

# Al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ's *Season of Migration to the North*, the CIA, and the Cultural Cold War after Bandung

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## ABSTRACT

In the fall of 1966, *Ḥiwār* magazine published al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ's novel *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* [*Season of Migration to the North*]. Arabic literary critics both hailed the novel in the Arabic press and mourned that it had been published by the Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom's *Ḥiwār*. The CCF had been revealed just months before to be a global covert cultural front of the Cold War founded and funded by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, maintaining an extensive list of high profile literary magazines, including not only the Beirut-based Arabic magazines *Ḥiwār* and briefly *Adab*, but also the London-based *Encounter*, Bombay's *Quest*, and the African journals *Black Orpheus* in Ibadan and *Transition* in Kampala. In response to the 1955 Bandung conference for Afro-Asian solidarity, the CCF established a formidable network of its own, founding and funding African and Asian magazines, putting on conferences, art exhibits, and handsomely paying a significant cadre of intellectuals, writers, and artists worldwide. It would be more than a decade later that the CIA's domination of Afro-Asian literature would give way to the publication of the Afro-Asian Writers Association's trilingual (Arabic/English/French) journal *Afro-Asian Writings* (later to be called *Lotus*), a broadly imagined legacy of the 1955 Bandung Conference for Afro-Asian Solidarity and its celebration of decolonization, various forms of communism and socialism, and resistance literature in the third world.

Drawing from *Encounter*, *Ḥiwār*, and other journals of the CCF, the Arabic press, letters exchanged by Ṣāliḥ and *Ḥiwār*'s editor Tawfiq Ṣāyigh, and the archives of the International Association for Cultural Freedom, this article argues that *Season of Migration to the North*, oft read as a postcolonial novel, is better understood as a product of American Cold War cultural imperialism. If its protagonist, Mustafa Sa'eed, might aspire, as though taking a page from Frantz Fanon, to liberate Africa with his penis as he beds a series of British women, seducing them with Orientalist fantasy, and if the novel's unnamed narrator might see that the newly independent Sudanese

government was being corrupted by American cars, air conditioners, and opulent conferences and government ministries, the novel itself is doing something still more. As it reaches back intertextually to pre-Islamic poetry, the wine odes of 'Abbasid poet Abū Nuwās, and the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights* in British translation, Šāliḥ's novel exposes the long chain of empires subtending the dissemination of Arabic literature that left it vulnerable to becoming a terrain of cultural Cold War after Bandung's call for Afro-Asian solidarity.

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The young Sudanese author al-Ṭayyib Šāliḥ's 1966 Arabic novel *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* [*Season of Migration to the North*] was originally published in its entirety in *Ḥiwār*'s September/December 1966 issue.<sup>1</sup> It immediately made headlines in the Arabic press. The Baghdad newspaper *Al-Maktabah* [*The Library*] and other periodicals reported that *Ḥiwār* [*Dialogue*], recently banned from Egypt, was being smuggled via air mail to Cairo. The eminent literary critic Rajā' al-Naqqāsh must have received one of these smuggled copies of *Ḥiwār*, hailing the then relatively unestablished Šāliḥ as a "genius of the Arabic novel" in the Cairo newspaper *Al-Muṣawwar* [*The Illustrated*]. Al-Naqqāsh, though, regretted that Šāliḥ's novel had appeared in this particular journal. For in English that April, and Arabic that May, it had been revealed that *Ḥiwār*, like all the journals of the Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom, was part of an extensive worldwide covert American cultural front of the Cold War, founded and funded by the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

Scandal engulfed the Arabic and world press as writers and artists worldwide discovered that, indeed, and as often suspected, the CIA had founded and funded the CCF's expansive global operations. Many suffered what Jean Franco diagnosed as "the bitterness of the duped" (32). But *Season of Migration to the North*, I propose here, met this Cold War hermeneutics of scandal with a shrug of the shoulders (when had it ever been otherwise?), proposing scandals of its own for investigation. Taunting the reader to discover the secret when the CIA's cover had already been blown, *Season of Migration to the North* traces intertexts from Arabic literature's long history spanning and spinning empires past—'Abbasid, Fatimid, Andalusian, Umayyad; if also British, and now American. The early years of Sudanese independence, an age celebrated as one of Afro-Asian solidarity and decolonization, are intertwined everywhere in this novel with the persistence of the cultural ideologies of empires past and their hauntings of the institutions of empires present: from Gordon College to the University of Khartoum (where the CCF would put on a series of conferences); from colonial infrastructures of taxation to the air-conditioned Sudanese Ministries of Agriculture, Finance and Education. If *Season of Migration to the North* is often read as a classic of the postcolonial canon, this article argues that readers must also closely read the novel's intertexts, the literary genealogies that it stages, and the deeply material questions that attend its fraught moment of publication to see the durable persistence of empire in its midst. Decisively, if sometimes also coyly, Šāliḥ's novel registers the ongoing imperial infiltration and interference at work in a time of Cold War.

This article reads from the CCF's extensive archives of correspondence, photography, and reports on Arabic literature over the 1950s and 1960s, published memoirs from this period, declassified CIA documents, and the contemporaneous Arabic and global press. Arabic language and Arabic literature, in this moment, became a high priority cultural Cold War battleground in the wake of the 1955 Bandung Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference and the 1956 Suez Crisis. The future of a geography spanning Africa and Asia, from Mauritania to Indonesia, reverberated with a centuries-long history of Arabic storytelling and *adab*—a term that indexes now primarily literature but historically has more expansively pointed to ethics and edification through discourse and proper social comportment. In the early years of the Cold War, these old networks of Arabic literature and knowledge—sustained over centuries of Islamic empires through epistolarity, statecraft, anthologies, translation, trade, pilgrimage, and literary patronage—were reinvented in epochal calls to a “Bandung spirit” of solidarity spanning Afro-Asia. These old *adab* networks of Islamic empire appear as intertexts to *Season of Migration to the North*, as the verse of classical Arabic poets and details of Islamic history are found interwoven in the novel's pages with citations of Shakespeare's *Othello* or translations of English poetry.

While al-Naqqāsh “had no doubt that Ṣāliḥ had no relationship with the International Congress for Cultural Freedom,” this was not the first time Ṣāliḥ's work appeared in one of their journals. Indeed, in the 1960s Ṣāliḥ's name appeared overwhelmingly in journals founded by or at the time friendly with the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Among them were not only Denys Johnson-Davies's short-lived London-based journal *Aṣwāt* (1961–63?) and Yūsuf al-Khāl's shorter-lived *Adab* (1962–63)—early issues of which were planned as an imprint of the CCF, paid for by a settlement with the CCF, and on whose masthead of editors could be found al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ and a number of other CCF affiliates—but also the better known CCF journals, like their Beirut-based Arabic journal *Ḥiwār* (1962–67), edited by Palestinian poet Tawfīq Ṣāyigh, and the widely disseminated journal *Encounter*, edited from London by Melvin Lasky and poet Stephen Spender for much of the 1960s.

So, as al-Naqqāsh and no doubt other readers of Arabic literature mourned the decision to publish *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* in a journal that had been founded as part of the CIA's Congress for Cultural Freedom, the novel in fact appeared *after* the organization was widely exposed in the global press as a CIA-founded and -funded cultural front. Ṣāliḥ was apprised of the frequently suspicious tone taken in the Arabic press toward the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the journal *Ḥiwār* and made the decision to publish this long-promised novel anyway in his friend Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's journal. At their 1967 Beirut meeting, the Afro-Asian Writers Association would denounce CCF publications as acts of “cultural infiltration”—accurately identifying the phrase the Eisenhower administration had used in the 1950s. Arabic literature became a renewed battleground in the cultural Cold War for the third world: the Bandung-inspired, increasingly Soviet-funded and -sponsored Afro-Asian Writers Association established their permanent bureau in Cairo in 1965 and in 1968 began publishing their own journal, *Afro-Asian Writings* (later called *Lotus*), in Arabic, French, and English.

From the 1950s, Arabic, French, and English became the languages of simultaneity of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation's (AAPSO) solidarity,

emerging in turn over the early decades of the Cold War as targets and theaters for American infiltration and de-articulation of a neutralist, Soviet, or Maoist Afro-Asian solidarity. The tactics of the CCF sought to edit and reconfigure Arabic's connectedness to Afro-Asian solidarities, oriented through an American area studies-aligned infiltration of Arabic literature that sought to route, in a manner rather like Pascale Casanova's *World Republic of Letters*, literary affiliations and solidarities through imperial metropolises like Paris, London, and perhaps even New York. When Arabic-English translator Denys Johnson-Davies, who would later publish and translate a great deal of al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ's work from the 1960s, proposed a study of Arabic literature for the English reader, he described it in a letter to the CIA's John Hunt, undercover at the CCF Paris headquarters, as "at least... one small ship travelling in the other direction in the Inter-Traffic you would like to bring about" (Hunt, Letter to Albert Hourani).<sup>2</sup> It was a literary trafficking that would meet the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization's call for nonalignment and the threat posed to the US of the organization's Soviet infiltration, with an Arabic literature in line with a report prepared the previous year. In May 1959, Ivan Kats (in a document entitled "Lebanon & Egypt 1959") avowed after a visit to the two countries that "the best approaches to the Middle East at the moment are through the arts and the social sciences. Arabic cultural attachments are to the West. We can reach them, and disinterestedly, through music, painting, and literature."

Drawing from *Encounter*, *Adab*, and *Hiwār*, the 1960s Arabic press, letters exchanged by Ṣāliḥ and Ṣāyigh, and the archives of the International Association for Cultural Freedom, this article argues that *Season of Migration to the North*, oft read as a postcolonial novel, is better understood as a product of and participant in Cold War cultural imperialism. If its protagonist, Mustafa Sa'eed, might aspire (as though taking a page from Frantz Fanon) to liberate Africa with his penis as he seduces a series of British women with Orientalist fantasy, and if the novel's unnamed narrator might see that the newly independent Sudanese government was being corrupted by American cars and air conditioners, the novel itself is doing something still more. As it reaches back intertextually to the journeys recounted in pre-Islamic poetry, the wine odes of 'Abbasid poet Abū Nuwās, the skepticism of 'Abbasid poet Abū 'Alā' al-Ma'arrī, the magnificent architecture of Fatimid Cairo, the tales of African conquest in *Abū Zayd al-Hilālī*, or the enchantments of *A Thousand and One Nights* in British translation—Ṣāliḥ's novel exposes the long chain of empire and conquest subtending the dissemination of Arabic literature. Reaching from the Indian to the Atlantic Oceans, encompassing the broad territory where Africa met Asia that became a global terrain of cultural Cold War after Bandung's call for Afro-Asian solidarity, from 1955, Arabic literature represented a coveted, oft-infiltrated, durable, and highly valued site of soft power.

Looking to redirect the "Bandung spirit" of third world independence, the CCF's Paris headquarters turned their focus to the "cultural infiltration" of Afro-Asia through the Congress's propaganda of cultural freedom. Four months after Bandung, the Congress's English-language Indian journal, *Quest*, published its first issue. On the eve of the conference that April, CCF founder Michael Josselson wrote Beshara Ghorayeb in Beirut: "Please don't misunderstand me. We ourselves wish to go slowly in developing contacts in the Middle East, but not quite as slowly as we have been proceeding" (see also Holt, "Cairo"). In September,

the Congress issued an Arabic publication called *Al-Munazzamah al-'ālamīyyah li-hurriyyat al-thaqāfah* (the *International Organization for Cultural Freedom*—the name of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Arabic) that included an account of *Encounter* editor Stephen Spender's time in Beirut and Egypt. *Al-Munazzamah al-'ālamīyyah li-hurriyyat al-thaqāfah* is organized through a US area studies cartography: "In the Middle East," "In the United States," "In Germany," "In Italy," "In France," "In the Scandinavian Countries," "In Latin America," and "In the Far East," as will be *Al-Hurriyyah awwalan* [*Freedom First*] from 1956.<sup>3</sup> Other CCF Arabic projects included *Aḍwā'*; *Akhhbār*, which announced an Arabic short story competition in 1958; and the 1961 Rome Conference for the Arab Writer.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Arabic-English translator Denys Johnson-Davies provided extensive support for the CCF's work through his journal *Aṣwāt*, published from 1961 to 1963 in London, and the many contacts with Arabic novelists and poets that he facilitated for the Congress. Following an eleventh-hour reversal in the plan to work with the prominent Lebanese poet and editor of *Shi'r* magazine Yūsuf al-Khāl to publish the journal *Adab* in Beirut from January 1962; in September 1962, *Hiwār*, edited by Tawfiq Ṣāyigh, began publishing in Beirut (Holt, "Cold War," "Cairo").<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the CCF had begun to work with both *Black Orpheus* and *Transition* in sub-Saharan Africa and in 1962 held one of the most important African Writers Conferences at the University of Makerere in Uganda on the African Writer of English Expression.

These were all part of a coordinated CIA and CCF effort from the mid-1950s to respond to the work of the Afro-Asian solidarity movement. The CIA carefully watched as the nonaligned third world prepared to meet in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. The CCF paid for African American writer Richard Wright to attend the 1955 Bandung Conference and, upon his return, editors of European journals of the CCF's early years were invited to select portions from the manuscript that would become *The Color Curtain* for publication in their magazines. Wright had been debriefed by the US State Department two years prior, following his meeting with Kwame Nkrumah during a trip to the Gold Coast (Polsgrove 125–29); and in 1949 he had proven his non-Communist Left bona fides with his contribution to the anti-Communist volume *The God That Failed: A Confession*. On that book's cover, Wright is found alongside key affiliates of the CCF, then in its planning stages, including Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, and Spender, who had been chosen by MI6 and the CIA as editor of the CCF's widely circulated London journal *Encounter* (Saunders 6).

Wright's manuscript, echoing language from CIA reports as they surveilled preparations for the April 1955 conference, informed a circle of CCF editors that at Bandung he had witnessed how

Attempts on the part of the sundered and atomized "coloreds" to reconstitute their lives, to regain that poise and balance that reigned before the coming of the white man, were regarded as a warlike threat by the powers originally responsible for the atomization of the customs and traditions. Present Asian and African mass movements are the frantic efforts on the part of more than one and one-half billion human beings to reorganize their lives. (486)

Wright presented the "warlike threat" of "Asian and African mass movements" working together "to reorganize their lives" to a circle of CCF editors at a moment

when the United States was inheriting the imperial mantle of the French and British. The CCF would dramatically expand its efforts in Asia and Africa, from the mid-fifties beginning magazines in Bombay, Beirut, Kampala, and Ibadan and holding important conferences in Beirut, Cairo, Khartoum, Makerere, Rome, Delhi, and throughout southeast Asia (Holt, "Cairo" 484; Said). In October 1957, the CIA issued an internal report on the preparatory activities underway for the late December 1957–early January 1958 conference being convened by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) in Cairo, a second conference following the inaugural Bandung Conference of 1955 and testament to the persistence of the "Bandung spirit." The CIA report notes that the preparatory committee for the Cairo 1957–58 AAPSO Conference "decided on Arabic, French, and English as the official languages for the conference and hoped to obtain simultaneous translation facilities" (CIA 8) and the CCF would redouble its Arabic and African efforts, erecting three translation booths—an English, a French, and an Arabic one—when it held the 1961 Rome Conference for the Arab Writer, an event that in many regards decisively established the CCF's influence over Arabic letters, much as Makerere secured the CCF's influence in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

As I have shown in my chapter on the "Cultural Cold War for Afro-Asia" in the *Routledge Guide to the Global Sixties*, Hunt recognized the need to infiltrate the Afro-Asian solidarity network, to redirect its work, and "to use the good name and the official aura of Bandung" for the CCF's own liberal Cold War ends (Holt, "Cairo"; Hunt, Letter to Beshara Ghorayeb). Andrew Rubin has argued in his study of the CCF, *Archives of Authority*, that it inaugurated a new sort of literary simultaneity as it made publications available through its bureaucracy of translation, coordination of editorial work, and a clearing house considered by Hunt to be a system for "organised piracy" (Hunt, Letter to Magdi Wahba). The CIA and in turn the CCF looked to infiltrate Afro-Asian networks (lest the Soviets or Maoists succeed in winning the third world to their side), such that these three languages become the languages of Cold War Afro-Asia for the CCF as well. The many wires connecting the Arabic-English-French translation booths at the CCF's 1961 Rome Conference for the Arab Writer, well-documented photographically in the CCF archive, were tools to infiltrate Arabic literature and in turn Afro-Asian solidarity.

In his recent online piece for *Black Perspectives* on "The Afro-Asian Writers Association and Soviet Engagement with Africa," Rossen Djagalov argues for the pioneering role that Soviet writers and cultural organizations played by "constituting international literary fields and deploying literature as a force for political engagement." Indeed, these pre-Cold War projects, like those of the British Information Review Board informed the career of Arthur Koestler, who penned the CCF's 1950 manifesto, as well as other key former Communists like Stephen Spender, Ignazio Silone, and Richard Wright, all of whom would be instrumental in Hunt's efforts to redirect the "Bandung spirit." The AAWA congresses that Djagalov goes on to list—"1958 Tashkent Congress of Afro-Asian Writers was only the first of eight Congresses in this history of the Association, the others being hosted by Cairo (1962), Beirut (1967), New Delhi (1970), Alma Ata (1973), Luanda (1979), Tashkent (1983), and Tunis (1988)"—cannot be read simply as a continuation, as Djagalov would have it, of Soviet "tradition," but rather as a terrain of Cold War, one witnessing extended, entrenched inter-imperial conflict over the future of the literature of Africa and Asia. Would it be Maoist? Leninist? Committed? In the

name of Freedom? These questions raged in the third world for well over a decade of American covert cultural imperialist CCF magazine publication in London, Beirut, Kampala, Ibadan, Bombay, and far beyond before the world ever saw the first issue of *Afro-Asian Writings* in 1968 and its lament—in English, French, and Arabic—of Afro-Asia’s cultural infiltration by the CCF. And punctuating this Cold War magazine library of sixties Afro-Asia, one finds al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ’s Arabic pen repeatedly being remunerated from CIA coffers.

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One of the CCF’s closest advisors on its Arabic venture was Arabic-English translator Denys Johnson-Davies. In February 1960, Hunt wrote to another of his advisors, Albert Hourani, the highly regarded historian of the Arab world and author of the canonical *A History of the Arab Peoples* and *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, soliciting his thoughts on how to create an influential Arabic magazine and sharing with him Johnson-Davies’s take on the state of the Arabic literary field. The CCF would rely heavily on Johnson-Davies in the late fifties and early sixties for his knowledge of Arabic literature and his established connections with the many authors who appear in the pages of his memoir, *Memories in Translation: A Life Between the Lines of Arabic Literature*, quite of a few of whom, including al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ, would go on to publish in future CCF Arabic publications. Johnson-Davies had written Hunt that in his esteem, Arabic literature “has a very long way to go,” offering that “the interest in it for the Western reader lies, I believe, more in the problems it poses—artistic, literary, social, etc.—than in its achievements” (Hunt, Letter to Albert Hourani). As the United States intelligence agencies monitored opportunities to redirect the Bandung spirit and infiltrate Afro-Asian solidarity networks, they looked, too, to one of Hourani’s students from St. Anthony’s College: Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, who served as Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, and at the time of his service to the CCF was the Sudanese Ambassador to Ethiopia. He was a man with strong opinions about how modernism might best work out in Arabic (Hourani 2).

Johnson-Davies had founded a small company called Middle East Services, a project intended as “a translation bureau, doing nothing but translations from Arabic,” and yet was, as he recalled in his memoir, “mainly... doing legal and commercial documents—and nothing is more soul-destroying. But soon the opportunity came to produce the quarterly literary magazine that I called *Aswat*, and my office thus became something of a home-from-home for Arab writers visiting London” (76). This “opportunity” to publish *Aṣwāt*, and in so doing make of his translation bureau something of “a home-from-home for Arab writers visiting London,” came on the heels of discussions with the Congress for Cultural Freedom in late 1959 about the possibility of Johnson-Davies running the Arabic division of their wire service, known as *Aḍwā’* and widely considered a success in helping place CCF materials in a range of Arabic newspapers and magazines.<sup>8</sup> The CCF was an early subscriber to *Aṣwāt* and would turn to Johnson-Davies repeatedly for advice in both practical matters related to printing and the material production and distribution of their new Arabic journal, as well as in regard to whose work they should publish in it. Johnson-Davies was only too happy to oblige, sending along the address of Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā and others (Hunt, Letter to [Denys]

Johnson-Davies), designing the masthead for *Aḍwā's* stationery, reading issues and offering critique, and checking in with the CCF in advance of publication to assess how *Aḍwāt* might be of service to the Congress. At one point in the early 1960s, the Congress—unwilling to pay the hefty fees Johnson-Davies was demanding for a translation of Naguib Mahfouz's *Children of the Alley* (and having barely heard of the author of the proposed volume of short stories, this young Sudanese writer by the name of al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ)—would eventually work out a deal whereby twenty-five ads sold for placement in *Ḥiwār* over a two-year period would earn Johnson-Davies (by way of commission) one round-trip visit from London to Beirut.

It would be in Johnson-Davies's *Aḍwāt* issue 3/4, in 1961, that al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ published his first short story, "Dūmat Wād Hāmid"; it was later translated by Johnson-Davies and published in *Encounter* in 1962 as "The Doum-Tree of Wad Hamid." Ṣāliḥ published a second story, "Hākādhā yā sādatī" 'Like This, Gentlemen,' in *Adab's* first issue of January 1962; and during *Ḥiwār's* five-year run he would publish portions of his novella *The Wedding of Zein*, his very short story series "Muqaddimāt" 'Introductions,' and in October of 1966 all of *Season of Migration to the North*. This latter in a double September–December issue that was for a moment indefinitely suspended and very nearly never released, the cultural Cold War having reached a fever pitch. On September 29, 1966, Hunt writes Tawfiq Ṣayigh that he is

very much concerned about the quality and the violence of the attacks which are appearing against HIWAR. I myself feel that when we are thus being vilified daily and with no one rising to our defence, there is no other course open to us save to suspend the magazine until these misunderstandings have been cleared up. What I am saying practically is that I believe we should quietly and without any announcement simply cease publication for the time being.... I need not tell you how saddened I am by this necessary suspension of our activities in the Arab world, but to carry on in the face of violent attacks seems to me foolhardy.

A few days later Hunt writes that "the magazine should be suspended for the time being" (Letter to [Tawfiq] Sayigh, 3 October). The timing of this issue of *Ḥiwār* would in the end, like so much else in United States area studies, depend on a new Ford grant: "the extraordinary number of HIWAR which you have prepared for October should be held up until the Ford announcement is made" (Letter to [Tawfiq] Sayigh, 7 October). While the funds came through, they were not enough to allay suspicions and *Ḥiwār* closed operations the next spring. Unable to weather the unrelenting attacks on the CCF, *Ḥiwār's* parting gift to readers was a recent study of Khalil Gibran's poetry by Ṣayigh and the first full volume of Ṣāliḥ's *Urs al-Zayn*, later to be published in English translation as *The Wedding of Zein* by Denys Johnson-Davies.

While he would go on to publish in other venues both before and after, during the tumultuous years of the 1960s, culminating with Ṣāliḥ making his name as genius of the Arabic novel for *Season of Migration to the North*, Ṣāliḥ's work could be found with abiding regularity in four journals friendly with or published by the CIA's Congress for Cultural Freedom. In the March–April issue of 1966, Ṣāliḥ's series of as-yet untranslated very short short stories "Muqaddimāt" 'Introductions' appeared, including one entitled "The Trial or Test"—"Al-Ikhtibār"—which opens as follows:

The two of them lived in Swiss Cottage. He was a lawyer from Durban. And she was a nurse from Nottingham and they were friends of mine. They used to hold a dinner party every Saturday. They would invite people "of all types," most of whom we would call "Afro-Asians" today. A good student from Nigeria, a university lecturer from India, a girl from Somalia studying social services, Egyptian students up until the declaration of the Battle of Suez, all sorts of the kind of people who buy *The Guardian* and read *The Observer* and *Encounter* and talk about Alan Paton. My friends used to vote for the Labor Party.

This is Šālih looking back from 1966 to the paradoxes of cosmopolitan London dinner parties as enactments of an Afro-Asian solidarity routed through the pages of *Encounter*, a CCF journal in which he himself had already published two stories translated from Arabic to English by Johnson-Davies and that CIA agents would carry as a signal to fellow agents, tucked under an arm so they might recognize each other when meeting for the first time (Saunders).

As Peter Coleman notes, "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'" (185). 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" (184). Limning the cartography of a former British empire and its trading partners both in its circulation and through the inclusion of translated stories from far beyond London, *Encounter* served as a cultural shuttle. It wove together a vision of world literature configured by area-studies with centers in London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome and extending out to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, even as the United States proved the ultimate source of both the journal's financial support and its cultural mission, which it routed through the Congress's offices in Paris. At the London dinner party in Šālih's story "Al-Ikhtibār," the affiliations of the Afro-Asian readers of *Encounter* are Western. It would be revealed within weeks of the publication of this story in *Hiwār* that the cosmopolitan ties cultivated through the CCF magazines were financed with CIA funding. As the Rand Corporation study of the CCF has observed, "broad dissemination" of literary works in the Cold War was of decisive consequence to its success. As a sense of linguistic simultaneity was coordinated through the Congress for Cultural Freedom across vast regions of the world and the United States inherited British and French literary networks, at the same time it tapped into the far older literary and linguistic networks that had been sustained over long centuries of Islamic empire and Arabic storytelling, seeking to orient readers away from a Bandung call to non-alignment and Afro-Asian solidarity in the 1950s, away from an increasingly Soviet-influenced Afro-Asian Writers Association come the 1960s, and surely away from Mao; and to orient them instead to the West through persistent acts of cultural infiltration.

Šālih's 1966 novel *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* [*Season of Migration to the North*] is poised to speak to this critical historical juncture of culture and politics in what many hoped was a decolonizing world. *Season of Migration* is a major work in not only Arabic and African literature, but also receives a great deal of critical attention in comparative and postcolonial literary discussions.<sup>9</sup> The novel has been reprinted in book form in both Arabic and English any number of times,

with the first English translation in the Heinemann African Writers Series in 1969. Routinely the sole representative of Arabic literary output on world literature, postcolonial literature, and comparative literature syllabi and critical studies (and here, we can take the novel's centrality to Gayatri Spivak's argument in *Death of a Discipline* as some index), this novel first appeared, all in one go, in the pages of *Hiwār* issue 24/25 (September–December 1966).<sup>10</sup> Set in the middle decades of the twentieth century between a small Sudanese village at a bend of the Nile, Khartoum, Cairo, and London, the novel's European and Islamic intertexts are woven from the opening line of the book with popular Arabic storytelling traditions, evoked also in the scenes that the narrator spends listening to the stories of his grandfather's generation and in the citations of characters and scenes from *A Thousand and One Nights* (Makdisi).

As though testifying to the uncertainty of the moment, *Hiwār* did not apportion out the novel into serial installments as was and remains common with Arabic novels in the Arabic press. Johnson-Davies, though, received *Season of Migration to the North* in installments as Ṣāliḥ composed it over the course of the 1960s: "Tayeb told me he was starting on a new, more ambitious novel. It was written out in longhand, and every few days at my office I would receive a sheaf of papers, a further episode. Soon the novel, entitled *Season of Migration to the North*, was finished, with the translation completed at almost the same time" (84). Perhaps these hand deliveries were edits or later chapters, written in 1965 or 1966, for Ṣāliḥ had begun the novel years prior, when he had finished the first three chapters while convalescing in a French village outside Cannes, following a long three-month hospital stay in Beirut in 1960, just a year before he would publish in Johnson-Davies's *Aṣwāt* (Shurīḥ 11). Written in the South of France and in London, *Season of Migration to the North* would soon be published in Beirut by an organization founded and funded by the CIA. Tawfiq Ṣāyigh had been interested in the novel since at least 1963—on October 29 of that year, Ṣāyigh warned Ṣāliḥ by letter of his desire to publish it in *Hiwār*: "I will not tire, as you see, nor will I raise the white flag, for if authors are like women, it being necessary to constantly chase after them, I will inform you that authors are as dear to me as women" (Shurīḥ 21).

By 1966, others had heard about the novel Ṣāliḥ was finishing and were eager to read it too. Ṣāyigh, unable to contain himself as he awaited the complete version of *Mawsim al-hijrah*, wrote to Ṣāliḥ in February of 1966 that "several months ago I told a number of friends about it, so they too are now waiting for it, and asking me about it" (Shurīḥ 66). *Rūz al-Yūsuf's* editor Fathī Ghānim, too, had approached Ṣāliḥ during a trip to London in 1965, and "said that he wanted to serialize it in *Ṣabāḥ al-Khayr* [Good Morning]."<sup>11</sup> Ṣāliḥ had declined, informing Ghānim that he had "promised Tawfiq, and it was Tawfiq and none other who would publish the story," continuing in the letter to Ṣāyigh, "I tell you this only to prove to you that I will keep my promise" (Shurīḥ 66). During this time, as detailed above, Ṣāliḥ's writing repeatedly appears in multiple CCF publications, including twice in translation; courtesy of the labors of Johnson-Davies, "The Doum-Tree of Wad Hamid" was published in *Encounter's* November 1962 issue, while "Handful of Dates" put Ṣāliḥ on *Encounter's* front cover in January 1966.

Ṣāliḥ's faithfulness to *Hiwār* and *Encounter* was at this point no small thing. At the beginning of that same letter from September of 1965, Ṣāliḥ had written:

I was astonished by Yūsuf Idrīs's sudden refusal of the [*Hiwār* short story] prize, for he had passed through London on his way to Poland. When I met him he was very happy and did not see anything that would prevent him from accepting it. The unfortunate thing is that he, unintentionally, has stoked anew the harsh attack against *Hiwār*. (Shurīḥ 65)

Šāliḥ was planning to publish *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* in *Hiwār* at a time when even Šāyigh's close friends were wary. Among those friends was Johnson-Davies, and he, too, was reluctant to publicly support *Hiwār*:

While both [esteemed Palestinian novelist and poet] Jabra [Ibrahim Jabra] and Tawfic [Sayigh] had written for *Aswat*, neither Jabra nor I had contributed to *Hiwār*.<sup>12</sup> Tawfiq was unhappy about this and asked us why we hadn't done so. We both answered that we unfortunately had doubts about *Hiwār*, and that neither of us was in a position to risk writing for a magazine that was regarded by many with suspicion. (71)

Šāliḥ had closely followed the *Hiwār* scandal and he knew that in 1966, when he decided to move forward with publishing *Season of Migration to the North*, that he was doing so in a journal that was widely believed to be backed by the CIA through the Congress for Cultural Freedom. As Šāliḥ related in a 2008 interview published in the Sudanese newspaper *Al-Ḥayāt*:

Tawfiq Šāyigh was, as far as I am concerned, a great poet who was in turn exposed to oppression in light of what arose surrounding the financing of the journal *Hiwār* in which I published *Season of Migration to the North* with the primary aim of supporting a friend who was being exposed to an ordeal during which many friends abandoned him despite him having been a civilized and broadly cultured person. (Sayyid)

Šāliḥ continued to support Šāyigh and the *Hiwār* venture even after *Season of Migration to the North's* publication, writing at the end of 1966, "I wish *Hiwār* health and endurance in the New Year, and it has pleased me to have been part of the last issue which was truly excellent" (qtd. in Shurīḥ 90). Šāliḥ had been better remunerated than any other *Hiwār* author, and Šāyigh admonished him in a letter, telling him that the "1400 L.L. ... [he paid for] ... *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* [was] the absolute largest amount I have spent (or will spend) in editing!" (qtd. in Shurīḥ 82). Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā's Christmas card to Šāyigh that year confirmed his support and admiration for Šāliḥ's novel, writing that "al-Ṭayyib Šāliḥ's story is the finest I have read in the Arabic language. Our congratulations on your incredible discovery!" (qtd. in Shurīḥ 97). When the journal *Hiwār* ceased publication entirely in April 1967, Šāyigh was putting the finishing editorial touches on Šāliḥ's *Urs al-Zayn*, which was to appear as a book published by the *Hiwār* press. The book was sent, along with a volume by Šāyigh, to "the journal's subscribers as compensation for what remained of their subscriptions" (qtd. in Shurīḥ 28).

Elsewhere in the *Al-Ḥayāt* interview, Šāliḥ privileges "preserving my freedom" as a writer, elaborating that "I had wanted to remain distant from the struggles of political works that were not nonpartisan while I paid the price. And I am determined not to pay the price of these concerns" (qtd. in Shurīḥ 28). Šāliḥ lingers in this interview on his determination "not to pay the price" of politics in

the publication of his novel, laying claim to his “freedom,” which is here coded as being “distant from the struggles of political works.” It sounds rather like what the Congress and *Ḥiwār* was paying for, an idyll of a non-Communist Left in which the cultural sphere represented a space of freedom from the dictates of political activism, state sponsorship, or guerilla warfare.

*Season of Migration to the North* would soon be hailed in the Arabic press as a masterpiece of the novel genre, with copies of *Ḥiwār* smuggled via airmail into Egypt, where Rajāʾ al-Naqqāsh’s aforementioned article, “al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ: ‘Abqariyyah riwā’iyyah jadīdah” ‘Tayeb Salih, New Novelistic Genius,’ was published in the journal *Al-Muṣawwar*. Al-Naqqāsh was not one, though, to be celebrating Ṣāyigh’s *Ḥiwār*; rather, his seminal article, which had established al-Ṭayyib Ṣāliḥ’s career, sought to recuse Ṣāliḥ from any possible affiliation with the dirty work of the Congress:

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 true nationalism, neither sick nor dirtied, and if it is regrettable that this novel was not published but in the journal *Ḥiwār*, 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 Arabic novel.<sup>13</sup>

“Neither sick nor dirtied,” al-Naqqāsh’s moniker for Ṣāliḥ stuck: “genius of the Arabic novel.”

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Told in the first-person voice of an unnamed narrator, *Season of Migration* begins with the narrator’s return to his Sudanese village and family after seven years in London studying English poetry. He finds himself—as does the reader—increasingly intrigued by the figure of Mustafa Sa’eed, who plays the part of a quiet, Sudanese merchant-turned-agriculturist looking to live a simple village life in now independent Sudan, until one night, drunk, he betrays to the narrator their parallel pasts as he recites English poetry. Over the course of the novel, we discover more about Mustafa Sa’eed—a child genius born in Khartoum—who excelled in the British colonial school there, eventually leaving Gordon College to study in Cairo and then London. Everywhere one looks in this novel is the scaffolding of the now collapsed British empire.

Ṣāliḥ’s protagonist, Mustafa Sa’eed, is born in 1898, during the last year of the independent Mahdiyyah state in the Sudan and the early years of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, when the Sudan was held out to the financial and ruling elite in Cairo, Alexandria, and London as a site of prospect and future investment and a setting for its novels. In Egyptian newspaper editor and author Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī’s serialized narrative *What Isa ibn Hisham Told Us* (published as *Ḥadīth ‘Isā ibn Hishām* in his family’s newspaper *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharq* [*The Lamp of the East*] from 1898 to 1902), an Egyptian minister avers that the post-Mahdist Sudan will “be a veritable garden for Egypt” and will “provide us with all our wants” (1: 125). Beirut-born novelist Jurjī Zaydān, owner of the important journal *Al-Hilāl*

[*The Crescent Moon*] and the publishing house Dār al-Hilāl, had been among the eye witnesses to the initial British failures to put down the Mahdi when Zaydān served for the British as an interpreter in the early 1880s, as he unabashedly recalled a number of times while promoting his 1892 novel, *Asīr al-Mutamahdī* [*Captive of the So-Called Mahdī*] in the pages of his journal *al-Hilāl*. Elsewhere in the Arabic press of Egypt—for example, in Faraḥ Antūn’s June 1903 novel, *Al-Dīn wa-l-‘ilm wa-l-māl* [*Faith, Knowledge, and Money*] published in his journal *Al-Jāmi‘ah* [*The University*])—such speculative imperial venture capitalism is decried in the name of Marx and anti-capitalist planned economies. Nevertheless, as I have shown in *Fictitious Capital: Silk, Cotton, and the Rise of the Arabic Novel*, a speculative boom gripped the Nile Valley economy on the eve of the 1907 stock market crash. Among the many fictions of finance in the Nile Valley under British rule, we find *Egyptian Gazette* reports on the prospects for gold mining, cotton, irrigation, railroad schemes, and the newly founded Gordon College in the imminently prosperous Sudan of Mustafa Sa‘eed’s youth.

Mustafa disappears one night in the late fifties—in a Nile flood during the early years of Sudanese independence, when socialist agricultural cooperatives were working to build a future that ran counter to that envisioned by Sudanese government ministers in Khartoum. The narrator himself works for the Ministry of Education in Khartoum and is privy to the contradictions capitalism has wrought. In the novel, Sudanese ministers—among whom we can presumably count the likes of Jamal Ahmed—drive American cars, covet air conditioners, and attend posh cosmopolitan conferences on education and development at the opulent new Ministry of Education building and at the University of Khartoum, where the CCF would hold a series of conferences in the sixties. The closer one looks, the more carefully one reads, the clearer the lineaments of the rise of American empire with the Cold War appear to the reader of Sālih’s novel, set against the legacy of British colonial domination.

In the novel, Mustafa Sa‘eed’s first encounter with the British government is around 1905 and it centers on Gordon College. Mustafa reminisces to the narrator:

That was the time when we first had schools. I remember now that people were not keen about them and so the government would send its officials to scour the villages and tribal communities, while the people would hide their sons—they thought of schools as being a great evil that had come to them with the armies of occupation. (Salih, *Season* 19)

Mustafa Sa‘eed, a young boy of about seven, is—as Albert Memmi tells us in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, one might in fact be—intrigued by the British colonial officer he meets and asks him, “What’s school?” The officer responds that it is a “nice stone building in the middle of a large garden on the banks of the Nile,” and Mustafa follows him there. It is the beginning of Mustafa’s journey through the ranks of colonial education, through the first and intermediate stages at Gordon College. The English headmaster will tell him, “Go to Egypt or Lebanon or England. We have nothing further to give you” (21). Mustafa heads north, up the Nile by train to Cairo for his secondary education and then finally to London, where he will become a Fabian economist of repute, a master of seduction, and an infamous murderer. As he journeys to Cairo around 1910 and through Alexandria

around 1913–14, those cities are recovering from the 1907 stock market crash brought on by speculation in the world market in Egyptian real estate, cotton, Sudanese gold mines, and complicated securities schemes enabled by British rule. After a decade of Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, through thick layers of colonial domination, Mustafa Sa'eed travels from Sudan, out of Egypt, to London.

In stories that Mustafa Sa'eed tells the narrator, we hear of Sa'eed's haunted past in London, where he weaves Orientalist-inspired fantasies to bed a series of women who then commit suicide until he meets Jean Morris, whom he murders. The scenes in Sa'eed's London bedroom flaunt their intertextuality with *A Thousand and One Nights*. A suspense story that indeed leaves us suspended in its closing pages, Scheherazade and Shahriyar make appearances in *Season of Migration*, wonders abound, the sun rises and sets, and characters act as genies and dream of buried treasure. Emulating the *Nights*, stories are cut off, evoking the fear of audiences when Scheherazade's silence marked the end of a night of storytelling, dawn having overtaken the imperial palace and leaving not only the king, Shahriyar, but also Scheherazade and her audience in suspense, waiting to discover whether Scheherazade would suffer the fate of the virgins who'd gone before her and be executed at the break of day.

The version of the *Nights* that *Season of Migration* evokes is a palimpsestic one, marked by the European imperial addition of stories like *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* to the collection. The *Nights* offer themselves as a catalogue of imperial and literary interference, and they are indexed in *Season of Migration to the North* when, late one night, the narrator stands drunk before the door of Mustafa Sa'eed's Sudanese study with his childhood friend Mahjoub, who exclaims: "The treasures that lie in this room are like those of King Solomon, brought here by genies, and you have the key to that treasure. Open, Sesame, and let's distribute the gold and jewels to the people" (Salih, *Season* 89). It is as though the wealth accumulated through colonial financial schemes and previous imperial expeditionary prospecting in gold mines might have been the work of capitalist genies. Later in the novel, the narrator decides to finally enter that room, Mustafa Sa'eed's study; he hears echoes of Mahjub's drunken rambles as he peruses the decidedly un-treasure-like contents of the study: shelves of books in English, a fireplace, an empty journal, and portraits of Mustafa Sa'eed's dead British lovers. Searching without finding answers, the narrator tells himself that "it was no coincidence that he [Mustafa Sa'eed] had excited my curiosity and had then told me his life story incompletely so that I myself might unearth the rest" (127). We hear again echoes of *A Thousand and One Nights*, its incomplete stories beckoning its audience with suspense at daybreak. On the next page, the narrator asserts: "I do not have time to proceed further with this farce. I must end it before the break of dawn" (128).

The narrator lets the door to Sa'eed's study lock behind him as he walks away from the voice of a believed-dead Mustafa Sa'eed narrating his murder of his last British lover, a Jean Morris who Mustafa Sa'eed compares to a "mendicant Shahrzad" (131); it is a story whose resolution has plagued the novel's readers to this point. The narrator relates: "I left him talking and went out. I did not let him complete his story"; and a few lines later: "My feet led me to the riverbank as the first glimmerings of dawn made their appearance in the east" (137). Forever in suspense as to what happened at the end of the story of the long-since-gone Mustafa

Sa'eed, we soon find the narrator suspended in the Nile, between north and south, east and west, life and death. And the novel ends:

All my life I had not chosen, had not decided. Now I am making a decision. I choose life. I shall live because there are a few people I want to stay with for the longest possible time and because I have duties to discharge. It is not my concern whether or not life has meaning. If I am unable to forgive, then I shall try to forget. I shall live by force and cunning. I moved my feet and arms, violently and with difficulty, until the upper part of my body was above water. Like a comic actor shouting on a stage, I screamed with all my remaining strength, "Help! Help!" (139)

The novel memorably does not tell us if the narrator makes it out of the water. In a sense, then, we are faced with a moment that Shahrazad's storied past can help us understand. Here is a narrator in mid-narrative, a narrative he abandons at the break of day to face the specter of his own death. The very moment of certainty, when the narrator decisively makes the choice to live, is undercut by our own inescapable uncertainty as readers who must leave him, suspended in the Nile, screaming for help. The unending suspense, the feeling of unease, of a lack of closure—the novel seems to be saying *this* is the constant, this, the recursive narrative scaffolding of empire.

Reading *Season of Migration to the North* and its publication history through *A Thousand and One Nights*, its frametale inherited from an imperial Persia, germinating and disseminating stories from the hearts of successive empires—Samarqand, Baghdad, Cairo, Paris, London, we are reminded this is not new. Arabic narrative is not new to empire, not new to the intertwining of patronage and literature in the service of political power and dominion. Indeed, Arabic literature was productive of and produced through the economies of Islamic empires past.

And then it is almost as though Šāliḥ's novel, and the act of its publication in *Hiwār* at this moment of international scandal and literary dislocation, is begging the reader to ask, so what? So what if the United States of America's Central Intelligence Agency created a Congress for Cultural Freedom charged with loosing culture from politics? Can't a reader just overlook that, can't a novelist just support a friend going through an extraordinary ordeal with the CIA? Can't the final literary product, something like the widely celebrated *Season of Migration to the North*, be read as trumping any claims American empire might have on Arabic literature? Could this history be ignored, shelved, ditched along with this entire essay? And wouldn't we be left in the end back where we were, reading the novel instead in celebration of the postcolony, as decolonial, as Arabic literary genius?

The stakes in a cultural Cold War are hermeneutic. American Cold War soft power strategy depends on the legibility of these stakes. The propaganda of cultural freedom depends on one deciding that, indeed, it matters not how the text was produced or with whose support, what is important is the text itself. It was New Critics like John Crowe Ransom and the *Kenyon Review* that inspired the workings of the CCF's call for literary autonomy, for a turn back to the literary text and away from its publication history, away from a cultural Cold War for Afro-Asia waged in the languages of past and present empires. And if we do this, if we look away, we have performed precisely the Congress's model of what literature should

be and how it should be read, namely, as autonomous from the politics infiltrating it: a text is a text, literature is for its own sake, and the writer's only commitment is to that freedom.

And if we decide to meet that "so what" with an insistence that the novel's publication history presses on the text—even, or perhaps especially, as it circulates in a *New York Review of Books* English translation more than fifty years and thousands of miles away from the 1966 issue of *Hiwār*, we are faced once again with the question of how to read it. Folding a reading of the novel against its publication history, reading the novel as being literally bound by the CIA, the novel becomes a history of empire's seasons of migration, a catalogue of imperial Persia, the Hilali tribe conquests of North Africa, al-Andalus under the invading Arab armies, Abbasid poetry, Fatimid Cairo, British colonial schools, and Orientalist modes of knowledge—in an American edition.

But what if we don't decide? What if we hold both the text's literariness and the indelible imperial imprint of the American Central Intelligence Agency's covert Cold War cultural operations in our hands at once? Gayatri Spivak, in *Death of a Discipline*, notes that throughout *Season of Migration to the North*, the narrator "will remain a vehicle of the undecidable" (58). In the final paragraph, when the narrator "decides," as readers we are left with a narrative voice that is literally in suspense—suspended in the river, perhaps drowning, perhaps on the brink of a life of force and cunning. It is 1966, the eve of the Arab defeat to Israel, a moment said to be one of Afro-Asian decolonization, when the CIA is revealed to be purveyors of a propaganda of cultural freedom and the Afro-Asian Writers Association's Permanent Bureau is to be found in Cairo, with increasing Soviet support, with persistent Maoist influence. What would it be not to decide?

The narrator, who works for the Sudanese government's education ministry in Khartoum, at one point in the novel imagines the total disbelief his friend Mahjoub in the village would experience were he to hear a government minister's recent speech, in which he warned against American empire and colonialism:

There must not be a contradiction between what a student studies in school and the reality of the people. Everyone who studies today wants to sit at a large desk beneath a ceiling fan and to live in an air-conditioned house surrounded by a garden and to come and go in an American car as wide as the street. If we do not pull this sickness out from the roots, a bourgeois class will take shape among us that has no connection to the reality of our life, and that is the gravest danger facing the future of Africa, even more so than colonialism itself. (143)

The narrator wonders, "How could I tell Mahjoub that this very man flees the summer months in Africa for his villa on Lake Lokarno, and that his wife buys what she needs from Harrod's in London, going there in her private plane?" (143).

It is almost as though Šāliḥ, standing before the scandal of the CIA's role in covertly propagating "cultural freedom" in Afro-Asia and across the world, in infiltrating the Afro-Asian networks enabled by Bandung's call to solidarity; before the contradictions of a member of an agricultural cooperative's inability to imagine the hypocrisies encoded in an plutocrat's fear of a Sudanese bourgeois utopia; before the persistent sense that, in this time of decolonization, "the gravest danger facing the future of Africa" might include "colonialism itself" (143)—it

is as though his novel *Season of Migration to the North* registers that the Cold War imperial politics countering the decolonization of Africa and Asia with a ruse of cultural freedom could only be witnessed through the perpetual undecidability of fiction, that in the face of the relentless persistence of empire, the scandal is to be found in the naïveté of believing it might be otherwise.

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## NOTES

1. Citations from Arabic periodicals and complete references to Congress for Cultural Freedom journals are also included within the article. The article draws from the following newspapers, bulletins, journals, and newspapers: *Adab* [Literature], *Al-Adāb* [Arts and Literature], *Afro-Asian Writings* (later renamed *Lotus*), *Akhbār* [News], *Akhbār al-Adab* [Literature News], *Aṣwāt* [Voices], *Black Orpheus*, *Egyptian Gazette*, *Encounter*, *Al-Ḥayāt* [Life {Sudan}], *Al-Hilāl* [The Crescent Moon], *Ḥiwār* [Dialogue], *Al-Ḥuriyyah Awwālan* [Freedom First], *Al-Jāmi'ah* [The University], *Lotus*, *Al-Maktabah* [The Library], *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharq* [Lantern of the East], *Al-Munazzamah al-Ālamiyyah li-Ḥuriyyat al-Thaqāfah* [The International Association for Cultural Freedom], *Al-Muṣawwar* [Illustrated], *New York Times*, *Ramparts*, *Rūz al-Yūsuf* (a woman's name), *Quest*, *Shi'r* [Poetry], *Transition*.

2. Letters and files from the International Association for Cultural Freedom Records archive at the University of Chicago's Special Collections Research Center (the IACF) are cited in the text by author and addressee, then day/month where multiple letters are cited. Full details are found in the works cited.

3. For a detailed study of the bureaucratic and intellectual history of United States area studies in the Cold War and its historical connections with intelligence and government agencies and private family foundations, see Lockman; Mitchell, "The Middle East," *Rule of Experts*, where he also briefly mentions the Congress for Cultural Freedom's early attempts to recruit Ibrahim Abu-Lughod as editor for their Arabic journal.

4. Issues of *Al-Munazzamah al-Ālamiyyah li-Ḥuriyyat al-Thaqāfah*, *Al-Ḥuriyyah Awwālan*, and *Aḍwā'* are held in Box 521, Folders 1–6, Series V: Documentation and Ephemeral Publications, 1950–72, Subseries I: Newsletters: Sub-subseries 2: Arabic Language: Miscellaneous, IACF.

5. See also Creswell, which offers a history of al-Khāl's role in Arabic poetry and the press in the early Cold War.

6. See third page of photo insert. The caption reads, "Stephen Spender, chosen by the CIA and Mf6 to co-edit Encounter magazine." "Stephen had all the right credentials to be chosen as a front," said Natasha Spender. "He was eminently bamboozable, because he was so innocent."

7. Declassified CIA report CIA-RDP78-00915R000700140010-8. Approved for release 24 Aug. 1999. Declassified United States Central Intelligence Agency documents can be found here: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/crest-25-year-program-archive>.

8. "Maybe we should after all give some thought to Johnson-Davies's idea of producing a Service in London with some Arabic staff he has on hand. If Ghorayeb presents us with one of his customary extravagant cost-estimates, then I suggest we consider producing it in London with Johnson-Davies and one of his Arab co-workers as editor" (Hunt, Letter to Meir Mindlin).

9. *Season of Migration* was immediately praised by Arab critics upon its publication in 1966 in the Beirut-based journal *Hiwār* and in 1967 in book form, and it remains an oft-studied and cited novel in the English-language academy and its classrooms. Hassan provides a thoughtful, thorough study of "the crisis of modern Arab culture and ideology through an analysis of Salih's fiction," informed by both psychoanalytic as well as postcolonial modes of interpretation (9). Hassan examines all of Salih's early short stories (such as "Letter to Eileen" and the stories of the Wad Hamid cycle, which would share their setting with later works), the novella "Wedding of Zein" (*Urs al-Zayn*), *Season of Migration to the North*, and the two volumes (1971 and 1976, respectively) of the incomplete *Bandarshah* trilogy, as well as his two late short stories, but without noting the connections to the CIA or the larger Cold War implications for Afro-Asian solidarity. Amyuni's edited volume and her other work on Šāliḥ are valuable biographical and critical resources, as is Šāliḥ and Jibrīl. Taking inspiration from Rajā' al-Naqqāsh's epithet for the author, Muḥammadiyyah also includes interviews with the author. Others are available in the Arabic press and in English translation in the difficult to find volume edited by Berkley and Ahmed. Šāliḥ was also a contributor to the London-based Arabic journal *āl-Majallah* during his many years of service to BBC Arabic in London. New editions of *Season of Migration to the North* continue to appear in Arabic and English and other languages, ratifying Denys Johnson-Davies sense in the 1960s when he finished translating *Season* that this was a novel that would be of interest to "some leading London publisher." For an excellent overview of the African novel in Arabic, including *Season of Migration to the North*, see Tageldin 85–102.

10. On literacy, postcoloniality, and the forked address of this novel in the context of thinking world literature, see Allan.

11. The title of the newspaper *Rūz al-Yūsuf* is a woman's name.

12. This is actually not the case, though the rhetorical point Johnson-Davies is making is nevertheless clear. Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā published his poem "Mutawāliyyah shi'riyyah" in the first issue of *Hiwār*, in November 1962, and would publish in the journal's fourteenth issue (*Hiwār* 3.2 [January–February 1965]), eighteenth issue (*Hiwār* 3.6 [September–October 1965]), and twenty-third issue (*Hiwār* 4.5 [July–August 1966]). He also presented at the Congress for Cultural Freedom's conference in Rome in October 1961 on contemporary Arabic literature. *Al-Ādāb* 10.7 (July 1962). For more on Arabic press coverage of the debates surrounding the Congress for Cultural Freedom's Arabic literary ventures, see Holt, "Bread or Freedom?"

13. Article reprinted in the critical volume Šāliḥ et al. 63–78.

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