



Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt

Heidi Morrison

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Heidi Morrison is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, USA. She is the editor of *The Global History of Childhood Reader* (2012).

'Heidi Morrison's *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt* is a groundbreaking work. It is the first monograph to chart a modern history of childhood in the Middle East. It explores uncharted sources, such as children's press, children's literature and memoirs, to portray a rich fabric of an intimate domain of modernity. Morrison portrays children as actors in Egypt's modern history and thus examines how the everyday of modernity was experienced. In doing so, her narrative weaves together history and memory, both personal and national. The book takes gender seriously as a category of analysis and explores its interaction with age and class. Morrison also takes emotions seriously, by integrating them into the analysis and by foregrounding empathy as a vital tool of the historian's toolkit.'

- Liat Kozma, author of *Policing Egyptian Women*.

"This is a beautifully written account of changing ideas and constructions of childhood in early twentieth-century Egypt. Based on contemporary autobiographies, magazines and children's literature, Morrison paints a fascinating and compelling picture of children's lives which will appeal to historians, anthropologists and anyone interested in different childhoods in different places."

- Heather Montgomery, Open University, UK

"Drawing on the children's press and literature, and on the autobiographies and writings of Egypt's literate classes, Morrison accounts for modern Egyptians came to record their childhood as a distinct period in their personal development. Using childhood as a category of historical analysis, Morrison contextualizes and analyzes those Egyptians' reflections on their increasingly state-prescribed roles in state building and colonial resistance. The result is not only an engaging history of the emergence of the category of childhood in modern Egypt, but also a critical account of the Egyptian nation's journey from colonial childhood to independent maturity."

- Lisa Pollard, The University of North Carolina, Wilmington, USA

About the book

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were pivotal in contemporary Egyptian history. The country searched for an identity in the face of intensifying western imperialism, the emerging nation-state, changing gender roles, and a rising middle class. A new cultural conception of childhood emerged in Egypt that had a synergistic and synonymous relationship with this process of modernization. Modernization cannot be separated from reconceptualization of categories of age. This book examines the transformations of Egyptian childhoods that occurred across gender, class, and rural/urban divides. It also questions the role of nostalgia and representation of childhood in illuminating key underlying political, social, and cultural developments in Egypt. Morrison uses unexplored Arabic sources such as the children's press and literature, as well as more familiar Arabic sources, such as autobiographies and the writings of Egyptian intellectuals – whose discussion of childhood has been missed by other scholars.

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