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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI
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PINTERLAND REVISITED: AFFIRMING THE PINTERESQUE IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH DRAMA

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ

ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

Bu belge ile, bu tezdeki bütün bilgilerin akademik kurallara ve etik davranış ilkelerine uygun olarak toplanıp sunulduğunu beyan ederim. Bu kural ve ilkelerin gereği olarak, çalışmamda bana ait olmayan tüm veri, düşünce ve sonuçları andığımı ve kaynağını gösterdiğimi ayrıca beyan ederim. (06/07/2017)

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INTRODUCTION

Harold Pinter undoubtedly built himself an unparalleled position in British drama in the second half of the twentieth century. In his book *Butter's Going Up (1977)*, Steven H. Gale asserted, "Pinter is by consensus without question the major force in the contemporary English-speaking theatre" (278); twenty-eight years later, in 2005 when Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, he was announced in a similar proclamation with Gale by the Swedish Academy, saying that "Harold Pinter is generally seen as the foremost representative of British drama in the second half of the 20th century", adding that he also "occupies a position as a modern classic" which is "illustrated by his name entering the language as an adjective used to describe a particular atmosphere and environment in drama: 'Pinteresque" (Harold Pinter Society Website); upon his death in 2008, *The Guardian*'s obituary honoured him similarly as "one of the greatest of modern dramatists", reiterating "Samuel Beckett" as "his only serious rival in terms of theatrical influence" (Billington, 2008: Web). Not surprisingly, the oeuvre of such a theatrical giant has extensively been studied, whereas his influence on his descendants in contemporary British drama yet widely remains to be explored. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyse Harold Pinter's influence on contemporary British drama through close readings of two plays, Philip Ridley's *The Fastest Clock in the Universe (1993)* and Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce (2006),* as well as Pinter's *The Hothouse (1980)* with a purpose of revealing the Pinteresque aesthetics in a Pinter play. While the importance of the former plays lies in their utilization of the Pinteresque by alloying it with new forms and sensibilities in the 'the new writing boom' that has been affluent since 1990s, the significance of *The Hothouse* lies in its being an expository play in which early ambiguities of Pinterian

aesthetics are clarified while announcing a shift in style in terms of political explicitness which became a routine endeavour in Pinter's drama starting from 1980s.

Pinteresque has been frequently formulized through its relation to the Theatre of the Absurd, the prevalent theatrical movement of the post-war European theatre in which Samuel Beckett is the leading figure. As Arnold Hinchliffe claims, "like Beckett, Pinter wants to communicate the mystery, the problematical nature, of man's situation in the world"; consequently, Pinter's plays are "basically images, almost allegories, of the human condition" (1976: 34). On the other hand, what distinguishes Pinter from his antecedents is that his plays evolve around the struggles to attain power, either in the form of clash between personal egos or in the form of institutional authority. A typical Pinteresque play, as Augusta Walker proclaims, involves "the relationships among three or four people in which there is a constant undertow of treacherous egos working destructively against other egos to suck everything into failure" because of their "inadequacy of the inner being, the lack of self-assurance" and "the corroding fear that a real identity does not quite exist behind the front" (1967: 5). Characters, who feel insecure about themselves due to unknown reasons, attempt to construct dominion in their personal territories in order to sustain their individual existence even if it means at the expense of others around them. Rather than taking risks and coalescing with the outside world, they prefer to dwell in their confined spaces and maintain their superiority which they have built through often petty achievements. The inside, for them, represents a 'womb-like security' while the outside means terror and loss of identity as well as external interference in their affairs. Within such a limited space, they find comfort in routine practices and repetitive conversations which always function in the same way, because familiarity means

comfort while novelty brings danger. However, an intruder breaks the security of such atmosphere and breaks the power structure that serves to the dominant individual, replacing them with new ones which victimize the ex-powerholder through various means ranging from linguistic violence to physical violence, as well as other means such as manipulation. In the end, characters usually end up where they start, no recuperation is observed, and it becomes apparent that their way of life will go back to where it was interrupted.

Regarding the accounts given above, the basic structure of a Pinteresque play finds its echoes in contemporary British drama. In this respect, the next chapter will give an overview of Pinteresque aesthetics in detail, as well as a selection of contemporary plays which carry the traces of the qualities that will be examined thereafter. In Chapter 2, one of Pinter's less studied plays, *The Hothouse (1980),* will be analysed in terms of its position in Pinter's oeuvre, besides investigating its relation to Pinteresque characteristics. In Chapter 3, Philip Ridley's *The Fastest Clock in the Universe (1993)* will be studied with regard to its combination of the in-yer-face sensibility and Pinterian features. In Chapter 4, Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce (2006)* will be analysed in terms of its debts to Pinterian qualities such as territorial battles and intrusions as well as the manipulation of memory.

CHAPTER 1

PINTERESQUE AESTHETICS AND CONTEMPORARY BRITISH DRAMATIC WRITING

i. Decoding the Pinteresque

There has been an ongoing debate on the relation between an author's biography and his literary works. While classical criticism stands for the assertion that a literary text is the product of its writer's background, contemporary approaches reject this relation in favour of the reader, claiming that it is the readers' perception of a literary work that is the utmost importance. For instance, in his famous essay "The Death of the Author" (1967), Roland Barthes strictly criticizes traditional literary criticism's fundamental reliance on biographies of the authors while interpreting literary works. According to him, texts cannot be traced back to the backgrounds of authors and it is futile to search for the voice of the author within a writing because the act of writing is "the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (142). For Barthes, a literary text is "not a line of words releasing a single meaning" about the history of its author but it is "a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (146). In other words, a literary text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (146). The power of a writer derives from his/her ability to "mix writings" from countless sources in an authentic way. Therefore, it is not the biography of the author that makes a text meaningful; rather, it is the multiplicity of meanings that are extracted from the depths of a literary text by the reader. In

this respect, Barthes values readers' perception of a text more than its relation to the past experiences of its writer. While interpreting a text, it is insignificant to associate, e.g a writer's childhood trauma or adolescent problems with his texts because the voice of a text does not belong to the writer. While the views of Roland Barthes emphasise the multiplicity of meanings in literary texts and avoids from associating them merely with biographical data, it is also an undeniable fact that some writers cannot be thought separately from their past experiences. In some cases, where a writer is born, what he/she goes through life, what his/her ideology is, or what his/her preferences are pave the way to his/her literary style. Some writers might project their critical responses to what they have witnessed in life through their literary productions. Harold Pinter, one of the most influential playwrights of the 20th century British drama, was clearly among these writers. His personal background, his traumatic experiences as a young man, his belonging to an ethnic minority, all paved way to the creation of a Pinter aesthetic which revolves around some certain issues such as the personal consequences of oppression, fear of subservience, failure of communication, estrangement in a hostile world, withdrawal from social life, and precarious environments where individuals are subjected to struggles for personal identities.

In line with his endeavour to articulate the inhumane aspects of the abuse of authority, Pinter produced twenty-nine plays, constituting what is known as "Pinteresque" today. One of the best fitting definitions of the term was made by *Financial Times* as "full of dark hints and pregnant suggestions, with the audience left uncertain what to conclude" (in Cusac, Web). In Pinter's theatre, characters who have ambiguous histories reside in precarious claustrophobic environments

which are threatened with the arrivals of intruders who carry menace in their pockets. While a certain order of authority is present within character's limited living spaces, these outsiders begin to disturb the power relations and from the point of encounter with the intruders, characters begin to defend what belongs to them, which is conceptualized as "the territorial struggle" by the critic Irving Wardle. Accordingly, similar to primitive animalistic instincts, characters fight for their dominion over the space both psychologically and physically because the space is a symbol of their authority on which they can situate their superiority. What is at hand is "a ritualized tournament in which the two instincts of sexual desire and territorial aspiration fight it out under the scrutiny of an emasculated winner on the sidelines" (Wardle, 1971: 44). However, domination does not always include fighting for grand possessions or conducting sovereign acts; they are often simple moves which, for Penelope Gilliatt, are "minute advantages". According to her, in Pinter's plays authority resides in simple domestic advantages such as "sitting in an armchair" instead of doing the chores:

> a man who does the washing up has the advantage over a man sitting in an armchair who thinks he can hear resentment in every swilling tea-leaf. The member of a married couple who stays up late has the advantage over the one who goes to bed first. A father has the advantage over his children as long as he can make them think of their birth and not let them remind him of his own death. (Web)

Through simple acts of superiority, Pinter's characters have a tendency to construct their authority at the expense of others around them. The ways that render their attempts possible, however, demonstrates a shift in Pinter's theatre in its course. While the early plays, commonly known as the comedies of menace, present

authority as a mainly linguistic and psychological clash between the dominant and the subservient individuals, plays in the middle period take memory as a site of struggle where authority is maintained through the continual reconstruction of the past. On the other hand, Pinter's late plays are usually regarded overt political plays since they explicitly assault upon states' and institutions' oppression of people in terms of censorship and human rights abuses. Despite the change in the tone, Pinter's theatre has always dealt with the consequences of oppression regardless of the agents and victims and the motives behind their attempts.

The term 'comedy of menace' was first coined by David Campton in 1957 and a year later Irving Wardle used the term for *The Birthday Party*. Accordingly, comedies of menace are the plays in which comedy and fear are present at the same time. These plays usually start comically but in the course of events they turn out to be full of terror and violence in several forms, both linguistic and physical. Characters reside in small living spaces which are usually claustrophobic rooms that have little connection with the outside. As Ruby Cohn claims, Pinter's rooms are "nonspecific cubes, whose atmosphere grows steadily more stale and more tense" and while at the beginning "these rooms look naturalistic, meaning no more than the eye contain", at the end "they become sealed containers, virtual coffins" (1962: 56) since they represent the literal and symbolic enclosure of characters from the exterior world. Their isolation seems a kind of escapism from the outside which is full of violence and terror. In an interview with Kenneth Tynan (1960) Pinter states that these characters are "scared of what is outside the room. Outside the room there is a world bearing upon them which is frightening" and so, characters cling to the fragile comfort of the inside. However, intruders with ambiguous

motives and histories disturb the security of the room and reign terror on characters. As Bernard Dukore claims, “menace lurks outside, but it also has psychological roots” (1982: 24) in characters’ lives who are afraid of stepping outside the lines that they draw to isolate themselves from external relations. What seems as comic events turn into threats with “physical, psychological, or potential violence – sometimes, in varying sequences to all three” (Dukore, 1982: 24). Behaviours of characters, on the other hand, often seem meaningless, without a proper reason or a reliable direction. In this context, Pinter’s early plays are usually associated with the Theatre of the Absurd, a term coined by Martin Esslin. In his seminal work *The Theatre of the Absurd (1968),* Esslin approaches to the early plays of Harold Pinter along with Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugéne Ionesco and Jean Genet as the examples of the theatre of the Absurd which, according to him, puts forward the idea that “the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting, that they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions” (23). Traditional beliefs and norms are regarded as illusory efforts and human’s search for meaning in life is seen as meaningless and futile in the absurd theatre. In line with this fashion, the plays of the playwrights stated above “have no story or plot to speak of”, they are mainly “without recognizable characters and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets”, they often have “neither a beginning nor an end”, they look like “reflections of dreams and nightmares” and they often “consist of incoherent babblings” (Esslin, 1968: 21-22). Characters in these plays do not communicate in traditional sense and they often fail to realize what they intend for. In this respect, the absurd theatre departs from the conventional theatre in both form and content.

Jerome Crabb explains the difference between the absurd drama and the conventional drama as follows:

> Whereas traditional theatre attempts to create a photographic representation of life as we see it, the Theatre of the Absurd aims to create a ritual-like, mythological, archetypal, allegorical vision, closely related to the world of dreams. The focal point of these dreams is often man's fundamental bewilderment and confusion, stemming from the fact that he has no answers to the basic existential questions: why we are alive, why we have to die, why there is injustice and suffering... The Theatre of the Absurd, in a sense, attempts to reestablish man's communion with the universe. (Web)

As can be inferred, reality in the absurd dramatic form is different from traditional theatre in that it does not present reality in usual sense; on the contrary, it deals with issues in a dream-like representation of reality. It emphasizes the inability to answer existential questions as to the position of man in a meaningless world. Thus, it is often possible to observe confused characters in the absurd theatre, who are not able to step into new forms of possibilities from the inane state of their existence. They are stucked within mundane routines which provides a suffocating stability in their daily lives because they feel threatened with the idea of novelty. Banality and absurdity are shields which protect them from the intrusion of the fearsome outside. In this sense, it can be said that Pinter's early plays present similar qualities with The Theatre of the Absurd. As Bernard Dukore claims, Pinter's "early plays conform to the characteristics of the Theatre of the Absurd" due to their thematic qualities and structural properties. As Dukore further investigates, in Pinter's theatre,

> events and actions are unexplained, and apparently illogical or unmotivated, the world seems capricious or malevolent. One can rely upon nothing. What is apparently secure is not secure. A

> haven does not protect. A weapon vanishes without warning. Linguistic absurdity may suggest the absurdity of the human condition. Fear of a menace may suggest the universal trauma of man in the universe. (1982: 25)

Dukore's insight into the characteristics of Pinter's drama is especially important because it gives the gist of Pinteresque context in its early form. In Pinterland, characters always feel insecure, their histories are usually vague, they usually feel the urge to construct an authority so that they can protect their territories, and they cannot sustain their lives without the repetition of monotonous acts. In his essential work *Gender and Power in the Plays of Harold Pinter (1994),* Victor L. Cahn states that Pinter's characters "are at times uncertain of whom or what they understand, of whom or what they believe, and ultimately of who or what they are" (2). Uncertainty and insecurity amalgamate with the feeling of protectivity and thus the "the conflict in Pinter's plays occurs when one of the outside forces penetrates into the room and disrupts the security of its occupants" (Wellwarth, 1971: 225). Defence of one's territory provides the main point of issue and the setting, which is usually a room, becomes the battleground where various egos with different motives blend and clash.

Among Pinter's early plays, *The Birthday Party (1958)* stands as a colossal figure in that it can be seen as the epitome of Pinteresque. In this play, a young pianist Stanley Webber lives in a seaside boarding house of two old people, Petey and Meg. One day, two new lodgers in black suits, Goldberg and McCann, arrive at the same house and it is clear that they are particularly eager to meet Stanley. Learning from Meg that it is Stanley's birthday, they insist on preparing a birthday party for him. They meet Stanley in the evening and he is saliently bothered with

their presence. He insists that it isn't his birthday by claiming that he isn't afraid of them. In return, Goldberg and McCann process an interrogation, a "linguistic torture" (Şenlen, 2009: 130), which pushes Stanley into a catatonic position. The so-called birthday party is celebrated with Stanley ultimately being engaged in occasional physical violence. In the morning, Stanley, who cannot speak properly with any clear words, wears a suit just the same as Goldberg and McCann and is taken away by them.

In his book *Harold Pinter and the Language of Cultural Power (1993)*, Marc Silverstein regards *The Birthday Party* as "a kind of dramatized theory of power" (26). In construction of this power, language plays a crucial role for the adoption of the dominant discourse to which characters are supposed to be subservient. As Jean Knox similarly asserts, "language can serve other purposes, often far less noble, purposes that are hidden in the prosody of the sentences, the rhythm and intonation beneath their overt meaning" (2009: 25). Through perpetual use of certain codes, language provides the chance to build dominion over subjects who are dissolved with the manipulative power of linguistic utterances. In this respect, the interrogation of Stanley which works as a mental operation presents how and to what extent dominant ideology can insert its oppressive discourse through linguistic employments. It also exemplifies the menace in Pinteresque which brings forth a stream of unfathomable fears to the characters. Though the menace is rarely clarified, it always operates in a conundrum of undefined fears that renders the characters compliant with demands of the intruders. During the cross-examination process, Goldberg and McCann suffocate Stanley with a variety of

threats, promises and nonsensical utterances which are seemingly resorted in order to ensure Stanley's integration with the system that they work for:

> […]
> *Goldberg*: We'll make a man of you.
> *McCann*: And a woman.
> *Goldberg*: You'll be re-orientated.
> *McCann*: You'll be rich.
> *Goldberg*: You'll be adjusted.
> *McCann*: You'll be our pride and joy.
> *Goldberg*: You'll be a mensch.
> *McCann*: You'll be a success.
> *Goldberg*: You'll be integrated.
> *McCann*: You'll give orders.
> *Goldberg*: You'll make decisions.
> *McCann*: You'll be a magnate.
> *Goldberg*: A statesman.
> *McCann*: You'll own yachts.
> *Goldberg*: Animals.
> *McCann*: Animals. (77-78)

While some remarks are the previews of a reward, the others are of a threatening nature. The truth behind the bombardment of these expressions is, however, to give Stanley no opportunity to defend himself. As Jeannette Malkin states, Goldberg and McCann's conversational style is a "quick, gapless rhythm, a totalitarian style which allows no space for response and no option for self-defense" (1992: 57). They attempt to manipulate Stanley to accept the values of the system they represent with verbal violence, which they become successful with Stanley's participation in the mob. As Michael Billington puts forth, "Pinter shows how language is a continuous

battle-tactic; a potential weapon of domination, a defensive posture to secure one's position, a source of evasion to hid the truth" (2007: 124) Thus, linguistic violence paves the way for "man's loss of autonomy and selfhood through the normative pressures, reductive tendencies, or a pre-determination of language" (Malkin, 1992: 8). Stanley, losing his individuality by getting numb, becomes part of an enigmatic system which prescribes his coalescence without any personal traits.

While intruders and claustrophobic spaces cause menace and oppression in Pinter's early works, in the middle plays, which are also known as memory plays, manipulation of the past provides the ground to construct one's authority over others. In these plays, memory becomes a shady space on which several different versions of past can be inscribed in line with the manipulative power of the parties. One such play is *Old Times (1971)* which is about an instantaneous change in the lives of a couple, Kate and Deeley who live in a farmhouse in the countryside in apparently an isolated place. They expect the arrival of one of Kate's old friends, Anna, who causes the main conflict in the play. However, Anna differs from other intruders in Pinter's plays because she doesn't enter characters' lives physically out of nowhere; she is already within their lives. At the stage direction of the beginning of the play, Anna stands at the window in dim light while Kate and Deeley are having a conversation. She instantly interrupts the couple's conversation *in medias res*, talking about her adventures with Kate with a long tirade: "Queuing all night, the rain, do you remember? My goodness, the Albert Hall, Covent Garden, what did we eat? […]" (1021). As Michael Billington states, there is "no messing with doors and entrances. Anna immediately launches into a long, detailed stream-of-consciousness account of London life with Kate twenty years ago" (2007: 370). In

this respect, it can be said that she does not intrude their lives physically; "it becomes clear that the conflict will not be territorial" and "the intrusion, as it turns out, is instead into their perception" (Prentice, 1991: 111). Affirmingly, a battle for possession over Kate is commenced between Anna and Deeley and they attempt to manipulate the past in accordance with their intentions to possess Kate. They emphasize petty details about her which would make their own point of view plausible:

> *Anna*: She was always a dreamer.
>
> *Deeley*: She likes taking long walks. All that. You know. Raincoat on. Off down the lane, hands, deep in pockets. All that kind of thing. (1023)

While the battle continues between Anna and Deeley, it becomes clear that Kate is transformed into an object of desire and control. Their rivalry is apparent; what is more apparent is the victimized position of Kate. They both state that they occasionally gaze at Kate, which is interpreted as the "panoptic gaze" (1993: 116) by Silverstein. The gaze, as Laura Mulvey claims, is directed towards the "passive female" with the intention of "displaying" her as a "sexual object" and therefore the act of gazing provides a "satisfying sense of omnipotence" and it is closely related to interpersonal power (2006: 346-347). With their occasional gazes, Deeley and Anna position Kate as an object of spectacle on which they can build their possessive authority:

> *Deeley*: Sometimes I take her face in my hands and look at it […] holding it in my hands. Then I kind of let it go, take my hands, leave it floating"
>
> […]

> *Anna*: Ah, those songs. We used to play them, all of them, all the time, late at night, lying on the floor, lovely old things. Sometimes I'd look at her face, but she was quite unaware of my gaze. (1023-1024)

Accordingly, they present the act of gazing as a sign of love, yet, the real outcome of the occasional surveillance is the submissive position of Kate who represents an oscillation between Deeley and Anna. As an object of gaze, Kate stands as the victim who can also be regarded as a hard-won trophy.

In their struggle for Kate, Deeley and Anna employ further strategies, such as a song competition in which lines of the songs are specifically chosen to impose an impotence on the other. Similarly, they begin to tell stories where the gist simply implies their motives. In order to have the upper hand, Deeley tells Anna of his sexual relations with Kate: "[A]t a slightly later stage our naked bodies met, hers cool, warm, highly agreeable, and I wondered what Robert Newton would think of this. What would he think of this I wondered as I touched her profoundly all over" (1026). As a response, Anna strikingly implies that Deeley's accounts are not true at all: "There are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place" (1026). As can be inferred from their duel, they foreground their own version of past in order to get the better of their opponent and this battle, memory is utilized as a psychological weapon which functions as a manipulative force. In Bernard Dukore's words, "[m]emories arouse rivalry and battles for domination through participation in a past or through one's ability to persuade another to accept an interpretation of it" (1982: 90). The past, however slippery it is, becomes the catalyser that shapes the present and through

manipulation of the memories, characters assert their authority in order to maintain their superiority. They occasionally form alliances, but alliances and rivalries are maintained as long as they support their own interests and they can easily be left aside if they are no longer useful. While Kate and Anna seem to form an alliance against Deeley, Kate also maintains her marital position with her husband, forming another alliance with him against Anna. As a response, Anna tries to wedge between the couple and the circle of alliances and rivalries rotates round and round in a trifling manner. In this context, Prentice states that "[t]he relationships are never static- no sooner is one formed, defined, nailed down than it immediately shifts slightly" (2000: 186). Thus, it can be said that memory is merely another strategy to construct and maintain authority in a limited environment, which provides the means of sustaining individuality that is under threat in the outside world.

In the third period of his career, Pinter turned into more overt aspects of the abuse of power by states and politico-social institutions and during this period, Pinter produced mainly short plays such as *One for the Road (1984)*, *Mountain Language (1988)* and *Party Time (1991)*. According to Mark Taylor-Batty, these three plays "are angry works that address the vulnerability of the weak in the face of unremitting state power" (2014: 150-151). For instance, in *One for the Road*, a family is interrogated by a torturer, Nicholas who can be regarded as the representative of the abusive state power since he frequently cites from a chauvinist national narrative. Victor, Gila and their seven-year-old son Nicky are separately questioned in an unknown place in terms of their loyalty to the state. During the interrogation, Nicholas gives references to a man who rules the country that he "feel[s] a link " and "a bond" (232). He talks about private matters such as Victor

and Gila's sexual life and never mentions the reason of their captivity. He also accuses Nicky of spitting at his soldiers and blames Gila for her son's behaviour insisting that she was the one who "encouraged him to spit, to strike at soldiers of honour, soldiers of God" (244). He also insists that Gila's father was "a man of honour" and she was a disgrace to her dead father's memory. In the end, he releases Victor telling that his wife will be released in about a week and when Victor asks about his son in a mumbling manner, Nicholas tells him not to worry and adds that "he was a little prick" (247). As Taylor-Batty claims, "a reference to him in the past tense as the play closes suggests he might have been killed" (2014: 151). In this context, it can be said that Pinter deals with the outcomes of human rights abuses in an unlimited state power blended with chauvinism and puts forth the argument that such states do not hesitate to annihilate even the most innocent target as long as there stands a chance to defy their oppression on which their omnipotence is built and legitimized.

A similar theme occurs in *Mountain Language (1988)* in which the so-called mountain people are banned to speak their language. Although the play is often associated with Turkey, Pinter explicitly stated that his play is not a "parable" of any specific issue. Rather, he emphasises the universality of the issue of forbidden languages: "this play is not about the Turks and the Kurds. I mean, throughout history, many languages have been banned- the Irish have suffered, the Welsh have suffered and the Urdu and the Estonians' language banned" (qtd. in Grimes, 2005: 90). Furthermore, in "Writing for Myself" (1961), Pinter says: "I'm convinced that what happens in my plays could happen anywhere, at any time, in any place" (ix). In line with Pinter's expressions, the play is set in an unnamed country where the

mountain language is forbidden. An elderly woman who cannot speak the language of the capital tries to visit her son in a prison. A sergeant and an officer occasionally warn the visitors not to speak their mountain language. Similar to Nicholas in *One for the Road*, Sergeant talks in a manner of a national narrative and he says "[y]our husbands, your sons, your fathers, these men you have been waiting to see, are shithouses. They are enemies of the state. They are shithouses" (255). In addition, Officer launches a tirade to remind the visitors of that the mountain language is strictly forbidden with a military decree:

> *Officer*: Now hear this. You are mountain people. You hear me? Your language is dead. It is forbidden. It is not permitted to speak your mountain language in this place. You cannot speak your language to your men. It is not permitted. Do you understand? You may not speak it. It is outlawed. You may only speak the language of the capital. That is the only language permitted in this place. You will be badly punished if you attempt to speak your mountain language in this place. This is a military decree. It is the law. Your language is forbidden. It is dead. No one is allowed to speak your language. Your language no longer exists. Any questions? (255-256)

The fact that the mountain language is forbidden is continuously repeated by the state officials and although apparently no one speaks the language, they are on guard against a possible word in the refused language. In the end, similar to Victor's release in *One for the Road*, the language is allowed "until further notice"; however, the elder woman "*does not respond. She sits still*" (267). The temporary freedom does not provide a relief since it does not ameliorate the precarious situation which characters are bound to experience for a long time. Both plays end with a pessimistic vision of institutional power since it does not produce possibilities of

new forms of communication; rather, it annihilates further possibilities other than those prescribed by dominant ideologies.

One for the Road and *Mountain Language* are quintessentially identical in that they both explore the perilous aspects of an unlimited state power. They can be considered as the epitomes of Pinter's late career which is generally defined in terms of overt political actions, which can also be considered as a propagandist approach. In an interview with Nicholas Hern, Pinter states "I always find agit-prop[1] insulting and objectionable. And now, of course, I'm doing exactly the same thing" (1986: 18). He also adds that the main reason behind his explicit participation in such political matters is that many people are not aware of the situations in many parts of the world and he feels it is necessary to convey these conflicts. When his Nobel lecture is considered, it is conceivable that Pinter regards it as an ethical necessity to search for the truth as a citizen, and that art is a valuable means of exploring reality. In his lecture, he states that as a writer, he cannot distinguish between what is true or what is false because "a thing is not necessarily either true or false, it can be both true and false" (2006: 22). However, he claims that "as a citizen" he "must ask: what is true? What is false" (22). It is in his late career that he intensifies his political activism as an endeavour to explore the boundaries of truth and false. During this period, Pinter participated in numerous protests within England and in foreign countries. He overtly protested nuclear armament by

[1] The term agit-prop is derived from "agitation" and "propaganda". In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory (2013)*, agitprop drama is defined in terms of socialist revolutions. Accordingly, "Bolsheviks wished to use art as a weapon in the revolutionary struggle, and the agitprop department [in Bolshevik regime] mobilized culture across the vast and largely illiterate country to stimulate people's understanding of and involvement in such important matters as health, sanitation, literacy or the military situation" (16). In this context, agitprop can be defined as any form of art which functions as a propaganda for a revolutionary purpose, mainly a left-oriented revolution.

becoming an active member of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Amnesty International. In 1985, he visited Turkey with American playwright Arthur Miller to draw attention to human rights abuses (Baker, 2008: 95). In 1987, he was a participant in protests outside the American Embassy in London. He also

> signed petitions, took part in interviews, wrote letters and articles drawing attention, for instance, to the condemnation by the International Court of Justice in June 1986 of the United States actions in Nicaragua, its overthrowing of democratic governments in Guatemala in 1954 and in Chile 1973. (Baker, 2008: 95).

Through his political activism, Pinter explicitly announced his discontent with the political status quo which he deemed responsible for human right abuses and anti-democratic actions in different parts of the world. In this period, for him, it was the powerful states and institutions that enabled the sustenance of oppression in every sense. Especially the changing paradigm in political power for the advantage of the USA clearly disturbed Pinter since he considered the American policies rather oppressive and abusive, which is the primary emphasis in his Nobel lecture in terms of the invasion of Iraq.

While Pinter's concern for the operation of authority has always remained vigilant, his perspective of the executers of power shows a dramatic change in style. In his early career, the whereabouts of the oppressors remain ambiguous and Pinter himself is reluctant to bring any explanation to them. There are no clues as to where they come from and who they work for and there are only simple details such as their dress codes that imply the system they belong to. Pinter' reply to a woman who could not grasp the meaning of *The Birthday Party* can be given as the evidence of his initial approach to his plays:

> Dear Sir, I would be obliged if you would kindly explain to me the meaning of your play *The Birthday Party*. These are the points which I do not understand: 1) Who are the two men? 2) Where did Stanley come from? 3) Were they all supposed to be normal? You will appreciate that without the answers to my questions I cannot fully understand your play.

As a response, Pinter wrote as follows:

> Dear Madam, I would be obliged if you would kindly explain to me the meaning of your letter. These are the points which I do not understand: 1) Who are you? 2) Where do you come from? 3) Are you supposed to be normal? You will appreciate that without the answers to my questions I cannot fully understand your letter. (qtd. in Esslin, 1982: 41-42).

This conversation portrays Pinter's attitude towards the meaning and sources of oppression in his early career in which he does not address an epistemology towards his characters or themes. They are merely plays as they are presented. He rejects any claims to classify them as metaphors or parables for any kind of assertions claiming that he doesn't "write from any kind of abstract idea" and "he wouldn't know a symbol if [he] saw one" (Writing for Myself: viii). For example, when Terence Rattigan, a renowned playwright of the time, claimed that *The Caretaker* was about "God, the Holy Ghost, and the mankind", Pinter said "no. It's about two brothers and a caretaker" (in Cusac, Web). In this context, Pinter did not give any prescription as to demonstrate the origins of oppression but in his late career, it can be said that he found the source. He directly addressed the oppressors, their objectives, and their strategies. For him, states and coercive institutions were the ones behind the tyrannical systems that regulate the concepts of truth and false, the daily life, the language, the notion of citizenry, and above all, the concept of normality. *The Hothouse (1980),* which is "one of Pinter's best plays" (2007: 181) according to Michel Billington, was first presented at the beginning of this period,

marking a dramatic shift in Pinter's conception of authority, from ambiguity to explicitness.

ii. Pinteresque and Contemporary British Dramatic Writing

The emergence of aforementioned Pinterian characteristics in contemporary theatre has been occasionally observed by theatre practitioners as well as critics and academics. Tom Stoppard, for instance, hails Pinter's Nobel Prize and states that "the prize has gone to a writer who not only does his own thing so well, but who has changed the way that many writers who followed him write for the stage" (2005: Web). Similarly, in his book *The Full Room (2000),* Dominic Dromgoole reiterates the influence of Pinter's drama on contemporary writing and regards him as "the biggest ship in the fleet" and "the aircraft carrier from which many planes take off on shorter, less majestic trips" (225). On the other hand, Pinter's frequent resonance in British drama has not always been welcomed positively. As such, *The Guardian*'s Michael Billington claims Pinter's "distinctive voice is reverberating through British drama in ways that begin to worry [him]" and that "too many writers are imitating the master's voice rather than discovering their own[2]" (2006: Web). Billington's concerns are shared by the playwright David Hare and he expresses that Pinter became "a disastrous influence on a later generation of playwrights who thought that there was nothing to his work but style – a style, what's more, that could be ripped off like lead from a church roof" (2005: Web). Taken positively or negatively, Pinter's influence on younger generations of playwriting is an indisputable case in British theatre, but the

[2] Billington states his argument in a review for Mark Ravenhill's *The Winterling (2006*) which will be studied in this section.

extent to which Pinteresque resonates in contemporary plays, and the ways that such affiliation with Pinterian aesthetics work deserve to be studied.

In his article "The Pinter Paradigm: Pinter's Influence on Contemporary Playwriting" (2009), Steve Waters asserts that Pinter's "ubiquity on stage is matched by his undeniable yet rarely articulated impact on the wave of new British playwriting emerging from the early 1990s through to the present" (297). According to him, "there are three modes of the Pinter paradigm that work their way into the bloodstream of the new writing of the 1990s" (301). In the first category, Pinter is "comic, the documenter of the *improvised confusions of masculine dialogue*, of selves lost in language, pitted in *unending competition*"; in addition, Pinter is "the patron of the so called new-laddism that stormed the stage in the mid-nineties, embodied in sharply crafted, linguistically exuberant, *predominantly urban plays chiefly concerned with male groups*" (301, emphasis added). For Waters, such qualities are profound in the plays of a range of playwrights such as Joe Penhall, Jez Butterworth, Patrick Marber, and David Eldridge, to which Anthony Neilson needs to be added. In many plays written by these playwrights, Pinter's influence usually visible, sometimes being too overt while occasionally being less-revealing.

Mainly set in "*the living-room of a rented flat*" where "*the credibly masculine fights with a softer influence*" (1998: 62), Neilson's *Penetrator (1993)* is about a sudden change in the lives of two male flatmates, Max and Alan, due to the arrival of Max's childhood friend Tadge who returns from military service with obvious symptoms of psychological breakdown. The flatmates are intensively engaged in their masculine dialogues concerning women, relationships, and sex, as well as incidental homophobic remarks such as "faggots" (69), but suddenly "*the door bell rings*" which

they are "*horrified*" with (76) because the territory is threatened, an obvious reminiscence of paranoid responses towards intruders in Pinter's plays. Tadge breaks the comfort of the inside with his schizophrenic fears that he is being followed by an ambiguous squad called The Penetrators who tortured him in "a black room" (85), who "know everything about everybody" (80) and are so powerful that "they can make you disappear like a black hole" (98). Aleks Sierz comments on Tadge's dark fantasies that "his idea of […] the tormentors is reminiscent of Pinter's vision of torture" (2001: 80). The conflict gets physical with Tadge's intimidation of Alan, calling him a Penetrator and urging him to "confess" his crimes, which is again an echoing of the verbal and physical assaults on Stanley in *The Birthday Party*. Through the closing scene, Tadge forces Max to tell the story of their getting lost in the woods when they were younger, which reveals that they had a homoerotic love before people found them. In the end, Alan leaves the flat since he is made redundant by Tadge's arrival, and Tadge talks about their nostalgia, an indication of slight recuperation in his condition. In this context, Mark E. Shaw proclaims that "Neilson mirrors the room play motif of early Pinter plays like *The Dumb Waiter*" while he also "refashions Pinter's model to create a room that changes from dystopian horror to a hopeful final conclusion" (2009: 221). Contrary to Pinter's ambiguous endings, "Neilson does not end his play with uncertainty or even the grimness with which Pinter ends his" (221).

Masculine dialogues and territorial struggles under the exuberance of psychiatric ailments are one of Joe Penhall's primary subject matters in addition to the problem of being stuck in a personal space or within the boundaries of moral judgements. In an interview with Hildegard Klein, Penhall states that all his plays "are about the impulse towards freedom, people wanting to get out of their immediate

environments, to escape the job, or relationships, or the mental condition they are in" but "they are also about the dangers of escape and liberation […] the warring instincts between liberation and security" (2007: 78). He also claims that Pinter is a huge influence on him, adding "I've spent my entire writing career wanting to write a play like Pinter's *The Homecoming* or *The Caretaker*" (83). In *Some Voices (1994),* Ray is a diagnosed schizophrenic and lives under the guardianship of his brother Pete who is too busy with his café to undertake the responsibility of full-time care for him. Their ways of reason-making are completely different from each other as evident in Ray's schizophrenic perception of the science of psychiatry. He is afraid of being under treatment again, an echoing of Aston's fear in *The Caretaker*, which is conveyed in quite a Pinteresque dialogue:

> *Ray*: They're not here to help, these people.
> *Pete*: They're here to –
> *Ray*: They're here to investigate the mind.
> *Pete*: Yes. *Your* mind.
> *Ray*: For fun.
> *Pete*: No, not for fun!
> *Ray*: Because they find it interesting. They do. (Penhall, 1998: 12)

In another scene, Ives, one of Ray's friends from the psychiatric ward, arrives in Pete's flat and Pete is obviously threatened by his presence. The fact that Ives is a psychiatric patient is a little problematic because he gives the impression of an intellectual who has gone mad in the face of social injustices[3]. In Act Two, he shouts at Pete: "THERE

[3] In one scene, Ives lectures Ray and shows the symptoms of a frustrated intellectual as follows: "Your world. The new world. Your new home. It will be built by contractors and its management put out to tender. […] I know what I am talking about. I am the authority on this kind of thing. I am the only authority you want to listen to and if you don't believe me you can jam it up your arses and whistle

IS NO REVOLUTION! THERE NEVER WILL BE BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT THE REVOLUTIONARY TYPE! […] NEVER IN THIS COUNTRY WILL THERE BE ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF JUSTICE" (49). His jargon certainly involves socialist terms and it is evident that he disturbs Pete's capitalist comfort since Pete is a representative of middle class bourgeoisie with his café[4]. As a consequence of this intrusion, he orders Ray to "get him out of there" reminding that "this is [his] home" (49). Pete is in fact afraid of any possible interaction with new people and is hesitant to spoil his comfort for his brother, though he is also quite protective of him[5]; he asks Ray whether he can "get" his "own place" since he can't "stay here forever" (53); when Ray meets a woman, Laura, Pete reminds him "the implications" (67) of meeting someone who he does not know well. On the other hand, the reason that Pete takes refuge in his isolation is that has been left by his wife and affected by his father's death, which is where Penhall departs from Pinterland because in a Pinter play, the reasons behind personal ailments are always ambiguous. In addition, the ending of *Some Voices* is unlike of Pinteresque, too, because at the end of the play, Pete teaches Ray how to cook, a sign of amelioration which Pinter deprives his characters. A similar subject with similar characters can be observed in *Blue/Orange (2000)*, but this time, the setting is the psychiatric hospital itself. A doctor, Robert, and a trainee, Bruce, argue over the decision of releasing a black patient, Christopher, because Bruce thinks that he is not simply sick but he is schizophrenic. Claiming that they "don't have the

because I have had enough. I am disgusted with you, with me, with everything and I am tired of telling you" (69-70)

[4] Pete further expresses his capitalist tendencies in a following dialogue with Ray. Ray claims that the house and the restaurant also belongs to him, to which Pete responds "my restaurant! Everything/I own" (79).

[5] In his review of the play, Michael Billington states "Pete's protectiveness towards his brother reminded me strongly of Mick and Aston in *The Caretaker*" (2004: Web)

beds" (Penhall, 2008: 23), Robert advises Bruce to "play the game", "keep" his "nose clean" and "enjoy psychiatry" so that one day he gets promotion (24). From this scene onwards, the couple becomes quite reminiscent of Pinter's couples, Goldberg and McCann, or Ben and Gus; the part that Robert advices his partner "to play the game" is in fact literally cited from Goldberg's advice to McCann. Upon Bruce's insistence, Robert builds his authority as how a Pinterian character would do it:

> *Robert*: The point is, this is my *province*, Doctor. That's why you asked me here. Because I know how many beans make five. I am, as they say, an expert. I am Senior Consultant and I am here to be consulted. I am not here to be bounced off. To run it up the flag pole and see who salutes. I am here because I know. (50)

The struggle to make their perspectives dominant continues until the end of the play, and though Robert seems to win the competition, Bruce states that he is going to "lodge a complaint with the Authority" (118) and give a statement, meaning that it is not over yet.

Jez Butterworth has been affiliated with the art of dramatic writing for more than two decades and his plays are filled with a higher level of testosterone than any other playwrights. Territorial struggles under the cover of macho tendencies are what makes Butterworth an inheritor of Pinter. In this context, in his book *The Theatre and Films of Jez Butterworth (2015)*, David Ian Rabey states that "Pinter may be considered the most direct and conscious mentor to Butterworth, because of their friendship" (25). One such influence can be observed in *Mojo (1995)* where the masculine battles are sustained for the capturing of a night club called Atlantic, both between rival businessmen and among the club's own henchmen. A young performer with a promising talent, Silver Johnny, continues his journey to fame and fortune but

is hampered by his excessively defensive producer Ezra. A local gangster, Sam Ross, begins to grow an interest in him, and one day, Ezra is found in the trash bin cut in half, by his sidekick Mickey, who exacerbates the situation by claiming that Ross wants to capture the club. The rest of the play presents the characters in a paranoid response to the possibility of Ross's arrival, as evident in Sweets's fear: "They're coming for us. Mr Ross is coming for us" (Butterworth, 2011: 37). Moulded by the fear of being slaughtered, characters inevitably experience severe group conflicts while falling out with each other, and consider the option of joining Ross's gang. In one scene, Skinny attempts to get rid of Ezra's son, Baby, by using a foul language similar to Pinter's characters: "Shut your fucking mouth, Jew. You don't belong here. You've got no place here. None of us want you. You're nasty and you lie. We've all had enough. Take your lies somewhere else" (96). Eventually, it is understood that it was Mickey who helped the murdering of Ezra for a share in the club and territorial struggles are reified in characters' long for economic gain. A similar tone can be recognized in *The Winterling (2006)*, which is, according to *The Guardian*'s Alfred Hickling, "more Pinteresque than Pinter himself" (2014: Web). Set in a "deserted, half-derelict farmhouse" (Butterworth, 2011: 185), the play is about a territorial struggle between male characters confined in their limited space. A veteran gangster, West, is waiting for his old partners Wally and Jerry, but soon learns that Jerry is dead and Wally arrives with his step-son Patsy in Jerry's place. Disturbed with the intrusion of someone he does not know, West manifest his discomfort in a typical Pinteresque dialogue that reveals his fear:

> *West*: Who's Patsy? Who's Patsy, Wally?
> *Wally*: This Patsy. Patsy, Mr West. Len, Patsy. Beat.

West: Watcha, Patsy.

Patsy: Watcha, Mr West.

West: Who's Patsy?

Patys: He's –

West: Patsy.

Patsy: Yes

Wally: Who's Patsy, Wally? Who's Patsy?

Wally: This is Patsy.

West: Is this him?

Wally: Yes. (193-194)

Butterworth does not deny the play's affiliation with Pinter; in fact, he expresses his regret of not dedicating the play to him. In an interview in *Plays One (2011)*, he states that upon seeing Pinter's Nobel Lecture, he "decided to sit down and write using entirely his technique" and "try to speak like him"; besides, the play "was really an exercise in homage and also a wish to get close to him […] as a creative force. To try to stand in his shoes" (ix-x). His endeavour seems successful in that the play bursts with dysfunctional dialogues that reflect Pinter's style. In one scene, West conveys his nostalgia in a storyline filled with overlapping matters as follows:

> *West*: Me and your old man, Patsy. Me and the old man. We go back. Has he told you? I bet he did. I bet he did. He told you, didn't he? What did he tell you? What did he tell you, Patsy? What did he tell you? Did he leave out the best bits? The dirty stuff. You don't know the half of it. I'll tell you stories'll put hair on your chest. You got hair on your chest, Patsy? (197)

In Pinter's drama, the moment characters talk abundantly, they reveal their weakness because speech is not a means of communication but a means of preventing it. As such, West is afraid of the intrusion of Patsy, and as a retaliation, he suffocates him with

questions about a historical site near his house, taking the role of Pinter's interrogators, but this time the victim, Patsy, can ask questions, too:

> *West*: What stands to the east …?
>
> *Patsy*: To the east is a stone circle. How big is it?
>
> *West*: Eighty feet across. How many stones?
>
> *Patsy*: Sixteen granite stones. How big are the stones?
>
> *West*: Between ten and thirteen feet high.
>
> *Patsy*: How heavy are the stones?
>
> *West*: Smallest is three tons.
>
> *Patsy*: The biggest is twelve tons.
>
> *West*: What was it used for? What was the stone circle used for? (*Pause*) What was the stone circle used for?
>
> *Patsy*: I… (Pause.) Hang on. (Pause.) Wait…
>
> *Pause.*
>
> *West*: When did you decide to come? (*Pause*.) How long did you think you think about it? Have you got the stomach for this, Patsy? Not just the stomach. The kidneys. The lungs. The neck. The teeth. The skill. The knowledge. In your bones. In your fingernails. In your teeth. It's not just front. Muscle and front. Nerve and bluster. What are you made of, Patsy? What are you made of? (218)

It is safe to claim that Butterworth shows an exceptional craftsmanship in imitating Pinter's voice through dialogues loaded with Pinteresque menace. The setting and subject matter also add to Pinterian quality of the play as well as the language that is used as a means to launch assaults.

When there is a crisis in masculinity, Patrick Marber is more than expert in exploring it. In *Dealer's Choice (1995)*, he portrays a dramatic world of gamble addicts who regard poker not as a mere game but as an arena where they can race their masculine potencies. The roles are usually set stable in the game; losers are generally

losers as winners are usually winners. The hierarchy among the characters often stays the same; however, with the intrusion of Ash, a professional poker player, the roles are upside down. He breaks the regular routine of the game and shakes the position of the leader of the clan, Stephen. At the end of the play, he manipulates him to toss a coin since he is aware of his addiction, but "*without revealing the coin Ash puts it in his pocket*" (Marber, 2004: 117) because Stephen is not accustomed to losing so he pays him the money without risking learning the coin. As he reveals, "the object of the game is to win" (120), and the act of winning is not important in terms of earning money considering the small amounts they risk, but the superior position that victory grants him is more important than financial gain. A similar human frailty can be observed in *Closer (1997)*, and this time, characters' aim is the victory over possession of the people that they claim to love. As Graham Saunders explains, "the structure of *Closer* drew comparisons with Harold Pinter's play *Betrayal (1978)*, and Marber's own career has demonstrated an ongoing practical engagement with Pinter's theatre" (2008: 31). "Both plays", Saunders asserts, "share broadly similar themes such as the anatomization of pain and guilt that arises from infidelity and shared, yet different memories of the past" (32). Involving two male and two female characters, the play portrays the animalistic tendencies of characters who are overwhelmed by the fear of being beaten by their rivals in terms of love affairs. It is not only male characters, but also the female ones that demonstrate a territorial imperative as a prerequisite of sustaining identity. However, the game is not an innocent one in that it consistently gets dirtier with sex wars that define self-dignity for characters. While female characters often use manipulative language as a tool to defeat their rivals, male characters are more bestial in their battles in which there is almost no end to adopt new

tactics ranging from comparing penis sizes to their capabilities in sexual intercourse. The territorial imperative is heightened with animalistic jealousy, and although characters have their own relationships, it is their rival's affairs that they are after:

> *Dan*: Thinking of me?
>
> *Anna*: No. How's Alice?
>
> *Dan*: She's fine. Do you love him?
>
> *Anna*: Yes, very much.
>
> *Dan*: (*alarmed*) You're not going to *marry* him?
>
> *Anna*: I might.
>
> *Dan*: Don't. Marry me. Children, everything. You don't want his children – three little stooges in white coats. Don't marry him, marry me. Grow old with me… die with me… wear a battered cardigan on the beach in Bournemouth. Marry me. (Marber, 2004: 220-221)

In another scene, Larry interrogates Anna about her choosing Dan since he is threatened by his shadow over his possession:

> *Larry*: Is he a good fuck?
>
> *Anna*: Don't do this.
>
> *Larry*: just answer the question. Is he *good*?
>
> *Anna*: Yes.
>
> *Larry*: Better than me?
>
> *Anna*: Different.
>
> *Larry*: Better?
>
> *Anna*: Gentler. (236)

As clear from Larry's anxieties, superiority in the battle of sexes is defined in terms of sexual potency. As a reprisal, he tries to win the affection of Dan's ex-girlfriend Alice. So, the cycle of attractions proves to be no more than a game in which rules are written and rewritten according to the strategies of characters, especially male ones.

David Eldridge is one other playwright that can be said to follow the footsteps of Pinter in terms of masculine rivalries. In his *Serving it Up (1996)* which "surely draws its shocking comic strength from *The Homecoming*" (Waters, 2009: 301-302), Eldridge explores a wide range of possessive tendencies mainly attributed to male characters in the East End of London, a notorious suburban area. In the play, characters fight over their possessions which can be manifested in jealousy of a girlfriend or a mother, or in the defence of England as a form of racism. In one scene, Charlie is disturbed by his wife Val's praise of Nick, a friend of their son Sonny:

> *Charlie*: Good boy that Nick.
>
> *Val*: He is a nice boy. […] Came round this morning for a cup of tea. Ever so polite, Charlie. Made the tea as well. Makes a lovely cup of tea. Had a big slice of victoria sponge an'all.
>
> *Val continues with her knitting. Pause.*
>
> *Charlie*: Did you screw him, Val?
>
> *Val*: Charlie! I wouldn't! You know I wouldn't! (Eldridge, 2005: 16)

Upon hearing Val's compliments for another man, masculine suspicions pervade the domestic setting and they are in fact not groundless because Val and Nick are having an affair. The reason behind Val's infidelity is easily palpable from her family's attitude towards her because she is constantly ignored by the male members of the family; for instance, when she prepares a cake for them, they show no interest in it and Nick is the only one that tastes the cake. In this sense, Val resembles the pitiful housewife of *The Birthday Party*, Meg, in that Meg's breakfasts gets no attention from Stanley and Petey let alone positive comments. Though Sonny shows little affection for his mother, he is enraged when he hears Nick's affair with her as it is a sign of challenge against his right over her mother; jealousy is actually a cover up for the

failing authority and it is not just family bonds but masculine potency that is at stake. The central motif that transforms the play into a Pinteresque one is the arrival of Sonny's old friend Ryan who breaks the chain of being an underdog and achieves a university degree by leaving his home in the suburbs. This way, he is a close reflection of *The Homecoming*'s Teddy; he briefly enters and exits the scene but stays enough to reveal the failing nature of the suburban residence which is shaped by dysfunctional but corrosive masculine culture. Similar to Teddy, his personal aura is fundamentally different from the people in his ex-habitat both intellectually and ideologically. For example, whereas his old cronies are simply racist and homophobic, Ryan is a liberal intellectual and is about to marry a girl named Sharman who is taken for a "bloody wog" (60) by Sonny. In this context, Ryan's presence proves the impossibility of an intersection between clashing perspectives, and thus, reminiscent of Teddy, he simply leaves the territory that is forged with destructiveness and prejudices.

"The second strand of the Pinter paradigm", as Waters asserts, "stems from his incarnation as a 'modernist' dramatist, attuned to European theatre and in the tradition of Kafka and Beckett"; in this fashion, plays are "elliptical, cool and attuned to the small-print of cruelty. This is Pinter as minimalist, the comedy very dark, the dialogue prone to surreality and poetic swerves" (2009: 301). This mode of Pinteresque employs numerous strategies to demonstrate the inefficiency of language, impossibility of verbal communication, ambiguity concerning the nature of characters, and dream-like (or nightmarish) procession of the action, and such attributes can be found in the plays of Martin Crimp and Mark Ravenhill. Crimp, who is "the most overt inheritor of the Pinter idiolect", according to Waters, "moves rather like Pinter did himself, from the darkly comic linguistics of his early plays to an increasingly bleak account of language

as the source and symptom of human isolation and mutual oppression" (2009: 303). As Dilek İnan claims, in his plays, "Crimp, akin to Pinter's *Betrayal*, tells the superficial life styles and shallow perceptions of the middle class[6]" (2013: 106). In *No One Sees the Video (1990),* Crimp explores the dysfunctional world of market research to which Liz has been recently recruited. Her job is to conduct face-to-face interviews with people on the streets but the dialogues she happens to be within appear to be from a world of dreams where language does not work for communication. At the beginning of the play, before she joins the world of market research, she is interviewed by Karen on the street and she is visibly lost when she is asked questions because she cannot understand even the simplest details and demand Karen to repeat the questions several times:

> *Liz*: (What) No, I'm sorry, would you / repeat that? […] I'm sorry, but what is this in fact about? […] How do you mean: qualify? […] What do you mean: qualify? (Crimp, 2005: 10-13)

Liz evidently suffers from an estrangement of verbal communication since she cannot comprehend the ordinary flow of a daily conversation. Apart from her disability to counteract healthily, it can be claimed that she also feels threatened by the imminence of a stranger who begins to ask her questions about her shopping habits. Questions, as stated previously, are the indicators of personal downfall in Pinteresque and Liz feels the pressure of such a danger and acts hesitantly. In another scene, two other characters, John and Colin, talk about freedom of choice, but the dialogue proves to be as dysfunctional as the one between Liz and Karen because they cannot understand each other without several repetitions:

[6] Translated from a Turkish article by the author of this study.

John: It's freedom of choice.

Colin: (Exactly) It's what?

John: It's freedom of choice.

Colin: Exactly.

[…]

John: It's cultural

Colin: (Of course it is.) It's what?

John: It's cultural.

Colin: Of course it is. (17)

As apparent from the conversation, the simplest words are not useful to transmit the meaning because the two characters are linguistically isolated and communication is overwhelmed by dysfunctional repetitions. In *The Country (2000),* Pinterian aesthetics are even more noticeable since the play closely echoes a revision of Pinter's *Old Times.* In both plays, domestic setting of a couple who moves from city life to countryside is disrupted with the arrival of another woman; similarly, both couples suffer from a severe problem of isolation and their attitude towards the intruder are enigmatic in that they regard her as a threat as well as freshness in a weighty atmosphere; in both plays, wives hint that they don't like to live in the countryside but they have to bear it because of their husbands. On the other hand, in *The Country,* the arrival of the intruder differs from Anna's advent upon Kate and Deeley's house. While Anna appears in medias res, Rebecca is found unconscious by Richard in the roadside at night and is brought home voluntarily. The oddity of Richard's solution is worth discussing here because normally, when a fainted stranger is found outside in the middle of the night, an ambulance and police investigation are expected due to a possibility of a severe problem, but Richard brings Rebecca home instead. It is mainly because that the

couple suffers from a rural isolation, and their relationship is also shaky. On several points in the play, Corinne wants Richard to kiss her but she is constantly refused by him:

- […] I want you to kiss me.
- I don't want to kiss you. I have kissed you.
- Then kiss me again.
- I don't want to kiss you again.
- Why? Don't you love me? (Crimp, 2005: 299)

Despite her inviting nature, Corinne is rejected by her husband constantly and Richard's attitude towards Rebecca can be interpreted through his indifference to Corinne. When Rebecca awakes in the morning, she is alone in the house with Corinne and they are openly disturbed by each other's presence. Still under the shock of finding herself in a desolate country house, Rebecca tries to get to know her host and asks why they live in isolation from city life. As a defence of her way of life, Corinne says, "This is our home. We don't want to go back. We are a family. We are here permanently" (324). Seeing that her defence looks like a childish memorization of a truth, Rebecca begins to unearth the things under the carpet and understands that it wasn't Corinne's idea to move into the countryside:

- He showed me the house – this house – and that convinced me.
- He convinced you. He convinced you to come.
- Yes.
- He convinced you that this was good.
- It is good. It is good. I didn't need / to be convinced.
- The land. The stream. The beautiful house.
- Yes. The beautiful house. Why not? (326)

Corinne's account of moving reveals that withdrawal from city life was not her decision, that she was "convinced" to settle there. Her mood is, in this respect, reminiscent of Kate's sentiment concerning the ambiguous attachment to her current residence:

> *Kate*: Sometimes I walk to the sea. There aren't many people. It's a long beach […] The water's very soft here. […] Everything's softer. The water, the light, the shapes, the sounds. There aren't such edges here. And living close to the sea too. You can't say wherever it begins or ends. That appeals to me. (Pinter, 2009: 1022, 1036)

Though Kate seems to like her house, it is implied that she is also unhappy with her isolation in a place where "there aren't many people" and thus, her attachment to her home is as ambiguous as Corinne's. Steve Waters stresses this similarity and states that both plays focus on the "unwilled retreat" of the female characters from city life; besides, "the fact that [Crimp] directed a rehearsed reading of *Old Times* shortly before Katie Mitchell's production of his play at the Royal Court does suggest Pinter's work played a part in the genesis of *The Country*" (2009: 305). With all these Pinteresque imprints on the play, Martin Crimp's inheritance of Pinter's legacy becomes overtly evident and the argument that Pinter is a source of dramatic nourishment is reified with Crimp's attendance to the Pinter clan.

In 1996, Mark Ravenhill hit the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs with his highly controversial play *Shopping and Fucking* which delves into the world of young people whose lives have been defined by capitalism and master-slave hierarchies within their dwelling. Similar to patriarchal hierarchy in Pinter's *The Homecoming*, characters position themselves within the law of macho figures, Mark or Brian, since they regard their power as a source of both fear and amazement. Again, reminiscent of Teddy's

story of departure and homecoming, Mark leaves his house but later returns with a partner named Gary, a homosexual sex worker. It is significant to state that Teddy's wife Ruth has also occasionally been identified as a prostitute who is offered by the all-male household to work in Greek Street[7]. The common characteristic of Ruth and Gary is that they wield their sexual appeal as a shield against the outside and they cling to life by constructing a strong identity which is the outcome of such precision and self -assurance. In addition, their fates are equally enigmatic in that the plays do not reveal their next steps or final destinations; Ruth stays with the family but her next action is unknown; similarly, the whereabouts of Gary is inconclusive because no one mentions his name after his departure. In this respect, both *The Homecoming* and *Shopping and Fucking* employ the motif of arrival but the circumstances of those who appear to be in a different territory remain obscure. Obscurity, which is one of Pinter's most significant employments, is more conspicuous in Ravenhill's *The Cut (2006)* which focuses on an enigmatic operation called the cut that is demanded by individuals who "want to be free [of] this history and this wanting and this busyness and this schooling and these, these ties" (Ravenhill, 2008: 192). The play takes place in a fictional country under a post-apocalyptic authoritarian state where "there's no history. All that struggling to move forward, to expand, to progress. That's gone away" and in this regime "there's no society. All the prisons and the universities have fallen down or been exploded. Or maybe they never were" (196). In an interview with Mark E. Shaw,

[7] It should be noted that Ruth has a complex character in that her fate is cryptic. Penelope Prentice calls her "the most misunderstood of all of Harold Pinter's characters" (1980: 458) because her actions are never fully revealed. Though she seems to accept an ambiguous job offer by the male household, it is not clear whether she starts it or not. As Pinter himself comments, "she does not become a harlot. At the end of the play she is in possession of a certain kind of freedom. She can do what she wants, and it is not at all certain she will go off to Greek Street" (qtd. in Prentice, 1980: 458)

Ravenhill points out his homage to Pinteresque and emphasizes the similarities between *The Cut* and Pinter's political plays:

> [*The Cut* is] probably the most Pinter-like play that I've written. It's not the same really, but when people ask me what's it like, and I'm trying to describe it, I say it's a little bit like *Mountain Language* or one of those kinds of plays. It's set in a fictional country. And the process of oppression that goes on is like one of those later Pinter plays, like *One for the Road* or *Mountain Language*. (qtd. in Shaw, 2009: 223).

Though Ravenhill associates his work with Pinter's overtly political plays, it can be claimed that his play lacks the overtness for political comments and instead covers the text through an enigmatic procession of the action. That is to say, the text is imbued with cryptic details and they are never revealed within the play such as the procedure of the cut. Reviewers have frequently stressed the similarities between Pinter and Ravenhill, but most of them assessed the play from a negative point of view. For instance, Charles Spencer from *The Daily Telegraph* regards the play "initially intriguing, but ultimately frustrating":

> Mark Ravenhill's new play is so up to its ears in debt to Harold Pinter that I'm not sure whether the Nobel Laureate should be merely flattered or demanding a slice of the royalties. Initially intriguing, but ultimately frustrating, the piece combines the enigma and menace of early Pinter with the political anger of late Pinter […] But what are we meant to read into *The Cut*? Like Pinter, Ravenhill withholds information more conventional dramatists would consider crucial […] I have to confess, however, that I found the play's refusal to reveal its hand tiresome, and the spare, edgy dialogue more mannered than mesmerising. (2006: Web)

Like Spencer, Susannah Clapp of *The Guardian* foregrounds the lack of originality and states that "some of Ravenhill's lines are so stripped of character that they might have been written by a machine" (2006: Web). Finally, Kate Ward-Smythe criticizes

the technical aspects of the play and asserts that "Ravenhill's use of repeated language, pause, expletives and threatening tone appear heavily influenced and by Harold Pinter. Yet overall, *The Cut* doesn't achieve Pinter's lasting chilling intensity" (2007: Web). Considering the critical responses, it can be claimed that *The Cut* makes use of Pinterian aesthetics in such an abundant quantity that it risks being on the line between imitation and inspiration. However, what it achieves is its confirmation of Pinter's everlasting influence on contemporary dramatic writing.

Overtly political plays as *The Cut* is "the third variant" of Pinter's influence on contemporary British drama, according to Waters (2009: 301). Such occupation with politics can be observed in the plays of Sarah Kane, Caryl Churchill and David Greig who employ explicit strategies to comment on current issues such as Bosnian War, the invasion of Iraq, and the problem of institutional abuse in authoritarian states. Sarah Kane is, in this respect, the forerunner figure in the 1990s to reflect her responses against human rights abuses and institutional power. In *Blasted (1995)*, which is regarded as the archetypal play of the nineties with a wide consensus, Kane explores the daily outcomes of war which does not have any ethical boundaries concerning the actions of those who perpetuate it. Set in "*a very expensive hotel room in Leeds*" (Kane, 2001: 3), the play adopts Pinter's techniques through several resemblances. As Helen Iball claims, "the opening scenes of *Blasted* invoke Harold Pinter's drama, showing the threat outside the room throwing into relief the individuals in conflict within it" (2008: 299). It is in fact the whole play that invokes Pinteresque elements; the comfort of two people in a room is disturbed with the arrival of a stranger who removes the existing power structure with a new one, but this time, the intruder is a soldier and the regime that he builds is more violent than any of Pinter's plays since it involves

extreme assaults such as male rape and eye-plucking. The fear of such atrocities is in fact what drives Cate to say "DON'T ANSWER IT DON'T ANSWER IT DON'T ANSWER IT" (34) when the soldiers knocks the door. Her fear of the outside where "there's a war on" (33) is manifested in her territorial defence which ultimately fails. What makes the play overtly political is that the violent regime inherent in the once-cosy place is the product of repressive state apparatuses such as army. A similar approach can be observed in *Cleansed (1998)* in that it is centred around an asylum which initiates an oppressive management in an indifferent, oppressive society. An omnipotent male, Tinker, is the purveyor of violence and abuse in a seemingly university campus and the conflict about him is that he takes an ambiguous role that includes being a doctor, a drug dealer, and someone authorised with security of the facility. As well as providing young people with drugs, he talks with the terminology of medicine and he also constantly monitors the other characters. In one scene, he claims that he is "here to save" them, and bears a mock-Jesus role (Kane, 2001: 133); in another scene, he tortures a newly arrived character, Grace, with electro-shock and causes her death. Considering such details of violence and institutional abuse, Waters stresses the affinity between Pinter's *The Hothouse* and Kane's *Cleansed*. Accordingly, "both plays depict society as a prison without walls, where the zone of oppositional agency is hopelessly attenuated" (2009: 305). It is significant to note that "*Cleansed* focuses on victims who in *The Hothouse* remain unseen, embodied only in sound" and "the most striking echo" between the two plays "lies in the fate of the two newcomers, Pinter's Lamb and Kane's Grace, their names suggesting their shared biblical, sacrificial functions" (305). As such, both plays employ similar strategies to

demonstrate the never-ending process of human rights abuse which is often initiated by government officials or repressive institutions.

Pinter's overtly political works were usually in the form of short plays and Caryl Churchill is one of those who adopt the same techniques to express an intellectual response against political atmosphere of the age her plays are written in. *This is a Chair (1997)* consists of eight brief sketches with different titles which "must be clearly displayed or announced" (Churchill, 2008: 40) and each sketches refer to common political issues of modern life: "The War in Bosnia" (41), "Pornography and Censorship" (44), "The Labour Party's Slide to the Right" (45), "Animal Conservation and Third World Economies: the Ivory Trade" (47), "Hong Kong"(49), "The Northern Ireland Peace Process" (55), "Genetic Engineering" (56), "The Impact of Capitalism on the Former Soviet Union" (58). Through its explicit titles, the play echoes an extended version of Pinter's *The New World Order (1991)* in which one character says to his partner "you're keeping the world clean for democracy" (1998: 277). With *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You? (2006)*, Churchill follows a Pinterian route in terms of a determined distaste of American foreign policy and worldwide political injustice. In the play, a personification of a country, Sam, and a male character, Guy[8] talk in a fragmented dialogue in which they express their love for each other. One topic is overlapped by another, and political comments are made from the perspective of abusive world powers but no sentence is ended with a clear conclusion. The dialogues

[8] In the Note for the play, Churchill writes: "Sam was always called Sam, because of Uncle Sam. I gave the other character the name Jack, thinking of it as just a name, but some people understandably thought it referred to Union Jack, and Jack was Britain in the same way that Sam was America. But I always meant that character to be individual, a man who falls in love with America, so I have changed his name to Guy. (2008: 269).

are reminiscent of Pinter's couples with a difference in sentence structures through the absence of verbs, subjects or objects:

> *Sam*: and Saddam's let us down, he's no longer a good guy so
> *Guy*: because sometimes propaganda isn't enough to
> *Sam*: military solution
> *Guy*: so much fun in my life
> *Sam*: being powerful and being on the side of good is (2008: 278)

Further conversations between the couple involve fragmented details about "bombing Iraq, bombing Somalia" (283), something "costing poor countries two billion dollars" (286), "teaching them in Brazil exactly how much electric shock you can administer without killing" (303). Through utilization of such design, Churchill's play comes closer to Pinterian aesthetics in terms of political affiliation and distaste of invasive policies.

Staging intellectual assaults on American policies was a prevalent mode of protest to the invasion of Iraq in mid 2000s, and David Greig became a part of this sensibility with his 2005 play *The American Pilot*. Set in "a country that has been mired in civil war and conflict for many years" (Greig, 2010: 345), the play explores the obscure position of America in terms of its divided perception by different individuals. In the play, America supports the official government in the civil war but one pilot crashes in hostile territory ruled by the resistance, and the conflict arises with his arrival in the rebel ranks because he, in Billington's words, "represents both a temptation and an opportunity" (2005: Web). For several people, the pilot means something different:

> To a guerrilla captain, he is a hostage who can draw the attention of the world's media to his country's suffering. To an ex-Marxist translator, he is a reminder of his own love-hate for the seductive great Satan. To a trader, he is a source of potential profit. But to Evie, the 16-year-old daughter of a local farmer, the pilot is an object of humane curiosity. (Billington, 2005: Web)

Though the pilot's significance depends on the person who attributes it, what is common for each person is that his intrusion changes the substratum of daily life within their territory. Discomfort from his presence is echoed in Farmer's words: "The American pilot was unsettling. As far as I was concerned, the sooner he was gone from my shed, the better." (347). Farmer's fear is not groundless because his Hollywood-ridden daughter Evie is awed by the presence of the stranger who she thinks "glows" under the sun. As the pilot begins to grow in strength, he occasionally reminds his hosts that if they "harm" him they "will be hunted down and brought to justice" (374), trying to reconstruct both his own power as well as the charisma of his national narrative. Through the end of the play, Evie defies his people saying that "America sent him to save" (405) them, and it becomes evident that she is moulded by Hollywood-backed American ideology which presents itself as an omnipotent saviour:

> *Evie*: America is on our side. He told me this. America is watching us. America sees us, Captain, just as surely as if we were on television. All the attacks. All the awfulness. America has seen it. All the hunger. All the fighting and stealing. America has seen it. He told me this. We had no hope left. We were full of dust and sorrow. We were lost but America sent him to tell us, we don't have to be alone any more. We can save ourselves. We can be found. We can be American. (405-406)

When the American soldiers arrive to rescue their fellow, the scene does not turn into an idyllic setting contrary to Evie's imagination, but into a wasteland under American bombs, and the pilot takes Evie with him, leaving her village under bombing and

gunfire. Thus, Pinter's assertion that America "has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good" (2006: 25) is once again reified with Evie's departure with the pilot while her home is being bombed.

In the light of the details given in this section, it is highly palpable that Pinter's influence has been felt throughout the capillary of contemporary British drama. From his early cryptic plays to late political works, Pinter built a universe which accepts new visitors if they are to benefit from it. All the playwrights mentioned here have, undoubtedly, their own original voices; on the other hand, it is also an undeniable fact that it is almost impossible not to be influenced by as colossal a figure as Pinter. The playwright Kevin Elyot says, "Pinter's influence is massive on all of us, whether we like it or not, or know it or not. Even as far as the dialogue is concerned, he reinvented dramatic language for a whole generation" (2007: 73). Considering the vast number of the visitors in Pinterland, Elyot's argument proves to be a viable one.

CHAPTER 2

I AM AUTHORISED!!!: THE ABUSE OF AUTHORITY IN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT IN HAROLD PINTER'S *THE HOTHOUSE*

Harold Pinter is famous for his extensive effort to revise over texts before their stage productions, for which *The Hothouse* is probably the best example of his vigilance to re-read and alter. In author's note for the play, Pinter states that he wrote it "in the winter of 1958" but "put it aside for further deliberation and made no attempt to have it produced at the time" until he re-read it in 1979 and "decided it was worth presenting on the stage" (1991: 186). He further explains the reasons of his disapproval of the play in an interview with Larry Bensky for *The Progressive* (1966). Accordingly, he didn't like writing "a play with a satirical point" which, in his opinion, was "quite useless" since it was too explicit in its depiction of themes and characters:

> I never began to like any of the characters; they really didn't live at all. So I discarded the play at once. The characters were so purely cardboard. I was intentionally—for the only time, I think—trying to make a point, an explicit point, that these were nasty people and I disapproved of them. And therefore they didn't begin to live. Whereas in other plays of mine every single character, even a bastard like Goldberg in *The Birthday Party*, I care for. (Pinter, in Bensky; Web)

As Pinter elicits the background of the play's discarding, the main reason was that the characters did not meet Pinter's expectations since they were directly talking about explicit issues, which Pinter clearly found worthless. In line with Pinter's perception of his own play, in *The Peopled Wound: The Works of Harold Pinter (1970)*, Martin Esslin regards the play as "written in an idiom of grotesque farce"

in which characters are "caricatures, gargoyles rather than human beings" (103-106). Contrary to Pinter's previous plays, there is little mystery in *The Hothouse* which is interwoven with stock characters, a cliché-ridden theme, and a self-expressive space which is a state-operated mental institution. Characters' ambitions are clear, their strategies are predictable, and the relationships are too shallow to be efficient. However, the importance of the play lies in its explicitness which builds an intersection among the phases in Pinter's career because while it indicates Pinter's embarking upon a new direction in terms of explicit political issues, it also highlights and clarifies the basic ambiguities that sprawl through his former plays, such as the nature of oppressive institutions and their agents. In this respect, the play presents valuable answers to questions 'how', 'why' and 'who' when Pinter's previous plays are considered for their enigmatic themes.

The play takes place in a mental hospital in which patients are called with numbers instead of names. While anonymous screams of the patients are heard occasionally, no attempt is made to solve the problem. Moreover, the air in the facility gets hotter every minute. In the opening act, Roote, the head of the institution and Gibbs, Roote's junior, discuss about the death of Number 6457. Gibbs tries to convince Roote that 6457 died a week ago, whereas Roote insists that he interviewed him the day before. It is ultimately made clear by Gibbs that Roote in fact talked to another patient, 6459 who is revealed to have given birth to a boy. Roote is "dumbstruck" by the news and orders Gibbs to find the person behind the rape of the patient while he occasionally accuses Gibbs of trying to take his position. In another scene, the secretary Miss Cutts and the security guard Lamb have a petty conversation during which Miss Cutts doesn't pay any attention to Lamb while he

is apparently more enthusiastic to share. In following scenes, it becomes clear that Miss Cutts has an affair with both Roote and Gibbs and she tries to wedge between them by using her sexuality to which she frequently refers by asking whether she is feminine enough or not. At Christmas night, Roote is asked to give an impressive speech to all the patients and the stuff and in the same evening, he is attempted to be poisoned with a cake by the understaff which commences the climactic effect. As part of the search for the illegitimate child's father, Lamb is accused of raping the patient 6459 and is tortured with electro-shocking by Gibbs and Miss Cutts, resulting in being locked within Room 1A which is apparently a common torture room of the institution. Through the end of the play, Roote gives a sensual speech to the whole institution, talks about leaving the sorrows behind and looking for a brighter future. Following his speech, "lights go down on the office, [s]queaks are heard, of locks turning; [w]hispers, chuckles, half-screams of patients grow" (319). Patients are visibly loose on the grounds and kill everyone except the understaff, Gibbs and Lamb who is locked in a room. In the end, Gibbs report to the government official Lobb about the events in the facility, and he blames Roote for raping 6459 and murdering 6457. He is appointed into the position of Roote and the play ends with Lamb standing still in Room 1A, "staring, as in a catatonic trance" (328).

The Hothouse which stands as "a further examination of the process of correction, obedience and corruption" (Taylor-Batty, 2014: 34) delves into the institutional mechanisms through which individuals are subjected to the dominant discourse by means of linguistic and institutional violence. Physical force as well as linguistic punching represents the scale that institutions can resort to in terms of

construction of an oppressive regime in which individuality is regarded as a deviance that needs to be corrected. Besides the subjects of such a regime, the hierarchy among the executives who maintain the existence of the system demonstrates the background of the procession of abusive power. In this respect, it can be said that *The Hothouse* is an embodiment of an institution in which the practice of oppression is prepared for social application. In this institution, in addition to manipulative tools such as linguistic superiority, coercion plays an important role in construction of an environment moulded with menace. In other words, the play examines the structural development of a totalitarian regime where individuals are "fixed" in line with the dominant ideology it represents. For this reason, considering that it was written in the post-war period, it can be claimed that the play is a symbolic representation of The Holocaust in that it problematizes the brutal aspects of the Nazi regime where people from different backgrounds were subjected to inhumane practices. In her essential article "Harold Pinter's The Hothouse: A Parable of the Holocaust (1993)", Rosette C. Lamont states that the play is "a parable of the systematic annihilation of "inferior" races by a nation bent on mass death" (38). Affirmatively, at the beginning of the play, Roote and Gibbs discuss the situation of patient 6457 and upon learning his death, Roote insists that he interviewed him a short time ago but then it is revealed that it was the patient 6459 that Roote interviewed. Concerned with the discrepancy, Roote complains about the number system:

> *Roote*: […] The whole thing's ridiculous! The system's wrong (*He walks across the room*.) We shouldn't use these stupid numbers at all. Only confuses things. Why don't we use their names, for God's sake? They've got names, haven't they?

> *Gibbs*: It was your predecessor who instituted the use of numbers, sir. (195)

However, although Roote expresses his discontent with the number system, he does not do it for the sake of the patients. In other words, he complains about the technical difficulty of maintaining the system with numbers rather than a sympathy for sustaining the patients' individuality. When Gibbs offers "to place further consideration of this matter on the agenda", Roote refuses to obey since "that was one of the rules of procedure laid down in the original constitution. The patients are to be given numbers and called by numbers" (198). Emphasising on the number issue, Lamont states that "the disappearance of names and personal identities and their replacement by numbers were […] practiced at Auschwitz" (39) which was a notorious concentration camp in the Nazi Germany. In addition, the fact that it gets hotter in the facility is an indicator of crematoriums and gas chambers in concentration camps, per Lamont. "This is a place where fires erupt and burn, where the heat cannot be regulated. Here life is extinguished, and all the patients live under the threat of impending death" (41). Ironically, Roote claims that "one of the purposes of this establishment is to instil […] confidence in each and every one of [patients], that confidence which will one day enable them to say I'm … Gubbins" (198). However, when he is offered to change the system, he refuses to bring any changes in favour of the patients and insists on continuing the usual practices. In this respect, it can be asserted that it is "not a place for healing, for restoring people in their community, but a death camp, complete with gas chambers, ovens, crematoria" (Lamont, 1993: 44). However, the play is more than one parable of a certain issue when Pinter's own remarks are taken into consideration. In an

interview with Brian Glanville, when he was asked why Goldberg from *The Birthday Party* was a Jewish character, he said that he had "no desire to write a whole play about Jews or Jewish situation" (8). In short, Pinter wants to emphasize the universality of fundamental issues such as the abuse of authority, oppression, and subservience to institutional domination. In this respect, as Taylor-Batty asserts, "his plays were not concerned with representing the plight of victims and appealing for corrective measures, but instead were composed to demonstrate the construction of victimhood by authoritative systems" (2014: 29). In other words, it can be said that Pinter's plays speak more than locality of one certain issue; rather, they are the examination of the mechanisms through which individuals are victimized. Although it is true that there are many allusions to the Holocaust, *The Hothouse* should be regarded as the study of the notion of power in which each character, like in many of Pinter's plays, endeavours to protect his or her position by overthrowing their opponents, even their collaborators. In this context, as Lamont herself claims, "power in *The Hothouse* cannot be transmitted peaceably; it is wrested by violent means" (1993: 46-47). Characters employs various strategies to maintain their positions and they do not hesitate to resort to violence to achieve their goals. With these at hand, it can be said that *The Hothouse* is an epitome of Pinteresque in that it's a manifest portrayal of territorial struggles as well as linguistic and physical battles.

Besides being an example of Pinteresque, *The Hothouse* is an expository play which sheds light upon some ambiguities in Pinter's dramatic style. In his article "Nowhere to Go: Society and the Individual in Harold Pinter's *The Hothouse*" (1983), Francis Gillen states that the play demonstrates for the first time

"a prototype of the organization which may have commissioned Ben and Gus in *The Dumb Waiter* and Goldberg and McCann in *The Birthday Party*" (87). In these plays, both couples seem to work for a secret organization but their employers are never unravelled. The organization in *The Dumb Waiter* is hinted through Ben and Gus's letters of orders while in *The Birthday Party*, it is hinted only through Goldberg and McCann's suits. Similarly, Aston's obscure story of a mental hospital in *The Caretaker* is demystified with the resolution of *The Hothouse*. In *The Caretaker*, Aston talks about a facility where he was apparently lobotomized by some doctors:

> […] he said, we're going to do something to your brain. He said… if we don't, you'll be here for the rest of your life, but if we do, you stand a chance […] they used to come round with these … I don't know what they were… they looked like big pincers, with wires on, the wires were attached to a little machine. It was electric" (53-54).

In a following scene, the caretaker Davies exerts his power over Aston by reminding him of his troubled past:

> Your brother's got his eye on you! They can put the pincers on your head again, man! They can have them on again! Any time. All they got to do is get the word. They'd carry you in there, boy. They'd come here and pick you up and carry you in! They'd keep you fixed! (65).

Though Aston is terrified of going back to the place he mentions, the audience is left curious as for the qualities of this facility in a similar manner with the case of Ben, Gus, Goldberg and McCann's anonymous employers. In this context, it is through the production of *The Hothouse* that several mysteries in Pinter's early plays are solved to a certain extent.

The beginning of the play presents the first glimpses at the characters. Although Roote is in charge of the institution, it becomes clear that he gives the impression of a senior who is on the verge of losing control. He insists on having done things that are not necessarily true. On the other hand, despite the lower status of Gibbs, it is apparent that he is the man who manages every detail within the facility. He not only handles the institutional affairs, but also carries out a challenging relationship with Roote who does not abstain from humiliating him occasionally. He is in fact the man who cleans after Roote since Roote cannot conduct a managing position. Gibbs has to correct him in his mistakes while he is also responsible for the smooth operation of the institution:

> *Roote*: […] I haven't written a single thing down in this diary for a whole week.
>
> *Gibbs*: You've held no interviews with any of the patients, sir, during the last week.
>
> *Roote*: No, I haven't, have I? Why not?
>
> *Gibbs*: You decided on the …18th, sir, that you would cancel all interviews until further notice.
>
> *Roote*. Oh yes. So did I.
>
> *Gibbs moves round the desk*. (192)

As Gibbs' power increases, he gets closer to Roote's desk and looks down on him literally. Since Roote begins to lose his superior position, he feels the necessity of reconstructing his authority by means of employing an offensive tactic:

> *Roote*: Don't stand so close to me. You're right on top of me. What's the matter with you?
>
> *Gibbs*: I'm so sorry, sir. (He steps away from the desk)
>
> *Roote*: There's plenty of room in here, isn't there? What are you breathing down my neck for?

Gibbs: I do apologise, sir.

Roote: Nothing's more irritating.

Gibbs: It was thoughtless of me, sir. (193).

Roote lacks the administrative talent and qualifications that Gibbs possess and so he cannot attack Gibbs with his own weapons. Instead, he changes the subject with an offensive one which is in fact an indicator of his inadequacy. In this respect, he resembles to Stanley in *The Birthday Party* in that he cannot respond to the invader's assaults with similar offences. After the interrogation, Stanley cannot counter against Goldberg and McCann with linguistic means because he does not possess the abilities that the interrogators have. Instead, he resorts to physical violence which is the only missile he can launch. Similarly, Roote reassures the condition of his authority in the best way he can, by constantly reminding the others around him of his power. In a following scene, Roote scolds Gibbs by making their positions clear:

Roote: I was standing where you're standing right now. I can tell you that. Saying yes sir, no sir and certainly sir. Just as you are now. I didn't bribe anyone to get where I am. I worked my way up. When my predecessor… retired… I was invited to take over his position. And you have any idea why you call me sir now?

Gibbs: Yes, sir?

Roote: Why?

Gibbs: Because you called him sir then, sir.

Roote: Right. (196-197)

As Roote debases Gibbs, he regains his confidence since he thinks that the invader has been repulsed. With this confidence at hand, he perpetuates the counter strike

against Gibbs and upon learning the news of the birth of an illegitimate child, Roote demands to be informed for everything in a threating tone:

> *Roote*: Between ourselves, man to man, you're not by any chance taking the old wee-wee out of me, are you?
>
> *Gibbs*: Most assuredly not, sir. By no means. I merely feel it incumbent upon me to answer any questions you put to me, or to do my best to do so. You are dependent upon me for certain information and I feel it in the line of duty to supply you with it, especially when it is by specific request. (203-204)

Though Roote attacks with his simple tactics, Gibbs can gird on more elaborate linguistic strategies resulting in Roote's reaction by saying "[s]top mouthing! This has been a most exhausting morning" (204). He is overwhelmed by Gibbs' strong and strategic rhetoric on responsibilities and duties and he performs his only strategy again by reminding Gibbs that he is the authority. He claims: "I didn't get this job for nothing, I can assure you. I shall know. Have no doubt whatsoever on that point" (205). As can be seen, although Roote continually emphasizes his power with an abundance of assertions, he cannot fortify his claims on a solid ground. He tries to maintain his power only by saying that he has power. In a way, he utilizes his power not to strengthen it, but to convince others around him that he has the authority. On the other hand, Gibbs' strategies are more versatile, more solid, and more menacing than Roote's. While Gibbs uses linguistic tools more economically, he is more strategic in building his own power contrary to Roote who consistently talks about his position. In his essential speech "Writing for the Theatre" (1962), Harold Pinter states that the abundancy of speech is a signal of weakness for a character because it means that the character is trying to maintain his/her position by masking the weakness:

> The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is constant stratagem to cover nakedness. (xiii)

As Pinter elaborates, speech is used by characters to "cover" their weak spots since revealing a weakness means the loss of battle over the territory and the loss of autonomy. In this respect, Roote's tirades on his power are attempts to "cover" his impotency in controlling his territory. Gibbs, on the other hand, employs less linguistic means with merely "yes, sir" and "certainly, sir" but gives the impression of a more powerful man. As Francis Gillen claims, "Gibbs has learned to play the organizational game perfectly: always agree or at least never seem to challenge authority" (1983: 88). He never provokes Roote by shaking his position. However, "[a]ll of Gibbs's dialogue is spoken in almost monotone with a stony, imperturbable face", so he does not look so neutral at all and "Roote is somewhat afraid of Gibbs" due to his inconceivable insidiousness and "control of the room - a major motif in Pinter - which seemed at first so fully in the hands of Roote is shown as shifting to Gibbs" (Gillen, 1983: 88). The visibly powerful Roote begins to lose his territory to Gibbs who has an invisible power contrary to him. Michel Foucault states that "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (1998: 86). As such, Roote fails to conceal his authority whereas Gibbs takes stronger steps by employing a poker face and not making his true feelings visible. Norman Fairclough calls this strategy as "power to disguise power" (1989: 52) through which an individual is hidden behind the mask of powerlessness while being at the centre of

authority. It is through these meticulous designs that Gibbs begins to take control of the territory.

The shift in power is hinted in Roote's speech about his predecessor's retirement. When he implies that he was appointed to the position after his predecessor's retirement, he has a minute hesitation in choosing the proper word, which, according to Rudolf Stamm, is "full of sinister implications. His difficulty in finding the right word may hint that he had been responsible for his predecessor's death just as Gibbs will be responsible for his death" (1981: 294). Similar to Roote's attaining power, it is foreshadowed that Gibbs will take hold of the institution through his elaborate plans and schemes which become clear in the course of the play.

In the following scene, Miss Cutts and Lamb have a conversation about their jobs and while Lamb seems keener to talk, Miss Cutts slurs over his attempts to deepen the chat, saying nothing more than necessary whereas Lamb talks about his ideas to improve the conditions in the facility. He expresses his eagerness to meet Roote in person since he is an admirer of him while also conveying the story of his employment by the Ministry over a year ago. He tells that since he did not know what the job was, he wanted to learn about it but he was told that he would learn the job when he got to the facility. The first hints of his character can be grasped from this scene because while he tells his accounts of employment, he actually reveals his personality. It is obvious that Lamb likes to have simple conversations to pass time and he does not avoid asking questions about the issues he cannot understand. As Arnold P. Hinchliffe asserts, "[t]o ask questions in Pinter is always dangerous" and the "act of questioning appearances, motives, or consequences

invites catastrophe" (1976: 69). When Pinter's early plays are considered, it can be observed that such a character stands as a threat to be eliminated. In this context, Lamb mirrors the character of Gus in *The Dumb Waiter* who asks innumerable questions and want to have healthy conversations with his partner, though sometimes in an absurd and nonsensical manner. Namely, he deviates from the course that the system he works for determines for him. Thus, he pays for his deviance with his life at the hands of his own partner. Similarly, Lamb wants to get in touch with Miss Cutts whom he calls the only friend he has got in the institution since he does not "seem to be able to … reach the others" (211). His attachment to Cutts as a friend can be considered quite ironic since Miss Cutts does not show friendship to him. As his name suggests, Lamb portrays a naïve character who can be gullible at times about the people around him. He accepts being appointed to a position which he knows nothing about; he talks about bringing some improvements with a "constructive, progressive approach to the patients" (210-211). In this sense, Lamb can be recognized as an intruder into the systematic operation of the institution who would cause the menace with structural changes. In Pinter's plays, the fear of change is a prevalent motive to employ defensive strategies against the intruder. Characters do not want to give up the security of environment that they have been used to. In line with this, it can be claimed that Lamb, like Gus in *The Dumb Waiter*, stands as a threat to the status quo which operates through habitual practices that are never questioned or altered. For this reason, his elimination seems an obligation for the operation of the oppressive system, which is hinted at his account for his predecessor who leaves no trace after quitting the job:

> *Lamb*: And I've never learned who the man was I took over from, and I've never found out why he left, either. Anyway I'm pretty sure he wasn't doing the job I'm doing. Or if he was doing the same job he wasn't doing it exactly the same way. The whole rota's been altered since he left, for a start. He couldn't have been doing my rota, and if he wasn't doing my rota he can hardly be said to have been doing my job. Rotas make all the difference. (209-210)

As Lamb unwittingly explains, whereabouts of his predecessor is ambiguous, similar to Roote's predecessor. In this institution, the structure of authority does not seem to mobilize in proper ways such as retirement or resignation. On the contrary, no one seems to get hold of a position in a refined manner. As Taylor-Batty asserts, powerholders are "at each other's throats" and anybody from the understaff (they apparently try to poison Roote with a Christmas cake) to the "elite body of staff" is ready to backstab each other, thus "contstruct[ing] a precarious, self-consuming system where the discourse of power is the only consistent, safe element in an ongoing chain of leadership" (2014: 35-36). Lamb, who dreams of getting a promotion for the schemes he is planning to apply, complains about not making much progress with his present job wishing that he "could deal with patients-directly" (210) and by doing so, begins to pave the way to his annihilation with his questions and challenges to the structure of power he serves.

The institution Lamb works for has an ambivalent structure regarding the purpose of existence. Though Gibbs and Roote refer to insiders as "patients", the facility does not give the impression of a hospital since "all the gates are locked outside the building" and "all the patients' doors are locked inside the building" (210) by Lamb. Besides, the air in the building gets more and more "suffocating" and occasional screams of patients are heard but no step is taken to ameliorate their

situation. In this respect, Rudolf Stamm considers the institution as "a cross between a hospital, a mental home, and a prison" (1981: 291). He accurately points to the fact that the intended purpose of the establishment is one of the few mysteries of the play in that there isn't any clue as to why the patients/prisoners are brought into the facility since there are no details about their backgrounds. It is not clear whether they committed a crime or they need physical/psychological treatment. They never appear on the stage; their existence is validated only through their screams. However, it can be said that the institution operates in order to adjust the individuals who are deemed dangerous by a powerful system. Roote claims that the patients are "people specially recommended by the Ministry" and "[t]hey are not any Tom, Dick or…or…er…Harry" (197). He gives a clue about the reason why the patients are locked within the premises since they are apparently important people who could be a threat to the dominant power Roote works for. This argument is confirmed by Lush, another junior of Roote, in a conversation with Gibbs in which he states that in this establishment, "some of the leading brains in this country are concentrated" (233). Thus, the institution can be recognized as a "detention centre for the correction of those who […] have lost their way in an authoritarian system that demands obedience" (Taylor-Batty, 2014: 34-35). Moreover, the patients are not allowed to keep contact with their families. In a following scene, Gibbs and Lush talk about the recent visit of 6457's mother who wants to learn the condition of her son. As Lush conveys, she claims that she hasn't heard from her son for over a year and in return she is bombarded with irrelevant explanations by Lush:

> I said -A year? You haven't seen him for a year? But that's ridiculous. Didn't you come down for Mother's Day, or

> Thanksgiving Day, or for the annual summer picnic for patients, staff, relatives and friends? Weren't you invited to the Halloween Feast, the May Dance, the October Revival, the Old Boys and Girls supper and social? Dancing on the lawn, cold buffets on the flat roof, midnight croquet, barbecued boar by the lake? None of this? […] (231-232)

Lush continues to explain the patient's situation with manipulative details which do not give a full picture about the whereabouts of the patient. He states that the patient has been moved to a convalescent home in which patients are "obliged to work and play and join in daily communal activity" (233). All the details Lush narrates are in fact the strategies to cover the death of 6457, which is a common technique used by oppressors in Pinter's plays. As such, able characters employ linguistic means to subvert the direction of conversation in order to sustain their superior positions, as conceptualized by Dukore's claim that "to control the conversation is to dominate" in Pinter's plays (1982: 67). These characters suffocate their victims with never-ending questions and details which would work to divert the attention from more important issues to trivial matters in order to disguise a serious reality. For instance, Goldberg and McCann's attempts to erase Staley's autonomy is disguised with their ceaseless promises and threats which leave him in a numb position and thus he cannot defend himself against the manipulation he is subjected to. Similar to him, 6457's mother is drowned with details that she cannot comprehend and leaves the premises "much moved by [Lush's] recital" (233). In this context, language plays a crucial role in constructing authority in line with the dominant discourse. As Norman Fairclough asserts, "power in discourse is to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants" (1989: 46). Individuals with power have the ability to manage the input from powerless

subjects through use of linguistic means, which can be epitomized as manipulation. They can control language with ulterior motives to foreground specific issues while keeping more challenging ones in the background. Language, in this sense, becomes a locus of struggle on which several mechanisms of authority blend and clash. On the issue of language, Harold Pinter states that language is "a highly ambiguous business" which might have a manifest and latent content:

> So often, below the word spoken, is the thing known and unspoken. My characters tell me so much and no more, with reference to their experience, their aspirations, their motives their histories. Between my lack of biographical data about them and the ambiguity of what they say lies a territory which is not only worthy of exploration but which is compulsory to explore. You and I, the characters which grow on a page, most of the time we're inexpressive, giving little away, unreliable, elusive, evasive, obstructive, unwilling. But it's out of these attributes that a language arises. A language, I repeat, where under what it said, another thing is being said. (1991: xii)

Pinter focuses on the use of language with multiple aspirations. As he claims, while a speech may seem "unreliable" or "elusive", it is also these characteristics that construct language as a unity of manifold meanings. Thus, while contemplating on certain issues, Pinter's characters also make use of language as an ambivalent weapon which operates to construct authority with manipulative strategies.

In following scenes, Roote continues to be "dumbstruck" with the news of the birth of a boy and associates the unpleasant situation with breaking the order. In order to stress the notion of order, he refers to someone called Mike whom he defines as "the predecessor of my predecessor, the predecessor of us all, the man who laid the foundation stone, the man who introduced the first patient, the man who […] opened institution after institution up and down the country" (214).

Considering Roote's admiration, Mike is the role model of such institutions since there is a statue of him in the front yard. Although he expresses the need to maintain the order in terms of Mike's vision, he has no idea how to sustain it in unexpected matters. He complains that he has "nothing to measure this event by so that [they] can with ease assess its implications" (215). He lacks the necessary wit and initiative to solve unexpected problems for which there is no previous examples to help him. However, it becomes clear that for Roote, what is shocking is not that a patient is raped but that she gets pregnant. When the patient is asked about the father, she cannot be "entirely sure since most of the staff have had relations with her" (216). It is apparent that rape is a common practice within the facility but pregnancy has never been a recurrent problem. In fact, he excuses the rape with his stuff's need to "di[p] their wicks on occasion" which is "got to go somewhere" and legitimizes the act of raping by stating that "[i]f a member of the staff decides that for the good of a female patient some degree of copulation is necessary then two birds are killed with one stone" (219). As a result, Roote orders Gibbs to "find the culprit" and "get rid of *it* [the baby]" (emphasis added) (220) but cannot give wiser solutions other than finding a wet nurse among the understaff and misses the chance of fortifying his leadership in a difficult situation. Therefore, he continues to present the image of a senior who is not capable of handling serious matters but who is also suspicious of the people around him in fear that they would attempt to depose him from his status. As a defence, he begins to restate his powers again in order to ward off possible intruders. When he talks to Lush and Gibbs, the potential candidates after him, he warns them about their moves to capture his power:

> *Roote*: I said you'd better watch your step. Everyone had better watch their step! (*He begins to move about the room*) I don't like

> the look of things. You can't trust a soul. And there's something going on here that I haven't quite cottoned on to. […] Some people think I'm old, but oh no, not by a long chalk. (302)

He continues to exaggerate his powers with groundless claims and finds himself in a ridiculous position because he cannot build a strong rhetoric of authority:

> *Roote*: I've got a second sight. I can see through walls. (*He considers*.) I don't mean that that's second sight, seeing through walls. I mean I've got second sight *and* I can see through walls! […] I can hear a whisper in the basement. I didn't waste my youth. I exercised my faculties. (302)

Roote's suspicions increase as the heat rises in the building, suggesting a symbolic meaning. Although Pinter explicitly rejects the use of symbolism in his plays, claiming that his plays are just about their titles, he is famous for his abundant use of symbols to enrich the meaning of the texts. For instance, types of news media such as newspapers that are supposed to provide communication are used to portray the lack of communication in his plays through husbands that try to hide behind newspapers to escape a possible communication with their wives. Similarly, the dumb waiter stands for the one-way communication between Gus and Ben while in *The Birthday Party,* Stanley rides on a wheelbarrow, which suggests that he will be taken away soon. In *The Hothouse*, it can be asserted that the increasing heat stands for the rising tension which is resolved with the displacement of the director. Suspecting that people are plotting against him, Roote is surrounded with anxieties and as a result, he helplessly asks Gibbs and Lush: "Do you think I'm going to be murdered" (302). Finding his weak spot, Lush attempts to challenge his authority with explicit questions and asks Roote why he continues to do the job if he is so

overwhelmed by it. Roote answers in a nonsensical manner, claiming that he is a delegate:

> *Roote*: Well, I'm sick to death of it! The patients, the staff, the understaff, the whole damn thing!
>
> *Gibbs*: I'm sorry to hear that, sir.
>
> *Roote*: It's bleeding me to death.
>
> Lush: Then why do you continue?
>
> *Roote looks at him.*
>
> *Roote*: Because I'm a delegate.
>
> *Lush*: A delegate of what?
>
> *Roote*: I tell you I'm a delegate.
>
> *Lush*: A delegate of what? […] Explain yourself. […] You're a delegate, are you?
>
> *Roote*: (*facing him squarely*) I am. (304-306)

As a senior who cannot base his authority on any valid ground, Roote is incapable of responding to assaults upon his right to rule the institution. His routine is disrupted but he cannot restore it to its former glory through his usual tactics since he represents the old way of power while Gibbs and Lush can be seen as fresh blood for the repressive system[9]. He tries to defend himself with irrelevant details but cannot cope with the intruders with strong tactics. As a result, he resorts to physical violence, which can be regarded as an expression of impotency in a similar manner with Stanley in *The Birthday Party*:

> *Lush*: On whose authority? With what power are you entrusted? By whom were you appointed? Of *what* are you a delegate?
>
> *Roote hits him in the stomach.*

[9] While Roote is a man in his fifties, Gibbs and Lush are in their thirties. In this respect, the generation gap among them can be considered as a further challenge for Roote. Though he is more experienced in the bussiness, he does not have the ability to apply his experience into his job while Gibbs, for example, is more capable of game making though manipulation and organizational talents.

> *Roote*: I'm a delegate! (*He hits him in the stomach*.) I was entrusted! (*He hits him in the stomach*) I'm a delegate! (*He hits him in the stomach*) I was appointed! *Lush backs, crouched, slowly across the stage, Roote following him.* Delegated! (*He hits him in the stomach*) Appointed! (*He hits him in the stomach*) Entrusted! *He hits him in the stomach. Lush sinks to the floor. Roote stands over him and shouts:* I AM AUTHORISED! (306-307)

While Roote clashes with Lush for his territorial rights, he constantly speaks in the passive voice, hinting the story of his appointment. It can be said that rather than earning the job with personal endeavour, Roote was probably granted the position by more powerful officials in the Ministry after the ambiguous retirement of his chief, though he lacked necessary qualities for administration. However, Roote also gives the impression of a man of duty who follows bureaucratic procedures and traditions precisely but contributes almost nothing to them. For this reason, it might be suggested that Roote behaves in compliance with Goldberg's advice to McCann to "follow the line" so that he "can't go wrong", which also clarifies Roote's past as a soldier. Before he uses violence on Lush, Lush calls him "colonel" which disturbs him immediately:

> *Lush*: You know I harbour no illusions about my position, Colonel.
>
> *Roote*: Don't call me Colonel!
>
> *Lush*: But you were a Colonel once, weren't you, Colonel?
>
> *Roote*: I was. And a bloody good one too. (259).

As an ex-soldier, it is clear that Roote is incapable of acting outside the boundaries of usual practices and thus, his ability to plot against his rivals is not as sophisticated as his juniors. In addition, Roote tries to hide his past for unknown reasons because in Pinter's theatre, revealing memory is fearsome and the past might be used as a

means to defeat one's opponent. It is highly probable that Roote wants to hide his past since there are things that he does not want to remember. As Martineau asserts, "the individual with the strongest power of memory and the strongest desire to reinvoke the past can assume control over time and manipulate it according to his or her will at the expense of others" (1973: 293). In this respect, Roote instantaneously defends himself but fails to maintain this strategy for long by glorifying his past groundlessly, similar to his exaggeration of his authority in previous acts. As a result, although he suspects a plot against him in the premises which would cost him his life, he is unable to discern it due to his strategic deprivation compared to his more juvenile adversaries. The only strategy he can develop is to exaggerate what he already possesses; thus, Martin Esslin's assertion that "in a world that is increasingly deprived of meaning, we seek refuge in being experts in some narrow field of irrelevant knowledge or expertise" (1968: 281-282) provides a useful insight into the psychological aspect of Roote's condition which is imbedded with anxieties and rage due to his lack of organization, wit and talent to plot.

Undertaking the mission of finding the culprit behind the rape, Gibbs requests Miss Cutts to bring Lamb into Room 1A and participate with him. Upon hearing that he is requested, Lamb feels "extraordinary uplift" since he thinks that it is about his promotion. When he meets Gibbs, he states his eagerness to cooperate by stating that in the facilities "something …. important is going on, something really valuable, and to be associated with it in any way can't be seen in any other light than as a privilege" (236). However, Lamb becomes curious of the room because it doesn't look like any other rooms in the hospital. Gibbs responds that

"it's a soundproof room" and they are going to do some tests on Lamb which includes wearing earphones and fitting electrodes to his wrists. Lamb acts cooperatively and does not question the process during which he portrays his usual gullible personality. He doesn't have the wit to question the existence of a soundproof room in a hospital in which experiments with electrodes are carried out. On the contrary, he thinks it's "a pleasure" to help them do their business. According to the procedure, while Lamb sits on the chair wearing his earphones, Gibbs and Cutts will ask him some questions from the control room. When the so-called experiment starts, it becomes clear that it's not a medical experiment but an interrogation in which incessant questions with irrelevant contents are asked in a rather cold manner. Although Lamb is asked a lot of questions, he is not allowed to answer them fully:

> *Gibbs*: Would you say you were a moody person?
>
> *Lamb*: Moody? No, I wouldn't say I was moody- well, sometimes occasionally I –
>
> *Cutts*: Do you ever get fits of depression?
>
> *Lamb*: Well, I wouldn't call them depression, exactly-
>
> *Gibbs*: Would you say you were a sociable person? (245)

The first glimpse at Lamb's interrogation by Gibbs and Cutts hints that it will be conducted in a similar manner to Stanley's interrogation by Goldberg and McCann in that the both interrogations are carried out in a one-way channel. While the first questions are targeted to understand his personality, the following ones are repeatedly asked about whether women and men puzzle him:

> *Cutts*: Are you often puzzled by women?
>
> *Lamb*: Women?

Gibbs: Men

Lamb: Men? Well, I was just going to answer the question about women-

Gibbs: Do you often feel puzzled?

Lamb: Puzzled?

Gibbs: By women.

Lamb: Women?

Cutts: Men. (245-246)

As the interrogation continues, it becomes apparent that the duo does not want to get answers from Lamb since they do not give any chance to reply and they increase the pace by sequencing the questions faster in a manipulative manner:

Cutts: After your day's work, do you ever feel tired, edgy?

Gibbs: Fretty?

Cutts: Irritable?

Gibbs: At a loose end?

Cutts: Morose?

Gibbs: Frustrated?

Cutts: Morbid?

[…]

Gibbs: Drained?

Cutts: Of energy?

Gibbs: Of dread?

Cutts: Of desire? (246-248)

Gibbs and Miss Cutts does not give a break for Lamb; the only intervals are when Lamb is tortured through earphones and electrodes. After he is bombarded with questions, "*Lamb jolts rigid, his hands go to his earphones, he is propelled from the chair, falls into his knees, twisting from side to side, still clutching his earphones, emitting highpitched cries*" (248-249). What starts as an ambiguous

interrogation under the name of medical experiment turns into a physical torture. Though Lamb acts in compliance with the duo's whims and tries to answer them, he is tortured by being exposed to highpitched sounds and electricity without having the chance to express himself. In this respect, the torture becomes the ultimate end of conversation which will be exercised no matter what Lamb's answers are. In his essential article "Violence and the Word" (1986), Robert M. Cover defines torture as "[t]he deliberate infliction of pain in order to destroy the victim's normative world and capacity to create shared values" (1603). According to him, the real purpose behind torture is "the infliction of pain" in order to keep the order in terms of the dominant discourse by exterminating the "normative world of the victim":

> The interrogation that is part of torture […] is rarely designed to elicit information. More commonly, the torturer's interrogation is designed to demonstrate the end of the normative world of the victim- the end of what the victim values, the end of the bonds that constitute the community in which the values are grounded […] The torturer and victim do end up creating their own terrible world […] The logic of that world is complete domination, though the objective may never be realized. (1603)

As Cover enunciates, the interrogation is not exercised in order to get information; rather, it is designed to "demonstrate the end" of the victim's world by replacing it with another one which is moulded with "domination". Thus, it can be said that torture symbolizes the triumph of the dominant discourse of torturer against victim's values. In the play, it can be said that Gibbs and Miss Cutts's purpose is not to extract information from Lamb since their questions have nonsensical contents. Contrarily, it can be said that the institution wants to correct Lamb who is deviating from the pre-determined course of the system. In a previous scene, Lamb wants to have a regular conversation with Miss Cutts similar to Gus's intention to

communicate with Ben in *The Dumb Waiter*. No one speaks out of course in this system without an ulterior motive to get the best of his opponent. In *The Hothouse* too, characters, with the exception of Roote and Lamb, escape from verbal communication in order to hide behind a mask of ambiguity so that their identities are not revealed. Instead, their speeches consist of cliché remarks and insinuation of their authorities through use of wit and cynicism. In this respect, it can be claimed that Lamb is a challenge to the status quo, which is an adequate reason for his elimination. The system at hand concentrates on the correction of common subjects through linguistic and psychological cleansing, as in the case of Stanley Webber in *The Birthday Party* while it is more unmerciful against the deviants among its own henchmen in that Lamb is physically tortured while Gus is killed by his partner. For this reason, it is clear that the torture of Lamb is carried out in order to maintain the hierarchic order which ensures the sustenance of such structural oppression by mental hospitals in this system. As Mary Luckhurst asserts, "Lamb does not question the ethics of what is happening in this secretive institution" and "he is an eager volunteer in his own destruction: he takes everything and everyone ate face value and pays a high price" (2009: 111). He admires Roote without knowing him in person and "grotesquely" abides by what he is told to do without having a slightest idea. When the interrogation finishes, he asks for more questions, stating that he is "quite ready for another question:"

> *Lamb*: Any more questions? I'm quite ready for another question. I'm quite ready. I'm rather enjoying this, you know. Oh, by the way, what was that extraordinary sound? It gave me quite a start, I must admit. Are you all right up there? You haven't finished your questions, have you? I'm ready whenever you are. (254)

Lamb is clearly eager to participate in the action whatever the results are. In Luckhurst's view, though the institution is full of terror and violence against the patients and Lamb witnesses it at first hand, he does not ask the questions, as Pinter claims, "what is true? "What is false" as a citizen because he is a mere tool of the system and he feeds on its maintenance. Thus, he prepares the way to his torture by legitimizing the strategies and procedures of the institutional oppression which ultimately targets at him.

One way of looking at Lamb's interrogation can be regarded in terms of his annihilation from the system; however, it is also possible to consider it as a fresh start for his new career. At the end of the play, he is alone in the room in a "catatonic trance" which implies that he is, from then on, a *tabula rasa* that is ready to be shaped by anyone, in this case the new boss Gibbs. He is ripe to serve for the organization after eluding from naivete and gullibility, his character traits that prevent him from being a perfect agent for the system. Rudolf Stamm contemplates a similar scenario for Lamb stating that he is ready to be the part of the system since he is corrected. He asserts that it is possible to point out "the intention of turning Lamb into a willing instrument in the hands of Gibbs, the next chief, who will not be able to carry on without the help of, at least, one member of the old staff" (1981: 297). Lamb's initial naïve willingness unites with the brutality of an insensitive organization, which is a perfect amalgam for the production of oppressive agents such as Goldberg and McCann or Gus and Ben. In this respect, Marc Silverstein's emphasis on the interrogation scene as "a cultural construction of subjectivity" and as "a socializing process" (1993: 20) is embodied in the case of Lamb. Although his individuality is literally erased, the process is also "transforming him into an

empty vessel waiting to be filled with the cultural codes that will allow him to speak with the Other's voice, embrace the Other's values, desire the Other's desire" (1993: 20). It can be claimed that although he loses the battle over his autonomy as an individual, he earns his long-wished promotion for which he pays a high price.

The interrogation scene unearths further issues in terms of below-the-surface realities of the characters, for which Miss Cutts present a highly controversial personality. A superficial examination of her as a simple mistress would not provide adequate explanations for her actions since she suggests more profound meanings than sexual connotations. On the surface, she maintains her existence through her affairs with Roote and Gibbs, sometimes even trying to wedge between them. In her book *The Dramatic World of Harold Pinter (1971)*, Katherine H. Burkman states that in Pinter's theatre, "relationship[s] becom[e] in a sense more profoundly social than psychological in its significance, more concerned at times with territory than with sex" (95). In line with this idea, Miss Cutts uses her sexuality in a strategic way to maintain her position in that she does not pay any attention to Lamb while she has affairs with the elite men of the premises. In a way, she spends no time for losers while protecting her valuable spot through serving her sexuality to powerful men. However, below the surface, Miss Cutts represents more than a mistress for whom sexuality is a tool. Although she talks about femininity several times, she does not demonstrate any conventional feminine attributes such as compassion or benevolence. On the contrary, she can easily help Gibbs to torture Lamb by electro-shocking in Room 1A, which she describes as her "favourite room in the whole place" where she "can ask the questions and be so intimate" with Gibbs (294). It is clear that, beyond sustaining

her position, she willingly participates in tortures since she adores the intimacy of the room. In this sense, it can be claimed that she is a reminiscent of *Aufseherinnen*, the female guards in Nazi concentration camps, who are known to play critical roles during the Holocaust. In her book, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields (2013),* Wendy Lower investigates the role of women in sustaining the Nazi order in the concentration camps. According to her, there were a lot of women in the Nazi ranks "as persecutors, not only as gleeful onlookers, but also as violent tormentors" (3). In her historical accounts, German women were part of the *Volkgemeinschaft*, People's Community, which meant actively participating "in all the campaigns of the Reich, including the Holocaust" (5). Moreover, "in the government hierarchies, female professionals and spouses attached themselves to men of power and in turn wielded considerable power themselves" and "they were given a license to abuse and even kill those who were perceived […] as the scum of the society" (5-6). As such, it can be claimed that Lower's historical accounts correspond to Miss Cutts' code of behaviour in that she willingly performs the act of torture along with her bedfellow. In this way, it can be expressed that Pinter challenges the idea of gender roles and argues that oppression is not about gender but it is about attachment to power relations, providing the ground on which authority is built. In Pinter, oppression might originate from anyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, or class. For instance, in *The Birthday Party* Pinter does not hesitate to make Goldberg Jewish as well as McCann an Irish character. As Taylor-Batty claims, by choosing torturers and persecutors from "socially disadvantaged groups", Pinter "arguably universalise[s] the condition of threat to personal freedom and individual expression" (2014: 29). Similarly, Baker claims that "Pinter […]

keeps the threat universal, undefined and non-ethnic" (2008: 41), to which non-gender can be added in the case of Miss Cutts. In other words, it is clear that Pinter does not synthetize categories as purely victims or victimizers, but rather, he focuses on the operation of the assaults on individual freedom, the source of which can be a Jew as wells as a woman. In this sense, Miss Cutts' search for power is not different from that of Roote or Gibbs, since she is no less villain than them due to her sadistic whims. What is the emphasis at this point is not the executives of oppression, but Pinter's vivid hatred for them. In a letter to Peter Wood, he addresses the oppressors in rather negative terms as follows: "Dying, rotting, scabrous, the decayed spiders, the flower of our society. They know their way around. Our mentors. Our ancestry. Them. Fuck'em." (1981: 4). Pinter's repulsion at the notion of oppression can clearly be seen in his remarks scorning the agents of authority, which is frequently the case in most of his plays through interrogation scenes and linguistic tortures. For this reason, characters such as Miss Cutts are not merely "struggl[ing] for life" (1971: 115), contrary to what Burkman claims, but they are active and willing participants of a system that constructs an abusive authority through violence at the expense of its victims, for which Miss Cutts presents a proper example.

At the end of the play, Gibbs manages to fulfil what Luckhurst calls "a coup for power" (2009: 110) by literally getting rid of all his rivals. Through his organizational skills, he succeeds in capturing the power in the institution, also managing to erase the history of the premises which also implies his own participation in abusive activities such as rape. In act one, Lush insinuates Gibbs might be the father of the new-born child; as a response, Gibbs does not reject the

accusation but instead focuses on scolding Lush for his incompetency and uselessness:

> *Lush*: Are you the father, Gibbs?
>
> *Gibbs sits back and folds his arms.*
>
> *Lush*: […] The kid's got to have a name, after all. What do you think yourself? I think something that'll remind him of this establishment when he grows up, don't you? His birth place. Of course, it depends on the father's name, doesn't it? […]
>
> *Gibbs*: You know, Lush, I don't know how you've lasted here. You're incompetent, you're unwholesome and you're offensive. You're the most totally bloody useless bugger I've ever came across. (229-230)

As can be inferred from the conversation, as well as having a clandestine character, Gibbs has also a weak spot revealed by the demoraliser Lush. However, he compensates for his default by laying the blame on Roote and getting in charge of the office. As an anonymous phrase goes, "history is written by the victors" and as a victor, Gibbs has the means to distort the truth in line with his own schemes which would help to fortify his new-found power.

In conclusion, *The Hothouse* can be regarded as a resolving play which draws clearer paths to understand several ambiguous aspects in Pinter's early plays. In other words, it can be said that it clarifies the concept of Pinteresque through explicit uses of strategies and characters that help to recognize Pinter's thematic concerns. In the play, individual and institutional authority is constructed through physical violence, linguistic tortures, and psychological cleansing while it also changes hands with such means.

CHAPTER 3

"WELCOME TO THE ABATTOIR": PINTERESQUE AESTHETICS IN PHILIP RIDLEY'S *THE FASTEST CLOCK IN THE UNIVERSE*

Philip Ridley, frequently termed as a "polymath author", stepped onto the theatre arena in 1991 with his highly controversial play *The Pitchfork Disney,* after a versatile career of writing children's novels, producing films and photography exhibitions. In Aleks Sierz's words, "depending on your point of view, he's either Britain's sickest playwright or a singular, prolific, and amazingly visionary genius" (Ridley and Sierz, 2009: 109) since his theatrical career has evolved around the concepts of violence, sexuality and "grotesque" (Pilny, 2016: 31). In 'Ridleyesque' sense of drama, it has intriguingly been common to observe violent characters who punch a pregnant woman in the stomach or attempt to fulfil their fantasies by murdering children or incongruous characters who masturbate or vomit on stage. In this respect, Ridley is regarded as one of the pioneers of the theatrical 'sensibility' of the 1990s in Britain, which was named after Sierz's seminal work *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today (2001).* Beyond residing in the scope of the in-yer-face theatre, however, Ridley has produced numerous plays in which the influence of Harold Pinter is not a series of sporadic resemblances but a consistent source of nourishment. In David Ian Rabey's words, Ridley's "plays ultimately reiterate early-Pinteresque contradictions, into defensively reductive withdrawal" (2003: 196-197). When his oeuvre is taken into consideration, it is highly possible to claim that Ridley's plays bear the traces of affinity to Pinteresque aesthetics such as intrusions, allusiveness of language, power relations among characters in an enclosed space,

settings, and evasive speech patterns. In this chapter, Ridley's inheritance of Pinteresque qualities will be studied regarding *The Fastest Clock in the Universe (1992)* as well as a brief account of in-yer-face theatre and his other plays with Pinterian affiliation.

The 1990s saw the emergence of a "new sensibility" in dramatic writing in terms of language, setting, subject matter, and above all, extremities in the portrayal of violence and sexuality. This new trend, which was occasionally named as "Neo-Jacobeanism", "New Brutalism" and "Theatre of the Urban Ennui" (Sierz, 2002: 18), was named after Sierz's invention through his work *In-Yer-Face Theatre*. Generally marked with the arrival of Sarah Kane's *Blasted* in 1995, in-yer-face theatre is defined as "any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message" and "it is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm" (Sierz, 2001: 4). In other words, in-yer-face plays are "confrontational" in that the audience is engaged within the extremity of action until the message is taken. "Blatant language", obscenity, physical and psychological violence can be accounted as the first attributes of this 'sensibility'. As Sierz further explains, what is traditionally thought to be taboos began to be presented prevailingly in such plays:

> The language is usually filthy, characters talk about unmentionable subjects, take their clothes off, have sex, humiliate each other, experience unpleasant emotions, become suddenly violent. At its best, this kind of theatre is so powerful, so visceral that it forces audiences to react: either they feel like fleeing the building or they are suddenly convinced that it is the best thing they have ever seen, and want all their friends to see it too. It is the kind of theatre that inspires us to use superlatives, whether in praise or condemnation. (2001: 5)

Acuteness of action and language establishes this new trend as rather a provocative approach in that these plays remind people "of the awful things human beings are capable of" and "the limits of our self-control" (Sierz, 2001: 6). All in all, in-yer-face plays use "shock tactics" in order to "explore the extremes of human condition" (Sierz, 2002: 19). On the other hand, besides tackling with such aesthetics concerning emotions, the new theatre is also associated with post-Thatcherite political atmosphere in the UK, which is generally defined in its relation to Thatcher's understanding of society. In an interview with Douglas Keay for *Woman's Own in* 1987, Thatcher expressed the famous quote as "there is no such thing as society" in that "there are individual men and women" (1987: Web). This sociological judgement which simply means the promotion of individual existence rather than collective one was, according to Sierz, what created in-yer-face theatre as "a reaction against [such] attitudes" (2002: 20). It can be assumed that since the idea of society was marginalized, the prevalent social sensibilities were also discarded alongside and in-yer-face plays were in fact representing the reality of such a socio-political aura. Put in other words, the idea of social unity, community and 'grand narratives' were reduced into small organisms and "micro-narratives" (Saunders, 2008: 3) such as 'individual', and in-yer-face plays adopted a critical stance to display the labour pains of this sensibility. For instance, in Mark Ravenhill's archetypal play of the era, *Shopping and Fucking (1996),* Robbie talks in an affirmative tone portraying such a transformation:

> *Robbie*: … I think we all need stories, we make up stories so that we can get by. And I think a long time ago there were big stories. Stories so big you could live your whole life in them. The Powerful Hands of the Gods and Fate. The Journey to Enlightenment. The March of Socialism. But they all died or the world grew up or grew senile or forgot them, so now we're all making up our own stories. Little stories. (2001: 66)

As can be inferred from the lines, “big stories” such as society, religion and politics are replaced by “little stories” as an individual endeavour and thus, in-yer-face plays often tend to “explore personal pain rather than public politics” (Sierz, 2002: 22). In this respect, it is correct to regard these plays as highly political, but their sense of tackling with politics is different from previous ages in that they do not take the role of speaking for any public ideologies, as was the case of political writers in 1970s and 1980s. For this reason, the new generation of writers, in Kritzer’s words, “signify a break with the past. They constitute a rejection of Thatcherite policies and an equally strong refusal to return to the pre-Thatcher social agenda of the 1970s” (2008: 30). However, it should be noted that although in-yer-face theatre was fundamentally influential towards the new millennium, its lifespan was not as long as it was expected to be. As David Eldridge writes in his article “In-yer-face and after” (2003), “perhaps in-yer-face only really lasted from 1994 to 1997” since new plays with different aesthetics than those of in-yer-face theatre began to arrive, “signalling a change in direction” (55).

One common mistake in the understanding of the ‘new writing’[10] in 1990s is that it is often assumed to start with Sarah Kane’s debut play *Blasted*, staged at the Royal Court in 1995. It is true that Kane caused an inconsolable frenzy among critics through her contradictive play, but as Sierz asserts, there were other writers such as Anthony Neilson who, “long before Kane and Ravenhill hit the headlines in mid-

[10] “New writing” is a concept that is frequently used by Aleks Sierz. It basically means the promotion of new plays by new writers rather than adaptations of classics. According to him, “new writers are young writers, and new writing is work by the writers at the start of their careers” (2011;47) and the sensibility of new writing probably begins with John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* in 1956 and still continues today. Since then, there has been an increase in new plays with new writers. For Sierz, new writing has some characteristics such as being “distinctive and original”, “relevant [to national identity] and resonant”, and “stimulating and provocative” (2011; 49, 54, 65).

nineties […], was exploring the darker side of human psyche" (2001: 68). Philip Ridley was clearly one of these writers since he was a pioneer in putting some of the foundation stones of in-yer-face aesthetics, such as violence, sexuality, and blatancy of linguistic employments on stage. The first three 'Ridleyesque' plays in the 1990s, also unofficially known as "East End gothic trilogy" (Sierz, 2015: 21) consists of plays which adopt stylistic qualities of the new writing in an authentic way. One other aspect that makes Ridley an important figure in 1990s is also his incorporation of Pinteresque elements with in-yer-face tactics. In his essential book *English Drama since 1940 (2003)*, David Ian Rabey correlatively states that "the dramatic premise and development of Ridley's plays are often confined to paradigms strongly reminiscent of early Pinter" through "solipsistic but insecure characters responding violently to invasive threats, but ultimately contracting into regression" (196). It is thus no surprise that critics have frequently associated Ridley's works with Pinter's plays in terms of subject matters, language, settings, and characterization (Gardner, 2009, 2011; Sierz, 2009, 2014; Spencer, 2009; Fisher, 2009; Trueman, 2009; Hardy, 2010; Brantley, 2012; Ambelez, 2012; Marmion, 2013; Ralf, 2014; Anderson, 2014). Within Ridley's trilogy, Pinterian qualities such as power relations mingling with agoraphobia, intrusions, linguistic manipulation, territorial conflicts, allusive dialogues, and manipulation of memory can be easily observed. In the first play, *The Pitchfork Disney*, agoraphobic siblings, Presley and Haley, live in a "dimly lit room in the East End of London", where "everything" is "worn and faded" (Ridley, 2012: 9). As the idea of the outside is too frightening for them, they spend their time in their sanctuary by telling fantastic stories in which they are the only survivors of a nuclear apocalypse and rarely get out to buy chocolate which they continuously binge on. However, their

comfort is disrupted with the arrival of two intruders, Cosmo Disney and Pitchfork Cavalier, who earn their lives by organizing shows at clubs in which they display grotesque performances such as eating cockroaches and insects. Horrified with the encounter, Presley both tries to protect his sister and wants to interact with the newcomers but in the end, he breaks Cosmo's finger since he attempts to get an orgasm by making Haley suck his thumb in her sleep. They get rid of the intruders and understand that they "must never let anyone in" (Ridley, 2012: 94) and continue to live their lives as they used to.

The third play, *Ghost from a Perfect Place (1994)*, tells the story of a veteran gangster, Travis Flood, who returns to his hometown after twenty-five years' departure. His arrival unravels the nostalgia of an unpleasant past since he had some ambiguous experiences which caused fatal changes in several people's lives. One of these people is Rio Sparks whose mother was raped by Travis in his criminally active years. As a teenager, Rio assembles a girl gang and conducts illegal activities like Travis, such as prostitution and theft. With her gang, she tortures him with by putting out cigarettes on his body as he refuses to pay her for sexual intercourse. The torture scene is quite a reminiscent of the interrogation scenes in Pinter's plays such as *The Birthday Party* and *The Hothouse* as Travis is tied to a chair and cross-examined by the members of the gang. Similarly, the fearsome invocation of the past, from which characters prefer to evade rather than embrace, presents the main basis for a Pinteresque argument for the play. As such, instead of welcoming their personal histories, characters tend to create a fictional memory which serves to their need for a stable identity, as in the case of Anna, Kate, and Deeley in *The Old Times*. For instance, Rio and her gang believe that her mother Donna was a saint untouched by any man

and that Rio was born out of a miracle like Jesus whereas Travis fictionalizes his past with slightly improbable claims that he moved to Hollywood and lived there for twenty-five years; in fact he has lived in a "small village near Bolton" since he sold out his gang members in the old days with a witness protection program. In the end, he confesses the fictionality of his past as follows: "I talk about past I've never lived. A past full of farms and village fetes. It's like living in a dream. But as years pass… the dream becomes real" (Ridley, 2012: 278). His account of an unrealized past that shapes the present is closely resonant of Anna's words in *The Old Times*: "There are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place" (1026). Thus, fiction is replaced with reality and as Ken Urban states, "the past is transformed into a sentimental space, a perfect place" (2007: 339).

Apart from his trilogy in the 1990s, there have been recurrent instances where Pinter's influence reverberates in Ridley's drama. In his book *Sex on Stage: Gender and Sexuality in Post-war British Drama (2009)*, Andrew Wyllie approaches Pinter's influence on Ridley through three modes of similitude; "physical settings", "confinement of action to a single interior space, a space threatened with invasion from the outside", and "speech patterns" (77). Accordingly, Ridley's settings in which "gloom" is a common attribute is "reminiscent of productions of Pinter's *The Room*, *The Dumb Waiter* or *The Caretaker*" (77). "Dimly lit", "dilapidated", "run-down", and "derelict" settings in the form of a claustrophobic room, which are indicators of "a profound vision of social calamity" (Rebellato, 2011: 429), share essential similarities with Pinter's early room plays. In addition, intrusions are a common way of disrupting the security of such territories, as is the case in *The Pitchfork Disney*. Dialogues and

evasions are other reminders of Pinteresque aesthetics in that they function as an escape from communication rather than contributing to it. It can also be said that there are more affinities to Pinter's works in Ridley's drama with diverse directions such as departure from memory, territorial collision, and dysfunctionality of family bonds.

In his article "Philip Ridley and Memory" (2013), Andrew Wyllie states that "Ridley's hybrid style of the 2000s ranges across in-yer-face and Pinterian tragicomedy" which involves "confrontations and negotiations with a traumatic past" (73). As such, *Vincent River (2000)* presents Anita and Davey who struggle to attain their own version of past to ease their agony of reality. In the play, a homosexual character, Vincent River, is killed by a gang at a public toilet and upon learning her son's murder as well as his sexual identity, Anita feels a pressure from her neighbourhood and moves away. She also throws away her son's porn magazines at a remote spot, a symbolic act which indicates her will to reconstruct the past since she cannot welcome the truth at present. Similarly, Davey makes up a story in which he is a passer-by with her girlfriend at the time of the murder but in fact, he happens to be Vincent's partner. When the two characters meet at Anita's new place, they try to impose their own version of past accounts since both characters are visibly discontent with their memories so they attempt to rewrite it in a desperate way, which is a common rationale in Pinter's memory plays. In *Mercury Fur (2005)*, Ridley takes a political stance since he locates a government in the background which narcotises its citizens through drugs to cause memory loss and bombs them with the army in the end within a post-apocalyptic society; thus, it is no coincidence that John Peter from *The Sunday Times* describes it as "the ultimate 9/11 play" (2015: Web) and in line with Peter's assessment, the play's director John Tiffany regards it as "the product of a

diseased world" (qtd. in Gardner, 2008: Web). Moreover, Ondrej Pilny states that "the use of the army bears an obvious and uncanny resemblance to the 2003 invasion of Iraq by Bush administration backed up by Tony Blair" (2016: 43), which can be observed in the Party Guest's words: "We need the fucking bombs and soldiers to bring some fucking order back" (Ridley, 2009: 187). Ridley himself confirms such a political aspect of his play in an interview with Sierz. He states that the play presents the memory loss because of state intervention as "stage one of an invasion for any imperialist force" which is "what America did in Iraq" through "looting the museums in Baghdad", which means, for him, "destroying history" and losing national memory (2009: 114). In this context, it can be claimed that Ridley echoes Pinter's concerns of oppressive regimes that feed on the abuse of citizens and human rights, which started in Pinter's career from 1980s and continued to be a prevalent matter of debate with 9/11 attacks and the so called 'war on terror'. *Mercury Fur*, therefore, inherits some aspects of Pinter's political plays such as *Mountain Language* and *One for the Road* in that they all problematize the issues of unlimited state power and its imprint on powerless subjects. With *Leaves of Glass (2007),* Ridley steps into the dysfunctional relationship of a couple, Debbie and Steven who apparently suffer from a severe inadequacy to come into terms with each other. In the play, Pinter's technical aspects are easily discernible through speech patterns, pauses, occasional silences, and a fragmented plot. For instance, quick dialogues function to defamiliarize what is supposed to be familiar. The two brothers, Steven and Barry, talk about an explosion at a local market which reminds the rapid conversations of Pinter's couples:

> *Steven*: What?
> *Barry*: The graffiti.

Steven: I don't know.

Barry: An explosion.

Steven: Oh! Yes… I remember now.

Barry: Go on.

Steven: Something to do with that… that bomb that went off.

Barry: Last year.

Steven: In the local market.

Barry: Outside the supermarket.

Steven: Someone with a bomb in a rucksack.

Barry: Boom!

Steven: Terrible.

Barry: A kid was killed.

Steven: Lucky there wasn't more.

Barry: Not lucky for the kid.

Steven: No.

Barry: The suicide bomber. (230-231)

The swift dialogue clearly has traces of Pinterian characters' attitudes in carrying on a conversation. Similarly, Steven and Debbie cannot sustain a healthy conversation even when the topic is Debbie's pregnancy. Upon learning that Debbie is pregnant, Steven loses the track of the talk which is supposed to be filled with paternal joy. As a result of the failing familial bonds, the couple becomes entwined in a speech pattern imbedded with nonsensical and irrelevant details. After a long Pinteresque pause at a dinner table, they try to resuscitate their sterile relationship through a succession of bizarre topics such as UFOs and the brightness of the lamp, with occasional increase in the tension. As Pinter regards speech as a "stratagem to cover nakedness", the couple uses strange dialogues to camouflage their failure to interact. Thus, their odd talks culminate in a scene reminiscent of Pinterian absurd:

> *Debbie*: This light's giving me a fucking headache. *Turns lamp off*. That better? For you? What d'you think? This -? *Turns lamp on*. Or this? *Turns lamp off*. This? *Lamp on*. Or This? […] (240-241)

Pinter's one of the most speculated themes is, beyond doubt, the territorial struggle, and *Piranha Heights (2008)* tackles with the problem with a relatively close inspiration from Pinter's *The Basement (1967)*. In Pinter's play, two friends strive for the possession of a basement, and similarly in Ridley's work, two brothers Alan and Terry struggle over their dead mother's flat, both claiming that it was their mother's wish. Terry and two foreign figures, Lily and Medic, who pretend to be immigrants from the Middle East intrude Alan's flat in a manner of invasion. Though Alan does not resist his brother, the foreigners begin to possess the territory against their wish. In the end, Lily, having been left by Medic, wears Alan's mother's clothes and declares that "Lily is gone. It's Mum now" (387), strongly echoing *The Homecoming* "in that a young woman character ends the play by appearing to take on the role of mother to two middle-aged men" (Wyllie, 2009: 80).

Pinteresque resonances in Ridley's works have often been visible and critics have frequently reiterated the affinity, if not always positively. For instance, Charles Spencer from *The Telegraph* underrates *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* claiming that the play is "derivative" and "an inferior rip-off of Pinter, Orton, and Albee's *Who's Afraid Virginia Woolf*" (2009: Web). However, it is fitting to say that as well as utilizing the aesthetics and techniques of former periods, Ridley has contributed to the new writing through his creative vision, stunning on-stage imagery, and referential quality of his texts. He can be regarded as a pioneer in constructing derelict settings compounded with extraordinary images such as stuffed birds and butterflies that cause

memory loss. He is also an expert in combining fairy tales with his own plots through storytelling. With these at hand, Ridley is considered as a leading figure of the new writing in 1990s: "At the start of the decade Ridley was almost alone in exploring ideas no one else dared to touch, but some of his trademarks – violent stage images, blatant language, pop culture references – became staples of the new drama" (Sierz, 2001: 47). As such, Ridley's second play *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* is not an inferior work, contrary to Spencer's argument, but an authentic piece of creative writing which stood on the shoulders of pre-explored aesthetics such as Pinteresque in order to create an original Ridleyesque. However, authentic qualities of Ridley's drama is a matter of a different study and thus, this chapter will primarily focus on similarities between Pinter and Ridley.

Set in a "dilapidated room above an abandoned factory in the East End of London" with "many cracks in walls" where "the main feature is birds- stuffed birds, china birds, paintings of birds- giving the room an atmosphere somewhere between museum and aviary" (Ridley, 1992: 105), *Fastest Clock in the Universe* tells the story of Cougar Glass, a "young-looking thirty-year-old man" who has an implacable fear of aging and Captain Tock, a "forty-nine years old, pale, slightly built and severely balding" (105) man who, in Ken Urban's words, is "Cougar's sugar daddy" (2007: 332) since his primary function is to serve Cougar in every way possible, from cleaning the place to plucking his grey hairs. As Cougar is terrified of his real age, the couple organize periodic nineteenth birthday parties and because of Cougar's apparent paedophile tendencies for young boys, Captain Tock helps his partner to arrange parties which involve sexual abuse of teenage boys. The play opens with preparations of such a party that will host Cougar's next victim, a sixteen-year-old Foxtrot Darling

who was played by Jude Law in the original production. According to the plan, Cougar will amaze Foxtrot with his popularity while he stealthily drives him drunk by constantly pouring vodka, and upon Captain's leave, Cougar will apparently rape him. However, Cougar explains that he met Foxtrot at a hospital while he was visiting his dying brother and that, in order to set a bond with him, he deceived him with a fabricated story in which Cougar just lost his imaginary wife Savannah Glass. Hearing the story, Captain is repulsed by his viciousness "to play with the boy's feelings" and "to manipulate him" (132) with such a cruel plan. Upon facing Captain's scolding that it is time "to grow up" and he "can't be a teenager" all his life, Cougar begins to have a nervous breakdown and "clutch at his head", saying that "it's hurting" (134-135). Though Captain never says his real age at his face, Cougar's seizure continues and as the only solution, their neighbour Cheetah Bee, an "eighty-eight years old, very wrinkled and virtually toothless" (135) woman is brought into the flat urgently. She tries to soothe him by comparing her body and Cougar's, urging that he is "youthful and perfect" and "at the beginning" of his life while she is "wrinkled and pale" and "at the end" of her life (136-137). With perpetual motivation, Cougar calms down and rests for his party. Later on, Foxtrot arrives at the scene but he also brings his pregnant girlfriend Sherbet Gravel, who was also his late brother's girlfriend. With her attendance to the trio, tension begins to rise and Cougar does not speak a word until the end. The birthday party of card games and stories turns into a battlefield in which Sherbet steadily attacks Cougar with insinuations of aging and fears, and as a retaliation, Cougar secretly masturbates Foxtrot while others are telling a story but is but Sherbet sees them on the action. Furious with Cougar, Sherbet says that she met Savannah on her deathbed at the hospital and learned "lots and lots of things" from

her, including Cougar's real age and wishes him "happy thirtieth birthday". As Cougar's real age is revealed, physical violence erupts in the scene "exaggerated to the extreme" with guns and knives, and Cougar punches Sherbet "repeatedly in the stomach" (189), causing her miscarriage. After Sherbet is taken with ambulance, Captain points a gun at Cougar while he is eating the birthday cake, but Cheetah Bee arrives and takes the gun from him. The play closes with Captain and Foxtrot in an after-the-storm tranquillity, explaining that the fastest clock in the universe is love.

In his review of the play, Patrick Marmion regards the *Fastest Clock* as a "sly update of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*" (2013: Web) in that both plays address bizarre events centred around the celebration of a fabricated birthday party which generates further menace with the arrival of intruders. It is also undoubtedly evident that the play is a fitting example of the in-yer-face sensibility through the blatancy of its language, explicit sexual imagery and physical violence as dramatic tension. Some recurrent themes which are frequently observed in Ridley's early plays are also visible in the *Fastest Clock*, such as Cougar's aspiration to a perfect body similar to Cosmo in the *Pitchfork Disney*[11]. In the opening act, Cougar sits "*in front of a sun-ray lamp, wearing only his (very sexy and stylish) underpants and sunglasses*" (105) and he pays no attention to Captain's attendance in the room until he talks of a "pucker" on Cougar's bow as well as a few grey hairs, provoking an immediate response for a mirror. Obsessed with physical perfection and youth, Cougar charges Captain to "pluck" the grey hairs but beforehand he wants to be sure that the person who touches

[11] In the *Pitchfork Disney*, Cosmo is obsessed with his masculine beauty and never lets anyone touch him. When he enters the siblings' flat, Presley's amazement is visible with his attempt to touch Cosmo and as a result, he is severely warned: "Don't fucking touch! I've warned you. Don't like being touched by men. Just use your eyes. Does my body look hard and muscular and totally free that? […] Look at my hands. Ain't they perfect? Perfect nails. Perfect knuckles. Smooth. White. Slender" (36).

him is clean and healthy. When he sees Captain's gnawed fingers, he feels repulsed and orders him to "put the gloves on":

> *Cougar*: Hang on! Show me your fingernails.
>
> *Captain*: What?
>
> *Cougar*: Fingernails!
>
> *Captain*: They're fine, Cougar.
>
> *Cougar*: Then show me!
>
> *Captain shows Cougar his fingernails.*
>
> *Cougar*: Oh, they're revolting Captain. Christ Almighty! You've been biting them again. I don't know how you can just gnaw and gnaw at them like that. Look! All the skin is chewed away. They might leak at any minute. Put the gloves on. (111-112)

Despite the insulting request of his partner, Captain succumbs to his will and wears the gloves, accepting Cougar's superiority from the very beginning. On the other hand, in his book *Modern British Playwriting: The 1990s (2012)*, Sierz interprets the scene differently in terms of "the fear of AIDS" and Cougar's "fear of women, and of their bodies" (102) in terms of bleeding, which is clarified with his attack on Sherbet through the end of the play. Concordantly, Amelie Howe Kritzer regards AIDS epidemic as one of the "[t]raumatic events that played a part in defining the post-Thatcher generation" (2008: 29). It is certain that Cougar is afraid of physical interaction with Captain fearing a disease transmission, a common fear in the 1990s while it is also possible to comment on the scene as Cougar's resistance to the possibility of resembling Captain through physical interaction, since he represents everything that Cougar is terrified of becoming such as old age, baldness, and physical imperfection. What makes the beginning scene of the play more significant is its affinity to Pinter's style in commencing a play. As it was emphasized in previous

chapters, the idea of two people in a room is one of the primary attributes of Pinter's plays and the failure of communication between these characters is made visible through one character's unreturned attempts to communicate with the other within the room plays. In *The Birthday Party,* for instance, Meg tries to reach out to Petey through trivial matters such as cornflakes and weather; in *The Dumb Waiter*, Ben's account of a traffic accident does not attract Gus's attention from making tea; in *A Slight Ache*, Flora and Edward initiates the play with a frivolous discussion about the difference between a "honeysuckle" and a "convolvulus". The common ground of these scenes is that the balance of power between the couples is made clear through the attempts to communicate and the defence to repel it by avoiding a possible interaction. Similar to Pinter's couples, the duo in the *Fastest Clock* are mentally isolated from each other despite dwelling in proximity in an enclosed space. When Captain enters the scene seeing Cougar getting a suntan, he says that he has "just had a terrible experience" about "a bird […] under the bridge" (105) with long petty details and asks Cougar if he is listening to him; as a symbolic response, "*Cougar flicks ash on the floor*" (106) from his cigarette and gives no answer. Unaware of the significance of Cougar's indifference to him, Captain "*gets dustpan and brush*" and begins to clean the floor and asks in an ironic manner: "What d'you think I am? Your skivvy?" (106). It is in fact ironic because Captain is actually a skivvy to the whims of Cougar in almost every aspect and as Cougar is aware of Captain's softness on the matter, he takes his superiority one step further and "*flicks ash on Captain's head*" (106). Though humiliated by such insults, Captain continues to keep his balance and serve to the obvious master of the room. Captain perpetually links to Cougar verbally, but he seems too absorbed in his own business which is smoking and drinking a beer while getting

a suntan, a reminiscent of Petey and Edward's fixation on their newspapers to evade from communication with their wives. The reason behind such a demeaning subservience is revealed when Captain offers another cigarette, "*puts [it] in Cougar's mouth and lights it*":

> *Captain*: I adore it when you breathe deeply. Your stomach muscles tensing. Like rows of packed walnuts.
>
> *Cougar finishes his beer, then slams empty bottles on table.*
>
> *Captain*: Another drink now, is it?
>
> *Cougar grins.*
>
> *Captain gets bottle of beer from fridge and opens it.*
>
> *He hands beer to Cougar.* (106)

The nature of the characters' relationship is palpable from the connotations of this scene in that each character serves to fulfil the other's desire, Captain by running the errands and Cougar by supplying a visual animation of Captain's dreams, namely an 'object of erotic gaze' in the form of male nudity. Since Captain lacks Cougar's physical perfection, he reimburses it through Cougar's visual representation and serves as a footman in return. In this respect, it is safe to claim that their relationship echoes the sensibility of wielding male attraction as a source of profit, which became popular simultaneously with in-yer-face theatre in the 1990s. In her book *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private (1999)*, Susan Bordo[12] analyses the naked masculine images of the 1990s in popular media and infers that the sensibility behind

[12] Bordo traces the proliferation of imageries with male nudity to the ancient Greeks and the sculpture of the Renaissance period. However, utilization of male nudity as a mass culture hype starts with Calvin Klein's "not the first" but "the most daring" attempts to advertise men's underwear in public places, such as "a forty-by-fifty-foot Bruce Weber photograph of Olympic pole vaulter Tom Hintinauss in Times Square" in 1983 (1999; 181). By this means, it is highly possible to associate Ridley's play with the 'cult of Calvin Klein' considering that Ridley studied art at "St. Martins School of Art" (Sierz, 2012; 89), a school famous in the fields of visual arts.

the prevalent images of muscular naked men in 1990s was "a triumph of pure consumerism" (179). As a result of the popularisation of naked masculine images, Bordo argues that "the athletic muscular male body […] has become an aesthetic norm" and "muscles are openly sold for their looks" (185); however, this has also caused a negative shift in perceiving the 'ideal' body through a "constant squeamishness about the flesh" (224). In a corroborative manner with Bordo, Cougar, "a Dorian Gray for the 1990s" as stated in Sierz (2012: 99), sells his muscular attraction in his "(*very sexy and stylish) underpants and sunglasses"* in the form of 'erotic gaze' to Captain in return for his service of doing the chores and preparing his illusory birthday parties, but his perception of himself stands on a slippery ground filled with fear of aging and physical decaying. In other words, it can be said that both characters feed on mutual benefits by offering their valuable assets to sustain a fantasy within an agoraphobic space. However, as visible in his pitiful attempts to pick up after Cougar, Captain is the one who, like *Birthday Party*'s Meg, is the sympathetic victim of the erosive relationship who functions as the servant to the man of his dreams. His subservience and internalised inferiority is clearer in a further dialogue when he expresses his discontent with his physical appearance:

> *Captain*: I wish I could look into the mirror with your confidence. Inspect my face with such interest and find only delight. Mirrors have never been kind to me. I even approach shop windows with caution in case my reflection leaps into view. You see, I have this image in my mind of what I look like. But for some reason, it doesn't correspond with what mirrors tell me. It must be glorious to know your appearance is a source of wonder. No matter where you go people are content merely to gaze at you. That has always eluded me. I can't even say I was beautiful once.
>
> *Cougar*: You had hair once.
>
> *Captain*: Was I beautiful when I had hair?
>
> *Cougar*: No. (109)

As clear from his grievance, Captain's emotional balance is shattered when the matter is physical appearance, which is epitomized in Cougar's assertion that Captain never possessed the male beauty as he possesses. In this respect, the main point of struggle among these Pinterian characters is directed towards beating the rival through discourses in physical context. When he is demeaned by Cougar's insults, Captain attempts to preserve his identity by launching a petty attack on Cougar, slightly hurting him while plucking the grey hairs. But as with Pinter's characters, assaults bring counter assaults, be it linguistic or physical. As a response to Captain's physical intimidation, Cougar initiates an extended linguistic charge through a rather dreadful terminology in which he accuses Captain of being "jealous" of his "healthy hair", calling it "the baldy's revenge":

> *Cougar*: You're only jealous – Oww! There you go again. What is this? The baldy's revenge?
>
> *Captain*: Don't, Cougar. Please
>
> *Cougar*: You must walk round with a pair of tweezers in your pocket. Then, when you see a man with a healthy head of hair, on a bus or something, or when you're walking through the park, or in your junk shop – sorry antique shop! – you creep up behind them and pluck out a few hairs.
>
> *Captain*: Stop it, Cougar. It's not funny. It's hurtful.
>
> *Cougar*: You should set up your own little society. You know, the Bald Phantom Hair Pluckers or something like that. You get together once a month – when the moon is full, or something – and compare how many hairs you've managed to pluck […] When … when you become a member you're given – not a comb, but a piece of cloth and some polish and … and you all sit there having skin-polishing contests. (113)

The linguistic violence exerted on Captain causes his emotional breakdown and pushes him to "dust a baby", which means dusting one of the many china birds in the room. As cleaning and running the errands are the only ways in which he can maintain

himself, Captain resorts to these mediums to survive the attack. However, after a brief exchange of the reasons of their offensive actions, they come into terms in a comical manner of teenage reconciliation with a hug. The setting of the battlefield is calmed down and the preparations for the birthday party is perpetuated.

Cougar's attempt to construct his dominion in the room through a debasing emphasis on the rival's old age and failing physiognomy is a recurrent motif in Pinter's plays. In *A Slight Ache*, for example, Flora relieves Edward about the intruder in that there is nothing to be worried about since "he's an old man, weak in the head" (173). When she is alone with the 'old man', she insults him in the sense that Cougar attacks Captain:

> *Flora*: […] I'm sure you must have been quite attractive once. [*She sits.*] Not any more, of course. You've got a vile smell. Vile. Quite repellent, in fact. [*Pause.*] Sex, I suppose, means nothing to you. Does it ever occur to you that sex is a very vital experience for other people? Really, I think you'd amuse me if you weren't so hideous. You're probably quite amusing in your own way. (176).

In both cases, the rivalry is amplified through an emphasis on the opponent's body. Similarly, in *The Caretaker*, Mick taunts Davies with his old age and "stinking" body:

> *Mick*: […] I think I'm coming to the conclusion that you're and old rogue. You're nothing but an old scoundrel […] You're stinking the place out. You're an old robber, there's no getting away from it. You're an old skate. You don't belong in a nice place like this. You're an old barbarian. Honest. (33).

As can be clearly figured out, characters employ the strategy of humiliating their competitors with their failing physiognomy in order to reiterate the superiority of their youthfulness. On the other hand, one common aspect of these attempts is that in reality, characters are drawn into their opponents while they are also repelled by them; Flora

is repulsed by the intruder but decides to keep him in the end while dismissing her husband; Mick is disgusted by Davies' odour but wants to keep him as a caretaker for his brother. The affiliation between such scenes, in this respect, brings forward Julia Kristeva's concept of "abjection" which can be epitomized as the state where the repulsiveness of 'the other' is inevitable while the subject is also attracted to the abject[13]. As Kristeva defines the term, abject is "the place where meaning collapses" since it is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (1982: 2-4). In McAfee's words, abjection occurs when "the subject finds the abject both repellent and seductive and thus his or her borders of self are, paradoxically, continuously threatened and maintained" (2004: 49-50). As such, Pinter and Ridley's characters tend to 'abject' their interlocutors in their search for dominion within a room through various tactics such as nauseating their physical existence, while they are also attracted to them. The reason behind their paradoxical attachment may vary, though. Flora is apparently suffering from an isolation in her country house which seems to have little connection with the outside and the stranger serves as a freshness as well as a threat to her. Mick, on the other hand, looks for a reliable person whom he can entrust his brother Aston. Cougar is more pragmatic in his bizarre relationship with Captain since it is obvious that he lives off Captain's back both financially and psychologically. For instance, when Cougar splashes a "strong" aftershave for his birthday party, Captain says "expensive stuff. Nice to know my money's being spent wisely" (119) and it becomes clear that as well as managing the domestic responsibilities, Captain also

[13] The concept of "abjection" in Pinter's context has been analysed by Charles Grimes in his *book Harold Pinter's Politics: A Silence Beyond Echo (2005)* regarding *The Party Time*. See pg.115.

supports his partner financially. This unilateral division of household duties is further evidenced in Cougar's answer to Captain when he asks if he has any "feelings" for him:

> *Captain*: I take you seriously. I have feelings for you.
> *Cougar*: Then don't. Life's too short to have feelings for people.
> *Captain*: Don't you have feelings for me?
> *Cougar*: I need you, Captain.
> *Captain*: Just need?
> *Cougar*: Now don't get all agitated. (123)

The couple's relationship is vividly based on the abuse of one character by the other and the setting, an agoraphobic room forbidden to the outsiders unless they are Cougar's 'special' guests, is a kind of Pinteresque sanctuary with its menacing aura. In this room, Captain is either voluntarily abiding or made to be subservient through Cougar's offenses and as a result, an unjust division of power is established, which evokes the footsteps of an interference from outside.

The nature of the relationship between Cougar and Captain has more than superficial similarities with Pinter's 1961 play *The Collection* which tells the story of two flatmates, Bill and Harry, whose lives are intruded by a couple, James and Stella. Bill is responsible for running the errands like Captain, such as repairing the "stair rod", preparing Harry's breakfast with "fruit juice" and "toast" while Harry regales himself with late night parties and arrives at home at "four" in the morning (111-112). One day they are visited by James, claiming that Bill has slept with his wife Stella. In order to persuade him that the allegation is not true, Harry says that "Bill's a slum boy" and "there's something faintly putrid about him" like "a slug", "he crawls all over the

walls of nice houses, leaving slime" (142-143). He tries to clarify the issue by humiliating his partner and James goes his own way afterwards. Therefore, his superiority which is established at the beginning by Bill's household service to him is fortified through his so-called defence of his friend, which is more of an abasement than a friendly protection. In this context, a Pinteresque space is constructed through two men in a room, one subservient, one offensive, intruded by people that wield different discourses, and a dysfunctional solution in the end. Thus, it can be said that the similar pattern is evident in the *Fastest Clock* as discerned from the two flatmates' sterile relationship and the function of the intruders.

Learning that his existence does not mean more than Cougar's "need" for him, Captain does not have any other option but help his partner in his schemes if he is willing to continue with him. When he learns that Cougar made up a story of a dying wife who is Captain's sister, he is shocked with his "diabolical" will to defile the "poor, grieving" boy who has recently lost his brother (133). This scene unearths some further issues as for Captain's ambiguous priorities because a moment before this scene, when Cougar tells him to leave the flat when he gets the "signal" so that he can take advantage of Foxtrot, he accepts his role as the purveyor and says "I'll go. Farewell, Foxtrot Darling" (129). The "farewell" here is open to many interpretations such as Captain's blurring role as the victim. From the beginning of the play, he is seen as the victim of a perpetual oppression but starting from this scene, he becomes part of a hypocrisy which Cougar slaps at his face:

> *Cougar*: I gave him what he wanted. A new big brother with a shoulder to cry on. So don't get all righteous with me. We're all as bad as each other. All hungry little cannibals at our own cannibal party. So fuck the milk of human kindness and welcome to the abattoir! (134)

Confronting with reality, Captain retributes with the insinuation of Cougar's age but cannot accomplish his charge because of Cougar's nervous breakdown, which is healed only through the attendance of an eighty-eight years old Cheetah Bee. Her lengthy speech of motivation includes self-humiliation whereas flattering Cougar's physical perfection:

> *Cheetah*: Look at my skin. It is wrinkled and pale. Your skin is tanned and smooth. Why? Because I am at the end and you are at the beginning. Look at my hair. It is colourless and thin. Your hair is black and thick. […] And my teeth! What few I have are brown and rotten. I can only suck my food and my breath smells of decay. Whereas you hava a full head of strong, white teeth and your breath is odourless, inviting kisses. […] Everything about me is ruined and faded. I cannot hear properly, walk properly, and all I have before me is sickness and death. But you, everything about you, my stripling, is youthful and perfect. Your hearing is impeccable. You have the agility of an athlete. And you have nothing ahead of you but time, time, time. And why? Because I am at the end and you are at the beginning. (136-137)

It is safe to claim that by 'abjecting' her own body, Cheetah provides a momentary relief for Cougar in that he regards her old age as a hallelujah for his own perfection. Therefore, it is also possible to comment that Cougar keeps Captain as a source of comfort but as his level of anxiety about his age increases, he needs more extreme precautions to sustain his relief. This scene is also a reminiscent of Lulu's visit in *The Birthday Party*, who is Stanley's female neighbour. When she sees that Stanley is in a derelict condition, she urges him to pull himself together:

> *Lulu*: Do you want to have a look at your face? (*Stanley withdraws from the table*) You could do with a shave, do you know that? (*Stanley sits, right at the table*.) Don't you ever go out? (*He does not answer*.) I mean, what do you do, just sit around the house like this all day long? […] Why don't you have a wash? You look terrible. (19-20).

After he hears Lulu's advice, Stanley "*goes to the mirror*" and "*begins to wash his face*" (20) similar to Cougar's calming and resting in his room after Cheetah's motivation. Thus, in both cases, female neighbours, who are not there to intrude but to accompany the protagonists, sets things right and bring their senses to them, though their ages are different and Lulu is not there to flatter Stanley contrary to Cheetah. Again, in both cases, these moments of relief are the last ones before the intrusion that causes the main characters' loss of self.

With Cheetah restoring the atmosphere, Foxtrot arrives at the scene and from the moment of their encounter, it is obvious that he talks with Captain in a similar manner with Cougar, despite being gentler. For instance, Cougar perpetually mocks Captain's "antique shop" by frequently calling it a "junk shop" as well as ridiculing his preference of uncommon words in daily speech. Similarly, Foxtrot accidentally calls his shop as a "junk shop" and says that Captain uses funny words such as "delinquent". It is safe to assert that from this scene onwards, Foxtrot prefers to adopt a discourse reminiscent of Cougar's point of view since he is apparently moulded by his stronger will. To Cougar's dismay, he arrives with his pregnant girlfriend Sherbet Gravel, a seventeen years old pregnant girl who is revealed to be an old member of a gang. *The Guardian*'s critic Lyn Gardner considers Sherbet as someone "who proceeds to unpack truths from her handbag like a chirpy, malevolent Mary Poppins" (2009: Web) since she is not a naïve teenager like Foxtrot but an experienced offender who knows her way to harass her opponents. At the beginning of her attendance, she makes it clear that she has confiscated Foxtrot's decisive mechanisms through her ludicrous

attachment to traditional things[14], such as having "a steady job" and sharing the burden of the baby, which is conveyed in a Pinteresque speech pattern:

> *Sherbet*: And then… then, you know what we'll have? Tell them, Babe.
>
> *Foxtrot*: A honeymoon!
>
> *Sherbet*: Somewhere hot! And then we'll settle down in a… Babe?
>
> *Foxtrot*: A traditional house.
>
> *Sherbet*: Little garden out front.
>
> *Foxtrot*: Little garden out back.
>
> *Sherbet*: And we'll have a nursery.
>
> *Foxtrot*: Blue if it's a boy.
>
> *Sherbet*: Pink if it's a girl.
>
> *Foxtrot*: And Babe'll do the cooking.
>
> *Sherbet*: Roast beef on Sunday.
>
> *Foxtrot*: Roast potatoes.
>
> *Sherbet*: Yorkshire pudding.
>
> *Foxtrot*: Mustard!
>
> *Sherbet*: And Babe will have a steady job.
>
> *Foxtrot*: Nine to five. (155)

Throughout these 'cliché' plans and afterwards, Cougar never speaks and settles into a defensive position. As can be inferred from her dominion over Foxtrot, Sherbet has come to defend what belongs to her and commences her linguistic attacks over Cougar

[14] Ken Urban regards Sherbet's attachment to traditional things as "the neo-Victorian nostalgia of Tory Propaganda: the centrality of family, the importance of proper signifiers for the holidays (the turkey, the chimes, the singing of carols), and the love of a past as it never was" (2007; 333). Urban also correctly points to Sherbet's "ironic" situation who "falls far from the ideal anything traditional" since "she appears to have been responsible for [Foxtrot's brother's] downfall and death" (2007; 333). In one scene, Foxtrot tells Captain that his brother was very "popular" and that "everyone wanted to be his mate" until he "ran away with Sherbet", which caused his ending up in a derelict place reminiscent of "The Underworld" and his death (Ridley, 2012; 145-146). In this sense, Sherbet is not an innocent vindicator but an oppressor as well since "she is seducing Foxtrot just as Cougar is, and her appearance at the party is motivated by her cruel desire to unmask Cougar as a thirty-year-old man" (Urban, 2007: 333)

without losing time. As also understood from her adherence to traditional values, she comes to impose her 'traditionalist' ideology to Cougar's space which periodically hosts 'untraditional' affairs. It is apparent that she is already aware of Cougar's situation but plays the time to strengthen her superior position. As a further strategy, she brings party hats to complete the setting of the birthday party. It is also clear that she plans to spoil Foxtrot's propensity for Cougar, which is embodied in his quiff hairstyle that he did for Cougar's appeal. She also wants to ridicule Cougar's 'cool' aura that is constructed through his "black leather jacket" and "dark glasses" by putting a funny hat on him. Foxtrot warns her that "he doesn't like anyone touching his hair" but she dares to continue the mockery of her rival, claiming that he can stop her anytime:

> *Sherbet*: He'll slap me out of the way and say, 'Don't touch my hair.' Won't you, Birthday Boy. You'll slap me so fucking hard my skull will split in two and my brains will spit out over the fucking floor. *Finishes putting hat on Cougar*. There you are! Oh, look at you! Ha! You know what you look like? A rabbit caught in car headlights. […] Frozen stiff by the dazzle. Waiting for the car to run it over. (158)

Besides teasing his coolness, Sherbet also insinuates a threat to Cougar, implying that she has come to "run" him "over" like a rabbit. She takes her threats one step further and tells Foxtrot that she can do anything to protect him: "If anyone was out to ravish you, I'd do anything to protect you. I'd rip out their fucking heart with my bare hands before they had a chance to pluck one single hair from your head" (159). Upon hearing his girlfriend's courageous possessiveness, Foxtrot embraces Sherbet and they kiss before 'the birthday boy'. Cougar, his victim possessed and his principles of touching violated, can do nothing but "*gra[b] knife on table and rais[e] it*" (159) as an offense

but Sherbet wards off this attempt wittily by saying "you can't cut the cake yet. You've got to blow the candles out first" (160). In this respect, Cougar's position as a potent victimizer begins to lessen from the very first moment of his encounter with Sherbet due to her strategic linguistic offenses, resulting in his gradual numbness which is evocative of Lamb's catatony in *The Hothouse* and Stanley's dumbness in *The Birthday Party*.

With positions cleared, Cougar blows out the candles on his cake "violently" and characters begin to talk about their wishes from life. As it turns out, male characters' wishes are about a recuperation in their bodies; Captain wishes healthy hair which he started to lose when he was eighteen; Foxtrot wants to have "strong whiskers" like his late brother whereas Sherbet wishes "to grow old peacefully" and talks about the people in the beauty salon where she works. She states that more and more people are obsessed with cosmetic practices to stay young and beautiful, and she claims that as a result of her experience, she "can usually tell a person's age as easy as that! One look is all it takes" and "*looks at Cougar*", which causes him to "*back away*" (168). Cougar is clearly disturbed by Sherbet's insidious gaze at him, since the act of gazing evokes significant issues. As Jean Paul Sartre puts forth, the outsider gaze is the "hell" which prisons individuals within the boundaries of the value system of the beholder. In his seminal work *Being and Nothingness (1943)*, Sartre says, "the Other's look makes me be beyond my being in this world and puts me in the midst of the world which is at once this world and beyond this world" (261). In other words, he emphasizes the constructive power of the act of gazing which is directed towards the subject's normative world. For instance, in Sartre's play *No Exit (1944)*, main character Garcin clarifies Sartrean gaze as follows:

> *Garcin*: [w]ith all those eyes intent on me. Devouring me. […] So this is hell. I'd never have believed it. You remember all we were told about the torture-chambers, the fire and brimstone, the "burning marl." Old wives' tales! There's no need for red-hot pokers. Hell is- other people! (45).

As such, frightened of the terror initiated by Sherbet's gaze, Cougar backs away to his defensive position and afterwards, the scene turns into a typical Pinterian battle where characters indirectly attack their rivals by talking about their acquaintances with other people. For instance, in *The Caretaker,* Mick launches assaults on Davies to destroy his identity by resembling him to unlikable people such as a man who was "chucked out of the Salvation Army" (26) and "a bloke" who "used to have a pitch" (30). While Mick seems to mention trivial resemblances, he in fact constructs his authority over the intruder Davies by associating him with idle people. Similarly, the intruder of the *Fastest Clock,* Sherbet, intimidates Cougar with a similar strategy by attacking him with an indirect association of him with a woman from the beauty salon:

> *Sherbet*: There's this one woman who comes in – I feel sorry for her in a way – and she's got this photograph of what she looked like when she was nineteen. She must be- oh, sixty if she's a bloody day now. Anyway, she comes in and she shows me this photo and – fucking hell!- was she beautiful! 'This was me,' she says. It's as if that photograph captured her at the happiest moment of her life. (168-169)

Although her speech seems to be about a woman who wants to stay young, she in fact insinuates that she knows Cougar's secret that he wants to stay nineteen forever similar to the woman she mentions. In this respect, it can be said that Ridley borrows some tactics from Pinter in terms of constructing the menace through association of people from the past with intruders of the present. In both plays, *The Caretaker* and the *Fastest Clock*, construction of authority starts with insinuations then turns into explicit battles.

Sherbet's strategies continue to emphasize the concept of time for Cougar and she brings him a clock as a birthday present which Cougar hates to see. At the beginning of the play, Cougar reveals that he "smashed" Captain's antique clocks since "they deserved to be smashed! Fucking clocks! Nothing to do but to sit there ticking!" (110). It is no mystery that he wants to get rid of the clocks since they remind him of the ephemerality of time. Clocks are, in a way, put out of sight to hinder the possibility of confronting with reality and thus, reconciliation with the passing of time becomes impossible in physical sense since the space is deconstructed by Cougar. As Urban states, "adherence to a nostalgic vision leads to a dismissal of the present and abdication of the future" (2007: 326) because the present and future are abject since they represent Cougar's failure to curb the physics of time; this is the reason that he reconstructs the space according to his will because it is the only thing he can do. When Sherbet presents the clock, she also challenges his perspective of constructing the space and releases the menace which imprisons Cougar's identity, causing his "*trembling*" and "*clutching the knife*" (173). From this point onwards, there is no more implicitness in the rivals' struggle because the battle gets dirtier with Cougar's masturbating Foxtrot during a story told by Captain. According to the story, "the most beautiful prince in the world" who is also very arrogant, "cruel" and "emotionless" is spelled by a wizard who changes the prince's face into a vulture. The only solution is to find the fastest clock in the universe, which is in fact true love with a blind girl. While Sherbet is absorbed in the "romantic" details of the story, Cougar has his time with Foxtrot who is also a willing participant in the action. At this point, it is possible to anticipate the similarities with *The Fastest Clock* and Pinter's *The Old Times*. In Pinter's play, Anna and Deeley's contest over the possession of Kate culminates in

comic turn of events with occasional compromises to play the game nicely. Both rivals employ linguistic strategies to solidify their privilege over Kate, even if it means hitting below the belt, such as Deeley's emphasis on their sexual discourse. In the *Fastest Clock*, Cougar and Sherbet's battle for Foxtrot has shades of Deeley and Anna's dispute, except that the former gets dirtier with the explicit act of masturbation because Cougar lacks the intellectual outfit[15] to build a defensive discourse, similar to Pinter's Stanley and Roote. In this context, he makes use of his only weapon which is homoerotic interaction with Foxtrot. For a brief period of time, he seems to have the upper hand in the conflict, as visible from his "*giggling*" (180). He also "*put his sunglasses back on*" and "*grins at Sherbet*" (181) when the couple has an argument over the matter. However, Sherbet plays her trump card slowly, firstly by reminding Foxtrot that they are going to have a baby by making him listen to its kick, saying that it "heard its dad shouting" (181). As Ken Urban claims, Sherbet's "success in capturing Foxtrot derives from a power that Cougar lacks: heterosexual reproductivity" (2007: 333). By foregrounding her reproductive power, Sherbet is in fact emphasizing her superiority over Cougar. Moreover, by cunningly telling that she met Cougar's dying wife from whom she learnt "lots and lots of things ", including Cougar's real age, she slaps it on him as her final move. At this moment, similar to Stanley whose glasses are broken by McCann, and Roote whose authority was overtly

[15] It is clear that Cougar is becoming more and more inadequate to employ language as a weapon against the intruder Sherbet, although he is quite sufficient in abusing Captain through language. This is in fact the very same situation with Stanley's case in *The Birthday Party*. While Stanley can utilize language to assault on Meg when he tells her that she is "a bad wife" (10), he loses his ability against Goldberg and McCann. With Cougar's case, Captain is more talented than him but he can outrun Captain through his oppressive style. In one scene, Captain calls him "cannibal" and Cougar responds "Christ Almighty! The words you come up with" (133). In another scene, when Foxtrot enters the scene and chats with Captain, he says "Cougar said you used funny words" (1459. In this respect, it is clear that Cougar can repel Captain but does not have a linguistic competence to defy Sherbet through words in the face of danger.

challenged by Lush, Cougar has no other alternative than resorting to physical violence as a retribution against linguistic assaults in order to preserve his autonomy and integrity which have been hanging on a thread since the arrival of the couple. As such, violence is "*exaggerated to the extreme*" (188) and "*Cougar punches Sherbet repeatedly in the stomach*" (189), causing her miscarriage. In Urban's words, "in his repeated punching of a pregnant woman's stomach, Cougar is literally destroying the future" (2007: 335) of which he is truly terrified. In the course of this action, it is revealed that the baby, which is called as The Future One by its parents, is another intruder in Cougar's value system and thus, pays the price with his life. The baby is killed because it violates Cougar's set of authority in his enclosed space by representing the future which Cougar cannot prevent from happening. In this respect, correlative to his "smashing" Captain's clocks, he destroys the baby in order to sustain his position in his own space.

Having been punched severely, Sherbet is taken to Cheetah's flat by Captain and Foxtrot, and in their absence, Cougar "*goes to mirror, takes comb from pocket and straightens his hair. When he's satisfied, he searches for his sunglasses and puts them on* […] *sees the remains of the birthday cake* [and] *begins to eat" (190)* and apparently celebrates his victory over the intruder, which can be seen as the primary difference between Ridley's play and the Pinteresque. Since Sherbet is taken away with ambulance, Captain enters the scene and informs Cougar, "*who is too engrossed in eating the cake*", that she has lost the baby and seeing his indifference, Captain "*aims the gun at Cougar, cocks the trigger. It makes a clicking sound*" (192), which is then taken by Cheetah. With a slight pause after Cheetah's departure, Captain completes the story that he was telling Sherbet:

> *Captain*: And the Prince and The Blind Girl lived … happily together. And the years flew by them. Years became hours. Hours became seconds. Because The Fastest Clock in the Universe is …
>
> *Cougar*: Love.
>
> *Captain*: Hallelujah! (193)

It would be safe to claim that, although their bond was shattered for a while, the last scene implies that Captain and Cougar will restore their relationship and continue to live as they used to. In this context, it is also possible to say that, echoing the Pinteresque, the *Fastest Clock* has a circular plot, that the beginning and the end have no difference, and there is no significant progress, since Captain fails to end the cycle with the gun. In Ken Urban's words, "the closing image of Cougar and the Captain together makes clear that there will be more nineteenth birthday parties. The future will only bring more of the same, for the Captain's love is truly blind: blind to Cougar's inhumanity." (2007: 335). In this respect, since the intruders have been repelled, the space is restored to its former glory, waiting to seduce more teenagers like Foxtrot.

The Fastest Clock in the Universe possesses fundamental similarities with Pinteresque aesthetics in terms of both form and content. Among these, the set of an oppressive regime within an enclosed space between two people, intrusion of the outsiders who come to impose a change to the territory, linguistic battles between the hosts and the intruders, physical violence as the last resort, and a circular plot to stress the steadiness of reality stand out as the primary traces of affinity to Pinter's drama. The battles that characters fight, the language that is used, the setting, the visitors, and the ending of the play all pay homage to Pinter's legacy. Such features are evidently borrowed from Pinter's room play format in which intruders play crucial roles in construction of an environment moulded with menace. Ridley also unites the

characteristics of Pinter's room play, his creative vision, and the sensibility of in-yer-face theatre and brings forth an original work of imagination which is as daring as the plays of former decades such as John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* or Edward Bond's *Saved*. While the play continuously salutes Pinter's style, it also retains its authenticity through Ridley's dramatic pattern in which storytelling has a paramount importance, and by means of stories told by characters within the play, Ridley maintains his original dramatic approach that is quite likely to be a classic in British drama.

CHAPTER 4

"WHAT ARE WE IF WE'RE NOT OUR STORIES?": PINTERESQUE IN ENDA WALSH'S *THE WALWORTH FARCE*

In his essential book *On Stories (2002)*, Richard Kearney asserts that "[t]elling stories is as basic to human beings as eating"; that, "while food makes us live, stories are what make our lives worth living" since they are "what make our condition human" (3). Kearney's claim is arguably concurrent with Irish theatre which has traditionally been interwoven with stories, storytelling and national mythologies, especially with the Irish dramatic revival in the 20th century. The reasons behind the prevalence of storytelling in Irish drama may vary, but one way to look at the intersection of dramatic writing with stories in Irish culture can be, in Christopher Innes's words, "a response to political powerlessness" (2011: 205). As Innes elaborates, considering that they were "[c]olonized and under foreign rule for as long as a thousand years" with "repeated (and defeated) rebellions" against "imperialist attempts to denigrate and destroy the Irish culture", it is affirmable that for Irish people "telling stories has been the only type of self-assertion possible" as "the only consolation is talk" (205). Stories are, in this way, means of cultural resistance to sustain vernacular identity and drama implements a multifaceted opportunity to serve to this purpose. A similar argument is made by Kearney that theatre is a means to sustain the "challenge to persist in an aesthetic reconquest of […] cultural self-image vanquished by the empirical fact of colonisation" (1988: 142). In this respect, it can be said that the coupling of drama with stories has conventionally paved the way to maintain a national struggle in Irish theatre in terms of resistance through aesthetic

pursuit. As a result of the affiliation with such a sensibility, Ruediger Ahrens claims that "[o]ne of the most important themes of Irish drama in the twentieth century is its treatment of national and historical myths" (1988: 89). Innes also points out a parallel case and declares that considering the consistent "focus on story-telling as a value that preserves Irish pride and heritage", it is "hardly surprising that Irish drama in particular includes story-tellers" and "represents narrative as action" (2011: 207). In this respect, Irish theatre has produced plays and playwrights with these tendencies, and one such prominent playwright is Enda Walsh whose plays rotate around the forms of "exploring the creation of identity, family and community through language and storytelling" (Fitzpatrick, 2010: 439). Similar to his predecessors and contemporaries, Walsh deals with the relationship between the narrative and identity formation; however, it should be noted that Walsh differs from other Irish playwrights in terms of the consequences of stories. While conventional Irish attitude regards narrative as a means to express liberation, Walsh's plays utilize stories as imprisonment which culminates in secluded lives set away from the interference of outside. Put differently, Walsh's plays "are dominated by isolated characters in small, enclosed spaces who constantly try to escape the insularity and claustrophobia inflicted on them", and "narrating their way out seems to be the only possible solution" (Schreiber, 2004: 149). In this context, stories do not provide emancipation but represent the self-imposed incarceration of characters whose "claustrophobic, paranoid worlds are often ripped asunder by violence, both diegetic and performed" (Fitzpatrick, 2010: 439). While they are afraid of the outside, they also reconstruct the inside through meticulously and repetitively edited stories and domestic violence which subvert reality according to personal needs. As such, Enda Walsh's plays can be interpreted through their homage

to Pinteresque aesthetics which also denote the flow of action through agoraphobic characters moulded with household struggles. It is abundantly possible to observe Pinteresque characters in Walsh's drama, who are in search of personal power in order to build a stable identity, or who intrude into already-defined spaces and disrupt the security. Therefore, in this chapter, Enda Walsh's 2006 play *The Walworth Farce* will be studied in terms of inheriting Harold Pinter's legacy in Irish context.

Born in 1967 in Dublin, Enda Walsh has been producing for theatre for over two decades. His distinct theatrical style makes Walsh a different figure in contemporary Irish drama, with his distortion of conventional elements and amalgamating them with new forms of dramatic opportunities, such as Irish dramatic tradition, in-yer-face theatre, and Pinteresque elements. In other words, he wanders around pre-explored vicinities but does not give up his authentic voice in creating peculiar settings and plots. Therefore, it can be claimed that Walsh's dramatic style can be correlated to what Mary Orr conceptualizes as "positive influence". In her important book *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts (2003),* Orr analyses the notion of literary influence and comes up with the concept of "positive influence" which "aims at variety of responses, not more of the same. It is therefore intrinsic to understanding change, revolt, regress and progress" (85). Though it is inevitable for literary figures to be influenced by their predecessors, the influence does not have to be processed in terms of "imitation" or continuation of duplicate patterns. Rather than "influence over" the descendant texts, Orr puts forth the concept of "influence for" (83) new forms of literary endeavour. "A truly influential work may be one that knows its own increase by being central to others subsequently" (83) but the influence is "not a term affirming a simplistic […] desire to recover lost origins or holistic worldviews,

but a toolbox of many instruments to get work started" (93). In line with Orr's views, it can be stated that 'positive influence' is a facilitator for the formation of new forms of literary styles without the intervention of imitative tendencies. When his oeuvre is taken into consideration, Enda Walsh truly presents the prerequisites of 'positive influence': he is an Irish dramatist but his plays, in Schreiber's words, "are not even particularly Irish" (2004: 146); he utilizes storytelling technique but not in the sense of narrative liberation but as an imprisonment; finally, he makes use of Pinterian features but alloys them with different genres such as farce. In this context, Walsh establishes himself within the long line of Irish dramatic tradition but also positions his theatrical style as unique among his contemporaries.

In a typical Walshian play[16], characters are "often opt to avoid the rest of the world, burying themselves in fictions to hide from the grief and pain of life", which is "expressed through metaphors of words as methods of social control and limitation, and of stories as rigid expressions of identity and barriers to possibility" (Fitzpatrick; 2010: 443). Since they continuously feel the threat of outside, they enclose themselves within claustrophobic spaces which closely resemble Pinter's rooms; thus, stories and routine actions are primary activities that they cling to. These stories, however, are not emblematic of Irish stories that bear the traces of national identity, nor they facilitate the release of in-house fears; contrarily, they are, in Hannah Greenstreet's words, "dysfunctional because they fail to cohere into viable national and individual identities and because they are symptomatic of broader dysfunctions in Irish society" (2017: 39.

[16] In her review of the play, Rosana Herrero Martin uses the term "Walshian obsessions" and gives three common characteristics of a typical Walshian play. These are "the vicious need to replay the darkest pitfalls of one's own family past; the ritualistic, cyclic and punctilious nature of the paraphernalia and wording involved within this performative procedure; together with the exploration of its dubious range of loyalty to reality, and the limits of its transfigurative and therapeutic effects" (2010; 299)

In *bedbound (2000)*, for instance, a middle aged Dad and his crippled Daughter "are trapped in their own compulsive and claustrophobic story[17]" and live in an extremely narrow room resembling a small box; the whole action takes place in Girl's "dirty" bed. Throughout the play, they perform bits and pieces from Dad's successful years as a businessman. As it is revealed, he goes bankrupt and Daughter is crippled because of polio. Since he is ashamed of her "fucked-up body" (142) and his wife whom he sees responsible for Daughter's condition, Dad incarcerates his family within home and day by day, the house is shrunk until the form of a small box. Telling their stories about the past is the only means of clinging to present, but the present brings no more than strict seclusion from outside world as visible from Dad's "fear of [his] life outside" (145). A similar atmosphere is explored in *The Small Things (2005)* in which Man and Woman share the same stage with a deep valley between them. They have trivial conversations about their personal histories which include petty details such as "mother's shoes" and "parquet floor" as a daily routine which they are afraid of breaking. Implying her love of the routine, Woman says they would be "lost without timetables" and "order" because when someone "start[s] an action that effects another and then another and pretty soon life turns into chaos" so "it's best to keep inside and sat on couch and do nothing at all" (173). In a way, she reminds the audience, as well as the reader, Goldberg's advice to McCann in *The Birthday Party* to "play the game" and "follow the line" so that he "can't go wrong" (Pinter, 1991: 71). As a result of their obsession with the past, "for years" they have "passed the very same day just for moments like these" (Walsh, 2011: 195).

[17] Back cover, Walsh, Enda. *Plays 1*. NHB. London. 2011.

Walsh's one of major successes is *The New Electric Ballroom* (2008) in which he tells the story of three sisters entrapped within the nostalgia of an unpleasant past. In his "Foreword" to *Plays Two (2014)*, Walsh entitles the play as "a companion piece" to *The Walworth Farce* since they are both "very Irish plays about a shared family story where a person visiting will somehow force the truth out of that uncertain history" and "about the pressures of the environment on […] isolated characters" (vii). In line with his interpretation, the play is a fitting example of the subversive nature of emended stories; two sisters at the age of sixties, Breda and Clara, regulate their younger sister Ada's life in terms of love affairs since they were both hurt by the same man in the past. "They prematurely retire from the world of romance and take refuge in their house by the sea" (Fitzpatrick, 2010: 446) because they were "branded, marked, scarred by talk" (Walsh, 2014: 120); they shut themselves in their isolated space to avoid being talked about. As she is moulded by her elder sisters' continuous re-enactment of past traumas filled with fear of gossip, Ada cannot form any relationship with any man and she "has never been kissed" (129) by a man. She is continuously urged that people will always talk about them since they "are born talkers" (91) so "womb is a more desirable place than this created world" (93) and "inside [is] where's safe." (105). The only person that occasionally intrudes into their lives is the local fishmonger Patsy who brings fish along with all the news and gossips of the town; since "*he's an unwelcome guest*", they tell him to "leave" the fish and "go" (96-97). Thus, he is a typical Pinteresque intruder because he brings along menace, namely gossip, which is what the characters are already afraid of.

Penelope (2010) is one of Walsh's recent works and is a clear reminiscent of Pinter's masculine territorial struggles; this time, the object over which the fight is

maintained is Penelope, a woman in her twenties. Four men at different ages compete to win the affection of Penelope in a drained pool, a confined space akin to room plays. The beginning scene carries the traces of trivial matters discussed in Pinter's plays such as cornflakes; the four men talk about the "sausage" on their barbecue for about three pages (140-142). Their rivalry, on the other hand, even causes violence among them, and in the end, they are ironically killed in a fire which breaks out of their barbecue. In *Ballyturk (2014),* Walsh explores a similar setting and the effect of confinement in an enclosed space upon secluded characters. Two characters, whose names are only given as 1 and 2, chat over an imaginary place in Ireland called Ballyturk in their "*very large room*" (221). Their amazement with the outside is evidenced when "*they freeze and stare at the wall*" (230) upon hearing a "*loud muffled noise […] behind the stage-right wall*" (230). Later on, another character called 3 enters the scene, and urges them that one of them will get out of the room with him, which causes them to argue over who will leave the room. At the end, 1 leaves the room, 2 stays, and "*a seven-year-old GIRL enters* [the room] *dressed in leggings, runners and a sweatshirt*" (272). It is apparent that 2 will continue to live in the room, and in a typical Pinterian as well as Beckettian manner, the plot turns into a circular one with a surreal ending through the attendance of a little girl whose motives or whereabouts are completely ambiguous.

In the light of the synopses given above, it is safe to claim that Enda Walsh's plays carry the traces of affinity to Pinteresque aesthetics through their enclosed settings, agoraphobic characters, intensive dependence on routines, and fear of intrusions. On the other hand, it should also be noted that, as stated previously, Walsh does not directly apply pre-formed aesthetics into his plays; rather, he prefers to

subvert them and alloy them with new tactics. Such an endeavour can be seen in his arguably the most Pinteresque play *The Walworth Farce* which was first performed by Druid Theatre Company in 2006, in which he mixes the genre of farce with realist drama. Normally, farce is "a kind of low comedy" whose "basic elements are exaggerated physical action (often repeated); exaggeration of character and situation; absurd situations and improbable events" (Cuddon, 2013: 269-270). Corresponding to the elements of a typical farce, Charlotte McIvor analyses the play's farcical elements under four categories; "rapid costume and character changes, gender-bending, physical comedy, and slapstick violence" (2010: 462). However, despite involving each of these elements, the play is, in Kim Solga's words, "farce in name only" (2011: 89). In an interview for *Totally Dublin*, Walsh touches upon the matter and says that the play is "a tragedy played in the rhythms of farce" (2008: Web). Characters perform a farce continually but their lives seem pitiful despite slapstick comedy they perform; the pity is aroused from their desperate dependence on a false story which reveals itself as a rigid reclusion rather than a mere performance.

An Irishman, Dinny, flees Cork City of Ireland after murdering his brother Paddy and his brother's wife Vera because of an argument over their late mother's estate. He settles in a "*council flat*" in the Walworth Road in London, where "*everything* [is] *worn and colourless and stuck in the 1970s*" (Walsh, 2014: 5). His two sons, twenty-four-year old Sean and twenty-five-year old Blake, accompany him in this self-inflicted exile, and for about two decades, they have been performing their last day in Cork in the form of farce every day as Dinny dictates it as a way of life. The story they enact is an intensively reconstructed version of the real history and includes improbable events such as someone killed by a flying dead horse and false

facts such as Dinny's being a surgeon whereas in reality, he is a builder. While Dinny acts only himself, two sons perform several roles, and female roles are always acted by Blake; at the end of each day, a trophy is given to the best actor, which is always won by Dinny. Since they have almost no connection with the outside, only Sean is allowed to go to local Tesco to buy provisions for their performance, which are always "oven-cooked chicken, white sliced bread, creamy milk, two packets of pink wafers, six cans of Harp and one cheesy spread" (43). One day, Sean brings another customer's bags by mistake and Hayley, a black check-out girl from the supermarket, brings his bags to their apartment since she has apparently developed an attachment to Sean during their brief encounters in Tesco, thus disrupting their routine of performing the story. Annoyed by her intrusion, Dinny tries to incorporate her within their bizarre performance; however, the atmosphere begins to grow tense and at the end of the farce, Blake kills his father and tricks his brother to kill him, urging him to "*leave* (84) and "break" the story at his last breath. Although he has an opportunity to live a new life, Sean cannot leave the flat; he "*lock[s*]" the door, begins to perform the events that happened the same day, and "*calmly lose[s] himself in a new story*" (85).

The Walworth Farce is in the form of a play-within-play[18]; as stated previously, the three characters perform a bizarre enactment of their last day in Cork. The first

[18] The plot of the farce is as follows: Dinny and Paddy are two brothers whose mother has died because of a flying dead horse that was hit by a speed boat. As they do not have access to the graveyard, they are forced to remove the coffin away, to one of their neighbour's house which they think is unoccupied. When they read their mother's will, it is understood that she wants her estate to be handed over to the one who is most successful with his life on condition that he will pay monthly allowance to the other son. Since Paddy and Vera live in misery in London, in order to take over the estate in line with his mother's will, Dinny says that he took a "night course in basic brain surgery" (11) and became a brain sergeant so he deserves the house. However, the real owners of the house arrive with the coffin of their own fathers who was murdered by his own family for his wealth. As usual with bedroom farce, sexual acts begin to take over the scene, with husbands and wives attracted to their adversaries. At the end, each character except Dinny and his wife, Maureen, die due to a poisonous chicken or heart attack, and Dinny farewells his family to flee into London, to Paddy and Vera's flat in the Walworth road.

scene starts *in medias res* of the preparation for the farce, with Dinny playing "An Irish Lullaby" and "A Nation Once Again" to revive an Irish setting within their derelict space. As David Pierce asserts, "this is a play about post-romantic Ireland, where rituals serve as a distressing and unsentimental reminder of what was lost and what cannot now be recuperated" (2009: 115). Having been under the stress of an unpleasant nostalgia, Dinny clearly attempts to invigorate a new form of reality to soothe what has disturbed him for years. The performance of the characters, in this respect, serves to Dinny's desperate will to attain an alternative memory in order to escape the haunting experience of his personal history. On the other hand, it is also quite visible that the enactment of an altered memory also provides Dinny a superior position among his sons since he is responsible for directing the farce. In his article "Stuff from Back Home: Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce*" (2010), Eamon Jordan states that since Dinny is "the actor/manager, director, scenographer, stage manager, prompter, ensemble member, adjudicator, critic, and spectator", it is arguable that "the sons are playing to and for him, and less for each other" (335). During their intervals, Dinny reviews their performances and congratulates or warns them according to their acting; similarly, when the sons forget their lines, he prompts them without breaking the action with such urgings as "then what, then what" (13). Thus, the farce they enact is "a measure of their commitment to their father that is being tested throughout the performance" (335).

A close look at the play would lucidly reveal the one-way power relations among the characters that are incarcerated within their bizarre family ritual. As with Harold Pinter's room plays, there is an apparent familial hierarchy between Dinny and his sons which constructs him as the totalitarian patriarch of the clan. While Dinny

maintains the comfort of playing only himself, the sons have to swap roles at once and catch up with the pace so as not to infuriate their father. Blake plays all the female roles and spends a tremendous energy to shift his roles by changing clothes and wearing wigs whereas Sean has to buy provisions as well reversing his roles, too. The first instance where Dinny's authoritarian aptitude is revealed is the scene when Sean's mistake with shopping bags is unravelled. In the farce, Dinny always eat his usual sandwiches since they are apparently what his wife used to make for him in Ireland. Upon learning that he has to make do with different sandwiches, "*Dinny freezes when he sees them*" and cuts the farce, accusing Sean of not going to the supermarket:

> *Dinny*: What's this?
> *Blake* (as himself): Sandwiches, Dad.
> *Dinny*: Ryvita sandwiches?
> *Sean*: There was no sliced pan in Tesco, Dad.
> *Dinny*: Supermarket, isn't it?
> *Sean*: I know but…
> *Dinny*: Didn't you go?
> *Sean*: I did, Dad.
> *Dinny*: You didn't go.
> *Sean*: I did.
> *Dinny*: Don't answer me back or I'll thump ya!
> *Blake*: Maybe we –
> *Dinny*: Shut up, you! The story calls for sliced pan bread, doesn't it? (12-13)

Seeing that his routine is disrupted, he reminds his sons of the "facts" of the story which requires exact obedience to customary practices:

> *Dinny*: The story doesn't work if we don't have the facts and Ryvitas aren't the facts… they're not close to the facts. A batched loaf is close to the facts, a bread roll is closer still but a Ryvita?... A Ryvita's

> just taking the piss Sean. A Ryvita's a great leap of the imagination (13)

Discernible from his attitude, Dinny does not abstain from using coercion as a way to sustain his authority over the space which is epitomized in his ritual. The acceptance and normalisation of Dinny's implausible story requires constant dictation and repetitive rehearsal of it along with indisputable obedience from his sons; when his usual formula of the story is spoilt with a slight change in provisions, it is therefore a challenge to his authority. As Hannah Greenstreet puts forth, "it is not just Ryvita but reality itself that is at stake" (2017: 5) so he attempts to rejuvenate his former dominion through physical threats.

The abusive nature of patriarchal authority within a claustrophobic space is common motif in Pinter's plays and *The Walworth Farce* has significant similarities with one such play, *The Homecoming (1965)*. Reminiscent of Pinter's work, *The Walworth Farce* is about the domestic struggles of an all-male household who are deprived of any interaction with the opposite sex. In his review for the play, Patrick Lonergan states that "[l]ike Pinter's *The Homecoming*, it explores gender and power in a disturbingly domestic setting" (qtd. in Gunn, 2009: 38). Walsh's patriarch Dinny is no less abusive than Pinter's patriarch Max since both fathers exert their domestic authority through every possible means including resorting to physical violence. Similar to Dinny's threat to "thump" his sons, Max attempts to beat his son Lenny with "his stick" and "give" him "a proper tuck up one of these days" (Pinter, 1991: 19-25). The rest of the household acquiesces to the authoritarian structure of domestic relations because of their fear of the outside. In *The Homecoming*, for instance, Teddy tries to persuade his wife Ruth not to go outside saying that it is too late at night but in fact he

is afraid of being alone and the idea of outside. Similarly, Dinny terrorizes his sons with the horrors of outside by depicting a terrifying picture of London: "You do often read stories that they do eat their young over there, Paddy and Vera. So criminal and violent they are that Londoners like nothing more than skinning an Irishman halfway through his drink" (Walsh, 2014: 16) and at the same time, he also checks whether his sons develop a tendency to go outside. Talking on the problem with the shopping bags, Dinny interrogates Sean about the reasons of such a 'deviation' from the routine; as a defence, Sean says that he was "tricked" by "the girl at the cash register" and that he "can go back" to the supermarket to get the bags (22-23) but his father doesn't trust him:

> *Sean*: I can go back if you want.
>
> *Dinny*: You're not enjoying going outside are you?
>
> *Sean*: Only if you want me to.
>
> *Dinny*: Seems to me you might be enjoying it a little. […] Are you lying to me about this girl that tricked you?
>
> *Sean*: No, Dad.
>
> *Dinny*: 'Cause if you lie to me there'll be terrible trouble to pay. (23)

As visible from Sean's uneasiness, they feel the potency of Dinny's rule over the space with his ever-suspicious schemes that consist of unending stories and enactment. Dinny uses performance and stories as a way of sustaining their reclusive lives within his space; as a result, in Brian Singleton's words, "the sons do not have any meaningful life outside the father's stories" so "the performance of Dinny's patriarchy subordinates his sons until the end" (2011: 60). On the other hand, Dinny's authority also resembles to Root's power in *The Hothouse,* both wielding their superiority with farcical manner as well as resorting to physical violence. Preserving their position

through coercion, both characters feel enraged at a moment of deviation from daily routine since they are not receptive enough to adapt into new situations quickly; they rather like to dwell within the comfort of familiar acts. When faced with disruptions, they become aggressive because their vulnerability is unravelled, which is a common fear among Pinteresque characters because revealing a deficit means losing one's identity and authority over the territory, which is what drives them to commit atrocities in varying degrees.

In addition to ever-checking Sean's recent tendencies for the outside, Dinny uses his manipulative talent by agitating their history which is continually rewritten by him. When Sean brings sausage instead of chicken, Dinny cannot perpetuate his role saying that "it's not right [with sausage]" (29). At this moment, Sean and Blake question the sense of their story for the first time:

> *Dinny*: (*quietly*) It's not working with the sausage. It's not right.
>
> *Sean*: (*instinctively*) Is any of it?
>
> *Immediately, Sean regrets saying anything. Dinny grabs him by the hair.*
>
> *Dinny*: What? Say it!
>
> *Sean*: Is any of this story real?
>
> *Dinny*: Don't doubt me. We allow Mister Doubt into this flat and where would we be? Blake?
>
> *Blake*: We'd be outside, Dad.
>
> *Dinny*: (*not liking Blake's tone*) Are you getting brave on me too.
>
> *Blake*: I think I might want to go back to Ireland now. (29-30)

As visible from the nature of the dialogue, since the two sons appear to be on the verge of losing their faith in the father's story, Dinny insinuates that they will find themselves "outside", being deprived of the comfort of the inside unless they obey his normative

values. In their influential article "Decisions and Nondecisions" (1963), Bachrach and Baratz states that "a power relation can exist only if one of the parties can threaten to invoke sanctions" (633). In line with this view, Dinny starts to reconstruct his authority by threatening to confront his sons with extraneous interaction. In order to solidify his position, he also attempts to manipulate them by reminding the reasons behind their tackling with the enactment of their last day in Ireland through a strong tirade, in which he stresses the horrors of London and his escaping of them, as well as making Sean and Blake complete the end of his tirade, which means that he has been using the same ploy for a long time because the two brothers contribute to Dinny's story as if they know it by heart:

> *Dinny*: Do I not care for you both? The two little boys who followed me over, didn't I take you in and feed you? Little scraps all tired and hungry, wasn't it me who took you in?
>
> *Blake*: Yes, Dad.
>
> *Dinny grabs Blake by the ear and drags him into the sitting room.* […]
>
> *Dinny*: And the sea, Blake? The sea, the sea, the sea, the sea, the sea […]
>
> *Dinny*: The sea it spits me out onto England. I stand on the shore with Ireland on my back and the tide pushing me across the land towards London. I run, Blake. […] I run the same race a million Irishmen ran. But pockets full of new money and Paddy's keys in my hands with Walworth Road, a final destination, a sure thing, a happy ever after. I run […] And then what happened, Blake? What then, tell me? (30-31)

The manipulative scene above is open to various interpretations. First of all, it reflects Dinny's talent to divert attention from resistance to obedience by utilizing language for ulterior motives. As famous philosopher Martin Heidegger states, "language is the house of being" (1982: 639) and it is possible define and redefine the norms that

determine the substance of individuality through language. By this means, Dinny makes use of a personal story as a tool for dominion over the space through alloying it with a manipulative language. Secondly, this scene is an apparent evidence of Dinny's priorities between his two sons; Blake has no memory of the real events, so his mental schema has thoroughly been moulded by Dinny's reclusive ideology and thus, he serves as a footman for his father. This is why Dinny wants to re-discipline Blake first because Blake also serves as a 'panoptic scheme' within the territory; disciplining him means the disciplining of the space in his absence. In his seminal work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1977*), Michel Foucault explains panoptic scheme's purpose as "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201) which is of use to "correct individuals" (203). Corresponding to Foucault's views, a while before the scene above, Blake tries to soothe Sean for his mistake with shopping bags by saying that "this story we play is everything" (Walsh, 2014: 22) and it is overtly clear that he speaks under the influence of Dinny's perspective. A moment after Dinny's tirade, Sean secretly tells Blake that "London isn't the way [Dinny] tells it", that he "spoke to someone outside" and "it's right that [they] leave" (33). However, "*Blake's face hardens*" and "*he's not happy*" (33) with what he has heard; he "*violently slams the knife into the kitchen table*" and "*stares angrily in at Sean*" (34), making it clear that he is not enthusiastic about a change in their place because for him, London is a place where "people […] come out from houses and shops" after Dinny in order to "tear" him "to shreds" (33). In this respect, moulded by Dinny's input that dictates the outside as "a horror film image" (Fitzpatrick, 2010; 444), Blake is the agent of domestic surveillance since he constantly undergoes a 'self-regulation' and as Dinny

is aware of his condition, his priority is to 'correct' Blake first since Blake will also try to correct his brother who is a bigger challenge for Dinny. Finally, the above scene can be interpreted as the triumph of narrativity; the two siblings question the validity of the stories that Dinny tells, but even the response to such resistance is given in a manner of storytelling in which Blake and Sean also participate by completing their father's tirade. In his essay "Conversational Storytelling" (2007), Neal R. Norrick claims that "narrators construct their identity through their choice of certain personal experiences to relate and their way of presenting these experiences to the current audience in the current context" (139). By using his story of emigration in the sense that Norrick explains, Dinny attempts to revive his dominion over his sons which comes to the brink of destruction. Stories, in this way, continue to serve to his schemes whether they are about challenge or oppression.

Intruders are indispensable in Pinter's drama, and in order for a play to be analysed under the concept of Pinteresque, the act of intrusion into an enclosed space is needed, which is met by the arrival of Hayley, a black girl[19] working in Tesco. In his book *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel (2000),* Nicholas Grene asserts "stranger in the house" as one of the characteristics of modern

[19] The fact that Hayley is black is a bigger challenge for Dinny because she does not fit into any story related to their past in Ireland; so, he "*takes his moisturiser and whitens Hayley's face*" (79) which is undoubtedly a racist act. Lisa Fitzpatrick comments on the scene that "the racial violence that this action suggests acts as a reminder of racist violence and terrorism in the real world, reminding the audience of events outside the safe space of the theatre and disturbing the sense of watching something that is only a fiction" (2010; 445). On the other hand, the scene can be interpreted in terms of patriarchal ideology, which male playwrights of Irish drama have been accused of being engaged with. According to Miriam Haughton, "the relationship between identity and nation" is "framed by a patriarchal landscape" and "this master-narrative of Ireland has been constructed as a male-dominated narrative" (2014; 380) Irish theatre and culture. Similarly, Eamon Jordan claims "the imaginations of Irish theatre practitioners, playwrights especially, have been seriously ideologically loaded, not only in the specific prioritization of primarily male values, references and aspirations, and in their general scrutiny of, and obsession with, masculinity, but also in their consistent subjugation, marginalization and objectification of the feminine" (2007; 130). In this respect, the racial violence on Hayley is not only related to her race, but also her sex.

Irish drama, and the setting of such entrance is usually "a room within a house, a family in the room, stand in for normality, for ordinary, familiar life; into the room there enters a stranger, and the incursion of that extrinsic, extraordinary figure alters, potentially transforms the scene" (52). Corresponding to Grene's notion of stranger, during the performance of the farce through the end of Act One, "*suddenly the doorbell makes a continuous buzzing sou*nd", the three characters "*freeze*", and "*instinctively, Blake grabs a kitchen knife to protect himself*" (39). Visitors are obviously unwelcome in this residence as clear from "*the many locks*" (40) of the front door, so the characters look at each other in the hope that someone else will open the door since the intruder evokes inconsolable fears among them. In Eamon Jordan's words, "the family response [to Hayley's arrival] is almost paranoid" (2010: 344) because, contrary to the household's routine, Hayley is someone "who has not been living dysfunction" (Walsh with Sierz, 2008: Web) and thus carries the normality of London into Dinny's oasis which has been built upon the notion that their flat is a place through which he is "keeping [them] safe" (59) from the horrors of the outside. As Singleton puts forth, "the arrival of a woman from outside their closed worlds, let alone her race that does not fit the Cork story, is the catalyst for the cycle to end and the tragedy to ensue" (2011: 61), a motif that is quite Pinteresque. However, Walsh implants a fundamental difference from Pinterian intruders into his play; whereas Pinter's hosts continually attempt to ward off the intruders from their space, Dinny does the contrary and "attempts to neutralise the threat of the outside world by theatricalising it" (Greenstreet, 2017: 7) because as soon as Hayley enters the scene, he asks her whether she can "cook" (Walsh, 2014: 40) with an apparent intention of integrating her with

their farce. Therefore, Dinny wittily tries to sustain the status quo through the only apparatus he has, storytelling in the form of farce.

Act Two begins with Hayley's interest in understanding the world of male characters with her ceaseless questions about almost every detail, ranging from the number of floors in the building to Sean's mother's cooking abilities, from Blake's being a "transvestite" to their jobs. Jesse Weaver claims that "much of the conflict in Walsh's plays comes from the attempts by characters to connect with each other beyond the compulsion to tell each other's stories, rather than from a direct, dialogic conflict between characters" (2012: 131). The characters in the play are accustomed to what Weaver explains but as an outsider, Hayley does not know how to play the game according to the already-set rules; she directly questions too much. It is palpable that she wants to connect to Sean but she loses her grip by being too curious. As Arnold Hinchliffe asserts, in Pinteresque, "to ask questions is always dangerous" and "the act of questioning appearances, motives, or consequences invites catastrophe" (1976: 69). In this context, Hayley begins to pave the way to the household's disintegration, and as Sean is alerted against such a threat, he feels the urge to resist her by asking her the reasons behind her arrival:

> *Sean*: Be honest with me please. Why did you come here?
>
> *A pause.*
>
> *Hayley*: To be nice. To do a nice thing.
>
> *A pause*
>
> *Sean*: (*anxious*) But for no other reason, Hayley? Something you won't tell me?
>
> *Hayley*: How do you mean?
>
> *Sean*: Not to trick me?
>
> *Hayley's a little confused. She just laughs.*

Hayley: Seriously? (45-46)

Sean's incredulous attitude is continued by Dinny a few minutes after this scene. When Hayley tries to leave, "*Dinny suddenly pounces on her and grabs her by the throat, pinning her to the door*", saying "here to break us up, boys. Trick us and drag us down to the street" (51). The suspicion towards Hayley inherent within the patriarchal space of Dinny is quite evocative of the distrust in Ruth in *The Homecoming*. As Ruth's settlement is made certain, the patriarchal father of the all-male family, Max, expresses his suspicion of Ruth as follows: "I've got a funny idea she'll do dirty on us, you want to bet? She'll use us, she'll make use of us, I can tell you! I can smell it […] She won't … be adaptable" (Pinter, 1991: 89). The male characters in both plays manifest the terror invoked by the arrival of female characters, and as leaders of their clans, the fathers tackle with the problem by wedging between the intruders and the family members because as well as the security of the territory, their command is endangered, which is a prevalent element of Pinteresque aesthetics. As Katherine H. Burkman affirms, "the importance of Pinter's settings to the characters who dwell in them, the way in which these rooms become battlegrounds for possession, and their key place in the cyclic transfers of power" are "often at the plays' centers" (1971: 67). The reason behind this struggle is that "the self is at stake in Pinter's dramatic portrayal of his victim-victors battling for a place that is identified with that self and that must be guarded, defended, or taken rather than shared" (1971: 135). Dinny performs such territorial defence with edited lines in the scenario when he reminds Hayley that he is the one in charge of the family and he is apt to defend what belongs to him: "I was more in the mode of King Kong, if you get my meaning. A gigantic freakish gorilla, intent on protecting his own and causing untold damage and chaos to those who

challenge my jungle authority" (49). As Sean understands the innuendo, he "*looks towards Hayley*" (49), sensing that his father will use force on her, which comes true with Dinny exerting physical violence on Hayley because Hayley involuntarily rejects being part of the farce by just staying as audience. She supposes that they are playing a game, but seeing that they don't have a break despite her interference, she begins to disrupt the performance urging them "to stop for a sec…" (49) and shouting "hellooooooooo!" (50). Though the trio try to keep up the performance through improvisation without paying attention to Hayley, Dinny is enraged when she tries to leave the flat and he imprisons her, telling him to "just do what [he] ask[s]" (51): playing the role of his wife Maureen, and prepare a roast chicken. From this scene onwards, Hayley acquiesces to the imperious will of Dinny and fulfils what is expected of her until the end of the impending tragedy.

The security of the territory seems to be ensured, but it is the interpersonal rivalry that is *en route*. Blake is evidently disturbed by Hayley's presence because she turns up in their place to claim Sean, so he begins to defy her; when she "*tugs at* [Sean's] *sleeve playfully*", Blake "*enters fast and takes Sean by the hand in an act of possession*" (46). He takes his resistance further by openly interrogating and threatening Sean:

> *Blake*: (*quietly*) Were you talking to her about us? Are you trying to find ways to get us down to the streets? Send the little girl up and the door starts banging with more bodies wanting to get us. Are you turning your back on me, Sean?
>
> *Dinny stands at the kitchen entrance looking in on the two of them.*
>
> *Sean*: I wouldn't do that. I couldn't be alone outside without you, Blake.

> *Blake*: But you're wanting me to kill Dad, aren't you, Sean? We kill Dad, break the story, step outside like you've got it all planned… but then you walk away from me with her.
>
> *Sean*: With her?
>
> *Blake*: You love her, tell me. (57)

It is apparent that Blake talks with Dinny's jargon, so his threats are closely evocative of Dinny's; however, Blake's motives are more of a childish egotism than an authoritarian nature. He is like a small boy who does not want to share his toy with a friend that is possibly willing to take it away, but he is a child that can also be assertive and violent. His persistence in perpetuating the familial order turns into a pathological obsession that culminates in physical violence, which, according to Jordan, shows that Blake "has completely internalised his own captivity and his sense of belonging is now, accordingly, utterly perverse" (2010: 346):

> *Sean*: Blake, we can both leave here. Me and you.
>
> *Blake*: You can't deny you love her!
>
> *Sean*: You don't have to be scared of what's out there any more.
>
> *Blake*: WE BELONG IN HERE!
>
> *Sean*: Blake…
>
> *Blake slaps him hard across the face. He climbs off Sean and stands over him.*
>
> *Blake*: You break what I know and I give you my word, little brother, I'll have to kill you. (*Less sure*) I can kill you straight. (57)

The word "kill" is started to be used frequently in such a way that it looks like a family legacy that passes from generation to generation. When Sean hears it, he finds the one chance to remind Blake of the reality of their last day in Cork, but Blake is not willing to accept it:

Sean: Then you'll live with what he lives with…

Blake: It's not true.

Sean: I saw him, Blake. I saw the blood that day! It's all lies!

Blake: It was Mr Cotter and the poisoned chicken…

Sean: Jesus, Blake…

Blake: No, Sean, no! No no no no!

Sean: Blake!

Blake covers his ears and enters the bedroom and lies on the bed with his head beneath the pillow. (57-58)

Dinny witnesses the conflicting dialogue between the brothers, and as the secret that he has been counteracting for years is being increasingly unravelled despite his coercive methods, he tries different tactics to set things right and adopts the role of benevolent father in order to have a full understanding of the simmering family story that is about to shift from a farcical enactment to objective reality:

Dinny: […] Tell me what you remember the day I left Cork, Sean.

Sean: Why?

Dinny: Well, is it the same as the way we tell it?

A pause.

Sean: No

A pause.

Dinny: No? (*He's angry but keeps calm. A pause*) Let me hear it so I can see where I stand with ya. You're playing in Mrs Cotter's back garden. (58)

In spite of Dinny's counter-produced reality rehearsed for nineteen years, Sean still remembers the details of the murders, that they were "playing in [their own garden]" not in Mrs Cotter's, that they heard "shouting from inside the house", that Dinny and Paddy were "fighting over Granny's money even before she's stuck in the ground",

that Sean saw Dinny "standing in the corner with blood all over [his] hands" after which "Mammy kisses [Dinny] and says leave, now, and sets [him] free", and that Dinny "step[s] out to the outside and begin[s] [his] run" (59). Narrativity has apparently been unsuccessful, and the farcical mode of the stage is replaced by a crude reality which was the catalyst for the self-imposed incarceration in the first place. Dinny thus asks Sean; "Why did your Mammy send you two little boys right after me if I did a bad thing" (59), a question which further unearths the family tragedy; "Because she still loved you. Because we had used to be so good in Ireland. Maybe she could forgive you. (*Slight pause*.) Dad, I don't know why she sent us" (59). "*Affected by what Sean says*" (59), it is highly arguable that Dinny does not know the answer himself, too, because as Sean reveals to Hayley at the beginning of Act Two, he last saw his mother "when [he] was five" (43) and so they haven't seen Maureen for nineteen years, considering that Sean is twenty-four now, thus her whereabouts are unknown in the play, the reason of her sending the children is ambiguous; perhaps she left the family, or she died in the aftermath of tragic events, but what is certain is that her decision to replace the children beside Dinny is what caused the bizarre enactment of a false memory for nineteen years. The reason behind the children's settlement with Dinny or how they make their living is ambiguous, but after all, as Katherine Burkman claims, in Pinteresque "an ambiguity exists bout the nature of the victim" (1971: 21).

As Sean unveils the truth, Dinny thinks that the culprit behind Dinny's transformation is Hayley; he accuses them of "talk[ing] about what [they] get up to" (60) in their flat, so, in order to understand the issue thoroughly, he forces them to "show [him] exactly how it was [with] the same words [by] play[ing] it" (60). Since performance of a certain memory is the only means to construct reality for Dinny, he

needs a visual representation of the accounts of what happened between Sean and Hayley in Tesco so that he can produce a counter-reality against the alternative truth that Hayley brings in. As understood from their enactment, Hayley suggests Sean to "go down to Brighton Beach" (61) together, and it is revealed that Sean has been perplexed and awakened by such intimacy which he has never been accustomed to:

> *Sean*: And I can't say anything as I pack the shopping away. (*Slight pause*.) But I'm thinking of whether I could ever risk my life with somebody else. If there would ever come a time when someone would promise me a new start. I'm thinking about us walking on a beach by the sea and I'm wondering if you'd stay with me if I got outside, Hayley. But you can't see me thinking about all of that. And I want to say, I'd really like to go there one day.
>
> *Hayley almost smiles.*
>
> *Hayley*: Then I would say, 'Let's go, Sean. Let's leave now.' (61)

Seeing his brother's attachment to someone from outside, Blake "*starts to thrash the flat*" which is encouraged by Dinny telling him to "go on" (61). The only way to calm the terror down is to continue the farce, during which Sean and Hayley prepare for a possible escape; she "*hides beneath the kitchen table*" (67) and secretly calls her mother for help but "*Blake grabs [her] from beneath the table*" and ties "*her arms behind her back*", consequently, "*Dinny is furious that the Farce has broken down once again*" (68). It is beyond doubt that Dinny's world is crashing in full spate despite his precautionary efforts, so, he has only one last option to preserve the integrity of his territory: to secretly tell Sean the logic and reasons of their performance and persuade him that it is for good use:

> *Dinny*: […] To calm you down, Sean, I start to tell you the story of me and Paddy on Robert's Cove beach. Me with Daddy's towel wrapping Paddy up and keeping him safe. For days I play that story over and over for you and Blakey and it brings us some calm and peace of mind. The telling of the story … it helps me, Sean. (A

> pause.) ‘Daddy?’ ‘Yes, Seannie?’ ‘What happened back home in Cork, Daddy?’ (A pause.) I start to tell a new story. (Almost breaks.) […] We’re making a routine that keeps our family safe. Isn’t that what we’ve done here? (69-70)

As divulged by Dinny, the reason of starting a performance was to soothe the brothers when they were little, and seeing the benefit of stories, Dinny has been using them to calm his sons and to produce answers to their questions for a long time; in order for such a regime to work, it is certain that the sons need to stay children forever so that stories are ever-functional. This is why Dinny raises them under a strict social withdrawal in an authoritarian reign because social intervention would hamper the functionality of this operation. However, the things that they need to survive, food and other provisions, are also the things that bring their end because reaching at them needs communication with the outside and bit by bit, this social contact modifies Sean, withholding him from the rule of the father and placing him in a purgatory. He is not fully a child any more, nor he is in the father’s realm, contrary to Blake who has never had the chance to see the world, and he can question the logic of Dinny’s governance as a result of his brief awakening outside:

> *Sean*: But none of these words are true.
>
> *A pause.*
>
> *Dinny*: It’s my truth, nothing else matters. (*A pause*.) You can never leave here without poor Blake, can you Sean?
>
> *Sean*: No, Dad. (70)

The issue of truth is significant in terms of the ideology behind the regime inherent in the family. Dinny, in a manner which reflects the characters in *The Old Times* considering his subjective approach to the concept of ‘truth’, proves to be evocative of Pinter’s dealing with it, which according to him is “elusive” rather than definite:

> Truth in drama is forever elusive […] But the real truth is that there never is any such thing as one truth to be found in dramatic art. There are many. These truths challenge each other, recoil from each other, reflect each other, ignore each other, tease each other, are blind to each other. Sometimes you feel you have the truth of a moment in your hand, then it slips through your fingers and is lost. (Art, Truth & Politics, 2006: 22)

As a Pinteresque character, Dinny defends his own version of reality to survive in a hostile world as well as construct his dominion even if it needs a tyrannical imposition. On the other hand, he also unearths a paradox concerning the notion of truth; he stresses the validity of his own version, but involuntarily makes it clear that there are other possibilities in truth-making, namely other people can have their own version of truth, too, such as Sean's own truth. Therefore, he needs other strategies to gather the diffused pieces of the familial affection, which he accomplishes by playing on Sean's emotions, manipulating him to return to the former state of affairs:

> *Dinny*: 'No, Dad.' To step outside and just little you all alone there in the world, imagine that? *Sean's eyes fill with tears.* It could never happen, Sean, answer me.
>
> *Sean*: I couldn't be alone outside, Dad.
>
> *Dinny*: No need, Seannie boy, no need at all. *Sean crying a little and Dinny embraces him.* You'll never tell Blake what you seen that last day, Sean?
>
> *Sean*: I wouldn't do that to him.
>
> *Dinny*: A simple boy best kept in the dark, isn't he?
>
> *Sean*: It's a better place to be.
>
> *A pause.*
>
> *Dinny*: To kill me would only turn you into your dad. Isn't that what you're thinking, Sean? Answer me, boy. […] Get back to my story. Get ready for the big finish, Sean. Soon Paddy's hole will strike and off to meet the good Lord, God bless him. Play it big and clear for me, won't ya?
>
> Sean: I will, Dad. (70-71)

As can be inferred, Dinny seems to restore the deviances which shatter the stability of the residence, he also promises to "let [Hayley] go if [Sean is] good to [him]" (71). However, the atmosphere of the space is tenser than ever, and the course of events more insecure, because Blake hears their talk and "*returns to Hayley and starts to untie her*" (71). She tries to reach him emotionally and asks him how long they have been in such a situation and whether or not he can leave, but Blake does not respond to her. Instead, he asks a crucial question:

> *Blake*: If Sean can go, you'll be with him? You won't leave Sean alone outside, promise me.
>
> *A slight pause.*
>
> *Hayley*: I'll stay with him.
>
> *Blake*: Cross your heart and hope to die.
>
> *A slight pause.*
>
> *Hayley*: Cross my heart and hope to die.
>
> *A pause.*
>
> *Blake*: I can finish it so. (72)

Blake instils a menace that will be resolved with Dinny's death but the farce is recommenced, with Hayley's attendance to the cast in the role of Maureen. At one point, Blake shifts his role and appears "*as his seven-year-old self*" and "*Sean quickly joins him*" (77). They exit and re-enter the scene, with Blake holding a kitchen knife, and Sean thinks he wants to kill Hayley so he tries to talk him out of his intention: "Fuck it, he's allowing her to leave, Blake! We can get back to normal! Tell him, Dad!" (78). Despite Sean's efforts, the farce continues to keep the menace alive, and in the final scene of the farce in which Dinny escapes Ireland, his role is literally finished:

> *Dinny*: A day of twists and turns and ducks and dives and terrible shocks. A story to be retold, no doubt, and cast in lore. For what are we, Maureen, if we're not our stories?
>
> *Blake*: We're the lost and the lonely.
>
> *Dinny*: Away to London! Gather around, my little boys! Come and kiss your daddy a final farewell!
>
> *Blake fires the knife into Dinny's back. Dinny gasps. Blake pulls out the knife, turns Dinny towards him quickly and stabs him in the stomach hard.* (83)

Killing his father, Blake makes Hayley scream like his mother's scream back in Cork, and upon hearing Hayley, Sean, who is still acting his seven-year-old self in the wardrobe, gets out and stabs his brother. At his last breath, Blake "*kisses Sean gently on the lips*" and says, "*now leave, love*" (84), his mother's last words to Dinny. Hayley "*runs to the front door, scrambles to open the last lock, opens it and exits fast leaving the door open*" (84). Sean, his father and brother dead, "*walks to the front door and stops just inside the flat*", "*stands there for some time looking out*" and "*then closes the door and begins to lock it*" (85). He begins to enact the events that happened the same day, and he "*calmly lose[s] himself in a new story*" (85) as the curtain falls instead of leaving the flat and breaking the cycle.

Pinteresque aesthetics have substantial imprints on *The Walworth Farce* in terms of language, setting, subject matter, and plot structure. Similar to Pinter's plays, the *Farce* uses dialogues which are moulded with menace that results in oppressive-submissive interpersonal relationships and language serves to construct the menace in favour of one character over the others. The setting is also in service of this tyrannical regime that feeds on incarceration of its subjects, which is again a clear borrowing from Pinter. The issues that it tackles with, the entrapment of several men within an enclosed space and the struggles among them, is no different from plays such as *The*

Homecoming, and the characters playing with memory for personal advantage are no less villainous than the ones in *The Old Times*. As with the plot structure, the *Farce* has a circular plot like a typical Pinterian play in that the end is the same with the beginning and brings no recuperation for anyone, as visible from the main character's being lost "in a new story". However, while utilizing these motifs, Walsh does not fall prey to the trap of imitation; rather, he episodically makes use of them along with the aesthetics of Irish drama, and creates an "intoxicating" (Billington, 2008: Web) work of theatre that is neither fully Irish, nor fully English, but totally Walshian.

CONCLUSION

In line with its purpose to examine the influence of Harold Pinter on contemporary British drama, this study has focused on reading of certain plays from contemporary period to reveal an in-depth analysis of how Pinteresque qualities reverberate through current dramatic sensibilities.

Chapter 1 has been devoted to the systematic analysis of Pinteresque aesthetics through brief accounts of the shifts in Pinter's career which is usually viewed in three periods. In the first period, 'comedies of menace' are the prevalent types of plays in which territories are threatened with outside menace. Key plays in this approach are *The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter* and *The Room*. The common aspect of these plays is that the power structure working for the benefit of one character is dismantled by the arrival of outsiders. Characters, who are accustomed to their regular and often dull practices, are challenged by the alteration in their rooms caused by the assertive attitudes of the strangers. In the second period, Pinter handles memory as a site of power struggles which are accentuated as personal endeavour to sustain a healthy identity and to construct the past in accordance with individual whims, and the exemplary play of the period is *Old Times*. Reconstructing history is handled through manipulative strategies such as storytelling which includes extensively edited versions of the real accounts, and the past is toyed to such an extent that it becomes impossible to discern the reality from fiction. The third period, on the other hand, consists of overtly political plays which are utilized as a means of Pinter's intellectual responses to certain political issues that he deems problematic in terms of human rights. *Mountain Language, One for the Road*, and *Party Time* are the most significant

examples for such purposes. The most visible concerns in these plays are the practices of abusive institutions, banning of languages, human rights abuses in authoritarian states, and unlimited power bestowed upon the agents of oppression.

In addition to studying the elements of Pinteresque, Chapter 1 has also focused on a review of contemporary plays which carry the traces of Pinterian elements. Prominent playwrights such as Anthony Neilson, Joe Penhall, Patrick Marber, Jez Butterworth, Martin Crimp, Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, Cary Churchill, and David Greig have produced compelling works which project Pinterian influences on a wide basis. Within the plays of these writers, it is often possible to observe Pinteresque components such as power struggles among males in enclosed spaces, intrusions, linguistic battles, the failure of communication, the abuse of authority, and overtly political statements about certain political issues. For instance, in Neilson's *The Penetrator*, the comfort of two flatmates is disrupted with the return of their friends from the army, and thus the structure of the play is typical of Pinter's early room plays. Joe Penhall and Patrick Marber's plays present masculine rivalries in complex forms and settings such as psychiatric wards and gambling houses, and the playwrights inherit Pinter's legacy through competitive language in their works reminiscent of Pinter's dramatic dialogues. The plays of Cary Churchill, Sarah Kane and David Greig build similar environments with Pinter's settings in which powerless individuals are subjected to abusive actions of authoritarian states. Echoing Pinter's overtly political plays such as *One for the Road*, the playwrights demonstrate their concerns about current political issues which are reflected within the aesthetics of Pinteresque.

In chapter 2, Harold Pinter's *The Hothouse* has been analysed in terms of both conventional and more recent ingredients of Pinterian aesthetics. It has been suggested

that the significance of the play lies in its being an expository piece in that it clarifies the previous ambiguities in Pinter's plays such as the texture of the oppressors, the nature of the abusive institutions, and the circumstances of the victims. The institution in the play gives the impression of a kitchen in which the agents of oppression are selected, trained, and prepared for field work. Besides, it resembles to a laboratory where techniques of oppression are experimented on victims who are mostly important people that are doomed to be corrected through institutional mechanisms. On the other hand, even such an establishment is not exempt from hierarchical struggles that are maintained for personal advantages. Through use of language, coercion and organizational skills, characters perpetuate a nameless battle for their valuable positions within the ranks of such a precarious institution because losing the game means the loss of advantages and in turn the loss of self. As with Pinter's other plays, dominant characters in *The Hothouse* maintain their cryptic personalities whereas those with less elaborate strategies reveal details about themselves which bring their downfall in the hands of an ambitious official.

Chapter 3 has focused on Philip Ridley's *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* in terms of its homage to Pinterian elements. The setting, the procession of the action, the intrusion of a stranger, and the circular plot structure are the components of Ridley's play whose source of inspiration is evidently Pinter's early plays. Reminiscent of the room plays, *Fastest Clock* reveals the disruption of domestic power structure between two people with the arrival of an intruder who destroys the status quo through various assaults on the powerholder, ranging from linguistic employments to manipulative acts. Before strangers invade the scene, a one-way construction of authority is evidenced through the abusive relationship between two male characters

who in fact stand for the fulfilment of each other's desires. Whereas Cougar nurtures Captain's desire for a perfect body, Captain performs the role of a dutiful daddy who is responsible with running the errands as well as providing a financial security. The relationship between the characters, therefore, is based upon a mutual benefit that works for the sustenance of stable identities in a claustrophobic room which is grotesquely shielded against the norms of the outside. The external world is avoided because the interference of social norms means the destruction of personal identities which are built through interpersonal rivalries that are ultimately no more than petty matters. The bizarre structure of such a power relationship is challenged by the arrival of Sherbet who gradually asserts her own perspective upon the liminal space of Cougar. Despite the shift in the position of the individuals wielding the authority, the ultimate design of the territory does not provide recuperation since the space is restored to former structure through counter assaults even if it requires physical violence. The end brings no change in that characters seem to perpetuate their way of living no matter what interferes in their daily routines.

Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce* has been studied in chapter 3 in terms of its amalgamation of several sensibilities and genres in the form of a play-within-play. In Walsh's work, the tradition of Irish drama, the genre of farce, and the aesthetics of Pinteresque are masterly alloyed and put to work in a sequence of actions in which stories are resorted as alternative realities to create a menacing atmosphere. Objective history is manipulated for personal gain and stories are not a business of entertainment but a means of territorial dominance. As with Pinter's memory plays, the arrangement of such an oppressive regime is mainly fragile and needs constant defence, but the functionality of this power domain ultimately fails with the arrival of an outsider. The

fictional reality of the secluded space is distorted with the participation of outside realities and eventually causes the collapse of the established order. Despite Dinny's overprotective measures, his dominion over his sons is eliminated by Hayley's arrival because, apart from being an intruder, Hayley is the embodiment of every rival reality which Dinny is afraid of; she is female, she is black, and she has a personal attachment to Sean. Dinny is terrified of these facts because they do not fit into any stories that he has been telling his sons for years to construct his authority. He attempts to neutralize these deviances by integrating Hayley into his stories but fails to do so and expedites his downfall. On the other hand, although the agency of authority changes hands, it is the triumph of stories that does not change because Sean loses himself enacting his own story after the death of his family members. It is thus affirmed that circularity of Pinteresque plot structure is adopted in Walsh's work to emphasize the impossibility of change in mundane incarceration.

In the light of the details discussed in this study, it is arguable that Pinter himself has been an intruder into the literary regime of contemporary British drama. He has been involuntarily interfering in the art of dramatic creation in Britain for more than six decades; he is still the first harbour where the younger generations of playwrights drop their first anchor. Like any revolutionaries in history, he has caused a paradigm shift in his field, which is manifested in his influence on his descendants. Above all else, his influence is not a present perfect, but a present perfect continuous, which still appears to be fusing within contemporary British drama. Pinteresque, in this context, has turned out to be a theatrical sensibility that reverberates through the authentic voices of contemporary playwrights in the sense that The Theatre of the Absurd or In-yer-face theatre did through their descendants. Put differently, it is wrong

to associate Pinteresque solely with the body of Pinter's work and consider it as a mode of theatre that is peculiar to Pinter; in fact, Pinteresque has been transformed into a widespread and vibrant theatrical sensibility which has its own coherent body of dramatic practices. In this respect, regarding the attitudes of reviewers such as Michael Billington or Charles Spencer who often tend to accuse contemporary playwrights of imitating Pinter's voice, it can be claimed that such criticisms are inequitable in that these criticisms are as irrelevant as accusing Pinter himself of writing in the fashion of the Theatre of the Absurd. While younger playwrights are utilizing Pinteresque aesthetics, they are in fact situating themselves within a distinct theatrical sensibility which extends far beyond Pinter's career. When the socio-political atmosphere of the contemporary period is taken into consideration, it is quite befitting to claim that it is more Pinteresque than ever; the advent of extremist political tendencies, the rise of fascism, the increasing number of human rights abuses, and the growing economic deprivation all contribute to the justifiability of the claim above. As a result of such social and political shifts, it is probable that Pinterland will be visited by more playwrights in the future since it provides a unique ground on which intellectual responses to these changes can be constructed.

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ABSTRACT

Harold Pinter is one of the most influential playwrights in twentieth century British drama. Although his oeuvre has extensively been studied throughout the world, his influence on contemporary British drama and dramatists remains widely to be explored. Pinter's theatrical style, commonly known as Pinteresque, has been a significant part of British drama in terms of focusing on certain issues such as oppression, power struggles, the failure of communication, isolation in a precarious world, intrusion into domestic settings, the abuse of authority, and institutional violence on powerless subjects. Through his authentic practices, Pinter created a 'Pinterland' where individuals prefer to dwell in enclosed spaces to escape from the terrors of the outside, where language works to prevent communication rather than invigorate it, where strangers intrude into personal spaces to break the comfort of the inside, and where citizens are subjected to institutions' oppressive authority. In contemporary British drama, playwrights who want to deal with similar issues are frequently visiting Pinterland to gain inspiration from Pinter's methods and contributing to the course that Pinter drew. This study aims to reveal the influence of Harold Pinter on contemporary playwrights through close readings of two plays, Philip Ridley's *The Fastest Clock in the Universe* and Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce* as well as examining Pinter's *The Hothouse* to reveal the qualities of Pinteresque in a Pinter play.

Key Words: Harold Pinter, Pinteresque, Philip Ridley, *The Fastest Clock in the Universe*, Enda Walsh, *The Walworth Farce*, *The Hothouse*

ÖZET

Harold Pinter yirminci yüzyıl İngiliz tiyatrosunun en etkili oyun yazarlarından biridir. Eserleri tüm dünyada yoğun bir biçimde çalışılmış olmasına karşın, Pinter'ın çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosu ve oyun yazarları üzerindeki etkisi keşfedilmeyi beklemektedir. Genellikle 'Pinteresque' olarak bilinen Pinter'ın tiyatro anlayışı baskı, iktidar çatışması, iletişimin başarısızlığı, tehlikeli bir dünyadan soyutlanma, kişisel mekanları gasp etme, iktidarın kötüye kullanımı ve güçsüz öznelere kurumsal şiddet uygulanmasını incelemesi bağlamında İngiliz tiyatrosunun önemli bir parçası olmuştur. Özgün pratikleri vasıtasıyla Pinter, insanların dışarıdaki korkulardan kaçmak için kapalı mekanlarda yaşamayı yeğlediği, dilin iletişimi güçlendirmek yerine engellemek üzere işlev gördüğü, amaçları bilinmeyen kişilerin içerisinin konforunu yok etmek üzere kişisel alanları işgal ettiği ve vatandaşların kurumların baskıcı iktidarına maruz kaldıkları bir Pinter Diyarı yaratmıştır. Çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosunda benzer konulara değinmek isteyen yazarlar, Pinter'ın yöntemlerinden faydalanmak için bu diyarı ziyaret etmekte ve Pinter'ın çizdiği yola katkıda bulunmaktadırlar. Bu çalışma, Harold Pinter'ın yarattığı Pinteresque estetiğinin çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosundaki izlerini incelemektedir. Bölüm 1'de Pinteresque özellikler detaylı bir biçimde aktarılacaktır, Bölüm 2'de Pinter'ın *The Hothouse (1980) (Sera)* oyunu incelenecektir, Bölüm 3'te Philip Ridley'nin *The Fastest Clock in the Universe (1993) (Kâinatın En Hızlı Saati)* ve Bölüm 4'te Enda Walsh'ın *The Walworth Farce (2006) (Walworth Farsı)* oyunlarında Pinter'ın yapısal ve tematik etkisi incelenecektir. Bölüm 1 genellikle üç dönemde incelenen Pinteresque estetiğin özelliklerine odaklanmanın yanı sıra bu özelliklerin çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosunda ne ölçüde yankılandığına değinmektedir. 'Tehdit komedisi' olarak adlandırılan oyunların

yoğunlukta olduğu ilk dönemde mekanların dışarıdan gelen tehditlere maruz kaldığı görülür ve bu dönemin başlıca oyunları *Doğum Günü Partisi, Git Gel Dolap* ve *Oda*'dır. Bu oyunlarda kapalı bir alanda bir karakterin menfaatine işleyen iktidar ilişkilerinin dışarıdan gelen ziyaretçiler tarafından bozulduğu görülür. Alışılagelmiş eylemlerine ve sıradan günlük yaşamlarına sıkı sıkıya bağlı olan karakterler yabancıların mekânı dönüştürmeye başlamasıyla kimlik savaşına girişirler. İkinci dönemde ise Pinter mekândan ziyade geçmişi bir iktidar alanı olarak ele alır ve karakterlerin kişisel çıkarları uğruna geçmişi kendi bakış açılarına göre şekillendirmeye çalıştıkları görülür. Bu dönemin en önemli oyunu olarak *Eski Zamanlar* göze çarpar. Karakterler hikâye anlatımı gibi çeşitli yöntemleri kullanarak geçmişi o denli şekillendirirler ki artık neyin gerçekte yaşandığı neyin kurgu olduğu kestirilemez. Üçüncü dönemde ise Pinter *Dağ Dili, Bir Tek Daha* ve *Parti Zamanı* gibi alenen politik oyunlar üretmeye başlamıştır. Bu oyunların baskıcı devlet kurumlarının eylemleri, dillerin yasaklanması, otoriter devlet düzenlerinde insan hakları ihlalleri ve devlet görevlilerine sınırsız yetki verilmesi gibi oldukça politik konuları vardır. Pinter'ın ortaya koyduğu estetik anlayış Anthony Neilson, Joe Penhall, Patrick Marber, Jez Butterworth, Martin Crimp, Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, Caryl Churchill ve David Greig gibi çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosunun önemli temsilcilerinin oyunlarında rahatlıkla gözlemlenebilir. Örneğin Anthony Neilson'ın *The Penetrator (Sokucu)* oyununda tehdit komedyası özellikleri göze çarparken, Sarah Kane'in *Blasted* oyunu ile David Greig'in *The American Pilot (Amerikan Pilotu)* oyununda aleni politik bir dil karşımıza çıkar. Bölüm 2 Pinter'ın *The Hothouse (Sera)* oyununu salt Pinteresque özellikler bakımından incelemenin ötesinde bu oyunun Pinter'ın kariyeri açısından ne denli önemli olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Pinter'ın erken dönem

kariyerinde baskıcı kişilerin amaçları, zorba devlet kurumlarının işleyişi ve kurbanların akıbeti gibi oldukça belirsiz olan kimi unsurların *The Hothouse* oyunuyla birlikte açıklığa kavuşturulduğu belirtilmektedir. Oyunun mekânı olan devlet kurumu baskıcı görevlilerin seçildiği, eğitildiği ve saha çalışması için hazırlandığı adeta bir laboratuvar işlevi görür. Kurbanların ise otoriter bir devlet düzeninde tehdit olarak görülen çoğunlukla nitelikli insanlar olduğu anlaşılır. Bütün bu açıklamaların yanı sıra Pinter bu oyunda da kişiler arası iktidar çatışmalarını merkeze alır ve kurum personeli arasındaki pozisyon mücadelelerini oldukça Pinteresque bir üslupla işler. Bölüm 3 Philip Ridley'nin *The Fastest Clock in the Universe (Kâinatın En Hızlı Saati)* oyununun hangi açılardan Pinteresque özellikleri yansıttığını inceler. Oyunun kapalı bir mekânda geçmesi, yabancıların mekânı gasp etmesi ve sirküler olay örgüsü gibi kimi unsurlar Ridley'nin eserinin Pinteresque estetik açısından incelenmesini mümkün kılar. Oyunun temel yapısı tipik bir Pinter oyununda olduğu gibidir; yıkık dökük bir fabrikanın üst katında yaşayan Cougar ve Captain adında iki kişi arasında tuhaf denebilecek bir iktidar ilişkisi sürüp gitmektedir, karşılıklı kullanılan dil iletişim aracı olmaktan ziyade bir saldırı aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır, birbirlerinden oldukça zıt görünen bu iki karakter aslında ortak mekanlarında kurdukları küçük dünyanın konforunu da sürmektedir, ancak Foxtrot ve Sherbet adındaki yabancılar karakterlerin küçük dünyasını ziyaret eder ve dış dünyanın gerçekliğini mekâna empoze ederek bu konforu ortadan kaldırır. Şiddet unsurunun fazlasıyla göze çarptığı sahnelerin ardından gelen final sahnesinde ise tıpkı Pinter oyunlarında olduğu gibi iyileşmenin ve düzelmenin olmadığı, hayatın yabancıların ziyaretinden önceki haline döneceği izlenimi hakimdir. Benzer bir oyun yapısı Bölüm 4'te incelenen Enda Walsh'ın *The Walworth Farce (Walworth Farsı)* eserinde de kendini gösterir, lakin Enda Walsh

oyun içinde oyun formunu kullanarak Pinteresque estiği daha kompleks bir yapıyla oyununa dahil eder. Yine yıkık dökük bir mekânda geçen oyunda iktidar ilişkileri merkezi konumdadır, ancak Dinny ile iki oğlu arasındaki güç mücadelesinin aracı olarak on dokuz yıldır her gün tekrarladıkları fars performansı göze çarpar. Cougar ve Captain karakterlerine benzer bir şekilde Dinny ile iki oğlunun dünyası Londra'daki küçük bir apartman dairesinde her gün canlandırmaya çalıştıkları ve on dokuz yıl önce terk ettikleri İrlanda'dan ibarettir. Fars performansı vasıtasıyla İrlanda'da geçirdikleri son günü her gün yeniden canlandıran karakterler nesnel dünyadan kopmuş bir biçimde kendi anlattıkları hikayelerde yaşamaktadırlar ve Pinter'ın oyunlarında karşılaşılan iktidar ilişkileri bu karakterler arasında da yaşanmaktadır. Dil ve performans Dinny tarafından bir iktidar aracı olarak kullanılırken iki oğlunun karşı koyabilme yetileri oldukça sınırlıdır zira yaşatmaya çalıştıkları hikayeler kendileri için yegâne gerçeklik haline gelmiştir ve Dinny oğullarını güvenli evlerinden mahrum kalmakla tehdit ederek hikayeler vasıtasıyla kurduğu iktidarını sağlamlaştırır. Diğer bir yandan, mümkün olduğunca kaçındıkları dış dünya süpermarkette çalışan Hayley adlı siyahi bir kadın karakterin mekâna adım atmasıyla kendi dünyalarına dahil olur ve izole oldukları alan Hayley'nin beraberinde getirdiği nesnel gerçeklikle tanışır. Dinny ve oğullarının hikayeleri geri dönülmez biçimde sekteye uğrar çünkü Hayley hem kadındır hem de siyahi; dolayısıyla, tamamı İrlanda bağlamında geçen ve eril dilin hâkim olduğu hikayelerde Hayley'e yer yoktur. Bu uyumsuzluğun ardından mekânın tüm işleyişi ve iktidar ilişkileri bozulur, sonunda ise Dinny ile bir oğlu ölür. On dokuz yıllık performans esaretinden kurtulma şansı yakalayan Sean ise evlerini terk etmez ve kendi hikayelerini tek başına canlandırmaya başlar. Oyun tıpkı Pinter'ın eserlerinde olduğu gibi düzelme ve iyileşme ihtimalinden yoksun kalan bir karakterin trajik

kaderini sergileyerek sonlanır. Sonuç olarak, son oyununu 2000 yılında yazan ve 2008 yılında vefat eden Harold Pinter'ın çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosunu halen şekillendirmeye devam ettiği, kendi yarattığı Pinteresque estetiğin çağdaş yazarlar tarafından benimsendiği ve kendi eserlerinde kullanıldığı, Pinteresque estetiğin herhangi bir esin kaynağı olmanın da ötesinde düzenli ve tutarlı pratikleri olan gelişmiş bir tiyatro anlayışı olduğu, dolayısıyla Pinteresque tiyatro anlayışının Absürd Tiyatro gibi kendine has bir tiyatro anlayışı haline geldiği bu çalışmada konu edilen oyunlardan yola çıkılarak görülebilmektedir. Bu bağlamda çağdaş oyun yazarları ile Harold Pinter arasındaki ilişkinin sıradan bir etkilenme olmadığı, daha ziyade çağdaş yazarların Harold Pinter'ın yarattığı -Samuel Beckett ve Eugene Ionesco gibi yazarların Absürd Tiyatroyu yaratması gibi- bir tiyatro geleneği çerçevesinde eserler ürettikleri söylenebilir. Çağdaş dünyanın sosyo-politik şartları göz önüne alındığında bu durumun şaşırtıcı olmadığı açıktır; insan hakları ihlallerinin giderek artması, faşizmin ve aşırı sağ politikaların yükselişi, radikalleşmenin artışı, giderek yaygınlaşan sosyal bunalımlar gibi kimi parametreler çağdaş İngiliz oyun yazarlarını Pinter'ın estetik anlayışına yaklaştırmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle çağdaş dünya giderek daha Pinteresque bir konuma doğru evrimleşmektedir ve bu durumun sonucu olarak çağdaş oyun yazarları Pinter Diyarına daha sık ziyaretler gerçekleştirmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Harold Pinter, Pinteresque, Philip Ridley, *Kâinatın En Hızlı Saati*, Enda Walsh, *Walworth Farsı, The Hothouse*