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BETWEEN WORK AND SCHOOL:

LEISURE AND MODERNITY IN HASHEMITE BAGHDAD, 1921-1958

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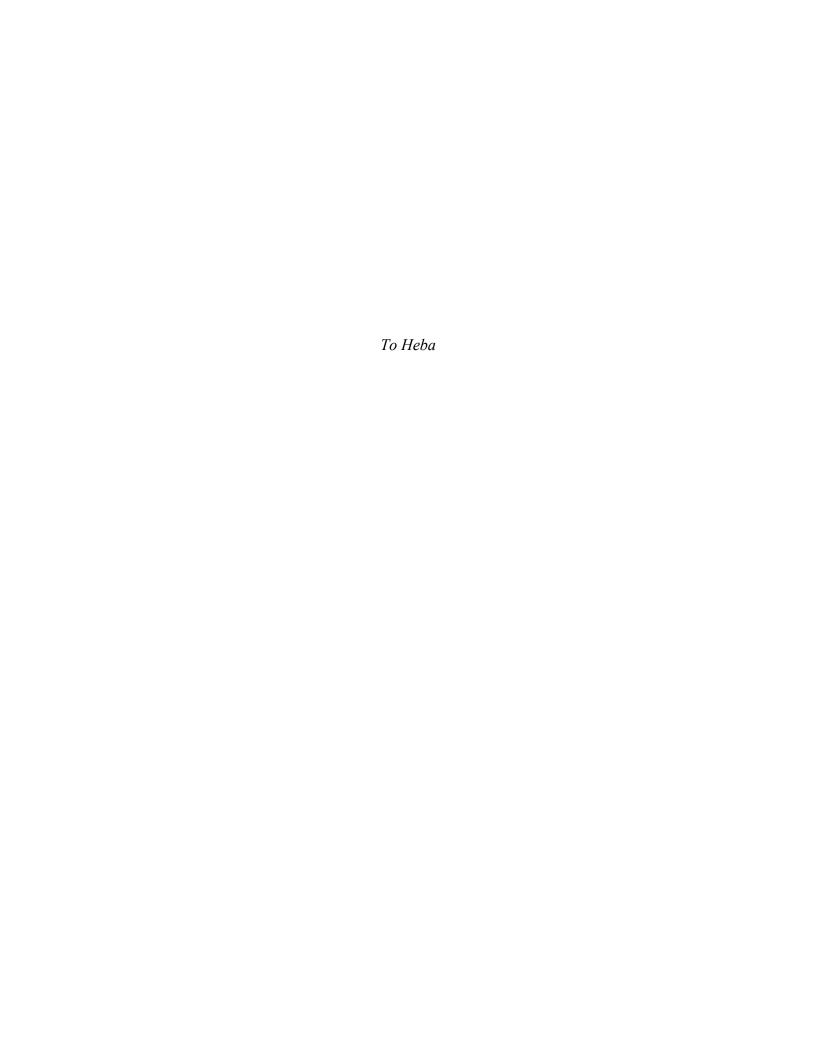
PELLE VALENTIN OLSEN

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To Heba

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A Note on Transliteration and Translation

This dissertation follows the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* except that diacritical marks have been omitted. Unless printed or specified by the person, names are transliterated in accordance with the IJMES system. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

Abstract

The story of Iraq's and Baghdad's modern history and modernity can be, and has been, told in a number of different ways. "Between Work and School: Leisure and Modernity in Hashemite Baghdad, 1921-1958" examines modern Iraqi history through the lens of urban practices and institutions of leisure in Baghdad. I show that leisure both defined and expressed key aspects of Iraqi modernity and suggest that we can begin to map some of the uncharted aspects of modern Iraqi history and modernity through the new institutions, practices, discourses, and distractions of leisure that took up increasing space and time in the life Iraqi of Iraqi subjects.

My dissertation argues that leisure time in twentieth century Iraq became one of the many frontiers upon which the individual and citizen came into contact with, confronted, challenged, and interacted with new ideas about gender, sexuality, time, and productivity. In other words, I show that it is possible to think of leisure as one of the domains in which different and competing ideals and visions of nation and temporality manifest themselves and in which social norms and gendered identities are both enforced, practiced, contested, and transgressed upon. At the same time, my dissertation highlights the multifunctional properties of leisure spaces and pays close attention not only to the porous boundaries between leisure and labor, but also to the forms of labor and exploitation that often remain hidden in studies and understandings of leisure. As such, in addition to investigating educational and extracurricular activities as structured leisure, labor is another form of structured time examined in this dissertation. Last but not least, this dissertation argues that several of the forms and institutions of leisure that emerged during the Hashemite period were, to varying degrees, both global, transnational, and local.

This dissertation examines leisure, and attempts to control it, in a number of different forms. The first two chapters examine how Iraqi students were disciplined in leisure. More specifically,

Chapters 1 and 2 explore the emergence of extracurricular activities in missionary schools as an attempt to control and fill the leisure time of students. Chapters 3-5 interrogate the increasingly public and commercial spaces of leisure, such as cafés, cinemas, and nightclubs, that were less within the bounds of official and state control. By paying attention to these institutions, practices, and discourses, along with their transregional and transnational connections, my dissertation aims toward a portrayal of modern Iraqi history that includes the multitude of everyday practices and experiences left out by traditional political histories.

Acknowledgements

The many challenges of writing a dissertation during a global pandemic without access to libraries, archives, and the distractions of leisure that, for me at least, writing and thinking requires, were at times daunting. These challenges, however, were made a lot less insurmountable by the kindness and support of friends and mentors near and far. I am fortunate to have had a wonderful dissertation committee. As my dissertation chair and advisor, Orit Bashkin has been an invaluable part of this project. Her encyclopedic grasp of Iraqi history and literature has guided me since my first year of graduate school. With her usual enthusiasm, Orit found the time to read and comment on my chapters with great care. Without her guidance, support, and mentorship, this dissertation simply would not exist. I will miss her generosity and advice. This dissertation, as well as my broader intellectual development, also benefited from the advice and comments I received from my other committee members: Ghenwa Hayek carefully read my chapters and patiently taught me what it means to think and write about literary texts. Ghenwa often reminded me what my dissertation was about. Holly Shissler, Peter Wien, and Qussay al-Attabi offered invaluable advice, encouragement, and comments along the way. My time in Rome and Paris coincided with Peter Wien's archival work there and I am grateful for the conversations we had over coffee and beer. Amanda Young, NELC's department administrator, made administrative matters and submission easy.

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Between Work and School: Leisure and Modernity in Hashemite Baghdad, 1921-1958

Introduction: Too Much of Good Thing?

"Regardless of how important and beneficial it may be, [leisure] is at one and the same time a disease and a cure (*daʾ wa dawaʾ*)." The sentence comes from an article, "Awqat al-Faragh: Niʿma wa Naqma" (Leisure Time: A Blessing and a Curse),[1] written by Fadil Husayn, a teacher in one of Baghdad's secondary schools. It was published in 1935 in the second issue of *al-Muʿallim al-Jadid* (*The New Teacher*), the official journal of the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Taking a *longue durée* historical approach to leisure, Husain argued that throughout human history, the increase of leisure, as result of technological advances, refined, and in fact created, human culture and civilization. According to Husayn, when humans lived as hunter-gatherers, simply surviving monopolized time to an extent that made leisure impossible. When humans turned to farming, however, small amounts of free time were released and made available for projects and activities beyond bare survival. In Husayn's view of human history, with each technological and material improvement, leisure incrementally increased.[2] This argument, as we will see, was hardly original to Husain. Rather, it reflected twentieth century modernizing discourses, many of which found their way to the pages of *al-Muʿallim al-Jadid.*

Husayn credited leisure time with having created art, philosophy, and a wide range of other human activities. He was, however, and with no small degree of urgency, pleading with his fellow citizens and educators to recognize that when it comes to leisure, there is such a thing as too much of a good thing:

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[1] Fadil Husayn, "Awqat al-Faragh: Niʿma wa Naqma," *al-Muʿallim al-Jadid* 1:2, June, 1935, 216-220.
[2] Ibid., 216.

Leisure, however, regardless of how important and beneficial it may be, is at one and the same time a disease and a cure (*daʾ wa dawaʾ*). Leisure is like fire– it can both enlighten and burn us. Nowadays, people who don't know how to spend their leisure time turn to harmful pastimes such as nightclubs (*al-malahi*), drinking, gambling, extravagant spending, and laziness.[3]

Envisioning leisure as a category of time that can easily create and amplify bad and unhealthy habits, Husayn argued that "those addicted to the drinking of alcohol most likely developed their first love for it [alcohol] when they were not working or without a job."[4] While Husayn did not elaborate on his juxtaposition of leisure with unemployment, the answer might be found in his analysis of human history. Husayn was particularly concerned since, in his prognosis for the future, leisure time would continue to increase. To Husayn, the industrial revolution had made it abundantly clear that in a not so far away future, machines would replace the majority of tasks carried out by workers. Popularized by economists such as John Maynard Keynes, debates about "technological unemployment," due to improvements in technological efficiency, and the utopic possibilities, were circulating in the 1930s.[5] Rather than embrace the utopic elements and potentials of this prognosis, however, Husain went to great lengths to convince his readers – the large number of teachers who had become important stakeholders in the Iraqi state and national project – that now more than ever, it was crucial to make sure that the ever-increasing amount leisure time be spent productively.[6]

Perhaps because he was a teacher, writing in the official journal of the Iraqi Ministry of Education, Husayn was particularly troubled by what he saw as the excessive leisure time of school-aged Iraqis – the future of the nation. Modern Iraqi institutions such as schools, as he

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[3] Ibid., 216.
[4] Ibid., 217.
[5] John Maynard Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren" in *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1963 [1930]), 358-373.
[6] Husayn, "Awqat al-Faragh: Niʿma wa Naqma," 217.

correctly pointed out, had in fact created a surplus of new forms of leisure through restructuring time and by punctuating school time with weekends, spring, and summer holidays -- in other words, with unstructured, unsupervised, and potentially unproductive time. It was those students that had reached adolescence (*sinn al-murahaqa*) that troubled Husayn the most. Adolescent students, when unoccupied, he argued, "will think about sexual matters, play with their sexual organs, and will turn to masturbation (*al-ʿada al-siriyya*), which damages health, compromises the intellect, and undermines fitness."[7] "Those students who do not think about sexual matters," Husain continued, "will instead hang out in the streets, get into bad company, or start engaging in dangerous distractions (*malahi*)."[8] Husain here uses the word *malahi*, the word normally used for nightclubs in Iraq at the time, in the original meaning of the word.

In Husayn's opinion, the newly available and myriad distractions, such as cinema and nightclubs, combined with the unreasonable amount of free time accessible to Iraqis posed a threat to Iraqi society at large. In fact, Husayn was not only concerned with students, but also with those lazy (*kaslan*) people not engaged in fulltime work who spend their time "in idleness in cafés."[9] Among these, he claimed, were "criminals who steal and murder, troublemakers who think that political agitation *(al-tahwish al-siyasi)* and journalistic buffoonery (*al-tahrij al-sahafi*) will bring them glory and reputation."[10] While British colonial discourse often framed too much education

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[7] Ibid., 218.

[8] Ibid., 218. Husain's obsession with masturbation as a dangerous leisure activity might appear odd or exaggerated. However, taking into account anti-masturbation rhetoric elsewhere in the world at the time, Husain's views are by no means exceptional. In fact, anti-masturbation discourses as techniques of moral regulation and self-governance were in transnational circulation and a feature of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social-purity movements. See for example Alan Hunt, "The Great Masturbation Panic and the Discourses of Moral Regulation in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Britain," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8:4: (1998): 578–759 and Pelle Valentin Olsen, "Cruising Baghdad: Desire Between Men in the 1930s Fiction of Dhu al-Nun Ayyub," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 14-1 (2018): 29-31.

[9] Husain, "Awqat al-Faragh: Niʿma wa Naqma," 219.

[10] Ibid., 219.

as inevitably leading to nationalist rebellions, going a step further, Husayn argued that too much leisure would eventually result in strikes, rebellions, and even revolutions. Therefore, properly controlling, organizing, and managing the leisure time of Iraqi subjects was necessary to safeguard the political stability of the country. Husayn claimed that Iraqis were failing to spend their free time properly: "the abundance of bars, the many nightclubs in which dancers perform in revealing clothes, and the silly films shown in the cinemas are all clear evidence that we have not yet found a good way to spend our [leisure] time."[11]

Husain ended his article by posing a dramatic question to his readers: "I wonder if leisure, which was an important reason behind the creation of human civilization, will now be an important contributor to the downfall of that same civilization, if we do not find the necessary solutions to problems of leisure?"[12] Husayn offered a list of eleven suggestions for the proper and productive uses of leisure time. If applied early enough and if rigorously followed by Iraqis, he believed that these could ameliorate the problems caused by leisure. Husayn's suggestions, some of which, as we will see, were already institutionalized, included: (1) reading and building more public libraries and library vans capable of reaching rural villages and communities, (2) establishing student drama groups, (3) encouraging love for fine art and music among students, (4) participating in competitions and sports, scouting movements, and government-run military training camps, (5) carrying out internships in factories and workshops, (6) studying and doing homework, (7) attending lectures outside of school, (8) conducting independent research, (9) doing charitable work, (10) enlisting in anti-illiteracy campaigns, and (11) establishing of scientific committees.[13] As noted by Sara Pursley, the leisure time and habits of young Iraqis remained a much-debated

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[11] Ibid., 218.
[12] Ibid., 220.
[13] Ibid., 219-220.

topic in the pages of *al-Muʿallim al-Jadid* and elsewhere throughout the Hashemite period and beyond.[14]

While it might be tempting to reduce the somewhat alarmist tone of Husayn's article to the anxious grievances of a strict and quasi-authoritarian teacher, his article is indicative of the way in which new forms of leisure in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries unleashed a flood of debates in Iraq and across the globe about the dangers and potentials of leisure. For Husayn and many others like him working both inside as well as outside the state, as we will see, the project of creating a modern Iraqi nation became, in no small measure, intertwined with the attempt to lay down and consolidate the permissible and acceptable forms of leisure. Husayn was not correct in his assertion that work would become obsolete due to technological inventions and that leisure, as a result, would continuously increase. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in Iraq and elsewhere, leisure time was restructured and reimagined rather than made abundant. From the viewpoint of an Iraqi school teacher in Baghdad, however, who was writing at a time when Baghdad had already begun its transformation into a modern Arabic capital with all that this entailed in terms of novel public venues of leisure and entertainment, leisure, as a dangerous distraction, *appeared* more abundant than ever before.

The new temporal order, with its restructuring of time, brought leisure into being and made it appear dangerous. However, this new temporal order did not immediately become hegemonic everywhere and for everyone. In fact, particular forms of older sociability and leisure persisted. The tension between continuity and change and the ways in which older landscapes of sociability

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[14] Sara Pursley, *Familiar Futures: Time, Selfhood, and Sovereignty in Iraq* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2019), 115-117. For more on *al-Muʿallim al-Jadid* see also Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2009), 92, 197, 246.

were transformed, and at times made obsolete, by new practices, discourses, and technologies will be explored throughout this dissertation. Husayn's observations, however, were not entirely wrong. Before the Hashemite period, with the exception of cafés, Baghdad had relatively few venues of public leisure and only a small number of educational institutions. As argued by Haytham Bahoora, the rearrangement and production of a new spatial order culminated with the period of state-led modernization in Iraq between 1950-1963. Ambitious modernization projects were spearheaded by the Iraqi Development Board, which was set up in 1950, and funded by oil royalties through a 50-50 profit sharing deal with the Iraq Petroleum Company. According to Bahoora, the creation of a new spatial order through infrastructure and housing projects resulted in the "the production of new ways of *being*."[15] While Baghdad was spatially rearranged with an unprecedented speed beginning in the 1950s, this rearrangement, however, was not restricted to the 1950s. In the early years of the Hashemite period, the city of Baghdad had already begun the transformation from a regional Ottoman city to an Iraqi capital. The emergence of new institutions of leisure in the urban landscape in the 1920s, such as cinemas, nightclubs, theaters, restaurants, museums, clubs, societies, and organizations was a significant and noticeable change and also led to "new ways of being" and inhabiting the city.

The story of Iraq's and Baghdad's modernity can be, and has been, told in a number of different ways. This dissertation views modern Iraqi history through the lens of the many "distractions" of urban leisure in Baghdad – the place where such new distractions were both most noticeable and plentiful. My primary aim is to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between leisure and modernity in Iraq. I define leisure as a versatile set of quotidian practices,

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[15] Haytham Bahoora, *Modernism Before Modernity: Literature and Urban Form in Iraq, 1950-1963*, PhD diss. (New York Univerity, 2010), 83.

activities, and performances that can be solitary, individual, and collective. Leisure, this dissertation shows, both defined and expressed key aspects of Iraqi modernity and modernization. As such, this dissertation suggests that we can begin to map some of the uncharted aspects of modern Iraqi history and modernity through the new institutions, practices, discourses, and distractions of leisure that took up increasing space and time in Iraqi life. Yet we know surprisingly little about leisure during this period. How did leisure emerge and develop into a key site for projects of national cultivation and their contestations? What did it mean to have leisure time and how did Iraqis spend and think about their free time in the expanding city of Baghdad? How did new forms, practices, and institutions of leisure change society, morality, conceptions of time, labor, and productivity? To what extent was Iraqi leisure the local articulation of regional and global histories?

My dissertation begins to answer these questions by suggesting that leisure is a site never free from politics and power. Rather, leisure is a site of interaction and contest between the two and a site in which the two are made concrete. This dissertation argues that leisure time in twentieth century Iraq became one of the many frontiers upon which the individual and citizen came into contact with, confronted, challenged, and interacted with new ideas about gender, sexuality, time, and productivity that were in contact with, but not necessarily part of the state. As such, this dissertation argues that it is possible to think of leisure as one of the domains in which different and competing ideals and visions of nation and temporality manifest themselves and in which social norms and gendered identities are both enforced, practiced, contested, and transgressed upon. At the same time, this dissertation highlights the multifunctional properties of leisure spaces and pays close attention not only to the porous boundaries between leisure and labor, but also to the forms of labor and exploitation that often remain hidden in studies and understandings of

leisure. As such, in addition to investigating educational and extracurricular activities as structured leisure, labor is another form of structured time examined in this dissertation.

Finally, this dissertation argues that several of the forms and institutions of leisure that emerged during the Hashemite period were, to varying degrees, both global, transnational, and local. In other words, this dissertation examines the rise of the Iraqi nation state through practices and institutions of leisure that found inspiration in and reflected Iraqi localities, traditions, folklore, and visions of what it meant to be Iraqi. Simultaneously, this dissertation explores the transnational movement of singers, dancers, sex workers, from places such as Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, ideas, American missionary education, American popular culture and cinema, travelling Egyptian theater groups, the songs of renowned Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthum, the foreign experts and actors involved in the import and production of films.

As noted by Husayn with no small amount of apprehension, in the beginning of the twentieth century, a wide array of leisure sites was available to Baghdadis who wished to spend their free time in the city. Through examining the emergence of leisure as a clearly defined category in relation and in opposition to work and school time, this dissertation shows how leisure played a growing role in Iraqi society. Leisure shaped both collective and individual identities – in terms of gender relations and identities, sexuality, class, and the built environment of the urban spaces that Iraqi leisure subjects inhabited. Simultaneously, as evidenced by Husayn's article, with the expansion of the Iraq state during this period, official interest in leisure and state intervention into leisure culture increased. During this time, the Iraqi state began to act as a regulatory force in the lives of its citizens in new ways, shaping leisurely practices and forms of movement, especially those that outgrew both cultural and political expectations. However, as this introduction's section on sources and archives will make clear, with extremely limited access to Iraqi state archives from

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the period, it is difficult to reconstruct how the power and discipline of the Iraqi state manifested in leisure. Therefore, in addition to tracing state discourses through the writings of officials, such as Husayn, who were affiliated with it, this dissertation looks past the state. Looking beyond the state allows this dissertation to take into account the many ways in which non-state regulatory forces and institutions, such as families, intellectuals and writers on the left, religious time and institutions, and global forces made claims on and about leisure time.

This dissertation examines leisure, and attempts to control it, in a number of different forms, including extracurricular activities and modern education, cinemas, cafés, and nocturnal venues of leisure. The first two chapters examine how Iraqi students were disciplined in leisure; in particular, Chapters 1 and 2 explore the emergence of extracurricular activities in missionary schools as an attempt to control and fill the leisure time of students. The chapters on education and extracurricular activities are inspired by scholars such as Timothy Mitchell who has contributed to our understanding of discipline and education in colonial contexts.[16] This dissertation, however, moves beyond discipline in a Foucauldian sense in order to show how modern education also created new possibilities, intersected with leisure as well as how leisure challenged education. The latter chapters interrogate the increasingly public and commercial spaces of leisure, such as cafés, cinemas, and nightclubs, that were less within the bounds of official and state control. By paying attention to these institutions, practices, and discourses, along with their transregional and transnational connections, we might be able to arrive at a portrayal of modern Iraqi history that includes the multitude of everyday practices and experiences left out by traditional political histories. While important for our understanding of modern Iraqi history, the sources used by political histories are poorly equipped to study the everyday. A cultural, social, and intellectual

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[16] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

history approach that thematically focuses on leisure as both circumscribed and enabled by class, gender, and transnational connections is more tuned into the workings of the rhythms of daily life in Hashemite Iraq.

Leisure, History, and Modernity

Defined as time spent away from work or school, leisure is not an entirely novel phenomenon. Before work became as structured and supervised as it did in the modern period, people undoubtedly understood, and enjoyed, the differences between work and the opportunities and free time offered by the absence of or changes in the intensity and rhythms of work. Leisure is, however, just like work, is a historically determined category. Thorstein Veblen's classic socio-economic study, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, originally published in 1899, linked leisure in trial and feudal societies to conspicuous consumption and framed it as the privilege of elites not engaged, like the middle and working classes, in economically productive labor.[17] Unlike in earlier periods when leisure was predominantly a privilege of dominant social classes and hierarchies, in the modern period, while still restricted by class and other social factors, leisure became less determined by these.[18] The Bakhtinian carnival or festival, to be sure, was a momentary exception for peasants and the poor, but it was exactly that: an exception.[19]

Emerging as a cultural category with the rise of capitalism in Western Europe, the beginnings of modern leisure are inseparable from the emergence of work as a coherent classification. More generally, according to Rudi Koshar, "leisure's multiform historical manifestations are inseparable from work and its various interpretations through time. As work

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[17] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994[1899]).
[18] Rudi Koshar, "Seeing Travelling, and Consuming: An Introduction," in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudi Koshar (Oxford: Berg, 2002) 4.
[19] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

changed, leisure changed as well."[20] The scholarly interest in understanding and framing leisure within the historical processes of industrialization, urbanization, and globalization can the traced back to the 1960s when a number of British social historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, E. P. Thompson, and their peers publishing in the journal *Past & Present* chose work and leisure as the topic for the seventh *Past & Present* conference in London in July 1964. The conference and the articles later published in the journal established the modern contrast between work and leisure time largely as a result of the Industrial Revolution.[21] For example, when writing about the Industrial Revolution and the synchronic forms of time and work discipline to which it gave rise, E. P. Thompson argued that novel forms of work and discipline dictated new understandings and disciplines of time beyond the realm of work.[22]

In the mid-1990s, also within the pages of the journal *Past & Present*, the Burke-Marfany debate, which brought together opposing views about leisure, further sharpened and clarified the understanding of leisure as a historical category.[23] In contrast to Marfany, who insisted on leisure as a transhistorical and timeless phenomenon, Burke argued that the modern distinction between

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[20] Benjamin Hunnicutt, "The History of Western Leisure," in *A Handbook of Leisure Studies*, ed. Chris Rojek and Susan Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 55-56; Koshar, "Seeing Travelling, and Consuming," 15.

[21] See for example Keith Thomas, "Work and Leisure," *Past & Present* 29:1 (1964): 50-66; Keith Thomas, "Work and Leisure in Industrial Society," *Past & Present* 30:3 (1965): 96-103. See also Nathan Lambert Fonder, "Pleasure, Leisure, or Vice? Public Morality in Imperial Cairo, 1882-1949," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013), 15-19.

[22] E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism." *Past and Present* 38 (1967): 59-91.

[23] Peter Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past & Present* 146 (1995): 136-150; Joan-Louis Marfany, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe." *Past & Present*, 156 (1997): 174-191; Peter Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe: Reply," *Past & Present* 156 (1997): 192-197. Marfany argued that leisure had always existed. See also the several books written on contemporary leisure and leisure theory by Chris Rojek: *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (London: Routledge, 1985); *Ways of Escape* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), *Decentering Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory* (London: Sage: 1995); *Leisure and Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); *Leisure Theory: Principles and Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); *The Labour of Leisure: The Culture of Free Time* (London: Sage, 2010).

work and leisure was a result of industrial capitalism and that "the idea of a history of leisure before the industrial revolution is an anachronism."[24] However, at the same time, he warned against adopting an entirely airtight dichotomy between pre-industrial and industrial society. While activities such as festivals, hunting, and gambling in pre-industrial Europe were not "part of a larger category or package called 'leisure,'"[25] this does not mean that we necessarily have to reduce all early modern or pre-industrial practices to "festival culture."[26] Instead, Burke suggested a more flexible and less clear-cut definition of modern leisure and its relationship to work:

> Another way of describing the change might be to speak of an increasingly sharp distinction between work and leisure, the shrinking of what looks to us a border area or 'no man's land' between the two domains. The sharper sense of free time was associated with the routinization of leisure, the shift from an annual turning of the world upside-down at Carnival to small but regular doses of daily or weekly recreation.[27]

As we will see, framing leisure as a domain that was slowly but continuously routinized aptly fits in Iraq, where it also took place alongside the process of capitalist industrialization and the move to wage labor, especially during the Hashemite period. Already in the late 1970s, the great historian of Iraq Hanna Batatu pointed out that the processes described by the scholars above as responsible for creating modern leisure as a separate domain, as described above, left Iraq forever changed.

> Perhaps no process has affected, through manifold and intricate mediate causes, the life of Iraqis more enduringly than the gradual tying up of the country in the course of the nineteenth and present centuries to a world market anchored on big industry and their involvement in the web of forces or the consequences of forces unleashed by the Industrial Revolution. To this process is related, in one way or another, a series of large facts: among others, the advance in Iraq of England's power and capital, the turning to Europe's advantage of the system of Capitulations, the appearance of steam-propelled transports, the incipient imitation of modern techniques, the English conquest, the dismemberment of Iraq's northern Arab provinces from their natural trading regions in Syria, the setting up of a dependent monarchy with a new standing army and a new administrative machine, the

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[24] Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," 137.
[25] Ibid., 138.
[26] Ibid., 139.
[27] Ibid., 148.

exploitation of Iraq's oil resources, and the diffusion of elements of European culture.[28]

Batatu was not interested in leisure. Indirectly, however, Batatu makes it clear that the conditions that created leisure elsewhere in the world were also present in Iraq. This dissertation brings the Iraqi case into conversation with the growing scholarship on leisure outside imperial centers.

As noted by Emmanuel Akyeampong and Charles Ambler, much of the historical scholarship on leisure is rooted in British, Western European, and North American experiences of industrial capitalism.[29] Elsewhere in the world, such as in Africa and the Middle East, the emergence of modern leisure was shaped by colonialism, missionaries, and local traditions in addition to capitalist development and industrialization.[30] This does not mean, however, that the studies mentioned above cannot shed light on the history and development of leisure in Iraq. In fact, first through European economic expansion during the late Ottoman period and later through missionary activity and British colonialism, Iraq became connected to and involved in the same processes as much of the rest of the world. With colonialism, new forms, ideas and discourses of leisure were introduced, negotiated, made Iraqi, or opposed as non-Iraqi. As this dissertation will show, the same can be said about the new forms of leisure and the cultural products, including Hollywood cinema, that followed the rise of the US as an economic and cultural force in Iraq and the world. In addition, several of the institutions of leisure examined in this dissertation, such as the cinema, spread globally and concurrently.

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[28] Hanna Batatu, *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* (London: Saqi, 2004), 1113. First published in 1978 by Princeton University Press. See also Samira Haj, *The Making of Iraq 1900-1963: Capital, Power, and Ideology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 1-111.
[29] Emmanuel Akyeampong and Charles Ambler, "Leisure in African History: An Introduction," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35:1 (2002):1.
[30] Ibid., 5.

As we saw above, the processes of capitalism and industrialization established leisure as a clearly defined category that was distinct from work. As leisure became more organized and institutionalized, in the words of Burke, "people became more conscious of it as a separate domain, rather than as a pause between bouts of work."[31] In Iraq and elsewhere, this coincided with the regulative and disciplinary mechanisms and general growth of the modern state. As a result, control over leisure – time spent away from work – became as important as attempts to control the meaning and length of work.[32] Simultaneously, modern leisure and entertainment moved from the private realm and were transformed into public activities and performances that often took place and were organized on a commercial scale.[33] This dissertation pays particular interest to public forms of leisure.

Another feature of modern leisure is the way in which modernizing states, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, conceptualized leisure as a potentially dangerous form of time that had to be filled with certain types of healthy, national, and rational activities. Husain's article discussed above illustrates this well. Pursley has described how the Iraqi state, and people like Husayn working within it, increasingly "asserted its internal sovereignty through biopolitical and disciplinary interventions within the domain of the social"[34] in order to create national and sovereign futures. As demonstrated by Bashkin, while such attempts were not always successful, they were vigorously pursued by Iraqi educational and military institutions.[35]

If we understand leisure as being connected to the modern state's capacity to shape the lives of individual citizens, then the case of Iraq, despite of its unique experiences with Ottoman

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[31] Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," 150.
[32] Koshar, "Seeing Travelling, and Consuming," 2.
[33] Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Effendiyya* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 193-196.
[34] Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 13.
[35] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq,* 299-264.

reforms and British colonialism, is not all that different from many other states the came into being

during the same period. In her study of early twentieth century Palestine, Liora Halperin notes that

attempts to control and "fill" leisure time were meant to shape "the kind of people that citizens are

supposed to be when they are being themselves."[36] In Iraq too, controlling subjects during their

free time became important precisely because leisure represents an arena in which people are less

supervised. As we saw in Husayn's article above and as the five chapters of this dissertation will

make clear, in Iraq too, attempts to regulate leisure permeated intimate and everyday life. These

attempts, however, as this dissertation will point out, were not exclusively carried out by the Iraqi

state.

The critical philosophy of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer has been at the crux of

scholarly works on leisure in the twentieth century. Adorno and Horkheimer theorized leisure as

an "escape from the mechanized work process," but an escape that was unavoidably connected to

capitalist production to a degree that leisure "experiences are inevitably after-images of the work-

process itself."[37] With a critical view of popular culture, for Adorno and Horkheimer, leisure was

little more than a continuation or preparation for further capitalist production. My dissertation

agrees that leisure can only be understood in relation to work and that it is never free from the

weight of social, economic, political, and cultural influences. In fact, leisure's intersection with

other temporalities and social positions, such as gender and class, will be a constant theme

throughout this dissertation. However, this dissertation moves beyond an understanding of leisure

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[36] Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920-1948* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 32. See also David Leheny, *The Rules of Play. National Identity and the Shaping of Japanese Leisure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Anne White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture: Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland, and Hungary, 1953-1989* (London: Routledge, 1990).

[37] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuun, 1999), 137.

as solely a realm in which capitalist logic and discipline were enforced. Everyday practices of leisure have the potential to upset work's hegemony[38] and offer what Lucie Ryzova has referred to, in the context of the shift from patriarchal and family to state and school disciplinary structures, as "pockets of autonomy."[39] Put differently, this dissertation also examines the moments of unsupervised or less strictly supervised time during which leisure subjects could, at least momentarily, contemplate the possibility of rebellion. Leisure's constant creation of opportunities for rebellion and transgression and, as a result, its framing as potentially dangerous and unproductive is a dynamic that will be explored throughout this dissertation.

That being said, the importance of studying leisure goes beyond its potential for rebellion and transgression. In the words of Akyeampong and Ambler, "beyond the simple importance of describing quotidian lives, the study of leisure illuminates social practice and the process of its formation – and puts critical political and cultural issues into relief."[40] While this dissertation is historical and focuses mostly on urban and public forms of leisure in twentieth century Baghdad, it contributes to wider scholarship and debates on the political ramifications of modern leisure practices. These practices of leisure intersect with politics, culture, gender, sexuality, identity, consumption, and economics; when used as lens through which to study Iraqi history, they have the potential to open up largely unexplored sources of information on much wider issues and to shed new light on some of the blind spots of Iraqi history.

Within the field of modern Middle East history, there is a growing awareness of the topic of leisure. Iraq, however, has been largely overlooked as most of these works focus on Egypt and

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[38] Hunnicutt, "The History of Western Leisure," 70.
[39] Ryzova, *The Age of the Effendiyya*, 197.
[40] Akyeampong and Ambler, "Leisure in African History: An Introduction," 1. See also Rojek, *Decentering Leisure*, 1995.

a few other locales.[41] Focusing on Egypt through the lens of communication and transportation,

On Barak has examined the emergence of new forms of temporality and divisions between work

and free time. Also working on Egypt, Wilson Jacob has analyzed the significance of sport in the

construction of Egyptian male gender identity. In their work on contemporary Beirut, Lara Deeb

and Mona Harb have explored the link between morality and geography within the realm of leisure

in order to show how notions of both morality and geography are reshaped through leisurely

experiences in the city. Relli Schechter's work on smoking and the political economy of Egypt has

shown that advertising is a viable lens through which to examine shifts in leisure practices, fashion,

and consumer tastes.[42] The link between consumption, politics, and leisure has also been dealt with

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[41] Halperin, *Babel in Zion*, 2015; Ryzova, *The Age of the Effendiyya*, 2014; On Barak, *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Walter Armbrust, *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Joseph Ben Prestel, *Emotional Practices in the City: Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Andrea Stanton, *This is Jerusalem Calling: State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013); Relli Schechter, *Smoking, Culture, and Economy in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006); Lara Deeb and Mona Harb, *Leisurely Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Holly Shissler, "Beauty Is Nothing to Be Ashamed Of: Beauty Contests As Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey." Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, no. 1 (2004); Wilson Chacko Jacob, *Working out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Egypt, 1870-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Shaun Lopez, "Football as National Allegory: Al-Ahram and the Olympics in 1920s Egypt," *History Compass* 7.1 (2009): 282-305. For studies of the late Ottoman period see Murat Yildiz, "'What is a Beautiful Body?' Late Ottoman 'Sportsman' Photographs and New Notions of Male Corporeal Beauty," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 8:2-3 (2015): 192-214; Cengiz Kirli, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, eds. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 75-97; Cemal Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul," in *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. Arzu Öztürkmen and Evelyn Birge Vitz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); Alan Mikhail, "The Heart's Desire: Gender, Urban Space and the Ottoman Coffee House," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Dana Sajdi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); Ali Caksu, "Janissary Coffee Houses in Late Eighteenth-Century Istanbul" in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Dana Sajdi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 117; Cengiz Kirli, "Coffeehouses: Leisure and Sociability in Ottoman Istanbul," in *Leisure Cultures in Urban Europe, 1700-1870*, eds. Peter Nigel Borsay and Jan Hein Furnee, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[42] Shechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy in the Middle East,* 133-134. See also Relli Shechter, "Reading Advertisement in a Colonial/Development Context: Cigarette Advertising and Identity Politics in Egypt c1919-1939." *Journal of Social History* 39 (2005): 483-503; Carl Ipsen, *Italy's Love Affair with the*

by Nancy Reynolds in her study of shopping in Egypt in which she demonstrates that sartorial products and their promotion in advertisement shaped the bodies of male and female citizens. "Sartorial materiality," as she calls it, heightened debates over Egyptian male, female, and youth identities.[43] While Schechter and Reynolds do not describe their works as being specifically about leisure, they nonetheless demonstrate the need to understand consumption as a historically situated phenomenon.

Last but not least, a number of important works on literary consumption, reading practices, and the construction of new reading subjects has appeared recently.[44] Collectively, these works have shed new light on literary tastes, sensibilities, canons, print markets, print capitalism, circulation, translation, and the embodied practices that constitute reading. In the context of Iraq, studies by Orit Bashkin and Haytham Bahoora have demonstrated the importance of extracurricular and obscene reading practices.[45]

A study of urban leisure would not be possible without a critical understanding of the

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Cigarette (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016); Rudi Matthee, "Exotic substances: the introduction and global spread of tobacco, coffee, cocoa, tea, and distilled liquor, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries" in *Drugs and Narcotics in History*, eds. R. Porter and M. Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Rudi Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (Washington: Mage Publishers, 2005); Penny Tinkler, *Smoke Signals: Women, Smoking and Visual Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2006); Kerry Segrave, *Women and Smoking in America, 1880-1950* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland Publishers, 2005).

[43] Nancy Reynolds, *A City Consumed: Urban Commerce, The Cairo Fire, and the Politics of Decolonization in Egypt* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).

[44] Michael Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); Ziad Fahmy, *Everyday Egyptians: Creating The Modern Nation Through Popular Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (New York: Palgrave, 2012); Hoda Yusef, *Composing Egypt: Reading, Writing, and the Emergence of a Modern Nation, 1870-1930* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016); Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[45] Haytham Bahoora, "Baudelaire in Baghdad: Modernism, The Body, and Husayn Mardan's Poetics of the Self," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no 2: (2013): 313-329; Bashkin, "When Mu'awiya Entered the Curriculum," 346–66.

double and ambiguous life of space. In thinking about the Baghdad's spaces of leisure, this dissertation borrows form a long tradition of inquiry among urban scholars and human geographers. Studying modern forms of urban leisure benefits from paying attention to the fact that the meaning of space is never fixed and that even the most regulated and governed of spaces has the potential to acquire different meanings. In particular, scholarship on space as socially produced informs how I think of urban leisure. Distinguishing "space" from "place," in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certeau noted that unlike place, which implies stability, "space is composed of intersections of mobile elements" and can be thought of as "practiced place."[46] Using the example of pedestrians, De Certeau contends that while urban spaces, such as streets or squares might be "geometrically defined by urban planning,"[47] those who inhabit and use them can potentially transform them according to their desires, goals, and needs. Similar arguments have been made by Edward Soja. In *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, Soja argues that "the organization, and meaning of space is a product of social translations, transformations, and experience."[48] Soja also developed the theoretical notion of "third space" as a site that is disruptive of the binaries through which space is normally thought of, this allowing for potentially emancipatory practices.[49]

Cafés, cinemas, and nightclubs, the sites of leisure examined in this dissertation, can also be thought of through the vocabulary of Foucault, who used the idea of heterotopia to describe

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[46] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117. See also Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984) in which Lefebvre described space a created through both political and everyday practices; Henri Lefevbre*, Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. Stuart Elden and Gerald More (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).
[47] Ibid., 117.
[48] Edward Soja*, Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, 80.
[49] Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 11.

spaces, both metaphorical and real, that permit non-hegemonic activities and actions.[50] In other words, these spaces "radically undermine or challenge existing spatial orderings,"[51] disturb, and transgress the normal conventions of society. This dissertation engages with and adds to the above literature by making leisure its main object of study.

The remainder of this introduction describes the history and historiography of modern Iraq. Building in the historiography section, I discuss and contextualize the sources and archives used in this dissertation. The last section lays out the logic behind structure of the dissertation and briefly describes the individual chapters.

On Iraqi History

Following the British occupation of the three Ottoman Provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul between 1914-1918, the Iraqi state came into being under a League of Nations mandate at the San Remo conference in 1920. British visions for the newly acquired mandate differed internally among colonial officials as well as among Iraqis, who responded differently to the new British rule. The British vision for the new Iraqi state did not go unchallenged, and in the early summer of 1920 a diverse conglomerate of forces, which began among the Shi'i tribes, rose up in revolt. The revolt was short-lived, however, and when the cities of Najaf and Karbala surrendered

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[50] Foucault, Michel, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16/1 (1986). See also Michien Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, *Heterotopia and the City: Urban Space in a Postcivil Society* (London: Routledge, 2008); Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
[51]Stuart Elden, "heterotopia," in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, by Derek Gregory. 5th ed. Blackwell Publishers, 2009. For approaches within human geography, which haven taken up the issue of the right to the city, see Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Seeing Like a City* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017); Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002); Nigel Thrift, *Spatial Formations* (London: Sage, 1996), Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London: Routledge, 2007); David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2013); David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006).

in October 1920, the revolt was officially over. Forced to find a more acceptable and less costly form of government in the aftermath, the high commissioner of Iraq, Sir Percy Cox, set up a British administered council in Baghdad consisting of Iraqis from the three provinces. The Hashemite monarchy of Iraq formally came into existence in 1921 at the Cairo Conference when the League of Nations mandate granted to Britain was replaced by a monarchy, headed by King Faysal I, but still administered and controlled by the British. At the expense of many of Iraq's other groups, the British allied themselves with the Ottoman-educated Sharifian military and administrative elites, who had fought with King Faysal and followed him from Syria, and Iraqi Sunni elites, and urban notables. Similarly, the British allied themselves with tribal shaykhs, the result of which was the shaping of new tribal hierarchies.[52]

Under the rule of King Faysal (1921-1933) the Iraqi state began to take on a distinctive shape, and institutions developed quickly. As the institutional and territorial boundaries were drawn, the state became an arena for rival politics and demands. Questions about the future form of the state and its leadership became a fiercely debated topic among Iraqis. The expansion of state institutions and education created new stakeholders and drew more people into the orbit of the state. As early as the 1920s, efforts were put into the creation of schools that would foster national loyalty, order, and discipline. Between 1920-1945 the number of primary schools increased from 88 to 878. The number of secondary schools climbed from 19 to 71 between 1930-1945. The number of foreign and missionary schools also increased. The British had little interest in secondary education, and colleges were therefore slower to appear. The Higher Teachers Training College, which became an important institution, began offering classes for primary school teachers in 1923.[53] Other colleges soon followed. Educational missions, in the forms of scholarships outside

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[52] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 30-63.
[53] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 230.

of Iraq, first to the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, and later to Europe and North America, began in 1921 and steadily increased throughout the Hashemite period.

With the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, which was extremely favorable to the British, Iraq entered the League of Nations and gained nominal independence in 1932. When King Faysal died in September 1933, his young son King Ghazi (1933-1939) followed him on the throne. When King Ghazi died in a car accident, his infant son King Faysal II, under the regency of Prince ʿAbd al-Ilah, was placed on the throne. The notion that state and society needed strengthening, reformation, and reconstruction united Iraqi political elites. This project, which was fundamentally a project of building and disciplining the nation, took a number of different forms. Founded in 1921, the Iraqi army almost tripled in size between 1925-1935.[54] Due to a shared program among the army and the political elites, the military was placed at the forefront of modernizing, disciplining, and remodeling Iraqi society as well as defining its values, norms, and national identity.[55] Despite British efforts to constrain the expansion of the Iraqi military, it played an important role in politics in the 1930s. Adopting the control mechanism of the colonizers, the army used bombing campaigns to crush an Assyrian revolt in 1933 and a series of tribal revolts between 1933-35. In 1936 General Bakr al-Sidqi led the first military coup in the Arab world. While the Sidqi regime promised reform, its most enduring mark was the dangerous example it set for military involvement in politics.

The interwar period witnessed growing ideological differences between Iraqi and pan-Arab nationalists, the undermining of civil society, and the growing influence of sectarianism.[56] Fascist tendencies emerged among segments of Iraqi society, and there were some manifestations of

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[54] Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 37.
[55] Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 75-77; Dawisha, *Iraq*, 39.
[56] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 50-64.

authoritarian rule. Some Iraqis looked to Italy and Germany as examples of strength and nation building in the aftermath of WW1, and some pan-Arab nationalist were attracted to German and Italian nationalisms. But the period was also characterized by positive developments such as the growth of the print media, associational and organizational life, and new modes of cultural production and literary forms.[57] The texts produced by intellectuals during the period, and the many debates in which intellectuals and journalists took part in the print media, were characterized as much by plurality and hybridity as by authoritarianism.[58] As Iraqis travelled abroad, they brought back new ideas from places such as India, the Soviet Union, the United States, Turkey, and Lebanon. The period also witnessed the rise of social criticism, and the public sphere included an active critical press and oppositional parties, such as the social democratic al-Ahali group established in 1933 and the illegal underground Iraqi Communist Party, whose first central committee was established in 1935. The Iraqi Communist Party would quickly become the main opposition movement in Iraq. The intellectuals of al-Ahali party, such as Kamil al-Chaderchi, ʿAbd al-Fattah Ibrahim, and Jaʿfar Abu Timman, voiced new critiques of colonialism, education, and the lack of genuine power given to Iraq's democratic institutions.

Throughout the years of the Hashemite monarchy, Iraq witnessed sporadic but continuous outbreaks of tribal unrest and Kurdish demands in the North, power struggles between different ethnic and religious groups, and the emergence of and competition between Iraqi and pan-Arab nationalisms. Iraqi nationalism focused on equality among the country's many ethnic groups, social justice, and land reform, and new labor laws. Pan-Arabism, which was popular among the Sunnis, although not exclusively, focused on the shared cultural and historical heritage of the

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[57] Ibid., 71.
[58] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq,* 84-85.

Arabic speaking peoples and imagined Iraq as part of a larger Arab anticolonial nation. Pan-Arabism was an oppositional and anti-British ideology, but paradoxically it was also the legitimizing creed of the Hashemite monarchy.

In 1941, a second military coup led by Rashid ʿAli al-Gaylani established a so-called "Government of National Defense" and brought radical pan-Arab ideology to the center of the state. The second British occupation of Iraq in May 1941 ended al-Gaylani's rule and resulted in renewed control of the public sphere and purges in the military and the ministry of education. In the following years, with a few exceptions, the pro-British politician Nuri al-Saʿid, who had come to Iraq with King Faysal, emerged as the most dominant voice in Iraqi politics, which were still personal and elite based. Nuri al-Saʿid served fourteen – not all consecutive -- terms as Prime Minister.

In the years between the end of WWII and the 1958 revolution, the Iraqi political arena was characterized by growing opposition to the monarchy and radicalization of the working and middle classes, but also by the expansion of education, urban development, and cultural revival. The illegal Iraqi Communist Party, which had been radicalizing since Yusuf Salman Yusuf, known as Fahd, took over the leadership in 1941, became a key player in oppositional politics and attracted many Iraqi intellectuals. In 1948 a new Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was signed in Portsmouth, which led to major protests and demonstrations, most famously the Wathba rebellion of 1948, which started among students but ended up as a mass rebellion. A second rebellion, known as the Intifada, broke out in 1952. In the early 1950s, under the leadership of Nuri al-Saʿid, oil revenues came to play a leading role in economic development, while land reform was sidelined from the government's agenda A 1952 agreement with the Iraq Petroleum Company secured the Iraqi government a 50-50 share of profits. A Development Board was created in the same year and was to be in charge of

70 per cent of the oil revenue for infrastructure development. The Board invited foreign companies, experts, and architects to Iraq and invested in large-scale infrastructure projects. The Board, however, favored landed interests and did not fundamentally challenge economic inequality.[59]

Muhammad Fadil al-Jamali came to power in 1953 and established a more reform friendly government. He was forced to resign soon in 1954 due to conservative opposition, and Nuri al-Sa'id returned. In the name of the fight against Communism, the state became increasingly oppressive, and the growing discontent with state violence made strikes, including prison strikes, and demonstrations a dominant feature of Iraqi politics. Nuri al-Saʿid and the conservative leadership of the country pushed westward with the signing of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 at time when most of the Arab world was taking a more anti-colonial route. In the summer of 1958, the Free Officers, under the leadership of General ʿAbd al-Karim Qasim and Colonel ʿAbd al-Salam ʿArif, ended the Hashemite monarchy in a coup.

In addition to the political developments and processes of nation and state building described above, between 1921 and 1958, the urban landscape and layout of Baghdad changed dramatically. The city witnessed the establishment of modern streets with electrical lighting, new architectural and building styles, neighborhoods, suburbs, parks, and streets, new forms of transportation, state and bureaucratic institutions, and an influx of immigrants from rural parts of the country. The most illustrative example is perhaps al-Rashid Street – Baghdad's modern thoroughfare. Al-Rashid Street was officially opened in 1916, and became one of the city's main commercial, retail, and entertainment hubs and was emblematic of calculated attempts to construct

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[59] Mina Marefet, "1950s Baghdad – Modern and International," *TAARII Newsletter* 2, 2007; Haytham Bahoora, *Modernism Before Modernity*: Literature and Urban Form in Iraq, 1950-1963. Ph. D Dissertation, New York University, 2010, 19-21; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 125, 133-34, Abbas al-Nasrawi, *Financing economic Development in Iraq. The Role of oil in a middle eastern Country* (New York: Praeger, 1967); Kahdim al-ʿEyd, *Oil Revenues and Accelerated Growth: Absorptive Capacity in Iraq* (New York: Praeger, 1979).

a modern city in the1930s.[60] Sections of al-Rashid Street were paved beginning in 1926, significantly improving its walkability. Before the street was paved, during the winter rains, it was often extremely muddy and difficult to cross on foot. In 1927 trees were planted alongside the street,[61] providing shade during the hot summer months.

These changed were accompanied by new urban policies regarding the spatial organization of the city. Throughout the 1930s, different regulations were put in place to create order and discipline along Baghdad's modern thoroughfare. In 1937 a law banned fruit and vegetable vendors from working in the street; vendors were given three months to set up shop elsewhere. Those who remained were fined. Later in the same year butchers, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, cotton carders, as well as kebab, coal, and wood vendors were also banned from al-Rashid Street. At night, uniformed and armed night watchmen kept order on al-Rashid and looked out for intoxicated Baghdadis returning from the area's bars and nightclubs.[62] Al-Rashid Street was also where, in the 1920s and 1930s, the majority of the city's cinemas were located.[63] As we will see in chapter 4, it was also the home of some of the city's most famous and popular cafés. Abu Nuwas Street, which is an extension of al-Rashid Street and which runs along the Tigris, became one of the city's main hubs of nocturnal leisure due to the bars, casinos, and restaurants that could be found there.[64]

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[60] Caecilia Pieri, Bagdad: la Construction d'une Capitale Moderne, 1914-1960 (Beirut: Presse de I'fpo, 2015); Marefet, "1950s Baghdad – Modern and International," 2007; Bahoora *Modernism Before Modernity*, 2010.

[61] ʿAdil al-ʿArdawi, "Araʾ fi Wiladat Shariʿa al-Rashid," in *Shariʿa al-Rashid* ed. Basil ʿAbd al-Hamid Hamudi (Beirut: Dar al-ʿArabiyya lilmawsuʿat, 2003), 140-151.

[62] ʿAbd al-Karim ʿAnad, "Haris al-Layli fi al-Rashid," in *Shariʿa al-Rashid*, ed. Basil ʿAbd al-Hamid Hamudi (Beirut: Dar al-ʿArabiyya lil-mawsuʿat, 2003), 224–38

[63] Stefano Bianca, *Urban Form in the Arab World: Past and Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 252.

[64] ʿAbd al-Razzaq al-Hassani, *al-ʿIraq Qadiman wa Ḥadithan* (Saida: Matbaʿat al-ʿIrfan, 1958), 105.

On Historiography

As described above, this dissertation contributes to historical scholarship on leisure in a global context. The emergence of leisure, as I argued, is a modern and global rather than a specifically Iraqi phenomenon. However, since this dissertation focuses on leisure in Hashemite Baghdad and makes a number of historiographical interventions in the field of Iraqi studies, it is important to lay out what is as stake in these interventions.

Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett observed in a survey of the historiography of modern Iraq in 1991 that "the compilation of a critical bibliography of modern Iraqi history is not a particularly arduous task."[65] Until recently, Iraqi cultural and literary histories were marginal in studies of the modern Middle East. Luckily, this is no longer the case. In another survey of the field written by Bashkin in 2015, she argues that within the last 10 years, an important re-writing of Iraq's modern history has taken place.[66] Within this nascent and rapidly growing interest in Iraq's cultural, social, and literary past, leisure remains of peripheral interest. Some works mention, although they do not study in depth, the importance of cafés, the existence of nightclubs, bars, brothels, the thriving cinema scene in Baghdad, sport, new literary tastes, and reading habits.[67] However, only one article deals specifically with leisure in the form of nightclubs and female performers.[68] In this regard, my dissertation hopes to break new ground. This does not

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[65] Marion-Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Historiography of Modern Iraq," *American Historical Review*, 96, no. 5: (1991): 1408.

[66] Orit Bashkin, "Deconstructing Destruction: The Second Gulf War and the New Historiography of Twentieth-Century Iraq," *Arab Studies Journal* vol. xxiii, no 1: (2015): 210-335.

[67] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 87-124; Orit Bashkin, "To Educate an Iraqi Jew: Or, What Can We Learn from Hebrew Autobiographies About Arab Nationalism and the Iraqi Education System (1921-1952)." In *World Yearbook of Education 2010*, ed. Andre E. Mazawi and Ronald G. Sultana, (London: Routledge, 2010), 230-233, day *Comparative Education Review* 3 (2006): 347-365; Davis, *Memories of State*, 55-81; Fabio Caiani and Catherine Cobham, *The Iraqi Novel: Key Writers, Key Texts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013)

[68] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 202.

mean, however, that I am writing in a vacuum. To write a history of leisure in twentieth century Iraq would be unthinkable without the important works of historians and literary scholars working on Iraq. More specifically, a study of leisure is now conceivable attainable thanks to recent attempts to decenter the state in the narrative of Iraqi history as well as to recent work exploring the role of discipline in the formation of modern Iraqi subjects.[69]

Leisure, as I will show, is deeply connected to the state and its relationship to society and public spheres. In recent years, scholars working on Iraqi history have pointed out that the power of the Hashemite state was not completely hegemonic and that its policies were contested in a number of ways. Similarly, the Iraqi state was not always able to implement its antidemocratic and nationalist ideals of gender, sexuality, and family, at least not without resistance.[70] The many refusals from a highly complex society, which included a growing civil society and a critical public sphere has been demonstrated by Orit Bashkin, Noga Efrati, and Eric Davis, who show that a multiplicity of voices, from across the political spectrum, including students and teachers, responded to and were critical of the authoritarian, ultra-nationalist, and disciplinary tendencies.[71] Students and teachers responded differently and critically to the educational blueprints of the state – blueprints which at times remained no more than ideals. In addition, as Peter Wien points out, a single and unified vision for education never existed. Rather, education became one of the domains

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[69] Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence," 175–87

[70] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 60, 233–35; Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence," 175–87; Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 89–90; Davis, *Memories of State*, 81-108.

[71] See Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 80-83; Bashkin, "'Out of Place': Home and Empire in the Works of Ahmad al-Sayyid and Dhu al-Nun Ayyub," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 3 (2008): 428-442; Bashkin, "Lands, Hands and Socio-Cultural Boundaries: A Reading of Dhu Nun Ayyub's The Hand, the Land and the Water (1948)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 3 (2010): 401-415, "To Educate an Iraqi Jew: Or, What Can We Learn from Hebrew Autobiographies About Arab Nationalism and the Iraqi Education System (1921-1952)." In *World Yearbook of Education 2010*, ed. Andre E. Mazawi and Ronald G. Sultana, (London: Routledge, 2010), 230-233, day *Comparative Education Review* 3 (2006): 347-365.

in which battles for the future form of the Iraqi nation were waged.[72] I complement and corroborate these important studies by focusing on everyday practices of leisure as key yet understudied expressions of Iraqi modernity and history.

Leisure, however, faced formidable challenges from the Iraqi state whose members were often far from democratic. In Iraq during the late 1920s, 1930s and early 1940s, ultranationalist voices sympathetic to fascism, Nazism, and authoritarianism were audible in the public sphere. Simultaneously, youth organizations that emphasized and promoted nationalism, militarism, and physical training spread rapidly.[73] Similarly, discourses about modernization and revival were prevalent, and these sometimes invoked fascist symbols and vocabulary.[74] In her work on education, scholars such Reeva Simon argues that education, "as the means for the transmission of cultural values and political ideas, is the key to analyzing the reasons for the German-Iraqi link in 1941, which, in essence, is the culmination of a process that began before WWI, continued during the turbulence in Iraq in the 1930s, and ended with the defeat in May 1941"[75] In the words of Simon, "history, followed by instruction in civics and physical education in the form of military drill, was the most important tool used to inculcate national awareness in the younger

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[72] Wien, "Who is a 'Liberal' in 1930s Iraq?", 31-47.

[73] Similar developments took place in other parts of the Middle East and indeed the world at large. On Egypt see for an example Jakob Skovgaard Petersen, "The Discovery of Adolescence in the Middle East," in *Youth and Youth Culture in the Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Jørgen Bæk Simonsen (Aarhus: Arhus University Press, 2005), 21-34; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jacob, *Working out Egypt,* 65-124. For examples of developments in Syria and Lebanon see Keith D. Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 255-278, and Christoph Schumann, *Radikalnationalismus in Syrien und Libanon: Politische Sozialisation und Elitenbildung, 1930-1958* (Hamburg: Deutches Orient Institut, 2001).

[74] Bashkin, "Iraqi Shadows, Iraqi Lights: Anti-Fascist and Anti-Nazi Voices in Monarchic Iraq, 1923-1941" in *Arab Responses to Nazism and Fascism: Attraction and Repulsion*, ed. Israel Gershoni, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014),144-145; Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 78-87,

[75] Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars*, xii.

generation."[76] She concludes that "Iraqi secondary-school students took the lessons to heart,"[77] and that the paramilitary youth movement *al-Futuwwa* was as an "opportunity for students to act out what the schools had been preaching."[78] Until recently, many histories of Iraq – both lay and scholarly -- focused on interwar Iraq as society deeply influenced by fascist, Nazi, and authoritarian ideology. This happened at the expense of more critical voices, of which there were many.[79] In a similar vein, my dissertation attempts to furnish a counter narrative to the official infatuation with authoritarianism and militarism, which has often been accentuated in historical scholarship on Iraq, and will jettison some of these well-worn historical frames. Asking different set of questions about modern Iraqi history leisure, this dissertation re-maps the Hashemite period and allows Iraq to enter into the broader discussion on leisure.

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[76] Ibid., 69-88.

[77] Ibid., 94.

[78] Ibid., 101.

[79] Bashkin, "Iraqi Shadows, Iraqi Lights," 141-168; Bashkin "The Barbarism from Within – Discourses about Fascism amongst Iraqi and Iraqi Jewish Communists, 1942-1955," *Die Welt des Islams* 52 (2012): 400-429; Peter Wien, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Germany Academia and Historical Relations between the Arab Lands and Nazi Germany," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010): 311-321. See also Israel Gershoni, "Introduction: An Analysis of Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism in Middle Eastern Studies," in *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Repulsion and Attraction*, ed. Israel Gershoni, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 1-31, Götz Nordbruch, "Cultural Fusion of Thought and Ambitions? Memory, Politics, and the History of Arab-Nazi German Encounters" *Middle Eastern Studies* 47 (2011): 183-194. For an example of uncritical scholarship that insists on seeing strong ideological links between Nazi Germany and Arab nationalism and even conspiracies, see Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), Mathias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11* (New-York: Telos Press, 2007), and Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), and Norman Podhoretz, World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism (New York: Vintage, 2007). For works that reconstruct anti authoritarian voices and discourse in the rest of the Arab Middle East see for example Israel Gershoni, "Confronting Nazism in Egypt—Tawfiq al-Hakim's Anti-Totalitarianism, 1938-1945," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte* 26 (1997), 121-150, Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010), Rami Ginat, "The Rise of Homemade Egyptian Communism: A Response to the Challenge Posed by Fascism and Nazism?" in Gershoni, *Arab Responses*, 195-215, Esther Webman, "The War and the Holocaust in the Egyptian Public Discourse, 1945-1947," in Gershoni, *Arab Responses*, 243-268, René Wildangel, "More than the Mufti: Other Arab-Palestinian Voices on Nazi Germany, 1933-1945, and Their Post War Narrations," in Gershoni, *Arab Responses*, 101- 125.

The clients of many of the institutions I study, cinemas, cafés, nightclubs, and theaters, the students and intellectuals whose leisure practices I examine, and the discourses about youth, time management, and time keeping are directly linked to the urban middle classes. Scholarship on the rise of the new professional, urban middle and middling classes, known in Arabic as the effendiyya, have taken center stage in the historiography of Iraq and the modern Middle East. Scholars have shown how, across the region, the effendiyya came to play important roles in the articulation of nationalisms, culture, print media, and shaped the conditions of political life in Arab states in the 1920-1940s.[80] Writing about Iraq at a time when few studies had been dedicated to the role of the Iraqi effendiyya, Eppel noted that "effendihood," had less to do with economic status and social origins, than with education, culture, and style of dress. To Eppel, the effendiyya was largely a result of the establishment of modern schools.[81] Both Eppel and Marr argued that the rise of the effendiyya must also be understood in the context of the expansion of market economy the since the Tanzimat and new urban employment patterns that followed the establishment of governing and administrative institutions and the press.[82] Many of these early studies overstated the effect of the pan-Arab ideology and transformative power of education on

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[80] Michael Eppel, "The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30:2 (1998): 227. See also Ryzova, *The Age of the Effendiyya*, 2014; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism*, 2009; Gershoni and Jankowski, *Rethinking Nationalism*, 1997.

[81] Ibid., 227-235. See also Reeva Simon, "The Education of an Iraqi Ottoman Army Officer" in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Majid Khaduri, Lisa Anderson, and Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 151-166, Reeva Simon, "The Hashemite 'Conspiracy': Hashemite Unity Attempts, 1921-1958," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 5:3 (1974): 314-327, Michael Eppel, *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam* (Gainesville: Florida University Press, 2004), and Phebe Marr, "The Development of Nationalist Ideology in Iraq, 1921-1941," *Muslim World* 75:2 (1985): 95-97, Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation-Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), and Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

[82] Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (London: Routledge, 2006); Hala Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745-1900* (New York: Suny Press, 1997); Samira Haj, *The Making of Iraq 1900-1963: Capital, Power, Ideology.* (New York: Suny Press, 1997).

the effendiyya. Wien introduced the concept of generational conflict to draw out the differences between the Ottoman educated Sharifian officers on the one hand, and the younger generation – the Young Effendiyya – on the other. The latter generation, according to Wien, of both military and civilian Arab nationalists were educated in Iraq's new schools, took advantage of the press and new clubs, and developed more radical Pan-Arab views during the late 1930s and 1940s.[83]

Sluglett criticized the characterization of the effendiyya as overwhelmingly pan-Arab in outlook. Pan-Arab nationalism, Sluglett argued, was mostly Sunni and did not appeal to the Shi'i, the Kurds, and the Jews, who were also part of the effendiyya. Rather, according to Sluglett, it was Iraqi nationalism, promoted by the left that appealed to the educated youth of Iraq at the time.[84] Bashkin used the term to describe the educated middle class and showed how Sunni, Shi'i, Kurdish, Christian, and Jewish effendis created an intellectual field that was more pluralistic than many have realized and which contained both pan-Arab and Iraqi nationalism.[85] Recently, Wien has contributed to our understanding of Arab nationalism, and by extension the effendiyya, by highlighting the importance of cultural texts, contexts, and non-elite transnational connections.[86] Taking these insights further, this dissertation suggests that practices of leisure shaped the formation of the Iraqi effendiyya and Iraqi modernity. Similarly, the changing nature of the effendiyya, from a small, conservative, and Ottoman group in the 1920s to a larger and more

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[83] Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 14-51.
[84] Peter Sluglett, "The Urban Bourgeoisie and the Colonial State: The Iraqi and Syrian Middle Classes between the Two World Wars," in *The Role of the State in Western Asia*, ed. Anika Rabo and Bo Utas (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2006), 77–90.
[85] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 2009.
[86] Peter Wien, *Arab Nationalism: The Politics of History and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2017), 1-21.

radical segment of Iraqi society in the 1950s, can be traced through the institutions and practices of leisure examined in this dissertation.

As the public sphere grew, so did the role of women in it. While the experiences of women were undoubtedly unique, many women passed through the same institutions, such as the new educational system, and took part, as activists, writers, and intellectuals, in the same debates and new public forums as did their male effendi counterparts. As political activists, women challenged their position in Iraqi society through organizations such as the Women's Union and the League for the Defense of Women's Rights. Naziha al-Dulaimi became the first president of the League for the Defense of Women's Rights and served as a minister during the Qasimite period. Women were also poets, writers, and editors. Paulina Hassoon, launched *Layla*, the first Iraqi women's journal, in 1923. Poet Nazik al-Malaʾika's used her poetry to protest and address, among other topics, the marginalization of women in Iraqi society. Women also took part in demonstrations, such as the 1948 Wathba and were involved with the illegal Communist party. Some worked in Baghdad's establishments of leisure as waitresses, singers, and dancers in nightclub and cabarets.[87] Some women worked, or were forced to work, as sex workers in Baghdad's brothels. The difficulty of studying female leisure will be discussed below as well as in the individual chapters.

As pointed out by Bashkin and Yoav DiCapua,[88] as well as by several memoirs written by Iraqis, Iraqi teachers, such as Muhammad Sharara, Husayn Muruwwa, and Dhu al-Nun Ayyub

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[87] Efrati, "The *Effendiya*: Where Have All the Women Gone?" 375-377; Efrati, *Women in Iraq*, 133; Efrati, "The Other Awakening in Iraq," 2004; Efrati, "Competing Narratives: Histories of Women's Movement in Iraq," 445-466; Bashkin, "Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq," 53-82; Pursley, "Daughters of the Right Path, 51-77, Sara Pursley, *"A Race Against Time,"* 2012; Walther, "From Women's Problems to Women as Images in Modern Iraqi Poetry," 219–41; Marion Farouk-Sluglett, "Liberation or Repression? Pan-Arab Nationalism and the Women's Movement in Iraq," 1993; Suleiman, "Nationalist Concerns in the Poetry of Nazik al-Mala'ika," 93-114; al-Ali, *Iraqi Women,"* 2007.

[88] Orit Bashkin, "When Mu'awiya Entered the Curriculum—Some Comments on the Iraqi Education System in the Interwar Period." Comparative Education Review 50, no. 3: (2006): 346–66; Bashkin, "To

were communists and influenced effendis in-the-making in ways not intended by the state. Outside the classroom, demonstrations became sites of many different forms of radicalization, identity making, and cross-sectarian solidarity as shown by Kevin Jones and Bashkin who focus on the 1948 Wathba and the 1952 Intifada.[89] This must be understood in the context of the post-WWII era, which Davis describes as "the most active and participatory era in twentieth century Iraqi political, social, and cultural life."[90] This was a time when the expanding public sphere with its increasingly politicized organizations, political parties, unions, literary and cultural movements became dominated by radical forces from both sides of the Iraqi-pan-Arab nationalist divide. Students, intellectuals, and workers subscribing to different nationalisms challenged both each other and the state through demonstrations, strikes, as well as in the press and in literature,[91] while the growth of urban centers in the post-war period facilitated a social space for political debate and provided the numbers needed to occupy these spaces.[92] This dissertation shows that spaces of leisure were crucial to these processes.

With regard to the sectarian makeup of Iraq, this dissertation follows scholars such as Ussama Makdisi and Max Weiss who in the Lebanese context have shown the historical and produced nature of sectarianism and its relation to colonialism and European hegemony.[93] In Iraq

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Educate an Iraqi Jew," 163–83; Yoav Di-Capua, "Homeward Bound: Husayn Muruwwah's Integrative Quest for Authenticity," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 44; (2013): 21-52.

[89] Jones (2014) and Bashkin (2017)

[90] Eric Davis, *Memories of State*, 83.

[91] Ibid., 86.

[92] Orit Bashkin, "A Patriotic Uprising: Baghdadi Jews and the Wathba," in *Violence and the City in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Nelida Fuccaro (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016), 151-166; Davis, *Memories of State*, 82-108; Kevin Jones, "A Horizon Lit With Blood: Public Poetry And Mass Politics In Iraq," *Social History* 39, no. 4: (2014): 443-461.

[93] Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth Century Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Ussama Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019); Max Weiss, *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

too, several historians have challenged sectarianism as a narrative that can explain modern Iraqi history and society. Without denying the existence of sectarianism, historians such as Bashkin, Batatu, Haj, Faleh Abdul Jabar, Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, and Sami Zubaida, highlighted the many anti-sectarian discourses that existed in Iraq, rural-urban divides, and the role played by British colonialism and the Hashemite state in the construction of the categories of sect and ethnicity.[94] While this dissertation is not about sectarianism, it shows that modern Iraqi practices and spaces of leisure were sites in which sectarian identities and boundaries could be crossed, dissolved, or at the very least momentarily forgotten. While Iraqi minorities, such as Jews, played a significant role in the first decades of Iraqi cinema, cinema leisure and culture was by no means sectarian. Similarly, as Baghdad grew and more mixed neighborhoods were constructed, many of the city's cafés began to cater to diverse and mixed habitués. Gender and class, as this dissertation will show, had a far greater impact on leisure than did sect.

In addition to the purely historiographic interventions described above, a study of leisure in Hashemite Iraq has the potential to make another set of interventions. Studying everyday practices and institutions of leisure might disrupt some of the tenacious racist, sectarian, and orientalist obsessions that continue to frame how Iraq is understood as well as how it is talked about in the media, especially after the 2003 invasion and occupation. At the same time, a study of leisure in Hashemite Iraq might upset, or at the very least contextualize, the nostalgic lens through which the history of Iraqi monarchy is sometimes viewed.

On Sources and Archives

Writing about the challenges facing historical research in the Middle East, Omnia El

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[94] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*; Bashkin, *New Babylonians*; Batatu, *Old Social Classes*; Abdul Jabar, Shi'ite Movement in Iraq; Abdul Jabar, Sluglett and Farouk-Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*; Zubaida, "Fragments Imagine the Nation."

Shakry has recently pointed out that the "material inaccessibility of particular postcolonial state archives," is a reality that increasingly challenges the region as a whole.[95] Writing a history "without documents," as El Shakry calls it, is a strenuous task both as a result of the the material inaccessibility of certain archives and the continued destruction of other archives. Combined, this reality limits the possibility for historical writing. So too, however, does the "archival imaginaries" of historians.[96] By reconsidering what might constitute an archive, it is possible to write histories without access to traditional archives. As El Shakry aptly point out, this is a situation that increasingly challenges historical research in the region as a whole. Iraq is certainly no exception.

In fact, the intricacies and obstacles related to the writing of Iraqi cultural histories are many. Decades of authoritarian rule, instability, crumbling sanctions, and three destructive wars have for long made archival research in Iraq difficult. In the wake of 2003, looting and vandalism left libraries, archives, museums, and government buildings in ruins. The loss of these sources and the present state of violence in Iraq pose serious challenges to historians of Iraq. Even before 2003, however, twentieth century Iraqi history has been written through a reliance of British colonial sources and with primacy given to political history and the state. This dissertation attempts to displace and challenge the authoritativeness of British colonial interpretations of Iraq. While colonial and state archives are important for what they can tell us about attempts to control leisure, they are not, as we will see, necessarily well suited for exploring everyday practices and institutions of leisure. A history of modern Iraq that only partially relies on colonial and state archives and sources, it is needless to say, can only tell, like all histories, a partial story. This story, however, is one that remains to be told.

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[95] Omnia El Shakry, "'History without Documents': The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle East," *The American Historical Review* 120:3 (2015): 921.
[96] Ibid., 934.

In fact, this dissertation is skeptical of uncritical celebrations of knowability. The idea that, if only one could travel to Iraq or if only the libraries and archives of Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra were still intact, then one could write the ultimate and definitive history of Iraq, is at best counterproductive. Regardless of the number of sources available, no country, group, or time period can ever be completely historicized. Rather, the difficulty of travelling to Iraq is as an opportunity to reexamine already available sources and engage innovatively and creatively with other sites, collections, and archives. This dissertation uses archives located in the United States, Lebanon, Israel, Italy, and the United Kingdom. This opportunity, it is pertinent to point out, is entirely contingent upon positionality: Institutional support, financial resources, the color of one's passport, and the privilege of mobility are very rarely afforded to researchers from and in Iraq. The inability of Iraqis to travel abroad for conferences and archival research and the violence that many face inside Iraq is a reality that the field of Iraqi studies will have to collectively address. I hope that conditions in Iraq an in Europe and North American will change in the near future. This would allow for more equal forms of collaboration and new interpretations of Iraq's past and present.

Academic writing is a collaborative and cumulative endeavor and my approach to sources and archives is inspired by a number of works that have appeared in Iraqi studies since around 2003.[97] These important works, creative in their engagement with sources and astute in their application of theory, have recalibrated the field of Iraqi studies by looking beyond and questioning the categories of state, sectarianism, and nationalism. My dissertation corroborates these recent trends by accentuating the pluralistic, composite, and leisurely aspects of Hashemite history and society. It does so by amplifying everyday voices, discourses, and experiences. This perspective

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[97] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 2009; Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 2012; Davis, *Memories of Sate*, 2005; Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 2006; Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence," 2013; Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 2019; Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute," 2015; Bahoora, "Baudelaire in Baghdad," 2013; Efrati, *Women in Iraq*, 2012; Bet-Shlimon, *City of Black Gold*, 2020.

on Iraq's cultural and political history can only be achieved by an interdisciplinary approach that sidelines, without completely ignoring, colonial, state, and traditional archives. In fact, as mentioned above, this dissertation investigates leisure in a multiplicity of sites, forms, and activities available in Baghdad during the Hashemite period. My dissertation investigates these diverse sites and practices from the perspective of those who engaged in them. I move beyond the state by amplifying the voices, discourses, and experiences that engaged with and challenged it. This textured history is best understood by looking at the diverse actors and institutions at times involved and in contact with, but not necessarily part of the state.

It is important to point out, however, that the decentering of the state in this dissertation is part choice, part necessity. Necessity because the sources and archives usually used to examine the manifestation of state power and discipline in the lives of subjects are not always available in the Iraqi case. As demonstrated in the first part of the introduction, leisure globally became a site of state intervention. However, with extremely limited access to police and court documents, for example, which in other histories of the modern Middle East from the same period have been used to describe the policing of bodies, institutions, and spaces of leisure, this dissertation takes a different approach. It does, however, rely on and engage with accounts of how leisure, gender, sexuality, and public space were policed in places outside of Iraq such as nineteenth and twentieth century Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran.

The decentering of the state, as mentioned above, is also part choice. The everyday experience of leisure has a tendency to fall through the gaps of official archives. In fact, it would be difficult to study leisure through the use of any single archive, however rich and detailed. Therefore, several archives and a varied combination of sources such as poetry, short stories, novels, autobiographies, photographs, newspapers, journals, and missionary sources form the

backbone of this dissertation. The particular problems posed by missionary archives will be dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2. Some of these sources and archives mimic state, official, religious and conservative views on leisure and can thus be used to reconstruct top-down attempts to control and police leisure. Other sources allow us to ask entirely different questions about leisure.

I hope that one day it will be possible to write a cultural history of Iraqi working class or rural leisure. This is not that dissertation. This dissertation centers mostly on urban, public, and middle class forms of leisure in Baghdad.[98] It is harder to study Iraqi rural subjects and poor urban dwellers, many of whom where women, engaged in petty trades, factory work, domestic labor, and services and sex work, as well as subjects generally outside or on the margins of the wage work economy.[99] While such subjects, including women, are momentarily visible in the writings of the shifting formations of the Iraqi left, who saw it as one of their goals to improve the living conditions of Iraq's urban and rural poor, their limited experiences of leisure are not.[100] Iraqi male middle class urbanites, on the others hand, engaged in more easily recognizable and traceable forms of public leisure, and produced texts about leisure. Whenever possible, however, this dissertation foregrounds inequalities within leisure as well as the role of labor on which leisure almost always depends. Furthermore, all of the chapters engage with the question of class, and

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[98] Recently, Scholars have begun to explore the Iraqi periphery. See for example Bet-Shlimon, "The Politics and Ideology of Urban Development in Iraq's Oil City Kirkuk, 1946–58." *Comparative Studies of South East Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 33, no. 1: (2013:) 26-40; Bet-Shlimon, *City of Black Gold*, Nelida Fuccaro, "Ethnicity, State Formation, and Conscription in Postcolonial Iraq: The Case of the Yazidi Kurds of Jabal Sinjar in Creating National Identities" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no 4: (1997) 559-80; Nelida Fuccaro, "Dissecting Moments of Unrest: Twentieth Century Kirkuk," in *Violence and the City in the Modern Middle East*, 169-188, ed. Nelida Fuccaro (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016); Reidar Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State: Separatism and Nationalism in Southern Iraq* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005)
[99] Orit Bashkin, Review of *Women in Iraq: Past Meets Present*, by Noga Efrati. *American Academic Research Institute in Iraq Newsletter* 7: 2 (2012): 12–14.
[100] Orit Bashkin, "Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq, 1921–1958." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no. 1: (2008): 53-82; Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute," 2015.

Chapters 3 and 4, on cinemas and cafés, examine spaces of leisure that were not class exclusive.

In terms of the gender politics that structured, facilitated, limited public leisure in Hashemite Baghdad, it is important to point out that although some male ways of inhabiting and circulating in the city arouse suspicion and moral condemnation, men nevertheless claimed a right to the city more easily than did women. In other words, in the theoretical lineage of Eve Sedgwick, urban and public leisure in Baghdad was largely a homosocial space in the sense that men and women were isolated into separate spheres and that social bonds created there were mostly between persons of the same sex.[101] Therefore, this dissertation's main focus is leisure as it existed among boys and men, many of whom belonged to the effendiyya. I use the term effendiyya as an analytical category to collectively describe the men of the Iraqi educated urban middle and middling classes and suggest that leisurely practices were important for the formation of the effendiyya.

This does not mean that women did not have leisure or that all spaces of leisure were gender-exclusive.[102] In fact, several of the chapters in this dissertation read sources against the grain in order to focus on women as participants, producers, and workers in Baghdad's economy

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[101] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For a study of female homosocial publics see Sara Pursley, "Daughters of the Right Path: Family Law, Homosocial Publics, and the Ethics of Intimacy in the Works of Shi'i Revivalist Bint al-Huda." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 8, no, 2: (2012): 51-77

[102] Noga Efrati, "The *Effendiya*: Where Have All the Women Gone?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011): 375-377; Noga Efrati, *Women in Iraq: Past Meets Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 133; Noga Efrati, "The Other Awakening in Iraq: The Women's Movement in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004); Noga Efrati, "Competing Narratives: Histories of Women's Movement in Iraq, 1910-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 3 (2008): 445-466; Orit Bashkin, "Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq, 1921–1958." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no. 1: (2008): 53-82; Sara Pursley, *A Race Against Time: Governing Femininity and Reproducing the Future in Revolutionary Iraq, 1945-63*. PhD diss., City University of New York, 2012, Wiebke Walther., "From Women's Problems to Women as Images in Modern Iraqi Poetry." *Die Welt des Islams* 36, no. 2: (1996): 219–41, Marion Farouk-Sluglett, "Liberation or Repression? Pan-Arab Nationalism and the Women's Movement in Iraq," *Iraq: Power and Society*, eds. Derek Hopwood, Habib Ishow, and Thomas Koszinowski (Reading: Ithaca, 1993), Yasir Suleiman, "Nationalist Concerns in the Poetry of Nazik al-Mala'ika," *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1-2 (1995): 93-114; Nadje al-Ali, *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present* (London: Zed Books, 2007).

of leisure. However, since the voices of these women are almost exclusively available through texts and accounts produced by men, studying the leisure of women represents a very real challenge. In fact, the paucity of women's voices with regards to leisure means that the story of leisure in Hashemite Iraq will, for now at least, be incomplete. That being said, the texts produced by Iraqi men, fictional and otherwise, shed light on the tensions and anxieties that existed around new spaces of public leisure in which women took part. As many of these texts, especially the fictional ones, are concerned with the respectability and morality of leisure and leisure spaces, they can be used to trace the performance of different kinds of policing and the construction of normative values.[103] In a similar vein, Chapters 1 and 2 analyze essays and short stories produced by Iraqi students in order to show how many of these mimicked more conservative and official voices and discourses to which this dissertation does not have access.

In order to capture these tensions, anxieties, and forms of policing, this dissertation combines historical analysis with close and critical readings of Iraqi literary texts produced during the period under study. The scarcity of Iraqi archival sources that deal with the lived and everyday experience of leisure makes literature a privileged site of information. More specifically, this dissertation brings literature and history closer together and suggests that literature played a role as a site of leisure while at the same time recording and debating new practices of leisure. In other words, practices of leisure and novel urban identities and figures were described, debated, worked out, and sometimes excluded in the literature of the period. Moreover, literature itself, whether in the form of reading it, producing it, or debating it, constitutes an important form of leisure. For

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[103] See for example Bahoora's study of how Iraqi male writers in the 1940s and 1950s used the figure of the female sex worker in order to articulate how Iraqi women could be integrated into the postcolonial nation state through "secular, urban, and middle-class notions of modern domesticity and respectability. Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute," 42-43.

example, the cinema is a continuous theme and setting Iraqi literature. From the short stories produced by Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, Dhu al-Nun Ayyub, and ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri, and Shakir Khusbak to the the rich tradition of Iraqi autobiographical writing, Baghdad's many cinemas play an important role. As we will see, the same holds true for cafés and nightclubs. Therefore, such texts play an important role in this dissertation.

As pointed out by Bahoora, literary texts are important for the writing of Iraqi cultural history. Literary texts can reveal "undiscovered subtleties and dissonant narratives" and narrate "the transformation of spaces, places, ideas, and experiences" and tell us about the emergence of new social types and the articulation of social problems, including conflicts over class, gender, and sexuality."[104] This does not mean, however, that literary texts can simply support a political or historical thesis in a straightforward way. Rather, according to Bahoora, as aesthetic objects with material histories of their own, literary texts can shed light on the "complexities and contradictions of a particular historical moment."[105] This dissertation, therefore, rather than read literary texts as sociological or historical studies of leisure practices and sensibilities, assumes that they tapped into and reflected psychological and social dynamics in Hashemite Iraq. More specifically, the flux of ideas around leisure was captured in the literature of the period, providing us with an aperture for further exploration. In addition to describing, debating, working out and excluding practices of leisure and novel urban identities and figures, the literature of the period mediated on tensions of class, gender, and sexuality.

This dissertation also makes use of a large number of autobiographies and memoirs written by Iraqis and foreigners in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, from across the political and

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[104] Haytham Bahoora, "Literature as Archive: Writing Literary History as Cultural History, *Arab Studies Journal* XXIII: 1 (2015): 250.
[105] Ibid., 249.

religious landscape of Iraq. As shown by Bashkin, in the case of Iraq, autobiographies, biographies of poets, novels, poetry and short stories can serve important case studies for historians.[106] While memoirs and autobiographies must always be read as reflecting the time of their writing and the classed and gendered position of their authors, they are important conduits into the world of leisure.

Last but not least, this dissertation makes use of a large body of non-fictional writing produced by Iraqis inside Iraqi. It is absolutely paramount to acknowledge the significant contributions of Iraqi historians, social scientists, and literary scholars, both lay and professional. Secondary literature in Arabic produced by Iraqis and other Arabs on Iraq has often been overlooked or at best treated solely as a primary source, rather than authoritative and enlightening commentaries in their own right. Works on Baghdadi history, culture, nightlife, music, and urban development by Najam Wali, ʿAbbas Baghdadi, Basil ʿAbd al-Hamid Hamudi, Shafiq Mahdi, Yeheskel Kojaman, ʿAbd al-Karim al-ʿAllaf, and social scientists like ʿAli al-Wardi have shaped how this dissertation approaches Iraqi history and leisure. The encyclopedic knowledge and attention to detail that characterize many of these works make up for what some of them lack in terms of conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Such works, and the people who produced them, deserve to be read, acknowledged, and problematized as part of the growing field of Iraqi studies.

On Structure and Organization

Leisure has many meanings and can in some ways be thought of as any form of social life that is not strictly work. To study such a vast phenomenon in a single dissertation would be daunting. Therefore, through its five thematic chapters, this dissertation examines a number of

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[106] Bashkin, "To Educate an Iraqi Jew; or, What Can We Learn from Hebrew Autobiographies about Arab Nationalism and the Iraqi Education System (1921–1952)," 163–83.

leisure sites, practices, as well as attempts to control and influence these. The five chapters of this dissertation are representative, without being exhaustive, of modern leisure's many roles, meanings, and trajectories. In order to prevent the focus of this dissertation from becoming too broad, the first two chapter of this dissertation show how Iraqi subjects were disciplined in leisure; in particular, the first two chapters explore the emergence of extracurricular activities in schools as an attempt to control and fill the leisure time of students. The latter three chapters interrogate leisure activities further removed from the bounds of official control. Attempts to control and influence leisure, however, whether by the state of the Iraqi Left, is a recurring theme in all of the chapters. In twentieth century Iraq, a vast number of discourses claimed leisure as central. Medical, moral, theological, legal, economic, cultural, and nationalist discourses all to varying degrees. Engaging with all of them in a single dissertation would be difficult. While I return to some of these discourses in the epilogue, others, such as medical and normative religious (whether Islamic, Christian, Jewish) discourses on leisure, are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

While this dissertation begins in 1921, the start of the Iraqi Hashemite state, it is structured around a thematic and site-specific, rather than a chronological, organization of chapters. Since this dissertation aims to examine leisure's multiple forms and manifestations rather than the history and emergence of the category itself, throughout the research phase, a thematic and site-specific organization of chapters emerged as the most generative approach. Some of the themes crystallized while doing archival research. Others, such as the spatial contexts, which are key to understanding the modes of leisure and recreation that emerged around them, and the critical notion of time emerge from theoretical perspectives. However, the intersection of leisure with temporalities and social positions, such as labor, gender, class, and age will be a recurring theme throughout the chapters. Although the five chapters are organized thematically, they all perform chronology by

way of the careful attention they pay to the histories of the institutions and practices they describe and analyze.

Writing about leisure in early modern Istanbul, Kafadar reminds us that while moments and extended periods of non-work time have always existed, especially in cities, those times, and the opportunities they created, offered themselves in new ways at different historical moments.[107] While leisure was offered in new ways during the Hashemite period, the majority of the chapters in this dissertation trace the institutions, forms, and practices of leisure they interrogate back to before the emergence of Iraq as a mandate and state. In other words, they all pay attention to continuities from the Ottoman period. Looking over one's shoulder and into Ottoman Iraq is welcome reminder of that period's proximity to Hashemite history. Simultaneously, it reminds us to think of notions of leisure and time as always historically constituted. Last but not least, while no single chapter deals specifically with British colonial rule or the Hashemite state, they all include, to various degrees, official views on and responses to leisure.

Chapter 1 focuses on American missionary education in Iraq and explores the ways in which extracurricular activities were actively mobilized to control and restrict the unsupervised time and leisure of students. I use the all-boys Jesuit Baghdad College (BC) as a case study. By focusing on BC, this chapter demonstrates that the attempt to control and mold leisure as well as to discipline students in leisure through extracurricular activities, cannot be thought of as a project exclusively within the bounds of the Iraqi state. Chapter 1 considers the new potentialities that occurred as a result of the appropriation of time at a historical moment when school both colonized time, creating new forms of controlled and supervised leisure, in the form of extracurricular activities. At this historical juncture, the extracurricular emerges as a useful sphere of analysis

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[107] Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night," 250.

because it so clearly embodies the desire to check and curb leisure, seeking to make it productive. As an American institution wedded to the idea that extracurricular activities were necessarily part and parcel of modern education and character building, BC is an ideal place to examine the control of leisure.

Chapter 1 argues that BC offered an impressive range of extracurricular activities and employed notions of "disciplined freedom" and "profitable recreation" to regulate and supervise the time of students. BC was an ideological institution, expressed through missionary and specifically American logics, behaviors, and values. Relatedly, this chapter re-evaluates the overlooked but important cultural and educational role played by the US in Iraq in the first half of the twentieth century and argues that BC sought to produce boys, or rather men of the future, in the image of American, middle class, Christian respectability. As part of this project, the Jesuits at BC used extracurricular activities to teach students about the dangers of communism. In fact, this chapter argues that American Jesuit missionaries were active in the fight against communism well before it had become a key feature of local Iraqi postwar politics or globally through the Cold War.

Building on the above insights, Chapter 2 examines the Presbyterian American School for Girls in Baghdad (ASG) and demonstrates that the time and leisure of young Iraqi women and girls, many of whom became students during this period, became a site of intense intervention equal to that of male students. When ASG opened in 1925, the school was at the forefront of mobilizing extracurricular activities as a way of controlling and diminishing the leisure time of students in ways that at times challenged sex-differentiated notions of what was considered appropriate for female students. As such, through the lens of ASG this chapter studies the gendered politics of education, extracurricular activities, and leisure. While there were differences between

the Presbyterians and the Jesuits, within the realm of neocolonial missionary education, they shared the American focus on extracurricular activities and character-building.

When modern education began to demand more time, it partially replaced the family. This chapter argues that ASG can be seen as a micro-cosmos of new forms of non-kin based Iraqi loyalty and solidarity. This resulted in new, intimate, and non-sectarian female friendships. While female subjects at ASG and later on also in Iraq's public schools were targeted first and foremost as women and future wives and mothers, this chapter shows that female students engaged in many of the same extracurricular activities as their male peers: They wrote short stories and poems in English and Arabic, put on plays, organized parties, played sports, and met in debating and Arabic societies and clubs.

Chapter 3 argues that the emergence of cinema culture in Iraq can be understood as a local articulation of a global history. While cinema's arrival predates the Hashemite state by roughly a decade, this chapter argues that the beginning of the Hashemite period is the moment when we can begin to see the local inflexion of the global phenomenon of the modernity of cinema in Iraq. This chapter approaches cinema through the lens of leisure and as a story of new urban spaces and institutions that in turn facilitated new forms of sociability. Chapter 3 shows that the history of cinema in Iraq is also the history of urban modernity. The first part of the chapter traces the beginnings of cinema culture in Iraq by focusing on the construction of cinemas in Iraqi urban centers. As cinemagoing became a habit, cultural products, performers, and people with technical skills came to Iraqi from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, India, Europe, and North America. Cinema, as this chapter will show, is therefore an elucidating example of how transregional and global products, knowledge, and knowhow was localized.

The second part of the chapter explores the experience of cinemagoing as well as how the

many forms of advertisements that accompanied the emergence of cinemas, changed Baghdad's urban landscape. While the cinema was a class and eventually also gender-inclusive leisure space that facilitated new forms of family and female leisure, Chaptter 3 argues that the experience of going to the cinema was nonetheless shaped by class and gender. At the same time, the films shown in Iraqi cinemas produced and made available new images and perceptions of gender. Images of American, but also Egyptian masculinity and femininity, affected Iraqi cinemagoers. Films created new idols, role models, hairstyles and fashion to be emulated. The same images also fueled sexual fantasies and shaped and created desire among Iraqi cinemagoers.

The last section of the chapter examines how cinema was mobilized for political, pedagogical, and propagandistic purposes. The cinema became a battleground for competing visions of morality, gender relations, and politics. The British, the Iraqi state, and later on also the Americans used cinema and films to control and influence public opinion and culture. In tandem, this chapter shows how Iraqi intellectuals and writers on the left envisioned cinemagoing as a form of leisure that could be politicized for progressive and anti-colonial purposes.

Chapter 4 attempts to reconstruct the quotidian and less studied aspects of the social life and dynamics of Baghad's many cafés. It examines the double life and ambiguity of space and argues that leisure time and leisure sites are not autonomous or hermetically sealed off from non-leisurely activities. As spaces of social interaction and exchange, in which Baghdadi men belonging to different classes, backgrounds, and creeds came into contact, cafés embodied a multiplicity of often overlapping functions and social roles that allowed for uses beyond their narrowly defined purposes. In addition to the important role they played in Baghdad's landscape of leisure, cafés were intimately connected to various forms of work, labor, and trade. In fact, leisure's ever present intersection with labor is a key concern and main analytical thrust throughout

this chapter. The café is an optimal place to study the relationship between leisure and labor. Not only were cafés, almost from their inception, associated with specific professions, crafts, and classes, they also attracted peddlers, functioned as sites of business transactions, and employed a large number of people such as waiters, entertainers, and musicians. In addition, cafés often became a locus of surrounding commercial activities. They attracted peddlers, served meals from nearby restaurants, and stands selling newspapers, old and new books, and magazines were often set up next to cafés. As such, this chapter argues, café leisure spilled into and was in a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding urban, economic, and social environment. The second half of this chapter examines Baghdad's literary cafés. It does so by tracing discourses of idleness. It argues that the notion of a potentially dangerous and non-national idleness emerged as a function of a new and modern temporality and came to be associated with a particular space, namely the café, which had previously represented a less rigid boundary between work and leisure.

Chapter 5 looks at nocturnal leisure and labor in Baghdad's nightlife. It argues that Iraqi nightlife, as it existed in the first part of the twentieth century, before Iraq became a state, can further our understanding of Middle Eastern transnationalism and movements of labor across the region. The "nocturnal" transnationalism of female nightclub performers and the mobility and movement of precarious forms of labour, including sex work, that it represents, offers a corrective to elite-focused understandings of movement and travel during this period. This chapter shows that both before and after Iraqi had become a state, nightlife was a form of leisure that challenged and changed the boundaries of sexuality and gender in Iraqi society. At the same time, it was a site in which sexuality and gender were policed.

In addition, Chapter 5 argues that at a time when the Hashemite state was trying to figure out and consolidate what it meant, politically, historically, and culturally to be Iraqi, there was a

synchronous attempt, from below and through popular culture and nocturnal institutions of leisure, to lay claims to Iraqi, history, identity, localities, and the national project more broadly. With a particular focus on female performers and nightclubs, the first part of this chapter examines how the Baghdadi night was turned into a space for leisure and traces history of the rise of nightlife and nocturnal leisure practices. The second part of this chapter traces the emergence of the female stars of Iraqi nightlife. In addition, it begins to tell the story of Iraq's hundreds of less fortunate and famous female performers.

The dissertation's epilogue concludes, reflects on the forms and modes of leisure not studied in this dissertation, and suggest future avenues for the study of leisure in Iraq.

Chapter 1: From Boys to Men: Missionary Education and Extracurricular Activities at Baghdad College

The 1948 issue of *Al Iraqi*, the Baghdad College (BC) yearbook, featured a full page drawing as an introduction to the graduating class of seniors. There was nothing unusual about this as *Al Iraqi* often included both student drawings and photographs. The 1948 drawing, however, is particularly indicative of BC's ideology and self-image. On the left side of the page, a young Iraqi boy, wearing shorts a marker of his young age, can be seen gazing up at the BC entrance in awe. The boy, a first year student at BC, is about to climb the stairs and enter the school. On the other side of the page, the boy has been transformed into an athletic, handsome young man sporting a white tuxedo and a black bowtie, the official BC graduation attire. The young man, with diploma in hand, is leaving BC and looks confidently and purposefully into the future. Underneath the drawing, the years 1943-1948 are printed in black, suggesting that this metamorphosis from boy to young man is the result of having spent his high school years at BC. The drawing is telling for a number of reasons and demonstrates BC's promise to make respectable men out of Iraqi boys. As this chapter will show, the specifically American-style education promised by BC centered around extracurricular activities, which enabled this transformation of Iraqi boys.

Figure 1: Drawing from *Al Iraqi*, 1948. JARC.

For a growing number of young Iraqis attending schools, like the students at BC, when modern education expanded and began to encroach on the life and time of students in hitherto unprecedented ways, it increasingly became a fulltime endeavor, entailing long hours spent on homework and extracurricular activities. As part of this process, school became a second home and played an increasingly important role in the lives students that reached far beyond graduation and into adult life. By focusing on American missionary education in Iraq, this chapter explores the ways in which extracurricular activities were actively mobilized to control and restrict the unsupervised time and leisure of students. It does so within the setting of an elite American missionary educational institution, namely the all-boys Jesuit Baghdad College where extracurricular activities, earlier than in most Iraqi schools, became an intimate part of the everyday life of students. By focusing on BC, this chapter demonstrates that the attempt to control and mold leisure as well as to discipline students in leisure through extracurricular activities, cannot be thought of as a project exclusively within the bound if the Iraqi state.

As its starting point, this chapter takes into consideration the ways in which modern schooling employed technologies of power and discipline. It also considers the new potentialities that occurred as a result of the appropriation of time at a historical moment when school both colonized time, creating new forms of controlled and supervised leisure, in the form of extracurricular activities. At this historical juncture, the extracurricular emerges as a useful sphere of analysis because it so clearly embodies the desire to check and curb leisure, seeking to make it productive. Relatedly, as an American institution wedded to the idea that extracurricular activities were necessarily part and parcel of modern education and character building, BC is an ideal place to examine the control of leisure.

As such, this chapter is in some ways about the absence of leisure and attempts to control and limit it by transforming it into extracurricular activities. While leisure has a tendency to fall through the archival gaps, attempts to govern and restrict it, such as those made by BC, are often easier to locate. Therefore, this chapter is less about what BC students did outside of school, and more about what the school did in order to "fill" the time that students spent inside the walls of the school. As we saw in Husain's essay in the introduction to this dissertation, while the Iraqi state was equally concerned with creating extracurricular activities to fill the leisure time of students, they did not have a monopoly. The reconstruction of less supervised and even illicit forms of leisure occurring outside of school will be explored in detail in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

The missionary ethos of BC informed the school's attempts to educate and civilize Iraqi students. However, much like other Iraqi educational institutions at the time, these attempts aimed to instill gendered, bodily, and moral discipline and character in its students. As part of these efforts, this chapter argues, BC offered an impressive range of extracurricular activities and employed notions of "disciplined freedom" and "profitable recreation" to regulate and supervise

the time of students. BC was an ideological institution, expressed through missionary and specifically American logics, behaviors, and values. As such, this chapter re-evaluates the overlooked but important cultural and educational role played by the US in Iraq in the first half of the twentieth century and argues that BC sought to produce boys, or rather men of the future, in the image of American, middle class, Christian respectability.[1] As part of this project, from very early on, the Jesuits at BC used extracurricular and academic activities specifically designed to teach students about the dangers of communism. In fact, this chapter argues that American Jesuit missionaries were active in the fight against communism well before it had become a key feature of local Iraqi postwar politics or globally through the Cold War.

Scholarship on education in Iraq has focused on Arab and Iraqi nationalist and militarist trends, but by focusing on BC, this chapter argues for the need to recognize the multiplicity of sometimes contradicting influences that played a role in the lives of Iraqi youth. BC was a multilingual and multiethnic institution that kept students busy through an impressive range of extracurricular activities that created not just moral character, discipline, self-control, and loyalty to American missionary and Catholic values but also intense and intimate friendships, elite and group consciousness, and new forms of sociability and ways to spend time in ways that were not always sanctioned by the school.

From early on, education was seen a tool capable of unifying the country and creating an Iraqi nation. At the head of the earliest efforts stood Satiʿ al-Husri. Al-Husri began his career as

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[1] For some of BC's Christian students, extracurricular school life included religious and devotional activities. The annual reports of the Sodality Society – BC's largest religious student organization – were always published in *Al-Iraqi* accompanied by pictures of students engaged in prayer and mass. BC also had a Sanctuary Society, organized annual collections for the poor and the missions, and encouraged personal prayer, piety, and devotion through The Knights of the Blessed Sacrament and Captains of the Sacred Heart League. This chapter, however, focuses only on the extracurricular activites shared by all the school's students.

an Ottoman educator in Istanbul, but followed Faisal from Damascus to Iraq where he became the doyen of Iraqi education, an important intellectual, and an advocate for Arab nationalism. As Iraq's first Director General of Education, al-Husri created and implemented a curriculum, developed teaching methods, and chose textbooks and teachers for Iraq's schools. In his approach, al-Husri favored Arabic language and history.[2] Thanks to efforts of the Iraqi state and the Ministry of Education, which received the third largest budgetary provision of all the departments of the Iraqi government, the numbers of students and schools increased dramatically throughout the mandate and Hashemite periods.[3] In 1921, Iraq had 88 primary schools and three secondary public schools. Ten years later, in 1931, the number of primary public schools had reached 316 while the number of secondary schools had risen to 19. In 1945, the numbers were 878 and 71, respectively. During the same period, the number of primary schools for girls rose from 27 in 1921 to 162 in 1945. By 1945, Iraq also had 49 coeducational schools.[4] The demand for education and the need for professors and teachers to educate Iraq's future generations was so great that teachers had to be brought in from neighboring countries. To alleviate the lack of teachers, Iraq also saw an increase

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[2] Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars*, 70-71. During the mandate period, British advisors assigned to the Ministry of Education had a say in the general trajectory of Iraqi education. The British advisors were often concerned about the prospect of Iraqis becoming too educated and tried, at least initially, to limit secondary education out of fear that overeducated and potentially unemployed Iraqis would turn to oppositional and anti-British politics. The powers of the British advisors, however, grew increasingly smaller as different Iraqi nationalist voices grew stronger. Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 273-295; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 230-231. Al-Husri often clashed with the British advisors in the Ministry of Education, who wanted to enforce a British system of education. Al-Husri also clashed with Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali, an Iraqi shi'i who followed him as Director General of Education. In fact, the ministry, continued to be characterized by fierce competition for power and influence. Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 233. Unlike al-Husri's interest in the strictly academic aspects of education, al-Jamali was an advocate for a more practical form of education that would, he hoped, prepare Iraqi students for real life. While the two frequently clashed, they did, however, agree on the importance of secularizing Iraqi education and limiting religious schooling, which they saw as a potential threat to the creation of national solidarity. As noted by Bashkin, however, the nationalized version of Iraq's Islamic past was never universally accepted and some even actively protested against it. See Bashkin, When, 347-355.
[3] Roderick Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries in the Near East: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria,* Lebanon (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1949), 127.
[4] Ibid., 140-142.

in the number of teacher training colleges. These included the Higher Teachers Training College, Queen Aliya College for women, and later the College of Arts and Sciences.[5] By 1945, Iraq had five colleges, which together enrolled 1,790 students.[6]

American missionary education in Iraq coincided with the rise and expansion of public education during the early years of the mandate and the Hashemite period. The scholarship on Iraq has explored the field of education and its relationship to nationalism and the emergence of an Iraqi *effendiyya*,[7] but little attention has been paid to foreign and private education. In fact, with the exception of Iraq's Jewish schools, the role of foreign and private schools in Iraq has only tentatively been researched.[8] Several historians of Iraq have pointed to the growing influence of American educational models in Iraq and the important role played by Iraqi educators, who studied at places such as Columbia University and the University of Chicago.[9] Similarly, Pursley noted

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[5] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 230. For more information on The Higher Teachers Training College see Ni'am K. El-Hashimi, The Higher Teachers College, Baghdad: A History, 1923-1958, MA Thesis, The American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon, 1963.

[6] The number of technical and vocational schools went from 1 to 7 during the same period. These were located in Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk and were, like most educational institutions in Iraq, with the exception of the Law College, essentially free. Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab* Countries, 134. Already in 1921, the Iraqi government started sending students to Middle Eastern, American, and European educational institutions. The number of students, including both men and women, rose steadily. In 1921, 9 students fully or almost fully funded by the Iraqi government were studying abroad. In 1929, the number was 93 and in 1940, the number of Iraqi students sent abroad reached 238. Just as many studied abroad at their own expense. Most went to Lebanon, the US, and Europe. Among the Iraqis who studied abroad were prominent figures such as Matta ʿAqrawi, ʿAbd al-Fattah Ibrahim, Ahmed Sousa, and Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali. ʿAqrawi and al-Jamali, both of whom were later to become prominent Iraqi politicians and educators, both obtained doctorates in education from the Teachers College of Columbia University.

[7] See for example Michael Eppel, "The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921–1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30:2 (1998): 227–50 and Phebe Marr, "The Development of Nationalist Ideology in Iraq, 1921–1941," *Muslim World* 75:2 (1985): 85–101.

[8] For insightful studies of Iraqi Jewish education see S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah, "Jewish Education in Baghdad: Communal vs. Public Space," in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, ed. S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H.L. Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 98-104 and Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 85, and Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 254. For more on the Shammash school see for example Sasson Somekh's memoir *Baghdad Yesterday: The Making of an Arab Jew* (Jerusalem: Ibis Editions, 2007).

[9] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 232-233, Pursley, *Familiar futures*, 3-31.

that the militarist aspects of Iraqi education have received much more scholarly attention than the effects on Iraqi schools of Western specialists, global and local economic forces, and political turmoil in Iraq.[10] However, with regard to the actual foreign schools that operated in Iraq, much work remains to be done.[11] This is not because missionary education was necessarily more liberal, but because it was an important part of the diverse landscape of education in Iraq. This chapter uses BC as a case study for the exploration of landscapes of leisure in the context of a private, elite school in Hashemite Iraq. Because of its American vision of education, BC was at the forefront of introducing and developing extracurricular activities as cornerstones of modern education in Iraq. In addition, the richness of the missionary archives complements the scarcity of Iraqi archives and can be used to trace the growth of extracurricular activities, which later became dominant in schools across the country.

Within the last decade, a spate of critical studies of missionaries and the institutions they established in the Middle East have appeared.[12] Focusing mostly on Egypt and the Levant, these works have pointed to the transnational, cross-cultural, and complex nature of the encounter

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[10] Pursley, "'Education for Real Life': Pragmatist Pedagogies and American Interwar Expansion in Iraq," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (Routledge: New York, 2015).

[11] Only one article and two MA theses exist on the topic: Israa Alhassani, *Basra's High Hope: An American Missionary School in Iraq during the World War Era*, MA Thesis, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 2014; Charles Bashara, *Faith, Education, and Nationalism in Interwar Iraq: The Mission of the American Jesuits, 1931-1941*, MA Thesis, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1985; Wisam Kh. Abdul-Jabbar, "Baghdad college and the geopolitics of desire: The Jesuit presence and Al-Futuwa nationalists," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53:2, (2016): 198-210. The first American missionary educational endeavor in Iraq began before Iraq had become a mandate. Lead by John Van Ess and established as part of the Protestant Arabian Mission, the High Hope Schools were established in Basra in 1912.

[12] Missionary activity and education in the Middle East stretches back beyond the twentieth century. An unofficial count on the eve of WWI put the number of French Catholic schools in the Ottoman Empire at 500, American schools at 675, and British at 178. These schools, especially in the nineteenth century, counted among them institutions of higher education, including colleges and universities. See Betty Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 11.

between missionaries and inhabitants of the region as well as to the lasting importance of the institutions that the missionaries established.[13] With a few notable exceptions, however, the daily life and activities of students, such as extracurricular activities, have been largely absent from the recent scholarship on missionaries in the region. Fleischmann's work on women in missionary schools in Syria and Lebanon is one such exception and will be explored in Chapter 2. Since the main focus of this dissertation is leisure, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer an exhaustive history of the Iraqi encounter and experience with missionaries. Instead, the first section of this chapter offers a brief overview of the history of the Jesuit mission to Iraq, which is synonymous with BC. It then explores the methodological challenges of missionary archives and sources. Finally, through these sources, this chapter discusses the several ways in which BC used extracurricular activities through a combination of moral, mental, and physical skills, to influence

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[13] See for example Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) and Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). Scholars such as Sharkey and Paul Sedra focused mainly, although not exclusively, on the meeting between missionaries and local Christian communities. See Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers, and Education in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011). Beth Baron recently shifted the focus to the encounter between missionaries and local Muslim populations and Islamic activists such as the Muslim Brotherhood. At the crux of Baron's study is the observation that missionary Protestantism transformed not only local Christianity, but also Egyptian Islam in ways that, at the expense of secular education, gave rise to novel Islamic attitudes towards education and welfare. See Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014), 197. See also Michael Marten, *attempting to Bring the Gospel Home: Scottish Missions to Palestine, 1839-1917* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), *American Missionaries and the Middle East : Foundational Encounters*, ed. Meeting Middle East Studies Association of North America, et al. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011). *New Faith in Ancient Lands : Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. H. L. Murre-van den Berg, Studies in Christian Mission (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2006). Samir Khalaf, *Protestant Missionaries in the Levant : Ungodly Puritans, 1820-60*, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern History ; (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2012). Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Nearest East : American Millennialism and Mission to the Middle East*, Politics, History, and Social Change. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010). Inger Marie Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure : Anglican Mission, Women, and Education in Palestine, 1888-1948*, ed. Inger Marie Okkenhaug, Studies in Christian Mission ; (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2002).

the free time of students while also paying attention to the ways in which students embraced, took part in, and at times challenged these activities.

Seeing like a Jesuit: A Brief History of the Jesuit Mission in Iraq

In 1921, the Chaldean Patriarch in Iraq, Mar Emmanuel II Thomas, a graduate of Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut, sent a petition to Pope Pius XI in Rome asking for the establishment of Christian secondary education in Baghdad. The Chaldean Patriarch continued his petitions and was later joined by the Syrian, Chaldean, and Armenian Bishops of Iraq.[14] More than a decade passed, however, before the desire for Christian secondary education in Iraq materialized: Georgetown professor, Fr. Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., arrived in Baghdad on March 7, 1931. Walsh had been sent to Baghdad in his capacity as fund-raiser and officer of the Vatican-sponsored Catholic Near East Welfare Association. He met with Iraqi government officials to discuss the possibility of opening a Jesuit high school in Baghdad. On March 5, 1932, Walsh received a cable from the Iraqi Ministry of Education giving permission to establish a secondary school "granted conditional compliance with all Government requirements and regulations."[15] From the beginning

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[14] The patriarch's petition came at a time when, in the aftermath of WWI, many of the already existing Catholic schools had closed down or been turned over to the government. After the war, only four Catholic primary schools were left; one in Mosul under the direction of the Dominicans and three in Baghdad operated by the Carmelites and the Syrian and Chaldean communities. Funding for these schools had, before the war, come primarily from France. "Baghdad College," by Fr. Rice, in *Nuntio de Missionibus*, Sept. 1938, RG 11.1, Box18, File 3. Missions Offices Records, New England Jesuit Foreign Missions, Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus, Jesuit Archives & Research Center, St. Louis, MO (Hereafter JARC).

[15] Joseph F. MacDonnell, *Jesuits by the Tigris: Men for Others in Baghdad* (Boston: Jesuit Mission Press, 1994), 14-15. Together, these eight institutions formed the The Iraq-American Educational Association. Announcement of Opening of Classes, Sept. 26, 1932, JARC 11.2-3-2. In 1956, the Jesuits also established a coeducational University, Al-Hikma, in Baghdad.

an American Jesuit project, BC was administered by the New England Province of the Society of Jesus and funded by the presidents of eight American Jesuit colleges and universities.[16]

During its first two years the school used two rented houses in the center of Baghdad close to the Euphrates. In 1934, it moved to the wealthy and developing suburb of Sulaikh outside of the city on the banks of the Tigris where a new American-style, 25-acre campus was built. Nine major buildings, including dorms, residence houses for faculty, and athletic fields were constructed between 1934 and 1969. The new campus was funded by grants from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. With the move to Sulaikh, BC purchased buses, which were used daily to transport students to and from campus and for school trips, picnics, and participation in sports tournaments with other schools.

Figure 2: The new BC campus in Sulaikh, early 1940s. JARC.

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[16] Boston College, the University of Detroit, Fordham University, Georgetown University, Loyola University in Chicago, University, Loyola University in New Orleans, St, Louis University, and the University of San Francisco.

Compared to the Presbyterian United Mission in Mesopotamia – the topic of Chapter 2, which began almost a decade earlier, the Jesuit mission was a latecomer and, from the beginning, much more limited in scope. Like the Presbyterians before them, however, the Jesuits who travelled to Iraq superimposed a Biblical geography and history on Iraq.[17] What set the two missions apart was their approach to evangelization and conversion. From its inception, the Jesuit mission was educational and confined to Baghdad. According to Rev. William A. Rice, S.J., who became the first Superior of the Mission in 1932, "the work of the Fathers in Baghdad does not consist in working among the heathens to convert them to Christ" since "attempts at converting the Mohammedans would certainly spell disaster for any good the Fathers might do."[18] While the decision not to evangelize among Iraq's Muslim and Jewish populations might have been pragmatic, the Jesuits, in the their own words, had both "the wisdom and policy not to proselytize."[19] Similarly, when BC advertised its opening in Iraqi newspapers, the ads mentioned that "although the School is Catholic, non-Catholics will be accepted and their religious opinions scrupulously respected. They will not be required to take part in the distinctively Catholic exercises."[20]

This does not mean that BC did not have its own ideological and Christian agenda. Among the Christian students at the school, the Jesuits saw it as their goal to "preserve and strengthen the faith… to breathe into these good people a new life, the Catholic life," as well as to teach them "what it means to live in a Catholic atmosphere."[21] The fact that BC was a Catholic school, to some extent, affected all its students. BC firmly believed that "there can be no true and solid

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[17] "American Jesuits Enter 'Iraq," by Fr. William A. Rice, S.J., in *Jesuit Missions*, May 1932, JARC 11.1-18-2.
[18] "Baghdad College," by Fr. Rice, in *Nuntio de Missionibus*, Sept. 1938, JARC 11.1-18-3.
[19] "Jesuits in Baghdad," in *Holy Cross Magazine*, Spring 2011, JARC 11.1-18-24d.
[20] Announcement of Opening of Classes, Sept. 26, 1932, JARC 11.2-3-2.
[21] "Baghdad College," by Fr. Rice, in *Nuntio de Missionibus*, Sept. 1938, JARC 11.1-18-3.

education where there is not a corresponding development of the moral faculties. Religion alone, in any scheme of education, has the power to keep the soul pure, to control the imagination, to guide and strengthen the will."[22] The Jesuit model of moral and religious education meant that the "lessons of conscientious work, of self-discipline, of loyalty to duty and unswerving fidelity to God" were inculcated, or at least an ambitious attempt was made to that end, throughout the daily studies and extracurricular activities. In fact, for the Jesuits at BC, the religious and spiritual values bequeathed to their students was in some ways the litmus test of their success:

> More difficult to assess than the progress of building a program or the soundness of the intellectual training given to our students is the spiritual impact of our teaching on their lives. Yet it is precisely the spiritual contribution that we make as religious educators that must determine the ultimate measure of our success at Baghdad College.[23]

While they did not manage to increase the number of Catholics in Iraq, they did try to teach generations of Iraqis about the importance of religion as a moral and spiritual force in modern life.

In 1932, the first year of BC's existence, four Jesuits were chosen to take care of teaching and administration; Fr. Rice from New England, Fr. Madaras from Chicago, Fr. Coffey from New York and Fr. Mifsud from California. Between 1934 and 1936, Baghdad College added eight new staff members to teach drama, French, Arabic, history, chemistry, biology, and mechanics. In addition to teaching, the new hires were tasked with organizing extracurricular activities such as sports, debating, drama, and photography.[24] In 1946, the teaching staff included 21 Americans, eight Iraqis, and two Egyptians.[25] In the first year, 375 boys applied and 120 were accepted. Classes were taught six days a week and lasted from 8am to 4pm during the winter semester. In the

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[22] Announcement of Opening of Classes, Sept. 26, 1932, JARC 11.2-3-2.
[23] "Baghdad Revisited," by Francis W. Anderson, S.J., in *The Sign*, May 1951, JARC 11.1-18-6.
[24] MacDonnell, *Jesuits by the Tigris*, 22-24.
[25] Report to United States Information Service, Edward F. Madaras, S.J. President of Baghdad College, 1946, JARC 11.1-3-47.

summer, classes were shorter and lasted from 7am to 1pm. With the exception of history, geography, and Arabic language, all subjects at BC were taught in English. An Iraqi education law, passed in 1940, meant that the topics of history, geography, and Arabic had to be taught in Arabic by teachers appointed by the government. The Arabic textbooks used for these subjects were the same as in the government schools. All other textbooks were from the US. Due to the Iraqi military conscription law of 1936, all schools not conforming with the curriculum of government schools would not be exempt from conscription.[26]

Figure 3: BC boarding students sleeping on the roof in May, 1940s. JARC

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In terms of enrolment numbers, WWII marked a turning point for BC. When the war reached the Mediterranean, the elites of Iraqi society, who had traditionally sent their children abroad for education, were forced to enroll them in Iraqi or other regional schools. Many opted for

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[26] Report to United States Information Service, Edward F. Madaras, S.J. President of Baghdad College, 1946, JARC 11.1-3-47.

BC.[27] Between 1939 and 1945, the number of students rose from 139 to 419. In the same years, the boarding section grew from 23 to 68.[28] In 1945, out of the 419 students at BC, 326 were Christian, 89 Muslim and four Jewish. In 1932, only four of the 139 students were Muslim. In 1946, Edward F. Madaras, S.J, President of BC, noted in a report to the United States Information Service that "there have been relatively few applications from Jews because they have their own private educational institutions of a high quality."[29] The number of Jewish students oscillated between four and fifteen throughout BC's history. In the 1950s, the number of Muslim students continued to increase so that in 1958 BC enrolled 467 Christians, 258 Muslims, seven Jews, and one Hindu. Iraqi Chaldeans formed the largest Christian group followed by Syrian Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, and Nestorians. BC also had Armenian Catholic, Greek orthodox, Jacobite, and Protestant students. BC did not distinguish between Sunnis and Shi'is. It did, however, list the place of origins of their students and listed Kurds, and sometimes Bedouins, as separate categories.[30]

The high tuition at BC meant that students came mostly from upper middle- and upper-class families. BC did, however, make provisions for "poor boys of intelligence and character." In 1946, eleven per cent of the students received free tuition in whole or in part.[31] But BC was, by all standards, an elite institution. Students and teachers were well aware of this fact and in reports sent back to the US, the school often prided itself on its ability to attract students from prominent Iraqi families.[32] In the first 15 years of its existence, BC counted among its students 14 sons of ministers,

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[27] "Baghdad Revisited," by Francis W. Anderson, S.J., in *The Sign*, May 1951, JARC 11.1-18-6.
[28] Baghdad College House History, 1939-1945, JARC 11.1-19-4.
[29] Report to United States Information Service, Edward F. Madaras, S.J. President of Baghdad College, 1946, JARC 11.1-3-47.
[30] Student Statistics, Religion and Rite, 1932-1968, JARC 11.2-3-38/39.
[31] Report to United States Information Service, Edward F. Madaras, S.J. President of Baghdad College, 1946, JARC 11.1-3-47.
[32] "Baghdad Revisited," by Francis W. Anderson, S.J., in *The Sign*, May 1951, JARC 11.1-18-6.

including four Prime Ministers and the ministers of Justice, Education, Social Affairs, Interior and Finance. In addition, seventeen senior government officials, such as the Director General of Education, the Director General of Police and Censorship, and the Director General of Antiquities, sent their sons to BC. Students were also the sons of army officials, judges, lawyers, doctors, governors, and tribal leaders. The editors of several Iraqi newspapers, including *al-Bilad*, *al-Akhbar*, *Sawt al-Shaʿb*, *Sawt al-Ahali*, and *al-Baʿth al-Qawmi*, and cultural figures, such as the poet Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi, sent their sons to BC. Sons of business owners also attended BC. The families of these students, including the owners of the Babylon, Sindbad, and London hotels, advertised their businesses on the pages of the BC yearbooks. Students also came from beyond the borders of Iraq.[33]

In its 37 years of existence, BC educated around 5000 students.[34] In 1969, the Jesuits were expelled from Iraq and BC and al-Hikma, the Jesuit university established in 1956, were "Iraqicized." In the 1970s, al-Hikma was turned into a trade school. Equipment and the library were taken over by the University of Baghdad. BC continued as a college preparatory school, its teaching staff now coming from the University of Baghdad. The Jesuit church and cemetery were taken over by the Chaldean Patriarch and turned into an orphanage.[35]

Missionary Archives and High School Yearbooks

Scholars of Middle East missionary history have highlighted the methodological challenges posed by missionary archives. According to Baron, the often overwhelming amount of material

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[33] Report to United States Information Service, Edward F. Madaras, S.J. President of Baghdad College, 1946, JARC 11.1-3-47. The ambassadors of the US, Iran, Turkey, and England to Iraq enrolled their sons at BC. A Syrian Prime Minister, the Persian and Transjordanian consuls, and the brother of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem did so as well.
[34] MacDonnell, *Jesuits by the Tigris*, 26-35.
[35] Ibid., 233-260.

produced by missionaries, was, at least in part, "meant to record their successes and struggles overseas as part of an effort to raise funds at home."[36] Sharkey has referred to such material as "audience-driven hyperbole."[37] In the case of missionary education, this means that the voices and experiences of students are often absent. In a recent article on BC, Abdul-Jabbar attempts to de-romanticize BC, which, according to him, has often been popularized as "a true civilizing mission."[38] He argues that BC and its attempts to "fetishize the West in a time when all things Western were desirable" became a geopolitical transmitter of institutionalized Jesuit knowledge, which was internalized by the students.[39] Part of what brings Abdul-Jabbar's article to this conclusion is its exclusive reliance on a limited set of materials produced by the Jesuits. The article, therefore, says little about the students and their experiences. The Jesuit archive, however, does include the voices of students. Looking at both official Jesuit archival sources and writing produced by students, this chapter tells a more complicated story of the Jesuit endeavor in Iraq. In particular, this chapter attempts to excavate student voices by using *Al Iraqi*, the bilingual yearbook of BC. In addition, *Al Iraqi* is not only a primary source about student leisure. Writing for the yearbook was itself an extracurricular activity and *Al Iraqi* can therefore also be seen as a physical manifestation and product of students' extracurricular leisure time. The BC yearbooks, which are made up of essays, fictional pieces, poem, reports, and extensive sections about clubs, societies, committees, and athletics tell a story about the extracurricular activities employed by the school to mobilize, shape, and discipline its students.

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[36] Baron, *The Orphan Scandal*, xiv.

[37] Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 16.

[38] Wisam Kh. Abdul-Jabbar, "Baghdad College and the Geopolitics of Desire: The Jesuit Presence and Al-Futuwa Nationalists," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53:2, (2016): 199.

[39] Ibid., 200-2001.

In her work on AUB, Anderson notes that while "faculty advisors supervised all of the student magazines and newspapers," this fact "does not negate the student agency displayed within them."[40] This chapter views yearbooks and student writings similarly, as a form of dialogue between the school's administration and its students. It argues that student essays were not marginalized from, but rather a microcosm of, larger debates and themes discussed outside of school. Having said that, the genre of the yearbook comes with a set of formal expectations that determine, or at least influence, its content. The yearbook is a conservative genre that speaks to an audience of fathers, both Jesuit and biological, families, friends, and relatives. While this chapter attempts to prioritize students' sources throughout, the Jesuit archives nonetheless provide a better sense of what the Jesuits wanted to happen than what the students actually experienced. This disjuncture between agenda and reality will be a theme throughout this chapter.

The stories the yearbooks tell are a conduit to the experiences, dreams, and ambitions of an elite group of Iraqi students. However, it is important to remember that the emergence of school papers, magazines, and yearbooks was neither a phenomenon restricted to missionary or private schools. In her work on Egypt, Ryzova points out that "virtually every school of note in the Interwar period published its own student-run journal."[41] In the context of Iraq, Bashkin has studied the school paper of the Jewish Shammash high school.[42] In addition, Matthews and Akrawi report that some of Iraq's public schools in the 1940s were issuing magazines and papers and that a few schools issued yearbooks and collections of literary essays written by students.[43] The precarious state of Iraqi archives makes it difficult to study the publications of Iraq's public schools. However, as publications of Iraq's foreign and missionary schools, including BC, were

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[40] Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, 23.
[41] Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya,* 194.
[42] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 225.
[43] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, 170-171.

among the first of their kind in Iraq, they are indicative of a more general trend. As a conservative genre, yearbooks, and the student essays they contain, can also be used to trace disciplinary discourses on leisure. While such essays give voice to students, they simultaneously mimic the voices of the institutions and normative society.

In March of 1941, one of the teachers at BC complained that "apparently schoolboys all over the world have an irresistible urge to carve their names on the school desks." In order to suppress the adolescent desire of their students to leave a mark and be remembered, the staff at BC numbered each chair and desk and punished "autographs" with a fine.[44] Luckily, for the BC inventory as well as for the pockets of its students, most students found a different and sanctioned way to be remembered and to eternalize their names and deeds in the form of articles and pictures published in *Al Iraqi. Al Iraqi* was published for the first time in 1936.[45] It was put together by the graduating class of seniors every year in June and was printed by the Jesuit press at Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut. Starting in 1940, *Al Iraqi* began to be printed in book form and in higher quality. The 1940 editorial, written by the editor in chief, Alexander Kouyoumdjian, urged fellow students to contribute articles to *Al Iraqi*.[46] And many did. In 1949, more than one hundred essays were submitted to the yearbook's annual literary contest. The English and the Arabic sections of *Al Iraqi* were divided by several pages of advertising by local and international companies. Reflecting the hierarchy of languages at BC, the English language section of *Al Iraqi* was always longer than the Arabic one. However, *Al Iraqi* also had an Arabic cover and table of contents and could be read from right to left as well.

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[44] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 9. No. 2. March 1941 JARC 11.2-1-34.
[45] It has not been possible to locate the 1936-1939 yearbooks. Due to unrest and political turmoil in the aftermath of the Rashid 'Ali coup in the spring of 1941, *Al Iraqi* was not published in that year.
[46] *Al Iraqi*, 1940, 1.

Figure 4: Covers of *Al Iraqi*, 1952. JARC

Mens Sana in Corpore Sano: Moral, Mental, and Physical Powers at Baghdad College

In a large and elaborately illustrated promotional brochure written in Arabic and English from the early 1940s, BC described its vision, agenda, and values to prospective students, parents, and the Jesuit community in the US. While it is difficult to say anything about the material history of the brochure, including its circulation and consumption, the fact that it was written in both Arabic and English suggests that Iraqi parents and students were the intended audience. "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," as the brochure was called, included curated pictures of BC students engaged in work and play. The brochure was divided into three main sections: "Baghdad College Develops Moral Powers," "Baghdad College Develops Mental Powers," and "Baghdad College Develops Physical Powers." BC subscribed to this Jesuit holy trinity of moral, mental, and physical powers as the foundation for education. This form of education, had, as the brochure boasted, "for

400 years been turning out upstanding men of strong character all over the world."[47] The brochure continued to explain how, "in the Jesuit system, education is the full and harmonious development of all the powers of man – mental, physical and moral. Thus the Jesuit system gives an education, not mere instruction, and trains the student for conscientious work and profitable recreation."[48] During the five-year metamorphosis – the transformation from boy to young man – BC sought to educate students in a manner "most conducive to the prosperity of the nation" and to "make them better citizens attached to their country and loyally submissive to constituted civil authority in every legitimate form of government."[49] This section, however, pays particular attention to physical extracurricular activities, which were in any case structured by ideas of moral and mental strength.

The first section of the brochure, "Baghdad College Develops Moral Powers," described how the moral discipline taught at BC aimed to create character through exercises for the intellect and will. The goal was to teach students "courteous ways and good manners" as well as to "instill in them lofty and noble ideals."[50] Last but not least, the development of moral powers included the teaching of "manly piety." In the section on mental powers, emphasis was on the rigorous instruction at BC and the many hours that, according to the brochure, students needed to spend on homework every day. In addition, this section described how BC aimed to produce, through its instruction, "reverence for God, reverence for Father and Mother, and reverence for the State." The brochure promised that "Baghdad College not only teaches these duties, but sees also that the student actually practices them."[51] The final section of the brochure was devoted to the

[47] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.
[48] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.
[49] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.
[50] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.
[51] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.

development of physical powers. Here too, the acceptance of and reverence for official power was accentuated: "From his games the student learns to respect official decisions, a lesson he carries with him in his private and public life."[52] BC deemed sport a disciplinary and moral activity, promoting it as a "means of learning how to control and organize one's movements" and as a "school of sociability and cooperation."[53] As such, BC's notion of extracurricular activities and leisure was one that emphasized discipline and surveillance.

As the emphasis placed on the concept of "profitable recreation" suggests, the desire to mold and keep students busy was a key tenet of BC's program and it was present from the very beginning. Before BC officially opened its doors in the fall of 1932, the school advertised itself in Arabic and English in the local press. One such ad described how the school would, since it believed in the "inestimable advantage of a sound mind in a sound body, *mens sana in corpore sano*," make every effort "to afford the students sufficient recreation."[54] Similarly, extracurricular activities were framed as essential to the school's mission and the ad promised that BC would make every effort "to afford the students opportunity to develop their talents in debating, public speaking, dramatics, writing, music, and the like."[55]

In a review of their time at BC, the class of 1945 recalled a speech given to them by Rev. Fr. Sarjeant, the President of Baghdad College, on their first day of school. In his speech, Sarjeant warned the first year students that "his school was not a library, was not a gymnasium, was not a

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[52] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.
[53] "An Iraqi School for Iraqi Boys," Promotional Brochure, 1940s, JARC 11.2-3-29.
[54] Announcement of Opening of Classes, Sept. 26, 1932, JARC 11.2-3-2.
[55] Announcement of Opening of Classes, Sept. 26, 1932, JARC 11.2-3-2. Right from the beginning, the Jesuits were not simply set on developing extracurricular activites during the school year, but also had plans for the long summer breaks, which they saw as dangerously long and unsupervised: "we have a dream of a summer camp up along the Tigris were the water is fresh and clean from the mountains…where tents can be pitched, where swimming and fishing and boating and tennis and hiking to the nearby mountains and story-telling round the evening camp fire, with perhaps a bit of leisurely reading or study thrown in for good measure." *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1. No. 8. July, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-10.

coffee shop, but an institution which strives to prepare young men to face courageously the struggles of life."[56] Sarjeant went on to describe how BC would provide years of intensive training so that the students, upon their graduation, "would be men who knew why they are born, what their duties are on earth, and how they are to live in order to attain the object of their life."[57]

As already mentioned, BC attempted to instill bodily and moral discipline in its students. These attempts manifested most clearly in attempts to regulate and supervise the leisure time of students. BC placed great emphasis on minimizing the unsupervised leisure time of the students, as did other schools and institutions during the period.[58] Although BC promised moral, mental, and physical powers and discipline, in its notion of "profitable recreation," physical power and sport were given a special place. In fact, one of the most important way in which BC tried to curb and channel the potentially dangerous adolescent vitality of its students was through sports. Students enthusiastically took part in the athletic activities organized by the college, which for Baghdad in the 1940s were rather extraordinary. The long reports and detailed descriptions in *Al Iraqi* about varsity sports and the athletic successes of BC students attest to the importance of sports. The new campus in Sulaikh provided ample opportunities for sports. In fact, BC was fiercely competitive and intra-class athletic rivalries and competitions against other schools was part of everyday life for BC students. Every year, BC athletes, who were the first in Iraq compete in official uniforms with the school logo printed on the chest, took part in the annual The

[56] *Al Iraqi*, 1945.

[57] *Al Iraqi*, 1945.

[58] Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya*, 193. See also Sara Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence: Anti-colonial Time, Youth Insurgency, and the Marriage Crisis in Hashemite Iraq." *History of the Present* 3, no. 2: 160–197; Jacob, *Working out Egypt*, 2011; Sara Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence: Anti-colonial Time, Youth Insurgency, and the Marriage Crisis in Hashemite Iraq." *History of the Present* 3, no. 2 (2013): 160–97, Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Discovery of Adolescence in the Middle East." In *Youth and Youth Culture in the Contemporary Middle East*, edited by Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, 21–34. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2005), and Omnia El Shakry, "Youth as Peril and Promise: The Emergence of Adolescent Psychology in Postwar Egypt." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 4 (2011): 591–610.

Government Track Meet, The King's Cup, Baghdad Schoolboy Tournament Field, and The Inter Liwa Track Meet, to mention just a few. Throughout the academic year, BC teams played against high schools across Baghdad. However, since Iraq had few elite high schools, the landscape of organized athletics gives us only limited information about traditional high school elite networks during the time. More importantly, perhaps, were the social networks and connections established during matches against the YMMA (Young Men's Muslim Association), The Royal Military College, The King's Guard, The Royal Sporting Club, and the different colleges of the University of Baghdad.

Figure 5: BC Basketball team, early 1950s. JARC.

Figure 6: Boxing match at BC, 1940s. JARC.

However, BC students also took part in disciplinary, bodily, and militarized forms of extracurricular activities not organized by BC.[59] The official Iraqi youth movement, *al-Futuwwa*, which was created in the early 1930s in order to instill military spirit among Iraqi youth is one example. The organization came to play an important role in nationalist indoctrination and politics and by 1939, participation in *al-Futuwwa's* military training had become mandatory for all secondary school students.[60] A BC student described the official birthday celebration of King Faisal II in 1940 in the following way:

> the Ministry of Education held a Futuwwa exhibition. It was a real success and thousands of spectators witnessed 10.000 boys and 800 girls, all staunch Iraqis, marching and performing various kinds of physical exercises. It certainly was a thrilling sight to see all these boys and girls going through their exercises as one person.[61]

[59] *Al Iraqi*, 1940, 3-4.
[60] Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 89-91.
[61] *Al Iraqi*, 1940, 3.

Joseph Maro, a junior at BC, wrote an article in Arabic, "The Futuwwa and its Goals" ("*al-Futuwwa wa Ahdafuha*"), which provided an even more enthusiastic view of the movement. Maro explained that the Ministry of Education instituted *al-Futuwwa* in Iraqi schools to prepare students for real life. According to Maro, the development of healthy manners was one of the most important elements in the strengthening and development of the social state of the nation. Through *al-Futuwwa*, Maro wrote, the youth will get accustomed to manhood, rough life, and physical fitness. Moreover, by subjugating themselves to the military regime of *al-Futuwwa*, Iraqi youth will no longer be slaves to their bodily desires. Maro devoted special attention to the high school branch *al-Futuwwa*, which were trained in carrying arms and in *sinaʿat al-mawt* (the art or profession of dying).[62] "So in conclusion," Maro wrote, "we can say that al-Futuwwa makes students into men of the future and makes female students into mothers who know how to raise their children and who know their obligations to their homeland."[63]

Maro's use of the phrase *sinaʿat al-mawt* is familiar to public discourses of the time. During this period in Iraqi history, nationalist educators and politicians often stressed the importance of death and sacrifice.[64] In the fall of 1939, the nationalist politician and educator Sami Shawkat, who worked for the Ministry of Education, delivered a speech to high school students in Baghdad. Entitled "Sinaʿat al-Mawt," Shawkat's speech encouraged sacrifice and death for the nation.[65]

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[62] Ibid., 10.

[63] Ibid., 11.

[64] Peter Wien, "'Watan' and 'Rujula': The Emergence of a New Model of Youth in Interwar Iraq." In *Youth and Youth Culture in the Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, 10–20. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2005), 10–20.

[65] Sami Shawkat, *Hadhihi Ahdafuna: Majmuʿa Muhadarat wa Maqalat wa Ahadith Qawmiyya* (Baghdad: *Majalla al-Muʿallim al-Jadid*, 1939), 2.

While the actual influence of characters such as Shawkat has often been overestimated, it is clear that his language trickled down into *Al Iraqi* as Maro's use of the phrase *sinʿat al-mawt* suggests.[66]

In addition, Shawkat, whose son graduated from BC in 1943, was not a stranger at the school. On June 24 1934, on the occasion of BC's second annual commencement ceremony, Shawkat, who was then Director General of Education, presented the Kingdom of Iraq Medal and gave an honorary address titled "The Voice of Iraq."[67] In 1940, while his son and nephew were still boarding students at BC, Shawkat again addressed the graduates at the commencement ceremony.[68] Shawkat's acceptance to take on the role as speaker at the commencement ceremony was seen as a small victory by the Jesuits. Shawkat, they correctly noted, had once been "a declared enemy of foreign schools." For the Jesuits in attendance at the commencement, Shawkat's "brief but cordial remarks are to be counted among the mile stones of our advance here."[69]

Other articles in *Al Iraqi* from 1940 also stressed the obligations and importance of living a nationalist life as well as the importance of knowledge and education as forms of self-strengthening. BC students did not escape this mode of mobilization. In fact, some students seem to have welcomed it. It is important to point out, however, that although some students celebrated the militarized masculinity *al-Futuwwa*, most never mentioned the movement. In the same issue in which Joseph Maro praised the arming of students, Alving A. Almary wrote a pacifist article

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[66] It is not a coincidence that Maro wrote about *al-Futuwwa* in 1940. The period between 1940 and 1942 represented a moment of heightened tensions, polarization, and changes in the Iraqi political arena. During the spring of 1941, four Iraqi officers, the so-called Golden Square, took power and installed the pro-German Rashid ʿAli al-Kailani as head of a new government.
[67] Second Annual Closing Exercises Program, June 24, 1934, JARC 11.2-3-4
[68] Shawkat's nephew, Ghassan, brought his father's German Shepard, Sheba, to the boarding school after his father had exiled it from their house because it ate his radio. Sheba became the boarding section's faithful night watchman and mascot. Sheba was like by everyone except the gardener because of the dog's "queer habit of digging up the flower garden," which made the gardener go on strike twice. *Al Iraqi*, 1943.
[69] Baghdad College House History, 1940, JARC 11.1-19-4.

entitled "No Jokes with Fire-Arms."[70] Some students went even further. Rejecting European authoritarianism and militarism altogether, Fraydoon Kashi, in his essay "Our Unknown Patriotic Ancestors," explicitly stated that "it is not necessary that Easterners look to the Nazis or the Fascisti or even Joan of Arc to learn what true devotion to country is." Rather, Kashi used Babylonian examples to exemplify love for "King and Country" that existed previously and which he believed ought to be brought back.[71] Focusing on the Babylonian alongside the Islamic past is a thread the runs throughout *Al Iraqi*. In fact, the yearbooks are full of pluralistic pasts and transnational geographies. During the 1930s and 1940s in Iraq, male students were encouraged to play sports and demonstrate self-restraint and chivalry through organizations such as *al-Futuwwa*. Organizations, societies, and an increasingly sex-differentiated curriculum offered female students lessons to prepare them for nationalist motherhood, childrearing, and household economics.[72] These trends led some historians of Iraq to focus on Iraq as deeply influenced by Fascist, Nazi, and authoritarian ideology.[73] Simon concluded that "Iraqi secondary-school students took the lessons to heart," and that the *al-Futuwwa*, with its focus on uniforms and military drills, became an "opportunity for students to act out what the schools had been preaching."[74]

However, the fascination with European authoritarianism described as a key feature of Iraqi society in these years is not corroborated by *Al Iraqi*. BC students imagined the West as not just Germany, Italy, or Britain. As several of the essays show, and as a later section of this chapter will describe in detail, both culturally and linguistically, the US was already a symbol that had

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[70] *Al Iraqi*, 1940, 7.
[71] Ibid., 6.
[72] Sara Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence: Anti-colonial Time, Youth Insurgency, and the Marriage Crisis in Hashemite Iraq." History of the Present 3, no. 2: (2013): 162, 169 and Peter Wien, "Mothers of Warriors: Girls in a Youth Debate of Interwar Iraq," in *Girlhood: A Global History*, ed. Jennifer Helgren and Colleen A. Vasconcellos (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 289-303.
[73] Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars*, xii.
[74] Ibid., 101.

penetrated the world of the BC boys and one that received far more admiration than Europe. In addition, like Iraqi society at large, BC was a pluralistic space in which both Muslim, Jewish, and Christian students studied and wrote about a range of other topics. Furthermore, the articles in *Al Iraqi* clearly show that the importance of sports and bodily discipline did not only take place under the auspices of *al-Futuwwa*. Rather, such forms of discipline were part of the school from the very beginning and they did not dissipate after the 1941 coup was crushed by the British, remaining an important part of the school's program.

Fleischmann has noted the lack of investigation "of the missionary impact on Arab culture and its discursive influence in shaping ordinary individuals' notion of identity,"[75] and Sharkey has demonstrated how American missionaries in particular thought of themselves not only as Christians, "but also as ambassadors for the United States and as promoters of American culture and modernity."[76] As the US was the central cultural point of reference for BC students, their focus the athletic male body was inspired as much, if not more, by American role models as it was by Iraqi militarist and nationalist trends. In fact, according to *Al Baghdadi*, the English-language newsletter of the Jesuits at BC, the greatest hero on campus was the Italian-born American bodybuilder Charles Atlas. Starting in the 1920s, Atlas rose to fame when he developed a bodybuilding method and exercise programs.

Atlas was so popular among BC students that his colorful ads and coupons announcing that "Charles Atlas will make a new man out of you" in the American magazines to which the school subscribed kept disappearing. The same *Al Baghdadi* newsletter reported that "no matter how carefully Fr. Larkin watches during the library period not a coupon remains in any of the

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[75] Ellen Fleischmann, "'Our Moslem Sisters': Women of Greater Syria in the Eyes of American Protestant Missionary Women," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 9:3 (1998): 307.
[76] Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 1.

periodicals."[77] The mystery of the disappearing ads continued in the 1950s when Fr. Miff took over the school library and reading room: "We're willing to bet that Mr. Atlas gets as much correspondence from Baghdad as from any other city in the world. Most of it is in the form of coupons ripped on the sly out of old *Popular Mechanics* magazines in Fr. Miff's library."[78]

Figure 7: Charles Atlas advertisement, 1944. JARC.

Another American hero on campus was Olympic medalist Robert Mathias, who visited BC in 1955 and spent a week training with the students. Mathias demonstrated his skills in high jump,

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[77] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 13. No 3. June 1945 JARC 11.2-2-10.
[78] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 20. No 3. June 1952 JARC 11.2-2-37.

broad jump, and many other disciplines. Prominent guests were invited to watch, including the Director of Physical Education and the physical education instructor from the Higher Teachers Training College. Earlier that same year, another American athletic delegation visited BC. This time, the star was the Texas-born American goodwill ambassador, former member of the US air force, and five-time Olympic medalist, Mal Whitfield. The delegation also included Roy Van Hess, a Fulbright scholar, who had come to Iraq in 1947. Like Whitfield, Van Hess had served in the Air Force during WWII, and was loaned to Iraq as a Basketball coach under the Fulbright act.[79] The transnational and mostly American links and movements of people, icons, and cultural products shaped notions of gender and manhood and were part of everyday life and reading habits of students at BC. They were not, however, exclusive to BC. As we will see in Chapter 3, the cinema made American and Egyptian cultural products, role models, and icons available to students across Iraq.

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[79] "U.S. Athlete Visits Iraq," *News Review*, Vol. VI, No. 45, Nov. 10, 1955. JARC 12.

Figure 8: Robert Mathias training with BC students, 1955. JARC.

The familiarity with American culture influenced the language of the students who developed Americanisms such as *fatherriyya* and *misteriyya* which they used to refer to the Jesuit staff at the school. They spoke of *al-man-to-man defense* when they played basketball and one student recalled a time when he *imshied* (walked) out of a coffee shop. The familiarity with and exposure to American culture brought BC students together as a community. BC students wrote avidly about Arabic poetry, Islamic history, and took pride in their Iraqi, and sometimes regional, tribal, and Kurdish background and heritage in the essays they published in *Al Iraqi*. At the same time, however, as the section above illustrates, they were extremely familiar with American culture

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and athletics. As the next section will show, familiarity with American culture wasn't the only

thing that brought them together.[80]

"With a shout, with a song, We will cheer the boys along"

With a shout, with a song
We will cheer the boys along,
Under banners of Green and Maroon!
While we do, while we dare
Proudly waving everywhere
Are the banners of Green and Maroon!
So it's High, High, High"
Always B. C. High!
Singing our glad merry tune.
And we'll cheer B.C.
On to victory,
Under banners Green and Maroon![81]

BC students were banded together by membership in an elite educational institution. As in

the alma mater song above, school honor, pride, glory as well as class consciousness were key

values through which BC students found a common language and identity.[82] The acquisition of

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[80] While the Jesuits at BC were enthusiastic about American culture and official US visits to their school, they were not, however, always in agreement with American foreign policy and official decisions. In an article written in 1951, Francis W. Anderson, who taught at BC, expressed his dismay when that a group of US senators visited Baghdad and did not find time to visit the school. Their excuse was that they wanted a more "native environment." Instead of visiting the school, Anderson writes, "two of our senators spent the afternoon hunting gazelles in the desert around Baghdad. But we must assume that the thrill of the chase was only secondary to their opportunity to survey at firsthand the impact of the desert on Iraq's agrarian economy. Two other senators went souvenir hunting in the native bazaars. But where else could they have studied to better effect the marketing processes of oriental commerce? Another two, of a scholarly turn of mind, probed into the rich deposit of Iraq's ancient civilizations, spending the afternoon among the relics of six thousand years, impressively displayed in the Iraqi Museum of Antiquities. The last member of the group, no doubt a rugged individualist, remained in his air-conditioned quarters to catch up on correspondence. It is not known to what extent the combined activites of the observing senators added to our Government's knowledge of the Middle East." "Baghdad Revisited," by Francis W. Anderson, S.J., in *The Sign*, May 1951, JARC 11.1-18-6.
[81] *Al Iraqi*, 1942.
[82] For more on character building and the culture of bonding and belonging in missionary boys' schools see for an example Sharkey's excellent article on the Gordon Memorial College in Northern Sudan: Sharkey, "Colonialism, Character-Building and the Culture of Nationalism in the Sudan, 1898-1956," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 15:1 (1998): 1-26.

the school ethos and the confidence that came with it, however, was not a passive process. Students were active in promoting these values and several of the articles in *Al Iraqi* dwell on the obligations and responsibilities that come with membership in an elite group. Through extracurricular activities and classes, strong bonds of friendship were created at BC. Visually, these friendships were strengthened within the pages of *Al Iraqi* through the many photographs of students sporting new suits and perfectly combed hair. The pictures of the graduating seniors at the beginning of every yearbook are accompanied by short biographies that often reveal details about the prevailing body culture at BC. In addition, the short biographies mention nicknames and the desired future profession of the students and thus exhibit a level of individuality unique for Iraqi school publications at the time.

The biography of Louis Bakose describes him as "Born in June 1921. 'Ty Power' is the most genteel boy in Fifth, best dressed and best looking. Life's ambition is to become a mechanical engineer."[83] Nicknamed after the famous American stage and radio actor Tyrone Edmund Power III, who often played romantic leads in the 1930s-1950s, Louis must have been popular among his peers. Information about good looks was not uncommon. At times, *Al Iraqi* went even further. In the "We Leave" poem in *Al Iraqi* from 1942, Marcel Pahlawan and Edmond Totounchi are described in the following words; "WE LEAVE Marcel's favorite lucky number (553) for some other Don Juan to make use of in his conquests … WE LEAVE Edmond's blushing countenance for Fathallah Loka to display to the giggling girls teasing him about his adventures."[84] While some of these references appear cryptic to the outsider, there can be little doubt about what is meant when Don Juan and conquests are mentioned in the same line. This openness is rather extraordinary for the period and demonstrates that there was at least some room for frivolity within the formal

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[83] *Al Iraqi*, 1940, 1
[84] Ibid., 1.

and conservative genre of the yearbook. Other biographies were less comradely. Khalid Ghanima was described by his classmates in the following way: "Born March 24, 1921. The fattest boy in Fifth. He represented B.C. at the Eucharist congress in Syria in 1939. Lover of politics he is class Politician No. 1. Life's ambition is to become Minister of Food!"[85] This form of body-shaming, not uncommon in the yearbooks, is another testament to the importance that surrounded the body and demonstrates that students were policing and supervising each other by enforcing hierarchies of normative body standards. It was also not uncommon for students to be teased or even ridiculed for their lack of athleticism. In other words, being a civilized and worthy young man was in some ways synonymous with athletic abilities and physical fitness.

One of the most striking features of the yearbooks is the way in which they provided students with a space in which to perform as intellectuals, poets, and politicians. In some articles, students fashioned themselves as emerging businessmen and capitalists.[86] Writing about Egypt, Ryzova notes that "while visually, or formally, these publications [yearbooks] reproduce social and political hierarchies, textually, it is the student's authority, his expertise and personal opinion, that dominates their actual content."[87] At BC too, students were encouraged, by the school and their peers, to act as authorities, and the many articles they wrote on science, technology, literature, and politics reflected the themes and topics taken up in the Iraqi press by their seniors. The ideals of school honor and glory mentioned earlier were often intertwined with notions of personal fame, greatness, and expertise. The *Al Iraqi* editorial from 1940 describes the purpose of the yearbook in the following way:

> The principal purpose of this paper is to supply you with a means of showing off your literary ability and to supply you with good literature. Incidentally the written word lasts and will remain and undying tribute to your immortal fame. And last but

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[85] *Al Iraqi*, 1940.
[86] *Al Iraqi*, 1942, 2
[87] Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya*, 203.

not least, we offer you an excellent opportunity for developing your aptitude in the languages. Will you miss this golden chance?[88]

Few students missed the chance. *Al Iraqi* often received more submissions than it could publish.[89] Fashioning themselves as intellectuals and experts to be, students wrote on everything from the Iraqi oil industry, the growing importance of synthetic fibers such as nylon and rayon, air transportation, water purification, and malaria to the most recent developments in plastic surgery.

Not only was writing for the yearbook a form of disciplined use of leisure time, which was both encouraged by the school and embraced by students, it was also, as suggested by the topics chosen by students, an indispensable part of the training that would eventually make BC students into elite Iraqi men of the future. Similarly, being in possession of the motivation, self-control, and discipline necessary to sacrifice personal time and use it productively, which in this case meant research and writing, in some ways became a litmus test for determination and future ambition. As such, student essays mimic discourses on the dangers of leisure. This does not mean, of course, that writing could not also be an enjoyable pastime for students.

As members of an elite institution, BC students optimistically look ahead to the future. *Al Iraqi* always included a piece of speculative or aspirational fiction about the future success of the graduating class. The setting of these pieces was often the future wedding party of one of the graduates. In 1944, the setting was the "wedding of multimillionaire, Mr. Joseph Rashid" and the guests included successful BC graduates now working as lawyers and business owners. One former classmate was now "an industrial chemist rolling in money brought from South Africa."[90]

The piece from 1943 was titled "A Midsummer's Night Dream" and written by class president, Munther Fettah. The story takes place at the wedding of the same Fathallah Loka

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[88] Ibid., 1.
[89] *Al Iraqi*, 1942, 1.
[90] *Al Iraqi*, 1944.

mentioned above. All the guests are now ambassadors, politicians, and professors. The wedding, however, does not go as planned. When the priest is about to wed the couple, the groom is nowhere to be found. The friends look for him together and finally find him in the library frantically reading "pamphlets about marriage, birth control, and *Casti Conubii*"[91] – the 1930 papal encyclical, issued by Pope Pius XI, affirming the Catholic ban on birth control and abortion. In 1946, the setting of the story is also a wedding. The author, Sami Lawrence describes how "as the drinks were being poured, a name on the bottle struck me as being very familiar. When the waiter had finished, I asked him to let me look at the bottle. Sure enough, I was right! The label read: 'Messayeh Distilleries.'"[92] Lawrence then congratulates his former classmate on having taken over his family's distillery.

The piece of speculative from the 1940 yearbooks is titled "Twenty Years Ahead."[93] Written by senior Jirair Kouyoumdjian, the story fulfills the professional dreams and desires of the students described in the short biographies in the first part of the yearbook. The narrator returns to Baghdad in 1961 and finds the city completely changed. Baghdad is now a modern metropolis run by his old friends from BC. Constantine Halkias, who in the yearbook describes his biggest dream as becoming a radio engineer, now runs the airport. Jamshid Kashi is the minister of the Iranian Legation, and Tariq El Pachachi, who drives a "splendid two-seater Ford,"[94] is about to enter politics. Khalid Ghanima is Minister of Foreign Affairs and Faradj Raffouli is the "chief screen scenario writer for El Iraqi Film Co."[95] When he visits BC, the president of the school informs him about the remainder of his old classmates. One is a surgeon, one is in Paris, another is a famous

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[91] *Al Iraqi*, 1943.
[92] *Al Iraqi*, 1946.
[93] Ibid., 2-3.
[94] Ibid., 2.
[95] Ibid., 2.

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radio journalist in Basra, and Louis Bakose, unsurprisingly, is a famous Hollywood actor.[96] At

night he is invited to Baghdad's Grand Theater to see Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and finds three

of his old friends in the roles of Ferdinand, Prospero, and Ariel. The story ends when the author

returns to Brazil where he owns a gold mine. Kouyoumdjian's story demonstrates the range of

possible (successful) futures imagined by the 1940 graduating class. Interestingly, the story is also

about Iraqi elite connections and friendships formed not through nationalism writ large, but

through loyalty to the cloistered world of BC. The students' desires, dreams, and imagined futures

are simultaneously global and local, but it is interesting to note that most of the graduating class

in Kouyoumdjian's story stay in Iraq. Put differently, in 1940, it was still possible for young Iraqis

of all faiths to imagine themselves as part of Iraq's future.

But not all the essays were optimistic about the future. In fact, careerism and the dangers of

idleness and unemployment are common themes in both the English and Arabic contributions.

The subtext in many of the essays and articles is one that stresses future success, the importance

of hard work, and preparation for a life among elites. Some essays demonstrate anxiety about

finding employment and the loss of class, privilege, and status. Claude A. Le Merle's poem from

1944, "What shall I Be?" captures well the pressure and angst associated with picking the right

career:

I'd like to be a preacher
And blunt the devil's knife
Or even be a teacher
And teach the way of life

I'd like to be a doctor
A host of men I'd save
Or be a great inventor
The way for cures I'd pave

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[96] As demonstrated from an ad in the 1961 yearbook of the Jesuit Al-Hikma University, Louis did not become an actor but rather a successful contractor with offices in both Baghdad and Basra. See *Al-Hikma*, 1961, 54.

I'd love to be a soldier
And stand on guard all night
I'm sure I'd make a sailor
I'd look so smart in white

My brain is in confusion
I don't know which one to choose
So full of great ambition
I might turn out a goose.[97]

It is perhaps not all that surprising to find a poem about the process of choosing a career in a high school yearbook. After all, the yearbook is, as a genre, concerned with the future, especially as it relates to work and career. Moreover, BC viewed poetry writing and other forms of artistic expression as constructive leisurely activities and encouraged students to pursue and hone their literary skills through the school's many clubs and societies as well as the several annual literary and oratory composition contests. Le Merle and most of his peers at BC were privileged. Most young Iraqis did not have a long list of career options of pick from. However, although Le Merle's poem is obviously written with no small amount of rhymed humor, the poem's last stanza suggests that the motivation behind the poem might have been a less humorous real-life concern. Faced with paternal, whether biological or Jesuit, and family pressure, picking the right career and succeeding must have been daunting for some students.[98]

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[97] *Al Iraqi*, 1944.

[98] And some students did have a lot to live up to. In the 1946 and 1947 yearbooks, sons of prominent Iraqis wrote about the fields and professions of their respective fathers. Badia Rafael Butti, the son of Rafael Butti, editor of the Iraqi newspaper *al-Bilad*, contributed a long essay in Arabic on journalism in Iraq entitled "Iraqi Journalism: Its Emergence and Development." Alexander Messayeh, whose family owned several distilleries, wrote an article called "On the Arak Industry," in which he meticulously described the history and modernization of the Iraqi arak industry. *Al Iraqi*, 1946. The Messayeh family advertised their products on the pages of *Al Iraqi*. In 1947, Misbah Asil, son of the famous Iraqi archeologist and Director General of Antiquities and former Foreign Minister, Dr. Naji Asil, wrote an Arabic essay called "The Dawn of Archeology in Iraq and its Growth." *Al Iraqi*, 1946. The Messayeh family advertised their products on the pages of *Al Iraqi*.

The feelings of insecurity and fear of failure that followed graduation is echoed in Edmond Elowe's 1944 essay, "From Childhood to Manhood." Elowe describes the transition from childhood to manhood as one of increased responsibilities and obligations. Once a boy becomes a young man, he writes, "he feels the load of responsibility upon his back and the yoke of hardships upon his shoulders. A young man comes face to face with many of the difficulties and trials of life. This part or stage of life, then, is recognized as a period of struggle." Staying focused and developing self-control, Elowe advised, is of the utmost importance "for the age of youth is the age of temptations and of sweet and empty dreams, which if followed, may lead to ruin and destruction."[99] Third year student Jacob Thaddeus's 1944 essay, "Career," urged his peers to begin to plan their futures and careers as early as possible. "Do they think," he rhetorically asks, "that success will ride to them and bear them to its flowery paths? If they do, they will be disappointed. For it seldom happens that this case will prove true."[100] Fourth year student Meir Nissim Yaqub's Arabic article, "al-Waqt Thamin" ("Time is Precious") stressed the importance of taking advantage of time and not wasting away one's youth. "Youth," according to Yaqub, "is not a time for play, but for study, exertion, and work."[101]

William Hoon's short story, "The Road to Failure," warned against the dangers of idleness. Narrated in the third person, the essay opens dramatically:

> A young man, not yet thirty years old, leaned crestfallen on the rail of the dock, waiting for the sentence which the judge was about to pronounce. His face was buried beneath a shock of hair and sweat streamed from his brow as he waited impatiently for the judge to speak. The words fell coldly on his ear. "This court finds you guilty![102]

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[99] *Al Iraqi*, 1944.
[100] Ibid., 9.
[101] Ibid., 5.
[102] Ibid., 10.

The young man's crimes, we learn, is that he was idle in his youth and passed his days in pleasure and "never thought of the morrow." Speaking directly to the reader, the story ends with the following warning: "Idleness is the root to all misfortunes, the guide-post to destruction and if you make of idleness a fellow traveler along the road of life the Greatest of all Judges will someday say of you, 'This court finds you guilty.'"[103] As laid out above, many of the pieces published in *Al Iraqi* echo the sentiment described in Hoon's short story. They do so either by directly warning against the dangers of idleness or non-productive leisure or by emphasizing the importance of career and hard work. Few of the essays, however, encapsulate this sentiment as precisely and candidly as does Hoon's. "The Road to Failure" not only makes leisure and pleasure equivalent to and synonymous with idleness but turns them into a religious sin for which one must answer to God – "the Greatest of all Judges." While the moral of Hoon's short story can be boiled down to the Christian saying, "idle hands are the devil's workshop," it does not completely banish leisure to the devil's playground. It does, however, underline the importance of productive leisure. Having said that, claims of using time wisely have to be understood with the audience of the yearbooks in mind. We can assume, however, that the amount of essays that deal with these topics is indicative of the extent to which the school was successful in mobilizing its students around the values of hard work, discipline, and the productive use of free time. In addition, the sentiments dominant in these essays mimic state and official discourses about leisure beyond BC such as those described in the introduction to this dissertation. At the same time, such essays suggest that students were genuinely occupied, and at times anxious, about making the correct choices regarding their futures. Even if they were anxious, however, as future members of the Iraqi elite, the emphasis that students

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[103] Ibid., 11.

placed on industriousness and productivity allowed them to demonstrate that they were up to the task.

Debating, Dramatics, and the Building of a School Library

In addition to physical strength and fitness, public speaking and oratory skills were seen as legitimate extracurricular activities and important elements in the education of BC students. To hone and develop these skills, the Chrysostom Debating Society was established in 1947. It quickly became one of the most popular and prestigious student organizations. The society was named after a famous orthodox saint, John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople (d. 407 CE). Fr. Sullivan served as the society's first moderator. The members elected a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a sergeant in arms every year. In the society's first annual report, its members stated that "it is our confident hope that the Chrysostom Debating Society will produce the eloquent orators or our country's future."[104] To attain this goal, members were given instruction in the "mechanics of speaking" during their weekly meetings. Through these meetings, the society endeavored to "improve each member's powers of expression and to afford him fundamental training in public speaking" and strove to "familiarize its members with the apt reason, the cogent reply, the forceful attack, the logical conclusion."[105] Debates were held in both Arabic and English.

Students embraced the importance of developing public speaking skills and described the mastering of such skills as "the ambition of every schoolboy." "Realizing the importance of self-expression in our future life," they explained, led them to devote their time "energetically to this important work."[106] The society debated a wide range of political, cultural, and moral questions. In 1949, the members debated "the traditions, the customs, and the occupations of Iraq; the place

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[104] *Al Iraqi,* 1947.
[105] *Al Iraqi,* 1947.
[106] *Al Iraqi,* 1949.

of science in the modern world; and the choice of different professions."[107] In other years, the themes ranged from adolescence to whether or not the production of atomic energy for industrial purposes should be prohibited. BC also had an International Relations Club sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation where students met to discuss and read about similar topics.[108] BC organized debates and elocution contests throughout the school year already in the early 1930s. Arabic and English prize debates and elocution contests were often held during the annual graduation ceremony. In 1934, the first annual Arabic Prize debate was held in June. Six speakers, three for and three against, debated whether wars were inevitable in front of a large audience. The judges, who were prominent members of the Baghdadi community, awarded the prize to the team arguing that wars were inevitable.[109]

Figure 9: The Dramatic Society of BC, 1940s. JARC.

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[107] *Al Iraqi,* 1949.
[108] Report to United States Information Service, Edward F. Madaras, S.J. President of Baghdad College, 1946, RG. 11.2-3-47.
[109] Second Annual Closing Exercises Program, June 24, 1934, RG.11.2- 3-4.

BC also considered theater a sanctioned form of leisure. The plays put on by BC's Dramatic Society were another highlight of the school year. Students acted in the plays, designed the costumes, the stage scenery, and wrote the music. This meant that the society's members spent hours of their free time preparing for the plays. Rehearsing, which most often took place on late afternoons after classes had ended offered the students involved a less supervised space with minimal interference from teachers. Since BC was a single sex institution, male students played female roles, except for a few rare occasions when sisters of students were invited to play important female roles. This undoubtedly allowed for occasional and humorous gender-bending during rehearsals and performances – a fact to which many of the photos from the Dramatic Society in the yearbooks attest. That theater can be dangerous or even radical,[110] in that it offers an opportunity to act out in otherwise repressive or censorious circumstances, does not seem to have worried the Jesuits. If they were concerned, they did not mention it in their reports. The fact that the Jesuits supervised the selection of plays and were present during performances likely explains their attitude. The rise of more radical and political Iraqi theater outside of schools will he explored in Chapter 3. In the beginning, plays were performed outdoors in front of families, friends, and classmates. In the 1950s, the plays staged by the Dramatic Society became open to the Baghdadi public when BC was allowed to use King Faisal Hall in downtown Baghdad. A small fee was charged at the door to pay for the use of the hall. According to the 1958 report of the Dramatic Society, the plays were a tremendous success and attracted a large audience: "On the nights of November 29 and 30, King Faisal Hall was crowded with anxious spectators. Even after the final

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[110] For an excellent study of radical theater in the Levant see Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 60-94.

curtain rang down, Baghdad's famous theatre still echoed with their sighs and smiles, laughter and 'bravoes.'"[111] The program consisted of three one-act plays, two in English and one in Arabic.

While students had a say in the selection of plays, several of the plays put on at BC were about saints, early Christian history, or famous Jesuits. In 1956, BC students put on *Our Daily Bread*, which in the play program was described as a "Eucharistic drama" taking place in Rome.[112] In 1952, on the occasion of the 400th Anniversary of St. Francis Xavier, the Dramatic Society performed *God's Whirlwind: A Life of Xavier*, which transported the audience to Paris, Rome, and India.[113] But the Dramatic Society also staged *The Emperor's New Clothes*, Agatha Christie's novel-turned play *Ten Little Indians*, comic plays, and several one-act plays by English and American playwrights such as George Kaufman's *If Men Played Cards As Women Do*, and *A Night at an Inn* by Lord Dunsany. This play in particular "caught the imagination of the audience and held it until the final curtain." In a student poll, *A Night at an Inn* was voted the best play of the year. The author of the report speculated, that perhaps, "the element of mystery [in the play], so appealing to young boys, had some influence on the vote."[114]

As this section will demonstrate, the thirst for mystery and crime among BC students was not limited to the dramatic arts. In the school library and in its adjacent reading room, BC students spent many hours before and after class and during noon recreation and the long summer breaks, during which the library stayed open, perusing magazines, comic books, novels, and other books in Arabic, English, and French. One report described the library as "one of the most frequented places in the school."[115] In the context of the reading habits of students in Hashemite Iraq, Bashkin

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[111] *Al Iraqi*, 1958. In the 1950s, BC students entered the annual drama competition organized by the British Institute in Baghdad.
[112] Play Programs, 1956, RG. 11.2-3-23
[113] Play Programs, 1952, RG. 11.2-3-24.
[114] *Al Iraqi*, 1951.
[115] *Al Iraqi*, 1949.

has shed light on the importance of reading outside of school as a form of "independent inquiry" that shaped students as much as what they read in the classroom.[116] Like their peers studying in Iraq's other educational institutions, BC students undoubtedly shared in this form of "independent inquiry."

At the same time, the BC school library was a unique and novel institution. Not only did its vast holdings far exceed those of Iraq's public schools, it also provided BC students with a materially superior reading experience in the form of reading rooms equipped with large desks, comfortable chairs, lamps, and stands for magazines, newspapers, and comic books. Presumably, it also cemented BC's elite status and kept students away from Baghdad's public library. While some of Iraq's Jewish schools contained libraries with collections in both Arabic, Hebrew and European languages,[117] this was not the case in Iraq's public schools. Commenting on the holdings of public school libraries in Iraq in the 1940s, Matthews and Akrawi assert that most primary school libraries had between 300 to 350 books and pamphlets consisting mostly of old textbooks, courses of study, books on teaching methods, some travel books and a very small number of children's books. The situation was often slightly better in Baghdad where books in Arabic and English were sometimes purchased through contributions from students.[118] However, according to the Matthews and Akrawi report, even the best of Bagdad's public secondary schools held no more than 1000 books in their libraries.[119] The Baghdad Public Library, also known as *Maktabat al-Salam* (The Peace Library) and the National Library, held 4,283 books in 1929.[120] In 1957, there

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[116] Bashkin, "When Mu'awiya Entered the Curriculum," 362.
[117] Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 73.
[118] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, 154.
[119] Ibid., 170.
[120] Ian Johnson, "Gertrude Bell and the Evolution if the Library Tradition in Iraq," in *Gertrude Bell an Iraq: A Life and Legacy*, edited by Paul Collins and Charles Tripp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 263. Both Gertrude Bell and Muriel Forbes, the wife of Henry F. Forbes, who was a judicial commissioner in the Imperial Service and President of the Court of Appeal in Iraq from 1919-1920, played important roles

were 240 public and school libraries in Iraq. The public library contained more than 30,000 books in 1957.[121]

In 1932, within a month of their arrival in Baghdad, and before the school had even opened, the Jesuits at BC enthusiastically began building a school library, which quickly became one of the biggest in Baghdad and certainly the biggest in terms of works in English. They used their newsletter, *Al Baghdadi,* which was circulation and read internationally, to elicit financial support for books from Catholic institutions and communities in the US and beyond:

> Quickly we say, just like that, 'give us that book!' Does our speed and insistence take your breath away? Well, look at it this way. If there's one thing you can't run a school without, it's books. And if there's one thing that costs an enormous amount of money, it's the building up of an adequate school library.[122]

In the same call for funds they made it clear that in addition to books, they were also interested in receiving magazines, papers, pictures, films, and phonograph records. The call for books and funds was answered immediately and with much zeal by the myriad Jesuit networks of support in American Catholic communities and institutions.[123] In late 1933, the first Arabic-speaking Jesuit

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in the founding the library. It opened in April of 1920. In 1924, The Baghdad Public Library was taken over by The Ministry of Education. In the 1930s it was merged with the YMCA Library and other libraries in Baghdad and in the same year a public library was established in Mosul. Ibid., 259-264.

[121] "Education in Iraq," Washington, Office of the Cultural Attache, Embassy of Iraq, 1957, 45.

[122] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 4. May, 1932 JARC 11.2-1-6.

[123] In 1933, the Jesuits at BC started a "Book-Across-the-Sea Club." As part of this project, BC opened up an account with the Everyman's Library in London. Everyman's Library, which had been founded in 1906, specialized in the publication of cheap editions of world classics. The Jesuits asked their supporters in to send money directly to Everyman's Library in London where they were added to BC's account. *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 7. April, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-9. Also in 1933, 2.880 pounds of books, records and magazines arrived in Baghdad from Jesuits in Milford (Connecticut). Boston College sent six cases of books and Georgetown University contributed 72 reels of educational films. An unspecified number of books arrived from Nazareth College in Michigan. *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 7. April, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-9. Later that same year, BC received a large number of "American and English classics" – thirty-five copies of each work – totaling almost a thousand volumes in all from the Georgetown Visitation Convent. The same shipment included a number of boxes of books from the Little Flower Missionary Club of Roxbury (Massachusetts) as well as several sets of the Catholic Encyclopedia from the Jesuit school of philosophy and theology, Weston College in Boston. *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 1. December, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-11.

staff arrived in Baghdad. Frs. Scanlon and Wand had both studied Arabic at the Vatican in Rome for two years and with their arrival, BC began adding Arabic books to their library. This trend continued as more Arabic-speaking Jesuits arrived and as more of the Jesuits learned Arabic.[124] The BC library continued to grow in size as well as in popularity. In a newsletter to the Jesuit community in the US, one of the Jesuits at BC proudly explained that the library, which was "full of swell books for boys" was used every single day.[125] In 1948, the library held 10,000 volumes in addition to comic books, magazines, journals, and newspapers.[126] The library increased its holdings every year. In 1949 it had 14,000 volumes,[127] and already in 1951, the library held 16,000 books.[128]

Already in the late 1930s, Iraqi Clubs were set up in places such as Boston, New Haven, and Worcester (Massachusetts). The Iraqi clubs, which were run almost exclusively by American Catholic church women, held annual bridge parties to collect money for books and other equipment. *Al Baghdadi,* Vol. 9. No. 3. June 1941, JARC 11.2-1-35. In 1947, the Worcester Iraqi Club's annual fashion show and bridge party gathered 1.320 Catholic women around 330 tables. *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 15. No. 3. June 1947, JARC 11.2-2-18. With individual tickets selling for $1.20, the event brought in close to $1.600.

[124] To mention a prominent example, Fr. Richard McCarty, who worked at both BC and the the Jesuit al-Hikma University finished his doctoral work at Oxford in 1947 under the tutelage of Professor Gibbs and became an authority on Islamic history, theology, and law. He even brought Professor Gibbs to BC when the latter was in Baghdad in 1952 of the occasion of the the millenary of Ibn Sina. *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 20. No. 3. June 1952, JARC 11.2-2-37.

[125] Newsletters from Fr. Thomas F. Hussey S.J., Oct. 3, 1948, RG. 11.1-28-10

[126] Newsletters from Fr. Thomas F. Hussey S.J., Oct. 3, 1948, RG. 11.1-28-10

[127] *Al Iraqi*, 1949.

[128] With the opening of the Bishop Rice Memorial Building during the same year, a science library with 1600 volumes was added. *Al Iraqi*, 1951.

Figure 10: Students reading in the library reading room, late 1940s. JARC.

Figure 11: Students reading in the library reading room, late 1940s. JARC

BC students were allowed to take out books and read them at home but were, in particular, "urged to acquire the habit of browsing about in the library and make themselves familiar with its contents."[129] Spending time in the school library was deemed a productive and profitable use of leisure time. This sentiment was echoed in students' writings about the library. The Library Committee, consisting mostly of juniors and seniors, told their fellow students that "when classes and homework are finished for the day there is no greater relaxation than a good book" and that during the long summer breaks in particular, reading was an excellent way to "pass the vacation period profitably."[130] Experimenting with writing in a new language – English, and perhaps also struggling with feelings of homesickness, first year boarding student, Yonan Ibrahim, wrote an essay in the 1940 yearbook about his love for the library. In his short essay, "Why I like the Library," Ibrahim had the following to say about his favorite place in the school:

> Sometimes when I am alone and have nothing to do I find great pleasure in going up to the library to read the books and magazines. It is so calm and peaceful there! I like it, too, because there are all sorts of books I can borrow and read in my spare time after I have finished my work instead of idling about. There are Arabic, English and French books, Adventure books, interesting all.[131]

Ibrahim's privileging of reading over "idling about" illustrates the ways in which he subscribed, at least in his writing, to the values of the school and the productive use of leisure time and profitable recreation on which the Jesuits put so much emphasis. As described in the previous section, students often internalized the school's antipathy to idleness and made it a recurring theme in their essays. Most likely, they also made such statements to appease to the school. Resistance to the productive use of leisure must have been abundant at times. However, such resistance did

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[129] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 7. April, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-9.
[130] *Al Iraqi*, 1951.
[131] *Al Iraqi*, 1940.

not easily filter through the yearbook. At the same time, Ibrahim's essay shows that the reading of adventure books in the library was a solitary and individual activity that coexisted with the more disciplinary, bodily, and physical forms of activities that the school prioritized. In fact, the library, with its unsupervised time, offered students a break from the extremely regimented and structured school day.

While BC's administration saw reading as a productive and profitable use of leisure time and did much to encourage it, the Jesuits did not see all reading habits and literary genres as equally desirable, and they controlled what books made it into the library. While comic books and magazines were included in the category of what constituted productive reading, some Arabic novels were not. Sometimes, the Jesuits would confiscate what they referred to as Arabic "dime novels" from the students.[132] The reports did not specify what exactly was considered a "dime novel," but these were mostly likely purchased in one of Baghdad's many bookstores or newspaper stands, which often sold cheap novels, and brought to campus by students.[133] Some of the first novels to arrive at BC were the young adult works of Jesuit priest, William. F. Hendrix, which is a good indication of what the Jesuits thought of as productive reading. Two of Hendrix's novels, *Harry Brown at Barchester* and *Red Halligan* were described by the BC staff as "the finest books for boys."[134] *Harry Brown at Barchester*, which was published in 1930, and read by BC students just three years later, was described in its frontispiece as "a sparkling story of Catholic High School life."[135] The same description promised that "boys will admire and like, and will want to imitate

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[132] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 7. April, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-9.
[133] For more on the reading habits of students in Hashemite Iraq see Bashkin, "When Mu'awiya Entered the Curriculum," 362-364.
[134] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 1 No. 7. April, 1933 JARC 11.2-1-9.
[135] William. F. Hendrix, *Harry Brown at Barchester* (Cincinnati: Benziger Brothers, 1930), 254.

Harry Brown a real boy of boys, excellent at games, cheerful, ready for jollity and a joke - even a fight for a good cause, and a fine student."[136]

The school library was also where students explored their interests, found inspiration, and did research for the essays they submitted to *Al Iraqi*.[137] Many of these essays were inspired by, and in some cases adapted from, English-language works in the library. Others again were abridged translations. As students became more confident in English, translations of English language publications, which had previously mostly circulated in Iraqi newspapers and literary journals, moved to school papers and yearbooks. Yusuf Abbu's 1952 essay, "The Road to Fame," can serve as an example. Abbu, an Assyrian boarding student from Tel Kaif, skillfully adapted "How I Killed a Bear," by Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900), an American novelist and essayist. Originally published in Warner's collection, *In the Wilderness* (1878), "How I Killed a Bear," like most of the stories in the collection, expresses a strong fascination and love for outdoor things, nature, and wildlife. Abbu's story, like Warner's, is told in a first person narrative and begins when the author states, "It was my ambition as a youth to distinguish myself someday by an outstanding act of heroism."[138] His opportunity arrives one summer when he manages to slay a wild boar with a bow and arrow. The opening paragraph of Abbu's story is almost a verbatim adaptation of Warner's, with the one exception that the bear has been replaced by a wild Iraqi boar: "There have been many strange versions of my accidental meeting with a wild boar, two years ago last summer, and I feel that in justice to the boar and myself, an explanation of the facts as they actually occurred

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[136] Ibid., 254.

[137] The library was also a space where students found a creative outlet. In 1945, eight students from the boarding section met in the library in secret to issue and edit a monthly student journal the first issue of which contained thirty pages printed with pen and stapled together. Each member of the group wrote an article and each printed a copy of the entire journal. Baghdad College House History from 1939-1945, 1945, RG. 11.2-19-4.

[138] *Al Iraqi*, 1952.

should be forthcoming."[139] Abbu's story stages the protagonist, who is identical with the author, as a gifted and fearless hunter capable of bringing down a boar with bow and arrow. At the same time, "The Road to Fame" is a tribute to the beauty of northern Iraq and the long days of summer and childhood when time seemed more plentiful and less structured by daily tasks, chores, and homework – a time when full days could be spent fishing in creeks and exploring the countryside. The story therefore also serves as an implicit challenge to the BC perspective described above.

Stories like Abbu's give us an idea of what BC students were reading in the library. Following this line of logic, the most popular genres were those of adventure stories and crime and murder mysteries. The abundance of such stories in *Al Iraqi* suggests that BC students were crazy about crime. Many of the crime stories written by BC students have a *noir* flavor and feature male protagonists who are the victims, suspects, or perpetrators of the crime around which the plot of the stories centers. Many of these stories are, true to the *noir* genre, about anxious performative masculinity.[140] Similarly, and most likely reflecting the American and English inspirations for the stories, most BC students chose nocturnal and often rainy American and European metropolitan cities as the setting for their stories. New York and London were the two most popular. Most of the stories are populated with characters rejoicing in names such as Mr. Sanders, Joseph Blake, Richard Reynolds, Joe, and George. Gerald Pearce's "Double Switch" follows the protagonist-murderer, Mr. Sanders, and opens in true *noir* fashion:

> Rain dripped off the brim of my hat in an endless stream. A blinding torrent beat a continuous tattoo on the gleaming black metal-work of the stationary Hispano or splashed noisily into the streaming gutters. Blurred, barely visible street lights gleamed dimly through an almost impenetrable curtain of fog and falling water.[141]

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[139] *Al Iraqi*, 1952.

[140] See for example Gregory Forter, *Murdering Masculinities: Fantasies of Gender and Violence in the American Crime Novel* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), Megan Abbott, *The Street Was Mine: Masculinity in Hardboiled Fiction and Film Noir* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), and Frank Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[141] *Al Iraqi*, 1945.

The story takes place in London and features a group of Egyptologists recently returned from Egypt where some of them "discovered the sarcophagus and embalmed body of Sen-mut, High Priest of the Temple of Isis during the reign of Thothmes III."[142] Mr. Sanders kills his friend and steals "the legendary Ring of Isis, said to hold the secrets of the ancient sorcerers and adepts at the Black Arts." The story ends when the mummy returns to life and takes revenge on Mr. Sanders, thus transforming the perpetrator into the victim.

Nazar Juwaidah's "The Sleep of Revenge" follows a somewhat similar plot. Also set in London, "The Sleep of Revenge" is about a young man by the name of Joseph Blake who "had come to London from his little village to study law. And now he was a murderer, one who had killed in cold blood, a pathetic outcast of human society."[143] In the beginning of the story, we find Joseph standing alone on a nocturnal and rain-swept London bridge. He has just committed a horrible crime. Joseph, a struggling law student, has murdered his friend in search of money. All he finds in his friend's apartment, however, is old letters and one-hundred pounds. Joseph is certain that he will get caught because of "finger prints and all the modern means of crime detection."[144] The crime is never solved, but justice is restored at the end of the story when the ghost of Joseph's friend, returns to kill him. The fascination with forensic science and police work is a recurring theme in many of the stories published in *Al Iraqi*. Naji Nashmi's "Circumstantial Evidence" is built around a love triangle drama featuring drinking and gambling and the two soldier friends, Sam and George, and a woman with whom they are both in love. George blames Sam for a murder he did not commit in order to marry Jane, who is already engaged to Sam. Most of the story takes

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[142] *Al Iraqi*, 1945.
[143] *Al Iraqi*, 1950.
[144] *Al Iraqi*, 1950.

place in a courtroom and showcases the author's intimate knowledge of and interest in criminal law, modern forensic science and the gathering of evidence.[145]

Crimes of passion drive the narrative forward in some of the stories in *Al Iraqi*. One example is John Roy's "The Village Tragedy" in which the young Walid leaves his mountain village in northern Iraq in search of modern education. In Baghdad, "the many stores, cinemas and entertainments were entirely new to this boy who had never left his mountain home."[146] While studying in Baghdad, Walid falls in love with Ferial, the sister of a school friend and the two decide to get married. This breaks Walid's promise to his father that he would return home to the village and marry Salwa after his graduation. When Walid's father dies, he returns to the village to live with Ferial. Salwa, however, has not forgotten Walid's promise and the story ends tragically when Salwa poisons Walid's newborn son.

The diverse narratives described above make up only a small portion of the many essays that students submitted to *Al Iraqi*. They demonstrate that writing was considered a legitimate and productive use of free time and that students were eager to hone their skills and see their name in print. Thematically, the stories suggest that when students used their free time to write, they found inspiration in and took clues from the materials they read at school. At the same time, they creatively used certain genres and tropes to make their writings reflect their own interests, concerns, and realities. For example, while some of the stories are set in cities such as London and New York, many of them deal with young male protagonists working, studying, and trying to get by in big cities far away from friends and family.

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[145] *Al Iraqi*, 1952.
[146] *Al Iraqi*, 1954.

Dangerous Leisure and anti-Communism and BC

Unlike the Presbyterians, as the next chapter will show, who seem only to have taken umbrage with communism as a threat to their evangelizing efforts outside of Baghdad, the Jesuits were genuinely concerned about the appeal of communism among their students. As a result, from early on, they took a pro-active approach to ensure that their students did not get the wrong ideas, literally, during their free time. Put differently, enforcing school discipline also meant preventing students from engaging in certain types of activities outside of school. Enforcing a capitalist ethos was in some ways synonymous with the notion of "profitable recreation" mentioned earlier. Not only did BC attempt to annex the time of students through athletic and academic activities such as the school's many clubs and societies, they also organized extracurricular and academic activities specifically designed to teach students about the dangers of communism.

As described earlier in this chapter, the leftist radicalization that took place in Iraqi schools among both students and teachers is well documented. Similarly, thanks to Batatu's magisterial work, we have a detailed account of the brutal anti-communist campaigns of the Hashemite state, which included, particularly in the late 1940s and 1950s, persecution, imprisonment, torture, and executions.[147] The influence of Cold War ideology on these matters and resulting Iraqi attempts to discipline leftist students have been described by Pursley.[148] Elliot Colla has explored the Cold War anti-communist polemics, through the xenophobic and personal attacks, made by Iraqi poet Badr Shakir al-Sayyab in the late 1950s following his break from the ICP. By framing al-Sayyab as a Cold War intellectual, Colla brought American-Iraqi anti-communist links, in the form of the CIA-sponsored International Association for Cultural Freedom (later Congress for Cultural

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[147] Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 404-712; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 87-124; Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 143; Ismael, *The Rise and Fall*, 2007; Franzen, *Red Star over Baghdad*, 2011.
[148] Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 109-115.

Freedom), to the fore.[149] However, a lot less is known about earlier and less directly violent attempts to fight the spread of communism in Iraq. More specifically, while more research is needed, it is interesting to note that from very early on, American missionaries were active in the fight against communism well before it had become a key feature of local Iraqi postwar politics or globally through the Cold War.

The bilingual invitation to BC's annual Lenten Lectures from 1936, which were organized and conducted by Rev. Vincent A. Gookin, S.J., invited students, their families, and friends to a series of lectures with a shared theme: "Communism the Modern Menace." Every Saturday, for six weeks Gookin gave lectures in Arabic and English on the following topics: "Why Did Communism Begin?" "What is the Communist Plan?," "Communism, a Menace to the Individual," "Communism, a Menace to the Family," "Communism, a Menace to the State," and "What is the Catholic Plan?" Gookin, who hailed from Boston, was an experienced public speaker in the field of anti-communist propaganda. While still in Boston, Gookin gave similar speeches to listeners on Boston Common, a public park in Downtown Boston.[150] The invitation to the lectures, which was printed with blue ink on thick, high-quality paper, was folded on the middle giving it the appearance of a booklet. It ended with a quote, translated into Arabic, by Pope Pius XI:

> The right to private property has been given to man by nature, or rather by the Creator Himself, not only in order that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, but also that by means of it, the good which the Creator has destined for the human race may truly serve this purpose.[151]

One of the students at BC translated the lectures into Arabic and they later appeared in an Iraqi newspaper.[152] According to *Al Baghdadi*, the rationale behind the lectures was that "communism

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[149] Elliot Colla, "Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, Cold War Poet," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 18:3 (2015):247-263.
[150] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 5 No. 1. June, 1936 JARC 11.2-1-18.
[151] Lenten Lecture Brochures, 1936, JARC 11.2-3-26.
[152] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 5 No. 1. June, 1936 JARC 11.2-1-18.

here, as elsewhere, is a topic of conversation." In the same article, the Jesuits at BC, however, assured their readers that their Iraqi students "were bent on learning all they could about the right side of the question."[153]

The anti-communist agenda of BC became entwined with the school's competitive ethos and its emphasis on competitions, awards, and prizes. During the annual commencement ceremony in June, which was one of the social highlights of the academic year, students were awarded honorary prizes for their academic and athletic achievements. During the early years of the school, the ceremony took place on the BC campus. In the 1940s, it was moved to the King Faisal Gardens.

The commencement ceremony also included speeches, music performed by student musicians,[154] plays, recitation of poetry, and a valedictorian address. Often, the Minister of Education or the Director General of Education were invited to give an honorary address. The Baghdad College Prize, awarded annually in honor of Saint Jude Thaddeus, Apostle of Iraq, to the best essays written in Arabic or English answering a pre-set prompt, went to Abboudi Gurgis Talia and Robert Anthony Pedroni for their essays on the dangers of communism.[155] Earlier in 1936, the income of BC's annual collection of funds to the Jesuit foreign missions was used to send medical supplies to General Franco in Spain. Fr. Sarjeant, who was in charge of the collection, offered half a day off to the class whose members collected the most money. Together, the students at BC gathered $22. When re-telling the story to their followers in the US, the staff at BC wrote, regarding developments in Spain, that they were "happy to report that the sympathy of Baghdad's populace is one the right side."[156] The modest amount collected by the BC students in support of General

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[153] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 5 No. 1. June, 1936 JARC 11.2-1-18.
[154] BC had several student musical groups, but the activities of these are for some reason not described in the yearbooks.
[155] Commencement Programs, 1936, JARC 11.2-3-5.
[156] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 5 No. 4. December, 1936 JARC 11.2-1-20.

Franco, when coupled with the general Iraqi anti-fascist tendencies of the period, says more about the particular Jesuit form of pro-Catholic anti-communism than it does about Iraqi support for Franco in Spain. In fact, pre-Cold War American Jesuit anti-communism at BC seems to have been particularly concerned with communism's anticlerical strain. While it is not necessarily indicative of political indoctrination, it is interesting to note that several BC students spent the summer of 1936 in Rome at the expense of the Italian government.[157]

The following year, in 1937, the Baghdad College Prize was given to two essays on the papacy, but the commencement ceremony included two student addresses entitled "Communism Enslaves the Worker" and "Communism Wars on God."[158] While scripts of the lectures and the student essays and talks have not been preserved, it is clear that the annual commencement ceremony, in addition to celebrating the graduation and academic achievements of the students, functioned as a showcase and was used to send a strong signal to parents, many of whom where business and land owners and influential politicians and government officials, who were themselves engaged in fighting the growing communist influence in Iraq. As most BC students hailed from wealthy and conservative families, many probably shared, if not the Catholic, then at least the anti-communist values of the school.

However, as described earlier, considering the general political climate in Iraq during this period, it is likely that some students found communism relevant, or at least interesting and fascinating. Based on the Jesuit archives, however, determining with certainty the degree to which this was the case is not possible. The often over-confident newsletters and reports that the Jesuits sent back to Catholic communities and supporters tell us little about how students responded to Jesuit and American anti-communist propaganda. It is also not clear if the BC anti-communist

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[157] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 5 No. 4. December, 1936 JARC 11.2-1-20.
[158] Commencement Programs, 1937, JARC 11.2-3-6.

performances were the first way and time that BC students learned about "the dangers of communism." However, when read carefully, the Jesuit archive suggests that perhaps some students were less concerned about the "threat" of communism. In a newsletter written by Fr. Stanislaus Gerry, S.J. in June 1948, he referred to some of his students as "Bolsheviks" and "potential bandits."[159] A couple of years prior, when a new Iraqi education law required that all primary classes be taught by Iraqi teachers, BC hired an Iraqi who had recently returned to Baghdad with a PhD in psychology from Ohio State University. The new hire, however, was fired within less than a year when the Jesuits learned that new their colleague "had been bitten in the States with the outmoded bug of the conflict between science and religion and had been trying to infect our boys."[160] These two examples are not necessarily indicative of student politics and receptiveness to radical ideas. They do, however, suggest that the school was actively engaged in the monitoring of its students and staff and that much effort was put into preventing BC students from seeking out radical politics during their free time.

Such attempts were not always successful and at times, students brought their politics to school. While it is impossible, due to the lack of sources, to definitively give an account of communist support among BC students, they were, like many Iraqi students during the Hashemite period, no strangers to protests and demonstrations. In 1948, two BC students were expelled and a third suspended for organizing a one-day hunger strike after previous and less radical protests over the poor quality of the food at BC's boarding section had yielded no results. The BC staff explained the strike with reference to the political atmosphere caused by events in Palestine and described the ringleaders of the strike as "school boys exposed to heady weeks of excitement."[161]

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[159] Newsletters, Fr. Stanislaus Gerry, S.J., June 28, 1948, JARC 11.1-28-10.
[160] Baghdad College House History, 1945, JARC 11.1-19-4.
[161] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 16. No. 3. June, 1948 JARC 11.2-2-22.

Earlier that year, in the aftermath of the anti-British rebellion in January know as the *Wathba* (the Leap), in which many Iraqi students took part, another controversy arose between BC students and teachers. The controversy arose over "the proper amount of patriotism and zeal for the memory of certain students who had been casualties in a flare-up over the latest treaty between Iraq and England."[162] Fr. Connell, who was then BC's principal, suggested that only the seniors and two representatives from the other classes go to lay wreaths on the graves of the fallen students on the weekend. In protest, one student "took matters into his own hands, solicited funds for a wreath and signed up the whole school to march to the cemetery on a class day."[163]

While the extent to which BC students engaged in oppositional politics remains unclear, it is certain that they enjoyed the less structured world outside the walls of BC. The entire class of 1944, when students were in their junior year, was expelled from the school for seven days due to "acts in the course of a certain Arabic class," which were taken "as the greatest and most villainous crimes against the school authorities."[164] In their review of their years at BC, the class of 1944 did not specify exactly what got them "exiled from school." Their account relates their week as exiles with no small amount of pride and a devil-may-care attitude: "During this period, we used to assemble in Saʿdun Park and remain there from morn till noon, thinking of our future and condemning the verdict passed upon us. We also played games, listened to records, and took pictures. In the afternoons we met, either in the cinema or on the river in small rowing boats."[165] Besides the social status that the suspension afforded the class of 1944, it is perhaps not surprising that they were nostalgic about their week of freedom. With an extremely regimented and busy

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[162] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 16. No. 3. June, 1948 JARC 11.2-2-22.
[163] *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 16. No. 3. June, 1948 JARC 11.2-2-22.
[164] *Al Iraqi*, 1944.
[165] *Al Iraqi*, 1944.

schedule that included many hours spent on homework and assignments, BC students had limited

time for unsupervised activities.[166]

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[166] Some of the activities at BC did transgress the strict regiment of everyday school life. In 1944, the same graduating class that had been expelled earlier in the year went on a trip to Basra together during the Christmas vacation. Knowing that many of them would be spread all over the world after graduation, they decided to travel to Basra together. In Basra they rented bicycles and played tennis and basketball and had dinner at the Shatt al-Arab Hotel where they were staying. BC's scientific society also organized picnics during school breaks. These picnics enabled members of the society to devote more time, in an informal setting, to their scientific interests and at the same time offered an opportunity for recreation and relaxation. Some students were lucky enough to be chosen for competitive summer programs abroad. In 1958, Wayil Kubba spent his entire summer in in the US as a camper at Camp Rising Sun in Rhinebeck, New York. A report with photographs taken by Kubba was included *Al Iraqi* from 1958 under the title "A Dream Come True." *Al Iraqi*, 1958. Other students went to study in the US more permanently on scholarships, facilitated by the Jesuits, at Detroit University and Williams College, to mention just a few. Already in 1936, several BC students had pen pals in the US. *Al Baghdadi*, Vol. 4. No. 2. January, 1936 JARC 11.2-1-17. Several times a year, BC used the school busses or local trains to organize picnics. Different rules applied and the rigid routine of school life was broken up during picnics. In the early summer of 1948, father Stanislaus Gerry boarded a train with a group of BC students. They were headed to the small town of Baquba for the day. Gerry described the picnic in a newsletter later that year. Gerry was annoyed at the long, slow, and hot train ride, but noted that "the boys, of course, were having their usual good time. I no sooner stepped up into a car, when I saw a pair of legs dangling in front of my face. One of my cherubs had already made himself at home in the baggage rack." Newsletters from Fr. Stanislaus Gerry, S.J., June 28, 1948, JARC 11.1- 28-10. The students brought a phonograph, harmonicas, and other musical instruments and the train ride quickly had the students dancing and singing. Every time the train stopped, the students got out of the train to take group pictures. After exploring Baquba, the group had lunch in a garden belonging to a relative of one of the students: "it wasn't long before whole chickens, eggs, loaves of bread, vegetables, salted meats, beef, etc. etc., was being dropped into my lap. So much foodstuffs appeared out of their bags that any moment I was expecting to see Tom Collins or Joe Martini slip out, but alas! They never even heard of the gentlemen, so I had to be content to wash down the lunch with oranges." Newsletters from Fr. Stanislaus Gerry, S.J., June 28, 1948, JARC 11.1- 28-10. Although Gerry, as his newsletter reveals, was disappointed about the lack of liquor, it is evident that he too was enjoying himself. Gerry was "beginning to learn," as he put it, "that you can have a swell time with the boys, if you can succeed in throwing off inhibitions and assume that everyone is your bosom pal." Newsletters from Fr. Stanislaus Gerry, S.J., June 28, 1948, JARC 11.1- 28-10. The students were having a great time too. On the BC campus smoking, at least for students, was strictly forbidden. Writing about the BC campus, one student, recalls how "the place was huge, surrounded by gardens where students used to sneak out during the break for a puff of a cigarette only to be caught by one of the Fathers who was on duty strolling in the yard." MacDonnell, *Jesuits by the Tigris*, 32. However, after the picnic lunch when the group came upon a coffee shop in Baquba, the students were allowed to smoke cigarettes and water-pipe until they "turned pale or began sweating" and "the world was becoming one vast merry-go-round for them." Newsletters from Fr. Stanislaus Gerry, S.J., June 28, 1948, JARC 11.1- 28-10.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that at a time when leisure emerged and developed into a key site for projects of national cultivations and their contestations, extracurricular activities became one of the main ways in which the leisure of students was controlled and restricted. In tandem, this chapter showed that the extracurricular is a useful sphere of analysis because it so clearly embodied the desire to check and curb leisure, seeking to make it productive. By focusing on American missionary education in Iraq, however, this chapter demonstrated that the attempt to discipline students in leisure was not exclusively an Iraqi project. In other words, during the Hashemite period, when Iraqi education was characterized by varying degrees of nationalist and militarist trends, it is important to pay attention to the multiplicity of influences that played a role in the lives of Iraqi students.

This chapter focused on the important cultural and educational role played by the US in Iraq in the first half of the twentieth century as one such transnational influence. As an elite missionary institution, BC employed specifically Jesuit and American notions of "disciplined freedom" and "profitable recreation" to regulate and supervise the time of students and to make them into men and leaders of the of the future. This included teaching students about the dangers of communism and other forms of dangerous and non-productive forms of leisure. Throughout this chapter, official Jesuit visions and discourses were discussed in tandem with writing produced by students. Critically reading student writings allowed this chapter to investigate the daily life, concerns, and interests of BC students. Their extracurricular reading, writing, and activities both expressed and cemented their elite status, mimicked the discourses that encroached on their lives, and at the same time demonstrated the extent to which BC students were familiar with and exposed to products of American cultural products and icons.

Chapter 2: Friendship, Sisterhood, and Extracurricular Activities at the American School for Girls in Baghdad

Our hearts to thee we raise
With live and grateful praise,
Thy daughters sing to thee,
Alma Mater, fair!
Rich blessings e're be thine,
E're shall thy glory shine,
Our hearts around thee twine,
Alma Mater, fair!

Within thy sacred walls
The voice of friendship calls,
Days spent in work and play,
Our lives unfold!
Lift high the blue and white,
Emblem of truth and right,
American Girls' School with our might,
We, thee, uphold!

Go, strive for human good
Strength and power of Womanhood,
Onward and upward lead,
Alma Mater, stand!
In mind and heart and deed,
Bound to thee we'll proceed
For us the world hath need,
Alma Mater, stand![1]

In the late 1940s, the Presbyterian American School for Girls in Baghdad (ASG) took steps to cement its status as a modern American elite school for girls. The result was a number of symbolic as well as material gestures and practices such as a school motto, a school seal, school colors (blue and white), and an alma mater song. In addition to creating feelings of loyalty and belonging, the alma mater song, "Our Hearts to Thee We Raise," which was often sung and which is quoted above, is a window onto ASG's mission and many of its goals and values. At the same

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[1] *The Echo* (*al-Sada*), 1950, Presbyterian Historical Society Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereafter PHS), 509, Box 5, File 3

time, however, behind the lofty ideals and promises of the text, what becomes clear is the important role that ASG played in the lives of its students – while they were students there as well as in the future. The three first lines of the second stanza are of particular interest to this chapter. Behind the "sacred walls," the song tells us, "the voice of friendship calls," and days are "spent in work and play." The previous chapter argued that modern education increasingly became a fulltime endeavor including long hours spent on homework and extracurricular activities – "work and play" – and that extracurricular activities became one of the most important ways in which the Hashemite state and other educational institutions sought to control and shape the time and leisure of students.

Building on these insights, this chapter demonstrates that the time and leisure of young Iraqi women and girls, many of whom became students during this period, became a site of intense intervention equal to that of male students. When ASG opened in 1925, the school was at the forefront of mobilizing extracurricular activities as a way of controlling and diminishing the leisure time of students in ways that at time challenged sex-differentiated notions of what was considered appropriate for female students. As such through the lens of ASG this chapter studies the gendered politics of education, extracurricular activities, and leisure in Hashemite Baghdad. While there were differences between the Presbyterians and the Jesuits, as this chapter will show, and while they do not seem to have worked together or consulted each other, within the realm of neocolonial missionary education, they shared the American focus on extracurricular activities and character-building. As we will see in the next chapter, many young women often only had access to public forms of leisure, such as cinemas, when they were accompanied by family members. As such, the family was not replaced altogether.

The loyalty and solidarity expressed and created by the alma mater song above was about more than ASG. When modern education began to demand more time, it partially replaced the family. This chapter argues that ASG can be seen as a micro-cosmos of new forms of non-kin based Iraqi loyalty and solidarity. This resulted in new, intimate, and non-sectarian female friendships. In addition, as mentioned in the alma mater song, ASG also created and gave rise to new notions of womanhood and gender more broadly. Like Chapter 1, this chapter re-examines the important cultural and educational role of the US in Iraq in the first half of the twentieth century and argues that ASG, like BC, used extracurricular activities to produce modern Iraqi women in the image of American middle class and Christian respectability. While female subjects at ASG and later on also in Iraq's public schools were targeted first and foremost as women and future wives and mothers, this chapter shows that female students engaged in many of the same extracurricular activities as their male peers: They wrote short stories and poems in English and Arabic, put on plays, organized parties, played sports, and met in debating and Arabic societies and clubs. This chapter argues that such activities created new forms of female sociability and physical practices, in the case of sports and physical education, that afforded ASG students with a level of freedom enjoyed by few female students in Baghdad at the time. Similarly, ASG students were just as ambitious and eager to use their skills, connections, and educations to better their career options. ASG was established almost ten years before BC and because no studies on the Presbyterian mission in Iraq exist, the important role they played in Iraqi female education and their use of extracurricular activities in particular has been overlooked.

As described in detail in the previous chapter, while missionaries in the Middle East adapted their evangelical hopes and desires to realities on the ground, the shift from evangelical to educational efforts was often blurred. What's more, across the region, most missionaries continued

to dream, albeit in less aggressive ways, of spreading the Christian message and way of life.[2] In most cases this mean turning from direct evangelization to educational work. The case of ASG illustrates this point well. Another trend of which ASG is indicative is the ways in which missionary education in the region increased, sometimes dramatically,[3] educational opportunities for females and rewrote gender roles while at the same time it created a venue of participation in the missionary enterprise for American and European women. In fact, as noted by several scholars, woman missionaries and educators were of paramount importance to the missionary enterprise.[4] At ASG, the mostly unmarried American, Iraqi, Syrian, and Lebanese women who taught there worked hard to bring missionary and modern American education to an elite group of Iraqi girls, But were also themselves transformed by their profession. The focus of this chapter, however, centers on the students.

Scholars working on missionary history and female education in the Middle East have pointed out that the missionary focus on educating girls was an attempt to "evangelize through the back door."[5] By targeting girls through education, missionaries across the region hoped to influence the mothers of the future.[6] This attempt to create maternal modernizers, as already mentioned, brought missionary both American-style education to a growing number of young women and in turn facilitated new forms of female identity. At ASG, the focus on extracurricular activities, which often went far beyond creating maternal modernizers played a big role in this.

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[2] Baron, *The Orphan Scandal*, 194. For more on this dynamic at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut see Marwa Elshakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[3] Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 1.

[4] Baron, *The Orphan Scandal*, 42-60; Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 10.

[5] Ellen Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, c. 1860–1950," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13:4 (2010): 412.

[6] Ibid., 412.

In shedding light on these intertwined processes, few studies are as detailed as Fleischmann's work on Protestant missionaries in Lebanon. Through her creative engagement with American missionary archives, Fleischmann was among the first to engage critically with the experience of the women, locals as well as missionaries, who studied and taught in the mission's schools. In her work on the Presbyterian Syrian mission, which shared many similarities, including teachers who often circulated between the Presbyterian schools, with the Presbyterian mission in Iraq, Fleischmann demonstrated that protestant culture and conservative cultural norms such as obedience and self-control permeated the values taught at the mission's schools.[7] Self-control was also a common feature of the Jesuit mission, as Chapter 1 showed. Similarly, in tandem with, or rather as part of their educational efforts, the missionaries advocated a notion of womanhood based on an American and Christian ideal. Marriage and motherhood were at the center of this ideal.[8] To some extent, missionaries shared this goal with both Muslim and secular Arab reformers.[9]

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[7] Ellen Fleischmann, "Lost in Translation: Home Economics and the Sidon Girls' School of Lebanon, 1924-1932," *Social Sciences and Missions* 23 (2010): 41.

[8] Ellen Fleischmann, "'Our Moslem Sisters': Women of Greater Syria in the Eyes of American Protestant Missionary Women," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 9:3 (1998): 308-314.

[9] See for example Beth Baron, *Egypt as Woman: Nationalism Gender and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) and Marilyn Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied: Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). See also Nancy Stockdale, "Palestinian Girls and the British Missionary Enterprise, 1847-1948" in *Girlhood: A Global History*, ed. by Jennifer Helgren and Colleen A. Vasconcellos (Rutgers University Press, 2010), 217-233, Nancy Stockdale, "Biblical Motherhood: English Women and Empire in Palestine, 1860-1948," *Women's History Review*, 15:4 (2006): 561-569, and Nancy Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters Among English and Palestinian Women, 1800-1948* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007). For more on regional attempts to reshape woman and motherhood see for example Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: the Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing and Liberating Egypt, 1805-1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), Mona Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863-1922* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Creating an Educated Housewife in Iran" and Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 91-125, 126-170; and Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

More importantly, Fleischmann has drawn attention to the agency of the female students who found themselves in missionary educational institutions arguing that these young women often subverted the missionary message "by utilizing their educations to enter the professions instead of becoming perfect housewives."[10] This subversion, which at times concerned the missionaries who described it as "utilitarian" and "economically based," was a key feature of female missionary education in Lebanon.[11] According to Fleischmann, the female missionaries who taught in Lebanon did not always recognize their own role in "creating hopes, desires, expectations and role models," which ultimately led many students to favor professional careers over or in addition to homemaking.[12] One of the reasons for this is that, despite of the rigid and normative ideals of woman and motherhood taught in missionary institutions, most of the female teachers who taught there were themselves mostly unmarried, paid professionals who did not "live in traditional homes in the bosom of a nuclear family, but rather, in institutional settings or in the cottages with other single women."[13] Similarly, many were engaged in their own struggles as women who enjoyed fewer rights than their male missionary colleagues.[14]

The focus on remaking Iraqi girls and women did not take place exclusively within the setting of missionary educational institutions. Rather, during the mandate and Hashemite periods, female education increased. Similarly, the education of girls and the place and meaning of womanhood was fiercely debated in the growing Iraqi public sphere. The first primary school for Jewish girls - a branch of the Alliance named Laura Kedourie opened already in 1893 and others

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[10] Fleischmann, "Lost in Translation," 36.
[11] Ibid., 55.
[12] Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon," 420.
[13] Fleischmann, "Lost in Translation," 75. See also Ellen Fleischmann, "I Only Wish I Had a Home on This Globe: Transnational Biography and Dr. Mary Eddy," *Journal of Women's History*, 21:3 (2009): 108-30.
[14] Ellen Fleischmann, "'Our Moslem Sisters': Women of Greater Syria in the Eyes of American Protestant Missionary Women," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 9:3 (1998): 313.

soon followed.[15] The first Ottoman school for girls opened in Baghdad in 1899. By 1912, there were 12 Ottoman schools for girls in Iraq offering primary and intermediate instruction in Turkish. Private tutors, some of whom were catholic nuns or teachers in the protestant missionary schools, sometimes taught the daughters of wealthy families in their homes. The Ottoman schools were closed and replaced by a new system during the mandate. The first of these new schools for girls opened in 1920 and had 27 students by 1922.[16]

During the mandate years, the general disinclination of the mandate authority to expand education naturally limited the education of Iraqi girls.[17] However, between 1921-1931 the number of primary schools for girls rose from 27 in 1921 to 162 in 1931. 22,261 girls were enrolled in these schools in 1945. By 1945, Iraq also had 49 coeducational schools.[18] By 1957, Iraq had 344 primary schools for girls.[19] These schools were almost exclusively located in Iraq's larger urban centers. The first public secondary schools for girls were not opened until 1929.[20] The first secondary school for girls had 11 students and 2 teachers. In 1958, there were 56 public secondary schools for girls with almost 12,000 students.[21] The number of foreign and private schools also grew. By 1956, there were 8 foreign and private primary schools for girls, and 6 secondary foreign and private schools for girls with 65 teachers and 1,111 students.[22] Some Iraqi women received

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[15] Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 85-99; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 254-263.
[16] Hind Tahsin Kadry, *Women's Education in Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Cultural Attache, Embassy of Iraq, 1958), 4-5.
[17] Orit Bashkin, "Representation of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4:1 (2008): 56.
Matthews and Akrawi 1949, 99–197; Sluglett 1976, 273–4; Efrati 2001
[18] Ibid., 140-142.
[19] Kadry, *Women's Education in Iraq,* 9.
[20] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, 143.
[21] Kadry, *Women's Education in Iraq*, 8.
[22] Ibid., 8.

education and classes through more informal venues.[23] The School of Home Arts in Baghdad opened in 1932 and offered females students a five year program focusing on home economics, childcare, and hygiene. Compared to male primary and secondary education, as described in the previous chapter, female education increased at a slower pace. Still, the increase in educational opportunities for girls were significant.

As evidenced by the numbers above, the most dramatic increase in education for Iraqi girls and women occurred after WWII. However, already before the war, the shortage of teachers forced Iraq to bring in teachers from surrounding countries. To combat the shortage of teachers, Iraq began opening teacher training colleges. Queen 'Aliyah College, was established in 1945 as an all-female institution with the goal of training secondary school teachers attracted a growing number of female students. Between 1920-1958 the number of female teachers went from 15 to 3542 and by1958, Iraq had 14 teacher training colleges for women with 1547 students enrolled.[24] Women also joined the new colleges in Baghdad, especially the College of Arts and Sciences and the.[25]

The previous chapter described how education in Hashemite Iraq became a key instrument

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[23] While they were started much earlier, in 1955 Iraqi had 29 centers established to fight female illiteracy. Between them, the centers employed 113 teachers and had almost 3000 women students. Kadry, *Women's Education in Iraq*, 8.

[24] Ibid., 10-14.

[25] In the 1930s, women slowly began attending the Law and Medical Colleges. In 1934, a school of nursing and midwifery was opened. In the mid and late 1940s, the first female students entered the School of Pharmacy and Chemistry, the College of Engineering, the School of Dentistry, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Fine Arts Institute. To mention just one example, the number of female students at the College of Arts and Sciences went from 28 in 1949 to 263 in 1958I. Kadry, *Women's Education in Iraq*, 14-18. Like their male counterparts, Iraqi women too went abroad in pursuit of education and training. A report published by the Iraqi embassy in Washington in the late 1950s reveals that a significant number of the Iraqis studying in the US were women. Already in the 1920s, the Iraqi government began sending Iraqi women abroad to obtain degrees. At the time when the report was written, more than 200 Iraqi women were studying abroad, some on full or partial government scholarships, others funded by their families. At least 50 Iraqi women were studying in the US. The majority were graduate students working in fields as varied as chemistry, nutrition, medicine, English, social work, arts, music, and education. Kadry, *Women's Education in* Iraq, 14-17. To mention just one example, the Iraqi poet, Nazik al-Mala'ika, who in the 1940s played a leading role in the free verse movement, received an MA in comparative literature from the University of Wisconsin.

for the construction of nationalist male bodies and minds. As shown by the numbers above, however, and as argued by Efrati, women went through many of the same institutions and were targeted in ways that were both similar and different. Following Efrati, it is therefore important to pay attention to the women who passed through Iraq's new educational institutions.[26] With regard to Iraq's missionary schools, this work has yet to be done. As described earlier, Iraq's Jewish schools has been explored by Bashkin and Goldstein-Sabbah.[27] In the context of Iraq's public schools, Pursley has described how the female adolescent subject became a concern for educators and reformers, particularly in postwar Iraq.[28] Worried about the perceived marriage crisis and distaste for conjugal life, the Ministry of Education initiated a campaign in 1952-1953 to restructure the schooling of adolescent girls around their sexual difference. The aim was to prepare them for the demands and orient them towards the pleasures of conjugal life.[29] Fueled by the global transformation of the discipline of psychology and Cold War politics, the growing concern about adolescence, as a potentially revolutionary and extended period of youth, replaced earlier notions of adolescence and puberty as an event.[30] For Iraqi female students, this resulted in an increasingly sex differentiated curriculum with a growing emphasis on home economics, which, it was believed, would keep Iraqi girls and young women within the trajectories of motherhood, marriage and domesticity, and away from revolutionary politics.[31]

Already before the curricular changes brought about in 1952-1953, Matthews and Akrawi described how female high school students were given courses in child psychology and

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[26] Noga Efrati, "The 'Effendiyya': Where Have All the Women Gone?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43: 2, (2011): 375-377.

[27] Bashkin, "To Educate an Iraqi Jew," 81-108, Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 2012, Goldstein-Sabbah, "Jewish Education in Baghdad", 98-104.

[28] Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 109.

[29] Ibid., 109.

[30] Ibid., 107-108.

[31] Ibid., 105.

development, childcare, first-aid, and hygiene.[32] That such trends were present at ASG, as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, shows that American missionaries were actively pursuing sex-differentiated education well before it became as pronounced as it did in Iraqi public schools in the early 1950s. These trends, however, cannot unproblematically be applied to ASG. In fact, like BC, ASG was at the forefront of mobilizing extracurricular activities as a way of controlling and diminishing the leisure time of students. ASG did so right from the beginning and at times in ways that challenged sex-differentiated notions of what was considered appropriate for female students. Therefore, the picture that emerges from the study of missionary institutions in Iraq, such as the Presbyterian ASG, is a much more complex one in which certain female students, who had the financial means, were afforded opportunities not enjoyed by their peers. The next section offers a brief historical overview of the Presbyterian enterprise in Iraq.

Seeing Like a Presbyterian: A Brief History of the United Mission in Mesopotamia and the American school for Girls

"We all believe that the Great War was only an incident in God's larger plan which is the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of His Son…"What men have called by-products of the war may eventually prove to have been God's main objectives."[33] One by-product, about which the Presbyterian missionaries felt particularly enthusiastic, was the establishment of a British mandate in the former Ottoman provinces of Iraq. For the Presbyterians, the British mandate spelled out a promising new beginning for missionary activity. A number of early treaties between Great Britain and Iraq, and later also between Iraq and the United states, made the discrimination against missionary activity unlawful as long as the missionary enterprise was "not prejudicial to

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[32] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, 168.
[33] Resolution Regarding Unoccupied Mesopotamia, 1920, United Mission in Iraq, RG 509-1-1.

public order and good government."[34] Another treaty secured American property rights in Iraq and allowed American nationals to "freely establish and maintain educational, philanthropic and religious institutions in Iraq," and to "receive voluntary applicants and to teach in the English Language."[35] Realizing that this opportune moment might not last forever, the Presbyterians were eager to begin work in Iraq: "The present moment is so peculiarly favorable…that it constitutes an urgency which cannot be disregarded. In view of the uncertainty as to the political development of the future in this area, the Boards are being urged to get a strong foothold at once as this may not be possible if later political developments are unfavorable."[36] This materialized in 1923 when the Joint Committee of the United Mission of Mesopotamia was established in New York. Dr. Robert Speer served as its president and Dr. McDowell was elected chairman of the mission in the field. The following year, Dr. Edmund W. McDowell, Mrs. E. W. McDowell, Dr. James Cantine, Mrs. James Cantine, Re. J. Wallace Willoughby, Rev. R. C. Cumberland, Rev. Albert G. Edwards, Mrs. A. G. Edwards, Dr. Calvin K. Staudt, and Mrs. C. Staudt were sent to Iraq.[37]

Several of the mission's early reports and promotional pamphlets imagined Iraq as a lost Christian paradise. One pamphlet from 1920 placed Iraq squarely within a biblical imaginary and past. Written by E. W. McDowell, who became one of UMM's first missionaries on the ground in Iraq, the pamphlet began with the following words: "Let us put on our Seven League Boots and do a hike of some six thousand years through Mesopotamia; the country that is bounded on the north by Noah's Ark, on the south by the Tower of Babel, and east by the closed gates of the Garden of Eden, and of the west by the enticing possibilities of England and America."[38] The

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[34] Treaty Between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of 'Iraq, Oct. 10, 1922, PHS 509-1-2.
[35] Treaty Between Great Britain, Iraq and the United States, Jan. 9, 1930, 1922 PHS 509-1-2, PHS.
[36] A New Mission in Mesopotamia, Oct. 13, 1922, PHS 509-1-1.
[37] Minutes of the first annual meeting of the United Mission in Mesopotamia, May 6, 1924, PHS 509-1-1.
[38] E. W. McDowell, *Mesopotamia*, 1920, PHS 509-1-1.

pamphlet, like most of the mission's early materials, narrated the historical emergence of Christianity in Iraq, through particular imaginary geography, as the beginning of the country's most prosperous and peaceful period. This was a time when, according to the pamphlet, "along the rivers churches and schools sprang into existence."[39] Iraq's past, which for the missionaries was decidedly Christian, and Iraq's future, during which it would become Christian again through missionary activity, were separated by centuries of backwardness and destruction. The entire history of Islam in Iraq was described as a period of submission and conversion, under the threat of violence, during which "the hordes of Islam swept up out of the desert and like an army of locusts alighted on the luxuriant gardens of Mesopotamia…Tamerlane and Genghis Khan followed to complete the work of devastation."[40] With the exception of the Abbasid period, which is referred to as a brief golden age, the pamphlet had little positive to say about Islam. The Ottoman period was not mentioned at all.[41]

The Presbyterians of the UMM saw it as their goal to once again make schools and churches spring up. Full of missionary zeal and optimism, the pamphlet ended with the following words: "There is pleasure in growing sweet peas; there is greater thrill in growing an apple tree. But what shall be said of partnership with God in growing nations?"[42] Even though Iraqi realities, which rarely welcomed the Gospel with the passion hoped for by the missionaries, often forced the mission to rethink its goals, strategies, and tactics, the conviction that Christianity was central to the development of the young Iraqi nation remained at the crux of the mission's ideology. One report from 1951, well after oil had become a key factor in Iraqi development, described the increasing number of irrigation channels and the seemingly endless miles of oil pipelines "pouring

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[39] Ibid., E. W. McDowell, *Mesopotamia*, 1920.
[40] Ibid., E. W. McDowell, *Mesopotamia*, 1920.
[41] Ibid., E. W. McDowell, *Mesopotamia*, 1920.
[42] Ibid., E. W. McDowell, Mesopotamia, 1920.

their burden of 'black gold' across deserts and mountains." The report concluded, however, that "none of these channels provide what is most needed for the people of Iraq. There must be likewise channels – living channels – for the water of Life, the life-giving Gospel of Christ, to flow into the hearts of needy people, to bring to thirsty souls the very Spirit of God."[43]

The aim of the mission remained "to make the Lord Jesus Christ known to the people of Mesopotamia as their Divine Saviour, and especially and primarily to evangelize the Mohammedan people of that area and to persuade them to become Christian disciples."[44] Reports from the 1920s, however, show that there were internal disagreements within the UMM about how to best achieve this goal. Many discussions were centered around how much effort should be put into education in Iraq. While there was agreement "that education can be made to serve evangelization," some elements within the mission questioned how "evangelistically profitable" it was to focus on education.[45] In spite of this, education was quickly administratively detached from the evangelization efforts and was often carried out by different missionaries. In addition, already during the early years of the mission, education, rather than conversion, became the main way of bringing "to thirsty souls the very Spirit of God." This was not an unusual development and has been described by Ellen Fleischmann in her work on missionary schools in the Lebanese context.[46]

The early plans of the mission, which soon proved overly ambitious, targeted both boys' and girls' education and aimed at setting up schools in Baghdad, Hilla, Mosul, Basra, Kirkuk, and Dohuk, in addition to mission stations, hospitals, and clinics. Several of these never materialized

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[43] Mission Narrative, United Mission in Iraq, 1951, PHS 89-1-10.

[44] The United Mission in Mesopotamia: What the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches Are Doing Together, 1935, PHS 509-1-8. Early reports, however, show that at least initially, the mission was also hoping to place "the Gospel message before the many thousand Jews of Iraq (Minutes of the first annual meeting of the United Mission in Mesopotamia, May 6, 1924, PHS 509-1-1).

[45] American Mission, Mosul Iraq, 1927, PHS 89-1-4.

[46] Ellen Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, C. 1860-1950," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2010).: 412

and some were closed down after only a few years, most often due to insufficient funding and lack of personnel. In addition to the American School for Girls in Bagdad, the mission ran a school and kindergarten for girls in Mosul, which was taken over from the British Church Missionary Society in 1924 but closed down in 1929. The mission also operated the Mosul School of Home Arts between 1932-1941 as well as a Girls Hostel between 1925-1941. Between 1912 and 1968, the Arabian Mission, which was also operated under the auspices of the Reformed Church of America, ran the boys' School of High Hope and School of Women's Hope in Basra. The American School for Boys in Baghdad, which opened in the fall of 1924, attracted boys from elite Iraqi circles, but was released from the mission in 1929, closed down in 1934, and incorporated under laws of the State of Maryland in the 1940s. The Kirkuk School for Boys was active between 1932-1933 and a small village school was briefly opened in Bashiqa.[47] There were repeated calls for girls' schools from communities in Dohuk, Zakho, and Sulaimania,[48] but the wish for girl's education in these areas never materialized.

With the Mosul School of Home Arts, also known as Girl's Hearthstone or the Boarding Home and Domestic Science School, being almost entirely dedicated to prepare "girls for marriage and care of the home and children,"[49] the American School for Girls quickly became the mission's only strictly academic endeavor. As one report from 1935 expressed it: "Strange as it may seem in a Moslem country where boys are greatly to be desired, and girls are merely a necessary evil, our educational work at present, through varied circumstances, is entirely for girls."[50] The American School for Girls in Baghdad officially opened its doors in the fall of 1925 with May D. P. Thoms,

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[47] A Brief Historical Survey by Rev. James W. Willoughby, Sept. 20, 1962, PHS 509-2-1
[48] Narrative Report of Mission Work, 1926-1927, May 31, 1927, PHS 509-1-7.
[49] Girl's Hearthstone, 1934, PHS 509-1-8
[50] The Sowing Goes On: Narrative of the Activites of the United Mission in Mesopotamia, 1935, PHS 89-1-20.

who had come from the Arabian Mission in Basra, acting as the school's first principal – a position she held for 18 years. The mission had applied to open a girls' school the previous year, but a permission was not granted. Therefore, during the year 1924, the school was operated under the permit of an already existing protestant school and classes were taught in the home of Ida Staudt, with the help of Mu'allima Zahura, a graduate of the American School of Mardin in Turkey. In its first year the school shared a house with the American School for Boys. According to a report, this kept girls from more conservative families from enrolling.[51] Similarly, according to reports, the compulsory Bible classes, which remained a feature of instruction at the school kept some Muslim and Jewish students from enrolling.[52]

Out of the 59 students enrolled in 1925 5% were Armenian, 17% Protestants, 20% Chaldeans, 25% Jews, and 33% Muslim. By 1932, enrollment had increased to 132. In 1934, out of its 143 students, 60 were Muslim, 34 Jews, and 49 Christian. In 1947 the school enrolled 228 students and had a graduating class of 25. The school remained religiously diverse until the 1950s when many of the Jewish students left Iraq. In 1955 the total enrollment was 231 and consisted of 162 Christians, 61 Muslims and 5 Jews. In 1958, the year of the revolution, the number of students was reduced to 150 when all foreign schools were banned from teaching primary school students.[53] Given the relatively small size of the cohorts, this chapter locates the impact of schools like ASG in the way that already in the mid-1920s mobilized extracurricular activities as a way of controlling and diminishing the leisure time of female students in ways that sometimes notions of what was considered appropriate for female students, rather than in the number of students they educated.

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[51] Girls Going to School in Baghdad, Ida Staudt, 1925, PHS 509-1-3.
[52] Report of the American Mission School for Girls, Baghdad, 1925-1926, May D. P. Thoms, 1926, PHS 509-1-7.
[53] A Brief Historical Survey by Rev. James W. Willoughby, Sept. 20, 1962, PHS 509-2-1

In addition to the small staff of missionary women, most of the teachers were Syrian and Lebanese women who had themselves graduated from missionary schools in the Levant. However, throughout its existence, the school struggled due to its modest budget, and the difficulty of finding and attracting qualified teachers from Syria, Lebanon, and later from Iraq. Reports show that this was partially a result of the competition caused by the increasing number of Iraqi government schools, which offered higher salaries than the missionaries.[54] Some of the women who came to Baghdad to teach at ASG were undoubtedly committed to missionary work. In fact, since the school could not offer high salaries, it tried to attract teachers on the basis of commitment to missionary work. In 1937, more classes were added making the school equivalent to a junior high school. Reports from the school show that the only hindrance to making the school a full high school with eleven classes was the lack of space in the school building as well as the limited budget.[55] ASG became a high school in the 1940s. ASG was housed in rented buildings in the center of Baghdad until 1957 when a new campus, funded in large part by American church women, opened, after much delay, in the then-developing suburb of Mansur.[56]

In August of 1958, two months after the revolution that overthrew the Hashemite monarchy, several missionaries were expelled while others were denied re-entry to Iraq. As already mentioned, the primary classes of the schooled were closed down. The secondary department, however, continued. By April of 1959 all missionary couples had been expelled leaving the mission with only three young women who were left in charge of the school.[57] After the revolution, the United Mission in Mesopotamia changed its name to The Iraq Fellowship. The American

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[54] The United Mission in Mesopotamia, Mission Narrative for 1936, PHS 89-1-6, Lynda Carver to "Dear Frances," Feb. 5, 1955, Lynda Carver Vertical File, 360-29-15, Lynda Carver to "Dear Frances," Jan. 5, 1956, Lynda Carver Vertical File, 360-29-15.
[55] Report of Girls' Educational Work Baghdad 1937-1938, 1938, PHS 89-1-10.
[56] Narrative Report of the United Mission in Mesopotamia, 1955. PHS 89-1-28.
[57] Annual Narrative Report, 1959, PHS 89-1-30.

School for Girls became the Baghdad High School in Mansour. It was hoped that these changes would distance the mission and its school from "over-tones of imperialism which that word [American] seems to have picked up in some parts of the world." [58] In 1968, the Iraqi Government nationalized all private schools in Iraq, expelled foreign teachers, and seized the properties of foreign schools. Baghdad High School for Girls in Mansur continued to operate under the auspices of the Iraqi Ministry of Education.

The Echo: The ASG Yearbooks

As pointed out in the previous chapter, yearbooks are precious and cherished material objects. As prized objects of pride, yearbooks at ASG were circulated among friends and shown to family members and visitors. To students at ASG, the annual publication of the yearbook was one of the most eagerly awaited events of the year and the result of months of writing and editing. Unlike the BC yearbooks, *The Echo* included a page for autographs. Around the time of graduation each year, the graduating class would exchange and sign each other's yearbooks thus leaving a personal and professional mark. Blance Haddad, who graduated in 1946 described in a short essay how she kept school photographs and other ASG memorabilia and paraphernalia "wrapped in velvet and cherished lovingly in my top drawer."[59] Students kept and used yearbooks in similar ways. Alongside the official diplomas, but in a more affective and personal way, yearbooks became material tokens of pride as well as a testament to individual and group achievements.

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[58] A Brief Historical Survey by Rev. James W. Willoughby, Sept. 20, 1962, PHS 509-2-1
[59] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

Figure 12: *The Echo* (*al-Sada*) Cover, 1949. PHS.

As described in detail in the Chapter 1, missionary archives must be read carefully and contextually. *The Echo* is no exception. However, when read carefully, *The Echo*, like *Al Iraqi*, offers intimate glimpses of the lives, thoughts, and activities of students. When writing about female students in particular, and as noted by Fleischmann, the often one-sided nature of written missionary sources – and most other sources – makes it challenging to locate the voices of students.[60] Fleischmann has demonstrated how Syrian women in missionary schools "both internalized and subverted some of the kinds of socio-cultural, religious and even political influences they received through mission educations."[61] Due to the lack of access to sources, such

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[60] Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon," 411.
[61] Ibid., 422.

as memoirs, that more directly give voice to the student experience, *The Echo*, which has the added benefit of being contemporaneous, is a privileged alternative.

In 1948, when May D. P. Thoms retired after more than twenty years of active service in Basra and Baghdad, Lynda Carver[62] took over as principal of ASG. As principal, Lynda Carver did much to further the already existing extracurricular activities at the school. She encouraged sports, school parties, picnics, and English conversation clubs. She also helped found and organize the ASG alumnae society. Last but not least, together with fellow missionary and ASG teacher Helen S. MacDonald, she was the driving force behind the launching of the ASG yearbook.[63] *The Echo* (*al-Sada*), as the yearbook was called, was one of the first of its kind to be published by any girls school in Iraq. It was modelled, in content as well as in form, on contemporary American high school yearbooks.[64] The first issue of *The Echo* was published in 1949. Like *Al Iraqi*, *The Echo* was a bilingual publication. In addition to essays and poems by students, *The Echo* contains individual pictures of the graduating class, class and graduation photos, teachers' pictures, as well as short pieces about clubs, societies, committees, and events at the school. *The Echo* was put together every year by a committee of six seniors consisting of an editor-in-chief, a secretary, and four members in charge of photography, the literary section of the yearbook, advertisement, and business.

The publication of the first yearbook in 1949 occurred at a time when ASG was actively engaged in constructing and strengthening its identity and school spirit – literally as well as symbolically. In addition to *The Echo* and the alumnae society, in the late 1940s ASG got its own

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[62] For more on the personal history of Lynda Carver and her motivations for joining the mission in Baghdad, see for example Lois A. Boyd and R. Douglas Backenridge, *Presbyterian Women in America: Two Centuries of a Quest for Status* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996).
[63] Lynda Carver Vertical File, PHS 360-26-15.
[64] Stars in the East: The Story of the American School for Girls in Baghdad, promotional pamphlet, 1950, PHS 509-2-12.

school motto ("you can if you think you can") and alma mater song ("Our Hearts to Thee We Raise"). It also added a school seal depicting a palm tree emerging from between Iraq's two iconic rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and a school hymn ("Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"). The school motto and seal were always printed on the upper left corner of the yearbooks. Finally, it was also during this period that the school colors of navy blue and white were decided on.[65] Unfortunately, unlike the issues of *Al Iraqi*, almost all of which are extant, only two issues of *The Echo* made their way to the Presbyterian missionary archives in Philadelphia: the inaugural issue of 1949 and that of 1950. The 1950 issue of *The Echo* was dedicated to May D. P. Thoms, the first principal of ASG, on the occasion of the school's twenty-fifth anniversary. In recognition of the anniversary, the front page of the 1950 yearbook was silver and blue and slightly bigger than the one from the previous year.

The senior classes of 1949 and 1950 both had 22 graduates each. The pictures of the graduating seniors and the biographical snippets of text that accompany them describe the hobbies, academic strengths, future ambitions, and sometimes the physical appearance of the seniors. While the athletic talents and achievements of the BC seniors are almost always mentioned, as we saw in Chapter 1, the section of the ASG yearbooks dedicated to the graduating class never mentions this aspect of school life even though athletics was an increasingly important part of life at ASG. To mention just two example, Samira Kassir was remembered "for her fair complexion, her neat appearance, and her friendliness" and Semha Kazzaz for her "rosy complexion."[66] In other yearbook entries, adjectives such as sincerity, serene, gentleness, dependable, quiet gracious manner were chosen. Some of the ASG graduates were described primarily in terms of their reproductive and domestic futures. Basima Kanimi was described by her classmates as a future

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[65] Ibid., Stars in the East, 1950, PHS 509-2-12.
[66] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

"devoted wife and mother" and Buthaina El Khedery, who also graduated in 1950, as someone who would be "a good homemaker in the future."

At the same time, however, the yearbook also mentions the two girls' fondness of Arabic poetry. In fact, Basima Kanimi was described as "the poetess" of the class."[67] While some ASG graduates married and became mothers soon after their graduation, descriptions like the ones above are a minority. The majority of the graduates are described in *The Echo* as having professional dreams and goals of career-making as well as ambitions that often were not restricted to the geographical boundaries of Iraq. Among the graduates of 1949, Suad Frangoul was planning "to study in Beirut and America." Claire Shlomo also "dreamed of going to America." Nahida al-Khoury's ambition was to study law in Egypt, Marguerite Obadiah wanted to travel and study psychology, and Lala Tatheossian, at the time of graduation, had already been accepted to study in England.[68] A similar pattern can be found among the 1950 graduates. Eglatine Michael went to England to study nursing, Raya Simon went to Australia, also to study nursing, Priscilla John wanted to study business in Beirut, Gitta Noury had plans to study economics in America, and Suad Jwaideh's biggest dream was to study ballet in Austria.[69] The graduates planning to stay in Iraq were no less ambitious. Inaam al-Orphali wanted to become a lawyer "and to help the country she loves so very much."[70] The dream of becoming a lawyer was shared by Enaam Nouri and Doris Nawy as well as by Evangeline Edwin who, her peers added, "if she becomes a lawyer as she hopes, she will make the court as noisy as our class."[71] Other graduates wanted to study medicine, psychology, agriculture, and business in Iraq. Na'amat Mohammad Tayib's ambition

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[67] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[68] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[69] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[70] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[71] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

was to study politics and her yearbook entry includes a jesting question: "aiming at the ministry, Na'amat?"[72]

While Na'amat did not become a minister, many graduates did accomplish their professional dreams. The 1950 anniversary edition of *The Echo* included a number of short essays by former graduates of the school. Dr. Khalida Qusayr, who had graduated from ASG in 1943, contributed an essay to the anniversary edition. Her essay, "A Prophecy Comes True" (*Nubuʾa Tatahaqqaq*) tells the story of her educational journey from ASG to medical school.[73] As described earlier in this chapter, women were entering Iraq's colleges and professional schools during these years. As such, the future plans of the graduates, while influenced by the optimism of youth, were not unrealistic.

Healthy Girls with Healthy Hobbies: Extracurricular Activities at ASG

A wide range of leisurely and extracurricular activities punctuated and structured life at ASG. Majida Makki al-Orphali's nostalgic essay, "Ayyamuna" ("Our Days"), about her time at ASG rhetorically asks: "Who among us can ever forget the plays that we did, whether literary or religious? Who will ever forget the travels, the picnics, and the athletic games that we did?"[74] School life at ASG included an impressive range of activities including, but not limited to, picnics and trips to different parts of Iraq, fieldtrips to hospitals and other institutions in Baghdad, school parties and dinners, extracurricular lectures, school clubs, committees, and athletics. Some of these activities, such as the Girls Club, which was held every Thursday, was devoted to less structured

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[72] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[73] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[74] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

and disciplinary pastimes such as general conversation, listening to records, and the reading and discussion of English literature.[75]

The large quantity of time that students spent in the relatively closed-off world of ASG created a novel experience, which can perhaps best be described as high school life. According to Fleischmann, for female students attending the American Junior College in Beirut, "one of the attractions of attending college - possibly inadvertent and unconscious - seems to have been to experience 'college life' and the freedom it represented."[76] At ASG too, the freedom, new and non-kin based social relations, and the myriad activities that the school offered were attractive and exciting to students and presumably, although the archive is mostly silent about this, also to parents who, after all, were making the financial decisions. Put differently, the desire for education and the vast world of extracurricular activities offered by ASG was larger than the distaste for the Christian message. While ASG did not market itself to parents by highlighting the kind of financial benefits that families could accrue by education daughters, it is possible that this is also what let parents to have their daughters trained in this way. It is important to mention, however, that the ASG boarding school experience, at least to some, must have included bad treatment from teachers and pears, loneliness, and perhaps even abuse. The nature of the archive, however, makes it difficult to investigate these aspects of the ASG experience.

Starting in the 1940s, sports and physical education became increasingly important and popular at ASG. Although it never acquired the same status and importance as it did at BC, which was partially a result of the lack of sports facilities at the school, physical education did come be seen as an integral part of modern female education. A section entitled "Athletics" in the 1950

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[75] Staudt, *Living in Romantic Baghdad*, 23.
[76] Ellen Fleischmann, "'Under an American Roof': The Beginnings of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut," *Arab Studies Journal*, 17:1, (2009): 74-75.

yearbook explains that, "In some periods, people believed that mental training should supersede physical training to the detriment of the latter. But today people have come to realize that both should be recognized on an equal footing, because we believe '*mens sana in corpore sano*.'"[77] With the motto of healthy minds and healthy bodies, which they also shared with BC, the school framed physical education for girls as an important part of what it meant to receive a modern education. To this end, ASG organized an annual sports day and introduced special uniforms for physical education classes. During athletic activities, ASG students wore short-sleeved white shirts and had the choice between jeans or a long skirt. ASG students played volleyball, basketball, badminton, and table tennis. Folk dancing was another popular activity. An athletics committee consisting of seven students organized the interclass matches. The highlight of the athletic season was the annual volley ball match between students and teachers, which was often won by the students.[78] During early fall and late spring, when the weather was considered too hot for outdoor athletics and play, these activities were replaced by indoor activities including games, art classes, classes in art history, first aid courses, as well as classes focusing on music and film.[79] A film committee was established the same year and films from the British Institute were shown monthly to the lower school and from the United States Information Service to the upper school.

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[77] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[78] If ASG competed against other Baghdad girls' schools, this is not mentioned in the yearbooks.
[79] Report of the American School for Girls, 1953, PHS 89-1-30.

Figure 13: ASG students wearing their athletic uniforms, 1950s. PHS.

Figure 14: The annual ASG Sports Day, 1950s. PHS.

The Choral Club, which was started in 1945 and included more than thirty girls, was one

of the school's most popular extracurricular activities. The club was run by a teacher, a student

president as well as a student secretary. Its repertoire included both religious hymns and popular music. The club met every Monday and was started to add a musical component to the annual Christmas and Easter plays, but soon became involved in the graduation exercises and the other school plays. The Choral Club worked closely with the Drama Society and helped create musical programs for the plays. In the first year of its existence, the Choral Club created a musical program for the play "Huckleberry Finn," which was given by the graduating class of that year. The annual plays were popular among students and parents. The audience was made up of female friends and relatives of the students. This changed in 1949, when fathers and male relatives were invited to attend the school plays and graduation exercises for the first time. In a pamphlet from 1933 calling for financial support and intended for an American audience, the Christmas play was described in the following way: "Our balcony was filled and many of those who were present still speak of the angels and especially the part of Mary, the mother of Jesus, which was played by Salima, a winsome Jewish girl. It was a stirring moment as she advanced toward the audience and announced the consecration of the baby Jesus."[80] All roles were played by the students. The Christian nature of the annual Christmas and Easter plays does not seem to have caused opposition among students or parents. Only one report mentions a small controversy that occurred when the Muslim mother of two ASG students complained that her daughters had been cast to play the part of two of the wise men. She was, however, happy for them to act as angels.

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[80] ASG pamphlet, "Call for Support, 1933, PHS, PAM P00362.

Figure 15: The ASG Drama Society, early 1950s PHS.

ASG also had a ten-member Library Committee which was in charge of the Arabic and English libraries at the school. Beginning in the 1940s, the library stayed open two days a week during the summer holiday. The holdings of the library were substantially increased in 1947 when ASG received a large book grant from the Middle East Cultural Relations Committee.[81] Most students coming to the library, according to Library Committee's report from 1950, were interested in books in Arabic.[82] Compared to other missionary institutions in the region that privileged Anglo and francophone reading and writing, this is an important difference. At first, ASG's small library consisted of books personally donated by the missionaries. When visiting the US on furlough, missionaries visited secondhand bookstores and had books sent back to Baghdad. Students cherished library time and sometimes donated books after they had graduated. One student, now studying in the US, sent a letter to Ida Staudt explaining that "perhaps, the greatest contribution

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[81] Personal Report, Helen Niekamp, 1947, PHS 89-1-19.
[82] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

the school has made was to develop a love of reading. I have received limitless benefits from the reading of books in our old library, and that is why I'm sending you a small sum for the purchase of more books." Another student wrote a letter in which she reminisced and wished "to have once more those school days renewed when we used to sit in the library and read the fine magazines and good books."[83]

Many students at ASG took pride in the Arabic language and cultivated their love for Arabic poetry and literature in the school's popular Arabic Society. It is not clear when the society was established, but in 1949, it had 38 members and met at least twice a month. The society organized poetry and debate competitions and offered students a space in which to practice writing plays, sermons, speeches, and poems. The Arabic Society produced some of the plays put on by the Drama Society. Every year the society held elections for the positions of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. "Exalt your Arabic Language and Serve its Nation (*Umma)*," was the society's permanent slogan. Every year, however, the society's members voted on an additional slogan and sometimes also an additional name for the society. In 1949, the members cleverly decided to name the society "The Girls of the Language of Dad" (*Fatat lughat al-Dad*). "I Know Nothing but the Arabs" (*Ana la ʿArif ghair al-ʿArab*) was another of the society's slogans.[84] The slogans and essays mentioned above is one of the few instances in which ASG students spoke directly of service to the nation in linguistic, cultural, political, nationalist terms. *The Echo*, however, far from lacks essays and poems about the importance of hard work, determination, responsibility, and servitude to Iraq. Na'amat Mohammad Tayib, the president of the Arabic Society, wrote an essay in *The Echo* in 1950 in which she praised the Arabic language as "the language inherited from our ancestors" and "the sacred language of the Qur'an." Na'amat urged

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[83] Staudt, *Living in Romantic Baghdad*, 22-23.
[84] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.

her peers to devote "the greatest attention" to the Arabic language and proudly proclaimed that the Arabic society had helped "create literary tastes" in addition to strengthening and honing reading, speaking, and composition skills.[85]

That Iraqi students, including young women, from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, developed a love for Arabic language and literature through their education has been demonstrated by Bashkin.[86] What is less well documented is the ways in which young female students, during the 1930s and 1940s, when Iraqi women more generally were beginning to claim a space for themselves in the print media, were actively participating in this process. While part of this participation, such as student writing, remained within the pages of yearbooks and other school publications and were read only by a relatively small audience, some ASG students published short stories, poems, and articles in magazines such as *Fatat al-Iraq*. *Fatat al-Iraq* was first published in 1936 and was owned by Hassibah Raji and edited by Sukaina Ibrahim.[87] The publication of *Fatat al-Iraq* is representative of larger developments in Iraq during the 1930s and 1940s. While *Layla*, the first women's magazine to appear in Iraq, was first published already in 1923 with Paulina Hassun as its editor, it was only in the two following decades that a noticeable women's press emerged in Iraq. In addition to *Fatat al-Iraq*, the 1930s and 1940s also witnessed the appearance of magazines such as *al-Marʾa al-Haditha* (1936), *Fatat al-ʿArab* (1937), *Sawt al-Marʾa* (1943), *al-Jil al-Jadid* (1945) *al-Rihab* (1946), *al-Umm wa al-Tifl* (1946), *Tahrir al-Marʾa* (1947), *Bint al-Rashid* (1948), and *al-Ittihad al-Nisaʾi* (1949).[88] Iraqi women also published in national Iraqi journals. To mention just one example, the Iraqi Jewish intellectual, writer and editor

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[85] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[86] Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 88.
[87] Ahmed Khalid al-Rawi, "Iraqi Women Journalists' Challenges and Predicaments," *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 3:3 (2010): 224.
[88] Efrati, "The Other 'Awakening' in Iraq," 31:2 (2004): 158-159, Bashkin, "Representation of Women," 58, Shaykh-Daʾud 1952, 82–90; al-ʿAlwaji 1975, 111–12; Ingrams 1983, 91; Efrati 2004, 157–9

of the important cultural magazine *al-Hasid* welcomed contributions from women who were in line with his progressive agenda.[89] On a smaller scale, the national calls for women's education, unveiling, marriage reform, and equality were mimicked by the female students at ASG in the articles they submitted to *The Echo*. The 1949 yearbook included two essays about women and education and one about the importance of teaching children and students to believe in themselves. Amira Walim Subhiyya's essay, "Girls and School," stressed the importance of female education as a prerequisite for any woman to become "a righteous member of society and a righteous citizen in service of the nation." If a girl does not receive an education, Subhiyya warned, "her reason will not develop […] she will not know about significance of life and will not learn anything about health and hygiene. She also will not know about what goes on in the world around or what took place in the past"[90] Ishkhanuhy Sultanian's essay, "Some Reforms in Education," about WWII and the hydrogen bomb called for free education for both boys and girls as the only antidote to another destructive world war.[91]

ASG also hosted countless literary competitions and contests. On a warm evening in May of 1933, the courtyard of the school was "turned into a garden" and decorated with Persian rugs and prints, several longs divans, and local spring flowers. According to one teacher, the "school never was so pretty before."[92] Seventy-five guests were invited and almost all of them showed up. Refreshments were served to the guests. The occasion was the school's annual literary contest in which ASG students competed against one another in the disciplines of essay writing, recitation, and debating. The theme of the debate, which was praised by the judges, some of whom where government schoolteachers, was whether elementary public school education ought to be

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[89] Bashkin, "Representation of Women," 60.
[90] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[91] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[92] ASG pamphlet, "Call for Support, 1933, PHS, PAM P00362.

compulsory in Iraq. The team in favor of compulsory schooling won the debate. The Iraqi Director General of Education and a father of one of the students paid for several books, which were awarded as prizes to the winners of the different disciplines.[93]

In addition to the many contests and competitions, ASG kindled the ambition of its students through extracurricular lectures, school trips, and excursions. Beginning in the 1940s, ASG hosted a weekly assembly, which often included prominent Iraqi as well as international guest speakers, many of whom were important female figures. In 1947, the guest speakers included, among others, the Iraqi representative at the World Conference of Women, Miss. Burton, an Australian in charge of the YWCA in the Near East, India and Africa during WWII, the president of the International Women's Alliance, a female member of the Swedish parliament, an Armenian female doctor who lectured the students on hygiene, and Mrs. Hubbeck, Principal of Morley College London. The only male guest speaker was Dr. David Dodge, who in in 1947 had recently retired as president of AUB.[94] The very transregional lineup of speakers at the school shows the Iraqi and the global nature of the Presbyterian enterprise.

The school's efforts to introduce its students to ambitious and respectable role models went hand in hand with its emphasis on disciplined freedom and profitable recreation. In 1933, ASG organized school trips to places such as Tel Omar, where students learned about the excavations of the old city of Seleucia, and The Iraq Museum, which had been established in 1926. Many of the excursions organized by ASG were meant to teach students about hygiene, modern science, technology, and progress. In the spring of 1933, the school visited the water works of Baghdad and students, as well as teachers, "were impressed with the efficiency of purification that takes

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[93] ASG pamphlet, "Call for Support, 1933, PHS, PAM P00362.
[94] Report of The American School for Girls, 1947, PHS 89-1-28.

place with the muddy, infested water of the Tigris."[95] Later that same year, during an excursion to the new X-ray department of the Royal Hospital in Baghdad, several girls from the junior and senior classes had a grand time when they were allowed to have various parts of their bodies X-rayed.[96] The girls eagerly lined up to have their arms, legs, and torsos x-rayed with the assistance of the department's doctors. The visit and the photos, which the students brought back to ASG, became an important subject of conversation for several weeks at the school. The real reason for the visit, however, was that the American missionary teachers at ASG were under the impression that their students were "quite ignorant of the structure of their bodies and the various organic functions." As such, the visit, as amusing and entertaining as it was to the students, was simultaneously part of a larger effort "to correct their old ideas and to make a deep impression on them."[97] In other words, the exciting yet strangely intimate exploration of the physical interior had an exterior and educational motive.

Pursley has noted how in the 1940s and 1950s in particular, pragmatist educators in Iraq "charged both schools and mothers with the task of interiorizing scientific reasoning – now understood as the capacity to plan for the future – in children."[98] The ASG visit to the X-ray department is an early and illustrative example of the morality of health and science. Similarly, it demonstrates how through extracurricular activities and visits such as the ones described above, ASG teachers aimed to make their students "not only the healthiest in Baghdad but also the happiest and most sensible future mothers of Iraq."[99] Another group of ASG students returned to the Royal Hospital on a school trip in 1937 where they participated in the inaugural "Baby Week"

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[95] ASG pamphlet, "Call for Support, 1933, PHS, PAM P00362.
[96] For more on the Royal Hospital in Baghdad see Omar Al-Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2017), 83.
[97] ASG pamphlet, "Call for Support, 1933, PHS, PAM P00362.
[98] Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 87.
[99] ASG pamphlet, "Call for Support, 1933, PHS, PAM P00362.

exhibition in Baghdad.[100] These efforts were combined with American educational and women's magazines about health, hygiene, housekeeping, cooking, dress-making, and social entertainment, which the school received from abroad.

ASG's busses made trips to further afield possible. In addition to picnics along the Tigris and the environs of Baghdad, ASG students toured the Iraqi countryside and villages where they met, talked to, and took photographs with local Iraqi women and children. Once a year, the school organized a ten-day summer camp for its students. According to one report, the purpose of the summer camp was to teach to the girls "to live and to work together in love" as well as to "live in the out-of-doors profiting from the clear, fresh air and healthful life." More importantly, perhaps, the report described the summer camp as an "opportunity to turn our attention to God and strengthen our relationship with Him. Let us keep these ten days for God."[101] To accomplish this goal, students gathered every morning to hear the witness of the women of the Bible and every afternoon to study the witness of John in the Gospel. The 1957 summer camp brought 22 ASG students and several teachers to the mountain village of Shaqlawa in the northern part of Iraq. Most of the students came from middle and upper middle-class homes in Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra. According to Margaret Purchase, who wrote the reports about the summer camp, most of the students "were not used to 'camping out' in the out-of-doors with very limited facilities." In addition, many of them were away from home for the first time and found it challenging to adjust to all the new inconveniences, the routine of program, the freedom and the responsibilities."[102] In addition to coping with the modest living conditions of the camp, such as cooking over an open fire and not being able to shower, almost all of the students got sick from food poisoning. This the

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[100] Report of Girls' Educational Work Baghdad 1937-1938, 1938, PHS 89-1-10.
[101] Summer Camp Report, 1957, PHS 89-1-31.
[102] A Book, a Picture, a Candle, Margaret Purchase, 1957, PHS 89-1-31.

made the already primitive toilet facilities and the lack of privacy all the more challenging for the young urbanite campers.

While the report written by Margaret Purchase suggests that most of the students eventually adjusted and even enjoyed the simplicity of camp life, one can only conjecture about the students' response to the daily Bible classes. However, in addition to Bible study, the camp program included personal study, discussions, panels, lectures, short plays, and other forms of entertainment. Writing about scouting in colonial Algeria, Krais argues that activities such as scouting created new forms and sites of female sociability in addition to familiarizing young women with new dress codes and bodily practices, not hitherto available to young women, such as hiking and camping.[103] In a similar fashion, the ten-day ASG camp offered copious amounts of relatively unstructured free time to be spent in the company of friends and classmates away from the watchful eyes of families, neighbors, daily chores, and obligations. With only a couple of teachers to look after the students, the ten-day camp offered plenty of opportunities for play and adventures in the bucolic surroundings. The evenings and nights, as Purchase's report hints at, which were spent outside with only the light of the stars and the moon, lend themselves to bonding and the sharing of emotions, intimate stories, and problems.[104] ASG students also took part in extracurricular and leisurely activities not directly organized by the school in their free time. It is difficult to know the exact extend of such activities, but reports show that several students were members of the Girls Reserves of the YWCA and the Girls Guides, which was modelled on the popular American organization, Camp Fire Girls.[105]

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[103] Jakob Krais, "Girl Guides, Athletes and Educators: Women and the National Body in Late Colonial Algeria," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 15:2 (2019): 204-205.

[104] A Book, a Picture, a Candle, Margaret Purchase, 1957, PHS 89-1-31.

[105] American Mission School for Girls Baghdad, Departmental and Personal Report, May De Pree Thoms, Annual Reports, 1923-1925, PHS 509-1-2. Lady Brooke-Popham, wife of the British Air Vice-Marshal in Iraq during the interwar years, started the Girl Guides in Baghdad and contacted ASG to ensure the

Sisters before Misters: Female Friendship and Sisterhood at ASG

In 1944, a young Christian Iraqi high school student named Ivy Edwin graduated from ASG. Six year later, on the occasion of the school's twenty-fifth anniversary, Edwin contributed a short essay and a poem entitled "Our Second Home," to the anniversary edition of *The Echo*. Edwin's essay, written in English, praised the school for all it had done for her and her peers, noting that "school became our second home where we could play, study and co-operate with our friends." In a similar vein, Edwin's poem eulogized her alma mater:

So long live our school, our second home,
To you our praise we give.
From early childhood you did help
Your children, who would live
To keep a happy memory
And try to help you live.[106]

As mentioned earlier in this as well as in the previous chapter, when modern education became a full-time endeavor, it made school a second home. In this process, the family was replaced, to some extent, and new bonds of loyalty, solidarity, and friendship were formed and took its place. Pursley has described how in twentieth century Iraq novel forms of non-kin relations between women were "enabled by the expansion of literacy, print culture, and a bureaucratic/technocratic labor force."[107] In addition to the causes mentioned by Pursley, this section views ASG as a micro-cosmos for new forms of non-kin based solidarity and friendship and argues that it was, in no small part, a result of education and the many leisurely and extracurricular activities offered by schools such as ASG.

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participation of its students. For a recent study of Muslim Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in Colonial Algeria, see Krais, "Girl Guides, Athletes and Educators," 199-215.
[106] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[107] Pursley, "Daughters of the Right Path," 53.

The student essays in *The Echo* can be read as a testament to the strong and intimate bonds of friendship that originated at ASG and cut across sectarian identities and affiliations. The missionary staff at ASG were very much aware, and extremely proud, of these friendships. In reports sent back to the mission board and donors in the US, teachers often wrote about such friendships and attributed their existence to the "progressive curriculum" and "big impartial spirit" of American education which "takes in all races and religions and treats them as if one."[108] On its ten-year anniversary in 1934, ASG reported that "the School for Girls in Baghdad with its 143 pupils, sixty of whom are Moslems, thirty-four Jews, and forty-nine Christians, reports a good year. The girls come from all classes of society and within the school drop their distinctions."[109] Observing the daily interactions between students, one report described the school in the following words:

> An Armenian girl divides her chair with a Jewish girl, a Jewish girl helps an Assyrian to prepare her lesson, Nahida, our Moslem girl, helps Maren Kondopelus to spell in dictation and when Rachel's hands are cold Rosa, our Protestant girl warms them. 'They love one another', says one of our native teachers, 'and they love the school.'"[110]

In fact, in the minds of the ASG missionaries, the "miniature Kingdom of Heaven,"[111] which materialized in the classroom, was a unique result of their approach to education. In addition, the ASG reports were highly critical of both Iraqi government schools, which they saw as "practically Moslem schools" and other religious schools, which, they argued, "accentuate the dividing gulf between races and religions and postpone the longed-for day of peace."[112] There can be no doubt, however, that cross-sectarian friendships were not unique to ASG. Rather, such friendships were

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[108] Girls Going to School in Baghdad, Annual Reports 1925-1929, PHS 509-1-7.
[109] Narrative of the United Mission in Mesopotamia, 1934, PHS 89-1-8.
[110] Girls Going to School in Baghdad, Annual Reports 1925-1929, PHS 509-1-7.
[111] Girls Going to School in Baghdad, Annual Reports 1925-1929, PHS 509-1-7.
[112] Girls Going to School in Baghdad, Annual Reports 1925-1929, PHS 509-1-7.

a feature of modern Iraqi education in general and existed in government as well as in other private schools. Exaggeration and idealization aside, the importance of friendship and love for the school is a recurring theme in the yearbook essays produced by students. These essays, unlike the reports, do not mention sectarian affiliation. Nor do they describe friendship as a social constellation occurring against the odds of religious and ethnic difference.

In the 1950 issue of *The Echo* several essays dealt specifically with friendship. "The Quality of Friendship" by Nezhat Rashid framed friendship as "an understanding that binds hearts and minds together with a great love." To Rashid, friendship had a religious component. Only through knowledge of God, she argued, can friendship bring people together and link "their souls with a perfect love that never changes." Eglantine Michael's essay, "True Friendship," was more concerned with formulating the correct affective rules of friendship. She advised her peers to "be natural" in their friendships. Affectation, she warned, "is the downfall of many. It is assumed to interest people, but nobody wants to be impressed with affectation." Instead, she encouraged her fellow students to exercise self-discipline and to cultivate friendships based on honesty and respect. Warning against jealousy, she formulated a selfless notion of friendship in which the sharing of joys, achievements, sorrows and disappointments was an integral part.[113]

One essay in particular, authored by ASG junior, 'A'ida Sharif 'Asiran in *The Echo* from 1949 and entitled "Masraʿ Ikhlas" ("The Death of Loyalty"), exemplifies the emotional intensity and loyalty of ASG female friendships. At the same time, the several of the values championed by the school shine through the essay. 'Asiran was an active member of the ASG Arabic Society. Her eloquent essay, written in a high register of formal Arabic, reflects the many extracurricular hours she spent with her peers of the Arabic Society. The dramatic essay begins with a dialogue between

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[113] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

two female friends, Hanadi and Lubna, both of whom are ASG graduates. Hanadi, the older of the two, has just been accepted to the College of Law in Baghdad and the opening exchange between the two friends is a joyful sharing of the future lawyer's success: "Hanadi, your beautiful dream has come true! Oh Hanadi you're so happy! Your beautiful eyes are dancing to the tunes of victory!"[114] Through Hanadi's reply, we learn about the lofty ideals she has for her future career: "Lubna! How can I not be happy? Can you believe that I will get to wear a lawyer's robe and stand in the courtroom protecting and defending the rights of the oppressed. I shall defend every oppressed person and demolish every oppressor."[115] Lubna shares her friend's excitement and takes part in Hanadi's dreams: "Oh Hanadi! Imagine yourself listening to the roaring echo of applause spreading in the courtroom in admiration of the skilled lawyer, Hanadi."[116]

Hanadi's acceptance to law school, however, is not the only cause for celebration for the two friends: "I'm also happy for you my dear," Hanadi tells her friend and continues: "I'm happy because your beautiful dream will also come true."[117] Lubna's dream is to marry her cousin Sarmad, to whom she is already engaged. The marriage between Lubna and Sarmad has long been in the cards and they have been engaged since they were both young. Since Sarmad is about to return from America after having studied there for an unspecified length of time, the wedding is just around the corner. 'Asiran's essay does not divert in any significant way from the personal and professional dreams of many of the ASG graduates. While 'Asiran dramatizes and adds moral and plot to her story, as will soon become clear, as described earlier, the yearbooks clearly demonstrate that both marriage and a career in law were on the horizon of expectations of several graduates.

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[114] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[115] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[116] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[117] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.

And so it goes. Lubna marries Sarmad and Hanadi enters the College of Law, where she quickly claims the status as the brightest and most attractive student. Sarmad, it turns out is a successful lawyer and begins teaching at the College of Law in Baghdad upon his return to Iraq. Sarmad is loved by both faculty and students. He is fiercely handsome and intelligent and the narrator informs us that "he was the subject of the female students' admiration because of his charm and perfect manliness."[118] Hanadi, however, "always hated men and the gossip of girls."[119] Rather than fawning over handsome lawyers, she spends all her time studying, reading books and magazines and going to the cinema with Lubna. On her several trips to the cinema she gets to know Sarmad, who often accompanies his young wife. Hanadi and Sarmad become friends and begin to spend time together at the College of Law. "She understood him and he understood her. Their opinions were always in agreement, their tastes in harmony, and their thoughts always in accordance."[120] Not a day passed without them sitting together, talking, discussing, and exchanging ideas for they were "the most wonderful friends."[121] The essay consistently makes sure that Hanadi's person and actions are honorable and without hidden agendas. She has already been presented as a studious and respectable young woman, who is not interested in men. In addition, the narrator ensures us that she only befriends Sarmad "because he was the life partner of the person dearest to her in the whole world."[122]

One day Sarmad comes to Hanadi in a distressed state and informs her that Lubna has given birth to a boy. Hanadi is thrilled to hear the news but surprised to see that Sarmad is sad. At this point, the narrator interrupts the narrative, in order to foreshadow what is to come, and speaks

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[118] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[119] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[120] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[121] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[122] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.

directly to the reader: "Now the hour has come – the hour that replaces innocent friendship with the blood-red word of 'love.'"[123] Sarmad aggressively confesses his love to Hanadi and tells her that he was forced to marry Lubna by his parents and that their marriage was never based on love. Hanadi fiercely defends her friend. "Lubna is my soul," she tells him and adds that he will never be able to find someone like her. But Sarmad does not give up: "Hanadi, you know me. If I want something I will get it, no matter what. And you know how stubborn I am. I want you for myself."[124] Hanadi valiantly refuses Sarmad's approaches and compliments. If he does not leave immediately, she tells him, she will kill him "with her own hands." Hanadi rushes to Lubna's house where she finds her friend heartbroken, shaking and crying: "I have lost Sarmad…For three months he has been avoiding my presence and my looks. I tried to be patient will all my might until I had no more patience left…I love him and I worship him!"[125] Sarmad has told her that he is in love with one of his students, but Lubna doesn't know her name. Hanadi tells her not to worry: "I will save you and kill the woman with whom he is in love."[126] Hanadi returns home. She is in despair but determined to save her friend. Again, the story foreshadows the future tragic event, which is about to occur.

The next day, when the sun rises, its first rays shine on Hanadi's corpse "stretched out on the bed."[127] When the news of Hanadi's death reach Lubna, she realizes immediately what has transpired and screams: "Oh Hanadi! I've lost you to the darkness of the grave. Your mother's screams have replaced the echo of applause in the court room… she [Hanadi] preferred death over betrayal."[128] The story ends when Lubna exclaims that if it weren't for her child, she would follow

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[123] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[124] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[125] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[126] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[127] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.
[128] *The Echo*, 1949, PHS 509-5-3.

Hanadi, thereby suggesting that she too is willing to die for her friend. In the context of the yearbooks, 'Asiran's essay exemplifies the different personal and professional paths taken by ASG graduates. It does so without judging and frames marriage and motherhood as equally legitimate to a career in law. 'Asiran's essay, could, of course, be read as a warning against arranged marriages, the romantic dangers of coeducational spaces, the mixed gender spaces of leisure, such as the cinema, which is where Hanadi and Sarmad first meet, or the importance of education over an early marriage. However, there's not much in the yearbooks to support such as reading. In fact, other essays seem to also portray motherhood and career as equally important to the future of Iraq. Ivy Edwin, who graduated from ASG in 1944 contributed a short essay under the title "Our Second Home" to *The Echo* in 1950. In in, she wrote that while "Our school has not made inventors or explorers," it has produced teachers, doctors and mothers, who are "helping society tremendously."[129] Similarly, Batool Sabri al-Hassani, who graduated in 1943, described herself in an essay as "busily engaged in my married life" and praised the school for "the things we were taught about being good citizens and good mothers."[130]

Rather, what seems to be of overriding importance in 'Asiran's story are the moral ideals of womanhood and friendship, which both of the story's characters perform to perfection. Lubna and Hanadi perform their marital and friendship duties of loyalty and fidelity at the cost of life and happiness. Hanadi in particular emerges as the story's tragic heroine thanks to her studious nature, loyalty, chastity, and not least because of her readiness and willingness for self-sacrifice. The values permeating the essay are undoubtedly those of the school. Simultaneously, however, they reveal the priorities of the school's adolescent students about to leave the world ASG in order to embark on careers, further education, and marriage. 'Asiran's literary imagination proposes a form

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[129] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.
[130] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

of female friendship for which death is not too big a sacrifice and for which marriage is both a potential and a strived for ideal. As the love triangle in the story suggests, this form of friendship is based on a shared moral and ethical codex, which in this case values death higher than betrayal and marriage to an unfaithful man.[131]

Basima Thomas Kanimi's Arabic poem, "Remember Me!!!" (*Idhkurini!!!*), from 1950, is another example of the intensity of female friendship and affection that developed at ASG. The author of the poem uses the form of the classical Arabic rhymed *qasida* to express her feelings towards a female friend. The poem does not mention ASG or graduation. It is clear, however, that the poem, among other things, addresses the impending departure of a close friend that accompanies graduation. The poem's imperative title and plea - "Remember Me!!!" – further strengthens such a reading. The poem is addressed to Sulayma,[132] a close friend of the poem's unnamed first-person narrator:

My night is intoxicated (*sakra*) and sings the song of evening (*al-samar*)
Stars dance in the moonlight (*al-qamar*)
The magic of my love reveals itself in a beautiful form
So come oh Sulayma let us achieve some of our wishes

The angel of love is my certainty and calls with tenderness (*hanan*)
Oh lovers come to where the good people flock
Where the dreams of night are found in cups (*kuʾus*) and wine jugs (*danan*)
So come and let us sip a love that is beyond reproach. [133]

Kanimi's poem performs friendship, love, and desire within the intense emotional register of a teenager about to graduate from high school and leave a close school friend. At the same time, however, the poem's intertextuality reveals the very specific poetic language that was available to the author. The intoxicated (*sakra*) night in the first line, the cups (*kuʾus*) and wine jugs (*danan*)

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[131] For more on love triangles and female homosoical intimacy and friendship on Iraqi literature see Pursley, "Daughters of the Right Path," 51-77.
[132] No student by the name of Sulayma graduated from ASG in 1949 or 1950.
[133] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

in the third and fourth lines of the second stanza, and the invitation to "sip a love that us beyond reproach" brings to mind the wine poetry of 'Abbasid poets such as Abu Nuwas. The second part of the poem is more dramatic in tone and addresses Sulayma as an already lost friend or beloved of whom only memories remain:

Where is my love, my faith, and the enchanting nights (*layali fatinat*)?
Where are the days of my communion (*wisali*) with my lover and the joys of life?
Were they a dream or an illusion that appear and then depart?
Come and let us harvest intimacy like blossoming flowers.

All that remains in the heart are these memories
Of longing, pining, yearning, and the grievance of departure
And my song for you from my innermost core
Memory, oh Sulayma, is life.[134]

Combined with the invocation of Abu Nuwas, the explicit words and romantic references in the two stanzas above might suggest that Sulayma is more than just a friend. Words such as *wisali*, which can be translated as the being together or communion of lovers in the second line of the stanza above, "seductive nights" (*layali fatinat*) in the first line, and the reference to harvesting intimacy (*al-uns*) "like blossoming flowers," could be interpreted as romantic hints.

Scholars focusing on female boarding school and college life and intimate friendships in late 19th and 20th century American and Britain have used the terms "smashing" and "crushing" to refer to particularly intimate and romantic, but not necessarily sexual, same-sex friendships between female students.[135] Through a detailed analysis of 19th and early 20th century

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[134] *The Echo*, 1950, PHS 509-5-3.

[135] For more on "smashing" see for example Lynn D. Gordon, "The Gibson Girl Goes to College: Popular (s(1987): 211-230, Sherrie Inness, "Mashes, Smashes, Crushes, and Raves: Woman-to-Woman Relationships in Popular Women's College Fiction, 1895–1915," *NWSA Journal*, 6:1 (1994): 48–68, Sally Newman, "'The Freshman Malady': Rethinking the Ontology of the 'Crush.'" *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 16:2 (2012): 279-301, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relationships Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs*, 1:1 (1975): 1–29, Martha Vicinus, "Distance and Desire: English Boarding-School Friendships," *Signs*, 9:4 (1982): 43–65, Rona M. Wilk, "What's a Crush? A Study of Crushes and Romantic Friendships at Barnard College, 1900-1920," *OAH Magazine of History,* 18: 4 (2004): 20-22.

newspapers, American children's and women's magazines, such as *St. Nicholas, Harper's Bazaar, Ladies Home Journal* (some of which were read by ASG students)*, the genre of college girl fiction, and the emerging discipline of sexology, Lilian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women* demonstrated that what she calls "boarding school romantic friendships," "boarding school crushes," "school girl crushes," and "girlhood crushes" were rather common and not necessarily frowned upon. Faderman also describes how words such as "rave," "pash," "mash," "spoon," and "flame" were used to describe the same form of romantic same-sex courtship, intimacy, and friendship.[136] Through a study of female same-sex relationships in Broadway plays, Meghan Gualtieri's work on white, middle-class, female homosexuality in America in the first half of the 20th century, reached similar conclusions about the prevalence of "smashing" at female boarding schools, which at times included "smashing" on female teachers.[137]

It is difficult to say whether or not "smashing" was a part of ASG student life. As already mentioned, ASG did have a boarding section and intimate friendships undoubtedly developed as a result of school life in general and extracurricular activities in particular as this section has made clear. The poem above, however, cannot be read as a straightforward example of "smashing." Nor is the poem and its language, however romantic it might be, sophisticated enough to make up a coded message of homoerotic love and desire. The performative desire and love in the poem is affective and emotional rather than physical and speak, among other things, about the pain of the social world of ASG broken apart by graduation. What is certain, however, is that the development of incredibly strong and intimate bonds of female friendship was a direct outcome of ASG school life. However, it is important to note that the very positive portrayals of friendships and school life

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[136] Lilian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1981), 145-357.
[137] Meghan Gualtieri, "Lesbian Broadway: American Theatre and Culture, 1920-1945," PhD diss. (Cornell Universty, Ithaca, 2010), 190-233.

above are partly a result of the available sources. Missionary sources and yearbooks do not discuss the bad experiences that were undoubtedly part of school life for several young women and girls. Such sources, as mentioned earlier, therefore have to be approached with cynicism.

Romance, Fashion, and Unladylike Conduct

This does not mean, of course, that ASG students were completely uninterested in romance and the opposite sex. What's more, as pointed out by Faderman, "smashing" was almost always replaced by heterosexual relationships and marriage.[138] In a letter from 1950, Helen MacDonald remarked, with some surprise, that while ASG students never missed the American movies playing in Baghdad's cinemas and read Harper's, Bazaar, and Vogue and dressed in the latest European and North American fashion, they never, with a few exceptions among the Christians, "talked about dates, or 'being in love.'"[139] But love, at least not when framed in abstract and proper terms, was not a taboo at ASG. Some years, Valentine's Day was celebrated at ASG. The students dressed up in their finest attire for the occasion and a photographer was hired to take group and individual photographs. The walls and the balconies of the school "were decorated with cupids and arrow-piercing hearts."[140] From the school reports alone, however, it is difficult to challenge or to paint a full picture of the romantic and emotional lives of ASG students. The students, if they were going on secret dates or fell in love, probably would not have shared such information with their teachers in the first place.

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[138] Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, 297-357.
[139] Helen MacDonald, "Merry Christmas from the good old USA," Dec., 1950, PHS 89-1-30.
[140] Staudt, *Living in Romantic Baghdad*, 43.

Figure 16: ASG students attending a tea party at school, late 1950s. PHS.

A report from 1938 mentioned that the students, "as all young girls, want to be good looking" and that one of the teachers, gave the students "corrective exercises" in standing, sitting, and walking. It is not clear what the students thought about these exercises, but they did happen at their request. The teachers happily agreed and saw this as a sign of progress and modernity. "Now that they are wearing western clothes," the report commented, "they cannot hide themselves under the loose flowering robes of old Arabic."[141] In fact, according to one teacher, the students were so in tune with the latest American fashion that when a dressmaker in New York offered to send fashion magazines to Baghdad, she replied that this "would have been like carrying coal to Newcastle" since "the fashion plates she wanted to send were already in Baghdad" and the students looked as though they "had stepped out of one of them."[142] In addition to the classes she taught,

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[141] Report of Girls' Educational Work Baghdad 1937-1938, 1938, PHS 89-1-10.
[142] Ibid., 69.

Ida Staudt ran a club whose goal it was to "prepare the girls to become intelligent companions to their husbands, and to have them make their homes more attractive than the coffee houses."[143] In other words, the sartorial changes of the students had to be accompanied by an embodied discipline of modesty and respectable beauty in the form of a repertoire of movements, stances, poses, and homemaking and decorating skills. Being "intelligent companions" also meant that ASG students had to learn how to host tea and supper parties.

There is some evidence, however, that the daily bus rides to and from school – especially after the school moved to the suburb of Mansour and the time spent on the bus every day was increased significantly, provided opportunities, albeit brief and fleeting, for encounters with the opposite sex. The school had to employ bus supervisors, whose job it was to keep order and give demerits to students "chewing gum on the bus," or "striking up friendship with a boy on some other bus passed daily or any other similar disorderly or unladylike conduct."[144] It is not clear from the report what other forms of "similar disorderly and unladylike conduct" occurred on the bus.

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[143] Staudt, *Living in Romantic Baghdad*, 68.
[144] The American School for Girls, July 1958, PHS 89-1-30.

Figure 17: Baghdad High School in Mansour School Bus, 1950s. PHS.

Unlike the Jesuits at BC, the Presbyterian missionaries in Iraq do not seem to have been particularly worried about the influence of communist and radical politics on their students. Even if they were concerned about potential student flirtations with opposition politics in and outside of school, they did not write about it. Since they did not write about the topic, it is only possible to conjecture about why the Presbyterian missionaries were not concerned about their students taking an interest in politics. It is likely, however, that they simply imagined their middle and upper middleclass female students as somehow being outside of the realm of politics and thus less corruptible. They did, however, see communism as a major threat to their evangelizing efforts across Iraq. In numerous reports, Presbyterian missionaries described Iraq as "one the most difficult mission fields in the world" and complained that although "its population of five million is 93% Moslem," "strong winds blow down through these oil rich, but poverty laden, lands which

whisper a new credo: there is no God but Lenin and Stalin is his prophet."[145] In a 1954 report from Kirkuk, where the Presbyterians ran a small mission station, the author of the report complained that the conditions for evangelical work were growing gradually worse and noted that "the younger generation are asking that we bring books on the life of Joe Stalin instead of the Gospels."[146] The Presbyterians recognized that it was, at least partially, the extreme poverty experienced by the majority of the population that made communism appealing to some Iraqis. They saw themselves as an antidote to communism and as part of the solution. At the same time, like the Jesuits, they imagined the solution in more global and geopolitical terms: "the western world is so much interested in both the geographical and geological features of these lands…that it cannot stand aside complacently in view of the infiltration of Communism into the thinking of the people."[147] From the Presbyterian viewpoint, Islam, rather than providing a bulwark against communism, was seen as part of the problem. In their analysis, Muslim tradition and religious authorities, in fact, stood in the way of "new ideas which would overcome these defects, leaving a vacuum which is inevitably assailed by the penetration of Communist propaganda."[148] While they did not specifically address the school's impressive range of extracurricular activities as a way of keeping students away from the dangers of politics and while they might have imagined the gender of their students as a sufficient safeguard against involvement in politics, female Iraqi students were involved in politics.

In fact, like their female peers at other institutions, ASG students actively took part in Iraqi politics, including protests and demonstrations. Although scarce in the details they provide, reports from ASG show that students took part in the 1948 Wathba as well as in pro-Palestinian

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[145] United Mission in Mesopotamia Evangelistic Report, 1950, PHS 89-1-30.
[146] Kirkuk Evangelistic Report, 1954, PHS 89-1-31.
[147] United Mission in Iraq Mission Narrative 1951, PHS 89-1-30.
[148] United Mission in Iraq Mission Narrative 1951, PHS 89-1-30.

demonstrations during the same year. In addition, a group of ASG students organized a group that

sewed and gathered clothing for refugees in Palestine.[149] This is not surprising since, as described

by Bashkin and others, the general radicalization and expansion of education during the post WWII

period exposed both female and male students to oppositional politics. During this period, the Iraqi

public sphere witnessed an increase in women's organizations, activism, and participation in

protests and demonstrations. Women and female students took part in the Wathba and the Intifada,

the large uprisings of 1948 and 1952.[150] While some of the new organizations where "traditional"

and affiliated with the state, others advocated more radical change.[151] The more radical

organizations included the Women's League Against Fascism, established in 1943, and the League

for the Defense of Women's Rights, which was led by Naziha Dulaymi. They both organized

classes for illiterate women in addition to their demonstrations and advocacy for women's

rights.[152] In the late 1940's in particular, women also joined the ICP, which had a women's

committee and women's cells. Communist women distributed pamphlets, worked as couriers, or

as organizers of meetings, and demonstrations, and taught their female comrades.[153] Women who

attended Iraq's new educational institutions were exposed to communist activities because the ICP

was active there.[154] Other women were introduced to the ICP through family connections.[155]

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[149] Narrative of the United Mission in Mesopotamia, 1948, PHS 89-1-16.
[150] Bashkin, "Representation of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4:1 (2008): 53-81.
[151] Efrati 2004, "The Other Awakening in Iraq," 165-168.
[152] Bashkin, "Representation of Women," 67.
[153] Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 95. See also Chelsie May. "'Not a Figure in the Past': Zionist Imperial Whiteness, The Iraqi Communist Party, and Their Reverberating Histories of Race and Gender, 1941-51," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 16:1 (2020): 41-61.*
[154] Ibid., 93.
[155] Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 113-114.

Pursley has described how during the same period, while male leftist students were sent to military training camps, the Ministry of Education also organized summer programs for Iraq's secondary female students. The aim of these camps was to "channel the free time of adolescent girls into social work rather than politics" as it was hoped that "these activities would improve girls' physical health and cultivate a sense of responsibility toward the society and the nation."[156] As already described, these campaigns were part growing efforts to control and influence students' time and leisure through extracurricular activities. While they were not necessarily framed as keeping students away from politics, when it came to channeling the time of their female students into morally and ladylike activities, ASG was at the forefront of these developments.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the attempt to control and shape the time and leisure of students through extracurricular activities by educational institutions such as ASG created new forms of structured work and play. Although this was a process that included the enforcement of gendered discipline and character building, it also facilitated non-kin based loyalties, solidarity, and strong bonds of friendship as the many essays and poems produced by students in English and Arabic showed. School time and the cross-sectarian friendships formed within it to some extent replaced families and allowed female students to imagine and take part in new social worlds. As we will see in the next chapter, many young women often only had access to public forms of leisure, such as cinemas, when they were accompanied by family members. As such, the family was not replaced altogether.

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[156] Ibid., 115.

Because of the missionary ethos of the school, ASG students were constantly reminded of their future roles as mothers and wives. In this sense, ASG was not different from most other Iraqi schools during the period. Most of the ASG teachers, however, were unmarried women with degrees and careers and therefore also embodied a different version of womanhood not limited marriage and motherhood. This chapter demonstrated that in addition to, or instead of motherhood, many ASG students imagined their futures outside of the home and often even outside of Iraq. The last section of this chapter argued that although Iraqi women increasingly took part in politics, oppositional and otherwise, during the Hashemite period, ASG staff imagined their well-do-to students as being outside the reach of oppositional politics, due to their gender. Therefore, the Presbyterians focused their anti-communist efforts on the mission stations they operated outside of Baghdad.

Chapter 1 and 2 showed how students at BC and ASG were disciplined in leisure. More specifically, the first two chapters of this dissertation explored the emergence of extracurricular activities in schools as an attempt to control and fill the leisure time of students. Chapter 3-5 will interrogate leisure activities and institutions outside, or less marked by, the bounds of official, state, and missionary control. Chapters 3 and 4, which deal with cinemas and cafés, maintain a partial focus on students and youth. Chapter 5 explores nocturnal forms of leisure from which students and children were excluded.

Chapter 3: Cinema in Iraq: A Local Story of Global Leisure

On the evening of July 26, 1909, the first silent film was shown in Baghdad. The film was shown outdoors in the *Karkh* area of Baghdad and the spectacle of the moving image and the relatively cool Baghdad summer night combined to attract a large audience. Two years later, in 1911, the place became known as Cinema Baluki. It was named after the Jewish merchant who imported the equipment and the films. Cinema Baluki was the first permanent cinema in Baghdad and the first one to open its doors to the public for a fee. The first talkie did not appear in Iraqi until 1927 and Cinema Baluki only showed silent films, most of which were imported from Britain and France, and the program was changed every Friday.[1] On September 30, 1911, in advance of the opening night, the first advertisement for Cinema Baluki appeared in Baghdadi newspapers. The short silent films shown on the opening night included films on leopard hunting, birds of prey in their nests, the funereal of Edward VII of England, balloon races, and pearls.[2]

In the 1910s and 1920s, when cinema spread globally, the novel commodity and forms of representation that it offered changed the structure of leisure, entertainment, and modern life itself. "Quite literally," in the words of James Donald, "movies defined and disseminated a twentieth-century habitus."[3] Some theoreticians, like Walter Benjamin, saw the cinema age as introducing a new way of being in the world:

> "Our bars and our city streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories seemed to close relentlessly around us. Then came film and exploded this prison-world with the dynamite of the split second, so that now we

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[1] Jabbar Audah Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq: Socio-Political and Cultural Study: 1946-1980.* PhD dissertation. The university of Michigan, 1983, 186-187; Shafiq Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq* (Baghdad: Mawsuʿat al-Turath al-Shaʿbi al-ʿIraqi, 2015), 12.
[2] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 187.
[3] James Donald, "Cinema, Modernism, and Modernity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, edited by Peter Brooker, Andrxej Gasiorek, Deborah Longworth, and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 11.

can set off calmly on journeys of adventure among its far-flung debris."[4]

The journeys facilitated by the cinema, like other modern technologies, such as radio and telephones, gave audiences access to new and strange, albeit mediated, worlds.[5] Drawing on Benjamin and Kracauer, film historian Miriam Hansen has argued that cinema, as a form, offered "the single most expansive discursive horizon in which the effects of modernity were reflected, rejected or denied, transmuted or negotiated."[6] Hansen further argued that Hollywood cinema in particular was able "to provide, to mass audiences both at home and abroad, a sensory-reflexive horizon for the experience of modernization and modernity" by acculturating men and women to the increasing "virtuality" of life in the twentieth century.[7]

These insights, which are not restricted to Hollywood cinema, can productively be applied to cinema across to globe. The Middle East, as the example of Cinema Baluki demonstrates, did not become part of the modernity of cinema belatedly. Writing about Egypt, Walter Armbrust has pointed out that commercial Egyptian cinema played a crucial role in the construction of an Egyptian bourgeoisie and national community by offering "a common fund of images tied to a

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[4] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 4 volumes, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Marcus Bullock, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999-2004), vol. 3: 117.

[5] James Donald, "Cinema, Modernism, and Modernity,"11.

[6] Miriam Bratu Hansen, "America, Paris, the Alps: Kracauer (and Benjamin) on Cinema and Modernity," in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, edited by Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 365–6.

[7] Miriam Bratu Hansen, "Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism," *Film Quarterly*, 4:1 (2000):10–11.

middle class bourgeois nationalist identity."[8] The screen capitalism, as Armbrust calls it, of

Egyptian commercial cinema emerged not long after the printing press and mass literacy and

therefore had a tremendous effect on Egyptian subjects[9] Viola Shafik has pointed out that cinema

in the Middle East, not unlike the radio and the gramophone, changed the structure of leisure by

making available specific images and genres of music and by replacing older forms of

entertainment.[10] Although Iraqi films and Iraqi commercial cinema did not appear until the late

1940s, the country was not a latecomer to cinema culture and leisure and there was no shortage of

Egyptian, American, and European films in the country during the 1920s and 1930s when cinemas

began to appear across Iraq. Like in other urban centers globally and across the region, in Iraq

cinema quickly became one of the most popular and widespread forms of mass entertainment for

a large number of Iraqis. With the exception of the work of Elizabeth Bishop and Jabbar Allawi,

however, there is a significant gap in the English-language scholarship on cinema in Iraq.[11]

        This chapter argues that the emergence of cinema culture in Iraq can be understood as a

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[8] Walter Armbrust, "The Golden Age before the Golden Age: Commercial Egyptian Cinema before the 1960s," in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*, edited by Walter Armbrust (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 304. See also Walter Armbrust; *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Walter Armbrust, "New Cinema, Commercial Cinema, and the Modernist Tradition in Egypt," Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics 15 (1995): 81-129; Robert Vitalis, "American Ambassador in Technicolor and Cinemascope: Hollywood and Revolution on the Nile," in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*, edited by Walter Armbrust (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 269-291; Joel Gordon, *Revolutionary Melodrama: Popular Film and Civic Identity in Nasser's Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Joel Gordon, "Nasser 56/Cairo 96: Reimagining Egypt's Lost Community," in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*, edited by Walter Armbrust (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 161-181.
[9] Walter Armbrust, "The Golden Age before the Golden Age," 312.
[10] Viola Shafik, *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2017), 7.
[11] For an overview of contemporary Iraqi cinema see Lucia Sorbera, "History and Fiction in the New Iraqi Cinema," in *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges*, edited by Jordi Tejel, Peter Sluglett, Riccardo Bocco, and Hamit Bozarslan (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2012), 423-444. For an overview of Iraqi cinema during years of the Republic and the Ba'th era see Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 195-203.

local articulation of a global history. While cinema's arrival predates the Hashemite state by roughly a decade, this chapter argues that the beginning of the Hashemite period is the moment when we can begin to see the local inflexion of the global phenomenon of the modernity of cinema in Iraq. With so little scholarship available on cinema in Iraqi, the story of Iraqi cinema can be told in a number of ways. This chapter approaches cinema through the lens of leisure and as a story of new urban spaces and institutions that in turn facilitated new forms of sociability. In fact, this chapter contends that the history of cinema in Iraq is also the history of urban modernity. Therefore, it is not possible to understand Iraqi modernity without paying close attention to the cinema, the images it projected, and the ways in which it structured and divided Iraqi leisure and time in new and different ways.

The first part of this chapter traces the beginnings of cinema culture in Iraq by focusing on the construction of cinemas in Iraqi urban centers. It shows that Iraqi cinema culture, like other places that were not sites of cinema production, was fundamentally transregional and global. As cinemagoing became a habit, cultural products, performers, and people with technical skills came to Iraqi from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, India, Europe, and North America. Cinema, as this chapter will show, is therefore an elucidating example of how transregional and global products, knowledge, and knowhow was localized. In other words, as Iraqis began to direct and produce films, the global art of cinema was localized through practices related to leisure. This process also forged new relationships between the cinema and other forms of leisure, including music, theater, and nightlife. In fact, the Iraqi case suggests that cinema predates theater as a modern public form of leisure and that cinema halls provided the spaces needed to set up plays, which were until then performed in schools.

While Iraqi minorities, particularly Jews, played a dominant role in first decades of Iraqi

cinema, this chapter shows that the cinema was a space in which Iraqis, regardless of religion, gathered to be entertained, transported, and thrilled by the magic of the screen. The second part of this chapter also explores the experience of cinemagoing as well as how the many forms of advertisements that accompanied the emergence of cinemas, changed Baghdad's urban landscape. While the cinema was a class and eventually also gender-inclusive leisure space that facilitated new forms of family and female leisure, this chapter argues that the experience of going to the cinema was nonetheless shaped by class and gender. At the same time, the films shown in Iraqi cinemas produced and made available new images and perceptions of gender. Images of American, but also Egyptian masculinity and femininity, affected Iraqi cinemagoers. Films created new idols, role models, hairstyles and fashion to be emulated. The same images also fueled sexual fantasies and shaped and created desire among Iraqi cinemagoers. As this chapter will show, the anonymity of the dark cinema halls meant that such desire could at times be acted on.

The last section of this chapter details how cinema was mobilized, by different agents and groups, for political, pedagogical, and propagandistic purposes. The cinema became a battleground for competing visions of morality, gender relations, and politics. At the same time, the British, the Iraqi state, and later on also the Americans used cinema and films to control and influence public opinion and culture. In tandem, this chapter shows how Iraqi intellectuals and writers on the left envisioned cinemagoing as a form of leisure that could be politicized for progressive and anti-colonial purposes.

In a recent article on early Lebanese cinema, Ghenwa Hayek convincingly argues that, as cultural objects embedded in modernity and popular culture, "films and their reception can play a significant role in elaborating the manner in which specific cultures experienced—and expressed—global modernity during a crucial moment in their postindependence, postcolonial

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histories."[12] Constructing her argument on a close reading of films, when these are extant, and their reception and impact on cinemagoers, Hayek points out that this dual analysis "can illuminate concerns imperceptible in the historical record."[13] Last but not least, Hayek demonstrates that "parafilmic" content, which is to say reviews, posters, and advertisements, can help reconstruct historical moments and thus enable "a glimpse into the topics, subjects, and anxieties that mattered within a national culture during a given era."[14] This chapter begins several decades before the first Iraqi film was produced in the late 1940s. Similarly, with very few Iraqi films from the period under study extant, this chapter follows Hayek's suggestion for the importance of analyzing parafilmic content. As a result, when this chapter discusses cinema, it does so in the broadest possible sense. Cinema, in this chapter, is used to refer to the assemblage of production, distribution, advertisement, reception, practices, and sites that together constitute cinema culture. Studying cinema culture means "looking past the screen."[15] Understanding cinema as more than just individual films allows for a more textured analysis of the myriad social, cultural, political, and economic phenomena that are part of cinema culture. Therefore, films only make up a small part of the sources used in this chapter. In the absence of Iraqi films and official archives, this chapter analyzes cinema culture and leisure through close readings of memoirs, secondary sources, advertisement, fan magazines, short stories, and official discourse.

This approach makes it possible for this chapter to look past the screen and to show that

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[12] Ghenwa Hayek, "Where to? Filming Emigration Anxiety in Prewar Lebanese Cinema," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 51:2 (2019): 183. For more on the importance of parafilmic parafilmic text see for example Allyson Nadia Field, *Uplift Cinema: The Emergence of African American Film and the Possibility of Black Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015) and Eric Smoodin, Paris in the Dark: Going to the Movies in the City of Lights (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

[13] Ibid., 184.

[14] Ibid., 184.

[15] I borrow the idea of "looking past the screen" from Eric Smoodin's and John Lewis' edited volume *Looking Past the Screen: Case Studies in American Film History and Method* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

cinema culture and cinema leisure intersect and overlap with other economies, sites, and forms of leisure. Since this dissertation is interested in urban forms of leisure, understanding how and to what extent cinemas and cinema culture became part of surrounding social and economic environments is important. The distinctions between the different aspects of cinema culture, such as production, advertisement, and reception, will be highlighted throughout this chapter. Similarly, the diverse sources used in this chapter to study cinema culture will be read with their differences in mind.

The Beginning of Cinema in Iraq

As noted, in the last years of Ottoman rule, during the British mandate and the years of the Hashemite period, the city of Baghdad was transforming from a regional Ottoman city to a fast growing capital. Baghdad's urban transformation added new forms of leisure to already existing ones. In fact, as the city grew, so did the opportunities for leisure. As a general trend, modern leisure and entertainment moved from the private realm and was transformed into public activities, albeit public activities that often took place and were organized on a commercial scale. The establishment of cinemas is illustrative of these changes. Cinemas opened up a new space for investors, merchants, and producers. Not unlike in Hollywood, many of these early entrepreneurs were Jews.[16] The first part of this section focuses on the establishment and ownership of cinemas in Baghdad and other Iraqi urban centers. The second half traces the beginnings of film production in Iraq.

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[16] Bashkin's work has shown that many Iraqi Jews, educated in both Jewish and non-Jewish schools, were Arabized through their education during the Hashemite period, which facilitated their participation in the Iraqi national project, enabling them to take part in Iraq's modern Arabic urban culture as well and in the country's political, economic, and intellectual life. Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 67-84. See also Goldstein-Sabbah, "Jewish Education in Baghdad," 96.

As evidenced by the large number of cinemas that began to appear in Baghdad in the 1920s and in the rest of the country starting in the 1930s, the cinema in Iraq was an extremely popular place of leisure. In fact, for many Iraqis, the cinema was the most important institution of leisure rivaled perhaps only by the café in terms of the number of Iraqis who frequented it.[17] Like other places in the region, in Baghdad the cinema rapidly became an established form of urban entertainment and life.[18] In addition, it emerged as a key cultural platform that connected Iraq to places across the region and the globe – both through the screen and through the economic networks and companies that brought films to Iraq. The opening of Cinema Baluki in 1911 marked the beginning of this process.

While a temporary cinema for British and Indian soldiers and locals existed in Basra already in 1916,[19] until the late 1920s, cinema as a form of leisure was largely restricted to Baghdad. This does not mean, however, that Iraqis living outside of the capital did not have access to cinema leisure. In fact, people came via train or by other means of transportation from places such as Basra and Mosul to witness firsthand the wonders of the screen.[20] After WWI, an Iraqi Jewish merchant by the name of Abu Anwar ʿAziz Daʾud purchased a projector and travelled around the country from city to city and from village to village, allowed those who could not afford the luxury of traveling to Baghdad to experience the moving image. Daʾud would set up in a garden, square, or coffee shop, charge a small fee, and project short silent films against a wall or

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[17] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq,* 10-12. See also ʿAbd al-Karim al-Husaini, "al-Sinama wa al-Malahi fi Baghdad," *Asrar* 7 (2017); Yasin ʿAli al-Nasir, *Mudhakarati: Arbaʿun Sana Sinamaʾiyya* (Matbaʿa al-Umma, 1980); Mahdi ʿAbbas, *Kitabat fi al-Sinama al-ʿIraqiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al-Shuʾun al-Thaqafiyya al-ʿAmma); Yusuf al-ʿAni, al-Sinama: *Safahat bayn al-Dhalam wa al-Dawʾ* (Baghdad: Dar al-Shuʾun al-Thaqafiyya al-ʿAmma, 2006).

[18] Elizabeth Thompson*, Colonial Citizens, Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 197.

[19] Khalid al-Bassam, *Sadma al-Ihtikak: Hikayyat al-Irsaliyya al-Amrikiyya fi al-Khalij wa al-Jazira al-ʿArabiyya* (London: Dar al-Saqi, 1997), 35-40.

[20] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 127.

a sheet. Such makeshift and temporary cinemas existed across Iraq. For workers at the many pumping stations that existed along the pipelines that brought Iraqi oil abroad, films were projected against walls and sheets for entertainment.[21]

Iraqis with international connections and familiarity with foreign languages came to play the most important role in the cinema industry.[22] Large-scale public interest in cinema combined with the promise of profit seems to have been the main motivators driving forward the industry, which remained in private hands until the 1960s.[23] Initially, Iraqi Jews were especially prominent in the import of foreign movies and the construction of cinemas. Before turning to cinema, Baluki specialized in the import of sowing machines,[24] and it is no coincidence that merchants and businessmen pioneered the Baghdadi cinema industry. Not only did they have the necessary capital, they were also well-connected to already existing import networks. Since projectors and film canisters flowed through the same international import and trade networks as other machines and goods, merchants who were already connected to these networks were at an advantage.

In 1920, a merchant from the Jewish Dodi family established Cinema Central in the Hafiz al-Qadi area of al-Rashid Street. Cinema Central, which was considered one of the first real

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[21] For more on the important role that multinational petroleum companies played in the construction of cinematic images of Iraqi oil-driven modernity and modernization see Mona Damluji, "Visualizing Iraq: Oil, Cinema and the Modern City," *Urban History* 43:4 (2016); Mona Damluji, "Power, Prestige and Petroleum: Sponsored Oil Films in the Gulf, 1938-1980," in *Arab Identities: Images in Film*, edited by Pamela Erskine-Loftus (Edinburgh: Akkadia Press, 2018), 35-50; Mona Damluji, "The Image World of Middle Eastern Oil," in *Subterranean Estates: Life Worlds of Oil and Gas,* edited by M. Watts, A. Mason and H. Appel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 147-164.

[22] Mazin Latif, "al-Yahud wa Intishar Dawr al-ʿArd al-Sinamaʾiyya fi al-ʿIraq," al-Hiwar al-Mutamaddin, accessed April 24, 2020. http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=327667&r=0. See also Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 109 and Sasson Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 14,

[23] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 186-187.

[24] A.D. Firdus ʿAbd al-Rahman Karim al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, (Beirut: al-Dar al-ʿArabiyya Lil-Mawsuʿat, 2017) 325-326; Latif, "al-Yahud wa Intishar Dawr al-ʿArd al-Sinamaʾiyya fi al-ʿIraq."

cinemas in Iraq, later changed its name to al-Rafidayn.[25] The success of Cinema Central encouraged more Iraqis to invest in the cinema industry. Throughout the following three decades, many more cinemas appeared across the city and country. In 1929 Cinema Royal opened in the Bab al-Agha area, Cinema al-ʿIraqi in the Midan area, and al-Rashid and al-Zawraʾ on al-Rashid Street across from the Murabbaʿ café. Cinema Roxy, al-Hillal, and Miami opened in the same year.[26] Most of these, and several others, such as Cinema al-Watani and Cinema Crown were owned by Iraqi Jews: Cinema al-Watani, which opened in 1927, was owned by the Shohet family, al-Zawraʾ by the Danos family, and Crown by the Zion and Yacov Shalom brothers.[27] In 1937 the two Jewish brothers Shaul and Kamil Qubi built Cinema Ghazi in the Bab al-Sharqi area.[28] The obvious national connotations of the names of many of these cinemas will be explored in the last section of this chapter.

Together with Cinema al-Zawraʾ, Cinema Ghazi became known as one of the fanciest and most luxurious cinemas in Baghdad. It was also one of the first to have air-conditioning installed[29] and was featured on an Iraqi postal stamp.[30] Cinema Ghazi was also among the first to include features such as wall decorations, opera curtains, private loges, and food and beverage services, which later became standard features of Iraqi cinema architecture. In fact, as the number of cinemas and the competition between them increased, several cinemas added sculptures and commissioned Iraqi artists to paint murals and decorate the interior in order to distinguish themselves from their competitors. Cinema Ghazi was located next to the Ghazi Gardens and there

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[25] Yosef Meʾir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit Hevratit shel Yehudey ʿIraq meʾaz 1830 ve ʿad Yemenu* (Tel Aviv: Naharayim, 1989), 439. Cinema al-Rafidayn burned down in 1946. Wahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 229.

[26] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 98-100.

[27] Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 439.

[28] Latif, "al-Yahud wa Intishar Dawr al-ʿArd al-Sinamaʾiyya fi al-ʿIraq.

[29] Najam Wali, *Baghdad: Sirat Madina* (London: Dar al-Saqi, 2015), 87.

[30] Ibid., 86.

was an outdoor Cinema Ghazi inside the gardens during the summer months. It was eventually demolished in 1955 to make room for new shops and a bus station.[31] Cinema Dar al-Salam also opened in 1937. Cinema Crown, Diana, al-Nujum, Baghdad, Sindibad, and Broadway all opened in 1947. Cinema Metro, al-Firdus, Hollywood, al-Khayyam, Faisal, Regent, Opera open air, and al-Rafidayn open air opened in the early 1950s.[32] Baghdad also had several other cinemas such as ʿIsani, Olympia, Ma Bain al-Nahrayn, al-Hamra,ʾ al-Sharqi, al-Ahrar, New Baghdad, al-Baida,ʾ Shaikh ʿOmar, al-Karnak, al-Midan, al-Andalus, al-Saʿdun, Shahrazad, al-Rusafi, Rio, Zubaida, and Salwa.[33] Cinema Regent opened in 1949 in Baghdad's al-Salihiyya neighborhood and was owned by Yusif al-Qadi. Cinema Al-Nujum was owned by Adib Nasir and Salim al-Adraqchi, and Cinema Miami by Hazim ʿAziz and his brothers. Cinema al-Sharqi and Cinema al-Hillal were owned by Habib al-Mallak.[34] Many of these, such as al-Hamra,ʾ Diana, New Baghdad, al-Hillal, al-Sharqi, Opera, and al-Rafidayn had both permanent facilities in addition to outdoor summer locations. The outdoor Cinema al-Hamra' was owned by the Baghdadi merchant Ismaʿil Sharif al-ʿAni. It changed its name to Cinema al-Nujum and again to Cinema al-Qahira al-Saifi in 1955 when a new owner took over.[35]

Exact numbers are not available for earlier periods, but in 1947 there were 71 cinemas in Iraq. A decade later, in 1957, when the second Iraqi census was carried out, there were 137 cinemas in Iraq with a seating capacity of 70,000.[36] More than a third of these were located in Baghdad.

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[31] Wahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 231.

[32] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 98-100.

[33] ʿAli, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa al-Sinima," 100; Wahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 231; Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 98-100.

[34] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 98-100. Unless noted in the body of the text, I have not been able to determine the exact year in which a cinema as established, its exact location, or details about the ownership.

[35] al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinimaʾihu," 227-227.

[36] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 204-205.

This is a significant number considering that the city's population in 1957 was less than 800,000.[37]

While this chapter focuses on Baghdad, it is important to mention that outside of the capital, cinemas were predominantly still owned by merchants with international connections. Outside of Baghdad, Habib al-Mallak was one of the most important figures in the world of Iraqi cinema. A native of Basra, al-Mallak opened Basra's first open-air cinema. Later on, he opened Cinema al-Hamra, ʾ which became the city's first permanent cinema. This took place in the early 1930s, which is generally when cinemas spread all over Iraq, including to Basra, Mosul, Kirkuk, Erbil, Amara, Nasiriyya, Hilla, Habbaniyya, Kut, Diwaniyya, Ba'quba, Khanaqin, and many other cities.[38] In 1949, al-Mallak opened Cinema al-Nujum, which became his first cinema in Baghdad.[39] By the 1950s, al-Mallak owned more than 35 cinemas all over Iraq. In addition to his friendship with Egyptian directors and producers, al-Mallak was close to many of the Egyptian cinema and music stars of the time, including Layla Murad, Farid al-Atrash, Maryam Fakhr, and Anwar Wajdi. Al-Mallak hosted these stars for elaborate dinners and parties at Hotels in Cairo and Baghdad.

In the late 1940s, al-Mallak began inviting Egyptian cinema stars to Baghdad and other Iraqi cities to put on concerts before the premiere of new Egyptian films. Al-Mallak, the businessman that he was, used his contacts in Egypt, as well as the parties he hosted, to get better deals with Egyptian film distributors. Al-Mallak's ambitions, however, were not constrained by the borders of Iraq or the Arabic language. In the 1950s, he established a cinema in the Southern Iranian city

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[37] In comparison, Paris has a population of 2,725, 374 and 357 cinemas: Smoodin, *Paris in The Dark*, 150-150). Paris is obviously not the best comparison, but I have not been able to find the numbers for cities such as Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and Aleppo.

[38] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 11. For more on these cinemas see Qahtan al-Mallak, *Nas min Baladina* (Matbaʿat al-Adib al-Baghdadiyya, 2001); Marwan Nusrat, "Sinama Kirkuk wa Ayyam al-Mutʿa wa al-Dhulam," *Mesopotamia* 5 (2005); ʿOmar Jabir Taj al-Din, *al-Hilla: Lamahat ʿIjtima'iyya wa Idariyya wa Faniyya, 1858-1958* (Baghdad: Dar al-Shuʾun al-Thaqafiyya al-ʿAmma, 2012) Azhar al-ʿAbidi, *al-Sinama fi al-Mawsul* (Mawsul: al-Majmuʿa al-Thaqafa, 2017)

[39] Ibid., 9-14.

of Ahwaz and another one in Tehran, which allegedly made Farid al-Atrash popular there. The

films shown, except for the songs, were dubbed to Persian.[40]

Before the 1950s, the Sawda'i's was one of the most important families in Iraqi cinema.

They specialized, as we will see shortly, in the construction of cinemas, the import of films, and

later on also in production.[41] Ezra Sawda'i and his three brothers started the Columbia Company,

which later changed its name to The Iraqi Company for Films. The company specialized in the

import of American films and, as we will see, also produced a number of films. The Iraqi Company

for Films mentioned above also owned several of the most famous cinemas in Baghdad: Roxy,

Broadway, Cinema Baghdad, Cinema Metro, and Cinema al-Rashid.[42]

Hollywood dominated the Iraqi market. While numbers are not available from the 1940s

and early 1950s, out of the 400 feature films imported in 1956, 69% came from the US and only

17% from Egypt. The rest came from Italy, Germany, the UK, India and Turkey.[43] The dominance

of Hollywood was further cemented by the fact that American production companies, such as

Goldwyn Meir, Fox, and Colombia opened up offices in Baghdad from where they sold films

directly to Iraqi cinemas.[44] In addition, in the 1950s, the United Nations sponsored a trade

agreement that removed tariff and trade restrictions and made foreign films exempt from customs

and quota restrictions.[45] We still know very little, however, about how films were purchased and

how they moved through Baghdadi cinemas, neighborhoods, and cities outside the capital. For

example, many Hollywood and local productions in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s were sold

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[40] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 15-19.
[41] Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 439; Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 167.
[42] Cinema Broadway was built on the site of the old al-Farabi nightclub and specialized in Italian movies. Wahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 230.
[43] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 193. See also Bishop, "The politics of Cinema,"
[44] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 16-20.
[45] Bishop, "Politics of Cinema," 103; Shafik, *Arab Cinema,* 21.

according to a system of block booking, which meant that a cinema often had to commit to purchase and show block of twenty films in order to purchase one popular film.[46] Similarly, it is difficult to determine exactly what titles were available in Baghdad and when these became available. Since almost no films were produced inside Iraq, Hollywood and Egyptian films must have arrived with a delay. Since not all cinemas advertised their programs consistently in the Iraqi press, many of these questions cannot be answered at the present moment.

While Hollywood dominated the Iraqi market, the emergence of talkies from Egypt in the 1930s changed the experience of going to the cinema for the large number of Iraqis who didn't know English and who were not able to read subtitles. The first silent films shown in Baghdad were accompanied by live piano music. Later on, simple subtitles and short Arabic texts explaining the actions that took place in the film were manually shown on a screen next to the main screen. These were very short and descriptive in nature including short sentences such as "the hero decided to take revenge" or "the hero had a fight with his lover."[47] For those who did not know how to read, bringing a friend or relative to the cinema who could explain the text solved part of the problem. When Arabic language talkies arrived from Egypt, however, it fundamentally opened up the world of cinema in a new way to Iraqis.

Some cinemas and import and production companies were joint business ventures between Jews, Christians and Muslims. The industrious Sawdaʾi family, Anton Messayeh from the Christian Messayeh family, who owned one of Iraq's arak distilleries, another Iraqi Jew by the name of Salman Zilkha, and a Muslim business partner by the name of Kamil al-Khudairi established the production company Studio Baghdad in 1946. In the first couple of years, Studio Baghdad relied heavily on experts hired from Europe and Egypt. Soon, however, Iraqis took over.

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[46] Eric Smoodin, *Paris in the Dark*, 11.
[47] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 124.

Although it is not clear who levelled the accusations, Studio Baghdad was accused of being a Zionist spy den in 1948.[48] However, in 1949 when the Iraqi Police wanted to make a documentary about itself, they hired none other than Studio Baghdad. This seems to have been one of the only incidents when Iraqi Jews were met with suspicion for their role in the cinema industry. In 1954 Studio Baghdad was sold to Iraqi's living abroad, but it continued to make films until 1966. That year the Coca Cola Company acquired the land and buildings in order to build a factory.[49]

In the 1940s, the Sawdaʾi family began construction of Madinat Roxy (Roxy City) on al-Rashid Street. This complex included not only Cinema Roxy, but also the Rex Nightclub, the Roxy Casino, and two outdoor summer cinemas. In addition, several shops selling sandwiches, snacks, and beverages were added to the complex. Such shops were often found in the vicinity of cinemas[50] and were at their busiest before the start of the movie and during intermission. *Sammun wa ʿamba* and nuts were the most popular choices. For those with money to spare, inside the cinema waiters sold ice cream, snacks and cold drinks.[51] Most cinemas also sold cigarettes and smoking was allowed.[52] The Roxy summer nightclub, which was also part of the complex, hosted performances with Egyptian singers such as Hasan al-Malwani and Hafsa Halmi. The Rex nightclub later became the Rex cinema.[53] The idea of combining cinema with other forms of leisure and consumption had already been introduced by Habib al-Mallak in Basra. When al-Mallak established the open-air

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[48] ʿAdnan Husain Ahmad, "al-Film al-ʿIraqi: ʿAliya wa ʿIssam," al-Hiwar al-Mutamaddin, accessed April 24, 2020. http://www.m.ahewar.org/s.asp?aid=21721&r=0.

[49] Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 363-364. The life of this factory, however, must have been short since Iraq, as part of the Arab League, declared a boycott of Coca Cola in 1968 due to the company's business ties with Israel. A boycott had been in place in Egypt already since 1966. See for example Andrew Jarnagin, "When Coca-Cola Grows Citrus on the Nile, Who Wins? Revisiting the End of the Arab Boycott in Egypt," *Grand Valley Journal of History* 4:1 (2016).

[50] See also Margo Kirtikar, *Once Upon a Time in Baghdad*, 111, Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, and Victor Sasson, *Memoirs of a Baghdad Childhood*, 51.

[51] Kirtikar, *Once Upon a Time in Baghdad*, 111

[52] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 183.

[53] ʿWahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 234-236.

Cinema al-Hamraʾ in the early 1930s, he added a casino, a nightclub, a hotel, and a café in the same building.[54]

The examples of Cinema al-Hamraʾ and Roxy City demonstrates several important points. Firstly, it shows that Iraqi cinema owners were involved and, quite literally, invested in the broad geography of leisure in Baghdad that extended beyond the cinema. Secondly, it shows that different sites and forms of leisure often intersect and overlap. In the case of Roxy City, the cinema became actively engaged with the surrounding social and economic environment – both through advertisement, snack shops, and other venues of leisure. Last but not least, the commercial complex of Roxy City is an early example of the capitalist structures that increasingly came to organize leisure in Baghdad. It allows us to trace the beginnings of a middle class desire for public, yet semi-private and exclusive spaces of leisure. The classed aspects of cinema leisure will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

In the 1930s, there were attempts to produce Iraqi films. None of these, however, materialized until the late 1940s.[55] In the Iraqi Arabic scholarship, there has been much debate about what can rightly be called the first Iraqi film Since some of the first productions employed foreign directors, used foreign funding, actors, and equipment, opinions still differ.[56] There can be no doubt, however, that ʿAliya wa ʿIssam from 1948 was one of the first. The Baghdad Film Company, owned by the Sawdaʾi brothers, produced the film. Meʾir Sawdaʾi found inspiration for ʿAliya wa ʿIssam in the very popular Egyptian-produced historical Bedouin drama ʿAntar wa ʿAbla from 1946 and wanted to produce similar films in Iraq. ʿAntar wa ʿAbla, an adaptation of the life

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[54] al-Mallak, *Nas min Baladina*, 40.
[55] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 193.
[56] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 224-229, Yosef Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 363, Anwar Shaʾul, *Qissat Hayyati fi Wadi al-Rafidayn* (Jerusalem: Manshurat Rabitat al-Jamaʿiyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-ʿIraq fi Israʾil), 100-101, and Adnan Husain Ahmad, "al-Film al-ʿIraqi: ʿAliya wa ʿIssam."

of pre-Islamic hero and poet from the *Muʿallaqat*, ʿAntara Ibn Shaddad al-ʿAbsi, was directed by the Egyptian director Salih Abu Saif, co-written with Naguib Mahfouz, and produced by Studio al-Ahram.

The songs and script for *ʿAliya wa ʿIssam* were written by the Iraqi Jewish lawyer, journalist, poet, and editor of *al-Hasid*, Anwar Shaʿul. Being a poet, Shaʾul initially wrote the script in metered and rhymed verse, but was asked to re-write it since the owners of the studio found it too formal.[57] The al-Kuwaiti brothers composed the music.[58] *ʿAliya wa ʿIssam* was directed by a French director and with French equipment. The actors, however, were Iraqi and came mostly from the theatre. ʿAliya was played by ʿAzima Tawfiq, who in the 1950s opened a nightclub after which she stopped her career as an actress and singer. The Iraqi actor, Ibrahim Jalal, played ʿIssam.[59] Salima Murad also starred in the movie.[60] *ʿAliya wa ʿIssam*, is a Romeo and Juliette-like story about a prince and a princess from two warring Iraqi tribes looking for revenge. It ends with the tragic suicide of the two protagonists. *ʿAliya wa ʿIssam* premiered in Cinema Roxy, owned by the Sawdaʾi family.

The Baghdad Film Company also produced two Turkish films, with a Turkish director and Turkish actors. *Ibn al-Sharq*, appeared already in 1946. It was directed by an Egyptian, Niazi Mustafa, and produced by an Iraqi-Egyptian company called al-Rashid. *Ibn al-Sharq* premiered in Cinema Ghazi and included both Egyptian and Iraqi actors and singers. Another film, *Cairo-Baghdad*, appeared in the same year and was produced by the same company. In 1949, Studio Baghdad also produced the film *Layla fi al-ʿIraq* in partnership with the Danos family, who owned

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[57] Shaʾul, *Qissat Hayyati*, 100-101, Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 364; Latif, "al-Yahud wa Intishar Dawr al-ʿArd al-Sinamaʾiyya fi al-ʿIraq
[58] Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 364
[59] Ibid., 364
[60] ʿAdnan Husain Ahmad, "al-Film al-ʿIraqi: ʿAliya ʿIssam,"

Cinema al-Zawra.ʾ *Layla fi al-ʿIraq* was directed by the Egyptian director Ahmad Kamil Mursi and was shown for the first time in Cinema Roxy in December of 1949.[61] The Rex Nightclub nightclub, owned by the Sawdaʾis, was featured in the movie. Layla was played by the famous Iraqi singer ʿAfifa Iskandar.[62] Collectively, the examples above demonstrate a number of important points. It is outside the scope of this chapter to explore these in detail. However, they deserve to be mentioned while they await further study. First, the existence of joint Iraqi-Egyptian companies and regional cooperation demonstrate that early Iraqi cinema was a transregional affair and that it must be studied as such. Second, the very limited cinema infrastructure in Iraq created a strong link between cinema owners and early film production Third, in the early days of cinema production in Iraq, the industry relied on resources, expertise and, and people from more established forms of leisure, including theater and female singers such as ʿAfifa Iskandar and Salima Murad who started their careers in Baghdad's nightclubs – the topic of Chapter 5.

In the mid and late 1950s, more Iraqi films were produced. These included *Fitna wa Hasan* (1953), *Warda* (1956), *Min al-Masʾul* (1956), and *Saʿid Effendi* (1957).[63] The technical knowledge and knowhow needed to produce Iraqi films was secured by Iraqis such as ʿAbd al-Latif Salih, Yahya Faik, Simʿun Mahran, Majid Kamil and Latif ʿAbd al-Karim who either studied abroad or were trained by the film unit owned by the Iraqi Petroleum Company. Another film unit, operated by the United States Information Service also hired Iraqis to produced newsreel and short film.

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[61] Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 363; Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 190.
[62] Wahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 235. *Layla fi al-ʿIraq* is also the name of a 1939 book written by the Egyptian intellectual Zaki Mubarak: Zaki Mubarak, *Layla al-Marida fi al-ʿIraq* (Cairo: Matbaʾat al-Risala, 1939). For more on Mubarak and the time he spent in Iraq see Orit Bashkin, "The Nile Valley on the Banks of the Euphrates and Tigris: Egyptian Intellectuals in Iraq During the Interwar Period," in *Narrating the Nile: Politics, Cultures, Identities* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 2008),
[63] Mahmud Qasim, *Mawsuʿa al-Aflam al-ʿArabiyya* 1927-2009 (self-published), 1162

Others brought back knowhow from their studies abroad.[64] *Fitna wa Hasan* was directed and produced by two Iraqis, ʿOmar al-Haidar and Yass ʿAli al-Nasir, and also used Iraqi actors and technicians. Yass ʿAli al-Nasir's company, Dunya al-Fann, produced the film. *Warda* was directed by Yahya Faik and produced by The Film Company of Iraq. *Min al-Masʾul* was produced by the Sumair Film Company.[65] The plots of these films, like many of the popular Egyptian films, were romantic and melodramatic.[66]

As described above, from the early 1940s and 1950s, there were several private companies established for the purpose of producing films in Iraq. Out of the few films produced by these, however, only *ʿAliya wa ʿIssam, Ibn al-Sharq,* and *Layla fi al-ʿIraq* seem to have gained commercial success. In spite of such films, Hollywood and Cairo dominated the Iraqi market. This was not because Iraqis were necessarily more attracted to Egyptian and American films, but because very few films were produced in Iraq. While this partially changed when Iraqis gained access to better equipment and technical skills, the lack of funding kept the Iraqi film industry small. In Egypt, knowhow, film infrastructure, and studios, such as Misr Studio, existed already in the early 1930s. Similarly, in Egypt the cinema industry was supported by the Bank Misr Group.[67] In Iraq it was difficult for the private film industry to obtain loans. The Iraqi Development Board, which was in charge of distributing the country's oil revenues, did not support the film industry the Iraqi government did not officially support filmmaking in the country until 1959.[68]

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[64] The film units of the Iraqi Petroleum Company and the United States Information Service were shut down after the 1958 Revolution: Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 193-194.

[65] Ibid., 191-192.

[66] Since only a few of the Iraqi film mentioned above are extant, I am relying, for now, on Allawi's descriptions and summaries. *Min al-Masʾul* (1956), and *Saʿid Effendi* (1957) are available online.

[67] For more on the Bank Misr Group, see Robert Vitalis, "American Ambassador in Technicolor and Cinemascope: Hollywood and Revolution on the Nile," in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*, edited by Walter Armbrust (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 276.

[68] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 203.

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the role of theater in depth, as briefly mentioned above, it is necessary to mention the entangled history and many connections shared by theater and cinema in the country. Not only did theater and cinema spread at the same time, but those invested in the cinema industry often also supported the theater. In addition, Arab cinema, including in Iraq, drew many of its actors from the theater and many of the pioneers of Iraqi theater later worked in film and broadcasting.[69] This lead to a situation in which the cinema and the theater, in addition to competing for audiences, actually depended on each other.

Before the 1920s, theater in Iraq was limited to schools and a small number of traveling theater groups. Beginning in the 1920s, theater, like cinema, entered the public sphere when literary and nationalist clubs performed historical plays about the Arab and Muslim past. At the end of the decade, professional theater groups began to appear.[70] When foreign theater groups began to visit Iraq after WWI, their plays were performed in cinemas. The presence of these groups in Iraq helped create interest in theater in the county's larger cities. When the Lebanese born director and playwright George Abyad came to Baghdad in 1926, his plays, including *Hamlet* and *Julius Cesar*, were staged in Cinema al-Watani. Local children from *al-Tafayyud al-Ahliyya* school played the roles of children in the plays. A few years later, Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese theater groups, include those of ʿAziz ʿAid, Fatima Rushdi, and Yusuf Wahbi followed.[71] With the arrival of Egyptian cinema and theatre magazines, such as *al-Kawakib*, in the late 1920s, the interest in

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[69] Jabbar Audah Allawi, Television and Film in Iraq: Socio-Political and Cultural Study: 1946-1980. PhD dissertation. The university of Michigan, 1983, 188; Sami Abdel Hamid, "The Arab Theatre and Cinema," in *The Cinema in The Arab Countries*, edited by Georges Sadoul (Beirut: Interarab Center for Cinema and Television, 1966), 37.

[70] Yousif Salaam, "The People's Theater of Yusuf al-Ani," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 19:4 (1997): 65.

[71] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad*, 101-102; Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 108-109. For more on Egyptian theater groups in Iraq see ʿAli Muhammad Hadi al-Rabiʿi, *al-Firaq al-Marahiyya al-Misriyya fi al-ʿIraq 1* (Cairo: Isdar khas bimunasabat mahrajan al-masrah al-ʿarabi al-dawra al-hadiyya ʿashra, 2019).

theater further increased and many schools established drama clubs and societies.[72] Beginning in 1934, the Iraqi magazine *al-Funun* dedicated its pages to cinema, theater, and music to meet the growing demand. [73] The Iraqi amateur actor, Haqqi al-Shibli, who had spent a year with Fatima Rushdi's theater group in Cairo formed his own group upon his return to Iraq.[74] A dramatic group was formed already in 1921 and the pioneer of Iraqi theater, Haqqi al-Shibli, formed two groups in 1927. A group was established in Mosul already in 1920.[75] At the same time, an official society for the promotion of theater was established with government funding. Members of the society rented a room in Cinema Royal for their rehearsals and performed plays in Cinema al-Watani.[76]

While Egyptian plays by writers such as Ahmed Shawqi, Tawfiq al-Hakim, and Yusif Wahbi were and continued to be popular, in the late 1930s and 1940s an Iraqi theater began to appear.[77] According to the Palestinian writer and intellectual, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, who spent a large part of his life teaching in Baghdad, during this period, educated Iraqis and recent college graduates flocked to theaters to see local and foreign plays.[78] During this period, government funding for theater also increased and a theater department was established at the Institute of Fine Arts in 1940. The aforementioned Haqqi al-Shibli became head of the department after spending four years studying theater in France.

Like the rest of the public sphere in the 1940s and 1950s, theater became more radical and

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[72] Ahmad Fayyad al-Mafraji, *al-Hayyat al Masrahiyya fi al-ʿIraq*, 3-4.

[73] ʿAli ʿAbd al-Amir*, Raqsat al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhrira: Sabaʿ ʿUqud min Tarikh al-ʿIraq ʿabar al-Ginaʾ wa al-Musiqa* (Milano: Manshurat al-Mutawassit, 2017), 170. I have not been able to locate extant copies of *al-Funun*.

[74] Salaam, "The People's Theater of Yusuf al-Ani," 66.

[75] Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 188. For more on Shibli see Khalid Kishtainy, *Ayyamʿ Iraqiyya* (London: Dar al-Hikma, 2011), 186-193.

[76] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad*, 104.

[77] Salaam, "The People's Theater of Yusuf al-Ani," 66.

[78] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Princesses' Street: Baghdad Memories*. Trans. Issa J. Boullata (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 2005), 80-81.

explicitly political in the early 1950s when personalities such as Yusuf al-ʿAni, Ibrahim Jalal, and Sami ʿAbd al-Hamid established modern theater groups such as *al-Masrah al-Hadith* (The Modern Theater) whose innovative plays were performed at Baghdad's colleges.[79] Yusuf al-ʿAni's interest in theater was inspired by the plays sew in school as a student as well as by the Egyptian movies he watched in Baghdad's cinemas.al-ʿAni' played the protagonist in the 1957 Iraqi film *Saʿid Effendi,* which was one of the first Iraqi films to provide social criticism, albeit in an indirect way.[80] al-ʿAni's career, the inspiration he found in the cinema, and his acting in films such as *Saʿid Effendi* further highlights the strong connection between cinema and theater worlds in Hashemite Iraq. [81]

As mentioned, unlike cinemas, which were from the beginning commercial, many early theaters were connected to schools in Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra. Chapters 1 and 2 described the important role played by of American missionary schools in setting up drama societies and clubs. These schools, however, were by no means the first to introduce theater in Iraqi schools. Schools such as the *al-Tafayyud al-Ahliyya* and *al-Markaziyya* schools staged some of the first performances in Baghdad and opened these to the public. Often, the plays were performed at Cinema Royal and Cinema al-Watani. As was the case with cinema, Iraqi Jews also played an important role in early Iraqi theater. Iraqi Jewish theater was influenced directly by European theater by way of the teachers who came from France, Britian, Turkey and Syria to teach in Iraq's Jewish schools.[82] As in the Christian schools, Jewish schools like the Alliance, the Albert Sasson school for boys, and the Laura Keddurie school for girls played an important role on creating a

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[79] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 91.
[80] Salaam, "The People's Theater of Yusuf al-Ani," 68.
[81] For more on Iraqi theater see also the special volume of *Journal of Contemporary Iraq & and the Arab World* 13:1 (2019), which dedicated to Yusif al-ʿAni.
[82] Salim Abu Jabir, *al-Masrah ʿainda Yahud al-ʿIraq*, 547; Shmuel Moreh, "Hateatron Hayehudi BIrak bmakhazit Harishona she Hameah Haesrim," *Paamim* 23 (1985): 64. See also See also, *Min Arshif al-ʿIraq al-Manhub*, edited by Mazin Latif (Baghdad?), 78-139.

taste for modern theater.[83] Several Iraqi Jews gained fame for their acting. Keddouri Shahrabani was considered one of the most talented Jewish actors and had leading roles in Iraqi productions of *Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, Harun al-Rashid* and *ʿAntar wa ʿAbla*. Other famous Iraqi theater personalities included the brothers Yusuf and Barukh ʿAbbudi, Ibrahim al-Bik, Eliahu Samira, and Shlomo Shamash. The Shalom and Salman Darwish brothers, Anwar Shaʾul, Nissim Mulul, and Salman ʿAbd Allah all translated and wrote plays. Anwar Sha'ul translated *William Tell*, which was performed in 1931 at the *Markaziyya* School in Baghdad.[84] Such plays were performed for Jewish as well and non-Jewish audiences. Many of these personalities, including Eliahu Samira and Nissim Mulul, were teachers or directors of Jewish school.[85] In addition to staging plays, and concerts, Iraqi cinemas also hosted wrestling matches with the famous Iraqi wrestler ʿAbbas al-Dik and others. During the winter months, parties and organizations used cinemas for meetings and congresses.[86]

As this section has shown, cinema, theater, and Iraqi culture more broadly, was fundamentally transregional and global. Equipment and cultural products, including films, performers, theater groups and plays as well as people with technical skills and knowhow visited Iraq from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, India, Europe, and North America. Iraqi cinema culture, therefore, can serve as an example of how transregional and global cultural products, knowledge, and knowhow become localized and embedded in new contexts and modes of leisure. Mobile units travelled the Iraqi country side and cinemas were constructed in urban center across Iraq not long after they had appeared in Europe, North America, and much of the rest of the world. In these

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[83] Jabir, *al-Masrah ʿainda Yahud al-ʿIraq*, 550.
[84] Ibid., 551-552. See also Shaʾul, *Qissat Hayyati*, 100-101, 153.
[85] Jabir, *al-Masrah ʿainda Yahud al-ʿIraq*, 553-554. For more on the characters who played an important role in early Iraqi cinema and theater see Ahmad Fayyad al-Mafraji, *Fananu al-Sinama fi al-ʿIraq* (Beirut: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya lil-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1981).
[86] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 111, 120.

cinemas, foreign films found an audience in Iraqi cinemagoers and the practice of cinema leisure took root in Iraq. Slightly later, when Iraqis learned how to direct and produce films from Egyptian, Lebanese, American and European directors, the global art of cinema became further localized through Iraqi productions.

Cinema Beyond the Screen

Leaving the world of production behind, the rest of this chapter explores cinema as a space of experience and consumption of leisure. The cinema was a space in which Iraqis, regardless of religion, gathered to be entertained, transported, and thrilled by the magic of the screen. As an experience, however, cinemagoing extended far beyond the screen and changed urban spaces across the city. From early on, films were advertised to cinemagoing audiences in Iraq across a range of media, such as newspapers, film magazines, movie posters, publicity stills, flyers, collectibles, and other parafilmic products. In addition, employees of cinemas would either shout out the available titles and screening times in the front of the cinema or walk or ride around town holding up posters and programs. Such characters modified Baghdad's city- and sound-scape. Sometimes, the advertisement staff hired by the cinemas would use horse-driven carriages and later on cars and would hire a band to accompany them on their tour around the city. Some cinemas also used the river for advertisement by hiring boats equipped with posters.[87] As the carriages and cars made their way through the city, they would hand out flyers, which were often produced in English by the foreign film companies, but with space for Arabic translations. The flyers listed the names of all the films shown, the names of actors, a brief summary and the times of the

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[87]Ibid., 111. See also Khalid Habib al-Rawi, *Tarikh al-Sahafa wa al-ʿIlam fi al-ʿIraq* (Damascus: Dar al-Safahat, 2010).

screenings.[88] Since the flyers had pictures on them, children and teenagers would run after carriages, cars, and cinema staff walking around on foot in order to get a flyer. Such flyers became collectibles that Iraqi children and teenagers exchanged with each other.[89]

Figure 18: Tarzan advertisement in *al-Istiqlal* (1935) and weekly cinema column in *al-Hatif* (1948)

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[88] Ibid., 113

[89] Ibid., 179.

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Figure 19: Advertisement in Baghdad, date unknown. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Archive, MIT.

Children also scavenged the floor of the cinema entrance and surrounding areas for old tickets and flyers, which they added to their collections of cinema paraphernalia. When cinema and theater magazines, such as *al-Kawakib* and *al-Sinama wa al-ʿAjaʾib*, arrived from Egypt and Lebanon, those who could afford to purchase them cut out pictures of their favorite actors and actresses. In addition to pictures of cinema stars and musicians, *al-Kawakib* and *al-Sinama wa al-ʿAjaʾib* contained interviews, articles about the plot of films, fashion, and fold-out posters. Some even wrote letters to famous cinema stars asking for signed pictures. Pictures and posters were also sold in shops in Baghdad.[90] The emergence of this star culture in Iraq included Egyptian, Lebanese, and American actors, and happened well before Iraqi films with Iraq stars were produced. This is another reminder of the transregional nature of cinema and the print culture that

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[90] Ibid., 196

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surrounded it. Of equal importance were the colorful posters on display in front of the city's many theaters. Such posters drew people into the cinema and at the same time disrupted pedestrian life causing passersby to stop up, look, and admire the posters that showed both what the cinema was currently screening as well as what would be screened the following week.[91]

In *Memoirs of a Baghdad Childhood*, Victor Sasson devotes many pages to his experiences in Baghdad's many cinemas:

> "The cinema was a great attraction to me as a child, as a teenager. It opened the gates to new, different, and exciting worlds – real or imaginary. Thinking back to my boyhood years, I'm still mystified as to my keen interest in films and film stars. Why was I such an addict to films? I believe my imagination broadened, and the more I saw, the more I wanted to see."[92]

The cinema was also where Sasson had his first "encounters" with the opposite sex. His school was not co-educational, but "the cinema and especially American films that showed actresses with scant clothing opened one's eyes a bit. Betty Hutton or Betty Grable, or some female dancer, scantily dressed, titillated the imagination a little."[93] As we will see in a later section of this chapter, the presence of women on the screen and in magazines *al-Kawakib* and *al-Sinama wa al-ʿAjaʾib*, fueled the sexual imagination and practices of Iraqi boys and men. At the age of 12, Sasson was allowed to visit the cinema on his own. He preferred Roxy, al-Zawraʾ, al-Hamraʾ, and al-Rafidayn on al-Rashid Street.[94] Like many other Iraqi boys, Sasson was a fan of Tarzan movies: "Tarzan films were naturally a staple for Baghdadi Jewish boys. Was there a boy in Baghdad who did not

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[91] Ibid., 175. In ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri's short story "Ghathayan" (Nausea) from 1954, the story's protagonist loiters in front of a cinema while waiting for a pimp, who will take him to a sex worker. Looking at the posters in front of the cinema he is reminded of a lost love. The poster portrays a man and a woman embracing and the protagonist is suddenly overcome with guilt and shame because he's about to meet a sex worker: Nuri, *Nashid al-Ard*, 57-60. See also Caiani and Cobham's reading of Nuri's story: *The Iraqi Novel*, 56-59.

[92] Victor Sasson, *Memoirs of Baghdad Childhood*, 37.

[93] Ibid., 86.

[94] Ibid., 39.

like Tarzan? Was there a child who did not relish his incredible feats against the villains of this world? Johnny Weissmuller and his monkey offered exciting adventure and humor at the same time – an escape from the harsh realities of our lives as children."[95] He also loved the adventure, action, and excitement of Zorro and Flash Gordon films.[96] According to Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, the cinema also served as meeting place for him and his friends. In addition to coffee shops and bars, Jabra and his group of novelist and poet friends would would often meet at Cinema Ghazi.[97]

Sasson also had a keen musical ear and the cinema was where he was introduced to the songs and compositions of Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhab, which he continued to listen to also later in life. Sasson's experience is indicative of that of many other Iraqis who frequented the cinema during this period. According to Kojaman, the cinema, like the radio and later on also television, had an enormous effect on Iraqi musical life and introduced and attracted many to modern compositions and music.[98] American talkies, some of which were musicals appeared in Iraq in the early 1930s. In the mid 1930, the first Egyptian talkies musicals appeared. While audiences generally liked the American musicals, the Egyptian ones had a much bigger impact as cinemagoers could understand the lyrics. In fact, for many cinemagoers, the musical component was often the most important and memorable part of the film.[99]

The cinema also played an important role for young musicians, who would go there to learn and memorize music. At a time when records and gramophones were expensive and formal education in modern music scarce, cheap cinema tickers allowed musicians to watch the same movie enough times to eventually learn the music. "Repeat viewing," as Indian anthropologist

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[95] Ibid., 51.
[96] Ibid., 51.
[97] Jabra, *Princesses' Street: Baghdad Memories*, 80-81.
[98] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 42.
[99] Ibid., 42.

Lakshmi Srinivas has called it,[100] was not restricted to musicians. Rather, as we will see shortly, it was part of the participatory form of spectatorship that characterized cinemagoing. Initially, musicians watched and learned from Egyptian films. Later on, when Iraqi films starring Iraq performers began to appear, amateur musicians also learned form these.[101] Before films and during the 10-15 minute intermission that broke up long films, music would be played to entertain the audience.[102] A small paper slip would be given to those who wanted to leave during the intermission to visit the toilets or purchase snacks or beverages.[103] This ensured that no one could sneak in halfway through the film. In the 1940s, Iraqi radio began to air programs about films and film stars. Iraqi radio also recorded popular Egyptian film songs inside Baghdad's cinemas at a special session with no audience before the premiere of a new film.[104] When Umm Kulthum visited Iraq in 1932, she gave a special concert only for women at Cinema Central.[105]

Abu al-Arbaʿin, *Sinima al-Balash*, and Class

As this section will show, the class-inclusiveness of the cinema brought together Iraqis from all walks of life in a relatively small space. While the experience of the cinema was in some ways collective, since everyone in the audience watched the same film, the classed architecture of the cinema and the differently priced tickets kept cinemagoers apart. Classed architecture aside, the fact that the cinema was a shared space led to clashes between different classed and cultural

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[100] Lakshmi Srinivas, "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India," *Media, Culture, & Society* 24 (2002): 167.
[101] Ibid., 43.
[102] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 182.
[103] Ibid., 177.
[104] Ibid., 193, 18.
[105] Ibid., 110.

notions of cinema etiquette and behavior. At the same time, the anonymity of the cinema allowed for some cinemagoers – or cinema crashers – to sneak in free of charge and disappear in the crowd.

While the cinema became increasingly class and gender inclusive,[106] it remained, however, like most forms of leisure, a classed space. Not everyone had equal access to the cinema. Free time and money for tickets were prerequisites. A student at the elite American Jesuit Baghdad College wrote an essay in the school yearbook about a young boy's struggle to come up with the necessary funds to go to the cinema: "Jim liked to see cinemas, but he found it very hard to see as many as he wished. The difficulty was money. Getting cinema money week after week was the most pressing problem of his life."[107] Jim was lucky, however, and always found a way to convince his mother to pay for his tickets. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, it was not unusual for BC students to give their essay characters very American names. Nissim Rejwan, who spent his youth in Baghdad, was an avid moviegoer in his youth. Fortunately for Rejwan, his aunt had married a wealthy Jewish merchant who owned part of Cinema Royal.

In his memoir, Rejwan describes how he used to loiter in front of Royal before the start of the film. If the cinema was not full, one of the employees, almost all relatives of the owner, let him in.[108] Later in life, Rejwan contributed to the growing culture that surrounded the cinema by writing film criticism and reviews for the English language and pro-British *The Iraq Times*.[109] Rejwan received a free press pass to Baghdad's cinemas and wrote up to four reviews a week. He also wrote book reviews for the paper, including titles on the politics and economics of cinema.[110] The late Sasson Somekh describes in his memoir, *Baghdad Etmol* (*Baghdad Yesterday*) how he

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[106] Elizabeth Bishop, "Politics of Cinema in Hashemite Iraq," *Oriente Moderno* 93 (2013): 105.
[107] *Al-Iraqi*, 1956.
[108] Nissim Rejwan, *The Last Jews in Baghdad; Remembering a Lost Homeland*, 88.
[109] Rejwan's book review written for *The Iraq Times* are printed in this memoir. I have not, however, been able to locate his film criticism and reviews.
[110] Ibid., 159-162.

too received a free journalist's pass in the 1940s when he worked as a film critic for the *al-Nadim* magazine.[111] Victor Sasson, mentioned earlier, describes how he would usually go to the cinema on Saturday afternoons. Sasson's older brother gave him a weekly allowance of 100 fils, which he spent almost entirely on cinema tickets. The cheapest tickets cost 40 fils. This allowed Sasson to watch two movies a weeks and still have a little money left for snacks.[112]

Iraqi government statistics from the 1950s show that the average middle class family of seven spent around 231 fils (the equivalent of around 1 USD) on movie tickets every month.[113] Not everyone was as wealthy or lucky as Jim, Nissim Rejwan, Victor Sasson, and Sasson Somekh and it is safe to assume that poor families spent even less on entertainment and leisure. However, even among recent emigrants from rural parts of Iraq living in the poorest neighborhoods of Baghdad, the cinema was a leisure option used mostly by boys and men from these neighborhoods whenever they had money to spare.[114] For those lacking the sufficient funds to purchase tickets, a number of alternatives were available. The least risky way was to vicariously experience a film by having the plot retold by a friend or relative. Other options involved a considerable amount of risk and planning, but also excitement and thrill. Most cinemas employed guards and watchmen to keep people from sneaking in without having paid.[115] In addition to guards, cinemas also employed cleaning staff, and waiters. Iraqis who owned several cinemas also employed people who would transport the films between the cinemas they owned. Sharing one or two copies between four or

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[111] Sasson Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 152. No copies of *al-Nadim* seem to be extant.
[112] Victor Sasson, *Memoirs of Baghdad Childhood*, 50-51.
[113] Bishop, "Politics of Cinema in Hashemite Iraq," 105-106.
[114] Doris G. Phillips, "Rural-to-Urban Migration in Iraq," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 7: 4 (1959): 417-418.
[115] Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, 1221

five cinemas was an efficient way to save money.[116] Guards and watchmen were not always successful and those willing to take the risk continued to use this as an option.

In addition to the many autobiographical accounts describing cinema leisure, the new urban institution of the cinema was also made a subject matter in the genre of poetry. In 1933 Sadiq al-Hindi, a poet from Najaf published a poem entitled *Sinama al-Afkar* (*The Cinema of Imagination*), in *al-Hatif*. *al-Hatif*, a cultural magazine, was edited by the Shiʻi intellectual Jaʿfar al-Khalili and became one Iraq's most important publications in the 1930s and 1940s. al-Hind's poem blurs the boundaries between cinema as a metaphor and cinema as a concrete experience as it speaks to several of the themes discussed above:

Whenever the fire in me flares up
I find comfort in the cinema of my imagination
It is with me whenever I want it
During my nights and days
I pay no entrance fee
And stay as long as I want
Whatever I desire and wish for
I find it there
Nothing is impossible
And everything can happen
…
In my room on my bed
Behind the closed door and the walls
I have often loved rugged wastelands in the cinema of imagination,
And traversed the depth of oceans
And many a time have I witnessed the passing of centuries
In the span of a single hour.[117]

Unlike the cinemas in cities such as Baghdad, al-Hindi's cinema of imagination could be visited whenever he wished, for as long as he desired, and without having to worry about entrance fees.

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[116] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 15-17.

[117] *al-Hatif*, 1933, 7 July. No information is available abut Sadiq al-Hindi and his career as a poet was likely brief. For more on *al-Hatif* see Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 172-174.

As we saw above, not everyone has equal access to cinema leisure. While the poem uses cinema as metaphor, the metaphor is nonetheless based on an actual experience, namely the difficulty of finding sufficient funds for cinema tickets. Despite my efforts, it has not been possible to establish when cinemas were constructed in Najaf. Al-Hindi's poem, however, suggests that the experience of not being able to afford cinema tickets was not unfamiliar to Najafi youth. This is not, however, the only theme in the poem. Rather, al-Hindi's use of the space of the cinema as a metaphor is also a personal and intimate reflection on the kind of unstructured time that allows for private thoughts and feelings. As in the actual cinema, which is also experienced behind closed doors and walls, al-Hindi's room provided the young poet with a temporary escape. At the same time, the poem can be read as suggesting that the experience of the cinema was one that could be transported back home, revisited, and replayed. In fact, the poem makes it difficult to tell apart the escapism and time travels enabled by cinemagoing and those of private daydreams.

Those cinema lovers not willing to break the law and face the embarrassment of being caught as well as those for whom an imaginary cinema was not enough, had other options. During WWII, the British organized screenings in Baghdad's many residential neighborhoods free of charge. The real purpose of these screenings, which always began with news from the front and calls to support the British and the allied forces, was to bolster support for the British war efforts. After the propaganda, a real film or several short sketches would be shown and it was these that drew the large crowds to the screenings.[118] Films with the Egyptian dancer and singer Badi'a al-

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[118] During the war years, the British tried to politicize leisure in a number of ways. In addition to cinema, smoking also became an arena for politics when the Britishs attempted to persuade the Iraqi government to place pictures celebrating British war efforts during WWII in cigarettes manufactured in Iraq: FO 624/23/26. FO 624/25/506. For more on cinema in the Middle East during WWII see Elizabeth Thompson, "Scarlett O'Hara in Damascus: Hollywood, Colonial Politics, and Arab Spectatorship During WWII," in *Globalizing American Studies*, ed. Brian T. Edwards and Dilip P. Gaonkar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 184–208.

Masabni were particular popular and drew loud applause and cheers from the audience.[119] Iraqi responses to British, and later on also American attempts to politicize cinema leisure will be discussed in detail in the last section of this chapter. Referred to as *Sinama al-Balash* (free cinema), these screenings took place on different days in different neighborhoods, which allowed people with enough free time to potentially go to several screenings. The film would be shown against a wall from a projector loaded on top of a car. Hundreds of people, both young and old attended these screenings and would either stand or bring their own chairs.[120] An industrious female baker in the Safina neighborhood, whose roof perfectly overlooked the screening site, began selling baked goods to the audience and admitted people to her roof, from where the view was better, for a small fee.[121]

The extent of such informal economies enabled my cinemas is not clear. However, informally attending, or at least listening to the music from afar when talkies were introduced, was also an option to those who lived close to Baghdad's many open air cinemas. Somekh, who grew up close to several of Baghdad's open air cinemas, recalls how, during the hot summer months when he and his family slept on the roof of their house, he would be entertained by the music from the nearby cinema. Since many films played for up to two weeks, the young Somekh was able to memorize the complete soundtrack of several films.[122] As few families were able to afford radios and gramophones, many likely took advantage of the ways in which the city's outdoors cinemas

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[119] Fakhri Quduri, *Tufula fi Baghdad ʿala Dafaf Dijla* (London: Dar al-Hikma, 2008), 133. For more on Masabni see Roberta L. Dougherty, "Badi'a Masabni Artist and Modernist: The Egyptian Print Media's Carnival of National Identity," in *Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond*, edited by Walter Armbrust (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 243-268.
[120] Quduri, *Tufula fi Baghdad æala Dafaf Dijla*, 133.
[121] Ibid., 134.
[122] Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 14.

changed the surrounding soundscape. For others, cinema sounds and noises might have been an inconvenience. I have not, however, come across complaints made my neighbors.

Even for those lucky enough to afford tickets or adventurous enough to sneak in, the cinema remained a classed space. This was manifested in the architecture of the cinema. The cheapest tickets cost 40 fils and gave access to a seat on the ground floor. These tickets were mostly purchased by boys and young men and were colloquially referred to as "*Abu al-Arba'in.*"[123] While the *Abu al-Arba'in* seats might have been the cheapest, since they were located on the ground floor, they were also often the coolest before air-conditioning was introduced. A seat on the upper level went for 70 fils. Private loges, which lined the upper balcony in many cinemas, were the most expensive and were usually reserved by wealthy families and couples,[124] who could afford to take out the entire family with all the expenses that this entailed such as transportation to an from the cinema and snacks. At the most expensive cinemas, loges cost as much as 300 fils.[125] Loge reservations could be made in person or via telephone. As such, for those who could afford it and did not find it morally inappropriate, going to the cinema was a family activity. At some of the bigger cinemas, such as Royal, Roxy, al-Zawraʾ, and Ghazi, the loges had five big chairs and velvet curtains.[126] Despite the fact that cinemagoers were divided inside the cinema according to the price they were willing or able to pay for a ticket, the cinema was a class-inclusive space and the cheap *Abu al-Arba'in* tickets meant that most people could occasionally afford to go to the cinema. In addition, discounts for children and students were available at some cinemas and special matinee prices also decreased the price for students.[127] Soldiers only paid half of the price and in

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[123] Najam Wali, *Baghdad: Sirat Madina*, 87.
[124] Sasson, *Memoirs of Baghdad Childhood*, 24, 50-51, Kirtikar, *Once Upon a Time in Baghdad*, 110.
[125] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 63.
[126] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 109.
[127] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 43.

some cinemas, young children were allowed to share a seat for the price of one in the *Abu al-Arba'in* section.[128]

The class-inclusiveness of the cinema space, however, was a cause of annoyance for some cinemagoers. Sami Lawrence, who was a student at Baghdad College, wrote a long essay entitled "Impressions of the Cinema," in the yearbook 1945 BC yearbook. In the beginning of the essay, Sami briefly recounts the history of cinema in Iraq. Chapter 1 showed how students essays at times mimicked conservative, classed, and disciplinary discourses on leisure, time, and productivity. Similarly, in "Impressions of the Cinema," it quickly becomes clear that the young author's intentions are educational. In fact, a large part of his essay is concerned with what he saw as the lack of proper behaviour among some cinemagoers. The stratification and classed architecture of the cinema meant that Lawrence was most likely looking down on the *Abu al-Arba'in* cinemagoers from his seat in one of the loges whenever he went to the cinema. According to Srinivas, in India, where cinemas were similarly divided, "those in the balcony [similar to the loge in Iraq] are able to literally look down on the audience in the less expensive seats and the activities of these viewers become part of the movie experience for the balcony audience."[129] It is possible that Sami too, in a way, enjoyed that the *Abu al-Arba'in* cinemagoers were living up to his negative expectations.

Since many cinemagoers saw the same films more than once, it was not uncommon for people to join in songs they liked and to vocally express their excitement, encouragement or opposition to what took place on the screen. During particularly intense scenes, such as when the hero – referred to by Iraqi audiences as *al-walad* (the boy) – was engaged in fierce battle, some spectators became so emotionally involved that they would throw objects, such as empty bottles,

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[128] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 47.
[129] Srinivas, "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India," 163.

at the villain on the screen.[130] Cinemagoers who had seen a movie more than once would sometimes spoil the plot by shouting, most likely out of excitement, in anticipation of a particularly suspenseful scene.[131] Noise was an integral part of the cinema experience. However, in addition to morning, afternoon, and evening shows, some cinemas offered a midnight show for those who wanted to avoid the noise produced by children.[132] To Sami, laughter and noise were markers of class:

> The behavior of the people in the cinema is generally good. In serious films the silence is absolute, at least in the upper gallery. The rowdy elements are naturally in the lower floor, and then there are scenes of quarrels, shouting etc. They usually join in the excitement with shrieks, laughter and exhortations. The upper gallery remains comparatively calmer.[133]

His essay was eager to stress what he saw a lack of order in the cinema. In his opinion, the lack of proper cinema skills, which is to say the discipline to remain silent, was confined to the "rowdy elements" on the ground floor.

Writing about Egypt and focusing more specifically on sound, Ziad Fahmy has demonstrated that both native and colonial elites employed a "sensory vocabulary" to classify and dismiss the masses. "Common people," Fahmy writers, "were often sonically marginalized by elites as noisy and vulgarly boisterous."[134] In Iraq too, the sonic sensibilities of modernity and leisure referred to by Fahmy were structured by class and elite status and belonging. Highlighting the participation of audiences and the social and cultural contexts in which cinema is consumed in

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[130] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 184; Violette Shamash, *Memories of Eden: A Journey Through Jewish Baghdad* (London: Forum Books, 2008), 166. See also Sasson, *Memoirs of Baghdad Childhood*, 50-51,
[131] Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 106.
[132] Kirtikar, *Once Upon a Time in Baghdad*, 110.
[133] *Al-Iraqi*, 1945.
[134] Ziad Fahmy, "Coming to Our Senses: Historicizing Sound and Noise in the Middle East," *History Compass* 11:4 (2013): 308-309.

India, Srinivas has coined the term ""active spectating."[135] The "interactive and participatory style of viewing, she argues, allows audiences to "adopt a certain spontaneous involvement as viewers shout out comments to the screen, talk to characters, give them advice, and take sides," which allow them to "take over a scene and reconstruct its meaning and impact."[136] Bringing this notion of spectatorship and reception to the Iraqi cinemagoers seated in the *Abu al-Arba ʿin* section allows for a fuller, and less dismissive, understanding of creative and less disciplined spectatorship and engagement with cinema.

In addition to his complaints about the noise emanating from the ground floor and the need for these elements to be educated about proper cinema etiquette, Sami outlined a number of other things that needed to be improved in Baghdadi cinemas. Since seats were not numbered, late-comers had to move from row to row until they found an empty seat obstructing the view and causing commotion in the process. Tardiness was unforgivable to Sami, but he suggested that adding numbers to the seats might ameliorate the problem. While Sami was himself a cinema enthusiast, he warned that "one should not become a cinema addict, as this may lead to expending money and time which might be better employed."[137] It is perhaps unwise to put too much weight on the opinions of one teenager. However, considering his class loyalties and education, Sami most likely meant that it was unwise for the less wealthy among the city's cinemagoers to allow themselves the luxury of going to the cinema too often. Such views demonstrate that cinema leisure reflected larger socioeconomic concerns and anxieties about class, productivity, and morality.

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[135] Srinivas, "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India," 165. See also Lakshmi Srinivas, *House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[136] Ibid., 170.
[137] Ibid., 1945.

Sami also a bone to pick with the level of service inside the cinema. Wishing for a more exclusive and luxurious space, he complained that the waiters serving snacks and refreshments were "improperly dressed" and that "they should all put on uniforms, and each cinema should rival the other with its outfit." Lastly, he suggested that "all cinemas should have a waiting space or lounging room, sitting accommodation for those who arrive early, standing room for others."[138] Sami's views demonstrates that Baghdad's upper classes considered the cinema as a modern space, which they hoped would be distinct from other spaces of leisure. This hope, or fantasy, was based on elitist notions of order and etiquette. Although cinemagoers were divided inside the darkness of the cinema, it is clear from Sami's complaints and suggestions that the cinema in many ways remained class-inclusive and that certain spaces inside as well as outside the cinema had to be shared. In fact, Sami's observations and ideas for improvement, however, were not limited to the interior of the cinema. Referring to impatient "young lads" fighting at the box office to get tickets, he stated that "such disorderly scenes do not create a good impression" and was upset that it was at times necessary for the police to intervene to break up fights.[139]

Women in the Cinema, Women on the Screen

Class, however, was not the only aspect of cinema leisure that caused concern and anxiety. As a novel urban space that brought men and women into close proximity, the gender of cinemagoing and cinemagoers also became a site of contestation. Initially, the experience of going to the cinema was shared mostly by boys and men.[140] This changed, however, when some cinemas,

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[138] Ibid., 1945.

[139] Ibid., 1945. For an interesting study and micro history of cinema, popular culture, and violence in interwar Paris see Smoodin, *Paris in the Dark*, 76-99.

[140] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 109

like al-Rafidayn, began offering gender-segregated showings[141] and Cinema al-Watani reserved

special sections for women.[142] More importantly, however, it changed because Iraqi women and

girls were just as attracted to the magic of the screen as were Iraqi men and boys. As such, the

cinema was not only class-inclusive, but also increasingly gender-inclusive. Aram Seropian, a peer

of Sami Lawrence at Baghdad College wrote a piece in the 1945 yearbook called "Baghdad Then

and Now." In it, he enthusiastically proclaimed that in terms leisure, "Baghdadi society is no longer

a no-woman's land. When the zero hour approaches for the opening of the cinema's booking

office, for example, men and women alike struggle to buy tickets."[143] While Seropian's essay is

perhaps a bit too optimistic, his observation that he cinema was no longer an exclusively male

space is correct, and the cinema also shaped the leisurely life and imaginaries of Iraqi women and

girls. This does not mean, however, that men and women and boys and girls had equal access to

the cinema or that their experiences in the cinema were the same.

In fact, as argued by Thompson, cinemas in Syria and Lebanon during the same period

became sites of moral and normative claims and battles. Christian and Muslim religious groups

campaigned against the presence of women on the screen as well as in the cinema. To quote

Thompson, "as in the United States, it was not only sex on the screen that drew moral censure.

Critics viewed the darkened theaters, where strangers mingled away from the public eye, with

suspicion, especially when women were involved."[144] In the end, however, according to

Thompson, attempts to ban female cinemagoers were not successful.[145] In Iraq too, the cinema,

both as an institution of leisure and as part of a growing public space, became part of debates about

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[141] Wali, *Baghdad: Sirat Madina*, 87. For more on the gender politics of cinema and segregated showings in the context of Syria and Lebanon, see Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 202-209.
[142] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 133.
[143] *Al-Iraqi*, 1945.
[144] Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 204.
[145] Ibid., 206.

the role and presence of women in public. As a space where men and woman met and sat close to each other, the cinema was suspect from the outset.

Victor Sasson mentions in his memoir that "one could hardy imagine an Iraqi Jewish girl interested in a Flash Gordon film or any film that had action and adventure in it."[146] It is clear from Sasson's statement that the content of films shaped ideas about gender and taste. What is also clear, however, is that women and girls did become cinemagoers, their numbers increased, and they watched many of the same films as their male counterparts. Sasson mentions that most women and girls did not visit the cinema unless accompanied by an adult, a male relative, or a husband. There were exceptions, however, and women and girls also went to the cinema on school trips or accompanied by female friends. For girls belonging to wealthier families, going to the cinema was a family activity that allowed for socializing outside of the private home and thus played an important role in the social life of many families. In summer and spring, some families brought their dinner to the open air cinemas, thereby transforming the cinema into a family picnic.[147] In fact, since many women had until then been excluded from most forms of public leisure and entertainment, such as nightclubs and coffee shops, the cinema allowed for women, and children, to participate in public leisure outside of the home.[148] Not all films, however, were considered appropriate for young women and girls. Violette Shamash recalls how as a teenager she was banned from watching certain types of romantic films.[149]

For cinemagoing couples and singles who had money to spend and spare on their appearance, dressing in the latest fashion was part of the ritual of going to the cinema. In fact, in many ways the experience of cinemagoing was as much about being seen as it was about seeing.

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[146] Sasson, *Memoirs of Baghdad Childhood*, 51.
[147] Kirtikar, *Once Upon a Time in Baghdad*, 114.
[148] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 43.
[149] Shamash, *Memories of Eden*, 166.

For men, this included dressing up in one's best suit, ironed shirt, and necktie, newly trimmed hair and beard, polished shoes, and aftershave.[150] The aesthetic repertoire of cinema leisure was often inspired by the films themselves. Orozdi Bek, the large department store on al-Rashid Street, made the latest fashion purchases available for both men and women and young men emulated their heroes by "growing mustachios, slicking, and brilliantinning their hair a la Clark Gable or Humphrey Bogart or ʿAbd al-Wahhab."[151] Chapter one and two described the effects that American culture had on students in Baghdad's American missionary schools and the ways in which popular magazines made new forms of gender identity available. At the same time, images of American, but also Egyptian masculinity and femininity on the screen were also having effects on Iraqi cinemagoers and created new idols, role models, hairstyles, and fashion to be emulated. As such, cinema played an important role in shaping both men's and women's fashion. James Dean hairstyles, particular ways of holding and smoking cigarettes, and the correct way of popping one's collar were all meticulously studied and emulated by cinemagoers in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country.[152] In addition, women and girls would imitate the dance moves they saw in the cinema and would later try them out and practice them at home and with friends.[153] It is interesting to note that although the heroes of the cinema changed, Egyptian stars such as ʿAbd al-Wahhab existed alongside American and British ones with no apparent hierarchy between them. Moving into the late 1940s and 1950s, however, the more rebellious elements among the cinemagoing population found new heroes such as James Dean.

Due to the gender-mixing allowed by the space and darkness of the cinema, romantic encounters did take place there. The loges mentioned above were popular with those couples who

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[150] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 65.
[151] Shamash, *Memories of Eden*,166-168.
[152] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 64.
[153] Ibid., 58.

could afford the momentary privacy offered by a loge. Some loges could be locked from the inside, which provided a level of privacy not easily found elsewhere. The phenomenon of romantic encounters in the cinema was popularized in Iraqi maqam performances during the time and the following line in particular gained fame: "I'll take you to the cinema, seat you in the loge, and with pinches and kisses, I swear to God, I will appease your appetite."[154] However, the cinema was by no means a risk-free space for women. In fact, while it is impossible to determine the extent of the problem, the cinema was a place of sexual harassment and even assault.

With limited access to Iraqi parafilmic archives, sources that can shed light on social practices, including consensual romantic encounters and harassment, have to found elsewhere. While they have to be read carefully and critically, this chapter uses Iraqi memoirs and fiction as a venue for the exploration of some of the anxieties and moral problems and possibilities created by cinemas. ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri's short story, "Kana Dhalika Yawm al-Jumaʿa" ("It was a Friday") from 1956 opens with a familiar scene: A young man finds himself at the entrance of one of Baghdad's cinemas. While munching on *sammun* and *ʿamba*, he scans the movie posters on display and quickly decides to watch a Tarzan film. The Tarzan movies, which tell the story of the strongman of the jungle, are the young man's favorite. After buying a ticket and a bag of seeds from a nearby vendor, the young man enters the smoke-filled cinema in search for a free seat in the crowd of boys, young men, and women. Unlike Tarzan, whose masculinity and prowess is unquestionable, the young male protagonist of Nuri's story is an outcast. Accused of stealing, he has recently been fired from his job a textile factory in Baghdad. Adding to his misfortunes is the fact that his father, who used to dote on him, has recently passed. His mother has remarried and due to a conflict between her and her new husband, he has been left without a home. The young

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[154] Latif, "al-Yahud wa Intishar Dawr al-ʿArd al-Sinamaʾiyya fi al-ʿIraq."

man has come to the cinema to be alone and momentarily escape the precarious situation in which he finds himself. He is quickly brought back to reality, however, when a group of his former colleagues, who are also at the cinema, refuse to let him sit in a free seat next to them. Now in a foul mood, the young man finally finds a seat next to two women, one of whom is smoking a cigarette. When the lights come off and the Tarzan movie begins directly without the usual segment of international news, his spirits are lifted and he finally begins to relax.[155]

When the woman sitting next to him lifts up the veil covering her face, he sees her eyes shining in the darkness and he cannot help but look at her: "her face was small like that of a child and covered in cheap makeup. Around her neck was a big necklace and around her wrist visible under the ʿabaya a lot of different bracelets."[156] Aroused and feeling entitled because of her makeup and jewelry, but too afraid to talk to her, the young man notices that the woman laughs every time the monkey in the film makes a silly move, and he attempts to coordinate his laugh with hers. The woman, however, is busy enjoying the film and talking to her friend and pays him no attention.[157]

Halfway through the movie, as Tarzan is hanging from a tree, the young man stops paying attention to the screen: "I felt a strange warmth running through my right leg and I noticed that the woman's leg was leaning against my leg."[158] Blood rushes to his face and his ears become like "like burning embers."[159] With all his focus now directed toward his right leg, he begins to move it "like someone riding a bicycle."[160] Probably out of fear, the woman's leg remains "frozen"

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[155] ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri, "Kana Dhalika Yawm al-Jumaʿa," 294-295.
[156] Ibid., 295.
[157] Ibid., 295.
[158] Ibid., 296.
[159] Ibid., 296.
[160] Ibid., 296.

(*jamida*).[161] At this point, the young man is so consumed by his lust that only one thing matters: "my only concern was to extinguish this overwhelming desire [*raghba ʿarima*] that was beginning to seriously torture me."[162] Replacing the adventures of Tarzan with a fantasy playing inside his head, he decides to end the torture: "I had to pour out what I had…I had to…at any cost. At this moment, I imagined her naked on the bed, ready to take me inside of her."[163] He begins to touch her arm and then proceeds to place his hand on her leg, quickly moving it further up her thigh and towards her crotch. Most likely terrified and paralyzed by fear as the previously use of the word *jamida* would suggest, the woman keeps her gaze fixed at the screen. Ignoring the woman's silent, but consistent rejection and refusal to reciprocate, the protagonist is determined to continue what has now become an assault: "I wanted to achieve my little goal *(hadafi al-saghir)* at any cost."[164] While the details are not described, it is clear that the young man ejaculates before he manages to penetrate his victim with his fingers: "after that I don't know exactly what happened! Every single part of my body was trembling…I probably finished before I reached the spot that all my dreams focused on."[165] At this moment, the woman begins to scream and forcefully removes his hand all the while cursing at him "in a high voice that broke the silence of the cinema, popcorn flaying out of her mouth."[166] Before anyone is able to react, the young man flees the cinema. Feeling intensely sorry for himself, the young man wanders aimlessly around Baghdad and continues to harass women by staring at their legs. Loved by no one, without a job, and with only enough money to

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[161] Ibid., 296.
[162] Ibid., 296.
[163] Ibid., 296.
[164] Ibid., 296.
[165] Ibid., 296.
[166] Ibid., 296.

buy a single glass of arak, the story ends in a bar next to the river where the young man silently admires the milky-white liquid in his glass.[167]

"Kana Dhalika Yawm al-Jumaʿa" is ambiguous in the sense that ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri frames the young man's situation as one worthy of some level of sympathy. Homeless and without a job, the story's protagonist embodies the precarious life of the Baghdadi working class. More importantly, however, Nuri's story shows that while the cinema was a gender-inclusive space, single women unaccompanied by male relatives, parents, or partners, and women unable to afford a seat in a loge risked becoming victims of harassment and assault. Harassment was by no means limited to the darkness of the cinema. Rather, as public spaces of leisure, with a few exceptions, remained predominantly male, the navigation of these spaces by women was far from risk-free. Last but not least, a third reading of the story is possible. The fact that the story's protagonist inhabits an ambiguous position between sympathy and contempt perhaps reflects Nuri's own anxiety, as middle class male subject, about women participating in public life and leisure. In fact, Nuri's agenda with the story is far from straightforward. On one level, on a different level, the story can be read as a warning about what happens to women who dare (with makeup on nonetheless!) inhabit public spaces of leisure. Such a reading would be in line with Bahoora's analysis of how progressive male writers from the period, including Nuri, used the figure of the prostitute to "articulate the contradictions and anxieties of the historical moment and project their national hopes, fears, and fantasies."[168] Since the figure of the prostitute, according to Bahoora, "existed outside established social and moral regulation, her deployment by men writers reveals an unsettled economy of virtue whereby she could be at the same time intstrumentalized for narrative purposes, pitied, and viewed as a threat to male dominance, suggesting a deeply

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[167]Ibid., 297.

[168] Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute," 44.

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embedded ambivalence toward women's equality and liberation in the cultural imagination."[169] While nothing in "Kana Dhalika Yawm al-Jumaʿa" suggests that the woman is a sex worker, Bahoora's analysis is still apt as it allows us to highlight the masculinist anxiety about equality, liberation, and morality.

Outside of fiction as well, the cinema was a space in which male sexual desire and fantasy often had free rein and could be acted upon. In addition to policing the entrance to the cinema, the guards mentioned earlier in this chapter also policed behavior within the cinema, including drinking, illicit affection, and inappropriate sexual behavior such as masturbation. Sometimes, when scantily-dressed female actors, dancers, and singers featured in Egyptian and American films, the young men occupying the seats closest to the screen in the *Abu al-Arbaʿin* section found an outlet for their desire by masturbating. Some young men, in fact, went to the cinema specifically for that purpose. While such behavior was by no means risk-free, the darkness of the cinema meant that it was not easy for guards to catch the culprits.[170] So widespread was the practice among young men that a slang developed for those who were addicted to the pleasures facilitated by the darkness of the cinema. While the practice was no restricted to one cinema, those engaging in it, sometimes groups of friends, were referred to as *qat Watani – Watani* referring to Cinema al-Watani and *qat* being a slang for masturbation.[171] Cutting out pictures of female actors from magazines such as *al-Kawakib* and *al-Sinama wa al-ʿAjaʾib* allowed some to satisfy their sexual desire and needs in the more private setting of the home.[172] Another option was to purchase the pictures of actresses, which were sold in many shops. As a young man in his early twenties, the Iraqi Najafi-born poet,

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[169] Ibid., 44.
[170] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 65-66. For more on the practice of male masturbation in Iraq see Olsen, "Cruising Baghdad," 29-31.
[171] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 134.
[172] Ibid., 196.

Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, visited Baghdad for the first time in 1921. His visit, which is described in his memoir, left on him an indelible impression. In addition to his admiration of the capital's many cars and "the beautiful unveiled Christian girls walking the streets of Baghdad," al-Jawahiri makes mention of cinema culture. Referring to himself as the "Najafi Columbus" and comparing his visit to Baghdad to "the first time an Arab visits Paris," al-Jawahiri recalls purchasing two pictures, which was all he could afford, of American actresses from a shop in Baghdad. He carried the pictures back to Najaf like a trophy.[173]

Concerned about public moral and propriety, some cinema owners took steps to avoid inappropriate behavior in the cinema. Once in the city of al-Kut, the owner of Cinema Sayyid Sallum cut out a particularly alluring scene from an American movie. The scene in question featured a female actress who loses her bikini bottom while swimming in a pool. Rumors of the scene spread quickly among the boys and men of al-Kut, and the large crowds that descended on Cinema Sayyid Sallum forced its owner to cut out the scene.[174]

Focusing on the reception of the themes of corporeal gratification and transgressive sexual desire in the poetry of Husayn Mardan, Bahoora has described how government censorship and emerging bourgeois cultural values and interest in public morality combined to regulate what could be published.[175] The example of non-state censorship carried out by an owner of a cinema shows that Bahoora's insights can be applied to cinema culture. However, because of the darkness and anonymity offered by the cinema, it was a place in which the boundaries of public morality and propriety could be tested and transgressed. While censorship did exist, as we will see in the following section, behavior inside the cinema was much more difficult to police. In other words,

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[173] Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, *Mudhakarati*. Al-Juzaʾ Awwal (Najaf: Dar al-Majtaba, 2005), 108-110.
[174] Ibid., 61.
[175] Haytham Bahoora, Baudelaire in Baghdad: Modernism, The Body, and Husayn Mardan's Poetics of the Self," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45:2 (2013): 313-329.

while politically and morally problematic poetry and film scenes could be banned or cut out, and while alert cinema guards and watchmen observed the audience, the bodily response of cinemagoers to what they saw on the screen could not completely be controlled. This made the cinema, and by extension cinema leisure, a space of potential escape and sexual gratificadin, in which some men could momentarily lose oneself and abscond.[176]

Politics, Propaganda, and Pedagogy

Compared cafés, which will be explored in the following chapter, as a space of leisure, the cinema was less susceptible to the multiplicity of overlapping uses, including different forms of labor, that characterized the coffee shop. With the exception of its gender-inclusivity described above, which was not a feature of café leisure, the cinema was predominantly a space of leisure and entertainment. This does not mean, however, that the cinema was not also a political space. The names of Iraq's many cinemas reflected the changing political tides and currents in the country. During the Hashemite period, many cinemas carried names such as Royal, Regent, Rex, and Ghazi, and it was standard for cinemas to show a picture of the king and play the national anthem before the start of a film. This practice came to an end with the 1958 revolution. At the same time, many cinemas changed their English or royal-sounding names, even if they were not directly related to the Iraqi monarchy, to more politically appropriate ones. Several cinemas chose the name al-Jumhuriyya. Cinema Broadway on al-Rashid Street became Cinema Alladin, and Cinema Metro changed its name to Cinema al-Ahram.[177] Some of these changes, however, took place already in 1948 after *Wathba* when Baghdad began a campaign to Arabize shops with foreign

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[176] For more on the cinema as a place of escape see for example Shakir Khusbak's short story "Saif" (Summer) in his 1948 collection of short stories *Siraʿ: Qissas ʿIraqiyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikra, 1948).
[177] Ibid., 46, 145, 151.

names.[178] The names of cinemas at certain times reflected the political leanings of their owners. Habib al-Mallak, who was an admirer of Egyptian films and pan-Arab nationalism, changed the names of many of the cinemas he owned in accordance with his admiration for Egypt. In 1955, before the Baghdad pact was signed, the Iraqi government was eager to garner support and distance themselves from Egypt and al-Mallak was asked to change the name of one of this most popular cinemas, Cinema al-Qahira, something which he refused. al-Mallak continued to use his cinemas politically. In 1968, after his Cinema al-Rusafi had been rebuilt after a fire, al-Mallak donated all the profits from the first week to the PLO.[179]

In fact, as this section will show, cinema and films were used and mobilized politically and pedagogically in ways that were both subversive, educational, and propagandistic at the same time. In her study of cinema in French mandate Syria and Lebanon, Thompson has described how cinemas were used for communist and labor union meetings as well as how they became "a node of confrontation between colonizer and colonized, between Western cultural influence and indigenous audiences."[180] In Iraq, the cinema also became part of larger struggles, collective action and mass politics. In the mid 1930s, a month-long strike and boycott of the British-owned Baghdad Electric Light and Power Company, due to its high rates, brought together socialists, communists, and nationalists and in addition to private homes and shops, many of Baghdad's cinemas also boycotted the services of the company.[181]

For some, the cinema offered examples and role models through and with which to advance local and regional cultural and political agendas such as the status and education of women. Already in 1922, the Iraqi poet Ibrahim Munib al-Pachachi published a poem called "To the White

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[178] Wahid al-Shahiri, "Shariʿa al-Rashid wa Sinamaʾihu," 230.
[179] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 13.
[180] Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 200.
[181] Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, 209-210; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 56.

Pearl" (*Ila al-Luʾluʾa al-Baidaʾ*) in the Iraqi daily *al-ʿIraq*. The poem, written in the rhymed and metered style of neo-classical poetry, is a tribute to the American actress, Pearl Fay White. Before turning to cinema, White performed as a singer in casinos and dance halls in the US and Latin America. Beginning in 1914 she gained fame for her acting in serials, many of which were released twice a week, such as *The Perils of Pauline*, *The Exploits of Elaine*, *Pearl of the Army* and several more. In many of her films, White, who did her own stunts, flew planes, drove cars, beat up villains, fired guns, and performed a number other actions normally associated exclusively with men and male characters.[182] In addition to her unveiled beauty, which he describes at length, al-Pachachi found in White a symbol that he used to argue in favor of unveiling, the liberation of women, and the education of girls, not just in Iraq, but all over the east (*al-sharq kulluhu*).[183] Addressing White in the second person singular, al-Pachachi speaks directly to the actress: "You're far away from me," he tells her, but "In the cinema (*masrah al-khayyal*) I see you." Describing her appearance on the screen in the darkness of the cinema, al-Pachachi continues: "In the night you're a planet of brightness / shinning a divulging light / on the meanings of the revelation of beauty / like the red rising morning sun."[184] In the last two lines of the last stanza, al-Pachachi makes a plea: "If I were given the opportunity, I would wish / to see female teachers in all the east / To build up boys and girls / in the knowledge illuminates both halves"[185]

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[182] For more on Pearl Fay White see for example Robert Mchenry, *Famous American Women: A Biographical Dictionary from Colonial Times the Present* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), 440; Rudmer Canjels, "Changing Views and Perspectives: Translating Pear White's American Adventures in Wartime France," in *Exporting Pauline: Pearl White and the Serial Film Craze*, edited by Marina Dahlquist (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 25-45; Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 50-116.
[183] *al-ʿIraq*, 1 January 1. 1922, 12. I would like to thank Kevin Jones for sharing al-Pachachi's poem with me.
[184] Ibid., 12.
[185] Ibid., 12.

But leisure was also politicized inside the cinema. Throughout the 1930s, several cinemas screened the popular Tarzan movies. In 1935 Cinema al-Rashid showed The New Adventures of Tarzan with Herman Brix starring as Tarzan.[186] In 1937, the same cinema screened the, according to an ad, much awaited Return of Tarzan, which had been seen by "most audiences in cinemas from East to West" and which had kept most people asking "what happened to Tarzan? Did he return to the forest?"[187] Tarzan and other European films were popular in Baghdad, and as shown earlier, offered up of new notions and images of male and female bodies. Not neglecting the racial politics of the films, Edward Said, who grew up watching Tarzan films in Cairo, has written about his appreciation for the Tarzan films staring Johnny Weissmuller in particular.[188]

Other scholars have explored how the jungle film genre, and Tarzan films in particular, embodied fantasies of racial, colonial, and imperial power in the context of imperial decline after WWI. Emerging in 1918 with the adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs's novel, *Tarzan and the Apes*, these films also reflected racial relations within European and American societies.[189] Ifdal Elsaket has explored how Egyptians, who were themselves fighting colonialism while at the same time attempting to create an empire in Sudan, reacted to and adapted the genre.[190] Looking specifically at two Egyptian jungle films, namely *Wadi al Nujum* (1943) and *Naduja*

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[186] *al-Istiqlal*, 25. December, 1935.

[187] *al-Istiqlal*, 27. December, 1937.

[188] Edward Said, "Jungle Calling," in *Reflections on Exile, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 327-36.

[189] See for example *Global Perspectives on Tarzan: From King of the Jungle to International Icon*, edited by Annette Wannamaker and Michelle Ann Abate (London: Routledge, 2012); Alex Vernon, *On Tarzan* (Athens: Georgia University Press, 2008); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[190] Ifdal Elsaket, "Jungle Films in Egypt: Race, Anti-Blackness, and Empire," *Arab Studies Journal* 25:2 (2017): 8-32. See also Joel Gordon's reading of the Egyptian film *Isma'il Yasin Tarzan* (1958) in which Tarzan's jungle is located in Sudan: Joel Gordon, "River Blindness: Black and White Identity in Early Nasserist Cinema," in *Narrating the Nile: Politics, Identities, Cultures*, edited by Israel Gershoni and Meir Hatina (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), 147-151.

(1944), Elsakat argues that the two films partially undid the binary of colonizer and colonized by producing Egyptian superiority by juxtaposing it to African and Sudanese blackness, otherness, and inferiority.[191]

In "Riwayat Bint al-Qamar," a short story from 1922 by the Iraqi leftist writer and journalist, Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, the narrator finds himself in a cinema, observing the audience during an evening show: "The images are moving, music is playing, and people are clapping out of excitement and happiness. Why are they clapping? Because the white guy is attacking the black guy, because the westerner beats the easterner with his shoe, and because an American officer humiliates an African leader."[192] Continuing his observations, the narrator directs his inner monologue at the audience: "This is what the writer of the script and the cinema company wanted…, but you, people of the East, how do you not see and understand? Why do you laugh at yourselves?"[193] The following night, the narrator returns to the cinema accompanied by a group of friends to watch the same film. During the film, they remain silent when the rest of the audience applaud the action on the screen. They begin to clap loudly, however, when the Africans (*sud al-wujuh*) in the film "struggle and defend their huts and ruins to the last breath."[194] Al-Sayyid's narrator, as described above, is distressed when he realizes that his compatriots are cheering and applauding when westerners ridicule or win battles over black Africans. However, in the second part of the story, the narrator and his peers take revenge by clapping when the Africans are fighting. On this level, the story can be read as a call to anti-colonial solidarity as it offers an outspoken critique of western colonial and racist culture through the politicization of leisure. It is not clear

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[191] Ibid., 9.
[192] Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, *al-Aʿmal al-Kamila li Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid*, edited by ʿAli Jawad al-Tahir and ʿAbd al-Ilah Ahmad (Baghdad: Dar al-Hurriyya, 1978), 230.
[193] Ibid., 230.
[194] Ibid., 231.

whether the film described in the short story is a real one or a product of al-Sayyid's imagination. What is interesting, however, is the way in which the short story politicizes cinema leisure, spectatorship, and reception. In the late 1960s, using the example of Tarzan, Fanon theorized colonized cinematic spectatorship and identification in *Black Skin, White Masks*:

> In the Antilles the young negro identifies himself de facto with Tarzan against the Negroes. This is much more difficult for him in a European theatre, for the rest of the audience, which is white, automatically identifies him with the savages on the screen.[195]

Al-Sayyid's fictional intervention into identification and spectatorship, albeit less theoretical than that of Fanon writing exactly thirty years later, is a clear indication that the colonial and racial politics of cinema did not go unnoticed in Hashemite Iraq. In her recent work on the transregional networks, solidarity, and multilingualism that characterized Iraqi culture both during and after the mandate, Bashkin similarly explores "Riwayat Bint al-Qamar" as part of al-Sayyid's attempts to create a new social consciousness among Iraqi peasants and the working classes through literature.[196] Bashkin convincingly suggests that "Riwayat Bint al-Qamar" shows how "the cinema offered to its Arab audience an opportunity to resist Orientalism *collectively*"[197] and further connects this to al-Sayyid's search for an Iraqi and third world canon of literature.[198]

In fact, several of al-Sayyid's other short stories, such as those found in the two collections *Hayyakil al-Jahal* and *al-Qalam al-Maksur*[199] from 1923, take up similar topics. Stories such as

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[195] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), 152-153. See also *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*, edited by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 26-27.

[196] Orit Bashkin, "On Eastern Cultures: Transregionalism and Multilingualism in Iraq, 1910-1938, in *Migrating Texts: Circulating Translations Around the Ottoman Mediterranean*, edited by Marilyn Booth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 122-148. See in particular pages 133-135.

[197] Ibid., 134.

[198] Ibid., 136-142.

[199] Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, *al-Aʿmal al-Kamila li Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid*, edited by ʿAli Jawad al-Tahir and ʿAbd al-Ilah Ahmad (Baghdad: Dar al-Hurriyya, 1978)

"al-Kutub," the opening story of *Hayyakil al-Jahal*, criticizes the popularity of cheap Arabic translations of European and American novels in Iraq. Referring in particular to the cheap Tarzan novels offered by the book-peddling street vendors in Baghdad, the narrator of "al-Kutub" calls such novels "superstitious and cock and bull stories."[200] Returning in a depressed state after having perused the books available in Baghdad, the narrator, in the solitude of his own library, finds solace in a book entitled *The Art of Modern Writing*. After having read a particularly agreeable section, he says out loud: "We must discard all the superstitious literature, detective novels, and romantic stories that have come to us like a stream from the west [*bilad al-afranj*]."[201] The story elucidates what, from the perspective of al-Sayyid, what was considered worthwhile and legitimate reading materials. In addition, the narrator's statement offers a swift and harsh judgment of cultural products as potential extension of western colonialism and influence.

As mentioned earlier, Tarzan novels and later on Tarzan films, which reached Iraq already in the 1930s, were extremely popular in the country. Protest by al-Sayyid and other like-minded Iraqis did little to change this. However, it is worthwhile to acknowledge that already in the early 1920s, Iraqis like al-Sayyid were aware of both the dangers and potentials of politicized leisure. It was not just Tarzan movies that elicited a critical response from Iraqi audiences. The many Hollywood-produced cowboy movies screened in Iraq let some cinemagoers frame the cowboys as the plunderers of native lands and therefore the *real* savages.[202]

Subversive behaviour in the cinema was not restricted to fictional narratives. A report from the American Embassy in Baghdad mentions that that during a 1932 film screening of a British film about WWI, the audience would applaud every time a British soldier was killed.[203] As

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[200] Ibid., 225-226.
[201] Ibid., 226.
[202] Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq*, 72.
[203] Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars*, 141.

evidenced by al-Sayyid's nationalist and anti-colonial view on the politics of cinema and as demonstrated by Bishop, "Cinemas (and the films screened within them) was also situated at the center of larger political developments."[204] This continued well after independence. The British, and later on also the Americans in Iraq, actively used cinema as a political tool. In the cinemas in Iraq's urban centers, short films and newsreels made by the Imperial News of British Pathé about the development and modernization of Iraq, Britain's role in the country, and news from the front during the war years were shown before films. In the 1950s, the US began to challenge the monopoly that Britain had until then had on the newsreel market.[205] But Britain and the US also centered their efforts on areas outside of Baghdad. British intelligence officers in Iraq screened films in rural and tribal areas of Iraq. Using a travelling cinema van equipped with a projector, speakers and a generator, they screened films, clips of the Iraqi royal family, the Iraqi national anthem, and sold pro-British magazines such as *Britain Today.*[206] Beginning in early 1950s, the American embassy in Baghdad also equipped a mobile cinema van which was sent to northern Iraq. Like the British, the Americans, through the US Information Services (USIS) used the screening of films as an opportunity for political influence. Short films on topics such as global security and defense and the dangers of Communism preceded the films shown by the cinema van. It was hoped that such films could at a later stage also be shown in the cinemas of Baghdad.[207]

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[204] Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 126; Mahdi, *Sinamat al-ʿIraq,* 194.
[205] Ibid., 118.
[206] Alec Stirling, "Bringing Cinema to Southern Iraq, 1952" in *The Arabists of Shemlan: MECAS Memoirs, 1944-1978,* Edited by Paul Tempest (London: Stacey International, 2006), 66-67; Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 114.
[207] American Embassy, Baghdad, to State Department, 16 May 1952. "Proposed Information Program for Iraq," National Security Archives. George Washington University. Accessed Jan 22, 2020, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/ NSAEBB78/pr0paganda%20 062.pdf; Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 115-117.

Using both British and US official sources, Bishop has shown that the anti-communist propaganda of mobile and travelling cinema vans and units was ineffective.[208] In fact, several reports show that mobile film units were frequently attacked. During the summer in 1951 in Najaf, an angry crowd of spectators, including both men and women, attacked a British cinema van with rocks and bricks destroying the projector and damaging the van.[209] In 1954, a group of young men and students in Halabja, which according to the report, ranked next to Najaf "in the degree of organization and activity among young communists,"[210] were jailed after they attacked a British mobile cinema. Wearing red handkerchiefs and ties, the demonstrators caused such a scene that local authorities informed a cinema crew from the American embassy that they would have to leave the city.[211] In several other towns and villages, demonstrators also attacked mobile cinemas with stones.[212]

Beginning in the 1950s, twice a week, a travelling cinema van from the US embassy visited the al-Salman village, in which the infamous Nuqrat al-Salman prison, which imprisoned many Iraqi political prisoners, was located. The travelling cinema screened American anti-communist propaganda films and the embassy staff gave lectures about the dangers of communism to the prison guards and other staff members. While anti-communist sentiment was most likely already wide-spread among the prison staff, the screenings at Nuqrat al-Salman seems to have been more

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[208] Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 115-117.

[209] Stirling, "Bringing Cinema to Southern Iraq, 1952," 68-69; Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 118.

[210] American Embassy, Baghdad, to State Department, 5 April 1954, "Report of PAO Dinsmore Shows Extent of Communist Organization in Suleiman Liwa", National Security Archives, George Washington University. Accessed January 22, 2020, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsar chiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/propaganda%20i2i.pdf

[211] American Embassy, Baghdad, to State Department, 5 April 1954, "Report of PAO Dinsmore Shows Extent of Communist Organization in Suleiman Liwa", National Security Archives, George Washington University. Accessed January 22, 2020, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsar chiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/propaganda%20i2i.pdf

[212] Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 117.

successful than the other mobile cinemas sponsored by the US embassy. According to ʿAbd al-Jabbar Wahbi, a former inmate at Nuqrat al-Salman, after the screenings, the prison guards would be riled up and would yell anti-communist slogans, sing anti-communist and pro-monarchy songs, and insult and threaten the prisoners.[213] According to Wahbi, one of the outcomes of the films was that the prison guards came to see all prisoners as communists and that they treated them accordingly.[214]

Iraqi officials and politicians were aware of how the British and the Americans mobilized cinema across the country. At the same time, they also embraced the modernizing, pedagogical, and propagandistic potential of cinema in specifically Iraqi ways. As described in chapters one and two and as demonstrated by Pursley, teachers and bureaucrats in the Iraqi education system were concerned with the failure of schools to sufficiently regulate and fill the free time of students with activities that would advance both youth and nation. According to Pursley, in the eyes of these bureaucrats and officials, "the postwar spread of print culture and other forms of entertainment, especially the cinema, had all combined to facilitate dangerous potentials and unregulated mobilities for adolescents once they exited the schoolyard."[215] Similarly, Bashkin has demonstrated that, by Iraqi intellectuals close to the state "cafés, nightclubs, cinemas, and theaters were negatively depicted as institutions encouraging idleness" and how the cinema in particular was seen "as a center of immoral activities," which led to a government ban on certain films thought to have harmful effects on Iraqi audiences.[216]

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[213] ʿAbd al-Jabbar Wahbi, *Min Aʿmaq al-Sujun fi al-ʿIraq* (Najaf: Muʾassat al-Nabras, 2003), 55-56.
[214] Ibid., 55.
[215] Sara Pursley, *A Race Against Time: Governing Femininity and Reproducing the Future in Revolutionary Iraq, 1945-63* (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2012), 231. See also Bashkin, "When Muʾawiya Entered the Curriculum," 347-365.
[216] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 173.

Some of the opposition to cinema leisure was rooted in a combination of moral and medical concern. In February of 1950, 26 cases of meningitis were reported in Baghdad. When the total number of cases reached 40, Iraqi health authorities encouraged the public to avoid crowded places. The following year, Iraqi health authorities gave orders to disinfect cinemas between shows.[217] In 1934, the Ottoman-educated Iraqi medical doctor, Fa'iq Shakir, gave a speech to the Iraqi Children's Welfare Society about syphilis and other venereal diseases. Acknowledging the lack of statistics, Shakir nonetheless lists twenty reasons why he believes that venereal diseases are wide spread in Iraq. In addition to the hot and passion-inducing Iraqi climate, lack of knowledge about venereal diseases, lack of hygiene, such as the sharing of glasses and cops in coffee shops, and the scarcity of health care facilities in Iraq, Shakir also blames a number of social practices, products, and institutions of leisure. In Shakir's opinion, brothels, venues of dancing such as hotels and nightclubs, which he links to sex work, alcohol, indecent and revealing clothing, the marriage crisis, and the availability of indecent novels, magazines, and images sold "under the pretext (*taht sitar*) of being works of art," all corrupt and lead Iraqi male and female youth astray.[218] Shakir also had a bone to pick with the cinema. The many scenes including "encounters of desire" (*waqaʾiʿ al-gharam*) and the frequency of kissing and flirting scenes in the films shown in Iraq, Shakir argued, would arouse lewd feelings (*al-hiss al-shahwani*) among Iraqi cinemagoers.[219] His real fear was that such feelings would be acted upon. While a direct link between the cinema and venereal diseases remains unverified, as we saw earlier, Shakir was not wrong about the link he established between cinema and desire.

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[217] Bishop, "Politics of Cinema," 123-125.
[218] Faʾiq Shakir, *al-Amrad al-Zuhariyya* (Baghdad: Matbaʿt al-ʿAhd, 1934), 6-10. I would like to thank Sara Farhan for drawing my attention to the writing of Faʿiq Shakir, which she kindly shared with me.
[219] Ibid., 7.

This does not mean, however, that censorship and attempts to supervise and control cinema was the goal only of those close to the state. As demonstrated by this chapter's reading of al-Sayyid's writings, intellectuals on the left also imagined the cinema as a tool, not unlike the press, literature, and the education system, which could be used for educational and ideological purposes. As a result, the role of the cinema was debated on the pages of Iraqi journals and magazines. [220] For example, writing about the Iraqi social democratic *al-Ahali* group, Bashkin has noted that their *shaʿbiyya* platform, which sought to create a social-democratic state with freedom and economic security for all citizens, included vision of a state that would fairly distribute land, offer free medical care, education, but also leisure spaces such as libraries, cinemas, theaters, and music halls.[221]

Teachers were also interested in the cinema. At Baghdad College, teachers embraced the pedagogical and educational potential of Hollywood and assigned films such as Orson Welles' *Macbeth* instead of homework.[222] As described in chapter one, Baghdad College also took boarding students to the cinema once a week and used cinema tickets as prizes in both athletic and academic competitions. The aforementioned Sami Lawrence, who was a student at Baghdad College, complained that the Iraqi government did not embrace the educational potential of cinema: "There is even now," Lawrence wrote in 1945, "no obligation imposed by the Government to display any percentage of educational, scientific or hygienic films."[223] Instead of cinema proprietors selecting films based only on the interest of local audiences, Lawrence hoped that the Iraqi government would enforce a percentage, however small, of

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[220] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 56.
[221] Ibid., 67. See also Amin, *Jamaʿat al-Ahali*, 87-88; Wakil, *Jamaʿat al-Ahali*, 163-164; ʿAbd al-Darraji, *Jaʿfar Abu al-Timman*, 493-496; Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, 72.
[222] Bishop, "The Politics of Cinema," 103-104.
[223] *Al-Iraqi*, 1945.

educational, industrial and hygienic films such as poultry farming, date-packing, tinned-food industry, sheep dipping, campaigning against malaria and other tropical diseases. People may not enjoy them all, but surely mothers, cultivators, and teachers will derive some benefit from them. Our practices in matters of agriculture, dairies, and local crafts are still on the primitive side; they must be modernized as soon as possible and the cinemas should contribute to this end.[224]

Recognizing both the modernizing and the educational potential of cinema, Lawrence saw in the cinema an untapped potential that could be used to shape his many countrymen and women, who spent their leisure time in the darkness of Iraq's many cinemas. Lawrence also complained that Iraq had not yet begun producing films. He was convinced that the demand for Iraqi films was already present in the country. He based this on the fact that whenever films of local Iraqi military manoeuvers, Boy Scout parades, and inauguration ceremonies were shown in Baghdad, "they have been warmly applauded, as they satisfy so much the national pride and enhance prestige here and abroad."[225] An Iraqi film industry, Lawrence claimed, like the Egyptian one before it, could render a great service to the Arab world and challenge Iraq's "spirit of enterprise."[226]

Conclusion

As hoped for by Lawrence, Iraqi cinema did eventually produce specifically Iraqi images of the Iraqi nation and its past. As this chapter demonstrated, however, only a handful of Iraqi films were produced during the Hashemite period. This meant that Egyptian and Hollywood productions dominated Iraq during this period. In this sense, cinema in Iraq was a transnational and transregional affair. In fact, this chapter has shown the extent to which the cinema, as a form of leisure, was decidedly transnational and transregional in terms of the films shown, the trade and import networks that brought film and equipment to Iraq, as well as the people and expertise

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[224] *Al-Iraqi*, 1945.
[225] *Al-Iraqi*, 1945.
[226] *Al-Iraqi*, 1945.

involved in the production of the first Iraqi films. More broadly, this chapter argued that cinema in Iraq can best be understood as the local version of a story of global modernity. In many ways, there is nothing specifically Iraqi about this story. However, as a local affair with global connections, this chapter focused on the ways in which Iraqi cinemagoers engaged with and responded to the new medium as well as the ways in which the cinema changed the Iraqi city- and sound-scape. Similarly, while censorship is part of the global history of cinema, attempts to control cinema leisure by the Iraqi state, the British, and the Americans reflected local politics, colonial concerns, and cold war anti-communist propaganda. At the same time, critical reception and attempts to politicize cinema leisure by the Iraqi left reflected the Iraqi political climate of the period.

The history of cinema in Iraq is related to and entangled in other modes and form of leisure. Iraqi theater and cinema, as this chapter argued, both inspired and competed with each other. At the same time, theater provided actors for the first Iraqi films. Other actors came from the world of Iraqi music with which the cinema also had strong connections. Even before the emergence of talkies in the 1930s when silent films were accompanied by live music, Iraqi cinema was intimately connected to music. Iraqi composers wrote the music for the first Iraqi films and music, both western, Egyptian, and Iraqi was a central part of the cinema experience. In addition to radio and record, the cinema played a key role in popularizing songs. This link was further strengthened in the 1940s and 1950s when Egyptian music and cinema stars gave concerts in Iraq.

This chapter demonstrated that although traveling and mobile cinemas existed for both leisurely and propagandistic purposes, throughout Iraq, cinema was an entirely urban phenomenon confined Iraqi urban centers. The main focus of this chapter was Baghdad. Baghdad is where cinema leisure first became available and where most of the country's cinemas were located. As

an urban form of leisure, cinema became one of the first and most popular examples of mass entertainment. In addition to being an urban form of leisure, cinemagoing was also a public form of leisure, which, unlike drinking coffee or reading, could not be enjoyed at home. Groups of friends, families, and solitary cinemagoers who wished to momentarily escape the routine of their daily life all frequented the cinema. While the classed architecture of the cinema kept some of these groups apart, the low price of tickets meant the most Iraqis could afford to occasionally visit the cinema. In addition to offering a form of leisure in which women and families could take part, the cinema also shaped notions of gender through the images it projected. Still, as this chapter showed, the cinema also offered a degree of anonymity and privacy. The cinema, as demonstrated by this chapter, was used for multiple purposes including plays, political congresses, concerts, and wrestling matches. The next chapter examines café leisure, which in terms of its spatial politics, was much more fluid.

Chapter 4: Cafés: Leisure, Labor, and Literature

As we saw in the previous chapter, Iraqi students, such as Sami Lawrence at BC, wrote about cinemagoing and cinema culture. Student interest in Baghdad's institutions of leisure, however, was not restricted to the cinema. In 1945, a BC student wrote a long article about cafés[1] in his school's yearbook. "Baghdad Then and Now," as the article is called, extols the dramatic changes that, according to the author, had taken place in Baghdad with in the last three decades. Gone are the "irregular and dim" streets, the shapeless houses "made of dried mud without architectural features," the "primitive transportation system," and the "despotic" rule of fathers and elders."[2] In contrast to the modern and technically sophisticated capital that Baghdad has become, the young author only mentions one redeeming quality about Baghdad of the past:

> Coffee shops, however, did exist and were the beating heart of the population. Rain or shine, day after day, the Baghdadi sat in the coffee shop, turning the pages of his life leisurely, giving his cares to the rising smoke, and ending his day with a personal anthem, 'Inshallah' to see the same friends in the same place on the morrow. Such was Baghdad thirty years ago![3]

Comparing Baghdad of the past to the city he presently inhabits, the author has nothing but praise for the city's transformation. Baghdad now exhibits paved and illuminated streets, "symmetrically arranged and fashionably modelled" houses, doctors, hospitals, and new schools as "abundant as gambling clubs in Monte Carlo."[4] In the midst of this whirlwind of dramatic change and progress, one institution, however, has remained a pillar of urban life and is given special attention by the author:

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[1] As we will see throughout this chapter, cafés are referred as "coffee shops," "coffee houses," and "cafés" by different authors. In the interest of consistency, this chapter uses the term café.
[2] *Al Iraqi*, 1945.
[3] Ibid., 1945.
[4] Ibid., 1945.

> As for the coffee shops, they continue to possess their traditional atmosphere, for they are one of the unchangeable, fundamental characteristics of any oriental city. They are still the place where shouting is speaking, drinking coffee or tea is sipping and smoking hubble-bubble is smoking hubble-bubble. To a Baghdadi, the coffee shop has a peculiar sweetness which appeals to him with a special attraction. It is a notorious belief that many a Baghdadi has left Broadway or Times Square because he has longed irresistibly for that tumultuous room where he coup sip coffee and play his beads.[5]

While cafés, like the rest of Baghdad, were neither timeless nor unchangeable, the fact that the author casts them as such can be seen as a testament to their historical and continued importance in the urban life, leisure, and culture of Baghdad. The slightly orientalist reference to cafés as one of the "unchangeable, fundamental characteristics of any oriental city" aside, it is the positive aspects and attraction of the café on which the author focuses his article. In fact, if we are to believe the young author, so strong is the connection between the inhabitants of Baghdad and the city's cafés that many have returned from abroad out of an irresistible longing for the café. Disregarding the artistic exaggeration employed by the author, there can be no doubt that cafés were integral to urban life in Baghdad as well as in many other Iraqi cities. The institution of the café changed in terms of the function and role it played, its clientele, its layout and design. In addition, as this chapter will make clear, the café was more than just a place in which the Iraqi could turn "the pages of his life leisurely" and give his cares only "to the rising smoke." The notion that cafés were associated with idleness was widespread during the time and will be explored throughout this chapter. Similarly, the deliberately gendered description of the café customer as male is correct, and the café remained a predominantly male and age-restricted space for much of the period under study. The café was, however, as suggested by the author above, one of the oldest forms of public

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[5] Ibid., 1945.

leisure in Baghdad and thus added a form of permanence, whether imagined or real, to a city that changed rapidly over the course of the twentieth century.

Cafés, as we will see, were part and parcel of these rapid changes. Between World War I and World War II colonized and later independent Iraq witnessed the rise of an effendiyya class, growing ideological differences among Iraqi nationalists, the proliferation of political groups, and an expansion of organizational and social life. During the same period, the general growth of Baghdad, the increase in education and literacy, and the rise of a critical public sphere and press drew a growing number of people to the city's cafés. As we saw in Chapter 3, Baghdad's al-Rashid Street played a key role in Iraqi leisure as it attracted those with time to spare to its many cafés, cinemas, and theaters. Cafés, however, were located all over Baghdad. In the 1940s and 1950s in particular, many students, activists, intellectuals, and writers frequented specific cafés.

In the introduction to an important historical work on the urban history of Baghdad, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad fi al-ʿIshrinat* (*Lest We Forget Baghdad in the Twenties*), by ʿAbbas Baghdadi, novelist ʿAbd al-Rahman Munif argues that the cafés of Baghdad encompassed a multiplicity of different social functions that went beyond the drinking of coffee. Munif ends his introduction with a metonymic statement about the city and its cafés: Baghdad, he concludes, "was its cafés."[6] Taking Munif's statement as a point of departure, this chapter argues that cafés played an unparalleled role in Baghdad's landscape of leisure. This role, however, due to the scarcity of sources available, has not yet been fully appreciated. In fact, this chapter argues that the multiplicity of different social functions mentioned by Munif have been somewhat distorted due to the limitations and inaccessibility of Iraqi archives. As a result of the significant gaps in our knowledge about the social and cultural history of Iraq, certain aspects of café culture and leisure

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[6] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa* Baghdad, 12-13.

have gained disproportionate attention. More specifically, while much work still needs to be done, due to the ways in which certain café were made iconic by the writers and intellectuals who frequented and wrote about them in fictional as well as in autobiographical texts, we now have detailed information about how the cafés of Baghdad, in the 1940s and 1950s in particular, became important nodes in the city's literary, artistic, and intellectual life. Similarly, the role of cafés as important fixtures in communist, nationalist, and anti-colonial politics as well as the way in which they became targets of state power, concern, and surveillance is no longer obscure. In other words, the focus on cafés as sites of cultural and literary production, intellectual exchange, and nationalist and oppositional politics has overshadowed the many other forms of leisure and labor that took place in and around the city's many cafés.

This chapter continues the exploration of cafés a sites of literature, politics, state power and control. In tandem, however, it asks a different set of questions and foregrounds other aspects of café culture and leisure in Hashemite Baghdad. This chapter attempts to reconstruct the quotidian and less studied aspects of the social life and dynamics of Baghad's cafés. This chapter examines the double life and ambiguity of space and argues that leisure time and leisure sites are not autonomous or hermetically sealed off from non-leisurely activities. As spaces of social interaction and exchange, in which Baghdadi men belonging to different classes, backgrounds, and creeds came into contact, cafés embodied a multiplicity of often overlapping functions and social roles that allowed for uses beyond their narrowly defined purposes. In addition to the important role they played in Baghdad's landscape of leisure, cafés were intimately connected to various forms of work, labor, and trade. In fact, leisure's ever present intersection with labor will be a key concern and main analytical thrust throughout this chapter. The café is an optimal place to study the relationship between leisure and labor. Not only were cafés, almost from their inception,

associated with specific professions, crafts, and classes, they also attracted peddlers, functioned as sites of business transactions, and employed a large number of people such as waiters, entertainers, and musicians. In addition, cafés often became a locus of surrounding commercial activities. They attracted peddlers, served meals from nearby restaurants, and stands selling newspapers, old and new books, and magazines were often set up next to cafés. As such, this chapter argues, café leisure spilled into and was in a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding urban, economic, and social environment.

The second half of this chapter examines Baghdad's literary cafés. It does so, however, by tracing discourses of idleness. It argues that the notion of a potentially dangerous and non-national idleness emerged as a function of a new and modern temporality and came to be associated with a particular space, namely the café, which had previously represented a less rigid boundary between work and leisure. In this context, some cafés acquired symbolic status among avant-garde intellectuals and literary figure as spaces of "idleness" or "non-work" and allowed them to appropriate official and colonial discourses of idleness, productivity, and punctuality in creative ways. Here as well this chapter highlights the centrality of labor in Iraqi cafés and the many ways in which "idleness" and café leisure were dependent upon working class labor.

This chapter begins by tracing the emergence and proliferation of cafés in Baghdad during the early Ottoman period. The following sections explore labor in the café and the changing forms of entertainment, including maqam performances, poetry, music, and radio, available to customers as well as how these were eventually transformed and challenged by new forms of leisure and entertainment. The final two sections of this chapter examine the literary and political uses and roles of cafés. While this chapter focuses on Baghdad, it is important to mention that coffee shops

were by no means an exclusively urban phenomenon. In fact, even small towns and villages often had at least one coffee shop.

New Beans and Old Brews

While the the majority of the cafés discussed in this chapter belong to the Hashemite period,[7] many existed before Iraq became a mandate under the British and later on gained independence. As such, unlike the cinema, cafés were not a product of the twentieth century. The sources are not always in agreement, but it is clear that cafés existed in Baghdad beginning in the sixteenth century. Some sources date the establishment of the first café back to 1586[8] while others suggest that the first café was established in 1590 and quickly followed by a second one, named *al-Wazir*, in 1599.[9] These accounts are most likely reliable since they match the general timeframe of the introduction of cafés in the region. In his detailed study from 1985, Hattox tells the tumultuous socio-legal history of coffee, coffee drinking and cafés in the medieval Near East and explores coffee's trek across the Arabian Peninsula and its subsequent spread to Ottoman lands. Most likely first used by Sufi orders in Yemen, by the late fifteenth century, coffee had made it to Mecca. By the middle of the sixteenth century, coffee had found its way to Cairo, Syria, and Istanbul.[10] With the spread of coffee, cafés also spread. The first coffee shop in Istanbul was established by two Syrians in 1555.[11]

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[7] For more on Baghdadi cafés in the 1960s and 1970s see for example Najam Wali, *Baghdad: Sirat Madina*; Jamal Haidar, *Baghdad fi Hadathat al-Sitinat* (Brussels: Alka Books, 2017), 9-15, 103-114.

[8] Iman al-Attar, *Baghdad: An Urban History through the Lens of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2018), 82. See also al-Durubi, al-Baghdadiyyun, Akhbaruhum wa Majalisuhum (Baghdad: Dar al-Shuʾun al-Thaqafiyya al-ʿAmma, 2001).

[9] Al-Hajj Hashim Muhammad al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-ʿIraqi* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿArabiyya Lilmawsuʿat, 2009), 224.

[10] Ralph S. Hattox: *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East*, 23-28.

[11] Ibid., 77.

By the end of the seventeenth century, coffee shops had become a global phenomenon spreading East into Iran and West into Europe where they became omnipresent within urban landscapes.[12] Historians of consumption have demonstrated how from the late sixteenth century a number of substances and stimulants such as tobacco, alcohol, tea, coffee, and sugar "were introduced, found acceptance, and spread with remarkable speed around the globe."[13] As pointed out by Matthee, "remarkable similarities are found in the way early modern society perceived and debated the new substances upon their introduction."[14] New substances were not just similar in the patterns of their introduction and use, but also in the controversies and debates to which they gave rise and the ways in which they spread, gained popularity and became either contested or accepted.[15] The Ottoman Empire was no exception. Despite attempts to ban the use of coffee by religious as well as secular authorities in the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire, according to Hattox, "coffee, coffeehouses and accompanying practices were, relatively quickly, embraced by and thoroughly integrated into the society."[16] The consumption of new substances gained popularity in the contexts of new forms of entertainment, leisure, assembly, and affiliation.[17] In

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[12] Cengiz Kirli, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, eds. Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 162-163; Cemal Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul," in *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. Arzu Öztürkmen and Evelyn Birge Vitz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 244.

[13] Rudi Matthee, "Exotic substances: the introduction and global spread of tobacco, coffee, cocoa, tea, and distilled liquor, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries" in *Drugs and Narcotics in History,* edited by Roy Porter and M. Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24. See also Rudi Matthee, The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900 (Washington: Mage Publishers, 2005) and Sidney Mintz*, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985).

[14] Matthee, "Exotic Substances," 28.

[15] *Ibid.*, 38-39.

[16] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 9.

[17] Matthee, "Exotic Substances," 46.

the Ottoman Empire, it was the café in particular, rather than the home, which came to be associated with the consumption of coffee.

The institution of the café quickly gained popularity in urban centers across the region and left a permanent mark on its cities and inhabitants alike. The taste and thirst for coffee created new economic spheres and trade networks and at the same time fundamentally changed urban social life. Since coffee was from the beginning a beverage consumed more frequently in public than in private, its consumption became a "public pastime" not easily distinguished from the place in which it was consumed – the café.[18] From early on, the consumption of coffee was affiliated with notions of public leisure and urban space. At a time when very few other options for public leisure existed, the café offered, in the words of Hattox, "the sixteenth-century urbanite with an excuse to do something that he obviously had a desperate urge to do--to get out of the house."[19] Not only did the café offer opportunities for socializing outside of the home, it also offered various forms of entertainment and, perhaps more importantly, made it respectable for men to go out, even at night.

In a similar vein, the new institution of the café removed, or at least made it an option to remove, friendships from the private space of the home.[20] At a time when Baghdad lacked public gardens, parks, and promenades and most people did not have houses big enough to host and entertain friends,[21] the café became an important alternative. Since the publication of Hattox's seminal 1985 study, a number of works written mostly by Ottoman historians interested in the Empire's cultural and social past have appeared. Collectively, these works have furthered our

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[18] Ibid., 72-73.

[19] Ibid., 89. See also Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night," 250; Alan Mikhail, "The Heart's Desire: Gender, Urban Space and the Ottoman Coffee House," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Dana Sajdi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 146-147.

[20] Mikhail, "The Heart's Desire," 141; Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night," 254; Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 125-128.

[21] al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-ʿIraqi*, 223.

understanding of cafés as spaces of public male sociability, leisure, and entertainment. In addition, they have made it clear that cafés were also, from the beginning, places of commerce, trade, business, and labour as well as spheres of resistance, opposition, rumor, spying, urban violence, racketeering and Sufi rituals.[22] In Iraq too, the café became the main institution of public entertainment and leisure as the numbers of cafés continued to grow, in the process becoming an integral part of the fabric of social, cultural, and political life.[23] One source estimates that by 1894, Baghdad already had more than 210 cafés.[24] This number continued to grow throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Baghdad's many cafés varied in size, design, and location. The larger ones were comprised of several rooms and were generally located in the center of the city, along the river, or on the city's main thoroughfares, such as al-Rashid Street, and in the vicinity of suqs and markets. At a time when most people, including those who worked in the center of the city, traversed the city on foot, cafés across the city offered those in need of rest a place to take a break and catch their breath. Smaller cafés, sometimes referred to as *maqahi shaʿbiyya* (popular coffee shops), frequented mostly by people living close by were located in Baghdad's residential neighborhoods. In addition to permanent cafés, small stands selling coffee could be found near markets, busy intersections, and train stations. In terms of seating, most coffee shops offered a combination of wooden chairs, tables, and benches, some of which had carpets or cushions for added comfort. Some cafés, especially those located along the river or in the vicinity of parks, offered outdoor seating. The

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[22] Kirli, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," 80; Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night," 252; Ali Caksu, "Janissary Coffee Houses in Late Eighteenth-Century Istanbul" in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Dana Sajdi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 117; Cengiz Kirli, "Coffeehouses: Leisure and Sociability in Ottoman Istanbul," in *Leisure Cultures in Urban Europe, 1700-1870*, eds. Peter Nigel Borsay and Jan Hein Furnee, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 161-181.

[23] al-Attar, *Baghdad: An Urban History through the Lens of Literature*, 82.

[24] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 90.

interior of cafés also varied. Most, however, offered some form of decoration ranging from photographs or paintings of famous Iraqi mosques, landmarks, the monarch, or the famous local personalities, such as religious scholars, who frequented them in the past. As we will see, many cafés served specific groups and classes of customers: soldiers, students, workers, merchants, travelers, and craftsmen.[25] Most, as we will see in the following sections, in addition to non-alcoholic beverages, offered other services, including food and various forms of entertainment.

Figure 20: Café in Baghdad, date unknown. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT.

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[25] Salman Hadi al-Tuʿma, "Fi al-Maqahi al-Shaʿbiyya al-Baghdadiyya," *Dhakira Iraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 6.

Figure 21: Café in Baghdad, date unknown. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT.
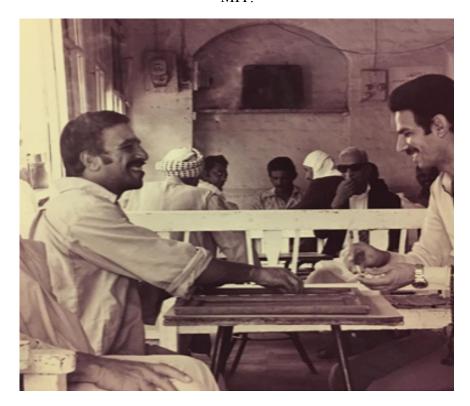

Figure 22: Café in Baghdad, date unknown. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT.

One Man's Leisure is Another Man's Labor

The café was a site of mostly male leisure and sociability. Just as importantly, cafés were centers of commercial, work-related, and entrepreneurial activities. As a setting for such activities, cafés attracted merchants, brokers, and a wide range of individuals engaged in other professions, occupations, trades, and industries. Cafés provided a space for employers to hire workers, and workers gathered in particular cafés in their search for work. At times, cafés also offered workers from rural parts of the country a place to spend the night free of charge.[26] Not only did cafés function as *ad hoc* offices and business centers for people engaged in different professions and trades, they were also places of labor for a large number of employees. After all, someone had to make the coffee and tea, serve it, take payments, prepare and keep the water pipes going, clean, and make sure that the stocks of coffee, tea, sugar, and tobacco were full. Cafés also hired storytellers and musicians, whose work there was an important source of income. Moreover, cafés were often a locus of surrounding commercial and work-related activities as they attracted peddlers, street vendors, served meals from nearby restaurants, and attracted newspaper and book vendors. As such, café leisure spilled into and was in a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding urban environment. As described above, labor and leisure are not each other's opposites. Rather, they almost always coexist in intricate and at times uneven ways. This is not specific to café leisure. However, the limited work on Baghdad's thriving café scene has focused almost exclusively on cafés as spaces of cultural, literary, and nationalist politics.

While this history is of great importance for our understanding of modern Iraqi history, as mentioned in the introduction, this limited lens has foreclosed examinations of the many other

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[26] For more on this in see "Maqahi al-Mawsil bayn al-Hadir wa al-Madi fi Hiwar maʿ Aqdam Qahwaji fiha," *Bait al-Mawsil*, accessed September 7, 2015, http://www.baytalmosul.com/159315761583-15751604158515861575160-15751604159315911575 1585/category/78e12542e8

forms of leisure and labor that took place in and around the city's many cafés. Part of the reason is that the archival traces of café labor and entertainment are not easy to locate or trace. The various forms of labor necessary for the daily operation of cafés, for example, are largely absent from the many Iraqi autobiographical accounts that describe, and which have formed the basis, for the body of work focusing on the cultural and literary aspects of Baghdad's café scene.

ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri's short story, "al-ʿAmila wa al-Jardhi wa al-Rabiʿ" (The Waitress, the Rat, and Spring) provides an interesting counterpoint. The story has been praised for its literary qualities and innovative technique that combines social realism and the inner life of characters though a stream of consciousness technique.[27] As we saw in the previous chapter, short stories, such as those of Nuri must be properly contextualized if there are to shed light on historical matters. Bahoora has pointed out the Iraqi male authors, including Nuri and many others from his generation, advocated for social and political reform in literary texts and newspaper and magazine articles.[28] Several of these writers, in the words of Bahoora, used the literary figure of the prostitute to "articulate a vision of women's liberation that emphasized secular, urban, and middle-class notions of domesticity and respectability."[29] While the female protagonist in a "al-ʿAmila" is not a sex worker, the story, like the cinema short story in Chapter 3, is one out of a number of short stories in which Nuri engaged the question of women in public. The story, however, is equally important because it highlights, albeit in a fictional reconfiguration, leisure's ever present intersection with labor. More precisely, "al-ʿAmila" unmasks and dramatizes the forms of labour that often remains hidden in accounts and descriptions of leisure, whether literary or historical, from the period. "al-ʿAmila" was first published in the newspaper *Akhbar al-Saʿa* on June 20 1953.

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[27] Cobham and Caiani, *The Iraqi Novel*, 46-50.
[28] Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute, *Tajdid*, and Masculinity in Anticolonial Literature of Iraq," 49-50
[29] Ibid., 42.

It was later included in Nuri's collection, *Nashid al-Ard* (*The Song of the Earth*) from 1954, which was published by *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida*, a publishing house with close links to the ICP.[30]

Albeit from the perspective of a male, upper middle class intellectual, "al-ʿAmila" engages with the classed and gendered aspects of café leisure and can thus be read as an attempt to vocalize, or at least recognize, the at-times uneven gender and labour relations that takes places within sites of leisure. "al-ʿAmila" takes place on a spring evening in a modern café somewhere in the center of Baghdad. The story begins when the young waitress, who is the story's main character, is about to end her shift after a long day. She is excited to finally escape the boredom and abuse of her job at the café. At the same time, however, she is not particularly excited about returning home. Throughout the story, the grandeur of the downtown café, the crowded and busy streets, and the big and colorful Coca Cola advertisements and neon signs that decorate the street outside the café are juxtaposed with the poor and mud-infested area in which the waitress lives with her abusive, disabled father and her younger siblings.[31] The waitress constantly feels despair about her miserable situation.

On top of this, she has to deal with insults and sexual harassment from two of the café's regulars - a young effendi teacher, who comes to the café every evening to read the newspaper and talk to his friend, who is also a regular. The teacher always sits at a table close to her and "would always look directly at her breast, as if they were they only part of her that existed."[32] One day, she overhears the teacher and his friend ridiculing the smallness of her breasts. The teacher points to his own chest and says jokingly to his friend, "are mine or hers bigger?" "She's still young," the friend replies. "Young? She's not a day under seventeen. This is how she was created," the

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[30] Cobham and Caiani, *The Iraqi Novel*, 69.
[31] ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri, *Nashid al-Ard*, 87.
[32] Ibid., 89.

professor says." "If only she would let us…,"[33] answers the friend. At this point, the narrative is interrupted by the thoughts of the waitress, who is distressed by the vulgar comments made by the two men. That night, she cries herself to sleep, hurt and "surprised that gentlemen (effendiyya) were able to utter such vile words."[34] The following day, in order to avoid the harassing stares of the two men, she covers her breasts with old rags.[35] "Even then," however, "she did not hate the teacher."[36]

Her only friend at the café is a young boy, who, like herself, is tied to the café by his labor. The young boy, who in the title of the story is referred to as the rat (*al-jardhi*), sells newspapers, magazines, books, and lottery tickets to the café's costumers. The boy's older brother, who is also his employer, is abusive and often beats him. They boy and the waitress develop a bond of unspoken solidarity. She lets him enjoy the warmth of the café in winter and in return he lends her, magazines, horoscopes, and novels free of charge. The reading materials provided by the boy allow the waitress to momentarily escape the boredom and harassment of her job through reading and daydreams. In fact, most of her reveries are structured by both novelistic and cinematic adaptations of Cinderella – her favorite novel and movie. The boy gave a her an Arabic Cinderella novel and Mary, her only friend, paid for her ticket the previous week so that she could see Cinderella in the cinema. She longs to visit the cinema again but is worried that she won't be able to pay Mary back. Her daydreams about the mansions of the Baghdad, which she passes daily on her way to work, are fueled by the cinema and they become castles "like the ones she saw in historical films."[37] The boy also regularly brings her copies of *al-Kawakib*. First published in 1932 by *Dar al-Hilal* in

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[33] Ibid., 89.
[34] Ibid., 89.
[35] Ibid., 89.
[36] Ibid., 89.
[37] Ibid., 94.

Cairo, *al-Kawakib* was a popular cinema-oriented magazine that frequently contained articles about the lives of movie starts in both the Middle East, Hollywood, and India. Despite her dreams of wealth and the glamorous life of movie stars, however, unlike in the fairytale, Nuri's Cinderella-waitress remains trapped in poverty and abuse.

While Nuri's sympathies with the waitress and her working conditions are clear, throughout the story he imposes a set of very gendered reading habits and behaviors on the waitress. In fact, the character of the waitress, her response to the harassment, and her continued infatuation with the teacher make her a rather predictable and perhaps unrealistic character. There are moments in the story, however, when she pursues a more active and critical stance toward her situation, such as when she allows herself to silently laugh at the customers or when she dreams of spitting the owner of the café in "his ugly face, which had always reminded her of the dogs the English have."[38] These moments, however, are far and few between. While few or no cafés employees were women, Nuri's fictional story gives access to the boredom, abuse, and dreams of escape that must have been part of the daily life for those who worked in Baghdad's cafés. While the waitress does not have much agency beyond her romantic dreams and hopes of being noticed by her harasser, the teacher, the story nonetheless allows for a reading of café leisure that at least recognizes the uneven labor and gender relations that exist within the space of the café. In this way, the story can be read as a self-critique from the point of view of a male author who himself frequented Baghdad's many cafés. Not only does it describe labour within the setting of leisure, it also lashes out at the two male effendi characters. Supposedly politically progressive, the two continually harass the young waitress, thereby, in Nuri's reading, failing their progressive effendi responsibilities and laying bare the precarious situation of women in Baghdad's public leisure

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[38] Ibid., 91.

establishments. At the same time, however, like in the cinema short story, the narrative reveals Nuri's own unease about women's participation in public life. In other words, even for progressive writers and intellectuals, women's participation in public life and leisure represented a final frontier.[39] The Iraqi poet and critic Malik al-Matlabi, who moved in the same circles as Nuri, describes the shock and embarrassment in caused when the wife of a writer showed up at the café where the group was gathered to talk to her husband. al-Matlabi also mentions that it caused a small revolution when one day a friend from the same group of writers invited two foreign women wearing trousers to the café.[40] Everyone, according to al-Matlabi, "were in a state of shock until the two women left."[41]

Middle class anxieties about gender aside, the Nuri's short story does describe two of the most important types of labor that existed in and around cafés, namely that of waiters, or waitresses, and newspaper vendors. While the newspaper boy in Nuri's story remains voiceless, his presence in the story demonstrates the centrality of his services to café leisure. Most cafés offered this service. In most cases, a newspaper vendor would set up shop outside the café. The vendor would buy at least two copies of the daily papers and would walk around the café and rent out the newspapers to the customers. Less frequently, the owner of the café would purchase copies of the papers and rent them out without a middle man.[42] This allowed the customers to read the daily papers for a very small fee. The tradition of selling and renting newspapers dates back to the Ottoman period. According to al-ʿAllaf, the Qaraʾkhana café was the first in Baghdad to offer local Iraqi Arabic newspapers in addition to Ottoman ones. The owner of Qaraʾkhana, an Iranian

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[39] I would like to thank Ghenwa Hayek for suggesting this term.
[40] Malik al-Matlabi, "Gharirat al-Maqha," *Dhakira ʿIraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 2.
[41] Ibid., 2.
[42] Fakhri al-Quduri, *Tufula fi Baghdad ʿala Dafaf Dijla*, 150.

national and polyglot, was nicknamed "monsieur" because of his love for the French language.[43]

Like in Nuri's story, with the advancement of print, other materials such as magazines and novels became available to café customers. In fact, cafés became sites of consumption of newspapers and other forms of print culture more broadly. Before the spread of newspapers, people frequented cafés to listen to religious and nationalist poems.[44] While poetry continued to be performed in cafés, the written word came to coexist with the spoken one. This suggests that link between the press, print culture, and the café was in some ways a continuation of an already established relationship or that the transition was a blurred one. Just as importantly, transition into a site of reading in its many different forms was depended on the labor of newspaper vendors.

Newspaper vendors, however, were far from the only vendors who relied on Baghdad's many cafés to earn a living. In his autobiography, Rejwan recalls how at the age of fourteen he worked as a vendor and peddled socks and handkerchiefs at café across the city.[45] Vendors like Rejwan, who were most often young or adolescent boys, were permanent characters in an around the city's cafés. While most cafés only employed or relied on a single newspaper vendor, they all employed several waiters, who were most often also young or adolescent boys. The labor provided by the waiters was indispensable for the daily operation of cafés. Waiters cleared and cleaned the small tables, prepared tea, coffee, and other beverages, washed glasses and cups, and served customers as well as local shop owners, who ordered beverages from the café. As soon as a customer entered and sat down, a waiter would take his order. However, at most café, many of the customers were regulars and waiters therefore already knew what to bring them. In fact, waiters often memorized the names of customers and would ask them about their health, families, and

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[43] ʿAbd al-Karim al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 60. See also Malik al-Matlabi, "ʿAziza al-Maqha," *Dhakira æIraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 2.
[44] al-Waʾili, "Maqha al-Bayruti wa Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi," 7.
[45] Rejwan, *The Last Jews of Baghdad*, 80.

work.[46] The performance, whether genuine or not, of familiarity and politeness shared between waiters and customers does not negate the uneven labour-leisure division that existed within the coffee shop. It does, however, demonstrate the extent to which most cafés were frequented by locals and regulars and that certain rituals of hospitality were required.

Figure 23: Employee pouring tea, date unknown. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Building on Henri Lefebvre's work on space as simultaneously conceived, perceived, and lived, Mona Harb and Lara Deeb, writing about cafés in the Southern suburbs of Beirut, have foregrounded the lived space of the café as a social experience that creates "informal collective practices and congeniality among customers" in addition to softening the distinction between

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[46] Mahdi, *Maqahi Baghdad*, 35-36.

public and private spaces "at times converting it into family space, a refuge, or a space that facilitates various acts of reciprocity."[47] While cafés in Baghdad were not family spaces, they were, however, spaces of familiarity, often complicating the distinction between private and public through the congeniality and reciprocity that existed within them as well as by virtue of their homely interior and decorations. An illustrative example, although not related to labor, is the various, and at times elaborate acts of reciprocity and generosity that was performed between café customers, many of whom were friends, neighbors, colleagues, or male members of the same family. It was common among acquaintances, friends, and at times even strangers, to offer to pay for the tea or coffee of a person who was about to leave the coffee shop. The customer wishing to pay would give a verbal – such as "wasil" or "wair," a word of Turkish origin, or a non-verbal cue to the owner, and the drinks would be added to his bill.[48] In a similarly, it was common for students and other customers with limited or changing amounts of income to share cigarettes, drinks, and food in cafés and whoever happened to have money would pay the bill.[49]

As mentioned earlier, waiters made up the largest group of café employees. Out of the many waiters who daily spent long hours serving customers, some gained local fame. They did so either because of their humor, service, or ability to carry multiple glasses of scalding hot tea or coffee at the same time.[50] To mention just one example, according to an anecdote, a particularly skilled waiter at the Faslan coffee shop became famous because he was able to carry twelve glasses of tea simultaneously without spilling a single drop.[51] Such anecdotes and other autobiographical

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[47] Lara Deeb and Mona Harb, *Leisurely Islam: Negotiating Geography and Morality in Shi'ite South Beirut* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 47.
[48] Mahdi, *Maqahi Baghdad*, 55.
[49] Husayn Mardan, "al-Maqahi al-Adabiyya," *Dhakira ʿIraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 5.
[50] *Maqahi Baghdad*, 47.
[51] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 122.

accounts are obviously classed and always written from the perspective of the customer. As such, they tell us little about what it was like to work in a café. They do, however, allows us to appreciate that the labor of waiter, talented or not, was what made café leisure possible. Apart from the waiters serving and making beverages, most cafés employed waiters whose job it was to supply customers with water and other waiters charged with preparing and tending to the water pipes of the smoking customers. Like the waiters serving beverages, a skilled waiter in charge of the water pipes knew what kind of tobacco a regular preferred without having to ask him.[52]

The owner, at least in the more traditional cafés, most often had a permanent table close to the entrance. Customers made payments to the owner before leaving the café rather than to the waiters. The owner was also the one in charge of handing out games, such as backgammon, and hungry customers were able to put in an order with the owner who would then send a waiter to a nearby restaurant.[53] Snacks or lighter meals such as cooked broad beans were often sold cheaply in cafes.[54] Like waiters, certain café proprietors also gained fame. In fact, some cafés, such as ʿAkama and Hassun where named after and became famous because of their owners. The Beiruti café, named after its owner, Ibrahim al-Bayruti al-Karkhi, was frequented by many prominent residents of Karkh, including the popular poet Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi, who composed and performed many of his most famous poems from his permanent table close to the entrance of the Beirut café.[55] One corner of the Beirut café was dedicated to gambling and card games. This gave the place a bad reputation among some people. The owner always took part in the gambling and apparently often lost and eventually gambled his café away.[56] Another café, on al-Rashid Street,

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[52] Mahdi, *Maqahi Baghdad*, 37.
[53] Ibid., 34-35.
[54] Yeheskel Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq* (London: Self-published, 2001), 27.
[55] al-Waʾili, "Maqha al-Bayruti wa Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi," 7; Shafiq, *Maqahi Baghdad*, 57.
[56] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 120.

owned by the well-connected Hajj Khalil, served as a center of information, and a sort of post office where messages and remittances between Baghdad and the provinces changed hands. IN fact, several cafés in Baghdad served as post offices. People coming from different parts of Iraq and even from abroad would bring letters to Baghdad and people in Baghdad would leave letters in a box for the purpose inside the café.[57] Similarly, the café of Hajj Khalil, which was popular among high school stundents, allowed students to stay in touch since many of them retained their connection to the coffee shop even after finding employment in different parts of Iraq.[58] Such services, which connected Baghdad to the peripheries and other urban centers of Iraq were indispensable at a time when large numbers of people traveled to Baghdad in search of work.

As already mentioned, students made up a distinct group within the café clientele. They often visited cafés in order do work in the form of homework, school assignments, and exam preparation. At a time when not everyone had electric lighting at home and when libraries were few and far between, cafés offered an important place for students to gather, socialize, and study. In fact, some cafés located in the vicinity of schools and colleges were frequented almost entirely by students and where known to give special privileges to students.[59] Such cafés were especially busy in the weeks before final exams. During exam periods, many cafés would set aside a specific section for students and ask the other customers to keep the noise to a minimum. Except for when the news came on, even the radio would be turned down to a lower volume. Those students who could afford it would stay late and order dinner from the café or a nearby restaurant or street vendor.[60] At the same time, however, less studious students would skip class and "flee" to hang

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[57] al-Waʾili, "Maqha al-Bayruti wa Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi" 7; Shafiq, *Maqahi Baghdad*, 57.
[58] Ibid., 62.
[59] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 62, 122-124.
[60] al-Quduri, *Tufula fi Baghdad*, 147-151.

out in the city's many cafés,[61] which again illustrates the ways in which leisure and different forms of labour coexisted, intertwined, and constantly remade the space of the café according to the needs of those frequenting it. In other words, the space of the café was a porous one that could easily be re-made by those using it. In the case of exam period, the secular time of modern education, which came structure the life of an increasing number of Iraqis in the twentieth century, also made itself felt in the city's cafés. The following section explores how other forms of time changed café leisure, labor, and entertainment.

Café Entertainment

This chapter suggests that leisure interacts with and is conditional upon labor. This interaction is evident in the various and constantly evolving forms of entertainment that cafés offered. As already mentioned, some cafés offered various forms of entertainment in addition to beverages, reading materials, and conversation. In fact, entertainment was a crucial part of café leisure. Here too, the connections between leisure and labor become obvious. In addition, as this section will demonstrate, the emergence of new types of leisure and entertainment, such as radio and television, displaced older forms of entertainment as well as the people engaged in entertainment-related forms of labour such as storytellers and musicians. As we saw earlier, cafés were connected and spilled into the economic life of the streets and neighborhoods in which they were located. The same can be said about the sounds and noises emanating from Baghdad's many cafés. In an attempt to overcome the ocularcentrism of modern Middle Eastern history, Ziad Fahmy has called for a vocalization of narratives of the past. This, according to Fahmy, means paying attention to the ways in which soundscapes have changed over time, particularly after the

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[61] al-Haydari, "Baghdad bayna Maqahi al-Udabaʾ wa Udabaʾ al-Maqahi," 12.

introduction of new technologies such as gramophones and radios.[62] In the context of cafés, Fahmy

shows how the sounds produced by and in these establishments extended into sidewalks and streets

in ways that had "obvious sonic implications to the wider neighborhood."[63] While the "acoustic

imprints"[64] of cafés, to borrow Fahmy's apt formulation, as this section will demonstrate, changed

with the introduction of new technologies, older forms of café entertainment were just as much

part of the surrounding soundscape.

In addition to games such as backgammon, chess, and domino, storytelling, and shadow

theater, some cafés were known for gambling. Other cafés, both inside as well as outside Baghdad,

became venues for cultural and sports-related activities and forms of entertainment. The most

popular of these included wrestling, weightlifting, and cockfighting.[65] The Tabana café, which was

famous for cockfighting, also offered entertainment in the form of fights between rams. The most

successful and famous rams had names.[66] Many of the cafés that offered entertainment and

gambling that included fights between animals, such as al-Mummayyiz, al-ʿAnbar, al-Shatt, al-

Qasriyya, al-Basha, Mushi, and al-Bayruti, were located in specific suqs and were associated with

merchants and traders who bought and sold livestock, grains, and other related food items.[67]

According to al-ʿAllaf, one café was so specialized that it was frequented mostly by nightingale

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[62] Ziad Fahmy, "Coming to Our Senses: Historicizing Sound and Noise in the Middle East," *History Compass* 11:4 (2013): 306-309.

[63] Ibid., 310. For more on the role of coffee shops and aurality in early 20th century Egyptian society see Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011), 145–47. See also Fahmy's forthcoming *Street Sounds: Listening to Life in Modern Egypt* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2020).

[64] Ibid., 310.

[65] "Maqahi al-Mawsil bayn al-Hadir wa al-Madi fi Hiwar maʿ Aqdam Qahwaji fiha," *Bait al-Mawsil*, accessed November 28, 2019, http://www.baytalmosul.com/159315761583-15751604158515861575 1602-157516041593159115751585/category/78e12542e8

[66] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-æIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad,* 88; al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 62.

[67] al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 87.

enthusiasts who came to the coffee shop to discuss how to raise, feed, and handle nightingales.[68]

Most cafés, however, offered entertainment that included humans, who were paid for their services. The Hasan ʿAjmi café was known for its cleanliness and its delicious tea, which according to urban legend, the owner always mixed with a tiny piece of opium or hash.[69] Regardless of such rumors, as we will see in the last section of this chapter, while cafés were sometimes associated with time loss, wasted productivity, and oppositional politics, compared to spaces such as nightclubs and brothels, cafés generally ranked higher in the moral hierarchy of social spaces. In addition to its cleanliness, tea, and the many intellectuals who frequented the it, Hasan ʿAjmi was well-known across Baghdad for another reason. Hasan ʿAjmi employed an Iranian dwarf by the name of Shaftalu to entertain the customers. Shaftalu served water and coffee to the café's customers, but his main job was to make a fool of himself in order to amuse the onlookers. His most famous trick was that he was able to fart on command.[70] In his memoir, Rejwan, who frequented Hasan ʿAjmi when he was in his late teens, fondly remembers Shaftalu and confirms his talent for farting on command. The young Rejwan, however, mostly remembers Shaftalu as a skilled comedian and entertainer whose sayings, jokes, and songs, performed in Shaftalu's heavy Persian accent, was among the reasons why he frequented this specific café.[71] The majority of cafés, however, offered entertainment in the form of story telling, shadow theater, music, comedy,

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[68] Ibid., 88.

[69] According to Rejwan, "the tea was so good and gave such an agreeable aroma that some rivals of ʿAjmi (''the Persian'') complained to the municipality that tea served in his teashop contained some sort of drug. Sure enough, a careful investigation revealed that somewhere inside the top of the teapot where the tea was left to 'cook' a tiny piece of *tiryaq* (hashish) was inserted, so that what gave the renowned teashop's tea its aroma and special taste was the said drug. No measures were taken against the owner, however, most likely thanks to the few shillings handed the municipal inspector," Rejwan, *The Last Jews of Baghdad*, 104.

[70] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 125.

[71] Rejwan, *The Last Jews of Baghdad*, 105.

or a combination of these.[72] Some cafés, before the establishment of nightclubs, cinemas, and Iraqi radio employed dancers, singers, and maqam performers. Live musical forms of entertainment, as chapter five will demonstrate, were often more widespread and frequent during the month of Ramadan when café leisure extended well into the night.

Storytelling was one of the oldest forms of café entertainment. Specialized storytellers, sometimes accompanied by music, often worked in several cafés to which they had been invited to entertain customers. Some cafés arranged special weekly or seasonal storytelling session while others offered this service daily. The stories where mostly famous epics or religious stories with a cast of characters that changed according to the location of the café. In areas or neighborhoods with a large shi'i population, to mention just one example, stories about ʿAli, Fatima, Hasan and Husain dominated.[73] Other cafés specialized in maqam performances. Maqam, in the Iraqi context, refers to the singing or chanting of verses structured by an elaborate number of rules and conventions.[74] The role of music and song in Iraq will be explored in great detail in chapter five.

The owners of such cafés were often either maqam singers, musicians, or maqam enthusiasts. In these cafés, performances took place both with and without chalghi bands accompanying the maqam singer. A traditional chalghi band consisted of four members. Most bands performed with different singers and the customer, whether a café owner or private individual, would request a singer through the band who then reached out to the singer and negotiated the entire fee. The singer always received the largest fee and the band divided the rest

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[72] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya*, 87. See also, al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 61 and Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 128.
[73] Yeheskel Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq* (London: Self-published, 2001), 28.
[74] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 183-190; Sami Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 214. See also al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-ʿIraqi*, 29; Kanana, *Falak al-Nas* 2016, ʿAbd al-Amir*, Raqsat al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhrira*, 2017.

between them according to rules agreed on internally in the band.[75] Some cafés exclusively offered maqam performances while others specialized in rural musical entertainment and singing or a combination of the two.

Cafés such as al-Qaraʾkhanah, Sabaʿ, al-Wahab, also known as Bikr or al-Qalaʿ, ʿAzzawi, al-Shatt, Salman, al-Fadl, Shabandar, and al-Qaisariyya belonged to the first category. Most maqam singers performed at several cafés in order to make a living whereas the most famous *maqamchis* (maqam singers) were associated with only one or two cafés.[76] The famous maqam singers Najim al-Shaikhli and Rashid al-Qundarchi often performed in the ʿAzzawi café in Midan area. ʿAzzawi eventually became a nightclub.[77] As we will see in Chapter 5, several cafés, especially those in the Midan area, were transformed into nightclubs during the first two decades of the twentieth century. According to Kojaman, the al-Mummayyiz cafés was associated with maqam performances even during the Ottoman period. This café , in the words of Kojaman, was not only a space of maqam performances but "a sort of musical school in which the maqam music, the arts of maqam singing, and the rules of the maqam were learned."[78] Al-Mummayyiz was also a place where prominent maqam singers, such as Ahmad Zaydan al-Bayyati and Hasan al-Shakarchi, and musicians came to compete with each other and test out new melodies, tunes, and lyrics.[79] While a detailed study of cafés as a meeting place for musicians is beyond the scope of this dissertation,[80] it is possible that some cafés were as important to Baghad's musicians as they were to the city's literary figures.

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[75] Ibid., 24.

[76] al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-ʿIraqi*, 226-228.

[77] Ibid., 227.

[78] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 29. See also al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 111.

[79] Ibid., 29

[80] Ethnomusicologist Dafna Dori at Uppsala University in Sweden is currently writing a PhD dissertation that will explore this topic in further detail.

Figure 24: Wedding band advertising their services outside a café, ca. 1960-1970s. Kamil and
Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT.

Except for the month of Ramadan, when singers and musicians did not have other jobs,

maqam performances almost always took place in the afternoon or early evenings. Early

performances were necessary in order for the singers and musicians to have enough time to get to

their next job, which before the introduction of radio and nightclubs was most often a performance

in the private residence of a person wealthy enough to hire maqam singers and musicians.[81] Most

often, private performances were arranged on occasions such as weddings and circumcisions.

During the warm spring and summer months, wealthy Baghdadis also hosted maqam performances

along the river or in private gardens on the outskirts of the city.[82] Before nightclubs took over fro

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[81] Ibid., 30.
[82] al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-ʿIraqi*, 225.

cafés as places of musical performance, as we will see in Chapter 5, maqam performers and musicians moved daily between the café and the nocturnal private and public space of leisure.

Cafés such as Nasir Hakim, Karimat, al-Mummayyiz and al-Bulunjiyya, and al-Club hosted rural performers and singers or combined such performances with maqam.[83] At Nasir Hakim, which was named after its owner and located next to Cinema Baghdad, Nasir Hakim, Muhammad ʿAbbud al-Najafi and Shahid Karim sang songs in the rural tradition.[84] The Iraqi trans singer, Masʿud al-ʿImratli sang at al-Bulunjiyya, which was predominantly frequented by saddle makers and craftsmen.[85] Drag and other gender-transgressive performances will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5. Before his transition, Masʿud was Maʿuda, born in the southern Iraqi town of Amara around 1897. Masʾud loved singing from an early age, but his musical career only began in earnest when he started performing at the private parties of Amara's notables and sheikhs. In 1925, Masʿud was discovered by the Baghdadi singer, ʿIssa Bin Huwaila, who was traveling the country in search of talent. ʿIssa convinced Masʿud to come to Baghdad to record songs. Despite being illiterate, Masʿud wrote, composed, and recorded a large number of songs.[86] With the opening of Radio Baghdad in 1936, Masʿud was given a new platform and his fame increased. He also travelled to places such as Aleppo and Beirut for concerts. Some years before his death from tuberculosis in 1944, Masʿud returned to Amara and married a woman there. Earlier in his life, Masʿud had been married to another woman.[87] Sources on the life of Masʿud are very scarce and

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[83] Ibid., 226.
[84] Ibid., 228.
[85] Ibid., 228.
[86] Salman Kayyush, "Masʿud al-ʿImratli," *Sawt al-ʿIraq*, 4 November 2017, Accessed 5 December 2019: https://www.sotaliraq.com/2017/11/04/صورة-حكاية-عمارتلي-مسعود/
[87] Sara Farhan, "'Huna Baghdad': Competing Visions in Television Programming in Monarchic Iraq," 8; Rayyaḍ al-Muhammdawi, "Thaʾira min Rif Misan Tahquq Shahra Faniyya," al-Zamman, 29 September 2015, accessed 5 December 2019: https://www.azzaman.com/?p=130442, Wali, *Baghdad: Sirat Madina*, 350.

the ones that exist are not always in agreement. Some sources suggest that Masʿud's bane was not tuberculosis, but that he was killed when his first wife poisoned him.[88] During his life and through the few records he managed to record, Masʿud "exemplified rural culture in melodies, lyrics, and rhythm.[89] In addition to maqam performances, the rural music of singers such as Masʿud was an important part of the café soundscape. The recordings made by Masʿud, to the best of my knowledge, are no longer extant.

Before the emergence of radio, the introduction of gramophones and records changed the soundscape of café leisure and entertainment. Like radios, gramophones and records were expensive for individuals, but nearly all cafés invested in gramophones. Some cafés specialized in specific singers or genres[90] and some employed a waiter who was in charge of the gramophone in addition to taking musical requests from costumers by sending a small piece of paper and a pen around the café.[91] There were cafés that exclusively played Umm Kulthum and Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhab.[92] An example of such a a café is the Baladiyya, which was frequented by the Iraqi poet Buland al-Haidari when he was a teenager exactly because it played the records of Umm Kulthum and Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhab.[93] When it came to records, the sound of the Baghdadi cafés was predominantly Egyptian. After WW1, when the Egyptian commercial recording industry boomed, those in Iraq with enough money to buy a gramophone had a large number of records available to them. While most of the British, French, German, and Egyptian recording companies, such as

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[88] Husayn Shahid al-Maliki, "Haqiqat Masʿud al-ʿImaratli," *al-Mada*, 11 February 2018, accessed 11 December 2019: https://www.almadasupplements.com/news.php?action=view&id=19637#sthash.kEScC2YP.dpbs; Masʿuda al-ʿImaratli al-Mutriba al-Misaniyya al-lati thawalat fi Baghdad ila Masʿud al-ʿImaratli, *al-Sharq*, 22 June 2018, accessed 11 December 2019: http://www.almashriqnews.com/inp/view.asp?ID=126843

[89] Farhan, "Huna Baghdad," 8.

[90] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 30.

[91] Sahib al-Shahir, "al-Baladiyya: Maqha min Ayyam al-Zaman al-Jamil," 6.

[92] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 122.

[93] al-Haydari, "Baghdad baina Maqahi al-Udabaʾ wa Udabaʾ al-Maqahi," 12.

Gramophone, Columbia, Polyphon, Odeon, Pathe, Baidaphon, and Mechian, were based in Cairo, the business and consumption of records was transregional and by the late 1920s, the records of Sayyid Darwish, Umm Kulthum, Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhab, and many others were widely available in Iraq.[94] Gramophone recorded Umm Kulthum, but also record Iraqi maqam musicians who participated in the Congress of Arabic Music held in Cairo in 1932. Baidaphon, which was based in Beirut, was the largest of the non-European companies recording in the Middle East and recorded most of the songs of Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhab. Baidaphon, starting in the mid 1920s, employed agents looking for talent in several Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq.[95]

Recordings were made in Iraq beginning in the 1930s. Before that, Iraqi singers and musicians had to travel abroad to record their songs and music. As this was very costly, few Iraqi artists did so. When the al-Kuwaiti brothers began composing songs in the late 1930s for Iraqi singers such as Sultana Yusif, Salima Murad, Nadhima Ibrahim and others in the 1930s, which were recorded soon after, the hegemony of the Egyptian soundscape changed slightly. However, since Egyptian records were not only more numerous but had also arrived earlier, they continued to dominate. There were relatively few maqam records since, by the time recording technology was available in Iraq, the tastes of listeners had already begun to change in favor of a more modern sound.[96]

After nominal independence from the British in 1932, first ideas and later on actual institutions of "national culture" were established. With regard to music, Zubaida notes that the radio was the most important.[97] National broadcasting in Iraq began in June of 1936. While radio

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[94] Ali Jihad Racy, "Record Industry and Egyptian Traditional Music: 1904-1932," *Ethnomusicology* 20:1 (1976): 27.
[95] Ibid., 31-32, 39-40.
[96] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 35-38. See also Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 218-220.
[97] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 222.

was conceived as a tool for the expanding Hashemite state, the fact that the state was keen on airing content that demonstrated the cultural diversity of the country made the radio an ideal form of café entertainment[98] since it made national celebrities, through broadcasting and recording, out of Iraqi singers and musicians.[99] Radios were even more expensive than gramophones and few individuals could therefore afford to purchase one. Like with gramophones, however, cafés offered an alternative and quickly became centers for radio listening like they had become centers for listening to records before that.[100]

Before 1936, most cafés played records during the day. When it was time for the daily Cairo broadcast, the gramophone became silent and the radio was turned on. Iraqis were only able to listen to Cairo broadcasts at night when the Cairo station began broadcasting on short wave. During the day, radio from Cairo was broadcast on local medium wave, which radios at the time could not receive all the way from Cairo. On special occasions, such as when Umm Kulthum gave her monthly concerts on Egyptian radio, cafés in Baghdad stayed open until the end of the concert, which sometimes meant until four in the morning.[101] When Iraqi singers, such as Salima Murad, Zuhur Husain, Zakiyya George, Narjis Shawqi, and ʿAfifa Iskandar, rose to fame due to their performances in Baghdad's nightclubs, they were given weekly shows on the radio. Similarly, when famous singers from abroad visited Iraq they were invited to perform on Iraqi radio.[102] Many of the listeners were café customers.

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[98] Sara Farhan, "'Huna Baghdad': Competing Visions in Television Programming in Monarchic Iraq," 6. For more on the development of radio in Iraq see Farhan, "'Huna Baghdad'," 5-8; Izzat al-Karkhi, 'The history of the Iraqi wireless radio,' *Radio Magazine*, Issue I, 22 September 1938, 12; Ziarat al Mahatat al-'idha'at,' *Majalat al-Sinama wa al-Masrah*_, no. 3, 1 July 1948, 18.
[99] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 222.
[100] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 39.
[101] Ibid., 39-40.
[102] Ibid., 41.

In addition to Iraqi national radio and broadcasts from Cairo, Iraqis were able to tune into BBC Arabic, Radio Berlin, which started broadcasting in 1939, and Radio Bari, which began broadcasting already in 1934. While it is by now a well-known fact that the influence of Nazi and Fascist propaganda in the Middle East was very limited, the Nazi Radio Berlin and the Italian Fascist Radio Bari did cause concern among the British, leftist and Jewish intellectuals in Iraq.[103] Radio Bari in particular transmitted programs to the Middle East in Arabic which combined cultural content such as programs about Arabic and Islamic history and architecture, poetry, literary, and popular Arabic music, and anti-British propaganda. Radio Bari also published a magazine in Arabic with articles on similar topics.[104]

Naguib Mahfouz's famous novel, *Midaq Alley* (*Zuqaq al-Midaq*), first published in 1947, opens with a panoramic view of a small Cairo alley in which most of the novel takes place. After a brief explanation of the historical and socio-economic milieu of the alley, the reader is quickly introduced to the aging storyteller, who has been entertaining the clients of the alley's local café with his stories for more than twenty years. On this particular evening, however, as the story teller begins to perform one of his epics, he is interrupted by the owner of the café, who addresses him in a hostile tone: "Are you going to force us to listen? It's over! It's over! Didn't I warn you last week?"[105] The disappearance of the traditional storyteller from the world of café leisure and entertainment was not a strictly Egyptian phenomenon. In Baghdad too, wide-ranging interruptions to the world of café leisure, in the form of technological developments and new cultural tastes and products eventually replaced older forms of entertainment and performances.

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[103] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 58-59. See also Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 68-69, 72.

[104] See also Arturo Marzano, *Onde Fasciste: La Propaganda Araba di Radio Bari, 1934-1943* (Rome: Carroci, 2015).

[105] Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*, translated by Humphrey Davis (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2011), 5.

There was often stiff competition between the many cafés in Baghdad and owners worked hard to attract customers. Like in Mahfouz's novel described above, acquiring a gramophone, a radio, or a television for one's café was an effective way to attract customers as most people could not afford these privately.[106] The radio not only made an outcast out of the storyteller, but also fundamentally changed the nature of Iraqi maqam performances. The Iraqi maqam tradition, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, shared an intimate link with the café. According to Kojaman, prior to the emergence of local radio in Iraq in 1936, maqam performances took place in private, in cafés, or in the nightclubs, which were slowly emerging during this period.[107] By 1938, maqam performances had almost entirely disappeared from the cafés. In fact, according to al-Rajab, the last maqam performance took place in late 1938 at the Shabandar café.[108] The reasons are many, but key among them is that the establishment of radio in Iraq in 1936 created a new, and in some ways more socially acceptable and respectable venue for maqam performances. Starting in 1936, the most well-known maqam performers were given radio shows once a week.[109] In addition to the radio, Kojaman mentions a number of other factors that contributed to the displacement of maqam performances from the café such as a general decline of the maqam tradition, the spread of more modern cafés, the younger generation's preference for modern Arabic music, the availability of Egyptian and Iraqi records, and the establishment of nightclubs, which became the dominant space for maqam performances and soon after also modern performances.[110]

At the same time, while records and gramophones remained important aspects of café leisure and entertainment, the radio and the emergence of a thriving cinema industry lessened the

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[106] 'Abd al-Rahman Karim al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-'Ijtimaiyya*, 87
[107] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 26.
[108] al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-'Iraqi*, 228.
[109] Ibid., 29-30. See also Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 213
[110] Ibid.,30-31.

importance of records and entered the competition for dominance as the most important musical institution.[111] In the mid 1950s, television arrived in Baghdad and almost immediately after its introduction added a new form of entertainment to café leisure. Like radios, when black and white television sets first appeared in Iraq they were expensive, costing as much as 140 USD. Cafés however, purchased or rented television sets because it attracted customers. With time, as development signals improved, it became possible for cafés outside of Baghdad to receive broadcasts.[112]

While this chapter concerned itself predominantly with the café leisure and entertainment in the context of "secular" activities, it is important to mention that the café also played into the cycle of religious time. During Ramadan, for example, cafés, offered different forms of entertainment, stayed open late, and saw an increase in the number visitors in the evenings after the breaking of the fast. In a way, Ramadan nights made the city of Baghdad available as a place of leisure to a larger group of people and allowed for nocturnal movements otherwise not sanctioned. As a fully sanctioned way of staying up late, while Ramadan did not change the gender segregated world of the café, the liminal time of the holy month did loosen up the age-related segregation normally enforced at cafés. During Ramadan, young boys who were normally not welcome in cafés during the evening were allowed to more freely move around the city. This allowed them to attend some of the many performances that took place at cafés during Ramadan.[113] Family friendly forms of leisure, such as picnic and amusement parks, made available during Eid and other holidays will be explored briefly in the epilogue.

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[111] Racy, "Record Industry and Egyptian Traditional Music: 1904-1932," 46.

[112] Sara Farhan, "'Huna Baghdad': Competing Visions in Television Programming in Monarchic Iraq," 11.

[113] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad,* 123. See also al-Quduri, *Tufula fi Baghdad*, 147-148; Haidar, *Baghdad fi Hadatha al-Sitinat*, 131-160.

In Praise of Idleness: Baghdad's Literary Cafés

As described in the previous sections, cafés offered diverse forms of sociability, leisure, and work related activities, and were highly specialized in terms of the entertainment they offered and the costumers they attracted. In addition, in the 1940s and 1950s in particular, cafés became the most important meeting place for writers and intellectuals. This was no coincidence. During this period, Iraq witnessed a what Bashkin has referred to as a literary and cultural renaissance[114] spearheaded by avant-garde literary, artistic, and intellectual milieus that all challenged literary as well as political and normative values through their texts. The political radicalization that happened at the same time will be discussed in the following section. The poetry of Badr Shakir al-Sayyab Nazik al-Malaʾika, and ʿAbd al-Wahhab al-Bayyati and the experimental novels and short stories of Fuʾad al-Takarli, ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri, and Ghaʾib Tuʿma Farman put Iraq on the map of modern Arabic literature. There is of course a pre-history to this phenomenon as the famous Baghdadi neo-classical poets such as Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, Maʿruf al-Rusafi, and Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi were also associated with particular cafés.[115] However, it is safe to say that the phenomenon of literary cafés became much more prominent in the 1940s and 1950s when groups of intellectuals, writers, and poets began to frequent specific cafés in order to meet, read, write, edit, and discuss literature, art, and politics. As this section will point out, the wealth of articles, poems, novels, and autobiographical writing produced by the generation of Iraqi writers and intellectuals who frequented Baghdad's cafés in the 1940s and 1950s has both facilitated and colored our understanding of cafés during this period.

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[114] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 88.
[115] Khalid Kishtainy, *Ayyam ʿIraqiyya* (London: Dar al-Hikma 2011), 125-127. See also Husayn Hatim al-Karkhi, *Majalis al-Adab fi Baghdad* (Beirut: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 2003); Razzaq Ibrahim Hasan, *Maqahi Baghdad al-Adabiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al-Shuʾun al-Thaqafiyya, 2001).

In fact, when seen through the eyes of its literary and intellectual clientele, the café emerges as a work-shop like place in which reading modern Arabic and Western literature, discussing this literature, politics, and art, and sharing new translations, books, and ideas from abroad were the most important activities. The café is a recurrent fixture in autobiographical and fictional writing about Baghdad and serves as a prime example of a site of literary and cultural consumption outside of the modern educational system. As we saw in the first part of this chapter, a small number of café, of which Swiss, Brazil, and Hasan 'Ajmi have already been mentioned, became iconic due to the clientele who frequented them.[116] The Iraqi poet and critic, Malik al-Matlabi, has referred to al-Rashid Street as "an expression of the empire of coffee shops […] al-Baladiyya was the two feet of the empire, and Hasan ʿAjmi and al-Zahawi made up its pelvis, the Parliament its navel, Café Brazil its chest, and Baida' its face."[117] al-Matlabi's strange metaphor suggests that hierarchies and classed differences existed between the many cafés on al-Rashid Street. At the same time, by suggesting that the many cafés on the street made up an organic empire, in the form of a body, he gives them all importance.[118]

Despite of the hierarchies that existed within and between different cafés, for budding poets and intellectuals, editing, reviewing, borrowing, and sharing materials was a form of independent inquiry that was very much a creative process especially because it was not controlled by the state. The provocative poet Husain Mardan, who came to Baghdad at the age of twenty and often slept on the streets or in parks at night, describes cafés as places of intense friendship, solidarity, and

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[116] Kishtainy, *Ayyam ʿIraqiyya*, 197.
[117] Malik al-Matlabi, "Gharirat al-Maqha," 2.
[118] For more on hierarchies and animosities between literary groups and writers associated with cafés see Yasmeen Hanoosh, "Contempt: Street Literati Vs. Street Literati in Modern Iraq," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43:2-3 (2012): 372-408.

encouragement between poets and calls cafés "the real universities for literature and poetry."[119]

As we will see short, while such statements must be taken with a grain of salt, cafés did offer a freedom not found in a university classroom or lecture hall. At the same time, however, Baghad's literary cafés often mimicked the power dynamics and hierarchies of universities. In fact, there was often competition between different groups and generations of poets. Specific cafés were associated with famous poets and younger poets and admirers had to respect their seniors – if they were lucky enough to be introduced or invited into the exclusive circles. The poetic stars had their permanent chairs and tables that were reserved for them.[120] Poet Buland al-Haidari describes how as a young poet, he and his friends were not welcome at cafés such as al-Bayruti where a group of more traditional poets were regulars.[121] Class loyalties and politics further divided Baghdad's literary cafés. According to Mardan, he and his close group of friends considered some cafés and the intellectuals and writers who held court there closely affiliated with the bourgeoisie. While Mardan frequented a number of different café at different stages of his career, he claims that he always preferred the ones frequented by working class Baghdadis.[122]

However, to argue, like Mardan, that cafés were "the real universities for literature and poetry"[123] pays too little attention to Iraq's educational institutions. Due to the relative weakness of Iraqi cultural institutions, it is of course correct to assume that much intellectual activity took place in cafés. However, while it is beyond this paper to address education, one could argue that

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[119] Husain Mardan, "al-Maqahi al-Adabiyya," *Dhakira ʿIraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 4. For more on Mardan see for example Haytham Bahoora, "Baudelaire in Baghdad: Modernism, The Body, and Husayn Mardan's Poetics of the Self," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 313-329.
[120] al-Matlabi, "Gharirat al-Maqha," 2.
[121] al-Haydari, "Baghdad bayna Maqahi al-Udabaʾ wa Udabaʾ al-Maqahi," 13.
[122] Mardan, "al-Maqahi al-Adabiyya," 4. Mardan describes how we would avoid going coffee shops such as Café Swiss, which was the home of intellectuals such as the Palestinian Jabra Ibrahim Jabra.
[123] Mardan, "al-Maqahi al-Adabiyya,", 4.

the Baghdad Teachers Training College, The College of Law, and the College Fine Arts were of equal importance. A brief look at the number of poets and writers who graduated from these institutors can attest to this.

As mentioned above, groups and societies of intellectuals and writers frequented and organized in specific cafés. The Society of Lost Time (*Jamaʿat al-Waqt al-Daʾi*) illustrates this well. In 1946 a group of avant-garde poets, artists, and intellectuals, among them painter Nizar Salim, poets Buland al-Haidari, Husain Mardan, and ʿAdnan Ra'uf, writers of prose and short stories Fuʾad al-Takarli, and ʿAbd al Malik Nouri established The Society of Lost Time as a venue for debates about literature and politics. The Society of Lost Time also published a magazine and even opened its own coffee shop, named Waq Waq, referencing the mythical island by the same name in medieval Arabic geographical literature, on ʿAntar square. According to al-Haydari, they chose to call themselves the Society of Lost time as a reference to Proust but also because their parents' generation used to tell them that art and literature were a waste of time.[124] While Baghdadi men of different socio-economic classes all frequented the city's cafes , there is a pattern, however, in which mostly middle class, progressive, and avant-garde intellectuals and writers, such as those belonging to The Society of Lost Time, frequented specific cafés as a way of constructing an oppositional identity.

By choosing its name, The Society of Lost Time adopted the state's and normative society's discourse of "lost time" and idleness, but turned it on its head. They did so, this section suggests, as a matter of pride and as a way of constructing themselves as part of an underground

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[124] Buland al-Haydari, "Baghdad bayna Maqahi al-Udabaʾ wa Udabaʾ al-Maqahi," *Dhakira Iraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 12-13. See also Caiani and Cobham, *The Iraqi Novel*, 40-41; Jabra, *Princesses' Street: Baghdad Memories*, 122. The Society of Lost Time only published two volumes of their journal, a couple of short stories, and al-Haidar's first collection of poetry *Khafqat Tin* (The Throb of Clay, 1946).

oppositional culture. Claiming idleness or "losing" time were key ingredients in the making if this distinction. Idleness most often took the form of hanging out in cafés in which they actively associated themselves with lower-class habitués. The café was a site of an urban subculture, and their claiming idleness a matter of pride and distinction that clearly marked them as vanguard while at the same time allowed them to mix with the "people." Claiming idleness and avant-garde status was at once as genuine and subversive as it was class-inflected and appears in literature as a marked infatuation with and tendency to describe the café and its clientele, to identify with and to romanticize it. Put differently, as playful acts of resistance, café activities produced an oppositional identity for vanguard intellectuals and rebuffed discourses of idleness and calls for leisure to be productive made by the modernizing state and those who became stakeholders in its project, such as teachers. In the circles of progressive literati, however, what the state saw as idleness emerged as a virtue.

Recalling his youth in Baghdad, writer and intellectual Rejwan describes in his autobiography the "endless hours" he spent in Café Swiss on al-Rashid Street and writes, "The coffee shop was quite an institution. Apart from providing a haven for us idlers, it was the ideal meeting place for friends, and it was there that our endless conversations about politics, literature and women were conducted."[125] For Rejwan, the café was also where he cultivated his most lasting friendships. "Already at the age of fifteen or sixteen," writes Rejwan, "I started frequenting coffee shops, my favorite being Hasan el-'Ajmi's. One could, and did, spend half a day in the cozy and cool Hasan el-'Ajmi's coffee shop for no more than five *fils*."[126] Hasan ʿAjmi was located between the Jewish Shamash high school and a third-class hotel. Directly in front of Hasan ʿAjmi was the Haydarkhana mosque. This mean that the café had a diverse clientele.

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[125] Rejwan, *The Last Jews of Baghdad*, 104
[126] Ibid., 105

In another chapter of his autobiography entitled "Idle Days," Rejwan writes, "The years 1937-1939 I spent in almost total idleness as far as work and regular schooling was concerned."[127] What is noteworthy here is that Rejwan refers to himself as an idler. Yet, rather than seeing this as an internalization of the bourgeois notion of time and the fact that he should have been elsewhere, in school or at work, Rejwan's attitude can be seen as a playful and potentially subversive self-description. As mentioned earlier, identifying as an idler gave Rejwan and his fellow idlers social distinction and marked their belonging to a very up to the minute urban subculture. Such descriptions, which abound in autobiographies, memoirs, and short stories, stand in stark contrast to the ways in which state and colonial officials described the coffee shop as a place of laziness, indolence, and non-national activities. In this way, it is possible to locate a certain pride in describing oneself as idle because it entailed a subtle opposition to normative society and values.

As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, during the Hashemite period, attempts to turn Iraq into a modern state were characterized by nationalist and at times authoritarian discourses. State officials were obsessed with the health of the nation. Consequently, they invoked a militarist idiom when speaking about citizens who had to be disciplined and turned into patriotic and punctual subjects through education and physical training. The café did not always fit well into this vision and, discursively at least, was transformed into a place in which time could be lost and wasted. Intellectuals who worked for the Ministry of Education in particular, such as Fadil al-Jamali (1902-1997) and Satiʿ al-Husri (1882-1968), were preoccupied with the ways in which young Iraqis spent their time and the reading materials they consumed, or produced, when they were not in school and not at work. They both gave diatribes directed against cafés, theaters, cinemas, and nightclubs as places that invited idleness, indolence, and immoral activities. Al-

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[127] Ibid., 105

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Jamali, in his book *Durus fi al-Tarbiyya wa al-Taʿlim,* was concerned about institutions and organizations outside of the reach of the government as well as the audiences who frequented them. A significant part of the criticism directed toward institutions such as the coffee shops stressed the time wastefulness associated with them. Al-Jamali argued that the people, and artists especially, neglected their national functions. Jamali preferred that intellectuals spent their time in clubs such as the nationalist *Nadi al-Muthanna* and not in independent literary salons, reading groups, or *ad hoc* and unofficial gatherings in cafés.[128] The fear of the café as a space in which both public and private morality and productivity could be lost has been noted by scholars studying cafés elsewhere in the region.[129]

In this context, the notion of a potentially dangerous and non-national idleness emerged as a function of a new and modern temporality and came to be associated with a particular space, namely the café, which had previously represented a less rigid boundary between work and leisure. In other words, café activities emerged as problematic as a result of a new time consciousness and the new notion of a fixed place and a fixed time for work, as well as the idea that there was a correct way for a citizen to spent his or her leisure. When the office became the fixed workplace, at least for a large segment of Iraq's new middle class, and the classroom the primary site for education, a number of places outside of these institutions became increasingly ambiguous. In fact, the more time became measured, controlled, and organized, the more unsupervised intellectual and political activity raised suspicion. It is in this context that idleness became a badge of honor for the avant-garde intellectual.

Regulars, however, also remember the café as a space in which aspiring poets and writers

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[128] Fadhil al-Jamali, *Durus fi al-Tarbiyya wa al-Taʿlim* (Baghdad, s.n., 1931).
[129] Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 90; Barak, *On Time*, 2013.

were debating the future of Arabic literature and where they met and became friendly with well-established literary personalities, many of whom served as role models for younger writers. Sasson Somekh, who was born in Baghdad in 1933, recalls the late 1940s in Baghdad in the following way:

> From then on, literary pursuits filled my life. I spent my days running back and forth between the many cafes on al-Rashid Street, which were the gathering places of young writers and artists […] a world of culture opened before me. Baghdad of the late 1940s was humming with literary activity, and seemed poised to become the center of literature in the Arab world.[130]

Somekh's description gives the impression that he spent all of this time "running back and forth between the many cafés on al-Rashid Street." Somekh, who was a high school student at the time, obviously did not spent all of his time frequenting Baghdad's literary cafés. A certain amount of nostalgia colors autobiographical accounts such as that of Somekh. Similarly, it is important to keep in mind that it required both money and free time to frequent the city's cafés. As we saw with cinema tickets in the previous chapter, this was a classed privilege not accessible to everyone. What is important, however, is the fact that Baghdad's vibrant cultural and literary life of the 1940s and 1950s, as it manifested in the city's cafés, attracted a large group of Iraqis interested in literature and politics and provided them with a space in which to discuss these topics. The literary milieu of the cafés was so fascinating to the young Somekh, and many others like him, that he spent a significant part of his leisure time reading, writing, and discussing literature in cafés after the school day had ended.[131]

Somekh further depicts the personal effects of these cultural processes: "I started to rebel against what struck me as a 'split personality': here I was, an Arab Jew in whose home and at

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[130] Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 164. See also Kishtainy, *Ayyam 'Iraqiyya*, 197.
[131] Ibid., 40.

whose school Arabic was treated with disdain."[132] The café, as described by Somekh, not only transcended sectarian boundaries but also, and partly as a result, facilitated the inclusion into the city's literary and intellectual culture of Iraqis who, like Somekh, studied at Jewish and foreign schools in which languages such as English and French were privileged over Arabic. While some of the smaller neighborhood cafés continued to attract sectarian-based clienteles, the emergence of more mixed residential areas and the anti-sectarian role of cafés located in the center of the city gradually became predominant. Similarly, it is important to remember that many teachers were also writers and intellectuals and that teachers and students sometimes formed bonds of friendship. Somekh, to mention just one example, accompanied his Lebanese communist, shi'i teacher, Muhammad Sharara, to meetings with young Baghdadi writers at cafés and it was also Sharara who introduced him to al-Jawahiri.[133]

There are several reasons why Baghdad's cafés have become synonymous with literature and poetry. Key among them is the fact that many of the literary personalities of the time, who frequented cafés, wrote about their experiences in works of poetry and prose, in articles as well as in autobiographies and memoirs. Judging from the many texts produced by the Iraqis who frequented Baghdad's cafés in the 1940s and 1950s, one might be tempted to think that the city's cafés were first and foremost literary cafés and that they were frequented almost entirely by writers who all knew each other either through collaborations or rivalries. It is undoubtedly important to recognize the very rich and productive literary café scene in Baghdad. The writings, however, of people who belonged to this scene tell us little about what must have made up the majority of

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[132] Ibid., 59.
[133] Ibid.,77, 162. Karim Muruwwa has a similar story of how he was introduced to Buland al-Haydari: Karim Muruwwa, "Maqha al-Waq Waq fi al-ʿAdhamiyya," *Dhakira ʿIraqiyya* (supplement of *al-Mada* newspaper) November 2, 2009, 10-11.

Baghdad's café clientele: lower and middle class Baghdadi men. The first half of this chapter began to tell this story.

Coffee, Ideology, and Politics

The fact that Baghdad's cafés have have been studied predominantly as sites of literary production does not mean that the poets who spent time there and their poems were not political. Kevin Jones, following Bashkin and Davis, has convincingly argued that the rise of urban cafés combined with improvements in literacy rates and increases in newspapers facilitated the entrance of an emergent Iraqi middle class into the public sphere and created new imagined communities of national and global solidarities.[134] These developments were in many ways tied to a number of physical spaces out of which the café was the most important.[135] Jones suggests that the link between poetry and cafés played a crucial role in this process. The recitation of popular and protest poetry at places such as cafés, in the words of Jones, can be seen as a testament to the causal relationship "between public performance, emotional reception and political action in the course of popular rebellions."[136] This phenomenon, Jones argues, is nowhere more visible than in Iraq of the late 1940s and 1950s when popular poetry played a crucial role in the protest movements of those years and became part and parcel of a new mode of mass politics.[137] During this period, some poets even composed poems that criticized those poets who spent their days in café, but failed to

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[134] Kevin Jones, "'A horizon lit with blood': public poetry and mass politics in Iraq," *Social History* 39:4 (2014): 448; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 96-100; Davis, *Memories of State*, 94-98; Eric Davis, 'The Historical Genesis of the Public Sphere in Iraq, 1900-1963: Implications for Building Democracy in the Post-Ba'thist Era," 393-401.
[135] Davis, 'The Historical Genesis of the Public Sphere in Iraq," 393-394.
[136] Jones, "'A horizon lit with blood,'" 445.
[137] Ibid., 445.

take on a public and political role.[138] It is important to mention, however, that this phenomenon, albeit in a different form, existed before the 1940s. Popular, protest, and political poetry about anything from the rising price of sugar to the British occupation after WWI was a part of the social life of coffee shops.[139] While poetry was also recited, read, and performed in the street and at other gatherings, as demonstrated above, the café shared an intimate and political relationship with poetry.

However, while poetry and poets were of great importance, Baghdad's cafés became centers of politics in other ways as well. As this section will show, sometimes the political were part of the more quotidian aspects of café leisure. The café, "as the reflection of an expanding public sphere,"[140] as Davis has called it, became the preferred meeting place for nationalist and oppositional political groups, labour organizers, and intellectuals and opposition to both the monarchy and the British was often orchestrated and debated in cafés. This, of course, put them on the radar of the Hashemite state as well as the British. The Baladiyya, for example, was a place of intense political discussions and debates. At times, these debates got so intense that the café's chairs were used as weapons between the fighting groups, which shows the extent to which urban violence was also part of the café scene. The Baladiyya played a crucial role during the 1952 uprising against the monarchy and demonstrations were organized and started in the café. During the same year, the Baladiyya also became center for solidarity with the Egyptian revolution.[141] The 1955 and 1956 riots against the signing of the Baghdad Pact similarly relied on cafés. Such political activites were not restricted to the 1950s or to the Baladiyya café.

Writing about the cafés of Cairo, Alexandria, and Beirut, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi has pointed

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138 Ibid., 460.
139 Mahdi, *Maqahi Baghdad*, 43-44.
140 Davis, 'The Historical Genesis of the Public Sphere in Iraq," 400; Bashkin*, The Other Iraq*, 88-89.
141 Sahib al-Shahir, "al-Baladiyya: Maqha min Ayyam al-Zaman al-Jamil," 6.

out that they were part of a transnational circulation of radical people, ideas, practices, printed materials, and performances, which made them an important "vehicle for the articulation of radicalism."[142] In Iraq too, throughout the Hashemite period, political opposition was closely linked to cafés. The great uprising during the winter 1948, the Wathba, which included students, workers, urban lower and middle classes also fermented and gained strength in the city's cafés.[143] In the 1930s, when a critical and radical and public sphere emerged, the coffee shop became one of the most important meeting places for nationalists, communists, and other dissidents including striking workers. Similarly, the café was where the radical materials produced by political opponents and dissidents were distributed and read.[144] Due to the role they played in oppositional politics, cafés were closely monitored by the state. In fact, police and police informers were regulars at several of Baghad's coffee shops. Informers came to listen in and monitor the reading materials read and distributed and sometimes arrests were made at cafés.[145]

Cafés were also places of more mundane and everyday conversations about politics, jokes, rumors, and conspiracy theories. The ʿArab café, owned by Ibrahim ʿArab, gained fame because of its owner. Ibrahim ʿArab was known for his many jokes, anecdotes, and exaggerated stories and conspiracy theories. This made the café popular among students. Psychology students from the nearby college often used the café as a place to study and prepare for exams and they would analyze Ibrahim ʿArab for fun due to his eclectic personality.[146] Ibrahim ʿArab not only claimed, to

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[142] Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean*, 167-168.

[143] For more on the Wathba and urban violence see Orit Bashkin, "A Patriotic Uprising: Baghdadi Jews and the Wathba," in *Violence and the City in the Modern Middle East*, edited by Nelida Fuccaro (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2016), 151-167. See also Nelida Fuccaro, "Dissecting Moments of Unrest: Twenty Century Kirkuk," 169-187 in the same volume. For more on urban violence in Kirkuk see Arbella Bet-Shlimon, *City of Black Gold: Oil Ethnicity and the Making of Modern Kirkuk* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2019.

[144] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 88-89.

[145] Sahib al-Shahir, "al-Baladiyya: Maqha min Ayyam al-Zaman al-Jamil," 6.

[146] Buland al-Haydari, "Baghdad baina Maqahi al-Udabaʾ wa Udabaʾ al-Maqahi," *Dhakira*

everyone who would listen, that he had dinner with King Faisal several times a week,[147] but also that his old dog, always sleeping at the entrance to the café , was the real reason behind World War II. According to Ibrahim ʿArab, in the 1930s, he had given the dog as a present to the German ambassador to Iraq. Meanwhile, the English ambassador to Iraq, who was under the impression that he had been promised the dog, got furious and the deteriorating relationship between the two ambassadors eventually led to the war.[148] Ibrahim often boasted about his football skills. Once, customers saw him arriving at the café drenched in sweat and out of breath. When they asked him what had happened, he proudly claimed that he was in the middle of saving the Iraqi national football team from defeat. Ibrahim has been at the stadium to watch the match and when things appeared to be going south for the Iraqi team, he decided to intervene. According to Ibrahim, he had just kicked the ball so high into the air that he figured he would have time for a cup of tea before the ball returned. After two sips of tea, he ran back towards the field.

Ibrahim ʿArab told everyone willing to listen that the little tree that he had planted in front of the coffee shop had been stolen, by none other than himself, from Nuri Saʿid's garden. Many of Ibrahim's jokes and anecdotes centered around the controversial figure of Nuri al-Saʿid, the pro-British Iraqi politician. Ibrahim claimed that Nuri al-Saʿid always listened to him and that the two were having a dialogue about redirecting the train tracks that crossed through Baghdad and passed by in close proximity to the café. The reason was that Ibrahim found the noise to be disturbing and was worried that it would distract the many students who came to his café to do homework and prepare for exams. Ibrahim was also known for his volatile temper and nothing infuriated him more than when his young customers didn't believe his stories. As a form of

ʿIraqiyya (supplement of al-Mada newspaper) November 2, 2009, 12-13.
[147] Baghdadi, Li-alla Nansa Baghdad, 126.
[148] al-Haydari, "Baghdad baina Maqahi al-Udabaʾ wa Udabaʾ al-Maqahi," 13.

punishment, he would refuse to serve such customers until his good mood had been restored.[149]

Ibrahim's performances, jokes and conspiracy theories offered a form of free entertainment. Just as importantly, however, as theorized by Lisa Wedeen in her work on Syria, jokes can be though of as subtle forms of rhetorical resistance with the potential to undermine legitimacy.[150] Without seriously challenging the status quo, humor, such as jokes, can function as a safety valve.[151]

Cafés across Iraq were not exclusively frequented by Iraqis. Nor were they necessarily sites of exclusively local Iraqi articulations of politics. In addition to travelers, tourists, and merchants from abroad, the Presbyterian missionaries, mentioned in Chapter 2, made the country's cafés an important part of their evangelizing efforts. Beginning in the mid 1920s, Presbyterian missionaries working at the mission's stations in Mosul and Hilla began frequenting cafés in the two cities, describing it as "a unique and novel way of reaching men."[152] In Hilla, the missionaries made daily visits to the many cafes in the market where they would read the Bible and hand out literature about the Christian message and way of life.[153] The strategy was simple: "One goes to a coffee-house with a supply of tracts and Scripture portions. Sitting by himself and reading, he waits till Arab curiosity leads to requests to see the tracts. Then he gives out his tracts to as many as ask for them and can read…In the course of the year about 20,000 tracts have been distributed throughout the field."[154]

In the late 1920s, the missionaries began referring to this type of work as "Coffee-House Evangelism." While the reports are written with an optimism that never came to be reflected in the

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[149] Ibid., 13.
[150] Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 120-129.
[151] Ibid., 159.
[152] Narrative Report of Mission Work, 1926-1927, United Mission in Iraq, RG 509-1-3.
[153] Evangelistic Report, Hillah, 1927, United Mission in Iraq, RG 89-1-1.
[154] Narrative Report of Mission Work, 1926-1927, United Mission in Iraq, RG 509-1-3.

numbers of converts, they contain astute observations about the social and leisurely functions of Iraqi cafés. In a report entitled "Coffee House Evangelism" from 1929, a Presbyterian missionary notes the important function that cafés play in the life of Iraqis. While some of the descriptions are steeped in a language of inherent Iraqi and Arab otherness – such as when the author describes the coffee shop as "a loafing place for the idle"[155] – most of the report exhibits interesting and correct observations about the importance of café leisure:

> It is the Arab's chief place of recreation and after works he goes to the coffee house instead of to his home, and wiles away the hours with backgammon, chess, checkers, or cards, or in sitting and watching, or listening to the screech of the phonograph. The coffee house is also the place for the retailing of news and discussion – the debating club of the Arabs. Besides this it serves as a reception room for many men, as the majority of them live in tiny houses and the seclusion of their women makes it impossible to receive guests at home. Finally, the coffee house is a business office where many important transactions are negotiated and the necessary documents signed.[156]

Another report describes the café as "the poor man's club, open twelve hours or more a day and crowded for much of that time."[157] The use of the term idleness, as suggested by the above quote, was not restricted to Iraqi officials or Iraqi poets and writers. It was also a missionary way of understanding and seeing café leisure. While it did not embody the same level of concern found among Iraqi officials or the racism of British views on Iraqi idleness, the Presbyterian missionaries still associated it what a particular place – the café. According to the British ambassador to Iraq in the early 1950s, John Troutbeck, café leisure, which in his opinion was a form of idleness, posed are more direct political threat:

> The Iraqi will sit in his café for hours … surrounded by his cronies, brooding over his grievances and talking interminable politics … Seeing little but squalor and stagnation all around him, he will not admit even to himself the obvious answer that he belongs to a peculiarly irresponsible and feckless race … He blames his

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[155] Coffee-House Evangelism, 1929, United Mission in Iraq, RG 89-1-3.
[156] Coffee-House Evangelism, 1929, United Mission in Iraq, RG 89-1-3.
[157] The United Mission in Iraq 1924-1962: A Brief Historical Survey by Rev. James W. Willoughby, United Mission in Iraq, RG 509-2-3.

frustration upon everyone but himself, and above all upon the British, feeling only every resentment for the few oases of civilization which we have created in his midst. His worst instincts urge him to wipe out these blots on the desert landscape and to drive out those who perpetrated them.[158]

As described in Chapter 2, the Presbyterians grew increasingly worried about the spread of communism in Iraqi in the 1940s and 1950s. In the late 1920s and 1930s, however, the more or less constant access to potential Iraqi converts provided by the long opening hours of cafés opened up new possibilities for the missionaries, which led them to engage in "Coffee-House Evangelism." Missionaries sometimes complained that their café lectures and readings were "subject to distractions, intentional or otherwise,"[159] but still saw it as one of their most effective tools and most "ideal field for evangelistic work"[160] because it offered opportunities to informally meet Iraqi men. Furthermore, since the missionaries correctly noted that the café was not a class-exclusive space, there, they thought, "the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can be presented to all classes of men in personal conversation – for all classes frequent the coffee houses."[161]

It is difficult to say how the café clientele perceived the missionaries since no available Arabic sources describe "Coffee-House Evangelism from the point of view of the Iraqis who frequented the coffee shops. Missionary reports, however, show that with the exception of one café, they were never refused entry. In another café, frequented mostly by Shi'is, the cups used by the missionaries, due to Shi'i purity laws, were taken to the river and washed after use, but the missionaries were still welcomed.[162] This is perhaps not surprising considering that the

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[158] "Attacks on Britain in the Iraqi Press," British Embassy (Mr. J. Troutbeck), Baghdad, to Anthony Eden, London, 31 October 1952, FO 371/98747 (in Rush, *Records of Iraq*, v. 10, 713-715). See also Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 87-88.

[159] The United Mission in Iraq 1924-1962: A Brief Historical Survey by Rev. James W. Willoughby, United Mission in Iraq, RG 509-2-3.

[160] Coffee-House Evangelism, 1929, United Mission in Iraq, RG 89-1-3.

[161] Coffee-House Evangelism, 1929, United Mission in Iraq, RG 89-1-3.

[162] Coffee-House Evangelism, 1929, United Mission in Iraq, RG 89-1-3.

missionaries were paying customers. More importantly perhaps, it seems safe to assume that the lack of hostility and at least part of the attention and interest described by the missionaries was due to the fact that missionaries, unwillingly perhaps, provided a spectacle, which was highly entertaining and free. For example, the missionaries or their colporteurs would read Gospel stories out loud or to each other. For café customers who could not read, this was an opportunity for free entertainment.

Conclusion

This chapter traced the long history and the changing role of Baghdad's cafés. Unlike the cinema, as we saw in Chapter 3, with very few exceptions, the café remained an almost exclusively male space of leisure during the Hashemite period. It therefore did not have a significant impact on the gender relations of leisure. Cafés were, however, integrated into new institutions and forms of leisure. With the growth of the education system and the public sphere, Baghdad witnessed an increase in both cafés and costumers. As part of this process, students began to frequent cafés. At the same time, newspapers, journals, magazines, and other reading materials became stables of café leisure. In addition to functioning as a place of literary consumption, in the 1940s and 1950s, select number of cafés became the preferred place of rendezvous for Iraqi intellectuals, writers, and poets. The café was also quick to integrate new technologies such as radio, gramophone, and later on also television. During the same period, cafés became nodes in Iraq's political life and landscape. Nationalists, communist, dissidents, and police informers all frequented the city's cafés, which sometimes led to clashes.

The first part of this chapter, in addition to highlighting the intertwinement of leisure and labor, demonstrated that cafés were places of both diurnal and nocturnal leisure and entertainment.

In fact, cafés were key in transforming and conquering nighttime as a respectable site of leisure and sociability outside of the home. In the words of Kafadar, already during the Ottoman period, cafés came to test "the elasticity of day and night."[163] As this chapter argued, different and changing forms of entertainment were important parts of this process. In addition to the café, which existed as a bridge between night and day, other venues of leisure such as bars and nightclubs belonged squarely in Baghdad's urban night. The next and final chapter follows those of Baghdad's café patrons who were not ready to call it a night after the cafés closed. The focus on the intersection of entertainment, leisure, and labor will remain in the next chapter as it will trace the singers, performers, and musicians who hurried off to nightclubs and private parties and gatherings after the cafés switched off their lights.

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[163] Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night," 254.

Chapter 5: Nocturnal Baghdad: Nightlife and Leisure in the City

In his 1935 book, *Iraq from Mandate to Independence*, Ernest Main, a British official and correspondent for the British sponsored and English-language *The Baghdad Times* newspaper, wrote extensively about Iraq's modernity, progress, and development. Main focused on the sights, scenes, and features that he considered to be important markers of Iraq's progress three years after nominal independence from Britian in 1932. In a section on entertainment and nightlife in Iraq's capital, Main complained that "the evening entertainments in Baghdad are not very varied." Without much enthusiasm, Main went on to describe the dancing and singing of female performers in nightclubs as "exotic and strange to Western ears and eyes." Main was no more impressed with the "shrill and quavering" music than he was with the "monotonous singing and swaying of the women dancers."[1] Main did acknowledge, however, that "an expert [Iraqi] dancer by her sinuous movements and gestures can move a whole audience to a state of great excitement."[2]

The Palestinian intellectual and novelist Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, who spent a large part of his life in Baghdad more than a decade later, provides a not so differnet view of Iraqi nightlife in his novel, *Hunters in a Narrow Street*. Before arriving in Baghdad, the novel's protagonist asks around to get a better sense of the city: "And was Baghdad a big city? I had asked someone in Damascus. 'It certainly is,' came the answer. 'There are fourteen cabarets in it.'"[3] After his arrival in Baghdad, the protagonist asks an employee at his hotel about sightseeing recommendations:

> This is my first day here. Are there interesting places to see?
> Lots. There are cinemas and cafés.
> No. I mean – I just did not know how to put it to him.
> I see. You mean cabarets where you can have fun. You just go down this way, to

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[1] Ernest Main, *Iraq from Mandate to Independence* (London: G. Allen & Unwin ltd., 1935), 17. See also Ernest Main, *In and Around Baghdad* (Baghdad: The Times Press, 1931).

[2] Ibid., 17.

[3] Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *Hunters in a Narrow Street* (London: Heinemann, 1960), 6.

South Gate.[4]

To the well-travelled Jabra, Baghdad was cultural a backwater and the irony and disappointment clearly shine through the text. Lamenting both the absence of Abbasid splendor and the present state of Baghdad's urban modernity, the city falls short of his expectations. Irony and disappointment aside, the fact that the local Iraqi working at the hotel frames cafés, cinemas, and cabarets as the most important landmarks of Baghdad shows the extent to which Baghdad's urban modernity was understood and narrated, at least locally, through its venues and practices of leisure. Chapters 3 and 4 described how in the first half of the 20 twentieth century, Baghdad became a modern capital and that as part of this process, a wide array of leisure venues and practices became available to Baghdadis. This chapter examines nocturnal leisure in Baghdad.

Unlike Main and Jabra, however, this chapter approaches Baghdadi nightlife, its audiences and many performers, who made their living in Baghdad's nightclubs, as a newly available, bustling, vibrant, and artistically sophisticated terrain of urban leisure. From the vantage point of those who took part in it, Baghdadi nightlife was a novel and exciting place. *Malha*, the Arabic word used most frequently for nightclubs in Iraq, carries a number of meanings, including "amusement," "entertainment," "diversion," and "distraction." In the twentieth century, nightfall fundamentally changed the streets of Baghdad and offered new forms of nocturnal amusement, entertainment, diversion, and distraction. When the sun set and the temperature dropped, night began to structure and guide nightlife and leisure. Men moved from the cinemas and cafés on al-Rashid Street, described in Chapter 3 and 4, to the bars, casinos, cabarets, brothels, and nightclubs in the Midan area or on Abu Nuwas Street, known to some as not just the geographical extension, but also "the nocturnal name for al-Rashid Street."[5]

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[4] Ibid., 20.
[5] al-Matlabi, "ʿAziza al-Maqha," 2.

As we saw in Jabra's novel, to the Iraqi hotel employee, establishments of nocturnal leisure such as cinemas, nightclubs, and casinos became markers of Baghdad's status as a capital as well as its urban modernity and development. Writing about Istanbul, Daniel Macarthur-Seal has recently described how nightlife changed during the Allied occupation (1918-1923). During this period, he notes, "new hotels, theaters, cinemas, and bars linked by gas-and electric-lit streets served a growing tourist, commercial, and local clientele and provided the components of a globally recognizable nightlife economy."[6] Baghdad too, during this period, witnessed the emergence of nocturnal practices and establishments of leisure. With the exception of one article, Iraqi nocturnal practices and institutions of leisure have been all but absent in the English-language scholarship on Iraq.[7] Chapter 3 showed the extent to which Iraqi cinema leisure was a local inflexion of a global phenomenon. This chapter contends that Iraqi nocturnal leisure was, if not global, then fundamentally transnational and transregional. As we will see, female performers, dancers, and singers came to Baghdad from all of Iraq's provinces as well as from elsewhere in the region.

In the 1970s, Ernest C. Dawn described the transnational movements of Arab urban elites and the role they played in forging pan-Arab nationalism.[8] Since then, a number of historians have

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[6] Daniel-Joseph Macarthur-Seal, "Intoxication and Imperialism: Nightlife in Occupied Istanbul, 1918 – 23." Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 37, no. 2 (2017): 299-300. See also Avner Wishnitzer, "Into the Dark: Power, Light, and Nocturnal Life in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul." International Journal of Middle East Studies 46 (2014): 513-31; Carole Woodall, "Decadent Nights: A Cocaine-Filled Reading of 1920s Post-Ottoman Istanbul." In Mediterranean Encounters in the City: Frameworks of Mediation between East and West, North and South, edited by Michela Ardizzoni and Valerio Ferme, 17 – 36. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015; Carole Woodall, "'Awakening a Horrible Monster': Negotiating the Jazz Public in 1920s Istanbul." Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 30, no. 3 (2010): 574 – 82.
[7] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 212-230.
[8] Ernest C. Dawn. *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973); Ernest C. Dawn, "The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology in the Interwar Years, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 20:1 (1988): 67-91

provided us with detailed accounts of the transnational movements of elites and middle classes that characterized the late Ottoman and early Hashemite periods. Recently, Michael Provence has given us an account of the transregional movement of late Ottoman Arab elites who went on to become nation builders after the state in which they had invested their hopes collapsed.[9] Writing specifically about Iraq, Bashkin, has described the transnational networks of Palestinian, Syrian, and Egyptian teachers, professors and intellectuals that characterized the Hashemite period in Iraq.[10] Examining new and non-elite sources, Wien has produced a transnational and cultural history of Arab nationalism and its institutions.[11] Noga Efra has drawn attention to the transnational connections of women's activism in early Hashemite Iraq.[12]

This chapter argues that Iraqi nightlife, as it existed in the first part of the twentieth century, before Iraq became a state, can further our understanding of Middle Eastern transnationalism and movements of labor across the region. The "nocturnal" transnationalism of female nightclub performers and the mobility and movement of precarious forms of labour, including sex work, that it represents, offers a corrective to elite-focused understandings of movement and travel during this period. Even later on, during the interwar period, when pan-Arab nationalism had become more established and non-elites, such as teachers moved around for work,

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[9] Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2017).

[10] Bashkin, "The Nile Valley on the Banks of the Euphrates and Tigris: Egyptian Intellectuals in Iraq During the Interwar Period, 59; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 127-157. See also Eppel, "The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,"; 227-250; Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism*, 8-9.

[11] Wien, *Arab Nationalism: The Politics of History and* 3.

[12] Noga Efrati, "Revisiting early women's activism in Iraq: a transnational perspective," Iraqi Studies: Past, Present, and Future, conference a Columbia University, February 28-29, 2020. See also
Efrati, "The Other Awakening in Iraq," 153-173; Efrati, "Competing Narratives: Histories of Women's Movement in Iraq," 445-466.

female performers continued to cross borders and were thus part of the same networks and movements. This chapter shows that both before and after Iraqi had become a state, nightlife was a form of leisure that challenged and changed the boundaries of sexuality and gender in Iraqi society. At the same time, it was a site in which sexuality and gender were policed.

In addition, this chapter argues that at a time when the Hashemite state was trying to figure out and consolidate what it meant, politically, historically, and culturally to be Iraqi, there was a synchronous attempt, from below and through popular culture and nocturnal institutions of leisure, to lay claims to Iraqi, history, identity, localities, and the national project more broadly. More specifically, I argue that while nightclubs and the women and musicians who performed in them were very much on the margins of society, they participated in a popular and nocturnal nationalism: they sang and danced in nightclubs with names such as al-Farabi, Abu Nuwas, al-Jawahiri, Dijla, Shahrazad and Alf Laila under stage names such as Salima al-ʿIraqiyya, Salima Dijla, Amina al-Hillawiyya, Salima Furat, and Fathiyya al-Maslawiyya. Some female performs, as this chapter will show, became famous national divas. In the process and throughout their careers, they crossed boundaries relating to to sect, class, and gender, and sexuality. Even the performers who did not become national and regional celebrities crossed many of the same boundaries. As argued by Baron in her study of Egyptian nationalism and gendered images and discourses of the nation, while women were excluded from the formal political sphere, they were at center stage in images of the nation.[13] This chapter demonstrates how images of the nation as woman, in the Iraqi context, were appropriated by the country's nocturnal institutions of leisure. Since several scholars have largely focused on the Iraqi effendiyya and the role of education in the construction of national identity, it is important to integrate people and institutions on the margins back into the narrative.

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[13] Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

With a particular focus on female performers and nightclubs, the first part of this chapter examines how the Baghdadi night was turned into a space for leisure and traces history of the rise of nightlife and nocturnal leisure practices. The second part of this chapter traces the emergence of the female stars of Iraqi nightlife. In addition, however, it begins to tell the story of Iraq's hundreds of less fortunate and famous female performers. Writing about early modern Istanbul, Kafadar has cautioned us to remember that "the use of night time is not always fun or a matter of desire."[14] Night labour forced many Baghdadi's, including those who worked in nightclubs, brothels, and bars, to stay awake across the city. The labour, including sex work, that facilitated nightlife in Baghdad will be at the crux of this chapter.

This chapter relies on a number of diverse sources. In particular, however, the works of two Iraqi scholars deserves to be mentioned. In addition to Kojaman, the Iraqi ethnomusicologist already mentioned in Chapter 4, without the work of ʿAbd al-Karim al-ʿAllaf (1896-1969), it would be next to impossible to write a chapter about Iraqi nightlife. A poet and a composer, al-ʿAllaf began his poetic career reading fierce nationalist poems in the Haydarkhana mosque during the 1920 Iraqi revolution, for which he was imprisoned. Later in his life, he wrote songs for some of the most famous singers in Iraq. Al-ʿAllaf also edited a number of magazines throughout his life.[15] For the present chapter, his most important contribution, however, is the many Arabic-language works of cultural and social history that he produced late in his life. Several of these, as we will see, deal specifically with Iraqi nightlife.

That being said, however important they may be, there are limits to what accounts produced by men can tell us about female performers. The Iraqi poet al-Jawahiri, who visited Baghdad's many cafés and nightclubs in his youth in the 1920s and 1930s, wrote several poems in which he

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[14] Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night," 254.
[15] ʿAbd al-Amir, *Raqsa al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhira*, 170.

praised the beauty of female dancers and singers. One of these poems is a tribute to the beauty of Badiʿa ʿAtish, a female dancer from Aleppo who performed at the ʿAzzawi café: "As you turn away /you show the eye the best / that it can see of a behind (*ahsan ma tara khalfan*)."[16] The poem aptly captures the novelty and excitement caused by the presence of female bodies in public space. The poetic prowess of al-Jawahiri aside, at the same time, the poem also demonstrates well both the objectification of female performers dancers and the exclusively male gaze through which we access the history of Iraqi nightlife. In fact, the voices of the female performers are absent from such accounts and since they they did not leave behind memoirs and autobiographies, their experiences are difficult to trace and locate. To complicate matters further, the sources normally used by historians to examine the ways in which female bodies, movements, and sexualities were governed, disciplined, and regulated are not currently available to historians of Iraq. Historians such as Liat Kozma, Camilla Campos, and Hanan Hammad have used police and court records to show how sex work, and female sexuality more broadly, was regulated by colonial authorities and decolonizing nation states.[17] In the absence of such sources, this chapter relies on accounts from other parts of region as well as what we know about Iraqi attempts to regulate desire and sexuality through the creation of sexual difference and heteronormative families during the period. This

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[16] Al-Jawahiri, *al-Diwan*, vol. 2, 42.

[17] Kozma, "Women's Migration for Prostitution in the interwar Middle East and North Africa," 94-95. See also Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011); Liat Kozma, *Policing Egyptian Women: Sex, Law, and Medicine in Khedival Egypt* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011); Kozma, "Women's Migration for Prostitution in the interwar Middle East and North Africa," *Journal of Women's History*, 28:3 (2016): 93-113; Camilla Pastor de Maria Campos, "Performers or Prostitutes? Artistes during the French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon, 1921–1946," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 13:2 (2017): 308; Hanan Hammad, *Industrial Sexuality: Gender, Urbanization, and Social Transformation in Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016).

chapter demonstrates that nightlife and sex work created tensions and moral anxieties in Hashemite Iraq. Some of these tensions and anxieties are reflected in texts produced by Iraqi men. In the absence of official records, while the experience of female performers is absent from these texts, they can shed light on the moral ambiguity and anxiety that existed around new spaces of public leisure in which women took part. As many of these texts, especially the fictional ones, are concerned with the respectability and morality of leisure, they can be used to trace the performance and articulation of of different kinds of policing and regulation.

From *Maqahi* to *Malahi* and from Boys to *Banat*: A Short History of Baghdadi Nightlife

The history of nightlife in Baghdad is simultaneously also part of the history of the last years of the Ottoman Empire, Baghdad's expansion, the changing role of the state, rural-to-urban migration, new middle classes, and changing categories of gender and sexuality. In addition, the history of Baghdadi nightlife is part and parcel of the wider history of the mandate, interwar, and postwar periods in Iraqi history. As we saw in Chapter 4, certain forms of especially musical entertainment and leisure moved from the cafés, the *maqahi*, to the nightclubs, the *malahi*, in the beginning of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, male performers, singers, and dancers were gradually replaced by female performers, first from across the Ottoman Empire and eventually, beginning in the 1920s, from Baghdad and across Iraq, Egypt, and the Levant. Developing from modest performances on makeshift stages in cafés, by the 1940s, Baghdadi nightlife not only had competition from other institutions, such as cinema and theater, as described in Chapter 3, but also internal competition between up-scale nightclubs located in hotels, casinos, and private parties. Also by the 1940s, and partially due to their appearance on Iraqi radio and in Iraqi and Egyptian

films, a number of famous performers managed to escaped nightlife's connotations with moral ambiguity and sex work, and entered the upper echelons of Iraqi society.

In the beginning of the twentieth century some cafés gradually transformed nightclubs while others continued to offer music, song, and dance until these activities permanently moved to the several nightclubs that began to appear in the 1920s.[18] In fact, before the 1920s, during the Ottoman period, Baghdad's limited nightlife was characterized by maqam performances and male dancing and singing, which generally took place in specific cafés that operated for a brief period before they were either turned into or replaced by nightclubs. Gender roles in this period tended to be conservative and female performers did not appear in Iraq until after 1908 when the more liberal climate that followed the the Young Turk revolution and new Ottoman constitution brought female performers to Iraq.[19]

One of the first cafés to offer dancing was Sabiʿ in the Midan area of Baghdad. Sabiʿ was also the first establishment to be referred to as a nightclub. It is not clear when exactly Sabiʿ became a venue for public musical leisure and entertainment.[20] However, it is certain that already in 1907, Sabiʿ offered maqam and chalghi[21] performances in addition to dancing boys, often dressed in women's clothing. It did not, however, have female performers.[22] A male dancer, often a young boy, was called a *shaʿar*. During his performance, the *shaʿar*, according to Kojaman, "puts makeup on his face, lets free his long hair" and is so "specialized in imitating female movements

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[18] Sahib al-Shahir, "al-Baladiyya: Maqha min Ayyam al-Zaman al-Jamil," 6.

[19] al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 125; ʿAli al-Wardi, *Lamahat ʿIjtimaʿiyya min Tarikh al-ʿIraq al-Hadith* (London: 1992), 253-255. See also Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 217-218.

[20] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 356; Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 217.

[21] Chalghi is the Iraqi word used for a traditional maqam ensemble and usually consisted of the following instruments. Kamana joza, santour, daff, and dembek. See also Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 21-24.

[22] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 326; Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 31; al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 121.

during his dance that one forgot that he was a man."[23] Some *shaʿar* performers had fake breasts made out of different materials.[24] Most *shaʿar* performers were accompanied by their own bands consisting of one or two members, most often a percussionist and a violinist.[25] A *shaʿar* performance lasted for up to three hours and did not include singing. Performances most often took place in the afternoon. All-male bands using mostly brass instruments and drums, which could be hired for weddings and other celebrations sometimes brought a *shaʿar* performer who would entertain the guests with dancing. Such bands, including the *shaʿar*, were paid in a combination of tips, food, and a small fee.[26] *Shaʿar* performances were popular. However, as we will see, like the female dancers and singers who eventually replaced the *shaʿar*, the profession was socially frowned upon. According to Kojaman, *shaʿar* performers were associated with both homosexuality and male sex work.[27] It is difficult to ascertain whether and to what extent *shaʿar* performers were involved in sex work. They did, however, gather in the Midan area close to Baghdad's official brothel district.[28]

While little is know about Baghdad's shaʿar performers, it is clear that some of them gained considerable fame. One of the most famous was Yahya Zakariyya, who was also a dance teacher.[29] Another male dancer, Naʿim, is well known because of his tragically short life, which was memorialized by the poet Maʿruf al-Rusafi. Naʿim, a Christian boy from Aleppo, was brought to Baghdad, possibly against his will, to dance by an Iraqi man. Na'im was extremely popular and, according to Zubaida, seduced and charmed many of Sabiʿ's male patrons because of his beauty

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[23] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 107.
[24] al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 122.
[25] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 107.
[26] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 215-216.
[27] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad*, 109-110; Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 107-108.
[28] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad*, 109-110
[29] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 108.

and dance skills.[30] One man in particular became so infatuated with the young Naʿim that he offered him money and gifts to become his lover. When Naʿim refused, one night the man showed up drunk at Sabiʿ during Naiʿm's performance and shot him dead while he was on stage.[31] The murder of Naʿim was the talk of town in Baghdad for several weeks. Shortly after the incident, which took place in 1907, al-Rusafi, who had been an admirer of Naʿim's, composed two poems, *Wajhu Naʿim* ʿ(*Naiʿm's Face*) and *al-Yatim al-Makhduʿ* (*The Defrauded Orphan*), in which he lamented his murder.[32] *Wajhu Naʿim* begins with the following lines: "God abundantly blessed Naʿim's face with beauty / a moon more powerful than the sunrise on a jet-black night (*bahim*) with his slender (*saqim*) figure he taught people true love."[33] Al-Rusafi also wrote poems about nightclubs during his time in Istanbul at a time when no nightclubs existed in Baghdad. *Layla fi Malha* (*A Night in a Nightclub*) describes a visit al-Rusafi made to a nightclub in Istanbul in the company of Khalil al-Sakakini.[34]

The extreme violence of Naʿim's murder was likely a reality for many performers who existed on the margins of Baghdadi society.[35] At the same time, however, and on a more abstract level, the murder of Naʿim symbolically ended *shaʿar*, which to say male, performances. While it was still possible in 1907 for al-Rusafi to cast Naʾim unapologetically as the poem's male beloved and protagonist, it is interesting to note that his murder occurred at a time when discourses and

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[30] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 217.

[31] al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 121; ʿAbd al-Karim al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyyan Baghdad fi al-ʿAsr al-ʿAbbasi wa al-Uthmani al-Akhir* (Baghdad: Matbaʿat Dar al-Tadamun,1969), 176.

[32] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyyan Baghdad*, 176. In *Baghdad al-Qadima* al-ʿAllaf mentions a rumor that Naiʿm was actually killed by his own family. When Naʿim began amassing gifts and wealth from his many admirers, his family in Aleppo wanted him back. When Naʿim refused, the family decided to kill him. See al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 122. However, this seems unlikely since, according to Zubaida, the man who killed Naʿim was from a well known Baghdadi family. See Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 217.

[33] al-Rusafi, *Diwan al-Rusafi*, 735.

[34] al-Rusafi, *Diwan al-Rusafi*.

[35] For more on violence against female sex workers see for example Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute," 42-62.

practices of sexuality and desire were changing. As the *shaʿar*, both as performer and object of male desire, disappeared from public view, instead, for the first time, around 1908, Iraq witnessed the introduction of female singers and dancers and the concomitant rise of the nightclub, the *malha*, as a space separate from the café. While *shaʿar* performances did not disappear overnight, the space of the nightclub quickly became associated with female performers and the articulation of heteronormal desire. As we will see in the following section, around the same time, poets began write poems that praised female performers. While more research is needed in order to fully grasp the specificities of the Iraqi case, the gradual disappearance of male dancers, from public as well as from poetry, might be understood as what Afsaneh Najmabadi has described, in the context of nineteenth century Iran, as the emulation of Western standards of heteronormativity as a prerequisite for achieving modernity.[36] In the words of Najmabadi, "homoeroticism and same-sex practices" became a sign of backwardness, requiring the heteronormalization of eros, sex, public space, and family life to achieve modernity.[37] This view is echoed by Dror Ze'evi whose work on the late Ottoman empire demonstrates that political and social changes and new conceptions of gender "created a clear, new, and comprehensive sense of bounded sexuality with a heteronormal center and 'deviant' margins" that became part of a new set of scripts that emerged to control deviant sexual behavior.[38] Similarly, Joseph Massad points to the deep connection between Arab nationalist and modernist discourse and the regulation of sexuality, especially same-sex practices, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[39] Writing specifically about the *khawal*, the Egyptian variant of the *shaʿar,* Wilson Jacob notes that the figure of the *khawal* sheds light on a "terrain of

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[36] Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Moustaches and Men without Beards* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
[37] Ibid., 3.
[38] Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 168.
[39] Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, 53-57.

gender, sexuality, and sociability that was in the process of rapidly receding" and that "the effect of colonial modernity in Egypt…was implicit in the vanishing of the cross-dressing sociality of the *khawal.*"[40]

This chapter suggests that in Iraq, the social projects closely connected to desires for progress, modernity, and social utopias characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took place at the expense of feminine, queer and lower class sexualized subjects, such as the *shaʿar.* While the murder of Na'im illustrates this on a symbolic level, the changes that took place in Iraqi nightlife and nocturnal leisure shows the extent to which the *shaʿar* was part of a disappearing world. In addition to reducing the many assemblages available in the construction of gender and desire, nightlife had effects on other aspects of gender relations. Writing about Syria, Camilla Campos points out that the introduction of female performers "normalized novel mixed-gender sociality in public spaces."[41] While the only women in Iraqi nightclubs, for several decades, were the performers, this observation is very much applicable to Iraq as well. In other words, by the 1920s, and perhaps even earlier, the nightclubs exclusively homosocial in terms of their clientele and completely heterosexual in terms of the performance of desire that took place on stage.

Pursley has argued that nationalist reformers who disagreed on many other issues in interwar Iraq articulated a rigid binary frame of difference in matters of morality, family, gender relations, and desire. Islamic ethics, she notes, were reconfigured into "moral pedagogies for

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[40] Jacob, *Working out Egypt*, 183-185. See also chapters 5-6 in Hanan Hammad, *Industrial Sexuality: Gender, Urbanization, and Social Transformation in Egypt* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016). For a different account of the khawal see also Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: John Murray, 1871), 376-377.

[41] Camilla Pastor de Maria Campos, "Performers or Prostitutes? Artistes during the French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon, 1921–1946," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 13:2 (2017): 308.

cultivating modern, and modernizing, sexual difference and desire."[42] While the paucity of sources makes it difficult to trace some of these changes in detail, as mentioned above, it is clear that Iraqi nightclubs by the 1920s were made up of all-female performers and all-male audiences. What is also clear is the fact that some of these changes began well before Iraq had become a state and that they therefore most be understood in a broader historical context of both Ottoman and global modernity. As the epilogue of this dissertation will point out, while the *shaʿar* and the sexual sociability associated with this figure disappeared from Iraqi nightlife and poetry, other same sex practices and homoerotic desires did not.[43] They were however, displaced from public institutions of nocturnal leisure.

Writing about the introduction of female performers to Iraqi, both ʿAli al-Wardi and al-ʿAllaf connect this trend to the more liberal climate that followed the the Young Turk revolution and new Ottoman constitution of 1908.[44] It would take almost two decades, however, before Iraqi women began performing in Iraqi nightclubs and it is possible that the fact that the first female performers came from abroad made their existence in Iraq less scandalous. One of the first female performers to arrive in Baghdad was woman from Aleppo, who performed under the name Rahlu. Sometime after her arrival, she was given the nickname *jarada* (locust) because of her dancing style. With no extant descriptions of her dancing, it is only possible to conjecture about what dancing like a locust might have looked liked. However, since the arrival of Rahlu caused a small scandal and fueled concerns about moral and financial degeneration, which was reported in the

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[42] Pursley, "The Stage of Adolescence," 161.

[43] For more on same sex practices and homoerotic desire in Iraq in the 1930s See Pelle Valentin Olsen, "Cruising Baghdad: Desire Between Men in the 1930s Fiction of Dhu al-Nun Ayyub," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 14:1 (2018): 25-44.

[44] al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 125; ʿAli al-Wardi, Lamahat Ijtimaʿiyya min Tarikh al-ʿIraq al-Hadith (London: 1992), 253-255. See also Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 217-218.

Iraqi press,[45] it is perhaps more plausible that she was given the nickname because some considered the arrival of foreign women like Rahlu a plague that would morally endanger the local harvest. The potentially derogative insect metaphor aside, Rahlu was extremely popular as evidenced by the large number of Baghdadis who went to see her perform.[46] Rahlu performed on a wooden stage, which had been set up for the purpose in the garden of the Sabiʿ café.[47] Soon, a large number of female performers from Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo, but also from further afield, came to Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. Al-ʿAllaf includes a list with the names of at least 155 foreign female dancers and singers who performed in Baghdad in the two first decades of the twentieth century.[48]

Sadly, very little is known about this first generation of female performers. Since most, if not all, performed under stage names, it is only possible to conjecture about the geographical origins and life stories of the majority of these young women who labored in Iraq's newly established nightclubs and cafés. Some, however, performed under stage names that included words such as al-Misriyya (The Egyptian), al-Iskandariyya (The Alexandrian), al-Lubnaniyya (The Lebanese), or al-Halabiyya (The Aleppan), which gives some indication as to where the performers came from. As stage names often functioned as a protection from family members who felt that they had been dishonored, they must be analyzed critically. In addition, al-ʿAllaf does not specify what exactly he means by the category of foreigner. It is possible that for al-ʿAllaf, the only person who has written extensively about the first generation of female performers, foreign simply meant non-Arab. If this is the case, then stage names such as al-Misriyya, al-Iskandariyya, al-Lubnaniyya, and al-Halabiyya functioned more as an invocation of exotic and distant places

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[45] al-ʿAllaf, *Baghdad al-Qadima*, 123; Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 31.
[46] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 31.
[47] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 196.
[48] For the full list of names see al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 179-181.

than as geographical places of origin. However, this section takes al-ʿAllaf's assumption seriously and suggests that the transnational web that characterized Iraqi nightlife was not just an imaginary one. While more information is needed, it seems that the vast majority of the first female performers in Iraq came from elsewhere in the region. Whether the foreignness and exoticism of Baghdad's first female performers was imagined or real, they and the cafés and nightclubs in which they performed localized and to some extent normalized a new form of public and heteronormative desire. In addition, the performers who came to Iraq from abroad brought with them new musical styles and songs. For example, it was female performers from Egypt who introduced the songs of Sayyid Darwish to Iraq.[49]

While many of the first performers probably returned home at some point or went on to other parts of the region, others stayed in Iraq for good. One performer who stayed is Marika Dimitri. It is unclear exactly when Marika, who was of Greek origin, came to Iraq. Marika, who was also a talented musician, performed alongside Elen al-Turkiyya at the al-Tuwaiq café and later on also in clubs. The success of other early nightclubs is what inspired the owner of al-Tuwaiq to set up a stage for singing and dancing.[50] Marika married a Christian Iraqi from Mosul and their daughter, ʿAfifa Iskandar, would go on to become one of the most famous singers in Iraq. What little we know about Marika is a result of the fact that her daughter became famous. With the exception of their stage names, nothing is known about the 155 performers mentioned by al-ʿAllaf. This paucity leaves much to be desired. This does not mean, however, that the information provided by al-ʿAllaf is not instructive.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the "nocturnal" transnationalism of female nightclub performers and the mobility and movement of precarious forms of labour, including sex

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[49] Ibid., 181.
[50] Ibid., 197.

work, that it represents, offers a small but important corrective to elite and male-focused understandings of movement and travel during this period. While it is not surprising that people, including women, traveled and moved for purposes of labor at a time when borders were more porous than they are today, it is important to include the category of female performers in our understanding of movement and mobility during the period. In addition, if we can trust al-ʿAllaf's numbers, the fact that at least 155 foreign female performers were present in Baghdad shows that Iraq, often thought of as peripheral, was very much part of transnational labor networks. Last but not least, the first decades of Iraqi nightlife were a result of and made possible by, the transnational movement of female labor. Kozma, to whose work the following sections will return, has described how women migrated for sex work during the interwar period.[51] While more work is needed, this chapter suggest that Iraq was part of these networks of women's labor migration and that they to some extent predates the interwar period. The last section of this chapter will return to the challenges of establishing a clear-cut boundary between performance and sex work. Whether as performers, sex workers, or a combination of the two, women travelled to Iraq for work in nocturnal institutions of leisure as early as 1908.

The arrival of these women fundamentally changed nocturnal leisure. The novel possibility of seeing women sing and dance in public was welcomed by equal parts excitement and outrage. Al-Shatt café, which was owned by a Jewish maqam singer and which became a nightclub in 1916, set up a stage already in 1913 and made the performer Tira al-Misriyya their main star. The two sisters, Rosa and Lailu Numa also performed there. According to al-Lami, when al-Shatt became a nightclub, it was able to seat 700 people and was full almost every night. Some patrons even paid

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[51] Kozma, "Women's Migration for Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East and North Africa," 93-113; Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East*, 2017.

entrance without being guaranteed a seat.[52] While this might be an exaggeration, several of the first nightclubs, like cinemas, were open air establishments with long rows of seats or benches rather than individual tables, which allowed for large audiences. Moreover, the novelty of the situation like attracted large crowds. The Majestic nightclub was established during the British occupation and later changed its name to al-Hilal.[53] Another well-known and popular venue for dancing and singing that existed before WW1 was the Bint al-Sawwas café in the Midan Area. Bint al-Sawwas was managed by the Iraqi qanun player, Yusif Zaʿrur al-Kabir whose cousin, also called Yusif Zaʿrur later became permanently employed by Iraqi radio. Bint al-Sawwas was one of the first places to offer entertainment in the form of female dancers.[54] Yusif Zaʿrur al-Kabir later operated two additional nightclubs in the Midan area: the aforementioned al-Hilal and another one called Alf Laila.[55]

The outbreak of WWI and the Iraqi revolution in 1920, put an end to the spread of nightclubs and temporarily kept some nightclubs closed. After 1921, however, nightclubs began to appear all over Iraq and, as we will see in the following section, the majority of performers were now Iraqi women. In the early years, a nightclub was sometimes referred to as *otel*, *teatru*, *marqas*, or casino.[56] Until the early 1930s, almost all of Baghdad's nightclubs were located in the Midan area. At that point, many moved to Bab al-Sharqi at the southern end of al-Rashid Street. In Baghdad, al-Hilal, al-Jawahiri, al-Munir, Nuzhat al-Budur, al-Opera, al-Farabi, Abu Nuwas, Shahrazad, Arizona, Layali al-Safa, and Dijla belong to the first generation of post 1921 nightclubs. From the outset, these clubs were different from cafés. They were open from early

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[52] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 357.
[53] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 196.
[54] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 357; Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad fi al-ʿIshrinat*, 105-106.
[55] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 45.
[56] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 218.

evening and until midnight and all charged an entrance fee. In the 1920s, most nightclubs charged 16 fils entrance fee.[57] In the beginning, most clubs did not sell alcohol. However, patrons would often go to one of the small shops or bars, known as *Maikhanat* in the Midan area where alcohol was sold until late and then return to one of the nightclubs. One of the most popular bars was the Jewish owned Masha Bar.[58] When nightclubs began selling alcohol, the admittance fee was usually the cost of the first drink, which was much higher than in the bars in Midan.[59] The real income came from drinks, tips to dancers and singers, and food. In fact, many nightclubs had a restaurant within the clubs or served food from nearby restaurants and eateries. When the consumption of alcohol became an integral part of nightclub leisure, nightclubs quickly became the only public places in the city, where alcohol could be purchased until midnight. For this reason, perhaps, men under 18 were not allowed entrance.[60] In the 1940s, as we will see, some clubs catering to Iraqi elites began welcoming couples. Most clubs, however, were exclusively male spaces. It is not clear whether female performers under 18 were allowed as performers.

Most nightclubs shared a similar layout including a restaurant, a bar, elaborately decorated walls and ceilings, a stage for performers and musicians, rows and small tables with lamps, tablecloths, napkins, ashtrays, flowers, and chairs for the guests. Tables, as we will see, were used by wealthier patrons who could afford to host female performers at their tables. In most nightclubs, it was forbidden for patrons to request songs and *pastat*. A *pasta* is a short song, often describing a love story (both hetero and homosexual) or a story of emotional and economic hardships. Most likely a word of Persian origin, the exact etymology of the word *pasta* as well as

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[57] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad fi al-ʿIshrinat*, 105-106.

[58] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 358; Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 45.

[59] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 46.

[60] Ibid., 46. See also Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 224 and Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad fi al-ʿIshrinat*, 106.

its existence in Iraqi Arabic is unclear.[61] Traditionally, the *pasta* follows or punctuates the performance of a maqam and thus offered the maqam singer a break while at the same time it changed the atmosphere of engaged attention and listening required by the maqam genre. Some chalghi bands employed specialized *pasta* singers – *pastachis*. With the rise of nightclubs, popular *pastat* began to be sung and performed by modern nightclub ensembles. Modern ensembles sometimes used popular Egyptian songs as *pastat*. In the late 1920s and 1930s, when modern Iraqi songs were composed, the difference between the *pasta* and modern songs gradually disappeared. In addition to the prohibition against requesting *pastat,* it was also forbidden to bring weapons inside. One reason for both of these prohibitions was that fights would sometimes break out between audience members when they felt that their requests had been ignored or when their requested song was not played as quickly as they preferred.[62] According to Baghdadi, some of these fights resulted in serious injuries and even casualties.[63]

As the music of nightclubs changed, so did the clubs themselves. In the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s, a different type of nightclub emerged. This happened a time when nightclubs were competing with a growing number of nocturnal or evening institutions of leisure. Targeting a different clientele, the second generation of nightclubs tried to distinguish themselves from the now large number of nightclubs by offering western music and dance. Not unlike some of the cinemas during the same period, as we saw in Chapter 3, they appealed to a taste and desire for exclusivity among Iraqi upper classes. Some of these new clubs were located inside hotels or

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[61] For more on the history of the pasta see Yizhak Avishur, *Men's Folk Songs in Judeo-Arabic from Jews in Iraq*. In Hebrew (Or Yehuda: Iraqi Jews' Traditional Culture Centre, 1994); Gen'ichi Tsuge "A Note on the Iraqi Maqam," *Asian Music* 4:1 (1972): 59-66.

[62] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 46. For more on the *pasta* see Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 227-240; al-Rajab, *al-Maqam al-ʿIraqi*, 186-201; al-ʿAllaf, al-Tarab ʿainda al-ʿArab, 139.

[63] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad fi al-ʿIshrinat*, 105-106.

casinos away from the crowded Midan and Bab al-Sharqi areas. For example, in 1947 David Cohen established the Jawhara Café. Despite of its name, the Jawhara Café was a nightclub, albeit a more luxurious one. Jawhara presented two programs every evening. The first consisted of several hours of traditional Iraqi music, singing, and dancing. The second part of the program, which is what distinguished Jawhara from Baghdad's more traditional nightclubs, consisted of western music and mixed gender ballroom dancing.[64] Most of the traditional nightclubs, however, remained exclusively male spaces, with the exception of the female performers.
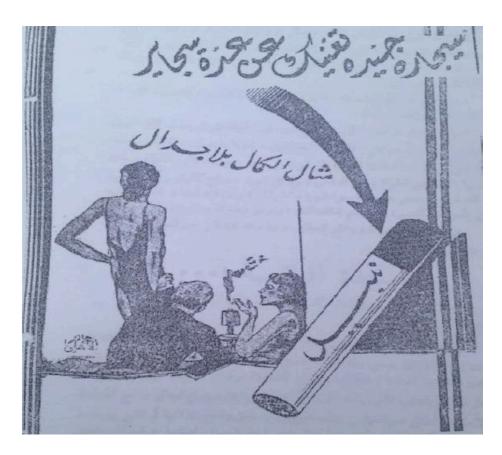

Figure 25: *Al-Istiqlal*, 7 Nov. 1935: "Nobel (Nabil) an irrefutable example of perfection."

The pages of the press, which during this period was synonymous with advertising, were full of pictures tempting middle and upper class Iraqis with new ways to spend their time and

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[64] Meir, *Hitpathut Tarbutit*, 439.

money, in public as well as in private, during the day as well as during the night. The picture above, an advertisement for the *Noble* (*Nabil*) cigarette brand, shows a sartorially up to the minute couple seated at a private table in a nightclub. Dressed in elegant evening attire, the young woman smokes a cigarette and they both observe a female dancer performing in front of them. The advertisement demonstrates that cigarettes companies invoked notions of luxury, distinction, as well as high end and modern forms of dress and leisure in order to tempt smokers. While cigarettes were relatively cheap, most smokers would not have been able to afford to visit Baghdad's new nightclubs. Similarly, even before the upscale nightclubs began to welcome women, cigarettes ads such as the one above, as noted by Shechter in the context of Egypt, were often placed in recently conceived public and semi-public leisure spaces and often situated alongside or in the context of other novel consumer goods and the newly introduced notions of fashion and nightlife.[65]

Figure 26: *Sawt al-Sha'b*, 24 Dec. 1939 p. 3 NLI

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[65] Relli Shechter, "Reading Advertisement in a Colonial/Development Context: Cigarette Advertising and Identity Politics in Egypt, c1919-1939," *Journal of Social History* 39 (2005): 484. See also Relli Shechter, *Smoking, Culture and Economy in the Middle East: The Egyptian Tobacco Market 1850-2000* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

In addition to cigarette companies, nightclubs and casinos also let Iraqis know through the press, that they had female dancers performing every night.[66] The nightclub situated inside al-Hilal Hotel frequently invited orchestras from abroad and promised its clientele "the most splendid nights of sociability" and "enchanting tunes and beautiful female artists (*fananat*). al-Hilal Hotel further distinguished itself by sing the word *fananat*, rather than *raqisat* (dancers) or simply *banat* (girls), which was how female performers where referred to at must nightclubs. The last line of the ad says in the imperative: "Spend your evenings in this nightclub."[67] The same period saw the rise of Casinos. Casinos were not places of betting and gambling, but functioned as drinking establishments and made up the middle ground between bars and nightclubs. Sometimes, however, there was no difference between casinos and nightclubs. In an ad with the caption "Meeting Place of the Upper Classes, (*multaqa al-tabaqat al-raqiyya*)" Saʿdun Park Casino invited "lovers of art (*fan*) and musical entertainment (*tarab*)" to nightly musical concerts and eastern, western, and acrobatic dance.[68] Casino Baghdad compared itself to the "nightclubs of Paris, Budapest, and Berlin" and like Saʿdun Park Casino, ran daily ads in the press.[69] Establishments such as Sa'dun Park Casino, which was located in the wealthy Sa'dun neighborhood, catered towards the growing middle and upper classes, as the advertisement unapologetically stated, who perhaps did not want to be associated with the Midan area, its brothels, and working class drinking establishments.

It is difficult to give an account of the owners of nightclubs, their class-background, and sectarian affiliation. As we will see, however, most owners of nightclubs, at least in the 1920s and 1930s, were themselves involved in nocturnal leisure and many were musicians, composers, or

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[66] *Al-Istiqlal*, 7 Nov. 1938 p. 4. MDC
[67] *Al-Istiqlal*, 6 Feb. 1938 p 4. MDC
[68] *Sawt al-Shaʿb*, 24 Dec. 1939 p. 3. NLI
[69] *Sawt al-Shaʿb*, 24 Dec. 1939 p. 4. NLI

retired singers. The moral ambiguity associated with nightlife is most likely what restricted ownership to people already engaged in Baghdad's nightlife. While nightclubs were popular, it is not clear how profitable the business was. As we will see in the last section, however, some female performers were able to amass considerable wealth. The next section of this chapter offers an account of the small group of Iraqi singers who gained national and regional fame in the 1930s and 1940s as well as how their success was tied to the emergence of Iraqi radio and the upscale nightclubs mentioned above.

Iraq's Famous Divas

The above section described the transnational movement of labor that brought female performers to Iraqi cafés and nightclubs and which in the process changed the gender politics of Iraqi nocturnal leisure. In addition, the section above demonstrated that Iraqi nocturnal leisure and nightlife was no exception to the transregional and transnational trends and networks that characterized Iraqi leisure in general. Chapters 1-3 described these trends with regard to education, American popular culture, and cinema culture. As we saw above, the vast majority of the first female performers came to Iraq from across the Ottoman Empire. This section describes those among Iraq's female performers who rose to fame in the 1930s and 1940s. As we will see, while most performers tended to come from, and remain within, poor or middle class families, a number of Iraqi women rose to national and regional fame. Those who rose to fame, the divas, became linked to cultural and political elites, and the public sphere through their radio and nightclub performances. Several of them also appeared in Iraqi and Egyptian films. In other words, they became entertainers of a different kind.

First however, it is important to mention that the transnationalism of nocturnal leisure did not disappear. To the contrary, with the rise of female stars in Iraq and across the region, the movement of singers became part of the same pan-Arab cultural networks that facilitated the movement of teachers, intellectuals, students, and politicians during the period.[70] Although it happened on a smaller scale, the movement of popular culture connected to nocturnal leisure can be thought of as part of the processes and networks that brought not only Arab intellectuals and educators such as Darwish Miqdadi, Akram Zuʿyatar, Jalal Zurayq, Anis al-Nusuli, Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat, and many others to Iraq, but also journals from Egypt and elsewhere such as *al-Risala*, *al-Thaqafa*, and *al-Adab*.[71] Beginning in the 1920s, in addition to the theater groups mentioned in Chapter 3, Egyptian and other Arab cinema and music stars also visited Iraq. Later on, Iraqi singers travelled to other Arab countries, and Iraq sent singers and orchestras to Arab music conferences elsewhere in the region such as the 1932 Cairo Musical Congress. Wien has recently called attention to the importance of studying the diverse manifestations and national, regional and transnational formulation and dissemination of nationalist narratives and nationalist culture, including popular culture, in the region.[72] While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the role of popular culture in articulations of Arab and Iraqi nationalism in depth or the reception of Iraqi performers abroad, it is important to note that the movement of official culture and people happened alongside the movement and expression of popular culture.

The most famous of the mostly Egyptian singers who came to Iraq gave concerts in hotels, cinemas, and nightclubs. Bringing along her orchestra, the Egyptian singer Munira al-Mahdiyya,

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[70] For more on the movement and circulation of teachers see for example Bashkin, "The Nile Valley on the Banks of the Euphrates and Tigris: Egyptian Intellectuals in Iraq During the Interwar Period," Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 146-156; Hilary Falb Kalisman, *Schooling the State: Educators in Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan, c. 1890-c. 1960*. Ph.D. Diss. (University of California Berkeley, 2015).

[71] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 146-156

[72] Wien, *Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Culture and History*, 16-18.

also known as *Sultana al-Tarab*, visited Baghdad in 1920 and gave concerts that sold out in Cinema Central, which had opened in the same year. Umm Kulthum, as we saw in Chapter 3, visited Iraq in 1932[73] and Nadira Amin Mustafa in 1934. Umm Kulthum performed at al-Hilal nightclub for two weeks. Nadira gave several concerts and parties at Hotel al-Hilal. The Iraqi press wrote extensively about Egyptian visiting stars and Iraqi poets such as Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi, Muhammad Baqir al-Shabibi, Jawad al-Shabibi, Maʿruf al-Rusafi, and Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri all wrote praise poems in their honor.[74] Several praise poems by al-Rusafi, al-Zahawi, Jawad al-Shabibi, Muhammad Baqir al-Shabibi, and Kamal Nasrat were produced and performed on the occasion of Umm Kulthum's visit to Iraq. These poems were performed on stage and printed in the local press. Al-Rusafi, who in 1907 wrote about the beauty of Naʿim, composed a very different poem in honor of Umm Kulthum's visit. *Ila Umm Kulthum* (*To Umm Kulthum*) praises Umm Kulthum as unequaled: "In the art of singing / Umm Kulthum alone is a nation (*Umma*) / In the East she's the only master of art."[75] Al-Zahawi's tribute similarly praised the uniqueness of Umm Kulthum: "Art is an elegant and undisturbed (*masʿum*) meadow / and you're its nightingale O Umm Kulthum."[76] These poets, many of whom avidly took part in Iraqi nocturnal leisure, also composed several poems dedicated to Iraqi dancers and singers. As we saw in the introduction, al-Jawahiri in particular was a regular participant in Iraqi nightlife in his youth. With friends, he frequented Baghdad's drinking establishments and nightclubs in the 1920s and 1930s and composed a number of poems praising singers and dancers.

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[73] For more on Umm Kulthum's visit to Iraq and the many praise poems written about her see al-ʿAllaf, *al-Tarab ʿainda al-ʿArab*, 163-144; al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 184-194.
[74] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 182-185, 194.
[75] Al-Rusafi, *Diwan al-Rusafi*.
[76] al-Zahawhi, quoted in al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 189.

Most nightclubs employed at least one famous female performer and launched the careers of the some of the biggest Iraqi stars in the 1930s and 1940s in particular. In fact, the rise of nightclubs can be linked directly to the emergence of Iraqi female artists, composers, and musicians. The popularity and demand for nocturnal leisure in the form of nightclubs increased the demand for new songs, new styles of music, and composers. Many of the musicians and composers, whose careers and fame were a result of the increase in nightclubs and taste for modern music, were Iraqi Jews. The most famous among them were Ezra Harun and later on the al-Kuwaiti brothers, already mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4. From the 1930s onwards, the al-Kuwaiti brothers composed the majority of the music and wrote many of the songs that became the soundtrack to Iraqi nightlife.[77] Together, the brothers composed more than 500 songs. The most popular of these were performed by Sadiqa al-Malaya, Munira al-Huzuz, Zakiyya George, Laila Murad, and ʿAfifa Iskandar. The al-Kuwaiti brothers came to Baghdad via ʿAmara and started their career playing at the Jawahiri nightclub. They later opened their own club named Abu Nuwas.[78] Salih al-Kuwaiti was later put in charge of the Iraqi radio ensemble.[79] The nightclubs also provided employment for less famous musicians as most club ensembles consisted for at least five musicians: three string players and two percussionists.[80]

Salima Murad and ʿAfifa Iskandar, arguably the two most famous Iraqi female singers, sang at al-Hilal beginning in the early 1930s. Salima Murad (Pasha) grew up in a Jewish family in Baghdad. She was given the nickname (*laqab*) of Pasha by Nuri Saʿid, Iraq's prime minister. Al-ʿAllaf and Salih al-Kuwaiti, both mentioned above, composed many of her most popular songs.

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[77] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 47.
[78] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 218.
[79] ʿAbd al-Amir, *Raqsa al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhira,* 152-153
[80] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 111.

Salih al-Kuwaiti also composed songs for Salima's sister, Regina.[81] Salima Murad was one of the first female singers to appear on Iraqi radio and she organized a cultural salon in her home. During these private sessions, she entertained politicians and other important Iraqis from the upper echelons of society. She converted to Islam and married the Iraqi singer Nazim al-Gahazzali in 1953. When she retired from singing, she managed the nightclub she had started with her husband.

With her mother, as mentioned above, being a performer, ʿAfifa Iskandar grew up in and close to Iraqi nightlife. Iskandar became her stage name when she at a very young age married an Iraqi Armenian musician by the name of Iskandar Estefian who was 40 years her senior. ʿAfifa Iskandar spent a brief part of her career in Egypt, where she appeared in movies alongside Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhab and Fatin Hamama. She also acted in some of the first Iraqi films described in Chapter 3. Upon her return to Baghdad, ʿAfifa Iskandar organized a literary salon in her home which attracted prominent Iraqi cultural personalities. She maintained a close friendship with the avant-garde poet Husain Mardan, whose life and work was described in Chapter 4.[82]

Zakiyya George came to Baghdad from Aleppo in 1920 with her sister, who was also a performer. She sang and danced first at cafés until she moved in 1922 to a newly established nightclub owned by Salih Batat. Later she moved to al-Opera where she worked until 1942 when she returned to Aleppo. Zakiyya worked with composer Salih al-Kuwaiti (who was also her teacher). The love affair between them was well known in Baghdad and much talked about, perhaps because it never resulted in marriage.[83]

Munira al-Huzuz, who was known as Munira 'Abd al-Rahman before she made the Iraqi folk song *al-huzuz* famous, began performing at al-Hilal in 1928 and later became the main name

[81] Yehezkel Kojaman, *Al-Musiqa al-Faniya al-Muʿasira fi al-ʿIraq* (Baghdad: Dar Mesopotamia, 2015), 166-167.
[82] ʿAbd al-Amir, *Raqsa al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhira*, 258-260.
[83] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 209.

at al-Munir nightclub.[84] Sabriyya Husain performed at al-Farabi and Zuhur Husain, who was of Iranian origin also became associated with al-Farabi in 1937. Zuhur became a well-known name on Iraqi radio when she was discovered by the al-Kuwaiti brothers and like other of the stars mentioned above also performed at private parties and weddings.[85] It was not uncommon for fans to wait outside the offices of Radio Baghdad to get a glimpse of Zuhur and the other stars who recorded their songs from there. In fact, the public as well as private lives of female stars and the scandals in which they were involved was the talk of town. According to Simon, the British also kept an eye on Iraqi nightlife and compiled personality files on the scandals, rumors, and excessive behavior in which Iraqi politicians and military leaders were involved.[86] Zuhur met a tragic end: she died at the age of 40 in a car accident with her sister Fatima when she was driving to Hilla where her husband was serving a prison sentence.[87] Sultana Yusif was the main name at Nuzhat al-Budur where she began performing in 1927. She later left for the clubs of Mosul and stayed there until she retired in 1957.[88]

These women became the first divas of Iraq Iraqi music. The songs of many of these stars, including Munira Huzuz, Salima Murad, Zakiyya George, Sultana Yusif, and the compositions of Salih al-Kuwaiti are still popular today.[89] In their careers, they crossed boundaries relating to sect, class, and gender. While most performers remained on the margins of Iraqi society, the ones

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[84] Ibid., 205-206.

[85] ʿAbd al-Amir, *Raqsa al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhira*, 254.

[86] Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars*, 125.

[87] Ibid., 213-215. For more on Zuhur Husain see ʿAbd al-Amir, *Raqsa al-Fustan al-Ahmar al-Akhira*, 254-258.

[88] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 207-208.

[89] The songs of many of these stars, including Munira Huzuz, Salima Murad, Zakiyya George, Sultana Yusif, and the compositions of Salih al-Kuwaiti were played weekly by Radio Bari, fascist Italy's Arabic language radio station. While Radio Bari broadcast across the Middle East, it is difficult to access its reception and the number of listeners who tuned in. Similarly, it is not clear whether Radio Bari helped make Iraqi singer popular in other Arab countries: "Minhaj al-Idhaʿa al-ʿArabiyya," *Radio Bari: Nashra Shahriyya limahattat Bari,* 2:2 February (1939): 19-24.

mentioned above not only gained fame and wealth but were able to enter elite cultural and political circles. They hosted and were hosted by politicians, appeared on national radio, and were embraced as important producers of Iraqi culture. This occurred at a time when their level of fame and respectability made it more or less unproblematic for the state to do so. While it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty how the state approached and saw female nightclub performers, it is interesting to note that the entrance of performers such as Salima Murad into respectable society happened at the same time as the state was expressing great anxiety about time, bodies, and minds, and when traditions were intensely renegotiated and the importance of heteronormative families and marriage were stressed by educators and reformers.[90] Efrati has described the differnet attempts at codification of the laws governing marriage during this period as how these often left the rights of women unprotected.[91]Bashkin has demonstrated how alongside discourses that presented mothers as educators of the nation's youth and emphasized the need to educate women about hygiene and childcare, the press negatively portrayed the immoral behavior or female performers and the places in which they worked. [92] Some of these discourses also warned against the dangers of alcoholism. Established in 1937 by Sara al-Jamali, the wife of Iraqi prime minister Muhammad al-Jamali, the Iraqi Temperance Society (*Jamʿiyyat Mukafahat al-Muskirat*) institutionalized this moral agenda by focusing on anti-alcohol education and offering educational assistance to poor young women and children.[93]

As described above, while the state and press were often critical of nocturnal practices of leisure associated with nightclubs and the women who worked there, politicians frequented the

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[90] For more on discourses on marriage see Pursley, *Familiar Futures*, 119-120. For a discussion of the legal aspect and changes to the laws governing marriage see Efrati, *Women in Iraq*, 61-80.
[91] Efrati, *Women in Iraq*, 61-80.
[92] Bashkin, "Representations of Women," 59. See also Jaʿfar al-Khalili, Al-*Qissa al-ʿIraqiyya Qadiman wa Hadithan* (Baghdad: Matbaʿat al-Maʿarif, 1957), 191-192 and Pursley, *Familiar Futures,* 99-105, 116-123.
[93] Efrati, *Women in Iraq*, 125-127.

same institutions and appeared with the divas of Iraqi nightlife both in private and in public. This meant that the most famous Iraqi singers respected, embraced, and used for national purposes. What started as a small scene made up of only a few cafés and nightclubs populated entirely by non-Iraqi women became, in the 1930s, a site for the production of a particularly Iraqi culture that remained attached to, but transcended the world of nocturnal leisure. While this did not happen overnight and while only a handful of singers gained the status and respectability afforded to Zakiyya George, Laila Murad, and ʿAfifa Iskandar, female nightclub performance was localized to an extent that it was possible for Iraqi women to take part in it and for some, to gain national and regional fame.

Less remembered today, but also famous among the first generation of female performers in Baghdad at the time were Sadiqa al-Malaya, Jalila Umm Sami, and Badriyya Anwar. Sadiqa al-Malaya came from a religious shi'i background and worked in a local Husainiyya before she became a performer in 1918. She eventually replaced the nightclubs with Radio Baghdad. Jalila Umm Sami began performing at the ʿAzzawi café in 1921. ʿAzzawi eventually became al-Munir Hotel and she worked there until 1932. Badriyya Anwar performed at Nuzhat al-Budur starting in 1927. Badriyya, who was religious, agreed to perform at the nightclub under the condition that she be described as a singer and not as dancer. Not only did she remain seated during her performances, which as unusual, she also wore an ʿabaya. She was the only Iraqi performer to do. One of her songs, *Umm al-ʿAbaya*, became famous in both Iraq and Syria.[94]

Other nightclubs, such as Abu Nuwas, Shahrazad, Arizona, and Layali al-Safa, Dijla, Rex, and Roxy also had their star singers and dancers. At most nightclubs, the famous singers, such as the ones just mentioned, performed at the very end of the night. This was, as Kojaman has pointed

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[94] Ibid., 216-220.

out, both a question of prestige and an attempt to increase revenue by keeping the audience in the club until the last performance ended around midnight.[95] As we will see in the following section, while some Iraqi female performers, beyond the divas mentioned above, amassed considerable wealth and reputation, for most of the young women selling their labour through singing and dancing in Iraq's many nightclubs, life was a lot less glamorous than what advertisement in the press promised.

Dancing, Singing and Sex Work

In addition to the stars of Iraqi nightlife who were often associated with particular nightclubs, had songs written for them, made recordings, and appeared on the radio, nightclubs all over the country employed hundreds of less famous and more itinerant and mobile female singers and dancers. This began, as we saw, around 1908, but continued during subsequent decades. By the beginning of the 1920s, young Iraqi women from all of Iraq's religious communities and corners and provinces of the country had replaced most of the foreign performers. During the mandate years, because of the often blurred boundaries between performance and sex work, laws were enforced that made it difficult for foreign performers to obtain Iraqi visas. Some foreign performers and sex workers were deported.[96] It is difficult to say exactly how strictly these laws were enforced. Some performers, as we will see, still came to Iraq from elsewhere in the region, including Iran, Syria, and Palestine. While some had relatively short careers due to the fact that they got married or found employment elsewhere, the majority of performers were active for a decade or more. Some worked only at one nightclub, but most circulated between several

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[95] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 46.
[96] Liat Kozma, "Women's Migration for Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East and North Africa *Journal of Women's History*, 28:3 (2016): 98.

nightclubs in Baghdad and other urban centers, including Basra and Mosul. Al-Farabi nightclub employed the largest number and had the fastest rotation of female performers.

As we will see in this section, clear hierarchies and competition existed between Iraq's female performers. The small group of the most famous and iconic, and therefore also the most respected, has been described above. A second and third group of dancers and singers existed. According to al-ʿAllaf, around 40 female performers belong in the second category.[97] While they were not all equally famous or popular, the fact that al-ʿAllaf is able to provide photographs and short biographies of all of them in his book, means that they must have been well-known characters in Iraq's nightlife during the period and that many of them probably enjoyed a large following of dedicated fans and admirers.

al-ʿAllaf's book, *Qiyan Baghdad*, published in 1969 is, to the best of my knowledge, the only work that offers a detailed account of Iraqi female performers. As the title suggests, the majority of the book is concerned, with female performers in Abbasid times. The last chapter of the book, however, provides detailed information about the lives, careers, and movemetns of many of Hashemite Iraq's less famous female performers. As described in the introduction, male accounts of women engaged in liminal and marginal professions must be read with great care. At the same time, however, as songwriter and musician, al-ʿAllaf was intimately familiar with the forms of nocturnal leisure he describes. While his position creates certain biases, it also provides an invaluable, and in many cases the only account, and therefore cannot easily be ignored.

The career of Bahija Mansur is indicative of the itinerant nature that characterized the life of many female nightclub performers. She began working at al-Farabi in 1942. She then moved to ʿAmara where she began working al-Kahlaʾ nightclub and finally settled in Basra where she

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[97] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 222-258.

performed at several nightclubs before retiring. Mansur is best known for her performance of the song "Ahlan Ahlan Marhabtain."[98] ʿUliya Muhammad, who moved to Baghdad from Mosul worked at al-Farabi from 1935 and until 1945 when she got married. She came to Baghdad as a young girl and stayed at the home the aforementioned Sabriyya Husain, who trained her in singing and dancing.[99] Sabriyya Husain also trained the Iranian-born Muluk Musa, who settled in Baghdad in the late 1940s and performed at al-Jawahiri and al-Farabi. The training of young singers and dancers by more established ones is another pattern among nightclub performers. Sabriyya, who was of Iranian origin, started her career at the Dar al-Salam nightclub (formerly the Dijla). It was at al-Farabi, however, that she gained fame. Sabriyya eventually took over the management of al-Farabi.[100] In fact, it was not uncommon for more established performers to take in and train younger women in whom they saw a potential, either because of their beauty, their skills, or a combination of the two. Both Sabiha Mahmud, who performed at Abu Nuwas and al-Jawahiri from 1936-1951, and Sabiha Kasra, who worked at nightclubs across Baghdad in the 1930s and 1940ss, lived and trained with Munira al-Huzur.[101]

Beginning in 1945, Salima al-ʿIraqiyya performed at al-Farabi and a number of other nightclubs in Baghdad until her retirement in 1954. According to an anecdote told by al-ʿAllaf, Salima refused to reveal her real name and would simply say, "Ana ʿIraqiyya" (I'm Iraqi), whenever people asked her.[102] In fact, like Salima, most nightclub performers, with the exception of the most famous ones, never used their real names. The two Jewish sisters, Salima and Sabiha

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[98] Ibid., 225.
[99] Ibid., 242.
[100] ʿAbd al-Karim al-Husayni, "Baghdad Ayyam al-Zaman al-Jamil," al-Kardinia, accessed April 24, 2020 https://algardenia.com/2014-04-04-19-52-20/menouats/4312-18.html
[101] Ibid., 239.
[102] "Hikayat Awwal Malha fi Baghdad," al-Kardinia, accessed April 24, 2020 https://algardenia.com/mochtaratt/11094-2014-06-21-21-47-15.html. See also al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, Ibid., 231.

Dijla, migrated to Baghdad from northern Iraq with their family in 1940. Salima first worked at the Dijla nightclub, which is how she got her stage name. Salima's younger sister also took Dijla as a stage name although she never worked there. She began her career at the Opera nightclub and later joined her sister at al-Farabi. Despite her name, however, it was at al-Farabi that Salima made a name for herself as dancer. At al-Farabi, Salima was in stiff and constant competition with Shakiba Salih, another Jewish performer who worked at al-Farabi in the 1940s. Salima and Sabiha eventually emigrated to Israel. Shakiba used the money she had amassed as a performer to go into the real estate business in Baghdad.[103] The performers Nuriyya Mahdi, Zakiyya Mahasin, and Rasmiyya ʿAbd al-Rahman also worked at al-Farabi in the 1940s and 1950s.
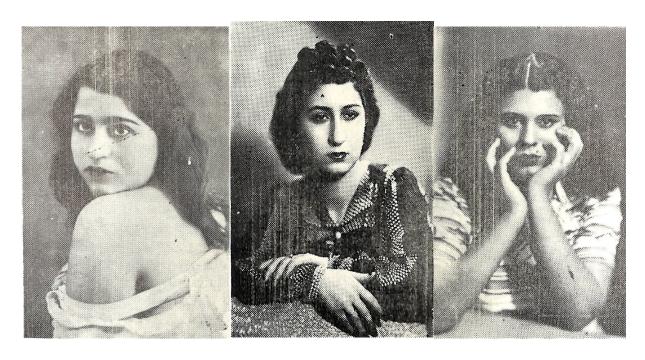

Figure 27: From left to right: Salima and Sabiha Dijla and Salima al-ʿIraqiyya. *Qiyan Baghdad*

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[103] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 230-233.

ʿAfifa Muhammad, who came to Baghdad from Aleppo in the 1930s worked at al-Jawahiri until the 1950s. The Iraqi Kurd, ʿAzima Tawfiq, came to Baghdad as a young girl with her mother from the area around Zakho in northern Iraq. Her mother left her in Baghdad in the care of Hasiba al-Mas, another Kurdish performer. ʿAzima married a man from Mosul who divorced her shortly after she had given birth to their daughter. ʿAzima worked at al-Jawahiri from 1943-1956. She remarried in 1956 and retired.[104] As we will see, ʿAzima was not the only single mother to work in Baghdad's nocturnal leisure industry. Badiʿa al-Jamal and Sabiha Salim, both from southern Iraq, began working at al-Jawahiri in 1944. An orphan, Badiʿa was raised by a woman from Basra locally referred to as *Umm al-Halib* (Mother of Milk), perhaps a reference to her habit of taking care of orphans. It was *Umm al-Halib* who brought Badiʿa to Baghdad where she quickly became famous for her beauty – her stage name, Badiʿa al-Jamal, in fact means "exquisite beauty."

Khadija ʿAli came to Baghdad with her mother in 1934, the year her mother took over the Nuzhat at-Budur nightclub from its previous owner, Ibrahim Siwas, the husband of the performer Badriyya Siwas. Badriyya oversaw the nightclub's move to Bab al-Sharqi, and its subsequent name change to Malha al-Sharq, after her mother's death.[105] Farida ʿAli, who was not related to Khadija, began performing at Nuzhat at-Budur in the 1930s. When Khadija got married, Farida took over the nightclub until 1950 when she went to the US for four years to study cosmetology. Upon her return to Baghdad she opened up a salon on Saʿdun Street.[106]

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[104] Ibid., 240-241.

[105] Ibid., 226.

[106] Ibid., 246. As already mentioned, many performers circulated between different cities and different nightclubs. Sabiha Muhammad came to Baghdad from the south of Iraq. She was briefly married to the famous Iraqi singer Hudairi Abu ʿAziz, with whom she often performed. She began her career at Dijla, but later moved to al-Farabi, and finally to the Arizona nightclub. Shakiba Bahr performed at nightclubs in Basra between 1945-1954, but occasionally performed in Baghdad. Shakiba Bahr, Badriyya ʿAli, and Nuriyya Mudiʿ, who had come from Palestine with her sister, all worked at clubs in Basra, such as al-Nasr,

The reasons for providing this high level of seemingly irrelevant biographical information are several and serves a number of purposes. Firstly, the trajectories of the many performers described above demonstrate the extent to which Iraqi urban centers, and especially Baghdad, drew more and more people into their orbit. The increasing migration of tribesmen and peasants to Baghdad that took place during the Hashemite period was debated and discussed in the Iraqi press and among educators and politicians.[107] The migration of female performers who came to Baghdad alone or with the families only made up a small part of rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban migration at the time. It deserves to be mentioned, however, that the growing demand for leisure attracted female labor to Baghdad.

While many of the performers mentioned in the section above never became famous outside of Iraq and while most never made to Iraqi radio, they nonetheless took part in an important and performative celebration of Arab, Islamic, and Iraqi cultural pasts and localities through their work. As shown by historians of Iraq such as Wien and Bashkin, during the interwar years in particular, there was a state-led attempt to create and consolidate what it meant, politically, historically, and culturally to be Iraqi and Arab. Like elsewhere in the region, such attempts nationalized the past and projected it backwards into an Arabized version of Islamic history.[108] The interest the Arab and Islamic past and its famous figures found its ways into textbooks, literature, and new national histories, myths, historical memory, literature, and other cultural manifestations.[109] This chapter suggests that there was a synchronous, albeit less structured,

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before moving to clubs in Baghdad. Some performers, including Badriyya ʿAli, moved between Basra and Baghdad for most of her career until she retired in 1948: Ibid., 222-233.

[107] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 197, 202-203.

[108] Bashkin, "When Mu'awiya Entered the Curriculum," 351-353; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 137-156; Wien, *Arab Nationalism*, 2017 chapters 3-5 in particular.

[109] Bashkin, "When Mu'awiyya Entered the Curriculum," 351; Dawn, "The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology," 67-9; Wien, *Arab Nationalism*, 35-47.

attempt, from below and through popular culture and nocturnal institutions of leisure, to lay claims to Iraqi, history, identity, localities, and the national project more broadly. More specifically, while most nightclubs and the women and musicians who performed in them were very much on the margins of society, they participated in a popular and nocturnal invocation of Iraqi, Abbasid, Arab, and Islamic pasts. The nightclubs they performed in carried names such as al-Farabi, Abu Nuwas, al-Jawahiri, Dijla, Shahrazad and Alf Laila and the performers used stage names that connected them to Iraqi localities such as as Salima al-ʿIraqiyya, Salima Dijla, Amina al-Hillawiyya, Salima Furat, and Fathiyya al-Maslawiyya. While official narratives, such as those found in textbooks, likely had a greater effect on the creation of an Iraqi version the past, it is important to note that people and institutions outside the state were also claiming this past through practices of leisure. Only scant information is available about the nightclubs mentioned above. However, for the many men, including politicians and employees of state institutions, who visited Baghad's clubs every night, the fact that they could sit in an establishment named after Abu Nuwas and listen to singers such as Salima al-ʿIraqiyya, Salima Dijla, and Salima Furat, must have contributed to their sense of belonging, at least momentarily, to a city, or a nation with a long history.

Like Farida ʿAli mentioned above, who opened up a beauty salon in Baghdad, some of Iraq's nightclub performers successfully transitioned to other and in the eyes of society, less morally dubious careers. Wahida Yusif, whose Syrian mother performed in nightclubs in Damascus before coming to Baghdad, worked at al-Farabi and al-Jawahiri beginning in 1943. She was a performer until the 1950s when she got married and opened a shop selling women's clothing on Nahr Street in Baghdad.[110] Besides becoming a housewife after marriage, for those who left their employment in Baghdad's nightlife, the transition from nightclub singer and dancer to theater

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[110] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 258.

and cinema was perhaps the path most commonly taken. Fakhriyya Ahmad came to Baghdad from the south of Iraq and after training with Zuhur Husain, she performed at al-Farabi and al-Jawahiri in the 1940s and 1950s. She eventually became a popular theater actress. Similarly, Fawsiyya Chachan, who came to Baghdad from Mosul in the 1930s, also exchanged the nightclub stage with that of theater and cinema. Madiha Saʿid, whose talent was discovered by one of the doyens of Iraqi theater, Haqqi al-Shibli,[111] also moved to the theater. Nuzhat al-Jamila came to Baghdad from Mosul with her mother, performed at al-Hilal, but also worked with Haqqi al al-Shibli. She eventually left Baghdad for Beirut where she settled down as a hotel owner. Nadira ʿAbd al-Karim, the sister of the actress Zakiyya ʿAbd al-Karim, was also active in both nightclubs and theaters in the 1930s and 1940s. Nadira was married to an Indian man. However, when she began dancing and singing, he divorced her and took their daughter with him to India. Nadira kept performing in Baghdad until 1948. Sabiha Ibrahim came to Baghdad from the south of Iraq in the 1930s. In 1935 she began performing at the Alf Laila and the Opera nightclubs. In 1945 she left the nightclubs and began working for Iraqi radio.[112] The transition from nightclub stage to radio studio was, however, one reserved almost exclusively for Iraq's most famous female and male performers and singers.

As we saw in Chapter 3, when national broadcasting began in Iraq in 1936, it changed café leisure and entertainment. The emergence of radio also had effects on the labor and social status of performers. When visiting artist from other Arab countries were invited to perform on Iraqi

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[111] For more on al-Shibli see Chapter 3 in this dissertation and Salaam, "The People's Theater of Yusuf al-Ani," 1997; Abdel Hamid, "The Arab Theatre and Cinema," 1966. Hadi al-Rabiʿi, *al-Firaq al-Marahiyya al-Misriyya fi al-ʿIraq,* 2019.

[112] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 244-255.

radio and when the most prominent Iraqi singers, including Salima Murad, Zuhur Husain, Zakiyya George, and ʿAfifa Iskandar began having weekly performances on the radio,[113] it dramatically changed society's view of female performers. However, as noted by Zubaida, while radio "provided a niche and a reputation for some artists, which endowed them with respectability,"[114] it only did so for a relatively small number. Moreover, in the words of Zubaida, "it did not entirely remove the moral opprobrium attached to the profession."[115] The next section of this chapter explores the "moral opprobrium" of nightclub performers as well as the links that sometimes existed between nightclubs and sex work.[116]

In addition to the group of approximately 40 female performers mentioned above, al-ʿAllaf mentions a third group of 70 female dancers and singers who were active in Iraq's nightclubs between the late 1920s and the late 1950s.[117] The performers in this third group are mentioned only by name. No pictures or biographical information is included.[118] While we do not have to uncritically accept al-ʿAllaf's three categories of female performers, what does become clear from

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[113] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 41.

[114] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 213.

[115] Ibid., 213.

[116] For more on this topic see Anthony Shay, *The Dangerous Lives of Public Performers: Dancing, Sex, and Entertainment in the Islamic World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[117] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 259.

[118] The names of the 70 performers mentioned by al-ʿAllaf: Ahlam Wahbi, Adele Yasu, Amal ʿAziz, Antoinette Iskandar, Amina al-Hillawiyya, Thurayya Nasir, Jamila Yaʿqub, Jamila ʿAli, Badriyya Nuzhat, Badriyya Ismaʿil, Badriyya Hiyawi, Thurayya ʿAziz, Jamila Hasan, Jamila Dawud, Hasiba al-Mas, Khairiyya Chachan (the sister of Fawziyya Chachan, Rosa and Lulu Numa, Halima Tawfiq, Hamdiyya Nabil, Khaznat Ibrahim, Ramziyya Hamid, Rushdiyya ʿAli, Zakiyya Muhammad, Salama, Salima Furat, Salima Hasan, Salima Yusif, Sabiha Salim, Sabriyya Qadir, Aʿisha Muhammad, ʿAziza Amir, Ghanniyya Hikmat, Fathiyya Ahmad al-Maslawiyya, Fakhriyya Shakir, Fadila ʿAbd al-Rahman, Fatima Hamra, Fawziyya ʿArif, Fawziyya Karun, Fawziyya Shirwan, Fadila Hadi, Fawziyya Bashir, Firyal Sidqi, Kamila ʿAli, Kamala Ibrahim, Lamiʿa Tawfiq, Mary Jirjis, Mary George, Mary Yaʿqub, Maʾida, Maryam Ibrahim, Masʿuda Murad (the sister of Layla Murad), Munira Hasun, Munira Muhammad, Makiyya ʿAbd al-Wahhab, Malak, Mary Musa, Madiha Natiq, Najiyya Karun, Nadwa Mahmud, Naʿima Kamal, Nuriyya Khazna, Nadima Muhammad, Nahida Faraj, Widad Husain, Wahida Khalil, Hadiyya, Hila Salman, and Haifa Husain: al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 259.

his lists is that fact that strict hierarchies between female performers existed. This is evident from the amount of biographical information and praise, or the lack thereof, that he includes in description of individual performers. While al-ʿAllaf might have been biased since he wrote songs for several performers, the fact that he includes hundreds of names in his book shows the respect and responsibility he felt towards the many female performers for whom dancing and singing were their bread and butter. Similarly, as a composer, songwriter, and poet, al-ʿAllaf was intimately familiar with Iraqi nightlife. In addition, as we will see, in his work, al-ʿAllaf was also concerned with saving, even if only retrospectively, the reputation of many of these women and probably also his own profession by censoring out certain details or by only indirectly hinting at the links between nightclubs and sex work.

What is important, in any case, is not so much the categorization or what aspects of the profession he leaves out, but the hundreds of names mentioned by al-ʿAllaf. In fact, between the late 1920s and the mid 1950s, well over a hundred performers were worked in Iraqi nightclubs. With such a large number of female performers present in Baghdad it is obvious that not all were equally famous and that competition between them must have been stiff. What is also obvious, however, is the fact that many most likely could not rely solely on the salaries they received for dancing and singing in the capital's nightclubs. As described earlier, in addition to nightclubs, cinema, theaters, the radio, and later on television, became venues of musical performance. In fact, as new spaces were added to Baghdad's infrastructure of leisure allowed for performances, and performers, to distance themselves from some of the negative connotations of the nightclub. As we saw above, some performers successfully shifted to cinema, theater, and radio performances. The institutions of cinema, radio, and theater, perhaps because they were not associated with drinking, sex-work, and all-male audiences lend respectability to female performances in general.

These, however, were avenues reserved for a select few. Some performers and musicians, male and female alike, were able to add to their income by performing at private parties and celebrations. According to Kojaman, the rise of female performers gave rise to new forms of private parties and family celebrations. In fact, it became a matter of prestige for wealthy families to invite the most popular performers to perform in their homes. The family or individual hosting the event would pay for an entire nightclub ensemble and often also several female performers.[119] Less wealthy families most likely invited performers who were less in demand. To host a party with one of Iraq's most famous singers was a privilege reserved for the absolute elite. Such private parties would often start relatively late when the performers and musicians had finished their work at the nightclub. Since these parties would often continue until the early hours of the morning, the host of the party had to get a license from the police. However, even when no license was obtained, according to Kojaman, the police could be persuaded to let the party continue on the condition that no percussions were used after midnight.[120]

Performers were paid an agreed upon fee but would also get tips when intoxicated members of the audience threw or pinned bills to her dress. The tipping took place during a special musical session, *al-qass*, during which the singer praised the host.[121] While nightclubs, with the exception of female performers, belonged to the exclusive world of men, private parties allowed for some women to take part in musical and nocturnal leisure that they could not normally access in clubs. It was not uncommon for private parties held in homes in the less affluent parts of the city, during which arak often flowed freely, to develop into fights. Similarly, gate-crashing was a standard part

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[119] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 111.
[120] Ibid., 111.
[121] Ibid., 113.

of private parties. Policemen and night watchmen were sometimes among the gate-crashers.[122]

According to Zubaida, some Baghdadis preferred the maqam singer Rashid al-Qundarchi over Muhammad al-Qubanchi because the latter had a following of male fans who would accompany him to private parties and start fights after consuming large quantities of arak. Violence was [123]

Nightclubs hired a large number of young women based on their looks rather than their artistic qualities and talents. According to Kojaman, while some of these women had or developed talents, their main job was to entertain the customers by dancing rather than singing. Most were paid very low salaries and were therefore often forced to sell more than just their voices and their dancing. Some of these performers side jobbed or had a past in sex work.[124] The link between female performers and sex work dates back to when the first nightclubs in Baghdad were established. Not only was the a geographical connection between the clubs and Baghdad's official red light district, *al-Kallachiyya*, since both were located in the Midan area, but many of the first performers were in fact women already working in the area's brothels.[125] This link between sex work and female performers persisted. In fact, for many of the dancers and singers, their labor might be better understood as existing in a grey zone between different forms of sex work and performance. Even among the most famous and respected female performers the association with sex work was still present. According to Zubaida, Salima Murad's sister, Regina, who was also a performer ran a brothel in the *Kallachiyya* and later on an upscale one in one of Baghdad's suburbs. There were even rumors, according to Zubaida, that Salima too ran a brothel and a gambling

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[122] Amin al-Mummayyiz, *Baghdad Kama ʿAriftuha* (Baghdad: Dar Afaq ʿArabiyya Lil Sahafa wa al-Nashr, 1985), 137. Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 221
[123] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 224.
[124] Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 46-47.
[125] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 220-221; Kojaman, *The Maqam Music Tradition of Iraq*, 46; Faʾiq Shakir, *al-Amrad al-Zuhariyya* (Baghdad: Matbaʾt al-ʿAhd, 1934), 6-10.

establishments for Iraq's elites.[126] Kojaman mentions that Salih al-Kuwaiti wrote songs for Regina and that she was murdered in 1936 by her lover, but he does not mention that she ran a brothel. He does, however, echo the rumors that Salima was involved in the upscale brothel business.[127]

While such rumors cannot be confirmed, other sources suggest the brothels were often operated and run by a combination of pimps and retired prostitutes.[128] One of al-Karkhi's most sexually explicit poems, *Daʾuwd al-Lambachi* (Dauwd the Lamplighter), tells the story of the life and death of Dauwd, one of Baghdad's most infamous pimps. Dauwd was also a brothel owner and lamplighter in central Baghdad when lamps were still lit by kerosene.[129] The poem mentions Dauwd's wife, Fatima al-Sumanji, who worked as a sex worker in his brother, and Dauwd's assistant, Ibrahim al-Tanburi, who married Fatima and took over the brothel after Dauwd's death. This would make brothels, in terms of ownership and operation, similar to nightclubs, since these were also often run or owned by retired singers.

Sex work, although it wasn't restricted to the night, also played a significant role in Baghdadi nocturnal leisure. In addition to *al-Kallachiyya* Baghdad also had high-end brothels, some owned by women. The distinction between brothels and nightclubs, as we will see, was not always clear.[130] In fact, sex work was widespread and legal even as it was condemned. As mentioned in the previous section, press and literary campaigns criticized leisure establishments, such as brothels, nightclubs, and casinos, where men and women mixed and engaged in

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[126] Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 221

[127] Kojaman, *Al-Musiqa al-Faniya al-Muʾasira fi al-Iraq*, 46.

[128] Ghazi A. Karim, Suq Al-Saray, Al-Mutannabi Street and the book trade in Baghdad in the 1940s: A personal narrative," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 9:3 (2015): 165-190.

[129] Clive Holes, "Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi (1861-1946), Vernacular Poet of Early Twentieth Century Baghdad," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 21:2-3 (2018): 225-239.

[130] Baghdadi, *Li-alla Nansa Baghdad fi al-ʿIshrinat*, 101–3; Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 213. For more on sex work in Iraqi from a medical perspective see Sara Farhan, "The Making of Iraqi Doctors: Reproduction in Medical Education in Modern Iraq, 1869-1959," (Phd. Dissertation. York University, 2019). diss., York University, 2019).

questionable behavior. These accounts negatively portrayed female dancers and singers, some of whom exchanged sexual services for money, and warned against the alcoholism and moral corruption attached to such forms of leisure.[131] Iraqi men and women on the left also condemned sex work as a form of exploitation of poor women by the upper classes.[132] The figure of the sex worker, as described in Chapter 3 and 4, was also a popular literary topic and trope in anticolonial literature and poetry in the 1940s and 1950s, allowing Iraqi male authors to visualize the integration of women into the nation-state.[133]

Rumors about Salima and Regina aside, it is certain that many clubs facilitated connections between wealthy patrons and female performers. The more popular the performer among the patrons, the higher her pay and tips. Those in high demand could charge a significant sum of money by spending the evening at the table of a wealthy patron. Some performers were able to amass considerable wealth.[134] Those among the performers who still had families outside of Baghdad and elsewhere in the region were able to send back whatever they could spare from their salaries using local Iraqi banks with branches abroad.[135] Similarly, some of the many offices on al-Saray Street specializing in paralegal services and the production and typing of official documents and permits offered their services to members of the sex trade.[136]

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[131] Bashkin, "Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq, 1921–1958," 59; Zubaida, "Entertainers in Baghdad, 1900-1950," 213.

[132] Bashkin, "Representations of Women in the Writings of the Intelligentsia in Hashemite Iraq, 1921–1958," 64-68.

[133] Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute, *Tajdid*, and Masculinity in Anticolonial Literature of Iraq," 43-44.

[134] al-Lami, *al-Hayyat al-ʿIjtimaiyya fi Baghdad*, 328.

[135] Naim Kattan, *Farewell Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad* (London: Souvenir Press, 2007), 129-130.

[136] Ghazi A. Karim, Suq Al-Saray, Al-Mutannabi Street and the book trade in Baghdad in the 1940s: A personal narrative," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 9:3 (2015): 170-171.

As mentioned in the introduction, the scarcity of Iraqi archival sources that deal with the lived and everyday experiences and discourses of leisure makes literature a privileged site of information. As we saw in ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri's short stories about café labor and sexual assault in the cinema in Chapters 3 and 4, fictional narratives can help access otherwise invisible or inaccessible experiences, tensions, anxieties, and forms of policing. Fiction also offered a space where new practices of nocturnal leisure and novel urban identies and figures, could be described, debated, worked out, and sometimes excluded.[137] As such, institutions of nocturnal leisure and the characters that populated them were not an uncommon theme on Iraqi fictional narratives from the period. Dhu al-Nun Ayyub's short story from 1938, "Hinama Tathur al-ʿAsifa" (When the Storm Blows), is a case in point. Ayyub, an Iraqi communist, teacher, and prose writer was born in Mosul and graduated from the Higher Teachers Training College in Baghdad. In the early 1930s he wrote for *al-Ahali*, the newspaper of the nonsectarian anticolonial group of the same name, and coedited the magazines *al-ʿAsr al-Hadith* and the communist *al-Majalla*.[138]

In "Hinama Tathur al-ʿAsifa" two male Iraqi friends, low-ranking officials in one of Baghdad's ministries, visit a nightclub: "We entered one of the numerous large clubs that functions as a refuge for those seeking company and where people come to spend and lose money."[139] The two friends find an an empty table and order two beers. The table next to theirs is occupied by a wealthy landowning sheikh "ruling over thousands of peasants."[140] The sheikh's wealth provides him with the constant attention of the club's owner and waiters. At his table, the sheikh is

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[137] For an excellent discussion of sex workers in Iraqi fiction and poetry see Bahoora, "The Figure of the Prostitute, *Tajdid*, and Masculinity in Anticolonial Literature of Iraq," 43-44.

[138] ʿAziz al-Hajj, *Abu Huraira al-Mawsuli: Dhu al-Nun Ayyub wa Siratuhu* (London: Riad al-Rayyis, 1990), 36.

[139] Dhu al-Nun Ayyub, "Hinama Tathur al-ʿAsifa", in *Al-Athar al-Kamila li-Adab Dhi al-Nun Ayyub* (The Complete Works of Dhu al-Nun Ayyub). Vol. 1. Baghdad: Wizarat al-Iʿlam, 1977), 204.

[140] Ibid., 204.

accompanied by several of "those dancers who are imported from Budapest and Prague (*waridat Budapest wa Prague*)."[141] The derogatory comparison between the female performers and imported goods is not the only judgment that the texts makes about nightclubs. One of the friends, who is also story's narrator, observes with disdain how the sheikh is unable to communicate with the dancers at his table due to his lack of foreign language skills. Mocking what he sees as the sheikh's lack of culture, education, and manners, the narrator tells his friend: "he [the sheikh] can't even write the language of his own country" and that someone like him "wouldn't burden himself with learning another language, not even for a dancer."[142] Full of contempt, the two friends watch as one often the waiters translates for the sheikh. Further adding to the negative portrayal of the sheik, we are told that the dancers are looking at him "with the eyes of a thief looking at an ownerless donkey loaded with jewels."[143] When the two friends talk to the waiter, he informs them that while the sheikh only pays him 1 dinar for his translation services, he paid one of the dancers 50 dinars for pending a week with him on his farm.[144]

In his short story "Talib Effendi" from 1923, Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid takes up a similar theme. "Talib Effendi" describes the adventures of Talib, tribal poet, who adopts the title of effendi after having discovered the sophisticated urban lifestyle of Baghdad. With his connections to both the British and Iraqi tribal sheikhs, Talib enters upper middle class life in Baghdad. Talib encounters a Turkish Christian nightclub dancer, whom he believes is the daughter of a general in the Ottoman army who has come to Iraq in search of her Arab roots. Talib spends the night with the dancer and gives her money, convinced that her wealthy family will pay him back. He soon

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141 Ibid., 204.
142 Ibid., 204.
143 Ibid., 204.
144 Ibid., 204.

discovers, however, that the dancer is a sex worker awaiting deportation by the police.[145] According to Bashkin's reading "Talib Effendi," "the imagined biography of the dancer correlates with a Hashemite national narrative: she comes from Syria, homeland of Arab nationalism, and wishes to return to her Arab roots and forget her Ottoman past."[146] As we saw above, the imagined journey of the dancer in al-Sayyid's short story was, in many cases, also a real journey taken by female performers and sex workers during the period. In addition, Bashkin reads "Talib Effendi" as indicative of narratives used by some Iraqi national and urban elites to discuss Iraqi tribesmen and rural subjects. According to Bashkin, Talib is only superficially civilized and cannot handle the temptations of the city, such as alcohol.[147] He is, in other words, a failed effendi.

In other stories as well, al-Sayyid used the literary trope of the failed effendi, who only dresses the part, lacks political awareness, and consumes alcohol excessively or in an unsophisticated manner. Connecting dress code and the construction of male aesthetic repertoires to consumption and behavior in Baghdad's nightlife, al-Sayyid's "Sakran!" (Drunkard!), also from 1923, follows the misfortunes of Qasim Effendi who has recently arrived in Baghdad. Drinking alone in his small apartment in the Midan area, Qasim Effendi dreams himself back to an encounter he had with a sex worker the previous week. A friend brings him a letter from the sex worker in which she complains about his absence. Qasim Effendi, however, is too intoxicated to answer her letter. Having spent all of his money on wine and visits to the brothel, the story ends with Qasim

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[145] Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid, "Talib Effendi," in *al-Aʿmal al-Kamila li Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid*, edited by ʿAli Jawad al-Tahir and ʿAbd al-Ilah Ahmad (Baghdad: Dar al-Hurriyya, 1978), 519-530.
[146] Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 194.
[147] Ibid., 195. See also Bashkin, *The Other Iraq* 195-207; Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 84; ʿAli Jawad al-Tahir, *Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid: Ra'id al-Qissa al-Haditha fi al-ʿIraq* (Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1969), 24-25, 148 and ʿAbd al-Ilah Ahmad, *al-Adab al-ʿIraqi mundhu al-Harb al-ʿAlamiyya al-Thaniyya* (Damascus: Ittihad al-Kuttab al-ʿArab, 2001), 224-228.

Effendi realizing that he will have to go hungry for the rest of the month.[148] Stories such as Ayyub's "Hinama Tathur al-ʿAsifa," al-Sayyid's "Talib Effendi," and "Sakran!" voice important social critiques of wealth, the political influence of tribal sheikhs, some of whom were empowered by the British and the Hashemite state, and rural imposters and failed effendis. It is interesting that they do so through descriptions of excessive and inappropriate behaviors in or around Baghdadi institutions of nocturnal leisure. The fact that they do so, however, provides us with an example of how, at least in the opinion of leftist Iraqi intellectuals, such institutions ought to be inhabited. In addition, they offer a glimpse of some of the characters who frequented nightclubs and brothels and shows that male behavior, albeit in differnet ways, was also policed and regulated in texts produced during the period.

While al-ʿAllaf must have been aware of the less glamourous and exploitative sides of Iraqi nightlife, he is careful not to explicitly mention the gray zone that existed between nightclubs and sex work. He does mention, however, that some women were more known for their dancing than their singing, and that some female performers were known for their skills in entertaining politicians, merchants and wealthy landowners.[149] In addition, in many of his biographical descriptions al-ʿAllaf mentions the beauty of specific performers, their ability to "drive men insane," their flirtation skills, and the many rivalries that erupted over who could attract wealthy clients.[150] When describing Jalila Umm Sami, who had a past in sex work, al-ʿAllaf simply mentions that she had a "dark past" (*madi aswad*) and that she retired from her nightclub career when she got married. While al-ʿAllaf does not seem to explicitly condemn women who were

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[148] al-Sayyid, "Sakran!" in *al-Aʿmal al-Kamila li Mahmud Ahmad al-Sayyid*, 1978), 399-405.

[149] al-ʿAllaf, *Qiyan Baghdad*, 222-223, 252.
[150] Ibid., 253, 231.

involved in sex work, he makes sure to mention that several female performers eventually got married and settled down into a life domestic bliss.[151] While many of the first Iraqi dancers and singers were hired, as we saw, directly from the *Kallachiyya*, later on, the performers who were engaged in sex work were probably better off than the sex workers in the city's brothels.

Even though some performers were forced to sell their services to the highest bidder or exchanged sex for gifts, observations made by scholars studying performance and sex work elsewhere in the region suggest that those women who were able to claim the status of performer where better off than those sex workers selling their labor in regular brothels. The blurred boundaries between performance and sex work was by no means a strictly Iraq phenomenon. In her study of mobile female performers in French Mandate Syria, Campos notes that foreign women were classified as *artistes* and regulated differently than local women, who were defined as prostitutes. While women belonging to both categories, according to Campos, were engaged in sex work, the former "escaped being prostitutionalized and thus retained control of material and moral resources denied to women defined as prostitutes."[152] Not having to deal with pimps and municipal authorities, those women categorized as *artistes* were able to move around more freely and could use their clients for support and protection.[153] Similarly, Campos asserts that the demand created by new public entertainment spaces "presented women options to travel, work, and control their earnings and reputations, escaping regulated prostitution."[154] In her study of sex work and migration, Liat Kozma suggests that "women who migrated for prostitution often followed the migration of men—workers, soldiers, pilgrims, settlers, and sailors" and that we see these woman

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[151] Ibid., 217.
[152] Campos, "Performers or Prostitutes? Artistes during the French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon, 1921–1946," 288.
[153] Ibid., 288.
[154] Ibid., 307.

as "actors in a global economy" rather than objects of commerce."[155] In Iraq too, I suggest, the women who travelled to Baghdad from abroad and from elsewhere within the country were not without agency. While they inhabited a morally ambiguous position, it makes sense to see them as actors and migrants within larger patterns of migration and the global economy at large. It is no coincidence that many of the female performers described above came to Baghdad with their families or alone at a time when when the city was experiencing a period of rapid urbanization and an influx of migrants from rural parts of the country.

If performers were morally ambiguous, so were some of their songs. In fact, in 1926 a judge in Baghdad sentenced Jalila Umm Sami to eight days in prison over a song that according to the judge dealt too explicitly with desire and flirtation. Several of the musicians involved in the production of the song were also imprisoned.[156] In fact, many songs explored taboo topics such as forbidden love and sexual topics. Some singers used a male object of desire in their songs or sang in the voice of the opposite gender to circumvent morally sensitive topics.[157] At a time when nightclubs, bars, and liquor stores were wide spread, it is not surprising to find a large number of songs dealing with alcohol and drunkenness. One example is Hudairi Abu 'Aziz's famous song *Ishrab Kaʾsak* (*Empty your Glass*) in which Abu 'Aziz urges a friend or lover to continue drinking and to "continue to be happy / forget the past / the night is sweet and brings relaxation / spending time with you is like heaven."[158] Especially in the first part of the twentieth century, when non-heteronormative desire circulated more freely, many Iraqi songs openly or through vaguely

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[155] Kozma, "Women's Migration for Prostitution in the interwar Middle East and North Africa," 94-95. See also Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011).
[156] Kanana, *Falak al-Nas fi al-Ghinaʾ al-ʿIraqi*, 538.
[157] Ibid., 539-544, 575-577.
[158] Ibid., 569. See also Kishtainy, *Ayyam ʿIraqiyya*, 197-198.

disguised language expressed love, desire flirtation, and relationships between men.[159] Such songs, however, like the figure of the *shaʿar* described earlier, gradually disappeared.

It is perhaps also in the songs that we can locate at least traces of voices and experiences of the women who sang them. While most songs were written by men, they acquire a double meaning when performed by women. To mention just one example, several of songs performed by Zakiyya George deal explicitly with the hardships faced by Iraqi women. *Shagul ʿala Hadi?* (*what do I do about my bad luck?)* can be seen as protest against polygamy. The song tells the story of a young woman whose husband has taken another wife. Referring to herself as educated, "*ana bit maktab wa bit al-madrasa*," [160] the young woman in the song laments the situation in which she finds herself. In another song by Zakiyya George, (*Ana al-Haditha*), the song's female subject complains that her family has married her to a much older and sick man ("*Ana al-haditha, ana bint al-faqir / Hali zawajuni birajul shayyib ʿalil*"). In the song she protests that her beauty and youth is being wasted on an old man, who does not deserve her:

My beauty shines like the moon
I'm like a gazelle
Coquettish, perfect and beautiful
There is no one in the world like me.[161]

Songs like *Shagul ʿala Hadi* and *Ana al-Haditha* do not tell us what it was like to be a female performer, famous like Zakiyya George or otherwise. However, with limited sources available, the songs, which were after all an important component of nightclub performances, might allow for future research to shed new light on the topic.

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[159] Kanana, *Falak al-Nas fi al-Ghinaʾ al-ʿIraqi*, 547, 557-563.
[160] Ibid., 396.
[161] Ibid., 397.

Conclusion

For most inhabitants of Baghdad and other Iraqi urban centers, nighttime remained designated for sleep and other forms of recreation and socialization within the private setting of the home. For some, night was a time of labor not associated with or reliant upon nightlife. However, the changing urban geography and economy of leisure described elsewhere in this dissertation did not leave the night untouched. Cafés, as we saw in Chapter 4, had already expanded public leisure well into the evening and early night. Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, some cafés set up stages upon which musicians, male and eventually also female dancers performed. By the 1920s, Baghdad had a noticeable and growing infrastructure of nocturnal leisure. In other words, Baghdad had a nightlife. The first years of Baghdadi nightlife relied upon the transnational movement of female labor. After Iraq had become a mandate and later on an independent state, female labor, in the form of performers, came to Baghdad from across Iraq.

The first part of this chapter traced the developments that turned cafés into nightclubs. Focusing on these nightclubs, the rest of this chapter argued that the rise of nightclubs created new forms of labor and professions, and music in addition to testing and altering the boundaries of public morality and the permissible forms of movement and leisure in the nocturnal city. Nightclubs were also responsible for bringing performers to Baghdad from elsewhere in Iraq and the region. Before the establishment of radio in Iraq in 1936, nightclubs created careers for musicians and female performers, including ʿAfifa Iskandar, Salima Murad, Zakiyya George, Munira Huzuz, and Sultana Yusif, who became, and remain, divas of Iraqi music. In turn, the stars of Iraqi nightlife performed and recorded their music in other parts of the region. Collectively, Iraqi female performers and the nightclubs in which they performed contributed to the creation of Iraqi popular and national culture.

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The stars of Iraqi nightlife were paid large sums to perform at private parties and celebrations such as wedding in the homes of wealthy Iraqis. In the 1930s, more exclusive clubs began to cater to the taste and desires of the same class of wealthy Iraqis. However, this chapter also demonstrated that while some female performers were able to amass considerable personal wealth, for the majority of Baghdad's many singers and dancers, life was a lot less glamorous.

Epilogue and Conclusion

This dissertation argued that leisure emerged globally as a clearly defined category in relation and in opposition to work as a result of the economic and social realities set in motion by the Industrial Revolution. While the effects of these changes were felt unevenly, and at times belatedly, across the globe, the conditions that created modern leisure were also present in Iraq. Focusing on Baghdad, this dissertation demonstrated how in the first decades of the twentieth century, new sites and institutions of leisure became available to the city's inhabitants creating new ways to spend time in and move through the city and its streets. Before the twentieth century, very few options for public leisure existed in Baghdad. My dissertation demonstrated that the emergence of new institutions of leisure in Baghdad, such as cinemas, nightclubs, theaters, restaurants, museums, clubs, societies, and organizations was a significant and noticeable change that fundamentally changed the experience of urban life, neighborhoods, and the city itself during the day as well as during the night.

I argued that leisure created and changed both collective and individual identities – in terms of gender relations and identities, sexuality, class, and the built environment of the urban spaces that Iraqi leisure subjects occupied. Focusing on urban and public institutions of leisure, this dissertation began to a tell a part of Iraq's modern Iraqi history, which has hitherto not been told. It mapped some of the uncharted aspects of modern Iraqi history and modernity through the new institutions, practices, discourses, and distractions of leisure that took up increasing space and time in Iraqi life. In fact, institutions of leisure such cafés, cinema, nightclubs, and extracurricular activities organized by schools were of such importance that it would be difficult to fully grasp modern Iraqi history without paying attention to them.

This dissertation showed that leisure can be an effective lens through which to study the dramatic changes that restructured Iraqi life in the twentieth century, including gender relations, sexuality, class, and labor. With regard to labor, it focused on the many forms of labor that are hidden in spaces and practices of leisure. Exactly because such labor has often remained invisible in accounts of modern leisure, my dissertation argued that it is important not to romanticize sites such as cafés as magnets for intellectual and literary activity and radical politics without recognizing that leisure relies upon labor.

With the expansion of the Iraqi state during the Hashemite period, official and normative interest in and concern about leisure also increased. During this time, the Iraqi state began to act as a regulatory force in the lives of its citizens in new ways, shaping leisurely practices, forms of movement, and notions of time and productivity. At the same time, my dissertation looked beyond the state in order to examine the many ways in which non-state regulatory forces and institutions, such as families, intellectuals and writers on the left, religious time and institutions, and global forces made claims on and about leisure time.

By paying attention to the institutions, practices, and discourses of leisure, along with their transregional and transnational connections, this dissertation also offered a portrayal of modern Iraqi history that included the multitude of everyday practices and and mundane experiences often left out by traditional political histories. As such, it made a historiographical intervention. The sources used by political histories are not well equipped to study the everyday. This dissertation favored a cultural history approach that thematically focuses on leisure as both circumscribed and enabled by class, gender, and transnational connections because it is more tuned into the workings of the rhythms of of leisure daily life in Hashemite Baghdad. This approach enabled me to think of archives and sources differently as well as a to conceptually frame the most mundane activities

as important, worthy of attention, and historically determined. To examine the full range of leisure habits, practices and option in a single dissertation would be difficult. The remainder of the epilogue explores some of the roads not taken as well as the challenges that make studying certain types of leisure difficult.

The last chapter of this dissertation examined institutions and practices of nocturnal leisure. One section of the chapter analyzed a short story by Dhu al-Nun Ayyub, the Iraqi communist, teacher, and prose writer, to shed light on these new institutions and practices as well as the people who frequented them. Characters in Baghdad's nightlife, the section demonstrated, were described, debated, worked out, and sometimes excluded from fictional texts. In fact, throughout this dissertation, I mobilized Iraqi fictional texts to unearth aspects of leisure that are otherwise inaccessible since they are not archived in official discourse or traditional archives. Illicit forms of leisure, for example, are often only visible in novels and short stories. Ayyub's collection of short stories, *My Friend* (*Sadiqi*),[1] from 1938 contains several texts about male friendship and Baghdadi urban geographies of leisure. Friendship, as several of the chapters in this dissertation pointed out, was an important part of leisure. Many Iraqis went to cinemas, cafés, and nightclubs in the company of friends. At the same time, new friendships were forged during leisure and extracurricular activities such as those described in Chapters 1 and 2 in the context of education. The majority of the stories in *Sadiqi*, however, narrate forms of urban leisure and friendship outside of the setting of the institutions of leisure described in this dissertation. As such, *Sadiqi* offers a way to begin to think through some of the forms of leisure, such as illicit, private, and sexual practices, that are not easily studied.

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[1] Dhu al-Nun Ayyub, *Sadiqi* (Baghdad: Matbaʿat al-Ahali, 1938).

Ayyub's short stories leave behind the world of established and institutionalized leisure and represent nonnormative masculinities and sexualities as features of society in 1930s Baghdad, which itself is represented as a heterotopic space that enabled multiple socialities and sexual possibilities, especially in its common evening spaces.[2] For example, "How I Found a Guy" ("Kayfa ʿAthartu ʿala Rajul") subverts the normativity of the Tigris river and reterritorializes its banks as spaces of illicit desire and leisure. By making Baghdad's perhaps most visible feature a site of male cruising, the act of using a locality to search for same-sex sexual partners, "How I Found a Guy" undoes divisions between outside and inside as well as public and private and propriety norms, rendering the river a heterotopic space. Michel Foucault's heterotopia concept refers to the nonhegemonic potential and enabling nature of some spaces.[3] In the context of cruising, Sofian Merabet argues that heterotopic space offers a "zone of encounter." Such "urban locations . . . foster attempts, with various levels of success, to transcend spatio-temporal fixities." They provide a "stage for the occasional transgressive act and, in doing so, circumvent the otherwise endorsed order of general respectability."[4] Ayyub's story suggests that some of Baghdad's public spaces, such as the Tigris, facilitated nonnormative and illicit sexual practices, leisure, and bonds of friendship.

While the carefree inhabiting of urban space of the two male protagonists indicates their privileges as men, it also challenges heteronormative forms of nocturnal leisure. While male dancers and sex workers gradually disappeared from Baghdad's nightclubs, as Chapter 5 showed, non-heterosexual desire and leisure remained. The two male friends in the story meet in open spaces far away from the leisure establishments on Abu Nuwas and al-Rashid Streets and far from

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[2] For more on Ayyub's *Sadiqi* see Pelle Valentin Olsen, "Cruising Baghdad: Desire Between Men in the 1930s Fiction of Dhu al-Nun Ayyub," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 14:1 (2018): 25-44.

[3] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16:1 (1986): 25.

[4] Sofian Merabet, *Queer Beirut* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 5, 211.

the neon signs and public lighting of Baghdad's main thoroughfares. In fact, *Sadiqi* uses the bucolic beauty of parts of the city to foreground the qualities of the deserted and relatively private banks of the Tigris at night. In Ayyub's story, in other words, some city space offers a degree of privacy not found elsewhere.

The urban history of Baghdad has always been closely linked with the Tigris.[5] The river was an important center of commerce and transportation and for those who lived and worked in the city, the banks of the Tigris and the river itself were important sites of normative leisure and play during the day and has played a ubiquitous role in Iraqi poetry, autobiographical, and fictional writing as site of leisure and space of physical training. Boys and men received swimming lessons in the Tigris, where competitions also took place. Many Baghdadi boys were taught how to swim when they were between the ages of 10-15. Most of the swimming teachers had a special "office" or a little wooden hut (*chardagh*) at the famous swimming places. The teachers prepared swimming belts (*kaghab*) from the trunks of bark palm trees or from old tires. Pay for the lessons would most often only be received after the student was able to cross the river without floating equipment. Swimming from one bank to the other was also a common exercise that embodied masculinity and a rite of passage for adolescent boys. When a student was ready, his family would be invited to watch and would wait on the other side of the river. Some would throw a small party in the occasion.[6] In the summer, the river was also a site of outings for Baghdadi families and groups of friends. Many spent summer evenings on the small islands that appeared as the water level dropped. Families would bring musical instruments or gramophones and would bring or make their dinner on one of the small islands.[7]

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[5] Iman al-Attar, *Baghdad: An Urban History*, 61-62.
[6] Al-Hijjiyya, *Baghdadiyyat*, 140-142.
[7] Somekh, *Baghdad Yesterday*, 37–42.

Figure 28: Boys swimming in the Tigris, date unknown. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Ayyub's stories suggest that illicit sexual encounters between men took place in public locations that required no entrance fees or mediation, such as during nighttime strolls along the Tigris or on city streets, which were largely male spaces at night. Nighttime erotic encounters by the river frame most of the stories in *Sadiqi*, and most of the men in the stories walk in the city at night. As argued by several of the chapters in this dissertation, it is important to recognize that movements in public space are both facilitated and limited by gender-based privileges. As noted by Matthew Beaumont, while some male ways of inhabiting the nocturnal city arouse suspicion and moral condemnation, men much more easily than women can claim a right to inhabit it, which in turn had restrictive effect on the mobility of women.[8]

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[8] Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London: Verso, 2015), 4. See also

Historians working on queer histories and identities have showed how modern public and semi-public places such as beaches, parks, and streets enabled the creation of intimate geographies that helped facilitate illicit leisure and desire, such as cruising, and shaped the lives of queer subjects, who in turn shaped the city.[9] It is important to mention, however, that such spaces need not always be emancipatory or subversive formations. While some spaces in Baghdad allowed for the momentary proliferation of alternative or subversive possibilities, practices, and performances, other spaces, such as cinemas and cafés could be hostile towards and dangerous to women. Rather than celebrate the subversiveness of space, this dissertation used the above insights more broadly in order to highlight the produced nature of space and the multiple meanings potentially attached to every space.

As this dissertation argued, and as illustrated by Ayyub's short story above, leisure existed in myriad ways in Hashemite Baghdad. The forms of leisure that took place in private, in secret, outside of institutions, or between friends and families are much harder to study. This does not, however, make them any less important. I hope that a future version of this dissertation, or better yet, an entirely different dissertation, will explore some of these forms of leisure in depth. In a similar vein, several institutions of leisure did not make it into this dissertation. Chapters 1 and 2 argued that sport was seen as a moral and productive form of leisure. The increasing importance

Joachim Schlör, *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London, 1840–1930* (London: Reaktion, 1998), 168.
[9] George Chauncey, Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940 (New York: Basic Books, 1994), Matt Houlbrook, Queer London: The Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Sofian Merabet, Queer Beirut (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014); P Hubbard, "Sex zones: Intimacy, Citizenship and Public Space," *Sexualities*, *4*, no 1: (2001): 51-71; P Hubbard, "Sexing the Self: Geographies of Engagement and Encounter," *Social & Cultural Geography*, *3* no. 4: (2002): 365-381; L. Knopp, "Sexuality and the Spatial Dynamics of Capitalism," *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, *10* no. 6: (1992): 651-669; R Tewksbury, "Cruising for Sex in Public Places: The Structure and Language of Men's Hidden, Erotic Worlds," *Deviant Behavior*, 17 no. 1: (1996): 1-19; Matt Houlbrook, "Towards a Historical Geography of Sexuality", *Journal of Urban History*, 2 no. 4: (2001). 497-504; W. Leap, *Public Sex/Gay Space* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

of sport, whether in schools or in the many private clubs that appeared during the Hashemite period, could have filled an entire dissertation. Chapters 1-3 focused on reading in the setting of schools, libraries, and cafés and demonstrated that reading practices and literary consumption were important elements in Iraqi leisure. Private reading practices made possible by growing literacy rates, libraries, and Baghdad's many bookstores were no less important. Bookstores such as Mackenzie's, al-ʿIraq, and al-Rabita on al-Rashid Street were important Iraqi cultural institutions and provided readers with Arabic and non-Arabic reading materials. The more than 35 bookstores selling Arabic books in Suq al-Saray – Baghdad's main book market before al-Mutanabbi Street took over were equally important.[10] The transnational circulation of cultural commodities such as books, magazines, and translations, as well as their consumption, will hopefully be studied in depth in the future. Bookstores, like the other institutions related to leisure described in this dissertation, were also sites of state intervention, censorship, and anti-communist surveillance.

Different forms of intervention, censorship, and surveillance were highlighted across this dissertation's five chapters. In fact, this dissertation demonstrated that throughout the Hashemite period, a plethora of discourses and new regimes of time made attempts to control, shape, and restrict leisure. Due to a combination of time restraints, lack of sources, and personal interests, some of these discourses and regimes were not discussed in this dissertation. For example, religious time, be it Muslim, Christian, and Jewish, was only tentatively explored. Similarly, normative discussions and discourses on leisure made by the religious figures and institutions were given a back seat in favor of other discourses. However, religious time and religious practices did structure, facilitate, and limit leisure for many Iraqis. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Ramadan nights

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[10] Ghazi A. Karim, Suq Al-Saray, Al-Mutannabi Street and the book trade in Baghdad in the 1940s: A personal narrative," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 9:3 (2015): 165-190.

made the city momentarily available to groups otherwise excluded from most forms of public leisure: During Ramadan, male youth were allowed to visit cafés in order to enjoy the entertainment and performers offered in such venues throughout the month.

Religious time, such as during the Eid holidays (*al-Adha* and *al-Fitr*), to mention just one example, also carved out temporary leisure spaces and opportunities for women, children, and families. Moments of religious celebration and time changed the cityscape through decorations such as lamps and added different sounds and smells to the streets of Baghdad. Travelling and temporary amusement parks, most of them made of wood, were set up during Eid holidays in public squares and gardens across Baghdad. Alone or accompanied by families, children could ride horses and donkeys, simple swings, ferris wheels (*dulab al-hawaʾ*), merry-go-rounds, and other rides. The Baghdadi colloquial poet, Mulla ʿAbbud al-Karkhi, composed a poem about the rides found in the amusement parks during Eid:

On Eid we used to play the worst of games (*alʿab*)
Wearing our shoes, we would ride the ferris wheel (*dulab*)

You could hear shoes falling on our heads like drumbeats: wham, wham!

This game was only played on holidays (*aʿyad*)
And those brave enough to ride were men and not children (*awlad*)

I was one of them and many a time I screamed ouch (*al-dad*)!
Because of falling shoes, sandals, and slippers (*kawalish, jazmat, wa kalat*)[11]

The simple, human-powered ferris wheels did not have real boxes for sitting, which meant that the ordeal of falling sandals, shoes, and slippers was a real one.

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[11] Quoted in al-Hijjiyya, *Baghdadiyyat*, 103-105. I would like to thank Qussay al-Attabi for helping me translate this poem. Qussay also pointed out that the poem might have been wrongly attributed to al-Karkhi due to two rudimentary violations of meter of rhyme in the first and third lines. Such violations are uncharacteristic of al-Karkhi. Remaining mistakes in the translation are mine.

In addition to temporarily changing the rules of sociability and leisure in the city, amusement parks also created opportunities for merchants and peddlers selling snacks, sweets, other refreshments, and toys. Leisure's intersection with and reliance on both labor and surrounding social and economic environments was described in detail in the chapters on cinema, cafés, and nightclubs. In this way, leisure structured by religious time was no different. In addition to amusement parks during Eid, *mawlids*, religious festivals, visits to shrines, and local and regional pilgrimage also offered important breaks from work and school. Along with family picnics on the river mentioned above, religious holidays facilitated forms of public leisure in which families and children took part.

Figure 29: Ferris wheel during Eid, ca. 1940s-1950s. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Figure 30: Ferris wheel during Eid, ca. 1940s-1950s. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Figure 31: Ferris wheel during Eid, ca. 1940s-1950s. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Figure 32: Refreshments during Eid, ca. 1940s-1950s. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Figure 33: Mawlid in Baghdad, ca. 1950s-1960s. Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, MIT

Photography can be a very useful way to document daily life and the photographs above clearly demonstrate that women, girls, and families were not excluded from public space took part in certain public forms of leisure. This dissertation used novels, short stories, and poetry as an alternate archive. With the exception of Chapters 1 and 2, which examined the genre of yearbook photographs, the many photographs in this dissertation were mostly used to document the practices and institutions described in the narrative. By treating the photographic heritage and visual archives of Iraq as objects in their own right, future research can add much to our understanding of modern Iraqi history. The Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, which was recently gifted to MIT, the many types of visual material scattered through the archives or American Jesuit and Presbyterian missionaries, and digital humanities projects such as Iraq Photo Archive[12] have made parts of Iraq's photographic past available to researchers. Scholars of photography and historians using photographic archives have demonstrated that when properly contextualized and located in respect to class, gender, social practice, and the way in which they were used by their owners at the time they were taken, photographs contain a particular usefulness as historical sources.[13]

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[12] https://www.iraqphotoarchive.com

[13] See in particular Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Book, 2008); Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: The Political Ontology of Photography* (London: Verso, 2012); Christopher Pinney, and Nicolas Peterson, *Photography's Other Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Rosalind Morris, *Photographies East: The Camera and its Histories in East and Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Stephen Sheehi, *The Arab Imago: A Social History of Portrait Photography, 1860-1910* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Elizabeth Edwards, and Janice Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2004); Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 1995); Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations. The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008); Toufoul Abu-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home: The Modern Middle Class in Ottoman Beirut* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2017); Nancy Micklewright, "Personal, Public, and Political (Re)Constructions: Photographs and Consumption," in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1922*, edited by Donald Quataert (Albany: State University of NY Press, 2000), 261-288; Nancy Micklewright, "Late Ottoman Photography: Family, Home, and New Identities," *Houses in Motion: Transformations in Domestic Consumption and Family Life in the Modern Middle East*, edited by Relli Schechter (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003).

Writing about Egypt, Lucie Ryzova has creatively demonstrated how the photographic genre of the peer album, as an object embedded in social relationships and contexts, "speak of how a classed and gendered self emerged in early- to mid-twentieth-century Egypt through a range of practices, of which photography-making (and album-making) was part."[14] In fact, by making albums, Ryzova shows how "young modernity-claiming Egyptians were asserting, performing and negotiating the parameters of their middle-class urbanity, and their emerging positions as modern gendered subjects and as adolescents."[15] A focused study of the many photographic genres that were available and used in Iraq, both official, private, professional, and vernacular, would undoubtedly enrich the field of Iraqi studies. For example, Iraqi private and family photographic archives, to the extent that they are made available, could play an important role in furthering our understanding of local articulations of middle class modernity, including leisure and sartorial habits and the changing architecture and materiality of Iraqi homes.

One of the photographs above show women and children taking place in a *mawlid* celebration in Baghdad. Religious time and religious discourses on leisure were described in the context of missionary education in Chapters 1 and 2. The decision, however, not to make these the main unit of analysis was a conscious one. This dissertation set out to examine everyday and quotidian forms of urban leisure in Baghdad. This happened at the expense of monthly or yearly celebrations such as Eid. In addition, by including the everyday lives and leisure of Baghdadis, some of whom were undoubtedly religious, this dissertation attempted to not reduce leisure to a

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[14] Lucie Ryzova, "Boys, Girls and Kodaks: Peer Albums and Middle-Class Personhood in Mid-Twentieth-Century Egypt," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 8:2-3 (2015): 215. See also also Lucie Ryzova "Unstable Icons, Contested Histories: Vintage Photographs and Neoliberal Memory in Contemporary Egypt," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 8: 1 2015): 7-68., and Lucie Ryzova "Mourning the Archive in Cairo: Middle Eastern Photographic Heritage between Neoliberalism and Digital Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56:4 (2014): 1027-1061.
[15] Ryzova, "Boys, Girls and Kodaks," 215.

single aspect of people's existence. In other words, religion might not be the most productive lens through which to study everyday leisure in modern Iraq. That being said, it is important for future research to think the categories of leisure and religion together, or at least in tandem, when appropriate. This could further help challenge the notion that the religious and the secular are incommensurable.[16]

While this dissertation focused on Baghdad, as demonstrated by Chapter 3 and 5, cinema culture and nocturnal leisure were not restricted to Baghdad. In fact, only a decade after cinemas became omnipresent spaces of leisure in Baghdad's urban landscape, they had spread to other urban center across the country. Similarly, already in the 1930, nightclubs existed in Mosul, Basra, Amara, and other Iraqi urban centers. Although this dissertation focused on Baghdad – the place where many of the changes related to leisure and modernity were most visible and the place about which sources are more easily available – modern leisure was not exclusive to the Iraqi capital. In fact, cities are not islands and the urban cannot be reduced to Baghdad.[17] Wealthy Baghdadis vacationed in the countryside or abroad and Baghdadi students, such as those at BC and ASG, travelled the countryside on school trips. In addition, the construction of new and modern suburbs in Baghdad with private gardens enabled new forms of private leisure and play that in some ways mimicked the forms of leisure that existed outside of the city. The city of Baghdad was also connected to rural parts of Iraq via markets, trade, migration, transportation, and the people who came to the city for leisure, either as participants or as workers. Chapter 4 described some of these connections in detail and showed how cafés functioned both as post offices and centers for rural labor. Chapter 5 showed how labor, in the form of female performers and sex workers, came to

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[16] Saba Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?," *Critical Inquiry* 35: 4 (2009): 836–862.

[17] Bet-Shlimon makes this fact abundantly clear in her recent study of Kirkuk. Bet-Shlimon, *City of Black Gold*, 2020.

Baghdad from rural parts of the country and from beyond the borders of Iraqi to work in the nightclubs of the capital, Basra, and Mosul. By following the movements of performers, students, workers, and others who came to Baghdad, this dissertation attempted to reduce the rural-urban dichotomy. With the growing interests in Ottoman and Iraqi urban peripheries and urban centers outside of Baghdad, I hope that we will soon have studies of leisure, social, and cultural life in cities such as Najaf, Karbala, Mosul, and Basra.

With the exception of Chapter 5, the chapters of this dissertation all explored notions of idleness and emerging discourses that framed a need for leisure to be productive, profitable, and national. Collectively, these chapters demonstrated that idleness is in the eye of the beholder and that the notion of a potentially dangerous and non-national idleness emerged as a function of a new and modern temporality that came to be associated with particular leisure spaces and practices. Much more difficult to study and locate in archives are the affective states of boredom, ennui, procrastination, and waiting that were undoubtedly part of everyday life and leisure in Baghdad. Chapters 3 and 4 analyzed two short stores by ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri. Both short stories framed the labor hidden in leisure and the uneven economic structures and unemployment and exploitative employment within the context of leisure, as leading to boredom. To write a history of boredom, or *malal,* waiting, and leisure, whether about bored students, women trapped at home by domestic labor, unemployed young men unable to take part in the city's leisure, or people simply doing nothing, would be a fascinating project. This is not that dissertation.

All of the chapters in this dissertation emphasized leisure's constant proximity to politics and power and demonstrated in a number of ways how, in twentieth century Iraq, leisure became one of the domains in which different and competing ideals and visions of the nation, gender, and sexuality manifested. At the same time, however, many of the chapters argued that forces and

ideologies beyond the Iraqi state encroached on the leisure of Iraqis. Chapter 1 in particular showed the extent to which extracurricular activities at BC were colored by and used to further the school's strong anti-communist agenda. Similarly, this dissertation showed that while leisure was a domain in which discipline was enforced, it simultaneously offered a space in which social and political norms and gendered identities could be practiced, contested, and transgressed upon. The strikes, demonstrations, and oppositional political activities mentioned in this dissertation represent moments of radical leisure and non-work for both the workers and the many students who took part in them.

The strikes and demonstrations that occurred more and more frequently during the Hashemite period led to the imprisonment of many Iraqis. Chapter 3 showed how cinema was used as propaganda tool to fight communism and entertain and influence prison guards in Iraqi prisons. The near complete absence of leisure for those Iraqis who spent years in prisons and correctional schools is an important aspect of modern Iraqi history, but one that is not easily studied. Bashkin has described the organization, friendship, solidarity, and resistance that took place among male and female communist prisoners inside Iraq's infamous Nuqrat al-Salman prison.[18] The ways in which incarcerated Iraqis attempted to organize reading groups, strikes, and more mundane forms of leisure to pass the time in Iraq's prisons will hopefully be the topic of future research.[19] In the absence of official records, the many autobiographical texts written by formerly imprisoned Iraqis, communist publications, and the many short stories, poems, and works of art dealing with imprisonment by Iraqis such as Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, Jawad Salim, ʿAbd al-Malik Nuri, Bahaʾ al-Din Nuri, to mention just a few, might show the way.

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[18] Bashkin, *New Babylonians*, 156-157; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 97-98, 107-108, 113-114.
[19] Henrik Andersen, a PhD student at Roskilde University in Denmark, is currently writing a dissertation on Iraqi jails and prisons.

In many ways, this dissertation traced the emergence of the Iraqi nation state through the lens of leisure. At the same time, most of the chapters traced the pre-state origins of practices and institutions of leisure. The dialogue between continuity and change was a constant companion in this dissertation. This dissertation ended with the Iraqi revolution in 1958. After 1958, while many forms of leisure continued more or less unchanged, others changed and were politicized in new ways. The revolutionary, decolonizing, and anti-colonial values of Qasim's republic changed the structure of leisure just like other historical ruptures had in the past. Not all dates mark watershed historical moments and I hope that futures studies will contribute to our understanding of the republican periods in Iraqi history. Leisure represents one lens through which this history can be told.

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