

Critical Discourse Analysis of Classism in Lynne Nottage's Sweat

(*)Inst. Moayad Mohammad Hassan

(**) Inst. Narmin Abbas Lutfi

Abstract

Classism is often viewed as a common human right abuse that targets people based on their social class. It is frequently utilized in literature to be associated with “discrimination and oppression”. It is an action which is entrenched in “stereotypes and negative” stances that eliminate or devalue the working class. This inspires Lynne Nottage to prioritize this subject through her works to portray, criticize and develop solutions to this detested practice. Hence, this paper is intended to critically examine classism in Nottage's Sweat. Using Reisigl's and Wodak's model (2001, 2009, 2015) of CDA, five extracts from Sweat are qualitatively analyzed. The study reveals that classism, racism, and prejudice are combined creating detachments among downgraded groups, and diverting consideration from the

(*) The Sunni Endowment

Divan Religious Teaching and Islamic
Studies Directorate

(**) Mustansiriayah University/ College of
Basic Education

moayad.hassan55@gmail.com

nermeen.abbas.h@uomustansiriayah.edu.iq

source causes of systemic discrimination. Furthermore, referential strategies are used prominently to highlight how characters' personalities are portrayed.

Key words: classicism, discursive strategies, Sweat, Nottage, CDA

Introduction

Literary works and plays play a significant role in highlighting significant issues of human rights and addressing often-overlooked problems like ethnicity and classism. For example, Lynn Nottage's plays raise communal awareness about these societal challenges. These works serve as tools for social and political critique (Khanam & Meem, 2018, p. 2). As a result, they create a valuable area of study within linguistics, predominantly when scrutinized via the area of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is an approach to studying language that underlines the role of discourse in determining meaning. Rather than being a single method, CDA combines various perspectives to explore the association between language use and social setting. It aims to expose hidden beliefs, messages, and practices embedded in language that shape specific realities (van Dijk, 2003, p. 325). Using CDA, Lynn Nottage's play *Sweat* can be analyzed to describe, interpret, and explain how linguistic devices highlight issues of ideology, ethnicity, and classism.

Research Questions

The present paper endeavors to provide answer to the coming questions:

1. What linguistic tools and strategies are used to portray classism in the play under study?

2. What are the most frequently utilized discursive practices that either reinforce or challenge classism in this play?

CDA Defined

Fairclough proposes that CDA seeks to methodically uncover the often-hidden associations between “discursive practices, events, and texts” and the broader cultural and social constructions, relationships, and procedures shaped by power dynamics and power conflicts. By concentrating on linguistic elements, CDA discloses hidden aspects of the social system and examines how these elements influence that system (Fairclough, 1989, p.10). Wodak (1997, p. 173) affirms that CDA goes beyond examining ambiguous interactions to also analyze observable structures of dominance, inequality, and discrimination. She asserts that CDA’s uniqueness lies in its significance on the connection between language and society, along with the association between the analysis itself and the subjects being studied. According to van Dijk (2009, p. 1), CDA is a dedicated branch of discourse analysis (DA) that concentrates on how “dominance, power abuse, and inequality” are expressed and extended through discourse in sociopolitical contexts. Its primary aim is to reveal and address socio-economic inequalities. van Dijk particularly examines how dominant groups use discourse as a device to exploit and maintain power over marginalized groups. Luke (2002, p. 100) views CDA as a comprehensive approach that involves linguistic investigation of texts, semiotic investigation and other types of investigation. It extends beyond examining language to inspect the social structures, institutions and power relations rooted within and reproduced by texts.

In brief, there is a comprehensive consensus that CDA covers two essential

basics: a concentration on the social mechanisms of ideology and power, and an investigation of how language figures, strengthens and exposes these constructions (Breez, 2011, p. 495). Simply put, most definitions of CDA stress the assembly between language and power (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258).

CDA: Historical View

To gain an inclusive understanding of CDA, it is important to examine its predecessors: Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Linguistics (CL). DA, which emerged as a field in the 1960s centers on the study of language use. It explores how individuals construe language and how it is employed in specific contexts to achieve particular functions. CL arose as a movement aimed at developing a linguistic outline with a sociological concentration, highlighting power relations. In this approach, the text is preserved as the main unit of analysis (Bhatia et al., 2008, p. 1). Its practitioners sought to inspect linguistic elements to gain a deeper understanding of power dynamics (Rogers, 2004, p. 13). Critical linguists maintain that social meanings are vital for discourse to function and that linguistic structures are closely related to social structures. However, earlier scholars overlooked the connection between “language, power, and ideology”. CDA differs from DA in the sense that it adopts an interdisciplinary and problem-oriented approach, addressing complex social issues through multidisciplinary and multi-methodological perspectives rather than solely linguistic analysis. Emerging in the late 1980s, CDA has rapidly become a key method in discourse analysis and social sciences, exploring the links between discourse and social practices, (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p.2).

Classism

CDA examines not only the formal features of language but also its relationship with society and ideology. By analyzing how language operates within social contexts, it emphasizes the dynamics of power and domination. One Key concept fundamental to CDA is classism which has attracted CDA scholars and has been studied within the arena of CDA. It is a term used to refer to class discrimination, i.e. a type of discrimination which is associated with social class. Bourdieu (1986, p.258) demonstrates that social class is a blend of “economic, social, and cultural capital”. Economic capital denotes monetary resources, social capital involves accessible networks that provide financial or cultural opportunities and cultural capital encompasses familiarity with the dominant culture’s practices. Social class is then both monetary and performative, demanding the ability to navigate dominant norms. Traditionally, researchers define social class through income and occupation, while the relational model focuses on authority, oppression, exploitation, and stress, emphasizing resource control in group dynamics. Lau et al. (2013, p.78) frame social class as a subjective lens shaping perceptions and interactions. Economic awareness influences behavior, with norms and values guiding assumptions about others’ social class based on cues like fashion, race, or language, leading to classism.

Theoretical spheres of classism were recognized by probing literature into “discrimination and oppression”. Lott (2002, p.110) identifies classism as actions rooted in “stereotypes and negative” views that eliminate or devalue the working class and the working poor. This can befall both via institutional systems and interpersonal interactions, which establish the first two domains of classism. Ryan expands on this by highlighting how repeated harmful narratives perpetuate classism, a phenomenon named citational

classism. Repetition of such stereotypes promotes cultural myths, making them sound true within predominant societal narratives. This framework of classism identifies six spheres across three analytical levels: macro, meso and micro. The macro level involves broad “social, cultural, and historical contexts”. The meso one focuses on the relations between different places. The micro level examines interpersonal relationships (Ryan, 1976, p. 30).

In the literature, six categories of classism have been promoted: stereotype citation, institutional classism, as well as four kinds of interpersonal classism. Interpersonal classism embraces separation, devaluation, discounting, and exclusion. Stereotype citation, to start with, symbolizes classism at a wider societal level, entrenched in undesirable stereotypes about working-class people. Institutional classism, secondly, operates within régimes or systems, often reproduced in policies that reserve inequality. In terms of interpersonal forms of classism, they first include separation, which comprises actions intended to prevent someone from encountering others with more wealth. Devaluation, the second form of classism, befalls when people are belittled due to their lower social status. Third, the discounting form encompasses sacking someone’s class status altogether. Finally, exclusion is exercised as a form of classism where people are deliberately left out or unnoticed because of their class (Smith, 2018).

In a nutshell, the forms illustrated of classism resort to schemes about the racial environment, which comprise sociohistorical, institutional, and psychological influences. Sociohistorical factors outline stereotypes, whereas institutional classism encompasses exclusionary practices in systems. The psychological environment deals with personal perceptions and behaviors, as seen in interpersonal classism. Inclusively, classism is figured out within the bigger context of class inequality, oppression and racial climate (Hurtado et al., 1998, p.302).

Discursive Strategies in DHA

One of critical discourse analysis approaches is discourse-historical approach (DHA) which is adaptable, integrating multiple methods and diverse empirical data while considering historical and political contexts (Wodak, 2001, p. 65). Wodak and Meyer (2001, pp.1,14), DHA defines context through four levels: linguistic co-text, intertextual and interdiscursive dimensions, extralinguistic factors, and socio-political and historical aspects. DHA is particularly associated with multimodal analyses of racism and the widespread impact of abuse.

DHA highlights identifying main discourse issues and analyzing historical narratives to connect with broader discourses. It makes use of sociopolitical history to explore how discourse evolves and examines the cognitive links between “synchronic discourses” and their topics to understand discursive production”. DHA views texts as cases of discourse and highlights three key aspects: (i) connections between macro-topics, (ii) discursive strategies and topoi, and (iii) legitimization mechanisms at macro and micro levels. Wodak identifies five discursive strategies essential for shaping identities and justifying inclusion or exclusion, defining strategies as purposeful actions involving “discursive practices to achieve specific social, political, psychological, or linguistic goals” (2011, p. 42).

Strategies have been made use of by Wodak for inspecting the “discursive structure of universal, national, and local identities” via five significant questions: how personalities, substances, phenomena, events, processes, and actions are linguistically termed; what characteristics are ascribed to social performers and elements; what arguments are exploited; the perspectives from which these linguistic selections and arguments are stated; and whether these utterances are obviously itemized, strengthened or alleviated (Wodak, 2015, p. 5).

Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) analysis identifies five strategies, one of which is referential or nomination. This strategy distinguishes between in-group and out-group to explore how social actors are depicted. It has been argued that the way social actors are referred to influences their portrayal. These strategies can be expressed through both direct and indirect noun phrases. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001), processes such as collectivization, spatialization, and professionalization are crucial for representing social actors and their relationships (pp. 48-52).

According to DHA, a strategy is a deliberate or incidental scheme of practice, involving discourse, aimed at achieving specific social, political, psychological, or linguistic goals. A discursive strategy specifically involves structured communication that conveys or supports an ideology, (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p.73). As its name implies, the DHA focuses on identifying discourse issues and examining their historical context. It explores socio-political settings to uncover strategies and hidden ideologies, linking past discourse production to cognitive connections in contemporary discourse topics. Reisigl and Wodak's discursive strategies offer an outline for inspecting how language is used to create social phenomena, such as identities and ideologies. They concentrate on how discourse outlines and supports social hierarchies and exclusion. Their work is persuasive in studies of discrimination, such as prejudice and classism.

The first of the five discursive strategies Reisigl and Wodak categorize is **nomination**, which is deployed to refer to the creation and classification of "social actors, objects, phenomena, events, and processes". In other words, this strategy shows how persons or assemblies are termed, such as immigrants vs. illegal aliens. Classifications and group formations may involve positive or negative connotations. The second one is, in their words,

predication which purposefully involves assigning characteristics to social actors or phenomena. Using adjectives or signifiers like hardworking immigrants is an illustration of this strategy whose concentration is on labeling, evaluation, and assigning values (positive, negative, or neutral). The third chatty strategy employed in their model is argumentation whose two-edged purposes are manifested to justify or encounter the inclusion or elimination of social actors or groups, often via argument schemes termed in their terminology as *topoi*. These *topos* are, for instance, logically or emotionally, used to back claims, such as “They take our jobs” (*topos* of threat) or “They contribute to the economy” (*topos* of benefit). As examples suggest, the main focus of this strategy is to persuade and rationalize certain viewpoints. In the fourth strategy known as *perspectivization*, Reisigl and Wodak claim that this discursive policy is a means by which a speaker expresses and locates his or her viewpoint or ideological stance. To achieve such a strategy, personal pronouns, modal verbs, or rhetorical devices are exploited to align with or distance from a this or that perspective. This strategy is, they argue, always after inclosing and locating discourse in terms of unfairness or subjectivity. The last strategy recognized as *intensification and mitigation* is referred to as a means to show the strength or degree of appraising or expressive language. Intensifying negative traits or softening positive ones are familiar examples of such a strategy. The purpose of such a policy is to emphasize de-emphasize or influence perception and engagement.

Methodology

The present paper principally implements a qualitative research method.

This method offers a deeper understanding and expressive influence of

the meaning and significance resulting from the use of linguistic elements, along with their deeper explanations in their contexts (Creswell, 2012, p,19). For Babbie and Mouton (2001, pp. 79-81), the qualitative technique is preferable as it is “exploratory, explanatory and descriptive in nature”. Further, it is normally adjustable as it gives more flexible in description and interpretation of the selected data.

Nature of Data

This paper under investigation tackles Lynn Nottage’s *Sweat* as the data for the examination. For this aim, it is required to highpoint some topics: the novelist’s social background, the key characters, and the situation of the play to appropriately grasp it. Nottage is a bright African-American playwright. She graduated from Brown University, where she attained an MFA in drama. She dwells in Brooklyn with her husband (a film producer Tony Gerber) and their daughter Ruby, Nottage was the first woman who twice won Pulitzer Prize. She engrossed in offering the suffering and horrifying circumstances of black and colored women in the US. Her play, *Sweat*, mostly focused on classism but in diverse ways.

Lynn Nottage’s plays, rich in emotional depth and authenticity, are inspired by real-life events and personal experiences. Her diverse body of work explores social issues, human relationships, and life’s complexities with raw honesty, as she shares in an interview:

“I think of myself as a playwright who is socially engaged. It’s important. I get very frustrated when I go to the theatre and it feels like we ‘re in some sort of bubble that has no relation to what ‘s going on in the world. I don ‘t understands it. I don ‘t understands how young playwrights choose not to be actively in conversation with the culture “(Bigby, 2017, p.142).

Nottage's works fearlessly address challenging issues, blending empathy with bold narratives that examine human nature, societal norms and pressing topics such as race, gender and classism. Nottage's profound storytelling has paved her status as one of the most influential and admired playwrights of her generation.

Sweat: Synopsis

The play *Sweat* is set in Reading, Pennsylvania, portraying the struggles of a working-class community devastated by deindustrialization in the early 21st century. Its inspiration came from an email Nottage received from a friend describing the financial hardships following the 2008 economic breakdown. The friend highlighted the workers' marginalization and invisibility in American society. Nottage, being touched, began investigating their stories (Brown, 2016). Workers in Reading faced harsh conditions and job losses due to economic decline, exacerbating their struggles. The steelworkers in *Sweat* reflect the real-life workers Nottage interviewed, who shared their tragic experiences, feeling "completely invisible" (Glasberg, 2017).

Sweat opens its foremost scene once a parole officer, Evan, speaking to Chris and Jason, who committed a racial crime eight years ago when they were young. These two men have been friends since childhood and their mothers, Cynthia, and Tracy, are also best friends. Chris whose descent is African American finds in the church his consolation as recompense for his past crime; Jason is a white American with tattoos covering his face. The succeeding scene moves to an inn in 2000 as the playwright shows the background of the events that end these two young men in prison. The writer sets most of the events in a bar in Reading town in 2000. The scene

then moves to Tracy's forty-fifth birthday in which she is partying with her intimate friends, Cynthia and Jessie. They have been friends for a long time due to the fact that they have been working at Olstead's Metal Tubing together for periods. When they finish their work, they are used to meeting at the local bar, run by Stan and Oscar helps in serving the customers. Chris and Jason are recurrent customers, also. Nevertheless, this tight friendship bond is shaken when Cynthia, the African American woman, is promoted from the floor to administration. Temporarily, Cynthia's promotion matches with discharging numerous employees and moving most of the machinery to Mexico. Tensions rise resulting from Cynthia's promotion and the news of imminent layoffs and sparking ethnic hostility toward Latinos. This leads to Chris and Jason assaulting Oscar, a young Colombian American working at the bar. Stan, trying to defend Oscar, is gravely injured and left with brain damage (Mohammed, 2020, pp. 35-36).

Data Collection

Five extracts from the play *Sweat* are chosen based on their relevance to the theme, serving as fertile ground for analyzing the targeted features. These extracts, taken from various scenes, illustrate how classism is portrayed against specific social classes within the narrative discourse. Some specific criteria have been taken into account when selecting the data for the current study. Firstly, all the extracts are selected based on the particular time in which important issues related to classism are predominant. Secondly, the place is measured to have a significant influence on how politics, ideologies and even societal structures are formed. Thirdly, the content criterion is concerned with the dramatic representation of classism. Finally, the genre criterion, the selected play follows the social representation of classism.

Model of Analysis

The paper's critical agenda aligns with its research goals via an inclusive model with two key components. The first, a micro-textual approach based on Wodak and Reisigl's strategies, identifies and organizes linguistic cues that reveal discrimination. This level examines how characters' language reflects negative ideologies such as ethnicity and classism. The second component is the interpretive level, where these linguistic elements are investigated to reveal their wider ideological implication at the macro level.

The discourse-historical method, rooted in the works of Reisigl and Wodak (2001, 2009, 2015), uses linguistic and rhetorical analysis to examine social power and its practices. While Fairclough's approach is based on systemic functional theory and the socio-cultural aspects of power and ideology, Reisigl and Wodak focus on sociolinguistic and ethnographic traditions, emphasizing mental representations. Both approaches, however, heavily rely on linguistic analysis (Khosravinik, 2015, p. 84).

Reisigl and Wodak's DHA stresses the combination of textual analysis with historical, sociopolitical, and contextual insights. It identifies five discursive strategies to reveal biased or power-laden discourses:

1. Nomination

This strategy denotes how social performers (characters) are termed or categorized. Precisely, it denotes investigating how characters are labeled in terms of their class (working-class, hero, elite, servant) and to perceive any use of metaphors, titles, or roles that sign their socio-economic position.

2. Prediction

Concisely, this strategy indicates the attributes assigned to the actors. Concerning the play in question, this tactic is employed to identify the traits associated with different classes. Are lower-class characters represented as

hardworking, naive or subversive? Are upper-class characters depicted as arrogant, exploitative, or cultured? Do they look for stereotypes that reinforce or challenge classist narratives.

3. Argumentation

This strategy examines the justification of claims made about social actors or events. It answers whether characters argue that class divisions are natural, merit-based, or divinely ordained and whether challenges to class structures are framed as dangerous or necessary.

4. Perspectivization

This strategy investigates the viewpoint or perspective from which discourse is presented. It considers whose viewpoint dominates the discourse. It is also interested in whether the narrative is outlined from the perspective of the oppressed or the privileged. It also analyzes interchanges, monologues or plot points to see how class struggles are problematized or normalized.

5. Mitigation and Intensification

This strategy looks for how certain ideas are softened or emphasized. It evaluates how powerfully classist ideologies are expressed. It also looks for linguistic markers like hedging, hyperbole, or irony that adjust the intensity of class-based discourses.

This paper implements Reisigl and Wodak's model (2001, 2009, and 2015) of classism to qualitatively analyze the selected extracts to address the research questions, Consider table 1.

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Referential/ nomination	Discursive construction of social actors, objects/ phenomena/ events, and processes/ actions.	Membership categorization devices, deictics, anthroponyms, etc.
		Tropes such as metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoches
		Verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions
Predication	Discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena/events/ processes, and actions (more or less positively or negatively).	Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (e.g., in the form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctive clauses, infinitive clauses, and participial clauses or groups)
		Explicit predicates or predicative nouns/ adjectives/pronouns
		Allusions, evocations, and presuppositions/ implicatures
		Other

Argumentation	Justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness.	Topoi (formal or more content-related).
		Fallacies
Perspectivization, framing, or discourse representation	Positioning speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance.	Deictics
		Direct, indirect or free indirect speech.
		Quotation marks, discourse markers/ particles
		Metaphors
		Animating prosody
Intensification, mitigation	Modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances.	Other
		Diminutives or augmentatives
		(Modal) particles, tag questions, subjunctive, hesitations, vague expressions, etc.
		Hyperboles, litotes
		Indirect speech acts (e.g., question instead of assertion)
		Verbs of saying, feeling, thinking
Other		

Table 1: Model of Analysis

Data Analysis

This section offers the qualitative analysis of the selected excerpts from Sweat, guided by Reisigl and Wodak's theoretical framework (2001, 2009, 2015). The study applies this model to explore the research questions. Nottage's play examines the socio-economic struggles of working-class Americans in a post-industrial context, addressing themes of classism and labor issues. It focuses on characters deeply affected by factory closures, union disputes, and economic decline, with key passages on classism serving as valuable material for critical discourse analysis.

Act I, Scene 2: Tracey: "You think they're gonna let you get ahead? I hate to break it to you, but they don't care about you. They don't care about any of us. You'll see. They'll use you and throw you away just like everyone else."

Contextually, in the course of Tracey and Cynthia's discussion of the possibility of Cynthia getting a promotion to a management position, Tracey expresses resentment. Tracey's statement "They don't care about you" proposes a separation between management and workers, framing the former as manipulative and the latter as the victim.

Tracy's use of personal pronouns "You" and "they" engenders a direct opposition between two groups. The employment of the pronoun "they" refers to an indefinite but authoritative group, (management). The use of the first object pronoun "us" which comprises Tracy and other workers, signifies a shared identity of the working class. What deserves noticing is that in the statement "They don't care about any of us" the nomination opposes groups as agents of manipulation "they" and victims of systemic indifference "us".

The figurative statement "They'll use you and throw you away" underlines the apparent dehumanization of workers, and at the same time, evaluates

the elite as manipulative and self-serving. In line with the statement above, the statement “They don’t care about any of us” sheds light on characteristics assigned to social groups “us” (the workers) giving them (the workers), implicitly the sense of being defenseless and overloaded.

In a warrant tone, the speaker, Tracey, uses her experience to reinforce her argument when bewaring Cynthia (“You’ll see”) and locates herself as a reliable adviser. Her repeated references to indifference support her evaluation of planned discrimination. Positioning herself as a disappointed one who has been exploited, Tracy foresees the consequences of mistreatment. Her skeptical tone expressed in the rhetorical question (“You think they’re gonna let you get ahead?”) challenges straightly the addressee’s confidence. She also adopts a sense of harmony with the laborers.

The sensitive language utilized by Tracy has been intensified via the repetition of the announcements “they don’t care”, “use you and throw you away’ and “They don’t care about any of us” to strengthen the determination of her perspective.

Act 1 Scene 3: Chris: [...] But I kinda wanna do something a little different than my moms and pops. Yo, I got aspirations. There it is. And I won’t apologize. Jason: You got aspirations? What is this, Black History Month? [...] Actually, it shouldn’t be called Black History Month, it should be called “Make White People Feel Guilty Month.”

Chris, in his statement “I” and “Yo, I got aspirations”, nominating himself, tries to locate himself as an individual with motivations and a desire to deviate from his parents’ route. His casual style (“moms and pops”, “Yo”) indicates a connection to a specific cultural and generational individuality. Another use of nominating strategy has been exposed by Jason whose statement “Black History Month” is utilized to reflect wider sociocultural phenomenon, raising racial and historical implications.

Attributing himself as someone who is self-disciplined and unapologetically confident, Chris allocates an optimistic quality to his ambitions and confirms his individuality when stating (“I won’t apologize”). On the contrary, Jason tries to reflect uncertainty or antipathy towards the initiative exposed by Chris when he allocates an unconcerned tone to “aspirations,” ironically connecting it to “Black History Month”.

In his rhetorical question (“What is this, Black History Month?”), Jason scorns Chris’s motivation by inferring that it is performative or overstated. The succeeding speech about “Black History Month” strengthens this dismissal, signifying that the month’s purpose is to produce guilt rather than celebrate triumphs. Jason’s argument lacks obvious evidence, relying instead on humor and shared cultural assumptions to make his point.

From his ambitious perspective, Chris’s use of “I” and “Yo” underlines his uniqueness and sets him apart from conventional standards when expressing a desire for self-independence. From a dismal perspective, Jason’s ironic comment (“What is this, Black History Month?”) proposes an absence of interest in both Chris’s goals and greater cultural or historical movements such as Black History Month.

Intensively, Chris reinforces his claims with expressions like “I kinda wanna do something different” and “I won’t apologize,” highlighting his objectives. Conversely and maneuveringly, Jason mitigates the importance of Black History Month when portraying it hilariously and mockingly (“Make White People Feel Guilty Month”), softening its significance.

Act 1 Scene 5: TRACEY: [...] I know the floor as good as Cynthia. I do. [...] I betcha they wanted a minority. I’m not prejudice, but that’s how things are going these days. I got eyes. They get tax breaks or something. [...]

Contextually speaking, the orator, Tracey, shows her frustration over factory

dynamics, principally concerning promotions and race. Tracey's use of the expression minority is a pure sample of a nomination strategy by which she makes use of a wide-ranging and impersonal label, which decreases individuals to a class based on race or culture. This imprecise orientation reproduces a distancing mechanism, signaling othering and supporting the apparent division between "us" (non-minorities) and "them" (minorities).

Through her remarks, such as "I betcha they wanted a minority" and "They get tax breaks or something", Tracey slightly reinforces the belief that minorities are unfairly favored in employment decisions. At the same time, she portrays minorities as recipients of systemic advantages (like "tax breaks"), implicitly accusing them of benefiting from unjust privileges.

Once again, in her remark "I'm not prejudice, but...", Tracey tries argumentatively to deny classic discrimination when using the phrase in question as an anticipatory protection against accusations of prejudice, while the succeeding statement ("that's how things are going these days") strengthens a narrative of systemic unfairness.

Another strategy, namely, mitigation and intensification has appeared in the phrase "I know the floor as good as Cynthia" which intensifies Tracey's self-perception as equally experienced, signifying a personal criticism about apparent unfairness.

Act II, Scene 1: Stan: "This isn't about you or me. This is about them. Always has been. We're just bodies filling a quota. One day they'll move the plant to Mexico, or Guatemala, and we'll be history."

At the inn where the workers gather to share their hopes and fears, the bar-keeper, Stan, insightful and sharp-tongued, lays down the unvarnished truth about things they cannot escape. The pronouns in the talk refer to all

the players; they are “you”, “me”, “them” and “they”. “You or me” highlights the workers as individual while simultaneously representing their collective identity “we”. On the other hand, “them” and “they” create a sharp tincture; they refer to the decision-makers and highlight how they are separated from the workers.

Being attributed as commodities by employing the statement “Bodies filling a quota”, the workers have been dehumanized and reduced to mere numbers or labor properties. The sense of mobility and immobility, “They’ll move the plant”, referring to the decision-makers and the workers, respectively, implies power for the corporation but weakness for the employees. Artfully manipulated, “We’ll be history” anticipates the workers’ unavoidable disposability, highlighting their agency deficiency and precarious position in the global labor economy.

The argument centers around economic inequality and power dynamics. The claim is that laborers are disposable (“bodies filling a quota”) and that corporate entities prioritize profit over human concerns. The extract presupposes a global trend of outsourcing (“move the plant to Mexico, or Guatemala”), which functions as a topos of economic inevitability—justifying corporate decisions as unavoidable within the global capitalist system. Implicitly, it critiques the commodification of labor and the exploitation of workers in both the local and global contexts.

The speaker identifies with the workers by using “you”, “me” and “we” to create a collective identity that unites those affected by corporate decisions. The terms “them” and “they” create a distance-based form of communication that denotes externality and power, creating these as us-versus-them. The speaker is resentful and resigned to circumstance due to globalization and corporatization.

The various phrases setting a rut, “This isn’t about you or me”, and “always has been”, enhance the sense of inevitability and nature of exploitation. The phrases “we’ll be history” and “just bodies filling a quota” are frank and emphasize the speaker’s negative and critical point of view.

Act II, Scene 2: Jason: “My dad worked here. I thought I’d work here. It was supposed to be simple. You put in your time, you get a house, a car, some security. What do I have? Nothing.”

Contextually, Jason and Chris, younger plant workers, talk about their futures. Jason categorizes himself as his father (“My dad worked here”) and situates himself within a broader socio-economic and familial identity. This reference positions him as part of a working-class ancestry tied to manufacturing labor.

It is mistakenly supposed that the workplace is categorized through implicit expectations of stability and recompense. Jason anticipates labor as an organization that promises material security, a house, a car, and stability. The disappointment of this promise leads to Jason’s disappointment and the prediction of his current state as missing (“What do I have? Nothing.”). Jason argumentatively criticizes the disconnect between effort and reward and considers the direct equation between hard work and reward a fallacy that has no basis in truth.

Bursting with frustration and fruitlessness, the extract in question bears Jason’s viewpoint when telling his story through personal involvement. He highlights how systemic failures are echoed in the lives of people. When Jason complains about the system using the phrase “Nothing”, it is a negative assertion that says he is feeling loss as well as misery and is adding to his emotional confusion and frustration.

Findings

Using Reisigl and Wodak's DHA, investigating Nottage's play (Sweat) via CDA, comprises methodically discovering how language and discourse in the play strengthen, rationalize, or challenge classist ideologies. The extracts selected critique systemic power imbalances and capitalist dehumanization. They portray a polarized reality between powerless workers ("us") and the exploitative elite ("they"), aligning the audience emotionally and ideologically with the working class to foster solidarity against systemic injustice. It has also been demonstrated how classism, racism, and prejudice are combined creating detachments among downgraded groups, and diverting consideration from the source causes of systemic discrimination.

Discursively, referential strategies using deictics have been marked as the main tools that the playwright highly relies on for donating characters in the play. In-group and out-group notions have been made use of in the form of deictic pronouns as far as referential strategy is under investigation. As far as predication strategy is concerned, all phrases and adjectives used to attribute working-class people are negatively oriented. Predicative nouns along with prepositional phrases have been manipulated to expose the theme of classism. Negative predication referring to the management is predicated as uncaring and exploitative through phrases like "they don't care" and "use you and throw you away". "These characterizations build an image of an unfriendly, degrading institution.

The topo of abuse has dominated all the other topos. This is an indicator that within the play, this topo clearly carries the traits of classism in the play. The topo of abuse of those in power who exploit and discard subordinates is portrayed as a way to persuade others by tempting them. The main aim

behind the argumentation strategy is to convince the addressee about an idea. Verbs of saying and thinking have been utilized as a means of intensification strategies. It is noticed that the mitigation strategy has largely been neglected and defeated in front of intensification due to the idea that the speakers have nothing to lose. Furthermore, intensification tools are employed to show the involvement and attitude of the speaker toward a situation.

In a nutshell, this study demonstrates how ideology, power, and language interact to uphold structural classism, acting as a microcosm of larger socio-political forces. It can be concluded that the study employs qualitative analyses to examine discursive strategies in the play *Sweat*. The results show that referential strategies score the highest strategy highlighting the nuanced representation of characters and their class. The investigation of discursive strategies discloses the complications of intersectional class and race, with characters embodying multifaceted identities.

References

- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. (2001). *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bhatia, V. K., Candlin, C. N., & Engberg, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Legal discourse across cultures and systems* (Vol. 1). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Bigsby, C. (2017). Lynn Nottage. In *Twenty-First Century, American Playwrights* (pp. 142-166). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi:10.1017/9781108303620.008>.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). New York: Greenwood Press.

- Breeze, R. (2011). Critical Discourse Analysis and Its Critics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5),615-628.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, E. (2016). Lynn Nottage's sweat and blood. *Interview Magazine*.
<https://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/lynn-nottage-sweat>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.)*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska–Lincoln Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. and Wodak, R. (1997). *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multi-disciplinary Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Glasberg, E. (2017, March). 'Sweat', an acclaimed play by prof. Lynn Nottage, opens on Broadway. *Columbia News*. <https://news.columbia.edu/news/sweat-acclaimed-play-prof-Lynn-Nottage-opens-Broadway>.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J. F., Clayton-Pedersen, A. R., & Allen, W. R. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21, 279–302.
- Khanam, D. & Meem, J. J. (2018). *Role of NGOS in Combating Violence against Women: A Comparative Study on NGOs Intervention and Non-Intervention Areas of Barguna District, Bangladesh*. Global Journals Inc.
- Khosravinik, M. (2015). *Discourse, identity and legitimacy: self and other in representations of Iran's nuclear programme*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- Lau, M. Y., Cho, R. J., Chang, J. J., & Huang, J. (2013). Measurement and methodological issues in social class research: A call for theorization and study. In W. M. Liu (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Class in Counseling* (1st ed.), (59–78). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lott, B. (2002). Cognitive and behavioral distancing from the poor. *American Psychologist*, 57(2), 100–110.
- Luke, A. (1995). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of research in education*, 21(1), 3-48.
- Luke, A. (2002). 5. Beyond science and ideology critique: Developments in critical discourse analysis. *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 22, 96-110.
- Mohammed, M. G. (2020). The Landscape of the Invisibles in Lynn Nottage's *Sweat*. *AWEJ*, 4(4), 35- 42.
- Reisigl, M. and Wodak, R. (2001). *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism*. London: Routledge.
- Reisigl, M., and Wodak, R. (2009). The discourse-historical approach. In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed.) (87-121). London: Routledge.
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2015). *The Discourse-Historical Approach*. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies (Introducing Qualitative Methods series)* (3rd ed.) (pp.87-121). London SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Rogers, R. (2004). *An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis in Education*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ryan, W. (1976). The art of savage discovery: How to blame the victim. In W.

- Ryan, Blaming the Victim (3–30). New York: Vintage Books.
- Smith, J. (2018). Understanding Classism in Society: A Critical Analysis. New York: Social Justice Press.
- Stubbs, M. (1983). Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2003). Discourse, ideology and context. MediaTor: Jurnal Komunikasi.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2009). Critical discourse studies: A sociocognitive approach. Methods of critical discourse analysis.
- Wodak, R. (1997). Gender and discourse. London: Sage.
- Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse historical approach. In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.). Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (pp. 63-93). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Wodak, R. (2011). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. Discursive pragmatics, 8, 50-70.
- Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (2001). Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory and methodology. Methods of critical discourse analysis, 2, 1-33.
- Wodak, R. (2015). Critical discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach. The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction, 1-14.

تحليل خطابي نقدي للطبقية في رواية الكدح لنواتج

م. مؤيد محمد حسن

ديوان الوقف السني - دائرة التعليم الديني والدراسات الإسلامية

م. نرمين عباس لطفي

الجامعة المستنصرية - كلية التربية الأساسية

المستخلص

غالبًا ما يُنظر إلى الطبقة على أنها انتهاك شائع لحقوق الإنسان تستهدف الأفراد بناءً على طبقتهم الاجتماعية. وكثيرًا ما تُستخدم في الأدب لربطها بـ "التمييز والقمع". إنها فعل متجذر في "الصور النمطية والمواقف السلبية" التي تقضي على الطبقة العاملة أو تقلل من قيمتها. وهذا ما ألهم لين نواتج لإعطاء الأولوية لهذا الموضوع من خلال أعمالها لتصوير هذه الممارسة المقيتة وانتقادها وتطوير حلول لها. وبالتالي، تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة الطبقة بشكل نقدي في رواية "الكدح" لنواتج. باستخدام نموذج ريزيجل ووداك (٢٠٠١، ٢٠٠٩، ٢٠١٥) لتحليل الخطاب النقدي، تم تحليل خمس مقتطفات من رواية "الكدح" تحليلًا نوعيًا. تكشف الدراسة أن الطبقة والعنصرية والتحيز تجتمع معًا مما يخلق انفصاليًا بين الفئات المهمشة، ويحول الانتباه عن الأسباب الجذرية للتمييز المنهجي. علاوة على ذلك، تُستخدم الاستراتيجيات المرجعية بشكل بارز لتسليط الضوء على كيفية تصوير شخصيات الرواية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطبقة، الاستراتيجيات الخطابية، الكدح، نواتج، تحليل خطابي نقدي