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**Democracy and Death in Frankenstein in Baghdad:**

**A Necropolitical Analysis**

**dfa**

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Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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## **Dedication**

*FOR MY DEAR TEACHER Mr ROUAG MILIANI AND FOR MY LOVED ONES.*

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Oh **ALLAH**, our sincere gratitude for paving the way to accomplish this work.

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## **Abstract**

The current research investigates the relationship between democracy and death in Frankenstein in Baghdad through necropolitic's eyes. It explores how the novel portrays the entanglement of political power and mortality in the context of post-war Baghdad. This study inquires about how democracy fails to uphold its ideals when juxtaposed with violence and instability, and how death becomes a mechanism of governance. The study hypothesizes that the novel criticizes the democratic process. It showcases how state and non-state actors exert control through the orchestration of death. This research is descriptive analytical using Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics as a theoretical lens. Through a detailed examination of the character "Whatsitsname," the novel reveals the complex dynamics between life, death, and authority. The results demonstrate that the novel not only critiques the limitations of democracy in war-torn societies but also highlights the ways in which power is sustained through the control of life and death.

**Keywords:** Achille Mbembe, Frankenstein in Baghdad, Democracy, Necropolitics, Death, Post-war Baghdad.

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## General Introduction

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

A tragic and complex interplay, the relationship between death and democracy in Baghdad represents an ongoing controversial debate and reality between the efforts to establish order and democracy and the chaotic violence in the Iraqi streets, particularly in Baghdad. The year 2003 witnessed an unauthorized American military intervention in Iraq; the US claimed that the intervention was for liberating the Iraqi people, creating a democratic system of governance, and eradicating the Baath regime. The outcomes of this intervention were devastating. Instead of liberating the Iraqis, the country became involved in an endless cycle of death . Violence rose to unprecedented levels, and unrest became the norm. This situation inaugurated an era of power struggles among various factions in Baghdad.

From a historical point of view, Iraq had periods of parliamentary debate and relatively democratic institutions, but the failure of the latter to foster real democracy contributed to ongoing tension and violence. As a matter of fact, imposing democracy tends to be an absurd notion, for the two, death and democracy, are unlikely to occur in one fragment. On the contrary, democracy is perceived as a foreign product to be imposed on a

given state and society — Iraq, in our case — which has further fueled conflicts (Schwalbe, S.R. n.d).

Corruption, crime, and American influence in decision-making are challenges in the face of democracy. These issues, among others, have created a violent atmosphere that led to the impossibility of sustaining a democratic process. The hostility of the Iraqi people toward the American presence, dealt with as occupation, is to be seen as a factor of exacerbating violence; however, this hostility towards the Americans is justified due to the attitude of the American government and army in the Iraqi cause.

founded in 762 by the Calif Almansour, Baghdad has undergone significant transformations ever since. Initially a vibrant cultural and intellectual centre, it was the heart of the Islamic Civilisation during the Islamic Golden Age. The year 1258, the city witnessed the devastating Mongol invasion which led the state to be drawn in centuries of instability under the various empires mainly the Ottoman then the British Empires. Under the British Empire rule during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rapid urban planning changes were set by the British, they introduced modern architectural styles. Nevertheless these developments, Baghdad has always faced ongoing changes including urban decay and conflicts that impact historical fabric and identity (Metwalli, 2024)

Frankenstein in Baghdad takes place in the context of post-invasion Iraq. This literary work unveils the devastating impact of the American invasion. It questions the promise of

democracy and freedom given by the Americans and how it is contradicted by the harsh realities of conflict and unrest. Saadawi's narrative illustrates how democratic ideals collide with corruption, power struggles, and sectarian divisions in the total absence of law and order. Violence, in post-invasion Baghdad and Iraq as a whole, became the norm, raising doubts about the significance of democracy for the Iraqi people who suffer endlessly from this war (Nasaybah W. Awjan, 2024).

The concept of necropolitics is explored in the novel through the depiction of identity and community fragmentation in a war-torn society. The novel portrays the breakdown of the social structure in Baghdad, especially amid the sectarian bloody conflicts that broke out after the US invasion in 2003. The character of the monster, Whatitsname, constructed of different bodies, illustrates the trauma and loss of individual identities in a conflict-stricken city. The monster also represents the absurdity of politics, life, and death in Baghdad. He is a human but not a person; he is alive but dead at the same time. The act of assembling different body parts is a metaphor for the struggle to reconstruct a fractured society. The novel also explores how complicated and fragile human relationships can become within an atmosphere that lacks trust and safety, with characters like Hadi, Mahmoud, and Elishva navigating a surreal yet realistic portrayal of Baghdad.

Frankenstein in Baghdad offers a reliable examination of how urban violence and trauma may influence identities and communities in contemporary Iraq, drawing parallels

to the theme of creation and monstrosity in Mary Shelley's original work (Abd-Aun, R.K., and Abd Hadi, A., 2021).

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Through this dissertation, we attempt to analyze how the effort to establish democracy in post-invasion Iraq clashes with the reality of permanent violence and the collapse of social and political structures. Through Ahmed Saadaoui's novel, this dissertation explores the failure of democratic ideals when confronted with necropolitical power dynamics and how the novel reflects these dynamics in terms of themes and setting

## **3. Research Questions**

- The current study inquires about the following questions:

1. How does Saadaoui's work mirror the manifestation of managing power and control in Iraq after the American invasion?
2. To which extent does the author succeed in manifesting, through the novel, how death and violence are politicized in contemporary Iraq society?
3. How does the literary presentation of these themes, pictured in the novel, help to better understand the failure of democratisation in this country?
4. What impact is created by systematic violence on the perception and the application of democratic ideals in Iraq?

#### 4. Literature Review

In recent years ,the sociopolitical atmosphere in the entire world has been witnessing dramatic changes .War against terrorism, in particular , had a great impact on the populations of countries that were subject to American military invasion in Afghanistan and Iraq .The social impacts of these wars have granted significant attention from researchers to study how terrorism, violence, and death have deeply affected the social order .Different studies have been conducted to explore the dilemma of violence and death carrying the message of democracy and how literature reflected this dilemma to shed some light on the suffering of the communities subjected to terror and horror.

Bushra Juhi Jani' essay (2015) argues that Saadaoui's monster embodies the abject as described by theorist Kristeva . The study entitled "Violence as abject in Iraq literature : Ahmed Saadaoui's Frankenstein in Baghdad and Mary Shelly's Frankenstein", the author stresses the fact that the violence of war is presented as dehumanizing as presented in Saadaoui's novel. In this essay' Juhi Jani examines the way in which Iraqis lose their humanity, becoming part of one monstrous reality, and how terror can become endless and unstoppable through renewing itself by creating more violence.

Stuart .J.Murray argues that human life can be politicized to extreme degrees . He explores the concept of "thanatopolitics" , grounded in biopolitics and necropolitics, which refer to the political use and management of deaths to influence and mobilize political life.

In the article “Thanatopolitics :on the use of death for mobilizing political life”, published in (2006), the writer demonstrates how political systems, often, manipulate death in order to frame a political agenda and normalize death at the expense of the people.

## **5. Research Objective**

The objective of this dissertation is to explore how necropolitical strategies are manifested in Iraq’s system of governance as well as in its social structure. In addition, it investigates how efforts to establish order in Iraq have been compromised due to the presence of the American army and the resulting violence, which led to the collapse of Iraqi institutions. The novel is used to construct a clear idea of the futility of imposing democracy in Iraq and the violence it caused after the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, providing an insightful source for further theoretical discussions and practical approaches to democratization in other countries experiencing political unrest and foreign influence, like Libya today.

## **6. Research Significance**

This research is significant for its critical examination of the controversial relationship between democracy and violence. It explores how necropolitical power

dynamics interact with efforts to establish democratic institutions. The current study sheds light on the challenges of democratization in hot war zones with extreme conditions by investigating the failure of democratic ideals in the face of blind violence and social breakdown. Moreover, it highlights the role of literature, such as *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, in reflecting and criticizing Iraq's socio-political realities. The research findings offer valuable insights for understanding and addressing the complexities of democratization in war zones.

## **7. Research Methodology**

As far as methodology is concerned, the research is set within the very complicated socio-political circumstances of 2003 Iraq. It portrays how the American invasion destabilized Iraq by fueling sectarianism and shaking social cohesion. It examines the clash between the promise of democracy and the unending cycle of violence through necropolitical strategies where the dominance of life and death is central and crucial. Grounded in the theories of biopolitics and necropolitics by Michel Foucault, Achille Mbembe, and Giorgio Agamben, the study uses a qualitative research methodology that combines theoretical analysis with literary criticism. It includes a case study of Ahmed Saadawi's novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, analyzing how the narrative reflects and critiques the realities of post-invasion Iraq. The methodology involves close reading and thematic analysis to explore the representation of necropolitics and its impact on democracy, using data from academic texts, historical documents, and literary sources to provide

a comprehensive understanding of how democracy is implemented in societies ravaged by violence.

## **8. Research Structure**

This dissertation contains three chapters. The first chapter, entitled “Contextualizing Iraq :Orientalist and Postcolonial Presepectives,” examines the sociopolitical context of Iraq , highlighting the impact of American invasion through orientalist and postmodernist perspectives. The second chapter explores the theoretical framework through which this research is conducted. It investigates the concept of Necropolitics introduced by Achill Mbembe , Biopolitics initiated by Michel Foucault, and Thanatopolitics framed by the Italian philosopher and anthropologist Gi Giorgio Agamben. The chapter demonstrates how death becomes instrumentalized both as a means of power and as a way of both contesting and resisting . The last chapter delves into Saadaoui’s novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, exploring themes of death and democracy in post-invasion Baghdad through an extensive analysis of its main character ” whatsitsname” . This chapter examines the character’s cycle of conflicts and how these conflicts determine the real sociopolitical situation on the ground .



# **CHAPTER ONE**

**Contextualizing Iraq:**

**Orientalist and Neocolonialist Perspectives**

## Chapter One: Contextualizing Iraq: Orientalist and Neocolonialist Perspectives

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## **Introduction**

This chapter examines the overlapped layers of historical, cultural, and political narratives that contributed to shaping Iraq's image through the lenses of Orientalism and Neocolonialism. We investigate the relationship between the Western representation of Iraq framed in an orientalist approach on one side, and on the other side, the contemporary manifestations of neocolonial power dynamics that consistently influence and interact with Iraq. Through analyzing these perspectives, we aim to highlight their impact on the understanding and engagement of Iraq in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **1.1 Orientalist Perspectives**

Coined by Edward Said (1979), Orientalism is to a certain extent a polysemic term whose usage depends completely on the text it is inserted in. It can be referred to as a scholarly discipline, as a style of thoughts elaborated by the East towards the West or as a political ideology. In this research, our interest in orientalism covers the cultural aspect. That is to say, investigating how Iraq is portrayed as being part from the East.

#### **1.1.1 Orientalism: Definition and Historical Background of the Concept**

The *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Criticism* defines the concept of Orientalism as follows: "A term pertaining to the Orient discovered, recorded, described, defined, produced, and in a sense invented by Europe and the West"(Cuddon,2013, p. 497). This definition implies that the West's portrayal of the East does not accurately reflect the reality of the East but rather

constructs a representation thereof. Edward Said critically examines Western doctrines and theses about the Orient. He argues that colonial powers, in their pursuit of constructing a self-image as powerful dominating entities, crafted a "version" of the Orient as inevitably the other. Said's background as a Middle Eastern thinker and theorist who lived his entire life in the West has profoundly shaped his understanding of how the West perceives and continues to perceive the East. Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between the 'orient' and (most of the time) the 'occident'" (Alghamdi, 2020).

### **1.1.2 Historical Background**

When tracing the history of Orientalism as a discourse, one finds its origins in the decision of the Church Council of Vienne in 1312 to establish chairs in various Semitic languages, including Arabic and Hebrew. Thus, the early interest in the East marked the genesis of Orientalist discourse, rooted primarily in religious perspectives (Cuddon, 2013).

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Cuddon (2013) added that Orientalist discourse became deeply entrenched with the rise of Islam and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. The West, to a certain extent, became preoccupied with the Orient. Accounts of the Far, Near, and Middle East began to proliferate during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to travellers' narratives. Works such as *the Arabian Nights*, translated into English, sparked significant interest among the European community and fuelled the popularity of Oriental tales. The 18th century witnessed the zenith of Orientalist studies, coinciding with the expansion of the British and French empires, albeit to a lesser extent.

However, it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Oriental studies reached its apex. This period was characterized by a burgeoning interest in Orientalism, with numerous learned and cultural societies established across Europe to advance scholarly endeavours. A multitude of individuals spanning colonial officials, statesmen, explorers, soldiers, diplomats, doctors, missionaries, travellers, writers, navigators, and merchant adventurers contributed memoirs, autobiographies, commentaries, and government reports to the corpus of Oriental studies.(Cuddon,2013,)

Transitioning into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous British novelists endeavored to portray interactions between the British and Asians under imperial regimes. Notable works by authors such as Kipling, Foster, Anthony Burgess, Paul Scott, and J.G. Farrell depicted the dynamics of British colonialism in Asian communities. In contrast, America's engagement with the East began in earnest only after 1945, with its involvement in the Second World War. This marked a shift towards a predominantly political interest in the Orient, distinct from the anthropological or cultural studies prevalent in British and French Orientalism.(Cuddon,2013).

In summary, the historical background of Orientalism reveals a complex interplay of sensitivities between the West and the East. Against a backdrop of significant geopolitical shifts, ongoing debates surrounding Orientalist discourse continue to evolve and reflect changing landscapes.

### **1.1.3 Western Views and Representation of Iraq**

The impact of the American invasion significantly shaped how the West perceives Iraq both as a system and as a community. The American propaganda machine portrayed Iraqis as victims of dictatorship yearning for genuine democracy. Issues such as freedom of speech, democracy, and corruption are often framed within the American narrative of Iraq (Daoud Kuttab,2007).

However, Western media often failed to accurately portray the reality of Iraq. There has been a persistent focus on violence, casualties, and conflicts, leading to a biased discourse and dehumanizing narrative. Iraqi lives and bodies became reduced to mere statistics in the news.

The supremacist spirit inherited from the colonial movement also influenced the representation of these countries' perceptions of Iraq. The British colonial legacy and later American imperialistic tendencies nurtured a desire to reoccupy Iraq to safeguard their interests at the expense of Iraqi lives and sovereignty (Entidhar Hamzah Abbas Al-Rashid,2016).

The U.S. misled public opinion in America and around the world to justify the invasion. While ostensibly framed as liberating Iraqis from Saddam Hussein's iron fist, it was primarily driven by interests, exploitation, and possibly revenge (Steven Kull, et al,2003).

## **1.2 Neocolonialist Analysis**

The first to theorize about neo-colonialism was Kwame Nkrumah, the African anti-colonial leader. He defined this concept as a "modern attempt to perpetuate colonialism while

simultaneously professing freedom. As a prominent figure in the Pan-African movement, Nkrumah underscored the essence of the oppressed-oppressor relationship in his definition. Western powers, even after granting political independence to their former colonies, continued to manifest colonial ideologies through economic and cultural hegemony. Neocolonialism thus operates as a form of masked colonialism (Nkrumah,1965.186).

### **1.2.1 Neocolonial Theory Basics**

The primary focus of neocolonialism, distinguishing it from post-colonialism, lies in the unequal power and economic relations between the colonizers and the former colonies. Western powers' pursuit of resources led them to maintain control over their colonies, exploiting labor and resources under the guise of mutual cooperation. Their policy is epitomized by supporting the regimes of "banana republics" and conspiring against any attempts by these nations to achieve economic and cultural sovereignty.

### **1.2.2 Postcolonialism, Corrupted Systems, and Dictatorships**

The so-called "free world" comprises former brutal colonizers, primarily Europeans and later Americans, who persistently uphold the ideology of white supremacy. They spare no effort in preserving and safeguarding their interests in their former colonies. Consequently, they actively support corrupt regimes and conspire against any attempts at new revolutions or genuine

democratic experiences in these nations. Countless examples abound in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.( Afoaku,2000)

In Africa, for instance, the Belgian security service, in collaboration with President Mobutu, was directly implicated in the brutal assassination of Patrice Lumumba, a key figure in negotiating the country's independence in Brussels( Maïthé Chini,2023). Similarly, the French intelligence service was responsible for the elimination of Thomas Sankara after he adopted an anti-colonial discourse in Burkina Faso. Subsequently, the country plunged into an era of dictatorship and iron-fisted rule in exchange for protecting French interests there.(L'Humanité,2021)

Turning to Iraq, the effects of corruption have been devastating since the early years of independence. However, if we were to highlight a particular figure, it would be Nuri Said Pasha. As the first prime minister to govern Iraq under the Hashemite Monarchy several times, his legacy is marred by a mixture of power and corruption. Nuri Said Pasha, a high-ranking officer, ruled as a virtual dictator, enjoying close ties to the monarchy which afforded him immunity. He became notorious for his abuse of power and luxurious lifestyle, which fueled tension and opposition against the monarchy in Iraqi streets. Centralized rule, nepotism, and political corruption are major hallmarks of Nuri Said's legacy (Aljazeera,2023).

### **1.2.3 Effects of the American invasion on Iraqi Society and Culture**

Under false allegations of possessing weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. invaded Iraq in March 2003. It is needless to mention that the U.S. targeted not only the infrastructure but also

intended to deliberately ruin or loot the worldly Iraqi cultural heritage known and appreciated worldwide; museums, archaeological sites, and libraries were savagely pillaged. The damages were devastating and irreparable to Iraqi cultural heritage. What used to be a source of pride to the people is swept to the ground, and so is the pride of Iraq. Social instability and civil unrest were the natural repercussions of the invasion, especially in a multi-sect society like Iraq's. By the removal of Saddam Hussein, tensions intensified between Sunni and Shia, fracturing Iraqi society which used to live in harmony. (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Russian Federation, 2023)

### **1.3 Iraq's socio-political landscape**

A cradle to many ancient civilizations, the Euphrates land has always been considered one of the greatest nations throughout history. The strategic geographical location as well as the fertile soil and oil in later times largely contributed to turning this area into an unstable spot for centuries until nowadays.

#### **1.3.1 Diversity in Iraqi society**

Located at the heart of the ancient world (Europe, Asia, and Africa) and a home to many races, sects, and religions, Iraq is an Arab country situated in the West of Asia. It is bordered by Jordan and Syria to the West, Turkey to the North, and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the South and covers an area of 438,317 km<sup>2</sup>. Iraq's official languages are Arabic and Kurdish (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq). Modern Iraq is composed of different ethnicities from

different backgrounds. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, about two-thirds of the country's population are Arabs, representing 64.7%. In addition to Arabs, a significant number of Kurdish ethnicities lives in the Northern part of the country, representing 23% of the Iraqi people according to the year 2000 statistics, while the rest of the population is composed of other minorities (Turkmen, Azerbaijani, and other ethnic groups). Christianity has existed in Iraq from earliest times, traced back to the first century AD to the preaching of St. Thomas (Gilgamesh and Salloum ,2023). Nowadays, it is estimated that there are around 250,000 Christians in Iraq, represented in the Iraqi parliament by six seats (Ibid). Like the Muslim community, the Iraqi Christian community is divided into several groups. Two-thirds of the community are Chaldean Catholics, Assyrians (Orthodox and Catholics), Armenians (Orthodox and Catholics), Evangelicals, and Anglicans distributed in different regions mainly in Baghdad and North of Nineveh governorate. The Iraqi community's social structure is of a complexity that led, among other reasons, to consistent instability. In other words, The British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Americans, took advantage of the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity to some extent.

### **1.3.2 Historical Overview of Iraqi Political History**

The establishment of the modern Iraqi state traces back to the aftermath of World War I. The San Remo conference, held in April 1920 in Italy, convened the victorious powers of the war,

primarily Britain and France under the auspices of the League of Nations, to determine the future of the Fertile Crescent Land, encompassing Syria, Jordan, and Iraq.

As a former part of the Ottoman Empire prior to its collapse during the war, Iraqi tribes aligned with the British against Ottoman occupation. However, the British also colluded with the French against the Iraqi people and those of the region. Throughout its history, modern Iraq has been plagued by various political and social upheavals, with instability being a constant theme (BBC,2018).

Karrem Raad underscores this instability, stating, "One basic fact regarding Iraq in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is its enduring trauma and violence in all aspects of life" (Raad, 2021). Iraq has scarcely witnessed a peaceful decade since its so-called independence, with instability prevalent from the British mandate onward. Coups, iron-fisted rule, and pivotal events have contributed to a complex narrative, shaping the country's trajectory toward violence, sectarianism, and eventual colonization.

Following World War I, Britain imposed the British mandate in 1920 under the League of Nations. A year later, King Feisal, son of Hussein, the Sheriff of Mecca, was appointed king, establishing the Hashemite Monarchy. In 1932, Britain formally ended the mandate, granting Iraq independence (BBC,2018).

King Feisal's reign was marked by restlessness, with various rebellions indicating the country's political instability. The monarchy was abolished in 1958, following a left-wing coup

d'état led by a 34-year-old army officer named Abdel Karim Qacem, leading to the execution of King Feisal II (BBC,2018).

Unfortunately, this coup marked the beginning of a series of coups, as Iraqi political parties vied for power, leaving the nation on shaky ground. The final coup was led by former President Saddam Hussein, who assumed power in 1979, establishing the Baathist regime, which endured until the fall of Baghdad in April 2003.

President Saddam, an ambitious Sunni Arab ruler, notably initiated a public nuclear reactor program, prompting a preemptive airstrike by the state of Israel in 1981. Iraq was already embroiled in a bloody war with neighboring Iran, which lasted eight years and resulted in significant human and economic losses for both sides. Despite this, the Hussein regime showed little concern for recovery (BBC,2018).

As a result of President Saddam's order to invade Kuwait, the U.S. and its allies, including Arab countries, launched a military move against Iraq. Its defeat led to political isolation and severe economic crisis (BBC,2018).

In March 2003, the US led an invasion of Iraq under the pretext of possessing weapons of mass destruction, which was later proven to be untrue later. This invasion toppled Saddam Hussein's regime and marked the start of years of violent conflicts with different groups competing for power. In the following year, sectarian tensions took place and resulted in a quite bloody civil war-like situation.

### **1.3.3 Socioeconomic Factors in Iraqi Politics**

The social and economic conditions of any state represent crucial factors in shaping the politics of a country. Iraq is in the paradox of a rich country with poor people. Classified as the fifth-largest oil-producing country in the world, more than 4,000,000 barrels daily according to worldometer reference website. Yet, the Iraqi economy is considered vulnerable due to the corruption of Iraqi officials who do not hesitate to prefer their own profits over government contracts (Jiyad,2023). Eyed Allawi, the former president of the Governing Council of Iraq in 2003, was appointed by the Americans with no consensus. Some of his ministers' names were brought up in heavy charges of corruption (Al Jazeera, 2005). Nouri al-Maliki's government was also subject to investigation on charges of corruption. In fact, al-Maliki's government is described as "the worst period of the modern state of Iraq" according to a report published by Sky News on August 10th, 2016. Suspicious armament contracts later led to the failure of the American army in front of ISIS militia and consequently the success of this notorious terrorist group in taking over Mosul, the capital of Nineveh governorate, and Salah Eddine governorate in 2014.(Sky News Arabia,2016)

On the social scale, unemployment, poverty, and structural inequalities are the main characteristics of post-invasion Iraq. Income falls and price increases have deteriorated the purchasing power parity to unprecedented levels. Though living standards before the invasion were

not at their best due to more than a decade of blockade and the absence of a real political will to raise living standards despite the obstacles, the situation after the invasion has worsened.

## **Conclusion**

Examining and analyzing Iraq through orientalist and neocolonial perspectives provides a deep insight to the Iraqi condition and explores the complexity of the country's historical narrative and cultural representations sculpting the Iraq's identity. Setting Iraq within orientalism and post colonialism lay out a deeper understanding of Iraq political and social structure. In Short, contextualizing Iraq both through orientalist and postcolonial perspectives is to highlight the importance of this framework to acknowledge the 'Hows' and the 'Whys' Related to Iraq history and identity.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Death and Democracy: A Necropolitical Approach**

## Chapter Two: Death and Democracy: A Necropolitical Approach

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## **Introduction**

This chapter embarks on a journey through necropolitical theory. It explores its theoretical foundations and application to literary analysis. From the formulation of death policies to surveillance mechanisms intertwined with biopolitical strategies, the narrative uncovers death's role as both a means of control and resistance within socio-political landscapes. As democracy grapples with contradictions and obstacles in necropolitical terrain, this discourse seeks to illuminate the nuanced relationship between democratic ideals and the realities of necropolitical governance.

### **2.1 Definition and Origins of Necropolitics**

Achille Mbembe, a Cameroonian student of history and social and political studies, initially introduced the concept of necropolitics in his 2003 paper and advocated for its creation in 2019. Criticizing present-day vote-based systems as frameworks that spread apartheid (Gržinic, 2021). Mbembe questions the idea of the imperial state and joins it to being a necropolitical state. According to Mbembe, a sovereign state creates wars to protect its sovereignty (Mbembe, 2003). In other words, Mbembe argues that the neoliberal world seeks to preserve state sovereignty by granting itself the right to kill. Mbembe's examination of the concept of sway infers the exceptionally definition of necropolitics: "The ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die." (Mbembe, 2003, p.11).

Mbembe's approach is founded on established social and political theory that discusses life and death, particularly two basic concepts elaborated by one of the main figures in postmodern

philosophy, Michel Foucault : biopower and biopolitics. In his book *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that the power of the state is closely tied to the knowledge the state uses to foster life or disallow it (Foucault, 1976, p. 138). Concurring to Foucault, biopower may be an unused shape of social and political control that the state maintain over the populace. It includes level-headed legislative issues that administer, to utilize the Foucauldian term, the lives of populace to guarantee, support, and arrange life. The state decides who receives medical care, good education, and high living standards, and who is left to neglect, poor living conditions, or slow death.

### **2.1.1 Theoretical Framework: Foucault, Mbembe, and Agamben**

Life, power, and death have increasingly become the central subjects of investigation and analysis in contemporary political discourse. The works of Michel Foucault, Achille Mbembe, and Giorgio Agamben stand out as essential and inevitable for a better understanding of the complexities and interwoven relationships between these concepts, aiming for a correct interpretation of governance, control, biopolitics, and necropolitics.

Michel Foucault, a pioneer in contemporary debates on governance and population control, introduced the concept of biopower, which has two poles: discipline of the body and control of the population (G. Arnason, 2012) . Biopower revolves around administering life within societies. Foucault argues that power has shifted in meaning and separated itself from its traditional understanding related to the right of the sovereign to kill or preserve life. Instead, power now focuses on sustaining or withholding life. Foucault states, “One might say that the

ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by the power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault, 1976, p. 138).

Building on Foucault's groundwork regarding the notion of power, Mbembe further developed his framework by exploring the power of death. While Foucault's main focus was on life, since biopower translates to the power of life or power over life, Mbembe founded his theory by discussing and analyzing the power over death, which defines the concept of necropolitics.

Influenced largely by Frantz Fanon, an influential figure in the anti-imperialist struggle, Mbembe suggests that the Foucauldian concept of biopower reveals an inherent racism in modern democratic systems: if some populations are chosen to live and others left to die, this presupposes a division into groups. Mbembe adds that biopower functions through dividing people into those who deserve life and those who do not (Mbembe, 2003).

Giorgio Agamben, another political rationalist taking after in Foucault's strides, clarified how control enters bodies in his book *The State of Exemption*, distributed in 2005. The state of exemption is an imperative concept within the logic of law and political reasoning. In times of war or other situations requiring extreme measures, the sovereign state may decide to suspend ordinary rules for some or all of the population. This concept may be termed differently, such as a state of emergency or martial law, but it signifies the same idea (Ian Browne, n.d) . Agamben's interest primarily lies in the contradiction of democracies as systems founded on freedom that violate human rights by restricting freedom. He argues that the state of exemption uses this exception as a weapon to create “a homo sacer”. This concept, introduced by Agamben, refers to individuals produced by the state of exemption whose rights are violated, rendering them

stateless and outside the law, thereby dehumanizing them. Consequently, killing them becomes unnoticed and unpunished. Agamben explains: It is as if the valorization and politicization of life necessarily imply a new decision concerning the threshold at which life ceases to be politically relevant and becomes sacred life, which can be eliminated without punishment" (Agamben , 1998, p. 139).

For instance, the U.S. and Canada refuse to acknowledge Palestine as a state for the danger this recognition may represent to the Zionist state of Israel .Canada, on the other hand, rejects Palestinian statehood, given the unconditional loyalty to the so called state of Israel and the United states. (CBC, 2011). By doing so, Palestinians become "homo sacer" and cannot appeal to human rights, eventually making them susceptible to being killed without punishment (Sahd, 2015).

### **2.1.2Necropolitical Strategies of Power and Control**

As we mentioned earlier, the Foucauldian framework of biopolitics focuses on the administration of life. To Foucault, the sovereign state engages in a selective process in which it decides who is to be taken care of and who is not. Mbembe, on the other hand, radicalized Foucault's notion of biopower when he argued that power has a distinctive aspect involving the selective elimination and systematic killing of certain groups. This not only creates what Mbembe calls "death worlds" but also institutionalizes them.

Wars, genocides, and refugee crises have become global phenomena, and exposure to death in a broader sense, has been a major concern in the biopolitical approach (Antonio Pele,2020) . Necropolitical tactics employed by Western democracies to maintain dominance

vary in form. They can be seen in policies that perpetuate violence, conflicts, and wars, aiming to create chaotic spaces of violence by depriving certain groups of their rights and resources. Regarding social structure, necropolitical strategies take on different forms. Communities are marginalized, where the risk of violence and death is highlighted to the extent that death becomes normalized to an absurd degree. Vulnerable populations suffering reinforces power dynamics, drawing the community into an endless cycle of subjugation.

However, the most prominent strategy of necropolitics is the regulation of life and death through dehumanizing tactics. Depriving populations of basic vital needs such as healthcare, education, or even food and drinkable water is common. The marginalization of certain populations and the normalization of violence are strategies that lie at the heart of necropolitical practices.

### **2.1.3 Application Necropolitics in Literary Analysis**

In literature, necropolitics serves as an approach to explore the foundational themes of the theory: the politicization of death, life, and violence. Within fictional narratives, authors demonstrate to readers the destructive dark side of power and how the precarization of certain groups is portrayed. Necropolitics can manifest in the representation of death and violence as tools wielded by power to exert full control over bodies and souls. Literary works featuring characters subjected to systematic, permanent violence reflect the destructive aspect of necropolitics. Numerous examples illustrate this, such as works dealing with life under Stalinist or Nazi regimes.

Ahmed Saadaoui (2013), the winner of the International Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction, dealt with the theme of death in his novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013). Some authors use plots to uncover the realities of tyrannical political systems that use violence as a means to control people, perpetuate violence, and manipulate lives by prioritizing certain lives over others. Literary texts can offer clear insights into the complexities at the intersection of poverty, governance, and death.

As dark as it may tend to be, necropolitics can also provide space for resistance against dominating power structures. Narratives about rebellions, challenges, and resistance against necropolitical control embody the rejection of dehumanization and the absurdity of death. Literary texts from war zones may depict rebellious acts against oppressive systems or portray revolutions against colonizers. Characters challenging tyrannical systems, whether dictators or colonizing authorities, offer a rich topic for analyzing values of patriotism and serve as a source of inspiration to rebel against oppressive power. History is marked by revolutions inspired by books. For example, Thomas Pains' *Common Sense* and Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* but we will limit the discussion to the works of the father of communism, Karl Marx's, and how his books directly impacted Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, leading to the launch of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

#### **2.1.4 Necropolitics and Gothic Fiction**

Gothic fiction, by its very nature, portrays death, terror, and horror. It tells stories of authoritarian figures, haunted spaces, oppressive regimes, and supernatural powers (Cuddon, 2013). The Gothic genre intersects with necropolitics as an analytical approach through which

questions of life, death, sovereignty, and exclusion are raised by Gothic texts and necropolitics alike. From another angle, Gothic protagonists confront oppressors in the narratives. They challenge hatred, violence, and deathly threats especially in the female gothic sub-genre (Ustun Kaya2022). Necropolitics can identify these moments of courage, rebellion, and defiance against dominating powers, ultimately paving the way to liberation or salvation.

## **2.2 Death as a Political Instrument**

In the previous section, we shed light on the concept of necropolitics as a philosophical and political framework, explaining the Foucauldian notion of biopower and how it is conceptualized by Mbembe and Agamben. In this section, we explore the instrumentalization of death in politics and how the sovereign state takes advantage of death to empower its position, primarily through creating a new and unique form of social existence that Mbembe calls death worlds. (Mbembe,2003,p 40)

### **2.2.1 Necropolitical Governance and Death Policies**

The existence of disposable bodies subjected to hostility and persecution has become a phenomenon in contemporary times. Muslims, LGBT communities, people of color, and other minorities face social disparities and extermination through systematic and structural violence embodied in various forms of oppression (Ribeiro et al,2021). Moreover, devout abuse, particularly against Muslims due to Islamophobia, has expanded over a long time. After the U.S.-led war on fear mongering in reaction to the 9/11 assaults, despise wrongdoings against Muslims significantly expanded and proceeded to rise (Aljazeera,2022).

Hussam Ayloush (2022) official chief of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Board on American-Islamic Relations, states to the Turkish News Agency ,Anadolu Agency, : "Our country (America) incorporates a long history of dehumanizing and marginalizing ethnic and religious groups, whether it is directed to the Black, Native Americans, Jewish, Asian American pacific Islanders, or other communities ."

The administration of death is a concept elaborated by Mbembe as a counterpart to Foucauldian concept administration of life . In this context, Mbembe suggests that sovereignty includes the power to dictate to whom life or death is offered. Agamben's reflection on Carl Schmitt's *The State of Exception* demonstrates how this state eventually excludes individuals from the community, reducing them to biometric data subjected to social abjection in camps (Giordanengo,2016) . Agamben discusses the state of exception and focuses particularly on the intersection of life and law, arguing that the sovereign deliberately creates disposable bodies, whom Agamben calls Homo Sacer, citing the extermination camps in Nazi Germany as an example.

Death camps, concentration camps, or extermination camps all represent necropolitical governance strategies in Nazi Germany. As a totalitarian and undemocratic regime, Nazi Germany implemented the Final Solution Project based on racist principles, denying groups like the Romani, Jews, and the disabled the right to live and placing them in camps for extermination. German historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt described the horrors of the camps by stating, "There are no parallels to life in the concentration camp."( Arendt ,1966,p.444)

However, Nazi concentration camps are just one example of necropolitical governance strategies. Colonial powers also exhibited brutality embodying necropolitical practices. Mbembe suggests that a historical perspective reveals similar premises in colonial imperialism and the marshaling of technical mechanisms exposing people to death. He argues that the French Revolution exemplified the conflation of reason and terror (Mbembe,2003). For instance, the Belgian colonial regime's practices in Congo under King Leopold II resulted in a tragic genocide estimated to have taken the lives of 10 to 15 million people through killings or neglect, often overshadowed by the more publicized concentration camps of the Jews.

### **2.2.2 Instrumentalization of Death for Political Purposes**

In social sciences and political philosophy, the instrumentalization of death in politics is framed under different key concepts. Agamben often uses the term "thanatopolitics" to refer to a form of biopolitical power that justifies killing certain people to achieve political gains (Agamben, Homo Sacer 1998). Although sometimes used interchangeably, we would like to mark the distinction between thanatopolitics and necropolitics. Mbembe's necropolitics refers to the politics of death, particularly dead bodies, framed in new forms of social existence like the colony in general and the slavery plantation in particular. In these spaces, necropolitical practices are evident and exercised by the dominant group. Thanatopolitics, on the other hand, refers to the justification of the extermination of humans, usually based on racial justifications. Michel Foucault identifies two functions of racism: the first is to divide deaths and administer them accordingly, and the second is to establish a positive relation to this form of death by considering some lives as safe and pure while allowing others to die (Foucault, 2003) .

In his analysis of the meaning of life and death from medical and biological viewpoints, Agamben argues that life and death are not purely scientific concepts but rather political ones (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 164). Hence, giving life or withholding it becomes a political question rather than a biological one. Politicizing death is, in fact, a reality. In the modern world, death inevitably intersects with politics in various areas. We mentioned earlier the state of exception and how it grants the right to kill following a thanatopolitical approach under different claims and justifications.

Mbembe expresses concern about sovereignty that does not have a project of autonomy but instead becomes an "instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 14).

The destruction of human bodies for political purposes takes various forms. It is not a new phenomenon but rooted in the history of domination and the political trajectory of the state since early civilizations. The politics of death can manifest in exploiting death anxieties through certain practices of memorialization and commemoration. For example, Vladimir Lenin's embalmed body remains on display in Moscow, and the Mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran glorifies the spiritual leader and savior of the people from the tyranny of the Shah.

However, using death as a political tool is not limited solely to power, be it political, religious, or other; it is also used as a way of protesting and resisting against political governance. As we will investigate in this idea within the following area when we dig into the second meaning of the concept of thanatopolitics.

### **2.2.3 Surveillance, Control, and Biopolitical Strategies**

In line with the administration of life, Foucault demonstrates that the sovereign needs to subject individuals to constant surveillance to ensure discipline. This practice is known as the panopticon effect, a concept borrowed by Foucault from the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Bentham suggested a circular architectural design for prisons that allowed guards to surveil all cells simultaneously without being seen by the prisoners. By doing so, prisoners would discipline themselves, knowing they are under constant observation. Today's systems validate Foucault's argument: modern states load streets and public places with security cameras to guide subjects into self-discipline. Foucault states, "He who is subjected to visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power" (Foucault, 1977,p 202).

Foucault views surveillance as a mode of exercising power, representing a figure of political technology. According to Foucault, the surveillance state has become a dominant form of power relations and dynamics. The Edward Snowden affair is a famous example of the panopticon system. Snowden revealed that Western governments, including the U.S., U.K., and Canada, were monitoring citizens' phones and emails, not for security reasons, but to expand their power. Monitoring and tracking individuals and groups take multiple forms, but what is important is that it is an ongoing process. Electronic surveillance, data surveillance, or physical surveillance—in public or private spaces—the state knows almost everything about everyone. The more control is expanded, the more knowledge the state acquires, and consequently, the more powerful it becomes. In this sense, surveillance and control are pillars of biopolitical strategies. The management of populations tends to rely heavily on these two paths.

#### **2.2.4 Death as a Means of Subjugation and Resistance**

Ending someone's life has always been the ultimate manifestation of power and the ultimate fear of individuals since modern science has so far failed to prolong or eternalize life. The state exploits this anxiety about death to reinforce its authority. However, death is also politicized from another angle. The destruction of one's own body can be used as a means of resistance and a method of defending a cause and expressing rejection of subjugation.

Necropolitics delves into the subjugation of life to the power of death by subjecting populations to a "death world", depriving them of basic needs. Necroeconomy operates to marginalize populations, confining them to specific spaces, harassing them, and exposing them to potential elimination. In Agamben's thought, control and management of death signify exercising power. Agamben's notion of 'bare life' summarizes how human life is reduced to a mere biological existence devoid of any political significance (Agamben,1998). The 'bare life' of Homo Sacer tends to be expendable and can be exterminated without consequences. Hannah Arendt points out that the Nazi regime stripped German Jews of citizenship before sending them to gas chambers or ovens. Thus, they became Homo Sacer, no longer belonging to the state, which justified their extermination without breaking the law or committing murder. (Arendt ,1966)

Dehumanizing individuals and devaluing the lives of certain groups may contribute to developing a counter-effect against the dominating power. In other words, while death can be a means of control and subjugation, it can also serve as a means of resistance. Foucault states that "life as a political object was taken at face value and turned back against the system that was bent on controlling it" (Foucault, 1978,p 145).

Indeed, the destruction of the human body may become an option for resistance and protest. Politicizing death in this perspective opposes the previous point. A suicide bomber, for instance, assures the role of the sovereign by weaponizing his body to destroy himself and those around him, whether targeted or considered collateral damage. This way of taking one's own life can be paradoxically defined as death serving life (Siamak, 2009,).

Mbembe summarizes this logic in his reflection on the late modern occupation in Palestine. He distinguishes between the logic of martyrdom and the logic of survival. The survivor is the one who faces death and lives, not just escaping alive but managing to kill his attackers. In this case, the death of the enemy satisfies him. Regarding the logic of martyrdom, the suicide bomber prepares his body carefully, choosing the location of his mission. The ambush location is often a café, a checkpoint, a garden—in sum, a public place (Mbembe, 2003, p. 36).

The logic of martyrdom is heroic. The willingness of the suicide bomber to die is fused with killing the enemy instantly—ending life for everyone. Canetti describes this moment as a moment of power. In this context, Mbembe argues that the body has neither power nor value in itself. The desire for suicide bombing in Palestine, adds Mbembe, is eternity by overcoming mortality in a moment that Mbembe calls a moment of supremacy. When the bomber escapes the state of siege and occupation literally and metaphorically through death (Mbembe, 2003, p. 37)

### **2.3 Democracy in a Necropolitical Context**

The paradox between democracy and necropolitics lies at the heart of Mbembe's critique of modernity, democracy, and necropolitics. Mbembe emphasizes the racist nature of

democracy, arguing that capitalist colonial powers tend to divide humanity into two categories: those who have value and those doomed to be disposed of.

### **2.3.1 Contradiction between Democracy and Necropolitics**

Democracy, often associated with concepts like human rights, freedom, and equality, is seen as the culmination of these ideals. Western democracies often portray their systems as successful examples of democratic experiences. However, this image of the "free world" quickly disintegrates when it comes to social groups of different colors, races, or classifications—that is, democracy primarily for the Western world population. In his critique of democratic systems, Mbembe argues that modern democracies owe their current status to the violence that gave birth to these systems. He cites the example of the French Revolution, which ended the feudal system, stating that the "guillotine marked a new phase of democratization through the means of discarding the enemies of the state" (Mbembe, 2003 ,p.19)

Therefore, despite the universal claims associated with the concept of democracy, its real focus remains primarily on Western communities, more precisely, North Atlantic societies (Pagliuso, Regati, Da Silva Santos, et al. 2022). These claims paradoxically ignore the colonial violence and the necropolitical trajectory that constitutes the other face of democracy.

Mbembe(2003) suggests that modern colonial capitalism founded two different worlds: one based on a plantation regime rooted in slavery and violence, and the other built upon bourgeois civility, culture, and good customs. He further argues that the colony is an integral part of democracy, regardless of the name or structure it carries. Democracy, adds Mbembe, bears the colony within it just as colonialism does to democracy.

## **Conclusion**

In the culmination of this exploration into death and democracy, the intricate relationship between necropolitics and democratic governance comes into focus. Through the theoretical lenses of Foucault, Mbembe, and Agamben, we have navigated landscapes marked by the use of mortality for political ends and the subversion of democratic ideals. From necropolitical governance tactics to the paradoxical coexistence of democracy within zones of necropolitical control, this chapter has revealed the complexities inherent in navigating democratic processes amidst the pervasive influence of death as a political tool. As we reflect on necropolitical obstacles hindering the realization of democratic values, it becomes evident that the struggle for democracy often unfolds in the shadows cast by the specter of death, prompting us to confront the inherent contradictions and complexities embedded within modern governance paradigms.

## **Chapter Three**

**Democracy and Death in Frankentia in Baghdad: A**

**Necropolitical Approach**

# Chapter Three: Democracy and Death in Frankenstein in Baghdad:

## A Necropolitical Approach

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## **Introduction**

In Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, democracy and death merge as one, through a story that seeks to blur the lines of life and death, reality, and myth. Set in post-invasion Baghdad, the novel is an embodiment of the chaotic, fragmented nature of a city trying to come to terms with the result of democracy imposed by an outsider. This novel is a deep commentary on the political and social disarray in Iraq, a place where democratic freedom has been spat upon by the violence and misfortunes of war.

This introduction sets the stage for a necropolitical analysis of the novel, looking at how this interaction between democracy and death is created in the book and reflects the broader socio-political landscape of Baghdad during a period of time when it was in great upheaval. The

latter part—the one involving the conventional understanding of sovereignty, governance, and justice in the rendering of the dead being repurposed to political ends in the novel—invites readers to reconsider the implications of democracy within a context marred by perpetual violence.

Set in post invasion Baghdad, the novel tells the story of Hadi Al Attak, an alcoholic bric-brac merchant who decides to collect the body parts of people killed in terrorist attacks and stitches them together as a corpse. When a lost soul, Hasib's, of a terrorist bombing attack victim enters the corpse, the creature comes to life and launches a revenge campaign to assassinate the murderers who have killed the people who gave him each part of his body. The monster terrorizes Baghdad, a city where sometimes arriving a few minutes early or late to a place could mean the difference between dying in a car bombing or narrowly escaping death but witnessing the horrific scene of maimed bodies. The novel blends elements of horror and political commentary, exploring themes of violence, identity, and the impact of war on individuals and society.

### **3.1. Frankenstein: A Necropolitical Landscape**

#### **3.1.1 Overview of Frankenstein's Emergence and Evolution as a Necropolitical Entity in**

##### **Baghdad**

Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is an in-depth look at the rise and growth of the Whatsitsname; a creature whose existence symbolizes the intricate and often grim realities of post-invasion Baghdad. The creature is more than just one of horror; it is a potent symbol of the chaos, violence, and fragmentation that engulfed the city following the U.S. invasion in 2003.

##### **3.1.1.1 The Creation of a Necropolitical Entity**

As controversial as it may seem, the monster was born dead; in an attempt to dignify Nahem's death, Hadi determined that his friend's body gets a proper burial. Even if his flesh was no more distinguishable than his horse's died in the same explosion:

Nahem had already been dead for several months from a car bomb that had exploded in front of the office of a religious party in Karada, killing also some other passersby and Nahem's horse. It had been hard to separate Nahem's horse flesh from that of his horse (p19).

Hadi's obsession about his friend's body reflects the care he carried to Nahem; he was desperate to extent that he completed himself Nahem's corpse so he can have a dignified burial:

I wanted to hand him over the forensic department, because it was a complete corpse that had been left in the streets like a trash. It's a human being, guys, a person (p21).

From this corpse the whatsitsname was created, we have a creature who emerged from a dead assembled body. This fact points the centrality of death in political life in 2003 Baghdad. Car bombings, suicide bombings and random shooting were common practices and normalized realities. This concept aligns with Achill Mbembe's notion of Necropolises; Deciding who is to live and who is to die defines the governance strategies. In the novel, whatsitsname becomes the embodiment of this necropolitical reality. Death is no longer a mere end of a cycle of someone's

life, but is politically an instrumentalized object so that the boundaries between life and death can be in permanent manipulation.

### **3.1.1.2 Evolution Through Violence**

It is in this way that the "Whatsitsname" killing spree follows a curve, in which, at its origin, the deed is all but based on a kind of justice for the constituent souls; in the continuation of killing, it becomes muddled. The creature loses all sense of morality to become increasingly fragmented and disoriented with each act of violence. This is symbolic of the greater social and moral disintegration happening in Baghdad. The spiral of this creature into the circle of violence from the very same motive is just like the city itself, which had lost its original cause in the never-ending chain of bloodletting.

It is this transformation of the "Whatsitsname" character that reflects the disintegration of social and moral fabric in Baghdad: The degeneration—from a creature with a mission of justice to one consumed by an insatiable compulsion for violence—paralleled the vicious circle of revenge now reinforcing itself within the city. Where there had been a justification for violence—sectarian, political, or personal—in the beginning, it escalates into an endless circle wherein violence breeds more violence, leading to a city steeped in permanent war.

### **3.1.1.3 A Metaphor for Collective Trauma**

The collective trauma and grief experienced by Baghdad's inhabitants is embodied in the necropolitical entity of whatsitsname. The half-live, half dead creature, represents the half-alive, half dead city of Baghdad itself, stitched together from the remnants of the dead, torn

apart by war and unable to find any sense of peace or unity. This reflects the fractured state of Baghdad's haunted by the past horrors and deprived of the ability to move forward at present.

The traditional notion of identity and nationhood is highly challenged in the novel due to the existence of the Whatsitsname. Before raising the question of who or what this creature is, one finds himself in a dilemma of answering another question: who is an Iraqi or what is an Iraqi? The creature identity is fluid, constantly changing with the addition and the falling of his body parts. This fluidity reflects the fragmented nature of Iraqi society, where the national identity has been destabilized by years of religious conflicts, occupation, and sectarian division.

#### **3.1.1.4 Reflecting Iraq's Post-Invasion Reality**

First of all, the novel figures the Whatsitsname as a person of fiction of the profound cleavages within Iraqi society. Emerging from the chaos of war, the Whatsitsname is a manifestation of the subsequent evolution into a being of uncontrollable violence: a reality that undercovers themes of loss, fragmentation in occupied city of Baghdad. The Whatsitsname does not simply portray which situation is of such horror. Yet, it is also a critique of the fact of how violence becomes structured and woven in society. The existence of the monster can be considered a reminder of the repercussions of conflict that extend, naturally, far beyond the battlefield, threatening the very essence of a community and identity.

Saadaoui's protagonist serves as a powerful metaphor for the chaotic and violent reality of post-invaded Baghdad. His journey is a striking commentary on the cyclic nature of violence, the fragmentation, and the deeply traumatized society.

### **3.1.2 Examination of the Socio-Political Structures and Power Dynamics That Define**

#### **Frankenstein's Governance Framework**

To whom power is granted in Iraq in 2003? Who sets the rules and the laws? In other words, who has authority in hand in the city? the Whatsitsname represents the fragmented nature of authority in Baghdad. The post-invasion on Baghdad governance is depicted as being pieced together, like the monster, from various groups each with its own agenda. They include the remnants of the Baathist regime, new political factions, militia groups, and the occupying coalition forces:

A government spokesman appeared, answering the journalist questions with a smile. He assured them that the government had thwarted the terrorists because, according to intelligence, Al Qaeda and remnants of the old regime had planned a hundreds car bombings but he coalition forces and the Iraqi security services had failed all but fifteen of them(p23).

#### **3.1.2.1 Socio-Political Structures**

##### **3.1.2.1.1 Fragmented Authority**

The nameless, Whatsitsnam , represents the fragmented nature of authority in Baghdad. This animal, put together from fragments of the body, mirrors the construction of post-2003 invasion Baghdad: remnants of the Baathist regime, newly formed political factions, militia groups, and foreign occupiers all managing different functions. Thus, governance of the

Whatsitsname would not be centralized but fragmented, reflecting real-world fragmentation within Iraq's political landscape.

#### **3.1.2.1.2 Lack of Authority's Legitimacy**

Given to the fact that the American intervention in Iraq was unauthorized in the first place, the coalition forces never represented a legitimate authority. After the fall of the city, a vacuum of legitimate authority emerged. New forms of power took place instead of the collapsed former political Baathist structure. These forms are often rooted in violence, coercion rather than law and order. The Whatsitsname itself assumes a role similar to that of a vigilante, filling the void left by the absence of a stable government. It was initially oriented to realizing justice. Hence, its actions, soon, devolve in the arbitrary violence, highlighting the dangers of power exercised without accountability.

Reda Nasr (2019) assumes that the overthrowing of the Baathist regime was a curse on the national unity in Iraq, she argues that the military occupation after the American invasion is the reason behind the sectarian tension and the ethnic cleansing. All the dominated national, tribal and religious tensions during Saddam Hussein ruling has come to surface and pushed the country to endless violence after launching the assumed Global War On Terror by the Americans.

#### **3.1.2.1.3 Sectarian Division**

Sectarianism, in the novel, is an incorporation of the way Whatsitsname was created, and later on in the journey of revenge he started for the sake of his body parts former owners.

The different religious, sectarian, and ethnic backgrounds are all set in one creature. A symbol for the cultural diversity of Iraq, Yet the deeply divided society as well. The creature seeking revenge on those responsible for the deaths of its constituent parts, becomes embroiled in the sectarian violence that characterized Baghdad during this period.

#### **3.1.2.1.4 Power Dynamics**

**3.1.2.1.4.1 Arbitrary Power:** The arbitrariness of holding and exercising power is very significant in the novel. The Whatsitsname acts like a wounded dragon with all the power he had. In fact, in Baghdad's lawless streets, power is exercised through brute force rather than legitimate channels. The creature actions are unpredictable and brutal. However, we cannot consider it an outlaw because there are no laws to break in the first place:

I live in as Area Zero because it and the building around, in an area about half mile square, have never been under the full control of any of the three forces (Iraqi national Guard and American Army, the Sunni militia and the Shiite militia) and because it's a war zone without any inhabitants, so it's the right place for me (p116.)

**3.1.2.1.4.2 Manipulation by external powers:** The Whatsitsname was morally conscious at the beginning in order to gain people's sympathy. However, its morality was put into the test when its parts started to be rotten and fell one after another:

The whatsitsname was now at a loss for what to do. He knew his missions was essentially to kill, to kill new people every day, but he

no longer had a clear idea who should be killed or why. The flesh of the innocents of which he was initially composed, had been replaced by new flesh, that of his own victims (p161).

The creature's pursuit for justice shifted the attempt to ensure survival. In other words, the justified violence led to creating an unstoppable cycle of violence for selfish purposes. This reflects a broader moral ambiguity of the Iraqi war and its aftermath. The lie about Iraq's possession weapons of mass destruction, being a primary reason to occupy the country, remains one of moral questions on the American administration. The governance framework where power is exercised in Baghdad was born in a morally ambiguous environment leading, ultimately, to further suffering and chaos.

### **3.1.3 Exploration of Frankenstein's Spatial Organization and Its Impact on The Urban Fabric of Baghdad.**

A significant aspect of the novel, the spatial organization of the protagonist and its impact on the urban fabric of Baghdad reflects the disarray and fragmentation in the post-invasion Baghdad.

#### **3.1.3.1 Spatial Organization Fragmented Existence**

The creature is literally made up of body parts of different people from various quarters of Baghdad. The further fragmentary nature is a testament to the breakdown in the social and physical texture of the city. Every part of this creature had its origins in various neighborhoods and communities that comprised the multifarious yet divided populace of Baghdad. The movements of the creature across the city act to underline a fractured urban

landscape, where different areas have been taken over by different factions or groups having their identity with tensions.

**3.1.3.1.1 Movement Through Urban Space:** The reader of the novel will discover what'sitsname moves through Baghdad's various districts. The Sunni neighbourhoods, the Sadr Shiite City, and the Christian side of the city. The Jewish Ruins are the monster's first shelter, though there are little or no Jews in Baghdad. The author's implied it as a part of the city as well. As the reader crosses boundaries between the neighborhoods, he or she can feel how isolated and segregated these neighborhoods are due to the sectarian conflicts. The creature passage through these spaces symbolizes the breakdown of the social cohesion in addition to the physical destruction of the city.

**3.1.3.1.2 Hidden and Marginal Spaces:** From his early life, the what'sitsname occupied only marginal and hidden spaces in Baghdad. Hadi stitched him in his falling quasi house, explicitly described as ruins. The monster also occupied abandoned buildings and alleys in his journey. These spaces are significant in the way which they uncover the hidden face of Baghdad. It is not only the Green Zone, but it is also the neglected and devastated area left to its fate within conflicts. The what'sitsname's presence in such spaces reveals how war pushed certain parts of the city to obscurity, transforming them into sites of instability.

### **3.1.3.2 Impact on the Urban Fabric**

**3.1.3.2.1 Symbol of Urban Decay:** As a city, where death is offered for free, Baghdad is no longer recognizable. The bombings taking place everywhere and at any time leaves it as a city of ghosts. The novel suggests that the city's fabric has been torn apart not just by the perceived

public violence but the destruction on deeper psychological and social levels. The decay of Baghdad is manifested in the seen urban fabric and unseen soul.

**3.1.3.2.2 Transformation of Space:** The creature is one whose actions turn space inhabited or traversed—into a marker of violence and death. Spaces used to be full of life are transformed into quasi graveyards, spaces that formed part of quotidian life in Baghdad are transformed into grieving areas. For instance, the places where the whastitsname appears often become sites of new conflicts or atrocities, further eroding any sense of safety and community. It reflects a transformation brought about by violence that reshapes Baghdad's urban landscape, turning familiar spaces into zones of danger and uncertainty.

**3.1.3.2.3A Reflection of The Fragmentation of Baghdad:** the spatial existence of the whatsitsname indicates the fragmentation of Baghdad into isolated enclaves. As the creature moves through different neighborhoods, it carries with it its memories of violence, loss, and injustice of those whose body parts it carries. This underlines the idea of a city torn apart, with each part of Baghdad having its traumas that contribute to the collective experience of fragmentation rather than unity.

**3.1.3.2.4 Social Interactions:** Suspicious, hostility and fear of the other is dominated scene in Baghdad. People do not know who is trustworthy and who is not. Everyone is a possible criminal or a possible victim. Everyone is dangerous to everyone. This fact mirrors the broader social disintegration in Baghdad. The work portrays how the urban fabric used to be, once a space for social interaction and community life has become fractured and dangerous environment leaving no place for trust, sympathy and solidarity.

## **3.2. Representation of Death in Frankenstein**

### **3.2.1 Analysis of How Death Is Represented and Utilized As a Tool of Power within**

#### **Frankenstein's Necropolitical Landscape**

A dominant theme all over the novel, death is omnipresent and plays a central role in demonstrating how power is exercised and perceived within the novel necropolitical landscape. Death instrumentalization as by the creature is a key element that reflects the social and political dynamics of post -invasion Baghdad.

#### **3.2.1.1 Representation of Death**

**3.2.1.1.1 Death as the Place of Birth of Whatsitsname:** Death cases of the sectarian violence in Baghdad is the very foundation of the whatsitsname that it is quite literally built from their corpses. Every one of its body parts—the product of death—finds it born of and for death. This accumulation of corpses shows the dehumanization and absurdity of war, where bodies are cut down to no more than raw materials for new forms of violence.

**3.2.1.1.2 Death as Moral Justification:** the creature uses death as moral justification for the terror he spreads in Baghdad. It promotes itself as an agent of justice seeking to revenge the death of those whose parts makes up its own. This misleading perspective illustrates how death is manipulated to legitimize violence in a context where laws and social order have collapsed at once

#### **3.2.1.2 The Use of Death as a Tool of Power**

**3.2.1.2.1 Death as a Means of Control:** Whatsitsname primary source of power is violence and death. Each murder it commits is a means to reinforce its authority and spread terror through the city. Death, hence, becomes a tool of social control where the fear of the creature helps to maintain certain type of order. The type based on terror. Out of the novel context, but in the same city, the so called Islamic State in Iraq and Sham, Daesh terror is based on the same form of terror amongst public execution on T.V screens.

**3.2.1.2.2 Death and Fragmentation of Power:** Besides using it as a means of control, death also symbolizes the fragmentation of power in Baghdad. Power is dispersed among various armed groups, each of which uses death to establish its influence and gain more power. This situation reflects the political reality of Baghdad and the fragmentation the city witnesses. Much like the city, the creature is an assembled disfigured fragments, and in order to survive, his only way is more killing.

**3.2.1.2.3 Death and the Cycle of Violence:** The creature finds itself trapped in a cycle of an endless violence; each death leads to other acts of violence. Like fire, the cycle illustrates how death becomes a self-sustain force in the necropolitical landscape of Baghdad. Violence gives birth to more of it. Yet, far from resolving conflicts, death only intensifies and perpetuates them instead.

Death in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is both a symptom and an instrument of power. Through the whatsitsname 's acts of death, legitimation and the assertion of rule over the city are displayed as a way to show how violence and death form the core of the performance of

power in a context of chaos and war. Death becomes a means to maintain a precarious order while underlining the fragmentation and instability of power in post-invasion Baghdad.

### **3.2.2 Examination of the Role of Mortality in Shaping Perceptions of Security, Control, and Resistance within the Populace**

In *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, death stands right at the fore in shaping the perceptions of security, control, and even resistance amongst masses.

**3.2.2.1. Perceptions of Safety:** Mortality in the novel is omnipresent; it plays a fundamental role in shaping the perception of security, control and instability. The characters' awareness, and in cases, indifference, towards mortality, fosters a sense of vulnerability and paranoia. Hadi's, in desperate search for meaning to his friend's death, collected dispersed body parts found in the street to create a proper body to be buried with dignity. A body that is transformed, later, to be what'sitsname after being haunted by Hasib's soul. The hotel Shiite security guard killed in the garbage truck explosion.

Hasib felt for certain that sunrise would spell disaster for him. He wouldn't have the energy to roam the streets or go back to the scene of the explosion. With his hands, which were made of primordial matter, he touched the pale, naked body and saw his spirit sink into it. His whole arm sank in, then his head and the rest of his body (p.30)

These scenes reflect the collective anxiety and the desperate attempt to find order amidst this chaos. The opening scene of the novel portrays the characters' exposure to death. Elishva was

sitting carelessly in the bus as if nothing happened while the massive explosion took place at that moment.

**3.2.2.2. Control vs. Resistance:** Death inevitability undermines the notion of control. This is portrayed in the Tracking and Pursuit Department, a security unit that attempts to exert control over the populace by employing the supernatural embodied in astrologers and fortune tellers to solve real world issues. This reliance on the supernatural to manage real world issues highlights the inadequacy of the traditional power structure in providing security. The populace, on the other side, resists these mechanisms of control by relaying on their own beliefs and superstitions. Elishva's neighbors believe that her prayers in the church of Saint Odisha is the cause behind the explosion while other locals think that her spiritual power prevented bad things from happening when she was among them.

**3.2.2.3. Community Responses:** community response to mortality involves a mix of resignation, adaptation and subtle forms of resistance. When Hadi was a victim of the garbage track explosion, he kept telling himself that he wouldn't die, reminding himself of how he had survived several other fatal attacks. Elishva, though accused of being mad, copes with the loss of her son by maintaining a belief in his return. Hadi clinging 's to life and Elishva to hope is indicative of a broader pattern of resistance against the crushing reality of death and loss.

**3.2.2.4. The Psychological Impact:** death affects psychologically characters spirits. It occupies the character's thoughts and emotions leading them to changes in behaviors and outlooks. The novel penetrates the character's mind in search for mental toll's effect of the one

living in an environment of terror, and how this mental toll pushes the characters to raise existentialist questions.

The theme of mortality is used in the novel to examine the complex dynamics of security, control and resistance in a city that witnesses terrorist attacks on daily basis. The character's responses to death and destruction provides an insightful vision into the human capacity for resilience and the struggle to maintain a sense of agency in the face of meaningless overwhelming odds. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* explores the theme of mortality to show complex dynamics of security, control, and resistance within a society under siege by violence. The contrast in their reactions to the death and destruction is indicative of human nature in its capacity for resilience and struggles to maintain agency in overwhelming odds.

### **3.2.3 Case studies illustrating specific instances where death serves as a mechanism for asserting authority and perpetuating social order**

A number of case studies articulate the use of death as a mechanism for claiming powers of authority to maintain the social order within the chaotic environment that characterizes *Frankenstein in Baghdad*:

**3.2.3.1. Department of Tracking and Pursuit:** the department is a security unit affiliated with the civil administration of the international coalition forces in Iraq. The department, desperately, attempts to predict serious security incidents; what is supposed to be a professional intelligence agency has become a nest for fortune tellers and astrologers. In a desperate move, the Iraqi authority employed these wizards to control the uncontrollable, violence and mortality.

The reliance on the supernatural can only mean the failure of traditional governance and law enforcement mechanisms reinforcing the idea that death and the threat of death can be harnessed to maintain a semblance of order and control against the ongoing violence.

**3.2.3.2. Character of Hadi and the Creation of what'sitsname:** the creature 's existence can be considered a response to the chaos and, at the same time, a means through which Hadi asserts his authority in a world where death is normalized. The what'sitsname acts as a grotesque reminder of the violence imposed on populace and a critique of the authorities' failure to protect their citizens .

**3.2.3.3. Elishva's Personal Rituals and Beliefs:** the widow Elisha lives on the hope to see her son Daniel who has been lost for years after being kidnapped by the Baathist former regime security services. Suspected of being mad sometimes and a woman of a supernatural powers other times. This Christian woman maintains a belief of her son eventual return. Her personal narrative of hope in a reality of despair functions as form of resistance against the fatality of death. Elishva denial of her son's death is related to the interaction with religious symbol sand rituals. An attitude she persevered to provide a sense of control over her life and offer a counter narrative to the fear of mortality. Elishva acceptance of the substitute for her son can be seen as an act of serving emotional connection to a lost object and the readiness for a new emotional investissement in another object. (Elayyan,2017). In the light of the Freudian examination of mourning and melancholia. Elishva adoption for the monster, adds Elayyan, reminds her of herself when she was a young mother.

**3.2.3.4. The Hotel Explosion and the Fate of Hasib Mohamed Jaafar:** Perhaps most emblematic of the way in which death serves to disrupt the social order and question the authority of the powerful is the explosion at the Sadeer Novotel Hotel by a suicide bomber. It is the guard who had sacrificed his life in order to avoid further destruction, Hasib, that turns out to be a symbol of the fragility of life, of how order could be upset so easily.

**3.2.3.5. Apparent Sectarian Violence:** the novel shows the use of death systemically as a way to exercise authority through various factions. Such incidents, therefore, ensure social fabric based on barriers and distrust based on threats of targeted attack on religious or ethnic grounds. This evidences how these acts of violence have remained in a few hands to keep communities in bondage and dissention at bay.

These case studies in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* signal the role of death, not as a backdrop to the story, but as an agent within it, a thing shaping the lives of the characters and the greater social order. This experience, common to the novel-inhabiting a city in which mortality, is part of the quotidian reality-death as banal, everyday instrument of control and resistance-powers a strong exploration of psychological and social effects. Living in a city where mortality is a daily occurrence and death is seen as a commonplace tool of resistance and control gives the novel a powerful examination of the psychological and social ramifications.

### 3.3. Democracy Amidst Frankenstein's Shadow

#### 3.3.1 Evaluation of Democratic Practices and Institutions within Frankenstein, Including Elections, Governance Structures, and Civil Liberties

*Frankenstein in Baghdad* interprets democratic habits and structures as a multi-mirror mosaic of a society wracked by turmoil. This novel, set in post-2003 Iraq, will give one some degree of insight into the challenges a nation faced trying to establish democratic governance within widespread violence and instability.

**3.3.1.1. Elections:** Although the book does not refer to the whole process of elections, it has been able to provide a background of a society where this concept of elections is very new and full of complications. Thus, most of the people question the concept of whether the elections can be considered as fair and efficient in such a violent and chaotic environment like Baghdad. The novel even goes to the extent of asserting that elections, though central features of democracy, are, as a matter of fact denigrated in those locations where the basic security and stability of its citizens are not guaranteed. In chapter seven, Al haqiqa editor, Ali Baher al Saidi addressed Mahmoud the journalist saying that there will be election that year and that he hoped that the security situation improves. Elections for people like Saidi, is an occasion to prosper the printing business and making profits and not a democratic event to be celebrated.

**3.3.1.2. Forms of Governance:** In this novel, the forms of governance appear to come across as incoherent and incompetent. The Tracking and Pursuit Department, for instance, is arranged in a manner which disperses responsibility through privilege and obscurity. Indeed, it

underlines the desperation and farcicality of governance mechanisms in times of crises to think that this department uses astrologers and fortune tellers to predict security threats. It is a broader critique against the nature of governance structures in post-invasion Iraq, where usually the enormity of violence and disorder eclipses institutions.

**3.3.1.3. Civil Liberties:** The novel speaks to the erosion of civil liberties in a society beset by fear and distrust. This is further manifested in the constant threat of violence, which constrains freedom of movement and expression since one is usually apprehensive about safety. During the interrogation of Hadi, he was beaten severely by the assistants of the traffic department:

two assistants lifted Hadi's arms and the pink officer with the bandage started pushing Hadi in the stomach like a madman. This went on for two full minutes. The punches didn't stop until Hadi threw u" (p.135)

The characters in this novel attempt to make their way across a landscape where civil liberties are taking a further place to survival, while the ability of the state to protect such liberties is seriously compromised. The character himself, Mahmoud al-Sawadi, manages to exude omnipresence with violence, much like his profession; this makes a point about the permanently problematic status of press freedom in particular and people who are committed to reporting reality in general.

**3.3.1.4. Public Disillusionment and Resistance:** There is widespread public disillusionment in the novel over democratic processes and institutions. Thus, characters like

Hadi and Elishva tend to personify a disavowal of faith in the rhetoric of democracy which had promised so much while their quotidian experience was determined far more by daily terrors than ideals about democratic rule. This extends into the various manners and modes of resistance, subtle and overt, whereby characters attempt to assert agency in a world where the official institutions have abandoned them.

**3.3.1.5. Social Order and Power Dynamic:** It is in this respect that the novel also describes an underlying power dynamic of the social order in Baghdad, its interacting mix of characters and groups underscoring complex dynamics wherein the democratic dispensation of institutions most often plays second fiddle to subterranean networks of influence and domination. The novel unfolds within a greatly bewildering society where it can barely be distinguished whether an event is due to state or non-state actors that is to say who is killing who, and one in which the imperatives of democratic governance often give way to the pursuit of power.

In a nutshell, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is an act of critique towards democracy in the context of conflict and turbulence. It reveals the fragility of democratic institutions and emphasizes the necessary building blocks of forming a strong and inclusive democratic society, addressing the root causes of violence and instability.

### **3.3.2 Analysis of The Challenges and Limitations to Democratic Expression and Participation within The Context of Frankenstein's Necropolitical Control**

The novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* inscribes into its narrative a concerned approach to democratic expression and participation, which is even more distinctly realized in the

necropolitical control that the novel depicts. The term necropolitics covers an act of power and governance within a highly networked, digitalized society. This carries with it particular complications when contextualized in a locale such as post-invasion Baghdad, where modern and traditional manifestations of control interface.

**3.3.2.1. Security and Violence:** Rampant violence and insecurity in the city make it highly indecent for democratic expression and participation. Bomb blasts and threats of violence always hamper the ability of the citizens to express themselves politically, protest collectively, or engage in public deliberation. This atmosphere of fear and terror challenges the core democratic principle of freedom of assembly and creates fewer avenues for collective action.

**3.3.2.2. Distrust and fragmentation:** The novel projects a deeply distrustful and fragmented society across sectarian lines, further exacerbated by the digital spread of propaganda and mis/disinformation feeding into and preventing the generation of a cohesive public sphere. Rumors and conspiracy theories spread by means of informal networks and digital platforms chip away at confidence in democratic institutions and procedures. It, thus, becomes very hard for the people to unitedly compel their leaders to explain certain actions or omissions.

**3.3.2.3. Control of Information:** The manipulation and control of information by both state and non-state agents constitute the forms of necropolitical control in the novel. The publication and dissemination of partial or distorted information through media and digital platforms have acted to reinforce entrenched power and exclude dissident voices from the mass level of decision-making. This control of information would remain quite unnecessary to restrict the mass level of decision-making and active participation in the democratic process.

**3.3.2.4. Co-optation of Democratic Institutions:** The novel illustrates the co-optation of democratic institutions by those in power through the use of such institutions to legitimize their rule rather than as instruments of enfranchisement for the populace. For example, the Tracking and Pursuit Department enjoys a degree of independence and impunity that reflects greater governance challenges brought about by a divided society. This process of co-optation depletes democratic institutions of any credibility and nurtures cynicism amongst the citizenry about the potential effectiveness of democratic participation.

**3.3.2.5. Social and Economic Inequalities:** The novel touches on a few other key ideas-for example, social and economic inequalities that circumscribe democratic expression and participation. Indeed, as with people living in the squalid areas of Bataween, individuals who live on the fringes of society, destitute and indigent, often have insufficient wherewithal and opportunity to engage in political life. The exclusion from democratic life, under such conditions, promotes a vicious circle wherein disfranchisement and estrangement from the state further weaken the possibility of democratic participation.

**3.3.2.6. Digital Surveillance and Repression:** The novel infers, in a net-political control context, digital surveillance and repression through multidirectional use by authorities to monitor and suppress political dissent. Free speech is chilled off in the face of being watched or targeted for utterances of views considered dissenting, and that keeps them from taking part in both online and offline political activities

### **3.3.3 Exploration of Grassroots Movements and Resistance Efforts Aimed at Challenging Frankenstein's Authoritarian Grip and Fostering Democratic Ideals**

**3.3.3.1 The grassroots movements and resistances:** are also utterly central in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* underlining the struggle of ordinary people against the authoritarian power structure for democratic values. It is a scrutiny into how one deals with or fights against oppression and asserts autonomy in the face of violence and chaos.

**3.3.3.2 Solidarity and Community Mutual Aid:** There is a sprinkling of various acts of effective resistance throughout the novel; the strongest among them being community solidarity. People unite for one another against violence and all forms of external aggression. In such a close-knit community, resilience is forged and lays the base upon which collective action against authoritarianism would be assembled.

**3.3.3.3 Cultural and Religious Identity Resistance:** It is in cultural and religious identity that the novel insists as a tool of resistance against authoritarianism. Characters like Elishva, clinging to her faith in Christianity and its practice, become the embodiment of resistance against such suppression of cultural diversity. People and society rise through an affirmation of their rights to life and prosperity in their full identity against the erasure of their identities.

**3.3.3.4 The Powers of Alternative Narratives:** Characters such as that of Hadi, the junk dealer, showcase how storytelling can work as a form of resistance. His creation of the *whatsitsname* and the stories he weaves around it are, in fact, one counter story to the ones

construed by those in power. To this effect, the characters elaborate on their narratives and propose counter-narratives against the dominant discourse that has been imposed on them.

Indeed, subversive actions and informal networks are the tools of effective resistance against authoritarian control in the novel. Mahmood al-Sawadi, being a journalist, runs the risk of reporting on this volatile situation to expose some of the perpetrators among those in power. Such an act, though dangerous, speaks to commitment for truth and justice. The novel also discusses local leadership and grassroots organization in mobilizing people around democratic principles. Characters taking leadership through religious, social, and civic means within the communities in which they live create a participatory culture against an authoritarian regime.

**3.3.3.5 Empowerment by Education:** The novel is underlined, in particular, by how education empowers individuals and their communities through fostering critical thinking and thereby asking people to question oppressive systems. Thus, grassroots movements lead to a more informed and active citizenship.

**3.3.3.6 Non-Violent Resistance:** While violence permeates the novel, it manages to represent non-violent resistance and civil disobedience as potent ways of countering authoritarianism. Characters leading peaceful protests and community-organizing depict the truth that collective action may have powerful consequences in changing reality.

Grassroots resistance was one basic counterforce to the forces of authoritarian rule that encouraged popular democratic longing; *Frankenstein in Baghdad* illustrated one example of such resistance. The resiliency and solidarity of individuals and their communities, as illustrated

by this novel, represent resistance to oppression-thus a reason to hope for the possibility of social and political change.

### **3.4. Intersectionality of Democracy and Death**

In *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, death literally lies at the heart of democratic processes and aspirations, highlighting the tension between ideals of democracy and the raw aspects of life in war-torn society. Death is definitely a spoiler of democratic processes: the ever-present possibility of violence prevents citizens from exercising their democratic rights, as in participation in elections, attending public meetings, or making representations of their views. This atmosphere of fear and instability saps the democratic spirit of civic engagement and grass-roots participatory principles. This novel also reflects the tremendous manner in which the constant sight of death reflects itself in the slow erosion of civil liberties; a state seeking to combat such displays of violence introduces new security measures, limiting individual freedoms. Despite these difficulties, death inspires symbolic resistance toward the struggle for life through democratic ideals. For example, with Hadi's invention of *whatsitsname*, which is a reaction against dehumanization, through a memory of the value of every single life taken. Additionally, collective mourning is a kind of solidarity that strengthens democratic aspirations as communities unify to mourn and support each other, steadfast in resilience and defiance. As in the case of Hasib Mohamed Jaafar, such a martyrdom narrative galvanizes his community to rise and points to a potential leap toward the greater good that is achieved by sacrifice. Other characters, such as Mahmoud al-Sawadi-the journalist-remind one of the struggle for justice and accountability by recording atrocities so that powers that be are called to order and held accountable.

Therefore, this grafting of death within the novel becomes a bleak reminder of democratic urgency, and society has to reflect on a need for systemic reform and the establishment of institutions protecting and empowering citizens. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* offers a multilayered look at the difficulties and complications of democratic achievement in a context of contestation and violence, showing how individuals and communities fashion democratic ideals in the face of challenges.

### **3.4.1 Analysis of How Mortality Influences Political Discourse, Citizen Engagement, and Resistance Movements within The Necropolitical Landscape**

Ahmed Saadawi's novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* unfolds a deep and extensive understanding of how mortality affects political discourses, citizens' participation, and the resistance movement within a complex socio-political landscape. In this sense, death is at the core of the work that looks at the political dynamics through violence that has been perpetuating itself ad infinitum in post-invasion Baghdad. The making of the *whatsitsname* out of the body parts of war victims is symbolic of communal trauma that challenges the authority of the state, as it carries in it the consequences of state failure. It is, then, this prime concern that creates the prime argument of political discourse: the challenging of losses and the inefficiencies of the government by its citizens. The omnipresence of death involves citizen participation in fear and disillusionments that stifle such participation, yet characters like Mahmoud the journalist seek to document atrocities and elicit accountability. Mortality thus fuels varieties of political engagement, from protest to documentation. The novel explores how mortality spurs resistance movements, representing the *Whatsitsname* in its desire for justice against ongoing violence. In

the broader necropolitical perspective, in which digital platforms often intermingle with shaping political realities, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* shows how communities are victimized by violence employ digital narratives as forms of voice amplification and acts of resistance. The novel thus provides insight into how mortality shapes political, social, and digital landscapes in modern conflicts.

### **3.4.2 Case Studies Highlighting Instances Where The Quest for Democracy and The Specter of Death Converge, Shaping The Trajectory of Frankenstein's Governance and Social Dynamics**

In the novel, this tug of war between the pursuit of democracy and the all-pervasive threat of death takes center stage through several critical moments, revealing how such forces define governance and social life. The novel constantly returns to the role that fear plays in governance; characters, such as Farid Shawaf, explain the cyclical violence as a function of deep fear about death among the masses. It is this fear-personal and political-that leads groups to take up militias and Death Machines, which in turn heighten violence, make governance impossible, and retard the aspiration of democracy.

The story also covers how vigilantism arose because of the general failure of democratic institutions. Mahmoud, a journalist, said, "There are three forms of justice in Baghdad: legal, divine, and street justice."(p.139). The inadequacy of formal institutions will force the citizens to take the law into their hands, as what happened in this case, where masked men killed a criminal after his acquittal in court. This shift to street justice reflects a society in which the quest for democracy is undermined by the fear of death, thus people are forced to move outside the system in search of some semblance of justice.

Besides, the monster's name is a symbol of the disintegration of Iraqi society. Being made up of victims' body parts, it symbolizes the collapse of social and political cohesion. The monster was regarded differently by the various factions: to some, it was a savior; to others, it was a doom. The division testifies to how the specter of death upsets governance and social cohesion, making people delve into myth and violence to try to live and find power within a democratic framework in decay.

These cases represent how the novel depicts a society in which the ghost of death, manipulated by unending conflict, therefore fragmented social cohesion and gave rise to alternative forms of justice. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* offers a trenchant commentary on the trials that face societies pursuing democracy with violence and death always pervasive in their lives.

### **3.5. Discussion of Results**

#### **3.5.1 Synthesis of Key Findings and Insights Derived From The Analysis of Democracy and Death Within Frankenstein's Necropolitical Framework**

A critical analysis of democracy and death in this novel within a necropolitical framework offers quite a number of important observations: for example, the piling up of corpses in the novel acts to provide a metaphor for war itself, whereby lives are reduced to a statistical count or to a means whereby further deaths may be achieved—a specific expression of how conflict rips away individual citizenship. The image of fragmented Baghdad suggests the way violence tore social cohesion, produced a climate of fear and mistrust, and made democratic engagement more problematic. In addition, the moral ambiguity of the power dynamics in this novel renders ambiguous the split between right and wrong within the throes of survival and resistance. It

captures how omnipresent death becomes an instrument of control, influencing political discourse, civic engagement by citizens, and the character of democracy in war-torn societies. The analysis is made while concurrently underlining the fact that active citizen participation in the democratic process, even amidst the overwhelming presence of violence, indeed suggests that the pursuit of democracy remains a vital enterprise under the most inauspicious conditions. These vision and insights are drawn from the novel, which complexly interplays violence, identity, and governance to reveal some of the challenges and resilience that individuals face in regard to democracy when chaos is at its greatest.

### **3.5.2 Discussion of the Broader Implications for Understanding The Complexities of Urban Governance, Power Dynamics, and Social Order**

The insight into democracy and death is very relevant within the necropolitical framework for an understanding of aspects related to governance, power dynamics, and social orders within urban areas affected by conflict-as is the case in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. The novel brings into view how violence and instability are bringing about an evident collapse of the traditional structures of urban governance while forcing the emergence of non-state actors and informal networks. This provides the cue for adaptive governance models that fit the particular pressures, stresses, and priorities of an urban conflict and place local leadership and grassroots movements at the heart of resilience and solidarity.

The story further brings into focus the fluidity in nature that characterizes power struggles in the urban context, where state authority is constantly confronted by insurgents, militias, and community organizations. The level of complexity thus requires a much finer consideration of

authority beyond the traditionally unilateral, state-centric model, while the interaction between formal and informal structures of power generates unstable social order in unforeseeable ways.

Indeed, externally threatened, community solidarity and collective identity can be the lynchpin that holds the social order in place. On the other hand, cultural and religious identities have been the very reason and inspiration for resistance against authoritarianism and violence and can therefore be factors fostering a sense of inclusive identities and social cohesion in an effort to rebuild trust and stability within societies in the aftermath of conflicts.

The omnipresence of violence in the novel points toward the destructive effects on democratic aspirations and civic engagement. This threatens to systematically squeeze out fear and insecurity from public discourses and participation, with the dual effect of fostering disillusionment with democratic processes. The critical task of coming to grips with this kind of dynamic thus becomes an important way to devise strategies for the encouragement of political engagement that allows citizens to reclaim their agency in adversarial contexts.

More important, the manipulative and controlling face of information in the book underpins the role that the media plays in shaping public perception and political discourse. In this tumultuous urban landscape, access to proper information guarantees better citizen engagement and accountability; there is, therefore, great need to put in more focus on media literacy and protection of free speech.

Finally, analysis underlines that the issues of social and economic inequalities, cultural identity, and political representation are intersectional. In as much as these factors can be linked with one another, framing an inclusive and representative urban governance system must look deeper into the factors that will lead to such a system. This involves effective consideration on

the part of policy thinkers and makers of the experiences and needs that different kinds of marginalized communities might face for the purpose of devising effective and sustainable solutions.

In all, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* has provided an extended basis of understanding of the interplay between violence and identity, democracy, and how meaningful interventions are required for resiliency, inclusivity, and democratic engagement in an urban context torn apart by war and insecurity.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the analysis of democracy and death in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* demonstrates how the struggle for democracy in conflict-ridden environments is always entangled with the realities of violence and social fragmentation. It brings into light the concept of necropolitics, showing how fluctuating changes in power relations along with death mold political discourse and citizen engagement in a post-invasion metropolis. The present analysis underlines how mass violence dramatically changes democratic processes and reveals a panorama of fear and instability undermining democratic principles. It reflects on the importance of grass-roots resistance, community solidarity, and cultural identity in the struggle against authoritarianism and for democratic convictions. It also deals with issues of mistrust and fragmentation facing democratic involvement and accountability further challenged by disinformation and conflict. Ultimately, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* presents essential lessons with respect to what is needed in the way of urban governance and societal resilience through the application of adaptive racy and rebuilding trust within turmoil.

## **General Conclusion**

This study aims at providing a detailed investigation about the ways necropolitical strategies are practised in Iraq both on the level of governance and that of social structure. This dissertation also discusses the failure of all attempts led by Americans to establish law and order in the country, spreading violence and uncertainties instead.

Using a necropolitical lens, Ahmed Saadawi poignantly explores the relationship between democracy and death. Saadawi's work reflects the profound and devastating impact of the American occupation on the fabric of Iraqi society. The novel unveils the bitter reality of how the promise of democracy and welfare granted by the Americans turned into a nightmare of an unending cycle of violence and daily casualties in post-invasion Iraq. The author criticizes the failure of the imposed American democracy for being unable or unwilling to meet the Iraqis' expectations, illustrating how ideals of democracy, freedom, and justice fell apart and were replaced by corruption, power struggles, and sectarianism, leading the country to a pervasive sense of disillusionment.

The character of Whatitsname, an entity assembled from different dead bodies, each with a bloody end, symbolizes the fragmentation of identity and community in Baghdad, the city of

death at the time. This creature embodies what can be called a living dead: living in the sense that it exists like any other real human being, yet dead in that it is a combination of human bodies, victims of various incidents and bombing. In other words, its body is not its own. What its name represents the collective trauma and loss of individual identities in a society ravaged by conflict. Saadawi uses this figure as a powerful metaphor for the disintegration of social structures and the challenges of reconstructing a community and identity within this chaotic environment.

Moreover, the interactions between characters such as Hadi, Mahmoud, and Elishva highlight the complexities of human relationships in a context where trust and safety are compromised. Both surreal and realistic elements of the novel are combined to offer a unique commentary on the socio-political landscape of Baghdad, underscoring the struggles of individuals to navigate their existence in the face of the death machine.

In summary, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* serves as a profound exploration of how urban violence and trauma shape identities and communities, offering a necropolitical perspective that bridges the themes of creation and monstrosity with the socio-political realities of contemporary Iraq. Saadawi's narrative not only critiques the failure of democratic efforts but also provides a poignant reflection on the enduring impact of conflict on the human condition.

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## الملخص

تدرس هذه الورقة البحثية العلاقة بين الديمقراطية والموت في رواية فرانكشتاين في بغداد من منظور السياسة النكروية يعالج هذا البحث نقل الرواية للتشابه بين النفوذ السياسي والموت في سياق ما بعد الحرب في مدينة بغداد تطرح هذه الدراسة تساؤلات حول كيفية فشل الديمقراطية في التمسك بمبادئها حين تتصادم مع العنف والاستقرار وكيف يمكن للموت ان يصبح الية حكم تطرح هذه الدراسة فرضية أن الرواية هي عمل نقدي للعملية الديمقراطية في العراق حيث تبرز حالات تمكن الفاعلين التابعين وغير التابعين للدولة من بسط سيطرتهم عبر التلاعب بالموت. هذا البحث هو تحليل وصفي للرواية بإعتماد مفهوم السياسة النكروية كمرجع نظري تكشف هذه الرواية عن الديناميكية المعقدة التي تربط بين الحياة، الموت والسلطة عبر تحليل مفصل لشخصية "شسمه" وتظهر نتائج هذا البحث ان الرواية لا تقتصر فقط على نقد قصور الديمقراطية وعيوبها في المجتمعات

التي مزقتها الحرب بل تتجاوزه بتسليطها ايضا الضوء على كيفية تمكن السلطة من الصمود عبر السيطرة على الحياة والموت.

كلمات مفتاحية: اخيل مبيمي، فرانكشتاين في بغداد، الديمقراطية، السياسة النكروية، بغداد ما بعد الحرب

