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## The Image of Cairo Between Two World Wars, 1914-1945 – Visions Through Contemporary Egyptian Novels and Travellers' Guidebooks

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### ABSTRACT

To introduce an approximately idea of distinct Cairene Downtown; as an international city between the Two World Wars, this paper examines the alliance between the traditional and the modern cities. It provides fundamentally an analytical historical background of the city's urban life by discussing the major events of that period, its decline and changes, and the gradually increasing European intervention. Such relevant influences, development aspects, population expansion and building boom, structure and traffic; all these factors had a distinguished impact on Cairo's urbanism and architecture. The basis for this vision is quoted from selected novels compiled by Yahya Hakki and Naguib Mahfouz, which illustrates the traditional city at the time, and provides glimpses of intimacy into Cairo in a fast transitional period which is still in progress. The exhaustive description of places, streets and districts, depicted in precise detail are extracted. The foreigners' empathy about Cairo recorded in the travelers' guidebooks during the same period, and which could be contradictory to the Egyptian fascination towards modernization, is also reviewed, to show the discrepancy between the two views that of westerners versus that of locals. This paper discusses briefly the distinct reactions towards the changes of the traditional and modern cities. Also, this paper examines the outcome of the European's interpretation with respect to the relation between the old traditional and the new modern cities that constitute Cairo's overall image. This is ended by the outcome of such a phenomenon characterized by the appearance of two diversified cities in Cairo.

### KEYWORDS

Cairo, traditional, modern, urban, architecture, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars

صورة القاهرة بين الحربين العالميتين ١٩١٤ - ١٩٤٥، رؤى من الرؤيا المصرية المعاصرة، وكتابات الرحالة

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### ملخص البحث

لتقديم فكرة تقريبية عن وسط مدينة القاهرة المتميز، والذي يعتبر مدينة عالمية خلال الفترة ما بين الحربين العالميتين، تتناول هذه الورقة العلاقة بين المدن التقليدية والحديثة. وهو يقدم بشكل أساسي خلفية تاريخية تحليلية للحياة الحضرية في المدينة من خلال مناقشة الأحداث الكبرى في تلك الفترة، وتراجعها وتغييراتها، والتدخل الأوروبي المتزايد تدريجياً في البلاد. بجانب التأثيرات ذات الصلة، وجوانب التنمية، والتوسع السكاني والطفرة العمرانية، والبنية وحركة المرور؛ وكان لكل هذه العوامل تأثير مميز على عمران وعمارة القاهرة. وأساس هذه الرؤية مقتبس من روايات مختارة جمعها كلا من الأدبيين يحيى حقي ونجيب محفوظ، والتي توضح حياة المدينة القديمة في ذلك الوقت، وتقدم لمحات من العلاقة الحميمة بالقاهرة في فترة انتقالية سريعة والتي لا تزال مستمرة. يتم استخلاص الوصف الشامل للأماكن والشوارع والأحياء، والموضحة بتفاصيل دقيقة. كما سيتم استعراض تعاطف الأجانب مع القاهرة والمسجل في أدلة الرحالة خلال نفس الفترة، والذي قد يتعارض مع انجذاب وميل المصريين نحو التحديث. لذلك تتناول هذه الورقة بإيجاز ردود الفعل المتميزة تجاه التغييرات في الصورة العامة للمدن التقليدية والحديثة. كما تتناول هذه الورقة نتائج التفسير الغربي فيما يتعلق بالعلاقة بين المدن التقليدية القديمة والمدن الحديثة الجديدة والتي تشكل الصورة العامة للقاهرة. وينتهي ذلك بنتيجة هذه الظاهرة التي تتميز بظهور مدينتين متنوعتين في داخل القاهرة.

## الكلمات المفتاحية

القاهرة، القديمة، الحديثة، العمران، العمارة، الحربين العالميتين الأولى والثانية.

**INTRODUCTION**

Cairo as a complex city, a blend of old and new, of East and West – loaded with its urban and architectural heritage – grew to be a vital cultural node. In 1915, William Lawrence Balls wrote describing the eclectic character and unique quality of Cairo's city that "Cairo is too complex to understand ..." (Balls, 1915). Actually, the formation of the urban and architectural character of the city has been effected by different political, economic and social concepts and ideologies, which reflected several eras. From an ideological perspective, Cairo has passed through 3 distinct periods, classified as following: Medieval Cairo (969-1863), European Cairo (1863-1952), and Contemporary Cairo (1952-present) (Ahmed & Kamel, 1996). Therefore, the first part of this paper provides fundamentally an analytical, historical background during the period between the Two World Wars 1914-1945, the major events and influences of that period, and the gradually increasing foreign intervention in the country. All factors such as the relevant political, economic, and intellectual influences, the aspects of the development of Cairo, the population and expansion issue as well as its structure and traffic, met in Cairo during this period, and had a distinguished impact on the city urban and architectural output.

According to James Moore, Cairo has often been seen as a 'dual city' divided between a modern European city and a historic traditional core (Moore, 2014).

In order to introduce an approximately close idea of Cairo during that period, this paper also discusses the alliance between Cairo's traditional and modern cities. By illustrating the traditional city's social and political life style, structure, and the decline and changes that has taken place in it. Likewise, to contribute an analogy between the Orient and Occident poles, their meditation and preference.

Actually, the basis for this vision is a group of selected stories and novels: "The Lamp of *Umm Hashim*" compiled by Yahya Hakki (Hakki, 1944), The Cairo Trilogy (Palace Walk, Palace of Desire, and Sugar Street) and *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz (Mahfouz, 1947-57). These stories clearly delineate a mental image of Cairo's city life at the time regarding the old Fatimid and new Downtown districts. Despite the fact that they are fictitious; however, these novels provide fascinating insight into the panorama of Egyptian life during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also, they provide detailed glimpses of Cairo in a period of fast transition that is still in progress up to now. The rich and exhaustive description of places, streets and districts, besides the cast of characters, inter-personal and municipal relationships are examined in precise detail and authenticity.

Otherwise, the foreigners' empathy about old and modern Cairo recorded in the travelers' guidebooks during the same period, and which could be contradictory to the Egyptian fascination towards modernization charisma, is also reviewed. Since, the travelers' point of view is unconventional; as they reflect their enthusiasm for knowledge to the origins of Western civilization, and presage much greater cultural and political exchanges. Consequently, this paper makes an analytical comparison between the two different poles represented by Cairenes and Europeans trying to determine the motive of Europeanization process and its influences towards making Cairo "Paris of the Orient".

Nezar AlSayyad in his book “Cinematic Urbanism” in 2006, he notes that no medium has ever captured the city and the experience of urban modernity better than film (AlSayyad, 2006). According to him, he notes that the ability of cinema to capture images and sounds with a degree of complexity was an important component in the rise of urban modernity at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century defined in architectural styles, sociological profiles, and urban narratives. Moreover, the connection between the cinematic city and the urban one, particularly in Europe and the United States, has been the subject of much scholarship. Whereas, those selected novels were adapted and transferred to feature cinematography movies between 1964 and 1973. Therefore, the first section of this paper uses films from the 1930s to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to illustrate the development of a modern Cairo and its modern subjects. The second section is focused on tracing through tourist guidebooks

## 1. DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF CAIRO – POLITICAL SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cairo could be considered as an International City. There is no clear-cut specification for the term “International City”. From the population side, a city of a million inhabitants is called an ‘International City’ (Brockhaus, 1974), which applies to Cairo, which has continued to grow rapidly since 1850, when its population was approximately 250,000; by 1930 the population had reached 1 million (Metz, 1991) (Figures 1 & 2). Lately, multiple criteria are used to define the city, in the UN world urbanization prospects, these criteria include administrative function, population size/density, or urban characteristics (UN-HABITAT, 2020). When an individual attempts to search for the essence or core of an “International City” in a closer way, it is found to be a major city that enjoys a large area, and which also includes areas of influence on the surrounding smaller sized cities. As a result, the city central core – meaning the banking, administrative, cultural and trade centers in the national and international sense – is definite (Fisher, 1955; Bahrtdt, 1961; Scharabi, 1985). Such factors met in Cairo during the interwar period, and had a distinguished impact on the city urbanism and architecture.



Figure (1): By 1930 Cairo’s population reached 1M; locals and foreigners mingle in a bustling the streets of the cold and modern Cairene cities. Source: Ahl.Misr.Zamaaan. (n.d.)



Figure (2): Aerial view of Cairo city in 1904 showing the rapid growth since 1850. Source: Monovisions, 2023

During that period, the relevant political, economic, and intellectual influences have also a distinguished impact on Cairo regarding the urban and architectural aspects.

Additionally, European ideology, ideas, and intellectual criteria affected the Cairene society, when the concept of ‘Reform’, which went hand in hand with the progress, and the changes in the social structure, played a key role. The change or the interest to change in an old society as Cairo would naturally clash with its traditionalist culture. Such argument was evident between the traditionalists and the reformists (Tignor, 1984). Here, we collide with a known phenomenon among the humanitarian scientists, which is the “Phenomenon of Ambiguity” (Laban, 1977); however, it is logical to say that this phenomenon carried within itself contradictions.

## 2. THE TRADITIONAL AND MODERN CITY LIFE AND URBAN FORM IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

In the traditional Cairo, there are four major or main components that represent the city structure and form: the city walls, *Hara*-system (alleyways), the extended street, and the *Suq* (market place). Thus, these cannot be moved to the new modern city, who has no walls, but a street called *al-Gumhuriya* Street with its buildings separating the traditional city from the modern one (Figure 3 & 4). Moreover, the *Hara*-system, since it was considered a form of cooperation and sharing; yet, remained foreign to the new modern city. This was in view of the fact that the administrative division (districts) of the modern city did not know the obvious visual boundaries present in the medieval Cairo city, due to the compact and organic street urban patterns that meandered in an intimate human scale.

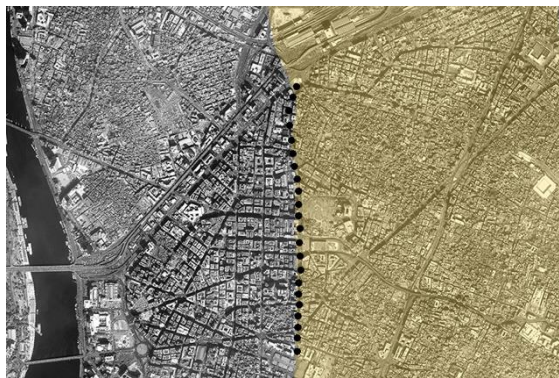


Figure (3): A map showing *al-Gomhoria* Street separating the old traditional city in the East to the new modern city in the West.  
Source: Google Maps edited by the author, 2023



Figure (4): Cairo's aerial view representing the Haussmann radial urban pattern, 1931  
Source: Cairo Observer, 2012

Moreover, thoroughfares enlarged the viewing space and altered the conception and design of buildings from a series of elements to the building as a total object. Nevertheless, the street system remained in its meaning more or less the same for both forms of the city. The roofing or partial roofing, that was common to the traditional street and which was alien to the modern one, as a compensation for this there were trees on one or both sides of the modern street (Figure 5). Also, instead of the numerous *Sabils* (fountains) in the traditional street, the new streets were supplied with memorial statues like those of Ibrahim Pasha and Suliaman Pasha (Figure 6).



Figure (5): New Cairo's streets with trees on one or both sides between 1920-1930  
Source: Great Egypt, 2023; Cairo Postcard; Zamengamil. (n.d.).



Figure (6): Modern Cairo's squares with memorial statues.  
Source: Musrzaman. (n.d.); WsfMrBalswr. (n.d.).

In the medieval city, the active movement day and night was all over the streets and alleys. There is a quotation by Mahfouz that can give some bearing to the contextual atmosphere of the traditional city in the times preceding World War II:

“Al-Nahhasin was not a quiet street, quite the contrary. Its strident noise did not abate from one dawn until shortly before the next. There were the loud cries of vendors, haggling of shoppers, pleas of crazed beggars, and wisecracks of passerby. People conversed as though delivering a public oration. Even the most personal discussions ricocheted everywhere, flying up to the minarets. To this general commotion the Suarès omnibus added its clanking and the donkey carts their clatter.” (Mahfouz, 1989).

Traditional city streets were also narrow; the issue here was not only straight streets but also blocked alleyways, and some of the streets pass right under the houses like *Darb Qirmiz* for example. These underground tunnels used to serve the residents during the World War II as protection against the German Air-force attacks. Another quotation illustrates negatively the compact urban planning design of the traditional Cairo: “She let her eyes wander over the houses bunched together untidily on both sides of the road like a row of soldiers standing at ease, relaxing from harsh



discipline.” (Mahfouz, 1989). However, nothing barely changed in the city structure during this period. The following quotation clarifies this phrase: “When his feet brought him to al-Gamaliya street, ... Nothing had changed. The street was still so narrow a handcart would almost block it when passing by. The protruding balconies of the houses almost touched each other overhead. The small shops resembled the cells of a beehive, they were so close together and crowded with patrons, so noisy and humming. The street was unpaved, with gaping holes full of mud.” (Mahfouz, 1989). Nevertheless, the architecture and urban resemblance between the traditional city houses, districts and alleys is another distinguished features. The following quotation indicates that there were such slight differences between districts: “Then *Aisha* talked about her new home with the enclosed balcony overlooking *al-Mutawalli* Gate, ... There was no difference except the names and some secondary features.” (Mahfouz, 1989)

A lot of the shops stayed open at night in addition to the cafés that did not close except with the sunrise, and also played an important role in the city life as the meeting point of all the neighbors, friends and tradesmen (Figure 7). There were many public types of public buildings such as: shops, schools (Kuttab and Madrasa), public baths (Hammam), Sabils, Khan, and also several mosques (Scharabi, 1985). Absolutely with the difference that in the modern city there are no Khan but hotels; there are no severe divisions of space but warehouses; also there are no mosques, but churches and Jewish synagogues. As for the Suq, which was the real center of the old city, and in which the spiritual and material aspects were integrated; nevertheless, this market has its counterpart in the modern city as El-Attaba Market in 1891 (Imam et al., 2020), and Bab el-Louk Market in 1912 (Lotfy et al., 2016) (Figures 8 & 9).

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the various members of the different social classes: tradesmen, artisans, employees, and workers were still living in the same traditional vicinity. Related to the narrow space as well, there was a good neighborly relations. However, the settled residents of the traditional city did not leave their old quarters; it was there that their families and friends lived. Moreover, they could go shopping, and satisfy their daily needs very close to their homes. Furthermore, there was great unrest and revolts in Cairo. These revolts broke out mainly in the traditional city. Since the 1920's, the British occupied the old traditional city militarily on several occasions, which had its influence on the residents.

During the world depression and financial crisis of the late 20's and early 30's, it was inevitable that some of the shops in the traditional city went bankrupt, which further decreased its attractiveness. Conversely, the French and English models, resulting of the European colonialism, had a great prevalence on Egyptians, especially on traditional city residents. In his novel “Palace Walk”, *Mahfouz* describes this fact, he states: “An Englishman ... the kind of man he imagined to embody all the perfections of the human race. ... Yasin probably detested the English as all Egyptian did, but deep inside he respected and venerated them so much that he frequently imagined they were made from a different stuff than the rest of mankind.” (Mahfouz, 1989). Another quotation in his novel “Palace of Desire” represents the fascination of French people, *Mahfouz* states: “But I love France itself and I admire qualities of French people unrelated to nationalism.” (Mahfouz, 1989).



Figure (7): Old Cairo’s streets between 1920-1930 played an important role in the city life as the meeting point of all the neighbors, friends and tradesmen  
Source: Ahl.Misr.Zamaaan. (n.d.).

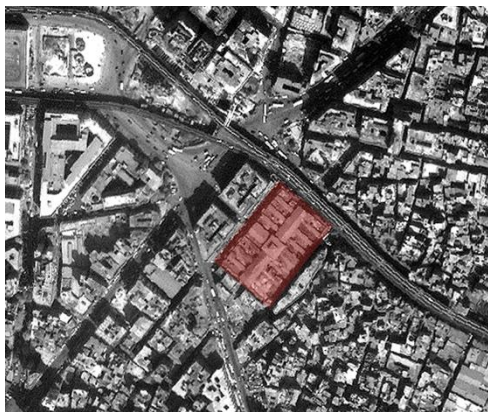


Figure (8): Aerial view showing Bab el-Louk Market in 1891.  
Source: Google Maps edited by the author, 2023



Figure (9): Aerial view of El-Attaba Market in 1912.  
Source: Google Maps edited by the author, 2023

As regards the characteristics features of the Downtown Cairo architecture during the period between the Two World Wars, it was only during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that imported European architecture and building typologies, with all its approaches and trends, attained a considerable interest in Cairo (Figure 10). Twentieth-century architecture was a product of both European and Egyptian architects. Such an explosion of styles gave Cairo its unique physiognomy, its *‘raison d’être moderne’*.



Figure (10): Modern Cairo's urban street life and imported European architecture and building typologies between 1920-1930

Source: Ahl.Misr.Zamanaan. (n.d.).

### 3. THE DECLINE AND COLLAPSE OF THE TRADITIONAL CITY

No significant changes had taken place at the traditional Cairo, except people. Therefore, the use and appearance of establishments had been changed. They have been coming unsuitable especially for the 'new generation' residents, which were in discrepancy with the architecture of the medieval Cairo. In his novel *Sugar Street*, Mahfouz states: "*Kamal left Jalila's house ... as he slowly made his way to New Street and then turned toward al-Husayn. How long would he live in this sacred district that had lost all of its spiritual significance for him?*" (Mahfouz, *S. Street*, 1989). On the other hand, *Hakki* expressed the feeling of his hero who returning from Europe, examined his old district; he stated: "As the car passed the station, entering the narrow al-Khalig Street which is not wide enough for the tram passage. The most that can be imagined was much more sincere than what was seen: dirt, flies, poverty and distraction, ...sorrow captured his soul." (Hakki, 1944). What could be a distinctive factor in deteriorating the architecture of the traditional city is the fact that most of old buildings were devastated. The following quotation clarifies this fact: "In the 'previously' called *Maiyda-Alley*, since *Maslahat al-Tanzim's* destructive tool executed along with what it diminished of all Cairo's landmarks. The tool went insane, to which the square surrendered its spirit, diminishing and elimination succeeded as its victims are stones and bricks." (Hakki, 1944).

Nevertheless, the traditional society of Cairo during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is still intact. This was very quickly changed during the second half after the sumptuous Cairenes left traditional areas and settled in new suburbs (Schrabi, 1985). Another quotation illustrates the preference of the old Cairo's residents to the modern comfortable life instead of the traditional one especially for their descendants: "Moreover he had left his old house in al-Jamaliya for a fine villa in al-Hilmiya, raising his children in an atmosphere quite cut off from that of other merchants ... his sons had assimilated new ideals and standards, a result of their comfortable life and pleasant environment." (Mahfouz, 1977).

#### 3.1 Orient Fascination to Occident

Eventually, in that fast transitional period, the presence of two different ways of life – traditional and modern – drove the Egyptians to contradiction; even, the new modern life appealed to them more. They liked everything related to European modernity, as they detested everything related to local traditions. In this sense a literary quotation would show the impact of the modern urban planning on people, and the fate of traditional Cairo during such period: "The Suarès omnibus went down al-Husayniya Street, and then its two emaciated horses began to traverse the asphalt of al-Abbasiya Street, ... with a slight turn of his head the boy could see al-Abbasiya Street stretching out in front of his eyes. It was wider than the streets he was used to in the old part of town and so lengthy that it appeared to have no end. The surface was level and smooth, and the houses on either side were huge with spacious grounds and lush gardens. He admired al-Abassiya greatly, ... The underlying reasons for his admiration were the district's cleanliness, its careful planning, and the restful calm reigning over its residences. All these characteristics were alien to his ancient and noisy district." (Mahfouz, 1989).



Another quotation renders an architectural comparison between the civilized Europe and backward Cairo. *Hakki* stated: “Could there exist in Europe as a whole, a square like *al-Saiyida Zainab*?! Outstanding huge buildings, refined art and lonely people, ... Who can deny Europe’s civilization, development; the East’s humility, its ignorance, sickness and poverty.” (*Hakki*, 1944).

In his novel, *Mahfouz* illustrates the daze of the heroine while moving from Midaq Alley to Cairo’s downtown. He describes the fulfilling influence of architectural and urbanistic modernism on the traditional Cairo’s residents, which could be considered as an analogy between the old and modern, he writes: “Hamida heard him say: “Sharif Pasha Street.” Sharif Pasha! Not Midaq Alley, nor *Sanadiqiya*, *Ghuriya* or even *Mousky*, but Sharif Pasha Street... Her eyes were bewildered by the dazzling lights as a splendid, laughing new world appeared through the windows...The taxi moved slowly, making its way through the sea of carriages, motor-cars, trams and people, but suddenly she was soothed by his polite voice: “This is Sharif Pasha Street ... and that’s my house a little way ahead. Would you like to see it?” Her nerves on edge, she looked where he pointed and saw several blocks of skyscraper apartments and she had no idea which one he meant ... She could see a towering building with an entrance wider than Midaq Alley ... She followed boldly with apparent indifference and stood examining the building while he paid the driver. Her thoughts recalled the alley she had just left and she felt amazed at the unexpected adventure that brought her to this massive building.” (*Mahfouz*, 1977). In the light of previous quotations, we can discern that the old city had to lose its attractiveness at the time when the new more modern districts had a stronger pull. The life in the new calm wide streets, without the noise of the old city, and living in modern apartments or villas with healthy environment and modern furniture, was the dream of all those who could afford to leave the traditional *old-fashioned* city (Figures 11 & 12).



Figure (11): Selectd snapshots from the movies: Palace Walk (*Bain al-Qasrain*); Palace of Desire (*Qasr al-Shoq*); Sugar Street (*Al-Sukkariya*); and Midaq Alley (*Zuqaq al-Madaq*), illustrating the old traditional urban and architectural character.

Source: Author snapshots, 2023



white vanished through its dimly lighted hall. So this was Egypt – at last!” (Leyda, 1951).

Many travelers were not content to look, wonder and report: they also had to play the expert – to judge, predict, instruct and even to affect far more experiences than they had. Much of travelers expressed in their books how Cairo appeared to foreigners as that city was itself emerging into the modern world while making it possible for the ordinary traveler to see for himself the remains and evidence of its ancient grandeur. Therefore, the Europeans did not expect to find Egypt immoderately modern as their homeland. For this purpose, they were stunned by its architectural buildings, urban planning and life that became much more westernized than Europe. Thus, we can discern a phenomenon that has eminently occurred in Cairo during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Europeans were interested to experience the picturesque town of mediaeval romance: the Victorious, while Egyptians tended to live in a new, modern and civilized city. Accordingly, each culture esteemed the dissimilar one; and everyone wanted to change his situation and desired to feel discrimination. This is due to the transitional phenomenon characterizing this period.

### 3.3 Egyptian's Reactions to the Traditional and Modern Cities

From the previous, regarding the Egyptian and European interpretations of traditional and modern Cairo, the Europeanization process sometimes creates harmonious or incongruous results between the traditional and modern cities. Therefore, there are two views. First, the two Cairo's could be seen as a harmonious mixture. Actually, nobody could have easily and freely talked about a homogeneous development either in the traditional city or in the European Cairo. Likewise, nobody dealt with “Egypt's modern formation”; yet, such view of the traditional city image remains dominant. This could be considered as an indication that the harmonious mixture between the traditional and modern cities is sporadic.

On the other hand, as regards the two Cairo's seen as a polarity, the new modern Cairo appeared and was functioning as it were a European city. However, the traditional city kept to a great extent its own character, in spite of all attempts by Napoleon, *Muhammad 'Ali* and *Isma'il Pasha* to “modernize” it. As a result of the failed attempt to modernize the traditional city, two Cairo's, distinct in character came to be, although not sharply divided in site.

During the last two decades of the 19th century, it was the urban imitation of Europe, and the replication of Western architecture and city structures. The Egyptian popular journalist 'Abd Allah al-Nadim states: “For now they (the Europeans) are the ones who are doing all the inventing and setting the rulers: the good is what they say is good, and the bad, what they say is bad ... The acquisition of civilization (al-Tamaddun) is conditional on [our] imitating them and accepting their ways. Savagery consists of being at variance with them, and acting against their opinions. We, the people of the East, must compete with the civilized nations (al-Umam al-Mutamaddina) in order to emerge from the slough of barbarism attributed to us ... We shall never arrive at this goal except by the means Europe has employed ...” (Al-Nadim, 1914)

By this statement, *al-Nadim* meant to say that the East must adopt European methods in order to survive not merely politically, but also culturally. Moreover, another quotation shows the blind imitation of Europe as well as the stimulation of the Europeanization process in Cairo as an evil to be avoided as much as the blind

imitation of the past. “We fear that if we go too far in this blind imitation (al-Taqlid al-‘Ama), and that we continue to adopt supernumerary end products before we have (mastered) the necessary and requisite preliminaries, our morality and traditional ways will die within us, and our change in another direction – if we should change – will merely be in the terms of a “new” imitation all over again, and this would be pointless.” (Rida, 1948)

Oppositely, under the following title “Planned Construction of Cairo Streets”, *‘Ali Pasha Mubarak* described the issue of Europeanization to the overall form of Cairo - architecture inclusive – without showing any critical inclination (Mubarak, 1889). However, he stressed the fact that the traditional city had been surrounded by ruins and heaps of rubbish, in which such areas were quite sufficient to plan for a new city; which proves that *Mubarak* was in favor of the Europeanization process. Thus, we can discern a phenomenon that had eminently begun in Cairo during that period. Europeans were interested to experience the picturesque city of medieval romance (the Victorious city); while Egyptians – the upper class in particular – tended to live in a new, modern and civilized city. From this viewpoint, each culture esteemed a dissimilar one resulting from the Europeanization process characterizing this period.

Accordingly, those quotations clarify the fact that we are facing a polarity of two cities; each of them had its own image, boundaries, society and economy. They were not separated by a wall, but rather by Ibrahim Pasha (now called *al-Gumhuriya*) Street that joined the railway station in the North to the ruler’s palace *‘Abdin* Palace in the South, passing by the eastern side of *al-Azbakiya* Garden and the Opera House (Fig. 3.85). Furthermore, those quotations point out to two distinct characteristics or traits of Cairo in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, besides the issue of Europeanization. First, in spite of all Europeanization endeavors, Cairo was not so much a European model as a mixture of both the Orient and the Occident. Second, the traditional city and its life had in no way vanished, despite all changes that had taken place. Consequently, the modernization movement, which was increasingly carried out in the modern city, made a great distinction between the two districts regardless of preference. However, tradition still existed – but certainly was a bit decreasing. In short, on all previous critical points, despite their physical contiguity, the two cities were miles apart architecturally and centuries apart structurally.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No significant changes had taken place in the medieval Cairo structure and form during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, except people. However, the use and appearance of establishments had been changed which decreased its attractiveness. Otherwise, what could be a distinctive factor in deteriorating the architecture of the traditional city is the fact that most of old buildings were devastated. Thereupon, it has been coming unsuitable especially for the ‘new generation’ residents, which preferred the modern city. Eventually, in that period of fast transition, the presence of traditional and modern ways of life drove the Egyptians to ambiguity. They liked everything related to European modernity, and they detested everything related to Egyptian traditions. Accordingly, the new life style appealed to them more. Thereupon, the old city had lost its correspondence while the new modernization concept had a conclusive charm.

Moreover, it is quite clear that the whole European influence managed to bring forward a prominent intellectual contribution, related to the change of the city image,



in addition to the city structure. For instance, the changes achieved in the traditional city. The streets located outside the traditional city followed new western styles and lines. Therewith, The relevant political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual influences – during the period between the Two World Wars – have a distinguished impact on the city urbanism and architecture. By the end of the formal military occupation of about 70 years, marking the end of the urbanistic development of Cairo. Within twenty years the physiognomy of Cairo had been revolutionized. Hence, population explosion, demands, challenges, crises and new necessities make, and are still making it “the modern Cairo”.

Undoubtedly some unified aspects, make *al-Tawfiqiya* and *al-Isma‘iliya* – constituting together a “modern city” – founded according to the 19<sup>th</sup> century European model of planning and architecture. Therefore in both sections, European historical architectural design is prevalent. The nature, homogeneity, proportionality, balance and clarity that characterize the modern city, seem to be so deep-rooted that it has been keeping its character that appears as a whole object. It is thus obvious, that on the urban level, the Europeanization process sometimes creates harmonious or tense results between the traditional and modern cities. As a result, European influence dominated over Cairo, as well as its urban resonance on the city structure; however, the traditional city character declined.

Ultimately, in that period of fast transition, the presence of two different ways of life - the traditional and the modern - drove Egyptians to a dilemma; but it was the new modern life, which increasingly appealed to them. Thereupon, the old city began to loose its attractiveness while the new modernization concept had a conclusive pull. Therefore, we are considering two *Cairos* – each of them had its own image, boundaries, structure and society. This points out to two distinct characteristics of Cairo during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: firstly, that in spite of all endeavors of Europeanization, Cairo was not so much a model of a European city as a mixture of both Orient and Occident; secondly, that the traditional city and its life had in no way vanished, in spite of all the changes that had taken place.

Contrariwise, the foreigners’ empathy about traditional and modern Cairo recorded in the travelers’ guidebooks is also distinct. The Europeans did not expect to find Egypt excessively modern as their homeland. Therefore, they were perplexed by its buildings, architecture, planning and life that became much more westernized than Europe. Thus, we can record a phenomenon that is everyone wanted to change and to see the opposite side. For instance, Europeans were interested to see the picturesque city of medieval romance, while Egyptians tended to live in a new, modern and civilized city.

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