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Reactions to Gulf War I and Gulf War II in American and Iraqi Cinema and Theatre: The Quest for a Global Utopia

Tajaddin Salahaddin Noori
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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Reactions to Gulf War I and Gulf War II in American and Iraqi Cinema and Theatre:
The Quest for a Global Utopia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies

by

Tajaddin Salahaddin Noori
University of Tikrit
Bachelor of Education in English Language and Literature, 2001
University of Tikrit
Master of Arts in English Literature and American Drama, 2005

May 2020
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

M. Keith Booker, Ph.D.
Dissertation Director

Les Wade, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Frank Scheide, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Abstract

Many American and Iraqi cultural reactions to Gulf War I and Gulf War II, including the texts selected for this study, expressed the dystopian consequences of these wars. However, this study focuses on exploring the utopian dimensions of the selected texts and investigates how these texts attempt to reconcile both sides of the conflict and produce visions toward a global utopia. Significantly, this study represents the visions toward a global utopia as a series of visions toward oneness. That is, oneness of human beings over otherness, oneness of different nation states under one global community, and oneness of cultural productions' utopian visions beyond all ideological differences. To do that, this study uses Fredric Jameson's dialectical approach of ideological and utopian analysis that he suggests in his book *The Political Unconscious*. This study discusses three American and three Iraqi cultural texts' political reactions to the Gulf Wars. The cultural texts are movies and plays produced by Hollywood and independent companies. The American cultural texts are *Three Kings* directed by David O. Russell, *The Situation* directed by Philip Haas, and *An Identified Enemy* written by Max Bush. The Iraqi cultural texts are *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds* directed by Amer Alwan, *Ambulance Driver*, directed by Hadi Mahood, and *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* written by Abdul Razaq Al-Rubai. Besides explaining the ideological constraints of their ruling classes, this study also explores these texts' utopian impulses. It illustrates that these texts envision borderless brotherhood, one global family, nonracial love, and denationalization as visions toward a global utopia. They also suggest these visions as alternatives to many status quos dominated by sociopolitical and socioeconomic strategies of capitalism, totalitarianism, nationalism, and the extreme perspectives of terrorism. Intrinsicly, this study will show that the selected texts express visions with both futuristic and cosmopolitan aspects. They embody distinguished projects toward eliminating clashes or confrontations among human beings because

of national, racial, religious, and economic contentions. In short, this study will show that the selected texts produce utopian visions offering a movement toward a universal peace and a peaceful universe.

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My wife and my kids, the sources of unlimited hope and love, thank you so much for your endurance and patience during the separation.

Last, but not least, my mother and my siblings, the sources of unlimited sympathy and kindness, thank you all.

Dedication

To memories of the immortal dwellers of Paradise

My father (Salahaddin) and my brother (Yaacob), who were killed together in a terrorist attack in Iraq in 2017, have everlasting peace and rest in heaven.

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INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UTOPIA AND GLOBALIZATION

No society has existed in the history of humanity without utopian visions. A utopian vision has a universal existence. Utopian visions toward having a peaceful life and a perfect world have started to exceed geographical borders and cultural specification with the rise of globalization. Utopian visions restricted to imagining an exceptional life for a particular nation or human beings living in a specific region have been replaced by utopian visions looking for a perfect life beyond borders and more fitting for the whole of humanity. Significantly, the world's multi-cultures, despite some differences, begin to maintain a movement from local dreams to universal ones and attempt to gain more unity and strength with the process of globalization. Without such a process, the world's multi-cultures and their utopias would remain in a state of isolation, continuous contest, and lack universal visions. Thus, globalization succeeds to widen the scope of utopia and redirect its visions.

Utopia and globalization have revolutionary impulses. They appeared as reactions against the restrictions of geopolitical traditions. They have unending missions and unlimited visions. Utopia deploys globalization to update its visions and to unite the world's multi social dreams against dystopian realities which expand quickly to every corner on this planet. At an equal rate, globalization looks for a world with alternative sociopolitical and socioeconomic policies in which human beings can express their cultural differences, practice their political activities, and exchange their economic productions without any kind of hurdles. In this way, utopia and globalization express a sense of dissatisfaction with the world's status quo and motivate human beings to envision nonexistent sociopolitical systems or, at least, to imagine how to improve the existing ones.

DEFINING GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon with multi aspects resistant to all kinds of reductionism. In other words, globalization is a complicated web consisting of many economic, social, and cultural factors which extend beyond geopolitical boundaries. The rise of the contemporary forms and functions of globalization can be attributed to the collapse of the European Empires at the end of World War II. Globalization intends to confront all nation states' powers which are based on political restrictions and national priorities. Salvatore Babones states that in the academic field, globalization has three main divisions: economic globalization, political globalization, and cultural globalization (145). Economic globalization refers to the massive transfer of capital, commodity, and labor among all continents of the globe. Political globalization refers to the rise of nongovernmental organizations which work beyond the nation states' interests and powers. Cultural globalization refers to the cultural integration and spread of cultural productions beyond borders.

That said, globalization has cultural, political, and economic aspects. Capitalism is the main aspect of globalization but not the only one. In addition to the economic aspect, globalization also has political and cultural aspects. Capitalism has succeeded so far to achieve economic benefits by crossing the multiple nation states' borders. Globalization facilitates the movement of capital and commodity from one nation to another. It intends to change the whole world into one global market and the whole humanity to either its customers or labors. In this sense, globalization succeeds to exceed geopolitical limits to guarantee the ultimate goals of capitalism. Further, globalization also has political and cultural aspects. Even though these aspects are marginalized, they are, in fact, as important as economic aspects. Globalization urges cultural exchanges and communications among multiple cultures. It breaks cultural isolation and

leaves no culture or cultural production in isolation. Moreover, globalization also increases human beings' awareness of the status quo and makes them realize that the world's current political system leads the world toward separation rather than unification. As a result, the necessity of replacing the world system or deconstructing its power becomes one of the top priorities of globalization. Ultimately, achieving capitalist benefit is not the absolute goal of globalization. Motivating cultural exchange and the establishment of counter powers are other goals of globalization.

The introduction of this dissertation will represent globalization and its aspects in a dialectical approach. This approach will be explained in chapter one with details. However, it will be important to refer to the dialectical approach very briefly here. Theorists and scholars adopt the dialectical approach as a method to discuss any subject or/ and theme within a series of multiple contradictions. Scholars display contradicting attitudes in discussing globalization. Some scholars represent gloomy visions of globalization's economic, cultural and political aspects. However, a few scholars draw optimistic portraits of the achievement of globalization by exploring the best accomplishment in political and cultural aspects of globalization. As a result, the introduction of this dissertation will discuss the utopian and dystopian energies in these aspects of globalization dialectically with special focus on the utopian energies in the cultural and political aspects of globalization before moving to discuss visions toward a global utopia, the essential argument of this dissertation.

DYSTOPIAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

For many decades, globalization was reduced to economic competition of capitalism and different repercussions of colonization. Many scholars have pessimistic perspectives on globalization. They view capitalism as the essential derive of globalization because globalization

narrows the local productions of the nation states and facilitates overseas mobilities of labors and productions. In *Manifesto of The Communist Party*, Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels identified the exploitive nature of capitalism. They reported that

[I]t has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. (12-13)

At the economic level, globalization improves capitalism. It threatens local productions continuously and makes them unreliable and unproductive without overseas materials.

Globalization provides capitalism with enough opportunities to monopolize the world's wealth and establish an economic gap between nation states. Thus, capitalism manipulates globalization to create an unfair economic competition and leads to a global economic instability.

The economic aspect of globalization maintains the growth of violence and terrorism. It leads to the growth of the industries of weapons and increases illegal trade in weapons. Economic globalization creates wars between nation states and intranational organizations whose members cannot be defeated easily. In other words, globalization creates wars between the regular armies of the nation states and members of violent organizations who plan to transfer violence beyond the borders of the nation states. David Held and Anthony McGrew combine globalization, criminalization, and commercialization together. They believe that illegal weapons merchandises, such as the Triads and Al-Qaeda are related to each other. They trade in weapons illegally and intend to establish a powerful terrorism able to threaten the world's security.

Notably, the members of global terrorism organization and the criminal merchandise function in

the shadow of economic globalization. They manipulate the sources of globalization and the media it uses, such as the internet and social media, in order to reach their targets. As a result, the local violence on the streets of world's big cities can be related to criminal groups beyond the national borders. In brief, economic globalization plays a fundamental role in creating dystopian realities. It supplies criminals and terrorists with new strategies of attack and the weapons they need illegally. It gives terrorism and violence a global dimension and makes committing a crime or a terrorist operation around the globe much easier than before. This dystopian aspect of economic globalization will be important in my dissertation because it will represent capitalism as a dystopian aspect of economic globalization and the visions toward a global utopia as counter visions or alternative to economic globalization.

Additionally, on the cultural and political levels, globalization melts the cultural differences, and national interests. Globalization intends to create a homogeneous world by breaking a lot of particularities, such as the inherited differences of cultures, historical beliefs of religions, and many interests of nation states. It looks for a world characterized with one culture, one religion, and one priority at the expense of traditional individualism. It easily breaks the attempts of all individual or groups who try to resort to cultural specification and makes them look irrelevant. For this reason, holding tight to a cultural tradition or a value becomes very challenging in the era of globalization.

Globalization effects negatively local decisions and national interests of the nation states. Nation states no longer take a local and a national resolution alone. Claus Offe states that the global politics and economy now participates in redefining the nation states' decisions more than before. The nation states' decisions shaped by quasi-regional or quasi-supranational organizations, such as the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and the European

Union (EU). They have notable effects on the national governments' decisions. Therefore, a government in a nation state is no longer able to distinguish between what is good and what is bad for its citizens (Held and McGrew 179). This aspect of globalization put nation states' local interests and decisions in critical situations. Hence, globalization, at cultural and political levels, has been considered an essential source of dystopia because the cultures lost their dissimilarities, and the nation states their independencies. After all, globalization, from dystopian dimensions, creates a world threatened with invisible enemies, elusive terrorism, instable economy, and uneven distribution of both natural and human resources. However, these features of globalization will not hide the utopian aspects of globalization. Dialectically speaking, these aspects of globalization, especially the political and cultural aspects which will be at the core of this dissertation's argument, also have utopian impulses. For this reason, they deserve stopping.

UTOPIAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

Economic aspects or capitalism should not be considered exclusively as a globalization of evil.

Capitalism is not completely an absolute source of destructiveness. Through globalization, capitalism succeeded to achieve significant development and transformation in the world.

Besides highlighting the dystopian aspects of globalization, Marx and Engels also highlighted the utopian dimensions in the economic aspect of globalization or capitalism. They believed that capitalism

has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West. (13)

In this sense, the economic aspect of globalization or capitalism becomes a global source of civilization and urbanization. It increased urban cities and decreased the primitive towns. It has

established a typical connection between different parts of one society as well as different parts of the world. However, this aspect will represent a departure in my dissertation because the dissertation will mainly focus on exploring utopian energies in cultural and political aspects of globalization.

That said, globalization opens optimistic scopes for humanity in political awareness and cultural exchanges. It unites the human beings around the globe against unjust actions and unexpected crises and opens the world's diverse cultures to each other. Politically, globalization critiques the political performances of the nation states' administrations and motivates the establishment of intragovernmental organizations. In other words, it threatens the power of the nation states' and establishes many intragovernmental organizations with global visions, such as EU, UN, United Nations Developing Program (UNNDP), Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), UNCIEF, and UNESCO, to mention a few. Significantly, these organizations, from Manfred Steger's perspectives, intend to fight demonization of nations and deconstruct the nationalism. They reject the division of human beings on the bases of 'us' and 'them'. They focus on human beings' relatedness and deny reducing them to their national identity. In this sense, globalization does not intend to break the lines of demarcation only, but also to melt human beings' mental and conceptual borders which make human beings believe blindly in such borders (*Globalization*, 56-57).

Furthermore, the political aspect of globalization also intends to detach human beings from their traditional priorities such as nationalism, heroism, and particularism. It considers such traditions as the main triggers of racism, conflict, and misconception on the local and global levels. Regarding this aspect, globalization has utopian dimensions. It deconstructs the nation states' apparatuses and attempts to impel them to work toward humanity beyond nationality. To

say it differently, at the political level, globalization intends to change such apparatuses' targets from focusing on the principles of nationality to the principles of humanity. Interestingly, Held and McGrew mention that these intragovernmental organizations develop many important strategies, such as:

1. Influencing public attitudes, interests, and identities.
2. Redefining the agendas of local, national, and global politics.
3. Providing communities and citizens with channels to global and regional decision-making forums.
4. Exercising moral, spiritual or technical authority. (154)

In other words, these organizations embody utopian dimensions. They achieve a groundbreaking influence on local and global levels. They could orient a lot of growing generation around the world to think of global concerns.

The cultural aspect of globalization intends to unite the world's diverse cultures and creates cultural integration. In other words, cultural aspect of globalization bridges the world's different cultures through their cultural productions and leaves no culture in isolation. It creates a state of homogeneity and interconnectedness among the world's cultures. From this aspect, globalization maintains a movement toward a utopian culture. It creates most fitting circumstances for the world's cultures to communicate with each other. Adam and Carfagna report that globalization turns the world into a cultural melting pot. For example, the television network MTV starts to have an unprecedented international effect. More than four hundred million viewers from one hundred nation states subscribe to MTV. Significantly, many countries use MTV for their own local uses. For instance, Indonesia uses it to call to a prayer in Islam, Japan utilizes it for tutoring in technological programs, and Italy for many shows on cooking. At

the same time, American fast food restaurants such as, Macdonald's and KFC influence many fast food restaurants around the world. Interestingly, the restaurants of Macdonald's and KFC beyond American borders edit their menus to fulfill the local needs and desires. In India, Macdonald restaurants offer their local customers lamb with many vegetarian sandwiches. In Germany, they offer Big Macs with beer. In France, they offer wine with Danone fruit yogurts and the French local drink Orangina. In Egypt, the Macdonald's restaurants offer falafel and serve MacFalafel sandwich. Equally, KFC offers rice in Indonesia and follows Islamic nutrition. In Chile, it offers sandwiches of avocado (34).

Since globalization is not a one-way street, the world culture has also influenced western and American cultures. Henry Jenkins states that the Japanese card game, Pokemon, led to a fury in American schools. Indian practices of yoga and meditation spread to the West. Moreover, the Indian film industry, Bollywood, became famous in a very short time and affected many film industries globally, especially American and British industries. Furthermore, many American TV productions such as *Big Brother*, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, and *Survivor* are adapted from international TV series. Many popular movies, such as *The Grudge*, *Shall We Dance*, and *The Ring* are versions of Japanese movies, while *Vanilla Sky* is originally a Spanish science fiction film (Adams and Carfagna, 34-35). In this way, globalization succeeds to maintain cultural collaborations and exchange among different cultures. It makes integration essential aspect in the movement toward a global culture. Significantly, the cultural integration makes it clear that cultures cannot be developed in isolation and they complete each other. The world's cultural integration also indicates that globalization cannot be attributed to American culture. Globalization is something as wide as the globe itself and it should not be restricted to one culture only, such as American culture. In other words, this aspect of globalization affirms that

globalization allows cultures to influence each other rather than one particular culture influences the world's multiple cultures.

At an equal rate, cultural globalization leads to the rise of many multicultural institutions which integrate cultures. Under cultural aspect of globalization, Hollywood has grown to be one of the most effective institutions of multiculturalism featured with cultural integration. A project of Suny Levin institution, "*Globalization and Culture*," reports that no one should consider Hollywood as an absolute American institution because it is based on assimilating aspects from different cultures, and it has many movies adapted from foreign films and cultures. To mention a few, the American movie *The Departed* is based on the Chinese film *Infernal Affairs*, *The Tourist* is an adaptation of the French film *Anthony Zimmer*, and the Swedish TV series the *Millennium Trilogy* was the main inspiration of the movie *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Additionally, Hollywood also has many film companies, producers, and actors who are not American. Twentieth Century Fox, which is in the process of being acquired by Disney in 2019, and the Columbia Tristar belong to Australia's News Corporation (6). At the same time, there are many Hollywood famous actors who are not Americans, such as, Anthony Daniels from Britain, Jackie Chan from China, and Stellan Skarsgård from Sweden, to mention a few. In this way, under such circumstances, globalization offers many utopian impulses. It produces unlimited integration through cultural productions. It opens different cultures to each other and initiates a movement toward a global culture. Rather than contesting or excluding certain cultures, globalization gives all cultures a chance to include and complete one other.

Significantly, this aspect is also noted in the cultural texts selected for this dissertation. For example, David O. Russell relied on some Iraqi and Arab cast to represent the role of the Iraqis in the movie, *Three Kings* such as Ali Alkindi, Haider Alkindi, Khalid Mustafa, and many

others. Philip Haas also used many Arab cast in his movie *The Situation* such as Mido Hamada, Omar Berdouni, Driss Roukhe, and many others. Additionally, Hadi Mahood used the Tunisian star Hayat Herzy to act the role of the American soldier, Jessica Lynch in his movie *Ambulance Driver*. The director Amer Alwan relied on many French producers in producing his movie *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds*, such as François Rabbath, Tomasz Cichawa, Joëlle Alauzet, and Marc-Andre Brunet. At the same time, James Al-Shamma, the Assistant Professor of Theatre at Belmont University, and Amir Al-Azraki, the Iraqi-Canadian Assistant Professor of the theatre at the University of Waterloo, participated in translating Abdul Razaq al Rubai's play *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* and many contemporary Iraqi plays after 2003. Furthermore, the American playwright Max Bush used an interview that Al-Arabiya channel did with the terrorist Shehadeh Jawhar (Abo Omar) as the main plot in his play *An Identified Enemy* and divided the interview into many scenes in his play. Thus, the cultural aspect of globalization plays an important role in bringing many cultures close to each other and unites their similar attitudes against war, violence, and misconception. It enhances a mutual understanding between many cultures. All considered, the optimistic visions of globalization and its utopian dimensions create a quest for a global utopia.

THE AIMS OF THIS DISSERTATION

There is no study comparing utopian visions in American and Iraqi studies after the Gulf wars. Some studies found focusing on ideological limitations and utopian visions in just one culture. In *Anti-War Theatre After Brecht: Dialectical Aesthetics in the Twenty-First Century*, Lara Stevens identifies the ideological projects and utopian impulses in six Western mainstream plays *Homebody/Kabul* and *Only We Who Guard the Mystery Shall be Unhappy* by Tony Kushner, *Le*

Dernier Caravansérail by Hélène Cixous, *Iraq.doc* and *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza* by Caryl Churchill, and Elfriede Jelinek's *Bambiland*. In his unpublished dissertation, *Disaster's Culture of Utopia after 9/11 and Katrina: Fiction, documentary, Memorial*, Joseph Donica explores how several fictional narratives, documentaries and memoirs contained utopian perspectives counter to neoliberal outlooks following the 11/9 attacks. Furthermore, in "Iraqi' cinema since the US-led invasion of 2003," Terri Ginsberg argues that the Iraqi cinematic productions between 1950s-1970s focused on nationalism and Arabism more than they did after the Iraq War in 2003.

My dissertation will define the visions toward a global utopia. It will counter reducing globalization to capitalism and project a political relationship between a utopia and globalization beyond the benefits of capitalism. It will represent a global utopia as a series of visions toward communication and cooperation among human beings beyond their national interests and financial drives. At the same time, this dissertation will find out how American and Iraqi cultural texts challenge the limits of their dominant ideologies and produce visions which offer a movement toward a global utopia.

This dissertation will mainly apply Fredric Jameson's dialectical hermeneutics of ideological and utopian analysis that he recommends in *The Political Unconscious*. It will explore ideological confinements versus visions toward a global utopia in six cultural texts produced as reactions to the Gulf War I and Gulf War II¹. The selected texts are three American and three Iraqi texts. They are movies and playscripts. The Iraqi cultural texts are *Zaman: The*

¹ Gulf War I will be used in my dissertation to refer the American war against Iraq in 1991, or what was called "the Operation of Desert Storm." Gulf War II will be used to refer to the American war against Iraq in 2003, or what was called "the Iraq War".

Man from the Reeds directed by Amer Alwan, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* written by Abdul Razaq Al-Rubai, and *Ambulance Driver*, directed by Hadi Mahood. The American texts are *Three Kings* directed by David O. Russell, *An Identified Enemy* written by Max Bush, and *The Situation* directed by Philip Haas. The selected cultural texts are antiwar works. They attack American and Iraqi dominant ideologies for causing the Gulf Wars and the rise of many radical groups and political tensions thereafter. As a result, rejecting radicalism, absolutism, and imperialism are the main political stances of the selected texts. Discussing these texts under such political stances will not ignore uncovering their advocating consciously or unconsciously the perspectives of their dominant ideologies. As a result, this dissertation will discuss the selected texts dialectically². It will introduce these texts as syntheses of the thesis, ideology, and the antithesis, utopia. It will represent containments of the dominant ideologies as the main problems in these texts and their impulses toward a global utopia as their alternative solutions.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS DISSERTATION

This dissertation is composed of four main chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one will define the main visions toward a global utopia. It will represent the visions toward a global utopia as visions aiming toward uniting all utopian visions from different cultures and directing them toward building a new world characterized with fairness and free from all cultural, religious, and national identities. These visions aim to unite human beings beyond such factors of differences and divisions. In other words, this chapter will represent the visions toward a global utopia as refusing radicalism, totalitarianism, imperialism, and capitalism. The visions toward a global

² Jameson's dialectical approach of ideological and utopian analysis will be discussed in chapter one.

utopia project a universal community based on equality and unity. This chapter will also define the dominant ideology and utopian impulses and how they are expressed in the selected cultural texts. Then, it will represent these aspects within Jameson dialectical approach or double hermeneutics of ideological and utopian analysis. Jameson considers the ideological analysis as “negative hermeneutics” since it focuses on exploring how a cultural text supports a certain status quo, and the utopian analysis as “positive hermeneutics” because it focuses on exploring how a cultural text challenges its status quo and produces utopian visions beyond its ideological limits (291-292). Thus, Jameson’s theoretical approach will be my dissertation’s main theoretical framework in the following chapters.

Chapter two will represent the visions toward a global utopia versus totalitarianism and capitalism in two movies produced as reactions to Gulf War I, *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds*, and *Three Kings*. This chapter will show that *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds* reflects the main perspectives of Saddam’s regime. It represents the era of Saddam’s regime as an era of free worshipping and coexistence. It depicts Iraqi Shiite performing their religious rituals freely, and the Christians’ worshipping places as well protected under Saddam’s regime. In this way, the movie supports the status quo under Saddam’s regime and represents the regime as an ideal protector of different Iraqi ethnicities and their coexistence. However, at the utopia level, the movie critiques the regime’s sociopolitical and socioeconomic strategies after Gulf War I for turning Iraqi cities, especially Baghdad, into awful cities. Then, the movie represents Iraqi Marshlands as a utopian land and as an alternative to Iraqi cities which have been completely ignored by the regime. It depicts the Marshlands as surrounded with many natural elements and its residents developing significant social ties with each other. At the same time, the movie represents many parts of this area as under the threats of capitalism and totalitarianism. The

movie indirectly reveals that Saddam's regime drained parts of Iraqi Marshlands and the rest are under the threats of a coming war, Gulf War II. As a result, the movie calls its audience to revolt against both systems together to preserve Iraqi Marshlands from further destruction. In this way, the movie develops a vision toward a global utopia.

This chapter will also identify the ideological limits and utopian impulses in *Three Kings*. At the ideological level, the movie represents the Iraqi soldiers as thieves stealing Kuwaiti gold bullions, and the American Army as imposing order and peace. The movie praises the role of American Army in returning that gold to Kuwait. In this sense, the movie represents the American Army as the only peacemakers and supports the dominant ideology's desire of changing the American Army into an international police force. However, the movie also challenges these ideological limits at the utopian level. It relates Gulf War II to the United States' capitalistic projects. It relates the war to securing oil prices rather than securing human rights. Significantly, the movie creates an important unity between the Iraqi rebels and Archie Gates', (George Clooney) crew. They could establish a unique togetherness beyond the dominant confinements. Hence, this chapter will show that these movies have visions toward a global utopia because they express a vision toward preserving human beings and ecology from the destructive power of capitalism and the brutal forces of totalitarianism.

Chapter two will represent visions toward a global utopia versus terrorism and the "the war on terrorism" in two plays: *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*, and *An Identified Enemy*. In the *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*, the analysis will focus on exploring how the play unconsciously supports the perspectives of al-Qaeda which became a dominant power in the west of Iraq between 2004-2007. For this reason, at the ideological level, the play represents al-Qaeda as the prevailing power. It depicts Ziyad and three members of al-Qaeda in Iraq as troubling the United

States' Army and the civilians without being defeated or captured. The play also represents the American forces and the Iraqis in the west of Iraq as unable to confront al-Qaeda. It excludes the role of the American forces and the Iraqi local tribes who minimized al-Qaeda's operations there dramatically. In this way, the play supports al-Qaeda's domination. However, the play attempts to challenge the radical perspectives of al-Qaeda with visions toward a global utopia. It creates an alternative relationship between Ziyad's mother, and an American soldier placed on their roof for surveillance. The play also establishes a significant interaction between Ziyad's sister and American troops beyond the radical regulations of al-Qaeda.

The second part of this chapter will focus on discussing ideological limits and utopian visions in *An Identified Enemy*. At the ideological level, the analysis will argue that the play defines al-Qaeda members in Iraq within the dominant ideology's definition of terrorists. It shows that the war on terrorism leading to a gradual betterment of security in Iraq and relates the Iraqi national soccer team's winning of Asian Cup in 2007 to the war on terrorism. However, the play also challenges these views with visions toward a global utopia. It critiques the dominant ideology's accusation of Iraq as having ties with terrorism. It establishes a unique friendship between Jalil, an Iraqi civilian, and Jamie, an American soldier, elevated a brotherhood after Jalil saves Jamie from a deadly explosion in Baghdad. Significantly, the play adopts this friendship as an alternative to the state of antagonism between both sides of the conflict. The play also uses the imaginative brotherhood between Jalil and Jamie as a ground for an alternative relationship between the United States and many countries in the Middle East which started to facilitate the movements of many terrorists toward Iraq. All considered, both plays could generate significant visions toward a global utopia. They intend to unite both sides of the conflict as members of one global family.

Chapter three will discuss the visions toward a global utopia versus nationalism in two movies produced after Gulf War II, *Ambulance Driver*, and *The Situation*. The first movie supports the new Iraqi dominant ideology which started to dominate the Iraqi sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions after the withdrawal of the United States' Army from Iraq in 2011. It repeats this ideology's perspectives toward Saddam's regime by representing it as a totalitarian regime. It shows how the regime exploited many ideological apparatuses in Iraq, especially during Gulf War II, in order to guarantee its continuity in power. The movie also expresses the dominant ideology's demonization of the United States' invasion of Iraq and its policy toward Iraq. It represents the continuity of resisting the role of the United States in Iraq even after the withdrawal of its forces as a national loyalty. However, the movie attempts to challenge this ideological perspective. It establishes an imaginative relationship between an Iraqi ambulance driver, a member in Iraqi Republican Guards, and the American soldier, Jessica, beyond national evaluation. It shows the ambulance driver and the Republican Guard's member refusing to follow a national command which compels them to kill Jessica for being an American soldier. At the end, these characters could establish a different interaction beyond the limits of their national evaluations.

The Situation also produces equal visions toward a global utopia. At the ideological level, the movie represents the American soldiers working hard to rebuild the Iraqi city, Samarra, socially and economically. It displays them building a children's hospital, a water treatment facility in the city, and trying to find good guys to run the governing council of Samarra. Then, the movie equates these soldiers' actions in Iraq with nationality. However, at the utopian level, the movie challenges the limits of national interests. It establishes a triangle love relationship between the American Journalist, Anna, the CIA agent Dan, and the Iraqi journalist Zaid. It

shows the relationship between Anna and Zaid has more utopian impulses than the one between Anna and Dan. Then, the movie produces more visions toward a global utopia in the relationship between Anna and Zaid than between Anna and Dan. They challenge all circumstances of hatred, tension, and the national priorities together. The movie shows them as challenging all kinds of national limits and restrictions. It depicts them living many utopian moments in the mid of the war's miserable conditions. Then, the movie also brings Anna and many Iraqi civilians into a state of amity. All considered, this chapter will represent nationality as the main reason of the antagonism between human beings and suggest the world without national borders as the best alternative to the world's status quo under the nation states.

CHAPTER ONE: A GLOBAL UTOPIA

WHAT IS A GLOBAL UTOPIA?

A global utopia is a series of visions aim to bring utopian impulses from different nationalities, different cultures, and different ethnicities together to explore their similar intentions toward building a new world characterized by prosperity, tranquility, and equality. These visions denounce the alienation of human beings in any corner of this globe and propose spaces of freedom and solidarity beyond borders. These visions are anti-racism, anti-radicalism, anti-imperialism, anti-global capitalism, and anti-exploitation of nature. They are oriented toward saving humanity from socioeconomic and sociopolitical crises, which threaten the whole globe. They critique the world's present status quo under multiple nation states since it created racial discriminations, economic exploitations, and endless conflicts. Instead of antagonism which resulted from the competitive ethics of capitalism, the visions toward a global utopia suggest a universal community based on human beings' coexistence, moral ethics, and mutual understanding of each other. These visions try to eliminate the mediation of dystopia, which threaten every positive change. Thus, visions toward a global utopia have projections of oneness of human beings over their otherness and offer significant movements toward a global reformation.

Utopia and globalization have distinctive relatedness and overlapped aspects.

Globalization has utopia in its essence. Robert Tally contradicts the attitudes which consider globalization as the withering of utopia. He asserts that globalization resurrects utopia after the belief that utopia ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union. He considers the new era of globalization as the "paradoxically untimely timeliness of utopia" (viii). At the theoretical level, he reports that since the beginning of the new Millennium a lot of studies have

been published asserting the power of utopia such as David Harvey's *Spaces of Hope*, Fredric Jameson's *Archaeologies of the Future*, Philip Wegner's *Imaginary Communities*, Lyman Tower Sargent's *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, and the journal of *The Utopian Studies*, which appeared two to three decades before the new Millennium. At the social and global level, Tally believes that after the 1960s, globalization gives birth to many events with utopian impulses, such as the " 'Occupy Wall Street' movement; the student protests in Canada, California, and the United Kingdom; the demonstrations associated with the Arab Spring, and the protests against austerity measures through Europe, among other sites of resistance around the world" (49). All these movements have impulses toward a global utopia because they intended to end exploitation, illness, and oppression around the world. Jameson considers globalization a potential source of utopia. In *Archaeologies of the Future*, he states that globalization "can indeed pass effortlessly from dystopian vision of world control to the celebration of world multiculturalism with mere changing of a valence" (215). Jameson sees globalization as possibly becoming a source of utopia rather than a dystopia, as it melts the hegemony of one culture and initiates the movement toward multiculturalism. Equally important, Patrick Hayden indicates that "utopia and globalization are born together." They both connote "the desire to transgress borders and to encounter other lands and peoples, to connect together otherwise disparate places and identities across the globe" (51). Indeed, globalization turns out to be one of utopia's dynamic strategies. It connects different people around the globe and motivates them to resist all kinds of oppression.

The visions toward a global utopia reject economic reductionism and exceed the capitalistic limits of globalization. Many scholars considered globalization as a process of Americanization or a process of reorganizing the world according to American standards.

However, Hayden asserts that even though capitalism and globalization have indivisible relations and despite Marx's belief, in Hayden's words, that "the internal logic of capitalism is global", globalization should not be condensed to capitalism and its profits (56). Clearly, Hayden refuses to consider Western global economic trading and universal extension of its power as the sole driving forces of globalization. Significantly, Hayden and Chamsy el-Ojeili argue that globalization should not be reduced to "a profit-above-all drive that threatens life on the planet. . . . [or] the idea of a 'new imperialism' centered on US military might and plans for a 'new American Century. . . . [or] cultural imperialism, Westoxification, and Coca-colonization." They report that globalization has many utopian energies, especially on the cultural and political levels. Politically, globalization establishes "the idea of the decline of sovereign states, and the simultaneous emergence of a cosmopolitan order of multilateral negotiation, human rights, peace, and global governance". Culturally, it provides "the vision of an increasingly cosmopolitan orientation amongst world citizenry, where everyone is connected instantly with everyone else, a global village of mutual understanding and constructive interchange, where people can pick and choose from the wealth of humanity's diverse, rich cultures" (55-56). In brief, the visions toward a global utopia develop an intention toward establishing a universal society based on protecting human rights not global markets, ending the national identity or ideological categorization of human beings, and replacing the enmity that is caused by imperialism with amity. My dissertation will mainly adopt this aspect and trajectory as the foundation of the visions toward a global utopia to show that the relationship between globalization and utopia exceeds the greed inclination of global capitalism.

A global utopia has been the main vision in the manifesto of many cultural productions and street movements which protest global capitalism and strive for a classless world. Held and

McGrew mention that in the recent years the annual meetings of many organizations supporting global capitalism such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Group of 8 (G8), and EU witnessed massive street movements refusing global capitalism (149). For example, from Genoa to Gleneagles, a lot of street movements protested against G8 summits, and from Cancun to Hong Kong a lot people protested the World Trade Organization (WTO) (137). At an equal rate, the social movements of the People Global Action (PGA), which was launched against global capitalism in Geneva in 1998, is another historical movement whose manifesto established significant movements toward a global utopia. According to Steger, three hundred representatives of grassroots resistance groups from seventy-one countries joined the movement. They rejected WTO decisions supporting global capitalism and called all locals around the world for a revolution without any kind of violence. Significantly, this movement created a reverberation around the world. It was followed by many protest movements such as the Direct Action Network and the Montreal-based anticapitalistic converge in North America, Landless Workers Movement, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST) in Brazil, the peasant farmers movement in Karnataka, Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) in India, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) movement in the United Kingdom, Italian Ya Basta movement of anti-capitalism and pro-immigration rights, and many other similar protests around the world (*Globalization Rethinking* 137). Despite their different geographical locations and ethnic origins, all these protest movements offered visions toward a global utopia. They were united to stop the spread of global capitalism and its exploitative projects. They strived to create a world free from class struggles and economic competitions.

Additionally, the visions toward a global utopia became important missions in the musical concerts which intend to fight sociopolitical crises. Adam and Carfagna report that in

July 2005, Bob Geldof, an Irish singer and political activist, held a concert to call for global attention to fight poverty in Africa and addressed the leaders of the G8's coming meeting. The performers in this concert asked the developed nation states to waive African poor states from their debts and to help them fight the spread of Malaria and AIDS. Many American and British artists and musical groups attended the concert, such as the Who, Paul McCartney, U2, Pink Floyd, Elton John, Stevie Wonder, Madonna, Destiny's Child, Green Day, Coldplay, and the Blackeyed Peas. More than one million audience attended the concert, five million people watched it over the video stream, and more than twenty-six million people supported the concert's theme through text messages (230). The concert also was a great advertisement for the music industry. It gained a vast amount of free publicity. In this sense, musical concerts and networks of social media produced impulses toward a global utopia. They intended to get the people around the world united and to make the world free from sociopolitical calamities, such as starvation and sickness.

Lyman Sargent identifies the poetics of a global utopia in *Empire, Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, and *Commonwealth*. These books are trilogy series written by Michael Hardt (an American literary theorist) and Antonio Negri (an Italian political theorist). They were published in the first decade of the new Millennium. Sargent states that the theorists in these publications argue that the world system of multiple nation states has become irrelevant and should be replaced by a different global authority which is not restricted to a particular region. These theorists are also, as Sargent argue, satisfied that establishing one empire or changing the whole world's system of nation states to one empire would be the best alternative. Off course, they refuse to give the United States the absolute power in their *Empire*. They focus on the fair distribution of natural resources and social productions such as knowledge,

information, and language. They argue that the natural resources and social productions should not be owned by specific states. On the contrary, they should be distributed to all regions of the planet equally (116). Thus, the street protests, musical concerts, and academic scholars added significant visions toward a global utopia.

The visions toward a global utopia also reject the attachment of a utopia to a specific region and era. Put differently, the visions toward a global utopia refuse to attribute utopia to the West or to the East, or to consider either one the only native land of a utopia. They aspire to bring all kinds of utopias together, regardless of their geographical territories and cultural identities. They do not contradict a specific culture and religion, nor give priority to anyone. Krishan Kumar's perspective that a utopia "appears only in societies with classical and Christian heritage", or "only in the West" (19) contradicts the utopian essence, especially in Thomas More's *Utopia* in which "some worship for god, the sun, some the moon, some some other of the plants" (qtd. in Kumar 20). In brief, the visions toward a global utopia assert the availability of a utopia in every culture and region.

The visions toward a global utopia attempt to unite the Western with nonwestern utopias. They bring forth nonwestern and marginalized utopias which existed in many cultures and regions beyond both More's *Utopia* and Christianity. Jacqueline Dutton redefines the meaning and the scope of utopia by considering utopia an "intercultural imaginaries of the ideal" (244). Significantly, she highlights many nonwestern utopias, such as

the Ramarajya-region of Rama in Hindu history, the Garden of Eden in Judeo-Christian beliefs, datong (Great Unity) in Confucianism, taping (Great Equality) in Taoism, the 'Dreaming' in the indigenous Australian worldwide, the first Caliphate or Medinan regime in Islamic thought, and Nirvana, the Pure Land of Eternal Happiness in ancient Indian Buddhism. (231-233)

Dutton emphasizes the global scope of a utopia and explores another region of it as she discovers utopian impulses in traditions beyond Western and Christian utopias. Similarly, Lyman Sargent asserts the global spirit of the utopia when he states that “different countries and cultures often faced similar problems, and sometimes similar answers were produced” including “social movements like feminism and environmentalism have raised questions that have been answered in similar ways in different places” (85). In this sense, the visions toward a global utopia are too wide to be reduced to an era or area. A global utopia’s vision finds the creativity of a utopia in its diversity, rather than in its uniformness and asserts Ernst Bloch’s conception that “to limit the utopian to Thomas More variety, or simply orient it in that direction, would be like trying to reduce electricity to the amber from which it gets its Greek name and in which it was first noticed” (15). Indeed, the visions toward a global utopia celebrate the richness of Western and Eastern utopias and aim to bring them together to a state of coexistence as both utopias plan to establish a better life for human beings.

Furthermore, the visions toward a global utopia are not cultural productions or social movements only, but genetic aspects also in human beings. All human beings inherently look for the best world to live in or to make the world the best place for themselves and for their successive generations. Bloch believes that the utopia “is a basic human aspiration, the longing and hope for a better world that, although emerging out of the historical past and present, is not yet” (Hayden 50). Bloch neither restricts utopian visions to a certain race of human beings or their color nor reduces it to a certain territory. Similarly, Karl Popper asserts that “all living beings are in search of a better world” (qtd. in Sargent 108). In this way, Popper and Bloch’s perspectives oppose Kumar’s assumption that a utopia is existed in Western and Christian

communities only. They believe that a utopian intention is a biological drive that can be found in every human being whether Western or Eastern.

Additionally, a global utopia is a post-national and post-traditional vision. It contradicts most traditional utopias and considers them unable to project a world outside their geographical borders and ideological dogmas. It looks at most traditional utopias as escapist utopias. They subvert the deepest demands of their audience by disabling them to change their status quo and taking them to imaginary places. More's *Utopia* takes readers to an imaginary island, Thomas Campanell's *The City of the Sun* describes a city located on an ideal island enclosed with seven circled walls, and Aldous Huxley's *Island* deals with a fictional island.

Jameson considers the traditional utopias and their utopian assumptions as simple projections because they are just like a "single-shot solution to all our ills. And this must be a solution so obvious and self-explanatory that every reasonable person will grasp it: just as the inventor is certain his better mousetrap will compel universal conviction" (*Archaeologies* 11). Traditional utopias lack the function of a utopias in the contemporary era. They have limited options. They lack the programs of diagnosing the sources of suffering and eliminating them from everywhere. Tally sees traditional utopias irrelevant because most of them are concerned with their own communities while the image of the nation and powerful state is melting down (viii-ix). Overall, the visions toward a global utopia do not find the imminent needs of the new era of globalization within traditional utopias. That is because many traditional utopias represent imaginary islands, imaginary cities, and even imaginary planets. They represent human beings whose skills, manners, forms, and fashions are different from ordinary people. They address distant times in the future and unknown places. Furthermore, traditional utopias represent utopia as something happened or is happening in the present. They depict life in the present as almost

the paradise itself and the people living in complete peace and harmony. However, the visions toward a global utopia represent utopia as a motivation toward a better life or an image of something, to bring Bloch's definition, "not yet." They diagnose ills in the present and fight them as a demand for moving forward toward the future. In short, global utopian visions critique the traditional utopias because they rely on the world of 'nowhere' more than they rely on the world of 'here and now'.

Furthermore, global utopian visions exceed the national borders and interests. They consider the world's current political system as a source of pessimism because it reinforces national interests over international ones. They do not critique one nation state or look for an alternative to it. On the contrary, they critique the whole world's status of multiple nation states and attempt to find an alternative. The visions toward a global utopia highlight the necessity of renewing the world's multiple nation states in order to match the needs of human beings everywhere rather than the needs of particular nations. Tally indicates that utopia in the globalization era has an inclusive rather than exclusive imagination. It has a project of totality. It starts to focus on imagining a world with "transnational power and post-national cartography" (66). Overall, the visions toward a global utopia are post national and post traditional utopias. They intend to overcome the traditional utopias which have national orientation and state direction. They suggest an alternative world system based on macro interests instead of micro ones. Further, they do not aim to melt the geographical borders only, but also to deconstruct the narrowness of traditional and national utopias. This function of a global utopia will be extremely important in my dissertation. It will be used to show how American and Iraqi cultural texts after Gulf War I and Gulf War II could exceed their national constraints and embody visions beyond nationality.

The visions toward a global utopia are against the exploitation of nature and its elements. In other words, global utopian visions do not only focus on saving human beings but also nature and its elements since the human beings will not be able to survive in a polluted environment. In this way, a global utopia should not be reduced to human affairs. Sargent states that the root word 'human' reduces the visions of a global utopia, which should also be involved in animal rights and deep ecology. In this way, he believes that, a global utopian vision is also "planetary in that it envisions an improved life for all sentient beings, to include deep ecology, the biosphere" (115). The vision toward a global utopia focuses on protecting nature from pollution and destruction because other types of utopia focused on other disciplines, such as technological development, fashion models, architecture design, and cultural productions, to mention a few, and ignored nature. Indeed, a global utopia envisions an environment clean from pollution and a nature beyond the exploitation of capitalistic projects.

The visions toward a global utopia, like many other utopian visions, are in a stubborn conflict with dystopian realities. In *American Utopia*, Jameson proposes an insightful project for utopian thinkers to treat dystopia in the contemporary era. He suggests that the

Utopians have to concentrate not on the visions of future happiness, but rather on the treatments of that stubborn resistance we tend to oppose to it and to all other proposals for positive change in this now worldwide society. Utopian thinking must first involve the radical therapy for dystopia, its radical treatment and cure; only then can it begin to spin out its own impossible pipedreams. We hammer away at anti-utopianism not with argument, but with therapy: every utopia today must be a psychotherapy of anti-utopia fears and draw them out into the light of day, where the sad passions like blinded snakes writhe and twist in the open air. (54-55)

Here, Jameson does not give a description of a global utopia only, but also a prescription of how global utopian visions can treat the causes of the global dystopia in the present before moving forward toward a better future. He depicts dystopia and anti-utopia as the most challenging ills

that can threaten utopia globally. Hence, Jameson argues that a better world is impossible in the future without detecting and defeating the dystopian symptoms of the present which spread to every corner.

As noted, a global utopia is a series of visions attempt to release human beings from isolation and enmity. They offer visions toward a peaceful universe for all human beings and all living things. They show that every dystopia or dystopian concept will be defeated by confronting it persistently but not by scaping it. Interestingly, the visions toward a global utopia do not envision a perfect life for the world of nowhere but for the world of here and now. Global utopian visions critique utopian production characterized with national orientation and traditional utopias because they reinforce differentiation among human beings and disempower them to envision alternatives. Indeed, a global utopia is a series of visions look for the global aspects in different culture's utopias and attempt to bring them together to a state of coexistence to direct them toward fighting racism, pessimism, and imperialism. In this sense, global utopian visions intend to break the hegemonic visions of a particular utopia or to consider a certain regional or religious utopia as the absolute foundation of all utopias. The global utopian visions attempt to break traditional and national constraints. To do that, the visions toward a global utopian challenge the dominant ideologies of the nation state because, as the next section will show, they confront its cosmopolitan visions.

IDEOLOGY VERSUS UTOPIA

Ideology resists the utopian impulses and imposes national, racial, material, and historical limits. That is to say, the dominant ideology of the nation states is the most challenging of the vision toward a global utopia. Marx and Engels express that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every

epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (58). They attributed the dominant ideology to the ruling class. Su Holmes explains that Marx and Engels’ definition of the dominant ideology “suggests that those who control the means of economic and cultural production also control the circulation of ideas in a society. These ‘ideas’ are often referred to as ideologies – dominant value systems and beliefs that often present themselves as ‘normal,’ ‘natural,’ and ‘common sense,’ but are in fact the product of particular ways of seeing the world.” (1314) In this sense, the dominant ideology reflects the attitudes and desires of the ruling class. Louis Althusser believes that the ruling ideology imposes its perspectives through what he calls “Ideological State Apparatuses” (ISA), such as education, religion, law, family, communication, and literature, and through “Repressive State Apparatuses” (RSA), such as the army and the police (Storey 302-3). The dominant ideology uses these apparatuses to practice its domination and guarantee the distribution of its perspectives. This dissertation will mainly adopt Marx and Engle’s definition of dominant ideology in order to show how American and Iraqi cultural texts reflect the dominant ideology consciously or unconsciously by expressing the attitudes of the ruling classes in both cultures.

Marxists identify different aspects of ideology varied from “false consciousness” to structural limitations. Raymond Williams reports that the traditional Marxists used ideology as a synonym for abstract and false ideas. They represent ideology as a false consciousness, illusion, and unreality or upside-down reality (111). In this way, Williams believes that traditional Marxism defines ideology as a process of distorting facts and masking reality. Similarly, David Forgacs states that traditional Marxists used ideology to refer to the ideas of the ruling class and false consciousness (137). Terry Eagleton gives several definitions for ideology, among them two definitions maintaining traditional Marxists’ definition of ideology. He defines ideology as

“(d) false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power; (e) systematically distorted communication” (*Ideology* 1). It will be important to mention that these are not the only definition of ideology developed by Eagleton. He also developed many contradictory aspects of ideology which will be explained later in this section. However, in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” Althusser states that “What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live” (“Ideology” 155). Althusser indicates that ideology should not be explained as a system of creating something false or true. Ideology is a system of creating an imaginary situation or relation comparing to the real ones.

Marxists also go beyond the traditional function of ideology to report that ideology is a process of imposing restrictions rather than distortion. Jameson refuses to define ideology within the concept of false consciousness. He identifies ideology as *a strategy of containment*. He reports that ideology “allows what can be thought to seem internally coherent in its own terms, while repressing the unthinkable ... which lies beyond its boundaries” (*Political Unconscious* 53). In this sense, Jameson sees ideology as a means of suppression. It intends to suppress the rise of contradicting attitudes. Additionally, Jameson considers ideology a “structural limitation and ideological closure,” thereby adopting Althusser’s notion of closure (52). For Althusser, closure “constitutes the structure of an ideological domain” (*Reading Capital* 308). Ideology adopts closure, rather than the false consciousness, as a technique to terminate the opposing ideas. Moreover, Eagleton defines the function of ideology as a “semiotic closure” (2), as “it represents the points where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them.” (223). In brief, ideology works on the basis of inclusion and exclusion rather than false consciousness. It works to include or exclude an idea or a series of ideas according to the

interests of certain groups. Significantly, this dissertation will use the notion of ideology within the context of closure rather than false consciousness. This notion will be used in this dissertation to show that American and Iraqi cultural texts produce ideological closure consciously or unconsciously by adopting the ruling class's attitudes on one hand. On the other hand, the dissertation will show that the texts could challenge the ideological closures and try to open them up by producing impulses toward a global utopia.

Scholars attribute different definitions and functions to a utopia. Ruth Levitas argues that there is no academic agreement on defining utopia among scholars as there is in colloquial language (2). For Fatima Vieira, “More resorted two Greek words- *ouk* (that means not and was reduced to u), and *topos* (place) to which he added the suffix *ia*, indicating a place. Etymologically, utopia is thus a place which is a non-place” (4). Viera believes that utopia is completely a fictional idea. It refers to a perfect land or a perfect life which is nowhere. Kumar argues that a utopia “goes beyond the immediately practicable, and it may go so far beyond as to be in most realistic senses wholly impracticable. But it is never simple dreaming. It always has one foot in reality” (*Utopianism* 2). However, Kumar believes that a utopia combines fantastical and factual aspects together. Sargent states that a “utopia can be simply a fantasy, it can be a description of a desirable or undesirable society, an extrapolation, a warning, an alternative to the present, or a model to be achieved.” (8) In this way, Sargent widens the meaning and function of utopia. He believes that a utopia can express an image, a hope, an alarm, and an alternative. Anyway, these definitions will be used as departure points. This dissertation will mainly adopt Bloch's and Jameson's views on a utopia.

A utopia has hybrid forms and genres in the contemporary era. In *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch identifies the notion of utopia and utopian impulses in many subjects, such as fiction,

architecture, technology, poetry, theatre, music, sports, religion, film, technology, medicine, travel, and many more. The vision of a utopia gets wider and creeps into many disciplines, such as literary theories, social studies, global studies, political sciences, architecture, fashion, and many other disciplines. Interestingly, this aspect of utopia accords with Levitas' perspective that a utopia "will not only vary markedly in content but may be expressed in a variety of forms, and may perform a variety of functions including compensation, criticism and the catalysing of change." (8) In this way, a utopia has irreducible forms and disciplines. It becomes an essential vision in many global disciplines whose aims are changing the life of human beings to become the best.

Significantly, a utopia is not concerned with imagining the better future only, but it also turns out to be a solid tool for criticizing the status quo and confronting its evilness. In other words, a utopia should not be understood narrowly as denoting a fantastical image of the future only but also a motivation toward it. According to Vincent Geoghegan, Bloch divides a utopia into an abstract and a concrete utopia. He considers the early and fantastical forms of utopia an abstract utopia. They have baseless contents, lack the spirit of Marx's call for revolution, and do not orient toward the future. The concrete utopia, on the other hand, is a revolutionary one. It has performable and comprehensible impulses. It is based on Marx's call for revolution. It aims at uprooting the abstract utopia or updating it to a didactic hope (*Ernst Bloch* 38-39). In this sense, Bloch represents utopia both as an abstract thinking or imagining and a concrete action. He intends to change every abstract thought or image of a utopia to a concrete and revolutionary action. In this way, the vision toward a global utopia accords with Bloch's definition of a utopia. It challenges the status quo of the world, especially under the nation states, and produces alternative projects to them.

Furthermore, it will be important to highlight Jameson's definition and division of utopia. He states that a utopian notion "keeps alive the possibility of a world qualitatively distinct from this one and takes the form of a stubborn negation of all that is" (*Marxism and Form* 111). Jameson views utopia as a tool for challenging the status quo. In this way, the vision toward a global utopia has distinctive functions that Jameson explores in a utopia. It motivates thinking of an alternative status quo. Significantly, Jameson draws a distinction between a "Utopian genre or text" and a "Utopian impulse." The first one refers to science fictions. The second one refers to the operation of finding a utopia not where it lies clearly, but where it is invisible and unexpected (*Archaeologies of the Future* 3). That said, this dissertation will deploy Jameson's discussion of utopian impulses to find out the undiscovered energies toward a global utopia in the selected texts. As noted, Jameson and Bloch view utopia as an ongoing process and a continuous path toward a perfect world. They consider utopia as a catalyst tool for a social change and argue that utopians should find out the sociopolitical ills in the status quo rather than romanticize it. Additionally, they explore utopian impulses in many subjects and highlight the necessity of searching for utopian energies in everything even in the most regressed conditions and tragic circumstances.

A utopia in my dissertation has a series of global visions and cosmopolitan purposes. It attempts to envision a world in which opposite cultures communicate and the fighting sides reconcile with each other. It initiates an image toward togetherness. It motivates human beings to be globally minded rather than nationally blinded. Put differently, it encourages human beings to ignore their differences and work together to build one universal civil society instead of many fighting ones. It craves to release human beings from the constraints of nation states' dominant ideologies. It aims to civilize human beings to accept each other and works to develop a typical

coexistence among them. Additionally, a utopia in my dissertation critiques the status quo of the world under radicalism, capitalism, nationalism, and totalitarianism. It attempts to project a world free from these circumstances. That is to say, a utopian vision here strives to establish one social community characterized with solidarity and harmony as a substitution for political communities made up of enmity and injustice. In brief, the vision toward a global utopia. It plans to unite divided communities within one harmonious world. That said, utopia and ideology will be the main elements of my argument in this dissertation. Dialectically speaking, this dissertation will represent the visions toward a global utopia as a counterweight to the ideological closures. It will show that the visions toward a global utopia as the only keys to open the ideological padlocks in American and Iraqi cultural texts, but after introducing Jameson's double hermeneutics in *The Political Unconscious* as the dissertation's main theoretical approach.

FREDRIC JAMESON'S DOUBLE HERMENEUTICS

In *The Political Unconscious*, Jameson defines the double hermeneutics or "two dimensions of the cultural text" as a dialectical approach focusing on exploring ideological constraints and utopian impulses in the cultural text (288). He calls the first dimension, the "negative hermeneutics." It is an ideological interpretation of the cultural text. It should show how a "cultural artifact fulfills a specific ideological mission, in legitimizing a given power structure, in perpetuating and reproducing the latter, and in generating specific forms of false consciousness" (291). Jameson considers hermeneutics in this dimension as a negative one because it usually looks for the part of the text that legitimizes the hegemonic power and supports the status quo. In other words, it repeats the ideological aims of the dominant power and reinforces its bounds. This dimension will be used in my dissertation to show that the Iraqi cultural texts, especially

after Gulf War I, aim to convince their audience that there is no alternative to Saddam's regime. They intend to block the audience's imagination and disempower their reactions. They encourage the audience to support the status quo under Saddam's regime. This dissertation will also apply Jameson's "negative hermeneutics" to American cultural texts. It will show that the American texts after the Gulf Wars repeat the perspectives and claims of American dominant ideology. They depict Iraq as threatening the stability of the whole world because of invading Kuwait, and display Iraq as supporting al-Qaeda and the attacks of the 9/11. In this way, the American cultural texts intend to convince their audience of Iraq's having a relation with al-Qaeda in order to motivate them to support the war in Iraq.

The second dimension in Jameson's double hermeneutics is the "positive hermeneutics." This dimension focuses on the utopian aspects of the cultural text. The analysis should "seek, through and beyond this demonstration of the instrumental function of a given cultural object, to project its simultaneously Utopian power as the symbolic affirmation of a specific historical class form of collective unity" (291-2). This aspect of hermeneutics is a positive one because it goes beyond ideological closures in the cultural text to affirm the availability of utopian impulses. It rejects the ideological demands and reveals utopian alternatives. With this in mind, this dissertation will also apply the positive hermeneutics to show that the Iraqi and American cultural texts could open up their ideological closures by producing visions offering a movement toward a global utopia. It will exhibit that the Iraqi and American texts could challenge the social limits and radical restrictions together by creating impulses toward a global utopia.

Any dialectical analysis of the cultural text will not be completed without the reference to the cultural text reflection of the social contradiction. In other words, the interpretation of any cultural text at the ideological level should figure out ideological contradictions in the text and

relate them to the social contradiction. In this sense, the ideological closure or antinomies in the text express the social contradiction and history. Jameson refers to ideological closure or ideological antinomies in the cultural text as the “symbolic enactment of the social within the formal and the aesthetic” (77).

History is at the core of Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious*. Jameson’s history refers to class conflicts. Adam Roberts states that “by history, Jameson as a Marxist, does not mean ‘the doings of Kings and Princes’; he means the class struggles and economic evolution” (77). Significantly, Jameson highlights the importance of history in the first sentence of *The Political Unconscious*, asserting that “Always historicize!” (9) Furthermore, Jameson sees history as the hidden power and the suppressed truth in the text that should be discovered. He states that history is “not a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious” (35). It’s worth mentioning that in the process of interpretation, the critic should highlight Real/History and bring it to the surface because history describes the unconscious and the hidden, or even the repressed class conflict between a dominant ideology and a subordinated one. This dissertation will use history to explore how the conflict between the dominant and opponent ideologies in Iraqi and American societies is expressed in the selected texts.

The term “unconscious” or unconsciously is another important term. This dissertation will use this term within Jameson’s use or definition of unconsciousness. From Roberts’ perspective, Jameson uses unconsciousness to refer to “the ways in which, no matter how apparently escapist their surfaces, they [cultural texts] still embody the social and economic realities that shaped them” (83-84). My dissertation will use the term unconsciousness or

unconsciously to explain the ideological functions of the cultural texts. In other words, the dissertation will use this term to show that although some of the selected cultural texts are apparently against their dominant ideologies or the dominant perspectives of specific ideology, they support that ideology or some aspects of that ideology unconsciously. Thus, the term “unconscious” or unconsciously will be used in this dissertation in order to explore how the cultural texts support their dominant ideologies unintentionally.

Jameson’s negative hermeneutics of ideology and positive hermeneutics of utopia is a building on Karl Mannheim’s hermeneutics of ideology and utopia. In *Ideology and Utopia*, Mannheim believes that “the concept ‘ideology’ reflects one discovery which emerged from political conflict, namely, the ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination.” Then, he adds that “the concept of *utopian* thinking reflects the opposite discovery of political struggle, namely that certain oppressed groups are intellectually so strongly interested in the destruction and transformation of a given condition of society that they unwittingly see only those elements in the situation which tend to negate it” (40, original emphasis) As noted, Mannheim relates ideology to the ruling class and its conflict for preserving the power. Then, he identifies utopia as the visions of those who challenge the status quo and plan to change it in any way.

Equally important, Jameson’s dialectical analysis was theorized previously by Bloch. In *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch uses “cold stream,” and “warm stream” dialectally to refer to ideology and utopia. The first one is concerned with exploring ideological limits and the second one with the utopian impulses, or in Geoghegan’s words, “the ‘cold stream’ of painstaking analysis, and the ‘warm stream’ of revolutionary rapture.” (*Ernst Bloch* 122). Bloch uses cold

stream for ideological analysis and the warm stream for utopian analysis. Bloch's perspectives here will be used in my dissertation to build on Jameson's dialectical approach and to discuss utopian impulses and ideological limits further in the selected texts.

Jameson and Bloch also identified the interrelatedness of a utopia and ideology. Jameson asserts that "the effectively ideological is also, at the same time, necessarily Utopian." (286). That is to say, there is no ideology which does not have utopian visions. There is also no utopia which does not have ideology or a utopia completely free from ideological goals. Jameson asserts that "all ideology in the strongest sense, including the most exclusive forms of ruling class consciousness just as much as that of oppositional or oppressed classes-is in its very nature Utopian." (289) Likewise, Douglas Kellner reports that "for Bloch, ideology is 'Janus-faced,' two-sided: it contains errors, mystifications, and techniques of manipulation and domination, but it also contains a utopian residue or surplus that can be used for social critique and to advance progressive politics" (85).

In conclusion, any interpretation of cultural texts should find out utopian and ideological aspects in them. Jameson reports that the "Marxist negative hermeneutic, a Marxist practice of ideological analysis proper, must in the practical work of reading and interpretation be exercised simultaneously with a Marxist positive hermeneutic, or a decipherment of the Utopian impulses of these same still ideological cultural texts" (296). Any interpretation of the cultural text should not identify the ideological aspects only and ignore the utopian aspects of the text because these aspects are incomplete by themselves. The absence of any aspect will make the interpretation of the cultural text fragile and insufficient. As a result, this dissertation will explore these aspects in American and Iraqi cultural texts together in the following chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: VISIONS TOWARD A GLOBAL UTOPIA VERSUS CAPITALISM AND TOTALITARIANISM IN GULF WAR I MOVIES

This chapter investigates that *Zaman* and *Three Kings* critique totalitarianism and capitalism.

They represent totalitarianism and capitalism as destructive systems. In other words, these movies shatter the attitudes of both systems and explore that they committed unlimited offenses against humanity and caused many ecological disasters in the Middle East. As Saddam's regime resulted in the murder of unlimited people in Iraq, and drained many parts of Iraqi Marshlands, Bush's administration almost did similar offenses in Iraq. It bombed many parts of Iraqi Marshlands and committed many violations against the Iraqi Army and civilians during Gulf War I. Furthermore, the movies also produce many alternative scenes which motivate togetherness and protest Gulf War I and its consequences. In this sense, the movies offer significant movements toward a global utopia. That said, this chapter attempts to achieve one of the dissertation's main goal exploring impulses toward a global utopia beyond ideological constraints of capitalism and totalitarianism in Iraqi and American movies produced after Gulf War I. To do that, this chapter uses Jameson's double hermeneutics of ideological and utopian analysis. It devotes the ideological hermeneutics to identify how the movies support some ideological aspects of capitalism and totalitarianism. At the same time, this chapter uses the utopian hermeneutics to explore impulses toward a global utopia in the selected movies for this chapter.

ZAMAN: THE MAN FROM THE REEDS

Zaman: The Man from the Reeds was directed by Amer Alwan between December 2002 and January 2003, two months before Gulf War II in March, 2003. According to Mahdi Abbas, the movie won the best director and best actor awards in many festivals such as Tribeca Film Festival 2004, San Sebastián International Film Festival 2003, Amiens Film Festival 2004, Rabat film festival 2004, the Carthage Film Festival 2004, and many others (84). The movie depicts many critical periods in Iraqi contemporary history. It narrates how the Iraqis lived under Saddam's regime and capitalism's continuous wars against Iraq. The movie also describes how Iraq looked eleven years after Gulf War I, eleven years after the International Sanctions on Iraq, and the last three months before Gulf War II.

Zaman describes Iraq in an endless suffering and between unending wars. It narrates the story of Zaman (Sami Kaftan), a villager living in Iraqi Marshlands who travels to Baghdad to get a rare medicine for his wife Najma (Shadha Salim). It portrays Baghdad living in a chaos because of Gulf War I, and in a high state of disorganization due to its preparation for another war, Gulf War II. Dialectically speaking, *Zaman* was produced under Saddam's regime. As a result, it supports the status quo under this regime and provides utopian alternatives to it. At the ideological level, the movie supports Iraqi dominant ideology under Saddam's regime through redistributing the regime's constraints and desires toward holding power forever. It highlights the freedom of religion and worshipping in Saddam's era, and displays Saddam's portraits in many places to reflect its power and readiness to confront Gulf War II. The movie also allegorically praises the efforts of Saddam's regime in attempting to provide the Iraqi people with free healthcare despite the international sanctions and condemns the United States' role in imposing these sanctions on Iraq. However, the movie also challenges the ideological constraints and

produces utopian impulses. It depicts Iraqi Marshlands as a Utopian place and explores how Zaman finds more utopian moments in Iraqi Marshlands than he finds in Baghdad. Above all, the movie also supports visions toward a global utopia. It calls its audience to revolt against Saddam's regime and the expectations of another Gulf War since Gulf War I and Saddam's regime put the Iraqi people and the Marshlands under callous and ecological crises.

Zaman depicts Saddam's era as one of religious freedom and free worshipping. It represents Saddam's era as characterized with coexistence between all religions and stripped of religious discrimination. The movie opens with Zaman performing *Wudu*, and praying as a Shiite Muslim freely.³ Then, it also highlights Zaman's visit to the Shrine of Imam Musa al-Kadhim in Baghdad and performing the rituals of visiting such as supplicating and praying without any interruption. The movie also portrays the Shiites visiting their shrine and performing their own rituals. It shows the people visiting the shrine whenever they want and practicing certain rituals they have with enough freedom. In this sense, the movie uses the Shiites' performance of their rituals to promote the regime's ideology of religious freedom. It uses such scenes to counter the United States' accusation of Saddam's regime persecuting the Shiites, especially after Gulf War I.

At the same time, the movie also highlights the unity between Muslims and Christians in Saddam's era. It focuses on an old and revered Church beside a Catholic hospital. It depicts a lot of Muslim families attending this hospital and receiving help, demonstrating the coexistence and solidarity among different Iraqi religions. Through this depiction, the movie attempts to represent the Christians as the main part of the Iraqi population and they share the same religious freedom

³ Wudu is the washing of main parts of the body, before praying in Islam.

as all Iraqis under Saddam's era. They have their own churches and hospitals. The movie depicts the Christians as a vital part of the society rather than a marginalized one and shows their institutions as well protected under Saddam's regime.

The movie's representation of religious freedom and equality under Saddam's regime has ideological indications. It supports the status quo under Saddam's regime. It attempts to convince the audience that different Iraqi religious groups have typical freedom and equality and reduces the importance of any alternative to Saddam's regime. The movie adopts this unique representation as a dominated status quo to minimize the real situations of religious suppression under Saddam's regime. In this sense, the movie sticks to the Ba'ath Party's practices of ideological closure. It hides the religious restrictions and the intelligence censorship which were imposed on all Iraqi religious practices and institutions in general, and the Shiites in particular. That said, the movie's religious representations have ideological functions. They aim to discredit the United States' accusation of Saddam's regime suppressing the Shiites as one of American justifications to attack Iraq again in 2003. In fact, the movie is one of the rare movies, if not the only one under Saddam's regime, which focuses on depicting how Iraqi Shiites are praying and performing their religious rituals inside their shrines. Similar to the idealization of the treatment of the Shiites, the movie's ideal representation of Christians in Iraq is also ideological. It does not only aim to show the equality between Muslims and Christians in every aspect of life under the regime, but also to attract the Americans and Westerns' sympathies toward the Iraqi Christians and show Christians as living better lives under Saddam's regime. Thus, the religious representations turn the movie into an ideological domain. They restrict the movie to represent the ruling class's interests. They show Iraq as an ideal country in religious freedom and represent Saddam's regime as the unique protector of religious rights.

Representing the power of Saddam's regime is another ideological aspect in *Zaman*. The movie displays the power of Saddam's regime through displaying his portraits in many locations. It exhibits three portraits of Saddam in different locations. It shows the first one on a street in a crowded marketplace, the second one on a high building at a traffic intersection, and the last one in a Catholic hospital. These portraits have ideological implications. The camera moves from Saddam's first portrait on the crowded street to the second one in which Saddam is seen wearing a black jacket, a black hat, firing at the air with an old fashion rifle. The camera focuses on this portrait longer than it does with the first one. This portrait is placed on a high building and large enough to be visible to viewers. Unlike its miserable location, the portrait looks mostly clean and clear. The camera orients the viewers' focus toward it alone. It presents nothing around the portrait or in front of it, so that nothing disturbs the audience's attention. In this sense, this portrait affirms Michael Freedon's description of ideological pictures and other visual materials. Freedon states that for any picture to be used ideologically it should be simple to understand and clear in its ideological messages. He believes that such a picture should be big enough to be seen clearly by eyes and no other information should be represented to misdirect the viewers' comprehension (115). This is how the movie represents Saddam's portrait exactly. It glorifies Saddam's regime through a non-verbal form of ideology. It adopts Saddam's portrait as a symbol to mobilize Iraqi people to resist the coming war and to transfer Iraq to a state of militarization or to enact, what Freedon will call, a "militarization of the national will" (114). The movie chooses this portrait of Saddam to send many ideological messages. One of these messages is to trigger the viewers against the United States' second war against Iraq. Another is to declare that despite the effects of the first Gulf War on Baghdad and the Iraqis' continuous suffering from the international sanctions, Iraq is still a strong country under Saddam's regime.

Slavoj Žižek commented on this portrait of Saddam after seeing it a lot on the television during Gulf War II:

The image of Saddam endlessly repeated on our screens before the war (Saddam firing a rifle into the air) made him into some kind of Iraqi Charlton Heston—the president not of Iraq only, but also of the Iraqi Rifle Association. The true interest of these images, however, is that they remind us how the ideological struggle is fought out not only at the level of argument but also at the level of images: which image will hegemonize a field, and function as the pragmatic embodiment of an idea, a regime, a problem. (originally dashed 2-3)

Through this portrait, the movie pragmatizes the power of Saddam's regime and the status quo under it. The movie urges the Iraqi people to get prepared for the war and calls them to support Saddam's regime.

It is worth mentioning that Saddam's portrait behind Iman in the Catholic hospital is also not an accident. It attributes Iman's generosity of giving Zaman medicine for free to Saddam's regime. In other words, through this portrait, the movie imposes the perspectives of the ruling class by attributing an individual's generosity to the regime's bounteousness. The camera focuses on Saddam's portrait more than it does on depicting the real services in the hospital. It focuses on the front desk of the hospital where Saddam's portrait is most prominently located. It neither displays what is really going inside this hospital nor the real suffering of the patients. The movie is restricted to highlighting the human presence of the regime in this health apparatus rather the miserable suffering of the patients. In this way, the movie confronts the opposing attitudes which attempt to prove that finding medication for rare, and even common diseases under Saddam's regime became impossible after the first Gulf War. In brief, the presence of Saddam's portrait in the hospital expresses another ideological concept. It reassures the presence of Saddam's regime in every apparatus and attempts to convince the audience to believe that Saddam's regime is the typical source of unlimited health care and kindness. With that said, the

portraits impose ideological aspects. They depict Saddam's regime as a kind regime which takes care of Iraqi people in order to oppose the attitudes which depict the regime as the source of brutality. The portraits also distribute the hope and the power of Saddam's regime as they reflect the existence of the regime in every corner and its readiness to fight another American war. Furthermore, the portraits are used to hide the perspectives of Iraqi people who were frustrated and remained hopeless under Saddam's regime. In short, through these portraits, the movie legitimizes the strategies and politics of the Ba'ath Party. They hide the dystopian practices of the regime and limit the possibility of any political change.

Zaman adopts allegory to legitimize Iraqi dominant ideology's stand against the United States after Gulf War I. It uses certain characters' reactions toward the medicine for Zaman's wife allegorically to reinforce the inclination of Iraqi dominant ideology. The movie uses the character of Iman (Fathima Salah), who works as a nurse in a Catholic hospital in Baghdad, allegorically to advocate for Saddam's regime and to represent it as a kind regime. At the same time, the manager of the hospital (Muhshin al-Ali), who looks like a bureaucrat, allegorically reflects the inhuman aspects of the United States' administration. The movie contrasts the kindness and humanity of Iman with the wickedness and cruelty of the Manager in order to praise Saddam's regime and condemn the American administration. In other words, the movie aims to depict Saddam's regime as benevolent and American administration as imperialistic by juxtaposing Iman and the Manager. In this way, *Zaman* transfers Iman into an ideological icon. It deploys her kindness and humanity to reflect to what extent Saddam's regime is a bighearted regime. It glorifies Iman's breaking of Manager's orders and giving Zaman medicine he needs for his wife even though Zaman does not have any official document. This situation is constructed to create the sense that despite the international sanctions on Iraq, which caused a

severe shortage in the medicine, Saddam's regime is still a generous one. It provides the Iraqis with the medicine for free.

Additionally, the movie represents the Manager of the hospital and his arrogant conduct as an allegory to represent the United States' reactions against Iraq after Gulf War I. In other words, allegorical representation of the movie utilizes the bureaucratic manners of the Manager to recirculate the regime's depiction of the United States' unlawful role in imposing the international sanctions on Iraq. Furthermore, *Zaman* illustrates the Manager's refusal to give the medicine to Zaman to stand for the United States' continual voting in the United Nations against stopping the international sanctions on Iraq. Thus, the movie employs the Managers' carelessness and overlooking of Zaman to bring into focus the United States' apathy towards the suffering of the Iraqis and its complete ignorance of their fundamental needs for the food and medicine.

Zaman represents these characters allegorically and contrasts their actions and reactions toward the medicine ideologically. The movie uses these characters and their perspectives toward the medicine to support the status quo under Saddam's regime and create more hostility to the United States before another war. That is to say, the movie weaponizes the medicine against the United States in order to reinforce ideological constraints of the Ba'ath Party. Zaid Khatlan recognizes the ideological implications of the movie. He reports "[t]hat's bullshit. They are Baathists. This is propaganda, a Saddam film. The premise is that there is no medicine because of embargo. This simplicity minimizes the whole situation onto one man" (qtd. in Feinstein). Indeed, the movie utilizes the allegorical representation of these characters and their perspectives toward the medicine ideologically. It dehumanizes all reactions of the United States' administration towards Iraq after Gulf War I and its preparation for a new one. Then, the

movie glorifies all actions of Saddam's regime in order to direct the viewers' feelings towards hating the United States and excludes any attribution of the Iraqis' suffering to the regime's military adventures in the region. However, the ideological limits are not the only aspects of *Zaman*. The movie also attempts to go beyond these limits by producing utopian impulses.

Dialectically speaking, *Zaman* also challenges the ideological constraints and produces many utopian visions. It critiques the regime's mismanagement of Baghdad and represents Iraqi Marshlands as a utopian alternative. At one level, the movie critiques the Iraqi socioeconomic status quo under Saddam's regime. It represents Iraqi people living without having any kind of job that can guarantee them a better life. They do hard work with a minimum payment. It shows that only a few Iraqis have stories while a lot of Iraqis either sell different stuff on the streets or pull handcarts. It also shows them using outdated cars or outmoded buses. In other words, the movie succeeds in challenging the regime's censorship. It describes Baghdad as a nasty and ugly city filled with unemployed people, unorganized shops, frustrated salesmen, and unregulated traffic. Furthermore, it shows the health facilities in miserable circumstances. The hospitals do not have doctors and the pharmacies are emptied from the necessary medicines. As a result, the people get sick and die due to medicine's unavailability. Through such scenes, the movie challenges some aspects of the regime's censorship and reveals the mismanagement of Saddam's regime. That said, the movie critiques the regime's strategies for turning Baghdad into an awful city.

At another level, the movie represents Iraqi Marshlands as a Utopian place and an alternative to Baghdad. The movie depicts the Marshlands as a paradise surrounded with many natural elements and a variety of resources. The movie's narrator informs the viewers that Iraqi Marshlands are in the far south of Iraq, where Tigris and Euphrates intersect with each other. The

movie represents the place as a unique location stripped of all noises of the big cities. It looks like a pre-capitalist territory. It is not manipulated by urban sights such as skyscrapers, hotels, factories, transportation, and stores. In this sense, the Iraqi Marshlands is seen similar to the Utopian island in More's *Utopia* from many aspects. It is surrounded by the seas and rivers from different directions. It looks like a fantastical place isolated from metropolitans.

The Marshlands residents attempt to establish a state of solidarity in Iraqi Marshlands. They love and respect each other. Zaman loves his wife whole heartedly and is seen loyal to her. He sails many miles with a canoe to Baghdad to bring a rare medicine. The neighbors are also seen in a state of harmony and take care of each other. Um Abbas (Saadiya Al-Zaydi) leaves her family and her children for many nights to take care of her sick neighbor, Najma. Furthermore, the people are seen kind, optimistic, and supportive. They confront all types of enslavement and oppression. Zaman adopts Yasin (Hussein Imad) whose parents were killed in the war, as his son. He does his best to help Yasin forget what happened to his family in the past and encourages him to look forward optimistically. Significantly, Zaman takes Yasin to work with him daily and motivates him to think of a better future. He teaches Yasin how to make reed matts and sell them in the neighbor cities. In return, Yasin uses the same supportive words that Zaman taught him to support Zaman back when his wife died. In this way, the Marshlands residents succeeded in challenging the socioeconomic conditions with social and progressive practices.

Interestingly, the movie represents the Iraqi Marshlands as free from austerity and segregation. The movie shows that no one is seen isolated or ignored in the Marshlands. The people neither work a lot nor have a hardship in their work. In other words, they are neither greedy nor alienated at work and reject selfishness. No one restores or does something for his or her own benefits alone. Zaman makes reed mats in the open air, sells them in Baghdad, and he is

satisfied with his gains. He is generous with his neighbors and highly respects them. Indeed, the movie succeeds in representing Marshlands as a utopian place. It is seen free from ideological apparatuses of the Ba'ath. With that said, the movie represents Iraqi Marshlands as an ideal area surrounded with unique natural elements and the people socially engaged with each other.

Further, Zaman finds rest and comfort in the nature of the Iraqi Marshlands and its elements more than he could find in Iraqi cities, especially Baghdad. He was attached to the natural elements and species in the Iraqi Marshlands. He prefers living in reeds to living in the crowded and disorganized city of Baghdad. He finds himself lost in Baghdad and looks like he does not know anyplace there except the Shrine of Imam al-Khadim.⁴ He is seen frustrated and alone in Baghdad, going from shop to shop and jumping from one road to another, and unfamiliar with the city streets and its nasty transportation. He does not carry any identification card or information with him. He knows no one in Baghdad. Zaman finds food very expensive and eats nothing there except a few loaves of homemade bread. However, Zaman is noted as more active and feels more motivated in the Marshlands. He is seen as an optimistic character and has positive visions at life. At the same time, he asks his wife and Yasin to be optimistic too. He loves the Marshlands and feels more attached to their natural species. He is well known and highly respected in the Marshlands. Significantly, the nature of the Marshlands gives him the spiritual motivation and the material support he needs. Despite the Marshlands' distance and isolation, Zaman never feels alone. Indeed, the nature of the Marshlands and its elements generate utopian moments for Zaman. They provide him with hope and peace.

⁴ The Shrine of Imam al-Khadim is one of the important shrines of the Shiite. This shrine is usually visited by the Shiite in Iraq and around the world.

Furthermore, *Zaman* supports visions toward a global utopia. It intends to rescue humanity and preserve Iraqi Marshlands, one of the world's heritages, from the despotism of a dictatorship and demolition of capitalism. It represents large areas of Iraqi Marshlands in the past through documentary scenes and compares them to a few areas left in 2002. Through this comparison, the movie highlights the destructive effects that Gulf War I and Saddam's regime brought to the Iraqi Marshlands. In addition to the mass dislocation of the Marshlands' residents, *The Guardian* reports that the Iraqi Marshlands, which were expanded to 3,500 square miles or 9,000 square kilometers in 1970s, were reduced to 2,900 square mile or 7,510 square kilometers by Saddam's regime. The regime drained a lot of Marshlands areas and built many dams to force tribes which rose against his power after Gulf War I to flee and to end the Shiites' proponents from taking the Marshlands as bases for guerrilla attacks against the regime's apparatuses in the area. For this reason, the United Nations considered the regime's ruthless action as "one of the world's greatest environmental disasters." With such actions, even Iraqi nature and natural species have not been safe from the regime's repression.

Because of Gulf War I's ecological effects, the movie also intends to protect the Iraqi Marshlands from further catastrophe that would be brought by the destructive power of capitalism. Sargent states one aspect of a global utopia is that "it envisions an improved life for all sentient beings, to include deep ecology, the biosphere." (115). The movie represents the Iraqi Marshlands as a quiet natural area featured with many species. The movie protests any coming war against Iraq because the Iraqi Marshlands will not be safe from the effects of another war. *Zaman* displays the Marshlands under a real threat by representing the noises of airplanes flying over it. In this way, the movie critiques the world system's inability to preserve Iraqi natural sites from a new war of capitalism. Significantly, Abbas mentions that the movie was

screened in festivals in many countries around the world, such as India, China, Singapore, Italy, Egypt, Lebanon, UAE, the United States, and many other countries (84). Through these festivals, the movie intends to mobilize its audience against any expected war. It warns them of the possibility of the Iraqi Marshlands' disappearance in a few years. The movie represents an American airplane flying over the Iraqi Marshlands almost every morning. Thus, *Zaman* supports the visions toward a global utopia as it tries to save humanity and ecology from sociopolitical and socioeconomic crises caused by capitalism and totalitarianism.

Through ideological confines and utopian energies, *Zaman* historicizes the real contradictions in Iraqi society. Put differently, the movie's ideological contradictions express a social contradiction in Iraqi society under Saddam's regime between the dominant perspectives of the regime and its opponents. On one hand, the movie expresses the regime's interests directly. It shows the status quo under Saddam's regime as better than other alternatives. It accuses the United States and the international sanctions of causing a severe lack in human beings' basic needs in Iraq and leading Iraq to an unprecedented state of regression in all fields. On the other hand, the movie represents miserable scenes of the status quo to express indirectly the opposition attitudes that have been marginalized under Saddam's regime. The marginalized attitudes accuse Saddam's regime more than the international sanctions of destroying Iraq. Through representing fragile infrastructures, the movie shows how the regime intentionally ignored developing Iraqi infrastructures in order to maintain its power and create a state of tension between Iraqi people and the international community. In fact, *Zaman's* ideological contradictions succeeded in reflecting a historical conflict in the Iraqi community over the domination of power in Iraq. This conflict between Saddam's regime and its opponents continued for more than thirty years. The regime's opponents led continuous uprisings against

the regime, but the regime continued to suppress them until it collapsed in 2003. For these reasons, the movie's positive representation of the Shiites, one of the regime's opponents, intends to hide this history or the regime's suppression of them. However, this history becomes prominent through rereading and contextualizing the movie's different ideological contents because Jameson indicates that history is not a clear text or a master narrative that we can easily access or understand. On the contrary, it is always invisible and absent, the only way to make it visible is through interpretation (35). With that explained, *Zaman* is seen reflecting a real conflict in Iraqi society between the regime and its opponents.

As noted, *Zaman* could reflect ideological constraints and utopian energies dialectically. It represents ideological constraints through reflecting the ideological limits of Saddam's regime. It posits Saddam's regime as the only guardian of religions and their rights in Iraq. It represents Zaman praying as a Shiite without any kind of interference. It also displays a Catholic hospital serving Iraqi Muslims and Christians alike and represents both religions in a high state of harmony. Then, the movie upholds the spread of Saddam's portraits in Baghdad's institutions and streets. It represents them as a symbol of power, resistance, and challenge. In this way, the movie imposes the regime's ideological domains and undermines the Iraqis' need for a different life. In other words, the portraits undermine the fact that the Iraqis need business and freedom more than Saddam's portraits. Then, the movie adopts allegorical representation of characters. It uses Iman's generosity as an indication to the regime's generosity and the Manager's inhuman reaction to Zaman's need for medicine for his wife as a reflection of the United States' stand against Iraqis' basic human needs.

Nevertheless, the movie critiques other aspects under Saddam's regime and produces utopian visions with local and global dimensions. It critiques the status quo in Baghdad and

represents the Iraqi Marshlands as a Utopian place free from ideological apparatuses, characterized with many natural elements and sources. It depicts the people of the Marshlands living in solidarity with each other. Furthermore, the movie supports impulses toward a global utopia. It addresses the whole world to revolt against Saddam's regime and an expected war by the United States' administration. It depicts Saddam's regime and capitalism as threatening the existence of human beings and ecology. Producing impulses utopian visions and criticizing the reactions of both Saddam's regime and the United States' policy toward Iraq are equally narrated in the American movie, *Three Kings*, which was also produced as a reaction against Gulf War I.

THREE KINGS

Three Kings is written and directed by David O. Russell. Primarily produced by Village Roadshow Pictures, it was distributed by Warner Bros. in 1999. The movie mostly narrates the aftermath of Gulf War I. It highlights the greedy ends, and the inconsistency in the policy of the United States' commitment toward human rights during and after this war. Russell states that "when I made the movie, I felt the abandonment of Iraqi people at the war's end further pointed to the hypocrisy of our intervention: it's the oil, stupid, not the people. We don't care about the people or democracy" (qtd. in Edelstein AR18). The movie critiques capitalism and reveals that the United States adopted the defense of the human rights as a strategy to achieve its imperialistic and capitalistic intentions, such as the establishment of the American Army as an international police force and securing oil prices globally. The movie displays series of tragic events that the Iraqi rebels and their families faced after they had been encouraged by the President George H. W. Bush to rise against Saddam's regime.

The movie has a complex structure and is built upon many contractions. Even though it is an antiwar movie, *Three Kings* unconsciously expresses the views of the dominant American ideology that considered Gulf War I a war for securing human rights, or a "Just War." It represents Iraqi soldiers as thieves who should be punished for stealing Kuwaiti gold bullions and that stolen bullions should be returned to Kuwait. It also reduces the importance of any revolution or alternative circumstances by representing Iraqi rebels and Archie Gates' (George Clooney) crew in many defeated situations. However, at the utopian level, the movie reveals the capitalistic aims of the war and its violation of human rights. It represents Saddam's regime and American government as allies more than enemies. At the same time, the movie produces impulses toward local and global utopias. It lays out movements toward American utopia

through trying to change the military role of the American Army to political and social roles. The movie also generates impulses toward a global utopia. It establishes a state of harmony between Iraqi rebels and Gates' crew in many scenes and produces imaginary ties among them beyond ideological categorization. In other words, the movie displays alternative circumstances in which Gates' crew and Iraqi rebels cooperate with each other and attempt to challenge a status quo controlled by totalitarianism and capitalism.

Three Kings interprets the desires of the dominant American ideology which intends to change the American Army to an international police force. It narrates the story of Kuwaiti gold bullions in accord with the dominant ideology's motives. The movie supports the dominant ideology's desire of promoting the role of the American Army to an international police force. It invents Gates' crew stealing back Kuwaiti gold bullions from the Iraqi Army. It represents the Iraqi Army's stealing of Kuwaiti gold bullions as an evil action but Gates crew's theft of bullions as a legal one. In other words, the movie does not reflect Gates crew's stealing of Kuwaiti gold bullions as an outlawed action. It complicates Iraq's stealing of Kuwaiti golden bullions and introduces the American Army as the only force qualified to punish the Iraqi Army and return Kuwaiti gold bullions. Through such narratives, the movie upholds the dominant American ideology's wish and excludes the main role of the United Nations in returning Kuwaiti bullions back.

This narrative keeps out the fact that Iraq returned all Kuwaiti gold bullions. On the 30th of July 1991, Paul Lewis stated in *The New York Times* that there has never been any disagreement between Iraqi and Kuwaiti sides on the number and weight of the stolen gold bullions. Kuwait declared and Iraq affirmed that the number of the stolen bullions was 3,216 bullions, each one weighing 12.5 Kilograms/30 pounds and Iraq promised to return all of

them(A3). One month later, *The New York Times* cites a United Nations official, who stated that “Iraq has handed back Kuwait gold bullions worth about \$ 700 million that Baghdad looted during the invasion of emirate last year” and “the last of 3,216 bars of gold was handed over at the Saudi border post of Arar on Thursday” (qtd. in “Iraq Gives Back Gold It Stole” A4). Additionally, the movie excludes the role of the coalition forces that cooperated with the United States in liberating Kuwait. It does not make any reference to their role in Gulf War I. It attributes all aspects of law enforcement to the American Army alone and ignores their functions. In this sense, the movie reveals the dominant ideology’s “*excluding* rival forms of thought,” which is, for Eagleton, an essential function of any ideology (6, original emphasis). Indeed, the movie passes over the attitudes which lay out the process of returning Kuwaiti gold bullions. It drives out the role of the United Nations in returning Kuwaiti bullions and allied forces in liberating Kuwait in order to distribute the dominant ideology’s desire toward the American Army.

Three Kings represents the American Army as free from ethnic contradictions and racial discriminations. In other words, the movie positions the American Army as most fitting to play the role of an international force. It depicts the American Army based on experience and equality rather than race or color. It represents the black characters at higher ranks and more educated than the white ones. It represents Chief Elgin (Ice Cube) who is a black man as staff sergeant and more educated than Conrad Vig (Spike Jonze) who is a white man and a private first class. Elgin refuses Vig’s use of expressions such as “dune coons” or “sand niggers” which reflect racial issues. He is seen as loyal to his white companions and risks his life to release his friend Troy Barlow (Mark Wahlberg) from the jails of Iraqi Republic Guards. At the same time, the movie represents Colonel Horn (Mykelti Williamson), who is a black man, in a higher rank than major

Gates. He is more attached to military regulations and more concerned about the future of the American Army than major Gates, who is dissatisfied with Gulf War I. Horn agrees to follow Gates' request to get Iraqi rebels across the border when he finds Gates' request improves the moral role of the American Army. This representation reveals ideological aims of being perceived as egalitarian and not racist. It imagines the equal presence and the important opportunities for black servicemembers in the American military to suppress their actual absence and real suffering in the civil community. Isabel Wilkerson reports that although the percentage of African Americans in the American Army was around thirty percent during the first Gulf War, their percentage in the civil society did not exceed twelve percent during the same era. This overrepresentation of African Americans in the Army reveals the fact that they were not given enough opportunities in education or employment and they found the Army the only welcoming apparatus for them (Wilkerson). Thus, the movie's representation of the American Army as an apparatus free from racism reinforces another ideological function. It interpellates the audience to view the status of the black people in accordance with the official ideology and to ignore the discrimination against them. It promotes American dominant ideology's interest in changing the American army into an international police force and suppresses the existence of real discrimination in American society.

Three Kings also repeats the accusations and expectations of the American dominant ideology. President Bush's administration encouraged the Iraqi people to revolt against Saddam's regime and promised to help them. When they did, the administration betrayed them. Trevor McCrisken attributes the United States' refusal to intervene for a political change to three reasons. First, the American administration did not want to repeat the experience of Vietnam. Second, it did not want to violate the United Nations' resolutions and lose its friendship with

allied countries as they refused to help the United States if it decided to go further and topple Saddam's regime. Third, it did not have enough local support (150-2). The American dominant ideology expected the decline of Iraqi revolution after Gulf War I and did not encourage any alternative status quo in Iraq. It expected that Saddam's regime would be able to suppress the revolution and it deserted Iraqi rebels to the brutality of the regime's power. This is exactly what *Three Kings* represents. It shows the regime's Republican Guards suppressing the revolution aggressively.

The movie also repeats the dominant ideology's claims and accusations that Iraqi rebels in the south had ties to Iran and they will try to establish a government alliance with Iran. The movie ignores Iraqi rebels in other parts of Iraq who chose other countries, including the United States, to flee to, and restricts the revolution to Iraqi Shiites in the south of Iraq. It represents Iraqi Shiites as connected to Iran socially and religiously. In fact, the most uprisings which disturbed American administration after Gulf War I was the uprising of the south. The United States did not want any uprising to succeed there. It expected that any success of the uprising in the south of Iraq would exchange Saddam's regime, a Sunni and a secular regime, with a Shiite one. It suspected that a Shiite regime would be an ally to Iran, and they would threaten the stability of everything in the Middle East, especially the oil markets. A. M. Rosenthal states that the United States administration believed that Saddam's success in repressing the rebels in the south of Iraq would certainly push them to Iran (A 19). For this reason, the movie's focus on the Iraqi Shiite rebels and connecting them to Iran embodies an ideological limit. It accords with prevailing perspectives of American administration. Indeed, the movie supports the dominant ideology's depiction of Iraqi Shiite as Iranian allies.

Three Kings restricts the role of alternatives to the status quo and reduces positive consequences. It orients the viewers toward supporting the status quo rather than uprising against it or trying to break it. It reduces the effect of Iraqis' uprising and does not offer any futuristic change in Iraq's status quo. In other words, the movie rejects the importance of uprisings against the status quos and puts the rebels under miserable circumstances. It represents them as a group of helpless people, innocent children, and incapable women. The movie disables them to confront Saddam's regime. It depicts them as without any developed strategy or planned action against the regime. The movie also highlights the success of the Republican Guards in suppressing the revolution and the rebels escape from Iraq. In brief, the movie places Saddam's repression over any alternative status quo. It depicts Iraqi rebels as too weak to achieve any significant change in Iraq's present and future.

Furthermore, the movie also downplays Gates crew's attempts to go beyond American militarism or break its regulations. Because of the lack of support by the American military, Gates' crew could not confront the Republican Guards until the end and in so doing, they face miserable circumstances. Gates is injured, Troy is imprisoned and injured, and Vig is killed. Their efforts are restricted in helping Iraqi rebels. Put differently, they help Iraqi rebels to escape from Iraq rather than to confront Saddam's regime and achieve a change in Iraq. Lila Kitaeff reports that even though Russell claimed that *Three Kings* would be unconventional, in fact, the movie does not disturb the status quo enough to locate it outside of Hollywood's market. On the contrary, it pushes its viewers towards dominant discourse (9). As such, the movie is seen as an anti-revolution movie. It shows neither the Iraqi uprising nor Gates crew's break succeed in changing the existed circumstances. The first group's attempts of changing Saddam's regime are exported, and the second group's attempts of breaking the conditions of American militarism

are suppressed and given little attention. Both groups could not advance any situation outside of dominant ideology's interests. The movie represents Iraqi and American existing sociopolitical circumstances as the prevailing ones and stronger than any kind of change. Iraqi Republican Guards could easily repress Iraqi rebels and compel them to flee to Iran. In other words, the movie shows how the Iraqi Republican Guards changed Iraqi rebels from fighters for a different Iraq to menial refugees. Gates crew's dissatisfaction with the war was subdued. The movie confines their rebellion against the American Army and its role in Gulf War I. At the end, they are arrested and cannot achieve any condition opposing the ruling class's advantages. In this sense, the movie succeeds in sustaining the power of the status quo and narrowing the power of any revolution.

Three Kings also expresses the perspectives of Kuwaiti dominant ideology. It represents Iraqi Republican Guards as thieves and the American Army as liberators. It highlights Iraqi Republican Guards' looting of Kuwaiti public and private property. The movie shows the Republican Guards' bunkers around the city of Karbala full of Kuwaiti property, such as gold bullions, fancy cars, expensive jewelries, new televisions, mini stereos, IBM computers, and other property. In other words, the movie shows almost every corner in Republican Guards bunkers having a stolen Kuwaiti property. On the 14th of March 1991, the Kuwaiti representative to the United Nations, Mohammed Abu Al-Hassan, reported that Iraq stole properties from the Kuwaiti National Library, the Kuwaiti Airways Corporation, the Kuwait National Museum, the Kuwaiti National Assembly, currency and gold bars from Central Bank of Kuwait. At the same time, Kuwait accused the Iraqi Army of stealing hundreds of fancy Kuwaiti cars from Monarchy palaces, public parking areas, city streets, and residents' houses and sent them to Saddam's family members and relatives. Abdul Reda Assiri states that the Iraqi Army

looted a lot of fancy cars from Kuwait during the invasion. He mentions that the Iraqi Army stole not less than 500, 000 modern vehicles and special trucks (Alazemi,246). In this sense, the movie's highlighting of Iraqi Republican Guards' looting of Kuwaiti properties in many scenes repeats Kuwaiti convictions.

The movie also represents the impact of Iraqi invasion on the environment. It reproduces Saddam's regime burning of Kuwaiti oil wells and its ecological impacts. Adriana Cruz (Nora Dunn) and Walter Wogaman (Jamie Kennedy) are shocked to find a group of birds next to a lake filled with oil unable to fly because of Kuwaiti's oil damage and environmental pollution around the area. Adriana tells Walter "Look at these poor fucking birds... it's an ecological catastrophe. Its goddamn horrible, Jesus Christ." In this sense, the movie speaks for the interests of the Kuwaiti prevailing ideology. Mohammed Khalon reported that Iraqi forces massively destroyed Kuwaiti national oil resources. They set fire to 618 oil wells and destroyed around 462 wells out of 1555 wells. They also damaged 77 wells and allowed oil to flow freely. For these reasons, Kuwait lost 4-5 million barrels of oil daily. At an equal rate, it was anticipated that 70, 000, 000 m² of soot was produced daily because of the fire in Kuwaiti oil wells. Furthermore, the flow of uncontrolled oil formed two hundred lakes of oil totaling around 125 million barrels and caused an environmental crisis. (173-74). With that said, through exposing Iraqi Republican Guards bunkers as full of Kuwaiti property and laying out the ruining of Kuwaiti oil wells. *Three Kings* reflects Kuwaiti dominant concepts. It describes the Iraqi Republican Guards' destruction of Kuwaiti infrastructure within the Kuwaiti prevailing ideology which attempted to persuade the world of the necessity of kicking Saddam's forces out of Kuwait and destroying his power. The movie also leaves the social and economic tensions between Iraq and Kuwait at its status quo without offering any chance of reconciliation. In this sense, the movie manifests Kuwaiti

situation which refused to forgive Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and its aftermath. Thus, in addition to American dominant ideology's perspectives, the movie also displays Kuwaiti circumstances after the invasion from Kuwaiti perspectives. Dialectically speaking, the movie's ideological closures are not the sole themes and structures of *Three Kings*. At the utopian level, the movie also criticizes the prevailing ideology and attempts to open the ideological closure with impulses offering a movement toward local and global utopias.

Three Kings exceeds ideological obstacles and criticizes the American dominant ideology. At one level, the movie exhibits the shocking and unrepresented offensives of the United States' administration against the Iraqi Army and civilians during Gulf War I. Gates shows his crew two Iraqi soldiers' corpses; one was burnt and the other one was half-buried. He tells his crew "we dropped a lot of bombs out here. We also buried a lot of guys alive." Through this scene, the movie highlights two of the United States most striking assaults during Gulf War I, the "Highway to Death" and the "Bulldozer Assault." In the first one, American Airplanes bombed hundreds of Iraqi military vehicles and burnt hundreds of soldiers inside them while they were retreating on the Highway 80 between Iraq and Kuwait. Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh mention that the Pentagon estimated the number of the casualties of this assault to be around hundreds, but a report guessed that around 5000 Iraqi soldiers burned in this assault and they were buried by Saudis (408). In the second assault, the "Bulldozer Assault," American troops buried Iraqi soldiers alive. Patrick Sloyan states that divisions from the American 1st infantry, after using a process of shocking strikes, broke through Iraqi trenches on the front lines and used plows mounted on tanks and combat earthmovers and buried many Iraqis alive. General Norman Schwarzkopf refused to give media the exact number of Iraqi soldiers who were killed in this assault, but his staff guessed that they were between 50,000-70,000 (A1). In this way, the

movie criticizes the Bush's administration which considered the war as a "Just War" and reveals the main offenses that the dominant report did not. Edelstein reports that Russel aimed through *Three Kings* to refute the American administrations' claim that the United States won a "moral victory" in this war.

At the same time, the movie also aims to exhibit the offenses that the United States administration committed against Iraqi civilians that it ought to protect. Captain Said (Saïd Taghmaoui) told Barlow that "you blow [*sic*] up my home. The whole street. My wife is crush [*sic*] by big fucking block of concrete. She lose [*sic*] her legs" and "My son was killed in his bed. He is one year old. He is sleeping with toy when the bomb come [*sic*]." The movie visualizes this scene by accompanying Said's speech with a roof falling on a sleeping baby. He also asks Barlow to imagine the same horror or the same event happening to his family in the United States. The movie visualizes that by showing Barlow's family getting blown up by an explosion. Through these scenes, the movie does not only aim to deliver the hidden facts of Gulf War I and the horrible offenses of the United States, but it also attempts to bring the viewers and these offenses close to each other in order to shock the viewers and force them to imagine the same offenses happening to their families. Through these scenes, the movie attempts to challenge further the dominant ideology's depiction of Gulf War I as a war free from casualties. Significantly, Jude Davies mentions that this scene was important in that it shocked American students more than British and Dutch students during their discussion of *Three Kings* in a conference over the internet in November 2002. This scene made American students change their views about another war in Iraq. An American student reports:

As an American, I think the director did a great job showing such an approach that is not what I would call your 'everyday' Hollywood flick. A prime example that really impacted me was when the Iraq soldier talked about how the Americans killed his

newborn with a stray missile. That, along with other Americans that I talked to outside the class described that scene as something to really think about, a surprisingly most have changed their minds and now are against the U.S. going back to the war. (Davis 413)

In this way, the movie shatters the dominant ideology depiction of the Gulf War I as a “Just War.” It shows that American “moral victory” in this war as immoral actions against human rights in Iraq.

The movie also equates the offenses of Bush’s administration with the offenses of Saddam’s regime. It represents the offenses of Saddam’s regime as a continuation of the offenses of the United States’ administration and reveals Saddam’s regime as an American made regime. In other words, the movie represents the cruelties of Iraqi Republican Guards as a production of the United States’ administration which allied with Saddam’s regime. Said informs Barlow that “You know I got weapons training from America...Specialist guys came here ... to train us when we fight Iran.” With this intention, the movie aims to unmask the fact that Saddam was an ally of the United States and the United States’ policy played a vital role in empowering his regime during the Iraq- Iran War in the 1980s. The movie reveals this fact during Said’s torturing Barlow with an electric shock and forcing him to drink a motor oil. This miserable and inhuman scene intends to shock American viewers with another hidden fact. It does not mean to shock them with the brutality of Saddam’s regime but with the hidden sources of this brutality_ the United States’ administration. Put differently, it reveals the fact that it was the United States that trained the Republican Guards of Saddam to be skillful in practicing such brutality. In this way, the movie shatters the dominant ideology and shocks its viewers. It expresses that it is the American people, not the Iraqi people, who first need to revolt against their social system. That said, the movie explores the interrelatedness of Iraqi and American authorities. It criticizes their offenses against Iraqi people. It depicts both social systems as violators of human rights and

juxtaposes their assaults. Said and Barlow describe both systems as “crazy.” Said tells Barlow “May be Saddam is very crazy, right? And then you are crazy to bomb all Iraq.” Barlow responded, “Too much bombing is crazy but save Kuwait.”

Three Kings also critiques capitalism and represents it as a system of immorality. The movie attributes Gulf War I to the intention of capitalism to extent further in the era of post-Cold War. In other words, the movie shows that the economy and oil market are the main reasons behind Gulf War I. Davis states that the movie criticizes the first Gulf War and shows that the military intervention was completely based on economic factors. The United States campaigned the war just to manage the level of oil consumerism (408) That is to say, the United States campaigned the war to secure oil markets rather than human rights. Said asked Barlow “Do they care? Do your army care about the children in Iraq? Do they come back to help?” Barlow answered “No, they are not coming.” Furthermore, *Three Kings* represents capitalism as a system run by hypocrisy and greediness. It shows that capitalism is involved in economic consideration rather than human rights and social justice. Said tells Barlow that a lot of nations are suffering in the world but the United States do not fight for them. The movie shows that it is oil and global price of the oil that capitalism cares about not global justice or global peace. Thus, the movie critiques capitalism and shows its unjustness as it fights just to keep oil prices and the level of its consumption fixed. In this way, the movie achieves the first part of the utopian function which is for Tally a necessary duty in any utopia and utopian analysis. He indicates that “utopias initially must present the root causes of a given society’s ills. In identifying and disclosing such problems, utopian discourse has already fulfilled one of its fundamental offices, which is to serve as a critique of the existing system.” (16) Besides critiquing many important aspects in the status

quo, *Three Kings* also develops significant visions which introduce a movement toward local and global utopias.

At the local level, *Three Kings* produces alternative and futuristic jobs for the American Army. It represents Gates' crew doing humanistic jobs rather than military ones. Since the beginning of the movie, Gates' crew expressed their dissatisfaction with the war and decided to revolt against the rules of the American military. In other words, instead of attaching themselves to the interests of the ruling classes, they attached themselves to the project of securing human rights rather than financial benefits of capitalism. They felt more pleasure in releasing Iraqi rebels from Republican Guards' jails and taking them out of the boundary of Saddam's power than in returning the Kuwaiti gold bullion or following the army's regulations. They distributed their food and some of Kuwaiti gold bullion to Iraqi rebels. They rejected the reactions of the American administration toward Iraqi rebels and decided to stand with them. Significantly, Gates' crew broke the regulations of the ceasefire between the Iraqi and American governments when they realized the American administration's betrayal of Iraqi rebels and its reinstatement of support for Saddam's regime. For this reason, Gates' crew declared their own war against the strategies of Gulf War I and intended to secure human rights rather than the ecopolitical interests of prevailing powers. In other words, they challenged the limits of ecopolitical war which attempted to defeat the other side of the conflict or move it from bad to worse situations. They developed a social war based on helping the other side of the conflict to exceed the crises and move forward. In this sense, the movie projects social duties rather imperial activities for the American Army and develops impulses toward American utopia.

With that said, Gates' crews' activities of Gates' crew embody utopian impulses. They accord with Jameson's visions toward American utopia. In *American Utopia*, Jameson believes

that American utopia should focus on imagining alternative duties for American Army. He asserts that the American Army should have a radical role rather than the traditional one. It should do a political coup and become a fundamental source for change. In brief, he believes that one aspect of American utopia should focus on changing the American Army, borrowing Leon Trotsky's words, from a bourgeois army to a social army (33). Gates' crew establish a coup inside the American Army. They redirect its duties and reorient its missions. They want the American Army to be more committed to the civil needs than to the traditional military functions. Gates's crew encounter the stands of the American Army and the American administration that refused to listen to Iraqi rebels or stood with them. Thus, the movie develops an impulse toward American utopia because it deorganizes the top list duties of the American Army and suggests alternative tasks for it.

At the global level, *Three Kings* produces visions toward a global utopia. It highlights the possibility of creating a world characterized with sincerity and trust as opposed to the world of Gulf War I which was characterized with deception and betrayal. The movie depicts the Iraqi rebels and Gates' crew working for an alternative world. They rejected requirements of their sociopolitical situations and united together to fight the instances of hypocrisy that were planned by the American administration against Iraqi rebels. Interestingly, the Iraqi rebels and Gates crew succeeded in establishing a unique sincerity with each other in opposition to the war's absurd motivations and a particular trust out of political deceit. They trusted each other more than they trusted their administrations. The crew joined the Iraqi rebels and supported them when they found Iraqi rebels fighting seriously for equality and freedom. At the same time, the Iraqi rebels supported Gates' crew when they found them to be against deception and committed to helping. Gates' crew refused false promises and social injustice against Iraqi rebels. In other

words, they refused manipulation and preferred saving Iraqi rebels and their families to saving Kuwaiti gold bullions. Significantly, both groups share a notable loyalty and commitment. Interestingly, Gates' crew saved Amir Abdullah (Cliff Curtis) from a Republican Guards' torture and delivered Iraqi rebels to the Iranian borders. In the same way, the Iraqi rebels also remained loyal. They helped Gates' crew find Barlow and released him from the Republican Guard's jail. Overall, the movie shows that the world is dominated by conspiratorial and hypocritical powers. It suggests social integrity and communal commitment as competent visions for a better world.

Iraqi rebels and Gates' crew also develop alternative circumstances to chaotic moments of the war. Iraqi rebels give Gates' crew a sense of comfort and freedom. They felt more relaxed with Iraqi rebels and had moments free from military restrictions. At the same time, Iraqi rebels also felt more secured and protected with Gates' crew. They all lived moments of liberty and unity. The Iraqi rebels expressed freely their anger at Saddam's regime and Bush's betrayal of them. They found themselves deserted by the whole world except Gates' crew who provided them with gold and delivered them to areas free from Saddam's domination. Likewise, Iraqi rebels protected Gates' crew from the gas attack and provided them with a shelter. Significantly, the movie represents the shelter as a space of unity. It dissolves the religious and political differences between both groups and creates moments of cohesion as alternative to religious collisions. It offers Elgin, a Christian, and Iraqi rebels, Muslims, a unique opportunity to pray together and respect each other's religion. Then, the movie reinforces a political cooperation between both groups to get united and empowers them to confront the status quo together. In this way, this shelter produces essential functions of "Utopian enclaves." For Jameson,

[S]uch enclaves are something like a foreign body within the social: in them, the differentiation process has momentarily been arrested, so that they remain as it were momentarily beyond the reach of the social and testify to its political powerlessness, at

the same time that they offer a space in which new wish images of the social can be elaborated and experimented on. (*Archaeologies* 16)

The shelter negates the reasons for the differences between two groups and releases new images of sociality. It reconciles both sides of the conflict and changes them from fighting each other to fighting for each other. Thus, the movie offers another vision toward a global utopia. It attempts to replace the war's futile moments of opposition with universal visions of solidarity.

Three Kings offers yet another vision toward a global utopia in representing Iraqi rebels. It rejects traditional misrepresentation of the Other. It introduces them as smart and intelligent rebels. They have degrees and know how business and politics work. The movie depicts them as talkative and optimistic people. It gives them enough opportunity to express their political attitudes and dreams. Significantly, they convince Gates' crew with their plans and suggestions. Without them, Gates' crew would face a lot of difficulties in finding Kuwaiti gold bullions and releasing Barlow from the Republican Guard's jail. They succeed in having Gates' crew accomplish their missions. Furthermore, the movie depicts them as respectful and as communicating well with Gates' crew. They are educated and speak English fluently. They have enough awareness of the political circumstances around them. Due to this representation, the director states that "I and the producers and Warner Brothers were given an award by Arab organization in the United States for our human portrayal of Arabs." (qtd. in Edelstein AR 18)

The movie also depicts Iraqi rebels as actively resistant. It displays them as resolute rebels fighting the oppression of the Iraqi regime and treachery of the American administration. They disclose the falsity of the United States because President Bush encouraged them to rebel against Saddam's regime and when they did, he ignored them. Amir Abdullah (Cliff Curtis) tells Gates that "Now, we try to get rid of Saddam. Bush leaves us twisting in the winds." They

believed in the importance of rising and adopted it as a way for a different future for Iraq. Obviously, Iraqi rebels reject yielding to both administrations' strategies of manipulation and isolation. In other words, the movie depicts them as refusing to be isolated by Saddam's regime and manipulated by Bush's administration. This representation produces a significant vision toward a global utopia. It refuses to demonize the Others. It emphasizes the necessity of establishing a mutual connection among human beings and equal representation of the Other in cultural productions.

At an equal rate, *Three Kings* also introduces a positive representation of black people. Davies states that during the international conference over *Three Kings*, most of American students agreed that the film gives a positive image of black people. They believed that the film made a positive representation of African Americans through the character of Elgin. A student states that the movie succeeds in incorporating the honesty of Gates and warm heartedness of Barlow. Another student believes that Elgin is represented as a peacemaker and succeeds in keeping Gates' crew together. At the same time, another one declares that:

While Marky Mark's character [Troy Barlow] presents a perfect picture of American values - his wife, his kid, and, most importantly, his whiteness- Ice Cube is doubtless the film's Ideal American: upstanding, calculating, compassionate, empathetic, and both physically and mentally strong, he is the man that Americans would have home to dinner. If they were color blind . . . (originally emphasized, and dashed, 18-19).

Likewise, Kitaeff mentions that the movie represents Elgin as the only religious character in Gates' crew. He is depicted as a character with a spiritual nature. For this reason, he is the only character in Gates' crew above shooting, killing, and torturing. In this sense, the movie shares the notion of liberal discourse which considers blackness as the center of spirituality and morality (8). The movie contradicts stereotypical image of blackness and minimizing its social role in American society. Considering all, the movie offers a significant vision toward a global

utopia. It attempts to deconstruct racial tensions and cultural differences by producing visions exceeding the limits of racism and Otherness. The movie represents a positive depiction of human beings by going beyond their color and identity at local and global levels.

Three Kings combines a series of contradictory ideas and stances or what Jameson calls, *aporia* and antinomies, unresolved contradictions in *The Political Unconscious* (50). The movie historicizes a repressed conflict between prevailing attitudes and opposing ones. In other words, the contradicting elements in the movie's narrative are clear reflections of the contradiction in its sociopolitical context. Jameson states that any contradiction in the cultural text is "symptomatic expression and conceptual reflex of something quite different, namely a social contradiction" (83). *Three Kings* succeeds in revealing a social tension between the perspectives of the American dominant ideology and the perspectives of the opposing ideologies that opposed Gulf War I. On one hand, the movie represents the ideas of the American dominant ideology. It justifies the dominant ideology's war against Iraq and its claims. The movie also restates Bush's perspectives when he promised American citizens that Gulf War I would not be another Vietnam War and it would have the lowest casualties. Colonel Horn disagrees with Gates' attempt to get further involved in Iraq and told him they do not want to invade all of Iraq just like Vietnam.

On the other hand, the movie also reflects the opposite ideologies which were dissatisfied with Gulf War I and its pretext. They looked at the war as a planned strategy of capitalism. For example, Noam Chomsky and Michael Albert asserted that "the real reason for U.S. opposition to Iraqi occupation of Kuwait is... to keep Washington, Wall Street, and their allies in charge of setting oil prices" (Kitaeff 3). The movie succeeds in expressing these ideas clearly. Barlow attributes the reason for the war to securing the stability of the world. However, Said attributes it to securing the stability of oil prices. Moreover, the movie highlights the

meaninglessness of Gulf War I. Gates asked Colonel Horn (Mykelti Williamson), “What was this war about?” Similarly, Adrian also asked “What was this war about?” That said, the movie expresses the counter ideologies that consider the war as an imperial and tragic action against humanity. After all, the movie’s contradictions historicize sociopolitical tensions between the ruling power and its contestants and bring the real fragmentation in American society during Gulf War I to the surface.

As noted, *Three Kings* presents ideological constraints and utopian impulses dialectically. On one hand, the movie supports the American prevailing ideology. It represents the American Army as free from racial discrimination and gives it more priority to be the sole guardian of universal order and peace. It shows Iraqi rebels unable to resist Saddam’s regime and reduces the possibilities of any positive change in Iraq. The movie also opens no spaces for a different status quo between Kuwaiti monarchy and Saddam’s regime. It highlights the Iraqi Army as stealing Kuwaiti properties and destroying Kuwaiti oil wells. Indeed, the movie’s ideological aspects create ideological constraints.

However, *Three Kings* challenges those closures with utopian impulses. It rejects racial and national priority and introduces significant visions toward a global utopia. It produces distinct visions toward the possibility of changing a manipulative and treacherous world into a loyal and an honest one. It represents Gate’s crew and the Iraqi rebels in a state of togetherness and places their alternative state over their differences and isolation. It shows that without togetherness neither group would survive and be able to challenge the status quo. Iraqi rebels are seen suffering torture until they are liberated and protected by Gates’ crew. Similarly, Gates’ crew are frustrated in the Iraqi desert and become vulnerable to the Republican Guards’ attacks until they are sheltered by Iraqi rebels. In short, *Three Kings*’ utopian visions carry political

significances because they exceed ideological differences and offer progressive images toward a global utopia.

As noted, *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds* and *Three Kings* support the status quo under their dominant ideologies. They produce scenes which reinforce the desires and expectations of their dominant ideologies. *Zaman* gives the Shiites enough freedom to convince the world of the religious freedom under Saddam's power. It shows that the Iraqi Shiites need nothing except practicing their religious rituals freely. In this sense, the movie depicts them as a passive population and suppresses their political and social perspectives. *Three Kings* depicts the Shiites within a propaganda context. It shows them as victims of Saddam's regime. They are seen facing unlimited torture and murder by the regime. In other words, the movie dramatizes the brutality of Saddam's forces against them to convince the world of Saddam's repression of religious freedom. Significantly, *Three Kings* presents the Shiites as an active population. It focuses on their political needs more than religious freedom. In other words, *Three Kings* displays that the Shiites need political freedom more than religious freedom. It displays them having political and business visions that cannot come true without the United States' support. In brief, both movies politicize the Shiite's spiritual and material needs for ideological purposes.

More importantly, *Zaman* and *Three Kings* embody visions toward a global utopia. *Three Kings* reminds its audience of Saddam's burning of Kuwaiti oil wells and how this action affected the environment in the Middle East. *Zaman* equates the effects of Gulf War I on Iraqi Marshlands and Saddam's draining of its large areas. In this way, both movies express their concern about ecological catastrophe and call for protecting ecology from Saddam's regime and the destruction of capitalism. The movies also express their concern about humanity and generate images of uniting human beings with each other as another movement toward a global utopia.

Three Kings establishes a unique state of togetherness between Gates' crew and the Iraqi rebels despite the circumstances of Gulf War I. *Zaman* expresses its refusal of isolating the Iraqis. Through narrating Zaman's suffering, highlighting the state of chaos, and showing the spread of unemployment in Baghdad, the movie sends a clear message: Iraqis desire to get rid of Saddam's regime and live together with the rest of the liberal world. In brief, *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds* and *Three Kings* highlight the similar consequences in Gulf War I's aftermath, draw equal political stances against it, and call for a one world order. Equally important, the American and Iraqi theatrical productions expressed other political stances against terrorism and the war against it.

CHAPTER THREE: VISIONS TOWARD A GLOBAL UTOPIA VERSUS “THE WAR ON TERRORISM” IN IRAQI AND AMERICAN THEATRICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

This chapter focuses on Iraqi and American theatrical reactions against “the war on terrorism” through exploring two plays written and produced after Gulf War II, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*, by Iraqi-Omani playwright Abdul Razaq Al-Rubai, and *An Identified Enemy*, written by the American playwright Max Bush. This chapter shows that besides supporting some ideological perspectives unconsciously, these plays also critique the reasons and the results of what was called “the war on terrorism.” The plays represent the United States and al-Qaeda in Iraq as two sides of the conflict and identify how they manipulated religion and power in order to mobilize enough support for the war and guarantee its continuation. This chapter displays the extreme ideas of al-Qaeda in Iraq and the United States’ prevailing perspectives against terrorism as ideological constraints in the plays. *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* supports al-Qaeda in Iraq which dominated many cities in the west of Iraq at the beginning of the United States’ invasion and repeats its radical regulations unconsciously. *An Identified Enemy* also maintains some claims “the war on terrorism” unconsciously.

At the utopian level, this chapter shows that the selected plays attempt to create familial relationships between antagonistic sides as visions toward a global utopia. The plays also critique terrorism and the unending war against it. They project that “the war on terrorism” should be directed to specific terrorists and groups rather than whole nations. In other words, the plays critique destroying entire communities because of certain terrorist organizations. They attempt to stop further clashes between the nations with the intent to join both sides of the conflict into one borderless family beyond their geopolitical divisions and religious differences. Thus, this chapter explores visions toward a global utopia versus terrorism in Gulf War II theatrical demonstrations.

A STRANGE BIRD ON OUR ROOF

A Strange Bird on Our Roof was written by Al-Rubai in 2006. It dramatizes the life of an Iraqi family put under the surveillance of the American Army for having a member who joined the insurgency. The play depicts the insurgency in Iraq when it reached its climax between 2004 and 2006. During this period, Iraq had many insurgency groups from different places. They were mainly led by al Qaeda and had one goal, fighting the American Army in Iraq. In her book *The Terrorists of Iraq*, Nance Malcolm mentions large number of terrorist groups in Iraq. She believes that the main groups were the Army of Mohammed, Ansar al-Sunna, and the Army of the Mujahedeen, to mention a few. They considered American troops “enemies” because they were non-Muslims and invaders (174). They established al-Qaeda in Iraq and dominated almost all aspects of life in Iraqi western cities which were defined by the American Army as “al- Sunni Triangle Area.” The extreme ideology of al-Qaeda became the dominant ideology in this part of Iraq. For this reason, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* reflects the extreme ideology of al-Qaeda unconsciously. It represents Ziyad, a young Iraqi, joins the insurgency to resist the American invasion. As a result, the American soldiers break into his home at midnight and assign a soldier on its roof. They also put Ziyad’s mother and sister under strict surveillance.

In fact, the main plot of the play is based on a real story. According to A. Al- Azraki and James Al-Shamma, Al-Rubai reports that:

In writing the play, I was inspired by an incident that occurred in 2006. The Iraqi writer Rasha Fadhil was living in one of the high conflict zones in Tikrit, and at that time there was an escalation of the insurgency against American forces. One day she told me about a family there. The Americans created a surveillance point on the roof of their home in order to ambush one of the sons, who was involved in the insurgency, and to put psychological pressure on the family. (121)

That said, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* supports unconsciously the repressive ideology of al-Qaeda which dominated the west of Iraq. The play represents religious differences between both sides of the conflict and maintains al-Qaeda's ideology unconsciously through adopting its categorization of American soldiers as Non-Muslims. The play also depicts American soldiers and Iraqi civilians under disparate situations, showing them as unable to defeat al-Qaeda in the west of Iraq. In this way, the play produces ideological confines supporting al-Qaeda in the west of Iraq unconsciously. However, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* also attempts to challenge the ideological confines with utopian impulses. It opens spaces of sharing significant respect and kindness between Iraqi civilians and American troops beyond al-Qaeda's ideological confines. It produces a familial relationship between Ziyad's mother, Ziyad's sister (Rasha), and the American soldier on their roof. The play offers this relationship as a vision toward a global utopia. It produces this vision to minimize xenophobia and stop antagonism between both sides of the conflict. Hence, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* tries to unite Iraqi civilians and American troops together as members of one family.

Even though *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* is anti-terrorism, it unconsciously sustains the extreme ideology of al-Qaeda against the United States Army in Iraq. It adopts the religious differences between Iraqi civilians and American soldiers as a strategy to enhance the struggle between both sides of the conflict. The play represents American soldiers as infidels. Ziyad's mother calls American soldiers "Killers, and *Kafirs*" (original emphasis 124). According to Al-Azraki and Al-Shamma,, "Kafir translates as 'unbeliever' or 'infidel.' The word is commonly used to refer to non-Muslims, although in a broad sense, it applies to anyone who rejects God. Whether or not it encompasses Christians and Jews (People of the Book) is disputed by Islamic scholars. Here, it is used as a derogatory term" (141). Clearly, the play uses "Kafirs" within al-

Qaeda's extreme definition to refer to them as non-Muslims. The play uses this definition unintentionally as an excuse to legitimize al-Qaeda's operations against the American Army in the west of Iraq and to appeal for more support for al-Qaeda. The play repeats al-Qaeda's categorization of Muslims and non-Muslims. It takes many Islamic texts out of their contexts in defining non-Muslims and reinforces al-Qaeda's misinterpretation of Islam's interaction with non-Muslims. In this way, it orients its audience to follow al-Qaeda's regulations without returning to the original interpretations and the contexts of each Islamic text. Thus, the play engulfs the division between Muslims and non-Muslims through al-Qaeda's definition of non-Muslim in order to draw more hatred toward American troops in Iraq and support the extreme ideology unconsciously.

The play also represents the members of al-Qaeda as *mujahideen* and their actions as jihad.⁵ In other words, the play presents al-Qaeda members as doing the right things and, for this reason, they should be respected (130). It escalates their fighting of American troops to jihad. In this sense, the play redistributes al-Qaeda's radical *fatwa*, which connects fighting American troops to jihad, and *Shahada* (martyrdom) i.e. it depicts fighting American troops as the only path toward paradise. It excludes the importance of major Islamic pillars which do not call for any confrontation with non-Muslims such as prayer, fast, and zakat, to mention a few.⁶ These pillars are considered in the Quran as the main paths towards paradise. Moreover, the play depicts those who break al-Qaeda's regulations and reject resisting the American Army as

⁵ Merriam-Webster defines mujahideen as "Islamic guerrilla fighters especially in the Middle East" and "Arabic mujāhidīn, plural of mujāhid, literally, person who wages jihad."

⁶ Fatwa is a religious statement or authorization prepared by a group of religious supreme scholars and clergies toward a subject under certain circumstances. Al-Qaeda refused to rely on such premise of the fatwa in Islam and it develops its many radical fatwas to achieve its extreme goals.

“cowards” and authorizes their murder (126). It defines jihad and mujahideen from al-Qaeda’s fundamental perspectives. In this way, the play connects al-Qaeda’s terrorist operations with jihad and approves its misrepresentation of jihad unconsciously. Thus, the play’s use of the terms such as “kafir” and “mujahideen” within a radical context support al-Qaeda’s ideology unconsciously. It adopts religious differences as a strategy to deepen the antagonism between both sides of the conflict.

Notably, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* represents al-Qaeda in a continuous state of threat against the success of the American invasion in Iraq. It represents al-Qaeda members in Iraq as beyond capture and defeat. The play portrays Ziyad and the three members of al-Qaeda freely planning an attack against the American soldiers in general and the American soldier on Ziyad’s roof in particular. They also threaten Ziyad’s family from establishing any communication with the American soldier. They keep watching the American soldier on Ziyad’s roof and detecting Ziyad’s family’s interaction with the soldier. That said, the play represents al-Qaeda as the only dominant power in the west of Iraq. It legitimizes al-Qaeda operation against American troops and promotes members of al-Qaeda to be the only defenders of the Iraqis’ interests.

At the same time, the play represents the American soldiers in fragile situations. The play depicts them as incapable of protecting themselves and Ziyad’s family from al-Qaeda’s threat. They avoid any kind of confrontation with al-Qaeda and stop surveilling Ziyad’s home as soon as they know that al-Qaeda members threatened to explode Ziyad’s home soon. They fail to track the movements of insurgents around Ziyad’s home as they could not convince the public to stand against al-Qaeda. They could neither break al-Qaeda’s role as a prevailing ideology in the west of Iraq nor get the civilians under al-Qaeda’s domination free from extreme conditions. They could not change the civilians’ lives for the better. On the contrary, they increase the civilians’

suffering from bad to worse and make them homeless. Instead of stopping al-Qaeda from targeting Ziyad's home and achieving the dreams of Ziyad's family of having a stable life, an American General asks Ziyad's family to abandon their home and live in tents. Furthermore, the play represents the American troops as without any clear proposal of defeating al-Qaeda in Iraq. It depicts them relying on old fashioned military strategies in detecting Ziyad and his group. The American troops left one soldier on Ziyad's roof to detect his movements. The soldier lives in miserable situations and stressful circumstances. He expects to be targeted by al-Qaeda at any moment. That said, the play does not give American troops any active or victorious role within the west of Iraq. It shows them as passive forces and introduces them without any military experience in confronting al-Qaeda's guerilla attacks or terrorist operations. It restricts the movements of American soldiers toward supporting one soldier they left on Ziyad's roof and turns their military operations to unsuccessful surveillance of Ziyad's group. In this way, the play excludes the success of the United States' forces in targeting and killing many prominent members of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Indeed, the play maximizes al-Qaeda's tactics of confrontation with the United States. It places al-Qaeda's operation over the military capabilities of the United States and exhibits American soldiers in frustrated conditions.

The play does not only reduce the capabilities of the American troops in confronting al-Qaeda, but it also turns down the Iraqis' competences in resisting al-Qaeda in the west of Iraq. It introduces the civilians in the west as either submissive or obedient to al-Qaeda. They do not have enough courage to oppose al-Qaeda's extreme perspectives and primitive regulations. The play displays al-Qaeda's projects of expelling the United States' troops from Iraq or the west of Iraq as prevailing perspectives. The play does not represent any individual force or local power in the west of Iraq as capable of confronting al-Qaeda's operations. Put differently, it produces

scenes highlighting al-Qaeda's operations against the American soldiers and ignores the operations that the Iraqis held against al-Qaeda. Furthermore, the play attempts to exclude the importance of any actual action which contradict al-Qaeda's goals of turning Iraqi west into a conservative or an anti-American community. It keeps out all public and tribal resistance which came out against al-Qaeda, such as the operations of Sheik Abdul Sattar Abu Risha and other counter operations against al-Qaeda. Interestingly, Abu Risha could unite many Sunni tribes in Al Anbar and lead many operations against al-Qaeda. In brief, the play excludes the reference to these operations against al-Qaeda unconsciously and represents Iraqi civilians and the American troops as too impotent to defeat al-Qaeda in the west of Iraq. The ideological perspectives of al-Qaeda are the main ideological confines in the play. They promote al-Qaeda's spread in the west of Iraq unconsciously and disempower any form of resistance against al-Qaeda's attempt to establish a fundamental state.

A Strange Bird on Our Roof's representation of al-Qaeda's ideology reflects al-Qaeda's domination over many areas in the west of Iraq. The play was written between 2004-2006. Historically speaking, during this period, Al-Qaeda took al Anbar as its capital and dominated most of the Iraqi western cities and all parts of "al-Sunni Triangle Area." It imposed its radical ideology in these areas and conducted many attacks against the Iraqi and American forces, especially in Falluja. As a result, al-Qaeda became the main source of threaten for American and Iraqi forces in these areas. According to Major Gerald De Lira Jr, al-Qaeda kidnapped and killed four contractors of the Black Water company and mutilated their bodies. A few days before that, they killed five Marines in Habbaniyah. These circumstances put the American Army under critical situations and threatened its progress in Iraq. As a result, these events lead to "Operation Vigilant Resolve" or what was known as "The First Battle for Falluja," in April 2004. Lira states

that this battle was a reactionary one and it was not planned deeply, neither by the White House nor by the Pentagon. Therefore, the battle could not succeed completely in terminating al-Qaeda members. On the contrary, this battle increased the number of al-Qaeda members and turned Falluja into a safe haven for many terrorists, especially Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (2). This battle was not the only battle between the American Army and al-Qaeda. In November 2004, the American Army campaigned for another battle against al-Qaeda in Falluja. It was called “Operation Phantom Fury” or “the Second Battle for Falluja.” The Iraqi and British forces participated with American troops against al-Qaeda. Despite that, Lira reports that the battle was one of the deadliest and toughest battles the United States’ troops confronted in its history. Al-Qaeda manipulated the period between the first and the second battle and prepared to fight. As a result, the United States had 44 marines killed and 425 wounded. The United States Army estimated that from 1000 to 2000 members of al-Qaeda were killed in this operation (20). Thus, the battles could minimize the power of al-Qaeda dramatically, but they did not end its operations entirely.

The time of the play’s production also witnessed a series of offenses that the United States troops committed in Iraq, such as the prison and torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, the massacre of al Haditha, and many other events. In April 2004, at the same time of the first battle for Falluja, CBS revealed the United States mistreatment of prisoners in Abu Ghraib detainee, such as torture, rape, and abuse. Moreover, Tim McGirk reported in *Time* magazine that it was the American troops, not al-Qaeda members, who killed 24 Iraqi civilians a day after a roadside bomb killed Lance Corporal Miguel Terrazas in the city of Haditha. *Time* also reported that many eyewitnesses confirmed that the Marines killed fifteen civilians as a reaction to the murder of Terrazas (McGirk). As a part of its radical ideology, al-Qaeda utilized such events in order to

have more supporters at local and regional levels. It used such events to legitimize its fundamentalism and spread more hatred toward the United States. Significantly, these events form the sociohistorical context of *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*, and its reaction. Jameson asserts that “the literary work or cultural object, as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction” (*Political Unconscious* 81-82). Indeed, the play’s sociohistorical circumstances are important. They form the play’s ideological structures and limits. However, the play also challenges the ideological limits and produces many distinguished scenes characterized with significant movements toward a global utopia.

At the utopian level, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* attempts to change the hostile state between both sides of the conflict. The play offers a familial state as a utopian vision and an alternative to the sense of hatred. Ziyad’s mother challenges all circumstances under the radical ideology and decides to take care of the American soldier on their roof. As she goes upstairs to the roof to check on Ziyad’s birds and sees the American soldier, she starts to sympathize with him. She thinks of his mother getting worried and missing him. She juxtaposes her hatred of the American soldier with a sense of motherhood and calls him “my son” (133). She rebels against the radical environment surrounding her. She releases her sense of motherhood and humanity which is suppressed by the extreme constraints. Ziyad’s mother attempts to break the soldier’s sense of alienation and end his status as an interloper. She considers herself his mother and rejects all kinds of division and antipathy. She tells Rasha, the American soldier is “a human being, he has a mother who cries blood for his absence” (134). She cooks a meal for the American soldier and invites him to have food with them. Thus, Ziyad’s mother develops a profound moment of solidarity out of the war’s desperate moments.

Further, Ziyad's mother tries to change the sense of rancor and repulsion with the sense of kindness and motherhood. Unlike the mother in Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*, who constrained her motherhood or cared for running her business during the war more than being a mother and did nothing notable to challenge the circumstances of the war after losing her children, Ziyad's mother uses her sense of motherhood to bring Ziyad and the American soldier on their roof to a state of harmony. She does not want any one of them to be hurt by the war. She rejects the war's continuation and will not profit from it at the expense of the Iraqi and American generation of young people. She tells the American soldier:

Open my heart with your gun and you will find it shot through and through, blasted by the war. I lost a son in the first Gulf War. He was handsome like you. He came back wrapped in a flag, while the national anthem played. . . . a medal pinned to his chest. . . . (*she laughs*). What good is a medal, valor? . . . Then I lost my second son in the second Gulf War. He was martyred during an American raid. His body was ripped apart by a bomb from your country. And Ziyad has left us. When the Americans came, he said, "This is occupation," then grabbed his gun and left. We have not heard from him since. (133)

Ziyad's mother hates all wars and does not find any moral reasons for them. She sees that nothing can be more valuable than the lives of the young people who usually become the first victims of wars. She challenges all circumstances and intends to make the young generation love each other and ignore hate. Thus, the alternative reactions of Ziyad's mother toward the American soldier embodies one of the play's important movements toward a global utopia. It produces unlimited progressiveness and togetherness.

At the same time, the American soldier's reactions toward Ziyad's mother reflects another utopian impulse in *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*. The American soldier develops an equal sense of kindness and respect toward Ziyad's mother. He does not hesitate to help Ziyad's mother. He respects her reactions toward him and helps her go downstairs. The American soldier

also tries to challenge the surveillance restrictions and contradicts other soldiers' mistreatment of Ziyad's family. In other words, instead of embarrassing Ziyad's family for having a family member in insurgency, he respects them. He contradicts other American soldiers who failed to make a distinction between al-Qaeda members and the civilians who live under their domination. He intends to break the rigidity of the military. He plans to redirect American intelligence and military power toward the real insurgents and stop their violent practices against the civilians. Furthermore, the American soldier develops an alternative relationship with Ziyad's mother and sister which goes beyond the relationship between the invader and the invaded. He is the first one who helps Ziyad's mother and sister after they are threatened by the terrorists to leave their home. Rasha tells her mother "he is sympathetic with us and does not want us to get hurt because of him" (139). Interestingly, the American soldier decides to take care of almost everything in Ziyad's home including his birds. The American soldier's alternative actions are criticized by his Sergeant. He tells the soldier a "good soldier needs a hard heart, sometimes. The greater good calls for action. If we hesitate, soldiers die. For us, it's a matter of life and death-either kill or be killed. Duty requires us to strike proactively and decisively, not to loiter on the rooftops, feeding the birds!" (140). Nevertheless, the American soldier's reciprocal actions and interactions embody another impulse of the play toward a global utopia. It initiates spaces of communication between both sides of the conflict. In brief, the play embodies a forward vision toward a global unity out of the war's scenes of discord. It produces expressive motivations toward reconciliation and ending further tensions.

At an equal rate, Rasha's interaction and working with the American Army produces another utopian energy in the play. She breaks the restrictions of al-Qaeda and attempts to develop an alternative relationship with American soldiers. She is not completely satisfied with

the status of confrontation between both sides of the conflict. She challenges the radical ideology which bars any communication with American soldiers and imposes strict punishment against any violator of its regulations. To clarify, al-Qaeda considers anyone who works with the American Army a “kafir” or “traitor” and gives itself an absolute authorization to kill the violator. Rasha decides to work with American troops as an interpreter despite the hegemonic rejection of this work. Interestingly, she refuses to have misconceptions about American soldiers and starts to have different perspectives toward the American soldiers. She told her mother, “the strange thing was when they [the American soldiers] took off their helmets, they looked like normal human beings capable of sorrow, and rational conversation.” In this way, Rasha does not accept al-Qaeda’s consideration of the American soldiers as “monsters” and “animals.” (136). She refuses to support al-Qaeda’s process of dehumanization of any human being for having a different religion. She refuses to fit herself to al-Qaeda’s primitive restrictions and works to break them. In brief, Rasha becomes aware of the narrowness of the radical ideology and strives to change it. She finds that there is no difference between the American soldiers and other human beings except in the uniform and combat helmets they wear.

Additionally, Rasha finds enough freedom and opportunity with American soldiers to think differently. She breaks her isolation and starts looking for the ways to end the status of antagonism between both sides of the conflict, beyond al-Qaeda’s interests. She delivers to her mother the concern of an American soldier. She reports that “one of them started talking to me about how much he misses his family and how he got stuck here” (136). Thus, Rasha’s interaction with American soldiers makes another movement toward a global utopia. It interrupts al-Qaeda’s extreme redlines. It opens a new channel of communication between the fighting sides in Iraq. In this way, the play achieves the essential requirement of a utopia which involves,

in Levitas' perspective, "the imagining of a state of being, in which the problems which actually confront us are removed or solved, often, but not necessarily, through the imagining of a state of the world in which the scarcity gap is closed or the 'collective problem' solved" (221). Overall, the play attempts to confront the rising tensions between antagonistic sides and suggests a familial state as a positive vision toward sharing respect and humanity.

Al-Rubai reveals that exploring the sense of shared humanity and spreading it around the world is one of his main visions in *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*. With writing this play, Al-Rubai states that he was seeking an answer for a question that preoccupied him, that is:

Is it possible to build a bridge between the two [both sides of the conflict] based upon a shared humanity? Both are feeling, thinking human beings, even though they may find themselves coping with different circumstances and encounter each other with a hostile environment. Is it possible for a human connection to develop despite these obstacles? (Al-Azraki and Al-Shamma 121)

Considering that, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* offers a significant movement towards a global utopia. It uses human beings' equal sense of humanity as steady ground for an alternative circumstance. It has forward outlooks and embodies a capacious involvement in humanity and hope. Ziyad's mother and the American soldier refused the circumstances of the war and spent moments free from hostility. They show a mutual respect. No one is seen completely satisfied with the reasons and causes of the war. Ziyad's mother does not find any notable distinction between the American soldier and her son as human beings. She realizes that they hate and fight each other for endless and meaningless causes. She desires to see them as brothers and friends more than as "enemies." The American soldier also shows equal kindness and respect toward the kindness of Ziyad's mother. The hospitality of Ziyad's mother reduces his sense of xenophobia. With that said, the play attempts to change Ziyad's home from the center of the war between two sides of the conflict to the center of pacification.

A Strange Bird on Our Roof and its utopian visions do not receive positive reactions in the academic and cultural fields. At the academic level, no study has yet been done about this play in Iraqi universities. The Iraqi academics avoid discussing and analyzing this play because of its outlooks. Put differently, the play's exposition of a different and alternative communication with the American Army in Iraq made it a strange artifact and placed it in isolation. Al-Azraki and al-Shamma are the first scholars who translated this play with many Iraqi modern plays which were published by Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., in 2017. The play did not get enough consideration and appreciation at the local level for the same reason. It was neither performed by any theatre in Iraq nor published by any Iraqi publishing house. Iraqi TV channels and daily newspapers almost ignored this play. Al-Noor website was the sole publisher of the play. It published the play in 2006 on its website and made it accessible for everyone.

At the regional level, the academic and cultural reaction to the play was not better than its local one. The play's attempt to bridge both sides of the conflict and its attempt to heal the wounds was rejected in the Middle East, as the region was completely against the invasion of Iraq and afraid of the spread of American democracy to other countries. Al Rubai states that he communicated with many publishing houses in the Middle East to publish the play, but no one accepted. Almost all publishing houses which he communicated with refused to buy and publish his script, saying that nowadays their readers are not interested in reading and thinking of any communication with the United States, due to many political and religious taboos. For this reason, the play remained unpublished for almost eight years. However, al-Ghasham publishing house in Oman published the play in 2013 and chose this play's title as the title for its anthology. Moreover, al Rubai adds that the play has not been performed for the same reasons. No theatrical house in the Middle East could challenge the status quo and enact the play until now, September

2019 (Al-Rubai, a Personal Interview). Despite that, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* would remain one of the distinctive anti-war plays.

A Strange Bird on Our Roof advocates for the radical ideology of al-Qaeda. It depicts al-Qaeda as more powerful and more dangerous than other powers in the west of Iraq. It repeats al-Qaeda's radical principles and distributes its basic strategies unconsciously. It connects resisting American invasion to religion and religious principles. The play defines American soldiers as "Kafir" and legitimizes jihad against them. The ideological lines of the play depict those who attack American troops as "mujahedeen" and those who refuse that as 'cowards.'" Furthermore, the play maximizes al-Qaeda's domination in the west of Iraq. It shows that neither American troops nor Iraqi forces could control the situation in this area completely.

Significantly, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* also produces utopian visions toward a global utopia. It criticizes the revengeful and disrespectful circumstances. Ziyad's mother, Rasha, and the American soldier, unlike Ziyad and his group, intend to change "al-Sunni Triangle Area" which was characterized by revenge and brutality from a war zone to a peaceful triangle and a unity zone. The play attempts to establish an alternative world and convert all antagonistic circumstances into a familial atmosphere. In short, the play produces a potential environment toward changing human beings from victims of ruthless military operations and fundamental ideologies to members of one global family. It suggests a world in which human beings can ignore their conflicting thoughts and accept each other. It explores the sense of humanity at both sides of the conflict which has been restricted by ideological confines. Significantly, this theme is not restricted to the Iraqi play *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*. The establishment of such a profound world of integrity and unity beyond both terrorism and the circumstances of the war on terrorism is equally displayed in Bush's play *An Identified Enemy*.

AN IDENTIFIED ENEMY

An Identified Enemy is a play written by award-winning American playwright Max Bush. After nine days of workshop and two stage readings, Bush produced and directed the play at the Grand Valley State University in the Louis Armstrong Theatre in 2012 (Bush 4-5). The play connects the present life of a former American soldier, Jamie Foster, with his past duty in Iraq during Gulf War II, between 2007 to 2009. The play is an anti-war work dramatizing how an Iraqi civilian, Jalil al-Majid, saved Jamie from a deadly bomb in Baghdad. Although *An Identified Enemy* is an antiwar play, it reinforces unconsciously many sociopolitical perspectives of the American dominant ideology. It defines al-Qaeda members in Iraq, such Shehadeh Jawhar (Abu Omar), and Fareed Mustafa Al-Chafur (Abu Mustafa) within the dominant ideology's categorization of terrorists and terrorism. Then, the play displays the United States completing its liberation of the Iraqis from al-Qaeda and improving the security in Iraq. It also brings Shatha's taking off her hijab and the Iraqi soccer team's winning of the Asian Soccer Cup in 2007 as distinctive events to approve the success of the United States' democracy in Iraq. Dialectically speaking, *An Identified Enemy* also challenges the perspectives of the dominant ideology and produces utopian impulses with global visions. As a result, it critiques "the war on terrorism" for causing more instability and hostility between the United States and many countries in the Middle East. It disassociates Iraq with terrorism. More importantly, the play produces a state of brotherhood between Jamie and Jalil as alternative to the state of antagonism between both sides of the conflict. The play projects this alternative state as a vision toward bringing together the United States and many countries in the Middle East which started to target the American troops in Iraq. Thus, the play's alternative visions projects critique "the war on terrorism" and embody progressive impulses toward a global utopia. In other words, the utopian impulses in this play

have dual functions. They critique the circumstances under “the war on terrorism” and produce alternative situations which express a global unity.

An Identified Enemy defines al-Qaeda terrorists in Iraq within the dominant ideology’s definition. It focuses on repeating the same information that the dominant media narrate about al-Qaeda members. It provides background information about the terrorists Shehadeh Jawhar (Abu Omar), and Fareed Mustafa Al-Chafur (Abu Mustafa) and shows how dangerous they are. Jamie defines Abu Mustafa as one of the major terrorists in Iraq (35). He told Jalil, “That man has killed more Iraqis than Americans.” At the same time, the play also represents an interview that al-Arabia channel did with Abu Omar.

INTERPETER: Who is Shehadeh Jawhar? Who is “Abu Omar?”

JAWHAR: I am a Muslim human being, a Palestinian. I am a refugee, living in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

INTERPRETER: So you went to Iraq to wage jihad.

JAWHIR: Yes. Did you think I went there to joint their bowling or Basketball team? ...
[original dots]

INTERPRETER: What was your role? What did you do?

JAWHAR: I went there to do military training.

INTERPRETER: What kind of training?

JAWHAR: I trained brothers to wage guerrilla warfare.

INTERPRETER: So you trained them to fight with weapons?

JAWHAR: I trained them in urban warfare—raids, ambushes, and attacks. That’s what guerrilla warfare is about.

INTERPRETER: Did you participate in the operations?

JAWHAR: Yes.

INTERPRETER: What kind of operations?

JAWHAR: Regular things. We used to attack the Americans. We used to carry out operations against American bases in Iraq... [original dots] (35-38)

This interview introduces Abu Omar within the depiction of the dominant ideology. It represents him as a real threat against the United States’ Army in Iraq. It draws more attention toward his sense of antipathy toward the United States. Put differently, the interview does not only represent Abu Omar as a person interested in attacking American forces in Iraq, but also

interested in training more terrorists there. He utilizes different strategies in attacking American soldiers, including the guerrilla attacks. Significantly, the play also reveals Jawhar's feeling of pride for being a terrorist and targeting the United States' Army in Iraq. When the interpreter asks him "Shehadeh Jawhar, do you consider yourself a terrorist?" he answers, "If I want to terrorize the enemies of Allah, what's the problem with that?" (69). In this way, the interview expresses another extreme aspect in Abu Omar's and other terrorists' antipathies toward the American army. Jawhar considers the Americans as "enemies of Allah." Through highlighting this view, the play supports the dominant ideology's definition of terrorists. It highlights terrorists extreme outlook at Americans and reinforces the dominant attitudes against them. Hence, through representing Abu Omar's radical feelings and reactionary actions against the United States, the play repeats the dominant ideology's description of Abu Omar and other terrorists. Notably, the play could not challenge the dominant definitions of them. It distributes Abu Omar's and other terrorist radical attitudes openly in order to reinforce the public hatred toward them. In brief, the play accords the dominant ideology's general definition of terrorists. It condemns them further and motivates the audience to celebrate the United States' targeting of them.

An Identified Enemy focuses on highlighting certain situations which minimize the dominant ideology's fears and undesired consequences of the invasion. The play indicates a gradual betterment of security in Iraq and intensifies the Iraqis' practices of daily activities. Jalil tells Jamie, "Oh, yes, you see, no bombs, all people out, selling, walking; sometimes, at night you can sit by river" (21). In this sense, the play idealizes the security in Iraq. It represents the Iraqis as having a distinctive peace under the invasion and illustrates Iraq as safer than before. It shows Jalil and a group of vendors selling food, CDs, and gifts to American soldiers and talking

with them freely. Clearly, this depiction has ideological constraints. It portrays the situations in Iraq according to the visions and desires of the American dominant ideology. It focuses on displaying the security situation around an American base in Baghdad and wrongly projects that security onto the whole country. Through such depictions, the play ignores the extreme crisis in the level of security in Iraq which was torn by sectarianism and terrorism. It excludes the fact that even the United States' military bases, protected by different kinds of weapons, intelligence, and technology, were not safe. The play evades the fragility of security over all of Iraq. It utilizes a few places and moments beyond the daily violence to convince the public that the United States is achieving a positive progress in Iraq.

Furthermore, the play represents unconsciously the Iraqi's extraordinary victory in a sport competition as another advantage of the war on terrorism. Put differently, the play relates the Iraqis' winning in the soccer competitions of Asian Cup in 2007 and the Iraqis' celebration of this event to the Iraqis' release from al-Qaeda's extreme ideology. Jalil tells Jamie "Iraq champion! Win big I make you a picture, then we make this for you. You put on your wall in Michigan. Say 'I help Iraq win football!'" (21). The play uses this event to highlight a positive result of "the war on terrorism" at the expense of many negative ones. It directs the audience attention toward a belief that this war made a decisive change in Iraq, not only at the social level, but also at the sports or entertainment level. It supposes that the Iraqi soccer team would have never won the Asian Cup if this war did not happen. Thus, the dominant ideology's perspectives are implicitly expressed. They attempt to persuade the audience that the Iraqi players did achieve this victory because they have been freed from Saddam and al-Qaeda's oppression and this freedom improved their creativities in sport. That said, the play's highlighting of this sporting event sustains the dominant ideology's prevailing attitudes unconsciously. It engages the

audience with one happy event in Iraq and blocks off many negative and tragic events which refute the dominant ideology's claims. Altogether, the play's reference to the significant betterment of security and the sport advancement in Iraq manifest ideological functions. They turn these situations into exclusive ideological events. Through these events, the play represents unconsciously an attempt toward stabilizing sociopolitical conditions in Iraq in accordance with the dominant ideology's anticipations and preserving the dominant ideology's main achievement.

An Identified Enemy also manipulates hijab to advocate for the dominant ideology. It uses hijab to express the United States' success in changing Iraq from an oppressed and isolated country into a free and liberated one. The play depicts the image of hijab as an extreme restriction of women's freedom in Iraq and its removal as the main indication of freedom and liberation. It demonstrates Shatha as happier and more liberated than before. She tries for the first time to take off her hijab without any interruption and feels romantically toward the American soldier Jackson. In other words, she no longer cares about religious and social consequences of taking off her hijab. She finds the United States' war on terrorism and the invasion of Iraq as protective and they offer her enough opportunity to ignore her hijab. In this way, the play uses hijab and the women's freedom ideologically. It aims to show that the women in Iraq could not take their hijab off before the war on terrorism. In other words, the play indicates that unless the war on terrorism occurred, Iraqi women would not have any kind of freedom from the religious constraints, such as wearing hijab. The play removes the fact that the Iraqi women did not have to wear hijabs under Saddam's regime. Put differently, Saddam's regime was a secular regime and wearing hijab was a personal decision not a state law under this regime. A notable percentage of Iraqi women did not wear hijab before the war on terrorism and

seeing a woman without hijab was very common under Saddam's regime. One might state that the percentage of women wearing hijab increased after the invasion because of the domination of different religious groups. In this sense, the play represents an imagined condition of hijab in Iraq in order to legitimize "the war on terrorism." In short, the play uses Shatha's action in removing her hijab to report that the war on terrorism has freed the Iraqis not only from political conventions but the religious ones too.

That being said, *An Identified Enemy* expresses the desires of the dominant ideology and highlights specific circumstances which protect its achievements in Iraq and endorses a social commitment toward Iraq. In a "Declaration on Iraq," President Bush stated, with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, that:

For the first time in decades, the Iraqi people are enjoying the taste of freedom. Iraqis are starting to rebuild their country and can look to a brighter future. They are free of Saddam Hussein and his vicious regime; they can speak freely; practice their religion. . . . We reaffirm the resolve of our two countries, with many friends and allies, to complete the process of bringing freedom, security, and peace to Iraq. . . . We reaffirm our long-term commitment to Iraq. (Stefan Talmon 1399)

After all, *An Identified Enemy* repeats unconsciously President Bush's claims here. The play shows Iraqi security and freedom on the rise while terrorism is vanishing. It portrays Iraq in a state of becoming a country with exceptional freedom in the Middle East. Then, the play shows the United States on its way to making Iraq free from terrorism and respecting its moral promise to make Iraq more stable than before.

As noted, *An Identified Enemy*'s definition of terrorists Abu Omar and Abu Mustafa, the rise of security, and Iraqis' liberation from all kinds of constraints express ideological functions. Through these functions, the play attempts to compel its audience to look at Iraqi sociopolitical situations through its perspectives rather through their own awareness and understanding of the

situation there. The play intends to satisfy its audience by suggesting that the United States is moving forward in Iraq. In other words, the play has been very selective in choosing Iraqi circumstances. In this way, it portrays a few scenes from a very narrow perspective. It focuses on just a few conditions which maintain the portrayal of the United States in Iraq as a prevailing and liberating power. It motivates its audience to believe in what they see and hear on the stage about the United States' progress in Iraq and the war on terrorism more than what they hear and see in other media. It shows Iraqi people as happier and more delighted with American democracy and the United States reaching an advanced level in its war against terrorism. In this sense, the play's ideological constraints turn the play into an ideological artifact. They represent different conditions in Iraq and aim to persuade its audience that the situation in Iraq now is much better than it was, and Iraqi people accept American democracy as the best alternative to totalitarian and fundamental systems.

The play's ideological constraints also reveal a "*strategy of containment*" in the prevailing ideology. For Jameson, this strategy, from Dowling's perspective, is not only imposing "merely limitation, a premature closing-off of thought to the truth about History, but as the repression of those underlying contradictions that have their source in History and Necessity" (77 original emphasis). The ideological confines of the play try to close all perspectives and events which counter the dominant ideology's commitments and claims in Iraq. They represent everything in Iraq according to the dominant ideology's proposals. In brief, the play uses Iraqi's aforementioned circumstances to express the dominant ideology's ultimate visions and sustain its ideological confines more than to inform the audience the real consequences of the war on terrorism and the invasion of Iraq.

However, *An Identified Enemy* also produces utopia impulses which seek an alternative world beyond the dominant ideology's limits. Significantly, the utopian impulses in this play perform two functions. First, they critique the exclusive practices and perspectives of the American dominant ideology in Iraq. Then, they envision alternative circumstances between Jalil and Jamie and offer these circumstances as a project for reconciling the fighting sides. The utopian impulses establish a state of brotherhood between Jamie and Jalil as an opposite to a prevailing state of antagonism. In this way, the play achieves the dual functions of a utopia that Tally refers to. Tally reports that the utopian impulses always have dual functions. First, they critique the major mistakes and faults in an existing community or system. Then, they imagine different circumstances to the current ones (21).

An Identified Enemy highlights the suppressed consequences of the war on terrorism and projects an alternative world free from any form of confrontation between nations. The play represents the world after "the war on terrorism" in chaos and division. In other words, the play shows that the war on terrorism increased terrorism rather than decreased it and the invasion of Iraq caused more enmity between the United States and many countries in the Middle East. The play shows that the conflict was no longer between the United States and Iraq alone or a particular social system in Iraq but developed to be between the United States and many countries in the Middle East. In fact, the United States' invasion of Iraq led to the rise of an untraditional conflict and an unorganized confrontation between the United States and many countries inside Iraq. In other words, the United States' war on terrorism and its intention to spread democracy across the Middle East was understood by many social systems as threatening their power. Almost every social system in the Middle East started to feel that it would be the next target of the "war on terrorism." For this reason, many countries facilitate the movements

of many radical groups and individuals toward fighting the United States in Iraq. Abu Omar reported that “we [the members of al-Qaeda in Iraq] had brothers from Tunisia, from Libya, Algeria, Morocco. . . . There were Egyptian brothers, brothers from Arabian Peninsula. I met several brothers from Kuwait, a brother from Qatar. There were Palestinians, Syrians of course, and Jordanians” (78). In this way, the play shows that the invasion created unexpected reactions against the United States across the region. Additionally, Syrian and Iranian regimes, which were the most antagonistic regimes of Saddam, supported a lot of terrorists to fight the United States in Iraq after the fall of Saddam’s regime. In the first part of his interview with the al-Arabia Channel, Abu Omar states that:

People from the Syrian intelligence came and asked to meet with Sheik Abu Mus’ab. They said to him: “Brother, what weapons do you need?” . . . It is not in the Syrians’ interests that Iraq remain calm even for a moment. They benefit from this. The more Iraq is destroyed, the more pleased they are, because if Americans feel comfortable in Iraq, they move on to many other places. For the same reason, it is not in the Iranian’s interest. I do not know if you noticed, but the Shiites started fighting the Americans only years ago. It is not the Shiites-the Iranians asked them to fight, and sent them weapons, explosive devices, and so on, because if Americans feel comfortable in Iraq, they will move on to other areas. Have you forgotten about the New Middle East? (Madhatter961)

In this sense, the play shows that the United States war on terrorism and involvement in Iraq created an unnecessary hatred between the United States and all these countries in the Middle East. In brief, the play shows that “the war on terrorism” destabilized the whole region and produced more terrorists against the United States’ interests in the region.

Furthermore, the play shows that the war on terrorism changed the longstanding conflict in the Middle East. It made all social systems and radical groups turn their triggers from Israeli forces in Palestine to American forces in Iraq. The social systems in the region started to motivate and support the young people in the Middle East to go fight Americans in Iraq more than to fight Israeli in Palestine. Abu Omar informs the interpreter that “most of the Muslim

youth in Lebanon would set their sight on jihad in Iraq. As you know, in general, the Lebanese structure and system prevent you from going to fight Palestine, even though Palestine takes precedence over Iraq and all other countries. Palestine is our main cause” (37). In this way, the play reveals that the war on terrorism created more opponents than allies. It gives many social systems and the radical groups an excuse to attack the United States’ forces in the region.

Consequently, *An Identified Enemy* deconstructs the relationship between Iraq and terrorism. The play represents the United States’ claims that Iraq has a relationship with al-Qaeda as a baseless accusation. It unfolds that most of the terrorists’ operations in Iraq were carried by overseas terrorists and the Iraqis did not fight the American soldiers. The play highlights Abu Omar’s statement that al-Qaeda in Iraq had members from almost all countries in the Middle East except Iraq. He asserts that “there were no Iraqis with us” (78). The play repeats this statement three times at the end of the play. This repetition is not an accident. Through them, the play refutes the dominant ideology’s accusation against Iraq. It represents Iraq as being anti-terrorism and brings up their yearning to be free from terrorism. The play shows the Iraqis desire to establish a different relationship with American troops. For example, Jalil keeps the photos of the terrorists, Abu Omar and Abu Mustafa, from Jamie without any hesitation and promises to share any information he learns about them. Moreover, the play repeatedly shows the Iraqis as either the victims of the invasion or the victims of terrorism rather than as terrorists. Despite being loyal and sincere in his relationship with American troops in general and Jamie in particular, the CIA arrests Jalil and forces him to confess his relation to the terrorist, Abu Omar, by shooting a detainee in front of his eyes for not having a relationship with terrorists. The play represents that the United States changed Iraq to a terrorist crucible. It shows that the United States creating more terrorists instead of fighting them seriously. Considering all, the play

achieves the first function of a utopia that Tally identifies. It critiques the war on terrorism and the United States' invasion of Iraq. The play represents the invasion as the main reasons behind the instability in the Middle East.

An Identified Enemy also attempts to create a world characterized by a borderless brotherhood as another utopian function. Instead of representing Jalil and Jamie as hating, scorning, and fearing each other, the play creates an opportunity for getting them to socialize and connect to each other. They strive for the safety and protection of one another. Despite the absurd moments of the war, Jalil and Jamie challenge all uncordial circumstances of equally. Day by day, Jalil and Jamie attempt to defeat circumstances of tension and misconception. They approach each other more and build spaces of brotherhood out of spitefulness. Jalil calls Jamie "my brother" (123). Significantly, Jalil broke the regulations of al-Qaeda which attempted to compel every Iraqi to fight the American Army and exchanges important information with Jamie about the terrorists, Abu Omar and Abu Mustafa. Jalil also succeeds in saving Jamie's life by stopping him from walking towards a deadly explosion in Baghdad.

Jamie feels more comfortable with Jalil. Unlike other American soldiers, such as Jackson, Davis, Olsen, and Della, who disrespect Jalil and never trust him, Jamie creates a different interaction with Jalil. He refuses the CIA's accusation of Jalil's association with terrorism. He trusts and believes in Jalil more than the CIA agents. Interestingly, Jamie remains loyal to Jalil even after finishing his duty in Iraq. He scrutinizes many of the daily videos of the war and keeps asking the military, the CIA, and the press in Michigan about the mysterious fate of Jalil. Significantly, Jamie and Jalil share traditional foods, family pictures, and personal gifts with each other. They refuse to exchange accusation, fears, and revenge. At the same time, Jalil and Jamie ignore the hegemonic rules and regulations which tried to deepen the hatred and divisions

between them. As Jalil refuses to obey al-Qaeda's restricted rules against having a communication with the American Army in Iraq, Jamie also refuses to be silenced by the CIA. He remains the only one who respects Jalil and cares about Jalil's fate. He remains loyal to Jalil and keeps asking the Iraqi Ministry of Prison, Iraqi Ministry of human right, the CIA, Amnesty international, and the Red Crescent about Jalil's fate. Thus, Jalil turns out to be Jamie's only concern. Neither Jamie's girlfriend, Della, nor his psychology classes could make Jamie forget Jalil. He stops attending his psychology classes and starts making enquiries about Jalil's fate. He spends nights and days watching war videos or reports and holding meetings with people who participate in the war and supervise the prisons in Iraq in the hope of finding anything new about Jalil. His psychology remains in crisis and discomfort until Jalil calls him and lets him know he is still alive. Interestingly, Jamie becomes the only person that Jalil could trust. He informs him about American forces and their strategies for torturing innocent people.

JALIL: One day they take me to room, there is other prisoner. They put my hand on his shoulder, tell me: "Look into his eyes." They put gun at brain of prisoner, say to him: "When do you train with Shehadeh Jawhar, in Iraq?" He say: "Allah mercy upon me, I tell you, I tell you, I tell you, I never see Shehadeh Jawar." They shoot him . . . Then put gun at my brain, say: "When do you train with Shedadeh Jawhar in Iraq?" . . . [Jamie] Foster what you do?

JAMIE: I don't know.

JALIL: I say "Yes, this is true, I know man in picture. I know bombs." They sell what I say to you, to America, I say more. "I know this man, Shehadeh Jawhar; he show me how to kill Americans," Then they stop. They give clothes; food. Doctor. What I say, it is funny to Egypt, but they have money, now. . . . Then I wait. And wait more. One day Americans take me to Syria; by Iraq border. They give money, they give cell phone, say out of car. I walk thinking they are going to shoot, but (*short silence*) (75-76)

Jalil becomes the source of information and optimism for Jamie. Jalil enables Jamie to explore the meaninglessness of the United States' claims that Iraq has a relationship with terrorism. He provides Jamie with a lot of information about terrorists and about the Americans' misuse of authority in torturing the innocent people. Jalil indicates that the United States creates and

motivates new terrorists more than it fights them. It requires all prisoners to confirm a relationship with al-Qaeda whether they really have one or not. The United States adopts this strategy to prove that Iraq has a relationship with terrorism. In fact, Jamie and Jalil's relationship with each other could reveal different facts about this war and create different interactions between both sides of the conflict. Through such interaction, Jalil and Jamie explore that the United States uses ineffective strategies in fighting terrorists. They suggest trusting each other and developing intensive communication as the best alternative to fight terrorism.

That said, Jalil and Jamie refuse the fighting worlds around them. They reject remaining passive obedient and inactive agents for the fighting sides. Instead of supporting either side of the conflict, which motivates nothing except division and revenge, Jalil and Jamie become active protesters. They try to change the war's enmity moments into trustful moments of brotherhood. Significantly, they develop spaces of respect and understanding beyond enmity borders. They reveal the mistakes of al-Qaeda and the CIA in Iraq. They make no distinction between al-Qaeda's terrorism and the United States' inappropriate reactions against it in Iraq because both put humanity under inhuman conditions. Furthermore, Jalil and Jamie have families. They want to get their families connected with each other and establish an alternative relationship. They share the pictures of their families with one another. At the same time, they share traditional food and unique gifts. Doing this activity enhances the communication between Jalil and Jamie. It gives them important chances to know and trust each other further. In brief, Jamie and Jalil's interaction embodies potential impulses toward a global utopia which intends to break all divisions among human beings and bring the world together. Jamie and Jalil's interactions reflect a decisive path toward a universal brotherhood out of the war.

The play's disposition toward a global utopia should not be reduced to its project of a borderless brotherhood between Jalil and Jamie. To put it in a different way, the play's aim at establishing a borderless brotherhood between Jalil and Jamie also embodies a significant movement toward a borderless brotherhood between the United States and the Middle East. Literarily speaking, the play conducts a counterwar against the "war on terrorism" and explores the major strategical mistakes of the war. It tries to defeat all forms of the tension between opposing worlds and to bring them to a state of brotherhood. It projects the sense of borderless brotherhood and mutual understanding between antagonistic nations as the best substitute to their divisions and tensions. In this way, the play suggests that the unity between Jalil and Jamie as a particular map for ending the endless "war on terrorism" and its consequences which threaten the existence of a peaceful and united world. For this reason, the play's imaginative world and futuristic plans of establishing a borderless brotherhood are important visions toward bridging these worlds together.

Indeed, the play's alternative project rejects all forms of intolerance between the United States and the Middle East. It adopts the sense of brotherhood as a significant vision to get the opposing sides to live in tolerance. According to the Grand Valley State University Theatre's website, the play:

argues strongly for cultural understanding and tolerance in the United States as we wrestle with issues of racial profiling, cultural imperialism, diversity and inclusion. It also appeals to middle eastern cultures for greater understanding of cultural issues among their own people who came into contact with westerners involved in their regional conflicts. For example, the central character Jamie Foster, is mocked by his fellow infantrymen because he befriends a young Iraqi man and his sister. At the same time, the play presents videotaped interviews from Al Jazeera news archives that display the same sort of hatred and cultural intolerance towards westerners and their defense of basic human rights for all peoples. (gvsu.edu/theatre.an-identified-enemy)

The play does not prioritize one nation over the other. On the contrary, it explores the poetics of intolerance in each culture. It rejects intolerance and misunderstanding in the United States and Middle Eastern cultures. In short, the play's alternative plan aims to reconcile all fighting sides.

The play attacks the intolerance in both cultures and intends to reconcile them on the bases of the necessity of spreading an understanding among humanity. It shows that the opportunity of reconciling the opposing sides is not entirely impossible. Thus, *An Identified Enemy* has the impulses toward a global utopia because it intends to bridge the Middle East and United States together after the attacks of 9/11. It abases the grudge between Americans and Arabs and displays brotherhood as the best alternative to save both sides and the whole of humanity from the casualties of war.

An Identified Enemy expresses the American dominant ideology's interests unconsciously. It describes al-Qaeda members within the dominant ideology's categorization of terrorism. It depicts Iraq on its way to freedom from terrorism and oppression due to American military intervention and the removal of Saddam's regime and continuous confrontation of al-Qaeda members in Iraq. It shows Iraq in a state of social and political advancement under the invasion. The play also produces the impulses toward a global utopia. It attempts to establish a world based on sharing an equal sense of brotherhood beyond the brutal circumstances of the war. It establishes a distinctive brotherhood between Jalil and Jamie. Through this brotherhood, the play also intends to end further tensions in the Middle East between the United States and many nations in the region. The play attempts to bring both sides of the conflict together beyond their sociopolitical events and cultural boundaries.

To sum up, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* and *An Identified Enemy* could unconsciously reflect unconsciously different ideological interests in their societies. *A Strange Bird on Our*

Roof reflects al-Qaeda's radical perspectives as prevailing perspectives in the west of Iraq and its intention to turn the west of Iraq into a radical community. *An Identified Enemy* could unconsciously express the results of the war on terrorism from the dominant ideology's perspective. Thus, both cultural texts reinforce ideological functions unconsciously. They advocate mainly for two very opposite ideologies. *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* represents al-Qaeda as the only prevailing power dominating the west of Iraq. It shows al-Qaeda putting the American soldiers and their allies in danger. *An Identified Enemy*, on the other hand, represents the United States as the only prevailing power. It represents al-Qaeda's member from the dominant ideology's perspectives.

Altogether, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* and *An Identified Enemy* critique the role of al-Qaeda and the United States' reactions against it in Iraq. *An Identified Enemy* shows that al-Qaeda threatened Iraqi civilians of making any cooperation with American soldiers, such as Jamie Foster and other soldiers. At the same time, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* shows al-Qaeda planning to kill Ziyad's mother and sister and explode their home for cooperating with an American soldier on their roof. Furthermore, the plays indicate that al-Qaeda tied their fight against American troops to religion and religious consideration. *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* represents the American soldiers at the beginning of the play as "Kafirs" (124). In *An Identified Enemy*, Jamie told his girlfriend how he was considered a "top infidel" in Iraq (13).

Moreover, both plays connect the war against terrorism to American new geopolitics. *An Identified Enemy* shows that the United States occupied Iraq in order to start the project of the New Middle East and represents terrorism just as an excuse. It also shows that many countries in the Middle East considered the United States' invasion of Iraq as the beginning of invasion in the whole region and for this reason they facilitated the movements of many terrorists to fight in

Iraq. Similarly, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* explores the United States' interests in the region. Rasha and her mother reported that the United States invaded Iraq for economic and capitalistic interests rather than because of terrorism (125). In other words, the play shows that the United States occupied Iraq to get control over the oil in Iraq. Altogether, *An Identified Enemy* and *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* explore geopolitical intentions of the war on terrorism.

However, reflecting ideological confrontation between the United States and the Middle Eastern countries or the state of enmity between both sides of the conflict, is not the main project of *An Identified Enemy* and *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*. These plays also produce significant alternatives to the war circumstances which embody a forward vision toward a global utopia. They project the sense of unrestricted motherhood and borderless brotherhood as alternatives to an unacceptable state of tension between nations. In brief, both plays project a universal family as the best futuristic vision. They intend to transform all sides of the conflict from extreme enemies to members of one global family.

CHAPTER FOUR: VISIONS TOWARD A GLOBAL UTOPIA VERSUS NATIONALISM IN GULF WAR II MOVIES

This chapter focuses on discussing two movies produced as reactions to Gulf War II, *Ambulance Driver* and *The Situation*. The first one is an Iraqi movie directed by Hadi Mahood and the second one is an American movie directed by Philip Haas. The movies represent nationality as the main triggers of Gulf War II. They reveal that the Iraqi and American dominant ideologies manipulated nationality to build an appealing justification for the war. For this reason, this chapter explains that the main conflict in these movies is between the dominant ideological confinements which impose the status quo of the nation states as the only successful system to run this world, and the utopian visions which attempt to break this status quo and project an alternative system. In this sense, these visions develop significant movements toward a global utopia and attempt to design a new system beyond national fidelities. Theoretically speaking, on one hand this chapter represents nationalism and national loyalties as the main ideological structures in these movies. On the other hand, this chapter discusses how the movies attempt to challenge these structures to produce visions toward a global utopia. In brief, this chapter explains how these movies offer spaces beyond nationality as responses to the closures of nationalism.

AMBULANCE DRIVER

Ambulance Driver was produced as a part of the festival of Baghdad, the Capital City of Arab Culture in 2013. This festival was the first one to be held by an Iraqi independent government in Baghdad after the defeat of al-Qaeda in Iraq and the withdrawal of the United States troops from Iraq in 2011. The festival presented many cultural productions such as plays, music, dancing, and movies. Most of these productions expressed the prevalent perspectives of the Iraqi new dominant ideology, just like many other cultural productions produced after the collapse of Saddam's regime. This new dominant ideology focuses on three important points: recalling crimes and totalitarian ideology of Saddam's regime, demonizing the United States' policy toward Iraq even after the withdrawal of its troops at official and public levels, and attempting to rebuild Iraq within the constraints of traditional nation states. Thus, most of Iraqi cultural productions started to reflect these attitudes consciously or unconsciously and *Ambulance Driver* is not an exception.

Ambulance Driver depicts the last twenty days of the Ba'ath Party's rule in Iraq during Gulf War II, the fall of Saddam's regime, and an Iraqi ambulance driver, Abu Anwar (Jabbar Al-Janabi), and Abu Khalil's (Ali Reysan), a member in Iraqi Republican Guard rescue of the American soldier, Jessica Lynch (Hayat Herzy). At the ideological level, the movie repeats the dominant ideology's depiction of Saddam's regime. It recalls the aspects of totalitarian ideology in Saddam's regime by highlighting its excessive manipulation of many Iraqi apparatuses during Gulf War II. It shows how the regime manipulated the public hospitals for military purposes and misused the media to hide the accurate news of the United States' daily progress toward invading Baghdad. The movie also depicts Saddam's forces, such as *Fedayeen Saddam* and Republican

Guards as repressive forces.⁷ Then, the movie highlights the destructive aspects of the invasion and repeats the dominant ideology's demonization of the United States. As a result, the movie represents resisting the United States' role in Iraq, even after the withdrawal of the United States' troops, as a national loyalty.

However, at the utopian level, the movie attempts to break the limits of nationalism. It creates a fictional interaction between Abu Anwar, Abu Khalil, and Jessica beyond the national loyalties. It uses this interaction as a premise for an alternative relation between both sides of the conflict since the state of antagonism between them did not end completely after the fall of Saddam's regime. This interaction transcends nationalism and develops significant visions toward a global utopia as it seeks to stop further antipathies between human beings on both sides of the conflict.

Ambulance Driver expresses the dominant ideology's depiction of Saddam's role as a totalitarian regime. It represents how the regime practiced central control over all Iraqi apparatuses and compelled them to sustain the continuity of its absolute state authority during the days of Gulf War II. In other words, the movie shows that Saddam's regime controlled all Iraqi apparatuses, or what Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses" and "Repressive Ideological Apparatuses," and directed them toward confronting the United States in Iraq in order to guarantee the continuity of its power. For example, the movie displays Saddam's regime entirely manipulating health centers and hospitals in Iraq. It shows the regime turning many hospitals in Iraq into state ideological apparatuses. The hospitals are depicted working to achieve the social

⁷ Sharon Otterman states that "experts say the Fedayeen Saddam, or Saddam's Men of Sacrifice, is a 30,000 to 40,000-member Iraqi paramilitary group that appears to be leading guerrilla-style attacks on coalition forces in southern Iraq" (Otterman).

and military goals of the regime, being named after Saddam's name, and overloaded with his portraits. Almost every corner in these hospitals has Saddam's portrait. Ironically, the movie shows the wounded people in the lobbies next to Saddam's portraits receiving no care. The movie uses these portraits to confirm the dominant perspective that the Iraqi hospitals had nothing to offer under Saddam's regime except Saddam's portraits.

Furthermore, the movie shows the regime using the hospitals for military purposes rather than for health services. It displays an Iraqi hospital run by a group of Republican Guards working to achieve the regime's agendas rather than protecting the hospital and guaranteeing safe circumstances for patients. The movie displays the Republican Guards as a group of ruthless and arrogant people who never hesitate to carry out the regime's orders. Instead of treating Jessica as a war prisoner after being captured by the Iraqi Army, they plan to kill her. They refuse her rights as a war prisoner and ignore the laws of Geneva conventions. They use health facilities to kill Jessica. They order Abu Anwar to take her in his ambulance to the frontline of the battle and leave her tied in his ambulance and be killed there. Through this scene, the movie shows how the regime militarized health centers and their functions. Hence, the movie produces these scenes to repeat the dominant ideology's consideration of Saddam's regime as a ruthless regime and disrespectful of Geneva Conventions.

Additionally, *Ambulance Driver* supports the dominant ideology's depiction of the manipulation of media by Saddam's regime. It shows the regime manipulating the Iraqi media and directing it toward supporting its power. *Ambulance Driver* illustrates that the regime dominated the local media entirely. It shows all Iraqi broadcasting programs and TV channels covering nothing during the war except news or programs supporting the regime. The movie displays the Iraqi media showing Saddam repeatedly reading his own odes to mobilize Iraqi

people against the United States' attacks. They are depicted broadcasting the Iraqi national anthem with many songs to convince Iraqis to fight the United States' invasion and never believe in its claims of democracy or freedom. More importantly, the movie also highlights the misleading role of the Iraqi Minister of Information, Mr. Muhammad Saeed al-Sahhaf. The movie highlights al-Sahhaf's certain strategies in stating fake news and hiding the facts about the progress of the American military toward Baghdad. Al-Sahhaf tried to convince all local and international viewers that the reports of the United States forces' occupation of what was called Saddam's airport and the destruction of Saddam's statue in Baghdad were fake. He stated that all these news and shows are some of Hollywood's fictional scenes. He used to call the American troops "*uluuj*" or "mercenaries" in order to mobilize more resistance against them.⁸ Thus, the movie shows that the regime intended to represent al-Sahhaf as the only reliable source that the world should trust.

Furthermore, the movie also shows that the regime's media depicted the United States diplomacy and Army in crisis. They transmitted many international news reporting that the United States was in a condemned situation by the whole world for disrespecting the United Nations. They also highlighted Al-Jazeera's report that there were global protests against the United States for campaigning the war against Iraq. At the same time, the movie shows that the regime's media reported that the whole world stood with Saddam's regime against the American diplomacy. They announced that the United States' repeated order to expel Iraqi diplomats was ignored by many countries and reported that "while France, Germany, and Belgium renewed

⁸ Andrew Hammond reported that "a debate raged throughout the Arab press about what '*uluuj*' meant—most concluded it was an archaic term for 'bloodsucking insect' or 'parasite' ('It's not mine or his [Saddam's]; it's from Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab,' Sahhaf said when asked about the origin of the word on Abu Dhabi TV in August 2003)" (318).

their opposition for the war, the Secretary of State Colin Powell repeatedly called the world to expel Iraqi diplomatic mission stations there.” Moreover, the movie also exhibits that the regime’s channels depicted the American Army as moving from one defeat into another in their procession toward invading Baghdad by encountering unexpected confrontation and ambushes. It reported that:

The U.S. military spokesman said that convoy military belonging to the Maintenance Company of America 507 has lost its way and was ambushed by Iraqis. Captain Jay La Ras Spokesman for the fifteenth Unit Campaign Marines, said that two soldiers were killed and witnesses said that a female American was captured and taken to an unknown destination after suffering injuries.

That said, the movie maintains the dominant ideology’s perspective that Saddam’s regime practiced an exclusive policy against the media in Iraq. It shows Saddam’s regime used the media to hide the facts rather than to reveal them and to represent Saddam’s regime, as usual, as the only victorious one. In brief, the movie’s description of the media under Saddam’s regime is narrated from the dominant ideology’s perspectives. The movie uses these scenes to reveal the totalitarian aspect of Saddam’s regime. Through these scenes, the movie motivates the audience to continue condemning Saddam’s regime even after its fall and support the status quo under the new social system.

Moreover, *Ambulance Driver* defines Fedayeen Saddam and their actions within the structures of the dominant ideology. The movie depicts them as a group of brutal forces that were more loyal to Saddam’s regime than to Iraq. The movie represents them as dreadful members wearing black suits which cover every part of their bodies except their eyes and mouths. They neither respected nor helped the civilians during the war days. The movie depicts them as planted in their shelters and shooting at anyone approaching them. Abu Anwar fears them more than the Iraqi Army and tries to keep Jessica away from them. They are exhibited as

the main violence makers. They distributed panic and chaos instead of peace and order at every corner. The movie represents them as killers. It depicts civilians getting killed around their shelters and being thrown to a trash area just next to a Saddam's portrait to highlight Fedayeen's readiness to kill anyone for Saddam's regime. Furthermore, the movie ignores the confrontation between Fedayeen Saddam and the American troops. It holds up many battles that took place between them and the American forces. Through this representation, the movie reinforces one of the dominant ideology's attitudes toward Fedayeen Saddam. It displays them as one of the regime's main forces of horror and violence. They turned out to be the regime's repressive apparatuses and alternative to the Iraqi Army.

Ambulance Driver also creates a comparison between the aspects of Iraqis' lives under Saddam's regime and the new social system. In the first part, the movie represents the Iraqis as suffering more tragedies under Saddam's regime. Put differently, the movie represents Saddam's era as the worst era in Iraqi history. It depicts the people as pessimistic, depressed, and disappointed. They could hardly find their basic needs such as food and medicine. Above that, the movie shows the Iraqis' getting killed continuously because of the regime's endless wars. In the second part, the movie switches to describe Iraqi circumstances under the new social system. It shows the Iraqis as much happier and optimistic than before. They are depicted as having positive visions toward the future. They are singing, dancing, and having a lot of fun. However, this comparison indicates another ideological aspect. It attempts to make the viewers believe that the Iraqi status quo under the new social system is much better than it was under Saddam's regime. It attempts to exclude the fact that the Iraqis' lives under the new system, on the contrary, are extremely regressed. Terrorism and sectarianism became alternative to totalitarianism and start targeting almost every family and neighborhood. As a result, the Iraqis

sufferings and tragedies multiplied. The number of the victims, orphans, and widows increased dramatically. That considered, the movie ignores these circumstances in order to represent the Iraqis' lives under the new social system as better than Saddam's regime.

More importantly, *Ambulance Driver* describes the United States within the constraints of the Iraqi dominant ideology. It repeats the dominant ideology's demonization of the United States and its invasion of Iraq. It represents the United States as a destructive power rather than a liberating one. The movie produces many scenes amplifying the United States' bombing of the civilians and civilian apparatuses more than the main apparatuses of Saddam's regime. It shows many parts of Baghdad without power and many neighborhoods completely destroyed by the American bombs. The movie displays hospitals as unable to treat the increasing number of wounded people, and the streets full of dead civilians. Furthermore, the movie shows firefighters pulling a lot of dead people out of destroyed buildings. In this way, the movie depicts United States as the main violator of human rights. It makes no distinction between civilian and military locations as it targets both at the same time. This description also reinforces the dominant rejection of the United States' projects in Iraq. It represents the United States' project of democracy and freedom in Iraq as fake and bloody claims. Put differently, the movie represents the United States as an imperialist power and motivates the public to reject the American role in Iraq and refuse any kind of communication with it. The movie displays the United States as an "enemy" more than an ally. It represents the continuation of resisting the United States' policy in Iraq within a national context. In this way, the movie excludes the fact that it was the United States which defeated Saddam's regime and supported the establishment of the new social system in Iraq. Hence, the movie motivates its audience to support the status quo in Iraq under

the new social system and represents the new social system as the best alternative to Saddam's regime and the United States' role in Iraq.

With this in mind, *Ambulance Driver* expresses an ideological closure. It accords the dominant outlook at the United States as an imperial power. It connects the continual resistance to the United States' interests in Iraq even after the withdrawal of its troops from this country as a national loyalty. However, *Ambulance Driver* also attempts to break such ideological closures of the dominant ideology and nationalism with utopian alternatives. It establishes an imaginative interaction between Abu Anwar, Abu Khali, and Jessica during Gulf War II to challenge the dominant ideology's continuous motivation toward resisting the United States' policy in Iraq and relates that resistance to a national loyalty. The movie adopts this fictional interaction communication between these characters as a premise for an alternative relationship between both sides of the conflict as the collapse of Saddam's regime does not end the dominant demonization of the United States' role in Iraq entirely.

Dialectically speaking, *Ambulance Driver* critiques nationalism and produces visions toward a global utopia. The movie represents the Iraqis as no longer interested in nationalism and challenging national orders refusing to fight for national purposes. The movie represents Abu Anwar as challenging national orders Instead of obeying and appreciating a national order by killing Jessica, Abu Anwar risks his life to save Jessica and takes especial care of her. He challenges the front line of the confrontation between Iraqi and American forces and drives between the shooting of both sides in order to deliver Jessica to a safe place. Additionally, Abu Anwar keeps transferring Jessica from one hospital into another just to find the best health providers for her. He is the only Iraqi who tries to help Jessica in a hospital managed by the Iraqi Republican Guards. Abu Anwar finds Jessica surrounded by a group of Republican Guards and

expects that they will kill her at any moment. For this reason, he refuses to leave Jessica alone in the hospital and keeps checking her emergency room. He disregards the Republican Guard's order to leave Jessica in the ambulance at the front line in order to be bombed by the Americans. He views her as a human being who should be respected rather than as an American soldier or as an "enemy" who should be killed. He does not consider Jessica's presence in Iraq as something wrong. On the contrary, he attributes the war to the state of nationalism and national orders that both sides of the conflict adopted. In other words, Abu Anwar finds Jessica's fight in Iraq as a national mistake done by the United States rather than an individual one. He realizes that fighting her or obeying the national order of killing her will be another mistake since that would reinforce the hatred between human beings and support the bases of nationalism. Significantly, he comprehends the limited borders and orders of nationality and attempts to break them. Thus, this scene embodies a vision toward a global utopia. It attempts to dissolve the hatred between both sides of the conflict and prioritize the valuation of humanity over the evaluation of nationality.

Significantly, Abu Anwar does not remain the only character who attempts to break the national orders. Abu Khalil, the member of Iraqi Republican Guards, joins Abu Anwar in breaking the national orders. At the beginning, he is very satisfied with national orders. He is seen ready to obey any order of fighting the United States in Iraq and protecting the national interests. He feels no sympathy toward Jessica and asks Abu Anwar to kill her, saying that "we did not invade them they invaded us." However, Abu Khalil starts to hate all national orders as soon as he sees Jessica helpless and bleeding in the ambulance. He refuses the orders of killing Jessica and realizes that there is no reason for him to hate Jessica or to kill her other than the nationality. He understands that neither he nor Jessica have met before or done anything wrong to one another. He understands that they are soldiers and both of them are motivated to kill each

other by national orders. For this reason, he revolts against nationalism and helps Abu Anwar to keep Jessica alive. Moreover, Abu Khalil sees nationalism as a process of endless fights and a continuous massacring of human beings. At the end, he quits his service and sees the military as an apparatus maintaining the state of division and hatred among human beings as it defends the status quo under nation states. He cannot develop any kindness and sense of humanity toward Jessica until he gets rid of the national beliefs which constrained his freedom and humanity. In other words, he finds nationality compels him to consider the human beings on the other side of the conflict as “enemies.” After revolting against nationalism, Abu Khalil shows unlimited kindness and tolerance toward Jessica. He develops unrestricted sympathy and respect through breaking national orders. In short, this scene produces another vision toward a global utopia. It motivates the military apparatuses to break the status quo under nation states since they engulf the division among human beings and get human beings connected beyond their national identities.

Furthermore, Abu Anwar and Abu Khalil do not remain alone in opposing national orders. They are joined by a group of young Iraqi soldiers, who succeeded in breaking principles of nationalism. They find nationalism to be one of the main sources of hostility between human beings. The young soldiers refuse to consider the fight for the nation as a holy action. They realize that the only holy action is opposing the murder of human beings on both sides of the conflict. For this reason, they revolt against the war and stop fighting the American Army in Iraq. The movie shows them taking off their military uniforms and throwing away their guns. Just like Abu Khali, these soldiers try to detach the relationship between militarism and nationalism. They see the status quo under nation states benefitting no one except the ruling classes. In other words, they do not want to support the status quo of nation states which form

different states and unjust forms of social systems such totalitarianism and corrupted systems which manipulate the system of nation states easily. Thus, the young Iraqi soldiers' revolt against nationality. Significantly, their revolution embodies an important vision toward a global utopia. It intends to give the military a social function and change their role from being the defenders of certain nationalities to the defenders of whole humanities.

Furthermore, nationalism and national loyalty put Jessica into deadly situations.

Ambulance Driver shows Jessica as captured by the Iraqi soldiers after they ambushed and killed many soldiers in her unit. She is taken from the battlefield to many hospitals in Iraq. She is seen defeated, impotent, and suffering from many wounds on her head and legs. The movie depicts how nationality and national interests change Jessica from a free civilian to a prisoner of war, living under the most dangerous conditions in her life. Moreover, national orders put Jessica in an unwelcoming land. She does not know what will happen to her and expects death at any moment because she is an American soldier. She is taken from one hospital to another, from one street to another, and sees how each side of the conflict is motivated by their nationalities to kill each other. Everyone around Jessica hates her and plans to kill her in order to achieve a national promotion or accomplish a national command except Abu Anwar and Abu Khalil. They challenge national loyalties to save her.

Significantly, these circumstances give Jessica enough opportunity to realize the intolerances of nationalism. In other words, she has enough time to see the inhuman consequences of the American and Iraqi nationalities. She notes how the American air forces mainly strike the civilians and civilian infrastructures. She is shocked when an Iraqi woman who was in the same ambulance with her died from an American bomb. These events shock Jessica and make her revolt against her nationalist loyalties. She sees the nationalist loyalties as killing

more civilians and develops different reactions toward Abu Anwar and Abu Khalil for being kind to her and refusing their national orders. All considered, the reactions of Abu Anwar, Abu Khalil, young Iraqi soldiers, and Jessica embody important visions toward a global utopia. They attempt to detach militarism from nationalism. they attempt to orient militarism toward ending the state of the divisions and bridge the gaps that national loyalties create among human beings on both sides of the conflict.

Indeed, *Ambulance Driver* represents nationalism and its proponents in decline. It depicts the Iraqis objecting to nationalism and changing gradually from being its proponents to its opponents. Abu Khalil and the young Iraqi soldiers who were loyal to their nation turn against it. They refuse to have their beliefs programmed and their feelings manipulated socially. Interestingly enough, the movie distinguishes the opponents of nationalism from its proponents. It depicts the defenders of nationalism in a continuous state of anxiety and depression. It shows the Fedayeen and the Republican Guards in a high state of stress and hysteria. It displays Fedayeen's feeling afraid of everything and shooting everyone that approaches them. Then, it represents Iraqi soldiers exhausted of nationalism and its orders. They are seen no longer willing to defend nationalism or interested in risking their lives for national orders. In other words, they want to liberate themselves from any national commitments. Equally important, Jessica lives under restrictions of nationality and defends nationalism until she is captured by Iraqi soldiers. After that, she realizes the undesired consequences of nationality both on herself and on humankind. That is to say, Jessica sees nationalism as the process of legalizing the violence against human beings in other nations. Yet, *Ambulance Driver* depicts the opponents of nationality as happy and free from anxiety. Notably, Abu Anwar is seen happier than the defenders of nationality. He can easily overlook the national interests in his mission and take

care of Jessica. Abu Khalil is seen disappointed and exhausted until he revolts against his national orders. Ultimately, the movie's depiction of nationalism in fragility or in inconvenient state supports the notion of a global utopia which intends to transcend nation states' borders and looks for a world free from national divisions.

The movie represents nation states as causing more malice between the fighting sides in Gulf War II. It projects a world without national loyalties and national identity as the best alternative toward creating togetherness between the Americans and the Iraqis or reconciling them with each other. It also projects this alternative to eliminate more military struggles and save more humans from warfare. In *Utopia and its Opposites*, Eagleton states that "once we have left behind the absurdity by which such ultimately unimportant human differences as gender, ethnicity, *national identity* and the like have been turned by our rulers into terrains of political battle, we may be able to clear the air a little and spot what genuinely divides us" (35, my emphasis). Clearly, the movie's alternative project of a world free from national loyalties and identities affirms Eagleton's perspective. It identifies nationalism as one of the main causes of the division among humankind and, therefore, challenges it. The movie reveals the fact that the current world system of nation states perpetuates injustices. Thus, the movie produces a vision toward a global utopia. It identifies the nationalist loyalties and national proposals as threatening human beings and it attempts to project a world beyond national confinements.

Ambulance Driver suggests a cosmopolitan order as the best alternative to the world's system of nation states. It deconstructs all kinds of priorities among human beings based on their geographical borders and political beliefs. It explores spaces of human beings' unlimited kindness and relatedness to each other beyond all barriers. The movie shows Abu Anwar, Abu Khalil, and Jessica planning together to establish a universal community free from national ideas

and prejudices. They intend to be attached to all human beings instead of merely one or two nation states. Significantly, the movie blocks off the military confrontation between both Jessica and Abu Khalil. Neither of them is seen as interested in performing any military tasks or fighting each other. On the contrary, they are more interested in civil actions than in military ones. They refuse violence and motivate spreading unity and togetherness. Significantly, neither of these characters is seen as racist or bigoted to a particular social system. They reveal more hatred than appreciation toward the system of nation states for producing tragic circumstances. Hence, these characters' actions and interactions have cosmopolitan aspects because they intend to stop further military involvement among nation states to establish one united civil community.

To sum up, *Ambulance Driver* reflects the main attitudes of Iraqi dominant ideology after Gulf War II which started to dominate Iraqi sociopolitical and socioeconomic aspects of life after the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. As seen, the movie supports the main attitudes of this ideology. It recalls the last days of Saddam's regime and its excessive utilization of the repressive and ideological apparatuses. The movie shows the regime used almost all apparatuses to maintain its confrontation with the United States. For example, the movie displays that the regime utilized hospitals and media to reinforce its totalitarian ideology. It illustrates how the regime subverted the civilian and public services to military ones and compelled all local media to cover nothing except the regime's claims and projects. As a result, the local media had to deliver just the news which reported that the United States' diplomacy and army in failure. In this way, the movie supports one of the dominant ideology's depictions of Saddam's regime as an absolute regime. In other words, the movie creates many scenes which manifest the limits and structures of the Iraqi social system after Gulf War II. The movie also relates resisting American policy to a national loyalty. However, at the utopian level, the movie challenges the dominant

attitudes, especially regarding nationalism. It creates an alternative space of interaction between Abu Anwar, Abu Khalil, and Jessica. Through establishing such communication, the movie produces visions toward a global utopia. It rejects the world's system under the nation states and looks for an alternative world because the world's current system establishes many nation states divided by visible and invisible borders and ignores the growth of hatred and division between human beings due to their nationalities. Indeed, the movie supports the establishment of a world beyond nation states as an alternative not only to reconcile the two sides of the conflict after Gulf War II, but also to reconcile any belligerent sides and stop further conflicts.

THE SITUATION

The Situation is the first movie to be produced about Gulf War II while the United States' troops were still fighting in Iraq in 2006. Most American people did not know what was going on in Iraq, because many news outlets and media did not cover all events in Iraq accurately. The director Haas was not completely satisfied with the media's coverage of the war. He expressed that he had been interested in producing a movie about Gulf War II in which "there wouldn't be a historical perspective, but there would be a sense of urgency, and a sense that we might be able to understand what was going on even though we are in the middle of it." Similarly, Liaquat Ahamed, one of the movie's producers, expressed that one of the main reasons for producing this movie was to discover more about Gulf War II. He reports that "people had a hunger to get inside the Middle East. I remember noting that two of the books that had been on the *New York Times* bestseller list the longest were 'The Kite Runner' and 'Reading Lolita in Tehran.' News reports were somehow unable to satisfy that curiosity" (Shadow Distribution 3-4). Thus, *The Situation* became an important source of information and reaction to this war. It was the first movie to challenge the dominant media's depiction of the war in Iraq

The Situation was produced by the independent companies Shadow Distribution, Red Wine Pictures, and Armian Pictures. It narrates the story of an American journalist, Anna Molyneux (Connie Nielsen), who travels to Iraq to document the sociopolitical conditions of Iraq under the American invasion. It features a love triangle between Anna and Dan Murphy (Damian Lewis), a CIA agent, and another relationship between Anna and Zaid (Mido Hamada), an Iraqi journalist. Many aspects of this plot are based on reality. The script of the movie is written by

Wendell Steavenson, who was a journalist in Iraq at the beginning of the invasion. Shadow Distribution reports that:

Steavenson began with what she knew best: her own experiences as a journalist living and working in Iraq. The main character of Anna Molyneux is also a magazine writer, who is struggling to paint a meaningful and accurate portrait of the Iraqi people despite the whirlwind of confusion and violence that surrounds her. While she was in Iraq, Steavenson had fallen in love with an Iraqi photographer, who also inspired a character in the film: Zaid, a photojournalist who is uninterested in politics and dreams of someday seeing the mountains and oceans beyond his country's borders. Steavenson then complicated Anna and Zaid's romance by adding the character of Dan Murphy, a CIA officer who is also in Anna's life. Finally, she filled out the script with a range of nuanced secondary characters and, in the spirit of CASABLANCA, set the love triangle against a thick web of alliances, agendas, and reverses. (4)

Steavenson succeeds in mixing many fictional and factual aspects together in her script. She develops a romantic story out of the war's tragic situations. She mixes the real experiences from Iraq with many imagined situations, and Haas succeeds in adopting these aspects of circumstances in *The Situation*.

Even though *The Situation* was produced by independent companies and protested the war, it does not oppose the ruling class daily reports of the war entirely. Ideologically speaking, the movie adopts the ideological perspectives of the ruling class in many scenes. It depicts American forces challenging very complicated situations and they are working hard to rebuild the city of Samarra economically and politically. The movie shows the difficulties that the American forces have in finding the Iraqis who are ready to cooperate with them in Samarra. It represents the Iraqis as opportunists who look to achieve personal interests from American troops. Additionally, the movie also reflects the opponent perspectives which consider American forces as the source of violence rather than the source of liberation. It unmask different kinds of the violence that American forces committed in Iraq, especially the event when two Iraqi teenagers were pushed over a bridge in Samarra by American soldiers. At the same time, the

movie challenges the limits of nationality with significant visions toward a global utopia. It establishes a typical amity between Anna and the Iraqis beyond the dominant misconception of the Iraqis. More importantly, the movie brings Anna and Zaid together in a love relationship that transcends the two nation states' political tensions and cultural differences.

The Situation expresses the projects of the American ruling class after Gulf War II. It depicts the American forces, such as the American soldiers and the CIA agents, working hard to build the infrastructure of Samarra under harsh conditions. On one level the movie shows the American forces as very concerned about Iraqi children. It represents Samarra as a city without a children's hospital. The movie shows Dan looking for better places to build a new hospital for Iraqi children, when no one else thinks about this project. In this sense, the movie manipulates the issues of children's health care and hospitals ideologically. It circulates the ruling class claims which tried to show the United States' forces building basic Iraqi infrastructures and trying to secure the necessary needs of the Iraqi people. At the same time, the movie represents the American ruling class as paying more attention to Iraqi children than Saddam's regime. It shows the United States trying to provide the Iraqi children with the best health care and the best health facilities. Through this scene, the movie draws the audience's attention toward the civil services of the American Army in Iraq. In fact, this scene reinforces the limited interests of the ruling class and excludes many facts about health facilities in Samarra, especially before the invasion. It is worth mentioning that Samara has been an important city in manufacturing drugs. For example, Samra Drug Industry (SDI) has been one of the most important drug industries in Iraq. It was established in 1965 and provided many Iraqis and regional pharmacies with more than 350 kinds of medicine (sdisamarra.com). Furthermore, the movie also depicts the American forces building a water treatment facility in Samarra. It represents the city without a water

treatment facility and the locals without drinking water. In this way, the movie excludes the reference to any active infrastructure in Samarra and the fact that the war destroyed much of the city's infrastructure.

Altogether the scenes of the children's hospital and water treatment create an ideological closure. They represent the members of the American Army as building new infrastructure in Samarra and the daily violence that they practiced in the city. These scenes also hide the highest level of terrorism and hatred between the American forces and the locals which mainly grew because of the "Battle of Samarra," which was also called as "Operation Baton Rouge." This battle happened between the American Army and insurgents in 2004. In fact, it destroyed the city's infrastructure completely and caused a lot of casualties. Jonathan Steele reports that the battle for Samarra was one of the United States' asymmetric battles in Iraq; the air and ground forces were authorized to target everything in the city. The United States' forces used an unlimited amount of power against a few insurgents who lived in very crowded areas. As a result, the officials in Samarra's public hospitals reported that at least 70 civilians were killed and 160 were wounded in less than 48 hours, many of them were women and children (Steele). The movie ignores this battle which destroyed almost every infrastructure and focuses instead on the United States' construction of a few pieces of infrastructure. The scenes of building the children's hospital and water treatment facility give the audience a different reality of what is going on in Iraq. They assign a different duty to American forces in order to defend its role in Iraq and refute the reports of the United States' violations of human rights in Samarra and the rest of Iraq. In brief, these scenes attempt to suppress the opposing perspectives and produce events more fitting for the ruling class' projects. The movie attributes the building of a few pieces of Iraqi infrastructure to the ruling class's moral plans and humanistic services. It

distributes the dominant ideology's perspectives and hides the traumatic situations that the American Army and the civilians experienced during the battle for Samarra. These scenes attempt to convince the audience that the Iraqis need the American Army to rebuild their country

Furthermore, the movie looks similar to many mainstream media that support the ruling class's ideology in Gulf War II and Hollywood war movies. On the 11th of October 2004, *Fox News* highlighted the nonmilitary role of the United States' troops in Samarra. It reported that the United States' Army built and improved health, education, and public services infrastructure in Iraq, such as providing hospitals and clinics with medical equipment. *Fox News* illustrated this claim with the example that the army provided an ambulance to the Aashaq clinic. Regarding education, *Fox News* reported that the American troops were trying hard to improve elementary and higher education in the city. They built three elementary schools for Samarra's public education. They also established a College of Education, Women's vocational center, and Academy of Science. For the public services, the American Army focused on establishing a project for cleaning Highway 1, dug for oil and water on the eastern side of the city, and provided the Mukashifa Police Department with power. They also worked to find the best alternatives for electricity and established water treatments in many parts of Iraq, including Samarra (foxnews.com) That said, the movie also repeats the same projects indicated by Fox News, especially at the level of health care and water treatment. It changed this piece from *Fox News* into a fictional movie. At this level, the movie supports the dominant ideological views about the role of American force in Iraq. Significantly, Patricia Keeton and Peter Scheckner state that even though the stances in the American war movies have recently changed toward the ruling class or political ideology, but it cannot be denied that the ruling ideology has continued in the last 35 years, impacting the main and independent movie companies equally. As a result, the

movies' themes have never been free from supporting the ruling class's interests and visions. Many movies have continued to lionize American veterans and moralize their missions. (9-10). Indeed, the movie's representation of the American Army's building of infrastructure affirms this ideological aspect.

At an equal rate, the movie shows that the American forces work hard to establish a city council and spread security in Samarra. The American soldiers and CIA agent are seen meeting continuously with different Iraqi figures to find the best people to run the city. The movie shows the Americans as more interested in establishing a city council in Samarra. They are seen looking for the insurgents who resist American forces and assassinate the locals who want to participate in establishing a new city council. Furthermore, the movie shows that without the United States' support, it would be very difficult to have a successful council in Samarra. It displays the United States as trying to protect Iraqi governmental institutions and communicating with loyal politicians to govern Iraq. They refuse to make any cooperation with those who are disloyal to Iraq and the United States. This scene embodies another ideological function. It portrays the American forces as the only force fighting terrorism in Iraq and exclude the role of American allies that performed the same function in other parts of Iraq. The movie shows that no governing council or security would be possible in Iraq without American troops. Indeed, the movie's attempts to show that establishing a successful city council in Samarra is an exclusively American project. The ideological aspects of the movie make it clear that the movie could not be entirely free from the impact of the ruling ideology.

The power of the dominant ideology is seen at the center of almost every scene and character's action, including those who are apparently against the American projects in Iraq. For example, the movie shows that Rafeeq (Nasser Memarzia) is killed because he refuses to help

Americans in Samarra and be under the protection of American forces. At the same time, Walid (Driss Roukhe), the ex -Republican Guard who leads the insurgency against the American Army in Samarra, is also defeated. However, Duraid (Mahmoud El Lozy) and Mayor Tahsin (Saiid Amadis) are the only characters who could achieve most of their dreams and desires because they helped the American forces in Samarra. The Mayor Tahsin could build his own power in Samarra and Duraid is granted a position in Iraqi embassy in Australia. Thus, although the movie is apparently antiwar and the anti the dominant ideology's projects in Iraq, it supports this ideology unconsciously. It represents the proponents of the American projects as the only victorious ones and the opponents as losers.

The movie also sustains the ruling class's ideology through misrepresenting the Other. Although some scholars and cast members believe that *The Situation* makes a good or a fair representation of the Other, the movie does offend Iraqis. Mahmoud El Lozy, the Professor of theatre at the American University in Cairo, who acted in the role of Duraid in the movie, believes that the movie makes a good representation of Arabs and counters many mainstream stereotypical depictions of Arabs. He reports that:

My first comment, after Philip gave me a very brief synopsis of the film, was that I would not want to be involved in anything that portrays Arabs in a demeaning manner. Then Philip sent me the script via e-mail, and I remember reading it off the screen in record time. I found the story fascinating and refreshing in terms of its portrayals of Arabs. It was clear to me from reading the script that this was written by someone whose encounter with Iraq was not derived from CNN or FOX News. I wrote to Philip immediately and told him that I would be glad to be part of the project. (Shadow Distribution 5-6)

Professor El Lozy's report reflects a quick reading of the movie's representation of Iraqis and lacks a deep criticism of the role of Arabs in the movie including the role of his character Duraid who is represented as one of the movie's most selfish characters.

Similarly, Mido Hamada, who acted in the role of Zaid, believes that the movie made a positive representation of Arabs. He states, “I knew as soon as I read the role that I wanted to do it. It was the first role in my career where I was playing an Arab who was really human, and not portrayed as a stereotype. He has a normal job; he’s a normal human being. I feel like we haven’t really seen that enough in film”. Hamada’s consideration or looking at the Arabs in this film is very similar to El Lozy’s. It lacks the other part of the story or the other side of the character he portrayed. Although his character of Zaid is the only character loyal to Anna, he is arrested by American troops and accused of exchanging information with insurgents about American troops in Iraq. The American General the Colonel Carrick (John Slattery) accuses him of terrorism. He refuses Dan’s decision to send Zaid to negotiate with the head of insurgency in Samarra, Walid (Driss Roukhe) saying, “why did you send a terrorist to negotiate with terrorists?”

Nevertheless, the movie misrepresents the Iraqis and reinforces another ideological function. It represents almost all Iraqis as bad guys. It represents the Mayor Tahsin as a corrupted person. He is seen interested in gathering money, spending time with prostitutes, and building a power base for himself. He hires a group of killers to be his bodyguards and the city police. The movie also represents Anna’s secular friend, Rafeeq as a terrorist. The movie indicates that he is imprisoned three times by the American forces for supporting insurgency in Samarra. He refuses Anna’s request to work with American forces in Samarra, reporting that his life would be put under real risk. At the same time, the movie also represents Duraid as an opportunistic diplomat. He exchanges information with the CIA and seeks the United States’ help to secure a position for him in Australia. The police are depicted as criminals and unfitting to be security members. They kill anyone who hates the Mayor or refuses his orders for a few dollars. Walid discovers that it was Salim who killed Rafeeq and tells Anna “He [Salim] was in Abu Gharib ten years for

murder. Now he drives a police car and he is killing who the Sheik tells him to". Moreover, Iraqi soldiers are also misrepresented. They are seen as disrespectful. The movie shows them as a group of guys insulting and offending each other and not doing their jobs properly. They are described as incompetent soldiers who are not fit to be in the Army. The movie disempowers Iraqi soldiers and insults them. It shows them as disloyal and untrustworthy to guard the Iraqis and shows the American Army instead as the only soldiers who can guard the Iraqi people. J. Hoberman reports that in *The Situation* "given the absence of civil society and the bewildering nexus of tribal, religious, and geographic ties, petty warlords or neighborhood godfathers command more loyalty than any political entity. The cops are ex-criminals, the insurgents are gangbangers. Fear is constant; the desire for protection trumps all" (155). Thus, these scenes reinforce the aspects of misrepresentation in the movie.

In general, the movie depicts Iraqis as criminals and terrorists. They kill each other for unfeasible reasons and in unexpected ways. It depicts the Iraqis as a group of fighting tribes, or sectarians, and ethnicities. They neither forget nor forgive each other. Furthermore, the movie depicts them as disloyal to each other and to their country. They do not like to work in any way to improve their country. That said, the movie's aspects of misrepresentation have ideological functions. They represent the sociopolitical situations in Iraq as dangerous and depict the Iraqis as unable to establish a well-developed country or run one. It obscures their social and political capabilities to legitimize the ruling class's social aims and capitalistic plans in Iraq. In other words, the movie represents the American forces as the only good guys who can govern Iraq and shows no group or ethnicity or even individual who would be able to govern this country. In brief, the movie's misrepresentation of the Iraqis legitimizes the American occupation of Iraq and the overstay of its army there.

On the other hand, the movie also supports some aspects of opposed ideologies which highlight many realities beyond the dominant ideology's expectations and reports. They display the American Army as brutal forces and under unwelcoming circumstances. The movie depicts American forces violating human rights in Samarra. As soon as the movie starts, a scene shows American soldiers beating two Iraqi teenagers and throwing them over a bridge in Samarra. Through this scene, the movie indicates a different reality about the American soldiers' operations in Iraq and depicts them as wild forces killing civilians for entertainment. The alive teenager tells Anna they did nothing to justify the American forces' killing of his cousin "it was like it was fun for them." The movie represents this scene as an example to refute the ruling class's depiction of American forces performing civil assignments in Iraq. It aims to subvert the dominant representation of the American Army in Iraq and give the audience different facts, showing the American soldiers living in anxiety. They can neither communicate nor respect the Iraqis in Samarra and use excessive violence against them. Through this scene, the movie protests the war and discredits the ruling class's daily reports about the civil role of the American troops in Iraq. The movie shows the audience the real casualties that the ruling class attempts intentionally to hide from the public. It motivates the audience to imagine the number of casualties that the American forces do daily throughout Iraq, but which the ruling class hides them from the public. Thus, this scene expresses an oppositional ideology that transcends the ruling class's confinements and its attempt to suppress all rival reports from Iraq.

At the same time, the movie also represents American soldiers living under extreme situations in Samarra. They are seen confronting hostile circumstances and can barely protect themselves from unexpected attacks or distinguish between their opponents and allies. They are targeted everywhere from highways to grocery stores. In other words, they are unwelcomed in

the city and can hardly find any locals to cooperate with them. Almost everyone hates them and wants to fight them, from street children to taxi drivers. Zaid tells his magazine editors “Kids playing on the street Americans and mujahedeen. You know no one wants to be American”. The movie also highlights a very tough conversation between Zaid and a taxi driver. It reflects how much the American soldiers are hated in Samarra.

THE TAXI DRIVER: Are you American?

ZAID: I am Iraqi

THE TAXI DRIVER: Did you live in America?

ZAID: No, I’ve always lived in Iraq.

THE TAXI DRIVER: I thought you couldn’t be Iraqi because you have a camera and you’re carrying a bag. I also saw your shoes.

ZAID: I bought them on Sadoun Street.⁹

THE TAXI DRIVER: Do you sell your pictures to the Americans?

ZAID: Yes... Sometime

THE TAXI DRIVER: Iraqi brother, you shouldn’t help the Americans.

This scene can be considered as one of the most important examples of how much the Iraqis hated American soldiers and their allies. Through this scene, the movie reveals that the Americans would never be able to win the Iraqis’ hearts in Samarra easily. It shows that the residents do not only refuse the American soldiers, but also the American productions. The movie indicates that the Iraqis refuse anything American and anyone sympathizes with the Americans. In brief, the opposing scenes or ideological perspectives depict that insurgency is growing in Samarra and the American troops could be defeated at any moment.

Significantly, the opposing ideological perspectives and scenes in *The Situation* also reveal utopian aspects especially within Mannheim’s definition of utopia as an impulse toward troubling or destroying the status quo. He states that the utopian impulses “intend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time” (173). The opposing

⁹ Sadoun Street is one of the well-known streets in Baghdad.

ideological scenes and events reveal utopian energies. They intend to subvert many of the ruling class's claims such as achieving significant progress in Iraq, attaching human and civil commitments to the American Army in Iraq, and depicting Iraq and the Middle East as better because of the American invasion of Iraq. The oppositional perspectives attempt to refute all these claims. They show American soldiers as unable to communicate with the civilians and that they enjoy killing them. They also show the insurgents as controlling the situation in Samarra more than the American soldiers. The opposing ideas also reflect that day by day the United States is not only losing the war in Iraq but also many of its allies. Dan tells the US ambassador that the war creates an unlimited number of "enemies" and results in infinite casualties. The opposing scenes subvert the image of the United States as the victorious power and winner of the war; they instead show that the war has ended but the battles have not ended yet and the United States is losing these consequent battles. In short, these scenes embody some utopian impulses because they break the dominant ideology's depiction of the war in Iraq and motivate the audience to think of alternatives beyond the dominant ideology's bounds. The movie's opposing scenes intend to make Americans more aware of the results and consequences of Gulf War I.

That said, the perspectives of the dominant ideology support the status quo under nation states. They reinforce national interests and unconsciously support the United States' plans toward reshaping the Middle East according to its own interests. That is to say, the dominant perspectives support the ideological limits and interests of one nation, the United States, over other nations. In the end, they maintain the world's status quo under nation states. It focuses on identifying and improving the United States' interests alone at the expenses of other nation states. The dominant perspectives sustain the system of the nation states and the United States hegemonic role within this system. Thus, the dominant perspectives create ideological closures

and tend toward preserving the world's current system under the nation states. However, the movie attempts to open these closures with impulses toward a global utopia.

More importantly, *The Situation* does not display the ideological aspects only, but it also generates many impulses toward a global utopia. The movie generates a love triangle between Anna and Dan on one hand, and between Anna and Zaid on the other. The love between Anna and Zaid, rather than that between Anna and Dan, succeeds in holding romantic and political dimensions. The relationship between Anna and Dan does not have as many political differences or cultural breaks as the relationship between Anna and Zaid has. In other words, Anna and Dan's relationship repeats the same cultural limits of love between a couple sharing an equal culture or mindset within one community. As a result, Anna is seen more interested in Zaid's actions and perspectives than Dan's. She spends more time with Zaid than she does with Dan. Anna meets Dan for a few times and spends a few minutes with him while she meets with Zaid more. She does not want to go further in her relationship with Dan. For her, Dan lacks the human and romantic feelings that she needs. Anna finds that Dan needs her just for sexual desires and political projects. He always wants Anna to reach out and communicate with the notable people that he cannot reach in Samarra and Baghdad. She dislikes Dan's actions and perspectives, especially his action in releasing her from the insurgents as it leads to the murder of many Iraqi civilians and American soldiers. Anna believes that Dan did that action mostly to strengthen his political positions rather than to save her. She sees Dan as a selfish man who does not care about the continuous murder of civilians in Iraq. She tells Dan "you do not care about dozens of people getting killed every day you don't bother about any Iraqi." He replies "Anna, it is just Iraq. Please, do not let it get to you." When they get together, they usually tell and retell the Iraqi sociopolitical situations in different ways and get involved in more tensions. They could not

provide any alternatives to the circumstances of Gulf War II in Samarra and Baghdad. For these reasons, Anna and Dan's relationship cannot develop enough utopian moments.

Nevertheless, *The Situation* generates significant impulses toward a global utopia in the relationship between Anna and Zaid. They break the basis of racial love and develop romantic feelings. They use their feelings of love as an alternative to all tensions and intensions of revenge. The movie portrays them sharing equal feelings and fears toward each other. They create notable opportunities of love out of extreme moments and impossible circumstances of romance. Anna asks Zaid for a kiss at the front line of a dramatic confrontation between American soldiers and the insurgents, but Zaid replies "Are you crazy? You can't kiss me in front of Sunni Mujahedeen. Afterwards, you can kiss me afterwards." Furthermore, they endure all challenges and acts of violence together, such as the possibility of being kidnapped or getting murdered at any moment. Anna is kidnapped by Walid, the leader of insurgency and Zaid risks his life to negotiate with insurgents to save her. He was arrested by American forces and accused of kidnapping Anna and sharing information with the insurgents not only in Samarra but also in Falluja. Nevertheless, Anna and Zaid feel stronger and more secure whenever they are together. They forget the daily consequences of the war and its insecure moments. Moreover, they trust each other more than anyone else. Zaid finds Anna the only person that he can trust and love within hostile circumstances. He does not want Anna uses her American passport and identity while traveling in Baghdad and provides her with an Iraqi passport and takes care of her. He becomes her guide and protector. At the same time, Anna finds Zaid to be the only person she can love and trust in the chaotic situations in Samarra and Baghdad. She trusts Zaid more than the American soldiers and Dan. In a few words, the movie shows that the relation between Anna

and Zaid has more utopian impulses than the relation between Anna and Dan because the former one attempts to defeat all boundaries and differences.

The relationship between Anna and Zaid also has political purposes. It attempts to solve the political tensions between both sides of the conflict which are created by nation states. Anna and Zaid could love each other and take care of each other by confronting their national tensions. They challenge the status quo of hatred between two nation states and establish a relationship beyond national considerations. Significantly, they spend moments of peace and connection beyond the limits of nationalism and the interests of two fighting nation states. Anna and Zaid's relation could deconstruct the boundaries of the nation states. They overcome national priorities and attempt to show how the people could live and love beyond their national identities. Thus, Anna and Zaid's love embodies surplus visions toward a global utopia because nationalism no longer matters or exists in their love. They ignore thinking and feeling within national constraints.

The Situation represents the defeat of the motivations toward nationalism. The movie does not give priority to any sort of nationalism or support any action which reinforces the status quo under nation states. Rafeeq has been imprisoned in Iran for many years and endured all kinds of torture for the sake of a better Iraq. Nevertheless, he gets no political position as a reward for his patriotism or belief in nationalism and get killed. His visions of changing Iraq into a better nation state never come true. Walid, an ex-Iraq Republican Guard, also believed in nationalism and patriotism blindly. He wishes to see Iraq as an independent nation state and believes that supporting a group of insurgents would be the only way to have a free Iraq again. He understands nationalism as a process of killing more Americans in Iraq. Yet, at the end of the movie he is defeated and flees. Through these characters' easy and fast defeat, the movie

critiques nationalism and expects its end soon. These characters could achieve no victory and their visions toward having a better nation state went unfulfilled.

At the same time, the American soldiers refuse to put themselves at risk for the sake of nationalism or national loyalties. They refuse nationalism and do not intend to be patriots. They blame the United States for occupying Iraq and causing a state of anarchy in Baghdad. The American soldiers could hardly approve of Dan's order to attack the insurgents' dens in Samarra to release Anna from them. The Iraqi soldiers are also seen uninterested in nationalism or be motivated by its regulations. They avoid any confrontation with American soldiers before the murder of the two Iraqi teenagers. They prefer to stay at home over performing any national duty. In this way, the movie supports the notion of a global utopia which embodies a vision toward a world beyond the national appreciation. With this intention, the movie refutes nationalism as the only and everlasting system of running the world. It represents almost everyone interested in nationalism as defeated or living in troubles.

The Situation presents the Iraqi civilians and Anna in a distinctive state of amity. Anna is seen as the first American who challenges the stereotypical description of the Iraqis and visits them to see what the war did to them and how they view the American invasion. In other words, Anna wants to live the Iraqis' daily lives under the American occupation. She visits homes of different Iraqi ethnicities and receives equal welcome. The movie shows the Iraqis as having a high sense of humanity and hospitality. It portrays the Iraqis endangering themselves and challenging all of the radical threats to protect Anna. For example, Zaid's mother challenges all radical threats which ban any communication with Americans. She refuses to allow Anna back to her hotel in Baghdad during the night and makes her sleep at their home. Similarly, Rafeeq's family also welcomes Anna warmly in their home and they challenge all dangerous

consequences of hosting her. Even though Rafeeq was against the United States' occupation of Iraq and has pessimistic visions of Iraq under the invasion, he provides Anna with the information she needs and protects her from Iraqi insurgents in Samarra, especially during the teenager's funeral in Samarra. He also cooperates with Anna to finish her article about the atrocities of the American soldiers in Samarra. Similarly, Walid, who is highly wanted by the American Army for supporting the insurgency, feels more concerned about Anna when she visits him. He protects her from Iraqi and Saudi insurgents in Samara. At the end, it is Walid, not Dan, who saves Anna's life. Without Walid, Anna would not have survived. Thus, these interactions between Anna and the Iraqis offer other impulses toward global utopia. They reject misrepresentation and affirm human beings' equal sense of humanity. Indeed, the cooperation between Anna and the Iraqis demonstrates the possibility of establishing a universe in which the people can live with hospitality and avoid hostility.

With this in mind, *The Situation* should not be understood as focusing on establishing an ideal world in the future and ignoring the ills of the world of here and now; on the contrary, it critiques the present world and looks for a different world system. Tally asserts that the utopia in the age of globalization "can be neither an ideal state elsewhere in world geography nor a realization of some ideal future. Rather utopia today must function as an imaginative effort to map the world system itself" (xi). *The Situation* identifies the system of nation states and political tensions it produces as the main source of threatening the establishment of a perfect world. Put differently, the movie shows that the establishment of an ideal future for the world of here and now as impossible under nation states since this system leads to continuous conflicts, the violation of human rights, and a lack of justice. Furthermore, the movie's utopian impulses do not represent an ideal world beyond the world of here and now or bring utopian moments

beyond this world. It explores the world's nation states as the main reason for many problems around the world, including Gulf War II. For this reason, it looks for an alternative policy for the world's current system.

Altogether, *Ambulance Driver* and *The Situation* could support the limits and aims of their status quo. They attempt to restore the structures of their dominant ideologies unconsciously. *Ambulance Driver* tries to reveal the dominant ideology's attitudes toward Saddam's regime and demonizes the United States. It shows the American policy as bringing continuous death and destruction to Iraq and asks its audience to resist it continuously and connects this resistance to national loyalty. Furthermore, the movie focuses on the casualties resulting from the American war and ignores the plights caused by Iraqi social systems before and after Gulf Wars.

At the same time, *The Situation* also supports the dominant ideology unconsciously. It shows the American forces very concerned about Iraq and trying hard to build its infrastructure in Samarra. It intends to convince its audience to support the United States' projects in Iraq. It shows Iraqi infrastructures in Samarra, just like the rest of Iraq as completely destroyed and asks the United States' Army to stay in the country longer as its infrastructures cannot be built over one night. The movie also represents opposing ideological perspectives. It produces many scenes highlighting the American Army's violation of human rights in Samarra. Notably, the movie's dominant perspectives are directed to improve the projects of one nation state (The United States) in another nation state (Iraq) and its plans to build it according to one nation state's interests. The movie's dominant ideological structures could not offer any change for the world system of nation states and they reinforce the ideological closure of nation states. This aspect is also noted in *Ambulance Driver*. It repeats the ideological constraints which intend to keep Iraq

as a nation state. Thus, these movies do not only focus on revealing ideological structures, but they also reveal many utopian energies.

Ambulance Driver and *The Situation* generate progressive visions toward a global utopia. They deconstruct the limits of nationalism and support breaking the status quo under nation states. They represent nationalism and the status quo of nation state as the main cause of the struggle and antagonisms between human beings. They reveal that the real conflict should be against nation states, not among nation states. Significantly, movies show that human beings can live in harmony and peace beyond the nation states more than within them. In other words, these movies criticize the world of nation states and accuse it of threatening coexistence among human beings. In short, the movies embody a movement toward a global utopia because they attempt to replace hostility with hospitality, fighting with love, and divided nation states with one united community.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the utopian and dystopian dimensions of globalization from economic, cultural, and political aspects. Scholars offer different perspectives toward globalization. Some scholars highlight the dystopian conditions of globalization's economic, cultural, and political aspects. They reduce globalization to capitalism and consider capitalism as the only drive of globalization. They relate all kinds of violence and terrorism around the world to the economic aspect of globalization. Furthermore, some scholars believe that globalization puts nation states' decisions and cultural specifications under critical situation. In other words, they believe that globalization puts the nation states' independency under digital and traditional attacks.

However, this study also highlighted the scholars who identified utopian dimensions in the same aspects of globalization. They believed that the capitalist aspect of globalization made a historical change in human history. It changed many parts of the world from primitive communities to metropolitan cities and makes the transfer of labors and products much easier than before. Moreover, globalization also brings the world's multiple cultures closer. It enables human beings to see and share different forms of cultures and interact with each other more than ever. Finally, globalization deconstructs the nation states' borders and interests. It succeeds in establishing many intragovernmental institutions with intranational interests. Interestingly enough, this dissertation focused on exploring utopian dimensions in political and cultural aspects of globalization and identified how they strengthened its main visions toward a global utopia.

This dissertation studied the visions toward a global utopia in six cultural texts produced as reactions against Gulf War I and II. The cultural texts depicted these wars as devastating events on both sides of the conflict and related these wars to the world's current system of nation

states. They suggested the movements toward a global utopia as alternative visions toward melting catastrophic circumstances under nation states. This dissertation's scope was limited to six cultural texts produced by Iraqi and American artists. The Americans texts were *Three Kings*, *An Identified Enemy*, and *The Situation*. The Iraqi texts were *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds*, *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*, and *Ambulance Driver*. This dissertation was mainly based on Jameson's double hermeneutics of utopian and ideological analysis or what Jameson calls "negative hermeneutics" and "positive hermeneutics" that he developed in *The Political Unconscious*. The dissertation also referred in some places to the ideological and utopian approaches which were developed by other scholars, such as Bloch, Tally, and Mannheim. The dissertation explained the ideological aspects in the selected texts according to Jameson's definition of ideology as "structural limits." Additionally, in explaining the utopian aspects in the selected texts, the dissertation relied on Bloch's and Jameson's definitions of a utopia. This dissertation also depends on the definition of impulses toward a global utopia, which was developed in this dissertation.

The selected cultural texts were anti-war texts and rejected Iraqi and American dominant ideologies which led to Gulf War I and II. However, the dissertation explored that even though these texts contradict the ideologies that led to these wars, they unconsciously supported the aims and perspectives of their ideologies. Then, the dissertation focused on exploring how these texts attempted to go beyond these ideological limits and produce many visions toward a global utopia. These texts were anti-war works. They looked at Gulf Wars I and II as devastating events on both sides of the conflict and their consequences as results of the world's current system of nation states. Hence, the dissertation explored the movements toward a global utopia as the most fitting alternatives to such circumstances.

This dissertation was divided into four chapters. Chapter one defined impulses toward a global utopia. It represented the visions toward a global utopia as a series of visions aiming to bridge utopian impulses of different cultures toward establishing a new world with a new sociopolitical system. The dissertation highlighted that the impulses toward a global utopia try to free human beings from national, cultural, racial, and religious differences in order to reveal their connectivity and produce a typical unity among them. The visions toward a global utopia are anti-radicalism, anti-totalitarianism, and anti-imperialism, to mention a few. They intend to save human beings from consequences of these phenomena. They critique the world's existing system of nation states for dividing human beings into different identities and fighting communities. The impulses toward a global utopia suggest one universal community based on coexistence and cooperation among human beings as an alternative to the world's multiple nation states which are based on strict sociopolitical and socioeconomic factors. These factors led to the spread of poverty, sickness, and wars between nation states. The dissertation pointed out many protest movements and musical concerts which developed expressive visions toward a global utopia, such as the people's protest against the World Trade Organization from Cancun to Hong Kong, Bob Geldof's concert against poverty in Africa, the Occupy Wall Street movements, and the street movements against the Gulf Wars. Thus, the dissertation represented nation states as dystopian communities, establishing the economic and social crises. As a result, it suggested impulses toward a global utopia as alternatives to the status quo.

Chapter Two represented the impulses toward a global utopia against totalitarianism and capitalism in Gulf War I movies *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds* and *Three Kings*. *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds*. At the ideological level, the movie depicted the Iraqis living in an ideal freedom and practicing their religious ceremonies without any interruption. Then, the movie also

focused on Saddam's portraits in many places in Baghdad. The portraits' messages varied from depicting Saddam's regime as a benevolent regime to a powerful one ready to confront the United States' second war against Iraq. However, the movie also broke such circumstances overloaded with ideological confinements of Saddam's regime and his surveillance apparatuses. It depicted Baghdad as an ugly city and represented Iraqi Marshland as a utopian alternative. It displayed the Marshlands' residents living in utopian moments, working together and taking care of each other. The movie also showed the Iraqi Marshlands as surrounded by natural elements from all sides and emptied from the regime's apparatuses and surveillance. However, this utopian place was seen under immediate risk by American planes. As an impulse toward a global utopia, the movie called its audience to move against the war and stop it from destroying Iraqi Marshlands. Here, the movie supported the notion of a global utopia which focuses on preserving nature and natural elements from the destructive power of capitalism.

At the same time, this chapter also highlighted the ideological limits in *Three Kings*. On one hand, the movie supported the dominant ideology's desire of having the United States' army play the role of an international police force. It depicted the Iraqi soldiers as thieves for stealing Kuwaiti gold bullions and the American forces led by Gates as the main source of law and justice. They beat Iraqi soldiers and return Kuwaiti gold bullions. This scene displayed one of the most important ideological aspects in the movie. It structured a plot aimed to glorify the role of the United States in securing the order and excludes the role of other nations that allied with the United States against Iraq. The movie also reduced the importance of any revolution in breaking in the status quo. As a result, neither Iraqi rebels nor Gates' crew could develop a significant revolution against the status quo. However, the movie attempted to break such ideological constraints with utopian impulses. It represented a significant togetherness between Iraqi rebels

and Gates' group. They attempted to establish a world characterized by loyalty and commitment as alternative to the world of Gulf War I which was characterized with betrayal and deceit as the United States administration broke its promise to help the Iraqis' revolt against Saddam's regime. The movie attributed this war to capitalistic projects rather than humanistic ones. Considering all, *Zaman: The Man from the Reeds* and *Three Kings* could produce impulses toward a global utopia. They critiqued the status quo under Saddam's regime and the capitalistic projects behind Gulf War I. They developed an intention to protect ecology and humanity from the violation of both sides.

Chapter three brought the impulses toward a global utopia against terrorism and the war on terrorism in *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* and *An Identified Enemy*. In *A Strange Bird on Our Roof*, the analysis focused on revealing the play's unconscious support of the radical ideology. The play reflected unconsciously the radical ideology which grew in the western cities of Iraq due to the rise of al-Qaeda between 2004-2006. The play defined the American soldiers as "killers" and "kafirs" which had been proper synonyms for American soldiers in al-Qaeda's ideology in order to legalize all kinds of operations against the American military. The play also introduced al-Qaeda members who fought the American soldiers as "mujahideen" in order to depict their operations against the American Army in Iraq as jihad. Thus, the play reinforced the extreme ideology of al-Qaeda in the Sunni triangle by representing al-Qaeda as the only group threatening the United States' Army and banning any communication with them. It represented a group of four insurgents troubling American forces without being defeated. The play also attempted to break these ideological closures with impulses toward a global utopia. It established a significant relationship between Ziyad's mother and the soldier put on their roof. Further, Ziyad's sister also broke the ideological constraints of al-Qaeda and started working as a

translator with American soldiers. She challenged al-Qaeda's depiction of American soldiers as "monsters" and called them "human beings." That said, the play succeeded in producing impulses toward a global utopia because it challenged radical constraints and attempted to establish a familial relationship between Iraqi civilians and American soldiers.

This vision was also repeated in the American play *An Identified Enemy*. At the ideological level, the play repeated the dominant ideology's accusation of Iraq and the region of supporting terrorism. It defined al-Qaeda terrorists, such as Shehadeh Jawhar (Abu Omar) and Fareed Mustafa Al-Chafur (Abu Mustafa) within the dominant ideology's definition of terrorists. Furthermore, the play also showed the United States improving security in Iraq. At the utopian level, the play produced utopian impulses toward a global utopia. It projected a friendship between Jalil and Jamie elevated to brotherhood. Significantly, the play used this brotherhood as a solution to the confrontation between the United States and many countries in the Middle East. All considered, *A strange Bird on Our Roof* and *An Identified Enemy* introduced significant visions toward a global utopia. They intended to break radical and political tensions between the Americans and the Iraqis on one hand and projects an alternative relationship between the United States and many countries in the region on the other hand. In brief, these plays intended to change all fighting sides into members of one community.

Chapter Four discussed nationalism versus vision toward a global utopia in Gulf War II movies, *Ambulance Driver* and *The Situation*. At the ideological level, *Ambulance Driver* repeated the Iraqi dominant ideology's constraints after Gulf War II. It showed how Saddam's regime manipulated Iraqi apparatuses, such as health facilities and mass media. The movie represented the regime's manipulation of Iraqi local media. Almost all radio stations that Abu Anwar turned on to listen to are covering either Saddam reciting his odes to mobilize Iraqi

people against the United States' attack, or the Iraqi Minister of Information refuting the American Army's progress in their movements toward invading Baghdad. Moreover, the movie repeated the dominant ideology's demonization of the United States' role in Iraq and represented resisting that role as a national loyalty. However, the movie also produced utopian visions which intend to go beyond national evaluation. It depicted Abu Anwar and Abu Khalil challenging a national order by refusing to kill Jessica for being an American soldier. At the end, Abu Anwar, Abu Khalil, and Jessica created utopian moments free from national identity and national evaluation. In this sense, the movie produced significant visions toward a global utopia.

Furthermore, this chapter also explored utopian visions beyond nationalism in *The Situation*. Although this movie was produced by independent companies, it supported the dominant ideology's projects in Iraq unconsciously. At the ideological level, this movie restated the American forces main achievements in Iraq during Gulf War II. It showed the American soldiers and the CIA working together to build children's hospital and a water treatment facility in Samarra. At the same time, the movie also depicted the American forces working steadily to find reliable and loyal people who can cooperate with them and govern the city sincerely. The movie displayed this task as very challenging as not everyone was interested in working with American forces. Through these scenes, the movie intended to romanticize the role of American forces in Iraq and exclude their violations of human rights. The movie also justified the American forces staying longer in Iraq by representing the Iraqis as unable and unwilling to build Iraq again and establish any kind of cooperation with the American forces. Thus, these scenes did not only support the dominant perspectives, but they also maintained the status quo of nation states and created ideological closure. On the other hand, the movie produced significant visions toward a global utopia. It replaced the moment of hatred and tension between both sides

of the conflict with a romance. It established a romantic relationship between the American journalist, Anna, and the Iraqi journalist, Zaid. Significantly, their love surpassed all racial and national borders. Interestingly, that relationship did not reinforce romantic feelings or replace revenge with kindness only, but it also deconstructed the political tensions between both sides of the conflict. Altogether, this chapter explored both movies' promotion of potential visions toward a global utopia. They refused the national identities and loyalties which trigger divisions and differences among human beings and brought the world beyond nationality as the best alternative.

Indeed, this dissertation confirmed that the impulses toward a global utopia are available in every culture. Although the selected texts are not entirely and openly utopian texts or utopian genres or even have identified utopian communities, they produce utopian impulses. The selected texts are war texts which means they are full of dystopian scenes and events rather than utopian ones. However, this dissertation could investigate their distinctive utopian impulses. It explored the capabilities of American and Iraqi cultural texts to surpass the confinements of their dominant ideologies and generate significant visions. Despite the differences in historical and cultural backgrounds, the cultural texts produce equal responses to Gulf War I and II. They reject both sides' use of absolute power against the environment and human beings and produce utopian projects to preserve both, humanity and ecology. The cultural texts also produce different plans attempt to counter terrorism and "the war on terrorism" with new visions focusing on fighting terrorist groups not whole nations. The cultural texts intend to reduce the spread of hatred and revenge whose scope exceeded the scope of "the war on terrorism." The selected texts in this dissertation campaign a war against misconception and misrepresentation. They refuse to represent any side of the conflict as "kafirs," "infidel," "monsters," "terrorists," and

“mercenaries”. They give both fighting sides one definition: human beings. The texts insist on love and reject hate and focus on the necessity of forgiveness instead of revenge. They intend to change the opposing sides of the conflict from ‘enemies’ to members of one global family working together to achieve a remarkable unity. At the same time, the texts never hesitate to introduce the terrorists such as Abu Omar and Abu Ghafur as terrorists.

Moreover, the selected texts identify the nation states and nationalism as another root of antagonism and wars, especially the Gulf Wars. For this reason, they critique nationalism and project the world beyond nationality as the best alternative. They encourage both sides of the conflict to widen their senses of humanity over their senses of nationality just like Anna and Zaid or like Abu Anwar, Abu Khlail, and Jessica. The texts are not concerned with the loss or victory of a nation, but they focused on the victory of humankind. All in all, the selected texts generate visions toward a global utopia because they endeavor to put human beings into a peaceful unity, critique nationalism for dehumanization, and call for denationalization.

Based on these conclusions, this dissertation will be a significant study in comparative literature and cultural studies. It explored two different cultures equal reactions toward the Gulf Wars. It offered war literatures and cultures characterized with dystopian narratives utopian evaluations. At the theoretical level, this dissertation built on the theories of Fredric Jameson, Robert Tally, and Patrick Hayden who explored positive relationships between a utopia and globalization. Then, it applied these scholars’ ideas to the selected texts. This dissertation also gave a globalization a reading beyond its economic aspects. It highlighted the utopian dimensions in cultural and political aspects of globalization. More importantly, this dissertation connected utopian visions from more than one culture and era with each other under a global utopia. It introduced many new visions toward this utopia. Overall, this dissertation found a few

studies have been written with the visions toward a global utopia. As a result, it recommends further considerable studies, like this dissertation, to be written to explore more impulses toward a global utopia and apply them to cultural productions which were produced or will be produced as reactions to many sociopolitical and sociopolitical issues. As a futuristic expectation, the cultural productions of the next years will need more studies to explore visions toward a global utopia as they will react to many global circumstances such as the rise of street movements from Hong Kong to Baghdad and the rise of the global pandemic of coronavirus from Wuhan to California in 2020.

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