

Surveillance and Torture: A Foucauldian Reading in Mahmoud Saeed's *Saddam City* and Sinan Antoon's *Ijaam*

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the portrayal of surveillance and torture during Saddam Hussein's era, as reflected in Sinan Antoon's novel *Ijaam* (2004) and Mahmoud Saeed's *Saddam City* (2004). Surveillance is one of Michel Foucault's strategies of power. The nature of surveillance means that the authority monitors the individuals without their knowledge. It is adopted as a mean of control and a method of domination throughout Saddam's regime. Antoon described how the citizens were forced to follow the authority commands because they know that the government always watch their moves. In *Saddam City* (2004), Mahmoud Saeed also portrays the difficult circumstances which the Iraqi society experienced for more three decades under constant censorship by the Baath Party- Saddam's ruling political party. Torture in prison, on the other hand, is also represented through the main characters of Antoon and Saeed texts. Theoretically, the subject of imprisonment and punishment is considered a unique work in Foucault's view that might not have been discussed even by modern philosophers. According to Michel Foucault, the prison must be used as a tool to reform individuals (Foucault,1995). Foucault's controversy about the use of forbidden matters in prison makes him very prominent in social and political works. He believes that the torture in prison is a political issue that does not restore justice or lead to individual reforms, but instead reinforces the authority by instilling the feeling of fear and terror among the masses. Consequently, the selected authors depicted the prison as non- reformist institution used by Saddam regime to frighten the people and to maintain his political authority.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the novel, in Iraq witnesses utmost importance including its themes, styles, and characteristics, more specifically, after the fall of the Baath party regime in 2003. It becomes a rich genre for its unique characteristics which then develops and occupies a big space in Iraqi literary art, both in the qualitative and quantitative aspects. It has succeeded in unveiling political controls. This is due to conditions of freedom and democracy in Iraq that

allow the mind to write its thoughts on papers by using the novel. Since the novel, as predicted by Hegel and Marx, is considered as a scientific measure of mental development, Arab intellectuals also see the novel as a more appropriate and ideal vehicle for describing and reflecting the new change in society. Thus, this supremacy in the novel helps more in revealing the psychological, cultural and political repression from the circle of silence into the realm of ideas which are

portrayed in Iraqi novel. As such, it is used as a critical record in introducing a vision to the world through reconstructing, observing, and revealing the cultures that are under control by the government. Unfortunately, the novel has been mostly neglected before the fall of the Ba'ath party regime. Because the political regime gives itself the right to monitor the creative art in all its forms. As a result, the novel in Iraq became a captive to the Ba'ath party regime's ideology. Any writer would be severely punished if he/she did not write for the support of the government (Aglo, 2016). Thus, because it was considered the most basic mean for the populations to express themselves against the political violence that was committed against them by the dictatorial political authorities, the Iraqi novel at that time was under hard surveillance to make it lack the themes and discussions related to politics. A matter that causes tyrannical authorities to impose a large collar on many Iraqi writers and poets who often suffered tyranny and terror. As a result, a lot of them were forced to leave their homeland and to live in exile (Ali, 2008).

In fact, the Iraqi literature has been influenced by two historical stages. The first one is represented during the establishment of the Iraqi Kingdom in 1921. It banned all the democratic freedoms and promised to jail anyone that dared express opinions against the ruling class. However, despite the severe censorship on the press and freedoms in monarchic Iraq, some opposition journals appeared. For example, *Public opinion* and *The people* were among the journals that were published in 1932 but were banned after a short period of their publication. Literature at that time was interested in topics that relate to social rather than political issues, and this was because class divisions were a key issue during that time. In the 1940s and 1950s, Iraq witnessed the emergence of some secular movements as a result of World War II. However, they were more suffered by the Iraqi government and, accordingly, all literature that used as a tool for expressing the Marxist ideologies was strictly censored. However, Political criticism was confined only to satirical journalism. The message was conveyed throughout metaphors, jokes, proverbs,

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word games. The success of such kind of criticism was due to the fact that the writers and poets whose higher level of education which could not match with those of the government censors. The political criticism magazine of such kind was increased, there were more than 31 magazine and journals during the early decades of monarchic Iraq. The number of socio-political cartoonists, for example, was also increased to become more than 18 well-known artists (Ali, 2008)

The second one is represented during the revolution of July 17th that was led by the Baath Party and which lasted until the Anglo-American conquest of Iraq in March 2003. The censorship of that period was different from its corresponding of monarchic Iraq in that the Baath authority used all measures and instruments that were available to stress its censorship, not only about literature but for everything. Tripp (2007) states that Saddam Hussein's regime had access to an apparatus far stronger than that were available to his predecessors, and thus had the potential of turning substantial financial and technical resources into unprecedented levels of raw power. The censorship during his rule represented by burning of cultural and historical books, imprisonment and deprivation of the poets and writers. Baram (1991) elaborates that the rationale behind the Baath party censorship was to do "normalization" of Iraqi history (p.515). The Iraqi government at that time claimed that Iraqi history and Arabic history, in general, was written by Persian historian and the motif of rewriting it would be part of the Iraqi future. Although Iraqi literature has been largely influenced by the above two periods, the first period was "less despotic" than the second one. Imprisonment and execution were used to shut down all the mouths that demanded freedom because the government considered any opposing opinion as a clear threat against it (Ali, 2008, p.214).

The new Iraqi novel in its forms, themes, and styles gives a picture which is completely different from that of the traditional Iraqi novel. It reflects the pain of the Iraqis in a special aesthetic style. Some of them appear in a fantastic poetic language although they describe

the Iraqi reality without ambiguity. Thus, the novelist in this genre takes the road of neutrality. This frankness and transparency can be located in many novels, such as in *Ijaam* (2004) and *The Corpse Washer* (2010) by Sinan Antoon, *Eye of Worm* (2010) by Naseef Falak, *Follow my footsteps* (2009) by Hameed Al- Aqabi, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2018) by Ahmed Saadawi and *Saddam City* (2004) by Mahmoud Saeed etc.

The theme of political violence, political turmoil, and personal troubles are the main themes that dominate Iraqi narration. There is less attention that has been paid to the use of figurative language. The novel became a critical discourse which detaches the old cultural and social manners throughout using a realistic vision. From another perspective, the new Iraqi novel has begun to skip down the path of autobiographical narrative or the personal angst towards describing the violations of both the local tyrannical regimes and those of colonial powers which the Iraqi society has faced (Al Sakaf, 2014). Unfortunately, the Iraqi literature lacks critical studies that deal with political violence, irrespective of the fact that there are many Iraqi intellectuals whose novels have played a vital role in portraying the painful scenes of Iraq, although they received little attention. This lack in these studies might be due to the need of translating their literary products. Besides, the number of novels which have been translated to English is very few. If they were compared with the number of translated works in other Arabic countries such as Egypt, it will be found that the Iraqi book market of the day is still modest.

2. Surveillance in Mahmoud Saeed's *Saddam City* and Antoon's *Ijaam*

In *Saddam City* (2004) Mahmoud Saeed portrays the Iraqi society and the difficult circumstances experienced by the Iraqis. A society in which its people have spent more than three decades under constant censorship by the Baath Party- Saddam's ruling political party. The nature of surveillance in Saeed's view encompasses in two ways: the first one indicates the surveillance throughout the use of secret

police that restricts the freedom of people, the second is by militarizing the society to be used as a tool to monitors the deviant individuals to the benefit of the state. So, the process of surveillance is achieved by the citizens themselves, especially through what is so-called pro-government individuals who write reports that tell the government if they witness contrary behavior which is opposed to what the Baath Party advocates.

As a result, through the eyes of the novel's protagonist, Mustafa Ali Noman, Saeed is succeeded to present a totalitarian regime based on constant surveillance. He shows how the governmental structure can use elements of surveillance to keep citizens obedient by eliminating the sense of privacy and trust for each other. Thus, to lessen the possibility of resistance, surveillance power puts the individuals under constant control.

Saeed's description of the hard conditions of the Baath Party prisons tells the readers about the state of fear in which the prisoners constantly live. Saeed's surveillance of the prisons in every city then continues into the description of those cities and complained about them provides fine points of observation to the disappointed Iraqi reality. French philosopher Michel Foucault introduces the concept of surveillance in 1975 in his book *Discipline and Punish*, he analyses the mechanism of surveillance in prison. Foucault describes the purpose of surveillance as follows:

To induce a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual use unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who uses it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are the bearer (Foucault, p. 201).

As in the extract above, Foucault supports Saeed's thought that the observed feels that he/she is being controlled by surveillance even though the act of monitoring might be discontinuous. He argues that the ones feel under surveillance even though they do not know if they are monitored. Thereby, the effect of surveillance is succeeded. In his article titled "Philosophy and the Panopticon," Scott O'Reilly explains that Foucault viewed surveillance as a mechanism used by the autocratic leaders to create obedient people (O'Reilly, 2002). In *Saddam City and Ijaam* novels, the regime exploits every aspect of daily life, going to such lengths as to turn children against their parents and friends against each other. Everyone is used as a means of control by the government. Saeed portrayed this issue in many situations of his novel, for instance, in one situation, the novel's protagonist, Mustafa appears his aversion to the child Nomeir (Mustafa's nephew) when the latter asked by his teachers about the writer of some papers which include some contrary opinions against the regime he found in his desk. Nomeir is forcibly and under torture told them that Mustafa (his uncle) is the writer of them and he also has resistant ideas towards the authority. The uncle states:

Why did you give them my name, Nomeir?
You know I had nothing to do with these things. I eavesdropped. The child answered: What could I do? They were going to kill me under torture. They asked me for a name. I gave Father's name but they said that did not count. So I gave them yours (Saeed, 2004 ,p.39).

Here, Saeed implies the function of the school in observing individuals. The schools are deemed to be one of the surveillance institutions which the regime profits from to subjugate, frighten and impose its power over the people. Thus, the teachers are trained to note and follow any anti-system movement to provide it for the Party, since the teachers themselves are members of the Baath Party. The only avenue for the victim to escape from the torture is to confess, even if it is not true. Another extract shows how the citizens

struggled, oppressed and controlled is when the narrator (Mustapha Ali) and his wife suffering from not having any freedom even in their house, as everything they intend to do is more likely witnessed. The police control the inmates, and the police themselves are controlled by persons with more power. Mustapha says: " Why don't you stop? Am I that important to be the subject of surveillance?" The wife then. " responded in a whisper, fearing she would be heard by the children" (Saeed, 2004, p.47).

This instance shows Saeed's resentment towards the ideology of Saddam's regime by which the Iraqi people are restricted and lose their freedom. The regime controls everyone as a matter that makes "free people did not trust even the members of their own families" (Saeed, 2004, p. 68). Consequently, most the Iraqi people become unsatisfied with their living circumstances and their society. And this seems clear when the novelist shows the complaint of the protagonist's wife discussing her attempt to leave the country when she says " Tell me this: how would we escape without passports?" (Saeed, 2004,p.49). One more incident about how the institutions such as schools are exploited and used as a controlling institution and as spying centers that serve the Baath Party purposes. This is evident in the following extract where the schools, as mentioned, have the strategy to bring students under their surveillance. Abu Waeeld explained this meaning:

Remember the little girl who was the cause of her father's execution just because she answered a simple question at school? The question was whether her father loved the leader, and she replied that he did not think so because he spat every time the leader appeared on TV " (Saeed, 2004, p. 68).

In the passage above, Saeed again criticizes Saddam Hussein's regime that utilizes the governmental institutions such as schools for exploiting the individuals' freedom. The people are restricted and not allowed to express their thoughts in that surveillance system. Indeed, the author's emphasis on this issue

implies his complain and refusal to the ideology of the Baath Party that tries to bring everyone under its control. As a result, the students serve as a powerful tool for the benefit of Saddam to defend his existence. In this way, individuals who refuse to obey the Party's instruction are must be punished. For example, Mustapha, the teacher can be perceived as suppressed in this system because he strives to refuse to accept the surveillance senses. People have no choice to select, as they either comply with the Party's rules or be tortured and eliminated from society.

Foucault argues that the basic thing behind the effect of successful surveillance, as mentioned, revolves on the idea the observed people do not if they are being observed. Foucault expounds how the theme of surveillance was used historically that "the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearer" (Foucault, p. 201). Foucault's theme of surveillance is projected in *Saddam City* when the protagonist's wife states: "Didn't I tell you our house was under surveillance, man?" (Saeed, p.49). It becomes apparent that the Baath Party aims to conquer the whole Iraqi society. It is not only to watch men and women, but its oppression also incorporates even children. Mustapha asserts that when he conveys his ordeal when he was in prison. The following passage reveals how the government imposing its oppression on everyone to have absolute control: He states:

Among us was a boy in his mid-teens from Karbala (Iraqi city). He looked noble and handsome but smoked a great deal. Everyone regarded him with compassion. His house had been raided, and as his brother had resisted arrest, all his family members were killed (Saeed, p. 57).

Again, in *Saddam City*, the notion of privacy or individuality does not exist. Since even private space has been surrounded by the secret police. The people are frightened and observed even inside their houses. All of these surveillance means are adopted by an entity known as the 'Baath Party' which uses as a leading elite in Saddam Hussein regime. The Party's

main purpose behind these surveillance methods is to enable it to immediately observe if anyone has an attempt or opposed behavior against the government and which in turn is considered a threat to the Party itself. In his expansion of Bentham's theory of the Panopticon in which the prisoner should be kept under constant surveillance along time, Foucault explains that this model is not merely confined to the prison, it, instead can be extended to include all aspects of society. Foucault states: "The Panopticon, on the other hand, must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men. No doubt Bentham presents it as a particular institution, closed in upon itself" (Foucault, p.205).

Ijaam (2004), in the same vein, revolves primarily around one male character- Furat, the student who put in prison as a result of his manuscript which includes his criticism and opposite opinions to the ideology of the Baath Party (Saddam's ruling political party). The strategy of surveillance is depicted to the description of the government buildings such as schools, prisons, and other institutions which have emerged as strong support and powerful bases of censorship to benefit Saddam's regime. In the novel, Antoon reveals the concept of surveillance throughout the deeds of the pro-government individuals who are used as means for the regime so that to give his readers an overview of the painful Iraqi scene.

First, the narrator starts to give the readers an ironic description of one of the Baath Party members, Abu Umar, and then going into the portrayal of the Ministry of culture and Information in an attempt to show how the governmental institutions are utilized as a propaganda system for the regime, he writes: "the Ministry of Rupture and Inflammation [could this be the Ministry of Culture and Information would daily bombard us with slogans and chants]" (Antoon, p.3).

Another representation of the concept surveillance is described when Furat is driven to General Security building, al-Amn al-'Amm (one of the five primary agencies that make up Saddam's security apparatus).

The narrator after describing the places that he crossed with the security policies in their way to the aforementioned building, such as, the cemetery which included the grave of Zubayda, a wife of Harun al – Rashid [the fifth Abbasid Caliph] and Nazim al-Ghazali [most popular Iraqi singer]. He then moves to give the readers an idea about how the strategy of surveillance used during Saddam's era. In this respect, he says: "What lies ahead for me...did someone write a report? Did they hear me doing my impression of Him?" (Antoon, p.4).

Based on the explanation above, Antoon attempts to reveal one of the common ways of surveillance that were used throughout the pro-government subjects. The regime utilizes such kind of surveillance power to be able to watch over any debate or activity of the populations. In fact, what those people convey is not necessarily true, since their primary function is ensuring the loyalty of the regime and getting money. The description of the story of the child who told a joke he had heard at home is also another evident about the surveillance technique that the narrator highlights to guide his readers to notice the unseemly monitoring of the houses during Saddam's government. The kindergarten teacher as soon as he heard the joke, he wrote a report to the government by which the child's father put in prison.

Likewise, there are other instances in the text that indicates Furat's abhorrence of the Baath Party surveillance forces. The following example illustrates the narrator's mocking and accusing of his supervisor Tariq when the latter asks him to submit a topic about George Orwell novel. But the supervisor appears does not know Orwell. The narrator writes: Who is this Orwell? He [the supervisor] asked. Never heard of him. Professor Tariq, the feces advisor[Thesis supervisor] had received his master's degree in English language and literature through devotion to the Party, spending his graduate years spying on his colleagues and writing reports, rather than essays. (Antoon, p.37). The narrator's statement above indicates Antoon's awareness of the Baath Party surveillance system and its function in deteriorating

education. Moreover, Antoon exposes his disgust of controlling education when he asserts that the supervisor's knowledge would not qualify him to be a supervisor. The narrator, then conveys that the supervisor presented him with a brilliant topic of translating Saddam's speech into English and studying them as literary texts, which is another evidence that indicates how the regime exploits the education as propaganda for its ideas. The description of the schools as surveillance institutions is depicted in detail in *Ijaam* to highlight the sovereignty and the surveillance power of the regime's members. For instance, the narrator explains that while professor Kamal was discussing his topic of the rise of the absurd theatre, one of the Baath Party members with a khaki suit knocked the door to order them to gather in the main square for a demonstration to celebrate the victories of Saddam's regime. The professor, then gathered his papers in silence without uttering a word.

Another situation that represents the severe censorship is embodied in Furat's unsuccessful attempt to publish some of his stories to "Jumhuriyya" newspaper [the official newspaper], (Antoon, p.19). Furat appears afraid to be observed because his story was about " the delirium of a grief-stricken mother who waits for the body of her only son to return from the war" (Antoon, p.19). After checking it, the editor rejected it claiming that it was not useful for " mobilization purposes" (p.19). The editor expounds that the mother of a martyr should be happy and proud and receive the body of her martyred son with songs of pleasure. Apart from the portrayal of the concept of surveillance, the explanation above, perhaps, shows Antoon's resistance to the ideology of the Baath Party and its biased institutions. The writer realized that the regime that caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people during his authoritarian regime and futile wars must be highlighted. Charles Tripp (2007) asserts this when he explains that the Iran Iraq war had caused the death of 250,000 individuals, and nearly 60,000 Iraqis remained prisoners of the Iranians. Besides, Iraq had accumulated a debt of over \$80 billion.

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault narrates many examples of the technique of surveillance which show how it affects and restricts the people's freedom in every place. The following example is related to the strong effect of surveillance on a worker's life: The worker, convicted of theft, placed under surveillance at Rouen, caught again for theft, and whom no lawyers would defend; so he took it upon himself to speak before the court, told the story of his life, explained how, on leaving prison and forced to reside in a particular place, he was unable to take up his trade as a gilder, since as an ex-convict he was turned down wherever he went the police refused him the right to seek work elsewhere: he found himself unable to leave Rouen, with nothing to do but die of hunger and poverty as a result of this terrible surveillance. He went to the town hall and asked for work; for eight days he was given work in the cemeteries for fourteen sous a day: 'But he said, I am young, I have a good appetite, I eat more than two pounds of bread a day at five sous a pound; what can I do with fourteen sous to feed myself, wash my clothes and find lodging I was driven to despair, I wanted to become an honest man again the surveillance plunged me back into misfortune. (*Discipline and Punish*, pp.267-268).

3. Prison and Tortures in *Ijaam* and *Saddam City*

Prison and punishment in Foucault's analysis, as explained above, are considered a distinctive work that might not have been discussed even by modern philosophers. Much of his works have focused on the discontinuities of discursive practices. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows the evolution stages of the torture. For instance, in the section titled 'The body of the condemned,' he starts first describing how the punishment practiced publically by the use of violent manners. Then how it transforms to be exerted in prisons. Foucault clarifies the issue of prisons in detail. The prison is strongly criticized. He complained about the severe conditions in the prisons that are utilized for political dimensions. The focal point of this section is to explore the issues of prison and torture as presented in both Sinan Antoon's *Ijaam* and Mahmoud Saeed's *Saddam City*, since Prison as an intimidator tool is one of the most common issues

found in these texts. Sinan Antoon makes the prison and torture are the salient themes in this novel. He exposes the suffering and brutalization of all Iraqis under the domination of Saddam's authoritarian regime. The prison was used as a miniature picture representing Iraq under such an abusive leader. Thus, Antoon portrays the unimaginable terror, violence, and cruelty of Saddām Ḥussein and his ruling political party, as well as their propaganda, which tells lies and deception. Despite his claim that he is a revolutionary leader, Saddam Hussein is depicted as a tyrant ruler who deceives his citizens, subjecting them to brutal control and subsequently leading them to three deadliest wars.

As in George Orwell (1984), Antoon attempts to draw a real picture of the dictator and his political party, that oppress the population, deny their freedom and keeping them under constant surveillance to maintain their position. It is important to note that the author attempts to portray his own experience of the Iraqi reality during Saddam's era, a matter that helps him to paint and convey authentic events that he experienced. For example, Antoon left Iraq after the Gulf War (2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991), so he lived under conditions of two wars: Iran- Iraq and The Iraq invasion of Kuwait. In this section, I will refer to how Saddam's sovereign power utilized cells with its worst and most painful methods of torture to homogenize the subjects as an objective to achieve his desire to maintain power. The chosen novels have examples of men as victims of Saddam's violence. I will discuss the ways that used in prison to abuse the individuals. Foucault in *Discipline and Punish the Birth of the Prison* states: "That punishment in general and the prison, in particular, belong to a political technology of the body is a lesson that I have learned not so much from history as from the present" (p.30). He expounds that nowadays the prisons have been developed to be used as a tool of repression. Likewise, the prisons set out during Saddam's era to undermine the subjects to reduce the possibility of their resistance. The prison, on the other hand, is deemed to be an important institution of Foucault's disciplinary power. The disciplinary power, as noted earlier, is a term coined

by Michel Foucault which refers to the use of different institutions such as schools, hospitals, factories, and prisons to control the people and making them obedient to the orders of the President, or what so-called 'docile bodies'. Again, In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault explicates docility as: "how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies,' docile' bodies" (p.138).

In this section, the researcher(s) will refer to how Saddam's sovereign power utilized cells with its worst and most painful methods of torture to homogenize the subjects as an objective to achieve his desire to maintain power. All of the novels which used in this study have examples of men as victims of Saddam's violence. The researcher (s) will discuss the ways that used in prison to abuse the individuals. Saeed, in *Saddam City*, shows the cycle of violence by Mustapha Ali, the narrator, and protagonist who is trapped in Saddam's prisons, where he spent most of his life in jail. Ali spent his life transferred from one prison to another. He was first taken to prison in Baghdad in which he was exposed to a cruel punishment "Why this violence? What had I done?" (Saeed, p. 17) then he was taken to Basra (one of Iraq rich cities) prison, then to Mosul and finally to Sulaymaniyah. The transmission from one jail to another does not entertain Ali, on the contrary, it increased his suffering. Saeed from the start of the novel tries to highlight two contrastive points pertaining to his protagonist ordeal when he was in prison. The first point is related to Mustapha Ali as an innocent man who is accused unfairly, he states: "I was a simple, peaceful man, loved by children and incapable of scaring a kitten" (Saeed, p.11). The second revealing point is about the Baath Party members who depicted as deceitful in their promise of leaving him after just a few minutes. This situation is best explained in the following dialogue Mustapha Ali and one member of the Baath Party:

Ali: I am at your service.

Security: Please come with us, sir.

Ali: But where?

Security: A simple interrogation... just a few minutes.

Ali: Interrogation?

Ali: But who are you? Security, the Party member answered.

Ali: Are you positive I am the one you are looking for?. (Saeed, p.11).

The conversation above, as noted, shows the reality of Saddam's regime as arrogant and unjust that built on accusation. Since Mustapha Ali was jailed for years with unknown charge. This issue became a clear when Ali had met his neighbour, Waheed on his way to the bath. The latter states " is it true that you don't know your charge? (Saeed, p.53). A man arrested and keeps for years at prisons and subjected to various forms of torture on false accusations. Saeed's evidence regarding this matter is revealed through Mustapha Ali's reference to the intimates he met, he states " At that moment I become convinced that all or at least ninety-nine percent of the men in that prison were wrongly accused sedition (Saeed, p. 93).

As seen in the text above, Saeed presents Ali's contemptuous feelings towards the ideology of Saddam's regime, its prisons, and how they work on the subjects to turn them into docile bodies. Consequently, this meaning is clearly shown in Foucault's philosophy. Foucault states: it was a question not of treating the body, en masse, 'wholesale', as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it 'retail', individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself - movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body. (*Discipline and Punish*, p.136-137).

In the statement above, Foucault shows the disciplinary institutions, such as prisons, attempt to normalize resistant individuals to be obedient to the state's views and aims. Later within the context of *Ijaam's* novel analysis, I will discuss how the schools are utilized as a means to support the regime's policy. Hence, the intentional use of the sovereign power in

prisons by Saddam's ruling political party is to achieve and sustain a long period of political domination. Foucault again expounds the reality of the jails in recent years which lack the basic standards a matter that leads to prison revolts throughout the world. He states that: There was certainly something paradoxical about their aims, their slogans and the way they took place. They were revolts against an entire state of physical misery that is over a century old: against cold, suffocation and overcrowding, against decrepit walls, hunger, physical maltreatment (p.30). Foucault's views of such dehumanizing circumstances were clearly described by Saeed in *Saddam City*, as the narrator manifested that he felt he could not endure hunger anymore. He was usually given the food after thirty hours " It was thirty hours since I had had a crust of bread" (Saeed, p.112). Foucault, however, looks to the prisons as tools of reformation that must be used to reform the subjects. It is necessary to know and analyze the causes that contribute and force the victim to commit a crime. He stressed that the victims must be treated according to the level of their crime. The punishment must be appropriate for the victim's case. Thus, the punitive measures must be utilized positively. Their main tasks are to support the victims for not returning to commit the crime. Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* criticized the traditional methods of punishment and assert that such kind is still used today. In fact, Foucauldian views of using the prisons in an appropriate way are not found in Saddam Hussein's' ideology. And this is evident in the selected novels where the prisons are depicted as rooms of hells which included various methods of torture. Many forms such as severe beating, buried alive, verbal abuse and sexual harassment are used. Saeed supports this fact when his protagonist writes that " I saw only two of dozens, buried alive in small catacombs. One of them had covered his head with a yashmak [A yashmak is one of the names for the familiar headdress worn by most Arab men] and I could see the yellowed whites of his eyes. The other had turned his back to the passageway" (Saeed,,p.59).

Accordingly, throughout the above story, we observe that the prisons are used as a mechanism to use

violence over Iraqi people. Since we do not notice any notion pertaining to the fundamentals of jails. Saeed, again, unmasks the reality of the prisons during Saddam Hussein's rule which lacks the necessities of life. The cell was crammed with thirteen to seventeen inmates, though it could not have been meant for more than two prisoners. The inmates just sat next to each other along the wall, extending their feet across the width of the cell. When they become tired and tend to sleep, they lean either on a wall or each other. The ceiling about six feet high which filled with the water droplets that resulting from the breath of so many people. It is important to note that what Saeed conveys is not an imaginative description, he is, on the contrary, depicts a realistic picture of the conditions of the prison that prevailed during the Baath Party government. Since, as noted, this institution was used by the government to scare people to protect the regime. On the other hand, the prisons, in one way or another, did not comply with Foucault's intentions of the jails to be as tools of reformation that must be used to reform the individuals. In his study titled *Evidence of Crimes from the Files of the Baath Party*, Aziz Al-Sudani agrees with Saeed's portrayal of prison life in Iraq. In this respect, Al-Sudani describes that the prisons were designed in high security. They cause psychological stress on the individuals as soon as they enter into it. The inmates were disconnected from any news about their families and become as they were in another world. The dungeons are equipped with the latest torture types and lack the necessary means of health. They were without windows and were opened three times daily and the inmates were allowed to go to the toilet only for a few minutes. While The prison guard prevented to let the jailors use the bathroom at night, the jailors are forced to use the drinking water bowl for defecation. Sleep was forbidden from 7 am to 11 pm. Furthermore, the prisoners were not allowed to speak with each other during this time.

The prisons were typically far and secret situated undergrounds and addressed with fake titles showing farms or something else to delude people about them. Al-Sudani adds further evidence for the reality of the prisons during Saddam's rule which has left their

imprint in the lives of all Iraqis. The regime practiced more than fifty forms of torture which are known for the victims of torture. For instance, chopping up the detainees' bodies while they were alive and throwing the minced human meat for fish. As such, one more method of torment was throughout the insertion of a glass bottle into the victim's anal passage or blowing up the victim's belly to the point of explosion. Another effect of torture is to bring the victim's wife, his son or his daughter to be punished or raped in front of him/her as a way to force the prisoner to confess (Aziz Al-Sudani, 2012).

The false confession above is one of the salient points of Saeed's *Saddam City*. This meaning is obviously manifested in the child's character, Nomeir when he is threatened to confess that his uncle has an affair about the manifestos which the former found in his desk at school. The following conversation shows the child's innocence for what he said:

The uncle: Why did you give them my name, Nomeir? You know I had nothing to do with these things.

The child: What could I do? They were going to kill me under torturer. They asked me for a name. I give Father's name but they said that did not count. So I give them yours.

The uncle: But I am your uncle.

The child: They were about to kill me, as they killed Haleem right in front of me. (Saeed, p.39).

The Baath Party's victimization of Nomeir, the child, illustrates its savagery and vileness strategy of domination which exploits even little children to dominate Iraq society so that to keep all people fearful and subordinated to it. As a result, torture is seen as a mechanism to establish power over Iraqis. Despite the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which expounds that the child should be protected against "all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members", (Convention on the Rights of the Child, p.2), the Baath Party was not restricted by any

law. Apart from the torture and its cruel types, Iraqi people are restricted even in their simplest rights, for instance, they are prevented from the expression of grief about their victims. When Jawaad Kazem executed, his widow prevented from four activities upon receiving her husband's body: "no wake, no public burial, no wailing and no wearing of black" (Saeed, p.42). The focal point in the above discussion is that the authority endeavors, in one way or another, to impose its absolute authority over the populations so that to force them to join the Party. The accusation on unreal things is one of the major issues that has dominated the Party members to achieve their goals. They deliberately attempt to accuse and looking for anything against anyone to impose their power.

Verbal abuse is also used to humiliate the prisoners in *Saddam City*. The inmates are associated with derogatory remarks such as "sons of whores" "Where are these dogs" (Saeed, p.36), "filthy hands" (p.30), "faggots" (p.39). The Party members always frown and the association of these words is natural to them towards the convicts. In both examples, the prisoners are humiliated not only to express their anger but to deem the prisoners as inferior to them. This meaning is demonstrated by the officer who describes all the inmates as "dogs" because he believes that any deviances to the Baath Party principles should be punished and treated in this way. Rape, as noted previously, is one of the horrific experiences for Iraqi prison victims. It is seen as one of the mechanisms to force or compel the jailors to confess. In *Ijaam*, Furat, the protagonist and narrator experience brutal rape by one of the prison guards: that he violently punished and brutally raped by him. In addition, he suffers different forms of oppression at the hand of the other jailors who can be described as animals in their brutal work. The following extract displays some instances in which Furat is tortured and raped. Furat states:

I feel intense pain in the back of my head from the blow I received when I tried to resist. It becomes aggravated when he pulls my hair or pushes my head, rubbing my nose in that gray cloth that has been colonized by a foul smell- a mixture of sweat, blood,

and layers of dirt. The pain surges to my wrists and joints when I try to pry open the wires that cut into my skin. I can feel his sticky fingers on my right thigh as he holds me down. His dirty fingernails dig into my skin. I close my eyes and try to disappear from existence, to flee my body, to abandon it forever...Perhaps I'm trying to forget it. But I can't ever forget his voice, whispering in my ear while his whole weight lay like a corpse on top of me: What an ass you have! Why don't you clap? You faggot! I'll make your ass clap. (Antoon, p.21). Being a prisoner and overpowered by one of the Baath Party members who rapes and tormented him, Furat has the victim of Saddam's members' insatiable desire to be powerful, victorious and in control. He symbolizes Saddam's adversary since the torture and rape represent something to the ideology of the Baath Party. By raping and violating the intimates, a sense of power and triumph over their foes is delegated upon the selves of the Party members. Although Furat tries to resist, the warden is implacable and continues to hold on to his thigh until his fingernails deepen into Furat's skin. This incident manifests Michel Foucault's assertion that rape is another form of violence, he suggests that the crime of rape be punished as violence rather than a uniquely sexual offense refocuses legal inscription. Foucault, as cited in (Henderson, 2007, p.225), argued that: One can always produce the theoretical discourse that amounts to saying: in any case, sexuality can in no circumstances be the object of punishment. And when one punishes rape one should be punishing physical violence and nothing but that. And to say that it is nothing more than an act of aggression: that there is no difference, in principle, between sticking one's fist into someone's face or one's penis into their sex [T]here are problems [if we are to say that rape is more serious than a punch in the face], because what we're saying amounts to this: sexuality as such, in the body, has a preponderant place, the sexual organ isn't like a hand, hair, or a nose. It, therefore, has to be protected, surrounded, invested in any case with legislation that isn't that pertaining to the rest of the body... It isn't a matter of sexuality, it's the physical violence that would be punished, without bringing in the fact that sexuality was involved.

Antoon, in *Ijaam*, shows the oppression of Saddam's regime by Furat the narrator and protagonist who is trapped in Saddam's prisons, where he spent most of his life in jail. Antoon from the start of the novel tries to highlight the sovereignty of Saddam's political party which restricts the freedom of Iraqi people so that to force them to join the Party. Furat narrates his suffering in which he was exposed to a cruel punishment " I feel intense in the back of my head from the blow I received when I tried to resist. It becomes aggravated when he pulls my hair or pushes my head, rubbing my nose in that gray cloth that has been colonized by a foul smell- a mixture of sweat, blood, and layers of dirt" (Antoon, p.21). Furat's harsh punishment in prison explains the oppression that the Iraqis face by Saddam Hussein and his henchmen. Apart from severe torture, Furat is also raped in prison. He is used as a plaything to satisfy the needs of the Baath Party members. Prison rape then is taken as a medium to assert the Baath Party's power and authority. The inmates are deemed as the property of the Party members who humiliating them. They are tortured because of their resistance to the ideology of the Baath Party.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method to investigate how the theme of surveillance and torture is reflected in contemporary selected Iraqi novels. The research focused on the two texts: *Saddam City* by Mahmoud Saeed and *Ijaam* by Sinan Antoon. The Foucauldian theme of surveillance is utilized to shed lights on how the authority used governmental institutions such as colleges, schools, factories, prisons to monitor, control, and subjugate the Iraqi people. Thus, by surveillance, the regime managed to normalize everyone to his regime. The textual analysis is the method which is used to analyze the chosen texts, in an attempt to reveal the persecution that resulted from the political violence, and how the power was abused based on some contemporary selected novels.

5. CONCLUSION

This analysis evaluates the profound influence of the surveillance and torture on the lives of Iraqi people and their daily lives. It highlights how Saddam's regime instills fear and surveillance in the hearts of Iraqis. Also, the study attempts to reveal the various ways of censorship used by the regime to control and subjugate the citizens. The researcher(s) also explained how the individuals react differently to the pressures of the surveillance power that oppress them. Besides, the researcher(s) argued how for instance the children are exploited and trapped in the surveillance power on behalf of the regime. In line with Foucault's view, in *Saddam City*, Saeed reveals a real experience about the hard conditions of prisons during Saddam's era because he is a political prisoner. Saeed explains that prisons are utilized for political reasons. Because most of the imprisoned characters do not know what their charges are? The researcher has found that the main reason behind their imprisonment is because of their disagreement with the ideology of Saddam's regime. They refuse to join the Baath Party. Antoon, through his narrator in *Ijaam*, discovers how the Baath Party has used school and prisons as a controlling means to impose its power over the individuals.

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