

## Arabic Thought against the Authoritarian Age

In the wake of the Arab uprisings, the Middle East descended into a frenzy of political turmoil and unprecedented human tragedy which reinforced regrettable stereotypes about the moribund state of Arab intellectual and cultural life. This volume sheds important light on diverse facets of the postwar Arab world and its vibrant intellectual, literary, and political history. Cutting-edge research is presented on such wide-ranging topics as poetry, intellectual history, political philosophy, and religious reform and cultural resilience all across the length and breadth of the Arab world, from Morocco to the Gulf States. This is an important statement of new directions in Middle East studies that challenges conventional thinking and has added relevance to the study of global intellectual history more broadly.

JENS HANSSSEN is Associate Professor of Arab Civilization at the University of Toronto. He is the author of *Fin de Stecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (2005).

MAX WEISS is Associate Professor in the Departments of History and Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, New Jersey. He is the author of *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism and the Making of Modern Lebanon* (2010).

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# Arabic Thought against the Authoritarian Age

*Towards an Intellectual History of the Present*

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*Edited by*

**Jens Hanssen**

*University of Toronto*

**Max Weiss**

*Princeton University*



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## Contributors

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HOSAM ABOUL-ELA is Associate Professor in the University of Houston's Department of English. He is the translator of three Arabic novels and the author of numerous critical articles in the areas of literature of the Americas, Latin American cultural studies, and Arab cultural studies. He is the author of *Other South: Faulkner, Coloniality, and the Mariátegui Tradition* (2007), and co-editor with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak of the series "Theory in the World." His current research project focuses on the particular character of U.S. imperial culture after World War II read through the lens of cultural critical theory from the Global South.

NEGAR AZIMI is a writer and the senior editor of *Bidoun*, an award-winning arts and culture magazine and curatorial project. Her writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and the *New York Times Magazine*, among other venues.

FADI A. BARDAWIL is Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His research, at the crossroads of political anthropology and intellectual history, focuses on contemporary modernist Arab thinkers and the international circulation of social theory. Currently, he is working on a book manuscript provisionally titled *In Marxism's Wake: Disenchanted Levantine Intellectuals and Metropolitan Traveling Theories*. His writings have appeared, and are forthcoming, in the *Journal for Palestine Studies* (Arabic edition), *Boundary 2*, *Jadaliyya*, *Kulturaustausch*, and *al-Akhabar* daily (2006–2012).

ORIT BASHKIN is Professor of Modern Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. Her publications include twenty-five book chapters and articles on the history of Arab-Jews in Iraq, on Iraqi history, and on Arabic literature and the Nahda. She has also edited a book *Sculpturing Culture in Egypt [le-fasel tarbut be-mitzrayim]* (1999) with Israel Gershoni and Liat Kozma, which included translations into

Hebrew of seminal works by Egyptian intellectuals. She is the author of *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (2009) and *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (2012).

JOEL BEININ is the Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History and Professor of Middle East History at Stanford University. In 2002 he served as president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America. His most recent books are *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2nd edition (2013), co-edited with Frédéric Vairel, and *The Struggle for Worker Rights in Egypt* (2010).

ROBYN CRESWELL is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Yale University, and poetry editor of *The Paris Review*. He is the translator of Abdelfattah Kilito's *The Clash of Images* (2010) and Sonallah Ibrahim's *That Smell and Notes from Prison* (2013).

YASMEEN DAIFALLAH is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where she teaches courses on classical and modern Islamic political thought. Prior to joining the University of Massachusetts in 2014, Yasmeen taught at and earned her PhD in political science from UC Berkeley.

YOAV DI-CAPUA is Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches modern Arab intellectual history. He is the author of *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (2009). He is currently at work on a new book, tentatively titled *No Exit: Arab Intellectuals, Jean Paul Sartre and Decolonization*. His research is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the University of Texas Humanities Research Award.

YASSIN AL-HAJ SALEH is a former political prisoner, a Syrian writer, activist, and academic. He is the author of many books, including *Al-Sayr 'ala qadam wahida: Suriya al-muqala* (2012), *Bi-l-khalas ya shabab: 16 'aman fi al-sujun al-suriyya* (2012), *al-Thaqafa ka-siyasa: al-muthaqqafun wa-mas'uliyyatuhum al-ijtima'iyya fi zaman al-ghilan* (2016), and, most recently, *The Impossible Revolution: Making Sense of the Syrian Tragedy* (2017). He lives in Istanbul and is currently a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

JENS HANSSSEN is Associate Professor of Arab and Mediterranean History. He received his DPhil in Modern History from Oxford University in 2001 and joined the University of Toronto the following year. His dissertation has been published by Clarendon Press as *Fin de Siècle*



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*Beirut* (2005). He has authored two co-edited volumes: *Empire in the City* (2002) and *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut* (2005). Parallel to his research on German, Jewish and Arab intellectual relations, he is studying the Arab Left. His writings have appeared in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, *The Routledge Reader of Fin de Siècle History*, *Critical Inquiry*, the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* and [www.hannaharendt.net](http://www.hannaharendt.net) – *Zeitschrift für Politisches Denken*.

ROSA YASSIN HASSAN is a Syrian writer, journalist, and activist. She is the author of several novels, including *Hurras al-harwa': riwaya* (2009), *Brufa: riwaya* (2011), and, most recently, *al-Ladhina masahahum al-sihr: min shazaya al-hikayat* (2016). Currently she lives in Germany.

ELIZABETH SUZANNE KASSAB is a Lebanese scholar based in Beirut. Trained as a philosopher at the American University of Beirut and at University of Fribourg in Switzerland, her work is focused on the philosophy of culture, both Western and Postcolonial, with a particular interest in contemporary Arab thought. Over the course of her academic career, she has taught at the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese American University and Balamand University in Lebanon, as well as Columbia, Yale and Brown. She has also been a research fellow at the German Orient Institute in Beirut, Erfurt University, and the Berlin Free University. She is currently a fellow at the Kaete Hamburger Kolleg of the University of Bonn. Her latest book is *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective* (2010). She is currently writing a book on Arab intellectuals and the uprisings tentatively entitled *Critique, Enlightenment and Revolution*.

ELIAS KHOURY was born in Beirut in 1948 and is the author of eleven novels (including, among those translated into English, *Little Mountain*, *The Journey of Little Gandhi*, *Gate of the Sun* and *Yalo*), four volumes of literary criticism, and three plays. In 1998, he was awarded the Palestine Prize for *Gate of the Sun*, and in 2000, the novel was named *Le Monde Diplomatique's* Book of the Year. Khoury is a Global Distinguished Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University and editor-in-chief of *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya*.

ELLEN MCLARNEY is Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at Duke University, where she teaches Arabic language and cultural studies. Ellen received her PhD from Columbia University and also was an Andrew W. Mellon post-doctoral Humanities fellow at Stanford's Department of Religious Studies. Her book *Soft Force: Women in Egypt's Islamic Awakening* was published in 2016.

ABDEL RAZZAQ TAKRITI is Associate Professor and Arab-American Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Arab History at the University of Houston. He previously held a Junior Research Fellowship in Political History at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, and a Lectureship in International History at the University of Sheffield. He is the author of *Monsoon Revolution: Republicans, Sultans, and Empires in Oman, 1965–1976* (2013), which was shortlisted for the Royal Historical Society's Gladstone Prize.

NATALYA VINCE is Reader in North African and French Studies at the University of Portsmouth, UK. Her subject area is modern Algerian and French history, and her research interests include oral history, gender studies, and state- and nation-building. Her monograph *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954–2012* was published in 2015.

MAX WEISS is Associate Professor of History and Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. He is author of *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon* (2010), co-editor (also with Jens Hanssen) of *Arabic Thought Beyond the Liberal Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda* (2016), and translator, most recently, of Mamdouh Azzam, *Ascension to Death* (2017). He is currently writing an interpretive history of Syria in the twentieth century, to be published by Princeton University Press, and translating Nihad Sirees, *States of Passion*. He earned his PhD from Stanford University.

## Preface

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This is a companion volume to our previous book, *Arabic Thought Beyond the Liberal Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda* (Cambridge University Press, 2016). Both books have their origins in a conference we organized at Princeton University in October 2012, “Arabic Thought Beyond the Liberal Age: New Directions in Middle East Intellectual History.” We are delighted to reiterate our profound gratitude to the various institutions and individuals that made our original conference the enjoyable success that it was. We are particularly indebted to those sponsors at Princeton who made the conference possible financially: the David A. Gardner ’69 Magic Fund, the Council of the Humanities, the Program on International and Regional Studies (PIIRS), and its then-director Mark Beissinger. Patricia Zimmer orchestrated the conference proceedings; Joy Scharfstein graced us with posters and promotional materials; Barb Leavey in the history department gave us timely logistical support.

In addition to the contributors to this volume, we would also like to recognize the attendance and participation of the following colleagues: Roger Allen, Abbas Amanat, Cemil Aydin, C. A. Bayly, Marilyn Booth, L. Carl Brown, Elliott Colla, Michael Cook, Leyla Dakhli, Omnia El Shakry, Israel Gershoni, Amal Ghazal, Michael Gilseman, Ellis Goldberg, Molly Greene, Bernard Haykel, Rashid Khalidi, Dina Rizk Khoury, Lital Levy, Zachary Lockman, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, Hussein Omar, Roger Owen, Thomas Philipp, Khaled Rouwayheb, Adam Sabra, Sherene Seikaly, Fawwaz Traboulsi, and Eve Troutt-Powell. At Cambridge University Press, Maria Marsh cheerfully shepherded our manuscript through the various stages of review and revision. To the professional and thorough production staff – James Gregory, Catherine KuruvillaJacob, and Hillary Ford – we are most grateful. We also thank the anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press, who provided us with bracing and thought-provoking questions; the volume is stronger for their labor. Of course, all responsibility for the arguments presented in the essays included here are those of the authors alone.

## Note on Transliteration

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Throughout this book Arabic has been transliterated according to a simplified version of the system employed by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. For the benefit of non-specialists, all diacritics have been omitted, with the exception of ‘ayn (‘) and hamza (‘). Common English forms of places, names, and terms are used when it seems commonsensical or expressly requested by an individual (i.e., Beirut not Bayrut or Beyrouth; Elias Khoury not Ilyas Khuri; and Rosa Yassin Hassan not Ruza Yasin Hasan). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are those of the chapter author(s).