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The Form of Ideology
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Cold War, Decolonization and Third

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6. Moroccan Intellectuals Between Decolonization and the Arab Cold War

Abdallah Laroui's Critical and Literary Writing

Karima Laachir

The Arab Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s can be understood primarily as an ideological rivalry between Arab countries. It pitted republican against monarchical regimes as they sought to develop and promote competing visions of Arab nationalism within a shared Arab frame of reference.[1] At the same time, the Arab Cold War can be linked to geopolitical and global factors, and to regional dynamics that include the competition of interests between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and the then newly rising American power. Notwithstanding the fact that most Arab countries were part of the Non-Aligned Movement, the broader Cold War polarization came to be mapped onto the region in a crude manner, with the United States supportive of Saudi-led monarchies and the Soviet Union backing the Nasserist-led Arab republics. However, we should not see the Arab Cold War as merely a reflection of the larger Cold War rivalry between the two competing blocs, but instead recognize that it had a particular Arab dimension in which perceptions of state and society were a significant

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1   Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958–1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

factor. The Arab monarchies—including the Gulf States, Morocco and Jordan—were less radical in their support of pan-Arabism; they insisted on the sovereignty of Arab states, and pursued the idea of interstate solidarity and cooperation. Conversely, the Arab socialist republics—including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq—were keener on the idea of a common 'Arab nation' whose interests were seen to supersede that of individual Arab states; their goal was to form a single Arab nation-state.[2]

While states engaged in a battle of hearts and minds to win the Arab publics to their particular vision of the Arab nation—with Egypt gaining the upper hand in the 1950s and 1960s—intellectuals and writers also had a part to play in critiquing these struggles and in establishing alternative possibilities of nationhood and Arab identity. How did Arab intellectuals of the time defy top-down pan-Arabism? This was the problem of the era, which played out against the backdrop of decolonization and the attempt to liberate the newly independent and/or newly established Arab nations from the burden of colonial legacies. I argue that while state-dominated understandings of pan-Arabism were caught in the vicissitudes of the Arab Cold War and eventually crumbled under the weight of competing ideologies, figures such as the celebrated Moroccan intellectual Abdallah Laroui (b. 1933) were able to harness their critical *and* fictional writing towards generating a bottom-up pan-Arabism that continues to speak in very particular ways to regional politics and to notions of shared Arab identity.

The turn to writing literary texts, including novels, by Arab intellectuals was a response to the oppressive environment they found themselves in during the Arab Cold War and reflected their inability to openly express their disillusionment. Novels offered the opportunity to turn scathing attention on the state via criticism of societal norms and values. Reading Laroui's literary and critical works together, I propose, can shed important light on his decolonial aesthetics and politics, and provide insights into how he perceived the unfinished project of decolonization as being aimed at both imperial hegemony and the internal exclusions of ethno-nationalism.

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2   Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

Revisiting Decolonization During the Arab Cold War

The 1950s and 1960s were marked by an emerging revolutionary spirit in Asia and Africa and a strong desire to decolonize the societies and cultures of the newly independent nations. The Bandung Conference held in Indonesia in 1955 marked the beginning of an era, as it brought together representatives of nations from Asia and Africa who confirmed their commitment to decolonization and opposition to the bi-polar world order of the Cold War. It was a stance of South-South solidarity from countries in Asia and Africa against Western domination and neo-colonialism; it was followed by a series of interrelated conferences, events, and movements that formed part of the project of self-determination and independence.[3]

Egypt's charismatic leader of the time, Jamal Abdel Nasser, was perceived as one of the foremost figures of this anti-imperialist movement. He rose to prominence after the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, which had made him hugely popular in the Arab world and configured him as the champion of decolonization and the leader of the pan-Arab socialist revolutions.[4] Nasser used the policy of secondment of Egyptian teachers to other parts of the Arab world (not only to Morocco but also, in great numbers, to Algeria, Libya, Sudan, and the Gulf Arab states) as an ideological tool to export the Egyptian socialist revolution and to promote pan-Arabism, with Egypt at the centre of it.[5] Soft power was hugely important to this project. The distribution of Egyptian newspapers abroad as well as radio broadcasts such as *The Voice of the Arabs* were utilized by Nasser to draw Arab populations directly to his cause. Print media and radio emerging from Cairo at the time spoke directly to millions of Arabs in the region and promoted the idea of pan-Arab solidarity and socialist union; they drew heavily on Egyptian cultural icons, such as the singer Umm Kulthum, to weigh in on and promote a radical perception of pan-Arabism that was both cultural and political.

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3   Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007).

4   Joel Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler, eds, *Rethinking Nasserism : Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004).

5   Gerasimos Tsourapas, 'Nasser's Educators and Agitators across *al Watan al-'Arabi*: Tracing the Foreign Policy Importance of Egyptian Regional Migration, 1952–1967', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43.3 (2016), 324–41.

Cairo in the 1950s was a hub of cultural and political creativity; 'a defiant city [...] ready to take on the First World with rhetoric and guns'.[6] In his memoir, *Mithl Ṣayf Lan Yatakarrar* (*Like a Summer Never to be Repeated*), Moroccan critic and novelist Mohamed Berrada reflects on his five-year stint in Cairo in the early 1950s and argues that these years were pivotal to his intellectual formation.[7] Cairo at the time was the centre of new literary movements within the Arab world, and Berrada describes meeting there many of the greatest living Arab writers, poets, and novelists, including Najib Mahfouz (Egyptian), Mikhail Naimy (or Nuaima, Lebanese), Mahmoud Messadi (Tunisian), Youssef Idriss (Egyptian), Suhail Idriss (Lebanese), and Salah Jahin (Egyptian). The city provided a space for fierce debate at a moment in which literature and literary criticism intersected with politics, against the backdrop of flourishing optimism about the Nasserist socialist revolution.

A wealth of Arabic literary journals, such as *Al-Adab* (Literature), founded in 1952 by the Lebanese writer Suhail Idriss; *Al-Shiᶜr* (Poetry), founded in 1958 by the Syrian-Lebanese poet Yusuf Al-Khal; *Mawāqif* (Positions), founded in 1968 by the Syrian poet Adonis; and *Gallery 68*, founded by the Egyptian writer Edwar al-Kharrat, connected Cairo with Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, Paris, and London in a way that suggested a moment of anticolonial or decolonizing consciousness. It hinted at a new Nahda, or awakening, in Arab critical thought; a Nahda that was linked (like the one in the nineteenth century) to the question of translation and the encounter with 'other' cultures.[8]

In the 1960s Cairo also became home to the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization with its Permanent Bureau of Afro-Asian Writers, whose establishment in 1968 of *Lotus: Afro-Asian Writings*, the trilingual quarterly journal in Arabic, French, and English, was an important intellectual endeavour that represented a specific South-South aesthetic and spoke to the politics of solidarity.[9] *Lotus* was largely sponsored by

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6   Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, p. 51.

7   Mohamed Berrada, *Mithl Sayf Lan Yatakarrar* (*Like a Summer Never to be Repeated*) (Amman: Nashe al-Fanik, 1999).

8   The Nahda (meaning renaissance) refers to the Arab cultural awakening starting from about the mid-nineteenth century in the Arabic speaking world, particularly in the Levant and Egypt.

9   Hala Halim, '*Lotus*, the Afro-Asian Nexus, and Global South Comparatism', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32.3 (2012), 563–83. The American bloc similarly sponsored cultural initiatives to bolster its position during

the Egyptian state and also had the backing of the Eastern bloc. As such, the journal fell within the parameters of the Arab Cold War. Its editor, the charismatic Youssef El-Sebai, rarely invited contributions from writers of countries within the so-called monarchical bloc. As a result, despite the presence of a strong body of Moroccan writers, including Adbellatif Laabi and Mohamed Kheir Eddine, who were themselves radical leftists and part of the tricontinental decolonial movement, Moroccan writers were greatly under-represented in *Lotus*.[10] This chapter asks how Moroccan intellectuals and writers located themselves within the configuration of the Arab Cold War. Did their top-down exclusion from the pan-Arabic cultural sphere affect their perception of Arab politics and the role of writing? Revising the 'problem-space' of the era of decolonization and the Arab Cold War allows us to read texts and authors from a geopolitically and historically located context that reflects on the concerns of the texts and of the authors.[11]

Morocco in Arab Cold War Politics

Where was Morocco located in Arab Cold War politics? Relations with Egypt were sour after the 1952 revolution, when the new Egyptian regime looked with suspicion on the Moroccan anticolonial nationalists who campaigned in Cairo for Egypt and the Arab League to support Moroccan independence.[12] Nasser's Egypt did not consider the Moroccan nationalists sufficiently radical, given that they pursued

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the Cold War (see Introduction and Laetitia Zecchini's chapter in this volume). The Arabic literary journal *Hiwār*, until its scandalous collapse in 1967, was used 'to co-opt the Arab avant-garde, offering authors both material compensation for their writing, as well as the much lauded cultural freedom', Elizabeth M Holt, '"Bread or Freedom": The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and the Arabic Literary Journal *Hiwār* (1962–67)', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 44.1 (2013), 83–102 (p. 83).

10 Andy Stafford, 'Tricontinentalism in Recent Moroccan Intellectual History: The Case of *Souffles*', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 7.3 (2009), 218–32.

11 David Scott defines problem-spaces as those 'conceptual-ideological ensembles, discursive formations, or language games that are generative of objects, and therefore of questions. And these problem-spaces are necessarily historical inasmuch as they alter as their (epistemic-ideological) conditions of existence change'; *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999), p. 8.

12 The revolution marked not only the overthrow of King Faruq and the monarchical system by a group of military officers called the Free Officers but also ushered a new era in Egypt, see *Modern Egypt: The Formation of a Nation State*, ed. by Arthur

various forms of diplomacy and kept generally good relations with the United States.[13] Despite the tensions with Nasserist Egypt, Morocco, like other postcolonial Arab States, adopted Arabic as its national language and the policy of Arabization in education. Its constitution declared that the people of Morocco belonged to an 'Arab nation', which was understood to transcend national territories and to be based on the notion of solidarity and commitment to Arab 'causes' including the Palestinian one.[14] Arabic Fusha (Modern Standard Arabic) was therefore perceived in most postcolonial Arabic-speaking nations as the emblem of a decolonized Arab national identity: a cosmopolitan, trans-regional, and symbolic language representing a rich and prestigious cultural heritage. Arabic Fusha was seen as an important component in the construction of national identity and vital for 'the re-birth of traditional Islamic culture and national identity'.[15] As the language of Arab patriotism, Arabic Fusha facilitated the inclusion of Morocco in a pan-Arabic 'imagined community', a 'vast sound chamber in which information, ideas, and opinions have resonated with little regard for state frontiers'.[16] Unlike the vernacular languages of Darija (spoken Moroccan Arabic) and Tamazight (the languages of the indigenous population), Arabic Fusha was viewed as the legitimate replacement of French and as playing a crucial role in severing lingering colonial ties to Europe.[17]

Moroccan thinker Mahdi Elmandjra states that cultural decolonization remains an unfinished project in the intellectual and political evolution of the Maghreb and the wider Arabic speaking world.[18] The attempt to decolonize Arabic thought haunted a generation

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Goldschmidt (New York: Routledge, 2019). Morocco only gained independence from France in 1956.

13   For a detailed analysis, see David Stenner '"Bitterness towards Egypt"—The Moroccan Nationalist Movement, Revolutionary Cairo and the Limits of Anti-Colonial Solidarity', *Cold War History*, 16.2 (2016), 159–75.

14   Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

15   Fatima Siddiqi, *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco* (Leiden: Brill 2003), p. 47.

16   Paul Noble, 'The Arab System: Pressures, Constraints, and Opportunities' in *The Foreign Politics of Arab States*, ed. by Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Desouki (Boulder: Westview 1991), p. 55.

17   Alexander Elinson, 'Dārija and Changing Writing Practices in Morocco', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 45.4 (2013), 715–30 (p. 716).

18   Mahdi Elmandjra, *La décolonisation culturelle, défi majeur de 21ème siècle* (Marrakesh: Editions Walilli, 1996).

of Maghrebi intellectuals who were predominantly steeped in French colonial schooling and largely influenced by the metropole's intellectual trends of the 1960s and 1970s. As Ibrahim Abu Rabi puts it:

> After independence, the most distinguished North African intellectuals thoroughly immersed themselves in the imperialist cultural problematic. Some attempted to find creative solutions to the onerous legacy of imperialism by advocating a sort of synthesis between their culture and that of the West. Only a few advocated a sharp separation between the "indigenous" and "foreign." In other words, even the most committed nationalist intelligentsia dared not advocate cultural or intellectual disengagement with the Center. All these of this class were born during the reign of colonialism and most of them studied in schools espousing its philosophy either at home or abroad.[19]

The period of decolonization was marked by debates around power, representation, and identity in a postcolonial setting consumed with 'the specter of "Europe" and the problem of elaborating a politics in relation to it'.[20] Now, decades after the unravelling of the European colonial project, it has become necessary to interrogate the notion that independence was born straightforwardly out of decolonization.[21] But even as early as the 1960s, political oppression, instability, and violence in post-colonial settings led a number of intellectuals to link independence with the reorganization of power structures and economic inequalities inherited from colonial structures in ways that guaranteed the rights of the elites at the expense of broader society. Economic and political dependence continue to haunt those countries that were unable to break the chain of subservience. The privileging of nation-building in discussions of decolonization, however, has marginalized other important issues, such as the formation of cultural and political solidarities that do not correspond to the 'physical or conceptual borders of postcolonial nation-states'.[22] It has further resulted in a failure to recognize the co-constitution of decolonization across the colonizers/colonized divide, particularly in

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19   Ibrahim Abu Rabi, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 344.

20   Nils Riecken, 'Relational Difference and the Grounds of Comparison: Abdallah Laroui's Critique of Centrism', *ReOrient,* 2.1 (2016), p. 14; see also Zecchini in this volume.

21   Ruth Ginio and Lynn Schler, 'Decolonisation Reconsidered: Rebirths, Continuities and Erasures', *HAGAR: Studies in Culture, Polity and Identity*, 9.2 (2010), 2–12.

22   Ibid., p. 8.

the region of the Maghreb, where intellectual leftist solidarities inspired the French theory of post-structuralism, and where France constituted a hub of intellectual and political inspiration for a number of Maghrebi intellectuals.

Moroccan intellectuals identified with various decolonial movements and solidarities: pan-Arabism, pan-Maghrebism, pan-Africanism, and the tricontinental movement originating in Havana in 1966 (see Srivastava in this volume); they were also vividly involved in promoting Berber culture against the monoculturalism of the state. Morocco was perhaps uniquely placed, insofar as 'its Janus-faced standing with regard to Europe and Africa allowed for the interconnectedness of "late" independence struggles',[23] to which we may also add its role in the decolonial struggles within the dynamics of the Arab Cold War.

Abdallah Laroui's Writing: Between the Critical and the Literary

Abdallah Laroui represents a generation of leftist intellectuals with a strong desire for change in the aftermath of the end of colonialism. In addition to his critical writing, Laroui used literary writing, and particularly novels, as a form to mediate his ideas. In the preface of his seminal book *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1998–1939*, Albert Hourani stresses the need to study how literature functioned as a vector to disseminate Arab intellectuals' thoughts to larger audiences.[24] I am also inspired by Jacques Rancière's idea that aesthetics and politics are intertwined and are not autonomous spheres.[25] Politics for Rancière is a 'dissensus' from a normative 'partition of the sensible', that is, a practice that is deeply disruptive of the normalized conceptual underpinnings of hierarchical social orders and forms of domination.[26] Like politics, aesthetics also disrupts a particular distribution of the sensible, though in a different way. For Rancière, aesthetics does not refer to art as a whole, but rather to a particular artistic practice in which 'the field of

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23　Stafford, 'Tricontinentalism in Recent Moroccan Intellectual History', p. 218.

24　Hourani, Albert, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1998–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. viii.

25　Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. by Steven Corcoran (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

26　Ibid., p. 152.

experience, severed from its traditional reference points, is therefore open for new restructuring through the "free play" of aestheticization'.[27] Laroui's aesthetics, I argue, is marked by this free play, which enables alternative imaginings of society, and therefore challenges the existing normative social and political hierarchies and also, most importantly, expands the critical field.

Laroui is considered one of the Arab world's radical critics. He invented a decolonial language of critique in both Arabic and French that draws simultaneously on local and global paradigms.[28] Laroui's philosophical and historical works, mostly written in French, are widely studied and translated in the Arabic speaking world, in the United States, and in Europe, but his literary works, written in Arabic, are little known or studied. In fact, there are no existing studies that read Laroui's critical works together with his literary ones. However, such an approach sheds important light on Laroui's decolonial aesthetics and politics, his efforts to resist and elude the strictures imposed by the Arab Cold War bi-polarity and, perhaps most importantly, his perception of the unfinished project of decolonization in Morocco and the wider Arab world.

Laroui is the product of colonial education: he went to colonial primary state schools in the early 1940s where both Arabic and French were taught, and then to high schools in Marrakesh, Rabat, and Casablanca. He was subsequently trained in history and economics in Paris, where he attended the Institut d'Etudes Politiques at the Sorbonne in the 1950s. During this period, he also trained himself independently in the history of the Islamic world and Arabic thought. From the early 1960s to the late 1970s he moved between Cairo (where he worked as a cultural attaché), Paris (where he completed his PhD), then UCLA in Los Angeles where he taught from 1967 to 1971, then back to Rabat where he settled as a Professor of History at Mohamed V University in the early 1970s. He is a multilingual writer fluent in Arabic, French, and English. His training in both European critical traditions and Islamic/Arabic ones has equipped him with the tools to be comfortable in both, and equally to be critical of both. He was preoccupied with exploring the question of national

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27   Steven Corcoran, 'Editor's Introduction' in Rancière, *Dissensus*, p. 17.
28   Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy: A theory of Distorted Change in the Arab World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Hosam Aboul-Ela, *Domestications: American Empire, Literary Culture, and the Postcolonial Lens* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018).

culture after independence beyond hegemonic colonial narratives, and with exploring the nationalism of the newly independent state of Morocco and independent states of the wider Arabic speaking world. Some of his critical pieces have appeared in magazines with wide circulation in the Arab world, including *Arabic Studies* and *Mawāqif*, both based in Beirut, the Rabat-based *Aqlām*, and the well-known Paris based *Les Temps Modernes* and *Diogenes*. Three main critical books, all written in French in the 1970s, were inspired by this 'significant geography' and movement between Europe, North America, and the Arab world: they include *Contemporary Arab Ideology*, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectuals*, and *History of the Maghreb*.[29] In the same decade, he also published (in Arabic), *Arabs and Historical Thinking*.[30] Laroui's novels, written over a span of four decades, are all written in Arabic and include *Al-Ghorba* (Exile, 1971), *Al-Yatīm* (The Orphan, 1978), *Al-Farīq* (The Team, 1986), *Folios* (Awrāq, 1989), and *Al-Āfah* (The Disaster, 2006). Reading Laroui's critical decolonial project in parallel with his literary novels, I focus on the question of the dialectical dichotomy between tradition and modernity, a dichotomy that marked the historical phase of decolonization in the Arabic speaking region in the 1950s and 1960s. As Laroui himself stated in 1956 (the year of Moroccan independence):

> The question that we all posed to ourselves was the following: on which bases can our country be rebuilt? It went without saying that we could not continue the colonial situation nor revive the past that had led to it. [...] The nationalists said: the colonialists have introduced reforms based on their own experience, their defeat proves that those reforms are not suitable for us. We thus have to evince imagination, underline our differences, be ourselves. Those who leaned towards communism tried to give it a national coloring. [...] That problematic determined my whole way of thinking. Wanting to be free from external influence, wanting to create, innovating, tending to one's difference, enriching human experience, all of this, I told myself, is laudable, but is it feasible?[31]

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29   Abdallah Laroui, *L'Idéologie arabe contemporaine: essai critique* (Contemporary Arab Ideology: a critical essay) (Paris: François Maspero, 1967); *La crise des intellectuels arabes, traditionalisme ou historicisme?* (The Crisis of Arab Intellectuals, traditionalism or historicism?) (Paris: François Maspero, 1974); *L'Histoire du Maghreb, un essai de synthèse* (Paris: François Maspero, 1970).

30   Abdallah Laroui, *Al-'Arab wa al-fikr al-ta'rīkhī* (Arabs and Historical Thought) (Beirut: Dar Al-Haqiqa, 1973).

31   Laroui's quote, cited and translated from French by Riecken in 'Relational Difference and the Grounds of Comparison', p. 22. Originally in Abdallah Laroui, 'Histoire et

As this quote shows, it is not difference *per se* but specifically a difference in relation to Europe and colonization that haunts the efforts to decolonize and to 'modernize'. How can the 'West' be de-centred in Arab intellectual debates on modernization? The unsettled problematic of the conflict between *turath* (tradition, implying the Arab-Islamic heritage) and modernity started before formal colonialism but accelerated with it. It was (and still is up to the present day) a divisive debate that dominates the discussion on decolonization in the Arab world, especially after the traditionalist turn of Arab nation-states in the 1960s, during which the state, faced with popular protest, positioned itself as the defender of the nation's language, religion, 'heritage', and glorious past.

In Laroui's first novel, *Exile* (*Al-Ghorba*, 1971), the author presents the dichotomy between modernity and tradition through the two main characters, who are childhood friends but whose lives follow vastly different trajectories. Ultimately, the story is analogous to a significant moment in Moroccan postcolonial history, when Francophone and Arabophone intellectuals worked together—despite linguistic and ideological differences—to challenge the colonial legacy and the ethno-centric tyranny of the state. I return to this novel, its two protagonists, and its dialogic form below after a reading of Laroui's critique of the figures of the cleric, the liberal, and the technophile in his *Contemporary Arab Ideology*. Reading the two texts together reveals that Laroui is aware of the limitations of his critical works and the fact that he uses the literary form and the genre of the novel to expand and even contest his own critical thinking.

Laroui and the Pan-Arab Intellectual Sphere

Laroui has pursued his decolonial project both through historicism, because of the need to historicize theory and practice from geo-historical and local perspectives, and through aesthetics or literary writing, particularly the genre of the novel. His book on *Contemporary Arab Ideology* was translated into Arabic in 1970 and published by the

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rationalité' in *Le sens de l'histoire. La raison aux prises avec la condition humaine*, ed. by A. Filali-Ansary (Casablanca and Rabat: Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz al Saoud; Fondation Konrad Adenauer, 2008).

Beirut-based publisher Dar Al-Haqiqa.[32] Laroui wrote the book in French because he believed that European interest in his critical texts always triggered interest from the Mashreq, i.e. the Arabic Middle East. Indeed, *Contemporary Arab Ideology* received excellent reviews in France and in Europe more broadly, which subsequently provoked the interest of intellectuals in the Middle East.[33] Here, the question of the power of European academe and markets, as well as the colonial legacies in the Arab-speaking Maghreb and Mashreq, are crucial. In the last hundred years or so, Arabic critical and literary productions have been mediated through the West, in the sense that they only become known across the two regions through their reception in Europe; for example, only after an Arabic critical book is translated into French and English does it become important in the wider Arab-speaking region. Laroui claims that 'any contact between us—Maghrebis, Arabs or Muslims—passes through the West'.[34] This kind of tacit request for recognition via the West raises important questions about the unfinished project of decolonization in both the Maghreb and the Mashreq. But it also shows that the top-down Arab Cold War between republican and monarchical states in the Arabic-speaking world in the 1950s–1960s did not alter the conceptual geography of imagined and real pan-Arabism from below, which differs from—and in fact critiques—the ideology of pan-Arabism imposed from above by the postcolonial Arab states seeking political and popular legitimacy. This intellectual pan-Arabism is embodied in a shared cosmopolitan heritage that is linked to language and that transcends enclosed national communities in order to embody wider geographies of influence and cultural circulation.

In a number of his works, Laroui has linked his critique of orientalism and knowledge production—including the circuit of recognition outlined above—to the crisis of the Arab intellectual.[35] In his search for epistemological liberation, Laroui has emphasized

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32   The book was translated by Mohammad Eitany with a preface by Maxime Rodinson. Laroui also wrote a preface to the Arab version introducing the book to Arab readers.

33   See Abdelfattah Kilito, *Atakallam jamīᶜ al-lughāt lākin bi'l-ᶜarabiyyah* (*Je parle toutes les langues mais en arabe*) trans. by Abdesalam Benabd Alali (Casablanca: Dar Toubkal 2013), p. 42.

34   Laroui, cited and translated by Riecken, p. 22.

35   Laroui, *L'Idéologie arabe contemporaine*; Laroui, *La crise des intellectuels arabes.*

how colonial knowledge production of the region shaped the Arabic speaking world's understanding of itself and others. Long before the publication of Edward Said's influential *Orientalism*,[36] Laroui—in the tradition of a number of Arab intellectuals writing on this topic, such as Muhammad Husayn Haykal, Anouar Abdel-Malek, and others— published a significant essay critiquing orientalism. The essay, entitled 'The Arabs and Cultural Anthropology: Notes on the Method of Gustave Von Grunebaum' and included in *Contemporary Arab Ideology*, critically engages with the intellectual itinerary of the Arabist Von Grunebaum (1909–1972) to reflect on questions of knowledge production and representation, and on Von Grunebaum's negative and reductive culturalist reading of Islamic history.[37] Laroui links this critique of orientalism and its knowledge production to the crisis of the Arab intellectual, who, he argues, cannot engage in such a critique without self-critique. In *Contemporary Arab Ideology*, Laroui reflects on the Arab intellectuals' engagement with the colonial and post-colonial condition since the mid-nineteenth century, and on their modes of understanding the Arab self in its historical and cultural trajectory.[38] Through his use of the figures of the cleric, the liberal, and the technophile, who represent various Arab ideologies and models of political and cultural formation, Laroui argues that the West is implicated in all currents of Arab ideology. All of them are, for Laroui, incapable of grasping the reality of the Arab condition.[39] He particularly criticizes 'the "traditionalism" that predominates in contemporary Arab modes of inhabiting their reality, and which conceives of history as the domain of divine will rather than that of human agency', to quote Yasmeen Daifallah.[40] The method needed to overcome this traditionalism, according to Laroui, is historicism, or a way of understanding history as a lived reality linked to the subject's agency, in a self-reflexive dialectic that critiques both Western hegemonic epistemology and one's *turath* or tradition.

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36   Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

37   Laroui, *L'Idéologie arabe contemporaine*.

38   Ibid., p. 16.

39   Ibid., p. 38.

40   Yasmeen Daifallah, 'Political Subjectivity in Contemporary Arab Thought: The Political Theory of Abdullah Laroui, Hassan Hanafi, and Mohamed Abed al-Jabiri' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2012), p. 18.

Laroui criticizes the two dominant ideologies in the postcolonial Arab world: traditionalism, which he links to Salafism or Islamism; and nationalism, which mixes traditional and Western notions of development. The characters of Sohaib and Idriss in Laroui's novel *Exile* (1971), as we shall see, represents these ideologies. Laroui's project is to demystify the so-called authenticity of *both* traditionalism and nationalism through a geopolitical, historical, and conceptual analysis that grounds both people in an understanding of their own social and political reality. He shows how 'traditionalism is responsible in great part for the failure of Arab attempts at instituting change, and the introduction of an alternative modality of understanding history and reality'.[41] Like other Arab intellectuals of the decolonization era, Laroui claims that the West has come to inhabit the Arab and Maghrebi intellectual consciousness and, therefore, any new thoughts must be in conversation with the West in a way that 'deepen[s] the realm of Western culture' and shows that 'its alleged universalism is in fact lacking'.[42] Yet Laroui avoids binary oppositions, and demands thinking with 'experiment and risk' in order to find 'an alternative modality of understanding one's history and reality'.[43]

Laroui's historicism is a 'self-reflexive dialectical method'.[44] He develops a nuanced understanding of difference 'by historicizing defiantly against a teleologically defined future, but rather toward an open horizon and within a relational, non-centrist architecture of difference that takes no conceptual form — be it history, the present, time, "Europe", Islam, or the human — as its transcendental epistemic frame'.[45] This involves an epistemological break with his own tradition, but also with the hegemony of the West. Laroui does not embrace the West and its modernity unconditionally, nor does he think of Europe as the ideal model to follow. The current backwardness of Arab societies does not mirror the past of the West. As Hosam Aboul-Ela notes, 'the great challenge to producing a truly historicist vision for Arab thinkers at that moment was the thoroughgoing interweaving of contemporary Arab ideology—even in its

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41   Ibid., p. 33.
42   Ibid., p. 39.
43   Ibid., p. 33.
44   Riecken, 'Relational Difference and the Grounds of Comparison', p. 27.
45   Ibid., p. 28.

nationalist and traditionalist manifestations—with Western metaphysics and the colonial historiography that correlates to it'.[46]

Laroui's pan-Arabist critical project was never derailed by the Arab Cold War, since his critique was directed at Arab intellectuals across the spectrum. According to Abu Rabi:

> Laroui's theoretical reflections on social, economic, political, and cultural conditions in the Arab world have influenced the work of such intellectuals as Elias Murqus [Syria], Mahmud Amin al-'Alim [Egypt], Mahdi 'Amil [Lebanon], Yassin al-Hafiz [Syria], Burhan Ghalyun [Syria], Hisham Sharabi [Palestine], Hichem Djaït [Tunisia], Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri [Morocco], as well as many other Moroccan and non-Moroccan thinkers.[47]

Laroui's wide-ranging impact shows that the energy of critical pan-Arabism, which has been resilient and has lived on after the end of its state-imposed equivalent and its Arab Cold War dynamics, thanks to its cultural consciousness and its power to link Arabic-speaking people through cultural critique, and social and political solidarity. Whether in French or Arabic, this critical pan-Arabism created a conceptual space to escape the repressive Arab states' control, particularly in the 1950–1970s when postcolonial Arab states moved from revolutionary solidarity to oppressive authoritarianism. But whereas Laroui's critical works circulated widely in the Arab 'vast sound chamber' and influenced a generation of intellectuals, his literary writings have remained largely unknown even in the Arab world.

Laroui's Literary Oeuvre: The Case of *Exile* (1971)

Ultimately Laroui's audience, whether of his critical or literary works, has always been located within Arab intellectual circles. In his critical works, as we have seen, he maintains the importance of breaking with traditional modes of thought in favour of new ways of understanding Arab reality that are grounded in a historicist method of self-critique. In his literary works, Laroui shows that the break with tradition remains an unresolved issue and is almost impossible to achieve. In doing so, he

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46   Aboul-Ela, *Domestications*, p. 70.
47   Abu Rabi, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, p. 345.

highlights the dilemma of his generation in their attempt to break away from their inherited mental tools as well as from European hegemony.

In a number of interviews Laroui has declared that literary writing allows him to move from history to 'love' (the act of writing in Arabic as a pleasure), in a self-reflexive movement that is free of the constraint of disciplinary boundaries and opens up the horizon of the theoretical from the perspective of the unsaid. In other words, the literary form of the novel allows him to free himself from the rigidity of discipline to reflect on other aspects of the soul and on the psychology of the mind.[48] In a 1992 interview, Laroui rejected the idea that his literary texts reflect the ideas found in his critical work: 'The more I reach a conclusive point in the critical and analytical field, the more I leave matters hanging in the creative field'.[49]

Laroui devotes a section of his seminal book on Arab ideology to literature and calls for the questioning of literary forms and borrowed ideas. The epitaph of his second novel *The Orphan* (which is considered as a sequel to *Exile*), starts with Andre Gide's famous quote, 'Fiction is history that might have happened. History is fiction that did happen'.[50] These gestures can be read as blurring the boundaries between history and fiction, and one can read Laroui's literary works as a move from the critique of Arab intellectuals' modes of thought to a particular focus on the internal conflicts and dynamics within postcolonial Morocco, which are, to a large extent, representative of the wider region.

In *Exile,* Laroui presents the discussion on *turath* and modernity through the dialogic relationship between the novel's two protagonists, who are childhood friends: Idriss is a young, urban, middle-class intellectual educated in French colonial schools and subsequently in France; Shoaib is educated first in a traditional Moroccan school and subsequently graduates from the Yousufiyya School, a prestigious religious school in Marrakech. The same trope of the two friends is powerfully present in Laroui's other novels, including *The Orphan* (1978),

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48   Abdallah Saef, 'Interview with Abdallah Laroui', *Afaq*, 3–4 (1992), 147–90; Mohamed Adahi, *Abdallah Laroui: Mena Atarikh ela Al-hub, Interview* (Abdallah Laroui: From History to Love, Interview) (Casablanca: Fnack, 1996); Nancy Gallagher and Abdallah Laroui, 'Interview — The Life and Times of Abdallah Laroui. A Moroccan Intellectual', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 3.1 (1998), 132–51.

49   Saef, 'Interview with Abdallah Laroui'.

50   Abdallah Laroui, *Al-Yatīm* (*The Orphan*) (Casablanca: Al Markaz Athaqafi Al Arabi 1978), republished in 2018 in a collection of Laroui's novels, p. 185.

The Team (1986), and *Folios* (1989). The relationship between Idriss and Shoaib is framed as a duality (*izdiwajiya*), but it is a duality based on understanding and harmony. While Idriss represents modernity and Shoaib represents tradition, this is not necessarily presented as a matter of conflict between them. Laroui reflects on this duality when he claims in an interview that:

> Of course, Shoaib is the Arab prophet, and he is Abu Shoaib al-Sariah,[51] a Sufi saint, and he is also the original part of Idriss's conscience [implying *turath* or tradition]. Likewise, Idriss is the Arab prophet as well, and he is an open consciousness for continuous and constant study [implying modernity]. And the dialogue continues between Shoaib and Idriss without one overpowering the other.[52]

In the sequel to *Exile,* Idriss dies, and across subsequent novels Shoaib carries on investigating the cause of Idriss's death.[53] For Laroui, Idriss's fate represents the restlessness of Arab intellectuals who could not find peace, nor answers to the question of *turath* or tradition in the era of decolonization. This restlessness is, in Laroui's thinking, a deadly psychological complex that is haunting all Arab intellectuals who are fully aware of what is at stake.

Laroui's novel *Exile* represented a new trend in Moroccan fiction in its use of complex aesthetics to reflect on decolonization. The novel is plotless, a very rare feature in Moroccan Arabic novels of the early 1970s,[54] and it moves through flashbacks between the colonial past and post-independence Morocco. The narrative focuses on the subjectivities of a group of young intellectuals at the margins of the anticolonial struggle; their revolutionary fervour before independence turns into frustration, powerlessness, and self-imposed exile in France in the ensuing decade. Laroui uses a series of endnotes to explain the complex references and allusions in the novel, like those relating to medieval saints and religious

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51   A well-known Moroccan Sufi master who lived during the Almoravid dynasty in the twelfth century. He was born and buried in the city of Azemmour, which is Laroui's home town; his shrine still attracts a large number of visitors today.

52   Saef, 'Interview with Abdallah Laroui'.

53   See *The Orphan* (1978); *The Team* (1986); and *Folios* (1989).

54   Ian Campbell's *Labyrinths, Intellectuals and the Revolution: the Arabic Language Moroccan Novel, 1957–1972* (Leiden: Brill 2013, p. 162) argues that Moroccan Arabic novels of this period 'address in a relatively straightforward manner the experiences of young intellectuals during and after the revolution', unlike Laroui's complex narrative.

figures, historical events, or references from the Qur'an.[55] The importance of spoken Moroccan Arabic or Darija is stressed throughout the novel, which also employs a layered mixture of Quranic, classical and modern Arabic.[56] The novel's lack of a clear plot, complex characterization, linguistic play, and temporal movement between past and present attest to its freer aesthetic and philosophical discourse—compared to the historicism of Laroui's critical works—on questions related to identity, culture, and modernity during decolonization.

In an epitaph to the section in the novel titled 'That's How We Were', the disappointment with life after independence is poignant and contrasts with what is, in other Arabic novels of the time, a moment of jubilation:

> That's how we were ... enthusiasm, liveliness and sharp discussion ... Believing in ideas and burning emotions ... demanding total agreement or division.... Look at us [now]; our emotions have faded. We try to bring back anger and wrath and explosion as if they were the misgivings of a forgotten generation.... That's how we were....[57]

In the footnote to this opening quote, Laroui claims that these thoughts could equally be those of Idriss, Shoaib, or Mariya, Idriss's fiancée who leaves Morocco for Paris exasperated at the lack of change in relation to women's rights in postcolonial Morocco.[58]

The novel reflects on the failure of intellectuals to instigate political and social change, not only because of the way the monarchy and conservative forces imposed a hegemonic vision of what it was to be a Moroccan citizen, but also because of the intellectuals' inability to rid themselves of their 'inherited mental tools' and to act decisively in favour

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55 The novel has 151 footnotes (pp. 149–56). For example, footnote 1 explains his reference to verse 28 of the Surah Hud in the Qur'an, 'Should we force it upon you while you are averse to it' as coming from Prophet Noah addressing his own people and that more references to the story of Noah will be made in the novel. Footnote 125 (p. 155) explains the subtle linguistic reference in the novel ('indeed, our father is in clear error', p. 125) to Surat Yusuf in the Qur'an. These Quranic references, as well as references to medieval scholars and Sufi figures, occur throughout the novel, an indication of Laroui's mastery of Islamic sources.

56 See footnote 2 when the reader is alerted that the dialogue between Shoaib and his wife (Laroui, *Al-Ghorba*, p. 7), although written in Fusha, is influenced by a Darija expression. She asked him 'Are you going out tonight', which although correct in Fusha, is more used in Moroccan Darija.

57 Ibid., p. 67. Ellipses in the text.

58 Ibid., footnote 74, p. 152.

of change. The narrative is not an exercise in the politics of blame, though, but an attempt to explore the dynamics behind this individual and collective failure, both from the perspective of the legacy of colonialism, which created a class of intellectuals who were practically alienated from their own societies through colonial education and language, which were perceived as signs of modernity and modernization; and from the perspective of the intellectuals' inability to challenge their traditional inherited norms and values.

The fate of the two protagonists after independence epitomizes this failure. The novel starts with Shoaib anticipating the long awaited return of Idriss from Paris, where he has been living in exile.[59] Shoaib describes Idriss's exile as the result of his disappointment with the state of affairs in the newly independent nation, but notes that his friend could not find answers there either and hence decided to return to his home country.[60] Flashbacks take us the anticolonial militancy against the French, in which both Shoaib and Idriss participated and which led to Shoaib's imprisonment.[61]

Meanwhile, Shoaib is rejected by society and by his wife because he is not 'modern' enough, yet he does not betray his principles.[62] Shoaib is the part of Idriss to which the latter always returns; he is the silenced part of his soul that he cannot extinguish. Shoaib is Idriss's heritage, an embodiment of a lived mystic culture. In one scene, Shoaib teaches his friend to swim—swimming being a reference to mystic ways of learning—and 'show[s] him the concealed secrets of God'.[63] This is described in terms of Idriss 'drawing from the well of Shoaib's knowledge to strengthen his conviction'.[64]

Neither friend is decisive enough to break with the past and instigate change, though Idriss is more problematic in this regard because of his training in French colonial education that aimed at 'overcoming' the past. Through the character of Shoaib, the novel presents us with two interlinked definitions of *turath* or tradition: print tradition, which extends beyond the borders of the local to the transnational Islamicate

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59   Ibid., pp. 8–10.
60   Ibid., pp. 10–11.
61   Ibid., pp. 45–53.
62   Ibid., p. 126.
63   Ibid., p. 117.
64   Ibid., p. 116.

culture, and which Shoaib masters (the 'yellow old books' in the quote below); and the oral popular and locally lived tradition which includes not only the mystical realm but also the norms and values that determine the religious behaviour of individuals. Shoaib's own relationship to the Arabo-Islamic heritage is complex, as this silent dialogue with Idriss shows:

> Shoaib went to the room that he used for reading, he went to a cabinet on top of which a number of books were covered in white paper. He read [their titles] out loud: *Healing*, *Mastery*, *Aspiring*.[65] Oh... if only I had my complete senses....
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> Sure, my friend [Idriss] ... these yellow books, there is a delight in overcoming their difficulty and pleasure in their depth. I drank from them the first time and I return to them whenever I feel helpless. You say I am not really faithful to them and that the [new] white coloured books decorated with pictures have ruined my mind and disturbed my emotions. You may be right. Here I am, feeling these [yellow] books to seek some sort of tranquillity.... I only find in them temporary tranquillity and I want to see you my friend and listen to your logic.[66]

Shoaib finds only temporary comfort in his old cultural heritage, which seems to be overcome by other new intellectual trends and concepts coming from Europe, represented by Idriss and his French education. The new modern books that Shoaib reads in Arabic translation (on white paper) make him question his own old (yellow) books. The temporary comfort that the 'yellow books' offer is indicative of Shoaib's perceived need to reinvent the intellectual heritage in order to make it relevant to modern life, a discussion that was important to many Arab intellectuals in the decolonization era. Just as Idriss misses Shoaib, Shoaib longs for Idriss, so that the two are placed in a dialectical relationship, without one overcoming the other. For Shoaib, the old books are a refuge from doubt and confusion, but he also reads the new ones, symbolizing modern European thoughts, to keep up with the new age. In the passage above, Shoaib appears still torn between the two and longs for

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65   In a footnote, Laroui explains that these are the titles of canonical works of Islamic philosophy, jurisprudence and Sufism; they include Abi Ishaq Al-Shatbi's *Seeking Protection* (790 CE), Al-Qadi Ayad's *Healing* (544 CE), Jalal Eddine Al-Sayuti's *Mastery in Quranic Sciences* (911 CE) and Abi Yaqoob Al-Qadili's *Aspiring to Learn from Sufis* (617 CE).

66   Laroui, *Al-Ghorba*, pp. 7–8; ellipses in the text.

Idriss to 'listen to his logic'. It is clear that Laroui considers the old to be part of the intellectuals' *wujdan* or soul, and that this soul cannot easily be eradicated. We can read Shoaib as the silenced part of Idriss's (and by extension, Laroui's) subjectivity. Indeed, the author claims in an interview that he wanted to give *taqlid* or tradition a space in his literary work, in order to express its existence and not cut it off completely.[67]

Idriss, by contrast, is in search of the new to improve the present. In a conversation with his father, the latter questions the pursuit of theoretical knowledge, claiming that it is of no 'real' use to society.[68] Idriss, however, tells his father that 'the ways of the past are no longer useful, so let us search for new paths, open to all and binding to all'.[69] Yet Idriss also longs for the old, as he states in language reminiscent of Sufism: 'each of us goes back to the birthplace of the soul [*masqat al wujdān*]... each one of us searches for their source'.[70] Although he believes in the right of women to liberate themselves from patriarchal constraints, he cannot understand the choice made by Mariya, his fiancée, who leaves for France once she realizes the curtailing of her freedoms in postcolonial Morocco.[71]

Idriss, the 'modern' scholar, is in fact more confused than Shoaib, the traditional one. A decade and a half after independence, and after his discovery, following his short sojourn in France, of how Morocco has changed for the worse and its people are 'stuck in their past', Idriss develops intellectual and social fatigue.[72] His questions about the reasons for this failure find no answer. His fatigue is not only caused by the authoritarian behaviour of the state, nor the neo-colonial economic policies of the metropolitan centre; most importantly, he blames inherited social behaviours and the mentality of a nation held back by its heritage. Social and political changes cannot be imposed from above; if a nation is not given the tools to dismantle its inherited shackles, it cannot 'modernize': 'In the past, I used to call for a deepening one's search and a careful treatment since we were in a transition period. But now the problem is a problem of civilisation and not of sovereignty and

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67   Saef, 'Interview with Abdallah Laroui'.
68   Laroui *Al-Ghorba*, p. 114
69   Ibid.
70   Ibid., p. 40, ellipses in the text.
71   Ibid., p. 111.
72   Ibid., p. 112.

leadership. Civilisation cannot be taken like this glass, though, it needs time and a long time. Why this pessimism and stubbornness?'[73]

The intellectual class seems incapable of enacting change. Idriss confesses to his father that even on the eve of the country's independence he had felt that the path to national liberation would be hampered.[74] He speaks of Moroccans as 'tied up with an unseen silk thread' that does not allow them to reach their goal: 'We are free but within borders that we are not allowed to transgress'.[75] While the local geopolitics of Morocco are important to the novel, the story is also recognisable and relatable for the rest of the Arab world, particularly the idea of disillusionment with the postcolonial state, which instigated change from above without giving societies the tools to change their mental beliefs and social practices. At a time when intellectuals like Laroui were censored, imprisoned, and tortured for voicing open criticism of the regime of King Hassan II, Laroui is careful to express his ideas in a way that does not exonerate the state but focuses more on the role (and failure) of the intellectuals in mobilizing the masses locally and changing their mentality towards social and political practice. Through the characters of Mariya and Idriss, the novel presents a condition of exile that was common among many Arab intellectuals and writers in the 1960s–1970s, who suffered the advance of authoritarian regimes that derailed the dreams and aspirations of generations who had lived through anticolonial struggles. After the defeat against Israel in the 1967 war, many Arab writers such as Laroui disengaged from romanticizing the revolutionary aspirations of their people and turned to a 'more self-reflexive mode of writing' with the aim 'to continue to disrupt the hegemony of the dominant group'.[76]

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73   Ibid., p. 132.
74   Ibid., p. 135.
75   Ibid.
76   Zeina Halabi, 'The Day the Wandering Dreamer Became a Fida'i: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and the Fashioning of Political Commitment' in *Commitment and Beyond: Reflections on/of the Political in Arabic Literature since the 1940s*, ed. by Frederike Pannewick et al. (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2015), pp. 156–70 (p. 167). For a detailed discussion, see the whole volume.

Conclusion

Abdallah Laroui used his formative experiences in Rabat, Paris, Egypt, Los Angeles, and various other places to theorize and write on the Arab World, denouncing socialist ideologies such as Baathism, Nasserism and others that dominated the region in the 1950s to 1970s and that became tyrannical and oppressive towards their own people. Laroui was radical in his critical thinking, particularly in his call to abandon all forms of 'traditionalist' thinking in favour of a more historicist method based on self-critique and grounded in the lived realities of Arab societies. He refused the label of Marxist but acknowledged his debt to the Marxist historicism that inspired his critical project. His political leanings were clearly leftist and aligned with popular aspirations for freedom and democracy. In his critical work, Laroui calls for a 'double critique' of the Self and the Other in order to demystify both traditionalism and nationalism, which he views as hindrances to decolonization and change; he seeks alternative modalities for understanding one's geopolitical history and reality that are not subordinated to Western hegemony but in dialogue with it. Laroui's historicist method calls for a decisive abandoning of 'traditionalism' so as to build a new thought structure that can reconcile the political subject with their sociopolitical condition or lived reality. His first novel, *Exile*, however, raises questions as to whether one can ever abandon what is imprinted on the heart. As Laroui puts it 'Since the time of the Nahda, our bodies have been living in one century while our thoughts and feelings inhabit another ... this has been the trick played on us by the backward parts of our societies and our psyches for the purpose of perpetuating and exploiting this backwardness'.[77] The novel describes the conundrum faced by intellectuals in the decolonization era in their attempt to live up to the project of independence, in a pan-Arabic political and cultural sphere that was fragmented by the top-down Arab Cold War but also by the colonial legacies of knowledge production. Laroui's literary works, this chapter has argued, expand on aspects of his critical work but also diverge from their conclusions. The denunciation of the *turath* that we find in his critical writings, for example, reappears in his novel *Exile*,

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77   Translated from Arabic and cited in Daifallah, 'Political Subjectivity in Contemporary Arab Thought', p. 16; ellipses in the text.

one of whose key themes is that no one can rid themselves of their traditional heritage, which is engraved in one's *wujdan*, one's soul. This suggests that the decolonization of the self and of national culture is an unfinished business, which in fact continues to preoccupy Arab intellectuals up to the present day.

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