

This article was downloaded by:[University of Haifa]
[University of Haifa]

On: 31 May 2007

Access Details: [subscription number 769548433]

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Middle Eastern Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713673558>

Arabic Literature by Iraqi Jews in the Twentieth Century:

The Case of Ishaq Bar-Moshe (1927-2003)

Reuven Snir

To cite this Article: Snir, Reuven , 'Arabic Literature by Iraqi Jews in the Twentieth Century: The Case of Ishaq Bar-Moshe (1927-2003)', Middle Eastern Studies, 41:1, 7 - 29

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/0026320042000322699

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0026320042000322699>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article maybe used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

© Taylor and Francis 2007

Arabic Literature by Iraqi Jews in the Twentieth Century: The Case of Ishaq Bar-Moshe (1927–2003)

REUVEN SNIR

Apart from Jewish symbiosis with Greek civilization in ancient times, and with the Romanic and Germanic peoples of Western and Central Europe in the modern period, Jewish symbiosis with Arab Muslim civilization is considered to be one of the most important contacts of Jewish people with other civilizations. Unlike contacts with the other two civilizations, which were essentially at variance with Jewish religious culture, because Islam is from the very flesh and bone of Judaism, as S. D. Goitein indicates, ‘never has Judaism encountered such a close and fructitious symbiosis as that with the medieval civilization of Arab Islam’.¹ Only under Arab Muslim influence did science, in the Greek sense of the word, for the first time become known and practised among the great majority of Jews. Medieval Jewish piety also leaned heavily on Sufism, i.e. Islamic mysticism. However, the basic aspect of Arab–Jewish symbiosis is that most of the Jews under the rule of Islam adopted Arabic as their mother tongue, as well as Arab ways of thinking, forms of literature, and Muslim religious notions.

Modern Arab–Jewish culture should be viewed against the background of the above symbiosis, the relationship between Judaism and Islam, the status of the Jews in the Arab Muslim world from the seventh century AD, as well as in the wake of the escalation of the religious, national and political conflict in the Middle East in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, from the late 1940s Arab–Jewish culture has been going through a process of marginalization, neglect, and gradual falling into complete oblivion by both Muslim Arab and Jewish Hebrew canonical cultural systems. Rejecting the hybrid Arab–Jewish or Jewish–Arab culture, both sides, each out of its own narrowed reasons and considerations, have generally refused to accept the legitimacy of such a cultural option, rather even doubting its historical existence in the past. This is in evident contrast to the solid sources, according to which Arabness referred to a common shared culture and language, with religious differences, that is until the 1940s the distinction in Arab lands had always been between Muslims, Jews, and Christians, and not at all Arab vis-à-vis Jew. Furthermore, although for half a millennium the creative centres of Jewish life were to be found under Islam and not under Christianity,² western intellectual discourse has highlighted the Judeo–Christian cultural tradition and rarely acknowledged the Judeo–Muslim cultural tradition. Also, Jewish experience in the Muslim world has often been portrayed as an unending nightmare of oppression and humiliation. For

example, writing under the pen name Bat Ye'or ('Daughter of the Nile'), the Egyptian-born scholar Giselle Littman argues that the myth of 'peaceful coexistence' between Muslims, Christians and Jews, such as the Andalusian 'Golden Age', propagated the Islamic version of the perfection of the *shari'a* – the law of Islam – in order to justify the elimination of Israel and its replacement by a 'secular and democratic Arab Palestine, the multicultural Arab Palestinian State'.³

The present article deals with the final phase of Arabic literature by Iraqi Jews in the twentieth century, through the life and works of one of its last writers, Ishaq (Isaac) Bar-Moshe (formerly Khedhour).

Modern Arabic–Jewish literature was rooted in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the barriers between the Jews and the society around them began to fall. In the wake of the processes of westernization and secularization of the Middle East and North Africa, Jews, particularly in Egypt and Iraq, became involved in the political, social and economic life of their countries, as well as in the intellectual life, culture, literature and the arts. In Iraq, out of desire to integrate into the surrounding society as Arabs of Jewish origin, there was motivation to demonstrate excellence and show extensive activity in local culture and literature; Jewish educational institutions also emphasized instruction in the Arabic language which, according to Bar-Moshe, was a 'decisive fact of life'.⁴ Furthermore, as the writer and physician Salman Darwish (1910–1982) says, the Arabic language and its culture 'have penetrated into our blood'.⁵ It is no wonder, then, that more than once the fluent Arabic style of Jews was deemed superior to the average among their non-Jewish counterparts.⁶ From the Syrian writer and educator 'Ali al-Tantawi (1909–99), who taught in schools in Baghdad in the 1930s,⁷ we learn that the excellence of Jewish students in Arabic provoked one school administration to 'guarantee the good of the homeland, and behave towards the Jews as they deserve'. Thus, it was decided to integrate instruction in literature with instruction in Muslim religion, but even this did not prevent the Jews from excelling in the new curriculum.⁸

It was not at all a desire of the Iraqi Jews to abandon their religion, but a consequence of the deep belief that there was no contradiction between the Jews' adherence to their religion and being citizens, of equal rights and responsibilities, in the Iraqi homeland. Their cultural vision was inspired by the eloquent dictum 'Religion is for God, the Fatherland is for everyone';⁹ the reality in which they lived and worked was one of close symbiotic contact with the wider Arab Muslim culture. For most of them their Arab identity was uppermost – they were 'Arab Jews' or 'Arabs of the Jewish faith'.¹⁰ On 18 July 1921, one month before his coronation as King of Iraq, the Amir Faysal (1883–1933) declared before the Jewish community leaders that 'in the terminology of patriotism, there is nothing called Jews, Muslims, and Christians. There is simply one thing called Iraq [...] I am asking all the Iraqi children of my homeland to be nothing other than Iraqis, because we all belong to one origin and one tree, the tree of our ancestor Shem, and all of us are related to the Semitic root, and in that there is no distinction between Muslim, Christian, and Jew'.¹¹

Jewish writing in literary Arabic (*fusha*) in Iraq in modern times began in the first decade of the twentieth century, predominantly in journalism which developed as a

result of liberalization in the Ottoman Empire after the revolution of July 1908, and as a result of secularization and modern education in the local community.¹² Modern Arabic belles-lettres among the Jews of Iraq flourished from the beginning of the 1920s.¹³ Their literary works quickly became part of the mainstream of modern Arabic literature and gained the recognition of Arab writers and scholars. 'The Jewish writers and artists of Iraq', according to Abbas Shiblak, 'were in fact part of the general cultural life of the Arab East, maintaining connections and sometimes working relationships with writers and artists in other Arab countries [...] The works of the Iraqi Jewish intelligentsia were Arabic in essence and expression.'¹⁴

Participating in the making of Iraqi local culture, Iraqi Jews revived a very old tradition whose roots were in the sixth century AD. When Arabic reached its full development with the appearance of poetry of high standing, Jews were an integral part of pre-Islamic Arab society and Arab Jewish tribes had distinguished poets. One such poet, al-Samaw'al ibn 'Adiya' even became proverbial for personal integrity and was since commemorated by the saying *awfa min al-Samaw'al* (more loyal than al-Samaw'al).¹⁵ Later, under the rule of Islam Jews (together with Christians) became protégés of the new community as *Ahl al-Dhimma* (People of the Pact). Well acquainted with the emerging Islamic literature and thoroughly Arabicized; they were by no means passive agents in the new Muslim society. From the ninth century Judeo-Arabic literature flourished, that is, texts in Jewish dialects of vernacular Arabic that combined Hebrew and Aramaic lexical items with Arabic and which was generally written in Hebrew script. Large portions of this literature were scientific, philosophical and theological in nature. The works, for example, of Sa'id ibn Yusuf al-Fayyumi, known as Sa'adia Gaon (882–942), were almost all written in Judeo-Arabic. He also translated the Hebrew Bible into Arabic and in that language he composed his commentary, the *Sharh*. Born in Egypt, after a stay in Palestine he left for Mesopotamia where in 928 AD, he was appointed Head of the Babylonian Academy at Sura, a position he held, with a six-year intermission, until his death. Being well acquainted with Arabic poetry and poetics, which he in fact applied in order to halt a decline in Hebrew writings, Sa'adia Gaon used Arabic literary criticism in order to increase the value of Hebrew poetry in the eyes of his generation.¹⁶ Also, one of the greatest scholars in Jewish history, the physician and philosopher Maimonides (Musa ibn Maymun) (1135–1204), when in Cairo wrote several of his major works in Judeo-Arabic; the most influential of these was *Dalalat al-Ha'irin* (The Guide of the Perplexed).¹⁷ The Jewish Iraqi scholar Sa'd ibn Mansur ibn Kammuna (1215–85) was well versed in science, philosophy, belles-lettres, and especially in mathematics and logic; in 1280 he published *Tanqih al-Abhath li-l-Milal al-Thalath* (Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths),¹⁸ which focused on Islam but dealt also with Christianity and Judaism, the faith in which the author grew up. His critical remarks on Islam led zealous Muslims to make an issue of the fact that a Jew dared to write about their faith and several years later he had to escape a mob riot.¹⁹ Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, Jews in al-Andalus became so integrated into Arab culture that many of them were able to achieve widespread recognition for their Arabic poetry; some of them actually converted to Islam. The outstanding most representative of this elite class was Ibrahim ibn Sahl al-Ishbili al-Isra'ili (1208–59) who wrote only in Arabic and became famous for his panegyrics and love poems.²⁰

To illustrate the involvement of the Iraqi Jews in Arabic literature in the twentieth century and the inspiration they drew from the above medieval Jewish writers, one can follow the activities of Anwar Sha'ul (1904–84).²¹ From the 1920s he was very active in Iraqi literary life and edited two literary journals, *al-Misbah* (The Candelabrum) (1924–29)²² and *al-Hasid* (The Reaper) (1929–38).²³ *Al-Misbah* was founded by Salman Shina (1898–1978), a lawyer who later became a member of the Iraqi parliament.²⁴ As the editor of *al-Misbah* in its first year of publication, Sha'ul wrote under the pseudonym Ibn al-Samaw'al, an allusion to the above pre-Islamic poet. Like other Iraqi Jewish intellectuals in the 1920s, he considered al-Samaw'al his cherished model, especially relying on his famous verse, which was at the time full of hope for Iraqi Jewish secular intellectuals: 'When a man's honor is not defiled by baseness, / Then every cloak he cloaks himself in is comely.'²⁵ Sha'ul's poem 'The Spring', published in the first issue of *al-Misbah*,²⁶ illustrated his hope for a new era of national unity far removed from any opportunistic considerations or religious fanaticism. The second journal, *al-Hasid*, was the most influential Iraqi literary journal during the 1930s. This time not only as editor but also as owner, Sha'ul did his best to be a faithful son of Arab nation, Iraqi society and Arab culture, paying attention to social problems and attempting to modernize local journalism and literature. Being confident that his religion would not pose an obstacle to integration into Iraqi society, in December 1929 he read in al-Gaylani mosque in Baghdad an elegy for the deceased Iraqi leader 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Sa'dun (1879–1929).²⁷ Among the other Jewish writers who contributed to the development of Iraqi literature in the first half of the twentieth century were Murad Michael (Mikha'il) (1906–86),²⁸ Mir Basri (b.1911),²⁹ Shalom Darwish (1913–97),³⁰ Ya'qub Balbul (1920–2003),³¹ and Ibrahim Obadya (born 1924).³²

As an organic and vital part of Iraqi society, the Jews were numbered among the front ranks of the intelligentsia. As pioneers of modernization and westernization, they even participated in the national Arab movement,³³ all in the belief that the Jewish community in Iraq would endure, as the above Shalom Darwish said, 'to the days of the Messiah'.³⁴ Little did they foresee at the time that political developments in Palestine would abruptly foreshorten Messianic hopes for that community. After King Faysal's death in 1933 and following the escalation of the national conflict in Palestine, the Jewish community had to walk a fine line. The distinctions made by early Arab nationalists between the Jewish religion and political Zionism began to blur, especially after 1936, with the infiltration of Nazi propaganda and when Iraqi support for the Palestinians coalesced with pan-Arab foreign policy. As Iraqi foreign policy publicly adopted the Palestinian Arabs, the definition of Arabism became ever more narrow and excluded Jews. Because of Palestine, religious and political identification blurred and no matter how vociferous their loyalty as Iraqi Arabs and denials of Zionist partisanship were, Jews became targets of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. In June 1941, following the attempted *coup d'état* by the pro-Nazi Rashid 'Ali al-Gaylani (1892–1965), they were victims of the *Farhud*, when more than 150 Jews in Baghdad were killed and Jewish property was looted.³⁵

Following the obfuscation of their role in Iraqi society by implying doubts about their loyalty, and as their life became increasingly intolerable, Jews, especially young men, were forced to choose new directions for their future. Whether as a committed way of struggle or as a kind of escapism, the shift in their thinking pushed them into

joining the Zionist movement or the Communist underground. While the former struggled for the establishment of an independent state for the Jews, the latter fought against the corrupt, dictatorial regime and for equal rights for all minorities in Iraq. The Communist underground strengthened especially following the outbreak of the Second World War and Jews joined it 'out of feelings of Iraqi patriotism'³⁶ and the belief that Communism was the only force capable of withstanding Nazism. According to details based on Iraqi criminal files,³⁷ the number of Jews who formally joined the Communist party in the 1940s was 245; with some few exceptions they were from Baghdad and the great majority joined the party in 1946. Not a few among them were at the time still students and among them there were also females. 'From a small, childish, one dimensional framework', this underground grew in strength to 'a tidal wave'.³⁸ The Communist underground also struggled against Zionism; several of its Jewish members in 1946 founded the magazine *al-'Usba* (The League), which was an organ of '*Usbat Mukafahat al-Sahyuniyya* (The League for the Struggle against Zionism); it had a 4000–6000 copy daily circulation. The editors were Yusuf Harun Zilkha (b.1921), the head of the League, and Masrur Salih Qattan (b.1913), and among the writers were also non-Jews. Six months later the newspaper was banned and the editors were imprisoned.³⁹

In the wake of the war in Palestine and later the establishment of the State of Israel, many Jewish Iraqi poets, writers, journalists and intellectuals emigrated to the new Jewish state,⁴⁰ while a much smaller number decided to seek their future in the west, such as Elie Kedourie (1926–1992) and Naim Kattan (Na'im Qatan) (b.1928). Kedourie who in the summer of 1947 left for London to study, later became a renowned professor of political science at the London School of Economics;⁴¹ Kattan, left Baghdad for Paris and then went to Canada to start a career as a writer and critic in French.⁴² Only a few chose to stay in Iraq, most of them were angry with the Zionists for their contribution to the expulsion of the Jews from Iraq.⁴³ Among these was the above Anwar Sha'ul who together with other Jewish writers, such as the above Mir Basri, even in the 1950s and 1960s went on with his literary activities.⁴⁴ In 1959 Sha'ul published a poem in praise of the Iraqi Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim Qasim (1914–23) in which he referred to him as *al-Awhad* (The Unique), an epitaph generally reserved only for God.⁴⁵ In April 1969, less than two years after the war of June 1967, Sha'ul participated with Mir Basri in the Iraqi delegation to the Conference of Arab Writers in Baghdad.⁴⁶ Standing before the assembly of the conference, he recited a long and sad poem:

My heart beats with love of the Arabs, my mouth proudly speaks their language,

Do not they and I share a common source? The distant past drew us together,
The day al-Samaw'al set in the book of faithfulness an emblem to the Arabs in al-Ablaq.⁴⁷

Today we march towards glory, we together long for a happy tomorrow,
My childhood blossomed on the waters of the Tigris, and the days of my youth drank of the Euphrates,

O Homeland of Arabism, blessed be you as a shelter whose generosity shines in its streets [..]

I love my precious homeland, and those who ennobled me with their love [..]

Our fates have been bound together in a radiant homeland which is like water and air to us.⁴⁸

At the beginning of January 1969 Mir Basri was detained for almost two months for giving an interview to an American 'spy', in fact a young scholar who had written a Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard University,⁴⁹ and then came to Baghdad to undertake research for a book she subsequently published.⁵⁰ The imprisonment of Basri, at the time Chairman of the Jewish Council, together with Sha'ul Naji, son of the Community President, Chief Rabbi Sasson Khedhour, was intended to silence the leaders of the Jewish community and stifle their protests before the hanging of the 'spies' in late January 1969. Commenting on the hardships he had to endure at the hands of his Iraqi compatriots, Basri wrote a poem titled 'The Imprisonment of the Body and the Soul' which includes the following verses:

What sin have I sinned in my life, for which I am so cruelly and harshly punished?
Is it my struggle and my stand on the side of my Iraq and of the Tigris and the Euphrates⁵¹

In the 1970s Sha'ul and Basri finally decided that their situation had become untenable and left Iraq, the former for Israel, the latter for Amsterdam and then London where he still lives.

As for the Jewish poets, writers and intellectuals who in the 1950s had already ended up in Israel, they faced harsh material conditions and difficulties in adapting to the new and fundamentally different society. They underwent, as Sasson Somekh (born 1933) testified in respect of his own trials and tribulations, an 'experience of shock and uprooting', and in these conditions 'it became difficult to think about literature'.⁵² However, among the emigrants who continued writing in Arabic it was soon possible to discern two groups generally parallel to the dominant trends among the Palestinian local minority: those who preferred to be active under the establishment⁵³ aegis and those who joined the Communist party.⁵⁴ From the 1960s, most Iraqi Jewish writers and poets who emigrated to Israel as the years went by completely severed themselves from any creative activities. Those who still insisted on writing faced the question of language: their mother tongue was Arabic and on arriving in Israel most of them did not know Hebrew. On the other hand, the language of the new state was Hebrew, the language of Zionism, while Arabic was the language of the enemy. The gradual demise of Arabic literature written by Jews opened up a new controversy regarding the cultural preferences of Israeli society; a dilemma as to whether or not Arab culture could be regarded as a 'correct' source of inspiration for the new Israeli Hebrew culture. Following the consolidation of the Zionist master narrative, no wonder that we find some of the Communist Jewish writers moving into the Zionist camp. The most prominent of these was Sami Michael (Sami Mikha'il) (b.1926),⁵⁵ whose transition to writing in Hebrew illustrated his 'crossing of lines', leaving behind the Communist ideology, even as he refused to see himself as Zionist.⁵⁶

Only few insisted on remaining true to their cultural origins and continued to write in Arabic. Among these we might mention two writers who began publishing only in

the 1970s, though their books hardly found any readership inside or outside Israel: Ishaq Bar-Moshe (1927–2003) and Samir Naqqash (1938–2004).⁵⁷ Although each represented a different concept of Arab–Jewish symbiosis, both soon realized that they were working in a void and that the Jewish voice in Arab literature was lost, a fact regretted today even by Muslim and Christian authors.⁵⁸ Samir Naqqash's following words epitomize that loss:

I don't exist in this country [Israel], not as a writer, a citizen nor human being. I don't feel that I belong anywhere, not since my roots were torn from the ground [in Iraq].⁵⁹

The fact that Bar-Moshe and Naqqash died recently illustrates that Arabic writing by Jews has become in fact a phenomenon of the past.

In the rest of this article I will deal with the unique case of Ishaq Bar-Moshe, whose life and literary work illustrate the complexities for those Arab–Iraqi Jews who, though succeeding in integrating into Israeli society, still feel that their cultural roots are rather Arab.

Born in 1927 to a religious middle-class family in the overwhelmingly Muslim Qambar 'Ali quarter in Baghdad, Ishaq (Isaac) Bar-Moshe was educated at the Rahel Shahmun School, then at al-Rusafa School and al-I'dadiyya al-Ahliyya. From the age of five he read translations of world literature as well as Arabic literature, his favourite reading being the Iraqi Dhu al-Nun Ayyub (1908–98) and the Egyptians Ibrahim 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini (1890–1949) and Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898–1987).⁶⁰ In 1949, he attended the Baghdad Law College. However, while still a student in September 1950 he emigrated to Israel. He worked for a time as a clerk at the oil refineries in Haifa, until in 1958 he joined Dar al-Idha'a al-Isra'iliyya (Israeli Broadcasting House), the Israeli Arabic broadcasting station, where he served as a commentator on Arab issues and held several positions, among them Head of the Political Department. In October 1968 he founded the governmental Arabic language daily *al-Anba'* and edited it until April 1970. Following the signing of the peace treaty with Egypt he served two terms as attaché for journalistic and cultural affairs in the Israeli embassy in Cairo (1983–86 and 1988–91). Then he edited the monthly Arabic cultural magazine *Qaws Quzah* (Rainbow) published by the Israeli Foreign Ministry; he also edited the Arabic version of the Journal *Ariel* published by the ministry in several foreign languages. Bar-Moshe was an active member of the Jerusalem branch of the Freemason order,⁶¹ which has among its objectives religious tolerance, assistance to others, brotherly love, and political compromise. Influence from Freemason preaching is found in his literary writings which are far removed from any kind of extremism or radicalism.

While in Baghdad Bar-Moshe anonymously published short stories,⁶² but in Israel it was only in 1972 that he published his first collection, *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra* (Behind the Fence and Other Stories).⁶³ Apart from his own literary writing he started to publish Arabic translations of literary works by Israeli writers,⁶⁴ which undoubtedly contributed to his mastering of some modernist techniques of the genre. Inspired by stream of consciousness literature, especially that of Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) who since the 1940s has had a great influence on Arab writers,⁶⁵ most of his stories probe the complexity of the human soul in an attempt to understand the

psychological motives behind people's actions. Detailed interior monologues appear frequently in his writings which also reveal a spiritual drive in a way reminiscent of that of the Muslim mystics. Stripped of any signifier of space or ethnicity, the literary characters in his stories are generally introvert personalities marked by alienation and strangeness with hardly any interest in matters outside their own feelings and thoughts. In fact, Bar-Moshe's stories were part of the general trend in Arabic literature of the 1960s and 1970s which expressed the tragic absurdity of human existence in modern civilization – the main theme being that this materialistic civilization obliterates human spiritual values and leaves human beings in an existential limbo.⁶⁶

Many stories seem to have been inspired by the work of the Austrian novelist Franz Kafka (1883–1924), especially by his existentialist sensibility which reflects the religious confusion of the human being in the twentieth century, the strangeness and alienation he feels in this world, and his wafting between the nihilism of existence and divine salvation.⁶⁷ Most of the conflicts in Bar-Moshe's stories are not because of political or social differences but rather due to inner emotional disharmony, intellectual discord and a struggle against the darkest sides of the human soul. Sometimes, the battle is against fate or against those forces in society which consider the progress of human civilization as engendering the sacred tradition. Experiencing alienation and estrangement, most of his protagonists, or rather anti-heroes, are outsiders living in their own world of misery or on the margins of society, not willing to compromise their principles. Some of them suffer from schizophrenia which leads them to seek refuge in a world of imagination and dreams, a world sometimes nothing other than another nightmare.⁶⁸ In addition to his interest in the world of imagination and dreams, other characteristics of his stories include his focus on ghosts and the irrational, the life hereafter, and death.⁶⁹ Some scholars refer to Bar-Moshe's interest in the world of dreams and imagination as a kind of escapism following the suffering of Iraqi Jews in transit camps: 'Everything was new to them – the language, the customs and social atmosphere [...] the camp was a new world completely different from the world the emigrants had known in Iraq.'⁷⁰ It should be noted however that when Bar-Moshe published his first stories, the transit camps were a phenomenon of the past.

Bar-Moshe's first collection mentioned above consists of 12 stories one of which may be referred to as meta-fictional and which deals with the author's own literary experience, namely *Mu'anat Qissa* (The Experience of a [Birth] of a Story).⁷¹ This story is about a man's attempt to express his own experiences in literary writing. Unlike the original pragmatic meaning of the Aristotelian 'catharsis' (purging), it seems that at the time of writing, the story served as an act with a cathartic purpose for the author himself.⁷² Bar-Moshe, like the Egyptian poet Salah 'Abd al-Sabur (1931–81) in his theory of the creative process,⁷³ indirectly argues that the 'catharsis' takes place within the soul of the artist himself.⁷⁴ After many frustrating attempts the writer succeeded and the story ends with the hero starting to write *his* own story: 'His eyes were shining with hope while the first beautiful fascinating sentences accumulated to write for him in the world of fantasies the first desired words which struck his mind as if they were like an axe digging the earth so that the water would burst forth and become a noisy river, the source hidden in the unknown but that

flowed vigorously and abundantly, noisy and free, in order to flood the world' (p.50).⁷⁵

One can hardly ignore the autobiographical elements in this story; Bar-Moshe himself had waited until he was 45 years old before publishing his first collection, which included the above story. The highly optimistic closure of the story may be a hint of the hopes which the author had set on his literary writing: it is like digging the hard earth in search of the hidden source which inevitably will burst forth and flood the world.

Another story in the collection, *al-Rabiya al-Thalitha* (The Third Hill),⁷⁶ may be considered a sequel to the above story that adds to the optimistic feeling of the implied author (that is 'the implicit image of an author in the text')⁷⁷ the aspect of the limitation on a human being's activity in this world. The hills the hero passes through may be deemed stages in the creative experience. However, when reaching the third hill he realizes he is a prisoner: 'the most important thing that you should have is the desire to obey. We want from you complete surrender without any reservations.'⁷⁸ The hero discovers that human freedom is only relative; real freedom without any restriction is impossible. The 'axe digging the earth' which appears at the end of 'The Experience of a [Birth] of a Story' seems also to be a prisoner of restrictions on human freedom. The issue of relative individual freedom is also the subject of another story, 'Suha',⁷⁹ the title being the name of Ibrahim's girlfriend whose father refuses to allow her to marry him.

Some of the stories in the first collection deal with the mystical and metaphysical drive in human life. In *al-Dar al-Mayyita* (The Dead House),⁸⁰ the narrator at exactly 9 a.m. receives a telephone call from a childhood friend who many years before had joined him in entering a risky deserted house next to their school. In its dark basement they had met a female demon which event had given them a sense of knowing the unknown. When they returned they realized that their journey had not taken any time at all; it was as if time itself had stopped. Moreover, at the level of the narration when the conversation with his friend ends the narrator realizes that the time is still 9 a.m.! The story brings to mind the oxymoronic mystical nature of the *hal*, that is the mystical state, according to medieval Sufi sources: it is an enduring phenomenon, one that occurs, however, outside of human serial time. Accordingly, the term *waqt* (literally, 'time') designates the 'present moment', that is the moment the gift of *hal* is granted to the Sufi mystic. *Waqt* then is like a sword, cutting off whatever was beforehand and whatever will be afterwards, leaving man in absolute nakedness in the presence of God.⁸¹ The Sufi mystic has been called *ibn al-waqt*, i.e. he who gives himself completely over to the present moment and receives what God sends down to him without a single thought about present, past, and future.⁸² For the Sufis the Prophet's expression *li ma'a Allah waqtun* ('I have a time with God') pointed to their own mystical experience when, as Annemarie Schimmel puts it, 'they break through created time and reach the Eternal Now in God', when everything created is annihilated. Similarly, for the Indian poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (1873–1938) this Prophetic tradition signifies the moment at which 'the infidel's griddle', namely, 'serial', time, is torn and 'the mystic establishes direct contact with God in a person-to-person encounter'.⁸³

In another story which bears the collection's title, *Wara' al-Sur* (Behind the Fence),⁸⁴ the narrator is a small stone that a worker kicks inside the courtyard of a

house. Through the stone's voice, the reader is invited to witness an investigation into the human characteristics and the relationships between characters from different classes in society, such as the owner of the house, the old gardener, the servant, a young man and his girlfriend hiding inside the garden kissing each other, the postman, and the servant girl and her boyfriend. The stone also listens to a conversation between two men on whether God exists in stones. The story ends with a kind of pantheistic conception that everything in the world, even inanimate objects, share in the Divine essence.

Bar-Moshe's second collection, *al-Dubb al-Qutbi wa-Qisas Ukhra* (The Polar Bear and Other Stories) (1973), includes 14 stories dealing with the same topics as in the first collection. For example, his tendency towards the mystical and metaphysical aspects of life is revealed in *Qaryat al-Ahrar* (The Village of Free Men),⁸⁵ where the main idea is the desire to be free from the imprisonment of the body. The writer's interest in meta-fiction is expressed in the story *Riwayat al-Hayat* (The Novel of Life),⁸⁶ which deals with the gap between the behaviour of the characters in a novel written by a friend of the narrator and their principles. However, unlike his previous collection, here he touches on his experiences in Iraq such as in the story *Abu Na'ima*,⁸⁷ which tells the story of a poor man whose love for a woman called Na'ima is so desperate that he refuses to be named except after her.

The third collection, *Raqsat al-Matar wa-Qisas Ukhra* (The Dance of the Rain and Other Stories) (1974), includes 12 stories most of which deal with the sense of alienation of the individual from the surrounding society, with the mystical drive intruding. For example in *al-Isha'a* (The Rumor),⁸⁸ a young woman has been disappointed by her lover and shuts herself in her house and although no one speaks to her various rumours spread about her fate.

The above three collections give the impression that Bar-Moshe wishes to present his literary work within the tradition of universal literature written in Arabic with only minor connections with his Arab-Jewish past in Iraq or with the Middle East conflict. The timespan between his emigration from Baghdad and the publication of these collections strengthens that conviction and has enabled critics to present theses about his literary preferences.⁸⁹ In the following years, Bar-Moshe published three more collections of short stories some of which dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; he also rather surprised his readers with the publication of a semi-autobiographical trilogy covering his own life in Iraq and corresponding to the most critical stage of the Jewish-Iraqi community in modern times.

Bar-Moshe dedicated his fourth collection, *Aswar al-Quds wa-Qisas Ukhra* (The Walls of Jerusalem and Other Stories) (1976), which includes 11 stories, to 'My brothers and friends on both sides of the line'. The stories deal with various aspects of Jewish-Arab encounters following the 1967 War; most of them express an attempt to understand the feeling and desires of people on both sides of the conflict. For example, the first story *al-La'na al-Ula* (The First Curse),⁹⁰ deals with the psychological motives behind the acts of the Palestinian *fedayeen* who risk their lives in the struggle with Israel. In the second story, *al-Risala* (The Letter),⁹¹ an Israeli soldier whose brother was killed in the war reveals a humanistic sense by helping a Palestinian to send a letter to worried relatives abroad. In both stories the writer tries to understand the feelings and miseries of Palestinian individuals. Other stories, such as *Ahmad wa-l-Tabib* (Ahmad and the Physician)⁹² and *Maktab al-*

Ustadh Anwar (The Office of Mr Anwar),⁹³ try to penetrate into the souls of Palestinian individuals in East Jerusalem, who suffer and feel distress as a result of the 1967 encounter with their Jewish neighbours. One sentence from an interior monologue in a story titled *al-Musaddas* (the Revolver),⁹⁴ will illustrate the stance of the implied author of the entire collection: 'The only important point is to observe human relationships and respect the humanity of human beings, in every situation, in every circumstance, by any and all means' (p.147).⁹⁵ In his next two collections, *Allah wa-l-Zahra wa-Qisas Ukhra* (God and the Flower and Other Stories) (1982) and *Ma Wara' al-Hayat wa-Qisas Ukhra* (Beyond Life and Other Stories) (1985) the writer continues his preaching of this objective with new attempts to understand the psychological structure of ordinary men and women. However, everything he published after 1975 was overshadowed by his semi-autobiographical trilogy in which through a personal account he gave expression to the collective experiences of the Iraqi Jews in the twentieth century. The three parts of the trilogy remain indispensable historical documents for the history of Iraqi Jews in modern times.

The historical and political events, which influenced the life of the Iraqi Jews in modern times until the mass emigration, were for Bar-Moshe a background for a vivid and colorful panoramic description of Jewish life in Baghdad. In rich language he touches on almost every corner of the cultural Arab–Jewish life in the colourful exotic streets and alleys of Baghdad, its characters, traditions, costumes, daily life and the complicated relationship of the Jews with their Muslim neighbours. Reading the trilogy one can hardly ignore the great inspiration Egyptian literature had on Bar-Moshe,⁹⁶ particularly Taha Husayn (1889–1973) and Najib Mahfuz (b.1911). In writing each of the three novels the author was inspired by Husayn's autobiographical novel *al-Ayyam* (1926–7, *The Days*), however unlike *al-Ayyam*, he employs the first person, colouring his narrative with a very intimate and subjective tone. The intimate tone is strengthened by the frequent use of dialogues or interior monologues. Influenced by Mahfuz's Cairene trilogy,⁹⁷ Bar-Moshe employed a fictional strategy in which the general political events are a necessary framework for the depiction of the characters and their lives. So much so that in the case of the trilogy of Mahfuz, one may read it as a kind of alternative history of Egyptian society in the first half of the twentieth century and in the case of Bar-Moshe's trilogy one may read it as a kind of history of the Iraqi Jews in the twentieth century. The dialogues in both trilogies are reconstructions in literary standard Arabic (*fusha*) of what would have been spoken in the dialect (*ammiyya*).

The first book in Bar-Moshe's trilogy is the memoir *al-Khuruġ min al-'Iraq: Dhikrayat 1945–1950* (Exodus from Iraq: Memories 1945–1950) (1975). With this, Bar-Moshe was the first author to publish a personal account of the events leading up to the tragic end of the Iraqi Jewish community, which was descended from the ancient Jewish Babylonian community as described in the Old Testament. The book, Bar-Moshe says, is 'a novel if you like, or a collection of short stories, or a personal history, but in the final [analysis] it is perhaps a mixture of all of these things together'.⁹⁸ Consisting of 123 chapters, each self-contained and recounting some event, the book records true episodes, either experienced by the author himself or by his friends. Some episodes may seem trivial and minor; others provide the reader with glimpses that contribute to the study of the short stories the author had previously published. For example, in one episode, which calls to mind the story *al-*

Sirdab (The Cellar) from the first collection, he describes how children were afraid to go down into the cellar of the family's house for fear of meeting the genie which dwelt there.⁹⁹ It is the accumulation of all these types of episode which gives the book its full impact, especially seen from the viewpoint of the events that preceded the mass emigration of the Iraqi Jews to Israel in the early 1950s, following a wave of harassment and systematic persecution. In all their long history, Iraqi Jews had never experienced such overt discrimination by their Muslim compatriots. Moreover, the reader is led to the conclusion that Jewish emigration was not at all a result of an inner Zionist drive on the part of the Iraqi Jews, but rather the result of sheer stupidity and blindness on the part of the Iraqi authorities at the time (in particular that of the successive governments of Nuri al-Sa'id [1888–1958]) and their short-sighted policies and cynical opportunism. It seems they used the Jews as a scapegoat for their own problems and failures, in order to protect themselves from the anger of their own people. In a chapter titled 'When the Time Stopped',¹⁰⁰ Bar-Moshe refers to the trial and execution of Shafiq 'Adas (1900–48) as a turning point in the modern history of Iraqi Jews. 'Adas, a wealthy businessman from Basra, is arrested on charges of siding with the clandestine Zionist movement. For their refusal to interfere, the author considers the British as another villain in this injustice which the Jews understood as a clear sign that Iraq was no longer their homeland.

Eight years later Bar-Moshe published the semi-autobiographical novel, *Baytun fi Baghdad* (A House in Baghdad) (1983),¹⁰¹ which tells the story of three generations of his family and of his own childhood and boyhood. The novel opens in the mid 1920s, when the narrator was two years old and ends with the events of 1936, when the *coup d'état* of Bakr Sidqi took place. Referring to the strong impression the novel leaves on readers regarding the deep bonds of friendship and goodwill between Jews and Muslims in Iraq, Nissim Rejwan (Nissim Rijwan) (b.1924),¹⁰² himself an Iraqi Jew, wrote that many readers of the book today, including Muslim and Christian Arabs 'will probably find it difficult to believe how closely-knit the lives of the Jews and non-Jews were in Iraq, in the years described here'.¹⁰³ The period the author deals with, which is prior to the penetration of Nazi propaganda into Iraq, was coloured with a vision of Muslim–Christian–Jewish cooperation. However, throughout the novel which shows how the lives of the Jews were intertwined with those of their non-Jewish neighbours, the 'author' is aware of the inevitable failure in the future of the Iraqi Arab Muslim–Christian–Jewish vision. Although the novel concentrates on the life of the Jews in Iraq, some writers in Egypt paid specific attention to the phenomenon of a Jewish author writing about the symbiotic contact of the Jews with Muslims and Christians. In his column in *al-Jumhuriyya*, Ibrahim al-Wirdani (born 1919), for example, expressed his astonishment at the similarities in the life and mores of the Jewish community, as described in the novel, and those of the average Arab household. Bar-Moshe, according to al-Wirdani, 'frankly, let me enter the Jewish Arab household in all its detail and made me feel as if I had actually lived there'.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, the hybrid Arab–Jewish cultural aspects of the novel, which were praised by al-Wirdani, were the very reason the Hebrew version has been totally ignored by the Israeli canonical cultural system which still does not recognize the hybrid Arab–Jewish culture as a legitimate option in Israeli society.¹⁰⁵

In 1988 Bar-Moshe completed his trilogy with the book *Ayyam al-'Iraq* (Iraq's Days) which covers the period between the mid 1930s and the mid 1940s. One of the

anecdotes in this novel provides another proof of the above mentioned motivation of Jewish students to demonstrate excellence in Arabic and the tension it caused between them and the Muslims: the narrator recalls how one of his teachers praised his style, even holding up his writing as a model, but anonymously.¹⁰⁶

A short while before he died in December 2003, Bar-Moshe had completed the manuscript of his last book which was on events of the *Farhud*. This book, *Yawman fi Huzairan* (Two Days in June), was published posthumously by Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq (The Association of Jewish Academics Immigrants from Iraq) (2004). In a 'clarification' appended to the book, Bar-Moshe explains that this book is part of the historical context of his already published trilogy and that the four books together form *al-Ruba'iyyat al-'Iraqiyya* (The Iraqi Quartet). One could, however, view 'Two Days in June' as an addendum to 'Iraq's Days' in the last scene of which the narrator walks down al-Rashid Street in Baghdad, in an atmosphere of increasing tension following the start of the German offensive against Poland. When he notices headlines in the *Iraq Times* newspaper on Britain's declaration of war against Germany, he walks faster to try to avoid bursting into tears; when he gets home, he breaks down and weeps, weeping crying until 'I started to paint in my imagination a dreadful picture of what would happen, the horror of which put an end to tears, and made the heart as strong as granite' (pp.388–9).

From the fictional point of view the last scene of 'Iraq's Days' is a kind of foreshadowing or an advance mention, that is, a narrative 'seed' the importance of which would not usually be recognized on first appearance. However, in 'Iraq's Days' it is clear to the reader that this foreshadowing is a prelude to the *Farhud*'s events which are described in 'Two Days in June'. The book's 154 pages are divided into 38 chapters which are full of expanded and detailed dialogues complementary to 'Iraq's Days'. The latter is the shortest part of the trilogy; it has 389 pages; 'A House in Baghdad' has 420 pages; and 'Exodus from Iraq' has 597 pages. It seems that when Bar-Moshe wrote 'Iraq's Days' confronting memories of the *Farhud* was very disconcerting. Even in his last book, 'Two Days in June', he was very cautious in dealing with the horrors of the events and generally preferred to concentrate on general background and related events.

Bar-Moshe wrote his last book from a Zionist perspective. For example, one of the main figures is the narrator's friend Elie Kedourie who, as a 14 or 15-year-old at the time, appears to be, despite his youth, an authority on political science and Middle Eastern affairs (undoubtedly his figure is built up in view of his future achievements). In a dialogue with the narrator, Kedourie whose relationship with the narrator is presented as that of a mentor and an admirer (although he was older than the author-narrator by only one year) anticipates even before the *Farhud* that as an outcome of the war in Europe and the situation in Palestine, 'the upshot of it all will probably be the declaration soon of a Jewish state' (p.66). This is presumably a view that the 'real' Kedourie would never have expressed in early 1941. More than once Kedourie argued that even in the 1940s 'the Zionist cause did not seem to me as a matter of any political wisdom. The expectancies which Zionism was creating were too high and unrealistic' (*Davar Ha-Shavuwa*, 7 April 1988, p.9).

Events in Iraq in 2003 and hopes for the establishment of a new state of Iraq dominate the last chapter of *Yawman fi Huzairan* titled 'Retrospective Glance – in

2003'. The narrator relates how the *Farhud* was followed by a second *Farhud* – in the early 1950s when harassment and persecution organized by the Iraqi authorities caused the mass emigration to Israel. The end of the last chapter reads: 'The Iraqi people woke up in 2003 when their country had to start everything from the beginning (this time it was a popular *Farhud* against the *Ba'th* government and the tyrannical family of Saddam Husayn)' (p.154).

On the whole, from the literary point of view the author's work in journalism before and during the writing of the trilogy, had an imprint on his style: unlike the tendency of Arab writers of the second half of the twentieth century to present condensed texts, sometimes ambiguous so as to permit 'a variety of interpretations' and 'a multiplicity of meanings',¹⁰⁷ Bar-Moshe avoids any ambiguity and provides the reader with lengthy and detailed conversations without leaving anything in doubt. This certainly brings some of his descriptive writing closer to being historical or sometimes even journalistic reports and somehow far from modernist literary style.¹⁰⁸

Bar-Moshe, whose literary career began in the early 1970s, was one of the last Jewish writers in Arabic.¹⁰⁹ His literary works consist of two main branches with different generic, thematic and stylistic preferences: for the expression of his social, existential and philosophical views he employed the genre of the short story, with an obvious inclination towards detailed interior monologues and psychological insights. The stories generally reflect universal concepts and tend to reveal the inner nature of human beings; they are mostly well removed from any specific time and place and when read in translation hardly point to the ethnic, religious or national identity of the author. The novel, the semi-autobiographical novel or the memoir are used for the recollection of his life in Iraq and for expressing his views on the last stage of the Iraqi Jewish community. The fictional framework is constructed on solid historical material in a way which enables the reader to see the books as an alternative history for the events described from the point of view of an Iraqi Jew living in Israel. Between the lines one can familiarize oneself with the clash after 1948 between the Zionist and the post-Zionist narratives.

Despite the richness of his literary works Bar-Moshe has been pushed to the margins of Israeli literature and has a very limited readership. The canonical Hebrew Establishment does not express any interest in his works – none of his writings have attracted the attention of outstanding Israeli literary critics and he has generally been considered to be an ethnic voice giving expression to views and issues which at most are relevant to only a limited section of Israeli society. This is in evident contrast, at least as seen above from the point of view of his short stories, to the universal nature of his work. His marginal status in Israeli culture as well as the feeling that for non-literary considerations his work has been left without serious attention from Arab critics and scholars are presumably the reasons why his literary voice had not been heard for a number of years before his death. He tried to publish his memoir *Misr fi Qalbi* in Hebrew but no publisher expressed any interest in the experiences of an Arab Jewish writer restoring his immediate and direct connections with Arab culture after a break of more than 30 years.¹¹⁰ As the roots of Jewish nationalism lie in Eastern Europe and the overall orientation of modern Israeli canonical culture is

predominantly Ashkenazi western oriented,¹¹¹ no wonder that Arab culture has been rejected by the dominant circles. There is no better illustration of this than the structure of departments of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Israeli universities where you can hardly find in tenure academic scholars of modern Hebrew literature or comparative literature who have a knowledge of Arabic or have taken the trouble to study the Arabic language and literature. Comparative studies can legitimately be done with Russian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, and of course with English, French and German, but hardly with Arabic literary works in the original.

Bar-Moshe's life and literary work may be regarded as a microcosm for the fate of Iraqi Arabic literature. As part of a Eurocentric narrative and adopting the dichotomy between East and West as a given, objective category, the hegemonic Zionist narrative's attitude to Bar-Moshe's work and to Arab Jewish culture in general is not surprising. 'Stripped of our history', as Arab Jewish scholar Ella Habiba Shohat, a professor of cultural studies and women's studies at CUNY, says, 'we have been forced by our no-exit situation to repress our collective nostalgia'. In *Forget Baghdad: Jews and Arabs – The Iraqi Connection*,¹¹² Shohat relates how 'when I went to kindergarten in Israel, I was aware that Arabic words sometimes slipped in when I spoke. I was ashamed'. In order to be incorporated into the narrative, as G. Piterberg puts it, 'the Arab Jews were forced to negate their memory and culture, just as "the Exilic Jew" was forced to do according to the general pattern of the Negation of Exile, in order to transform themselves and become eligible to join the Zionist/Israeli imagined community'.¹¹³ Those like Bar-Moshe who insisted on retaining some connection with their Arab origins, such as writing in Arabic even if they did it from a Zionist perspective, have paid the price of marginalization and being pushed to the remote edges of Israeli society and culture. In addition, while imposing their interpretative authority over all other cultural groups, the hegemonic cultural Hebrew circles which pride themselves on being mainly leftist-liberal refrain from openly and publicly expressing negative views regarding Arab, certainly not Arab-Jewish, culture. This is presumably for fear that it would mean voicing a disparaging attitude towards the 'other' and would thus not be 'politically correct', especially after multiculturalism had become a fundamental component of the new local intellectual discourse and the consensus of opinion, at least publicly, was that the Eurocentric character of Israeli education should be multiculturalized. To resolve this 'cognitive dissonance' and preserve the cosy reassurance of its liberal and tolerant attitude towards the culture of the minority in its midst, the literary Establishment gives Arab or Arab-Jewish culture a 'seat' in the local cultural arena – whether through Palestinian writers such as the Druze Na'im 'Arayidi (b.1948) and the Christian Antun Shammas (b.1950) who are 'chosen' by the canonical centre as representatives of the minority,¹¹⁴ or through Hebrew, Arab Jewish writers such as the above Sami Michael or Eli 'Amir (born 1937).¹¹⁵

From the 1980s in the light of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the development of post-colonial theories, and the rise of multicultural studies, there developed a critical literature on the way the hegemonic Ashkenzi society of the 1950s absorbed Arab Jewish immigrants and its attitude to their Arab culture. In addition, thanks to the activities of a new generation of scholars and intellectuals of 'Arab Jewish' or 'Jewish Arab' origin, the terms 'Jewish Arabism' or 'Arab Judaism', which almost disappeared from the academic scholarship and discourse after 1948, have made

their comeback. Greatly contributing to this end is the journal *Teoria U–Bikoret* (*Theory and Criticism*); more than 20 issues already having been published from 1991 by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. From the 16th issue (2000), the editor has been Yehuda Shenhav, a Tel–Aviv University professor and an activist of *Ha-Keshet Ha-Demokratit Ha-Mizrahit* (The Oriental Democratic Spectrum). Stating that the negation of Arab culture and the crystallization of western culture within Zionism is a powerful driving force Shenhav argues that a large part of the struggle over multiculturalism in Israel is a struggle over the collective memory, since Zionist streams of memory are mobilized and used to form the insight and positions of Arab Jewish immigrants towards the Arabs and their culture. Just as the memory of the Holocaust was put aside for the sake of the State of Israel, so the *Farhud* pogrom in Baghdad, which in all seriousness has been described as part of the events of the Holocaust, as for example in some of the publications of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre in Or-Yehuda.¹¹⁶ The same centre, which was founded in 1972, has since painted Jewish Iraqi modern history in Zionist colours, and has even sent a letter to the Ministry of Education asking why ‘the Holocaust in Baghdad’ is not a major part of the State history programme.¹¹⁷

It is not too far-fetched to see Arabic literature by Jews as another victim of the conflict played out in Palestine, especially following the disappearance of the distinction between ‘Jew’ and ‘Zionist’ in Arab nationalist discourse and the attitude of the hegemonic Zionist narrative to Arab culture. Since the early 1950s, the literature of twentieth century Iraqi Jews produced in Arabic has been entirely relegated to the margins of Arabic of literature. Political, national and cultural reasons are mainly behind that process and behind the paucity of scholarly attention this literature has been given through the years. Although the literary writing of Iraqi Jews in the 1940s gained some attention among Jewish intellectuals in Palestine,¹¹⁸ scholars outside Iraq since 1948 have totally shunned the study of that literature. Nevertheless, one should not forget that in the 1920s Jewish Iraqi intellectuals were literary pioneers who stood on the threshold of emancipation with the highest hopes in their hearts. Therefore, ‘their attitudes must be examined’, as indicated by Emile Marmorstein (1901–83), headmaster of the Shammash School for boys in Baghdad in the 1930s, ‘in the light of the generous prospects of the twenties rather than in the gloom of a decade in which their visions have been almost completely shattered’.¹¹⁹

Notes

1. S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* (New York: Schocken Books, 1955), p.130.
2. According to Bernard Lewis, to speak about a Judeo–Muslim heritage is undoubtedly historically no less justified than to speak about a Judeo–Christian one (‘The Judeo–Islamic Heritage’ [Hebrew], *Pe’amim – Studies in Oriental Jewry* 20 (1984), pp.3–13).
3. Bat Ye’or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Lancaster: Gazelle Book Services, 2002), pp.316–7. See also N.A. Stillman, ‘The Judeo–Islamic Historical Encounter: Vision and Revision’, in T. Parfitt (ed.), *Israel and Ishmael: Studies in Muslim–Jewish Relations* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), pp.5–6, which is a summary of the contributions towards establishing the myth of harmonious Muslim–Jewish relations prior to the rise of Zionism, as well as the counter myth emphasizing the darker side of Jewish history under Islam.
4. Ishaq Bar-Moshe, *Baytun fi Baghdad* (A House in Baghdad) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami’iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-‘Iraq, 1983), p.231.

5. Salman Darwish, *Kull Shay' Hadi' fi al-'Iyada* (All is Quiet in the Surgery) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq, 1981), p.200.
6. 'Abd al-Ilah Ahmad, *Nash'at al-Qissa wa-Tatawwuruha fi al-'Iraq 1908–1939* (The Rise of the Short Story and its Development in Iraq 1908–1939) (Baghdad: Matba'at Shafiq, 1969), p.242. Cf. Shmuel Moreh, 'The Intellectual Production of Iraqi Jews in the Arabic Language' [Hebrew], in Jacob Mansour (ed.), *Mehqarim be-'Aravit uve-Islam* (Arabic and Islamic Studies) (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1978), II, p.61.
7. In the 1940s, prominent intellectuals and educators from various Arab countries were teaching in educational institutions in Baghdad including Jewish schools, cf. D. Semah, 'Mir Basri and the Resurgence of Modern Iraqi Literature' [Arabic], *al-Karmil* 10 (1989), p.86.
8. See *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), 24 May 1984, p.10. Cf. a similar case in Syria in which a Muslim journalist is stunned that Jewish students excel in Arabic exams; Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia and New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p.280. About a similar phenomenon in Egypt, see Sasson Somekh, 'Lost Voices: Jewish Authors in Modern Arabic Literature', in Mark R. Cohen and Abraham L. Udovitch (eds.), *Jews Among Arabs: Contacts and Boundaries* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1989), p.14.
9. Anwar Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati fi Wadi al-Rafidayn* (The Story of My life in Mesopotamia) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq, 1980), pp.119, 223; Darwish, *Kull Shay'*, p.202.
10. Semah, 'Mir Basri', pp.88–9.
11. The original text was first published in *al-'Iraq*, 19 July 1921. The translation is based on the version which appears in Mir Basri, *A'lam al-Yahud fi al-'Iraq al-Hadith* (Eminent Jewish Personalities in the New Iraq) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq, 1993), II, p.9. For a slightly different version, see Philip Willard Ireland, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970 [1937]), p.466. Cf. D.B.E. Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London: Ernest Benn, 1930), p.495; M.H. Mudhi, 'The Origin and Development of the Iraqi-Jewish Short Story from 1922–1972', Ph.D Thesis (University of Exeter, 1988), p.21; Stillman, *The Jews*, 1991, pp.55–6, 260.
12. On Arabic press by Jews, see 'Press, Arabic', in G. Abramson (ed.), *Companion to Modern Jewish Culture* (London and New York: Routledge) (in press).
13. On various aspects of the Arabic literature of Iraqi Jews, see my articles 'Cultural Changes as Reflected in Literature – The Beginning of the Arabic Short Story by Jewish Authors in Iraq' [Hebrew], *Pe'amim – Studies in Oriental Jewry*, 36 (1988), pp.108–29; 'Under the Patronage of Muhammad': Islamic Motifs in the Poetry of Jewish Writers from Iraq' [Hebrew], in T. Alexander et al. (eds.), *History and Creativity in the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Communities* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, 1994), pp.161–93; 'Arabic Literature of Iraqi Jews – The Dynamics of the Jewish Cultural System and the Relationship with the Arabic Cultural System' [Hebrew], *Miqqedem Umiyyam*, 6 (1995), pp.255–88; 'Women in the Arabic Belles Lettres of Iraqi Jewry in the twentieth Century' [Hebrew], *Pe'amim – Studies in Oriental Jewry*, 82, Winter (2000), pp.119–49; 'Iraqi Jewry after 1945 – Literature, History and Historiography' [Hebrew], *Miqqedem Umiyyam*, 7 (2000), pp.245–271; 'My Heart Beats with Love of the Arabs: Iraqi Jews Writing in Arabic in the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* I, 2 (2002), pp.182–203.
14. Abbas Shibliak, *The Lure of Zion – The Case of the Iraqi Jews* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1986), p.28.
15. See Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Maydani, *Majma'al-Amthal* (The Assembly of Proverbs) (ed. Na'im Husayn Zarzur) (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1988), II, pp.441–2. On the poet and his loyalty, see also Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), II, pp.685–6.
16. On Sa'adia Gaon and his attitude to Arabic poetics, see Y. Tobi, 'Sa'adia Gaon, *Poet-Paytan*: The Connecting Link between the Ancient Piyut and Hebrew Arabised Poetry in Spain', in T. Parfitt (ed.), *Israel and Ishmael*, pp.59–77; Y. Tobi, 'The Reaction of Rav Sa'adia Gaon to Arabic Poetry and Poetics', *Hebrew Studies*, 36 (1995), pp.35–53.
17. On Maimonides and his connection with Arab culture, see, Meisami and Starkey, II, pp.494–5.
18. See M. Perlmann, *Ibn Kammuna's Examination of the Three Faiths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

19. On Ibn Kammunah, see L. Nemoy, 'New Data for the Biography of Sa'd ibn Kammunah', *Revue des Études Juives* CXXII (1964), pp.507–10.
20. On Ibn Sahl and the issue of his conversion, see the introduction by Ihsan 'Abbas, in Ibn Sahl al-Andalusi, *Diwan* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1967), especially pp.33–7. See also Meisami and Starkey, I, p.367; A. Schippers, 'Humorous Approach of the Divine in the Poetry of al-Andalus: The Case of Ibn Sahl', in G. Borg and E. de Moor (eds.), *Representations of the Divine in Arabic Poetry* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2001), pp.119–135.
21. On Anwar Sha'ul and his work, see E. Marmorstein, 'Two Iraqi Jewish Short Story Writers: A Suggestion for Social Research', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* I, 2 (1959), pp.187–200; Ahmad, *Nash'at al-Qissa wa-Tatawuruha*, pp.237–56; Abraham Ben-Yaacob, *Yehude Bavel be-Eretz Yisrael me-ha-Aliyot ha-Rishonot 'ad ha-Yom* (The Jews of Iraq in the Land of Israel from the First Emigrations till Today) (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1980), pp.381–2; Shmuel Moreh, *Short Stories by Jewish Writers from Iraq*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), pp.81–7; Itzhak Bezalel, *Kitve Sofrim Yehudim Sfaradiyahim bi-Lshonot Yehudiyot ve-Zarot* (The Writings of Sephardic and Oriental Jewish Authors in Languages Other than Hebrew) (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University and The Ministry of Education and Culture, 1982), I, pp.307–8; Shmuel Moreh and Mahmud 'Abbasi, *Tarajim wa-Athar fi al-Adab al-'Arabi fi Isra'il 1948–1986* (Biographies and Bibliographies in Arabic Literature in Israel 1948–86) (Jerusalem and Shfaram: Dar al-Mashriq, 1987), pp.113–15; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.191–30; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, IX (1997), p.370 (by S. Moreh). For a list of Sha'ul's short stories published in newspapers and magazines, see Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.497–501.
22. On *al-Misbah*, see Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati*, 76–9; Orit Bashkin, *al-Misbah (1924–1929) – Iton Yehudi 'Iraqi (al-Misbah [1924–29] – A Jewish Iraqi Newspaper)*, MA Thesis (Tel-Aviv University, 1998).
23. On *al-Hasid*, see Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati*, 148–73. On Jewish press in Iraq in general, see 'Isam Jum'a Ahmad al-Ma'adidi, *al-Sihafa al-Yahudiyya fi al-'Iraq* (Jewish Journalism in Iraq) (Cairo: Dar al-Dawliyya li-l-Itihithmarat al-Thaqafiyya, 2001).
24. On Shina, see Mir Basri, *A'lam al-Yahud fi al-'Iraq al-Hadith* (Eminent Jewish Men of Modern Iraq) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq, 1983), I, p.76; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, IX (1997), pp.442–3 (by S. Moreh).
25. Abu Tammam, *al-Hamasa* (Cairo: Muhammad 'Ali Sabih, n.d.), I, p.36.
26. See *al-Misbah* I,1 (10 April 1924), p.2.
27. Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati*, 119–24.
28. On Murad Mikha'il and his work, see Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.73–5; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.105–11.
29. On Basri and his work, see Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.155–9; Bezalel, *Kitve Sofrim Yehudim*, I, pp.285–6; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.157–72; Semah, 'Mir Basri', pp.83–122.
30. On Darwish and his work, see E. Marmorstein, 'An Iraqi Jewish Writer in the Holy Land', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* VI, 1 (July 1964), pp.91–102; Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.111–18; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.231–312; Shimon Ballas, 'The Realistic Orientation in Shalom Darwish's Stories' [Arabic], *al-Karmil – Studies in Arabic Language and Literature* 10 (1989), pp.27–60. For a list of Darwish's short stories published in newspapers and magazines, see Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.502–6.
31. On Balbul and his work, see Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.97–103; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.145–53. Balbul published the first Iraqi–Jewish story which used colloquial (Islamic!) language, that is, '*Sura Tibqa al-Asl*' (True Copy), in Ya'qub Balbul, *al-Jamra al-Ula* (The First Live Coal) (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Ma'arif, 1938), pp.97–103.
32. On Obadya and his work, see Ben-Yaacob, *Yehude Bavel*, p.436; Moreh and 'Abbasi, *Tarajim wa-Athar*, pp.161–3. The Iraqi critic Hamza al-Hasan refers to Obadya as 'The greatest Iraqi poet still living, the last giant of poetry in Mesopotamia, the only Iraqi living poet who has lived and participated and recorded all the uprisings of the Iraqi people' (*al-Hiwar al-Mutamaddin*, electronic journal, N. 534, 5 July 2003 [www.rezgor.com]).
33. Cf. Dafna Zimhoni, 'The Beginnings of Modernization among the Jews of Iraq in the Nineteenth Century until 1914' [Hebrew], *Pe'amim - Studies in Oriental Jewry* 36 (1988), p.8.
34. Shalom Darwish, 'Relations Between Communal Institutions and the he-Halutz Underground Movement in Baghdad' [Hebrew], in Zvi Yehuda (ed.), *Mi-Bavel li-Yrushalayim* (From Babylon to

- Jerusalem) (Tel Aviv: Iraqi Jews' Traditional Cultural Center, 1980), p.83. Cf. Sami Michael, *Hofen shel 'Arafel* (A Handful of Fog) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1979), p.77.
35. On the *Farhud*, see H. Cohen, 'The Anti-Jewish Farhud in Baghdad', *The Middle Eastern Studies* 3.1 (Oct. 1966), pp.2–17; H.J. Cohen, *The Jews of the Middle East 1860–1972* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1973), pp.28–32; E. Kedourie, *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), pp.283–304; N. Rejwan, *The Jews of Iraq, 3000 Years of History and Culture* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985), pp.217–44; D. Silverfarb, *Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1929–1941* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.118–41.
 36. See D. Semah's letter in *Ma'ariv*, 26 Jan. 1989.
 37. Fadil al-Barak, *al-Madaris al-Yahudiyya wa-l-Iraniyya fi al-'Iraq* (Jewish and Iranian Schools in Iraq) (Baghdad: al-Dar al-'Arabiyya, 1985), pp.245–52.
 38. According to Sami Michael (*Ba-Mamahane*, 22 March 1989, p.23). On Jewish Communist activity in Iraq, see Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements in Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp.650–1, 699–701, 1190–2; Shiblak, *The Lure of Zion*, p.59.
 39. On *al-'Usba*, see Shmuel Moreh, *Hibure Yehudim ba-Lashon ha-'Aravit* (Arabic Works by Jewish Writers) (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1973), p.111; al-Ma'adidi, *al-Sihafa al-Yahudiyya fi al-'Iraq*, pp.64–6. On the League in general, see Usuki Akira, 'The Anti-Zionist Movement Among the Iraqi Jews: Zionism, Arab Nationalism, and Communism in Iraq Immediately After the Second World War', *Journal of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Saga University* 21 (March 1989), pp.1–26.
 40. On the Jewish–Iraqi emigration to Israel, its causes and motives, see Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.58–91; M. Gat, *The Jewish Exodus from Iraq 1948–1951* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).
 41. On Kedourie, see Sylvia Kedourie (ed.), *Elie Kedourie CBE, FBA 1926–1992: History, Philosophy, Politics* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 1998); Nissim Rejwan, *The Last Jews in Baghdad: Remembering a Lost Homeland* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), pp.122–3, 150–68.
 42. Kattan published an autobiographical novel on his life in Iraq, *Adieu Babylone* (Montréal: Julliard, 1975), also published in English and Arabic: *Farewell, Babylon* (tr. S. Fischman) (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1980); *Wada'an Babil* (tr. Adam Fathi) (Köln: Al-Kamel Verlag, 1999). On Kattan and his work, see *al-Hayat* (London), 11 Nov. 1994, p.16; *The Scribe* 66 (Sept. 1996), p.34; Sami Mahdi, *al-Majallat al-'Iraqiyya al-Riyadiyya wa-Dawruha fi Tahdiith al-Adab wa-l-Fann 1945–1958* (The Iraqi Avant-Garde Periodicals and their Role in the Modernization of the Literature and the Art) (Baghdad: Dar al-Shu'un al-Thaqafiyya al-'Ammah, 1955), pp.14–37; E. Benson and W. Toye, *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.588–9.
 43. Zionists have been accused of bombing Jewish gatherings in Baghdad, such as the Mas'uda Shem-Tov Synagogue on 15 Jan. 1951, in the hope of urging the Jews to leave Iraq. Referring to that accusation Elie Kedourie says that it 'must remain an open question' (*The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970], p.449, n.72). On this subject, see Gat (note 40), *The Jewish Exodus*, pp.175–91.
 44. See Anwar Sha'ul, *Fi Ziham al-Madina* (In the Turmoil of the City) (Baghdad: Sharikat al-Tijara wa-l-Tiba'a al-Mahduda, 1955); Mir Basri, *Rijal wa-Zilal - Qisas wa-Suwar Qalamiyya* (Men and Shadows: Stories and Written Pictures) (Baghdad: Sharikat al-Tijara li-l-Tiba'a, 1955); Mir Basri, *Nufus Zami'a* (Thirsty Souls) (Baghdad: Sharikat al-Tijara li-l-Tiba'a, 1966).
 45. *Al-Zaman*, 1 June 1959.
 46. Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati*, pp.120–4, 270–4, 335–7; Mir Basri, *Rihlat al-'Umr min Difaf Dijla ila Wadi al-Tims* (Life's Journey from the Bank of the Tigris to the Valley of the Thames) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq, 1991), pp.145–6.
 47. Al-Samaw'al's fortress in Tayma', north of al-Madina.
 48. Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati*, pp.335–6.
 49. Phebe A. Marr, *Yasin al-Hashimi: 'The Rise and Fall of a Nationalist'*, Ph.D. Thesis (Harvard University, 1966).
 50. Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder and London: Westview, 1985).
 51. For the entire poem, which was written in 20 April 1969, see Mir Basri, *Aghani al-Hubb wa-l-Khulud* (Songs of Love and Eternity) (Jerusalem: Rabitat al-Jami'iyyin al-Yahud al-Nazihin min al-'Iraq, 1991), pp.149–52. On the events that prompted the writing of these verses, see Basri, *Rihlat al-'Umr*,

- pp.139–44; M.S. Basri, 'A Young American Lady and I', *The Scribe* 62 (Sept. 1994), p.16. Cf. Sha'ul, *Qissat Hayati*, pp.329–33.
52. *Iton* 77, Jan.–Feb. 1988, p.32.
53. I use 'Establishment' advisedly. As much as a political establishment is based not on merit but on power, so cultural and literary establishment refers not just to literary and cultural elements within the community but to the power relations that structure it. It is that hegemonic group in a society's culture that has succeeded in establishing its interpretative authority over all other cultural groups, that is, a minority group of individuals within society, such as major critics and scholars, editors of literary periodicals, publishers, major educators, etc., who from the socio-cultural point of view are acknowledged as superior in some sense and who influence or control most segments of culture. Although the people-in-the-culture share in the process of defining the socio-cultural distinctions, it is the above cultural, literary and critical elite which has the decisive role in that process (cf. R. Snir, 'Synchronic and Diachronic Dynamics in Modern Arabic Literature' in S. Ballas and R. Snir, *Studies in Canonical and Popular Arabic Literature* (Toronto: York Press, 1998), p.93). In Israel, the cultural and literary establishment closely parallels the hegemonic Zionist structure of the state itself in that the canonical centre which 'dictates' the prevailing features of Israeli culture is predominantly Ashkenazi western-oriented.
54. On the literary activities of Iraq Jews in Israel during the 1950s, see my article "We Were Like Those Who Dream": Iraqi-Jewish Writers in Israel in the 1950s', *Prooftexts* 11 (1991), pp.153–73.
55. On Michael and his work, see Ben-Yaacob, *Yehude Bavel*, p.411; Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.221–32; Bezalel, *Kitve Sofrim Yehudim*, p.294; Moreh and 'Abbasi, *Tarajim wa-Athar*, pp.226–7; Gila Ramras-Rauch, *The Arab in Israeli Literature* (Bloomington, Indianapolis and London: Indiana University Press, 1989, 179–83); Sorrel Kerbel (ed.), *Jewish Writers of the Twentieth Century* (New York and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003), pp.373–4.
56. On the general issue of the interactions of Hebrew and Arabic literature and the involvement of Iraqi Jewish writers in these interactions, see R. Snir, 'Intersecting Circles between Hebrew and Arabic Literature' [Hebrew], in Y. Tobi (ed.), *Ben 'Ever and le-'Arav: Ha-maga'im ben ha-Sifrut ha-'Arvit le-ben ha-Sifrut ha-Yehudit bi-Yme ha-Benayim uba-Zman he-Hadash* (Between Hebrew and Arabic: Contacts between Arabic Literature and Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times) (Tel-Aviv: Afikim, 1998), pp.177–210.
57. On Samir Naqqash and his work, see Ben-Yaacob, *Yehude Bavel*, p.410; Bezalel, *Kitve Sofrim Yehudim*, pp.296–98; Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.251–4; Moreh and 'Abbasi, *Tarajim wa-Athar*, pp.236–7; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.404–58; David Semah, 'The Iraqi Novel of Samir Naqqash' [Hebrew], *Naharde'a* 7 (1989), pp.21–2; R. Snir, 'Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Literature and Periodicals of Iraqi Jewry' [Hebrew], *Pe'amim - Studies in Oriental Jewry* 63 (Spring 1995), pp.32–3; 'Izz al-Din Sarmad, 'The Period I Lived in Baghdad was All My Life: An Interview with Samir Naqqash' [Arabic], *al-Thaqafa al-Jadida* (Cairo), May–June 2000, pp.134–42; Lital Levy, 'Exchanging Words: Thematization of Translation in Arabic Writing in Israel', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 23.1 and 2 (2003), pp.93–114.
58. The Lebanese writer and critic Ilyas Khuri (Elias Khoury) (b. 1948) considers the 'Jewish-Arab voice' a central voice in Arab culture, therefore, its loss has been a great loss for that culture (interview with Anton Shammas in *Yedi'ot Ahronoth*, 7 Days, 15 March 2002, p.60). It is ironical that about six years before, Ilyas Khuri himself threatened to walk out of the hall during a conference on Arabic literature in Carthage (Tunis) when the Israeli writer Sami Michael (b. 1926), himself an Arab Jew in origin, was prepared to come up on the stage to give his lecture. Michael's anger was expressed in an essay with the title: 'Shylock in Carthage', *The Jewish Quarterly*, Winter 1994/5, pp.71–2. Under the title 'The Experience of Oriental Jews in Israel: Have We Lost for Ever the Jews of Iraq?' The Jordanian writer Ibrahim Gharayiba laments the failure of the Arabs to have the Arab Jews, especially the Iraqis, as an integral part of Arab society and culture (*al-Hayat*, 25 July 2002, p.25. The article appeared in English translation in *The Scribe*, the journal of Babylonian Jewry published by the Jewish Exilarch's Foundation in London, Vol.72 (Sept. 1999), p.25. However, the translation omits some sentences in which the writer argues that the above failure has only served Israeli and Zionist aggression against the Arabs).
59. Nancy E. Berg, *Exile from Exile – Israeli Writers from Iraq* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p.3.
60. Ishaq Bar-Moshe, *Ayyam al-'Iraq* (Shfaram: Dar al-Mashriq, 1988), pp.94–7, 138–9, 223.

61. See his article 'Historic Freemasonry in the Middle East', in www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/9991/mideast.html (23 Aug. 2003).
62. Shmuel Moreh, 'The Individual Nature of Ishaq Bar-Moshe's Stories' [Arabic], *al-Sharq*, April–May 1975, p.43 (for the Hebrew version, see *Shevet ve-'Am* 3 [8] 1978, p.426).
63. On the collection, see 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abbad, 'Some Words on 'Behind the Fence and Other Stories', '*al-Anba*', 18 Aug. 1972, p.4; Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.369–403.
64. E.g., the short story *Minzar Ha-Shatkanim* (The Trappist Monastery) by Amos Oz (born 1939) whose translation was published in *al-Sharq*, June–Aug. 1973, pp.75–82.
65. See R. Snir, 'Virginia Woolf in Arabic Literature: Translations, Influence, and Reception', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* 54 (Fall 1999), pp.6–7.
66. See, for example, the story *Dar Sa'id* (Sa'id's House) (*Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra* [Jerusalem: Majallat al-Sharq, 1972], pp.21–30. On the story, see Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.389–91).
67. On the ways modern Arab writers were inspired by Kafka's works, see R. Snir, 'Human Existence According to Kafka and Salah 'Abd al-Sabur', *Jusur* 5 (1989), pp.31–43.
68. See, for example, the story *Infisam* (Schizophrenia) (*Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.73–84. On the story, see Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.393–5).
69. See, for example, the stories *al-Haris* (The Guardian) and '*Awdat Mahbub* (The Return of Mahbub) (*Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.85–98, 113–32. On the stories, see Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.385–9, 395–7).
70. Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.365–6.
71. *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.31–50. Mudhi translated the title as 'The Suffering of a Story' (Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, p.369).
72. In reply to Plato's view that art arouses and fans dangerous emotions, Aristotle considers art as beneficial as it cleanses and purifies the souls of people by wisely regulating the emotions and preventing anarchy in them (Aristotle, *Poetics* [introduction, commentary and appendixes by D.W. Lucas] (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1968], p.10; Aristotle, *Poetics* [tr. with an introduction and notes by G.F. Else] [Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967], p.25).
73. See R. Snir, 'The Poetic Creative Process according to Salah 'Abd al-Sabur', in Ami Elad (ed.), *Writer, Culture, Text: Studies in Modern Arabic Literature* (Fredericton: York Press, 1993), pp.74–88.
74. Though Aristotle himself does not deal with the catharsis of the poet, the philosophy of art has produced theories maintaining that poetry is a catharsis for the author himself. Edmund Wilson (1895–1972), for example, suggests the metaphors of the 'wound' and the 'bow', where the first refers to the artist's neurosis, and the second to the art which is its compensation: E. Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature* (Cambridge, MA.: Houghton Mifflin, 1941), pp.272–95.
75. Translation is according to Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.370–1.
76. *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.57–72.
77. Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp.42–3.
78. *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, p.64.
79. *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.5–20.
80. *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.151–66.
81. Cf. Meister Eckhart's concept of time: 'The person who lives in the light of God is conscious neither of time past nor of time to come but only of one eternity [. . .] Therefore he gets nothing new of future events, nor from chance, for he lives in the Now-moment that is, unfailingly, "in verdure newly clad"' (Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *Mystical Experience* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973], p.151).
82. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), pp.129–30. Cf. Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, *Maqamat al-Sufiyya* (ed. Emile Maalouf) (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq Sarl Éditeurs, 1993), pp.79–80.
83. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p.220.
84. *Wara' al-Sur wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.187–99. The story was also published in *al-Sharq*, June–July 1972, pp.107–10. On the story, see also Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.400–3.
85. *Al-Dubb al-Qutbi wa-Qisas Ukhra* (Jerusalem: Majallat al-Sharq, 1973), pp.155–68.
86. *Al-Dubb al-Qutbi wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.79–92.

87. *Al-Dubb al-Qutbi wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.123–38. The story was also published in *al-Sharq*, Sept. 1973, pp.39–44.
88. *Raqsat al-Matar wa-Qisas Ukhra* (Jerusalem: Majallat al-Sharq, 1974), pp.7–28.
89. E.g., Shimon Ballas' article in *Ha'aretz*, 25 July 1975.
90. *Aswar al-Quds wa-Qisas Ukhra* (Jerusalem: Majallat al-Sharq, 1976), pp.7–22.
91. *Aswar al-Quds wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.23–40.
92. *Aswar al-Quds wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.41–59. The story was also published in *al-Sharq*, Oct.–Dec. 1975, pp.49–59.
93. *Aswar al-Quds wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.103–19.
94. *Aswar al-Quds wa-Qisas Ukhra*, pp.135–49. The story was also published in *al-Sharq*, Aug.–Oct. 1974, pp.33–8.
95. On the collection see S. Somekh's essay in *Iton 77*, April–May 1977, pp.12–13.
96. On the role of Egypt in the life of Jewish intellectuals in Iraq, see Bar-Moshe's own testimony in Bar-Moshe, *Ayyam al-'Iraq*, pp.107–8, 223–4. In the 1990s Bar-Moshe published *Misr fi Qalbi* (Egypt in My Heart) (Nazareth: The Ministry of Education and Culture, 1994), a memoir on the years he had spent in Egypt during his diplomatic mission. The book describes his feelings and impressions of the Egyptian culture which, while living in Baghdad in the 1940s, like all Iraqi intellectuals of his generation, he was greatly inspired by its cultural leadership in the Arab world.
97. Written before the revolution of 1952 and published only in 1956–7.
98. Ishaq Bar-Moshe, *al-Khuruj min al-'Iraq: Dhikrayat 1945–1950* (Jerusalem: Manshurat Majlis al-Tawa'if al-Sfaradiyya, 1975), p.20.
99. Bar-Moshe, *al-Khuruj min al-'Iraq*, p.45. For reviews of the book, see N.R. in *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, 27 June 1975; Nir Shohet in *Ba-Ma'racha*, 174 (July 1975), pp.16–17; Muhammad Abu Shalabiyya, 'Some Observations and Notions about the Book 'Exodus from Iraq'', *al-Anba'*, 20–7 July 1975; Shimon Khayyat, 'The Persecution of the Iraqi Jews on the Eve of their Emigration to Israel' (Hebrew), *Ba-Ma'racha*, 177 (Oct. 1975), p.20; Sylvia G. Haim, 'Anatomy of an Exodus', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 March 1976, p.296; The book was also published in Hebrew: Yitzhak Bar-Moshe, *Yetzi'at Iraq* (tr. Nir Shohet) (Jerusalem: The Sephardi Council, 1977). For reviews of the Hebrew version, see Moshe-Giyora Elimelekh in *Ha'aretz*, 29 May 1977, p.14; Sasson Somekh in *Iton 77*, June–July 1977, pp.12–13; Ian Black in *Jerusalem Post*, 11 Nov. 1977; as well as a review in 'Al Ha-Mishmar, 12 May 1978.
100. Bar-Moshe, *al-Khuruj min al-'Iraq*, pp.287–295. This chapter is not numbered within the 123 chapters of the book and appears after chapter 56 and before chapter 57, as if to give the impression of stopping the serial time. Against the background of the above discussion of the Sufi *waqt* and the mystical experience as breaking through created serial time, one can think of the author as ascribing 'metaphysical roots' to the historical events.
101. The novel was published in Hebrew a year before its publication in Arabic: Yitzhak Bar-Moshe, *Bayit be-Baghdad* (tr. Hanita Brand) (Jerusalem: The Sephardi Council and The Center for the Integration of Oriental Jewish Heritage, Ministry of Education and Culture, 1982).
102. On Rejwan and his work, see Ben-Yaacob, *Yehude Bavel*, p.404; A. Alcalay (ed.), *Keys to the Garden: New Israeli Writing* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996), pp.46–60. Rejwan published essays on films in *The Iraq Times* between June 1946 and Aug. 1948, and between May 1947 and August 1948 served also as the literary critic of the newspaper after the regular critic, Elie Kedourie, left for England to study.
103. *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 26 Sept. 1984, p.26.
104. See *al-Jumhuriyya*, 19 Oct. 1983, p.6. See also al-Wirdani's column in the same daily in 23 Sept. 1983, p.6; as well as Muhammad al-'Azabi's essay in *al-Jumhuriyya*, 21 Nov. 1983.
105. For reviews on the Hebrew version, see Ehud Ben-Ezer in *Ha'aretz*, 1 July 1983, p.23; M. Piamenta in *Ma'ariv*, 6 May 1983; M. Avi-Shlomo in 'Al Ha-Mishmar, 17 Dec. 1982.
106. Bar-Moshe, *Ayyam al-'Iraq*, pp.265–6.
107. The phrases are by the Syrian poet Adunis ('Ali Ahmad Sa'id) (born 1930), who speaks in favour of the rejection of clarity and the pre-eminence of ambiguity and obscurity; Adunis, *al-Shi'riyya al-'Arabiyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 2000 [1985]), p.54; English translation: Adonis, *An Introduction for Arab Poetics* (tr. C. Cobham) (London: Saqi Books, 1990), p.52. Although Adunis speaks about the writing of poetry, since the 1960s the transgeneric phenomena in Arabic literature has been so outstanding that many characteristics of poetry have become integral components of Arabic prose.

108. For a review of the trilogy, see M.J.L. Young's essay in *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27,3, July (1991), pp.528–33.
109. In addition to the above references, for more on Bar-Moshe life and works, see Ben-Yaacob, *Yehude Bavel*, pp.400–1; Berg, *Exile from Exile*, pp.112–120; Moreh, *Short Stories*, pp.233–6; Moreh and 'Abbasi, *Tarajim wa-Athar*, pp.26–28. M.H. Mudhi deals with Bar-Moshe's literary works of the early 1970s only, therefore his discussion is devoid of an overall perspective (Mudhi, *The Origin and Development*, pp.365–403).
110. Bar-Moshe, *Misr fi Qalbi*, p.7.
111. For an attempt to locate the roots of the westernization identity project undergone by the emerging Israeli society in the earlier history of the Jewish encounter with orientalism and western colonialism, see Aziza Khazzoom, 'The Great Chain of Orientalism: Jewish Identity, Stigma Management, and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel', *American Sociological Review*, 68 (2003), pp.481–510.
112. A film written and directed by an Iraqi Shiite exile film-maker, nicknamed Samir (produced by Dschoint Ventschr, Zurich, 2002).
113. G. Piterberg 'Domestic Orientalism: The Representation of 'Oriental' Jews in Zionist/Israeli Historiography', *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 23.2 (1996), p.135.
114. R. Snir, "'Postcards in the Morning": Palestinians Writing in Hebrew', *Hebrew Studies* XLII (2001), pp.197–224.
115. On 'Amir and his work, see Berg, *Exile from Exile*, pp.391–4; R. Snir, 'Baghdad My Beloved City' [Hebrew], *Ha'aretz*, 23 April 1993, p.B9; R. Snir, 'Zionism as Reflected in Arabic and Hebrew Belles Lettres of Iraqi Jewry' [Hebrew], *Pe'amim – Studies in Oriental Jewry* 73 (Autumn 1997), pp.128–146; Kerbel, *Jewish Writers of the Twentieth Century*, pp.42–3.
116. See S. Moreh and Z. Yehuda (eds.), *Sin'at Yehudim u-Fra'ot be-Iraq* (English title: Hatred of Jews and the Farhud in Iraq) (Or-Yehuda: The Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, 1992), pp.7–10.
117. For Shenhav's views, see his book *Ha-Yehudim ha-aravim: leumiyut, dat ve-etniyut* [The Arab-Jews: Nationalism, Religion and Ethnicity] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003), as well as his articles: 'The Jews of Iraq, Zionist Ideology and the Property of the Palestinian Refugees of 1948: An Anatomy of National Accounting', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999), pp.605–30; 'Ethnicity and National memory: the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC) in the Context of the Palestinian National Struggle', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 29 (2002), pp.27–56; 'The Phenomenology of Colonialism and the Politics of 'Difference': European Zionist Emissaries and Arab Jews in Colonial Abadan', *Social Identities*, 8 (2002), pp.521–44. See also his lecture at the School for Peace Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, Israel, March 2000; *School for Peace Annual Review 1999–2001*, Jan. 2001.
118. See, for example, Yehushua Ben Hananya 'Jewish Writers and Poets in Iraq' [Hebrew], *Hed Ha-Mizrah*, 29 Sept. 1943, p.12; 13 Oct. 1943, pp.6–7; 29 Oct. 1943, p.7; 12 Nov. 1943, pp.6–7.
119. Marmorstein, 'Two Iraqi Jewish Short Story Writers', p.199.