

# A Critical Analysis of Neoliberalism in David Hare's *Stuff Happens* and *The Permanent Way*

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## Abstract

This paper concentrates on two theatrical works produced in the central years of the neoliberal era, specifically the 2000s. The works under examination are *The Permanent Way* and *Stuff Happens*. Acknowledging that literary productions are intertwined with broader and more complex social structures, this study endeavours to identify the dialectical connections among Hare's plays, the communities they mirror, and the prevailing neoliberal policies prevalent since the 1970s. The research aims to contextualize David Hare's selected plays and argue that they possess a dialectical relationship with the societies of their creation. Employing the dialectical method, this analysis examines the dynamic relationships between the plays and their social and political contexts, emphasizing Hare's distinctive discourse and thematic selections that shape his oeuvre. Given the prevalence of neoliberal ideology, this research centers on plays written after the new millennium. The selection is based on their strong reflections of neoliberal policies and their perceived contribution to the decline of neoliberalism. Hence, the objective of this analysis is to examine how economic and social inequalities are portrayed in Hare's plays, aligning with the breakdown of social cohesion and the corruption of institutions, symbolizing the decline of neoliberalism.

**Keywords:** David Hare, Neoliberalism, Iraq War, Privatisation, Contemporary British Drama

## DAVID HARE'İN *STUFF HAPPENS* VE *THE PERMANENT WAY* ADLI OYUNLARINDA NEOLİBERALİZMİN ELEŞTİREL BİR ANALİZİ

## Öz

Bu makale, neoliberal çağın en tartışmalı döneminde, özellikle 2000'lerde yazılan iki oyuna odaklanmaktadır. İncelenen eserler *The Permanent Way* (2003) ve *Stuff Happens* (2004) adlı oyunlardır. Edebi üretimlerin daha geniş ve daha karmaşık toplumsal yapılarla iç içe olduğu fikrini rehber edinen bu çalışma, Hare'in oyunları, yansıttıkları toplumsal yapılar ve 1970'lerden bu yana egemen olan neoliberal politikalar arasındaki diyalektik ilişkileri belirlemeye çalışmaktadır. Araştırma, David Hare'in seçilmiş oyunlarını tarihsel bağlamlarına yerleştirmeyi ve yarattıkları toplumlarla diyalektik bir ilişkiye sahip olduklarını iddia etmektedir. Diyalektik yöntemi kullanan bu çalışma, oyunlar ile sosyo-politik bağlamları arasındaki etkileşimi inceler ve Hare'in edebi argümanını oluşturan benzersiz dili ve tematik seçimlerini vurgular. Neoliberal ideolojinin yaygınlığı göz önüne alındığında, bu araştırma yeni milenyumdan sonra yazılan oyunlara yoğunlaşarak neoliberal politikaların güçlü yansımalarına ve neoliberalizmin düşüşünün başlangıcı

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olarak algılanan dönemin eleştirisine odaklanır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, neoliberalizmin çöküşüne işaret eden toplumsal bütünlüğün çözülmesi ve kurumların yozlaşmasıyla aynı zamana denk gelen David Hare oyunlarındaki ekonomik ve toplumsal eşitsizliklerin temsiliyi araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** David Hare, Neoliberalizm, Irak Savaşı, Özelleştirme, Çağdaş İngiliz Tiyatrosu

**D**avid Hare's literary journey began at Cambridge University in 1965, where he was introduced to the world of literature and laid the foundation for a prolific career spanning over four decades, encompassing various literary forms like theatre and film. Influenced by his experiences at Cambridge, Hare (2015) delved into political theatre with a socialist agenda, challenging mainstream norms. As part of the Fringe Theatre Movement, he sought to challenge conventional theatre and evolved his writing style from satirical and propagandist works to more intimate and spiritually focused narratives. Throughout his career, Hare resisted being confined to labels, exploring literary diversity and tackling a wide range of subjects. His plays emphasized the connection between individual actions and their social context, encouraging critical reflection on socio-political themes. From a political dramatist to a playwright capable of creating emotionally powerful stage poetry, Hare's dedication to thought-provoking insights into the human condition made him one of the most prominent British playwrights of his time, leaving a significant and enduring contribution to the theatre.

David Hare, as a playwright with a keen interest in politics, does not shy away from dramatizing significant global political occurrences and their consequential impacts. As Gültekin (2021) reveals that this presents a basis for the criticism Hare creates politically, which covers themes such as corruption associated with privatization policies, the critique of detrimental effects of new neo-imperialism, and dissolution of societal bounds. Hare's criticisms of neoliberalism revolve around its destructive impact on the core values of the West and the social order on which it is based, deepening economic and social injustices.

## THE EVOLUTION OF NEOLIBERALISM: FROM KEYNESIANISM TO THE MARKET SOCIETY

Neoliberalism has had a polemical history intertwined with the development of modern societies. While its roots can be discerned in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it experienced a notable surge in the 1990s, marked by intellectual controversies and fierce debates. Subsequently, ruling classes and venture capitalist groups embraced neoliberalism enthusiastically, and the 1980s marked its golden age, with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan implementing neoliberal theory robustly. The declaration of the Washington Consensus provided a framework for the globalization of American capitalism and its associated cultural system. However, as the new millennium dawned, serious global problems surfaced. These events increased the debates in political and academic circles about the operability of neoliberal policies. David Harvey (2007) views neoliberalism as an ideological project aimed at restoring conditions for wealth distribution and resetting the absolute for the ruling classes.

Following World War II, the capitalist world underwent a major restructuring of state forms and international relations to prevent a recurrence of the 1930s economic crisis. During this time, both the capitalist and communist moral systems collapsed, necessitating the development of a new democratic blend to ensure stability and peace. The Bretton Woods Conference played a crucial role in establishing an international new world order. The conference resulted in the establishment of institutions such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This era revealed Keynesianism, an economic and social theory that sought a balanced system to regulate the relationships between social classes, emphasizing state intervention and market controls.

The 1950s and 1960s are known as The Golden Age of Keynesianism and the Welfare State. Keynesianism gained prominence in developed capitalist countries, resulting in significant advancements in important sectors such as finance, education and transportation. The concept of the welfare state took centre stage, characterized by efforts to reduce poverty, income inequality, and the promotion of social security and accessible health services. The welfare state operated on the premise that the government should prioritize permanent employment, fostering economic enhancement, and safeguarding the well-being of its populace, stepping in to regulate market activities when required.

However, by the early 1970s, problems began to emerge in the capitalist markets, with high growth rates plateauing and financial crises looming. This led to the decline of Keynesian policies and the ascent of neoliberalism. Neoliberal theorists blamed Keynesianism for the market's failures and sought to create an alternative approach where the government played a minimal role in the economy. Neoliberalism prioritized free market processes over state interventions, focusing on promoting the freedom of enterprises and entrepreneurs, while subordinating the freedom of workers and consumers. Neoliberalism aimed to dismantle the structures of the welfare state in favour of principles align with a free market approach, resulting in the reconfiguration of society as a business-oriented community. In this societal shift, individuals are treated as means of capital accumulation, and the economy becomes increasingly financialized. The concept of the enterprise society emerged, emphasizing the delivery of specific goods and benefits for the sake of capital accumulation.

As Davies, Jackson and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite (2021) asserts, the period after the 1970s is able to be named as 'the Neoliberal Age'. Neoliberalism's historical evolution showcases its rise from the post-WWII Keynesianism era and the subsequent shift towards a market-oriented society. The transformation was marked by the belief that market competition and entrepreneurship should be prioritized over state intervention, leading to profound changes in economic and social structures. As the ongoing debate surrounding neoliberalism continues, understanding its complex history is vital in comprehending its impact on modern societies.

### **FORGING A ROUTE FROM NEOLIBERALISM TO NEW IMPERIALISM: *STUFF HAPPENS***

In the midst of the first anniversary of the US and United Kingdom's military intervention in Iraq, David Hare penned *Stuff Happens*. This play delves into the efforts of George Bush's Cabinet to

pave a manageable path for initiating the occupation. The narrative unfolds during the initial days of the war, offering a critical examination of the ongoing events. Hare skilfully presents a complex interplay between the insatiable pursuit of aggressive growth within the domain of free-market capitalism and the militaristic intervention practices of the governing neoliberal elites. These practices, at times, come at the cost of thousands of lives. The play masterfully weaves together a blend of fiction and fact. Using the technique of verbatim theatre, Hare employs the public speeches of politicians as a basis for crafting dialogues. Moreover, he employs his creative imagination to envision the private discussions that take place behind closed doors. The initial verbatim quote in the play is the play's own title. Around a month following the commencement of the US-led coalition forces' intervention in Iraq to topple the Saddam Regime, Donald Rumsfeld responded to a reporter's question with a historically significant answer: "Think what's happened in our cities when we've had riots, and problems, and looting. Stuff happens!" (Loughlin, 2003)

Hare initiates a discourse on the historical backdrop of U.S. hegemony, directing the attention to the year 1975. This choice of date is not coincidental; it coincides with a period of market crisis and the American defeat in Vietnam. The Actor points out that during the mid-seventies, the US acknowledged the limits of its power, marking a crucial turning point. However, the true and remarkable shift was not solely centred around military might. The origins of the neoliberal transformation of capitalist societies can be traced back to the mid-1970s. According to Harvey (2007), neoliberalism received intellectual legitimacy when Hayek received the Nobel Prize. The prior dominant model, rooted in Keynesian capitalism, became unsustainable. As the primary capitalist force, the United States initiated the development of a new dominant paradigm termed neoliberalism. Hare depicts the emerging hegemonic mentality by attributing fictional statements to Paul Wolfowitz: "I consider myself conceptual. I am willing to re-examine entire precepts of U.S. foreign policy" (Hare, 2004, p.5). Paul Wolfowitz personifies the archetype of the new millennium, symbolizing the trajectory of neoliberalization throughout history. Wolfowitz emphasizes that the neoconservatives aim to shift the equilibrium between coercion and consent, heralding a new era of neoliberalization.

Tony Blair makes his debut on the stage expresses his sentiments. He mentions his particular resentment towards the assumption that identifying "Neanderthal elements" (Hare, 2004, p.7) in the Labour party equates to discovering the genuine essence of the party. In this scene, Hare deliberately references Blair's words to underscore the transformation of the Labour Party from its roots as a working-class-focused organization. As noted by Harvey (2007), the Labour Party once took a principled stand by refusing to send soldiers to Vietnam, thereby preventing the UK from experiencing upheaval resulting from involvement in an unfavourable war. However, the advent of 'New Labour' saw a departure from this legacy, as they chose to involve in the US intervention to Iraq. Labour Party was determined to do whatever it took to be in power, as exemplified by Tony Blair's statement that he "did not join the Labour Party to join a party of protest" (Hare, 2004, p.8).

President George Bush makes his initial entrance, joining seven key characters on stage. During his first appearance, Bush directly addresses the audience with a verbatim dialogue:

**Bush:** My faith frees me. Frees me to put the problem of the moment in proper perspective. Frees me to make decisions which others might not like. Frees me to enjoy life and not worry about what comes next (Hare, 2004, pp.8-9)

Hare explicitly references a specific excerpt from the book, *A Charge to Keep: My Journey to the White House* by George Bush. For his debut, Hare deliberately selects Bush's words with a focus on his religious perspective. Throughout the play, Hare consistently incorporates Bush's language and statements, conveying Bush's sentiment that "I feel like God wants me to run for president" (Hare, 2004, p.9) anticipating a future event where his country will require leadership. The monologue attributed to Bush is an exact transcript extracted from a public interview conducted in 1999 between George W. Bush and James Robinson, an American journalist. Hare intentionally chooses Bush's opening statements for the play, underscoring Bush's conviction that his presidency is part of a godly plan above all earthly plans. Despite Bush's conviction in divine intervention in US politics, his presidency is fundamentally rooted in the ideology of Neoconservatism. By verbatim quoting Bush's public statements, David Hare aims to underscore the neoconservative ideological stance of his administration.

According to Harvey (2007), neoconservatives in the US advocate for capitalist power and privatisation. This ideology aligns seamlessly with the neoliberalism, scepticism towards democracy, and the preservation of market principles. In this regard, Steger and Roy (2010) assert that neoconservatives support a permanent and extensive application of both military and economic power to advance the causes of free speech, markets, and democracy. With an analysis of the prevailing "power structures" (Oliva, 1988, p.10) in mind, David Hare sets the stage for his main dramatic discussion and introduces the primary characters of his play.

In his publication titled *The New Imperialism*, Harvey elucidates the connection between the notion of freedom and the US Foreign Policy. He explains that, in the realm of international relations, the United States positioned itself as the primary defender of freedom, interpreted in the context of free markets, and the protection of private property rights. The U.S. extended economic and military support to property-owning classes or political and military elites wherever they were situated. Harvey's explanation highlights that freedom holds significance when it is harnessed in favour of the processes of neoliberalism. Harvey (2007) states that neoliberalism distinguishes between favourable and unfavourable freedoms. He draws upon Karl Polanyi's (1957) perspective that societies cannot function without power and compulsion, and that force plays a role in the world. Harvey contends that over time, liberal or neoliberal utopias inevitably transition into states characterized by authoritarianism. When referencing Bush's public speech, where he states, "as the greatest power on earth we [the US] have an obligation to help the spread of freedom" (Bush 2004), he identifies parallels with Polanyi's ideas. It becomes apparent that in order to uphold a neoliberal state, the utilization of military power is necessary, and this becomes a topic of conversation during the fifth scene on the stage.

In the neoliberal order, the utilization of military power is unavoidable. However, the central debate revolves around whether this militaristic approach will be implemented with public consent or coercion. David Hare introduces this topic in the seventh scene. The scene starts with Bush telling a story to a group of kids in a nursery school. Following that, an actor comes forward and relay

information regarding the events of the 9/11 attacks. Amidst the presence of young children, Bush receives information from a staff and subsequently states: "Make no mistake. The United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts." (Hare, 2004, p.16).

By incorporating kindergarten kids into the portrayal of the 9/11 attacks, Hare consciously chooses this setting. Children are powerful symbols of the future, freedom, and the preservation of these values is deemed vital across cultures, particularly in American society. The decision to resort to militaristic options is always accompanied by tragedy, and the use of deadly weapons for political purposes necessitates compelling justifications. Harvey (2007) emphasizes that Neoliberalism may also employ military means to enforce its principles, as seen in the operations of the IMF in Mozambique and financial dealings in Chile. According to David Harvey (2003b), neoliberalism extends beyond being solely an economic program; it also seeks to establish an ideological foundation to make the market system dominant. As previously mentioned, neoliberalization often strives to integrate its principles and actions through consent rather than coercion within any given social structure. The choice depends on the specific country's society, economy, and military where neoliberalism seeks to operate.

In scene thirteen the U.S. intends to engage the UN for new inspections of weapons and advocate for stringent consequences unless Iraq cooperates. The subsequent National Security Council meeting focuses on crafting a new resolution for the United Nations. Vice President Dick Cheney expresses reservations about this initiative, but Bush is determined to shift responsibility to Kofi Annan, stating, "We put the monkey on Kofi Annan's back" (Hare, 2004, p.59). Bush's strategic decision unfolds, dispersing responsibility in the halls of the United Nations.

According to Harvey (2003a), neoconservative Bush government associates freedom with free market and endeavours to promote this principle through voluntary agreement. When unable to globalize the neoliberal ideology by consent, the US is willing to utilize its military strength. This marks the moment when the Bush administration introduces the concept of new imperialism. Under the guise of promoting global prosperity and development, the new imperialism enforces institutional frameworks that could include political coercion or military intervention. Scene fifteen depicts a strained diplomatic confrontation between De Villepin, the French representative, and Colin Powell. De Villepin advocates for two separate resolutions in the United Nations— one focused on disarmament and a second, if deemed necessary, for military action. Powell expresses clear frustration with this proposition and concludes his turn with a warning: "I warn you now, don't vote for the first unless one day you're going to be ready to vote for a second. We'd take that very badly" (Hare, 2004, p.76).

In the context of neoliberalism, transnational corporations and the state apparatus closely resemble each other. Corporate profit goals become intertwined with a country's economic growth objectives, leading to the deployment of various military capabilities by the state to assist companies in exploring new markets. This pursuit of new markets and the global expansion of neoliberalism may potentially give rise to new conflicts. The exploitation subterranean resources like oil reserves or the establishment of centres for technological innovation, and the degradation of soils are seen as consequences of neoliberal policies, referred to as "war calamities" (Harvey, 2007: p.37). Harvey (2007) highlights the Halliburton case as a clear example of the most evident wrongdoing committed

by the neoliberal state. This view is shared by David Hare, who incorporates the purported connection to Dick Cheney's Halliburton, a multinational oil company, as a crucial aspect in his play. *An Actor*, a character in the play, revealed that Cheney continues to receive deferred compensation and possesses over 433,000 stock options, originally valued at \$241,498, but now totalling \$8 million. An actor also mentioned that Halliburton has secured no-bid contracts in Iraq, amounting to "10 billion dollars" (Hare, 2004, pp.117).

Initially, Dick Cheney refutes the accusations. Nevertheless, according to Harvey (2003a), it is revealed that "Halliburton, Vice-President Cheney's former company, is set to gain nearly a billion dollars in oil services contracts immediately after the war" (p.18). In his play, David Hare incorporates a piece of Cheney's speech from a 2003 TV show, where Hare exposes the falsehood expressed publicly by Cheney, presented through a performance. Evidently, Hare aims at speaking "the truth in public is thus directly responsive to politicians' inability or unwillingness to do the same" (Megson and Rebellato, 2007, p.240). Hare's perspective is that neoliberalism corrupts nearly every structure, utilizing them solely for capitalist objectives, it also corrupts individuals for the same end. Ultimately, Hare characterizes Dick Cheney as a man in politics who advances the interests of the corrupt capitalist ruling class through the process of neoliberalism. This depiction is exemplified by a disgraceful lie uttered before millions. However, Hare intends to reveal that the deceitfulness extends beyond just Cheney's lies.

In his book *Blue Touch Paper* (2015), Hare has been in New York when discussions revolved around civil rights, Vietnam, and revolution. However, he observes that nowadays, based on what he overhears, conversations seem to be entirely self-centred (p.240). Hare is well aware of a profound psychological transformation that has taken place in American society. This shift in the collective psyche, characterized by a paranoid mind-set, cannot be solely attributed to the 9/11 attacks. The primary catalyst for this psychology is the widespread imposition of neoliberal ideology on a global scale, particularly within the media landscape, spanning almost four decades. Media outlets, often influenced by neoliberal elites, consistently support the interests of the neoliberal upper classes. For instance, during the Iraq occupation, as Harvey (2003a) claims, all Murdoch Media Companies, supposedly run by independent newsagents, unanimously advocated for the war.

The establishment of neoliberal dominance can occur through either consent or coercion, depending on the prevailing circumstances. The occupation of Iraq by the United States was a clear example of military force being used. Nevertheless, the transnational upper classes, seeking to implement neoliberalism for capitalist exploitation, found it necessary to resort to deception when dealing with their own citizens. Consequently, they launched a massive propaganda campaign through both private and state sector representatives, which had embraced neoliberal principles. The media, under control of transnational monopolies, played a pivotal role in facilitating these propaganda efforts. As emphasized by Harvey (2003a), troubled regions like Afghanistan are presented as in need of foreign intervention and control. This propaganda had a significant impact, as Hare points out that "in 2005, forty-seven percent of the American electorate still believed that Saddam Hussein was directly involved in planning the 9/11 attacks" (Hare, 2004, p.119). In the concluding scene, Hare gives voice to an Iraqi exile, who shared that their family had left Iraq 17 years ago, expressing a yearning for the downfall of the dictator. While in exile, they actively worked

towards that goal. However, according to them, Donald Rumsfeld's statement, "Stuff happens," struck them as the most racist remark they had ever heard. The exile pondered whether the vacuum created was intentional. They found it incomprehensible that those who came to save them had no plans. Iraqi Exile highlighted the recorded count of American casualties with draped coffins but questioned the lack of figures for Iraqi deaths, especially among civilians, emphasizing that their losses remain uncounted.

In the concluding moments of the play, David Hare intends for the audience to recollect an Iraqi exile. As in *Via Dolorosa*, which "addresses the history of the conflict through the eyes of Israelis and Palestinians" (Biçer, 2023, p. 142), Hare tries to tell what happened in the Iraq War through the eyes of the local people. Iraqi Exile was a dissident under the Saddam regime, actively working to overthrow it over time. However, the exile now highlights the emergence of a transnational tyranny in place of a local assault. Hare emphasizes that imperialism has been driven by fresh economic ambitions, precisely when Neoliberalism reached its pinnacle and began to decline, inflicting new hardships on the Middle East in the form of this new imperialism.

#### **PRIVATIZATION AS A NEOLIBERAL TOOL AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SOLIDARITY: *THE PERMANENT WAY***

*The Permanent Way*, a play first performed in 2003, presents a scathing critique of neoliberal privatization processes applied to the British rail system. David Hare formed the play by engaging numerous meetings with passengers and railway experts to draw from their memories and experiences, incorporating parts of these interviews into the play. Hare's portrayal of railway privatization is seen as controversial, and *The Permanent Way* features fictional responses to the train accidents occurred in real life, including the Hatfield and the Southall train crashes. The play also encompasses diverse perspectives from individuals directly or indirectly associated with British railway operations. Terry Eagleton (2013) emphasizes the significance of openings in comprehending the quality of literary works. Hare begins *The Permanent Way* with a powerful statement from a railway customer: "Britain, yeah, beautiful country, shame we can't run a railway" (Hare, 2003, p.3). This opening line encapsulates Hare's fundamental objection, highlighting that Britain's railway system is not managed effectively. According to Hare, the responsibility for this situation lies squarely with society itself. To underscore this point, Hare purposely employs the word 'we' as the subject of the sentence.

In the following scene, Passenger 4 expresses frustration with the Labour Party, accusing them of neglecting their crucial responsibility in addressing the issues with the railways. Despite being traditionally seen as a strong advocate for public transport, the Labour has failed to tackle the serious problems affecting the railway systems. Passenger 4 suggests that this failure might be driven by the fear of receiving criticism from the Daily Mail, a major tabloid of British conservatives, indicating that the newspaper's stance could influence the party's policies. This transformation in the Labour Party can be traced back to the post-Thatcherism era, during which they shifted towards free-market practices, abandoning socialist politics. This change, often referred to as 'New Labour', viewed economic matters through neoliberal lenses. Tony Blair's statement about not "undoing

Thatcherism" (Darnton, 1996) further underscores this shift. Hare's reference to a serious criticism in the Daily Mail suggests a notable policy change in the Labour Party principles.

Berlinski (2011) argues that former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, as a precursor of neoliberalism, staunchly defended the proposal, asserting that there were no viable alternatives to free-market capitalism. According to Steger and Roy (2010), privatization had been the primary motive in Thatcher's implementation of neoliberal policies. Thatcher's administration pursued a strategy of privatization to weaken the influence of organized labor and dismantle established bureaucratic structures. This resulted in the privatization of almost all public assets and institutions, including significant entities like British Aerospace, British Rail, British Steel, and British Petroleum.

David Marsh (1991) explains that Thatcher governments employed privatization as a means to achieve various objectives, including reducing public spending, regulating the money supply, and lowering income taxes. For example, the Thatcher government launched a program to privatize social housing in the UK, and the Housing Act of 1980 is highlighted by Harvey (2007) as a landmark application of Thatcherism. Under this act, council house residents were offered the opportunity to purchase their rented houses with a specific discount, which was presented as a beneficial move for the lower classes.

Hare's criticism lies in the Labour Party's lack of effort in preventing conservative party governments, like those of Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) and John Major (1990-1997), from pursuing railway privatization instead of enhancing public services. Passenger 5 adds to this conversation, highlighting the neglect of railways by contemporary governments compared to other sectors like education and health. The story of Passenger 5's neighbour, a bank officer involved in the privatization of British railways, illustrates that privatization has resulted in increased profits for capitalists, but it has not led to improved train services, with delays being a common issue. Hare's stance is against privatization, as he believes it has not produced positive outcomes in terms of service improvement. Instead, he says that privatization has primarily benefited owners by increasing the profits, aligning with the principles of the neoliberal economy, where privatization serves as a significant economic tool. Passenger 9, a character in the play, asserts that their father always maintained, "There's no free lunch and there is no free market" (Hare, 2003, p.7) and in their view, the father was correct. According to them, there is no such thing as a free market; it is consistently manipulated, and the manipulation favours those who control the market. Passenger 9 describe the market as a dishonest casino where the house always comes out on top. According to them, one way or another, the taxpayer bears the cost of the railways. Passenger 9 point out that when the railways were publicly owned, the Treasury did not adequately subsidize them, arguing that it considered them inefficient due to public ownership

Passenger 9 contends that the foundational principle of neoliberalism, the free market concept, is absent. In Passenger 9's view, the notion of deregulating markets consistently favours the elite class. The free market principle is likened to a slot machine where the house invariably triumphs. Criticism is also directed towards governments for their insufficient backing of railways during periods of public ownership. This leads Passenger 9 to insinuate that these methods have rendered railways non-functional. Moreover, Passenger 9 expresses frustration that even after privatization, taxpayers continue to subsidize railways. This stands as a source of anger considering that one of

the primary assertions made by proponents of privatization is the alleviation of the tax burden on citizens.

In order to persist, neoliberalism must gain control over the ideological machinery of nations and the pathways of international exchanges. This imperative gradually gives rise to a novel structure of the state. As described by Bobbitt (2011), this configuration is termed a market-state system, characterized by the reorganization of global markets along transnational patterns. Similarly, Harvey (1989) designates this form of governance as the neoliberal state. Steger and Roy (2010) outline a set of criteria defining the characteristics of a neoliberal state. Among these criteria, one of the most pivotal is the assurance of partial fiscal restraint. A neoliberal state is also responsible for addressing issues like eliminating budget deficits, fostering financial liberalization, allowing market-determined interest rates, and safeguarding property rights. Advocates of neoliberalism strongly emphasize that only through market freedom can wealth and prosperity be attained. They assert that the invisible regulatory force of the market, often referred to as the 'invisible hand', possesses the capability to manage the intricacies of economic dynamics. Neoliberal thinkers rely on Adam Smith's depiction of the market, believing that this concealed influence within the market has the capacity to govern all aspects of economic processes.

According to Harvey (2007), in theory, neoliberalism opposes interventionist economic theories such as Keynesianism or state capitalism. Nonetheless, practical realities have unfolded since the waning years of the exuberant 1990s. Post the turn of the millennium, governments of neoliberal states have displayed a departure from merely adhering to unhindered market mechanisms. Alternatively, they aim to leverage the market to reinforce their own domestic political standings, as noted by Bremmer (2009). This implies the cessation of market deregulation. As an example, Mishkin (2011) mentions that on September 16, 2008, the Federal Reserve intervened by providing an \$85 billion loan to ensure the stability of AIG. According to a report by Tom Braithwaite in *The Financial Times* in 2015, the United States' open markets are being disrupted by the government, which is disregarding the interests of investors. As evidenced by the provided examples, the concept of allowing markets to operate without regulation through an unseen force has crumbled in the period following the year 2000. Hare emphasizes this reality through the dialogue of his character, passenger 9.

High-Powered Treasury Thinker provides a comprehensive overview of the historical context of British Rail privatization and meticulously describes the step-by-step process involved. High-powered Treasury thinker remarked that when it came to the railways, the challenges became more intricate. Thatcher's perspective was consistently pragmatic: "They don't make money; let's wait until they make money and then let's privatize them" (Hare, 2003, pp.11-12). The sentiment was not necessarily hostile; rather, like many others, she did not view them as a particularly pleasant mode of travel. According to High-powered Treasury thinker, only seven percent of the population utilizes railways, as they are not the preferred choice unless necessary. The Treasury team was clear in their stance not to replace a public monopoly with a private one, drawing from the lesson of the unsuccessful privatization of telephones. Their solution was to separate the track from the trains and introduce competitive franchises for the operational companies, culminating in the concept of Railtrack.

High-Powered Treasury Thinker highlights that the privatization of railways has its roots in the Thatcher era, where railways were not regarded as essential public transport. Although the Thatcher government refrained from privatizing British Rail at the time, it was because they believed it would not yield significant profits. Thatcher's perspective, famously stating that there is no such thing as society, led to the evaluation of public services based on their profitability, negatively affecting service quality and eroding social cohesion over the long term. The strategy encouraged a focus on personal self-interest and a rejection of collective societal obligations, resulting in a deterioration of unity and bordering on societal disorder and nihilism, as noted by David Harvey (2007). In the context of the play, Hare emphasizes the dissolving nature of Thatcherism through the government administrator's words. Instead of creating a private monopoly, they adhered to the neoliberal concept of promoting competitiveness and decided to privatize the railway services in segments. This led to the sale of the railroad infrastructure to around seventy different companies. Among these companies, the High-Powered Treasury Thinker draws particular attention to Railtrack. This choice became significant as the first technical problems following privatization emerged, falling under the responsibility of Railtrack.

The foundation of the free market system primarily relies on private enterprises. In a neoliberal state, the entrepreneurial spirit is seen as the driving force behind individual prosperity and national progress. Consequently, state enterprises undergo deregulation, and competition becomes a central virtue in various aspects, including between individuals, businesses, and territorial enterprises, as pointed out by Harvey (2007). Leading Entrepreneur, another character in the play, takes the stage and mentions that they have bought on the railways as they enjoy challenges, considering it an interesting one. The goal is to enhance the entire travel experience, making it more akin to an airline with a greater focus on customer satisfaction. For instance, while on a new train named Peridalinos, they noticed that "there was no hot milk" (Hare, 2003, p.22). Hare portrays the Leading Entrepreneur in an extravagant manner, emphasizing his highly materialistic approach to captivate the audience's full attention. The entrepreneur's view on privatization, a polemical subject that profoundly impacts the lives of numerous labourers, is reduced to what can be compared to a hunting party. The Leading Entrepreneur envisions a railway service that prioritizes customer satisfaction, driven by a personal experience where he encountered the absence of hot milk during one of his trips. This might appear absurd, yet Hare intentionally draws attention to a significant mind-set – entrepreneurship. This mode of thinking involves the establishing an organization that translates economic considerations into liberal values by integrating production factors to offer goods or services. It involves taking psychological, social and financial risks in the pursuit of both economic and personal satisfaction, as described by Stevenson and Jarillo (2007).

Privatization significantly impacts the working conditions of the employees, a topic naturally addressed by David Hare in *The Permanent Way*. Rustin' Hoffman, a railway labourer, expresses concern about subcontracting on the Stansted Express Train Service, stating that "it's all subcontracting. You don't actually know who the fuck you work for" (Hare, 2003, p.23). Sven, another worker in the play, expresses dissatisfaction with the extended working hours and substantial workload, leading to physical strain and reliance on pain medication (Hare 2003). Lastly, the Rail Union Leader discusses the current labor situation. Overall, the play highlights the

challenges and consequences of railway privatization, particularly in relation to the working class, shedding light on the unequal impact of these policies on different social classes, favouring the ruling class. Union leader claims workers' income has gradually decreased over the years and accuses privatisation by saying that "23. Always the same, always goes with privatisation: a two-tier system. There's chronic low pay throughout the industry and endemic overtime factors" (Hare, 2003, p.34). Each worker reports a gradual deterioration in their working circumstances. The unsatisfactory and challenging work environment has started to impact their physical situation, and the precarious and flexible working conditions are contributing to a decline in their psychological well-being. As a consequence, significant unrest emerges within the working class, which represents a considerable majority in the society.

Ultimately, the unequal distribution of income among different social layers negatively affects social unity. Prior to the neoliberalization of global markets, Howard and King (2008) that organized labor wielded substantial influence, and government intervention gained enough backing to mitigate market dependence whenever it jeopardized the social rights of citizens. However, with the implementation of neoliberal precarization policies, Thatcherism strategically aimed and successfully weakened the bargaining power of all trade unions, which Margaret Thatcher referred to as "the enemy within" (Ross 2013). In order to accomplish this, the process of neoliberalization initially aimed to break down traditional classes into subclasses. To Harvey (2007), the participants in capitalist endeavours included chief executive officers (CEOs), influential figures serving on corporate individuals within the legal, technical, financial realms closely associated with this core domain of capitalist operations. Conversely, the working class underwent subdivision into several subcategories, including part-time, subcontracting and full-time workers. Consequently, while the ruling classes strengthened their position through professionalized experts, organized labour experienced a diminishing influence due to internal conflicts within unions and the oppressive conditions stemming from precarization.

The last scenes, Hare illustrates that the survivors' group has fragmented, mirroring the fate of the railway union that once represented the collective power of workers. Neoliberalism, the prevailing ideology since 1970s, prioritized individualism over collective solidarity. The successive British governments, including the Thatcher government, the Conservative John Major's government, and finally, Blair's Labour Party government, consistently adhered to this fundamental neoliberal principle. Consequently, public resources owned by the public were swiftly privatized, while NGO's or trade unions to safeguard the public interests were undermined and rendered ineffective by government policies. Historical support for the upper classes led these states to dismantle structures that could challenge such policies.

Legislation was realigned by the British governments to support these neoliberal objectives, including severe interference to the trade unions and their protests. The 1984-85 miners' strike serves as an example of such intervention, where the Thatcher Government mobilized vast physical, financial, and propagandist resources in favour of the National Coal Board, leading to a significant setback of the National Union of Mineworkers. Following this, the labour associations lost much of its bargaining power, and the privatization applications gained momentum, resulting in the erosion of social solidarity networks and eventual social decay. Hare delves into the reasons behind these

outcomes, emphasizing the weakening of the working class and oppressed organizations. Neoliberalism is identified as the primary driver of this social disintegration. Hare portrays dissenting perspectives emerging from marginalised segments of society; nevertheless, these viewpoints frequently encounter limited success due to the lack of political capacity in organizations like trade unions or worker's associations to effect substantial change for the benefit of citizens. Neoliberal policies have reinforced individualism and precarious work for increased profit, contributing to the disarray among labour and social disintegration.

## CONCLUSION

This work delves into David Hare's plays and their critique of neoliberalism. The English playwright has long been known for his criticisms of the UK. His major works vividly depict social disorders, encompassing cultural, social, ideological, and dialectical boundaries. Considering the dominance of neoliberalism in world politics for nearly four decades, it comes as no surprise that Hare's dramas incorporate this ideology. The thesis concentrates on specific plays written during periods of neoliberal dominance in Western capitalism. The chosen plays, penned in the 2000s, offer substantial criticism of neoliberal policies. The analysis aims to understand the dialectical relations between these plays, the societies they reflect, and the perceptually dominant neoliberalism. David Hare fearlessly dramatizes significant political developments and their effects on international society. He critiques neoliberalism for eroding the social unity and exacerbating economic and social injustices in Western society. The study examines how Hare's criticism of neoliberalism is interwoven into his plays. The plays are analysed under two themes: From Neoliberalism to New Imperialism and Dissolution of Social Integrity.

Keynesian policies once dominated international politics, resulting in birth of the welfare state in the UK, Continental Europe, and the U.S. During this era, there was an enhancement in the caliber of rights, wages and social services for the labourers, leading to a shift towards the middle classes in advanced capitalist countries. However, with the crisis of the 1970s, alternative theories began challenging Keynesianism, culminating in the rise of neoliberalism. Neoliberal theorists sought to integrate capitalist principles such as market competition, capital accumulation and free-market. Neoliberalism, as a reaction to Keynesianism, advocated for minimal state intervention in the economy, emphasizing the invisible hand of market over state regulations. This led to the dismantling of Welfare State institutions in favour of creating an entrepreneurial society where the state acts more like a business enterprise. Neoliberalism prioritizes market freedom, associating it with prosperity and the freedom of individuals. However, this ideology also results in the exploitation of workers as human capital, leading to the destruction of social rights by governments.

In *Stuff Happens*, Hare presents various neoliberal propaganda employed in neoliberalism to shape perceptions across various societal strata, serving to create a neoliberal deception. He argues that freedom is vital in the context of neoliberalism, yet he distinguishes between good and bad freedoms within neoliberalism. Hare suggests that neoliberal utopias eventually lead to violence and authoritarianism, with military force being the means to maintain the neoliberal regime. Consequently, Hare suggests that this course of action was chosen by Bush. Furthermore, he explores a psychological shift toward a paranoid logic driven by the neoliberal ideology that had

been propagated worldwide, especially by media outlets, for almost fifty years before the Iraq War. Hare offers instances of media propaganda in both UK and the U.S., highlighting how any issue aligned with the interests of the neoliberal upper classes garners support from media magnates. He also delves into the historical context of US hegemony to reveal the lies of the Bush Cabinet and expose the manipulation of the audience by neoliberal ideological propaganda.

The play also portrays the political support of the Labour Party for the Iraqi occupation. David Hare argues that under the leadership of Tony Blair, the Labour Party, once associated with socialist policies, embraced neoliberalism and backed the US-led occupation as the leader of the international capitalist system. Neoliberalism, according to Hare, successfully influenced various social entities in the developed capitalist world, including democratic leftist organizations like the Labour Party, historically opposed to neoliberal principles.

The play also addresses the themes of paranoid logic post 9/11 attacks and the idea of a permanent war on terror as part of its critique of neoliberalism. Hare suggests that the Bush government capitalized on the post-9/11 paranoid social psychology to generate consent for their actions. Through dialogues, Hare argues that neoliberalism is not solely an economic program but also an ideological instrument aimed at establishing the hegemony of the market system. Neoliberalism aims to secure its principles and actions not primarily through coercion but by avoiding integration into any social mechanism without consent. Hare incorporates the 9/11 terrorist attacks into the play because he believes that a sinister plan lies behind them. He implies that the ideological foundation of the Iraq invasion is connected to the 9/11 attacks. The play heavily criticizes the notion of a preventive war on terrorism, contending that it has been employed to rationalize the establishment of a neoliberal, market-driven state wherein the administration wields unchecked power.

The second play examined in this study is *The Permanent Way*. It serves as a critique of neoliberal privatization applications in the British national rail system. Hare, during the play's preparation process, extensively engaged in meetings with individuals and experts, incorporating pieces of interviews into the play. Hare highlights the neglect of railways by politicians in comparison to health and education services, presenting an anti-privatization stance. According to him, privatization policies aimed at improving railway services did not yield positive outcomes, but instead, they boosted capitalists' profits, given privatization's role as a crucial economic instrument of the neoliberal economy.

Thatcherism, driven by the goal of neoliberalization, privatized numerous state organizations and assets in the UK to diminish the political resilience of organized labour. This included key public entities like British Aerospace, British Steel, and British Rail. David Hare disapproves of that kind of ideological stance, viewing privatization as a means to weaken trade union power and erode societal solidarity mechanisms. Thatcher aimed to diminish the size, bargaining power, and policy impact of the working class through privatization, as illustrated in the play. The apprehension of potential unemployment due to economic conditions instilled anxiety among workers, leading to the retreat of trade unions and facilitating Thatcherism's major policies. Through *The Permanent Way*, David Hare aims at stressing the fact that the uneven distribution of capital between social classes negatively affects the social structure.

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Rumlar Etnisite ve Kimlik



Günce Yayınları

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Yaşamı, Yapıtları, Sanatı

H. Yasemin Mumcu



Günce Yayınları

**FAİK ÂLİ OZANSOY**

YAŞAM ÖYKÜSÜ, YAPITLARI VE ŞAIRLİĞİ

DOÇ. DR. SEVİM KARABELA ŞERMET



Günce Yayınları

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