In the Shadow of Segregation:
Women's Identity in the Modern Iraqi House.

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Abstract

This thesis intends to develop a critical perspective on the culture and politics of the modern house in Iraq. It advances the discussion from the authoritative religious environment of women's segregation in the Islamic era associated with the courtyard house, to the seemingly liberated status of women in modern times, as manifested in the design of the house. The primary argument is that there was little substantial change in this status through British Colonialism and the emergence of the secular state and modern aesthetics in Post-Colonial Iraq.

Marking the pre-modern period from the Abbasid to the Ottoman rule, the traditional courtyard house reflected the apparent agreement between the world view of a traditional society and the accepted status of women in it. This house manifested principles of spatial hierarchy and privacy as a response to the deeply-embedded principles of social hierarchization of sexes and prevailing assumptions about women. Thus the courtyard house came to be "the house of women's segregation" par excellance.

In the British colonial era, the upper-middle classes manifested their preference for the Classical architecture of the colonizers and for European lifestyles; however, the selective process and adaptation of the influences of Colonial architecture into house design made the logic behind the design principles inconsistent. The inflexibility of these principles with respect to accommodating concepts of women's privacy, such as principles of axis and symmetry, reveals the inappropriateness of this style to work within the cultural conventions.

In the period of post-colonial independence and nation building, the aspirations of the Iraqi architects for a new aesthetic revolution and a social reform was articulated with the state revolutionary politics. Seemingly divorced from traditional methods of building and traditional materials, the architects promoted aspects of modern utopia and positivism in anticipation of an environmentally and socially better world. The architects' intellectual passion for abstraction and their excessive infatuation with technology, culminating in the new aesthetic and openness, were applied primarily in facade treatment and minor details rather than the actual plan of the house. Thus the plan was still confined to the conventional practices of the society based on imperatives of privacy and hierarchy. Moreover, the new aesthetic of openness conflicted with the entrenched social norms and with woman's perception of herself, resulting in a feeling of alienation.

The promise of women's liberation was illusive within the limited definition of the politics of that liberation and given the persistent perception of women in society as dependent and vulnerable. The modern house could not carry a new social reform with its new aesthetic. It still faced the dilemma of society marked by the conflict between the desired definition of progressivness and the existing conventions of identity, thereby revealing the emptiness and the unresolved contradiction between aspirations and actual practice.

Thesis Supervisor: Sibel Bozdogan
Title: Assistant Professor of Architecture

To all the women back there.....
                    who lived and died in fear.....
For the silence of their pain......

Aknowledgments:

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Introduction

On the whole, regarding the proper conduct for a wife, one can say, in brief, that she must remain in her private quarters and never neglect her spindle. She must not make frequent trips to the balcony nor spend her time gazing down from there. Let her exchange but few words with her neighbors and not go visit them.[1]

With the authoritarian impact of orthodox religious discourse, the Islamic culture imprinted concepts of identity and sexuality on Muslim women. In the Muslim perception, women must be silent and obedient in order to be good wives. Thus, the female should not aspire to be autonomous: to do so would put the honor of her family in question. The protection of her assumed weaker status restricted her movement in public and further confined her within the house to provide maximum privacy, segregating her from males. This assumption about women was presented as a normative construct in the Muslim context. The traditional concepts of privacy and power hierarchy practiced in the Iraqi house in relation to women were inherited from the pre-modern history of Iraq. The segregation of women was practiced in the palaces and houses of the Abbasid times and continued in the nineteenth-century traditional courtyard houses under the Ottoman rule. The cultural religious context of these periods incorporated societal beliefs about women's segregation into house design without being contested. The literature even exaggerated aspects of the house to stress the concepts of segregation and privacy. In contrast to the conflicting beliefs of modern times, Muslim societal and religious values were consistent in their beliefs and practices, understanding women's segregation as "natural."

In the period of colonial intervention and domination, British architects introduced the classical style of their colonial architecture to Iraq. Although British architects used local Islamic motifs in public buildings and villas in order to pacify the nationalist resentment, in Gwendolyn Wright's words this came to "represent only the most obviously political aspect of architecture and urban design in colonial cities."[2] The colonial classical style was propagated by upper middle-class families who aspired to colonial power and prosperity; however, the restriction within the logical principles of axis and symmetry raised a conflict with traditional practices such as segregation and privacy. Thus, the classical style, with its rigid principles of symmetrical plan and axis, did not provide enough flexibility to incorporate the conventional habits of the Iraqi society in relation to women. Thus, these houses were concerned

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[1]Imam Ghazzali's definition of an ideal woman in his famous work on the revival of the science of religion. See Imam Ghazzali, Ihya' 'ulum al-din (Cairo: Al-Maktaba al-Tijariya al-Kubra, n.d).

[2]Gwendolyn Wright, The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 1.

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primarily with the exterior classical facade while the programmatic application in the plan was a compromise between the traditional use of space and the logic of the symmetrical plan.

With the rise of the modern secular state in the 1950s and 1960s, belief in the rational scientific method of progress became prevalent and was shared between the Iraqi intellectuals and the modern state. The Iraqi architects' aspirations for social reform using the new aesthetic revolution were received within the new revolutionary politics of the regime. Influenced by the international style, modern Iraqi architects promoted ideas of social reform; architecture was endowed with the power to influence lives and bring about social change. They acclaimed the scientific method which was assumed to reveal universal truth. Avant-garde modern architecture had a clear influence on the Iraqi architects' formative years abroad. The pioneering principles of new architecture were applied in a formalisitc way to the Iraqi house. The Iraqi architects drastically transformed the image of the house, replacing the solid appearance of the house with essential and pure forms that expressed the plasticity of the new technology, such as overhanging balconies, free facades and in particular, large glass windows. However, the concept of free design was applied in the facade but not in the plans. The plans still inherited the social beliefs about the separation of women and the hierarchical division of space. Moreover, the new functional age and the new rationality of functional zoning, i.e. the new divisions of space into private, public, and service areas, seemed to further reinforce women's segregation. Ironically, the modern Iraqi house, with its new aesthetics and rational method, revealed the emptiness of its aesthetics devoid of symbolism, and the segregation of its functions. Thus, the modern house still advocated the separation and exclusion of women.

In the Iraqi context, discontent with modernity can not be read only in terms of the modern movement's failure to live up to its promises. Rather, it is also necessary to examine the complexity of the social and political context that aspired to aesthetic facial revolution while the society continued to live in the shadow of segregation. The utopian concept of equality, so central to modernity seems unattainable in Iraqi society.

The modern house presented a new house form with a new vocabulary that shied away from earlier Iraqi houses in both the traditional and colonial periods, thus encouraging the assumptions of its progressive intent in relation to women's status. While the state slogan of women's liberation came to be believed by the society as her liberation, the modern house came to be seen as a manifestation of the progressive intent expressed by the society. Although the bourgeois intellectuals believed in societal progress and women's liberation, the limited

definition of liberation, along with the gap between their intellect and the conflicted social reality, made the utopia of the new movement reverse itself.

Politics of Women's Liberation

....More important than anything is the liberation of women through active work and sincere participation in the reconstruction of society...Anti-feminist acts and ideas should be extensively condemned by men as well as by women in every section of our people.[3]

After the revolution of July 17, 1968, which was directed to expound the aspiration of the Arab nation for Unity, Liberty and Socialism, the ABSP[4] took on the duty of spreading the Arab nationalist aims: to fight imperialism and zionism. The Baath believed that the July 17 Revolution came not as an independent event, but as a necessary step within a series of revolutionary acts that covered the various regions in the Arab world.[5] After the revolutionary movement,[6] the ABSP strove to achieve social and political reform. It embraced a belief in the need to transform the Arab nation generally and Iraqi society particularly.

Fig. 1   Women's status in Modern Iraq.

Women, being the mothers of the next generation and the new labor force, became an essential concern of the Republican state. Associating women's backwardness with imperialist hegemony, the Baath promoted women's liberation as part of the new revolution. Women were portrayed as the builders of the new society and equal to men. They were equipped with new skills and education which helped create a false propriety. However, women's liberation seen as part of her liberation was permitted only as far as it served the new Republican state(Fig.1).

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[3]Saddam Hussein on The Revolution and Women in Iraq. Quoted from Doreen Ingrams, The Awakened: Women in Iraq (London: Third World Center, 1983), p. 103.
[4]The Arab Baath Socialist Party was founded in Damascus in the early 1940s by Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, two Syrians who had been influenced by Marxism and socialism during their studies in France. The party claims to aspire to the resurrection of the Arab Nation by means of Arab socialism and secularism. For more details, refer to the Appendix.
[5]The ABSP believes that the July 17-30 Revolution is complementary to two earlier events, the nationalization of the Suez Canal and the short-lived unity between Egypt and Syria. Refer to the Appendix.
[6]See Appendix for more ideological background on the Baath party and the revolution.

The following extract from the political report of the Arab Baath Socialist Party's Eighth Regional Conference illustrates the party's definition of women's liberation:

The past phase did not witness enough ideological and practical efforts to liberate women's legal status. We must struggle to eliminate all factors preventing their effective contribution in the society as called for by the party. The coming phase should promote such an effort. We must work towards equal educational and work opportunities for women and equal legal status of men and women. We must struggle to unmask the backward and reactionary trends of thought which consider women inferior. [7]

The only "feminist" movement in Iraq was promoted by the Baath. In seeking to control women's liberation in Iraq, the government sponsored The General Federation of Iraqi Women." This organization came to be the official feminist organization with full state support. [8] Women were subjected to threats, even of the death sentence, if they participated in other secret organizations. Thus, women's liberation was controlled within the Baathi lines of thoughts. This organization arranges conferences on women's liberation that serve the purposes of the state by using the media to picture the society as powerful and progressive. Women attended classes for typing sewing or embroidery. Thus, the organization, with state backing, prepared women to serve both the state and the family (Fig. 2). The speeches delivered by Saddam Hussein aimed at defining the meanings of women's liberation. Moreover, Saddam Hussein with his family was interviewed by Al-Marah magazine. The interview intended to inform the society about the ideal family image--an enlightened woman who is a wife and mother. Thus, the family of the President became the ideal family.

Fig. 2   Al- Thawra nurseries run by the General Federation of Iraqi Women.

[7] khalid al-Ani, Mawsuat al-Iraq al--hadith (Baghdad: al-Dar al-Arabiyah al-Mawsuat) Vol. 3, p. 625.
[8] Doreen Ingrams, The Awakened: Women in Iraq (Third World Center for Research and Publishing Ltd. 1983) p. 111.

Moreover, The state's dilemma between modernization and cultural continuity led to further restrictions on women's liberation. Although the state was secular, it was careful not to arouse conflicts with the conservative religious groups of Iraqi society. These conflicts were more visible as women participated in the economy outside the home; this was optional, contingent upon the husband's approval. However, the woman's private life in her home were still controlled by the man, rendering her liberation most questionable at home where her quest for autonomy was in direct conflict with the Arab-Islamic heritage. At the same time, the regime's relation to the Islamic religion was political. It reinforced already existing social and cultural patterns of life within the interests of the regime. It used the interpretation of religion to define women's ethical and sexual life.[9]

One of these patterns is associated with the definition of women in the Arab-Muslim mentality of honor and shame. This idea has often been referred to by the feminist writers of this century, including Nawal El Saadawi (Egypt) and Sana al-Khayyat (Iraq). According to them, the concept of honor in the family is dependent on the woman's honor rather than that of the man. Honor essentially can be explained in terms of virginity and social rules controlling the relationships of men and women.

A report in Al-Nahar,[10] states that during the blood bath following the first Bathist coup, a presidential decree reduced the sentences of 61 men who had murdered women in their family for breaking societal taboos (e.g. sexual relations with men, losing their virginity). The typical link of cruelty and sexuality, the latter often equated with evil and power, was used extensively by the regime, which associates concepts of sadism with the male (the masculine role), and victimization with the female (the feminine role).

As in other Arab Muslim countries, religious doctrine in Iraq provides the ethical framework on which these societies base their conventions and norms. Many of these conventions and manifestations of traditions come from religion or the interpretation of religion; however, the religion lends itself to being interpreted for male domination. Amal Rassam argues that despite the secularist modernist ideology of the Baath and its bold economic strategies, it was

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[9]Even though the Baath was secular and did not rely on Islam for the basis of its practice, it did not try to interfere with or challenge the practice of Islam.

[10]Al-nahar, Beirut daily newspaper, 17 April 1963.

more careful in areas where social reform could contradict Muslim ethics, so the personal life remained governed by Divine Law.[11]

Certain symbols attained different meanings in different times. In traditional times, veiling was a man's declaration to the society of his prestigious status, since he did not need to send his women to work and thus risk his honor.[12] The unveiling of women in the state of Iraq, however, became the sign of her liberation and education. Furthermore the ABSP had a deep-rooted resentment against feudal and bourgeois society. It used the concept of women's liberation to differentiate between the state's liberation and other bourgeois liberation of women. Creating this difference, it claimed that its practice of liberation is the accurate one. In April 1975, Saddam Hussien gave a statement to <u>Al-Marah</u> magazine stating the need to avoid two erroneous tendencies:

....the first, to define the role and importance of women in society on the basis of feudal or bourgeois ideology which assumes that the first and the last role of women is in the home and treats them as second-class citizens. Thus women are stripped of their humanity and deprived of their creative spirit and mental power. The second, to accept certain superficial aspects of what is called modernization in those societies and countries which are advanced in this field as if they were models for the freedom and development of women. [13]

With no other feminist movement, Iraqi women were victimized within their assumed emancipation. Despite the apocalyptic expression of women's liberation, it was a necessary act of social reform to prepare well-educated women.

Politics of Representations

What we must eliminate are systems of representation that carry with them the kind of authority which, to my mind, has been repressive because it does not permit or make room for interventions on the part of those represented.[14]

The sex-gender complex is both a socio-cultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation that assigns meaning (e.g. identity, value, prestige, status in the social hierarchy) to individuals within the society. In that sense, gender representations are social positions that convey different meanings; for someone to be represented and to represent oneself as male or female implies the acceptance of all those meanings. Thus, the construction of gender

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[11]Amal Rassam, <u>Political Ideology and Women in Iraq: Legislation and Cultural Constraints,</u> Journal of Developing Societies. Vol. VIII, 1992. p. 83.

[12]Amal Rassam, <u>Women in the Arab World</u> (Great Britain: SPR Ltd.,Exeter), p. 122.

[13] The speech has been translated by Khalid Kishtainy, <u>Social and Foreign Affairs in Iraq,</u> p.14.

[14] See Phil Mariani And Jonathan Crary, <u>In the shadow of the west: An interview with Edward Said,</u> p.95.

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is both the product and the process of its representation. [15]

Speculation about the interrelationship between representations and their subject and the ideology within which they exist, reveals concepts of femininity and masculinity implied by these representations (Fig. 3). These representations, widely used in school curricula and the media, assert a socio-political assumption that shapes our concepts, and constructs a body of "knowledge."

Given the lack of women's magazines in Iraq, Al- Marah or "The Woman" magazine, published in the late 1960s by the General Federation of Iraqi Women, came to be an authoritative portrayal of Iraqi women in the Baathi regime. The magazine is overloaded with political agendas for women's liberation. Women's participation in labor, their duty as wives and mothers, and their support for larger nationalist aims, primarily the liberation of Palestine. Moreover, the magazine is also overloaded with cultural and political understanding of women's sexuality and identity. The magazine presented images and ideas which participated in the construction of women's new identity. The new dress code pictured women in western dress, which was more practical, allowing them to better perform their duties and to give an image of the modern state with modern dressed women. Criticism of women who were extravagant in fashion rendered them almost asexual (Fig. 4).

Fig. 3   Portrayal of the Arab woman's identity

— لا يا مدموازيل ، الله يرحمـــــه
قاسم امين ماكانش قصده كده !!

Fig. 4   Caricature, criticism of Arab women's imitation of western fashion.

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[15]Russell Ferguson, Discourses in Postmodern Art and Culture, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

Another magazine that was relatively radical in the cultural construct was Hawa or "Eve" published in the 1950s in Egypt.[16] Eve magazine was known as the magazine for "The Elegant Woman and the Happy Home" and was widely read by educated Iraqi people from the upper and middle classes. It dealt with the same issues as Al-Marah concerning women's beauty, marriage, and efficient housework; however, it had more westernized designs in clothes and furniture and discussed some taboo issues, such as children's sexuality and women's sexuality within marriage. Although Hawa magazine was less dominated by the state, it also expressed a prevalent nationalist trend in the Arab countries associated with the liberation of Palestine.

Fig. 5   Efficiency in the design of space

Fig. 6   A modern clean kitchen became the determinant of women's efficiency.

Both magazines had a one or two-page section on the house, named "The Best House." These representations incorporated the open plan western concept with the privacy of the Arab house, by providing ideas on screening and masking the space. The images of the interior spaces of the modern house, with its furniture and fittings, promoted the concept of efficiency and functionality in the design of furniture and in the use of kitchen equipment. (Figs. 5-6) These issues were discussed as appealing to the
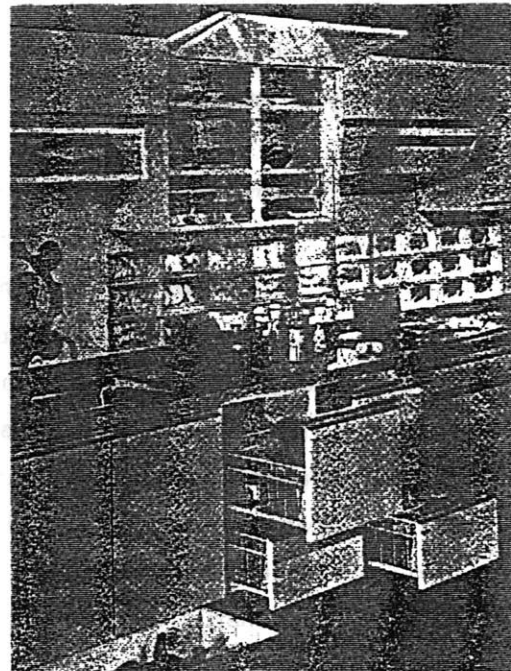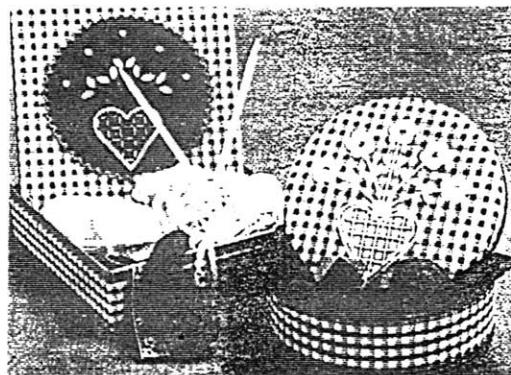
Fig. 7   The emphasis on handiwork.

[16]In the late 1960s, Hawa magazine included cautious writings on sexuality within the cult of marriage as a result of the feminist work in Egypt, e.g. Nawal Sadawi's writings on the sexuality of the Arab woman.

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in the use of kitchen equipment. (Figs. 5-6) These issues were discussed as appealing to the prevailing positivist rationality, to give the image of a modern and progressive house. However, the emphasis on efficiency, functionality and technology to allow women to do house work in less time was contradicted by the emphasis on handiwork. The focus of women's interest on housework and handiwork increases the amount of time spent in the house (Fig. 7). Thus it failed to lessen the increased burden of work that women assumed with the new technology and the mandate to work outside the home.

These representations explicitly and implicitly served socio-political aims. Behind these magazine images is the assumption of woman's identity presented in an absolute normality. Images introduced by both sexes depicting women in the house holding children or working in the kitchen feed into the establishment of her oppressive status.

Fig. 8   Iraqi artist portraying the Iraqi women, Nazeha Salim

Women were cut off from wider contacts and this reinforced their position in society, associated with functions of interiority and domesticity. In reality, women were merely the receptive audience for these images. Yet these images represented women as self-consciously choosing their femininity, motherhood and role in society (Fig. 8).

Certain traditional principles concerning women attained sets of meanings in opposition to western values. This opposition was meant to be an assertive creator of indigenous identity. The constant differentiation throughout the magazine between liberation and westernization defined women's identity in "difference." Dress codes, and the sexual politics of both the state and the culture, acted as strongly charged reinforcer of gender differentiation. Even in daily life the idea of the *Abaya* taken as a symbol of women's subjection also generated social beliefs to help create its cultural individuality.

The visual forms of al-Marah magazine, and the representation of women by both women and men artists, record images of peasant women, women in the house with children, working women, marriage and family. All these representations participated in constructing the women's knowledge of themselves. Although the Iraqi artists represented the image as a general frame to exemplify a more abstract concept, these images came to be seen by the artists as independent of politics; however, the artists set for themselves a referential framework that was received perfectly with the state politics and cultural construct on women. When one is exposed constantly to a particular construct, one tends to identify with it and to project it upon oneself, rather than being an autonomous subject outside it.[17]

The construction of our knowledge happens according to an existing construct of thinking. What we know about ourselves is what is represented to us by others. In these representations of women, some Iraqi architects and artists tried to convey the meaning as if it were pre-given, "natural," and their representations were independent of cultural-political meanings. Within modern culture, however, meanings are not transcendental but are products of cultural and political ideology in a continuous flux. In modern times, the sign is no longer a direct explanation of the signifier. Seen another way, these images not only act as a text but as a representation--we cannot simply separate the act of reading the text from the interpretation of the text.

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[17] For the perception and meanings of representation through artwork see Karen L. Kleinfelder, The Artist, His Model, Her Image, His Gaze, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
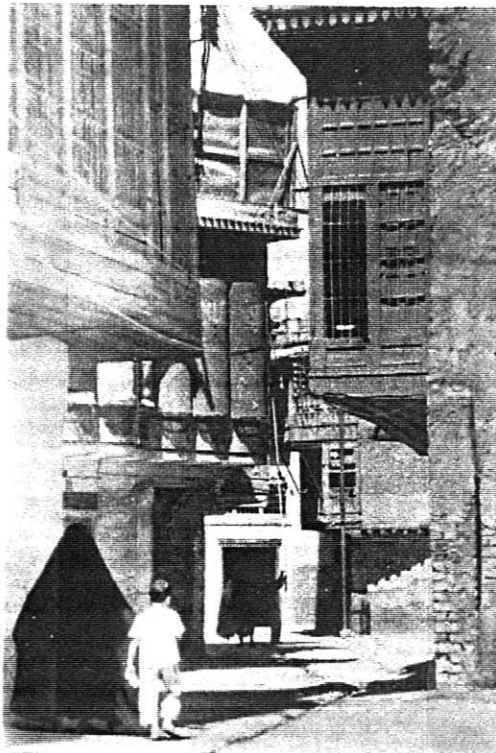
Chapter One

Historical Precedents of Segregation

Chapter One
Historical Precedents of Segregation

This chapter will analyze and critically observe historical precedents dating back to the Abbasid times. Despite the inconclusive archeological evidence of that period, the available historical information reveals the principles involved in the design of Muslim cities, especially al-Mansur city, known as Rounded City of Baghdad. Correlations can be drawn between principles of city design and principles of house design. Underlying both was the need for protection from outside danger. This overall need for security defined the introverted character of the city; the women's need for privacy defined the introversion found in the house. In parallel with the hierarchical system of power in the city, similar principles of hierarchy were practiced in the house between men and women, not merely socially but also spatially. The few descriptions we have of Abbasid houses and palaces give insightful instances of these principles.

Later on in the chapter, the same principles of hierarchy and privacy are expounded in the traditional courtyard house of the 19th century. In principle, this type of house resembled in principle its earlier version of the 13th century. The courtyard house became an archetype of the Muslim house, and thus had historical legitimacy. Patterns of privacy and power hierarchy continued to shape the concept of the house, underlying the social-cultural interpretation in relation to women. Both the depiction of the Abbasid house, and the existing examples of the traditional courtyard house, illustrate those concepts of hierarchy and privacy which were used to segregate women from men. The spatial hierarchy of the household reflects the wider social hierarchy based on assumptions about women's inferior status as the weaker sex.

The Abbasid Houses

In 762, after searching for a central permanent capital for the Islamic Empire, the second Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur chose the west bank of the Tigris for his capital.[11] In this period, known as the glorious phase of the Islamic Empire, buildings were erected in Baghdad expressing the pleasure of the prestigious lives lived by its caliphs. Later, in the 8th to 10th

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[11]The city of al-Mansur was also known as Madinat al-Salam, the city of peace (or the city of saftey). The name was deliberately chosen as a reference to Dar-el-Salam, or Paradise in the Quran. See Gaston Wiet, Baghdad: Metropolis of the Abbasid Caliphate, (University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p.11.

century, Baghdad became the capital of the Islamic empire and its cultural and intellectual center. This period is known as the Golden Period of Baghdad.[12]

The city of Baghdad like other medieval cities in the East, was a fortified city. It was protected by two concentric walls separated by an intervallum called a*Fasil*. [13] The highly determined circular design of the city provided security for the inner court where the Golden Palace and the mosque are situated. The concentric streets prevented public access and interaction behind the wall surrounding the central square. This wall separated the residential houses from the central court with a second intervallum. (Fig. 1.) Moreover, four well-guarded gates were designed to secure the entrance and the four wide avenues leading to the central space. To ascertain his security, the Caliph housed his faithful officers, black slaves, and young children around the central space .[14] As mentioned by Yaqubi,[15] the only residential houses in the central square of the palace were for the chief of the guards and the chief of police.[16] Moreover, al-Mansur strictly prevented anyone, including his ailing uncle, from entering the city on a mule.[17]
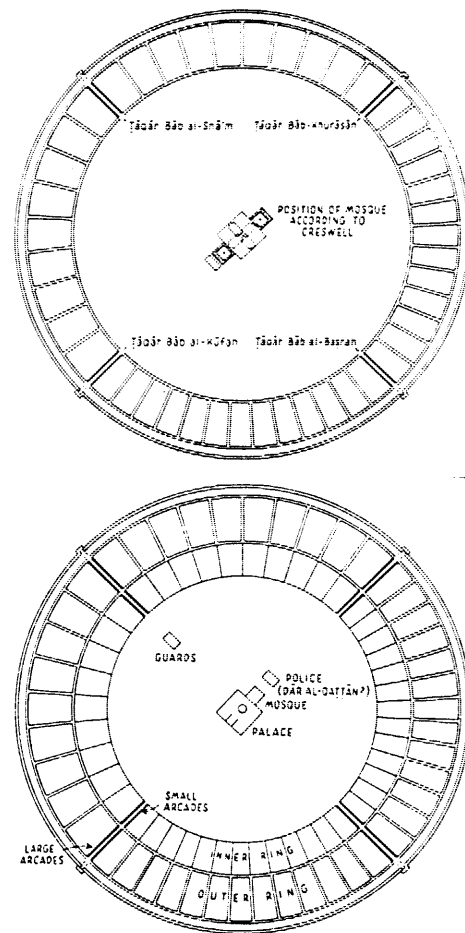
Fig. 1   Plan
The Round City of Al-Mansur.
(After Herzfeld and Creswell)

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[12]The years from 762-946 were particularly critical in the history of Baghdad for they marked the location of the traditional centers that are further developed in the present, like Rusafa, Karkh, Kadimiah and Adhamiyah. See M. M. Nour, An Analytical Study of Traditional Arab Architecture, (Doctoral thesis, University of Newcastle, 1979), p. 98.

[13]Jacob Lassner, The Topography of Baghdad in the early Middle Ages (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1970) p.142.

[14]Gaston Wiet, Baghdad: Metropolis of the Abbasid Caliphate (University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p.16.

[15]Yaqubi Ahmed B. Abi Yaqub al-Abbasi, an Arab historian and geographer, a descendant of Wadih, a freedman of Salih and later of his father the Caliph al-mansur, after whom the family takes the name al-Abbasi. See H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1953).

[16]Mustafa Jewad, Baghdad, (Baghdad: Naqabat al-muhandisin al-Iraqirin, 1961), p. 22.

[17]Lassner, p.57.

The city of al-Mansur embodied the power hierarchy, ranging from the central power of the caliph down to the public residential units on the outskirts of the city. The center symbolized and actualized the caliph's security, power and privacy. In the house, though, the powerful places are on the edges. The power in the house flows from the outside public world of men to the central, private space of women.

Although Islamic religion claimed to be based on equality that attempted to ameliorate the lives of women, these principles were not practiced in the palaces and houses. Women and their children were housed either in different residential areas, or in different palaces. In the year 775, the caliph had another palace on the west bank of the Tigris called *Khuld*, or "Eternity" Palace, that housed his children and women. [18] The division between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, freemen and slaves, was maintained in residences and the city. In the Abassid times, Baghdad city was divided into aristocratic and poor quarters, underlining the sharp class division in society. The aristocratic quarter housed the caliph, and his companions and other rich men; the poor quarters were for the public. While the poor lived in primitive huts, the rich--the Caliph and his bureaucrats--lived in palatial houses or palaces.[19] Similarly, the slaves were housed in different residential areas where they could protect and serve the caliph and his palace.

The city of Baghdad was constructed on a quarter system.[20] These quarters were divided according to the tribe, trade or religion that they served. The hierarchical division within the quarters was represented in the cul-de-sac inhabited by one big family or several families of immediate relationship.[21] The social hierarchy was practiced in the city and the house. While every quarter had a man called *Shaykh* who spoke for its inhabitants, in the individual homes the men were the decision makers and the heads of the families. In the city, the hierarchical system established an urban class structure dividing the rich and the poor; in the house it established the separation between the two sexes.

The surviving palaces of the Abbasid period, such as al-Ukhaidir palace (778 AD) and Balkuwara palace (849 AD), give us an insight into the residential units of the 8th and 9th centuries.[22] (Fig. 2.) The fortified palace of al-Ukhaidir is rectangular with a tower in each corner. In each of the four corners, a staircase leads to a gallery that runs around the periphery

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[18] Wiet, p.26.
[19] Muhammad Manazir Ahsan, Social Life Under the Abbasids. (London, Longman Group, 1979), p.165.
[20] Jewad, p. 17.
[21] Nour, p.357.
[22] Nour, p.109.

of the palace.[23] In the middle of each side wall is a great gateway to the palace. Creswell described the palace as:

.....a khan of quite exceptional type, for it does not consist of a central courtyard surrounded by dozens of cells, all alike. On the contrary, there is a large liwan, a kitchen close to it and a large tunnel-vaulted hall nearly 12m. (40 ft) long with a semi-domed alcove at one end..., which I suggest must have been intended for a princely hall of reception.....[24]
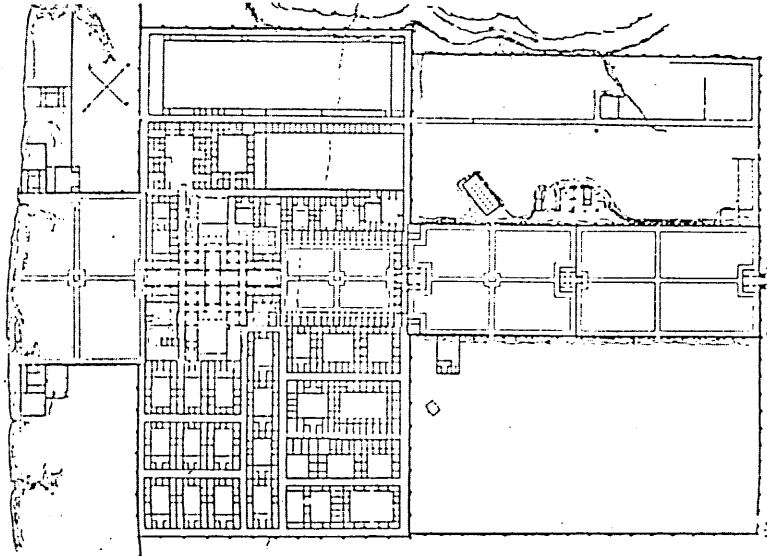

Fig. 2   Plan
Balkuwara Palace.

The palace contains a major space nearly in the middle called the court of honor. It is surrounded by a vaulted corridor that links the other smaller courtyards. Creswell called the four almost identical courtyards on the sides of the court of honor the four Bayts. These are supposed to be the living rooms on the sides of the large guest room.[25] (Fig 3.)
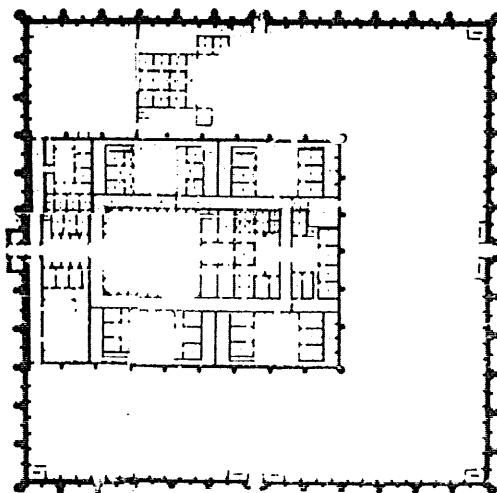
Fig. 3   Plan
Al-Ukhaidir Palace.

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[23]K. A. C. Creswell, A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture (Beirut: New Impression, 1968), p.193.
[24]Creswell, p. 203.
[25]Creswell, p.197.

26

The palace expressed a spatial hierarchy. The more central court of honor is the public space for the guests. The great hall leading to the court of honor had a processional entrance, kept highly secured and thus secluded from interaction with other spaces. Moreover, the four residential units at the sides of the court of honor are highly privatized and separated from each other; each has only one opening to the corridor. This arrangement renders them highly segregated from interaction with the other adjacent areas.

Accounts by Creswell and Herzfeld carried some information on the houses of the 9th century, especially the Samarran houses. These houses, which had Persian influences, were very big and contained as many as 50 rooms. (Fig. 4.) In Creswell's description (based on Herzfeld's information), these were grand houses with a courtyard for men called the *serai* and one for the women called the *harem*. [26] On the opposite side of the courtyard were summer and winter rooms, both upstairs and downstairs for different activities in different seasons. Like the courtyard houses, these houses were adapted to the climate. They had another cooler level underneath for use on the hot days called "sirdab." Moreover, the roof was used for sleeping on hot summer nights. Ground floor windows projected out and had colored glass. Another house of the 9th century, excavated in the late sixties at Siraf, was similar. It was symmetrical, with a courtyard house surrounded by rooms.[27]
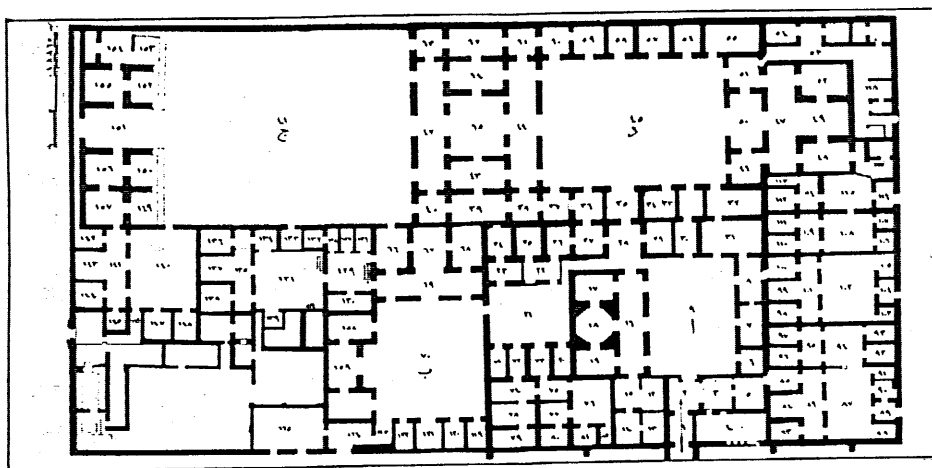
Fig. 4   Plan
Samarran Houses

[26]Ahsan, p.172.
[27]Ahsan, p.172.

Thus, the accounts we have from Abbasid times describe the wealthy houses as impressive and multi-storied, with gardens.[28]High social status seems to be evident in the successful segregation of women from the time of courtyard house until now. The relative wealth of an owner determined whether he could live in this preferable style. The prestigious houses were more elaborated. They had gardens, private baths and more defined spaces for women, servants and guests. This kind of division practiced in the palatial houses and the palaces of the caliphs was not found in the houses of the poor who could not afford it.

In the houses of Abbasid period, the gate was linked to its interior court by a corridor called *dihliz*, which was also used as a waiting room for visitors. It was elaborately decorated and sometimes spacious enough to contain a study room or a guest room—a space used for a more public activity associated with men or their guests. On the threshold of the house, men used to sit on a platform on a mat or a carpet. Thus, the front door and the narrow street formed an environment inhabited by men. One comes across the phrase "fajalasa ala bab darihi," meaning, "He sat at the door of his house."[29] Men and their guests used to sit in the streets in the hot summers watching the passers-by. In this respect, men were at the juncture between inside and outside, symbolizing the man as the controlling sex in relation to the outside. This, practice forced women inside, reinforcing their dependence on the men. Moreover, the vertical hierarchy was manifested from ground floor to the first floor. While spaces on the ground floor were usually used by men, the upper floor was inhabited by women; They were even separate stairs from men, women, and guests.

In Siraf, the houses were multi-storied, consisting of five, six and seven stories. In contrast to the previous situation, the upper rooms were more prestigious and were offered to the guests. These rooms were called "aliya," meaning the most prestigious place of the house.[30] One of the spatial features that continued to be used in the courtyard house was the bent entrance that goes back to the pre-Islamic period.[31] The staggered entrance was

Fig. 5   Plan
The Gates of
Baghdad City

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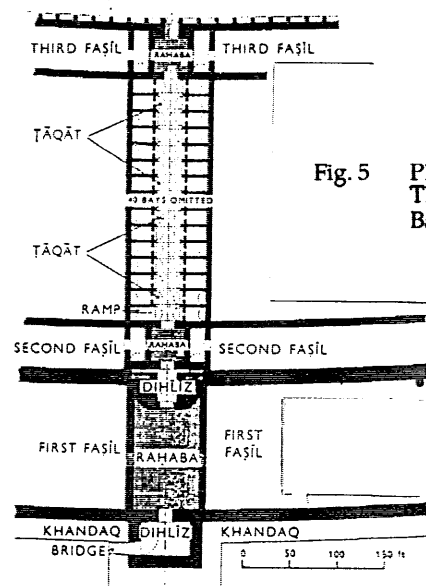
[28]Ahsan, p. 165.
[29]Ahsan, p.176.
[30]Ahsan, p.174.
[31] In ancient Egypt, the bent entrance was used from the 6th to the 8th dynasties, as in such places as Shunet Az-Zebib.

first used in the city of Baghdad; then it became commonly used in houses during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods.[32] While the bent entrance was intended to secure the entrance from direct penetration, it also prevented those in the alley from seeing the private events of the court. (Figs 5-6.)

The need for women's privacy was legitimized in the Quran, which emphasized strict privacy in relation to strangers:[33]

And speak unto the believing women, that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty, and discover not their ornaments, except what (necessarily) appeareth thereof. And let them throw their veils over their bosoms, and not show their ornaments, unless to their husbands or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers, or their brother's sons, or their sisters's sons, or their women.[34]
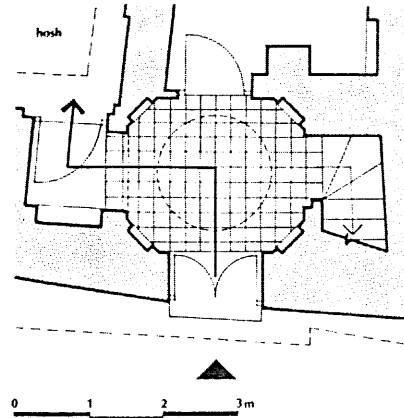
Fig. 6   Plan
The Bent Entrance in the House.

In Islam, concepts of privacy and hierarchy in relation to men and women are based on the religious and social understanding of each sex. The Quran and Sharia are used as authorities to establish women's privacy and inferiority. These doctrines have even been challenged by feminists, such as Asghar Ali Enginner, that men's superiority in the Quran is not absolute. They argued that while women's privacy is interpreted strictly, other matters were interpreted more contexually. Asghar Ali Engineer has discussed the status given to Muslim women in the Quran. [35] While most of the 'ulama and jurists have interpreted the status of women as inferior, she argues that the Quran refers to women's status both in the normative and the contextual sense. In the normative sense, she says, the Quran seems to favor equal status. In the contextual sense, it gives a slightly higher status to men, not due to the weak status of women but rather to the social context. However, the Quran is always interpreted in the normative sense, thus giving the man an absolute superior status and limiting the role of women.[36] Further, Islamic jurists argue that women have been assigned the role of wives and mothers in the Quran.

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[32]Nour, p.359.
[33]Nour, p.354.
[34]Nour, p.354.
[35]Asghar Ali Engineer, The Rights of Women in Islam (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).
[36]Engineer, p.42.

In Abbasid times, a woman's freedom was understood within her Islamic role. She was seen as having full rights by merely participating in governmental decisions or in the work glorified in literature. The "heroic" history of Islam mentioned the names of those women as proof of that religion was being practiced fairly. The women were portrayed as enjoying full social status. Their need for permission to go out in public or to the public baths was justified by religious constructs. Thus their movement was limited to the minimum to satisfy basic needs. Moreover, women in Abbasid times were criticized when they wore fashionable clothes and jewelry. It was considered an improper use of clothes to imitate such upper-class women as the caliphs' and Amirsc wives. There were even instances when well-dressed women became the object of physical assault.

Thus the prevalent construction of women's identity in the Muslim world served the Muslim man. It justified his superior status, through the supernatural power of religion. Since women's weakness was religiously legitimized, the house had to provide privacy and segregation for women in order to protect the honor of the family.

The Traditional Courtyard House

The traditional courtyard house was part of the urban fabric in Baghdad at the end of the nineteenth century. In Iraq, there is little difference between the houses of the 13th and 14th century and these of the late 19th century. Examples of these houses found in other parts of the Muslim world, such as the al-Fustat houses in Cairo, resembled to a great extent the more recent traditional courtyard houses in Baghdad.[37] (Fig. 7)

In the 1960's Sir Max Mallowan speculated on the Larsa period in Ur.[38] Ihsan Fethi and John Warren, writing on the traditional courtyard house in Baghdad, referred to his writings on
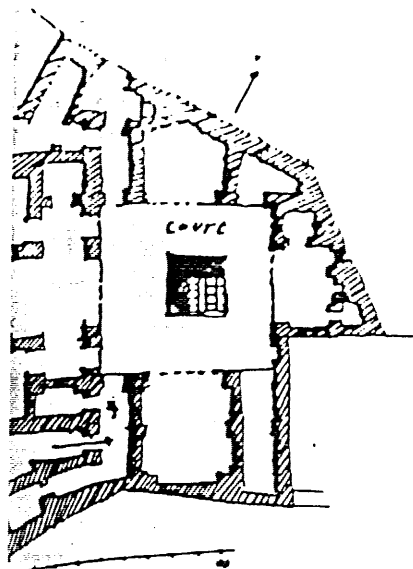
Fig. 7   Plan
Al-Fustat Houses-13th century

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[37]Nour, p.268.

[38]"The Sumerian city of Ur, in southern Iraq on the Euphrates, was a vassal to the semantic state of Larsa from 1800-1000 B.C." John Warren and Ihsan Fethi, Traditional Houses in Baghdad.(Horsham, England: Coach publishing House Ltd, 1982), p. 206.

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the Larsa house as explaining the major characteristics of the courtyard house. (Fig. 8.) Sir Max wrote:

...the Larsa house ...in its ground plan and in the arrangement and character of its rooms...precisely resembles the town house of the middle-class Arab of today; the plan of, e.g. No. 3, Gay Street might be that of a hundred houses in modern Baghdad.[39]

Fethi and Warren saw similarities between the excavated houses in the archaeologists' work, and the traditional houses of the 19th century. Moreover, buildings excavated in the shrines of Khadhimain and Bab al-Shaikh[40] showed, through multiple layers of building and rebuilding, the development of the colonnaded house with a central urban house form[41]. All these analogies; however, should not lead us to perceive the house as a static form.

Given the inconsistency between the ancient evidence and the surviving evidence, there is no definite archaeological explanation on the origin of the Baghdadi house. However, illustrations by al-Wasiti, who lived in the 13th century, showed a two-story house with a central open courtyard, and timber balconies projecting to the alleys or the river.[42] From these illustrations, Fethi and Warren concluded that the Baghdadi house was established by the 13th century and continued to evolve ever since.(Fig. 9.)

Fig. 8   Plan
The Larsa Houses.
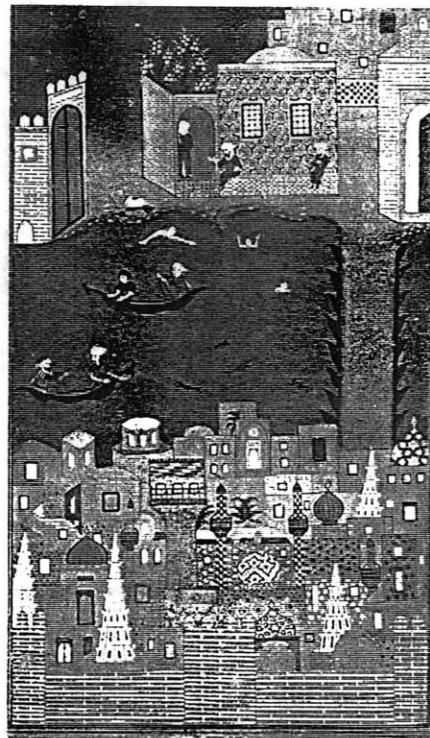
Fig. 9   Baghdad in the 15th century,
a miniature by al Wasiti.

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[39]Warren and Fethi, p.18.
[40]Kharkh and Kadhimiyeh are considered the oldest inhabited areas of Baghdad. See Warren and Fethi, p.27.
[41]Warren and Fethi, p.28.
[42]Warren and Fethi, p. 31.

In a period later than the Al-Wasiti illustrations, other evidence in the evolution of the colonnaded house is the construction of the shrines at Kerbala, Balad, and Kadhimain. These shrines also featured the colonnade balcony. (Fig. 10.) This establishes the correlation between the period of the shrines and the colonnaded house in the tarma-talar element. [43]Travelers in the 18th century described the house as a colonnade house, built of brick, with no impressive exterior and a rich, impressive interior .
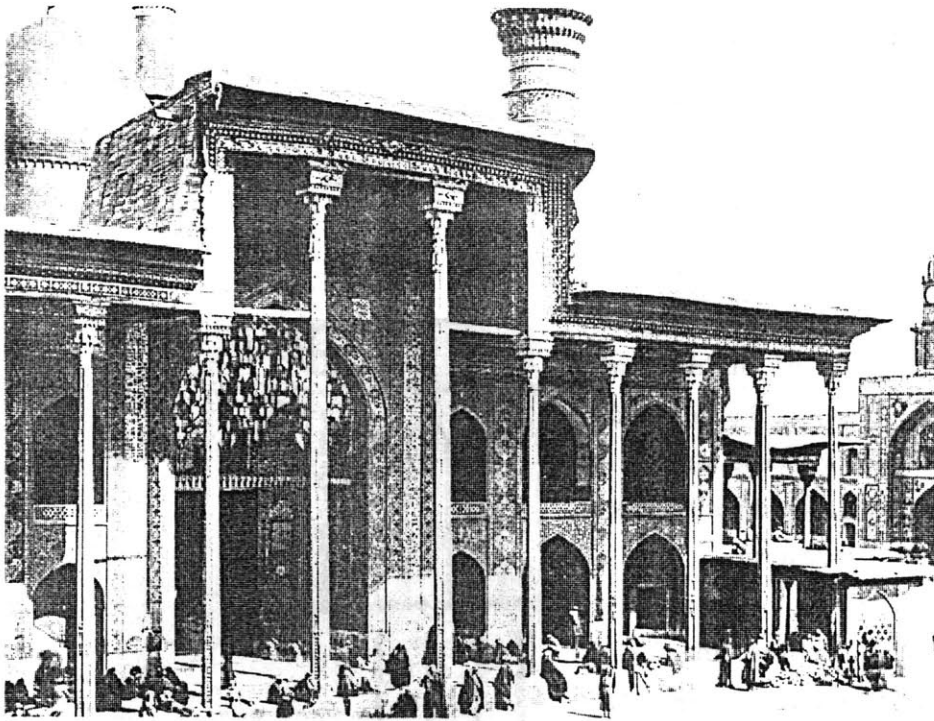
Fig. 10   The Entrance Arcade of the shrine at Khadhimain, shows the timber
colonnade.

John Jackson, who traveled to Iraq in the 18th century [44], described the colonnaded houses:

The roofs are flat and surrounded by a parapet. Here the inhabitants sleep during the summer season, in the open air. To a European every house appears like a prison, as it can receive no light from the street, because it has no windows. They have generally two flights of steps; one leading to the hall, where alone strangers are admitted; the other leading to the harem, to which none but the family can have access. [45]

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[43]Warren and Fethi, p.32.
[44]Fethi and Warren, p.34.
[45]John Jackson, Journey (London: 1799).

An Arab custom, claimed to be part of the Islamic religion, is the segregation of women from men with whom they have no blood relation.[46] The courtyard was meant to be clearly separated from the outside, creating a sharp contrast between public and private; its bent entrance prevents the stranger's curiosity and is curtained off at the end. In addition, there is a division between the harem for women, servants, and female guests. The diwankhana for males and their guests. Sometimes the two sections are extremely separated, having different entrances.

The Iraqi courtyard house is not a peculiar type. The courtyard house can be found in North Africa, in the Persian Gulf area, southern and central Asia, and other places. Despite a few architectural differences, in the Muslim world courtyard houses share major concepts. They share the notion of a large central space and the concept of privacy in the segregation of women in the *harim* from the mens' quarters or *diwankhana*. These houses tend to be labeled as Arab, Muslim, or Middle-Eastern houses.

Description of the House

Western scholars depicted the courtyard house as the private place of the harem. The contrast between the outside life and the inner life triggered their imagination of the exotic life of the East behind high solid walls. (Fig. 11.)The work of Richard Burton and others helped construct the westerners' perception of the East as the exotic, erotic and inferior.[47] Baghdad city was imagined within the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights*.. Richard Burton's translating the tales of Arabian nights, he described the courtyard house in exotic and exaggerated overtones of language, as revealing the secret life of the harem:

...and they went on till they reached a spacious ground-floor hall built with admirable skill and beautified with all manner of colors and carvings; with upper balconies and groined arches and galleries and cupboards and recesses

Fig. 11 The traditional courtyard houses.

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[46]Fethi and Warren, p.8.

[47]After being exchanged orally, the stories of Arabian Nights came to be translated variously by various Western scholars. It is believed that Antonie Galland was the first to introduce these stories to the west between 1704 and 1717. Later on came the translations of E. W. Lane and Richard Burton.
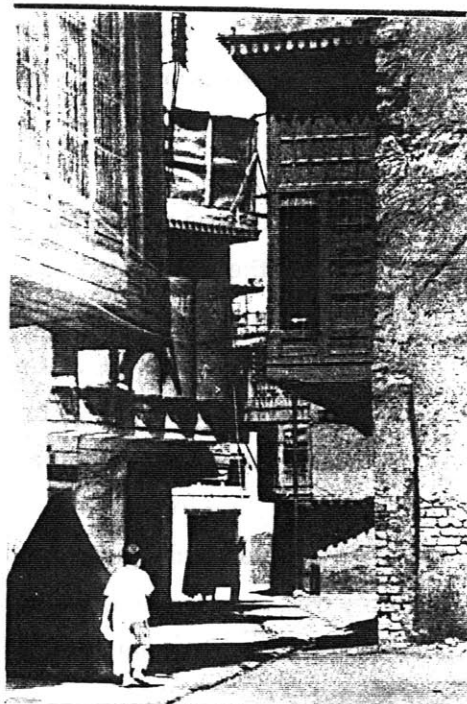
whose curtains hung before them. In the midst stood a great basin of water surrounding a fine fountain, and on the upper end of the raised dais was a couch of juniper wood set with gems and pearls, with a canopy like mosquito curtains of red satin-silk looped up with pearls as big as filberts... [48]

The courtyard house was determined by the organic nature of the city; it corresponded in shape to the houses surrounding the plot. (Fig.12.) The two-story house was built of brick at the ground level and timber on the second level. Its organic rectangular shape was mostly surrounded on three sides by other houses. As a result, the house turned to the inside, displaying no windows on the outside except one facade facing the alley, which was covered with projecting wooden lattice screens called shanashill.

The courtyard acts as a visual reference for the house, uniting the segregated spaces of the house with its inner private court. (Fig. 13) The courtyard also serves as a space for women's housework, especially cooking. In wealthier houses, owners can afford to provide a separate courtyard for cooking called " hosh al mutbakh."[49] Although the guest room is one of the spaces that overlooks the private space of the courtyard, it is shielded from the activity of the harem in the house. It usually is entered from the bent lobby and has permanent curtains covering the lattice timber windows. The Iwan or Talar is another room on the ground floor; this space semi-open to the yard, was used as dining room or as a tea room. (Fig. 14) Its

Fig. 12   The pattern of the old city.
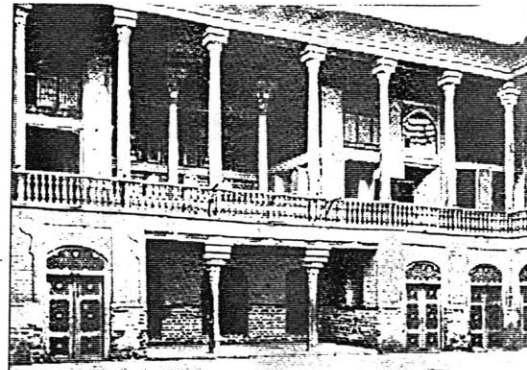
Fig. 13   Elevation of court al-Harem, showing at the ground level the Talar or the colonaaded recess and at the first floor, the Tarma.
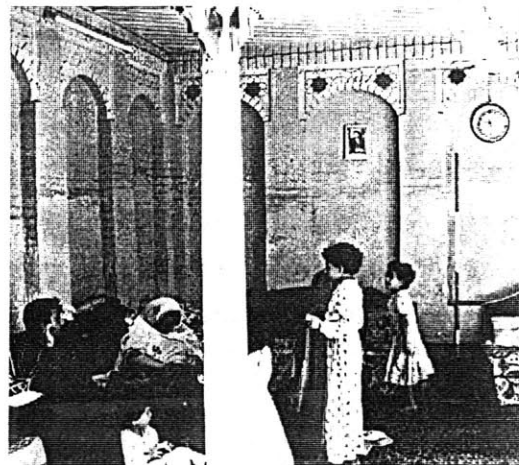
Fig. 14   The Iwan at the first floor with Delak columns.

[48]Warren and Fethi, p.17. Quote is from Sir Richard Burton, tales of Arabian Nights, London: Elek, 1958.
[49]Fethi and Warren, p.106.

slightly raised floor acts as the stage of the house; its wooden columns (Delak) along its open side support the Tarma on the first floor. The living room, the other large room on the first floor after the guest room, is usually near the kitchen, facing the courtyard with its decorated windows. Sometimes in the winter this space is used as a dining room instead of the Iwan.

The first floor is surrounded by a gallery that connects the spaces. The Tarma--a semi-open space that resembles the Iwan--is connected to the gallery. The Tarma is used for sleeping in autumn and spring or for afternoon tea. Sometimes Tarmas are projected outside when the house overlooks a park or river. While the Tarma acts as an open interior balcony projected into the gallery and the yard, the bedrooms on the sides of the first floor are fully enclosed. They have large decorated timber windows called ursi, and are usually divided up, with specific rooms for parents, children, males and family guests. (Figs 15-16.)

The private life of the inner court is protected from the neighbors' eyes by high walls. "To look over the neighbor's fence would have been to steal from him his privacy."[50] Since the roof terrace was used mostly by the family as a sleeping area in the summer, it was shielded by high parapets. The roof was divided into two, three, or four areas to be used by parents, male adults, females or distant relatives. Privacy was achieved by separating these areas with

[50]Fethi and Warren, p.100.

Fig. 15   Ground floor plan, basement and first floor plan, kadhimiyeh.
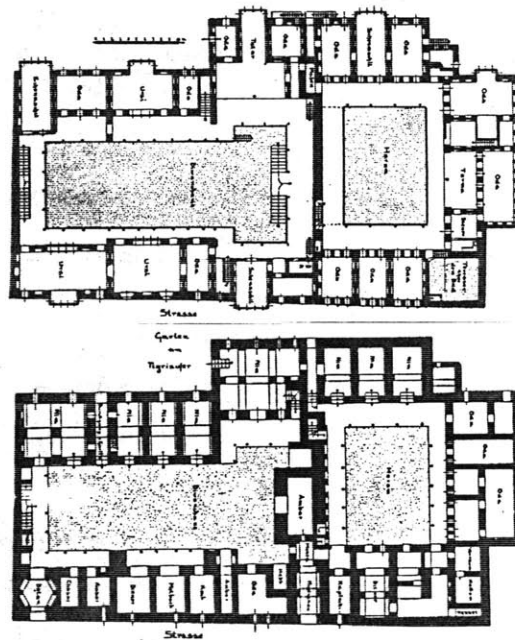
Fig. 16   Ground floor plan and first floor of the harem and diwankhana.

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bed sheets. The bed sheets could be raised to the height of the wall to prevent family members from looking at each other. Further, the mosquito net that covered the bed also helped achieve privacy.

Rethinking the Courtyard House

In the 1950s, the impact of modernization and new regulations on renewal and urban expansion led to the destruction of many traditional courtyard houses. These houses were left behind by their original owners who were seeking modern houses and better lifestyles. At that point, there was a clear distinction in the mind of the Iraqi people, between the traditional courtyard houses called the Oriental house (Byoot Sharqiyah) and the Western house (Byoot Ghabiyah.)[51] The traditional courtyard houses were then either transformed into warehouses and workshops or were inhabited by poorer people or immigrants from the suburbs. (Fig. 17.)
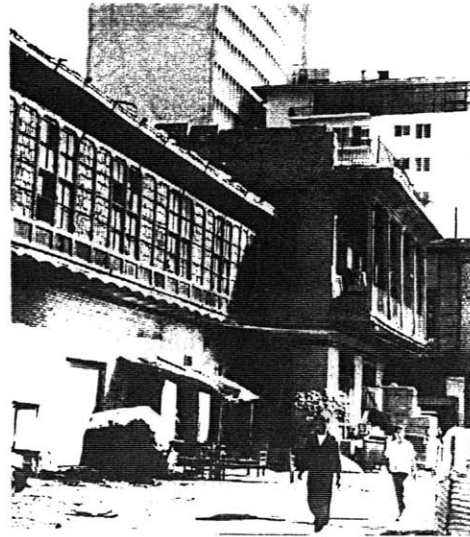
Fig. 17   The co-existence of old and new.

However, the destruction of these houses eventually led to a reassessment of them by architects and later on by the local government.[52] The traditional courtyard house both conceals and reveals the memories and myths of Iraqi cultural identity, which stimulated the society's consciousness to return to seek its individuality. By the 1960s and 1970s, the courtyard house became a model of the appealing search for a romantic tradition. The near impossibility of living in a traditional house in a modern society and with a modern life style made the memory even more appealing. The architect imagination was full of the rich decorated images of old streets oBaghdad, with Shanashil casting shadows on the streets, where women walked by wearing abayas. These images repeatedly depicted the domestic and private life of the

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[51]Subhi Al Azzawi, The Courtyards of Indigenous and Oriental Houses in Baghdad, Traditional Dwellings and Settlements, Working Paper Series Vol. VI 59-84, 1989.
[52]Mohammed Makiya worked with students documenting the traditional courtyard houses and their details.

house and helped to fix and stabilize the image of traditional house and a traditional woman as the ideal. (Fig 18.)

Since the courtyard house had been an overwhelming traditional resource, it inspired architects who wanted to bring the essence of that experience to the modern house. They rationalized its climatic features and in the 1960s and 1970s conducted scientific research on issues of temperature and living comfort. The house became the object of examination and experiment, from its symbolic elements to its actual courtyard plan.

Fig. 18 The traditional house as an ideal type of privacy.

The traditional house had embodied meanings of privacy, mostly associated with the segregation of women. The segregation came not only between the males and females of the family, but also between guests and women. There were separate entrances and staircases to ensure the segregation of women from guests. However, the wealth of the owner could increase the degree of segregation, sometimes creating two courtyards one for the harem and the other for males. These two courtyards would usually have separate independent entrances to prevent interaction. Moreover, the segregation of women from the outside world led the woman to depend on the house as part of their identity.

Her acts were associated with the house: she was dependent and passive, relying on the man who controlled the threshold between the inner and outer space. Images of women mostly, wearing the Abaya, had become part of the courtyard house representations. These images

Fig. 19-20 The woman in the traditional courtyard house

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had portrayed women as either looking into the alley from behind the lattice screens, making tea in the Tarma or serving the men. All these images reinforced ideas of the limited role of woman around domestic ideals and her dependency on the man. (Figs. 19-21.)

These customs and practices found their justification in religion. Mona Mikhail questions the origins of these practices. In his foreword, to Mikhail's book, Gamal Moursi Badr states that these practices are more of Persian and Byzantine origin than of Islamic origin. He argues that the Muslims did not practice the seclusion of women in the first century of the Islamic era and used to mix more freely. He gives as an example the wife of the son of a known companion of the prophet Mus'ab ibn al-Zubair. When she was asked to veil her face, she said, *"Since the Almighty hath put me the stamp of beauty, it is my wish that the public should view that beauty and thereby recognize His grace unto them."*[53]

Fatima Mernissi expressed the same belief in her book, Women and Islam:

If women's are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the koran nor the prophet, nor the Islamic tradition.[54]

Fig. 21 The woman within the shanashill..

Mernissi and Mikhail's argument tries to prove the source of women's segregation is not Islamic, but pre-Islamic. Although some of these arguments try to disassociate Islam from segregation to prove its intended equality, it was nonetheless practiced in Muslim societies and was justified through and in religion. Whatever the origin of these practices, they presumed superior status for the Muslim man.

[53]Mona Mikhail, Images of Arab Women (Washington D.C: Three Continents Press Inc, 1979), p.3.
[54]Fatima Mernissi, Women & Islam : An Historical and Theological Enquiry (Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. ix.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the literature on this subject exaggerated the privacy aspect in the courtyard house, attributing and associating every feature to the need for women's privacy. For example, the job of calling the public to prayer from the minaret was given to a blind man in order to prevent a stranger from overlooking the private life of the courtyard house. In addition, the lattice screen, called the Shanashill or Mashrabiya, was also associated with the segregation of women; however, the screen may equally have resulted from a climatic cause, the need to keep out the dust, sun or glare. Thus, the courtyard house epitomized the ideal type of private life.

Even though the courtyard house seems a neutral form adaptable to different uses, it existed in an intolerant segregated society, highly separated from the public life outside. The neutral form of the interior courtyard space made it less easy to segregate the family within the house. (Fig. 22.) Spaces were used for different activities due to change in seasons and times of the day. The summer activties in a first floor might move to the second floor at the night or in the winter. Other bedrooms could be converted to winter tea rooms or siesta rooms. This practice provides flexibility within the family in the use of space. However, this flexibility did not tolerate the privacy and the interaction between men and women inside the house. Thus renders the house the ideal type of private and domestic life.
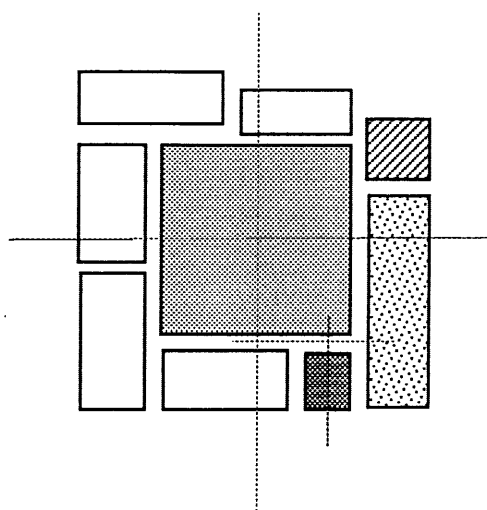
Fig. 22   Diagram of spatial relationship in the courtyard house.
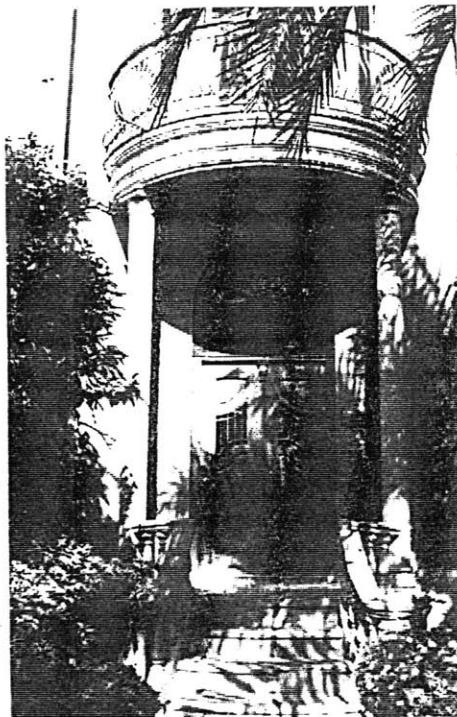
Chapter Two

Persistency Underlying Classical Expression

Chapter Two
Between the Two World Wars: Persistency underlying Classical Expression

As our administration exhibits European justice, order, law, energy and honour--and that in no hesitating or feeble way-so our buildings ought to hold up a high standard of European art. They ought to be European both as a rallying point for ourselves, and as raising a distinctive symbol of our presence to be beheld with respect and even with admiration by the natives of the country.[1]

The British considered the classical style in their colonies that involved using Metcalf terms *conceptions of national identity and purpose.*[2] This chapter considers the consequences of the British rule for the Iraqi social life and the architecture of their houses. The upper-middle-class families aspired to the prosperous life of the colonizers: the power and the cultural supremacy of the west. Their houses embodied principles of the classical and neo-classical style of symmetry and axis. The assertion of these principles of power and prestige was in conflict with the usual functions of the house; however, the conflict was manifested in the plans of these villas, explaining the persistence of certain conventions and their effect on women's privacy and segregation.

The Forming of Ideological Conflicts

The British rule of Iraq in 1920-1932 achieved Britain's objectives of protecting its interests in the region, and particularly its colony in India. Coinciding with the initial steps of modernization, the impact of the brief British rule was far-reaching. With their posture of superiority, the British took the role of the savior, claiming Iraq was incapable of self-government and was taking only inconclusive steps towards progress and modernization.

The British applauded the nationalist groups in Iraq in their opposition to the Ottoman rule. With these reassurances, the nationalists aspired to rule their country with the support of the English. However, they felt betrayed by the mandate status given to Iraq, which was perceived as a disguise for colonialization. In fact, the Iraqis enjoyed even less independence under the British. The exclusion of the Iraqis, and the inclusion of the Indians in administrative positions, in the army and police force, raised anger among the nationalists in Iraq.

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[1] T. Roger Smith, speaking on architectural art in India in 1873. Quoted from Thomas R. Metcalf, An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj p.1.

[2] Thomas R. Metcalf, An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p.1.

The opposition to British rule, which united offensive conflicting cultural and ideological groups, demanded independence from British rule and the right to govern Iraq. This resistance was accelerated in the so-called "The Great Iraqi Revolution."[3] These events led Britian to replace its military regime with a provisional Arab government, largely controlled by British advisors. In 1921, the British set parameters for political life in Iraq that remained in effect up to 1958. They chose King Faisal as the first king of Iraq. However, the Iraqis refused the concept of monarchy and considered Faisal merely the supporter of the British rule in Iraq. In their opposition to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, the nationalists demanded unconditional political independence. Thus a new Anglo-Iraqi treaty was signed in June, 1930, to admit Iraq to the League of Nations with the promise of full interaction between Britain and Iraq in all matters of foreign policy; the treaty came into effect in October 1932. Nevertheless, continuous conflicts ideological, ethnic, and religious continued to characterize the situation until July, 1958, when the monarchy was overthrown and the era of the Arab Baath socialist party began. The nationalists struggled for power and control over their social life; however, they emulated the power and prestige of the British in their rule and architecture.

The Imitation of the Colonizer Image:

The British architects in Iraq, from 1920 to the beginning of World War II, influenced the architectural style of the natives. With the emergence of patriotism and national awareness, however, the period of colonization known as the "contaminated" history of Iraq, was discarded in a revulsion against any indication of grandeur or superiority associated with the colonizer. However, architects such as Khalid Sultani and Rifat Chadirji appreciated the aesthetic values of the colonizers' classical style in spite of its political connotations.

A parallel could be drawn with the British colonization of India. Not only was the structure of the British administration in Iraq largely modeled on Britain's imperial structure in India,[4] but the architectural presence of the European classical style was a distinctive symbol of the British presence. In New Delhi, the British had idealized their monuments, emblemizing their power in stone, marble, or brick. The British in Iraq were no different; they aspired to the glory and to the stylish architecture of their colony in India. One of the most influential figures in India was Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) who cooperated with his friend Baker and in 1931

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[3]Perceived by the British as a tribal rebellion fomented by Syrian Nationalists, this was also known as the 1920 rebellion. The Iraqis perceived it as a genuine nationalist revolution that discredited certain practiced policies although it did not achieve independence. See The Modern History of Iraq, Phoebe Marr, p.33.
[4]Pheobe Marr, The Modern History of Iraq (Colorado: Westview Press, Inc. 1985) p.31.

completed the biggest and most remarkable imperial city of the British. Sir Edwin, famous for his British country houses and gardens, had a taste for the Romantic. He was fascinated with the 19th century classical style of England and believed in its capability to meet India's new needs. He yearned to create an image similar to the Acropolis in Athens. Moreover, he was intolerant of mixing other non-classical styles such as Mugual or Islamic into his grandiose architecture.[5] Sir Edwin and other British traditionalists criticized and resented the modern architecture. They associated it with fascism and other socialist movements, focusing especially on the Bauhaus and its association with the socialist movement in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. They aspired to the aesthetic and artistic values of architecture over political values, ignoring the early modernists' interest in free plan designs, functionalism and technological symbolism.[6]

The British architects in Iraq, like G. M. Wilson, H. C. Mason and G. B. Cooper had similar preferences and were largely influenced by the British architects of India, especially Lutyens. Although they had modest aspirations, they also designed buildings in the British classical style. The use of the classical style was not only a conservative aesthetic classical preference, but an assertion of national identity, promoting the classical style as the predominant style of their colonies. It had a political significance distinctly different from other styles in the European context. As part of their architectural adaptation to Iraq, the British architects tried to incorporate the traditional architecture of Iraq into their new style. The result was a political facade with few Islamic features. These influences of the classical and neo-classical styles led to an eclectic style of architecture in Iraq: a style preoccupied with ornaments and various Palladian, classical, and French pastiches in the facades and plans.
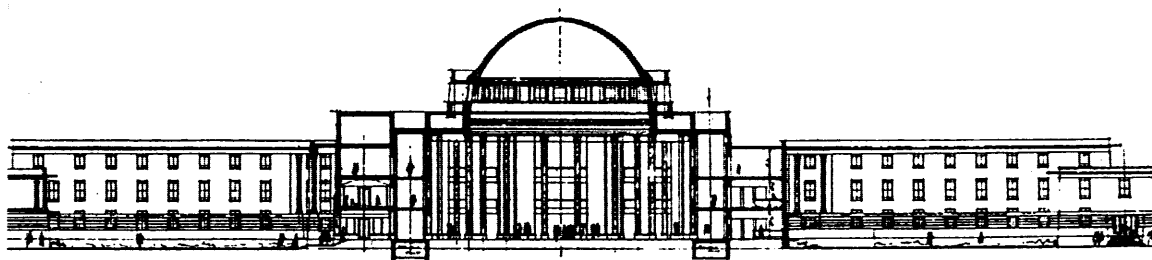
Fig. 1a   Front Elevation
Baghadad Railway Station, designed by J. M. Wilson 1947.

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[5]For example, he refused to use the pointed arch, preferring the Roman rounded arch.
[6]For more details on Sir Edwin Lutyens work, see Robert Grant Irving, Indian Summer, Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial India, (Yale University Press, 1981.)
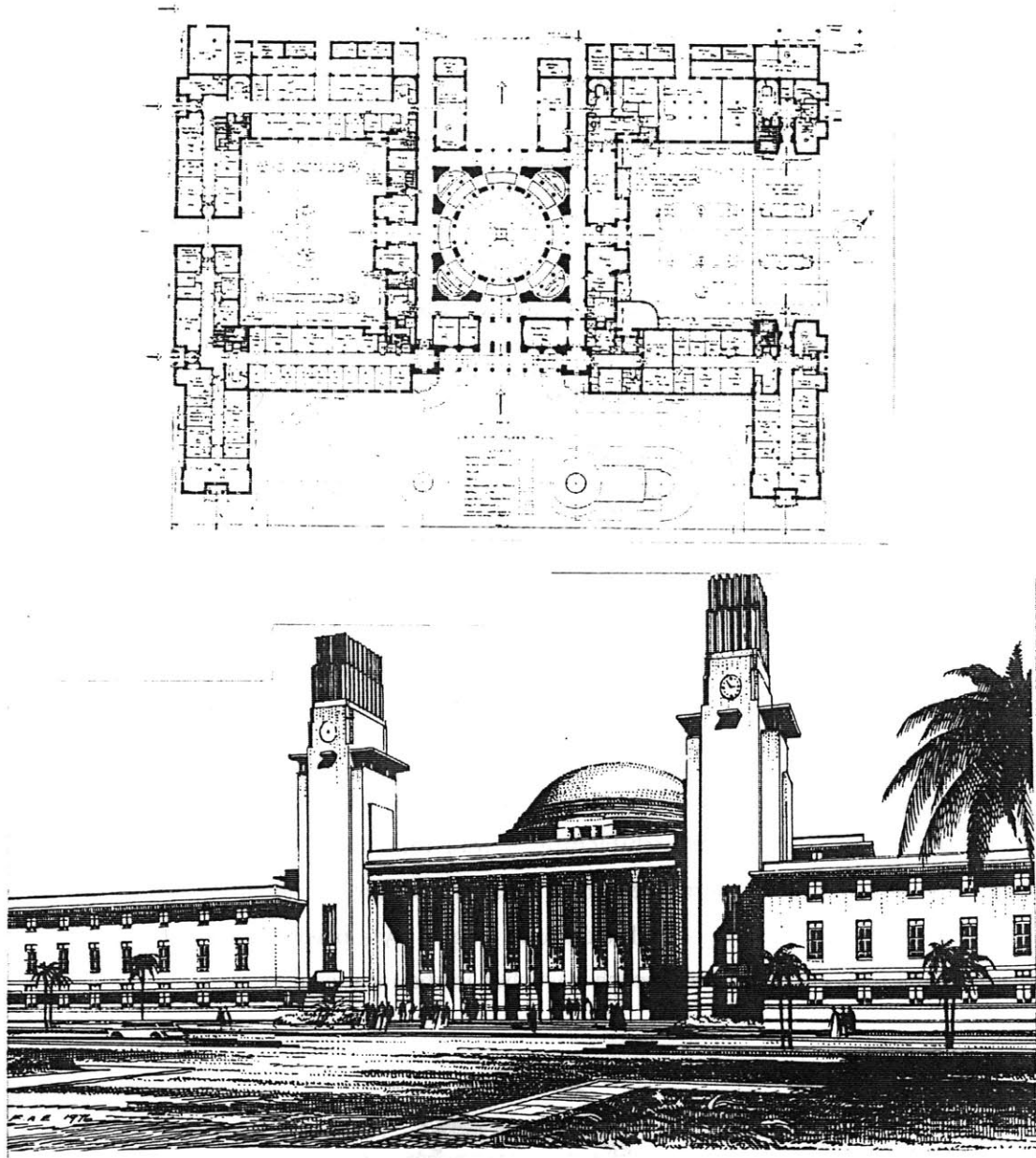
Fig. 1b Ground Floor Plan & Perspective from the Main Entrance.
Baghadad Railway Station, designed by J. M. Wilson 1947.

G. M. Wilson designed many projects that manifested the British preference for classical style. He was part of the British military engineers. He enjoyed his prosperous authoritarian position as a British employee in the government and a friend of King Faisal. In 1947, he designed Baghdad Railway station that expressed through its classical style the British dignified rule , creating a striking contrast with the local buildings[7] (Fig. 1).

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[7]Khalid Sultani, Architecture in Iraq between the Two World Wars 1920-1940, Ur magazine (the Iraqi Cultural Center 2/3-1982), p. 94

Since Iraq was the major link to Britain's biggest and most glorious colony, India, the British tried to further their style in Iraq. Khalid Sultani[8] expressed the same belief when he stated that the "English buildings in India were reinterpreted in Iraq".[9] In addition, most of the architects who worked in Iraq were military engineers who either had been in India or had participated in the building of it.

The British in India were forced to consider the style of the context. Sir Edwin was uncomfortable with the political implications of style; he explained his attitude saying, "The British architects in India should design the way they dress there."[10] He was highly critical of the need to use Islamic or Indian motifs in his buildings. Other British architects, like Baker looked into Mugual and Buddhist architecture for oriental decorations to be mixed with classical forms.[11]

In Iraq, there was similar pressure to consider the local style under British rule, particularly the Arab-Islamic style. The Iraqi nationalists were conscious of asserting their identity. With the nationalist movement in Iraq and the 1920 revolt against using Turkish and English in the schools, enthusiasim grew about local architectural style.[12] As in India, the British architects in Iraq tried to compromise the politics by adding so-called "Islamic features," i.e., native motifs. One example, is the interior of the Port Directorate offices in Basra, drawn by J. M. Wilson that incorporated Islamic patterns into the classical expression of the interior[13] (Fig. 2). Moreover, the critical climatic differences between Britain and both India and Iraq allowed for many
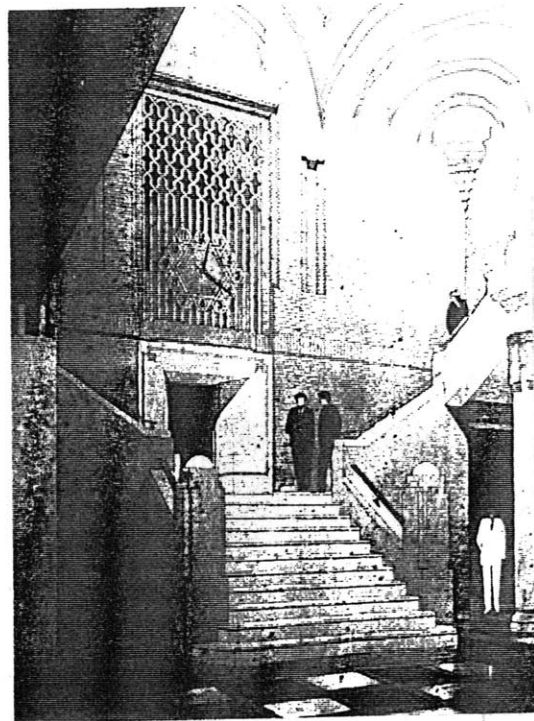
Fig. 2   Interior of Port Directorate Offices, designed by J. M. Wilson —.

[8]Khalid Sultani, The Thirties Architecture of Baghdad. Unpublished article, College of Engineering, University of Baghdad.
[9]Sultani, p. 99.
[10] Video: Imperial City: The use and influence of British architectural Style in India. Arts Council of Great Britain, 1980. Available at Rotch Library video collection, MIT Cambridge.
[11]Metcalf, p.28.
[12]Sultani, p.99.
[13]Sultani, p.96.

accommodations and raised many concerns.Wilson believed in evolving what he called "an Arab Renaissance Art"[14]. He emphasized the relationship between the building and the garden, as well as the axis, symmetry and the grandness of the British classical style. In the design of Aal Albait University (Fig. 3.), he expressed his opinion:

As can be seen from the plans the project includes building a central edifice with two fronts overlooking gardens, one of which is to face the road from al-Muatham to Baghdad, the other the river. [15]

His designs were largely influenced by the work of Lutyens; however, he was more tolerant in incorporating the tradition in his buildings.

Iraq has been the home of a certain style of architecture which has influenced the rest of the civilized world, but present circumstances need a new style of building which, it is hoped, will integrate the best of traditional decorative features.[16]
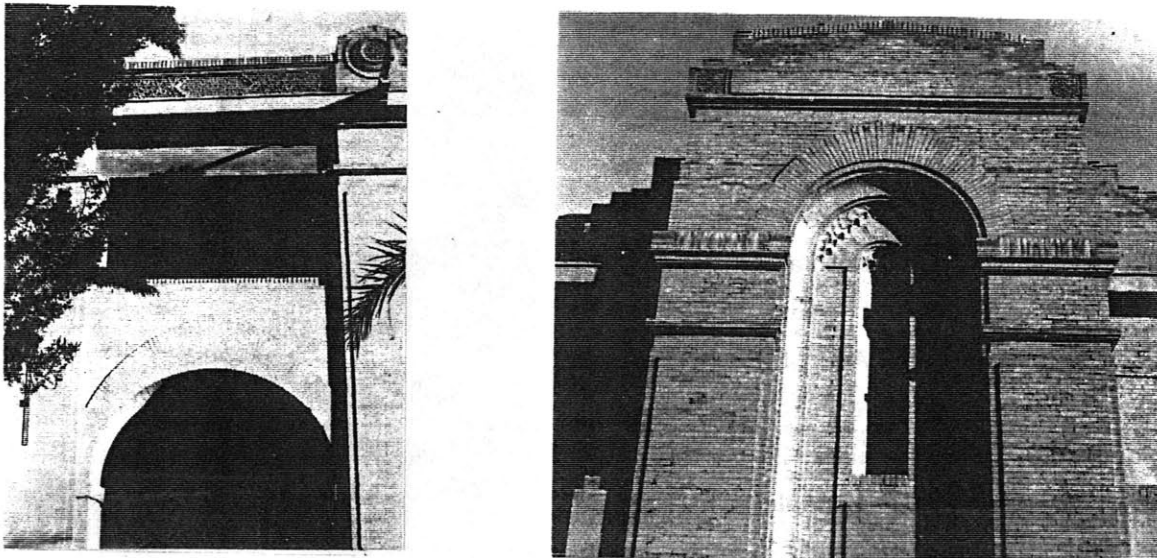
Fig. 3   Aal Albait University, designed by J. M. Wilson, 1922-1924.

Rifat Chadirji,[17] one of the pioneer Iraqi architects, has classified the period of British rule into two phases. The first is the period of classical and neo-classical style of British architecture. He dates the beginning of this period to their glorious buildings with the design of the Palace for the King by Maison in 1922, and believes it ended with the design of the al-

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[14]Sultani, p.101.
[15]Sultani, p.100.
[16]Sultani, p.101.
[17]Rifat Chadirji's book, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri (London: Riad Al-Rayyes, 1991) included a lengthy description of Chadirji's formative years and a description of the modern architecture and architects of the same period in Iraq. It is a further description of his earlier book Shari Taha wa Hamer published in 1985.

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Zuhoor Palace in 1933 (Fig. 4). The second period began with the design of al-Basra airport in 1931 and ended with the beginning of World War II. The glorious period ended with the decline of British power and their own loss of belief in classical architecture. This coincided with the influence of the modern style in England. The British architects in Iraq were cut off from this development and lacked confidence in using the modern style. Rifat stated that their architecture became confused after World War II..[18]
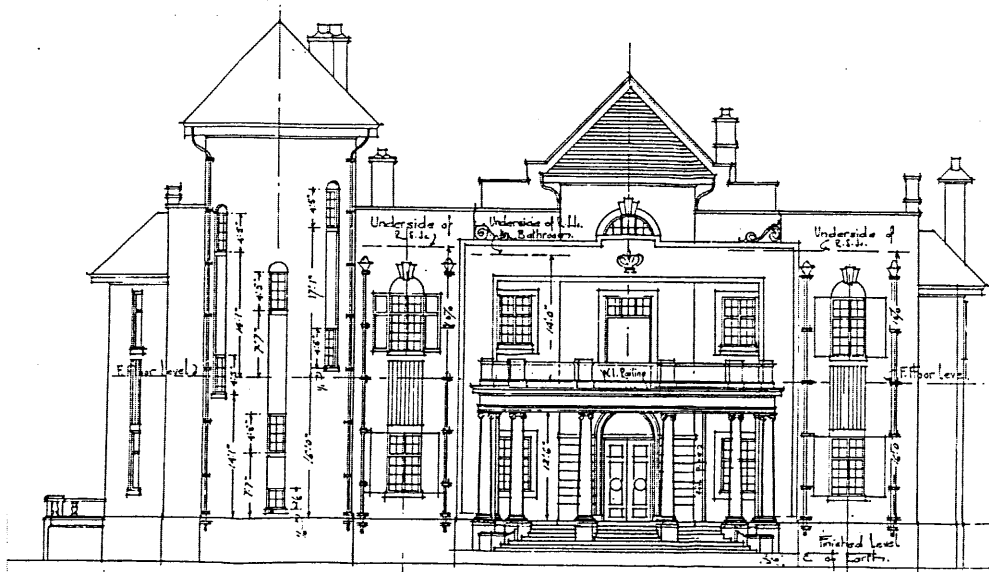
Fig. 4   Front Elevation
Villa (Qasr al-Zuhoor) -Harthiya -designed by H. C. Mason 1933.

After the decline of British rule, the impact of their style on Iraq resulted in a hybrid architecture using both eastern and western vocabularies. This architecture suffered from a lack of balance between the classical superiority of the colonizer and the traditional Islamic style. This architecture lived under the sway of its confusion, uncomfortable in its inconsistent ideological expression. Its randomness coincided with different factors, such as the practice of local architects and builders.

This period has not been well documented, in terms of buildings and customs. However, some writers provide clues about life in Iraq between the two world wars. Baghdad sketches by Freya Stark, tried to illuminate the type of life in Baghdad in the 1930s; it was directed to both foreigners and natives. The society was confused by the new influences, even their clothes were a mixture of western and traditional. Ironically, most of the people were anti-British and their imitation of western clothes, architectural styles and manners created a conflict.

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[18]Rifat Chadirji, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri (London: Riad El Rayyes, 1991), p. 515.

When the British took over the country, Nasir became a schoolmaster at Ba'quba, and adopted European clothes. He did not think much of them. 'There is not an Arab,' said he one warm day, 'who does not take refuge with Allah from the discomfort of your socks.' But it was a symbol of the new order. He tried to compromise by wearing a collar and no tie, observing with some truth that he could see no usefulness in the latter garment: the political officer, however, said that it was better to be either European or all Asiatic in the matter of clothes: Nasir submitted to our peculiar views on masculine adornment as part of the new civilization.[19]

Stark continued to describe the life of the Arabic teacher, Nasir and his wife:

In his own house he returned to the long white gown. I called there one day on his wife, a frightened wild creature with long plaits who sat timidly on one corner of the red velvet divan, evidently unused to chairs, and too shy to utter a word.[20]

The image of a submissive wife mostly uneducated, was prevalent. It fit the stereotypical "feminine behavior". She and her husband accept her subversion as part of her identity distinct from that of the Western woman.

Cautious of European and American women's influences, exclusive rules and restrictions were set for Iraqi women on their residences, movement, and escorts.[21] A letter to the Baghdad Times explained the social status of ladies in Baghdad.

To the Editor.

Sir, In your paper of Oct. 18th you give a detailed though possibly not a comprehensive list (for that would be beyond any human ingenuity) of things that ladies in Iraq are not supposed to do. As an earnest and interested engineer, may I ask for a few further details?
What, exactly is meant by a "similar social status"?
It is quite difficult enough, in these days, to define a "Lady," but when she has to have a Similar Social Status as well, it become impossible without the help of some lucid official definition.
It is rather important, for I gather from the above-mentioned document that if she is neither a Lady, nor possessed of any Social Status in particular, the authorities do not really mind what becomes of her, and she may pic-nic off the main road without notifying the Ministry of the Interior.
I take it that before accepting any invitation that may be made, she must also be very careful to look into the adequate Social Status of the European and American who is to accompany her. This is always judicious, especially when traveling abroad, and cannot be too carefully recommended. But a few hints as to how to decide on such a matter at short notice, would be very useful. Socks and ties and an Oxford manner are apt to be misleading, and a short test that could be applied rapidly whenever any excursion or expedition is under discussion, appears to be highly advisable.

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[19]Freya Stark, Baghdad Sketches (New York: E. P. Dutton&Co., 1938) p. 46.
[20]Stark, p.47.
[21]Stark. For details on these restrictions, see p. 79.

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As to main roads--they are not always recognizable in this country..They suddenly turn into a flat desert and one finds that one is off them. Under such circumstances, is a real lady, with Social Status and all, liable to have her visa canceled?

Yours,

ENQUIRER

Under British rule, the Iraqi woman was exposed to a new life style, that of the European woman, which led to a new kind of uneasiness.[22] Her status was clearly distinguished from the "other," the western women, and thus her inferior status in "difference" was intensified. These distinctions were explicitly and implicitly amplified in rules and restrictions on her movement outside the house. The European woman continued a middle-class style of living, not necessarily engaged in a middle-class occupation, but seeking a middle-class domesticity in a middle-class home. The upper-class woman aimed to identify herself with the European woman in lifestyle and fashion. Her prestigious status, above other lower class women was evidenced through her clothes, her house, her television set, her husband's car and her maids. However, she fell within the same construct of identity and was mostly uneducated, married young, and domesticated into a submissive role. The upper-class women lived in a luxurious villa which was privatized in reflection of the society's convention. Her position was in conflict since the long tradition of belief could not be unreservedly discarded. Beliefs and aspirations were not in confluence and women were faced with a paradox between their own experiences and the new aspirations of the colonial image.

The British influences lasted a long time. They left traces of their manners, customs, beliefs, and classical buildings, as well as their western clothes, in a society which struggled to prove its independence from colonial domination. Their architecture could be neither Iraqi nor English, but inhabited the space between the two--a remaining expression of British knowledge and power.

The Colonial House

In domestic architecture, Iraqi houses were greatly influenced by the classical style. These houses carried so many classical, Italian, French, and Palladian influences, that one can not accurately name their style or identify their origin. These houses might contain glimpses of

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[22]These were mostly the wives of the privileged minority of civil and military officers.

various classical styles, though the different influences and mixtures would make identification with one style more expedient. Moreover, the trend in the 1930s and 1940s of using Italian and French catalogues made these house styles even more eclectic, especially the upper-middle-class villas. These plans inherited the classical hierarchy and composition of western models, yet were appropriated to suit the conventions of Iraqi society (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5   Thirties Houses, al- Wazyeria, Baghdad, Designed by a Local Architect.

The palatial architecture of Palladian villas had a clear influence, especially in the logic of the plans. It is interesting to see this in relation to the great Palladian revivals in Italy and England in the early eighteenth century. While the influence in Italy was on the religious buildings, in England it affected domestic architecture. In Egypt, in the second half of the nineteenth century, this style has been considered a symbol of aspiration to a higher social status. Khalid Asfour clarified the same belief, arguing for the continued Cairene tradition inside the Palladian style, which was prevalent mostly in Europe for upper-middle-class villas. [23]Sir Edwin Lutyens also had experimented with the Palladian style in India and built villas in that style. Similarly, in Iraq it attracted the attention of the upper-middle class mostly politicians, merchants and lawyers who aspired to the power and prosperity of the colonizers. These villas emphasized simplicity and calm grandeur in their spatial and formal qualities. They appear to be solid and severe, a picturesque vista of the British influence.

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[23]Khalid Asfour, Cairene Traditions Inside Palladian Villas, Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review. Vol. IV No. 11, 1993, p.40.

In reaction to the critique of the modern Arab house being westernized in form, a counteractive argument explained the continuity of tradition in the modern house.[24] This was mostly based on the continuity of social and cultural conventions shown through the adaptation of the western style. Thus, the discontinuity was in the formal aesthetic language and technological functional aspects.[25] The villas that had been built in the 1930s were reinterpreted by others as a continuation of the traditional courtyard house--the central hall considered to be the central yard of the courtyard house, now being covered for climatic reasons. Layth Raouf argues that the modern Iraqi House is a continuation of the traditional Iraqi house. However, his reference to these villas as covered courtyard houses is inaccurate in its suggestion of formal continuation.[24] Moreover a distinction is necessary between those villas and the earlier modified courtyard houses that carried the same logic as the courtyard house. The latter were subjected to new regulations, such as the setback and the straightening requirements which gave them a greater exposure to the outside. Moreover, rules limited the use of the shanashill as a covered projection beyond the plot boundary. Thus, uncovered balconies called "tarmas" started to appear in the facades[26](Fig. 6).
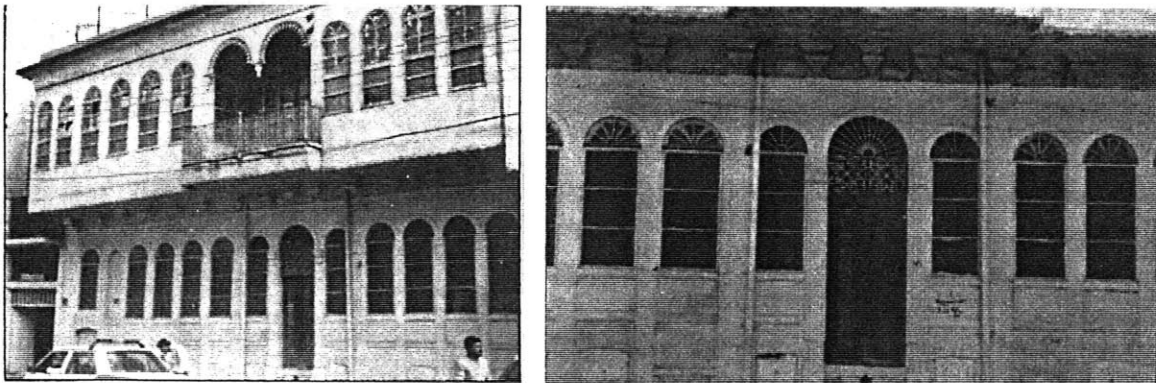
Fig. 6   Modified Traditional House in the break through Nineveh Street, Mosul.

While the balconies in the colonial houses were a result of stylistic influences, in the other case, they were the outcome of rules. The conceptual implication and the ideological context of the colonial house in the 1930s conveyed different meanings from those of both the courtyard house and the modified courtyard house, yet it resembled them in the underlying cultural and social practices. The villa was a symbol of power and prestige; it became an object on the site and within the garden, exposing its wealth to the outside. Ironically, the natives popularized the style of the colonizer, creating and magnifying the distance between the general public and

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[24]See Layth Raouf, Tradition and Continuity in the Modern Iraqi House, Ur 1-1985.
See Khalid Asfour, Cairene Traditions Inside Palladian Villas, Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review. Vol. IV. No. 11, 1993, p. 40.
[25]It differs from the post-modern era where consciousness of use of certain forms and historical references was explicit to achieve its linkage to the past.
[26]Raouf, p.20.

the upper-class families. In contrast, the courtyard house, though decorative in its way, was less distinctive in comparison with the lower-class houses that took the same form with less decoration.

The extroverted nature of these villas contradicted the generally private style of Iraqi life. As a result, the new classical style had to be adjusted so it would correspond to the traditional values of the society. However, the generic use of the term "traditional values" refers here to the prevalent inheritance, which includes values related to privacy, women's status and identity. Ironically, the quest for superiority is antagonistic to the so-called "fixed" values. The double perspective scenes in the city of Baghdad illustrate how heterogeneous these concepts were. One persepective is the balconies and tarmas in these villas. They are extended and stretched spaces to the outside, revealing part of the life to the public (Fig. 7). Its connotation is unveiling, exposure and openness; however, it contrasts with other spaces that women inhabited psychologically and physically.
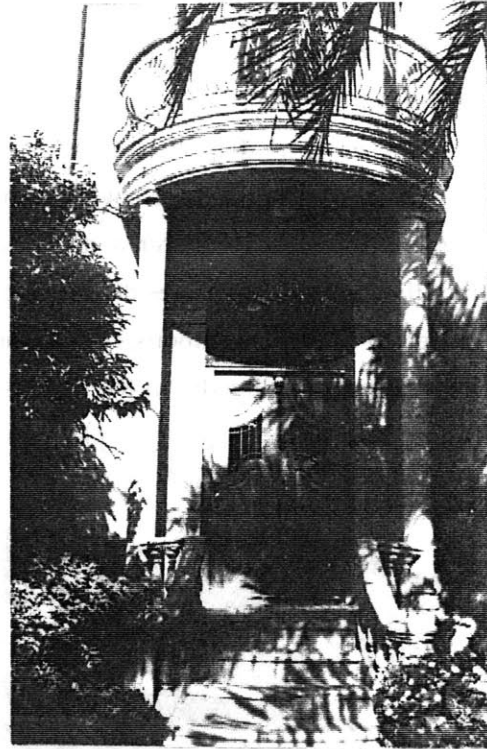
Fig. 7   Balconies in the European Style

The other perspective is the unisex schools attended by women. These are mostly surrounded by high walls where the gate of the school is the threshold of the unveiling process, where women take the abaya off. Generally, the margin of inside and outside is quite explicit in the design of spaces. The balconies and tarmas that are quite inviting to the inner world turned out to be an inappropriate space for women to sit in or do chores. The woman was conscious of being recognized and seen in an inappropriate situation by passers-by in the street.[27]

The plans of these villas shared the same logic of the Palladian villas, i.e. the symmetrical plan and axial determination (Fig. 8). They were also composed of a central plan and had an

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[27]I recall my grandmother sitting in the veranda or the balcony in her house enjoying the sun while conscious all the time of being recognized by a passer-by in the street.

comparison with the other houses examined in this study, this house tried to follow the logic of the form clearly with less adaptation. It achieved an absolute symmetry both in the facade and the back of the house. The hall was situated on the central axis with equal sized rooms on both sides. The staircase was positioned in the central axis, integrated into the design of the house. Thus, it differed largely from the conventional way of locating the stairs in the courtyard house as a mere functional and segregative device. In this house, its meaning is stretched until it nearly becomes a theatrical device.

Fig. 9a   The front elevation--Hafez Jamil House.

Since following the logical principles of axis and symmetry are of prime concern in this house, the rooms are restricted to a certain size that is sometimes not sufficient for its activity. In addition, this concern made other changes impossible in order to be able to retain the symmetrical plan. However, within the logical constraints of the plan, certain adaptations were considered to achieve privacy. The entrance hall used the same mechanisms for privacy as the courtyard house. It still served as the demarcation line between public and private, providing two separate entrances, one public and one private.
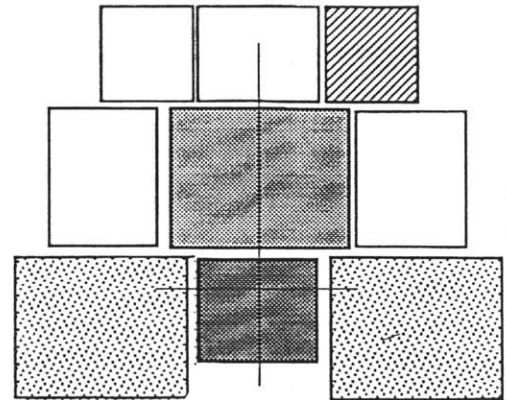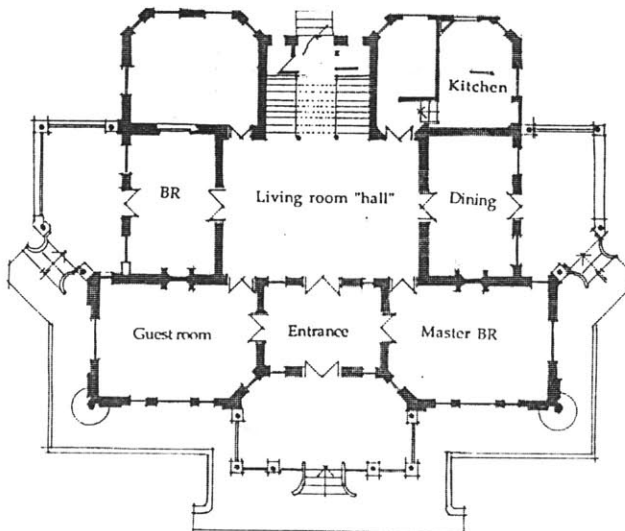
Fig. 9b   The ground floor plan-- Hafez Jamil House.

Fig. 9c   Diagram of the spatial relationship.

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It was highly enclosed and had three double doors to the inside; one leading to the central hall used mostly by women, while men used the guest room. However, the door from the entrance to the master bedroom was insufficient for secluding it from the other spaces of the house. Moreover it faced a more public space, the guest room. Thus, the door was located only to achieve symmetry with the guest room's door. The central hall became a space of circulation in this house, for there were seven double-doors opening to the hall.

Other examples are generated from the same principle but are more tolerant in their adaptation. Kamal Sinawi's house built in the early 1930s in al-Sadoon is another example of this type of house; however, it retains its symmetrical facade while it is asymmetrical behind the first layer of the plan (Fig. 10).
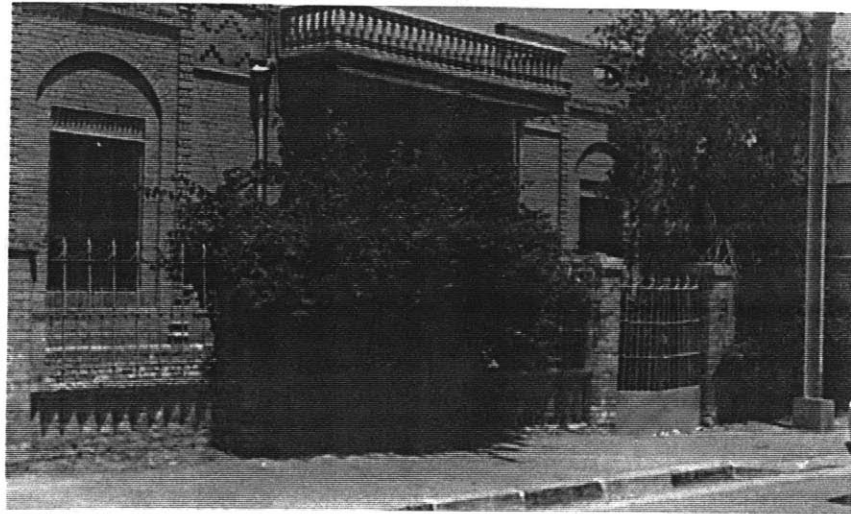
Fig. 10a The front elevation--Kamal Sinawi House.

The spaces in the back -- the bedrooms and the toilets -- do not follow the symmetrical logic. The entrance is different from Jamil's house in that it opens immediately to the central hall. This made one entrance to the guest room inconvenient for privacy. In that respect, another door to the guest room from the outside was provided to separate the guests from women. The master bedroom had three doors, two of which correspond symmetrically to the other two facing it, thus making its use inefficient. The more private door in the back of the room was mostly used by the woman.[29] The staircase in this example has been transferred to the inside to serve the more private wings; thus it interrupted the symmetrical layout of space. The kitchen is

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[29] These observations of the behavior of women in this type of the house are derived both from my earlier report on these houses in Iraq and from my personal experience, having lived in this house with my grandmother.

secluded and situated in the back garden, thus adding to the distance the maids or the housewife had to carry the food.
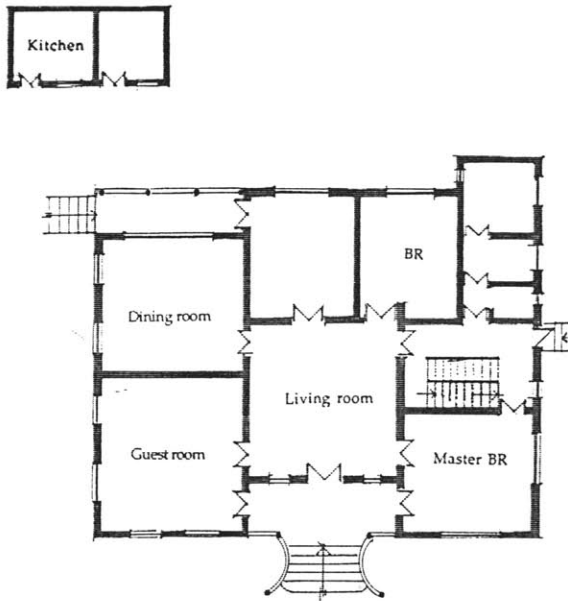
Fig. 10b The ground floor plan--Kamal Sinawi House.
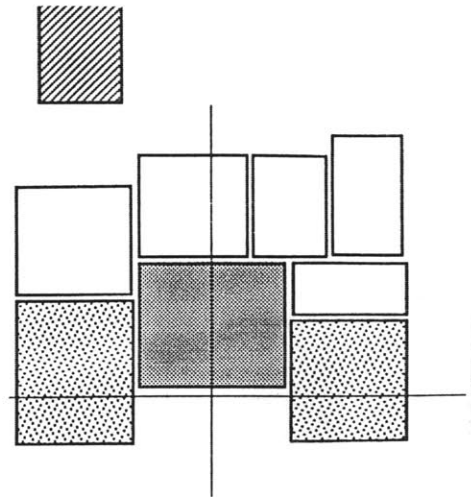
Fig. 10c Diagram of the spatial relationship.

The house of Tawfik al-Suwaydi, designed by the local architect Abbas Hasan is similar to al-Sinawi house in incorporating the symmetrical plan with the functional conventional use of space (Fig. 11). It embodied symmetry in the first layer of the plan, but is non-symmetrical at the back, allowing more freedom in the spatial mapping. The kitchen is still independent from other activities, having a separate door and corridor at the back that connects it to the dining room. It has the entrance device that separates guests from the private space in the hall.
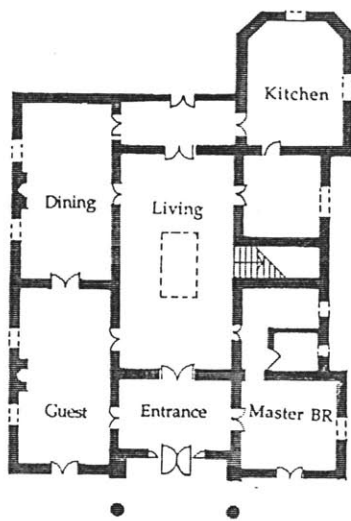
Fig. 11a The ground floor plan--Tawfik al-Suwaydi House.
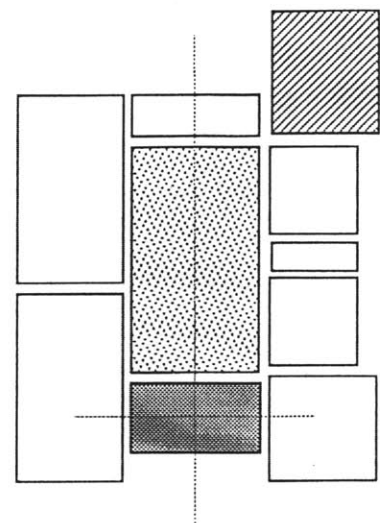
Fig. 11b Diagram of the spatial relationship.

In his piece on the Modern Iraqi house, Layth Raouf had included a plan of this ideal type of house [30] (Fig. 12). It showed the symmetrical plan in the front with an asymmetrical plan in the back. The staircase is hidden behind one of the central hall walls. The central axis is shifted to one of the sides to prevent anyone from having an immediate direct look inside. The guest room has two doors; one opens to the outside, and the other opens to the front terrace. However, the door to the bedroom on the other side does not correspond to the opening of the guest room, showing a departure from classical plan restrictions.

As shown in the above examples, the central space of the Palladian villas was passed down to the Iraqi house and used as a living room (Fig. 13). It became a circulation space different from the yard in the courtyard house. While the yard in the courtyard house acted as the visual connector, and a source for sunlight and ventilation, in the colonial house the central hall retained its activity as a central functional device connecting other spaces. However, it is inconvenient to the life style of Iraqi society. Moreover, its ventilation and lighting is inefficient. The many doors used in this house to retain privacy for the bedrooms made it hard to control heat in cold winters.

Fig. 12   Plan of ideal type of colonial house.
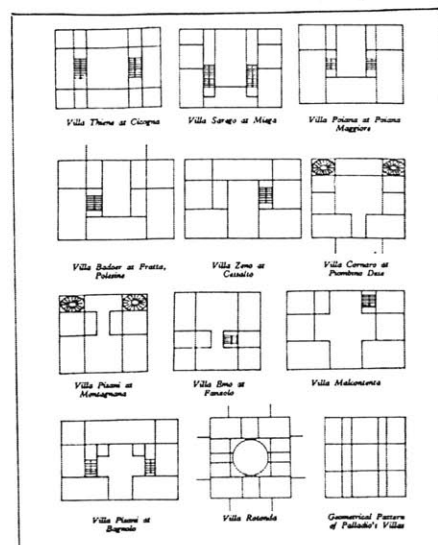
Fig. 13   Plans of Palladio's villas.

The ceiling height of the central space is doubled giving grandness to the space that resembled the central space of Palladian villas. The central hall in the Palladian villa might have satisfied the need of Italian society or European society (Figs 13-14). In Iraq, however, it was

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[30]Layth Raouf, Tradition and continuity in the Modern Iraqi House, Ur 1-1985, p.22.
This house is called "the covered courtyard house" by Layth Raouf.

incapable of fitting with the usual practice of society because of its symmetrical plan restrictions.

Other later solutions responded to the inefficiency of the central hall and the restriction of the symmetrical plan. More adaptation was applied, changing the logic of the plan; however, it showed a clear departure from the classical. One of these examples is the Rauof Saad house built in 1963 in Taha Street. The front facade had the classical style yet it was asymmetrical in plan (Fig. 15).

While the logic behind the form in the Palladian villa was constant in the symmetrically juxtaposed spaces and axial determination, it was ambiguous in the Iraqi house. The incompatibility of the axis and symmetrical plan with the function and use of the space led to the neglect of axis and symmetry. The axis was shifted to hide and seclude the space from the viewer. Similarly, the location of the guest room door, opening into the central living hall, makes it quite interactive with the private life of the women inside; hence, an outside door to the guest room was usually provided.

As such, the design of the house is subordinate to an intellectual construct, i.e. an idea of symmetry and axis which does not reflect the experiential reality of domestic life. Thus, the overall logic of the plan was bypassed in favor of having a symmetrical plan in the front and a less symmetrical plan at the back of the house (Fig. 16). Thus the plan came to be determined
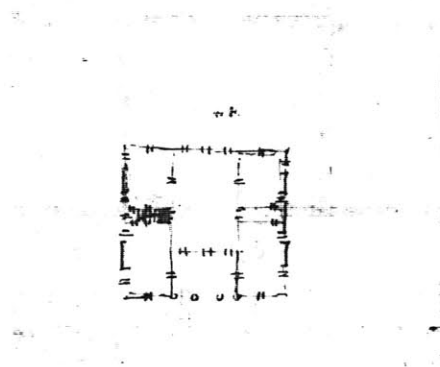
Fig. 14   Plan study of Palladio's work.
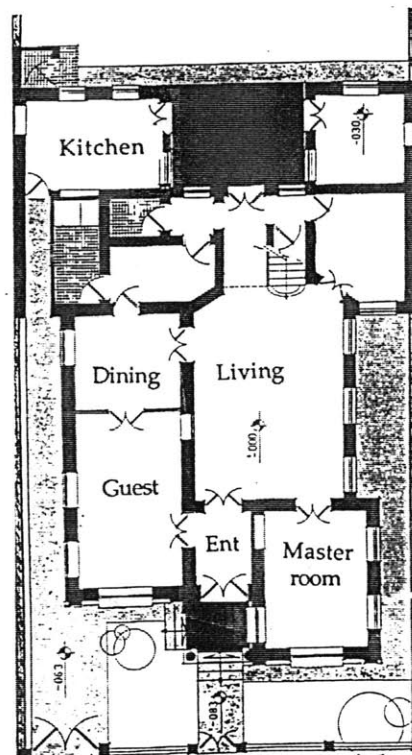
Fig. 15a   The ground floor plan--Rauof Saad House.
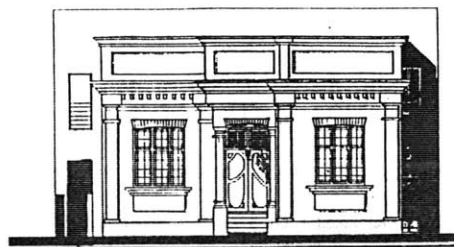
Fig. 15b   The front elavation--Rauof Saad House.

by other functional criteria of privacy and inaccessibility.

The practice of ensuring privacy by introducing another layer, usually in the entrance, did prevent immediate openness between the street and the inner private living room. The entrance lobby acted as an intermediate semi-public space with doors on each end. The degree of adaptation differed from one family to another; however, most of these examples reflect similar attitudes. These houses lacked the unity achieved by the logical groupings of the parts. That logic is further manipulated in the use of stairs, rooms and entrances.
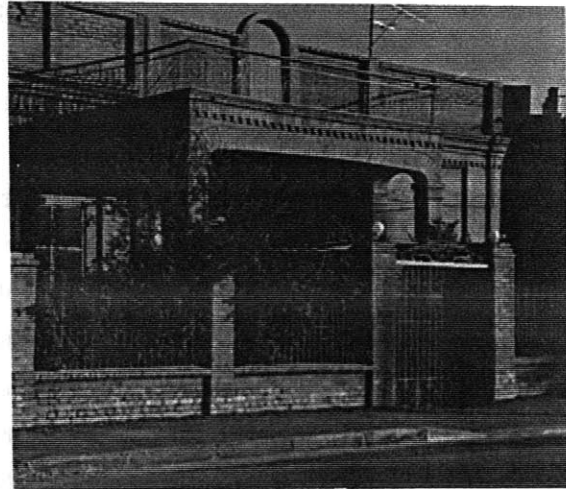
Fig. 16   The symmetrical facade in al-Bataween House.

In these types of houses, the service wings, kitchen and storage areas, used by either the woman of the house or the servants, were mostly secluded. There was a distinction between activities that are considered unclean, such as the "smell of cooking", and the clean spaces of the house. The kitchen is usually located either in the back garden or within the house but with an entrance separate from other spaces of the house. The location was impractical for the woman and was made even worse by her seclusion from other activities of the house. Moreover, it forced her to move in and out of the house, which is inconvenient in both summer and winter. The garage is another space added in the plan of these houses as a separate enclosed space at the far end of the front garden. Since the car was introduced much later to the Iraqi life style, it was less integrated with the overall desgin of the house.

In these houses, the house's relationship to the garden is similar to that of the Palladian style, where the house opens to the garden space behind the house. This opening to the back yard is often elevated with columns in a classical style supporting the ceiling (Fig. 17). This kind of treatment with columns is more exaggerated in the entrance where the theatrical elevation of the entrance adds to its sense of permanence.

The designers of these houses were conscious of the political uses of certain styles that were distinctively western. They avoided the use of pediments, pitched roofs or statues in spite of

using the same principles of openings with classical ornaments, iron work, balusters, parapets of balconies, terraces and stairs. The form was compromised in its context through the use of brick and some other traditional features that render the house eclectic in style.

These villas are surrounded with well-crafted and ornamented fences with piers and balustrades in iron and stone (Fig. 18). The gate is articulated by two piers on each side, marking the outside entrance to a luxurious prestigious house, one that veils, through the pretentious formal expression of its facade, the hidden conflicts of the society.

Fig. 17   The classical columns in al-Bataween House.
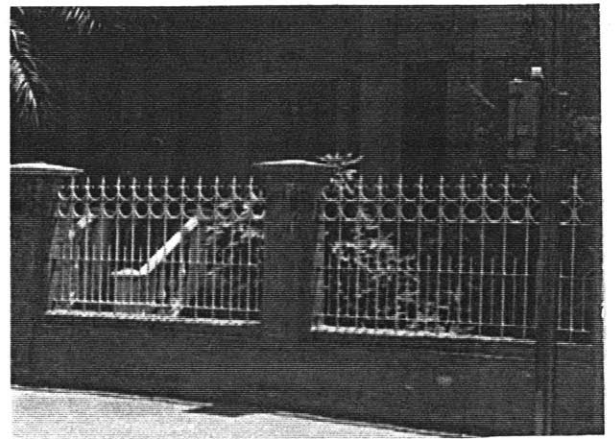
Fig. 18   Details of al-Bataween houses.
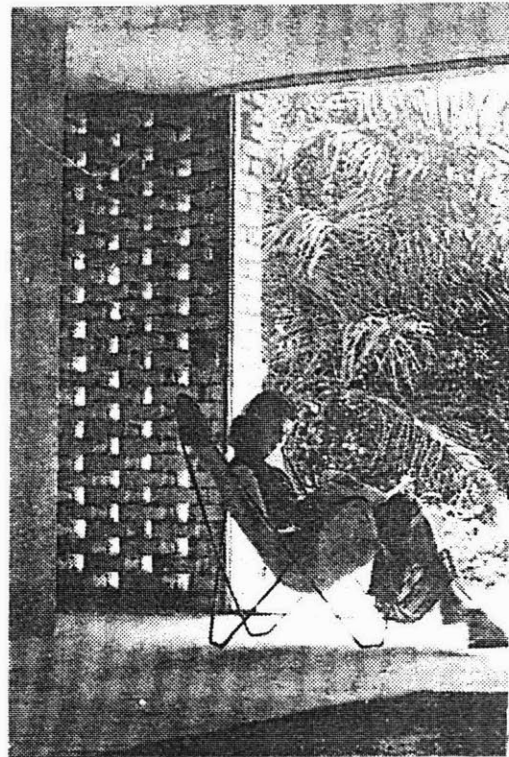
Chapter Three

Persistency Behind Modern Aesthetic Preference

Chapter Three
After World War II: Persistency Behind Modern Aesthetic Preference

This chapter will examine the modern Iraqi house in the 1950s and 1960s from political and cultural perspectives. The study considers the new fashionable aesthetics of the modern movement to examine the underlying principles behind them. The new language of the avant-garde needs to be examined to understand the principles of the design that underlie the formal image of the progressive house. Other factors also need to be layered out such as the preference for the fashionable style, the impact of the technology , the new materials, the new regulations of modernization and the new awareness of architecture. In understanding the impact of these factors on the image of the house, it becomes possible to perceive the persistent principles of privacy and the power hierarchy that persist in the modern house.

The Emergence of Modern Conflict

To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction. It is to be both revolutionary and conservative. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, "All that is solid melts into air [1]

The experience of modernity in Iraq falls within the larger context of modernity in the Middle East and the West. Although the Western experience attempted to unite the society under a universal theme, its internal paradoxes tended to destroy what society had long valued: traditions, personal identities, and peoples lives. In the Third World countries, especially those which were western colonies, the experience of modernity came to be more ambivalent in its application. While these countries were radically reacting to their old status associated with reactionism and ignorance, they were either decontexualizing the colonial experience to their own context or fabricating an internalized independent identity. Modern Iraqi men and women found themselves in the midst of a secular world seemingly away from and devoid of traditional values, split between the material world of modernization and the spiritual world of tradition.

After independence, influenced by the western ideologies and figures, political and social aspects of Iraqi life were modernized dramatically in a relatively short time. Old appearances and traditional status were transformed, and extremely modernistic concepts were imposed. Iraqi citizens, as well as the Iraqi government, were susceptible to the appeal of the concept of

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[1] Marshall Berman, All That Is Solid Melts Into Air (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p.15.

progress; but they did not understand the nature of the modern ideas, and thus could not change their memories as quickly as they changed external habits. These experiences resulted in a dual identity for the society.

Emerging as a new modern state with access to new technologies, Iraq aimed to reconcile tradition with modernity aiming to create an Arab or Iraqi identity. It aspired to be a powerful progressive society antagonistic to the west, especially to Imperialism and Zionism. It did so by searching for absolute modern solutions for the new society without understanding the relative merits and consequences of these solutions, especially as they related to the conflicted conditions within Iraqi society.

The shortage of manpower to cope with the economic development made the government turn to women to increase its labor force. The need for what the Baathi regime called "emancipation of woman" emerged as a slogan promulgated by the state. However, this so-called "emancipation" was limited by the traditional or "fixed" identity which created a mythical image of the Iraqi woman as a mother with children. In other words, the state promoted a dualistic image characterizing the woman in both a traditional role and an apparently "emancipated" role--her participation in the economy (Fig. 1).
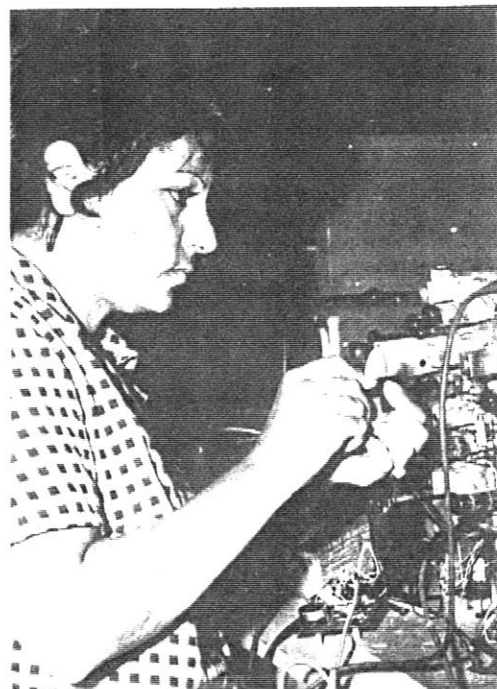
Fig. 1   The State Portrayal of women
As a skilled operator

The ideology of the ABSP predominately influenced the prevalent societal thoughts. In this context, both men and women participated in promoting the Baath ideology about a modern state; however, these claims led to a paradox between the secular government and the Islamic doctrine. Even though Iraq was a secular state, it politicized the difference between man and woman, Western woman and Eastern woman, and emphasized established religious assumptions. Thus, woman's experience was more dialectical within her social "construct." However, most of the Iraqi women believed in their liberation within the Baathi authoritarian concept of "liberation." Sana al-Khayyat interviewed educated and working

urban women in modern Iraq in 1982, they either believed in woman's liberation within the opportunistic approach of the Baath, or opposed the liberation as a corruption of woman within Islamic principles.[2] The lack of a radical feminist movement that would challenge the state and the religious portrayal of women allowed that representation to remain the norm. The state adopted the Islamic doctrine to further legitimize its portrayal of women: it restricted the Iraqi women from imitating their western counterpart, especially, in sexual autonomy and independence. Hence restrictions on woman's sexuality persist in the society.

Al-Khayyat's interviews with two modern Iraqi women illustrate the typical opinions of these women on the meaning of liberation:

In our society, I think women are emancipated already. All these meetings[3]--there's no need for them, they're just a waste of time. Our religion gives us all the rights we need. I also think these meetings and all this talk about women's rights make men resent women even more.[4]

A conscious and an aware woman at home and in society is a liberated one. This is our concept of liberation. This differs from liberation in the West which is associated with corruption.[5]

The New Modern Aesthetics

After World War II, the practice of architecture in Iraq became more official, as the Iraqi society grew more aware of the architectural profession. Previously, the profession had been controlled by civil engineers and technical builders, the British and the Indians. In the 1950s, a professional architectural group called *Majlis al-Immar* was formed, and in 1959, the Iraqi Union of Engineers, which included architectural engineers, was founded. Moreover, in the same year the architectural department of Baghdad University was established by Mohammed Makiya with the support of other architects. This period was marked by the new consciousness in architecture. The profession was a crucial and debatable subject within the intellectual bourgeois group of the society, particularly architects and artists.

In the same period, western-educated Iraqi architects returned to Iraq with a belief in the need for a revolutionary movement to transform their society. They believed in the ability of a modern movement to achieve social and moral progress, and promoted the international style, believing it prefigured a utopian ideal independent from political dogmatism. In this respect,

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[2]Sana al-Khayyat, Honour and Shame: Women in Modern Iraq (London: Saqi Books, 1990), p.181.
[3]She is referring to the meeting of The General Federation of Iraqi Women, the only women's organization set up by the Baath government.
[4] al-Khayyat, p.181.
[5]al-Khayyat, p. 182.

they shied away from the past, refusing any historical continuity, fascinated by the new style as an evolutionary process. They tried to imitate the western pioneers aspiring a new transcendental revolution in the realm of architecture, which in effect led to a break-up with the past. They supported the modern scientific rational method of using design principles to establish a new language of architecture independent of its history, and immune from the influence of precedents.

In the 1950s, Iraqi architects promoted an architecture that was abstract, transcendental and autonomous. Abstract artistic forms have been powerful impulses to modern architects in Iraq (Figs. 2-3). Continuous discussion developed between artists and architects, as they strove to form their ideas about the new influences. The art movement in Iraq went through the same process as architecture; in fact it was much ahead and greatly affected the trend in architecture. While Iraqi architects were still infatuated with artistic abstraction, and tried to implement it directly in their architectural form, the artists were employing abstraction in establishing an independent Iraqi style.

The architectural designs were largely influenced by the western De-Stijil art movement. Their designs manifested the formal relationship between lines and surfaces that represent only one part of an abstract work of art. Among other pioneer architects in the fifties, Rifat Chadirji's work was the archetype of the modern vocabulary and the new aesthetics. In explaining his work, he refers constantly to Mondrian, the De-Stijil style and the abstraction in the works of Mies (Fig. 4).
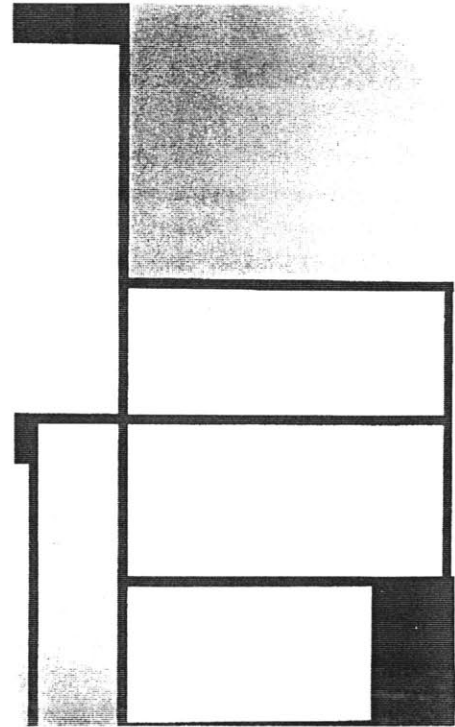
Fig. 2   Piet Mondrian, Tableau I, 1921.
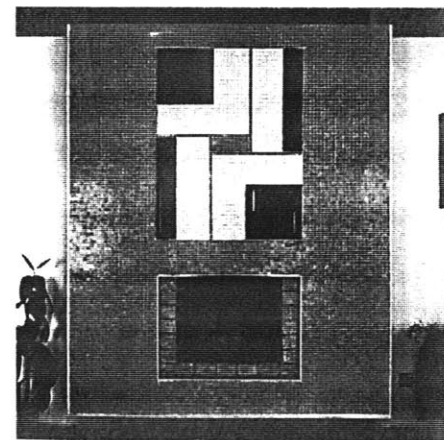
Fig. 3   Fireplace, K. Alousi Residence
           Chadirji, 1963.

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However, the influence of the modern style only influenced the facades and details of his designs. Although he tried to incorporate the Miesian abstraction in his plans, using free standing walls extended to the landscape, this did not express the freedom of the free plan principles since the plan was still conventional in its division of space (Fig. 5).
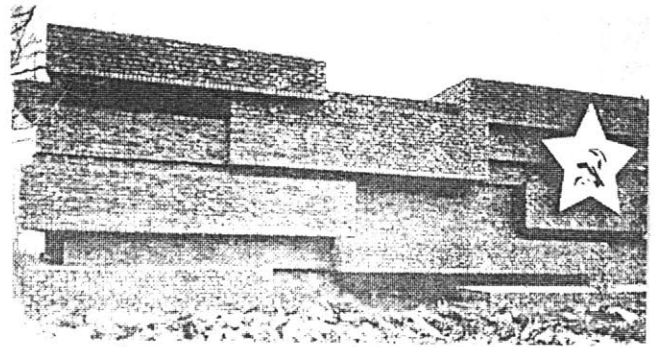
Fig. 4   Monument in Berlin, Mies Van der Rohe, 1926.

In the 1960s and later, the trend changed with the prevalent ideology of identity and nationalism. Certain features from historical and traditional precedents were consciously applied in the modern designs. Like other architects, Chadirji's work changed in the 60s and later, towards a traditionalized and regionalized style in search of cultural identity. Similarly, Mohammed Makiya and his other contemporary architects abandoned the first modernist project in search of historical and traditional continuity in their designs. The designs still carried the modern abstraction; however, the straight and rectangular lines were replaced by curved lines as arches were used more often (Fig 6).
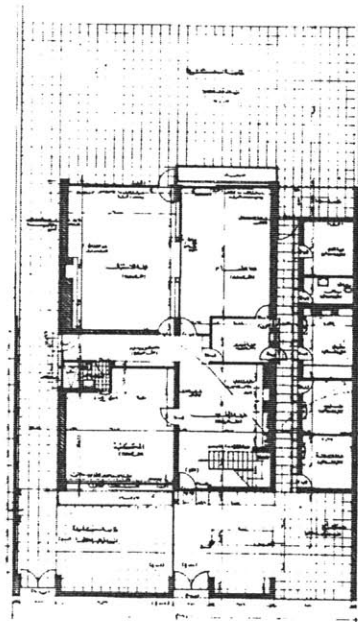
Fig. 5   Baher Faeq Residence, Rifat Chadirji in 1952

The modernist architects faced difficulties working within the political and conventional rules of the society. Before late 50s, this dilemma is illustrated in a dialogue between Rifat Chadirji, the new modernist architect, and Hazim Nameq, the manager of public works (Mudeer al-Asghal al-amm). On one hand, Rifat believed in liberating himself and the society from the conventional style; he
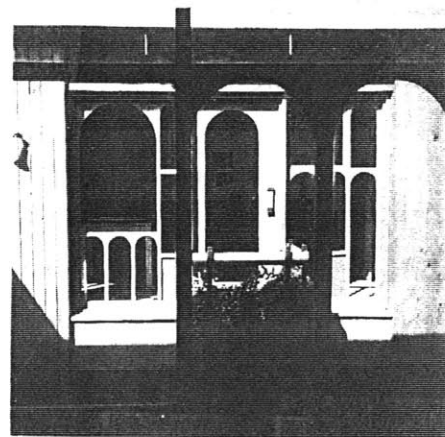
Fig. 6   Consult Bureau, Rifat Chadirji in 1965.

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explained to Nameq the need for a style that can comprehend the new changes. On the other hand, Nameq avoided revolutionary trends that would alter the practice drastically. His position is representative of the authoritarian architectural practices in the early 1950s. [6]

In his book, Rifat Chadirji tried to give some insight into the architectural trends of the 1960s. He describes two groups; the first one being representatives of the Baath ideology. They proclaimed the need to avoid bourgeois architecture, which they believed to be related to political inequality. Remaining uncomfortable with the project of modernity, these architects arrived at an architecture which is part progressive and part traditional, trying to exploit the political climate of the time to promote their work. The adherents of the other trend advocated the development of an Iraqi architecture within a global context of progress. They projected themselves as autonomous; their work fell outside the definition of architecture as part of political ideology. Instead, it was high design and pure art.

In his description, Chadirji criticized the first group for the underlying political agenda of their work and claimed that his projects fell within the second group. Clearly, claiming their independance from contemporary political scene, the second group called for more spontaneity in the architectural designs that coincided with a pessimistic, totalitarian view of politics. However, this became the banner under which modernist Iraqi architects sought new and innovative forms[7] (Fig. 7) They neglected the regional aspect in favor of the new formal expression.
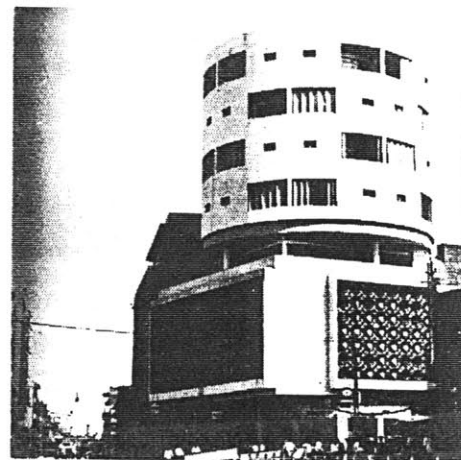
Fig. 7   Abood Building, Abud Allah
Ihsan Kamel and Chadirji, 1955.

In the period between 1944 -1958, as Chadirji classified it, the second generation of Iraqi architects which includes Medhat Ali Mathlum, Jaffar Alawi, Abud Allah Ihsan Kamel and Mohammed Makiya, came back to Iraq after their study in England.[8] They acquired a prestigious status in the society because of either their higher education or their social status

[6]Rifat Chadirji, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri (London: Riad El Rayyes, 1991), p.496.
[7]Chadirji, p.497.
[8]Chadirji, p.52.

These were the advocates of the modern movement in Iraq.[9] They disapproved of the authority's hiring old-fashioned British architects like Cooper. Thus they paved the way to invite modern pioneer architects like Frank Llyod Wright, Oscar Niemeyer, Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier and Gio Ponti (Fig. 8). These western architects visited Iraq in the 1950s and participated in building a modern city that consequently influenced the design of the local Iraqi work, especially in their interpretation of the Iraqi architectural heritage.

Moreover, according to Ihsan Fethi, the pioneer architects' visit to Iraq led the local architects to abandon western influences and express their own heritage and vocabulary. For that reason, Fethi postulated that Rifat Chadirji's work had changed to a new style using local brick, turquoise wooden shutters, and the round arch[10] (Fig. 9).

Thus the Iraqi architects began a more selective process of borrowing from the west. Their concern for abstract visual formations derived from cubism and the purity of the cubist form. They claimed to question the validity of the traditional facade of the house yet did not question the social mapping of the space. The new techniques of using concrete and steel--plasticity as opposed to the heaviness of brick--had brought a new aesthetic revolutionary
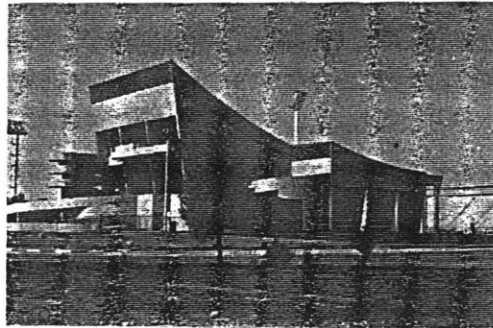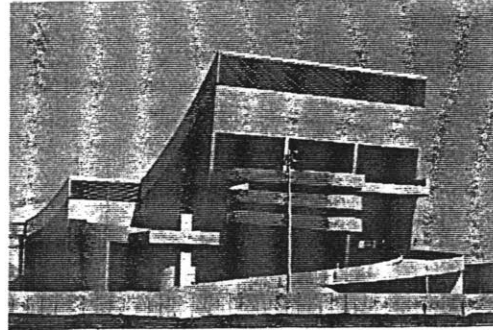
Fig. 8   Le Corbusier, Saddam Indoor Sport Hall

Fig. 10   Residence in Baghdad, Chadirji, 1959.

Fig. 9   M. Othman Residence, Rifat Chadirji in 1965.

[9]Chadirji, p. 518. Rifat considered the first generation of the Iraqi architects to be those who returned to Baghdad between 1936-1944 like Ahmed Mukhtar Ibrahim, Hazim Nameq, Niazi Fatu, and Sami Khydar.
[10]Ihsan Fethi, Contemporary Architecture in Baghdad: Its Roots and Transition, Process Architecture, Vol. 58, p.

thinking (Fig. 10). However, the Iraqi architects mostly applied it on interior or facial expressions independent of the plan of the house, e.g., details of facades, fireplace, and doors (Fig. 11).

In 1952, the first cement factory in Iraq was opened and reinforced concrete began to be widely used. This new material freed architects to create new types of windows that could reach from one end of the facade to the other. However, the beauty of transparency allowed within the new structural system was later veiled with large screens for security, privacy or climatic reasons and in response to similar treatments in western contexts by Gropius and Niemeyer (Figs. 12-13).

Fig. 11   Detail of a window in Mustafa Shanshill House, 1963.
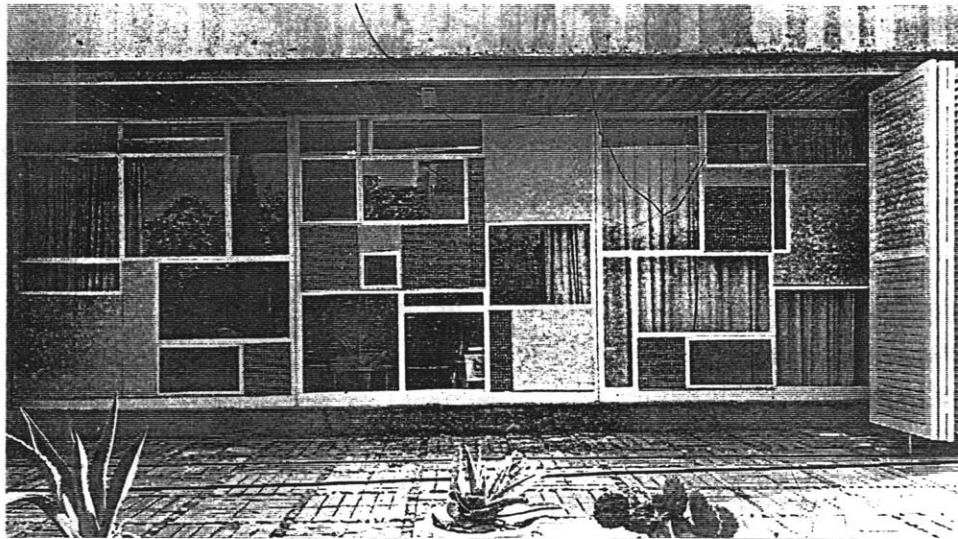
Fig. 12   The large glass windows in Muhsen Shanshill House, 1963.
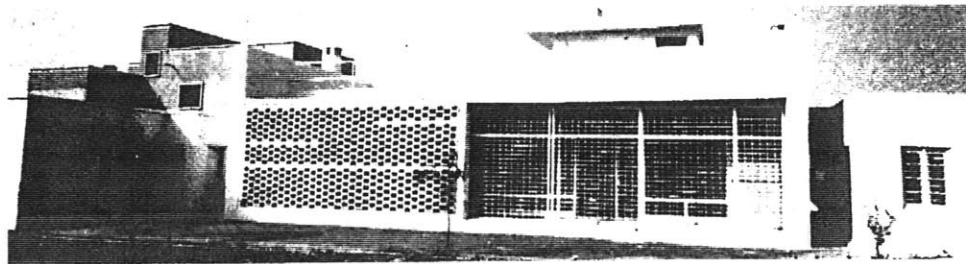
Fig. 13   Hassan al-Karbasi house, Chadirji, 1953.

The new aesthetics prevailed over pragmatic applications in the house. Some architects encouraged the fashionable functional western plan. However, some of the ideas were inconvenient for the already established mode of life, such as the kitchen opening into the living room. While the architect was fascinated with the new functional exposition of the free plan without the conventional divisions, the Iraqi housewife saw that the integration of the kitchen with other spaces was less functional in terms of its exposure to other activities in the house. This raised a conflict between the architect and the housewife.

The Modern House

The city of Baghdad witnessed great modern transformations. New regulations started to appear and justify the need for a new infrastructure. Major avenues were opened, like Al-Jamhoriya; others were extended, like Al-Rashid. In addition, the planning legislation and rules such as the Road and Building law No. 44 of 1935, which was influenced by the Anglo-Indian law, affected the formation of the urban city and the house form. The widths of main roads, secondary roads and cul-de-sacs were changed to six, four and three meters respectively, thus changing the relationship between the house and the street.[11] Straight lines were used to create new plot edges as alleys were set back and straightened to fit the new dimensions. The setbacks created spaces in front of houses, which were used later as front gardens and thus contributed further to change the form of the house. As a consequence, the old city plots were regularized into a new system of gridiron divisions (Fig. 14).
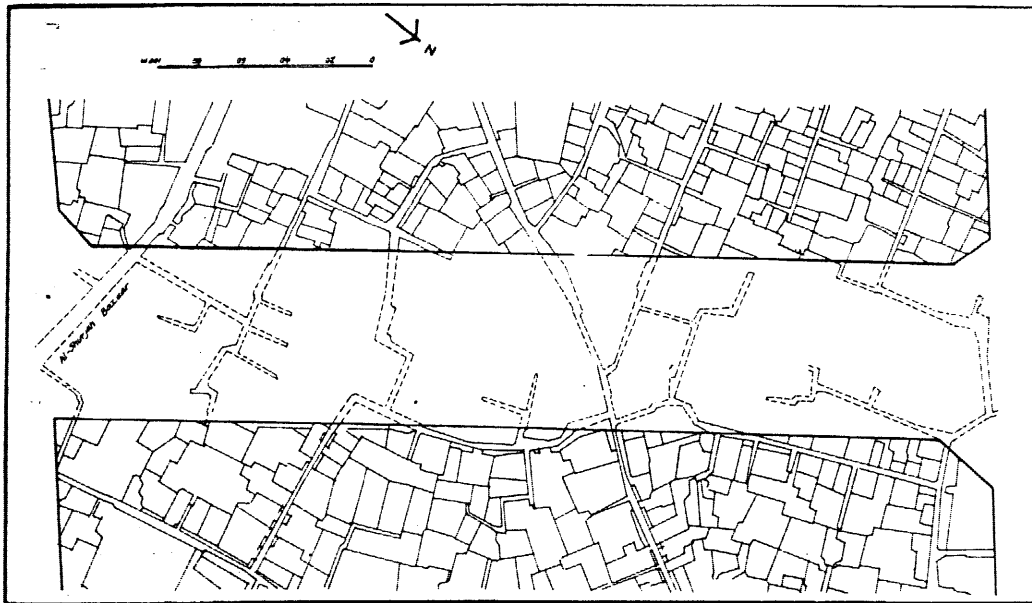
Fig. 14   Al-Jamhoriya break-through Street showing the destruction to Traditional areas.

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[11]Layth Raouf, Tradition and Continuity in the Modern Iraqi House, Ur 1-1985, p.19.

The Modern house in Iraq expressed new aesthetic values reflecting the desire of the bourgeois group of architects for social reform and liberation from older forms. The new language challenged the conventional aesthetic ideals of the traditional house, yet often seemed to present similar underlying ideals, merely with a new vocabulary. The international style that might seem to prefigure a classless utopia had less to say about the relations between the sexes. It changed the shape of the house and everything in it without challenging its domestic roles. It incorporated a revolutionary functional kitchen and provided large Miesian windows, as a model for a progressive house. But the architects were using a modern vocabulary that was remote from the everyday lives of the people. The people ended up with a materialistic linkage to their houses. The woman was specifically linked to her modern kitchen, and new electrical appliances.

A key theme was the explicit rejection of any association with inwardness; this was to be a sign for the emancipation of the society from the introverted life of the courtyard house. The longing to belong to the outside, to be mixed with nature, changed the relationship to the outside. The modern house allowed less communication within the family; men were related to the outer world of economics and a larger public. While men tended to spend their time outside the house, either working or with their male friends, women spent their hours alienated in the house doing housework and looking after the children. The modern house became an expression of the new life and a manifestation of social-political beliefs in its capacity for progress. It symbolized the people's aspiration for emancipation. It used the capacity of new technology and the strength of new materials to alter the image of the house, and symbolized a progressive aspect of the society (Fig. 15.)
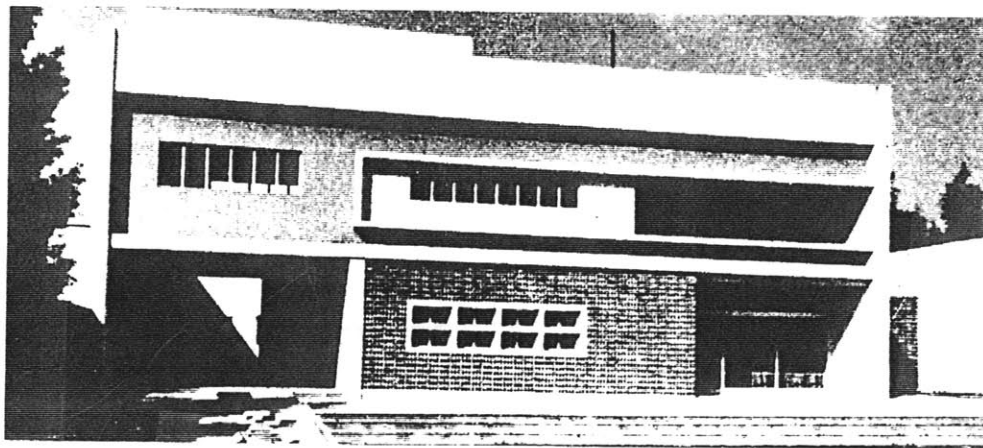
Fig. 15   Hussein Jamil House, Chadirji, 1953.

The implementation of new western ideas, however, was inconsistent and selective. The house form drastically changed from the courtyard house but its departure from the traditional house was largely formal, rather than profound. Both the architects and the society were fascinated with the new aesthetic values of the early modern movement, especially the international style. Aspiring to the progressive image of the western house, they did not challenge the actual plan of these houses as much as they challenged its formal expression (Figs 16-17).
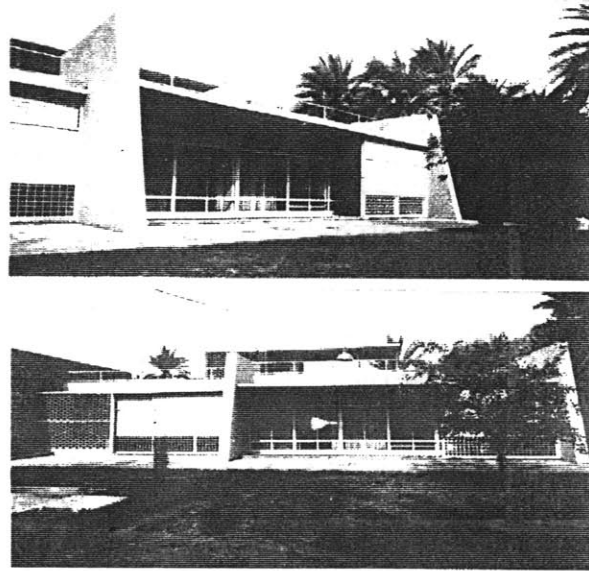
Fig. 16 & 17   Muhammed abud al-Wahab House, Chadirji

For all the formal changes, the modern house did not embrace the meanings of women's emancipation that were attributed to it. The modern house created a dichotomy between the social conventions and the new aesthetics: the traditional practice of privacy, social and spatial hierarchy with the aesthetics of openness and transparency. Despite the apparent differences between the modern house and the courtyard house, they both embodied privacy and the power hierarchy in positioning women within the house in equal measure. The private and segregative courtyard house is quite consistent with the ideological stance on women's segregation. The context of the modern house, however, is far more contradictory: it has a progressive look and conventional practice. The modern house is not merely a new aesthetic expression; nor does it represent women's emancipation or technology. The meanings of the modern house become more layered in its application as a result of heterogeneous beliefs. The social mapping of these modern houses--their spatial hierarchy and privacy--might differ little from the courtyard house. In fact, the selectivity of modern ideas differentiated Iraqi social life from western life, in terms of women and privacy in the house.

A second aspect of conflict is presented in the women's perception of the space, which in this study is called "virtual experience." It seems that aspirations occur in advance of praxis so that there is always a difference between them. In other words, the built form can be seen as a manifestation of one set of thoughts and beliefs, while the actual life that goes on inside can be a manifestation of another set of beliefs. Thus, a woman could believe that she is modern, living in a modern house, while in reality her social functions and perceptions continue to be restricted within conventions and traditions.

Therefore, this study is concerned with two aspects of the house: the actual physicality of the house and the virtual (potential) experience of it.[12] The next section takes up this issue.

The Actual Context
Spatial Hierarchy

The Muslims implemented a system of hierarchy in planning their cities and designing their houses. These concepts of hierarchical stratification continue to shape future examples. The hierarchical segregation of masters from slaves, men from women, upper class from lower class continues to embody its inherent segregated assumptions in modern times, but in a new form and vocabulary.

Like the house, the mosque had also witnessed various changes in its form and functional parts; however, it remained consistent in its separation of women and men. While men used the principal entrance to the major prayer hall, the women use a more secluded side entrance leading to a more modest space on the mezzanine, screened from men. In that sense, the presence of women was accepted but not integrated. The mosque remained a man's world, a highly segregated entity, expressing the unchangeable status of women in relation to Islamic doctrine

We reinforce in each other a small set of beliefs, beliefs that rationalize inequality, social classes and social roles, beliefs that justify privileges we do not want to give up and deprivations we can not easily change: and we do so regardless of inconsistent facts.[13]

Spatial hierarchy can be more easily explained in terms of privacy. Privacy is constantly associated with the fact that women are prevented from interacting with men. However, this hierarchy rationalized privileges for men. In comparison with the traditional and colonial earlier houses, the modern house expressed the spatial hierarchy in a different manner. Although segregation of women was most extremely applied and justified in the traditional courtyard house and seemingly more tolerated in the colonial house, the literature on the modern house never alluded to the segregation of women. On the contrary, it adopted the political belief of the liberation and unveiling of women within the modern house.

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[12] Actuality and potentiality are contrasting terms. Actuality(Greek: energeia) is that mode of being in which a thing can bring other things about or be brought about by them--the realm of events and facts. By contrast, potentiality (Greek: dynamics) is not a mode in which a thing exists, but rather the power to effect change, the capacity of a thing to make transitions into different states. Antony Flew, A Dictionary of Philosophy, p. 5.

[13]Murray Edelman, "Space and the Social Order", Journal of Architectural Education, Vol. 32, No. 2 (November 1978), pp. 2-7.

The modern house embodied a categorical hierarchical system: top and bottom, back to front, left to right providing a gradient of vertical, axial, and lateral hierarchy. Moreover, the spatial relationship was highly defined in terms of public and private spheres. The introduction of separate functional areas which was made apparent in the architectural massing, as opposed to one complete homogenous form, came to intensify segregation. This separation of men from women, public from private was not perceived to be segregation *per se* but rather the result of objective functional divisions. The service areas were separated from the sleeping areas which in turn were separated from the guest and dining areas. (Fig, 18.)

Moreover, the positioning of the house at the back of the plot, which allowed the integration of the garden with the inner spaces, produced a gradual approach from the front gate, through the garden and up to the front door. The new positioning of the house established a different correlation between inside and outside as opposed to that of the courtyard house where the transition between the house and the alley was abrupt and sudden. Thus the modern house became more hidden from the outside than the colonial house which was closer to the street to expose its ornamental facade.

Fig. 18a   Plan of ideal type modern house.
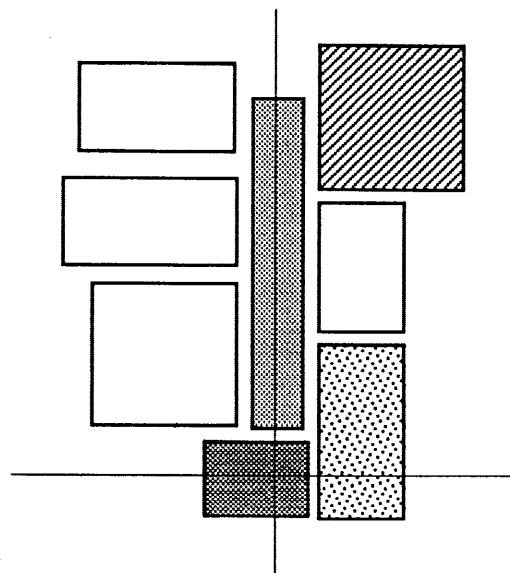
Fig. 18b   Diagram of the spatial relationship in modern house.

The other feature created and elaborated in the modern house was the side or back door. The urban setting of the traditional courtyard house did not permit other entrances; however, both were considered in the colonial and modern period. In the colonial house, the other entrances

became a segregation device, e.g. the side entrance for male guests. In the modern house, the kitchen door became the entrance for women and their guests while men used the front formal entrance. The axial hierarchy between front and back associated the front with the public sphere -- men and their guests and the back with the private sphere used by women. However, this segregation between men's and women's access to the house carried the assumption that women were to be confined. In contrast, men and their guests used the formal entrance leading to the formal guest room where the family's best possessions were displayed. In this manner, the outsider had access to the inside without interacting with the private spaces. Another device used by men for political and intellectual readings and discussions was the library. This was usually a man's space situated in the front within the spatial hierarchy close to the entrance. Thus, spatial hierarchy reflectede social hierarchy. The guest rooms and the library conveyed the power, wealth and the intellect of the man of the house, while the kitchen exhibited woman's efficiency in housework (Figs. 17).
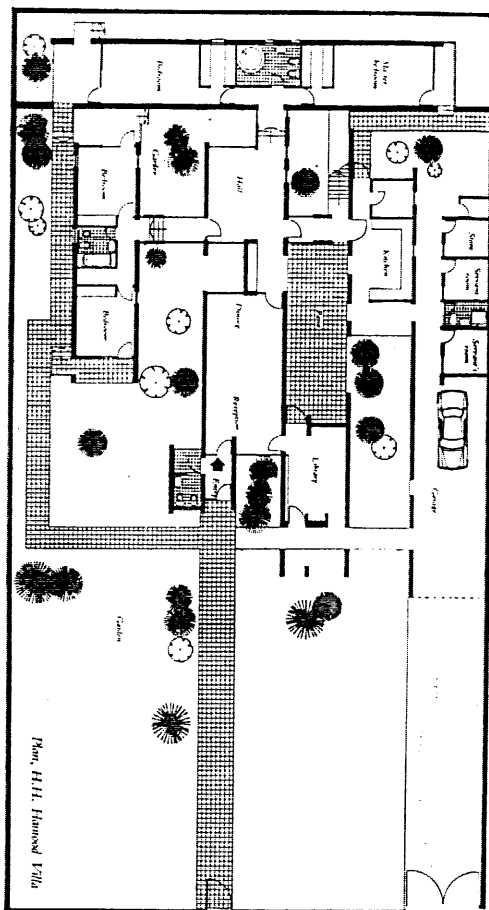
Fig. 19a   Plan
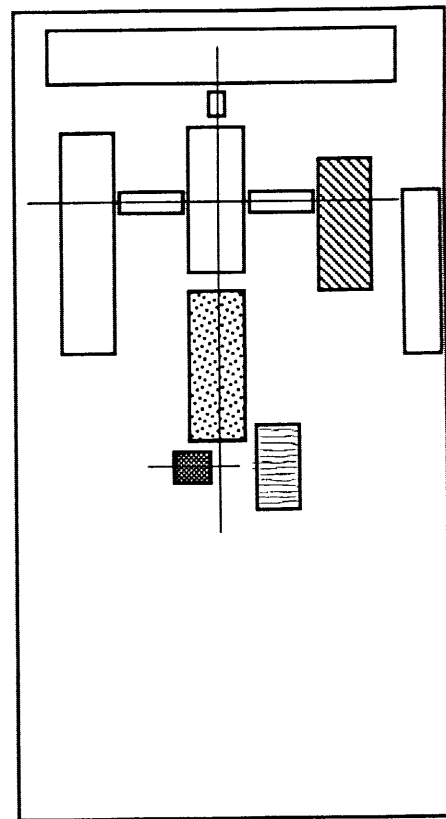
Fig. 19b   Diagram of the spatail relationship.

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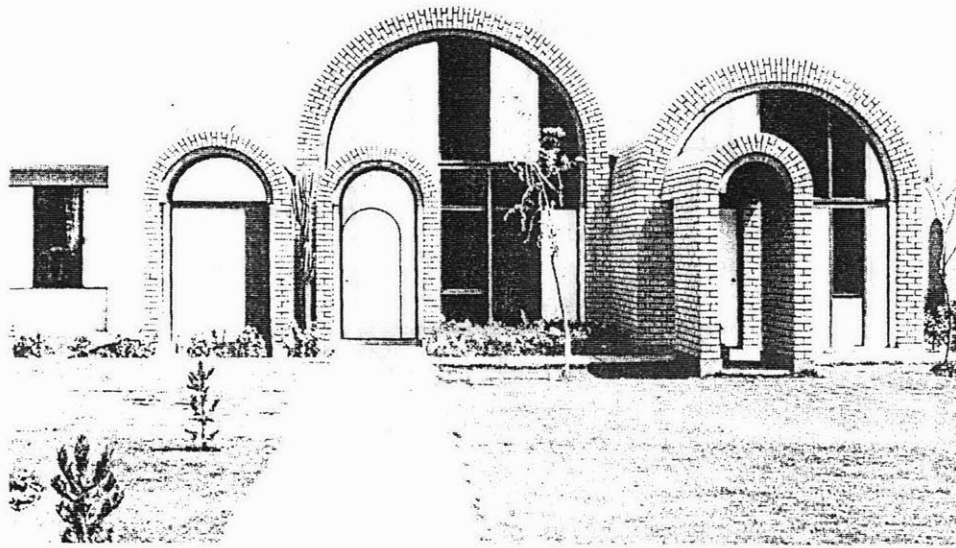
Fig. 19c   The front elevation of Hamood Residence.

The other hierarchical axis was the vertical one. The first floor of the house was more public than the second floor, where most of the bedrooms were located, separate from interaction with the first-floor spaces. In that respect, when men or men's guests used the first floor, women tended to use the second floor as their private territory. In consequence, the second floor was provided with another living area secluded from the main living area on the first floor. Thus, the tendency to create a living room integrated with the guest room and dining room-in imitation of the free plan principle failed within the social conventions of the society. The first-floor living room was frequently void of women while the guest room was in use by strangers--men who had no blood relation to the women.

The interior character of the modern house was less interactive due to its hierarchical divisions. The spaces tended to be separated and secluded from the others. In the courtyard house, in spite of its emphasis on segregation, the spaces in the first and second floor were visually connected with the inner corridor acting as the visual connector. Although the courtyard house provided an archetype of women's segregation, the form in itself created less segregation than the modern house. The most pronounced difference between the courtyard house and the modern house was the break with architectural form; less important were the underlying principles on privacy and women's space.
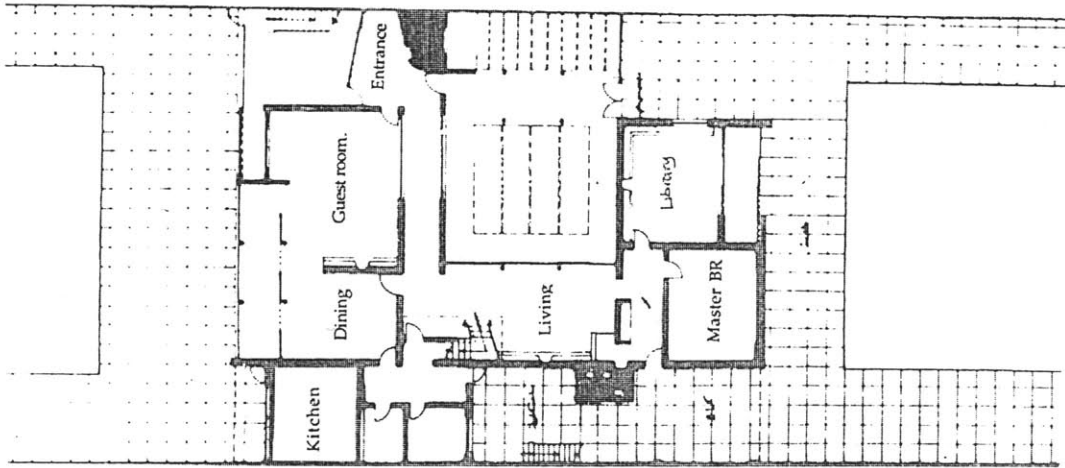
Fig. 20a   First floor plan.
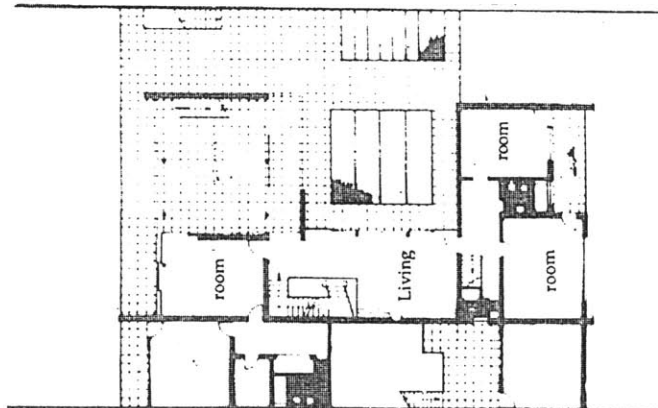
Fig. 20b   Ground floor plan.
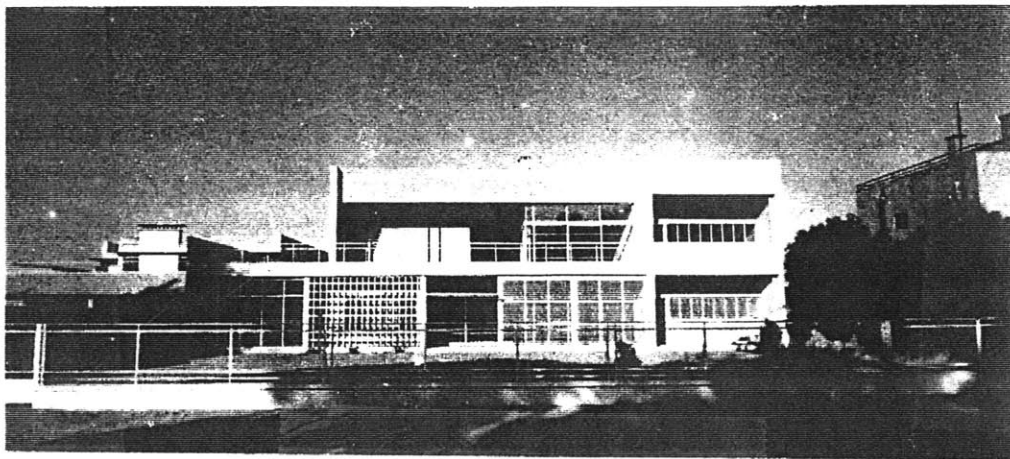
Fig. 20c   Exterior perspective.

Privacy

Definitions of privacy range between the socio-cultural, religious perspective and the individual. However, the two are dynamically intertwined. The individual absorbs the definition of privacy over time becomes part of his/her definition. Privacy implies a boundary regulation process in which control over interaction with other people is critical. However, the protection of the vulnerability of an individual is perceived and not necessarily real. According to the vulnerability hypothesis, then, introversion, enclosure, and concealment, whether manifested in behavior or extended in the physical environment, represent a higher degree of privacy to protect against the greater vulnerability. Privacy can convey various meanings, ranging from attaining one's own comfort and individuality to being segregated from interaction with the opposite sex.

The concept of privacy is primarily universal. In most cultures, there is a need for some degree of privacy, both for men and women. However, other assumptions are included within the term privacy that simplify and intensify ideas in the already existing social order to increase the status of the privileged group. Thus, the word was already ideologized. Muslim assumptions on privacy tend to differentiate between women's privacy and men's privacy, and between a Muslim woman's privacy and a western woman's privacy. Although privacy is justified extensively by Islamic religion, it became a cultural attitude practiced even in non-Muslim houses in the Middle East. Muslim societies are likely to emphasize on privacy as an essential need, manipulating it to serve as a control device over women. The word privacy tends to mean segregation from strangers rather than privacy in the sense of independence, comfort, individuality and self-realization. In that sense, the woman has no privacy; she is excluded from interaction with strangers while her privacy is less seriously considered within the family members. Although she is segregated in the kitchen, away from other parts of the house, it is not a private place for her. It is likely to be used at any moment by the man of the house and the children. While the man has the library as a private independent space for his own interests away from any of the family, the women's interest is considered to fall within the need of the family, both economically and as a mother and wife.

In Muslim societies, the societal belief that women must be separated, takes the form of an absolute. Women are considered potential objects of desire and are to be shielded from the gaze of men to control their seductiveness. The privacy of the courtyard house was mainly achieved through introversion; although it was visually interconnected to the central yard of the house. In the modern house the hall and the corridor became an essential consideration in the design of

the house, articulating an independent device to reduce unnecessary interaction with the private parts of the house. The traditional house was explicitly designed to control the privacy of the interior in relation to the immediate alley. In modern times the garden became the third element distancing the two.

Among the objectives of the new style was a closer union of body and nature--contacts with outdoor spaces. However in the Iraqi context, these principles were manipulated. Miesian windows were applied in a different manner from the western context. This explains the limited application within certain cultural constraints. These windows were either applied in the guest rooms which were occasionally used or they were hidden behind a screen faced a solid wall, manipulating the essence of the glass wall (Fig. 21-22). The idea of architecture as a transparent envelope could not possibly be applied in the Iraqi context. Rifat Chadirji referred to Mies's German Pavilion and Mies's free plan villas.[14] Although he claimed to have carefully studied Mies's work, he was highly selective in his use of Mies's principles that could be applied in the Iraqi context. He was fascinated mostly by the De Stijl style and their abstract paintings and not by Mies's use of these principles in the interior spatial compositions, and the transparency of Mies's interiors (Fig, 23). Moreover, the use of free extended walls had an influence on the Modern Iraqi house, although
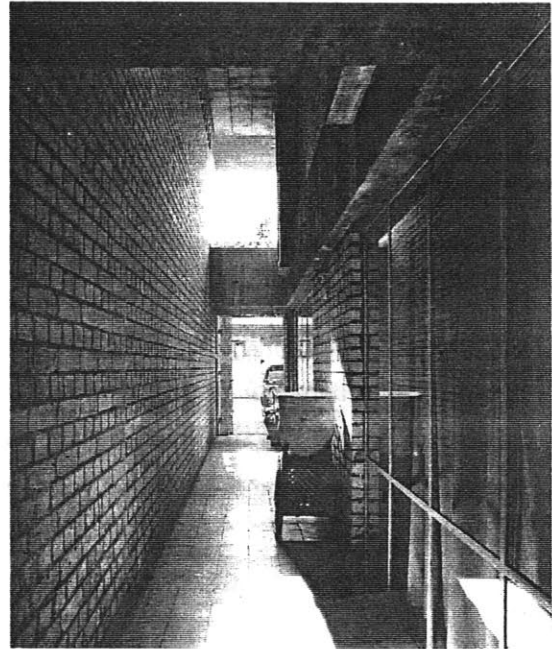
Fig. 21   Nasir Chadirji House, large glass window facing solid wall, 1962.
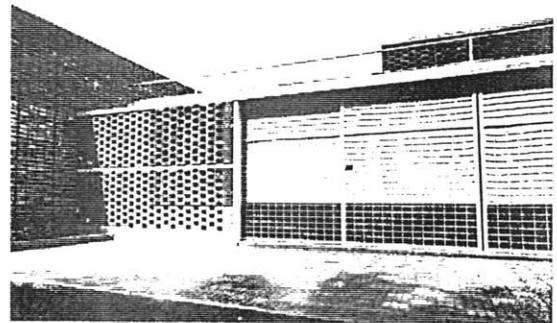
Fig. 22   Muhammed abud al-Wahab House, screening large glass windows, 1952.

Fig. 23   Barcelona Pavillion by Mies Van Der Rohe, 1929.

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[14]Chadirji, p. 29, 54.

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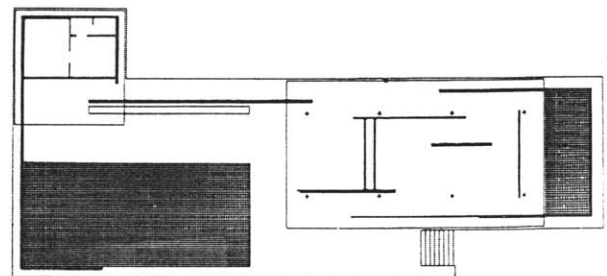
it was applied in a restricted manner that does not allow the spaces to flow into each other. Thus, the relationship between the spaces became static; spaces are contained within the enclosing walls, defining the periphery of each room.

The modern Iraqi architects did not choose to dissolve the cubicle--the traditional barriers to privacy -- which would have been consonant with the avant-garde view of optimal freedom. The space were strictly divided into cubicles in the most solidly traditional manner. The open plan, as a succession of spaces merging into one another, often without door separations, lacking any pretense of privacy, was avoided.

In comparison with the courtyard house and the colonial house, the entrance hall received similar treatment. The entrance was highly defined as an introduction to the world of privacy inside the house. It functioned as the demarcation line between inside and outside, that regulating the relation between public and private. The entrance hall generally had a separate enclosed formal entrance, with separate doors to the guest room.

The kitchen provided a secluded space for the woman's use in order to maintain privacy. It was less integrated with other parts of the house. It resembled any western kitchen in terms of its efficiency for housework, equipment and the functional rational relationship between its parts. However, it overloaded women with housework, especially with the change of the class structure in the 1960s that affected the availability of domestic servants. Progressive attitudes towards the kitchen design were not incorporated in the house since it did not challenge the domestic role of woman. On the contrary, it demanded that she be efficient in her housework. Moreover, this size large kitchen was designed to accommodate a private dining area for the family. This dining area in the kitchen was used daily while the main dining room became the formal one used on special occasions. Clearly, the modern house doubled in size, since there were now both formal and informal living rooms and dining rooms. Spatial segregation and privacy were legitimized within the paradigms of Iraqi tradition. The privatization of the western model became the rule by which the Iraqi tradition was defined. Both the architect and the society maintain the primacy of the cultural paradigms of privacy and tradition in difference from the "other"-- the western tradition and society.

The Virtual Context
Perception of Space-Identity and Memory

The way one perceives space does not counteract its mere physicality. It also reflects the individual's inner beliefs, which are predominantly a result of social and cultural assumptions. In studying how a woman's perception is patterned, attention is drawn to the significance of the parameters within which she codifies and confronts the world around her, and how she reacts to some of the problems that arise from the existence of those assumptions.

A woman's perception of space is interrelated with her perception of her body, and her sexuality and identity. In this dualistic vision of space, objective quality contradicts subjective quality. The wall not only represent the objective capacity to divide or enclose; it could also become the manifestation of a woman's need to hide and protect.

Thus, this discussion addresses the literature associated with essentialist assumptions on women: What is a woman? How does one act as a woman? And what does a woman need? Assumptions on Iraqi women were part of the larger universal conceptions on Arab-Muslim women specifically and women generally. For years, women were depicted as being passive and dependent on the men in their lives. Poetry, short stories, and other media such as TV provided an essential framework of identification and representation fixing woman's image both to herself and to others .

From the Diary of a Carefree Women   *by Nazzar Kabani*[15]

I will write of my friends
each one's story--I see in each myself---
a tragedy like my own.

I will write of my friends
of the prison that sucks the lives of the inmates
of the time eaten by magazine columns
of doors that don't open
of desires slaughtered in their cradle
of nipples crying under their silk
of the great prison
and its black walls
of thousands and thousands of martyrs
buried nameless in the grave of tradition.

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[15]Nazar Kabani : A Syrian poet (born 1923) well known in the contemporary Arab world for his writings on women. He is considered to be a promoter of women as rebels and at the same time as those who adulate their bodies in a very traditional sense.

my friends...
dolls shrouded in cotton
inside a closed museum
coins... minted by history, unnegotiable,
schools of fish in their ponds strangled,
crystal bowls, whose blue butterflies died.

I will write of my friends
without fear
of shackles bloodied on pretty feet
of hallucination... apprehension...
of nights of supplication
of desires buried in pillows
of running full circles in a vacuum
of the death of sighs.

my friends
pawns bought and sold in the markets of superstition,
slaves in the harems of the east,
dead and not dead
they live and die like mold in bottlenecks.[16]

In this poem, Nazzar Kabbani depicts the Arab woman stereotypically; describing her tragedy within the tradition of the East. In his other pieces, he depicts women as striving to survive in the man's world and often shows how they are berated for daring to intrude into his realm. The man's world represents power and prestige, the woman's world vulnerability and weakness.

Kabbani wrote,

Forgive me sir
If I dared venture in the kingdom of men
Classical literature has always been men's literature
And love have always been men's prerogative
And sex always
The opium sold to men
A myth women's freedom is in our land.[17]

The vulnerability of women to rape and other deprivations is a basic asymmetry which has a bearing on how women perceive enclosure and openness; in other words, how they perceive the house. Women perceive the house within their normal and natural setting where they can meticulously differentiate aspects of space: public versus private, masculine versus feminine, secure versus vulnerable.

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[16]Cited in Images of Arab Women by Mona Mikhail.
[17]One of the Qabbani's poems cited in Mikhail, p.62.

The return to a more identifiable traditional perspective on the woman inside the house balances the meaninglessness and alienation of the modern new life. Men face the larger public and impersonal sphere outside the home. To counter this uncontrollable outside reality, men strove to identify with a traditional environment at home. The manageable intimate home provided them a refuge from the distresses of modernity. Thus, women had to confront this paradox between modernity and tradition, and found it intensified their dilemma: their existing "fixed" identity encountered the nationalism and traditionalism that accompanied modern life.

As woman tried to be autonomous and modern, they faced the tension between striving for a modern house and feeling familiar with a more traditional one. Women tried to distance themselves from their "identity" as objects of confinement and desire that had to be shielded from other people's eyes. They refused the traditional setting of the traditional houses, but their encounter with new meanings of modern life led them to devalue themselves, which unavoidably resulted in feelings of alienation. As each woman's bodily experience within the space became uncomfortable, her state of mind became more confused and in reaction she would try to fit within her "construct." This led her to feel lonely and lost in interaction with modernity. The problem became more dialectic in the context of her "construct." Her identity was further constructed as the modern state politics perpetuated a mythical image of her liberation, though she was still the victim of the new political and social demands of ostensible "liberation." This false liberation did not permit her to experience her individuality as an autonomous human being and further intensified the dilemma. Thus, woman became a willing participant, legitimizing the social and political beliefs and adopting the subjugation of her status--to criticize herself or the society became a whole questioning of herself that she is reluctant to confront.[18]

In meeting with new expectations of modern life, certain features gained high status as signs of liberation: large glass windows, functional kitchens and open integrated living spaces. The modern house provided the glass walls that ran from ceiling to floor, relating the outside to the inside--a theme prevalent in the modern house in the 1950s and later. The characteristics of glass rendered it possible to reach beyond the margin yet confined the inhabitant within it. The architecture of openness communicated to the outside public world, where relations seemed more spontaneous and free. The inner and outer distinctions seemed to fade, leaving an

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[18] Most of this analysis is supported by my observations of my personal experience and that of others.

inaccessible feeling of openness. The glass wall in the modern Iraqi house illustrated the impossibility of a woman's feeling comfortable and secure; simultaneously she felt too vulnerable to confront the openness to the landscape. Thus, the large glass windows intensified a woman's consciousness of her body and the way it is percieved. She feels as if she is the object of someone's gaze. Moreover, this style failed to be rational in the climate because it allowed dust and excessive heat.

Parallel to this argument, an interesting psychoanalytic argument is outlined by Beatriz Colomina[19] who elaborates on how subject and object exchange places in the inner social spaces of the Moller House. She argues that whether there is actually a person behind either gaze is irrelevant. Quoting from Jacques Lacan:

I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not even see, not even discern. All that is necessary is to signify to me that there may be others there. The window when it gets a bit dark and if I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straight away a gaze. From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But in this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen.[20]

This argument raises issues on the gap between the imagined and the real. In the case where no one is looking from the outside, the woman still feels vulnerable to the imagined gaze. Yet this reflects a whole belief of herself shared by the society as a vulnerable object of others' gaze. The built-in paradox makes the woman return to her enclave. She aspires to be modern, yet is encumbered with psychological obstacles, both cultural and political.

Probably no one of the pioneer architects understood the complexity of presenting this kind of openness in such a confined society. They imposed their aesthetics on a society still living the conflict of religion. The large glass windows which were intended to neutrally connect the exterior with the interior were subverted to represent the emptiness of its aesthetic.

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[19]See Beatriz Colomina in The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism, Sexuality & Space, p. 82.

[20]Borrowed from Jacques Lacan, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book 1, Freud's Paper on Technique 1953-1954, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988), p.215. In this passage Lacan is referring to Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness.

Conclusion

The modern Iraqi house that evolved in the 1950s and early 1960s embraced the forms of the *avant-garde*. It searched for a new aesthetics in its physical manifestation, striving for the openness and progressivness of the new society. Women were portrayed as parts and symbols of the progressive scene, unveiled, liberated and living in modern houses.

The revolutionary aesthetic changes, that were applied to the modern house, carried the assumption that society was reformed from its traditional status. The encounter with the new form and technological expressions of the house resulted in purely formalistic readings of the house. Although the modern house could be analyzed within the critique of modernism and the failure of the utopian concept of *avant-garde*, all these readings are insufficient to comprehend the complexity of the political and social context in which the form was evolved. Outside the western world modernity was epitomized by the coexistence of contradictory thoughts and practices. The contradictory nature and inherent complexity of this picture frequently encourages simplistic, reductionist and formalistic readings of the house.

This thesis argues that a collective assumption emerged positing the modern house as the manifestation of the new societal and political belief in the liberation of women. This assumed a formal differentiation between binary opposites--the traditional house versus the modern house, solidity as opposed to transparency. However, the social assumption behind the modern house, with its relative transparency and extroverted look, does not necessarily mark a break with tradition, in spite of the divergence from the tradition of formal solidity and introverted character.

This thesis has developed from a primary question facing the initial argument: whether the old modes of thought and practices still exist in the modern house. However, analyzing the traditional courtyard house and the colonial house, each within its aesthetic, political and cultural context, made the analysis and understanding of the modern house possible. Although the form of the modern house has departed the formal expression of the colonial and the traditional house, one fact persists in the three periods in spite of their contextual differences. Women's roles within the framework of domesticity and privacy still persist in shaping the social and spatial mapping.

However, the form of the house, as analyzed within its political and cultural contexts, does not necessarily reflect the political and social inequality of that context. The form could convey a

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different, not necessarily opposite meaning, of its former context. The traditional courtyard house, as a form seemingly associated with women's segregation, could carry independent meaning apart from its association with segregation. Thus, it can offer a different meaning in its new setting. But this is not to suggest a return to the traditional courtyard house in favor of a romantic perspective on the tradition or a reaction to the new rationale of the modern enlightenment era. The courtyard house needs to be looked at beyond the immediate association with its former meaning.

The state's declarations on women's liberation and unveiling in the modern Iraqi state elusively camouflaged the inherited idea that women should be segregated. The new propaganda promoted a generalized mythical image of women as a worker and a mother with children. However, the totalitarian image of the liberated women promoted by the state was believed by both men and women to equal to liberation, although it did not actually liberate women for themselves as individuals.

Appendix

Social and Political Changes in Baghdad

After the Soviet Revolution in 1917, Marxist-Leninist ideas came in favor of Iraqi intellectuals in the 1920s.[1] During World War II, the communist party in Iraq, founded in 1934, was inspired by the Soviet Union struggle against Nazi occupation. In 1957, the National Unity Front was formed and included the Communist Party, the National Democrats, the Istiqlal Party and the Baath Party.

After the 14 of July Revolution, political forces became polarized. The communist party was in struggle for radical socio-economic reforms. The national bourgeoisie were trying to monopolize political power. When the Baath Party gained power in 1968, it established an anti-communist attitude, trying to paralyze and terrorize the communist party. It neglected the democratic union and the peasants societies. The Arab Baath Socialist Party (ABSP) did not change the character of the bourgeois regime, but it did transfer power to the middle bourgeois so it did not put an end to the despotic military rule.

The communist party was critical of the government's anti-communist and anti-democratic attitudes especially their violation of human rights. However, they supported the ABSP's ideas of nationalism, anti-Zionism and feudalism. In July 1973, the two parties signed the National Action Charter, promising mutual respect for the independence of each party, ideologically, politically and organizationally.[2] However, the charter remained a merely symbolic gesture. The anti-communist campaign intensified. The communist party members were subjected to torture. The system of dictatorship that the Baath had practiced in Iraq came to be expressed in social and political life.

Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, two Syrians who had been influenced by Marxism and socialism during their studies in France, founded the Arab Baath Socialist Party in Damascus in the early 1940s.[3] Better known as the Baath (meaning Resurrection) Party, it claims to aspire to "the resurrection of the Arab Nation by means of Arab socialism and secularism."

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[1]Cardri, Saddam's Iraq Revolution or Reaction? (London: Zed Books Ltd. , 1986), p.141.
[2]Chardri, p. 153.
[3]Michel Aflaq was an Orthodox Christian and Salah al-Din Bitar was a Sunni Muslim. Aflaq admired the work of Alfred Rosenberg, especially Rosenberg's The Myth of the Twentieth Century, and he believed that Hitler achieved the best possible synthesis of socialism and nationalism.

The Baath Party believed in the unity of all Arab people and lands. It believed that the Arab states in their present constitution are artificial creations of imperialism and colonialism, and should be abolished to create a single Arab state. The Baath believed in "inqilab"[4] (literally meaning "overthrow," or fundamental structural overturning) of existing state regimes, and then adopting the declared principles of the Baath. A single Arab nation was imagined as covering the area from the Taurus Mountains (in Turkey) to the Indian Ocean and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.[5]

In May 1941, the first Arab nationalist coup was staged against the pro-British government in Iraq. The same year, the newly founded Baath Party proclaimed its aims of Unity, Liberty and Pan-Arabism. The party's still-dominant slogan, "One Arab nation with an eternal mission" appeared then. In the first national party congress, held in Damascus in 1947, the Baath Party announced its structure, strategy and constitution.

On July 14, 1958, army officers overthrew the nearly 30-year-old pro-British monarchy and the government that had served under it. The Baath perceived this revolution as the savior of the country from a corrupted government. The Baath believed that there was a conspiracy within the government against the people. With the 1950 revolution, Iraq was declared a republic, and Islam the state religion.

The new government's first manifesto stated: *This uprising, which is carried out by the people and the army for carrying on the victorious march of the glorious July revolution, must accomplish two objectives: the attainment of the national unity of the people, and the achievement of the mass participation in running the affairs of the government. To attain to this, public freedoms must be released.*[6]

On February 9, 1963, the Baath supported by sympathetic military forces, moved to get rid of Abdel-Kareem Qasim. After a very bloody battle, the Baath took power for the first time in Iraq.

One of the main slogans of Baathism is "Unity, Liberty, Socialism." Beyond the unification of the Arab people and lands, "Unity" refers to a united anti-imperialist front and the unity of Arab military forces against imperialism and for the liberation of Palestine. Baathists took more interest in Arab unity more than in freedom and socialism. Arab unity was in fact more emphasized than Islamic unity. "Liberty" to the Baath Party meant total liberation from any imperialist influence. By "Socialism" the Baath Party meant giving equal opportunities to the

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[4]Inqilab means structural transformation, believed, within the ideology of the Baath, to be the spirit and thinking of the Arabs.

[5]Most of these Arab lands were dominated in the forties and fifties by the West.

[6]Khalid al-Ani, *Mawsuat al-Iraq al-Hadith.* (Baghdad: al-Dar al-Arabiya al-Mawust, 1977), vol. 1, p. 227.

masses and fair distribution of resources among the masses. This is to eliminate all feudal and capitalist forms in the economic and social sectors.

By the end of July 17-30, 1968, Revolution, the Arab Baath Socialist Party captured power in Iraq. Ahmed Hasan al-Bakr became president, commander-in-chief, chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, and general secretary of the Arab Baath. Saddam Hussein was his chief aide and deputy, and the executor of the president's policy decisions.[7]

The concept of pan-Arabism, now in a secular state, now came to be better applied. Secular Arabism is the compromise position between the traditional religious groups' need for identity assertion, and the Baath Party's project for modernizing the society. Secular Arabists to state firm opposition to any manifestation of imperialism and Zionism. Secular Arabism, therefore, took a nationalist turn.

In the 19th Century, there was no clear theory about Arab nationalism existed. To a far greater extent, religious solidarity was the focus. Arab nationalism existed as a more definite theory in the 1940s and 1950s, continued into the late 1960s. But Arab government's raising the banner of Arab nationalism failed in significant ways. They failed in attempts at unity (including the attempt to unify Syria and Egypt between 1958-1961), to improve the lot of Arabs, and failed in some ways, to stand up against Israel. These setbacks, combined with the death of the charismatic nationalist leader President Gamal Abd al-Nasir of Egypt in 1970, delivered the idea of Arab nationalism a devastating blow.

"Pan-Arabism is a mode of being....a symbol that forces itself upon geographers and historians alike.... It conceals an almost incantatory force, a prestige so out of proportion to any material basis that the causes of this transcendence must be sought elsewhere than in stark objectivity. They, doubtless, lie in a past which marries to the glory of its conquests the classicism of its language and the integrity of its creed. In keeping with Mediterranean symmetry that the Arabs do not repudiate, their contribution, their genius, and their being are one of the most authentic and enduring components of the Old World."[8]

Between Arab Nationalism and Islam

The conflict between Islam and Arab nationalism was a problem in the original establishment of the state of Iraq. The conflict involves the question of whether one claims relating to Islam or to Arab nationalism. It is a problem still faced nowadays in most of the Arab countries. For Islam had gathered to itself many ethnic groups in addition to Arabs. If Arab countries had

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[7]Elaine Sciolino, The Outlaw State, p. 49.
[8]Jacques Berque, Arab Rebirth: Pain and Ecstasy (London: Al Saqi Books, 1983), p. 1.

identified with Islam, they could not claim distinction and superiority over the non-Arab Muslims.

The Baath had uneasy relationship to Islam, particularly in view of the fact that they were dealing with societies marked by a mixture of ethnic and religious groups, which were further divided into sects. These facts made it easier for the Baath to relate to Arab identity rather than religious identity -- and it is an Arab identity in which Islam conforms to Arabism, and not the opposite. Because of the European influences on the founders of Baathism and the makeup of Arab societies, the party became a mixture of European socialism and Arab nationalism. The party emphasized Arabism and the search for a political leader for the Arab world. They found model of Arabism in the Jahiliyya, the period before the emergence of Islam.[9] A very intriguing point, expressed in the first writings of the party, is the claim for a transcendental origin of Arabs--that the Arab race in its pure and original form is free of any outside contamination. In other words, the Baath believes that Arabs are not the consequence of economic or social factors, but that Arabness was the original uncontaminated core. Islam is simply one of its formatives.[10]

There are two other reasons for emphasizing Secular Arabism over Arab Islamism. First, the Baathists' fear having their mission associated with, and thus adulterated by the non-Arab Muslims such as Turks or Persians, whose influence on the Arab and Islamic worlds is of great impact. Second, they claim an authenticity of origin a transcendental truth (in Arabness) beyond religion.[11]

Iraq was uncertain of its claims to Arab descent or Islamic universalism; however, the trend was towards Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism rather than Islamic universalism. Sometimes the rhetoric overlaps Arab and Islamic themes to justify an even more powerful identity myth.

"We are Arabs ...before being Muslims, and Mohammed is an Arab before being a prophet."[12]

Michel Aflaq emphasized to the Arabs in that they should not have a problem with the natural affinity between Arab nationalism and Islam:

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[9]*Jahiliyya* is the name for the period before the coming of Islam, the word "jahiliyya" meaning "the age of ignorance." Furthermore, in discussing Arab nationalism, Zaki al-Arsuzi, a lesser known founder of the Baath Party, traces the idea of nationalism to the pre-Islamic era, and according to him a national feeling had appeared at that time, (Farah, E., Tawfik, Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism, p. 22.)

[10]Even though the Baath were secular and did not rely on Islam for its basis, it did not try to interfere or at least to challenge the practice of Islam.

[11]I would also like to mention that the words Michel Aflaq used in describing the philosophy of the Baath is taken from the bible and it was accused of being too Christian taken in consideration his Christian origin, he is a member of Greek Orthodox church.

[12]Quoted in Faysal ibn al-Hussein fi Aqwalihi wa Khitabatihi [Faysal ibn al-Hussein in his speeches and writings] (Baghdad: 1945), p. 175.

"The Arabs are unique among the other nations in that their national awakening coincides with the birth of a religious message, or rather, that this message was an expression of the national awakening... They did not expand for the sake of expansion...but to perform a religious duty which is all truth, guidance, mercy, justice and generosity... As long as we see Arabism as a body with Islam as its soul, there is no room for fear of the Arabs going to extremes in their nationalism."[13]

Thus, Aflaq and others view of Islam is as the core of Arab history. Arabism is portrayed as the force that brought Islam and secularism together. However, the distinctions are not clear and the philosophy of Arabism remains in some ways obscure.

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[13]Michel Aflaq, Fi sabil al Baath, (Beirut: 1975), p. 128.

Figures Titles & Sources

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Fig. 1   Women's status in Modern Iraq.
Source: General Federation for Iraqi Women, <u>Al-Marah</u>, issue # 64/1977.

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Fig. 3   Portrayal of the Arab woman's identity.
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Source: General Federation for Iraqi Women, <u>Al-Marah</u>.

Chapter 1

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Source: Mustafa Jawad, <u>Baghdad</u>, p. 351.

Fig. 1   Plan
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Source: J. Lassner, <u>The Topography of Baghdad in the early Middle Ages</u>, p.207.

Fig. 2   Plan
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Source: Nour, <u>An Analytical Study of Traditional Arab Architecture</u>, p.113.

Fig. 3   Plan
Al-Ukhaidir Palace.
Source: Mustafa, <u>The Arabic House in Iraq in the Islamic Period</u>, p.164.

Fig. 4   Plan
Samarran Houses
Source: Mustafa, <u>Baghdad</u>, p.181.

Fig. 5   Plan
The Gates of Baghdad City.
Source: Creswell, <u>A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture</u>, p. 171.

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Fig. 20c   Exterior perspective.
                Hussein Jamil House, Chadirji, 1953.
                Source: Rifat Chadirji, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri, p. 51.

Fig. 21   Nasir Chadirji House, large glass window facing solid wall, 1962.
                Source: Chadirji, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri, p. 138.

Fig. 22   Muhammed abud al-Wahab House, screening large glass windows, 1952.
                Source: Chadirji, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri, p. 37.

Fig. 23   Barcelona Pavillion by Mies Van Der Rohe, 1929.
                Source: Rifat Chadirji, Al-Ukhaydir wa-al-Qasr al-Billuri, p. 54.

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