

**The Monster Unleashed: Iraq's Horrors of Everyday Life in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*****Hani Elayyan**

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**Abstract**

This paper analyzes *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, the winner of the 2014 International Arabic Fiction Prize by Iraqi novelist Ahmed Saadawi. I argue that by borrowing the story of Mary Shelley's monster in *Frankenstein*, Saadawi manages to pinpoint the roots of the terrorism that has plagued Iraq since the American occupation. Terrorism emanates from fear. Fear is the monster that has been unleashed by the collapse of central authority which resulted in what Judith Butler has called 'a precarious life' in which sudden and violent death is always looming. In addition, the struggle for power among the new players in the Iraqi scene leads to selfishness, demagoguery, and exploitation. The novel stresses the need to acknowledge that no one is free of blame. By acknowledging that that nobody is purely a victim or a victimizer, and by taking responsibility for one's deed, there might be hope for a way out of the horrors of the civil strife and carnage.

**Key Words:** Arabic fiction, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, Saadawi, Terrorism in Iraq

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