READING IRAQ

CULTURE AND POWER IN CONFLICT

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I.B. TAURIS

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*In Memory
of
'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim
The Intellectual and the Martyr*

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In the preparation of this monograph, I used a transliteration font system for Arabic names from Arabic documents. Although unusual for books in history, political science, and cultural studies, I find this feasible, and also needful for readers to be well acquainted with the Iraqi cultural milieu.

Preface

This book develops a cultural perspective that makes use of history and narrative, memories, records, and anecdotes to present an Iraqi Iraq, or an Iraq through the eyes of its own people. The hypothesis of national consciousness that underlies this book makes use of cultural parameters that account for the rise and fall of secular ideology and religion, as well as their impact on, or negotiation with, material reality. Hence, while Middle Eastern or Arab contexts operate very strongly on national consciousness, there are also, and even more significantly, social and political facts that have drawn little attention from secular ideologues. The latter can come up with sharp critiques of political systems and movements, and offer very informing readings of Iraqi political history, but there may be a great gulf between their perspectives and those of the common public. A case in point is the disparity in views in respect to the leader of the 14 July 1958 revolution, ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim (executed in 1963). Iraqis, especially the poorer classes, lovingly recall him as the man who carried out a number of reforms, in contrast to how they feel for ideologues or even for his cabinet ministers who were also behind the plans for those land, housing, and health reforms. More than ever, Iraqi intellectuals have to bridge the gap with the common public, understand its needs, and rescue the country from chaos and disorder. Chaos is not random, and to let it continue will demolish whatever is left of urban life and structure. While granting the role played by many groups and individuals who are represented in the following discussion, there is a need for a free play of the mind, a new outlook and rigorous analysis to deal with the new situation.

It is not the purpose of this book, therefore, to provide a political history of Iraq, or even to write its recent history. There are many books and articles on its modern history and political life, but little is written on its cultural formations, its intellectual life, and the images and representations of its intellectuals and writers. The timeliness of the book emanates from Iraq's present situation, its precariousness and future struggles. It also relates to the underlying cultural critique that holds the discussion together: are Iraqi intellectuals in control of their country? Have they ever been so?

How much influence do they have on the populace, the masses that have been out in the streets since April 2003, only half of which are employed? How do they assess their role with respect to a conspicuous American and British military presence? Is it true that there is a religious revivalism poised against a secular ideology that has presumably failed to cope with the situation in Iraq and the Middle East?

No matter how the underlying cultural critique argues its case, its focus remains on representations and images of intellectuals, especially writers and ideologues. The word *images* is deliberately used, for it is pertinent to draw a line of demarcation between self-styled images, public roles, and the constructions maintained and treasured in the files of the security offices respecting every notable intellectual. Self-indicting statements or confessional testimonies are always there in every file, secured and obtained by various means, not necessarily to reach the truth about one's role, but usually to implicate the individual in further connections and relations that network and mushroom according to the design of the security office, which is the design and policy of the State as drawn by a single person or a group. Not surprisingly, these are usually bequeathed as a precious legacy to the next regime, regardless of political differences or animosity. This pernicious focus on intellectuals that cost many their lives is not unique to Iraq, but the country has lost, and may still lose, many. The intellectual has been, and will remain, central to any discussion of Iraqi cultural and political life, not only because of the role intellectuals usually play, but also for the damage they may do when they misconstrue reality and offer the wrong recipes to politicians. Studying images of intellectuals means also to investigate the dynamics of cultural life in Iraq. When I was cordially asked in September 1998 to offer lectures at Rutgers University and also at the Middle East Institute in Washington, I chose the title "Redefining Culture in Iraq," not only because I intended then to re-define culture, but also to draw attention to the significance of cultural dynamics for any regime, and Saddam's regime in particular. This should not be taken as a pejorative critique, for regardless of where a regime stands on political issues, and especially the issue of genuine democracy, its attention to culture demonstrates recognition of its power and role. Nobody can dispute the fact that Saddam's regime was very attentive to cultural manifestations and tried every means to co-opt intellectuals. Unlike dictatorships in Latin America, Saddam's regime tried hard to fill in the gap in the training of its cadres, their need for cultural grounding. The effort towards this goal was not necessarily highly successful, but it was there nevertheless. It sprang from a need to build a new state, led by one single party in the 1970s, and then ruled by one individual as the only leader in the 1980s, and consequently by his two sons.

More significantly, the effort emerged also in competition with other political groups: the communists, the democrats, the revisionist nationalists, and Kurdish nationalists. Organized religion was targeted for different reasons, however, as Saddam and secular ideology in general thought of religious activism as regressive and reactionary. Even ethnic partisanship was not permissible for Saddam as it was for the secular left, since it ran against nationalism as much as it discredited class struggle divides. The problem in this line of thought is not one of right and wrong, for there must be a better reading of the masses, their needs, and expectations if a state or a regime seeks prolonged survival. Repression of rituals is as harmful as the deliberate

encouragement of these at the expense of other issues like employment, health, security and the reconstruction of demolished infrastructure. The lessons of the Latin American experience, and an alliance of religion and political organization, had not taken root among the Iraqi secular left and the national movement despite the historical background for the 1920 revolution. The jurists and the shaykhs were left to devise their own means of organization to fill in the political vacuum.

Along with the realization that intellectuals could influence the masses, Saddam's regime tried hard to win over many, and there were numerous cultural platforms, including high-quality journals in London, fashion directorates, schools for ballet and music, and refined cultural centers to enlist the cooperation of intellectuals of every inclination or temperament. Indeed, many artists and writers were proudly involved in these as manifestations of good taste and a desired 'Iraqiness.' Especially prior to the war with Iran, 1980-88, and except for the backlash against organized communist writers, the cultural scene had the glittering façade of refinement and tolerance. The enormous effort to have a solid infrastructure and a total literacy in the same period won the appreciation of both the Iraqis and the international body. The cadres who were behind the effort were executed in the summer of 1979, not only for refusing to accept Saddam's self-imposed appointment as the President, but also for resisting the idea of war with Iran.

On the other hand, Saddam was quite conscious of his opponents, the Marxists, the democrats, some nationalists, and their cultural background and education. As those cultured groups might offer a better vision for an Iraqi state, he had to forge a competitive one drawn under his own supervision, as the many visits in the late 1970s to state sector departments indicated. His speeches were not a cultural show, an effort to outshine his comrades, for there he set the tone for privatization, but it was a privatization designed to change the social and class structure through the economic and social strengthening of his family and associates as the new private owners of those agricultural and economic departments. The move was combined with a vision of history as mainly political, for as Peter Gran acutely discerned, "social and economic analysis was driven out of history into fields such as sociology."[1] The state began to change into a monopolizing family. This deliberate restructuring went hand in hand with other efforts to penetrate upper middle class and traditional families, and also with a parallel attempt to undermine the mercantile society through interference, exile, and murder.

As the new society of the late 1970s had to claim some legitimacy, the re-writing of history took place. The effort was mediocre, for no serious re-writing emerged, and a counter-effort developed among writers to recollect and re-address recent history as if to buttress a pervasive nostalgia for a lost past. Certainly, a nostalgic mood is never truth-finding or truth-claiming. It is merely a human expression of disappointment. A phrase or a motto from the leader's speech on the past is enough to let recollections and readings of the past pass uncensored.

Iraqi memory of the recent past, as written during the last five decades, should lead us also to recognize the achievements of the state since 1958. State building, infrastructure, river dams and bridges all put an end to the floods that used to sweep Baghdad and damage many other cities and villages. The life of the poor improved as

never before, and corruption was almost non-existent until the 1990s. Nonetheless, Iraqis suffered from no less of an evil: political homogenization and wars.

Iraqi writers and artists offer us narratives of multi-faceted perspective with respect to these issues. These perspectives may align with what we consider factual records, but they may also challenge our views, and compel us to read Iraq anew, as a cultural complexity, and as a small but dynamic culture. The love and disappointments shown in these narratives betray attachment and even sentimentalism, but they also set the tone for a nonconformist discourse that has a non-compromising attitude towards such issues as independence, sovereignty, and national security. After April 2003, exiles and expatriates found the country in terrible shape, with new losses, new constraints, and failures. The old sites of innocent pleasure were gone, and the newcomer, the Iraqi exile or expatriate, is waiting endlessly for doors to open. Thus, says the poet Fawzī Karīm (b. 1945), a resident in London,

> In front of the Gardenia's locked door,
> A middle-aged man with the look of a retired man
> is waiting
> I also am a middle-aged man, just returned from exile.
> I squat a few feet from him,
> and without wasting much time, I ask:
> "Do you know when it opens?"[2]

The emphasis on this sensitive chord should alert us to the difference between this writing and the impersonal accounts that we usually come across in political chronicles and records or historical accounts. As the ground material for this book, Iraqi writings lend their commitment and emotion, making it different therefore in direction and method from other writings on Iraq.

This reading of Iraq deliberately attempts to engage its audience in a narrative of understanding. One may agree with the protagonist-narrator in Isabel Allende's *Eva Luna* (New York: Knopf, 1988, p. 271) that we "construct reality in the image of our desires," and many recollections and narratives in this book care for these desires and aspirations. Narrating Iraq therefore emerges as a number of itineraries, encounters, efforts, struggles, successes and pain, not only in response to a political scene, an internal crisis, or a massive military occupation, but also to natural disasters, as well as to history itself, and its manner of unfolding to every Iraqi. If this book offers something new and challenging, it does so through a narrative of debates and schisms that fit well into the so-called Iraqi disposition to argumentation which Iraqi writers since early Islamic times have referred to as a distinctive marker.

This monograph investigates the topography of a rich and diversified culture, thus revealing the deepest fears and highest aspirations of a nation—particularly during times of national crisis—that have ranged from political oppression to military occupation. It is this dialectic of power and the agitation of cultural memory that will ultimately determine what Iraq will look like in the near future. *Reading Iraq* in terms of "culture and power" is a navigational barometer of those seismic changes that will,

for a long time, determine the historical course of a troubled land, a fiercely independent people, and an exceedingly critical spot in global geopolitics.

The first part of this monograph has two sections that propose to study Iraq as a nation in the context of modern times, debating some popular concepts of urban and rural dualities. This part highlights the operations of history, inventions of tradition,[3] and dynamic consciousness before the gradual loosening of the grip of tradition under the pressure of secular ideology (including variants of nationalism and Marxism) since the 1940s, and the apparent regression of this ideology since March-April 1991, the date of the aborted popular Revolution in 16 provinces and the resurgence of government-sponsored tribalism.

In the second part, there is an overview of the dialectical interaction and divergence between power relations and cultural dynamics since the British military occupation of Iraq (19 November 1914 until 11 March 1917), their mandate on Iraq until 1932, and their virtual control until 1958.[4] Culture proved to be a functional and effective destabilizer as any survey of Iraqi literature shows. The first British arrangement to install King Fayṣal was not a smooth one, despite the early Shī'ī initiative to get a Sharifian descendant,[5] as the British tried to influence the King and keep him under control despite his national pride and his understanding of the need of the Iraqis for a representative government.[6] But this part of the present study does not limit its concerns to statecraft, for it takes issue with the early failure of the British in Iraq, their resistance to popular sentiments against occupation, and their undermining of their very claims for freedom and democracy. A gulf of mistrust emerged, and the masses soon responded positively to organized political opposition. Efforts to derive legitimacy for the King (d. 1933), albeit grudgingly done by the British, and to form a constitutional apparatus did not work smoothly, and the British soon realized that power was moving away from their own strongmen into the hands of the people, the masses in the mosques, the religious sites, the tribes of the mid-Euphrates, and the social and cultural assemblies. On 16 July 1946, the British Embassy dispatch to London was quite pessimistic after years of reliance on a local clique: "with the old gang in power this country [Iraq] cannot hope to progress very far," concludes the dispatch.[7] Over two to three decades a culture of social and political protest developed, and with it the politics of redemptive suffering and challenge gathered momentum, with sacrifices and losses, to be sure, but also with faith in a single unified Iraq. Such were the circumstances that drove the British Ambassador Sir Kinahan to contend in November 1943, "The old order might be very rudely disturbed at no very distant date."[8]

The third part of this monograph looks at the emerging Iraqi consciousness in terms of ideology and religion, for ideology, whether nationalist or communist, appealed strongly not only to the dispossessed and the underprivileged, but also to the rising classes with their sense of pride and independence. Political parties gained popularity to the extent of cutting across ethnic and religious demarcations. Instead of the early ascendancy in the 1930s of sectarian, religious or ethnic preoccupations, there followed political and ideological alliances and identifications that caught the Iraqis in civil conflicts and fights over agendas for Iraq's present and future. Certainly, key

Iraqi leaders like the enlightened businessman Jaʿfar Abū al-Timman (d. 1945) had already laid the groundwork for a politics of independence and Iraqidom (as distinguished from *Iraqism* with its non-Arab tinge) beyond the pale of sectarianism and ethnicity. While honesty and sincere commitment to national independence were Abū al-Timman's motivational markers, the case might not be so with others, for such broad concerns have the potential to end up in idealizations or political professionalism and opportunism. Both happened in Iraq. This part of the present study demonstrates how history and culture can be manipulated, how traditions can be reinvented, and how discourses get disrupted deliberately to control the educated, deceive the masses and ensure domination. These facts should not blind us to the achievements on the ground, for the post-independence state of Iraq since 1958 has proved successful in building up an infrastructure, and in making unacknowledged use of the plans of the Iraqi Development Board. This board that was established in the early 1950s by conscientious Iraqi economists, developmentalists and statesmen, set the stage for good use of oil revenues.

Many of these plans were cut short, or reduced to nothing, because of the advent of tribal politics, their penetration into urban life, and their fusion into nationalist idealizations, leading to an intentional misreading of history as a one-person act. Like any artificial or enforced reconstruction, these efforts ended up in destruction, loss, wars and misery. The recent history of Iraq bears witness to this state of affairs. The isolation of dictators is not new, but the lesson should be learnt that without a genuine democratization process, there will be a wide gulf between the people, their culture, and the dictator's value-laden codified language. Saddam's ultimate isolation, loneliness and reduced political and moral status, long before his overthrow, ran counter to his self-imaging and presentation of the hero, the indispensable leader, in 1977–80. In the words of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (d. 1999),

> A dictator
> Wearing the mask of a man
> Murders people, destroying them
> Claiming he cannot kill a bird.[9]

In the face of invasions, the genuine hero usually gathers the masses behind him. This was not the case with Saddam Hussein. In other words, he failed to live up to the image he tried hard to present, and caused the Iraqis therefore enormous losses. Yet, is Saddam a single phenomenon? Though he duplicated with genius and ruthlessness other examples, both eastern and western, his likes among Iraqis were not many. Writers like the late Iraqi Kurdish poet Buland al-Ḥaydarī (d. 1996) relate him historically to the ruthless Umayyad ruler of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj (661-714),[10] while the poet's persona identifies with the victim. Others may find an early nationalist-opportunist prototype in Yāsin al-Hāshimī (a *Sharifian* officer close to King Fayṣal,[11] who became a prime minister and a minister of finance and cabinet minister many times during the monarchy) who maintained his nationalist premises while enriching himself and his clique through alliances with tribal shaykhs.[12] Yāsin al-Hāshimī was also hailed once by high school students as an Arab Garibaldi or a Bismarck leading a unified na-

tion toward freedom and independence.[13] Whatever the defining lines followed by the analyst, Saddam can be a European product of ideology, as much as he can be an outcome of narrow nationalism.

Still Iraqi culture has a story to tell, as parts four and five argue; one of a counterhistory that shows how both tradition and history are made by the Iraqis, and for them, and how each moment in the life of Iraq offers a sign of communal identity that offsets rift, for life under the yoke of occupation (the Mongols, 1258 and the aftermath; the Ottomans, 1534; the British, 1914) was as bad as the one under a dictator, and in both cases, as the poet Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb said (1954),[14] "In Iraq a thousand serpents drink liqueur of flowers." This part deals then with cultural indices, including poetry, fiction, theatre, art and painting, travelogue, cinema, and āshūrā' processions, and it makes use of the history of radio and television stations, museums, galleries, coteries, and endowments to explain urban consciousness as it manifests itself in a poetics of place that shows forth in painting in particular. Appended to this part is an analysis of the emergence of public intellectuals, the role they played, and the suffering they underwent. This role will remain the most pivotal in Iraqi culture as it reclaims responsibility and commitment from politicians and builds on a cemented rapprochement with the masses. Some major Iraqi writers and poets, like Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī (1900?–1997), were so influential in the formation of Iraqi literature and political opposition that some critics describe them as "more like the voice of the nation's conscience."[15] Coming from the renowned Palestinian poet, novelist and critic, Jabrā Ibrāhim Jabrā, the tribute is not an ordinary one. Although considered a neo-classical poet, al-Jawāhirī received the warm recognition of all, as he "has become a part of the emotional, intellectual, and political experience of the entire nation no matter how much individuals differ in their attitudes toward the poet himself," adds Jabrā Ibrāhim Jabrā.[16]

With such figures in Iraqi literature and culture, we can understand the significance of their presence in Iraqi life and politics. Both literature and art have developed in time an emotive link, along with the binding cultural one, through those public intellectuals and artists whose life stories and production are household words in Iraqi life. These narratives fuse into national ones or even originate some of these, and create ongoing climates of argumentation and debate as befitting a nation celebrated and also criticized for so much interest in debates and difference. As this monograph emerged out of the lectures I offered over a period of five years, it has both the stamp and color of immediacy, urgency and, perhaps, breadth. It answers questions and hopes to offer a vision for a better acquaintance with Iraq since it has resurfaced in the news. Unfortunately, Iraq does not appear in media reports as the cradle of civilization, the forerunner in writing, law, and quasi-democratization among thirty-nine legacies that Samuel N. Kramer lists in his monumental work, *History Begins at Sumer*.[17] On the contrary, it appears as a country in transition, a subject of controversy and concern. As Iraq becomes more of an international concern, an object for debates and discussion, there is a danger of identity erosion. The more talk about a country as an object, the greater the risk of the eradication of its sovereignty. Such is the sad story that circulates in dispatches, reports, political arrangements, financial transactions, and military operations.

Yet, this is only one side of the story. The other grows in a discourse of opposition and resistance. It builds a counter-radicalization of sentiments, for nationalist feelings could be easily inflamed by challenge and defiance, leading probably to a resurgence of nationalism, this time with strong Islamic underpinnings in the aftermath of the seeming bankruptcy of state nationalism until April 2003. Islamic nationalism will take over if serious democratization does not take place soon. It has already begun to make use of a rich historical repertoire and repository of resistance to foreign rule.[18] Hence the question, so what's next? A radical change in discourse that seriously takes into account the origination of Mesopotamia,[19] as the British also used to call it throughout the 1920s, as well as a genuine reaching for a stable state may be the only way to establish peace and mutual understanding and cooperation beyond the actual concerns and objectives of the war on Iraq and its instigators and mechanisms, which are beyond the purview of this monograph. Iraq will be central to the whole region, and a great deal will depend on how a genuine democratic process can be reached and achieved. Duplications of privatization systems and the judiciary, and a total surrender of state formations will create chaos in no time and increase poverty margins.[20] A country of rich culture and almost total state structure since the early 1920s that used to offer free education and low-cost services should not be thrown into a counter-decentralization that will bring about disruption and anarchy.[21] Hence the emphasis in this monograph on genuine commitment to the specific *character*, if any, of such a rich country that has passed through prolonged suffering, British occupation, and brutal administrations. Understandably engaged in current discussions, this monograph does not adopt a single position, but it may well display and problematize the narrative of many Iraqi factions and groups that have thought of their account as "the prism through which all Iraqis must see their country."[22] Its reliance on narratives, accounts, recollections, and poetic or artistic works allows it to navigate freely towards a broad and unlimited vision. Even such significant contributions as Hanna Batatu's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* are not concerned with this as an issue, for Hanna Batatu's focus is on political movements, and not the cultural dynamics behind their growth.[23] Recent exceptions are Peter Gran's chapter on the Russian road applicability to Iraq's modern history in his *Beyond Eurocentricism*, and Eric Davis' book *Memories of State* that gives more space to the formation of ideology and collective identity.[24] Their arguments find more substantiation in this book, which also raises more questions and offers other interpretations. In other words, this monograph aspires to offer a reading of the cultural operation in the making of a society and a state in a Middle Eastern context.

Part One

A. Mapping Iraqi Culture: Introduction

1.
I have a deep love for the 'Iraq regions, and
No wonder that I a lover finds himself lonesome here!

<div align="right">Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī (d. 1064), in Nykl, p. 102</div>

2.
There was an East that like a child
Begged and cried for help,
With the West as its unerring master.
The map has been changed;
The whole world is aflame, and in its ashes
East and West are gathered
in a single tomb.

<div align="right">'Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd (Adonis), in *Anthology of Modern Poetry*, p. 199</div>

In *About Baghdad*, a documentary film produced in the spring of 2004,[1] a female teenager repeats that "Baghdad did not fall, it was occupied." Seemingly redundant, this statement is potent for Iraqis, conveying a strong sense of national pride and independence. The perspective offered in this balanced documentary is not random, after all, as it focuses on the streets, the asylums, the hospitals, the ruined libraries, and commercial centers. It is so, especially as the same school-uniformed youngster adds cynically that the revised curriculum of history should not tamper with the facts. While this perspective testifies to the power of education in the formation of consciousness, and to the Iraqis' politicized mind,[2] it also draws attention to an inherent pride in one's country, and to an awareness of the vagaries of politics. This historical awareness is no casual matter, and it plays a large role in disorienting enforced identities, including ideological constructions that are unable to negotiate an integral connection with the historical consciousness. Due to rampant stories of designs and

conspiracies carried out by foreign and occupation elements, along with harrowing details of the destruction and looting of libraries and museums soon after 9 April 2003,[3] a suspicious frame of mind has grown among people, as to the repository of mistrust. It dates back to the British mandate (April 1920), as conferred through the Treaty of San Remo in the virtual absence of Iraqi voices. All these implications are culture-oriented. To overlook or ignore these facts and others may well lead, and has already led, to serious mistakes on the ground.[4]

About Baghdad highlights many other perspectives and debates contentions, satisfactions and disappointments. It attends to the madhouses, and shows people whose minds are so brain-washed that they ironically repeat slogans they have been hearing for thirty years, unaware of the encompassing turnover of the regime with its other insanities and new troubles. Yet, the overall engagement of the documentary is cultural, summed up by that young girl, as she calls for a better understanding of her country. For to her, as perhaps for many Iraqis, no city of such glamour and history such as Baghdad can ever fall and no civilization such as Mesopotamia can easily disappear. Her views, as well as the views from the aforementioned sites, converge with an underlying dissatisfaction with the old regime, and also with an anxious anticipation of the end of occupation. These views are caught dialectically between the need for change and the desire for freedom from subordination. Both positions involve an engagement with reality and a vision to design it, and both engage the attention of Iraqis, inside and outside, as manifested in the poems of Saʿdī Yūsuf, a leading Iraqi poet in exile, as well as in the writings of other exiles and expatriates.[5] These cultural parameters are the most obvious and present in Iraqi consciousness as gathered from marginal or mostly disinterested sites. They are not at great variance with hundreds of dispatches on life in Iraq since 9 April 2003, the date which marks the enforced end of the old regime after years of devastating sanctions that ravaged the Iraqi middle classes and greatly damaged the infrastructure.[6] The value of these cultural parameters to the present monograph lies in the need to study cultural dynamics in Iraq, its intellectual history, its religions, ethnicities, elite and marginal groups, museums, libraries, art, literature, societies, schools, and intellectual circles. Significantly, even a cursory reading of the role of the Iraqi intelligentsia, especially the literati, is bound to demonstrate a cultural diversity within an Iraqi nationhood that is often constructed not only in terms of a glorious ʿAbbāsid past, but also in terms of a culture belonging to traditions of radical politics. Wasn't Iraq, after all, the center for a number of rebellions against the Umayyads, and even against the ʿAbbāsids? But, wasn't it also a scene of ravages and wars? Intellectuals and poets take pride in moments of power and glory, but in the modernist movements in the second half of the twentieth century, many were drawn also to the dispossessed, the underprivileged and the persecuted. Iraqi culture therefore has this tension between more than one consciousness, and history can work both ways, to soothe or to invoke anger and rebellion.

The implications of profiling Iraq are many, however, and they relate to a number of paradigms and concepts that have been current in modern Iraqi thought. As Peter Gran notes, these paradigms can be broadly divided between a romantic view of history as continuity, and a liberal view that allows more space to modernity, and to

its demands and pressures. The romantic paradigm may include the pan-Arabists as well as the adherents to Iraq's Mesopotamian legacy, whereas the liberals are more attuned to positivist views.[7] Both paradigms end up in the creation of a crisis state, but the outcome has something to do with the role of the elite, its power base, and manipulation of culture and power. The use of the past as well as the appropriation of folklore and popular culture is part of a mechanism to ensure a wider power base that can elude genuine catering to democratization processes and fair distribution of wealth. This ensuing outcome cannot be seen apart from a past of British colonial legacy and Ottoman control. The cycle of violence and domination informs and enforces patterns of reactions, in thought and manner.

Intellectual circles were active participants in national consciousness, and have been an irritant to every regime even before the British occupation of Baghdad on 11 March 1917. A cultural mapping of the 19th century, for instance, shows us this burgeoning consciousness in a large number of themes and discussions that signify cultural and political positions. The prominent Iraqi leader in the 1920 Revolution, academic, historian and poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, tells us as much in his book *Nahḍat al-'Irāq al-adabiyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar* (The Iraqi Literary Renaissance in the 19th Century).[8] The common or shared features in these narratives and accounts offer a distinctive discursive mode that highlights figures and personalities, accepts difference as part of a heterogeneous society, and emphasizes nationalness or Iraqiness within a wider concept of an Arab nation.

This understanding should not blind us to other facts on the ground. As long as there is hegemony, a ruling group is not worried about democratization. Yet we should not lose sight of other issues related to nationalism and nationhood. The presence of foreign troops and foreign rule plays well in the hands of any dethroned regime. The case is more so for nationalist powers in their reach for the masses. The masses rarely enjoy actual improvement in their standard of living during times of crisis, and may well join in a popular resistance to occupation. This is the situation in Iraq now. On the other hand, major ethnic groups, like the Kurds, may overreact in the implementation of their political presence and participate unwittingly in weakening Iraqi nationhood and themselves through misreading of the present situation, its need for clarity of vision and foresight. Kurdish intellectuals were never of one mind on many issues, and we need to understand their perspectives in the same manner as we read their counterparts among other national and religious groups in the mosaics of the Iraqi nationhood. The Kurdistan for which Sherko Faiq (Bekes Jr), the Minister of Culture in Kurdistan Iraq in 1991–94, sings may sound separate from the one included in Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī's singing for an Iraq where the "Tigris of munificence" drew his nostalgia while far away in exile in the early 1960s. Bekes says, "But, my Kurdistan/ there is no country/ more lovable than you."[9] Written in 1985, the poem also invokes nostalgia and revolt. In another poem, "Picture," the picture of the Kurd is that of the rebel, forced by circumstance to be always a fighter. However, set in the overall picture of other ethnicities, the picture overrules other divides that should be no less dynamic in terms of opposition and rebellion. While the Turk, the Persian and the Arab draw parts of the human body, it is only the Kurd who "drew a gun on his shoulder."[10] In other words, circumstance and hardships may per-

petuate a tendency to narrow the vision, and make it much smaller than the one espoused by Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī (1900?–1997), an Arab who was an ardent Iraqi poet, "the voice of the nation's conscience,"[11] with genuine love for the Kurds and full commitment to their rights. Kurdish intellectuals have their problems and discontents, as much as their Arab counterparts. They were no less critical of their parties: "Where are the political parties?" asks Fereydun Refiq Hilmi (b.1942) in a poem entitled "Political Parties" and written in 1996. Calling them to resist, he continues, "They wasted six years, just mucking about/ they learned no lesson from the past."[12] The Kurdish issue has been central to Iraqi consciousness, and a coherent effort to have it solved cannot bypass its integral Iraqiness, its interrelatedness to other Iraqi problems. Hence, the role of intellectuals should be larger than the ones exercised by politicians under the demands and needs of the present moment. This role is supposedly grounded in a deep and pervasive political consciousness that has distinguished an Iraqi climate of ideas.

While seemingly desirable in the creation of a highly modernized society, this kind of consciousness, whether rural or urban, has been a headache to appointed or national regimes and their advisors who were keen on sustaining a status quo. As early as June–July 1932, the U.S. academic Paul Monroe, a professor at Columbia University, who chaired an advisory committee for education in Iraq, warned against the consequences of higher education: "We have conserved a clear idea that the increase of young people with higher education is dangerous to political stability in any country. This is the situation now in many Eastern nations."[13] Monroe's negative view of higher education in newly independent states stemmed from a scenario of probable mass unemployment, whereby "enlightened idles could lead angry and frustrated people to political disorder."[14] The recommendation was rejected by nationalist educators, such as Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 1968), who were surprised to see an educator thinking in terms of the status quo.[15] The two perspectives are not randomly articulated. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī stood for change, and he considered the Arab nation a homogeneous entity that is bound to undergo a transformation to rid itself of such evils as division and disunity, which he usually leveled at foreign powers and their clients inside. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī rejects such expressions as "Arab peoples," for to him there is only one Arab nation, as he argues in his rejoinder to a speech by the acclaimed Egyptian littérateur Aḥmad Amīn,[16] whom he otherwise greatly appreciated for his contribution to the idea of an Arab renaissance.

The rejoinder was only a continuation of his earlier response to an article in *Al-Siyāsah al-Miṣriyyah* on 23 April 1929, entitled "Bawādir al-nahḍah al-fikriyyah al-jadīdah" (Harbingers of a New Intellectual Renaissance) which he also greatly appreciated, but also with added corrective notes in order to enhance the "natural role" of Egypt because of its historical and geographical position.[17] On the other hand, the idea of the status quo which was advocated by the U.S. team of 1932 runs counter to these formulations that argue for a renaissance and a transformation. Surprisingly Monroe's views as reported by Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī contradicted his foreword to Fāḍil al-Jamālī's doctoral thesis, published as a book in 1934. As a mentor, he accepts Fāḍil al-Jamālī's thesis: "The Arab revival includes a political element made manifest in the development of a spirit of nationalism; a cultural element which includes the literary,

intellectual and educational revivals; and a religious element, as shown in the profound changes now going on in the Islamic faith."[18] He further describes the social and industrial elements such "as no less profound but less easily labeled and identified." The discrepancy suggests that either the reporting was inaccurate or Monroe was inconsistent in his views. To Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's nationalist mind, a conspiracy was hatched by a number of Shīʿīs and pro-U.S. teachers who deceived Monroe and surrounded him with "a wall" of secrecy.[19] He rightly discerned fear among the British from organized student demonstrations and political confrontation, but he accepted views and attitudes only as a totality to fit into a homogeneous vision of a nation.[20] His vision of the nation was only partly acceptable in the 1920s and 1930s, albeit with more nationalness (i.e., Iraqiness) than nationalism. This vision evolved as a community of discourses or an episteme that was challenged only later by public intellectuals, especially in the 1940s and 1950s with the growth of the social sciences.

It is worth noting, however, that a totalizing nationalist discourse was effectively present upon the acceptance of a King from Mecca as the ruler for Iraq. This discourse received further endorsement and intellectual substantiation in education and was proliferated in the press and other mass media. Counter readings such as Muḥammad Fāḍil al-Jamālī's book *The New Iraq: Its Problem of Bedouin Education* (1934) were not published yet, and Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's ideology and his personal expertise within a closely connected elite made his views widely noted even among people who objected to his sectarianism, pan-Arabism, anti-Baʿth critique of idealisms, and opposition to Marxist thought. These differences set him conversely within a nationalist thought which had such followers later as the academic ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bazzāz (d. under torture, 1969–70) and which opted broadly for an Arab independence and unity. Education was his priority towards this goal.[21]

The British gradually recognized the rising educated class and blamed their puppet regime for negligence and selfishness in the 1940s when discontent was simmering for a number of reasons. These reasons can be brought together under the rubric of culture in its broad terms, as I will explain later. Yet, recent events in Iraq, since April 2003, also demonstrate ignorance of an intellectual history and disregard for factual and moral issues. No obvious indication shows serious reading of the history of the country, even its most recent one under the British until the overthrow of the monarchy on 14 July 1958.[22]

As a means toward an intellectual history, literature, popular art and writing at large can offer a significant narrative to complement anecdotal and factual detail, as this monograph argues. In the absence of a substantial record of public recollections, narratives as well as songs operate on the level of collective consciousness. Especially in matters that demand a panoramic view, unlimited by interest, these come to our rescue to grasp the formation of thought. For, how can we understand the emergence of organized politics after the recognition of Iraq as an independent state, as a member of the League of Nations in 1932, if we cannot discern the role of the newly educated classes, and their paradoxical sincerity and opportunism, as traced and narrated in writing and popular art? On the other hand, how can we look at these educated elites in terms of decolonization, if we accept the popular view that those who go to the West to study come back with pro-Western conceptualizations of modernity that

have no connection to their locales and cultures? Narrative in particular offers a broad perspective to complement history and remedy its possible shortcomings. The value of new historicism, coupled with discourse analysis, may prove methodically useful in this regard. Let me cite two examples to show the role of literary texts in reading Iraq, one from Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb's short story, "A Pillar of the Tower of Babel," written in 1936, and included in his novel *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (1939), and another from *A Sky So Close* (2001), a novel by the young woman novelist Betool Khedairi.

Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb's short story is about Dr. Ibrāhīm who comes back from London University, and who desires a post which cannot be obtained by ordinary means. Hence he is bent on using every means toward this end. Coming back in a period of political transition, "he was an active member of the Young Men's Muslim association, because he was a Muslim, zealous for his religion; and of the Young Men's Christian Association because his wife was a religious Englishwoman; and of the Society of Freemasons, because he was a man of high moral principles; and of the Muthannā ibn Ḥarithah al-Shaybānī Club, because he was a staunch nationalist."[23] Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb's narrator adds: "He made bitter attacks on the Shi'ites and dubbed them 'foreigners' before zealous Sunnites, in order to win the trust of his party, while he confessed before the communists that he had been a communist when he was a student." If somebody questions his opportunism, he has an answer for this: "The Heir Apparent of Great Britain had done exactly the same."[24] The hybrid intellectual comes back with an opportunist mind, the narrative says, but it is a mind that fits a circumstance where the major players have no connection with the public. Landlords, officers, and prominent officials fight to consolidate their interests, while sincere political engagements are put aside.

The scene depicts Baghdad's elite of the 1930s, its alliances and groups. But does this apply to the rest? Betool Khedairi shows the other side of the coin in her *A Sky So Close,* a narrative that depicts the female protagonist as she grows up in Baghdad of the 1970s and the 1980s, during the war with Iran. Despite the disclaimer of any resemblance with reality, the narrative sounds like a veiled autobiography with a very dense detailed recollection of a childhood experience. The father who comes back from the United Kingdom with a Scottish wife looks no longer the same to his wife: "He's also attached to this rural lifestyle, which reminds him of his youth. I can hardly believe this is the same man I met when he came to study in England."[25] The child, who is also the narrator, becomes the battling ground in a cultural conflict on ways of education and upbringing. "Woman, you're talking about a culture you don't understand. I've warned you about the differences we'd face in raising her." He adds: "we're now in the Arab, Islamic world, and she and I are Muslims."[26] Homecoming for the father entails a positive integration in society, especially when matters relate to the education of his daughter. Yet, the family conflict itself is the one which narrow nationalism uses to justify its rejection of these intercultural marriages. Especially under Saddam's rule, people with foreign wives would not be given important posts. Loyalty is in doubt as long as there are double commitments, identities, and connections, argue nationalist jurists. Perhaps people can cite examples to corroborate the legitimacy of this rule. Yet, they may well miss the other side of the matter: the prospects of intercultural fertilization, and the horizons of exchange which the Arabs were well

aware of in the past. For the child in the same novel, these debates become a venue for more freedom: "Your disagreements allowed me to mingle with both worlds. Just like our house, which was in itself two worlds?"[27] These words may apply to Iraq, its multiple identities within its broad Arab context and historical background. Even when debated to prove a point, this fact should make allowance to heterogeneity and difference as potentially empowering.

While not intending to subscribe to a transcendent view of a romanticized implication, the emphasis here on temperament and character derives its thrust from contemporary Iraqi writing and lore. It was a given among the intelligentsia in the 1950s to speak of a "character," especially after the Iraqi sociologist's 'Alī al-Wardī's lecture in 1951, "Shakhṣiyat al-fard al-'Irāqī" ("The personality of the Iraqi individual") which appeared in book form in the same year. The narrative of Iraqi life, history and self tends to focus on specific aspects that are also debated in counter-accounts. Both positions betray some self-consciousness which defines Iraqiness vertically and horizontally as a combination of factors and effects. The propensity to categorization is rigorously interrogated by many Iraqi intellectuals and nationalist or leftist activists who look upon this as no more than subordination to verbal constructs that cannot stand rigorous analysis.[28] Nevertheless, a narrative of Iraqiness does exist, and it finds its justification in historical accounts, as will be clear in due course, but a sociologist and littérateur like 'Alī al-Wardī may define it as a number of traits that show forth in a tendency to "*jadal*" (argumentation), or disputation.[29] Yet, he locates this in socio-cultural, geopolitical and economic contexts. In poetry these may imaginatively evolve into a dwelling or habitat for memory to settle in. We can read the following by the Iraqi woman pioneer in modernist poetry Nāzik al-Malā'ikah (b.1923) to understand this amalgamation of historical and geographical factors:

> From the temples' incense of bygone Babylon
> From the clamor of waterwheels in southern deserts
>   From the nocturnal cries of a turtledove
> And the echo of harvesters chanting the sunset tune
>   That voice, your voice, will return
>   To my life, to the years' audition,
>   Haggard with the scent of a sad evening,
> Ears of grain weighting it with raving fragrance.[30]

The romanticized recollection assumes full meaning only in this time and space, which is a recurrent trope in contemporary writing. To speak of a *character* is deliberately articulated then, for as long as we believe in a popular culture of a people, their lore, ways of life, customs, patterns of commitment and deference, forms of address, art and singing, and processes of interaction and communication, we assume a specific identity, with certain structures of feeling that underlie behavior, response and thinking. In two articles in 1957–1959, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah wrote on the Iraqi character as it appears in popular songs. She argues that between passion and love for land, there develops a character that takes art, and singing in particular, as a need rather than an outlet for joy and celebration of life.[31] 'Alī al-Wardī wrote of this character as the

product of circumstance, wars, troubles, and the proximity between Bedouin deserts and urban centers that have led to cultural ambivalence, with a dominating mood of sadness and longing as portrayed in Iraqi popular songs.[32] This is one among many readings of Iraqi life and culture. Approaches to this issue may vary, in view of positions and interests, but there are general features and aspects that constitute an attitude and that enable us to speak of heterogeneity within a seeming homogeneity.

In the following parts of *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in a Middle East Society*, I explore the deep-rooted connection between the varied forms of cultural identity and the institutional foregrounding of political power in the modern history of Iraq. The analytical framework used here has a single purpose: to understand the contemporary predicament of an ancient land and the historical seat of a cosmopolitan culture. Drawing on both high and popular registers of cultural expression, I identify tropes of courage, suffering, and martyrdom located in the collective cultural consciousness of the Iraqi people. No less focused is my effort to demonstrate how the artificially-imposed discourses and institutions of constitutional monarchy, elitist ideology, and especially Saddam's brand of Ba'thism have historically fought so hard to take root in the Iraqi cultural sensibilities that they provoked a heterogeneous counter-culture of resistance.[33] Saddam's Ba'thism could be seen in terms of a larger pan-Arab legacy, but it certainly destroyed the already burgeoning marriages between nationalism and Marxism in Iraq and the Arab world. It also dealt a heavy blow to the Ba'th effort since 1964, and after the Sixth National Congress, to develop a self-critique and a socialist outlook with a Marxist underpinning. The late July 1979 ideological cleansing in Iraq, including the execution of no less than 500 leftist Ba'thī cadres, turned the party into an apparatus for coercion and terror.[34] In Muẓaffar al-Nawwāb's words,

> The mariner of mariners was silent,
> Keeping his story hidden inside a living sea-shell
> Because in a police state, termites can even hatch their eggs
> Between a man and his wife in their bed-clothes.
> They even assign the sex of the newborn,
> And determine precisely where on his buttocks to put the sultan's seal.[35]

While this applies to every police state, it nevertheless problematizes a number of issues that relate to secular ideology, party politics, nationalism, and the Shī'ī subtext of *taqiyyah* or reticence and even dissimulation of one's faith under duress or uncongenial circumstances. In other words, every seemingly intact formation or structure in Iraq has a niche and a rift that may have an ancestry in recent or ancient history, as the following parts argue.

B. Reading Iraq Now:
Functions and Markers of Culture

> This is our house; we play here, live here,
>   So, why should strangers interfere?
>   Popular song, Yūsuf al-ʿĀnī, *Al-Miftāḥ*, p. 289.

The emphasis on cultural dynamics in reading Iraq emanates from its own history, not only as an inheritor of past glories, Mesopotamian and Islamic, but also as the target of invasions and occupations, usually carried out under pretexts and proclamations of preemptive attacks or needful change. Such were Alexander's invasion of Babylon, the Mongols' devastation of Baghdad in 1258, the Ottoman conquest in 1534, then in 1834 until 1914, the British (1914–1932) and the British-American occupation (9 April 2003).[1] Yet, no invasion felt at ease with the Iraqi past, and its bearing on the present. It deprives the occupying power and the invader of the claim of civilization, which is the legacy of modern imperialism. Even the fact of dictatorship and abuse of one's people does not offer a justification for invasion which fits well in the neo-imperial normative agenda. Dictatorships oppress people but are never careless in respect to nation-building. To be a dictator means to see one's self through one's creation as a mirror to reflect the dictator's power and glory. Hence, a dictator's state can be an abortive target to imperialist or neo-imperialist ideology and propaganda, for there is no poverty, ignorance, and backwardness to redress, as is seen in the usual claims of colonialist discourse. Without the old colonialist discourse, neo-imperialism searches for alternative excuses and justifications which may prove fatal too. There is no civilizational message, and the liberation claim has exhausted itself since Napoleon in Egypt in 1798, and General Maude in Iraq 1917. On the other hand, the idea of reconstruction, as an accompaniment to invasion—as both an actual investment, rather than the search for new markets, and as a strategy to appease occupied nations—justifies itself only in more destruction and death, with total acquisition emerging as its real goal.[2] Yet, these may provoke further troubles, unrest and bloody

encounters. It is in these instances that culture serves as pacifier and instigator, depending on the manipulation of sources and venues.

To study culture as such may demand a number of classifications and typologies. In his reading of African situations, Ali A. Mazrui offers seven functions of culture that may serve as directions in this reading of Iraq[3]: 1. as a provider of "lenses of perception and cognition," depending on one's education, to look upon the outside powers and the world at large; 2. as articulator of response and human behavior, according to one's origins and understanding; 3. as supplier of evaluative terms, in matters of moral, social or aesthetic nature; 4. as a basis for identification and affiliation; 5. as a mode of communication through language and its variants and vernaculars; 6. as definer of stratification, rank and status; 7. as a telling power in economic patterns of consumption and production. More important are the types of dependency in relation to the colonizer, between *surplus need* and *deficit control,* in Mazrui's usage. Especially in African countries, the two types worked in terms of cultural and economic power relations. The writer quotes an exceptional remark by the Kenyan ruler Jomo Kenyatta: "When the white man came to Africa he had the Bible and we had the land. And now? We have the Bible and he has the land." Culture could be decisively pursued to achieve economic control. But, it can also be a strong bulwark in the face of economic and political designs, as the following review of cultural functions may demonstrate.

Cultural lenses of perception and cognition usually build up a comparative scale whereby terms of negotiation are set out to prove a point, not only to the colonizer, but also to the natives. As early as June 1928, the Iraqi *Journal of Education and Learning,* directed by the educator and staunch pan-Arabist Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, ran a survey of aptitude tests among Iraqi and American schools, and reached the conclusion that they are of the same standard and aptitude. The message targets the British, to be sure, for he wanted to ensure due recognition of the Iraqis in running their country. When used to further Iraqidom in the financial committee for the parliamentarian council, these tests proved "that the glories of the Iraqis in the past are among the best indicators of the possibility that these inherited talents can glitter anew to continue and enhance our civilization."[4]

On the other hand, the awareness of the Mesopotamian heritage, its presence in sites and details, makes every newcomer to Iraq captivated by both the glamour and burden of this fact. The King used it in his coronation address of August 1921, despite its seeming undermining of his appointment by the British as an Ḥijāzī, not Iraqi in the first place: "this land has been in past generations the cradle of civilization and prosperity, and the center of science and knowledge," he asserted.[5] Yet, the burden of heritage may go well beyond pan-Arab sentiments, as the British were soon to realize. Indeed some *Sharifian* officers who were highly recommended by the future king of Iraq and by the so-called Lawrence of Arabia and Major H. W. Young[6] were reported "touring their own country in disguise with the object of obtaining signatures to anti-British manifestos," despite their early collaboration with the British "as the mainstay of their revolt against the Turks," says Young.[7] "There is something very wrong somewhere," he surmises.[8] Obviously, the British never thought that the Iraqis were as opportunist in this matter as the British. They were making use of the British

to get rid of the Ottomans, but not to sustain a British occupation. Young's dismay and his " there is something very wrong somewhere" should lead us to the origination of nationalism, both in its Iraqi and pan-Arab dimensions, as a modern consciousness that could well cut across tribalism while serving the group interest in terms of Ibn Khaldun's group solidarity. While nationalness had already been present in the discursive mode of the nineteenth-century, and among the learned Shī'ī clerics,[9] the nationalist or pan-Arab attitude received great impetus as ideology only later in reaction against *Turkification* processes in 1913. References to Ibn Khaldun, with which Iraqi writings abound since the late 1920s, testify to an effort to conceptualize the two, nationalness and nationalism/Islamism, in terms of Iraqi geography, history and present conditions. His conceptualizations of group solidarity and the urban-Bedouin tension and strife offered some denominators and paradigms to cope with the nature of the Iraqi society and its national aspirations in a pan-Arab context. Nationalists like Sāmī Shawkat who was the director for education (1931–35) might be appalled by Ibn Khaldun's use of *A'rāb*, thinking it applies to Arabs at large, while Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī found it an opportunity to pick on this and correct infantile nationalism, especially as Shawkat was veering away from his own plan for education towards "what the clique around him calls American systems without due thought and prudence."[10] But the difference in viewpoint cannot be limited to use of terms, for Shawkat and al-Jamālī worked as a team with Monroe. Al-Jamālī had his own definition of nationalism as a broad civic loyalty which "should not be concentrated on Iraq only. All the Arab countries should receive an equal share." Relating this to his plan for education, he adds: "The tribes should be taught to realize the importance of bringing into existence that Arab federation which is the hope and goal of intelligent Arab leaders throughout the world." So far, there is seemingly no difference between him and Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, but the qualifications to this statement warn against idealization. The Arab, he argues, "is known to be 'a good mixer,' and racial prejudice, in the Western sense, is practically unknown."[11] Hence, he argues for nationalism that "cherishes more and more cordiality and friendship toward minority factions and neighboring nations."[12] The difference goes beyond the allusion to neighboring nations which Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī was unhappy with, for nationalism is defined as a "tool that may be used for good or for evil."[13] To Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, such definitions and conceptualizations can unsettle many of his nationalist tenets, especially as they come within a program that requires education "to be purposeful" with a goal to be "a national plan for the reconstruction of the country."[14]

More importantly, the writings of al-Jamālī, especially his doctoral thesis at Columbia University on Bedouin education in Iraq (1934) which was a source for the sociologist 'Alī al-Wardī's work on the Iraqi character, along with the latter's work on Ibn Khaldun, were in line with Muhsin Mahdi's book on the same. These and the prominent Iraqi economist Muḥammad Salmān Ḥasan's writing on Iraq in the nineteenth-century[15] should be read in terms of an epistemic coherence over a crucial time span, signifying a scientific breakthrough toward a reading of identity based on situations, conditions, facts and applications.[16] It is worth mentioning that al-Jamālī's doctoral thesis on the "problem of Bedouin education" drew attention to Ibn Khaldun, especially in respect to the movement from nomadic life to urbanization.

While questioning the generalization in the statement, he quoted it, nevertheless,[17] as it was popular among researchers in the field at the time to lean on Ibn Khaldun, especially in keeping with the demand for knowing the Arab East. The statement alerts readers to the "depravity, wickedness, dishonesty, and the inclination to help themselves by all possible means" that are common traits among Bedouins who move toward urbanization, according to Ibn Khaldun. When they settle and accept urbanization, argues Ibn Khaldun, "one will further note that their striking tendency to satisfy their passions and to enjoy the pleasures introduced by luxury has rendered them familiar with all types of vice and with immorality in all its forms."[18] The author quotes from a book titled *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*. In other words, the attention paid by the author to Ibn Khaldun falls within a Western awareness of Ibn Khaldun's work, especially among sociologists and anthropologists. Yet, he also relates his analysis of Bedouins to an Iraqi nineteenth-century source by Abū al-Thanā' al-Ālūsī (d. 1854). According to the latter, the Bedouin holds a number of values before succumbing to the vices associated with urbanization. These traits are: bravery, wisdom, liberality, fidelity, honor, magnanimity, and resentment of humiliation.[19] Al-Jamālī also relies on other sources to emphasize the role of memory "because of the absence of writing" among Bedouin tribes.[20] All traits are of significance not only in the usual search for collective memory, but also for any analysis of discourse, especially in times of conflict and battle.

The whole rhetoric of democratization and constitutionalization becomes meaningless when both interest and honor are threatened. The source is important to balance Ibn Khaldun's outrage at the devastation of urban centers which he leveled at desert tribes. Both views have something to add to social inquiry, and are present therefore in Iraqi social sciences since the 1920s. In terms of cultural markers and identifications, one can say that the nineteenth-century offered us poetry; the so-called national rule, 1921–32, offered us more variety in narrative, social sciences, poetry and journalism, to compete with and overcome the colonial discourse, whereas the post-1932 period was more involved in social sciences devoted to an understanding of Iraqi culture under the impact of the rising educated classes.

The Iraqi renowned economist Muḥammad Salmān Ḥasan's reading shows that Iraqi population in 1867 was relatively small, with the people divided as follows: 35% Bedouins, 41% rural and 24% urban. A shift towards urban life took place in the next decades, especially in response to the new Ottoman regulations, and also to their encouragement of settlement, and their "divide and rule" policy.[21] During this period there was little chance for non-poetic modes to grow, not only because of the relative absence of the press and Ottoman constraints, but also because poetry was the most viable means of communication, and proved to be very influential in arousing the masses through processions, assemblies and gatherings. Poetry operated therefore as a counter-discourse to the Ottomans.

Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr tells us much about this function of poetry in his book *Nahḍat al-'Irāq al-adabiyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar* (The Iraqi Literary Renaissance in the Nineteenth-century).[22] In his biographical and critical sketches, there are shared features that constitute a distinctive discursive mode that highlights the role of the poet as the human agent in social change, accepts difference as part of a hetero-

geneous society, and emphasizes nationalness or Iraqiness within a wider concept of an Arab nation. The book is important because it draws attention to a rich heritage, comparable only to the one in Egypt in the same period, he argues. Its nationalness cuts across sectarianism or ethnicity, for all poets, from Mosul to Basrah, shared an Iraqi concern, and all participated in elegies in memoriam of the Prophet's descendants. On the other hand, the book shows how poetry provides a record of political upheaval and brutal reprisals by such Ottoman governors as Najīb Pasha who launched a vicious attack on Karbalā'. Other examples show what nineteenth-century Iraq looked like under the Ottomans as portrayed in ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Akhras' poetry: a chaos where Ottoman greed had no limits and where poverty and disorder bred bad social habits, as the *maqāmāt* of Abū al-Thanāʾ al-Ālūsī shows. There are many brighter sides, too, but the overall picture is of an Iraq searching for relief, not only from Ottoman occupation and brutality, but also from social evils and economic backwardness in a land of plenty. The 26 personalities from all over the country whom he chose for his lectures in the 1940s are poets, but many were actively involved in the nineteenth-century life of their country as community and political leaders. Their critique offers significant insights into a growing consciousness that had poetry and other means of discourse as viable means to achieve change.[23] Although poetry and *maqāmāt* may not be enough to lend an epistemic coherency, they can be an index of cultural consciousness in an Arab/Islamic tradition where poetry and other forms of recitation have played a strong political and social role. This role can be better assessed in terms of the response of the masses and also the response of Ottomans and, later, the British. It is worth noting that from among these nineteenth-century poets the renowned poet Shaykh Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Ḥabūbī led an army to fight the British at al-Shuʿaibah in the south where he was wounded and died later in 1915.[24] The poet as a public figure and political leader is not a single phenomenon, nor an ordinary one. In terms of the functions of culture, the role of the public intellectual also entails negotiating a stand between resistance to the Ottomans and appropriation of political achievements on the ground.

No matter how the Iraqi elite was dismayed at first at the Ottoman centralization process that was in effect in 1834, the regulation of the three provinces of Iraq (Mosul, Baghdad and Basrah) under one direct rule obliged close affiliation patterns and state structures that were not oblivious to the changes carried out in Egypt by Muhammad Ali (1808–1839). Of great relevance were the Land Law of 1858 and the Vilayet Law of 1864, which centralized administration while enlisting the dependency of land tenants throughout Iraq. Both the governor of Iraq, Midhat Pasha, and his predecessor, Mehmed Namiq Pasha, brought about other changes, including the introduction of the press and the initiation of irrigation and industry projects. During Midhat's reign as governor (1869–72), the official newspaper *Al-Zawrāʾ* appeared (1869), giving the Iraqis a sense of a new state, albeit under the Ottoman's rule. Aside from the harmful effects of the Ottoman policies, which are beyond the scope of the present reading, the salient impact lay in the response of the Iraqi elite to the nationalism of the New Turk Movement. The Law School, and the War College in Istanbul, and later the Military School in Baghdad became the right meeting space for the young educated Iraqis. The 1908 Young Turk revolution, its enforcement of the con-

stitution and the emergence of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) alerted the Iraqis to the need to organize themselves in clubs and societies and issue newspapers and journals. While the Sunni elite like Tawfīq al-Suwaidī, Nājī Shawkat and Ḥamdī al-Bāchachī, among others, were actively engaged in the raging discussion in Istanbul on the meaning of the modern state and constitutionalization processes, their counterparts in Baghdad and the South were also responsive to these and to the constitutionalization process in Iran in 1906. In this climate of change as well as in reaction to the increasing tendency toward the *Turkification* of Mesopotamia, the elite groups, with a more resolute leadership in Basrah, developed a national discourse that had strong pan-Arab sentiments to counter *Turkification*.

Annoyed at, and angered by, the CUP coup of 1913 with its proclaimed *Turkification* designs and processes, the Iraqi educated class created the National Scientific Club in Baghdad which acted as a forum for all Iraqis, regardless of ethnicity, race or sect. As expected, the Ottoman authorities were strongly against this and took immediate measures to banish and arrest its members. The other forum was the *'Ahd*, or covenant, which enlisted the secret membership of the Istanbul Arab officers who were later to become the main force in modern Iraqi official politics until 1958. Between these two groups, their affiliations, interconnections and interests grew a substantial organization of Iraqi nationalism ahead of the British occupation.[25] Between this elitist nationalism and a wider popular one there developed an Iraqi consciousness against foreign, especially non-Muslim, encroachment and invasion. Caught between two evils, the Ottomans and the British, the decision to join the *jihād* against the British in 1915 was taken not only by tribes, but mainly by enlightened shaykhs who were poets and writers, too, as will be shown in part four. Burgeoning in the nineteenth-century and crystallizing in response to regional and international change and challenge, this consciousness led to the 1920 popular revolution and to the following formation of a state.

However, this elite group, with its mixed backgrounds and origins, was not quite harmonious. Although sharing a vested interest in the new state and a common distrust of Shī'īs, their loyalties, specifically those of the *'Ahd* group under Ottoman influences, were divided between the British, Iraq and pan-Arabism.[26] Further details, especially of relevance to the 1920 popular revolution, convey this same stand. But, as the recollections of Sulaymān Faydī indicate, many officers, along with others who came from Syria, also participated in the popular revolution of 1920, as historians and ordinary Iraqis call it.[27]

While enabling us to perceive the making of mind and response in a crucial moment, cultural lenses as such may also lead us into the ramifications of attitudes regarding educational perspectives. Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī was at great pains to convince his colleagues and readers that Iraq and the Arab world in the 1930s differed in temper and need from America. Hence his criticism of the Iraqi graduates of the American University of Beirut, whom he provided with scholarships to contribute to his educational vision. He was against their "tendency to blind imitation," as they came back, and "each one of them thought of himself as the most learned." It was not only their different perspectives which he opposed and tried to correct, as he proudly noticed regarding one of them, Dāwūd Qaṣīr, but also their excessive use of American examples,

and their opposition to liberal arts as useless.[28] Yet, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī was also blamed for his nationalism, which some Iraqis thought of as lacking sufficient Iraqiness. His reflections on people whom he described as Iranians, including the renowned poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī (d. 1997), did not show enough sagacity on his part, and neither did his association of blue eyes and reddish beards and faces with Iranians, as he insinuates in describing the minister of education, Abū al-Maḥāsin.[29] As long as the position of the minister of education was reserved for the Shīʿīs, then they were either Iranians, in his designations, or less sophisticated and thorough even if one of them was Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī, the poet and one of the leaders of the 1920 revolution.[30] In other words, cultural lenses offer themselves differently as they color things with one's own predilections, for Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī, as a non-Iraqi and ardent nationalist with a strong Ottoman education, could not digest a culture that was in opposition to his education, especially to his brand of nationalism. The Shīʿīs, whom the King recognized as suffering under the Ottoman rule and their liability to misunderstanding due to their escape of Ottoman conscription,[31] were also more sensitive to a presence of a formidable character and educator who was not easy to dissuade from his own plans and perspectives.[32]

Yet the role of culture in the formation of Iraqi responses may be more colorful and acute, not only in terms of linguistic application, and naming, but also in enforcing social ways and patterns of behavior. To be an agent to the British or their associate was not condoned, for instance, and the imitation of English ways of speech, dress and behavior, could easily be the butt of sarcasm, as the person in question was "yitnaqraz"—i.e., acting like the English. Labels may emanate from a situation, for when the British officers in the *Qushla* area in old Baghdad decided in the 1920s to play *Julius Caesar* and could not find enough community to be among the crowd of Romans, they asked people from the nearby *red light* district, the *ṣābūnchiyah*, to come over. They happened to be the pimps who were addressed in the play by Antonio as "the honorable Romans." Since then, *Sharīf Romā* or honorable Romans assumed a sarcastic and ironic application. It did not bode well for the *Sharifian* officers by connotation, either.[33] The popular mood was not quite receptive to collaborationists. The coinage of the term *Abū Nājī* in respect to the British colonizer was in use, too, since the British occupation, and it carried within it the connotations of slyness, ruse, craftiness, and also tact. It was reported and used in reference to this side, and also to a crafty experience in politics, and even industrial products. This mixed usage occurs in *Al-Nakhlah wa-al-jīran* (The Date Palm and the Neighbors, 1966), a novel by the late Iraqi novelist Ghāʾib Ṭuʿmah Farmān (1927–1992). The powerful and shrewd Gertrude Bell, Oriental Secretary to Sir Percy Cox, the British High Commissioner in Iraq, was known among the Iraqis as the Khātūn (kadın or hanım), a term that means a grand lady, but carries also some insinuations of power. On the other hand, there was no irony in respect to the American way of life, with the exception, perhaps, of the Baghdadi Ḥassūn Amrīkī—the American Ḥassūn—who used to dress like some Hollywood actors, though with more colorful shirts and hats, in the 1950s.

The explanation for this is not hard to find, for despite Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's objection to imitativeness, he, in his powerful capacity in the Ministry of Education (March 1922–26, July 1927), suggested the American Ms. Kerr and approved of her as dean

and director of the Women Teachers College, regardless of the objection of the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, Henry Dobbs (1923–29).[34] A wider context was the positive response to American foreign policy, as the many poems celebrating Woodrow Wilson's principles of independence and freedom indicate.[35] Every major Iraqi poet, including al-Jawāhirī and al-Ruṣāfī, participated in creating this climate in the 1920s.

No less important in cultural politics is the power of culture in normative formations of identity and identification, especially in mandated and 'independent' Iraq until 1958. The basic divide is one of interest, as the elite was preoccupied with power and benefits, to the extent that Gertrude Bell herself complained of this lack of responsibility, as reported by Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī.[36] When confronted with a public upsurge, the elite were ready to change positions, and refrain from playing on the sectarian chord as the events of the 1920 revolution shows.

The privileged class (under the Ottomans and then under the British) was never happy with this revolution, nor were the new opportunists.[37] Indeed both groups thought that the British should rule by their right as conquerors. As for the rebels, from the center and the south of the country, they were, to dignitaries like ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qaylānī the head of the "ashrāf" in Baghdad, hypocrites who killed the Prophet's grandson and wept for him. Such views also had their counterpart in religious cities where interest drove privileged groups to opt for an Iranian connection.[38] Both positions have sectarian underpinnings, and they are telling on very many serious and minor issues as well. The term *rāfiḍī* and *rawāfiḍ* is still in use in application to Shīʿīs,[39] while the counter phrase *nāṣibī* and *nawāṣib* in Shīʿī applications to Sunnis was no longer in use. Their re-appearance or currency corresponds to vested interests and power relations.

In 1986 when there was a suggestion to commemorate the celebrated descendant of the Prophet, the renowned poet al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d.1016), the traditional poet and the ardent anti-Shīʿī calligrapher Walīd al-Aʿḍamī wrote to the Minister of Culture and Information that this should not take place as it was, in his phrasing, no more than a Shīʿī or *rāfiḍī* conspiracy. And as late as May 1991, the Iraqi Minister of Culture and Information, Ḥāmid Yūsuf Ḥammādī, himself a leftist in 1962, told the poet Mawlūd al-Dūrī that he was appalled by the large number of Shīʿīs and communists (usually collapsed) in domains of culture and journalism in Iraq.[40] While rooted in interest, jealousy, and fear of criticism, this attitude partakes of a cultural grounding that depicts the Shīʿīs as Others. No less interested Shīʿī segments might look upon their counterparts as their Others, too. Interest, not religious sentiment, plays on such a divide, which usually disappears whenever secular ideology gets the upper hand. A good example of the amount of cultural complexity in this issue, its regional and national ramifications, is the following anecdote: Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī was so direct about his sense of self-righteousness, as enhanced by his brand of nationalism, that he reported on a Shīʿī *taʿziya* procession, *ʿĀshūrāʾ* ceremony in recollection of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn and his family, in Kaḍimiyyah (West of Baghdad city) in 1921. The King was there in his effort to integrate the Shīʿī majority in state operations and concerns after a long history of rift with the Ottomans. Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī thought that the opposition to have the state flag bearer close to the person acting the role of the Imam

was mainly a Persian-conspired design to alienate the national flag.[41] Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī reported this later to the King, who answered him: "My mind was so occupied with listening to explanations, and the follow up of processions and the clamor of the masses, that I did not watch the positions of the flag."[42]

In relation to the cultural function of evaluative standards and identifications, the King's answer was tactical and too subtle for Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's ideological temper, for the King had an idea of the disenfranchisement of the Shīʿīs, which was the reason behind a common resistance to a state formation, and which did not go over well with the common public. A state that alienated its people meant little then, as was the case later in 1991 (popular Revolution), and again in 2003 (the US led invasion). Like many ideologues and applicants of national theories, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī could not understand that what was at stake was also a deliberate dissociation from the State as unjust. Indeed, this position would continue until some time in the 1950s.[43] Shīʿī participation occurred only when there was "qaḍāʾ ḥājāt al-ʾukhwān," or service to the community and colleagues, and evasion of danger, as the sixth Shīʿī Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765) was reported to say.[44] The disparity in perspective between an ideologue like Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī—who was also aligned with a strong lobby in the government, along with the King until his death in 1933—and the majority emanates not only from little acquaintance with Iraq, but mainly from a specific nationalist pride that displays uncritical self-righteousness. Indeed, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's recurrent mood in his memoirs is one of satisfaction when the King and/or some powerful presence like Nūrī al-Saʿīd (in his capacity as Prime Minister or a dynamic political force) change positions in deference to his logic.[45] In other words, to see through cultural and political issues, we need to know that things cannot be clearly demarcated unless we place them into terms of culture and economic or political interest. Admittedly, the British "had started a process of constructing fixed, singular, communal identities for Iraqis," as Roger Owen stipulates, but actual positions on the ground are informed by education, background, and state politics.[46]

Still, understanding culture as a provider of identification processes can lead us into a number of patterns that may seem unrelated or discordant otherwise. For how can we understand the reluctance of the dominating elite throughout 1921–1958 even to accept one Shīʿī minister in the relatively modest ministry of education? Even Dr. Fāḍl al-Jamālī's appointment in the late 1940s, and his role as Prime Minister (twice in 1953–54) and architect of the anti-communist nationalist-colonial alliance, came most often under fire. Why did Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī single out in his discourse turbaned Shīʿīs and tribal shaykhs, denying them, except one, a claim to knowledge or even love for their country?[47] The best narratives of descriptive density in his memoirs are reserved for these people as the villains of the work. Between 1921 and 1941, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī tells us there were 30 cabinet formations, by 13 Prime Ministers. He did not express surprise that there was not a single one from among the majority. The empowered class before 1958 came from the ex-*Sharifian* officers, their entourage and relatives and connections. It included the educated elite who were residing previously in Syria, along with a small number of well-educated Jews until the early 1940s. People with military training, though from a relatively modest social background, along with people with education made up the higher class, especially in Baghdad.

Of great relevance to our search for a distinctive discursive mode before the rise of leftist ideology, and its overriding claims for equality, freedom and justice within a variety of historical and geographical contexts, is the text or incident that could rally people and public opinion. One of these that demonstrates the tension in nationalist ideology in its development in Iraq—under Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's articulation—is Muḥam-mad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī's poem "Barīd al-ghurbah" ("A Letter of Homesickness"). It was published in Iraq in 1927 when the poet, who was newly appointed in a teaching position in Iraq, was spending the summer in Iran. The director, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī, read the poem as one of xenophobia, a Persian elevation of land and people at the expense of the Arabs. He decided to relieve the poet of his job. The lines that angered him run as follows:

> It is 'Persia', its wind is a north-west breeze, and its sky is a canopy of
>   branches and leaves
> Its lovers get infatuated, and infatuation is heartbreaking for being so.

He adds,

> In Iraq, I have a clique, without whom Iraq cannot be so loved,
> Without them the Tigris, though sweet, matters not, nor is the Euphrates
>   worth tasting.[48]

Ṣāṭi al-Ḥuṣrī was not a littérateur, but an educator and an ideologue. His reading of the poem, which he included in his memoirs, was bent on confusing joy and rapture with racial and religious affiliation. The Minister, obviously with the help of the poet, explained in writing the metaphorical implications of the poem, but Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī tenaciously rejected this, for the poem only confirmed his belief that the poet was of an Iranian descent, unfit for teaching in Iraq. The poet argued many times against this, pointing out to the director the nature of Iraqi identity registration under the Ottomans. He even drew a comparison with the Arab teachers who were hired to teach in Iraq. "But, they are Arabs," was Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's answer.[49] The teachers were among ardent nationalists, but one of them, al-Nuṣūlī, caused a sectarian row, though he was supported by his students from every ethnicity and sect, as will be explained in an-other place. Some were also accused of escalating anti-Jewish feelings in the early 1930s and later, as the Iraqi Jewish intellectual Meer Basri says.[50] In other words, texts and issues of a seemingly passing nature may well testify to a climate of ideas where transition takes many forms and where possibilities of growth or rift take shape discursively.

Although many public figures had national sentiments, there were as many who were liable to opportunism, as the Mosulite writer and novelist Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb tells us in his representative novels and stories of the 1930s, especially in his novel *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (1939). While the interest of the British Empire lies with an exchange of interest with the "colonial state," and with a close supervision of the ups and downs of local regimes, the latter function mainly within the domains of ideology and inter-est.[51] These were not necessarily interdependent, for the religious element in the cen-

tre and south of Iraq proved to be very nationalist, with a great potential for organization and cooperation with the Kurds and the Sunni segments of the society, as will be clear later in this book.[52] While there were and are religious institutions, segments and individuals who make use of their position to deceive the masses and incur as much benefit from people and governments as possible, organized religion, in the case of both major sects, proved to be more formidably established against invasions and occupation. A mention of this issue as depicted in two Iraqi novels of the 1930s might be useful.

In *Ṣafwān al-adīb* by Kāẓim Makkī (1939)[53] the main character or protagonist grows up in the middle of social and religious superstitions, and also dire social circumstances. The protagonist became aware of Darwin's theory and social and economic treatises that offered social and economic solutions. This new education made him doubt religion and curse all its institutions as worthless, or inadequate for the modern age. Yet, the argument is against opportunism and misreading of religion. The book caused the author some trouble, and he was banished outside Basra for a year, but the Ministry of Education distributed the book to bookshops.[54] In other words, the Ministry, with its continued national training under the early guidance of al-Ḥuṣrī, was more receptive to these secular works, which might also help in weakening religious institutions. The timing was important, too, for the nationalist ideology was taking shape among the elitist segments in preparation for the 1941 coup d'état against the British and their regime in Baghdad, while Marxist and leftist thought was more common among the middle classes and the poor.

No less so was Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb's novel *Duktūr Ibrāhīm*, for the protagonist's father made a fortune by claiming he was a descendant of the Prophet's family. Chance led him to discover the tomb of a saint, with a sharp blade and a green piece of cloth hidden there.[55] These became his symbols to legitimize succession as the custodian for the tomb. Nature helped him, too, in making that year one of rain and fertility, and therefore as signs of his blessed presence in the village community. All this is told in an ironic way, for the son as protagonist turned out to be the craftiest villain in the emerging Iraqi elite after getting his doctoral degree from London University.

Acculturation was not of much help in his case. The hybrid intellectual found himself in the middle of an elite in Baghdad, presumably the renowned nationalist club, *Nādī al-Muthannā*, whose members spoke then of serving the grand issue of Arabism, towards the unity of the Arabs, through a vanguard party or club, whose membership should be based on purity of blood: "But my father is of a Persian extraction as I indicated before, and my wife is English. I was afraid when the club was established and the members began to carry out their program." He adds: "Origin and marriage would be my weakest points and would expose me to attacks. But my fears were soon dissipated as I noticed that all the grand officials were not Arab and those whose fathers were highly positioned in the Ottoman administration belong to the club, and are devoted to purity of blood even more than others of pure Arab descent. Thus I requested membership and initiated my career in serving the nationalist cause." The author's message is clear: The elite, ruling Iraq in the post-Ottoman period, during the colonial state, were keen on developing an ideological crust, to preserve elitism and power through a systematic displacement of others.[56]

These strategies of displacement did not last for long, despite their occasional use by vulnerable regimes, like those of ʿAbd al-Salām ʿArif (reign 1963-66), and Saddam Hussein after 1979, the bloody execution of the leading leftist Baʿthists. The undercurrents, as noticeable in popular ʿĀshūrāʾ processions, journalism, poetry and painting throughout the 1940s and onwards, demonstrate the underlying interdependence between culture, politics, especially the Palestinian debacle, and economy. No wonder the Minister of Education in the 1950s, Khalīl Kannah, spoke of the intellectual scene in post-World War II Iraq in the following manner: "a loyal illiterate is far better than an intellectual saboteur."[57]

While it is customary to speak of elitist culture versus a popular one or of a cultural dependency of a colonial state in correspondence with economic and political subordination as enforced in the series of arrangements before the end of the British mandate,[58] this did not necessarily work in Iraq. In an ironically loaded statement, Ms. Gertrude Bell said to Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī: "I told his Excellency the King: No need to learn English, for this government will be Arab, and learning Kurdish will be more useful."[59] While dictating the form of government, the British understood then that it was a mistake to jeopardize their position, after their fight with the Muslim Ottomans, by a cultural encroachment which was bound to fail. Indeed, no matter how opinionated and biased Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī was, he established a systematic educational training, with a national and pan-Arab core.[60] As usual with ideologues, there was no contact with people, and hence identity formation remained high-brow. No one among Iraqi rulers, perhaps, with the exception of ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim (reign 1958–63), had this touch, for education as formidably and ably laid by Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī and those who followed him, elevated theory and mission beyond people, and towards an idealized prospect. Paradoxically, the outcome was different. Indeed, it was as unexpected as the organized cells that led many a coup d'état or revolution in 1936, 1941, 1958, 1963, and 1968 despite the restricted acceptance of applicants at the Military College, and despite a usual procedure of a written recommendation from a high ranking officer. Nevertheless, there is a large context within which identity formation works as long as we speak of a state.

In this context, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī also laid a foundation for enforcing Iraqi nationness through an Iraqi museum, but also with more emphasis on the Arab/Islamic side, which was secularized to fit into his pan-Arab ideology. This was carefully delineated to reject the inflammatory rhetoric of Dr. Sāmī Shawkat and his brand of nationalism.[61] That rhetoric was basically endorsed by nationalist officers and the *Muthannā* Club group; it worked since the early 1930s against any opposing nationalist or sectarian rebellions or revolutions, including those of the Assyrians, the Kurds, and the south.[62] Its militant overtones were in line with both Zionist and subsequent Nazi propaganda to unsettle the strong and deeply-rooted Jewish community in Iraq, and leading thereby in 1941 to the notorious *farhūd*, or looting and dispossession of the Iraqi Jewish community, its strong mercantile class and intellectual elite.[63]

The matter of allegiance in relation to cultural dependency was used by nationalist propaganda, especially against communities with some business or cultural contacts with the British. Ironically, some national or nationalist officers were no less attached to the British in matters of cultural grounding. Yet, the Iraqi Jewish

intelligentsia was, and proved to be, more Iraqi in commitment. Contrary to elitist nationalism and its predicates of loyalty, a substantial number of Iraqi Jewish writers and artists have continued to identify as Iraqis. Even when examining memory as in the documentary film *Forget Baghdad*,[64] there is the paradoxical retention of Baghdad and its culture. The insistence on the use of Arabic, as Samīr Naqqāsh (d. 2005) argues, is another way to challenge cultural and physical dislocation. Naqqāsh, Shimon Ballas and Sami Mikhail are among many Iraqi intellectuals who identify with their Iraqi culture, recollect it, and live it against heavy odds.

Another way of dealing with the past is through textual belonging where the Iraqi Jewish intellectual recaptures the past as a biographical network, based on recollections of figures and attitudes that have made up the literary history of contemporary Iraq as is the case in a number of Meer Basri's writings.[65] Some of his writings deal with Iraqi national and political leaders, intellectuals, folklore, and other issues that demonstrate a mind thoroughly immersed in his Iraqi and Arab culture. Operating on memory and through its many byways, the past cannot be dislodged, and its presence is secretly retained, albeit with an understanding that it evolves now as narrative, to be rehearsed, polished and invented, too, like all other histories and traditions. Its nagging or lovable presence is there like the shoes of Abū al-Qāsim in Shimon Ballas's novel of Iraqi folklore, *The Shoes of Tanboury*.[66] Identity finds no better trope than these shoes which keep coming back to their owner, even though he buys new ones to replace the old pair which he throws away in the most deserted places. They keep coming back, implicating the owner in many troubles. Such is the old Iraqi identity from which Ballas cannot be free, and which tells of the non-assimilability of Iraqi Jewish intellectuals elsewhere. These are only a few examples of works and writings by Iraqi Jewish intellectuals that support the argument of the book in respect to a distinctive Iraqi locale and culture.

While there are instances of disloyalty in every community, these might get augmented under the impact of inflammatory rhetoric manipulated by the empowered elite: the history of both the Jewish and the Assyrian communities is a case in point. Interested groups among the elite made use of single cases, as they would make use later of other cases among Kurdish and Shī'ī communities, to exercise cultural repression, economic reprisal, and genocide.[67]

Vested interest should not be confused with nationalism proper, despite its many origins and colors. Indeed, many Arab advocates and ideologues were not Muslim in the first place. On the other hand, the Iraqi/Ottoman core, officers and otherwise, was not of the same formation, too, as Ḥikmat Sulaymān's attachment in 1936 to the liberal and leftist *Ahālī* group indicates, while Yāsin al-Hāshimī's alliance with tribal shaykhs throughout the preceding period illustrates the opportunist designs of a statesman. Both instances make use of a political situation through cultural means. In a climate of competition among the major players—i.e., the officers and their associates—the newly emerging civil elite, and the tribal federations, ideology and statecraft were so compromised as to depart from the common national feeling which had its epistemic consistency in the 1930s and lasted until 1941 with the failure of the nationalist coup and the expulsion of Sāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī. Even Bakr Ṣidqī (killed in August 1937) could not accept the leftist *Ahālī* group in the government, formed by his as-

sociate Ḥikmat Sulaymān, in his coup of 1936. It was during his role as the com-
manding officer of the south, too, during Yāsin al-Hāshimī's reign as Prime Minister
that reprisals against mid-Euphrates tribes and other rebellions in the south were car-
ried out repeatedly. During Yāsin al-Hāshimī's rule, the Kurdish rebellion was
crushed, and also another one by the Yazidis in the north. Yāsin al-Hāshimī's ruthless
understanding of nationalism coupled with his tactical politics could not survive for
long, for it gave other officers a justification to use their own organized power to rule.
Whether propelled by a military desire to rule, anger at the ruling junta, or the na-
ture of polarization among the urban elite, Bakr Ṣidqī became the agent of circum-
stance like many others. As chief of staff he authorized the use of force against the
mid-Euphrates tribes while his associate Ḥikmat Sulaymān, as Prime Minister, did
not refrain from using the police against demonstrations. Education itself was to un-
dergo some serious changes which were more in keeping with a militarization ten-
dency. Military training was already in effect in 1935–36, and the paramilitary youth
movement was introduced in 1939. The gradual militarization of politics and the in-
volvement of the army in administration were bound to lead to these developments,
which should be seen as no more than a means to contain and influence the growing
nationalness and appropriating it into "a disciplined acceptance of the status quo."[68]

Militarization can be looked at from multiple perspectives, but within the
purview of cultural independence, it means reluctance to surrender the cultural "self."
This can be a factor among urban groups, as much as it is latently there in rural areas.
In other words, both internal and external factors were more receptive to a national
ideology of such broad markers like cultural independence and Arab identity. These
were given form by the architect of nationalism in Iraq, namely Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī, despite
his reluctance to accept the *status quo* for being opposed to his idea of transformation,
which was to become the recurrent and dominant word in nationalism thereafter.[69]
His endeavor to impose a nationalist vision comprises other trends without subscrib-
ing to any, while excluding leftist ideas and programs from his agenda and thought.
Yet, these excluded ideas and programs offered a counter-reading of Iraq and devel-
oped their ideological structures and conceptualizations in relation to national and in-
ternational concerns beyond both the state and the compromised nationalist ideology,
as further discussions point out.

The nation around which discussions evolve grows into a trope, with meanings
and implications that range between an idealism that is clothed in metaphors and a
realism that speaks of the masses and the country or the homeland. The museum as
the nation, for example, may well stand for part of the nationalist ideology. It repre-
sents a legacy, and its growth testifies to a connection with the past. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī was
the director of antiquities from 11 November 1934 to 11 June 1941. The office was
established as the archeological office and part of the Ministry of Education under the
honorary direction of Ms. Bell.[70] Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī became the director in 1934. He was
the first Arab director. While he and many Iraqis were already fighting for an Iraqi
museum "proper to the antiquities and relics which distinguished our country," as the
Parliamentary Commission for Education said in its report in 1930,[71] you need a com-
mitted person to let the idea materialize in full. "My appointment as director fright-
ened the British," he wrote in view of the British Ambassador's message to the Iraqi

government.[72] More important, however, is the role itself, as the very appointment came in the mid-1930s, along with the rise of national feelings. No matter how ironic litterateurs might be regarding the elite, there was an elitist segment that took nation-building seriously as an ideological commitment. It must have meant a lot to al-Ḥuṣrī to function as director of Āthār (the Arabic word means traces), as an ardent nationalist with an enthusiastic commitment to historical records and artifacts. For, as Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh argues, "to become 'museumized', the object must be assumed to retain the traces of history."[73] Thus, aside from Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's fight to preserve relics and antiquities, and his effort to build up an Iraqi staff of curators, historians and excavators, as he reports, the drive was central to a grand, national narrative that claims the past in order to secure a full nationhood in the present. Admittedly, more concerned with the Arab/Islamic part, he nevertheless found in his job further satisfaction that complemented his educational role. The second volume of his memoirs includes many photographs in this respect, and the materialization of an inventory of traces, there and then, made him, perhaps, feel that the goal of nationhood was not far away. Indeed, we need to read his description of the conflict with the University of Chicago archaeological mission, when he put seven single pieces at the top of a place, while the duplicates and doubles were laid for division on the table in front of the meeting members. The single pieces, elevated to a place of their own, perhaps stand for a desired independent nation.[74]

The incident was narrated with pride and great satisfaction, for Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī acted in good faith, not only as an Iraqi, i.e., in the same manner as the King whom he joined and who was brought by the British, but also as a pan-Arab ideologue. As narrated by the architect of education in Iraq, the incident demonstrates more than faith in cultural independence. It functions symbolically as an instance of sovereignty, and an assertion of one's independence. It is no less so than Saddam Hussein's sense of pride, not free of vengeance, when reporting after the nationalization of oil in June 1972 how he brought the British ambassador so low, making him request more time and patience.[75] On the practical level it aspires to an economic and political equity. It is certainly not representative of the ruling elite which even the British were appalled because of its corruption and selfishness.[76] Yet, its ideological base or orientation sets it within a common public feeling of independence. We should keep in mind that al-Ḥuṣrī had already accompanied his roles as an educator and ideologue with responses to Western and American counterparts who were busy then with developing a look at European and other nationalisms in the colonized world. In an answer to an American educator about whether the Arabs and Iraq were in a process of "fabricating fables and inventing lies" in the teaching of history, Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī argued back: "We believe that the Arab nation does not need such fabrications to reach its national ends, for our history is rich with examples and lessons of glory."[77]

This general frame of mind was so strong as to relatively appeal even to British advisors who became intimately involved in Iraqi affairs, especially after the ensued partial empowerment of Iraqi administrators and officials according to the Administrative Inspectorate Law (passed by the Council of Ministers, 3 January 1923).[78] Yet, here as in other future transactions, there is a recognizable rift and fear between the colonized and the colonizer, especially when the latter thinks that the colonized

should be thankful to the colonizer. Without enough reading of the cultural rift and the socio-political implications of colonization, Troutbeck, for instance, delineates the unemployed Iraqi as follows: "The Iraqi, it seems to me, or at any rate the townsman, will never forget a grievance. Being one of the laziest of mortals and having no family life, he will sit in his café for hours on end surrounded by his cronies, brooding over his grievances and talking interminable politics." He adds: "There is a side to his nature which is embittered, frustrated and fanatical."[79] Even if we accept this stereotyping, no effort is made to study the reasons behind such an attitude.

Sir John Troutbeck's remark should lead us to another cultural marker, however, which relates to urban identity. Although the urban growth was relatively small in those years, the mention of cafés should be indicative, too, of a relatively good presence of an urban population, mostly male, that had not yet witnessed enough dynamic economic growth to keep it busy. In the early 1960s the case was somehow different from the extent that rural and Bedouin ways of life were mocked in the literature of the period. Writing in retrospect, Fu'ād al-Takarlī looks upon the scene as one of urbanity where the presence of a shepherd or a Bedouin was rare in urban areas. In his novel *Al-Raj' al-ba'īd* (1977, translated as *The Long Way Back*, 2001), one of the characters speaks of the Bedouin as follows: "our brother here, I mean . . . is crying over his family and his dead ancestors' bloody camels. An under-shepherd bellowing in our ears! What is the world coming to . . . ?"[80] Urban growth led later to further fundamental changes in cultural attitudes that relate to lifestyles, art galleries, theatres, social clubs, and venues for musical performance. Every province had a number of these. Availability of space and planned activity by academic, cultural and union institutions in the 1970s onwards had a very positive impact on the cultural outlook. The tendency suffered later due to a restrictive mind, geared towards patriarchal monopoly of social and cultural activity. The same mind was attuned to tribalism, not urbanism, and tribal laws were strongly grafted onto the legal system in the 1990s, whereas kinship and nepotism were given legitimacy through presidential pronouncements and decrees.[81]

Hence, to understand cultural identities, analysis should take into account a number of factors that relate to Iraq itself: its enveloping Islamic culture, its centrality in the civilizational making of this culture, its urban growth, ethnic, religious and class formations,[82] in comparison to the artificial model presented by the occupation administration in the congratulatory meetings following the capture of Saddam Hussein on 17 December 2003. While there should be due recognition of demographic facts on the ground, a state of chaos is not the right way, even for agendas that devise chaos as a condition designed to destroy urban growth and its concomitant achievements in health, education, and established ways of life. To let chaos continue will not damage Iraqi society, but will surely reach Arab and non-Arab communities. It will fragment Iraq into societies and clans, but it will also set a negative example for the region and breed instability and havoc.

The present reading prioritizes culture in association with power relations. Aaron Wildavsky's mention of four political cultures is no less applicable to other societies: "The dimensions of cultural theory," he argues, "are based on answers to two questions: Who am I? And what shall I do? The question of identity may be answered by

saying that individuals belong to the strong group, a collective that makes decisions binding on all members, or that their ties are weak in that their choices bind only themselves."[83] The writer's "prescriptions" are no more than customs and ways of thought and behavior as enforced by tradition, group feeling, or power, as is the case in centers of power and their media apparatus.

The application has internal and external dimensions, for every exercise of power has a cultural context and incentive. In societies where tradition, history and custom have a dense proliferation into consciousness, culture becomes enmeshed in every-thing, whether deliberate, accidental or spontaneous. While it is a given in cultural studies to speak of identity on individual or communal levels, the matter is not so when arguing for a specific temper or a frame of mind as was the case in earlier stud-ies by Jerome H. Buckley and Walter E. Houghton.[84] Even in these, there is a specific period that may have the stamp of a particular class, but a nation or a people may well resist compartmentalization. Orientalized studies among Arabs and non-Arabs still circulate and speak of an "Arab mind," an essence that is transhistorical, dormant, and transcendent.

Yet, there is a narrative corpus that speaks of Iraq since ancient times. In a num-ber of appellations, it depicts a number of characteristics, traits, predilections and ways of thinking and life that are usually associated with a habitat along the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, or on the shores of Sumerian waters. These nar-ratives are in the minds of people in times of trouble and crisis, and they range be-tween self-glorification and self-debasement. The *'Irāqī yaqra' al-mamḥī* (The Iraqi reads the hidden), says one; whereas the *'Irāqī matṣīrlah chārah* (The Iraqi is a hope-less case), says the other. The latter is usually rebuffed by nationalists and reformists, including Saddam who did so a number of times when positively commenting on the Iraqi character. But Imam 'Alī's (d. 661) words to the Iraqis of the Anbār region still resonate with meaning and suggestion to other groups. They made many excuses, es-pecially in reference to the weather, to avoid participation in wars. His words are still used against people who do not take the initiative to preempt attacks and forestall ag-gression.[85] Another address was by Ziyād Ibn Abīh (d. 673), asking the Basrah and Kufa people to "hold . . . [their] hands and tongues" to avoid his reprisals.[86] The address of the ruthless Umayyad governor al-Hajjāj Ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (d. 714) is quoted in moments of great political upheaval and disorder, for "you people of Iraq, did any troublemaker ever make claims or a wailer wailing or a discontented person sighing without you being his followers and supporters?"[87]

In trying to cope with this narrative legacy, the Iraqi sociologist 'Alī al-Wardī found a historical background for the Iraqi sense of revolt which made them reject the Kufa governor's words that Iraq, or *Arḍ al-sawād* as it was called in early Islamic times in reference to its expanding forests, was no more than "the orchard for Quraysh."[88] In order to relate al-Ḥajjāj's appellation that Iraq is the land of dissent and hypocrisy to Alexander's alleged description of the Iraqis as troublemakers, the sociologist goes back to al-Jāḥiẓī's (d. 869) articulation of an explanation for the discontents of rulers against the Iraqis. "The reason for the Iraqi disobedience to rulers comes from their insight and sagacity. With these there develops a propensity for search and interrogation and with them come assessments and evaluations. . . ." While this propensity for argumenta-

tion weakens them politically, says the sociologist, it invigorates them intellectually.[89] He concludes that people with this disposition argue and debate issues, rarely accepting things at face value. They end up above their social station or class because of their idealized vision, undergoing for this reason duality and cultural ambivalence.[90]

The combination of cultural and geographical factors to explain a character and a temper can be traced in earlier accounts, too. In the *Golden Meadows—Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhar*—written in 947 and revised in 956, the Arab historian and polymath Abū al-Ḥusayn ʿAlī B. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī (b. in Baghdad, and d. in Egypt in 956), also described as the Arab Herodotus, wrote as follows on Iraq:

> As for Iraq, it is the shining beacon for the east, the center-of the world and its heart, towards which waters flow, and blooming continues. In it there is exact temperance, and hence its people's dispositions are wholesome, and their minds are pleasant, while their inclinations are sharp and their diversions are ongoing. Hence they gain sagacity, and their brains retain sobriety, and their insights are firm. The heart of the universe is Iraq, which is so since ancient times, and it is the key to the east. . . . Its people have the right colors, the purest aroma, and the best tempers, and the most flexible dispositions.[91]

The reference to a specific character and temper may not be consistently tenable, as postmodernist studies attempt to convince us, but narrative as such gains currency through repetition and circulation. It assumes a power of its own, like any ideology and master narrative, and is bound to affect a temper or a character. More than any narrative productions, we apprehend these "through sedimented layers of previous interpretations," to use Fredric Jameson's words, and "in terms of a particular interpretive master code."[92] These have also the power of antecedent authority and operate strongly on the present, especially in times of crisis when handy appellations get a better reception. Historical accounts also tell us of how rulers resorted to persuasion, intimidation and coercion in their dealings with Iraq. These efforts, since Alexander the Great, make specific reference to this special nature. Their discourses, including the addresses made by the Umayyads took it for granted that the Iraqis are not easy to rule, as they are politicized, and cannot swallow humiliation and exploitation. By the same token, these addresses also reveal recognition of a sophisticated population, prone to challenge misrule. It has its rules of conduct and terms of rapprochement. Hence hegemony works only in terms of pleasant rhetoric and transparent practice. Its coercive means may not last long even within a medium of seeming acceptance. Yet, history informs us of means to fabricate, manipulate and invent tradition to force the Iraqis into gradual acceptance of dealings and practices. Indeed, Umayyad and subsequent dynasties enlisted writers and orators to their service in order to contain the Iraqis and dominate them for long. As late as the monarchy of the twentieth century, and then under subsequent regimes, the tendency to enlist services of writers and artists continued. While attesting to the impact of culture on public opinion, the effort was usually part of a tendency to hegemonize culture and make regime and partisan values and ethics widely proliferate.[93]

In terms of deliberate manipulation and exercise of power to produce knowledge, invention and fabrication become means of cultural hegemony. In this context, we agree with Michel Foucault that "power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."[94] Foucault sums these up as "power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge."[95] Culture and power work in concordance and opposition, for the more the reliance of the empowered on force and its mechanisms, the less they are in control of society. The reasons are not necessarily the ones applied by Iraqi sociologists in their readings of discontent,[96] for latent Shīʿī sentiments are in opposition to any exercise of power, especially when smacking of injustice or exploitation, whereas nomadic or Bedouin-like predilections in the so-called Sunni triangle are still as real as they were before. Their relatively privileged militarization under the old regime only intensifies this characteristic bent towards independence, valor and honor. While Shīʿī sentiments are deeply rooted in a history of sacrifice and agony with an emanating redemptive suffering, the Bedouin-like predilections survive on valor and revenge despite a recent history of urbanization. The difference among these segments is not geography-bound despite the presence of this demarcation in the overall formation of tempers. The area surrounding Najaf, for instance, is no less arid and desert-like, but inclinations lack militarization under the impact of redemptive suffering. This feeling can be a denominator for the Iraqi south, with all its religions and ethnicities. It cuts across Kurdish and Turkomans' sentiments, too, as the Sunni Islam of the Kurds is more disposed to spirituality and also Sufism, not only because of the widespread *Naqshbandiyyah* order of Sufism, but mainly because of the shared sense of oppression. The exiled Kurds to the South of Iraq during different periods of dictatorial rule used to find themselves among very compassionate societies, and return to Kurdistan with feelings of sympathy and love.[97] The underlying sense of suffering should also be studied in terms of ancient history as it appears not only in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but also in contemporary ideology. Iraqi writing itself offers ample examples in this respect as the poetry of Muẓaffar al-Nawwāb demonstrates. An Iraqi Shīʿī with a strong Marxist grounding and a rejectionist attitude to conciliatory positions, his poetry reaches the common public and becomes at times part of their lore and non-compromising politics.[98]

The role of memory and history in the contemporary discursive terrain cannot be easily dismissed. Between archeological sites and the collective unconscious there should be a connection to explain the recurrence of Sumerian and Babylonian or Islamic narratives, for instance, in contemporary writing. The record of the Iraqi museum may serve as an index of the role of history, not only in elitist ideology, but also in popular tradition. The museum that came into being in 1923 was very much in line then with a mandated state that was recently referred to in British colonial dispatches as Mesopotamia. The continued reference as well as the archeological efforts should reveal a mind that, in Eric Davis' pertinent wording, "would just as soon have seen the land devoid of its modern inhabitants."[99] The virtual control of archeological finds testified then to an enforced surrender to the British that strongly bothered the re-

cruited King who was lured into the enterprise through British promises of support to an Arab national cause. As the "uncrowned queen" of Iraq,[100] Ms. Bell could not think of the museum in terms other than a dead past, hence attaching it to the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, and alienating it thereby from the evolving national ideology. But, in the following years, and with the growing national consciousness as attending or informing political developments, there were other museums of Arab antiquities (1937), national costumes, and modern art along with institutes and academies of fine art and folklore. There were also more excavations in the Arab/Islamic sites. The question of history is not secondary to the collective political and social unconscious. Its parameters are between mourning, redemptive suffering and rejuvenation,[101] as further arguments demonstrate. Insofar as tempers are concerned, it is pertinent to have an overview of the working of this history. Around 2350 B.C., Enheduanna, the gifted daughter of King Sargon of *Akkad*,[102] wrote hymns that were recited at the major temples in Sumer.[103] These, partly captured in modern Iraqi poetry,[104] were more in the spirit of invocations and prayers, before the catastrophe that put an end to the third dynasty of Ur, as inscribed in the "Lament for the Fall of Ur." Like wars of devastation, the god Enlil "called the storm/-the people mourned-/winds of abundance he took away from the land, / the people mourn/-good winds he took away from Sumer,/-the people mourn-/deputed evil winds,/the people mourn."[105] Under this image of Enlil, the enemy ravages the country of abundance until "Sumer writhed in the trap."[106]

The annihilating war in the image of the storm "was gathering in the country, / the storm was ravaging/ floodlike the city" until it "covered Ur like a cloth, / veiled like a linen sheet."[107] The images for war as a violent terrorizing onslaught on life are effectively gathered, for "Dawn and the rise of the bright sun/ he locked up with good winds,/let not the bright sun rise upon the country,/like a twilight star it dawned."[108] While these lamentations remain with the Iraqis, the laments for Dumuzi balance them,[109] as their ultimate purpose was to invoke gods' intervention for regeneration and reconstruction. The festive nature and purpose was present in the epic of Gilgamesh, too. Probably a historical figure around 2700 BCE, when *Uruk* city walls were built, Gilgamesh was and is still present in the minds of Iraqis. Saddam had him in mind, perhaps, but surely he was more concerned with the renowned name of Hammurabi or Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BC) as great statesmen and powerful kings when he commissioned archaeologists to inscribe his name on the special bricks used to rebuild Babylon in the mid 1980s during the war with Iran. Gilgamesh's late successor Anam (nineteenth-century BCE) did the same, when commemorating his own improvement on and renovation of the walls of *Uruk*, giving credit, too, to his royal ancestor as the builder of the magnificent walls.[110] The celebrated king abused his people in the first phase of his reign, for he "would leave no girl to her mother" and "leaves no son to his father."[111] Then there was the creation of his rival Enkidu who became a friend later, who joined him in the quest for fame. Yet, Enkidu's death terrified Gilgamesh who was faced with mortality as a challenge that he spent time and energy to defeat.

While the Sumerian subtext served to substantiate the ultimate realization of the inevitability of death and its chastening effect on a proud and arrogant king, the

whole drive of the epic is "to stress the importance of knowledge,"[112] for Mesopotami-
ans thought that for their own times the "highest knowledge came from the study of
written works of the past."[113] Certainly the ultimate knowledge is "Trust not, Gil-
gamesh, in your strength alone," as the dignitaries say to him.[114] While the lesson
holds the epic together, there is also the regenerative enterprise, for Ishtar, Astarte,
was not put off by the death of Dumuzi, though "For Dumuzi, your girlhood lover, /
you ordained year after year of weeping," says Gilgamesh.[115] The reference to a tradi-
tion, signified by the date 3200 BCE, was not random, for mourning had the purpose
of invocation not morbidity, life not death. In other words, the Tammuzi tradition
survives in the tempers of the Iraqis, mostly the *Shīʿīs*, as a balance between lamenta-
tion and suffering.

In its contemporary recall, this invocation should not be looked at merely in
terms of political opportunism or identity formation and consolidation. Nor should
its openness to power manipulation blind us to its pervasive presence in an Iraqi col-
lective unconscious. Admittedly used in different periods of contemporary Iraqi his-
tory to ensure the "complicity of subaltern groups,"[116] the combination of ancient
hymns and canticles with Shīʿī rituals in the most leftist secular discourse or narrative
should alert us to a culture that may well derive the substance of its making from a
collective unconscious. Examples abound from among different generations of writers
and their objects of recollection. The late Jawad Yaqoob (d. 2002), an Iraqi expatriate
who died at the age of 36, wrote a poem on the late painter Laylā al-ʿAṭṭār, who was
killed in the American bombardment of Baghdad in 1993. The poem is titled "Res-
urrections of Layla al-Attar." Using Babylonian images and almost painting with
words, the poet tried to capture the image of the late artist in a painting which has as
a frame the two rivers. In one section, he says:

> Tonight Ishtar is in sorrow
> dripping hot tears.
> Sadness in Baghdad's eyes
> clouds all the ancestors' ziggurats.
> And the ancient women of Ur and Uruk
> mourning brothers and sons.
> But the martyrs already in the other world
> will be wearing red flowers
> and singing with joy.
> Who can erase from this world a homeland
> its shape Layla al-Attar?[117]

The painter elicited other responses from poets, as Ḥamīd Saʿīd's poem "The Last
Painting" shows. As its translator explains, the poem "deals in part with what is pre-
sumed to be the last painting which Layla al-Attar (1944–93) was working on the
night her home was destroyed by a misguided missile in June 1993."[118] The poem, as
an elegy, celebrates the painter's talents, and uses for this purpose "conventional fea-
tures of elegy and satire as practiced in Arabic poetry for more than fifteen cen-
turies."[119] The use of history and literary tradition intensifies a lineage and a connec-

tion to the past while the poet navigates among other cultures to suggest the late painter's modernism, as the allusions to Picasso show. A more intricate combination is captured by the Syrian novelist Ḥaydar Ḥaydar in his celebrated and censored novel *Walīmah li-aʿshāb al-baḥr* (A Banquet for Seaweed).[120] The narrative was written between 1974–83 while the writer was an expatriate in Algeria, Beirut and Cyprus. It takes modern Algeria as its setting, with its post-colonial legacy of aspiration, corruption, change, infantilism, socialism, and serious search for an Arab nationhood through extensive programs of Arabization to counteract the French systematic erosion of the Arabic language. The location provokes the unfolding of Iraqi memories, which gather in intensity, density and agony only in response to moments of love or violence. The narrator picks on two Iraq exiles who carry their political scars with them—with their "*jaḥīm*" or inferno as it survives in their minds, like graves that cannot be dislodged.[121] The narrator gives a full voice to these radical Marxist-Leninists along with other characters, especially Algerian women, whom he presents in their ordinary lives of passion, sex, failure, and hope.

The Iraqi teachers are the product of a dense consciousness, an endless memory, that makes them speak and think of leftist politics and communist ideology in terms and contexts that can never be in the mind of Marx or Lenin. The Iraqi girl whom the protagonist Mahdī Jawād met once says to him: "Iraqi history is one of lack and loss."[122] Perhaps, she does not mean the erasure of the referent upon historicization, for the context shows a moment of loss in a present of disenchantment. He still recollects her words as he remembers his comrade Khālid who left London to join the armed liberation movement in the marshes of Iraq. Khālid was a real person like the pseudonymous protagonist Mahdī Jawād, Mihyār al-Bāhilī, his comrade there, and others who are mentioned in the novel. The text evolves as a comparative political biography of people as potential players in, and makers of, history. The appeal of Che Guevara is mentioned a number of times, but it blends with Khālid's cultural background, his grandfather's legendary lore and his stories and dreams of Imam al-Mahdī who will come from "the eye of the sun, with a sword of equality, love and justice unsheathed after the increase of oppression, corruption and hunger." His grandfather will see "that this moment can be captured by the sword of the communist Mahdī."[123] These characters did not choose the marshes for their location only, but also for their history of revolt a number of times between 1920 and 1950.[124] Moreover, there is the Sumerian past with its relentless effort to rebuild the temple and recreate life anew regardless of war and destruction.[125] Every detail in their life in the marshes recollects a Sumerian one that only increases their consciousness of the need for change.

No matter how we treat this narrative, its creative reliance on biography and familiarity with its object, the density of the habitat—as a Sumerian background highlighted through juxtaposition with an Algerian and an Iraqi present—is markedly pivotal. As a historical space, it valorizes a politic of revolt. Paradoxically, this same locale invoked repudiation and depreciation in 1991, after the popular revolution. Its people who were once, during the war with Iran, 1980–1988, the "best of people," became in the notorious editorial by Saddam or his eldest son, "not Arabs. They were brought with their buffalo from India by Muhammad al-Qasim."[126] In these instances between Saddam and his opponents, history assumes a number of meanings, and at

times it changes purpose and matter according to circumstance. Revolutionary discourse needs to implant itself in the language and topography of the habitat, and invests its markers with significations of revolt. The same was targeted by Saddam years later in 1978, for his first public appearance as a popular leader was among the people of the marshes, as captured in a painting by the Iraqi painter Māhūd Aḥmad. To ensure hegemony, a populist discursive direction was developed before his ultimate success and its discursive markers of arrogance and despite. History emerges as series of ruptures, not a linear succession that leads to a climax.

This surmise may not apply to recollections of Babylon, which still surfaces in discourses and narratives of different positions as a glorious unblemished past of worthy ancestors. There is in modern Iraqi narrative, for instance, an extensive use of Babylonian festivity and celebrations that come from people who are the least affiliated with state machinery like the dramatist and short story writer from Kirkuk, Jalīl al-Qaysī.

In his short story "Mamlakat al-inʻkāsāt al-ḍaw'iyyah" (The kingdom of the reflections of light), the author as protagonist enjoys a third drink for the road with a friend after a pleasant evening. He meets, in that mood, two noble beings of majestic stature, the Babylonian gods Mardukh and Enkidu, whom he takes home, serving them good, hearty meat and wine, which they enjoy despite their recognition of its bad quality. They invite him to Babylon, to attend the *akitu* New Year Festival, for they tell him, "if you refuse to come you will be cursed for ever." There he finds himself where all "are immersed in singing, and dancing to the extent of intoxication and ecstasy. . . . What a society that overflows with luxury! What gaiety and joviality like in fables!"[127] The festivities celebrate Mardukh's exploits, to be sure, but their twelve-day continuity combine joy at the rebirth of nature and victory over Chaos, concluding with Mardukh's fixing of the "destinies" of Babylon.[128] Published in 1988, the story may betray a national identification between Saddam Hussein and Mardukh, especially as it appeared after the end of the Iraq-Iran war. However, we should take into account the writer's independent mind, and his celebration of Babylonian—not Arab/Islamic—ancestors as they address themselves to him by name in that intoxicated mood. Even when the vogue of magic realism is taken into account there is more than mere internalization of a mode (magic realism) or a hegemonic politics of continuity, a resurrection of a glorious past into the celebrated image of the leader. Intoxicated recollections are closer to Freud's unconscious and can freely find their way into the page.

On the other hand, cultural dynamics operate in a broad three-dimensional dialectic: Iraqism and Iraqiness/Iraqidom, nationalism and religion. The three are inseparable on many occasions, and the history of Kurdish nationalism and the Iraqiness of Christians and Jews, their devotion to their country wherever they go, should have been surprising to many who form their opinions on hearsay or on cases of opportunism or political enterprising. On the other hand the whole Kurdish drive to annex Kurdistan in November 1922 was motivated by a nationalist desire to gain recognition, forcing both the British-appointed government and the occupation administration to issue the December 1922 communiqué to recognize the right of the Kurds within the borders of Iraq to have autonomy—a Kurdish government. The British

High Commissioner authorized the Iraqi Prime Minister 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Saʿdūn
on 17 January 1923 to send a representative to meet the Sulaymaniyah deputies in
Kirkuk. Certainly the British claimed later that Shaykh Maḥmūd of the Kurdish side
revoked the agreement, and hence there were air strikes on his positions on 2 March
1923. The British were not seriously committed to a Kurdish self-rule, for they
formed their own interim government in Sulaymaniyah on 30 April 1923. The Iraqi
government found its interest more in a workable plan with the Kurds, though the
British were not opposed to the effort as long as there was no separatist movement.
The Prime Minister 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Saʿdūn found the tribal leaders there very
much in support of his plan for recognition of their national aspirations within the
framework of one country. They even supported the King of Iraq, as the meeting with
them on 29 May 1923 indicates. The tribal Shaykhs, the businessmen and other
dignitaries were opposed to Shaykh Maḥmūd for security reasons, as he was prone
to "lawlessness and terrorism" as the Prime Minister's message to the King alleged
(31 May 1923). In other words, the Kurdish elite and the tribal Shaykhs were strongly
inclined to a unified Iraq with due recognition of their rights on equal bases with their
brethren in the rest of the country.[129]

Culturally, religion works as a unifying element among different ethnicities.
They share one Islamic culture with strong Iraqi overtones that also belong to
Mesopotamian times. Religion therefore resurfaces in times of foreign intervention or
occupation, and recalls a rich historical register of war and conquest. It has shared
codes and significations for both Sunnis and Shīʿīs, especially when it comes to spe-
cific issues related to the role of Imam 'Alī, the fourth caliph. Yet, there are differences,
too, when emphasis is laid on historical figures of a controversial nature. Nevertheless,
religion acts strongly on sentiments and should be taken very seriously. It loses
ground to secular ideology whenever the political climate is focused on internal poli-
tics and concerns in post-occupation times, for political parties are prone to compete
for the urban public that tends to be divided among concerns of nationalism, nation-
ality, and class. Since 1920, as a departure point for a well-documented inventory,
Iraqis have been insightfully responsive to challenges that have direct bearing on these
matters: unity of the country, its natural resources, the national conscience, security,
and freedom. It should not be surprising that the current political climate in Iraq will
remain liable to popular revolutions as Muqtadā al-Ṣadr's show of opposition demon-
strated (28 March–26 June 2004; and August–October 2004).[130]

Muqtadā al-Ṣadr's phenomenon is not a passing one, and many will take his place
soon if things do not improve drastically. The sudden and surprising emergence of a
young Shīʿī cleric from among the masses, with a well-established lineage, but no spe-
cial command of scholarship, resonates as an astounding political happening. Both the
young man and the appeal he has made throughout the country should draw us not
only to factual details of organizational and partisan politics, but also to the history of
Shīʿism. The young cleric with a militia formed under the name of *The Mahdī Army*
appealed to a Shīʿī subconscious, its latent yearning for the return of Imam al-Mahdī
(d. 874) to fill the universe with justice as it was filled with oppression and cruelty.[131]
It is of significance that the great Sufi Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) stressed that when Imam
al-Mahdī returns, "the people of Kufa will be happy." That was the town where Muq-

tadā al-Ṣadr made his appearance, practiced his prayers and aroused the resentment of well-established clerics. Then he added, "He had no enemies other than the jurists, for they no longer retain power, and they are no longer distinguished from the mass population. . . . Had the sword not been with al-Mahdī, they would have called for his death."[132] In other words, the young cleric made his appearance with this notion in mind before being dissuaded from pursuing it or fighting further. The appeal to this subconscious could have materialized into a popular Revolution in opposition to the counter discourse followed up by the occupation administration in Iraq.

Within the cultural purview of this monograph, there is a discursive conflict augmented by battle on the ground. It takes place in a cultural rift, emanating not only from mistrust and misunderstanding, but mainly from neighboring fundamentalism, and the occupation's forceful military and politicized discourse that speaks for the Iraqis and to them.[133] Even when taking its claims of foreign insurgents, the old regime's bulging pockets, and scattered bandits into account, there is a serious problem with this discourse. It comes across as supreme, unchallenged, arrogant and dictating. While it strove to convince the American public of prowess and steadfastness, it alienated and may continue to alienate the common person in Iraq whose sentiments run counter to this kind of discourse and to the position from which it emanates. No wonder the opposition has grown among the unemployed, the underprivileged and the poor. The discourse is far from reality, laden with value judgments. Its conciliatory stance is one of unfulfilled promises. Even when we grant the need for time to transfer power, the period since June 2003 has been one of a series of disappointments and frustrations. The night raids, the foul language, the brutality, and the methods used in enforcing control have led to a number of responses with enormous negative consequences that have overshadowed whatever positive achievements were made on the ground: 1. The rise of Bedouin tribalism, with its ethics and values of valor and honor; 2. The emergence of a fundamentalist grouping in a society which has been known for its religious tolerance and secular predilections; 3. Organized resistance among the special forces and guards of the old regime, for those are mostly from the Anbār province and they are not ready to swallow the destruction of their cities and the raids on their homes and families; 4. A growing organized opposition among the alienated Baʿthists in resistance to the new regime's call for their *ijtithāth*, uprooting; 5. A mounting discontent among the population at large, for while there is democracy, there have emerged within the new chaotic climate bandits and fanatics who intimidate and attack secular segments of the society. This phenomenon is one of the most dangerous threats to urban society. Also, there are few jobs and no security to balance the situation and unify people behind a new state. While hopes are high among many people, there is also disappointment and frustration among a large segment. A sense of betrayal may be the most pervasive now, not only because of the issues mentioned above, but also because of the circulation of a media discourse perpetuated by the occupation to enforce sectarianism and ethnic grouping as facts in an otherwise secular society. Confusing demographic facts (i.e., population statistics) and matters of power relations (history of rulers and ruling classes) with sectarian and ethnic strife and conflict, contributes to a divide that will soon assume a paradigmatic role, to be referred to and applied in any dissensional or separatist discourse.

No counter-claims could alleviate mistrust in a country that has had a long history of colonialism and a much politicized frame of mind. The experience with the British was of value for both the Iraqis and the British, as will be shown later. Current claims and promises remind people of the French monopoly of the situation in the Arab West, i. e., North Africa, when an imperialist takeover ruined the economy, as French banks and businesses under the protection of a military administration were in full control of lands and natural resources along with every possible enterprise.[134]

The present monograph does not plan to take issue with this matter, for its focus is on the formation of culture and identity, and hence offers a background for the meaning of what is taking place, including the warnings that are repeatedly voiced from among the underprivileged and the voiceless under the old regime. Issues of ethnicity and religion are not separate from class and nation, and we have to examine Iraqi history since ancient times: this history has a formative influence that sheds light on the lives of Arab and non-Arab or non-Islamic groups, too. Iraqis ask questions about the looting and systematic burning to the ground of a number of libraries in April 2003, including the National Library, the Endowment Library and the Baghdad Universality Library, among many others.[135] They are still searching for answers to assassinations of scientists and the kidnapping of physicians. Unless we put these occurrences in context, since Babylonian times and the invasion of Alexander the Great (330 BCE) and down to the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258, we are not going to understand the restlessness that will continue to influence Iraqi sentiments and tempers. In other words, for many Iraqis there is a vicious circle of revenge that makes use of the present situation to disinherit Iraqi culture, impoverish it and change it into a sordid reality of commercial deals, drug trafficking and petty concerns.

Without enough understanding of tradition as an ongoing life, we may misunderstand the reasons and also the circumstance of happenings, including the Fallūja debacle, the gathering of the nationalists and fundamentalists there, and the disproportionate American-Anglo assault with its enormous consequences of destruction and loss of lives, and its consequent provocation of revenge among tribes that will never forgive mistreatment. Aside from the known reasons available in journalistic discourse, history may tell us something. The renowned poet Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (1945), who was anti-British and whose poems were partly censored by Ms. Bell, wrote a poem called "Yawm al-Fallūja," or the Fallūja day in 1941, on the occasion of the fight there, and the British use of mighty force and mercenaries to occupy the city. Certainly, this detail would be of little significance unless we know that he used to settle there whenever he had a problem with the King or the British, especially in the 1920s. It was around that area, too, that there was an anti-British assault that took the life of Colonel Leachman and other officers in 1920, and became part of the 1920 revolutionary record.[136] Scenarios and happenings have something in common, and the same applies to the counter reaction and cultural response. In the same manner, pronouncements by the Grand Shīʿī cleric ʿAlī al-Sīstānī are no minor issue. They fall into the mainstream of the Iraqi national movement and continue the position that was taken by his forbears in the 1920s. His way of communication falls in the mainstream of Shīʿī discourse, with its readiness to work out a peaceful transfer of power, and reluctance to resort to armed struggle unless it is the last option to protect the rights of

the polity. In other words, this discourse and its functionality carry on the 1920 popular revolution position that forced the British to change plans and procedures. As a path-breaking event and a discursive catalyst in the history of Iraq, the 1920 revolution has set the tone for self-consciousness that is strongly enmeshed into a modernity process that belies associations between modernity and the colonizer. The nationalist elite that joined the appointed King were aware later of this resistance to both the colonial presence and the elitist overtones of broad nationalism. Thus, this monograph offers a diagnosis not a cure, and debates agendas obliquely, giving many the benefit of the doubt while hinting at the troubles ahead as predicted and seen through cultural lenses as well as oracles of the past.

No serious study of culture and power can overlook structures of feeling in a society of antiquity and presence like Iraq.[137] Both the social and historical operate strongly in a country of such a formation. Religion acts as an index of feelings, for it draws more attention in times of trouble and struggle. Its surfacing in consciousness must be heeded, for the occupation takes place in a context of rift and common frustration and anger. The outcome runs counter to previous periods when American culture was more popular with young generations. Especially in the case of Iraq, historically there was no conflict with America and the youth were ready to celebrate a promise of freedom, especially as the battle was seen then as one between Saddam and his previous ally. Coming after a long night of brutal rule, they subscribed also to a sense of resignation that was common among their families. Hence they met the change of the old regime with approval. What proved to be very troubling were heavy-handedness, misunderstanding of cultural norms, the use of brutality and the accompanying disarray inside Iraq.

The sense of betrayal or injustice may well accumulate as soon as it finds nourishment in a latent temper whose underpinnings are the usual national stand against foreign occupation, the Bedouin sense of honor and valor west of Baghdad, and the Shī'ī redemptive suffering. The latter, along with pride, operates strongly on Iraqi sensibilities after prolonged suffering, and acts therefore as a cultural dynamic. No Bedouin will be against the prophet's family, but they are against scenes of sorrow which they reject as signs of weakness and unmanliness. To them, according to the sociologist 'Alī al-Wardī, the Prophet's cousin 'Alī was the most heroic, the exemplary fighter.[138] Yet, the Bedouin valor and the historical sense of redemptive suffering are important also because of their bearing on tradition, its invention and rewriting to maintain legitimacy and status. Their indirect use and subtle manipulation in cultural practices may strongly empower the state or the formation of a consensus, yet to overlook or confront their presence as structures of feeling may lead to friction, opposition and revolt. Their opposites, as structures, are complacency, resignation and humiliation. The first two, i.e., complacency and resignation, may well lead to estrangement from governmental machinery. The third structure, i.e., humiliation, comes usually with foreign occupation, and its possible disregard for native culture. The sense of humiliation has been the most volatile since ancient times, as it provokes resentment, anger and revolt. Foreign occupation and "kin oppression" usually lead to bitterness and opposition. Literature demonstrates as much, but its significant signposts, whether in traditional elegies (*marāthī*, *ta'āzī*) or poetry at large, allow enough

space for an opposite celebration of life and love, not only to counteract negativity and halt the possible sliding into pitiful pain, but also to counterbalance aggression and foreign intrusions. Redemptive suffering and pride are strongly present in Iraqi culture, and both invigorate it and constitute its distinctive features. Both have been deep-rooted in the Iraqi temper since Sumerian times (middle 4th millennium BCE), and hence are present in the minds of royalty, dictators, statesmen, leaders, political parties and tribal chiefs, and are expediently used and misused. They are bound therefore to shape and color responses to current and forthcoming issues.

Part Two
Power Relations and Cultural Dynamics Since the Mandate

Every year the soil grows into leaf
Yet we're hungry
In Iraq not a year has passed without famine
      —From "The Song of the Rain" Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb (d. 1964)

He who wants power and glory,
Demands of the future its power.
He alone will one day see the end of the road
Who searches for tomorrow with all his attention.
      Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī, 258

Writing on the relation between culture and power in Iraq is a challenge, not only because of its complexity, but also because of the underlying cultural amalgam of antiquity and modernity, ethnic multiplicity and Arabo-Islamic centrality. The subject involves a number of things, including religion, temperament, ethnicity, social classes, history, ideology, literature, art, folklore, political movements, and statecraft. Yet all these work in convergence/disparity dialectic in a society of such antiquity and modernity as Iraq. The cradle of ancient civilization was also the center for the Islamic empire at its zenith. Its ancient legacy, its impact on every other civilization, including the Greek, should unsettle every complacent statesman and politician, and invite meticulous consideration of every step and notion. "On, and beneath the surface of modern Iraq," writes Jeremy Black, "are the remains of the successive cultures of ancient Mesopotamia. The Assyrians and the Babylonians were the inheritors of an even more ancient civilization, Sumer, whose origins can be traced back onto the fourth millennium BC, if not earlier." He adds, "Sumer was the first literate history of the world."[1] The past is never alien to the present, not only because of archaeological excavations, museums, scholarship and trafficking in times of chaos and war, but also because of its presence in modern culture and power. "Don't you believe in your ances-

tors' tales?" asks the old man in another story by Jalīl al-Qaysī. "To me cursed is the one who does not believe in them."[2] While of great bearing on lifestyles and collective memory, the past can be manipulated, reinvented, monumentalized and given voice toward the goal of reconstituting a civilization and a culture. Local regimes and global powers are also engaged in the fight for this past for present manipulation, and it would be an oversight and even a misrepresentation to think of the current situation in Iraq since April 2003 only in terms of material and immediate political gain. The fight for Iraq is a fight for a past, too. It is not the past which Saddam Hussein claimed to build up his image as the ultimate flowering of a grand and heroic tradition, as will be explained in part three. Global politics is also after other inventions of tradition, depending on ascending agendas and platforms, not only to suit some Biblical reinvention, to accrue to an apocalyptic vision, but also to superimpose a value-system in a continued imperial effort to master space and time, which will also be shown in due course. The apocalyptic is not confined to an outside ultra-conservative vision, however, for it works in convergence with local mythology, Babylonian or Shīʿī. In sum, Iraq has become a discursive space, inscribed with variegated registers to camouflage or advance agendas. It is a body, scarred with repression and war, and spoken of since 1980 as a commodity, or as a battleground, to serve another purpose. Hence writes the poet ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Aṭaymish from the south of Iraq in "A Homeland without Friends":

> Fates have wronged you
> When you were born, oh my homeland
> In the age of calamities
> Oh land of fertility and water
> (Between two rivers or two swords)
> You suffer thirst
> You suffer hunger
> As your Euphrates and Tigris
> Turned into blood.[3]

Both imperial powers and Saddam Hussein had their agendas, and each thought that manipulation of the other would lead to the right outcome. The Reagan administration viewed Saddam as "our son of a bitch,"[4] but he was also the man who took it for granted that Iraq was part of him: "If you say Saddam, you mean Iraq," says the young poet Luʾayy Ḥaqqī.[5] In both cases, Iraq was relegated to a part, a portion in an enormous active politic. Its wealth and educated people were allocated to a background, as if they were not the targets, before and after. Such a space and history have a lot to entice and challenge imperial dreams, fanatical historical-mythical reconstructions, and paranoid nationalisms. No wonder Iraq is approached and addressed in historical terms, once as "Turkish Arabia" and "Mesopotamia" even as late as 1914, and later under its own historic name.[6] While all speak of it as deserving that glorious past, there is always the underlying romantic suggestion of a lady in distress, a fettered entity in need of release and liberation.

In nationalist and in imperial discourses, Iraq is spoken for and at as one in need of rejuvenation. Totalitarianism at home and imperial interests abroad had their loaded registers and codifications. As totalitarian and neo-imperialist discourses are usually foiled with a value-laden language, in the case of Iraq they ironically exposed their pitfalls and contradictions against the rich Iraqi cultural background. The Iraqis were aware of Saddam's rhetoric and the process of co-option, as much as they are aware now that along with the promise of democratization there is an intentional plan to perpetuate chaos that will lead to further fragmentation and disorder. Beneath the seemingly predictable reality, there are many unpredictable occasions. War rhetoric and politics of violence forebodingly indicate that humanity passes through an acute stage in its life. Predictions and perditions accumulate in a momentous encounter where power, in every form, produces in Foucault's terms, "effects at the level of desire;" and also "at the level of knowledge."[7]

Hence there is more than one reason to prioritize culture in this reading of Iraq despite the increasing emphasis of politicians and social scientists on the state of Iraq, its natural resources and its place and performance in a world order led and envisioned by the United States. The Iraqi poet and activist in the 1920 revolution, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, looked on moral and cultural factors as more important than material ones. In *Tārīkh al-qaḍiyyah al-ʿIrāqiyyah* (Baghdad, 1923), he expressed surprise at the sudden change in the British Acting Commissioner's discourse, for, in his farewell speech of September 1920, Arnold Wilson asserted cultural factors as largely informing consciousness, an assertion that runs counter to his notorious emphasis on force;[8] but instead of condescending to Eastern and Muslim culture whose value he recognized, he highlighted the current idea of nationhood as a newly emerging Western concept that reached the East only recently,[9] and drove the *Sharifian* (Sherīfī) family in Ḥijāz (King Hussein's Hashemite house in Mecca) to coordinate its pan-Arabism with the British, especially T. E. Lawrence, against the Ottomans. In other words, if there was a worthwhile endeavor among Arabs and Iraqis toward unification and nationhood, it is only because Great Britain enabled the colonial state to do so. This discourse which was popular among architects of imperial policy and thought still persists.

As a matter of relevance, a reading of Iraqi culture, for instance, its recent historical formation, could have led nowadays to some solid understanding of material realities. While there is evidence to suggest present duplication of British colonial procedures and information since 1917,[10] along with accompanying successes and failures, there is also surprising bypassing of a positive American cultural presence in Iraqi popular and elitist culture in the 1930s–40s, which could have become fundamental toward an understanding of cultural dynamics as operating on life and politics. Trainees in Middle Eastern studies as well as pragmatists may well miss the mark whenever expediency and a self-congratulatory reading of the past become the priority.[11]

Hence history as a record of imperial achievement receives expedient attention, and empires complacently bequeath their legacies to each other, for in 330 BCE, Alexander the Great seized Babylon, promising to regain Babylon's glory as the center of the civilized world. The Mongols made no such promises when invading Bagh-

dad in 1258, but were driven there by an ambition to be at the center of the Islamic world, causing enormous cultural destruction and racial cleansing that was unequaled. Their Ottoman successors in 1534 were as brutal, but they were there for the wealth of Iraq despite some efforts by their Iraqi appointees to re-build the country as a state once more. In the struggle between them and Iran to dominate Iraq, the country passed through turmoil, suffering and destruction. Centuries later, on 11 March 1917, General Maude was lavish in his promises. The British imperial discourse had such markers as the absolute faith in the need to stay in Iraq, the claim that "the average Arab" realized "that he would lose rather than gain in national unity if we [the British] relinquish effective control," and that Iraq under domination could present a "model for the rest" (14 November 1918).[12]

These ideas permeated the communications of Colonel Arnold Wilson, the Acting Civil Commissioner in Iraq, to the Secretary of State for India. Like many other servants of the empire, Arnold Wilson strongly believed in his civilizational mission, to bestow justice, efficient administration, liberation, and security on Iraqis. These administrators, in the paraphrase of Philip Ireland, looked upon counter-political aspirations as no more than ". . . vagaries of ungrateful extremists or to be repressed as firmly as wayward thoughts in any adolescent youth" (p. 141). Phebe Marr rightly noticed that this kind of colonial logic ". . . was modeled largely on Britain's imperial structure in India," guided by faith in the "white man's burden" with an absolute distrust of the ability of the natives for self-rule.[13] The Iraqi historian 'Abbās 'Alī wrote on this point, for the British officials had no knowledge "of the temper of the Iraqi nation, its great difference from India in matters of feeling, sensibility and customs," a fact that ". . . was the first reason behind spite, resentment, and hopelessness."[14]

Although there were differences of opinion among those officials about the form of rule, there was little disagreement on the means to achieve ends, including the use of a few opportunists, sympathetic tribal Shaykhs, or British advisors as ultimate arbiters, establishment of municipalities as administrative laboratories to form future politicians, the reliance on allegiance as a primary qualification for future employment, the recourse to planned plebiscites, and the disregard for formative structures of feeling.[15] The British might have lacked other alternatives, and found themselves with little choice to ensure their domination; this has not been the case with the American occupation administration in Iraq. There are already an infrastructure, a state, highly experienced staff and technocrats, and many graduates from the United States. While there is evidence to suggest the use of many Iraqis in advisory jobs, especially from among exiles and expatriates, it is difficult to claim there is enough recognition on the ground of this highly educated class.

In this instance of negligence, as perhaps in many others, there is more than a lapse, for a well-disposed acquaintance with this positive cultural axis could have led to a deep and thorough reading of Iraq beyond economic and political expediency, thereby ensuring a better vision and surely a more peaceful one. If, for the sake of argument at least, we accept the claims to rid Iraq of a dictator, there follows then the need to let its people make use of their manpower and revenues to establish a democratic and constitutionalized state. No monopoly over its resources or sovereignty should be exercised. The liberal thought that distinguished the growing Iraqi bour-

geoisie between the 1930s and 1940s had a strong American strain that was tinged with a thin leftist sentiment attuned to the emerging labor movement.[16] As will be shown in part four, in the 1920s, poets, scholars, and eminent Shaykhs celebrated President Woodrow Wilson's principles of self-determination and rule, which were attuned to their fight against the colonialist discourse of the British civil administration in Baghdad. To Gertrude Bell, the Press Secretary in the British Administration and the influential agent in colonial politics, the publication of these principles was untimely as it, along with other factors, led to a consolidated national front against British occupation.[17] These national sentiments could have been passing outbursts of pride and manipulation of international politics, had it not been for the appearance of a body of translation from American, Russian, and French cultures. In 1922, for example, the Iraqi lawyer, journalist, and writer of the first lengthy narrative, Sulaymān Faydī (d. 1951), translated the law and constitution of the United States. Faydī was on record as having been contacted by Lawrence of Arabia (7 April 1916) to lead the revolt against the Turks, "and I will put the whole bank at your disposal and the army will provide you with the weapons you want." Faydī rejected the offer, [18] but it is good to know that he was one of the few Iraqi intellectuals with clarity of vision in matters of political nature. He also set the tone for other specific translations and comparative studies, especially concerned with laws, constitutions, supreme courts and concepts of democracy and change. Along with the well-known Iraqi thinker 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Ibrāhīm, one of the most influential thinkers in Iraqi middle class politics until 1960,[19] there were other intellectuals who developed a similar sense of comparison, especially in their doctoral dissertations in the States. Two leading communists from a Christian background had their education in the States. Jamīl Tūmā and Nūrī Rūfā'īl attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1928–31 and 1931–33 respectively.[20] Ṭal'at al-Shaybānī got his degree from Indiana University and was an Iraqi cabinet minister for planning and development many times since 1959. He wrote on the need for free elections to initiate genuine democratization; he also wrote a doctoral dissertation comparing the Supreme Court in the United States and Iraq (1955). Muḥsin Oghāzdin made similar comparisons in "Corporation Accounting Procedures" (1956), while 'Adnān al-Dūrī wrote on juvenile courts in Iraq and the States (1955). But these are mere instances of a relatively large academic effort to make use of American achievements in politics, science and education. Between 1938 and 1962, there appeared around 170 theses by Iraqi graduates from such American universities as Columbia, Harvard, Stanford, University of Pennsylvania, Chicago, Duke, George Washington, University of Southern California, Johns Hopkins, Wisconsin, Kansas, Ohio State, Cincinnati, Georgetown, Maryland, Michigan and many others. A cursory survey of Gurguis 'Awwād's *Dictionary of Iraqi Authors* (1969) could well demonstrate the fruits of Fāḍil al-Jamālī's policy when in charge of education in the 1930s and early 1940s.[21] Directed against nationalist centralization, al-Jamālī's policy to decentralize education in order to escape hegemony achieved greater success.

Enabling the poor and underprivileged south to make use of education and to vie for better positions and life, al-Jamālī ensured a better education for the Shī'īs without jeopardizing their cultural identity. Many received scholarships to study in the States. Indeed, 'Awwād's listing shows that at least two-thirds of the total number of students

abroad obtained their higher education in the States. Furthermore, dissertations completed in the States are immediately concerned with scientific and humanist applications. In 1939 'Abd al-Majīd 'Abbās wrote his doctoral thesis (Univ. of Chicago) on "Oil Diplomacy in the Near East." Another, A.T. Wālī, wrote on "The Education System in Iraq" (University of California, 1954). Zakī Ṣāliḥ wrote his on "Origins of British Influence in Mesopotamia" (Columbia University, 1941). In 1947, 'Abd al-Ṣāḥib al-'Alwān wrote his thesis on "The Process of Economic Development in Iraq" (University of Wisconsin), whereas Sa'dūn Ḥammādī had his education at American University of Beirut and the University of Wisconsin. He was a prominent leader and thinker in the main stream of the Ba'th party. Many made specific applications to law, urban planning, agriculture, and scientific research. Many became ministers before and after 1958. The pan-Arab educator and nationalist theorist Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī's (d. 1968) disappointment with this policy was openly voiced in his critique of Paul Monroe's Mission (1932).[22] Mattī 'Aqrāwī was behind the invitation, but obviously Fāḍil al-Jamālī had a hand as he made use of his stay at Columbia University (1929–1932) as a doctoral candidate, joined the mission, and was appointed as the Iraqi government attaché for the mission to assess the situation in Iraq. It was that assessment which led to the radical educational transformation in Iraq. On the other hand, this educational policy, with its focused interest in de-centering, proliferating and dispersing power, was not of minor significance, not only because it counterbalanced Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī's avowed discrimination against the south,[23] and because of his reluctance to provide students with scholarship opportunities, but also because it partly undermined sectarian concentration of power. As the senior officers along with active politicians who came with the appointed king or served in the Ottoman army were "Sunnis almost to a man,"[24] power machinery and apparatus remained with a concentration that gave vent to discontents until 1958. According to the Ministry of Education sources, the commission, led by Paul Monroe, drew attention to the need for equal opportunity education. It noticed also that grants and fellowships to study abroad were not distributed equally.[25] In his capacity as Supervisor General (1932), Fāḍil al-Jamālī collaborated with Sāmī Shawkat, the Director General of Education, when the Shī'ī landlord and dignitary Sayyid 'Abd al-Mahdī was the Minister of Education (9 September 1933). Fāḍil al-Jamālī democratized education and raised serious questions regarding the need to cover Islam as a way of life, not as a State religion focused only on the four Sunni *madhhabs*. Fāḍil al-Jamālī's policy set a counter policy of great bearing on subsequent cultural formations. That policy was not only a "result of his association with Professor Monroe,"[26] but also in line with his upbringing in a traditional Shī'ī family. Summing up some of these issues in view of available scholarship, Phebe Marr concludes:

> In 1930s, in particular, Fāḍil al-Jamālī, a Shī'ī, used his position as director-general in the ministry to encourage the shī'ah to attend the Higher Teachers' Training College. He also helped to spread schools to the rural south and to give the shī'ah scholarships to study abroad. The result of these efforts was a new generation of shī'ah with higher degrees—often from the west—in modern technical and professional fields as medicine, engineering, and economics (Ibid. 145).

This summation is of significance when set in relation to the 1958 egalitarian policy, but against the virtual centralized perspective as enhanced by Saddam's early ascendancy as *al-sayyid al-nā'ib*, the deputy. The efforts of the Iraqi regime since 1972 were to reverse that direction towards a centralized nationalist drive against indigenous orientations, an effort that had an ideological base to be sure, for Saddam strongly believed in nationalism as a way of life and state formation.[27]

Rather than a passing interest, this American cultural engagement, with its Columbia University stamp, took a cultural route, noticed and followed up by the American Consul in Baghdad, Loy Henderson, who began, upon his arrival in 1942, a series of visits to the Shī'ī holy sites at Najaf and Karbalā', meeting on one occasion the Grand Mujtahid al-Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan (May 1944) whom the Iraqis revered for being of pure Arab and Iraqi extraction.

This American engagement should be set against the British early endorsement of the nationalist drive versus Islamism and its sectarian variations. Despite Colonel [later Sir] Arnold Wilson's reluctance to follow up T. E. Lawrence's advocacy of Arabism to counteract Islamism, the nationalist streak took hold in the early formation of the State because of a number of factors, as will be shown in due course. It should also be seen against a British disappointment at the Shī'ī popular revolution throughout the South in 1920 that enlisted the support of other sects and factions in the center of Iraq.

The Columbia nexus was not limited to the Paul Monroe Mission and its draft resolutions, as sponsored by Fāḍil al-Jamālī. In 1930 the young intellectual 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Ibrāhīm settled there under the guidance of Parker Thomas Moon.[28] Despite his short stay, the impact of Moon was great, leading the already anti-British mind to study colonialism and its impact on sociological formations, and to dissect the dying colonialist strategy. Upon returning and later joining the American University in Beirut, 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Ibrāhīm wasted no time in forming the *Ahālī* Group, a coterie of national intellectuals, reformist in the main, with an open distrust of both Pan-Arab nationalism and communism, or any ideology smacking of totalitarianism.[29]

The immediate impact of the American grounding showed in his theory of "populism" and its democratization principles. Opting for equal opportunities to all social and ethnic groups, this theory enlisted on its side many intellectuals who were searching for a way out of the impasse. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Ibrāhīm underwent persecutions for his "populism," and the whole group passed through a number of difficulties. With its disintegration, the whole scene became a theatre of conflicts, where the army, the British and subordinate political parties wrought havoc and destruction.

Another side of the American cultural imprint could be traced in the growing cultural consciousness of the 1940s. The poetess Nāzik al-Malā'ikah demonstrated the influence of Edgar Alan Poe in her pioneering experimentation in poetry. Her Princeton (1951) and Wisconsin (1955) experiences later gave her poetry a new flavor, a sense of feminist identity. In 1945 the newly emerging journal, *al-Fikr al-Ḥadīth* (New Thought) began to publish articles that called for the application of American realism. Other poets, such as the influential al-Sayyāb, brought T. S. Eliot to the attention of many intellectuals. Sa'dī Yūsuf, another renowned poet, translated Walt Whitman. On the other hand, the Franklin Foundation (Free Thought Organization) found itself siding with al-Sayyāb and other Iraqi literati to challenge Marxist thought

throughout the 1950s. Of no less significance was the return from the States in the late 1940s of such intellectuals and sociologists as ʿAlī al-Wardī, Muḥsin Mahdī, Mattī ʿAqrāwī and Majīd Khedūrī. There were other educators, too, who exerted a direct impact on the cultural scene. ʿAlī al-Wardī's sociological mind drove him to develop a discourse of resistance against the *status quo.* His writings of the early 1950s were openly opposed to tradition as an elitist discourse, and to the concept of *belles lettres.* His *Usṭūrat al-adab al-rafī* (Myth of belles lettres) that appeared as articles first caused a storm among nationalists. In a rejoinder, a well-known journalist was disappointed at al-Wardī's Americanization: "God forgive America . . . for benefiting us with the likes of al-Wardī," he wrote.[30]

Between 1960 and 1990, hundreds of Iraqis received their doctoral degrees from American schools in every field of knowledge including law, economy, management, finance, media, engineering, and medicine. It should certainly have been surprising to them to hear that between April 2003 and June 2004 that the help of American junior professors was being enlisted to lay out the constitutional and institutional mapping for post-Saddam Iraq. I am citing this example not only for its ironic twist, the ignorance of recent facts and historical records respecting the land that offered humanity its first written laws, but also for its touch on culture and power as the topic for the present discussion. Local authorities since the so-called independence (the passage from mandatory rule, protectorate in 1921 to fabricated independence on 3 October 1932) proved to be aware of cultural dynamics. They were noticeably aware of culture as an effective ideological means for hegemony. Foreign powers demonstrated (and are demonstrating) not only inadequacy, but also superficiality in dealing with Iraq's structures of feeling, tempers, symbols, and lifestyles. Local authorities also showed readiness to reinvent tradition; foreign powers on the other hand thought then, and think now, in terms of might, physical coercion, and other disciplinary means as deployed in the hinterland.

The comparison and contrast does not suggest that local authorities were successful in the long run, for the monarchy (1921-58), the Republican rule (1958), and the military coups thereafter (1963, 1964, 1968, the internal takeover of 1979) came up with invented traditions, including claims of lineage to the Prophet, to profess legitimacy against opposition and to undermine any search for institutionalized democracy. Every attempt at legitimacy outside proper institutionalized processes or indigenous practices of social justice and communal wisdom proved to be authoritarian and absolute; or, in the case of colonial subordination, a mere façade.

Legitimacy and State Formation

Nevertheless, an overview of the meaning of tradition as such may well lead us to a focused reading of the role of culture, including ideology, in state formation, opposition, revolutions, and the emergence of the neo-patriarch. On many occasions, there were many competing discourses, for as Foucault argues in respect to mixed agendas and occurrences, ". . . a whole mass of discourses appeared pursuing the same confrontation."[31] In state formation as well as in the consolidation of power around a group or a party, there is always an effort to enlist the intelligentsia, to influence public opinion, and to disseminate the ruling ideology; in short, to manufacture a new

Gramscian hegemony. While this signifies a periodic success, hidden and marginalized cultural norms and repressed opposition gather in momentum to burst out into surprising manifestations of revolt, with a ready-for-use inventory of symbols, markers, songs, satires, elevating words, and street slander that may well belie clear-cut categorizations on ethnic or sectarian grounds, as was the case in Iraqi revolutions. It should be noticed, too, that any disarray and anarchy following the collapse of a patriarch may draw nostalgia for a seemingly better past, not only because of the long-time association with that past, its cultural symbols and rituals, but also because of its relative stability and security.

As state formation (i.e., the process involving the formation of its institutions)[32] in modern Iraq worked for some time within rival or accommodating ideologies, like pan-Arabism, Islamism, and socialism, the state developed subtle means of undermining internal and external opposition through a number of ways that were mostly cultural. Foremost among these were its inventions of tradition, to use Eric Hobsbawm's terms. Although specifically used to refer to the effort to forge or "establish continuity with a suitable historic past," the term "includes both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period . . . and establishing themselves with great rapidity."[33] The accompanying process of "formalization and ritualization" involves grafting symbols, current official ritual, and religious or nationalist markers onto old associations and connotations to "restructure historical memory and popular culture,"[34] not only to ensure hegemony, but also to circumvent other serious problems that invite and demand address in line with the challenge of democracy. To quell dissent and opposition and to repress any mention of social, ethnic or religious and ideological cleavage, there developed in Iraq—though periodically and with different focus and emphasis—a series of invented traditions that boosted national pride, past glories, patriarchy, and sameness, not only to reinterpret the past and fit it into an institutionalized power, but also to appeal to the populace and "forge emotive links" with it against the learned and the educated.[35]

While this thesis does not underestimate the natural flow of Arab and Iraqi nationalisms throughout the interwar period and after the Second World War, my focus is on the empowering invention and appropriation of culture and ideology. For the increasingly politicized Iraqis (in terms of ideological formations), political and social positions rise and fall throughout the period in question in view of categorical political labeling, ranging between nationalism and Islamism, and between communism and subordination to foreign powers. The latter is a stigma and a sin for the ordinary Iraqi, and regimes invested money and energy to manipulate these sentiments: "I wonder at treason," writes al-Sayyāb in his poem "Stranger at the Gulf," "can a man betray his country? / How could he exist if he betrayed the meaning of his existence?" In other words, labeling people politically derives its potency from political consciousness and anxieties as formed within national and nationalist predilections. These fluctuate to be sure, and priorities change within each social or economic stratum, but political determinants, including communal, ethnic, sectarian, tribal, and especially ideological affiliations, may cut across these formations, too, as the history of political parties in Iraq indicates.

On the other hand, authority has an enormous interest in manipulating, forging, and accentuating religion, rituals, and history. These are its means to legitimacy in the absence of transparent constitutionalized process. Even when resorting to a counter discourse, this counter discourse cannot remain totally free from contamination. To oppose means to retain some aspects of the opposed discourse. The Karbalā' calamity in 680 that culminated in the murder of the Prophet's grandson and his family, for instance, has evolved in commemorative discourses and performances. These have evolved as representations of the oppressed, but when enacted under Shī'ī sovereignty, they should grow into moments of triumph. In other words, they should give vent to the outcome of longtime suffering, to rejuvenation and joy.

Yet, even in such circumstances, there is nevertheless a sense of agony, for the past remains a scar, a bleeding wound that resists healing. It fuses into other discourses of the oppressed and may acquire a permanent stamp of resistance and opposition. In this passage into other discourses, it may undergo violation and suffer infraction. As much as the Karbalā' discourse speaks for Shī'ī opposition, it may also pass into mainstream Islamism as an undercurrent against oppression and authoritarian misuse of religion. Despite widespread checks and prohibitions, the father of Islamic jurisprudence, Imam al-Shāf'ī (d. 205/820), for instance, spoke of the Karbalā' tragedy.[36] While many from among Sunni jurists were no less sympathetic to the plight of the Prophet's family, politicians have made use of the tragedy to build emotive links with the masses. Yet, notwithstanding individual or authoritarian manipulations of practices and rituals, Karbalā' remains central to cultural consciousnesses regardless of secular affiliations. As a site of discourse, it invokes poets and writers from every platform to draw on it to express their lamentation of misuse, oppression, and injustice.[37] Karbalā' assumes a universal meaning and operates strongly on structures of feeling. In *Ḥabbāt al-naftālīn* (1986; English translation, *Mothballs,* 1996), the Iraqi woman writer 'Ālyah Mamdūḥ depicts a Sunni family in the A'ḍamiyah district in Baghdad, which does its burial rituals and prayers at Imam Abū Ḥanīfah mosque, while it also invokes the blessings of the "Lord of Martyrs, Hussein." The grandmother says: "We will ask him to soften Jamil's [her son's] heart and heal him."[38] While this attests to the ideological hold of Karbalā' on the Iraqi conscience, it also explains why a state nationalist ideology, like Saddam's, feared this hold.

In the case of Iraq, the annual commemoration of the 'Āshūrā', or the ten days of the battle that ended with the murder of the Prophet's grandson (680), is not only an assertion of life against death, inscription against erosion, identity and survival against extermination, but also a writing back, a rejuvenation through rituals and carnivals, to redraw tradition in a leftist mode. As the whole idea of *rawāfiḍ* (rejectionists, as the Shī'īs were called) was based on the need to recognize legitimacy only among the Prophet's immediate family, there is a vested interest in the idea through claims to lineage, as the 'Abbāsids did (750–1258). If the rejection of the first caliphal order amounted to a rejection of the Umayyad (661–750) as usurpers, the 'Abbāsids manipulated the idea to claim their immediate lineage to the Prophet through his uncle al-'Abbās. In later periods, ideological identification with the feeling of betrayal or with its roots in an Islamic message of great power and appeal could work politically, too, for both the communists and the nationalists.

Leftist ideology made use of this collective feeling of the oppressed to win over the masses; historical belonging and a rooted feeling in a tradition that sustains itself with the narrative of the Prophet's immediate family endow nationalism and the fight against colonialism with purpose and human power. No discussion of pain and suffering can bypass history and oppression in Iraq. Although writing on the late Iraqi Kurdish poet Buland al-Ḥaydarī as early as 1967, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's words apply to this whole structure of feeling. He says:

> Iraqi pain is real and old, it is the pain of a country passing through series of periods, Babylonian, Sumerian and Akkadian, and its forehead is smeared with the mud of submission. Instead of changing into a David, a Spartacus, or a Greek hero, he resigns, accepting oppressors' alms, and when revolting he is only freed from the Ottoman master to fall into the hands of the British master.

He adds: "From this Iraqi poet's background, where our sorrows multiply in the heart of this land, no Iraqi poet emerges without passing through the cycle of pain."[39] Pain becomes the corner stone in ideological formations. Hence, the history of communism and nationalism in Iraq cannot be seen as isolated from structures of feeling and practices that have informed collective memory. In other words, appeals to Iraqi Shīʿism, as well as manipulations of its drive and subsequent secular disregard of its burgeoning, had a history of diversified ideological formation that should be taken into account while studying culture and power in Iraq.

Although Hanna Batatu argues in his book *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [40] that social and economic interests and material facts determine all political dynamics, there are also other facts on the ground that suggest otherwise. In his monumental work, Batatu accepts extant class and economic formations as providing horizontal determinants, while the vertical ones include religious and ethnic categories. The latter surely intertwine with the former, but they are no less important in terms of political consciousness and deployment of political action.[41] The story of political consciousness, its general and organized manifestations in tribal and party politics and ways of dissemination, may offer a balancing view in this respect. The tribes of the middle Euphrates, for instance, were more politically conscious, as evidenced by the 1920 Revolution and the 1991 Revolution, than some other more nomadic tribes; yet the latter could well become means to enforce authority through deliberate militarization as was the case during the ʿĀrifs' era (1963–68) and, especially, in Saddam Hussein's times (especially 1978–2003). Cultural politics assume a great role under manipulation and may well become fundamental in political change and reversible formations.

Again, the 1920 popular revolution should be in one's mind whenever studying the elite, the landlords, and the populace in Iraq. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr's reading of the Revolution, being one of its spokesmen and leaders, offers many insights into these combinational sites, for he rarely bypasses a detail whenever it is worth citing, focusing on Iraqidom as an issue concerning all the Iraqis, including Kurds and other ethnic groups. Elitist discourse, national communiqués, and clerical and intel-

lectual leadership (along with tribal affiliations), proved great potency in organizing the populace, but popular genius, especially in revolutionary sayings and folk poetry, was more effective at being pervasive. While the media and cultural sites, including mosques, are venues for cultural manipulation, songs and symbols, including anthems, flags, pictures, images and the like, assume greater significance because they take the streets at large as their free and liberating space. This does not preclude the manipulation of the cultivated medium, including poetry and narrative if the need arises. Hence, a better way to investigate the dissemination of culture that led to the 1920 popular revolution and all subsequent state building may lie with a discussion of the following:

1. Agents of change, especially dignitaries, religious and tribal leaders, and the notables in Baghdad and other cities.
2. Sites of cultural diffusion, especially *majālis* (singular *majlis*), i.e., assemblies, mosques, schools, newspaper coteries, prisons, marketplaces, clubs, guild and party headquarters, military camps, and islands of exile.
3. Communal and societal ethics, lore, recollections, religious rituals, forms of piety, and tragedies of epical dimensions like the ones on the systematic extermination of the house of the Prophet. The most passionate accounts of the so-called *maqātil* genre (used specifically in reference to these deliberate murders) have Abū Mikhnif's report of the Karbalā' massacre as its prototype, as recorded by Abū Ja'far Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. This is the catalyst and inciter for redemptive suffering in annual assemblies and processions.[42]
4. Underground activities, including secret political movements.
5. Parties and social, ethnic, and professional movements.
6. Ideology formation, including the use of tradition and the openness to acculturation.

Against these is the counter-culture with its "sultans' counselors," to use ʿAlī al-Wardī's book title (1954), opportunists who told the British occupation forces that all was well and that they had a good monopoly over the masses,[43] decrees, laws, restraints, and checks. Along with this presence, there is also the deliberate camouflage of institutions, their reproduction as a façade, not as genuine institutionalized apparatus, like the ones set by the Acting High Commissioner, in line with a British policy that was not remedied or corrected in the Cairo meeting (March 1921) as presided over by Winston Churchill.[44] The latter denied that the Iraqis expected full independence in an announcement, a denial that infuriated the Iraqis and led to the Ḥaydarkhānah [an old Baghdadi district] Mosque meeting.[45] In 1921, the political agenda emanating from this meeting and its communiqué emphasized: full independence, democratic rule, and rejection of the mandate or any other form of subordination.[46]

Agents of Change: Dignitaries and Activists

The role of dignitaries, notables, poets, and scholars cannot be exaggerated, for the Iraqis still think that what happened to a number of families since 1958 was a continuation of British dismay at the role of these families during the national struggle. In

the alleged plot of 20 January 1970 against the Ba'th regime, many traditional families were targeted, and the Iraqis thought the British repaid these families at the hands of the new revolutionaries. Perhaps, in view of a history of mistrust, public opinion was still under the overshadowing presence of Abū Nājī, i.e., the British. There were bases for the record of mistrust. On 3 November 1920, the High Commissioner made it clear that he was to deprive the areas of the popular revolution of participation in the general conference, the constitutional council that was to manage the guidelines for a national role (al-Baṣīr, pp. 292–94). Another instance that aroused suspicions was the effort of the occupation authority to divide the Iraqi national front by suggesting names (2 July 1920) from outside the fifteen dignitaries who were the broad public's choice from all segments of the society (religious and ethnic), a tactic that did not work as the national leaders hastened to meet their colleagues, including Christians, Jews and other minorities, at the house of Rif'at al-Chādarchī (Ibid. 161). On another front, the active and shrewd press secretary of the British authority, Ms. Gertrude Bell, made an effort to invite the young revolutionary nationals for tea at her residence every Friday evening to keep them away from the planned meetings at mosques. She succeeded in the first invitation, but failed later when her tactic was exposed (Ibid. 146–47). Worst of all was the deliberate effort to imprison, exile, punish and execute leaders and dignitaries, ban newspapers, and enforce a campaign of terror (Ibid. 144–45, 187, 432–33, 435–439). The fifteen representatives of the people who were chosen from every segment of the society to negotiate with the British authorities in 1920 provided a counter-discourse to the one that depicts the mosaic nature of the society as a problem.

There were a good number of those figures, according to Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr (pp. 151–55).[47] Those were only the people selected to supervise action or to take orders from the Najaf Ḥawzah or the supreme Shī'ī council and the leaderships of both the al-Istiqlāl Society (Independence) and the al-'Ahd Society ("Society of the Covenant," 1919).

In other words, these, along with the officers of the 'Ahd Society, like Yāsīn al-Hāshimī, 'Alī Jawdat al-Ayyubī, Jamīl al-Madfa'ī (a very courageous anti-British nationalist from Mosul), and Taḥsīn 'Alī, and such figures from the Ḥaras al-Istiqlāl (February 1919), as 'Alī Bāzirqān, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, Jalāl Beg Bābān, Shākir Maḥmūd, the officer Ḥājj Maḥmūd Rāmz, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-'Askarī, and Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī, were among many Iraqis, Kurds, and Arabs, who saw it as their responsibility to represent all the Iraqis and to fight for independence. They included officers, businessmen, religious leaders, notables, political activists, poets and scholars. Representation stemmed from a shared ethic and faith in Iraq. Their readiness to sacrifice life and wealth for their country made them symbolic of an Iraqi nation. The Istiqlāl group made it clear that they stood for all Iraqis (Ibid. 138); the 'Ahd (Covenant/Pledge) restricted its membership to sincere Arab or Iraqi members (Ibid. 106). The latter as a party was in coordination with its Syrian counterpart and in the hands of the nationalist officers.[48]

In dialogue with other groups, ethnic and religious, these names represented the Iraqi society at large, its main nationalities, ethnicities and sects. This representational nature was more in keeping with the attitude of the Istiqlāl group, to "unite the word of the Iraqis" and to stand for "their ethnicities and sects" (Ibid. 138). There

was an executive committee for the fifteen representatives that included al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, ʿAlī al-Bāzirqān, Jaʿfar Abū al-Timman, Yūsuf Afendī al-Suwaidī, and al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Dawūd. To enforce the idea of a single unified Iraq, Muslims participated in Easter festivals and brought flowers to the churches all over Iraq. The *Iraq* newspaper published in that year an article titled "The Iraqis and Refined Social Intimacy" (Ibid. 156). On the other hand, upon meeting the group suggested by the occupation authority, the representatives arranged with their colleagues to have one, unified agenda (Ibid. 161–62). The British were unhappy with these arrangements and things deteriorated, with more imprisonments, atrocities, decrees of exile and repression, and disregard for the sentiments of people in the sacred cities, leading soon after to the Popular Revolution of 30 June 1920 (Ibid. 188–199).

Perhaps there is no better evidence to the impact of the media than the orders of the British High Commissioner in Iraq to ban the *Mufīd* and *Al-Rāfidān* dailies that were issued by the national party, *al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī*, and the Renaissance Party, *Ḥizb al-Nahḍah*, on 26 August 1922. Sir Percy Cox's decree included orders to imprison the editors Sāmī Khundah and Ibrāhim Ḥilmī al-ʿUmar—who was able to disappear—and to exile political leaders of national standing, including Jaʿfar Abū al-Timman, Ḥamdī al-Bāchachī, Mahdī al-Baṣīr, Sayyid Muhammad Ḥasan Ṣadr al-Dīn, Ḥabīb al-Ghayzarān and others (al-Baṣīr, p. 434). Writers, poets and activists were given the choice between exile or signing a pledge of non-interference in politics (Ibid. 438),[49] a practice set by the British in Iraq and followed henceforth by the nation-state or the post-independence one. Banning of newspapers, songs, poems, and the like was a practice shared by both occupation and national authorities. Both agreed that in times of crisis and war, classical and popular poetry, political writing, songs, canticles, cartoons, and other means of expression could influence and inflame the masses and cause what Percy Cox called "insurgency and disorder," as documented by Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr (p. 432).

Sites of Protest

Although sites of protest change according to circumstance, the early practice of using mosques, schools, clubs and assemblies continues to be quite effective as the dynamic gate to the street, its public and manifestations of power. *Jamʿiyyat Ḥaras al-Istiqlāl* (The Guards of Independence Society, later to become a political party) was quite effective in organizing these gatherings, along with its comparable, but less effective, *al-ʿAhd* Party. It issued the *Istiqlāl* newspaper (28 September 1920–9 February 1921) as the mouthpiece for the rebels during the Revolution. The measures taken by the occupation authorities on 9 February 1921 against the newspaper, its editors and writers, ranged from exile to some, and imprisonments for Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, ʿAbd al-Ghafūr al-Badrī, and Qāsim al-ʿAlawī (Ibid. p. 144). *Jamʿiyyat Ḥaras al-Istiqlāl* used to invite people for religious gatherings, especially to commemorate the Prophet's birth or on the occasion of the annual mourning for Imam Ḥusayn, or for other reasons where poetry was recited and speeches were delivered. Unless we understand the impact of these occasions on collective memory and their ability to relate the present to the past, we may well miss why these occasions constitute the route toward social and political protest or resistance. Especially when attended by the Shaykh

al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, who used to be met by large groups every week upon coming down to Baghdad from Kaẓimiyyah, these gatherings assumed great significance and became explosive spaces that disturbed the occupation authorities (Ibid. 147–48). Another site was the schools, like the *Ahliyyah* Secondary School, established by 'Alī al-Bāzirqān (14 September 1919), where secret meetings were held and where speeches were delivered every Thursday evening, until it became " a pure political club," said Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr (p. 141).

On the other hand assemblies and clubs were no less able to bridge the gap between the elite and the public. Every meeting of some significance had its echo in the street, and on many occasions the street spread the message over a citywide network, transforming the whole society into a revolutionary boiler. The gathering of the masses outside the British High Commissioner's office (2 July 1920) where he had a meeting with the fifteen representatives of the people along with their colleagues (the ones selected by the British authority) was an instance of how assemblies and meetings could well reach to the street to empower representatives with the people's will (Ibid. 161–62). With due respect to religious authority, assemblies in the religious sites had a peaceful nature. Their significance as a rite of passage toward a covenant of faith and communal solidarity cannot be overestimated. Negligence on the part of the British governors with respect to these assemblies, and indeed their disrespect, led to discontents that were behind the emergence of the secret *Nahḍah Islāmiyyah* (Islamic Renaissance) society that was responsible for the assassination of Captain Marshal. The same negligence and arrogance was among the reasons behind the 1920 Popular Revolution.[50] Of no less importance were coterie meetings, café gatherings, dignitary assemblies, and religious *majālis* (assemblies).

As I am reserving the discussion of literary coteries and assemblies for the fourth part, it is worthwhile here to focus on the practice and meaning of these religious *majālis*, especially during the *'Āshūrā'*, the ten days of the Muḥarram month recording the events that led to the massacre of the Prophet's grandson Imam al-Ḥusayn (680), and *Al-Arba 'īn Ziyārah*, the commemorative pilgrimage or visit to his shrine upon the passing of forty days after his murder. These commemorative occasions have been repressed since 680. The few instances when the community was freely allowed the practice enabled the community to remember the poetry and the narratives. These make up the *ta 'ziya* (mourning) tradition that involved, in the Buwayhid period (945–1055) since 352/963, rituals, recitations, and chanting, along with processions of chest beating, self-flagellation, head cutting, and shows of suffering, along with enactments of the scene as envisioned in popular histories. The literature has survived as a marginalized one, despite the fact that many religious authorities from mainstream Islamism were in sympathy and support. Yet, hegemony works differently and installs its checks and measures to sustain an official view of history that upholds authority and power. The history of repression did not end with the Wahhabis' nineteenth-century invasions of the sacred sites in Najaf and Karbalā', for there were repressive measures against these by Iraqi Ba'th authorities, especially when Saddam was in virtual control from 1975 to 1977, that concluded with total prohibition in the 1980s.

This was not the practice of the monarchy, especially King Fayṣal's sympathy and participation in these, a gesture that won the community over and led it to place the

national flag among the usual banners of these *ta 'āzī* processions and assemblies—to the chagrin of people like Ṣātī' al-Ḥuṣrī as noted earlier. The British were no less aware of the impact of these rituals and showed some support and understanding despite their repression of the community in matters pertaining to the future of the country.[51] In terms of usual practice, these *majālis* could be held in the courtyards of the shrines, mosques, streets, and private houses. They are usually enacted and sponsored for both women and men, for women's *majālis* are no less known for their educational and cathartic function. On the other hand, women also attend men's processions in the streets, where the society regains its oneness, becoming a *communitas* in suffering, pain, and aspiration for regeneration.[52] People usually move from one assembly to another, depending on how many notables have the money and piety to entertain these gatherings, and thereby to sustain a social, economic, and moral contract with the society. Patrons have to prepare the assembly and its needs, bring *a qāri'* (reciter, narrator or *rawzakhūn*) who narrates the events of the year 680 and reports accounts along with poetic accentuations and melodious recitations and maintain emotive links with audiences. Emotive links are usually consolidated through an association between the past and the present, with direct or oblique reference to social and political grievances. Security offices carefully monitored these in the past years, and many well-established reciters suffered persecution and murder. The sponsors have to bring a *rādūd* (chanter, literally one who reiterates rhythmically) who may start working on his audience at the assembly with poetic *laṭmiyyāt* (strophic recapitulations) of the occasion in a very moving rhythmic pattern, melodious voice, before taking over the center of the assembly, the street or the square where a *pulpit* is erected to enable him to supervise the audience and excite the youth and the pious from every age to interact and begin chest beating in a rhythmic pattern. These are different from the last night when the *waḥshah*, the night of the forlorn, is meant to reenact what happened to the family of the Prophet's grandson, who were taken as captives all the way to Damascus. This concludes in the morning with the preparation of *harīsah*, a porridge rich with meat. Pots are spread around the assembly or in the street to be available to all, along with the service of water which becomes part of the ritual and rewarding practice as atonement for the betrayal suffered by the sacred family and the denial of water to them. Water jugs or tanks are covered with black cloth, to associate water with the Imam's suffering and the denial of water to him and to his family, including the children. Jugs or tanks are spread all over the city or village and community with inscribed signs saying that they are free (*"ya- sabīl, ya-'aṭshān"*) for the thirsty passersby, to repent for the crime committed against the Prophet's family, and to reintegrate into the community of the faithful. On the last *waḥshah* night there should be no lights, for grief overwhelms the scene, and following the assembly and recitations, there may be a procession that goes on in the streets with solemn recitations of what were supposed to be the words of the Prophet's grandson: "My people, *shī'atī*, if you drink sweet water remember me, and if you hear of a martyr killed by oppressors, mourn for me."

One cannot exaggerate the impact of these reenactments on public and collective consciousness. Their work in shaping a collective memory and their consolidation of social life are not the only manifestations of significance. These serve too as preparatory grounds for organized politics and other ideological and cultural formations.

They became the targets of secular ideology whenever the latter was empowered enough to relieve itself of its early tactical condescension, as was the case in Iraq in the 1970s and the 1980s.

In this sense, culture is more inclusive as it relates to structures of feeling. Although means and methods of deployment differ and vary, culture operates within the whole society, for, in the words of Jacques Berque, "Culture . . . is nothing more than the movement of the social totality as it seeks for itself an expression and a meaning." He has a caution, however: "This search for expression and a meaning may either comment on the movement of any given time, urge it to return to its structures, or project it into anticipation of the future. In any of these cases it acts upon the social whole and is acted upon."[53] For this reason, compared to praxis and politics, culture is given priority, for can politics "succeed . . . without ideals and revolutionary images, that is without specifically cultural preparation?"[54]

To cope with the complexity of the subject, I will argue the case of culture and power through a dialectic of exchange among power relations, cultural constructs, and basic structures of feeling, including nonconformity and "redemptive suffering" as pertaining to the typical Iraqi mood that subsumes Shīʿism,[55] and pride on individual and national levels. The latter should be taken seriously due to its rooted presence in collective memory, a fact that reporters of the current situation in Iraq recognize. Evan Thomas and Rod Nordland of *Newsweek,* 22 December 2003, said the following in commenting on the first images of Saddam in captivity: "In a part of the world where pride and dignity mean everything, the images were clearly intended to shame." No matter who was the target in these images, and what expediency lay behind them, there was a deliberate humiliation, depending on who was the sufferer. Like Saddam's recourse to public punishments, mutilations, executions and videotaped scenes of torture of public figures, these images mean to enforce sovereignty and power. Force becomes a discourse of its own, a counter-culture that believes in a concentrated power to intimidate the rest. Culture, on the other hand, works through proliferation, permeation, and accessibility. "A cultural approach," writes Jacques Berque, "thus implies reference to concrete, overall history but cannot be confined to it. It must try to learn to what extent and how this history tends to become expressive and meaningful: for itself, but also for others" (p. 21).

I will draw on a number of things to bridge historical signposts since the British appointment of Fayṣal as King of Iraq, in August 1921 (after a planned plebiscite voiced 90% approval). This argument will refer to a supportive movement that enlisted some Shīʿī dignitaries, Iraqi intellectuals, and Iraqi Sharīfī officers of diverse ethnicities though mainly Arabs like Nūri al-Saʿīd.[56] There is a reference to the British simultaneous change of the status of Iraq into a Protectorate, as a pivot, and to argue the whole case within an Iraqi sense of nationhood. The emphasis is laid on semiotics, and flags in particular, as they change in focus and priority, and on cultural figures, mostly covered in parts four and five, as both agents of change and as participants in delivering or enhancing structures of feeling, as was the case with the Iraqi poet from Ḥilla, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, and the next generation poet from Basrah, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb (d. 1964). The significance of both, among many others, for this prioritization of culture lies in their poetry and career as functionally en-

meshed in a politics of revolution for the first and, for the second, of a difficult search
for meaning and stance in a post-independence state. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr is
described as the "most famous among the poets of the Iraqi revolution,"[57] as his po-
etry was dynamically involved in political protest among every segment of the soci-
ety, a point that will receive more attention in part three. His significance as activist,
participant, and historian is no less important for delineating the political-cultural
scene that led to the revolution against the British, which has become a touchstone
and yardstick for Iraqi politics and dealings with foreign powers. While approving of
Sir Aylmer Haldane's critique of British policy as the reason behind the Revolution as
described in his book *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia* (1922), Muḥammad Mahdī al-
Baṣīr mentioned the British use of municipalities as a façade or as alternatives to gen-
uine independence, their repression of intellectual freedom and the freedom of ex-
pression, and their reliance on opportunists as the real reasons behind Iraqi grievances
(p. 67–71). Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr was a fair-minded intellectual and a revolu-
tionary whose concerns were purely Iraqi. His *Tārīkh al-qaḍiyyah al-ʿIrāqiyyah* (The
History of the Iraqi Question) is an important document, not only for the information
it has on local and national responses, but also for its coverage of British documents,
speeches and responses. He maintains a critical insight into details, and never allows
one point of view to dominate. Hence, he combined Gertrude Bell's assessments with
Wilson's speeches; he cited responses to Ṭālib al-Naqīb's ambitions to be the king or
ruler of Iraq against a background of popular discontent with his aspirations.[58] He
demonstrated that Shaykh Ḍarī's cooperation and coordination along with that of his
Zoubaʿ tribe was the only courageous instance of actual participation in the Revolu-
tion northwest of Baghdad.[59]

He was also among the few who gave us a first hand experience of the Henjam Is-
land. This was the dreary place of exile used by the British against uncompromising
national leaders, including the author of *Tārīkh al-qaḍiyyah al-ʿIrāqiyyah,* Muḥam-
mad Mahdī al-Baṣīr. He was exiled in 1922 as part of the British strategy to alienate
the participants in the popular revolution and to keep them away from nation-state
formation; i.e., the governing council.[60] The other poet, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, from
the next generation, was more involved in cultural production. His career and poet-
ics, for instance, encapsulate issues that are seemingly disparate. As a pioneering voice
in poetry since the late 1940s, he was among the few who reconstituted tradition in
terms of keen awareness of modernity. His grounding in folk tradition and systematic
reinvention of the classical in terms of modern awareness made his voice unique
among Iraqi intellectuals. On the other hand, he developed an Iraqi poetic temper,
which remains significantly clear and distinctive in register and music, conjoining
both ancient markers and melody while capturing a typical Iraqi note of "redemptive
suffering" that can be associated with both ancient Babylonian and Sumerian rituals
of Tammūzī death and rebirth, and Shīʿī agony for their community's tardiness in of-
fering support to the Prophet's grandson. He was also the typical Iraqi dissenter, a dis-
interested intellectual, a Sunni with a Shīʿī temper, an opponent of the status quo, and
a destabilizer of orthodoxy. Certainly, he was not alone among artists and poets, for his
contemporary, the painter Kāẓim Ḥaydar was no less preoccupied with the underpin-
nings of the Iraqi tragic consciousness. As Jabra argues, "for him [Kāẓim Ḥaydar] the

religious inspiration of Islam comes through a sense of tragedy, in signs and symbols that he makes his own; horses, helmets, swords, spears, men, women, tents, conspiracies, treacheries—the whole phantasmagoria of ancient battles in a peculiarly personal idiom."[61] But this common or shared register and vision that attests to al-Sayyāb's representativeness does not detract from his unique poetics.

More than ever, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's poetics and politics should validate the present discussion to account for Iraqi agonies and sense of injustice. More than ever, his poetry resonates with immediacy and urgency, as Iraq is free from despotism but falls into war and anarchy. In the aftermath of the fall of Baghdad on 9 April 2003, things work in such a way as to remind the Iraqis of the troubled times of both the Ottomans of the nineteenth-century and the British occupation, mandatory rule (1920–32), and so-called Independence (1932–58) with its British advisors, lackeys, plebiscites, insecurity and misery. The comparison/contrast remains worthwhile in any search for understanding and settlements.

Empowering or Weakening Mosaics?

The Iraqi historian ‘Abbās ‘Alī wrote in a book devoted to the Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, *Za‘īm al-thawrah al-‘Irāqiyyah* (The leader of the Iraqi revolution), that the occupation authorities took a number of measures, like banning national newspapers that ended up putting the Iraqis in contact with the Arab cultural unrest through Syrian and Egyptian newspapers. Coercion resulted in great national consciousness and opposition to the British authorities,[62] even more so because Arnold Wilson was so opposed to Iraqi self-rule that he infuriated the Iraqis, inflamed their opposition and was in part responsible for the 1920 rebellion all over the country.[63] The sense of humiliation grew into rebellion to regain identity against cultural erosion, and a venue for regeneration—a movement, in the face of invasion, toward a past glory in a present reconstruction.

In this counter-movement, culture was dynamically involved in gathering the masses around leaders who were mostly poets, writers and shaykhs. The occasion prepared the Iraqi political scene for a resistance ideology, as will be explained in due course, for the British Acting Civil Administrator, says Philip Ireland, ". . . had no personal knowledge of the deep hold which Independence and Nationalism, as abstract ideas, had upon the ‘Iraqī participants in the Arab Movement."[64] On the other hand, this response was in keeping with a common nationalist feeling that was still alive since the revolutions "in 1915 and 1916 at Najaf, Karbalā, Hilla, Kūfa and Tūwairj," adds Ireland on another occasion.[65] The Shī‘ī-Sunnī rapprochement, as Ireland calls the 1919–1920 organized meetings against the British,[66] was mostly perpetuated and consolidated by speeches and poetry, and manufactured mainly by the brilliant and committed Shī‘ī leader and businessman Ja‘far Abū al-Timman (d. 1945).[67]

While this rapprochement went back to other occasions when notable Sunnis and Shaykhs participated in the mourning gathering on the occasion of the death of the grand Mujtahid and national leader Kāẓim al-Yazdī (April 1919),[68] the deliberate effort to put an end to schisms took a political turn that was also manipulated by the empowered circles to gain more shares in the allied or independent Iraq. Speeches and

poetry were neither mere propaganda nor expressive flourishes, for they acted on consciousness and retrieved a collective memory of glory and achievement when Baghdad was the center of the world. From the mid-Euphrates where the revolt took place on the second of July 1920, to the religious places and Baghdad to the north and east of Baghdad, the 1920 Uprising or Revolution spread, inflamed by speeches, slogans and poetry. Cultural consolidation of nationalist sentiment brought religious and ethnic communities together in "unprecedented cooperation," says Phebe Marr (p. 33). In a paradoxical speech before leaving Baghdad on 22 September 1920, Sir Arnold Wilson attacked the revolutionaries while proposing the idea that cultural and moral factors proved more effective than material ones, and were historically present in the East. However, the West took over and exported the ideas of nationalism and identity, giving birth to movements of independence such as the anti-Ottoman Ḥijāzī movement led by Sharīf al-Ḥusayn of Mecca. In the same speech, he downplayed such factors in the making of the 1920 revolution, for in his view, as long as it was anti-British, it was disorder and anarchy.

The underpinnings of colonial discourse tend to downplay the native's cultural potential in order to speak of the colonized nation in negative terms of violence and disorder. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr commented on the speech saying, ". . . this was the first time in which the speaker cared for factors other than force."[69] Around that time, al-Baṣīr was ardently involved in an ongoing effort to enhance cultural and political consciousness, albeit with the terminology and discourse which was still in vogue then. He argues in a poem on the need to advance and progress titled "Science and Us":

> Take to your breast the person of virtue
> Guard their words and fruits of their study
> Virtue is unhappy in Baghdad now
> Sick, deprived of glory and destitute
> If it has any grand expectation
> It is in the houses of science, towards them it turns.[70]

This combination of a revolutionary discourse with a poetics of change is part of a cultural commitment toward emancipation and independence. Its goals emanate from an understanding that to build an Iraqi state demands a multifaceted fight. Nevertheless, for the Iraqis, the revolution began to indicate the threshold towards modernity and independence. For Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb decades later, Iraq was still holding a further promise of thunder and lightening, as he concludes in "The Canticle of the Rain," and the promise is never dead, for the cycle of death and rebirth cannot be halted unless there is enough justice, enough understanding of needs and predilections, and unless there is a process that gives equal opportunity to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sect, class, and gender.

Explanations for failure are not hard to find in a culture so rich with images, symbols, folktales, premonitions, perditions, predictions, oracles, and poetry. Alexander as a conqueror of Cyrus the Persian in Babylon, 330–31 BCE, failed to attend to the ruler's function in the Babylonian Akitu festival,[71] with its ancient rites, to defeat

powers of sterility and disorder. For people who strongly believed in the diviners and their divinations, failing to attend the ceremony whereby gods appeal to the ruler to conquer Chaos signaled the end for Alexander the Great.[72] So went the failures of the Umayyad in Iraq and other dynasties, for they missed the nature of Iraq, its cycles, rites, and expectations. No matter how we read these legends, rites, and oracles, there is a common historical reference to speeches on Iraqis as nonconformists and prone to discussions, illustrated by no less than Imam 'Alī (murdered in 661), the Prophet's cousin, Ziyād Ibn Abīh (d. 673), the Umayyad governor on Iraq, and the Umayyad ruler of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqāfī (d. 714), who coined the notorious appellations that describes the Iraqis as "people of schism, dissent and hypocrisy." Meant as derogatory to confront their rebellion, the phrase continues to circulate, including among scholars, for Kamāl Dīb wrote a book on the Iraqi situation with the title, *Zilzāl fī arḍ al-shiqāq* (Earthquake in the Land of Schism).[73] A long time ago, al-Jāḥiẓ looked at the matter differently, for the Iraqis ". . . are people of great acumen and insight, and with these there will be search and investigation, and because of these, there will emerge condemnation and blame, critical judgment of people and rulers and exposition of their faults."[74] Yet the main issue remains one of relevance, for the occupation power rarely accepts the Iraqis for who they are. The other side of this experience lies in resistance to foreign encroachments, for as the story goes there is no chance for foreign powers to stay for long in Iraq, even with an invented tradition that might have been acquainted, for instance, with what the eleventh century littérateur al-Ḥuṣrī al-Qayrawānī (d. 453/1022) relates. He writes that Aristotle was asked by Alexander for a way to get rid of the Iraqis and settle peacefully in their lands. Aristotle answers,

> If you kill them all, can you kill the air that feeds their temper and endows them with intelligence? If they die, others as identical will replace them. So he asked: what do you suggest? He {Aristotle} answered: These who have this intelligence have pride, haughtiness, high-mindedness, violent temper, and impatience with oppression; so divide them into factions, and appoint an emir for each, for this will lead to schisms, and with this they are no longer as powerful.[75]

The British departed by force, and the clear-sighted dispositions of some sensible British officials were lost in the enormous greed of the empire and its total reliance on tribal factions and opportunists. In the 1940s, perceptive politicians, like the British Ambassador Sir Kinahan Cornwallis,[76] advisor to the Minister of Interior until 1935, tried hard to draw attention to the need for an actual recognition of the rising learned classes, their consciousness, and search for equality, justice, and freedom for their people, with their ethnic and religious mosaics. While all the blame should not be assigned to the British, their strong men were the ones resisting change, and aligning their power with opportunists and the handful of exploiters. From the 1920s until we reach Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb in the late 1940s, there was a long line of intellectuals who suffered persecution and exile for their political stands. Like many, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb saw corruption beneath a veneer of parliamentary rule in a state constituted

to serve British interests. Recapitulating the intellectual ferment of the invasion and the occupation period, the Iraqi scholar Yūsuf ‘Izz al-Dīn writes, “What accelerated the spirit of pain and revenge was the British misadministration, their humiliation of the people, and their military and dictatorial rule that exhausted the national feeling.” He adds, “The colonizer tried to make Iraq subordinate to India and the people were treated badly, for the colonizer could not understand the nature of this people.”[77] Not only were the British insensitive to Iraqi pride in general, but they were also blunt about their rejection of Iraqi expertise, even from among the Iraqi officers in Damascus who agreed to offer their help in rebuilding their country and its state formation. Nājī al-Suwaidī was one of them, but he soon resigned when he noticed that the Acting Civil Commissioner was interested in him only as a “. . . cog in the British machine and that his advice would not be heeded and was not even wanted.”[78] The British High Commissioner Sir Percy Cox, despite his subtlety, could not offer a better phrase for the transformation of power to the Iraqis in the aftermath of the 1920 Revolution than asking for “a complete and necessarily rapid transformation of the façade of the existing administration from British to Arab.” Commenting on this D. K. Fieldhouse says, “The key word is ‘façade’. In practice, behind an indigenous front, the system created by Fox was as effectively British as that proposed by Wilson,”[79] for Cox set up a Council in October 1920, under his supervision and the guidance of his advisors, excluding Shī‘īs and any notables suspected of Turkish sympathies. Although seemingly subsumed in an Iraqi sense of nationhood, sectarian as well as ethnic discrimination could act negatively even on the most progressive minds.

In an article in the Persian *Mardom* (The Masses), n. 9, dated 4 January 1946, Mahdī Hāshim, as one of the founders of the Iraqi communist party complained, “in the whole Iraqi diplomatic corps there are only two Shī‘īs . . . and of the eighty staff officers of the Iraqi army only three come from Shī‘ī families, while 90% of the soldiers are sons of the Shī‘ī community.”[80] The exemption was the worst, divisive wedge ever implanted by the British, for it intentionally bypassed recognition of Iraqi ethnic and religious diversity, and evaded the issue of democratization. It was a blow to Iraqi pride, and a further perpetuation of redemptive suffering and its ingredients of pain, sacrifice and search for salvation through faith and possible insurgency.

The British colonizers invaded Iraq in November 1914, not only with army and armor, but also with an Orientalist legacy that spoke for and of the colonized in terms that were alive as late as G. E. von Grunebaum’s notorious surmise that “One succumbs to colonization only when one is colonizable.”[81] Sir Percy Cox proved more qualified than his deputy Arnold Wilson to make use of current colonial tenets, for he approached the matter with a “divide and rule” strategy that he carried out to perfection, despite early promises to put an end to this policy that was also followed by the Ottomans. Yet, he was in line with Stanley Maude’s subtle manipulation of Napoleon’s address to the Egyptian *‘ulamā’,* or the learned, for he also claimed “liberation not occupation, and welfare not oppression.” After occupying Baghdad on 11 March 1917, the British conqueror General Stanley Maude pledged on 17 March 1917 to liberate Iraq from the Ottomans, promising to be up to the expectations of Iraqi writers and philosophers, and to have a prosperous and peaceful Iraq. “It is the hope of the British Government,” he said, “that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers

shall be realized and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals."[82] The British authorities went even as far as participating in organizing Shīʿī rituals, processions and rallies, gaining thereby some of their dignitaries' appreciation and even trust, as reported in *Al-ʿArab* daily (23 October 1918). Such appeals to popular religion worked positively to be sure, and many Iraqis asked for patience and tolerance to give the British a chance to work out a viable policy of understanding and cooperation.

In these well-disposed positions regarding the occupation administration, temper has the upper hand, for in politicized societies with tradition and legacy like Iraq, temper works in terms of trial and challenge. A show of negligence or disrespect may easily give way to revolt. As much as political maneuvers to coerce the Iraqis into acceptance of other imperial arrangements in the region—as indicated in the visit of the British Zionist Alfred Mond to Baghdad in 1928—Arnold Wilson's blunt imperial rhetoric as Acting High Commissioner, 1918–19, his fabricated plebiscites, and disregard for the masses resulted in violent demonstrations and nationalist opposition.[83] Pride and intelligence, as the two foremost emotions in Iraqi temper, operate in this register, and can very often lead to violence.

Although these emanate from misrule, social, economic, and political injustice, they have become so interwoven into a national mood that they appear as leitmotifs in writings on Iraqi life and culture. Beneath a gentle and sensitive surface there lies a deep-rooted and latent sense of national identity—i.e., referring "to the collective self-image of the members of a national unit and to their distinctive cultural system as shared by the majority of the population"[84]—that goes back to Sumer, Babylon, and Nineveh, and recaptures the glorious ʿAbbāsid years of the historical Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809). Encounters or invasions that bypass Iraqi history and culture usually end up in disarray. Under different powers of occupation, appointed local authorities in Iraq have failed to gain people's support for their tactical maneuvers and invention of tradition. In both cases, culture—as it forms part of Iraqi temperament—resists fabrications of legitimacy. It also resists colonial mapping, for the Iraqis see Iraq as an entity that is more solid and permanent than empires and occupations. Issues of identity, tradition and power regain prominence in crisis and deserve sustained reading before following them up in writing since the British mandate. Certainly, a question that comes up whenever there is such a crisis relates to recent history, as Iraq finds itself mapped out, discussed and addressed without being given the chance to demonstrate its full historical inventory.

Is Iraq a New Entity?

To the British, pre-mandated Iraq under the Ottomans was "Turkish Arabia," and since November 1914 was known as Mesopotamia—the "land between the two rivers"—as was described by Herodotus. The recurrent term and the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force which had been in the military lead were not random. The imperial effort took a Eurocentric form of appellation, which was at home with Herodotus more than with Arab/Islamic or ancient names. Iraq as the object of colonization needed to fit in British Imperial paradigms, which implied bypassing its people,

imaginatively emptying the habitat of its population, and treating it as an island wait-
ing for a Robinson Crusoe. Inheriting the division of the three Ottoman Wilayets
(provinces) of Mosul, Basrah and Baghdad, Great Britain, in the words of the Acting
Civil Commissioner, on 14 November 1918, acted diligently "to keep Mesopotamia
as a wedge of British Controlled Territory. That it should not be assimilated politi-
cally to the rest of the Arab and Muhammadan World, but remain insulated as far as
may be, presenting a model to the rest."[85] Although phrased against T. E. Lawrence's
pro-Ḥijāzī pan-Arab strategy,[86] this communiqué lay at the heart of the British pol-
icy in Iraq, as later developments and military blocs and alliances indicate. Its focus
on an entity should be seen in view of an emphasis on the "Arabs of Mesopotamia," as
Wilson tends to say whenever speaking of national pride. "National unity means for
them unity of Mesopotamia, and not unity with either Syria or Hijaz," he argues.[87]

In other words, history for the British was based on its imperial triumphs against
Turkey and the Wilayets under its control. This referent skips all of Islamic history
and its Iraqi referentiality, to maintain a lineage with a name circulated in a European
legacy since Herodotus, but emptied of Babylonian and Sumerian markers. The
British legacy in this respect derived power and authentication from a tradition that
would signify leadership in a world order. Summoning a Eurocentric history to its
side, it swept away the history of colonies, and proclaimed them anew as imperial be-
longings and initiations. British success thereafter was accepted as a given by all who
subscribed to the idea that a nation-state did not exist before the British take-over.
From now on, the dominating imperial discourse had to imprint its own markers on
nations and minds, leading even the well-intentioned to speak of Iraq as an artificial
state, as if World Wars did not create European states, and as if the world as we know
it had already existed in the form of various states. In a cogent argument, Isam al-
Khafaji shows the contradictions in this line of thought, its subordination to other
discourses and its lack of scholarly rigor.[88] Not many tried to read this logic against
its underpinnings: for were there many nation-states, in the present sense of the word,
before that date?

The renowned Orientalist Bernard Lewis was not alone in repeating in 1991 that
Iraq did not exist as a state before 1915–1921. Iraq and Tunisia were the names of
"medieval provinces," he said once.[89] Although recognized by almost every writer as
"of considerable antiquity," as far as the "administrative region of Lower Mesopo-
tamia" is concerned, there is also a consensus that the "modern state of Iraq includes
upper Mesopotamia and was created during and after the First World War,"[90] says an-
other writer. Among Arab writers, Hisham Sharabi also says as much, for "[B]efore
1920 Iraq had never existed as a separate and independent political entity; like Syria
and Lebanon, it came into being as a result of the postwar settlement based on the
Sykes-Picot agreement of 1915 and the Anglo-French compromise reached at San
Remo in April 1920."[91] While these premises have currency in view of the modern
sense of state formation with its institutionalized structures, they overlook the power
of historical narrative and its invocation of multiple interpretations. Interpretation "is
not an isolated act," explains Jameson, "but takes place within a Homeric battlefield,
on which a host of interpretive options are either openly or implicitly in conflict."[92]
Although the name of Iraq recurs in Islamic records often in reference to the wealth

of *arḍ al-sawād*, from Tikrit north of Baghdad to the Gulf, the ancient combination of the Assyrian and Babylonian civilizations with their common cultural codes should have given the land and its people some distinctive characteristics.[93]

In each new interpretive context, there are some characteristics that gain more attention than others. The Umayyad dynasty was afraid of its people's propensity to fight, for instance, hence the able and shrewd caliph Muʿāwiyah's (d. 60/680) advice to his son to resign to their wishes even if they demanded a change of a governor every day. Others had different impressions, and historians never tired of applauding its people and lands. In other words, narratives evoke different interpretations and conclusions. In searching for what he took for granted as a specific breed of people, the Iraqi sociologist ʿAlī al-Wardī, for example, admitted that he changed his interpretations a number of times to account for the nature of the Iraqis.[94] But he never swerved from his major contention that there is a specific Iraqi character nevertheless.

Understandably interested in seeing their country as one entity, Iraqi nationalist officers who joined the King thought of the country as such, "Its well-known frontiers from the north of Mosul to the Persian Gulf," writes ʿAlī Jawdat al-Ayyūbī, who was once a Prime Minister under the monarchy, and whose early training in the military academy in Istanbul increased his sense of nationalism.[95] Like other Iraqi officers in the pan-Arab movement, ʿAlī Jawdat al-Ayyūbī participated in spreading nationalist resistance. Iraqi religious and national leaders, from every segment, sent a number of documents to the would-be King of Iraq, complaining about British military rule in Iraq. They requested him to make known their demands for an independent Iraqi state from the north of Mosul to the Gulf. These were conveyed by Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī as the messenger to the would-be king despite the difficulties and dangers attending the trip around that time (January 1919).[96]

The Iraqis see themselves as so well established and historically rooted as to deride geographical mapping as no more than a matter of convenience in world politics, or, in the words of Donald Quataert, "strokes of pens on treaties and on maps."[97] The land carries connotations of cultural diversity, for as the Iraqi ex-communist leader ʿAzīz al-Ḥājj argues, "From ancient times Iraq was the meeting place and mixture of races, nations, cultures and religions."[98] Al-Sayyāb, for one, cannot think of Iraq in terms of these maps: "The wind screams at me: Iraq, / and the waves wail at me: Iraq, Iraq, only Iraq!" he says in "Strangers at the Gulf." The Iraqis look at the matter with suspicion when it is argued to justify occupation and foreign rule, as was the case with the maneuvers of the British administration that led to the 1920 rebellion.

For the Iraqis, there is and always has been an Iraq, regardless of state formations and colonial arrangements. The underlying sense of Iraqidom was recognized by no less than Arnold Wilson himself. For no matter how opposed he was to self-rule, he recognized the Iraqis as so full of independence that "they resent the importation of social or administrative institutions or methods that savor of India."[99] These sentiments were recalled, not to recognize Iraqidom, but to ensure a British control, free from pan-Arabism and its aspiration for a unified Arab state, against artificial borders, as its ideologues will continue to argue. To counteract T. E. Lawrence's view of having a Hashemite leadership in Iraq, Sir Percy Cox, before being appointed as High Commissioner, and the Acting Civil Commissioner Arnold Wilson as well, resorted to a

carefully managed plebiscite (30 November 1918) to ensure British full control, to get Sir Percy Cox to be ". . . the first incumbent of the post," i.e., the head of the State,[100] ". . . without any Arab Amir or other head of State, but with Arab Ministers backed by British Advisors." Before being transferred to Iran, Cox was supported by no less than the renowned Orientalist D.S. Margoliouth who was then part of the British administration in Iraq. In a meeting for this purpose (22 January 1919) Margoliouth said: "Iraq is used to foreign rule since ancient times, for it was ruled by the Mongols, the Turks and the Iranians, as it cannot rule itself. Thus, the Iraqis should choose the British to rule them, or to be under their mandatory rule and protection." In Ayyūb's novel of 1939, the protagonist's father-in-law repeats these words in a comment on the 1936 coup, for the Iraqis proved that they were unable to rule themselves, said the missionary who was one of the pillars in British India.[101] In the same meeting, the British military administrator for Baghdad, Frank Balfour, addressed the gathering soon after as follows: "We are leaving now, and you are to get us your opinions in writing."[102] But Winston Churchill's Cairo meeting in March 1921 used the consent of some notables to appoint Fayṣal as the King of Iraq, on 23 August 1921, to be guided on significant international and financial matters by the British High Commissioner. A treaty followed the appointment in 1922 to ensure British virtual control of Iraq for twenty years. Gertrude Bell's comment on the issue is worthwhile: "We have carried him on our shoulders," she said to the American Chargé d'Affaires. The appointment was a shrewd tactic, not only to rally the Ottoman Sunni remnant in Iraq behind the British, to make use of the Hashemite Arabism against Turkish Islamism and to involve the newly appointed kings' retinues in the new state,[103] but also to play on tradition, the lineage to Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe, and the Prophet's family.[104]

Despite some discrepancies under the British influence, ". . . the public in Baghdad, Kadimiyyah, Najaf, Karbala, and the rest of the country," recollected Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr in 1923, "led by the intellectual class and the religious ‘ulamā, was fully interested in establishing an independent Arab administration presided over by one of King Ḥusayn's sons as king for Iraq."[105] Citing the speech of one of the leaders of the Revolution, the dignitary and landlord Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Ḥājj Sukar, "we are not up to a republic yet, nor are we Parisians, Turks or English, to choose a Persian, a Turk or an English emir: we are Arabs, and as the Sherīfī (*sharifian*) family in Mecca is the largest in the Arab World, we are inclined to have an independent Arab government presided over by one of King Hussein's sons."[106] There was a double appeal here to Arab nationalism as opposed to purely Iraqi sentiments, including ethnic and sectarian identities. D. S. Margoliouth's words as well as T. E. Lawrence's politics took root in British foreign policy to control Iraq through a legitimacy that appeals to Pan-Arab, not regional, sentiments, and to Arab-Islamic, not Islamite[107] temper. Tradition was reinvented to suit its policy, quell opposition, and put an end to lingering pro-Ottoman sentiments.

Elitism and Hegemony

The association between the newly appointed king and nationalism might well work against the British in the long run. In the meantime, it served British interests and

forestalled organized opposition like the one that helped in the 1920 popular revolution. A comparison between the new pan-Arab State, the monarchy, and the Iraqi national one of 1958 can be demonstrated in a comparison between the two flags. The colors of the monarchy flag have resisted change. Yet, the long-time application of the pan-Arab flag was disrupted in 1958 (from July 1959 to 1963) with the national revolution that decidedly opted for an Iraqi national identity, ironically, in line with Arnold Wilson's early objections to pan-Arabism, specifically the "Arabs of Mesopotamia," as he termed Iraq. In the flag of Iraq as a kingdom, 1921–24, the horizontal colors, of green, white and black, are the same as the colors of the kingdom of Ḥijāz, as ruled by the King's family. They were also the pan-Arab movement colors, and are still the markers of the Arab nation. The black stands for the Prophet's flag, used in early Islam, and also by the 'Abbāsids. The white was the flag of the Arabs in Damascus in the Umayyad period. The green was the color of the Prophet's family. The horizontal tricolors, black, white and green, were joined with a red equilateral extending from the hoist. There were no stars at first, but these were mentioned in law no. 36 in 1928. The two heptagonal (seven-pointed) white stars referred to the new divisions, the fourteen provinces that constituted the Iraqi Kingdom. There was since then a change in color order, for green was at the top, then white in the middle and black at the bottom.

The colors appealed to Arab-Islamic history, and derived their potency from a verse by the ardent Iraqi poet of the fourteenth century, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 1348), in which he celebrated the unblemished deeds and achievements of his people, their valor, and the beauty of the land, as symbolized in colors, their significations, and associations.[108] The colors obviously targeted political affiliations, too. They vied for emotive links to associate people with larger issues and lead them back into history. They definitely worked against Turkish affiliations and invoked an Arab and Islamic tradition. The opposite national view of Iraq as an independent entity, not as part of an Arab union, found a clear expression in the 1958 revolution flag, as described and formalized in the official governmental paper.[109] It replaced the horizontal colors with vertical ones, to indicate an independent line more reminiscent of the flag of the French revolution. Communist organized rallies addressed the Prime Minister and leader of the revolution, the officer 'Abd al-Karīm Qāsim (d. 1963), with the following slogan: *Jumhūrītak yā-Karīm mustaḥīl itṣīr iqlīm* (your republic Karīm cannot be a province), and this was reflected in the flag. While taking into account the historical background or colors, verticality dissociates them from pan-Arabism, drawing them to another center, an ancient Iraqi core, where the red sun in the middle of the flag is a reference to the Assyrian symbol of the national god Ashur. In the center of the sun, the yellow color refers to the Kurdish hero Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn who liberated Jerusalem from the crusaders. The red stands for the 14 July 1958 revolution and also for the Arab flag in al-Andalus. The eight-pointed star and its yellow circle indicate the unity of Arabs and Kurds, who "compose the Iraqi people since ancient times." The coup of 8 February 1963 reverted to the monarchy pan-Arab flag, but also with changes that were more in line with the Egyptian flag as representative then of pan-Arab nationalism. Three stars appear in the middle white space.

The flag continued throughout, and was the one used by the 17 July 1968 coup until Saddam Hussein added to it in his own handwriting:, *Allāh Akbar* (God is

Great), in an effort to rally Muslims behind him against the American-led alliance of 1991 as well as against Saudi Arabia and other governments as apostates, as he designated all Arabs who stood against him. The religious emphasis was a tactical move especially to counteract Khomeini's appeal to Islamism, to be sure, but it should also be seen as culmination of Saddam's belated disenchantment with the old concept of Arab unity that drove him in his youth to fight the communists in the streets and colleges for their call for Arab federation, rather than unity. On 8 September 1982, he argued, "Unity must not be imposed, but must be achieved through common fraternal opinion. Unity must give strength to its partners, not cancel their national identity."[110]

Each law or decree for a flag reveals an ideology that operates on cultural predilections as well. The King came with this understanding of a pan-Arab federation, if not a unity, and designed his flag accordingly in arrangement with the British advocates of Arab nationalism against the Turks. Like any reinvention, legitimacy as such could not survive for long. The King realized this; for early in 1933 he came to the conclusion that there was no support for him. In a memorandum circulated among his attendants, he complained as follows: "Iraq lacks the most important social element, the cultural, ethnic and religious unity, for it is divided and scattered, and there is no one Iraqi people yet, but social forces empty of national feeling and a unified coherence. He who knows the hardship of people formation under these circumstances should understand the enormous efforts to be exerted toward this end."[111] Instead of looking upon multiplicity and diversity as potential dynamics for cultural and social growth, patriarchy looks upon the Iraqi mosaic as a burden. Despite the King's keen desire to establish a nation-state, and despite his sincere commitment to a new Iraq, the motivating ideology remained British as far as colonies were concerned.

The political system as deployed by the British was not meant to foster democracy despite the initiation of institutionalized structures, for to ensure its control the British administration used portions of the intelligentsia, military officers and landowners as a "historical bloc" to further its own interests—a façade, not a dynamic mechanism as back home.[112] Excluding social forces and political groups with challenging and opposing views and deporting many,[113] it unwittingly undermined the monarchy's claims to legitimacy, its sole and only justification to rule. To recapitulate, opposition began to gather impetus through education, cultural consciousness and political organizations. The more the British were bent on coercion and control, the greater was this opposition. Intellectual figures, including nationalists from among the officers, became soon after the King's death political organizers. In the absence of genuine constitutional administration and a proper civil society, and after the enormous British effort to contain centers of rebellion and discontent and the little allowance made for the left, there remained only the obvious actors, including landlords, professionals, officers, and dignitaries who were politically inefficient, and who lacked the desire to transform the society radically.[114] Nevertheless, educators were bent on spreading education among rural areas, resisting the policy of impoverishment, and giving all Iraqis the opportunity to study abroad, whereas artists, poets, and short story writers brought a new sense of modernity and change into the whole Arab climate.

As referents, colonialism, the façade administration, and tradition were and are central to any discussion of the counter-movement, its growth and proliferation into the whole society, and its conspicuous markers in each stage. Post-colonial culture had these as referents, and its underlying consciousness stood behind the evolution of ethnic and sectarian sentiments, as well as issues of class and gender, into ideological accentuations as subsumed into grand narratives, especially formulated as agendas by competitive political parties. These vary in outcome, but they have made up the Iraqi elitist formal façade since 1920, culminating in idealist impositions or totalitarian and dictatorial rule.

Cultural Inroads

Elitist ideological formations are merely the conspicuous facets of a culture, which are balanced and, indeed, offset by the literary and artistic output in its popular and written forms. The latter transgresses limits and offers the larger context of Iraqi cultural life beyond authoritarian or imperialist infringement and manipulation. Its crude emanations may gather into gossip, rumors and their like, for as the narrator in *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (1939) says, "In this country people transmit reports as frequently as their practice of walking, eating and drinking. In this region rumors do the work of newspapers, and perform their job with perfection."[115] Cultural practices include assemblies, coffeehouses, processions, religious rituals, and visitations, along with many popular and literary/artistic performances. Although seemingly binary and dichotomous, the relation of these to the identified reference (i.e., sites of power) is rife with anxiety and complexity.

Culture shows this complexity, its beauties and scars, smoothness and schizophrenia, unity and rupture. Iraqi writers, especially sociologists like 'Alī al-Wardī, tried to study complexity in terms of binary and dichotomous paradigms based on a culture and civilization divide between nomadic life and urbanization, between Islamic values and desert life, and between social values, pragmatic needs and jurists' edifications. While Islam teaches resignation, piety and justice, Bedouin values invoke pride, lineage, and mastery, he argues.[116] He contends that duality shows more in places that are closer to the desert, and have a large number of religious clerics.[117] These he found in the make-up of the Iraqi character. Wars, coercion, and violence since Sumerian times, but especially since Islam, have involved the character into a duality, *"izdiwājiyyah,"*[118] a phrase that found much currency among the chest-beating generation of mediocre writers. The sociologist 'Alī al-Wardī also used Gardner Murphy's reading of personality to trace the latent vengeful attitude against exploitation, misery, and marginalization.[119] On the other hand, he adapted Ibn Khaldun's separation of Bedouin and urban mentalities as ways of life that remain with people and inform their use of power. Like any generalization, its paradigmatic sets, and it attempts to justify recurrent ways of behavior and thinking in inclusive terms, without probing into the mechanisms of coercion and repression, agony and release. There is Iraqi pain, as noticeable in songs and music, but it is an exquisite one, that carries within its making a redemptive faith, a conjoining of suffering, pride, belief in a promise, search for a better future, enjoyment of life to the full, dashing into the most daring adventures, and rapture in discovery, as well as repetition of past cycles of pain.

The presence of the imperial power, the façade administration and the dictatorial rule, act as reminders of comparable past occurrences to be sure, but recollection intensifies a struggle and involves the most seemingly complacent writing or art into multiple layering that defies offhand categorization. Joseph Braude was not off the mark when he drew attention to the recurrent theme in Iraqi storytelling of ". . . joy emerging after periods of the darkest trauma," for the flood left ". . . a better world in its wake," and the judge Abū ʿAlī Ibn ʿAlī al-Muḥāssin al-Tanūkhī (329-84/941-94) devoted volumes to stories of relief after hardships in his compilation *Al-Faraj baʿda al-shiddah* (Relief following hardship).[120]

The underlying faith in a better world to come recedes into the past to engage the present, for the Iraqis speak of their ancient past in terms that may sound strange to foreign ears. Recollection is a deliberate act, as the annual commemoration of ʿĀshūrāʾ indicates, especially its use for political celebrations, even as the ancient Tammūzī rituals used to be. Even gatherings of a social kind, meetings at mosques, like al-Ḥaydariyyah Mosque in Baghdad, became throughout the 1920s sites of resistance, where poetry and oratory resumed their archetypal role as empowering means of resistance.[121] Both offer enough scope for masochistic expression and tender embracement of life and love, and both carry within them seeds of reconciliation and revolt. But rather than duality, there lies a complexity that has also a surface layering of emotional outbursts, unsought musings, superficial dealings, and hasty accentuations that may show in writings and songs, too.

A New Reading

In the following pages, I will trace hegemonic practices, counter ideologies, and cultural opposition, with its tracks and fluctuations. On many occasions, the three are brought together in anti-imperialist and anti-traditionalist discourses. Hanna Batatu's argument in this respect sounds right, for in Mahdī Hāshim's article in *Mardam*, the anti-imperialist temper conjoins with a sense of neglect and hardship in a country that has all the means of affluence and welfare. An elementary school teacher, wireless operator, and a railway station official, Mahdī Hāshim, a Shīʿī and a founder of the ICP among other Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Jews, recollected how in the British siege of Najaf in 1920, the British army tore down their house, and many other houses in the same quarter, in retaliation for the resistance and fire that was "directed against the British besiegers." In later days, hatred for the foreign occupants came to mean to him the same thing as communism.[122] The association between the two can work both ways, for British agents might explain things this way to evade reference to or recognition of facts on the ground relating to opposition to occupation and its local administration. In a letter to the High Commissioner in 1932, the police chief thought that the anti-imperialist talk was no more than ". . . the wail of those who failed to obtain or retain government posts,"[123] an explanation that does not square with the later developments, insurrections, coups, and revolutions.

Both the British colonizers and their puppet regime were held responsible for the poverty, injustice, and corruption in a country of plenty. Although at this stage echoing early sentiments and, perhaps, continuing them, a politicized consciousness was in the making. Unlike the early confrontations and scenes of protest and revolt that

were fighting the physical presence of the occupation authority as humiliating to national pride, the growing political consciousness since the late 1920s, and especially after the 1932 alliance treaty as enforced by the British, opted for a diversified agenda, including political and economic independence. This diversity took many forms and channels as party formations indicate.

Traditionalism was not spared, for the fight for freedom and justice was inclusive in the early 1920s. As young intellectuals began serious work and organization, in networks that spread wide within many social spectrums, their defense of women's rights became paramount in their agenda for reform and social progress. The father of Iraqi Marxists (Batatu, p. 293), as Ḥusayn al-Raḥḥāl was called, noted in his newspaper *Al-Saḥīfah* on 28 December 1924 that the veil and the harem belong to an aristocratic order that survived through exploitation of women. He drew a comparison between this order and the laboring peasants who knew nothing of this seclusion and veiling. But this essay, "Determinism in Society," was not the only destabilizing article, for he argued in another article dated 1 March 1925, ". . . it is not religion that moves social life but social life that moves religion," concluding that "the era when people believed in the divine guidance of natural events was gone."[124] The author came too soon under the impact of historical materialism and naturalism to digest social realities. Perhaps it is this fact that pertains to the whole issue of ideology in Iraq. Intellectualized and acculturated in Western and Marxist thought, leftist ideology could successfully negotiate the issue of religion, despite the effort since 1935 to cope with the questions of nationhood and religion.[125] By proving so much insularity and distance they gave way to counter-thought that was bound to grow and cause a wide future rift among ideological positions, with partisans on each side. This gave way in turn to officers and party operators who manipulated the situation thereafter and sabotaged the accumulating political consciousnesses and its ensuing expertise in every track of life and statecraft.

Party structures in Iraq often emerged from social and professional clubs, a fact that has a cultural drive, for members gather around an idea, but are organized first through city and place affiliations, school or university, and familial networking.[126] Although plausibly leading to formations and gatherings, place might have imposed its own incentives and decisive impact on impressionable minds as was the case with two Iraqi writers of the late 1940s, Fuʾād al-Takarlī (b. 1923) and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (d. 1999), who lived in Bāb al-Shaykh, an urban, working-class district in Baghdad. The case of the *Ahālī* group was an example of urban togetherness, but *Nādī al-Shabībah* (The Youth Club, founded 1929) was another, an urban leftist gathering that began as an association of liberals, but with focused emphasis on freedom, liberty, justice, tolerance, and treatment of all Arab countries as one. In its defense of women's rights, freedom of expression, criticism of religious institutions, emphasis on democratization and institutionalization, and pan-Arabism, this group became the nucleus for the Iraqi communist party.[127] Prior to it was al-Raḥḥāl's and Yūsuf Zaynal's *Nādī al-Taḍāmun* (1926), a gathering for youth with socialist ideas, but with a penchant for organized work and demonstrations, as the anti-Zionist demonstration of 8 February 1928 indicates. This proved to be one of the major links to the subsequent organization of the ICP.

More significant in the early fight for independence was the role of Jaʿfar Abū al-Timman (d. 1945), who proved to be a formidable politician, statesman and organizer. Coming from the wealthy business class, a Shīʿī with no sectarian qualms, and an effective leader in the 1920 Revolution, he carried a lot of weight to bring notables from Sunni and Shīʿī sects together in the renowned rapprochement against the British. He was the founder of the National Party, 1928–33, that was banned by the British. He was also the President of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce from 1935–45. The British also exiled him to the dreary Henjam Island in 1922, an island that became an exile for many intellectuals, including the poet and national leader Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr.[128] As noticed by many who wrote on the history of Iraq, from the National Party emerged all the significant parties and associations that were to play the main political role in Iraq, including the ICP (founded in 1930, formally in 1935) the Association against Imperialism, the *Ahālī* group, the Association of People's Reform, the National Democratic Party, the *Muthannā Club*, and the Independence Party.[129]

While there were many motivations behind these organizations, their growth and impact on the struggle for power in Iraq, their main and common cultural denominators rest on the following: 1. Political and economic independence; 2. Formation of a democratized state; 3. Iraqi nationhood within a pan-Arab one; 4. Transformation of the status quo. The common struggle of these forces rested until 1958 on an anti-imperialist stance. This shared agenda could not hide their divisions as heterogeneous structures for long, nor could it hide their identities as derived from a mixture of class, sectarian and ethnic interests, or grievances. While many of these forces have this mixture in their formations, the grievances of ethnic and sectarian roots found more expression in leadership roles, especially in the making of the ICP. No matter how significant the national issue was, there were also other issues that involved these groups in discussions and differences as pertaining to class, gender, ethnicity and sect. These divisions operated and continued to operate until the counter-emergence of the patrimonial rule, the brothers' ʿĀrif rule, 1963–66 and 1966–68, and Saddam's control, especially the years 1978–2003, when a discourse of nationhood became the official mask that was hiding hegemonic practices. Ideological rifts and increasing political divides among these groups became more pronounced since the Rashīd ʿĀlī coup of 1941 than ethnic, sectarian, and class affiliations. Behind these was an acute political consciousness as propelled by the Palestinian debacle, the powerful onslaught of Arab nationalism (especially after the 1952 revolution in Egypt), the growth of the non-aligned movement, and the cold war situation. Every ideology vied for its markers and register, and the cultural scene imbibed these while feeding their agendas with more justifications and accentuations to further emotive links with targeted audiences. Every party had a slogan of its own, a motto, and rituals of organization.

A cursory reading of the many Iraqi cabinets after the Rashīd ʿĀlī coup of 1941[130] could tell us not only of unrest and political and economic competitions among the leading strata, but also of the lack of a constitutional power and system due to an early and underlying disregard for Iraqi people's interests and needs. Although every party or organization, especially the ones with a large military base, spoke of transformation, revival, and resurrection, terms of achievement were never smooth or transpar-

ent. Each party had its chance to be in the leadership (1936, 1958, 1963, and 1968). But every one met a counter-movement too. The 1958 had its 1963, and 1963 had its opposite coup in the same year; the 17 July 1968 coup was diverted in a "reformist" direction on 30 July 1968; and the 1979 internal coup (within the ruling party) put an end to broad leadership in the Ba'th Party and the start of absolute dictatorship. Each one tried to legitimize its presence by discrediting opponents. On the other hand, the parties that were operating openly throughout the same period were either of very small constituency, or representative only of the empowered elite.[131]

Political parties, even from among the pro-British ones, spoke of transformation, too. The terms were not new, to be sure. As early as 1928, Jalāl Khālid, the hero of the novel of the same name, was mostly fashioned and modeled after Ḥusayn al-Raḥḥāl, though he has something of the writer's, Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Sayyid, temper and ideology, too. In this novel, the writer uses the word resurrection for change, for in the words of his Indian companion, the journalist F. Swami: ". . . if only we were more numerous, we would rise and carry the day and then take hold of the people and drive them with whips toward civilization and the free and true life and this would not be a distress to them nor an injustice but a mercy and a resurrection."[132] The Indian journalist is made to speak for Ḥusayn al-Raḥḥāl and al-Sayyid. Two things deserve attention here: the attack on traditionalist views associated with religion, and the use of the word resurrection. The word "ba'th" or "inbi'āth" means resurrection and is loaded with different connotations, both cultural and religious.

The opposition to religion was a show of leftist infantilism, as many of the religious leaders in Iraq participated in the 1920 Revolution, and developed a very progressive anti-imperialist discourse. Many intellectuals granted this fact at a later stage or, otherwise, met with resistance that led to failure, as was the case with the Grand Mujtahid al-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm and the ICP in 1961 onwards. Their opponents encouraged this rift, but they did little to remedy it. Swami's use of the word "Resurrection" would be echoed late in the 1940s, when Arab poets came across politics of regeneration, in a mixed register of Babylonian mythology, Christian sacrifice and Shī'ī rituals. One of the Iraqi Communist Party leaders, the Christian from Baghdad, Jamīl Tūma, wrote upon coming back from Boston Workers' School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, 1928–31: "When I returned, Iraq seemed a dreary barrenness. Its condition cried for change."[133] Both the cry for change and the need for sacrifice and resurrection crept into the slogans and names of political parties, especially the *Ba'th* (established first in Syria, and then in Iraq, 1949–50), meaning resurrection, while the ICP finds in "Free homeland and happy people" enough justification for its struggle. Both meanings were captured, however, by the Iraqi poet al-Sayyāb with his pioneering poetics that spread all over the Arab world in the 1950s, giving literary expression and voice to the latent but accumulating need for freedom and change. It is worth remembering that al-Sayyāb began as a communist, then moved to liberalism and nationalism, and was claimed by the Ba'th. He was one of the main poets of the Tammūzī Movement and its inclusive recapitulation of the regenerative myth, especially in its Babylonian invocation of fertility and joy against ever-present aridity and death, its appropriation of a politics of rebellion and change, and its innovative outlook in every aspect.[134] As late as 1977 we read "A Sug-

gested Form for the Gypsy Epic" by the Iraqi poet Ḥamīd Saʿīd, in which the markers of the rebirth poem coalesce into a matrix of promises and vows. Significantly, it is a gypsy epic, a combination of the desire of the marginalized and the heroism and valor of the epical heroes:

> I bring you good tidings:
> You take the earth and build on it
> From its issue a filly shall rise
> Where're her hooves flit on the earth
> Our dreamy bowers are kindled,
> The udders filled, pastures turned green
> And the Arab Homeland begins to course in our veins.[135]

Culturally speaking, the poetic and artistic practice was a crystallization of the underlying consciousness in opposition to imperialist and traditionalist rule, a matter that will be documented in part three of this monograph.

In the last years of the monarchy, there was an accumulating cultural opposition that fed rebellious sentiments and paved the way for a bloody revolution. Thus, joining Iraqi emigrants in search of work in Kuwait, al-Sayyāb's persona sings in agony of both misery and culminating transformation in "Canticle of the Rain," 1954:

> Since we were children
> The sky has slipped into clouds in winter
> And it always rained.
> Yet we're hungry.
> In Iraq not a year has passed without famine.
> Rain . . .
> Rain . . .
> Rain . . .
> Every drop of rain
> Holds a red or yellow flower.
> Every tear of the starved who have no rags to their backs
> Every drop of blood shed by a slave
> Is a smile awaiting fresh lips
> Or a nipple glowing in the mouth of a newborn
> In tomorrow's youthful world, giver of life!
> Rain . . .
> Rain . . .
> Rain . . .
> And Iraq springs into leaf in the rain . . .[136]

Al-Sayyāb's career and poetry may also acquaint us with four aspects of Iraqi culture that have direct bearing on power politics: the infiltration of popular lore into Iraqi literature, in line with the growing peasant and labor movement against elitism, the use of the native tradition to counterbalance and displace the colonial claim for Bibli-

cal space, the valorization of a revolutionary poetic dialect against monarchy and British control, and the appeal to basic Iraqi structures of feeling beyond sectarianism. As these will be dealt with in part three, it is worth mentioning that al-Sayyāb's poetic refrain for rain and regeneration is not a complacent perpetuation of infantile leftist ideology. Despite his political opposition in the 1950s, al-Sayyāb's disappointment at the revolution of 1958 did not translate into approval of consequent changes including bloodshed and the emergence of exclusive idealism with its claims to truth that verged on total negation of social forces and their political representations. His poetry tends to undermine unitary discourse. Yet, Tammūzī poetics leaves enough space for the emergence of another Tammūz, a hero and a leader bent on sacrifice and atonement to offer renewal and life to his land. It may also accomodate the devil impersonating that role, an anti-Christ or a sham hero in disguise. Like any retrieval of myth, many, especially in times of great ideological vehemence, can claim this dialectic. The emerging consciousness of the 1950s moved the Iraqi scene beyond the 1920 politics of rapprochement and independence toward the regeneration of the nation, whereby history received further attention, not only to enhance views of nationhood, but also to consolidate the role of the individual in the reconstitution of the society. No wonder participants in the reconstitution of culture were either members of political parties or active contributors to nationalism, democracy, and class-consciousness.

Part Three
Ideology, the Post-Independence State and Saddam's Discourse

A sound blasted in the depths of my heart
Bereaved like a mother at the loss of her child: Iraq,
Like water rising, like a cloud, like the tears in the eyes.
The wind screams at me: Iraq.
And the waves wail at me: Iraq, Iraq, only Iraq!
The sea as vast as it is and you as distant as you are,
And the sea between you and me, O Iraq.

<div align="right">Al-Sayyāb, "The Stranger at the Gulf"</div>

One way of looking at the intellectual history of Iraq is to look at the writers' views of history, and as well as at their actual practice in writing it down. The controversy around ʿAlī al-Wardī's views in the 1950s could be one possible way. He argued then against elitism as a deliberate method to claim history and literature as elevated practices, beyond the reach of the underprivileged and the marginal. He looked at contemporary insistence on classical rhetoric as no more than a strategy to alienate other social groups, as they were alienated in matters of behavior and dress.[1] Addressed to common readers as well as academics, the views, which appeared as newspaper articles, stirred the cultural climate, and were perhaps concomitantly integrated into a climate of dissent. It was not incidental that the leftist Maṭbaʿat al-Rābiṭah (The Rābiṭah Press) got it published in book form.

Another way is to see how writers view history as a number of narrative tracks that may well negotiate a settlement with the unconscious and the formative period in one's life. In his novel *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (1939), Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb lets his opportunist protagonist Ibrāhīm consider these tracks, one that opens up one's mind to virtues of sublimity and peace; another that leads nations to positive growth and achievement, and a third one followed by people like him, who make use of the first two tracks for a selfish purpose: "I am one of the last group which manipulated leaders of the soul and the body and confiscated their achievements in cold blood." This tendency was not a late

development: "History lessons appealed to me greatly, and the study of people known for craftiness, talent and political maneuvers, was of especial pleasure to me. I used to ponder with enthusiasm and admiration on their hellish schemes and satanic methods to humiliate their enemies and conquer them."[2] In other words, history as read by the protagonist in his formative years has these tracks, as set and traversed by philosophers, ideologues, and statesmen. As for the ultimate impact, it depends on the person's mind. With these options, we can look at the burgeoning 1950s climate as no less receptive to these, but with more openness to ideas of regeneration and nation building which were more popular then than they were in the earlier years.

Poets and intellectuals at large may well confuse hope with reality, and read their cultural aspirations in the emergence of young leaders who show promise and profess social transformation, political reform and regeneration of a glorious past. Poets appeal to their readers' sentiments and tempers while they work on these, and their poetry often carries a typical Iraqi pain, albeit with a promise that is entrenched in redemptive suffering, its presence rooted in ancient and Islamic history. In nationalist, revivalist, liberal and religious discourses that have been growing since the late 1940s, some combinations of hope, promise, and social historical consciousness have stamped these with wishful thinking. In more than one sense, there is in these discourses a poetic strain at the expense of realistic analysis. Aside from the igniting awareness of James Frazer's celebration of Middle Eastern mythical structures, which Arab poets endorsed with relish, the Orientalist legacy of Sir Hamilton Gibb, Gustave von Grunebaum, and others, especially the participants in *Al-Risālah* journal in Egypt, struck roots in Arab nationalist ideology.[3] Whether in agreement or disapproval, these views on history, nation and renaissance, along with the ascending German thought, were widespread among the educated elite. As early as 1939, Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb's protagonist speaks of the dignitaries of the Ministry of Education who were speaking of nationalism, and the "Grand Arab Cause," invoking his opportunism to exaggerate the tendency and offer a lecture on the distinctive "qualities of the Arab blood."[4] These coincided with a tendency within the empowered discourse to label "communist" any line of difference, dissent, or reluctance to cater to opportunism.[5] The Iraqis were not oblivious to currents of thought outside their borders, especially as education was in the hands of ardent nationalists. Both the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, as led by the late Anṭūn Saʿādah (executed in 1949) in Lebanon, and the variants of the burgeoning Baʿth ideology, under the impact or leadership of the Syrians Zakī al-Arsūzī (d. 1968) and Michel ʿAflaq (d. 1989), were to be within a climate of ideas. They did not have enough roots then as they depoliticized the past, emptied it of socio-economic dynamics, and drew on it as profusely available to achieve rebirth in a triumphal present.

Although these ideologies argue and vie for space against an imperial invasion, their discourses are more concerned with time within an idealistic vision of rebirth. While Arab nationalist ideologies, free from subsequent totalitarian manipulations, are not the "resurgent" ones specified in Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*,[6] they partly assumed such a character in Iraq against another Iraqi regionalist temper, which made allowance for Arabism, without jeopardizing its local character. Even the nationalist element in the 1920 anti-British Revolution surfaced as a result of the mas-

sive Iraqidom that ignited the movement. Thriving in a historical context, this temper had a strong presence in every Iraqi political or professional organization. The exception, to some degree, was the nationalist parties. In the interwar years, 1930–1944, the state and military apparatus, including the ones who became Great Britain's strongest men in Iraq like Nūrī al-Saʿīd (killed in the July 1958 revolution), represented nationalist ideologies in their broad application to faith, not total fusion, in one Arab nation. An Arab nationhood was the desirable state for Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī (1880–1968) as propagated in his textbooks and writings. He was, significantly, deputy minister of education, director of education, schools inspector, the Iraqi Museum curator, and the director of heritage and antiquities department during different intervals (1921–41). He also had a family connection to Nūrī al-Saʿīd. Ṣāṭīʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's brand of nationalism is important, however, not only for its nationalist erasure of ethnic and linguistic diversity and its subsequent bearing on Saddam's regimentation and indoctrination of historiography and culture, but also for its Arabism as constituted by language, history, culture, and homeland. Secularizing the notion away from strict application of Islamic association, and steering it away from the Germanic spirit, Ṣāṭīʿ al-Ḥuṣrī should and will continue as a referent in cultural debate and power formations, as indicated by his wide-ranging appointments to supervise education all over the Arab world. On the other hand, his acute differences with Iraqi poets, like Maʿrūf al-Ruṣāfī (d. 1945) and Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī (d. 1997), a Sunni and a Shīʿī, may also belie categorizations regarding his final stand on matters sectarian or political in nature. Yet, his brand of nationalism remains significantly dynamic, as he was against claims of racial purity that were to constitute Saddam's perspective as much as he was against other notions of nationalism such as love or faith.[7] He was also unhappy with dead civilizations, which he saw as too old to bring incentive and power to the present. No matter how we look at it, its secular and Arab-centric position was part of a positive movement toward independence. In the words of Partha Chatterjee, "In its very constitution as a discourse of power, nationalist thought cannot remain only a negation; it is also a *positive* discourse which seeks to replace the structure of colonial power with a new order, that of the national power."[8]

    This nationalist theorization may lead smoothly to Zakī al-Arsūzī's emphasis on culture and language in their dialectic exchange with Western renaissance. Zakī al-Arsūzī's call for a return to the springs of national life means also less emphasis on the Islamic era, for pre-Islamic life was the source of language, as the most expressive of Arab genius. Hence his call for revivalism fits into the poetics of a phoenix-like tradition, the re-emergence of life from ruins and ashes. It is definitely different from Michel ʿAflaq's emphasis on the Arab spirit, as manifested in the Prophet's mission. Exemplifying transformational revolt (*inqilāb*) against regression and decline (*inḥiṭāṭ*), the Prophetic mission as a starting point (regardless of its socio-political and economic complexity) becomes a broadly-defined locus for Michel ʿAflaq's thought, not only to bypass ethnic and sectarian issues, but also to capture the emotions of the masses beyond material realities. Its connotations of the sacred and the righteous tend to discredit every opposition in terms of falsity and apostasy. When carried to their full meaning both terms justify violence, like any dichotomous discourse. Such is the relevance to our reading of culture and power.[9]

Nationalism still received serious blows, not only because of the Nasserists' clash with the left, and the 1967 defeat, but also because of its vulnerability to challenges of historical materialism. The sense of disappointment after the failures of the Nasserite experience and the 1967 defeat brought an end to the early predilection for the rebirth cycle and the phoenix-like resurrection which was made popular in a number of political ideologies in the Fertile Crescent. The nostalgia for this mythical cycle did not abate, for expressions of disappointment testified a faith that did not disappear from collective memory. Temporary drawbacks and failures were easily laid at the doors of leaders and corrupt systems. Almost every poet in the Arab world had a poem to this effect, but in Iraq the renowned ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (d. 1999) dedicated a poem to the late Syrian ideologue Zakī al-Arsūzī (d. 1968), perhaps in recognition of his faith in this phoenix-like regeneration and out of despair at the failure of that vision:

> We did not hang a bell on the tail of a cat or a donkey
> We did not ask the blind deceiver. Why did you flee?
> We are the generation of meaningless death
> The recipients of alms.
> In the coffeehouses of the East we were defeated by
> The war of words
> The peacocks who strut in the halls where pride is dead, and
> The essays of the obedient hacks.
> O you thief of the poor's food and the princes' shoes,
> Stain this page, this false news
> With the blood of truth, and
> Die like bubbles in the air.
> We can no longer swallow lies
> Or write the nonsense
> Or engage in idle talk

Targetting a whole generation as one of sham ideology and empty rhetoric, the poet unmasks the discourse that was popular at that time. He took 5 June 1967 as a dividing point between a dead rhetoric and a new language of action and commitment:

> We are the generation of meaningless death
> The recipients of alms.
> We neither died one day nor were born
> Nor knew the anguish of heroes.
> Why did they leave us naked
> O my God
> For the predatory birds
> Wearing the tatters of our dead and crying in shame?
> Ah, the sun of June
> Left our genitals naked.
> Why did they leave us for the dogs

Corpses without prayer
Carrying the crucified nation in one hand and dust in the other?
Don't brush the flies from the wound
My wounds are the mouth of Job
My pains are patience waiting
And blood seeking revenge.
O Lord of the poor workers
We were not defeated
The giant peacocks alone were defeated
Quicker than the flicker of a flame.[10]

This may not be the path that Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb would have followed had he been alive then; but he could have shared a similar disappointment. The poem is significant for another reason, however. It plays on idealizations as they resonate in the nationalist discourse of death and imminent rebirth, emptying them from their magical quality, which Ernest Cassirer in *Language and Myth* associates with a "whole gamut of overpowering emotions."[11] Yet, this halt in nationalist discoursing did not discourage its upholders from further implementation. However, rather than feeding it with expectations, they, like Saddam Hussein, temporarily (for about four or five years) grafted on it a leftist stamp. Courting leftist ideologues and allowing translations from Marxist writings in *al-Thawra* daily throughout 1968–69 and providing the neo-Marxist *Al-Ghad* weekly (6 issues, edited by 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim in 1969–70) with an article with a Stalinist stamp, Saddam gave the impression of radical change, from nationalist idealism that describes itself as "love before anything else" in the words of the 'Master,' as Michel 'Aflaq was reverently called by his disciples, to a critique of a neo-Marxist layering about revolutionary trenches, democracy, centralization, and flexibility in revolutionary action. His articles appeared in 1969–72, fusing onto those of 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrā'ī (executed in 1979) who declined to put his name to articles that were not approved yet by the Party. Saddam invited writers and thinkers from the left, with a national-Marxist outlook, to participate in the cultural climate. Those included 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim (executed soon after his imprisonment on 15 April 1991),[12] 'Azīz Sibāhī, Peter Yūsuf, and others. Before ensuring his absolute power and full control of the political and economic situation, especially after the nationalization of oil and the deportation of rich families labeled of Iranian extraction (1972 onwards), Saddam also orchestrated an alliance with the Communist Party in 1973. He gave himself thereby enough space to maneuver within his Party and to eliminate not only the left and the military senior officers, but also competing comrades of similar minds and tactics. While his leftist rhetoric sounded then like a new line of thought better-equipped than 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrā'ī's approach, for instance, he was keen on making it known that he stood for nationalization against the latter's caution. 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrā'ī, before his imprisonment in 1973, was aware that Saddam's emphasis on democratic centralization was a deliberate effort toward hegemony.[13]

On the cultural level, Islam was downplayed, however, whereas the emphasis was laid on pre-Islamic civilization, especially the Mesopotamian component. While still

a deputy, or Mr. Deputy (*al-Sayyid al-Nā'ib*),[14] as he bade people call him in 1972, Saddam ensured emphasis on the history of Iraq, not only to court and accelerate sentiments of national pride and to escape the accusations of failure that were laid at the doors of Nasserism and Arab states neighboring Israel, but also to prepare for future mitigations of ethnic and sectarian diversity in an invigorating melting pot that was in keeping with his cultural strategy to "reinforce a national-territorial consciousness," as Amatzia Baram rightly notes.[15]

Saviors and Sham Heroes:
Ideology as Cultural Consciousness

In a country of rich and complex cultural formations, it is not easy to navigate in words. This underlying reality has its positive and negative aspects. The negative aspect lay in the "Indispensable Leader's" faith in the long-term viability of a disarming discourse to outwit the Iraqis. The emphasis on sameness, one destiny, one ancient past, one culture and one society, coincided with an increasing attention to a specific discourse that treaded cautiously but deliberately, enforcing the use of a handful of phrases including his reference to himself as *al-Sayyid al-Nā'ib*. As Josaphat Kubayanda argues, "While dictators failed to grasp the necessity of handling vital concepts in specific, positive new ways to suit new circumstances, they did not fail to press into service one of the most powerful universal tools of authority: the word."[16] The emphasis on Iraqidom or Iraqiness was meant to displace ethnic, sectarian, and religious diversity. Shīʿī usual celebrations, processes, and rallies, along with their accompanying rituals, were banned, whereas Kurdish rights were recognized on 11 March 1970, without realistic measures on the political and administrative levels to let them achieve autonomy. Iraqiness was consolidated with incessant indoctrination of the masses, including speeches, shows, wrestling, rumors of serial killers, etc.

While emphasizing a common history for all the Iraqis, rooted in Mesopotamia, older than any race and religion, he began to rephrase leftist terminology to fit into a growing nationalist register of a Pan-Arabist background subsumed into a personality cult which was to displace every other and which stood unchallenged thereafter until 1991. Instead of Leninist centralized democracy, he advocated in 1971–72 democratic centralization. The case showed more conspicuously in his growing revisionism of historiography under the impact of his uncle Khairullah Ṭulfāḥ, whose sinister influence and hatred for every other race, sect, and ethnicity was beyond any reasonable measure.[17] To pave the way for a complete take-over, Saddam began to theorize deliberately for a history as made by heroes, not institutions and political parties. Moreover, he let the word "history" re-circulate, not only through festivals, museum exhibits, and resurrection of archeological sites, but also in academic gatherings, as he established and chaired *The Committee for Re-Writing History*. This committee continued throughout the Iraq-Iran war (1980–88), and issued many publications, along with a multi-volume history of Iraq which did away with the so-called "unreliable" accounts, including those by classic historians like al-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī and al-Yaʿqūbī. Participants from among contemporary historians like Farūq ʿUmar Fawzī used Orientalist thought lavishly.

This endeavor should be seen in context: the whole Tammūzī movement in the poetry and poetics of the 1950s was geared toward a reinvention of history, albeit with

a mythical superimposition, to revive the regenerative process, and to initiate the re-birth of a wasteland. The mythical hero may well find some historical descendants, like these young veterans. History becomes therefore a new battleground, as idealists and enthusiasts pass through identification processes that inform the political scene.

Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb was a member of that group, although his poetics is more messianic than the rest. His poetry sets the tone for a revolutionary reading of history and a counter-invention of tradition. He both participated in and helped to craft the consciousness of the decade of the 1950s. Did not the latter argue for regeneration in an Iraq of plenty? "I can almost hear Iraq collecting and storing / Thunder and light-ning on plains and mountains" ("Canticle of the Rain"), writes the poet in 1954, in anticipation of transformation and change within a paradigm of faith in regeneration. Although offering Christian symbols of martyrdom and sacrifice, there is in his poetry an emphasis on the savior as revolutionary and rebel. The poet's persona may well pass into the role, "I wish I could drown in my blood / To share humanity's burden/ And bring back life. / My death is a victory," he says in "The River and Death" (p. 34). There is a revisionist reading here that places sacrificial symbolism into a contempo-rary political register, as suffering leads to redemption. Poets are more attuned to sac-rificial detail, and the association with Shīʿī rituals should be present in one's mind, not only in view of Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's poems *Risālah ʾilā Yazīd* (Letter to Yazīd) and *Al-Damʿah al-kharsāʾ* (The Silent Tear), which carry both castigation for the Umayyad caliph (r. 680–683) who was responsible for Imam Ḥusayn's murder, and a re-enactment of the Shīʿī locus of sacrifice, suffering and redemption epitomized in Imam Ḥusayn's martyrdom (680), but also for the imprint left by Shīʿī *taʿziyah* on modern poetry. In both form and content, there is such an underlying presence of this *taʿziyah* that critics put aside, not out of negligence, but in secular subservience to modern ideology and thought, as I explain in this part.

The intellectual scene in the 1950s was so much overwhelmed by secular thought and so resistant to religious sentiments that history as anecdotal corpus was put aside; and if debated, it was only in a few daring efforts by sociologists. On the other hand, poets made use of the messianic in history. As poetry and narrative in this line show, there is a combined emphasis, not only on salvation of the elect and punishment for the enemies of the Prophet's family, but also on the community of suffering, its effect on the whole life of the society through a covenant of renewal and perpetuation whereby the scene of the crime against the Prophet's grandson and his family is re-peatedly enacted. The scene is bloody and humiliating, "with no one to give them burial," says one poem in the voice of Zaynab, the Prophet's granddaughter.[18] Against this spiritual wasteland, there must be sacrifice and agony to bring about life and re-birth. The underlying conviction in Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's previous poems means also faith in saviors and heroes.

The premise of leadership, as inclusive of heroes and saviors, is broad enough to accommodate saints and devils. As those who model themselves on heroes or saviors associate missions with a personal survival, we cannot expect them to be martyrs. Also, if they cannot be saints, prophets, or gods in a secular context, they may well slip into the role of dictators. Thus were the rulers and revolutionaries who modeled their lives and roles on fictional heroes or mythical structures. Along these patterns

we should also include the nationalist veterans who, in the absence of institutional-ized life, patterned their careers on these mythical or historical constructs.

However, the relevance of Saddam's deliberate re-writing of history was not a passing matter, as it forms the base for his personality cult, as much as it infects his relationship with others, including the United States. Every discourse that was in touch with Saddam's received something from his personality and career as the refer-ent. Just watch the emergence of young religious clerics and see how much they have taken from Saddam in speech, tactic, and image-making. On the other hand, every American public act in Iraq in 2003, as carried out by American administrators, re-peats Saddam's tactics and search for a populist image. Saddam worked hard on his image and cult, and it would take time before dislodging his impact from public memory. It is worth mentioning, too, that Saddam's career was the ultimate antidote to the possible democratization of Iraq that began in the early 1920s, albeit with the drawbacks usually associated with the British use of local subordinates from among the intelligentsia, the military and the landlords. Aware of the failure of ideology in the 1967 aftermath, including his own, he summoned the past, including myth and legends, to mobilize the masses, and, consequently, deprive them of any intellectual or politicized resistance. There are three stages for this manipulation of the cultural reservoir, which for convenience can be periodized as follows: 1968–73, 1973–79, 1979–90, and after. These are not passing matters, for they involved Iraq and the Arabs in the tangled web of global politics without due grounding or consultation with the intelligentsia. The first stage began in 1973, soon after the removal of the strong intellectual ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrāʾī. Saddam made the suggestion that he would provide the model for historians to emulate. Historiography, he argued, has a number of objectives: to retrieve the glorious past, as history, in his view, is written for the living not the dead; to bring history into life, to be lived as a present; and to consolidate a national consciousness, basically patriotic, with pride in one's history as a living reality.[19]

Although his speeches of 1973–78, especially his pamphlet of 11 August 1977 on rewriting history, did not spell out the reason for this re-address. Its underlying ra-tionale was against party members with sympathy for Shīʿism, especially in the after-math of the outbreak of Shīʿī riots in Najaf and Karbalāʾ in February 1977.[20] Both facts made him more disposed to a fight with internal opposition. He authorized the security office to crack down on every suspected cell or individual and to "clean" Iraq from the Daʿwah Party, the organized political body for Shīʿism. Between 1972 and 1974, five of the Party cadres were executed, along with hundreds from among its members or sympathizers. Books were banned, and public libraries were asked to burn every book that did not fit into the nationalist reading of Islam. The sweep was in-clusive of any books that smacked of leftist ideology or were tinged with populism. Eleven of ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's books were banned by 1978, after he was forced into retirement in 1977, along with books by Fayṣal al-Sāmir and Ibrāhim Kubbah. Even al-Ṭabarī's classical history was revised.

On the other hand, the Mesopotamian civilization was no longer a solid mono-lith, for the emphasis was laid on its Babylonian—rather than Sumerian—aspect, as the latter lacked conquests. Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar became his idols, as

statesmen, warriors, and adventurers. The surviving art of that period, with the im-
ages of the vanquished enemy trampled over by the triumphant Assyrians, found new
expression in the Victory Arch monument, designed as two sheathed swords, drawn
in a circle, crossing over one another at the top, with their handles in the right and
left grips of the leader. These emblems rest on the actual helmets of Iranian soldiers.
In other words, lineage works well with this past, not the Sumerian one. Both the
Sumerian name Janūb, meaning South, and *sawād*, or the dark space, standing for the
densely green area, were culturally alienating, not only for their alleged non-Semite
origin that he (or his son) drew upon with anger in the six unsigned editorials for *Al-
Thawrah* daily (April) in the aftermath of the 1991 uprising (February–March 1991),
but also for their cultural constitution for someone who was keen on a personality cult
with a lineage to or affiliation with warriors as triumphant leaders.[21] Alexander's in-
vasion of Babylon took place in 330–331 BCE. It followed the misuse and destruction
suffered after Babylon's fall to the Persian Cyrus in 539 BCE. The event also serves as
a reminder of the need to sustain and summon military power, not urbanity and cul-
tural refinement, to stand up to possible Western encroachments in times of chaos and
disintegration. Such was Saddam's understanding of the moment. History, through
reinvention and revitalization, was as alive for him as it was for his enemies, but with
different tracks and agendas.

Such a reading of history was reared not only in a one-sided tradition of war and
conflict, but mainly in a semi-nomadic childhood where valor and competition were
the foremost traits. Opposition to Saddam's authority meant either death or family ex-
termination. No wonder counter-readings to his vindictive editorials of 1991 led to
an overwhelming anger that ended the lives of both ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāssim, who wrote
him a long letter against the notorious editorials and their blame of others for his fail-
ures, and the young journalist Ḍurghām Hāshim who, in a short essay in April, ex-
pressed his surprise at how the South became suddenly reprehensible when it was
praised as the best of people in the Iraqi-Iran war.[22]

War, not culture and urbanity, became the normative element in an increasingly
violent discourse. This prioritization was not random, for it prepared for the conse-
quent fight with the densely populated south, especially the marshlands, while it gave
another impetus to the personality cult, as Saddam figured in festival posters beside
and later "on top of," Nebuchadnezzar, as Paul William Roberts noticed.[23] Saddam's
opposition and utter dislike for religious organization certainly belonged to his brand
of nationalism, which was rigorously against Islamization of nationalism. He was
therefore against nationalist thought of some liberal accentuations such as the one pro-
moted by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bazzāz (died under torture in 1970) and Nāṣir al-Ḥanī
(also murdered in 1969). On the other hand, he was unwilling to accept religious pacts
between Shīʿī and Sunni clerics such as the one between Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Badrī
(executed early 1970), a renowned and influential Sunni *ʿālim*, and the Najaf *Ḥawzah*.
Thus, he began eliminating outspoken Sunni Shaykhs like al-Badrī early in the 1970s.
The open rift with Shīʿism began around that time with confiscations of property and
deportations of families of Iranian origin. It deepened on 13 November 1973. Saddam
proclaimed utter denunciation of sectarianism and prohibited Shīʿī sentiments among

party members. He subsequently cancelled Shīʿī ceremonies, including the commemoration of ʿĀshūrāʾ, the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (murdered in 680).

Vying for political space, the Shīʿīs were certainly keen on organizing their forces, not only in terms of party structures, but also in terms of ideology, as the books of Marjiʿ Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr and his sister Bint al-Huda (executed 9 April 1980) were circulated in secret after being available in large quantities throughout the 1960s. The oil revenues on the one hand, the temporary alliance with some Kurdish factions—subsequent to the 11 March 1970 Communiqué on the rights of Kurds—and the Communist Party on the other, gave Saddam Hussein a lot of space to enforce a contrived cultural base and combat other ideologies. During that period, he was able to make it a common belief that there was nothing shameful about Arab life in pre-Islamic times, and the word *jāhiliyyah*, or period of agnosticism, was replaced by the phrase "pre-Islamic." The rhetoric toward this end was effectively introduced, to ensure bonds and logicality while maintaining emotive links with the masses. Both the mass audience and the nationalist elite began to condone this discourse, to speak of an Arab people, an Arab society, without detracting from the sense of Iraqidom. The words of the Iraqi anthem, adopted in 1981 and worded by the poet and Baʿthī cadre Shafīq al-Kamālī (d. 1984, possibly poisoned), express this configuration of meanings and registers. Both pan-Arab and national concerns converge in a glorified vision beyond any Islamic piety.[24] Yet, this stage was only one step on the ladder toward supremacy, for as soon as he felt secure enough among the nationalist intelligentsia and the masses, he cracked down on communists, the Kurds, the minorities, and his opponents inside his Party, and offered a new ideology, an amalgam of free market economy, Fabian socialism, and Islamism. The new ideology was centered on his person, for opposition invited swift elimination, like his massive use of chemical weapons against Halabjah (March 1988) and other areas in the North, and in the marshes around 1991. The mere naming of *Al-Anfāl* (spoils of war) in his 1987–88 war on the Kurds signified then self-righteousness supported by a tradition redefined to fit into his interpretive master code of Saddamite nationalism. This reinterpretive act assumes meaning and justification only against the infidelity of its Others.[25] It is no longer tenable to speak of his brand of politics under any rubric or appellation, for its self-righteousness negates all, including such nationalisms as the Baʿth, Nasserism and Arab Nationalists. The invasion of Kuwait was a declaration of war on these nationalisms.

The Others of this self-centered apparatus are almost the whole country, for his image of Iraq excludes the one already established in historical narratives as one of cultural life, debate, argumentation, joy, and fertility. In practice, he should have found his precursors among people who were anti-Iraqis, those who ruled the country and ruined it. The national anthem loses meaning, therefore, for people both inside and outside. The expatriate community has its own anthem, too. Fadhil Assultani wrote his "Incomplete Anthem" for an Iraq that is always restless, a wayfarer in a hopeless and futile search, for "what will Iraq catch as she travels by sea for a thousand years?"[26] Playing on the name and its female connotations, and also on the history of the country, the poet's homeland is not the one celebrated in the Iraqi anthem of 1981: there

is no glory and power, but exile and loss. Deprived of all its historical properties, it is almost lost. It evolves only as a trope for exile and expatriation:

> Return, Iraq! You are not the master of the ship
> nor prince of the sea.
> There is no tower there,
> no dam to keep back the tide.
> You are naked like the waves.
> There is no cloud to shade the caravan
> and no tiny star to look down from your sky
> no harbor calling you, and no *houri* to sing to you.

The state's culture was not one, and it would be a great misunderstanding to speak of it as one. Insofar as Saddam looked at it, it should be subordinate to power, a handmaid to state-building in a neo-patriarchal pattern. Culture as an ideology of expedience is a hegemonic one, and, in the previous case, was meant to justify measures of privatization, crackdowns on political opponents, achievement of a wide material base, securing of recognition inside and outside, and the ultimate presence as the modern Arab hero. Socialism was criticized as no more than a pretext of "filling . . . bellies," and for not engaging serious issues.

On the other hand, democracy was also a target, for Saddam was not interested in the so-called "state of shops,"[27] concluding in 1981 that socialism was a failure, a proposition that he emphasized, especially in the late 1980s, in line with his critique of leftist or democratic discourses against imperialism. Adding both democracy and socialism to a banned and marginalized cultural register, Saddam lived in a state of rhetorical bankruptcy, for to issue a viable discourse, certain linguistic and rhetorical operations must be carried out to achieve the persuasive impact. However, bankruptcy was precisely what he was after. In other words, by emptying the formal state register of every other ideology and discourse, he came out with new replacements to establish a unitary discourse, uncompromising, codified, that also summoned significations, signs, and historical resurrections, from the ancient and from the near past. Cities were re-named in 1984 according to their Islamic nomenclature.[28] The Republican Palace side of the city now had the Unknown Soldier Monument along with the Celebrations Square with its Victory Arch. Recent history, including references and writings and, in the case of King Faysal I, statues, were allowed. The national anthem, as noticed before, was changed to a new one with clear-cut emphasis on the homeland, like an eagle with two huge wings, covering its far reaches and garbed in its ancient history. Giant screen productions appeared. One of them, *Al-Mas'alah al-Kubrā* ("The Clash of Royalties"), brings back to life the 1920 Revolution against the British, but with an intentional revisionist emphasis on an incident west of Baghdad in which Shaykh Ḍārī and his guards killed the British Colonel G. E. Leachman (12 August 1920) in retaliation for his insults and slander of the Shaykh who was in support of the 1920 popular revolution. This deliberate hijacking of the revolution that originated around the Euphrates, with Baghdad, Najaf and Shamiyyah among its many centers, disturbed people south of Baghdad, including dignitaries and notables,

as one of them intimated to me.[29] Another giant screen production was *Al-Qadisiyyah* (January 1980), named after the triumphal battle with the ancient Sassanian empire at the Arab outpost of al-Ḥīrah south of Najaf (637). That battle concluded with al-Ḥīrah's return to Arab-Islamic rule. He found it worth producing quickly, and ordered lavish spending. This production was not a mere whim, for it was already decided to perpetuate hatred and consequent violence against the Iranians, especially as Imam Khumeini's rhetoric offered the excuse for a war on which Saddam's mind was bent. When displeased with the Persian heroine of the original script as faithful in her love to the Arab knight, Saddam asked the actress to re-play the role as a treacherous Persian, to which the Egyptian actress Suʿād Ḥusny objected unless she was offered a new contract. The film appeared as the leader wished it to be. So was history. These manifestations meant preparations for action, as they coordinated with others to form a discourse of war not only to offer his self-image as the arch hero, but also to displace, not continue, Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir's role as the Arab knight.

Culture and power have many facets. To make culture an invented tradition permeating every social segment, there must be roads toward this end that cannot be reached by physical coercion. In 1978, *The Long Days* came out as a novel, tracing Saddam's early life as a member of the Party cell in charge of assassinating the Prime Minister ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim (killed in 1963 coup). In May 1978, the court writer ʿAbd al-Jabbār Muḥsin, as ordered to do so, wrote about the leader as a "historical necessity," a phrase that was the focus of the Party's Regional Conference Political Report in 1982. The idea of the indispensable leader repeats Saddam's view on 19 February 1975 that the leader is "the father of the society."[30] Since that time, and in the absence of competing members in the leadership, this view of the indispensable leader began to replace every other notion, making the issue of collective leadership an empty shell, culminating in the purge of his colleagues in 1979, a purge that placed the whole cultural and ideological scene under a one-man vision and whim.[31] In the 1982 Political Congress, the emphasis on the indispensable leader coincided with two things: the disappearance of nationalist ideology as pertaining to the Party, and the sharp criticism of members with Shīʿī inclinations. Both were in line with the growing official, military, and economic dominance of his family and tribal members, who became owners of many state sector companies that were sold off beginning in 1977 under the pretext of bankruptcy.[32]

Concentration of power worked in tune with a cultural proliferation and an increasing emphasis on religious trappings. To stifle criticism, and to counteract any criticism of his war policy, anti-Shīʿī sentiments, etc., he arranged with his uncle Khayrullah Ṭulfāh to persuade some tribal Shaykhs and jurists from the South to produce a personal genealogy that traced his descent to the Prophet's cousin ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (killed 661). The genealogical tree was made popular soon after the Iranian revolution of February 1979.

Coinciding with the purging of his comrades in July 1979 and the accelerated effort to summon the support and subservience of many writers and poets (as he met them, reported Fuʾād al-Takarlī, lying in bed because of back pain, narrating to them his career as party veteran and hero, and asking them to write it down),[33] this tactic was more than a search for legitimacy. While there was a desire on his part to ingrati-

ate himself with the population in the South, as Bengio suggests,[34] the populace was not that naïve, nor was he for this matter. Still, he sought any tactic to counteract the Iranian ideological rhetoric of martyrdom. Hence, the same discourse made use of the Prophet's mission, Qur'ānic language, and anti-Shī'ī sentiments as involved in abundant references to the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr, the founder of Baghdad and the relentless opponent of his cousins. As the oath of allegiance ceremony of 13 November 1982 shows, Saddam's effort was directed toward a sustained manipulation of a number of things that could ensure him survival in the face of calamities brought on by war.

The enormous investment of money and energy in an invented tradition of Arabo-Islamic accentuations demonstrates his fear of Iran's religious rhetoric, but he was also intent upon building up his own cultural reservoir to boost the propaganda war and its prioritization of race (Arabs versus Persians), to elude the religious dimension that worked positively on the side of the Iranians. Even the raised motto, "Martyrs are the most honored of all," was secularized to counterbalance Shī'ī popular understanding of and commitment to martyrdom. The deliberate focus on free women in danger of captivity was offered in pre-Islamic terms to dislodge the Shī'ī annual commemoration of the scene at Karbalā' where women from the Prophet's family were taken captive by Arabs—the Umayyads, not the Persians. Along with this, there was an enormous propaganda effort, coupled with financial support for families that lost members in the war, to make martyrdom acceptable. The emphasis on honor, valor, and sacrifice operated effectively among the recruits when needs were addressed, too. At this stage, he summoned young poets, along with folk choruses, to participate in the war effort. The ultimate purpose was to enlist the whole society in the war, for "Oh Mother, on my wedding night, sings the cannon, dom, dom. / Oh Mother, gunpowder floats, smelling like cardamom, dom, dom," says one popular war song.[35] Another says: "We have marched away, / Marched away to war . . . / I'm a lover, defending my beloved one, / and we've marched away to war." Yet, another is even more bent on associations of love, honor, and homeland: "My homeland said to me, / I'm your mother / and you are my son . . . / you're the soldier, a bridegroom to be / your friends will celebrate / and your wedding day will be a day of feasting." While songs were powerful means to influence the masses or at least to contain resistance, there were other means, too, to ensure that opposition would not make use of discontents. Hence, he also resorted to a campaign of coercion to involve everybody in the war effort, withholding support from those who were reluctant to participate, imprisoning others, kicking many out of their jobs, and torturing the rest. Recurrent rhetoric emphasized the shame that should befall those who showed reluctance or hesitation, *al-mutakhādhilūn*, even from among the highest ranks in the party. By laying stress on women's honor and the image of the *ḥarā'ir*, or free virgin women, as valiant ones, Saddam's war rhetoric was more pre-Islamic, targeting the new tribal affiliates who were leading the army.

There was, however, an Islamic accentuation in war communiqués with Iran. Their target was the Iranian elite, not the populace, and the few senior officers, tribal chiefs and academics that still held sectarian sentiments against Iran. But there was little evidence to support the view that Saddam's use of Islamic discourse helped otherwise in the war with Iran. The impact of this discourse on some Arab populations

might have been true, as was the case with the newly allied tribes that had the regime's financial and economic support. The known alliance with the Reagan administration undermined the tactic, but Saddam continued to play the card of Islamism while appearing in Basrah or in the mountainous areas in cowboy uniforms. The disappointments internally and on the war fronts were many, and a number of writers were banned, imprisoned, or executed for alleged opposition to the war. Some senior army officers lost their lives, too, and the whole scene inside was deteriorating throughout the 1980s. On the eve of the end of hostilities people were in the streets, celebrating the occasion, implicitly indicating the bankruptcy of this war rhetoric. Cultural manipulation reached a standstill, and the regime was not hesitant in making open threats to every intellectual or academic lest there be a dissent.[36] Forms of cultural resistance abound, however, and at least three of the short story writers suffered imprisonment, and two were executed. Those two were among the winners in the best war story competition.[37] Indirection as a way to escape censorship flourished. A salient example is the one narrated in *A Sky So Close*. The dance performance at the National Theatre was called *Light*. "The first group prospered blessed by a gentle golden sun, unaware that the other group was coming down with a disease, as their sun was hidden away by a thick cloud in the shape of a giant mushroom. . . ."[38] "They were separated by a river. The dancers were divided into two groups fighting for light. The performance used every technique of lighting and shadows, we are told, to show that 'light was a gift for everyone and didn't belong to one group or the other.'"[39] Playing on the gift of light, the performance enabled each pair of eyes to shine in the darkness to allow the audience to see and perceive the ravages of war and the danger threatening life because of it. Articles appeared also dealing indirectly with issues that used to bother the President, questioning obliquely his policy and regimentation. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāssim wrote a number of articles for both *Al-ʿIrāq* and *Qādisiyyah* dailies, before and after his 1988 imprisonment, criticizing the damage done to date palm groves, rivers and marshes. Another article speaks about the Prophet's grandson, Imam Ḥusayn, while another uses the fish as an analogy for Iraq, with the implication of an Iraqi popular saying that rottenness initiates in the head of the fish. Another of his articles was of a decidedly oppositional nature. It criticized the late Romanian president Ceausescu, in *al-ʿIrāq*, 6 March 1989. The article led to a ban on any writing on this issue. Coercion became the practice, with its accompanying disinformation.

There are, however, a number of issues that need further discussion whenever we speak of culture under repressive regimes, totalitarian or ultraconservative, in the East or in the West, during "dark periods" or relatively liberal ones. New Historicism, as well as cultural theory, no longer accepts stringent associations between political systems and cultures, for the latter may well grow as ways of life, habits, patterns of thinking and resistance. While there is an emergent culture generated and organized by the present society, there is always a competing one that devises its own ways, too. Aware of the power of cultural dynamics, Saddam was very careful to choose the most ideologically educated and acceptable in his closely-knit group, namely Ṭāriq ʿAzīz, to supervise cultural activity, especially after the elimination of ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrāʾī in 1979, for "as long as he was alive," said ʿAlī Ḥasan al-Majīd in that infa-

mous video tape of late July 1979, "there will be more conspiracies." Ṭāriq ʿAzīz was also accepted by people on the left, and had previously, until 1977, very good connections with the leadership of the Iraqi Communist Party, especially ʿĀmir ʿAbdullah. He was also known for his dislike of radical thought and infantile leftist pronouncements in general. More importantly, he was the advocate of *The Baʿth Working Theory*, or *Nazariyat al-ʿAmal al-Baʿthiyyah*, which emphasizes thought as subordinate to the actual needs of the state. Hence began the process of regulating hegemony through media, unions, education, and entertainment.

As regulation might prove incomplete during the war with Iran, there was an organized effort to: 1. purge the Baʿth Party and get rid of those who still held an influence among older generations, but who might restrain *The Baʿth Working Theory,* like the poet and painter Shafīq al-Kamālī (died or poisoned after a brief imprisonment in 1983?) who had been a member in the regional and national leadership; 2. co-opt intellectuals from every other platform, including leftists from among all religions and ethnicities; 3. keep the old structures of a pseudo-national front, like the central council of thirty members for the Iraqi Union of Writers before the open elections of 1985 and 1988; 4. supervise the whole scene through a specific group of loyalists that had the final say before the rise to power of Saddam's son in 1989 onward, when the balance moved in a family direction, with a Saʿūdī state system in mind.[40]

To achieve hegemony through war propaganda was understandably impossible despite the enormous effort in channels of psychoanalysis, social penetration, persuasion, and the use of a literary tradition of war with its properties of honor, valor, and sacrifice. To suffuse the regime's worldview throughout the social fabric, the intelligentsia had to be given some space, even when this space was relatively small in comparison with a "culture industry" that had grown steadily as a pacifying and integrating mechanism.[41] The cultural scene fought hard in the 1980s to cut across codification and imbibe Iraqi life with adequate acculturation. A survey of the names of participants, whether Iraqi or Arab, in writing, translation, and other activities, attests to this cultural effort to resist pacification. The translation projects, run by the financially self-sufficient Cultural Directorate, the heritage series, and the journals in every field of knowledge, should be studied in terms of resistance to co-option, and not the other way around.[42] It may be worthwhile to point out that one activity, like the Mirbad Festival every November, was an occasion to make use of the presence of poets to polish the image of the regime, despite the fact that many poets had nothing to do with this image-making. In other words, the State was interested in regulating the Festival to fit into its culture industry. Two things happened to indicate a cultural deviation: there were firstly poets who made their view against the war very clear, like ʿAlawī al-Hāshmī from Bahrain and Selīm Barakat from Syria; and there was secondly the emergence of the "scholarly sessions" as part of the festival which began to draw audiences from the poetry readings. Those sessions in criticism which I designed in 1983 ensured the participation of brilliant critics and scholars for a number of years. In 1988 a joint-chair was appointed in his capacity as a member of the Baʿth Cultural Bureau to control those sessions in preparation for full control which took place in 1989.[43] Understanding the deviational nature of the sessions, they were not allowed to circulate in the media in 1988.

The regime's effort to manipulate Iraqi cultural life and to co-opt writers and artists into a servile cultural regimentation should not blind us to the power of the intelligentsia in developing ways of resistance. Against a heap of cheap production and propaganda literature by the Mass Culture Directorate and its military equivalents, literature, painting, music, folk poetry, and popular arts grew, mostly through a cultural interaction made available by the focused efforts and subtle planning of Iraqi intellectuals from 1983 to 1988.[44] Saddam might have been less receptive to this intellectualized effort, had it not been acclaimed by some enlightened individuals around him as beneficial to Arab intellectuals. Nevertheless, cultural productivity in general occupied some space that he desired to fill up with his images and symbols. Whenever there was no immediate reminder of the benefits to his role, there was a possibility of displeasure. This gave way to many vituperative remarks against intellectuals, and many detentions and executions.[45] Intellectuals inside Iraq knew how difficult it was to navigate in shallow waters, and they tried their best to cope with the situation without jeopardizing their lives and the lives of those around them. It is on record that "some intellectuals strive to maintain a modicum of professional integrity under repressive political conditions."[46]

Intellectuals themselves suffered divisions of their own throughout the history of Iraq. Their aspiration for an ideal society was only the aspiration of the Iraqis at large, according to the sociologist ʿAlī al-Wardī. But failure to achieve this and disappointments have led many to disillusions, anger and duality, he argues.[47] During the so-called national rule since 1921, the ground for resentment and resistance had already been laid, and organized politics had to manipulate this for their agendas. It should not be surprising that the greatest contenders for this ground were the ICP and the Baʿth. These two parties also experienced their own internal struggles for power. The Baʿth's struggle for power took many forms. Despite the effort of ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrāʾī (imprisoned in 1973 and executed in prison in 1979), through his friendship with ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim (imprisoned in 1988 and 1991, and executed in prison) to develop an ideology of Marxist-national formation based on the sixth pan-Arab Baʿth conference and its emphasis on scientific socialism, this preventive measure failed. By 1974, Saddam authorized Ṭāriq ʿAzīz to write down the eighth political report for the Baʿth Regional Conference (i.e., the region of Iraq), to lay emphasis on a specific cultural policy that prioritized action and pragmatics, and to rid the Baʿth discourse of leftist and Marxist connotations. By that time, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's writings were marginalized until they were banned by 1978 after his "honorary membership" in the Baʾth (offered in 1969) was withdrawn (1977), and party members were told not to read his works.[48] He was also forced into retirement as an acting editor of *Labor Voices*. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's role stopped with the imprisonment (1973–79), and subsequent execution in 1979, of ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrāʾī. His early writings on revolutionary thought, his attack on opportunism and bureaucracy, as well as his analysis of sham heroes and revolutionaries should not be bypassed, as they subtly paved the way for subsequent readings of neo-patrimonialism as the epitome of expedient politics in revolutionary movements. His interpretations of freedom, revolution and culture, as noticed by Fāḍil al-ʿAzzāwī,[49] were nonconformist and they were seen later as the seeds for dissent among young intellectuals.[50] In other words, the culminating state dis-

course since 1974 was deliberately freed from other contaminations in order to pave
the way for Saddam's view of culture and ideology as channels of expediency.

The prior complacent tone that Saddam had used in times of enormous war losses
gave way by the end of the war (1988) to a biting criticism of the Iraqis as originally
barefoot, poor, and ignorant. He insinuated that they were "undeserving" of the leader
whom they had received as a heavenly gift. Around the late 1980s, Michel ʿAflaq's
words (as reported in Iraqi media) that "Saddam was the present of the Baʿth to
Iraq and of Iraq to the Arab nation" were popular among associates. In opposition to
this there surfaced more redemptive suffering and a sense of humiliation and loss,
which the handwritten addition of "God is great" to the Iraqi flag (January 1991) did
not dissipate. By the year 2000 (August 28), Saddam was impatient with the whole
invented tradition, asking for a new anthem, not only because the old one was a re-
minder of the ghost of the deceased author, but also because that one "was cumber-
some in words and music," and he would like to "have a shorter one" to be recited in
wars and festivities.

Despite the enormous investment in invented traditions, the 1991 Uprising as
well as the striking images from April 2003 of Saddam's loneliness and isolation
should raise serious questions about the efficacy of processes of contrivance, invention,
and fabrication. Frantz Fanon offers very deep insights into such problematic situa-
tions. Instead of the usual rise of a "bourgeois dictatorship," there was in the case of
Iraq "a tribal dictatorship," but with the affluence and power of a group that had full
and unrestricted access to oil revenues, whose leader ". . . strikes terror into his
nearest collaborators."[51] Placing the whole economy at the service of personal survival,
image making, and the tribal gang meant also alienating others. Hanna Batatu says:
"It would not be going too far to say that the Takritis rule through the Baʿth party,
rather than the Baʿth party through the Takritis."[52] I agree with Malik Mufti that by
1979, Saddam was surrounded by a chosen few who knew that they could be swept
away at any time.[53] In the case of Iraq no one can deny, however, that there was a to-
talitarian statecraft, partaking of patriarchy, with more than a tinge of Mafia struc-
tures, but with a focus on infrastructures, urban planning, and extensive state appa-
ratus, which was particularly important for image-making. For how can descendants
of the great figures of the past be without a city-state or a nation-state?

A state composed of intelligence services and physical coercion cannot cope for
long with counter-ambitions that manipulate circumstances to dethrone the isolated
regime. Cultural fabrications usually fail to accrue popularity. The use of old clichés,
respecting the fight against imperialism and the nationalization of oil failed in 1991,
for the masses no longer had a vested interest in a system that, to use Fanon's words,
expelled them from history.[54] A series of wars run by a corrupt system could not claim
popularity, for people's dreams and visions turned into nightmarish inhibitions and
miseries. Thus writes Sinan Antoon,

I saw another war
and a mother weaving a shroud
for the dead man
still in her womb.[55]

Fanon wrote on post independence situations at large, but the applicability still holds, especially whenever regimes and dictators are deliberately engaged in the destruction of the remaining institutionalized structures. Palace and subordinates become the locus of authority, to the exclusion of the rest. Treating them as sheep, or isolating them from the serious concerns of the regime, the ". . . masses begin to sulk," says Fanon on other instances of old, "as they turn away from this nation in which they have been given no place and begin to lose interest in it."[56] Even the flag and the palace, argues Fanon, cease on these occasions "to be the symbols of the nation," becoming instead "empty shells."[57] It is only through a "moving consciousness of the whole of the people," with a definite purpose of regaining "dignity to all citizens," says Fanon, that such societies can recover from the damage done to their structures of feeling and lifestyles.[58] "The national government, if it wants to be national, ought to govern by the people and for the people, for the outcast and by the outcasts."[59]

While applicable to the situation inside, the matter as discussed by Fanon does not provide an explanation for the relation between the ruler and the expatriates or exiles. Even when taking into consideration the mechanism of the police state, its use of families as pawns to coerce opposition outside, there is nevertheless an intellectual dissent that cannot be contained. Both Saʿdī Yūsuf and Muẓaffar al-Nawwāb stand for the most uncompromising voices, not only against the police state but also against occupation and puppet regimes. The homeland is lost the moment it is confiscated as another's possession, for "We know that I.R.A.Q. are letters we pronounce, / but where can we see it? Will it enter through the door of our reed hut some day?" asks the poet's young persona in a poem written in 1977. The homeland needs some positive presence to materialize into a lovable form, a gesture of warmth and love like what the *miʿdān* women do in the marshes area and in the cities of the south every morning:[60]

> Will it come carrying clay pots,
> Filled with fresh buttermilk
> Or white butter?[61]

For many exiles, there is no homecoming, and the poem becomes a new homeland searching for a cultural context shared by exiles and expatriates, rather than by the receiving milieu and its culture. The Iraqi poet Fawzī Karīm has no qualms about this as a fact for, in "The Scent of Mulberry," he only raises rhetorical questions that tend to ease his tension:

> Which one of us knows to whom we belong:
> We to you with this wrinkled face?
> Or you to us, we the patrons of no-return roads?
> Or do both of us, O Baghdad,
> belong to the hangman?[62]

Another exile from the next generation, Hāshim Shafīq, feels no need to draw a history of imposed alienation, for the country is turned into something unbearable:

> Oh, Tyrant, is this a flower or a cement?
> Is this a plate or a drum?
> Is this nectar or sludge?
> Is this a homeland or a guillotine?

The whole situation is beyond one's capacity to reason,

> I don't know what has blurred my perception of things
> So that now, the cub mews and the rat roars.[63]

Other poets of recent exile (since 1991), like ʿAwwād Nāṣir, identify with precursors not only from among Iraqi poets but also from among mythical heroes like Prometheus, those who have been suffering for the simple reason that they do not hold power in their hands. At the mercy of those who wield it, they are bound to be the victims:

> It is my destiny to steal away like a thief
> And enter like a thief,
> I am the one who steals fire from the creator.

> But it's my destiny,
> That of an ear of wheat,
> Which when it grows tall
> Is threatened by the one who wields the sickle.[64]

Exile as the most tormenting form of dislocation cannot be summed up in terms of a love/hate relationship with the motherland, or with its political systems. The best among Iraqi writers were not ready to politicize the moment in black and white terms. There is soul-searching and an effort to see where they stand, and how to see the unfolding of a country under either dictatorship or occupation. Also between wishful thinking and sordid realities, they need to define their own vision of their country and homeland. In "The River," a poem of three movements, the Iraqi poet Fawzī Karīm, a London resident, suspects that his view of his homeland may have been provoked by nationalist ideologies of glorification, or by recent theories of history, the disenchanted views of nationhood and invented traditions. A mounting suspicion under the impact of recent thought and global strategies counteracts his childhood recollections of a bountiful river and a glorious history. Caught up between desire and fear of reality, the poet says:

> If I were not a desire—like your waves that never settle,
> or an apparition, behind the veil, on both of your banks, what else could I
>   be?
> And you, Tigris, as you have always been my father's house
> and my vigilance against strangers,

why do I presume that your waterway is a symbol
invented by others
and that your Babylonian alluvium is false evidence
and your voice pure fabrication?
Is it for fear of seeing the path narrower than what I think?[65]

Although exile and expatriation may breed a great deal of self-aggrandizement, paranoia, claims to truth, and propensity to rumor, the best of Iraqi intellectuals abroad like Saʿdī Yūsuf and Muẓaffar al-Nawwāb have a clear responsibility in mind: to fight dictatorship and foreign aggression. The metamorphosis in Fāḍhil Al-ʿAzzāwī's persona may explain the nature of responsibility even among intellectuals who were of divided aims in the early stage of their exile. In "The Poet" he says:

Once I met a poet who spent his life
among the dead.
Discovering that I was alive,
he named himself Fadhil Al-Azzawi, my very name, and began
Publishing poems—my poems—under his name
To bamboozle his enemies.
Then he came and asked me to join him
in his holy war
against the devils of the world.[66]

This responsibility is not a mere exercise in propagandist jargon, for in Saʿdī Yūsuf's "America, America," for example, it has the qualities of his best poetics.[67] Written on 20 August 1995, in Damascus, in recollection of the 1991 war and its aftermath, the poet develops the topography of the battle in the south, sarcastically speaking of the recurrent motif in military jargon about precision bombs and their like, as they target a country at random:

The neutron bomb is highly intelligent,
It distinguishes between
An "I" and an "Identity."

Situating Basra topography and the military means of erosion between passages of love and nostalgia that borrow from the "blues," the poet goes on to show how culturally he is involved in love with the best signs of American culture:

I too love jeans and jazz and Treasure Island
And John Silver's parrot and the terraces of New Orleans
I love Mark Twain and the Mississippi steamboats and Abraham Lincoln's
     dogs
I love the fields of wheat and corn and the smell of Virginia tobacco.
But I am not American. Is that enough for the phantom pilot to turn me
     back to the Stone Age!

Building on a number of juxtapositions while undermining military rhetoric and political jargon, the poem becomes a national inventory of traces highlighted and poeticized through their factual reference to the topography of a land of plenty that had once been living in peace. The difference between the two styles of life is poetically drawn to appropriate potential cultural sediment as his readings and assimilations indicate. While there is a cultural rapprochement which should be a road to peace and understanding, argues the poet, America offers destructive war and aggression. Instead of culture there is death. What remains for the poet to do is no more than living fully in the past. By delineating the topography of his city, its groves of date palms, its many rivers and its livestock, the poet nostalgically retrieves what he misses in exile. Childhood recollections come sharp and dense in counter motion to a war of erosion and destruction,

> And now I remember trees;
> The date palm of our mosque in Basra, at the end of Basra
> The bird's beak
> And a child's secret
> A summer feast.
> But the war means something else:
> The trees die
> Pummeled
> Dizzied,
> Not standing
> The trees die.

The poem leans on the poet's rich matrix of the lore and topography of his city Basra which has become a poetic bastion in his early poetry. Now, it is back to counteract and argue a case of urgency:

> I need neither oil, nor America herself, neither the elephant nor the don
>   key.
> Leave me alone, pilot, and leave my house roofed with palm fronds and
>   this wooden bridge.
> I need neither your Golden Gate nor your skyscrapers.
> I need the village not New York.
> Why did you come to me from your Nevada desert, soldier armed to the
>   teeth?
> Why did you come all the way to the distant Basra where fish used to
>   swim by our doorsteps?

Literature in exile can be potentially effective not only in terms of its relative freedom to call things by their name, but also as a negotiating stand beyond malice and grudge that may well blind infantile positions. In this poem by Saʻdī Yūsuf, for instance, the poet has his homeland in mind despite his committed stand against the regime since the 1970s. Poetry, for that matter, can operate strongly on Iraqi, Arab, and American audiences, among others, as it functions between shared registers and codes, and brings to its audiences what may be missed otherwise in times of confusion and turmoil.

Part Four
The Literary Politic in Cultural Consciousness

How can I sleep the night while you occupy my mind?
Even fish in the water weep for my plight.

<div align="right">Nāzik al-Malāʾikah, qt. a popular song, 618</div>

It may well be that this strange people is exceptional in the degree of its preoccupation with politics, mixing it with its food and drink, its joy, seriousness, and fun.

<div align="right">*Duktūr Ibrāhīm,* p. 141.</div>

This chapter argues that literature and art strongly affect Iraqi consciousness while they convey its multiple layers. Between the seemingly personal predilection and the public role there is little or no distance, as the general mood or temper is one of passionate commitment in love, life, and politics. This generalization does not preclude other terms of analysis and exceptions applicable to cases, cults, interests, divides and other categories. Yet, it justifies its conclusions by recurrent markers and findings. While these reveal a lot of this consciousness, they also testify to the role and impact of literature and art in acting on this temper, inciting therefore many developments with or against a specific exercise of power. The failure of tribal dictators and unconstitutional systems to share and disperse power usually leads to the emergence of muffled and repressed cultural responses and open resistance, along with other conspicuous manifestations and mixed discourses. These appear in personal songs and rituals as much as the latter may well enrich a public archive with a register of longing and love that can easily accommodate political commitments. Despite the complexity attending this fusion, hegemonic discourse is not at a loss to thrive on these at times. It makes use of their appeal to traditional lore to ransack them of their validity and sell them anew as its own legacy of gain, power and achievement. The most appealing tactic is to recourse either to the war discourse, the one that speaks of dangers and conspiracies, or to the pronounced commitment to tradition as a rubric for a selected

legacy of the past. Both enable the patriarch or the only leader to wield more power. But, this cannot pass smoothly.

Reinventing traditions and forging new ones is an exhausting process that may end up in failure, as shown by Saddam's desperate efforts to rewrite and accommodate history to his own vision of a Saddamite hierarchy. However, wrecking the reinvention by mighty force may well bring about havoc, as was the case with the US military intervention of April 2003 after a series of wars, bombardments and cruel sanctions that did not allow even pencils and paper. In the past as in the present, both reinvention and disintegration met and are meeting resistance that builds on inherent and functional predilections, moods, practices and traditions. Despite the giant film productions that were carried out to perfection in the early 1980s in Iraq, for example, the 1920 Revolution literature as well as the political scene in the 1930s received much academic attention in the 1980s and were part of the post-April 2003 legacy as the demonstrations and their slogans demonstrate. On the other hand, Saddam's term, "the bride of revolutions," in reference to 1963, that drove him to recognize all previous revolutions, was hijacked by dissenters in the 1980s who wrote articles and books on the monarchy and the 14 July 1958 revolution. The political history of Iraq was relived as if to counteract the effort to obliterate it from memory.

The Iraqi cultural scene in the 1980s had this mixture of complacency and dissent, compliance and revolt. Even Saddam's words were manipulated as headings or paratexts to elude censorship and to preempt intelligence reporting. The Iraqi *ḥis-chah*, or deep-layered punning,[1] worked well in the 1980s, not only in paratextual referentiality, framed narratives, and applications of wished-for epithets to the president, but also in the contrivance of a war literature that was oppositional in nature. Even translation projects and literary criticism, along with oblique literary journalism, had this deep *ḥis-chah*, which was deeply rooted in the recesses of the mind. Banning practices, like the Shīʿī celebrations of al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom, but not the Prophet's birthday, increased rather than diminished sentiments. The banning was directed against their canticles as volatile verbal structures of enormous political subversion. Operating on consciousness and permeating society at large, art forms and literature, including the *Ḥusayniyyāt*, or strophes and elegies commemorating the Prophet's grandson al-Ḥusayn and his martyrdom in 680, are dynamically involved in power relations, vying as they do for a space in history against reinventions, while competing for culture as a battling ground, which bigots in the regime denote with a grudge as a Shīʿī property.[2]

With their dense and functional presence in life, in their empirical and epistemic dimensions, art and literature have a multi-faceted presence and role in monarchical and Republican Iraq, its ups and downs, its successes and failures. Redemptive suffering is historically poised in an Iraqi temper as well as in its accompanying resistance to humiliation: "death is more tolerable than pity," says al-Sayyāb in "Stranger at the Gulf." Culture becomes an encompassing Iraqi presence, with conspicuous and latent expressions. Early on in the century, the British (as well as the Americans in 2003) claimed the Shīʿī celebratory occasion as indicative of their support for ethnic and religious freedom. These pronouncements may turn out to be no more than self-congratulatory proclamations, for these same processions and festivities could challenge the political system, no matter what claims it makes, upon reaching the con-

clusion that there is a hidden agenda, occupation and loss. No matter who incites the first instance of resistance or unrest, revolutions and insurgencies get their impetus amid unemployment, humiliation and grievance at large. The masses usually wait for the right outcome; otherwise there is trouble. Nothing will stop the masses with such a history of redemptive suffering from "trampling death-by-death," as the Christian hymn says, and fighting against humiliation. That was the case with the British, as the following critical assessment of literary history argues. Iraqi literature since the 1920 popular revolution has some distinctive features that center on resistance, suspicion, social protest, and the fight for freedom, as well as exposure of social evils, corruption, and bureaucracy. Literature and the arts in general offer the counter-dissemination of knowledge and power, a fact that also explains the reasons behind the sacrifices made by writers and intellectuals, their imprisonments, and their executions in the ongoing battle between supremacy and independence, domination and freedom.

The 1920 Literature

This deep-rooted and underlying temper, as delineated above, is perpetuated by Shī'ī commemorative processions and recitations, which pervade the whole culture, including that of specific ethnicities and sects. Poetry, painting and narrative, for example, are tellingly influenced by a melancholic strain that may have some Sumerian and Babylonian tones, but is definitely revived in Shī'ī rituals of death and regeneration. The rhythmical chant, especially in the modernist trend of the 1950s, came under the impact of Shī'ī recitations, as I argued elsewhere. But, the presence of Shī'ī celebratory rituals is so pervasive that it touches every practice, including naming. Needless to say Sunnis and Sabians, for instance, subscribe to the whole temper, and in the case of Sabians, naming takes after some Shī'ī practices of nomenclature as a show of allegiance to God, the Prophet and the Imams.[3] On the other hand, and no matter how limited recent resistance to the occupation is, there is a counter invest-ment in tradition, especially the 1920 popular revolution. There emerged a group naming itself after the popular revolution, while demonstrators chanted some of its slogans and songs. On the other hand, even militant groups make use of history to le-gitimize their actions, drawing on the fight in Anbar province against the British in 1920, as mentioned elsewhere in this monograph.

Hence arises the need for a critique of modern Iraqi literary history, with the 1920 popular revolution as a focal point. In a rare acknowledgment among historians, Charles Tripp notes that "there was a conscious effort on the part of certain writers to construct a secular identity that would minimize sectarian differences between Sun-nis and Shi'a."[4] Despite the increasing scholarship on Iraqi politics and internal af-fairs, including class and ethnic structures, little has been done to account for its dis-tinctive literary and cultural formations despite the power of these "to encourage a sense of distinctive Iraqi national community that would bridge the many particular identities of Iraq's inhabitants."[5] Overburdened with sectarian, ethnic, and border problems, Iraq found itself entangled in a number of disputes and divisions, which the British mandatory rule did little to alleviate. Applying a policy of utter disregard for national aspirations and feelings, the British, represented by their Acting Civil Com-missioner Sir Arnold Wilson, were soon to confront a popular Revolution in 1920.

The mere announcement of the British mandate for the country sparked a widespread "revolution" on June 30, immobilizing British forces in many areas, costing them heavy losses and ultimately leading to the removal of Sir Arnold Wilson.[6]

In T. E. Lawrence's account for the *Sunday Times* (August 1920), the Revolution occurred in reaction to a policy of imperial violence as conducted by the British Commissioner. His view is worth mentioning in this context to account later for the dynamic role of intellectuals in that Revolution. He writes:

> Our government is worse than the old Turkish system. They kept fourteen thousand local conscripts embodied, and killed a yearly average of two hundred Arabs in maintaining peace. We keep ninety thousand men, with airplanes, armored cars, gunboats and armored trains. We killed about ten thousand Arabs in this rising in summer.

To Colonel T. E. Lawrence, this is the worst policy ever conducted, for:

> We cannot hope to maintain such an average: it is a poor country, sparsely peopled. . . . How long will we permit millions of pounds, thousands of imperial troops, and tens of thousands of Arabs to be sacrificed on behalf of a form of colonial administration which can benefit nobody but its administrators?[7]

Due to what William R. Polk calls "the power of the purse," Great Britain came to understand their inability to "govern Iraq directly as a colony."[8] This understanding came only in response to that popular Revolution, which Iraqi historians take as a point of fissure in the relations between Iraq and Britain. It is the more so, however, whenever set against the colonialist line of thought held and defended by Sir Arnold Wilson. Newspaper releases and comments made by the leading participants in that revolution acted not only as counter-texts to British colonialist discourse but also as early manifestations of post-colonial response to matters of identity and cultural formation. Taken as such, and in relation to the significant body of writings hereafter, the writings of the 1920 Revolution set the tone for further literary concerns that diversify critical theory in Iraq beyond the limitations of the classical literary canon.

Sir Arnold Wilson's representations of the Iraqi population were not merely informed by a radical Orientalist discourse, for he virtually acted and spoke for the Iraqis. When requested by London in 1918 to assess the Iraqi needs and aspirations regarding self-rule or another form of government, the Commissioner ". . . genuinely believed that he knew what was best for Iraq," instructing his political officers ". . . to conduct plebiscites only when public opinion was likely to be in accord with the British desire for a single state under British control."[9] The contradiction involved in practicing distortion and fabrication and claiming knowledge of the Iraqis, their temper, and needs, was counterbalanced by the mounting Iraqi sentiment against Wilson and the British occupation. Basically, and before the subsequent division on sectarian bases, Wilson divided the society into three segments: the first comprising Bedouins and Kurds, the second the peasantry, and the third the urban population.

This classification enabled him to see the first in a state of noble savagery, whereas the second was in "desperate need of succor," as Polk's rephrasing goes, while the third includes people who were vile, treacherous, and deceitful.[10]

This classification endows the whole colonialist discourse with a number of self-justifications that are contradictory in nature, as noticed by Philip W. Ireland, for instance.[11] Britain was there, according to Sir Arnold "to bestow its gifts of efficient administration, of impartial justice, of honest finance and of security on backward peoples." No less than a heavenly blessing, the mission of the Empire was infallible and, for that matter, should have been acceptable to all. No challenge to British authority or interests was to be either foreseen or condoned. Wilson's conclusive surmises regarding total subordination invited no further explanation. He sweepingly looked on "political aspirations and the desire for self-government" as "vagaries of ungrateful extremists" or "wayward thoughts in any adolescent youth."[12]

Yet, this "adolescent youth" took Sir Arnold by surprise. A participant in the popular revolution, the academic and poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr (1896–1968) provides the ingredients of a counter-discourse in his *Tarīkh al-qaḍiyyah al-ʿIraqiyyah* (History of the Iraqi question, 1923). Intellectuals were actual participants in the revolution. Some issued newspapers, like the poet and Shīʿī Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shabībī. Others, like the historian ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ḥasanī, co-edited with M. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Kaẓimī a newspaper named *al-Istiqlāl* (Independence) in 1920. *Al-Furāt*, the Euphrates, was al-Shabībī's newspaper in Najaf. Both played an important role in covering events and developments, while inciting people to organize their efforts against British forces. Rather than "adolescent youth" or deceitful gangs and pitiful masses, the Iraqis of that Revolution had already maintained anti-colonialist attitudes. There were opportunists among them, to be sure, but the educated were the vanguard of the Revolution, too. In al-Baṣīr's analysis, British repressive policy against intellectuals was no minor cause for the popular revolution. He says:

> The worst mistakes which provoked the resentment of the people against the government, and which had the worst impact on its intellectuals was the repression of free thought, the prohibition of newspapers other than the official ones. . . . The very confiscation of this freedom led to the unlimited desire to read the free Syrian and Egyptian newspapers.[13]

Al-Baṣīr's poems, speeches and writings were used as mottoes for newspaper headings. *Al-Istiqlāl* (Independence, Najaf 1 October–14 October 1920), for instance, took its motto from his well-known saying, "No Life without Independence." On the other hand, *The Euphrates* (Najaf, 7 August–15 September 1920) writes in its fifth issue, addressing Sir Arnold Wilson:

> Take it easy, you representative of the English State. The nation which you were against, and where you unleashed the sword, causing so much bloodshed and casualties among its people, in utter hatred and arbitrary rule, regardless of its rights and justice, this nation is to take you to task in the court of history.

The same issue explains that the British policy of taxation led to the total destruction of Iraq: "The soil of each region confirms that you have taken away even the seeds from the bird's beak, and extracted the marrow from the bone." These addresses also include intellectual recognition of and support for President Woodrow Wilson's principles of self-determination. Thus, in its second issue, *The Euphrates* enlists the reasons behind political frustration in Iraq:

> The nation got impatient as a result of the oppression practised by the occupation authority, especially in these days when Iraq's complaints are everywhere in line with the principle of "self determination and total independence." The Iraqis realize that legal requests and peaceful demonstrations are useless, as they restore no right. It is especially so because just complaints reach no political circle abroad, as the British are in total control of all media and means of communication.

Furthermore, Sir Arnold Wilson's "adolescent youth," meaning the Iraqi revolutionary movement, proved greater understanding of imperial politics. In its fifth issue, *al-Istiqlāl* (Independence) explained that colonialist policies were unredeemable, for the colonialists

> . . . are bent on silencing rising nations and preventing them from further revolt, regardless of the losses they are bound to suffer. They do so for fear of getting entangled in an endless national war, which would entail the collapse of their rule and the emergence of national governments in India, Africa and the Arab world, sooner or later.[14]

Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shabībī's address to Sir Arnold falls within a larger context of anti-colonial consciousness, for the Shī'ī notable and Shaykh was known for his meticulous knowledge of British imperial mechanism, including the use of advisors to run the state after the so-called independence. His verse satirizing the Iraqi ministers under occupation [and the supervision of the British advisors] was popular among the masses, for ". . . the advisor is the one who got drunk, why were you so intoxicated, minister?"[15] In other words, the sly and deliberate neglect of Iraqi pride and independent personality made people more receptive to ideas of social and political protest. The 1920s, which were marked by "an increasingly lively and sometimes scurrilous press . . . as well as by the flowering of poetry that engaged with the politics of the day,"[16] was also a formative period. Indeed poets "helped to establish the landscape and the contours of this newly imagined entity, imbuing it with features that began to gain wide currency."[17] The new politic of this poetry was focused on foreign occupation, social inequality, and oppression. By juxtaposing claims and realities, poetry became part of a popular discourse which was national to the core. Narrative was not behind. Although less circulated and popular, it was able to carry on discussions and debates. Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Sayyid's veiled autobiographical narrative, *Jalāl Khālid* (1928), covers the years 1919–1923, suggesting that Iraqi intellectuals were receptive to a large anti-colonial discourse, promoted and developed by In-

dian and Arab intellectuals. As a character in the narrative, the fictitious Indian thinker Sewamī could stand for any anti-British writer. Under his impact and due to his wide reading and travels, the protagonist argues that, ". . . we who call ourselves free, the people of the enlightenment . . . should never leave our country." Commenting on such pronouncements and the protagonist's experience in India, an Iraqi critic, Yāsīn al-Naṣīr, suggests that the choice of India as a space for opposition is not at random: "the Indian subcontinent stands as the borders of the ransacked consciousness of all colonized states."[18]

Unmaking/Unmasking of Power:
Literature for an Eager Reading Public
The Indian nexus should be taken more seriously in any reading of Iraqi culture in the first decades of the century, for although it gave way in mid-war years to ardent nationalism and direct engagement with Arab, American, and European thought, its pre-nascent era centered on two factors: the geographical connection through the Arabian Gulf, with its commercial and human flowing, and the colonial proxy, for the British empire had India as its experimental laboratory for future expansion. Iraqi intellectuals of the early decades were at pains to dissuade the British from such applications, as India was different in temper and sentiment, they said. Still, this was not the position of other groups that had maintained solid commercial and business connections with the subcontinent and thought of Basrah as an autonomous entity that had more foreign elements than any other part of Iraq, and deserved autonomy within a federation with Iraq![19] The movement expressed itself in a letter dated 13 June 1921, addressed to Sir Percy Cox, and signed by the governor Aḥmad 'Abdullah al-Ṣāni', 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Mindīl, and Nājī al-Suwaidī. Basrah national leaders like Amīn 'Alī Bāsh A'yān, 'Abd al-Kāẓim Chalabī al-Shamkhānī, Ḥabīb Beg al-Mallāk, and Muzāḥim Beg al-Bāchachī opposed the group (al-Baṣīr, p. 454). The appeal to commercial and business interests explains the non-national desire on the part of some notables, but the same appeal could be used both ways, depending on who is to manipulate the issue.[20] Nevertheless, culture, as a movement of the whole society, never negates permanently. Its dominant, residual, and emergent make-up, to use Raymond Williams' terms, is in constant shift according to power relations.[21] If the dominant culture under Saddam opted for purity of blood, for instance, the shift after April 2003 is towards Iraqiness. The term "Iraqi" comes to mean belonging to Iraq, not to an ideology. As early as 1939, writers made fun of this emphasis on purity of blood, for as the late Iraqi writer and ex-communist Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb argues in his 1939 novel *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (Ibrāhīm the Doctor), everybody from among the newly emerging and aspiring nationalist intelligentsia was attempting to prove how purely Arab was he.[22] In other words, culture undergoes readings and interpretations according to the rising group, for this kind of dialogue as documented by Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb foreshadowed the nationalist Revolution of 1941. Writers could be so perceptive as to recognize inter-racial mixing as a fact in areas with thriving business and commercial connections, especially ports. In "Clocks like Horses," the brilliant writer from Basrah, Muḥammad Khuḍayyir, lets his protagonist report the following in respect to the boy who is leading him to the watchmaker:

Then he leaned towards me and whispered: 'Are you Indian?'

This idea came as a surprise to me. The boy himself was more likely to be Indian with his dark complexion, thick brilliantine hair and sparkling eyes. I whispered: 'Did they tell you that Basrah used to be called the crotch of India, and that the Indian invaders in the British army, who came down to the land of Fao first of all, desired no other woman except those of Basrah?'

The boy ignored my cryptic reference to the mixing of passions and blending of races and asked, 'if I wasn't Indian, where did I live?'[23]

No less important in counteracting the imperial discourse and its native hybrids was poetry, especially its rhetoric of valor and honor. A *ḥamāsah* poetry witnessed an enormous growth, not only in its classical norm, but also as folk poetry, or *shiʿr shaʿbī*. This growth in the first decades of the century and the participation of a large number of poets in the phenomenon invite a close reading. Growth indicates vogue in the urban centers, and both are signs of dynamic political consciousness. The appeal of this sub genre rests on shared codes and a deep-rooted tradition of the *ḥamāsah* poetry, its elevation of national and tribal ethics, and celebration of courage, valor, resistance, and pride. Iraq is after all the land of such celebratory and confrontational poetry. Poets like al-Ruṣafī (d. 1945), al-Baṣīr, ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Azrī (d. 1954), Aḥmad al-Ṣāfī al-Najafī (d. 1977) and ʿAbbūd al-Karkhī, from among the Baghdadi vernacular poets, and many others, fully participated in the preparation and furthering of the Revolution. Soon after the British occupation of Najaf (1918), for example, Aḥmad al-Ṣāfī al-Najafī, along with the poet Saʿd Ṣāliḥ (1896–1949), fled first to Basrah, then to Kuwait and Iran to escape British reprisals for being among the ringleaders of the anti-British movement. As Peretz argues in *The Middle East Today*, there is a possibility that the British were not keen on capturing all, for "several nationalist leaders were allowed to leave for Egypt in the hope that they would be lost in exile."[24] Among poets, ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Kāẓimī settled in Egypt, where he found patronage from Saʿd Zaqlūl.

A look at the intellectual scene in Iraq since the end of the First World War demonstrates that almost every poet or writer of some fame participated in the anti-colonial struggle, not only in inflammatory rhetoric, poetic description of the political situation, and incitation, but also in the effort to awaken the people. Sulaymān Faydī (1885–1951) wrote his awakening novel (*al-Riwāyah al-ʾIqāẓiyyah*) in 1919. It was a dialogue that could be seen as an intellectual participation in the Iraqi new consciousness. No less were other narratives by Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Sayyid (d. 1937), and writings by Rafāʾīl Buṭṭī (d. 1956) and Fahmī al-Mudarris (d. 1944). The latter was discharged of his position as a chief counselor for the king in 1922 after being suspected of facilitating the demonstration against Percy Cox, which was led by such intellectuals and dignitaries as al-Baṣīr, Jaʿfar Abū al-Timman, Muḥammad Ḥasan Kubbah, and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Dāwūd.[25] More importantly, poems, essays, and narratives began to accumulate, to help in the formation of an Iraqi awakening whose subtext was simultaneously anti-colonialist and national. Hence, we read for instance al-Azrī's poem on the *jihad* call, or *fatwa*, which belittled British vindictive jargon and

pompous rhetoric: "If a shock stems from the *jihad fatwa* it eliminates the arrogance of the High Commissioner."

Under Percy Cox, there developed a British discourse that made extensive and deliberate use of the old method of divide and rule. Percy Cox established the Provisional State Council, headed by ʿAbd a-Raḥmān al-Naqīb, the Sunni head for Baghdad nobles who was also an avowed opponent to Shīʿism. From that Council and also in a controlled plebiscite, he obtained the needed support to crown Fayṣal in August 1921, as Peretz explains.[26] He also entrusted leading influential sects, families, and dignitaries with government positions. The practice appealed to some poets like al-Zahāwī, despite his early celebration of the leaders of the 1920 Revolution. He asked Cox, upon coming back to Iraq, to settle forever in Baghdad: "Come back to Iraq and reform the rotten, / Disperse justice, and bestow prosperity to its people." The greeting appealed so much to Cox that he answered the poet by name, with a speech to the same effect, while Gertrude Bell, the Oriental Secretary, used to refer to al-Zahāwī as "our poet." Perhaps there were other pro-British voices then, but such poets as al-Baṣīr never forgave al-Zahāwī for that, while al-Azrī saw in these shows of collaboration treachery and betrayal: "If the stranger's whip hurts you / those of kin are worse."[27]

Although there was a rift among the elite, the feeling of betrayal to the cause of the Revolution remained with the Iraqis until, perhaps, July 1958. King Fayṣal tried to alleviate this by veering away from the governing body of dignitaries and landowners, but the needs and interests of the Empire led to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance in 1930. While seemingly entitling Iraq to full independence, Britain virtually controlled Iraq. In William Roger Louis' words, "To the next generation the continued existence of the bilateral treaty represented as great servitude as the mandate had seemed to the previous generation."[28] But, if Sir Arnold's ". . . treatment of the native population sowed intense Iraqi nationalism," as Peretz argues, and augmented feelings of resistance among the officers and the common public, the 1930 Treaty aroused further apprehensions among the increasingly educated groups.[29]

More important to this reading, however, is the fact that British occupation of the country sparked a variegated resistance among the population whose leadership fell into the hands of the educated classes. Sir Arnold Wilson's disparagement of the people, and his disregard for the educated groups, involved the Iraqi scene in an anti-colonial opposition. The literature of the period served, and still serves, as subtext for that anti-colonial tone, so distinctive of Iraqi literature. On the other hand, the increasing participation of persons from among the learned in internal politics since 1918 only refutes Sir Arnold's classification of the Iraqis into three divisions. Underestimating the kind of learning usually retained among traditional societies, the British officials were taken by surprise on many occasions throughout their presence in Iraq. Their obliviousness to the intellectual ferment was shown in Gertrude Bell's censure of al-Ruṣāfī's poetry. The government itself was always on the alert to expel, persecute, and imprison Iraqi writers and essayists whenever writings smelt of criticism.[30]

Despite these censures against free thought, Iraqi assemblies (salons), especially in Baghdad and Najaf, became sites for discussion, organization, and literary growth. These, as much as the cafés of 1930–50, operated as meeting points for intellectual groups. Perhaps these assemblies could be seen as central to the growing national con-

sciousness. There were assemblies of dignitaries, poets, essayists, and linguists. In Baghdad, the well-known names from among the learned had their weekly meetings, usually named after a celebrated dignitary, such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb, ʿAbbās al-ʿAzzāwī (1891–1971), Ṭāhā al-Rāwī (1890–1946), Anastas Mari al-Kirmilī (1866–1947), Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī, Nājī al-Qushtīnī, and many others. From outside these circles, poets and writers also had their gatherings in coffeehouses. The celebrated poet al-Ruṣāfī had his assembly at al-Shaṭṭ Café in Baghdad. In Najaf, the al-Ṣāfī family had its famous weekly gathering, usually attended by the Shīʿī dignitary ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jazāʾirī, a leader and major organizer of the 1920 Revolution. On the other hand al-Shīrāzī's assembly was always in order, where the Shīʿī leader used to listen to other dignitaries and discuss with them issues of political and theological nature. In other words, these assemblies acted, throughout the first decades, as places of learning and discussion. Many followers tended to emulate their mentors' methods of analysis and discussion. Aside from their role in the formation of independent Iraq, those meetings were also sites of reconciliation among factions and individual writers. It is known, for instance, that on 8 December 1928 during Maḥmūd Subḥī al-Daftarī's weekly meeting at his house, the reconciliation between al-Ruṣāfī and al-Zahāwī was reached. Thus, al-Zahāwī says in verse,

> The free man of letters Sūbḥī brought us together
> At his house; glory to such a place

The late Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī (d. 1997) recollected to *al-Ḥayāt Daily* (London, 28 May 1997, p. 20) that the Ḥasan ʿAjmī Café in Baghdad used to be the meeting point for many writers and poets. So were al-Sabʿ Café, al-Ādāb, ʿĀrif Aghā, al-Bayrūtī and al-Zahāwī.[31]

It is worth pointing out at this stage that gatherings of this nature, along with the increasing tendency among young intellectuals to form coteries, such as the one formed by Ḥusayn al-Raḥḥal (1900–1971) upon coming back from Germany in the early 1920s, refute British assumptions regarding the limited learned stratum.[32] Sir Arnold Wilson's classifications sound as mere pomposity to define a British sense of superiority against the backward other,[33] for as Edward Said notes in a different context, the "*Western* view of the non-Western world is so ingrained as to blind him to other histories, other cultures, other aspirations."[34] On the other hand, those gatherings obviously operated as intersections to monopolize a national feeling, which was anti-colonialist in the main as long as foreign powers were a threat to sovereignty.

Beginnings

In so far as the formation of literary tastes and critical sense is concerned, there began to emerge then a broad, still undisciplined effort to tackle literature in a cultural context, to take it away from a revivalist attention to Arabic language and the classical tradition, toward understanding it as a cultural product. The great Christian polymath al-Kirmilī, in his journal *Lughat al-ʿArab* (The Arabic Language, 1911–14, 1926–31), introduced a column for "guidance and criticism." In the first issue of July 1911, the editor-in-chief and owner explains that to "look upon," means "to gaze from

a height so as to prove one's own vision, and when needed, to write what a person per-
ceives in a disinterested manner." He further compares this position to criticism,
". . . for if a gift is sent to be assessed *pour en faire la critique*, then we'll express our
view according to what is noticed, assessing both sides, the negative and the positive,
to reach in final our preference for either." Criticism is taken from the word *intiqād*, a
term applied to coins. To do this for coins means to assess, examine and find out the
true from the counterfeit. Al-Kirmilī was more concerned with pure literary contro-
versies, mostly those of a linguistic nature. On the other hand, Ḥusayn al-Raḥḥal, the
pioneer Marxist ideologue in Iraq, brought along with him Marxist writings, includ-
ing the *Communist Manifesto*. His colleague and friend Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Sayyid
published novels and essays throughout the 1920s that called for a dynamic cultural
climate. Making use of the secular tendencies in Egypt that received additional appeal
and presence due to the British continuous banning of national publications, al-
Sayyid developed a discourse that argues for scientific analysis of social and cultural is-
sues. Blaming the colonialists and the oligarchy for exploitation and backwardness,
al-Sayyid's discourse was among the earliest anti-colonialist writings.

Perhaps it is worthwhile here to consider some early writings that have become
a subtext for the robust Iraqi cultural milieu since the late 1940s. Fahmī al-Mudarris'
writings, for instance, expose the puppet government, which, "instead of promoting
intellectual discussion . . . was desperate to increase stagnation, stifle feeling, and
paralyze the remaining little activity."[35] In another article on the mandatory rule, he
writes, "the worst of polices is the mandatory, as stemming from World War, to strike
as thunderbolt the wretched of the earth." As for the British-controlled government,
it made " . . . the political situation in Iraq unlike any other, its government has no
equal among other governments" (Ibid. 242, 337). A contemporary to al-Mudarris
was Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ Shukr (d. 1944), who began issuing short-lived papers in 1913, suf-
fering imprisonment every now and then. Although he was anti-British in the main,
his castigation of poets known for anti-colonialist attitudes tells of a pro-
Ottoman's flavor. Against the British, he writes: "they looked down on us, holding
such an attitude against us, due to the indifference of a certain group upon which gifts
are bestowed in these hard days . . . . Those who are fettered by high posts should
have preferred the urgent duty to an official position."[36]

Such writings should be seen in relation to a growing national drive for identity
formation in politics, culture, and society. In so far as literary criticism is concerned,
it is enough, perhaps, to cite books that take Iraq for their titles. Muḥammad Mahdī
al-Baṣīr's *The History of the Iraqi Question* was published in Baghdad in 1922. Rafā'īl
Buṭṭī's *Al-Adab al-'Aṣrī fī al-'Irāq al-'Arabī* (Contemporary literature in the Arabian
Iraq) appeared in Cairo in the same year; other titles followed soon. In the introduc-
tion to his book, Buṭṭī (1900–1956), twice a cabinet minister of state in 1953–54,
writes:

> This is a new book in which I intend to provide an embodied delineation of
> the contemporary literature in Iraq, and to expound on the ways of our poets
> and writers. Aren't we in need nowadays to study our writers and to criticize
> their styles? Literatures in Egypt, the Levant and the Arab *Mahjar* developed

newly in line with the spirit of the age. Thus, it is hoped that our Iraq would
have a share in this growth . . . .

Many since then have taken this line of commitment, but there also appeared
some individualistic endeavor to flaunt standards, unsettle situations, and cause havoc
in the literary scene. Such was Ibrahīm Ṣāliḥ Shukr's incursions into the cultural life,
especially through his newspaper *al-Nāshi'ah* (1921) and *al-Nāshi'ah al-Jadīdah*
(1922) (the Emergent, and the Newly-Emerging). Although he was a close friend of
Buṭṭī and other writers, poets and revolutionaries, Ibrahīm Ṣāliḥ Shukr was unique in
his dissent. In his disparagement of renowned poets, such as al-Ruṣāfī, and his delib-
erate esteem of Egyptian writers, Shukr revealed a tendency to shock and unsettle
canons of taste, thereby cutting across the well-established lines of merit on national
and literary grounds. Individualistic to the extreme, he also brings a certain amount
of eccentricity in his writing to thwart the reigning tendency to speak in high-flown
rhetoric of the nation and its independence, a tendency that could accommodate both
the genuine and the fake. As poetic craft can elude such issues of sincerity and expe-
rience, poetry in the *ḥamāsah* tradition may succumb to the dominating literary ten-
dency. Suspicious of opportunism and bent on shocking the prevalent communal and
national taste, he writes in one editorial:

> This paper has no intention to serve the homeland, or the nation, the cause,
> or independence. Not even science or art. It is here to serve me, it speaks for
> me, expresses my own feelings. If it writes, it is with my pen, and if it gets
> printed, it is with my money, in my own country.

He adds, "This paper is free to be read by all, but people should know that I am not
going to allow them to ask me to write what they are accustomed to." He further ex-
plains, "I am among carriers of spades, and this paper is a spade for destruction. I'll do
that, not because the country needs it, but for the single reason that I am pleased with
destruction and fond of it" (Ibid. 275).

Hiding behind this mask of the eccentric and the cynic, Shukr involved the cul-
tural scene in controversies, discussions, and fights. Many of his contemporaries re-
acted harshly, for Ḥasan al-Ẓarīfī describes this writing as mere noise caused by "par-
asites" (Ibid. 276). Al-Ruṣāfī's biographer, Muṣṭafā 'Alī (d. 1980), classifies Shukr as
an "inexperienced young man."[37] Another contemporary, 'Abbās Faḍlī, argues that
Shukr's paper, "After writing what it has published against al-Zahāwī . . . directed
its attack against . . . Ma'rūf al-Ruṣāfī."[38] But Shukr insisted that his paper was for
decent criticism, not for slander.[39]

These battles should not be seen as incidental, for they may well remind us of
similar ones in other cultures in the dawn of change and cultural transformations con-
temporaneous with regional and international questions. Unrest, a search for mean-
ing, and the emergence of individualism versus an encompassing national conscious-
ness are no less real for being rare. Ma'rūf al-Ruṣāfī was a celebrity to be reckoned with
despite his destitution, the King's dislike for him, and Gertrude Bell's open censure
of some of his poems. To target Ma'rūf al-Ruṣāfī was not an ordinary matter for the

Iraqis, therefore, as he was then one of the most outspoken against the British and the King. His poems were recited in every primary school morning gathering all over Iraq, and his poetic disparagement of the sham constitution, the flag, and the parliament were common words among Iraqis, who were appalled by the veneers of democracy and the façade of constitutional rule, which received relentless criticism and exposure from Ma'rūf al-Ruṣāfī and other poets and essayists.[40] In other words, al-Ruṣāfī has become a symbolic figure for social and political protest among the literati and the masses, with a poetics and a career of great appeal.

This controversy over names and roles was unlike the ones between the revivalists and the modernists at the end of the nineteenth-century. In this instance under consideration, criticism assumes a cultural role, broader than the late nineteenth-century concern with texts, linguistics and rhetoric. Rashīd al-Hāshimī (d. 1946), for instance, was so disgusted by Shukr's writing that he wrote for al-'Āṣimah daily (18 January 1923) stipulating, "Criticism has its well-known morals and rules that should be taken into consideration." Instead of Shukr's "charming and ornamented speech," says the writer in the same source, "we are in need of a pen, flowing and discerning, to assess fairly our situation, socially, morally, economically, politically, scientifically and intellectually. We need somebody to indicate what is at fault and to prescribe the solution in a disinterested manner." Another contemporary, Tawfīq al-Sam'ānī (d. 1982), the owner of the renowned daily Al-Zamān, also deplored that situation, expressing his sorrow for what befell the "Iraqi realm of literature" which "pedants want to sweep away."[41]

Although betraying increasing awareness of the need for literary criticism as a disciplined practice, these writings also cater to a taste for cultural product as a diversified undertaking that involves criticism in larger and interdisciplinary preoccupations. One may well agree with Aḥmad Maṭlūb that "Literary criticism in Iraq took a serious stamp after 1920."[42] Specific writers in the late 1920s associated that interest with two things: the formation of the Iraqi government and the publication of books such as Buṭṭī's on contemporary Iraqi literature. "Upon its publication, writers began to write articles with or against the book," provoking many heated discussions about priorities among living poets.[43] Ibrāhīm Ḥilmī al-'Umar (1890–1942), one of the writers and journalists targeted by the occupation administration,[44] for instance, objects to Buṭṭī's preference for al-Zahāwī, suggesting either al-Ruṣāfī (1875–1945) or al-Shabībī (1889–1966) at the head of the list of the best poets.[45] While basing the prioritization on poetic grounds, al-'Umar also appealed to national feelings that lay more with the 1920 Revolution.

Early Literary Theory in Context
Intertwined in the politics of protest, the call for broad but disciplined criticism includes two different issues. One concerns typical Arab interest in poetry, while the other involves the ramifications of the cultural scene at large: its ideological, ethnic, religious and social formation. The two overlap, to be sure, whenever critics as poets, or political activists as critics, feel the need for a dynamic change and a socio-economic growth. It is worthwhile at this point to cite al-Ruṣāfī and al-Najafī on contemporary poetry, and reserve the sophisticated view of literary criticism to the promising critic

of 1942, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Shabībī, along with Yūnis al-Sabʿāwī, both of whom
were executed for political affiliations.[46] Although enmeshed, these ever-growing con-
cerns were to become the distinctive imprint of Iraqi criticism. Both concerns lead to
theory proper, but they have encompassed literary theory as well as new methodolo-
gies and practices in steady dynamic interaction with or against tradition. Whenever
there is the interplay of tradition and modernity, in its diversity and multiplicity,
there is an explosive and controversial outcome. Each literary and cultural production
since the 1920 Revolution partakes of the new consciousness in its search for a better
understanding of identity and the making of a national selfhood. Hence it is almost
impossible to account for the pioneering avant-garde movement in painting, sculp-
ture, poetry and the short story by the late 1940s, for example, without some ac-
quaintance with the sense of restlessness among the earlier generation of writers.
Looking upon themselves as actual participants in the making of the new nation-state,
poets such as al-Ruṣāfī, ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Kāẓimī (1870–1935), al-Zahāwī
(1863–1935), and others argue for the opening up of tradition to meet new claims and
demands. Upon assessing contemporary criticism in the 1920s, al-Zahāwī, for in-
stance, begins as follows:

> The literary-learned in Iraq are in disarray: for you read a paper that places
> me above my station, while another will come the next day to put me down
> below what I deserve . . . . They all know that I stood against the despot-
> ism of [the Ottoman Sultan] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd 40 years ago, and I wrote nar-
> rative poetry 35 years ago, and I defended women rights before 30 years. I
> suffered imprisonment in Istanbul for the poetry, which I wrote in opposi-
> tion to that despotic ruler. I was fired from my position at the Faculty of Law
> for my stand for women rights. I am also the one who wrote in poetic narra-
> tive "The Soldier's Wife," 30 years ago when there was no poet in Baghdad
> then fully committing poetry to social reform.[47]

The implications of this defensiveness are many to be sure, but the most obvious
drive in the poet's response is his dismay at the fluctuating taste among critics
and journalists. Very few received so much attention as al-Zahāwī, but his sense of
supremacy led him to notorious conflicts with other poets, especially with al-Ruṣāfī.
The latter was known for his criticism of the puppet government, and even of King
Fayṣal because of his appointment by the British. As noted before, his poems were so
popular throughout the first half of the century that they became mottoes, slogans,
and household words, always quoted and recited in opposition to the pro-British rule.
But al-Ruṣāfī also has brilliant critical insights that have become essential to the de-
centering of tradition. In an early interview with *Al-Majallah al-Jadīdah*, he explains:

> The most thwarting obstacles preventing [poetry] from growth are dying
> traditions and insipid customs, which shackle it and the whole intellectual
> freedom with binding fetters. We are in a society that does in secrecy what
> it sees right in public, but it carries out things in secrecy that it deems dis-
> gusting to speak of openly. This is why modern poetry lacks a lot in this di-

rection. It is bound to escape, however, these shackles as soon as the Arab society reaches a better standard in science and literature.[48]

This reading of dualism in morality and double standards in addressing moral and social issues betrays an overriding sense of transition which was to gather momentum throughout the first half of the century, leading to the evolving break with traditional poetry and to sociological studies of the same phenomenon by the brilliant Iraqi sociologist 'Alī al-Wardī (d. 1994). Another contemporary poet of al-Ruṣāfī was Aḥmad al-Ṣāfī al-Najafī who explains: "I have a concept of poetry that has been formed throughout my five years in Damascus: if poetry models itself after the ancients, or on Western poetry, it is not new, it is imitation of the old, or imitation of the new."[49]

As late as 1953, the eminent poet and dignitary, Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī, the Minister of Education many times since the 1920s, associates the fluctuating literary taste with the dearth of criticism, for "criticism is relatively new in Iraq."[50] Intellectuals of a rather liberal education such as Kāẓim Jawād hold a similar view. In 1956, Kāẓim Jawād explained: "Most often criticism has remained dependent on the Arabic tradition in criticism, a tradition of static notions of poetry, unrelated to other genres, like the story as an art form, or drama, of which Arabic literature has known nothing."[51]

Tradition and Genealogy

While these concerns grow and develop in response to external factors like colonialism and subordination, it is naïve to see literary theory merely in terms of challenge and response. Literary theory has also its own innate growth that accounts for eccentricity and uniqueness. We also have to set the aforesaid argument within the ongoing controversy between nationalism and liberalism, tradition and modernism. Although not necessarily assuming such binary opposition, a tendency has grown among the nationalist literati to associate racial purity with a genealogy of literature, a tradition that, for the upholders of this view, must survive assaults to enable the Arab nation to reach unity and independence. The argument is not new, for it has a long history against the so-called *shu'ūbiyyah* since[52] the days of the renowned Arab polymath from Basrah 'Amr Ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiz (776-869). Against it, there resonates the idea of Arabism that usually surfaces politically whenever there is an agenda such as the one held by the young cleric Muqtadā al-Ṣadr against the Grand Marji' al-Sistānī. As late as 1958, the nationalist scholar Aḥmad 'Abd al-Sattār al-Juwārī, a Minister of Education for the Ba'thites a number of times, explains his view as follows:

> Arab nationalism faces this struggle nowadays, as Arabic literature is targeted by a dissent of a new kind, Shu'ūbiyyah (xenophobia), in the form of criticism, pleased with the civilization of the West, its culture and literature, denying Arabic literature its original features, considering them a trace of the past, unworthy of survival, and disagreeable for emulation.[53]

Against this alleged tendency, al-Juwārī suggests a counter-discourse with a well-sustained knowledge of "Arabic literary tradition," its "standards and tenets," to re-

sist "wayward desires." He also stipulates that criticism should stem from "the essence of the modern Arab society, not soaring in fog or straying in climates of poisoned smoke." Certainly, al-Juwārī's criticism was not that far from Ṣāṭī' al-Ḥuṣrī's brand of nationalism, especially in matters of language, common history, and culture.[54] The call for the essential and the original is at the heart of the revived traditional discourse, for central to it is the belief in ethnic purity and its genealogical growth which may assimilate and digest other cultures without losing its ethnocentricity or focus. Although ready to negotiate opposing discourses of secular and ethnic predilections, this discourse generally subsumes these to face up to the ascending challenge of radical transformation and change. Al-Juwārī is a Sunni, for instance, but his colleague and collaborator in this fight is from al-Najaf, 'Abd al-Razzāq Muḥyī al-Dīn (1910–1983), the academic, poet, and Minister of Unity with Egypt in the 1960s. His writings of the 1950s reveal a better focus, however, for he defines tradition against romantic individualism, emphasizing standards and rules to bypass individual impressions and personal predilections. The whole controversy should be contextualized, too, for nationalism has been undergoing gradual conservative revisionism in opposition to leftist, i. e., communist thought. It was then, too, that American foreign policy was allied to Arab nationalism. With the mounting movement for modern poetry and short story in mind, the writer argues:

> The reason behind this chaos in our literary circles belongs to a pervasive individualistic sentiment among persons, a sentiment susceptible to distortion and probably unable to conform to common feelings and emotions. It is also because of that obscurity and mystification which forestall clarity of vision. Hence are the differences in evaluating the literary aspects of one text.[55]

This appeal to general rules and common sentiments is the classical manifestation of a discourse that remains alert to non-literary incursions in texts that avowedly belong to the specific genre of poetry. While condoned in the traditional *qaṣīdah*, this across-boundary practice in modern poetry is looked upon with great suspicion. Muḥyī al-Dīn takes as his point of departure a well-known classical tenet regarding the *qaṣīdah*, and poetry at large, as the "Torah of this nation in its ancient *Jāhilī* (pre-Islamic) life, and its golden activity when there was no other intellectual occupation." He expounds on this retention of classical criticism in response to the sociologist 'Alī al-Wardī, whose articles on "the myth of belles lettres (elitist literature)" provoked numerous responses.

Certainly, 'Abd al-Razzāq Muḥyī al-Dīn raises a number of salient points, especially when he speaks against general assumptions that describe the panegyric as the encompassing genre and not a sub genre in the house of the *qaṣīdah*, or the traditional Arabic ode, emphasizing instead the presence of dissent and rebellion in the works of a large number of poets. He writes,

> If we compare poets in any other Arab country to a class of the educated and the learned in any field of culture, we find them far away from conformity to

the status quo, and the least disposed to support exploiters or justify their wrong doings.[56]

Tactically, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Muḥyī al-Dīn sides with rebels in order to defeat al-Wardī's appeal against the panegyric as the dominating genre in a society where the privileged classes offer patronage to poets. Applying his counter argument to the contemporary scene, he places poetry in general at the center of dynamic transformation, evading therefore the specific challenge of the modern poets of the late 1940s. He asserts: "Contemporary poetry is ahead of other life patterns in transformation and change, inhaling the spirit of the age and the tenets of modern life more than any other intellectual field."[57]

It is good to understand that al-Wardī's argument is based on a theory in sociology known as the vacuum class. According to this theory, people of the affluent class try their best "to resort to pretensions and rituals that distinguish them from lower classes. These should be too sophisticated and expensive to be competed with."[58] Literature, in its grandiosity and polished manner, could be one of these.[59] Poetry addressed to patrons from the royalty or aristocracy aspires for a similar standard of virtuosity. Al-Wardī further suggests that bankruptcy of this writing and readers' reluctance to keep up with it demonstrate the death of this literature. He rounds up his argument with a straightforward call for writing to the people who suffer exploitation and oppression.[60] We should keep in mind that Iraqi society, especially after the British conquest between 22 November 1914 and 30 October 1918, underwent further exploitation. The British, in the words of William R. Polk, ". . . tried to create order in the countryside by 'promoting' the shaykhs of clans or sections . . . making them responsible to the government for public order."[61]

The situation which provoked al-Wardī's scathing analysis of culture and society was not limited to the urban center of Baghdad. Most Shaykhs moved to Baghdad to enjoy the new privileges, leaving things in the hands of their subordinates. This increased the suffering of peasants and laborers. In Don Peretz' rephrasing of historical accounts, this "governing elite," which was established by the British in preparation for the 1930 treaty and in accordance with its purpose, complicated an already deteriorating social situation. These ". . . absentee owners and leaders who set up residence in Baghdad, had little contact with the masses and paid no attention to Iraq's social and economic problems."[62] Against this background, al-Wardī's belated argument complements an already mounting literary movement to open up literature to crosscurrents, values, languages and sites that would make it accessible to other reading publics. Reiterating the increasing emphasis on the role of the poet as rebel, he argues:

> The occurrence of oppression does not by itself incite people and drive them to rebellion unless it is combined with responsive awareness and resentment. Hence is the significance of the writer's function. Writers call things by their names, point out evils, and tell the oppressed of the oppression, repeating that so many times so as to lead lazy sentiments to rebellion. Through this activity history moves forward in striding steps.[63]

Perhaps al-Wardī had in mind a large number of Iraqi intellectuals who suffered persecution, imprisonment and execution. In the late 1940s and 1950s, some poets like al-Sayyāb spent some time in prison for political activity, whereas Ḥusayn Mardān (1927–72), the vagabond poet, passed a year in prison for what was then considered as immoral poetry. More serious, however, was the government's harsh punishment of intellectuals for their participation in politics. Whether accused of radical nationalism or communism, their anti-British stand was never condoned. Indeed, the puppet regimes tended to be loyal to the British to secure privileged status and selfish interests. It is on record that the British even suggested some leniency in dealing with these activities. After meeting Fāḍil al-Jamālī, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1946, Bevin wrote to Stonehewer-Bird (18 September 1946):

> I thought to deal with communism by means of repression alone was not the best method. Many of these young men and women in all probability were really anxious that their country should develop an energetic social policy and they found an outlet for their energies in supporting that line of action. Would it not be wise therefore to have a definite policy devised and put it before the country, then rally the bulk of the people?[64]

Afraid of raising more discontent, the British opted for other means of action, well devised to quell opposition and thwart political action. Especially regarding intellectual dissent, the puppet government proved to be relentless, however, in implementing harsh punishments. Two instances are worth mentioning, as they anticipated al-Wardī's call for active participation against oppression, while they also demonstrated some advanced intellectual awareness of theory in literary criticism.

Yūnis al-Sabʿāwī (1910–42) participated in organizing the youth against the 1930 Treaty and issued a circular against the Nūrī al-Saʿīd government. He was consequently imprisoned along with a number of intellectuals, who became later leaders for some political factions. The young intellectual published a number of articles. He states in one of these (1931) that young people in Iraq and the educated at large "never hid their discontent" with rulers; neither did they conceal their

> dissatisfaction with 'the present situation,' 'terrible conditions,' the 'dark future' for 'this meek people,' the 'weak nation,' in the face of the 'strong oppressor,' and the 'powerful colonialist.' These and other terms and epithets you'll repeatedly hear from among these classes.

He also provides a map of their readings as intellectuals in modern Arabic and Western literature and thought, asking in conclusion whether writers can "lead the youth towards some anchor."[65] Al-Sabʿāwī's call was in line with his activism, for he joined the military officers who staged the 1941 revolution against the British. He was executed in 1942. No less damaging to literary and cultural life in Iraq was the execution of Ḥusayn Muḥammad al-Shabībī (14/15 February 1949), along with Yūsuf Salmān (Fahad) and Zakī Basīm, as the leadership of the censored ICP.[66] An active par-

ticipant in literary criticism, al-Shabībī was ahead of many in calling for the opening up of criticism to other disciplines. In 1942, he wrote for *al-Majallah* magazine in Baghdad, explaining:

> If criticism is to be acclaimed by its own standards, it has to aspire for further prospects: it has to create liberal writers, and to release them from shackles. These shackles are of numerous colors, under one title, but they vary between gold fetters and iron chains.

More significantly, al-Shabībī points out the serious problems of literary history in the Arab world. This history writing has "put criticism under the mercy of the three talents," which he defines as "composition, taste, and assessment, limiting thereby literature and the very notion of the litterateur." Anticipating al-Wardī, he also stipulates, these ". . . common literary tenets are created only to communicate with the learned of the upper classes."[67]

Again, al-Shabībī's argument is directed against the limitation of literature as merely *belles lettres*, while he opts for opening up critical theory beyond philology and rhetoric that cater to a "dilettante" taste, as he contends. The significance of this critique lies also in its anticipation of further transformations, subsequent to the Second World War, the partition of Palestine, and the binding Treaty of Portsmouth (15 January 1948) which led to al-*Wathbah* (Uprising) demonstrations throughout Iraq. "A violent political storm burst upon the exposed regent. He wobbled, then collapsed," explains Wm. Roger Louis, and was driven to announce: "He would not ratify a treaty that did not fulfill the 'national aspirations' of the Iraqi people" (p. 335). While critical of their puppet regime in Iraq, its inefficiency and incapacity to see the changing urban centers, and the emergence of new social powers lead by a learned class, the British could not see that their policy of installing such a regime led to this deterioration. Their office in Iraq held suspicions even against the most moderate parties of the opposition, including Muḥammad Mahdī Kubbah, leader of the *Istiqlāl* party, and a member of the Supreme Council after the 1958 revolution. To Sir Henry Mack, Kubbah "looks sinister, [and] is probably able and, from our point of view, dangerous."[68]

To the British, reasons did not exist for such an Uprising; if they did, it was only because of the weakness of their puppet regime in Iraq. "I do not however think that even the most evilly intentioned agitator could have hoped in his wildest dreams to meet such disunity and weakness in responsible quarters,"[69] writes Douglas Busk to Bevin when the former was the official in charge of the British Embassy in Baghdad. Indeed, repression, failure of grain crops, bread shortages, political and social exploitation, and issues of direct political relevance were never taken seriously by the British. Hence, "the revelation" of the intense "anti-British sentiment . . . came as a blow to the Foreign Secretary."[70] On the other hand, had the Foreign office read the dispatches from their Baghdad embassy and taken them seriously, they could have taken some measures to change the administration, for "with the old gang in power," says the ambassador Sir Hugh Stonehewer-Bird, "this country cannot hope to progress very far."[71]

The Post-colonial Instance

The implications of this policy for post-colonial Iraq are far-reaching, and, hence, central even to any cursory reading of culture and power. Although Anthony Eden recognized later on, in 1941, the need "to promote a system under which the Shia majority of the country would have more say in its government,"[72] this came as a belated gesture that did not materialize, for they had already established a system of prioritization based on sectarian preference or privilege whereby a Sunni becomes a king or a Premier.[73] They used to install shaykhs and landowners to exploit and control the masses, resisting thereby any recognition of the emerging educated classes and powers of opposition. The British imposed a camouflaged rhetoric of national prerequisites and needs, a rhetoric that was in disparity with genuine democracy, but elusive enough to appeal to the post-revolutionaries and to help in posing a national discourse henceforth. On the other hand, the seeds of neo-patriarchy found in that legacy fertile ground in which to take root and to speak of the nation as an ownership where the population is a temporary tenant unless proving total subordination. There is a lot here to justify Stuart Hall's suggestion that ". . . 'the colonial' is not dead, since it lives on in its 'after-effects'. But its politics can certainly no longer be mapped completely back into, nor declared to be 'the same,' in the post-colonial moment as it was during the period of the British mandate."[74]

The call to open up criticism to wider concerns intends to live up to rising needs and problems. In this relation, criticism is offered across boundary dimensions that demonstrate what Linda Hutcheon calls, ". . . an awareness of the social practices and institutions that shape" art and theory. Covering a variety of readings by McConnell Richard Rorty, Edward Said, and others, she further argues that pragmatic semiotics and discourse analysis "end up being political and engaged, because they do not and cannot masquerade as modes of neutral analysis."[75] Criticism, then, also aspires to inscribe people in a textual space whereby they regain their identity, which is usually eroded or bypassed under colonial and post-mandate rule, including dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. In a short story titled "Aʿwām al-ruʿb" (Years of horror) by Shākir Khuṣbāk (1951), the protagonist surveys the socio-political scene as one that is lulled into silence through years of repression. The society is so underprivileged and downtrodden that it settles for an undistinguished life, away from any participation in state politics. Ironically, the trouble for the educated began with the advent of the colonial power and its regime: "We have been living in peace and security, with no relation to the government. Everybody is self-contented. But times began to change, and the government was to interfere in people's affairs, and they to interfere with that of the government."[76] Such a statement is quite intricate, not only because it succinctly covers the period before and after the British occupation, but also because the whole Shīʿī population was reluctant then to participate in a rule considered vile, unjust, and unredeemable. The government since 1918 made little effort to encourage counter participation. It was only in the 1940s that writers, artists, and poets began to theorize for the participation of the "little person" in life and politics.[77] Social and political consciousness manifested itself in cultural productions of variegated appeal.

Poets, short story writers, and artists began to develop an intense awareness of the ordinary individual, woman and man, the underprivileged and the outcast, finding in

writings by Russian, French, and Anglo-American writers a great incentive for further study and analysis. The painter and sculptor Jawād Salīm (d. 1961) wrote on 7 August 1945 that he found himself intrigued by the look of Iraqi women, ". . . their gentility, enormous femininity, large black eyes filled with repressed desire and attractive shyness" (Ibid. 168). He adds that their bodies, covered by a black robe, drew his attention as an artist. So was the color of everything, ". . . even mud in front of our house has million colors," he adds.[78] Jawād Salīm was not alone in this focus on Iraqi locality and character, for a whole group of artists, the Baghdad Group for Modern Art (1951–1952), would take this as its motto and stamp. The painter and member of the group, Shākir Ḥasan al-Saʿīd (d. 2004), explains their manifesto: "The Group never underestimates its intellectual and stylistic connection to current growth in the world. But it also aspires to create forms that bestow on Iraqi art a special stamp and distinctive character. The paintings of 1951 bring Iraq identity and life to the attention of many, in surprising colors and focused detail."[79] Especially in painting, sculpture, and narrative there was then a growing concern with the real as pertaining to the downtrodden and the common, without necessarily siding with a specific social realism in the current Russian sense of the word. Writers made use of Russian literature, but they also admired American realism. ʿAdnān Raʾūf wrote for *al-Fikr al-Ḥadīth* (Modern thought), 1945–47, on realism in American literature as the ideal form of realism for keeping up with the intimate preoccupations of the ordinary person. But, well acquainted with Dostoevsky and Kafka, and rather prone to existentialism due to a number of reasons,[80] Iraqi writers have found themselves since the late 1940s more at home with Camus and Sartre. Resisting disciplinary commitment but opting for individual freedom, these intellectuals perhaps anticipated Adam Schaff in raising questions that were to accumulate at a later stage regarding the incompatibility between free choice and social and party politics and regulations. One may end up saying with him, "No, it is sad that they turned to Existentialism, with its negative outlook, but fully understandable."[81]

Strangers, aliens, rovers, and exiles have peopled poetry since the early 1950s. Al-Sayyāb's "Al-Sūq al-qadīm" (The old market) incorporates poetry in real situations, where the downtrodden are no less than strangers in "a gloomy marketplace." The whole scene is nostalgic only in the sense that the speaker's attention, in the middle of the gloom, is drawn to an ". . . echo of singing / from far away, reminding one of bygone many nights and palm trees." He adds, "But I, the stranger . . . continue listening and dreaming of migration / In that old marketplace." Al-Bayātī has numerous poems that bring the downtrodden to the foreground, while castigating landlords and exploiters as parasites whose spokesmen are "the fly hunters" from among the literati.[82]

In al-Bayātī's critical insight as much as in the writings of Nāzik al-Malāʾikah, al-Sayyāb, Buland al-Ḥaydarī and other writers or artists, transformation in every field is prioritized. In the introduction to his *Aṣāṭīr* (Myths), published in 1950, al-Sayyāb argues, "I am of the belief that the artist is indebted to this miserable society where he lives. But I never agree that the artist, especially the poet, is to become a slave to this theory. Whenever the poet is sincere in writing about this whole life, he/she is bound to express the sufferings and aspirations of the society, with no need to be pushed to

that by any body."[83] In politics and poetics, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb is the typical Iraqi sensitive soul, albeit with much poetic talent. It should not be surprising that his two poems, "Canticle of the Rain" and "The Stranger at the Gulf," resonate with so much meaning and poignancy whenever Iraq is in trouble or crisis. Two eminent poets from two different poetic positions, the Palestinian Maḥmūd Darwīsh (b. 1942) and the Syrian-Lebanese in exile ʿAlī Aḥmad Saʿīd, otherwise called Adūnīs (b. 1929), quoted him in their poems on the eve of the fall of Baghdad, 9 April 2003. The Iranian President Khātamī did the same in a speech for the Lebanese in the same year. Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's typical Iraqi temper and his acute capturing of the discrepancy between Iraqi wealth and people's famine may stand behind this recollection of his famous poems. His unique negotiation between tradition and Western poetics should be kept in mind as well, for his sense of the *zeitgeist* necessitates both recognition of the modern world in its globalized version and the paradoxical disarray and ignorance attending power politics. Had he been alive, he might have offered us more poems to this effect, but surely he would have participated in perpetuating the timeless melody of redemptive suffering that also resonates in bloody encounters with invading armies.

Aside from his modernist poetics that cannot be dissociated from an inclusive vision, a politics of national pride and worldview, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb offers a typical Iraqi strain, deeply steeped in a collective memory of glory and failure, triumph and betrayal, where Iraq, nonetheless, offers the anchor and succor: "The reunion would not be complete if you came to me in exile! / The meeting with you and Iraq is the reunion!"[84] The poet's yearning for this reunion in "The Stranger at the Gulf" when in exile counterbalances the normal exilic resignation to the impossibility of homecoming, for "Yearning jolts my blood to it, as if blood is still craving, / Hunger for it . . . like the hunger of the drowning person's blood for air." At this very moment, in his poem "A Stranger at the Gulf," the poet gives vent to a lurking fear of letting down a country, whose authority let him down, forlorn and in exile: "I wonder at treason! Can a man betray his country?" A typical Iraqi sensitivity refuses to exchange Iraq for any other: "The sun is more beautiful in my country than in others, / and the darkness— / Even the darkness—is more beautiful there, / for it embraces Iraq." This typicality does not preclude a human vision, nor does it opt for a secluded selfhood, for it regains its character in exile, among foreign cities and fearful villages, extolling national identity only as a victim and a savior, an exile and a redeemer: "for I am Christ dragging his cross in exile."[85]

Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb acts as a catalyst for Iraqi culture and power. His poems resonate with the Iraqi sensitivity, sense of loss, dislocation and betrayal, posited against a strong sense of identity, faith in one's people, and pride in belonging to such an ancient and rich culture that offered humanity many things including law and writing. His juxtaposed poetics of loss and yearning, famine and promise, exploitation and liberation, and bondage and freedom pulse as heartbeats, invoking the listener's participation and identification. These poetics set the scene for a vision of Iraq as an entity and identity, as an active participant in the making of world civilization and as a possible exemplary case against provincialism.

In an elaborate reading of "The Social Roots of the Free Verse Movement" (1958), the pioneering woman poet in the Free Verse Movement of the late 1940s, Nāzik al-

Malā'ikah, develops her discussion in order to counteract accusations that see free verse as a mere manifestation of servitude to other cultures. Whereas there is some truth in this, as recent re-readings of "colonization" suggest,[86] the Free Verse Movement demonstrates another sense of identity searching against limitations and constraints. She argues that there is a growing need for the individual to be free from "romanticized climates, [moving] towards a hard and solid reality." She adds, "The modern poet wants to be dynamically present." As for mere grandiose lyricism, it betrays exaggeration suitable only for the lazy. "Free verse provides the poet with an escape from a climate peopled by women-slaves, silk and 'Alā' al-Dīn's lamp."[87] She also sees the movement as the modern poet's intention to "establish individuality, following up a poetic line that absorbs this modern personality." A third social factor that she specifies lies in the growing reluctance to utilize "archetypal patterns." Another factor is related to the tendency to make forms subservient to notions.[88] In other words, needs rather than rules and standards have initiated and provoked the Free Verse movement. These needs demonstrate a position, a stand against dormancy, imitation, and servility. The seemingly literary engagement is only another name for an engagement with the real in its inclusiveness of political and social consciousness. Perhaps, a reader of Iraqi intellectual history may find no better representative of this engagement than the poet al-Jawāhirī, not only because he participated actively in major demonstrations and events in Iraqi history, but also because he used his grounding in classical Arabic poetry to engage the life of the Iraqis. In the words of Sulaiman Jubran, "Al-Jawahiri rebelled against the role of the classical poet, whose primary task was to record the deeds of the caliphs and emirs. Instead, he chose for himself the role of the poet who incites people to rebel against despotic rulers. His poetry sets out to immortalize the heroism of the fighters and victims who perished in the struggle."[89] What makes his voice unique, even in a period of great literary experimentation as the 1950s, is the mastery of images and tropes that "are deep within the consciousness and subconsciousness of his people," says another critic.[90]

The whole drive in the 1950s runs opposite to an oppressive but restless political climate, as the educated classes were effectively involved in disseminating a culture of democracy and resistance: democracy for the Iraqis, against martial laws and censorship, and resistance to British virtual control of the many cabinets that spanned the period in question. The British and their strong men had only a certain number of names to choose from, and even those were not allowed enough freedom to maneuver some solutions to acute and chronic problems. Despite the emergence of the Iraqi Development Board,[91] a very significant institution with a far reaching impact in the post-revolutionary years, the deteriorating situation gave further impetus to the growth of a populist culture, a culture that derived its markers from reality and the local tradition in its Arab and Islamic context, along with a newly developed engagement with ancient mythology, Christian symbolism, and Western and Russian cultures.

Part Five
Defining Postcoloniality in Iraqi Culture

1. Lured by a summons he does not
understand,
taken away from the kingdom of earthly joy,
alienated from himself,
he slowly steps toward a door.

<div align="right">Mahmoud al-Braikan, "The Possessed," (1992)</div>

2. She walked on, slowly like a penguin, until Freedom Monument
where she threw her headscarf to the myrtle
and her fateful *aba'ah* (wrap)
and stood very, very still
and all at once began dancing, dancing
to the music of the spheres.

<div align="right">Gzar Hantoosh, "Celebration," p. 75.</div>

The growth of populism in culture was the significant part of a movement that was central to the politics and poetics of the new Iraqi consciousness. This movement, which gained momentum in the early 1950s, was not an isolated phenomenon. Poetry, fiction, story writing and the arts at large witnessed something similar. Preparations for change went way back to the early decades. In 1928, Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Sayyid (1903–37) argued for writings that can expose evils and vices, citing Zola in support of his naturalism.[1] In 1939, Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb (d. 1996) published his novel *Duktūr Ibrāhīm.* Its protagonist is avowedly modeled on Zola's heroes. He frankly explains that, living in a society of double standards and conflicting interests, he has to use his talent, English grounding, and connections to climb up in society, forestalling the progress of others in order to sustain his supremacy. On many occasions, Ibrāhīm stipulates that, by doing this, he only emulates the English, their domination, and control of such societies, despite their relatively small and isolated island.[2] The irony

lies in this contaminating contact with the colonial mind, for the native intellectual comes back with one part of the metropolitan legacy: its colonization of other nations. He will model himself on the agents of the empire and will follow their ways and methods to exercise power. His education anticipates what Frantz Fanon cites in respect to these native intellectuals who come back to their homeland with a white mask, and faith in colonialist practices. Thus, in the same narrative the British senior officer thought of Dr. Ibrāhīm as one of their subordinates in the native elite, which they chose to run the country. He intimates to Ibrāhīm his distrust of the 1936 Bakr Ṣidqī military coup that followed the 1932 declaration of Iraq as a state under a binding treaty with the British that virtually kept Iraq under control. Angered by the coup, he says: "The Iraqis prove that they do not deserve the independence offered to them. They were given the utmost independence and self-rule, but they went on plundering what they were entrusted with, killing each other for profits and rewards."[3] The novel is a pioneering post-colonial text. It anticipates future discussions of the native elite, the impact of colonial encounters, and the making of the nation-state. Literature is not only a manifestation of a political consciousness but also an acting force in its making. This making includes exposure of failures, consolidation of values, and grafting means and methods of dynamism, democracy, and progress.

The post-colonial consciousness is a self-critique, too. In Fuʾād al-Takarlī's novel, *Al-Rajʿ al-baʿīd* (1977; translated as *The Long Way Back*, 2001), one of the protagonists, the young secondary school teacher Munīrah, identifies her personal life with life at large as experienced in her country. With bitterness at the circumstances that bind her to traditional ways of life and stop her from revealing her rape, she equates her misfortune with that of her country, as both are misused and powerless: "Was I not the typical daughter of this country, suspended eternally between death and prostitution?"[4] The early egoist, her cousin Midḥat, goes even further while in that mood of existentialist defiance. He defines Iraq of 1962 as follows: "An unstable society with no future; a society on the edge of the abyss; a society of indigestion, stupidity, fear, hatred, hypocrisy; where you eat when your stomach's full, don't know what's going on in the world, can't avoid sexual complexes, and are obsessed with poverty." He adds: "It's a society which has no relationship with its true members and offers you nothing in exchange for the stupid conditions it imposes, because in fact it's not a society but a period of time."[5] The speaker acts and operates as part of this traditional network of customs, however. His belonging to a traditional family wins him over to the tribe, or the nation, as he calls the society he criticizes. Unable to overcome his sense of disappointment at her loss of virginity, he interrogates himself: "Was it out of concern for the purity of the stock, the family, the tribe, the nation, and the whole of humanity?"[6] He knows it is all sham and "ridiculous," however, for, "Why did the word purity come to his mind?"[7] But the word is part of an ongoing tradition that has been invigorated by nationalist ideology. Its coming to his mind now is not random, for the upsurge of nationalism is everywhere, as indicated in the violent noise of bombardment and mortar attacks on 8 February 1963, during the coup against Qāsim (executed 1963). He is as critical of Qāsim, as are his cousin and father. His discontent remains, however, an amateurish existentialism of hesitation or ambivalence. Here, as in his cousin's meditations on her predicament, the past operates on the present, and

the culture she lives in is not the product of her autonomous will. In Marxist terms, there are also circumstances which are "directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."[8]

These and many other interventions and insights may not provide us, however, with a well-defined cultural theory to engage prospects of continuity and disintegration, subordination and discontent. Sociological readings may prove useful in this context as we noticed in ʿAlī al-Wardī's writings of the 1950s onward. The danger in these is their reliance on paradigmatic analysis that may not account for the creative impulse, its elusiveness, and resistance to compartmentalization. They may provide viable means, however, to read and analyze folklore and popular arts, especially popular songs. These could offer good insights into what we term here as Iraqi character. While we can trace in popular songs, especially in love songs, a lot of traditional supplication and blame, there is the agony and deep sadness that is not dissipated by the most exquisite melodious tones. The pioneer poetess Nāzik al-Malāʾikah, for instance, tried to explain the overwhelming presence of the censorious person, the ʿādhil, the vigilant observer who stands in the way of union between lovers. Its presence, she notices, signifies an insider, not an outsider. This is why the popular song, halī ya-ẓullām halī (O my kin, O oppressors)[9] which she cited as an example, speaks of the singer's own family and community as the censorious people. Looking at a scene with so many songs to the same effect, she concludes that the ʿādhil is another name for a society that is still restrictive.[10]

The song is not only an effect or a response, for it can also operate on temper and function on one's mind in a way that may not coincide with proclaimed political positions. In "Parallel Lives,"[11] a story written in October 1996, the Iraqi Kurdish expatriate Haifāʾ Zanqanah lets the song have the power of counteracting partisan attitudes. Her homeland is under attack and her people suffer. The narrator listens to news about recent attacks on Iraq and Baghdad, bombardment of Southern cities, and also about the devastating consequences of sanctions on people's lives and the infrastructure. She watches televised news of Saddam striding in a dictatorial manner, keeping everybody in suspense before he reaches the meeting room and chooses his seat. She listens to her daughter's sympathies for her country though expressed only in English. Divided and torn between so many things, she is on her way to the office in London. On that rainy day she finds herself suddenly recollecting the old song of childhood, the song which Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb immortalizes also in a canticle, "Shanāshīl Ibnat al-Chalabī" (The Enclosed balcony of the wealthy man's daughter). "The rain is different. The downpour is like milk flowing from the sky's breast." There is no similarity between London rain and the rain back home, "Rain. What was the song they sang as children when it rained? They would run through the dusty streets of Baghdad inhaling the smell of the new rain. The scent of newly wetted earth. Palms upturned to catch the drops." In that moment soaked with rain in London, exhausted and forlorn, the song comes back to her: "O Rain! O Halabi! We're the girls of Chalabi! Very slowly she turns, pulling the words from her past." Recollection brings her back to childhood and Baghdad, empowering her to decide not to go to the office, though it takes her only twelve minutes to reach the station: "She returns to the flat.

O Rain! O Halabi! We're the girls of the Pasha! She closes the door behind her, slides down to the floor, her back to the door, her tears flow. She weeps, O Rain! O Goldie!" Recollection functions under pressing circumstances, sweeps away other concerns as if to challenge ideological demarcations, and implants selfhood instead into the "wetted earth," thereby liberating it through memory from both dictatorship and neo-imperialism. The foreign space is no longer accommodating enough, and its very nature is as alienating as the censor back home whom Nāzik al-Malā'ikah traced in her songs. It is the woman narrator's Other, too.

Yet, this Other as the restrictive society, custom, or foreign space may grow or fall according to a situation or circumstance, its durability or discontinuity. Internal exploitation and oppression, colonialism, and foreign rule are among these situations and circumstances. These receive a number of treatments that are not necessarily as direct as newspaper articles and editorials. Such are the critiques by creative writers, especially those that argue against the legacy of colonization at home. One may well agree with Stuart Hall, that ". . . one of the principal values of the term 'post colonial' has been to direct our attention to the many ways in which colonization was never simply external to the societies of the metropolis."[12] The emergence of the hybrid intellectual is very serious, as state formation may well come under the impact of this cultural legacy. While it possibly leads to duplications of efforts and outlooks, the legacy can nevertheless dynamize reform. Its danger lies in a possible lack of grounding in native culture. As we noticed earlier, the debate on education in Iraq in the early decades of the twentieth century took as a point of departure the issue of political and cultural independence. Al-Ḥuṣrī was afraid that the Monroe report "reflects the intellectual attitudes which the colonizer's advocates hold in educating the people of the colonized nations."[13] Conversely, al-Jamālī offered a philosophy of education based on his reading of the Bedouin society, and its difference from the urban communities. Although he was part of the Monroe team, his academic grounding in Iraqi native tradition enabled him to devise a combination of methods and objectives.

Of no less significance is the kind of criticism that gives precedence to space over time. This is so, not only because of its immediate relevance to actual material existence with its struggles and sufferings, but also because both the colonizer and its breed among natives use banishment, expulsion, deportation, and erosion as means of challenge, threat, and repression. To quell opposition is to erase its very site, with all its connotations of language, thought, and belonging. To deprive a person of place is to replace his memory and lineage by another. Hence, the emphasis on space in criticism highlights points of opposition and challenge already visible in poetry and fiction.

No less important for theory in a post-colonial context is to see life in its textual richness. It is only through immersion in local sites, spaces of gender, class, race, and sect that writing undermines centrism, essentialism, authoritarianism, and their tenets of containment, absorption, erosion of difference, and repression of dissent. They protect and buttress themselves with such grand ideologies as ethnic purity and visions of totality, regimes of containment, colonial and local, advance wars, martial laws, censorship, and emergency measures to suppress opposition in every sphere of life, but especially in domains of intellectualism and thought.

But how do these concerns evolve in literary theory in post-colonial Iraq?

Strategies of Literary Dialogue

Writings that call for "psychological reform" began as early, the 1920s. ʿAbd al-Ghanī Shawqī writes on "Literary Disasters and the Purpose of Literature" in 1928. In that article, he explains the purpose of literature as "spiritual fulfillment, to quench our thirsty selves and reach our deep feelings."[14] What is significant in this article, however, is this emphasis on psychological delineation, an emphasis that received a good amount of attention in the late 1940s. Farīd al-Saʿdī, a well-established writer of the period, applied that to ʿAbd al-Malik Nūrī's short story, "Faṭṭūmah." He points out that the welcome given to that short story indicates a change in literary taste. In his view, the story writer "created a new solid style of depth and knowledge . . . providing us with a variety of alternating images rich with life, in its issues, sentiments, thoughts, fantasies, desires, impulses, vile and virtuous. . . ."[15] What the critic tends to emphasize is that story writing is no longer a pursuit of mere virtuosity and refinement; neither is it an imposition of a grand idea on a certain construct. Nūrī himself tries to explain to his readership that there occurs a radical change in story writing.

In his survey of story writing in Iraq,[16] Nūrī provides a literary biography that also reveals a great deal about the scene in Iraq since the 1920s. Every young writer first read narratives of romantic predilections, *bildungsroman* and novels of sentiment, including Goethe's *Werther's Sorrows*. They were influenced then by a "giant," with "scattered red hair shining on his bald head." That "giant" also had a "kind heart," providing readers in his writings "with pictures of their terrible reality, in small portions." Nūrī means Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb. The reaction against Ayyūb's school should not be surprising in view of the emerging consciousness among the literati as noticed by the British Ambassador to Baghdad, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, in 1943.[17] Nūrī argues that:

> Ayyūb narrates reality in his stories superficially without digging deep below the surface, or into common human feelings. Neither does he reach that buried current. If he gets involved in analysis, it is done in a classical way (i.e. in *Duktūr Ibrāhīm*). He is so lazy that he doesn't attempt to improve on his style, doesn't even bother to do that. He never obliges himself to be up to certain artistic standards, and never tries to reach a certain artistic goal along with the social message (p. 134).

Although addressing Ayyūb, Nūrī supplied a multiple critique that was also directed against certain literary tastes. Even when appreciating another storywriter, Fuʾād al-Takarlī, he tended to describe him against the aforesaid background: "He is not content with the surface of things, and never pictures life as does a camera. Neither does he let simplicity in performance become disgusting negligence . . ." (p. 135). When affirming the positive in Fuʾād al-Takarlī's stories, Nūrī emphasized the writer's protagonists as "full with life, with enormous strange sentiments fluctuating in their inner selves" (p. 137). There were writers, like Shākir Khusbāk, argued Nūrī, who were no less concerned with reality than Ayyūb, but who brought it back to us with "endearing simplicity." Against this writing, he cited Nizār Salīm's contempo-

rary experience. His stories lack "slices of life," offering us instead artificial "fabrications" and "surprising paradoxical endings" with "conspicuous contrivance." Nūrī added that Nizār Salīm's insight "is unable to delve into the lives and depths of others" (p. 138). Listing other images of writers, Nūrī concluded his survey with admiration for writers whom he associated with great involvement in human life and psychology.

The whole drive of Nūrī's essay is to destabilize taste in order to prepare for the acceptance of new strategies of writing. The literary scene since the late 1940s has been undergoing conflicts and controversies. Fu'ād al-Takarlī argued that backlash that critically considered modern poetry and story writing as subordinate to Western models, or as signs of servitude and plagiarism, was groundless. They were based on the faulty premise that predecessors should offer a measuring stick for new writings. Specifically defending Nūrī's experimentalism, Fu'ād al-Takarlī did not shy away from the impact of the West. On the contrary, he suggested, ". . . artistic story writing standards should be derived from the literatures of the West."[18] Writing back to refute two well-known critics, Kāẓim Jawād and Muḥyī al-Dīn Ismā'īl, Fu'ād al-Takarlī suggested that they should reach "the creative dynamic element" that distinguishes Nūrī 's writing. Against the confusion between the surprising effect and the plot, Fu'ād al-Takarlī argued that a story could occupy a slice of life, whereby the writer spreads his/her plot without contriving a surprising end. Another point deals with characterization: "without images [characters] the story dwindles to a disgusting event," he surmises. "Whenever free from subordination to the old, the writer would find it hard to come up with enough wealth of expression" (Ibid.) to delineate the inner life of his characters. Al-Takarlī admits that Nūrī confides in his memory, using some clichés and platitudes, but his whole effort is directed towards a dynamic representation of individuals from every sphere of life. He is concerned with setting both "the person and the universe in interaction" (Ibid.)

These arguments are not alien to this reading of culture and power, for the effort here was directed toward a radical change in attitudes among writers and readers. The emphasis on delineation, psychological insight, acculturation, and resistance to imitation and traditional norms in writing reveals a new outlook, a worldview that the British ambassador recognized while local authorities were too stubborn or oblivious to recognize. Such a temper means political and social unrest. Experimentation in literature is only a manifestation of embryonic consciousness. Such arguments tend to place experimentalism in a context of inevitable transformation and change. As 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim argues in the introduction to his collection of stories, *al-Dīk wa-Qiṣaṣ ukhrā* (The Rooster and other stories), "Experimentation is always an aspect of story writing, for structural elements are ever in the making, and becoming, according to a dialectic relationship between life and death, existence and nothingness." He further argues, "The representation of the real is—practically—impossible, for it is basically an experimentalist effort. Reality is not represented, it exists as it is."[19] As a critical insight, 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's articulate summation demonstrates the sophisticated growth of literary and cultural criticism in Iraq since the 1960s. It also directs attention to a cultural dynamism, for to live is to experience change as much as to enforce that change.

Transculturality and Intertextuality

Experimentation is a method first, but it is closely intertwined with identity consciousness. Identity formation occurs during dialogue and confrontation with others, including such entities as the colonizing culture. Since the 1920s, however, Iraqi intellectuals have been on the lookout for styles, techniques, notions and attitudes to cope with a changing consciousness. Al-Sayyid's Sewami, in his narrative *Jalāl Khālid*, is only one figure among these who inhabit Iraqi writing.

Most Iraqi writings are studded with names of authors, sayings, quotations, and appropriations from a variety of sources. Along with Turkish poets and thinkers, there are others from China and Japan, along with the known ones from among Arab, English, Russian and French writers. Indeed, the group of al-Sayyid, Fahmī al-Mudarris, 'Abd al-Fattāh Ibrāhīm, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Amīn, Lutfī Bakr Sidqī, Husayn Jamīl, and Husayn al-Rahhāl was among many similar coteries of a rather purposeful drive to bring about a class and national consciousness. It should not be surprising that these groups led to the emergence of party politics in Iraq. The Ahālī group with its populism, and al-Muthannā Club with its nationalism, were among many societies throughout Iraq that began to develop their thought and aspirations in dialogue with other ideologies and cultures.[20] Translations also offer another outlet for intercultural dialogue. Especially in the late 1940s, access to literatures from the East and the West brought to the attention of intellectuals the need for radical change in forms, techniques, and representations. To approach these as signs of subordination or manifestations of servitude, as some critics hastily assumed in the early 1950s,[21] is to miss the whole issue of counter-discourse. Ransacking other literatures could well evolve into a kind of self-inscription into the domains of the colonizing culture. Especially when Western techniques are brought into the peripheral culture to appropriate and inhale native locality and color, literatures gain rather than lose. The matter is even more so whenever a writer is aware of this entanglement and negotiation. Following Luwīs 'Awad, Terry DeYoung aptly argues that al-Sayyāb, for instance, uses Eliot's techniques to thwart his theories.[22] Al-Sayyāb's land of plenty is not Eliot's *Waste Land*, as the Iraqi poet inverts this master poetic, not only to question its cultural underpinnings, but also to plead for his country through extensive use of Middle Eastern myth, local lore, and geographical space. The markers and motifs in the emerging poem are typically Iraqi, converging with universal symbolism and redemptive suffering. This redemptive suffering, connoted by clouds, by thunder and lightening, and by dying or drowning émigrés, runs counter to the spiritual wasteland of the original, for the Iraqi poet has no time to ponder and survey scenes of artificiality and mechanical love-making; nor does he have the mood to recollect scenes from Shakespeare and Dante when the real situation speaks of a misery that is only challenged by the speaker's love for the transfigured beauty of the lover as homeland. Both assume spatial resonance amid images of great complexity. The longing for rain indicates after all both fertility and disaster. Through juxtaposition and referentiality, the Iraqi poet pleads for a society overburdened by human exploitation and misuse at the hands of the same civilization which Eliot castigates for its spiritual failure of vision. Unable to be redemptive, the dying empire only makes claims to a ". . . self-justifying practice of an idea or mission over time," in the words of Edward Said.[23] While the culture of the

metropolis may not show many conspicuous signs of the peripheral contaminating touch, the colonized may well develop native strategies of intertextuality that bypass the superficial reading of the classical theory of plagiarism, toward another one of great complexity. The post-colonial text emerges as densely populated with the other, even as the text takes the trouble of unearthing allusions to the master text, the legacy of the empire. We come across articles in the monthly *al-Ādāb* (Literatures), for instance, that speak of "Influence between Distortion and Plagiarism."[24] Such writings do not seek mere similarities in outlines or plots, but they nevertheless recognize the need for "acquaintance with world thought."[25] Seemingly in keeping with each other, these two claims betray some hesitation and restlessness, usually characteristic of cultures in transition.

Significantly, poets and storywriters who take it upon themselves to theorize for their innovations usually understand acculturation and the appropriation of techniques and themes as inevitable. Even when dealing with the self-evident distinction between culture at large and imperial legacy and rhetoric, the effort is worth noticing as it navigates in a wide cultural scene for markers of identity in a changing world. The whole issue of exchange is set into the dialectics of power relations. One takes from a stronger culture to revitalize one's own. According to Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, in the introduction to her *Shaẓāyā wa-Ramād* (Shreds and ashes, 1949):

> It may be worthwhile to remember that growth in literatures and the arts always occurs whenever two or three nations interact. It often happens that a nation loses its potential, and stagnates for centuries for numerous reasons. But it passes later through striding times that awaken it, driving it to hesitate, move, look upon its surroundings, then begin to inhale bypassed cultures, and to make use of neighboring nations which are still energetic, and thus adding brilliant chapters to human thought. As soon as half a century passes, the passive nation will emerge from the stage of [shock and] comprehension, taking its point of departure where other nations have stopped, adding its own contributions.[26]

In other words, she looks upon Iraqi and Arabic culture until the 1950s as inevitably making use of cultural contacts and literary influx to revitalize itself. This conclusive remark also suggests that this effort, in which she herself is an active participant and pioneer, will soon thrive, enabling Arabic poetry and culture to be on equal footing with competing cultures. Her aspiration is central to the very decolonizing process. It also partakes of the evolving identity drive to establish the self in a highly contested terrain. This valorization of the role of intellectuals and cultural contacts coincides with a tendency among writers and poets of the 1950s to look upon the present in terms of cyclic patterns whereby the Middle Eastern myth of Tammūz and 'Ishtār beckons to regeneration and rebirth. This sense should not be underestimated, for the 1949 title "shreds and ashes" encapsulates the paradigms of the phoenix oriented ideology, for from ashes there is rebirth; from shreds and fragmentation there will emerge wholeness and life. The redemptive suffering factor coalesces with Babylonian mythology, and inhabits a contemporary ideology of renaissance, affluence, and

freedom. Again we should keep in mind that the climate of ideas and the presence of the educated classes in the 1940s gave Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, the British ambassador in Baghdad, the sense of imminent change, for ". . . there had been a radical change in the attitude of the people during the last twenty years. They were no longer as long-suffering as of yore. In the towns especially, education had brought about a new outlook." He surmised, ". . . unless account were of these facts, the old order might be very rudely disturbed at no very distant date."[27]

This approach implies that writers and poets see themselves as active participants in transformation and change. Through masks, visions, and use of allusions, poets interact with other cultures to bring something new, thereby unsettling the native tradition. Other cultures as well as native lore offer Christ-figures for al-Sayyāb in his Messianic poems and outcasts and aliens to al-Bayātī. There is in them the aspiration of Prometheus and the relentlessness of Sisyphus, as al-Bayātī's poetry usually suggests. Indeed, when writing about al-Sayyāb, six years after his death, Jabrā I. Jabrā draws a comparison between the Messianic poet, the Tammūzi son of Iraq, and the very concept of crucifixion. There is also a well-justified comparison between him and T. S. Eliot. By doing that, in line with similar comparative readings, Jabrā subscribes to the view that peripheral cultures under colonial rule may well deserve a higher estimate in world literatures.[28]

Poets, more than story writers, are bent on enriching space in their poetic texture with shreds, sayings, and images from wide-ranging disciplines, as if anticipating Edward Said's emphasis on "crossing over, of stepping beyond boundaries," which he considers a sign of "more creative human activities."[29] More important to literary criticism is the effort to identify with foreign poets, including Persian, Turkish, Russian, American, English, Spanish, Latin American, and French. Hence, we come across poems that take their titles from specific names, like Neruda, Lorca, and Nazim Hikmat. No less telling are dedications. These poems offer critical insights, as their paratexts are thresholds to approval or rejection of views and attitudes. They also operate as sites of debate where cultural identity negotiates its markers in relation to its counterparts in other cultures. Indeed, al-Malā'ikah identifies with Keats, on many occasions, whereas al-Sayyāb slips into Lorca's voice. Al-Bayātī assumes a number of identities. He is Lorca, Hikmat, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, and Ibn ʿArabī. Yet, when he addresses Eliot, there is difference and opposition. He is pleased to slip into Alberti's voice, or to speak for Hemingway, but he is keen on criticizing poets of the bourgeois tradition. When studied against a context of translations from and readings into other cultures, these dedications, masks, and identifications demonstrate a certain awareness of some trans-cultural space that calls for active participation and dialogue. Cultural consciousness operates ahead of political expediency and should be taken seriously in statecraft and state-building.

Among painters and sculptors there is more of this cultural dialogue, not only among coteries and groups, but also with international schools and trends. The pioneering artists like Jawād Selīm, Fāyiq Ḥasan, Ismāʿīl al-Shaikhlī, Kāẓim Ḥaydar and Ḥāfiẓ al-Durūbī, among others, received an early training between the 1930s and 1950s in Rome, Paris, Florence, London, and other places.[30] The significance of this training emanates from its igniting contact, for each artist developed a perspective of

keen awareness of his own land, people, and tradition. Jawād Selīm had his Baghdad Modern Art Group, and its first exhibition in April 1951 was a landmark in forging this combination between tradition and contemporaneity which he did not expect many to appreciate. Fāyiq Ḥasan had his S.P., or the Societé Primitive, while Ḥāfiẓ al-Drūbī had his Impressionists. The Sufi Shākir Ḥasan al-Saʿīd (d. 2003) had his One-Dimensionists, meaning a direct connection between the human and the Divine. There are other groups that are no less distinct in attitudes and visions, but they have one thing in common, as Jabra rightly notices: "However much they may subscribe to the view of 'internationalism' or 'cosmopolitism' in modern art, they will not give up the notion that their identity can only be shaped by rooting themselves in a tradition of their own, which helps to give a distinction to their work, marking them off as the creators and extenders of a national culture."[31] As an example, Jabra draws attention to the late Fāyiq Ḥasan's cubism of the 1950s. His paintings then were a mixture of European cubist styles and Baghdadi illuminations of the thirteenth century, especially by Yaḥyā al-Wāsiṭī. "But his peasants, his Bedouins, his fishermen—his constant themes—belonged very much to the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates. His harvesters, his curd-sellers, however cubistically stylized, labored under a clear Mesopotamian sun."[32] As a prominent influence in Iraqi art, Fāyiq Ḥasan led also to a focus on endurance and joy in Iraqi life, a combination that fits well into the temper of redemptive suffering and Sumerian and Babylonian myths of regeneration and rebirth.

No less influential was Jawād Selīm despite his unfortunate death at the age of 41 (d. 1961). His training abroad in Paris, Rome, and later, London, was combined with his involvement in Iraqi ancient civilization when working at the Archaeological Museum in Baghdad. The two streams made him a unique sculptor-painter, a highly innovative artist whose acute awareness of intellectual freedom made him first present the struggle of the fettered intellectual in his monumental composition in bronze, the *Monument of Liberty*. It is in the middle of Baghdad, the Liberation Square, and is "Spread out in fourteen 8-metre high groups over a 50-metre long frieze."[33] Aside from the representational nature of the work, there is the suggestion that everything beckons forward, in a spirit of struggle and challenge. The work comes alive every minute it is read and seen against a history of turmoil and aspiration. Certainly, painting becomes life and joy as soon as it captures the beholder's gaze, entangling it and leading it into the matrix of its life. Such are the works of every painter, especially Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿAzzāwī. The use of graphic detail, illumination, and Sumerian and Babylonian icons and myths comes alive in his work through love for a tradition which is never re-drawn for its own sake. The past assumes its significance in its powerful artistic dimensions and suggestiveness, making everything shines anew with rapture and love. Popular life with its rituals and pre-occupations come alive on canvas. The narrativity of each painting realizes its unfolding through pictures, icons, symbols, actions, graphics, graffiti, and other details of portents and vows. Every painting speaks a language or many languages, but they share an Iraqi background that defies erosion and death.

The strong attachment to rich heritage and colorful life overrides mere imitativeness or servitude that may take place against fragile backgrounds or thin cultural consciousness. Notwithstanding the positive direction of art in Iraq, the cultural exchange is not a random process, however, for the colonized borrows enormously from

the colonizer, not only through the usual means of appreciation and need, but also under the guided direction of the colonizer and its cultural councils. The colonized may find some solace in the recognition allotted in the metropolitan culture for some of its past masterpieces. The sense of comfort may degenerate into smugness and naïve self-esteem, especially among the privileged classes and their literary coteries. On the other hand, this recognition may lead to a better reading of native tradition, especially when the means and ways of Western appropriation and adaptation are read closely as strategies of assessment and critique. Readings of Sufi traditions, translations of the *Mu'allaqāt*, al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, and the *Romance of 'Antar*, Sufi poetry, geography, science, and the *Arabian Nights* are highlighted to counteract a one-way flow of literary traffic. In this sense, the effort is not directed toward self-glorification, but as an instance of interaction whereby culture operates widely, permeating larger spaces and enhancing cultural bridges. The metropolis took a lot from the conquered nation, but the receptive temper has to be analyzed and seen in terms of cultural dynamics as part of an acculturation process. Culture as such becomes another space for communication and recognition beyond expediency. Many critics are drawn to this effort, especially, if I may add, Muḥsin al-Mūsawī in his *al-Wuqū' fi dā'irat al-siḥr* (Caught in the web of enchantment; English version: *Scheherazade in England*, 1981). The book went into four editions in 6 years, selling 26 thousand copies in the Arab world, driving the academic and critic Dāwūd Sallūm to claim it as a turning point in comparative studies.[34] Ṣalāḥ Khāliṣ' writings on the Arabs in Spain, along with significant contributions on aspects of comparison with other cultures show how post-colonial critics take the problems of cultural dialogue and identity formation seriously.

A Contested Terrain

These trajectories of comparison and dialogue have another dimension, for their ultimate purpose centers on space as the focus of both the colonized and the colonizer. Identity and its erosion derive their acumen from this relevance; and the fight for space assumes meanings and dimensions in relation to the significance of this space for both. The matter is even more important for individuals.

The British occupation authorities exiled and deported poets, writers, journalists, and politicians to many places, but especially to Henjam Island. The deserted and gloomy island as described by the exiled poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr was a wasteland that was meant to stifle the minds of these Iraqis (436–39), empty them of thoughts, and sterilize their imagination. The island is more than a prison, as it disconnects the writer from cultural and human contact, numbs the sense of alertness, and kills dissent. Ja'far Abū al-Timman took it upon himself to cultivate the island in 1928,[35] in a counter gesture to reclaim the island and to demonstrate a native bent to development and survival. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr noticed that Ja'far Abū al-Timman was the last exile on the island (Ibid. 439), as he was a "key leader and inspirer of the 1920" revolution and ". . . the head and the heart" hereafter in Iraqi politics of the 1920s and 1930s.[36] The practice of the occupation authority was to show exiles that power lay in the hands of the British, and that no matter how popular these Iraqis might be with their people, there was little they could do to change the situation. The land became a British one, and they were the strangers unless they would sign the

pledge of non-interference in politics.[37] In other words, power politics works in terms of premises and assumptions as long as there is no serious challenge to its authority. All natives turn into exiles. The same premise received similar insinuations from the post-independence puppet regime in Iraq, for al-Sayyāb or any other poet might be treated as a traitor or a foreigner to his homeland whenever he had different political views. In post-revolutionary Iraq, it got even worse, as difference or dissent meant treachery.

Contested place turns into contested identity, and exile turns into a nexus of intimations, fears, anticipations, expectations, promise and loss, as suspended between memory and forgetfulness. Unless we understand the poetics and politics of exile in modern Iraqi poetry, we are bound to miss the implications of space in theory and literary criticism. Against a colonial past, poetry since the 1940s has been re-capturing space, peopled by self-confident natives, with a sense of passionate belonging. But puppet regimes and later dictatorial breeds unleashed martial laws, and means of coercion and repression, to muffle the whisper and the cry, driving many writers into imprisonment, banishment or exile. The remaining writers have begun their prolonged suffering of inner exile, whereby the self undergoes division between the buried one and the public image.

Narratives cover this experience with harrowing recollections. In ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's *al-Zahr al-Shaqi* (The Suffering Primrose), the protagonist is sent to another city, banished from his family and immediate surroundings.[38] In al-Bayātī's poetry, the whole state of being is one of exile, deprived of poetry and joy. The latter is usually associated in his poetics with such females as ʿĀʾisha and Lara who may well stand for the poetic impulse, unrestrained and free:

> But she returned to Damascus
> With the birds and dawn light
> Leaving her slave in exile
> Jesting, rebellious, for sale:
> Dead and living.[39]

Under repression, poetry flees, and the poet remains "locked" in prose. Al-Bayātī writes:

> Exiled in memory
> Locked in words
> Under the rain I flee (Ibid.)

The whole universe changes into a stranger, unsympathetic and hard-hearted: "No one knows another in this exile. / All are alone" (Ibid.). Against a terrible sense of exile, al-Sayyāb also longs for homecoming, as it signifies warmth, love and intimate belonging:

> My roads have been threads
> Of ardor, of longing and love
> For a house in Iraq [40]

To be far from home is to suffer a prolonged death, for estrangement overwhelms the poet with desolation and fear:

> There are oceans between us,
> Cities and deserts of darkness

Only recollections of the mother's love and sympathy recall comfort and rectitude to his mind:

> And the wind carries the echoes of kisses to me,
> Like flames leaping from palm to palm,
> Glowing through the clouds[41]

The recollection of the dead mother only intensifies this longing for homecoming, usually represented in al-Sayyāb's spatial images of his village, Jaikūr, and its river, Buwayb. Indeed, both assume a life of their own, vivid and exuberant to the extreme:

> But in Jaikūr
> The summer has colors of its own.
> So has the winter;
> And the sun sets
> As though the sky were a field
> Drinking water. [42]

Also,

> the stars whisper their melodies
> flowers are born
> and in the eyes of children
> there is the flutter of wings
> in the world of sleep.

The native land, its rivers and villages, is not romanticized. Its recollection intensifies a sense of rapture and belonging. It is solid against another world, though it has also its own anxieties and fears:

> And you, Buwayb,
> If I were to drown
> In you I would pick
> The shells and build with them
> A house where the waterweeds and
> trees around it
> Are lit up by sprinklings from the
> moon and the stars. [43]

Re-inscribed textually, such an experience of longing against estrangement, and of voicing exile against repression and censorship, grows into a striding discourse of resistance and challenge. Fighting for space, writers and poets know well that the worst punishment is to be expelled, banished, and forcibly exiled, and to be deprived of place, memory, and community. If the colonizer occupies the native land, exploiting it as his, the national breeds of morose colonels and operative politicians are more desperate to annihilate sources of memory and to quell probable channels of resistance. Significantly the *monologist* ʿAzīz ʿAlī, who was popular throughout the 1950s and 1960s, brought the two themes together in his rhythmic popular songs, especially in his monologue "Duktūr," or doctor. The song asks the doctor, as the enlightened intelligentsia, to offer the cure to an ailing society under the impact of occupation or oppression and exploitation.[44]

It is against this deliberate erosion of memory, in its many forms of deportation and confiscation, that criticism develops an increasing attention to the poetics of space in post-colonial Iraq. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Baṣrī writes at great length on al-Sayyāb's use of space in his poetry.[45] Although seeing this as an anti-feudal strategy in the main, al-Baṣrī also emphasizes its metaphorical and documentary dimensionality. Especially in *The House of Serfs* (1963), al-Sayyāb develops the poem in its technical-relational complexity, providing us with a society of the young and the aging, with conflicting languages, assumptions and aspirations. As a dialogic space, the poem also indicates the end of an era, the feudal, and the commencement of the new with its newly emerging complications (Ibid. 70).

Space is also larger than its obvious limitations, as shown in "The Hymn [or Canticle] of Rain." Al-Baṣrī finds the poem following a four-wave design, whereby each wave develops its orbit to fuse into another. The poet begins with the speaker and the woman he loves, then the space of Kuwait, to be followed by another encircling Iraq and Kuwait through the speaker's own experience and understanding, before reaching into a benediction for liberation and freedom (Ibid. 30-31).

Politics of Space

No Iraqi critic other than ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim devoted so much attention to the poetics of space in both poetry and discourse at large. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's sophisticated analysis takes as a point of departure historical space politics, traditionally and hegemonically promoted and studied through some metaphysical explanations that tend to endow the caliph or the ruler with godly support against the masses. Applying this to the very emergence of Baghdad, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim argues that historians work for caliphs and state politics to further patriarchy and authoritarianism.[46]

Against such metaphysics, Baghdad Sufis come with a counter discourse of non-representational poetics. This counter discourse is destabilizing in the sense that its withdrawal and asceticism constitute oblique undermining matrices against authoritarianism and politics of coercion or hegemonic direction. Certainly, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's endorsement of the Sufi discourse is in line with another argument in which he elaborates on the reasons behind the choice of al-Kūfah as the urban center for Islamic rule by ʿAlī, the prophet's cousin. Against centers of clan and class authority, al-Kūfah is an ". . . ideal Islamic system based on a direct relationship between the

ruler and the ruled, implemented by the collective mosque, and in accordance with principles of free communication in markets, areas of work, and fighting zones, where there are no borders or walls to separate the caliph from citizens."[47]

The implication of space metaphysics can be overruled either through Sufi poetics or through a counter inscription of textual richness. Limiting itself to a search for continuity and survival, a repressive authority is bound to suffer dismantling by an opposing discursive terrain that counteracts its unitary language. "In many stages of history," argues ‘Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, "authority, regardless of the kind of principles it upholds, remains of a limited social sphere in relations. It chooses an elite, in line with its proclaimed politics or thoughts, or it makes its own elite with which it shares common interests" (Ibid. 238). In other words, both space and discourse are bound to suffer loss due to the very nature of their inherent limitation. Against this insularity, confinement and non-reciprocal self, there grows a large body of resistance which usually has its own sites and languages.

Al-Sayyid Jāsim's writings on such poets as al-Bayātī, al-Ruṣāfī, Ḥamīd Sa‘īd, ‘Abd al-Amīr al-Ḥuṣayrī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭuhmāzī and others are of great significance for any reading of theory in post-colonial Iraq. Especially regarding poetics of space, ‘Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim offers us, perhaps, the most erudite and insightful reading. Space in poetry is not merely a relational memory in a web of recognition and mystification, empowered with a certain amount of suggestiveness that defies the limitation of space while opting for a presence. It also operates as a discourse that stems from a site with a complexity of its own that retains the land to poetry and, for that matter, to the people. Nowhere does the idea receive so much attention as in ‘Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's lengthy introduction to the collected poetry of the vagabond poet, the late ‘Abd al-Amīr al-Ḥuṣayrī (d. 1987).[48]

To pit the poet against the very structures of authority, ‘Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim finds in this disciple and friend the best example of the dialectical challenge to authority. The vagabond is the "little man," but his existentialist choice of vagabondage endows him/her with a defiant commitment to personal freedom. Neglected and isolated, the vagabond knows at heart that masks of nobility, politeness, and prestige are a façade. "Pitfalls of petty life compel him to lie on street-pavements, . . . as a neglected thing in the eyes of those who have put on the mask of nobility, garbed with it, but in fact living in excrement, the rubbish from which worms escape" (Ibid. 10). While these are always afraid of the discomfort caused by a stray poet, they also admit to themselves the power of freedom in unleashing a different kind of poetry that celebrates life.

Although ‘Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's analysis is rather concerned with poetics of space within the dynamics of power relations, he is basically bent on pitting vagabondage and vagrancy against the authoritarian hegemony, as entrenched against the impending change. His vagabond poets are the other exiles, who remain in their land, roaming around, unsettling the *status quo*.

One way of seeing how problematic this view is in relation to the entire literary scene is to read it against poetic representations of the vagabond poet. The Iraqi poet Fawzī Karīm (b. 1945) recently wrote "Painting al-Husairy." The poem is an effort to see him in retrospect when roaming the city and invading some gatherings in the bars

he was familiar with. The painting cannot deal with a vision larger and more dis-
turbing than what the brush might offer:

> But the glass of wine has a locked color that refuses to respond
> to a single oil brush
> and a few colors
> I have been trying for two days
> but his overcoat covers the entire horizon.
> I left it gloomy
> with its two bushy wings, restive forever,
> And I switched the light off.[49]

The poet's declaration of failure should not be taken at face value: it is an implicit
recognition of vagabondage as larger than representation. This reading should not be
seen in isolation from a tendency, growing since the 1950s, to look upon
vagabondage, vagrancy, and slave revolutions as manifestations of a dynamic society,
and not as static as deliberately passed to us in historical documents. In his book
Thawrat al-Zanj (The Slaves' revolt), first published in 1954, the historian Fayṣal al-
Sāmir, the Minister of Guidance in 1958, explains, ". . . the first reason for choos-
ing this subject is the fact that social movements in Islam have been neglected . . .
to the extent that the Islamic East is accused of dormancy and stagnation."[50] Refer-
ring to ʿAḥmad b. Muḥammad's revolt in Basrah (255 H. /869 AC), he argues that it
is ". . . among steps taken by the Islamic peoples to improve their lot, regardless of
its opposition to the interests of certain parties" (Ibid. 8, 14).

Vagabonds in Baghdad

These revisits to history bring back to the center of attention what has been system-
atically relegated to the margin. Both slaves and vagabonds emerge in this criticism
as the subalterns who are given space in a decolonizing and decentralizing discourse.
ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's bohemian patronage of ʿAbd al-Amīr al-Ḥuṣayrī—paradoxical
as it may sound—is actually an instance of grand literary and human commitment to
the talented vagrant, the heir of a long tradition in Arabic poetry. The poet as rebel
took Baghdad as his domain. "Wherever you stroll in Baghdad," writes the author in
the introduction to the *Dīwān*, ". . . ʿAbd al-Amīr al-Ḥuṣayrī will meet you, in the
morning, at noon, in the evening, and at night, as if he were a guard asked to protect
streets and keep them free." According to ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, that poet ". . . was
so overwhelmed by the notion of place that he was completely attached to Baghdad
despite his originary love for his birthplace [Najaf]" (p. 8).

This attachment to Baghdad passed through stages, for he came first in 1962, to
celebrate Baghdad in his *Muʿllaqat Baghdad* (Baghdad's Ode) through his deep ac-
quaintance with its rich history, poetry, arts, and achievements. In the second stage of
his poetry, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim argues, al-Ḥuṣayrī the poet ". . . loved the city,
which began to enslave him." But didn't Ibn al-Fārid, asks ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, love
Cairo as much? The only difference between the two is that al-Ḥuṣayrī's love, as man-
ifested in his poetry, is ". . . sensual, ecstatic, and yearning, for his love is in the tra-

dition of outcasts, pursued by the devils of starvation, misery and deprivation" (Ibid. 104). Indeed, in his poetry as in his personal life, ʿAbd al-Amīr al-Ḥuṣayrī ". . . was a Baghdadi wanderer, roaming among the alleys of infatuation and questioning" (Ibid. 14). The irony of the vagabond re-claiming his space against dispossession and deprivation lay in the fact that the dispossessed claims ownership of a country that is in fact in the hands of the privileged.[51]

Wanderers and Sufis

The vagabond poet, as a model, is the exile's counterpart, whose wanderings in Baghdad's streets, alleys, and centers and his intrusions in pubs and cafes make him the unauthorized custodian of place. Overcome by despots and their gangs of every sort, the city needs these wanderers to inscribe its own agonies and raptures. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim finds in al-Ruṣāfī another model to be resurrected from among heaps of traditional scholarship. To ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, al-Ruṣāfī who stood against the British and their puppet regime, suffering repression and passing through many an ordeal, is the archetypal wanderer. Selling cigarettes in his later years in the 1940s, but never giving up his mission as a defiant poet, al-Ruṣāfī maintained a very close connection to Baghdad. In his poetry, Baghdad is strongly present, peopled, addressed, attacked, blamed, endeared, and agonized. The city emerges as entity, with a discourse of its own that unsettles the empowered, while it continues to offer resistance through its poets.[52]

The poet as wanderer, vagabond, outsider, and rebel has a long tradition in Arabic and, specifically, Iraqi poetry and narrative. But it is given more focus in a poetics of indirection, loaded with suggestion, implication, juxtaposition, and gaps that involve the reader in comparisons. History is redrawn; so is anecdotal literature about writers and poets, ancient and modern, in order to remind the neo-patriarch that time is the ultimate arbiter and destroyer. As ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim notes in his book on the ʿAbbāsid poet al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d.1016), "Historical recollections remind people of forgotten things . . . the ruler will return to his normal size upon listening to that voice, while the ruled grow larger in comparison."[53] History as narrative demands a better reading for this reason, as it is always in constant danger of distortion and fabrication to meet the needs of neo-patriarchy. In this instance there is an effort on the part of the public intellectual to offer a counter version against invented traditions as appropriated to meet the needs of the colonialist, the imperialist, and the neo-patriarch.

The Sufi Texts

Among ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's significant contributions to theory are his readings of textual terrains as spaces that are not given enough voicing. In his *Baghdad Sufis*, he argues, ". . . the dearth of information and reports opens up the wide unrestricted sphere," for dearth is another name for repression, and both provoke opposition and dissent.[54] The Sufi text is a terrain for the unsayable, rich with suggestions, provoking further interpretations, for it works as if ". . . everything begets its antithetical stance in a dialectic debate" (p. 62). The very dearth of virtuosity and grandeur in the Sufi text becomes another manifestation of the Sufis' life of austerity, for both are "on

strike against wealth, and the passion for acquisition." Their whole position was taken by the masses as a negative protest against authority in charge, ". . . which was held responsible for the enormous social rupture" (p. 67). But Sufi texts and positions vary: "Revolutionary Sufism defies the unjust ruler. It is actually based on defiance, but it is that kind of defiance, which is unstained by selfishness or interest."[55] On the other hand, there is a defiance of another sort, whenever Sufis "are able to disconnect themselves from the material and moral links holding them to reality. Infatuation and rapture lead them to social estrangement, which is ultimately a road to ecstasy" (Ibid. 266).

According to this reading, 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim develops his critique of the materialist frame of mind which looks upon Sufism as "negation and escapism."[56] He traces in this binary thought a structural pitfall in Arabic culture, especially as professional politics and operative groups gain ascendancy at the expense of intellectuals. Conversely, he suggests that Sufism is neither materialism nor spiritualism, but ". . . an expression of the dialectic in the complex relationship between materialism and idealism, as simply manifested in the lives of the Sufis" (Ibid.). In the dialectic of culture and power, Sufism is not a misguided path but a line of waywardness, rebelliousness, and difference. It is a rejection of a formalized discourse that is authoritarian and essentialist.

Through such an approach, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī's major poetic contributions are neither mere expressions of commitment to the real, nor idealistic formations of a poetic drive. Both are well entrenched within the text, competing with each other, and vie for supremacy and ascendancy.[57] A similar reading of al-Raḍī's poetry leads to the conclusion that alienation is another show of rejection, for the great poetic genius was also a descendant of the Prophet, a fact that means he was forced to live in subordination to the 'Abbāsid caliphate.

Patterns of Alienation

Readings of "alienation" provide a multifarious site of positions and intellectual debates in Iraqi literary theory. Especially in the writings of Fayṣal al-Sāmir, Muḥammad Mubārak and 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, alienation is not merely a willful estrangement from the society, or aversion to authority. It is an intellectual commitment that takes its point of departure from the recognition of injustice and a consequent sympathy for the masses. Put succinctly in poetry, the Iraqi poet Fawzī Karīm writes:

> Even histories are chronicled in the names of these two,
> the one in writing and the other in silence,
> while empires rise and fall.[58]

The deconstructionist reading of history in Iraq was not a Derridean one, although it began its endeavor with questions. Communities, groups, and dynasties were questioned, and traditional documentation was looked at from a new angle that was rooted in sympathy for the masses, those that were set aside by historians or suspected of disobedience. In al-Sāmir's reading of the Slaves' revolt (1954), the slaves of Zanzibar and Africa led a life of double estrangement, both from their roots and from

their new masters. The latter's practice of discipline and punishment, to use Foucault's words, runs counter to Islamic notions of justice, as it was based on a misreading of the Qur'ānic text according to the slaves' leader. Hence, to regain an Islamic orientation became a double bind for the slaves. The first slaves felt an emotional alienation when they were deprived of family and community. Their masters' coercion intensified their sense of alienation. Led by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (869) in Basrah, their resentment grew into communal awareness of oppression, leading them to a Revolution that established them in power for fourteen years. Both masters and slaves were driven by economic and material factors first, regardless of the applications of faith (pp. 19–20). The creed of the masters, argues Muḥammad Mubārak, involved selfish interpretations of the Qur'ānic text to empower themselves, whereas the slaves' leader read the text differently in line with his sense of injustice, which Islam came to redress. The implications in both al-Sāmir's and Mubārak's analysis derive their intricacy from their multiple critique. Religion in al-Sāmir's analysis cannot be disconnected from an economic base. Masters and slaves use religion differently. The masters understand religion as an empowering text, to enforce the subordination of the rest. Slaves suffer alienation because the masters' god is not theirs. Both al-Sāmir and Mubārak also accept Marx's reading of alienation as economic. "Man for Marx," explains Richard T. De George, "was alienated in three basic ways: the worker was alienated or separated from the products of his labor, from his productive activity, and from both other man (his life species) and nature."[59]

A rather deconstructionist approach is followed by Mubārak to point out the contradictory nature of medieval discourse. Al-Kindī, in Muḥammad Mubārak's reasoning, chose austerity to expose the impropriety of luxury and abundance, restricting himself to a life of rigorous practice and analysis to subtly thwart the privations and restraints of the dominating creeds.[60] This purposeful display of tightfistedness is not synonymous with avarice, for there was a purpose and ideology that run counter to the 'Abbāsid age of affluence and lavish expenditure from taxation. Such an explanation in the early 1970s in Iraq was not incidental as it fits well into series of writings by his close colleague and friend, 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, against opportunism, bureaucracy, sham heroism and rebelliousness. The efforts can be seen as sites of indirection in a period that was soon to witness the nationalization of oil and the flow of petrodollars. Reading al-Jāḥiẓ's (d. 869) representation of al-Kindī the philosopher (801–66) as a miser, Mubārak suggests that al-Jāḥiẓ's seeming satire is directed against an age of affluence and enormous luxury. Indeed, al-Kindī might have deliberately rejected assimilation in that society, choosing instead a life of austerity and isolation. Al-Jāḥiẓ's discourse falls in this case within the assumptions of the age, but it should be reread in such a way as to retain rules of its occurrence. As Foucault argues, "The systematic erasure of all given unities enables us first of all to restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence, and to show that discontinuity is one of those great accidents that create cracks not only in the geology of history, but also in the simple fact of the statement."[61]

Mubārak situates his approach within the binary of "dogma" and "seclusion," which also takes the name of "isolation." The first dogma signifies "barrenness," aridity, and rejection of the real, while the second leads to defiance and rebellion if it does

not fall into mere denials of life. In his reading of binaries in Arabic culture, Mubārak stresses the need to read texts as "material formations," for such a reading is bound to lead to another view of Arabic life and culture, different from traditional historical accounts. Mubārak 's emphasis on inherent constraints in the creed leads him to reread these as restraints ". . . used by dominating classes to consolidate beliefs that control the human" (p. 29). But Mubārak 's analysis is not limited to al-Jāḥiẓ's text, for he uses this as an instance of subordination to a socio-political context that involves writing in its web of power relations. Conversely, he suggests a Marxist reading, whereby emphasis is laid on the human agency as primarily productive and as aware of its productivity against creeds that tend to dehumanize the race. Indeed, Mubārak cites hegemonic distrust of hermeneutics, and of any interpretive strategy, as evidence of closure and bigotry. He cites the well-known medieval saying, popular among the ruling elite, *mann tamanṭaqa tazandaq* (he who sophisticates blasphemes), as an instance of resistance to philosophy and free thought to forestall innovation and intellectual discussion (p. 33). Mubārak's reading destabilizes many views sustained by orthodoxy and the emerging post-independence state, which usually uses the saying to forestall trends of democratization and free thought! If these readings of texts tell us something, they certainly reveal the impact of other disciplines and cultures on the formation of a secular outlook. Whether leaning on sociology, economics, or philosophy, each writer displays some line of analysis, which is bound to undermine or destabilize the status quo.

Texts in Contexts

These readings and writings attest to what the British Embassy in Baghdad expected in the mid-1940s. A cultural empowerment with a strong intellectual drive has distinguished the Iraqi scene, for texts assume meaning and appeal in view of contexts that establish a shared understanding and common codes with readers. Each period and context has its registers and priorities. Indeed, ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir (1922–96), for one, describes this as follows:

> The "new" means then [i.e., in the 1930s] to be on the side of people, the mass population of workers and peasants, to fight back exploitation. Exploiters are landowners, politicians, landlords, along with colonialism, and British colonialism in particular. Thus, good literature emerges from that, a literature that makes some achievement forward, reaching a wider readership. It is not surprising that al-Jawāhirī [1899–1997] was the greatest among poets, adding the new to the old, along with his wealth of ancient learning.

He finds this literature faulty however: "It occupies people with ideas and slogans, regardless of form . . . for the leadership then was in the hands of thinkers and politicians."[62] Although seemingly true, this explanation applies Western standards of composition to writings that have been growing in response to an increasing urge for identity formation. Al-Jawāhirī's use of classical rhetoric didn't prevent his poetry from reaching a wide readership; neither did it pass unnoticed by the puppet regime.

On the other hand, writings by Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb, especially *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (1939), draw more attention today for being post-colonial texts par excellence. Years later, in 1943, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis warned the prime minister Nūrī al-Saʿīd against the dishonesty, inefficiency, corruption, and unreliability of the regime and its apparatus, along with acute economic problems, ". . . the mishandling of the Kurds, the shameless land-grabbing carried on by prominent personalities, the general lack of courageous leadership and the wide gulf between the Government and the people."[63] In other words, literature—and poetry in particular—was very much involved in ideas and reform to the extent of becoming the most effective means of inciting the masses and monopolizing public opinion.

Nevertheless, ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir's approach was a belated assessment. It should be seen within a larger context of conflictual attitudes, perspectives, and methods. Culture of later periods was less combative, more urbane in view of the changing milieu. On the other hand, with the increasing power of the police state or under the impact of wars (1960, 1963, 1964, 1977–2003), literature displays more nervousness, anxiety, and intensity that show in cryptic styles, stark language, and morose outlook or mockery. Yet, there is always an independent line that eludes these demarcations. Under the impact of the Leavisite School to which Jabrā I. Jabrā adheres, for example, the latter looks upon texts as carrying within them interpretative rules. The "laws that exist inside the text" are bound to account for the value of the text, and thereby its value within the humanist tradition. Applied to a number of readings, Jabrā's approach tends to resist any other referentiality, including that of tradition, as his 1961 Rome Conference intervention demonstrates.[64]

A different approach can be traced in Nāzik al-Malāʾikah's criticism. When she suggests and uses "The Platform for Criticism" as a review page in *al-Ādāb* monthly, al-Malāʾikah specifies the need for methodological criticism. She argues her case against a flood of writing, which she accuses of lawlessness and lack of vision. To enhance methodological criticism she stipulates that criticism should have ". . . its own rules and forms, which must be obliging. Otherwise, it is bound to lose its power and significance."[65]

Many critics approach literature according to specific laws. Others address it from Marxist positions, as the writings of Fāḍil Thāmir and Muḥammad Mubārak demonstrate. But others find the Leavisite tradition worth pursuing. Indeed, the late ʿAbd al-Jabbār ʿAbbās read al-Sayyāb's poetry in this direction, finding him more akin to Eliot than to any specific Arabic tradition.[66]

A different line of critical reading shows, according to historians and critics of Iraqi literature,[67] in Muḥsin al-Mūsawī's criticism of Iraqi literature, especially the short story. Although narrative texts usually establish their own codes, the reader's attention is drawn by their recurrence to account for a dominating viewpoint or voice. Tracing these should never lead the reader away from the marginal individual in narratives. To deal with the underprivileged, the storywriter has to make a choice: either to acquiesce to a liminal discourse, to one of marginalized fragments, or to unconsciously cater to platitudes and assumptions that stud daily language and behavior. The writer in the 1950s came under the impact of other schools and tried to delve into the recesses of society and the depths of the character. No matter what that character

might be, the writer had to place it into trying circumstances to grasp its responses and intimacies. Outcasts, prostitutes, idiots, and the poor are present in the narratives of the 1950s as part of a larger awareness of the "little man" in a society of clans, classes, and privilege. The little man drew attention in reaction against the privileged society with its ". . . land-grabbing . . . prominent personalities," in the words of Sir Kinahan. The reader has already been prepared to accept this new reading of the society since he/she had received street training under the impact of poetry as recited in gatherings and demonstrations that were possible before the emergence of the police state and its use of mass killings to thwart opposition.

Such readings look upon texts as contested terrains where languages and sites join forces in articulation. Hence, discursive space fuses into contexts without letting itself be overburdened by the biographical. In the Iraqi short story since the early 1950s, as much as in poetry and the arts, including painting, a certain trans-generic quality dominates. In fact many poems argue for the same vision already advanced in specific paintings and sculptures by Jawād Selīm and Fā'iq Ḥasan. These appear as intersections that reveal common awareness of a modernist, even postmodernist, anxiety to account for the oscillation between certainty and rupture. Upon drawing a comparison between the classical poem and the free verse movement in Iraq, 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim aptly relates the latter to a post-colonial context which, to use Stuart Hall's words, ". . . obliges us to re-read the binaries as forms of transculturation, of cultural translation, destined to trouble the here/there cultural binaries for ever" (p. 247). In 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's words,

> If it is possible to say that classical poetry is the companion of the nation's growth, its nationalist augmentation, and as carrying many of its historical specifications, then it is possible to argue that the free verse embodies many of its common emotional and intellectual features, at the global level of human life, as well as the national.[68]

This awareness is larger than the civilizational divisions, offered by al-Wardī in the 1950s. Al-Wardī argues that "Arabic poetry is of double standards like its society, of a divided heart between Bedouin values and civilizational others" (p. 102). For 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, the arts in their interdisciplinarity subsume more of the dialogic and the polyphonic than the unitary. The poem, for him, is a space of dialogue as well, "in which visions blossom in harmony with consciousness, and in accordance with the relation between the 'I' and the communal 'we'."[69] He further stipulates,

> It is because of this fusion that poetry offers new images, motions, rich symbols, and a climate that promises universal warmth. Poetry comes unexpectedly with new changeable but fertile doses, offering a happy surprise to its reader (p. 36).

In another article, he stipulates that poetry as music aspires for the universal through absorption rather than imitation. He argues that rhythm is not ". . . an imitation of a group of clear and known voices," for ". . . it is an incessant search for

those enormous and secret voices that occupy our whole universe" (p. 29). Certainly, such a reading grounds itself within an intertext of poems, narratives and paintings that have been in dialogue with other texts and contexts, in Iraq, the Arab World and the whole global scene. Its underlying drive is towards a displacement of the dormant in tradition as a restrictive institution. Texts themselves demonstrate a dialogue, a "democratization," that takes into account other texts and languages, and offers a better space of belonging. In his very influential book on *'Alī: sulṭat al-ḥaqq* (Ali: the authority of righteousness), which led to his imprisonment in 1988, 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim questions authoritarianism not only through a deconstructionist reading of Islam, but also indirectly, or obliquely, in a critique that sets democratization against essentialism, authoritarianism, and unitary discourse. Literature is brought into the text to develop a counter-discourse, stemming from the following points:

1. The text is both the idea and the instrument (*Dirāsāt.* p. 286).
2. The literary text that outlasts its time is a personal manifestation, but behind it is a personality that fuses into other personalities, with specific predilections and missions (*Dirāsāt.* p. 287).
3. Words in the text are living creations: a true writer is the one whose deep thoughts are present in the infrastructure of the text, its base, underpinnings and cracks (*Dirāsāt.* p. 287).
4. If there is a difference between ordinary language and the literary style, it is mostly in the choice of meanings, not in word usage (*Dirāsāt.* p. 293).

To decentralize static classifications that are ironically in line with Sir Arnold Wilson's view of Iraqi social structures, 'Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim provides a wide-ranging theory that has a variety of applications to culture. To him, language is a record of both a lexical register and a semantic structure. Both lack rigorous discipline, but they betray each writer's fluctuating search for identity. To assume that discourse is one, solid entity is to cater to a bourgeois notion of the human self as a solid Supreme Being free from frailty and contradiction. Conversely, this contradiction is itself a sign of resistance. Without this rift there is no aspiration for change. Writing in the 1960s, his words anticipate Derridean supplementarity, for every presence involves absence, and the "two surfaces" meet in one space, he argues in his articles of the 1960s for *Al-Ādāb*, which were collected in book form in 1970 (*Dirāsāt*, p. 10). His burgeoning thought is significant for reading the Iraqi scene, its culture, and its power, for it resists compromising the factual and the dialectic for the sake of ideological agenda. Working against total or continuous history, and refusing to anthropologize Marx, he rejects the effort to bypass social differences and ethnic or cultural divisions, for no totalized system of values can claim truth, nor can an imperial power make a similar claim for "a coherent type of civilization," to use Foucault's words.[70]

Discoursing Gender
Such increasing attention to discourse analysis is directed against both authoritarianism and static views of tradition. Both have enjoyed a time of alignment and configuration of positions since the 1960s. The use of the word *turāth*, or heritage, evolves as

a conservative monopoly in opposition to new currents of thought. Authoritarian monopoly is underscored by a deliberate repetition of the term to identify conservatism at large against other attitudes. Regimes have been heavily involved in appealing to tradition to forestall criticism and repress free thought. Authoritarianism rephrases history as a totality advancing under the control and leadership of a hero, whose divinely-ordained presence entails the subservience of tradition and the inevitable erosion of dissent.[71] Against this, Iraqi thought has its own counter-tradition. It often focuses on a number of issues: freedom of the people, their right to free expression, faith in the efficiency of poetry and culture at large to change society and to mobilize tradition, and a commitment to the underprivileged and the poor as al-Ruṣāfī's poems demonstrate. Even in writings that were markedly flouting social norms, like Ḥusayn Mardān's (1927–72) collection of *Qaṣā'id 'āriyah* (Naked Poems, 1949), there was a decisive and purposeful effort to destabilize the status quo. In his defense, the lawyer and poet Ṣafā' al-Orfalī said: "He is a man of letters who spreads virtue through speaking of vice as Flaubert did in Madame Bovary."[72] His other collection, *'Azīzatī fulānah* (Dear so and so, 1952) led to his imprisonment for one year, and he was the first poet to be imprisoned for a daringly flouting poetry, writes Jalāl al-Khayyāt.[73] Although seemingly concerned with exposure rather than an ideological stand, Mardān was reckless in disparaging social and moral constraints. His effort was unlike Ayyūb who dedicated his collection al-*Ḍaḥāya* (Victims, 1937) to the "Woman who shakes the cradle with one arm and suffers whipping in the other." In Mardān's poetry, there is rebellion, but in Ayyūb's narratives there is commitment.

The sufferings of both writers for their views were less than many others. Worse still are the disappearance, imprisonment, murder, and execution of writers. Iraqi writers, in the main, take their vocation seriously, involved in their unauthorized pursuit of truth or ideal. Under the colonial rule as well as under the post-independence dictatorships, writers suffered for their commitment to independence, freedom, and equality. They fought for women's rights and social freedom, as the early poems of al-Ruṣāfī, al-Zahāwī, and al-Baṣīr demonstrate. They also fought for political independence. This combination of purposes and agendas is not surprising, for the history of colonialism is rife with contradiction. Its claims for progress and change contradict its support for traditionalism, including the British defense of the veil as a sign of identity.[74] In 1923, Asmā' al-Zahāwī established The Society for Women's Renaissance. In the same year, Paulinā Ḥassūn issued her magazine *Laylā*. Mājdah al-Ḥaydarī was the first to openly tear off the veil in 1933. Soon after, the daughter of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Dawūd, named Sabīḥah, decided to attend the Faculty of Law in 1934. Women's weeklies and periodicals have found a large readership since then.

The most notable achievement of women in Iraqi literature lay with al-Malā'ikah's role in both theory and practice. It is worth mentioning that Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's poetics is usually looked upon not only as pioneering, but also as representative of the ". . . history of the Iraqi woman," as 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Baṣrī says.[75] In her poetry, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, ". . . emptied such utterances as night, sea, boat, star, winds, and temple from their lexical signification, turning them into symbols," he surmises (Ibid. 71). Sharing this register with her mother (Salīmah 'Abd al-Razzāq or Umm Nizār), the poet entrenches herself within a tradition in which women writ-

ers have always been vying for space. Indeed, al-Baṣrī goes so far as to suggest that the poet only ". . . complements her mother's poetic career" (Ibid. 44–46). From another angle, however, this continuation is a double strategy for survival against heavy odds. She herself acknowledges that in her poetry there is always a multiplicity of voices. When she states something, usually advanced by male critics in their interpretation of her poetry, there is another voice, which steps into the text with a counter interpretation which is avowedly hers (Ibid. 11).

What releases poetry from a long history of subordination to a male tradition is also this use of the poem as a spectrum or a plethora of voices. Thus, her night becomes, for instance, a space of wider prospects, intimations and meditations in a spacious land of freedom. She herself explains the reasons behind calling her first collection *ʿĀshiqat al-Layl* (The night devotee). To her, night ". . . stands for poetry, imagination, vague dreams, beauty of the stars, grandeur of the moon, and the glittering of the Tigris under light."[76] Behind this slippage, however, there is also the implication of social separation that involves the speaker in meditations away from the sordid. Women are deprived of the privileged position of the patriarch, or the voyeur, in her poems.

While male critics criticized her for a seemingly excessive romantic agony, Nāzik al-Malāʾikah let her personae live to the utmost in an inwardness that resists outside encroachments. Her poetics is, therefore, feminist in the main, but it is a feminism that may not coincide with male feminism. More than many male feminists, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim develops a discourse that stems from his view of labor as the starting point for discussion. Rather than a matter of archaic societies or historical ones, the status of women relates to exploitation first. In his 1980 book, *The Rights of Women* (banned in Iraq), the writer argues that historical accounts demonstrate that patriarchy is held, sustained and promoted against the marginalized and oppressed female.[77] Indeed, even when times witness a resurgence of women's presence at large, the dominating discourse implied by ". . . equality that a woman be a man" (p. 46). In other words, al-Sayyid Jāsim accepts the disruption of the newly emerging feminist position to the very formations of paternal and patriarchal discourse. According to Luce Irigaray, what is needed is "to challenge and disrupt" discourse as ". . . the structuration of language that shores up its representations, separating the true from the false, the meaningful from the meaningless, and so forth."[78] But rather than agreeing with Nawāl al-Saʿdāwī's binary reading, al-Sayyid Jāsim suggests that preference is not the way to regain the right position for women. A viable beginning is to detect the voice in discourse, or the positionality that partakes of the hegemony of classes, institutions and states that benefit from oppression, discrimination, and injustice. To limit a feminist discourse only to the tracing of the masculine in reality and history is to confuse issues. There are two faces for the dominating culture, he argues. One is the ". . . visible cultural facet, as expressed in the formal proclamations of the male society. Another is latent in subtle inner practices" (p. 22). Indeed, "male consciousness can allow space for women to practice social and cultural activity, in education, or in communication with the ruling apparatus and its political institutions. But it never accepts the role of women as governors, or in charge politically, administratively or in jurisprudence."[79] Coming upon an old historical account by Ibn Ṭabāṭabā regarding

the role of women in the demise of the caliphate in al-Muqtadir's times, the writer explains,

> This analysis, which relates destruction as resulting from the interference of women in state affairs, does actually emanate from a collective unconscious, which is patriarchal to the extreme. It jumps to conclusions with no guiding principle of analysis that conjoin the objective and the subjective to reach truth (Ibid. p. 77).

Relating the discussion to the dynamics of cultural formations, he argues that the role of the intellectual is to enable gender to come to full flowering, ". . . towards a mode of exchange," says Irigaray, "irreducible to any centering, any centrism" (p. 79). In Jāsim's formulation, gender is to be emancipated from the presuppositions of economic, philosophical and metaphysical structuration:

> Femininity and masculinity are not a cultural image, for they retain a magnetic difference. It is the role of culture to bring forth the utmost humanity in their union, the woman as female, and the man as male. Culture is to sweep away illusions and biases, but not to erode the necessary distinctions that embody gender.[80]

Such formulations are directed against a whole corpus of readings, especially by such writers as al-ʿAqqād in Egypt, who minimize the role of women and harbor the most backward views of gender.[81] Such positions, views, concerns, and practices of Iraqi intellectuals since the British mandate and the 1920 Revolution consider Iraqi culture vital enough to resist the constraints of authoritarianism and political repression. Its earnest search for deliverance from provincialism, essentialism, and totalitarianism (represented by a unitary discourse) involves it in rich experimentalism, leading its prominent figures to thoughtful insights that justifiably vie for a better position in Arabic culture.

Looking upon a whole scene of intellectual endeavors, achievements and disappointments, readers may be baffled by the mounting barriers that stand between writers and the modern state. Imprisoned, exiled, murdered, or dead in exile, Iraqi intellectuals have been inscribing historical sites with a tragedy, wrought simultaneously by human agency and fate. Writing since independence to shock society out of its political and ethical stupor, they have been reaping the hatred of a State that fulminates against all, especially those with a daring commitment to their homeland. Literary criticism in Iraq is not a supplement, an appendage to poetry and narrative, but a solid involvement in the complexity of identity formation and culture. What Victor Brombert writes of the intellectual hero applies with equal force to those critics, theorists, and intellectuals in Iraq, as it also explains their self-chastisement. He speaks of this type as it grows in French fiction as follows:

> Dreaming of his high social and spiritual mission, he knows his efforts are doomed to defeat, yet blames himself for his own futility. Concerned with

the regeneration of mankind, driven on by the urge to speak for and with others, he also flirts with catastrophe and secretly yearns for his own destruction. He is in fact the hero, the victim and the buffoon of a tortured era, which has experienced politics as tragedy, freedom as necessity, and where history has assumed the urgent voice of a *fatum*.[82]

Iraqi writers and intellectuals differ from these French intellectual heroes, perhaps, in the tragedy staged for them by the modern state. The irony, which holds like lead to their writing, stems from a reversal of fortune. While they have aspired since the 1950s for regeneration, in the form of the old Mesopotamian rites, they find themselves reaping bitterness, disappointment, and death. However, their attachments to ideals, and their love for their homeland, endow their writings with much passion, anxiety, and hope.

Conclusion

These readings into Iraqi culture may sound like Foucault's genealogies. They also aspire to reach for the discontinuous, the illegitimate, and the disqualified ". . . against the claims of a unitary body of theory," as usually espoused by hegemonic discourse and its exercising power. In the case of Iraq, dictatorships and imperial or colonial powers before and after the mandate are not only engaged in prioritizing knowledge, but also in manipulating it, re-inventing traditional formations, and asserting and proliferating power. Iraqi literature since then, and despite the occasional manipulation of some segments from the intelligentsia to spread and publicize the ruling ideology, has had a destabilizing quality that Foucault associates with the broader ". . . insurrections of knowledge," which he sees as opposing ". . . the effects of centralizing powers."[1] Iraqi literature, especially in its critically-disposed cultural focus, operates and has operated in constituting a consciousness which can be described as dissenting and rebellious; but its rebelliousness is enmeshed in a redemptive suffering that counteracts colonial and authoritarian claims to salvation and redemption. Culture in this sense is, to use Edward Said, ". . . a source of identity, and a rather combative one,"[2] not only in response to cruel practices and oppression, but also as an engagement with a history that burdens and adorns the most ancient civilization with so much wealth and riches that have incited the greed of many, foreigners and natives, while Iraqis are deprived of their wealth. The sound of rupture and agony in this culture, as displayed and fathomed in its rituals, has the ring of pain and pride. Its deep redemptive suffering acts as an index of the dialectic relationship between culture and power. The other side of this test lies in resistance to foreign encroachments, for as the story goes, since Alexander the Great, there is no chance for foreign powers to stay for long in Iraq. The other danger resides in the monopoly of power by the few in the absence of a genuine constitutional life and transparent democracy. In this culture and civilization, every action and expression displays a political stand. Even daily language and wit demonstrate as much, and the need to understand the Iraqis remains as of paramount significance as ever, for to communicate with them, to cooperate with them, or to dream of dominating them, the right start is to know them.

Appendix I
Profile: ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim

There are many reasons behind this profile. Foremost is the fact that ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim was taken so seriously by Saddam's regime that every piece of news about him was suppressed throughout the 1990s. The UN, Amnesty International, and PEN tried hard to get information about his case, but they failed or were misinformed. Even when I published in Egypt the first part of "ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim: Sīrah lam tuk-tab"/"An Unwritten Biography" (*Akhbār al-Adab* weekly, Cairo, 1997, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim: Unwritten Biography), when I was a university Professor in Tunisia, the Iraqi ambassador there made it clear that he was unhappy with this piece. When I mentioned to him it was about ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's early life before the 1968 Baʿth coup, he said it might be manipulated. On the other hand the press attaché at the embassy asked if I still have family in Iraq, insinuating reprisals if I would continue writing. The regime's ban on anything relating to ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim was not the only reason behind this profile, however. The Iraqi Communist Party, under its old leadership as well as the official Baʿth Party, usually associated with Saddam, and ideologically with Ṭāriq ʿAzīz, were adamantly against his writings. Many mentioned to me that they could not write articles in his defense, even when they were exiles, as long as they were acclaimed as ICP members or as mere dilettantes. While we can find reasons for the dislike of a totalitarian regime for such an intellectual, it is not easy to justify the official position of ICP. The previous leadership had many dabblers in culture and literature who lived on petty recollections and misconstrued realities. Caught between pettiness and dislike to revisionism, they found his critique of their agenda and practice quite destabilizing. His popularity among the masses also inflamed this opposition. His books enjoyed great popularity. His book on ʿAbd al-Nāṣir (1987) sold 30, 000 copies in two weeks. More importantly, the writer disliked public relations, conferences, and official meetings. His critique of opportunism, bureaucracy, sham politics, and hypocrisy made others suspicious and sensitive to his criticism. His encyclopedic knowledge, rigorous analysis, and combination of theory and practice in his intellectual interventions made his presence quite conspicuous since 1988, despite

his Sufism. In literature, politics, and thought, he developed a sharp and rich cultural critique. Taken together, these facts depict an uncompromising intellectual.

ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim participated in political organization as a student in Dār al-Muʿalimīn al-Ibtidāʾiyyah (The Primary Teachers Institute) in Al-Naṣiriyyah in 1956. He was approached by the Iraqi Communist Party earlier through a middle class businessman, Dhiyāb al-Ḥāj Ṭāhir, who hired him to run a flour mill every summer in his village al-Naṣr. He soon became a dynamic organizer and a brilliant intellectual who digested Marxist thought and critiqued the Party. In 1959 he was already in the city leadership, and was pen-named Morris. Thereafter he led a dissident movement, criticizing the party for its oscillation and lack of a national perspective. He was boycotted in 1960 as pro-Tito, meaning a nationalist reading of Marxist thought. When I was still young, and ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim was only 20, Ḥasan Oudah, a brilliant boy who was my senior then, intimated to me that all the associates of the Communist Party, and he was included, were ordered to boycott ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim. Although, he was back to ICP, this rapprochement lasted for a year and a half only. The ICP ran articles against comrade Morris and others for their revisionism.

He began publishing articles at an early time, perhaps in 1961. His readings in literature helped to distinguish his style which evolved as a combination of rigorous logic and passionate discourse. He was imprisoned in 1961, and then in 1963. In 1966–70 he published numerous literary articles in the famous Lebanese journal *Al-Ādāb*. He also published articles in Iraq in which he began to practice the efficacy of his thought, its marriage between nationalism and socialism, to the dismay of both, the Communists and the nationalists who had been surviving in dichotomous zones of great polarity. In 1969, he was invited to come to Baghdad and join the Baʿth left, led then by ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrāʾī, and he was offered an honorary membership. When al-Sāmarrāʾī was imprisoned in 1973, al-Sayyid Jāsim knew that a regressive line was emerging leading back to 1963. He responded with a seventy page critique in 1976 to Saddam's survey of the cultural scene to assess the so-called Communist penetration in Iraqi culture. Al-Sayyid Jāsim's critique was the reason behind the withdrawal of the honorary membership, the ban on his books, and his removal from *The Labor Voice* weekly as an acting editor. He was forced into an early retirement. From 1977 onwards, he was under surveillance, and at least 11 of his books were banned. Official newspapers were ordered not to publish his literary writings unless he would write in support of the war with Iran. The poet Sāmī Mahdī, editor of *Al-Jumhūriyyah* daily, told me as much. The writer never published in those papers. When his book on ʿAlī, the Prophet's cousin, appeared he was imprisoned for six months, and books were fabricated under his name. The book was considered an oblique criticism of Saddam and an inciting document. He knew then that it was only a matter of months before the regime would get rid of him. Nevertheless, many of his books appeared in 1988–90.

Saddam's half brother, Sabʿāwī, who was the director of the Security Directorate, confessed on 23 March 2005 that he executed the writer ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim upon the orders of his brother. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim was imprisoned on 15 April 1991, and Saddam's orders made it clear that no news should be divulged about his fate. The reason behind this second arrest and its harrowing aftermath was a letter which the writer

sent to Saddam in early April 1991, criticizing him for the invasion of Kuwait, and for his atrocious slander of the South, its tradition and culture in a series of editorials. One of the officials who were in a meeting with Saddam during the alliance attacks on Baghdad and Iraq also participated in inflaming Saddam's anger against the writer. Yet, the fact that Saddam imposed a ban on his fate and whereabouts only attests to ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's power as an intellectual.

Appendix II
Lieut. General Sir Stanley Maude's
Proclamation of March 19, 1917

Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. Since the days of Halaka your city and your lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking; your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of today testify the vanity of those promises?

It is the wish not only of my king and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

Between your people and the dominions of the King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and the Turks, who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interest of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

But your people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the

aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realized and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hedjaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so indeed are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers . . . . , the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and the desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

O people of Baghdad, remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants who have ever endeavored to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representative of great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realizing the aspirations of your race.[1]

Notes

Preface

1. See Peter Gran, *Beyond Eurocentrism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), p. 79.

2. Fawzī Karīm, "At the Gardenia's Door," *Banipal*, no. 19, Spring 2004, 80.

3. I certainly differ here from readings that dump all emphasis on history as ideological *manufacturation* or "imported identity," as Amatzia Baram implies. See his otherwise well-documented article, "A Case of Imported Identity: The Modernizing Secular Ruling Elite and the Concept of Mesopotamian-Inspired Territorial Nationalism," *Poetics Today* 15:2 (Summer 1995), 279–319.

4. See Sulaymān Faydī, *Fī ghamrat al-niḍāl* (In the midst of political struggle; Baghdad: Sharikat al-Tijārah, 1952), p. 197.

5. That was in 1919 when Shīʿī notables in Karbalāʾ and Kaẓimiyyah were in favor with one of the sons of Sharif Ḥusayn of Mecca. The Grand Marjiʿ Muḥammad Taqī Shīrāzī wrote to Sharif Ḥusayn accordingly despite British opposition and the arrest and deportation of six Shīʿī notables who signed the petition. For more, see Joyce N. Wiley, "The Iraqi Shiʿas," in *Iraq: Its History, People and Politics*, pp. 149–161, at. 155

6. The King's resistance to the British High Commissioner Percy Cox, the latter's demand for an authorization to arrest nationalist leaders in August 1922, is one case in point. See Toby Dodge, "International Obligations, Domestic Pressure and Colonial Nationalism . . ." in *The British and the French Mandates* in *Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 143–164, at. 151 and n. 25.

7. Matthew Elliot, *'Independent Iraq': The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941–1958* (London: Tauris, 1996), p. 25. See also Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945–1951* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 309.

8. Cited in Matthew Elliot, p. 21.

9. Translated by Bassam K. Frangieh, "Al-Bayati: A Journey of Birth and Death," *Banipal,* Summer 2003, pp. 36–7.

10. See his poem, "The Return of the Victim," trans. Salih Altoma, *Banipal*, Autumn 2003, p. 34.

11. The term *Sharifian* has been used to refer to the associates of the Sharif of Mecca and his revolt against the Ottomans, also called the Arab Revolt.

12. For a review of his career, see David Pool, "From Elite to Class: The Transformation of Iraqi Leadership, 1920–1039," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 12:3 (November

1980), 331–350, based mostly on Phebe Marr, "Yasin al-Hashimi: The Rise and Fall of a Nationalist," Ph. D Dissertation, Harvard University 1968.

13. For more see Reeva S. Simon, "The Teaching of History in Iraq before the Rashid 'Ali Coup of 1941," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Jan. 1986; also Amatzia Baram, "A Case of Imported Identity," at 288 n. 8.

14. The history of occupation and foreign onslaught is long: the Buwayhids: 945; the Seljukqs: 1055; the Mongols: 1258; the Jalayrs: 1340; the Mongols: 1393 & 1401; the Turkoman Black Sheep: 1411; Turkoman White Sheep: 1469; Safavids: 1508; 1534 Ottomans under Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent: 1534; Safavids: 1623; Ottomans under Sultan Murad IV: 1638; then the British and the Americans. See Sinan Antoon, "Of bridges and Birds," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 634, April, 17–23, 2003.

15. This is Jabrā Ibrāhim Jabrā's phrase, in Salih Altoma, "In Memoriam: Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 19:4 (Fall 1997), iv–viii, at iv.

16. Ibid. iv.

17. Samuel Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (New York: Doubleday, 1959); also subtitled: *Thirty-Nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1989).

18. Although Peter Sluglett was uneasy about the "genuine, if somewhat quixotic" attempt to throw out the British in July 1920, the losses which the British suffered, and the literature on the revolution, during the event and after, still operate dynamically in Iraqi consciousness. See "Les Mandate/The Mandates: Some Reflections," in *The British and the French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 103–127, at 115.

19. The word *'Irāq* means the shores and lands along a river and a sea.

20. See Peter Galbraith's comment on appointments to run Iraq as an occupied country through the conservative Heritage Foundation and nepotism. One of the appointees to privatize Iraq's economy, Michael Fleisher is quoted as saying he was going to teach the Iraqis how to do business, "The only paradigm they know is cronyism," p. 71.

21. It is worth mentioning that the infrastructure, education and every service in Iraq suffered enormously under the sanctions at a time when Iraq was suffering from the use of depleted uranium and other weapons in 1991. For a survey of this impact and its terrible consequences on life, see Rania Masri, "Assault on Iraq's Environment," in *Iraq: Its History, People and Politics*. Ed. Shams C. Inati. New York: Humanity Books, 2003, pp. 189–214. See also in the same book Nadje al-Ali, "Women: Gender Relations, and Sanctions in Iraq," pp. 233–247.

22. Charles Tripp, *The History of Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 1.

23. Batatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a study of Iraq's old landed and commercial classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

24. Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

Part One
A. Mapping Iraqi Culture: Introduction

1. Edited by the Iraqi/American Sinan Antoon. Directed by InCounter Productions, a collective of artists. See http://www.aboutbaghdad.com

2. It is worthwhile that Iraqi sociologists and writers alike agree on this point as I will explain in due course.

3. The Iraqi National Library was completely destroyed after the ordinary looting. So were the graduate school library at the College of Arts, and many other sites, which should have been inaccessible to ordinary looters. The Awqāf (Religious Endowments) Library, for example, lost in the same manner 45,000 rare books, 5,300 books in Shī'ī jurisprudence, 5,000 medical books, and 5,000 books in Ottoman script. http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/zan.html.

4. See Peter W. Galbraith, "Iraq: The Bungled Transition," *New York Times Book Review,* September 23, 2004, 70–75, written on 25 August 2005.

5. There will be a further note on this subject.

6. See the late Iraqi artist Nuha al-Radi's book, *Baghdad Diaries* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003). A very moving picture is in Betool Khedairi, *A Sky So Close.* New York: Pantheon, 2001. A ballet teacher in Baghdad wrote in a letter to the protagonist via Amman: "It's raining bombs. You can't imagine what we're going through. A black rain covers the gardens, the streets, and the rooftops, resembling black decomposing remains; it makes the days uglier than the nights. The economic embargo has made us cut our hair short to economize in the use of soap and water. The communications tower above the Central Post Office was brought down by the attacking planes. Car bombs devour; a young man looks for his fingers blown off amid the debris. A dog carries its discarded paw as it hops three-legged across a ditch—the water a dirty pink color." The ballet teacher adds in her letter: "So many people die of heart attacks brought on by this ever-present fear. Women pray to God 'Do not dishonor us in our death . . . Do not dishonor us in our death.' Young women no longer sleep in their nightclothes. They dress up to go to bed, or wear their work clothes" in preparation for air strikes. See p. 203.

7. Peter Gran, *Beyond Eurocentricism,* pp. 56–7.

8. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, *Nahḍat al-ʿIrāq al-adabiyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ʿashar* (The Iraqi literary renaissance in the 19th century), (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿārif, 1946).

9. *Iraqi Poetry Today,* p. 62.

10. Ibid.

11. Jabrā Ibrāhim Jabrā's words. Cited in Salih Altoma, "In Memoriam," p. iv.

12. Ibid. p. 91.

13. Cited in Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's report in response. *Naqd taqrīr lajnat Monroe* (A Critique of the Monroe Committee Report; Baghdad: al-Najāḥ Press, 1932), p. 19. The Committee had Professor Paul Monroe as President, William Chandler Bagley and Edgar Wallace Knight, as members, and Janette Monroe as secretary.

14. Ibid.

15. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī was the King's advisor on education for the first six months of 1921, then deputy minister of education, 5 March to 16 January 1923; and director general of education, 17 January 1923–31 July 1927; professor at the Teachers Higher College, 1 August 1927–30 September 1931; general supervisor of education, 1 October 1931–21 January 1931; dean of the college of law, 22 December 1931–10 October 1934; dean of the college of law and director of antiquities 11 October 1934–15 September 1935; director of antiquities and the director general of education and teaching, 16 September 1935–11 September 1936; and director of antiquities, 12 September 1963–11 June 1941. See his *Mudhakkarātī fī al-ʿIrāq* (Beirut: Dār Al-Ṭalīʿah, 1976), 1: 9

16. *Mudhakkarātī,* 2:66. That was during a meeting at Carlton Hotel on the Tigris, 2 August 1931.

17. Ibid. 57. The rejoinder appeared in his journal, no. 17, 15 May, 1929.

18. *The New Iraq: Its Problem of Bedouin Education* (New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), p. v.

19. *Mudhakkarātī,* 2: 143.

20. Ibid.102–103.

21. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bazzāz sums these beliefs as follows: "Arab nationalism is an eternal message emanating from the character of the Arab nation and . . . inspired by Arab history." Cited from Kemal Karpat's translation in his *Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East,* in Don Peretz, *The Middle East: Selected Readings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973) p. 164.

22. See Peter W. Galbraith's neat analysis of the persistent tendency to ignore and overlook Iraq's most recent history. "Iraq: The Bungled Transition." He concludes in one place, "what is astonishing is that the conduct of this venture was not left to the military and civilian professional most qualified to make it work but rather to those most committed to a fuzzy vision of a transformed Iraq," p. 72.

23. Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb, "The Pillar of the Tower of Babel," in *Arab Short Stories: East and West.* Trans. With an introduction by R. Y. Ebied and M. J. L. Young. Leeds, 1977, pp. 1–11, at. 6.

24. Ibid.

25. Betool Khedairi, *A Sky So Close.* New York: Pantheon Books, 2001, p. 31.

26. Ibid. 10.

27. Ibid. 11.

28. Articles appeared in 1965–67, in Iraqi press, and also in *Al-Aqlām* monthly. The renowned poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī (d. 1997) wrote "A Lullaby for the Hungry" on 28 March 1951. The poem can be read as a sarcastic deconstruction of a number of grand narratives that opt to sustain the status quo: "do not dispute, / words are not for the slaves," and sleep for "precious unity / demands that you do so," and sleep "to relieve the rulers / from fears of malaise and strife," and sleep "for the world is only a Bridge/ raised upon adversity." See *Iraqi Poetry Today,* pp. 94–99.

29. See *Dirāsah fī ṭabīʿat al-mujtamaʿ al-ʿIrāqī.* Baghdad: Al-ʿĀnī, 1965, p. 366–67.

30. "To Poetry," in *Iraqi Poetry of Today.* Edited by Daniel Weissbort and Saadi A Simawe. London: King's College, 2003, p. 120.

31. Nāzik al-Malāʾikah, "Longing and Thirst in Iraqi Songs," 1959; and "The Character of Others in Iraqi Songs," 1957, in *Al-Aʿmāl Al-nathriyyah,* vol. 2 (Cairo: The Supreme Council for Culture, 2002), pp. 607–624.

32. See *Dirāsah fī ṭabīʿat al-mujtamaʿ al-ʿIrāqī.* Baghdad, p. 307.

33. Certainly the history of Saddam's *brand* of Baʿthism goes back to 1963, which he tried hard to conceal. Both Amjad Ḥusayn, the writer and academic who was my teacher at the Faculty of Education, and the Kuwaiti writer and academic Sulaymān al-ʿAskarī told me he interrogated them in 1963. On the other hand, the late Saʿd al-Rāwī, who held a doctoral degree from Stanford University and was a Minister of Higher Education in 1971–73, intimated to me that in 1963, when Saddam was still young, he came to al-Bakr and pointed to the supposedly leftist group of ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ al-Saʿdī who were at the back of the meeting room, asking al-Bakr whether he would like him to get rid of them. "We began to fear him," he added.

34. For a short account, see Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 222–223.

35. In *Iraqi Poetry Today,* eds. Daniel Weissbort and Saadi A. Simawe. London: King's College, 2003, p. 156.

B. Reading Iraq Now: Functions and Markers of Culture

1. At the request of the occupying powers the United Nations Security Council confirmed the US-led coalition, overwhelmingly dominated by the US, as the occupying power. See Peter W. Galbraith, p. 70.

2. According to the researches from Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, and al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad, the death toll in Iraq was 100,000 since "the conflict began 18 months ago," and "higher if the Falluja data is included," the study said, as quoted by CNN, 29 October 2004, and as published by the Web site of the *Lancet Medical Journal,* October 29, 2004. The report adds: "air strikes from coalition forces accounted for most of the violent deaths." Also, "most of those who died were women and children."

3. "The 'Other' as the 'Self' under Cultural Dependency: The Impact of the Postcolonial University," in *Encountering the Other(s): Studies in Literature, History, and Culture.* Ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 333–362, at 334–337.

4. Quoted in Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī, *Mudhakkarātī fī al-ʿIrāq,* 1: 175.

5. Quoted in Baram, p. 284.

6. He was the British acting high commissioner for Iraq before independence and later advisor at the Foreign Office. See David Pool, p. 338. The four British High Commissioners are as follows: 1. Sir Percy Cox, 1920–23; 2. Sir Henry Dobbs, 1923–29; 3. Sir Francis Humphrys, 1929-32; and 4. Sir Gilbert Clayton, 1929. The latter died a few months after the appointment, and Sir Francis became ambassador between 1932–35. Before them there was an acting civil

commissioner, A. T. Wilson, September 1918–July 1920. See Peter Sluglett, "British Archival Sources for the History of the Middle Eastern Mandates," in *The British and the French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 55–61, at 60.

7. Quoted in Pool, 338.

8. Ibid.

9. See Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq,* with a new introduction by the author. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. See also Meir Litvak, *Shi'i Scholars of Nineteenth-Century Iraq: The Ulama of Najaf and Karbala.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

10. Ṣāti' al-Ḥuṣrī, *Mudhakkarātī* 2: 160–61, 143.

11. *The New Iraq,* p. 108.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.104.

15. Published in *Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics,* 20: 4, 1958. Cited in 'Alī al-Wardī's *Dirāsah,* p. 118.

16. See for example, Ṣāti' al-Ḥuṣrī, *Dirāsah'an Muqaddimat Ibn Khladun* (A Study of Ibn Khadlun's *Muqaddimah.* Miṣr: Al-Khānjī, 1961; Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History.* London: Allen & Unwin, 1957; 'Alī al-Wardī, *Manṭiq Ibn Khaldun* (The Logic of Ibn Khaldun), (Cairo: Ma'had Al-Dirāsāt, 1962).

17. *The New Iraq: Its Problem of Bedouin Education,* p. 95.

18. Ibid.

19. Quoted in ibid. pp. 49–51.

20. Ibid. 52.

21. Mohammed Fadhel Jamali (sic) quotes Gertrude bell and others on these policies which the British criticized, without necessarily giving up. See *The New Iraq,* pp. 56–57, 59.

22. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, *Nahḍat al-'Irāq al-adabiyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar* (The Iraqi literary renaissance in the nineteenth centrury).

23. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, *Nahḍat al-'Irāq al-adabiyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsi' 'ashar* (The Iraqi literary renaissance in the nineteenth-century), (Beirut: Al-Rā'id, 1990, third printing), pp. 240–43.

24. Ibid. 24.

25. See Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* for a brief review of these groups, 27–29.

26. See Peter and Mariam Farouk-Sluglett, "Sunnis and Shi'is Revisited: Sectarianism and Ethnicity in Authoritarian Iraq," in *Iraq: Power and Society,* eds. Derek Hopwood, et al (Oxford: St. Anthony's College, 1993), pp. 75–90, at. 79.

27. See *Fī ghamrat al-niḍāl* (In the midst of political struggle), 258–59.Tripp drew no connection between these officers and the popular revolution, July–August 1920. See p. 40.

28. *Mudhakkarātī,* vol. 2: 87–99.

29. Ibid. He wrote that the new Prime Minister Ja'far al-'Askarī called him one day and told him to come over to "collect" his minister, "ta'āl istilim wazīrak." Let us read how Ṣāti' al-Ḥuṣrī reports the occasion: "So I went to the Prime Minister's office, without knowing who the minister of education might be. Nonetheless, as soon as I entered the Prime Minister's reception room and had a quick look upon the people seated there, I perceived who the minister was despite the fact that I did not know him before, and never heard of his name: On his head was a large turban, and on his shoulders a downy robe, with a thick reddish beard and light blue eyes." 2: 367. The insinuations of an Iranian descent and the sarcastic tone of the Prime Minister tell a lot of a sense of cultural and racial supremacy.

30. Ibid, 1: 367, 433–456, 585–602.

31. The King was caught in between the British influence and the elite which he brought and established as a needed apparatus. Toby Dodge said succinctly, "From 1921 until 1932 he continually sought to build a base within the state and society to give him autonomy from the nascent political elite as well as from the British who had been responsible for his succession." Cited in "International Obligations . . . ," p. 152.

32. For a brief note of this matter in relation to images of nationhood, see Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: the Case of Iraq," *Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002), pp. 205–215.

33. The late Iraqi historian Jabbār al-ʿUmar (d. 1994) mentioned this to me, and I included it in my novel, *Al-ʿUqda* (The Knot), (Baghdad: Al-Taḥrīr Bookshop, 1989), pp. 132–33.

34. *Mudhakkarātī*, 1:519–27.

35. For a brief note on Woodrow Wilson and his differences with the imperial powers then, see Toby Dodge, p. 147.

36. *Mudhakkarātī,* 1: 56–7. Though she exempted Jaʿfar and Nūrī, she said, "All were after money, position, they are overruled by interest." Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī objected to her generalization that there was no national feeling in the history of the Arabs.

37. The British policy was largely responsible for the destitution of peasantry. To secure the subordination of the "small men of no account" whom they "made . . . powerful and rich," as Major Pulley reported to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad, August 6, 1920, the British set an economic system of terrible consequences. The High Commissioner Henry Dobbs, who was revenue commissioner before, thought of this policy, with its concomitant distribution and leasing, as the most effective to secure domination and control. See Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* pp. 51–2; and Marion Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958* (London; New York: KPI, 1987). Sir John Troutbeck, with his long service in the Middle East, said this in 1953: "The kind of things that were worrying me, as likely in due course to lead to an explosive situation, were the facts that the rich paid practically no taxes, that there were still innumerable peasants without land of their own, that the cost of living remained very high and that the split between the Sunnis and Shias seemed to be getting wider rather than otherwise" as "the Sunni minority . . . still holds most of the big jobs whether in government, administration or army." Quoted in Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," in *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958,* ed. Robert A. Fernea, pp. 31–61, at. 37.

38. For a brief survey based on the Iraqi sociologist ʿAlī al-Wardī's account, see Zubaida, p. 210.

39. Some current messages allegedly by Zarqāwī still use the term. The term *rāfiḍī* was in use during the times of Imam Muḥammad Ibn Idris al-Shāfiʿī (150/767–205/820) who rejected the unqualified use against partisans. See L. Clarke, "Elegy on Imam Husayn," in *Alserāt,* XII 1986, 13–28, at 18.

40. There is a further note in part four.

41. *Mudhakkarātī*, 1: 87–89.

42. Ibid. 89.

43. In a short story under the title "Aʿwām al-ruʿb" (Years of horror), by the Iraqi Shākir Khuṣbāk, from Ḥilla or Babylon, there was this prevailing notion throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The protagonist says: "We were living in security and peace for we had nothing to do with the government, and we were happy and contented, but times began to change. The government began to interfere in people's affairs, and people in the affairs of the government." See his collection, *ʿAhd jadīd* (A new period), (Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, 1951), p. 186.

44. See Tawfīq al-Sayf, *Naẓariyat al-ṣultah fī al-fiqh al-Shīʿī* (Beirut: Al-Markaz Al-Thaqāfī Al-ʿArabī, 2002), p. 108.

45. See *Mudhakkarātī*, 1: 89, on the King; on the Prime Minister Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī, and his readiness to resign if Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī"s position was not respected against the poet al-Jawāhirī, 1: 601; and how Nūrī al-Saʿīd was pacified as Minister of Foreign affairs when Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī explained to him that the American ambassador had no reason to object to his decisions regarding the Chicago University archaeological mission and its disappointment at not dividing every finding or item between them and the Iraqi museum. See 1: 419.

46. "Class and Class Politics in Iraq before 1958: The 'Colonial and Post-Colonial State'," in *The Iraqi Revolution: The Old Social Classes Revisited,* ed. Robert Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 154–171, at. 158.

47. *Mudhakkarātī*, 1: 433.

48. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī's poem appeared in *Al-Fayḥā'* newspaper, 15, 31 March, 1927, and included in his *Dīwān,* vol. 1(Bagdad: Wizārat al-I'lām, 1972), pp. 359–60.

49. Included along with the interpretations in Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, *Mudhakkarātī*, 1: 588–99.

50. See "The Jews of Iraq," in *Iraq: Its History, People and Politics,* p. 146.

51. The concept of the "colonial state" finds no better expression than the one argued by Sir Francis Humphrys as the High Commissioner in Iraq in 1931, for in comparison to the "civilized nations of the modern world," there are states like Iraq, recreated with a "machinery of government" that " may not run so smoothly or so efficiently " as the former. See Toby Dodge, pp. 160–61, and fn. 55. See also Sir John Troutbeck's subsequent views in this connection, in Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," pp. 33–34.

52. See Joyce N. Wiley, p. 155, for example, on the alliance with the Turks.

53. Kāẓim Makkī, *Ṣafwān al-adīb* (Basrah: Al-Fayḥā' Press, 1939).

54. See Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Riwāyah fī al-'Irāq* (Cairo: ALECSO, 1973), p. 116, n. 1.

55. *Duktūr Ibrāhīm,* p. 55.

56. Quoted in Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Riwāyah fī al-'Irāq,* p. 216. See Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb's *Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (Baghdad, 1939; 2nd print with the assistance of The Ministry of Education, 1960), pp. 184–85.

57. See Hana Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 645–47. Also Abdul-Salaam Yousif, "The Struggle for Cultural Hegemony during the Iraqi Revolution," in *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958,* ed. Robert A. Fernea, pp. 172–196, at. 176.

58. These include the ratification of the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, the 1930 oil concessions, the tying of the dinar to the sterling, and the emplacement of British advisors in key administrative positions. See Roger Owen, p. 156. For more on the early British effort to secure oil concessions, see Peter Sluglett, Les Mandates . . . ," p. 123.

59. *Mudhakkarātī,* p. 56.

60. This does not preclude the fact that he tried his best to reach all ethnic and religious groups, as the following table and terms indicate regarding primary schools in Nasiriyah and Imarah in 1921-22: 80 Sunni, 99 Shī'ī, 4 Christian, 23 Israeli, and 32 Sabian. As for Imarah: 89 Sunni, 50 Shī'ī, 4 Christian, 30 Israeli, and 42 Sabian. See *Mudhakkarātī,* 1:342. In these provinces, there is supposedly a Shī'ī majority. There must be reasons for reluctance or obstacles to joining.

61. He was disturbed by Shawkat's phrase, "ṣinā'at al-mawt," the craft of death, as synonym to national martyrdom, and was appalled by Shawkat's misunderstanding of Ibn Khaldun's terminology. See *Mudhakkarātī* 2: 160–61.

62. For short review, see Tripp, pp. 67-68, 74–75, 86–88.

63. It also claimed the lives of nearly 200 individuals. For more, see Tripp, pp. 105–106, 123–126. See also Meer S. Basri, "Notes on the Jews of Iraq," in *Iraq: Its History, People, and Politics,* pp. 143–148.

64. Samir Naqqash in *Forget Baghdad.* A Documentary Film (Seattle, Washington: Arab Film Distribution, 2002).

65. There are many works by Mir Basri (also Meer), including monographs on the Jewish community, the Kurdish political personalities, the Arabs, and the Turkumans. He has published on Arab/Iraqi nationalism, too. See as an example, Mir Basri, *A'lām al-adab fī al-'Irāq al-ḥadīth.* London: Dār Al-Ḥikmah, 1994–99; and *A'lām al-waṭaniyyah wa-al-qawmiyyah al-'Arabiyyah*) (London: Dār Al-Ḥikmah, 1999).

66. Shimon Ballas, *The Shoes of Tanboury.* (New York: Sabra Books, 1970).

67. For a brief account, see Tripp, 74–5, 244–46.

68. Tripp's phrase, *A History of Iraq,* p. 96.

69. In his answer to an American educator's questionnaire, he argued it is not valid to speak of sustaining the status quo, "for the Arab nation is in a bad condition that does not justify its conservation." No. 31 of his *Journal.* See *Mudhakkarātī,* 2: 277–80.

70. Then it was joined to the Ministry of Transportation in 1922, and then to the Ministry of Education in 1926. After her death, the notorious antiquities trafficker Mr. Cook took over in his capacity as the advisor for the Ministry of Endowments. He was followed by Sidney Smith, deputy to the British Museum director.

71. Ibid. 2: 403.

72. Ibid.2: 407.

73. Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, "Museums and the Construction of National History in Syria and Lebanon," in *The British and the French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives.* Ed. Nadine Meouchy and Peter Sluglett (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 185–202, at. 189.

74. Ibid, 2: 417.

75. The moment was in the records of negotiations, run by the late Murtaḍā ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Baghdad: Al-Dār Al-Waṭaniyyah, 1972).

76. See also Sir John Troutbeck's call in April 1953 for "a real effort to move things in the right direction." In Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," p. 35.

77. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī, *Mudhakkarātī,* 2: 282.

78. Hence such an architect of British policy in Iraq as Hubert Young was unhappy with the advisors who might become "more native than the native himself." Quoted in Toby Dodge, p. 154.

79. Cited Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," p. 35.

80. Fuʾād al-Takarlī, *Al-Rajʿ al-baʿīd* (1977, translated by Catherine Cobhan as *The Long Way Back*), (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2001), p. 247.

81. For a review of these, see Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," *Journal of Middle East Studies* 29(1997), 1–31.

82. One needs to survey Hanna Batatu's monumental work *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements,* for example, to see the urban formation since World War II. The percentage to the whole population of the urban to the rural for the Arab Sunnis in 1947, for instance, was 26.7 urban, 16.0 rural, while for the Shīʿīs, 41.9 urban to 56.5 rural. For Christians the percentage to the whole population was 5.9 urban to 1.8 rural. As for the Jews, it was 7.0 urban to 0.2 rural. See p. 40. Although undergoing serious changes later, the urban presence meant political participation and middle class growth. Middle classes henceforth have been instrumental in the formation of the state apparatus and political parties.

83. See Aaron B. Wildavsky, "Choosing Preferences by Constructing Institutions: A Cultural Theory of Preference Formation," in A.A. Berger, ed. *Political Culture and Public Opinion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1989), pp. 68–69.

84. See for instance, Jerome H. Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1951); and Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

85. Abū Ūthmān ʿAmr Ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–9), *Al-Bayān wa-al-tabyīn* (Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 2001), pp. 259–60.

86. Ibid. 263–265.

87. Ibid.301–302

88. *Dirāsah,* pp. 366–67.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid. 367.

91. Arabic Edition. Beirut: Al-Andalus, 1996, 2:36. Also in English, *The Meadows of Gold,* trans. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone (London: Kegan Paul, 1989).

92. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 9–10.

93. See Abdul Salam Yousif's note, in reference to the monarchy, p. 181.

94. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House-Vintage, 1995), p. 27.

95. Ibid. 28.

96. Reference here is to the late professor ʿAlī al-Wardī of Baghdad University with his influential interpretations of the Iraqi society, written in 1950–1970, as one of duality, mainly urban and Bedouin, whereby closeness to nomadic life decides the parameters of duality. See especially *Lamaḥāt Ijtimāʿiyah min tārikh al-ʿIrāq al-ḥadīth* (Social aspects of Iraqi modern history). London: Kufaan, 1991 (reprint. of 1969). See further notes in part three.

97. Although no documentation or memoirs are available, I had a chance to mix with national and leftist Kurds banished to the South in the 1960s.

98. See for example his poems as transcribed and translated by Carol Bardenstein and Saadi A. Simawe, in *Iraqi Poetry Today* (London: king's College London, 2003), pp. 151–185.

99. Eric Davis, "The Museum and the Politics of Social Control in Modern Iraq," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity,* ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 90–104, at. 92.

100. Cited in Davis, from Sarah Graham-Brown's *The Desert and the Sown,* p. 102.

101. According to Theodor H. Gaster, in *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Norton and Co., 1977), howling and wailing at seasonal ceremonies "need not be interpreted as acts of mourning, but rather as mere expressions of excitement or as functional procedures designed to promote fertility through the magical properties of tears." Without denying the element of mourning, he thinks these acts "fall into the category of rites of Invigoration rather than Mortification" (p. 34). Without going into details of how these were carried out and when, he mentions Tammuz, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh,* Isis in Egyptian rites, Osiris among the Greeks, Attis in Asia Minor, and Adonis in Syria.

102. Akkad: north of Sumer.

103. See Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . . Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), xi–xii.

104. See, for example, Amal al-Juburi's " Enheduanna," translated by Salih Altoma:

> Oh Towers:
> It's time to leave this Mesopotamian soil
> This land of sighs
> Too many dead you have buried
> While brooding your conspiracies
> Your rotten days.

The poem ends with identification with Enheduanna, "her heart was greater than / The tyrants' gospels." See also Altoma's note and references to scholarship, in "Iraqi Poets in Western Exile," *World Literature Today* (October–December 2003), pp. 37–41, at 40.

105. Ibid. 458.

106. Ibid. 459.

107. Ibid. 460.

108. Ibid. 459.

109. Also Ama-usumgal-ana, the shepherd god, the lover of Inana, the goddess of love and war. For more see Jeremy Black, *Reading Sumerian Poetry* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998).

110. Benjamin R. Foster, trans. edit. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2001), xi.

111. Ibid. 5–6.

112. Ibid. Xxi.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid. 27.

115. Ibid. 47.

116. Davis, p. 90.

117. Jawad Yaqoob, "The Resurrectuion of Layla al-Attar," in *Iraqi Poetry Today,* pp. 238–39.

118. Salih Altoma, "'The Last Painting': Introductory Remarks," *The Literary Review,* 45: 3 (Spring 2002), 576–79, at 576.

119. Ibid. 576.

120. Ḥaydar Ḥaydar, *Walīmah li-a'shāb al-baḥr* (A Banquet for the seaweed), (Damascus: Dār Amwāj, 1984).

121. Pp. 82, 185, 190. These are real characters as Tarq Ali points out, too. See Tariq Ali, *Bush in Babylon: the Recolonization of Iraq* (New York: Verso, 2004), pp. 94–101.

122. Ibid. 128.

123. Ibid. 137. The reference is to Imam Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Mahdī Ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 874) al-Muntaẓar (the awaited-for, and hence he is Ṣāḥib aI-Zamān, the master or the guardian of time), the twelfth Shī'ī hidden Imam who went into the *ghaybah,* occlusion in 878 [some scholars used 'occultation,' see Arthur Jeffery, *A Reader on Islam,* p. 12]. See also Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shī'ī: Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 161–62. In Albert Hourani's neat summary: "Since the world could not exist without an *imam,* it was believed that the twelfth one had not died but was still living in 'occlusion' (*ghayba*); at first he communicated with the Muslim people through intermediaries, but after that he was out of the view of the living world, which remained in expectation of his reappearance to bring in the reign of justice." See *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), pp. 61–62.

124. Ibid. 142.

125. Ibid. 198, 205.

126. *Al-Thawra,* 1–3 April 1991. The reference to India is to Muhammad al-Qasim, the Abbasid leader who conquered India in the 9th century. See Isam al Khafaji, p. 224.

127. Jalīl al-Qaysī, *Mamlakat al-in'kāsāt al-ḍaw'iyyah* (The kingdom of the reflections of light; Baghdad: Al-Thaqāfiyah, 1996), p. 29.

128. For a brief discussion, see Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria* (London: Edward Arnold, 1954, reprint 1969).

129. For a good survey of this issue, see Luṭfī J. 'Alī, *'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Sa'dūn* (Baghdad: Dār al-Rashīd, 1979), pp. 102–106.

130. Muqtadā al-Ṣadr, perhaps born in 1974, is the only remaining son of Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Sadr, who was assassinated in 1999. He disappeared to save his life, and could not finish training at the Hawzah, remaining as such with no formal Islamic standing. Following the line of his father, he pledged allegiance to his grand uncle's (Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, executed with his sister by Saddam Hussein in 1980) student, the Iran-based, Iraqi-exiled cleric, Ayatollah Kāẓim al-Ḥā'irī. On 28 March 2004, the US occupation authorities ordered the closure of al-*Hawza* newspaper, published by Muqtada al-Sadr, alleging it was inciting violence. The closure led to peaceful protests that turned into violence when they were met with American use of force. Al-Sadr urged his followers to "terrorise" their enemy on 5 April 2004. Muqtada al-Sadr has maintained his rejection of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council and has actively advocated the so-called "faithfully Islamic government." The enormous force used by the occupation against the insurgents and fighters led to considerable casualities.

131. The reference is to Imam Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad al-Mahdī Ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (d. 874) al-Muntaẓar (the awaited-for, and hence he is Ṣāḥib aI-Zamān, the master or the guardian of time).

132. For these and other quotes, see Kāmil Muṣtafā al-Shībī, *Al-Ṣilah bayna al-taṣawwuf wa-al-tashayyu'* (Beirut: Dār Al-Andalus, 3rd Print, 1982), 2: 499.

133. While the international body is made to accept the naming of the process from "occupation" to "alliance" presence, the fact on the ground is the same, unless other steps are taken to accommodate a national spectrum of difference, with actual say and role in the fate of Iraq.

134. See A. Laroui, *Tārīkh al-Maghrib* (History of the Arab West; Beirut: MADN, 1977), p. 332.

To use newly empowered middlemen from among the locales and exiles might sound as natural as any process if there were no other arrangements to monopolize business. Nobody should be duped into thinking that enforced arrangements will prove successful in the long run.

135. Again, like other details relating to revenues and contracts, this whole issue should not be bypassed lightly. There must be an investigation of the whole thing, according to Wal-

ter Sommerfeld and Robert Fisk. According to Sommerfeld, who was there in April and May 2003, there was a systematic looting and arson. "The looters pillaged and destroyed, but did not burn," he wrote, for "the arsonists came afterwards, systematically dousing the looted buildings with gasoline, in some cases with incendiary chemicals, and lighting them ablaze." For more see www.zyworld.com/Assyrian/Main.htm.

136. For Maʿrūf al-Rusāfī, see his *Dīwān,* vol. 3 (Beirut: Al-Mawsūʿāt, 1999–2000), pp. 343–346. For the historical background, see Faydī, on Shaykh Ḍārī, p. 258.

137. The phrase "structures of feeling" was coined by Raymond Williams in his Preface to Film, and later in *The Long Revolution,* to designate particularity and difference even among commonalities derived from inherited norms and alien streaks. See *Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism.* Ed. Joseph Childers and Gary Hentzi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 288–89.

138. *Dirāsah,* p. 239.

Part Two
Power Relations and Cultural Dynamics Since the Mandate

1. Jeremy Black, *Reading Sumerian Poetry.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 3. On the impact of other civilizations, see M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Influences on Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997). The standard work is Samuel N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (English translation, 1959, rev. 1961).

2. Jalīl al-Qaysī, "Nidāba," in his collection *Mamlakat al-inʿkāsāt al-ḍawʾiyyah* (The kingdom of the reflections of light), p. 52. The title refers to the Babylonian goddess of vegetation.

3. Translated by Salih Altoma, see "Iraqi Poets in Western Exile," p. 39.

4. That was Richard Murphy's phrase as Under Secretary of State in the 1980s. Noam Chomsky uses "our kind of guy" in paraphrasing Murphy's phrase in the 1980s. See "Rogue States," *The Saddam Reader,* edited by Turi Munthe (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), p. 392.

5. The young poet, who was very close to the Iraqi President in the early 1980s, coined this to fit into Saddam's own view of things. This phrase also sums up what Charles Tripp argues at length in respect to Saddam's autocracy, his attempt to show "unique qualifications" as representative of all Iraqis. See "The Iran-Iraq War and the Iraqi State," in *The Saddam Reader,* p. 109.

6. See Peter Sluglett, "British Archival Sources for the History of the Middle Eastern Mandates," in *The British and the French Mandates,* pp. 55–56.

7. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge.* Trans. Colin Gordon, et al. New York: Harvester, 1980, p. 59.

8. Due to differences with London, especially due to the 1920 Revolution, he was "uceremoniously removed." See Toby Dodge, p. 149.

9. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 278–79.

10. See for instance the appeal to tribalism, the use of advisors, the approach to religious sentiments, the empowering of subordinates, the dissolution of the army and state apparatus, the jingoist jargon, and the sheer relish of absolute power, the baseless claim that all is in the hands of the Iraqis, the reluctance to look at the heart of the insurgency, its internal and external burgeoning, and the hasty desire to claim other reasons, etc. For material to compare, see Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958* (London: Tauris, 1987, reprint 2001), p. 12. For the celebration of fire and military power, see Colonel Wilson's covert threats to the Shīʿī Grand Marjiʿ al-Iṣbahānī, who became so after al-Shīrāzī's death, reminding him of the imperial army of five millions "spread all over the globe," *al-ʿIrāq* daily, 27 August 1920, n. 77, cited in Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, *Tārīkh al-qaḍiyyah al-ʿIrāqiyyah* (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿt al-Falāḥ, 1923), pp. 254–257. For cases that are worth comparison, see ibid. pp. 210, on insurgents; and civilizational mission, p. 165.

11. In a talk at Columbia University, Professor Stephen Holmes from NYU, who was among the USA advisors to set the current Iraqi law, said: "we often disjointedly attempt to impose our own values and governmental structures on a nation without first trying to understand their contemporary institutions and situation." See *Columbia Spectator,* October 7, 2004, p.1.

12. Cited in Philip I. Ireland, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1937, pp. 138–39.

13. Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985, p. 31.

14. ʿAbbās ʿAlī, *Zaʿīm al-thawrah al-ʿIrāqiyyah* (The leader of the Iraqi revolution: al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr; Baghdad: al-Najāḥ, 1950), p. 39. The writer largely relies on Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr.

15. Ibid. 38–43.

16. See Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, pp. 36–38.

17. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr cited this along with other issues that Bell mentioned as responsible for a new Iraqi political consciousness against occupation. See *Tārīkh al-qaḍiyyah al-ʿIrāqiyyah* (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat Al-Falāḥ, 1923), p. 78.

18. See the full record of the interview, in *Fī Ghamrat al-niḍāl,* pp. 211–223, at. 216.

19. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Ibrāhīm also published *Dirāsāt fī al-ʾijtimāʿ* (studies in sociology; Baghdad: Al-Rābiṭah, 1950), a book that relates sociology to the social sciences, political science, statecraft, philosophy, civilization, environment, geography, economic theories, social classes, cultural exchange, the idea of periodization, the idea of the golden age, the concept of progress and material philosophy, division of labor, specialization, cultural change, nationalism and political entity. In other words, the author has in mind the need to take all these into consideration when analyzing the Iraqi society and his stand behind social democratization.

20. See Hanna Batatu, pp. 425–26.

21. Salih Altoma studied and assessed 70 doctoral dissertations done by Iraqis at the American institutions until 1963, in terms of time and specialization, in his capacity then as the Iraqi cultural attaché. See his article, "Dirāsah iḥṣāʾiyyah ʿann ḥamalat al-duktūrāh al-ʿIrāqiyyīn," *The Professor,* College of Education, University of Baghdad, vol. 16, 1968–69, pp. 249–258. Fāḍil al-Jamālī was discharged of education in 1941 when the British advisor disapproved of his policy and suspected him of Nazi sentiments, an accusation that proved baseless. See Harry J. Almond, *Iraqi Statesman: A Portrait of Mohammed Fadhel Jamali.* N.E. Salem, OR: Grosvenor Books, 1993, pp. 37, and 43.

22. In addition to what was already mentioned, Professor Paul Monroe was from Columbia University Teachers College, and, from the same college, Professor Chandler Bagley, and Professor Edgar Knight, from the University of North Carolina. Fāḍil al-Jamālī was the Iraqi Government attaché to the Commission.

23. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī's policy was mainly nationalist, but he had little knowledge of the history of Iraq, the reasons behind the rift between the Ottomans and the South, the reluctance of the South to be part of the government, etc. As such he discriminated against many as of Persian extraction, including the poet Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī, whom he relegated to a primary school teaching job, while approving of Shaykh Muḥammad Bahjat al-Atharī for a better job at the Ministry of Education, as al-Jawāhirī argued with due recognition of al-Atharī's scholarship. Both appointees had no certificates. Ṣāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī looked upon the appointment of Sayyid ʿAbd al-Mahdī as Minister with dismay. See Muḥammad Mahdī al-Jawāhirī, *Dhikrayātī* (Damascus: Dār Al-Rāfidayn, 1988), vol. 1: 141–155.

24. Ibid. p. 20.

25. See ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Uzrī, *Tārīkh fī dhikrayāt al-ʿIrāq,* 1930–1958. Beirut: NP. 1982, pp. 22–25. The writer was the Minister of Finance in the last cabinet of March 1958, before the revolution in July 1958. The British ambassador Sir Michael Wright thought of him as a "doctrinaire economist and land owner with progressive views and many ideas." Cited in Wm. Roger Louis in "the British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," p. 48.

26. See Harry J. Almond, *Iraqi Statesman: A Portrait of Mohammed Fadhel Jamali.* N.E. Salem, OR: Grosvenor Books, 1993, p. 44. This was not shared by al-Ḥuṣrī, nor was it shared by Dhū al-Nūn Ayyūb. See 2: 283–85; and 1960: 24; 198–199, respectively.

27. See Turi Munthe's conclusion, "Introduction," to *The Saddam's Reader,* p. xxix. Saddam's combination of nationalist theory and pragmatics led to a reign of terror against oppo-

nents or suspected opponents, see his views as voiced in an interview, *The Saddam Reader,* pp. 6, 12, 23–25

28. To understand the impact, see Parker Thomas Moon, *Imperialism and World Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1926).

29. The group consisted of American University of Beirut graduates in the 1920s, including ʿAbd al-Qādir Ismāʿīl who was to become one of the Iraqi communist party leaders. See Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, p. 18.

30. Cited in *Usṭūrat al-adab al-rafīʿ* (The Myth of Belles Lettres), p. 63.

31. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1991, p. 68.

32. See Liora Lukitz's application of Anthony D. Smith's formulas. *Iraq: The Search for National Identity.* London: Frank Cass, 1995, p. 1.

33. Eric Hobsbawm, Introduction, *The Invention of Tradition.* Eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 1.

34. Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides, Preface, *Statecraft,* p. xvii.

35. Ibid, p. 13.

36. His is one of the four *Orthodox madhāhib* or law schools.

37. See Salih Altoma, "Martyrdom in Arabic Literature," in *Islam in the Contemporary World,* ed. Cyriac K. Pullapilly. Notre Dame, Indiana: Crossroad Books, 1980, pp. 54–69.

38. ʿĀlyah Mamdūḥ, *Ḥabbāt al-naftālīn.* 1986; English translation, Alia Mamdouh, *Mothballs* (London: Garnet, 1996), p. 96.

39. "Ḥawla qaṣāʾid ʿIrāqiyyah muntakhabah," in *Dirāsāt naqdiyyah fī al-adab al-ḥadīth* (Baghdad, 1970; reprint, Cairo: GEBO, 1995), pp. 123–140, at. 127.

40. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.

41. See Liora Lukitz on this point, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity.* London: Frank Cass, 1995, p. 2.

42. See Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyyīn,* ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: Al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1949); al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh al-umam wa-al-mulūk* (Beirut: Dār Ṣadir, 2003), vol. 3, pp. 1012–1058; and Abū Mikhnif, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* (Tehran: Maktabat Intishārāt, n. d.). There are also other versions, like the *Maqtal* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Maqram, and *Al-Majālis al-saniyyah,* by Muḥsin Amīn al-ʿĀmilī. See Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaydarī, *Trājīdyā Karbalāʾ* (London: Saqi, 1999), p. 97.

43. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 68–69, 83, 453.

44. For a review, see ibid, pp. 332–334.

45. The meeting authorized al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, Aḥmad al-Dāwūd, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khālisī, Yāsīn al-Hāshimī, and Ḥamdī al-Bāchachī, to meet the King and discuss the matter with him. Although Yāsīn al-Hāshimī could not attend the meeting, he expressed his support. The group issued a communiqué that was repressed by the occupation authorities, but it became a kind of national contract for the Euphrates tribes, the other provinces, and groups

46. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 492–95. Hereafter citations in the text. Churchill's record on Iraq is recalled with anger, as he also authorized the use of chemical weapons against the Iraqis.

47. They were the Shīʿī Marjiʿ and actual participant in the anti-colonial struggle al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, the Grand Marjiʿ Taqqī al-Shīrāzī, through his advisor al-Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim who was a symbolic figure and the chief missionary for the Revolution; al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Dāwūd; al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ẓāhir (of good grounding in religious sciences and he went underground after the crack on *Ḥaras al-Istiqlāl* and came out after the formation of the first cabinet, Ibid.151); Jaʿfar Abū al-Timman (among the most brilliant businessmen and dynamic national leaders); Rifʿat al-Chādrchī (he was in his seventies then and was exiled to Istanbul and came back on 7 December 1921); al-Shaykh Saʿīd al-Naqshbandī (a religious leader, and the president of the *ʿAhd* (Promise/Pledge) Society in Baghdad; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥaydarī (from the famous Ḥaydarī family in Kāẓimiyyah, Baghdad); ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nāʾib (one of the great religious leaders in Baghdad); ʿAlī al-Bāzirqān; al-Sayyid ʿAbd al-Karīm al-

Sayyid Ḥaydar (from a great renowned family), Fu'ād Afandī al-Daftarī (although he was in his seventies, he was active enough to negotiate rising problems among his colleagues, and was imprisoned along with his wife and son in a military prison on 28 August 1920 and exiled to Istanbul and came back on 7 December 1921, and became the mayor of Baghdad) ; Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Khalīl (exiled to Basra, and imprisoned there and then exiled to Henjam); Yūsuf Afandī al-Suwaidī; al-Ḥājj Yāsīn Chalabī al-Khuḍairī (a man of wealth and good reputation). From the real center of the Revolution, Najaf and the Euphrates, there were al-Shaykh Jawād al-Jawāhirī; al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Riḍī al-Shaykh Mahdī; al-Ḥājj 'Abd al-Muḥsin Chalabī Shlāsh; al-Sayyid 'Alwān al-Yāsirī; al-Sayyid Nūr al-Sayyid 'Azīz; from Ḥillah Ra'ūf al-Amīn and Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī.

48. 'Abbās 'Alī, *Za'īm al-thawrah al-'Irāqiyyah,* pp. 44–45.

49. The pledge is as follows: "I swear by God's name to follow the policy of the government of his Majesty the King, and avoid any action that will cause disorder, and incite ideas against the government" (Ibid. 438).

50. Ibid. pp. 190–200. See also 'Abbās 'Alī, *Za'īm al-thawrah al-'Irāqiyyah* (The leader of the Iraqi revolution: al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr; Baghdad: al-Najāḥ, 1950), p. 41

51. See Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaydarī, *Trājīdyā Karbalā',* pp. 72, and 70, respectively.

52. For a review of readings of these festivities, see Falih A. Jabbar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi, 2003), pp. 187–192.

53. Ibid.

54. Jacques Berque, *Cultural Expression in Arab Society Today.* Tr. Robert W. Stookey. London and Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 1974, pp. 194 and 195.

55. In Mahmoud Ayoub's monumental work, the phrase implies "transformation of suffering from a power of total negation into something of value . . . effected though human faith and divine mercy," for suffering in this case "can be overcome only by its own power." The term is applied to Shī'ī rituals and *ta'ziyah.* See *Redemptive Suffering.* The Hague, London, New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978. I am using the term in broader terms, however, in view of Iraqi ancient history, and also in view of the long Sumerian suffering.

56. For a full assessment of this movement, in its diverse ways and occupations, see Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 82–88, 328–29, 341, 353–54, 389.

57. See Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqī wa-athar al-tayyārāt al-siyāsiyyah fīh* (Iraqi poetry and the impact of social and political trends; Cairo: Al-Dār al-Qawmiyyah, 1966), p. 145.

58. Al-Baṣīr, pp. 335–337.

59. Ibid. pp. 250–51.

60. Ibid. pp. 435–39, and 294.

61. *The Grassroots of Iraqi Art* (London: Wasit Graphic and Publishing Limited, 1983), p. 30.

62. 'Abbās 'Alī, *Za'īm al-thawrah al-'Irāqiyyah,* pp. 44–45.

63. See Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr on Sir Arnold Wilson, p. 285. See also Toby Dodge, on the Iraqi "vocal nationalism," though with no reference to Iraqi documentation, pp. 148–49.

64. Philip Ireland, 196.

65. Ibid. 239.

66. Ibid. 263.

67. See Batatu, pp. 294–95.

68. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp.189–190.

69. Ibid. 278.

70. In *An Anthology of Middle Eastern Literature from the Twentieth Century,* p. 83.

71. The name of the temple outside the city towards which the procession used to go. It gave its name to the festival.

72. S. K. Eddy, *The King is Dead.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961, pp. 24, and 109–110.

73. Beirut: Al-Fārābī, 2003.

74. Cited in 'Alī al-Wardī, *Wu'āz al-salāṭīn* (sultans' counselors, 1954; London: Kufaan, reprint, 1995), p. 30.

75. Al-Ḥuṣrī al-Qayrawānī, *Jam' al-Jawāhir.* Beirut: Al-Manhal, 1993, pp. 111–112.

76. Matthew Elliot, *'Independent Iraq': The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941–1958.* London: I. B. Tauris Academic Studies, 1996, p. 21.

77. Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqī al-ḥadīth wa-athar al-tayyārāt al-ijtimā'īyyah wa-al-siyāsiyyah fīh* (Iraqi poetry and the impact of political and social trends, p. 136.

78. See Ireland, p. 190, and n.2.

79. See D. K. Fieldhouse, ed. with introduction. *Kurds, Arabs and Britons: The Memoir of Wallace Lyon in Iraq, 1918–44.* London: I.B. Tauris, 2002, p. 13.

80. Cited by Hanna Batatu, p. 423.

81. *Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity.* Berkeley: University Press, 1962, p. 1171.

82. For a full text, see Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 57–59. In English, see Appendix II.

83. See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq,* p. 79; and Batatu, p. 399, on the leftist organization of the demonstrations.

84. See Liora Lukitz's use and neat application of A.D. Smith's ideas, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p. 2.

85. Cited in Philip Ireland, p. 139.

86. Ibid. Ibid. p. 164.

87. Cited in Ireland, p. 138.

88. See Isam al Khafaji, "Not Quite an Arab Prussia: Revisiting Some Myths on Iraqi Exceptionalism," in *Iraq: the Human Cost of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 213–257, at. 217–20.

89. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1982, reprint 2001, p. 60.

90. Matthew Elliot, *'Independent Iraq': The Monarchy and British Influence,* 1941–1958, p. 5.

91. Hisham Sharabi, *Governments and Politics of the Middle East in the Twentieth Century.* New York: Nostrand, 1962, p 149.

92. *The Political Unconscious,* p. 13.

93. For a review of these, see McGuire Gibson, "Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Iraq: Its People, History and Politics,* pp. 23–34.

94. See *Dirāsah,* p. 5.

95. Cited from *Dhikrayāt,* p. 89, in Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 23.

96. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 86–87.

97. Eric Davis and Nicholas Gavrielides, *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture.* Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991, p. xii.

98. Cited in Hala Fattah, "The Question of 'Artificiality' of Iraq as a Nation-State," in *Iraq: Its History, People, and Politics,* ed. Shams C. Inati. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003, pp. 49–60, at. 57.

99. Cited In Ireland, p. 138.

100. See Ireland's citations, p. 172, and n. 4–5.

101. See my citations and comment, in *The PostcolonialArabic Novel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 64.

102. See Alī al-Bāzirqān, *Al-Waqāi' al-haqīqiyyah fī al-thawrah al-'Irāqiyyah.* Baghdad: 1954, pp. 66–67.

103. It should be noted that the British looked with suspicion on Iraqis, They allowed and advised Ṭālib Pāsha al-Naqīb to go in "voluntary exile" to Ceylon. Other Iraqi officers in the Turkish army who offered their services like Nūrī al-Sa'īd and 'Abdullah al-Damlūjī were sent into detention camps in India and Egypt, before joining later as the real pillars of the pro-British national alliance. See Ireland, p. 239, and n. 1–2. Fieldhouse offers a better view, more consistent with Iraqi accounts, as Ṭālib Pāshā al-Naqīb was "arrested on Cox's order after hav-

ing tea with Gertrude Bell." That was on 17 April 1921. Fieldhouse comments: "Nothing demonstrates more clearly the arbitrary nature of British methods: this was their standard tactic when dealing with recalcitrant people in their colonies." p. 17.

104. See Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr on this issue, and how Iraqi notables in Baghdad and the South, along with Iraqi officers in the Turkish army, were supportive of this appointment on a variety of bases, including nationalism, but the Hashemite legitimacy was foremost, pp. 82–85.

105. Ibid. 82.

106. Ibid. 83–84.

107. The phrase here indicates the specific emphasis on root, Islamic nation and rule.

108. The verse reads as follows: "White are our deeds (we are good and generous); black are our battles (they make our foes grieve); our fields are green (we are affluent not needy); and our swords are red (we are cavaliers and knights who defeat their enemies)."

109. *Al-Waqā'i'*, no. 189, 27 June 1959.

110. Cited in Christine Moss Helms, *Iraq: Eastern Flank of the Arab World.* Washington, D. C. 1984, pp. 114–115.

111. Cited in Amīn al-Mumayyiz, *Baghdad kamā 'ariftuhā* (Baghdad as I know it), Baghdad, 1985, p. 62.

112. See Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides' use of Gramsci's phrase, p. 25.

113. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, pp. 68–69.

114. See Elliot, pp. 10, 16.

115. *Duktūr Ibrāhīm,* p. 40.

116. See *Wu'āẓ al-salāṭīn* (The Sultans' counselors or preachers; 1954, reprint. London: Kufaan, 1995), p. 19.

117. Ibid. 20.

118. pp. 19–20.

119. Gardner Murphy has many publications, including *Personality: a Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure* (New York: Harper, 1947); and *Approaches to Personality,* co-authored with F. Jensen (New York: Coward-McCann, 1932).

120. *The New Iraq: Rebuilding the Country for its People, the Middle East, and the World.* New York, NY: basic Books, 2003, p. xv.

121. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, p. 148.

122. Batatu's conclusion based on a personal conversation, p. 423, n. 23.

123. Ibid. P. 413.

124. Ibid. p. 397.

125. The organ of the Central Committee of ICP, *Kifāḥ al-Sha'b,* n. 2, August 1935, pp. 6–7, warned members in "The Question of Religion" from concentrating on a topic, "when addressing the people when the latter having not yet attained the perspective that would make a forthright discussion of such a matter feasible." Cited in Batatu, p. 409, n. 18.

126. See Batatu's note regarding early formations, pp. 412–13.

127. Ibid. pp. 406–7.

128. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, p. 150.

129. For a survey, see Batatu, pp. 296–97.

130. See Matthew Elliot's Appendix, pp. 169–180.

131. Ibid. 181-183; but see Batatu, for extensive references.

132. Cited in ibid. p. 401.

133. Ibid. p. 425.

134. This movement received this name later, and the Iraqi-Palestinian Jabrā I. Jabrā coined the term. It became the term to include Jabrā I. Jabrā, Adūnīs, Khalīl Ḥāwī, and Yūsuf al-Khāl, among others. Significantly, the title and name were taken from the Babylonian god of fertility Tammūz, with his equivalent in Greek mythology Adonis. For further information, see my *Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of Modernity and Tradition.* London: Routledge/Curzon, forthcoming.

135. Ḥamīd Saʿīd, "A Suggested Form for the Gypsy Epic," in *Selection of Contemporary Iraqi Poetry.* Trans. George Masri, illustrated by Dia al-Azzawi (London: Iraqi Cultural Center, 1977).

136. I used Abdullah al-Udhari's early translation, *Modern Poetry of the Arab World.* London: Penguin1986, p. 31

Part Three
Ideology, the Post-Independence State and Saddam's Discourse

1. Aside from his Sultans' counselors (1954), already cited, he has *'Usṭūrat al-adab al-rafīʿ* (Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat Al-Rābiṭah, 1957).

2. *Duktūr Ibrāhīm,* pp. 89–90.

3. For a survey, see the present author's *Al-Istishrāq fī al-fikr al-ʿArabī* (Beirut: MADN, 1993).

4. *Duktūr Ibrāhīm,* p. 184–85.

5. Ibid. 217.

6. Edward Said, p. 63.

7. See his book, *Al-Iqlīmiyyah* (Beirut: Dār Al-ʿIlm lil-Malāyīn, 1963), pp. 212–296.

8. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 42.

9. On 8 August 1979, Saddam spoke as follows against opposition: "Yes, indeed, whenever we discover someone engaged in treason we behead him without mercy and in public." Then, he drew a comparison between himself and the renowned Islamic warrior from the aristocracy of Quraysh, Khālid Ibn al-Walīd (d. 642), for the latter "beheaded thirty thousand people during the wars of *riddah* [treacherous regression or apostasy] because of his commitment to his mission and upholding of his belief." See *Al-Iraq* daily, 9 August 1979. The same term was reapplied to the Uprising of 1991.

10. *Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati: Love, Death and Exile.* Trans. by Bassam K. Frangieh. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990, pp. 20–27.

11. Ernest Cassirer, *Language and Myth.* New York: 1946.

12. Saddam's half brother, Sabʿāwī Ibrāhim al-Ḥasan, confessed, according to Sawa Radio and other media reports on 23 March 2005, that he carried out the murder in prison upon Saddam's orders.

13. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim told me in 1973 that ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Sāmarrāʾī thought it was possible to curb Saddam's obvious intention to centralize authority.

14. This was a deliberate use, not to be confused with Vice President which was to become a meaningless position. He used it in a meeting with the Iraqi broadcasting station personnel in 1972.

15. Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Baʿthist Iraq, 1968–89.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991, p. 25.

16. Josaphat Kubayyanda, "Unfinished Business: Dictatorial Literature of Post-Independence Latin America and Africa," *Research in African Literatures,* 4, Winter 1997, vol., pp. 38–53.

17. Khairullah Ṭulfāḥ claimed to be a participant in 1941, and was pseudo-historian. He was known for his unlimited greed.

18. See Mahmoud Ayub's monumental study, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam.* The Hague, Paris, New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978.

19. For a good reading of Saddam's discourse, albeit with some inaccuracies respecting dates, see Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 165–78.

20. For a survey of the Najafi youth movement in 1977, and the Karbalāʾ marches, the executions of leaders, etc . . . See Falih A. Jabbar, pp. 208–213.

21. On these unsigned articles, see Kanan Makiya, "The Iraqi Intifada, 1991,"in *The Saddam Reader,* pp. 338–340

22. See Naʿīm ʿAbd Mhalhal, *Al-Ḥiwār al-Mutamaddin,* 1140, 17 March 2005.   المتمدن
الحوار ـ :العدد 17 / 3 / 2005–1140.

23. *Harper's,* May 1996.

24. Music was by Walid Georges Gholmieh, from Lebanon. The anthem first part reads as follows:

> A home land that extended its wings over the horizon,
> And wore the glory of civilization as a garment
> Blessed be the land of the two rivers,
> A homeland of glorious determination and tolerance.
>
> This homeland is made of flame and splendor
> And pride unequalled by the high heavens.
> It is a mountain that rises above the tops of the world
> And a plain that embodies our pride.
> Babylon is inherent in us and Assyria is ours,
> And because of the glory of our background
> History itself radiates with light,
> And it is we alone who possess the anger of the sword
> And the patience of the prophets.
>
> Oh company of al-Baʿth, you pride of lions,
> Oh pinnacle of pride and of inherited glory,
> Advance, bringing terror, to a certain victory
> And resurrect the time of [Harun] al-Rashīd in our land!
> We are a generation who give all and toil to the utmost.
>
> Oh expanse of glory, we have returned anew
> To a nation that we build with unyielding determination.
> And each martyr follows in the footsteps of a former martyr.
> Our mighty nation is filled with pride and vigor
> And the comrades build the fortresses of glory.
> Oh Iraq, may you remain forever a refuge for all the Arabs
> And be as suns that turn night into day!
> And pride unequaled by the high heavens.

25. The designation for the war on the Kurds was taken from the 8ᵗʰ sūra of the Qurʾān, about the division of the spoils gained at the battle of Badr2/624. That was the first battle against Quraysh, and the small Muslim community was victorious. "Unseen" powers were on the side of the Muslims, says the sūrā.

26. Fadhil Assultani, "Incomplete Anthem," In *Iraqi Poetry Today,* pp. 20–22, at 21.

27. See both *Al-Jumhūriyyah* daily, 24 March 1979; and 4 July 1980. A survey of these is also in Bengio, p. 42.

28. See Phebe Marr, p. 30.

29. In a private conversation with me in 1985, Sayyid Muḥammad Sayyid Jaddūʿ from that region, a self-educated dignitary and a well-read one, noticed the intention behind the film.

30. See Saddam, *Al-Thawrah wa-al-naẓrah al-jadīdah* (Baghdad: Dār Al-Ḥurriyyah, 1981).

31. Bengio offers a good and interesting reading of this stage, pp. 71–73.

32. It should be noted that to his credit Saddam Hussein used to plan everything before-hand, manipulating situations to the end, unless there was a need to eliminate a challenge. The preparation for a cultural takeover began seriously in 1977 when his secretary was in charge of a committee to investigate the accusations that culture was a failure in Iraq. ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, reported Muḥammad Jamīl Shalash as the director of cultural affairs, was questioned for making these accusations. He added that the secretary left the room to take a tranquilizer.

When asked by Shalash what the matter was, he answered that ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim answered him. "Isn't it enough as evidence of the failure of culture that you, a military officer, interrogate me now?" Private record, 1983.

33. Privately to the author in 1980.

34. Ibid. p. 80.

35. Songs are in Betool Khedairi, *A Sky So Close,* pp. 106–07.

36. In 1987, writers were called to a meeting at the Cinema and Stage Auditorium. Around 150 were there. The late ʿAbd al-Amīr Muʿallah presided and he was obviously told, in his capacity as Deputy Minister of Culture, to make the case clear to everybody. He said: "the government heard rumors that many of you writers are against the war. We are not hesitant to fill the mouth of any with bullets if we hear of him/her as opposed to the war."

37. They were Ḥasan Muṭlaq and ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm. The third Maḥmūd Jindārī died after being released from prison.

38. *A Sky So Close,* pp. 177–79.

39. Ibid. 178.

40. According to professors at the College of Law, where Saddam's young son was studying in the mid-1980s, that was the tendency, and the son was not hiding his father's interest which was developed under the uncle's influential advice.

41. For hegemony, regulation and the role of intellectuals, see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971, pp. 12, 242. The phrase 'culture industry' was used by Herbert Marcuse and Adorno.

42. In her narrative of those years, the protagonist in Betool Khedairi's *A Sky So Close,* mentions "the latest books that had been translated into Arabic" as one of the main areas that make local news among the educated. See p. 123.

43. The poet Sāmi Mahdī was appointed, but he might have not wished it himself as critics began to lose interest.

44. There are many writings on these aspects, but see Herbert Mason, "Impressions of an Arab Poetry festival," *Religion and Literature* 20. 1(Spring 1988): 157–161.

45. The attitude culminated, among many other measures, in my brother's imprisonment in 1988 and mine, too, in the same year, for allegedly helping my brother in the publication of his book on the Prophet's cousin ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib in Beirut (Dār Al-Ādāb, 1988). For an account of his career and literary output, see Hager Bin Driss, "The Unholy Trinity: Politics, Sex and Mysticism in ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's Narratives," *Journal of Arabic Literature* xxxv:1 (2004), pp. 71–87.

46. See Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California press, 2005), p. 11.

47. Pp. 288–89.

48. Privately reported by the writer Ḥamīd al-Maṭbaʿī.

49. Fāḍil al-ʿAzzāwī's views were fair, but there is confusion on points of affiliation. See ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's support for Fāḍil al-ʿAzzāwī, and his views on such issues, in the latter's book, *Al-Rūḥ al-Ḥayyah* (The living soul). Damascus: Al-Madā, 1997, second print, 2003, pp. 250, 262, 267, and 354–355.

50. In the late 1980s, Abū Bakr Maḥmūd Rasūl, the Kurdish Minister for Social Affairs, told me that Saddam once was so angry with an article by ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim that he said with anger that "this Jāsim," should be stopped. The Minister added he should have known this and escaped.

51. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* pp. 183–84.

52. *The Old Social Classes,* p. 1088.

53. Malik Mufti, p. 228.

54. *The Wretched of the Earth,* p. 168.

55. "Wars I," in *Iraqi Poetry Today,* p. 17.

56. Ibid. 169.

57. *The Wretched of the Earth,* p. 204.

58. Ibid. 205

59. Ibid.

60. *Mi'dān* is the epithet for an old Sumerian folk that survived on selling milk products. It was used pejoratively in reference to the migrations to Baghdad since the 1950s.

61. Sa'dī Yūsuf, "Enemies," in *Iraqi Poetry Today,* pp. 241–45, at 242.

62. Fawzī Karīm "The Scent of Mulberry," *Banipal,* no. 19, Spring 2004, p. 85.

63. Hāshim Shafīq, "Picture of a Tyrant," in *Iraqi Poetry Today,* pp. 230–232, at 231.

64. Awwād Nāṣir, "A Poet's Fate," in *Iraqi Poetry Today,* p. 150.

65. Fawzī Karīm, "The River," translated by Saadi Simawi and Merissa Brown, *Banipal,* no. 19, spring 2004, 86–87, at 87.

66. Fadhil Al-Azzawi, "The Poet," in *Iraqi Poetry Today,* p. 29.

67. "America, America," in *Banipal,* 2, Spring 2000, pp. 3–5.

Part Four
The Literary Politic in Cultural Consciousness

1. The term should not be confused with Ḥisak and Ḥiskah, the place, and its popular poetry, though emanating from them; for in Iraqi terminology it evolves as a language of indirection, based on wit.

2. The late Mawlūd al-Dūrī reported to me in 1991 that the Iraqi President's Secretary Ḥāmid Ḥammādī, a powerful presence, who became Minister of Culture and Information, told him how dismayed he was by the control of culture by the Shī'īs and communists. The reporter, a Sunni in terms of religious affiliation, was surprised at this shallow-mindedness and bigotry.

3. Fundamentalists oppose this attitude in naming, like 'Abd al-Zahrā', or 'Abd al-Riḍā, etc. . . .

4. *A History of Iraq,* p. 65.

5. Ibid.

6. For more, see Ernest Main, *Iraq from Mandate to Independence.* London, 1935; Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq, 1914–1932.* London, 1976; Reeva Simon, *Iraq between the Two World Wars: The Creation and Implementation of a National Ideology.* New York: Columbia Univ. 1986; Elie Kedourie, "The Iraqi Shi'is and Their Fate," in Martin Kramer, *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution.* Boulder, Colorado & London, 1987; Elie Kedouvie, "The Kingdom of Iraq: A Retrospect," in *The Catham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies.* New York, 1970; and S. H. Logrigg, *Iraq 1900 to 1950.* London, 1953.

7. Cited in Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), pp. 432–433.

8. William Polk, *The United States and the Arab World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966), p. 126.

9. Polk, p. 126.

10. Ibid. p. 124.

11. *Iraq: A Study in Political Development,* London: J. Cape. 1937, p. 157.

12. Cited in Ireland, p. 432.

13. Al-Baṣīr, p. 167.

14. For a survey of newspapers and literature of the period, see Kamāl Aḥmad Muẓhir, *Ṣafaḥāt min Tarīkh al-'Irāq al-Mu'āṣīr* (Pages from Iraq contemporary history). Baghdad: Badīsī, 1987. Also,'Abdullah al-Fayyāḍ, *al-Thawrah al-'Irāqiyyah al-Kubrā* (The Great Iraqi revolution). Baghdad 1963; 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ḥasanī, *Tarīkh al-Ṣiḥāfah al-'Irāqiyyah* (History of the Iraqi press) 1971; and 'Abd al-Rasūl Ḥusayn, *Ṣiḥāfat Thawrat al-'Ishrīn* (Press of the 1920 Revolution). Baghdad 1970.

15. The poem says:

> They said there is an independent government, but I laughed, as they reported the matter without further verification.
>
> Is this a government while its god is advice, and the advisor worshiped?
>
> It is their absolute rule, and they are the source of orders and decrees and their beneficiaries.

16. See Tripp, p. 65.

17. Ibid.

18. *Ishkāliyyat al-makān fī al-naṣṣ al-adabī* (Problematics of place in the literary text). Baghdad. Al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1986, p. 34.

19. The communication to this effect says: "For years now Basrah became the residence for no small number of Western nationals, and other foreigners, and their number is growing rapidly, and will be great in the near future, and this perpetual mixing with foreign peoples has an impact on the people of Basrah that made them think that their progress will be on a different pace from the rest of Iraq." Cited in al-Baṣīr, p. 456.

20. In the war with Iran, Saddam spoke highly of Basrah, its history and culture. However, in 1991, it became one of the "black" cities, the city of the Slaves' Revolt, of mixed race, and of Indian origination like the marsh areas, said the notorious editorials of March–April 1991, in *al-Thawrah* daily. See Kanan Makiya, *The Saddam Hussein Reader,* pp. 338–400. The term "white" was used by Saddam to designate the provinces that did not revolt against him.

21. Williams updated the terms to refer to ideology, for dominant elements that stand for the controlling ideology fail to acknowledge social complexity. The marginal factor accounts for some of the missing aspects and cultural contradictions. Residual aspects are the remains of previous ideologies. See *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory.* Editor: Irena R. Makaryk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 22.

22. Pp. 184–85.

23. "Clocks Like Horses," in *Arabic Short Stories,* trans. Denys Johnson-Davies (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 27–39, at 29.

24. Peretz, *The Middle East Today,* p. 433.

25. On Sulaymān Fayḍī, see Yūsuf ʿIzz al-Dīn, *al-Riwāyah fī al-ʿIraq* (the Novel in Iraq). Cairo: Maʿhad al-Buḥūth, 1973; and ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Fahmī al-Mudarris: Min ruwwād al-fikr al-ʿArabī* (Fahmī al-Mudarris. A Pioneer in Arabic thought), Cairo, 1870, p. 152. His role cannot be exaggerated as he was also behind the Ahl al-Bayt University (1922–28) that aspired to bridge the gap between the two Muslim sects, but was opposed by many, including the British.

26. Pp. 434–35.

27. For al-Baṣīr, see p. 287; and for al-Azrī's poetry, see the *Dīwān,* ed. Makkī al-Sayyid Jāsim, and Shākir H. Shukr. Beirut: al-Nuʿmān. n. d., pp. 15, 29. On al-Zahāwī, see ʿAlī al-Khāqānī, *Shuʿarāʾ Baghdād* (Baghdad Poets: Baghdad: Al-Bayān, 1962), p. 356; and on his paradoxical anti-colonial and subservient stance, see Yūsuf ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqī,* pp. 112–114.

28. Wm Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945–1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Post-War Imperialism.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, p. 322.

29. Peretz, p. 433.

30. For instance, the Prime Minister Nūrī al-Saʿīd issued a warrant to expel both Raphaʾīl Buṭṭī and Fahmī al-Mudarris to Sulaimāniyah in 1932 for an article by the latter, published by Buṭṭī. Discussions in the Parliament for or against al-Saʿīd's decree tell much of the increasing political ferment among the educated elite. See ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Fahmī al-Mudarris,* p. 263.

31. On these assemblies, salons, in Baghdad, see Ibrāhīm al-Durūbī, *Al-Baghdādiyyūn: Akhbāruhum wa-Majālisuhum* (The Baghdadis: their reports and salons). Baghdad, 1958; and Ḥusayn al-Karkhī, *Majālis al-Adab fī Baghdad* (Literary salons in Baghdad; Baghdad: Al-Dīwānī, 1987).

32. Yūsuf ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Fahmī al-Muddaris.* Cairo: Maʿhad al-Buḥūth, 1970; and *al-Riwāyah fī al-ʿIraq* (The Novel in Iraq; Cairo: Maʿhad al-Buḥūth, 1973).

33. This was Wilson's answer to the representatives on 2 July 1920, for "there are lands populated by peoples who are unable to stand independently on their own feet in a volatile modern life." Cited by al-Baṣīr, pp. 164–65.

34. *Culture and Imperialism.* New York: Vintage, 1993, p. xix.

35. Cited in Yūsuf ʿIzz al-Dīn, *Fahmī al-Mudarris,* p. 275.

36. Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn, *Ibrahīm Ṣāliḥ Shukr wa-Bawākīr al-Nathr al-Ḥadīth fī al-'Irāq* (*Ibrahīm Ṣāliḥ Shukr* and the beginnings of modern prose in Iraq). Cairo: Ma'had Al-Buḥūth, 1975, p. 139. Hereafter, citations from this book will be within the text.

37. Muṣṭafā 'Alī, pp. 103, 98.

38. *Al-Amal* daily, 10 December 1923.

39. *Al-Nāshi'ah al-Jadīdah,* 7 January 1923.

40. See Matthew Elliot on the failure of constitutional arrangements under British actual control, pp. 7–8.

41. *Al-Zanbaqa,* no. 9, February 1923.

42. *Al-Naqd al-Adabī al-Ḥadīth fī al-'Irāq* (New Literary Criticism in Iraq) Cairo: Ma'had Al-Buḥūth, 1968.

43. Ibid. cited form *Al-Burhān* daily, no. 9, 27 November 1927. The writer signs under "A."

44. Al-Baṣīr, p. 434.

45. *Al-Iraq* daily, 988, 15 August 1923.

46. See Khayrī al-'Umarī, *Yūnis al-Sab'āwī. sīrat siyāsī 'iṣāmī* (The Biography of a stoic politician; Baghdad: al-Thaqāfiyyah, 3rd print 1986).

47. See 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Rashūdī, *Al-Zahāwī: Dirāsāt wa-nuṣūṣ* (Al-Zahāwī: studies and texts; Beirut, 1966), p. 39.

48. Cited in Aḥmad Maṭlūb, pp. 57–58.

49. Ibid. *Al-Bilād* daily, no. 483, 19 February.

50. *Al-Ādāb* (Beirut), no. 10, 1953, p. 61.

51. Cited in Khiḍer al-Walī, *Ārā' fī al-Shi'r wa -al-Qiṣṣah* (Views on poetry and the story; Baghdad, 1956), p. 43.

52. The term emphasizes the equality of Arabs and non-Arabs, but it has inherited connotations of disparagement against the Arabs in comparison with the Persians in early Islam.

53. *Al-Ādāb,* 1, January 1958, pp. 21–22.

54. On Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, see Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry.* London: Macmillan, 1990, 2nd. ed.

55. *Al-Ḥuriyyah* daily, 22 April 1955, p. 265.

56. Cited in al-Wardī, *Usṭūrat al-adab al-rafī'* (The Myth of belles letters; 1957, rpt. London: Kufaan, 1994), pp. 34–35.

57. Ibid. p. 34.

58. Ibid. p. 193.

59. Ibid. p. 193.

60. Ibid. p. 12.

61. William R. Polk, pp. 124–25.

62. Don Peretz, p. 438.

63. *Usṭūrat al-adab,* p. 296.

64. W. R. Louis, *The British Empire,* p. 318.

65. *Al-Siyāsah al-Usbū'iyyah,* February 6, 1931.

66. See Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (N.J.: Princeton, 1978), p. 568. Also Wm. Roger Louis, p. 342.

67. *Al-Majallah,* 1 March 1942, p. 35.

68. Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire,* p. 342, n. 99.

69. Cited in ibid. p. 338.

70. Ibid. p. 341.

71. Cited in Matthew Elliot, p. 25, and n. 78.

72. Ibid. p. 19.

73. Douglas Busk was in support of Ṣāliḥ Jabr as Prime Minister, March 1947, as suitable to British interests. Ibid. 321. Al-Jamālī was the only other Shī'ī chosen by the British. Needless to say Iraqi intellectuals looked upon sectarian divisions as part of a British strategy.

74. "When was The Post-Colonial? Thinking at the Limit," in *The Post-Colonial Question,* eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, London & New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 242–260.

75. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History Theory, Fiction* (London & N.Y.: Routledge. 1988), p. 54; and *A Philosophy of Man* (1963) in Richard T. DeGeorge, *The New Marxism* (New York: Pegasus, 1968), p. 94.

76. *'Ahd Jadīd* (A New epoch; Cairo: Maktabat Miṣr, 1951).

77. For a survey of this issue, see Muḥsin J. al-Mūsawī, *al-Tajrīb wa-al-ḥadāthah fī al-Qiṣṣah al-'Irāqiyyah fī al-khamsīnāt* (Experimentalism and modernism in the Iraqi short story in the 1950s; Baghdad: Al-Mawsū'ah Al-Ṣaghīrah, 1990).

78. *Ḥiwār* (1964, p. 11), cited in Ibid. 6.

79. Shākir Ḥasan al-Sa'īd, *Fuṣūl min tārīkh al-ḥarakah al-tashkīliyyah fī al 'Iraq* (Chapters in the history of painting in Iraq). Baghdad: Al-Thaqāyfiyyah 1983.

80. See Muhsin Jassim al-Musawi "The Socio-Political Context of the Iraqi Short Story," in *Statecraft and Popular Culture in the Middle East,* ed. Eric Davis and Nicholas Gavrieldes. Florida: Florida University Press, 1990, pp. 202–227.

81. Cited from *A Philosophy of Man* (1963) in Richard T. De George, *The New Marxism.* N. York: Pegasus, 1968: 94.

82. *Al-Ādāb,* no. 8, 1953, p. 74.

83. Cited in 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Baṣrī, *Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb: rā'id al-shi'r al-ḥurr* (Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb: The pioneer of free verse). Baghdad: Dār Al-Jumhūriyyah, p. 86.

84. See appendix 1.

85. Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, "Stranger at the Gulf," trans. Tahia Khalid Abdel Nasser, *Jusoor,* n. 4 (Winter-Spring, 1994), pp. 73–77, at 74–75.

86. Stuart Hall on Catherine Hall, p. 247.

87. *Al-Ādāb,* nos. 6–8, 1958, pp. 6–10.

88. Stuart Hall on Catherine Hall, p. 247.

88. *Al-Ādāb,* nos. 6–8, 1958, pp. 6–10.

89. Sulaiman Jubran, "The Old and the New: Al-Jawahiri's Poetic Imagery," *Asian and African Studies* 26 (1992), pp. 249–262, at 251.

90. Quoted in ibid., p. 253.

91. See Matthew Elliot, pp. 29–37, 114–116, 138–39, 148–50, 157–64.

Part Five
Defining Postcoloniality in Iraqi Culture

1. "Our Popular Stories," *Al-Ḥadīth,* vol. 1, no. 7, May 1928. Also republished in Muḥsin J. al-Mūsawī *Naz'at al-ḥadāthah fī al-Qiṣṣah al-'Iraqiyyah* (The Modernist trend in the Iraqi short story). Baghdad: Al-Mu'assasah Al-'Arabiyyah lil-Dirāsāt, 1984, pp. 122–124.

2. 1960, p. 114.

3. *Al-Duktūr Ibrāhīm* (Baghdad, 1939; reprint. Baghdad: Manshūrat Wizārat al-Thaqāfah, 1978), p. 204.

4. Fu'ād al-Takarlī, *Al-Raj' al-ba'īd* (1977; translated by Catherine Cobhan as *The Long Way Back;* Cairo: American University of Cairo, 2001), p. 209.

5. Ibid. 115.

6. Ibid. 323.

7. Ibid.

8. Marx, K. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 15.

9. It was sung by the late Iraqi singer from Shaṭrah in the south, Ḥuḍayrī Abū 'Azīz.

10. See pp. 610–611 of her 1957 article on "The Character of Others in Iraqi Songs."

11. Haifa Zangana (sic), "Parallel Lives," *Banipal,* summer, 2003, pp. 50–52, at 52. Further references are to the same page.

12. "When was 'The Post-Colonial'?" p. 246.

13. *Mudhakkarātī,* 2: 166.

14. *Al-Ḥadīth,* vol.1, 7 May 1928.

15 *Al-Ḥadīth,* vol.1, 7 May, 1928

16. *Akhbār al-Sā‘ah,* 2 April 1953. Also in my book *Naz‘at al-ḥadāthah,* pp. 132–140. Further quotations are from this reference.

17. Sir Kinahan Cornwallis says,

> I reminded the Prime Minister that there had been a radical change in the attitude of the people during the last twenty years. They were no longer as long-suffering as of yore. In the towns especially, education had brought about a new outlook, and I warned His Excellency that, unless account were of these facts, the old order might be very rudely disturbed at no very distant date.

Cited in Matthew Elliot, p. 21.

18. Review of *Nashīd al-arḍ, Al-Adīb,* Oct. 1954. Also in my *Naz‘at,* pp. 164–72.

19. *Al-Dīk wa-Qiṣaṣ ukhrā* (the Rooster and other stories; Cairo: GEBO, 1987), p. 6.

20. The best source is Batatu; see also Peretz, pp. 440–45; and W.R. Louis, pp. 342–4.

21. *Naz‘at,* pp. 164–72.

22. See Terri DeYoung, *Placing the Poet: Al-Sayyab in Post-Colonial Iraq* (N.Y.: State Univ. of New York 1998).

23. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* New York, Knopf, 1993 p. 82.

24. Opposition to innovation was widespread, usually stemming from fear of the new as a challenge to tradition, but, also, from suspicions of plagiarism or misreading. In 1954, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ismā‘īl wrote against a "gang of pretentious innovators" in literature. *Al-Ādāb,* no. 6, 1954, pp. 94–95.Kāẓim Jawād's article appeared in *Al-Ādāb,* no. 5, May 1954; also in my *Modernist Trend . . . ,* pp. 157–160. Another, for instance, is by Muḥyī al-Dīn Ismā‘īl, "Ḥawla nashīd al-arḍ" (About the hymn of the land), *Al-Ādāb,* no. 8, Aug. 1954; also in *Modernist Trend . . .* 160–164.

25. Kāẓim Jawād, in *Modernist Trend,* p. 158.

26. *Shaẓāyā wa-Ramād* (Shards or shreds and ashes, 1949; Beirut: Al-‘Awdah, 1981), p. 27.

27. Cited in Matthew Elliot, p. 21.

28. "Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb: kam ḥayātan sataḥyā" (Badr Shakir al-Sayyab: How many lives to live?) *Al-Kalimah* 2, 1970, pp. 16–23.

29. "An Ideology of Difference," *Critical Enquiry,* 12:1, pp. 38–56, at. 43.

30. See Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *The Grass Roots of Iraqi Art* (London: Wasit Graphic and Publishing Limited, 1983).

31. *Grass Roots,* p. 12.

32. Ibid. 14.

33. Ibid. 22.

34. *Al-‘Irāq,* 22 April 1986.

35. Batatu. p. 295.

36. Batatu, p. 293.

37. Muḥammad Mahdī al-Baṣīr, p. 438.

38. ‘Azīz al-Sayyid Jāsim's *Al-Zahr al-Shaqi* (The Suffering primrose; Cairo: GEBO, 1987).

39. "Eye of the Sun," tr. Desmond Stewart, in *Abdul Wahab al-Bayati, Love Under the Rain.* Madrid: Editorial Oriental, S.A. 1985.

40. "Take me," in *Badr Shakir al-Sayyab: Selected Poems.* Tr. Nadia Bishai, London: Third World Center, 1986, p. 32.

41. Ibid. "The Wind is Knocking at my Door, " p. 53.

42. Ibid. "Jaikūr and the Trees of the City," pp. 38–39.

43. "Death and the River," ibid.

44. The best study is by Ḥasan ‘Alawī, *‘Azīz ‘Alī: al-laḥn al-sākhir* (‘Azīz ‘Alī: the sarcastic melody), (Baghdad, 1967).

45. *Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb: Rā‘id al-Shi‘r al-Ḥurr* (Badr Shakir al-Sayyab: Pioneer of free verse; Baghdad, 1966).

46. *Mutaṣawwifat Baghdad* (Baghdad Sufis; Baghdad, Paris & Beirut: Al-Maʿrifa, Al-Risāla, Al-Markaz Al-Thaqāfī—as cited here—1990, 1996, 1997), pp. 12, 16, 18.

47. *ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib: Sulṭat al-Ḥaqq* (ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib: the authority of righteousness; Beirut: Dār Al-Intishār Al-ʿArabī, 1997), p. 187.

48. *Diwān ʿAbd al-Amīr al-Ḥuṣayrī,* ed. with introduction, ʿAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim. Baghdad: al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1987. 2 vols.

49. Fawzī Karīm, "Painting al-Husairy," translated by Saadi Simawe and Melissa Brown. *Banipal,* no. 19, Spring 2004, p. 83.

50. *Thawrat Al-Zanj* (Baghdad: Al-Manār, 1971).

51. No less a vagabond was the late Jan Dammu, a poet and an avid reader of new poetic trends and attitudes. Once in the 1980s, he joined us in the Writers' Bar and Club. Seeing among the group the late ʿAbd al-Amīr Muʿalla, Jan complained to him of the popular army, recruiting young and old. ʿAbd al-Amīr Muʿalla retorted intoxicatingly that such a comment could ruin the country in times of war, Jan answered carelessly: "Have you left anything undestroyed?"

52. *Al-Ruṣāfī al-khālid* (*Al-Ruṣāfī*: The immortal; Baghdad: Al-Maʿrifah, 1991).

53. *Al-ʾIghtirāb fī Shiʿr al-Sharīf al-Raḍī* (Alienation in al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's poetry), (Beirut: Dār Al-Andalus 1987), p. 67.

54. *Mutaṣawwifat Baghdad,* 1997, p. 59.

55. *Al-ʾIltizām wa-al-taṣawwuf fī shiʿr ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī* (Baghdad: Al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1990), p. 233.

56. *Jadal al-ʿAlāqah al-muʿaqqadah bayna al-mādiyyah wa-al-mithāliyyah* (The Dialectics of the complex relation between materialism and idealism; Beirut: Al-Nahār, 1981), p. 270.

57. *Al-ʾIltizām wa-al-taṣawwuf,* p. 233.

58. Fawzī Karīm, "Letters Keep Going," translated by Saadi Simawi and Melissa Brown. *Banipal,* 19, Spring 2004, pp. 81–82.

59. *The New Marxism,* p. 87.

60. *Al-Kindī: Faylasūf al-ʿaql.* (Baghdad: Al-Ḥuriyyah, 1971), p. 31.

61. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 28.

62. Published at first in *Al-Fikr Al-Jadīd,* 28 April 1973. Reprinted in *Jīm/Sīn: ajwibah ʿan asʾilah fī al-adab wa-al-naqd* (Q. A: Answers to questions in literature and criticism), (Baghdad: Al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1997), p. 28.

63. Cited in Matthew Elliot, p. 20.

64. Jabra I. Jabra, *Al-Ḥurriyah wa-al-Ṭūfān* (Freedom and deluge). Beirut: al-Muʾassasah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1993, p. 132. On this point, see M.J. al-Musawi, "Marjiʿyyāt naqd al-shiʿr fī al-khamsīnāt" (Referentialities of poetry criticism in the 1950s) *Fuṣūl,* 15, no. 3, August 1996, pp. 34–61.

65. *Al-Ādāb,* 4, 1959, pp. 2–3.

66. "Bayna al-Sayyab wa-Eliot" (Between al-Sayyab and Eliot), *al-Kalima,* 2, 1970, pp. 26–45.

67. For a review of these, see Jihād Fāḍil, ed. *Asʾilat al-thaqāfah* (Baghdad: Maktabat Al-Nahḍah, 1989); and Eric Davis and N. Gavrieldes, 202–227.

68. Al-Taṣawwuf wa-al-iltizām, p. 287.

69. *Dirāsāt Naqdiyyah fī al-Adab* (Critical studies in literature: a collection of the essays of the 1960s), (Baghdad: Al-ʾIdārah Al-Maḥaliyyah, 1970; rpt. Cairo: GEBO, 1994), pp. 4, 8. Further citations are within the text.

70. Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge,* p.12.

71. On the alignment of ideology, orthodoxy and tradition for a purpose, see Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Baʿthist Iraq, 1968–89* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); also, Eric Davis, "The Museum and the Politics of Social Control in Modern Iraq."

72. See Jalāl al-Khayyāt, *Al-shiʿr al-ʿIrāqī al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār Al-Rāʾid Al-ʿArabī, 1987), p. 148.

73. Ibid.

74. Al-Azrī, 1880–1954, was an opponent to the unveiling stand. In one poem, he says

Veil never prevents cultivation

For science has nothing to do with fashion

In another, he argues against al-Ruṣāfī and al-Zahāwī. He stipulates,

They limit treatment to unveiling, not knowing

That in the limit lies the origin of disease

See *The Dīwān,* ed. Makkī al-Sayyid Jāsim and Shākir Hādī Shukr (Beirut: al-Nuʻmān, n.d), pp. 30, 31.

75. ʻAbd al-Jabbār al-Baṣrī, *Nāzik al-Malāʾikah: al-shiʻr wa- al-naẓariyyah* (Nāzik al-Malāʾikah: poetry and theory), (Baghdad: Al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1971), pp. 11, and 18–19. Further notes are within the text.

76. Nāzik al-Malāʾikah, *Al-Baḥr yughayyir alwanah* (The sea changes its colors), (Cairo: Quṣūr Al-Thaqāfah, 1998), p. 9.

77. ʻAzīz al-Sayyid Jāsim, *Ḥaqq al-marʾah bayna mushkilāt al-takhalluf wa- mutaṭalabāt al-ḥayāt al-jadīdah* (The Rights of women between problems of backwardness and requisites of new life), (Beirut: al-Muʾassasah al-ʻArabiyyah, MADN, 1980), p. 11. Citations hereafter are within the text

78. *This Sex Which is Not One,* tr. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985; in French 1977), pp. 74–75. Further citations are within the text.

79. *Al-Mafhūm al-tārīkhī li- qaḍiyat al-marʾah* (The Historical concept of the woman issue; Baghdad, n. d)., pp. 76–77.

80. *Ḥaqq al-marʾah,* p. 200.

81. Ibid. 202.

82. Victor Brombert, *The Intellectual Hero: Studies in the French Novel, 1880–1955* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press-Phoenix Books, 1964), p. 19.

Conclusion

1. *Power/Knowledge,* pp. 83, 84.

2. *Culture and Imperialism,* p. xiii.

Appendix 2

1. Printed many times, and in a number of sources, the last is *Harper's Magazine,* May, 2003.

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Glossary

Akitu: Babylonian New Year Festival.

Anfāl: spoils of war. The term was borrowed from the Qur'ān and was used by Saddam' regime in the war of 1987–88 on the Kurds in the North of Iraq.

'Āshūrā': a Shī'ī ceremonial application that used the month, especially the ten days of the battle of Karbalā' south of Baghdad, commemorating the martyrdom of the Prophet's nephew Imam Ḥusayn and his family and companions (680 C.E).

Āthār: literally traces, but usually refer to antiquities.

Farhūd: meaning 'looting,' in reference to the looting in 1941 of the Jewish community property in Basrah and Baghdad. While probably encouraged by the nationalist propaganda, there were strong suspicions raised by the Iraqi Communist Party and other secular parties that it was desired by Zionists and some government officials to frighten Jews and lead them to migrate.

Ḥawzah: the assembly of the learned in Shī'ī Islam, which should have the authority on its community in matters of opinion, position, and also the use of the endowments, the support for the needy, and the redress of injustice. It has schools and scholars to cultivate future clerics from all over the world of Islam.

Inqilāb: transformation, revolt, radical change, usually applied to any radicalization process, including military coup, It was popular in Arab ideology in the 1930s in reference to change in attitude and thinking.

Izdiwājiyyah: duality in behavior between the public and the personal, appearance and reality, the Bedouin and the urban, etc, as applied to communities.

Jāhiliyyah: pre-Islamic times, or the period of agnosticism. The term has different connotations for Islamists as it has different meaning for nationalists

Jihād: the term derives its original use from the Koranic call to protect Islam materially and spiritually. It includes the fight against one's propensity to sin. It also involves fighting occupation, and non-believers when posing a danger to Islam.

laṭmiyyāt (plural for laṭmiyyah): strophic mourning chanting attending breast beating during 'Āshūrā' processions.

Majlis: assembly or gathering, especially used in reference to a specific place, usually named after a certain dignitary, where a gathering takes place during a specific day of the week.

Marāthī: elegies.

Nāṣibī: meaning 'going by appointment' in reference to the caliphs after the Prophet. It is a Shī'ī term used to oppose the anti-Alwaite term used during the second Abbasid period, rāfiḍī, or rejectionist, meaning rejecting the three caliphs after the Prophet. These pejorative terms were used by sectarian factions when there was the emerging controversy with its political dimensions. Both terms were not necessarily authorized or endorsed by the learned

Qishlah: The compartments and buildings along the Tigris close to the Maude Bridge, called later the Martyrs' Bridge, in old Baghdad, or al-Ḥaydarkhānah, in al-Rusāfah side of the city. They were used first by the British. On the side of the street, not the river, there is the minaret with its old nests, which gives the name to the whole

Rādūd: chanter and poet in mourning ceremonies.

Sharifian: derived from Ashrāf, or nobility, specifically used in reference or lineage to the Prophet's family. It was applied, however, to officers who joined the Sharif of Mecca in the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans.

Taqiyyah: reticence or dissimulation under duress. The practice is to save self and family from reprisal or extermination. It was used by Shī'īs during different times. It certainly justifies the practice.

Ta'ziyah: literally meaning condolences, but it has become to refer to assemblies or processes of mourning and lamentation practiced by Shī'īs in remembrance of Imam Ḥusayn, the 'gharīb' or alienated stranger, and 'maẓlūm', or oppressed, of Karbalā'.

'ulamā': the learned, especially among the clerics.

Waḥshah: the night of the forlorn, in remembrance of the Imam and his family when their abodes and tents were burnt down and pillaged after the tragic massacre in 680.This usually comes as the tenth night culminating the mourning processions during the annual 'Āshūrā' occasion.

Zanj Revolt: the Slaves, zanj, of Basrah, usually brought from different parts of Africa revolted in 869, against misuse. The revolt which continued for years posed a serious challenge to the central government, as it objected to the authoritarian interpretation of the Qur'ān to suit the regime's purpose, as their leader argued.

Al-Zawrā': the first Iraqi newspaper meant by the Ottoman Governor of Iraq as the official organ in 1869. The name was derived from Baghdad's other names, like the Abode of Peace and the Circular, when it was established by the Caliph al-Manṣūr in 762 as circular in shape.

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