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Araştırma makalesi/Research article

Precarity, Hope and Despair in Nadia Fall's *Home*

Nadia Fall'un *Home* adlı Eserinde Güvencesizlik, Umut ve Umutsuzluk

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Abstract

This paper examines Nadia Fall's *Home* (2013), which delves into youth homelessness in London against the backdrop of the UK government's austerity measures. These measures included budget reductions in education, health, social security, and culture, along with the introduction of 'Universal Credit', a new benefit system. Crafted by Nadia Fall, *Home* offers a paradoxical panorama that draws attention to resilience and despair, sociability and loneliness in an old building housing over 200 young residents. Known for directing plays such as *Three Sisters, The Suicide,* Dara, and *Chewing Gum Dreams* at the National Theatre, Nadia Fall has collaborated with major theatre companies including the Bush Theatre, Chichester, and Lyric Hammersmith. Fall, renowned for her directing prowess, has demonstrated her success as a playwright with Home, which she

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produced based on over thirty hours of interviews with homeless individuals. This research situates Nadia Fall's play *Home* within its historical backdrop, seeking to comprehend the historical factors influencing the political circumstances depicted in the play. It aims to grasp the characters' social class placement by applying Guy Standing's concept of the precariat. The paper scrutinizes how *Home* employs hope and despair, along with a utopian socio-economic background, to highlight the unbearable nature of precariousness and homelessness. Additionally, the paper explores the utopian aspiration for an alternative way of life.

Keywords: *Theatre, Neoliberalism, austerity, homelessness, precarity*

Öz

Bu makale, Nadia Fall'un Birleşik Krallık hükümetinin kemer sıkma programı bağlamında Londra'daki genç evsizliğe odaklanan *Home* (2013) adlı oyununu inceler. Kemer sıkma önlemleri; sağlık, eğitim, kültür ve emeklilik alanlarında uygulanan mali kesintileri ve 'Universal Credit' adlı yeni bir programın uygulamaya konmasını da içerir. Nadia Fall tarafından yazılan oyun, 200'den fazla gencin yaşadığı eski bir binada dirençlilik ve umutsuzluğa, sosyalleşmeye ve yalnızlığa dikkat çeken paradoksal bir panorama sunar. National Theatre'da *Three Sisters*, *The Suicide*, *Dara* ve *Chewing Gum Dreams* gibi oyunları yöneten Nadia Fall, Bush Theatre, Chichester ve Lyric Hammersmith gibi önemli tiyatro topluluklarıyla çalışmıştır. Genel olarak yönetmenlik yeteneğiyle tanınan Fall, evsiz bireylerle 30 saatin üzerinde röportajlar yaparak ürettiği *Home* ile oyun yazarlığı konusunda ne kadar başarılı olduğunu kanıtlamıştır. Bu araştırma, Nadia Fall'un *Home* adlı oyununu tarihsel bağlamına yerleştirmeyi ve oyunda tasvir edilen politik koşulları etkileyen tarihsel faktörleri ortaya koymayı, Guy Standing'in *prekarya* kavramını kullanarak karakterlerin sınıfsal konumlarını kavramayı amaçlar. Fall'un *Home* adlı oyunu, güvencesizlik ve evsizliğin dayanılmazlığına ve alternatif bir yaşam tarzına yönelik ütopik arzuya ışık tutmak için umut ve çaresizliğin yanı sıra ütopik ve sosyo-ekonomik unsurları nasıl kullandığını da sergiler. Sonuç olarak eser, Austerity döneminde Birleşik Krallık'taki genç evsiz bireylerin karşılaştığı zorlu koşullarla mücadeleleri ve sistem temelli eşitsizlikleri gözler önüne serer. Burada birebir tanıklıklar kullanarak prekarya sınıfının kırılgan yapısı oyun karakterleri üzerinden ortaya konur. *Home*, zor koşullara rağmen, mevcut çalışma, karakterlerin umut ve dirençlerinin ev kavramını sadece fiziksel bir mekândan daha fazlasına dönüştürdüğünü ortaya koyar.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Tiyatro, Neoliberalizm, kemer sıkma politikaları, evsizlik, güvencesizlik*

The path to *Home:* Neoliberalism, globalisation and the financial crisis of 2008

Countries and societies that were tired of the destruction and polarization of World War II harbored a will for reconciliation to prevail at an international level. After the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed in 1947, although the world would eventually enter a new time of polarization known as the Cold War, the initial years after the war were years of reconciliation.

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The first and most important event for international cooperation and post-war restoration in the World Economy was The Bretton Woods Conference. For David Harvey (2007), the conference marked a commencement of a "new world order" (10). The post-war new world order was influenced by Keynesian Economics. British economist John Maynard Keynes was a leading figure at the Bretton Woods Conference and his ideas were articulated in his famous work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936). Keynesian economics advocates government intervention and strategies to maintain economic stability. Keynesians argue that significant macroeconomic fluctuations have detrimental impact on overall economic wellbeing, and thus, and thus they strive for equilibrium. This economic perspective is grounded in the belief that the government possesses the expertise and capability to step in and enhance the functioning of the free market. Keynesians prioritize addressing unemployment over concerns about inflation.

To Briggs (1961), the term 'welfare state' was initially employed to characterize post-1945 Britain under the Labour government. The welfare state, originally emerging in the United Kingdom and subsequently adopted by other capitalist countries, stands as a highly significant illustration of Keynesian economics. David Harvey (2007) calls the concept of the welfare state embedded liberalism. Harvey asserts that embedded liberalism constituted a prevailing consensus primarily centred on poverty reduction, erasing income disparities among social classes, ensuring accessible healthcare, and providing free and scientific education. This consensus prevailed until the 1970s, at which point a new economic model known as neoliberalism brought about an irreversible change to the capitalist camp during the Cold War.

Neoliberalism has not merely been a matter of pinpointing the prevailing actions; instead, neoliberalism ought to be observed as "the current stage, phase or mode of existence of global capitalism" (Alfredo Saad-Filho, 2021: 133). According to Howard and King (2008), as The Bretton Woods system collapsed, the US under no obligation to exchange gold "for dollars held by other central banks, and all currencies began to float" (150). This arrangement naturally led to a capital deficit in global markets. States began to implement a series of structural reforms, notably privatization and deregulation, to manage their capital balances and to keep up with the evolving global economic framework. As Stephen Bell and Andrew Hindmoor (2015) mention that neoliberal policies advocate for the supremacy of markets over centrally planned economies and trust in the ability of markets to self-adjust, as well as its potential to foster individualism. Peter Gowan (1999) regards neoliberalism as a method of political manipulation. Neoliberalism serves as a means to expand a state's economic resources through the products and financial interactions of advanced capitalism.

Neoliberalism is widely recognized by political scientists and journalists as the primary catalyst behind globalization. Gowan (1999) stresses the fact that both neoliberalism and globalization were encroaching in the western World; however, after the downfall of the former Soviet bloc, capitalist countries "actively sought to radicalise and generalise these trends, articulating them in ways which would anchor other political and economic interests" (8). Accordingly, the trailblazers in establishing the neoliberal global landscape among

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English-speaking nations were Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and Ronald Reagan, the president of the US. Steger and Roy states that they do not "only articulated the core ideological claims of neoliberalism but also sought to convert them into public policies and programmes" (2010: 21). Both in the UK and the US, there happened a definitive shift towards adopting free-market capitalism.

By the turn of the millennium, nearly all countries worldwide had embraced neoliberal policies, thanks to the influence of globalization, with the exception of a handful like North Korea, which remained isolated from the international community. Even in the United Kingdom, the traditional party of the British working class, The Labour Party, implemented labour exploitation regulations under the banner of 'New Labour'. During the 1990s, under the Presidency of Bill Clinton, the US was providing direction to the former Soviet bloc nations, and simultaneously, the banking and financial sector was expanding a global financial network through the proliferation of the Internet. However, this dream of neoliberal momentum, which began in the 1970s, was shaken by the 2007–2008 financial crisis. The crisis, marking the conclusion of the prosperous era of neoliberalism, resulted in the weakening of sectors that directly impact the welfare of the populace, including fields like education, healthcare, and social welfare.

The crisis and austerity in the UK

The 2007–2008 global financial crisis is considered the severest global turmoil since the Great Depression. Eric Helleiner (2011) argues that the crisis has two important pillars. The first addresses diverse market and regulatory shortcomings, while the second delves into the importance of a macroeconomic context characterized by easily accessible credit in the years preceding the crisis. The significant decline in the global markets, along with the official takeovers of Northern Rock in the UK and AIG in the USA, demonstrated that the performance of free-market principles was not meeting the earlier optimistic expectations. According to Arthur E. Wilmarth Jr (2008), the amount of household mortgage debt increased significantly from 2.7 trillion dollars to 10.5 trillion between 1990 and 2007. During the same period, the equity as a percentage of the market value of household real estate volume decreased due to the large increase in mortgage debt. The aggregate consumer credit, encompassing credit card loans and various other loan types, experienced a threefold surge between 1991 and 2007.

The 2008 global economic crisis, which stemmed from the expansion of the housing bubble, vulnerable credit conditions, market deregulation or insufficient regulation of the markets and precarious debt loads, profoundly rattled the global markets and took its place in history as the most significant crisis of neoliberalism. As Krisnah Poinasamy (2013) reports, "The 2008 financial crisis led the UK government to bail out British banks at an estimated cost of £141bn, with exposure to liabilities of over £1 trillion" (1). This intervention was carried out to prevent a catastrophic breakdown of the banks in the UK. In addition, the UK government enacted emergency fiscal measures such as lowering VAT. The government

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initiated a stimulus campaign, which involved accelerating capital expenditures for schools and social housing while postponing a corporate tax increase. Nevertheless, in 2010, these urgent measures came to an end when the Liberal Democrat and Conservative coalition launched the austerity programme.

Austerity has been a process of economic adjustment "through the reduction of wages, prices, and public spending to restore competitiveness, which is (supposedly) best achieved by cutting the state's budget, debts, and deficits" (Blyth, 2013: 2). Tania Arrieta Hernandez refers the UK Austerity programme as a conscious political strategy and states that this "led to the shrinking of the welfare state through budgetary reductions, the decentralisation of local government and increased fragmentation in service delivery" (533). The UK Austerity programme encompasses reductions in welfare applications, cuts in local government funding, a considerable increase in VAT and cancellation of school construction procedures. Additionally, spending on security and justice services has also been cut. The utilization of food banks has experienced a notable rise since the year 2010. When the coalition government came to power, cuts were also made in housing practices. Heather Stewart and Richard Partington (2018) state that austerity measures, particularly the benefit freeze, have resulted in restrictions on several benefits such as housing aid, child benefit, or working tax credit.

The Conservative-led government thus "implemented contractionary fiscal policies, better known as austerity policies" (Hernandez, 2021: 518). Although the government claimed to form policies to compensate for a public deficit created by the previous ruling Labour Party, fiscal consolidation was achieved through cuts in public expenditures. The government had asserted that, in spite of budget cuts, public expenses would represent the same level of spending as in 2006-2007. However, the estimation was incorrect, and spending on utilities actually fell from 44.7% in 2011 to 37.9% of GDP in 2019. On this occasion, the burden of the crisis was placed on the working class instead of spreading to all social classes through a fairer taxation system. To Pettifor (2018), This scenario served to transfer the weight of the financial crisis from those accountable for it onto those who were least responsible. Consequently, the Austerity Program in the UK triggered significant cuts in financial support for social welfare initiatives, providing the backdrop for Nadia Fall's play *Home*.

Austerity, precarity and hope in *Home*

In recent years, contemporary theatre has increasingly featured themes related to home, homelessness, and precariousness. For instance, Aleksander Zeldin's play *Love* (2016) explores the lives of families forced to reside in temporary accommodation centers. Works such as *Of Precariousness: Vulnerabilities, Responsibilities, Communities in 21st Century British Drama and Theater* (2017) delve into the growing influence of precariousness in recent years, as portrayed in the works of various playwrights. Nadia Fall's *Home* is a play showcases authentic testimonials from young individuals grappling with poverty and precarious conditions. The characters include an Eritrean Girl, who arrived in the country in a lorry and a Garden Boy, whose sole yearning is to experience a sense of safety. Dorothy

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Birke (2017) emphasizes that in *Home*, poverty is not portrayed solely for entertainment value without being commercialized, thus it is hard to "characterise *Home* as 'poverty porn'" (134). All characters in the play have to live in a hostel, named Target East Foyer, specially allocated to the homeless and operated with government support. Merely being residents of this hostel, which accomodates more than two hundred people simultaneously, places the characters within the precarious circumstances of the precariat.

Their need to navigate life without external assistance further underscores their vulnerable situations. The characters also have other important features that categorize them as part of the Precariat. First of all, almost half of the characters are immigrants or asylum seekers. The Eritrean Girl tells her story:

> **Eritrean Girl** Can we go to the office? Thanks.
>
> *Eritrean Girl and interviewer find an empty office.*
>
> Er… because you know our country Eritrea. There is, religion, because of my religion it's not possible to um… to be free and to worship in Jesus Christ so because of that I… came out from that place. The government rule the country but this is about the religion our religion is different. If you maybe they found you when you worship on a place, they gonna come, the police come and took you to prison. Umm… 2008. I left that country. From my country to Yemen from Yemen to France by plane and half of by boat. From France to here I came by, you know by lorry? You know lorry? They brought us to… lorry and we get in, eight people together… (Fall, 2013: 35)

Another remarkable aspect of Nadia Fall's *Home* is that the characters talk to an unseen interviewer throughout the play. At this moment in the performance, drawing from real-life testimonies of the hostel residents, the audience bears witness the story of the Eritrean girl character. Being a Christian, Eritrean Girl shares her inability to practice her religious duties in her home country, which compelled her to seek refuge in the United Kingdom through illegal means. She describes her arrival in the UK hidden in a lorry with eight other people, first from Yemen to France, and from France to the United Kingdom, concealed in a secret compartment. Throughout her heartfelt monologue, Eritrean Girl discloses the sexual harassment she has endured on her journey to the UK. In a poignant culmination, she stands and sings on the stage as a sign of precarity and hopelessness she has faced.

Turkish, Eritrean, Portuguese or Nigerian characters in the play are economically poor characters who had to immigrate to the UK for fatal and compulsory reasons. The act of migration, coupled with the immediate trauma they encounter upon their arrival in the new country, fosters a sense of alienation among these individuals, ultimately shaping their class identity. At this juncture, it is pertinent to refer Guy Standing's work concerning the relationship between immigrant labour and the precariat. Standing analyses variegated immigration patterns around the world, stating that "migrants make up a large share of the world's precariat." (2011: 90). Refugees, asylum seekers, prostitutes, partial citizens, climate refugees and even exchange students might be classified in the precariat because of their immigration status. These individuals, often marginalized and lacking official identification because of their immigration status, are particularly susceptible to precarious and adaptable

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working conditions. Immigrants "are rarely stateless in a de jure sense; they are not expelled from humanity. But they lack security and opportunity for membership of countries to where they move. More are 'de-citizenised', de facto denizens" (Standing, 2011: 113). In the light of Standing's analysis, Eritrean Girl is included in the precariat in terms of her class position.

The gender identity of the Eritrean Girl further exacerbates the precarity of her social existence. Women are among the social groups most impacted by the UK austerity program, and among them, single mothers have also suffered from austerity measures. In the play, this social group is represented by two characters: Young Mum and Asian Young Mum:

> **Young Mum** Yeah if you're not mother and baby you don't normally stay here cos the lift is rubbish, and the stairs bringing the baby up is too much for them but the higher you are up, the quicker you're gonna get out the flat if you're pregnant cos it's a risk for you…
>
> **Asian Young Mum** I'm on the seventh floor. And the lifts as well, the lifts keep breaking down and going up and down them stairs and.
>
> **Young Mum** My son is nine months old.
>
> **Asian Young Mum** My daughter is nine months
>
> (Fall, 2013: 27)

One of the most significant changes that the UK austerity program introduced to the British citizens was the introduction another benefit program known as Universal Credit. The striking difference of Universal Credit from its predecessors is that "a number of individual benefits have been replaced by a single monthly payment. The underlying idea was to simplify the process of claiming benefits and create incentives for people to get back into work faster" (Starck, 2020: 190). Nevertheless, the program has faced harsh criticism due to inequality, injustice, rigidity, long waiting times, and humiliating sanctions that led to partial or total cuts to payments. Austerity has wreaked havoc on virtually every part of British society.

According to information from the Department for Work and Pensions (2023), Universal Credit imposes work based conditions on all single mothers with a youngest child aged one year or older, and these requirements become more stringent as the child ages. As Thornton and Iacoella argues, this can be a tiring process that creates psychological pressure on mothers. Once single parents are not employed, they are unfairly categorized as irrational or irresponsible, and this situation may result in the social isolation of parents and "one would expect single parents' life satisfaction to disproportionately suffer from UC recipience, compared to coupled parents and non-parents" (2022: 6). Upon initial examination, the governmental initiative to encourage women to participate in the labour market may appear to advantageous for women. Nevertheless, the requirement for single mothers to seek employment to maintain their benefits, while facing challenging circumstances in raising their children independently, amplifies the psychological impact of their isolation and estrangement.

In his analysis of precarity, Guy Standing (1999) highlights a noteworthy trend concerning women's labour on a worldwide scale, particularly since the 1980s. According to Standing, while women hold more positions around the world, nevertheless, the employment of women in flexible and precarious conditions has also increased. Notably, the surge in women's

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employment within the sector of customer service and free zones is the mainstay of Standing's account of the precariatization of women's labor. In other words, although the visibility of women in the labour market has risen, their income and social security benefits have not risen. In this case, even if the single mothers depicted in the play secure employment with Universal Credit, the jobs they are placed in will most likely be low-income and insecure. This new circumstance is poised to create an additional realm of vulnerability for these mothers. Jade is an another woman in the play who is in the grip of insecurity due to austerity policies:

> (Beatboxes) I'm trying to get through to someone about my housing benefit form. (Beatboxes) This is the fourth time I've been put on hold. Put on hold.
>
> (Beatboxes) If I don't get through to someone, I won't be able to pay my rent. (Beatboxes) Not a funny situation. (Beatboxes) I'm at Target East. (Beatboxes) I'm six months pregnant. (Beatboxes) You're punching me for it. (Beatboxes) Can I be put through to your manager. (Beatboxes) I'm organised about these things. (Beatboxes) I need the money. (Fall, 2013: 20)

Jade is a 6 months' pregnant single mother who has to stay in this temporary foyer because she cannot afford the rent of a proper house. This scene unmistakably portrays her struggles with the housing benefit process, putting her at risk of being unable to cover the rent for the hostel, which is already considerably lower than typical rental rates. The problem of delayed rent payments is a situation that is voiced by the characters several times in the play. One of these characters is Bullet, who was involved in criminal activities and was even once shot in the streets. In a scene where Bullet is discussing rent payments with the key worker, he receives an official warning: "Do you realise you're going to be evicted? Do you?" (Fall, 2013: 26). Bullet remains silent because he has nowhere to stay except that foyer.

Since the end of World War II, UK governments have provided housing support in various ways as a requirement of the welfare state. Stephens and Stephenson (2016) underline the fact that from 1945 to 1979, governments preferred the social rented housing method. However, they state that from 1980 to 2010, UK governments encouraged home ownership. After 2010, the conservative government carried out various housing programmes such as 'Help to Buy', 'Starter homes', 'Right to Buy', 'Social Renting' and 'Housing Benefit'. Among these programmes, the housing benefit program holds the most significant initiative in terms of appeal to both the oldest and the broadest public.

Housing benefit (2023) is a form of financial support to aid individuals with limited incomes in covering their housing expenses, including rent and certain service charges. Housing Benefit is available to both employed and unemployed recipients. In this sense, housing benefit represents a social entitlement employed by the precariat, which constitutes the majority of the society, as a safeguard against homelessness. Stephens and Stephenson (2016) argue that housing benefit was gradually reduced after 2010 and that "cuts to Housing Benefit have already undermined the ability of the system to prevent rents taking people into deep poverty" (p. 15). Stephens and Stephenson (2016) emphasizes the significant reduction in social protection for households and unethical government promotion of home ownership. In such a situation, where tenants' Housing Benefit is restricted and prospective tenants

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for new social housing are encountering a potential reduction in the guarantee of tenancy security, while a more prosperous housing association receives substantial subsidies to its tenants for purchasing their homes. This situation contradicts the mentality and ethos of the welfare state. This contradiction suggests a shift in the government's housing perspective from austerity to a model that redirects resources away from individuals with lower incomes.

The concept of 'home' serves as a profoundly significant image as well as being both the name and the spiritual centre of the play. It represents the heart and the soul of the entire narrative. A shy and silent teenager, Singing Boy declares "you know I don't, I still feel, I don't feel this is my home yet" (Fall, 2013: 14). According to him, the cold foyer cannot serve as a suitable home. For another character, Tattoo Boy, home is a place "wherever you feel comfortable to lay your head or sometimes wherever you do have to lay your head" (Ibid.). Asian Young mum says that "home is a place where you're feeling safe, feeling happy…" (Ibid.). Sharon says that "home is the most important place… for anybody and, for me, it's a place for, to relax, it's the safest and most securest place as far as I'm concerned that what you should be and it's about family" (Fall, 2013: 15). Garden Boy declares, home is "a place where I feel safe" (24). According to Bullet, "no Target don't feel nothing like fucking home" (46).

The songs in the play also symbolize the increasing cost of living concern of the Precariat. The songs are sung in chorus and the lyrics reflect the longing for home. For example, the lyrics of the first song sung in chorus are as follows: "I'm longing for those keys, Oh how I'm longing for those keys, Somewhere I can call my home, My home, Call the home, My home. Somewhere I can call my home, my home, Call the home, My home. Oh." (Fall, 2013: 4). Within the choral song, there exists a particularly powerful single sentence, delivered with a recurring, rhythmic cadence: "No shoulder to cry on" (Fall, 2013: 41). The songs in the play serve as symbolic performances emphasizing that the characters have a precarious life cycle.

There is another song in the play, 'Playing with Fire' by Plan B featuring Labrinth. The song is performed by Tattoo Boy in the play. The song is significant in terms of the class position of the characters, since it is mostly about a young man named Jake, who got into a street gang at a young age, started using drugs and even engaged in armed conflict.

Many of the characters exhibit similar traits to Jake, the protagonist of the song. For instance, Bullet's account of being placed in Target East Foyer is due to being shot near the foyer where he previously resided, reflecting the shared experiences of these characters. Bullet does not explicitly say why he was shot, although he implies the reason why he is in East London: "I couldn't come South London cos they didn't know if I was going to get into trouble" (Fall, 2013: 45). If he was sent to East London for his safety, the clear implication is that he is engaged in illegal activities.

It is also remarkable that Playing with Fire's lyrics includes a harsh criticism of real politics and real politicians. Towards the end of the song, the following words are heard: "As for Jake, he's already made his decision and now he's just another poster boy for David Cameron's Broken Britain" (2023). The song's lyrics openly critique David Cameron, the Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The use of phrase 'Broken Britain' is an outright criticism, implying that the Cameron-Clegg coalition is

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leading the country to political turmoil. Another direct criticism of the Cameron government in the play is voiced by Garden Boy:

> David Cameron's like basically just put a leash around Stratford so, it's just getting really tight and all the money's getting hard there's hardly any schools around here anymore. Yeah I don't know, I just don't think the Olympics should've been here, so they put the Olympics here and it just sort of um… cos like, I can put it like this, basically, I used to go to a shop, get a can of coke for forty pee, as soon as the Olympics come eighty pence, that's doub-even though it's only eighty pee it's still double the money – everything is just ridiculous, cos Westfield's got put everything's gone up in price, everything's too expensive you can't afford to live here anymore and East London was originally built for the poor… (Fall, 2013: 59)

Garden Boy draws attention to the dark side of the Olympics, referring to the 2012 Olympic Games held in London. Garden Boy complains that preparations for the Olympics have increased the cost of living in the East London area where London's poorest residents live. According to Garden Boy, basic needs such as shelter and food are getting more and more expensive. According to the report by Oliver Wainwright (2022) from the Guardian, the preparations for the London Olympics led to the creation of an attractive park adorned with noteworthy sports facilities and upscale residences, alongside upcoming cultural attractions. But the poorest and most vulnerable, in what remain London's most deprived boroughs, have lost out. Additionally, Aurelia Foster informs that Prior to the Olympics, locals had been promised approximately 9000 residences would be constructed on the former Olympic Park, with half of them designated as affordable for local residents. Ten years after hosting the Games, which incurred a hosting cost of £9bn, approximately 1200 homes have been constructed on the site. However, it is alleged that the majority of these homes are beyond the reach of many local residents. Even a decade after the Olympics, the income inequality in the region and the housing problem justifies Garden Boy's comments.

In the final scene of the play, Sharon, the manager of the foyer, appears on stage:

> **Sharon** For the last three years we've always, there's been rumours that they're gonna close Target down… but, you know, from my point of view there isn't anywhere else really, this building is full all the time, even when we got a void we can fill it back to back you know erm… so what are they gonna do with all these young people, there is no other accommodation out there, there's very little accommodation available for anybody let alone a young person erm… and you know, some of these people if this place wasn't here would be living on the street. (Fall, 2013: 71)

The most striking aspect of Sharon's statement is that the risk of foyer's closure for three years is finally becoming a reality. This coincides with the exact year when the Austerity program was initiated. According to the survey by Anna Clark (2016), "Twenty-six percent of young people (aged 16-25) had slept rough at some point in their life and 35 percent had 'sofa surfed' (stayed with friends or family on their floor or sofa because they had nowhere else to go)" (60). Claiming that sofa surfing is a kind of hidden homelessness, Clark (2016) states that 1.5 million young people had sofa surfed at least once in 2016 and claims that approximately 216000 young people need to sofa surf in one night. On the other hand, survey-based estimates show

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that around 40,000 young individuals sleep rough in any given night. Access to conventional housing is becoming increasingly more challenging for young individuals. The solution to Sharon's inquiry, on behalf of youth, about where these people go can be found in this statistical information. Young people are compelled to precariousness and are isolated from social life. That is the legacy of the Austerity program for young individuals.

Almost all of the characters offer distinct definitions of home in the play. Their depictions of home vary, but, there is a shared element in all their portrayals: the yearning for a place where they can truly feel safe. The characters, grappled by insecurity and a fragility of their lives, long for the idea of home as a sanctuary, where they can find the utmost security. There are, of course, individual and practical reasons why specific characters do not feel safe. However, when the characters' state of insecurity is considered from a broad perspective and on a sociological basis, it becomes evident that their class position, which unmistakably falls within the realm of the Precariat, is closely related to this prevailing insecurity.

Conclusion

Michael Billington (2013) says "I'd like to have heard more about what happens to ex-residents in a borough starved of council accommodation". The play does not explicitly reveal the outcomes for the characters residing in the hostel, but considering the economic and political changes of the Austerity era, it is not too hard to infer that their endings will not be very happy. In the Austerity era, "Inequalities have grown; wages have fallen further; unemployment, poverty and homelessness have risen. Governments have cut support for the precariat, while increasing subsidies for the rich" (Standing, 2014: p. 34). Thus, the increase in people's precarious circumstances can be attributed to the economic policies exercised by the Conservative government. In the play, the characters' connection of the concept of home with a stable and tranquil existence is likewise a product of their social class position.

Every work of fiction holds a kernel of truth. *Home* is a fictional representation of the truth. The verbatim nature of *Home* solidifies its connection to reality. Actual testimonies based on interviews with real homeless people underscores the sociological and political landscape of contemporary UK. One of the most important political implications of the play is the concept of the precariat, which identifies the class position of the characters. The prevailing capitalist ideology, neoliberalism, which has held dominance for almost fifty years, underwent a significant historical rupture with the occurrence of The 2007–2008 financial crisis. The most visible impact of the crisis in the UK is the Austerity program, which the Conservative-led Cameron-Clegg coalition government launched as soon as it came to power in 2010. The initiative represents a clear shift, transferring the weight of the crisis from banks and financial institutions onto the public. The scope of social benefits such as housing benefit or disability benefit, especially Universal Credit, has been narrowed and access to the programs has been hindered by bureaucratic procedures. Austerity has heightened UK citizens more vulnerable. Nevertheless, the young homeless individuals in the play remain resilient. For them home signifies hope.

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The most meaningful of the songs sung by the choir in the play is centred around the theme of hope. In the song 'No shoulder to cry on,' the loneliness and isolation of the characters is clearly understood from the lyrics of the song. In the initial part of the song, the lyrics convey the characters' feelings of isolation and vulnerability: "Can't cry on your shoulder, when that shoulder's your own, outside there'll be vultures who smell fear when you moan" (Fall, 2013: 41). For residents, of course, the foyer is not a comfortable place; but it is still a roof where they take shelter. The outside world is a jungle full of dangers. However, residents do not see either the outside world or this hostel as their ideal place to live. Hope arises at the end of the song: "You might be trapped here a while, but now is your time to smile, cos when you leave this place the jungle will change your face" (p. 42). Residents aspire for more, they still have not lost their optimism to live better and be happy in the future. To them, home is not just a physical structure, it embodies a concept that represents their future and hope.

Amidst the implementation of austerity measures, notable alterations and failures emerged in the social services specifically crafted for marginalised individuals, and especially in London. According to New Horizon Youth Centre, located (2021), the number of young people experiencing homelessness has risen by 20% over the last five years. This information underscores that, despite the applied reforms, youth homelessness in the UK has become increasingly vulnerable and at risk. In his book, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class,* Guy Standing highlights the increasing prevalence of precarious employment among the younger generation. Due to the neoliberalization, young people, entirely subject to free market forces, are gradually destined for unstable lives and diminishing sense of hope. As per Standing, the precariat represents a developing class that lacks a defined political strategy. Conversely, the precariat stands out as the most densely populated social stratum ever recorded, encompassing diverse social segments like disenfranchised, the homeless, LGBTIQ+ community, youth, the unemployed, and immigrants from various parts of the world. The precariat lacks the collective organization seen in the proletariat, which historically aimed to overthrow the bourgeoisie and bring about a revolutionary transformation of the world. There are however still sources of hope. Young individuals without homes from diverse cultural backgrounds reside in this 'globalised' shelter, resembling a post-neoliberal dystopia. Nadia Fall utilizes a utopian approach by interjecting the middle-class realm of the theatre with the voices of young homeless individuals, intending to compel the audience to face and acknowledge this despairing situation.

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