

## Images of Iraq after 2003 in TV series: Analytical study of the series (Years Under Ashes)

By

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### Abstract

The content of television has been linked to the image, and as it is known, we live today in the era of post-written culture, namely, the era of the image and the vulgar society, as the battle that is taking place today between the major industrial countries and their dominance over the poor countries is the battle for control of the image in all its forms and various meanings, starting with the direct television image via satellite, cinematic image and cartoon films, as these channels seek to draw perceptions and establish specific features and frameworks for the issues of Iraq, by allocating dramatic works that dealt with the events, issues and developments that occurred in it, and to reflect what is happening in it from different angles according to the policies of those in charge on those channels seeking to draw specific perceptions and trends.

**Keywords:** Television image, Television series, Security crises

### Introduction

The image, regardless of whether it is static or moving, is considered a means of advertising in prominent moments in history and still images, for example, were and preferred means of communication, as today's world no longer lives in the image society after the society of industry and technology only, but our world has entered the society of communication, knowledge and information, and human intelligence, or the postmodern society, has deepened the function of the image and given it a degree of language and culture distinct from the alphabetic language and culture that man has composed and learned through it. .

### Topic One

#### *The Methodological Framework*

##### *Research problem*

This research is concerned with knowing the presented image about Iraq in the Iraqi satellite channels that dealt with the events occurred after the change of the political regime on April 9, 2003, the aspects in which they focus and the framework in which these events were presented, and the role they play in shaping the controversy towards these events in order to formulate an image, trying to get it to the viewers ,this study analyzes the dimensions and characteristics of the images presented by each satellite channel of issues, events and perceptions in Iraq, in order to draw the perceptions that it seeks to support and highlight. The problem of the study can be diagnosed in the following question.

What are the images presented by TV series and their role in shaping the image of Iraq?

*The following sub-questions emerge from this question.*

1-What are the topics raised in the series “Years Under the Ashes” on Al-Iraqiya TV?

### ***What is the image of violence and crises presented by the research series.2***

3-What are the most prominent social and political images that were shown in the research series?

### ***Research objectives 2***

The research seeks within the framework of the methodology, methods and research available tools to it to answer the questions posed by the research subject to achieve a number of scientific objectives related to the subject of the research, which are as follows;

### ***Getting to know the nature of the presented topics in the series 1***

Investigate the most prominent images presented by the television series.2

3-Revealing the dimensions and features of the image of Iraq in the series (Years Under the Ashes)

### ***The importance of research 3***

The importance of the study comes from the importance of the topic it addresses, which is the image of Iraq in TV series, as the research exposes the image of Iraq that was included in the TV series after 2003 in Iraq and the repercussions of its occupation on Iraqi society. The importance of the study can be summarized as follows.

- 1) 1-This is the first study on the image of Iraq presented through Iraqi TV series, and the Iraqi public's view of these images.
- 2) 2-The study is a new addition to the media library in an aspect that suffers from a lack of research and studies in this field, which is the aspect of the relationship between series and the image, which may be a precursor to another research.

### ***Type and method of research 4***

This research belongs to the descriptive research that deals with depicting the current situation and determining the relationships between phenomena and trends that are on the path of growth, or development and change, therefore, the researcher sought to discover the current situation of the phenomenon under study, and the study of the role of television series in shaping the image of Iraq in television series, and for the purpose of arriving at accurate data and answers about the role of television series in shaping the image of Iraq represented in the episodes of the Al-Iraqiya TV series, the subject of the study, and recording what it entails these answers have meanings and implications, the researcher used the survey method, specifically the sample survey. The researcher also used the content analysis method to analyze the selected sample from the Al-Iraqiya TV series (Aldoghan, 2021; Danielle & Masilela, 2020; Dlalisa & Govender, 2020).

### ***Limitations of the search 5***

The limitations of the search are as follows.

1-The **objective limit**: it includes the series on the Iraqi TV satellite channels that were shown after 2003.

2-**Spatial limit**: It is represented in Al-Iraqiya satellite channel

3-**Time limit**: The time limit for research is represented by the works that were shown on Al-Iraqiya satellite channel after 2003, which witnessed the change of the political system in Iraq.

## **Topic Two**

### ***The theoretical framework***

#### ***Types of images in TV series.***

There are many justifications through which images gain legitimacy, even if they are

unreal images or do not express reality to the extent that, in the event of their extremism, may lead to the creation of major conflicts within this reality, However, society's need for images and the nervous system's need for a mechanism in which it organizes its perceptions, have created justifications for the existence of images (what the television reflects is a copy of the external world, with which the world before us on the television screen has become more real than existence itself) (Jahja, , p. 13) and we can describe, or divide the image in TV series, according to their topics and contents, into several types.

The popular image or the public image refers to the image carried by a group of individuals at the same time. The popular image, according to Bolding, arises from what he called the rhetorical universe, which refers to the process of sharing messages and experiences, the sources of these messages that build the popular image are usually nature and other people, in addition, speech represents another source of messages that form the popular image, as the symbols or symbolic images that come through speech play an important role in building the popular image, but this does not mean that all individuals in a social group necessarily receive the same messages, one of them is aware of the situation from his position, but the image formed in the mind of each of them is similar to some extent (Jamil, p. 41) and Boulding adds to the presence of points of similarity in the images of different individuals in the group that pushes the group's behavior towards enhancing and strengthening the points of similarity. (Sankour2001, p. 112)

The social problems that are raised through television series deal with a social image, are clarified and appropriate solutions are proposed, and sometimes the appropriate solution is left to the viewer who puts it according to his understanding of the problem and his cultural and social reference, and an example of this is the series "Bab Al-Sheikh" which gave wonderful image about the social life of the Baghdadis, and how the residents of this neighborhood adhere to their old customs and traditions, as there are many customs that reflect the images of Iraq from a social point of view, and customs can be divided into traditional customs and new habits, the traditional customs (the habits inherent in the culture and specific to the community that inherited by successor from The ancestors and continued from generation to generation. , as for the newly created customs, they are habits invented by individuals and groups and practiced from the beginning without any connection to the group's past. (Al Zughayer2008, p. 133)

Television series often dealt with the social image of Iraq, in which people showed love for each other, regardless of religious, ideological and national differences, as well as altruism and service to others, as well as love for family, cooperation, generosity and giving, and an example of this is the series (Qanbar Ali)

As for the political image in television series, it is one of the new trends in the field of television drama that began to spread at the beginning of the nineties, which constituted a qualitative leap in the field of topics and content dealt with by television series, as such political actions were ignored by specific political forces or party figures with clear affiliation in favor of presenting general national forces and stereotypical figures, good or evil, with or against, and political series usually deal with issues of control and forces of control over others, and directing others, as in the series "Abu Tabar", and it is one of the serious issues in society that needs a space of freedom and democracy, which makes the artist move freely and express clearly without any pressure. (Al-Kassan2006, p. 108.)

The political image in television series usually deals with topics related to the ruler, the government, political institutions, ministers or parliament, as in the Iraqi series "Ayoub."

However, there are those who believe that politics is included in all kinds of series, even series with themes of love and adoration, as it deals with politics, as in the series “When Dreams Steal.” The political image in television series (it is not addressed in itself, but rather is part of the artist’s thinking and point of view in general, which forms his political, religious and moral views) (Ibid p 14), and political projection through television series is usually in it, governments are criticized, and this is evident in (many TV series that installed the wave of attack through the terrorist model belonging to some groups) (Madanat, , 2008, p. 44) as well as in the series (Phobia Baghdad)

TV series can also deal with some images related to issues of corruption, which can be defined as (the misuse of a public position to achieve private gains) (Ibid p 201), as aspects of corruption can be dealt with in several ways, including bribery, embezzlement and fraud, as well as nepotism issues, and how to exploit positions to achieve personal benefits or manipulation of laws and market regulations, as well as moral corruption, which reflects the totality of moral and behavioral deviations related to the employee’s behavior, such as carrying out indecent acts in the workplace or combining a job with other works, as in the series “Years Under Ashes” which shed light on issues of financial and administrative corruption is rampant in one of the Iraqi ministries.

In addition to the previous types of images, there is also the historical picture, which is taken from historical events or facts or from the lives of personalities who had a great impact on the nation’s march, content for it. This type of images (reflecting events that occurred in one or more stages of history, or presenting the biography of a hero of history who played a dangerous role in an era of past, and the subject of that series may be taken from the reality of life or composed of fiction, or it may be it is exposed to a specific stage in an era of ages, or the translation of the life of a scholar of history, or a story from the masterpieces of world literature that presents an image of the life of the distant or recent past) (Ali and Sharaf, 2000, pp. 128-129) as an example of this is the series “Akher Al-Malouk” which dealt with the biography of King Faisal.

Also, some television series worked on presenting the cultural image in Iraqi society, and how recent events affected the cultural scene in Iraq, and culture refers to (a group of elements that the general public circulates and adopts, preserves and leave to new generations, as it is a basic framework in the their national or local identity is distinguished, as there are inherited elements of some arts, beliefs, knowledge and skills, and it is a developed and open culture that takes from others, it is not static) (Al-Hamam, 2010, p. 88) but the recent events in Iraq have affected and cast a shadow on the current generations in terms of different hair styles and clothing styles, which prompted those in charge of producing television series to shed light on these phenomena, as in the series (Dar Dour)

It was not limited to highlighting images related to political issues, power, exploitation and corruption, but Iraqi television series addressed the issues of violence and terrorism that occurred in Iraq, and what accompanied the entry of the occupation forces into Baghdad, as most television series focused on issues of violence and terrorism because (terrorist operations are targeting innocent people and people Isolation and vandalism of homes and public and private property, in the name of jihad and resistance) (Mutaluk, 2008, p. 112) as no society is free from violence in any historical era, and the transmission of scenes of violence through the visual screen, specifically through television series, where these images are a signal for sensing violence and the terrorism that affected the victims of these attacks, as is the case in the series (Love and Peace)

there is the economic picture presented by the series, which reflects the state of society

and the impact of this important factor in direct impact on people's lives, by dealing with some dramatic situations and scenes, which indicate the reality of the state of living standard and per capita income, as well as the images they deal with about the country's progress or backwardness, from an economic point of view, such as some scenes in the series "Love and War" and the images he presented on this subject, as the difficult conditions that the Iraqi society lived and lived through became materials for television series, and some series dealt with the phenomenon of "Hawasim" that appeared after 2003, and showed people they working to steal state institutions, as in the series (Tariq Naima)

### Topic Three

#### *The analytical framework*

##### *Main images in the series (Years Under Ashes)*

The results of the analysis showed the main images in the series "Years Under the Ashes" that (the image of security crises) ranked first on the recurring level with (90) recurrences and at a rate of (%16.5), but it ranked sixth on the temporal level with a time of (103.1) minutes, at a rate of (7.6%)

The image of (violence) ranked second on the repetition level with (86) recurrences and a rate of (15.7%), while it ranked third on the temporal level with (160.0) minutes and at a rate of (11.8%)

The image of (the citizen) ranked third on the recurrence level with (76) recurrences and a rate of (13.9%), while it ranked second on the temporal level with (238.1) minutes and a rate of (17.6%)

**Table (1)** shows the main images in the series (Years Under the Ashes)

Main images	Repetition	Percentage	Time minute /second	Percentage
Image of security crisis	90	%16,5	103,1	%7,6
The image of violence in Iraq	86	%15,7	160,2	%11,8
Iraqi citizen's image	76	%13,9	238,1	%17,6
The image of social relations in Iraq	66	%12,0	372,0	%27,5
Image of the reality of education in Iraq	50	%9,1	134,0	%9,9
The image of corruption in Iraq	50	%9,1	144,0	%10,6
The image of the economic reality in Iraq	42	%7,7	9,1	%0,6
Iraqi government's image	26	%4,7	70,0	%5,1
image of the Iraqi cultural reality	24	%4,3	50,0	%3,7
image of the political reality in Iraq	22	%4,0	60,0	%4,4
The historical image of Iraq	14	%2,5	10,3	%0,7
The total	546	%100	1350,8	%100

From the foregoing, it becomes clear to us that the image of security crises and the image of violence was at the fore in the series (Years Under the Ashes), and this is evidence of the channel's keenness and interest in highlighting the security events that occupy a large area in the life of the citizen, which is one of the important images that affect the life of Iraqi citizen., as the channel adopts the public broadcasting system and is linked to the Iraqi state.

#### *First: The images of the security crises in the series "Years Under the Ashes"*

The category (the difficulty of moving in the streets of Baghdad at night) ranked first on the repetition level with (50) recurrences and at a rate of (%55.5), while it ranked third on the temporal level with a time of (25.0) minutes and at a rate of (%24.2%). The category



(people's suffering from blocking roads with concrete blocks) ranked second with (38) recurrences and a rate of (%42.2), but it came first on the temporal level with a time of (50.0) minutes and at a rate of (%48.5%)

**Table (2) shows the picture of the security crises in the series (Years Under the Ashes)**

<b>Image of security crisis</b>	<b>Repetition</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time Minute /Second</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Difficulty moving in the streets of Baghdad at night because of the curfew	50	%55,5	25,0	%24,2
Suffering of people from cutting the roads and alleys of Baghdad with concrete blocks and barbed wire.	38	%42,2	50,0	%48,5
The spread of unidentified bodies in the streets of Baghdad	2	%2,2	28,1	%27,1
<b>The total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>%100</b>	<b>103,1</b>	<b>%100</b>

We conclude from the above that the category, (the difficulty of moving in the streets of Baghdad at night) corresponds to what Iraq experienced as a result of the security measures taken by the Iraqi government to limit the phenomenon of exploiting the security deterioration, and carrying out kidnappings, bombings and killings, as the task of any government is to protect the lives and property of citizens and to maintain order. and public security, despite the fact that the imposition of a night curfew has increased the suffering of the Iraqi citizen and led to confusion in the process of moving at night when a health symptom catches him.

**Second: The image of violence in the series Years Under Ashes**

The category (killing people and stealing their property from gangs) ranked first on the recurring level with (37) recurrences and a rate of (%43.0), while it ranked third on the temporal level with a time of (35.2) minutes and a rate of (%21.8) ,as for the second place with the number of recurrences (35) recurrences and a rate of (%40.6), the category (revenge and settling accounts) came first, but it ranked first on the temporal level with a time of (65.0) minutes and a rate of (40.6%), The results showed that the category (the use of violence and threats when interrogating people ranked third with (9) recurrences and a rate of (% 10.4), while it ranked fourth on the temporal level with a time of (20.0) minutes and a rate of (% 12.5)

**Table (3) shows the picture of violence in the series (Years Under Ashes)**

<b>Image of violence</b>	<b>Repetition</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time Minute /Second</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Killing people and stealing their property from gangs and terrorist groups in Baghdad	37	%43,0	32,2	%21,8
Revenge and settling scores between people in the streets of Baghdad	35	%40,6	65,0	%40,6
The use of violence and threats when interrogating innocent people	9	%10,4	20,0	%12,5
Reprimanding general managers and officials in state institutions for their employees	5	%5,8	40,0	%25
<b>The total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>%100</b>	<b>160,2</b>	<b>%100</b>

The previous table shows that (the killing of people and the theft of their property by gangs) corresponds to what is going on in Iraq after 2003 due to the spread of the phenomenon of murder, theft, kidnapping and extortion of people in order to obtain money, as well as the complete absence of the role of the security services, especially after the period that accompanied the entry of occupation forces directly to the capital, Baghdad.

**Third: images of the reality of the Iraqi citizen**

The category (citizen victim of the actions of the former regime) ranked first with (20) recurrences and a rate of (%26.3), and it also ranked first on the temporal level with a time of (80.1) minutes and at a rate of (%33.6). (flattering and opportunistic), it ranked second on the repetition level with (15) recurrences and at a rate of (%19.7), but it occupied the third position on the temporal level with a time of (33.0) minutes and at a rate of (%13.8), while It ranked third on the repetition level with (10) recurrences and a rate of (%13.1), but it ranked second on the temporal level with a time of (52.0) minutes and with a rate of (%21.8) it came to the category (sacrifice and loyalty for the sake of Iraq)

**Table No. (4) shows images of the reality of the Iraqi citizen**

<b>Iraqi citizen's image</b>	<b>Repetition</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time minute /second</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The Iraqi citizen is a victim of the actions of the former regime	20	%26,3	80,1	%33,6
Flattery, opportunistic, and transmitting news to others.	15	%19,7	33,0	%13,8
Sacrifice and loyalty for Iraq	10	%13,1	52,0	%21,8
He is optimistic and dreams of a better future for himself and his children	8	%10,5	20,0	%8,4
Corrupt and manipulates with the food of the people.	6	%7,8	15,0	%6,3
Desperate for life and has no goals to achieve	4	%5,2	10,0	%4,2
Former political activist	4	%5,2	9,0	%3,7
The Iraqi citizen is a victim of terrorist acts and military raids	3	%3,9	6,0	%2,5
He has the freedom to express his opinion about everything that happened and is happening in Iraq	2	%2,6	5,0	%2,1
The Iraqi citizen is marginalized by the state	2	%2,6	4,0	%1,6
Accused of violence and theft	1	%1,3	1,0	%0,4
The Iraqi citizen dreams of owning a king's house and a permanent salary	1	1,3%	3,0	%2,1
<b>The total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>%100</b>	<b>238,1</b>	<b>%100</b>

We conclude from the previous table that the category (the Iraqi citizen victim of the actions of the former regime) obtained advanced ranks and this corresponds to what the Iraqi people suffered, who faced conditions and went through crises that other peoples have not experienced, such as wars, sieges, muzzling of mouths, restriction of freedoms, arrests and mass graves, as well as hunger, deprivation and imprisonment for no reason.

**Fourth: The image of social relations in Iraq**

The category (communication with family and neighbors in times of crisis) ranked first on the recurrence level with (25) recurrences and a rate of (%37.8), while on the temporal level, it ranked second with a time of (73.0) minutes and a rate of (%19.6). It is noted that the category (betrayal of the friend, the homeland and the workplace) ranked second on the recurring level with (9) recurrences and a rate of (%13.6), but it occupied the third place on the temporal level with a time of (68.0) minutes and at a rate of (%18) ,4)

**Table (5)** shows the picture of social relations in Iraq

social relations picture	Repetition	Percentage	Time Minute /Second	0
Communicate with family and neighbors in times of crisis	25	%37,8	73,0	%33,6
Betrayal of a friend, homeland, and workplace for the sake of money	9	%13,6	68,0	%19,6
Communicating with family and neighbors at weddings	8	%12,1	46,0	%18,4
Children are victims of the mistakes their parents made in the past	7	%10,6	75,0	%12,3
Sacrifice and loyalty on the part of the Iraqi wife	6	%9,0	28,0	%20,2
Exploiting personal relationships between family and friends	4	%6,0	43,0	%7,6
Parents' role in following up their children's academic conditions, their relationship with friends, and their behavior with others	7	%4,5	20,0	%11,6
Cut the ties of kinship between the parents	7	%4,5	12,0	%5,3
The supremacy of tribal customs and traditions over the rule of law	1	%1,5	5,0	%3,2
The total	66	%100	372,0	%1,3

It is also clear from the previous figures that the category (communication of family and neighbors in crises) is commensurate with the reality of Iraqi society. The Iraqi people are united, and all of their people have lived in social peace over the past years. They have suffered crises, wars and security deterioration, and society in general and the Iraqi citizen in particular is cohesive in all cases, which gives a positive image of the cohesion and cohesion of Iraqis in distress.

## Conclusions

After completing the theoretical and field study chapters, the study reached several conclusions in the light of answering the research questions, verifying the objectives of the study, testing its hypotheses, and studying the correlational relationships, which are as follows.

- 1) There is an intense interest on the part of Al-Iraqiya channel in dealing with the Iraqi events and issues and the different reactions towards them.
- 2) Al-Iraqiya channel focused on various topics, however, the interest in security, social and economic issues was the priority over the rest of the other issues.
- 3) Al-Iraqiya channel sought to highlight the image of Iraq by highlighting the image of the security crises, the image of violence and the image of the Iraqi citizen in the first place, while the rest of the other images did not attach great importance.
- 4) Al-Iraqiya channel presented violence in Iraq as represented by revenge and settling accounts.
- 5) Al-Iraqiya channel dealt with the issue of the security crisis in a limited way.
- 6) Al-Iraqiya channel highlighted the image of the Iraqi intellectual in a miserable manner. The channel presented a negative image of highlighting political events and issues and ignoring the positive roles and qualities that must be worked on more prominently.



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