

Theatre as Testimony: A Critical Analysis of David Hare's *Stuff Happens*

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The significance and power of theatre stems from its ability to pierce the tangible life through imaginative reconstruction to detect cryptic facts. The theatre of testimony is a playwright's favourite way of publicising authentic affairs, as does David Hare in his play *Stuff Happens* (2006; premiered 2004). Drawing on a postcolonial theory, the research analyses "David Hare's *Stuff Happens*" as a testimonial play through shedding light on the reasons why the George W. Bush and Tony Blair administrations adopted to pick Iraq as a target for invasion in 2003, credibility and trustiness of their submitted evidence, how they could convince the UN as well as the entire world of the legitimacy of war on Iraq and the consequences of invasion on both the American and British administrations and Iraq. The study depicts the meetings, fake evidence, and arguments of the major characters: Bush junior, Blair, Powell, Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz that resulted in the Iraqi invasion in 2003, as dramatised in the play. The majority of the events and most of the speeches are authentic, starting from the title *Stuff Happens*, which is taken actually from Donald Rumsfeld as his comment on riots, looting and troubles happened in Iraq after the war, to the end of the play. The study concludes that Hare - through his dexterous mixture of imagination and fact - succeeded in pressing the idea that the American war on Iraq is based on false and mistaken analyses due to colonial domination and self-interest.

Key words: *Theatre of testimony, postcolonial theory, the Iraq war and invasion, David Hare, Stuff Happens.*

Introduction: Theatre of Testimony

Theatre of testimony is the genre that brings witnesses on a stage through presenting characters having real as well as fictional names and performing real subjects mixed with imaginary ones in order to impart ulterior facts to the public. Taylor (2003) stressed that: "The theatre, like the testimony, like the photograph, film, or report, can make witnesses of others. " In this line, Rokem (2002) affirmed that: "The theatrical medium has an inherent tendency to create situations where some kind of witness is present. I would even claim that all theatre performances contain some form of direct or implicit witnessing, or transformations of witnessing." Here stems the virtual function of theatre of testimony in revealing what is secret from the public through depicting facts and events taken from reality. Assmann (2006) advocated another function to the theatre of testimony; the manner in which the event is interpreted: "The question to be asked is no longer merely what has happened? But also how was the event experienced, how is it remembered and passed on to succeeding generations."

Theatres of testimony are more honest bearers of truth than life itself, as in the case of Hare's *Stuff Happens*. In his "Author's Note," Hare identified *Stuff Happens* as a "history play, which happens to centre on very recent history. The events within it have been authenticated from multiple sources, both private and public. What happened happened. Nothing in the narrative is knowingly untrue"(cited in Donna Soto-Morettini, 2005).

Literature Review

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990-1991 was the first spark that ignited enmity between Iraq and America. Though The Second Gulf War, as it was called, ended with Kuwait's liberation and the defeat of the Iraqi Army, it left Iraq "subject to United Nations sanctions and arms inspections to look for weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical and nuclear)"('Timeline: Iraq war', 2016).

Regardless of victory, Bush Senior saw that Iraq still represented menace to the whole world, especially to the Middle East, and it was his duty to keep peace in the region, as he stated in his TV from the Oval Office: "Ahead of us is the task of achieving a potentially historic peace' in the Middle East"('From the archive, 28 February 1991: the liberation of Kuwait', 2014). The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre Towers that led to the death of three thousand people made Iraq among those blamed for it because Iraq was conceived to be a supporter of al-Qaeda and terrorism. So in the name of peace, on March 17, 2003, a war against Iraq started. The consequences that Iraq has suffered and still suffers from go against the promises the Bush administration gave to Iraqis.

David Hare's *Stuff Happens* is chosen as a testimony to display that the plans and aims which led to the Iraq war and invasion were colonial. Post-colonial theories are employed in this study to emphasise the continuous manipulation of colonialism on contemporary politicians and events on the one hand. On the other hand, they assist in contextualising the implications and aims of the Iraq war and invasion. Kamali (cited in Loomba, 2005), clarified that colonialism has survived taking new roles and policies according to modern requirements. Its new form is expressed in the "free world." This same excuse is utilised for invading Iraq in 2003 as reflected in Hare's *Stuff Happens*.

David Hare's *Stuff Happens*: A Testimony on the Iraq War and Invasion in 2003

David Hare (born in Sussex, 1947), enjoys an admirable reputation as a playwright who conceives theatre as a mode of exhibiting fictions more true and valid than declared facts. He argued that "[i]t would be sad if this historical period had no chronicler" and that the role of the playwright is "to act as a witness of our times" (cited in Nicholson, 2007). On this cue, his play *Stuff Happens* depends. It is a testimony on the contemporary history of Iraq. Boon described it as an "epic play which imagines the lead-up to the attack on Iraq through both . . . re-creations of real speeches, meetings and press conferences and fictionalised versions of private meetings between members of the American and British governments and other key international figures," (Boon, 2007). Thus, *Stuff Happens* is not just a title given to a play. It is the response of the American Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, which reflects his concept of freedom:

Rumsfeld: "Stuff happens! Free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things. They're also free to live their lives and do wonderful things, and that's what's going to happen here" (Hare).

For Rumsfeld, looting and pillaging are a normal behaviour of free people. However, this act is a testimony that Iraq is going towards chaos and disorder instead of freedom and democracy. Rumsfeld exploits these acts to support the colonial view that the East is still in need of the West for civilisation. Kamali (cited in Loomba, p. 11) stipulated that one of the colonial strategies is to divide the world into "we" and "them" when "we" refers to the civilised countries and "them" to the barbaric ones. Here lies the significance of colonialism in saving those primitive societies. In this play, Iraqis' acts help in transmitting a message that they are primitive and savage people who need to be educated and civilised at the hands of America.

Hare showed three authentic reasons as answers to a question asked by all observers up to the present: Why America has chosen Iraq for invasion? The first reason is demonstrated by a Palestinian academic who demonstrates that the war has colonial interests; power, pride, and

wealth:

Palestinian A: "Why Iraq? The question has been asked a thousand times. . . . Here comes the familiar list of explanations. Because an Arab democracy would serve as a model. Because Osama bin Laden had served notice on the dictatorship in Saudi Arabia, and now America needed a new military base. Because Cheney worked for [Halliburton](#)." "It was all about oil!" . . .," it's about one thing: defending the interests of America's three-billion-dollar-a-year colony in the Middle East" (Hare, 2.12.p.30).

This view is asserted by Said in his lecture 'The United States, the Islamic World, and the Question of Palestine': "Were Iraq the world's largest exporter of apples or oranges, no one would care about its weapons of mass destruction or human rights exploitation. Saddam's regime has violated many human rights, there's no arguing. But everything Powell has accused the Ba'athists of has been the stock in trade of the Israeli government since 1948" (Edward Said cited by Powell, 2003).

Any endeavour to defy America, will result in misfortune, which is the second reason remarked in this play through the [announcements](#) of Condoleezza Rice, United States Secretary of State:

Rice: "We want to send a message to countries which are considering actions hostile to the United States" (Hare, 1.7.p.9).

The American administration sorts countries in accord with enmity to America rather than their bolster of terrorism. So, one country must be selected as a scapegoat to be a rebuke for the others. Rumsfeld nominates Iraq for this job:

Rumsfeld: "I sent a memo with a list of countries who I considered were eager to exploit any lapses in US capability. China, North Korea, Russia, Iran. My conclusion was we should take any actions necessary to dissuade nations from challenging American interests. Top of that list was Iraq" (Hare, 1.7.p.10).

Since Saddam Hussein, the previous president of Iraq, expresses enmity to America, America chooses Iraq to be an example for those that underestimate America's power and government. This is confirmed by Ansorge (2007): "it becomes even clearer that a main part of his [Bush's] agenda is to make a simple example out of Iraq." For perpetuating that position, America must show the world the calamitous consequences of a country which scorns America as Iraq does.

Hare pointed his finger to the third reason for choosing Iraq in particular; it has to do with the grudge against Iraq since the first Gulf war in 1990-1991:

Rumsfeld: "There's a mistake they made during the first [Gulf War](#). . . . They talked all the time about Saddam Hussein. . . . Now he's still there and everyone says "Hey - they screwed up." We want to avoid that mistake" (Hare, I.7.p.11).

For the above social and psychological impressions, America schemes war against Iraq by exploiting four fake and hidden evidences or reasons as determined in this play.

The first fake example of evidence that drives Bush Junior- the President of the United States of America, to view Iraq as a terrorist country is a photograph shown to him by George Tenet, Director of Central Intelligence. It illustrates the sources of potential danger in the Middle East as Rice states:

Tenet: "I'm going to ask you all to take a look at this photograph."

RICE: "And where's that going to come from? It's going to come from Saddam Hussein" (Hare, 1.4.p.5).

The photograph describes plants on both sides. According to CIA belief, these plants produce chemical or biological materials for weapons factories in Iraq. Westgate discerned that the photograph "becomes a trope for the empirical evidence unacknowledged . . . that contributed to the marketing of the war to senators, congressmen and women, and their constituents" (Westgate , 2009). The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell does not see that this is evidence though:

Powell: "I can see. But, to be frank, with you, I've seen an awful lot of factories around the world that look an awful lot like this. What's the evidence, what's the evidence of what this factory's producing?" (Hare, 1.4.p.6).

This is a testimony that this is a slight reason for considering Iraq a threat. But for achieving the American colonial interests, such a threat should be utilised.

The second false reason depicted in the play is that Bush employs 9/11 to create a myth of war on terror for domination. He assessed the 9/11 attacks as terrorism, which must be stopped:

Bush: "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them. None of us will forget this day. Yet we go forward to defend



freedom and all that is good and just in our world" (Hare, 1.6.p.8).

The first nation that declares its support to the Bush's administration is Britain as Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of Britain, declares:

Blair: "This is not a battle between the United States of America and terrorism, but between the free and democratic world and terrorism. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our American friends. We will not rest until this evil is driven from the world" (Hare, 1.6.p.8).

Reinelt emphasised how Blair wants to be a hero: "Hare seems to suggest that Blair has a kind of grandiose desire to be a great leader" (2005). Blair agrees with Bush that Iraq is an incubator of terrorism through indicating Iraq's involvement in the 9/11 attacks seizing the opportunity of the comment of the Iraqi spokesman for Saddam Hussein on the 9/11 attacks, which is cunningly employed to intensify their claim:

Iraqi Man: The massive explosions in the centres of power are a painful slap in the face of US politicians to stop their illegitimate hegemony and attempts to impose custodianship on peoples. The American cowboy is reaping the fruits of his crimes against humanity (Hare, 1.6.p.8).

The Iraqi spokesman's statement cannot be interpreted as evidence that Iraq is the hand that pulled the trigger. He just explicates Iraq's view that America has strong enemies - due to its interferences in others' affairs - and thus it is worthy of that hit.

Paul Wolfowitz, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, props Bush's excuses by mentioning the percentage of Saddam Hussein's involvement in the 9/11 attacks:

Wolfowitz: "And more important - talking about sending messages - I'd say there's a good percentage chance Saddam Hussein was directly involved in the attacks on the World Trade Center. . . . Ten to fifty" (Hare, 1.7.p.10).

Soto-Morettini explained "the (highly questionable) causal links between the attacks of September 11 and the war in Iraq go largely unquestioned" (p. 310). This is a sample of the meetings that ends with the consensus that war against Iraq represents a war on terror and that all countries must take part in this war.

The death of Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, and the head of terrorism, does not rescue Iraq from war because it is inevitable. The second man after Bin Laden is Saddam Hussein. And this is the third false reason for America's invasion of Iraq. There are no excuses stronger than Saddam Hussein's aggressive acts against his people that Bush and



Blair can utilise for achieving their colonial aims. They state their cares for freeing Iraqis and putting an end to their tribulations, oppression and dictatorship for over twenty-five years:

Bush: "We . . . recognise the danger of a man who's willing to kill his own people harbouring and developing weapons of mass destruction. This guy, Saddam Hussein, is a leader who gasses his own people" (Hare, 1.10.p.22).

To hide the real objectives, the Americans exploit Saddam Hussein's tyranny against his people to make him a terrorist who must be overthrown so that tension and danger in Iraq and the Middle East would end. Shohat and Stam (2007), opined that the Arab world is inherently performed as a world far away from "globalised, dramatic modernity." Due to this view, war on Iraq is vindicated for introducing democracy and freedom to the country. Hare explored the tomfoolery of this fake reason through the tongue of Journalist:

Journalist: "The absurdity and the irrelevance. The idea of discussing even ... a historical event, an invasion already more than three years old. A country groaning under a dictator, its people oppressed, liberated at last from a twenty-five year tyranny - and freed" (Hare, 1.6.p.7).

Hare wondered that the American administration has not noticed that Saddam Hussein is a dictator and oppressor only after the 9/11 attacks. By this, Hare maintained that another true reason for war on Iraq is the 9/11 attacks. This testimony is confirmed by Ali (2003), as he manifested that Saddam Hussein has not been seen as an unjust dictator only before 2003. Conversely, Saddam Hussein was supported and armed by the American administration during the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1989).

The play shows that Bush has had personal and vengeful motivations toward Saddam Hussein and Iraq since 9/11 which contradict his claims of establishing democracy in the Middle East:

Bush: "I'm sitting here and since 9/11 I've been getting very strong feelings that this is something we can't leave alone. Saddam has to be dealt with" (Hare, 1.10.p.18).

This is a testimony that the Iraq war is a matter of retaliation. A Brit in New York remarks that America has been changed after 9/11:

Brit in Ny: "America changed." That's what we're told. "On September 11th everything changed." "If you're not American, you can't understand"(Hare, 1.18.p.50).

Ignatieff (2002), advocated that after 9/11 America has been changed into a New American Empire. Its war on terror is just a cloak to hide its colonial imperial power. One of the opponents of this view is Foster (2006), who believed that the "new militarism" that all states have noticed since 9/11 is not new; it is just a performance of the American imperial colonial history.

The fourth hidden reason for the Iraq war is revealed by a saleswoman:

Brit in Ny: "I was in Saks Fifth Avenue the morning they bombed Baghdad. Isn't it wonderful?" says the saleswoman. "At last we're hitting back." "Yes," I reply, "At the wrong people. Somebody steals your handbag, so you kill their second cousin, on the grounds they live close. . . . North Korea is developing a nuclear weapons programme. All these you leave alone. No, you go to war with the one place in the region admitted to have no connection with terrorism" (Hare, 1.18.p.50).

Hare highlighted how America's war on Iraq is colonial because its excuse is logically unjustified. There are countries which virtually represent more menace than Iraq and thus they deserve to be equally attacked. But war is waged to conserve American power and wealth - which are colonial objectives. Chomsky (2005), illustrated that America has interests in Iraq: national or international. Therefore, it is against their desire to have Iraq with dependence and democracy.

One of the benefits achieved from Iraq after invasion is the cost of its reconstruction, which Wolfowitz suggests must be "Self-financing" (Hare, 2.23.p.61). It is spread that it costs 87 billion dollars. But An Actor reveals that the figure is false: "The true figure is now likely to be nearer a trillion" (Hare, 2.23.p.61). The character of An Actor does not only function as a commentator on the events but symbolises the voice of Hare, who serves as a testimony of what has happened in reality. Watt (2009), described the theatre of testimony as a place where "authentic voices speak directly (. . . through the medium of an actor) to an audience is able to vicariously experience another world."

Brilliantly, Hare dramatised how America and its allies plot the war against Iraq through making plans. Fanon (2006), argued that one of the tenets of colonialism is "the actions, the plans of the occupier." The Bush administration looks for a solid excuse to prove that war on Iraq is a war on terror:

Bush: "Donald, I know you're doing a worldwide review. I've been thinking: it could provide a very good cover."

Rumsfeld: "What sort of cover?"



Bush: "What kind of war plans do you have for Iraq? How do you feel about the war plan for Iraq? Let's get started on this" (Hare, 1.8.p.15) (Hare, 2006); (Hare, 2018).

Boon noted that *Stuff Happens* raises authentic "questions of the nature of patriotism and heroism, of the self's responsibility to the self and, crucially, of the rights and wrongs of intervention, be it the intervention of one sovereign state into the affairs of another" (p. 3). Bush gets a very good plan for war; Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. This claim must be based on solid evidence. The false solid evidence is given by Sir Richard Dearlove, the head of the British Secret Intelligence Service, who enters the stage to declare that he has an authentic source which can be utilised as an authentic argument against Iraq:

Dearlove: "We have a source who is saying that the Iraqi military are able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within 20 to 45 minutes of an order to do so."

Dearlove: "It's come to us through an Iraqi organisation."

Manning: "An exiles organisation?"

Dearlove: "The original source is in the Iraqi army" (Hare, 2.14. pp.32-33).

Blair wants war at any expense. whether Iraq has or even does not have WMD, simply because he wants to manifest his loyalty to America and he wants safety for himself and his nation:

Blair: "Can you?" – what I'm asking - can you promise this information is sound."

Dearlove: "No. No," "I can't promise." "It's a judgment" (Hare, 2.14.p.33).

The British administration depends on what hearsay said to wage war on Iraq instead of facts, just because they want to support America (we) the strong side against Iraq (them) the weak side. Blair's duty towards America obliges him to take a daring step to declare that Iraq has WMD and it must be stopped for the world's security:

Blair: "This document discloses that Saddam's military planning allows for some of the WMD to be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them" (Hare, 2.14.p.34).

This step is followed by another decisive one made by Bush. Before the General Assembly and with the presence of his Secretary of State, Bush concludes that Iraq has WMD and that Saddam Hussein is a menace to Iraq, the Middle East, and the whole world:

Bush: "The history, the logic and the facts lead to one conclusion: Saddam Hussein's regime



is a grave and gathering danger” (Hare, 2.14.p.34).

Bush and Blair need UN approval as well so that their war will be legal:

Blair: "I have an attorney-general who is advising me that any invasion of Iraq without UN support is going to be in breach of international law" (Hare, 1.10.p.19).

A step towards the UN approval is to convince the UN with what is called the preventive war. Jervis (2005), assumed that this war is created to establish and preserve America's strength and dominance. Therefore, it is based on the notion that America's views and norms must extend to all countries all over the world. In the case of Iraq, both Bush and Blair need to submit what proves virtually that Iraq is a "real and imminent" threat:

Blair: "Even with UN support, any invasion will still be illegal unless we can demonstrate that the threat to British national security from Iraq is what he calls "real and imminent" (Hare, 1.10.p.19).

"Real and imminent" are the exact words said by the attorney-general. This testifies that Iraq falls a prey to an American-British conspiracy because it has never been a "real and imminent" threat to America or Britain. This testimony is consolidated by Ricks (2006), who observed that imminent threat is a plan from the American and British administration to "sustain [sic] campaign of misrepresenting the intelligence on Iraq" and all those mischaracterisations and errors were deliberately made and exaggerated to portray to the world how Iraq represented a real threat for the aim of waging war.

After the US-British agreement on the Iraq war, it is the time for the UN to endorse it as well. Hare portrayed four false reasons given to the UN. Powell affirms that Iraq has WMD, which is the first fake reason offered to the UN:

Powell: "My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we're giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence" (Hare, 2.21.p.57).

Contrary to Powell is Blix. As a representative of the UN inspection commission in Iraq, Blix testifies that Iraq is free of WMD:

Blix: "Since we have arrived in Iraq we have conducted more than 400 inspections, covering more than 300 sites. The inspectors have not found any weapons of mass destruction" (Hare, 2.21.p.57).

However, Blair still insists on war, as An Actor remarks:

An Actor: "Meanwhile Tony Blair, fighting for the survival of his government, undertakes what he calls his masochism strategy, directly confronting critics of the war"(Hare, 2.27.p.58).

The Bush and Blair cabinets put another fake reason on the table of the UN. Dick Cheney, Vice President of the United States, sees that Saddam Hussein has violated UN agreements:

Cheney: "Saddam Hussein has violated 17 UN agreements. The UN has 173 pages of concerns about weapons of mass destruction. Therefore. The only question is: "Does the UN still have a role?" (Hare, 2.13.p.31).

Cheney demonstrates that there is no cooperation between Baghdad and the UN and that Saddam Hussein does not respect the UN resolutions. Violating the UN resolutions is a huge unacceptable mistake committed by Iraq that makes war on Iraq inescapable.

For further supporting his plea, Cheney blames the 9/11 attacks on Saddam Hussein which is the third reason to convince the UN of the war against Iraq:

Cheney: "Success in Iraq means we will have struck a blow right at the heart of the base, if you will, the geographic base of the terrorists who had us under assault now for many years, but most especially on 9/11" (Hare, 2.14.p.31).

He conveys an idea that Iraq and Al-Qaeda are one. Thus, the war on Iraq symbolises a stroke to Al-Qaeda.

The fourth and last fabricated reason for convincing the UN of war reflected in this play is provided by Powell, who speaks of its necessity for the dignity and prestige of the UN:

Powell: "I'm reluctant to say that at this table we hold the future of the UN in our hands. Should the Security Council fail to get compliance from Saddam Hussein, it's going to be very bad news for the prestige and standing of the organisation. We see this process as clearly asking the question: how effective can the UN be?" (Hare, 2.15.p.36).

He turns Saddam Hussein's arrogance to his aids. He clarifies that Saddam Hussein's underestimation of the UN is leading to its loss of glory, authority and power. As a result, this war is a consideration for the UN in the first place. This is the public plea but the hidden purpose is to invade Iraq, as remarked frankly by De Villepin:



De Villepin: "There's all the difference in the world between coming to the UN with the aim of getting Saddam to disarm through peaceful means, and coming to the UN in order simply to get a stamp of approval for an invasion" (Hare, 2.15.p.38).

A clear sign of colonialism is their fake evidence to cover their greed. After that, they turn their efforts to win as many allies to their coalition as possible.

Any opposed opinion to the Iraqi war must be altered. Hence, Hans Blix and Mohamed Elbaradei reject the war, they are invited to sit with Bush, Powell and Cheney to discuss Iraq file more closely:

Cheney: "You know, we're sure there are weapons there. I don't think you're going to have any trouble finding them. And if you do have any trouble, understand, we're ready to discredit you" (Hare, 2.16.p.41).

Their brief meeting ends with a conclusion that only Bush is the decision maker of this issue in particular:

Bush: "The only mistake you could make is to imagine that when you come to report, it's you that's making the decision. About whether to take further action."

Blix: "Of course not." "I agree with you. That's not my role."

Bush: "No." "It isn't you that makes that decision." "It's me" (Hare, 2.16.p.42).

This is a testimony that Bush used persuasion through faked facts and force in his campaign for the Iraq war.

Consequently, on March 20th 2003, the war started and Iraq was invaded, which is a colonial act. McClintock (1994), defined colonialism as "the direct territorial appropriation of another geo-political entity, combined with forthright exploitation of its resources and labour, and systematic inference in the capacity of the appropriated culture to organise its dispensations of power." Edward Said in *Orientalism* indicated that the American invasion of Iraq cannot be deemed sanctioned or legal since it is built on the basis of "we" and "you" (2003). Therefore, Iraq's invasion is an assertion that colonialism is not a term of the past. Iraqis were looking for a bright new future at the hands of America due to slogans and political speeches delivered in the public:

Rumsfeld: "There is, I am certain, among the Iraqi people a respect for the care and the precision that went into the bombing campaign."



Wolfowitz: "Like the people of France in the 1940s, they view us as their hoped-for liberator" (Hare, 2.23.p.61).

The Iraqis' warm welcome of the coalition forces can be deemed parallel to the colonised views towards the arrival of colonisers who deluded the colonised world that their existence will bring prosperity and development as Mannoni argued: "Whenever Europeans have founded colonies . . . , it can safely be said that their coming was unconsciously expected--even desired-- by the future subject peoples. Everywhere there existed legends foretelling the arrival of strangers from the sea, bearing wondrous gifts with them" (cited in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin*, p. 73) (Fanon, 1967). The American administration translated that welcome as authorisation to interfere in all affairs of Iraq: social, economic, commercial, and even educational, while in reality, this interference creates chaos (Said, 2003); (Said, 2003).

Hare disclosed the American and British colonial allegations through exposing five main politicians' views of war, invasion and conditions of Iraq after 2003. The truth is made public that Iraq is free from WMD:

An Actor: "Asked in the same year whether the Americans are winning the war in Iraq," Donald Rumsfeld replies:

Rumsfeld: "Winning or losing is not the issue for "we," in my view, in the traditional, conventional context of using the words "winning" and "losing" in a war (Hare, 2.23.p.62).

Rumsfeld is the first politician whose pleas are unlike all his statements before 2003. He denies that one of the objectives of war was America's pride. Similar to Rumsfeld is Cheney, the second politician whose speech is changed after the Iraq war:

Interviewer: "Vice-President, this time last year, you claimed Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear capability."

Cheney: "Yes, I did misspeak." "We never had any evidence that Hussein had acquired a nuclear weapon" (Hare, 2.23.p.62).

Since there is no evidence, war against Iraq should not have been started. The reasons behind the Iraq war are emphasised by Hare once more in this play; America seeks to achieve money, business and glory through this invasion:

An Actor: "Asked in 2003 whether he still has a connection with the company Halliburton," Dick Cheney claims:



Cheney: "Since I left Halliburton to become George Bush's Vice-President, I've severed all my ties with the company, gotten rid of my financial interest." "I have no financial interest in Halliburton of any kind and haven't had, now, for over three years."

AN ACTOR: "In fact, Cheney is still receiving deferred compensation and owns more than 433,000 stock options." "Those options were worth \$241,498. They are now worth \$8 million. Halliburton has 10 billion dollars-worth of no-bid contracts in Iraq." "In playing the role of the a charitable coloniser, America legalises its exploitation in Iraq" (Hare, 2.23. p.62).

Cheney is not the only American who admits that he was wrong about the Iraq issue; Powell is the third American politician who declares he was wrong:

Powell: "Well the intelligence community got it wrong, what I presented ... Look, I am not somebody who walked around Iraq looking for it" (Hare, 2.23.pp.62-63).

To free himself from this big lie, Powell puts the blame on the inspection commission whose duty was to provide the public with reliable and error-free information. However, this excuse does not justify his entanglement:

Paxman: "What you said, you said that these aren't assertions, what we're giving you is facts and conclusions."

Powell: "Yes. I know."

Paxman: "But they weren't facts and conclusions."

Powell: "They were facts and conclusions as they existed at that time, based on what the intelligence committee said to us." "We subsequently discovered that was wrong. We were wrong" (Hare, 2.23.p.63).

. As for Bush, the fourth main politician, he convinces the Americans that Saddam Hussein was a time bomb who represented a menace. Bush's interference was a conclusive movement to stop him:

Bush. "God told me to strike Al Qaeda and I struck them, and then He instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did"(Hare, 2.23.p.63).

Similarly, Blair, the fifth politician, still thinks that the war on Iraq has positive aspects despite the tribulations inflicted on Iraqis:



Dinner Guest: "How do you feel about the 100,000 innocent Iraqis who have died as a result of this invasion?"

Blair: "I don't accept that figure." "I've seen that figure and it's wrong. I couldn't sleep at night if 100,000 people had died."

Dinner Guest: "But you can sleep if 50,000 have died?"

(BLAIR looks at us a moment, then goes) (Hare, 2.23.p.63).

In an interview with James Graham, David Hare discussed what people think of their politicians: "People tend to ask: do politicians know they're lying? Are they sincere or insincere? Politicians don't think in those terms. They think: this is the case I have to put – almost like a QC – whatever I privately feel" (cited by Kate Kellaway, 2018). In his play, Hare elucidated that the politicians know that they are lying. Chomsky (p. 50) opined that the Bush and Blair administrations knew that Iraq did not have WMD, and thus it did not represent a menace, otherwise, they would not have had the war to invade it. But, the matter was for pride and advantages.

Iraqis were happy for the end of Saddam Hussein's regime because they had been dreaming of prosperity and freedom. But after the war, the result was shocking, and the situation became much worse than it was before, as expressed by Iraqi Exile:

IRAQI EXILE: "My family left Iraq 17 years ago. I longed for the fall of the dictator. In exile, I worked for it. Then Donald Rumsfeld said "Stuff happens." It seems to me the most racist remark I ever heard."

". . . They came to save us, but they had no plans. . . . How many Iraqis have died? . . . No figure is given. . . . We opposed Saddam Hussein, . . . , because he harmed people, and anybody who harms innocent Iraqis, I feel equally passionately and strongly about and I will oppose them. . . . If there is a word, Iraq has been crucified. By Saddam's sins, by ten years of sanctions, by the occupation and now by the insurgency. . . . People say to me "Look, tell America." I tell them: "You are putting your faith in the wrong person. Don't expect America or anybody will do it for you. "If you don't do it yourself, this is what you get" (Hare, 2.24.p.64).

After the invasion, Iraqis do not know how to live or co-exist. The Bush and Blair administrations give false impressions that the Iraq war is a practical worthy stage towards saving and freeing Iraqis from tyranny. Hare investigated that the results are fatality. Soto-



Morettini (p. 313), argued that in *Stuff Happens*, Hare intentionally ended his play in this melancholic manner to manifest "how the history is shaped in the hands of powerful" countries. The Iraqis should not have trusted America. In 'The American empire; the burden', Ignatieff (2003) displayed that tragedies in Iraq would remain and, like any colonial policy, freedom, order and democracy would not be solidified if they were puppets in the hands of the Americans. This feeling of anger can be interpreted as a rejection to the war and invasion.

Conclusion

In demystifying the false evidence claimed by the Bush and Blair governments as well as the authentic reasons that led to the Iraq war and invasion through mixing real characters and events with fictitious ones, David Hare's *Stuff Happens* is a testimony that colonialism is reborn in the contemporary age under the pen names freedom, civilisation and democracy.

Through the analysis of the play, the study concludes that the fake evidence, military processes and intervention in Iraqi affairs are colonial policies in form and content, on the one hand. On the other hand, it reveals that America is indisputably the only benevolent power and decision maker in the world. Its claims that it is burdened with spreading security, stability and liberty all over the world are unbeatably a new current and contemporary colonial ideology. Consequently, the audience bears witness to the American colonial interests in Iraq, as well as its domain as a superior country over the countries of the Middle East through occupying Iraq as an inferior country, which are also the core results of this study.



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