

## “Under Eastern Eyes”: East on West in the Arabic Press of the *Nahḍa* Period<sup>1</sup>

“How many branches of the tree of *tamaddun*/civilization do we see, that die when their trunk/source is unable to nourish them. There is no real future for Syria or for its civilization unless it is interwoven with the threads of *tamaddun* and can integrate aspects of European culture, sowing them in the ground, and watering them with the sweat of its toilers.”<sup>2</sup>

(Ya‘qūb Ṣarrūf, 1884)

### INTRODUCTION: FROM ORIENTALISM TO OCCIDENTALISM

Edward Said’s *Orientalism*<sup>3</sup> (1978) introduced the important historical debate about the crystallization of Western identity/culture versus the Other- the East. One of his main arguments was

1. \* Earlier version of this study was presented at the workshop in the Mediterranean Programme: 9<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Research Meeting, Florence and Montecatini Terme, 2008. The workshop was conducted in the European University Institute-Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies. Participants in this workshop made significant comments, and I would like to thank them all. I am also grateful to Professor Ami Ayalon who read earlier versions of this paper.

2. Ya‘qūb Ṣarrūf, “Al-Naẓr fī Ḥāqirīnā wa-Mustaqbalīnā,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 8 (1884), p. 196. The first sentence was taken by Ṣarrūf from a poem which I could not trace. The other sentences are his own.

3. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1978).

that ‘in order to know who I am, I must know what I am not’. This concept created an imbalance in which the West predominates in the interaction between the two cultures. This simplistic, black-and-white inference of the East’s inferiority did not expose the dynamic discourse between the two cultures. Instead, it created a static, biased debate which gave no expression to ideas and views of ‘The Other’/East concerning the Other/West. Makdisi’s article “Ottoman Orientalism”<sup>4</sup> extended Said’s analysis of Orientalism by demonstrating how, in the process of modernization, the Ottoman Empire regarded its own Arab periphery as inferior. He did not elaborate on how this “Arab periphery” reacted to the encounter with its’ West.

One attempt to represent the East’s notions of the West brought forward the debate on the term Occidentalism, which over the years has received a variety of interpretations.<sup>5</sup> One of the most recent and problematic interpretations appears in *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism* by Buruma and Margalit (2004); in which it is defined as “the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies.”<sup>6</sup> Occidentalism is also interpreted as an anti-Western view which developed in the East during the post-colonial period, not only among fundamentalist and Islamic groups, but also among groups from the Far East. These groups not only opposed Western

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4. Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 107, no: 3 (2002), pp. 1-32.

5. For other interpretations of the term Occidentalism see, Meltem Aniska, “Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 102, no: 2/3 (2003), pp. 378-379, footnote 77; James G. Carrier (ed.), *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Wang Ning, “Orientalism vs. Occidentalism,” *New Literary History*, vol. 28, no:1 (1997), pp. 57-67; Carter Vaughan Findley, “An Ottoman Occidental in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gülner, 1889,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 103, no: 1 (1998), pp 15-49; See also on Occidentalism as reflected in Art, Jill Beaulieu and Marry Roberts (eds.), *Orientalism’s Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).

6. Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of anti-Westernism* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), p. 5.

culture but also diminished and de-legitimized it as “a poisonous materialist civilization.”<sup>7</sup>

My intention is to re-locate this developing discourse on Occidentalism, with its central question of how the East conceives the West, or what I term ‘the impression of ‘The Other’ by ‘The Other’’, to the earlier period in the relationship between the two cultures, to the *nahḍa* (Arab awakening). I regard Occidentalism as the attitude, both negative and positive, of the East to the West during the first phase of this encounter. The term Occidentalism is charged with the issue of Orientalism, unavoidably inserting it into the debate. Since the “Eastern writers” chose to repeatedly refer to East versus West, I opted to remain loyal to their view of this debate, even though the West was one of their many “others.”<sup>8</sup>

Post-colonial theories offer concepts enabling us to understand and interpret the cultural contact between East and West. Homi K. Bhabha contends that a new hybrid identity (subject-position) emerges from the interwoven elements of the two cultures. This replaces the established pattern with a mutual and mutable representation of cultural differences located *in-between*, in a *third space* that give rise to new possibilities. According to Bhabha this hybrid third space is an ambivalent site in which cultural meaning and representation have no primordial unity or fixity.<sup>9</sup>

Influenced by these notions I contend that the cultural encounter between East and West not only resulted in the West’s view of the East as inferior, effeminate, backward etc., but also in the East viewing the West as its cultural ‘Other’. The result was a new putative Eastern identity, a modern (*ruḥ al-‘aṣr*) hybrid which attempted to amalgamate the two cultures – the traditional and the modern.

7. Buruma and Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of anti-Westernism*, p. 3.

8. One such example is the reference to the Muslim communities in Java and Malaysia in 19<sup>th</sup> century press in Beirut and Cairo, offering yet another society against which local intellectuals viewed their own. See, Michael Laffan, “‘Another Andalusia’: Images of Colonial Southeast Asia in Arabic Newspapers,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 66, no:3, pp. 689-722.

9. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Thus this Eastern/Arab identity was created in the process of observing, debating and, to some extent, adopting aspects of Western culture, so that the two-way dynamic between cultures was extended and became more complex.

My article concentrates on the dynamics of this encounter, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century especially as it appeared in the Arabic press of the *nahḍa* period, in particular in Greater Syria. The dynamics present the difficulties of the East in defining its own identity, elaborating how this encounter impelled Eastern intellectuals to clarify, invent, or formulate their own Eastern identity, changing the main debate from Orientalism to Occidentalism.

Although, I have drawn some of the insights concerning this encounter between the cultures from previous research such as that of Albert Hourani, Hisham Sharabi, Bernard Lewis and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod,<sup>10</sup> my main focus concentrates on the perception of the *Sharq*/East. This I examine through articles, correspondence and narrative fiction, particularly those incorporated in the five *nahḍa* journals.

## ENCOUNTERING THE WEST: ATTITUDES OF THE PRESS

Bonaparte's traumatic invasion of Egypt at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of an immense incursion of Western culture into the East and of a powerful dialogue between the two sides.<sup>11</sup> First impressions of this encounter can be seen in

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10. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (London-Oxford-New-York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Ibrahim A. Abu-Lughod, *Arab Rediscovering Europe* (Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1963); Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years 1875-1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970); Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New-York, Oxford University Press, 1993); Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (New-York: Harper and Row, 1964).

11. See for example on the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Fatma Müge Göçek, *East Encounters West:*

the writings of the Egyptian historian al-Jabartī (1753-1825) and the Lebanese intellectual and poet Niqūlā Turk (1763-1828).<sup>12</sup> Until this time, *Sharq*/East and *Gharb*/West<sup>13</sup> were mainly regarded as geographical designations. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, as we shall see, East and West increasingly acquired cultural connotations as well. Among writers of the *nahḍa* period, in geographical terms the *Sharq*/East (the Arab East) included mainly Persia in the East, Greater Syria and Egypt, and on occasion as far as Tunis in the West. Some writers went emphasised that the Arab East was an integral part of a greater East, implying regions as remote as the Far East.<sup>14</sup> When using the term West, *nahḍa* writers generally referred to Europe (mainly England and France) and America. Alongside these terms and perceptions, both before and after the *nahḍa* period, a geographical division also existed inside the Islamic world/Caliphate. On the one side al-*Mashriq* - the Muslim-Arab region that included: Iraq, Persia, *Bilād al-Shām*, the Arab Peninsula, and sometimes Egypt and on the other side the *Maghrib* which included non-Arab Muslim regions such as North Africa and Andalusia.<sup>15</sup>

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*France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

12. George M. Haddad, “The Historical Work of Niqula al-Turk 1763-1828,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1961), pp. 247-251; Rifā‘a Rāfi‘ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *al-Dīwān al-Nafīs fī ‘Īwān Bārīs Aw Takhlīs al-Ibrīz fī Talkhīs Bārīs* (Beirut: al-Mu‘asasa al-‘Arabiyya lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 2002). Ed. ‘Alī Aḥmad Kan‘ān.

13. The word *Sharq* (East) implies ‘sunrise’ or, in some cases, the sun itself. The root *Sh-r-q* also means light, beauty, wisdom and good. The meaning of *Gharb* (West) is ‘where the sun goes down’, i.e. sunset.

14. Salīm wrote of Egypt as “the most important region in the *Sharq al-‘Arabī*” (*Aḥamm aqtār al-Sharq al-‘Arabī*), describing the era of the Hadives (such as Tawfiq) as a return to Egypt’s magnificent past. See, Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Ta‘ṣṣub al-Dīnī wal-‘Uṣba al-Jinsiyya,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 13 (1882), pp 33-35; Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Sharq,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 1 (1870), pp. 15-17; Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-İslāh,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 2 (1871), pp. 213-216.

15. In classical and medieval Arabic poetry and literature, critics used to separate between *Mashriq* and *Maghrib* mainly between the literary productions of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt and that of Andalusia. Thus the geographical separation eventually created a cultural difference inside the world of Islam. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munjid,

The *nahḍa* period was the time when observation and examination of the West became integral to the evolving process of Eastern self-discovery. The West was encountered through media such as travelogues by merchants and intellectuals who described what they saw in the West.<sup>16</sup> There were also translations, such as that of *Robinson Crusoe* (1861) by Buṭrus al-Bustānī, one of the most distinguished intellectuals of the *nahḍa*. Speeches and lectures about the West were delivered to cultural societies.<sup>17</sup>

The journals of Greater Syria, often produced as private initiatives of the Beirut middle class of merchants and intellectuals working side by side, expanded this discourse more intensively into the public sphere. At this stage, the participants in the debate, both writers and readers were mainly the local elite and bourgeoisie/middle class of women and men, Muslims and Christians that was developing as a result of the expansion of economic and cultural activities with Europe. In many cases the writers of these journals received their education in missionary schools making them familiar with Western culture.

In 1858 the first private Arabic newspaper in Beirut, *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*, was published by Khalīl al-Khūrī, a Greek Orthodox Christian Arab. Its' publication continued until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> In Istanbul, another journal, *al-Jawā'ib*, was published between the years 1861-1883 by a Syrian named Aḥmad Fāris

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*al-Mashriq fī Naẓar al-Maraghāriba wal-Andalusiyyīn fī al-Qurūn al-Wustā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1963).

16. For example, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, *al-Dīwān al-Nafīs fī 'Īwān Bārīs*; Fransīs Faṭḥallāh Marrāsh, *Riḥlat Bārīs* (Beirut: al-Mu'asasa al-'Arabiyya lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 2004). Qāsim Wahab (ed.); Salīm Bustrus, *al-Nuzha al-Shahiyya fī al-Riḥla al-Salīmiyya* 1855 (Beirut, al-Mu'asasa al-'Arabiyya lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 2003). Ed. Qāsim Wahab.

17. See for example, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, "Khitāb Fī al-Hay'a al-Ijtimā'iyya wal-Muqābala bayna al-'Awā'id al-'Arabiyya wal-Ifranjiyya (1869), in Yūsuf Quzmā khūrī (ed.), *A 'māl al-Jam'iyya al-'Ilmiyya al-Sūriyya* 1868-1869 (Beirut: Dār al-Hudā, 1990), pp. 204-217.

18. The newspaper stopped publication either in 1909 or in 1911. This article includes only the first ten years (1858-1868) of *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*.

al-Shidyāq. From 1870 until 1886 the periodical *al-Jinān* was published by the Bustānīs, a Maronite family some of whose members (such as Buṭrus and Salīm) converted to Protestantism. From 1875 to 1908 *Thamarāt al-Funūn* was established by Jam‘iyat al-Funūn who appointed ‘Abd al-Qādir Qabbānī as its editor. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, within the framework of the late *nahḍa* in Egypt, two other significant journals were established by Christian Arab Syrians who immigrated from Beirut to Egypt. *Al-Muqtaṭaf* (1876-1884, Beirut), (1884-1952, Cairo)) was published by two Arab editors Ya‘qūb Ṣarrūf and Fāris Nimr and the second, *al-Hilāl* (1892-) was published by Jurjī Zaydān. These journals resembled their European counterparts but were adapted to local taste. It is difficult to estimate the number of subscribers or readers but, based on the information available, it seems that during the first few months of the publication of *Ḥadīqat al-Akhbār*, the newspaper had approximately 400 subscribers, while *al-Jinān* had 1500.<sup>19</sup> We also know that *al-Hilāl* and *Muqtaṭaf* were popular. The latter with a circulation of about 3000 in 1892.<sup>20</sup>

As these newspapers were agents of identity, the issue of the encounter between the East and the West was fundamental. It incorporated imperative discourses of the time such as: modernity, modernization, Westernization, liberalism, reforms and roles of women and men. The dialogue was not monolithic; on the contrary it was diverse and vibrant. This is evident in the correspondence, articles, and translations of historical and social novels and of short stories, all of which were published in the local press. All of them endeavoured to tackle the issue of Western culture, each with its own emphasis. *Jawā’ib* seems to have been relatively attuned to Western culture, *al-Jinān*, called for a selective adoption of Western mores, *Thamarāt al-Funūn* like Other journals, called

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19. Henry Harris Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1982), p. 136.

20. Beth Baron, “Readers and the Women’s Press in Egypt,” *Poetics Today*, vol.15, no:2 (1994), p. 228.

for a progressive and civilized *mutamaddina* –<sup>21</sup> Arab/Eastern culture, but also emphasized that Islam has its own *tamaddun Islāmī* (advanced Islamic culture) that is in accordance with *sharī‘a* (Islamic law).<sup>22</sup>

Until the 1880s the dialogue with the West was largely cultural and not political. This dialogue was common to all the journals in that the East recognized ‘The Other’, with its own reservations. The writers firmly believed that civilization should be multi-cultural, but emphasized that each culture should safeguard its own uniqueness. Khūrī, editor of *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*, wrote: “Every nation has its specific culture, which suits its own morals and manners [...] We like the English to be English, the French to be French, and the Arab to be Arab.”<sup>23</sup>

As in travel books of this time, Arab writers were ambivalent towards the West. On one hand they viewed its innovations, cultural materialism, and its order with enthusiasm, amazement, and even with admiration. On the other hand they applied caution and suspicion, criticizing Western morality, humanity, religious attitudes and materialism. However there was an awareness that,

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21. *Tamaddun* was the opposite of *Tawaḥḥush* (*Barbarianism*). In general it embodies the meaning of an urbanized and civilised living. *Madīna* (city) derives from the same root (m-d-n). The intellectuals of the *nahḍa* believed that true (*ḥaqīqī*) *tamaddun* exists in organized cities founded on justice, *ḥuqūq jumhūriyya* (public’s rights) and public order. Thus, it was perceived as an ideal condition of society. Reference to someone as *Mutamaddin* meant that he was urban and educated. Nevertheless the term was freely used among intellectuals, becoming a flexible generalisation that is still a complex socio-cultural concept. Although literally translated as “civilization/being civilised” or “advancement,” the term is multifaceted and reflects subjective opinions, varying according to author and subject matter. For more details see, Butrus al-Bustānī, “Tamaddun,” *Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif*, vol. 6, pp. 213-215; Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity: Intellectuals and Merchants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 66-67.

22. Unknown author, “Mustaqbal al-Islām,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1214 (1899), pp. 2-3; This attitude can be seen also in *al-Hilāl*: R. N (Egypt), “al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī wa-bi-Mādhā Qāma,” *al-Hilāl*, vol. 3 (1894), pp. 381-384.

23. Khalīl al-Khūrī, “Way... Idhan Lastu bi- Ifranjī,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*, issue 93 (1859).



ultimately, the adoption of Western culture could endanger the existence of the local culture. Aware the power of the press,<sup>24</sup> the writers believed that they must call for the safeguarding of local culture while emphasizing that familiarity with ‘The Other’ was essential for its’ advance.

The editors regularly exposed their readers to debates and articles from the European press, some of which were translated into Arabic. They published serialized essays on Western history. In publications such as *al-Hilāl* and *al-Muqtaṭaf* many issues opened with a column entitled *Famous events and distinguished figures*. Many of these “events” occurred in Western history, and many of the “figures”, both women and men were European. Local figures were also represented. Western innovations, technology and science predominated in every issue.<sup>25</sup> This mass of information was not always driven by fear, but rather by curiosity about ‘The Other’ and by trying to understand why the West was so advanced while the once illustrious Arab culture, a leader in philosophy, mathematics and so on, had advanced so little. Was it our fault? What went wrong?

The writers suggested several answers. Khūrī, editor of *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār* tried to explain the high levels of morality and literature among the English in his article “On the English Nation”<sup>26</sup>. He believed this was due to their having preserved their culture as a “national” faith. Even though they may be cold and boring, their

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24. Unknown author, “Mabāḥith ‘Ilmiyya Adabiyya Ta’rīkiyya: al-‘Ilm wal-Jarā’id,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1193 (1898), p. 6; Unknown author, “Fī Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*, issue 48 (1858), p. 1; Unknown author, “al-Jarā’id wa-Fawā’iduhā, Jarā’id al-‘Āṣima,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1201 (1898), p. 1-2.

25. Unknown author, “Al-Jarā’id wa-Fawā’iduhā, Jarā’id al-‘Āṣima,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, pp. 1-2.

26. Khalīl al-Khūrī, “Fī al-‘Umma al-Inklīziyya,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*, issues 66, p. 2 and issue 68 (1859), p. 2. See also, Unknown author, “Tabdhīr al-Sharq wa-Tabdhīr al-Gharb,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 1 (1876), pp. 110-112; Unknown author, “Tabdhīr al-Sharq wa-Tabdhīr al-Gharb,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 8 (1883), pp. 143-145; Unknown author, “Madīnat Bārīs,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 16 (1892), pp. 105-112; Unknown author, “Madīnat Lundun,” *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 16 (1892), pp. 161-168.

patriotism, order and diligence are of the highest standard. The English love their country and will do whatever they can for its sake. As a member of the bourgeoisie Khūrī, conceived an 'ideal society' based on hard work, diligence, and discipline: qualities, he believed, that were lacking in the Arab culture of his days.

A series of articles entitled "The differences between the East and the West" discusses this proposition further. It is remarkable that the writers' emphasis is on the differences rather than the similarities between the cultures.<sup>27</sup> They compared the two cultures regarding matters of dress, customs, social, economic and moral differences. They focused on the issue of education especially for women and children which they observed as vital for the progress of their society.<sup>28</sup> It is also evident that the Eastern intellectuals grasped the Western understanding that modern societies and nations are founded on the modern family.

In 1871 Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, editor and publisher of *al-Jawā'ib*, published one of the most interesting of these articles, "The difference between East and West".<sup>29</sup> Shidyāq was familiar with Western culture. He was a man of the world who spent much of his life in Lebanon, Egypt, Malta, Istanbul, and Tunis, and lived in France and England for more than 15 years. A colourful personality who was born a Maronite, became a Protestant, and finally converted to Islam. Unlike other writers he focused mainly on daily life in Europe. He was fascinated by the West, but also

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27. Salīm al-Bustānī, "al-Sharq wal-Gharb," *al-Jinān*, vol. 7 (1877), pp. 742-746; Unknown author, "al-Sharq wal-Gharb," *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1183 (1898), p. 2; Unknown author, "Tabdhīr al-Sharq wa-Tadbīr al-Gharb," *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 1, pp. 110-112; Unknown author, "Tabdhīr al-Sharq wa-Tadbīr al-Gharb," *al-Muqtaṭaf*, vol. 8, pp. 143-145; Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, "Fī al-Farq ma bayna al-Sharq wal-Gharb," in Salīm al-Shidyāq (ed), *Kanz al-Ragha'ib fī Muntakhabāt al-Jawā'ib*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Maṭba'at al-Jawā'ib, 1288-1871), 7 vols, pp. 87-101.

28. Unknown author, "Al-'ilm wal-Tarbiyya aw Kitāb min Sirr Taqaddum al-Inklīz al-Saksūniyyin," *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1243 (1889), p. 2; Unknown author, "al-'Ilm wal-Tarbiyya aw Kitāb min Sirr Taqaddum al-Inklīz al-Saksūniyyin," *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1244 (1889), p. 3.

29. al-Shidyāq, "Fī al-Farq ma bayna al-Sharq wal-Gharb," pp. 87-101.

recognised it as more corrupt and unjust than the East, and emphasized the misery of its peasants.

Shidyāq believed that the main differences between the cultures lay in education, family life, and commerce. He focused mainly on the difference between the roles of European and Eastern/Arab women. He argued that European women educate their children before they start school, while the Eastern women fill their children’s heads with tales and superstitions, and most of the children do not even attend school. Hence, Eastern children are weak and cowardly compared to European children who are proud, active, full of initiative, and contribute to society. He emphasized that education is a major issue in European society, with many libraries and books on education written by distinguished men. However, Shidyāq also believed that the fault in the East lies with the men who keep women in subjection, thereby injuring the nation.

Other writers vacillated between blaming themselves and blaming Western society for the state of Eastern society. In 1877, Salīm al-Bustānī, editor of *al-Jinān*, wrote his article “The East and the West.”<sup>30</sup> He describes a cultural war planned by the West, through which it would eventually dominate the East. It is obvious that Salīm’s description of the struggle between the cultures is borrowed from the terminology of the Muslim conquests (*futūḥ al-Islām*). The conquest of the East by the West is described as *futūḥ al-bilād* or *al-futūḥ al-tijāriyya* and not, for example, *iḥtilāl al-bilād*. He concentrated on the West’s domination of the East as a form of *cultural*, rather than political, *imperialism*. In an apologetic tone, he reminds his readers that Islam did the same in the past, referring to the Muslim conquest in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. He calls his readers to join forces, to be patriotic, and to reform their society. He cautions them not to be influenced by Western flattery, because this is only a strategy for making them dependent on the West. He warns that

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30. Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Sharq wal-Gharb,” *al-Jinān*, pp. 742-746.

after the West has emptied their pockets it will turn to the Far East (*al-Sharq al-Aqṣā*).

However, Salim also proposed a solution for the East.<sup>31</sup> Observe Westerners and learn their innovations, just as the West once learned from their Moorish forebears. He believed that in a multi-cultural world (*ikhtilāf al-umam*) mutual cooperation among nations is essential. They should take from the West what suits their society, and at the same time sell to the West whatever they can.

Some writers, who were aware of the enthusiasm of ‘The Other’, attempted to warn their Western readers by pointing out some of the perils. For example, Ya‘qūb Ṣarrūf wrote an article, on *The Dangers of Rapid [European] Advancement (tamaddun Ūrūbī)*.<sup>32</sup> As a critic expressing post-colonial ideas long before post-colonialism, he examined the consequences of encounters between Europe and other cultures. Ṣarrūf warned the “Easterners” against European culture, as being harmful to every society it comes into contact with, even to the point of a decline in population in these societies. He based his article on the research of Dr. Watson (?), citing the societies of South America, Hawaii, Australia and India as cases in point. He emphasized that the encounter that brought new cultural codes and customs to these societies also introduced damaging practices such as the consumption of alcohol and a change in dress code. Ṣarrūf concludes by telling his Eastern readers not to be fearful of European culture, but to be wary.

In a lecture given at the Syrian School for Girls, in Beirut, Ṣarrūf declares that there are some who think that if a weak nation is integrated into a stronger one, it is obvious that the stronger will overcome the weaker. In his opinion the case of Syria is different. Western culture cannot swallow Syrian culture because wherever

31. See also, Unknown author, “Mustaqbal al-Islām,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*; Unknown author, “al-Jarā’id wa-Fawā’iduhā, Jarā’id al-‘Āṣima,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, p. 1.

32. Ya‘qūb Ṣarrūf, “Aḍrār al-Tamadun al-Sarī,” *al-Muqtataf*, vol. 9 (1884-1885), pp. 284-288.

Syrians compete with Westerners they are equal or even stronger. At the same time Syrians must be careful to pay close attention to achieving more and to being less influenced by the West.<sup>33</sup>

Women also participated in this discussion and a journalistic dialogue was conducted between female and male readers. Two women responded to this article of Şarrūf’s. One of the women, Shams Shaḥāda from Zaḥla, did not accept Şarrūf’s position. In her opinion, the harm caused by the West’s influence on the East is greater than its benefits.<sup>34</sup> From the point of view of cultural damage, like Şarrūf, Shaḥāda points to the increased consumption of alcoholic drinks, and to the increased permissiveness in the family.

Ḥannah Yannī of Tripoli, who came from one of the leading educated families in the city, also responded. Ḥannah did not agree with Shaḥāda, and insisted that the advantages of Western civilization were greater than the harm incurred. She felt that the West had many ways of helping her society such as schooling, newspapers, and the railway.<sup>35</sup>

The admiration of the West was sometimes tempered by the ridicule of Western morality, behaviour<sup>36</sup> and materialism, and by ridiculing the Westernized woman. In 1885 under the caption “The New Fashion” an illustration of a woman with her belongings placed on top of her bustle appeared as a mockery of Western women’s fashions.<sup>37</sup> The press praised Eastern dress by reporting

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33. Ya‘qūb Şarrūf, “Al-Naẓr fī Ḥaḍīrinā wa-Mustaqbalinā,” *Al-Muqataḍaf*, vol. 8 (1884), pp. 193-199.

34. Shams Shaḥāda, “Maḍārr al-Tamadun al-Ūrūbī wa-Manāfi‘uhu,” *Al-Muqataḍaf*, vol. 9 (1885), pp. 565-566.

35. Ḥannah Yannī, “Maḍārr al-Tamadun al-Ūrūbī wa-Manāfi‘uhu,” *Al-Muqataḍaf*, vol. 10 (1885), pp. 36-37.

36. The attitude towards Western morality was ambivalent. In some contexts it was conceived as positive, especially when in line with eastern standards. In others, such as the behavior of women, it was negative.

37. See, “Mulaḥ,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 16 (1885), p. 702; Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, p. 76.

that at the Chicago World Fair in 1893 arose a discussion about the need to modify women's dress, especially the corset, since it was detrimental to the female body and health. The writer informs his readers that the conclusion of the debate was a return to traditional loose-fitting dress, similar to that worn by Eastern women. This, he believed, indicated that America, despite all its progress, now understood what Eastern people had known long before.<sup>38</sup> Writers, proud of their culture, called on their readers to unite through their religion and/or culture, to conduct reforms, and to preserve their heritage.

At this stage the debate gradually concentrated on what to take or not to take from Western culture. This was one of the reasons that many writers of the *nahḍa* period insisted on distinguishing between modernization and Westernization as a means of clarifying to their readers what should and what should not be borrowed from the West. Most discourses encouraged modernization while pushing aside Westernization.

The writers cautioned time and again against mistaking the superficialities of Western culture (*tamaddun khārījī*) for an advanced and modern society reformed from within (*tamaddun dākhlī*). Cer-

38. See for example, Unknown author, "Malābis al-Nisā'," *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue, 936 (1893); Unknown author, "Malābis al-Nisā'," *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1001 (1894); 'Abd al-Bāsit Faṭḥallāh, "Lubūs al-Ṣayf wa-Naṣīj al-Waṭan," *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1287 (1900), p. 3. 'Afīfa Azn, "Bāb Tadbīr al-Manzal: Al-Malābis wal-Zīna, *al-Muqṭaṭaf*, vol. 19 (1895), pp. 216-218. Other women participated in this debate. Maryam Makārīyūs (1860-1888) was one of the most learned and outstanding women of her time. She conducted a cultural salon in Syria and wrote an article about the superstitious beliefs of the West, and concluded her essay with the statement that the Westerners have as many such beliefs/superstition as there are in her own society. Another example is Hannā Kasbānī Kūrānī (1870-1898), from Kfar Shīmā, a poet and journalist that obtained her education in the American school for girls in Tripoli and Beirut. She was voted the first female representative from Greater Syria to the Chicago World Fair (1893). At the closing session she delivered a speech talking about the virtues of the Eastern woman and speaking in favor of the East and its society. She delivered her speeches garbed in Eastern clothes. See, Jūrj Kallās, *Al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya al-Nasāwiyya fī 'Aṣr al-Nanḍa, 1849-1923* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1996), p. 255; Maryam Makārīyūs, "Ba'd Ḥurāfat al-Ifranj," *al-Muqṭaṭf*, vol. 5 (1880), pp. 169-171.

tain practices became associated with the appropriation of superficial Western culture and its values, like materialism, greed, dressing ostentatiously.

These concepts of the *nahḍa* writers are in line with Eisenstadt’s *multiple modernities*. This challenged the narratives of Western modernity by showing that modernization does not necessarily imply Westernization.<sup>39</sup> It also includes some pluralistic features of Western modernity. In keeping with the *nahḍa*, this indicated that modernity presented a historical and intellectual challenge to the established norms, as it adopted, rejected, distorted, or was simply refashioned according to contexts other than Western ones. As we shall see, Eastern journalists tried to analyze the specific characteristics of civilization, not only in terms of their approximation to the West, but also in their own terms and in terms with those of modernization.

### THE THIRD SPACE: RE-SHAPING EASTERN CULTURE

Throughout the period of the *nahḍa* press we see that the proposed solution for the East’s confrontation with the West was to redefine Eastern/Arab culture. The writers believed that this was the only way, that they were on the brink of a new era (*al-‘aṣr al-jadīd*) heralding in the East regaining its former prominence and hopefully even transcending the West once again.<sup>40</sup> Traditional Eastern

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39. For more details see, S. N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus*, vol. 129, 1 (2000), pp. 1-29; Deepak Lal, “Does Modernization Require Westernization?” *Independent Review*, vol. 5 (2000), pp. 5-24; Nilüfer Göle, “Snapshots of Islamic Modernities,” vol. 129, 1 (2000), pp. 99-117; See also, Keith. D. Watenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 16.

40. Unknown author, “Mabāḥith ‘Ilmiyya Adabiyya Ta’rīkhiyya: al-‘Ilm wal-Jarā’id,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, p. 6; Unknown author, “Fī Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*; Unknown author, “al-Jarā’id wa-Fawā’iduhā, Jarā’id al-‘Aṣīma” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, pp. 1-2.

society would necessarily be transformed, to make it more open, advanced and egalitarian.

Local journalists demanded the formulation of a body of Arabic literature that would be no less important than that of Europe. They called for pride in their glorious Eastern culture (*al-Sharq al-‘Azīm*),<sup>41</sup> which was a reservoir of their unique local heritage. They believed that literature was the basic tool for achieving cultural and social progress which, in turn, would lead to modern development.<sup>42</sup>

In 1861 Khūrī, proud of his Eastern culture, and defending it against the patronizing West, wrote:

“The Europeans were surprised by Arab writers who emulated them, and were astounded that to some extent, some Syrians followed the art of European fiction. As if they [the Europeans] did not know that Eastern-Arab skills and talents could... produce writers... who might well be deemed equal to Moliere and Racine”.<sup>43</sup>

The revival of Arabic as the language of the East was crucial. The writers implied that Arab backwardness was due to the incapacity of Arabic to allow the expression of the modern idiom. They called for a change from Arabic’s familiar traditional and limited religious content, and for confronting it with the challenges of modern life.<sup>44</sup>

The importance of re-defining the eastern culture to local society was also manifested in the first authentic Arabic fiction which was

41. See also Unknown author, “Mustaqbal al-Islām,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, pp. 2-3; In 1920’s and 1930’s similar ideas were presented in Egypt. See, for more details, Israel Gershoni, *Egypt between Distinctiveness and Unity: The Search for a National Identity 1919-1948*. (Hebrew) (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1980), pp. 139-161.

42. Unknown author, “Faṣl Adabī,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*, issue 24 (1858), p.3.

43. al-Khūrī, “Way...Idhan Lastu bi- Ifranji” *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*, issue 151 (1861), pp. 2-3. Unknown author, “Faṣl Adabī,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*.

44. Unknown author, “Fī Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akhhbār*.



published in the *nahḍa* press, *Way...Idhan Lastu bi Ifranjī* (Alas, I’m not a Foreigner).<sup>45</sup> This novella by Khūrī, was serialised in *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār* consecutively from 1859 to 1861.<sup>46</sup>

This was a journey that the author and his readers made into self awareness and into discovering their Eastern culture. From the outset, Khūrī emphasized that diffusing one culture with another is important for progress, but replacing one culture with another is dangerous.<sup>47</sup> The novella called its readers to become “modern Easterners” rather than “modern Europeans.” As I believe that this novel is characteristic of the manner in which authors of then contemporary journals presented the importance of being Eastern, I choose to digress in order to elaborate on it.

Khūrī’s narrator begins his journey by criticising the symptoms of “Europeanization” (*tafarnuḥ*) in Beirut, the first city he visits. He insists that the Beirutis have moved away from their traditional Eastern culture, and are aping the Westerners. He then visits Aleppo and Mt. Lebanon, and concludes that in Aleppo the people still preserve their Eastern traditions. They have the finest musicians in the *Sharq* and their city symbolizes the essence of their culture. This is reflected in the poetry of Lamartine, the French poet who visited in 1832.<sup>48</sup> Khūrī relates the story of an Aleppo family. The father, Mikhālī is a grotesque figure who would do anything in order to become European. He adopts European identity through his name, clothes, language and food, and despises his Arab culture.<sup>49</sup> He wants to marry his daughter Imīlī to a European. His wife, a truly Eastern woman, remains faithful to her Arab heritage.

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45. *Ibid*, issues, 93, 3/1 (November 1859) to issue 151, 7/23 (March 1861).

46. Basiliyus Bawardi, “First Steps in Writing Arabic Narrative Fiction: The Case of Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār,” *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 48 (2008), pp. 190-192.

47. al-Khūrī, “Way...Idhan Lastu bi- Ifranjī,” *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*, issue 93 (1859), p. 3.

48. *Ibid*, issue 97 (1859), p. 3-4.

49. *Ibid*, issue 98 (1859), pp. 3-4.

Idmünd (Edmond), a young Parisian who has Arab antecedents, comes to the city. Mikhālī believes that he is the scion of a distinguished Parisian family and on visiting Idmünd (Edmond), he introduces himself as European in origin. He brags about his European watch and explains that, even though he married an Arab, he has educated his daughter in Western manners. But when Idmünd asks what she has learnt, it becomes obvious that Mikhālī does not really know what a European education includes. Meanwhile, Idmünd, tired of European life in Paris, tells Mikhālī that he came to Aleppo in order to find his Eastern roots.<sup>50</sup> Mikhālī is happy. He decides that Idmünd is the perfect husband for his Imīlī, even though she is in love with a young Arab, As'ad.

Shortly after, Idmünd is invited to dinner at Mikhālī's house. This scene was intended for the bourgeoisie to see how ridiculous they look when they try to act as Westerners, and deals mainly with European table manners. Mikhālī explains the importance of eating with knife and fork. He then brags about serving coffee with milk as the appropriate *mutamaddin*. He is angry with his wife for not serving the courses in the correct order, as at a true Western dinner.<sup>51</sup> As'ad understands what is going on and is offended, especially when Idmünd stays the night at Mikhālī's house.

Later, that evening Idmünd receives a letter which he reads and throws out of the window, and then immediately informs Mikhālī that he has to leave.<sup>52</sup> Mikhālī begs him not to go, and hints that he wants him to marry his daughter. Idmünd answers that this is impossible since, as a European, he cannot marry an Arab woman. This scene is the peak of the plot, exposing Mikhālī's identity crisis. He throws a tantrum, shouting: *Way... Idhan Lastu bi Ifranji*.<sup>53</sup> It is the first time he understands that, try as he may to be European, the Europeans will not see him as such.

50. Ibid, issue 103 (1859), pp. 3-4.

51. Ibid, issue 106 (1860), p. 3; issue 108 (1860), pp. 2-3.

52. Ibid, issue 124 (1860), pp. 2-3.

53. Ibid, issue 131 (1860), pp. 3-4.

In the meantime Imīlī reads the letter that Idmūd had discarded. It reveals that Idmūd did not arrive in the East in order to travel or find his roots, but as a servant running from his Parisian master who has accused him of stealing. The letter was from his father who tells him that the thief has been caught, and he can return. So Mikhālī is not a distinguished European, and nor is Idmūd. Khūrī is implying that appearances are deceptive, that not all that seems European is really so.

At the end of the story the harsh consequences of abandoning one’s Eastern culture are revealed. Due to Mikhālī’s aspiration to become European, ‘Asad decides not to continue his relationship with Imīlī, and leaves for Italy.

Khūrī concludes his message:

“We should not be impressed by everything that is European, or approve of everything that is Arab [...] So limit yourself to European science and art, and work hard to revive Eastern culture (*tamaddun Sharqī*) in a manner suited to the spirit of the nation as rooted in its literature and art for forty generations. Be a civilized Arab rather than an incomplete European.”<sup>54</sup>

What, then, is Eastern culture? What are the essential characteristics of the “true/modern” Easterner? As we saw previously, newspapers helped not only to define ‘The Other’, but also to shape the local. The writers believed that some of the scientific achievements of the West were derived from Eastern achievements in the past. In effect, their position was that Eastern culture could never be dominated by Western culture, and that materialism is temporary, while spirituality (referring to their culture) is eternal.<sup>55</sup> Hence they preached for what they perceived as “a

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54. Ibid, issue 151 (1861), pp. 2-3.

55. See for more details, Salīm al-Bustānī, “Markazunā,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 3 (1872), p. 154; Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Numū al-Tabi‘ī lil-Duwal,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 11 (1880), pp. 641-643.

truly ideal Eastern society” (*al-tamaddun al-ḥaqīqī* as opposed to *tamaddun wahmī*), i.e. the proper creation of an advanced society with modern parameters. These ideas are evident not only in the serialised fictional narratives but also in articles published in the journals. These literary efforts were designed to educate readers on how to advance themselves and their eastern society. The serials first appeared in *Ḥadīqat al-Akḥbār*, but the periodical *al-Jinān* was the most outstanding of this genre.<sup>56</sup>

In most of these tales, the hero and heroine were good examples of how to be modern/new Arab/easterner.<sup>57</sup> The new Eastern woman was often presented as the one who safeguards her own culture, selectively adjusting occidental codes to the needs of her society. She wears Western-style clothing modestly; she can speak several languages but prefers to speak her mother tongue – Arabic. Like Zenobia, the Eastern queen, she was presented as a highly moral being, as a woman who abided by the Eastern qualities of modesty and honour, acquired education and knew her rights and obligations. She would be devoted to her nation, while excelling in her family duties and in raising the new generation.<sup>58</sup> The new Eastern man is similarly sensitive and moral. He preserves his culture and is devoted to his family and his nation.<sup>59</sup> Men were told

56. For further details see, Sharon Halevi and Fruma Zachs, “Asma (1873): The Early Arabic Novel as a Social Compass,” *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 39, no: 4 (2007), pp. 416–430. Other examples of narrative fictions in *al-Jinān* were *Bint al-‘Aṣr* (1875), *Fatima* (1877), *Salma* (1878–79), and *Samya* (1882).

57. At this point it should be noted that the overlapping and blurred ideas and terms in the present article reflect the blurring and overlapping in 19<sup>th</sup> century texts. In fact, the discussion on the characteristics of Eastern culture is a continuation side of the ongoing discussion about modernization vs. Westernization.

58. For example: “Al-Jawaz wa-Mu’ashirāt al-‘Iyāl fī Ūrubā,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 930, (1893), p. 3; Un-known author, “al-‘Ilm wal-mar’a,” *Thamarāt al-Funūn*, issue 1220 (1899), pp. 8–9. and the novels: Salīm al-Bustānī, “Asmā,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 4 (1873), especially pp. 31, 67, 69, 103, 176, 213, 251, 283, 358, 749. See also Halevi and Zachs, “Asma (1873): The Early Arabic Novel as a Social Compass,” pp. 416–430.

59. For example, Unknown author, “*al-fatāt al-Sharqiyya fī Ākhir al-Qarn al-Tāsī‘ Ashr*,” *al-Hilāl*, vol. 6 (1897), pp. 169–174. And also an article on the Eastern

not to marry for money, but to choose a girl with qualities. They should also be versed in agriculture and commerce - the traditional Eastern professions.

Negative figures of both women and men were portrayed as grotesque and superficial, empty characters whose whole purpose in life was to become Westerners. They were presented as uneducated, unpatriotic, foolish and self-centred.<sup>60</sup>

Hence, we can say that the intellectuals strove to revive Eastern culture by combining the “good” values of two distinct cultures; the universally valid ideas of modernity such as freedom from tyranny, dignity, orderliness, equality, and tolerance with those of the Arab culture such as non-materialism, humility, charity, and respect for tradition. The task of reconciling or sifting through different values to create a coherent system and worldview was not an easy one and it created a dichotomy in Eastern culture between modern and traditional, local and foreign, self and ‘The Other’.

The following insights further clarify how the contemporary Arab authors conceived and defined the East. First and foremost at the core of Eastern culture was the magnificent Arab cultural history. The basic components of Eastern culture were those of the Arab culture, to the extent that ‘Easterner’ was equivalent to Arab. The preference for the term ‘Eastern’ permitted a suitable counterpart to ‘Western’ – multi-national, multi-territorial, and multi-ethnic. ‘Eastern culture’ included Arab identities such as Egyptian and Syrian; different religions such as Islam or Christianity. It retained the territorial uniqueness of the regions under it, but served as a cultural, regional framework for all. This somewhat “secular” interpretation of Eastern culture was especially marked among the Christian Arab writers who comprised

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boy: Unknown author, “al-Shabb al-Sharqī fī Ākhir al-Qarn al-Tāsi‘ ‘Ashr,” *al-Hilāl*, vol. 6 (1897), pp. 333-340; Fruma Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, pp. 191-197.

60. Halevi and Zachs, “Asma (1873): The Early Arabic Novel as a Social Compass,” pp. 420-421.

the majority of the authors of these journals. Although a religious minority, they strove to be integrated into a society whose majority was Muslim.<sup>61</sup>

At the same time, especially among Muslim writers there existed a religious-focused framework in Eastern culture, which emphasized Islam as the core of this culture and emphasised the *sharīʿa* as one of the loftiest judicial systems in the world, typified by legal flexibility and founded on the principles of justice and liberty.<sup>62</sup> This Islamic modernist thought was regarded as an expression of the Muslim Arabs' need to adapt modern European concepts and to lament the loss of Islamic glory. These writers, in order to confront the West and yet retain their own identity, tried to show that Islam includes rational interpretations suitable for modern times. They tried to prove that Islam is more open and attentive than the West, and represents the essence of the East. They related to Islam not just as a religion, but also as a codex of social and political laws, a basis for Eastern society. They maintained that the principles of *jumhūriyya* and the rules of government originated in the East and that in some aspects it is superior to the West. For example, in its treatment of the poor and of women.<sup>63</sup> The writers did not view the East and the West as two monolithic cultures/

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61. The cultural/secular definition of the term *Sharq* appears to have been more in use among Christian Arab intellectuals who were influenced by Western discourse since many of them had studied in American missionary schools. Muslim writers tended to use *Sharq*, with its cultural connotations, towards the end of the 19th century. They emphasized religious and, to a lesser extent, cultural aspects, and thus generally used the term 'Islam' rather than 'The East' vis a vis the West. See for example, Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *al-Islām wal-Ḥaḍāra al-'Arabiyya* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ta'lif wal-Tarjama wal-Nashr, 1968), pp. 195-252.

62. Meir Hatina, "Where East Meets West: Sufism, Cultural Rapprochement, and Politics", *International Journal of Middle East studies*, vol. 39, Issue 3 (2007), pp. 389-409.

63. This attitude can be seen especially in the newspaper *Thamarāt al-Funūn*. See other examples, Unknown author, "al-Ṣiyām wal-Tamaddun," *al-Manār*, vol. 2 (1900), pp. 673-678; Unknown author, "al-Zakat wal-Tamaddun," *al-Manār*, vol. 2 (1900), pp. 721-725; Yūsuf Niqūlā, "Asbāb Inḥiṭāṭ al-Sharq, al-Hay' al-Ijtimā'iyya al-Sharqiyya," *al-Manār*, vol. 1 (1897-1898), pp. 886-889.

entities. This was not a confrontation of fixed identities and cultures but a multi-layered conception. ‘East’, and also ‘West’, was a fluid term with varying interpretations conceived differently by different Arab communities and the perception of the encounter between them lies in the combined interpretation of these societies and cultures.

Furthermore, partly due to the encounter with the West, the term *Sharq* in the *nahḍa* press, was not merely geographic. It gradually became a cultural definition with cultural connotations. Alongside its geographical terms (*al-Sharq*, *al-Mamalik al-Sharqiyya*, *al-Aqṭār al-Sharqiyya*), cultural interpretations were also embedded in terms such as: *al-Shu‘ūb al-Sharqiyya*, *Ahālī al-Sharq*, *al-Umma al-Sharqiyya*, *al-Tamaddun al-Sharqī*, and *Sharqiyyūn*.<sup>64</sup> Among writers of the *nahḍa*, and beyond the world of Islam (*mashriq and maghrib*), the emphasized geographical and cultural division was mainly between East (*Sharq*) and West (*Gharb*),<sup>65</sup> and if until the *nahḍa*, this encounter was in many cases perceived to be religious, between Christianity and Islam, it seems that under the *nahḍa*, it represented an encounter between two unlike cultures.

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64. Salīm al-Bustānī, “Markazunā,” *al-Jinān*, p. 154; Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, “Fī al-Farq Ma bayna al-Gharb wal-Sharq,” pp. 87-101.

65. The definitions *Sharq* and *Gharb* are more frequent than *mashriq* and *maghrib* as geographical terms in dictionaries and encyclopedias published during the *nahḍa* period. It seems that this division between *Sharq* and *Gharb*, together with the schooling of the American missions helped to create this distinction among intellectuals of the *nahḍa*. For more details see, Ibn Manẓūr, “Sharq,” *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 10 (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, ?), pp. 183-189; Buṭrūs al-Bustānī, *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ*, Vol. 1 (Beirut, 1867), pp. 1076-1077. Bustānī gave the geographical meaning of the term; J. G. Hava, “al-Sharq,” *al-Farā’id al-Duriyya*, 4 ed (Beirut, 1982), p. 362. Hava defined it as the sunrise, and as the East or the Levant, which included the coastline between Alexandretta and Gaza; Edward William Lane, “Sharq,” *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book 1, Part 4 (New-York: Frederick Ungar, 1956), pp. 1539-1541; Edward William Lane, “Gharb,” *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book 1, Part 6 (New-York: Frederick Ungar, 1956), pp. 2240-2244.

## CONCLUSION

In Eastern eyes, the division between East and West was influenced by Western discourse, driven by the concept of its own identity vs. that of ‘The Other’, and that the East, despite all its self-criticism was a magnificent culture, neither backward, nor inferior to the West. The writers of the *nahḍa* press, emphasized that the rehabilitation of Eastern culture concurrently with modernization was essential. They did not suggest discarding ‘The Other’, but rather the renewal of itself. ‘The Other’ was not rejected as harmful, it was acceptable as long as it did not impose itself on the East. Perhaps this was an attempt to construct a world with two distinct cultures that would enrich each other, existing side by side, but each of them safeguarding its own. In the discussion of Occidentalism in the *nahḍa* period the patronizing or contemptuous attitude of Orientalism was not evident, because the East had its own pride and a critical attitude. At that stage, the East’s view of the West was essentially critical and ambivalent – a love-hate relationship. In this context, the writing of the *nahḍa* journals was crucial.

Some of the patterns and insights of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have filtered down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In articles<sup>66</sup> on the wars between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, or the British conquest of Egypt in 1882, from the 1880s onwards, it can be seen that some of this cultural discourse and terminology was gradually politicized from 1880’s onwards. This process continued till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially after the agreements signed after the First

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66. For example, Salīm al-Bustānī, “Taḥfīdh Mu’āhadat Birlīn lil-Duwal allatī lahā Maṣāliḥ fī al-Sharq,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 9 (1878), pp. 607-609; Salīm al-Bustānī, “Kutiba ‘alā al-Sharqiyyin an yajlibū Maḍḍārratahum bi-aydihim,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 10 (1879), pp. 33-34. Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Wizāra al-Baritaniyya al-Jadīda wa-Siyāsatahā fī al-Sharq,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 11 (1880), pp. 257-259; Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Mudākhalāt al-Ūrūbiyya fī al-Sharq,” *al-Jinān*, vol. 12 (1881), pp. 385-386; Salīm al-Bustānī, “al-Ta’ṣṣub al-Dīnī wal-’Uṣba al-Jinsiyya,” pp. 33-35.



World War. With time, as the ideological discourse became more extreme and the barriers between East and West grew, some Muslim groups saw the West as illegitimate. At this point the situation was reversed; some Western observers believe that the East constitutes a danger to Western civilization. But let it be noted that from the *nahḍa* period until today "... no occidental, even the most fervent holy warrior, can ever be entirely free of the occident."<sup>67</sup>

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67. Buruma and Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism*, p. 144.

