

Heather Raffo's

9 Parts of Desire

Produced by
Mo'olelo Performing Arts
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Teacher Study Guide

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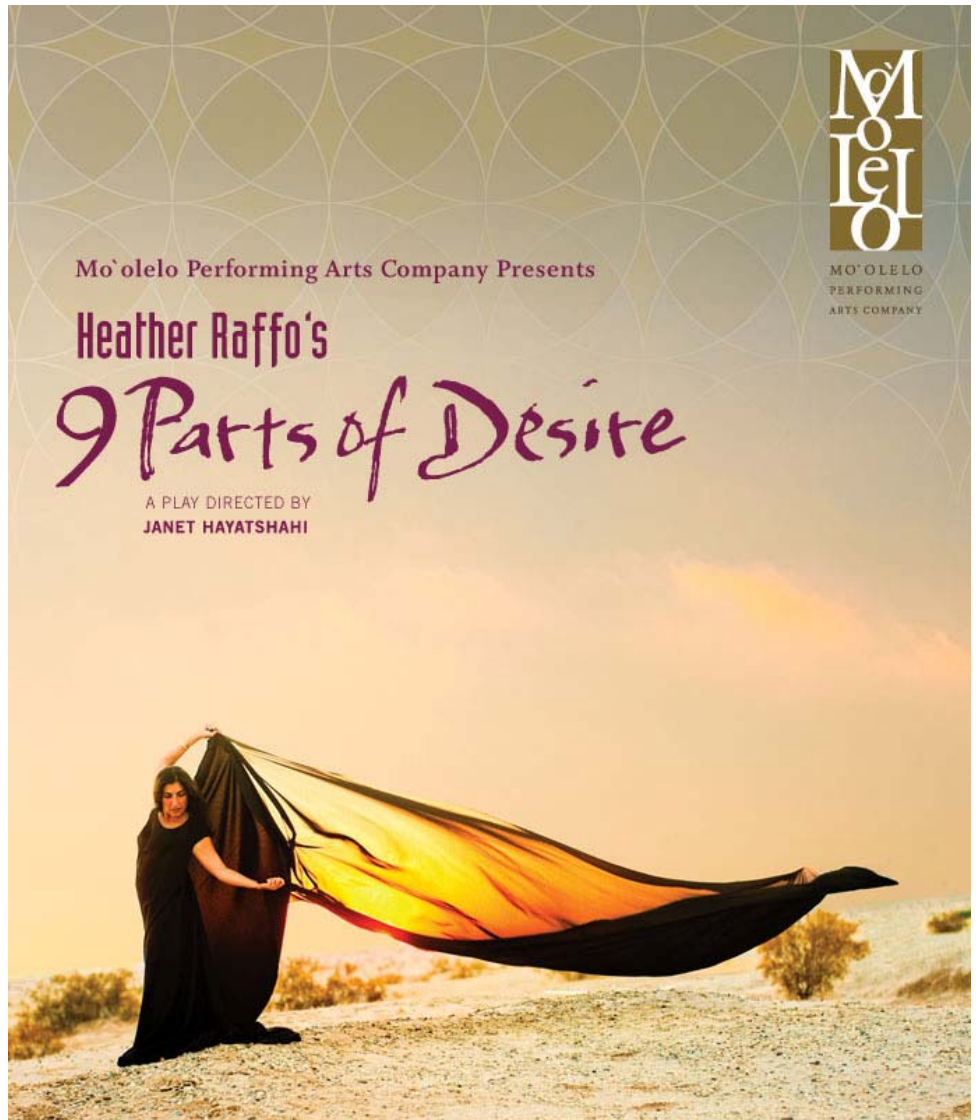


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THE FIELDSTONE FOUNDATION



*An Artist. An Exile. An American.
A Doctor. A Girl. A Survivor.
A Mullaya. A Lover. An Old Woman.*

What does it mean to be a woman from Iraq?

Inspired and extracted from true events, *9 Parts of Desire* is the story of nine Iraqi women living in Baghdad, London and New York who confront the world in both ordinary and surprising ways, revealing conflicting perspectives about an age-old war zone.

An example of how art can remake the world! A triumph! Thrilling!
- The New Yorker

GREENING MO'OLELO: As part of Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company's Greening Initiative, this study guide is printed on recycled paper (30% post-consumer content).

The Artistic Team

Playwright.....Heather Raffo
Director.....Janet Hayatshahi
Stage Manager.....Annette Yé*
Scenic Designer.....David F. Weiner
Lighting Designer....Jason Bieber
Costume Designer..Charlotte Devaux
Sound Designer.....Paul Peterson
Dialect Coach.....Jan Gist
Dramaturg.....Shelley Orr
Consultant.....Ghada Osman

Cast:

Lisel Gorell-Getz
Frances Anita Rivera
Dré Slaman

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.*

9 Parts of Desire is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., in New York

Playwright's Biography: **Heather Raffo**

Heather trained as an actress and has spent the last ten years performing off Broadway, off West End, in regional theater and in film. She is the author of the play *9 Parts of Desire*, a one-woman show told through the lives of nine Iraqi women. Heather received a Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Special Commendation and a Lucille Lortel award for Best Solo Show as well as Helen Hayes, Outer Critics Circle and Drama League nominations, for outstanding performance.

Heather first performed *9 Parts* at the Bush Theatre in London's Off-West End. It's New York premiere was at the Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, where the show ran for nine months. Most recently, Heather performed a concert version of the play at Kennedy Center with renowned Iraqi Musician, Amir ElSaffar.

It has been performed across the U.S. and internationally. Publications are by Northwestern University Press and Dramatists Play Service as well as a number of anthologies.

Recent acting credits: *In Darfur* at The Public Theater, *Palace of the End* (Drama League Nomination) at Epic Theater Center; *French Lieutenant's Woman* at Fulton Opera House; *Macbeth*, *Merry Wives of Windsor* with The Acting Company; *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Comedy of Errors* at the Old Globe Theater San Diego.

Iraqi art showing the American bombing of Iraq



A Brief History of Iraq

By Dr. Ghada Osman

Dr. Ghada Osman is Director of the Center for Islamic & Arabic Studies at San Diego State University. She holds a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern Studies and an M.A. in Islamic Studies, and frequently gives lectures on Islam and various aspects of Muslim societies.



Map Source: Lonely Planet

Historically known as “Mesopotamia,” Iraq has been home to successive civilizations since the 6th millennium BC. In the seventh century C.E., Islam entered Iraq and the Muslim rulers established control over the area, annexing it to their growing Muslim Empire that came to incorporate much of what is today the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of South Asia. When the city of Baghdad was built in the eighth century as the capital of the Muslim Empire, it rapidly flourished to become a leading metropolis and a hub for learning and cultural activity. Scholars in Baghdad were credited with advancements in the arts and the sciences; the words *admiral*, *algebra*, *alchemy*, and *algorithm* are all of Arabic origin.

In modern times, Iraq was given to Britain as a mandate at the end of World War I. During this period, British colonial administrators ruled the country, suppressing Arab and Kurdish rebellions against the occupation. Iraq received its independence from Britain in 1932, though the British retained military bases and transit rights for their forces. A monarchy ruled Iraq until 1958, when it was overthrown by an Iraqi Army coup. A further series of coups brought the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party to power briefly in 1963 and again in 1968; the Party and government gradually came under the control of Saddam Hussein, who took power as President in 1979. His government was one that came to repress Kurds, Shi’is, some Sunnis, and Christian minority groups. At the same time, the Ba’ath Party advocated women’s literacy and education, and Iraqi women’s literacy rates came to be among the highest in the Middle East.

In 1990, faced with economic disaster following the end of the 1980-1988 Iran–Iraq War, Saddam Hussein, claiming that Kuwait was illegally slant-drilling its oil pipelines into Iraqi territory, invaded his oil-rich neighbor. The UN agreed to pass economic sanctions against Iraq and demanded its immediate withdrawal from Kuwait. Iraq refused and the UN Security Council in 1990 voted for military action against Iraq. Iraq was soundly defeated, but failed to comply with disarmament terms, and as a result, economic sanctions against the country continued. It is estimated more than 500,000 Iraqi children died as a result of the sanctions.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act, calling for “regime change” in Iraq. Saddam Hussein, under pressure from the U.S. and the U.N., finally agreed to allow weapons inspectors to return to Iraq in 2002. By that time, however, preparations for war were already underway, and the first CIA team entered Iraq in July 2002. On March 20, 2003, a United States-organized coalition invaded Iraq. Saddam Hussein’s government was toppled, and on December 30, 2006, Saddam Hussein was hanged.

Timeline: Iraq

A chronology of key events

- 1920** 25 April - Iraq is placed under British mandate by the League of Nations.
- 1921** 23 August - Faysal, son of Hussein Bin Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, is crowned Iraq's first king.
- 1932** 3 October - Iraq becomes an independent state.
- 1958** 14 July - The monarchy is overthrown in a military coup.
- 1963** 8 February - The Arab Socialist Baath Party (ASBP) seizes power in a coup.
18 November - The Ba'athist government is overthrown.
- 1968** 17 July - A Ba'athist led-coup seizes power again.
- 1972** Iraq nationalizes the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC).
- 1979** 16 July - President Al-Bakr resigns and is succeeded by Vice-President Saddam Hussein.
- 1980** 4 September - Iran shells Iraqi border towns (Iraq considers this as the start of the Iran/Iraq war). Almost one million people died in the conflict; exchanges of war dead continued for years
- 1981** 7 June - Israel attacks an Iraqi nuclear research centre at Tuwaythah near Baghdad.
- 1988** 20 August - A ceasefire comes into effect to be monitored by the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (Uniimog).
- 1990** 2 August - Iraq invades Kuwait and is condemned by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 660 which calls for full withdrawal.
6 August - UNSC Resolution 661 imposes economic sanctions on Iraq.
- 1991** 16 -17 January - The Gulf War starts when the coalition forces begin aerial bombing of Iraq ("Operation Desert Storm").
13 February - US planes destroy an air raid shelter at Amiriyah in Baghdad, killing more than 300 people.
Mid-March/early April - Iraqi forces suppress rebellions in the south and the north of the country.
8 April - A plan to establish a UN safe-haven in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds is approved at a European Union meeting.
On 10 April the USA orders Iraq to end all military activity in this area.

Continued...

References from the Play

Amiriyah Bomb Shelter

Before dawn on February 13, 1991, an air-raid shelter called Public Shelter No. 25, located in the Amiriyah neighborhood of Baghdad, was bombed by the U.S. Two "smart bombs" were dropped. The first penetrated the concrete bunker and the second followed the opening created by the first. More than 400 people, overwhelmingly women and children died horrific deaths from the heat generated by the blasts. The shelter was turned into a memorial to those who died there. A woman, Umm Greyda, who lost 8 of her 9 children in the bombing, moved to the shelter to help create the memorial. The character Umm Ghada in *9 Parts of Desire* is based on this woman. The U.S. justified the attack claiming that the shelter was being used for military command purposes, a claim rejected by Human Rights Watch, among others.

Depleted Uranium

The character of The Doctor refers to depleted uranium in the play. The U.S. developed depleted uranium munitions because the density of the uranium material makes it able to penetrate the most sophisticated armor. Termed "depleted" because it is a by-product of enriching uranium for use in reactors and weapons, its external radiation dose is about 60% that of natural uranium. It has a half-life of 4.5 billion years. The U.S. used DU munitions on Iraqi troops during the first Gulf War in 1991, in enforcing its "no-fly" zones during the 1990's, in the bombing raids of 1998, and during the war and occupation that began in 2003. Substantial areas of Iraq, especially in the south, have significant contamination in the soil, in vegetation and in the water. In these areas, a multi-fold increase in low-level radiation exposure related diseases has been recorded since 1995. These include childhood leukemia, congenital malformations, chromosomal aberrations and breast cancer. Women in the contaminated areas have suffered high rates of miscarriages and sterility. The use of depleted uranium in Iraq has resulted in a public health and environmental catastrophe.

Ba'ath Party

The Iraq Ba'ath party, formally the Arab Socialist Ba'ath ("renaissance") Party, was founded in 1951. It advocated Arab unity, secular nationalism and a one-party state. It grew rapidly in the 1950's. Its main opposition among secular nationalists was the Iraq Communist Party. The U.S., concerned about Soviet

- 1992** 26 August - A no-fly zone, which Iraqi planes are not allowed to enter, is set up in southern Iraq, south of latitude 32 degrees north.
- 1996** 3 September - US extends northern limit of southern no-fly zone to latitude 33 degrees north, just south of Baghdad.
- 1998** 16-19 December - US and UK launch a bombing campaign, "Operation Desert Fox", to destroy Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes.
- 2001** February - Britain, US carry out bombing raids to try to disable Iraq's air defense network. The bombings have little international support.
- 2002** November - UN weapons inspectors return to Iraq backed by a UN resolution which threatens serious consequences if Iraq is in "material breach" of its terms.
- 2003** March - Chief weapons inspector Hans Blix reports that Iraq has accelerated its cooperation but says inspectors need more time to verify Iraq's compliance.
- 2003** 20 March - American missiles hit targets in Baghdad, marking the start of a US-led campaign to topple Saddam Hussein. In the following days US and British ground troops enter Iraq from the south.
9 April - US forces advance into central Baghdad. Saddam Hussein's grip on the city is broken. In the following days Kurdish fighters and US forces take control of the northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul. There is looting in Baghdad and elsewhere.
May - UN Security Council backs US-led administration in Iraq and lifts economic sanctions. It is estimated that 500,000 Iraqi children died of causes directly attributable to the sanctions. US administrator abolishes Ba'ath Party and institutions of former regime.
- 2003** 14 December - Saddam Hussein captured in Tikrit.
- 2004** April-May - Hundreds are reported killed in fighting during the month-long US military siege of the Sunni Muslim city of Falluja. Photographic evidence emerges of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US troops.
June - US hands sovereignty to interim government headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.
August - Fighting in Najaf between US forces and Shia militia of radical cleric Moqtada Sadr.
November - Major US-led offensive against insurgents in Falluja.

Continued...

References from the play

continued

influence in Iraq, supported the Ba'ath and aided it in the coups that brought it to power, initially in 1963 and then, again, in 1968. Saddam Hussein joined the Ba'ath in 1956 and by 1979 had become president of Iraq, head of the Revolutionary Command Council and secretary general of the Ba'ath Party. Under Saddam, the ideological base of the Ba'ath gave way to its use as an instrument of maintaining power. Membership in the Ba'ath became critically important for social and economic advancement.

Sanctions

From 1990 to 2003, the UN imposed trade sanctions on Iraq. The sanctions were the most drastic in human history and prevented Iraq from buying or selling virtually anything on the open market. Even things that were essential for public health (like chlorine for purifying water) were banned if they were "dual use," that is, might be used for military purposes. Some 1.5 million deaths, a third of them children, are attributed to the sanctions, due to lack of clean water among other reasons. The socio-economic consequences of sanctions were also dramatic. Between 1990 and 1998, over one fifth of Iraqi children stopped enrolling in school. There was a dramatic increase in child labor, from a virtually non-existent level in the 1980s. The per capita income in Iraq dropped from \$3510 in 1989 to \$450 in 1996.

Saddam Art Center

The Saddam Art Center was Baghdad's museum of modern art. It had a huge collection and was noted for its works by the "Pioneers," the first generation of Iraqi artists to bring European-style modernism to Iraq. In 1993, it opened an exhibition of 40 new portraits of Saddam Hussein, each measuring 6 feet by 9 feet, to mark the 25th anniversary of the coup that brought the Baath Party to power. During her visit in 1993, Heather Raffo was inspired by a painting by artist Layla Al-Attar who was also director of the museum. Al-Attar was known for paintings showing female nudes mingling with trees and the natural environment. Al-Attar was killed in 1993 during a missile attack ordered by President Bill Clinton. After the U.S. invasion, the museum was looted of all of its paintings and sculptures.

- 2005** July - Study compiled by the non-governmental Iraq Body Count organization estimates that nearly 25,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed since the 2003 US-led invasion.
Voters approve a new constitution, which aims to create an Islamic federal democracy.
- 2005** 15 December - Iraqis vote for the first, full-term government and parliament since the US-led invasion.
- 2006** February onwards - A bomb attack on an important Shia shrine in Samarra unleashes a wave of sectarian violence in which hundreds of people are killed.
May and June - An average of more than 100 civilians per day are killed in violence in Iraq, the UN says.
11 October – British medical journal *The Lancet* estimates that 654,965 Iraqis had died by June 2006 for reasons directly attributable to the war.
December - Iraq Study Group report making recommendations to President Bush on future policy in Iraq describes the situation as grave and deteriorating. It warns of the prospect of a slide towards chaos, triggering the collapse of the government and a humanitarian catastrophe.
30 December - Saddam Hussein is executed by hanging.
- 2007** January - US President Bush announces a new Iraq strategy; thousands more US troops will be dispatched to shore up security in Baghdad. UN says more than 34,000 civilians were killed in violence during 2006; the figure surpasses official Iraqi estimates threefold.
- 2007** September - Controversy over private security contractors after Blackwater security guards allegedly fire at civilians, killing 17.
Prime Minister Maliki orders crackdown on militia in Basra, sparking pitched battles with Moqtada Sadr's Mehdi Army. Hundreds are killed.
- 2008** July - Prime Minister Maliki for the first time raises the prospect of setting a timetable for the withdrawal of US troops as part of negotiations over a new security agreement with Washington
November - The Iraqi parliament approves a security pact with the United States under which all US troops are due to leave the country by the end of 2011.
- 2009** March - US President Barack Obama announces withdrawal of most US troops by end of August 2010. Up to 50,000 of 142,000 troops now there will stay on into 2011 to advise Iraqi forces and protect US interests, leaving by end of 2011.
May - Parliamentary election date set for 30 January 2010.

Saddam Hussein and the U.S. **He was our friend before he was our enemy**

Saddam Hussein's relationship with the U.S. goes back at least to 1958. Then, just one year after the monarchy installed by the British was overthrown, Saddam was wounded in a failed attempt to assassinate the new prime minister, Abdul Karim Qasim. It seems that the U.S. considered Qasim to be too radical and feared he would tilt toward the Soviet Union. So it engaged in a plot to get rid of him. Saddam, then in his twenties, was part of the plot.

After the failed plot, Saddam fled to Cairo where he went to law school and was on a stipend from the CIA via the Egyptian government.

In 1963, a Baathist coup seized power and killed Qasim. The CIA gave the Baathists lists of communists who were subsequently killed. Saddam was brought back from Cairo as an interrogator and soon became head of Baath Intelligence. But officers loyal to Qasim overthrew the Baath government later that same year.

In 1968, a second Baath coup successfully took power. This time, the U.S. promoted a Baath faction from Tikrit that included Saddam and helped them become dominant. Saddam grew increasingly powerful within the Baath during this period, consolidating his position and becoming President of Iraq in 1979.

During the 1980's the U.S. support of Saddam became even stronger. The U.S. gave practical help during the war with Iran, including supplying Iraq with billions of dollars of credits, providing military intelligence and advice, encouraging allies to supply Iraq with high power weaponry, turning a blind eye to pharmaceutical companies that supplied Iraq with the ingredients for chemical weapons, and opposing an attempt by Iran to get the U.N. to condemn Iraq for using chemical weapons.

But Saddam was outliving his usefulness. The Gulf War of 1991, 13 years of trade sanctions and the invasion in 2003 were followed by his execution in 2006.

FURTHER READING ON IRAQ

Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq by Riverbend

Baghdad Burning II: More Girl Blog from Iraq by Riverbend

Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches from an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq by Dahr Jamail

Cities of Widows: An Iraqi Woman's Account of War and Resistance by Haifa Zangana.

Dictatorship, Imperialism and Chaos: Iraq Since 1989 by Thabit Abdullah

Engaging the Muslim World by Juan Cole

Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq by Thomas E. Ricks

Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone by Rajiv Chandrasekaran

Iraqigirl: Diary of a Teenage Girl in Iraq by Elizabeth Wrigley-field and John Ross

Iraqi Women: Untold Stories form 1948 to the Present by Nadjé Sadig Al-Ali.

Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War by Anthony Arnove

The Occupation: War and Resistance in Iraq by Patrick Cockburn

Sacred Space And Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam by Juan Cole

Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation by William R. Polk

What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation in Iraq by Nadjé Al-Ali and Nicole Pratt

Women in Iraq: The Gender Impact of International Sanctions by Yasmin Hussein Al-Jawaheri

Blog: Baghdad Burning <http://riverbendblog.blogspot.com/>

Video: Baghdad USA www.baghdadusa.com

What is *Wudu*?

In the production of *9 Parts of Desire*, you'll notice that some of the characters respond to the Islamic call to prayer by washing their hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head, ears, and feet ritually. This is the Muslim practice known as *wudu*, a process of cleaning oneself before praying. You can learn more about *wudu* here: <http://www.islamicity.com/mosque/salat/salat6.htm>.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Please remind students of theatre etiquette:

- 1) Turn off all cell phones, pagers, watch alarms, and other noisemakers when in the theater.
- 2) No foods, drinks, or gum chewing during the performance.
- 3) No recording devices of any kind, video or audio, allowed in the theater.
- 4) Any backpacks, books, purses, lunch bags, ipods, etc. that the students bring to the theater will be stored in the lobby during the performance.
- 5) No talking during the performance as a courtesy to the actors and your fellow audience members.
- 6) The theater can sometimes be cold, please remind students to bring a jacket.
- 7) Each performance is completely unique. As the audience, you can control the quality of the performance by the level of focus and respect you give the actors.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT – A NOTE TO TEACHERS

During the in-class workshops we ask teachers to assist in creating an environment that encourages creativity and learning. Please manage all discipline problems in the classroom. If a student requires further discipline outside the room, please devise a plan that does not involve you leaving the classroom at any time during the workshop. It is important that the workshop facilitators are not left alone without a faculty representative present. Please prepare students for the participatory nature of our workshops. We may push back chairs and desks, get students on their feet, and have them move around the room. We request that students who are not participating be asked to leave the classroom so that we can send a consistent message to all students. We look forward to working with you and your students. For more information, please contact Mo`olelo at 619-342-7395 or schools@moolelo.net.

ABOUT MO`OLELO PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY

Mo`olelo means story in Hawaiian. Mo`olelo Performing Arts Company is a socially-conscious, community-focused, Equity theater organization dedicated to broadening the scope of San Diego's cultural environment by telling powerful stories that are as diverse as the islands of Hawaii, by paying Equity wages to local actors and developing environmentally-friendly theater practices. A recipient of the Patté, McDonald Playwriting and the Anti-Discrimination Awards, its mission is to create new works based on research within various communities, produce lesser-known works by master and contemporary playwrights, and educate youth. To learn more, visit www.moolelo.net or call 619-342-7395.