

ICL: Thursday, September 20, 1-3 pm

Great Decisions Topic: “Exit From Afghanistan & Iraq—Right Time, Right Place?”

Suggestions for Supplementary Reading, taken from the Reading Lists for 2010-2011 & 2011-2012, published on the ICL website, together with the 2012-2013 List, presently under development by ICL member, Anita Stables

THE FAVORED DAUGHTER” by Fawzia Koofi (2012)

Billy Lynn is a member of the Army's Bravo Company, whose fierce firefight in Iraq is caught on film and subsequently shown on Fox News, thus turning the survivors into instant heroes. Idolized like the flag raisers on Iwo Jima, the men of Bravo are whisked back home for a two-week victory tour, scheduled to climax with a half-time appearance at the Dallas Cowboy's stadium.

Billy narrates his own and his comrades' discomfort in being required to represent America's fighting forces in a strongly contrived cross-country tour, meeting awestruck citizens who mouth patriotic clichés. The soldiers' distress is intensified when they are required to participate with Beyoncé in a ridiculous, military-themed halftime show and to describe the horrors of war at a news conference in the presence of pom-pom-shaking Dallas Cowboys' cheerleaders. A stunning read.

“THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST” by Hamid Mohsin (2007)

The novel begins a few years after 9/11. Change, the narrator, happens upon an American visitor in Lahore, invites him to tea, and tells the story of his life in the months just before and after the attacks. The resulting monologue by the narrator is the substance of Hamid's elegant and chilling novel.

“THE WANDERING FALCON” by Jamil Ahmad (2011)

Ahmad, a civil servant in Pakistan, began his career in Baluchistan in the 1950s. He wrote a collection of loosely interlinked stories about the people and the tribes, among whom he had been working. Ahmad provides a window into the heart and soul of a primitive system where honor and respect are all important, but killings and revenge remain the unfortunate consequences. Ahmad has the ability to combine an affection and respect for this world of tribal discipline w(i) 0.2 Tq2(0. r 0 0 50 0m) 0.2 (1 0.2 (ne-0.2 (a.2 (f) -0.5 (f) -0

THE WATCH by Joydeep Roy-Bhattacharaya (2012)

The setting is Tarsandan, an isolated garrison in the Kandahar province of Afghanistan, which came under attack during a blistering dust storm with zero visibility. The American forces suffer heavy losses. The dust has barely settled when a legless girl pushing a wheelbarrow appears outside the fort to demand the release of her brother's body, which under Pashtun custom requires burial only by a family member. The book describes in gripping detail the girl's descent from the hills to the barren field outside the fort. For two days, she sits in the hot sun, waiting for her brother's body. The reader is given an apt description of the fort, isolated in the desolate landscape. Inside, the plumbing for showers is broken; the soldiers are feeling confined, smelly and dusty; and they wonder when the next attack will occur. Is the waiting girl a terrorist or just a family member come to bury her brother?