

## **Iraq in Contemporary Egyptian Cinema: Impotency and Lack of Interest**

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In recent years, several Egyptian films have expressed the situation of helplessness of Arab states and Egypt particularly, concerning the situation in Iraq (as well as in Palestine).

These films, like ***Heena Maysara*** (Till Better Times, 2008) show the decreasing interest of the Egyptian public in the Iraqi situation. Instead, they see the Iraqi problem only through the eyes of Egyptians who had gone to work in this country (this phenomenon has also been found in other films). The heroes of this film closely monitored TV broadcasting from Iraq in 1991, however, in 2003, nobody was interested in watching the news from Iraq.

The Egyptian discourse concerning Iraq is challenged by some inconvenient facts: Saddam ordered the murder of many Egyptian workers at the end of Iran-Iraq War. Saddam, in his tyrannical way, caused Egypt to join the American anti-Iraqi coalition in 1991. Nevertheless, in 2003, Egypt stood together with the rest of the Arab world in condemning the US for invading Iraq and other Moslem countries, thus shifting the emphasis to an American clash with Moslem civilization. In the film ***Suqut Baghdad*** (The Fall of Baghdad) the typical family from Cairo sees American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan as a prelude to an attempted domination over the entire Muslim world.

Libya, on the other hand, shows a positive attitude towards Saddam, since the image of his hanging resembles the hanging of the Libyan resistance leader Omar Al-Mukhtar, also in a film dedicated to him.