

David Hare's *Stuff Happens* A Dramatic Journey of American War on Iraq

Elaff Ganim Salih¹, Hardev Kaur², Mohamad Fleih Hassan³

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
Serdang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

¹*elafganem@yahoo.com ²hardevkaur@yahoo.com ³mohamedfleih@yahoo.com

Keywords: Verbatim theatre; *Stuff Happens*; Orientalism; David Hare.

ABSTRACT The war launched by America and its allies against the country of Iraq on 2003 was a debatable and notorious war for the public opinion was shocked with the realization that the reasons for launching the war under the title 'Iraq's Mass Destruction Weapons' were false. The tragic consequences of this war led many writers around the world to question the policy of the United States and its manipulation of facts to justify their narratives. The present study examines the American policy of invading Iraq in David Hare's *Stuff Happens*. It investigates Hare's technique of combining documentary realism with imaginative reconstruction of the arguments to dramatize the American Invasion of Iraq. *Stuff Happens* is a historical and political play written as a verbatim theatre. It depicts the backroom deals and political maneuvers of the Bush administration in justifying their campaign against the 'Axis of Evil' culminated by the war against Iraq. The verbatim theatre is the best way of showing the gap between 'what is said and what is seen to be done'. Scenes of direct speeches by real characters are part of this theatre dramatized to present a new reading of a historical event. In addition, characterization is used by Hare's to chronicle the American war on Iraq. The study follows a postcolonial framework. The study concludes that Hare's *Stuff Happens* succeeded in shaking the public opinion with the truth that Bush's administration has manipulated facts in order to achieve their colonial and imperial interests in Iraq, which led to more destruction and violence in this country.

1. INTRODUCTION

After the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, Bush administration began publicly to discuss the possibility of US military action against Iraq by connecting this country to Al-Qaeda. The administration suggested that Saddam Hussein helps AL-Qaeda by supplying them of the chemical weapons which he processes and fosters. Although the United Nations' inspections proved no existence of mass destruction weapons or relations to AL-Qaeda, they raised the public's feelings of fear of Iraq as a source of threat for America and the world. Bush affirmed these feelings when he declared that "America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer." (*Stuff Happens*, 33). President Bush set the United States as a nation against a small band of enemies and he leveled Iraq as one of them in his famous speech "Axis of Evil" when he said "Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility towards America" (ibid, 33). By this accusation, America redirected war against terror starting with Iraq. Bush administration wanted always to be perceived as waging a moral war. On March 19, 2003, President Bush announced the launch of war against Iraq. In fact, oil and the colonial desire was the primary driving force behind the war against Iraq. Thus, it was necessary for America to fabricate its intervention in Iraq in the name of freeing the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's oppression as Bush told the journalist in David Hare's *Stuff Happens*:

Bush: Adam. the Prime Minister and I, of course, talked about Iraq. We both recognize the danger of man who's willing to kill his own people harboring and developing Weapons of mass destruction. This guy, Saddam Hussein, Is a leader who gases his own people. (S. H, 33)

Thus, America created a dangerous enemy from Iraq and its leadership represented by Saddam Hussein. Bush claimed “By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger” (S. H, 33). They utilized the doctrine of ‘Preemptive Self-defense’ expressed by Bush administration in its September 2002 report to the Congress on national security. That report, among other things “asserted an evolving right under international law for the United States to use military force preemptively against the threat posed by “rogue states” possessing WMD” (Sean D. Murphy, 2004, 3). But later on in the play, Bush affirmed to Collin Powell, his secretary, that there is no existence for the chemical weapons “We’ve got ourselves into a situation where we’re insisting he’s guilty until he proves he’s innocent. That’s not good. That’s not good for us. He’s making a monkey of us” (S. H, 91). In spite of this reality, Iraq was put in the center of a competition between two poles of power: the United States and the United Kingdom. In fact, the targeting of Iraq came for its strategic importance as many critics noted “the importance of Iraq in a region from which the United States and the global community derive energy resources” (Murphy, 2004, 2). It can be said that the American invasion of Iraq was a colonial project.

A study was conducted by Hassan The Iraqi war in 2003 was one of the results of the 9/11th attacks, for it was launched to go in line with the campaign of the United States to fight against “Axis of Evil”. Those attacks led to the U.S. A. occupation of Iraq as well as exacerbated level of political destabilization in much of the Middle East. As such, the first decade of the 21st century witnessed a large number of political writings regarding these events. David Hare’s play *Stuff Happens* is a literary piece that handles such political issues in a verbatim tradition.

2. STUFF HAPPENS AND THE VERBATIM THEATER

The importance and power of the political theater stems from the endeavor to show the discrepancy between what is intended to be said or claimed and what has happened or done. It presents a staged interpretation of facts and events as Hare did in his play *Stuff Happens*. Hare clarifies this significance in the Obedience:

I would suggest crudely that one of the reasons for the theatre’s possible authority, and for its recent general drift towards politics, is its unique suitability to illustrating an age in which men’s ideals and men’s practice bear no relation to each other [...] The theatre is the best way of showing the gap between what is said and what is seen to be done [...]. (Hare, 2005, 115)

David Hare (1947-) is a British post-war dramatist. His writings are distinguished for their concern with political affairs. He is “a remarkable playwright who, for over three decades, has turned a laser-like eye on the condition of Britain” (Billington, 2004). His known plays are many such as *The Permanent Way* (2003), *Stuff Happens* (2004) and *The Vertical Hour* (2006). *Stuff Happens* is an example of the experiments in political theater that emerged after the attacks of 11/9. The play was first premiered at the National Theatre of Britain in September of 2004. It is a dramatic version of the journey of the United States and Britain’s marching towards their war against Iraq. David Hare has fashioned both a historical narrative and a human drama about the frustrations of power and the limits of diplomacy. The play presents the discourse of war that followed the attacks of 9/11. *Stuff Happens* directly dramatizes the decisions of the British and American governments to go to war in Iraq. Reinelt mentions in his review of the play:

Hare provides a version of how we got into the war. It is his version, because although he uses many verbatim speeches and other public-record utterances, he also imagines scenes behind closed doors at the highest levels of government—between Tony Blair and George W. Bush, between Colin Powell and Condi Rice, between Hans Blix and Bush, Rice, and Paul Wolfowitz. (2005, 303)

Many texts appeared as experiments in the political theater that revived the engagement between playwrights and a global audience, as they present global events and affairs (Feffe, 2010). These experiments encompass verbatim theatre. The term verbatim was coined by Derek Paget. He defines it as:

A form of theatre firmly predicated upon the taping and subsequent transcription of interviews with ‘ordinary’ people, done in the context of research into a particular region, subject area, issue, event, or combination of these things. The primary source is then transformed into a text which is acted, usually by the performers who collected the material in the first place. (1987, 317).

Verbatim theatre techniques then developed to investigate the national political issues rather than the local or personal issues. In recent years, the term ‘verbatim’ is widely used in the United Kingdom (Heddon, 2008) as well as in Australia Whereas in the United States, this form of theatre is more usually called “...documentary theater” (Claycomb, 2003, 96). Hare is one of the practitioners of this type of theater who represents the political issues on the stage. The aim is to present knowledge different from that presented in the media. It can be said that it is a political theater which seeks truth.

The verbatim theater re-constructs an event from a public speech of real people in order to present a realistic picture of the occurred event. The playwright defines his own verbatim technique as follows: “The dialogue of real people is recorded and subsequently organized by a dramatist to make a play. The process is akin to sculpture. You find the drift-wood on the beach, but you carve the wood and paint it to make it art” (Hare, 2005, 29). But Hares uses his imagination to depict what happens behind the closed doors between the political leaders and characters. In this way, he tries to dramatize the process that leads to the invasion as a journey ended by occupying Iraq. Hare combines the documentation with imagination as a technique to describe a recent historical event. In the author’s note to *Stuff Happens*, Hare writes, ‘This is surely a play, not a documentary, and driven, I hope, by its themes as much as by its characters and story’ (Hare, 2004). It is a type of theater that seeks truth and responds to the issues of the day. He utilizes the verbatim techniques such as interviews and transcripts to create something unique and new. He translated a subject from public media discourse into dramatic text. The play is a re-telling of the Bush administration's determination to invade Iraq in 2003 on the stage. “It is an organized repetition of history” as Freddie Rokem said (2000, xi). The action mostly takes place in rooms behind closed doors so the setting is various. It moves from place to another, from the white House to Camp David to Oval Office. The audience in this type of theater and specifically in this play bears witness for a history that still experiences it until now because it is a very recent so it is related to the present. Hare describes his play saying:

Stuff Happens is a history play, which just happens to center 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. Scenes of direct address quote people verbatim. When the doors close on the worlds' leaders and on their entourages, then I have used my imagination. (S. H, Author’s Note, 2004)

The verbatim theater by addressing contemporary issues differs from journalism in interpreting the meaning of the event in new setting rather than just informing to arouse the desired effect on the audience. It presents a new knowledge about the political issues different from that presented in media. Hare said in an Interview with Will Hammond “Verbatim theater does what journalism fails to do”. (Hammond and Steward, 2008, 62)

Since the theatre of verbatim is about real events and real characters, Hare's play conforms to the form. In so far, a plot must have an arrangement of incidents that describes a whole action of

significance. *Stuff Happens*' plot includes an important universal action that is the American invasion of Iraq. The arrangement of incidents is similar to a large extent to the real incidents of the invasion process. It includes the preparation for war by the false premises and claims, to remove Saddam Hussein, and then to occupy Iraq. Another feature of the verbatim theater is the reflection and recognition of the suffering. Some characters like Colin Powell recognize the meaning and the bad consequence of the decision of going to war for both U.S.A soldiers and Iraqis. In act three, he expresses his opinion concerning war of Vietnam saying "politicians start wars; soldiers fight and die in them" (S. H, 4) and again he says "War should be the politics of the last resort" (ibid, 5). Hare comments on Powell's character that he "was presented as a hero, I admired him as a man who understands what collateral damage is ,who understands what a military operation is, and who knows what it's like to see people's lives destroyed by bombs" (Bumiller, 2006, 1).

3. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The American invasion can be framed in post-colonial frame. It is needed to frame the American invasion of Iraq to understand the motivations which led to the questioning of the existing imperial discourse. So the post-colonial theory and its concept of Orientalism are helpful to such an end. Post-colonial theories can help in "understanding the implications of the invasion and the occupation of Iraq since it entails an understanding of how the colonial past influences contemporary politics and events" (Sarah, 2008, p.5). During the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, it was assumed in the West, that "the Orient and everything in it was either inferior to, or in need of corrective study by the West. It is a political vision of reality which promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")" (ibid, p.5). There are Westerners, and there are Orientals, the former dominates and the latter must be dominated. In essence, Orientalism is a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient where the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power and of domination" (ibid, 5). However, a Western conquest of the Orient was considered as liberation, a construction that was repeated and used many times during the American invasion of Iraq by the Bush administration. The premise was that since the Iraqis (Orientals) are ignorant of self-government and are lack liberty, it is best that they are invaded for their own good.

It is essential to understand the invasion and occupation of Iraq by U.S.A as a continuation of colonial and imperialist discourses and processes. The recent wars since 2001 validated what Edward Said noted in his preface of 2003 edition of *Orientalism* concerning modern imperialism. He raised the questions "whether modern imperialism ever ended or has continued in the Orient two centuries ago of Napoleon's entry into Egypt?" (Said, 2003). Colonialism was not a project limited to the conquering of large parts of the world but also includes subordinating the colonized "races" and "cultures" (Sarah, 2008, p.7). According to Anne McClintock, colonization involves:

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 (itself not necessarily a homogenous entity) to organize its dispensations of power. (1994: 295)

The colonial practices and trends didn't end but they take new shapes and new ideologies. For example, the United States of America uses war to keep its domain over the countries of the third world by maintaining and enriching the conflicts between the West and the East. Sara Aarnivaara mentioned that:

The self-interests of the colonial and imperial powers created the foundation for their political and military actions around the world. However, a central tenet within post-colonial theory is that

colonialism cannot simply be attributed as a thing of the past. Rather it is claimed that the colonial crusades have to be seen as a part of the socio-political map of our times, a “map” that is continuously being drawn and modified by the same powers as before. Thus, the colonial heritage is still alive, but in new shapes and forms. (2008, 6)

The colonial projects strengthened the division of the world’s population into “we” and “them”. “We” came to represent the civilized and “them” the uncivilized, barbaric and primitive. They justify the colonization as a “civilizing mission where the uncivilized peoples of the world were to be saved by the colonial powers.” (Loomba, 2005b: 009-010). In this way the colonizer legitimates the extreme exploitation and abuses that colonized nations and peoples suffered under colonial rule. The same colonial premises and justifications were used by U.S.A in its war and invasion of Iraq. “Violence was and is the language of the colonial powers through which the colonial powers forced millions of people around the world to a life of subordination” (kamali, p.010). The self-interests of the colonial and imperial powers created the foundation for their political and military actions around the world. Thus, the colonial heritage is still alive, but it takes new shapes and forms. Nowadays the colonization is covered by the phrase “Free World”.

4. CHARACTERIZATION AS A MEANS OF DRAMATIZING THE JOURNEY OF WAR

Hare has combined the verbatim techniques of using real characters and presenting an accurate account of what they did and said. Also, characterization is another means that Hares adopts to dramatize the decision making of the American invasion of Iraq. *Stuff Happens*:

revolves around powerful political leaders, public figures who are supposed to represent positions and attitudes of whole countries, who are responsible for the consequences of their political decisions on private lives. Thus, the world’s history shaped by political decisions and the private lives of millions of individuals becomes very vague. (Golimowska, 2012, 6)

It sheds light on the process that led Bush administration to attack Iraq through focusing on the characters’ speech, disputes and decisions. Hare's play describes the political personalities and advisors that surrounded Bush and Tony Blair and their negotiating of war. The characters in Hare’s play carry the names of real politicians speaking in a mixture of real and fictitious voices like Collin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Kondeliza Rice. The play's dialogue is “taken from parliamentary records, speeches, interviews, transcripts, and photographs. It is a historical narrative about the consequences of the abuses of power played out on a global scale” (Fyffe, 2010, 23). Most of the dialogue is the actual words of the political leaders and statesmen, which is one feature of the verbatim theater. For instance, Saddam Hussein made a speech on Iraqi TV, speaking in Arabic and a translator rendered it in English and Bush’s famous description of Iraq as “axis of evil” on the 29th January 2002:

Saddam: We apologize to God about any act which has angered him in the past, and that was held against us and we apologize to the Kuwaitis on the same basis. (S. H, 86)

Bush: Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility towards America and to support terror. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. (S. H, 3)

Bush, Blair and Powell are the triangle of the play's action. The first two represent the two poles of power; U.S.A and Britain who made a coalition together to attack Iraq, whereas Powell was represented by Hare as a man of conscience who protests against war. Hare invents another type of characters who contrasts the double identity of the politicians. They are figured as external narrators who are called 'Actors'. Their role is to intervene and provide additional information or an opinion on certain issue. (Golimowska, 2012, 4) For instance, when Bush asked Rumsfeld about his plan for Iraq, An Actor comments "It is seventy-two days after September 11th." (S. H, 31). Their power to intervene gives them control over the events in the play. Moreover, a British Journalist asks many questions about the occupation which he names liberation "Was it lawful? Was it not? How was it done? ... Do I like the people who did it? Are they my kind of people? Hey- are they stupider than me? " (S. H, 15). Hare differentiates between character speech and asides by using these non-fictional characters' phrases and imagined private conversations between the characters respectively. Mary Luckhurst refers to these figures as "voices of conscience" (2008, 213). The actors like the chorus in the play, they let the figures speak for themselves but also provide some additional information. For instance, an actor says "By the end of 2001, the US will have spent \$6.46 billion on bombing of Afghanistan." (S. H, 30)

Stuff Happens was based on real events, real people and their real speech. Beginning from the title of the play, actually Donald Rumsfeld "gives the play its title and its theme. "Stuff Happens" was his response to the postwar grand looting of Baghdad (Stohard, 2004, 1). It was taken from a verbatim of Rumsfeld, the former Secretary of American Defense. A notorious remark made by him when he commented on the looting and pillage that followed the American conquest of Baghdad on Friday, April 11th 2003. He simply responded that "stuff happens":

Rumsfeld: I've seen the pictures. I've seen those pictures. I could take pictures in any city in America. Think What's happened in our cities when we've had riots, And problems, and looting. Stuff happens! (S. H, 3)

Although "stuff happens" refers to an American profanity, but Hare uses it to "refer to how the decisions to go to war a decision of enormous magnitude and with profound consequences just "happens" (Juhi, 2010, 20). Hare categorizes his play in the tradition of documentary political theater. He presented characters like Bush introduced from the very beginning of the play by an outside actor:

Actor: These are the actors; these are the men and women who will play parts in a defining drama of the new century. And at their head is a snappish young man, seeking his fortune in the oil-rich Permian Basin of West Texas, who will, one day, like forty-six per cent of his fellow Americans, say he has been born again. (S. H, 9)

Describing Bush as a man "seeking his fortune" in oil, "paints a picture of a man with a selfish agenda, privileged, who has a narrow view of the world and not to be trusted." (Fyffe, 2010, 32) He was authoritative and arrogant:

I am the commander – see, I don't need to explain. I don't need to explain why I say things. That's the interesting thing about being the President. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something. I don't feel like I owe anybody an explanation. (S. H, 10)

This is clear through the course of the play when Bush explains and comments very little about his decisions during the play, "he listens more than comments. Yet it is clear that the power lies with him. And it becomes even clearer that a main part of his agenda is to make a simple example out of Iraq." (Boon, 2007, 93). The "Roman Empire" that mentioned by Collin Powell, is well depicted in an analysis of Bush character who is arrogant. Hare presents George W. Bush as

the president of the U.S who accidentally found him-self in the White House and who hardly ever says anything “Bush: you know I had a drinking problem. Right now, I should be in Texas, not in the Oval Office. There is only one reason I am in the Oval Office and not a bar. I found God. I am here because the power of prayer.” (S. H, 9)

Although Hare colors Bush character with humor but he takes his actions seriously. Bush was obsessed with power and did not fear or avoid war. It is a very important message of *Stuff Happens* that “since the consequences of Bush’s decisions are serious, his actions must also be taken seriously” (Boon, 2007, 10). He used words as a type of war to provide media with an explanation and ready responses to often thorny questions. In this way, he was able to frame any political or military situation or action by a morality tale that separates the good from the evil or the right from the wrong. As he did in fabricating a tale of weapons of mass destruction and terror and its relation to Iraq, axis of evil, to frame the American invasion in a moral frame that is to protect the world’s safety from grave danger. So, he was a cunning character who used language as means to satisfy the world with false claims w. Bush took decisions independently and released his judges according to his colonial interests without taking into consideration the bad consequences of these decisions as he concluded in scene fourteen “The history, the logic, and the facts lead to one conclusion: Saddam Hussein’s regime is a grave and gathering danger” (S. H, 66). This was depicted by Powell’s warning and protest against this war. Remarkably, this theme of the “inevitable connection between personal behavior and its social and political consequences is one of the strongest themes throughout Hare’s work.” (Reinelt, 2009, 112).

Although Tony Blair’s role was to secure the corporation of Britain in war but Hare portrayed American and British relations with regard to the war as a series of fatal cultural misunderstandings. The independence and a reflection of the British politics in a statement delivered by the character of Blair talking to Bush saying “In the event of your considering armed action against Iraq, the British Parliament - and I’d say still more the British people - won’t go along without UN support” (S. H, 38). Again in act two, he tells Campbell:

I promised the British people: no war without the UN (Blair moves away] There’s one rule. With the Americans there’s one rule. You get in early. You prove your loyalty. And that way they listen. The one thing we’ve learnt: if for a moment, if even for a moment we come adrift from Washington, our influence is gone. It’s gone!” (S. H, 88)

In order to legitimize the invasion, it must be under the UN’s approval. It is an indication that Britain doesn’t like to involve in this war unless there is obvious evidence against Iraq. As well as it is a reference to the tension in the diplomatic relations between U.S and UK .When Bush meets Blair in Texas to talk about Iraq before they go to a press conference, Blair refuses to support an invasion without a UN resolution and honest diplomacy. He justifies his decision in a long statement:

If Britain is involved, we will need evidence that Iraq can launch a nuclear, biological or chemical attack on Western country. We can’t go to war because of what we fear. Only because of what we know...Now plainly, if you choose you can set out on your own. That’s your choice. But frankly, I wouldn’t advice it. (S. H, 39)

Bush concluded as usual with a brief: “I understand” (ibid, 39). The most interesting point is Bush’s reaction to this dispute with Blair after Blair reached into a conclusion that “To be honest...if I’m honest, we’re getting contradictory impressions from different parts of your administration”, which Bush himself affirmed saying “I can believe that.” (ibid, 39) and at last Bush said his last word “It’s me that takes the decision. I’ll take the decision. I’m the president.” (ibid, 40) Later on, Britain was involved in the war under the U.S’s pressure even without the approval of

the UN for the sake of its imperial interests. In an essay entitled “Why ‘we’ love hate ‘you’ ”, Paul Smith described the transatlantic relations in 21st century as a master-slave. Claiming that “European powers, rights and obligations as ‘slaves’ are to no longer love and to remain ambivalent towards the “narcissist” as he calls the U.S., obsessed with its imperial aspirations.” (Smith, 2004) Similarly, Hare uses “umbrella” as a metaphor to show the European subordination to the U.S. On Rumsfeld’s tongue, he said:

What you can say about these people in Europe except that they live their lives under the American umbrella? Every time it rains they come running for shelter. And yet they still think that they’re entitled to say, “Hey you’re not holding that um-brella right.” Or more often, “I want a share of that umbrella. Or even,” you are not allowed an umbrella because not everybody’s got one. (S. H, 102)

On his return to London, Blair was unsure of what has been agreed “You don’t know exactly what’s has been agreed. You don’t know where you are.” (S. H, 44) It is an example of “Bush being a cunning character who can manipulate and surprise Blair. His seeming communicational incompetence makes him strong and dangerous.” (Golimowska, 2012, 10-11) The War Cabinet members in Camp David told us exactly who they were and what they thought. They agreed on attacking Iraq to state an example in the War on Terror, and because it was “do-able,” as Wolfowitz said in the play (S. H, 22). They discussed the decision-making process. But it was clear that Bush alone eventually decided and who rendered the actual discussion in the play. The absurdity of the decision-making was reflected in the following brief exchange:

Bush: Huh.
Rumsfeld: I like what you said earlier, sir. A war on terror. That’s good. That’s vague.
Cheney: It’s good.
Rumsfeld: That way we can do anything. (S. H, 24)

This quotation illustrated their colonial and imperial intentions, and the connection between the war on terror and the modern state of exception. The focus is on the idea that America in its claim of war on terror played the role of judge. The most important attributes of judging are impartiality and independence, but that was not the case with war on Iraq. America assumed extraordinary powers in response to the war on terror represented by Iraq. There was playfulness in their judgment as well as awfulness in judging war. (Bird & Rogers, 2009) Iraq’s war decision was an example of exception in justice judgment. It was clear in Bush’s speech to justify his war on Iraq because it was one of “axis of evil” (S. H, 33)

Powell’s character was a key to understand the different themes of the play. The characterization and verbatim techniques were the main techniques used in his play to theatricalize a historical event. Powell was a Vietnam War veteran, the only person in the War Cabinet who supported the desire for diplomacy. Powell was very skeptical towards Bush’s plan and criticized it, wishing “his country was less arrogant” (S. H, 53). He told us what he learned about the nature of war while he was fighting in Vietnam: “After Vietnam many in my generation vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in half-hearted warfare for half-baked reasons....War should be the politics of last resort.”(S. H, 4-5). Powell unlike Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz displayed a conscience about the morality of war. This difference created a dramatic tension in the play. (Boon, 2007) The playwright had the ability to create a form that can articulate struggle and contradiction. He built his play’s dramatic tension depending on the tension between the statesmen and their contradictory points of view towards war. We can see this dialogical form of truth contesting in the following exchange:

Powell: I want us to go about this in a different way.

Bush and Rice wait for Powell to calm.

Three thousand of our citizens died. They died in an unforgivable attack. But that doesn't license us to behave like idiots. If we reach the point where everyone is secretly hoping that America gets a bloody nose, then we're going to find it very hard indeed to call on friends when we need them.

The other two are silenced by the depth of Powell's feelings. Then Bush speaks.

Bush: I've said before: this isn't a popularity contest, Colin. It isn't about being popular.

Powell: No, it isn't. You're right.

Bush: No.... (S. H, 53)

It was a dynamic event that allowed contradiction. This conversation between Bush and Powell with Rice listening was fictional but it was emotional. It gave him urgency and authority. Powell, the military man was the only one who knew the cost of war. He believed that serving his country means keeping it out of unnecessary wars. He wanted to avoid war but he failed in his mission. Powell was the advisor but he won't be listened to. In this point, a valid meaning of the play can be concluded that "when men of conscience or men who have experienced war are not listened to, yet more war is the outcome. And when a powerful nation becomes arrogant, the end is not good." (ibid, 54) Powell said that Bush didn't listen only to those who wanted launching the war like Rumsfeld:

Powell: It should never have happened at all! Rumsfeld cut my legs off. *There is an angry silence. Bush shifts again, uncomfortable.*

Powell: Ok, so I've had this experience, and now I'm looking at the current planning - planning for Iraq - and all I can see is a group of people getting a hard-on about the idea of war, and no one giving a damn for the reality. Ten times more excitement about going in than there is about how the hell we get out! (S. H, 52)

Hare portrayed that eventual failure of Powell to achieve his goal as a tragic hero. "Powell's fate is that of any tragic hero: doomed to be right and sane in a world gone mad. But, again key to the development of a tragic hero, we, the audience, are made aware of the some of the forces arrayed against him." (ibid, 32-33) *Stuff Happens* shows that launching war and the relations between U.S.A and Britain are more important to each party than the country and people they are attacking. America was portrayed as a stubborn and its good conscience was represented by Powell who said:

Powell: If anyone's stupid enough to think this is payback time for whatever grudge they happen to be nursing against the US...then what they'll be doing in effect is condemning Iraqi women and children to the sort of bombardment which is going to make them wish they'd never been born. And possibly civil chaos after. That's what I'm trying to avoid. (S. H, 76)

Suffering of the people of Iraq, unnecessary death of soldiers and the chaos of a sectarian war all were foreshadowed by Powell. Although Powell protested against war, the play showed that Powell had a soldier's sense of loyalty to his commander who told him to make a presentation before the UN on the 5th of February 2003 against the Iraqi WMD Program. The play suggested that Powell probably knew that what he was going to say in the presentation was a case of deception. At one point in the play, he talked about hypocrisy concerning chemical weapons

“There's an element of hypocrisy, George. We were trading with the guy! [Saddam Hussein] Not long ago. People keep asking, how do you know he's got weapons of mass destruction? How do we know? (S. H, 53-54)

Stuff Happens criticized and satirizes the egoism and self-centrism of the United States and Great Britain. They cared only about their reciprocal relation that they tended to overlook the rest of the world for their own interests without any consideration to the fatal consequences of their decisions. This image was well depicted by “Roman Empire” which is a metaphor for exceptionalism of power and arrogance. Going to war had a symbolic dimension, because it was a way of proving the exceptionalism of American power. The drama showed that consequences and responsibility were beyond the desire to be exceptional. None of the individuals portrayed by Hare, except for Powell, cared about the soldiers who sacrificed their lives. Neither did they seem to care about the countless Iraqi civilians who suffered most tragically from the American invasion. Powell reminded Bush of that saying:

Bush: We need to show these people that we mean business.

Powell: The Roman Empire. I'm familiar with the analogy. The Romans would always go out of their way to make an announcement: ‘You are now dealing with the Roman Empire’. So if you pricked a senator in Rome, if you just pricked him through his toga with a pin, then Roman soldiers would seek out the village you came from [...] and they would kill all your family and burn down your house just to make a point. But Sir, we're not Romans. And last time I looked at the constitution, we were still a republic, not an empire. (S. H, 51)

The character of Bush was like an emperor who longed to invade and control the world by force. These are the colonialism's means to domain the other world by war. Powell succeeded in convincing Bush to seek the approval of the UN before launching the invasion of Iraq. The stage directions that ended the scene provided an image that mirrored that all might yet be right with the world “The stage darkens. The White House glows in the night, creamy, surreal. An August evening in a Southern town.” (S. H, 55)

The White House indeed looks like a castle that is isolated and glowing to stand as a symbol of absolute power. This absolute power well exemplified by US's war against Iraq to achieve imperial and colonial interests in the Middle East. British MP Simpson described Bush's longing for war by comparing him to a drunk who hold a bottle “Bush will hit Iraq in much the same way that a drunk will hit a bottle—to satisfy his thirst for power and oil. I must tell the Prime Minister that the role of a friend in such circumstances is not to pass the drunk the bottle!” (S. H, 11-12) On the other side, some other few European countries did not enable U.S.A from invading Iraq to gratify its thirst for power and oil.

Moreover, Hare showed the failure to bring freedom and democracy to Iraq. Hare said in the New York Times "I wanted to write the story of how a supposedly stupid man completely gets his way with two supposedly clever men," Mr. Hare said. "And wins repeatedly. The supposed dummy is the commander in chief, President George W. Bush, and the eggheads he's humiliating are Tony (Blair) and Colin (Powell)". (Makinley, 2006) They are supposed to be the most reasonable and wise full characters as clear from their speech throughout the play. But they are overwhelmed by the cunning and powerful character of Bush. This analogy is consistent with Foucault's heterotopias, “places that are the opposite of Utopias. The Utopian dream of the democratic beacons of power bringing democracy to the world is demolished by what happens in the play as both centers of power two fools blunder into a disastrous war.” (Fyffe, 2010, 53)

Hare distanced himself from both U.S.A and British's governments. This could be interpreted as Hare's response to “being put into the position of a passive observer of the tragic consequences caused by decisions made by a handful politicians and can therefore be seen as an articulation of a sentiment shared by audiences across the world.” (Golimowska, 2012, 1-2) This

was clear throughout the text when he raised questions concerning waging war against Iraq, but he didn't give clear answers just alluding. why Iraq? what's for? But by a Palestinian character, Hare alludes to answers as the unnamed Palestinian academic character said in a monologue:

Palestinian: Why Iraq? The question has been asked a thousand times. And a thousand answers have been given. Why was the only war in history ever to be based purely on intelligence – and doubtful intelligence at that – launched against a man who was ten years past his peak of belligerence ? Why Iraq ? Why now ? It was all about oil!" For us, no. For Palestinians, it's about one thing : defending the interests of America's three-billion-dollar-a-year colony in the Middle East. (S. H, 59)

This extract well clarified the reason behind the American invasion of Iraq. It was for oil neither to release the world from the grave danger of Saddam Hussein nor to free the Iraqis from his oppression. It was an imperial and colonial discourse. Their claims of liberating the third world countries were fake. The invasion of Iraq was defined by Said as an "illegal and unsanctioned imperial invasion and occupation." (Said, 2003: xiii). He argued that the US war could not launch its war "without an underlying sense that these people over there are not like "us" and do not appreciate "our" values, a view that is at the very core of traditionalist Orientalist dogma" (ibid, xv). The case of Iraq was a clear example of the continuity of imperial and colonial power being exercised. According to Anne McClintock, colonialism involves "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 organize its dispensations of power" (McClintock, 1994, 295). Moreover, Loomba defines American imperialism as "an enormous economic and military exercise of power across the globe without having any direct political control." (2005b: 027). The exercise of direct political control of US was highly evident in the case of Iraq. Thus, following McClintock's above-mentioned definition, it could be said that US occupation of Iraq was colonial more rather than imperial.

The last monologue was delivered by an unnamed Iraqi exile who described how he could not "comprehend how they, speaking of Bush and Blair, came without plans to save Iraqis after the dictator was gone." He reflected on the untold, undocumented Iraqi casualties of war and on the fates of nations who "put faith in the wrong person" (S. H, 120) The outcome was the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, and deadly violence resulted from America's policy, which serves only its imperial and colonial interests. The Iraqi exile said:

Iraqi Exile: A vacuum was created. Was it created deliberately? I cannot comprehend. They came to save us, but they had no plans. And now the American dead are counted, their numbers recorded, their coffins draped in flags. How many Iraqis have died? How many civilians? No figure is given. Our dead are uncounted.... I mean, 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. Basically it's a story of a nation that has failed in only one thing. But it's a big sin. It failed to take charge of itself. And that meant the worst person in the country took charge.....people say to me "Look, tell America." I tell them: "You are putting your faith in the wrong person." (S. H, 120)

Iraq suffered a lot of oppression, ten years of sanctions, American occupation and insurgency. The references to a "nation that failed to take charge of itself" at the mercy of "the worst person in the country" could just as easily refer to the United States under Bush." (Fyffe, 2010, 48) The Iraqi Exile proposed that they came to free Iraqis from dictatorship but what happened was that they destroyed the country. Hare presented this view by the character of Powell in his discussions with Bush in scene eleven "all I can see is a group of people getting a hard-on the idea of war, and no one giving a damn for the reality. Ten times more excitement about going in than there is about the hell we get out! " (S. H, 52) He continued his questioning, "And once we go, how long will we stay?... if you go into Iraq, you're going to be the proud owner of twenty-five million people. Their lives. All their hopes and aspirations. All their problems. Has anyone begun to think about that?" (S. H, 52-53) Bush didn't reply because he was thinking only in war, his only way to achieve his colonial project. The Iraqi Exile made the point that "this war, which would be fought on their territory, was about U.S. interests exclusively." (ibid, 49) So that, *Stuff Happens* "reflects a general skepticism to-wards politicians and their decisions as well as the helpless position of millions of observers who are affected by these decisions and yet feel like they have no influence." (Golimowska, 2012, 1) Bush abandoned his promises of freedom and safety for Iraqis and the world leaving behind a sectarian war and an ambiguous future.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that David Hare used the verbatim techniques in his play *Stuff Happens* to theatricalize the invasion of Iraq, thus presenting a new narrative to the motives and results behind launching this war. With the help of the postcolonial framework, the study introduced a new real story of the historical narrative of the Iraqi war, circulated by David Hare in his play *Stuff Happens*. The study again concludes that Hare's manipulation of historical documentaries and dramatic representation in his play shocked the conscience of the public opinion with the narrative of Iraqi war that was falsified by the American policy to justify their claims. *Stuff Happens* depicts political issues by presenting a new knowledge different from that communicated in the social media. It is a historical narrative about the abuses of power by the global poles in order to achieve colonial and imperial projects.

REFERENCES

- [1] Aarnivaara, Sara (2008). *Empire and Resistance: An Analysis of the Occupation of Iraq and the Iraqi Opposition and Armed Resistance*. (Master Thesis, Lund University).
- [2] Billington, Michael. Sir David Hare. *The Guardian*. February, 2004.
- [3] Bird, G., & Rogers, N. (2009). Talking to Judges about the Art of Judging: an Annotated Performance Text. Pub. Space: *JL & Soc. Just.*, 3, 1, 1-18.
- [4] Boon, R. ed. (2007). *The Cambridge Companion to David Hare*. Cambridge University Press.
- [5] Bumiller, Elisabeth. *Iraq War Faces Some New Critics*. The Theater Kind. *New York Times*. 03 Apr 2006: A.14.
- [6] Claycomb, R. M. (2003). (Ch) oral History: Documentary Theatre, the Communal Subject and Progressive Politics. *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, (2), 95-122.
- [7] Fyffe, L. (2010). *Political Theatre Post 9/11: The Age of Verbatim, of Testimony, & of Learning from Fictional Worlds*. Canada.
- [8] Golimowska, K. (2012). Transatlantic Miscommunication in David Hare's Drama *Stuff Happens*. *Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies*, 13.
- [9] Hammond, Will, and Dan Steward, eds. *Verbatim Verbatim. Techniques in Contemporary Documentary Theater*. London: Oberon, 2008.

-
- [10] Hare, David. *Stuff Happens*. Faber and Faber Ltd, 2004.
- [11] Hare, D. (2005). *Obedience, Struggle and Revolt*. London. Faber & Faber.
- [12] Heddon, D. E. (2007). *Autobiography and Performance*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [13] Juhı, Bushra. (2011). "Stuff Happens: David Hare's Iraq War Drama," *Al-Mustansiriya Journal of Arts*. September 22, 2011, Issue 55: 1-21.
- [14] Loomba, A. (2005). *Colonialism/Post-colonialism*. London. Rutledge.
- [15] Luckhurst, M. (2008). *Verbatim Theatre, Media Relations and Ethics* (pp. 200-222). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [16] McKinley, J. (2006). *David Hare Enters the Theater of War*. New York Times,1.
- [17] McClintock, Anne. 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term, Post-Colonialism', pp. 291-304 in Williams, P. & Chrisman, L (1994) (Eds.). *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- [18] Murphy, S. D. (2004). Assessing the Legality of Invading Iraq. *Georgetown Law Journal*, 92(4).
- [19] Paget, D. (1987). 'Verbatim Theatre': Oral History and Documentary Techniques. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 3(12), 317-336.
- [20] Reinelt, J. G. (2005). *Stuff Happens* (Review). *Theatre Journal*, 57(2), 303-306.
- [21] Rokem, F. (2000). *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*. University of Iowa Press.
- [22] Said, E. (2003). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.
- [23] Smith, Paul. "Why 'We' Love hate 'You'" *Contemporary Conflicts*, 2004. Web 4 Dec. 2011.
- [24] Stothard, Peter. *The Stuff of Political Nightmares*. The Times. London, 2004.
- [25] Stuart, Amanda Fisher. *Master Class: Exploring Verbatim Theater*. London, 2011.