

# Chapter 1

## A MIRROR HELD UP TO 'PAST' AND 'FUTURE': HOWARD BRENTON'S *THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN*

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### Introduction

It is a general postulation that literature mirrors the different encounters, thoughts, interests, and experiences of individuals and the societies they belong to. As Laurenson and Swingewood (1972) point out, literature focuses primarily on the social world of man, and the desire to adapt and transform it. Thus, drama, one of the greatest artistic types of mechanical society, can be seen as a selfless effort to revive the social universe of family relations, community, state issues, and its relationship with the state. For that reason, as Duhan (2015) states, literature is not only a reflection of society, but also a corrective mirror where community members can look after themselves and need positive change. "It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 75).

Howard Brenton, a leading playwright in Britain, discusses colonialism, expansionism, cultural violence, and the results of the invasions in his *The Romans in Britain*. The violence and oppression that we face at the global level today make it not only valid for the time it was written, but also for present and the future. Discussing how societies are transformed into colonies focusing on the need and importance of solidarity among the social groups in the society so that they can resist the invading forces, it makes for us possible to understand the similar events of present time and the future.

Our study focuses on the events in *The Romans in Britain* as an example of the invasions in human history and tries to evaluate if there are any similarities between the invading forces of the past and present. We will also examine if the communities, societies or the countries which were invaded have some common characteristics which make it easier for the invading forces to take the control of the targeted countries. The influences of the invasion on the culture, belief and structure of the society will be other points that we will focus on to understand if they are transitory or permanent, giving examples from the invasions of Britain and Ireland as reflected in the work, and the invasion of Iraq by USA.

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this, it will not be possible to understand the general characteristics of today's societies. The diplomats or politicians, who are in charge of dealing with the many cultural and social crises that we face today, are far from the necessary historical awareness. The use of violence to overcome these problems further complicates matters and undermines people's confidence in each other and the system. Many people are unaware of what we are dealing with today, a deep historical development, and they are not aware of their own ignorance either (Woodcock, 1962). For this reason, writers, thinkers, and scientists who claim that we should reconsider the history to understand and evaluate today's events better are exposed to the treatment of naughty children in society. Because the measures to be taken based on false and incomplete information will probably be ineffective, it will not work nothing more than by intensifying the problems.

So, when we ask ourselves the question of what is the most valid and effective way of reconsidering history, we will have "literary works" will be the answer as the work we have studied suggests. Brenton wants to offer an alternative to the official history that imperialist powers have shaped and imposed on humanity. And the best way to achieve this goal is to encourage people to rethink this issue by addressing historical events and beliefs.

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