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IB HL Literature

19 March 2024

Fishbowl Reflection

The fishbowl today was an interesting expansion upon our understanding of *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. The book by Ahmed Sadawi tells the story of Hati the junk dealer who collects the body parts in the aftermath of a bomb and accidentally creates the Whatsitname. This monster goes on a killing spree with the goal of vengeance, but as time goes on it justifies the murder of innocent people to gain body parts.

One discussion I was a part of in the fishbowl talked about the novels' theme regarding nature vs nurture. We talked about whether it is the Whatsitname nature, in the beginning, to be driven by something like seeking justice or if he is driven by the nurturing he receives from an old lady who helps him be a positive figure through her kindness. Even though the Whatsitname's killing becomes unjust in some way he can justify it because without it he would die. This is similar to patterns in history like the one that led to the Americans entering Iraq. At first, America justified it with the fact that they needed to help them and get rid of Saddam Hussain because he was evil but instead, they entered the country, caused mass destruction, and left. In some ways, this novel could be an allegory for the conflict between the US and Iraq with the Whatsitname symbolizing the US and the negative effect they had on the country despite beginning with a "positive" motive.

Another group discussed how the story uses a medium of lies, to tell the truth, and discussed this idea of the way the author uses magical realism to talk about this violence that is very real. Magical realism grabs the reader's attention and is a great way to emphasize an issue. They also talked about how this connects to the author trying to call attention to the fact that Iraq was left in ruins by the US.