ISSN: 1994-4217 (Print) 2518-5586(online)

Journal of College of Education

Available online at: https://eduj.uowasit.edu.iq

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Keywords:

Class Consciousness, Cultural Deprivation, Marxist Criticism, Language and Power, Working-Class Culture

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A r t i c l e i n f o

Article history:

Received 10. Jul.2026

Revised 20. Aug.2026

Accepted 1. Sep.2026

Published 25. Nov.2026

Class Consciousness and Cultural Deprivation in Arnold Wesker's Roots: A Marxist Study

A B S T R A C T

The present study has examined the concepts of class consciousness and cultural deprivation in the novel Roots by Arnold Wesker from a Marxist critical perspective. It examines the social, economic, and cultural circumstances that influence the lives of the working classes in post-war Britain. The study examines issues of class consciousness, ideology, cultural hegemony and false consciousness, focusing on the intellectual and social growth of Beatie Bryant of the Bryant family. The analysis illustrates that cultural deprivation is not limited to the materialistic aspects of poverty, but also refers to the limited access to education, language, cultural resources and so on, which will lead to social inequality and a lack of critical awareness. Moreover, the research shows the important role of language in the process of ideologization and social change. Finally, Roots sees cultural empowerment and education as key ways of raising self-awareness, confronting ideological domination and implementing social change in working-class communities.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol65.Iss2.5454

الوعي الطبقي والحرمان الثقافي في رواية "جذور" لأرنولد ويسكر: دراسة ماركسية

م.م. عباس بشار حسن

المديرية العامة لتربية واسط

الملخص

تناولت هذه الدراسة مفهومي الوعي الطبقي والحرمان الثقافي في رواية "جذور" للكاتب أرنولد ويسكر من منظور نقدي ماركسي. وتدرس الظروف الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية التي تؤثر على حياة الطبقات العاملة في بريطانيا ما بعد الحرب. وتتناول الدراسة قضايا الوعي الطبقي، والأيديولوجيا، والهيمنة الثقافية، والوعي الزائف، مع التركيز على النمو الفكري والاجتماعي لبيتي براينت، إحدى أفراد عائلة براينت. ويُظهر التحليل أن الحرمان الثقافي لا يقتصر على الجوانب

المادية للفقر، بل يشمل أيضاً محدودية الوصول إلى التعليم واللغة والموارد الثقافية وغيرها، مما يؤدي إلى عدم المساواة الاجتماعية ونقص الوعي النقدي. علاوة على ذلك، يُبين البحث الدور المهم للغة في عملية التأيديولوجيا والتغيير الاجتماعي. وأخيراً، ترى رواية "جذور" أن التمكين الثقافي والتعليم هما السبيلان الرئيسيان لرفع مستوى الوعي الذاتي، ومواجهة الهيمنة الأيديولوجية، وإحداث التغيير الاجتماعي في مجتمعات الطبقة العاملة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوعي الطبقي؛ الحرمان الثقافي؛ النقد الماركسي؛ الأيديولوجيا؛ اللغة والسلطة؛ أرنولد ويسكر؛ الجذور؛ ثقافة الطبقة العاملة.

1. Introduction

Arnold Wesker, a British playwright, screenwriter, and social commentator, lived from 1932 until 2016. One of the most influential playwrights after the war in British theater, he was widely accepted and well known for his realistic portrayal of working class life, social inequalities, and family relations. His best known books are the *Wesker Trilogy*: *Chicken Soup with Barley*, *Roots* and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem.*

His plays frequently reflect his socialist concepts and concern for social justice, making him a prominent figure in contemporary British theatre. It was first performed at the Royal Court Theater in 1959. *Roots* is considered one of the cornerstones of the British Kitchen-sink movement and an important addition to the social realism movement in post-war Britain. The play focuses on women and domestic life, and emphasises the lives of the British working class. *Roots* follows Beatie Bryant's personal and mental growth as she continues to gain a deeper awareness of herself and others in her working class environment. In addition, *Roots* is one of the most critical plays by Wesker in which the complexities between two classes are depicted: one, the proletariat, for instance, labourers who are introduced to the urbanised businessperson world. Secondly, those who are in charge of the pastoral society at Norfolk, and only farm specialists. Despite its strong critical acclaim as a post-war British landmark of drama, *Roots'* evolution of class consciousness and cultural deprivation remains as pertinent an exploration of ideology, language, and social identity as ever.

A Marxist approach to the socio-cultural analysis of consciousness is appropriate for the study of the impact of economic conditions on culture and the development of working-class consciousness in *Roots*. The purpose of this analysis is to examine these interrelated topics thoroughly, in order to gain a fuller understanding of Wesker's social and political perspective, by combining rigorous textual analysis with Marxist ideas. Arnold Wesker was a major post-war British playwright who often explored social, political, and cultural aspects of the working class. His theatrical pieces highlight the connection between human identity and economic circumstances and show the impact of socialist philosophy. *Roots* is one of these, and one of them that takes into account the cultural and intellectual loneliness that most people experience besides material suffering. Wesker shows the importance of education, language and cultural awareness in the development of class consciousness and personal identity in the case of Beatie Bryant.

As a result, the play continues to garner scholarly interest and is extremely pertinent to modern Marxist literary criticism. This research brings together class consciousness, cultural deprivation, language and ideology in a unified Marxist framework, whereas previous works have concentrated more on class struggle/social realism in *Roots*. It also highlights the relation between language and the progress of class consciousness through close textual analysis of the play. Although Arnold Wesker's *Roots* has attracted a lot of scholarly interest, the link between cultural deprivation and class consciousness is not sufficiently studied in a comprehensive Marxist framework. Previous research has concentrated mainly on class struggle, ideology, social inequality, and gender relations, with comparatively little attention given to the importance of culture in developing ideological awareness and social awakening among working class society. This is especially notable because *Roots* intentionally represents oppression as a cultural and intellectual trauma, rather than just an economic condition, and its impact on identity, language, and consciousness is emphasized. For this reason, the present study aims to discuss the notion of class consciousness in the play from a Marxist lens, to examine the concept of cultural deprivation and its social consequences, to analyse the connection between language and ideology, and to look at Wesker's critique of post-war British society and culture. In this process, the study seeks to illustrate the role of cultural consciousness in the ideological transformation and development of the working class consciousness.

2. Research Methodology

This study takes a qualitative descriptive and analytical method, drawing on Marxist literary criticism. The study examines Arnold Wesker's *Roots* with the help of the concepts of class consciousness, cultural deprivation, ideology, and class conflict as formulated by Karl Marx and later by Marxist critics. The study is primarily concerned with the dramatic text of *Roots* (Wesker, 2013), and secondary materials consist of books and scholarly papers dealing with Marxist criticism, postwar British drama and Arnold Wesker's dramatic work. Wesker depicts working class exploitation, the consequences of cultural deprivation, and the development of Beatie Bryant's class consciousness using close textual analysis of selected dialogues and dramatic situations. The study seeks to explain how *Roots* criticizes social inequality and promotes cultural awareness as a strategy of social revolution by combining textual evidence with Marxist theoretical ideas.

3. Research Questions

1. How does Wesker demonstrate class consciousness in *Roots*?
2. In what manner does cultural deprivation perpetuate class subjugation?
3. How does language shape ideology?
4. How can the conflicts in the play be explained by Marxist theory?

4. Literature review

Over the last few years, there has been continued research on class, ideology, social inequality, and cultural representation in literary and social contexts. In the course of Arnold Wesker studies, Mazanoğlu (2023) analyzed The Kitchen from a Marxist point of view, with an emphasis on class struggle and ideology. The study showed how the capitalist system results in the exploitation and dehumanization of workers and strengthens the ideology of

domination in the process of working and enjoying leisure. The results highlighted the continuity of class struggle and the perpetuation of social inequality under capitalism. Yet the main focus of the study was on the relationship between labour relations and ideological control, not the importance of cultural deprivation in the formation of working class consciousness.

In much the same way, Omar and Muhammed (2024) investigated The Kitchen using the lens of ambivalent sexism, which showed the entrenchment of gendered power relations and social hierarchies in the play's portrayal of everyday life. They identified problems of discrimination and domination, mostly gender discrimination, but did not pay much attention to the emergence of class consciousness among the working class characters.

Another study more closely connected to Wesker's vision of drama is Othman (2024), who explored the concept of class struggle and economic inequality in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Arnold Wesker's *Roots*. Both plays, the study said, were about the disillusionment of the British working class following the war and revealed deep social and economic inequalities. The focus was on class consciousness and social realism, but for the most part the emphasis was on economic inequality and class conflict, and not enough attention was given to the correlation between cultural deprivation and ideological awakening.

In addition to literary analyses, Lee (2024) explored class consciousness through a socio-psychological lens and discovered that those with more of a class consciousness view poverty and inequality as a result of structural issues, not personal ones. Similarly, Kühnen and Kitayama (2024) explored the link between culture, social class, and identity development, revealing how uneven access to cultural resources can have a profound impact on how one views oneself, social norms, and the way they engage with society. These studies offer important theoretical frameworks for understanding class consciousness and cultural inequality but do not consider how these are constructed and "negotiated" in literary works.

Consequently, the previous studies have concentrated on class struggle, economic inequality, ideology, gender relations, and social identity in Wesker's production and in the context of his work. While class consciousness has been explored by a few scholars and cultural inequality has been discussed from sociological and psychological perspectives, there has been little attention given to the interrelationship between cultural deprivation and the development of class consciousness in Arnold Wesker's *Roots*. This lack is even more striking as it is not only a lack of economic marginalisation, but a lack of cultural resources that would be shaping the protagonist's intellectual and ideological development. The aim of the present study, therefore, is to address such a gap by conducting a Marxist analysis of *Roots*, and to analyze how cultural deprivation underlies the development of class consciousness and ideological awareness of working-class characters.

5. Background and Context

Arnold Wesker (1932-2016) was one of the most important and influential players in the post-war British theatre. Raised in the working-class Jewish community of Stepney, East London, Wesker's childhood experiences of poverty, wartime Britain and working-class life

had a strong impact on his literary and political views. Before becoming a playwright, he had a number of jobs: kitchen and catering work and, eventually, service in the Royal Air Force.

During his entire career, Wesker was involved in cultural and literary institutions and was awarded a number of honorary academic degrees for his work in modern British drama (Keene, 1967). Wesker was involved in other movements for the empowerment of workers, outside the domain of theatre. In his dramas and cultural activities, he was a champion of making education, art and intellectualism accessible to the common man. This vision was manifested through the formation of Centre 42 in 1961, as a result of a resolution passed by the Trades Union Congress in 1960 in which cultural work in the lives of working people was highlighted. The project aimed to introduce theatre, literature, music, and the arts to the working class audiences who have been historically underrepresented in the arts. Despite never really being able to gain permanent institutional recognition and its eventual demise in 1970, Centre 42 was a powerful statement of Wesker's conviction that culture could be a means of social awareness and group empowerment. Several of his later plays, such as *Their Very Own* (1966), *Golden City* (1966), *The Four Seasons* (1966) and *The Friends* (1970), exemplify the challenges to idealism, social change, and cultural transformation. One of the best dramatic representations of these concerns was in *Roots* (1959), a play about the rural county of Norfolk in post-war welfare-state Britain. Whereas some of Wesker's earlier plays are based on urban families, *Roots* is about a provincial working-class family whose lives are constrained by economic constraints, limited education and cultural isolation. The Bryant family is a section of the rural working class whose members are engaged in manual labour in farming, machine operation, and in the garages, while the women are limited to domestic duties. Their everyday conversations are concerned with household issues, local gossip, and routine matters; their social horizon is narrow as they lack access to cultural and intellectual resources (Sehrawat & Singh, 2014). In this context, Wesker defines cultural deprivation as a deprivation of intellectual development, critical reflection, and social awareness, as well as material resources.

Their social context has imposed limitations, as shown by the family's preference for popular entertainment and their lack of interest in reading, literature, art, and intellectual discussion. The Bryants could be considered to represent a formative period of proletarian consciousness, where they do not actively challenge the superior cultural and political contexts, but rather take their fate into their own hands. In this context, *Roots* is a thought-provoking look at the connection between culture, language, identity, and social change, as Beatie Bryant slowly begins to understand and develop a class consciousness.

6. Marxist Theory and Class Distinction

Karl Marx theorized that capitalist societies had two major classes: the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the proletariat, who must sell their labour for sustenance. In such a framework, class consciousness manifests itself when workers or working class people become aware of the social and economic systems that impact on their lives, and start to question inequality and domination. One of the central issues of Marxist criticism is that of ideology and social awareness. The dominant culture(s) within cultural institutions tend to legitimise the values of the dominant class, which can lead to the workers

accepting the existing social arrangements as a natural and inevitable part of life. This is also the view of Georg Lukács (1971) that class consciousness is a product of people's awareness of the social and economic conditions in which they live, rather than their personal circumstances. It is only when the proletariat is aware of its collective situation in the capitalist system that it becomes transformative, according to Lukács. This perspective further supports the Marxist notion that a critical reflection, and cultural participation, are necessary to transcend the ideology of domination and to gain social awareness. As Beatie slowly evolves intellectually in *Roots*, she is questioning what she has always taken for granted and what she has never considered, the way she understands herself and others around her. Therefore, low access to education, culture and intellectual development may not allow the working class to gain a critical perspective on their social situation. To Marxist critics, then, cultural deprivation is one of the key factors in the perpetuation and transmission of class inequality from one generation to the next. The play, however, with the character of Beatie Bryant, shows how class consciousness is starting to develop and how there is a growing desire for intellectual and cultural self-development. Wesker also argues for a cultural deprivation cause of social disadvantage. This idea is reflected in Ronnie's criticism of popular entertainment:

> *"That's what I used to tell him. 'Fun?' he say. 'Fun? Playing an instrument is fun, painting is fun, reading a book is fun, talking with friends is fun – but a comic? A comic? for a young woman of twenty-two?"* (Wesker, 2013, p. 67).

From a Marxist perspective, this statement highlights the importance of culture and education in fostering critical awareness. It is clear from Ronnie's statements that intellectual and artistic pursuits can expand the consciousness of the individual, while passive styles of entertainment can help to perpetuate cultural boundaries and social conformity. The transformation of class consciousness is the most obvious in Beatie's transformation.

Over the course of the play, she slowly develops from a passive acceptance of her environment to an increasingly critical one. When she says: "I don't want Ronnie to think I come from a small-minded family" (Wesker, 2013, p. 118), it is clear that this is a change. Not only is she embarrassed, but she is aware of cultural restrictions that are being placed upon her by her environment. This development from passive conformity to critical consciousness is seen in Beatie's increasing discontent as an example of how language, culture, and education can shift the dynamics that support class inequality in Marxist thinking.

6.1 False Consciousness, Cultural Hegemony, and Ideology

Marxist criticism has a central concept, false consciousness, in which the workers do not see the structural causes of their social and economic injustice, but believe that injustice is natural, inevitable, or legitimate. Capitalist societies frequently obscure the true nature of the exploitation by means of ideologies that influence individuals' perceptions of social relations and class interests, according to Marxist theorists. Consequently, workers can absorb dominant values and beliefs that ultimately may benefit the interests of the ruling class, and

not the workers (Marx & Engels, 1978). False consciousness is thus an obstacle to the formation of class consciousness since it restricts people's capacity to critically analyse their material lives. This is seen in the Bryant family's passive acceptance of economic hardship and limited educational and cultural opportunities, which are generally considered as normal parts of life rather than the result of a wider social disadvantage. Cultural hegemony is a term used by Antonio Gramsci to describe how the production and dissemination of cultural values, beliefs and norms, which come to be accepted as common sense (Gramsci, 1971), are a way of maintaining power for dominant social groups, which is not merely economic or political.

According to Gramsci, the ruling class secures consent by shaping cultural institutions and social practices in ways that normalize existing power relations. Culture therefore becomes a crucial arena of struggle, of domination and resistance. In this regard, access to education, literature and art, and critical discourse is very important in the challenge of what are considered hegemonic assumptions and the creation of social awareness. The contrast between the culturally constrained world of the Bryant family and Ronnie's intellectually sophisticated worldview is a study in cultural conformity and critical consciousness, with reading, discussion and appreciation of art at the center of his approach, an attempt to break free from limitations set by hegemonic cultural practices and to develop a more reflective approach to social reality. In his work (1971), Althusser developed the idea of ideology and social consciousness by adding to it the concept of “Ideological State Apparatuses” (ISAs), which are the family, education, religion, and the media, which reproduce the social structures of capitalist societies. In terms of ideology, Hasan (2023) states that discourse is always ideological and that linguistic choices play a role in shaping specific social realities and identities. Likewise, in Roots, language is not just a medium of communication; it is a place of negotiation and contestation between classes, cultural values, and ideology. The play reveals the way in which the dominant cultural points of view permeate the consciousness of the working classes with dialogue and characterization. These institutions do not force anything upon others, but rather do so subtly in ways that lead to compliance with prevailing social norms. Ideology is, thus, also more than just a series of ideas; it is a system of representation which enables people to perceive themselves and their relationship to society.

Marxist literary criticism often looks at how literary texts express, reinforce, or refract these ideological structures. Language, family relations, and cultural practices in *Roots* are ideological structures that shape characters' sense of themselves and their social situation. Beatie Bryant's intellectual maturation may thus be understood as a process of transcendence from ideology to critical consciousness about class, culture, and social disparities. The role of culture and ideology in shaping social consciousness is still emphasized in the contemporary period by Marxist scholars. Eagleton (2011) claims that ideology will work best when it is built into routine practices and taken-for-granted beliefs, which makes social inequality seem normal and unproblematic. Likewise, Tyson (2015) argues that literature can reveal the ideological undercurrents that are at play when it shows the connection between culture, power, and class. Such insights are important, as Wesker demonstrates in *Roots* that cultural deprivation goes beyond lack of education, artistic exposure, or lack of class consciousness

and is a specific condition which affects the ability to reflect: Beatie's metamorphosis ultimately implies that cultural involvement and thinking can stand in opposition to ideological domination and help in personal and social emancipation.

7. Family Relations and Cultural Deprivation

In Roots, Wesker's focus is on the family dynamic and how economic deprivation and cultural deprivation can have a significant impact on relationships. The family of the Bryants is a family where there have been constant tensions and distance for many years; it is a larger social commentary on the working class. Mrs. Bryant's primary focus is on basic needs and survival—little opportunity for emotional need or intellectual growth.

As a result, she is not affectionate or understanding of her husband and constantly criticizes and fights with him. This tension in their marriage relationship is most clearly seen when Beatie is repeatedly asked to be a go-between in their conflicts. Things go downhill when Mr. Bryant is stripped of his employment status and is forced to take half pay after serving 18 years. Instead of challenging the inequity of the situation, he is passive, and Mrs Bryant is frustrated and resentful. Wesker (2013, p. 47) argues that the longer a person is economically disadvantaged, the more it negatively affects the emotional bond at home. Mr. Bryant's reaction to his situation is another example of the consequences of working-class resignation. When Beatie asks him to fight back against his mistreatment, he just says, “You can't do anything.” It is a statement that conveys helplessness and acceptance toward the dominant ideology and internalization of social inequality that are typical of the Marxist critics. Throughout the play, financial insecurity remains a factor in family relationships. Mr. Bryant says that it would be too expensive to make a cake for Jenny, for instance, when Beatie wants to make one for her sister Jenny. His response underscores the negative impact economic disadvantage can have on family love and kindness. Wesker also depicts Mrs. Bryant as a stand-in for numerous rural working-class women who have few social activities beyond daily housework. Such isolation contributes to frustration, emotional dissatisfaction, and a narrow worldview. Not everyone these days is limited to communicating with each other. Wesker continues with younger couples, such as Jenny and Jimmy, and their relationship is no exception to the constraints of their social environment.

As a mechanic, instead of a farm labourer, the couple still has many of the constraints typical of the Bryant parents. In these parallel relationships, the play illustrates the link between cultural and economic deprivation, and how it is passed down from generation to generation. A major difference to this is brought in by the education and intellectually curious young man Ronnie Kahn, that Beatie falls in love with while living in London. Ronnie stands for culture, education and critical thinking. His passions range from the mundane to the literary, musical, artistic, political and intellectual. This places him in a social and cultural space that is significantly different from Beatie's and her family's. Their relationship exposes the difference between the rich, culturalized urban life and the limited experiences of rural working class life. Ronnie’s criticism of popular entertainment illustrates Wesker’s concern with cultural deprivation. Beatie remembers how he was affected by her reading comics: “Fun?” he say. “Fun? Playing an instrument is fun, painting is fun, reading a book is fun, talking with friends is fun – but a comic? A comic? for a young woman of

twenty-two?" (Manju, 2014). In this criticism, Ronnie makes Beatie think again about her concepts of culture and personal growth. He encourages her to devote her time to serious reading, good music, political discussion, and art and intellectual activity. In this way he catalyses her intellectual reawakening and her developing consciousness of the constraints that are placed on her by her social position.

8. Social and Proletarian Issues

Roots is a contemporary, realistic portrayal of Beatie Bryant, a young, working class female, whose life mirrors that of post-war Britain. Wesker discusses in Beatie and her family how there were conflicts between generations, specifically between parents and children, as well as the emotional and social dynamics that influenced working class life. The play focuses on human relationships, communication and the social context that affects individuals' behaviour in the family and in wider society (Dornan, 2014).

A major issue highlighted in the play is the impact of limited education and cultural deprivation on the working class. Wesker depicts a limited social environment that leads to emotional frustration, social isolation and a lack of communication among the members of the Bryant family. The tension between Mr. and Mrs. Bryant represents the forces of economic poverty and the detrimental impact of material poverty on family life. Wesker argues that poverty not only impacts the living situation, but also on interpersonal relations between people, which may result in emotional distance and lessen communication within the family. As Khanam (2025) argues, the absence of meaningful communication between family members becomes a consequence of the social and economic pressures experienced by the working class.

9. Social Conflict

Roots' central tension is not simply one between personal opinions but also a greater social-cultural struggle between intellectual consciousness and the traditional values of the working class. The introduction into Beatie's world of the boys Ronnie and Lenny provides her with a much deeper cultural background than she had as a child. Beatie tries to win Ronnie's favor by taking over many of his perspectives without fully understanding them, and shows her difficulty in making a personal identity (Costello, 1978). Wesker also argues that social conflict is linked to cultural inequality. Popular entertainments are shown to be insufficient alternatives to "intellectual and cultural" work, and literature, education, and critical reflection are seen as the means by which individual development and social consciousness are cultivated (Wesker, 1960).

In this contrast, the play reflects on the significance of culture and consciousness and thus posits that knowledge gives people the authority to challenge social structures that influence their lives. The family is deserving of a central role in this process as a chief socialization site of the family. Values, attitudes, communication styles, and the perception of the world are shaped much within the family context. Conditions of childhood can have a strong impact on social relationships and patterns of behaviour as Page (1967) suggests. *Roots* are not just about the economic constraints of working class existence, but also the

rather constrained cultural experiences afforded to family members. Therefore, the play draws attention to the lack of communication in the majority of working class society. The play does not just indicate the problem and go back to the drawing board: it offers a solution to the riddle of the social and emotional isolation of Wesker's characters. Education, cultural interaction, and literature and the arts can help to extend people's self-awareness and outwit the restrictions of social deprivation, via Beatie's intellectual awakening, Wesker suggests. In this sense, *Roots* advocates cultural enrichment as a means of fostering personal development, social participation, and class consciousness (Wesker, 2013).

10. Language and Accent

Language plays a pivotal role in Roots, not just as a communication tool but as a symbol for social identity, cultural awareness, as well as positioning as an ideology. Wesker shows how linguistic competence can be a symbolic power which influences what kind of image of the self and the world people develop. A Marxist view of language sees it as reflecting unequal access to cultural resources and exposing the extent of the people's ability to engage in intellectual and social life. This relationship between language and knowledge and consciousness is demonstrated when Mrs. Bryant says “I don't know all the words” (Wesker, 2013, p. 96). Her remark reflects more than a lack of linguistic competence; it is a sign of a greater state of cultural deprivation which is affecting her ability to think beyond her social context. Beatie's language awareness is a developing skill, unlike Mrs. Bryant's, as he is gradually sensitized to the cultural and political values of language. As she interacts with Ronnie, she comes to recognize that language is not just a means of communication, but a medium through which she can express her identity, make meaning of her experiences, and challenge social realities. It's especially noticeable when Beatie and her mother discuss words and meaning. What is your attitude towards words?” Beatie asks. Do you find them beautiful?”, Mrs. Bryant responds, “Them’s as good words as any.” Pressed further with questions such as, “What do they do to you? How do the words influence you? Are you moved? Do you find them beautiful?... Do they make you feel better?”, she finally replies, “it’s the tune I like. Words never mean anything” (Kour, 2007, p. 24). This is a considerable difference in the linguistic awareness. As Beatie becomes more aware of the potential for words to represent and convey meaning and intellectual stimulation, her mother sees words as merely secondary to what can be absorbed instantly through sensory input. The dialogue also illustrates the difference between meaning and the word—where there is no meaning in the word but only in the interpretation and social context. This is consistent with Hasn's (2024) idea that meaning is negotiated rather than determined by the intentions of the speakers and their sociocultural knowledge. Wesker also delves into the connection between language and consciousness in Beatie's mental growth. She will have to try to make the ideas that her family has, known to Ronnie. Thinking about Ronnie's opinions she concedes:

> *"I don't know what he talk about. Something about registers, something about commercial world blunting our responses"* (Wesker, 2013, p. 115).

Her uncertainty is an indication that she is still learning the cultural background information she needs in order to express intricate social and intellectual ideas. But this battle is a turning point *in her development as a person, as she begins to question conventional beliefs that were once accepted and without question. Ronnie has a strong impact on critical reflection and self-education. His counsel to Beatie is representative of the play's general concern for intellectual development:*

> *" 'Give yourself time, woman, 'he says, 'Time! You can't learn how to live overnight. I don't even know what's more, a large portion of the world doesn't know, yet we got the opportunity to attempt. Try co's we're still suffering from the shock of two world wars, and we don't know it. Talk and look and listen and think and ask questions"* (ibid.).

The emphasis is on the need for inquiry, discussion, and critical thinking to transcend cultural barriers. Ronnie's point of view is Marxist, and therefore he advocates the awareness of people in the world. Ronnie's words are in a Marxist sense, advocating the awareness of people beyond passively accepting their social conditions, but engaging actively with the world around them. But it is also clear that Wesker comes across his own problems with this process.

Likewise, Beatie uses Ronnie's vocabulary and ideas, repeating them sometimes without understanding their meaning. Her efforts to question her family are often met with criticism and not discussion as a result. She criticizes her mother for being uncultured and for *"closing out the world,"* believing that her family provided her few chances to expand her intellectual horizons. The lack of books, the unwillingness to watch serious cultural shows, and the love for popular entertainment become symbols of cultural deprivation in the family life. It is frustrating that Mrs. Bryant cannot effectively respond to these claims, which were again made in her confused question, "What's gone into you now, gal?" (ibid.) describes the difference between the older and younger generations in terms of communication. Finally, *Roots* offers a language as a place for social contestation and individual transformation. Wesker shows how cultural awareness grows over time and sometimes at a snail's pace through Beatie's development of language. The play implies that class consciousness is built up through access to language, education and the use of intellectual discourse, and that such intellectual discourse can question the cultural constraints of social inequality.

11. Results and Discussion

The investigation indicates that *Roots* is not a direct reaction to the economic situation only, but also a process of class consciousness, one that is intellectual and cultural. Wesker's depiction of Beatie Bryant illustrates how new thinking, learning, and culture spur people to challenge the assumptions that inform their lives. Throughout the play, Beatie's realization of the constraints of her social world grows, shifting from being passive to being more critical of class relations and social inequality. This is an important development in the central Marxist issue of the development of class consciousness as a precursor to social awareness and change.

The results also show that cultural deprivation is among the major challenges that are about to be encountered by the working class in the play. Wesker's Bryant family is depicted as being socially and culturally limited, with limited intellectual horizons, little engagement with literature or the arts, and less opportunity to learn. The play implies that such deprivation does not just restrict the growth and development of individuals, but also helps spread class inequality. In a Marxist view, a lack of cultural resources also strengthens the current social order by not encouraging critical thinking and by limiting opportunity for self-development. A second noteworthy discovery has to do with the connection between language and ideology.

The analysis shows the significance of language as a clue to cultural awareness and intellectual development. As the play unfolds, Beatie slowly realises that the power of language can be used to communicate ideas, to manipulate experience and even to question established beliefs. In contrast, other members of her family often regard language as merely a practical means of communication. This contrast makes it clear that linguistic and cultural knowledge are important for an individual's understanding and evaluation of social realities. Thus, language becomes an important instrument in the process of critical consciousness. The study also shows that there is no personal disagreement that lies beneath the social conflict in *Roots*; rather, there is cultural and ideological disagreement. The battle between Beatie and her family is a battle between traditional and working-class values and ideals and those of intellectual and cultural advancement. At times, however, Beatie becomes more cynical, and the more she sees, the less she can take the limitations of her world for granted—and the more she starts to butt heads with those who still do. In this conflict, the issues of personal change and social change in a class society are brought to light.

Overall, the results show that Roots is more than a one-dimensional image of working-class struggle. Wesker offers a more general commentary on the cultural and ideological climate that underpinned social inequality after the war in Britain. Finally, Beatie's intellectual growth makes Wesker realize that a sense of cultural awareness forms an important component of personal empowerment and social change.

12. Conclusion

This study has shown that Arnold Wesker's work *Roots* is more than a realistic depiction of post-war working-class life in Britain; it is a critique of the social, cultural and ideological frameworks which perpetuate class inequality. From this Marxist view, the

analysis indicated that cultural deprivation is a very powerful mechanism of social domination, limiting access to education, critical thinking and cultural participation and therefore the development of class consciousness. The research also revealed that, for Wesker, economic deprivation is associated with intellectual marginalisation, which is an example of the socialization of the poor and the normalisation of their situation. The Bryant family exemplify this state of limited consciousness, and Beatie Bryant's slow emergence from passivity to critical awareness suggests a shift from passivity to critical consciousness. Her metamorphosis demonstrates how important language, learning, and cultural interaction are when it comes to confronting ideological boundaries and developing self-awareness.

Furthermore, this analysis has validated the notion that language works as a site of ideologization and the construction of social identities in *Roots*. In Wesker's work, he highlights the importance of linguistic ability and cultural knowledge to challenge and re-imagine social realities. In this regard, the play is consistent with major Marxist issues such as ideology, cultural hegemony, and the perpetuation of class relations. In the end, *Roots* calls for cultural empowerment as a way to personal emancipation and a collective social awareness. According to Wesker, the effort to create meaningful social change must not only work to improve the economy, but to provide access to intellectual and cultural resources that can change consciousness. *Roots*' timelessness has to do with its awareness of the fight against inequality as an economic, cultural, and ideological process; as such, it can be considered an important work in the Marxist literary tradition and in the current debate over class, culture, and social justice.

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