



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية
التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكرو فيلم

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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية
التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكروفيلم



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكروفيلم



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Denshawai (1906) and Cultural Historiography: A Study of Selected Imperialist and anti-Imperialist Texts

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master's Degree of Literature

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Abstract

Denshawai (1906) is a multi-layered cultural historical text. The incident produces a myriad of Arabic and English texts that can be divided into imperialist and anti-imperialist. The thesis is a meta-history of Denshawai (1906) since it applies the interdisciplinary cultural historiography to such selected texts produced on Denshawai, stressing the exceptionality of the incident in shaking the tenets of the British Occupation in Egypt and reviving the Egyptian nationalist movement that was dormant after the Urabi Revolt (1882). The interdisciplinarity and contemporaneity of cultural historiography make it apt to study the various texts produced on Denshawai since it includes historical, visual, semiotic as well as literary studies. The texts analyzed include: a preface, a chronicle, a diary, newspaper articles, photographs and a cartoon. The historico-cultural analysis of the texts proves that Denshawai (1906) is an authentic cultural matrix composed of three parallel triads. The 1st triad is of the narrative, the narrator and the narratee, the 2nd triad is composed of Aristotle's three modes of persuasion and the 3rd triad represents Hayden White's three modes of historical interpretation. The three triads are applied and analyzed in the context of cultural historiography and Juri Lotman's concept of the artistic text as a unified entity that can be broken down into variants. Thus, the thesis aims at presenting a meta-history of Denshawai (1906) focusing on the structure of each historical narrative and the role of the cultural historian in it.

Key Words: (Denshawai- cultural historiography- interdisciplinarity- artistic text- imperialist- anti-imperialist)

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Introduction

The thesis aims at answering the following questions: (1) Why is it important to re-examine long-left historical incidents culturally? (2) What makes Denshawai (1906) distinctive for a historico-cultural analysis? (3) And how is cultural historiography applied to Denshawai (1906)? The first question is answered in the introduction by clarifying the relationship between culture and history in the light of the features of cultural historiography. The second question is answered in chapter one by denoting the consequences of Denshawai (1906) on the British Occupation of Egypt. The third question is answered in all three chapters by applying the features of cultural historiography to the Egyptian texts in chapter one, in addition to the English imperialist texts in chapter two, and finally the anti-imperialist ones in chapter three.

Carving the historical incidents in the human memory takes two forms: plain historiography and cultural historiography. Narrating the events as they happened is known as plain historiography. The historian, in this regard, might be an eyewitness who records the events as they happened or he might go for collecting witnesses from the people who witnessed the incident to achieve credibility. In this regard, Radwa Ashour (1964- 2014) explains the process of historical narration in stating that "reading history transforms us from being narratees into being part of the narrative and potential narrators of it" (*Review of Sabra and Shatila* 11). She further clarifies that history gains power by narration because "stories that end do not end as long as they can be re/narrated" (*Granada Trilogy*, 247). Therefore, the sustainability of the historical events is proved depending on the number of times such events are narrated. In plain historiography, the historian relates the events as they are without any comments from his part. On the contrary, cultural historiography aims at narrating a historical incident in a certain form. This form can be a preface, a poem, a chronicle, a pamphlet, a cartoon, a newspaper article

among many others. The cultural historian in this respect is an active doer in the process of delivering such historical narrative to the narratees. Thus, the difference between plain and cultural historiography is mainly in the form both adopt in narrating their own narratives. Having an introduction on cultural historiography and highlighting its features stress the national need for applying a cultural historiographical approach to the historical texts to add a qualitative content to the studies of humanities.

To further highlight the previous point of the difference between plain and cultural historiography, historian Bayan Al-Hout (b1937) in her book *Sabra and Shatila*¹(2004), offered a plain historiography of the massacre by offering a historical account of Sabra and Shatila (1982) based on the direct witnesses of the incident. Al-Hout's work in this regard is collecting such witnesses together in a plain form. However, cultural historiography is **kaleidoscopic** in the sense that each historical event is granted a different hue when transferred from a narrator to a narratee. The result is never the same since each narrator chooses to highlight certain patterns of history, while putting other patterns in shade. Continuing with the kaleidoscope metaphor, Denshawai (1906) is the kaleidoscope of the thesis and each narrator/cultural historian is a valid kaleidoscope user. The user offers the readers in this regard a different hue of Denshawai (1906) to be examined and compared with the other possible hues of it. One time the hue is given by a dramatist, another time by a poet and a third time by a politician. The variety of such hues springs from the different backgrounds to which the narrators belong: their historical, geographical, ideological and epistemological backgrounds.

¹ Historian Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout (b 1937) wrote that book in 2004. It covers the three-day atrocious massacre of Sabra and Shatila which took place from the sixteenth of September to the eighteenth of September 1982. It took place in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, against the Palestinian refugees by the Lebanese militias, aided and supervised by the Israeli army.

The contribution of the thesis lies in the historico-cultural analysis of Denshawai (1906). In this regard, Kimberly Alana Luke's dissertation entitled *Peering through the Lens of Dinshwai: British Imperialism in Egypt 1882-1914* (2010) restricts her analysis of Denshawai to history, dealing with both Egyptian and British responses applying the concepts of the Imperialism approach. Thus, the thesis follows a different pattern of analysis from what was made before.

To further solidify the controversy between traditional history and cultural history, historian Hayden White states that there is a long-lasting controversy between proper history and meta-history. He claims in his book *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1978) that proper history is to just provide information as mentioned in the documents without any attempt of explaining it or commenting on it. However, meta-history is mainly concerned with studying the governing rules of historiography and the structure of the historical narrative itself (White 52). Therefore, the thesis is considered a meta-history of Denshawai (1906) since, as the definition of meta-history indicates, it studies the structure of the historical narratives done on the incident to examine the historical, geographical, as well as the ideological stance upon which such narratives are constructed. The thesis, therefore, intends to introduce Denshawai (1906) by applying the interdisciplinary cultural historiography to the selected texts done on it to present a **meta-history** of Denshawai (1906).

Before delving into the features of cultural historiography, a plain historical background of the incident will help further analyze it historico-culturally because touching upon the mere historical event leads to deeper analysis. It is stated that on the thirteenth of June, 1906, a group of five British officers went on a pigeon shooting tour in Denshawai village, Menoufyya governorate. The story started when a detachment of the army of Occupation led by Major Pine-

Coffin was on its way to Alexandria and when they reached Menouf; they expressed their desire to the Sheriff of the Police in Menouf to go to Denshawai to shoot pigeons. Receiving orders of comforting the English army and meeting their needs whenever possible, the five officers' request was accepted and they went to Denshawai accompanied by an interpreter after getting a permission of shooting pigeons "outside the village" (Shafiq² 99).

A scuffle broke out when an officer mistakenly shot the barn owned by one of the villagers, putting it on fire and severely wounded his wife who had been driving a thresher. The villager, whose wife was wounded, wanted to get the guilty English officer to the police station. In the meantime, the villagers and the four other English officers came to the scene. A number of sentries with their chief appeared in the scene while the officers misinterpreted their presence for causing them harm; therefore, they started shooting. The result is the murder of the chief of the sentries and getting some civilians injured. Things went worse when the civilians started beating the officers and throwing them with stones. Pine Coffin's left arm was broken and another officer suffered a broken nose. The sentries arrested Major Coffin, Lieutenant Smith and another officer after disarming them. They were then delivered to their camp (Shafiq 100).

Captain Bull and the vet officer ran for around eight kilometers when Bull fell dead due to sunstroke mixed with the blows to the head he had earlier received and which caused him a concussion. When reached the camp, the officers accompanied the vet to where Captain Bull had fallen. The officers arrested all the villagers who were surrounding Bull and killed one of them, maiming his body. The incident was reported to the supreme authorities who attended at once

²Ahmed Shafiq Pasha (1860-1940) is a prominent Egyptian historian and politician. He was the Chief of the Khedive's Court and the Dean of the Egyptian National University during the time of Abbas II. He wrote his own memoirs in which he narrates the incident of Denshawai (1906) among other incidents from 1903 to 1914.

represented in the governor of Menoufyya, the Chief prosecutor and a large number of police men armed with guns and bayonets (Shafiq 100).

Fifty two villagers were arrested and persecuted before a special court of British and Egyptian members. The court members were: Acting Minister of Justice, Boutros Ghali Pasha as a President of the Court, Mr. Hayter as Acting Judicial Adviser, FathyBek Zaghloul, as a President of the Egyptian Court of First Instance, Mr. Bond, as a Vice-President of the Court of Appeal and Lieutenant-Colonel, Ludlow, as a Judge Advocate of the Occupation Army. The court was convened on the 24th of June, 1906. Ibrahim El-Helbawi (1858-1940), the Public Prosecutor narrated the details of the incident asking for a severe punishment to the accused (Shafiq 101).

On the 27th of June of the same year, the Special Court had issued its decision with no appeal by sentencing four villagers to death, applying penal servitude to two villagers, imprisoning a villager for fifteen years and six villagers for seven years, in addition to applying penal servitude of seven years to six villagers. It also applied penal servitude of one year to three villagers and flogged them with fifty lashes each, besides, flogging other five villagers with fifty lashes. The sum is twenty one victims³ executed, imprisoned or flogged. On the 28th of June, a day after the Tribunal's decision, the sentences of execution and flogging were publicly enforced in front of the civilians' houses and before their families' eyes in one of the most atrocious scenes (Shafiq 102).

Understanding the features of cultural historiography, its origin and development throughout time, sets the ground for analyzing Denshawai (1906) historico-culturally in its

³ There is a slight difference in the number of the victims in Wilfred Scawen Blunt's *My Diaries* (1907) since the total number is twenty five victims: four death sentences, four penal servitude for life, three, fifteen years of imprisonment and six, seven years of imprisonment, three, one year with fifty lashes and five received fifty lashes.

various forms. Cultural historiography is the means through which the various lights of the Denshawai (1906) kaleidoscope are perceived. Therefore, cultural historians Peter Burke (1937), Jörg Rogge (1962) and Alison Moore (1972) refer to cultural historiography as an interdisciplinary and relatively recent approach that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. It is characterized by interdisciplinarity because it includes anthropology, literary history, art history, historical studies, reader response, and mythology along with other disciplines as close neighbors (Burke 135). Jörg Rogge states that what makes cultural historiography distinct from social history is the former's interdisciplinarity and what makes it different from cultural studies is that cultural historiography is a "more flexible and open approach" (16). He further states that the dissatisfaction with the dominant historical-scientific concepts opened the door before cultural history so that at the beginning of the 1980s in Germany, criticism of the social history with socio-economic interests was the starting point for the awakening interest in culture (17). It was the start point that nothing is pure anymore.

Cultural historiography as an interdisciplinary approach is linguistically coined from the combination of culture and history. Peter Burke, in this regard, traces the term culture. He states that culture was mainly used to refer to the arts and sciences of the high culture, and then it moved to describe the popular equivalents to those arts and sciences such as the folk music and folk medicine. In the recent generations, it was utilized to refer to "a wide range of artifacts such as images, houses, as well as conversations, reading and playing games" (29). It is therefore a particular way of life whether for a people, a period or a group (1). American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) perceives culture as "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols" (37). The historical transmission of such pattern of meanings makes them always alive and fresh for analysis. The historico-cultural examination of Denshawai (1906) is in