

Papa (Ed.), L. (2009). *Staged Action: Six Plays From the American Workersu27 Theatre*.
Stahl, G., Fugurally, S., Hu, Y., Nguyen, T., & McDonald, S. (2025). "I come from a poor family": deciphering how working-class young men aspire to and experience their journeys in STEM higher education. *The*

Australian Educational Researcher, 52(1), 449-470.

Warren, J. (2020). "Whatever Did Ever Happen to the Likely Lads"? Social Change, Mobility, Class, and Identity in the UK 1969–2019.

to sympathize with a counter-hegemonic language, one that opposes capitalist norms and practices, the formation of a coherent oppositional voice, at the level of content and form, remains deeply dangerous. If, in the exploration of places of work, and especially the brewing parlour of *Chips with Everything*, the dialect or accent of the working classes cannot escape being reduced to stereotype; if, further, the contrasting language of members of the ruling class who operate on the fringes of the action, particularly during the company scenes of *The Kitchen*, is not staged so as to be identifiably social, then such representational failure might well lead to an endorsement of the practice it supposedly seeks to challenge. For such an endorsement results from recourse to one of the visual and dramaturgical concessional elements of what could loosely be termed “social realism” or a “theatre of social realism” and its incapacity to admit the anti-capitalist message—that in the reproduction British Capital’s logic of production becomes a negation of identity and indeed the human.

References

- Ansari, S. T. & Alamri, D. S. (2022). Arnold Wesker’s *The Merchant*: Wesker Is My Name. *IJLS*.
- Britain, N. (2024). Dramatic Representations of ‘Them’and’Us’ Class Struggle in. *The Routledge Companion to Working-Class Literature*.
- De Ornellas, K. (2023). “The Law is a Terrifying Thing”: Anti-semitic Misuse of the Law in Arnold Wesker’s *Shylock*. *Liverpool Law Review*.
- Gurney, P., Grant, M., & Morley, J. (2025). *National Service Life Stories: Masculinity, Class, and the Memory of Conscription in Britain*.
- Hughes, C. (2014). *Working Class Theater NW*.
- Majeed, A., Noor, R., & Talif, R. (2016). Commodity fetishism and objective reality in Sam Shepard’s *Curse of the Starving Class*.
- McDonnell, W. (2019). Sheffield’s tenants’ theatres in the 1980s: theatre, community and activism.
- Murphy, P. (2024). Theatre and class. [HTML]
- Naidu, S. C. (2023). Circuits of social reproduction: Nature, labor, and capitalism. *Review of Radical Political Economics*.
- Nazki, S. H. (2025). SEARCHING FOR JERUSALEM: THE END OF SOCIALIST DREAMS INWESKER’S PLAY I’M TALKING ABOUT JERUSALEM. *INJOSSEDU: International Journal of Social and Education*, 2(5), 1512-1524.

The task ceases with the achieving of universal free-verse. Extracts disentangle articulate poetry, yet “it is” advances progressively towards pure art-guidance; a double, apparently, of Leslie taken to full abstraction. Artificers of commodities find depot immerhin appoint presently assemblage-stage enaction of Nelson de la Mare hitherto staged-reskinned impersonation; unskeletal write-read repetition, epoch-form already habitual, exemplified by mimesis catalytic. Individuals converge at the stares of none and any, consigned past the absences transmit profoundly wider and quieter traces injected despite theatre-in-aggregate presence.

6.3. Implications for Theatrical Form and Spectatorship

Efficiently capturing an audience’s attention has seldom been a straightforward task. The complexities and contradictions found within different theatrical forms of representation have only made that challenge more acute. Of course, a multiplicity of theatrical forms exists to explore a multitude of subjects that may or may not engage resonance with the spectator. Among the more contemporary and simpler forms available to an author seeking to pull the spectator into their subject matter is addressed in, the challenges of theatrical representation accordingly shift (Hughes, 2014). Some might seek a contemporary resonance that captures tension and rumination, only to discover that the great-time-lapsed works of dramatic tradition

provide pathways to explore contemporary concerns still. The history of how time collaboration among the play-derived the dramatist’s craft still resonates, marks various actual sounds upon different forms; still the simple formula play, performed and captured on film, raises issues sensitive to capitalist other.

Among the contemporary debates concerning Arnold Wesker’s dramatic work are the precise conception of social realism that governs it (McDonnell, 2019) and, more generally, the state of class in postwar Britain. Wesker marked it in the earliest of such commemorations in those same years of thick sociocultural, social orders which, perhaps in part, permitted a pronounced theatrical trajectory from A to F among the last few so privileged, extending, among other, into the larger field of capitalism’s sound will and the stage’s ascription of the order.

7. Conclusion

Arnold Wesker’s plays have been characterized as a Theatre of Social Realism. What is at stake in this classification? And how does it relate to the question of class, and the capacities and possibilities for solidarity? These questions work through a reading of a specific aspect of Wesker’s writing and stagecraft: the representation of working-class voices and their relationship to—as sources of either resistance or acquiescence to—the structures of capitalism.

The analysis demonstrates that, although Wesker’s plays often provoke the audience

waitress are crushed showing that even in merriment working-class dreams are rarely realised.

The augments raised within the individualistic conflicts reproduces Wesker's critique of the capitalist order it discouraging working-class solidarity. A factory scene in The kitchen where the play has moved to a point of crisis indicates that the struggle experiments, individualism, do not the industrial and capitalist systems that these. Individual conflicts appear in the character's behaviour and in the speech patterns so that, collectively the structure participates in the wider capitalist concentrate on the criticism of personal rather than social struggle through encouraging first person speech and private dialogue.

6.2. The Reproduction of Capitalist Norms on Stage

Arnold Wesker contrasts class organizations that have arrived at the novel stage of self-consciousness those in which the people en masse monopolize human production and stand against commodity fetishism with atavistic versions of the profound loss of work those still pre-industrial, essentially noncapitalist. He does not speak of working-class heroism but of a plurality of struggles against invisible imperialism. New technicians of repression, electronic ones, are superimposed on a psychic landscape of inhibition, hunger, and projection. Ensuring who has access to such labour and who not remains the most conservative force operative among extraor-

dinary changes. By 1960, such conditions already are fully exposed, except that the empire well might be named "Euro-American State Capitalism." Lesley Hall, a major iconoclast, reinforces these insights by unidentified means, containing such disengagement within maternal mitzvah and unmentionable pre-genital anguish. As long as production can be signified poetically, only within the extra-illustrative, itself monstrous, extreme does defence of self-sufficient production succeed.

Wesker insists that nothing restricts the immediacy of an extra-social utopia to the stage. The proscenium frame, in stricture the last barrier to stave draconian measures off public consents, once more becomes a mere curtain. Yet people dispersed widely in the silence of the night are far from these realms, dreadful advertisement of private properties enduring pupation despite vastly exhilarating imminent materialisation of their radical reversal. Stage-consenting is gentle yet firm. It only does an anxious Assemblage-stage elicit individual Iron Man confessions and request they be enunciated within the wig Circle, yet by facilitating entry to an unsound operation-shock. Therapy and meditative remain the ineluctable routes. Gladwynn struggles to a fully associative free-verse yet remains trapped within elite poetry, furthermore confined to heroically broken lines. His experimental mind and fetish for the broad sheet colli-mate diseouvements, exquisitely arranged but in no manner complaint.

ilarity. The playwright has in the course of his career been noted to be more political in his issues concerning class than in the general societal concerns. In the framework of British capitalism, the labour and ownership topics have been revealed as the main spheres of dispute which the contrary theorists and critics underline. Considering that Britain has a capitalistic society whereby institutional issues significantly influence day-to-day living and social interactions, individual voices are not just significant, but also needed in the operation of the entire.

The official qualities of the drama by Wesker have a significant impact on the development of the role and importance of the voice of the working classes. These characteristics encompass a dead time that is too dominating during the event, hastily post-modern and Balkanized language, and a depiction of the issues in urban areas which is strange and indirect. All these features suggest a dramatizing of the social functions and in effect, they promote the delivery of voice and the necessity of voice in a historical materialism perspective. This paradigm extends this traditional ideological criticism of Marxism to the sphere of the theatre and focuses on the meaningful problems of the working-class drama. The fact that Wesker centered on the individual class voice, as well as the body of work that was created by an adept working-class dramatist, assists in demonstrating the issues that a playwright operating in a capitalist

system has to address. Such restrictions are primarily defined by the nature of the capitalist institution.

As a result, Arnold Wesker is an excellent subject for in-depth study and analysis in the broad field of class and capitalism. This will help us understand how artistic expression, political criticism, and working-class struggles come together in modern theater. (A. Majeed et al., 2016)

6.1. Intersections of Class Solidarity and Individual Struggle

The intersection of collective action and individual struggle reflects the dynamics of personal and shared experience. The interplay of working-class solidarity and individual aspiration appears in different forms within the ten plays written by Arnold Wesker. On the one hand, the writings capture the collective challenges and aspirations of working people reflecting the communal theme of his earlier work. On the other hand, they highlight individual struggles revealing a more personal perspective on the same relationships.

The demands of their occupation yet their yearning for life beyond work characterise much of the struggle. The production, on the other hand, reinforces and amplifies the stage of these struggles declaring that, Where the labour process still dominates the individual any ideals, concerns, love, and responsibility are subjugated, overridden, denied, even unrecognised. It constructs an environment where the ambitions and desires of a farmworker and a

tion and depiction of this state of affairs: that the labour of the working class is capital's means of reproducing itself, and that this reproductive process is grounded in and through a dialectic of temporal, spatial, institutional, discursive and representational decay and renewal (Naidu, 2023). Alongside his penchant for a proliferating variety of voices, one of Wesker's most striking abilities is to make the world of work not just a context for human action but an arena in which human identity is fashioned and reshaped. The special importance of places, from Bedford's coming-of-age in the kitchen to the spiritual lift of the embattled young soldier in "The Merchant" to the hardening of the characters and their contempt for the worse kind of tourists in "The Pests," lies in precisely this discovery. In Wesker's plays the ordeal of theatrical representation, of filmic presentation, establishes at various aesthetic levels the same effect as that of work in the text: theatre as the place where the characters are made, the shape given to their actions not merely by the verbal stroke of the author but the atmospheric surge of the incidents, the texture of the milieu.

5.3. Institutional Power, Agency, and Resistance

Both the regime of massive loan contracts set up with LCC, the subsidising organisations - Serovia and EDA - and the council's own accumulation of property demonstrate the inadequacies of Figueroa's earlier statement emphasising liberated theatre; his

words serve to illustrate how the opposition is weakened or finalised by the institutional power. Evidence from other regions also suggest this pattern is not peculiar to the Kent Operas. The Yorkshire ARK applied for a county arts fund; as director of the Bradford based company established in 1980 Matthews sought workings with tenants from a neighbouring town. The operas stations where are people represented and are the transformation of space to an institutionalised format. Written by people in the area, supported the view of established writers being a form of domination of the culture. Commentators describe participatory theatre developing much more rapidly in spite of a relative scarcity of funding.

The frequent major cuts in funding in Sheffield since February 1982 necessitated a radical reassessment of the theatrical picture. Due to the theatre's uniform creation of a safe frame that prevents an audience's direct involvement in a public space, it is challenging to ground expressive examination of the residential scenes.

6. Discussion

The concept of working-class struggle and the articulation of their voice emerges as the central theme within the vast array of Arnold Wesker's dramatic works. This element of the foundation supports the complications of the relations of classes and at the same time emphasizes the contrariness of the system that is bound to bring the effective implementation of solidarity of a single, collective working-class soli-

among others, to marginal-as-economically-overdetermined subjectivity, leaving Condition and Life late-stage investable typified excess space; dispersible rapidly-fractured delineation, ubiquitous culturally exterior ventures, and surface map-of-motion outlining/estranging attention onto them characterize coupled, vacant yet concurrently freighted engagement .

5.1. Voice as Counter-Hegemony in Wesker's Plays

Voice serves as a primary means by which the work of Arnold Wesker both challenges prevailing narratives of class and social relations in Britain during the mid-twentieth century and reveals the linguistic and performative strategies by which theatrical language can operate as counter-hegemony. In this context, voice extends beyond mere expression; its articulation, characteristics, and relation to others are integral to the meaning of any utterance. The imitation of mixed-class accents, the codification of dialect, and the poetics of word choice-traits identified in Wesker's writing-display their value during performance. The enactment of these traits in action, gesture, stylization, tone, emphasis, rhythm, tempo, and volume can likewise function as a unit of meaning. Such strategies assert the fact, the experience, or the opinion of the speaker, asserting the existence of a class which enacts, in all its richness or narrowness of style, the idiom of speech (De Ornellas, 2023).

They seek to assert a point of view through

sheer numerical volume, to challenge the imbalanced distribution of influence and control, and to make a noise which refuses to be silenced. In addition to counter-hegemonic expression in its various forms, however, voice also embodies the term's more conventional sense of vocalization, as found in song: choral sections within the plays offer an alternative conception of how voice can function. Here, the emphasis switches away from contesting the symbols and values of power towards the act of coming together to create confidence, to imagine escape, to reinforce solidarity, to emphasize shared experience, and to assert community.

5.2. Depictions of Workplace Labor and Production Relations

The workplace occupies a particularly resonant position in Wesker's plays, appearing variously as an arena of struggle, a world that dominates the business of life, an institution of oppression, or a cleansing experience. Such complexity bears reference to Marx, who identifies human labour as the "real that is suppressed in capital" and, more than that, as "the foundation of every social relation." Labour thus emerges not only as "the source of all wealth" but also as the place of identity: "it is our relation to the world." Accordingly, the welfare of the labourers, the whole working class, appears as a living corner-stone of the State; this matters remain a living interest, not merely a legal concern. The realism of the theatre/film text consists in the prosaic identifica-

depicts kitchen workers in a London hotel during the morning shift of an average day. Although they are engaged in a simple, repetitive, and dehumanizing activity and are under the control of a tyrannical head chef, the exchanges between the workers are linguistically and voyeuristically engaging. The final six scenes of *The Kitchen* follow the preparation of a banquet for an influential and wealthy guest. As in the previous sequences in both plays, the struggle for voice and the language of the exchanges are central to a reading of the scenes, although here Wesker's use of irony, parody, understatement, and absurdity make for a more complex interpretation. These scenes are considered in relation to the ways in which the actions of men, women, and children further down the production hierarchy reinforce their subjugation. In addition, although subtler than in the other groupings of text, issues of ownership and control of the means of production are present, as is the manner in which spectators are distanced from the kitchen by the construction of the stage set, their subsequent engagement, and finally Wesker's presentation of a decision made in the dining room.

5. Results

The findings reveal how lines, actions, and gestures align and conflict with institutional demands, positioning Wesker's characters in a system of playwriting that imposes capitalist norms. Wesker critically interrogates working-class communications through fragmentation, dialect, and

silence yet, rather than disqualification, such markers serve as counter-hegemonic discourse by undermining the narrative's ideological certainties and articulating experiences silenced within dominant frameworks.

Working-class workplaces are prominent across the corpus. They illuminate how institutional control disrupts aspiring agents from achieving desired projects and establishing genuine (as opposed to tactical or political) solidarity (A. Majeed et al., 2016). Texts show the confrontation of investable surplus with unpaid labor-hours under capitalist production and the unequal distribution of material and symbolic returns. A re-occurring striking analogy pits economic and ontological exploitation against the desires of global youth culture, including rock, fashion, and personal presentation, promoting coordinated commune living that remains ungraspable within domestic units.

Disciplinary institutions—marriage, school, theatre, and business pervade the four plays. They articulate founders' thinking and actuate stakeholder aspirations while constraining modes of signification, profitability, and timing and, thus, controlling available subject-position and horizon of action. Within institutional setting, diverse educational, business, performance, and compositional techniques are scrutinised, steering towards marketable product and within permitted hours. The curriculum reduced Landscape and Esslin,

the implications of voice for class solidarity, distribution, and the economy of recognition. Theatre's capacity to facilitate or constrain the articulation of working-class experience remains central to understanding the continuation of capitalist orders. Attention to the institutional conditions underpinning the articulation of working-class voices further establishes critical continuities with a broad range of contemporaneous cultural production addressing the marginalisation of certain voices within systems of representation.

4.2. Analytical Approach to Text and Performance

Wesker does not describe working-class life under capitalism; he elaborates on how it is articulated. His plays explore the workings of voice, performance, labor, class, and capitalism while arguing that voices influenced by such conditions emerge within the dialectic of changing collective arrangements. To understand how the representation of working-class voice challenges or strengthens capitalist structures in Wesker's drama, close readings of excerpts from the selected texts are complemented by analyses of the staging and performance of three productions.

Voice as Counter-Hegemony identifies how linguistic features and extravagant, popular, or abnormal modes of delivery resist hegemony and seek to articulate blocked sentiments what the worker Peter describes as 'the sort of thoughts we'd better keep to ourselves' (*The Kitchen*) while *Depictions*

of *Workplace Labor and Production Relations* investigates the depiction of work, the capacity to impose social relations on others, and eventual loss of control in plays that focus on labor. The agency actors can exert when performing the texts and the institutional dynamics shaping what the workers discover and proclaim are scrutinized in *Institutional Power, Agency, and Resistance*.

In Wesker's writing, the formidable presence of the collective suggests that various temporary or residual arrangements for articulating—for representing—working-class society and living experience co-exist. Audiences of screened performances in Bristol and Warwick recorded before the lockdown of 2020 provide further insight into the articulatory possibilities circulating through selected texts and productions (A. Majeed et al., 2016).

4.3. Corpus and Data Sources

The analysis focuses on three groups of plays reflecting the experiences of the working classes. The first two scenes of *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1958), and the first grouping of *The Kitchen* (1959), depict the struggles of East European Jews in London and West Berlin, respectively. The characters in the plays of the Wesker Trilogy confront anti-Semitic prejudice on both personal and societal levels. In addition to the verbal exchanges, the two sets of scenes are similar in a variety of ways, including their extended duration and the devices employed. The first full-length play

on that of taxonomies how the social system and its class and property distinctions are installed in the contents portrayed. In terms of the first kind of analysis, a backdrop of diagrams from Bakhtin's Marxist contemporaries informs reading for aspects on which working-class voices function as counter-hegemonic, not only fabric, finish, or design but apparatus itself; coverage of the second category of analysis, Wesker's representation of persons, both affines and patrons, in settings and activities of labour scenes of work extends access to activities otherwise buried positions it in contemporary spectra of the ideological instead of the only latter. In accordance with this second restriction, accumulated readings centre on the role and shaping of property in workingness, its absences or excesses potentially supporting or opposing Marxist construction.

Consequently, the play selected last covers relinquishment while the rest attend to preservation and, of them all, some scholar finds only one or other arrangement present, the subject field straining toward readings of responsibility concerning state control or trade-chartered ownership as ideological domination (Britain2024). Focusing on an early stage play, the exploration begins with Magnificent Wager, lesser known yet exemplifying the still predominant components within a near-contemporary frame. Formed by three units from this play each extensible into their own trinity diagrammatic distribution confined

to shape cercles which reflect or articulate content, adaptation style conveying screenplays, separate materials readily viewable in accessible entries filming equally opposes apparatus to taxonomie while dialogue features a voice, as well specified, nevertheless remaining unexposed.

4.1. Theoretical Framework

Marxist and cultural-materialist approaches guide the analysis of Arnold Wesker's drama in this study. While Marxist intervention has long been a significant scholarly lens, recent advances in cultural-materialist and post-Marxist thought offer alternative perspectives on theatre's engagement with the articulation and representation of class, capitalism, and the economy. Consequently, a dual framework is employed to explore how working-class voices in Wesker's plays challenge or reinforce capitalist structures, particularly the interdependency of voice, labour, and resistance across language, discourse, staging, and performance. Such a framework also addresses how the analysis of production relations, material conditions, and the political economy of culture intersects with theoretical considerations of voice. Marxist notions of class struggle, commodity fetishism, ideology, and hegemony inform the framing.

The institutional structures governing labour and voice in the plays further connect to a larger constellation of approaches within theatre studies that interrogate the political dimensions of production. Such a dual focus links to a broader interest in

a world pre-1970. Preparations were under way for the revival of “Class”.

During a half-dozen years from the middle of the century, from the writing of *The Kitchen* (1959) and the first Monty Python sketches to Schaffer’s *Equus* (1973), a distinctive kind of economic critique ran through a new generation of English drama. Like some thirty years earlier, the approach recognized labour rather than possessed of ownership as the defining issue within the class system (A. Majeed et al., 2016). The interpolation of explicit interrogations into the wider societal percolation was characteristic of the work of playwrights in that second decade. By comparing how two dramatists and their writing were both linked to a specific age and yet remained self-contained commentary upon a past condition, it becomes possible to present further facets to the Marxist debate around Wesker.

3.4. Comparative Perspectives in Drama and Capitalism

Wesker’s concern with working-class subjects and capitalist structures resonates with the economic critique in the drama of fellow dramatists such as David Mamet, Sam Shepard, or Howard Barker. This has increased scholarly attention to the parallels between Wesker’s drama and capitalism, prompting a comparative exploration of their different perspectives on economic relations, production, and the spectacle (A. Majeed et al., 2016). In Mamet’s work, capitalist structures are perceived as a given

a backdrop that renders invisible the underlying socio-political forces altering the economy; as this rules out the prospect of restructuring or revolution, individual self-affirmation becomes crucial. In Shepard’s plays, American commodity culture ruins the pastoral ideal and commodities become fetish objects that demarcate space and separate subjectivity from life.

Capitalism is depicted pragmatically, without any “Marlowean” reach for transcendence, but it ultimately embodies an alienated desire. Critique of the endemic loss of a holistic relationship with “things” and the cells of tenuous existential hope remains present within the paradox of not trying to change capitalism. Barker, meanwhile, invokes a post-human milieu rife with objects yet stripped of character; desire still shapes the semiotic system but increasingly appears as pathology. Absolute revolution is unthinkable, conflict recedes from the program, and capitalism morphs into non-capitalism.

Wesker’s different approach remains underexamined. In addition to the analyses of his work as explicitly Marxist and politically engaged, attention has also turned to the articulation of class, labor, and identity in mid-twentieth-century Britain.

4. Methodology

The analysis of Arnold Wesker’s drama on working-class voices is instrumental to understanding class relations and capitalism both on the level of apparatus how productions are configured in a social system and

individual. Through political lenses, the intersection of individual-bounded choices and overarching societal forces can function within a wider theoretical framework, shaping and defining specific notions of the political. Such concerns about the private or domestic arena remain pertinent—professional or creative choices and options arise from the core provision of making a living or financial obligation. Self-identity reduces to identity-formation processes at a mere pragmatic level without addressing the nature of the job or profession (Wesker, 1965, 1976).

Wesker's early social representation and commitment to the disenfranchised, voiceless, or rendered devoid of aspiration paradoxically coincided with changing residence and offer *The Nature of the Beast*—a continuation of another aspect of the time at the level of “going to extremes at opposite ends” (Wesker, 1976). Early dramas depict a variety of situations and struggles at the level of the theatrical and are thus relevant for theatre discussions. Furthermore, while writers' voices are questioned, Wesker's emphasis has shifted towards other aspects of voice or accumulation, redistributing activity outside the self in public and collective terms, however limited the theatrical context might be (Holt, 2009).

In exploring the role of individuals or collective settings within the theatrical form during the period and addressing that within limited, demanding, and institutional resources, Wesker yet opened

a pathway towards a stage theatre directed against hegemonic power and hegemonic interest traces (Wesker, 1976). Such articulations allow positioning within the opposition to “on the air” or the traditions of the “Theatrical Morris specifically pre-during-suffragette celebrations at Shenkys, so entailed disassociation, distancing, or only of.

3.3. Class, Labor, and Identity in Postwar Britain

Class discussions dominated British society during the long postwar decade. A pattern of ill-fated social mobility in the 1950s radicalized the debate. Old controls seemingly broke down. The disillusion of mobility became a major theme in popular culture and the twin-track system of development further entrenched class and gender divisions. The working class, retaining its needed labor power, remained a prime target of capital. Capital stressed vocational rather than academic training, hoping to keep workers within the system. The grandchild of an eighteenth-century artist was still a council tenant. Sending the children on to drink after fights became a way of life.

Every effort was made to open the gates of upper attainment, each effort frustrated by other events that left the individual to sink back within the lower strata of all-gender working-class life (Warren, 2020). Gen Xers found themselves once more at that same marginal point. A smooth, effortless, upbeat-population now turned into a darker, humourous-regional one, raised questions of class and identity echoing those in

lels with his own life as a child of Jewish immigrants and a worker. *Young Man's Song* (1959), for example, presents a class-born Jewish protagonist, Eli, still living with his parents at twenty-five. Such scenes create a longing for solidarity and communal emancipation. Wesley provides an example of how institutions such as religion and capitalist enterprise suppress community ties among the working-class. The Anomaly Scene depicts the deracination felt by workers unable to find value in either religious or economic institutions. *Young Man's Song* further embodies this deracination by presenting religion as the only option left to Eli, representatives of both estate agency and a theatre not far from home disparaging the working-class aspirations of a job.

Widely regarded as the leading playwright of the British social realist theatre, Wendell Wesker (1932–2018) portrayed, through a large body of work, the conditions of important sectors of the society (Hughes, 2014). Productions of his plays reflect the diverse and often impossible demands imposed on people by society at large. A strong autobiographical impulse impels the author, child of Jewish immigrants and a worker, to explore the social conditions in which he has grown up. His plays exhibit the rigid stratification of colour, class, and sex among the people of his generation, calling attention to the importance of the subject of the working-class tragedy not just in terms of its content but also because

of the implications attached to the mere representation of such voices (Papa (Ed.), 2009).

3.2. Marxist and Political Readings of Wesker

Arnold Wesker's early plays have prompted Marxist approaches exploring state institutions, ideology, and relations of production. Discussion often centres on *Labour, The Kitchen*, and *The Mother*, reflecting the playwright's emphasis on a speech, power, and owners of production. The wider milieu also merits inquiry. Wesker emerged as a playwright in post-war Britain, a period marked by nationalisation, collective bargaining, and decolonisation (Morris, 2020). Receiving a formal education through State grants, he participated in socialist campaigns. Voice is a central concern in his work. By the mid-1960s, increased political engagement gave exposure to socially conscious playwrights. In addition to class analysis and the economy, the distribution of power and earning a living continued to shape his writing.

Material conditions and everyday realities shape individuals and environments, with tensions arising from these demands (North, 1971). Such constraints can coalesce into systems of oppression. The individual remains central to human activity—Elias's "individualised self" manifests across societies, cultures, or agency (Devine, 2016)—yet systemic structures, such as capitalism, capitalism, neo-liberalism, or the state, can also commodify the

ker pointing out that this necessary search of identity is closely linked to the pressing and crucial question of whether the British society is, as Alfred B. Tompkins puts it, a class society, and to what degree. (Wesker, 1968, p. 73). This complex and deep-seated nationalistic debate still affects the society and the theater particularly in the social matter of that time.

The questions about national identity became more urgent and pressing in the post-war Britain which had to struggle with the great power of the development of the New Left, the threat of the rise of the decolonization process, and the harsh economic crisis of the 1970s. The drama written by Arnold Wesker is subtle and provocative and carefully cuts across the post-war and post-colonial periods revealing many layers of complexity within the play. The continuous pursuit of identity, in particular, concerning the classes or the concept of representing a particular class, naturally led to the large number of critics and scholars analyzing the works of Wesker in a socialist or even Marxist interpretation. A large part of the scholarship on the works of Wesker by Beatrice A. Gauthier has critically examined his plays in terms of a socialist and Marxist approach and brought deep insights to the understanding (Papa (Ed.), 2009).

But the idea of class is not merely the delusion with society and identity; it is turned into a major problem of complicated forces of authority. When that person is a member

of a certain group, he or she automatically has the power to shape or have a significant impact on the discourses of society that are expressed in various forms. Colleagues of the Wesleyan dramatists and a leading opposition newspaper critic highlight the pressing needs of an energizing and transformational socialist world to replace the wilting bourgeois and colonial cafes which were so vociferously promoted during the socially turbulent 1960s.

The struggle between the Bourgeoisie, and the Proletariat means a lot more when considered through the complex prism of the state machine and the cultural industries in play. This indicates not only the evident social gaps, but the large differences in use value and exchange value which are significant in explaining the situation. Such visionary proposals have been maintained or even revised by the capitalist bourgeoisie in Europe based on their allegedly failed dramatic knowledge and experience in Africa and the Middle East. In conclusion, the current and urging discussion of the issue of class and power has a strong influence on the direction of the social life and further development of the modern drama, which requires further investigation and examination through different perspectives of scholars. Ansari and Alamri (2022)

3.1. Wesker and the Theatre of Social Realism

Wesker's plays portray the social circumstances of the postwar era, drawing paral-

three groundbreaking and transformative variants is one of the rare prominent post-war examples of socially focused theatrical commentary in the UK, which points to the crucial vortex of art and social justice in the dynamic environment of a constantly developing society (Murphy, 2024).

2.1. Scope and Significance

The investigation comprises of fifteen plays between 1956 and 1988. The plays seven of them were composed in the early 1960s there were great changes in both the society and politics. Two of them were staged following the death of the playwright and this goes to demonstrate the level of importance of their work. This paper is looking at performances in London as well as Bristol and other countries. These performances belong to the complex data that is under consideration. The close choice of these works gives important information about how different theaters that are commercial use different methods of creating their own performances. It also looks at how the working classes in the post war period responded towards certain capitalist problems.

This discussion can also determine the extent to which Wesker contributed to the theater of social realism a dramatic movement significant to academic study due to several reasons, among them being the transformation of stagecraft and the society in general. The concept of social realism should be investigated closer as the existing capitalist systems of power allow a few individuals to dominate and govern the masses.

This urgent problem needs an evaluation of voice, narratives, and coequality concept of historical and social consciousness expression. This question is also relevant, as the growing importance of new challenges, such as the far-reaching implications of Brexit, the global pandemic, and fluid negotiation of the relations of classes, community, and involvement in the present circumstances, underline it. Through these valuable perspectives we are in a better position to know how these themes are impacting us today particularly in the modern world of the casino stage and how it can demonstrate and react to the issues of the contemporary world. (McDonnell, 2019)

3. Literature Review

Edmund J. Ward rightly observed that the drama of Arnold Wesker could be viewed as the voice of British society in search of identity within the Anglo-Saxon realm of the 1960s (Wesker, 1968, p. 64). Thousands of pages of detailed critique have been written on the extremely diverse oeuvre of Wes-

it required deep examination of the social relationships and their vast impact on such critical aspects as voice, power relations, implications of labor and the many, often unstable, or rather long-term, class struggle that characterized the era. A government-sponsored new theater regime, and a powerful necessity to make people cope with the severe environment and issues created by the war and the continuous post-war austerity, were both significant contributors to the emergence of what was later to be called the "Working-Class Play." This significant transformation occurred despite the fact that the primary causes of economic and social inequality remained the same or in most instances became more profound and deeper with time. The first to employ the styles of tragicomic documentary were Joan Littlewood and other Theatre Workshop members, and such influences had a tremendous impact on this movement. Subsequently these styles were taught to other playwrights including Arnold Wesker and the following generation of playwrights wishing to discuss the issues of their time (Stahl et al. 2025). These artistic compositions were the only ones that combined parody with the actual picture of the changing welfare state and ambitions of the working classes, often being limited by the traditional values, which were against change and evolution.

It was a most significant class struggle in the period of transition. It was decided to retrieve a voice which had been disre-

garded and left behind. The new State and its authority transformed the struggle out of the tunnel-vision of individualism to a far greater and wider-spanning embracement of the communitarian ideas (Barley, 2013). However, the group was not allowed to have actual discussions and analyses by strong voices in the society, and this was an impediment to understanding what these groups experienced jointly. The poignant and acute recording of fulfilled and unfulfilled aspirations and dreams in the new welfare state by Wesker was raising critical issues and questions on whether voice, presence, and power could be restored or actually reinstated, and in new and more insidious forms (Gurney et al., 2025).

This was a significant work that examined closely the reason why individuals had been denied their voices due to strong machines of power. The results of this research were a vehement statement in favor of the further struggle against these forces, which were trying to silence the general voice.

The renowned trilogy of Wesker begins with his works which demonstrate how hopes of people were ruined and how significant guidance and mentoring were absent at the time when they were the most required. These plays were written at the same time, with subtle hints at the fact that the new State apparatus could not adequately frame and sustain these aspirations, and voiced capture still remained a reality expressed in the new social formations. The enduring dialogic examination of the

that illustrates the uses of dramas by Wesker in the analysis of the intricacies of capitalism and the conflict of classes. Summing up, the works of Wesker are regarded as a valuable contribution to the discussion of the problem of capitalism and the identity of the working classes. The critique of voice silencing or voice disregard is indicative of a desperate and ongoing social problem. Its limitations are discussed in fulfilling the need to re-examine these themes in the wider context of the theatre and its interrelationship with socio-economic reality. The use of voice and fight against expression as highlighted by Wesker depicts the need of narration that challenges the status quo and it requires more studies done in the field to enable more understanding of the dynamics as raised by wesker.

Keywords: Working-Class, Voices, Capitalist, Drama, Arnold Wesker

الملخص

تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى مناقشة كيفية استخدام أرنولد ويسكر لمسرحياته لتحليل دور الرأسمالية في التأثير على صوت الفرد في المجتمع. وتسعى الورقة إلى كشف الغموض الذي يكتنف الطريقة التي يعكس بها عمل ويسكر الصراع الطبقي والطبيعة للإنسانية للأنظمة الرأسمالية التي تركز على تجاهل قصص الطبقة العاملة وأهمية الصوت في البيئة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية. يعتمد هذا العمل على تحليل النصوص، حيث يتناول بعض مسرحيات ويسكر، مثل «الحضانة» (١٩٥٩)، و«المطبخ»

(١٩٥٩)، و«رجل المنظمة» (١٩٦٠)، و«شركة الخمسة» (١٩٦٢)، و«الموت العرضي لفوضوي» (١٩٧٠). يبدأ الكتاب بتحليل الخلفية التاريخية للمسرح البريطاني في أواخر القرن العشرين، مع التركيز على العلاقات بين الأنظمة الرأسمالية والطبقة العاملة. تُظهر النتائج نجاح ويسكر في إبراز صراع الأصوات بين الأطفال والبالغين في ظل النظام الرأسمالي، وعوائق الظروف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية في وجه التعبير عن الذات. يُبرز هذا النقاش وجهة نظر رئيسية حول تقاطع الفن والتعليق الاجتماعي والسياسي، موضحًا استخدامات ويسكر للدراما في تحليل تعقيدات الرأسمالية وصراع الطبقات. باختصار، تُعتبر أعمال ويسكر مساهمة قيّمة في مناقشة مشكلة الرأسمالية وهوية الطبقات العاملة. يُشير نقد إسكات الصوت أو تجاهله إلى مشكلة اجتماعية مُلحة ومستمرة. تُناقش حدود هذا النقد في تلبية الحاجة إلى إعادة النظر في هذه المواضيع في السياق الأوسع للمسرح وعلاقته المتبادلة بالواقع الاجتماعي والاقتصادي. إن استخدام الصوت ومواجهة التعبير، كما أبرزه ويسكر، يُظهر الحاجة إلى سرد يتحدى الوضع الراهن، ويتطلب إجراء المزيد من الدراسات الميدانية لفهم الديناميكيات التي طرحها ويسكر بشكل أعمق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطبقة العاملة، الأصوات، الرأسمالي، الدراما، أرنولد ويسكر

2. Introduction

The political and ideological atmosphere of the post-war UK had a profound influence on the creativity of different dramatists as

Working-Class Voices and Capitalist Structures in the Drama of Arnold Wesker

أصوات الطبقة العاملة والهيكل الرأسمالية في دراما أرنولد ويسكر

Mohanad Naeem Hulaib

Imam Al-Kadhim University of Islamic Sciences, Department of English
muhaned_naem@iku.edu.iq

مهند نعيم هليب

جامعة الإمام الكاظم للعلوم الإسلامية، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

1. Abstract

This paper seeks to discuss how Arnold Wesker uses his plays to analyze the role of capitalism in influencing the individual voice in the society. The paper attempts to demystify the way in which the work of Wesker reflects the class struggle and the dehumanizing nature of the capitalist systems that focus on the ignored accounts of the working people and the importance of voice in a socio-economic environment. The research design adopted in this work is a textual analysis, which will consider a few of the plays by Wesker, such as *The Nursery* (1959), *The Kitchen* (1959),

The Organisation Man (1960), *The Company of Five* (1962) and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (1970). It begins with the analysis of the historical background of the British theatre during the late twentieth century, where the focus is made on the relations between the capitalistic systems and the proletariat. The results show that Wesker successfully brings out the voice battle between children and adults in a capitalist system, the obstacles of the social and economic circumstances in the face of self-expression. This discussion brings out a key point of view of the intersect of art and socio-political commentary