

Writing Workshop #2  
ARBC212-f15  
11/2/2015

Directions: Read the following introductory paragraph from a work of contemporary (and excellent) scholarship and comment on it according to the guidelines offered in the text "Writing Workshop Etiquette".

In his classic study on the rise of Arab nationalism, George Antonius writes: "Without school or book, the making of a nation is in modern times inconceivable" (Antonius, 1946, 40). Of course, modern nations are not built in schools and books alone; but one need not discount nationalism's socioeconomic determinants, nor its historical specificity, to accept the premise of Antonius's argument: that is, the effect of culture and cultural institutions on the political formation of the nation-state. Though the nature of that effect is itself overdetermined, its location can in part be inferred from what Antonius then goes on to write concerning certain education reforms initiated in Syria in 1834: "[They] paved the way, by laying the foundations of a new cultural system for the rehabilitation of the Arabic language as a vehicle of thought" (Antonius, 1946, 40). In other words, one might say, a modern nation is inconceivable apart from a language in which it can be conceived and communicated as such. By articulating this linguistic link between nation and thought, Antonius thus points to the site of culture, or a cultural system, as the specifically ideological field in which nationalism is sown and from which national identities are reaped.

Jeff Shalan, "Writing the Nation: The Emergence of Egypt in the Modern Arabic Novel", *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2002): 211-212.