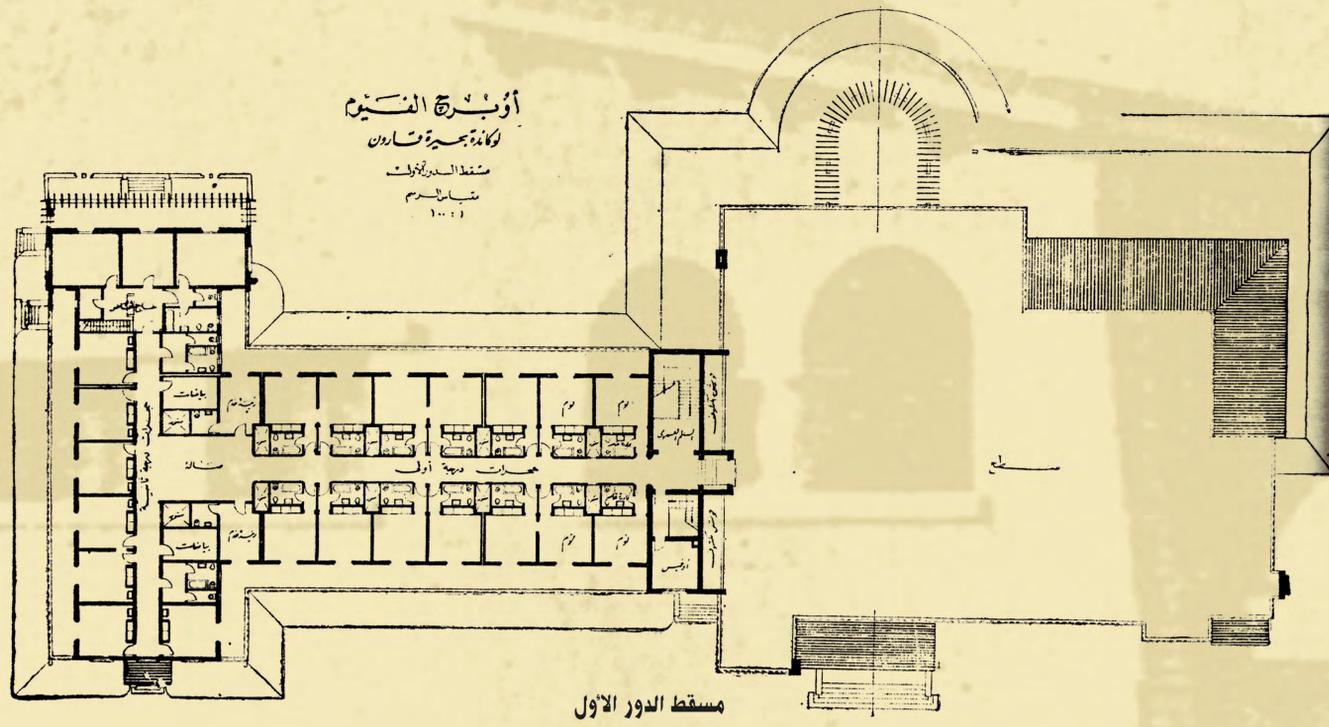


مسقط الدور الارضى

مسقط الدور الارضى

**Albert Zananiri**  
**Dar Al helal**  
**Mobtadyan Streat, Cairo.**

**البيير زانانيرى**  
**دار الهلال للطباعة و النشر**  
**شارع المبتديان ، القاهرة**



**Albert Zanani**  
**Al Fayoum Oberge**  
**Fayoum**

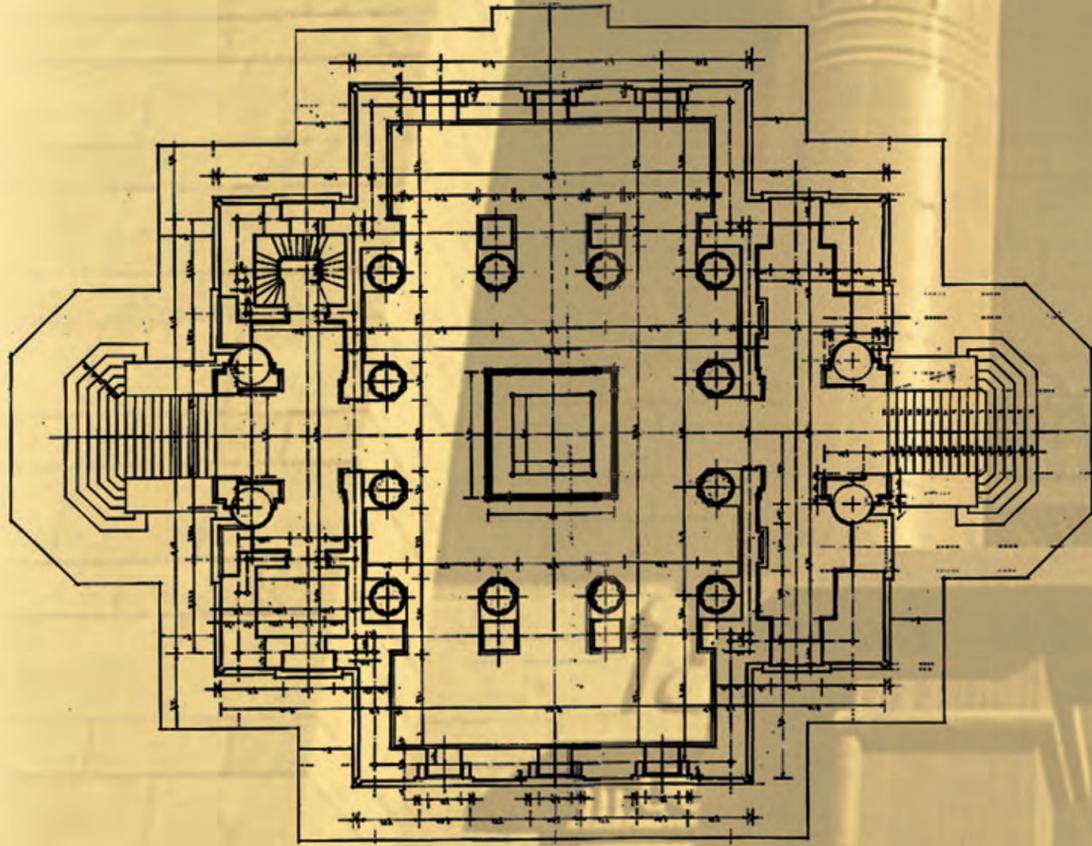
**البير زانيري**  
**أوبرج بحيرة قارون**  
**الفيوم**



# مصطفى محمود فهمي باشا

ضريح سعد زغلول باشا  
شارع منصور ، لاطوغلى ، بالقاهرة

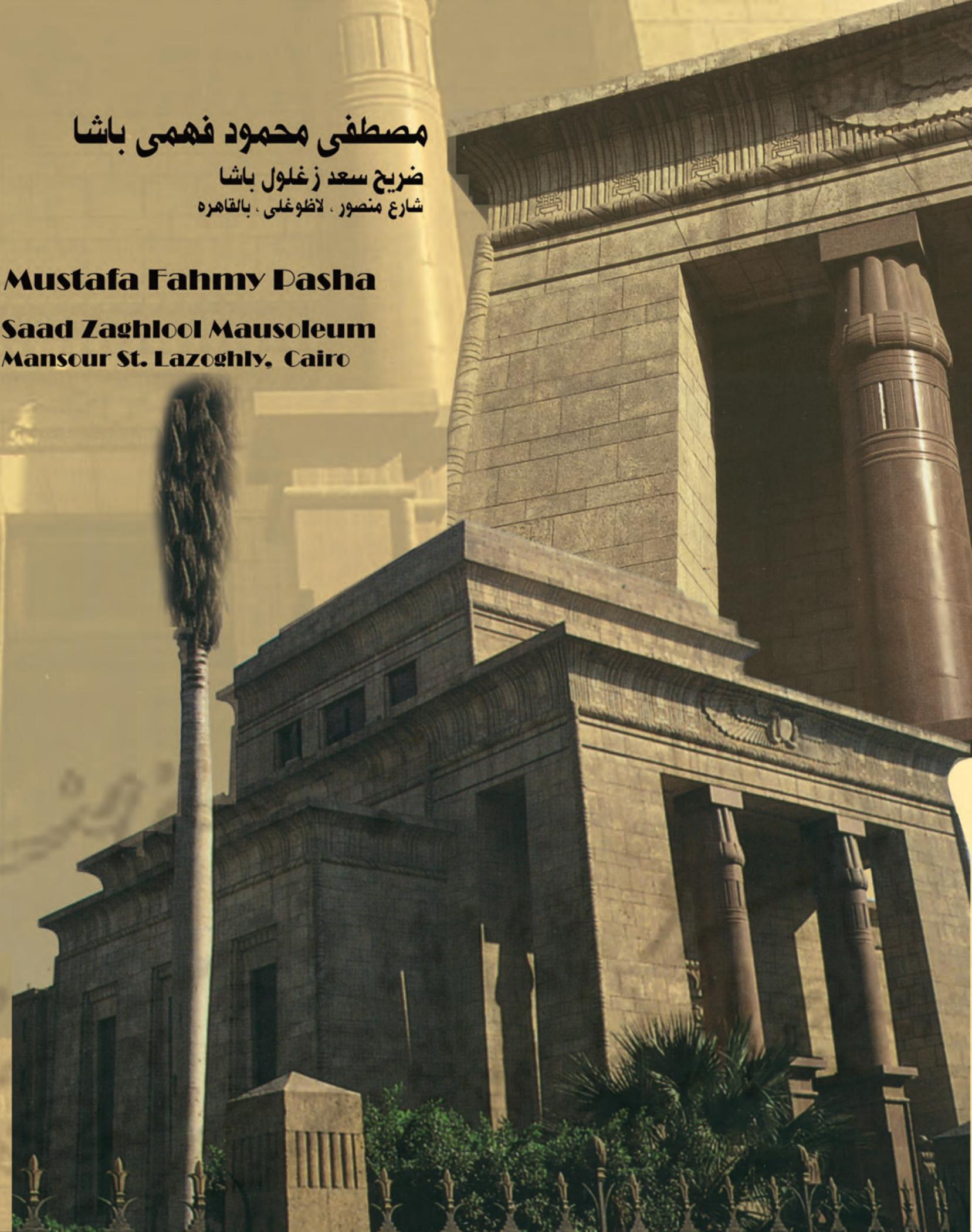
**Mustafa Fahmy Pasha**  
**Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum**  
**Mansour St. Lazoghly, Cairo**

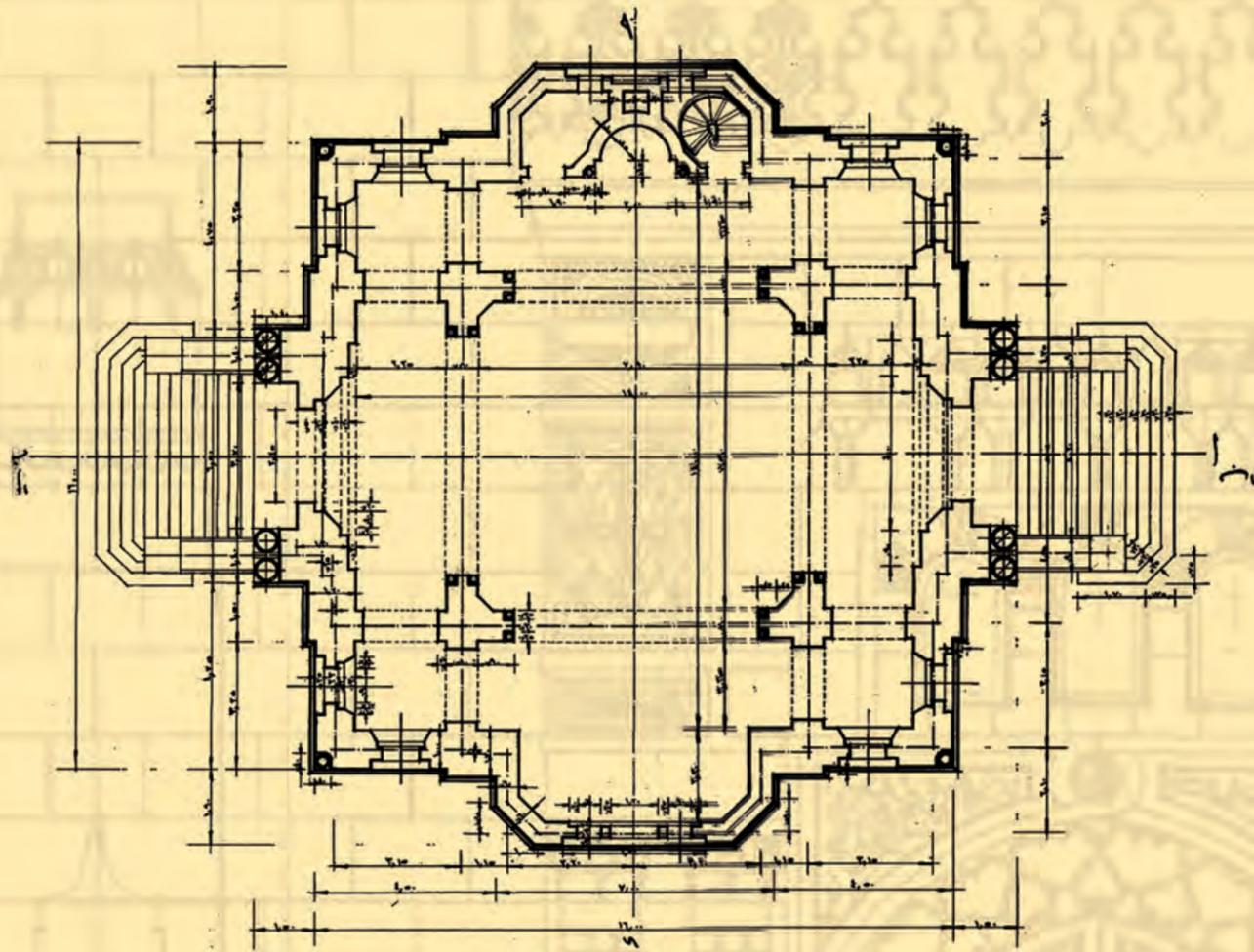


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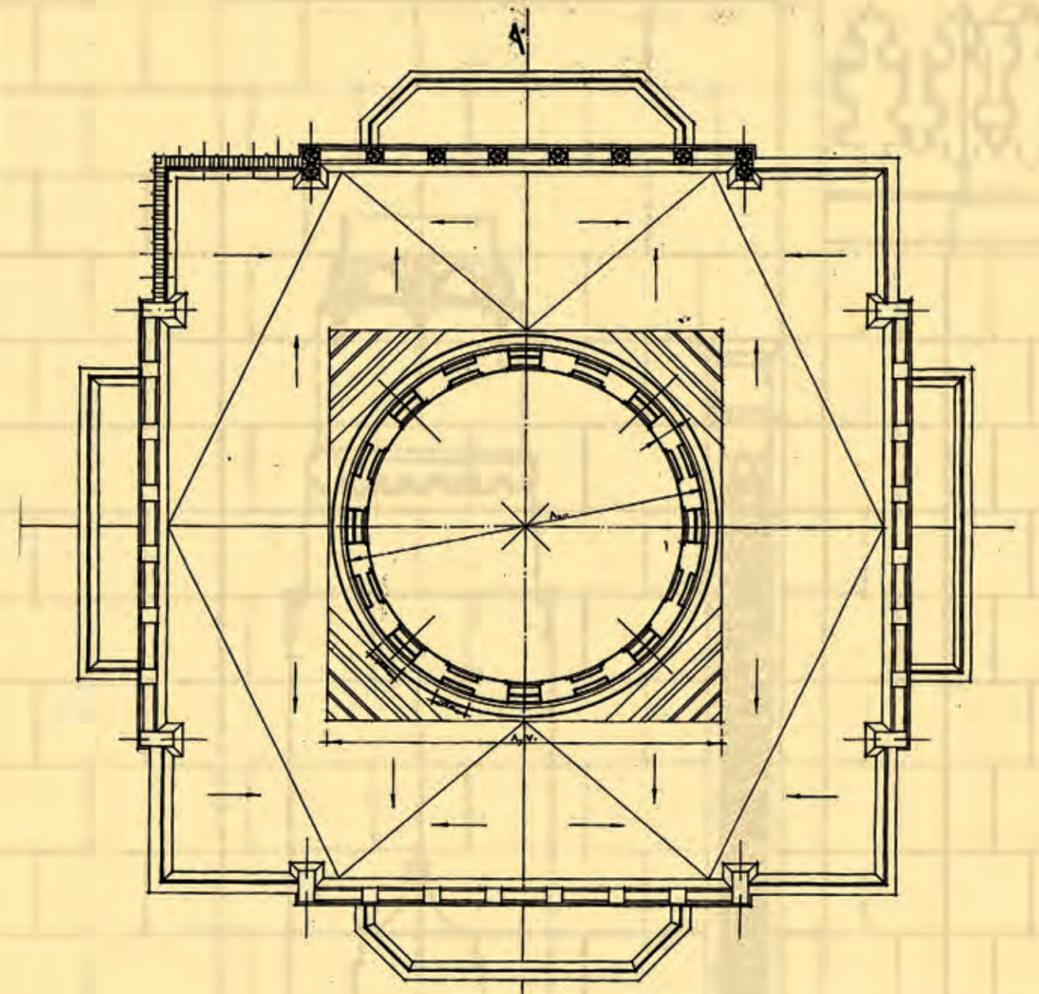


قطاع رأسى للضريح (ب-ب)

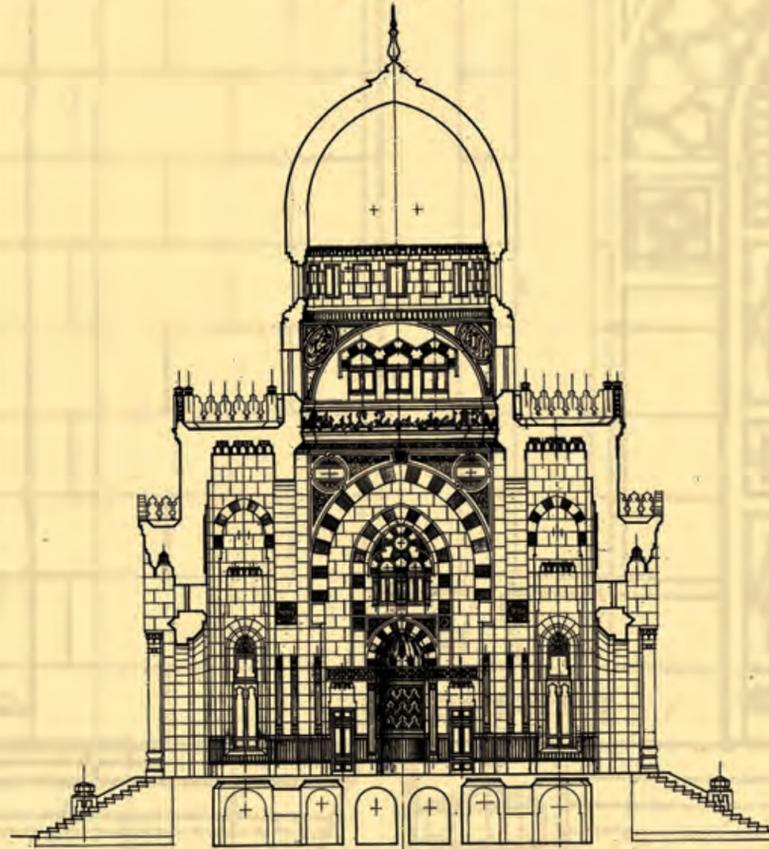




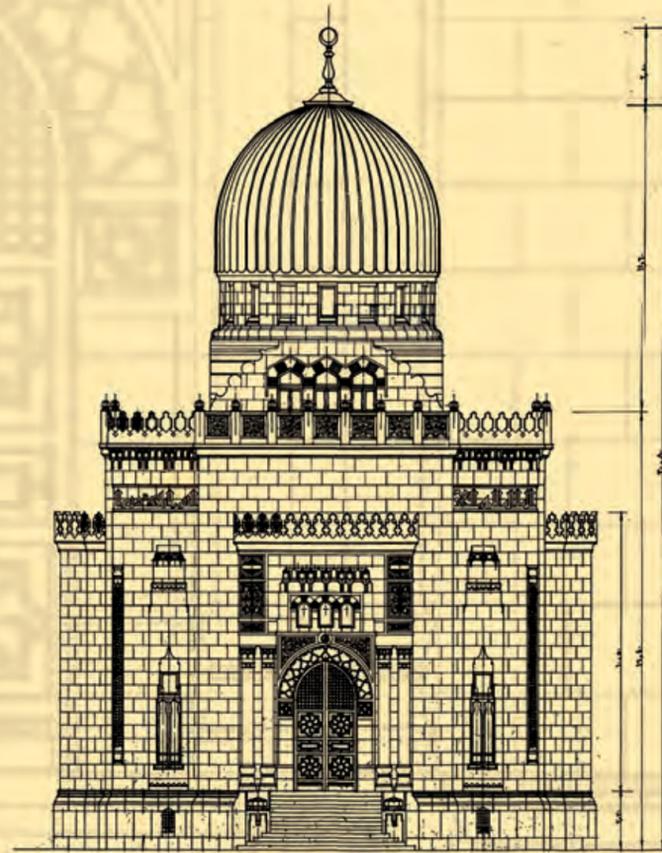
مسقط أفقى للدور الأرضى



مسقط أفقى للسطوح



قطاع أفقى أ-ب



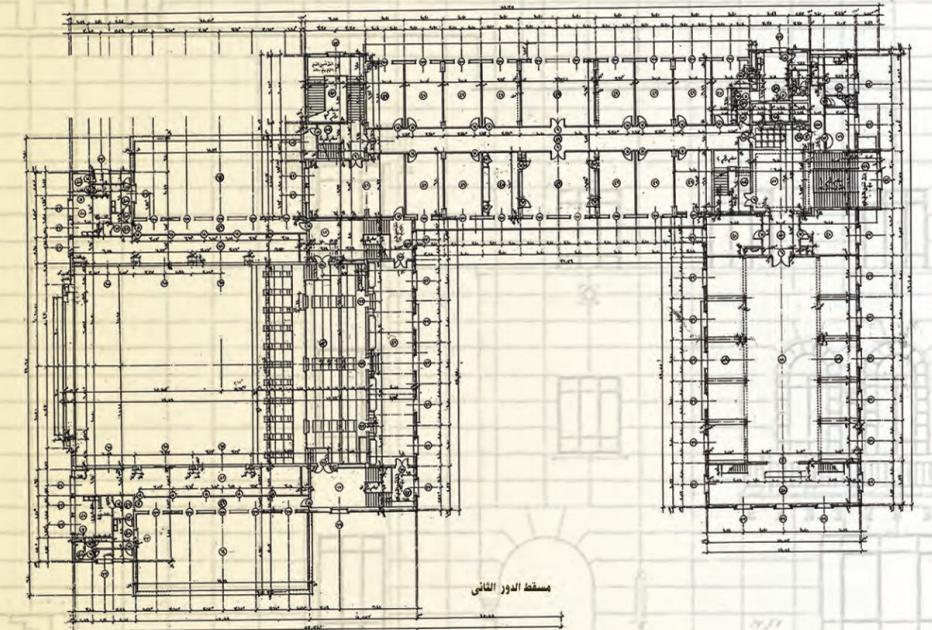
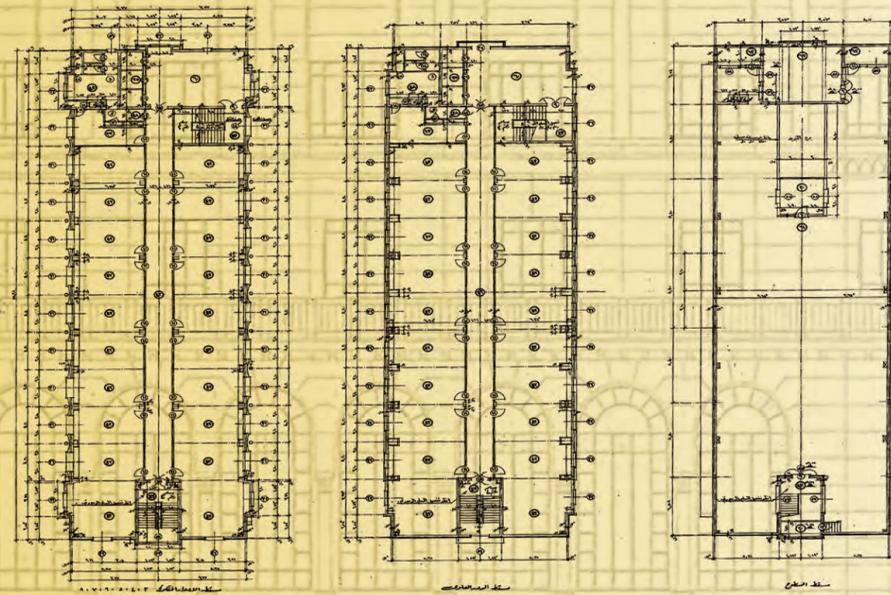
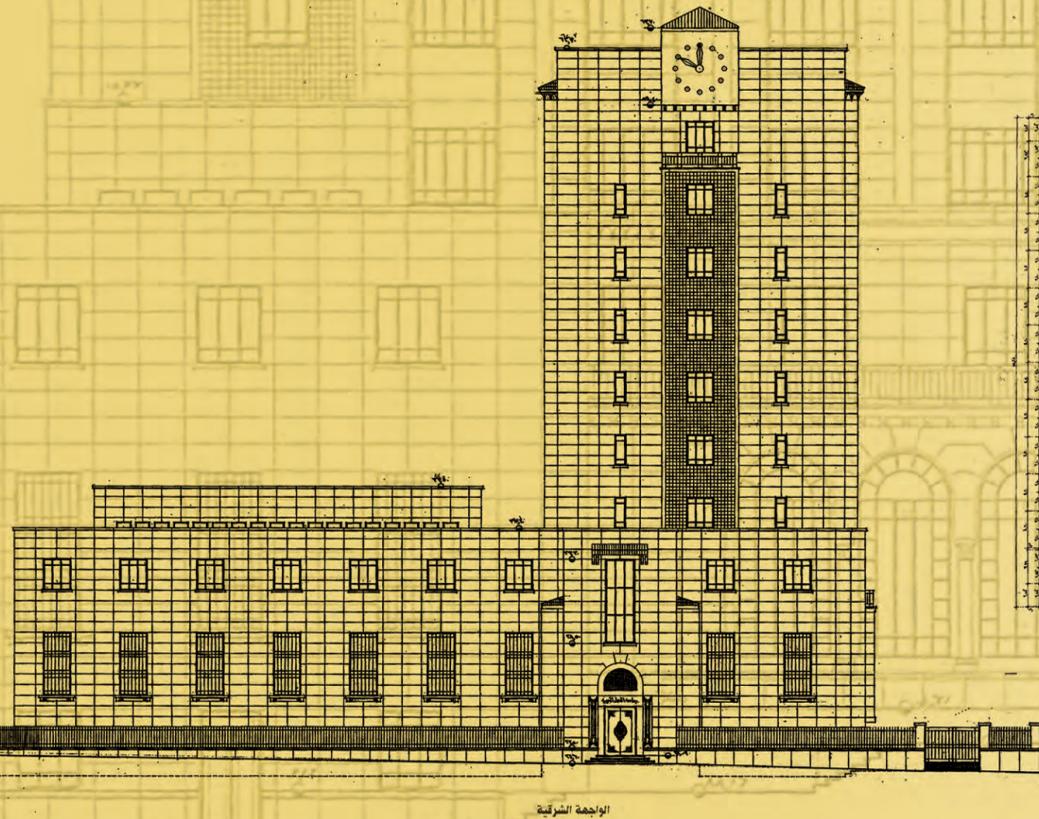
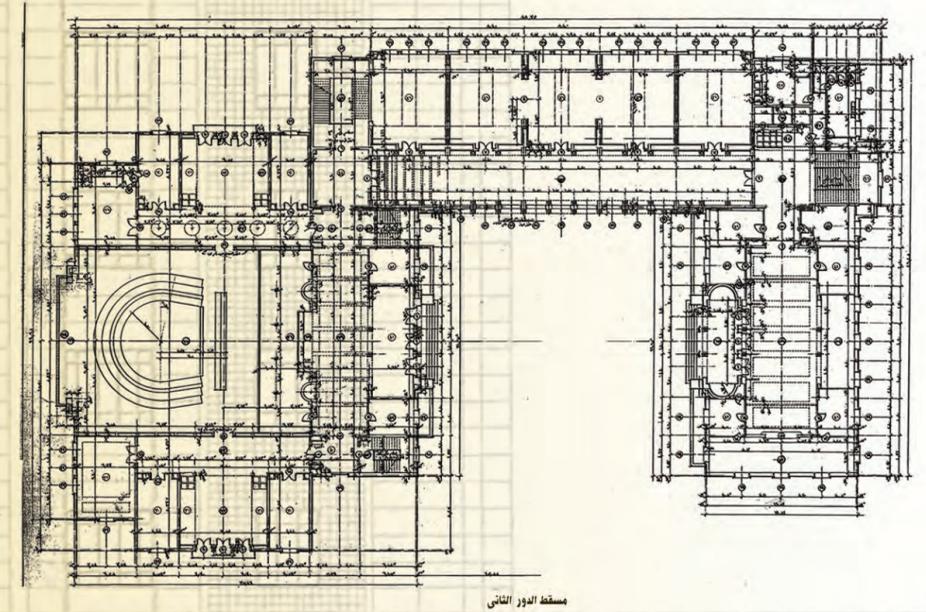
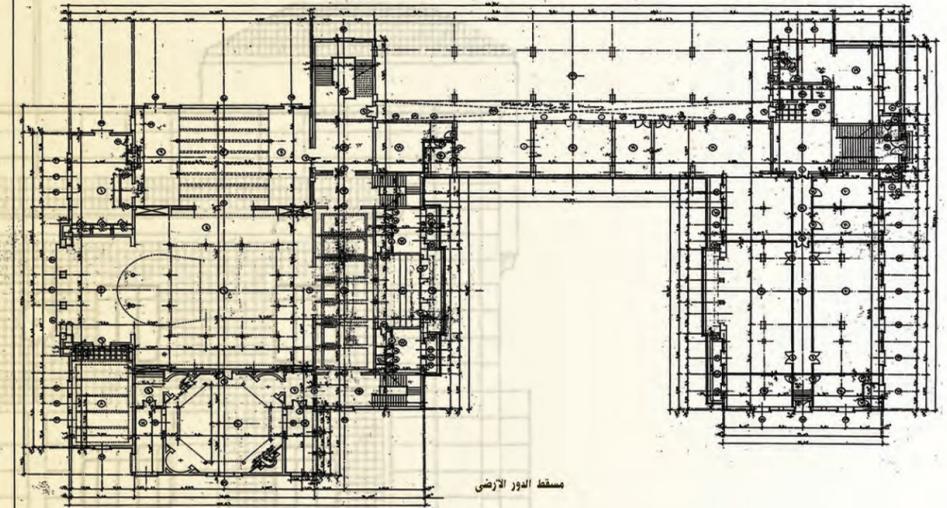
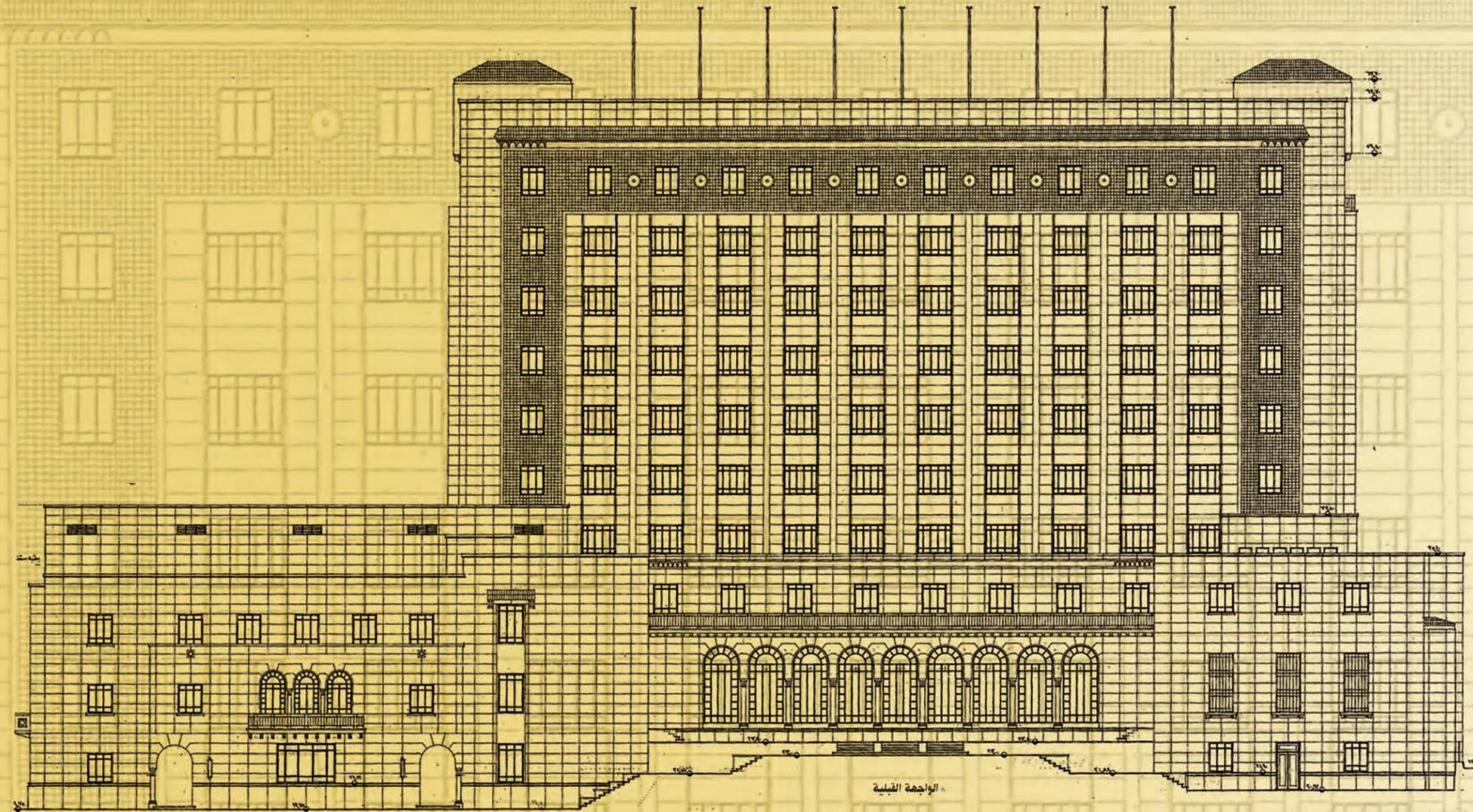
واجهة الضريح

مصطفى محمود فهمى باشا  
ضريح سعد زغلول باشا

**Mustafa Fahmy**  
**Saad Zaghloul Mausoleum**

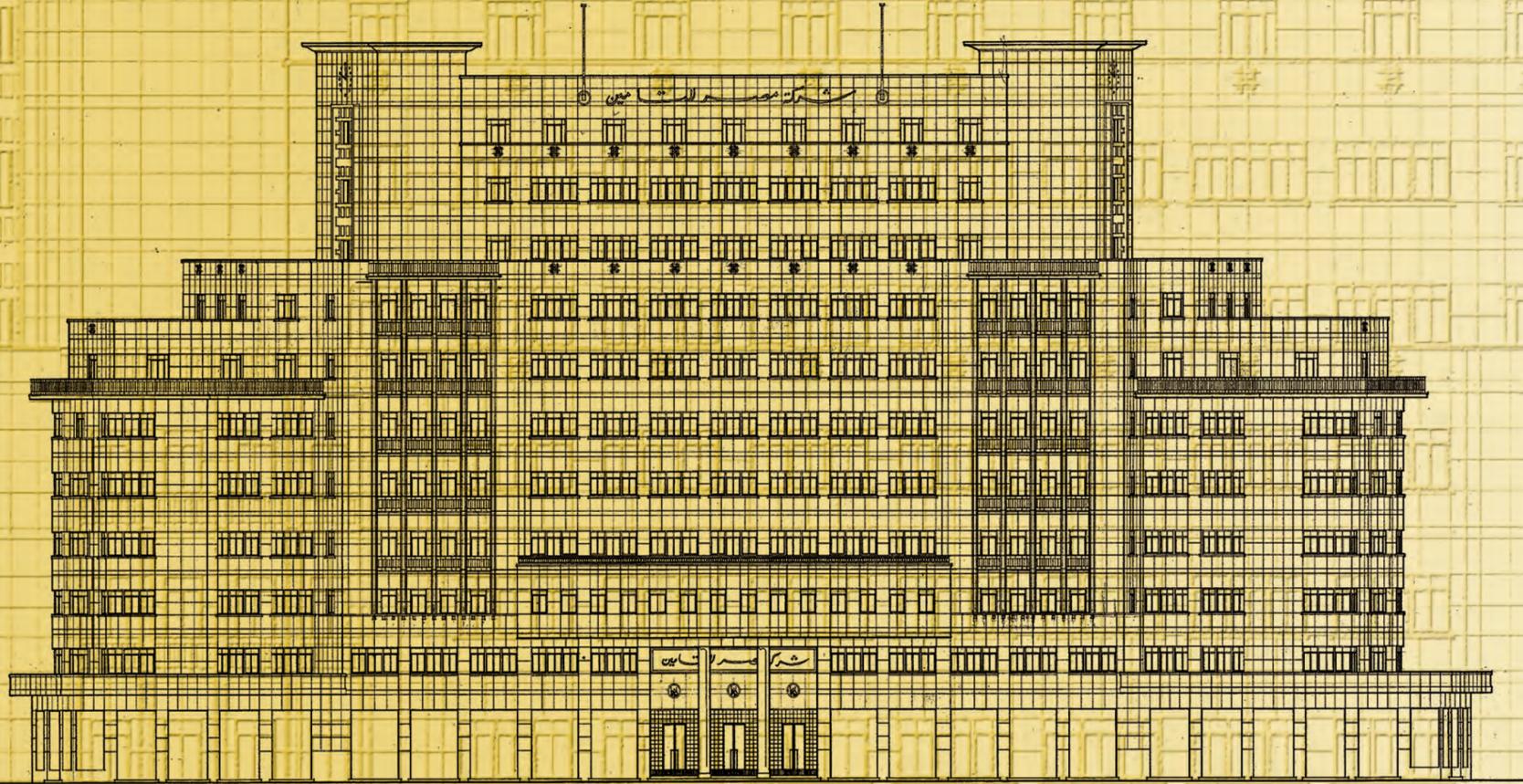
**Mahmoud Ryad**  
**Arab League Building**  
**Tahrir Square, Cairo**

**محمود رياض**  
**مبنى جامعة الدول العربية**  
**ميدان التحرير - القاهرة**

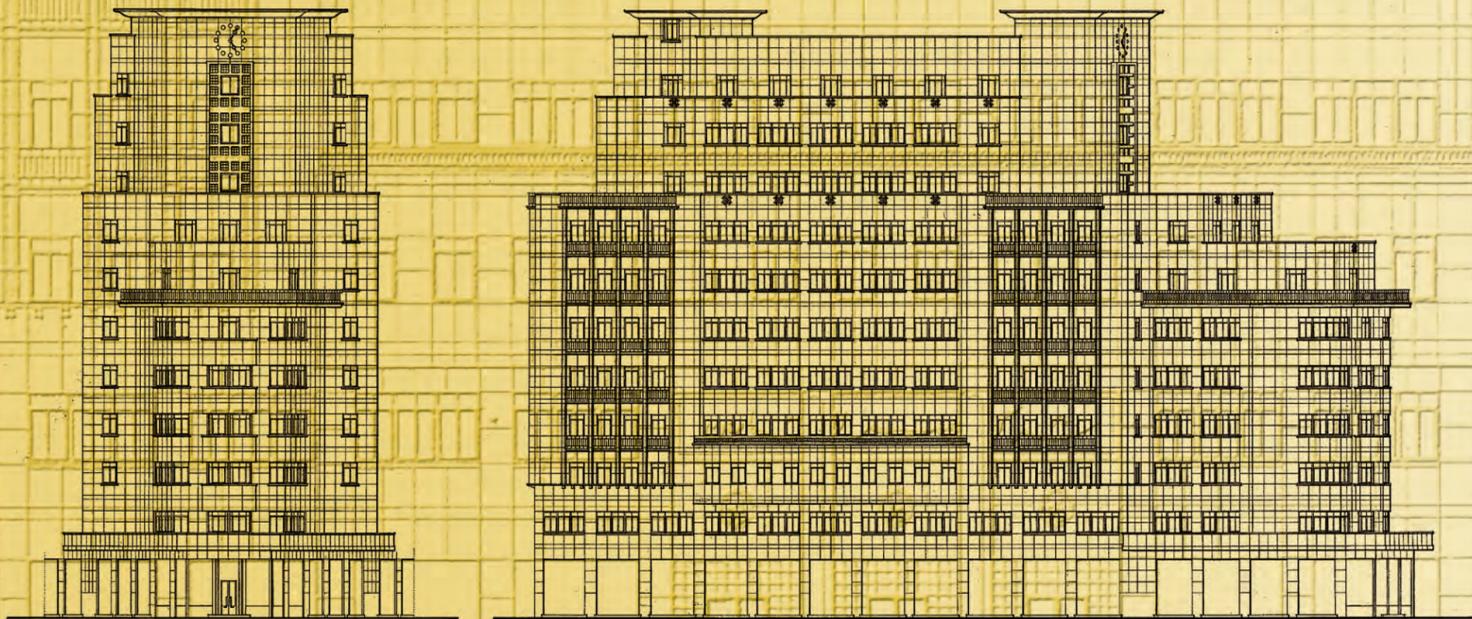


**Mahmoud Ryad**  
**Misr Insurance Company**  
**Tawfeqia Square, Cairo**

**محمود رياض**  
**مبنى شركة مصر للتأمين**  
**ميدان التوفيقية - القاهرة**

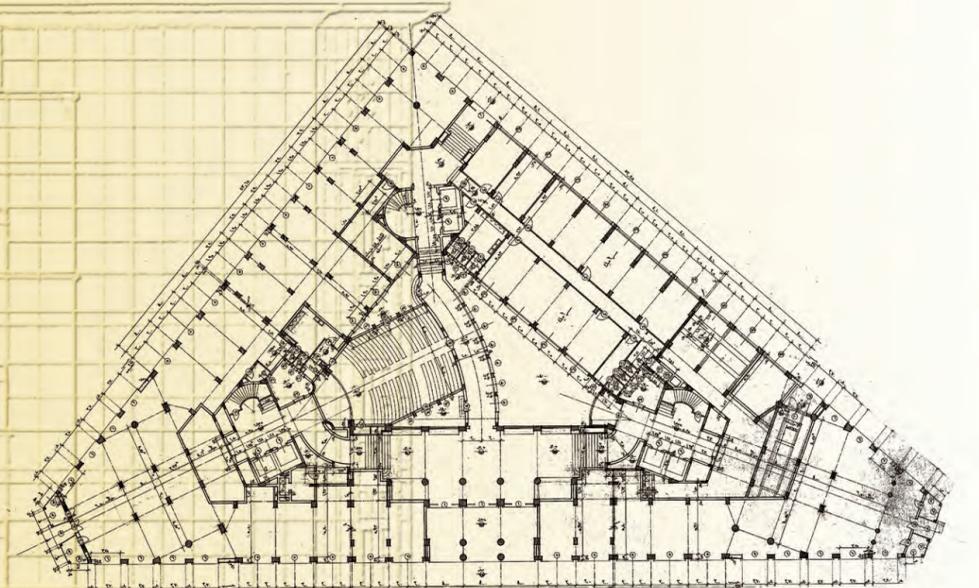


واجهة شارع توفيق

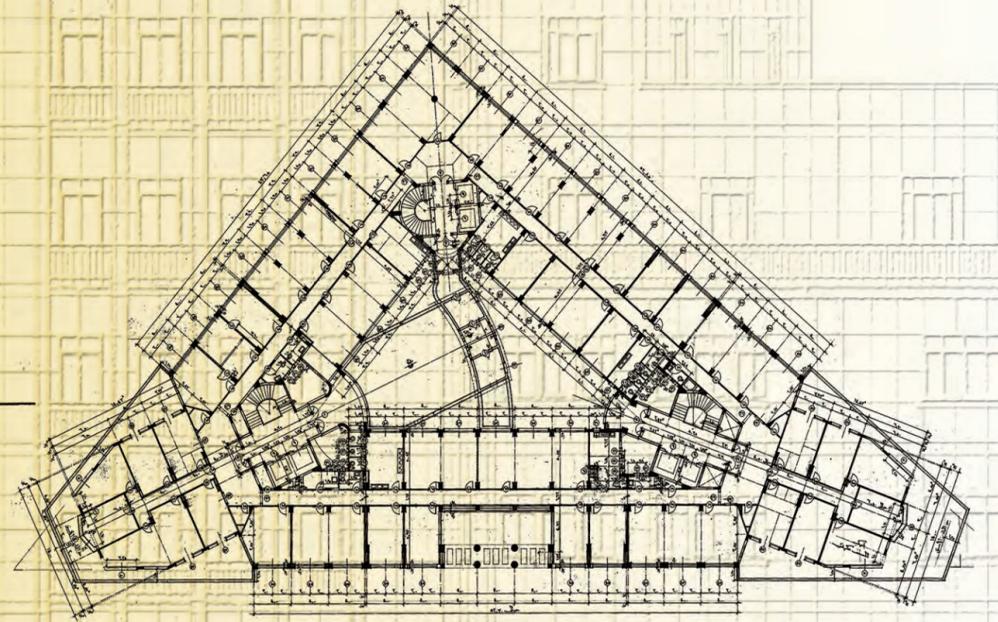


واجهة ميدان توفيق

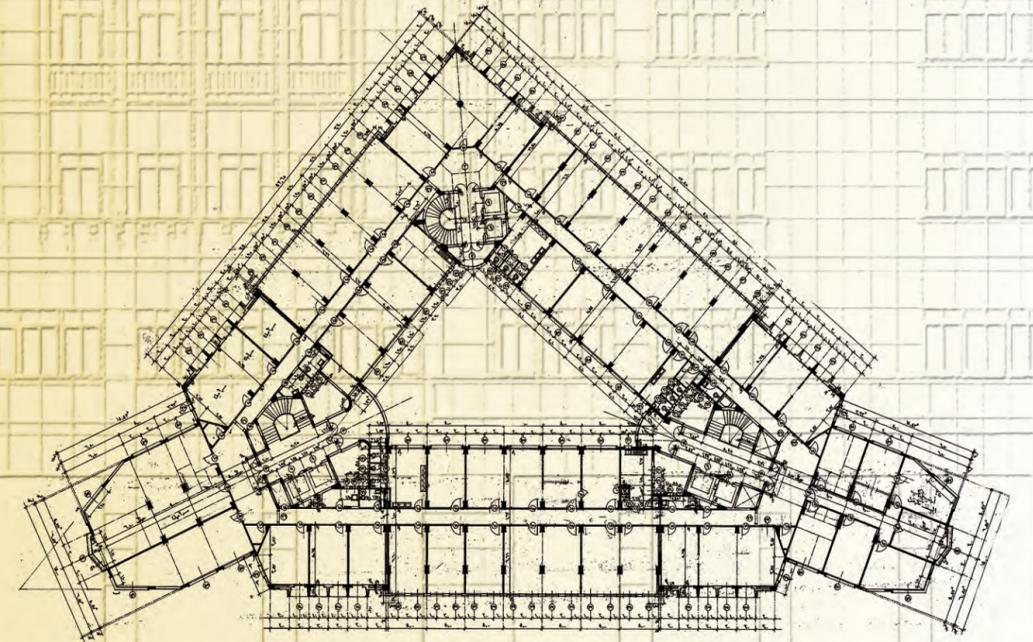
واجهة شارع زكي



مسقط الدور الارضي



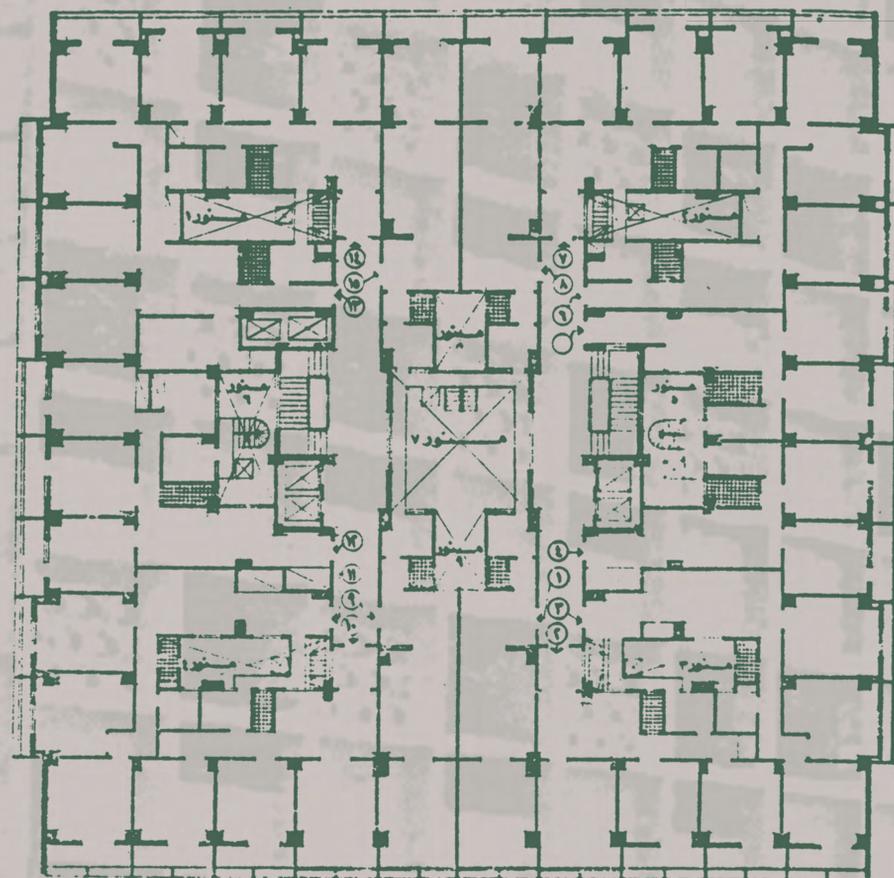
مسقط الدور الاول



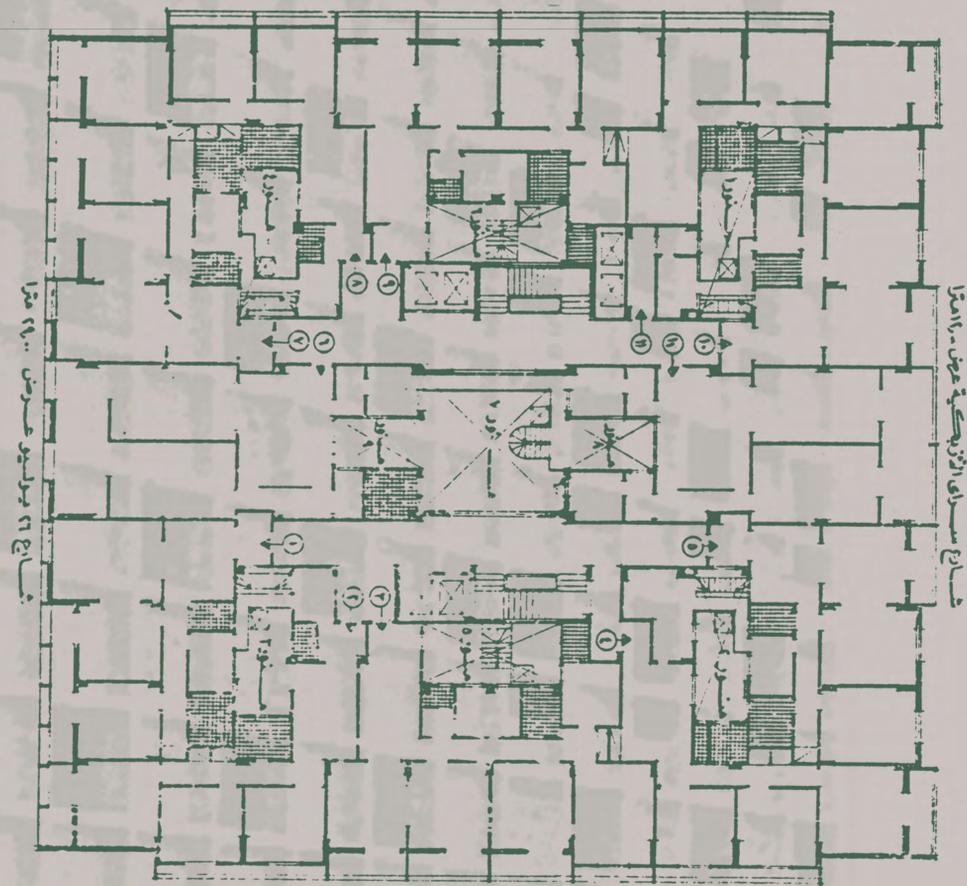
مسقط الدور الثاني

**Mohamed Cherif Nooman**  
**Al-Sharq Insurance Building.**  
Cairo

**محمد شريف نعمان**  
**عمارة الشرق للتأمين**  
القاهرة



مسقط أفقى لادوار المكاتب



شاح عمداث درالماث عرض ١٤.٠٠ مترا

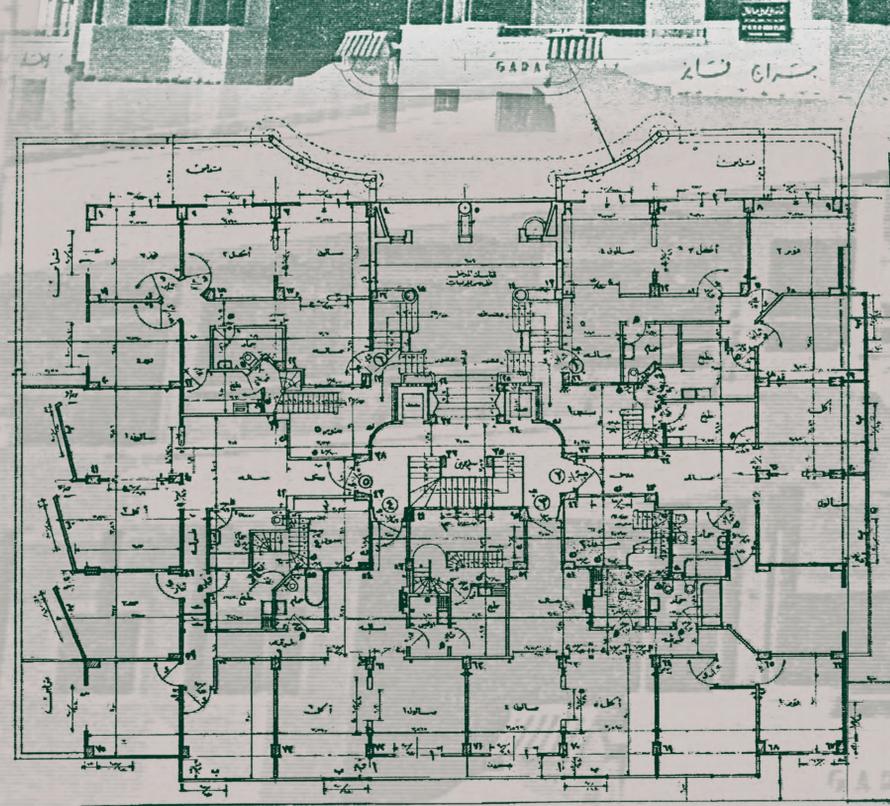
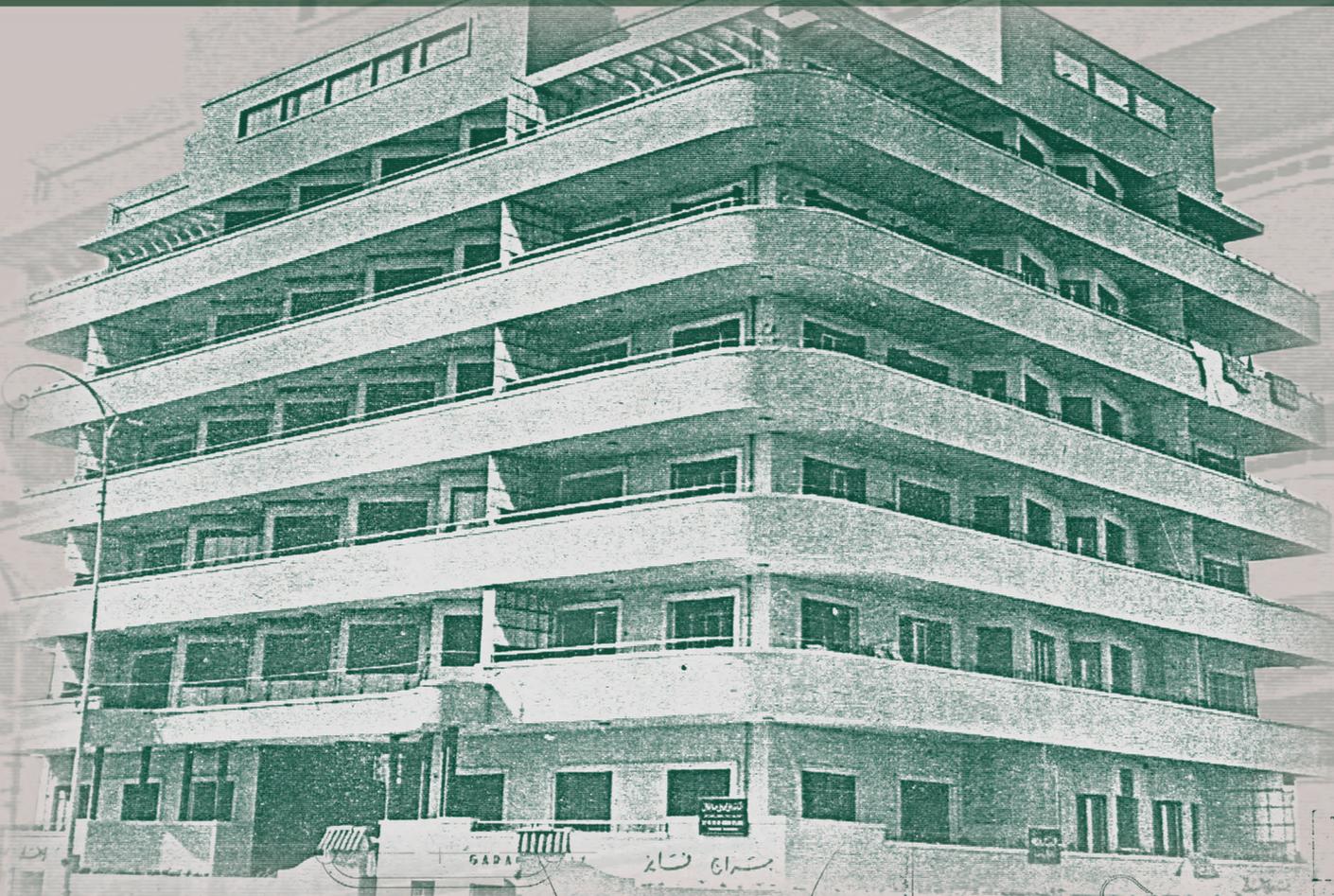
مسقط أفقى لادوار السكنية

شاح ١١ بطول عرض ١٩.٠٠ مترا

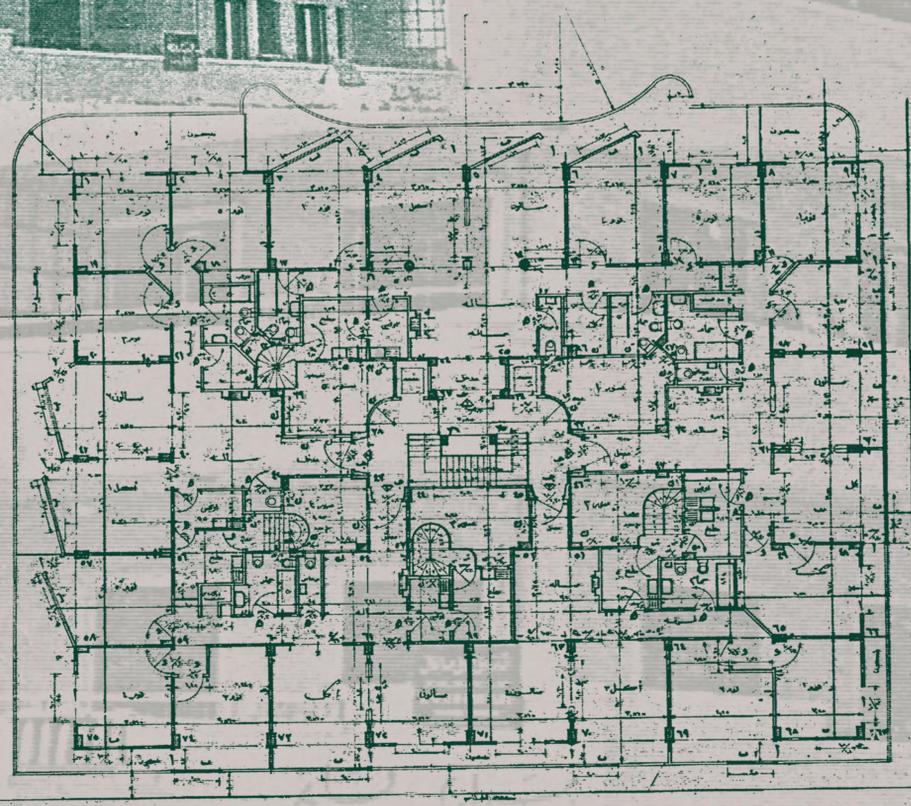
شاح مسداى الازوية عرض ١٩.٠٠ مترا

**Mohamed Cherif Nooman**  
**Mrs Faeza Oweiss Building.**  
**Baron Empain St. Heliopolis, Cairo.**

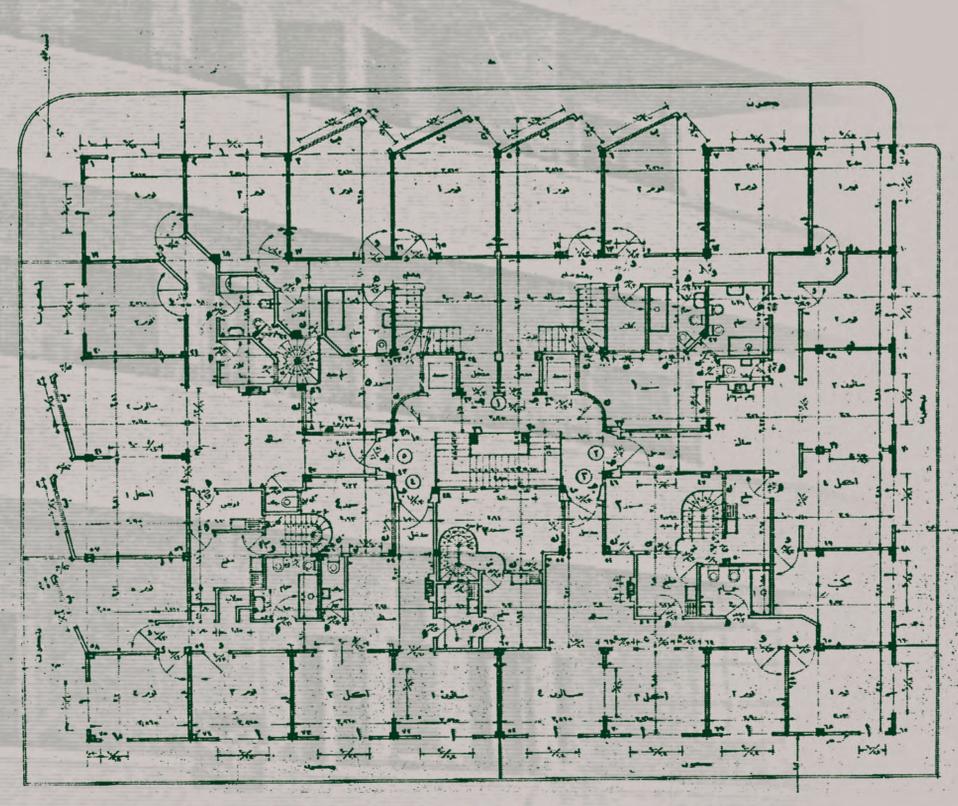
**محمد شريف نعمان**  
**عمارة السيدة فائزة هانم عويس.**  
**شارع البارون امبان، مصر الجديدة.**



مسقط الدور الارضى



مسقط الادوار المتكررة



مسقط الدور الخامس

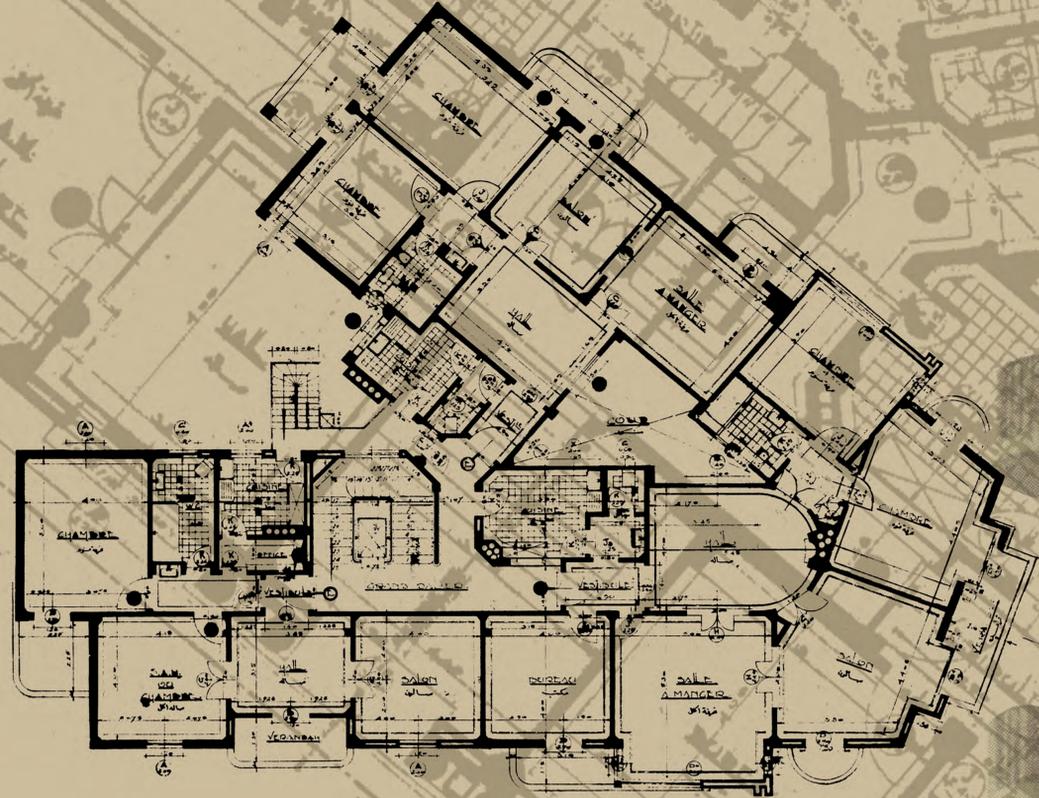


**Charles Ayrout**

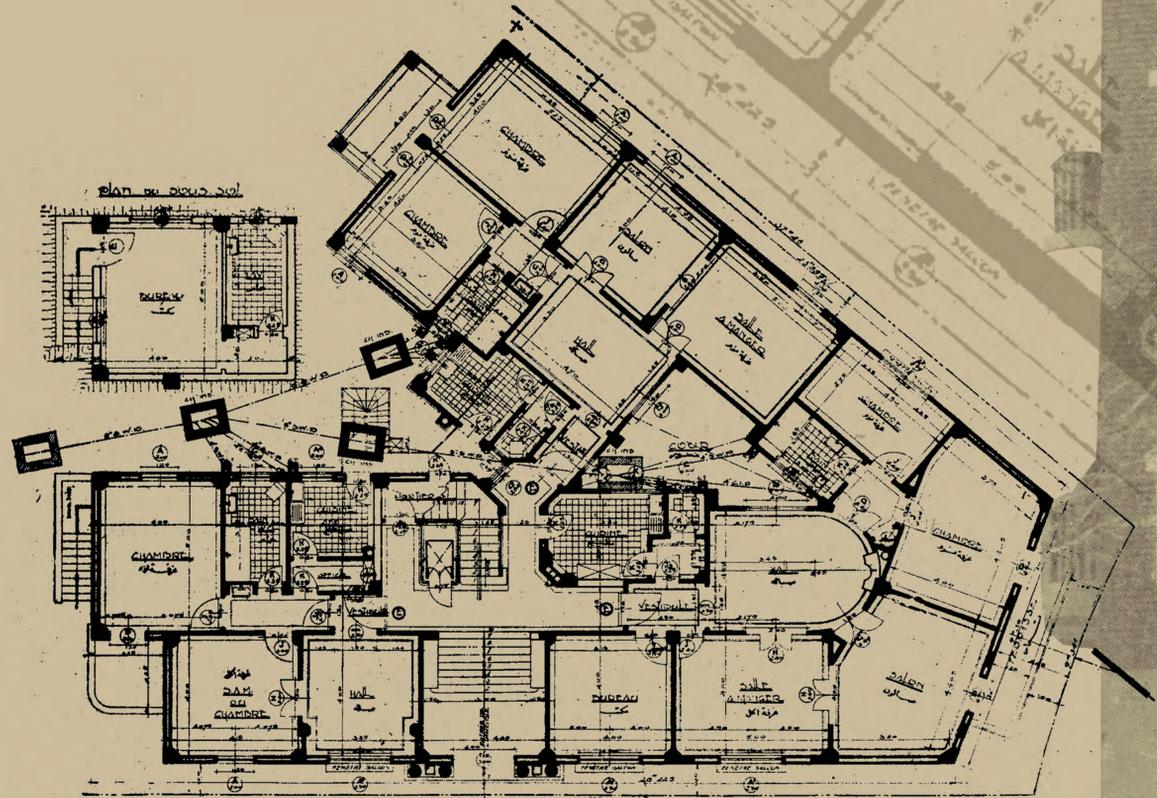
**Halim Doss Building  
Al Shafakhana Square, Giza**

**شارل عيروط**

**عمارة حليم بك دوس  
ميدان الشفخانة ، الجيزة**



مسقط الادوار

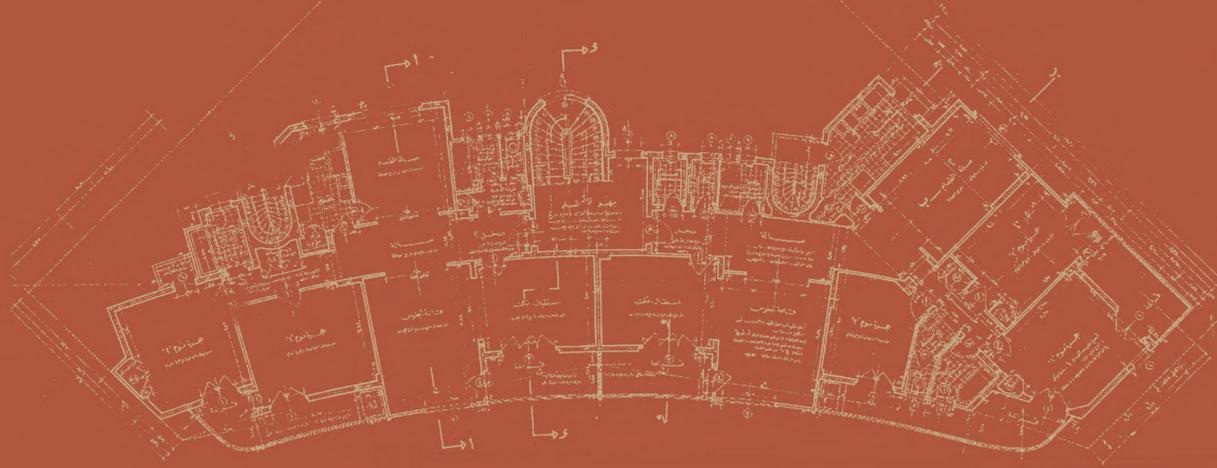


مسقط الدور الارضى



## عمارة إيجارية بالجيزة

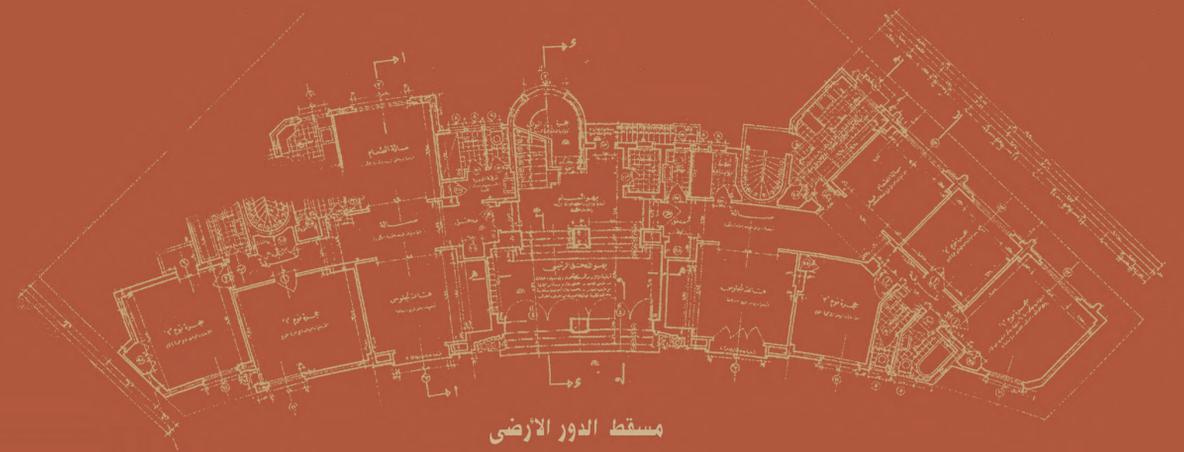
بميدان ابن بكيل  
ملك حفنة من حبات القمح وأهداهم ثمرها  
مسقط الأدوار المتكررة  
مستشار الرسم ٥٠١١



مسقط الأدوار المتكررة

## عمارة إيجارية بالجيزة

بميدان ابن بكيل  
ملك حفنة من حبات القمح وأهداهم ثمرها  
مسقط الدور الأرضي  
مستشار الرسم ٥٠١١



مسقط الدور الأرضي

## عمارة إيجارية بالجيزة

بميدان ابن بكيل  
ملك حفنة من حبات القمح وأهداهم ثمرها  
مسقط الدور  
مستشار الرسم ٥٠١١



مسقط البدروم



الواجهة الرئيسية المطلة على الميدان

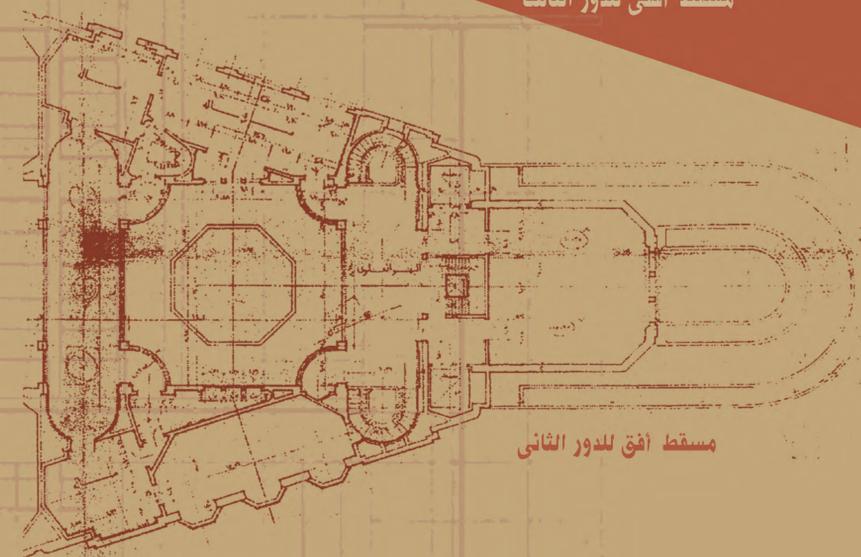
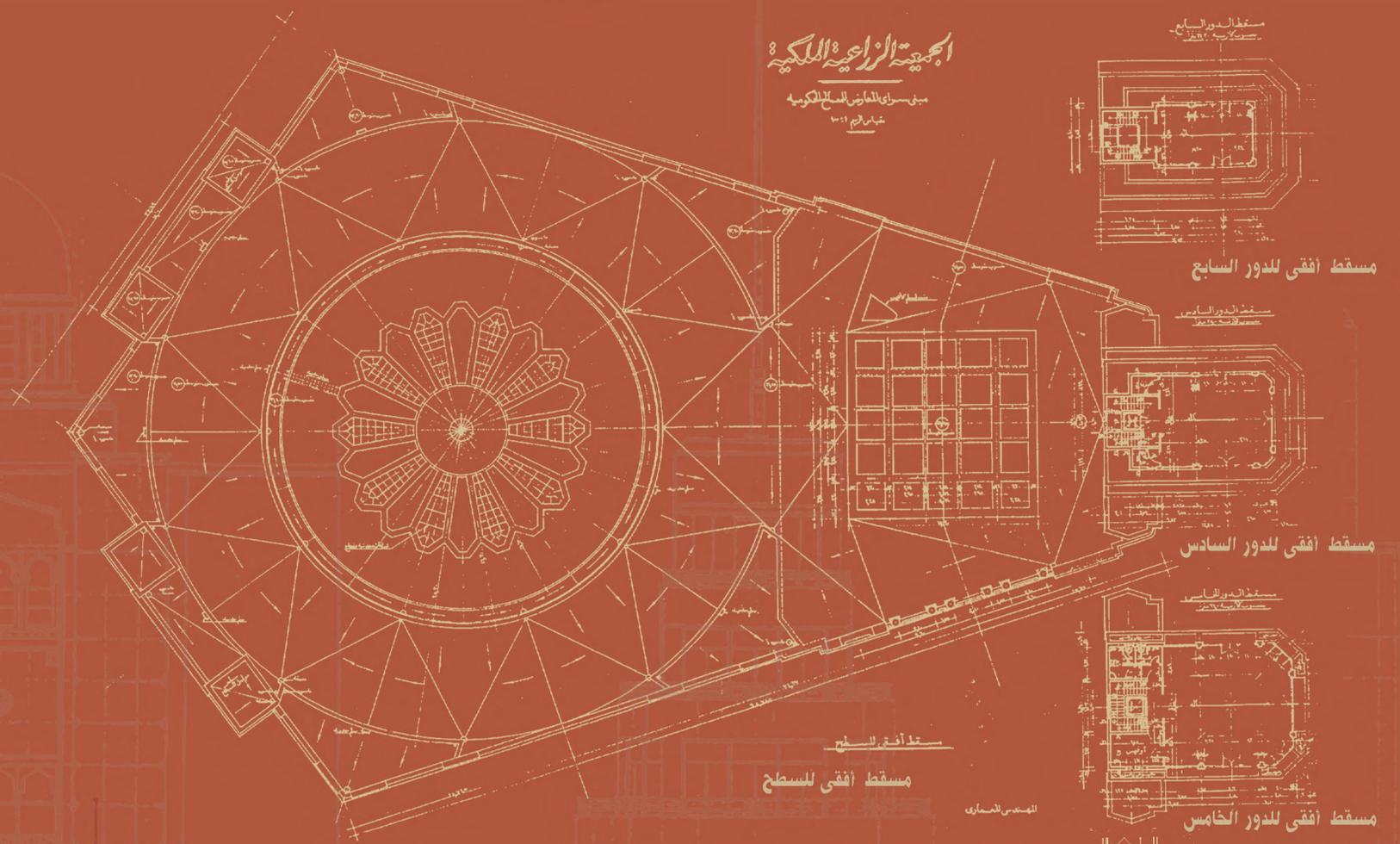
الواجهة الرئيسية المطلة على الميدان

**Shafei Office**  
Rent Building  
Ebn Bkil Street, Giza

**مكتب شافعي**  
عمارة إيجارية بالجيزة  
شارع ابن بكيل، الجيزة

**Shafei Office**  
The governmental Exhibition Building  
Cairo

**مكتب شافعي**  
مبنى سراي المعارض للمصالح الحكومية  
القاهرة



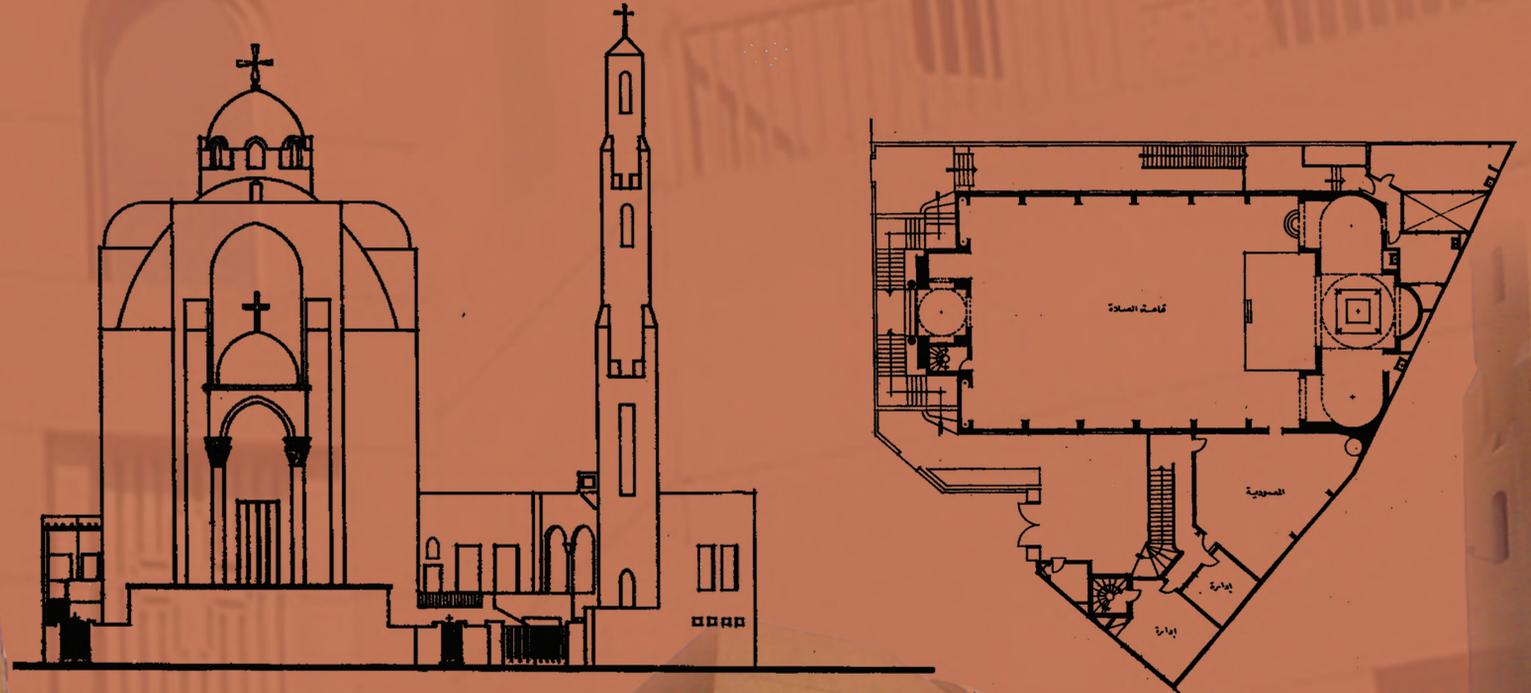
**Ramses Wissa Wassef**  
**Virsin Mary Church**  
Maraashly st. ZAMALEK

**رمسيس وِيسا واصف**  
**كنيسة السيدة العذراء**  
شارع المرعشلى - الزمالك



قطاع رأسى طولى

قطاع رأسى عرضى



الواجهة الرئيسية

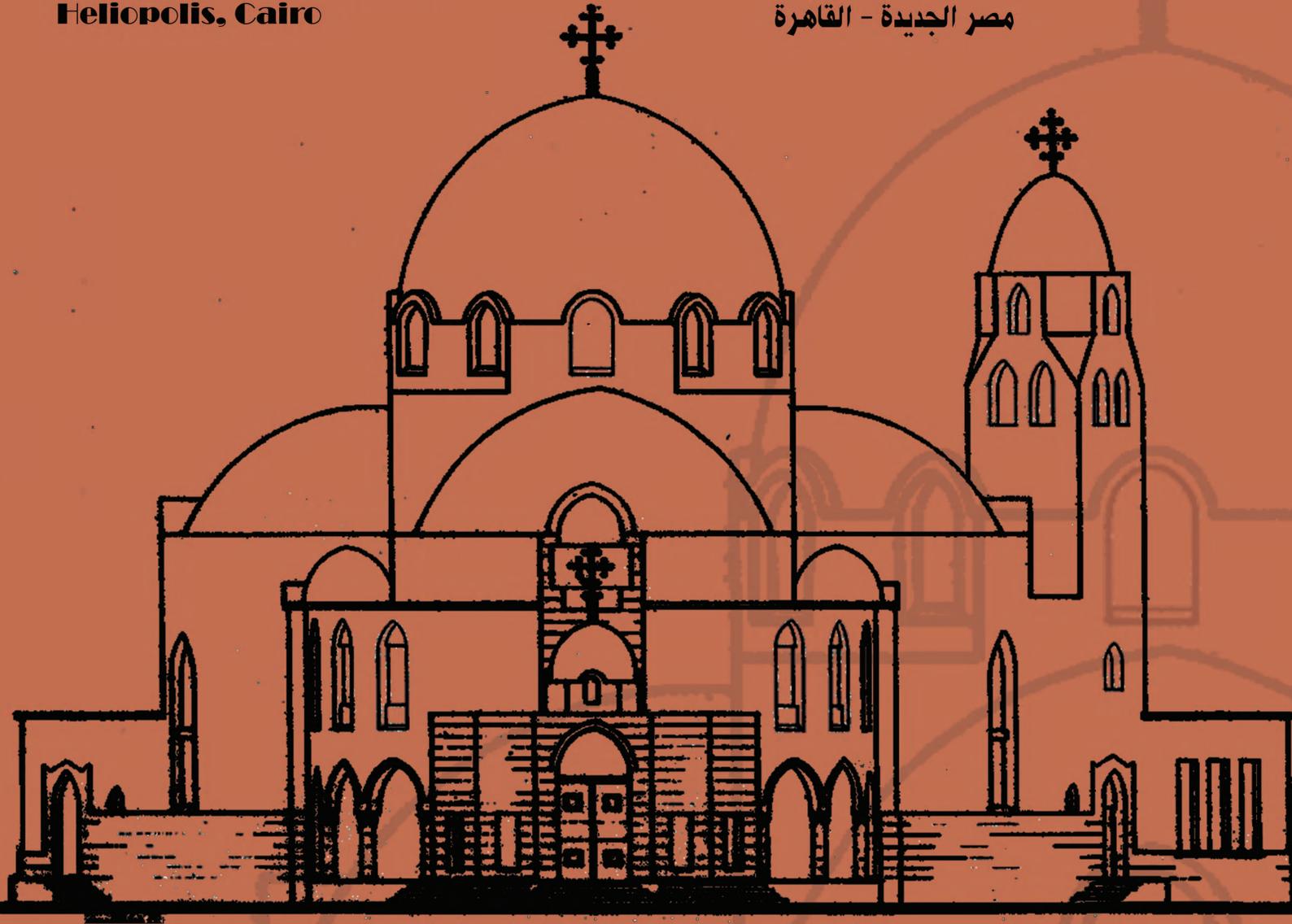
مسقط أفقى للدور العلوى



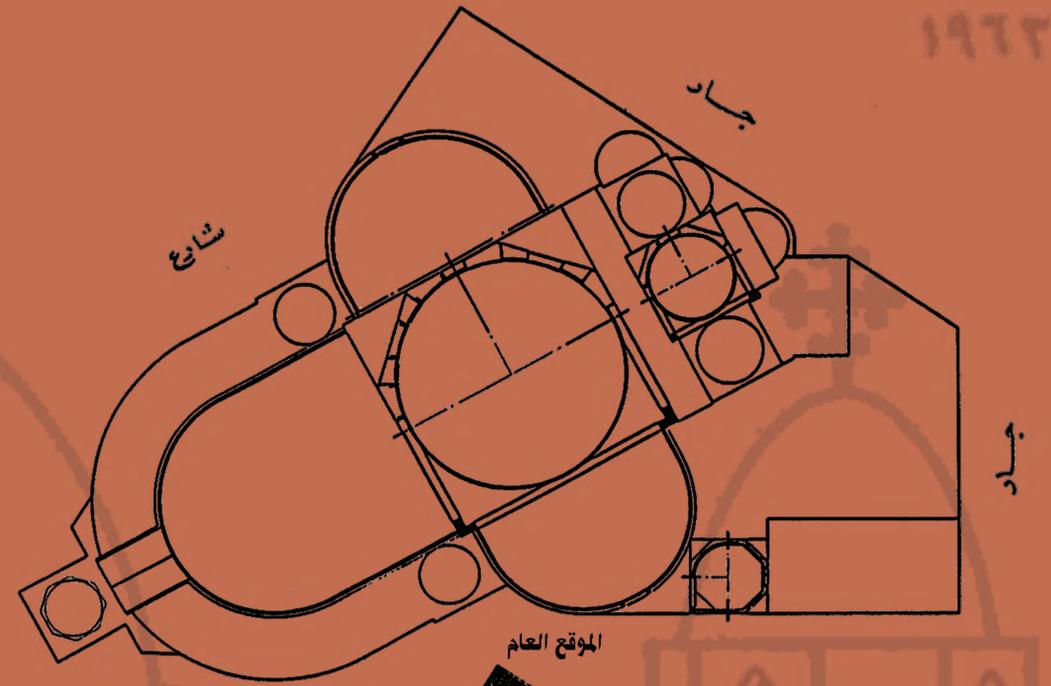
Ramses Wissa Wassef  
Mary Gerges Church  
Heliopolis, Cairo

رمسيس ويسا واصف  
كنيسة مارجرجس  
مصر الجديدة - القاهرة

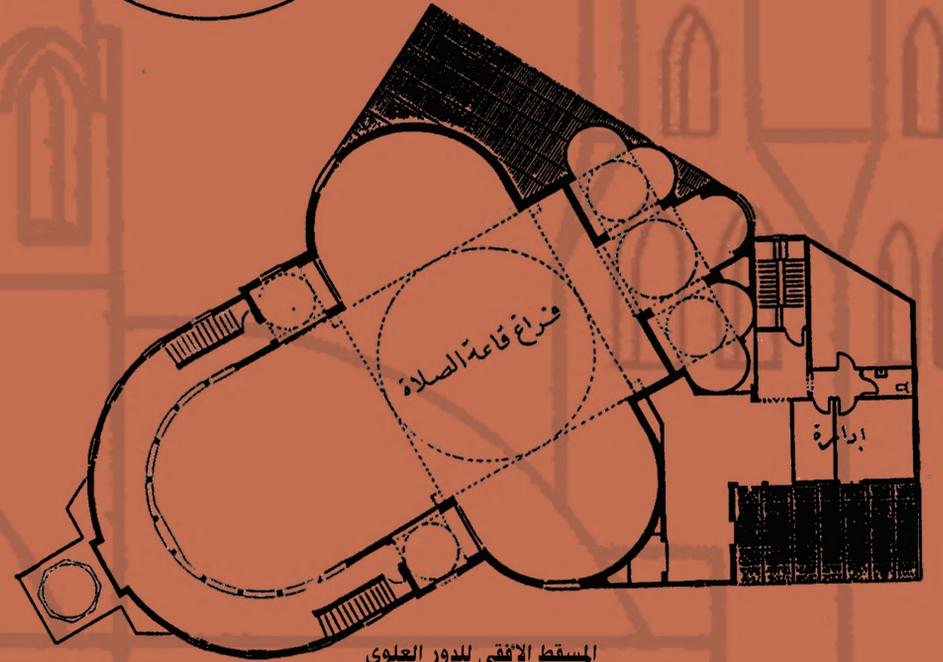
عام ١٩٦٣



الواجهة الامامية



الموقع العام



المسقط الافقي للدور العلوى



قطاع طولى



الواجهة الجانبية

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