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“A lot of blood gets lost here”: Class Struggle and Ideology in *The Kitchen*

“Burada çok kan dökülüyor”: *Mutfak Oyununda Sınıf Mücadelesi ve İdeoloji*

Emine Seda ÇAĞLAYAN MAZANOĞLU^{a*}

^a Arş. Gör. Dr., Hacettepe Üniversitesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, Ankara / TÜRKİYE
ORCID: 0000-0002-9595-4899

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ÖZ

Arnold Wesker'in *Mutfak* (1957) adlı oyunu hem birbirleri arasında hem de kendi içlerinde hiyerarşik yapıya sahip olan kapitalist sınıf ve işçi sınıfı olmak üzere iki sosyal sınıf arasında, işçi sınıfının kapitalist sınıf tarafından sömürülmesiyle sonuçlanan mücadelenin yer aldığı çalışma dünyasını anlatmaktadır. Restorandaki kötü çalışma şartları, işin değişen hızı, işveren tarafından çalışana dinlenmesi ve sosyalleşmesi için verilen kısıtlı zaman ve kapitalist sınıf tarafından kontrol edilen iş yükünün çalışanın insanlığını kaybettirici yönü hem iki sosyal sınıf arasındaki hem de işçi sınıfı üyelerinin kendi aralarındaki ilişkiler aracılığıyla sunulur. Bu çalışmanın amacı, *Mutfak* oyununda kapitalist sınıf ile işçi sınıfı arasındaki iş ve üretime dayalı ilişkiyi ve işçi sınıfının, kapitalist sınıfın uygulamalarını kabullenişini sırasıyla Marksist kavramlar olan *sınıf mücadelesi* ve *ideoloji* kavramları ile okumaktır. Bu bağlamda, sınıf çatışmasının sadece sermaye sahibi kapitalist sınıf ile üretimi gerçekleştiren işçi sınıfı arasında olmadığı, sınıf mücadelesinin aynı zamanda farklı milli kimliklere sahip işçi sınıfı üyeleri arasında ırk temelli nefret ile ifade edildiği ortaya konulacaktır. Ayrıca, restoran çalışanlarının içinde çalıştıkları ekonomik koşulları bilinçli olarak kabul ettikleri ve hem işin hem eğlencenin kapitalist sınıf tarafından kontrol edildiğini de gösteren işçi sınıfının kültürel/sanatsal zevklerini işveren tarafından belirlenen kısa mola zamanlarında gösterebildikleri üzerinde durulacaktır.

ABSTRACT

Arnold Wesker's *The Kitchen* (1957) presents the world of labour where the two social classes, the capitalist class and the working class, with hierarchies between each other and among themselves, clash, which ends with the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. The harsh working conditions at the restaurant, the changing pace of work, little time given by the employer to the employees to rest and socialise, and the dehumanising aspect of labour are presented through the relationships between the two social classes and also among the working class people. Hence, the aim of this paper is to argue that the relationship between the capitalist class and the working class based on labour and production and the working class people's submission to the practices of the ruling class in *The Kitchen* can be analysed through the Marxist concepts of *class conflict* and *ideology*, respectively. Accordingly, it will be demonstrated that class conflict is seen not only between the bourgeoisie, the owner of the capital, and the proletariat, the agent of production, but also among the members of the proletariat of different nationalities, which is expressed through racial hatred. Furthermore, it will be displayed that the employees of the restaurant not only consciously accept the economic conditions under which they work but also reveal their cultural/artistic tastes during short breaks that are set by the employer, which shows that both work and leisure are controlled by the capitalist class.

* Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author.

e-posta: emineseda.caglayan@hacettepe.edu.tr

Introduction

The Kitchen (1957) by Arnold Wesker presents a working day in the kitchen of Tivoli, a restaurant in London. Although the main setting in the play is the kitchen of the restaurant, and all the action, including the production, the fights between the employer and the employee and among the employees, takes place in the kitchen, the dining room is also referred to through the waitresses and their work. Therefore, the restaurant is presented as a workplace with employees performing different duties both in the kitchen and the dining room and an employer, Marango, who only cares about running his business and the continuity of the establishment. In the play with the employer and the employees, there are two social classes as the capitalist class and the working class, respectively, and in a rigid class hierarchy the two classes are engaged in a class struggle in which the capitalist class dominates over the working class through labour, which can be analysed with Marxist theory. In Francis Mulhern's (1992) definition, Marxism is "a theory of the capitalist mode of production, its fundamental classes and their antagonisms, and of the organic relationship between working class struggles against capital" (p. 1). Therefore, the production process, which is carried out by working class, the ownership of the means of production, the product, and the financial gain by the capitalist class, and the class conflict arising from such economic disparity in the relationship between the employee and the employer are the subjects of Marxist theory, and they are also dealt with in *The Kitchen*. Moreover, in *The Kitchen* it is clearly presented that the economic and cultural norms and practices of the capitalist class shape the lives of the working class people. The resignation of the working class to the demands from the capitalist class demonstrates that the capitalist class not only dominates production but also the economic, social, and cultural discourse, and makes the working class adopt it, which can be explained with *ideology* in Marxist theory. As in Barbara Foley's (2019) words, "[i]deology is thus complicit in disseminating and reinforcing the standpoint of those possessing property and power" (p. 219), which corresponds to the employees' acceptance of both the economic and cultural/artistic structures which are established by the employer in the play. Hence, the aim of this paper is to analyse *the Kitchen* with Marxist theory and argue that in the play the two concepts of Marxist theory, *class conflict* and *ideology*, are used in the representation of the relationship between the capitalist class and the working class. In the two latest articles on *The Kitchen*, Elvan Karaman (2021) uses Marxist literary criticism to present the class conflict between the staff and Mr. Marango and argues that alienation and moral decline are the consequences of being commodified while Rajesh Sandil (2022) focuses on the transformation of the workers into machine-like beings which is the result of industrialisation, and highlights the themes of betrayal, love, jealousy, and anger. In this article, it will be demonstrated that along with the hierarchy between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, there is also a stepped hierarchy among the members of each social class. Accordingly, Ray Orley (1972) describes the presentation of the hierarchy between different social classes and even among the members of the same social class in his review of the performance of the play by Stanford University in 1971: "All the world's a restaurant's kitchen and all the men and women in it merely cooks, bakers, waitresses, salad girls, dishwashers, owners, and managers.' [Wesker's] early play *The Kitchen*, [...] is an explicit working out of exactly that thesis" (p. 189). In this respect, in the class struggle not only do the bourgeoisie and the proletariat confront one another, but also the members of the proletariat are in conflict with each other, and this clash among the working class people turns into racial segregation as the characters use racial hatred to outclass each other. In regard to *ideology*, it will be presented that the proletariat adopts the bourgeoisie ideology in economic and cultural/artistic terms. It will be demonstrated that in the former, especially the senior employees of the kitchen, willingly submit themselves to economic exploitation as they believe that in all the workplaces the economic structure is controlled by the bourgeoisie. In the latter, the employees reveal their

cultural or artistic tastes only during short breaks, which are set by the employer, because during the production process the employees are forced to be occupied with their work. In this sense, first, Arnold Wesker's biography will be briefly presented as the play is based on his own experiences as a kitchen porter, pastry cook, and chef (Pattie, 2012, p. 426). Secondly, the concepts of *class* and *class conflict* will be explained in relation to Marxist theory, and the related examples from the play will be presented. With respect to the concept of *class*, the concepts of *work* and *hierarchy* will also be dealt with. Thirdly, the Marxist concept of *ideology* will be explained, and the economic and cultural/artistic approaches to ideology in the play will be presented with references to the play.

Arnold Wesker

Arnold Wesker (1932-2016) is of working class descent, as both of his parents worked for a tailor, and his mother later worked as a cook (Pattie, 2012, p. 228). He suffered and survived social, political, and financial hardships since his childhood as he experienced the Blitz during the Second World War and was forced to leave his family and go to different locations in England and Wales to escape from the German bombings. He attended Upton House Technical School in London, and then he left school and worked in several jobs. After he completed his military service at the RAF between 1950 and 1952, he worked in badly-paid jobs to save money for the London School of Film Technique where he studied in 1957 (Sternlicht, 2004, p. 157). He worked as a kitchen porter and a plumber's assistant (Leech, 1962, p. 11). After he moved to Norfolk he also worked as a farm labourer and a freelance journalist. As he could not get a grant for RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art), he lived on working in the kitchens, and first he worked as a pastry cook in London, then he worked as a chef for nine months in Paris in 1956 (Pattie, 2012, p. 234). Although Wesker's mother was an active member of the Communist Party, Wesker was not linked with the Party, and instead, he was a member of the Young Communist League and the Zionist Youth Movement. In 1960 he participated in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which was seen as a civil disobedience protest and ended with Wesker's one-month imprisonment (Pattie, 2012, p. 425). Based upon Wesker's work experience, it is possible to argue that Wesker had first-hand experience as an employee knowing both the capitalist class, the employer who is dominating and exploiting, and the working class, the employee who is exploited through labour-intensive work. In this sense, *The Kitchen*, which was first performed in 1959, is an autobiographical work (Sternlicht, 2004, p. 158). Clifford Leech (1962) points out that in the play the dining-room is the showcase of a restaurant, and the customers are totally ignorant of "the atmosphere of hurry and noise and heat and quarrelling that lies behind the dining-room", and Wesker particularly aimed to show the reader/audience the reality of the kitchen which he directly experienced (p. 11). In a sense, the play is "a near-replica of what could be found behind the scenes in many a popular restaurant" (Leech, 1962, p. 20). Based on this, Glenda Leeming (1981) asserts that Wesker's plays in the late 1950s and the 1960s can be categorised in two groups: The Trilogy dealing with social and family relationships and *the Kitchen*, *Chips with Everything* (1962) and *Their Very Own and Golden City* (1966) which feature the theme of labour (p. 65). Malcolm Page (1967) comments on Wesker's realistic approach to the living and working conditions of the working class by saying that Wesker "has a vision of what life should be like. [...] He is politically aware. He is not an 'entertainer,' but a playwright with a mission" (p. 208). Therefore, in the light of this information, it may be argued that Wesker had always been a political man, but his work-oriented experiences occupied a decisive role in shaping his involvement in politics and his writing because he acquainted himself with the concepts of 'oppression', 'inequality', and 'struggle' in work life, and for Wesker, the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed in politics is reflected in the relationship between the employer and the employee in production.

Class Conflict

Pramod K. Nayar (2010) expresses that for Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the social context that includes the forms of culture and the arts is inseparable from the political, economic, and historical contexts; therefore, in addressing the arts, issues such as class, economic conditions, and power relations are also dealt with (p. 169). In Marxist theory, “the economic realm (the means of production, the classes, the ownership of the means of the production) is the most important realm in any society, and class is the basic unit of a society” (Nayar, 2010, p. 170). In this sense, the economic structure in a social context shapes the customs, practices, and tastes in a society (Bressler, 2011, p. 166). In other words, there is a direct relationship between the social context and economic production as the former is, in fact, shaped by the latter. Accordingly, in the economic structure, the economic mode of production is called the *base* while the social, legal, educational, religious, artistic, cultural, and political institutions and systems are called the *superstructure*, which is controlled and shaped by the base (Bressler, 2011, p. 167). Louis Althusser (2014) defines the base as “the unity of the productive forces and the relations of productions” and the superstructure as “the political-legal level (law and the state) and the ideological level (the various ideologies: religious, moral, legal, political, and so on)” (p. 53). Hence, the systems which form the bases of a social structure cannot be isolated from the economic production; in other words, the economic production underlies all the social, political, legal, religious, artistic, and cultural productions which determine the lives of people in a certain social context. In Nayar’s (2010) definition of Marxist theory, economic conditions lead to the creation of hierarchies based on economic potential. Based on this, in industrialised societies in power relations the upper class aims to control the lower class, which turns into the suppression of the less powerful class by the more powerful class. In Marxist theory ‘class’ is defined by economic means as there are two main groups in society: A capitalist class of people and a class of workers (p. 170). Hence, the binaries of master/slave in slavery and lord/serf in feudalism were replaced by a new system called *capitalism* where the ruling minority is renamed as *employer* who has control over politics and economy, and the subordinated majority is called *employee* (Wolff, 2019, p. 22). In the kitchen which “is always there” (Wesker, 2012, p. 17) the working day starts with a repetitive pattern of Magi’s turning on the seven ovens early in the morning, and both the light and the sound of the ovens gradually grow and create “a small roar” (Wesker, 2012, p. 18). As Anne, who is responsible for desserts and coffee, says, the kitchen “[becomes] a mad-house in two hours” after the work starts in the morning. Until the lunch service, which is at the end of Part One, the chefs enter the kitchen at different times, and as the stage direction says, “[b]y now EVERYBODY is hard at work. [...] The ovens hum. The sounds of clash rattle, and chopping on boards are an orchestrated kitchen symphony” (Wesker, 2012, p. 51). When the lunch service starts, a movement which is at first slow but then gradually becomes rapid and involves both the chefs who prepare the orders and the waitresses who deliver the orders to the customers. As it is suggested in the stage direction for this specific scene, “a specific layout of the kitchen which enables the stage to be constantly peopled with movement” is necessary; if the scene is performed with a different organisation, then it is necessary to have “a different sequence of orders so that the kitchen is never entirely denuded” (Wesker, 2012, p. 98). Therefore, in the stage direction it is emphasised that no matter what kind of stage management is preferred by the director of the play, it is of importance to maintain the constant movement on the stage, which signifies the uninterrupted, labour-intensive work. In Leeming’s words (1981), “[a]s Wesker says in his introduction to the text [*The Journalists*]: *The Kitchen* is not about cooking, it’s about man and his relationship to work” (p. 72). The work is so mechanised that the pace of movement on the stage increases in five stages as the first stage starts with eight beats, and in the following stages the beats decrease until the final stage where there are “no gaps between orders” (Wesker, 2012, p. 115), which shows the gradual increase in movement.

The ending of the lunch service is described as “*final frenzy*” (Wesker, 2012, p. 125) which is followed by Interlude that is an afternoon break when the work temporarily stops and the workers rest. At the beginning of Part Two work continues at a relaxed pace, and the evening service is slow as the orders are prepared and delivered to the customers at a certain speed (Wesker, 2012, p. 185) until Peter has a nervous breakdown and stops the work in the kitchen. Therefore, it may be argued that the tempo of work in the kitchen changes as it quickens and then slackens throughout the day.

The restaurant is a workplace which consists of two parts, the kitchen, where the production takes place, and the dining-room, where the product is delivered to the customer, and the work in the restaurant is done by both the members of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in a rigid class hierarchy. Marango, who is in the first rank in hierarchy, is introduced as “proprietor” (Wesker, 2012, p. 11) while Chef who is the head of all the chefs in the kitchen is followed by Frank who is the second chef and responsible for poultry. Max, the butcher, Bertha, the vegetable chef, Alfredo, the roast chef, Hans, the fry chef, Peter, the boiled fish chef, Kevin, the fried fish chef, Gaston, the grill chef, Michael, responsible for eggs, Nicholas, the cold buffet chef, Paul, the pastry chef, and Raymond, the assistant pastry chef, are the other chefs who work under the supervision of Frank, Chef and Marango hierarchically. Mangolis and Dimitri work as kitchen porters who are below the rank of the chefs in the kitchen. In the dining-room Head Waiter is the representative of the capitalist class, and the waitresses, Monique, Molly, Winnie, Hettie, Violet, Gwen, Daphne, Cynthia, Betty, and Jackie work under Head Waiter. Hence, the ruling minority consists of four characters while the subordinated majority comprises twenty-four characters in total. Also, as it is clearly presented in the staff list of the restaurant, it is a workplace which functions under a hierarchical system with the ruling class having an administrative hierarchy in itself and the working class having a hierarchy according to the division of labour. Therefore, it may be argued that in the play as in Marxist theory there are two main opposite parties which are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in class hierarchy; however, in the play this division is expanded, and in each social class a stepped hierarchy is also established. Regarding the abundance of characters in the play, Laurence Kitchin (1968) states that “Wesker’s experience of the work is a guarantee of authenticity, and that’s about all. When it comes to character, we will be disappointed if we look for any great insight or complexity; there are too many of them and there is little time” (p. 76). Hence, it may be argued that according to Kitchin, Wesker presents a workplace, a place where production constantly continues, with the social classes working in and running the establishment, and rather than the personal lives of the members of both classes, their relationship to work and production is highlighted as the chefs and waitresses work to produce for the capitalist class while Marango and other members of the capitalist class like Chef, Frank and Head Waiter work to control the labour.

As Charles E. Bressler (2011) explains, work becomes the determining aspect of the economic system, and hence the people in a social context are divided into classes; however, it is inevitable that these classes clash resulting in class conflicts, which causes the transformation from a feudal social and economic system where power rests with the people who possess inherited wealth into the capitalist system where the individual ownership of property becomes the dominant force (p. 168). The class struggle, that is “class antagonisms” in Marx and Engels’s (2018) words, arises from the desire for exploitation of one class by the other class which has not changed for centuries (p. 40). Marx and Engels (2018) explain that the contemporary age is the age of bourgeoisie, and the class struggle takes place between the “two great hostile camps, [...] two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat” which were in the past “[f]reeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed”, and they have always

opposed each other, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly (p. 25). In other words, in Marxist theory, the class conflict is between the employer and the employee, the high class and the lower class, the dominant force and the subordinate. In this regard, “an efficient management of the working class”, which is a direct control, is aimed at by the dominant class to maximize its profit (Nayar, 2010, p. 170). In the play the class conflict is presented in two ways. First, the clash between the capitalist class and the working class is demonstrated through the discussion between Chef and Peter and Marango’s clash with Peter. Secondly, the struggle within the working class itself, among the employees, is presented. Accordingly, Marango, the employer and the representative of the capitalist system, leads a monotonous life which is described as miserable by Peter when Kevin calls Marango a polite man in Part One. Peter resembles Marango to a restaurant to show his obsession with his work and explains that Marango follows the same routine everyday as he goes to market very early in the morning, returns to the restaurant and goes to the kitchen to watch the service. He walks around inspecting the work done. He stays at the restaurant until the last customer leaves late at night (Wesker, 2012, p. 65). In a sense, he spends all his time at the restaurant controlling the employees, their work, and the production without having any private life, and as also Peter asks, “[w]hat kind of a life is that, in a kitchen!” (Wesker, 2012, p. 65).

Marango’s staying late at the restaurant and close inspection of the work done by the employees during the day corresponds to Nayar’s argument that the employer needs to keep the employee under strict control for substantial gain under capitalist management. Furthermore, according to Marx (1976), the work of a worker belongs to the capitalist, so the means of production and the instruments of labour are under the control of the capitalist. And although the product is produced by a worker, its ownership is passed on to the capitalist, and both the labour and its use value belong to the capitalist (p. 292). It is possible to interpret Marango’s obsession with work accordingly as the whole production process, including the means that are used and the course, which is followed by the workers, is closely supervised by Marango; therefore, although the labour in production process and the product belong to the chefs and the waitresses in the workplace, the ownership of work is then taken over by the bourgeoisie from the proletariat. In this sense, Marx (1976) defines the capitalist as being “only capital personified. His sole is the soul of capital” (p. 342) thinking nothing but the labour, production and the product to consume.

The clash between the employer and the employee due to the former’s central focus on work intensifies at the end of the play as Peter, with a sudden outburst of anger, breaks the main gas pipe in the kitchen and makes the whole work stop. Not only Marango but also Chef, representing the authority, gives a hostile reaction to Peter’s tantrum, and calls him “Fool!” (Wesker, 2012, p. 198). Peter, referring to Chef’s indifference to the needs of the chefs in the kitchen thitherto, accuses him of caring just when the work comes to a standstill. Therefore, Chef’s relationship with the workers in the kitchen is also failed as he does not attempt to understand the reason for Peter’s outburst and try to empathise with him as a human being to ameliorate the workers’ crises; instead, he accuses Peter of betrayal as he says, “What do you mean, ‘now he cares’? You have to make me care? Forty years and suddenly you have to make me care?” (Wesker, 2012, p. 198). In other words, in the eyes of Chef, Peter has accepted the working conditions, no matter how difficult and poor they are, and he has earned money; however, on a sudden, after working submissively for forty years, he vigorously protests to the capitalist class. Marx (1976) describes that in the labour process a worker is conscious of her/his role in production and the fact that s/he produces as a part of a certain system with “a purposeful will [which] is required for the entire duration of the work” (p. 284). Therefore, Peter’s unexpected rebellion does not seem reasonable to Chef because Peter, as an employee, is expected by the employer to do his duty without questioning, which he, in fact, has done for

many years. Unlike Chef's aggressive attitude, Marango voices his disappointment at Peter's rebellion. As it is presented in the stage direction, he first "*surveys the damage*" (Wesker, 2012, p. 200) which is the physical damage in the kitchen, the damage to the property owned by the capitalist class, rather than Peter's emotional damage, and he regards Peter's outburst as an act of sabotage which he attributes not only to Peter but also to all the employees in the workplace. In this sense, he addresses Frank, the second chef, with the following words: "Why does everybody sabotage me, Frank? I give work, I pay well, yes? They eat what they want, don't they? I don't know what more to give a man" (Wesker, 2012, p. 200). As a representative of the bourgeoisie Marango neglects the human aspect of work and sees the members of the proletariat as objects used for production; therefore, his definition of man does not refer to a human being but a mechanised agent of production. And this agent has one need, that is, earning enough money to survive. Here, it may be argued that Marango's flaw is to degrade his employees into the means of production, and he sees them as entities which are contented with physical labour, meeting basic needs, and earning pocket money for nonurgent needs.

The impact of such objectivisation on the employees can be evaluated through Georg Lukács's *reification* theory which is used to describe the fragmentation of the subject which is the labourer who is forced to see oneself from the outside, and the subject self is objectified, which reflects the alienation of the labourer (Foley, 2019, pp. 265-266). Moreover, Marango's self-righteousness as the leading representative of the capitalist class in the play is so high that he considers his power equal to that of God's and sharply rebukes Peter with the following words: "You have stopped my whole world. Did you get permission from God? Did you? There – is – no – one – else! You know that? No one!" (Wesker, 2012, p. 200). Thus, Marango openly puts forth his superior status in the hierarchy of social classes, and his superiority is not only to the working class people but also to the other members of the capitalist class in the play. And in Kitchin's (1968) words, "[a] kitchen on stage can be accepted as a Capitalist microcosm with the proprietor standing in for God" (p. 77).

The class conflict is seen not only between the dominant class and the subordinate but also within the working class itself as there is a hierarchy among the workers of the restaurant. In the exploitative relationship between the superior class and the inferior class the capitalist force grows richer while the working class earns less although it is the main producing force. The labourers who are treated by the capitalists as merely objects which are beneficial as long as they produce are alienated and isolated not only from the dominant class and the society in general but also from themselves and each other in the same class (Bertens, 2014, pp. 70-71). The conflict within working class is first presented by the account of the fight between Peter and Gaston the night before. After the evening shift ends, Gaston accuses Peter of calling him "lousy Cypro", and although Peter denies the accusation insisting that it is a misunderstanding, not a racial insult, he is threatened by Gaston's friends. In this regard, in Part One when Paul, Raymond and Anne get into a conversation about the fight, Max interferes in the conversation and blames Peter for the fight although he knows very little about why the fight has started and how it has developed. In his accusation he makes references to Peter's ethnicity and explodes with rage at Peter even though they are members of the same social class and co-workers. He suddenly associates Peter's ethnicity with his working in the kitchen and his quarrelsome personality: "He's a bloody German, a fool, that's what he is. He's always quarrelling, always" (Wesker, 2012, p. 26). Moreover, in the conversation between Nicholas and Max regarding the fight both men use pejorative terms while commenting on Peter's nationality and behaviours. Nicholas calls Peter "Boche" and expresses his hate: "The lot! I hate them, you know? I don't hate no one like I hate Boche" (Wesker, 2012, p. 92). Both Max and Nicholas go far in their enmity towards Peter and want him to be officially executed just because he is German and has disruptive behaviours. Max calls it "[a]n eye for an eye" while Nicholas says that "[they] should

use the electric chair. It's no good this hanging" (Wesker, 2012, p. 92). Similarly, when Hans speaks in German to Nicholas and French to Raymond, Max verbally attacks him and reminds him that he is in England, and as all the foreign workers come to England to learn the native language, then they are, in a way, obliged to speak in English (Wesker, 2012, p. 61). The social conflict within the same class which turns into a racial conflict is also presented through a particular fight between Nicholas and Bertha which starts when Bertha takes the tray of sliced, cold potatoes from the cold cupboard that Nicholas claims to have prepared for his own salad and rejects to share it. Both characters have sense of belonging to England and call one another 'the other' insulting each other's native country. When Bertha says, "You don't bloody hell me, my son. You bloody hell in your own country", Nicholas claims that "[t]his is his country", and both characters use the following statement, "[t]he lavatory is your country" (Wesker, 2012, p. 46), to affront each other. Therefore, it is possible to argue that "*The Kitchen* shows how pressured and hierarchically separated working conditions intensify resentments" (Rabey, 2003, p.37) which grow into racial hatred within the working class itself in the play.

The conflict among the members of the working class is also presented through direct physical contact, as in the discussion between Peter and Violet that turns into a fight where Peter acts to attack and also emotionally hurt Violet. In Part Two in the evening service Violet wants Peter to prepare three turbot for Marango; however, Peter does not take the order as he wants Violet to wait until half past six, the start time of the service. After the service starts, Violet rejects to wait in the queue and tries to take her order from the tray behind the serving counter, which is violently received by Peter as he takes the food from Violet and pushes her back saying, "[t]his is my place and there (*Points to the other side of the serving counter.*) there is for you!" (Wesker, 2012, p. 193). When Violet asks, "Who the hell do you think you are, you?", Peter's response, "I am the cook, yes? And you're the waitress, and in the kitchen I do what I like, yes? And in the dining-room you do what you like" (Wesker, 2012, p. 193), clearly shows that there is a sharp division among the working class people according to where they carry out their duties. The waitresses are above the chefs in the hierarchy in the dining-room while the chefs are the dominant class over the waitresses in the kitchen; in a way, there are two distinct places with their own ruling classes, both of which are owned by Marango as the supreme power. This discussion turns into a fight as Peter "*screams and smashes the plate from [Violet's] hand*", and he "*is about to snap. Follows her*" (Wesker, 2012, p. 194) after he claims his domain with the following words: "Is my kingdom here. This is the side where I live. This!" (Wesker, 2012, p. 194). Peter gets out of control, which causes Violet to be "*petrified*" (Wesker, 2012, p. 194) as in the stage direction he is described as "*a frightened animal*" who "*wheels around, in a frenzy, looking for something violent to do*" (Wesker, 2012, p. 194) rather than a human being. Violet's calling Peter "Boche" and "bloody German bastard" during the fight also demonstrates that the conflict between the two parties within the same class turns into a racial fight. Hence, in the light of this information, it may be argued that the members of the working class are exploited by the dominant class in terms of workload and the harsh working conditions, which not only puts them in a position of inferiority but also leads them to feel a strong sense of inferiority and have a desire to attain a position of power. However, as they cannot challenge the bourgeoisie, they rise against each other, and they wreak their anger on each other through racial discrimination.

Ideology

As Barbara Foley (2019) points out, "in Marxist theory social classes are constituted by their contradictory interrelation: without the bourgeoisie there is no proletariat, and vice versa" (p. 85). From this point of view, it is possible to argue that the existence of both classes depends on their economic relationship and the struggle that they are engaged in, which also leads to the

formation of their identities. Charles E. Bressler (2011) explains the reasons for the class struggle through *base* and *superstructure* as follows:

The chief reason for [conflicts between social classes] is the varying ways the members of society work and use their economic resources. The methods of economic production and the social relationships they engender form the economic structure of society, the base. In America, for example, the capitalists exploit the working classes, determining for them their salaries and their working conditions, among many other elements of their lives. From this base arises the superstructure, or a multitude of social and legal institutions, political and educational systems, religious beliefs, values, and a body of art and literature that the one dominant social class (e.g., the capitalists in America) uses to keep in check members of the working classes. (p. 176)

Hence, it may be argued that, as in the case of the system in America, the capitalists hold the economic power of production, so the base, and they determine the general structures of the superstructure, that is, all kinds of systems and structures in society, which are necessary for the formation of a civilisation and are shaped by the ideology of the capitalists, and the working class people lead their lives in accordance with the practices and thoughts of the dominant ideology. In *Capital* (1867) Marx and Engels explain that the bourgeoisie which maintains economic power and controls the social and political policies develops a dominant discourse reflecting the superstructure which includes its values, beliefs, customs, arts, and culture, and makes the proletariat follow this discourse, which becomes the *ideology* of the capitalist class (Bressler, 2011, p. 168). Hence, the concept of *ideology* includes the structures which form the superstructure, and these structures are in accordance with the customs and practices of the high class which is in charge of production (Castle, 2007, p. 110). Hence, it may be argued that the dominant class' use of its own ideology on the subordinate class prevents a possible rebellion by the oppressed working class people, and eventually makes them accept their economic, political, social, cultural, and artistic position. In a sense, the bourgeoisie uses *ideology* as a means of controlling the proletariat in the class conflict. As Hans Bertens (2014) explains,

[f]or Marxists, ideology is not so much a set of beliefs or assumptions that we are aware of – although most of them would include consciously held beliefs and assumptions in their definition of the term – but, more importantly, that which makes us experience our life in a certain way and makes us believe that that way of seeing ourselves and the world is natural. In so doing, ideology distorts reality in one way or another and falsely presents as natural and harmonious what is artificial and contradictory – the class differences that we find under capitalism, for instance. If we succumb to ideology, we live in an illusory world, in what Marxists have often described as a state of false consciousness. (p. 72)

Therefore, it may be argued that the dominant class establishes its ideology consciously and manipulatively by using its practices and customs in its lifestyle. However, the capitalist ideology is not imposed on the lower class. The proletariat adopts and internalises the ruling class ideology unconsciously, which then, in time, turns into a conscious submission. Such adoption avoids a revolt against the capitalist class, which is, in fact, expected from the working class as Marx and Engels assert in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) (Bressler, 2011, p. 168). In Charles E. Bressler's (2011) words, under the influence of dominant ideology the working class people "are presently not free agents, but individuals controlled by an intricate social web dominated by a self-declared, self-empowered, and self-perpetuating social elite" (p. 177). For Louis Althusser, it is 'interpellation' which means that the force in power defines the identity of the less powerful without making it realise that its identity is defined by another party (Foley, 2019, p. 274).

In the play the use of ideology by the capitalist class on the working class is first presented in economic terms through the clash among the members of the working class. While the new employees of the restaurant react against the working conditions created by the capitalist, the senior employees, in desperation, submit to the work life whose rules were laid down by the superior class. The harsh working conditions in the kitchen are voiced by the two

new employees, Kevin and Violet in Part Two, and while Kevin calls the work “hell and high pressure”, both Kevin and Violet complain about the indifference by both the employer and the workers themselves. Kevin complains that the workers work in total ignorance of each other while Violet expresses that the waitresses consent to be physically abused as they may get injured in the hustle and bustle of the service times (Wesker, 2012, p. 159). The adverse reaction by the new employees is also given at the beginning of the play in Part One when they compare the kitchen to other places they have worked. For Violet, in her previous workplaces “[t]here was room”, and she “[moved] like a ballet dancer, [weaved] in and out of tables with grace” (Wesker, 2012, p. 160). Violet also asserts that in such good working conditions the workers including the chefs have not minded queueing up and the inspection by the employer. At Tivoli she has bruises due to the rush but in other civilised workplaces she has even served the Prince of Wales once (Wesker, 2012, p. 160). In Interlude Kevin, in weariness, complains about the heavy workload of the kitchen, and describes the kitchen as a place where he must get out of because “[t]his is no place for a human being” (Wesker, 2012, p. 128). He sweats profusely from preparing the orders during the lunch service, and calls it not sweat but “soaking” that he “can wring [his jacket] out” (Wesker, 2012, p. 127). In response to the complaints the senior employees of the kitchen advise them to be patient and get accustomed to the working conditions and the workload, which can be interpreted as adopting the capitalist ideology. In this sense, Gaston emphasises the monetary aspect of the work and says to Kevin: “You’ll get used to it, stay! It’s good money” (Wesker, 2012, p. 159) while Head Waiter tells Violet to wait until after the lunch service because if she survives it, then “[i]t’ll just be hot – hot and close. For everyone!” (Wesker, 2012, p. 160). Dimitri’s response to Kevin is more negative than other responses as he states that in all the workplaces the employees are both financially and emotionally exploited. He regards Kevin’s complaints as “grumbling” and asks, “Is different anywhere else?”, and explains the general situation for the working class as follows: “People come and go, big excitement, big noise. [...] What for? [...] Why you grumble about this one kitchen?” (Wesker, 2012, p. 128). Therefore, Dimitri openly states that it is a common problem for the working class people, and instead of complaining about a specific place, this problem should be solved in all workplaces in general. In a sense, as long as the working class people comply with the dominant ideology and do not rebel against the exploitive capitalist system for the change of working and living conditions, they will be vulnerable not only to the economic but also to the social, political, cultural, and artistic exploitation by the capitalist class. Dimitri’s attitude is supported by Peter as he expresses that the offices and the factories are not different from the kitchen in terms of exploitation of the workers as in all the workplaces the production is valued while the people who produce the product are disregarded; therefore, while the workplaces are permanent, the workers are temporary and substitutable (Wesker, 2012, p. 130).

Similarly, in Part One after Paul, Daphne, Hans, and Hettie dance to rock & roll music on the radio made by Dimitri, which is a brief relief moment from work, Raymond asks Dimitri why he does not work in a factory producing wires and plugs, and Dimitri expresses that it is another type of work under the capitalist system. Marx and Engels (2018) resemble “the masses of labourers” in a factory to soldiers serving to sergeants in a hierarchical order (p. 30). Accordingly, in the kitchen the employees exist to produce meals to be distributed to the customers; in a factory as in Dimitri’s words, “a man makes a little piece till he becomes a little piece” (Wesker, 2012, pp. 34-35). Therefore, Dimitri’s definition of factory work is in line with Marx’s (1976) ideas about the alienation effect of work because a worker is forced to distance herself/himself from the work both physically and mentally so that s/he will not enjoy the work but just focus on the work to finish it (pp. 283-284). Therefore, for a worker, according to Marx (1976), the following three elements are enough in the labour process: “(1) purposeful activity, that is work itself, (2) the object on which that work is performed, and (3) the instruments of that work” (p. 284). Hence, a worker’s interaction with other workers during the labour process

is not emphasised because for a worker, the means of production which are provided by the capitalist class are the fundamental aspects of production (p. 290). In this sense, although both Dimitri and Peter assert the necessity of accommodating themselves to the current working conditions at the restaurant as they do not improve in other workplaces, they are also aware of the fact that a complete economic revolution is required to change the lives of the working class people in all areas; in a sense, unless the control of the base is gained by the proletariat, the superstructure cannot be shaped in favour of them.

Pramod K. Nayar (2010) asserts that class is not only an economic division, but it also creates some certain taste which includes specific cultural and artistic forms, moral values, modes of behaviour, and all the non-economic aspects of the life of a particular class. Therefore, the taste of one class becomes a defining characteristic of that particular class, and in power relations it leads to the creation of hierarchy between the dominant class and the subordinate class, which gives power of determining good and bad art to the former (pp. 171-172). In the play while the artistic taste of the ruling class is not openly presented, the working class people engage in artistic activities in a limited way, just during the short resting time which is a relief from the pressure of work. And it may be argued that the artistic taste they display in the absence of work belongs to the working class itself, and although the artistic and cultural world of the working class is not shown during the production process, it does not imply that its aesthetic taste is simple but, in a sense, the ruling class determines when and how much the working class can deal with arts and culture by using the pressure of work. In Interlude, which starts with the following stage direction showing the steady pace of work, “*PAUL and RAYMOND work in their corner [...] KEVIN is flat out on his back on a wooden bench, exhausted. DIMITRI slowly sweeps the morning’s debris. PETER squats waiting for MONIQUE. HANS [...] with guitar, singing Ah Sinner Man*” (Wesker, 2012, pp. 126-127), and it ends with the return of the chefs and waitresses to the kitchen. The Interlude part, the afternoon break, is described as “[b]est part of the day” (Wesker, 2012, p. 149) by Paul while Raymond comments on the comfort he feels when the work stops as follows: “When they’re gone I slow down” (Wesker, 2012, p. 149). During the break Peter, Raymond and Dimitri role play as Peter and Raymond duel by using a dustbin lid, a ladle, a whisk, and a saucepan lid; Peter builds an arch with two dustbins, he places a container on each dustbin and a saucepan on the top of the containers, then he hangs a dishcloth on a broom and puts it on the top, and decorates his arch with Chef’s roses, and acts as a German soldier. Then Dimitri wants Peter, Paul, Raymond, Kevin, and Hans to gather and dream that their association is the United Nations with representatives from different countries in the world, and the best dream will be rewarded one million dollars. In this sense, Raymond dreams of having a relationship with a different woman every night, Dimitri wants a workshop, Paul wants a friend, Kevin wants to sleep in a bed, and Hans wants money. Only Peter cannot dream of anything saying, “I can’t, I can’t” (Wesker, 2012, p. 147) although his overwhelming desire is to get rid of the kitchen physically as Dimitri says, “One morning you come here, to this street here, and the kitchen is gone” (Wesker, 2012, p. 146). Furthermore, the Greek dance by Mangolis, Dimitri, Gaston, and Nicholas, which ends Interlude, is a rare instance where the working class people can display their own artistic taste in the absence of the capitalist class. Hence, as Barbara Foley (2019) states, ideology represents the standpoint of a certain class; therefore, both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have their own ideologies (p. 223). In the play the proletariat consciously follows the bourgeoisie ideology in economic and cultural/artistic terms. Although the proletariat is fully aware of the social and economic problems that the working class people confront, it still yields to the ruling ideology, and instead of taking an action and being emancipated from the domination of the superior ideology, it strongly and in despair argues for the impossibility of change.

Conclusion

The Kitchen presents us a world of capitalism where the poor working conditions, long working hours, hectic service times, lack of enough resting time for the workers and a constant supervision by the employer result in the exploitation of the inferior class by the superior class. Therefore, the kitchen stands for capitalism, and all the workers endure a solitary existence which they struggle to avoid (Conley, 1998, p. 125). Accordingly, the existence of the lower class people depends on the existence of the superior class because in the hierarchy between the two social classes the capitalist class holds the power both in base and superstructure and rules over the working class, which causes a class struggle. In the play the employees who are constantly oppressed by the capitalist class, in a way, fight against and escape the sense of worthlessness by suppressing each other. In a sense, the members of the working class ignore the fact that they are subject to the same economic and social exploitation by the capitalist class, and they wreak their anger on one another. In the play as the majority of the working class characters are from different nationalities, the struggle within the class itself is presented through racist discourse, and the members of the class attack each other's nationalities to achieve superiority over one another. In addition, the influence of the capitalist class on the working class is presented through *ideology* as the employees are suppressed not only by the economic means that are work, the production process and the product which are eventually taken over by the employer but also by the economic and social discourse established by the bourgeoisie. The exploitation of the proletariat through the dominant discourse of the bourgeoisie is presented by the use of economic and cultural/artistic ideology on the working class. In economic terms the employees consciously work under the harsh conditions which are set by the employer, which avoids a possible rebellion by the working class to change the balance of power in hierarchy and class struggle. As to the cultural/artistic terms, the working class can show its taste only in the absence of labour as during the production process the employees avoid any activity which will distract them from work. It may be argued that the members of the proletariat adopt the bourgeoisie ideology of work and engage in cultural/artistic activities, which will refresh them and lead them to recognise that they may have another experience of the world which reflects their own likes, customs, and practices, only during short breaks. Therefore, the capitalist class ideology does not enable the working class people to escape into their own world where they are independent from labour and the practices of the capitalist class and limits them to a certain period of time to act like human beings establishing relationships with each other and taking part in cultural/artistic activities.

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