


Beyond Colonialism
and Nationalism in the Maghrib 

History, Culture, and Politics

Edited by Ali Abdullatif Ahmida

palgrave

- "harem" therefore sharply contrasts with Mernissi's, in which women are granted full agency.
17. H. Adlai Murdoch, "Rewriting Writing: Identity, Exile and Renewal in Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*" *Yale French Studies* 83:2 (1993): 71–92.
 18. Caren Kaplan, "Resisting Autobiography: Out-Law Genres and Transnational Feminist Subjects," *Decolonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).
 19. Françoise Lionnet, "'Logiques méritées': Cultural Appropriation and Post-colonial Representations," *College Literature* 19:3–20:1 (October/February 1992–1993): 100–121.
 20. Malek Alloula, *Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

Chapter 6

Shadi Abd al-Salam's *al-Mumiya*

Ambivalence and the Egyptian Nation-State

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When asked to pronounce judgment, Egyptian critics consistently list Shadi Abd al-Salam's *Yawm an tuhza al-sinin: al-Mumiya* (*The Day of Reckoning Years: The Mummy*) as one of the most important films, if not the most important film, of Egyptian cinema. Given the film's striking visual style and its impressive production technique, it is not hard to see how this would be so. Yet there is a real dissonance between critical discourse that places the film at the heart of Egyptian cinema and the fact that as a text, its presence in and influence on the Egyptian cinematic canon is relatively negligible. *Al-Mumiya* is a film that, although produced in 1969 within the public sector studio system of the Nasserist state, had no public distribution until roughly six years later. When at last *al-Mumiya* was commercially released in late January 1975—an unlucky week, as the Arab world was awaiting the news of Umm Kulthum's impending death—it failed to draw audiences and was quickly pulled from circulation. In other venues such as television or video, *al-Mumiya* might have enjoyed a life in Egypt that extended beyond its brief theatrical release. But that does not seem to have been the case. Likewise, as much as Egyptian filmmakers reverently invoke the name of Shadi Abd al-Salam in interviews, they have not been so apt to apply elements of his cinematic style that appear in the film. In short, for all the talk about the centrality of *al-Mumiya* within the Egyptian national cinematic canon, the actual film enjoyed only a brief moment of commercial release in Egypt, no lasting public venues there, nor much visible influence on subsequent schools of Egyptian film. My point in raising these

issues is not to say that Shadi Abd al-Salam's film does not deserve critical attention. Quite the contrary. However, when the special circumstances of its release and reception are taken into consideration, the film's relationship to the Egyptian nationalist canon appears more ambivalent. The first part of this essay begins with these circumstances in order to speculate about its initial moment of significance. The second part argues that the film needs to be reconsidered and resituated within the state-centered rhetoric of aesthetic Pharaonism. As I hope to show below, *al-Mumiya* both recapitulates and deviates from the dominant themes of an elite nationalist discourse concerned with images and narratives rooted in a very particular aesthetic style of treating ancient Egyptian artifacts.

Al-Mumiya and Audiences

There are different mechanisms by which texts gain a lasting reputation and significance within a cultural formation. Popular audience reception—whether or not the result of aggressive marketing—raises the value of a text most immediately. Or, in a more dialectical fashion, when subsequent artists “recognize” a work by referring to and reproducing its style and themes, the value of that text seems to accrue with each citation. Reception, reference, and reproduction are perhaps the most common ways by which films come to have a place within a cinematic canon. In the absence of such factors, a text can become “significant” by the discourse of critics—backed by the institutions that give their discourse legitimacy—who struggle to assert its value against the ravages of time, ideological opposition, popular disinterest, or cultural invisibility. *Al-Mumiya* is one such text, for its lasting cultural significance has been the product of critical rather than popular reception. Moreover, I would argue that the peculiarity of its status as a “critics’ favorite” raises the first questions about its meaning.

In a sense, the fact that the cultural value of *al-Mumiya* has been the product of critical assertion means that its significance was constructed in a more deliberate way than other more popular films within the Egyptian canon. Admittedly, within any given cultural formation the value of a text is always constructed. However, when the significance of a text is tied to popular reception, the process by which value has accrued is relatively obscure since it is determined by factors (audience composition, reader response) that are often quite difficult to distinguish and weigh. Similarly, when a text becomes significant because of its influence on subsequent texts, the process by which value has accumulated is highly mediated, fluctuating, and relational in nature, the result of an ongoing series of citational performances each of which retroactively transforms the significance of the text in question. But the value of texts also accrues by critical assertion. That the con-

temporary significance of *al-Mumiya* has been constructed by critical insistence rather than commercial or popular reception is not a remarkable fact in itself. What is striking however is the heterogeneous composition of the body of critics who have most loudly asserted its significance. If we can say there is a community that has been established by discourse about the film's significance, it is a community that is both cosmopolitan and local, both limited and split, composed of a thin elite of Western film critics of world cinema, Orientalist academics and Egyptian partisans of national culture, each with its own distinct way of talking about the film.

There are good reasons why I cannot separate the history of the film from the discourses of Orientalist academism and European cinema. In my own experience, which was probably not significantly different from other American students of Arabic, I first came to know the film in the context of language instruction: for years *al-Mumiya* has been a standard teaching text in Arabic language programs since its dialogue, unlike that of other Arabic films, takes place in a classical register. Thus, the text has come to have a value in North American area studies programs, albeit with certain radical qualifications: its significance in this context has not been tied to plot, cinematic style, or relevance to wider cultural issues; rather it has been the peculiar accident of its language that has served to make it such an important text. But that has not been the only extra-Egyptian forum in which the film has circulated: not only did Shadi Abd al-Salam work with a number of foreign *auteur* directors on productions both in Egypt and Europe, but according to him, it was the Italian director Rossellini who played the decisive role in winning approval for the project with Tharwat Akkasha, then-Minister of Culture.¹ Rossellini also helped secure the aid of Italian studios for postproduction and, later, for screenings at European film festivals where it went on to win a number of awards. Since the early 1970s, *al-Mumiya* has figured prominently as one of the most sophisticated examples of Third Cinema from the Arab world.²

Meanwhile back in Egypt, the film initially languished between bureaucratic hostility and public disinterest. *Al-Mumiya* was not released to theaters because the very governmental institution—the Cinema Organization within the Ministry of Culture, which had funded and overseen its production and owned all the movie houses by that time—deemed that it was not suitable for general distribution.³ The film was screened a number of times within the exclusive confines of the Cinema Club where it attracted the attention of small audiences there. It was only after *al-Mumiya* had won a number of awards at European film festivals that the ministry was humbled into reconsidering its quick dismissal of the film. At the time *al-Mumiya*, a different *infisah*, was commercially released in 1975 (2), Egypt was distracted by other events and the film seems to have quickly disappeared from

the public eye. Even though during the eighties the film reappeared in the video stores of al-Shawarbi Street in Cairo, it seems to have attracted a small market composed not so much of Egyptians as foreign scholars on library purchasing forays. Finally, if the decisions of television formatters to include the film were only rarely any indication of its significance in that medium, then we would have to concede the enormous gap between the critical discourse celebrating the film and the resounding silence it has met with at the usual sites of Egyptian cinematic culture. The unpopularity of the film has not been lost on critics, although it has entered their imagination only in a negative way: when critics acknowledge the fact that Egyptian audiences have avoided the film, they explain it as a failing on the part of a vulgar public that craves melodrama and action.

However, while the film may have made a brief and low appearance in the forums of mainstream Egyptian film culture—theaters, television, and video—it has enjoyed a persistent and high profile there in elite print discourse on film. Since the 1970s, there has been something of a consensus in Egypt about the significance of *al-Mumiya*, a consensus that makes the film out to be a straightforward story about the eternal spirit of Egypt, an ancient spirit that was reawakened and nurtured by the modern nation-state. Within this discourse of cultural criticism, the film text functions as a transparent example of the anticolonial struggle, a variation upon the tried and true theme of the struggle of the modern, urban national liberation movement caught between the forces of foreign oppression and the tradition-bound peasantry. This interpretation of the plot is more or less the gist of the European cineaste discourse on the film as well. But the point at which these two discourses depart from one another is perhaps the most telling: whereas European critics have chosen to talk about the film's most striking cinematic techniques (the real-time shot, slow pacing, lingering close-ups, and silences) in terms of *estrangement*, Egyptian critics—and Abd al-Salam himself—have discussed them largely in terms of *authentic history*. European critics have watched the film and commented glowingly on its unusually slow, lingering sense of cinematic time and alienating camera effects. These critics, not wholly attuned to the nature of nationalist culture in Egypt, have focused on the film's formalist questions while almost completely ignoring its specific sociohistorical claims. For their part, Egyptian critics have instead foregrounded discussions of plot and character while backgrounding the complications brought on by its exaggerated stylistics. For these Egyptian critics, the film—despite its estranging formalism—portrays its subject, the peasant culture of Upper Egypt, the “true” national culture of Egypt, realistically and authentically; if it seems estranged, it is because under colonial pressure the local culture has become alienated from itself.

Obviously, the main points of each critical version have their merit, but as I will argue, the rich significance of the film needs to take both plot and style into account. Moreover, it needs to be placed within the long history of invoking ancient Egyptian symbols and themes on which *al-Mumiya* explicitly draws. In light of these issues, the film appears as a key text within the Egyptian cinematic canon, not for the reason that Egyptian critics contend (i.e., that it is an unambiguous allegory of national liberation), but rather because it reveals the violence and ambivalence of the national culture it depicts in addition to the relations of domination that undergird the official *effendi* culture of Egypt, both in the colonial period and in the specific moment following the defeat of 1967. In arguing for an ambivalent reading of the film, I am hoping to transform the central use the film has had for Cairene critics. I am not suggesting that the film is not about national liberation, cultural authenticity, and resistance to colonialism, but rather that it also shows the limits of the Cairocentric, elitist categories embedded within that nationalist narrative.

Al-Mumiya and the Rhetoric of National Authenticity

At first glance, *al-Mumiya* appears to be a straightforward narrative about the importance of conserving Pharaonic antiquities within nationalist culture. The film, set in 1881, on the eve of colonial rule in Egypt, is based on the true story of the Abd al-Rusul clan of Qurna.⁴ Throughout the 1870s, the Abd al-Rasuls robbed a cache of royal mummies, enriching themselves by selling ancient relics to traders who in turn sold them on the black market to European collectors and museums. The Antiquities Service, led at the time by Gustave Maspéro, learned that the artifacts had come on the market and became interested in finding out their source, especially because the pieces, from a relatively unknown dynasty, had come from a location unknown to them. During their investigation, the service began to suspect a middleman, Mustafa Agha Ayyat—the local consul of England, France, and Belgium—who, because of diplomatic immunity, could not be fully pursued. Instead, the police went after two brothers, Muhammad and Ahmad Abd al-Rasul, arresting the younger Ahmad and holding him in jail. When no evidence could be found to prosecute, Ahmad was released. Upon his return, Ahmad demanded as recompense for his jailtime the lion's share of the artifacts then still in his clan's possession. Whereas Ahmad wanted to continue in the trade, Muhammad had decided to quit. After quarrels with Ahmad (and with the consul Ayyat, who demanded money for his silence) Muhammad went to the police and confessed everything. Muhammad eventually found part-time employment with the Antiquities Service and later helped to discover a number of other important royal tombs.

The film creatively recasts the events of this story by situating the moral center of gravity squarely within the Antiquities Service. The film tells the more or less heroic tale of how the Antiquities Service breaks up the illicit activities of the clan of backward, traditionalist tomb robbers who sell Egypt's artifacts, via greedy middlemen, to European collectors. The film ends with the officers and soldiers of the service moving in to save the sarcophagi and mummies of the tomb from destruction at the greedy hands of the "Harbat" clan. However, the nationalist timber of the film is complicated in a number of ways. The struggle between the two chief protagonists—Ahmad Kamal, who is an inspector in the Antiquities Service, and Wanis, of the Harbat tribe—is a highly ambiguous one and ends with Wanis betraying the secret of his people to the Service. The murder of Wanis's brother by members of his clan and Wanis's own estrangement from them complicate matters even further. Finally, while the film ends with the victory of the Antiquities Service, it also gives a sense of the tragedy that this event poses for the world of the vanquished Harbat.

The film retells the Abd al-Rasul story in terms of a struggle between two opposing camps, the first represented by the *effendi* officers of the Antiquities Service, while the other camp is led by the patriarchs of the Harbat and the traders and smugglers with whom they traffic. And since the film is about the control of the trade in antiquities, the two sides, the state and the tribe, serve as figures for more deeply embedded opposing styles of culture, community, and political organization. On the one hand, there is the *effendiyya*, representatives of the enlightened state bureaucracy—modern, rational, transparent, orderly, benevolent, scientific, and historical—that seeks to preserve antiquities for public good and scientific benefit. On the other hand, there is the tribe—traditional, ignorant, secretive, tyrannical, violent, and superstitious—that seeks to maintain its ways at all costs. It needs to be added that this sharp set of oppositions is in fact completely congruent with the director's own accounts of the film. In interviews, Abd al-Salam describes an Egypt that is completely bifurcated, one that is split by a struggle between the enlightened capital and the rural South. This struggle is admittedly complicated by the fact that the South, for all its backwardness, is also the site of the great cultural legacy represented by Pharaonic artifacts:

[Le film] c'est l'histoire de deux Égyptes qui se rencontrent, l'une qui finit, l'autre qui commence à s'imposer. La première, une Égypte anachronique, encore vivante, se heurte au progrès scientifique venue de la ville dévoreuse, Le Caire. Si les gens des deux Égyptes se ressemblent physiquement et parlent la même langue dans le film (l'arabe littéraire), les uns, archéologues, ont tarbouches et bateaux à vapeur venant d'un monde totalement différent; les autres ont des bâtons et le pillage de tombes incompréhensibles pour toute subsistance.⁵

(It's the story of the two Egypts that meet, one who ends and the other who starts to assert itself. The first one, an anachronistic Egypt, still alive, collides with scientific progress that has come from the devouring city, Cairo. If people of the two Egypts resemble one another physically and speak the same language [literary Arabic], some, the archeologists, wearing the tarboosh and using steamboats come from a world altogether different, while the others have sticks and the pillage of tombs are their sole means of subsistence.)

The temporality of these two Egypts reveals a particularly Cairene conception of enlightened modernity and its vanguardist, pedagogical mode of nationalism: the scientific, developed present/future Egypt of Cairo able to teach the rest of Egypt, which, despite efforts to educate it, remains in the past. In fact, "ignorance"—that necessary feature of the discourse of modernity that invites pedagogical intervention—plays a central role in Abd al-Salam's comments on the film. In the nationalist struggle to regain control over antiquities, imperialist Europeans can succeed only by the unwitting collaboration of "ignorant" peasants. Thus, the mission of the *effendi* protagonist in the film is twofold: to repossess antiquities and to teach their value. And in teaching the true value of the artifacts, the *effendi* restores to the rural peasant his original culture:

With me the protagonist is the protagonist. Not that I tell the story of just any character . . . but so that I can tell the story of Egypt: the role of Egypt in the Middle East, in Africa, or in the Mediterranean. Or the story of someone in relation to Cairo, or the countryside in relation to Cairo, or Upper Egypt and Cairo—so that two different civilizations can encounter each other. An old civilization which stopped advancing at a certain stage and withdrew from the world because of those imperialist currents which focused on the capital and ignored [the development of] Upper Egypt. And so, for its part, Upper Egypt withdrew itself until the Europeans arrived. If those Europeans happened to know something about antiquities, they bought them . . .

The Europeans would go to the inhabitants [of Dayr al-Bahri] and ask to buy artifacts at prices which were inconceivable to this impoverished, closed society. So they began to sell [antiquities] without meaning to, or without knowing what they were doing. A European would come to him and say, "Give me this piece of stone for this much money," and the Upper Egyptian would give it to him without realizing that he was selling a piece of his own flesh. This continues until the present day.

In the film *al-Mumiya*, the educated Cairene comes to Upper Egypt and meets this other Egyptian on the other's ground. But the two—even if they are joined by a single Nile . . . and shared language—are separated by a huge difference between their respective cultures. The meeting of these two cultures is the axis of the film . . . It is an encounter in which the two sides don't come

together in a single history or even in terms of economy—for one of them searches for antiquities and the other trades in them.⁶

This binary split between peasant-traditional and urban-modern stands upon a notion of false consciousness. It is a representation of Egypt that is seconded by many of Abd al-Salam's critics who describe the film in terms of a "search for identity" and "authenticity."⁷ To explore the dynamics of this conceptual formation, I would like to touch briefly upon a number of terms that reappear both in Abd al-Salam's comments on the film and in the critical discourse of others. These ideas—resurrection, identity, redemption, authenticity, and unity—are revealing in that together they express the rubric of the nationalist discourse in which Pharaonic artifacts come to have an identificatory value.

Interestingly, the film directly addresses the topic of identity only in a cursory way. The credits and the opening scene, which serve as a framing sequence, refer to identity and resurrection. The film's credits open with lines taken from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*: "O ye departed, you shall return! / O ye asleep, you shall awake! / O ye perished, you shall be reborn! / Glory be to you!" After the credits, we fade into a scene in which the character of Ahmad Kamal reads another passage to his Antiquities Service colleagues in Cairo. We then hear Maspéro's voice stating that to forget one's name on the Day of Judgment is tantamount to losing one's identity (*al-shakhsiyya*) forever: each body must know its name if the soul is to return and each mummy must have its identity if it is to be resurrected. These words, which do not recur in the film, nevertheless cast a long shadow over the events that follow: to remember one's name, to repossess one's own spirit and body—are these tasks not the sacred mission of the service? In discussions of the film, Abd al-Salam and his critics use this frame scene to argue an interpretation of the film as allegory, as Egypt's search to remember its true name, redeem its identity, and to be resurrected anew.⁸ Their consensus on this allegorical interpretation about the redemption of identity begins to explain the importance that Abd al-Salam (and his critics) place on authenticity. This occurs not only on the surface of the film's theme, namely Abd al-Salam's assertion that the recovery of Pharaonic culture was a return to Egypt's original culture, but on many other levels as well: his (and others') claims about the film's absolute "historical accuracy" in using "real" historical events and characters such as Kamal or Maspéro (despite the fact that Maspéro was absent during the Abd al-Rasul affair and that the actual career of the Egyptologist Ahmad Kamal did not begin until some time after the events of the film); Abd al-Salam's exceptional attention to using only "authentic" costumes, actors, and sets,⁹ as well as his desire for precise lighting

and color, in "the search for the true Egyptian dramatic element, [one that is] removed from the themes of borrowed or false cinema."¹⁰

Thus, while the claim to an authenticity awarded by an aesthetic-historical "appreciation" of ancient Egypt and the claim to an authentic indigenous cinema appear to be separate from one another—or at least, of different orders—they actually work together to create a conceptual continuum whereby past and present, aesthetic appreciation, historical accuracy, scientific method, and production technique find a coherent unity. Indeed, as Abd al-Salam and his critics claim, the film lays the foundations for a culture of redeemed origins. The paradox of this claim is that the categories of the rural and the traditional serve to lend authenticity to those of the urban and the modern but only when the traditional has been reminded—by the more developed *effendiyya*—of its own true, ancient origins. The result would be a culture in which all differences would be sublimated into unities and continuities.¹¹ Abd al-Salam remarks,

The events of the film are of secondary importance to me. In *al-Mumiya* I have essentially dealt with the problematics of national culture. That is what was important to me. Accordingly, I purposely structured my film on a number of levels. We can find in the text the description of the awakening of a character and the dramatic situation created by this awakening. Wanis—who has been entrusted with the secret that generations of his tribe have passed down—is torn between his loyalty to his civilization [*al-hadara*] which has survived for thousands of years, the culture [*al-shaqafa*] of his grandfathers, and between the demands of the modern world and its sciences. He realizes that there is some mistake in the predicament and lifestyle of those around him.

But, even though I support progress, I cannot condemn the tribe of [tomb] robbers. This tribe represents people who have maintained national culture and all that means. Furthermore, they respect that culture and help it develop. I wanted to make it clear through the film that, even though Wanis and the young Egyptologist [Ahmad Kamal] had never spoken to each other before their meeting, they are two brothers who represent two poles of Egyptian society. There will come a day in which all the Egyptian masses will share one culture, that is, the culture [*al-shaqafa*] of customs that are particularly Egyptian, but developed [modernized]. This is the deeper meaning of *al-Mumiya*.¹²

In Abd al-Salam's account, as in the accounts of his critics, the relation between civilization and culture—*al-hadara* and *al-shaqafa*—is one of balance and complementarity: *al-hadara*—associated with the distant past—functions as the deeper, inertial force that unifies the more superficial differences of *al-shaqafa*, local knowledge, culture, and custom; *al-shaqafa* may serve to

unite smaller social groups of shorter geographical and temporal dimensions but, as these critics would have it, a "nation"—like Egypt—needs to be founded on *al-hadara*. It is on this point that we can see why ancient artifacts appear so crucially in Abd al-Salam's vision: as material objects, they function as markers that testify unequivocally to the obscured past of *al-hadara*; and as signs, they connote the possibility—through the aesthetic-scientific discourse of appreciation—of a recuperated *al-hadara* transcending existing regional, class, and historical-developmental differences.¹³ However flexible Abd al-Salam's account of Egyptian civilization may seem at first glance, when set in the context of nationalist discourses on antiquities, its rigidity begins to show. Indeed, for all his claim to sympathize with the tribe and Upper Egypt in general, Abd al-Salam's account of civilizational unity recapitulates some of the more elite aspects of *effendi* nationalism. Because it is the modern and the urban that have the monopoly on the interpretation and representation of antiquity, this idea of the local *al-thaqafa* melting into the more universal *al-hadara*—like the Antiquities Service that enforces it—begins and ends in Cairo: in the film, this comes across most visibly in the transport of Pharaonic artifacts to their rightful place in the capital museum. Thus the call to dissolve local "culture"—the "tradition" of the tribe within the film—within the transcendent "civilization" of the nation-state seems to reiterate the essential terms of elite nationalism: to subordinate the South to the needs of the North, to remake the rural according to the imagination of the urban.

The temporality of this model needs further elaboration: *al-hadara*, insofar as it suggests ideas of accomplishment and development, places it within a time that links the *distant* past directly to the (future) time of modernity. In the film, *al-thaqafa* is related to the more *recent* past, to retarded development, to an incomplete present dominated by an unchanging tradition of repeated imitations (*al-taqalid*). Or more directly, from the earlier quote, "C'est l'histoire de deux Égyptes qui se recontrent, l'une qui finit, l'autre qui commence à s'imposer." As I noted in passing above, this temporality implies a certain pedagogy, one aesthetic consequence of which is the tendency of nationalist texts to develop an aesthetic that is split in terms of its representational goals. On the one hand, these texts are committed to asserting the claim to represent social relations as they *are*—in the terms of Lukacsian realism, "the typical,"¹⁴ the "manners and customs" of a community as they exist.¹⁵ On the other, they are equally committed to a pedagogy that represents the exemplary or the desired (as opposed to what is) in order to express what *should* be. As Homi Bhabha has pointed out, the difference between the rhetoric of "what is" and "what should be" is a difference of temporality between a present state (of lack) and a future state (of fulfillment).¹⁶ Moreover, this antagonism between "is" and "should be" proves irresolvable

within the terms of realism: it creates a split image of the nation. We will return to this ambivalence after briefly touching upon the wider context of scientific-aesthetic institutions by which the trade and consumption of Pharaonic material objects—and mummy objects in particular—were regulated in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt.

The Mummy and the Nation-State

It may seem peculiar to use mummies—both as material objects and as discursive figures—to explore the colonial struggle between Egypt and Europe or to get at the processes by which the Egyptian nation-state asserted itself over Egyptians. But just as shifts in the value of other commodities (such as cotton or labor) give some indication of wider transformations in market relations, so too do ancient Egyptian objects—for which there had long been a developed economy—mark the site of fierce competition between European and local traders and a simultaneous struggle between the emerging Egyptian nation-state and those groups *within* Egypt who contested the state's efforts to bring territory, inhabitants, and things under a single, centralized authority. Part of this peculiarity may be due to the fact that while the European fascination with mummies is persistent and more or less familiar, the mummy figures only very marginally in Egyptian elite and popular cultures. There was a brief heyday, predating and following the discovery of King Tutankhamun's tomb in 1921, during which mummies, along with other Pharaonic figures and themes, appear in middlebrow print culture.¹⁷ But for the most part, they are not a literary (or cinematic) concern, which partly accounts for the striking originality of Abd al-Salam's film. Yet when we glance at antiquities laws in Egypt, a certain narrative about mummies begins to emerge, a narrative that suggests that state control over the exchange of objects implied certain relationships not only between people and things, but between people and the state as well.

For centuries, mummies were extracted and sold in Egypt by the ton, nearly all for export to markets in Europe. However, during the nineteenth century, the trade of mummies changed drastically: the mummy object moved from being a common commodity to being a singular artifact, and its economy shifted from mass circulation and unregulated consumption to one of increased restriction and sacralized display within specialized institutions governed by discourses of aesthetic and historical appreciation. In short, the mummy moved from the margins of the local souq to the center of the Egyptian Museum. Throughout this process, the state was involved on a number of levels.

In the opening years of the nineteenth century, new laws were enacted on the trade in antiquities that gave the agents of European powers a near

monopoly in excavation and extraction rights.¹⁸ Although local officials did not enforce these concessions evenly, from the 1810s onwards, it is European agents who dominate the legal excavation of major antiquities centers—and this included, significantly, the extraction of mummies for export.¹⁹ This did not happen without resistance: the village of Qurna near Luxor regularly took up arms to resist these concessions, which they saw, more or less correctly, as an infringement on the local monopoly they had established since the mid-eighteenth century.²⁰ Nevertheless, by the 1820s, European archaeologists, collectors and adventurers had begun to dominate the excavation and trading markets to the point at which local entrepreneurs were increasingly driven underground. It is important to note also that hereafter these laws set the tone for legislation on the antiquities trade between Egypt and Europe: such trade remained permissible as long as it was for public (or national) interest; trade for personal profit became illicit.²¹

Most histories of the laws and institutions governing antiquities in Egypt look to the Vice-Regal Ordinance of 1835 as a point of origin.²² The decree cut in two directions. On the one hand, it was prohibitory, forbidding the export of all antiquities from Egypt. And on the other hand, it was constructive, establishing a “special place” (*mahall khass*) in Rifa al-Tahtawi’s School of Translation, located in Ezbekiyya, for the collection and display of antiquities for Egyptians, but “particularly for European visitors.” These two principles—prohibition and construction—came together most explicitly in the Third Article, which stipulated that the State expressly sees fit “not only to prevent hereafter the destruction of ancient monuments in Upper Egypt, but also to take measures to insure their conservation throughout.”²³ Accompanying the decree were a number of orders directed to the local governors (*mudirs*) of the Said, orders that partly clarified the guiding principles of the decree: that they hand over all found antiquities to al-Tahtawi; that they not allow any defacing of monuments; that they suspend all current excavation projects, using armed soldiers if necessary; that they henceforth rigorously prevent the unregulated export of antiquities from Egypt. The other orders detailed the organizational hierarchy of the state museum and the protocol by which local *mudirs* would interact with museum officials and museum inspectors on their annual visits. This decree was accompanied by at least one other, aimed not at the trade with Europe but at the practices of Egyptian peasants who “destroyed monuments” in order to build habitations.²⁴

As Antoine Khater has pointed out, the terms of the 1835 Ordinance were not effectively realized, and the excavation and export of antiquities continued apace: first, antiquities “discovered” before 1835 were exempted by the law’s nonretroactivity; second, there remained a number of questions

within the law itself, questions as to the definition of antiquities or to the implementation of conservation and prohibition. Interestingly, mummies figured as an important test case for the legal definition of antiquities. In response to an 1835 inquiry from the governor of Qusayr (on the Red Sea) about the legal status of a mummy and wooden sarcophagus that had been loaded onto an English ship bound for India, the Council of the Pasha replied: “Since the decree on antiquities is mute about the subject of *infidel* mummies . . . the Council does not oppose their export, insofar as there is no formal prohibition.”²⁵ Khater notes that the absence of a precise definition allowed for “human products,” but not human bodies (however embalmed), to be defined as antique objects. Mummies continued to be exported without even formal resistance until the state reclassified them as antiquities in 1851. There is another point to be made about the wording of the council’s ruling: it implies that the export of mummies was permissible on the grounds of their religious status as *kufar* bodies. It is perhaps the only moment in the state’s administration of Pharaonic antiquities that moves out of an explicitly secular register.

As if these interpretative and legislative problems did not weaken enforcement of the law enough, official exemptions on the part of the pasha and governors—the granting of special *firmans*, the predilection for gifting antiquities to curry favor with European powers—quickly made the prohibition a purely formal matter. And whereas the establishment of the museum perhaps did help centralize the conservationist aspect of the antiquities ordinance, it also facilitated the old habit of royal benevolence: its collection depleted over the years by gifting, the Ezbekiyya “museum” ceased to exist in 1855 when Abbas Pasha bestowed the remaining pieces to the Archduke Maximilian.²⁶

Without a permanent administration, the principles laid out by the 1835 Ordinance had decreasing effect. As Khater and others have argued, this begins to change in 1857 when, at the behest of Ferdinand de Lesseps, Said Pasha employed Auguste Mariette as director (*mamur*) of antiquities in Egypt. Given the necessary funds to rejuvenate the antiquities administration, and the vice-regal authority and steamboat with which to make inspections in Upper Egypt, Mariette began to implement changes. In 1858, the Khedive established the Bulaq Museum under Mariette’s management. By 1862, local governors were given explicit orders to submit to the authority of Mariette during his inspections. However, the widened scope of Mariette’s authority is best evidenced in an event that took place in the wake of the 1867 World’s Fair in Paris where the Egyptian pavilion, designed by Mariette, had been celebrated as a wild success. After the fair, the empress of France wrote to Ismail Pasha asking him for the jewels that had been on display. Ismail, who agreed on the condition that Mariette approved, is said to

have written, "There is someone in Bulaq more powerful than I [in this matter], and it is to him you must address yourself."²⁷ When Mariette refused, the jewels returned to Bulaq. From this point on, the principles of conservation were sharpened and expanded by an increase of legislation—both on the level of Egyptian law and on the level of Ottoman law—that helped to augment innovative institutional changes within the service.²⁸

Whereas the highest official of the emerging Antiquities Service was French—this was to remain the case through the first half of the twentieth century as well—the largest number of employees and officers in the service were Egyptian: they served as guards, excavation foremen, guides, and porters. While there were hundreds of Egyptians involved in the conservation and policing of antiquities, by and large they answered to a management that was European. That is to say, that while Egyptians worked to unearth, guard, and display the artifacts of ancient Egypt, it was almost exclusively Europeans who interpreted those artifacts. After the closing of al-Tahtawi's school of translation, the state attempted to expand the ranks of Egyptians in the field of archaeology by opening the first Egyptian school of Egyptology in 1869. But the school, headed by the German scholar Heinrich Brugsch, was soon closed when French archaeologists led by Auguste Mariette, angered by the Franco-Prussian war—and hostile to the encroachment of Egyptian intellectuals in "their" field—pressed for the expulsion of German scholars from Egypt and effectively closed the school for good. Although the school's existence was brief, it did produce a number of Egyptian scholars, such as Ahmad Kamal, who were systematically discriminated against in the major institutions of archaeology, even those financed by the Egyptian state. Kamal and his colleagues were eventually hired by Mariette's successor Gustave Maspéro, who allowed Kamal to teach Egyptology through the museum to a handful of Egyptian students. This and another experiment in 1910 were short-lived and without lasting results. It was not until 1925, with the formation of an ongoing Egyptology program within the new Egyptian University, that the study of ancient Egypt was available to Egyptians on their soil.

However involved the state may have been in administering the trade and display of antiquities and mummies, this should not imply that there was a consensus on the issue among late nineteenth-century intellectuals. In fact, something of the opposite was probably true: by and large, figures of ancient Egypt were negative in the older literary tradition, which equated the Pharaoh with tyranny, vanity, and sacrilege. In the early 1900s there was a public debate about the usefulness of antiquities: some intellectuals suggested that all Pharaonic antiquities—including the Pyramids—should be sold to European museums, because Egyptians did not need them, and only Europeans would be crazy enough to pay for them. Thus, Egypt would be

able to settle its foreign debt, placating and expelling its foreign rulers at one and the same time. Such a debate occurs in a hilarious exchange taken from Muhammad al-Muwaylihi's episodic work, *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham*, published in 1900. In this passage, a character argues about the value of Pharaonic antiquities:

The reason why people in [Europe] are so proud to cherish antiquities in their museums is that they consider them symbols of victory and conquest . . . But what sign of glory and honor is there in these decaying corpses of ignorant and tyrannical people who numbered among the ancient kings of the past? . . . These relics don't come to us by conquest and victory, but merely by digging up graves. . . . Almost every year some new cache of these relics is discovered somewhere in Egypt . . . It wouldn't do any harm for Egyptians to get rid of some of this excess . . . They could put the money to good use on public welfare projects, and there would still be enough relics left in the Egyptian museum to satisfy the requirements of ostentation and national rivalry.²⁹

While the nineteenth century ended with a real ambivalence about the status of antiquities in Egyptian culture, by the 1920s, and especially after the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, secular intellectuals earnestly embraced symbols from ancient Egypt. The period of the 1920s and 1930s marked the zenith of the political and literary movements that drew inspiration from this ancient past: in the theater of Tawfiq al-Hakim, Ahmad Shawqi, and others; in the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi and others; in the novels of al-Hakim, Naguib Mahfouz, and others; in the sculptures of Mahmud Mukhtar; and finally, in essays, memoirs and speeches of Lutfi al-Sayyid, Muhammad Husayn Haykal, Saad Zaghlul, Salamah Musa, and Ahmad Husayn. It is during this period that an identificatory culture of "Pharaonism" emerges, a culture in which the state of modern Egypt finds its origins in the symbols of ancient Egypt.³⁰ In the struggle with imperial occupation, Pharaonist culture created new spaces for Egyptians to legitimate their claim to sovereignty. Artifacts, such as mummies, served to concretize the problem of colonial dispossession and mobilize a symbolic system that was as specific and actual as it was inspiring.

Because the discourses about antiquities and artifacts were initiated, underwritten, extended, and policed by the Egyptian State, it becomes necessary to address the question of the state more or less explicitly. But this will not be easy for a number of reasons. Foremost among them is the fact that for the rather long historical period I have invoked, there is nothing like a single "Egyptian state." Rather there are periods in which at least three different forms of state authority emerge, thrive, and transform: relative autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, joint British-Khedival rule, and joint

British-Khedival-Parliamentary rule. Each of these implies a different rhetoric of legitimacy and corresponding concept of the state. And as all these examples suggest, these instantiations of the state were neither wholly unified nor self-contained: at each moment the Egyptian state was compelled to mediate between antagonistic forces that were both internal and external in nature.

Insofar as the state is a reification of a more complex set of social relations and political antagonisms, my invocation of it as a concept needs serious qualification. Recent critics have pointed out that on the one hand, the state exists merely as a formal concept, and on the other, as an administrative system by which legitimate rule—authority and sovereignty—is produced and extended.³¹ Paradoxically, these theorists acknowledge that there is both far *less* to the state than we would suppose since it is merely an abstraction; and there is far *more*, insofar as the aura of the state seems to exceed the mere sum of its numerous administrative functions.³² Thus, for analytical purposes, the state can be said both to exist and not exist.³³ What all this suggests is that the study of the state is hindered both by the nature of the object of study and by the methods that focus too much study upon that object.³⁴ That is, both the disperse nature of the state and the habits by which the state is studied obfuscate rather than illuminate.

Foucault has argued that the conceptual problem posed by the state is embedded in the overvaluation of its repressive capacities or, equally, in the overestimation of its administrative functions.³⁵ Either way, at best “the state” can be only a misleading metaphor for discourse on social and political relations, and for the ongoing process of subject formation. While Foucault’s argument is based in a specifically European history—namely the replacement of medieval concepts of legitimate political authority by eighteenth-century ideas of political economy—the trajectory of his argument suggests that the theory of governmentality at which he arrives is meant to get around the analytical problems inherent to the study of the state. In Foucault’s account, instead of seeing the state as an extension of sovereignty over a territory and its inhabitants, “government” works upon things—resources, wealth, health, customs, and social relations—by subordinating their administration to ever increasingly specialized forms of knowledge and techniques of security.³⁶

Making use of these ideas, I would like to return my attention to the Egyptian Antiquities Service, whose continuous institutional existence from the 1850s becomes all the more remarkable when juxtaposed with the real discontinuities within the history of the Egyptian State during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Following Foucault’s lead, certain aspects of the Antiquities Service come into sharp relief: the superspecialization of archaeological knowledge; the increasing intricacy of institutions of conserva-

tion and display; the ever-growing body of legal discourse governing the uses of antiquities in formal ways; and expanding enforcement of antiquities laws in material ways. Most importantly, the management of antiquities becomes more than just the management of things: it encourages certain dispositions, especially the disinterested scientific-aesthetic mode of relating to Pharaonic artifacts or the interested nationalist mode of identification with the objects as the signs of one’s own history.

The cultivation of normative social relations between modern Egyptians and the objects of ancient Egypt is inseparable from the nationalist project of forming ethical, aesthetic citizen-subjects.³⁷ This idea of a cultivated subject position with regard to the objects of antiquity was manifested on the institutional level by the formation of different organizations devoted to Egyptology: some were governmental (the Antiquities Service, the Egyptian Museum, the short-lived School of Egyptology), some private (the program in Egyptology at the Egyptian University), all of which helped to administer the culture of Pharaonic artifacts. The field of Egyptology was dispersed by other complementary organizations—at the elite level, by the Khedival Geographical Society or L’Institut d’Égypte, or, at a more popular level, by the establishment of formal and informal institutions in which cadres of museum guards, antiquities caretakers, and skilled excavating laborers—and later archaeologists—were trained, supported, and promoted. Furthermore, in no less a real way, the positive notion of a relation to ancient artifacts was put into practice in the emerging institutions of domestic tourism.³⁸ It is in the sum of these institutions and practices that one can make sense of the emerging representational formations—in literature and in politics—that encouraged, through this relation to artifacts, a relatively abstract identification with ancient history or national culture.

The cultivation of this identificatory relation to artifacts was never disarticulated from prohibitions: just as the discourses of law and literature normalized certain relations, so too did they greatly delegitimize other sorts of relations Egyptians could (and did) have with regard to the objects. In the laws concerning the excavation, transport, sale, and export of antiquities, the actual practices of Egyptians were put under increasingly strict governmental supervision, under an implicitly prohibitory rhetoric that defined what was permitted and under what conditions. When the terms of permission were breached, there were punitive consequences. Thus the excavation or transport of artifacts without a permit was subject to criminal punishment.³⁹ So too was the sale or export of objects without the necessary government permits tantamount to theft of public property.⁴⁰ Some of these restrictions, such as those on sales exports and graffiti, mostly affected Europeans.⁴¹

However, there is ample evidence that the ban on unauthorized excavations was directed chiefly at two practices that were associated primarily with

non-Europeans: on the one hand, the fairly systematic excavations performed by local Egyptians—such as the residents of Qurna—who had long been engaged in the harvest of artifact-commodities for European markets; and on the other, “treasure seeking” ventures, associated with Maghribi searching for gold and jewels on their passage through Egypt. This second type of practice was so widespread that the Antiquities Service commissioned the Egyptologist Ahmad Kamal to edit and translate a collection of Moroccan manuscripts that pilgrims on the Hajj had been using as guides for digging around Pharaonic monuments. At the end of his preface to the collection Kamal writes:

Allow me to state the reasons behind why the Antiquities Service decided to undertake this publication. One can say, without exaggeration, that this practice [of treasure seeking] has ruined more monuments than war or the centuries: even today, hardly a season—or month—passes without some Maghrebian, or professed sorcerer, coming to recite magic incantations, or burning incense in front of a bas relief on the wall of a lonely temple or tomb, attacking it with a pick, or even dynamite, in order to extract the treasure that he believes to be hidden inside. In spite of not finding anything, they persevere and, since they don't have the money to do the work at their own expense, they always find gullible people to underwrite the operations.⁴²

While it is not clear how the publication of this work would actually prevent the practice, it does give some indication of the extent to which the service saw treasure seeking as a problem.⁴³ In addition to Maghribi treasure seeking and unauthorized local excavations, the Egyptian state expressly prohibited a number of other practices by which antiquities were put to nonscientific or nonaesthetic ends. In particular, the use of stones and debris to build homes was prohibited, and the use of temples as inhabitations was put to an end.⁴⁴ Finally, the old practice of using debris mounds (containing disintegrated mummy corpses, pottery, stone, etc.) as fertilizer, known in Egypt as *sibakh*, was greatly restricted and, by the early twentieth century, prohibited completely.⁴⁵ The scope of these prohibitions was not confined to formal legal discourse: in the contemporary writings of travelers, tourists, archaeologists, and Antiquities Service employees, one finds many moralizing echoes.⁴⁶

It is important to note that each state decree established an administrative branch of bureaucrats, archaeologists, and inspectors who oversaw enforcement. And, as a quick glance shows, a singularly loaded word recurring in these texts is *surveillance*.⁴⁷ When one begins to recast the legal and moral prohibition of certain practices in terms of a regime that surveils relationships and dispositions, encouraging some and prohibiting others, one begins

to see within the mission of the Antiquities Service the outlines of both a state-led pedagogy and a disciplinary order: a pedagogy inculcating a specific set of legitimate concepts and practices—practices and concepts that implied a certain subjectivity, and a disciplinary regime actively policing the fields of its jurisdiction and punishing those who crossed it.

What is most telling about the legal discourse on antiquities is that although the language of prohibition was always *universal*, it prohibited practices and economies that were quite *particular* in scope. That is to say that although the law addressed *all* Egyptians as it attempted to regulate and restrict the excavation, trade, and transport of antiques, in practical terms the law could specifically prohibit only those Egyptians who had been engaged in or were in a position to engage in the antiquities trade. It is no exaggeration to say that the majority of these prohibitions were explicitly directed at the peasantry of Upper Egypt, in particular at those who lived near the rich antiquities sites around Beni Hassan, Luxor, Kom Ombo, Edfu, and Aswan. Indeed, the bans on excavation could be put into effect in very few places other than Upper Egypt. The moralist equivalent of legal discourse also specifically targeted the rural peasantry of Upper Egypt, as we find in Ahmad Najib's 1895 guide for Egyptian tourists to Upper Egypt. Najib prefaces his text with a long argument about the benefits of antiquities and the importance they should have for “cultured, modern Egyptians.” It is a didactic text that attempts to translate the European model of antiquities appreciation to the lettered classes of Cairo and Alexandria, to encourage those who rarely travel to Upper Egypt to see the wonder of its monuments. But with regard to the peasants of Upper Egypt, Najib writes:

Among the reasons which pressed me to write this book is that when I was appointed to the Antiquities Service to protect historical monuments throughout Egypt, I went to Upper Egypt to perform my duty [and there] I found ignorant people—uncultured mobs—attacking monuments to destroy them. Nothing can prevent them from doing this, and nothing can protect the antiquities from those people who listen not to sound advice and who have no shame. . . . They meddle with the dead and scatter their bones. They rip up towering monuments and bring them down, they pull apart the joints [of mummy bodies] and sell them. They deface papyri. They lay their hands on the tombs of kings, now unknown, as if these were not the remains of their forefathers. I searched for reasons [for why they do this] . . . and realized that they are a people who do not know the difference between ugly wretchedness and beautiful value. They know neither science nor the general good.⁴⁸

Save for Najib's nationalist identification with aspects of the Pharaonic past (“the remains of their forefathers”), it is hard to distinguish between his contempt for the peasantry and the usual contempt shown to them by European

travelers and archaeologists.⁴⁹ Nor can we say that there is a pedagogical telos to his comments. On the contrary, the peasants of Upper Egypt appear to be beyond teaching, which would suggest that rather than figuring as the subjects of the pedagogical discourse on antiquities, they are the objects of its corresponding disciplinary rhetoric. Not surprisingly, the village of Qurna holds a particularly low place in Najib's account:

You people of Upper Egypt, and especially the Shantara Arabs and inhabitants of Qurna: don't you realize that once you have completely robbed Upper Egypt of its antiquities, visitors will stop coming? Don't you fear the wicked result, you who are more aware of this than anyone else?! In a few years, with so few visitors, you will grow rebellious, you will rant and rave, send delegations and claim "economic depression" and the spread of "corruption" and "poverty." And the national papers [in Cairo] will sympathize and your cries will go out. Whenever there are hordes of foreigners in your neighborhood, you destroy monuments and sell them away. You're like the one who cuts down the tree to pluck its fruit!⁵⁰

The tone of Najib's account—which is unexceptional in the nationalist discourse on antiquities—gives some indication as to the specific social class nature of the legal-moralistic discourse on antiquities. That is to say, the positive—appreciative and/or identificatory—subjectivity with respect to artifacts begins to show its underlying Northern, urban, lettered, and elite character, while the prohibitive and repressive rhetorics of the discourse begin to show the outlines of its irreformable target, the Southern rural peasantry. Thus, we can begin to see within the discourse on antiquities an opposition that dominates elite nationalist writing, a bias that can be conceived of in terms of Gramsci's arguments about the Southern question: that is, the subordination of economic development in the rural South to the needs of the industrializing, urbanizing North and the political domination of the South by the North.⁵¹

Al-Mumiya: The Ambivalence of 1967

In light of this history, the ways in which the text of *al-Mumiya* is implicated within the nationalist discourse on Pharaonic objects should appear more obvious. From its identification with symbols of the ancient past, to its assumption of a normative urbane sensibility toward antiquities, and to its acceptance of the "natural" legitimacy of the nation-state as conservator over the objects and economies of the South, the film is very much a part of a much longer and more complicated history than most critics acknowledge. Nevertheless, as much as the film participates in this statist discourse on an-

tiquities—and the Cairocentric elitism in which it is rooted—it also deviates most significantly from that discourse. To conclude, I would like to return more closely to the film in order to spell out the ways in which the film departs from the major themes of Pharaonism.

I have already suggested that the realist-pedagogical mode of nationalist discourse is an ambiguity traversing the text of the film and that it splits the image of the nation into two temporalities and two voices—one, the nation as it is, the other as it should be—that are rejoined only with great difficulty. I would like to consider four other sites of ambivalence within the film that seem to me to both undermine the coherence of the text's nationalist surface and announce paths for breaking away from the deeper structures of realism that support that surface. These ambivalences occur at various levels in the text—in language and sound, image and pacing, character and plot. These points are never far removed from the basic elements of the film's story, however: as Abd al-Salam's commentary on the film concedes, each of these ambivalences marks a point of contention with realism.⁵² I will begin my discussion of each ambiguity with Abd al-Salam's own commentary—where he discusses his nationalist vision—in order to show that the actual articulation of the text diverges and begins to rub against his apparent intentions. Along the way I will suggest that the point of each departure is tied to the moment of 1967.

The Estranged Univocity of the Nation

Unlike the vast majority of Egyptian films, *al-Mumiya* takes place in a classical rather than colloquial idiom. This was no accident, nor was the director's decision driven by the desire to create a film for export to non-Egyptian Arab markets. On the contrary, Abd al-Salam affirms that the language of the film serves to unify the characters into a single family, nation, and culture:

[An aesthetic of strict] realism would have dictated that Wanis speak in a different style from the urban intellectuals, but I preferred that they all spoke in the same style so as not to reconfirm unnecessarily the social difference between them. For Egypt contains both of these cultures. . . .

I relied on removing the differences between the cultures, even in the use of make-up: their skin color is the same, even though the skin of peasants is dark from the rays of the burning sun. I wanted to say that Wanis and the archaeologist belong to a single family. . . . When we see the film we sense that Wanis and the archaeologist are not really enemies, but they are searching for the same thing. . . . My hope is that in the future Egypt will have a unified culture throughout. We have suffered so long from the cultural division of the Egyptian people. These divisions have diminished and I believe that one day they will disappear.⁵³

In Egyptian cinema of the period, which, unlike print media, was dominated by an aesthetic of relative linguistic realism, characters are usually differentiated in terms of heteroglossic classes and regions. What makes Abd al-Salam's choice of the classical register so interesting is that the unification of his characters within an homoglossic community is accomplished through a distancing of the text from the thing—Egypt—it claims to represent.⁵⁴ The language the characters speak does not mimic language actually spoken in Egypt; rather, it is an exaggerated, stylized idiom. This distance from the everyday and the colloquial is the condition for Abd al-Salam's image of the univocal nation but it also marks something of a limit: within this model, the social-cultural differences between speakers are transcended by the language of each utterance, but the utterances themselves remain somewhat estranged from the speakers and the situation they claim to represent.

It is only by acknowledging the sense of distance embedded within the spoken dialogue that we can begin to account for the long silences—broken by the cries of mourning women, the distant horn of a steamboat, or the howl of the wind over empty spaces—that only increase the distance of the words by setting them against a background of hollow sounds. Thus, it is not simply that the image of the unified linguistic nation comes at the expense of simple realism, but its silences—oddly in tune with the distanced effect of the register—begin to show the hollowness of the spoken language in the text. The play of estranged language and distanced sound also serve to intensify the richness of the text's visual images and to isolate them from the rest of the film, an issue to which we will now turn.

Real Time and the Disconcerting Image

Abd al-Salam has remarked on the glacial pace of his film a number of times: "The style of *al-Mumiya* approaches poetry more than a simple narrative. To a certain extent, it is inspired by eastern *muwashshahat*. The slow pace of the events is an effect I wanted in order to arrive at a hypnotic rhythm."⁵⁵ If we are to trust Abd al-Salam's comments, this is just as much an aesthetic principle as an aspect of the thing he wants to represent:

The slow rhythm expresses hypnosis in the film . . . It tells the story of a young man who thinks, and imagines and suffers from the reality which surrounds him . . . I was inspired to use such a slow pace because life in Upper Egypt is so slow, since the severity of the heat leads to relative inactivity and a tendency towards depression.⁵⁶

These last remarks—which should recall our comments on Northern chauvinism toward southern Egypt—betray the supposedly realist motivation be-

hind the film's sense of time: the camera moves slowly in order to capture the essence of Upper Egypt.

The pace of the film works to intensify the image-quality of the text in disconcerting ways. In fact, the film's pace clearly has more to do with a specific cinematic style than it does with the supposed "inactivity" and "depressed" speed of the underdeveloped South. What sets this film off from the dominant aesthetics of the period's melodrama and social realist cinema is precisely Abd al-Salam's avoidance, when possible, of the more common time-condensing and editing-intensive techniques of montage and shot-reverse-shot. In contrast, Abd al-Salam's reliance on long tracking shots, deep-focus, and dense visual composition is unique in Egyptian cinema—creating a text in which the time of action, rather than being compressed through editing, figures centrally within what the lens of the camera registers. The editing of the film never takes away from temporal duration even in the more elaborate sequences of the film—the opening funeral, the sarcophagus opening, the arrival of the government steamship, the procession of the sarcophagi—that are composed of multiple points of view and countershots. On the contrary, each of these sequences is composed of images that seem to record first a sense of time passing and then, only secondarily, narrate a plot of events.

Abd al-Salam's attention to time recalls the remarks of the film critic André Bazin in his reaction to the artifice of early cinema—in particular, to the techniques of montage and shifting camera point of view—that produced images and narratives at the expense of time. Bazin poses a different aesthetic of shots in which time, uncondensed by editing, could begin to show itself as a pressure within the medium. This is because, for Bazin, what sets film apart from other art media is its special capacity for recording objects and events as they offer themselves to the camera: hence, techniques that sacrifice this recording capacity for visual effect transgress upon the special quality of the medium. Instead, Bazin repeatedly pleads for "a film form that would permit everything to be said without chopping the world up into little fragments, that would reveal the hidden meanings in people and things without disturbing the unity natural to them."⁵⁷ In Bazin, this aesthetic is a realism "capable once more of bringing together real time, in which things exist, along with the duration of the action, for which classical editing had insidiously substituted mental and abstract time."⁵⁸ But the insistence on "real time" is not as easy an aesthetic principle as it might sound. On the contrary, Bazin acknowledges that this aesthetic is disconcerting: "Take a look at the world, keep on doing so, and in the end it will lay bare for you all its cruelty and its ugliness."⁵⁹ In particular, it is the lingering close-up shot—a technique that recurs often in *al-Mumiya*—that, as time passes, begins to appear disturbing. Bazin explains this by noting that the effect of

real-time cinema is that it begins to draw attention to its own recording capacity. That is, within the real-time shot there emerges a sense of the image's supplemental relationship to the thing it represents—a sense that the cinematic image is always the ghost-image of the text that it is recording.

Bazin has described his realism—a sort of negative theology, an aesthetic in which the representation wears on the surface its distance from the object of representation—in terms of mummification, rooted in the particular temporal nature of the photographic still image that, he argues, records an object by embalming it:

If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation. The process might reveal that at the origin of painting and sculpture there lies a mummy complex. . . . The first Egyptian statue, then, was a mummy, tanned and petrified in sodium. But pyramids and labyrinthine corridors offered no certain guarantee against ultimate pillage.⁶⁰

In Bazin's account, there are two representative "ambitions" in art: "the primarily aesthetic, namely the expression of spiritual reality wherein the symbol transcended its model" and the "purely psychological, namely the duplication of the world outside."⁶¹ What is unique about the photographic image is that it marked the first moment in which the duplicative ambition could be definitively separated from the symbolic. But what concerns us here is something connected to the problematic status of the photographic image: namely that as a duplicate of the world, the photograph represents something at a particular moment. In a sense, it embalms objects of representation in a more exact and enduring cast than other media—indeed, it does not represent them so much as supplement them by putting alongside them copies that are (more or less) faithful. What seems especially rich in Bazin's account of the photographic image is this uncomfortable juxtaposition between the copy and the original, a juxtaposition that begins to rub against the conceptualization of "realist" representation as the mere duplication of things as they are. For Bazin, even the most precise photographic image creates, by the act of duplication, an uneasiness between original and copy, an uneasiness that he aptly describes through the metaphor of the mummy: it preserves the body only through embalming it.

In order to illustrate the applicability of Bazin's ideas on time and image with regard to Abd al-Salam's film, I would like to concentrate on the second scene, the funeral of the father. This scene, which is approximately two minutes in length, is almost exclusively visual in nature: there is no dialogue and the only sounds are that of the wind and a pitch that resembles mourning women. What occurs in the scene—the funeral procession to the grave-

yard and the burial of the father—is narrated through the lens of a camera that constantly moves. While there are nine cuts in the scene, insofar as the shorter cuts (six shot-reverse-shots) are interspersed with long tracking shots, the overall effect is fairly continuous and smooth. The first shots of the procession are long, followed by middle-range shots that focus on the women and finally a lingering close-up of the two brothers in front of their father's grave. Although it is clear that the elapsed time of the procession and burial has been greatly condensed by editing, nevertheless the pace of the scene remains slow—we see characters walking, standing silently, watching the bier as it passes. In fact, the temporality of the scene suggests a sense of waiting more than movement. The effect is indeed hypnotic, as Abd al-Salam might say, not because it reproduces the slow essence of the South, but because the camera's attention to the passing of time problematizes the status of the image on screen. Nowhere is this more manifest than in the close-up shot that ends the scene: the lingering pace—what Bazin would call "real time"—makes visible the artifice underlying the cinematic shot; the image—which seems to remain too long on the screen—begins to show the constructedness of its composition. These effects are based in an aesthetic of distance and estrangement, an aesthetic that, when looked at closely, runs against the grain of Abd al-Salam's own rhetoric. The very technique of pacing that Abd al-Salam claims as necessary to represent his object "realistically" becomes the very mechanism by which the representation peels away from its object.

The Mummification of Wanis

There is a strange undecidedness to Abd al-Salam's own comments on the struggle within the film. In interviews, Abd al-Salam has stated that the film depicts Egypt's enlightenment during "a moment of consciousness or conscience."⁶² The underlying terms of this enlightenment need to be mapped out as a series of binary oppositions—rationality versus superstition, progress versus stagnation, etc.—in which the discourse on ancient Egypt played a significant role. But on this subject, Abd al-Salam is also conflicted: at times he admits to a real ambivalence about the desirability of the "progress" associated with statist enlightenment and discusses the project in terms of tragedy and loss. This shows itself quite explicitly in the character of Wanis, the character who effectively abandons the traditions of the tribe but whose "enlightenment" remains somewhat opaque:

Le fils du chef décédé de la tribu, voyant que ces hommes venus de la capitale peuvent déchiffrer les secrets, incompréhensibles pour lui, des tombes dont sa famille vit, se sent étranger à son village, à son propre monde. Il comprend que ces objets leur appartiennent et que leur existence sera éternelle, comme

l'existence de toute œuvre d'art, et que ces hommes en tarbouches, sur leur vapeur, sont les messagers d'une machine qui vient inexorablement transformer le pays, le progrès scientifique que l'on ne peut arrêter, bien qu'il écrase beaucoup de gens, sur son passage.⁶³

(The son of the deceased tribal chief, seeing that these men who come from the capital can decipher the secrets of the tombs, for him incomprehensible, tombs that his family live off, feels like a stranger in his own village, his own world. He understands that these objects belong to them and that their existence will be eternal, like the existence of all works of art, and that these men wearing tarbooshes standing on their steamboats are messengers of a machine that comes to transform inexorably the country and brings the scientific progress that cannot be stopped even though it crushes many on its path.)

Wanis's estrangement from his village and world begins with the death of his father, the tribal patriarch. After this death, Wanis and his brother are brought into the secret of the clan's livelihood. In an early scene, which depicts a ritual of initiation, Wanis and his brother are led into the secret tomb to take part in the family economy, are invited—as their father was—to become men of the tribe. But rather than embracing the tribe's system of values, the two men break from it. They turn in horror as they watch their uncles dismember the body of a mummy. It is not just that Wanis turns away as they roughly hack at the body of the mummy. Instead, there is a remarkable shift that transpires during the scene when Wanis is ordered to take a piece of jewelry to the antiquities trader Ayyub. The piece of jewelry—a necklace adorned with a large eye—seems to return Wanis's gaze: by the end of the scene, he is the one who appears possessed, transfixed by the eye of the object. It is as if the eye of the past stares back in judgment at the present.

The scene is a watershed for Wanis's character: it precipitates his exit from the tribal culture, a culture in which mummies have value largely as inanimate objects to be traded for profit. In confronting the tribe, both Wanis and his brother assert that mummies, as human remains, demand the respect of ancestors. However, when Wanis's brother confronts the elders and tells them it is shameful to traffick in the dead, they murder him and thus reinstate their notion of ancestral loyalty to the tribe. In contrast to his brother, Wanis leaves the tribe passively, more through madness than will. He wanders the Theban landscape, pursued by uncles who want to silence him and by antiquities officers who want to question him. If the tribe and the Antiquities Service represent two opposing systems and two opposing modes of subjectivity, then we can say that although Wanis has left the first position, he never arrives at the second. Instead, he wanders among colossal ruins throughout the course of the film. His character marks a liminal space between the despotic tradition-

alism of the tribe and the enlightened modernity of the nation-state. It is this very in-betweenness that makes Wanis seem unhinged or undead. In short, the film tells the story of Wanis's transformation into a mummy.

Wanis's narrative is about this figurative mummification and is underscored by the many uncomfortable close-ups that intensify the embalmed quality of his visual image. The mummy figure that emerges signals loss more than preservation and death more than resurrection. Visually, this loss of self is represented most powerfully in the scenes in which Wanis wanders through ruins, scenes in which his character falls under the shadow of the objects that surround him, the rocks and statues that come to possess him. The monumental ruins do not serve as a backdrop to the development of Wanis; rather, as the film progresses, it is as though these monuments become the true focus and he gradually fades into the background. Thus, the film's obsession with loss inverts the themes of identification with and possession of antiquities: the Antiquities Service project of repossessing ancient artifacts—artifacts that are the stuff upon which identities are founded—becomes linked with the more frightening excesses of identification and possession we find in Wanis's character.

Patrimony, Melancholia, and the Funerals of 1967

To conclude, I would like to consider how the narrative of the film is framed by two funerals: in the first scene the patriarch is buried, while in the film's closing scene it is the bodies of mummies that are figuratively laid to rest by the state. This doubled ritual of burial casts a melancholic shadow over what comes between: melancholic rather than mournful, because Wanis's character chooses to honor the loss of the father (and then brother) by specifically refusing to attach himself to the order that would compensate for their loss, and melancholic because the experience of their deaths precipitates an internalization and inversion of his feelings into despair, shame, and self-hatred. This is particularly visible in the final moments of the film after Wanis appears—almost sleepwalking—at the door of the antiquities inspector to whom he reveals the tribe's secret. The antiquities department dispatches soldiers and archaeologists who, under the cloak of darkness, work to save the mummies from the tribe. The film closes with Wanis waking from his stupor and realizing that by helping the Antiquities Service, he has condemned his tribe to poverty. He watches as the soldiers lead a solemn procession of sarcophagi from the tomb to the government steamship for transport to the Cairo museum. On the one hand, this final scene marks the triumph of the benevolent state over the tyranny of the tribe: the rich visual quality and slow pace of the final procession is extended by the detailed composition of the shot in which the members of the defeated tribe stand in

front of the powerful steamship. But on the other hand, the film enacts this victory as a funeral ceremony: this procession marks the beginning of the tribe's own death march as it confronts modernity.

We can read the doubled framing ritual of burial in another way, as expressive of competing notions of patriarchy and competing economies of reverence. In a sense, the burials are about one patriarchal system giving way to another: the tribe's literal sense of patriarchy is replaced by the more figurative one of the state; fathers are replaced by forefathers; local customs are supplanted by the more abstract principles of civilization; and finally, family inheritance gives way to national heritage. This transition is a victory of the nation-state, but it is an empty victory: it remains unclear what has been won in the struggle over artifacts. The film begins to seem a meditation on loss and bereavement rather than recuperation and salvation. The note it ends on is so uneasy because by recapitulating and drawing out the ambivalences within the nationalist discourse on antiquities, it begins to lay bare those irreducible social antagonisms which underlie it.

I would like to consider the funeral scenes further in light of the tension between the nationalist, redemptive surface of the film and the sense of ambivalence and melancholia just underneath. I would speculate that this tension exists chiefly between the film's screenplay and its production and that it is partially explained by the peculiar conditions of the film's production. As I noted above, the screenplay for the film was complete and funding guaranteed by the Ministry of Culture by early 1967. Most likely, the casting, sets and locations were also decided by that spring. This was soon followed by the disastrous war which took place in June. As Abd al-Salam notes:

I wrote [the film] right before the collapse [of 1967]. Then I began shooting six or seven months after it. Of course, [the event] had a great impact on me. Especially since my father had died a couple months after the collapse, which plunged me into deep grief. I could not avoid the effect these two calamities had on me. I remember that when I shaved each morning, I was truly afraid to see my face in the mirror.⁶⁴

The film was then shot in 1968 and completed the next year. With this chronology in mind, one could propose another reading of the film with special reference to the interpretive struggles in which Abd al-Salam, the post-1967 director, exercised his authority to revise the work of Abd al-Salam, the Nasserist screenwriter. This at least might begin to explain the disjuncture between the naive nationalism of the text's screenplay (which passed the first censors) and the complications of its melancholic cinematic style, much of which could be the result of post-1967 choices. Moreover,

this would at least partially explain the Ministry of Culture's surprise at the final product and its cool reception: the melancholic, distanced aesthetic of the text does not seem to have been lost on the bureaucrats who decided to shelve the film in 1969.

I would like to conclude by juxtaposing the film's funerals with the historical context in which the film was produced: to think of the film as a meditation on loss taking place in a political and cultural situation of profound loss, as an oblique rumination on the perceived collapse of the Nasserist nation-state. Indeed, early audiences link their experience of viewing the film to general feelings of defeat and loss. One of Abd al-Salam's critics describes what it was like to watch the film in Cairo at the time:

I first saw the film on December 16, 1969, in one of the private screenings at the Cinema Club . . . I saw the film in the midst of difficult circumstances. The nation was weighed down by anxiety and a heavy sensation of defeat, our breasts were filled with shame. Huge crowds of youth stood in lines outside embassies in the hopes of emigrating.⁶⁵

For this critic, as for others, the film was the sort of powerful text that could redeem a fallen national culture:

Everyone [in the audience] realized that when an aesthetic piece was presented by an eloquent cineaste like Abd al-Salam who carried within his mind and heart the culture of his ancient forefathers; its message should reach out to his people and kin.⁶⁶

That neither the state nor the public took to this interpretation seems to indicate just how estranged the film was from its context.

Yet, the special circumstances surrounding the general release of *al-Mumiya* on January 28, 1975, reconnect us to the film's funereal themes. The film's appearance on the Egyptian cultural scene is almost too neatly framed by a series of mass funerals—al-Nahhas in 1965, Nasser in 1970, Umm Kulthum in 1975, and finally Abd al-Halim Hafiz in 1977—in which millions of Egyptians mourned something more than the death of public individuals. While it would be incorrect to think that those larger events need be read solely as the public mourning of the passing of Arab nationalism, nevertheless they do seem to figure in the background of Abd al-Salam's text. As such, they suggest a different reason for thinking of the significance of *al-Mumiya* within the nationalist cinematic canon—and allow us to recognize its special place in that tradition while not betraying its internal ambivalences or the richness of the ambivalences posed by its historical moment.

Notes

1. See Shadi Abd al-Salam, "Counting the Years: Shadi Abd al-Salam's Words," *Discourse* 21:1 (1999): 130.
2. For example, see Guy Hennebelle, "Chadi Abdel Salam une brillante exception," *Les Cinémas Africains en 1972* (Paris: Société Africaine d'Édition, 1972).
3. Sami al-Salamuni, "Hiwar lam yunshir fi hiyat Shadi," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 351.
4. The story appears in Gaston Maspéro, *Les momies royales de Deir el-Bahari*, pp. 511-787.
5. See the interview "Chadi Abdes-Salam: le duel tradition-modernité" in Yves Thoraval, *Regards sur le cinéma égyptien* (Beirut: Dar al-Machreq Éditeurs, 1975), p. 81.
6. Al-Salamuni, pp. 347-48.
7. See Muridi al-Nahhas, "Shadi Abd al-Salam: shua min Misr," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 7-12, and Viola Shafiq, "Al-Bahth an al-Hawiyya," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 118-120.
8. "Al-Mumiya expresses Abd al-Salam's attempt to cling to his roots. Not in the sense of proudly boasting that he owns the antiquities. But that truly, those thousands of years that extend behind him have not slipped from his grasp, and that they assist him in rising up from his fall no matter how difficult or long that fall may have been." From Saad Abd al-Rahmsn, "Rawat al-mur'iyyat fi-l-Mumiya," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 206. See also Majdi Abd al-Rahman, "Al-Mumiya abr thalath tawarikh," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 229.
9. See for example comments Abd al-Salam (1999, p. 136) makes with regard to the costumes and casting of another Pharaonic film, *Akhinatun*, he was set to make at the time of his death:

Before starting to shoot, I will teach the cast the gestures and rhythms of those who lived three thousand years ago. They will need to learn to walk very naturally barefoot in burning sands. I've asked the finest artisans in Moski in old Cairo to make for me exactly what was made for Tutankhamen... decorated with jewels... the very colors... the same weights... the same material, or something close to it. I am using the finest materials in order to approximate the real thing. I want you to understand me... the actors aren't professionals... I met the person who will play the role of Akhenaton while walking in the streets of Cairo... I've met more than one young woman who would work for the role of Nefertiti. Now I have to choose one of them... Most who act with me are inexperienced... I can influence them... They're not tied to things that distance them from us... For this reason, when they decorate themselves with jewelry and wear wigs like the ancients... wigs made of wool, wearing Pharaonic robes made of Egyptian cotton, or the priest's garment of cheetah skin... At that moment, the blood of our kings and queens and princes

- and soldiers and storytellers and writers will flow in their veins. It's the blood of memory. They won't be acting roles, they will be inheriting them.
10. See Muhammad Ibrahim Adil, "Al-Mumiya bayn al-tashkil wa-l-tajsid," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 189.
11. There is a long history of nationalist writing that sees a singularity and univocity within Egyptian culture from the ancient past through the present. With specific reference to the film, see the rich architectural study by Abd al-Salam and Salah Mari, "Al-Bayt wa-l-khayma fi rif Idfuh," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 90-118; see also articles by Majd Abd al-Rahman, al-Nahhas, and Shafiq, op. cit.
12. Guy Hennebelle, "Hadith an al-Mumiya," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 243.
13. While Abd al-Salam's vision of civilization and culture is unique with regard to his generation of intellectuals, it nevertheless builds upon an established body of earlier discourse that attempted to make sense of the relevance of the ancient or pre-Islamic world within the cultures of modern Egyptians. See for example, Husayn 1996 (1938), #270.
14. "The central category and criterion of realist literature is the type, a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations." Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (New York: The Universal Library, 1964), p. 6.
15. "The function of costumbrismo was to make the different strata of society comprehensible one to another." Susan Kirkpatrick as quoted in Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: Traditional Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 14.
16. See Homi Bhabha's distinction between performative and pedagogical subjects in "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 302.
17. See for example: "Al-Mumiya," *Majallat Ramsis* 10:4 (1921): 314-20; "Yaqtat firawn," *Majallat Ramsis* 12:9-10 (1923): 696-67; and "Al-Yadd al-muhannat," *Majallat Ramsis* (1924): 47-48.
18. See Brian Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile* (New York: Scribners, 1975); Peter France, *The Rape of Egypt: How the Europeans Stripped Egypt of its Heritage* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1991), pp. 27-57.
19. For two examples of travel accounts in which the trade appears, see [Giovanni] Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia* (London: John Murray, 1820) and Wolfradine Von Minutoli, *Recollections of Egypt* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Carey, 1827).
20. Al-Qurna (also: Gourna, el-Gourney, Curnu, etc.) is exceptional in the accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers: its proximity to the important sites of the Colossi of Memnon, the Memnonium (or Ramesseum), Dayr al-Bahri, Medinat Abu, and the Valley of the Kings meant that travelers and archaeologists had to negotiate for the assistance and labor of locals, in addition to the artifacts they had excavated in secret.

More interestingly, al-Qurna people's organized and militant refusal to concede ground to the central state and foreign explorers set it apart from other regions where antiquities were found. The early history of armed encounters between European visitors and local villagers can be traced through travel accounts. See Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries* (London: W. Bowyer, 1743), pp. 78–98; Frederick Lewis Norden, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia* (London: Lockyer Davis and Charles Reymers, 1758), vol. II, pp. 71–74, 194–95; Charles Nicolas Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt: Undertaken by Order of the Old Government of France* (London: John Stockdale, 1799), vol. III, pp. 239–50; Vivant Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt, During the Campaigns of General Bonaparte* (London: J. Cundee, 1803), vol. I, p. 216; and Belzoni.

21. France, pp. 58–80.
22. A complete French translation of the Ordinance of August 15, 1835, appears in Antoine Khater, *Le Régime juridique de fouilles et des antiquités en Égypte* (Cairo: Imprimerie de L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1960), pp. 37–40. The state Arabic translation of the Ottoman text may be found in Dar al-Wathaiq: Abhath Box 127: Folder 9: Diwan Khidiwi, wurida: Daftar 816: Number 148: Page 175: Date: 6 Rabi al-Thani, 1251.
23. Khater, 38, translation mine.
24. See Abhath Box 127: Folder 9. Correspondence from the Sublime Porte to Mukhtar Bey, Nazir of the Royal Court. Date: 21 Rabi al-Thani, 1251.
25. See Khater, p. 45. See also Dar al-Wathaiq: Abhath Box 127: Folder 9: Document "Al-Tasrihat li-naql juthuth al-kufar."
26. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
28. Donald Reid, "Indigenous Egyptology: The Decolonization of a Profession," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105:2 (1985): 233–246; and "Nationalizing the Pharaonic Past: Egyptology, Imperialism, and Egyptian Nationalism, 1922–1952" in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, eds. James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 127–49.
29. Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham* (Cairo: Dar al-Shab, n.d.), pp. 197–98.
30. See Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, "The Egyptianist Image of Egypt: III. Pharaonicism," in *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
31. See Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1:1 (1988): 58–89; Ralph Miliband, "Marx and the State" in *Class Power and State Power* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 3–25; and Michael Taussig, "Maleficium: State Fetishism" in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, eds. E. Apter and W. Pietz (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 217–247.

32. Millband, p. 6.
33. Abrams, pp. 69–70; Taussig, pp. 220–23.
34. Abrams, pp. 61–65.
35. See Michel Foucault, "Governmentality" in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 87–104.
36. Foucault, pp. 103–104.
37. David Lloyd and Paul Thomas describe more fully this process by which a cultural canon and ethical subject are articulated by the State:

[Culture] refers in part to the objects that constitute a "culture" [Kultur], in the sense of the ensemble of artifacts and aesthetic practices of a developed civilization rather than to any given 'mode of living,' but designates primarily the disposition of the human subject in relation to those objects and to nature. It thus extends the purview of the prior concept-metaphor, "Taste," and the philosophical elaboration of the "aesthetic" comes to consider culture as a process of cultivation, the gradual formation of an ethical human subject, characterized by disinterested reflection and universally valid judgments (*Culture and the State* [New York: Routledge, 1998], p. 2).

38. See, for example, Ibrahim Mustafa, *Al-Qawl al-mufid fi-ashar al-Said* (Bulaq: al-Matbaa al-Kubra al-Amiriya bi-Bulaq, 1893); Ahmad Najib, *Al-Ashr al-jalil li-l-gudama wadi al-Nil* (Bulaq: al-Matbaa al-Kubra al-Amiriya bi-Bulaq, 1895).
39. In particular, see Khater, Decrees of 1835 and 1869. Transportation laws seem to have been the medium for regulating ownership and possession. See the Decrees of 1869, 1883, 1891, and the 1901 railroads bylaw also in Khater.
40. The bylaws of 1912 are the most elaborate of the laws on exchange. Besides the 1835 and 1869 Decrees, see the bylaws of 1880, 1912, and 1921. See Khater.
41. As it appears in the above Decree of 1897 and, more specifically, in the Decree of 1909.
42. Ahmad Kamal, *Livre des perles enfouies et du mystère précieux au sujet des indications des cachettes, des trouvailles et des trésors* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1907), p. 8.
43. Treasure seeking—al-matlab—is addressed also in the 1869 Ottoman antiquities bylaws, Articles 7, 11, and 13.
44. See the 1835 Decree in Khater. The vagueness of the 1869 Ottoman bylaws on antiquities allowed the state to lay claim, in the name of conservation, to all sorts of land. One such example is Article 23: "Dans le cas où le Gouvernement voudrait exécuter lui-même des fouilles sur des points qui ne sont pas mulk, ni dépendents de localités habitées et où la découverte d'antiquités serait probable, ces endroits ne seront cédés à personne" (Khater, p. 277).

- On the expulsion of the permanent settlement from the ruins of Edfu, see Auguste Mariette-Bey, *The Monuments of Upper Egypt* (Alexandria: A. Mourès, 1877), p. 247.
45. See the Decrees of 1909 in Khater.
 46. On *sibakh*, see Khater and Najib. Also, many nineteenth-century writers describe with horror the practice of burning mummies as fuel. See, for example, Frederick Henniker, *Notes During a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, the Oasis Boeris, Mount Sinai and Jerusalem* (London: John Murray, 1824); Minutoli, op. cit. (1827); and John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea and the Holy Land* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970 [1835]). Mark Twain claims to have heard that Egyptian locomotives used mummies instead of coal in *The Innocents Abroad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). While it is easy to suppose that such a use of mummy would have been prohibited under existing law, the fact that it is never alluded to by Antiquities Service officers makes one at least doubt the extent of the practice. Nevertheless, as an image, it was striking enough to resurface in the "mummy torch" scene in Rider Haggard's novel *She*.
 47. Article 3 of the 1835 Decree stipulated the posting of armed soldiers around sites, whereas Article 9 subordinated local officials to the authority of Antiquities Inspectors, and Article 10 authorized inspection tours throughout Upper Egypt. Article 6 of the 1869 Ottoman bylaws authorized government agents to guard monuments while Article 9 placed all authorized excavations under the direct supervision of government agents and Article 21 stipulated: "Si l'emplacement à fouiller se trouve séparé des localités peuplées par une distance qui rendrait difficile toute surveillance continue de l'autorité, un employé sera adjoint au possesseur d'autorisation aux frais de ce dernier" (Khater, 277).
 48. Najyb, p. 5.
 49. See Mariette-Bey, p. 57, or for an earlier account, Moyle Sherer, *Scenes and Impressions in Egypt and in Italy* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824), pp. 116-17.
 50. Najyb, p. 81.
 51. Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), p. xxxv.
 52. Majdi Abd al-Rahman asserts that the first draft of the screenplay was "realist," the second "melodrama" as opposed to the fourth, the version that was finally produced, which was "visual poetry" (al-shi'r al-mar'i). See Majdi Abd al-Rahman, p. 227.
 53. Shadi Abd al-Salam, "Al-Iqa al-Misri al-bati," (interview in *Al-Qahira* 159 [February 1996]: 246.
 54. Majdi Abd al-Rahman, op. cit. p. 228.
 55. Hennebelle (1996), p. 243.
 56. Abd al-Salam (1996), p. 247.
 57. André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 38.

58. Ibid., p. 39.
59. Ibid., p. 27.
60. Ibid., p. 9.
61. Ibid., p. 11.
62. Shadi Abd al-Salam (1999), p. 131.
63. Thoraval, p. 81.
64. Al-Salamuni, p. 349.
65. Majdi Abd al-Rahman, "Ya man tadhhab sataiud," *Al-Qahira* 159 (February 1996): 306.
66. Ibid.