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MASTER THESIS

THE THEME OF
LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND ALIENATION
IN THE CARETAKER BY HAROLD PINTER
AND
THE ZOO STORY BY EDWARD ALBEE

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The Theme of Lack of Communication and Alienation

In *The Caretaker* By Harold PINTER

And *The Zoo Story* By Edward ALBEE

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ABSTRACT

The Theme of “Lack of Communication and Alienation” in *The Caretaker* by Harold PINTER and *The Zoo Story* by Edward ALBEE

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Harold Pinter’s *The Caretaker* (1960) and Edward Albee’s *The Zoo Story* (1959), two plays written in the style of Absurd Drama, build around the theme of man’s alienation in society resulting from the lack of communication that characterizes the modern society. Pinter and Albee are among the most prominent dramatists in English and American Literature respectively. Both playwrights are exponents of the Theater of the Absurd, which became popular after World War II. In their plays, Pinter and Albee portray the predicament of mankind and the alienated existence of human beings. Accordingly, this study focuses particularly on the theme of estrangement as reflected in the interaction of the characters in both plays -Aston, Mick and Davies in *The Caretaker*, and Jerry and Peter in *The Zoo Story*- all of whom are the victims of alienation caused by lack of communication. These characters are estranged from their families and friends. Their alienation is either imposed upon them by others or results from their own nature. The experiences they live through cause these characters to become alienated from the society in which they live. These figures are not capable of connecting or communicating with other people, a characteristic feature of the plays written in the tradition of Absurd Drama.

This problematic experience, coupled with the indifference of the outside world to their predicament, drift these characters to alienation, sometimes to death.

ÖZ

Harold PINTER’ın Kapıcı ve Edward ALBEE’nin Hayvanat

Bahçesi Hikayesi Adlı Oyunlarında “İletişim Eksikliği ve

Yabancılaşma” Teması

Rabia ARIKAN

YÜKSEK LİSANS, İNGİLİZ EDEBİYATI VE KÜLTÜR İNCELEMELERİ

BÖLÜMÜ

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“Uyumsuzluk Tiyatrosu”(Anlamsız Tiyatro) tarzında yazılmış olan Harold Pinter’in *The Caretaker* (Kapıcı-Bakıcı) (1960) ve Edward Albee’nin *The Zoo Story* (Hayvanat Bahçesi Hikayesi) (1959) adlı oyunları, modern toplumda yaşanan iletişim eksikliği kaynaklı, bireyin yabancılaşması teması etrafında şekillenir. Pinter ve Albee İngiliz ve Amerikan Edebiyatları’nın önde gelen oyun yazarları arasında yer alır. Her iki yazar da II. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında popülarite kazanan anlamsız tiyatro alanında eserler vermiş olup, özellikle bu iki oyunda insanın içinde bulunduğu bunalımları ve giderek artan yabancılaşma duygusunu eserlerine yansıtmışlardır. Bu çalışma özellikle her iki oyunda yer alan karakterler arasında yaşanan etkileşimler sonucu bireyde ortaya çıkan yabancılaşma duygusunu ele alır. *The Caretaker* adlı oyunda Aston, Mick ve Davies, *The Zoo Story*’de Jerry ve Peter karakterleri, iletişim kopukluğu nedeniyle yabancılaşma duygusu yaşayan insanlar olarak karşımıza çıkarlar. Aile ve arkadaşlarından yabancılaşmış olan bu karakterlerin içinde bulunduğu bu durum etrafındaki insanlar tarafından dayatılmış olabileceği gibi kendi doğalarından da kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Bu karakterlerin yaşadıkları olaylar, içinde yaşadıkları toplumla bağlarının kopmasına yol açar. Anlamsız Tiyatro geleneği içinde yer alan eserlerde olduğu gibi, söz konusu iki oyundaki karakterler diğer

insanlarla sađlıklı bir iletiřim kurma becerisine sahip deđildirler. Bu problemlili yařantı üzerine bir de dıř dũnyanın onların yařadığı sorunlara karřı duyarsızlığı eklendiğinde, bu durum söz konusu karakterleri yabancılařmaya, hatta bazen ölüme kadar götürür.

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INTRODUCTION

Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker* (1960) and Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* (1959), two plays written in the style of Absurd Drama, build around the theme of man's alienation in modern society, which is caused by lack of communication between individuals and people's indifference to one another.

Harold Pinter is one of the prominent playwrights of English Literature in the second half of the twentieth century. Pinter's Jewish background might have been a significant factor in his deep interest in the theme of alienation. This theme lies in the core of *The Caretaker* as well as many of his plays. Published in 1960, *The Caretaker* established Pinter as a prominent playwright both in England and abroad. (Ovens.2009: 30) His early plays reflected the deep influence of absurdist drama as seen in the works of Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco, but Pinter developed a personal style which included more naturalistic elements than theirs. Pinter gives his own message to the audience without attempting to preach it through his characters. Everything is two-sided in his plays; there is often one question, but a number of explanations for that question. Pinter's plays are characterized by a sense of horror and fear, which is a reflection of factors such as his Jewish background, the outbreak of World War II, and the sense of depression that people suffered in the aftermath of the war. However, Pinter's plays hold up a mirror to the contemporary society, depicting people with typical English manners. The typical setting of his plays is a room, which is like a refuge or prison for the individual. All events that happen in this setting reveal the alienated existence of the individual. The conflicts between characters bring out their loneliness, isolation, alienation as well as their desires and obsessions. The representation of these feelings and situations causes deformation in language which becomes a barrier to communication. (Greenbalt.2012:2815)

In 1958, the American playwright Edward Albee published his major work, *The Zoo Story*, a one-act play that enabled him to achieve immediate popularity in

the world of drama. The play reveals Albee's keen observation of human alienation through the portrayal of two male characters meeting in a park, and then quarrelling over a trivial matter -the possession of a bench in the park. The gap between their lives and the absurdity of their communication give rise to a fatal conflict that culminates in an act of self-inflicted violence.

The Theatre of the Absurd

The term 'absurd' originally means "out of harmony with reason and propriety, incongruous, unreasonable, and illogical." In common usage the word absurd may simply mean 'ridiculous'. In his essay on Kafka, Eugène Ionesco defined his conception of the term as follows: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose....Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless." (Esslin.1968: 23)

"The Theatre of the Absurd" refers to particular plays written after World War II by European and American playwrights who wanted to come up with a new style of writing, a new approach to drama, an original means of expression, experimental dramatic techniques, and new images. As a result of these developments, The Theatre of the Absurd came into existence. The writers who adopted this style shared a similar view of life and dealt with subjects such as worthlessness of life, lack of communication, alienation, isolation and loneliness, which have resulted from the pessimism, despair and depression caused by The World War II.

Writers of the Absurdist Drama changed the traditional style of drama with a view to expressing sensation, hopelessness and find meaning in the world. The plays that fall into the category of "The Theatre of the Absurd" reflect the contradictions of our age. (Albee.1962: 12) Writers of The Theatre of the Absurd feel themselves outside of the world and reveal their disrupted relationship with society as well as their sense of isolation and anxiety in the Western World. (Esslin.1968: 22)

The Theatre of Absurd originated in Paris, but eventually spread over Britain, Spain, Italy, Germany, Eastern Europe and the United States. The movement emerged as a new trend in the world of drama with the plays of Eugène Ionesco from Romania, Samuel Beckett from Ireland, Jean Genet from France and Arthur Adamov

from Russia. (Esslin.1968: 27) When these plays were put on stage, the audience and critics got surprised because these plays disrupted all the traditions of the mainstream theatre. Contrary to conventional expectations, these plays did not contain any meaningful dialogue; rather, they were filled with unfinished, meaningless words without any beginning or end. (Albee.1962:7)

The Theatre of the Absurd, tends towards radical devaluation of language, toward a poetry that is to emerge from the concrete and objectified images of the stage itself. The element of language still plays an important part in this conception, but happens on the stage transcends, and often contradicts, the words spoken by the characters. In Ionesco's *The Chairs*, for example, the poetic content of a powerfully poetic content of powerfully poetic play does not lie in the banal words that are uttered but in the fact that they are spoken to an ever growing number of empty chairs. (Esslin.1968: 26)

The Theatre of the Absurd is often associated with Existentialism, a philosophy that dominated the literary circles in Paris during the years when the Theatre of the Absurd was beginning to flourish. Among the main themes of the Theatre of the Absurd are the feelings of grief and sadness in human beings, and the essential absurdity of human behaviours. Existentialist dramatists like Sartre and Camus reflect in their works the absurdity of human condition from their own perspectives. The weakening of religious faith as well as the emergence of nationalism and various totalitarian regimes characterized the period before and after World War II. In 1942, Albert Camus was seriously considering suicide as an alternative to escape from the loss of meaning in human life. Camus explored the troubled existence of humanity in his work "The Myth of Sisyphus":

For all the similarities between Existentialist theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd, it would be wrong to assume that they refer to the same kind of dramatic work. Actually, there is a remarkable difference between the two forms of theatre. Unlike the Existentialist theatre, the Theatre of the Absurd is characterized by an attempt to combine form and subject-matter (Esslin 1961: 24)

If a good play must have clearly constructed story, these have no

story or plot to speak of; if a good story is judged by subtlety of characterization and motivation, these are often without recognizable characters and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets: if a good story is to hold the mirror up to nature and portray the manners and mannerisms of the age in finely observed sketches, these seem often to be reflections of dreams and nightmares; if a good play relies on witty repartee and pointed dialogue, these often consist of incoherent babblings. (Esslin.1968: 23)

Absurdist plays are marked by a curious blend of comic elements such as black humour with a tragic style. These elements in absurdist theatre are so closely intertwined that they cannot be separated from each other. (Ovens.2009: 43) Martin Esslin, who coined the term “Theatre of the Absurd”, defined the “Theatre of the Absurd” as a dramatic form that “strives to express its 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.” (Bloom.2008: 29) To quote Esslin:

The social and spiritual reasons for such a sense of loss of meaning are manifold and complex: the waning of religious faith that had started with Enlightenment and led Nietzsche to speak of the ‘death of God’ by the eighteen–eighties; the breakdown of the liberal faith in inevitable social progress in the wake of World War I; the disillusionment with the hopes of radical soviet revolution as predicted by Marx and Stalin had turned into a totalitarian tyranny; the relapse into barbarism, mass murder, genocide in the Hitler’s brief rule over Europe during the World War II ; and, in the aftermath of that war, the spread of spiritual emptiness in the outwardly prosperous and affluent societies of Western Europe and United States. There can be no doubt; for many intelligent and sensitive human beings the world of the mid twentieth century has lost its meaning and has simply ceased to make sense. Suddenly man sees himself faced with universe that is both frightening and illogical-in a word: absurd. (Albee.1962: 13)

Arthur Adamov's play *The Confession*, opens with a statement which reflects "the metaphysical anguish" that underlies Existentialist literature and the Theatre of the Absurd:

What is there? I know first of all that I am. But who am I? All I know of myself is that I suffer. And if I suffer it is because at the origin of myself there is mutilation, separation. I am separated. What I am separated from – I cannot name it. But I am separated.

As Adamov points out in his notes; "Formerly it was called God. Today it no longer has any name. A deep sense of alienation, the feeling that time weighs on him with all its dark power, a deep feeling of passivity- these are some of the symptoms of his spiritual sickness."(Esslin.1968: 89)

Another exponent of Absurd Drama, Ionesco depicts in his works the meaninglessness of human communication and despair of human beings as well as their sadness and fear. In his plays, language ceases to be a means by which individuals can meaningfully communicate with each other. Ionesco's characters are overpowered by a deep sense of isolation. This feeling seems to arise from the society itself, which forms a barrier to any meaningful relationship or communication that can be formed between human beings. Ionesco expresses his thoughts over man's plight in contemporary society as follows:

To discover the fundamental problem common to all mankind, I must ask myself what my fundamental problem is, what my most ineradicable fear is. I am certain then to find the problems and fears of literally everyone. That is the true road into my own darkness, our darkness, which I bring to the light of day...A work of art is the expression of an incommunicable reality that one tries to communicate-and which sometimes can be communicated. That is paradox and its truth. (Esslin.1968:127)

From the beginning, Absurdist playwrights aimed to use language for the purpose of expressing the prevalent human mood in modern world. The language used in the

absurdist plays seem to be different from conventional forms. In this type of drama, everything becomes irrelevant -even language. As a means of communication, language becomes meaningless both in form and content. Generally, words fail to express an individual's feelings and experiences. In the Theatre of the Absurd, language becomes unreliable and deficient. Repetitions are very common. Each character repeats the other's words, asks meaningless questions, and makes unnecessary explanations about situations and events. Loss of meaning in human existence causes people to have serious doubts about the function of language as a basic tool of communication. Language becomes deformed and dysfunctional, and so do human relations. This results in the formation of an atmosphere in society where people are unwilling to communicate with one another. This situation finds reflection in literature as well. "Waiting for Godot", in which "Beckett parodies and mocks the language of philosophy and in Luck's famous speech", is a striking example that can be cited to illustrate this point. Similarly, Harold Pinter "reveals that everyday conversation is largely devoid of logic and sense, is in fact nonsensical." This situation becomes all the more surprising when one considers the fact that Pinter is a writer "whose uncanny accuracy in the reproduction of real conversation among English people has earned him the reputation of having a tape-recorder built into his memory" (Albee.1962: 14)

The French writer Alfred Jarry's "Ubi Roi", a play first performed in 1896, is often considered to be a significant landmark that foreshadows the rise of the Theatre of the Absurd. (Albee.1962: 16) Yet, critics widely agree that the Theatre of the Absurd in its true sense begins with the performance of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" in 1953 (published in 1952) and Eugene Ionesco's "Bald Prima Donna" (written in 1948) (Albee.1962: 16) To quote Esslin:

Waiting for Godot received his first impressions of the type of drama against which he reacted in his rejection of what Beckett has called 'the grotesque fallacy of realistic art-that miserable statement of line and surface' and the penny-a-line vulgarity of a literature of notations. (Esslin.1968:29)

Beckett does not intend to express his feelings, write a story or give any moral lessons to the audience. Thus, a play like “Waiting for Godot” can be regarded as a dramatic work even though nothing happens in the play, which suggests that nothing of significance can ever occur in human life.(Albee.1962: 11).The repetitive disillusionment of the characters is the main theme of the play. There is no story and event; ‘Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it’s awful’(Esslin.1968: 45) As Esslin puts it,

The sequence of events and the dialogue in each act are different. Each time the two tramps encounter another pair of characters, Pozzo and Lucky, master and slave, under differing circumstances; in each act Vladimir and Estragon attempt suicide and fail, for differing reasons; but these variations merely serve to emphasize the essential sameness of the situation(Esslin.1968: 45)

Alan Schneider, the director of the first production of Waiting for Godot in the U.S, once asked Beckett the meaning of Godot, who it is. Beckett answered: ‘If I knew, I would have said so in the play.’ (Esslin.1968: 43)To quote Esslin:

The reception of Waiting for Godot at San Quentin, the wide acclaim given to plays by Ionesco, Adamov, Pinter and others, testify that these plays, which are so often superciliously dismissed as nonsense or mystification, have something to say that and can be understood.(Esslin.1968: 21)

In his study comparing Albee, Pinter and Beckett, Robert Mayberry finds similarities among these playwrights in terms of their techniques of bringing the audience closer to the reality. These writers break the traditional patterns of theatre and attempt to create a new form. According to Mayberry, Albee and Pinter have not been so “persistent” as Beckett in trying to create new forms, for “Box-Mao-Box” is Albee’s only play written in this direction. In defining and exploring this type of Absurd theatre, Mayberry thinks that Albee usually engages in this practice in a superficial way instead of fully committing himself to this enterprise. (Jackson: 8)

Pinter and Albee were inspired by many of the features of the Absurdist Theatre, which is clearly seen in the manner they employ absurdist elements in their plays. Both playwrights contributed to this trend in their own ways. Their plays aim to draw attention to loss of values and broken human relationships. (Ovens.2009: 43)

Harold Pinter as a Writer of the Theatre of the Absurd

Harold Pinter is considered by Martin Esslin to be the pioneer of absurdism in British Drama. Esslin maintains that Pinter “takes as his starting point, in man’s confrontation with himself and the nature of his own being, that fundamental anxiety which is nothing less than a living basic awareness of the threat of non-being, of annihilation.’ (Peacock.1997: 55) According to Esslin, Pinter intends to convey “the enigmatic and problematic nature of human existence.” Esslin further argues that Pinter’s plays are basically “reflections on, and allegories of, the human condition,” though the situations that are depicted seem to be realistic on the surface. Viewed as a whole, Pinter’s plays stress the precarious and troubled nature of the human condition.(natashaobrain, Harold-pinters-play/The Birthday Party) Harold Pinter extends Beckett’s absurdist ideas and adopts the Absurd Drama to emphasize social relationships. (Ovens.2009: 43)

Among the favourite themes found in Pinter’s plays are the isolated individual trapped in a hostile world, a fear of authority, a sense of guilt, and the prospect of punishment. His characters are overpowered by feelings of fear, insecurity, anxiety, and guilt. (Peacock. 1997: 50) The anxieties these characters feel can be regarded as a reflection of the anxieties commonly felt in British society in 1950s and 1960s. (Peacock.1997: 52)

Loss of faith in reason and in the reliability of experiences based on rational approaches is the most remarkable characteristic of the Theatre of the Absurd. Absurdist plays are full of unanswered questions as well as illogical and confusing arguments which lead the audience to no specific conclusion. The absurdity inherent in the language used in his works gives rise to the absurd behaviours of the characters. In his article ‘Pinter and Absurd’, Esslin comments on Pinter’s characters,

their loneliness, lack of communication, as well as the small and closed settings they live in:

[His characters exist at a point, that is,] when they are back in their rooms confronted with the basic problem of being. We are thus seeing Pinter's characters in the process of their essential adjustment to the world, at the point at which they have to solve their basic problem, whether they are able to confront, to come to terms with, reality at all. It is only after they have made this fundamental adjustment that they will be able to become part of society and share in the games of sex or politics. (Esslin.1968: 56)

Esslin's view is confirmed by Pinter's comment that his characters live "at the edge of their living, where they living pretty much alone." (Peacock.1997: 56) The themes of lack of communication, failed relationships, individual's struggle for dominance are fundamental to Pinter's plays, sketches and screenplays. In his works, Pinter draws attention to the struggle of his characters to achieve dominance over others. On the other hand, most of his characters suffer from a failure to communicate with other people, which often lead to serious conflicts between them. Mostly, his characters are reluctant to, even scared of, communicating with any other human being.

Pinter acknowledges communication as key to the central conflict, not the ability to communicate as commonly noted, but "a deliberate evasion of communication." He says communication "is so frightening "that it results in "continual cross talk" to evade it. Of the 'Light the kettle/Light the gas" argument, he says that the characters deliberately argue to avoid the issue "that they are both in fact frightened of their condition, of their situation, of their state. (Prentice.1991: 23)

Pinter's characters mainly fall into two categories: dominant and recessive ones. Dominant characters in his plays act as if they did not care about the events that occur around them. Still, these characters exercise full control over the actions that happen in their surroundings with their antagonistic behaviours. They do not let others interfere with their own decisions. These characters dominate the whole action with their aggressive behaviours, mostly by threatening and attacking others. The audience sympathizes with the recessive character who arouses pity for his painful experiences.

Pinter's characters are involved in an existential struggle so as to protect themselves from threats against their autonomy and their personal relationships. (Prentice.1991: 32) The existential dilemma of Pinter's characters is the threat to their autonomy. (Peacock.1997: 56) This accounts for the animalistic behaviours and attitudes of Pinter's characters. Their language can best be described by the three essential features of animals; "fight, flight and mimetism" (Bloom.1987: 91) The major characters in his plays such as Stanley, Davies, Teddy, Spooner, Jerry make use of language as a means of communication in order to attack, fight or conceal what they are. Pinter differs from the other writers of the Absurd Drama in that he draws attention less to the difficulty of communication than to the danger involved in it. Pinter's characters are not willing to communicate because they are afraid that it would threaten their individual existence. As Pinter once put it, in his plays "communication is a fearful matter" (Peacock.1997: 46) Information shared with another person may turn out to be a weapon directed against the individual who communicates that information.

I think we communicate only too well, in our silence, in
what is unsaid, that what takes place is continual evasion,
desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves.
Communication is too alarming. To enter into someone else's
life is too frightening, to disclose to others the poverty within
us is too fearsome a possibility. (Bloom.1987:91)

Martin Esslin comments on the kind of language used by Pinter's characters with an example from *The Caretaker*: "inarticulate, incoherent, tautological and nonsensical speech might be as dramatic as verbal brilliance when it could be treated simply as

an element of action.” (Bloom.1987:101) To illustrate this with an example, Davies, in *The Caretaker*, speaks with bad grammar: “What about them shoes I come all the way to get I hear you was giving away?”

The most notable characteristic of Pinter’s plays is the room image, which serves as a setting that highlights the lack of communication and sense of loneliness the characters experience. He expresses this situation as follows:

Two people in a room-I am dealing a great deal of the time with this image of two people in a room. The curtain goes up on the stage, and I see it as a very potent question: What is going to happen to these people in the room? Is someone going to open the door and come in? The starting point of Pinter’s theatre is thus a return to some of the basic elements of drama-the suspense created by the elementary ingredients of pure, preliterate theatre: a stage, two people, a door; a poetic image of an undefined fear and expectation. When asked by a critic what his two people in his room are afraid of, Pinter replied, “Obviously, they are scared of what is outside the room. Outside the room there is a world bearing upon them which is frightening. I am sure it is frightening to you and me as well.” (Esslin.1968:266)

Harold Pinter emphasizes the need for living as whole human being with integrity as well as acting with virtue and ethics. Pinter’s works question the traditional values with a view to helping the audience achieve insight into human existence. Generally, Pinter’s plays take place in a single and imprisoned room that symbolizes the world of its inhabitants. His plays investigate the far reaches of the human psyche. Their ultimate goal is to deal with the traumas people experience and contribute to the solution of the problems they encounter. By so doing, Pinter aims to reveal the psychological disturbance of human beings in his attempt to explore the inner world of human psyche and sensibility. (Prentice.1991: 35)

Pinter’s plays express our state of lack of communication, alienation, loneliness, meaninglessness, estrangement and isolation. His plays show the failure of human communication, efforts to convert their situation and their confrontation. According to Pinter, everyone has a private world belonging to no one else but

himself. The intruder is found offensive, for the characters do not want to share their private space with others since this will mean uncertainty and possibility of change, which “is unknown, unpredictable, and threatening.” Hence, characters try to safeguard their personal space at all costs, for this is vital to their individual autonomy. (Peacock: 1997, 44)

Characters . . . find themselves having to adjust, in fairly radical ways, to circumstances that require them or force them to change what they are and who they have been. Their ability to affect or resist such change varies from case to case, as do the benefits and liabilities involved in their attempts to adapt to changing circumstances. It is in this context that communication problems regularly occur, but these are usually manifestations of equally important issues to do with commitment, continuity and control. (Bloom.1987: 35)

Harold Pinter wrote plays dealing with the theme of loneliness induced by lack of communication, coupled with a sharp sensitivity toward alienated individuals. The following quotation by Esslin is a comment on Pinter’s dramatic works:

Pinter, who acknowledges Kafka and Beckett among his literary heroes, combines realism with an intuition of the absurdity of human existence. In his later work he has shed some of the allegorical symbolism of his beginnings, but even in seemingly realistic plays like *The Collection* there is an absence of motivation and solution, a multiple ambiguity and a sense of non-communication which transforms the seemingly realistic account of humdrum adultery into a poetic image of the human condition. (Albee.1962: 19)

Edward Albee as a Writer of the Theatre of the Absurd

Like Harold Pinter, Edward Albee is considered a member of the Theatre of the Absurd movement. Albee uses the techniques of Absurd Drama to criticize the

idea of American optimism. In fact, Albee's early plays "*The Zoo Story*", "*The Sandbox*", "*The American Dream*", and "*The Death of Bessie Smith*" have characteristics that are commonly associated with tradition of the Theatre of the Absurd. In his notable work *The Theatre of Absurd*, Martin Esslin associates Albee with this tradition saying, "Edward Albee comes into the category of the Theatre of The Absurd precisely because his works attacks the very foundations of American optimism." (Jackson: 63)

Martin Esslin considers "*American Dream*" to be a critical work in the development of the American Drama simply because the play is filled with the clichés commonly used in American society. He also makes a point of Pinter's use, in the play, of words and phrases that make no sense. Like Esslin, Brian Way emphasizes Albee's use of absurd elements as a means of social criticism, maintaining that Albee employs absurdist techniques to highlight the emptiness and futility "the American Way of Life". According to Brian Way, Albee does not fully accept the arguments of Absurdist dramatists such as Ionesco, Pinter, or Beckett. In his research exploring Edward Albee's relationship to Absurdism, Brian Way regards the writer as caught between the "apparent security of realism and the temptation to experiment." (Jackson: 8) In Albee's plays it is the American society, rather than the whole universe, which is depicted as absurd. In most of his plays, Albee portrays a world that looks both absurd and realistic, which seems to be the major reason why he fails to achieve "the poetic power" of the playwrights cited above. (Jackson: 8)

In his short play, "*American Dream*", Albee concerns himself with the representation of the American way of life to reveal his strong disapproval of the false values and ideals that prevail in the American society. This accounts for why this play can be read as a bitter social satire. As Wendell V. Harris puts it,

(The play) is a satire directed against the emasculated men and domineering women, the heartlessness, the glitteringly hollow goals and ideals which Albee seems to see on every side in contemporary America.(Jackson: 11)

There are other critics who voiced their opinions about Albee's role in the development of Absurd Drama. In a debate with Faubion Bowers in *Theatre Arts* in

1962, Glenn M. Loney emphasized the contribution of Albee's plays to the Theatre of the Absurd considering him "the most talented and significant contributor to the literature.....of the Absurd....", and thus giving special credit to the planning and purpose in his plays. Loney argues that like his other plays, "Bessie Smith and Virginia Woolf"; "*The Zoo Story*" is essentially realistic," though there are also absurd elements in it. (Jackson: 7)

Edward Albee was praised by Loney for being "the least Absurd of the Absurdist." (Jackson:7) On the other hand, Robert H. Deutsch makes a comparison between *The Zoo Story* and Ionesco's "The Bald Primadonna", arguing that "Albee employs only a slight distortion from expected reality"; however, he still categorizes Albee as an author writing within the Absurdist tradition. According to Deutsch, the Theatre of the Absurd ceased to be an avant-garde movement with such writers as Albee who contributed significantly to improving this genre. (Jackson: 8) Albee expresses his own feelings when he was writing *The Zoo Story* how he identifies himself with it:

Something very, very interesting happened with the writing of the play. I didn't discover suddenly that I was a playwright; I discovered that I had been a playwright all my life, but I didn't know it because I hadn't written plays...And so when I wrote *The Zoo Story*, I was able to start practicing my "nature" fully (Raudene.1987:4)

Albee talks about his heroes: "I have learned that neither kindness nor cruelty by themselves, independent of each other, creates any effect beyond themselves; and I have learned that the two combined, together, at the same time, are the teaching emotion."(Raudene.1987:38) Albee believes in the value of human beings. His characters are different from those of Ionesco and Beckett in this respect. Albee's characters suffer from having to living in an absurd society, but they are aware of the opportunity to achieve "growth and change" (Raudene.1987: 22)

In order to live the effects of this situation Albee's characters examine "the nature of his or her values, predicaments, and relationships. To live honestly-as Jerry in *The Zoo Story* and Grandma in "The Sandbox"and George and Martha in "Who's

Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” And Tobias in “A Delicate Balance” and “The Wife in All Over” and Charlie in “Seascape” and Jo in “The Lady from Dubuque and Himself” in “The Man Who Had Three Arms” discover- is a liberating quality that frees in the mind, even at the risk of facing a grimly deterministic world in which one suddenly feels the utter precariousness of existence.”(Raudene.1987: 24) The quotation below suggests that Albee’s characters represent human predicament at large:

Physical, psychological, and spiritual forces stand as the elements that so often converge within Albee’s characters. Such an intermixture, moreover, precipitates an elemental anxiety, what Albee calls “a personal, private yowl” that “has something to do” with anguish of us all. (Raudene.1987: 21)

CHAPTER I

THE THEME OF LACK OF COMMUNICATION IN THE CARETAKER

Lack of communication is one of the significant features of Pinter's plays. The problem of communication in characters, their behaviours, lives and circumstances constitute an impediment on them understanding each other. This chapter will be concerned with an examination of the concept of alienation in two plays written in the tradition of Absurd Drama *The Caretaker* and *The Zoo Story* by focusing on the similar experiences of the characters in these two plays. Jerry in *The Zoo Story* lives in a rooming house, isolated from society and devoid of any sympathy from the people he lives together with. He desperately seeks a remedy to his nameless existence and ultimately dies in the zoo. Likewise, Aston and Mick in Pinter's *The Caretaker* are two alienated brothers, who live in an isolated dark room and try to find out their essential nature by a man called Davies, who represents society. Aston and Mick make a place for themselves in a life of loneliness, look for a companion to endure their life, but ironically find nothing except the bitter reality of their isolation. The dramatic fates of the protagonists, their consequent alienation, prove inevitable in an indifferent, even a hostile world.

The Caretaker is divided into three acts and takes place in a period of two weeks. Pinter creates a dramatic situation in which three working-class men confront each other. The action takes place in a single room owned by Mick (in his late twenties), the patriarch of the family. Currently, Mick lives together with his elder brother Aston (in his thirties), who has been suffering from mental problems since he was made to undergo a severe electro-shock treatment in a psychiatric hospital. Aston meets an old man named Davies in a nearby cafe. Aston has saved Davies from a fight and he offers to give him a bed for the night. Davies is an outsider invited by Aston to stay with them for a while. Davies admits this invitation and tries to become part of the family; getting closer now to Aston, then to Mick, playing one

against the other. Although the two brothers do not get on well at first, ultimately they do not give up each other, acknowledging the reality of brotherhood.

The Caretaker opens with Mick looking carefully around the room. There is a Buddha sitting on a gas stove. When hearing the noise of someone approaching, Mick quickly goes out. Aston and Davies enter the room. Davies is angry about the treatment he was subjected to in the café and shouts by declaring his hatred for: “Poles, Greeks and Blacks”. (Pinter.1960:6) He tells Aston that he needs a new pair of shoes. Davies confesses that his real name is Bernard Jenkins, and that he wants to have a real identity. The next morning, Aston gets up early and wakes Davies up, complaining that he couldn’t sleep because of the noise. Aston is about to leave, but first gives Davies a door-key and begins an investigation in the room. Meanwhile, Mick enters silently to put his own keys into his pocket. After watching Davies for a while, Mick pushes him down to the floor. Then, Mick checks Davies’s trousers under the blankets.

In the second act, Davies tries to explain to Mick that his name is Jenkins that he wants his trousers back. He defends himself saying that he is not an intruder and that he has been invited to stay in the room. Mick asks Davies a series of questions to find out what kind man he is. Mick insists that he is the owner of the house. Then, Aston comes in with Davies’s bag, which he had left in the café. The two brothers begin playing a game in which they throw Davies’s bag at each other, trying not to let Davies get his bag. Finally, Davies manages to get hold of it and returns to his bed. After Mick leaves the room, Aston tells Davies about the room, making it clear that it belongs to Mick. Aston also points out that he is going to decorate the upper part of the house after he finishes the shed to be used as a workshop. Aston offers Davies a job as a caretaker. While Davies has some worries about the job, he is obviously pleased to get such an offer. Treating Davies in a friendly manner, Mick tells him that Aston is lazy and reluctant to work. Mick offers Davies the job of caretaker, which will provide him with professional experience.

In the morning, Aston wakes Davies up, reminding him of his plan to go to Sidcup. As Aston prepares to go out, they talk about a nearby café, which makes Davies recall his days before he was taken to a psychiatric hospital. Aston describes his experience in hospital, where he was given electric shock treatment against his will.

He talks about his regret and resentment toward his mother for giving permission to such a painful treatment as it caused him to think slowly and suffer terrible headaches. According to Aston, one should be responsible for deciding how his medical treatment should be made. Aston tells them how badly the treatment affected him:

So I did get out. I got out of the place but I couldn't walk very well. I don't think of my spine was damaged. That was perfectly all right. The trouble was... my thoughts... had become very slow... 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 couldn't sit in my room.(Pinter.1960: 60)

Then, Aston decides to finish the work in the garden shed. In the last act, Mick complains about Aston, with whom he is unable to have a decent conversation. Mick describes his plans for converting the house into a luxurious apartment with Davies's assistance. Davies tries not to communicate with Aston. Rather, he seeks to develop an intimate relationship with Mick. Soon, Aston returns with a pair of shoes for Davies, who continually complains about their being without laces, which means he can't use them. Davies unwillingly accepts a pair of brown laces instead of black ones. Then, he says he cannot go to Sidcup with Aston. Aston wakes up in the middle of the night, because has been unable to sleep due to Davies's snoring. Aston wakes Davies up, claiming that he and Mick are now on good terms. Davies threatens to have Aston committed to the psychiatric hospital again. He pulls out his knife and attacks Aston. Relying on his alliance with Mick, Davies blames Aston for wasting his time in the building, which he describes as "a stinking shed". Aston becomes so angry that he starts putting Davies's belongings into his bag. Davies leaves, saying that he is going to find Mick, who will deal with Aston.

Next morning Mick and Davies return to an empty room. Initially, Mick is friendly, but when Davies makes a few negative remarks about Aston's electric-shock treatment, he gets angry. Mick tells Davies to leave immediately. Filled with anger, he throws the Buddha to the floor, where it shatters into pieces. Mick says he

is tired of looking after the house and making plans to renovate it. Now he intends to let Aston do exactly what he wants with it. The play ends with Davies standing silent and Aston, having turned his back on him, refusing to talk. Davies has no other choice but to leave the room. All his efforts to become integrated into the lives of the others come to nothing. Through Davies's experience, Pinter calls attention to the predicament of the individual desperately trapped in an alienated world.

In *The Caretaker*, Pinter uses language as a tool of deception. Although Davies likes neither of the brothers, he pretends to be friendly toward them. Davies uses language in a deceptive manner in his attempt to gain their confidence so that they can comfortably confide in him. Mick is also good at lying; in fact, he is better than Aston in using the deceptive power of words. Aston does not need to use the words indirectly and defines his feelings suddenly. His mental treatment and electro-shock therapy prevent him from hiding the intentions behind his behaviors. His honesty in telling other people about his psychological treatment is very remarkable. (Misra.1992: 80)

In *The Caretaker* each of the three characters is distinctively model in the art of lying. All are incorrigible liars. Mick is clever, a consummate liar, pretending and lying as a matter of habit, but he lies are not sharp enough to effectively distort truth. Davies, similarly, is a chronic liar, but he appears to be more psychopathic than artful in his distortion of truth. He often blurs truth and falsehood, and sometimes in his linguistic helplessness appears to be senile, involving an inability to distinguish fact from fancy. Language in successful Pinter plays thus serves as a medium of characterisation not only at the superficial, social level, but also at deeper levels of psychology. (Misra.1992: 83)

None of the characters in the play is willing to have a meaningful communication with the others. This finds reflection in their behaviour as well as in their language. Sometimes, they do not feel the need to respond to the questions they are asked by the others. For example, Aston wants to learn Davies's real name and nationality; but

Davies first ignores him, and then gives a short and evasive response. (MISRA.1992: 80)

Aston: Welsh, are you?

Davies: Eh?

Aston: You Welsh?

Pause

Davies: Well, I been around, you know... what I mean... I been about..

Aston: Where were you then?

Davies: What do you mean?

Aston: Where were you born?

Davies: I was...uh...oh.., It's a bit hard like, to set your mind back... see what I mean...going back... a good way...lose a bit of track, like... you know... (Pinter.1960: 27)

By using the power of language, Aston wants to get more information about Davies and tries to learn more about his secret life. Yet, Davies prefers not to give any clues about his private life. The dialogue between Aston and Davies is rather different from what happens in a sincere communication between two persons. When Davies is offered the job of a caretaker, he has difficulty articulating his thoughts and feelings:

Davies: You see, what I mean to say... what I am getting at is...

I mean, what sort of jobs....

Pause

Aston: Well, there is things like the stairs... and the... the bells.

Davies: But it'd be a matter...wouldn't it...it'd be a matter of a broom... isn't it?

Aston: Yes, and of course, you'd need a few brushes. (Pinter.1960: 45)

A similar kind of situation can be seen in most of the dialogues between Mick and Davies, where the former dominates over the latter by using long and effective and speeches. (MISRA.1992: 81) Mick, the most articulate character in the play, uses language as an instrument to “disarm Davies and discredit him.” (MISRA.1992: 82) In

fact, most of the talks between Mick and Davies turns out to be a kind of interrogation, in which the victim (Davies) is asked a series of questions by his tormentor (Mick).

Pinter also uses silence and pauses effectively in his plays. The confrontation of characters in silence gives expectation to the audience about what is going to happen other parts of the play. There is “a long silence” at the end of *The Caretaker* when Davies’s asking for permission in Aston’s room meets with no response. This “long silence” means loss of all hopes for Davies to stay with the two brothers. Faced with Aston’s refusal to let Davies stay with them, the latter becomes deprived of the chance to live in the warmth of a home. (Bloom.1987: 160)

Loneliness is the main theme of Pinter’s plays. His characters are isolated from themselves and from society. While some of them are abandoned, homeless characters, others are alienated despite the fact that they have a family. (Peacock.1997: 44) In view of this fact, writers reflect their works the concept of alienation resulted from lack of communication of the human being from the others. Eventually, isolation emerges out and person lives lonely. So, Pinter’s and Albee’s characters tend to be live alone. For instance, their lack of communication can be exemplified by this dialogue in *The Caretaker*:

Mick: ... But he doesn’t seem to be interested in what I got mind, that’s the trouble. Why don’t you have a chat with him, see if he’s interested?

Davies: Me?

Mick: Yes. You’re a friend of his.

Davies: He’s no friend of mine.

Mick: You’re living in the same room with him, en’t you?

Davies: He’s no friend of mine. You don’t know where you are with him. I mean, with a bloke like you, you know where you are.(Pinter.1960: 64)

It is quite absurd that in spite of the fact that they lived in the crowd there was no personal contact among them. Davies complains about the situation and expresses his feelings with his words:

Couple of weeks ago... he sat there, he give me a long chat... about a couple of weeks ago. A long chat he give me. Since then he ain't said hardly a word. He went on talking there... I don't know what he was... he wasn't looking at me, he wasn't talking to me, he don't care about me. He was talking to himself! That's all he worries about. I mean, you come up to me, you ask my advice, he wouldn't never do a thing like that. I mean, we don't have any conversation, you see? You can't live in the same room with someone who... who don't have any conversation with you. (Pinter.1987: 58)

The lack of communication is evident in their dialogues. Even if they live in a same room, he does not call him a friend of him, refers to him as a chair or a bed part of his belongings. They also suffer from the strange identity of their characters. The characters are isolated from each other in world of alienation, selfishness, estrangement and loneliness. In one of his interviews, Pinter stresses the importance of communication:

I feel...that instead of any inability to communicate, there is a deliberate evasion of communication. Communication itself between people is so frightening that rather than do that there is continual cross-talk, a continual talking about other things, rather than what is at the root of their relationship.(Almansi.1987: 30)

Pinter creates a heavy element of mystery as clearly seen in *The Caretaker*. This mystery arouses the interest of the audience who seeks reality behind the evident absurdity. Seeking a companion for himself, Aston invites Davies to stay with them in their home. Soon, Davies, the intruder, asserts his dominance over Aston. But Mick, unlike his brother, prevails over Davies. First, Mick makes an attractive offer to him, the job of caretaker, which Davies refuses. Consequently, Mick threatens to expel Davies from the house, the last sanctuary offered to him.

In *The Caretaker*, the audience can see the exaggeration and absurdity arising from the individual's desperate search for the meaning of reality. Aston points out that his mental breakdown occurred after his exposure to electrical shock treatment, which caused him to lose contact with other people: "They always used to listen. I thought...they understood what I said. I mean I used to talk to them. I talked too much. That was my mistake" (Esslin.1968: 282) Suffering from hallucinations, Aston cannot separate reality from illusion. Consequently, he always lives with the horror of being committed to mental hospital. He expresses his resentment toward his mother, who signed the papers giving officials legal permission to send him there again: (Aston) "she signed their form you see, giving them permission." (Pinter.1960: 58)

Having lost all his memories as well as his hallucinations, Aston gives up everything and begins working as a decorator, thus finding a way to express himself; "...so I decided to have a go at decorating it, so I came into this room, and I started to collect the wood, for my shed, and all these bits and pieces, that I thought might come in handy for the flat, or around the house, sometime.'"(Esslin.1968: 282)

CHAPTER II

THE THEME OF LACK OF COMMUNICATION IN THE ZOO STORY

Modern society is characterized by rapid technological developments as well as an unprecedented rise in population and urbanization, all of which effect significant changes in people's lifestyles and habits. Big cities are crowded with people from diverse ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. People walk past one another on the streets every day without even feeling the need to get to know others. Often, people do not bother to enter into relationships with others. Instead of face-to-face communication, most people use computers for chatting with their friends. They prefer to live within their private sphere of existence. They usually stay at home to relax, read magazine and books to improve themselves, or go to cinema and concert to have fun. Most people seem to feel that they are self-sufficient, and that they do not need to connect or communicate with any other person. Many people living in metropolitan areas seem to have lost their sense of communal life as these people are occupied with their own jobs or personal businesses. As such, social relationships weaken and this creates a barrier between people, making them feel reluctant to contact with others. By and large, people living in urban areas tend to be indifferent to the needs and problems of others. Most relationships are based on personal interest. People become increasingly alienated from each other. There is no feeling and no need of any other person. The barrier to contact becomes wider and wider, social disparity emerges in the society. Everything seems to wonderful but when the time passes, monotonous in the lives begin to get them bored, their inner world begin to alarm, begin to get used to live alone and doesn't want any more people. Then megalomania begins and just only focuses on the fault of the people. And they totally seem wonderful in any case. This duration follows by antisocialism and psychological disorders may be suicides. Generally person can't see what he or she lives from outside including his fault and problem. Consequently, the process of lack of communication leads to a growing sense of feeling of alienation among the

people. The problem of alienation is the problematic condition of modern man, and this problem has become a great concern in not only in their social lives but also some areas of cultural activity such as in sociology, philosophy, and literature. In modern world, people suffer from the symptoms of social sickness arising from the condition of alienation.

Existentialist philosophers and writers focused on the individual's sense of loneliness and alienation, regarding this condition as a major human predicament which results from lack of communication. This particular theme lies in the core of *The Zoo Story*, a play that shows how the same subject is handled in a dramatic work written in the convention of the Theatre of the Absurd. The play becomes a remarkable manifestation of the way loneliness leads to mental disorder and ultimately to death. (Jackson: 71)

An important theme found in *The Zoo Story* is the false optimism in American life supported by advertising and mass media. As it seems, the popular life style of people in America and its degenerative effects contribute to lack of communication and alienation in individual's life. Albee criticizes the contemporary American society in the person of Peter, who is ultimately driven to crime. Peter's subconscious thoughts and feelings are partly revealed in his dialogues with Jerry. The act of murder –or rather, the assisted suicide- that occurs at the end of the play shakes him off his illusions. At the end of the play, his life changes utterly and his sense of complacency and optimism is shattered into pieces. On the other hand, Jerry, with the criminal act committed at the end of the play, has become an agent of Peter's confrontation with reality. As regards his own life, Jerry has always experienced suffering and misery. In this sense, his death seems to be escape from an unbearable world and his meaningless life, an eternal relief from his inner conflicts. Jerry thanks Peter for helping him put an end to his painful life. Jerry's death not only marks the end of his miserable life, but also becomes a confirmation of his human and social inadequacies. Also, by getting himself killed Jerry becomes instrumental in enlightening another person, confronting him with the precarious nature of his life.

The main theme of *The Zoo Story* is lack of communication leading to man's alienation, his isolation from society and its tragic consequences. Jerry loses his life for his attempt to communicate, or at least, enter into contact with another man, and

his failure to do so. This theme is suggested by the slowness and difficulty of the dialogue between Jerry and Peter, which turns out to be a monologue of Peter. Jerry's need for speaking, trusting, having a relation with another human being is so strong that his feelings turn into violation. His last communication, the only real one, is achieved at the life of itself. Albee defines here that Jerry's life is based on his loneliness, alienation and lack of communication. He reinforces this theme in the course of the play with repeats, expressions and extends it to the human's alienation in general. Firstly, he uses the image of the title where the world appears as a zoo in which all the human beings live separated from each other by bars. This image of world is repeated in Jerry's description of rooming house. The theme finally turns into the communication of Jerry and the dog and owner of the dog's sexual relation with him. This is the sign of failure of human beings relation and their physical contact is only rapprochement of them; even sexual experience brings them together ironically.(Jackson: 75) These three themes are criticism to human life, the lack of communication, alienation, loneliness and sexual obsession underlying them are combined in this play. (Jackson: 77)

The Zoo Story takes as its theme lack of communication between individuals as an inevitable human condition that leads to alienation. In the play, Peter figures as a man who lives a peaceful and calm life within his 'seemingly' secure environment. By contrast, Jerry has a dull and miserable life. We learn that when he was a child Jerry suffered from poverty and a bitter sense of abandonment. His mother's early death combined with his being deserted by his father seems to have deeply affected his growth. On the other hand, having committed a perverted act driven by homosexual impulses, Jerry has never been able to make love or fall in love with anyone of opposite gender. The very emptiness of his emotional life is clearly manifested by one detail that comes to sharp focus in the description of his room: Jerry has got two frames without any pictures in them. These empty frames can be regarded as symbols of the sense of loneliness, isolation and alienation he has been experiencing since his childhood. We learn that Jerry was abandoned by his mother when he was ten years old. Soon after this traumatic experience, his father committed suicide by throwing himself upon a moving bus. After that, Jerry began to live with with his sulky-faced aunt, who died the day he graduated from high school.

A play written in the tradition of Absurdist Drama, *The Zoo Story* is unconventional both in form and content. The plot, that is, what happens in the play, violates our standards of what is normal. The action involves two characters, Jerry and Peter. The play tells the story of two dissimilar characters, a factor that further enhances the sense of alienation and isolation people suffer from. The themes of the play are represented by the physical and moral differences between the two characters. The two characters are different not only in terms of their appearance, but also with regard to the nature of the lives they lead. Peter is a man in his forties who feels secure in his calm and settled life. He is a publishing officer, respectable citizen, a quiet family man with a wife, two daughters, cats and two parakeets. On the contrary, Jerry lives alone. He has got neither a family nor friends. Jerry is deprived of the many advantages the more privileged portion of society enjoys. He is in his thirties, but seems devastated by the hardships and injustices of life. Jerry is a lonely social outsider living in a rooming house surrounded by people like him.

The action of the play starts with Jerry's words: "I have been to the zoo. I said, I've been to the zoo. MISTER I'VE BEEN TO THE ZOO!" (Albee.1962:159) From the very beginning, Jerry reflects his alienation with words and gestures that are comparable to those of an animal. He behaves as if he wants to draw the attention of others to himself. Jerry repeats the same statements over and over. Moreover, he constantly keeps talking and asking questions without letting Peter respond to him. Jerry's strange behaviour results from his loneliness, his desperate need to connect with and talk to someone else. Jerry has bitterly found that his life has no meaning and purpose. He feels overpowered by a deep sense of alienation from society. It seems that Jerry does not belong to this world. He feels so desperate that he wants to put an end to his life, he chooses an end with Peter who has prosperous, regular life has everything that he hasn't. These two characters stand for two different worlds, one representing the world of success and prosperity, the other symbolizing the world of alienated people whose lives are isolated from each other.

Jerry stays in an apartment where he is totally estranged from social life. Jerry knows every detail of his flat because he doesn't have anything else to do. He keeps looking at his flat and the walls, memorizing everything. He gives a detailed description of the people and things around him. The emptiness of his life is reflected by the empty frames he has. In order to find a way to escape from his alienation

which overshadows his life, he starts to tell his stories about his old Pop and Mom. Then, he tells the story of gatekeeper woman who treats him like an animal and she uses him for her sexual desires whenever she wants. His existence and feelings are not important for her. By telling Peter stories about his own life, Jerry finds temporary relief from his isolation. The most significant and interesting story Jerry narrates is the story of the dog belonging to the gatekeeper woman. He tells the story describing how the dog attacks him when he comes back home. He tries to find out some way to get rid of it. Jerry puts a piece of poisonous meat, when the dog eats it, it becomes sick. Yet, contrary to his expectations, the dog recovers soon. Then he changes his mind and tries to get in touch with dog because he has lost all his hope of having relationship with people. He tells Peter: "It's just that if you can't deal with people, you make start somewhere WITH ANIMALS" (Albee.1962:175) Jerry's words reveal his desperate need to communicate with a living creature. For all his attempts to communicate, the dog never loves Jerry. He fails to have connection with an animal, let alone a human being.

After this failure to communicate with the dog, Jerry decides to go to the zoo in order to end his life. No one, neither humans nor animals, seems to care for his existence. At the end of the play, Jerry's quarrel with Peter over a trivial matter -who is going to take possession of the bench- turns into an absurd fight that ends up in Jerry's suicide. Jerry impales himself on the knife he has allowed Peter to take hold of, and thus terminating his miserable life. With the relief of achieving his goal for the first time in his life, Jerry dies uttering these words of gratitude: 'Thank you, Peter. I mean that now thank you very much.(Albee.1962:184) So, Jerry's act alleviates all his pain and finally his alienated soul finds peace. He then tells Peter to leave quickly before the police arrive so that there will be no evidence to blame him for killing Jerry. He just wants to be only actor for his "zoo story".

Many unexpected and unpredictable events occur in the play, which culminate in an unexpected final - Jerry's suicide. Jerry's quarrel with Peter over the possession of a bench in Public Park is preposterous and difficult to make sense of, just like his act of suicide. Viewed from this perspective, it is evident that the play includes an important feature of the Theatre of the Absurd: Trivial matters may cause big conflicts. Having being terribly shocked at the scene of suicide, the audience tries to figure out what the play could mean. The audience attempts to account for why

Jerry committed this assisted suicide, wondering if there could be any other reason behind his action. Ironically, Peter becomes the agent of this Jerry's suicide. This act of self-destruction reveals the essential philosophy of the Theatre of the Absurd: human existence is ultimately meaningless and human condition is totally hopeless. At this point, the basic concern of the absurd theatre manifests itself. Jerry's suicide suggests that human life is futile and without purpose.

It is impossible to come up with a rational explanation for the deformity and distortion that occurs in Jerry's character. Jerry must have a certain degree of consciousness. Otherwise, he wouldn't fight with another person to take possession of a bench in the public park. So, it is rather difficult to explain why a person like Jerry, who is conscious enough to force another person to relinquish the bench to him, should commit suicide. It is hard to find out a reasonable explanation for Jerry's action at the end of the play. The curious way in which the play ends can be accounted for by the idea that Albee prefers not to confine the limits of the audience's imagination. Rather, he lets the audience use their power of imagination to consider the reasons that may have led Jerry to commit suicide. In this sense, the Theatre of the Absurd as Albee fashions it becomes a highly demanding and intellectual form of theatre designed to exploit the full potentialities of human mind and imagination. Thus, the audience is made to rely on their own perspective and life experiences to interpret the play, in order to find out the meaning of Jerry's self-destructive act in *The Zoo Story*. The audience's active involvement in thinking about the possible reasons for Jerry's suicide and the implications of this action demonstrates Albee's keen interest in portraying the individual's alienation in modern society. The play involves a dramatic representation of the tragic consequences of human alienation in an indifferent society.

One of the most striking scenes in the play is the one in which Jerry talks about his desperate efforts to build a relationship with the landlady's dog. In this scene, Albee demonstrates the unreasonable elements of a world of confusion. Jerry's speech reflects the tensions of this incident. His attempts to build some connection with the dog ultimately fail, with the result that his hopelessness becomes all the more aggravated. (Jackson: 70) In his early plays including *The Zoo Story*, Edward Albee draws a parallelism between Jerry's experience as an alienated individual and a wider context that encompasses the whole society, which can shortly

be defined as “the American Way of Life”. This situation can clearly be illustrated with Jerry’s words:

am a permanent transient, and my home is the sickening
rooming house on the West-Side of New-York City, which
is the greatest city in the world. Amen. (Albee.1962:177)

Underlying Jerry’s words is a note of social criticism expressed through dramatic means. Jerry’s dramatic death at the end of the play leaves the audience with a sense of dissatisfaction commonly seen in the works of most American dramatists. While the play abounds in unexpected situations and absurd dialogues, traditional ideas of naturalism can also be found in it. Jerry’s last words at the end of the play tell us what the play really means. His sudden conversion to God and his declaration of faith represent a combination of the Theatre of the Absurd with realism. (Jackson 21)

In *The Zoo Story* Albee depicts lack of communication in society through Jerry’s relationship with the people in the apartment and with Peter. Jerry comes from low-class society. In the apartment Jerry lives with many other people, among others are a black transvestite, a Puerto Rican family with many children, an anonymous crying woman, a person whom he has never seen, and the landlady. Even though Jerry lives together with these people he has no contact with them, except with the drunken landlady who tries to seduce him and for whom Jerry feels disgust. Jerry does not try to maintain contact with any people in the rooming house. The fact that Jerry is unconcerned about these people is shown by the fact that he has never tried to talk with them:

(Why he went to the zoo) Jerry: Let me tell you why I went
...well, let me tell you some things. I ‘ve told you about the
fourth floor of the rooming house where I live. I think the rooms
are better as you go down, floor by floor. I guess they are; I don’t
know. I don’t know any of the people on the third and second
floors. Oh! wait! I do know that there’s the lady living on
the third floor, in the front. I know because she cries all the
time. (Albee.1962: 12)

The description of the condition and situation in the rooming house resembles the life style of an apartment and densely populated areas in big cities in which people do not know each other, there is no relation of neighbourhood and show no concern with the next-door people even though they live closely. These people are physically connected to each other as they live in the same flat, but the formation of close relationships is difficult to maintain. Although the landlady tries to approach and make contact with Jerry, she behaves selfishly, as she does not want to have a real contact with Jerry. The absence of personal contact among the people in the rooming house reflects the problem of alienation and impersonality of modern cities. This situation creates weak social relationships with each other and generally, they turns into isolated individuals. In *The Zoo Story* the people in the rooming house live under one roof, and they are physically related, they live very closely one to the other. But, they are not psychologically related. Jerry has mentioned that there is no contact between them. Even though Jerry lives together with other people in the apartment, he does not know them, not even by name. Jerry only identifies them with their ethnicities. These people remain as familiar strangers to Jerry. The lack of contact among the people living in the same apartment indicates that there is an alienation that signs the condition of a modern society.

The senseless and unrelated dialogues of Jerry and Peter are the significant sample of lack of communication as well. He explains his reasons the necessity of real dialogue;

Jerry: I'll tell you why I do it; I don't talk to many people-except to say like: give me a beer, or where's the John, or what time does feature go on, or keep your hands to yourself, buddy. You know-things like that.

Peter: I must say I don't...

Jerry: But every once in a while I like to talk to somebody, really talk; like to get to know somebody, know all about him. (Albee.1962:161)

Likewise, there is only direct dialogue between Jerry and Peter in *The Zoo Story* at the end of the play so as to display the image of lack of communication between the people in the world. (Albee.1962:165)

Jerry's loneliness results from lack of communication, which leads to neurosis, suicide and death in the end. His last words tragically reveal his loneliness and confession to his resolve to put an end to his miserable life:

Oh Peter, I was so afraid I'd drive you away...you don't know how I was afraid I was you'd go away and leave me. And now I'll tell you what happened at the zoo. I think... I think...this is what happened at the zoo...I think that while I was at the zoo I decided that I would walk north...northerly, rather...until I found you... or somebody...and I decided that I would talk to you...I would tell you things ...and things that I would tell you. Well here we are...you see. Here we are.

(Albee.1962:184)

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ALIENATION

The historical root of alienation concept is based on two millennia ago. ‘In Roman Law, alienatio was a legal term used to denote the act of transferring property; St. Augustine described insanity as abalienatio mentis; Ludz (1973) illuminated its use among the early Gnostics, and Fu Ting Liao (1993) described its positive usage among the Taoists. In modern times, the concept surfaced again in the nineteenth century and owes its resurgence largely to Marx and Freud, although the latter did not deal with it explicitly. After World War II, when societal complexity started its increasingly accelerated rate of change, and the first signals of post modernity were perceived by the intellectual elite, alienation slowly became part of the intellectual scene; Srole was one of the first of in the 1950s to develop an alienation scale to measure degrees and varieties of alienation. Following the 1968 student revolutions in the United States and Europe, alienation studies proliferated, at least in the Western world.’ (Geyer.1996:xi)

Alienation is generally admitted as a “social disease” needed a serious treatment in Modern Western Societies. In this context, alienation is connected by “mental disorder.” Another definition of alienation can be found in dictionaries like “mental derangement” or “insanity”. Firstly, the term of “alienist” was used in Great Britain in order to identify “psychiatrists”. Nowadays, alienation took its labelled name being the most encountered problem of human beings. (Kolin.1988:27)

Alienation can be defined as the state of being an outsider or the feeling of being isolated from society. Alienation is a sense of not belonging. Generally, alienation divides three parts; alienation from yourself, from other people and from the world in which you live. The varieties of alienation can change according to relationships among the other factors. The notion, “work alienation” may be derived from not being liked a person’s work, “social alienation” may be derived from the

feeling of isolated from society, “political alienation” may be derived from the feeling of lack of communication with political events and like that...As the reasons of them seem not to be satisfied psychologically, there may be others. This quotation exemplifies the situation clearly;

work alienation” is conceived in terms of high rates of absenteeism, a decline in the quality of workmanship, and “social alienation” in term of high crime rates, low involvement in community organizations, and neglect of those in various categories of need; and ‘political alienation’ in terms of low voter turnout, meagre participation in the political progress and so on. (Schacht.1994: 22)

In Psychiatry, It can be defined that it is a state in which individual’s feelings are inhibited, thus the self and external world seem to be unreal. In his essay in “Der Konflikt der Modern en Kultur” (The Conflict of Modern Culture) George Simmel affected modern philosophy and sociology in both Europe and America reflects that the increased threat of human being’s alienation, retold by existentialist at this time again. According to Simmel, it is possible to see the inner conflict to the development of many civilisation derived from the contrast between the living and form. The movement of living in a civilisation defines itself in law, technology, art, science and religion. The aim of these definitions practise and find a place different from their life energy. The life produces these forms continually and goes on. As soon as cultural emergence comes into existence, his life energy picks himself and takes his place after a longer or shorter struggle. The longing contrast between life and form which Simmel believes in but makes any attempt to analyse has increased and intensified in our age. Simmel thought that the moralists using genre and form are right from referring to dominant idea of alienation and lack of communication in our age. (Hall and Gardner.1985: 11)

Firstly, the theme of alienation is used in philosophy by Fichte and Hegel at the beginning of 19th century. But, at this time effect of this theme is restricted with small philosophic communities. The concept of alienation came into existence to the sociology by the comment of Marx’s capitalist era that based on individual’s his own alienation at the same century’s 40s. But it could not go on its effect and is forgotten

year by year. At present, the concept of alienation has been popularised and admitted by even the people who disagree with Marx's idea and many people get interested in alienation. Some evidences have seen that alienation is a new concept based on the political events in the second half of 20th century. (Pappenheim.2002: 35) The different term of alienation is used in the social sciences, in the name of "powerlessness and normlessness or anomie/anomia" (Peacock.1997: 27)

Heidegger and many other scientists offer the more pessimistic tabloid of human existence. Mankind alienated from the reality because of the separation from subject and object; this neutral knowledge makes this distinction deeper. While human being escaped from himself, he has been far away from himself for conceding his existence to mass crowd. (Hall and Gardner.1985: 22) The alienation and form of existence of human being is described in Kafka's works systematically and tremendously. While mentioning himself Kafka says 'there is a great hole separating me from everything and even I cannot reach the border of it.' (Pappenheim.2002: 24)

While existentialist defines the human being as an alien in the world, one of the basic experiences of our age becomes formulated. Heidegger wrote like what; 'Homelessness is becoming a universal destiny.' The same resemblance is also dictated by the poets and novelists who had grasped the problems of our age better for symbolizing the deepest threat of modern man. American novelists narrate the destiny of alienation and homelessness in their works, too. Heidegger and Sartre who are different from their contemporaries attribute the alienation of mankind to the historical events. These are two wars of 20th century, the totalitarian regimes which do not respect holy souls of mankind, victimize them in the camps, sudden economical decrease lead to these changes.(Chen.2010: 26) Psychoanalyst, Karen Horney explains how the people make an attempt to compete with anxiety resulted from these situations in this quotation:

To cope with basic anxiety, people develop a number of strategies.

They create and strive to actualize an idealized self-image by attaining perfection, or "glory"; they develop a "pride system" to support the idealized image, as well as a set of impossible standards of behaviour, or "shoulds"; and they try to disown, or "externalize", things in themselves with which they cannot cope.

All these efforts can produce from “alienation from self.”
(Hall and Gardner.1985:160)

The concept of alienation from self ‘is also expressed by Karen Horney like that:

Alienation from self has far-reaching effects on one’s personality and life. To begin with, If people believe that others are responsible for their difficulties, they can neither respond to others’ friendly feelings nor express such feelings themselves. In addition, the more energy goes to pride system, the less available for the constructive drive toward self-realization. Finally, the pride system prevents people from assuming responsibility for themselves: If a person cannot recognize that she is the instigator of her own behaviour, she will be unwilling to bear the consequences of that behaviour and she will not recognize that only she can do something about the difficulties that have resulted from it. (Hall and Gardner.1985:162)

In the world of literature, the problem of alienation is depicted in the works of many prominent writers including in *The Zoo Story* Albee and *The Caretaker* Pinter. Both writers show alienation of the human being from the self and the others. This situation is generally caused by lack of communication, and the result of this, isolation emerges out so person lives alone. So, Pinter’s and Albee’s characters tend to be live lonely. They also suffer from the strange identity of their characters. The characters are isolated from each other in world of alienation, selfishness, estrangement and loneliness. In *The Caretaker*, recognizing that Mick has now rejected him with these words injuriously:

Mick: What a strange man you are. Aren’t you? You’re really strange. Ever since you come into this house there’s been nothing but trouble. Honest. I can take nothing you say at face value. Every word you speak is open any number of different interpretations. Most of what you say is lies. You’re violent, you’re erratic, you’re just completely unpredictable. You’re nothing else but a wild animal, when you come down to it. You’re barbarian. (Pinter.1960: 72)

Davies tries to ingratiate himself with Aston once again. He begs Aston to be allowed to stay in the room:

What am I going to do? What shall I do?' Where am I going to go?
If you want me to go...I will go. You just say the word. I'll tell you
what I through... them shoes...them shoes you give me... they're
working out all right...They're all right. Maybe I could... get down...
Listen...if I... got down... if I was to... get my papers...would you...
would you let...would you...if I got down... and got my ... (Pinter.1960: 76)

These are the most striking result of lack of communication and alienation that reflect the dialogues of people and their life experiences.Pinter also believes that the human being is alienated and that is a main constituent of the human situation. Man cannot save from his isolation and every human being is in the same condition. In Pinter's plays, the characters also dwell on this kind of alienation. Especially, Pinter's people are in a room, and they are frightened outside the world. Their characters look for a power so as to protect their identity and living. They not only resist against outside forces but also their inner and deeper world. Pinter is also concerned with the theme is originated from the failure of relationships. The problems of the individuality has become the basic of his plays. They practice a dilemma of identity as they often fail to protect their sense of themselves which is defined by outside powers.(Peacock.1997: 44)This quotation expresses how loneliness and alienation were reflected by Pinter's characters:

loneliness and despair; or the chronic ailments of specific characters, such as Stanley's cowardice in *The Birthday Party*, Davie's insecurity in *The Caretaker*, Max's sentimental deprivation in *The Homecoming*, Hirst's death-wish ,In *No Man's Land*. Yet we must control ourselves, check sympathies silence our inquisitive hearts. Above all, we must not pretend to dig deep. If we satisfy ourselves with what happens there and then, forging the time element that exists outside the text, then we will come to appreciate the role that strategy- rather than psychology – plays in these characters' behaviour. And even more so in their respective

opponents: Goldberg, Mick, Lenny, Spooner. For us, Pinter criticism has a better contribution to make –through understanding of the strategic purpose of dialogue rather than through our involvement with the characters’ emotional needs. We are not being dogmatic, nor are we issuing a critical manifesto of anti-psychologism. We are simply indicating the general direction that our inquiry is going to take. (Kolin.1988: 30)

As in *The Caretaker*, Davies rebels attitude of people towards him by addressing Aston:

what do you think I am, a dog? Nothing better than a dog.
What do you think I am, a wild animal? What about them
shoes I come all the way here to get I heard you was giving away?
(Pinter.1960: 13)

He indicates his rebellion and expresses his disturbance but his real attitude towards alienated figure of human beings, their animalistic tendencies;

They live in isolation and reminisce in silence. As the listener is just a physical presence or an illusion of art of it, the speaker by talking to himself about his own self does not escape from the world of his thoughts. Nobody disturbs him in his silent reminiscence. We rather get a verbal reproduction of silences which are ‘still points of storm’ in a man’s life. (Misra.1992: 96)

Moreover, he summarizes his life with these words not different from his other expressions;

All them toe-rags, mate, got the manners of pigs.
I might have been on the road a few years but you can take it from me I’m clean. I keep myself up. That’s why I left my wife. Fortnight after I married her, no, not much as that, no more than a week, I took the lid of a saucepan, you know what was in it? A pile of her underclothing, unwashed. The pan for

vegetables, it was. The vegetable pan. That's when I left her and I haven't seen her since. I've eaten my dinner off the best of plates. But I'm not young any more. I remember the days I was as handy as any of them. They didn't take any liberties with me. But I haven't been so well lately. I've had few attacks. (Pinter.1960:7)

This quotation also indicates that people living in cities actually suffered from loneliness and alienation. Alienation became a serious problem in cities. People were occupied by their own affairs and self-centred demands. Mick displays this situation with his words evidently:

Mick: How could I have the wrong man? You're the only man I've spoken to. You're the only man I've told, about my dreams, about my deepest wishes, you're the only one I've told, and I only told you because I understood you were an experienced first-class professional interior and exterior decorator. (Pinter.1960: 76)

Davies in *The Caretaker* is afraid of the idea dream; he says 'Dreaming? (...)I don't dream. I've never dreamed.' An individual reflects his inner world to his dreams. He reveals his isolation and expresses his needs for socialization with his words. (Almansi.1987: 64)

Consequently, they fail to maintain and preserve personal communication, and this situation leads to the feeling of alienation. It is quite absurd that in spite of the fact that they lived in the crowd there was no personal contact among them. It is evident in their dialogues;

Mick: ... But he doesn't seem to be interested in what I got mind, that's the trouble. Why don't you have a chat with him, see if he's interested?

Davies: Me?

Mick: Yes. You're a friend of his.

Davies: He's no friend of mine.

Mick: You're living in the same room with him, en't you?

Davies: He's no friend of mine. You don't know where you

are with him. I mean, with a bloke like you, you know where you are.
(Pinter.1960: 64)

Even though they live in a same room, he does not call him a friend of him, refers to him a chair or a bed part of his belongings.

Especially, in *The Zoo Story* ‘‘Living in a jail is like living in a zoo, there is no difference.’’(Albee.1962: 175) This expression is frequently repeated throughout the play. The rooming house is described as a jail, at this point it is presented with the image of a zoo. The bars separating these people each other indicate the extent of human being’s isolation. The description of the apartment is as ‘a humiliating excuse of jail’ the significance of the title of the play. People are locked in rooms, and have no chance to contact with others. The zoo is a metaphor for disrupted social relationships in modern society. In describing the situation of the rooming house, Albee chooses the phrase in order to emphasize the disturbing condition of the apartment and the feeling of the residents. The people feel humiliated for living in the miserable condition of the apartment. And their loneliness and estrangement increase day by day. Later, Albee also chooses an ironical way to show two contrasting conditions in society when Jerry says:

my home is the sickening rooming houses in New York City, which is the greatest city in the world. Amen. (Albee.1962:177)

In this quotation, Albee tries to indicate the two contrasting conditions that can be found in big cities. Not only Jerry’s and Peter’s characters are absolutely different from each other but also there is a contrast between Jerry’s rooming house apartment and the expensive apartments and elegant buildings nearby. Jerry is a kind of person who does not have an ideal family in his life. His mother left him when he was ten and a half years old. His parents reunited, but they died not long before that. Then Jerry lived with his aunt, who also died when he graduated from high school. His feeling of emptiness is also described by two empty picture frames he always keeps. This situation can also be seen in the dialogues with Peter:

PETER. (Stares glumly at his shoes, then)

About those two empty picture frames. .?

JERRY. I don't see why they need any explanation at all. Isn't it clear? I don't have pictures of anyone to put in them.

PETER. Your parents...perhaps... a girlfriend ...

JERRY. You are a very sweet man, [...]. But good old Mom and good old Pop are dead ... you know? ... I'm broken up about it, too ... I mean really. [...] so I don't see how I can look at them, all neat and framed.(Albee.1962:166)

This quotation indicates that Jerry does not have anybody special in his life. He does not even want to recall his parents' life as he admits that he was broken up by this experience, and he wants it to be buried. The empty picture frames illustrate the significance of his loneliness and emptiness, and it adds up his feeling of alienation. The emptiness and meaninglessness of modern life, the terrible loneliness suffered by individuals and their feeling of isolation emphasizes in Jerry's personality.

A manifestation of alienation is depicted in *The Zoo Story* when Peter, after grabbing his books, rushes to leave Jerry in his dying moment. Jerry's lack of contact with other people can also be seen by the fact that he did not have long relationships with women. He admits this situation in his dialogue with Peter:

JERRY: And let's see now; what's the point of having a girl's picture, especially in two frames? I have two picture frames, you remember. I never see the pretty little women more than once, and most of them wouldn't be caught in the same room with a camera [...]

PETER: The girls?

JERRY. No. I wonder if it's sad that I never see the little women more than once. [...] that's it. ... Oh, wait; for a week and a half, when I was fifteen ... and I hang my head in shame that puberty was late... I was a h-o-m-o-s-e-x-u-a-l. [...]. And for those eleven days, I met at least twice a day with the park superintendent's son. And now; oh, I do love the little women; really, I love them. For about an hour. (Albee.1962:167)

He confesses and this quotation proves his deviance and sexual obsession. Here Jerry admits that he had very little contact with women when he was young. His relationship with women was so restricted. The homosexual encounter happened when he was fifteen years old with the superintendent's son. He did not try to maintain contact or relationships with many other girls at his age. Based on such experiences Jerry finds it hard to be himself, so it can be said that Jerry is alienated not only from his fellow men in the apartment, but also from other people. It has been mentioned previously that the problem of alienation has marked the condition of a society under the effects of modernism. In spite of contrasting realities of Jerry and Peter, Albee portrays them as figures suffering from a sense of isolation and alienation. For this reason, *The Zoo Story* is also acknowledged a kind of existentialist play. The forced communication between two characters display at this point; their failure for communication, especially Peter's tragic life in the past and he will not feel isolated at last and his soul has a great relief forever. It is more important for Jerry to die than end his desperate life;

Accountability means little to Jerry, for he would rather die than perpetuate his desperate life. Thus both characters' experiences of isolation, although prompted by seemingly opposite predicaments- Jerry is too aware of felt isolation, Peter too anesthetized to discern separateness-dove tail within a broader context of existential aloneness. (Raudene.1987: 35)

In *The Zoo Story*, the behaviours of the people in the apartment portray the feeling of anxiety the people. Jerry says that the people in the apartment have strange behaviours. ‘

The coloured queen, for example, always wears a rare Japanese kimono and has a strange habit of plucking his eyebrow, the woman who is living on the third floor cries all the time behind the locked door, the landlady tries to seduce him in the entrance hall. (Albee.1962:165)

These strange behaviours reflect the people's anxiety and despair, and they show an extra ordinary psychological disorder, characteristic of alienation in modern society.

As if these different kinds of people live in a modern society in New York City, they have no apparent jobs to support themselves.

Consequently, these people show the extra ordinary psychological-social disorder. Jerry's suicide also reflects a psycho-social disorder as he is in a state of hopelessness, anxiety and despair. Jerry shares the same life condition as the other people in the rooming house, and his fatal death shows that he has lost his reason to live. Jerry's sense of meaning and purpose of life have gone away.

In *The Zoo Story* the meaning of the play can be seen from the significance of the characters and their actions. This play portrays a situation in which Jerry is in a state of loneliness and alienation, but desperately tries to come into contact with other people. Jerry's suffering from the problem of alienation and social disparity become the secret reason so as to commit suicide. However, as it was seen in general, there are no apparent reasons that lead him to commit suicide. Peter and the audiences never expect that Jerry would take such an act. The reason of Jerry's death cannot be found clearly. There are no apparent reasons that make him commit suicide. If his reason is to fight for the bench, then it is illogical. Jerry has reasons to end his life as he thinks that his suffering is useless. He has tried very hard to realize his ideas and dreams in making Peter understand the importance of contact with others. However, he fails in doing so. Then he thinks that by committing suicide he will be able to save Peter from his alienation and his irrelevance toward the reality of life in his environment. Jerry does not think about the necessity to defend his life as he thinks that his life is not worth living. On the other hand, Jerry believes in that after he commits suicide he will be able to give a new perspective to Peter's life.

In these respects, *The Zoo Story* and *The Caretaker* are the stories of alienation of the modern man who loses his real essence in the world where people do not consider humanistic values, but materialistic ones. He is treated as an animal within the society he lives even his parents and brother. People cut his ties with life from the flux of the human civilization. Their apartment looks like zoo, they even do not know the names of neighbours or they try to build a shed locating a place in life. The characters in these two plays only call the people by titles and descriptive names. Jerry's death is a protest for modern life driving him apart, likewise Aston's and

Davies's loneliness. So, he wishes that his death would bring some sense to his meaningless life.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL EFFECTS OF ALIENATION

After World War II, It is stated that the construction of building and bridges, foundation of new cities cannot prevent the European mind from pessimism and despair. But the war threat of civilisation is not only effect in the result of tendency to this pessimism. It should not be ignored that the part of the world known West civilisation has lived an inner depression for a long time. In modern societies, human beings are such separated condition and isolated from each other that they have only communicated so as to share common direction. The relationship with people has based on self-interest of them. (Pappenheim.2002: 72)

According to Marx, the communications of people are so isolated that the separation from others can be seen naturally, but the ties linked to human being's soul have seemed to be needless. In this content, individuals give the messages that all the social relation each other only consist of appearance and deprived of emotion (Pappenheim.2002: 73) The concept of alienation is not only emerged out by Marx, Hegel's opinion that every form and inside of reality has separation and distance, has affected him deeply. (Pappenheim.2002: 74)

Other philosophers, psychologists and sociologists argue that alienation is associated with characteristics such as; an extra-ordinary variety of psycho-social disorder, including loss of self, anxiety state, despair, loneliness, meaninglessness, isolation, the loss of belief or values and lack of communication. Generally, alienation has been used to describe various phenomena such as any feeling of separation from society and feeling of discontent with society. Alienation often suggests the feelings of loneliness, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and the sense that there is a moral breakdown or the loss of belief and values in society. As a society becomes increasingly modernized, people try to cope with the requirements of modern life by seeking economic security at all costs. This makes people more

singularly obsessed with achieving their goals, with a sheer disregard for the needs and expectations of other people. Alienation stems from a basic feeling that society fails to respond to the needs of the individuals who constitute it. This feeling is considered to be a sign of personal dissatisfaction with certain structural elements of society. This dissatisfaction can be defined by individual feelings of alienation, meaninglessness, social isolation and self-estrangement. The expressions of literary characters who struggle with other human beings have the feeling of being disconnected from others.

Alienation is a powerful force that moves individuals towards negative thoughts such as loneliness, isolation, self-pity and violence. Moreover, people even feel alienated from their own communities, their closer connections, including family members and loved ones, religious belief in which they have been raised; sometimes this type of alienation extends so far that the individual feel alienated from God himself. Alienation has one of the central themes in modernist movement that increased relying on science and technology. As individuals gradually move from rural community into urban areas, they become estranged from the very society which they should normally be an integral part of. Modernism explores how our relationships with each other and with social institutions such as schools, work and family have grown weaker, leading us to be increasingly individualistic in our thinking and thus alienated. Alienation and isolation can be used in different ways. Living in a confused world growing each day, getting more impersonal more densely populated, having face-to-face relations makes people more dehumanized and causes them to become alienated from their next-door neighbours. Today, modern man has reached a level where he leads a more comfortable and luxurious life, yet this has been achieved at the cost of alienation and loss of hopes for a happy and meaningful life. (Pappenheim.2002:9)

Problems caused by alienation increased gradually after the development of the world economy stimulating the physical development of the countries. At that time, there was an important development in big cities both in terms of infrastructure and population. This condition determined the nature of social relations among people, as people living in metropolitan cities have different social attitudes from those who live in rural areas. For many people, big cities offer individuals greater opportunities for development and hold prospects for limitless hope. A great number

of people move to big cities with the hope that their dreams will come true. However, for many other people, especially those suffering from estrangement are desperately trapped in their own world with a sense of alienation, isolation, disappointment. Though cities are characterized by modern and dreamy atmosphere, most people feel lonely, isolated and suffer from people's indifference to their problems. Thus, it is inevitable to meet the individuals dwelling on the crowd of aliens. Based on a life with such characteristics, the sense of alienation becomes obvious phenomenon, people tend to mind their own business and weaken their sense of community. In cities, the ethnic difference of the population also weakens the social relationships of the people, and it creates a barrier to communication. They live as if they dwell on the world of strangers. In our modern age, the reasons lead to alienation is increasing day by day in terms of importance and intensity. (Hall and Gardner.1985:4)

As Lyn Lofland has stated, people has lived their urban world as “full of strangers”. Every day people walk around the street do not recognize each other, generally they have no intention of communicate and behave as if they are part of an object. Moreover, “as correctly noted by the human ecologists, the major proportion of our daily encounters are brief and highly formalized and do not require or encourage us to deal with others as whole people. Most of our dealings with store clerks, bus drivers, and assorted co-workers do not call upon us to share feelings, disclose inner thoughts, or offer support to others.” (Krupat.1985:130)

Simmel's statement also supports this derivation;” adopt a mode of relating to others in general that is characterized by a tone of reserve and a holding back that makes the formation of primary (total and close) relations difficult and unlikely. In this situation few relationships are begun in the first place, and those that exist are likely to be shallow and weak. At its extreme we have a picture of the urbanite as a person who is physically embedded in a tight web of others yet feels psychologically almost totally isolated.” (Krupat.1985:131)

Nowadays, considerable attention has been focused on the concept of alienation and its relationship to modern social structure and alienated individuals. Alienation has been used to describe various social phenomena that include the feelings of loneliness, meaninglessness, isolation, separation, discontent with society and lack of communication. Newspapers often cover news concerning personal

problems such as deep sorrows, miserable lives and acute illnesses, which are among the chief reasons why people commit suicide. Feeling of alienation arises from deprivation from human contact as well as lack of genuine interpersonal relationships.

In *The Caretaker* we can find a reflection of this sense of alienation in Aston and Davies's dialogues:

Aston: Where were you born then?

Davies: (darkly) What do you mean?

Aston: Where were you born?

Davies: I was... uh... oh, it's a bit hard, like,
to set your mind back... see what I mean...
going back... a good way... lose a bit of track,
like... you know... (Pinter.1960: 23)

Davies continues to express this situation with this quotation:

Eh? Oh, well, that was... near on... that'll be...
that'll be a little while ago now. But of course what it is,
they can't find the right kind of people in these places.
What they want to do, they're trying to do away with these
foreigners, you see, in catering. They want an Englishman
to pour their tea, that's what they want, that's what they're
crying out for. It's only common sense, en't? Oh, I got all that
under way... that's... uh... that's... what I'll be doing. (Pinter.1960: 25)

Moreover, Davies enlarges this definition and expresses the alienated figure of people with their language, race and shape in this quotation;

Davies:All them Greeks had it, Poles, Greeks, Blacks,
the lot of them, all of them aliens had it. And they had me
working there...they had me working...All them Blacks had it,
Blacks, Greeks, Poles, the lot of them, that's what, doing me out
of a seat, treating me like a dirt. When he comes at me tonight I

told him. (Pinter.1960: 6)

In *The Zoo Story*, Albee tries to denote the problem of alienation that emerges with the modernism. The problem of alienation that is reflected in the contemporary society of the mid-twentieth century is presented through Jerry, a lonely man living in an apartment in New York City. In the days when *The Zoo Story* was written, the city was very crowded as a result of the immigration and internal migration that continued until World War II. The influx into urban areas of a large number of people from different ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds resulted in the formation of a highly heterogeneous population. As a result of ethnic and cultural differences in the population, social relationships among people had seriously weakened. Jerry's predicament stems from this bitter sense of isolation that one inevitably experiences in such a society. Jerry feels so deeply overpowered by this feeling that he compares animals with people saying:

I worried about that animal the very first minute I met him. Now, animals don't take to me like Saint Francis had birds hanging off him all the time. What I mean is: animals are indifferent to me... like people...(He smiles slightly) most of time...(Albee.1962: 14)

He also accuses him Peter and society not to understand other's needs in this dialogue:

Jerry: Why? You have everything in the world you want; you've told me about your home, and your family, and your own little zoo. You have everything, and now you want this bench. Are these the things men fight for? Tell me, Peter, is this bench, this iron and this wood, is this your honour? Is this the thing in the world you'd fight for? Can you think of anything more absurd?

Peter: Absurd? Look, I'm not going to talk to you about honour, or even try to explain it to you. Besides, it isn't a question of honour; but even if it were, you wouldn't understand.

Jerry: You don't even know what you're saying, do you? This is probably the first time in your life you've had anything more trying to face than

changing your cats' toilet box. Stupid ! Don't you have any idea not even the slightest, what other people need? (Albee.1962: 24)

The problem of alienation in society has become more all the pronounced in modern society. Consequently, in almost all metropolitan cities, life has invariably been characterized by an impersonal and negative atmosphere. The problem of alienation has become a prevalent feeling associated with metropolitan society where people live as if they were animals put in cages in a big zoo designed especially for human beings.

The turning points of the plays occur with the characters' irresistible attempts to communicate, and their continual deprivation of it, causing first threat, then uncontrollable violence. The sincere communication and emotional warmth are the only things seeking for them so as to alleviate their alienation. The two of the plays are the sample of the showing interest of mankind, in the world of alienation.

In Pinter's works, violence is an effective way for domineering characters to express themselves. According to Pinter, "The world is a pretty violent place and violence is really only an expression of the question of dominance and subservience but he will not call this violence so much as a battle for positions, it is very common, everyday thing."(Penelope.1991: 21)Absurdity in linguistics reveals the absurdity in individual's life; similarly, horror and fear also reveal the psychological disorder of people in the world. (Dukare.1982: 25) Albee clearly illustrates this situation in the following quotation:

In the establish genuine contact with a dog, let alone any human being-The Zoo Story is closely akin to the world of Harold Pinter. But the effect of his brilliant one-act dialogue between Jerry, the outcast, and Peter, the conformist bourgeois, is marred by its melodramatic climax; when Jerry provokes Peter drawing a knife and then impales himself on it, the plight of the schizophrenic outcast is turned into an act of sentimentality, especially the victim expires in touching solicitude and fellow-feeling for his involuntary murderer. (Jackson: 63)

When Jerry kills Peter with the knife for the demand of Peter, Jerry's soul feel relieved and he finds the meaning of his life at last helping another person. Albee has remarked, "and Jerry has to shock him into understanding the tragic sense of being alive." (Raudene.1987: 33)

Jerry violates Peter's isolation through communication. Exceeding the limits of expected propriety for a chance first encounter, Jerry bombards Peter disarmingly shrill and frank account of his private life. But he does this because Peter's initial indifference prompts Jerry to rely on the powers of invention, the weaving together of fact and fiction, a method of sorting through his fragmented experience and keeping Peter transfixed. (Raudene.1978: 35)

Although Jerry's struggle and fight with life, Peter refuses the logic and reasonable solutions. Peter does not admit communication like Jerry, threatens him:

"I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE" (Albee.1962:177)

To display the rejection of Peter's whole world, Albee refers to the dog's story so as to explain the resemblance with their confrontation. For example, the strain with Jerry and the dog increases when trying to include his life as it is seen with Peter's and Jerry's dialogue:

Peter (Furious): Look, you get off my bench. I don't care if it makes any sense or not. I want this bench. I don't care if it makes any sense or not. I want this bench to myself: I want you OFF IT!

Jerry (Mocking): Aw....look who's mad.

Peter: GET OUT!

Jerry: No.

Peter: I WARN YOU!

Jerry: Do you know how ridiculous you look now?

Peter (His fury and self-consciousness have possessed him): I doesn't matter. (He is almost crying)

GET AWAY FROM MY BENCH! (Albee.1962:181)

Attacking another person with knife is the real communication that occurs between the characters in the play. Jerry finds the real connection with the world by getting himself stabbed by Peter. Jerry howls with the relieving sense of death: 'OH MY GOD!' (Albee.1962:184). This provides him with some relief and brings him closer to God:

From this point onward Peter appears aroused, angered, ready to define himself through concrete deeds rather than false compromises. Within the closing febrile scenes of the play Peter experiences Camus's "definitive awakening" in a moment in which he comes to consciousness wherein he can apprehend the world external to the self in quality new terms. (Raudene.1987: 41). As it is seen in Albee's later works, *The Zoo Story* reflects the relationship of opposing character of two men tragically. (Raudene.1987: 40)

Likewise, in *The Caretaker*, Aston displays the examples of menace with his behaviours. He reflects his callousness into the statues of Buddha which represents the humanity, mercy and sympathy. By breaking the Buddha, Mick tries to give a lesson to Davies, shakes and comes to his senses. He supplied his expected reaction at the end of the play, Aston "sees the broken Buddha and looks at the pieces for a moment", he cuts his relationship with Davies at last. (Almansi and Henderson.1987: 55)

Pinter's language of violence demands imaginative alertness and attention from the victim and is so charted that the chain of reactions that would follow in the victim's mind would lead him to the brink of collapse and speechlessness. The dramatic language thus becomes more effective real physical violence on the stage. (Misra.1992: 79)

The unending argument Aston and Davies related to stinking shed causes increasing tension between them. The knife is the tool of displaying violence here again:

Davies: Don't come too near!

Aston: You've no reason to call that shed stinking.

(Davies points the knife.) You stink.

Davies: What!

Aston: You've been stinking the place out.

Davies: Christ, you say that to me!

Aston: For days. That's one reason I can't sleep.

Davies: You call me that! You call me stinking!

Aston: You better go.

Davies: I'LL STINK YOU!

(He thrusts his arm out, the arm trembling, the knife pointing at ASTON's stomach. ASTON does not move. Silence. Davies's arm moves no further. They stand. I'll stink you...)

Aston: Get your stuff.

(Davies draws the knife in to his chest, breathing heavily. Aston goes to Davies' bed, collects his bag, and puts a few of Davies' things into it.)
(Pinter.1960: 72)

Pinter reveals this situation with as follows:

The original idea was ... to end the play with the violent death of the tramp... It suddenly struck me that it was not necessary. And I think that in this play.... I have developed, that I have no need to use cabaret in turns and back outs and screams in the dark to the extent that I enjoyed using them before. I feel that I can deal, without resorting to that kind of thing, with a human situation... I do see this play as merely... a particular human situation, concerning three particular people and not, incidentally... symbols. (Esslin.1968:280)

As one can see in *The Caretaker* and *The Zoo Story*, growing sense of alienation induced by lack of communication often causes conflicts between characters, leads them to act in abnormal ways, and sometimes drives them to commit acts of violence either against others or themselves.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, lack of communication in modern society leads to alienation, isolation, estrangement, loneliness, threat, horror, violence, murder and death. This situation will certainly continue to be part of our lives in the years to come; however the struggle against it will go on as well; not only in a theoretical, but also sociological sense. Driven by a strong desire to deal with the realities of the human condition, the Theatre of the Absurd tackles the fundamental problems of life and death, lack of communication and alienation, thus fulfilling the original responsibility of the theatre to represent the conflicts arising from the problematic nature of the universe.

To summarize; Pinter reveals the inevitability of individual's alienation. No matter how hard man tries to overcome his sense of isolation, he fails to do so. This hypothesis is proven with Davies's experience. Aston rescues Davies from his loneliness by chance and the latter overcomes his alienation, but he does not appreciate this favour. In spite of Aston's sincerity and generosity, Davies is defeated by his human weakness by putting one brother in conflict with the other. Meanwhile, Aston focuses on his own alienation, which has been induced by different reasons. It is not only the society in which he lives that is guilty for his mental disorder and treatment, but also his senseless mother and probably his deceitful brother, Mick. Aston's predicament results from his alienation, which is caused by his failure to have meaningful communication with others. Out of an impulse to find a way out of this problem, Aston tries to establish some kind of relationship with Davies. Ironically however, Aston is betrayed by Davies, which further intensifies his feeling of alienation. All these happenings are not beyond his control. His only consolation in his alienation is his brother, Mick. Even in every situation, he displays real example of brotherhood, Davies realizes this truth tragically at the end. Mick and Davies are the representatives of the society in this play. Deprived of love, affection and communication with Mick, lead to increase Aston's alienation duration. Even

though Mick is not directly effective in this emergence, he forces him isolation indirectly. Aston struggles to be part of the society by helping Davies. But he treats him abnormally, he states he cannot do anything without help. Pinter wants to observe us how an individual being alienated on the course of others. It is not only Aston's failure but also all humanity. Being deeply upset by Davies who is now completely lonely, Aston accepts his destiny, Mick supports his brother surprisingly at the end by reassuring him. Throughout in his play *The Caretaker*, Pinter stresses and Davies's alienation is derived from his and hypocrite, on the contrary the alienation of Aston is not the fault of him but of the society.

Likewise, Albee believes in necessity of communication too, Peter represents the attempts of human beings to communicate more, Jerry tries to force Peter in order to communicate even the result of it is a murder. The reality which is displayed in this play has always been the problem of mankind since having lived in large society. The message wants to be given to us that is still valid today. *The Zoo Story* symbolizes the alienation of modern man, who lost his real prosperity in a world where human beings prefer materialism instead of humanity. Jerry is the victim of alienation, his life is not different from the animals in the zoo. Everyone behaves him like an animal. He lost his soul in the modern world, lives physically not spiritually. He cuts all his ties with the flux of human civilisation, lives marginally. His apartment is also like a zoo, he does not know even the names of his neighbours as many of us.. He is the reality of the modernism, all his living is the result of it. Jerry is the society and his death is a protest against the deplorable situation of mankind in modernism. His only aim is to give a meaning to his meaningless life.

In my thesis, I tried to examine the concept of lack of communication leads to alienation in *The Caretaker*, *The Zoo Story*, by focusing on the life of Jerry who lives in a rooming house, isolated from society with no sympathy from the people he lives together with, seeks a remedy his nameless existence and dies in his zoo. In the same circumstances but in different aspect, Aston and Mick, two alienated brothers, who live in an isolated dark room and try to find out their essential nature by Davies representing society, make a place for themselves a life of loneliness, looks for a companion to endure their life but finds nothing except their loneliness. The dramatic ending of the protagonists, resemblance and viewpoint of life based the essential part of my work. The society and modernism drifted them away alienation emerged out

their deprivation from communication. I tried to prove this phenomenon on behalf of two writers in my thesis, because whatever it is named, poem, drama, picture, novel, the way of art is to mirror the realities of life and human beings.

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