



**A FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO HAROLD  
PINTER'S *THE CARETAKER***

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**ABSTRACT**

In modern societies, it can be observed that individuals suffer from alienation and loss of communication. Apart from individual differences, social and cultural conditions are assumed among the reasons behind mental disorders, psychological distress and neurotic disabilities. In this study, the role of society and authoritative forces will be questioned to scrutinize the core reasons behind the neurotic disorders through correlating the concepts of social theory of alienation and the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of neurosis. Therefore, *The Caretaker* (1960), by Harold Pinter, will be examined by taking into consideration the internal and external forces in individuals' life. The paper aims to examine and interpret the play from the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective in order to disclose the effect of external forces on individuals' psyche under the condition of oppression and authoritative forces. In the first place, the study touches shortly upon the Freudian Psychoanalytic Theory and the Theatre of the Absurd and then gives brief information about the play, *The Caretaker*. Later, the study dwells on the analysis of the play from the point of the Freudian Psychoanalytic Theory.

**Key Words:** *The Caretaker*, Freud, Psychoanalysis, society, neurotic disorder, alienation.

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## HAROLD PINTER'İN *KAPICI* ADLI OYUNUNA FREUDÇU PSİKANALİTİK YAKLAŞIM

### ÖZ

Modern toplumlarda bireylerin yabancılaşma ve iletişim kaybı sıkıntısı çektiği gözlemlenebilir. Ruhsal bozukluklar, psikolojik sıkıntı ve nörotik rahatsızlıkların nedenleri arasında bireysel farklılıkların yanı sıra sosyal ve kültürel koşulların olduğunu varsayılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada sosyal yabancılaşma teorisi ile Freudçu psikanalitik nevroz teorisi kavramlarını ilişkilendirerek nörotik bozuklukların altında yatan başlıca nedenleri derinlemesine incelemek amacıyla toplumun ve otoriter güçlerin rolü sorgulanacaktır. Bu nedenle Harold Pinter tarafından yazılan *The Caretaker (Kapıcı)* (1960), bireylerin yaşamındaki iç ve dış güçler göz önünde bulundurularak incelenecektir. Bu makale, dış güçlerin baskı ve otoriter güçlerin altında olan bireyin psikolojisi üzerindeki etkisini açığa çıkarmak amacıyla oyunu Freudçu psikoanalitik bakış açısından incelemeyi ve yorumlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma öncelikle Freudçu Psikanalitik Teori ve Absürt Tiyatro'ya kısaca değinmekte ve sonrasında da *The Caretaker (Kapıcı)* oyunu hakkında kısa bilgi vermektedir. Sonrasında ise oyunun Freudçu Psikanalitik Teori açısından analizi üzerinde durmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *The Caretaker (Kapıcı)*, Freud, Psikanaliz, toplum, nörotik bozukluk, yabancılaşma.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present study intends to analyse Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* (1960) in the light of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. To set ground for the analysis of the play, which is influenced by the existential philosophy, it will be beneficial to provide a brief introduction to the movement to which the play belongs.

Firstly, the focus will be on the theoretical framework of the paper in order to shed light on the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of neurosis. Having first been coined by Cullen (1769), the term "neurosis" refers to a sort of inability to adapt to one's environment, one's inability to change one's life patterns, and the inability to develop a satisfying personality. The term was defined by different scholars. Russon (2003), for example, defined the term neurosis as "the way a tension – frustration of desire – is structured into our very approach to things" (p. 126). To elaborate, neurosis is related with physiological conditions, one's culture, factors that cause stress in people's lives. And according to Eagleton (1996, p. 167), such considerations cover the cultural, political, and economic aspects of life "... that lead a man towards disorder" (p. 167). In a similar vein, Freud proposes that the social and economic aspects of life play a crucial role in the individual stating "Under the influence of some cultural urges some civilizations...possibly the whole mankind has become neurotic" (Freud, 1962, p. 91).

The psychological analysis of Pinter's *The Caretaker* (1960) has been studied especially in terms of its characters. Nonetheless, the issue does not seem to have been studied in terms of the psychoanalytic theory of neurosis. As such, it would be valuable to analyse the main character, Aston, with special reference to neurotic disorder.

Gillen (1983) provided significant insight into the "torturous role of society" in making an individual "...doubt himself by placing impossible demands upon him and thus reduce him to an automaton" (p. 94). Jamil (2014) views Aston, the main character in *The Caretaker* (1960), as "the victimized person" who was suppressed by society. Moreover, according to Burkman (1971), Aston who "failed to make his escape" represents "a victim of society, and of his own mother, whose permission was needed for the operation" (p. 80). Likewise, Esslin (1980) makes the point that Aston was the victim of society. In particular, as was stressed by Jamil (2014), parental or social authority conditions human relations to a large extent and thus such irrational authority may be the cause of individual neurosis.

Secondly, the repressive effect of dominating society on the individual's life as a product of that society will be discussed by presenting relevant excerpts from the play. Considering Freud's theory of the repressed unconscious, the relation between the neurosis disorders and environmental effect will be discussed to determine the underlying cause of the characters' experiences in the play. Freud basically refers to biological factor to reveal the origins of neurotic disorders, yet his assertions on social aspects of the emergence of a neurosis reveal the role of social constructions on driving forces behind a neurosis as it follows:

One may question whether, and in what degree, it would be possible for a different cultural environment to do away with the two characteristics of human masses which make the guidance of human affairs so difficult. The experiment has not yet been made. Probably a certain percentage of mankind (owing to a pathological disposition or an excess of instinctual strength) will always remain asocial; but if it were feasible merely to reduce the majority that is hostile towards civilization to-day into a minority, a great deal would have been accomplished—perhaps that can be accomplished (Freud, 1961, p.9).

Analysing the play, it will be exposed that psychological disorders of the individuals can be attributed to the domineering and repressive authorities of society.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

In a psychoanalytic framework, *The Caretaker* (1960) written by Harold Pinter, will be examined to explore the effect of modern society and authorization on an individual's psychology. The aim is to expose the influence of the materialistic society on the individual's life as a product of that society by providing instances from the relevant part of the play. Analysing the text, it will be discovered that psychological disorders of the individuals can be attributed to the domineering and repressive authorities of society. In this sense, according to Freudian psychoanalytic theory, repressed unconscious ultimately gives rise to abnormal psychological processes and neurotic disorders such as extreme social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive neurosis and severe depression. Basically, the Freudian psychoanalytic focuses on exploring and analyzing the inner world of an individual. However, the psychic structure of an individual is formed in certain social conditions, which should be taken into account in explaining human behaviour.

Sigmund Freud came up with the idea of the primary division of human psyche which is between conscious and unconscious and enhanced his theory with the second topography (ego, id and superego) and developed the hypothesis of two principles which are the pleasure principle and the reality principle. Freud systematically developed the theory of the structure of human mind and emphasized the concept of 'the unconscious mind' as the primary source of human behaviour (Rennison, 2001, p.38-40).

Taking into consideration the Freudian psychoanalytic theory and Freudian social concepts on human psychology in a civilized world as a theoretical framework, the characters will be analysed. The interdisciplinary concepts on social psychology Freud developed and discussed in his works will light the way of examining the inner psyche of the characters in the play. In Freud's view, sociology can be applied psychology to analyze the behaviour of people in the social community (Freud, 1933, p. 179).

"In the individual mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended and justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well" (Freud, 1921, p. 69)

The psychoanalytic approach can be viewed as one of the modern approaches that are used in the application of interpretative analysis in literature in order to explore the mechanism finding out the hidden meaning of a literary text. It can be considered that the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis has always been enunciated by the academic field of literary criticism or literary theory (Hossain, 2017, p. 41).

Psychoanalysis is regarded as a psychological theory put forward in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Austrian Neurologist Sigmund Freud and some other theorists. Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality suggests that the interactions among the id, ego and superego bring on human behaviour. In this sense, Freud tends to attribute the cause of mental disorders to the unconscious mind. To him, repressed desires and impulses such as sexuality and aggression are seen as the main reasons for the psychological and neurotic disorders of people. However, Freud confirms that social domain is another main reason behind these psychological problems as it follows:

It was discovered that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration with society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals, and it was inferred from this that the abolition or reduction of those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness (Freud,1962, p.34).

The relationship between parents and children or between people and friends affects human relations to a large extent. Taking this into account, the difference in relationships can be revealed as one of the main reasons for individual neurosis. According to Freud, the environmental effect on the instinctive seeking of pleasure and avoiding pain to satisfy biological and psychological needs comes into collision with an individual's ability of the mind to assess the reality of the external world (Freud, 1962, 14). Individuals develop hostility to the external world because of the dissatisfaction of needs stemming from the restrictions of civilization. With these claims, Freud implies that the existing struggle between individuals with unsatisfied demands and repressive civilization can be considered as the core reason for the emergence of neuroses. In his *Freud and Psychoanalysis* (2001), Nick Rennison underlines social causation of neurosis by disclosing the role of civilization in cultivating the mental distress:

The evolution of civilisation is a constant struggle between altruism and egoism, between acquiescence to society's rules and the selfish fulfilment of individual desire. One result of this is that the growth of civilisation is inextricably bound up with an increase in the sense of guilt in the individual, since he or she is aware, both consciously and unconsciously, of those destructive and transgressive desires which exist in us all. Freud concludes by pondering (with his usual, innate gloominess) the question of whether our cultural development is enough to master the underlying human instinct for aggression and self-destruction (Rennison, 2001, p.53).

Whilst culture is seen as essential for individuals to pursue collective living by demanding renunciation of instincts, the tendency of individuals' frustration and self-destruction caused by the fear of external authority results in the development of neuroses.

### 3. THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Martin Esslin coined the term 'The Theatre of the Absurd' in 1961 by giving that title to his landmark book *The Theatre of the Absurd*(1961) in which he systematised the structure and subject matter of the particular plays and reveal the conventions of the Theatre of the Absurd (Bennett, 2005, p. 1). In order to elucidate the Theatre of the Absurd, Esslin attempts to define the word 'absurd' attributing to the philosophy of Albert Camus who wrote about the human condition of absurdity in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). Esslin indicates that destructive effects of the Second World War on the faith in science, nationalism and totalitarian fallacies result in the shattered condition of human beings. He denotes that, "By 1942, Albert Camus was calmly putting the question why, since life had lost all meaning, man should not seek escape in suicide" (Esslin, 1961, p.19). Esslin refers to *The Myth of Sisyphus* in which Camus portrays the human situation in a world of shattered beliefs:

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity (Camus, 1942, p.18).

Esslin explains the endeavour of the Theatre of the Absurd as the manifestation of "the sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought" (Esslin, 1961, p. 20). As he asserts, the playwrights of the Theatre of the Absurd intend to argue about the absurdity of

the human condition; they merely present it in being - that is, in terms of concrete stage images.

In respect to Esslin's utterance, it can be articulated that the Theatre of the Absurd is a literary movement that refers to particular plays written after World War II in order to express people's existentialist issues with a new mode of writing and new dramatic techniques. English and American playwrights aim to convey their audiences' concerns on the stage in the post-war period. The main themes of Absurdist theatre can be seen as a lack of communication isolation, loneliness and the main alienation of individuals in modern societies. As *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre and Literature of the Absurd* sets forth, psychological depression in societies after the war is the core issue for the Absurdist playwrights who attempt to disclose the distress, anxiety and constant failure in communication among individuals. The Absurdist theatre attempts to effectuate an allegorical vision driving people into their essential complexity about the basic existential inquiries. In this sense, the theatre of Absurd accentuates the absurdity of pre-established ideologies by making the audience aware of the pointless human condition. (Bennett, 2015, p.71)

#### **4. HAROLD PINTER AND *THE CARETAKER***

In his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*, Martin Esslin introduces Harold Pinter as an achiever of the status of a major force in the contemporary theatre among the younger generation of playwrights who followed in the footsteps of the pioneers of the Theatre of the Absurd (Esslin, 229). Harold Pinter was engaged in several dramatic forms such as the comedy of menace, dark comedy, and theatre of the absurd, the avant-garde and supra-realistic drama. His drama has been extensively studied concerning its technical aspects like dynamics of language, silences, and pauses, various characteristics of his dialogues, non-verbal communication, and sub-textual overtones (Vairavan, 2018).

*The Caretaker* is one of the most well-known plays of Pinter. It is Pinter's second full-length play, but it is generally considered his first masterpiece. The play has three acts and it was written in 1960. It can be considered as naturalist play having elements of tragedy and comedy as well. Pinter himself said that *The Caretaker* was a funny play to some extent and Pinter's own interest was beyond that funny aspect. Pinter included elements from his own life. Pinter's original intention was that Aston would kill Davies, but as the play unfolded, he relinquished this idea. The major themes in the play are the problems of communication; race and social class; the current political state in the 1950s in England; identity; language; and deception. It was first acted in 1960 and then acted for many times. It is still staged for special audiences and critics.

*The Caretaker* can be considered a psychological play including elements of power, innocence, or corruption. Some studies shed light on the sociological, cultural, and historical aspects of Pinter's plays. For instance, the theme of power was handled by Prantice (2000). Some other researchers also focused on Pinter from a Freudian perspective (see Jamil, 2014). Pinter also aims to astonish audiences through clear-cut distinctions between the modern and post-modern. Watt (1998) views Pinter as a post-modernist playwright and categorizes *The Caretaker* as a post-modernist play.

#### **5. A FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO HAROLD PINTER'S *THE CARETAKER***

One of the main issues in modern societies is the alienation of individuals from their surroundings as a result of which people often suffer from their repressed thoughts, loneliness

and isolation from their relationships in social spheres. In psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud explains this situation as neurosis which is manifested in behaviour of people experiencing emotional distress and unconscious conflict.

The Freudian psychoanalytic approach considers human mind as biological structure formed under certain environmental conditions by establishing a relation between structural and environmental influences. In this sense, it can be asserted that socio-cultural factors are also influential for the formation of human behaviour to some extent besides biological factors (Fenichel, 1999, p.6).

There appears an opposition between environmentally accepted normalities and individual discontentment that an individual discloses in the particular form of their discomfort as Ian Parker explains:

It is the kind of civilization that makes us discontented, and that reading of the phrase has led to a rich tradition of political analysis using psychoanalysis. However, while there are certainly aspects of capitalist culture that produce alienation and distress for the individuals who live in it, Freud is actually making a deeper point about the nature of our relations with others. Civilization refers to the particular set of technical accomplishments... Culture is what the infant enters as they navigate the Oedipus complex as a basic structure of dependency and then autonomy for the individual, and the title of Freud's study is actually 'the uneasiness inherent in culture'. There is no civilization that is not marked by this 'uneasiness', this contradiction between what we desire and those with whom we try to fulfil it...There is no independent point outside culture from which we can give diagnoses of its pathology, and even if one were pushed to imagine such an independent point it would not take the form of an individual (Parker, 2015, pp.73, 74).

Alienation can be viewed as the main concern of Harold Pinter in the play in which he tends to employ the theme of isolation and estrangement. In almost all modern societies, alienation is generally accepted as a social disorder that should be treated. In the play, Aston's mental disorder can be connected to the theme of alienation which is the main concern of the Absurdist theatre. To start analysing, in *The Caretaker*, Pinter depicts the mental suffering of Aston and the identity problems of each character. The characters of the play, Mick, Aston and Davies are depicted as detached to any social and political issue throughout the play. However, Pinter aims to present disclosure of the effect of social, political and economic conditions on the characters. It can be observed that the characters of the play are in quest for their identities in different ways and they all cope with the neurotic disorder at some point. In a way, their personality disorders imprison them in an alienated and isolated world since they are trapped in a repressive society. The playwright exposes the disturbing aspect of authoritative forces through presenting the character's afflictions in a row and the way the mental suffering of Aston is treated. Considering Aston as a psychoneurotic treated by electroshock therapy because of his discomfort towards society, the setting is completely representative of the internal world of Aston. In his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1962), Freud explains this tension between individual and civilization as a result of individual's discontentment for the demands of external authority (Freud, 1962, pp.74).

The play, *The Caretaker*, opens by describing Aston's room, which is cluttered and in a messy condition, representing Aston's chaotic state of mind. On the other hand, Pinter describes Aston as "wearing an old tweed overcoat, and under it a thin shabby dark-blue pinstripe suit, single-breasted, with a pullover and faded shirt and tie" (Pinter, 1960, p. 5). Based on Aston's appearance, it can be stated that the suit worn by Aston is related to integrity or conformity to authoritative forces which force him on lobotomy at a mental hospital. By making him wear a suit as a kind of uniform, the forces pursue him to transform his nonconformity to fit society. All through the play, Aston's preoccupation with electrical

works like fixing plugs can be seen as a token of his lobotomy experience which illustrates that his continual engagement in these kinds of electric works isolates him socially just as his lobotomy treatment makes him isolated and prevents him from participating a healthy communication and relations with others despite his attempts. In this sense, it can be claimed that in Freudian perspective Aston's overwhelming experience with electroshock treatment is reflected by his instant fight with electric works which represents his "psycho-neurosis" he tries to make conscious the experience in the repressed unconscious mind. In this regard, the continuous desire of Aston for electric repairing is psychologically related to the unconscious mind of Aston who experiences a lobotomy treatment.

Lack of communication can be considered as one of the most outstanding themes of the play. There appears an instant problem of communication among the three characters Aston, Davies and Mick all through the play, and their different way of understanding each other and different lifestyles prevent them from meeting in the middle. As an illustration, it can be observed that Mick and Aston are alienated from each other because they live in two different worlds; Aston lives in an isolated part of the house which he attempts to share with a tramp called Davies, Mick enjoys his days in different places. Even when they stay at the same house, there exists no strong interaction between them until the end of the play. These two brothers try to find companionship and end up with Davies. However, there appears no proper communication between Davies and the brothers, especially Aston. Their conversations are based upon repetition and unresolved conflict showing Aston's incapability to make a sensible connection in terms of meaning as it follows:

DAVIES: How many Blacks you got around here then?

ASTON: What?

DAVIES: You got any more Blacks around here?

ASTON: (holding out the shoes). See if these are any good (Pinter, 1960, p.12).

It can be clearly seen that there is an obvious ambiguity between Aston and Davies, presenting that Aston suffers from a lack of communication in society as an isolated individual. In his psyche, he can be viewed as trapped in his cage making him estranged from society. The image of the door and window are emphasized through repetition, indicating that Aston's attempt to go beyond his limitations and to attend the social sphere comes out with the action that Aston moves to the window and the door. In other words, his suffocated state is relieved through a sigh of relief, breathing soothing air near the window. In the psychoanalytical aspect, the conflict between Aston's super-ego and ego leads to social anxiety bringing along a lack of communication with which Aston's dominant superego gets himself punished to reduce anxiety. Freud asserts this conflict an individual experiences in his mind on the condition of social isolation.

The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it, is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment. Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it like a garrison in a conquered city... The sense of guilt is clearly only a fear of loss of love and social anxiety (Freud, 1962, p.70-72).



At the end of act II, the audience is exposed to Aston's unpleasant experience of shock treatment conducted with the consent of his mother as he brings into open:

ASTON: I used to go there quite a bit. Oh, years ago now. But I stopped. I used to like that place. I used to... talk about things. And these men, they used to listen, whenever I... had anything to say. Then one day they took me to a hospital, right outside London. They... got me there. I didn't want to go. Anyway... I tried to get out, quite a few times. But... it wasn't very easy. They asked me questions, in there. Got me in and asked me all sort of questions. he said, we're going to do something to your brain. He said... if we don't, you'll be in here for the rest of your life, but if we do, you stand a chance. You can go out, he said, and live like the others. What do you want to do to my brain, I said to him. But he just repeated what he'd said. Well, I wasn't a fool. I knew I was a minor. I knew he couldn't do anything to me without getting permission. I knew he had to get permission from my mother. So I wrote to her and told her what they were trying to do. But she signed their form, you see, giving them permission. I know that because he showed me her signature when I brought it up (Pinter, 1960, p. 52-53).

This monologue apparently sheds light on all the reasons behind the strangeness of Aston. However, on a psychological level, this oddity is attributed to social reality in a sense. The society in which Aston lives puts Aston in a limited environment in which he cannot communicate properly at all. As a matter of concern in the play, the theme of urban loneliness and lack of communication is conveyed through Aston's experiences with repressive shock treatment which brings him alienation from all forms of healthy relations. Out of loneliness and a strong need to make a connection with someone, Aston starts up a conversation with Davies idling in the street. Lack of communication stands out in a different way when the absence of a functional family is revealed in Aston's monologue:

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. They used to hold the man down, and this chief... the chief doctor, used to fit the pincers, something like earphones, he used to fit them on either side of the man's skull. There was a man holding the machine, you see, and he'd... turn it on, and the chief would just press these pincers on either side of the skull and keep them there....The trouble was... my thoughts... had become very slow... I couldn't think at all... I couldn't... get... my thoughts... together... uuuhh... I could... never quite get it... together. The trouble was, I couldn't hear what people were saying. I couldn't look to the right or the left, I had to look straight in front of me, because if I turned my head round... I used to sit in my room. That was when I lived with my mother. And my brother. He was younger than me. And I laid everything out, in order, in my room, all the things I knew were mine, but I didn't die. The thing is, I should have been dead. I should have died. Anyway, I feel much better now. But I don't talk to people now. I steer clear of places like that café. I never go into them now. I don't talk to anyone... like that. I've often thought of going back and trying to find the man who did that to me. But I want to do something first. I want to build that shed out in the garden (Pinter, 1960, p. 52-55).

In his monologue, Aston explicates his lack of communication and his unpleasant experience with the lobotomy of modern technology. Despite his attempt to have a connection with Davies by bringing him to house, Aston is stuck in a circle and his own zone and cannot move further towards Davies. In this way, Pinter seems to attack social barriers and limitations which blocks establishing proper communication in modern society. Living in an isolated room in a house which is located in a very crowded place with different kinds of people in London, Aston has no proper relationship or contact with the environment. As Freud suggested, the neurotic raises difficulties in his relations with his environment and the society he belongs to (1962, p. 60). The story with Davies is a futile attempt to communicate and shows that Aston loses even a minimum communication with Davies a man no one knows.

As the story behind Aston's personality is revealed as a neurotic disorder, the audience encounters social reality. In modern societies, there is social pressure and discontent on individuals because of the social norms people are forced to conform. Freud reveals this state of unconformity and its effect as follows:

It was discovered that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals, and it was inferred from this that the abolition or reduction of those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness. (Freud, 1962, p. 34)

Aston can be regarded as the representative of the oppressed people in society. Society can be considered responsible for Aston's psychological disorder since the authorities, doctors, mothers, representatives of society, force Aston to conform to the societal assertiveness and social norms which he rejects to conform. The problem with Aston is ironically shown as talkativeness before the treatment as he explicates "*I used to talk to them. I talked too much. That was my mistake*" (Pinter, 1960, p.52). The audience is not introduced to such details as the way he was talking or about what he was talking. It can be probably political talking, sexual talking or talking against the authority or social norms. The electroshock treatment forced by society or any kind of authority represents the fear which is tried to be created in order to take control of people.

In addition, Aston's ability to talk and think is taken away from him through the operation conducted by the hospital which represents a means of governmental authority. Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* employs exactly the same issue with *The Caretaker*. In Kesey's novel, the treatment is applied to rebellious and non-conformist 'patients' with no neurotic disorder in order to bring them under control. Similarly, Aston is applied electroshock therapy in order to eliminate his questioning ability and to make him fail to communicate properly anymore. Society refuses to take purely awake and insubmissive people in itself. Aston, considered as mad in society, is doomed to be controlled by the authorities and to be transformed into an individual free of risk for society. Pinter deals with this brutal and dictatorial treatment towards Aston when he presents a character Aston, whom society makes de-potentiated and spiritually paralyzed. Aston, who suffers from a lack of clear vision and damaged brain, explains how he used to be able to think and make decisions properly until his cognitive abilities are taken from him through the brutal treatment which makes him silenced. Aston's act of talking, thinking and questioning is imposed upon him as a 'mistake' as he suggests "That was my mistake." (p.52) Through Aston's monologue, Harold Pinter tends to disclose the effect of modern society on individuals. Individuals are forced to conform pre-established norms and barriers of society which push individuals towards loneliness, isolation and alienation.

As a result of the oppressive treatment of society, individuals cannot destroy the walls constructed between the members of the society, and alienation remains a serious problem in modern society which people are not able to overcome. Pinter gives the best example of this social reality when he shows the relationship between Aston and Davies or Aston and Mick. While Aston intends to bring an old and idle man into his house and to give him a place to stay, Aston cannot establish a proper connection with him and the problem of alienation remains unresolved. Considering electroshock therapy as a tool of the control mechanism of authoritarian forces, Aston is a representative for the victims of society who are made alienated and silenced in order to take them under control because of their unwillingness to conform societal assertiveness. Freud specifies the practice of civilization and its destructing impacts on social relationships between individuals:

It is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instinct... This cultural frustration dominates the large field of social relationship between human beings. It is the cause of the hostility against which all civilizations have to struggle...If the loss is not compensated for economically, one can be certain that serious disorder will ensue (1962, p.44).

All in all, the repressive effects of dominating society on the individual's life are handled by Pinter in his play. As a product of that society, Aston is a perfect example of the victims of society who are exposed to political social and religious enforcements. Taking into consideration the neurotic disabilities of Aston, psychological disorders of the individuals can be attributed to the domineering and repressive authorities of society. With a detailed analysis of the play and characters especially Aston, it can be deduced that as a product of the system, Aston is victimized to live with his paralyzed state of mind that is distant from normalities of the psychological realm. His state ends up with the failure of communication and proper relations with people in the social sphere. As a matter of fact, society is held to account by leading people to live in limitations with their neurotic disorders just as Aston leads his life in a limited and isolated zone.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In an analysis of *The Caretaker*, by Harold Pinter, in the light of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the paper comes up with the conclusion that as social beings, individuals are subject to lose their healthy connections and freedom of expressing themselves in such societies ruled by authoritative forces. Pinter's each character in *The Caretaker* represents a vicious circle for the loss of solidarity and communication in a civilized world. In Freudian psychoanalysis, psychological disorders or an individual's repressed thoughts and mental distress can be examined by considering social and cultural aspects. It is a practice of "cultural representations of internal mental states and social relations" (Parker, 2015, p.9).

The restrictions and the reduction of human instincts are enforced to individuals through the practice of civilizations in social reality and result in the emergence of hostility between society and individuals who resist conforming its exercise of unrestricted domination. As Freud suggests in *The Future of an Illusion*, only the authority that holds the absolute power could unrestrictedly remain satisfied and happy in the face of the restrictions of civilization. (1961, p. 15) In *The Caretaker*, inner psyche and behaviour of the characters are analyzed to reflect our present-day social reality that reveals the core reasons behind neurotic disorders. The characters of the play represent people who tend to develop a hostile attitude towards the external world because of their restricted demands and suppressed urges. The clash between Aston's super-ego and ego gives rise to his social isolation as a way of self-punishment directed by his superego, which can be interpreted as a dysfunctional internal working of mechanism of the human mind in the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective.

The only possible way to scrutinize the psychological problems of an individual is to go deeper into the culture and society which the individual belongs to. Conducting an inquiry on an individual subject should require considering the product of particular cultural and institutional conditions. In this sense, the modern society which Aston, Davies and Mick live in can be regarded as the root cause of mental disorders and social estrangement. On one side society seeks profit of ensuring the total control under its members by making them conformists, on the other side, this oppression and sense of surveillance turn these people into isolated and bereft individuals in a crowded modern society. Aston's story represents an individual, who tries to survive in a hostile world, where his individuality is not in safe hands.

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