



The Aftermath of Colonial Wars: Analyzing the Post-Colonial Impact on Societies and Individuals of Ernest Hemingway's 'The Old Man at the Bridge'

Muntadher Abdulkadhim Hasan

Asst.Lect. / Alamarah university College

Article Information

Article History:

Received July21, 2024

Reviewer August17 .2024

Accepted August 26, 2024

Available Online March1 , 2025

Keywords:

Post-colonialism,

Trauma,

Mental Health,

Destruction,

War Impact

Correspondence:

Montader.abdelkazem@alamarahuc.edu.iq

Abstract

This study investigates the impact and consequences of colonial conflicts, focusing on the implications of postcolonialism and analyzing their enduring possessions through the lens of postcolonial theory. It also examines the fate of societies inhabited by images of abominable driven insulation from behind grey-blue offices dominated only by artificial confusion, always ready to fill the air with terror. It also delves into the motives that cause some wars to spread, leading to widespread trauma, their interest in the mental case of this person and how he is transformed into a man who is extremely mass unconscious of his presence or place, also the effect of colonialism and war are not limited to men, in addition, this analysis of the chosen short story also exposes how life is taken away from all living beings. Furthermore, this close reading of the story shows how war takes all life from humans as well as animals; it reveals a thorough destruction of living beings. This research raises many questions, including: What are his insights and viewpoints about life in regard to postcolonialism? How colonized people view themselves? we will answer during the research.

DOI: [10.33899/radab.2024.152158.2207](https://doi.org/10.33899/radab.2024.152158.2207), ©Authors, 2023, College of Arts, University of Mosul.

This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

ما بعد الحروب الاستعمارية: تحليل تأثير ما بعد الاستعمار على المجتمعات والأفراد في قصة إرنست همنغواي 'العجوز على الجسر'

منتظر عبد الكاظم حسن*

المستخلص:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تأثيرات وصراعات الاستعمار، مع التركيز على تداعيات ما بعد الاستعمار وتحليل آثارها المستمرة من خلال منظور النظرية ما بعد الاستعمارية. كما تتناول مصير المجتمعات التي تسكنها صور العزلة البغيضة التي تدفعها المكاتب الرمادية الزرقاء المسيطر عليها فقط بفوضى صناعية، والتي دائماً ما تكون جاهزة لملء الجو بالرعب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تتعمق الدراسة في الدوافع التي تؤدي إلى انتشار بعض الحروب وما يترتب على ذلك من صدمات واسعة النطاق، وتهتم بالحالة العقلية لهذا الشخص وكيف يتحول إلى رجل غارق في اللاوعي الجماعي لوجوده أو مكانه. إن تأثير الاستعمار والحرب لا يقتصر على الرجال فقط، فهذه الدراسة التحليلية للقصة القصيرة المختارة تكشف أيضاً كيف تسلب الحياة من جميع الكائنات الحية. وعلاوة على ذلك، يُظهر هذا التحليل المتعمق للقصة كيف تأخذ

* مدرس مساعد/ كلية الجامعة العمارة

الحرب كل حياة من البشر والحيوانات على حد سواء؛ إذ يكشف عن تدمير شامل للكائنات الحية. تثير هذه الدراسة العديد من الأسئلة، بما في ذلك: ما هي رؤاه ووجهات نظره حول الحياة فيما يتعلق بما بعد الاستعمار؟ كيف يرى المستعمرون أنفسهم؟ وهي أسئلة سنسعى للإجابة عنها خلال البحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: - ما بعد الاستعمار، الصدمة، الصحة النفسية، الدمار، تأثير الحرب

Introduction

One of the finest contributions to American literature, *A Man at the Bridge* is a short story written by Earnest Hemingway in 1941, he pursued other careers and his writing style greatly reflects the time in which he wrote. Moreover, his volumes transferred to the upcoming genre along with an exceptional appreciation. In addition, Hemingway managed to fictional stories about the consequences of numerous war species. Throughout his life, because of his experiences throughout the war, Hemingway was able to see several aspects that would later inform and influence much of his war fiction. he watched different wars and managed to write about the way these wars impacted either in the real world or on people from a spiritual view. (Abrams, 1999). One way he explored this, particularly in his story *Old Man at the Bridge*, is through his examination of the aftermath of war, specifically in the context of the Spanish Civil War, In Hemingway's works, war is presented as a disease that will weaken the characters both physically and mentally, in this story, Hemingway introduced a character, now duty-bound to flee from who he was and from his home with the other animals as war came. The poem opens with a man who is attempting to cross the bridge, with a speaker (a soldier) next to him. The soldier asked the man Then only he (the man) knew that this bridge was 12 KM. Then he has two goats, a pair of pigeons, and one cat. This is the conversation on the battle with a man who expressed concern for least about his animals, entered to save him be heard, telling the soldier that the cat may survive, but he is unsure about other animals. Hemingway closed the narrative with the soldier assuming that the man will not move and that he is close to his doom because the enemy is approaching the bridge. (Abraham & Geoffrey, 2009).

In 1937 Hemingway went to Spain Because it brings back painful memories, Hemingway purposefully left his homeland and settled in Spain, which became his stronghold and the source of his identity, as a war correspondent for the *American Gazette*. That year, he decided to join the World Writers Association and if you look at their manifest then indeed, they seem where their positions are as well with respect to the Spanish war. He had returned after leaving Spain and the Ebro bridge was fought, very well away from being for him once he got his side of the bridge, and from that, he penned the following: the lineaments of this war this is more than just a war story, while it had an equally related context to the Spanish conflict, Hemingway was concentrating on the mysterious condition of an old man impotent, coming towards his death, likewise, in this way, Hemingway also showed that this character is not concerned with the politics of war and does not take a position either by opposing or accepting the war. Also, Hemingway presents a fact related to the age and natural composition of the person, because the person here appears to be very old and unable to move. Hemingway wanted to show the experience of the elderly in such wars that they are unable to move or defend themselves (Abrams, 1999).

Symbolism and the Effects of War in the short story

This research is qualitative in nature and in which the post-colonial approach of literary criticism is followed. The literature of the nations that were once colonies of other nations is a major focus of post-colonialism, or more precisely post-colonial philosophy. One could think of post-colonialism as a form of

resistance to imposed social norms and ideas of the global colonizers. A new postmodern literary style is supposed to be post-colonialism. The very first thing post-colonialism does is observe how people respond to and analyze colonialism. This philosophy's major objective is to combat colonialism's negative impacts and how they affect different cultures. Consequently, subaltern peoples have access to intellectual spaces created by postcolonial theory where they may speak honestly and independently, and languages that are less powerful endure and build innovative modes of perception. Edward Said was a significant individual in the post-colonial era. Said claims that in an effort to portray the Orient as just the "others" in opposition to the developed and enlightened West, people have almost always portrayed it as being savage and unenlightened. Said also adds that "Orientalism is a philosophical position built upon an ontological and epistemological dichotomy created among "the East" and "the Western world" So colonialism was not limited to the countries and peoples of the "Third World," but was also used in other settings, in his widely read book *Exoticism*. (Walker, 1985).

The text "Old Man at the Bridge" is told as a dialogue between an old person and a warrior. The author uses a commonplace fact to create a moving narrative well about the misery of wartime. In the narrative, the elderly man represents the many civilians who die in conflicts. A soldier and an elderly man who had to flee his home because of the Spanish Civil War had a chat that serves as the basis for the narrative "Old Man at the Bridge." Panic and worry pervaded every area during the battle. The imminent demise was known to all. Unable to move, an elderly man wearing glasses sat on the side of the road close to a bridge over the river that bridged the river (De Quesada, A. (2014).

Now, the soldier was having a conversation with an older chat. After an exchange of words, it came out the old man was so worried about his pets that he had taken leave by themselves. The old gentleman told the soldier that he had four pigeons, two goats, and a cat. He says an artillery fire led to his commander ordering him out of the area and leaving without pets. Bear in mind that he was an orphan, but still fretted about his pets. While he had no idea what would've happened to his other pets, the Cat will be fine he said because the cat is self-sufficient (Bryant, 2018).

Hemingway appeared to emphasize the fact that wars affected those societies a lot. But he fled when violence spilled too near to him with the start of the war, abandoning his animals so we can see that the focus is nearly entirely on his animals rather than the land, indicating a "materialistic point of view". He came to the bridge and his own animals at home; he was craving without any hope that would make him carry on living. In this way, Hemingway hoped to convey that man's only salvation for his life was going away which needed the support of beautiful animals but with the coming of war, these magnificent creatures made killing or perishing consequently distancing him from them. Now, crazy enough and Hemingway obviously gave no name to his character - he's just an old man and he uses that expression. This is Hemingway's favorite way of referring to the hero in his novels and short stories, as it suggests wisdom (albeit one hard-earned), experience, vulnerability – just a touch — all those attributes so beloved by writers. The "old man" character is often an incarnation of the declining body as much as it stands for a determination to prevail against crushing circumstances. One of the most famous examples is Hemingway's protagonist Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*, who embodies both struggle and personal dignity as exemplifying a man coming to terms with his own vulnerability, the fact that Hemingway employed this descriptor casts his characters in a specific light and furthers themes of resilience, mortality, and human frailty, besides to show that anything may result from war to the old man, other people may go through the same. Moreover, there is also mention of the war on the side of the

narrator, who is not named in order to underscore his nature as a cosmic figure rather than an individual. Hemingway does not give him a name as he is meant to be symbolic of the myriad anonymous soldiers who go off fighting in wars, this character is anonymous to represent all of the soldiers and make it a broader experience than just one soldier. The only thing that the author gives about him is that he is a soldier from the left wing and his job is to watch the other side of the enemy when they get closer. The soldier actually forms part in this war and refers to how people are following those in power. By adding such a character, Hemingway wanted to say that, the soldier is totally different from the man, as he takes part in the war, so he is experiencing the essence of the effects of the war. When the soldier meets the man, he seems to be so kind and he sympathizes with the man that he wanted the old man to save his life by running away (De Quesada, 2014) .

Though he never seems to consider the man's thought, that is to say, whatever the man tells him, he replies with less interest. Finally, when the troops come, the soldier leaves the man, since the man doesn't seem to move. Through this, it is totally clear that his aid to the man is just by speaking, the soldier doesn't show effort to help the man physically. Therefore, it can be seen that war has fully dehumanized the soldier; war makes him not to give attention to living (Altenbend & Lewis, 1966).

One of the main literary works that perfectly exemplifies true meanings that are implemented in a very clear easiness is "Old Man at the Bridge." Investigating the central idea and its implied meaning in this narrative is therefore important. The devastating effects of the conflict on naïve neutral parties are the main focus of this short narrative. In actuality, the older man, the title suggests, departed the town of San Carlos, where he had once kept several pets. He views the symbolic condition of the bridge as a tragic end for him because of his situation. His mental health has been impacted by the battle, which has also snuffed out his passion for life (Benson, 1990).

This person who is writing about 'Old Man at the Bridge' opposes war as it brings terror and anxiety. That the end is nigh is common knowledge. There appears to be chaos in every corner. TIRED: A shucks and glasses-wearing old man slouched by the side of a bridge over a river during the Spanish Civil War (Blake, 2001).

Hemingway obviously uses this persona "the mask that the author stands behind it" to make fun of the old person in order to illustrate how war affects the minds of innocent people. His worn-out body and perplexed mind don't appear to be able to comprehend or deal with the abrupt breakdown of his entire universe (Abraham & Geoffrey, 2009).

The Use of Animal Symbolism to Depict the Ravages of War

Man's beautiful animals could only be a representation of peace; Love turned the lovely to be praised for rough wars. First, there is a cat, the animal who lives independently and does not care about what happening. Well, this time around the cat means a person who can secure his life while doing nothing to help other folks. This reflects how people are concerned about themselves; they ignore whatever happens to others we can see individualism, as depicted by Hemingway, emphasizes how conflict increases personal alienation and self-interest, highlighting that, despite the societal consequences of war, people feel and respond to it in extremely personal and solitary ways, secondly, there are the birds that can easily escape by flying. The fact that these birds are addressed differently, the old man calls them pigeons since he wants to see the war's end because of its high effect on his psychological state. Later on, they are also

called doves by the soldier because as a soldier who is tired physically and spiritually, he longs for peace. Finally, there are the goats that are connected with man's situation due to their inability to escape. They refer to the old man's situation of going to die with no family or someone who asks and cares about him. Hemingway wants to reflect that war doesn't matter whether you are poor or rich and have a family or not, it will affect you, no matter (Childs, 2002).

Moreover, Hemingway uses a perfect symbol to show the effects and the horrible consequences of war that the fight depletes the old man's physical vitality, native land, animals, and, eventually, his life, which is the last thing he cares about. First, there is the Ebro River which is truly connected with a trip that the old man did after leaving his home. The river implies that the old man has left an old life, directing to a new one that waits for him in Barcelona city. Moreover, the river is considered as something that urges the old man to renew, furthermore the "river" often symbolizes the passage of time, a life journey, or the divide between safety and danger. It could be also a reference to how temporal time is. Hemingway connects the river with a war that forces the man to escape and leave everything behind. Besides, by using the River, Hemingway reveals how the old man's nihilism is not ready for a new life which is under the influence of war, and that war pushed him to an unwanted new life. Even though the new life is filled with comfort and there is the stress of war, the old man wants to keep staying in his past. Secondly, another symbol is mentioned which is the bridge in which there is a sense of terrible fear. The bridge serves as the final link between the elderly man and his former life. With everything taken from him, the alienated man sits by the bridge, thinking about his animals, as he awaits his untimely death, there is a spatial connection as well as a psychological one, the movement that is going on around the bridge reveals the stress and fear that is felt by everyone. Furthermore, the unstable movement shows the gloominess of war that bears nothing but destruction. In comparison, the time of writing the story is on Easter Sunday, Hemingway sets his narrative on the day of Jesus' resurrection in order to emphasize the point that death is inevitable and may happen to anybody at any moment and that life has no purpose, the day that refers to believing in God. So, on one hand, people are frightened and terrified they also don't want to lose their belief and insistence on surviving. The thing that reflects insistence exists no matter what war causes (Li, 2015).

The site of the story also includes themes of war as well as the idea of post-colonialism clearly. Through the dialogue between the novelist and the old man, the novel uses many signs and clues that are clearly related to the effects of the war. We find the narrator uses terms such as torn clothes, miserable atmosphere, and black color, and thus these expressions enabled Hemingway to give a picture of such a miserable war that leads to the deterioration of the situation in everything .

In addition, it is through these references that Hemingway develops a feeling of pressure and inability to do anything. Thus, the location of the story clarifies the ideas that prevailed between the Nationalists and Republicans, that is, each of them takes a direction, as for the society on both sides, the suffering is engulfing him. These signs and symbols expressed the situation of the society at a time of unpopular war. They also indicated the absurdity that the society experienced. That is why Hemingway put these signs to indicate the unhappiness of the individual in this era and this battle with pleasure, that is, the man has become like any being who seeks refuge in an unsafe place. Of course, Hemingway's choice of the place of the story revealed the reality of the feeling that was clearly prevalent, as well as supporting the idea of what could happen after a war broke out at the wrong time and time. This indicates that Hemingway gave high importance to the place, just like the rest of the things included in the story, and even explained most

of his ideas through it. By choosing this place, it is also a goal to give a clear message about the war to the complexes of the same place, so he is choosing a second place and thus the picture was clear. He set some clear things and signs through which he expressed giving and addressing everything that was happening during the war. With this, he has reached the thrust of his message towards criticizing and cursing this devastating war (Beevor, 2006) .

Adherents often turn to the efforts by authors from colonized countries where they seek first to articulate, and at times even adopt back their respective cultures which had been taken over as spoils of colonization. They also consider in what way the colonial nations' writing contributes to degrading images of colonized subjects and justifies colonization through literature. However, the notional variation in defining postcolonial methodology itself stirred a divisive discourse and many writers have even fulminated over this concept as a grand tease (Ricoeur, 1971).

The main concern of Creatures: Exploring Compassion in Literature

This is one of the best examples of a philosophy, in which Ernest Hemingway relies on his story-telling skills with this brief tale. It is the type of everyday incident that he then sensationalizes with a dramatic story about how hellish war could be, but is, through storytelling. The short story does well to convey these everyday things about conflict that so many people forget and he employed his metaphor as a way of describing his formula on how to put the specifics in action for the narrative. He loves the animals and is worried about what will happen to them while he's gone. He knows the enemy line, and therefore bombings encroach upon him, endangering the lives of his animals. Animals were treated with a lot of love by the old person who said he was an orphan and only took care of animals. All he had were his animals, which he loved. He is also worried about the animals he left behind when they lost battle. It shows us that he is a sensitive man and caring one and in the time of the war he cares about his animal it does not mean that he is indifferent world it just means that his world is different now that he is 76 years old and does not care about politics; he has a romantic perspective of the world here; which it is romantic that he is looking after his animals and also not care about politics which means this is wrong yes, but on the other hand, we have the other side of this contrast here “two generations with different views”, our hero soldier character as well hearing the man who attracted by something else along with him watching over The Bridge still taking cares for others while this man looks after an animal (Walker,1985).

Conclusion

It is an explanatory study and serves to explain what effects and the terrible consequences occur when colonial wars take place, for this reason, it addresses its context in a post-colonialism look, so that way we hope to have excellent results. In short, the fact that Hemingway uses the character of an old man paints quite a real picture in terms of war. He kills his horse and loses all, the war destroys everything beautiful. We also get a sense of the author's genuine sadness at what occurs because of war, and why he comes off as so whiny concerning mental health for these poor bourgeois souls, his artwork reveals something about his challenging existence and how he relates to the shared issues of postmodernism and postcolonialism. He has numerous highs and lows in life. Hemingway understands how war can rob a man of any illusion of beauty in the universe, or love for life itself. They will be physically and mentally affected by what war bears, no matter how much faith they have, war can diminish it with its gloominess. War only leads to the full damage and sorrow that is accompanied by death which is truly clear by the old man's character and the poor people also who experienced the harshness of war. The feeling of life inside the old man is

caused by his loving animals, but after war drives him away from them, he feels no life and can't even maintain his life. By this story, Hemingway wants to free the minds of his society and other societies to how war means the biggest plight of life.

This study offers an explanation of the effects and results when colonial wars happen, as it focuses on studying mainly post-colonialism Showing that wars lead naturally to the annihilation of society, and not they are full of hopeless kisses. This is what Hemingway called for his works. Through this work, he hoped to convey how significant it is for society to be cognizant of these wars waged by societies over their members - and that they were the kind of warfare in which society divests itself from all things but surely its basest possessions. And its victims are not just people, but all other creatures. Hence and by consequence, this is a revelation subservient to what has come after colonialism. Hemingway formulated this work in a way that shows the amount of contempt for this colonialism, which shows the domination of the strong over the weak. By mentioning some symbols such as the bridge, the soldier and the river as well as the horrors of war, Hemingway wanted to give a picture of the triviality and the meaningless of life in such a situation, as well as the weakness of societal thinking and the hegemony of super, in the light of all this, the reason why Said is unable in the end to suggest alternatives to the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism is not difficult to explain. First, because he overlooks the potential contradiction between discourse theory and Gramscian hegemony, he fails to historicize adequately the texts he cites and summarizes, finding always the same triumphant discourse where several are frequently in conflict, finally, he fails to show how literary texts may in their play establish distance from the ideologies they seem to be reproducing. He wanted to emphasize societal thinking, believing that if thinking develops, there may be a response to such wars aimed at attacking humanity and stripping society of its vitality. Hemingway likewise desired to illustrate the methods, in which specific leading nations manipulate unstable and inferior ones and in particular ideological lies. But in no time, they will set their feet on these countries, and it should not take them long to stop all this sham of milking poor nations for everything. Hence, the way to occupation for those very intellectual works on that soil and with its adverse consequences will also be paved. This is the manner in which Hemingway illustrated postcolonial theory, and it seems to have been a great way indeed.

References

1. Abraham, M. H. and Geoffrey, G. (2009). A Glossary of literary terms. Wordsworth.
2. Abrams, M. (1999). Glossary of literary terms. Heinle & Heinle.
3. Alternbend, L. and Lewis, L.L. (1966). A handbook for the study of fiction. Collier and Education, English and Literature studies ;Vol .5, No1.
4. and Vrginia Woolf's Orlando: A Biography.Tinakori Critical Journal of Katherine Manstield Society. Issue2, 34-42. <http://www.katherinemanstieldsociety.org>.
5. Beevor, A (2006). The bottle for Spain. Nicholson.
6. Benson, J. (1990). New critical approaches to the short Stories of Ernest Hemingway. Duke
7. Blake, A. (2001). Katherine Mansfield and the rejection of England. in A. Blake, England .
8. Bryant, R. K. (2018). Beneath the performance: Identity in Katherine Manstield's Miss Brill .
9. Childs, P. (2002). Modernism. The new critical idiom. Tylor and Francis.
10. De Quesada, A. (2014). The Spanish civil war- Nationalists forces. Oxford University Press.
11. Li, J. (2015). The impacts of wars on Ernest Hemingway's works. Canadian center of Science Macmillan Ltd.
12. Ricoeur, P. (1971). What is a text? Explanation and interpretation. In David ,R. Mythic-

13. Said, E. W. (1977). Orientalism. *The Georgia Review*, 31(1), 162-206.
14. symbolic language and philosophical anthropology: A conservative interpretation of the thought of Paul Ricoeur: The Hague. Nijhoff .
15. through Colonial Eyes in Twentieth-Century Fiction (79-91) Palgrave. University Press.
16. Walker, A. (1985). *The color purple*. Pocket Books.