1 Introduction
Arabic Intellectual History between the Postwar and the Postcolonial

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> [T]he struggle with tyranny that the Arab revolutions attempted ... is fundamentally an intellectual struggle (*sira' ma'rifi*), a struggle that desires to return history to its historicity, to engage with the present in its contemporaneity, and to look towards the future as though it were a development accumulated from its pasts.[1]

> Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it ... We must rid ourselves of the habit, now that we are in the thick of the fight, of minimizing the action of our fathers or of feigning incomprehension when considering their silence and passivity. They fought as well as they could, with the arms they possessed then: and if the echoes of their struggle have not resounded in the international arena, we must realize that the reason for this silence lies less in their lack of heroism than in the fundamentally different international situation of our time.[2]

How might practitioners of modern Arab intellectual history find new ways to dispatch historical narratives predicated upon Eurocentric discourses, practices, and modes of being that have been too simplistically tracked as they were transmitted in some modular fashion to other parts of the world, including the Middle East? Is modern Arab intellectual history consigned to only ever amount to a derivative discourse? To what extent have Arab intellectual engagements with questions of politics, society, and culture been integrated into local, regional, and global discourses? How have these currents been transformed in the crucible of the twentieth century Middle East? What are the key moments of rupture and the abiding trajectories of continuity in the intellectual history development of the postwar Arab Middle East? In what ways might historians find other means for interrogating the relationship between the secular and the religious in the production of intellectual discourses in the modern Middle East?

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[1] Nasser Rabbat, "Sira'at al-istibdad," *al-Hayat*, May 8, 2015.
[2] Fanon (2004 [1961]: 145).

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One plausible challenge to the unsatisfying linear narrative of a singular European modernity that diffused from Europe towards its peripheries in a modular form can be found in the form of global studies, a broad scholarly field that has captivated the humanities and social sciences in recent years. But the present ubiquity of "the global" in scholarly and popular discourse demands an engagement with and problematization of its emergence and ascendancy.[3] Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori interrogate the stakes and possible futures of a field of intellectual historical inquiry gone global.[4] They hail the arrival of this new global intellectual history as potentially "transformative" for the disciplines of history, politics, philosophy, and so on, as "a threshold moment in the possible formation of an intellectual history extending across geographical parameters far larger than usual."[5] At the same time, they are careful to subject "the global" to a painstaking critique, unpacking three levels at which scholars employ the term: "as a meta-analytical category of the historian"; "as a substantive scale of historical process"; and, finally, "as a subjective category used by historical agents."[6]

Any adequate assessment of global intellectual history must be situated within the broader context of the professional historical discipline as well as the political-economic conjuncture within which it operates. Otherwise, the global is prone to (however unwittingly) re-inscribing modes of universal rationality that are oblivious to or unconcerned by historical difference.[7] Another problem concerns the subtle (and, often, not-so-subtle) iterations of Eurocentrism that accompany this pursuit of *a* global intellectual history that is distinguished by its interconnectedness if not always its singularity; even if globalization proceeds at multiple scales and in divergent directions, the figure of "Europe" haunts the arrival of "the global."[8] As Frederick Cooper cautions in *Global Intellectual History*, "The path to an intellectual history that takes in most of the world will lead us to a less-than-global intellectual history."[9]

What are the implications, then, of such a global history that may be always already "less-than-global"? How should scholars of the Middle East and other world-historical regions traditionally set apart from, or even sometimes against, the mainline narrative of world and global history respond to the challenges set forth by these methods and concerns? In this rush to synthesize new narratives of everything – from the most mundane to the most universal – have historians of the global

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[3] Cf. Kelley (2005).   [4] Moyn and Sartori (2013).   [5] Ibid., 4.   [6] Ibid., 5.
[7] Guha (1989); Chatterjee (1993); Scott (1999); Scott (2004); Lazarus (2011).
[8] Chakrabarty (2000).   [9] Cooper (2013: 292).

obviated the need for local- or mid-range historical research and scholarly analysis?[10]

Critics of overreaching narratives of global history point to the hubris embedded in the triumphalist claims about the inevitability of globalization and its attendant histories, narrative framing devices, and ideological repertoires.[11] To put the critical question most simply: must all history now be global?[12] Certainly the answer to this question must be a qualified yet emphatic no. Emphatic in the sense that historical research and analysis will never be able to abandon altogether the local: events, structures, and movements; individual actors, social groups, institutions, and even non-human agents. Qualified, too, though, in the sense that, just as historians can no longer justifiably overlook hitherto marginalized sectors of society such as women, workers, peasants, children, and other subaltern groups ever since the emergence of social history and history from below, historians are no longer free to ignore the insights of those proponents of diasporic or transnational or global histories that rely upon polycentric and multiscalar historical analysis.[13]

Other critical intellectual historians employ a centripetal or "outside-in" approach to globalization in an effort to decenter the West. Historians of the Haitian revolution, for example, identify the birth of the modern world in the Atlantic slave trade and Caribbean slave rebellions.[14] Not only did such events in the colonial periphery inspire radical traditions of thought concerning concepts of self-determination and national unification that would challenge liberal platitudes and leftist mobilization. They also fundamentally transformed and recast European Enlightenment thought in the process.[15] What Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi has called "genesis amnesia" in the (post)colonial encounter with Western modernity echoes the argument of Timothy Mitchell that modernity ought to be conceived as a product of both the West's dialectic interactions with the non-West and the violent forging of that geo-cultural dualism in the first place.[16]

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[10] David A. Bell, "This Is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network," *New Republic*, October 25, 2013: www.newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor.

[11] Krishnan (2007). To be fair, Mazlish (1998: 392) equivocates, arguing, "the course of this globalization is not foreordained: Global history is not Whiggish." Still, there is clearly a sense of the inevitability of the study of the global as the new universal frame of reference.

[12] This argument should be tempered, of course, through an acknowledgement of the diversity of this emergent field. Consider the following exhaustive exchange: Pieterse (2013); responses by Juergensmeyer (2013), Steger (2013), Axford (2013); Pieterse (2014).

[13] Pieterse (2014: 168).

[14] James (1938). See, too, Mintz (1985); Dubois (2004); Buck-Morss (2009).

[15] Trouillot (1995); Ferrer (2014); Getachew (2016).   [16] Mitchell (1999b).

Edward Said referred to the "voyage in" in order to describe an intellectual journey of empowerment and anti-imperial thought that would continue to shape and reshape European Orientalism as well as other scholarly ventures throughout the postwar period even as events in the Middle East and elsewhere galvanized new European intellectual trends.[17] For example, the French-British-Israeli invasion of Suez in 1956 played some part in catalyzing the New Left in Britain, while the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962) profoundly polarized French intellectuals.[18] In turn, Algerian marks on French thought later migrated across the Atlantic as French political philosophy was reconstituted as "theory" and post-structuralism on U.S. campuses.[19] The student revolts of 1968 in France and West Germany, meanwhile, also had strong connections to Thirdworldist political and intellectual movements.[20] In addition, anti-fascist and anti-totalitarian intellectuals in Europe and North America have often come into conflict with anti-colonial and anti-racist thinkers and activists over the question of uncritical support for Israel.[21]

In his contribution to this volume, literature scholar and translator Hosam Aboul-Ela addresses the legacies of Orientalist scholarship, Eurocentric epistemologies, and colonial intervention in their portrayal of the Middle East and North Africa as a "no theory producing area." For a variety of reasons, the most influential centers – intellectually and institutionally – for the development of "Arab theory" have not been in the Middle East itself. Despite widespread debates over Orientalism that had gone on for decades, if not centuries – in France, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere – the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in New York in 1978 was far more impactful in catalyzing a scholarly discussion of the politics of knowledge production vis-à-vis the Middle East and the Islamic world on a global scale.[22]

Fadi Bardawil and Samer Frangie, among others, explore the historically contingent tensions between postcolonial thinkers in the metropole and Marxist intellectuals in the Middle East. At the heart of the "broken conversation" between what are often, unfortunately, apprehended as disparate problem-spaces lies the question of what constitutes an

[17] Said (2000b).
[18] Bogues (2015); Le Sueur (2005); Shepard (2006); Carroll (2007); Goodman and Silverstein (2009).
[19] Young (1990); Cusset (2008); Wise (2009); Ahluwalia (2010). For a critique of these approaches, see Davis (2011).
[20] Ross (2002); Slobodian (2012).
[21] Lubin (2014); Doulatzai (2012); Naber (2012); Feldman (2015); Pennock (2017).
[22] Abdel-Malek (1963); Asad and Owen (1980); al-'Azm (1981); Said (1994 [1978]).

effective critique of global capitalism and Western imperialism as well as enduring Orientalist forms of knowledge production. Various methodological solutions have been proposed and explored, from international political economy, critical race theory, and critical sociology to discourse analysis, hermeneutics, and postcolonial historicism, just to name a few salient approaches.[23] In the war-torn Middle East of the mid- to late twentieth century, the economic and, indeed, existential stakes were high; they urgently demanded a more engaged form of political praxis, which seemed unlikely to emerge out of the turn to ethics and epistemology that informed a good deal of critical theory and other postcolonial approaches.[24] Lebanese Marxist philosopher Mahdi ʿAmil (d. 1987), for example, was assassinated by the very forces of sectarian reaction that he had struggled to critically diagnose and politically overthrow.[25]

Since Said's untimely death in 2003, the academic conversation may have shifted from his preferred mode of secular criticism and contrapuntal reading of empire towards a broad and incisive critique of secularism inspired by the work of Talal Asad (b. 1932) and others. Both of these approaches, in their own ways, push towards the provincializing of Judeo-Christian and Eurocentric conceptions of humanity. All the same, the universal(izing) claims of a Saidian critique of Orientalism as well as an Asadian critique of the secular must be subjected, in turn, to the kind of intellectual-historical inquiry that can offer an account of their epistemology, political economy, and political commitments and biases. The fact that these genealogies are primarily to be found in North American and European academic discourses does not render them suspect or make them inauthentic per se, of course, but it does demand a more critical engagement with their arguments and their ideological underpinnings. If Said and Asad remained, for different reasons, skeptical of de-politicized postcolonialism and reductive materialism, they were both praxis-oriented in their own ways. Whereas Said famously deconstructed "the counterrevolutionary zealotry" of Anglophone Orientalists,[26] Asad casts a dark eye towards the possibility of universal human freedom within the framework of the secular modern, calling into question the ostensible virtues and emancipatory potential of "a liberal democratic, or a revolutionary society."[27]

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[23] For a recent discussion of these and other approaches in the Arab context, see Rami Abu Shihab, *al-Rasis wa-l-mukhatala: Khitab ma baʿda al-kuluniyaliyya fi al-naqd al-ʿarabi al-muʿasir, al-nadhariyya wa-l-tatbiq* (Beirut: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 2013).

[24] Bardawil (2010); Frangie (2012: 466).

[25] ʿAmil (1985); ʿAmil (1989 [1986]); Frangieh (2016)   [26] Said (1994: 313).

[27] Bardawil and Asad (2016: 164–65, 170).

The arguments gathered together in this volume participate in these important debates – without claiming to arrive at a single consensus conclusion – while also striving to challenge, complicate, and push ahead the field of modern Arab intellectual history. As Omnia El Shakry reminds us, scholars must resist the temptation to view a given "intellectual agenda as epiphenomenal to political developments in the Arab world or read postwar Arab intellectual thought as essentially a political allegory for decolonization." Instead of a predetermined, declensionist metanarrative arc from the Nahda's "awakening" to postcolonial "defeatism," therefore, intellectual historians, political philosophers, and cultural critics ought to place greater attention on "the substance of Arab intellectual thought" in a given historical moment.[28] No doubt, this daunting task of historical reconstruction has been bedeviled, in part, by the opaqueness of state archives around the region – especially as compared to the relative transparency and openness of colonial archives – which "has often masked the precise nature of the political and social debates that went into the consolidation of regimes in the aftermath of decolonization."[29] Such research obstacles have only proliferated in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, whether due to chaos and destruction or the increased obstructionism of current regimes, but they also make the pursuit of contemporary Arab intellectual history all the more urgent.

Modern Arabic Thought in the Shadow of Global Intellectual History

> The oddity of the terms "East" and "West" is that they allude both to the Cold War and to an imperial divide of race and civilizational conquest.[30]

Ever since Albert Hourani (d. 1993) published his magisterial *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* in 1962, the book has remained a touchstone for modern Arab intellectual history.[31] *Arabic Thought* examined the origins and early effects of the nineteenth-century Arabic literary revival and cultural renaissance known as the Nahda (awakening or Enlightenment). Primarily focused on Christian intellectuals from the mountains of Lebanon and Islamic modernists from Cairo, Hourani proposed a chain of intellectual transmission (*isnad*) spanning three generations that became the backbone of mainstream narratives of

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[28] El Shakry (2014: 118). For an important reconsideration of the linear Nahda narrative of progress and development, see El-Ariss (2013).
[29] El Shakry (2015: 924).   [30] Brennan (2006: 41).   [31] Hourani (1983 [1962]).

Middle East political, intellectual, and religious history. "An age passed away in 1939," Hourani famously concluded about the Arab Middle East, "and with it there went a certain type of political thought."[32] This type of political thought was epitomized by the pragmatic alliance building among nationalist politicians under colonial rule as opposed to the search for ideological and theoretical purity of radical party politics during early independence.

Inasmuch as the Nahda serves as the Archimedean point around which competing claims about Arab modernity are staked, *Arabic Thought* remains an indispensable reference and teaching tool.[33] Although Hourani made a strong case for punctuating the end of the liberal age in 1939, we argue that the Nakba, the Palestinian Disaster, the dispossession of over 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and their lands in the midst and aftermath of the War of 1948 signified at least as great of a political and social as well as – it needs to be stressed – cultural and intellectual rupture for Arab writers, poets, political activists, and ordinary people as did the experience of World War II: the piecemeal evacuation of French and British imperial presence in the Middle East; decolonization struggles and their consequences; the ascension to power of a new class of Western-educated political elites; and the increasingly interventionist juggernaut constituted by U.S. military, political, and economic power. Struggles for national independence and decolonization – in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, just to name a few of the most salient regional cases – proceeded both alongside as well as in relation to the struggle for Palestine. Palestine remains one of the last countries on earth to have not yet undergone decolonization, to say nothing of achieving its national independence. As Edward Said, Joseph Massad, Ella Shohat, and Ann Laura Stoler have argued, the long-standing scholarly silencing of Palestinians is unmistakably political, even in the *soi-disant* radical field of postcolonial studies.[34]

The tangled intersections of the postwar and the postcolonial in Arab intellectual history can be tracked within the dynamic context of the

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[32] Ibid., 341. Hourani later regretted that the book's title labeled this "bygone" age as liberal, actually blaming his editor for using the term.

[33] Our previous volume strove to historicize the Nahda, to resist treating it as a monolithic age. Hanssen and Weiss (2016a).

[34] Said (1979); Massad (2000; 2010); Shohat (2006: 233–49; 359–84). In "Raw Cute: Palestine, Israel, and (Post)Colonial Studies," Ann Stoler (2016: 37–67) sheds light on how this problem bedevils the intellectual orientation of (post)colonial studies broadly conceived, exemplified by the disparate reception histories of Edward Said's *Orientalism* as compared to his *The Question of Palestine*. Meanwhile, Zionist scholars express concern about an ongoing theoretical danger to Israel represented by the field of postcolonial studies. See Salzman and Divine (2008).

evolving Cold War, shifting battlefields of (counter-)insurgency, and the dramatic reconstitution of the global economy.[35] In his autobiographical *Re-Reading the Postwar Period*, the prominent Egyptian world-systems theorist and economist Samir Amin (b. 1931) offers a useful three-part periodization for tracking these developments. Between 1945 and 1955, the forging of a new global economic system allowed the United States to establish monetary and industrial hegemony over European markets devastated by the war. Amin characterized the next phase, "The Bandung Era" (1955–75), not in such familiar terms as a global anti-colonial and anti-racist spirit but rather as a moment in which "the world system was organized around the emergence of the third world."[36] The Soviet Union, Amin argues, "escaped from its isolation by allying itself with the rising tide of third world national liberation," as a variety of developmentalist alternatives to the mantra of "free trade" were attempted. The limits of productivist notions of economic growth were exemplified by successive crises of capitalism that ushered in the third postwar phase (1975–92). The de-linking of the U.S. dollar from the gold standard in the early 1970s and the concomitant collapse of the Bretton Woods system may have seemed to threaten the foundations of American hegemony, but the petro-boom that occasioned the improbable rise of the Gulf monarchies not only resulted in renewed dynamism in the oil sector on a global scale – forcing Western European economies into recession while also raising the specter of stagflation throughout the 1980s – but also created opportunities for the United States and its Western allies to build new relationships with emergent autocracies around the Gulf region.[37]

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was a disaster around the region, not only for the 750,000 Palestinians forced from their homes but also for the humiliated Arab military forces that had failed to unify in the face of the Zionist-cum-Israeli enemy. This, in turn, led to diplomatic, military, economic, and cultural support for the new state from across the political spectrum in Europe, North America, and the Soviet Union. Stalin's surprising recognition of Israel presented a challenge to Communist parties and other progressive forces throughout the Arab world.[38] Among other things, this triggered the regional search for more

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[35] Westad (2007); McMahon (2013).
[36] Amin (1994: 14). By shifting the focus away from the Cold War conflict in and over Europe to the broader struggle of the global South against the (neo-) imperialisms of the Northern hemisphere, Amin's argument might be understood as a complement to Judt (2006). See, too, Maier (2000).
[37] Gavin (2004); Galpern (2009); Mitchell (2013); Bina and Garavini (2016).
[38] Krammer (1973). On the history of various Arab communist parties, see: Beinin (1990); Ismael (2005); Franzén (2011); Hanssen (forthcoming).

radical alternatives, as the Arab political fields were captured, in large measure, by military officers who launched coup d'états in Syria (three times in 1949 alone; 1954), Egypt (1952) and Iraq (1958).[39] Meanwhile, the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution in 1954 represented a foundational moment in the rise of Thirdworldism but also in the transformation of radical anti-imperialist Arab politics.[40] For example, this period witnessed the emergence of the clandestine and vanguardist Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN), led by George Habash and fellow students from the American University of Beirut, which sought to upgrade the Palestinian resistance from sporadic acts of vengeance and sabotage against Israel into a more nimble and better-organized guerilla force.[41]

But this combustible mixture of progressive and anti-imperialist forces were confronted, and in many instances contained by rival powers in what Malcolm Kerr memorably termed the "Arab Cold War": a contest between pro-Western monarchies, on the one side, and independent republics and pan-Arabist and Arab Socialist forces, on the other side. For much of this period, the main battleground was Syria.[42] Along with "soft power" tactics of the global cold war such as censorship, libeling, funding and defunding – not least by the CIA-funded Congress of Cultural Freedom and Soviet Cominform affiliates[43] – the "hard power" of coups, torture, imprisonment, exile, and assassination hampered political developments in the Middle East in general and curtailed the Arab intellectual field in particular.[44] It was in this evolving context that Arab intellectuals would search for ways out of the post-Nakba aporia while also pursuing greater recognition on the stage of international politics in the context of the global Cold War.[45]

When the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference convened in Bandung, Indonesia, in order to launch a series of Thirdworldist political, economic, and cultural solidarity initiatives, many of its African representatives came from Arab countries, and later Arab writers were well-represented in the affiliated Afro-Asian Writers' Association, which published the influential journal *Lotus* beginning in 1968.[46] Armed anti-colonial struggle in Vietnam, Algeria, and Cuba would inspire the Arab Left as

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[39] Little (1990); Louis and Owen (2002).
[40] See Vince's contribution to this volume; also, see Malley (1996); Byrne (2016).
[41] See Takriti's contribution to this volume; also, see Sayigh (1997); Anderson (2011); Chamberlin (2012); and Takriti (2013).
[42] Kerr (1965); Seale (1965: 283–326); Gendzier (1997); Yaqub (2004).
[43] Barghoorn (1960); Saunders (2001); Scott-Smith (2002); Gould-Davies (2003): 193–214; Primakov (2009); Rubin (2012); Holt (2013); Haddad-Fonda (2014).
[44] Little (2004).   [45] Gendzier (1997); Prashad (2007); Burke (2010); Lee (2010).
[46] Vitalis (2013); Halim (2012).

much as Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal and his victory against the ensuing joint British, French, and Israeli assault on Egypt in 1956. In the journalistic field, Suhayl Idris's *al-Adab* magazine, founded in Beirut in 1955, was spearheading an Arabic *littérature engagée* – inspired by the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre – against the old guard of liberal thinkers, even as intellectuals who refused to be enlisted in the Nasserist project of state-corporatist pan-Arab nationalism – Egyptian Communists, for example – faced imprisonment, torture, and even worse fates.[47] In the final months of the short-lived Syrian-Egyptian United Arab Republic (1958–61), Nasser released leftists from prison, and the Egyptian daily *al-Ahram's* editor Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal summoned Arab Marxists and liberals to Cairo in order to absorb internationalist intellectuals into the Egyptian state fold.[48] In subsequent years, even as the remaining Communists trickled out of prison, the Party found itself adrift.[49] Indeed, Communist and other leftist forces across the Arab world found themselves pinched between the Scylla of post-populist authoritarian regimes and the Charybdis of political Islam-ist opposition groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and other avatars of the so-called Islamic Revival. Meanwhile, secular as well as religious elements from the liberal center all the way to the extreme right embraced varieties of "nation-state nationalism" in order to carve out positions of influence in a matrix of postcolonial rule that preserved little space for independent political activity.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War has long been considered the defining watershed in postwar Arab politics and intellectual history.[50] Indeed, 1967 has loomed so large that historians have explored very little of the intellectual life of the Arab world between 1945 and 1967. If that crush-ing Israeli military victory over Egyptian and Syrian forces decisively interrupted the Nasserist project, it simultaneously opened the door to the regional influence of Saudi Arabia and other conservative Gulf monarchies while also contributing to the consolidation of dictatorships in Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, Hafiz al-Asad's Syria, and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.[51] However, the intellectual and cultural effervescence that characterized the 1960s did not simply vanish in the aftermath of the 1967 defeat (*al-naksa*). On the contrary: if the Nakba of 1948 had elicited relatively little Thirdworldist solidarity, by the early 1970s the Palestinian cause was fast becoming a broad-based *cause célèbre* within

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[47] See Di-Capua's contribution to this volume; also, see Idris (1992); Klemm (1998); Pannewick and Khalil (2015).
[48] Haykal (1961); Abdel-Malek (1962).   [49] Ibrahim (2013); Ginat (1997).
[50] Ajami (1981); Abu-Rabiʿ (2004); Kassab (2010).   [51] Sassoon (2016).