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**HEGEMONY AND CORRUPTION IN HOWARD BRENTON'S *THE GENIUS*  
AND *JUDE***

**YAZAR**

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**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

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## **ETİK BEYANI**

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Şeyma Vesile GÖKÇE

## ABSTRACT

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

#### HEGEMONY AND CORRUPTION IN HOWARD BRENTON'S THE GENIUS (1983) AND JUDE (2018)

ŞEYMA VESİLE GÖKÇE

The aim of this thesis is to scrutinize *The Genius* (1983) and *Jude* (2018) by Howard John Brenton (1942-) in the light of cultural, political, ideological, and institutional dimensions of hegemony and corruption. Known for his controversial and rebellious pen producing historical, utopian, and directly political plays, Brenton has made outstanding contributions to contemporary British theatre since 1970s as one of the representatives of 'Second Wave' post-war drama. His attribution most of his plays to real historical figures and issues makes his plays distinctive. In the same way, Brenton refers to real lives of Galileo Galilei in *The Genius* and Euripides in *Jude* in the contexts of power, violence, oppression and exploitation growing in a modern corrupted society. In the selected plays, the playwright focuses on several facets of hegemony and corruption for the purpose of revealing imbalance of power applied by the state through its hegemonic apparatuses to individuals. The scope of this thesis covers political, ideological cultural and institutional dimensions of hegemony that have frequently been interpreted according to the essence of Gramscian and Marxian concepts of hegemony. The term has recently been associated with the Marxist Italian and socialist politician, Antonio Gramsci (1892-1937) who has described various facets of hegemony in *The Sothorn Question* (1926) and in his posthumous work *Prison Notebooks* (1975). By removing hegemony from the common concepts of sovereignty and emperorship, Gramsci has interpreted it in original senses of cultural unification and consensus. To Gramsci, the most influential components of hegemony are culture and education transmission from a dominant group to subaltern groups thanks to schools and intellectuals. Brenton, in *The Genius* and *Jude*, dramatises institutional and legitimized state-based predominance over individuals that undermines their freedom. Political and moral corruption in academic milieus, exploitation of academicians, alienated and humiliated conditions of individuals are common themes of the selected plays. While *The Genius* primarily is emphasizing the oppressive political power applied to scientists, *Jude* indicates exploitive attitude of the state towards immigrants. The protagonists in both plays are symbolic subjects who have been deprived of their legal rights in a hegemonic and corrupted governmental system. This thesis is intended to present political, ideological, cultural and institutional aspects of hegemonic system, in *The Genius* and *Jude*, developing in corrupted societies.

**Key Words :** Brenton, *The Genius*, *Jude*, Hegemony, Corruption, Gramsci

## ÖZET

### İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI

#### HOWARD BRENTON'IN THE GENIUS (1983) VE JUDE (2018) OYUNLARINDA HEGEMONYA VE YOZLAŞMA

#### ŞEYMA VESİLE GÖKÇE

Bu tezin amacı, Howard John Brenton'ın (1942-) *The Genius* (1983) ve *Jude* (2018) adlı eserlerini hegemonya ve yozlaşmanın kültürel, politik, ideolojik ve kurumsal boyutları ışığında incelemektir. Tarihi, ütopyik ve açıkça politik oyunlar üreten ihtilafçı ve başkaldıran kalemiyle tanınan Brenton, savaş sonrası 'İkinci Dönem' dramasının temsilcilerinden biri olarak 1970'lerden bu yana çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosuna önemli katkılarda bulunur. Oyunlarının birçoğunu gerçek tarihi şahsiyetlere ve konulara atfetmesi, Brenton'un oyunlarını ayırt edici kılar. Örneğin; Brenton, *The Genius*'ta Galileo Galilei'nin ve *Jude*'da Euripides'in gerçek hayatlarına, modern, yozlaşmış bir toplumda büyüyen güç, şiddet, baskı ve sömürü bağlamında gönderme yapar. Seçilen bu oyunlarda oyun yazarı, devletin hegemonik aygıtları aracılığıyla bireylere karşı uyguladığı kontrolsüz gücü ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla hegemonyanın ve yozlaşmanın çeşitli boyutlarına odaklanır. Bu tezin evrenini çoğunlukla Gramsci'nin ve Marx'ın hegemonya kavramlarının özüne göre yorumlanan hegemonyanın politik, ideolojik, kültürel ve kurumsal boyutları oluşturur. Hegemonya, son zamanlarda Güney Sorunu (1926) ve ölümünden sonra yayımlanan *Hapishane Defterleri* (1975) adlı eserlerinde bu terimin çeşitli yönlerini tanımlayan İtalyan, Marxist ve sosyalist siyasetçi Antonio Gramsci (1892-1937) ile ilişkilendirilir. Gramsci, hegemonyayı egemenlik ve imparatorluk gibi genel kavramlardan ayırt ederek, bu terimi kültürel birlik ve uzlaşma anlamıyla özgün bir biçimde yorumlar. Gramsci'ye göre hegemonyanın en etkili bileşenleri kültür ve eğitimin, okullar ve aydınlar aracılığıyla egemen bir gruptan madun gruplara aktarılmasıdır. Brenton, *The Genius* ve *Jude* oyunlarında, bireylerin özgürlüklerini baltalayan kurumsal ve meşrulaştırılmış devlet temelli egemenliği dramatize etmektedir. Akademik ortamlardaki siyasi ve ahlaki yozlaşma, akademisyenlerin sömürülmesi, bireylerin toplumda yabancılaşmış ve aşağılanmış durumları seçilen oyunların ortak temasıdır. *The Genius* esasen bilim adamlarına yönelik uygulanan baskıcı siyasi güce vurgu yaparken, *Jude* devletin göçmenlere karşı sömürücü tutumuna dikkat çeker. Her iki oyunun da kahramanları, hegemonik ve yozlaşmış bir hükümet sistemi içinde yasal haklarından mahrum bırakılmış sembolik öznelerdir. Bu tez, *The Genius* ve *Jude* oyunlarında yozlaşmış toplumlarda gelişen hegemonik sistemin politik, ideolojik, kültürel ve kurumsal yönlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Brenton, *The Genius*, *Jude*, Hegemonya, Yozlaşma, Gramsci

## TEŞEKKÜR

Tez yazmak zaman alıcı ve zorlu bir iştir. Bu zorlu sürecin artık sonuna gelmiş olmanın ve tez çalışmamı tamamlamış olmanın haklı gururunu yaşamaktayım. Sevgisi, saygısı, bilgisi, anlayışı ve sabrıyla bu anı benim için mümkün kılan, iyi ki hayatımda varlar dediğim kişilere teşekkürlerimi sunmak istiyorum.

Öncelikle tez çalışmam boyunca gösterdiği paha biçilmez sabrı, desteği, rehberliği ve nezaketi için tez danışmanım Sayın Doç. Dr. Cüneyt ÖZATA'ya sonsuz minnettarlığımı sunarım. Kendisinin alanında sahip olduğu engin tecrübesi, yapıcı geri bildirimleri ve cesaret verici tutumu bu zorlu süreci benim için daha aşılabılır kıldı.

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Bana karşı duyduğu sonsuz sevgi ve sabrından dolayı en özel teşekkürlerimi sevgili eşim Tayfun GÖKÇE'ye sunmak isterim. Hayatıma sevgi ve saygı çerçevesinde anlam kattığın için teşekkür ederim. Her daim neşe kaynaklarımız; oğlum Agah Yasin'e ve kızım Aslı Beren'e bu sabır gerektiren süreç boyunca yaşlarının ötesinde sergiledikleri olgun tutumlarından ve karşılıksız sevgilerinden dolayı çok teşekkür ederim. Ayrıca tüm bu sürece en başından itibaren tanıklık eden ve bana inanmaktan asla vazgeçmeyen annem Hava KULAÇ'a ve kardeşim Zehra İNAL'a sonsuz teşekkürleri bir borç bilirim.

Şeyma Vesile GÖKÇE

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background of the study

Hegemony is a term, heritage from Ancient Greece, defined as dominance or empire and until the twentieth century, this term has frequently been associated with the notions of military and imperialist power similar to its broad spectrum of meanings of the current international relations. Correct perception of hegemony is significant in interpretation of the current social and political events in the world. Hegemony has mostly been used as a balancing mechanism between power and consent that covers political, educational, economic, cultural and moral leadership. Military forces, qualified population, territorial wideness, economic and natural resource abundance, and political stability are basic determiners for political power of nations. Hegemony has been evaluated as a kind of an ideological superiority of powerful authorities over under-developed nations.

Roots of hegemony and its lexical flexibility have been scrutinized by Anderson in *The H-Word The Peripeteia of Hegemony* (2017) that provides a holistic perception to this term; from its origins to its recent way of perception. Worth (2015) illuminates the complicated structure of 'hegemony' by associating and redefining the term within the concepts of regional hegemony, power stability and international relations theory. Puchala (2005) argues that hegemonic stability and international institutions have been assessed as direct determinants for powerful nations to have long-standing political, military and economical leadership. Furthermore, Puchala (2005) asserts that it is possible to make close relationship between 'hegemony' and 'empire', however in Gramscian context of hegemony the institutions of the state have been qualified as structures of authority to sustain its power within a consensual atmosphere. What actually differentiates 'hegemony' from 'empire' is the policy of voluntary submission of other nations to hegemon states.

Cox (2004) evaluates the ideological hegemony as a tool of legitimized 'soft power' applied by the state. In Gramscian hegemony, laws are considered as balancing fundamentals of the consensuality between the state and civil society. Cox (2004), with

his Neo-Gramscian theory, has adapted the Gramscian concept of hegemony to recent international affairs. Robinson (2004) has scrutinized hegemony within four categories that are basically related to state hegemony, international relations theory, Gramscian consensual hegemony and international leadership.

Hegemonic power and domination have frequently been the main focus of contemporary British plays. Brenton and his contemporaries and also their successors take charge of reflecting violence in society in their plays. Howard J. Brenton is a prolific British dramatist, novelist and screenwriter whose historical and utopian plays have always reflected political and social conflicts of his own time. As one of the post-war British dramatists, Howard Brenton has taken his audience's attention to worldwide violence caused by power race on international scale. Brenton regards power and its variations as a source of violence. He is mostly known for his writing style of historicization through which he has founded a bridge between preceding epochs and the present-day. Reflections of real historical characters, mythological elements, ghosts and skeletons are major components of his plays. He always makes references to factual experiences of the historical figures through symbolic and realistic protagonists; he creates "*real people not types*" for the historical drama (Velmani, 2015, p. 352).

Brenton, as a member of controversial and radical left-wing British drama, satirically dramatises social and political conflicts on stage. Moral corruptions, violence, exploitation, injustice and hegemonic power have been focal points of his 'state of the nation' plays. Brenton and his contemporaries, called as 'Second Wave' playwrights, direct post-war British theatre and attack all kinds of conventional and imposed ideas. Displaying an opposing stance against the corrupt order dominating the society puts his plays in a category of 'political'. He has written rebellious plays on hegemonic power applied by the state or institutions to discriminate and exploit individuals (Bay, 2013).

The existing body of research (Baker, 2007; Bennet, 2016; Botham, 2014; Bull, 2013; Cantoni, 2019; O'Connor, 2005; Reinelt, 2007; Saunders, 2019; Velmani, 2014) on Brenton's plays concentrates on his political, historical and utopian works. It is possible to observe impacts of Brechtian epic drama, especially, in Brenton's historical plays (Cantoni, 2019). Saunders (2019) argues Brechtian effects on Brenton's political plays in which the dramatist provides a critical vision about public issues and political ideologies. The work concentrates on historicism of Brenton in *The Romans in Britain* (1980), in particular. Reinelt (2007) analyses Brenton's perspective to interaction between religion

and political issues in *Paul* (2005) and *In Extremis* (2006). Baker (2007) also writes on Brenton's *Paul* in which the dramatist questions roots of Christianity and its myths. *Paul* reflects Brenton's own thoughts on religion; Brenton questions the phenomenon of 'salvation' in Christianity, in particular (Baker, 2007). Velmani (2014) concentrates on Brenton's reflection of his own political approaches to his plays. Especially, the latest works of the dramatist are centered on current political issues.

In his *From Sore Throats to Greenland: Howard Brenton's Utopian Plays* (2005), John O'Connor touches Brenton's utopian plays and claims that Brenton is trying to convince his audience of the possibility of a world where individuals produce goodness for themselves and the society. Brenton has written his utopian trilogy; *Sore Throats* (1978), *Bloody Poetry* (1984), and *Greenlands* (1988) all of which centre on the possibility of a world order of freedom and peace far from dangers, fear, violence and brutality. Brenton makes his audience to get a "vision for the future" through the utopian plays (O'Connor, 2005, p. 411).

This thesis is centered on *The Genius* (1983) and *Jude* (2018) which focus on the academic milieu that lost its freedom as a result of oppressive attitude of the state and its institutions. There is a notable lack of studies applying the concept of hegemony on Brenton's selected plays. The basic themes of injustice, human-induced violence, marginalization, discrimination and abuse of science are common in the selected plays in spite of the long interval between them. The central discussion of this work is going to be the hegemonic power of the state over the university that emerged in a corrupted society. His characterization of ordinary men in corrupted societies, oppressed under the burden of social and political hegemonic power is felt throughout the entire two plays.

This thesis covers four main chapters subsequent to this introductory first chapter which draws a theoretical outline to this study and conceptualizes the term hegemony in terms of its origins and lexical context. The introductory chapter is intended to introduce the significance, objectives and methodological framework of this thesis. Additionally, a general information about the background and dimensions of hegemony is given in this chapter. Chapter 2 presents a general outline of previous studies on the term hegemony and its dimensions and reveals the transformation process of hegemony in terms of its lexical background and current usage. Origins of hegemony, its Marxian sense and Gramscian concept and legitimization are analysed. Transition process of hegemony from Marxian class concept to Gramsci's philosophical insights is enlightened. This chapter

also focuses on the structure of corrupted order and hegemony shaped in corrupted societies.

Main phases of the British theatre, Howard John Brenton's background, his career as a post-war dramatist and his political, historical, and utopian plays are the main topics of Chapter 3. It fundamentally aims to establish an integrity of realism in the modern British drama and Brenton's socialist approach to political and cultural issues of his time. This section also gives information about playwright's writing style and scrutinizes dramaturgical implications of the dramatist within his style of historicization. Additionally, this chapter makes a notable contribution to this thesis through analyses on the notions of power and domination in Brenton plays in terms of supporting the theoretical framework of hegemony as stated in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4 is centered on Brenton's *The Genius* in respect to hegemony as ideological, institutional and political practices. This section is intended to give information about hegemonic implications in the play. Central plot of *The Genius* is predominating mechanism of the government over individuals and its consequences in respect to exploitation of science and scientists. In this play, Brenton focuses on the dilemmas between technological advancements and interests of the state.

Chapter 5 concentrates on power perception in *Jude* through which Brenton touches upon a universal problem of mass migration and troublesome efforts to survive of immigrants. The system of hegemonic power exercised against the immigrants is discussed and hegemony disguised under the consciousness of nationalism are emphasized. Additionally, consciousness of nation-state and discriminated position of immigrants are come to the fore in *Jude*.

In respect to this background, the present study is intended to make an analysis of *The Genius* and *Jude* by Brenton in order to make a notable contribution to the existing body of research on the selected plays of the dramatist.

## **1.2. Objectives of the study**

The specific objective of this thesis is to analyse *The Genius* and *Jude* by Howard John Brenton, in the light of the notion of political, cultural, ideological and institutional hegemony in corrupted societies. This study provides an overview of the theoretical framework of hegemony developing in corrupted societies. The focal point of this thesis is the term hegemony with its cultural, sociological, ideological and political contents in Brenton's selected plays. On the theoretical bases of the multi-dimensional term hegemony and the corrupted society in modern world order, the answers of the following questions will be searched throughout the study:

Research Questions:

- What are the basic indicators pointing dimensions of hegemony in Howard Brenton's *The Genius* and *Jude*?
- What are the fundamental hegemonic impacts in the structure of a corrupted society portrayed by Brenton in *The Genius* and *Jude*?
- In what way the context of hegemony makes a contribution to be comprehended main message of these two plays?

### **1.3. Significance of the study**

The prior aim of this study is to analyse the concept of hegemony as a kind of oppression in a corrupted society as a consequence of moral corruption in Howard Brenton's *The Genius* and *Jude*. This thesis is intended to reveal to what extent does hegemony practised in corrupted communities affect individuals and institutions. In addition, this thesis takes a critical approach to hegemonic power shaped in a corrupted structure of society and concentrates on negative impacts on individuals of being dominated and oppressed. Even though Howard J. Brenton is mostly known for his political plays, several studies have focused on his writing style of historicization and his characterisation of his female characters. There is little material and just a few works examining Brenton's *Jude*, on the other hand, the prominent studies on *The Genius* have been focused on Brenton's

characterisation and writing style. Brenton has created multi-dimensional plays centering on several controversial themes such as power, exploitation, domination, violence, brutality, and injustice. This study examines Brenton's *The Genius* and *Jude* in respect to hegemonic power applied against individuals in a corrupted society and it sheds new light on these two selected plays through a more distinctive perspective. Being studied in the frameworks of corruption and hegemony brings originality to the literary works on *The Genius* and *Jude*.

#### **1.4. Scope and limitations of the study**

This study primarily focuses on the two plays, *The Genius* and *Jude* by British dramatist Brenton and it discusses hegemonic power applied by the state to individuals and institutions. The study is limited to merely examining the plays in accordance with basic, political, ideological and cultural dimensions of hegemony. Brenton's other prominent plays are briefly reviewed to highlight the dramatist's writing style of historicization. The major problem encountered during this study was related to the paucity of research about Brenton as a contemporary British dramatist and the limited number of studies on *Jude*, in particular. What is known about the dramatist's plays is largely based on his historical characterization and his distinctive writing style.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREMISES**

## 2.1. Roots and lexical background of hegemony

The aim of this study is to analyse indications of hegemony and corruption in Brenton's two plays: *The Genius* and *Jude*. Within this scope, this thesis applies qualitative research methods. The qualitative methodology provides this thesis a better understanding of hegemony with its political, ideological, institutional and cultural dimensions stated through words, phrases and statements. Hermeneutics inquiry and document analysis methods are also adopted in this study to make a contribution to the existing body of research on Brenton and his plays through literary interpretations. "*Document analysis involves skimming, reading and interpretation* (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). The research data in this thesis are drawn from scientific documents such as journal articles, books and interviews. As Morse indicates "*researchers should use quotations to illustrate their interpretations of the data, rather than in place of descriptive text*" (1994, p. 232) supportive quotations from the two plays and related sources are used to cement the hermeneutics in this study.

Hegemony is a long-debated and complex term whose lexical meaning is directly related to the practice of exercising power in terms of political, economic, cultural and ideological predominance. Looking at the background and roots of this term, prominent researchers has come to a common point on different types of hegemony that it is a concept worths searching on to make a sense about the complex relationship between historical and contemporary international relationships. Anderson in his *The-H Word* (2017), draws an outline to hegemony and touches upon its significance:

*The word has ceased to be either marginal or arcane. What lies behind this alteration? The idea of hegemony—like modernity, or democracy, or legitimacy, or so many other political concepts—has a complicated history which belies its current wide adoption, and which needs to be understood if we are to grasp its relevance to the contemporary landscape around us* (p. 6).

Focal point of a hegemonic system is the answer to these questions: Why, to whom and for what purposes a hegemonic power is used? Hegemony is derived from Latin '*principatus*' and has been dusted and reinterpreted by researchers over the years until the modern era. It has several facets diversifying according to its social and political

interpretations but obviously it is directly related to concepts of power and supremacy. Hegemony is literally defined in *Latin Concise Dictionary* as “*emperorship*” (hegemony, 2003), and it is written as ‘*ηγεμονια*’ in Greek meaning “*sovereignty, principality*” in *The Pocket Oxford Greek Dictionary* (hegemony, 2000). It is also described as “*a situation in which one state or country controls others*” in *Dictionary of Contemporary English* (hegemony, 2009). Within these definitions, hegemony bears a close resemblance to the context of the verbs ‘dominate’ and ‘rule’. Besides, in *Rethinking Hegemony* (2015), Owen Worth indicates that “*The genesis of hegemony can be seen with the phase ‘hegeomai’ that came to prominence in ancient Greece in the fifth century BC*” (p. 2). The term is also explained in more detail in Nicholas Comfort’s *Bewer’s Politics* (1993): *A Phrase and Fable Dictionary* as “[d]omination by one nation over others or over a region” and additionally “[t]he theory of the Italian ideologue Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) that private ‘civil society’ exercises hegemony, while political society (the state) exercises domination” that is a definition encompassing the widest concept of Gramscian sense of hegemony.

Hegemony is originally a Greek term stating the superior position of a hegemon state over the other states; for instance, the advantageous status of Athens among other city-states is a representation of a hegemonic leadership. In Ancient Greek, ‘*hegemonia*’ is used by contemporaneous historians Herodotus (484-425 BC) and Thucydides (460-440 BC) within basically in different contexts: Herodotus defines hegemony as the position of Spartanian “*resistance*” against invasions of Xerxes (Anderson, 2017, p. 8). Wickersham (1994) mentions that Herodotus uses ‘*dunamis*’ (‘power’ in Greek) to define the long-lasting hegemony of Spartans in Athens. However in Wickersham’s words, the historian emphasizes that hegemony requires more than *dunamis*: “*...what Herodotus wants to convey: dunamis is not a main factor in the Greek’s feelings about hegemony. No matter how great the dunamis, it fails to impress when other sorts of recommendation are lacking*” (1994, p. 8). Direct power (*dunamis*) and political sanctions are useful in establishing hegemony rather than maintaining it. For a long-lasting dominance, ideological practices are vital.

Thucydides takes the war between Peloponnesian League and Delian League as the topic in his opus *The History of Peloponnesian War* (the late 5th century BC) and he comes to prominence as a historian thanks to his attempt to enlighten the discrimination between perceptions of ‘*arche*’ and ‘*hegemonia*’ (Lebow & Kelly, 2001). According to



Thucydides, while ‘*arche*’ represents political coercion and army power, ‘*hegemonia*’ covers cultural and financial superiority. ‘*Arche*’ is generally associated with ‘*empire*’ that is delineated as ‘direct power’. Hegemony and empire have frequently been used interchangeably; they have been confused with each other and generally supposed to have the same meaning.

Actually, centuries ago, the context of imperial power and the nature of being a hegemon were separated from each other with a clear distinction by Aristotle as Fontana indicates: “*Hegemony is leadership exercised by a state over consenting allies, while despotism represents the exercise of domination and coercion over recalcitrant and opposing states or peoples*” (2000, p. 316). In addition, Agnew (2005) enlightens the discrimination between these terms as following:

*Hegemony is from a Greek word signifying domination or leadership, particularly of a state or nation in a league or confederation, but without clear commitment to whether this is the result of coercion, consensus, or a mix of the two...Empire is Roman/Latin in origin, signifying supreme rule, absolute power, and dominion (pp. 20-21).*

In *Cultural Hegemony in the United States* (2000), Artz and Murphy retrace ‘hegemony’ in the concepts of its cultural and political meanings representing power of God of Charity in providing agricultural fertility and authority of Greek leaders over their colonies and allies (pp. 4-5). “*In early Athens one of the twin gods of Charity was Hegemony, who ‘conducted’ plants to their bloom and directed or ‘led’ them to bear fruit*” (Burns, 1957, p. 373 as cited in Artz & Murphy, 2000). Besides, Artz and Murphy enlighten Ancient Greek hegemony as a type of reciprocal profit between Greek leaders and their colonies; the leaders offer them educational and cultural privileges in exchange for using their army force while the colonies prefer living under the political leadership of the Greek leaders (2000, p. 5). Aristotle asserts a notable distinction between empire and hegemony; he associates empire with ‘despotism’ and ‘inequality’, but he uses hegemony as domination of ‘equals’; while the first one refers to relationship between ‘a master and his slaves’, the second interpretation is about a community formed by ‘equal’ citizens (Fontana, 2008).

The lexical complexity of the term generally comes from the historical process in which hegemony is interpreted. It is definite that there is an absolute diversity in defining and interpreting hegemony according to Athenian, Marxian, Gramscian or neo-Gramscian (Coxian) understanding. This mostly depends on differences of the perception of power;

while quality of navy and quantity of soldiers were the actual meaning of power in Athens, in Marxian hegemony power was the indicator of the degree of revolt of oppressed classes. Likewise, the ability of authority in providing consensus among the oppressed group means power in Gramscian hegemony, on the contrary in neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony, power is depended on technological and financial superiority of the states in international affairs. Traditional and neo-Gramscian understandings of hegemony differ from each other in terms of source and goal of the power. Traditional hegemony represents 'statist' domination and neo-Gramscian hegemony means 'ideological' sanction mechanism. Aftermath of the World War II and the Cold War, ideological hegemony has become the focal point in international debates (Worth, 2015).

## **2.2. Marxian and Gramscian conceptions of hegemony**

Hegemony is the term generally associated with dominance, ascendancy and superiority in terms of cultural, political and financial power. The term has a complex lexical context mostly discussed by researchers recently; its complexity stems from both its diversity in lexical meanings and affinity with some akin words such as power, dominance, superiority, empire, and force. Hegemony is evaluated as a kind of 'power' used by a hegemon state to be superior against other powerless states and it is closely related to the way of using its sources (Poitras, 1990). Moreover, within historical period, hegemony has diversely been used by empires, states and nations to make other weaker empires, states and nations submit to their dominion. The perception of hegemony has transformed from a kind of direct force to an ideological dominance. On international scale, hegemony is a system pertaining to supremacy of a single state over the others. International trade, mass production, advantaged and influential position in international institutions are sources of this kind of hegemonic worldwide supremacy for a single hegemon state.

The essence of Marxist understanding of hegemony is a double-faced economic coercion; dominance of the product of capitalist system over the producers (workers) and power of capital against labor process. The first phenomenon is expressed as alienation between the worker and his product which has possibility to threaten human existence or is too valuable and expensive for the laborer to afford. The second process summarizes the capitalist system in which civil society is directed and oppressed by the state. Rupert

(1993) claims that the state represents the implicit form of economic coercion within the mechanism of class struggle.

In Marxian sense, the term “*gegemonia*” (Williams, 2020, p. 89) appears in works of G. V. Plekhanov (1856-1918) “*to describe the process whereby the impotence of the Russian bourgeoisie to carry through its ‘normal’ struggle for political liberty forced the working class to intervene decisively to achieve it*” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 49). As one of the leading supporters of Russian socialism against Tsarism, Plekhanov adopts Marxian ideas. Within the revolution process hegemony is used as a “*strategy*” pursued by the proletariat to unify with the peasantry to create an “*alliance*” (Worth, 2015, p. 64).

Hegemony is also used by Lev Trotsky (1879-1940), Russian politician, in his works interpreting the class struggle within the concept of the global international economic and political connections between states. Trotsky defines US worldwide hegemony as a kind of superiority covering a series of factors such as economic, military, political and technological power. However rather than rivalry between the states, the class struggle is considered the focus of Trotskyian understanding of hegemony. “*According to Trotsky, the central actor in world politics was not the states, but the classes and, for this reason, he analysed the problems of the relations between world powers and war from the point of view of the proletariat* (Dal Maso, 2021, p. 14). While associating British and US worldwide hegemony with class struggle, Trotsky prioritizes financial expansion of these states. Trotsky regards transition period between decline of Britain’s hegemony and military, commercial, cultural ascendancy of the USA as a class struggle within the context of international affairs (Dal Maso, 2021).

In his work, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (1975), which examines the relationship between class struggle and contemporary capitalism under the impact of Marxism, Nicos Poulantzas associates class struggle with the production and ‘labour process’:

*If we confine ourselves to modes of production alone, we find that each of them involves two classes present in their full economic, political and ideological determination- the exploiting class, which is politically and ideologically dominant, and the exploited class, which is politically and ideologically dominated: masters and slaves in the slave mode of production, lords and serfs in the feudal mode of production, bourgeois and workers in the capitalist mode of production (p. 22).*

In Marxist concept, the class consciousness and the working-class solidarity against the overwhelming oppression of the bourgeoisie are preconditions for political hegemony and

the degree of being a powerful class has been determined by the phenomenon of being wealthy, prosperous and dominant.

Peter Mayo indicates that in his *Hegemony and Education under Neoliberalism* (2015), hegemony is a concept originating from Ancient Greek and used by Russian revolutionaries; Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) and Georg Plekhanov (1856-1918) in the means of unification of working-class and peasants against the bourgeoisie to demolish the oppressive attitude of the state. Ives (2004) claims that Lenin and Plekhanov use the concept of hegemony in “*basic categories of Marxist theory*” such as economy, working class, proletariat revolution and class consciousness (p. 147). Moreover, Mann (2008) constructs a close relation between Marxist materialist tradition and the contemporary concept of hegemony. Replacement mechanism of material values for humanbeings is the central argument of Marxist hegemony. Within the basic concept of capitalism, the essence of hegemony lies under the mechanism emphasizing substitution of wages for labor power (Stoddart, 2007, p. 196).

The idea of hegemony has been reshaped in cultural and financial dimensions of capitalist system in the late 1800s as a result of the monetary gap and class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The supremacy of the bourgeoisie over the working-class is an indicator of a kind of economic hegemony and within the process of improvement of machines “*the special skill of the laborer becomes worthless*” (Marx, 1902). Through the Marxist standpoint, power is directly related to commodity, material properties and capital that makes the bourgeoisie superior to the working class.

Hegemony has frequently been associated with Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), a prominent Italian Marxist philosopher, secretary of Italian Communist Party, journalist and politician who is known for his groundbreaking theories on ideological and cultural concepts of hegemony. His unique contributions to the ongoing discussions on hegemony have still shed light on the contemporary dynamics in international political relations. Hegemony in Gramscian sense is basically different from the coercive power of an empire. Through his philosophical approach, Gramsci has reinterpreted the image of ‘a centaur’ created by Italian philosopher Machiavelli (1469-1527) in his *The Prince* (1988). In *The Prince*, the centaur refers to a creature, ‘half-man and half-beast’, described by Machiavelli as a necessary feature of a hegemon. Gramscian understanding of hegemony draws a similarity between the centaur and the hegemonic power that is formed by a

combination of half-coercion and half-consent. Consent represents ideological power while coercion stands for direct power.

To make a sensible criticism on current political and social relations between wealthy, powerful and under-developed countries, it is necessary to evaluate Gramscian hegemony with both a holistic and detailed approach. Gramsci has attempted to enlighten the notion of hegemony within the concepts of politics and philosophy (Fontana, 1993). Originality of Gramscian hegemony lies its unique contributions to the Marxian thought. The ideological and philosophical combinations between politics-culture and coercion-consent make Gramscian concept of hegemony original. This concept has been associated with an idea, an ideology and a system of cultural domination. Apart from its ideological content, hegemony consists of cultural and educational relationship between different groups of a society that has a substantial reference to Gramscian context of hegemony.

Jessop and Sum (2006) claim that Gramsci enriches the Marxian approach based on economic superiority of the bourgeoisie through his relevance of culture as a more powerful tool than capital. In this way, the dominant group of the society is able to impose its own cultural values and political beliefs to sub-altern groups to influence them. To Gramsci, the transmission process of culture and morals is precondition for the continuity of hegemonic power and it can be provided by intellectuals. In Gramscian hegemony, politics is an integral part of culture and vice versa and it appears as a philosophical way of thinking, namely it is a kind of ideology.

The core of the Gramscian hegemony lies in the social and political problems of North and South regions of Italy that was a personal matter for Gramsci as a Southerner in Italy. Gramsci basically defines hegemony in *Some Aspects of the Southern Question* (1978) as a kind of unified power of the bourgeoisie of the North and the peasants of the South against the State and capitalist system. Gramsci gives an original feature to this “*Russian term*” by using it within a social framework. (Anderson, 2017, p. 18). Gramsci suggests hegemony as a precondition of political stability in Italian government to unify affluent, modern, industrialized north and poor, agrarian south. As a result of his socialist resolutions about class struggle of the proletariat, he is arrested and imprisoned by the Fascist Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) government in 1926 so he is supposed to be prevented from indulging in active politics until his death. By mentioning to his sister-in-law, Tatiana Schucht before his trial about his intention to write scholar materials, Gramsci reveals first hints of his posthumous published work *Quaderni dei carcere* (*The*

*Prison Notebooks*, 1975) written under hard conditions during his incarceration. This fragmentary work covers “33 notebooks, a total of nearly 3,000 pages of tiny, meticulous handwriting” (Jones, 2006, p. 25); power, revolution, socialism, education, intellectuals, civil society, the state, cultural leadership, hegemony and philosophy of praxis are main arguments of the work.

In Gramscian sense, hegemonic power is applied in two different ways; domination and leadership. While the former is a sign of coercive mechanism, the latter bases on consensus. There is a sharp discrimination between them because coercion requires violence but consent is based on ideological thoughts. In political framework, hegemonic power is carried out by governments over societies and institutions or by hegemon states over subordinate ones in terms of both domination and leadership. Domination means sole direct force but leadership requires ideological effort as well as direct power. The ideological hegemony covers an atmosphere of consensus which makes hegemonic power a perennial political system. In Gramscian understanding of hegemony, culture and education are preconditions of socialism that culture is a tool for individuals to lead them in communities in terms of gaining the ability to live in a society and adapting to it.

In *The Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci draws an outline to hegemony with many concepts like crucial role of intellectuals and cultural values. Gramsci regards culture and education also as wealth of knowledge through which intellectuals are able to be powerful leaders to ‘sub-altern’ groups. Gramsci gives significant responsibilities on intellectuals categorized in two groups as organic intellectuals (writers, scientists, philosophers) and traditional intellectuals (the church men), in terms of establishing and maintaining hegemony through cultural awareness over the state, namely the bourgeoisie. Organic intellectuals have a pivotal role in transmitting the bourgeois (‘elite’) culture to the ‘subaltern’ groups. Gramsci (1978) associates traditional and organic intellectuals with agriculture and industry respectively. Language, ethnicity, morals, values, religious beliefs, systems of law and education are common phenomenons of culture that are preconditional concepts for sustainability and stability of governmental political hegemony.

### **2.3. Legitimization and hegemony in international relations**

Hegemony is regarded as a kind of an ideology used by a person, a community, an institution, and a state to oppress, to control or to rule the opponent person or group through applying legitimized laws, morals and rules. The ideology is a sign of covert hegemony. Laws are a set of rules that order social life. However, they are in fact notable parts of hegemonic power. The legitimized laws can be classified as norms, morals, social values and official rules. Unlike directly exerted power, hegemony is a system that works due to consent and consensus. The consensual system is structured by legitimacy of laws. Namely, it means a correlation between a government and its society that bases on mutual interests.

In Gramscian hegemony, sustainability of a political leadership depends on how appropriately legitimated laws are applied to individuals and institutions. Robert W. Cox (1926-2018), a Canadian scholar, has reformulated the Gramscian hegemony in the context of international relations to provide a basis making easier “...to understand the institutional and power-related origins of the existing world order” (Ünay, 2010, p. 40). Cox has conceptualized economic and political power that are prerequisite for gaining worldwide hegemonic leadership on international relations scale. In fact, Robert Cox has researched the contexts of international relations, international institutions and modern world order in the light of Gramscian understanding of hegemony. His interpretations of hegemony according to modern world order have been criticized by other researchers. The scholar has broadened the Gramscian understanding of governmental hegemony to legitimized social and political control of international institutions or any ruling class leading the world order. According to Cox, today’s mechanism of hegemony has been shaped through interrelations between the states and in *Approaches to World Order* (1996), Cox claims that he has applied Gramscian ‘national level’ notion of hegemony to ‘international level’ concept (p. 56). On international relations scale, hegemony is interpreted as financial and political ascendancy of a state over others. Worldwide radical changes after the World War II and Cold War was the turning point in Cox’s political vision on current international relations. Cox (2002) states that: “... the proclaimed end of the Cold War it has become obvious to many that there has been a major change in the structure of world order” (p. 40). In the global sense, the rise of the US as a global hegemonic power during the World War II in terms of both military and economic expansion has initiated radical changes in the world. Rather than cultural and psychological aspects of hegemony, its economic dimension has been dominant in recent

capitalist world order. Cox has expanded the perception on national hegemonic values to international scale and he indicates that international institutions such as World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Labour Organization (ILO) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have been used by the United States to pertain its economic worldwide hegemony in the post-war period. These international institutions provide legitimacy for American universal economic and military dominance.

#### **2.4. Althusserian hegemonic ideological apparatuses**

In Marxist sense, the state is authoritative with its repressive institutions such as army force, its courts and prisons. It uses these mechanisms to guarantee its hegemonic power and maintain it. In capitalist system, the state displays its political and economic superiority through its legitimized rules and its oppressive institutions. On the other hand, Althusserian sense of ideological apparatuses stands for legal, cultural and educational institutions like families, schools, churches and communication devices, all of which constitute the ideological power of the state. Louis Althusser (2006) claims that education has the most pivotal importance as an ideological apparatus implemented by churches and families:

*I have good reasons for thinking that behind the scenes of its political Ideological State Apparatus, which occupies the front of the stage, what the bourgeoisie has installed as its number one, i.e. as its dominant ideological State apparatus, is the educational apparatus, which has in fact replaced in its functions the previously dominant ideological State apparatus, the Church. One might even add: the School–Family couple has replaced the Church–Family couple (p. 96).*

According to Althusser, education constitutes the largest part of political and ideological apparatuses of the state and schools give education to children in order to provide a source to the classes of the capitalist society. At the end of their school life, the children are assigned to various duties in different classes, which represent the ideological hegemonic apparatuses of the state; educational, religious, political, cultural, historical practices. The state carries out its ideological hegemony thanks to its legitimized institutions. Schools and churches transmit cultural values and ideologies of the bourgeoisie to subaltern groups. To Althusser, rather than political oppressive apparatuses, education has more pivotal role in maintenance of ideological hegemony of the state.



## 2.5. Corrupted societies portrayed by Brenton

Corrupt is defined as “*using your power in a dishonest or illegal way in order to get an advantage for yourself*” (corruption, 2009). Class consciousness, imbalance of power, alienation, domination and injustice are prominent features of a corrupted society. In a corrupted society, freedom of individuals is restricted in a fearful atmosphere. Consciousness of ruling a corrupted society is based on culture of fear. To gain power is the key factor in a hegemonic order that can be diversified as military, political, economic, cultural, and social capacity of a community. In a corrupted order, each kind of power is used in a destructive way because of the fact that legitimized rules cannot be discussed and questioned by individuals. Therefore, a corrupted order can be associated with a governmental despotism. Restriction of freedom is the most destructive side of corruption. The consciousness of an unconditional obedience causes alienation of individuals to their own identities. When an oppressive authority detains them from making choices, free-will of the society is inhibited. So the oppressed are hopeless for their future. Technology feeds civilized people’s expectancies for luxury, on the other hand, it makes them feel alienated to their own being and humane values.

Brenton has created several portrayals of gloomy corrupted societies in his entire oeuvre, which shows a corrupted social order. He tries to portray political, sociological, technological, environmental, and psychological corruption. In this regard, war, terrorism, exile and murder are sources of modern fear in his plays. The themes of fight against mass murder in Brenton’s *Christie in Love* (1970), destructive struggle for revolution in *Bloody Poetry* (1984) and *Sore Throats* (1979), fear of mass destruction resulting from nuclear armament in *The Genius* (1989) are all different perceptions of corruption. Even in his utopian plays, Brenton chooses to give hints of corrupted pessimism. His oppressive characters are brutal, selfish and betrayer; the main determinants of their behaviour are their own values and beliefs (Bay, 2010).

### 3. CONTEMPORARY BRITISH DRAMA AND HOWARD JOHN BRENTON

#### 3.1. A general outlook to background of british drama

Modern British Drama has been rooted to Roman invasion (AD 43) in Britain and theatre is one of the most priceless cultural values heritaged from the Roman civilization to Britain. During the Roman rule in Britain, farces, pantomimes and mimes were remarkable and prevalent prototypes of drama acted in amphitheatres. Besides, theatres were also used for staging religious rituals and performances. Prolonged Norman invasions disrupted theatrical activities in Britain but they were revived within the period of Renaissance (late 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-early 17<sup>th</sup> century). The medieval drama was mostly consisted of religious plays such as saints' and folk plays covering short with a small cast staged in churches frequently. These plays were also called as 'liturgical plays' meaning 'ritual or ceremony' in which themes like salvation and redemption were staged. Moreover, miracles and moralities were staged in the garden of churches, in the streets or on portable simple stages. While miracle (mystery) plays, "*written and acted by priests in churches for an audience of simple folk, largely illiterate*" (Clunes, 1967, p. 17), were about Jesus the Christ and his life, moralities (interludes) aimed to give moral lessons to society. Interludes were allegorical and didactic plays. *The Summoning of Everyman* (15<sup>th</sup> century play), by an anonymous writer, is a renowned example of the morality plays whose primary themes are conflicts between vices and virtues.

The second epoch of the British Theatre was the Renaissance period, it was a phase from the dark ages to the Age of Enlightenment (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) with invention of printing press, onset of geographical discoveries and transition from dogmatism to rationalism. Elizabethan playhouse, founded in 1576, was the first perennial public theatre building. Elizabethan era was the period of several prolific dramatists like William Shakespeare (1564-1616), George Chapman (1559-1634), Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), Ben Jonson (1572-1637) and Francis Beaumont (1584-1616). Poems and sonnets were prominent literary genres of the Elizabethan age as well as tragedies, comedies and tragi-comedies. The fertile process of British Drama was inhibited from advancing during the Interregnum (1642-1660) period when the Puritans reigned in Britain and because of

so-called blasphemous and immoral plays, all the theatres were closed by the state oppressed by church.

Restoration (1660-1710) was the period when the Monarchy was tried to be constucted instead of the Commonwealth. During this process, there was a strong reaction against the Puritanism that was a positive impact on progression towards theatrical activities. However theatre was an entertaining activity just for the bourgeoisie anymore and moral corruption was reflected in the Restoration Drama. The plays were written by the bourgeoisie and staged at more luxury theatre halls with an expensive and ornate decoration. Nonetheless, "*the Restroration playhouses were not known for the churchlike atmosphere that is the hallmark of the twentieth-century theatre*" (Taney, 1985, p. 14). The Restoration period was also the process when women players were frequently on British stage in heroic tragedies. The themes of the theatrical activities were dominated with pretension, vanity and insincerity. Due to some political events or moral corruptions, most of the plays during this period were censored or prevented from being staged altogether.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an expression of the British society's seperation from daydreams and journey to realities. Drama was the most influential art form on well-educated middle-class British society ("*the new men*") whose rate of population had increased (Barker, 1971, p. 14). Saved from the yoke of the upper classes' illusionary and utopic impact, the late 19<sup>th</sup> British stage hosted more realist plays reflecting common and daily issues such as class conflicts, marriage problems and social missions assigned to women that were formerly used to be considered private. The audience had first chance to watch "*a slice of life*" (Clunes, 1967, p. 130) on the British stage through realist plays like *Peer Gynt* (1867), *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *Hedda Gabler* (1890) by the Norwegian 'iconoclastic' dramatist Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906). Clunes (1967) claims that this kind of radical changes were quite difficult for society to adopt immediately and Ibsen was subjected to severe criticisms. Theatre has been transformed from fantasy to reality (Esslin, 1976). The Ibsenist realism is considered an original rebellion against all common traditions used as tools to oppress women in society. Marriages (base of families) in a society, roles attributed to husband and wives, moral values and traditions are core phenomenons in Ibsenist drama.

"*Realism is a revelation of truth; it knocks down established creeds and does not build up new ones*" (Fearnow, 2014, p. 176). Ibsenist realism has gradually attacked to these

conventional “*creeds*” by questioning the essence of social positions and traditional duties of women in particular. He reveals covert social realities of the bourgeoisie family structures based on material values rather than morals and he defends freedom of women in a male-dominated society. As a successor of Ibsen, Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) has created real characters who are struggling through their actual life problems far from illusionary, artificial and pretentious world. He defines Ibsen as “*a great teacher*” (Shaw, 1926, p. xii) whose forward-looking theatrical style is still being used in the latest modern plays in British theatre.

Birth of ‘New Wave’ on British stages subsequent to the World War II has been evaluated as the onset of post-war British drama that is an expression of emergence of new generation middle-class dramatists (‘Angry Young Men’) such as John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, Harold Pinter and Shelagh Delaney (Rebellato, 1999). Called as socialist and left-wing playwrights, they have reshaped the British stage different from previous “*flimsy and artificial*” British theatre through reverberating social problems of ordinary men (Rebellato, 1999, p. 2).

*The emergence of a number of writers whose class origins were different from those of their predecessors created the impression of a radical disjunction, of a theatre concerned with addressing itself to social realities, to the experiences of those displaced from theatrical no less than political concern* (Biggsby, 1993, p. 283).

The New Wave is an expression of a political perspective, shaped in ‘kitchen sink’ drama, through which the new generation of dramatists has written plays focusing on working-class problems. Their realistic style is still a guiding idea to new generation of dramatists. Substitution of kitchen sink realism for illusion has been evaluated as a revolutionary step for British theatre.

Howard J. Brenton, David Hare, Trevor Griffiths and David Edgar are called as pioneers of the ‘Second Wave’ political British drama since 1960s. Their directly political plays have been considered representatives of new writing style owing to their realistic and rebellious nature. The common feature of their plays is that they are all reflections of unhappiness, disappointment and dismay (Bull, 1984). Therefore, the portrayals of the characters on stage are carried out in a highly natural atmosphere and in a way that reflects their emotional conditions in the most natural style.

### **3.2. Howard John Brenton’s background**

Howard John Brenton (1942-) is one of the most radical and controversial pens of post-war British drama. In addition to his career as a remarkable playwright, he has enriched his prolific profession with three novels (*Diving For Pearls*, 1989; *Hot Irons*, 1995, *Ugly Rumours*, 1988, co-written with Tariq Ali), several screenplays (*The Saliva Milkshake*, 1975; *Desert of Lies*, 1984; *Dead Head*, 1986) and poems. As members of the 'Second Generation' of the British political drama, Howard Brenton, David Hare, Trevor Griffiths and David Edgar whose plays have represented an oppositional stance against political upheavals, social conflicts, oppressive and conservative practices of the Thatcherist government have resolutely maintained to keep vivid the 1950s' rebellious spirit inherited from 'Angry Young Men'.

Brenton creates his distinctive style of writing through adopting historicism in addition to using images of myths and ghosts in his plays. Design and visual materials on stage carry an irreplaceable importance for Brenton in presentation of his plays. According to Brenton, decoration of the stage and the visual equipment strengthen the concentration between the audience and the actors on the stage. He dramatizes social events almost in their most realistic form. The playwright focuses on several leading historical figures and impressive past events that give a distinctive feature to his works. Known for his plays written with the style of historicization, Brenton explores a strong correlation between past and present.

Being born as "a *Blitz baby*" in a middle-class family in Portsmouth, England during the ongoing years of the World War II, Brenton was brought up in Sussex, Bognor Regis until he was 18 and studied at 'The Chichester High School For Boys' (Boon, 1987). During the World War II, especially children were protected within the framework of the British policy of 'evacuations of civils' as a result of 'The Blitz'; "*German bombing campaign against the United Kingdom in 1940 and 1941*" (The Blitz, n.d.). In an interview with Carole Waddis of the Guardian, in spite of hard conditions of his time, Brenton mentions about his childhood in positive manner: "*My childhood was an idyll. You were free; there was the seaside, the beach, you could cycle up into the Downs. It's a very beautiful part of the world. My parents didn't have much money. We lived in a council house*" (Murgator, n.d.). His mother was the daughter of a Portsmouth docker. According to Brenton, during this period, his father, Donald Henry Brenton, later a Methodist minister, had to choose the profession of police to ensure the future material life of his family:

*He was a policeman until he was 50 and then he resigned. My father was a hopeless policeman. He hated it. He only joined the police because it was a time of unemployment in the Thirties* (Murgator, n.d.).

In his childhood, being an artist or an archaeologist were Brenton's future dream which he abandoned later and decided to be a writer. His rebellious soul became to lead Brenton even during his primary school period; he has described himself as a "sullen" and "churlish" character against the education system (Trussler, 1981, p. 87). Brenton's interest in theatre is inherited from his father, 'an amateur theatre producer'; he mentions about his father that "I remember him studying John Wesley and Thomas Aquinas at night when I was a little boy" (Trussler, 1981, p. 86). However, Brenton is different from his deeply religious father, the playwright has chosen a left-wing perspective depicting the 1980s of Britain as "a nasty decade" (Brenton, 1989).

Brenton wrote his first play at the age of nine and post-'68 fringe problems, political upheavals, injustice, social and political corruption, violence and crime have frequently been central focus of his works. Exposing contemporary consciousness as a member of political conviction, Brenton has created his plays in response to these public events. Early Brenton plays were mostly about children whose deplorable and hard conditions of life were expertly portrayed (Bull, 1984).

### **3.2.1. His career as a british dramatist**

The second half of the twentieth century (the post-war period) has been regarded as a milestone for the British theatre staging abreast of directly political plays with realistic approaches to social and political issues. John Osborne's (1929-1994) *Look Back in Anger* (1956) was a turning point in terms of radical changes on the British stage. There was a 12-year-old teenage among the audience, Howard J. Brenton, whose entire future career as a dramatist would shape subsequent to this play according to the 'New' British theatre revolutionary movement triggered by Osborne and his contemporaries. As a son of a highly conventional father, in fact Brenton had no chance to see such a revolutionary play by Osborne and he admits that he "went illicitly" (Trussler, 1981, p. 88). Brenton was extremely impressed by Osborne's work that was the first play he watched, which portrayed the realities about daily life of ordinary men. As one of the forerunners of 'Kitchen Sink Drama', "Osborne, now regarded as the leader of a new wave" (Leach,

2019, p. 652). In *The Red Theatre Under The Bed* (1987), Brenton clearly declares his admirations about Osborne's achievement:

*John Osborne is much slagged off in the theatrical circles I move in and out of. But Osborne is unquestionably the greatest playwright in English since Shaw, because he wrote Jimmy Porter-a character who stepped down off the stage, into real life (p. 199).*

Howard Brenton is one of the second wave playwrights subsequent to Osborne's generation of revolutionary period of the British theatre. As Barnes (1986) indicates "*certainly Brenton is one of the best playwrights of the generation after Osborne, Wesker and Arden, the generation often referred to as the 'new wave' or 'second wave'*" (p. 48). The term 'revolution' has been directly associated with political movement on British stage since 1940s. Brenton's admiration to Osborne comes from the originality of 'the new drama language' through which the playwright is able to reveal daily life of the typical working-man.

Before his 'Portable Theatre' career, Brenton worked at Brighton Combination as a writer and an actor. Brenton's collaboration with David Hare (1947-) and Tony Bicat (1945-) under the roof of the Portable Theatre was onset of the playwright's impressive career in British political drama. Even though Brenton has written his several plays in collaboration with his contemporaries, it is a remarkable achievement for him to create his distinctive style in portrayal of characterization and usage of abstract images on stage.

Before his experience in Portable Theatre, like his contemporaries, the playwright produced his plays in hard conditions due to deficiency in the British government's financial support to theatres. Brenton shares his opinions about the difficult period in 'author's note' of his *Plays For The Poor Theatre*:

*These five plays in varied ways try to turn 'bad theatrical conditions' to advantage. They are not easy to do or constricted in what they say-their 'poverty' is that of theatre companies with no money, amateur acting, touring conditions that can vary from a studio theatre to a school gymnasium, to a room with a bare floor and no electric plug (Brenton, 1980).*

When he was still at the University of Cambridge, Brenton wrote his first plays *Ladder of Fools*, *Winter*, *Daddykins*, and *It's My Criminal* in 1965 and after leaving the University of Cambridge, in 1966, he joined the Brighton Combination as an actor and a playwright because "*the work of this group closely matched Brenton's own concern for a form of theatre which was socially and politically active, aggressively experimental in style, and*

*responding to immediate contemporary events*” (Hay & Roberts, 1979, p. 132). For his first full-length play, *Revenge* (1969), he was awarded by the ‘John Whiting Award’ in 1970. And then became a member of the Fringe Theatre known for its realistic and sensitive approach to social and financial problems of the working class. Brenton has developed such a highly sophisticated writing style that he has created various characters representing different classes of society. The playwright is known for his plays written under the impact of Brechtian style and techniques. Wu (2000) portrays Brenton as “*the inheritor of the Brechtian tradition*” (p. 18). Like Brecht, Brenton scrutinizes the past to interpret the modern world. Although Brenton is known for his Brechtian epic style, he has never described himself as an ‘inheritor’ of Brechtian drama. Through his original left-wing writing style, Brenton has put forth his socialist point of view. Likewise, Reinelt (1996) claims that Brenton has an original perspective about Brechtian drama:

*Brenton is not a simple successor to Brecht ... He has shown awareness and interest in the question of ethnic and cultural differences and their presentation ... One major difference, perhaps, between this moment in history and Brecht’s absolute sense that he was at the center, that as a man and an intellectual and a German, he was centered. Brenton is decentered; it is the contemporary condition. And then there is Brenton’s own attitude toward Brecht* (pp. 18-19).

Brenton has adopted epic style of writing in his plays. Themes of his especially later plays are palpably political and chaotic. Permanent and wide-ranging effects of May 1968 movement in Paris against capitalism, imperialism and consumerism have played an important role in Brenton’s modern plays. As Ansorge (1975) stresses on “*1968 can be marked out as a watershed in our recent theatrical, if not political history*” (p. 1) because it was not solely a resistance movement of students and workers, it was regarded as origin of several revolts in the world. Moreover, invasion of Czechoslovakia by Russian state, the police revolts in Chicago and the Vietnam war were other escalating unrests. It is also possible to comprehend the devastation resulted by May 1968 on his generation through Brenton’s own words: “*A generation dreaming of a beautiful utopia was kicked – kicked awake and not dead*” (Trussler, 1981, p. 97).

Naturally, it was ordinary to observe the reflections of worldwide issues on the political British stage. Brenton’s sensitivity to the political events of his time, his writing style of historicization and his stance against violence have directly been reflected to his plays. *Fruit* (1970) was his first play through which the dramatist got involved in “*political strife*” (Bull, 1984, p. 41). Brenton (1986) defines the term ‘political’ as a definition invented by conservative theatre critics. So rather than ‘political plays’, he chooses the



term 'public plays' for his works; "*I don't like the label 'political play'. But it resulted from feeling the public nature of the theatre. A better word for 'political' is 'public'*" (Trussler, 1981, p. 91).

### 3.2.2. Signs of power and dominance in Howard John Brenton's plays

Howard J. Brenton has enriched his career as a contemporary British playwright with his several political, historical and utopian plays. Socialism, equality, humanity and justice have been leading themes of his plays. Learning from the past can be regarded as a life motto for Brenton because, according to him, the way individuals' understanding of history determines their present and future. So presence of real historical characters is one of the basic features of Brenton plays. The dramatist has written directly political plays like his left-wing contemporaries, David Hare, David Edgar, Tom Stoppard and Trevor Griffiths. As one of the prominent representatives of the 'Second Wave' post-war British drama, he touches upon social issues, political upheavals, cultural and moral corruption through his realist standpoint. It is understood from Brenton's own words in *Preface* of his *Plays:1*, reading the contemporary plays through a realist point of view is more accurate and reasonable:

*This way of reading, setting up a theatre in your head, in your imagination straight out of the real world, may – I admit – come unstuck in some of these scenes. I don't want to give you brain damage, but the plays have some bizzare innovations. ... you'll see what the author was seeing as he wrote* (Brenton, 1986).

Brenton's first works subsequent to the 1968 upheavals were *Christie in Love* (1969)-written for Portable Theatre-, *Gum and Goo* (1969)-later staged at Open Space Theatre. *Revenge* (1969) was the milestone within the period of his tendency towards a more political style of writing (Itzin, 2022). *Magnificence* (1973), *The Churchill Play* (1974) and *Weapons of Happiness* (1976) are Brenton's the most controversial and revolutionary plays. "*Brenton's breakthrough into mainstream theatre came with Magnificence*" (Brandt, 1998, p. 108) because the play directly reflects his own thoughts on the May 1968.

To Brenton, the process of making sense of historical matters provide individuals a realist perspective to present time and future. Brenton's plays differentiate from his

contemporaries' works due to the richness of his writing style of historicism. *The Romans In Britain* (1980), in this sense, his major play which is a dramaturgical expression of Roman invasion of Britain. Because of the scenes staging rape, cruelty and brutality, these plays, especially *The Romans In Britain*, have been regarded as 'scandalous' by several theatre critics and directors. However, Brenton indicates that "*Yesterday's scandals evaporate and here is the play, readable and, I think, very much alive. I'm immensely proud of it*" (Brenton, 1989, p. x).

*Pravda* (1985), *A Fleet Street Comedy*, co-written with his collaborator David Hare for the National Theatre, is one of Brenton's well-known plays which was awarded in 1985 by 'Evening Standard Best Play Award'. The play underlines the importance of newspapers not as a means of political 'propaganda' of democracy but a tool exploited by a group of businessmen in order not to lose their political positions (Bay, 2018). Brenton and Hare emphasize with *Pravda* objectivity, transparency and freedom of the press. On the other hand, it is a play demonstrating the defeat condition of humanity against capitalism and its consequences (Peacock, 1999). Brenton wrote *A Short Sharp Shock* (1980) with Tony Howard to criticize the conservative Thatcherist government policies. Additionally, Brenton wrote *Moscow Gold* (1990) with his another collaborator, Tariq Ali (1943-). It is one of Brenton's historical plays about a prominent historical character; it depicts the political rise of Mikhail Gorbachev. Palmer (1998) claims that Brenton and Tariq Ali, by referring to Gorbachev's private life, actually have touched upon political conflicts. Brenton's first clear satire on wars and power race of states is seen in *Hitler Dances* (1972) and *Moscow Gold* (1990).

#### **4. SIGNS OF HEGEMONY AND CORRUPTION IN *THE GENIUS***

##### **4.1. *The Genius***

*The Genius* (1983), (originally titled as *Galileo's Goose*), written by Howard J. Brenton in 1980 as an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) epic play *Life Of Galileo* (1943),

was presented by the Royal Court Theatre in 1983 and directed by Danny Boyle. Central themes of this play are direct interrelation between science and politics, abuse of science, oppressed and politicized position of universities and scientists. Similar to the dramatist's many early historical adaptation plays focusing on real historical persons, *The Genius* is also an attribution to Galileo Galilei's (1564-1642) life. As a translator of *Life Of Galileo* and a successor of Brechtian epic drama, Brenton has declared that in *The Genius* he has created the twentieth century Galileo through his remarkable characterization of an American professor Leo Lehrer:

*Playing around with the question of who would a modern Galileo be, I thought, 'he'd be an American...' glamorous, brilliant and articulate, a man who seems to have everything, the good looks of a film star, the brain of an Einstein...He should be a 1980s' 'Renaissance man', universally admired and a light in people's lives* (Brenton, 1995, p. 33).

To McNeill's assertion, Brenton has created a more cautious and humble protagonist than Brecht's: "*Where Galileo sees his science as a weapon against repressive forces of power and control, Leo is painfully aware of the dangers his science has in and of itself*" (2005, p. 111). Unlike from Brenton's early works concentrating on utopic indications, mythical elements and gender conflicts, *The Genius*, more realistically, reflects psychological conditions of legally oppressed characters. Brenton aims to reveal the fact that science has not been used for the benefit of humanity and he questions morality of scientists, vitality of technological advances and essentially science itself. *The Genius* enlightens the majority of the society who are not aware of the facts about the background of nuclear armament policies of powerful states. It provides the audience with a critical outlook on inequality in the worldwide power distribution policy and the politicized condition of universities and academicians. Brenton satirizes the cooperation of the academic milieu and the university senates in tandem with politics and he argues the necessity of objectivity and purity in science. It is not possible to produce useful and beneficial scientific inventions under the hegemony of political abuse. Brenton, through *The Genius*, holds up a realistic mirror to the British corrupted society shaped subsequent to a wartime atmosphere and reveals destructive sides in the worldwide race of nuclear armament initiated during the Cold War, in particular. Political hegemonic attitude and oppressive threat on pure science, scientists and institutions are the central arguments of the play.

*The Genius* is a story of two brilliant people; an American mathematics professor, Leo Lehrer and a first-year undergraduate at mathematics, Gillian (Gilly) Brown. Although

Leo Lehrer is a Nobel-prize winner scientist, he is punished by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for concealing his scientific invention from the state and not developing his scientific project called 'Unified Field Theory' (financed by the Pentagon) so he is exiled to an English university in the Midlands. At the beginning, the professor is unaware of possible danger caused by his theory in mathematics; 'The Unified Field Theory' covers a combination of forces like 'gravity, the electrical force, weak nuclear force and strong nuclear force' (Brenton, 1989, p. 191) allowing the invention of an atomic bomb that is powerful and destructive enough to exterminate all humanity.

The Pentagon aims to produce nuclear weapons owing to Leo Lehrer's theory but, as soon as he has realized the fact that the state forces have exploited his invention for their own interests, Leo Lehrer stops working on his project. He is exposed to institutionalized and oppressed power in the university he was exiled. All the university staff is aware of the professor's exiled condition and attempts to oppress him. Finding himself in a highly politicized university milieu, Leo Lehrer encounters hidden but harsh threats of the British state forces. He meets the undergraduate Gilly Brown, born with a rare talent for mathematics and clever enough to understand 'Godel's inconsistency theorem' just at the age of nine, has found out some fragments of the same equations of Leo's theory.

Contrary to Leo, she is so much enthusiastic about possible future scientific advancements based on these equations because she envisions scientific advances as a mechanism used for the benefit of humanity. The professor refuses to continue his study on his theory and he struggles to persuade his student, Gilly to avoid advancing it and developing any other scientific inventions because he believes that science is always doomed to be abused by politics for the sake of the state's interests. Through despair of Leo and ambition of Gilly, Brenton (1989) makes his audience question whether science is really vital or dangerous for humanity:

*'The Genius' is, though, about two brilliant people-Leo Lehrer and a student, Gilly Brown. They struggle with a dangerous idea-that nuclear science is a profoundly malign pursuit and that, for the first time in human history, we must deny ourselves a technological 'advance'. It was a strange play to write, trying to dramatize the intellectual love affair between two characters light years ahead of their author's intelligence (p-p. xii-xiii).*

Vice Chancellor of the university, Richard Weight (VC) and a so-called student (actually an agent) Tom Dicks represent politicized face of the university by forcing Leo Lehrer and his student Gilly to submit their works on 'The Unified Field Theory' because they

work on behalf of the British government that desires to produce powerful weapons to gain worldwide superiority. The university bursar, Graham Hay supports Leo Lehrer in his scientific studies and insists Leo on advancing his theory because Graham believes the reality of purity in science. Leo clearly states that he will no longer carry out his scientific studies despite all threats and insistence of the university administration.

Even though Leo Lehrer demonstrates the possible future destructive effects and catastrophes of the hydrogen bomb on humanbeings, he cannot protect himself from threats and accusations of the university administration. Leo reveals the fatal sides of the atomic bomb by creating fake wounds and burns on Gilly due to make-up. Actually, the professor and his student Gilly deliberately prepare this street drama to demonstrate people the disaster caused by atomic bomb. Although the VC has been impressed by the disgusting and terrifying image of Gilly, he is insisted on humiliating the professor and sustaining his authority over him. The irresponsible and careless attitude of the university administration towards the possibility of the extinction of all humanity makes Gilly furious, she runs away in despair. Wife of the university bursar Graham Hay, Virginia Hay was previously a mathematician, is aware of the professor's struggle and kidnaps Gilly to protect her from the state forces searching for Gilly.

Graham is kidnapped by the VC and Tom Dicks and interrogated by being brutally tortured by the state forces about 'The Unified Theory' of Leo Lehrer and Gilly Brown. Moreover, Leo Lehrer is followed and threatened by an officer, Cliff Jones (Cyclist), an American scientist of the Pentagon. The Cyclist offers a letter from Professor Abelski and his wife Irena to Leo and reports his administrator's wishes to him. Leo is forced to accept the letter. Graham indicates the state forces have searched for Gilly. Unaware of the fact that Leo Lehrer has been constantly interrogated about the lost girl and he is forced to submit all his works to the VC who has been working for the state from the very beginning. While escaping from the state forces, Gilly encounters Leo Lehrer. The professor confesses in desperation that he has given their works to the VC and Tom because there is a kind of force he cannot overcome.

Brenton uses an image of skeleton playing the violin that appears two times in the play within a heavy rainy lightening weather condition referring to destruction of all humanity as a result of atomic weapons. The playwright creates a gloomy, depressing and melancholic atmosphere on the stage to demonstrate the wicked and terrible condition of the modern world witnessing incessant violence.

#### 4.1.1. Signs of hegemony as an ideological power

Ideology is defined as “*a set of beliefs on which a political and economic system is based, or which strongly influence the way people behave*” (ideology, 2009). The word ‘influence’ is the key term in this definition because basic purpose of hegemony is to influence people in terms of directing and ruling them. It is worth mentioning on Marxist and Gramscian notion of ideology to provide a holistic approach to hegemony arising from ideological way of thought. Marxist ideology is based on an economic hegemony, while Gramscian ideology is about a psychological and consensual dimensions of hegemony. There seems to be no compulsion in Gramscian notion of hegemony, but an ideological hegemony lies under its consensual policy. When an ideological theory is evaluated in the concept of policy of a group or a community, it is directly related to a discursive construction (Stoddart, 2007). Marxist ideology is associated with class conception and dominated power applied to this class. Ethnicity, gender and class are some of the conceptions capitalist system that can differentiate depending on the structure of a society (Stoddart, 2007).

In *The Genius*, there is a sharp discrimination between ‘the state’ and ‘civil society’ in terms of economic interests. In the play, the government and as a legitimate institution, the university use their exploitive hegemonic policy towards the scientists. In Stoddart’s word: “*Coercion refers to the State’s capacity for violence, which it can use against those who refuse to participate in capitalist relations of production*” (Stoddart, 2007, pp. 200-201). However, Gramscian power of consent refers to a convincing mechanism of the state. The functionality of the state’s consensus policy mostly depends on its ability to use the ideological hegemony. Howard Brenton, in *The Genius*, uses both Marxist and Gramscian ideological hegemonic implications effectively through creating a powerful

and subordinated social classes; the latter one is oppressed under the economic dominance of the advantaged class.

Throughout the play, overwhelming authority of the state against its institutions is frequently felt. In the same way, the universities and other research institutions take an oppressive stance towards scholars and scientists in order to sustain the state-sourced hegemonic system. Leo Lehrer is a symbolic subject who turns to be a victim in a corrupted society where governmental interests are considered main priorities. As frankly declared by the university bursar, Leo Lehrer is severely punished with exile:

**Graham** *Vague, it was very vague, but it said you soft pedalled on something. A project, financed by the Pentagon? And that, by letting you come to us, you were being punished* (Brenton, 1989, p. 169).

The government and its institutions represent the mechanism of economic coercive hegemony while the scientists and individuals in society are members of a group oppressed by legitimized laws. The enforced exile of Leo Lehrer and obstacles to his scientific studies are outright indicators of the covert hegemony in which the legitimized rules are used as oppressive apparatuses. The hegemonic power in the play bears a resemblance to a contestation between the institution and an individual. Backing up the governmental power, the VC of the university uses humiliated and oppressive discourses to prove the superior position of himself towards Leo Lehrer:

**Leo** *A third. A third of a Nobel Prize. And we were lucky.*

**VC** *Ah, the collective 'we'. Never the personal 'I'. We measure out our lives in democratic verbal twitches. Even in academic life there are trots. But we chairpersons stumble on, squelching in our consensus wellies.*

**Leo** (to Graham). *What are wellies? What are trots?*

**Graham** *Rubbers and trotsyists.*

**Leo** *My God.*

**VC** *I must tread the mud of committee language, the dreary art of saying nothing to that only the right people know what you mean. So – you lighten our darkness, Dr Lehrer! The trots will go mad to hear it and I get blood in my administrative wellies – but, in the end, the glory of a university is the exceptional; individual brain. The individual human being.*

**Leo** *Shucks* (Brenton, 1989, pp. 165-166).

It is possible to infer from this quotation that the university VC uses a sarcastic and conceited hegemony against Leo by disregarding the professor's academic identity and

success. Leo Lehrer is forced to submit the exploitative attitude towards himself. When focused on the position of the professor from Gramscian perspective, it is understood that Leo Lehrer is supposed to make contribution to the hegemonic mechanism of the state as an intellectual. Main reason of the official repression over him is his rebellious but humanist attitude towards his duty to develop more improved nuclear weapons for the state. To Gramsci, intellectuals, as members of ‘political society’, are tools used in a hegemonic system to transmit their cultural values and knowledge to ‘civil society’ in order to ensure the longevity of governmental hegemony.

Brenton, in *The Genius*, questions application mechanism of hegemonic domination conducted by the state in corrupted communities through legitimated but exploitive laws whose main purpose is to prevent social and political injustice. Abuse of science and exploited, oppressed position of the scientists in a corrupt system are central themes of the play. It is a system handled by the state to maintain its ideological power which covers various types of oppressive hegemony. Examples of hegemony appear in the play as a ‘political leadership’ covering legal but an irresistible system of power that can subjugate even science. As understood from Leo Lehrer’s following utterances that he has been threatened covertly and ideologically by the state of America:

**Leo** *I was on a beach. Californian holiday? Up came an individual and sat down beside me. Blue eyes, the body of a surfer. The Government, Gilly, the Government of A-mer-i-ca. And it began.*

**Gilly** *What did?*

A silence.

**Leo** *Everything. The threat in a smile. The offer of power. A lead role in a cage.*

He puffs his cheeks and blows out.

*They wanted the work and they wanted me, for Uncle Sam, the free world, for weapons research, for – a – bomb.*

...

*So I said – OK, no calculation is pure. Therefore calculate no more. I gave up, Gilly, I closed down, I exiled me into my own head. If you are shit scared of the damage you can do, do nothing, eh?*

A silence.

*In the end they let me alone. And let me hide, here in England (Brenton, 1989, pp. 193-194).*



It is inferred from Leo's speech of persuasion to his student, Gilly Brown that the state's hegemony on science and scientists is influential enough to determine fates of them. The statement of Leo, "*the threat in a smile*" (p. 194), is an open indicator of an ideological oppression because of which freedom of science and ambition of scientists have been censored. Being exiled from his scientific researches and his town, having a diseases of "*paranoia*" (p. 194) and "*insomnia*" (p. 195), living like imprisoned in a foreign land in desperate condition by doing nothing are all the consequences of ideological and hegemonic oppression on Leo. He is totally isolated himself from science not to be involved in the destructive armament system of the state. Gilly is convinced when she learns that her scientific inventions are sufficient to extinct all humanity rather than having beneficial effect. This pessimistic overview indicates a corrupted society which regards technology and science as an inventor of modern fear. Polak (1973) supports this idea with his following statements:

*It makes so crystal clear what the fatal consequences of the continued development of science and technology might be that it revives the old idea of a moratorium on further scientific research (p. 193).*

To Brenton, since ancient times, scientists have always been punished for exile or death. Brenton is referring to Galileo Galilei who was also punished for house arrest and death subsequent to the trial in Inquisition: "*Galileo said one day, scientists will come forward overjoyed with a new discovery to be greeted with a universal cry of horror*" (p. 196). Each scientific invention helps to foster destructive aspects of modern technology. Additionally, in the last scene of the first act of the play, Leo and Gilly display and try to explain harmful impacts of raw materials of a nuclear bomb on a human body:

**Leo** *We did her up, best we could, first degree burns? The epidermal layer, what we call 'our skin', gone? The blood vessels beneath, exposed? And blinded, if not by the flash, by photophobia? Ultra-violet light? The ozone layer stripped away, ten minutes outside, and – eyes gone?*

The university VC immediately warns the professor through a threatening hegemony again: "*If this is to go too far, if you have gone too far*" (p. 202). Despite this insulting statement, Leo Lehrer demands a formal support from the university administration for himself and all other scientists. He declares his desire to have freedom as a scientist to conduct his scientific studies and to prevent humanity from being destructed of nuclear atomic bombs.

#### 4.1.2. Institutional hegemony

In essence of Gramscian institutionalized hegemony, schools have a pivotal role in regard to transmission of cultural values to the ‘civil society’ under the name of education. As indicated in Chapter 2, schools are hegemonic tools of the ‘superstructure’ (the state) for imposing its hegemonic power to the substructure (civil society). Gramsci conceptualizes the application mechanism of institutional hegemony in two different forms: “[t]he supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 56). Political leadership of the state over the universities, in *The Genius*, is an overt sign of the Gramscian ‘domination’ notion of hegemony; the state urges its institutions to provide the production of nuclear weapons at the expense of exploiting science and scientists.

In *The Genius*, the University of Midlands, the research institutions; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in USA and the Leningrad Institute for the Advancement of Science in Russia are all representatives of a corrupt system governed through legal (!) but invisible institutional hegemonic power. These institutions come to prominence as legal mechanisms providing technical support to security forces of the state. It can be called as hegemonic leadership on international scale in the framework of national security policies of states. In the play, the Pentagon seizes the scientific works of the professor, Leo, by violating his personal rights:

*Leo* What do you want to hear? OK you’ve been sold a dud, ‘old chap’. My lack of human grace is brought on by a dose of the post-Einstein clap. Real guilt and dread. I had the new E equals MC squared but flushed it down the john, I feared it would burn the world. But Spiderman crashed in through the men’s room window, dived down the pan and rescued the magic maths for the Pentagon. That kind of thing happens all the time at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Brenton, 1989, pp. 169-170).

In *The Genius*, Brenton takes his audience’s attention to psychological and physical violence in disguise of institutional hegemonic power shadowing freedom of individuals. Although the play is mostly associated with historical issues and characters, it is basically related to social and political phenomena of the modern age when national and international race of power have directed institutions of nations in ‘new world order’. The dramatist makes approach to imbalance of power in corrupted societies on both social and

political scales and he makes his audience witness how and to what extent the omnipotent institutional power victimizes individuals.

The institutions in the play, on the other hand, have a double-faced role as both a collective part of the 'superstructure' and a member of the 'substructure' oppressed by the state. The university administration in the play is ruled by the state forces but at the same time, it urges the scientists to conduct their works for the benefit of the state. Brenton outspokenly mentions the irreplaceable position of universities for the hegemon governments due to its relation with scientific inventions. In the play, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in America, the Leningrad Institute for the Advancement of Science, and the University in Midlands in Britain have financially been supported by governments in terms of developing more destructive and ruinous technological nuclear weapons. Brenton takes attention to the university administration employing both under the monopoly of the government and in cooperation with it. The university Bursar, Graham frankly reveals his interpretations about the status of the universities and their staff in a political equation. According to the following statements of the university Bursar, like other institutions, the universities are also apparatuses of the state within this hegemonic mechanism:

**Graham** *We all pay lip service to pure research in a university, 'being for pure research' is like being for life and against death. But actually we loathe it, because we all know, in our tiny souls, that real mathematics, science, pure knowledge aspires to the condition of music. And a university is paid for-by a government that wants weapons, a car industry that wants the petrol-free engine. And who is going to fight a war or run a car on a bloody string quarter? ... Don't be fooled by the VC dribbling on about muffins; university officials are professional politicians, their apparent senility is a rhetorical ploy. The VC can talk about blood in his administrative wellies, mine are full of broken toes* (Brenton, 1989, p. 168).

In the modern world, hegemony is a systematic mechanism of legitimized power through laws and it is built on consent of the oppressed who have to obey laws and political rules. It is possible to improve a close relation between Gramscian concept of hegemony and modern legitimized and institutional power of the state (Litowitz, 2000). Besides, as Nye (2004) indicates, the real power to dominate any kind of resistance is information (p. 1). However, in the play, Brenton claims that in the modern world, information and technology have not been used for goodness and peace:

**Leo** *In this world, millions of dollars and roubles are not spent for love. They-are-spent-for-power"* (Brenton, 1989, p. 192).

In Mann's words: "*Hegemony involves more than Nye's notion of 'soft power'*" (2012, p. 20). In the conception of Nye's (2004) 'soft power', it is necessary to create an atmosphere of acquiescence and mutual alliance. However, in *The Genius*, the style of commanding attitude of the government officials towards scientists and institutions is a clear sign of direct power which is categorized by Nye (2004) as 'hard power'. Essentially, Howard Brenton shows his audience the moral depravity in science and indispensable growing menace of it to all humanity. Brenton reveals the political hegemony as a practice used implicitly by institutions. The oppressive institutions refer to the political society in Gramscian hegemony because their fundamental duty is to maintain balance between the civil society and the state, namely the institutions turn hard power into soft power to rule the civil society. In the Gramscian understanding of hegemony, these institutions are apparatuses of government to impose its coercive policy. Political domination in Gramscian hegemony is masked and hidden through legitimized rules and it is applied covertly (Litowitz, 2000).

Brenton also argues corrupt condition of universities far from being centre of free thought, sophisticated science and modern technology. In *The Genius*, the university is under the governmental involvements besides its corrupt environment where strangers around drink alcohol, so-called students deliver leaflets and propagate political ideas on campus. This can be evaluated as an indicator of ideological order to be structured at the base of the university. The conversation between Leo and Graham at the first day of the term supports the reality of this situation:

**Leo** *Who are they, over there. Students?*

**Graham** looks

**Graham** *Oh. No. Townies.*

**Leo** doesn't understand.

*Kids from the city. They come up and bum drinks in the student bars. There are thefts and there are fights. But – this is meant to be a people's university.*

**Leo** *Some o' Britain's legendary unemployed, eh?* (Brenton, 1989, p. 167).

To Brenton, universities are turned out to be ordinary places and they are no longer the centre of science but of chaos. Therefore, it is quite normal for Leo Lehrer to feel desperate and alienated as a result of his exile. The professor is aware of the fact that he

is deprived of his freedom not just as a scientist but as an ordinary individual. Like other educational institutions, universities also have great importance for the state in instilling cultural values to society. In culture transmitting, educational institutions play a crucial role, however the state-based authority is also provided by these institutions as 'hegemonic apparatuses' (Özata, 2023). Moreover, in Gramscian sense, intellectuals have responsibility for educating the society and to develop their cultural knowledge. The duty of strengthening hegemony of the superstructure is assigned to intellectuals in terms of influencing individuals due to their knowledge and culture. As an intellectual believing in pure and free science, Leo Lehrer makes a formal request from the VC for supporting their works to provide benefit to humanity. However, the VC yet prefers displaying his political power through a hegemony:

*Leo Here we are, teachers and students. Help two of your number deal with the product of their – twisted, bloody, clever, clever brains. Protect us. Help us deal with what we've done. Be a university.*

*VC Yes, I think I have to intervene, would the undergraduates present please leave, there may be a matter for Senate here –*

Graham throws the tray down on the ground, smashing the glasses.

*Gilly They'll never understand. They'll twist it. They'll destroy it. They're stupid, they're all dead (Brenton, 1989, p. 204).*

According to the VC, Leo Lehrer is intentionally struggling to weaken political power of the university due to his humanitarian perspective. In spite of all his hopeless psychology, the professor struggles for making a contribution to society. On the other hand, the VC has an intention to use his official authority against Leo Lehrer.

#### **4.1.3. Practices of political power in disguise of hegemony**

Importance of hegemonic role of the states on international scale has gradually increased recently. Having a preeminent position in terms of military, technological, economic and political potentialities has become more important since the Cold War. Especially, under the leadership of the United States, the system called 'unipolarity' seems to be adopted in the world. In this unipolar system, the USA is considered global balancer of power. But political hegemony means much more than such a world leadership (Cox, 1987). Political

hegemony covers the idea of worldwide monopoly of a single state, which uses its coercion to dominate the other states. Apart from its military and financial predominance, the hegemon state uses its cultural values and legitimized laws in order to influence other nations.

In *The Genius*, political coercion is frequently felt as the desperate exiled condition of the professor. According to Leo Lehrer, American government has effectively used its political power to assimilate the scientists who refuse to work under the yoke of the hegemonic state. Through drawing an analogy between the twentieth century America and the ancient Roman empire, Brenton makes a strong criticism of the oppressive system applied by the USA:

*Leo Exile. To an English university in the Midlands. Jesus, look at it. The edge of the Holy American Empire. Concrete in the rain...Exile. He looks about him.*

*Late twentieth century style. The Romans used to send their bad boys – lovers of the Emperor’s wife, dirty poets – off to little islands. Maybe they did the same for their scientists” (Brenton, 1989, p. 164).*

To Brenton, American state of modern age has been inherited a state-dominated strategy indicating direct hard power. Subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Cold War, the United States has played a significant role in managing the political relations in unipolar world system and its “*economic hegemony*” is a key factor in American global preponderance (Falkner, 2005, p. 591). Puchala (2005) asserts that the economic supremacy of the USA has been sustained through supporting financial power of international institutions which “*ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order*” (p. 576).

Within the post-war period, the United States has taken responsibility for providing a global political stability. The international institutions have fulfilled their duty of transforming the hard power into soft sanctions regulated through legitimated laws. The source of this ideological order is called as political hegemony that makes the US an authority while it turns the other nations into subordinates and it has strengthened its economic domination on other nations during the Second World War (Lake, 2006). Apart from the American state forces, the Russian government is also depicted in the play as another oppressive power. Brenton is directly referring to the nuclear armament race between The USA and the Soviet Union. Deudney’s (2014) statements clearly show the race for hegemony between these two states:

*For the first half century of the nuclear era, the strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, a topic of intense and continuous concern for both states, was centered on nuclear weapons and the various systems to deliver them (p. 205).*

The power race between these two worldwide hegemonies has a wide range of influence changing the life of an individual. The protagonists of Brenton, who generally reduces world conflicts to individuals' personal life, are the victims of these issues. As one of them, Leo Lehrer is victimized under the hegemony of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Midlands and the Leningrad Institute for the Advancement of Science. Cliff Jones (The Cyclist), a lecturer in the University of Midlands, seems to be an ordinary intellectual at the university until he submits a letter to Leo from an official professor at the Leningrad Institute for the Advancement of Science. The letter symbolizes another ideological dominance applied to Leo:

**Cyclist** *I give you the greetings of Professor Abelski and his wife Irena of the Leningrad Institute for the Advancement of Science...He has written you this letter. A purely technical letter, detailing recent work he has done that may interest you. However, Professor Abelski wishes you to know that the facilities of the Institute are at your disposal. The Socialist Peoples hope you will join them to work for world peace (Brenton, 1989, p. 214).*

In the play, Brenton creates a gloomy atmosphere reflecting a depressing and hopeless psychological condition. Even though the envelope sent by Professor Abelski seems like an offer, it is actually a clear sign of hegemony. This is a representation of a struggle for keeping Leo Lehrer and his scientific works under control and an attempt to direct them in accordance with the political interests of the Russian government. Although he has given up improving his scientific theories, Leo Lehrer represents pure science being conducted in terms of humanist moral values. Following statements of Leo Lehrer show his desperate psychological mood; he feels as if he were stuck in a trap and pressured by an ideological power:

**Leo** *Letters from the East. Threats from the West. Trees on fire. But what is all that to do with me? I feel like a singer, who sings a note in innocence and all the glass in the windows smashes. Is the consequence of what I think down to me or not? I say – not. I am sick of being some kind of moralist default – all because I was in love with numbers (Brenton, 1989, p. 222).*

Brenton stresses on the politicization of scientists by the superior nations for the sake of gaining more military power that enables them the facility to be a single worldwide hegemon. The hegemon nations have been using scientific works to broaden their military facilities by supporting the universities financially and the nations have attributed a new

political identity to both the scientists and the universities. Due to the hydrogen bomb and any other technologically sophisticated weapons, the USA has strengthened its national power during World War II and the Cold War in particular. Advancing original techniques in nuclear weapon invention has been the main responsibility of the American scientists in wartime. Gilpin (1962) satirically takes attention to responsibilities of “*The Federation of Atomic Scientists*” that is paradoxically mentioned as “*promoting the welfare of mankind*” (p. 28). Gilpin (1962) argues realities about the political position of scientists in the USA:

*The benefits to society of the scientists’ new political role have been enormous. Creative, dedicated, and selfless minds have been brought into the realm of public affairs. There can be little doubt that without this new participation of scientists in political life the United States could not meet the increasingly difficult problems it faces as the world undergoes the twentieth century scientific revolution. Achievement of a truly effective utilization of this creative and dedicated talent should therefore be a major goal for American political leadership* (pp. 3-4).

As Gilpin (1962) mentions in this quotation, American state has essentially aimed to be the worldwide hegemon with its technological military power and he claims that science and scientists (called as “*political animals*” by Gilpin) have been exploited within this process (p. 6). In a modern world order where globalization has been perceived as solely military expansion, sustainability of global political dominance of the USA has depended on how effective its military superiority is.

Leo is clearly against nuclear weapons and nuclear armament policies of the states but the so-called undergraduates Tom Dicks and Andrea Long (later will intend to give up attending political issues) are in collaboration with the university administration in terms of supporting the state forces. However, ironically they distribute leaflets announcing a nuclear disarmament campaign of the state:

**Andrea** (to LEO). *Oy. You in there.*

LEO stops spinning. She holds out a leaflet. He does not take it. END.

**Leo** *EN what?*

**Andrea** *Campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament.*

A silence. Then LEO sinks to his knees giggling. He speaks gutturally.

**Leo** *Nuc – lear – Disarm – a – ment. Nuc – lear Disarm – a – ment.*



**Andre** *CDN? 'Ban The Bomb'?*

**Tom** *Come on, Andrea!*

**Andrea** (To LEO). *What's so funny?*

LEO gestures her toward him. He points. She looks where he is pointing then back at him. (Brenton, 1989, pp. 172-173).

This quotation is one of the central indicators of ideological system carried out by the university in the context of nuclear armament. In this dialogue, Leo expresses his deep suspense with his gestures about the reality in 'Nuclear Disarmament Campaign' led by the university management. While Gilly is totally unaware of the ideological atmosphere she is in, Leo is suffering from the hypocritical system leading the university administration. The playwright satirizes the ideological background hidden behind political hegemony implying benefits for all humanity. Leo Lehrer is aware of the fact that nuclear armament has been one of the most initial policies of the hegemon states that they are struggling to develop further.

Gilly, throughout the play, represents beneficence and naivety of science, on the other hand, the oppressive attitudes of Andrea and Tom towards Gilly are open indicators of dominance and hard power. Gilly Brown is also a symbolic character representing future ambitious and humanist scientists. On the contrary to innocence of Gilly, oppressive, violent, struggling and coercive manners have been felt throughout the play. Exiled, thus humiliated condition of Leo because of his struggle to save all humanity from more lethal nuclear weapons, university and government sourced threatens, physical and psychological violence against Andrea when she desires to quit the politically-oriented system of the university are examples to political oppression:

**Tom:** *But why? Why resign?*

**Andrea:** *Because I'm tired, bored, sick and tired, tired, tired – of men shouting at me about the Vanguard Party.*

**Tom:** *What a deeply, deeply –*  
He shouts.  
*Stupid remark.*

**Andrea:** *There, you shouted at me!*

**Tom:** *You can't resign. No one resigns, they just change sides. We're all locked in a room together. There's only one way out and that's called death* (Brenton, 1989, p. 175).

Thus it can be inferred from the play that hegemony inherently involves a covert violence in the interrelation between 'the state' and 'civil society'.

## 5. SIGNS OF HEGEMONY AND CORRUPTION IN *JUDE*

### 5.1. *Jude*

*Jude* (2018), written by Howard J. Brenton as an adaptation of Thomas Hardy's highly political and controversial novel *Jude The Obscure* (1895). The play is enriched with some quotes from *Iliad* by Homer (8<sup>th</sup> BC). Staged at the Hampstead Theatre in 2019, *Jude* is a realist play based on contemporary political issues such as universal immigration problem, national chauvinism, dequalification of universities and hegemonic oppression over institutions. Brenton both questions and judges the source of these political issues by holding up a mirror to modern society in order to create a sensible awareness. Brenton's writing style of historicization appears also in *Jude* through his mythological attributions to Greek tragedian and classicist Euripides (c.480-c.406 BC), who is animated both as a real and imaginary character on the stage, and his renowned play *Medea* (431 BC) to create a mystical and mysterious ambiance throughout *Jude*.

Brenton unifies realistic, mythological, historical and modern issues in *Jude* and he demonstrates a remarkable affinity between *Medea* and *Jude* in terms of their victimized and exiled position in a corrupt society. Like *Medea* in exile, *Jude* is betrayed in the

foreign lands where she has come to as an outsider. Both exiled women are struggling against injustice, social prejudices, and male dominance. Euripides avers women's rights and criticizes the underestimation of their power by the patriarchal society of his time. Euripides himself has to leave Athens and survive in Macedonia as an immigrant due to severe criticism of society and comedy playwrights against his tragic women characters. *Jude* is a story of a self-taught, gifted Syrian refugee girl who is suffering from being an immigrant in a foreign land and cultural obstacles caused by racial prejudices which prevent her from getting a qualified education and surviving with her own identity. In Brenton's following words:

*Jude is a story of a genius someone who has a vision who falls through the rotten floorboards of our country ... Jude is a tragic heroine of our times as her talents are denied and I fear that is happening too many gifted people who don't fit who do not tick the boxes and therefore whose lives are crumpled up like pieces of paper by a bureaucracy and thrown away (Brenton, 2020).*

The dramatist conceptualizes the bureaucratic power that is used as a tool in a corrupt society where individuals are positioned according to their identity; racial background, religious belief, cultural and moral values, languages.

During a brutal, devastating and ruinous immigration journey, Jude has lost all her family and takes shelter with her aunt Martha Nasrani and her cousin Mark Nasrani in Waterlooville, a town in Portsmouth in England. Entering the University of Oxford as a student, will of her father for Judith, is the biggest dream of her. Due to hard conditions offered to refugees in England, she has to earn her life by cleaning flats. Judith's employer is Sally Phillotson, a teacher (classicist) at 'South Hants College' and an activist, demands to educate her in the field of classics when she discovers Judith's rare talent in translating ancient Greek and Latin languages.

Sally's ambitious and determined attitudes towards educating Jude strengthens the refugee girl's future dreams and encouraged her to pass the exams and enter the University of Oxford. The future dreams of the refugee girl are totally imaginary, trivial and impossible to her boyfriend, Jack Donn because of her identity, ethnicity, and status. Jack, a British man from whom Jude will have a son, Timothy, is proud of his British identity and regards himself as a haven for Jude. Because of his conceited, irresponsible

personality and illegal business in meat (later he will go bankrupt), Jack is not the right man for Jude to get married anyway.

Sally educates Jude for a while until she is offered a postgraduate at Christminster College in Oxford, an opportunity for her to finish her 'Dphil'. In spite of Jude's insistence on going with her to Oxford and entering the exams, Sally makes up some excuses about Jude's motherhood and other domestic responsibilities and refuses so it makes Jude feel abandoned and betrayed. With her own facilities, Jude enters the exams and thinks that she has passed with A level in all subjects. She goes to Oxford with her cousin Mark and follows Sally and while Sally is walking with Deidre Cass, a professor at the college, Jude introduces herself to Deidre and informs her about A level exam results with her all enthusiasm. When she leaves, Sally warns Deidre against permitting Jude to enter the University of Oxford.

The next morning, Jude is shocked when exact final exam results are announced because one of her A level has deliberately been changed to B level. Jude informs Deidre instantly and gets the promise from her that the mistake will be corrected. However, the university administration does not allow Deidre to help Jude due to her ethnicity and her cousin Mark's engagement in terrorist activities. Although Sally intends to support Jude later, Deidre, under the domination and threat of the university administration, chooses to protect the prestige of the university from scandalous events and does not confirm Jude's correct exam results. In fact, the origin of all these racial prejudices is Jude and Mark's ethnicity, identity and belief. However, Jude and Mark are not Muslims, contrary to the common belief, they are Christians. Within a disappointment and desperate psychology, Jude desires to die because all of her effort to create a new identity and life in freedom has been completely devastated. When she realizes that she will never be able to enter Oxford, she drowns herself; there are foreshadowing ideas given throughout the play about her possible death. She has been forced to choose a total extinction over an existence stuck in paradoxes and obscurity.

Brenton, in *Jude*, depicts a corrupted world where individuals, outsiders in particular, are suffering from social, cultural and political injustice and racism. Through his socialist perspective, Brenton openly criticizes political and cultural oppression over immigrants and satirically questions the phenomenon of identity. In such a corrupted society, quest for identity is a fate for the minorities. The consciousness of ethnic discrimination lies on the basis of the hegemony in the play.

### 5.1.1. Traces of hegemonic power on cultural values in a corrupted society

Howard Brenton has established the plot of *Jude*, on cultural bases such as migration, identity, family, alienation, social injustice, inequality in education, social oppression and social classes. Culture is a term with wide lexical meaning that encompasses genetic identity, language, morals, traditions and social relations. Cultural hegemony has been described as an attempt of a dominant state to impose its cultural values to other states through a consensual mechanism and legitimization. It is possible to infer from this definition that the cultural hegemony has a philosophical background. Fontana (2005) relates this philosophical aspect of cultural hegemony to “*art of persuasion*” (p. 99). This conception of hegemony seems to be a process of cultural exchange between different nations. However initially it is necessary to answer the questions inquired by Artz and Murphy (2000) about the cultural hegemonic process: “*Who is dominant and for what purpose, and who is subordinate and what do they gain or lose?*” (p. 4).

Cultural hegemony is a double-sided conception which provides a cultural diversity among different nations or causes a coercive and compelling system over the other communities. That the consciousness of identity is used for the purpose of insulting others whose legal rights are intended to be restricted can be evaluated as a clear sign of cultural hegemony. In *Jude*, Brenton argues distorted sides of the cultural phenomena as major consequences of corrupt modern capitalist order on corrupted society scale. Alienation and assimilation are central themes of the play. As a socialist playwright, Brenton argues actual reasons of injustice on both national and international scales. In the play, Jude is the victimized protagonist whose quest for a new identity as an asylum seeker concludes with an immense disappointment.

The most important phenomenon of culture is background of individuals comprised of their races, mother tongues, religious beliefs, moral values, customs, and habits. In *Jude*, Brenton examines exploitation of these cultural values through hegemony in respect to immigration issues on ‘British nationalism’ scale. Just because of her national identity, Judith’s rare language skill is ignored and she is victimized within the borders of a corrupted foreign land. Hegemony in the play is fundamentally depended on prejudices about national identities of strangers. Western based prejudices about cultural values of

the refugees dominate the entire play. For instance, Sally Phillotson has several prejudiced ideas, most of which are mistaken, about cultural background of the refugee girl:

**Sally** *All right. Was it your school, back in Syria? What, an elite, a party school?*

Judith is looking at her in her shutdown mode.

*I mean how did you learn Greek?*

**Judith** *Church.*

**Sally** *Church?*

**Judith** *My aunt goes to church. They have a jumble sale.*

**Sally** *But – aren't you, I assumed – aren't you Muslim?*

**Judith** *You tell me.*

**Sally** *No, I mean –*

**Judith** *I'm what you think I am, in't I. (Brenton, 2018, p. 9).*

The word, “*assume*” here is an expression of ignorance and racial prejudice against a stranger and it is not based on facts because Jude is one of the Syrian Christians. However, like most of westerners, Sally thinks that Jude is a Muslim and uneducated. Judith is exposed to a cultural hegemony hidden behind a racial discrimination just because of her genetic identity. Actually, Sally never wants to believe in Jude's talent and accuses her for faking all information from other works. Even during her interrogation by Pat Nash four years after Jude's escape, Sally claims that she never adopts the idea of being naturally gifted; “*No meant to believe in genius, are we. If someone is gifted, they've got a class advantage – household of books, foreign holidays, music ... Nothing from nature, it's all nurture* (p. 14). Additionally, in the means of his religious belief, Jude's cousin Mark experiences an unconditional acceptance because he is aware of the oppressive remarks around all immigrants and he tends to leave his own values. In his following conversation with Jude, there are clear signs of a possible assimilation and submission:

**Judith** *What's going on with you, Mark?*

Mark is shy of this.

**Mark** *It's that –*

He hesitates.

*I'm on a spiritual journey.*

**Judith** *Who the fuck isn't?*

**Mark** *Everyone thinks I'm a Muslim.*

**Judith** *I know, you don't get a chance to say 'But I'm a Christian, there are Christians in Syria.'*

**Mark** *Yeah, why are people so ignorant in England?*

**Judith** *Funny, in't it. I mean my father always said 'In England people are free.' I s'pose he meant free to be pig ignorant.*

**Mark** *I begin to feel 'You think I'm a Muslim, okay I'll be one.'* (Brenton, 2018, pp. 54-55).

To Gramscian insight, culture is a vital factor empowering the struggle of protecting a community's freedom, values and legal rights. Essentially, class domination is the core of the concept of cultural hegemony because "*without culture, Gramsci retorted, the exploited classes can never hope to arrive at an understanding of their role in history, or of their rights and their duties*" (Buttigieg, 1992, p. 18). Pozo (2007) interprets hegemonic class domination within the framework of national identity which covers a nation's common heritage of history, tradition and values, namely its 'historical bloc'. Gramsci uses the terms 'superstructure' and 'structure' to express the sharp discrimination between 'the culturally dominant state' – 'the culturally oppressed groups'. Thus Gramsci has pointed out that there is a remarkable affinity between culture and power, namely culture is a mechanism to provide a hegemonic leadership (Lears, 1985). Cultural dominance of a majority causes the feeling of 'otherness' among refugees. Submission or assimilation is a process through which an outsider is able to rescue from being 'other'.

Mark is subjected to religious-based oppression and prejudice. Being an immigrant of Eastern origin is a clear sign of being a Muslim in Western countries and being a Muslim is considered equivalent to terrorism. Mark has frequently been exposed to religious-based prejudices, as a result he concedes that he is a Muslim in spite of his Christian origins.

### 5.1.2. Hegemony in respect to national chauvinism

A hegemonic order requires political, cultural or ideological supremacy providing the power of 'leadership' against an individual, an organization, an institution or a state. A political or cultural 'leadership' is mostly useful and advantageous mechanism unless there is a consciousness of exploitive ideology functioning through legitimization of rules (Chase-Dunn et al., 1994). Modern hegemonic systems have been founded upon a malevolent ideological order through which class consciousness and discriminatory nationalism have taken stronger roots (Chase-Dunn et al., 1994). However, hegemony based on nationalism or racism is a sign of coercive power applied to subordinates in a corrupted society. This sort of consciousness of nationalism encapsulates racial sovereignty, namely chauvinism.

'Chauvinism' is defined as "*a strong belief that your country or race is better or more important than any other*" (Chauvinism, 2009). Chauvinism is a contradictory term fostering consciousness of nationalism of a hegemon community while it is shading down the rights and identities of minorities. So the condition of being totally humiliated, ignored, and assimilated in a corrupted society exemplifies racial discrimination for immigrants. *Jude* is centered on worldwide mass migration issues and struggle for life of exiled refugees whose fates have been directed in accordance with 'national chauvinism'.

In *Jude*, the playwright portrays Britain as a highly politicized and an oppressive country towards the refugees' struggle to survive. Jude is turned into one of the victims of this brutal system in spite of all her outstanding talents. In the play, her efforts to enter the University of Oxford to get education and to establish a new life in Britain have been hindered by policy of over nationalism and hidden institutional forces in England and the covert connection between the state and its forces in the background is emphasized.

Brenton underlines the destructive sides of British nationalism that is exercised harshly against the immigrants. Hall (2005) argues the destructive and exploitive aspects of the 'Britishness' which defines the essence of racial discrimination in Britain against all minorities. Culture of oppression and cultural hegemony resulting from excessive consciousness of British nationalism are perceived in the play in terms of the discriminatory and racist conversations. It is understood that Judith and her remaining



family are suffered from being marginalized and underestimated in Britain. Moreover in the following conversation between Judith and her lover Jack, the audience witnesses the severe racist indignation:

**Jack** *Right, so let's get married.*

**Judith** *I don't want to be Mr and Mrs Bunny.*

**Jack** *But I'll save you.*

**Judith** *Save me?*

**Jack** *They won't chuck you out. British national's wife. I mean they're getting really heavy about you lot.*

**Judith** *My*

*lot?*

**Jack** *All you f\*cking Arabs 'n' Africans.*

JUDITH laughing.

**Judith** *What a charmer is my lover!*

**Jack** *Judy, I googled your status.*

**Judith** *Ooh! Kinky! Google me up in leather 'n' chains –*

**Jack** *Be serious about this! For f\*cksake, when you're eighteen you'll need permanent permission to stay (Brenton, 2018, p. 25).*

The 'Britishness' is a product of globalization, modernization and capitalism like any other perceptions of national identity (Hall, 1993). It is directly related to worldwide 'nation-state' system that is an expression of 'cultural belongingness' contrary to 'multiculturalism'. In *Jude*, Brenton emphasizes the British nationalism towards ethnicity as one of the basic conflicts of Jude and her family. In the former quotation, Jack is depicted as a superior and savior British citizen who gains his power solely from his privileged nationality that is strong enough to provide Jude an asylum facility in Britain. Jude, on the other hand, portrays an image of an ambitious young woman who desires freedom enabled through a qualified education rather than a compulsory marriage with a 'British' man because having education at the University of Oxford means freedom for her. Jude is struggling to resist against being oppressed, humiliated and discriminated just because of her Syrian identity in this foreign country. In spite of Jude's aunt Martha's all insistence, Jude always rejects this marriage:

**Martha** *What I want for you is a real life, not some – fantasy in your head. Be a British housewife with a British passport!*

**Judith** *I'd rather put needles in my eyes.*

MARTHA closes her eyes, controlling herself, JUDITH continues to concentrate on drawing with her stick.

**Martha** *The immigration, they can come for you, today, now. They'll be at the gate – big black car, big men, some stony-faced woman to take Timmy. They'll throw you in one of those centres, then God help you. Judith, you're back with your son now, be a family is the last hope.*

**Judith** *Or – the last horror* (Brenton, 2018, p. 80).

Martha is aware of the fact that Jack is the last hope and rescuer for Jude. The aunt summarizes all despairs experienced by the refugees and her compelling manners and insistence symbolize a hegemony against Jude. Jude is a member of the subordinated groups whose resistance and struggle for survival have been ignored by hegemonic authorities.

### **5.1.3. Institutionalized Hegemony**

In *Jude*, Brenton depicts a violent cultural conflict resulting from worldwide mass migration problem on scale of Jude's personal life. Brenton's socialist activist point of view appears in the play through his emphases on the exigency of justice, democracy, peace, freedom and equality in the world. A worldwide armistice and a balanced distribution of power, namely a complete justice, are preconditions for the socialist world view of Brenton. The minorities have turned out to be disadvantaged communities all around the world because of both military oppression over them and the attempt of the powerful countries to impose their own cultural values to the immigrants. Brenton reveals the double-faced hegemony applied to Jude and her family by the state forces in Britain.

Brenton shows political predominance applied to the immigrants as well. Refugee Centre and Resistance Workshop are examples of the political institutions, mentioned in the play, that are constructed under the name of humanitarian aid and support organisations for refugees. However, keeping the outsiders under control and seeming to provide an actual confidence for them have been main policies of these institutions. It is understood from

the play that Sally Phillotson has been assigned at the Refugee Centre to investigate personal conditions of refugees. Four years after Jude's disappearance as a result of being rejected from the University of Oxford, Sally is interrogated by Patricia Nash who is a member of secret forces of the state. It is clear that Sally has a special duty in addition to process of her academic education. It can be inferred from the conversation between Sally and Patricia Nash that Sally is pretending to be the employer of Jude and she is working as an activist illegally:

**Pat** *Went there a lot, did you?*

*A pause.*

*The Centre. A group met there. Something called a 'Resistance Workshop'?*

**Sally** *That was – an informal thing.*

**Pat** *Informally resisting what?*

**Sally** *People like you.*

*PAT sighs.*

**Pat** *Don't go smart-arse with me, Sally.*

**Sally** *It was just a – women's resource group. Trying to help immigrants with problems.*

**Pat** *You know the council closed the Centre.*

**Sally** *I left Waterlooville –*

**Pat** *Closed it because of information received from the security forces.*

**Sally** *Look, understand, I don't do that stuff any more.*

**Pat** *Stuff?*

**Sally** *Getting involved! Activism. Caring about the bloody world.*

**Pat** *But you did care about Judith. And very much got involved (Brenton, 2018, pp. 13-14).*

Thus, the playwright implies that there are significant political and organisational issues carried out in disguise of charity and there is a covert reality about actual mission of Sally Phillotson. At first sight, the 'Resistance Workshop Centre' seems to be a philanthropic organisation operating charity for the refugees under the roof of universities by giving support to immigrant students in terms of their legal rights and better educational opportunities. On the other hand, the centre is closed by the state forces due to its illegal,

abusive and exploitive policies. These institutions aims to take advantages of the irregular mass migrations. Moreover, the word ‘activism’ is directly related to political actions or protests against the governmental practices. Sally conducts the political activities besides her MA studies on ‘Pericles’ but Sally seems to be assigned as an agent at the university to carry out secret missions about the refugees. The ‘Resistance Workshop Centre’ is one of the institutions led by the state forces to set boundaries around freedom of the refugees. The institutions, in Gramscian sense, provide a mechanism of the legitimated domination on ‘civil society’ in a capitalist state that is closely related to Gramscian ‘political leadership’. Joseph Samuel Nye, Jr. (1991) indicates that the institutions have been utilized by ruling nations in order to impose their cultural values in legal and consensual manner.

In *Jude*, the university administration is both under the domination of the security forces and in collaboration with them. The administration in Oxford is forced to conduct the university in accordance with political sanctions. This reality is inferred from the conversation between Sally and the university professor Deidre Cass:

**Deidre** *I’ve done the deed. I’ve had the faculty withdraw the scholarship.*

A pause

**Sally** *You can’t do that to her.*

**Deidre** *School for terrorists? Write your own Daily Mail. The scandal could destroy everything I’ve tried to do in this college.*

**Sally** *No way would – Judith’s in to Classical Greece, Western culture, what you and I – what we’re meant to stand for!*

**Deidre** *But – my source, my nemesis – tells me her cousin, this Mark, has gone Jihadist. I have to protect us from any taint. Or perception of taint (Brenton, 2018, p. 72).*

Jude is punished by the institutional oppressive order just because of her identity. This condition is an example of hegemonic approach to the oppressed groups. Institutional dominance here is felt both on the university and Jude. Hegemonic power is exercised in the play through legitimated governmental laws. Weber (2002) argues legitimacy of domination in his article and he claims that even though it is based on legitimated rules, a culture of oppression is damaging and brutal. In addition, Deidre Cass confesses the reality about her own position supporting the oppressive state forces:

**Deidre** *We tell ourselves we're free. Transgressive. Making a new world. But, in the end, we are all collaborators* (Brenton, 2018, p. 73).

Deidre is an important character who has a double-faced role as a member of the sovereign group and one of the victimized individuals in society.

#### 5.1.4. Hegemony as covert coercion

Coercion has a close meaning to domination stating a control mechanism to gain more authority by directing others. That a hegemonic subject has chosen to establish and maintain his authority through oppressive hegemony is an obvious sign of his being a violator of freedom of others. To reinforce the hegemonic system, ideologically usage of these coercive hegemony is influential. In the play, Brenton takes attention to state-based but hidden sourced hegemony. The state-based pressure on the university is felt, in *Jude*, in the dialogue between the professor Deidre and the deep state forces:

Christminster College. Deidre's rooms. She is on the phone. Someone is talking heated torrents at her.

**Deidre** *You know there used to be a notion that university's purpose is to encourage genius.*

Listens

**Deidre** *No I said 'genius' not 'genetics' – (To herself. Phone to her shoulder.) help, help, they're taking over, someone help me! (Back into her phone.) Individual genius. Aren't we here to find great minds?*

Listens

...

*Absolutely.*

A beat

*Absolutely. Yes.*

She puts the phone down (Brenton, 2018, pp. 58-59).

The voice on the phone warns Deidre in a menacing tone. Deidre is aware of the fact that Jude has an original genius and she really deserves to enter the university and get education there, however she has no power to resist the coercive hegemony she hears on the phone. The voice of deep state on the phone has the power to establish a governance mechanism over the university. The university here plays a role transmitting the state's coercion to an individual.

In Gramscian sense, while the state and its institution is called as 'superstructure', Jude is a representative of 'structure'. Namely, this scene depicts the strife between 'political society' and 'civil society'. However, according to essence of Gramscian hegemony as Femia indicates "*it is necessary to win the 'hearts and minds' of the majority before the conquest of the state power*", namely, individuals in the play are being exposed to 'hard power' instead of a consensual atmosphere (1979, p. 473).

Brenton makes clear the existence of a hidden but commanding force and he creates a depressive atmosphere. In another dialogue between Sally and Deidre, they are not aware of the source of power, they can just predict it:

**Deidre** *No I have fun with my Twitter trolls. I poke them. No, I've been threatened by the real thing. A real troll. A little demon, popped up from underground.*

**Sally** *Oh Deidre, it's not sex –*

**Deidre** *If only it were! No, this is not the caress of a delectable young thing, come back to haunt.*

**Sally** *So it's the police –*

**Deidre** *Not really police.*

They are looking at each other.

A pause.

*Ah. You just feel it. A fear like no other. Chest tight, head scrambled into horrible images, handcuffs, light-bulb rooms* (Brenton, 2018, p. 71).

In the play, Brenton generally underlines modern fear, which develops in a corrupted society where ambiguousness is dominantly felt by individuals. In fact, a corrupted world is fictitious, however, Brenton confronts his audience with the realities of the modern world identical to the imaginary corrupted one.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Modern British drama has been shaped by numerous invaluable works by radical, rebellious, and realist dramatists whose uncommon styles are still forcing the boundaries of audiences' imagination. Through his plain yet influential language, Howard J. Brenton has produced 'state of the nation' plays since 1960s in order to depict the entire social, political and cultural agenda of the present day. Accompanied by his socialist contemporaries directly affected by political upheavals of 1968', Brenton has aimed to confront his audience with realities of their time. He has produced his plays for popular theatres like Fringe, The National Theatre, Royal Court Theatre and Hampstead Theatre. All these theatre companies have aimed to reflect social conflicts on the British stage. Unlike from previous plays, post-war dramaturgical works depicts economic collapse, social injustice and political dilemmas through real characters acted in actual decorations. In this scope, it is not a coincidence to associate post-war plays with the phenomenon of 'power'. This inference can be clearly noticed in Brenton plays; especially each of his recent plays is an integration of power perceptions such as class conflicts, political ideologies, institutional corruptions, and abuse of laws. In the frame of power, Brenton is skillfully able to reflect his society in its most realistic form in his plays.

Within the post-war period, the 'Second Wave' playwrights have adopted socialism as a political view against capitalism. Therefore they radically stress on working-class problems and rebel against the bourgeoisie ideologies. Brenton imposes his socialist perspective to his plays referring to historical events and reflections of real historical figures. His notable ambition and interest to history since his childhood has been an invaluable resource to his theatrical works because he aims to make his audience aware

of the past experiences of humanity. To Brenton, this is necessary to make sense of social and political contradictions today, namely historical awareness has a pivotal role in shaping future. His challenge in this regard makes significant contributions to political British theatre. Besides, his protagonists are mostly portrayal of either ordinary men struggling in a morally corrupt society or brutal ones who uses their hegemonic power to oppress others.

This thesis is concerned with hegemony which is closely related to the notion of ideological power. In this regard, Howard Brenton's two plays: *The Genius* and *Jude*, similar in content and style, are chosen as central works of this study. Focal point of these two plays is exploitation of subjects as a result of hegemonic attitudes of authorities. At the core of these plays, Brenton forms a close and strong correlation between domination and power; it is possible to observe in both plays reflections of political and institutional pressure to boundaries of individuals' privacy and rights. While *The Genius* holds up a mirror to the process of exploitation of science and a scientist by hegemonic institutions, *Jude* shows the desperate condition of a refugee girl victimized by oppressive and authoritarian hegemony imposed by the state forces. In both plays, Brenton chooses to depict the destructive impacts and irretrievable losses of the universal issues on the scale of personal lives of victimized subjects to demonstrate magnitude of both physical and psychological dimensions of damage.

Hegemony is an ideological system through which an individual or a group of people is struggling to have a cultural and political leadership. The notion of ideological approach is regarded as a 'consensus' by Gramsci. The consensual mechanism works thanks to legitimization of rules. Individuals have to obey the rules established by law, so there is no possibility of revolt within this hegemonic environment. Brenton, in his plays, makes references to the current hegemonic world system. *The Genius*, touches upon the process of nuclear armament of nations for the sake of gaining more military power to have a leadership in all over the world. Brenton, in this play, demonstrates the clash between both science-power and scientists-the state forces. Besides, exploitation of science and scientists by the governments of the USA and the Soviet Union is the main issue. Brenton makes direct references to the race of nuclear armament between these two worldwide hegemon nations, during the Cold War and its aftermath, in particular. In this regard, the dramatist argues about actual purposes of science and real duties of scientists. The demand for financial and political superiority of nations as a result of globalization



provides a basis for misuse of scientific advancements and exploitation of scientists. In *The Genius*, Brenton underlines hegemony in two-dimensional style: there is a governmental domineering authority against its institutions; on the other hand, there are clear implications of institutional oppression over individuals. *The Genius*, dramatizes such universal realities tried to be ignored by the society.

*Jude*, takes attention of its audience due to its realistic theme; it depicts the universal mass migration problem and alienated situation of immigrants. Brenton shapes the matter of class distinction on immigration issue scale and he bases his play on nationalism, identity crisis, moral corruption and exploitation that are observable in the play through hegemony. The central ideological idea externalized in *Jude* is that power turns out to be a malignity when it is applied with the intention of exploiting others. Just as in *The Genius*, civilians are victims of global problems in *Jude* as well. Hegemonic implications are referred in *Jude* through violence, physical and psychological punishment, humiliation and national chauvinism. Brenton extends the conception of hegemony to force, oppression, severity and cultural predominance. In *The Genius*, the protagonist is condemned to ambiguity, he is punished by exile. Moreover, he is oppressed by society, by his institution and by the state.

This study analyses social, political and ideological dimensions of hegemony in *The Genius* and *Jude*. Hegemony is interpreted as a theory that expresses how power is used. In a system in which hegemonic political or economic power is applied, there is definitely the oppressor and the oppressed because hegemony comprises ideologies used for dominating institutions or individuals. These ideologies are scrutinized in this thesis within the frameworks of Marxist class concept and Gramscian philosophical approaches. Gramscian philosophical hegemony has gained its latest context in Coxian form which still sheds light on contemporary universal matters. In all of its interpretations, hegemony is directly associated with power and its variations. As in both *The Genius* and *Jude*, hegemony is related to political power of government that provides to sustain its predominance.

Brenton, in his selected plays, blends destructive impacts of capitalism and globalism with possible threatening consequences within a corrupted structure of society where pessimism is dominant. In such a society, individuals are repressed by an authority of a person, a community or the state. They are not allowed to use their individual autonomy. Accordingly, the oppressed society is, in a negative way, both physically and

psychologically affected. Brenton chooses his protagonists mostly from these victimized individuals whose private life is devastated irretrievably. Besides, the dramatist focuses on modern fear of individuals. Wars, financial problems, social conflicts, racism and injustice make people feel insecure.

As a political playwright, Brenton is sensitive to political, social and cultural issues and he directly reflects his inferences to his works. He uses a gloomy atmosphere through a bad weather with rain, snow or a lightning, a ghost, a mythological character, a skeleton or a corpse. It can be inferred that in this way, Brenton portrays his pessimist perspective on the stage. Additionally, he prefers to show the clash between the oppressor and the oppressed because he has a socialist stance against injustice. All in all, this thesis presents an analysis of hegemony in *The Genius* and *Jude*. Brenton displays this sort of hegemony in a structure of corrupted societies. It seems that Howard Brenton will direct his career as a dramatist according to his socialist perspective, always advocates equality, honesty, justice and compassion.

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## ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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