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**The Promotion of Girls' Education in a late 19th Century Egyptian
Women's Magazine**
- A Study of Western Feminist Influences

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Keywords: *Hind Nawfal; Arab feminism; Western feminism; women's writing; girls' education; domestic ideology; Arabic language.*

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the Western influence in three different articles from the late 19th century, Egyptian Women's Magazine, *al-Fatāh*. The analysis is based on the hypothesis that they used similar arguments in their debate for girl's education, as did women in the West. In order to compare the analysis to Western writers, a background on the debate about girls' education among Western women writers' is provided. I have used the analytical approach called Discourse Analysis. I have also examined if there are indicators, other than arguments about education, that show Western influence on these texts, such as idealising the Western household management system or references to Western literature. The conclusions reached are that Egyptian women writers were using similar arguments to Western women in debating women's education. The texts also show other indicators of being influenced by Western women, in the way that they wrote about Western women and the Western education system.

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1. Introduction

The status of Arab women, their rights and roles in the Middle East, have been much debated both in the Middle East and in the West throughout the last century and until today. The popular picture of the secluded and submissive Arab woman has been displayed in Western media and film culture during the 20th century, despite an ongoing struggle for emancipation amongst women throughout the Arab world. In the late nineteenth century, in the light of changes and interactions with the West, the women's debate flourished in Egypt. New women's movements and intellectuals engaged in the debate for the female cause. Women's writing became popular and women established their own literary salons and women's journals. The topic in this thesis is the women's campaign for female education, through the medium of women's journal writing. The thesis will deal with the reception of Western *gender ideologies* in late 19th Century Egypt and the emerging women's writing there.

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

When I first began searching for a topic for my thesis, one area of interest was modern feminism in the Middle East and the differences between Western feminism and Islamic feminism. After reading about early women's writing in Egypt, I began to focus more on the women's debate in general as mediated through popular women's writing. I read about the existence of women's periodicals and became interested in their power to reach out to young women, through their discussion of topics such as education, women's role in the home and women's rights in society.

The journal *al-Fatah* was the first Arabic language journal to be written and fully produced by women in Egypt and in the Arab world. The purpose of my thesis is to examine three texts which I have chosen from *al-Fatah* journal. My hypothesis is that they have, to some point, been influenced by Western women writers. I will explore what evidence there is that the content has been influenced, with particular focus on the issue of girls' education. With this purpose in mind, I have formed the following Research Question:

What is the evidence that the content of these articles regarding girls' education, was influenced by Western women writers?

1.2 Relevance of Study

Feminism has been questioned for failing to recognise the status of "all women", by approaching the status of women in non-Western contexts from a white middle class women's perspective. Such failures have arisen from the research of writers researching feminism and the feminist approach to Black/Arab women, Islamic Feminism, and women in "Third World" countries. This thesis will not deal with the differences between various feminist approaches, but will study how similar the debate on women's rights and status in *al-Fatah* journal was to the Western women's debate on education.

My thesis is relevant in the context of Arab and Western Feminist research, because it highlights the significance of Arab women's voices in history. The data presented in this thesis illustrates that already in the 19th century, a debate of women's roles existed in Egypt, and it made up a significant part of the topics covered in women's periodicals.

2. Theory and Method

In this chapter I will present my choice of theory and method. There are many ways to approach the analysis of a text and many theories and methods that could have been used, such as, Historical Criticism or Comparative Historical Analysis. I have chosen to use Discourse Analysis which I found suited for the type of thesis that I am writing, which involves a close sifting of a number of texts for evidence of specific themes.

I will begin with a short introduction to Discourse Analysis and then outline the approach that I have chosen to take.

2.1 Discourse Psychology Analysis

Discourse Analysis is today commonly used within the field of Social Science.

In the Jørgensen and Philips' book, *Discourse Analysis - Theory and Method*, the background to Discourse Analysis and different methods of Discourse Analysis are explained. They introduce three different approaches within discourse analysis; Ernesto Laclao and Chantal Mouffes' Discourse Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Discourse Psychology.

These three approaches to Discourse Analysis are based on Social Constructionism, which is the term for a group of theories about culture and society. Within social constructionism it is perceived that the ways in which we understand and categorise things in our daily lives, is not a reflection of the world, but rather a product of historical and cultural specific images of the world.¹ This means that the way we perceive things are formed in our interactions with people and that human characteristics are not predetermined or unchangeable. Language can therefore not be seen as something that we simply use as a method of mediating an already existing reality, but rather as an active agent through which the subjective psychological reality is constituted.

As my method, I have chosen to use Discourse Psychology as described by Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Philips.² I chose this particular approach because I found that Discourse Psychology provides a good structure for how to approach my thesis and carry out the analysis.

Discourse psychology is a form of Social Psychology that investigates the relationships between individuals' value formation and social structures and processes. In Discourse Psychology, texts and

¹ Louise Phillips and Marianne W. Jørgensen, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, (London: Sage publications Ltd, 2006), P, 104.

² Louise Phillips and Marianne W. Jørgensen, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, (London: Sage publications Ltd, 2006), P, 97.

spoken language are observed as constructions of the world, made to influence society.³ This approach to Discourse Analysis investigates how people strategically use discourses to represent themselves and the world in a set (advantageous) way in social interaction, and examines what social consequences that has.⁴

Discourse Psychology can be carried out in ten steps. However, due to the nature of this thesis, five of the steps are irrelevant for the research. The five steps are irrelevant in this study since they relate to the usage of interviews. The following steps have therefore been eliminated: “Assembling Naturally Occurring Material”, “Collection of Material”, “Transcription”, “Determination of Validity”, “Applying Research Results”.

I will therefore only be using the following five steps of Discourse Psychology: 1. Research Question. 2. Choice of Sample. 3. Coding. 4. Analysis. 5. Research Report.

2.2 Method

The purpose of my thesis is to examine three texts, which I have chosen from al-Fatah journal, and explore what the evidence is that the content has been influenced by western women writers, with particular focus on the issue of girls’ education. I will review the most common topics of debate in women’s movements and among key Western women writers at that time, through source material and current articles on this subject. Following this, I will study in detail the arguments for education of women in the Egyptian texts, and compare them to the arguments that Western women had used. Outside of these arguments, I will also look for other examples in the texts, of the influence of Western women writers.

As mentioned above I will be using the following five steps from discourse psychology. 1. Research Question. 2. Choice of Sample. 3. Coding. 4. Analysis. 5. Research Report.

Step One: the Research Question has been presented in 1.1. Purpose and Research Question.

Step Two in the method of this thesis, was to select the Material. This was done by reading through the 12 issues of the magazine and picking out three articles that all included the topics of women and education. The Material is presented in 3.1 Primary Sources.

Step Three of the analysis is coding, where one categorises and “maps out” the material to make it easier to handle. Because I am looking for something concrete in the material “influence of Western women writers”, I began by applying the research findings from my background chapter “The Debate on Girls’ Education in the West”. From that research I found two common arguments:

The “**education makes better wives and mothers**” argument. Western writers repeatedly used this argument to legitimize the need for reforming the girl’s education. If the Arabic texts are influenced by Western women writers, I should expect to find similar arguments.

³ Louise Phillips and Marianne W. Jørgensen, Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method, (London: Sage publications Ltd, 2006), P, 97.

⁴ Louise Phillips and Marianne W. Jørgensen, Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method, (London: Sage publications Ltd, 2006), P, 13.

The “**need for a broader girls curriculum**” argument. Western writers were aiming to change the curriculum of girls’ education to make it more similar to that of boys. This, they argued, was so that the girls could better perform their duty, in the domestic ideology, of being good companions and mothers. I will look for similar arguments or examples of how this argument has been adapted or changed to suit the Egyptian context.

I decided to look for similar arguments in the Arabic texts by studying each text more carefully and extracting from all of them, paragraphs that were relevant to the question of girls’ education. To make it easier to deal with the material, I divided the paragraphs into two categories:

Arguments for Girls’ Education
Debating Girls’ Curriculum

After studying the material more carefully, I found that, in addition to arguments about girls’ education, there was other evidence of Western influences on the texts. For example; references to specific women, women writers, and direct comparisons made in these texts between Western and Arab women’s role in their family life and society. I have therefore made a third category:

Other Evidence of Western Influences

Because many of the arguments are included in the wider category “Arguments for Girls’ Education”, I have formed sub-themes in this category for the reader to easier follow the analysis. These are as follows in Text One: *Indirect references, Direct References, Comparisons between Women*. Text Two: *Education Makes Better Wives, Household Management*. Text Three: *Education Making Better Mothers and Wives, Negative Effects of the Woman’s Ignorance*.

Step Four is the analysis. Every text is analysed individually in order one to three, followed by a short conclusion after each text. Each passage analysed is followed by my own English translation in order to assist non-Arabic speakers.

Step Five, the research report, is the final part of my method where I am stating my conclusions and findings in the analysis of the three texts.

3. Material

In this chapter I will present the material used in this thesis, beginning with information about the primary sources, which is followed by a presentation of the main secondary sources.

3.1 Primary Sources

Hind Nawfal and al-Fatāh Journal

Hind Nawfal (1875-1957) was a pioneering Lebanese journalist who, as a child, moved from coastal Syria to Alexandria in Egypt with her parents Maryam Nahhās and Nasim Nawfal. Nawfal was educated in Alexandria and in 1892 her father helped her to establish the *al-Fatah* magazine.⁵ Her mother Maryam Nahhas, also a writer, had completed a biographical dictionary of Western and

⁵ (Badran & Cooke, 2004, 215)

Eastern women, (*The Fine Woman's Exhibition of Biographies of Famous Women*), which the writer Zaynab Fawwāz (1860-1914), described as “biographies of famous women, alive and dead, arranged after the fashion of European dictionaries.”⁶ Hind Nawfal established *al-Fatāh* Magazine in Alexandria in 1892, in which she defended women's rights. *al-Fatāh* was the first Arabic women's journal to be published by a woman. Sha'bān has translated what Hind wrote in her editorial in the first issue in November 1892: “*al-Fatah* is the only journal for women in the East; it expresses their thoughts, discloses their inner minds, fights for their rights, searches for their literature and science, and takes pride in publishing the products of their pens.”⁷ Writers like Zaynab Fawwāz and Aisha al-Taimuriyya contributed to the journal and articles came from throughout Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and the Mediterranean. This widespread origin of articles reflects the widespread circulation of the journal.

In the seventh issue of the magazine, Nasim Nawfal announced Hind's engagement to Habib Dabanam.⁸ After introducing the concept of Arabic women's periodicals to the Arab world, it is believed that she married and withdrew to a domestic life. However, *al-Fatah* prepared the way for a wave of Arabic language women's journals, at least 30 by the early Twentieth Century, to emerge in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad.⁹

3.2 Secondary sources

In this chapter I will present the most prominent of my secondary sources. Due to lack of availability of literature from women of non-Western backgrounds in Nordic libraries, all of these writers are of Western background.

Beth Baron

Beth Baron is an American researcher in the field of Middle Eastern Studies. She is a Professor at the City College of New York, Graduate Centre.

Her main research area is Modern Middle East, and in addition to *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society and the Press*, which is referenced in this thesis, she has also published a book titled *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics*. In addition to that, she has published several research articles in the topics of Women, Nationalism and Egypt.¹⁰

In *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society and the Press*, Baron provides an overview of women's writing in the late Nineteenth Century Egypt, the development of the women's press and women's magazines. She explains the context in which these women were operating and gives an explicit introduction to the topics on women's rights that these women wrote and campaigned for. The book describes their status in society, and developments in girl's education and women's rights, in the context of colonialism and the rising nationalist movement.

Dr. Ellen Jordan

⁶ (Booth, 2001, 317)

⁷ (Sha'aban, 1996, 250)

⁸ (Badran & Cooke, 2004, 215)

⁹ (Badran & Cooke, 2004, 216)

¹⁰ <http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Page-Elements/Academics-Research-Centers-Initiatives/Doctoral-Programs/History/Faculty-Bios/Beth-Baron> (Accessed 28/7/14)

Dr. Ellen Jordan is a lecturer in sociology and anthropology at the University of Newcastle, Australia.¹¹ In her research article “*Making Good Wives and Mothers*”? *The Transformation of Middle-Class Girls’ Education in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, she writes about the debate on girls’ education and the changes that took place during the nineteenth century Britain. The article provides a good overview of the changes in girls’ education and she quotes several of the main writers on the issue, from the time. The article reports that these women intellectuals mainly argued for changes to the education in order for women, in accordance with the current domestic ideology, to become “better wives and mothers”. She thus claims that this generation of writers did not question women’s presumed gender roles in domesticity.

Nikki Keddie

Nikki Keddie is a professor of Eastern, Iranian and women’s history, retired from the University of Carolina. She has published several books and received several awards for her achievements in her career. Her book *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present* provides a comprehensive account of women’s history in the Middle East, from before the rise of Islam until today.

Marilyn Booth

Marilyn Booth is a Professor at University of Edinburgh, an author, and translator of Arabic literature.¹² Among her research interests are early feminism, masculinity/femininity, nationalist/Islamic discourses in the Arab world, and history of Arabic periodicals.

In her book “*May Her Likes Be Multiplied*” - *Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt*, Booth writes about female biographical dictionaries, which had started to appear in the late Nineteenth century Egypt. These biographies of Western or Eastern women were often published in women’s periodicals. They were documenting famous Western and Eastern women in history. When published in periodicals, biographies of famous women also became role-models for middle class Egyptian girls.

¹¹ <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/profile/ellen-jordan>. (Accessed 28/7/14)

¹² <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/islamic-middle-eastern/people/booth>

4. Background

4.1 Emerging Women's Writing in late 19th Century Egypt

The debate on women's rights and their roles grew significantly in the late Nineteenth – to the early Twentieth Century. The two main reasons for this were the emerging women writers and the influences that the West had in Egypt. Women increasingly published articles in the press and especially in the emerging women's press. This was the first time that women intellectuals extensively participated in the literary debate. It is therefore one of the best historical accounts of the women's situation and debate of that time, told by the women themselves. This new wave of women writers became the pioneers of a growing movement, influencing the debate on women's status and a promise of social change in Egypt. It became known as The Women's Awakening.

The growth of the periodical press in the 1860s in Egypt represented an important change. The "comparative liberalism of the Turkish and Egyptian regimes" allowed for an increase in printing presses, the creation of periodicals and private newspapers, and the development of a writing and reading public.¹³ After realizing that the European strength was due to their modern education and technology, modernizing reforms began to take place in Egypt. The women's magazines emerged during this time of modernization and change. For the role and status of women, this modernization meant a reconsideration of girls' education, which at the time was only provided for the very few. Developing safe and healthy household management, with procedures in cleaning and hygiene contributed to healthier families.¹⁴ The women's press largely advocated scientific domesticity, including rationalized home management, child rearing, and health and hygiene.¹⁵

The increase in women's participation in the press and the rise of women's periodicals paralleled the emergence of the Nationalist movement in Egypt. This was not a coincidence, for although the majority of the women's press didn't deal explicitly with political issues of the time, the Nationalist Movement used the press as the main medium for politics. The emergence of nationalism meant a rethinking of the society and culture, including questions regarding women and the family. Therefore, the fact that women's press dealt much with these issues, should be considered in the context of changes occurring as part of the nationalist struggle of the time.¹⁶

Many of the pioneering women writers originated from Syria, this was partly due to the tightening of the Ottoman censorship in Arab provinces in 1880s and 1890s, attracting Syrian writers to the freer Egyptian press and a wider market of readers.¹⁷ Syrian Women saw themselves as pioneers of the women's awakening, being the first to enter into many professions such as the theatre, medicine, and teaching. They introduced intellectual work for women in Egypt and established the first women's associations and periodicals. These Syrian women had an advantage due to their earlier access to education through a network of Syrian missionary schools and religious run primary schools in

¹³ (Hourani, 1962, 97)

¹⁴ (Keddie, 2007, 71)

¹⁵ (Keddie, 2007, 68)

¹⁶ (Baron, 1994, p13)

¹⁷ (Baron, 1994, p15)

Syria.¹⁸ They were inspired by Western women's progress but did not want to copy their system, instead they looked for examples in their own past to prove an indigenous history of strong and influential women.¹⁹

The women's periodicals appeared from the early 1890's and they provided a platform for discussion of women's rights and roles. Some of the most discussed topics of these journals were marriage and divorce laws, veiling and seclusion, education and work. The journals also functioned as educational guides to women and girls, providing information on housework and motherhood. Female readership increased with the journals, and the interest in women's affairs grew significantly.²⁰

The idea of a separate women's journal, produced by women and for a female readership, emerged from abroad. They had already existed in Europe and America for over a century when they were adopted by the Arab press. The first women's periodical produced by a woman, for women, was the Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator* which appeared from 1744 in England. Although the Western periodicals were many and diverse, there were common themes in them of family and the promotion of domesticity.²¹ Arab editors, who found the separatist women's periodicals suitable to the Middle East society, adapted the concept and shaped the journals after their own region's interests. By creating a female literary and press culture in Egypt, they gained a platform and a medium for expressing their programme and social reform.²² Hind Nawfal published the first issue of *al-Fatāh* in November 1892, stating in the magazine's first number, the need for a periodical for Arab women.²³

Arabic editors commonly derived stories and ideas from Western periodicals. In the early stages of the Arabic women's press, the writers translated and borrowed much of their subjects and inspiration from Western writers. As Arabic periodicals became more common, their original European roots became less apparent.²⁴ As they changed to suit Egyptian needs, both subjects and biographies became increasingly Arab and less European.²⁵

While The Women's Awakening occurred parallel to the Nationalist struggle, most of the early female writers did not enter the main male press and write on topics related to the nationalist struggle. They, instead, created their own female literary culture, writing on social and domestic topics, satisfying a growing interest from young female readers. Many female writers engaged in poetry, biographical writings of famous women, and translations of Western works.²⁶ The translation of Western writers introduced new literary genres as well as scientific and humanistic ideas to Arabic readers. Writers like Maryam al-Nahhas and Zaynab Fawwāz made an effort to document women's lives by writing biographical dictionaries, publishing stories about famous women from around the world.²⁷ The short story became a very popular form of writing for Arabic women and was often published in the periodicals. Short story writing rather than novels was more suitable for

¹⁸ (Baron, 1994, p108)

¹⁹ (Baron, 1994, p107)

²⁰ (Baron, 1994, p2)

²¹ (Baron, 1994, p61)

²² (Baron, 1994, p58)

²³ (Baron, 1994, p60)

²⁴ (Baron, 1994, p62)

²⁵ (Baron, 1994, p66)

²⁶ (Baron, 1994, p51)

²⁷ (Baron, 1994, p51)

women who were caring for children and managing a household besides their writing. With the spread of girls' education and a growing female readership, the need for educational texts increased. Many writers, especially those involved in care work, wrote educational tutorials on topics of care, childrearing and household management for young women readers.²⁸

There were many obstacles for these women to overcome in legitimizing their participation in the public press and raising their voices for the rights of women. Both Muslim and Coptic women, especially from the upper classes, at the time practiced veiling and were restricted from moving freely without escorts.²⁹ Women who chose to write were criticised for not remaining silent and for corresponding with strangers. Many women chose to use pseudonyms to protect their family and reputation. Silence was connected to respect and women's names spoken in public were seen as shameful, women remained veiled or secluded by not using their own name.³⁰ Women writers had yet their domestic responsibilities that came before any writing, and they had to justify that they only wrote when the opportunity allowed for it. The need to mobilise people during the Nationalist struggles provide legitimacy for women's participation in the press.³¹ Women claimed that they were writing for the advancement of the Nation while also looking after their responsibilities in their own homes. Some women argued that there was a need for women to write for topics relating especially to women, and highlighted the difference between male and female literary tradition.³²

Women's writing developed at a time when the entire Arabic press flourished in Egypt, from the late 1870's. This was partly due to the government relinquishing their monopoly of the press and the limited censorship after the British occupation in 1882. With no Egyptian parliament or parties, the press gave the Nationalist movement a platform for political discussion and anti-European opposition³³. Egypt by the end of the Nineteenth Century had also developed an infrastructure that made the expansion of the women's periodicals possible, including a postal system and modern banking. The state allowed private presses to multiply and, with an economic boom as well as a rise in literacy, the press grew significantly.³⁴

In relation to the role of the women and their rights in the modernization of Egypt, it should be mentioned that these women writers are of the upper classes and their ideas sometimes seem ignorant to the reality of the lower class women. For all the positive developments in women's rights that came with capitalism and Westernization, there were many setbacks for lower class women. It became more difficult for women to trade and own land, as trading became more and more the men's sphere. The availability of cheaper imports through international trade meant that the crafts made by women earned very little.³⁵ Rather than focusing on improving this situation and working conditions for these women, intellectual women writers looked to raise women's status by enhancing the domestic sphere.

In the late 19th century upper and middle class homes of Cairo and Alexandria, housework was transformed with the introduction of gas, water, electricity and the appearance of ovens and sewing machines. Household management articles flourished in women's magazines and books, and the

²⁸ (Baron, 1994, p53)

²⁹ (Baron, 1994, p39)

³⁰ (Baron, 1994, p45)

³¹ (Baron, 1994, p41)

³² (Baron, 1994, p42)

³³ (Baron, 1994, p15)

³⁴ (Baron, 1994, p59)

³⁵ (Keddie, 2007, 65)

women writers promoted training young women to use these inventions adapted from West.³⁶ The socioeconomic and technological changes brought in a new *domestic ideology*, with new notions of women's role within the home, and ideas about efficiency, tidiness and hygiene.

4.2 Debating Girls' Education in 19th Century Europe

The first wave of Western feminism deals with many issues, among which are suffrage (the right to vote), women's education, the right to property and inheritance, marriage and divorce laws. In writing about the issue of female education in late 19th century Egypt, it is interesting to see how that debate was influenced by the women's movement in The West from the late 18th to the 19th century.

Women's status, their rights and roles, and ideas about their education were much debated around the time of The Enlightenment and after. Arguments by women writers on reforming girls' education varied between profeminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Emily Davies, who wanted to reform the girls' education to be equal to that of boys; and more conservative thinkers like Hannah More and Dorothea Beale, who developed separatist curriculums for girls' education.³⁷ Many of them, even the profeminists, argued that educational reform would make women better wives and mothers. New schools were opened, and girls' education was reformed to become increasingly more like that of the boys.³⁸

With industrial capitalism came a separation between home and work, creating a clear distinction between men's and women's "spheres". This led to a new gender ideology - *domestic ideology* - where it was seen as appropriate for women to stay at home and deal only with the household.³⁹ The debate on education highlighted a contradiction in Western feminists' use of the "education makes better wives and mothers" argument - the reforms they proposed, would open the way for girls to access areas of life hitherto the preserve of men.

Early models of girls' education focused on "accomplishments" – these included skills like dancing, music, behaviour and on "domestic science" (i.e. cleaning, washing, dress making etc.). The new ideas about girls' education promoted the use of the same academic subjects that were taught to boys - mathematics, geography, language, history, literature. The argument that education creates better wives and mothers could be used because of the demands on the modern woman. The ideological role of the modern woman was to be a good companion to her husband, educate their children, handle new technology and manage the household. Only a woman with a modern education could perform these duties in a proper manner.⁴⁰

In her essay *The Education of Women* from 1863, Irish writer Frances Power Cobbe, one of the leading suffrage campaigners of 19th century Dublin, wrote about the benefits for women in pursuing higher education. She argued against the previous assumptions that education would render a woman unfit for motherhood, and tried to prove the benefit gained by educated women. She argued that there was a need for change in the curriculum for girls, and that young women should have the opportunity of university education and of pursuing a career outside of the home. She wrote about the advantages for women who had gained an education, both in their household duties and in work outside of the home. In her essay, she uses her acquaintances Mary Somerville and Mary Carpenter, both well accomplished women, as examples of this success and goes on to say "few of us, I think,

³⁶ (Baron, 1994, 155)

³⁷ (Jordan, 2014, 439)

³⁸ (Jordan, 2014, 440)

³⁹ (Jordan, 2014, 443)

⁴⁰ (Jordan, 2014, 442)

would fail to cite in their own circles the best cultivated women as precisely those whose homes are the happiest, who exercise therein that spirit of order and love of beauty, and, above all, that sense of the sacredness of even the smallest duties, which comes of true culture of mind”.⁴¹

In writing against the common fear that higher education would erase the difference between the sexes, Cobbe argues that education only “draws out” the powers in an individual, and because a woman cannot get the powers of a man, education will only increase her feminine qualities, making her a perfect woman.⁴² Furthermore, she writes, on the same topic, that women will never become like men, because they are different by nature, and their way of study and understanding will always be different.⁴³ “Our affair is to give nature its fullest, healthiest play and richest culture, and then the result will be what the Lord of Nature has designed – a true woman; a being, not artificially different from man, but radically and essentially, because naturally, different – his complement in the great sum of human nature, not a mere deduction from his share of the sum”.⁴⁴

The prevalent idea that woman existed primarily as the servant of man, conflicted with the Christian thought that women should serve God. Religious intellectual women began to argue for women to be autonomous and make their own moral judgements. A small group of feminists, including Mary Wollstonecraft, brought this argument further to include political and economic autonomy. Religious middle class women used this argument for educational reform. They believed that women could make moral judgements, only if they were trained to think logically and rationally.⁴⁵

Within *domestic ideology*, which forced women to be dependent on their husbands, it was difficult to demand women’s autonomy. Intellectual writers had to justify their demands with the “education makes better wives and mothers” argument. The need for educated women to satisfy the *domestic ideology* role of women as friendly companions of their husbands, was much written about in the mid 19th century. It was argued that an educated man would, in desperation of his wife’s ignorance, lower his own level of intellect to hers, and therefore he would not be happy. An educated man therefore needed to marry an educated woman, who could understand his reasoning and be a joyful companion.⁴⁶

One early group of conservative “feminists” were the Bluestockings, an informal women's social and educational movement in mid-18th century England. They believed in domestic ideology, that women’s role was in the home, and that only a woman who had received the right curriculum of education would become a good and feminine wife. The educational ideas of the Bluestocking women were influential throughout the 19th Century. These ideas were intended to create literate, cultivated women, with knowledge in literature, history, geography, and natural science.⁴⁷ The Bluestockings valued the development of independent thought and intellectual autonomy. They sought to reproduce femininity, in educated and virtuous wives. Hannah Moore, one of the early members of this society, wrote about educational reforms in her book *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, in 1799.⁴⁸ In the first chapter, *Practical Uses of Female Knowledge – A Comparative View of the Sexes*, Moore writes of woman that “she is to read the best books, not so

⁴¹ (Cobbe, 1863, 222)

⁴² (Cobbe, 1863, 224)

⁴³ (Cobbe, 1863, 225)

⁴⁴ (Cobbe, 1863, 227)

⁴⁵ (Jordan, 2014, 444)

⁴⁶ (Jordan, 2014, 447)

⁴⁷ (Jordan, 2014, 451)

⁴⁸ (Jordan, 2014, 451)

much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement she derives from them to rectification of her principles, and the formation of her habits.⁴⁹ She wrote about the importance for young women to learn about useful topics like economy, rather than poetry or music, which would not help her manage her household.⁵⁰

None of these pioneering writers directly challenged *domestic ideology's* suppressive and domesticated role for women. Dorothea Beale wrote that her school was seeking “the right means of training girls so that they may best perform that subordinate part in the world to which I believe they have been called”.⁵¹ Change came with the women’s movements of the 1860s and onwards, that opposed women’s lack of autonomy and their limitation to the “sphere” of the home. One of the most famous advocates for women’s education was Emily Davies, who wanted women to pursue upper middle class professions, such as physician, barrister and politician. To attain these professions, which required university studies, young women needed the same basic secondary school curriculum as young men.⁵² Despite challenging women’s inferior role, most of these women, like the earlier generation of writers, continued to use the “making better companions for men”, and “moral improvement” arguments as justification for their proposals. Henrietta Stanley wrote that being a helpful companion to a man is the happiest position of the woman, but that conventional inferiority is no guarantee of good companionship.⁵³

Beth Baron, a contemporary writer, has written about Western influences on the evolving role and status of the Middle Eastern women. Beth Baron has researched the pioneering writers, and their debate about women’s rights and roles in late 19th century Egypt. Baron writes that there were many Western influences in Egypt leading up to the time of this movement of women writers. From the arrival of the French troops in 1798, to the British occupation in 1882, the presence of colonial powers had an influence on the Egyptian modernization.⁵⁴ In the late 19th century, when *al-Fatāh* was published, about 10 percent of the population in urban centres was foreign. This meant that many middle and upper-class women in Egypt had personal contact with Western women.⁵⁵

Egypt needed to borrow military techniques, political ideas, and industrial organization, in order to modernise itself and catch up with the West. Many Egyptian intellectuals travelled to Europe and America to attain higher educations and brought back new ideas. In writing about the role of the Syrian women writers, such as Hind Nawfal, Baron writes that they were bridging European and Arabic cultures in their writings. These writers wrote and translated articles of Western women. Some of them travelled and experienced the West themselves. Despite this, they depicted Western women in monolithic terms and dissociated themselves from Western women’s political demands. Instead these Syrian women writers identified with their Eastern identity and sought to prove the existence of powerful women in their local history.⁵⁶ They rarely wrote about religious disputes. They argued for girls’ education, and more use of the Arabic language in education.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ (More, 1799, 2)

⁵⁰ (More, 1799, 6)

⁵¹ (Jordan, 2014, 454)

⁵² (Jordan, 2014, 456)

⁵³ (Jordan, 2014, 459)

⁵⁴ (Baron, 1994, 38)

⁵⁵ (Baron, 1994, 105)

⁵⁶ (Baron, 1994, 104.)

⁵⁷ (Baron, 1994, 106)

Girls' education was, according to Baron, one of the main concerns of the early Egyptian women's movement. Many articles in *al-Fatah* and other women's journals dealt with the subject of women's rights and advantages of education. These women wrote in the context of the Nationalist debate on education, which criticised British policies, e.g investing just one percent of state funds in education.⁵⁸ The advocates of educational reform in Egypt sought a more European model of schooling, expanded to include the lower classes of society. They wanted to have a separate system for boys and girls.⁵⁹ In order to legitimize their demands for girls' education, the advantages both for the family and the nation were highlighted. Education was needed because girls would become mothers who reared the infants of the nation. From a religious, Muslim, point of view, encouraged education for women, so they could learn their rights and responsibilities.⁶⁰ There were already traditional schools, and since the early 19th century, European style schools were being built. The British later decided to incorporate the traditional schools, which taught mainly lower class children, into the state system. They still distinguished between the two types of schooling, modern and traditional, so that the lower class girls could receive a traditional education in Quran studies, whereas the middle class girls could attend the European type primary schooling, learning subjects like Arabic, Turkish, religion, drawing, piano, and needlework.⁶¹ The lack in state funding for the school system, led to an increase in privately run schools. Along with the network of Egyptian private schools, the growing demand for education, led to French Catholic, British Anglican, American Presbyterian, as well as other missionary groups, setting up educational facilities of their own. During the second half of the century, these missionary groups built churches, hospitals, orphanages, and schools. The failure of the state to meet the growing demand for education, created a ready market for these missionaries to expand. For a time they taught a larger number of girls, than any other institution in Egypt. In 1892, while Christian missionaries taught 9000 girls, and other non-state institutions taught 4000 girls, only 242 students received education through the state schools.⁶²

In conclusion, early women writers in Egypt were acquainted with Western women writers and Western ideas, both through their literature and through personal contacts. As in the West, the debate on girls' education had an important place in the larger debate about women's rights and roles. Western women writers argued for reform of girls' education to include the same subjects as that of boys. The argument that education would create better wives and mothers and that it would benefit both the society and the individual, was used by both conservative thinkers and protofeminists. Along with traditional Egyptian education, the influence of British and Western missionary education was also strongly felt right through to the late 19th century and into the 20th century.

⁵⁸ (Baron, 1994, 122)

⁵⁹ (Baron, 1994, 124)

⁶⁰ (Baron, 1994, 125)

⁶¹ (Baron, 1994, 128)

⁶² (Baron, 1994, 135)

5. Analysis

5.1 Text One - The Roles and Rights of Women in Household Management in Egypt

Summary of Text One

The text was published under the heading *Women, her rights and roles in Egypt – in household management*. It was published in the fifth number of the Journal *al-Fatāh* in April 1893.⁶³ It is originally an excerpt from an introduction to a book on household management, which was published by Arts Press in Egypt (المطبوع بمطبعة الآداب بمصر). It does not give the name of the writer, or the year when the book was originally published.

The aim of the article is to argue for girls' education. The writer discusses girls' rights to education and its benefit to them for their household management tasks. The writer supports her arguments with comparisons between educated and non-educated mothers' methods in childrearing. The writer is also comparing the Eastern women with educated Europeans.

I have numbered the paragraphs in the article 1- 13, this will make it easier for me to discuss the content. I have also numbered my citations, to make it easier to follow and so that I may refer to the same argument more than once.

Arguments for Girl's Education in Text One

Indirect references

Most of the discussion on girls' education is taken up by the argument that education will “make them become better mothers.” In two places (**paragraphs 1 and 3**), the writer supports this indirectly, by saying that girls will have important future responsibilities in their homes.

In paragraph 1, she begins the text with:

أهم دواعي انحطاط الأمة عدم تربية بناتها وبقاؤهن في ظلام الجهل، لأن أبنائها مهما بلغت في التهذيب العقلي والارتقاء العلمي فلا تحوز تقدما ولا ارتقاء ما دامت التربية غير مشتركة بينهم وبين البنات (Cit. 1)

The main reason for the degradation of the nation is its failure to educate its girls and keeping them in the darkness of ignorance. Because regardless of the intelligence and scientific progress that it reached, there was no development and no progress as long as education was not shared between the boys and the girls.

The writer's use of the phrase the darkness of ignorance (في ظلام الجهل) is a strong description of how girls are not being considered important. The word (الجهل) “ignorance” is used in many places in the

⁶³ (El-Sadda, 2006, 211-214)

text to describe those girls who lack education. The writer's point in this argument is that the nation will not progress as long as the girls remain ignorant and the education is unequal between boys and girls.

The writer then criticises that boys are favoured by being educated, when girls will gain important responsibility for their homes and children:

(Cit.2)

كيف لا والبنات يأتى عليهن زمن يصيرن فيه منوطات بتدبير المنزل وسياستها وتهذيب أخلاق الأولاد

Why not, since a time will come for the girls to take up the tasks of managing and administering the house, and to refine the manners of her children?

In arguing this, she says (زمن يصيرن فيه منوطات بتدبير المنزل) to explain why women should be entitled to education, thus showing the importance of these responsibilities. In paragraph 3, she backs up her argument in a similar way, expressing the important impressions that the mothers will have on their children with their special, close relationships:

(Cit.3)

كيف لا وهن الملازمات لهم على الدوام المطلعات على سرهم وجهرهم خصوصا في سن الطفولية حيث تكون التربية معهودة إليهن وليس إلى الآباء.

How could it be otherwise, when they are with them at all times and know all that they keep secret and that which they reveal to them, especially during infancy, when the childrearing is their responsibility and not the fathers'.

The writer wants to express that this responsibility, should be much valued, and girls need the same education as boys, to perform it well. She stresses that this is the responsibility of the mothers and not the fathers'.

Direct References

In paragraphs 2, 3, and 6, the writer is stating directly that education will make better mothers. In this statement in paragraph 2, she writes that:

(Cit.4)

فإن كن من المتعلمات المهذبات أفدن الأطفال خير إفادة، ونقشن على صفحات قلوبهم قواعد وتعاليم تؤسس عليها حياتهم في المستقبل.

Thus if they were educated and well mannered they could provide for the children well and inscribe the pages of their hearts with foundations and teachings that could provide a base for their future lives.

The use of the word (أفدن) which means “to be of good use”, “to help” “to inform”, I have chosen to translate as “to provide for” the children.

This argument is very similar to those made by Western women about women's roles in the *domestic ideology* of the 19th century. It is clear that the writer believes that education is needed for women to become better mothers, and that this is why he/she wants girls' education. By writing (ونقشن على)

“inscribe the pages of their hearts”, he/she graphically points out that the methods of childrearing and the mothers love will leave traces and become a solid base in their adult lives. Paragraph 3 expresses what will happen when women are not educated:

(Cit.5)

وبالعكس إن كن جاهلات ورؤسهن مزدانة بأنوار الأحجار الكريمة وخالية من شعاع العقل والأداب طبعن في عقول الأطفال صورة جهلن

And on the contrary, if they are ignorant and their heads were ornamented with the light of precious stones and devoid of the beams of reason and good manners, they would imprint their children's minds with a copy of their own ignorance.

The uneducated Arabic mothers appear in the text to be very irrational and unstable, which is expressed in their heads being (مزدانة بأنوار الأحجار الكريمة) “ornamented with the light of precious stones”, and they are so focused on beauty and superficiality that they are blind to reason and reality. He/she writes that they are (وخالية من شعاع العقل والأداب) “devoid of the beams of reason and good manners,” (صورة جهلن) “a picture of (their) ignorance,” and says that their children will adapt their ignorance. They are unable to teach their children manners and skills and they cannot handle their own emotions while interacting with them.

In paragraph 6, the benefits of girls' education are being mentioned:

(Cit.6)

ومن منا ينكر فضل الوالدة المهذبة المتحلية بحلى العلم والآداب المتمسكة بعروة الدين الوثقى، فهي تربي أولادها خير تربية وتصرف معظم وقتها في تأييد السلام بمنزلها وبين أولادها وحسم ما يكدر الصفاء.

Who among us, would deny the benefits of the well mannered and educated mother, with jewels of knowledge and refinement, grasping the firm bounds of the faith. Because she rears her children well and spends most of her time spreading harmony in her home and between her children and settles anything that disturbs the sincerity.

The writer speaks of the advantages of the educated woman with (بحلى العلم والآداب المتمسكة) “jewels of knowledge and refinement” who (بعروة الدين الوثقى) “grasps the firm bounds of the faith.” This seems to express the advantages of *religious autonomy*, which was argued by the Bluestockings, that education would allow women to better make moral judgements. This is expressed with the woman (تأييد السلام بمنزلها) “spreading harmony in her house”, and who (وحسم ما يكدر الصفاء) “settles anything that disturbs the sincerity.”

Comparisons Between Women

The writer also uses comparisons between educated and non-educated mothers to explain the benefits of education. In the following paragraphs, **2, 3, 6, 7 and 8**, the writer has been using these types of arguments.

In paragraph 2, (see Cit.6), he/she says that if the mothers were educated and well mannered they could inform the children well and inscribe the pages of their hearts with foundations and teachings that could provide a basis for their future lives.

While in paragraph 3, (See Cit.7) she explains this if they are uneducated and their heads were (مزدانة) (بأنوار الأحجار الكريمة) “ornamented with the lights of precious stones”, they would imprint their

children's minds with a copy of their own ignorance. With this the writer wants to say that the manners that the mother will develop due to her education, will determine whether or not she will become a good mother.

In paragraph 6, (see Cit. 8) the advantage of education is described, in that the mother (تربى أولادها خير) "rears her children well" and that she (معظم وقتها في تأييد السلام بمنزلها) "spends most of her time with building harmony in her house." In paragraph 7, she states her opinion directly, saying that:

(Cit.7)

والفرق بين هذه وبين الوالدة الجاهلة ظاهر كالصبح لذى عينين

And the difference between this woman and the uneducated woman is as clear as day

(Cit.8)

فإنك إذا دخلت إلى منزل الأم الجاهلة لا تسمع إلا ضجيجا وسبا وضربا إلى غير ذلك من الدواعى والشتائم التي تقشعر منها الأبدان، وسببه ضعف شوكة الأم وعدم معرفتها بمبادئ التربية الصحيحة. *So you, if you entered a home of an uneducated mother you will only hear noise, swearing and hitting, and the line of insults and accusations which make the body shiver. The reason for this is the mother's weakened power and her lack of the education.*

The home of the uneducated mother is described as being filled with violence, you will hear nothing but (لا تسمع إلا ضجيجا وسبا وضربا) "noise, swearing and hitting." The reason for this is (ضعف شوكة الأم) "the mothers weakened strength and her lack of the education." In paragraph 8, the writer gives another example of the difficulties faced by the uneducated mother in being a gentle mother, while also maintaining her authority and over the children. Here it is written that if she is unable to answer the requests of her son, her response will be:

(Cit. 9)

قتبدره بالسب والقذف والضرب حتى ينتهى أو ربما لا ينتهى عن غيه

So she snaps at him with insults, accusations, and beating, until he stops or maybe he doesn't stop with his offense.

The uneducated mother is again described as being very irrational and without control over her emotions and manners. The writer continues by writing that

(Cit.10)

وهذا العمل من الوالدة مما يملأ فؤاد الوالد من البغض والكراهة لها، فضلا عن تخلفه بأخلاقها الفاسدة من السب والقذف والشتائم ورفع الصوت

This act of the mother fills the father with dislike to the mother. In addition to that, she also shapes him with her bad manners of insults, accusations, swearing, and shouting.

With (تخلفه بأخلاقها) I interpret that the writer means that the mother is teaching the father her bad behaviour. It is possible that there might be a spelling mistake in this sentence which would change the meaning. The words son (الولد) and father (الوالد) are very similar and it is easy to make the mistake between them while writing. I assume that the writer in this case wants to refer to the son, and means to write that the mother's bad manners will influence the son and he will adapt the same behaviour. This reference could however also be interpreted as that the father, sees this interaction

between the mother and the son and that this then leads to the father adapting her bad manners, of swearing, striking, insulting and shouting. This idea would agree with the “good companion” argument, that if the women are uneducated, they will destroy their husbands’ level of good manners and knowledge.

Debating Girls’ Curriculum

The writer does not argue for any specific curriculum for girls’ education, but does however, refer in a few places to different kinds of education. For example in paragraph 1 (see. Cit.1), he/she writes that “boys are preferred to reach intelligence and scientific advancement,” and that there can be no development until the education is “equal between them and the girls.” This implies that there is a problem with the boys education being favoured and can therefore be interpreted as the author seeking scientific and intelligent education for girls also. But because the writer does not put that in words, I can not draw that conclusion.

In paragraph 5, after defending why girls should go to school, he/she writes:

(Cit.11)

والصواب إنه لا خوف عليهن إذا جمعن بين العلم والمبادي الدينية والأدبية وتوشحن بلباس التقوى
وخوف الله تعالى

The right is not to worry about them if they assemble the science, the principles of religion and decency and dress in modern clothing and fear of God the almighty.

Here the writer mentions that it should be acceptable for girls to receive a broader education, including both science and history. In paragraph 9, writing, that:

(Cit. 12)

فإذا علمت السيدات أن التربية تعلی شأنهن وتساوی درجتهم بدرجة وتقويهن على مشاركتهم في
الأعمال العقلية كالتأليف والتعليم والخطابة ومعالجة المرضى وغيرها لكن يبادرن إلى التعليم.

If women knew that education raises their situation, gave them an equal level of status and empowers them to participate in intellectual work like writing, teaching, speaking, treating the sick, and more, they would set out to become educated.

I interpret (وتساوى درجتهم بدرجة) to mean “equal level status” literally it means “equal level”. (وتساوى) means “to become equal” (بدرجة) emphasizes (درجتهم) “level” or “degree”.

This is the first place where the writer mentions equal status to the men and the possibility of the women taking up positions outside of the home. This is similar to some of the arguments used by Western women in the late 19th century. Even if they still saw women’s main place as being within the home (*domestic ideology*), they didn’t see women as inferiors, but equals.

Because the writer suggests that women could, if educated, take up work, this seems to suggest that he/she sees the possibility of working outside the home as an additional benefit of a broader education. However, in mentioning that women could work at (الأعمال العقلية كالتأليف والتعليم والخطابة) (ومعالجة المرضى وغيرها) “writing, teaching, speaking, treating the sick, and more,” he/she seems also to suggest that there are certain jobs appropriate for women to participate in.

Other Evidence of Western Influences on the Text

The second part of the article includes many comparisons between Western and Eastern women. In those, the writer describes the Western women as being, in general, better at their duties as mother and wives. This is believed to be due to their “perceived” educational advantage, as Westerners. The writer doesn’t make any references to specific people, but makes references to Europe.

Paragraph 11 is the first place where the comparisons to Western women appear:

(Cit.13)

لا كالغربيات اللواتى يتهمن بتربية أولادهن باللين واللفظ لا بالقسوة والعنف والإكراه والشتائم والضرب

Unlike the Western women who care to educate their children softly and gently and not with cruelty, violence, coercion, insults and battering.

This picture shows Western women as being calm and understanding, who, because of their education, know how to deal with their children.

The next two paragraphs (14, 15) are an illustration of European family life and the methods used by mothers in childrearing.

(Cit. 14)

وكل من سافر إلى إحدى المدن الأوروبية وولج منزل إحدى العائلات رأى الوالد والوالدة والأبناء والبنات مجتمعين إما حول المائدة وإما حول وجليق النار ليصطلوا حسب عاداتهم،

Anyone who travels to one of the European cities and enters a family home, sees the father, the mother, the sons and the daughters gathered together either around the dinner table or around the fireplace to get warm, according to their habits.

I believe that the writer has made a spelling mistake where it is written (وجلق النار), which I can not find any meaning for. I believe that she intended to write (وجاق النار) which means stove. The meaning suits the rest of the sentence and I have therefore chosen to interpret this to mean “fireplace”. In providing an image of how the European family is gathered, around a fire, it sounds like that the writer believes that this example of a European family counts for all of Europe. This image is shared with (كل من سافر) “everyone who has travelled” there. The writer shows to be familiar with European family life and habits, when he/she writes that they do this (حسب عاداتهم) “according to their habits.” This would mean that the writer itself has either been in Europe, or read or heard stories from others about how people in Europe socialise in their families. The Western family is described as valuing the educational advancements of their children. So when they sit around the fire:

(Cit.15)

الأحاديث العلمية المناسبة لسن الأطفال المرقية للملكاتهم المهذبة لطباعهم والأولاد يسألون عن علل بعض الأشياء ومعرفة بعض المسائل المفيدة فيجاوبهن الوالد والوالدة بكل بشاشة ولطف عن أسئلتهم، بعبارة سهلة الإدراك

An educational conversation suitable to the age of the children, advancing their cultural disposition and developing for their characters. The children ask about reasons for some things and about

knowledge in some useful issues and the mother and the father answers all their questions with charm and kindness, with words easy to understand.

The word (للملكتهم) must be a mistake, where the writer has added both definite article and possessive pronoun. I have chosen to interpret this word without the definite article and with its pronoun.

It is described how the children are encouraged to learn about scientific topics. The parents are delighted to answer them with (بكل بشاشة ولطف) "charm and kindness." Then the writer goes on to describe how this method of rearing children is highly beneficial for advancements of the children's skills and manners.

(Cit. 16)

وربما كان الأطفال لا يبلغون من العمر السنتين أو الثلاث حتى يكونوا قد أخذوا في أسباب القراءة وتأسست فيهم مبادئ التهذيب والانقياد إلى الطاعة

And the children have maybe not even reached the age of two or three years in order that they should start reading. And have established in them the principles of discipline and compliance to obedience.

Here he/she seems accustomed to European families and to their children's early advancements in reading and politeness. Then continues to describe the alternative teaching methods that European parents are inventing to teach their young children how to read

(Cite. 17)

كشراء أنواع مخصوصة من الحلويات مكتوب على كل واحدة منها حرف من الحروف الهجائية وعندما يطلب الولد شيئاً منها تأمره أمه بتركيب كلمة أو انتخاب حرف مخصوص، فإذا عمل ذلك فله وإلا فلا حتى يتعلم.

such as buying special types of sweets which have written on them letters from the alphabet. And when the son asks for a piece of (candy), the mother instructs him to make a word or pick out a specific letter, so if he does the task she will give it to him and if he doesn't [she won't], in order that he learns it.

These arguments portray the European mother as calm and as an expert to childrearing. The children are developing very early and the family is described in an ideal and harmonious way. Again, the writer is well accustomed with the childrearing techniques of the West. While the example of the sweets hardly sounds like the most common method of teaching, it could have been something that the writer has found in a European household management book or similar. In contrast with what has been written about the ignorant women, the European women have required good discipline and manners from their children (فإذا عمل ذلك فله وإلا فلا حتى يتعلم.) "so if he does the task she will give it to him and if he doesn't she won't, in order that he learns it." The problem with the examples of Arabic women that was used earlier was that their children didn't respect them, due to their lack of skills and manners.

(Cite. 18)

وإذا طلب شيئاً من والدته ورأت الضرورة تدعيها بأن لا تجيب طلبه تفهمه باللطف والأنس والرفقة
علة امتناعها

nd if he asks something from his mother and she sees that necessity requires her not to answer his request, she explains to him with gentleness, affability and tenderness why she denies it.

Western women are again described to be gentle and loving with the children, while also teaching them what is right. Household management was becoming a system that women had to learn how to do in a more organised and efficient manner. In the same way, the system for childrearing was also being developed. It sounds by the examples above, as if the writer wants to adapt a European system for rearing the children. Another thing to note from these examples is the typical Western nuclear family, mother, father, sons and daughters, are gathered together. This family model was becoming increasingly popular and common within middle class Egyptian families. The writer ends the article with:

: (Cit. 19)

كل ذلك، وهي متباعدة عن النفور بالسب والشتم والضرب وما به تكدير صفو العيش.

All that without using swearing, abuse, hitting and all that spoils life's happiness.

Here the writer compares this to what he/she has previously written about uneducated Arab women, whose homes would be full of insults, shouting, hitting and accusations. This illustration of the Western family, and the role that the educated mother serves in her family, is used in order to describe why education is important. The writer's ideas of the Western family model must come either from personal experience, stories or readings of Western women literature.

Conclusion

There have been many arguments in the text that support the statement that education is needed to benefit women's roles in the home. The comparisons that were made were justified on the basis of the "better mothers" argument. Most of the arguments for why women should become educated suit the *domestic ideology*, which was discussed by the European writers. The writer argues for women to become educated, in order to become better in their household tasks. In continuously basing the comparisons on women's manners within their homes, it can be understood that the writer considers woman's first priority the home. Many of the European writers also argued that the women would become better companions to their husbands. This argument isn't found in the article, other than that they are indirectly better if they perform their household duties better.

Regarding "Debating Girls' Education", there were fewer places in the text in which the writer directly argued about what kind of education girls should be taught. It can however be interpreted from some of his/her arguments that he/she wants girls to receive similar education to boys. In some parts of these arguments scientific, intellectual, religious teachings are mentioned, and in one place the writer points out the types of work that women could do if they were educated. This shows that the writer had a broader type of education in mind, but it does not necessarily prove that this was an important point for him/her. The writer does not actively argue for a broader education. As all the comparisons relate back to the duties in the home, it could be understood that the writer prefers women to stay at home, or that that is how the arguments for girls' education is justified. On a similar note, even Western women, all through the 19th century, were arguing for educational reform, on the basis that it would improve woman's work in the home. With the references that are

being made to the West and to the educated Western women, it can be interpreted that the writer wants a similar education and childrearing system as in the West. I have found no evidence in the text of that the writer wants to adapt the Western type education, and change it to suit an Egyptian context.

It could be questioned if there is a direct influence, or if it is more the case of societies having similar human (female) responses to similar human (male) forms of oppression? In that case the women in Egypt would not be influenced by the West in seeking their emancipation and rights. The similarities in their arguments could be due to the similarities in their situations that both groups are facing male and religiously dominated societies, to which they show a similar response.

However, the references made to Western women and to adapting the Western household management system, is clearer evidence of influence. Several comparisons were made to Western women, in a way which makes the women of the West seem like one entity. The writer takes for granted that the Western women are all educated. In idealising the European family model, and their way of educating the children, it is implied that the writer itself has either been in Europe, visiting a family, or has read or heard stories told about Western women and their childrearing techniques. The writer claims to know how Western women educated their children, and does express a want for something similar in Egypt. On this point it is also evident that the writer was influenced by European women and that had an idealised idea of Europe.

In this text the writer argued for girls' education to become better mothers. It did not argue much about the women becoming better wives. It gave some indications of that the education should be broader and include scientific subjects, but the writer didn't highlight this in the arguments. Comparisons between women in the West and Arab uneducated mothers were used, in a way that suggests that the writer has knowledge about European culture, family life and habits. No direct references to any specific women in the West were made.

5.2 Text Two – Part Two of The Roles and Rights of Women in Household Management in Egypt

Summary of Text Two

The article is a continuation of the previous text; it was thus published under the same title, *Women, her rights and roles in Egypt – in household management*. It was published in the sixth number of the journal *al-Fatāh* in May 1893.⁶⁴

The topic of this article is girls' education in relation to society, women's suffrage and healthy relationships. It also deals with the topic of household management. The writer makes comparisons between America and Egypt; she also makes reference to Western women in the text.

As with the previous article, I have numbered the paragraphs 1 – 8, in order to make it easier to discuss the content. I have also numbered my citations, to make it easier follow and so that I may refer to the same argument more than once.

Arguments for Girl's Education in Text Two

Education Making Better Wives

Most of the discussion on girls' education in this text, is taken up with the argument that it makes them become better wives. These types of arguments have been used in the following paragraphs, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

In paragraph 4, the writer speaks about the need for women to receive education so that their husbands will not become depressed with their ignorance and lack of scientific interests. The author begins the argument by using Egypt as an example of where the failure to educate girls has caused young men to enter into habits of drinking and drug misuses:

(Cit.1)

وأقوى دليل على أن تربية الأبناء دون البنات لا تجدى نفعا ما نشاهده في بلادنا من أن معظم الشبان المصريين الآن يتقنون التعليم ويتربون التربية التامة، ولكن بتأهيلهم ببعض العاريات عن الحكمة والتدبير تنحط معارفهم وتمحى علومهم من صدورهم

And the strong evidence that educating the sons without educating the girls is of no use, is what we see in our country: that most of the young Egyptian boys today master knowledge and are well educated, but when they get married with someone who is deprived of wisdom and education, their level of culture decreases and the knowledge is wiped out from their chests.

This argument reflects the ideas in *domestic ideology* that the European women used to justify their debate for educational reform. According to that gender ideology, it was considered important for a woman to be a good and understanding companion, for her husband not to suffer in her company. Where he/she writes (تمحى علومهم من صدورهم), "the knowledge is wiped out from their chests", the writer explains graphically that since the women won't become smarter, the men will have to lower their own level knowledge, to interact with their wives. This will make them unhappy and it will waste all efforts in educating them in the first place.

⁶⁴ (El-Sadda, 2006, 270-273)

The argument is strengthened with:

(Cit. 2)

وذلك لعدم وجود شريك لهم بالمنزل يوافقهم على أفكارهم المتتورة، وبالنسبة لما يحصل لهم من الحزن والكره وسوء المعيشة الناتجة من عدم اتفاق نساءهم ومدامتهم على المشاجرة

That is because of the lack of a partner in the home that agrees with them in their enlightened ideas, and because of the sorrow, chagrin and poor life, resulting from their wives lack of understanding and their continuous quarrelling.

The writer is here stressing the need for women to become educated in order to have healthier relationships. He/she describes all misfortunes that come out of ignorance and of an unequal relationship between men and women. In highlighting how this lack of understanding between partners can worsen relationships and everything in the home, the writer goes on to say:

(Cit. 3)

فلا يلبث الشاب أن يتعود (بعد أن يتزوج) على السهر بالأسواق وهجر الكتب والمحابر التي فنى شبابه بينها، فيتعلق بشرب المسكرات وتناول المغيبات وتلم الصيت خوفا من دخوله بالمنزل، فيسمع ما لا يسره

It does not take long time (after they marry) before the young man gets accustomed to spending their nights in the markets. Abandoning the books and the inkwells amongst which he spent his youth, he becomes dependent on drinking alcoholic beverages, taking narcotics, and defamation, fearing from entering the house, because he hears what isn't pleasing him.

The men are well educated and happy, but as they marry a woman who is lacking scientific knowledge and good manners, they become unhappy. The author goes as far as saying that this is why young men enter into substance misuse. Where he/she writes (فيسمع ما لا يسره), it can be interpreted that they fear entering the house, because they so much despise their wives lack of manners and understanding in interesting topics. Subsequently, the author goes as far as to mention that some of these young men even die, due to these addictions, which are cause by lack of girls' education.

(Cit. 4)

وقد يمرض الكثيرون من الشبان لا سيما المسيحيين بسبب عدم تربية البنات

Many of the youths may get sick, not least the Christians, because of the lack of education for the girls.

All of these arguments in paragraph 4 thus are made to justify girls' education on the basis of becoming better companions for their husbands.

Household Management

Paragraph 5 is about the new household management system which has been brought into Egypt from the West. This system systematically explains how to do everything around the house in the right manner. The writer mentions that this system is entrusted (implying responsibility) to the "housewife".

(Cit. 5)

فعلى ربة الدار المناط بها هذا العمل الخطير تتعلق الآمال في تأدية نظام يكون موافقا في تعداده

For it is on the housewife that this important work is entrusted and concerning the hopes in her to apply the system accordingly in its details.

By using descriptions of the household work as (العمل الخطير) "important work", the writer is empowering women and their worth. This recognition of the work made by the women is maybe the most important of all these points. Women, thus, needed education like men, because they had a very important responsibility in the home. This evolution of thought regarding household and responsibility took place in the West as well.

Finally in paragraph 8, the writer continues to stress the point that young women need training in this new household management system:

(Cit.6)

وحيث كما تقدم أن السيدات هن القابضات على زمام هاتيك المنازل النافذات لغتها وسمينها،
الأمرات الناهيات في نظام حركاتها وسكناتها، فيجب كل الوجوب إتقان تربيتهن وصوغ أخلاقهن
في قالب التهذيب الأدبي الكمال النفسى

As we mentioned before, the ladies have grabbed the responsibility of the house and, they have the full control of the system and everything inside it, it is of the outmost necessity perfecting their education and in forming their morals in refining their manners and perfection of their selves.

According to Hans Wehr dictionary (الأمرات الناهيات) means "absolute master, Vested with unlimited authority". I have had difficulty to understand what (لغتها وسمينها) "its thinness and fatness" means, but in this context I interpret as to mean "everything inside it".

When these new ideas for managing the home were brought in, education was needed for women to change their habits. Women were expected to learn how to carry out their tasks in a more efficient and systematic way. The writer is using this to justify the need for girls' education and development, just as women in the West did. Not particular to the Middle East, these changes in household management were also taking place in the West. In writing (أن السيدات هن القابضات على زمام هاتيك المنزل) "the ladies have grabbed the responsibility of the house" he/she is showing that there is a change going on and that women are actively taking on these new responsibilities. The writer continues in the same paragraph to develop this thought:

(Cit. 7)

وكما أن رجال السياسة تقوم بهم سطوة الممالك، كذلك السيدات يصلحن خلل المنازل مع النهوض
بأعبائها للحصول على تجدد نظام الأمن والراحة

Just like the influence of the kingdoms rest upon the men of politics, the women have upon them the reform of the faults of the homes through their renewal and burdens for modernisation of the system of protection and comfort.

Through this argument, the author raises the value and importance of housework to an honourable level, stressing that woman now has the responsibility for its management. It also shows that the writer considers the home to be the main responsibility of the woman, while the nation is that of men in politics.

Finally, paragraph 8 and thereby the article ends with:

(Cit. 8)

وما أشقى الذين لا يذوقون طعم تربيتهم، فأولئك هم الموطى في عالم الأحياء.

And who are more wretched than those who do not get to taste [the fruits of] the education of these women; they are the oppressed in the world of the living.

The writer has used the word (الموطى) "oppressed", and this could be the meaning. However, I believe that this could be a spelling mistake, and that the writer could have intended to write (الموتى) "dead". This sentence would make more sense if it was intended to say that "they are dead in the world of the living".

In both of these interpretations, the outcome becomes similar. Because if they were brought up without an educated mother who could teach them order, love and happiness, then they would lack the skills needed in society and in their relationships, and thus become oppressed. On the contrary, If the writer really did intend to write that they become like the ones who are dead in the world of the living, it signals that they are unseen or unrecognised by the "living" people. I interpret it to mean that they are misfortunate and do not experience any of the good things in life. They therefore are, in the words of the writer, (الموتى في عالم الأحياء) "dead in the world of living." Here the writer is referring to all the issues that have been discussed in regards to issues in the homes of ignorant women with lack of knowledge and good manners.

Debating Girls' Curriculum

While the whole text promotes the need for girls' education, the writer does not express directly what sort of education should be available for girls. In many of the arguments, it can be understood from the writer's use of certain words, that he/she is seeking a similar curriculum for both boys and girls. The writer expresses these ideas in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4.

Already in paragraph 2, the author expresses a preference for equal education between the genders:

(Cit.9)

ومن استقرى التاريخ علم فضل النساء ومجاراتهن في الأعمال للرجال منذ زمن بعيد، واقتنع بأنهن إذا تعلمن ساوين الرجال بدون فرق

And the one who examines history knows the preference of women and they have been keeping up work in accordance with men since a long time. He is convinced that, if they [the women] were educated, they would become equal to the men without distinction.

The writer is in this paragraph stresses that women have been important in their contribution to men's work in history, and that educating women would make them equal to men.

The argument then continues to be supported with examples of well accomplished and famous historical women.

(Cit. 10)

، ولنذكر بعضاً من الشهيرات مثل مدام دي سفينياه التى تستحق تحاريرها أن تكتب بماء الذهب

ومدام دى سايل التي أدهشت علماء عصرها بالفلسفة والسياسة والتشخيص (وهي التي عارضت نابليون الأول وأرهبته حتى نفاها عنه)، وكاترين كسوبرين التي خاضت بحر العلوم الطبيعية والرياضية وقوت رأى لوك الفيلسوف الإنجليزي الشهير، وثيانو الشاعرة بنت فيثاغورس الفيلسوف وهيئاتيا بنت الفيلسوف ثيون وغيرهن.

Let us recall some of the celebrities such as Madam De Sevigné who deserves for her letters to be written with golden ink; Madam De Stael, who startled the scientists of her era with philosophy, politics and personality (she was the one who opposed Napoleon the first and terrorized him until he denied her); Catherine Cockburn who immersed herself in Natural Science and Mathematics and supported the opinion of the famous English philosopher Locke; Theano, the poet and daughter of Pythagoras the philosopher; Hypatia, daughter of the philosopher Theon, and others.

Using these examples of powerful and strong women in history, proves that if women are educated scientifically and intellectually, they can become very accomplished and influential in their fields.

Referring to these women and honouring their accomplishments, shows the writer's openness towards women entering professional careers and most of all, support for equal education for boys and girls.

In paragraph 3, the author expresses the importance of a (تربية تهذيبية علمية) refined and scientific education for girls.

(Cit. 11)

وعليه، فلا ننكر أن التعليم يجعل المرأة مساوية للرجل، ولا نجعل أن كل أمة بناتها غير مترقيات تربية تهذيبية علمية فلا بد من تقوض بنايتها وسقوط أعمدتها بل تلاشيتها بالتدريج من على وجه البسيطة.

Accordingly, we cannot deny that education makes woman equal to man, nor can we deny that the structures and pillars of every nation whose girls are not given a refined and scientific education, will be destroyed and fall down, eventually fading gradually from the face of the earth.

Again he/she mentions how women cannot become equal to men, unless they receive an education. If this education is to make them equal, one can assume that the writer wants a similar education for both men and women. The author also stresses the importance of science, writing that in countries where girls will not receive "a refined and scientific education," these nations will " (فلا بد من تقوض بنايتها وسقوط أعمدتها بل تلاشيتها بالتدريج من على وجه البسيطة) eventually fading gradually from the face of the earth." This way, the author emphasises the importance of girls' education as the basis for a functioning society. This could refer to what has been written about previously, where women's lack of education leads to issues in their homes and relationships, (see cit. 2). This idea about education as necessary for functional relationships is similar to the ideas that European women used. They also justified their demand for education by arguing that it made women more virtuous, while at the same time, seeking to reform the curriculum to include more academic subjects.

Paragraph 4 gives examples of misfortunes in the home, caused by the lack of girls' education. The main cause was (وذلك لعدم وجود شريك لهم بالمنزل يوافقهم على أفكارهم المتتورة)

"because of the lack of a partner in the home that agrees with them in their enlightened ideas". The writer is indicating again here that he/she wants girls' education to be the same as boys. If women are to be educated to understand the topics which their husbands have been studying, they must of course be taught those same subjects. And finally, in the same paragraph it is written:

(Cit. 12)

وصرت الوقت هدرا نظرا لخلو أذهانهن من الآداب والتعاليم المفيدة

Time is spent in vain, seeing that the women's minds are devoid of good manners and useful education.

Yet again, the author stresses the importance of learning good manners but also (التعاليم المفيدة) "useful education", indicating the need for learning which could have a practical use, rather than accumulating useless accomplishments. This was one of the main points debated by the European women.

Other evidence of Western influences on the text

This text shows in many ways that the writer has been influenced by Western writers, not least in its examples, comparisons and references to Western women. In this following part of the analysis, I will be give examples of how the writer describes the efforts by Western, mainly American, women to win the right to vote. These types of influences appear paragraphs 1, 2, and 5.

In paragraph 1 the writer talks about women's struggle for suffrage in America. The writer makes a comparison of West to East in order to highlight the reasons of Western women's success.

(Cit. 13)

وإن شئت فسل أهل أميركا عن تقدم نسائها وهم ينبؤونك بأن أساس ذلك هو اهدنائهم إلى توجه
العناية باتقان تربية البنات

If you want then ask the American people on the progress of their women. And they will tell you that the basis of women's success is that they pay attention to girl's education.

This clearly shows that the writer has some knowledge of the progress of women in America. There is no sign of the writer being unhappy with the direction that the women in the West are taking. The writer uses this argument to claim that education is the means for successful women's development. This is stressed by the way the writer expresses (وإن شئت فسل أهل أميركا عن تقدم نسائها) "if you want then ask the American people on the progress of their women". With this positive representation of the women's movement in America and the benefits of women's education, the writer appears, at least in some ways to have assimilated Western views on "the Woman Question". Nowhere is it expressed that Egypt should seek an educational system slightly different than the West, or that the West has gone too far in their desire for female emancipation.

The author continues on the same topic, writing about the success of the American Suffragettes:

(Cit. 14)

فإن نساء تلك البلاد خصوصا الولايات المتحدة قد قمن على قدم وساق يطلبن حقوقهن ورفع المظالم
عنهن ومساواتهن بالرجال، ومن عهد ليس ببعيد أقرت الحكومة في بعض أقسامها للنساء الحق في
انتخابهن نوابا كالرجال

Because the women of those countries, especially the United States, worked with great effectiveness, demanding their rights, getting rid of the oppression over them and becoming equal with men, within a short time, the government acknowledged, in some areas, the right of women to elect delegates, the same as men.

Here the writer is using, again, developments in America to inspire the Egyptian women that everything is possible with good effort, explaining that the Americans had to try very hard (على قدم) "on their feet and legs," but that they achieved their goals.

I have chosen to translate (قد قمن على قدم وساق) with "worked with great effectiveness." The literal meaning of (قمن) is "to intend, to propose to do something." The words (على قدم وساق) is an expression which means "to become fully effective."

The writer continues to convince readers with examples of positive developments in America in the first part of paragraph 2. First he/she recites a discussion between a suffragette woman "Miss "Shbarsky Hanskn"⁶⁵, and an opponent, a man called Prof. Cobb. In response to his questioning of a resolution which had allowed women, in some areas, to participate in elections, she replies to him with:

(Cit. 15)

بقولها (قد ظهر من الرجال عدم السير إلى جادة الحق والاستقامة في أمر الانتخاب، فعلى النساء أن يبادرن إلى إصلاحهم بقولهن لهم بما أنكم لم تحسنوا في الانتخابات صنعا، فإليكم عنها ودعونا ننتخب لكم حكامكم، فنرفع السياسة من حضيض الذل والفساد إلى أوج المجد والطهارة، وبذلك يكون لمعشر النساء حق ثابت بالانتخاب يستخدمه للإفادة لا للافتخار)

It has been shown that men fail continuously to have justice and integrity in the matter of the elections. So it is on the women to begin to reform them by saying 'as you have not fared well in the elections, thus leave it and let us elect your rulers, so that we can raise politics from the bottom of humiliation and corruption to the height of glory and purity.' And therefore, women always have the right to use elections for good and not for self interest.

I have chosen to translate (لم تحسنوا في الانتخابات صنعا) "you did not fare well in the elections" however a more literal translation could be "you did not do well in the elections" where (صنعا) becomes (al-tamīz التمييز) and is used to further emphasise "well", together with (تحسنوا) "to do something well".

I have translated (معشر النساء) as "all women", but the word (معشر) means "assemblage" or "community", so literally it means "the community of women."

With all these references to the suffrage movement in America, it can be understood that the writer is a supporter of women's equal rights to men, and their equal rights to education. The writer puts forward that education gives women the opportunity to develop. The advances made by the Americans are due to the advantages given by their education. Without education, this struggle for suffrage would not be possible. Women would not seek it, if they did not understand the privileges that it entailed.

⁶⁵ I have, despite much research, been unable to locate this woman and to make out her name.

In the second part of paragraph 2, the writer has made references to European women from the 17th and 18th century. They have been famous or well accomplished in their fields. For example, Madam De Sevigné, who is famous for her literary correspondence during the 17th century, and about which she writes (التي تستحق تحاريرها أن تكتب بماء الذهب) "who deserves for her letters to be written with golden ink". Considering the way the writer expresses their adulation for these letters, it would be odd if he/she had not read any of them. The writer's interest in the West seems wide and genuine. The writer seems acquainted with Western literature, science, and women from history. There is nothing in the text that shows a dislike of the West or developments there, rather the examples given seem to indicate the writer's wish to adapt a similar system.

And finally, in paragraph 5, the writer speaks about the adaptation of the Western household management system, through Syrian women:

(Cit. 16)

وهنا ألوى عنان اليراع إلى نشر عبير الثناء على السيدات السوريات، فقد حققن الآمال بابتداء
السير على خطة الغربيين

Here I turn the pen to give praise to the Syrian ladies, for they have realized the hopes of beginning progress on the project of the Westerners.

This further shows the influence that the Western women's movement had on the development of the Egyptian women's movement and debate, regarding education and the household management system. This "praise" to the Syrian ladies, also gives a hint of them having a role in bridging East and West, as has been written about in Beth Baron's book *The Women's Awakening in Egypt*.⁶⁶

Conclusions

The text includes many arguments for education which are justified by reasoning that it will make women into better companions for their husbands. These points are much similar to the ones that were used by Western women. Women should, according to *domestic ideology*, be well educated in topics that are similar to the ones that young men study, in order for them to have healthy relationships. If a woman is lacking education, she and her husband will not have any mutual interest and he will become depressed. This again was very much part of the debate among European women, in accordance with the *gender ideology* ideal, that women should be good companions and understanding housewives. There is also evidence from the text that a "westernized" household management system is being encouraged and taught to young Egyptian women. Despite arguing for women's need for education in order to become better wives and managers of their homes, there are many references made to powerful and influential women outside of the home. The writer is arguing for women to receive education in order that they may do their housework more efficiently, also leaving it to be understood that this is the main role for women. However, she also says that if women had the same education like men, they could become as successful in professional fields as men.

The writers' opinion on girls' curriculum were expressed in the text, both directly and indirectly. Despite arguing for women to take on the reform of household management, references made to

⁶⁶ (Baron, 1994, 105)

education indicate that the writer is also interested in women receiving a refined and scientific education. From the various arguments, it can be assumed that the writer wants women to have an opportunity to gain a higher education, however their main role should be in the home.

Regarding other evidences of influence, the writer does seem to have much insight into American politics, at least in regards to the women's suffrage movement. It is possible that the writer has travelled and it is possible to the writer has personal contact with Americans, considering the amount of foreigners living in Egypt at the time of this article. Whatever the reason, the writer has some knowledge about famous women in European history, and ideas about the household management system in the West. This knowledge is shown in the examples which the writer is using in the beginning of the article, with American women's improvements. The author's interest in adapting Western developments into the Egyptian context is well shown by the way that he/she speaks of the West and their women's politics. The writer's main reason for using these examples is to demonstrate all of the opportunities which flow from women being educated.

5.3 Text Three – Women’s Rights

Summary of Text Three

The article entitled *Women’s Rights* was published in the sixth issue of the journal *al-Fatāh* in May 1893.⁶⁷ This text has been written by two writers; Miss Muhja Qarina Janib al-Fadil and Wallis Afendi Suqa Batanta.

The topic in this article is the debate about women’s rights in Egypt and the need for female education. The text argues that education can help make better mothers and wives. The writers give examples of issues related women not being educated and how education will teach them to make moral judgements. This text contains far fewer references to household management, but focuses generally on women’s role in rearing children.

I have numbered the paragraphs 1 - 11, in order to make it easier to discuss the content. I have also numbered my citations, to make it easier to follow and so that I may refer to the same argument more than once.

Arguments for Girl’s Education in Text Three

Education Making Better Mothers and Wives

Most of the discussion on female education in the text centres on how education determines the quality of a mothers care in the home. These types of arguments appear in paragraphs **3, 7, and 10**.

In paragraph 3, the writer discusses the importance of an educated mother:

(Cit.1)

أما ترى أن الزوجة هي المربية للأولاد والمهذبة للأخلاق والمحسنة للصفات إذا كانت من أهل التهذيب والعلم والخلق الحسنة وإلا فينقلب الوضع وينعكس الطبع إذا كانت على ضد ذلك.

Don’t you see that the wife cares for the children and educates their morals and improves their characteristics, if she belongs to the civilized, scientific, and well mannered people. But if not, then the situation is reversed and the dispositions are reversed, if she is the opposite of that.

Here the writers point out the importance of women’s education for ensuring that children receive good care and tutoring. They want to encourage people to support the education of women, because this will be reflected in how they bear their responsibilities in childrearing. They also highlight the different roles that the mother has in her children’s lives (المربية للأولاد والمهذبة للأخلاق والمحسنة للصفات) “cares for the children and educates their morals and improves their characteristics”. What is different about this passage is the use of the term (أهل التهذيب) “civilised people.” In the previous two texts, the writers compare women with different levels of education. In this passage, the writers bring into account the background of the woman. The “civilised people” are the higher classes who can afford to provide modern education for their children in the home.

Connection between the Mother and Child

In the next sentence the writer has emphasised the connection between the mother and the baby:

(Cit. 2)

⁶⁷ (El-Sadda, 2006, 244-248)

ولأن الطفل المولود حديثاً أول من يقع نظره عليه عند خروجه إلى نور هذه الحياة هو أمه، وأول ما ينطبع في مخيلته ويؤثر في طبيئته هو حركات أمه وسكناتها وأقوالها وأفعالها، إن خيراً أو شراً
Because the first thing that the newly born baby will rest his eyes upon when he comes out into the light of this life is his mother, and the first thing that is inscribed into his mind and influences his character, is his mother in all her doings, her words and deeds, be they good or evil.

The word (طبيئته) literally means clay, and I believe that the writer here uses it to express that it, “the character,” can be shaped.

This passage emphasises the impression that the mother makes on the child from the first moments of its life. The mother’s behaviour (وسكناتها وأقوالها وأفعالها) “her movements, her words and deeds,” (إن (خيراً أو شراً) “be they good or evil” are inscribed in the mind of the child. The education of women is thus of much importance to ensure the health of the young children. Thus, the writers highlight the consequences for a young child of an ignorant mother.

Negative Effects of the Woman’s Ignorance

In paragraph 7, the writer is giving examples of what the lack of girls’ education can lead to:

(Cit.3)

والذى لولاه لما أنفقت المرأة لزوجها رزق شهر بل رزق سنة في شراء ثياب وحلى على غير
اضطرار لشيء منها

And without which the wife will deprive her husband of a month’s or even a year’s income on buying clothes and jewellery and other things that she does not need.

With the responsibilities that the new household management system brought, women needed training to make more responsible choices in managing the home spending. If the wife had been schooled, she could have understood home economics and the value of money.

Further they write about the negative effects of the woman’s ignorance:

(Cit.4)

ولا قادته عند المساء إلى الملهى والمرقص مريضاً أو مجهوراً، وما ذلك إلا لكونه حجب عنها
أنوار العلم، وأغلق في وجهها أبواب العرفان والنباهة

And does not lead him in the evening to the “place for amusements” and the dancehall, sick or scandalized, and only because of him withholding the lights of science from her and having the doors of knowledge and intelligence closed in her face.

In this example, the writers show that the man’s own behaviour is affected by his wife’s ignorance. If she is ignorant, he will be led to (الملهى) - (this is a place of entertainments, amusements, cabaret) or (المرقص) “dancehall” (Likely to be a place where women dance, however the dictionary gives the explanation of dancehall). The writers don’t say why the wife’s lack of education leads him to such places. It could mean, as was described in the previous text, that if he is bored in his relationship

(because his wife can't converse with him or maybe they are arguing), he will go out at night, and waste his time.

In paragraph 10, they express the need for educated mothers to teach their children:

(Cit. 5)

قد قال أحد الأدباء إنه لا أم إلا حيث يكون علم ولا زوجة إلا حيث يكون عرفان ومن المعلوم أن العلم يرفع شأن المرأة ويجعلها أوفر احشاما وعفة وأعلى همة وأرفع نفسا وأكثر عزة وأسهل ومراسا وأعظم نبالة،

One of the writers has said, that there is no mother if there is no knowledge and there is no wife except when there is no perception. And it is well-known that knowledge raises the situation of the woman, and makes her more modest, chaste, of higher ambition, of stronger mind and more intelligent, docile and more noble.

Education will enhance the qualities of the mother. The expression (لا أم إلا حيث يكون علم) “there is no mother if there is no knowledge” means that the mother carries the responsibility of educating the children and if she is ignorant herself, then they will not get any education. This type of expression highlights the responsibilities of the mothers and their expected moral behaviour. This attitude to women's roles became more important in the new *gender ideology* which developed during the late 19th century.

Paragraph 8 emphasises how the ignorance of woman damages not just her family, but the wider society.

(Cit.6)

ويا ليتته ينحصر الضرر الناتج عن جهل المرأة عند الحد، ولكنه لسوء الحظ يتعداه إلى هيئة الاجتماع عموما، وهناك الطامة الكبرى لأن المرأة ليست زوجته فقط بل أما ومربية للأولاد الذي يتألف من أفرادهم مجموع العائلة البشرية والنوع الإنساني عموما

If only the damage caused by the ignorance of women could be restricted to the individual, but unfortunately it is extended to the social organization in general. This is a big disaster, because the woman isn't only his wife, but is also mother, educator of the children, the sum of whom makes up the whole of the family of mankind and the human race.

By this argument the writers are explaining how (جهل المرأة) “ignorance of women”, is a problem not only for the individual, but for the entire human race. The damage caused by the ignorance of women is extended past the individual (إلى هيئة الاجتماع عموما) “to the social organization in general”. She then continues to stress the damage that could be done if women, with their major influence on society, are left in ignorance.

(Cit. 7)

فإن لم تكن الأمهات فضلات عاقلات مهذبات عالمات بمقتضيات التربية وأساليب التهذيب، لفسدت الأخلاق وعم الجهل، وأصبح العمران خرابا والنجاح تأخرا والقوة ضعفا والوجاهة خسفا
so if the mothers are not superb, sensible, cultured, and knowing of the necessities of education,

procedures of upbringing, the manners will be corrupted, ignorance prevalent. Culture is broken, the success becomes backwardness, the strength weakness and the soundness becomes disgrace.

This is an argument for increasing the education of women to ensure better upbringing of the children, who are the future of society. Where the writers are saying, (لم تكن الأمهات فضلات عاقلات) (مهذبات عالقات بمقتضيات التربية وأساليب التهذيب "if the mothers are not superb, sensible, cultured, and knowing of the necessities of education", these expectations of the mother are part of the new roles that were brought in for woman around this time in Egypt. This was part of the process of modernization that was taking place in the country. This type of argument is also similar to the ones that were made by Western women.

The writers continue to emphasize on the need for educated women in their roles as mother and wives. In this argument from paragraph 10, the writer is giving an example of what could happen if a man dies and his wife is left to take over his work:

(Cit.8)

فماذا يكون من أمر الثروة المتروكة لها وأشغال الرجل المعهودة إليها، وكيف يمكنها النهوض بهذه المهام بتربية الأولاد إذا كانوا أطفالاً إن لم تكون من الخبيرات العرفات، وكم من رجل قد مات عن ثروة واسعة وأموال طائلة وشهرة طائرة، وإذا لم يكن له من يقوم بإدارة ما تركه فتذهب تلك الثروة والأموال والشهرة أدراج الرياح

What will remain of the wealth that is left to her, and his work entrusted to her, and how would she handle the advancements of these tasks and raise the children if they were small, if she wasn't an expert or accustomed to it. And how many men have not died from their vast wealth, huge amount of funds and much fame, and if he doesn't have anyone who will manage what he left behind, then that wealth, money, and fame will come to nothing.

I interpret (شهرة طائرة) "much fame" it can be used to mean "limitless, carry away, exult, and fly off" I thus believe that it is used here to emphasis on the fame, that he has "much fame".

The writers use this example to illustrate that the mother should be educated, to be prepared to deal with the unexpected. That if the mother is educated, she will be able to handle the economy if the man dies, and to guarantee their children's well upbringing. Because if there is no one to manage what he left behind, (فتذهب تلك الثروة والأموال والشهرة أدراج الرياح) "that wealth, money, and fame will come to nothing". With the argument they want to show, that the education of the wives is important in all aspects of the men's lives, it will determine their happiness when alive and what happens to his wealth when they die.

In the next argument, the writers point to the *moral autonomy* that women will develop with education:

(Cit. 9)

ولا تفعل ما يجلب اللوم على نفسها وعلى قومها، بل تنبذ الخسائس نبذاً، وكلما يعيب بطارتها أو يحط من شأنها.

And she doesn't do what brings shame on herself and her people, moreover she rejects the vile, and everything that arouses her frivolity or degrades her situation.

In this sentence, it can be interpreted that the writers want to prove that there is no need to consider education a disgrace or harm on women, that it rather helps women to make good choices. By explaining about the educated woman that (ولا تفعل ما يجلب اللوم على نفسها وعلى قومها) “she doesn't do what brings shame on herself and her people”, the writers indicate that knowledge would allow women to make moral decisions. Educated women will therefore avoid the “forbidden” rather than bring shame on their families. This way of justifying the arguments for education was much used in Europe, especially by the Bluestockings, who used women's increased ability to make their own moral judgments as one of their main arguments in favour of education.

Debating Girls' Curriculum

Few direct references are made to girls' curriculum. In some of the arguments, it can be indirectly understood what type of education the writers have in mind.

In Paragraph 7, the writers speak about the opposition to women's education:

(Cit. 10)

ومما يقضى بالأسف إن السواد الأعظم من أهالي شرقنا الذين لم تنار عقولهم بأنوار العلم ما زالوا يحسبون تعليم المرأة عارا وإنارة عقلها بأنوار علوم العصر شنارا ويذكرون لذلك أسبابا فاسدة وحجبا ساقطة ليست من الحقيقة

It is unfortunate that the vast majority of people of our East, whose minds have not been enlightened by science, still consider the education of the woman a shame, and the enlightening of her mind by modern sciences a disgrace. They therefore state false reasons and fallacious arguments, which are not true.

The use of (بأنوار علوم العصر) “modern sciences” could indicate the writers' support for this topic of study. The same term is used in the phrase (الذين لم تنار عقولهم بأنوار العلم) “whose minds have not been enlightened by science,” showing again this topic in a favourable light.

In paragraph 9, (see cit. 14) they are making a reference to Napoleon's building of a girls' school in Bologna. The subjects referenced are those which would help them in their home responsibilities, but it is also mentioned that they were also encouraged to receive a higher education. The reference to Napoleon's girls school is another indication of the type of education that the writers favour.

Other Evidence of Western Influences on the Text

The writers make comparisons between the East and West, and in this article, talk about the women's debate both in West and East. These types of arguments appear in paragraphs 3, 9 and 11.

In paragraph 3, the writers speak about the growing interest of the debate of women's rights, both in Egypt and in the West:

(Cit.11)

إن ما نحن فيه الآن موضوع في هذه الأيام موضع البحث في الجرائد والكتب والخطب وأقوال أهل النظر والنقد في كل مكان في الشرق والغرب، وكلهم يطلبون فيما يكتبون أو يخطبون أسبابا لإصلاح حال المرأة وأعلى شأنها ورفعها إلى المقام الذى تستحق لتكون في مقام الرجل مساوية له فيما يجب أن تكون مساوية له فيه لها ماله وعليها ما عليه،

What we have today present in these days' discussion in newspapers, books, speeches, conversations, intellectual discourse, and the criticism of any place in the East and West. And all of them are demanding in their writings or speeches, reasons for reforming the situation of the woman and uphold her will and raise her to the status which she deserves to become equal to man, equal to him in what she must be equal to him, in rights and responsibilities.

The way that the writers begin the sentence (إن ما نحن فيه الآن موضوع في هذه الأيام موضع البحث) appears strange, and it is difficult to understand exactly what is meant. I have translated it as, “what we have today present in these days' discussion” however, what I believe that the writers mean is “women are the subject being discussed today....”

Despite the strange beginning to this paragraph, it can be understood that the writers are describing how the “woman’s question” is being debated in the East and the West. One could interpret from this that the writers have some awareness of the West. It also gives the impression that the writers consider it to be one struggle for women’s rights. This is also a comparison, in that the writers are pointing out the development of women’s education in the West and comparing it to the East.

In paragraph 9, the writers mention a letter written by Napoleon, in which he speaks about women’s school that he has set up in Bologna:

(Cit.12)

– قال وأحب أن تخرج النساء من المدرسة فاضلات متعلمات غير منقادات إلى الزى والدلال صفاتهن الجاذبة صفاء القلب وكرامة الأخلاق وأمر بتعليمهن المعالى والبيان والتاريخ ومن العلوم الطبيعية ما يخرجهن من ظلوم الجهل

He said: I would love for the women to graduate from the school as virtuous and educated women, not drawn to clothes and spoiling their attractive characteristics being purity of heart and dignity of ethics. And he ordered higher education for them, with rhetoric, history, Natural science and what gets them out of the darkness of ignorance.

By referring positively to Napoleon’s efforts in to support women’s education in Bologna, the writers show how the ideas of Western education have spread and had an influence.

From paragraph 11, the writers are making a comparison to the West in their efforts of spreading girls’ education.

(Cit. 13)

ولنا في مقابلة شرقنا الذي لم يصر الاعتناء بتعليم نسائه حتى الآن ببلاد الغرب التي راجت فيها سوق العلم بين إناثه لأعظم شاهد وأسطع برهان على ما نقول من وجوب تعليم المرأة وإعدادها لأن تكون جسما حيا ناميا في هيئة الاجتماع،

And we have in the West, in comparison to our East which has not begun to take care of the education of its women, with the countries of the West who spread the science between its women, the greatest witness and the clearest proof on what we are saying about the must of educating the woman and prepare her to be an active member in the society.

With this argument, the writers show an awareness of the advances of girl's education in Western countries. It also shows that the writers are interested in achieving similar progress in the East.

Conclusions

Throughout the article the writers have mostly made arguments about the benefits of educating women for their work of rearing children and being good wives. Examples have been given about how girls' education is important for the advances, not only of the individual, but for the whole society. Most of these arguments for better mothers suit the *domestic ideology* which was used in the arguments of European women, in arguing for reform in girls' education.

The European women were aiming to change their girls' curriculum to become more scientific and more similar to that of the boys. Most of the arguments in this text relate to women's morals and their behaviour with their children. In a few places in the text, the writers mention scientific education. There is, however, very limited information about curriculum.

The only references that the writers make to people from the West, are those made about Napoleon and his efforts to educate women in Bologna. The writers also speak of the woman's debate as an international phenomenon, a question that is being debated both in the East and in the West. This shows that they have some awareness of the West. In the last paragraph, the writers make a comparison between education in the East and West, from which it is obvious that the writers want the East to develop female education similar to the West.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of my thesis was to examine three texts which I had chosen from *al-Fatāh* journal and to answer the research question “*What is the evidence that the content of these articles regarding girls’ education, was influenced by Western women writers?*”

That education will make better mothers is the main argument used throughout all three of the texts, to justify the need for girls’ education. The argument that they would become better companions was found in the second and third texts, but not in the first. These types of arguments are based on the same reasons that were used by Western writers who argued for *Domestic Ideology*. This similarity in their arguments could thus be seen a visible sign of how the Egyptian writers are influenced by the Western. However, the debate on the position of women does not have to be influenced by Western women. It could also appear similar due to the similarity of the situation. In both cases, the struggle is to improve women’s situation in a male dominated society.

The second category “Debating Girl’s Education” shows varying findings in the different texts. In the first and third text, it is not argued about what kind of education is needed. However, it can be interpreted from some of the arguments used, that the writers are indeed seeking a similar curriculum. In the second text this is more developed. There the writer argues for the women to receive equal education to men, while at the same time emphasizing the responsibilities that women have in their homes. The main way in which the second text argues for education, is for healthier relationships between men and women: women need the same education to be able to understand the man and be an understanding companion. Because I have found examples of arguments for a broader curriculum, which seem to involve similar subjects that the Western women were debating, there is no need to discuss how these arguments has been changed to suit the Egyptian context.

Arguing for similar type education does not necessarily show that the Egyptians were influenced by the Western writers. It could also be the case that both societies are having similar human (female) responses to similar human (male) forms of oppression. In that case, the writers would not be influenced by the West in seeking women’s emancipation and rights. The similarities in their arguments could be due to the similarities in their situations that both groups are facing male and religiously dominated societies, to which they show a similar response. However, even if this is true to some degree, there are many indications in the way that the writers are describing the West that shows that there in fact is an influence.

“Other Evidence of Western Influences” is present in all three texts, but mainly in the first and the second. These made many comparisons between Western and Eastern women, in a way that shows that the writer was influenced by West. The references to Western women in the second text were also further evidence of this. In the third text there were fewer comparisons between West and East, but it still existed. The use of comparisons between West and East and writing about girls’ education and developments in the West shows that the writers were aware of the debate on girls’ education in the West. The writers of all three texts show that they have some insights into Western women’s situation.

In conclusion, these three categories were used to analyse what the evidence were of Western influences on the content of the texts. All three texts showed evidence of the usage of similar arguments about education to Western women, mainly for women to become better mothers. The most clear evidence that the content was influenced by West, was the usage of comparisons to the West, and references to Western women.

7. Further Research

What could be interesting, in terms of further research of these texts, would be to look into how the national struggle at the time is reflected in the texts and in their arguments for education and emancipation of woman. It is evident in much of the material that Egypt is focused on national development. Most of the arguments for advancing women are supported by the fact that it would benefit the whole society and the future of the Nation. It would be interesting to examine the links between the struggle for women's emancipation and the rise of Nationalism.

What would also be interesting is to study the cause behind this influence and to study further how it was used. Were these writers merely mirroring and adapting the advances of the Western women, or were they using the debate of "feminists" in the West as inspiration or proof that a better status for women could be achieved.

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