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**Dystopian Reality in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* a novel  
by Ahmed Saadawi**

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**Abstract**

Dystopian literature is important in old and modern literature. It depicts a world in which everything is imperfect, chaotic and distorted. It shows a nightmarish image yet it is true in some afflicted communities. It mainly deals with war, oppression and disastrous situations. Almost all the characteristics of dystopian literature are real in Ahmed Saadawi's novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. These characteristics are real and tangible in the place where the events of the novel occurred. These characteristics are manifested in people's fear from the government, the American troops and terrorism attacks. Also the unstable life that they are forced to adapt. In addition, the lack of freedom and independence create a huge gap between citizens and the government.

Baghdad was devastated by many oppressive factors like: American annoying troops, terrorists' explosions attacks, incompetent government highly officials, and militias' sectarian attacks. The only imaginative tool of dystopia that Saadawi use is the creation of Whatsitsname. Saadawi tries to drag his readers' attention to a magical-realistic world. All the other incidents are real and present in everyday life in Baghdad in 2005; like the unsafe capital, the disintegration of family members, the separated limbs of victims. Saadawi virtually described the dark era in Baghdad at that time. The bloodshed, the torture and massive killing was overwhelming the city.

Dystopian fiction links elements of truth that is specific to the time in which it is written in with science or imaginary elements that represent the terrifying direction we are winding to. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* converses this classic formula: the dystopian fundamentals of the novel are not engrained in its hypothetical and mythical elements but rather in the very real, frightening violence that Baghdad witnessed in 2005.

**Key words:** Dystopia, suicidal bombed cars, chaos, assassinations, fear, death, Whatsitsname, victims, militias, fortune tellers, incompetent government.

## Introduction: Dystopia and Utopia

### Section one: Utopia

This section is going to provide a clear description of the concept dystopia. But before that there is a need to grasp the meaning of utopia to understand these two genres. Utopia is a term which refers to the ideal society where everything is good. There is no place for injustice, cruelty, violation, or exploitation. It is the platonic place of each man's dream. It is a perfect place for humanity. No one can be mistreated, humiliated or hurt in such imaginary and ideal world. Civil rights are equally distributed among all people regardless of their race, religion and social position.

The word [utopia](#) was first originated in the literary works of the 1st century BC Classical Greek philosopher and mathematician, Aristocles Plato (428BC -348BC) Created from the Greek words *eu* ("good"), *ou* ("no") and *topos* ("place"), utopia represented an unobtainable perfect society or community, in which social, economic, environmental, and scientific conditions were ideal. These intentionally created perfect fictional communities were frequently the focus of many philosophical literary works over. (British Library) *Merriam Webster* dictionary defines it as follows: “*often capitalized*: a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions ” , “an impractical scheme for social improvement”, “an imaginary and indefinitely remote place”. (Merriam Webster)

The concept of utopia is very wide but we can illuminate simple definitions of it. Utopia is a man's dream of a better world. Apparently it is simple but it is more complex in meaning. (Davis, 12). The concept of ‘better’ here is relevant to the idea of perfection in Utopias. So Utopia exists neither in the past nor in the future. The Platonic utopia “classic utopia” is designed for contemplation only and not for action. It transcends time and place. The classical utopia is seen as unconcerned with actualization in time (Ibid, 14-15) On the contrary of the modern utopia which seeks change in man and society. So utopia is concerned with the ideal society, a society which is perfect in everything. With Plato utopia was born to create a fantasy of a just and harmonious urban society which is based on hierarchy of virtues and instinctual repression which attract later generation (E. Manuel& P. Manuel: 64)

The first writer who coined and brought Utopia to life is Mr. Thomas More (1478 –1535), venerated in the Catholic Church as Saint Thomas More, was an English lawyer, social philosopher, author, statesman, and noted Renaissance humanist besides being a moralist. He had loved God and the world (Crawley et al. 1) His love to God is not by turning away from the world, but by actively

engaging it (March'hadour 1) He wrote his book *Utopia* in 1516 in Latin. Then it was translated to other languages. Morely describes More's book as follows:

The name of the book has given an adjective to our language\_ well call an impracticable scheme Utopia. Yet, under the veil of a playful fiction, the talk is intensely earnest, and abounds in practical suggestion. It is the work of a scholarly and witty Englishman, who attacks in his own way the chief political and social evils in his time. (Morely 229)

Ultimately, Utopian writing is known as being a difficult genre to define. Lyman Tower Sargent define Utopianism as ‘’ the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live’’ (Ostry and Hintz 2). To be quiet clear, not all literary works that present positive environment can be classified as Utopian. There must be a subtle awareness of social organization and that gives a clear message for everyone (Ibid 4) Utopian literature encourages people to observe their society in a critical eye. It awakens them for political action. It makes them be more sensitive and fully aware of their conditions (Ibid7)

Marxism defines ‘‘utopia’’ as reactionary on the ground that is sought to impose an ideal plan upon reality rather seeking in that reality the means of social change’’ (Levitas 69) So utopia is like a myth created by writers and philosophers to escape facing reality. But it is important to evoke people against injustice. (Ibid 78) Despite the fact that Utopia is not about something real or tangible in life, it works as a social criticism. It presents a wonderful environment to mock actual life. Writers make use of it to awaken people to the miseries and the discrimination in our everyday life.

### **Section Two: Dystopia**

The word dystopia in the literary heritage creates disturbing images. It makes readers go back in thinking to the ancient myths of the Flood, the divine wrath and of the apocalypse of Judgment Day. Death, destruction and fear are dominant in dystopian texts. It anticipates the collapse of civilization (Claeys 3)These visions of apocalypse are very old; they dated back to nearly 1000 B.C. The victory of chaos on order is defined by the Egyptians through the prophecies of Nefertiti which foretold of the complete breakdown of society. Great people are exiled from power, crime, robbery and murder are dominant. The Nile turned red by the corpses floating in it (Ibid 4)

As we have explained earlier, defining genres is not an easy task. Yet the dystopian genre is usually defined as follows ‘‘dystopia is a genre often used to describe a fictional portrayal of a society in which

evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand, or as a satire of utopian aspiration which attempt to show its fallacies'' (Lenhan 16) So dystopia displays evil and negative atmosphere in the text. But if one looks at the majority of literary text dystopian concept can be a main theme of them. So how can we classify a work as dystopian or not. In almost every work of literature there is at least one conflict. There must be good and evil, right and wrong, mercy and cruelty. So how can we spot a dystopian work? A dystopian work views humanity and its future with alarm. Dystopian texts are dark, gloomy, and pessimistic. There must be a real warning for the readers (Ibid) Lenhan states that:

The dystopia is not merely 'utopia in reverse' as it has often been called, but a singular generic category issuing out of a twentieth-century shift of attitudes toward utopia. Dystopia is composed of unique qualities of imagination and sensibility. Certain historically bound shifts of the social imagination brought together as a fictive philosophical tract but in the form of the modern novel. However, the dystopian novelist, instead of recreating some fragment of the actual world, extrapolates from his concept of actuality in order to make a holistic framework, a complete alternative structure. (Lehnal 11)

The nightmarish eras of dystopia gains an increasingly prominent position in our vocabulary and our mental world. Dystopia become like a modern real phenomenon. This word is derived from two Greek words, *dus* and *topos*, meaning a diseased, bad, faulty or unfavorable place (Claey 4) It was first appeared in the mid- eighteenth century, but not used widely until the twentieth. It has awkward cousins, like Jermeý Bentham's 'cacotopia' or 'evil place' in common parlance, the word functions as the opposite of 'utopia' the bad place versus what we imagine to be the good place, the secular version of paradise (Ibid) The noun dystopia is often used synonymously with dystopian literature. However, Ruth Levitas generalizes it on the critical issues of our age like: predictions of the nuclear winter or the consequences of the destruction of the rain forests, the holes in the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect and the potential melting of the polar ice caps (Ibid 5) These issues are far from literature but they create this sense of dystopia in the modern life.

Sometimes dystopian elements are hidden within utopian texts as an example of that is the sake in the Garden of Eden. It gives us an alarm for what may happen in the near future. In fact a dystopian novel portrays an extremely negative or evil fictional states usually dominated by fear. So what do dystopian works reflect? They reflect the worries of society. These worries are illustrated either in for instance income inequality, power in the hands of evil fringe group,

the financial crisis. Science and technology are impacting our lives and changing who we are as people. (Demejan1)

Most critics like Karen F. Stein, Jocelyn Harris and Peter Fitting believe that through their observation in the literary works utopian and dystopian have a common ground in satire. Both of these genres criticize the injustice and irrationality of the existing social system. Both of them care for justice and its applications in the society system (Gottlieb 27)

Here is a quick primer on dystopian literature from *Contemporary Literary Criticism*:

Dystopian literature has been characterized as fiction that presents a negative view of the future of society and humankind. Utopian works typically sketch a future in which technology improves the everyday life of human beings and advances civilization, while dystopian works offer an opposite view. Some common themes found in dystopian fiction include mastery of nature—to the point that it becomes barren, or turns against humankind; technological advances that enslave humans or regiment their lives; the mandatory division of people into castes or groups with specialized functions; and a collective loss of memory and history making mankind easier to manipulate psychologically and ultimately leading to dehumanization (Gale18)

One can portray the utopia/dystopia in terms of spectrum of anxiety. With relative peace, friendship, and the absence of fear at one end, matched by anxiety, paranoia, and alienation on the other (Claeys 8) In the twentieth century, the universalization fear was certainly intensified by the immense destructiveness of overly rapid modernization.

There are many prototypes of dystopia. They are: militarized society, slavery, despotism, prisons and diseased spaces. The first prototype is about war and its destructive power on societies, in history there is a prominent example which is ancient Sparta. Beside that the exploitation of ethnic groups whether they are Christian, Muslims or Jews. The second prototype is slavery which can be seen in many cultures like Chinese, Indians, Babylon, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptians and Greek. Slavery is a black spot in history. It is even worse than wars. The third prototype is political despotism, which is unfortunately a common form of regime. They are key antecedents for totalitarian dictatorship. Terror and exploitation are their tools to control the people under their rule. The fourth is prison, tracking, torture, forced labor and the death camp. The fifth one is ostracism of diseased population from healthy, just like lepers. They remove their property and human rights. Sometimes lepers were subjected to a ceremony in which their heads were sprinkled with earth to signify

that they were dead to the world. So as readers see dystopia is interwoven with discourses about crisis and blights (Claey 10-14)

The dystopian theme in Saadawi's novel is a little bit different from the regular dystopian fiction. Sam Metz in his article "Fiction of Dystopian Times": Ahmed Saadawi's "Frankenstein in Baghdad" states that:

Dystopian fiction combines components of reality specific to the time in which it's written with science or fantasy elements that depict the nightmarish direction we are bending toward. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* reverses this typical formula: the dystopian elements of the novel are not rooted in its speculative, supernatural elements but rather in the very real, nightmarish violence of 2005 Baghdad. In an interview about the novel, Saadawi explained how he intended the book to be an opportunity to "deal with reality in an untraditional way." "The element of fantasy adds a touch of joy to the work, mitigating its cruelty," he said. Such is the case even more for English-language audiences; the insertion of Whatsitsname provides them relief from the limited way Iraq is traditionally represented in the United States and Europe (Metz 3)

So Saadawi uses real element to show the dystopian atmosphere in this novel. He deals with reality in untraditional way to drag people's attention to the bad conditions of people's life. Most of the actions and events in this novel are authentic and real. Nothing is fake except this creature which represents criminality and horror of everyday life in Baghdad in 2005. He also states that:

Rather than dystopian fiction, it's more correct to call *Frankenstein in Baghdad* fiction of dystopian times. Dystopian fiction rarely answers the question of how we got there; explicit connections between our time frame and that of the book's "near future" are skipped over to make space for the speculative premise. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* recognizes truths about the present day it describes instead of allowing a means for readers to escape and take solace in the comfortable idea that these books are only projections into an unreal future (Ibid 5)

### **Section Three: The Unsafe Environment in Baghdad**

The beginning lines in chapter one of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* releases terror and fear to the readers. Saadawi starts it with the following disastrous scene which is common in everyday life in Baghdad in 2005. It shows an authentic image of a moaning city with fear, death, explosion, horror and panic. It embodies all the evil that surround people:

The explosion took place two minutes after Elishva, the old woman known as Umm Daniel, or Daniel's mother, boarded the bus. Everyone on the bus turned round to see what had happened. They

watched in shock as a ball of smoke rose above the crowds, huge and black, from the car park near Tayaran Square in the centre of Baghdad. Young people raced to the scene of the explosion, and cars collided into each other or into the central reservation. The drivers were frightened and confused: they were assaulted by a cacophony of car horns and of people screaming and shouting (*FB 5*)

Saadawi perfectly manages to describe the real dystopian reality in his novel, where everything is in chaos and devastation. He describes the city as a war zone. He mentions that “death stalked the city like the plague” (*FB 6*) After each explosion the scene is left with the remaining of exploded bodies. He pictures a very horrible image that shows the cheapness of human flesh and blood. The coming line of the novel shakes everyone’s common sense: “There was blood and hair on the pole” (*FB 8*)

The unstable city had a big effect on all people and all religions and ethnic groups especially Christian people. They were threatened by unknown groups to conquer their houses and their possessions. The absence of law in Baghdad gave a chance to different types of criminals to control people’s lives. Elishava or Umm Daniel is a Christian woman who lives alone in her big traditional house. She has lost her son and husband. Her son was taken by Baathist Abu Zaidoun to join the battle against Iran and didn’t come back. Her husband died from grief on his deceased son. “He was the Baathist who had taken her son by the collar and dragged him off into the unknown” (*FB 11*) So even poor people didn’t feel safe from either the Saadam regime or the American forces. The little quietness of the city was also broken by the noises of American air forces planes: “the next day after she had had breakfast and washed the dishes, she was surprised to hear the annoying roar of American Apache helicopter flying overhead” (*FB 16*) Elishva lives alone in Baghdad. Her daughters Hilda and Matilda run out the country with their husbands. They find out that it is not safe for everyone and particularly for Christians. Their mother didn’t agree to go with them because she was living with hope that her son may return safe and sound. The two girls tried more than one time to take their mother but their effort was in vein:

Her daughters were shocked when they found out that their mother was alone in a big house in a troubled city where the demons had broken out of their dungeons and come to the surface all at once- at least that was how they imagined it (*FB 61*)

The burning bodies and the scattered parts of bodies were a common scene in the streets of Baghdad. No day may pass without an explosion here or there. As if life become absurd and meaningless and everyone should wait for his or her death. Natural death is no longer a catastrophe. If someone died naturally everyone would say that he is

lucky to die in dignity without being scattered by a bomb car or a suicide bomber. Having a whole safe corpse buried is bliss:

The explosion was horrific- and there Hadi looked to Aziz....on his way out of the shop he collided with people running from the explosion. The smell suddenly hit his nostrils- the smoke, the burning of plastic and seat cushions, the roasting of human flesh. You wouldn't have smelled anything like it in your life and would never forget it... A grey four-wheel drive stopped, and most of the workers sitting on the kerb stood up. When some of them approached, the vehicle exploded in a ball of fire. No one saw it coming; it all happened in a fraction of a second. The people who weren't injured- because they were too far away, or screened by other people's bodies, or by parked cars, or because they were coming down the side lanes... witnessed the explosion as it engulfed the vehicles and the bodies of the people around them. It cut electricity wires and killed birds (*FB* 20)

Hadi, the junk dealer who lives in Bataween, sees that there is no respect for the body parts of dead people. He always witnesses fire brigade wash these part to the sewer and didn't respect them. Beside that he had a gloomy experience which happened to his dearest friend Nahem Abdaki. He used to live with Hadi before he got married. Hadi and Nahem are working together. They drove a horse drawn cart around. They buy old house staff like pots, pans, old furniture, and second hand staffs. The way Nahem dies evoke Hadi to do something very peculiar.

"Nahem had been dead for several months- from a car bomb that had exploded in front of the office of a religious party in Karrada, also killing some other passerby and Nahem's horse. It had been hard to separate Nahem's flesh from that of the horse" (*FB* 23)

This horrible accident changed Hadi forever. He didn't get over this experience. So whenever there is an explosion nearby Hadi snatched the opportunity to collect the neglected body parts to make them one complete body. He collected different parts of human bodies and sewed them together in order to get a full human corpse that can be buried with dignity. He imagined a conversation between himself and the employee in the forensics department:

I wanted to hand him over to the forensics department because it was a complete corpse that had been left in the street like rubbish; it's a human being, guys, a person, he told them. 'But it wasn't a complete corpse. You made it complete,' someone objected. I made it complete so it wouldn't be treated as rubbish, so it would be respected like other dead people and given a proper burial (*FB* 25)

Sometimes victims of these suicidal bombed cars or suicide bomber lose their whole bodies as if earth absorbed them and leave



no trace of them except may be a shoe, a ring or a piece of a burned shirt. This is so devastating to their mothers, fathers and wives. Losing someone's dear, in unjust and in a savagery way by bloody minded monsters, is the ultimate sorrow. Another victim is a poor guard man from Al Sadr City named Hasib Mohamed. He works a guard at Al Sadeer Novotel hotel. Later on this poor guard's soul will become a trigger to the body that Hadi had sewn together. Hasib's soul will be restless because it couldn't find its body. So it will rest in Whatsitsname body (the body that Hadi sewed together from different victims). Hasib was killed by a Sudanese suicide bomber driving a dynamite-laden rubbish truck stolen from the Baghdad municipality:

The bomber was planning to crash through the hotel's outer gate, drive the truck into the hotel lobby, and detonate the explosives, bringing down the whole building. He failed because the guard bravely fired several rounds at the driver, causing him to detonate the explosives early. The guard's belongings were handed back to his family: his civilian clothes, a new pair of socks, a bottle of cologne, and the first volume of al-Sayyab's collected poems. In the coffin they put his burned black shoes; his shredded, bloodstained clothes; and small charred parts of his body. There was little left of Hasib Mohamed Jaafar; the coffin that was taken to the cemetery in Najaf was more of a token. Hasib's young wife wrapped her arms around it, wept bitterly, and wailed at length (*FB 33-34*)

Ahmed Saadawi brilliantly documented the horrific events that went through life in Baghdad. The poor guard Hasib saw the gloominess of the city even after his death. He becomes a soul without a body. His soul remains restless and hovers all around to find its body but to no avail. He hovers in the city and find dead souls like him:

He watched darkness engulf the city. He saw the distant lights of buildings, houses and vehicles... he was drifting slowly with the current. Hasib moved towards him and looked into his face. 'Why are you looking at me, my son?' the man said 'Go and find out what happened to your body. Don't stay here.' He saw another dead body, floating face down in the water. It didn't say anything. It just floated slowly, in silence. Hasib went back to the hotel gate and looked at the large hole the suicide bomber had made...but couldn't find his body (*FB 35-36*)

Hasib's soul will become a trigger for the body that Hadi, the junk dealer, had made from different parts of different people. This lost soul will cause chaos, fear and death. Here are few lines said by this creature Whatsitsname describing the place where he dwells in which death and sectarian killing was common during that time in Baghdad. Saadawi presents an authentic image of the real situations that

Baghdad went through after 2003 and on. The Whatsitsname describes the place where he dwells:

I'm living in an unfinished building close to the Assyrian quarter in Dora, south of Baghdad. It's an area that's become a battle ground between three forces: the Iraqi National Guard and the American army on one side, and the Sunni militias and the Shiite militias as the second and third sides. I could describe the building I live in No Man's Land because it and the buildings around, in an area about a half-mile square, have never been under the full control of any of the three forces, and because it's a war zone without any inhabitants. So it's the right place for me (*FB 138*)

The Whatsitsname finds himself subsequently questioning the responsibility towards the individual deaths, and, through them, enlarge the political questions about fault, sectarianism, and salvation in modern-day Baghdad, where “the criminals and the victims are entangled in a way that is more complicated than ever before. The Whatsitsname Saadawi's monster is named *shesmeh* in Iraqi dialect—a mishmash of the words *shinu* and *ismueh*, or “what's” and “his name”. It is proven that anyone who individually tries to carry out justice, if it is a man, monster, or American global force, will eventually fail. As this emotionally complex corpse monster — the first genuine Iraqi, by way of hopeless stitching, we're told — roams a city where reality has become odder than fiction, his cautious prosecutions offer readers a hint of Iraq that can't be gathered from traditional war journalism or policy memos. Saadawi's creature feels that he is misunderstood. He believes that he is not a bad person. The revenge that he seeks is for the poor victims (Garner 1) The Whatsitsname inserts that:

I know that things haven't been going the way I would like. That's why I'm asking anyone who listens to this recording to help me by not obstructing my work until I finish it and leave this world of yours. I've already been here too long. I've had many predecessors who have turned up here, carried out their missions in tough times, and then left. I don't want to be any different from them (*FB149*)

#### **Section Four: Incompetent Government Officials**

The successive governments that came after the American occupation were like the worst nightmare upon this country especially for the capital. Baghdad was doomed by the intensification of violence, assassination, turmoil and unrest. The American forces as well as the Iraqi forces at that time dealt vigorously and in flounder with the security situations. There was no real and useful strategy to save common people from terror; sectarian killing and bombing cars were common every day. The number of victims went up each month. This caused distrust between the People and the government. It led to

the growing of different types of militia and armed gangs. Baghdad became a place of tragic events and turbulence.

As it is mentioned earlier, Hadi, the junk dealer, stitched different parts of bodies to create a full body to be respected and buried as a complete human being. But it didn't go the way he expected. The lost soul of Hasib rests in this strange body. This new creature which has no name is called by people Whatshisname. This hybrid creature becomes like a killing machine. No one can stop it and no one can defeat it. The government high security members in the Tracking and Pursuit Department failed to follow useful strategies to catch it. They rely on magicians and fortune tellers.

It is clear that the department had been operating outside its area of expertise, which should have been limited to such bureaucratic matters as archiving information and preserving files and documents. Under the direct management of Brigadier Majid, it had employed several astrologers and fortune-tellers, on high salaries financed by the Iraqi treasury, not by US authorities. According to Brigadier Majid's testimony, their only purpose was to make predictions about serious security incidents that might take place in Baghdad and surrounding areas. It is not clear to the committee to what extent these predictions helped avert security incidents or whether they had any practical benefits (*FB 1, 2*)

It is obvious that these official members of security failed in taking the practical and accurate decision in following the murderous that kills almost every day. And now a series of strange killing start to appear in Baghdad. The first strange incident is of the four beggars: 'Nearby sat the bodies of four beggars who had been found sitting upright in the lane. .. Each of the beggars had his hands around the neck of the man in front of him. It looked like some weird tableau or theatrical scene'' (*FB 66*) Chaos was hovering around the city. No one can put his finger in the right place and solve the safety dilemma. And instead of following right strategies in tracking and investigations they rely on magic and the supernatural. Here is a part of the conversation that goes between Brigadier Majeed, the head of the mysterious Tracking and Pursuit Department, and Ali Baher al-Saidi, the owner and editor of al-Haqiqa magazine:

We have analysts in parapsychology, astrologer, people who specialize in communications with spirits and with the djinn, and soothsayers,' said the brigadier. 'Do you really believe in such things?' 'It's work. You don't know how many weird stories we have to deal with. The aim is to get more control, to provide information about the sources of violence and incitement to hatred, and to prevent civil war' (*FB73*)

This flounder of misuse of power creates a huge gap between common people and the authorities in Baghdad. The protagonist Whatsitsname felt himself the right one to sustain peace and revenge for those who are victims. “I’m the answer to the call of poor. I’m a saviour, the one they were waiting for and hoped for in some sense” (FB 136) He thought himself a peacemaker, but on the contrary he creates horror and blood shedding everywhere. He at first tried to revenge the people who were responsible for killing the people whose parts are in his body now. “He was composite of victims seeking to avenge their deaths so they could rest in peace.” (FB125) The absence of a well-trained confident and responsible security forces gives a chance to such horrific incidents to occur here and there in Baghdad.

No one knew, not even Aziz, that the Whatsitsname, as Hadi called later, had come back to Hadi alive and standing on its own two feet. There were serious things happening, and Hadi was merely a conduit, like a simple father or mother who produces a son who is prophet, a savior or an evil leader. They didn’t exactly create the storm that followed. They were just the channel for something that was more powerful and significant than themselves (FB 103)

People have no trust in both the Iraqi government and the American Forces: “ the Americans and the government on one side, the terrorists and the various anti-government militias on the other. In fact ‘terrorist’ was the term used for everyone who was against the government and the Americans” (FB 77) This creature chases its goal of achieving justice that has been long absent in Baghdad. “With the help of God and of heaven, I will take revenge on all the criminals. I will finally bring about justice on earth, and there will no longer be a need to wait in agony for justice to come, in heaven or after death” (FB 137) The method of this creature is cautious killing and revenge. The Whatsitsname starts revenging those whom he thinks are responsible for killing others. He assigned himself a justice maker. He killed Abu Zaidoun who was responsible for sending young people to war and among them was Daniel the son of Elishva the lonely Christian widow. They found him dead in his barber shop:

He looked to be asleep, at least to anyone seeing him from afar, but the handle of a pair of stainless steel scissors protruded from the top of his breastbone, at the base of his neck... others recalled the man’s long career and how he had been responsible for sending so many young men off to war. He had been active in Baath Party organizations, doggedly pursuing all those who deserted from the army or tried to avoid military training (FB 78)

Now another calamity took place during a religious occasion on the Imams Bridge which crosses the river Tigris between the distances

of Kadhimiya and Adamiya. The government poor coordination contributed mainly to allow rumors to spread among the people on this great religious event. The rumor was that there was a suicide bomber among the huge crowds of people who were walking afoot. The security forces weren't well experienced to suppress such rumors and warn people from believing such things. Unfortunately, rumors spread among them and caused chaos and pushing. And instead of that official people rely on fortune tellers and magician to prophecy the coming events:

The brigadier had some suspicions that the fortune- tellers and astrologers had confused these ghostly figures with the people who for the past two days had been setting off from various parts of Baghdad and heading for Kadhimiya for the ceremonies celebrating the anniversary of the death of Imam Musa al- Kadhim. The final report from the senior astrologer came at noon, in a pink envelope, and it gave an approximate number for these ghostly figures: about one thousand. As the brigadier read the report, the big television screen in his grand office flashed breaking news that dozens of people had been killed on the Imams Bridge. A rumor that there was a suicide bomber among the pilgrims had caused panic, and some of the pilgrims were trampled to death while others threw themselves into the river and drowned (FB105)

No one can deny that the government is basically responsible for this plight. It is clear from the lack of planning and coordination between the Ministry of the Interior Affairs and Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Road and Transport. The chain is loose and the victim is the Iraqi. This is what Farid Shawwaf, a journalist who writes for al- Haqiqa, said on a TV show to analyze the incident: "As I said earlier, responsibility for this incident lies with the government, which installed concrete barriers on the bridge itself. It should have carried out the searches at the entrance and exit of the bridge so it wouldn't get crowded there" (FB 117) Hundreds of people died from this lack of coordination and real planning. Also there is this sense of fear that controlled people which also sprung from this lack of faith in the government effort to end this religious event successfully. This is what Shawwaf also mentioned in his interview:

Honestly, I think everyone was responsible in one way or another. I'd go further and say that all the security incidents and the tragedies we're seeing stem from one thing- fear. The people on the bridge died because they were frightened of dying. Every day we're dying from the same fear of dying. The groups that have given shelter and support to al-Qaeda have done so because they are frightened of another group, and this other group has created and mobilized militias to protect itself from al-Qaeda. It has created a death machine working in

the other direction because it's afraid of the other. And we're going to see more and more death because of fear. The government and the occupation forces have to eliminate fear. They must put a stop to it if they really want this cycle of killing to end (*FB 117-118*)

The Whatsitsname thinks himself to be the chosen one. He thinks he has the right to represent different groups, because his body is composed from different people who belong to different religious roots. He believes that he is number one citizen in Iraq:

The young madman thinks I'm the model citizen that the Iraqi state has failed to produce, at least since the days of King Faisal I. Because I'm made up of body parts of people from diverse backgrounds- ethnicities, tribes, races and social classes- I represent the impossible mix that never was achieved in the past. I'm the first true Iraqi citizen, he thinks. The old madman thinks I'm an instrument of mass destruction that presages the coming of the saviour that all the world's religions have predicted. I'm the one who will annihilate people who have lost their way and gone astray (*FB140*)

This killing machine, which Hadi creates, substitutes himself as a powerful judge over people's fates. He makes use of the poor existence of the security forces. The capital becomes an isolated place. Iraqis have no communication with the outside world. The country is now isolated and all alone. The American politicians and its troops claim to bring justice to Iraq but instead they make this land a dystopian wasteland. " they believed that I was the black hole and the Great Azrael, the Angel of Death, who would swallow up the whole world under the protection of divine grace" (*FB 148*) He believed that he had a message to be fulfilled:

I know that things haven't been going the way I would like. That's why I'm asking anyone who listens to this recording to help me by not obstructing my work until I finish it and leave this world of yours. I've already been here too long. I've had many predecessors who have turned up here, carried out their missions in tough times, and then left. I don't want to be any different from them (*FB 149*)

In conclusion, the lack of honesty, control and coordination of the government officials lead the capital to remain under unofficial armed groups. This ultimately leads to chaos and destruction. The Whatsitsname is considered in Sunni parts as Shia extremist and in Shia parts they considered him as Wahhabi.

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## الواقع الديستوبي في روايه فرانكنشتاين في بغداد للكاتب احمد سعداوي

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## المستخلص

ان الادب الديستوبي مهم في الادب القديم والمعاصر. إذ انه يصور عالما كل شي فيه منقوص، فوضوي و مشوه. هذا النوع من الادب يظهر صورته مرعبه لكنها حقيقية في بعض المجتمعات المنكوبه. يتناول هذا النوع من الادب بشكل اساسي الحرب، القمع والحالات الكارثيه. ان كل خصائص الادب الديستوبي هي تقريبا حقيقه في روايه الكاتب احمد سعداوي فرانكنشتاين في بغداد. هذه الخصائص هي واقعيه وحقيقه في المكان الذي حدثت فيه احداث الروايه. تتضح هذه الخصائص في خوف الناس من الحكومه والقوات الامريكيه والهجمات الارهابيه. وايضاً الحياة غير المستقره التي ارغموا على التكيف معها. بالاضافه الى انعدام الحريه والاستقلاليه التي خلقت فجوه كبيره بين المواطنين والحكومه.

دُمرت بغداد من قبل عدده عوامل قمعيه متمثله بلقوات الامريكيه المؤديه، الهجمات التفجيريّه الانتحاريه وعدم اهليه كبار مسؤولي الدوله وايضا الاعتداءات الطائفيه للميليشيات. الاداة الخياليه الوحيده التي استخدمها سعداوي في روايته هي بخلقه شخصيه الشسمه. حاول سعداوي ان يلفت انتباه قرائه الى عالم واقعي-خيالي. كل بقيه الاحداث هي واقعيه وموجوده حقا في الحياه اليوميه لبغداد في عام ٢٠٠٥ ومثالا على ذلك البيئه غير الآمنه والتفكك الاسري وتناثر الاشلاء للضحايا وهذه كلها صور واقعيه. سعداوي وصف بطريقه واقعيه المرحله السوداء التي مرت ببغداد في ذلك الحين. قُهرت المدينه بسفك الدماء، التعذيب، والقتل الجماعي.

ربط الادب الديستوبي عناصر واقعيه مخصصه لزمان كتابتها مع اضافات علميه وعناصر خياليه التي تمثل الاتجاه المروع الذي نتجه له. فرانكنشتاين في بغداد قلبت هذه المعادله التقليديه للادب الديستوبي إذ ان اساسيات الدستوبيا في هذا الروايه ليست مرتبطه بالعالم النظري او غير الواقعي وانما مرتبط بعالم العنف الحقيقي المروع الذي شهدته بغداد في سنه ٢٠٠٥.