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Contents

Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
◌َ	a		◌ًا، ◌ًى	an
◌ُ	u		◌ٌو	un
◌ِ	i		◌ٍي	in
◌َا، ◌ٰ، ◌َى،	ā		◌َوْ	aw
◌ُو	ū		◌َيْ	ay
◌ِي	ī		◌ُوّ	uww, ū (in final position)
			◌ِيّ	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: http://rotas.iium.edu.my

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Book Review

Sherman A. Jackson (2024). *The Islamic Secular*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 527 pp. Hardback. ISBN: 9780197661789. £32.99.

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"Verily, deeds are [judged] only by intentions…"
(al-Nawawi, n.d., p. 11)
– a Prophetic Ḥadīth narrated by al-Nawawī (d. 1277)

While Sherman Jackson is well-known for his research and theorisation on Islamic law and African American Islam (Jackson, 2005; 2009; 1996), this monograph proves that Jackson can tackle a wide range of intellectual questions with prowess; this monograph also shows how Africana studies and Islamic studies can intersect in important ways, bringing Blackamerican theorists in conversation with Islamic studies, such as James Baldwin (1). "It should be clear by now that there is a confessional dimension to my thesis and its application. This should neither alarm nor surprise. As Talal Asad observes, 'The question of secularism has emerged as an object of academic argument *and of practical dispute*'" (11). The concept of "secularism" is oft conceptualised as an intergenerational trauma from one of the longest and most destructive conflicts in European history, the Thirty Years War. This sectarian, ostensibly religious war was known as the "Great Schism." This "age of religious wars" ushered in the concept of the secular public square and nation-state, where religion and secularism "implies a necessary dichotomous relationship" with each other, which Jackson calls "civilisational failure or civilisational schizophrenia" (3, 11). Jackson defines secularism as "excluding religion from the public

sphere, while somehow maintaining its own status as neutral" (27). Engaging with both orientalist scholarship, traditional Islamic studies, and classical sources, Jackson makes the case that classical Islamic civilisation not only had a concept of secularism, but that this concept challenges the Occident's claim that their secular is the universal Secular all must kowtow to. We need not bend the knee or prostrate to such a provincial concept; the modern Western secular is not "the only secular" (28). "It is precisely this binary relationship between the secular and the religious that the Islamic Secular calls into question" (27).

This *tour de force* of a monograph objects to the Western understanding of secularism by claiming that in Islam, the concept of the "secular" does not entail some fast-food emancipatory flight from religion, but rather differentiation from *Sharī'ah* (i.e. *dunyawī*). Unlike the modern Western secular, where secularisation aims to separate various pursuits from religion, the Islamic Secular maintains a symbiotic relationship with religion, complementing it rather than displacing it (28-29). Jackson stresses that while Islamic jurisdiction is extensive, *Sharī'ah*'s scope is limited, allowing for aspects of state policy, the economy, and science to exist outside its purview without being deemed non-Islamic. This notion of the Islamic Secular, devoid of concepts like secularisation and secularism, significantly influences Islam's interaction with the modern state, including the Islamic State, as Jackson elucidates through an examination of Islam's pre-modern juristic tradition. His overarching argument is in congruence with much of modern Islamic thought. For example, if one looks at *Definitions of the [Islamic] Sciences* by Ibn ʿĀshūr (d. 1973), one will see many so-called 'secular' sciences listed as Islamic sciences: linguistics, engineering, mathematics, natural sciences, studying foreign languages, literature, history, logic, philosophy, accounting, music, astronomy, geography, etc. (Ashur, n.d.). I, myself, have also heard, in person, such things from Muslim scholars at al-Azhar University, which includes departments on such aforementioned disciplines, as well as the Islamic University of Madinah. "Medicine, grammar, farming, weapons systems, educational institutions, and countless other practical disciplines have all been recognised as integral to the health and perpetuation of Islam, in which capacity of they all constitute (or can constitute) Islamic pursuits and without which Islam as a lived reality cannot be sustained" (373). This is in congruence with both Marshall Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam*

and Shahab Ahmed's *What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic* in which—as the quoted Ḥadīth above states—anything is *in potentia* "Islamic[ate]" (54-73, 376).

Chapters one through three represent part one of Jackson's book, where he establishes, vindicates, and explains "the theoretical foundations of the Islamic Secular" (15). Part two includes chapters four through six, in which he focuses "on the relationship between Islam-cum-*Sharīʿah* and the modern state" (ibid.). This style of inquiry and theorisation is pertinent because:

> The choice of the modern state as interlocutor is neither gratuitous nor self-serving. The chief function of the secular in the modern world has been to regulate the public space and the proper role and authority of religion within it. In this capacity, the secular has been invoked as the Great Mediator in the relationship between religion, society and the state, the state constituting the 'immanent frame' or 'über-context' within which all modern life takes shape. In this context, to speak about Islam in the modern world is of necessity to speak about its relationship not only to the secular but also to the modern state (15-16, emphasis is the author's).

Regarding so-called 'secular' activities, Jackson wrote, "to refer to such energies and efforts as 'non-religious' because they or their manner of deployment are not concretely grounded in or dictated by scripture is to view them through the prism of a very specific, overly narrow, and historically contingent understanding of 'religion'" (372-3). Throughout, the idea that has so permeated orientalist thought, that is, the *Sharī'ah*'s totalising jurisdiction is forthwith refuted by Jackson as not only factually, historically false, but also it reinforces the Occidental Secular over the Islamic Secular. Whether one accepts the claim that there was a premodern Islamic Secular or not, as shown above, modern Muslims do not accept the Occidental Secular, which would beseech academicians to decolonise and/or provincialise their conceptualisations of secularism (30-34). This is ultimately *The Islamic Secular*'s main contribution to the academe in a monograph of 527 pages.

What this book does quite well in part two is engage with other theorists on "Islam-cum-*Sharīʿah*" vis-à-vis the modern nation-state, such as Wael Hallaq's (2012) *The Impossible State*, Abdullahi An-Na'im's (2010) *Islam and the Secular State*, and Andrew March's

(2009) *Islam and Liberal Citizenship*. "The Impossible State proves less impossible than Hallaq assumes; the Secular State proves less necessary than An-Naʿim assumes; and the mere fact that Islam-cum- *Sharīʿah* can accommodate liberal citizenship on the level of 'doctrine' proves less meaningful than March assumes. In each case, my main point was not to refute these scholars' theses but to cross-examine them in light of the Islamic Secular" (375). This follows a general trend in the field where, elsewhere, I made a similar critique of Hallaq's argument that an Islamic state is an oxymoron, showing that the modern Ottoman *Mecelle* was based on indigenous Ḥanafī jurisprudence (Dudgeon, 2022). Was the late Ottoman state not an "Islamic" state? However, all of this is with the caveat "that Muslims are not necessarily bound to the modern state as some sort of would-be normative Islamic imperative" (197).

An ostensible weakness of the monograph lies in its lexical inaccessibility to laypeople. While I, personally, do not consider this a weakness as the subject matter is inherently deeply theoretical in nature, besides its philological component. Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, so-called linguistic "clarity" is a mere illusion of mutual intelligibility (Dudgeon, 2024). Naturally, philosophically dense texts such as this may be inaccessible to initiates of the discipline. While this monograph would be of great importance to graduate students, it may be slightly too verbose and theoretically layered for some undergraduate students. However, I would argue that this text was never intended solely for undergraduate students, but rather it is a manifesto to the academe at large. The age of modern secularism is being pushed to the wayside to make room for postmodern and metamodern conceptualisations of societal organisation. Therefore, I would have liked to see a broader engagement of theorists of the secular beyond Islamicists, such as Khayati Joshi's (2020) *White Christian Privilege*, or Paul Kivel's (2013) *Living in the Shadow of the Cross*, where they both demonstrate that vestiges of Christian theology still persist within Western Secularism's epistemologies, further provincialising the Western Secular. This is an opportunity Jackson unfortunately misses but remains for future scholarship to blast wide open.

Overall, this monograph marks a major contribution to Islamic studies, secular studies, religious studies, and both the social sciences and humanities more broadly. Sherman Jackson's monograph challenges Western conceptions of secularism, arguing that in Islam, the secular

does not signify a complete separation from religion but rather a differentiation from *Sharī'ah* (i.e. non-*Sharʿī*), maintaining a symbiotic relationship with religion (*al-Dīn*). Unlike the Western Secular, which aims to separate various pursuits from religion, the Islamic Secular allows aspects like state policy, the economy, and science to exist outside *Sharī'ah*'s jurisdiction without being deemed non-Islamic. Jackson's argument, supported by engagement with recent occidental scholarship and classical Islamic sources, contests the universality of Western secularism and emphasises the importance of decolonising and provincialising conceptualisations of the secular. Divided into theoretical foundations of the Islamic Secular and discussions on Islamic civilisation's relationship with the modern state, Jackson's work offers a significant contribution to the field—although its dense theoretical nature may limit accessibility to laypeople—following the trends of postmodern and metamodern conceptualisations of societal organisation. What Jackson does well is give us an entirely new framework to not only understand what is "secular," but also what is "Islamic."

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Joshi, K. Y. (2020). *White Christian Privilege: The Illusion of Religious Equality in America*. New York: New York University Press.

Kivel, P. (2013). *Living in the Shadow of the Cross: Understanding and Resisting the Power and Privilege of Christian Hegemony.* Gabriola: New Society Publishers.

March, A. F. (2009). *Islam and Liberal Citizenship.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Intellectual Discourse is an academic, refereed journal, published twice a year. Four types of contributions are considered for publication in this journal: major articles reporting findings of original research; review articles synthesising important deliberations related to disciplines within the domain of Islamic sciences; short research notes or communications, containing original ideas or discussions on vital issues of contemporary concern, and book reviews; and brief reader comments, or statements of divergent viewpoints.

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The manuscript submitted to Intellectual Discourse should not have been published elsewhere, and should not be under consideration by other publications. This must be stated in the covering letter.

1. Original research and review articles should be 5,000-8,000 words while research notes 3,000-4,000 words, accompanied by an abstract of 100-150 words. Book review should be 1,000-1,500 words.
2. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with a 1-inch (2.5 cm) margins. Use 12-point Times New Roman font.
3. Manuscripts should adhere to the *American Psychological Association* (APA) style*,* latest edition.
4. The title should be as concise as possible and should appear on a separate sheet together with name(s) of the author(s), affiliation(s), and the complete postal address of the institute(s).
5. A short running title of not more than 40 characters should also be included.
6. Headings and sub-headings of different sections should be clearly indicated.
7. References should be alphabetically ordered. Some examples are given below:

Book
In-text citations:
Al-Faruqi & al-Faruqi (1986)

Reference:
Al-Faruqi, I. R., & al-Faruqi, L. L. (1986). *The cultural atlas of Islam*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Chapter in a Book
In-text:
Alias (2009)

Reference:
Alias, A. (2009). Human nature. In N. M. Noor (Ed.), *Human nature from an Islamic perspective: A guide to teaching and learning* (pp.79-117). Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.

Journal Article
In-text:
Chapra (2002)

Reference:
Chapra, M. U. (2002). Islam and the international debt problem. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 10*, 214-232.

The Qur'ān
In-text:
(i) direct quotation, write as 30:36
(ii) indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30:36

Reference:
The glorious Qur'ān. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

Ḥadīth
In-text:
(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)
(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:
(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

The Bible
In-text:
Matthew 12:31-32

Reference:
The new Oxford annonated Bible. (2007). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Transliteration of Arabic words should follow the style indicated in ROTAS Transliteration Kit as detailed on its website (http://rotas.iium.edu.my/?Table_of_Transliteration), which is a slight modification of ALA-LC (Library of Congress and the American Library Association) transliteration scheme. Transliteration of Persian, Urdu, Turkish and other scripts should follow ALA-LC scheme.

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