



Found in Translation: The American Invasion of Iraq That Never Happened

Background

Translation of an Iraqi novel that dramatizes an American invasion of Iraq. What it saw as imaginary in 1988 did happen 15 years later. Intriguing interplay of two histories, peoples, and cultures.



Abstract

The novel depicts U.S. GIs in a Southern Iraq location. One night, a Black GI assaulting an Iraqi woman shoots and kills a White MP, and the only witness is the woman with him. In a camp outside the city, the woman is brought and asked to identify the shooter in a long line-up. As she looks at the Black GIs, whom she sees only as rapists, she starts to overcome her prejudice and recognize affinities with them.

Goal

Demonstration in a work of fiction of common yet dazzling interactions between literature and reality, and of possibilities of overcoming prejudice and understanding connections between human beings seen as “different” or enemies.

Relevancy Across Disciplines

Highlighting connections between language, literature, history, and culture. The material presented in the novel is of interest to several departments and programs: Language and Literature; African American Studies; Cultural Studies, Women Studies; Anthropology; Political Science; Translation Studies; Middle Eastern Studies.

Acknowledgements

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Details

- Published translation to have original Arabic text facing English translation.
- Visual, linguistic contrast sharpens issues of identity, prejudice, and othering.
- Connections between the imagination and historical events.
- Bilingual publication to contribute to study of language, culture, translation studies.

Outcome

- Demonstrating intricate connections between peoples and cultures
- Understanding of reality and its connections with the imagination
- Understanding of major historical events such as the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and access to extensive resources.
- Bilingual publication to serve as textbook.