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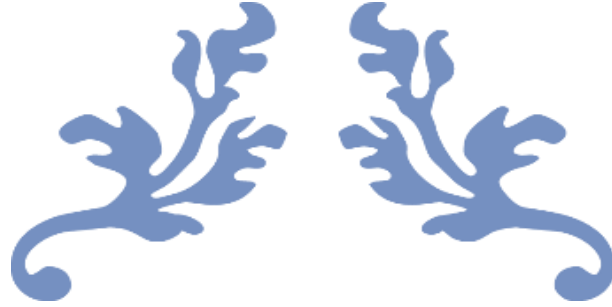
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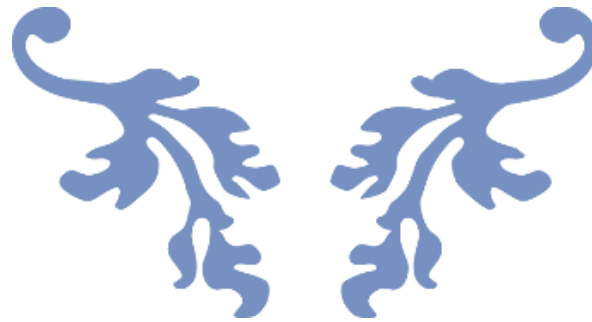
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ، الحمدّ لله على فضله ونعمته ، والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم وآله ، أمّا بعد

يسرّنا أن نقدم لكم العدد 25 الجزء الثاني من المجلة الأمريكية الدولية للعلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية، الذي يضم مجموعة من البحوث العلمية المتميزة التي شارك بها باحثون من مختلف دول العالم.

لقد دأبت هيئة التحرير على تطبيق معايير التقييم العلمية شأنها بذلك شأن المجلات الرصينة المثيلة في حقل التخصص والنشر العالمي ، فعرضت البحوث على محكمين لهم مكانتهم العلمية في فضائهم العلمي ، ويعودون لجنسيات مختلفة ، ومن جامعات متباينة ، منها الجامعات الحكومية التي ترجع بمرجعيتها إلى بلدان العالم المختلفة ، فضلا عن الاستعانة بخبراء من جامعات خاصة اثبتوا بشكل علمي أنهم أهل للتحكيم واطلاق الحكم على علمية البحث المقدم للمجلة ، وصلاحيته للنشر.

حرصت هيئة التحرير على عرض البحث المقدم من لدن كاتب البحث على محكمين اثنين ، وتقديمه لهما ، بتوقيتات زمنية محددة ، فأن اتفق المحكمان على صلاحية البحث ، تم تحويله إلى مرحلة التنضيد والنشر ، بعد التأكد من دقة تطبيق تعليمات النشر الخاصة بالمجلة . وإن اختلف المحكمان في التقييم المطلق على البحث المقدم ، حول البحث لمحكم ثالث ، فأن قبله ، تم تحويله للمرحلة الثانية التنضيد والنشر ، وإن رفضه ، عندئذ يرفع البحث من قائمة البحوث المعدة للنشر.

لم يختلف منهج هيئة التحرير في آلية قبول البحوث ، وعدّها للنشر عن غيرها من المجلات العلمية ؛ لأن الرصانة العلمية هو هدفها الذي تسعى للوصول إليه ، واعتمدت نظاما دقيقا في استقبال البحوث ، وتقديمها للمقومين ، واشعار الباحثين بقبول النشر ، وفقا لأمر إداري يصدر عن المجلة ، يعد مستندا في صحة نشر البحث في المجلة ، مع تثبيت العدد الذي نشر فيه مذيلا بإمضاء رئيس التحرير.

احتوى هذا العدد في طياته مجموعة من البحوث ، والتي تحمل موضوعات متنوعة ، ذات الطابع الإنساني والاجتماعي ، ضمن تخصص المجلة ، وكل الأفكار التي طرحت تحمل الرؤى العلمية وأبعادها ، والنظرية التي يؤمن بها أصحاب تلك الأفكار ، لذلك كانت المجلة دقيقة ؛ لأجل عرض تلك الأفكار من دون التدخل فيها ، مع متابعة كونها لا تؤدي إلى خلق الفوضى العلمية ، أو تحريض للعنف ، أو للتطرف العلمي والمجتمعي.

نحن فخورون أيضًا أن هذا العدد يصادف حدثًا مميزًا في مسيرة المجلة، حيث تم اعتمادنا من قبل المكتبة الوطنية المغربية للحصول على الاعتماد القانوني، ومنحنها التسلسل الرقمي الدولي (ISSN) للنسخة الإلكترونية وأيضًا للنسخة الورقية. هذا الإنجاز يعكس التزامنا بتقديم محتوى علمي رصين ومتنوع، ويسهم في تعزيز مكانة المجلة كمصدر مرجعي معترف به عالميًا.

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الملاحظة القانونية

البحوث المنشورة في المجلة لا تعبر عن وجهة نظر المجلة ، بل عن رأي كاتبها

فهرس الموضوعات

Western Narcissism and the Evasion of Ethical Responsibility in David Hare's The Vertical Hour
A Levinasian and Postcolonial Reading

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Abstract

The Vertical Hour, by David Hare, addresses the ethical and political implications of Western narcissism, how self-absorption and ideological detachment undermine global humanity. The play explores the failure of Western intellectuals and policymakers to take responsibility for cycles of violence while claiming a liberalism they have never followed through on; it questions why the West allows itself to continue this cycle by turning away or rationalizing its actions through intellectual posturing as opposed to meaningful engagement with suffering, and how Hare frames narcissism in his work as destructive to global humanity. Discusses how The Vertical Hour challenges the moral relativism of Western intellectuals and policymakers, the erosion of empathy in political discourse, and how privileging personal idealism over collective responsibility can be destructive. This study analyzes how Hare's work frames Western narcissism as a destructive force, one that perpetuates injustice while masking itself in the rhetoric of righteousness. It looks at characters such as Nadia (the intellectual), who weaponize reason to rationalize doing nothing. By comparing the West's refusal to recognize the Face of the Other (e.g., victims of war reduced to political talking points), Hare exposes how narcissistic self-mythologizing corrodes ethical action, and he illustrates this by showing Nadia's intellectualized liberalism and Oliver's

cynical complicity, both of which are contrasted against an underlying pathology in the West: the fetish for moral superiority as a way to avoid responsibility .

David Hare's The Vertical Hour performs a scathing indictment of Western narcissism via the disintegration of ethical responsibility to the Other by focusing on how the Western Self negates, appropriates, or renders invisible its marginalized victims (Other) of global conflict through an ethics of alterity based upon Emmanuel Levinas and colonial psychoanalysis from Frantz Fanon.

This play's title refers to the "vertical hour" of suspended time that precedes moral choice; for Hare, this concept is his metaphor for the endless deferral by the West of "ethical encounter". For him, true reckoning entails shattering the narcissistic Self to confront the irreducible humanity of the Other; in their final confrontation, Nadia and Oliver reveal Self/Other not as a binary but a collapsed spectrum on which Western identity falls apart under the weight of its own unacknowledged complicity.

Key words: Western hypocrisy, intellectual complicity, moral responsibility, Self and other, cost of ideological detachment.

النرجسية الغربية والتهرب من المسؤولية الأخلاقية في رواية "الساعة العمودية" لديفيد هير

قراءة ليفيناسية وما بعد استعمارية

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الملخص

تتناول مسرحية *الساعة العمودية* للكاتب ديفيد هير الأبعاد الأخلاقية والسياسية للنرجسية الغربية، وكيف أن الانغماس في الذات والانفصال الأيديولوجي يؤديان إلى تقويض القيم الإنسانية على مستوى العالم. تستعرض المسرحية فشل المثقفين وصنّاع القرار في الغرب في تحمّل مسؤولية دوائر العنف المتكررة، رغم ادعائهم التمسك بليبرالية لم يطبقوها فعليًا. كما تطرح تساؤلات حول أسباب استمرار الغرب في هذا النهج من خلال التجاهل أو التبرير القائم على التنظير الفكري، بدلًا من الانخراط الحقيقي مع المعاناة، وتوضح كيف يصور هير النرجسية كقوة مدمرة للإنسانية العالمية.

تحلل هذه الدراسة الكيفية التي يصوّر بها هير النرجسية الغربية كقوة هدامة تكرّس الظلم بينما تتخفّى خلف خطاب أخلاقي زائف. وتركز على شخصيات مثل ناديا (المثقفة) التي تستخدم العقل لتبرير العجز عن اتخاذ موقف. ومن خلال مقارنة رفض الغرب الاعتراف بـ"وجه الآخر" (مثل ضحايا الحروب الذين يتم اختزالهم إلى مجرد نقاط نقاش سياسية)، يكشف هير كيف يؤدّي التمركز النرجسي حول الذات إلى تآكل الفعل الأخلاقي، ويجسد ذلك من خلال ليبرالية ناديا العقلانية وتواطؤ أوليفر المتشائم، وكلاهما يعكس مرضًا متأصلاً في الغرب: الولع بالتفوق الأخلاقي كوسيلة للتهرب من المسؤولية.

تُقدّم *الساعة العمودية* إدانة لاذعة للنرجسية الغربية من خلال تفكك المسؤولية الأخلاقية تجاه "الآخر"، حيث تركز على الكيفية التي

تُنكر بها الذات الغربية ضحاياها المهمشين أو تستغلهم أو تمحو وجودهم في سياق الصراعات العالمية، وذلك من خلال منظور

أخلاقيات "الغيرية" المستند إلى فلسفة إيمانويل ليفيناس، والتحليل النفسي الاستعماري لدى فرانز فانون.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النفاق الغربي، تواطؤ المثقفين، المسؤولية الأخلاقية، الذات والآخر، ثمن الانفصال الأيديولوجي..

1. Importance of the Study

This section highlights why the research is significant:

- This paper argues that Hare's The Vertical Hour dramatizes Western narcissism as a systemic evasion of ethical responsibility, using Levinasian alterity and Said's Orientalism to expose the pathologies of liberal interventionism.
- The concept of Western narcissism is rarely addressed through a dramatic lens.
- David Hare's *The Vertical Hour* provides a unique critique of intellectual and political complicity.
- The study sheds light on how modern theatre can act as a medium of ethical resistance and political commentary.

2. Objectives of the Study

This section identifies what the research seeks to achieve:

- To analyze how *The Vertical Hour* exposes Western narcissism.
- To examine the ethical failures of intellectual liberalism in the play.
- To explore the role of theatre in revealing ideological detachment and moral hypocrisy.

3. Scope of the Study

This defines the limitations and boundaries of the research:

- The analysis is limited to *The Vertical Hour* as a primary text.
- Focuses on Western political and philosophical discourse post-9/11 and the 2003 Iraq War.
- The research is interpretive and qualitative, not empirical.

4. Research Hypotheses

These are proposed assumptions that the research investigates:

- Western narcissism is portrayed as a destructive force in *The Vertical Hour*.
- Liberal intellectualism fails to engage ethically with the Other.
- The Western identity constructs itself through denial and detachment from global suffering.

5. Review of Previous Studies

This section surveys existing literature relevant to the topic:

- Previous critical work on David Hare's political plays.
- Studies of postcolonial ethics, especially those based on Emmanuel Levinas and
- Research discussing the role of theatre in ethical and political discourse.

6. Research Tools

These are the theoretical and analytical tools used in the research:

- Textual analysis of *The Vertical Hour*.
- the concept of "the Other" Edward Siad
- Dramatic theory: analysis of character, dialogue, and structure.

7. Research Methodology

- This study employs close reading of pivotal scenes (e.g., Nadia/Oliver's debate in Act II) and Levinasian keywords ('Face,' 'Other') to trace ethical evasion. Hare's stage directions (e.g., prolonged silences) are analyzed as performative metaphors for deferred responsibility.
- Qualitative and analytical in nature.

- Interpretive and grounded in dramatic criticism.
- Uses thematic and philosophical frameworks to analyze the play's content and characters.

8. Body of the Research

This paper examines the interplay between Western narcissism and its broader sociopolitical consequences through three key thematic sections: first, it establishes a conceptual framework for understanding narcissism in the Western context; then, it analyzes the repercussions of this narcissism on Iraqi society, particularly through the lens of political drama; finally, it explores the political and ethical implications of Hare's dramatic works, focusing on Edward Siad's dichotomies to assess their critical resonance. Together, these sections form a cohesive argument about the ideological and cultural impact of Western narcissism.

9. Conclusion (Findings – Recommendations – Suggestions)

Summarizes the research and provides closing insights:

- Findings: Hare uses drama to reveal how Western narcissism erodes moral responsibility.
- Recommendations: Further studies should explore other post-9/11 plays that critique liberal complicity.
- Suggestions: Comparative analysis with other playwrights like Caryl Churchill or Tony Kushner could enrich the discourse.

Section One

1.Western Narcissism as an Ethical Pathology: *Self-Mythologizing, Liberal Interventionism, and Moral Evasion*

Narcissism refers to an excessive self-love and a heightened sense of self-centeredness. It is considered pathological only when it causes significant harm to the individual or others, particularly when the symptoms align with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). Social factors have been shown to contribute significantly to the development of an exaggerated sense of self-importance (Charité, 2023).

In the context of Western ideology, the West often promotes itself as a force of national regeneration, aimed at reclaiming a supposedly threatened or lost national dominance. This drive has been linked to collective narcissism, a belief in the unparalleled greatness of one's national in-group. Collective narcissism has been associated with increased international support for illiberal right-wing populist leaders, parties, and policies, as well as with the application of moral double standards when evaluating such leadership (Keenan, 2022).

If individual narcissism manifests as grandiosity masking fragility (Charité, 2023), its political analogue is the West's mythologized self-image—e.g., framing wars as 'humanitarian' while ignoring collateral damage (Gupta, 2011). Hare's characters embody this duality: Nadia's intellectualism masks guilt, while Oliver's cynicism conceals passivity. Collective narcissism serves as a psychological foundation for populist attitudes. It prioritizes the perceived needs of a narrowly defined national in-group—particularly the need for proper recognition—over the broader interests of society. It is also correlated with negative affect, hypersensitivity, and hypervigilance toward perceived threats, whether real, ambiguous, or entirely imagined (e.g., conspiracy theories). The key issue tied to collective narcissism is not the structural integrity of the state,

but rather the external image of the nation and how it is perceived by others (Keenan, 2022).

2. From Humanitarian Rhetoric to Human Cost: *Iraq, War Discourse, and the Erasure of the Other*

Just as the Bush administration coped with its damaged pride by asserting dominance, Philip in The Vertical Hour similarly retreats inward, using control as a way to conceal his emotional wounds.. His rigid worldview—insisting on the righteousness of intervention—is rooted in a similar narcissistic denial of vulnerability. In both cases, a narcissistic display of grandeur often conceals underlying feelings of fragility and insecurity. Following the events of September 11, Americans experienced a profound sense of national vulnerability, which arguably made them more susceptible to President George W. Bush's doctrine of unilateral preemption. In psychological terms, narcissistic personalities are typically averse to dependence, perceiving it as a marker of weakness, humiliation, or loss of control. Within an increasingly interconnected international system, the Bush administration seemed to fear that cooperative engagement might render the United States vulnerable to external influence or subordination. "I still believe in the idea of intervention. Not as conquest or imperialism, but as a means of saving people's lives. A humane intervention."

This worldview reflects a deeply entrenched belief in a hostile, zero-sum global environment—one governed by the logic of self-preservation and distrust. Trust, under such a paradigm, is placed solely in the Self, while mutual reliance is viewed as perilous. For the narcissistic psyche, psychological survival is contingent upon absolute autonomy. The Bush administration similarly projected the notion that America could—and should—rely solely on its own capabilities. The implicit message conveyed was: "Do

unto others before they can do unto you" (The Theatre Times, 2023), underscoring a preemptive and defensive stance shaped by fear rather than strategic confidence.

Ironically, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, numerous nations—including traditional allies such as France and Germany—extended overtures of solidarity. However, driven by entrenched suspicion and a need to reassert dominance, the administration rejected these collaborative gestures in favor of unilateral action. This glorification of autonomy resonated with America's cultural ethos of rugged individualism, yet when transposed onto the global stage, it manifested as an isolating and aggressive posture. The metaphor of the "lone gunman" pursuing evildoers encapsulates this shift from heroic independence to defensive narcissism.

This isolationist disposition had measurable consequences. The refusal to engage in multilateral cooperation arguably intensified the human cost of the Iraq conflict, with daily casualties that may have been reduced through shared international responsibility. The administration's interactions with other states were characterized more by exploitation than by partnership, signaling a preference for dominance over diplomacy. In this context, acts of retaliation were not only strategic but also psychologically restorative—a means to reclaim damaged national pride. Some analysts have even speculated that personal motives, such as Saddam Hussein's alleged plot to assassinate President George H. W. Bush, may have influenced the vehemence of U.S. actions toward Iraq. "There are no clean hands in this, Nadia. No one comes out unmarked."

As the administration adopted an increasingly adversarial stance toward longtime allies, it contributed to a global climate of hostility, undermining international collaboration and inflaming anti-American sentiment. This shift raised a deeper moral and political question, particularly salient during the 2004 presidential election: Should America be represented by an image of power rooted in dominance and retribution—a nation that, like the narcissist, disguises vulnerability through aggressive self-assertion? (Pressley, 2014). This question, mirrored in the ideological tension between Philip and Nadia in *The*

Vertical Hour, invites broader reflection on how personal and political narcissism shape the ethics of intervention and the psychology of empire. "Power is a terrible thing. It makes people act in ways they wouldn't otherwise. And often, it's the fear beneath that power that drives the worst decisions."

4. The Narcissistic Self and the Collapse of Ethical Responsibility

Hare's work extends a tradition of British political drama (e.g., John Osborne's Look Back in Anger) that uses dialogue-driven confrontation to unsettle audience complacency. Unlike Brecht's didacticism, however, Hare's Vertical Hour leverages psychological realism—making its critique of narcissism more intimate and destabilizing (Dahl, 1987).

British political drama emerged as a potent artistic response to a confluence of domestic and international political shifts during the late 1960s. This form of theatre evolved amid a broader global context defined by ideological disillusionment and sociopolitical upheaval. Key world events—such as the Vietnam War, Soviet expansionism, and the 1968 student revolts in Paris—significantly influenced the thematic direction of British theatre. The oppressive legacy of Stalinism had already sown deep skepticism among young leftist thinkers, but this disillusionment intensified following the Soviet Union's violent suppression of uprisings in Hungary (1956) and its crushing of reformist momentum during the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia. These interventions exposed the contradictions within so-called socialist regimes, alienating progressive youth and intellectuals alike (Cotterell, 2019). "You think political systems are built on ideals, but they're just fragile, self-serving constructions. The ones in power always betray the people they claim to protect." (Hare, 2006)

Simultaneously, the Vietnam War—presented by the United States as a defense against communist aggression in Southeast Asia—sparked massive global dissent. The war's brutality and imperialist undertones provoked widespread resistance, particularly among

students and left-leaning workers. According to Fyffe (2010), these movements reached a critical mass in 1968, with student-led uprisings and labor strikes erupting in various parts of the world. Nowhere was this more symbolic than in Paris, where the government's repressive response further fueled anti-establishment sentiment and eroded faith in traditional political structures. For many, 1968 marked a psychological and ideological rupture, prompting a reevaluation of previously held revolutionary ideals:

> Oliver: "You think you can fix the world with ideas alone? History shows us that ideas often die on the altar of power." (Hare, 2006)Nadia: "Idealism is a luxury we can't always afford—sometimes the cost is too high, and the world doesn't wait for us to catch up." (Hare, 2006) Philip: "There's a difference between believing in change and being willing to face what change actually demands from you." (Hare, 2006)

Within this turbulent climate, British theatre witnessed a significant transformation. Playwrights began to explore political themes with a renewed urgency and boldness. This shift was facilitated by evolving cultural dynamics within the United Kingdom, including the relaxation of censorship laws and broader legislative reforms. Two major legislative developments expanded civil liberties and helped democratize the arts, creating fertile

ground for politically conscious drama (Fayadh, 2015). No longer constrained by the restrictive apparatus of state censorship, dramatists found themselves empowered to voice the concerns of the politically marginalized and socially silenced. Thus, British political drama during this era functioned as a platform for resistance—a voice for those rendered inferior by dominant power structures. It sought to critique not only domestic injustices but also to interrogate broader systems of imperialism, state violence, and ideological betrayal. In doing so, it reclaimed the stage as a space for subversion, discourse, and the reimagining of social realities.

5. Edward Said's Orientalism's impact on *The Vertical Hour*

In Orientalism, Edward Said (2000) articulates how colonial discourse systematically constructs the racialized "Other" as an inferior counterpart to Western civility and refinement. Through this framework, the Orient is depicted not merely as different but as diametrically opposed to European values—embodying irrationality, primitiveness, and moral deficiency. These discursive constructions legitimize colonial domination by presenting it as a civilizing mission. Said's analysis highlights the ideological labor involved in framing colonized subjects as ontologically subordinate, thereby rendering imperial power both necessary and virtuous.

Linda Alcoff (as cited in Wagner, 2015) critiques the ethics of representation, emphasizing that "speaking for others" is never politically neutral but shaped by the speaker's positionality, which includes identity, power, and context. This idea is vividly dramatized in The Vertical Hour through the character of Nadia, who admits, "I believed we were doing something good—liberating people, intervening in their lives. But sometimes I wonder if we were repeating the same mistakes." Here, Nadia's reflection reveals the problematic nature of Western intellectuals speaking on behalf of

marginalized others, risking the reproduction of oppressive hierarchies despite good intentions.

Michel Foucault's (1970) exploration of discourse and power warns about institutionalized knowledge that can marginalize authentic voices. This tension appears in Oliver's critique of intellectuals: "The trouble with you intellectuals is that you think everything is a debate. But for the people on the ground, it's life and death." Oliver's words underscore the disconnect between academic or political discourse and the lived realities of those affected by such interventions. This mirrors Foucault's concern that expertise can silence the subaltern by framing their experiences within dominant power structures. Further, the play highlights the ethical weight and emotional burden of representation through Nadia's admission: "We always have to think about the consequences of our actions. But sometimes the consequences are too terrible to bear." This statement encapsulates the struggle of bearing responsibility for others without falling into intellectual detachment or harmful paternalism.

Oliver's warning—"It's all very well talking about politics and ideas, but people suffer. And sometimes I think that the people who talk the loudest about helping others are the ones who do the most harm."—resonates with Alcoff's caution about dominant voices potentially reinforcing the very structures they aim to challenge. It serves as a dramatic reminder of the dangers of uncritically accepting authoritative narratives about marginalized groups. In the aftermath of 9/11, the Iraq War emerged as a dominant cultural concern within American and British political discourse.

 David Hare's response came in the form of two major plays: Stuff Happens (2004, rev. 2006) and The Vertical Hour (2006), both of which interrogate the moral ambiguities and political fallout of the war. While Stuff Happens dramatizes the political elite—offering a docudrama-style reconstruction of high-level decision-making—The Vertical Hour adopts a more intimate approach, filtering geopolitical debate through personal and philosophical confrontation.

Premiering at the Music Box Theater in New York in 2006, The Vertical Hour centers on Nadia Blye, a Yale professor and former war journalist who once supported the invasion of Iraq. Her character embodies the entanglement of intellectual authority and political idealism. During a visit to the UK with her boyfriend, Philip, Nadia encounters his father, Oliver—an introspective, retired physician whose skepticism about Western interventionism challenges Nadia's self-assured narratives. What ensues is a series of intense conversations that reveal not only ideological differences but also the emotional residue of political action.

Nadia's support for the war—grounded in a belief in "humane intervention"—is shaped by her experiences in the Balkans, where Western inaction had tragic consequences. As Hare (2006) presents her, she is not a caricature of hawkishness, but rather a complex figure torn between ethical responsibility and personal trauma. Oliver, on the other hand, presents a deeply humanistic critique, drawing on literary and historical allusions to expose the moral limitations of imperial logic. He positions poets such as Wilfred Owen and William Blake as moral arbiters, contrasting their vision with the political expediencies of modern governance. The personal dimensions of the play complicate the political discourse. Oliver's questioning of Nadia's authority—suggesting her academic detachment shields her from the consequences of policy—brings into focus the disconnect between theory and lived experience. Through this confrontation, Hare dramatizes the ethical tensions between knowledge and power, intention and consequence. As Nadia undergoes a slow unraveling of her convictions, the play charts her movement from ideological certainty to existential doubt.

Eventually, Nadia confronts her disillusionment, confessing, "We certainly made a mess of it, didn't we?" (Hare, 2006). Her personal revelation—rooted in a painful past relationship with a Polish journalist—serves as a narrative catalyst, pushing her away from the security of academic life and back into the field as a war correspondent. Her

return to Iraq signifies not only a geographical journey but also a transformation in moral consciousness.

Hare's portrayal of Nadia exemplifies his broader interest in the interplay between the personal and the political. As he asserts (cited in Hammond & Steward, 2008), his theatre is less about moral resolution than it is about moral inquiry. The Vertical Hour is thus firmly situated within the tradition of British political theatre: its power lies not in spectacle, but in the emotional and philosophical urgency of its dialogue.

 Through its quiet intensity, the play exposes the contradictions of liberal interventionism, the fragility of political truth, and the emotional toll of global crises. Hare's portrayal of Nadia exemplifies his broader interest in the interplay between the personal and the political. As he asserts (cited in Hammond & Steward, 2008), his theatre is less about moral resolution than it is about moral inquiry. The Vertical Hour is thus firmly situated within the tradition of British political theatre: its power lies not in spectacle, but in the emotional and philosophical urgency of its dialogue. Through its quiet intensity, the play exposes the contradictions of liberal interventionism, the fragility of political truth, and the emotional toll of global crises.

Findings and conclusions

The study reveals that Hare frames Western narcissism as a systemic evasion of accountability, mirrored in Nadia's academic liberalism and Oliver's complicit cynicism. Future research should compare Hare's work to post-9/11 plays by Churchill or Kushner to explore broader patterns of ideological critique in theatre. The analysis reveals that the Bush administration's foreign policy after 9/11 exhibits characteristics of narcissistic political behavior. This includes unilateralism, a mistrust of international cooperation, and the idealization of isolationist strength. In Hare's *The*

Vertical Hour, this manifests in the character Nadia's initial support for the Iraq invasion, which echoes the West's desire to "intervene" under the guise of humanitarianism, masking deeper imperialistic tendencies. Orientalism as a Justifying Framework for Invasion

Drawing on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, the study finds that the Iraq War was framed by Western narratives that constructed the East as irrational, barbaric, and in need of rescue. The character of Nadia illustrates this, believing that military intervention could "liberate" Iraqis, reflecting the internalized belief in Western superiority and the right to speak for the Other. Conflict Between Personal Ethics and Political Ideology The play portrays a central conflict between personal ethics (represented by Oliver) and political ideology (represented by Nadia). Oliver's humanistic worldview challenges Nadia's academic justification for war, exposing the emotional cost of suppressing moral doubt in favor of political conviction. The eventual breakdown of Nadia's position signals a personal reckoning with complicity and guilt. Theater as a Medium of Political Reflection and Critique. The study finds that Hare's dramatic structure—relying heavily on dialogue rather than action—creates space for philosophical debate and introspection. By focusing on educated elites rather than direct victims of war, Hare critiques the ways intellectuals may become detached from the lived consequences of political decisions.

Evolving Consciousness and the Role of Self-Critique

Nadia's character arc—from certainty to disillusionment—illustrates the potential for self-awareness and ideological transformation. Her return to Iraq, not as a political advisor but as a journalist, suggests a shift from abstract theorization to engaged witnessing, a significant critique of Western academic detachment.

Suggestions

For Playwrights: Integrate verbatim testimony from Iraqi refugees (e.g., as in The Baghdad Monologues) to disrupt Western-centric narratives. For Educators: Pair The Vertical Hour with Fanon's Wretched of the Earth to contrast dramatic and theoretical critiques of colonialism. Promote Ethical Representation in Political Narratives. Playwrights, artists, and academics should critically assess their own positionality when representing foreign or marginalized perspectives. Adopting a self-reflexive stance can prevent the reproduction of Orientalist and neocolonial tropes in literature and theatre.

Encourage Dialogic Structures in Political Drama

Political plays can benefit from dialogic structures that allow multiple perspectives to coexist without imposing a singular truth. This enables audiences to engage in critical reflection and form their own judgments rather than being guided toward a predetermined moral. Integrate Subaltern Voices into Theatrical Discourse While Hare's choice to focus on elite Western characters is deliberate, future dramatists might consider including authentic subaltern or Iraqi voices to offer a more comprehensive portrayal of the war's impact. This would help deconstruct power hierarchies within narrative structures.

Bridge the Gap Between Academia and Reality

The character of Nadia highlights the danger of academic or theoretical detachment from real-world suffering. Institutions and intellectuals should encourage praxis-based approaches that emphasize lived experience, empathy, and ethical responsibility in political analysis.

Re-examine the Role of Western Interventionism in Education and Policy Educators and policymakers should use works like *The Vertical Hour* to initiate discussions about the ethics of interventionism, postcolonial critique, and the cultural legacy of the War on Terror. Interdisciplinary approaches that combine political science, literature, and postcolonial theory can foster a deeper understanding.

The West has long positioned itself at the forefront of global power, maintaining a hierarchical arrangement that relegates other nations to subordinate roles. Over time, many countries have come to recognize that the alliances they once trusted were, in fact, misguided and that the accomplishments achieved under such alliances were often superficial. The slogans promoting freedom, democracy, and progress were revealed to be hollow, disconnected from the realities on the ground. This disillusionment exposes a deeper issue—Western exceptionalism rooted in a long-standing belief in racial and cultural superiority. This ideology, dating back to colonial domination in Africa and Asia, has not only justified the exploitation of land and resources but has also dehumanized entire populations through systems such as the transatlantic slave trade.

Such attitudes reflect what can be described as a condition of narcissistic inflation—a psychological and cultural obsession with superiority that has permeated Western policies and global relations. As long as this mindset of exclusion persists, it will continue to obstruct genuine global cooperation and understanding.

David Hare's The Vertical Hour interrogates these dynamics through the personal and ideological clash between its central characters. The play explores the psychological tension between public responsibility and private conscience, revealing how personal beliefs are deeply entangled with political action. Ultimately, the narrative illustrates that public and private spheres are inseparable, and that moral evasion in the face of truth is a profound ethical failure. By dramatizing these internal and external conflicts, The Vertical Hour compels both characters and audiences to confront the consequences of political decisions and the moral weight they carry

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