fascination and open-mindedness, but there is also parody and satire. For example, Egyptian journalist-intellectual Salama Musa broached the idea of cultural fertilization and hybridity in 1935, long before post-colonialism arose. He writes: “Cultures mixed, made exchanges, and borrowed from one another … Borrowing among cultures fertilizes them, as if a living body were breeding a different living body—producing new breeds and then, through evolution, new species” (39).

Finally, the brief introductions to the selections are helpful contextual aids to students and the general reader alike. Given the current popularity of learning Arabic at American academic institutions, students will find having the Arabic original beside the English translation most useful. The *Arab Renaissance: A Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda* is a valuable contribution for students of Arabic language and culture, the humanities and the social sciences.

**Gerrard, Graeme, and James Bernard Murphy.** *How to Think Politically: Sages, Scholars and Statesmen Whose Ideas Have Shaped the World.*


This concise summary of the major ideas of sages, scholars, and statesmen from around the world—from Asia, Africa, Europe and America—is a good read, written in a lucid and enjoyable style. Assembling the major ideas of 30 thinkers ranging from the ancients to the medieval, moderns and contemporaries, Graeme Gerrard and James Bernard Murphy also offer a brief introduction and conclusion. Explored are the answers to many questions regarding the relationship of politics and philosophy, the nature of man and society, governance and representation, and the attributes of rulers and responsibility of governments. In short, the book sheds light on how ideas and ideals play into the reality of political power and economic interests, issues that are pertinent to global societies in the twenty-first century.

In addition to being historically contextualized, the authors’ approach is also analytical, critical and comparatist. A brief biography of each thinker is integrated within the text, which allows the reader to situate him or her in the specificity of the personal and historical time. For example, while Marx’s poverty-stricken environment in both France and in exile in London may have played a role in shaping his materialism, Hannah Arendt’s emphasis on freedom could have been motivated by her life in Germany and arrests by the Nazis for being a Jew. The assembled thinkers raise many questions. Is a human being a rational, social, political or religious animal? In what ways could thinkers affect “order, justice and harmony” (13) in human society? And what makes a good ruler and a good citizen? Confucius for one underscores personal virtues rather than rules and laws, while the Muslim philosopher Al-Farabi sought to reconcile Islam with Greek philosophy. A philosopher king, according to Plato, is the ideal statesman who seeks justice and truth, a stance that
“rests upon genuine knowledge of reality” (26). But the Florentine Machiavelli believed “the end justified the means” (81) because humans are “ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain” (82). Gerrard and Murphy rightly warn that, while some of these thinkers’ political ideas are idealistic or obsolete in today’s political world, other insights retain their relevance in the twenty-first century. Although the authors attempted to include a few non-European thinkers in the mix, the collection remains mostly Eurocentric.

The modernist section, the largest in the book, covers the major English, French and German thinkers, as well as the first European feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, thinkers who have shaped the modern world as we know it. In this section, we get the gist of the major ideas behind liberal democracy, utilitarianism, capitalism, constitutional monarchies, Marxism, feminism, as well as the motivations behind the major revolutions in European and American history. Political thinkers didn’t only debate the realities of their present but projected the possibilities of a just, rational and peaceful future for human beings, as they simultaneously reached into the past. The reader gets a glimpse of a time continuum where the past, present and future are meshed together. We discover that the American Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson’s Constitution, drafted in the late 1800s, reach back to the seventeenth-century ideas of the English philosopher John Locke. Most notably, the authors tell us that Locke’s major ideas were instrumental as the American Founding Fathers were laying the groundwork for their independent republic. These concepts are: religious freedom, a limited constitutional government based on the consent of the people and protection of property, and the separation of church and state. Some of these topics have resurfaced in modern-day America and Europe.

Gerrard and Murphy bring the discussion of how to be political up to date by including three women and a distinguished philosopher-turned-environmentalist to the list of world thinkers. How to Think Politically would be a valuable primer for the general reader and for introductory courses in political science and international politics.


Age of Coexistence offers a fresh look at the making of the modern Arab world. Given the plethora of studies that focus on contemporary wars and sectarian violence, this well-researched study employs Arabic and Western resources that challenge the prevailing perceptions about the region and its people. Ussama Makdisi conjoins the basic centrality of religion in the Mashriq with the idea of the process