



Escalating Enigmatic post-colonialism in Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*: A Lacanian Study

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Abstract

This research tries to scrutinize Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013)", focusing on the monstrous creature's repulsive physical representations, the novel's investigation into themes of justice and violence, and the aforementioned elements. By adopting Lacanian psychoanalysis, the current study examines this novel in relation to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. It shows the binary oppositions in the novel such as justice and revenge, good and evil, life and death, peace and destruction, order and disorder, innocence and criminality, and truth and lies. "The Whatsitsname," an unnamed monster created by Saadawi, is formed through an unintentional yet noble endeavor: Hadi, the protagonist, assembles fragments of corpses discovered in the streets of Baghdad into a single entity for the purpose of performing "a proper burial" and restoring the deceased's dignity. It is noteworthy that although the Iraqi government views the creature as an adversary, the general populace views him as a savior their sole prospect for halting the violence and attaining justice. This work speculates that Saadawi utilizes the metaphor of Frankenstein's monster is not only depict the dystopian atmosphere of Baghdad after 2003, but also to challenge the lamentable realities, and repercussions of war. In addition to the broader implications of colonialism. Furthermore, Saadawi's embodiment of the monster metaphor in *Frankenstein* actualizes a novel literary function for the monster represents the idea of the Other. In this instance, Frankenstein's body symbolizes the complete Iraqi literary community. Equally significant is the fragmented appearance of his body, which is literally composed of various body parts from various individuals; this may represent the critical necessity for unity in Iraq.

Key words: Enigmatic, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, Other, Post-colonialism, Justice

تصاعد الغموض لفترة ما بعد الاستعمار في رواية فرانكشتاين في بغداد لأحمد سعداوي: دراسة لأكانية

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وزارة التربية، الكلية التربوية المفتوحة، محافظة النجف، العراق.

ملخص

يجري هذا البحث تحليلاً لرواية فرانكشتاين في بغداد لأحمد سعداوي (2013) مع التركيز على التمثيلات الجسدية المقززة للمخلوق الوحشي، وبحث الرواية في موضوعي العدالة والعنف، والعناصر المذكورة آنفاً. في ضوء نظرية لاكان النفسية، تبحث الدراسة الحالية في هذه الرواية مدى علاقتها برواية



فرانكنشتاين لماري شيلي. وتبين التناقضات الثنائية في الرواية مثل الخير والشر، العدالة والانتقام، السلام والدمار، الحياة والموت، والنظام والفوضى، والبراءة والإجرام، والحقيقة والأكاذيب. The Whatsitsname وهو وحش غير مسمى أنشأه السعداوي، تم تشكيله من خلال مسعى غير مقصود ولكنه نبيل: يقوم هادي، بطل الرواية، بتجميع شظايا الجثث المكتشفة في شوارع بغداد في كيان واحد لغرض أداء عملية مناسبة الدفن واستعادة كرامة المتوفى. من الجدير بالذكر أنه على الرغم من أن الحكومة العراقية تنظر إلى المخلوق باعتباره خصمًا، إلا أن السكان العامين ينظرون إليه على أنه المنقذ احتمالهم الوحيد لوقف العنف وتحقيق العدالة. تفترض هذه الدراسة أن سعداوي استخدم استعارة وحش فرانكنشتاين ليس فقط لتصوير أجواء بغداد ديستوبيا بعد عام 2003، ولكن أيضًا لتحدي الحقائق المثيرة للأصالة، والتدخلات في الحرب، بالإضافة إلى الآثار المترتبة على الاستعمار. علاوة على ذلك، فإن تجسيد سعداوي من استعارة الوحش في فرانكنشتاين يحقق وظيفة أدبية جديدة للوحش تجسيد الآخر في الأدب. في هذه الحالة، يرمز جسم فرانكنشتاين إلى المجتمع الأدبي العراقي الكامل. بنفس القدر من الأهمية هو المظهر المجزأ لجسمه، والذي يتكون حرفيًا من أجزاء الجسم المختلفة من مختلف الأفراد؛ قد يمثل هذا الضرورة الحرجة للوحدة في العراق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الغموض، فرانكنشتاين في بغداد، العدالة، آخر، بعد الاحتلال

Introduction

Frankenstein in Baghdad, written by Ahmed Saadawi, was awarded the 2014 International Prize for Arabic Fiction. It is noteworthy to mention that this prestigious award has never been bestowed upon an Iraqi novelist before. Saadawi skillfully weaves a compelling narrative that aptly portrays the harsh reality of the present condition of affairs across Iraq. The streets of the capital city are ravaged by heinous depictions of conflicts, terrorist attacks, abductions, suicide bombings, and improvised explosive devices". Despair is prowling the thoroughfares of Baghdad, capriciously pursuing individuals and dismantling families. The escalating cycle of violence has reduced human fatalities to mere statistical data (Guerra, 2022).

Annie Webster's (2018) contends that Saadawi's novel "presents readers with the remains of Iraqi civilians who perished in the violence that engulfed Iraq after 2003 and whose dignity appears to be disregarded, as they remain unidentified and unexhumed in the thoroughfares of Baghdad" (Webster 445). This pertains to dystopia, which describes a tangible location rather than a conceptual one. Put simply, the dystopian elements present in the novel originate from a realistic yet horrific reality Baghdad subsequent to 2003. Saadawi's work effectively represents a tangible dystopia, as Fatima Vieira's (2010) contends: "Therefore, the term dystopia was applied not only to conceptual locales that were more deplorable than their tangible counterparts, but also to literary compositions that depicted such locations" (Vieira 17).

After 2003, a range of horrifying and traumatic experiences were captured in the Iraqi adaptation of *Frankenstein*, which has emerged in Baghdad with a local



narrative voice. An altruistic intent to elevate the deceased is attributed to the conception of Frankenstein. When the protagonist, Hadi, gathers the mortal remains of innocent individuals slain in terrorist attacks from the street in order to bury them properly, the monster is brought to life through a miraculous touch. As part of his mission, the monstrous creature exacts vengeance on all the perpetrators responsible for the murders of the victims' body parts. He begins to murder innocent people, however, in order to ensure his own survival as his body begins to dissolve. The beast undergoes an absolute metamorphosis from a symbol of optimism to a terrifying entity at this moment.

Meanwhile, the deformity of ongoing realities in Iraq is symbolized by the degradation of his body, while the corruption of his actions represents a scathing critique of the Iraqi government. Iraqi society's identity crisis and societal fragmentation against the backdrop of Baghdad's colonial past are intricately encapsulated in the emergence of Frankenstein in Iraqi literature following the 2003 invasion lead by the United States.

The "traumas of colonialism and the sudden outbreak of violence that occurred in Iraq after 2003 profoundly affected Saadawi. As a result, he renders a dystopian narrative through the lens of a local author who is embroiled in an unfolding event, thus confronting these tragic circumstances" (Alhashmi 1). Saadawi challenges the current "state of Iraqi identity, albeit with a unifying spirit", via the divided bodily parts of "the Whatsitsname," which represent various ethnic groups of the Iraqi people. By portraying the entirety of Iraq in the midst of sectarian strife, political deterioration, occupation, and war, Saadawi significantly contributes to the construction of Iraqi identity narratives after 2003. In light of the linguistic designation of the Whatsitsname, which refers to the entirety of Iraqi society, the significance of archaeological heritage in safeguarding the nation's identity, and the historical and cultural variety of Baghdad as viewed through artistic lenses, the purpose of this article is to analyze the manner in which Iraqi identity and Cultural crises in the texts of Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is portrayed in Saadawi's novel.

Ahmed Saadawi's Career

Ahmed Saadawi is a screenwriter, novelist, poet, and documentary cinematographer from Iraq. In 1973, he was born in Baghdad. With his spouse, he has four children. In addition to working for numerous newspapers, periodicals, and local press organizations, he was "a BBC correspondent in Baghdad" from 2005 to 2007. He was responsible for scenario writing, producing and authoring documentaries, and preparing television programs. He served "as a correspondent in Berlin for the German-based agency MIT. Saadawi, the recipient of the Grand



Prize for Fantasy in France, is selected as the preeminent Arab author below the age of 39 for Beirut39".

A novel that stands out among his body of work is "*Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013). It received an honorable mention among the top six manuscripts for the 2018 Man Booker International Prize in 2014. It honors the finest translations of novels from around the globe. The award is presented annually, and one book is adapted into a motion picture and published in 32 languages, including English (One World Publications; Jonathan Wright, Chinese, French, and Korean) (Latif, 2019, p.53-54).

Saadawi was of modest origin, hailing from Althawra City, a densely populated neighborhood in Baghdad. His driving instruction was the responsibility of his father, while his mother remained at home. The child was fortunate to be in close proximity to two uncles, one of whom was an artist and the other a poet. These uncles recognized their nephew's aptitude for storytelling as an artist and provided him with guidance to enhance his artistic endeavors. Saadawi commenced his poetic endeavors at the tender age of ten. Concurrently, he held a position as a drawer at a publishing house" overseeing children's courses. "Since my childhood, I have had a personal connection with the art of storytelling," the author writes to illustrate his enthusiasm for literature. "My life has been driven by writing" (Hankir, 2018).

Methodology

This research attempts to investigate the escalation of paradoxical post-modern in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* by Ahmed Saadawi. The analysis will presumably examine how Saadawi employs repulsive imagery and the Frankenstein myth to symbolize the social, political, and existential concerns that afflict Iraqi society.

Saadawi's Frankenstein and Identity Enigma

Saadawi's "artistic and historical milieu is profoundly influenced by his Arabic heritage, a cultural heritage marked by a poetic sensibility and an abundance of narratives". However, his inspiration does not solely originate from "the Arabic tradition". Additionally, numerous Western authors have had a profound impact on him, including but not limited to "Borges and English and French fantasy writers such as H. G. Wells and Jules Verne" (Becker, 2018, 6). Saadawi asserts that his inspiration extends beyond Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and encompasses "the vast cultural space known as 'Frankenstein'" (Najjar, 2014). This implies that Saadawi was profoundly impacted by the enduring "influence of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and its overarching metaphorical significance, given his profound admiration for the 1994 film Frankenstein" (Hankir, 2018). Therefore,



Saadawi alludes to the Frankensteinian, despite the fact that the latter is intricately linked to the prevailing state of affairs in Iraq.

Frankenstein in Baghdad, which was published in 2013, the novel has undergone translation into numerous languages, and diverse facets of the narrative, including violence, grotesqueness, magical realism, dystopia, gothic, identity issues, double estrangement, and a comparison between Saadawi's text and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, have been the subject of dozens of studies, articles. Nevertheless, there remains ample opportunity to delve deeper into "the enigma of identity" beyond 2003, as it has yet to receive sufficient scholarly attention across multiple dimensions.

The Duality of Monsters in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Frankenstein in Baghdad is noteworthy that Saadawi's novel incorporates the Frankenstein motif for the first time in Arabic literature. In contrast, Saadawi's creature exhibits a novel aesthetic that sets it apart from Shelley's, specifically with regard to its inception and quest. However, they are united by a common motif retribution. The inception of "Dr. Frankenstein's monster" was purposeful and instigated by electrical shocks to the bolts fastening around his neck, motivated by "a sense of scientific achievement-based pride". In contrast, Hadi's monster's conception was fortuitous and artistically constructed with a surreal aesthetic, intended to provide "a proper burial" (Saadawi, 2018, 24). In summary, whereas the inspiration for "the original Frankenstein" stems from inquiry, Saadawi's *Whatsitsname* is an artifact of miracles.

Theoretical Approach

Based on the Lacanian psychoanalysis, the present study analyzes Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, in the context of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The novel illustrates binary oppositions, including good and evil, justice and revenge, peace and destruction, life and death, order and disorder, innocence and criminality, and truth and lies. It strives to challenge the limitations imposed by binary oppositions, demonstrating that chaos results in a state of violence and criminality where the notions of justice and "retribution become intertwined.

Psychological analysis emphasizes appearance, "or at the very least implies that meaning can be discerned in appearance throughout humans behaviour. According to Lacan, the distinction is undesirable because it is not discernible through ordinary experiences. The ideal concepts, including justice and truth, are especially elusive and susceptible to manipulation (Hartman vii-viii).



In the 1970s, American "Yale critics" applied these notions to a variety of literary works. Prominent detractors such as "Paul De Man, J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, and Harold Bloom" are members of this group. They propelled the discourse and widespread acceptance of humans performance by incorporating Zizek's ideas into the realm of art.

Essentially, Zizek clarifies the structure of Western society and thought is predicated on implicit assumptions that, while influencing meaning, also serve to restrict it. It would appear that these assumptions are self-evident truths that transcend in performance. As an example, the term "the human spirit," along with "God" and "consciousness," implies the existence of a transcendent force. The conviction that something possesses an external significance is called logocentrism. On the contrary to the logocentric perspective, Zizek argues that the absence of "extralinguistic presence" is precisely what generates meaning (Quinn 110).

A written work bestows an autonomous essence upon the text. Lacan perspective endeavors to illustrate the process by which a text disseminates itself, rather than revealing its hidden meaning. The given text contains no discernible significance. The transmission of meaning between texts is delayed. Traces of meaning are discernible in the comprehended work, and a (trained) reader is able to discern how these traces of meaning are either revealed or obscured, ultimately conveying meaning. Lacan asserts that the text can be interpreted as a system of signals, and that no extra-textual realities or extra-linguistic evidence existed to which it could be referred. There was nothing but a game of signals "over there" (Hendricks 2).

This interpretation would be predicated on a binary opposition in which one of the pairs is preferred over the other. In most cases, this binary opposition is a response to the text's ideological framework (or at least one of its ideological frameworks). Reviewing the binary opposition that underpins the reading would be the subsequent course of action: that is, identifying the ways in which the work's contradictory elements interact, or determining whether or not they are in fact, contradictory. One may consider the weaknesses "and limitations of the writer's proposed idea in this manner, whether consciously or unconsciously" (Tyson 262).

Sadaawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* offers significant material for deconstructive analysis due to its utilization of fantastical devices to address the social and political challenges in Iraq. The amalgamation of fantasy and reverberating reality in the novel fosters the development of binary oppositions, which establishes the link between the work's major themes. Therefore, when



considered collectively, the chapters “contained within this volume present an extensive array of viewpoints concerning psychoanalyst reading, Lacan, of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* approaches to in search of the cause of the forcefulness human behavior.

Character's Interaction in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Saadawi reimagines the Frankenstein monster in his work as an entity composed entirely of Iraqis who were murdered throughout Baghdad in 2005, when the city was on the precipice of a sectarian conflict. His novel provides a chilling depiction of Baghdad subsequent to the United States invasion. A multitude of vehicle bombs in the past emitted an odor reminiscent of plastic combustibles and charred human remains. As "they fly above" residences, Americans eat while being interrupted from their meals by the obnoxious roar "of Apache helicopters". Not only have a significant number of residents abandoned the city, but those who have remained are utterly isolated. Consequently, "the American occupation's" pledged justice materialized into a desolate desolation (Metz, 2018). Thus, in the novel, the primary motivation and rationale for the characters' actions are established through the wreckage and psychological devastation they endure.

Baghdad is in shambles as Hadi al-Attag, the Saadawi equivalent of Mary Shelley's Dr. Victor Frankenstein, inhabits the area. Hadi is an outspoken antiquities dealer whose irises bulge. His apparel is soiled to the point of odour and tarnished with cigarette burns. Hadi is frequently observed sipping ouzo, engaging in sexual relations with prostitutes, and scouring the city in search of antiquities to trade. A local coffee shop close to his residence is where he enjoys narrating exaggerated tales while residing in a deteriorating ruin of a house. In what manner does Hadi transform into the monstrous Dr. Frankenstein? Subsequent to recovering fragments of severed corpses discovered along the road, he proceeds to amass the remains of bombings and other violent acts as if they were priceless antiques. Evidently an artistic endeavor of some sort, he assembles the components into a functioning human body through the use of stitching; the organism subsequently comes to life (Metz 2018). This act of collecting human remains is a direct allusion to the mass graves that have accumulated in Iraq since the American invasion, which were the result of terrorist attacks and criminal activity.

For a psychological analysis of this novel, it is crucial to examine the binary framework upon which it was constructed. For example, the dichotomy of life and mortality forms a complex duality in the works of Shelley and Saadawi. The central themes of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* are carnage and the Abject, which comprise the majority of the narrative. In contrast to the original novel, which



depicts a scientist creating the beast in his laboratory, this somber retelling of Frankenstein features a monster created by a waste collector. Hadi Al-atag assembles human remains that have been deformed by daily bombings into a single body situated on the roof of a dilapidated house. The Iraqi Arabic term "shesma," which translates to what is its name (Jani 322), is the appellation given to this entity. A media analyst, Farid Shawaf is one of the most significant characters in the novel because he connects numerous plot points.

By offering commentary on the Imam's Bridge Event, a historical occurrence that transpired in 2005, he exposes the novel's fundamental themes. A monstrous act of terrorism resulted in the deaths of more than a thousand Shiite tourists on a Baghdad bridge after a warning of a suicidal terrorist incited a rampage that compelled many to jump:

"There is a single source of all security incidents and catastrophes that we are currently witnessing: terror. The bridge victims perished as a result of their irrational fear of death. Each day, we perish in awe of mortality. [...] There will be an increasing number of fatalities attributable to terrorism" (Frankenstein 137).

This illustrates that the conflict is driven by a profound sense of foreboding that has been magnified and transformed into a monstrous form. Saadawi posits that this monstrosity "is composed of components extracted from Iraqis belonging to various races, sects, and ethnicities," and thus "embodies the entirety of the Iraqi human race" (Saadawi, quoted in Jani 322). In other words, the 'what' sitsname' represents an exceptional instance of identity fusion.

In contrast, "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein introduces an entirely different creator and adopts an entirely different tone. As a result of his preoccupation with the sciences, particularly chemistry, biology, and philosophy, Victor Frankenstein created a humanoid creature, which he codenamed "terrifying" and "numerous infamous names. His concerns concern eternity, existence, and death. Frankenstein has harbored an insatiable curiosity regarding the realm of science since his thirteenth birthday. He engaged in thorough independent research in the natural sciences and meticulously read scientific works authored by Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paracelsus". Notably, while residing in a home near Belrive at the age of fifteen, he beheld an ominous thunderstorm raging from the Jura Hills as it approached during the night. In his words, the intensity, dread, and magnificence of the enormous tempest captivated his imagination:

Immediately following the cessation of the dazzling light, the oak vanished, leaving behind a charred remnant. Upon returning the following morning, we discovered the tree to be completely fractured.



The impact did not cause any splintering; rather, it completely reduced the wood to thin ribbons (Shelley 33).

Due to the scientific fervor of the time and this indelible experience, he decided to pursue studies and "research at the University of Ingolstadt under the supervision of distinguished scholars Waldman and Krempe. In contrast to Saadawi's account, the creature and its creator are" therefore situated in a zone that is both secure and even alluring, devoid of anything horrifying or unexpected (Mahmood 121).

Peace and war constitute the binary opposition that Saadawi's novel delves into as its second pair of opposites. By employing Gothic elements, the novel explores the repercussions of conflict and aims to depict the authentic context of the Iraq conflict, with a particular focus on Baghdad. Saadawi employs an intricate interpretation of the Frankenstein motif to scrutinize and comment on the fears, deeds, lifestyles, and ideologies of the inhabitants of postwar Baghdad. Saadawi emphasizes areas of the war and its aftermath through the use of a particular creature genre and setting" (Teggart 2). Although a work of fiction, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* draws inspiration from the actual invasion that occurred in Iraq. Despite the fact that the Ba'ath Regime inflicted anguish and pain upon hundreds, this city had always been vibrant and lovely; however, it lost those qualities in the post invasion period. The capital city has been marred by political and economic instability, religious conflicts, terrorist attacks, and explosions, which have claimed thousands of lives". The findings of an investigation entitled "Violent deaths of Iraqi civilians, 2003–2008: analysis by perpetrator, weapon, time, and location" indicate the following:

An analysis was conducted on the Iraq Body Count database, which comprised 92,614 direct fatalities of Iraqi civilians caused by armed violence between March 20, 2003 and March 19, 2008. Among these, 74% were attributed to unknown perpetrators (68,396), 12% to coalition forces (11,516), and 11% to anti-coalition forces (9,954)". (quoted in Hicks 1)

Sadaawi's novel amalgamates these numerical data points, catastrophic events involving random assaults and fatalities, into a singular, intricate figure that instills terror in its environs. By imbuing "this dramatic treatment of the futility and chance of death with significance, an effort was made to emphasize the gloomy nature of life in Iraq at the time.

As a result of the post-2003 transformation, the inhabitants of Baghdad ceased to envision a prosperous and enlightened existence characterized by advances in technology, civilization, and knowledge. The nation, historically recognized as a



critical incubator of human development and advancement, has been reduced to a labyrinth of destruction and disorder (Mahmood p; 121-122).

The novel existence is limited to the monster, its originator, and the individuals in the vicinity of said creator. The creature comes to terms with its anomaly subsequent to being abandoned mercilessly by both "his creator and" the individuals who behold him while on the prowl for him. Reflecting on its image, it inquires, "Was I then a monstrosity, a bluish dot on the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?" (Shelley 93). It is intriguing how the reader develops compassion for the creature as it acknowledges its physical imperfections and seeks solace in the forest. "Half-surprised by the novelty of these sensations, I allowed myself to be carried away by them; and daring to be happy, I forgot my isolation and deformity" (Shelley 8). As a result of this alienation, the creature goes in search of his progenitor and his family members; he disrupts the harmony that once surrounded them and entangles them all in a labyrinth of escapes as well as fatalities.

There is another significant duality, in Saadawi's novel, is between reality and fantasy. The appalling, actual violence that characterized Baghdad serves as the foundation for the realistic elements of *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. Saadawi stated in an interview that he intended for the novel to provide a unorthodox way to confront reality. The inclusion of fantasy imbues the work with a sense of levity, thereby alleviating its malevolence, he elaborated (as cited in Metz 2018). This is particularly evident for English-speaking viewers, who derive advantages from the inclusion of Whatsitsname, as it provides them with an escape from the limited portrayal of Iraq that is customary in the West and Europe (see Metz, 2018). Consequently, Saadawi utilizes tangible components from reality to represent the post-apocalyptic setting in this literary work (Alsaedi 12).

Similarly, the sense of fantasy is restrained in Shelley's works, appearing only in the monster's construction. The narration in Shelley's book is imbued with an unwavering realism.

Victor proceeds to recount his story, commencing with his opulent upbringing in Geneva amid his affluent family, progressing to his fervent interest in natural philosophy, culminating in his abhorrent invention of the monster and the subsequent calamitous consequences that ensued, as he attends university studying chemistry. The narrative of the creature is abruptly introduced to the reader as an effect of this convoluted structure. The concluding letters from Captain Walton to his sister serve to elaborate on the nested narrative (Nasr 10).

Safety and fear are portrayed critically in both novels. The initial sentences of *Frankenstein in Baghdad* induce readers with foreboding and fear. Saadawi



commences with the subsequent lamentable incident, a recurring occurrence in Baghdad. It accurately portrays a nation in a state of distress characterized by terror, death, explosions, hysteria, and despair. It represents the very essence of malevolence that permeates the world. Elishva, also referred to "as Umm Daniel or Daniel's mother, boarded the bus precisely two minutes prior to the detonation. Everyone on the bus turned around to see what had transpired and was horrified to see the corpses on fire. Automobiles collided with one another or entered the center reserve as youths hurried to the detonation site. As they were deluged with vehicle horns and individuals shouting, the motorists were terrified and bewildered (Saadawi 5). Saadawi's literary creations adeptly encapsulate the profound dread that ensues when all is in disarray and disarray (Alsaedi 12-13).

In Sadaawi's works, fear is employed to bolster the fantastical elements and enhance the realism of the narrative. The novel's monstrous figure is perpetually shrouded in peril and dread, which causes characters to avoid it and compels readers to emphasize its presence in every scene. Fear is not initially introduced in Shelley's novel; rather, it is introduced in the midst of the narrative, when the creature is created and abandoned. Frankenstein dashes into the streets after abandoning and discarding his creation, while the creature, he created escapes into the woods and disappears. Frankenstein's aberrant mastery of forbidden knowledge, produces natural & unavoidable consequences, as depicted by Shelley. Nevertheless, with increasing rejection and agony, the monster develops a sense of self-pity and begins to question the injustice to which it is subjected (Shelley, 1993, 169). It declares, "I, the miserable and abandoned, am an abortion, to be despised, kicked, and trampled." He declares vengeance after abandoning his creator and the opportunity to discover love or acceptance. Henry Clerval, Frankenstein's closest companion, is fatally struck by the creature, and Elizabeth, Frankenstein's beloved cousin and spouse, is also taken from her on the eve of his wedding (Nasr 11-12). As retribution for these atrocities motivates Victor to commence an actual & relentless pursuit of the creature in an effort to put an end to its evil.

An additional pair of binary opposites results from the monster's pursuit of Frankenstein: subjective justice and injustice. Saadawi stated, in an interview, "[The body] is composed of various organs extracted from Iraqis of different races, sects, and ethnicities." As the narrative unfolds, it becomes apparent to the audience that upon regaining consciousness, the body undertakes a monumental vengeful mission eradicating each malevolent individual held accountable "for the murder of the body's intrinsic components (Nasr 17). Because justice had to be done here on earth, with witnesses present (Saadawi 83), the Whatsitsname, which is inhabited by the guard's spirit, begins murdering for retribution and justice.



Surprisingly, as soon as it begins to slaughter malevolent individuals, body parts begin to detach and rot. Moreover, to accomplish its honorable mission and reassemble the fragmented parts, it will be necessary to execute a greater number of culpable individuals and acquire spare parts (Saadawi 150).

In Saadawi, the biomedical imaginary is portrayed as a nightmare reflection that is, a fantastical fabric of medical thought and innovation that was woven together by military forces during the Iraqi civil war. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* depicts the conflict as a catalyst for a recurring pattern of debilitating violence. Saadawi's novel showcases an inventive imagination that breathes life into inanimate body parts, thereby presenting a medical fantasy. Nevertheless, this medical fantasy is overshadowed by the obscene nature of the conflict (Webster, 2018, 439). The fantastical concept of medical fabrication by the brilliant scientist Victor Frankenstein is also explored in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Victor investigates biological & natural phenomena with the goal of regenerating the human organism. Additionally, the Frankenstein creature is composed of numerous human elements. Despite his abhorrent outward appearance, he is incapable of evading the fundamental human requirement for affection.

Numerous literary scholars hold the opinion that Shelley crafted the piece as a cautionary anthology, highlighting the potential repercussions of scientific inquiry taken too far (Lee, 2018). In this case, it isn't science per se that poses a threat; rather, it is the application of science for the menial gratification of human curiosity, lacking any genuine noble intention.

In both novels, purpose and aimlessness are fundamental to the monster's actions. In Shelley's novel, it is Victor who imparts life and purpose to the creature. However, in Saadawi's novel, it is Hadi, the refuse trader, who does not bestow life or purpose upon the Whatsitsname. The situation does indeed become clear-cut when the Whatsitsname meets the widow Elishva. Upon encountering the Whatsitsname at her residence, she becomes convinced that Daniel, her presumed abducted son from her during the conflict, has returned to her.

The Whatsitsname seeks vengeance against the barber who urged Daniel to go to war after hearing her account. The Whatsitsname begins to attend to the distinct stories of the other components that were utilized in his construction. The Whatsitsname undergoes a metamorphosis into a Middle Eastern Erinye, driven by retribution against his mistresses. Therefore, his *raison d'être* is comparable to that of Shelley's Monster in that he is willing to do anything to achieve interior peace (Lee, 2018). The progressive transformation of both monsters into vengeful ones demonstrates that the bestowal of life itself cannot be considered a 'gift' when an individual is formed in an environment that instills within them anguish and dread.



Both authors use this to critique their respective "social contexts; Mary Shelley and Sadaawi both depict the depravity of their respective social realities. Consequently, their monsters are driven solely by personal vengeance and not by altruistic intentions.

The concept of innocence of body, mind, spirit, and conduct is not only called into question in Saadawi's work, but it is also viciously assaulted. The Whatsitsname transitions from innocent civilian protection to homicide for additional body parts. The notion of adhering to a single correct perspective is progressively distorted. In the contemporary world, binaries are seldom discussed. Gender & ethnicity are just two examples of concepts that the global community has come to reject as black & white. However, occasionally it remains a practical method for identifying the construction of objects. The narrative by Saadawi examines how humanity perceives, organizes, and values itself in accordance with dichotomies, including "good/evil," "black/white," "Muslim/Christian," "East/West," "wrong/right," and "liberal/democrat," among others.

The author employs a grotesque depiction of death & war to illustrate these contradictions in order to convey to readers that irrespective of their stance, all individuals involved in warfare are losers and criminals. This is exemplified by the fact that the titular character, Whatsitsname, ultimately orchestrates its own demise (Lee, 2018). Sadaawi, the author, has adeptly established a connection between these facets of civil service in Iraq & Mary Shelley's novel and monster, both of which were created and published centuries ago in a distinct society. Nevertheless, the correlation and parallels between these two novels made this analysis possible, demonstrating how deconstructive reading can illuminate the intricacy of intertextual compositions.

Conclusion

Frankenstein in Baghdad by Saadawi is a contemporary retelling of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. Beyond that, he augments the philosophical underpinnings "of Shelley's work with an excessive amount of violence and political ramifications, thereby solely modifying the novel's setting. The novel employs binary opposites to illustrate the themes that revolve around the narrative, while also highlighting the notable parallels between the works of Saadawi & Shelley. Nevertheless, both novels achieve a specific goal through the creation of the creature. As Lacan illustrates about the idea of the Other throughout his inquiry, Whereas Shelley's intent was to caution against the perils of scientific endeavors, Saadawi's story serves as a caution against the repercussions of conflict. Moreover, Saadawi presents an account of the Iraqi conflict and its subsequent



repercussions that are distinct from the depictions prevalent in Western media. Saadawi, in contrast to the narratives that depict an American hero or European savior rescuing helpless victims with ultimate triumph and happiness, emphasizes the suffering, devastation, and death that this 'hero' inflicts while rescuing a single victim through narrative's backdrop. Shelley's work has been incorporated into Sadaawi's work in numerous ways. Additionally, he incorporated real-life occurrences in Iraq to enhance the authenticity of his novel as it dealt with political and social issues in Iraq. Equally significant is the fragmented appearance of his body, which is literally composed of various body parts from various individuals; this may represent the critical necessity for unity in Iraq.

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