Arabic Literary-Scientific Journals: Precedence for Globalization and the Creation of Modernity

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The pioneering Egyptian socialist intellectual Salamah Musa (1887–1958) writes in the first lines of his memoirs:

> I saw the 19th century through the eyes of a child. I saw it free of complexities, wearing nothing of the inventions of the 20th century. . . . The traditions of the 19th century—if not the many preceding centuries—remained static until the beginning of this very century. . . . I have ridden on a donkey from the Cairo train station to 'Aabin and I lived in Zaqaziq when street lamps were unknown.[1]

In his memories, he conjures up a vision free of any signs of modernity. Just as his donkey walks away from the capital's train station, his narrative leaves behind radically new forms of communication, transportation, economy, and thought that had reached the Cairene metropole and Egyptian countryside by the late 1890s. His narrative omits technologies and the new political economy of Egypt that emerge even as he is refusing them. Foremost among these technologies were the literary-scientific journal and newspaper, both immensely popular since their inception in the nineteenth century. Musa, himself born in the provincial town of Zagazig, worked or published in journals such as Mustafa Kamil's nationalist *al-Liwa'* (*The Brigade*) in 1908, Jurji Zaydan's *al-Hilal* (*The Crescent*), Y'aqub Sarruf's *al-Muqtataf* (*The Harvest*), and May Ziyadah's *al-Mahrusah* (*Cairo, the Protected*), among others, as well as starting two of his own journals, *al-Mustaqbal* (*The Future*, 1914) and *al-Majallah al-jadidah* (*The New Journal*, 1929). He acknowledges that his own education—that is, the awakening of his own political, intellectual, and social consciousness—was radicalized by the thought of nationalist leaders and other "pioneers of the Arab Renaissance" (*ruwwad al-nahdah*), whose writings were disseminated virtually exclusively through their own literary-scientific journals and newspapers.

The blindness endemic to Musa's self-reflections—the inability or refusal to see the harbingers of modernity around him—recalls innumerable earlier writings by Arab reformers of the Tanzimat period that pondered the underdevelopment, "feudalism," and "backwardness" (*takhalluf*) of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Among the earliest of such ponderings, Salim al-Bustani, son of the renowned social intellectual and encyclopedist Butrus al-Bustani, wrote an editorial in 1870 titled "Why Are We Backward?"[2] He answers that the "Easterners," particularly those of the Syrian provinces, lack unity and fraternal love.

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1. Salamah Musa, *Tarbiyat Salamah Musa* (*The Education of Salamah Musa*) (Cairo: Mu'assasat al-khariji, 1962), 7.

2. Salim al-Bustani, "Limadha Nahnu Muta'khkharun?" ("Why Are We Backward?"), *al-Jinan* 1 (1870): 12–14.

Consequently, his compatriots surrendered themselves to ignorance, sectarianism, materialism, tribal prejudice, and fanaticism, resulting in national division, internal strife, and vulnerability to foreign economic and political expansion. Salim's analysis is important not only because he was a prolific thinker but also because he is seen to be among the progenitors of Arab political and social journalism. In fact, the force of his influence must be largely ascribed to the birth of print media, which he and his father forged. Indeed, Salim's weekly editorial column, titled "Reform," opened every issue of his groundbreaking journal *al-Jinan* (*The Garden*). The commentary, firmly positivist in vision and analysis, engaged virtually every topic imaginable, from women's rights and consumerism to local, regional, and global political developments. By introducing scientific knowledge and humanist political and social principles, *al-Jinan* was the prototype for innumerable journals that worked to integrate the Arab world into a new age, the modern age.[3]

Allegations that the precepts of humanism and ethos of modernity are antithetical to Arab culture, Islam, and the "Arab mind" itself are common in the recent history of the Arab world. Most recently, Thomas Friedman, Dennis Ross, Samuel Huntington, Daniel Pipes, Fareed Zakaria, Bernard Lewis, and Charles Krauthammer have all launched campaigns about how the Arab world has failed to progress and modernize.[4] Indeed, the accusations against the Arab world have become stronger and more virulent since September 11, 2001. Echoing V. S. Naipaul, *Newsweek* editor Fareed Zakaria states in his now infamous "Why Do They Hate Us?" that "only when you get to the Middle East do you see in lurid color all the dysfunctions that people conjure up when they think of Islam today."[5]

The logic of such a comment stems from a set of economic, political, and ideological conditions that have been naturalized as a consequence of modernity itself, a fundamental of which is the unequal relationship between the West and the Third World. Despite works such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* or *Covering Islam*, which examine the systemic logic of popular and academic discourses on the Middle East not dissimilar to Zakaria's, the mainstream media have rejected as biased or partisan virtually all serious and honest scholarly inquiries into these historical conditions.[6] To the contrary, the concept of modernity that Western media pundits, policymakers, and both liberal and right-wing journalists sophomorically invoke denies the historical, social, and intellectual complexities that the term entails; that is, its contradictions, its variations, its transformations, and, indeed, its very epistemology. Instead, their use of the term is synonymous

3. The term *al-'asr al-jadid* (the new age) was common parlance by the second half of the nineteenth century and was interchangeable with the term *al-'asr al-hadith* (the modern age). Underlying this age, reformers noted as specific zeitgeist. For example, Salim specifically wrote an editorial that sums up the ethos of the era as well as its challenges in the Arab East. See his article "Ruh al-'asr" ("The Spirit of the Age"), *al-Jinan* 1 (1870): 385–88.

4. Patronized by cable news networks, many of these "Middle East experts" have boldly capitalized on the tragedy of September 11, using it as a chance for self-aggrandizement but also as an opportunity to intensify their ideological offensives against the Palestinian cause for self-determination and their justification for current U.S. foreign policy in the region. For example, Bernard Lewis—a longtime anti-Arab and anti-Armenian ideologue—has become a public figure. Not ironically, his views differ little from Ernest Renan's views more than a hundred years ago. See Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Lewis, *Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: Modern Library, 2003); and, most recently, Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Hawkish Zionist Daniel Pipes was appointed to the U.S. Institute of Peace in 2003 and published his vociferous and pseudoacademic *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2002); and Pipes, *Militant Islam Reaches America* (New York: Norton, 2004). Former ambassador Dennis Ross was made the counselor and Ziegler Distinguished Fellow at the think tank Washington Institute for Near East Policy (funded by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) in 2002 and published his ambassadorial memoirs, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004). After ironically winning the Pulitzer for news commentary after 9/11, Thomas Friedman also published *Longitudes and Attitudes: Exploring the World after September 11* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002), which became a *New York Times* best seller. Charles Krauthammer, who published a right-wing justification for U.S. unilateralism titled *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press, 2004), is a regular on Fox News Channel. By far the most intelligent of these pundits, Farid Zakaria recently published *The Future of Democracy: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: Norton, 2004) and has joined ABC's *This Week*. The offensive is not limited to these pundits. Those such as renown conservatives and pro-Zionists William Safire, George Will, Jeff Jacoby, and Martin Kramer have continued their long-standing anti-Arab and anti-Muslim commitment. "Analysts" such as Pipes and Zakaria, journalists such as Friedman, and pseudoscholars such as Lewis seem to me to have been most prominently catapulted into the mainstream by egregiously capitalizing on the tragedy of 9/11.

5. Fareed Zakaria, "Why Do They Hate Us?" *Newsweek*, 15 October 2001, www.fareedzakaria.com/articles/archive.html.

6. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978); and Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

with a notion of economic liberalism: the existence of representative democracy that is enframed by a "natural" division between public and private space (i.e., civil society) that ensures less the rights of citizens as much as the right of capital to grow, expand, and flow unencumbered nationally and transnationally (i.e., a free market). The economic, cultural, and media phenomenon of globalization has only disseminated such a logic more thoroughly, succeeding in making it appear seamless. Recognizing this, we understand then how Zakaria's analysis differs little from myriad mainstream Arab self-criticism, which Western commentators themselves refuse to acknowledge. Contrary to the sophism of the current crop of most American media commentators and journalists, the theory stating that Arab societies have failed to internalize the true esprit of modernity has been articulated by countless native intellectuals, activists, and scholars. Ranging from the left to the right, the Arab intelligentsia, for better or for worse, has championed the cause of modernity for more than a century, whether it is the legendary editor of *al-Ahram* (*The Pyramids*), Muhammad Hassanein Haykal, the progressive Hisham Sharabi, the academician Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri, or CBS News house-Arab Fouad Ajami. Intellectuals, political activists and analysts, journalists, economists, literati, and editorialists from the time of Salim al-Bustani (1848–84) and Salamah Musa debated the promises and problematics of modernity. In doing so, they produced modernity almost exclusively through apparatuses of the modern age, that is, through the use of mass media and print culture.

This article argues, then, that the genesis and massive distribution of renown literary-scientific Arabic journals such as *al-Jinan*, *al-Muqtataf*, *Misr* (*Egypt*), *al-Liwa'*, *Misbah al-Sharq* (*Lantern of the East*), *al-Manar* (*The Lighthouse*), *al-Hilal*, and *al-Jami'yah* (*The Federation*), among others, produced the intellectual, political, and social conditions for modernity in the Arab world. These journals not only formed the origin of critical Arab journalism but also provided a public arena for political debate—bold debate that often took place despite Ottoman, Egyptian, and British censors. While most were published in Cairo precisely because of increased censorship during the reign of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II, they were the most prominent and powerful means by which the burgeoning bourgeoisie of the Arab world (albeit heavily Egyptian and Levantine) could work out and imagine not only national identities but also social, economic, and political issues and policies.

The physical dissemination of these journals set a technical, political, and social precedence for the growth in electronic media because they created a readership that was quite often more than local or national but also regional, if not one that also reached into immigrant communities abroad. By merit of this circulation and its role in the formation of a pan-Arab identity, journals also situated the Arabs—as a collective—within a political, economic, and cultural world that reached beyond the borders of the Ottoman Arab provinces and/or mandate states. Although this article does not expand on the contemporary globalization of satellite media and information technology, it does focus on the general structure, content, and circulation of a handful of these journals, which were the primary source of local, national, and international news and information of their day. Moreover, these journals published articles ranging from politics to medicine to ethnography to science. They are responsible for introducing into Arabic new forms of literary genres, including the novel and short story, as well as disseminating a wide range of classical and modern poetic genres. Finally, every literary-scientific journal of its day contained editorials and social and political commentaries written by the staff and contributors, remarking on every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life throughout the Arab world, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe.

If such an explanation of the missions of these journals sounds sweeping, it is only because their missions were explicitly communal but also regional. The aforementioned journals had not only a local or national circulation but also often a dissemination that was virtually global. As Benedict Anderson might suggest in *Imagined Communities*, the international, even transregional, authorship, marketing, distribution, and consumption of these journals defined new conceptions of Arab subjectivities as early as the first decade of the twentieth

century.[7] Indeed, "imagining" parochial and pan-Arab nationalisms would have been impossible without these venues. The political, social, and cultural identities that were *produced* and disseminated by these journals were essentially modern. A cursory reading of the journals quickly reveals how they accepted, if not actively purported, notions of economic liberalization, individualist selfhood, national affiliation, and even rationalist paradigms of Islam and religion. The argument of this article expands on Anderson's work inasmuch as we witness not only the formation of national identities through print media but also pan-national, regional, and transnational identifications that informed a plethora of Arab nationalist identities. Like Anderson, this research should not be understood as accepting modernity, humanism, or liberalism unquestionably. Nor does this article assert that somehow the liberal tradition is inherent to Arab culture in ways that non-Arabs cannot recognize. The research begins to map out, however crudely, how the Arabs were active agents in forging modernity in their region, how the identifications and ideals concomitant to modernity became widespread and commonplace throughout the Arab world as far back as a century ago. Their dissemination through new mass print media acts now as precedence for the current growth in media technologies that has both created and bound a global community of Arab readers and viewers. The empirical or data-based nature of this article should not deflect from the fact that its suppositions are critical and theoretical. By using the historical record, the article cannot help but refute the intensified barrage of rhetorical analysis that declares that the Arabs have evinced, as right-wing commentator Charles Krauthammer states, "an abject failure to modernize," socially, religiously, politically, civilly, and culturally and hence stand out as a pariah unable to be assimilated into the world order by peaceful means.[8]

Circulation

Despite his pastoral testimony, Salamah Musa was submitting his own articles to the scientific journal *al-Muqtataf* by the first years of the century. By 1906, his first article, on Nietzsche, had been published. Equally ironic, the famed historian and historical novelist Jurji Zaydan, founder and editor of *al-Hilal*, certainly the most prominent Arabic literary-scientific journal well into the mid-twentieth century, saw this period as a decline in circulation of print media. In 1892, he writes in his article "al-Nahdah al-masriyah al-akhirah" ("The Last Egyptian Renaissance") that journals, newspapers, and intellectual salons had declined from the previous decades, at which time the levels of personal freedoms and wealth had exceeded any that previously existed. What eroded this progress was not the Arabs' inherent inability or failure to internalize modernity. To the contrary, Egypt had succeeded in achieving unprecedented levels of progress that were facilitated by the founding of schools and journals by an enlightened government and new intelligentsia. However, despite these advances, he says, Egypt could no longer repel the relentless assault of social ills brought by national debt, civil instability, and "the intervention of foreigners in the country's administration."[9]

Perhaps more telling than Zaydan's sociopolitical criticism is the evidence regarding Musa's own social and historical milieu. In 1893, a resident of Musa's own village, Zagazig, wrote to Zaydan's *al-Hilal* asking the editor about Napoleon III, his relationship to Bonaparte and so forth. From the earliest years of their existence, Beiruti and Cairene journalistic leaders such as *al-Jinan*, *al-Muqtataf*, *Thamarat al-funun* (*Fruit of the Arts*), *al-Hilal*, and *al-Manar* received similar letters, editorials, and even *qasa'id* (poems) from readers throughout the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas. They provided information on every aspect of public and private, social and scientific life.

7. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

8. Charles Krauthammer, "A Violent Religion," *Jewish World Review*, 6 December 2002, www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/krauthammer120602.asp.

9. Jurji Zaydan, "al-Nahdah al-masriyah al-akhirah" ("The Last Egyptian Renaissance"), *al-Hilal* 1 (1892): 124.

Al-Hilal in 1894, only its third year, received several letters from Cairo, Beirut, al-Iskandariyah, Halab, Asiyut, al-Mansurah, Tanta, Damascus, Hums, Tripoli, Suez, Port Said, al-Fuyyum, and Dasouq. In addition to these letters, at least one to three letters were received from New York, Ohio, and Sao Paolo in the Americas; Basra, Baghdad, Hulwan, Nejd, and Mosul in Iraq; Nazareth (Nasirah), Jaffa (Yaffa), Nablus, and Janin in Palestine; Sidon (Saydah), Marj'ayun, Zahlah, Ba'albek, Balamand, and 'Akkar; Antakiyah, Mardin, and Urfa in Anatolia; and even from relatively underdeveloped Sanaa in Yemen. In addition to major cities and entrepôts, letters were also mailed from more rural villages in Egypt and the Levant. Among these smaller towns were Kafr al-Shaykh, Tukh, Wadi Hulafa, Beni Siyouf, al-Fashin, Karusku, and Mit Ghamar. The list of villages, towns, and cities communicates to us the history of the proliferation of mass media in the region and its centrality in the organizing of public and private issues of culture, politics, economy, and society. Certainly, modernity as an urban experience, whose particular characteristics were expanded on by those such as Georg Simmel, must be distinguished from the way in which modernity reaches into and organizes rural space and communities.[10] This said, the network of dissemination of mass print culture demonstrates that, by the turn of the century, even the most remote village in places such as Greater Syria and Egypt had been brought into the economic, political, and social fold of modernity. The journals' roots into the rural and urban areas set the precedent for radio's decades of widespread popularity throughout the Arab world, a critical means by which popular culture and political ideology were disseminated in the twentieth century.

Journals and Circulation

By 1892, an American commentator, Rae Fraser, noted in the monthly review *Nineteenth Century* that there were forty-six periodicals published in Egypt alone. Of these, twenty were in Arabic, twelve in French, eight in Greek, and five in Italian. Considering the British political and economic control of the country, it is surprising that only one journal is purported to be in English. Fifteen of these twenty Arabic publications were newspapers. Among the most popular was the Cairo-based newspaper *al-Muqattam*, which had "just short of 3000 subscribers," a shocking number, Fraser states, considering that they raised their number of subscriptions by five hundred in only one year (see appendix 1).[11] Within five more years, *al-Muqattam*, *al-Ahram*, and the nationalist *al-Mu'ayyad* (*The Advocate*) would have around six thousands subscribers each. Their subscription lists would reach an estimated fifteen to eighteen thousand subscribers by the advent of World War I. As for journals, it seems that Jurji Zaydan's *al-Hilal* and Y'aqub Sarruf's *al-Muqtataf* enjoyed widest circulation regionally and globally, but not necessarily the best in Egypt. Each distributed in the neighborhood of five thousand copies annually by 1892 nationally and internationally. However, Sabry Hafez cites 'Abd Allah al-Nadim, who states that in 1893 only *al-Ahram's* circulation of three thousand subscribers outnumbered subscriptions to his own journal *al-Ustadh* (*The Professor*), which reached more than twenty-two hundred. In the meantime, nationalist *al-Mu'ayyad* and *al-Muqtataf* had around 1,600 paying readers, and *al-Hilal's* list of 740 subscribers in Egypt was outstripped by local periodicals such as *al-Mahrusah*, *al-Nil* (*The Nile*), *al-Adab* (*Culture*), and *al-Watan* (*The Nation*), which each had a circulation of approximately one thousand.[12] Farah Antun's *Al-Jami'yah* and *al-Hilal* both provided their distributors' names in the Middle East, North and South America, and Europe.[13]

The fact that these journals were read internationally by immigrant communities as well as Orientalists is not surprising if we are to believe Albert Hourani, who states that Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq's *al-Jawa'ib* (*Answers*), printed

10. See Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism*, 3rd ed., ed. James Farganis (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000), 149–57.

11. Rae Fraser, "The Egyptian Press," in *Nineteenth Century* 32 (1892).

12. Sabry Hafez, *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse* (London: Saqi, 1993), 279 n. 75. He cites "Ihsa' al-jara'id" ("Newspaper Statistics") in *al-Ustadh*, January 3, 1893.

13. Circulation lists were frequently published in *al-Hilal*, which seems to me to be the Al-Jazeera of its day. For example, see *al-Hilal* 22 (1913): 8. *Al-Jami'yah* was also faithful but less regular in providing numbers.

in Istanbul, could be found from "Nejd to Bombay."[14] Such a statement has also been made regarding Muhammad 'Abduh's *al-Manar*, which enjoyed an audience even in India. Its subscription list numbered about five hundred in 1901 in its inaugural years. Allegedly, it doubled in the years following. Considering the weight of the editor's political and intellectual presence in Egypt and the Muslim world, this is not unlikely or startling. But more than this, the genre of journal known as the "literary-scientific-political journal" lent itself to the new transnational character of its Arabic-language readership. While *al-Hilal* could be found without difficulty in American and Brazilian immigrant communities, Farah Antun strongly marketed *al-Jami'yah* not only in Syria and Egypt but also in North America. He states that, in 1903, he had to print an additional one thousand copies to meet regional and international demand.[15] Upon his temporary migration to New York, he took his journal along with him. At this time, the content of the journal sharply changed, integrating the important matters and issues that not only affected the Syro-Lebanese immigrant community but also related to mother communities in Greater Syria and Egypt. Consequently, he boasted that he had attracted more than five hundred subscribers in the United States alone by 1906.[16]

Whether these statistics are reliable is unknown, especially when one recalls that Antun's journal, indeed unique in its own way, was often erratic and seemed to be in financial difficulty.[17] However, the international and national circulation and readership of these journals are as indisputable as their impact on the political, social, and cultural milieus of the day. Forming the intellectual and political backdrop for Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, the "readership" of these journals outstripped their technical subscriber lists. In Beirut and other major urban areas, we know of an abundance of public reading rooms, which were popular with the burgeoning literate classes at the end of the century. More significant in terms of exposure, several accounts in literature and biography relate to us that the newspapers and journals were read to illiterate members of the family, extended family, and nonliterate members of the community in villages cafes, kitchens, and informal social gatherings. An article in *al-Hilal*, presumably by Jurji Zaydan, projects that the total audience for newspapers in Egypt surpassed two hundred thousand in 1897. Zaydan reached this number on the assumption that each "copy of the newspaper is customarily read by ten or even tens of people."[18] Resonating with this assumption, Palestinian writer Fadwa Tuqan tells us in her autobiography *Rihlah jabaliyah* that her mother would listen to her husband read *al-Hilal*. Her parents were such fans of the journal's content that they even chose her name, Fadwa, from one of Zaydan's serialized historical novels.[19]

Content

Just as the circulation of these journals was extraterritorial, the information that they disseminated was global. They introduced their readers to new discoveries and scientific advancements; world history; ethnographies of Africa, Asia, and America; and biographies of literary, scientific, and historical figures. Local and regional news was reported by the editors, and venues such as *Thamrat al-funun*, *al-Muqattam*, *al-Jawa'ib*, *al-Hilal*, and *al-Jami'yah* disseminated international news by directly translating telegraphs from Reuters and Havas.[20] In appendix 2, I have provided select examples of the articles in two journals.

Many of the editors had worked at competing journals before joining or starting rival publications. As we saw in Salamah Musa's

14. *Al-Jawa'ib*, the Istanbul-based journal of author, philologist, intellectual-extraordinaire Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, accommodated the interest of his reform-minded Arab readership by providing official Ottoman legislation, international treaties, and speeches in Arabic translation and their original Ottoman Turkish. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 99.

15. *Al-Jami'yah* 4 (1903): 1.

16. *Al-Jami'yah* 7 (1906): appendix. Antun states that his own as well as his sister Rose's woman's journal *al-Sayyidat wal-banat* (*Ladies and Girls*) sold more than eleven hundred copies in 1905. See *al-Jami'yah* 7 (1906): 27.

17. Donald Reid, *The Odyssey of Farah Antun* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1975), 45.

18. "Kuttab al-jara'id wal-mujallat" ("Journal and Newspaper Writers"), *al-Hilal* 7 (1897): 131. This article is also quoted by Sabry Hafez in his brief discussion of the topic. See Hafez, *The Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse*, 84.

19. Fadwa Tuqan, *Rihlah jabaliyah* (*Mountain Journey*) (Amman: Dar al-Shuruq, 1985), 13.

20. An announcement in *al-Hilal* boasts that Nijab Haddad's Alexandria-based newspaper *Lisan al-'arab* carried translated news items from Reuters/Havas, a practice still used by several Arabic print and electronic news services. See "Lisan al-'arab" ("The Arab Tongue"), *al-Hilal* 3 (1893): 735.

experience in myriad journals, the venues functioned as an informal training program for future editors, literati, scholars, and activists. Farah Antun worked for *al-Muqtataf* and Salim and Beshara Taqla's *al-Ahram*, Zaydan worked for *al-Muqtataf*, and Muhammad Kurd 'Ali edited *al-Ra'id al-Masri* (*The Egyptian Pioneer*) (founded by Niqula Shahadah, 1896) in 1901. Friendships, alliances, and rivalries were forged during these apprenticeships. This might account for the fact that, despite fierce competition and ideological differences among them, the major players such as *al-Hilal*, *al-Muqtataf*, *al-Manar*, and *al-Mashriq* (*The East*) would announce, as standard practice, the appearance of new journals including their mission statements, irregardless of whether these journals were potential competitors. These ads and reviews not only serve as a fascinating record for the innumerable journals which are now lost. They also relate to us that a desire for news was a dialectical process.

The proliferation of print culture fed a hunger for current events. But, more important, the desire itself for news and information was created by the activities of Arab intellectuals, reformers, and literati as much as it was a result of the region's immersion into a new economic and social order. A major objective of the social, political, and cultural reform movements of the age was explicitly the creation of desire (*raghbah*); to create a desire in the modern Arab citizen for modern, rational, and scientific knowledge upon which the modern era was allegedly built.[21] In calling for the building of cultural infrastructure concomitant to the modern age, Butrus al-Bustani stated that "undoubtedly, journals (*jurnalat*) are among the best means for the civilization of the masses, which can increase the number of their readers if they are used properly."[22] Phillip al-Tarrazi tells us that Rizqallah Hassun's London-based *Mir'at al-ahwal* (*The Mirror of Society*), now virtually forgotten, was motivated by an aim to reform the Ottoman Empire as well as by the desire for news coming from the Crimean front.[23]

The competition between journals was often ideologically and politically rooted, and many journals in fact incurred consequences because of their political stances. Ya'qub Sannu's satirical *Abu Nazzarah* (*Mr. Spectacles*) offended the Khedive, and Muhammad Kurd 'Ali's reformist Arabist *al-Muqtabas* (*The Learned*) was persecuted by Ottoman authorities in Damascus. They both were shut down as a result of their political content. Indeed, during the reign of the Ottoman sultan 'Abd al-Hamid, censorship was religiously enforced, which resulted not only in the suppression of Arabic-language journals in Beirut, Damascus, and Istanbul but in the banning in the early 1880s of journals such as Amin al-Shummayil's *al-Huquq* (*Rights*), *al-Munabbih* (*The Awakening*), and *Kawakab al-Mashriq* (*Star of the Levant*) published in Paris and Louis Sabunji's *al-Nakhlah*, *al-Hurriyah wal-Istiqlaliyah* (*Freedom and Independence*), and *al-Khalifah* (*Caliph*) published in London. More often than not, these journals had detectable, although sometimes unstated, ideological inclinations. The aforementioned banned journals offer a good example of the range in political beliefs of journalistic culture, covering the spectrum from Young Ottomanist such as *al-Huquq* to pro-French policies such as *Kawakab al-Mashriq* to pro-independence and liberal such as *al-Nakhlah* and *al-Hurriyah wal-Istiqlaliyah* to the progressive Muslim *al-Khalifah*. Some journals and newspapers in fact succumbed to political pressures, undergoing political transformations, such as *Thamarat al-funun*, which started as a reformist newspaper under Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani only to be eventually transformed into a conservative Islamist organ under Ahmad Tabbarah.[24]

Moreover, these pioneering journals were crucial sites for debates on secularism, Islamic and Arab history, Arabic language, women's rights, and national independence. In these

21. Jurji Zaydan states this in his discussion of writing historical novels, which were serialized in *al-Hilal*. See "Al-Riwayah: Asluha wa tarikhuha" ("The Novel: Its Origin and History"), *al-Hilal* 11 (1902): 39.

22. Butrus al-Bustani, *Khutbah fi adab al-'arab* (*Lecture on the Culture of the Arabs*) (Beirut: n.p., 1859), 35. The lecture is also included in the most recent publication of *A'mal al-jami'yah al-suriyah lil-funun wal-'ulum* (*The Works of the Syrian Society for the Arts and Sciences*), compiled by Yusuf Qizma Khuri (Beirut: Dar al-Hamra', 1990).

23. Philip al-Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-sihafah al-'arabiyah* (*History of Arab Journalism*), 4 vols. (Beirut: n.p., 1913–14), 2:248.

24. For the journal's history, see Donald Ciota, "*Thamarat al-Funun*: Syria's First Islamic Newspaper, 1875–1908" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1979).

debates, we can witness the embryo of the self-generated media spectacle. For example, using Ibn Rushd as a pretext, Farah Antun and Muhammad 'Abduh debated whether secularism and rationalism were compatible with Islam. Here the atheist Antun used this high profile, provocative debate to increase the visibility of his struggling journal. The bitterness, vituperative nature, and personal attacks of accusations and replies seemed to be a standard generic motif that would attract readers and keep them reading over an extended period of time. A good example of the play between politics and rhetorical mudslinging is the vociferous debates between the newspapers *al-Mu'ayyad* and *al-Muqattam* on Egyptian independence, the former being a militant proponent of Egyptian independence and the latter preferring British tutelage to prepare the Egyptians for independence, for which they were not supposedly ready.[25] Likewise, certain venues became identifiable with polemics against one ideology or another. Sarruf's *al-Muqtataf*, a staunch advocate of free trade, was a virulent critic of socialism, decrying the "corruption of the belief of the socialists" in 1890.[26] Zaydan's Victorian *al-Hilal* gradually shifted from its vehement opposition to socialism to eventually becoming an advocate of it under the editorship of Zaydan's son, Emile.[27]

The passion, prevalence, and scope of these debates and political opinion indicate that mass print media served more than to disseminate positive information to a passive and unaffected readership. Rather, these journals were *productive*, forming a new public venue for learning, debate, and even confrontation, which generated new normative modes of thought and sociocultural practice. The result of entrepreneurial enterprise, the public and collective nature of these privately owned journals was defined by modern capitalist modes of production and commodity distribution and, as we know from the financial failure of many of them, they operated depending on a margin of profit. Consequently, their material form as well as their content created a new Arab consumer base that we have come to call an "Arab readership." This readership is inseparable from a modern conception of individuality (the private reader and public consumer), which possesses a political as well as a cultural identity. In turn, this new Arab individual could find his or her identity already made in these journals' pages.

Discourse

The literary-scientific journals of the turn of the century explicitly espoused a goal to affect the consciousness of their Arab readership. As we have seen, the diversity of information ranged from scientific to literary. The comprehensive nature of knowledge that this print media presented reflected the social, cultural, and political reform projects that every region of the Ottoman Empire was undergoing. The knowledge that was produced assisted the Arab intelligentsia, ruling elite, and even working and peasant classes to locate the Arabs in a Hegelian notion of universal cultural development and world history. That is, these journals were pivotal in introducing the concept of modernity into the Arab world but also instrumental in enacting modernity itself. Journals were the prime venue for the articulation and dissemination of scientific and reform paradigms into the social milieu.[28] Their pages were the main forum for discussions and debates regarding social reform, education, current events, and national and regional politics. They were the marquee forum for the publication of poetry and fiction, both traditional and new genres, where the first works of the likes of Jubran Khalil Jubran, Amin al-Rihani, and al-Manfaluti appeared. Perhaps more important in respect to "civil society" is that virtually every major Arab political, scientific, and cultural figure in Egypt and the Levant wrote articles or editorials in a major regional journal, from Ottoman reformer Midhat Pasha to Egyptian nationalist leader S'ad Zaghlul, from the founder of the Egyptian national

25. For a list of some debates, see *al-Hilal* 36 (1929): 305.

26. Ya'qub Sarruf, "Fasad madhab al-ishtirakiyin" ("The Corruption of the Sect of Communists"), *al-Muqtataf* 14 (1890): 361–64.

27. *Al-Hilal* published a scathing attack of socialism in "al-Ishtirakiyun" ("The Socialists"), 9 (1900): 20–21. This said, under the direction of venerable and moralistic Jurji Zaydan, Shibli Shummayil, the leading Arab socialist thinker of his day, published "al-Ishtirakiyah al-sahihah" ("True Socialism") in *al-Hilal* 20 (1913): 9–16.

28. For a discussion of the formations of these reform paradigms and their reconceptualization of modern Arab subjectivity, see Stephen Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004).

press, Sheikh Rifa al-Tahtawi, to socialist physician Shibli Shummayil and to feminist activist Hoda Sh'arawi.

The efforts of these intellectuals, activists, politicians, clerics, and scientists had profound discursive and empirical effects. For example, a completely new form of Arabic was created. By 1896, litterateur and founding editor of *al-Bayan* (*The Bulletin*) and *al-Diya'* (*The Call*) Ibrahim al-Yaziji called it "the language of the newspaper" (*lughat al-jaridah*).[29] In the first modern linguistic study, al-Yaziji closely discusses the syntactic and lexiconographical changes spawned and institutionalized by journalistic writing. Its ornate and complex vocabulary was pared down and its syntactic structure simplified to resonate more with spoken forms of the language.[30] Its absence of parallelisms, lack of adjectival embellishments, structural sparseness, and just-the-facts narrative inspired Ya'qub Sarruf, founder of the landmark journal *al-Muqtataf*, Salamah Musa, and political activist and editor of *al-Muqtabas*, Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, separately to call this form of Arabic prose "the telegraphic style" (*al-uslub al-telegrafi*).[31] This phrase expresses how both language and narratives for communicating information underwent a drastic transformation during the last half of the century. This change reflected the ethos of "the Arab Renaissance" itself, that is, to reform Arab thought, knowledge, and social, cultural, and political practice along a "rationalist," positive axis while maintaining cultural authenticity in the face of colonial intervention and exploitation.

In the same vein, as we see in appendix 4, new nomenclatures were introduced exclusively through these journals, popularizing scientific, enlightenment, and humanistic concepts and making them common parlance.[32] Moreover, journals such as *al-Mufid* (*The Benefit*), *al-Hilal*, *Thamarat al-funun*, *al-Ustadh*, *al-Manar*, *al-Liwa'*, *al-'Ahd* (*The Covenant*), *al-Mu'ayyad*, *al-Muqtataf*, and *al-Mashriq* served then as codices for a plethora of ideological formations. It would be hard to conceptualize any independence struggle or nationalist movement in the Arab world without the existence of several concomitant journals. That is, while few of these journals expressed an *exclusively* political agenda, venues such as Zaydan's *al-Hilal* and Antun's *al-Jami'yah*, although rival competitors, published articles and editorials supporting the Ottoman reform movement. Despite their pretense to objectivity, both of these journals could not temper their enthusiasm upon the victor of the Young Turk Revolution (organized by the Committee for Union and Progress against the autocratic Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid) in 1908. Likewise, 'Abduh's and Rashid Rida's *al-Manar*, Mustafa Kamal's *al-Liwa'*, and Ali Yusuf's *al-Mu'ayyad* were the most ardent voices for the Egyptian independence movement and, despite 'Abduh's complicity with the Cromer administration as mufti of Egypt, were most critical of British rule. By the years preceding World War I, journals such as 'Abd al-Ghani al-'Uraysi's *al-Mufid* functioned not only as organs for embryonic Arab nationalist movements but also as the prime means by which they disseminated information and their ideology.

While many journals such as *al-Hilal* and *al-Muqtataf* were reluctant to share their otherwise well-known political positions, most of these journals unambiguously stated a desire to reform their local and/or regional milieu. For example, the introduction to the first issue of *al-Jami'yah* states as its goal "to spread cultural, political, and historical research" and educate all of "the peoples of the East."[33] The editor continues, "The journal will bring modern knowledge," hoping to "forge a new brotherhood between the Muslim and Christian Arabs." In doing so, Antun's journal, like so many others, served to create a new sense of civil society organized along a distinction between public and private spheres. The lion's portion of these journals aimed to engineer an architecture of public

29. Ibrahim al-Yaziji, *Lughat al-jara'id* (*Language of the Newspaper*) ([Beirut?]: Matba'at al-Matar, 1900).

30. For changes in Arabic prose during this period, see Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Modern Arabic Literary Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); and Sasson Somekh, *Genre and Language in Modern Arabic Literature* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrossowitz, 1991).

31. Musa, *Tarbiyat Salamah Musa*, 42–43.

32. For one study of the introduction of such vocabulary, see Leon Zolondek, "*Ash-Sh'ab* in Arabic Political Literature of the Nineteenth Century," *Die Welt des Islams* 10 (1965): 1–16. Also, for how this nomenclature forms a syntagm of reform, see Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity*, 46–75.

33. Farah Antun, "Introduction," *al-Jami'yah* 1 (1899).

space that is specific to modernity. As we have seen, editors focused on current events, scientific discoveries, historical developments, women's rights, and education, all with the expressed intention that this knowledge would help their communities in building independent, prosperous, and even democratic countries. At the same time, their pages were full of articles on social etiquette, child rearing, personal decoration, morality, art, civil behavior, marital relations, domestic economy, and personal health and hygiene, not to mention poetry and long and short fiction. These writings were explicitly aimed, as Antun states, "to educate women and men, so as to alter their roles in the family itself."[34] In other words, the editorials and articles written by intellectuals and thinkers of the day instituted new notions of private and public space and identity. This demarcation between the two would be necessary for the inception of consumer culture as much as the independence struggles, bourgeois enfranchisement, and subaltern mobilization.

Conclusion

Among its many vignettes, Muhammad al-Muwaylihi's *'Isa bin Hisham*, itself serialized in his father's journal *Misbah al-Sharq*, provides a portrait of an embittered *al-ulama'*. The group of Muslim clergymen and traditional intelligentsia complain about the popularity of mass print media. They curse the plethora of "long winded chatter boxes" whose articles, commentaries, and editorials have confused the social and religious morals of the masses. These pseudo-intellectual print authors, they accuse, "with their new schools and books . . . have introduced modern heretical sciences into scholarly circles so as to make great religious scholars—who don't take any interest in these futile sciences—look like dilettantes!"[35] After belittling newspapers and periodicals, the clergymen congratulate a colleague who had just published a scathing critique of the reform movement in one of these very journals. Clearly, by 1896, the literary-scientific journal could not be ignored even by its most vehement detractors. Reflecting the rearrangement of power relations, the scene is illustrative of the degree to which print media had become the authoritative social, cultural, and political media of the era.

In this short prolegomenon, I hoped to reveal a historical precedence. If the post-9/11 attention to the Arabic-language satellite news networks such as Al-Jazeera has correlated the popularity of new media and electronic technologies to ideological and political positions if not struggles, then we understand the harnessing of print media at the turn of the century as essential in conceptualizing modern Arab selfhood, society, and polity in modernity.[36] Moreover, as the primary venue for social and political intervention for intellectuals, politicians, cultural-producers, and clerics as well as journalists, these journals were a principal mechanism by which modernity was culturally *institutionalized* in the Arab world. The political and social debate as well as the critical self-analysis that took place in these journals popularized ideas and practices elemental to modern "civil society," ideas and practices that had become commonplace among the new reform-minded Arab intelligentsia during the Ottoman Tanzimat. In the words of Michel Foucault, they naturalized and gave form to "the methods of systematizing propositions that already [existed]" in the Arab world, "the methods of

34. Ibid.

35. Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, *Hadith 'Isa ibn Hisham aw fatrah min al-zaman* (*Isa ibn Hisham or a Period of Time*) (Cairo: Matba'at al-ma'arif, 1907), 158–59. Like most of the fiction of the day, the "novel" was first serialized in his father's *Misbah al-Sharq*, 1898–99.

36. Hisham Sharabi wrote an article in the wake of the "official" cessation of the U.S. invasion of Iraq explaining the effects of new media technologies, particularly independent Arabic-language satellite news channels. He notes the creation of a new level of informed collective political consciousness as well as the willingness of this collective to be publicly critical not only of American policies and Israeli aggression but of the corruption of the Arab governments themselves. Originally appearing in Arabic in the daily *al-Hayat* (18 July 2003), the article is translated. See Hisham Sharabi, "The Arab Satellite Channels and Their Political Impact after the Iraq War," *World Press*, 4 January 2005, www.worldpress.org/Mideast/1369.cfm. An article by Thalif Deen also posits whether or not Al-Jazeera is a new standard barer for Arab nationalism in an age where the ideological platform seems to have disintegrated on a political level. He also notes instances where the Bush administration pressured the Qatari government to shut down or censor the satellite news channel. His argument would be bolstered even further if we remember that the Western interest in Al-Jazeera upon its inauguration focused on and indeed lauded the network as a new independent media voice willing to take on state-controlled media services. "Is Al-Jazeera the New Symbol of Arab Nationalism?" *Inter Press News Agency*, 12 October 2004, www.ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=25833.

redistributing statements that [were] already linked together, but which one rearranges in a new systemic whole."[37] Obviously, significant differences exist between the 1890s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, differences that reflect the economic and political organization during modern and postmodern eras. However, examinations of the current and future developments in media globalization should take into consideration the power and precedence of the past if not the irrefutable empirical evidence that disproves the hypothesis that the Arab audience, because of its religious and cultural baggage, has been unable to be integrated properly into modernity.

Appendix 1: Journals and Number of Subscribers

Name	Type	Owner	Founded	Location	No. of Subscribers*
al-Jinan	Journal	Bustanis	1870	Beirut	NA
al-Muqtataf	Journal	Sarruf and Nimr	1876	Beirut / Cairo	3,000 (1892)
al-Hilal	Journal	Zaydan	1891	Cairo	5,000 (1892)
al-Manar	Journal	Abduh and Rida	1897	Cairo	500 (1902)
al-Muqattam	Daily	Sarruf	1889	Cairo	3,000 (1893)
al-Ahram	Daily	Taqla Brothers	1876	Cairo	6,000 (1898)
al-Jami'yah	Journal	Antun	1899	Alexandria	NA in general (500 in United States [1906])
Hadiqat al-Akbar	Weekly	Khalil Khuri	1856	Beirut	400
al-Mu'ayyad	Daily	'Ali Yusuf	1896	Cairo	4,000 (1896)

*Sources for the number of subscribers: Rae Fraser, "The Egyptian Press," in *Nineteenth Century* 32 (1892): 213–23; Philip al-Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-sihafah al-'arabiyah* (Beirut: n.p., 1913–14), vols. 1–4; 'Abd al-Latif Hamzah, *Adab al-Maqalah al-Sahafiyah fi Misr* (Cairo: Dar al-fikr al-'arabi, n.d.), vols. 1–8; *al-Jami'yah* (1906); and *al-Hilal* (1913).

Appendix 2: Contents by Subject (Not Comprehensive)

Al-Hilal (vol. 3, 1893–94): Biography of Milton, Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, Salah al-din, and Alexander the Great; History of Pharaonic Egypt, Anglo-Saxons, and Phoenicians, Roman Empire, Arabic language, classical Arab literature, and Abbasid age; current affairs such as Sino-Japanese war and earthquakes in Greece and Anatolia.

Al-Jinan (vol. 2, 1871): Freedom of the press, mass education, good governance and governing, the Paris Commune, civil rights, the Sublime Porte, parliamentary debates in France and Great Britain, administrative reform in Germany, French-German war and peace treaty, foreign activity in Egypt, and Ottoman and local social and political reform.

Appendix 3: Debates

al-Yaziji–al-Shidyaq	*al-Jinan–al-Jawa'ib*
'Antun–'Abduh	*al-Jami'yah–al-Manar*
Cheikho–Zaydan	*al-Mashriq–al-Hilal*
Sabunji–al-Bustani	*al-Nakhlah–al-Jinan*

Appendix 4: Sample of Reform Nomenclature

Sample of reform nomenclature taken from *al-Hilal*, *al-Jawa'ib*, *al-Manar*, *al-Jami'yah*, and *al-Muqtataf*. Like their Ottoman Turkish and Armenian counterparts, these words appeared for the first time or were recoded and imbued with their modern, enlightenment meanings through their deployment in political and social commentaries that appeared in the region's periodicals:

> *Hurriyah* (freedom), *t'abir shakhsi* (personal expression), *a'mal wa ashab al-mal* (workers and owners), *r'as mal* (capital), *ishtirakiyah* (socialism), *istibdad* (oppression), *al-sh'ab* (the people), *inhitat* (social decay), *jumud* (social stagnation), *islah* (reform), *taqaddum* (progress), *tamaddun* (civilization), *madiniyah* (civil society), *hidarah* (civilization), *'ulum wa ma'arif*, *'aqlaniyah* (rationalism), *ittihad* (unity), *ulfah* (social concord), *nizam* (sociopolitical order), *al-'asr al-hadith* (modern age).

37. Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 59.