



BRILL

"Bread or Freedom": The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and the Arabic Literary Journal "Ḥiwār" (1962-67)

Author(s): Elizabeth M. Holt

Source: *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. 44, No. 1, Arabic Literature, Criticism and Intellectual Thought from the "Nahḍah" to the Present, Part II (2013), pp. 83-102

Published by: Brill

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43304750>

Accessed: 23-10-2019 01:59 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



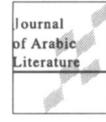
JSTOR

Brill is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Arabic Literature*



BRILL

Journal of Arabic Literature 44 (2013) 83-102



brill.com/jal

“Bread or Freedom”: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and the Arabic Literary Journal *Ḥiwār* (1962-67)

Elizabeth M. Holt
Bard College

Abstract

In 1950, the United States Central Intelligence Agency created the Congress for Cultural Freedom, with its main offices in Paris. The CCF was designed as a cultural front in the Cold War in response to the Soviet Cominform, and founded and funded a worldwide network of literary journals (as well as conferences, concerts, art exhibits and other cultural events). From 1962 until its scandalous collapse over the course of 1966 and the early months of 1967, Tawfiq Ṣāyigh edited the CCF's Arabic outpost *Ḥiwār* from Beirut, joining a growing web of CCF journals, including London's *Encounter*, Kampala's *Transition*, Bombay's *Quest*, and the Latin American, Paris-based *Mundo Nuevo*. *Ḥiwār*, a journal funded by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and thus covertly by the CIA, sought to co-opt the Arab avant-garde, offering authors both material compensation for their writing, as well as the much lauded cultural freedom. By 1966, *Ḥiwār's* promise to writers of both bread and freedom collapsed in the pages of the Arabic press under the weight of paradox and a worldwide scandal on the eve of the 1967 Arab defeat.

Keywords

Congress for Cultural Freedom; CIA; *Ḥiwār*; Tawfiq Ṣāyigh; literary journals; 1960s; freedom; the avant-garde; cultural materialism; Cold War

On April 27, 1966, the *New York Times* published a front-page article entitled “Electronic Prying Grows: the CIA Is Spying from 100 Miles Up,” the third in a five-part series that revealed the contours of the United States Central

* Research for this article in Beirut and Washington, D.C. was generously supported by Bard College. My thanks are due also to my students at Bard in World Literature and the CIA, to Jason Frydman, Cole Heinowitz, and the outside readers of the *Journal of Arabic Literature* for their helpful comments on previous drafts. A shorter version of this paper was presented at a panel on Arabic Literature and the 1960s at the 2012 annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association Conference in Denver, Colorado. I am grateful to the audience for their thoughtful questions. Portions of this article that focus on *Ḥiwār* and the work of al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ were presented at the 2012 Modern Language Association Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts as part of a panel on Teaching Arabic Literature; I am grateful to Vilashini Cooppan for her insightful comments as panel moderator.

© Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2013

DOI: 10.1163/1570064x-12341257

Intelligence Agency's massive, worldwide covert Cold War operations. It is a long article, with subsections carrying headings like "Cosmic Espionage," "Bugging from Afar," "Purloined Messages," and a short section entitled "Magazine Got Funds," which disclosed that the CIA had indirectly relayed funds to the Congress for Cultural Freedom, supporting the publication of a number of their magazines, including *Encounter*. As the scandal unfolded on a global scale, Arabic literature found itself caught in a paradox shaped by the inevitable materiality and politics of literary production in the Cold War.

A writer at *Rūz al-Yūsuf* newspaper in Cairo carefully read that *New York Times* article of Cold War espionage and literary intrigue, in turn publishing an article in Arabic in the pages of *Rūz al-Yūsuf* revealing the Beirut-based journal *Ḥiwār* to have been covertly founded and funded by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, confirming rumors that had circulated in Cairo the previous year. The extensive literary network founded and funded through the Congress for Cultural Freedom was a cultural scandal of considerable proportion in the pages of newspapers across the world in 1966 and into 1967, from New York, to London, Bombay, Kampala, and Berlin. The revelation that it was the CIA who had been publishing *Ḥiwār* was met in Arabic, in Cairo, Beirut and Baghdad, with indignation and satire, and finally, and until quite recently in English, with relative amnesia.¹

Pierre Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production* speaks to the global workings of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, as the sociology of literature shades into an outline of how the Congress manipulated a network of literary journals, editors, and authors. Providing an overview of the eponymous "field of cultural production" as it intersects with "the field of power," Bourdieu writes:

¹ The notable exception is a recent interview by Michael Vazquez with the former editor of the CCF's Indian journal *Quest* Achal Prabhala, in which Vazquez notes the considerable role that *Ḥiwār* played in 1960s Arabic literary culture. See Michael Vazquez, "The Best of *Quest*," *Bidoun: Art and Culture from the Middle East* 26 (2012). Mention is also made of *Ḥiwār* in studies of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, most recently Andrew N. Rubin's *Archives of Authority: Empire, Culture and the Cold War* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012), 59. In *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, Timothy Mitchell briefly discusses *Ḥiwār* and its connections with the CIA, connecting the episode to a far larger edifice of American intelligence that was shaping the region's intellectual production; see Mitchell, *Rule of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 337, fn 69 and 71. The most detailed account of *Ḥiwār* was published in this journal forty years ago: Issa J. Boullata, "The Beleaguered Unicorn: A Study of Tawfiq Ṣāyigh," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 4 (1973), 69-93; see especially the first five pages. Cultural memory of the scandal has been reignited in Arabic in recent years, particularly with the publication of letters and diary entries kept by *Ḥiwār*'s editor Tawfiq Ṣāyigh. See Maḥmūd Shurayḥ, ed., *Mudhakkirāt Tawfiq Ṣāyigh bi-khaṭṭ yaḍīhi wa-huwa yastā'id l-ṣḍār majallat Ḥiwār: 7 Nisān- 31 Tamūz 1962, Bayrūt—London—Bāris—Bayrūt* [Memoirs of Tawfiq Ṣāyigh in His Own Handwriting as He Was Preparing to Publish the Journal *Ḥiwār*] (Beirut: Dār Nelson, 2011); and Shurayḥ, ed., *Rasā'il Tawfiq Ṣāyigh wa-l-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ* [The Letters of Tawfiq Ṣāyigh and al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ] (Beirut: Dār Nelson, 2010).

[T]he sociology of art and literature has to take as its object not only the material production but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e. the production of the value of the work, which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work. It therefore has to consider as contributing to production not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artist, writer, etc.) but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work—critics, publishers, gallery directors and the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art as such.²

Replace “the sociology of art and literature” with “the Congress for Cultural Freedom,” and a fair outline of the necessary tactics for world literary success in the CIA’s cultural Cold War begins to emerge. As the CCF nurtured an eventually worldwide network of literary journals, it was imperative it create and sustain journals capable of attracting “the direct producers of the work in its materiality”—i.e., editors, poets, artists, novelists, short story writers, and essayists—to its world literary order. Keen surveyors of the literary field, the CCF did not limit its work to curating and publishing a network of world literary journals, but also held conferences, concerts, and art exhibitions, awarded prizes, and coordinated with a wider web of journals and publishers as they intervened in the production of not just world literature in its materiality, but of a global simultaneity of literary experience, routed through a shared “belief in the value of the work.” The CCF represented a “whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art as such.”

Borrowing the language of the front page of the *New York Times* to situate the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the larger context of the CIA’s Cold War tactics, the optics of an American imperial “cosmic” literary network come into view. Well before arriving at the brief section “Magazine Got Funds,” “Electronic Prying Grows” begins as a spy drama in an age of science fiction:

To the men most privy to the secrets of the Central Intelligence Agency, it sometimes seems that the human spies, the James Bonds and Mata Haris, are obsolete. Like humans everywhere, they are no match for the computers, cameras, radars and other gadgets by which nations can now gather the darkest secrets of both friends and foes.

With complex machines circling the earth at 17,000 miles an hour, C.I.A. agents are able to relax in their carpeted offices beside the Potomac and count the intercontinental missiles poised in Soviet Kazakhstan, monitor the conversations between Moscow and a Soviet submarine near Tahiti, follow the countdown of a sputnik launching as easily as that of a Gemini capsule in Florida, track the

² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 37.

electronic imprint of an adversary's bombers and watch for the heat traces of his missiles.³

The CIA had engineered an experience of global simultaneity through "cosmic espionage."⁴ Kazakhstan, Tahiti, Florida and the airspace above them appeared at the same moment, broadcast to "C.I.A. agents... able to relax in their carpeted offices beside the Potomac." It was an experience not unlike that which the Congress for Cultural Freedom would afford readers through their network of literary journals.

The London-based journal *Encounter* further on in "Electronic Prying Grows" is identified as "a well-known anti-Communist intellectual monthly with editions in Spanish and German as well as English" that had been "one of the indirect beneficiaries of C.I.A. funds." As Peter Coleman notes in *The Liberal Conspiracy*, "by 1963 *Encounter's* circulation had risen to 34,000, and it was a success... Peter Duval Smith wrote in the *Financial Times*, 'I recollect seeing the magazine on the coffee tables of Tokyo, Cairo, Cape Town, Addis Ababa.'⁵ Reaching audiences in cities throughout the world, *Encounter* likewise strove "as part of the Congress's 'discovery of Africa' in the late 1950s [to pay] greater attention both to Africa and the Third World as a whole."⁶ The "coffee tables of Tokyo, Cairo, Cape Town, Addis Ababa;" efforts to "'discover Africa;'" and the relaxed, carpeted offices of the C.I.A. beside the Potomac—agents' eyes on intercontinental missiles and cosmic warfare—were all connected in the United States' Cold War mission for global military but also cultural domination, all part of a shared "belief in the value of the work."

The CIA-created Congress for Cultural Freedom trafficked in the kind of literary production that could offer an alternative to Communism, to the social realism appearing globally in Communist literary circles, and the Communist imperative to write for the state. Depicted as totalitarian, this literature and the ideology that subtended it were combatted by the Congress for Cultural Freedom with a promise of just that: "cultural freedom." By a certain reading, it was this sort of freedom that alone could secure what Bourdieu calls the "position of the 'pure' writer or artist." Freedom in this formulation is, for the producer of culture—the writer, the artist, the editor—defined against institutions: it is "an institution of *freedom* constructed against the 'bourgeoisie'

³ "Electronic Prying Grows: C.I.A. Is Spying for 100 Miles Up; Satellites Probe Secrets of the Soviet Union," *New York Times* (April 27, 1966), 1; 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵ Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 185.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

(in the artists' sense) and against institutions—in particular against the state bureaucracies, academies, salons, etc.”⁷

Following a CIA-sponsored conference held in Berlin, in 1950 the Congress for Cultural Freedom's founding manifesto opened with the statement “We hold it to be self-evident that intellectual freedom is one of the inalienable rights of man.”⁸ The Congress for Cultural Freedom presented itself to writers of the world as a guarantor of the “institution of freedom,” to itself *be* that institution of freedom, as against “the state bureaucracies, academies, salons, etc.” The CIA's Congress for Cultural Freedom, a covert cultural front of the Cold War, like all of the CIA's covert operations, were designed with the intention that CIA (and by extension American government) involvement could always be plausibly denied. Cultural freedom, the manifesto assured the world, was part of a “campaign for peace;” were such a campaign “not backed by acts that will guarantee its maintenance,” it would, in the words of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, be reduced to “counterfeit currency circulated for dishonest purposes.”⁹ Openly aimed at combatting restrictions on cultural freedom imposed by totalitarian regimes and especially the Soviet Union's Cominform, the Congress for Cultural Freedom functioned as the former's global doppelganger, waging “campaigns for peace” through a global cultural mission whose own propaganda of freedom could always be plausibly denied from carpeted offices overlooking the Potomac. This was also the age of empire's hand-off, as the United States inherited an imperial role on the world stage, and the former colonial powers faced a postcolonial world increasingly riven by American capital, financial, cultural and otherwise.

The CIA's Congress for Cultural Freedom marshaled the possibility of autonomy for the world's authors and poets in order to realize their mandate, that in protest of “a world in which everything serves a political purpose, which is for us unacceptable, it was necessary to create platforms from which culture could be expressed without regard to politics and without confusion with propaganda.”¹⁰ As Frances Stonor Saunders records in her book *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*:

The individuals and institutions subsidized by the CIA were expected to perform as part of a broad campaign of persuasion, of a propaganda war in which... the “most effective kind of propaganda” was defined as the kind where “*the subject moves in the direction you desire for reasons which he believes to be his own.*”¹¹

⁷ Bourdieu, 63.

⁸ Coleman, Appendix A, 249.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹⁰ As quoted in Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Book, 1999), 312.

¹¹ Saunders, 4.

In 1947, the American National Security Council issued directive “NSC-4,” which, as Saunders details, “instructed the Director of Central Intelligence to undertake ‘covert psychological activities,’” while later directives called for an “‘expansive conception of [America]’s security requirements to include a world substantially made over in its own image,” stipulating that “all such activities, in the words of NSC-10/2, must be ‘so planned and executed that any U.S. government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons, and that if uncovered the U.S. government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them.’”¹² The plausible deniability of this propaganda of freedom hinges on consolidating the will of the intellectual and that of the Congress so neatly that, as the National Security Council would have it, “*the subject moves in the direction you desire for reasons which he believes to be his own.*”

The Congress for Cultural Freedom’s most globally well-known journal was *Encounter*, published in the colonial metropole of London. As part of the CCF’s increasing interest in taking the fight against Communism beyond Europe and the Commonwealth countries, the CCF recruited an editor in the late 1950s and early 1960s to begin an Arabic journal based out of Beirut. Though Ibrahim Abu-Lughod was initially approached to edit the CCF’s Arabic outpost, as Timothy Mitchell relates, “the amount of money on offer and the stipulation concerning the Soviet Union made Abu-Lughod immediately suspicious.”¹³ Changing tacks, the CCF sought a well-known if also avant-garde, or at least modernist poet as editor for their nascent Arabic journal, as was the case with *Encounter*, edited by English poet Stephen Spender throughout the Congress years, and their Indian journal *Quest* (edited by modernist poet Nissim Ezekiel). Tawfiq Ṣāyigh, who would accept the offer to edit the new Arabic journal *Hiwār*, recalls in his recently published memoirs of 1962, that just before his initial encounters with the Congress, the CCF appeared to have had a falling out with Yūsuf al-Khāl, editor of the influential if also sometimes quite experimental and avant-garde Arabic poetry journal *Shi‘r*.

The cache of the avant-garde little literary magazine, which had played such a pivotal role in the early development of an Anglo-American modernism, and of European and American avant-gardes more generally, derived in part from

¹² Ibid., 39.

¹³ The Congress had initially approached Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, who informed Mitchell on August 3, 2000 that Congress representative “Berger had attempted to recruit Abu-Lughod to edit the magazine. Berger did not reveal the source of the funds, but the amount of money on offer and the stipulation concerning the Soviet Union made Abu-Lughod immediately suspicious. When the facts about their involvement with the CIA emerged in the late 1960s, many of the American intellectuals who received funds from the CIA claimed that they had not realized who was paying them.” See Mitchell, *Rule of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 337, fn 69 and 71.

the freedom the little magazine offered authors. Here again Bourdieu's sociological perspective on the literary field and "the position of the 'pure' writer" as "an institution of freedom" is helpful:

Owing to its objectively contradictory intention, it exists only at the lowest degree of institutionalization, in the form of words ('avant-garde', for example) or models (the avant-garde writer and his or her exemplary deeds) which constitute a tradition of freedom and criticism, and also, but above all, in the form of a field of competition, equipped with its own institutions (the paradigm of which might be the *Salon de refusés* or the little avant-garde literary review) and articulated by mechanisms of competition capable of providing incentives and gratification for emancipatory endeavors.¹⁴

The Congress for Cultural Freedom posed as offering literatures of the world their "own institutions" of freedom, replete with the "incentives and gratification for [their] emancipatory endeavors" of not only getting paid for their writing, but also seeing it published alongside writers of Europe and the United States.

The near-simultaneous publication of essays, interviews and sometimes stories and poems in multiple Congress journals and affiliated publications engendered a global simultaneity of literary aesthetics and discourses of political freedom and commitment, an observation that stands at the heart of Andrew Rubin's book-length study of the Congress for Cultural Freedom *Archives of Authority*. This sense of simultaneity found its formally military echo in the carpeted offices beside the Potomac and the CIA's cosmic espionage of intercontinental missiles, while in a cultural register, it took the form of an opportunity to appear alongside prestigious European and American authors. As Rubin writes in a brief passage on *Hiwār*,

the accelerated transmission of essays and the short story meant that there were newly efficient ways of respatializing world literary time. T.S. Eliot's work, for example, was translated into Arabic and printed in *Hiwar* (*Dialogue*) in Beirut alongside the work of the Palestinian poet Tawfiq Sayigh, who later translated Eliot's *Four Quartets* into Arabic. In its first issue, *Hiwar* published an essay by Albert Hourani on Taha Hussein that was simultaneously printed in *Cuadernos* and *Preuves*.¹⁵

A global simultaneity of literary experience as an instantiation of the institution of cultural freedom was held out to prospective CCF authors as an incentive. "Respatializ[ed] world literary time" offered the possibility that some of

¹⁴ Bourdieu, 63.

¹⁵ Rubin, 59.

the prestige of being a part of the simultaneity of a global avant-garde might rub off on emerging authors of African, Latin American, Arab and Asian countries in the form of cultural capital.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom sought to inherit the legacy of the little magazine, yet without the material limitations that would seem from the Congress's perspective to limit the endurance of these institutions of the avant-garde, the forebears of cultural freedom and autonomy. In 1963, the Congress for Cultural Freedom's Kampala-based Ugandan journal *Transition* ran an essay entitled "The 'Little Magazines,'" penned by Robie Macauley, a CIA agent who played a central role in organizing the Congress for Cultural Freedom (based in Paris), and editor of the Congress-funded *Kenyon Review*. Macauley drew a contemporary map of magazine publication where "the editors of the little literary magazines are likely to envy their contemporaries in other countries—the editors of such worthy publications as *Quadrant* in Australia, *Comment* in the Philippines, *Quest* in India." He is listing the Congress's literary outposts in those countries, though the Congress is nowhere mentioned in the article. These, Macauley assures *Transition's* readers, are places where "the intellectual publication may have a little firmer place in the intellectual life of the country as a whole, and where magazines seem a little less subject to the ebb and flow of fashion and the constant American demand to 'make it new.'" ¹⁶ "Less subject," this slightly firmer place that Congress magazines claimed for themselves in Australia, the Philippines and India is figured by Macauley as free-er even than the avant-garde, that traditional bulwark of cultural freedom, here depicted as constantly harangued by an American penchant for novelties.

Macauley goes on in the article to enumerate the material concerns that have plagued the American terrain:

Small magazines, which account for a sizeable proportion of the American literary effort, have always been highly individualistic affairs. Financed either by windfalls from occasional donors or here and there by idealistic college administrations that agree to pay the printer's bill, they lose money steadily for a few years until the source dries up. Traditional dissenters and dedicated to *épater le bourgeois*, they frequently attack the official representatives of literature, such as eminent professors, Broadway playwrights, Pulitzer prizewinners, *The New York Times Book Review*—and each other as well. The perfect apotheosis of an American literary magazine may well have been the time when the United States Post Office, with indignant majesty, burned three issues of *The Little Review* that contained portions of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Under such circumstances, it has always been extremely difficult to get respectable foundations or the cautious rich to contribute anything

¹⁶ Robie Macauley, "The 'Little Magazines,'" *Transition* 9 (June 1963), 24.

in the way of support. And so the small American magazines, which were the first publishers of Hemingway, Faulkner, Frost, Pound, Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Katherine Ann Porter—and, in fact, an estimated 80 per cent of all American writers of any literary stature since 1912—have usually been run out of the pocketbooks, if not the sheer nerve of, their editors. It is no wonder that their average life is about four years. In spite of all this, their contribution to modern American letters has been enormous.¹⁷

Indeed, *Transition* was a fitting publication for Macauley's article. While the Congress for Cultural Freedom had actively recruited editors to found periodicals in their eventually global network of literary magazines, *Transition* was unique. Its editor Rajat Neogy had in fact attempted to run the journal out of his own pocketbook, and when that ran dry (far before Macauley's average four years were up), he turned to Ezekiel Mphahlele, editor of the Congress for Cultural Freedom's then only African magazine *Black Orpheus*, who dutifully put him in contact with the CCF's Paris offices. Neogy would be imprisoned, along with two other editors of *Transition*, for sedition after the scandal of the CIA's role in the founding and funding of Congress for Cultural Freedom magazines came to light in 1966.¹⁸

Funded from the Congress for Cultural Freedom's headquarters in Paris, *Ḥiwār*, like other Congress journals, was to a large extent free of the material pressures that forced the little magazines of the avant-garde to stop publishing. While financial support from "respectable foundations or the cautious rich" had not been forthcoming for the little magazines of the American avant-garde, following Macauley, it would appear that the situation of CCF journals had managed to circumvent these material impediments. Ṣāyigh's introduction to the November 1962 inaugural issue of *Ḥiwār* would speak to the journal's liquidity, assuring his anticipated audience that "the writer's time is valuable... and for this reason *Ḥiwār* relies on the principle of financial compensation in everything that it publishes, from articles to translations to stories, as well as drawings and poems: for the poet wants to soil his brow, but he also does not want his feet to be bare."¹⁹

In the April 23, 1962 entry in Ṣāyigh's memoirs, Ṣāyigh records details of an hour-and-a-half long meeting with Suhayl Idris, editor of the esteemed literary and political journal *Al-Adāb*, a journal that had done much to circulate Jean-Paul Sartre's work on the notion of *littérature engagée*, rendered in

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ For more on the history of *Transition*, see Michael Colin Vazquez, "An African Dilemma" *Transition* 75/76, The Anniversary Issue: Selections from *Transition*, 1961-1976 (1997): 6-15.

¹⁹ *Ḥiwār* 1:1 (November 1962), 2.

Arabic translation as *iltizām*.²⁰ This passage in Ṣāyigh's memoirs immediately points to a central topic of that conversation: "the Congress's reputation."²¹ Was the Congress for Cultural Freedom a respectable foundation? Idrīs, despite his "being urged continuously to attack the Congress" by the journal *Al-Ḥawādith* and others, hesitates to pass judgment; he will neither attack the Congress, "nor will he praise it, before its good and evil is made clear to him."²² Idrīs's concerns over the course of his discussion that April with Ṣāyigh are instructive: not only does he express a sense of "great reassurance" in Ṣāyigh's editorial leadership, but he also "strongly advises [Ṣāyigh] not to attack Communism directly first thing," and not to be naïve in hoping to be able to avoid politics, but rather to "place the artistic level [of contributions] above any political consideration."²³ Finally, the conversation comes around to the "issue of our paying writers, and he said that some will say that we plundered his writers, as he does not pay or pays little, while we pay well—and he said that the writer who runs after money is worthless [*lā khayra fīhi*], so he will leave him to us."²⁴ Idrīs is laying out the rules of the literary game for Ṣāyigh, and again, Bourdieu's work on the field of cultural production elucidates further the conjuncture of the literary and economic terrains. Writing of the "value of the work of art," Bourdieu notes that the "makers and marketers of works of art are adversaries in collusion, who each abide by the same law which demands the repression of direct manifestations of personal interest, at least in the overtly 'economic' form."²⁵ Though Ṣāyigh will soon "overtly" address the "'economic' form" that his relationship with makers of works of art will take in the first issue of *Ḥiwār*, that April in Beirut, he is quick to reply, "that we won't pay the fantastic amounts that you imagine and mention (he said: 200 or 300 or 400 or 500 L.L.!!)."²⁶

Idrīs hesitated over questions of the "Congress's reputation" and "the writer who runs after money," yet he very much argued for freedom, as Verena Klemm notes, as "a basic condition for literary activity," something that for

²⁰ See Verena Klemm, "Different Notions of Commitment (*iltizām*) and Committed Literature (*al-adab al-multazim*) in the Literary Circles of the Mashriq," *Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures* 3:1 (2000), 54.

²¹ Ṣāyigh, *Mudhakkirāt*, 68.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Bourdieu, 79.

²⁶ Ṣāyigh, *Mudhakkirāt*, 69. In September of 1966, however, Ṣāyigh would pay al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ 1400 L.L. for *Mausim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* [*Season of Migration to the North*] which Ṣāyigh tells Ṣāliḥ in a letter is "the absolute largest amount I have spent (or will spend) in editing!" *Ibid.*, 82.

him Marxist notions of literary commitment could not afford the author.²⁷ Şâyigh, like Macauley and other Congress for Cultural Freedom affiliates, would publicly argue that it was material support that could open up a space of freedom for the writer and editor, that could foster an avant-garde “less subject” to material concerns. In *Hiwār*’s first issue, Şâyigh offered prospective writers both “financial compensation” and “freedom”:

We believe that the Arab intellectual, be he writer or reader, artist or *adib* or thinker, will not live as he should until the climate of freedom is eased for him, his situation is like that of any intellectual in any other country. We believe that the intellectual is in a state of constant thirst for more freedom.²⁸

Şâyigh’s journal, well funded by the Paris-based, CIA-created Congress for Cultural Freedom, tasked with being an Arabic outpost in a moment of globally simultaneous “cultural freedom,” is torn between the economic disavowal that historically had been a condition of the avant-garde (as Macauley himself noted), and the need to create in its materiality a journal of high literary stature, capable of attracting authors of the caliber published in the pages of leading cultural journals such as Idris’s *Al-Ādāb*.

The paradoxical position in which Şâyigh and other Congress for Cultural Freedom editors would find themselves was clear to Muḥyī al-Dīn Şubḥī the summer before *Hiwār* began to publish. In an article in *Al-Ādāb*, Şubḥī reported at length on a conference on Contemporary Arabic Literature convened in Rome in October of 1961 with the funding and sponsorship of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.²⁹ (A similar conference was held in Makerere in June of 1962 on African literature.)³⁰ Yūsuf al-Khāl, editor of *Shi‘r*, had

²⁷ Klemm, 55; 53.

²⁸ *Hiwār* 1:1 (November 1962), 2.

²⁹ The Congress for Cultural Freedom also coordinated with “many Arab institutions—among them the National Planning Commission of the U.A.R., the Egyptian Society of Engineers, the Institute of Public Administration in Cairo, and the University of Khartoum—which have formally and officially co-sponsored with the Congress for Cultural Freedom international seminars of interest to the Arab intellectual community.” See “Arab Magazine Banned by Cairo,” *New York Times* (24 July 1966), 3. For more on the Rome conference, see also Muhsin al-Musawi, *Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of Modernity and Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 54-56.

³⁰ Postcolonial theorist, playwright and novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o of Kenya fascinatingly mentions this conference in a footnote to his essay “The Language of African Literature” in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1992), 30 fn2. Thiong’o comments, “The conference was organized by the anti-Communist Paris-based but American-inspired and financed Society for Cultural Freedom which was later discovered actually to have been financed by CIA. It shows how certain directions in our cultural, political, and economic choices can be masterminded from the metropolitan centres of imperialism.”

given a lecture on “The Arab Author in the Modern World” (“Al-Adīb al-‘Arabī fi-l-‘ālam al-ḥadīth”), which fell considerably short of pleasing Ṣubḥī. Not convinced that both freedom and firm material footing could together be the fate of modern Arabic literature, Ṣubḥī wrote:

The problem that the modern era presents is: bread or freedom, and it is unfortunate that one of them always usurps the other. As for those peoples who are blessed with freedom, they take their bread from their colonies. And we still don't have colonies, so we have nothing but our compatriots. Would it please the professor to bake his bread [*yakhbaz ṭā‘amahu*] with the blood of his compatriots?³¹

Presaging the scandalous collapse of *Ḥiwār* even before its first issue appeared, the impossibility of both cultural freedom and material security for Arabic literature was clear to Ṣubḥī; and it was clear that though it was 1962, this was still a problem of empire.

Over the course of its nearly five-year run, *Ḥiwār* published both emerging and established authors, serving as a register of some of the most important Arabic historians, critics, short story writers, novelists and poets writing in the 1960s, including Badr Shākīr al-Sayyāb, Ghādah al-Sammān, Albert Hourani, Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, Suhayr Qalamāwī, Walīd al-Khālīdī, Samīr Khalaf, Zakariyyā Tāmir, Laylā Ba‘ālbakī, Ṣalāḥ ‘Abd al-Ṣubūr, Salmā al-Khaḍrā’ al-Jayyūsī, Ṣabrī Ḥāfīz, Luwīs ‘Awaḍ, Ibrāhīm Maṣṣūr, Ibrāhīm Aṣlān, Fu‘ād al-Takarlī, al-Ṭayyīb Ṣālīḥ and Yūsuf Idrīs, alongside interviews with major international cultural figures such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Arthur Miller, Ernest Hemingway, György Lukács, Aldous Huxley, Jean-Paul Sartre and Picasso. From its first issue, *Ḥiwār* staged a sense of global simultaneity of literary experience, but from an Arab perspective. On the first page of the first issue of *Ḥiwār*, Ṣāyigh announced the journal's interest in “observ[ing] what was happening in the field of culture in other countries,” yet he also insisted on *Ḥiwār*'s simultaneous dedication to “serving” the Arab nationalist cause.³² *Ḥiwār* was “not a foreign journal publishing in an Arab country,” Ṣāyigh assured his readers. Aiming instead to be “a true dialogue between... one culture and another,”³³ *Ḥiwār*

Has its own style and color, which distinguishes it from its sisters in other languages. What unites it with the other journals published by the International Congress for Cultural Freedom is that it shares the goals that this Congress has taken upon itself: “To encourage the spirit of free inquiry and dedication to the

³¹ *Al-Ādāb* 10:7 (July 1962), 59.

³² *Mudhakkirāt Taūfiq Ṣāyigh*, 42.

³³ *Ḥiwār* 1:1 (1962), 2

truth and the value of creativity, and to defend intellectual freedom against any aggression whatever its source.”³⁴

Despite *Hiwār*'s considerable success in attracting to its pages Arab authors that remain canonical today, the journal faced a steady stream of suspicion in Arabic concerning its connections with the well-endowed Congress for Cultural Freedom. Before its publication, as Idrīs informed Ṣāyigh in April 1962, he had been urged to denounce the journal. Lebanese short story writer Laylā Ba'albakī, one of Ṣāyigh's close friends in Beirut, was among the opponents of *Hiwār* in the months leading up to its first issue's publication, though she would go on to publish her infamous short story “Safinat ḥanān ilā al-qamr” [“Spaceship of Tenderness to the Moon”] in *Hiwār*'s fourth issue for May/June of 1963. Yet the year before “Spaceship of Tenderness” appeared in *Hiwār*, Ba'albakī's relationship with the magazine was still that of a skeptic, fearing that “the Congress would proselytize antagonism toward Communism,” and that “the Congress is Zionist;”³⁵ these sentiments recur over and over again in the pages of Ṣāyigh's memoirs. Meeting at Uncle Sam, a bar in Beirut, that April, Ṣāyigh endured Ghassān Kanafānī's “attack on [*Hiwār*] because it was funded from abroad,”³⁶ while less than two weeks later in London, Ṣāyigh's friend Aḥmad Abū Ḥākīmāh wondered, he jotted down, “how could I be willing to cooperate with these spies.”³⁷

Meeting in Beirut with the Congress's representative Simon Jargy in 1962, Ṣāyigh warned Jargy that April that “some are saying that the Congress is foreign and against Communism.” Jargy offered more than one response, rhetorically pointing to Gamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, and asking, “doesn't he openly fight Communism?” He continued: “If we give them a faultless journal [*lā ghubāra 'alayhā*], why would they attack?”³⁸ Tasked with editing a faultless journal for a suspicious Arabic reading public, Ṣāyigh resolves at a meeting for the journal, with regards to “the issue of mentioning or ignoring the matter of funding,” to “mention untainted cultural organizations in other countries, and indicate that the Congress has no relationship with Zionism or Israel.”³⁹ The credibility of Arabic's authors and poets, and of their committed politics, was being marshaled in order to realize the Congress for Cultural Freedom's mandate, that in protest of “a world in which everything serves a political purpose, which is for us unacceptable, it was necessary to create platforms from which

³⁴ Ibid., 1.

³⁵ *Mudhakkirāt Tawfiq Ṣāyigh*, 17.

³⁶ Ibid., 64.

³⁷ Ibid., 87.

³⁸ Ibid., 30.

³⁹ Ibid., 45.

culture could be expressed without regard to politics and without confusion with propaganda.’”⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the imperial optics of global simultaneity—optics that functioned in both military and literary codes—impressed themselves on the form that *Ḥiwār* took. Though Ṣāyigh insisted in meetings with Jargy “that I would fight against any interference,”⁴¹ Jargy in turn stipulated that *Ḥiwār* include pieces taken from other Congress journals and that “our journal needed to be open to the world.” Ṣāyigh initially records replying “I don’t want to include any foreign articles,” though he would relent, allowing by the end of their conversation in his memoirs for “an interview with a world writer, 3 letters from abroad, [and a section on a] journal among the journals” of the Congress.⁴² This matter came up again, however, until finally in response to Simon Jargy’s “insistence on increasing the number of foreign writers and foreign topics in the journal,” Ṣāyigh recalls:

I resisted, he insisted, a long discussion, in the end I couldn’t say anything but: look Simon, what do you want! Say it and I will do it even if I am unwilling! I learned today that I am like a country that has welcomed a coup only to find out that the new party is just like the old in every way.⁴³

What Jargy wanted was to make the Arabic essays, poems, novels and stories published in *Ḥiwār* “open to the world,” by enframing the authors that Ṣāyigh had invited and persuaded to publish, with “foreign materials.” In letting Arabic literature be “open to the world,” Ṣāyigh “welcomed a coup,” agreeing to the new party’s demands by allowing Jargy to “arrange all the foreign materials and send them to me—I said fine, but this is only if we can’t find Arab authors on these topics.”⁴⁴ Jargy’s coup was directed at integrating a foreign literary presence, curated by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, into the pages of *Ḥiwār* and the newsstands of the Arab world, and in turn producing the literary simultaneity identified by Rubin. Ṣāyigh’s sense that he was welcoming a coup presciently connected the project of the Congress for Cultural Freedom with other CIA missions monitored from the carpeted offices beside the Potomac. The connectedness of this “coup” to other CIA machinations was perhaps too close for the CCF’s comfort, for Jargy also asked Ṣāyigh to change the journal’s name from *Ḥiwār*. The Congress feared “the difficulty in

⁴⁰ As quoted in Saunders, 312.

⁴¹ *Mudhakkirāt Tawfiq Ṣāyigh*, 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 100

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

pronunciation,⁴⁵ he reported, citing concerns that an English reader might see in the title a bellicose greeting from the Arabs: “*Hiwal*.”⁴⁶ In the end, however, the title aptly stood.

Doubts—both politically and materially motivated—continued to circulate surrounding *Hiwār* and its connections with the Congress for Cultural Freedom. In 1965, *Hiwār* selected Yūsuf Idrīs as the winner of its short story prize, yet Idrīs later refused the prize, unwilling to convert his considerable prestige as a committed short story writer into political and literary capital for the CIA. It was a scandal of considerable magnitude, and while it was not an affair Yūsuf Idrīs liked to discuss,⁴⁷ it eventually made the *New York Times*:

Last fall . . . Hiwar named Yussef Idriss, one of Cairo’s most popular short story and screenwriters, as winner of the magazine’s \$2,800 literary prize.

Mr. Idriss at first accepted but after warnings from the Egyptian press he turned the prize down. One Lebanese newspaper charged that Egyptian authorities had put pressure on him to refuse the award in return for a promise of an Egyptian award. Mr. Idriss denied this.

Last January, he received a major Egyptian literary award a month after *Al Katab* [sic], a local magazine, whose board of editors includes Mr. Idriss, had charged that Hiwar was secretly working for the American intelligence agency.⁴⁸

The next year, following the exposé published by *Rūz al-Yūsuf* citing the *New York Times*’ “Electronic Prying Grows,” Yūsuf Idrīs’s hesitations would be validated in the face of a literary scandal of cosmic proportion. Following a call by Luwīs ‘Awaḍ and others for *Hiwār* to be banned from Egypt, and in the wake of the ensuing debate, Egyptian intellectuals would in the end take the matter into their own hands, as copies of the banned *Hiwār* September/December 1966 issue 24/25—which opened with al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ’s *Season of Migration to the North* in its entirety—were smuggled⁴⁹ into the country by various means,

⁴⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 103.

⁴⁷ In an interview with Yūsuf Idrīs, *Al-Uṣbū’ al-‘Arabi* quoted Idrīs as responding to their question as to his “opinion on the issue of *Hiwār* being banned from Egypt” in 1966 due to its connections with the CIA, that it was something “of which I like to speak neither good nor evil” *Al-Uṣbū’ al-‘Arabi* (31 October 1966), 44.

⁴⁸ “Arab Magazine Banned by Cairo,” *New York Times* (24 July 1966), 3.

⁴⁹ It would appear that Rajā’ al-Naqqāsh was among those “personalities in Cairo and Alexandria” who had received one of the banned copies of *Hiwār*, as he wrote from Cairo with chagrin in the closing lines of his late 1966 article in the Cairo journal *al-Muṣawwar* that established al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ’s career, “Al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ: ‘Abqariyyah riwā’iyyah jadidah” (Al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ: New Novelistic Genius): “I have no doubt that Al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ has no relationship with the International Congress for Cultural Freedom, for he—as his novel [*Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* (*Season of Migration to the North*)] says with each letter it contains—is an Arab genius pulsating with

including air mail. The ban and trafficking of *Hiwār* was reported not only in Cairo journals such as *Rūz al-Yūsuf*, but also in Baghdad's *al-Maktabah*,⁵⁰ and in the *New York Times*,⁵¹ as intellectuals across the world responded in late 1966 and the spring of 1967 to this scene of literary scandal.

Unsī al-Ḥājj, a former writer for *Hiwār* and friend to Tawfiq Ṣāyigh saw, in all those Arab intellectuals that summer of 1966 who had been implicated in the scandal of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, himself included, so many traitors, if also “victims of our innocence.”⁵² The response was similar elsewhere in the world; Jean Franco points to the “bitterness of the duped,” an experience shared by editors of *Encounter* in London, as well as authors throughout Latin America such as Gabriel García Márquez and Augusto Roa Bastos who had published in the Congress for Cultural Freedom's *Mundo Nuevo*.⁵³ Al-Ḥājj's article, entitled “The Issue of the Journal *Hiwār*” and published in Beirut's *Mulḥaq al-Nahār* upon the 1966 announcement by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture that it had been banned from Egypt, begins on a note of anger, disillusionment and self reproach—sentiments so often associated in Arabic with the post-1967 years—yet soon moves into a satirical mode. Shocked that under Ṣāyigh's watch *Hiwār* “had dragged the dignity of all those who participated in it in the dirt,” al-Ḥājj wrote:

The journal *Hiwār*, was, then, a traitorous journal. And we, all of those whose names appeared in it, are traitors as well. Out of ignorance or knowledge of the matter, there is no difference.

This is what came to my mind when I read the news of the journal being banned from entering Egypt... And I felt that I, myself and those who like me wrote in *Hiwār*, we were that entire time victims of our innocence. The American intelligence service! Could we, all those who wrote in *Hiwār*, be writing for the CIA?

true nationalism, neither sick nor dirtied, and if it is regrettable that this novel was not published but in the journal *Hiwār*, I hope that an Arab publishing house in Cairo or Beirut will publish the complete text shortly and present it to Arab readers everywhere in order to sense with their minds and emotions the birth of a new genius in the skies of the Arab novel.” Article reprinted in the critical volume *Al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ: 'Abqārī al-riwāyah al-'Arabiyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-'Awdah, 1976): 63-78. This quote is from p. 78.

⁵⁰ *Al-Maktabah* 45 (October 1966), 57. The journal published the following in its literary news on Egypt: “The journal *Hiwār*, whose entry to Egypt was banned has started to arrive by air mail to a number of personalities in Cairo and Alexandria.”

⁵¹ “Arab Magazine Banned in Cairo,” *New York Times* (July 24, 1966).

⁵² Unsī al-Ḥājj, “The Issue of the Journal *Hiwār*,” *Mulḥaq al-Nahār* (Sunday, June 12, 1966), 19.

⁵³ Jean Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 32, and more generally, Chapter One, “Killing Them Softly: The Cold War and Culture.”

And suddenly I felt important! We, writers of Arabic participating in *Hiwār*, more important than spies! We had found the one who realized our importance, we the *udaba'* of Arabic, and who was it? The biggest intelligence apparatus in the world!

I imagined the departed Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, who was at the forefront of those who published in *Hiwār*, I imagined him behind "appearances" of weakness in form, to be the James Bond of Iraq!

And I imagined Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣubūr and Nizār Qabbānī and Yūsuf Ghuṣūb and Luwīs 'Awaḍ and Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ and Salmā Khaḍrā' al-Jayyūsī implementing through what *Hiwār* published of their poems, an odious American plot, with or without their knowledge, in order to apprehend, for instance, Arab nationalism!

I imagined the CIA encouraging Tawfiq Ṣāyigh, the journal's editor, to publish the stories of Laylā Ba'albaki and Ghādah al-Sammān and Walīd Ikhlašī and Zakariyyā Tāmūr and 'Abd al-Salām al-'Ujaylī, in order to strengthen the pillars of imperialism in the Middle East and to kill the Palestinian cause!

And I asked myself: Was the CIA really endowed with intelligence to this degree?

And I asked myself: Are all of them, and others and still others, American agents, while there is more than one Marxist among them?

And I asked myself: Who sees himself laughing at the other⁵⁴ in this game, the Marxists who got the CIA to spread their ideas, or the CIA who made Marxists write in an "American" journal?⁵⁵

The absurdity of it, of inhabiting the perspective the CIA had taken on not just the world as a military terrain but also as a literary field of cosmic espionage—of imagining in Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb a James Bond, of freedom being just another word for covert American propaganda—was also part of what made it plausibly deniable. Yet in imagining al-Sayyāb "behind 'appearances' of weakness in form" as 007, in laughing at the thought of it, we also register the irony

⁵⁴ The CIA seemed pretty sure they were the ones laughing. As Saunders notes, when Nicolas Nabokov, an established composer, one of the key figures involved with the Congress for Cultural Freedom from its inception, and cousin of Vladimir, published his memoirs in 1975, he included a section on the June-July 1960 conference that the Congress held "commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Tolstoy" on the Venetian island of San Giorgio. Two Russians had attended, among them one who Nabokov describes as "an odious SOB called Yermilov, a nasty little party hack. They were standing in line, both of them, to receive their *per diem* and travel allowance from my secretary, or rather the administrative secretary of the Congress for Cultural Freedom." Saunders relates: "Nabokov closed the recollection on a jubilant note: "Mr. Yermilov, turn in your grave: *you have just taken CIA money!*" Saunders, 332. See also Saunders's volume's photo insert featuring the laughing, or at least quite happily smiling, faces of key Congress organizers "John Hunt, Robie Macauley and Michael Josselson mapping things out in the hills above Geneva."

⁵⁵ Al-Ḥājj, 19.

that all along “freedom” had provided strategic cover as *Hiwār*’s authors did the Congress’s work for reasons they had believed to be their own.

Tarek El-Ariss, in his article “Fiction in Scandal,” reads the Arab defeat to Israel in June 1967 as a *fadhīḥah*, a scandal that “exposed [the] instability and vulnerability” of Arab projects of modernity, yet offered at the same time the possibility of rethinking literature.⁵⁶ Indeed, much has been written about Arab introspection in the wake of the June war, and the need to rethink and reappraise the years and perhaps decades leading up to the defeat. In his recent book *Conscience of the Nation: Writers, State, and Society in Modern Egypt*, Richard Jacquemond considers the legacy of pre-*Naksah* “‘prophets of the defeat” at that hands of their readers: “after June 1967, previous production now was reread and re-evaluated,”⁵⁷ as a disillusioned audience read this time for literary auguries containing a “critical description of a system that meant the stranglehold of the state over society.”⁵⁸ Jacquemond devotes a brief paragraph as well to *Hiwār*, detailing how the journal “attracted the best Egyptian writers,” who later boycotted it. In light of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and therefore the CIA’s role in founding and funding *Hiwār* and other literary journals worldwide, however, the continuities in a post-1967 Arab intellectual longing, per Jacquemond, for “autonomy and freedom for literature and for the writer, even if this meant turning their backs on the great collective cause,”⁵⁹ can be heard also as an echo of the Congress for Cultural Freedom’s mission.

In August of 1966, Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mu’ṭā Ḥijāzī saw *Hiwār* as a journal busy “spreading its poison and its thoughts and distracting Arab intellectuals from their real causes with empty slogans.”⁶⁰ Their slogans were all in the name of “autonomy and freedom for literature and for the writer,” of course. Between Jacquemond’s post-1967 intellectuals making their call for autonomy and freedom, and Ḥijāzī’s prescient 1966 essay warning about the “poison” being spread by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the pernicious endurance of the world literary intervention staged by the CIA comes into view. Distracted and disillusioned in 1967 as in 1966, “due to the political and ideological fragmentation which followed the war of 1967,” as Klemm notes, “many of the proponents of commitment lost their belief in the political role of the writer and the effectiveness of the literary word.”⁶¹ Yet what the *Hiwār* scandal

⁵⁶ Tarek El-Ariss, “Fiction of Scandal,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43:2-3 (2012), 523.

⁵⁷ Richard Jacquemond, *Conscience of the Nation: Writers, State, and Society in Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008), 91.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶⁰ Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mu’ṭā Ḥijāzī, “An End to *Hiwār*, Not Its Confiscation,” *Rūz al-Yūsuf* (15 August 1966), 35.

⁶¹ Klemm, 58.

revealed, ironically enough, was that the literary was a site of global power contestation so critical it had attracted the attention of an imperially minded American security apparatus. This suspicious, angry, introspective literary-political moment in Arabic would last well beyond the end of the decade, as writers no doubt wondered what scandal had yet to be uncovered, and who would be compromised next.

Yet for Elisabeth Kendall in her recent book *Literature, Journalism, and the Avant-Garde: Intersection in Egypt*, “more liberal Beirut journals like *al-Ādāb* (The Literary Arts, 1953-) and *Ḥiwār* (Dialogue 1962-7?)” are prophetic not so much of a defeat, as of the future of the literary avant-garde in Arabic in post-1967 Egypt, overlooking entirely the matter of the CIA’s intervention in the material production of this very avant-garde. As Kendall reads it, the founding of the avant-garde literary journal *Gallery 68* in Cairo in 1968 “was needed because unifying these experimental currents within a single outlet inside Egypt would magnify their impact and thus win recognition for the fact that a new literary phenomenon had emerged.”⁶² The imperial optics at play in the CIA and CCF intervention in these “new literary phenomenon” on a global scale is left out of Kendall’s generally quite detailed analysis. As a result, her analysis of “the forces of imperial domination” in the Arabic literary sphere are limited to the “extreme” exaggerations of “the most dismissive critics”:

Established writers and critics raised the spectre of Egyptian cultural dislocation at the hands of a Western influenced avant-garde. The most dismissive critics identified Western influences with the forces of imperial domination. At worst, they were exaggerated into a Zionist plot, indicating the suspicion and fury that permeated these politically fraught times. Although extreme, it is possible to understand the roots of this critical stance and therefore to empathize with it: Western literary influence was linked to the power structures perpetuated by European imperialism on the grounds that both the practical and ideological aspects of cultural globalization are ultimately powered by an imperial dynamic of influence, dissemination and hegemony.⁶³

Empathy and exaggeration aside, the “practical and ideological aspects of cultural globalization” had in fact meant that Arabic literature on the eve of the 1967 defeat and at the Cold War’s height had, every two months and for almost five years, filled pages of a widely read and influential Arabic literary journal, as its well-shod writers lived on bread baked with the blood of the

⁶² Elisabeth Kendall, *Literature, Journalism, and the Avant-Garde: Intersection in Egypt* (NY: Routledge, 2006), 124.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 139.

CIA's imperial victims, or with that of their own compatriots—in the end they were of course one and the same.

ʿAwaḍ responded to the machinations of the Congress for Cultural Freedom with his own call to make culture truly free from the politics of the security agent. He asked:

To what extent is it permissible for an intelligence apparatus in any country of the world to take over culture and cultural apparatuses whether domestically or abroad? To each his role in life: the task of the intellectual is to spread culture and the task of the security agent [*rajal al-ammn*] is to preserve security, and if the security agent worked to spread culture, or the man of culture for the preservation of security, matters would be mixed up. And there is nothing more dangerous for culture than to become a weapon [*silāḥ*] of security even inside the country itself, for from the very start culture becomes an active synonym for the colonization of minds if it is taken up as a weapon of foreign defense.⁶⁴

Still touting cultural freedom, calling for the “man of culture” not to get mixed up in “preserv[ing] security” or “the colonization of minds” or “foreign defense,” on some level it would seem ʿAwaḍ still believed in the value of the work of preserving “cultural freedom,” in the value of a world in which not “everything serves a political purpose.”⁶⁵ He was writing this no doubt for reasons which he believed to be his own, failing in turn to register the counterfeit nature of the very idea that culture—encumbered materially as politically—ever really had been, or ever could be, free.

⁶⁴ Included in Luwīs ʿAwaḍ's collection of essays entitled *al-Thawrah wa-l-adab* (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr, 1967), 433-34.

⁶⁵ As quoted in Saunders, 312.