Deprived of Free Will: Antihumanism in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*

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Abstract

The present paper discusses one of Pinter's plays, *The Birthday Party*, in the light of the notion of antihumanism as proposed by Foucault, Althusser, and Freud. Arguing that an important aspect of Harold Pinter's plays is the description of how people are forced into an antihuman state in which they have no opportunity to show and practice their individuality and free will, the present research applies Foucault to see how antihumanism is created through politics, applies Althusser to see it coming through ideology, and applies Freud to find how it comes through psychological mechanisms. Thus, all through the research, Foucault's notions of disindividualization and institutionalization, Althusser's notions of Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatuses, and Freud's notions of id-ego-superego and defense mechanism act as the theoretical framework to discuss how antihumanism is created in the course of the play.

Keywords: Antihumanism; Power-knowledge; Ideological state apparatuses; Death drive.

1. Introduction

Harold Pinter (1930-2008), one of the greatest dramatists of the twentieth century, was born in Hackney, a working-class district of London. His education was at Hackney Downs Grammar School and, for a short time, at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He was only thirteen when he first began writing poetry and it was in high school days when he became interested in drama. Between the years 1949 and 1959, Pinter was a professional actor travelling around Britain and Ireland with the brand of David Baron. Between the years 1973 and 1983 he became an associate director of Britain's National Theater and in 1966 Pinter worked as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

In the period 1960s when Pinter's dramas were watched on stage in London, they were termed as Theater of the Absurd. Pinter's style of writing was inspired by Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, and Feodor Dostoevsky. His dramatic writing is similar to the Theater of the Absurd in that it uses an uneasy mixture of farce and tragedy; like other absurdist theatres, his works are about being rather than acting and present patterns rather than narrate stories. Nevertheless, Pinter's disreputable characters and filthy settings do not have realistic characteristics. His plays are strongly and compactly built and contain the unities of time and space, but in their diversity they are enigmatic, somewhat surreal. In fact, he is fundamentally a poetic dramatist.

Pinter was almost certainly the most important and leading British dramatist of the second half of the 20th century. His unique, characteristic plays belong to himself and could never be mistaken for anyone else's. His plays do not have the conventional denouement and do not present motives for any action. Pinter himself admitted that his plays were in the beginning some images or scenes, glimpsed or imagined, holding an air of mystery. According to John Russell Taylor, Pinter's plays look a lot like poetry and music in giving themselves to examination through imagery and theme rather than investigation of ideas. Their characteristic aspect is their unmatched Pinteresque dialogue. Pinter had a strange ear that devotedly recreates daily conversation in all its ordinariness, yet it is in some way intensified; as he describes it, speech becomes both more articulate and ambiguous. Pinter was suspicious of language because he believed it to be a cover-up intended to hide rather than to tell. His plays have typically pauses and silences that speak volumes (Stade and Karen 380). Because of all these features, an antihumanistic approach to Pinter's plays discuss many ambiguities of his writings.

2. Humanism and Anti-Humanism

Before exploring the ideas of the anti-humanist figures Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Sigmund Freud, one need to explore the definition of anti-humanism. Because the term is related to its antithesis, humanism, it is necessary to explore the definitions and indications of the two terms.

The term "humanism" is mostly associated with the Renaissance. The term Renaissance humanism is associated with the critical exploration of classical olden times, in the beginning in Italy and then exported to Western Europe in the timespan of three centuries from the 14th to the 16th centuries. The word humanism is used at that period, while Renaissance humanism is a distinguishing coinage used to differentiate it from subsequent humanist ideas and discussions (Knapp, 2000).

While the term Renaissance humanism has a historical signification, the term humanism is a concept with its specific meanings and with no historical concern. As a notion, humanism refers to a philosophical and moral standpoint that underscores the worth, activity, and agency of human beings, both in their individual and collective manifestations. In its general approach, humanism is interested in critical thinking, discussion, and evidence (in such movements as rationalism and empiricism), while rejects the ideas tainted with dogma or superstition (Knapp, 2000).

Humanism has seen different significations based on the consecutive intellectual movements which have associated themselves with it. The term found a distinctive signification through the ideas of Friedrich Niethammer at the opening years of the 19th century to discuss a mode of education rooted in the study of classical literature. Nonetheless, humanism, in its general sense, gives the meaning of a viewpoint that supports some idea of human agency, freedom, and progress. This standpoint regards humans as the only one who is in charge of the promotion and development of individuals and lays emphasis on the concern for man in relation to the world (Calin, 2007).

2.1. Foucault and Anti-Humanism

In his anti-humanist stance, Foucault resisted against the foundational features of Enlightenment humanism, along with their calculated consequences, emphasizing that they either openly formed counter-emancipatory consequences, or matched amplified "freedom" with higher and disciplinary normatization. Foucault's anti-humanist cynicism resulted in his efforts at seeing theory in both human feeling and reason, emphasizing that both were historically conditional hypothesis, rather than the universals that humanism upheld. Thus, the first step in considering Foucault's anti-humanism is to see how the philosopher resists against essentialism. In his view, the idea of universal man is meaningless because humans are always defined historically. According to Foucault, in this historical definition, power and discourse play an important role (Morgan, 2016).

Foucault's definitions of power can be found in his early work on institutions and his later one on the issue of sexuality and governmentality. In the former, Foucault occasionally means that power is in some way intrinsic to institutions and establishments themselves, instead of being in the human entities that make them function. Evidently, what Foucault studies in his early works is to know how the formation of modern disciplines, with their doctrines and mechanisms of command and control, are inclined to "disindividualize" power, making it appear as if power is inherently present in the prison, the school, the factory, etc. Thus, in his anti-humanism, Foucault emphasizes that power is present in institutions and individuals do not have agency in themselves.

In this anti-humanistic state, the Panopticon is emphasized by Foucault as a model for the way other institutions work. According to him, the Panopticon "is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (Discipline 202). Undeniably, the aim of Jeremy Bentham, the designer of the Panopticon, was to institute an architectural notion that, in the long run, could work by itself. This means that it was not important who exactly activated and worked with the machine: "Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants" (Discipline 202).

The very presence and application of the idea of discipline can similarly be seen as a perception of the idea of power from any individual: "'Discipline' may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology" (Discipline 215). Governments, similar to disciplines, are at work in empowering the idea and practice of disindividuation because they support the passivity of the administrator ("I'm just doing my job"; "I'm just a cog in the machine") and are inclined to continue working even following major changes or revolutions. For instance, following the collapse of Nazi Germany, the general administrative structure, and most of its staffs, remained in place.

The outcome of this inclination to disindividualize power is the observation that power exists in in the machine itself (the "panoptic machine"; the "technology" of power) rather than in the person who operates it. Because of this, it is possible to end up reading Foucault's Discipline and Punish with the fearful belie that we are helpless before such an operative and scattered method of social control. Yet, later in his writings, Foucault emphasizes that power eventually is innately present in individuals, including those that are observed or disciplined. It is an axiom that modern methods of punitive institute permit ever greater number of people to be observed and dominated by ever smaller numbers of "specialists"; nonetheless, as Foucault expounds in "The Subject and Power" that "something called Power, with or without a capital letter, which is assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist. Power exists only when it is put into action" ("The Subject and Power" 219). Foucault, then, explains that power, by itself, "is not a renunciation of freedom, a transference of rights, the power of each and all delegated to a few" ("The Subject and Power" 220).

2.2. Althusser and Anti-Humanism

Similar to Foucault's antihumanism, Althusser's antihumanism is politically structured. While Foucault is concerned mostly with the idea of power, Althusser discusses how power is structurally at work to implement and further ideology in societies. With Althusser's description of the foundations that form any socio-economic structure

and their relations, two conclusions can be made about the relationship between man and society. First, the belief that humans are simply one of the centers in which the conflicting dynamic forces that form an epoch are constructed. This means that Althusser's anti-humanism lies in his precaution that the main object of social philosophy is not the human individual. Second, When Althusser proposes the idea that the state or the government created by political struggles is only one dynamic practices among others, he points out that the main component in political philosophy is not the state. Even though both the components of states and individuals are important factors in the continuation of the socio-economic entity as a whole, none of them are the sole players in the development of societies. It is in their interaction that societies progress. Because humans are defined by their interaction with states in Althusserian philosophy, his ideas are considered as "anti-humanist" (Morgan, 2016).

According to Althusser, human beings and their nature are historically produced and reproduced through prevailing social relations. To put it in another way, they are all ideologically constructed. Except for the need of humans to be involved with productive associations with their fellows and with their surroundings in order to obtain their means of survival, there cannot be envisaged any human nature or essence. This contention works as the essence of Althusser's "anti-humanist" position. Also, while some principle and order need to be present in order to make the production and reproduction of social life possible, there is no necessary or best form that this principle or order must produce. This does not mean that humans do not consider or struggle for the best possible order for their social lives or that they do not have faith in the fact that they are principally free or the same and deserving of rights. In addition, this does not mean that all of people's thoughts are identical and that disparate thoughts and ideas about what is the finest cannot be existent next to each other in the identical system without resulting in skirmish (though they sometimes do). The discipline of Historical Materialism has shown the yearning for such ideas and orders to be historically produced together with the ideas about human nature that validate them (Morgan, 2016).

Since in Althusser's philosophy the question of history plays a key role, one cannot believe that there is something called human nature. This means that humans are produced in historical moments through the states that dominate them. In Althusserian philosophy, the histories in question are made up of the ideologies that the states spread in societies. Therefore, anti-humanism in Althusser's philosophy is brought about by ideologies that the ruling class spread in societies. Althusser devotes an important part of his thoughts to the way ideologies are given out and the place where people receive them. Considering the fact that Althusser is in the first place under the influence of orthodox Marxism, one should begin with the Marxian notion of "State apparatus" (Rehmann, 2013).

This term includes all systems and administrations that the ruling class in the forms of the governing system apply to keep its economic power and dominance going. These apparatuses appear in the forms of the government, the police, the courts, the civil service, the prisons, the army, and the like. Althusser concludes that the State seems to be more difficult to comprehend than what Marxist theory had informed us. In his groundbreaking definition, Althusser emphasizes that the State apparatus are made up of two groups of organizations. In the first place, it is made up of what is regarded as the suppressive systems or institutions, meaning that they are powerful systems by which the leading power dominates its subjects. In the second place, it involves an ideology that arranges for an excuse for the repression:

The State Apparatus (SA) encompasses: The Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc., which constitute what later in this chapter will be termed as the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive indicates that the State Apparatus at issue "functions by violence" – at least eventually (since repression, e.g. governmental repression, may have non-physical manifestations (Lenin and Philosophy 136).

Althusser puts emphasis on the issue of force and repression in the State. He emphasizes that the ruling power uses the "repressive State apparatuses" (RSA), aiming at controlling and giving directions to the working class. The main working of the RSA is to appear every time the working class tries to intrude upon power and class order. The time when such disrespect is seen, the RSA comes and stops the subordinate classes, either through applying violence or through applying the threat to violence. In the words of Althusser, "The (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such thing as a purely repressive apparatus.)" (Lenin and Philosophy 138). In actual fact, the governing system exerts his power and control over the RSA, because it also exerts control over other parts of the State (including political, legislative, and the armed). The complication that Althusser is concerned with is in fact as a result of the complicated relationship between ideology and repression.

According to Althusser, it is the task of ideology to allow repression to carry out its job. To clarify how ideology disseminates and strengthens its discourses, Althusser writes a wide-ranging treatise entitled "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." This writing is nowadays regarded as his utmost contribution to the neo-Marxist definition of ideology and as one of the best explanations of how the reproduction of production relations comes about. Every time Althusser mentions the ISAs, he essentially regards how powers reintroduce and reproduce the relations of production, a process to which their life in both individual and collective forms is depended on. The central reason for Althusser's argument is that because manners of production have essentially exploitative nature, why the exploited people allow the power or society to keep on exploiting him or her. To give a response to this question, Althusser proposes the notion of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (Dowding, 2011).

To give definition to his celebrated ISAs, Althusser directs his readers to initially compare it with the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA). The ISAs, dissimilar to the repressive nature of the RSA, are existent and functioning in the private institutions of communities. For instance, they appear in churches, families, schools, and the like. In contrast to the RSA, they do not enforce order by using repression; instead, they continue the leading class cohesion and power primarily by ideology. When people are exposed to education by the ISAs, they usually act and work in a normal manner since they are afraid of social scorn, not necessarily of legal prosecution. In their diverse

manifestations, the ISAs are distinctive and specialized systems or institutions that can be categorized into the following collections:

The religious ISA (the system of the different churches) / the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private schools) / the family ISA / the legal ISA/ the political ISA / the trade union ISA/ the communications ISA (press, radio and television etc.)/ the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports etc (Althusser, 1972).

At this point, Althusser expresses his central argument that, though the RSA and the ISAs are extremely unified and interconnected, they have dissimilar potentials and methodology. He emphasizes that, while the RSA function primarily and predominantly "by violence," the ISAs function in the first place "by ideology" (Althusser, 1972). Though they have different nature and approach, they are severely behind one another:

For their part, the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if only ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus (Althusser, 1972).

2.3. Freud and Anti-Humanism

The contribution of Sigmund Freud to the question of anti-humanism can be found in his discussion of psychic determinism, which is clearly present in his theory of psychoanalysis. In the 20th century, the understanding of humans as rationally independent entities was challenged and undermined by Freud, who argued that humans to be essentially controlled and dominated by unconscious irrational desires.

Psychic determinism, as a fundamental notion of psychoanalysis, refers to a deterministic view that conceives that all psychological procedures and practices are not intentional but are determined and controlled through the unconscious or foregoing mental functions. This outlook holds that the causation norm is applicable to mental happenings in which nothing takes place accidentally. Consequently, slips of the tongue, forgetting the name of a certain person, and any other verbal associations or mistakes are believed to be possibly discussed as psychological meaning. Psychoanalysts would commonly inquire their clients and ask them to explain why a certain thing "popped into" their mind or why someone's name have elapsed their mind rather than ignoring the material. Afterwards, the psychoanalysts examine this interaction with clients for some evidences that expose unconscious relations to the slip of verbal association. Psychic determinism is associated with the all-encompassing notion of determinism, especially in relation to human actions. Psychoanalysts who hold a conviction in psychic determinism argue that human exploits and judgements are prearranged and are not essentially within their own power and control (Meissner, 2012).

Even though the "Freudian slip" is seen as the most common and well-known instance of psychic determinism in Freud's psychoanalysis, this idea of determinism is not the only one in his philosophy. In Freudian psychoanalysis, psychic determinism is seen in other manifestations of mental lapses such as forgetting someone's name. All these issues are related to Freud's proposition of the unconscious (De Berg, 2003).

As Freud's most prominent contribution to the idea of anti-humanism and determinism, the notion of the unconscious was central to the psychologist's account of the mind. Freud announced that while men of letters and intellectuals had long been aware of the presence of the unconscious, he had struggled that the term would find scientific attention in the field of psychology. Thus, the concept made an appearance in Freud's writings.

The issue of unconscious as an important part of human psyche was first propounded with regard to the issue of repression, in an attempt to discuss what happens to ideas that are suppressed. Freud openly acknowledged that the question of the unconscious was grounded in the notion of repression. He assumed a succession of events in which thoughts are repressed, but are kept in the mind, detached from consciousness yet running, then resurface in consciousness under certain situations. This assumption was the result of the study of cases of traumatic hysteria, which discovered situations where the conduct of patients could not be described without pointing to ideas or thoughts of which they were not aware. This issue, mingled with the belief that such conduct could be artificially brought about by hypnosis, in which thoughts were injected into people's minds, meant that thoughts were functioning in the original cases, even if their subjects knew nothing of them (Billig, 1999).

In his anti-humanist stance about conscious and unconscious minds, Freud argued that the human psyche could be divided into three parts: Id, ego and super-ego. Freud proposed these subdivisions in the 1920 essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle, and completely went into detail about them in The Ego and the Id (1923), in which he considered their comprehensive definition as a substitute to his earlier topographic outline (i.e., conscious, unconscious and preconscious). Regarding the id, Freud argues that it is the totally unconscious, thoughtless, naïve part of the psyche that functions on the "pleasure principle" and is the foundation of rudimentary instincts and drives. In sum, it strives for instant pleasure and satisfaction (Bernstein, 2018).

3. Discussion

The Birthday Party, Pinter's first full length play, is among the first of his dramatic production in which the melodramatic and supernatural features are deleted, while mystery and horror continues. The peaceful and warm accommodation of The Room is now a filthy coastal boarding house administered by a disorderly but supportive and motherly old woman called Meg. Petey, her husband, is nearly totally quiet and muted. He is a benevolent old man who is working as a deck-chair helper on the promenade. The two ominous gunmen of The Dumb Waiter, called Ben and Gus, resurface as a threatening pair of guests called McCann and Goldberg. A new significant character is also introduced in the play: a man in his late thirties named Stanley, who is lethargic and indifferent, who has somehow found shelter and protection in the boarding house, which for a long time has not accommodated any other guest. Meg's maternal affection for Stanley is so extreme that it almost seems to be somehow incestuous. No

background information is provided about Stanley, except that he on one occurrence had a piano concert at Lower Edmonton, a performance that was immensely successful. Nonetheless, as he emphasizes, an unknown man prevented the performance of his next concert. Although Stanley is imagining a world tour, it is clear that he is taking refuge from an inauspicious world in Meg's repulsive seaside resort.

Then, similar to the other plays by Pinter, the door opens. Two threatening guests, Goldberg and McCann, look for a room in Meg's abode. It is rapidly revealed that they are present there for Stanley. Some questions arise: Do they represent some top-secret institution he has betrayed? Are they nurses sent to take him back to an asylum from which he has fled? Are they agents of another world? Such questions are never answered in the play. Spectators merely see them organizing a birthday party for their victim who asserts that it is not his birthday party, and putting him in a terrifying but absurd questioning.

The birthday party continues, while Meg, uninformed of what is going on, strangely playing the belle of the ball; along with Goldberg, who appears to have various names, seducing the stupid blonde from the next door – until eventually it comes to an end in a play of blind man's buff. McCann has taken away Stanley's glasses, and Stanley is now more and more shocked and terrified. Stanley proceeds to stifle Meg but is sent upstairs by McCann and Goldberg.

In the third act, Stanley is taken away by the two ominous characters in a big black car. His dress is now a black jacket and stripped trousers with a clean collar and a bowler hat on his head. Keeping his broken glasses, he has turned dumb and blank, something like a puppet. Coming down, Meg is still daydreaming of the pleasing party and does not understand what has happened.

3.1. Foucauldian Antihumanism

A story of Foucauldian power institutionalization and disindividualization like the ones produced by Kafka, *The Birthday Party* represents two mysteriously and ominously disindividualized figures called Goldberg and McCann who appear in the coastal boarding house as the agents of a mysterious state-run organization to institutionalize their victim, Stanley. They can be properly designated as disindividualized because they appear to be mere performer of some orders, the orders that are issued by an authority who remains unfamiliar to them all through. Once they approach their victim, they remind one another about the antihuman nature of their task:

GOLDBERG. You know what I said when this job came up. I mean naturally they approached me
to take care of it. (29).

When Goldberg uses the word "naturally," one is reminded of the essentialism that Foucault refers to. As their typical task, the unknown "they" approach Goldberg to assign him for some missions with no envisaging of any choice for him whether or not to accept it. Similarly, the disindividualized McCann has been led to the belief that he has to obey as he has always done:

MCCANN. This job-no, listen-this job, is going to be like anything we've ever done before. (29).

These comments indicate that Goldberg and McCann's presence at the boarding house is empowered by the directives enforced on them by an institutionalizing power (Jageer 67). In their antihumanistic situation, they are seemingly unable to choose whether to perform the mission or not. Also, Pinter presents some evidences to indicate that Stanley himself was at a time an agent of the very organization to which Goldberg and McCann are now a member (Jageer 67). This is emphasized in the play in the interrogations:

MCCANN. Why did you leave the organisation?
GOLDBERG. What would your old mother say, Webber? (48).

Here, it becomes clear that one of the reasons for which Stanley is tortured is his abandonment of the organization. In another explicit indication, McCann strongly points out:

MCCANN. You betrayed the organisation. I know him! (48).

McCann and Goldberg's dialogues reveal that Stanley has had some associations with them and with the organization. His guilt, which remains to a high degree hidden throughout the play, can be found in his struggle to disentangle himself from the disindividualization power of power structure. He is now a pianist who has had the ambition of having some concerts. His acts of dissociation with the organization and the new association with art, which is generally taken to be an individualistic practice, have incited the intolerant and essentialist power structure to take him back into his previous antihumanistic situation. This is why the now autonomous Stanley is highly afraid of the arrival of McCann and Goldberg's:

STANLEY (advancing): They're coming today. They're coming in a van.
MEG: Who?
STANLEY: And do you know what they've got in that van?
MEG: What?
STANLEY: They've got a wheelbarrow in that van.
MEG (breathlessly): They haven't.
STANLEY: Oh yes they have (24).

Stanley's inclination for freedom, the disindividualizing nature of the organization, and the passive obedience of McCann and Goldberg all indicate that in Pinter's The Birthday Party it is an external power that determines everything including the wills of both the agents and targets. This power structure is so authoritative and ever-present that it affects even those who are not directly associated with it. This is characterized with the fact that Meg grows afraid of the presence of McCann and Goldberg, while she is not associated with the organization.

This shadow of terror is the result of the disindividualized power that has been assigned to the two. All through The Birthday Party, Goldberg and McCann are shown to be powerfully exercising power, while, in actual fact, they

are themselves institutionalized subject with no power of their own. Through presenting such antihumanist pictures, Pinter proves himself to be "a humanist who is very concerned about the fate of humanity, showing us that language is betraying us and placing absurd roles on people" (Laskewicz 9). In other words, Pinter seems to be finding the clue for humanism in the exposition of antihumanism. For this aim, Pinter depicts two ominous characters who on the surface are humanely empowered, while in depth are inhumanely powerless. Their power is externally provided since the bureaucratic system gives them credibility even prior to their appearance on stage. Gradually, the two becomes tools for other characters to take one another into an antihuman situation, as evidenced in Meg and Stanley's relationship:

> STANLEY: But who are they?
> MEG: You'll see when they come.
> STANLEY: (decisively) they won't come
> MEG: why not?
> STANLEY: (quickly) I tell you they won't come. Why didn't they come last night, if they were coming? (20).

As civilian people, these characters are stunned by the presence of the agents of power structure. As the case of Meg indicates, they refer to power as a tool to terrorize each other. In the same way, Goldberg and McCann's appearance acts as an excuse for Stanley to retaliate Meg's bothering (Laskewicz 1). This act of referring to power to have dominancy on each other indicates how the external power affects interpersonal relationships:

> STANLEY: They're looking for someone. A certain person.
> MEG: (hoarsely) No, they're not!
> STANLEY: Shall I tell you who they're looking for?
> MEG: No! (24).

The excerpt reveals that ordinary people are unconsciously afraid that external power prosecute them, while they are apparently innocent. Pinter's play does not give any clue about Meg's possible criminality. Yet, she is terrorized by the very thinking that they might come to take her away. This appears to be the unjust power of a totalitarian system that overwhelm everyone who come in its course. As Vafa Nadernia and his colleagues points out:

> Many instances in The Birthday Party show how in retrospect the atrocities of some totalitarian governments that deprive people from their primary civil rights and response to any opposition – verbal or practical – by torture, suppression, and at most killing. The violent treatment of interrogators, Goldberg and McCann in The Birthday Party, is a symbol of the dreadful dominance of animalism on humanism which might be portrayed in any legal and accepted shape of advisor or counselor (2).

3.2. Althusserian Antihumanism

When discussing the question of ideology, Althusser believes that ideology is spread by the dominant system for the sake of preserving class coalition. In other words, ideology keeps the interests of the owners of capital. This practice is done in domestic places, and it becomes a practice for greater capitals like the ones owned by the state. This practice in domestic places is seen by the fact that the capital possession of Petey and Meg is powerfully at work in power dealings between characters. Pointing to the power dealings in the play, Jageer argues that "Petey tries to dominate Meg and Meg tries to dominate every other male character in the play" (61). The order and hierarchy that Jageer refers to is empowered by what Althusser calls ideology in domestic institutions, here Petey and Meg's boarding house, that it itself is determined by the questions of class and capital. This source of soft power coming from ideology and capital is clearly seen in Stanley and Meg's relationships:

> STANLEY: How long has that tea been in the pot?
> MEG: It's good tea. Good strong tea.
> STANLEY: This isn't tea. It's gravy.
> MEG: It's not.
> STANLEY: Get out of it. You succulent old washing bag.
> MEG: I am not! And it isn't your place to tell me if I am!
> STANLEY: And it isn't your place to come into a man's bed room and—wake him up (18).

Stanley and Meg's discussion has two elements of capital and gender in the background. Their struggle for dominating each other is motivated by these two elements that are decided by the ideologies of the time in which they live. This soft power is distinct from the repressive apparatuses, like the one exerted by Goldberg and his colleague. While these two ominous agents exert power through force or RSA, the power exertion in the boarding house among characters is through ideology. When spectators see Meg as the landlady and the holder of capital, they can expect her to be looking after her share of power. Also, when Stanley is seen as a man in the play, spectators can naturally expect his search for a masculine share of power. Thus, the questions of class and gender are ideological because are aimed at creating order and hierarchy. It is noteworthy that, at times, the fact that Meg is the holder of capital influences shields her from being affected by repressive agents. According to Wyllie, "Pinter's treatment of Meg in The Birthday Party is particularly intriguing" and though the two threatening characters "have an overwhelmingly negative impact on Stanley, and they ultimately provoke Petey to minor defiance followed by subdued silence," they cannot affect Meg as much as other characters (72). This means that Meg is the only character in The Birthday Party who is capable of resisting Goldberg:

> Meg: I hope I look nice in my dress.
> Goldberg: Madam, you'll look like a tulpit.

Meg: What colour?

Goldberg: Er – well, I'll have to see the dress first (33).

Discussing this excerpt, Wyllie argues that Goldberg's hesitancy at this scene is the only example in the play when he feels incapable of exerting power (72). However, despite the power coming from holding capital, it is Goldberg and McCann as repressive agents of the system that finally dominate the power play in the course of The Birthday Party. They are able to ignore and destroy the ideological power plays in the play by kidnapping Stanley as the guest to the boarding house against Meg's wish, i.e. the wish of the holder of capital. This might be as a result of the outward source of power whose board and degree of influence dominates the boarding house and its residents. Thus, Goldberg and McCann become the agents of an oppressive government in the play that ignore ideological dealing in the domestic places.

By revealing the dominant ideology in the domestic institution of Meg's boarding house, Pinter tries to show how repression and ideology are present at the same. He also tries to reveal that these two elements of the state constantly take individuals onto the state of antihumanism. While the repressive antihumanism that Goldberg and McCann takes characters into is very overt and palpable, the one that ideology takes into is more invisible and needs more attention. In addition, Pinter's politics in revealing ideologies leads to the exposition of what happens in the time of the production of the play. In fact, by being concerned with the events of the time, the Birthday Party becomes itself an ideological apparatus. Therefore, it is necessary to consider The Birthday Party in the backdrop of the historical context on which it is written. The very beginning of the play by the ominously alarming knock at the door of Stanley's shelter in Meg and Petey's boarding house is significant.

3.3. Freudian Antihumanism

The psychological understanding of assimilation is true of Stanley who can be seen as a true manifestation of such an individual whose disposition has been paralyzed because of his artistic outlook by the savage agents of the society. According to Jamil and Alvi, "Stanley, whose only crime was to be indifferent towards society and to sustain his individuality, was not allowed by society to live by his own in his separate peace and by hiding himself from others. The fear of the world outside has made Stanley neurotic" (143). Stanley's neurosis is in fact the psychological source of antihumanism throughout the play.

Stanley is psychologically entangled in the conflict of assimilation and individuality. He has sheltered in his own world where he is satisfied by his life by being isolated from society and this is evidently a symptom of neurosis. From the very beginning of the play, Stanley appears to be a character disconnected with the world of reality. His discussion with Meg in the first act of the play, in which he has dreams of being a successful pianist indicates his dreamy inclination and his estrangement with the world of reality. He is afraid of the unknown, the one which may be known in fact. As a result, he keeps to be detached from the outside world.

As Stanley's main source of psychological antihumanism, his neurosis makes him believe that the external world is blameworthy for his fiasco in practical and real life and also for the distresses he experienced. This shows itself in his emphasis that "They carved me up. Carved me up. It was all worked out…They want me to crack down on my bended knees" (13). In addition to the antihuman force of neurosis, other sources of psychological enslavement are Oedipus complex and the castration complex in the play.

From the opening of the play, the Freudian term Oedipus complex is seen in the relationship between Meg, a woman in her 60s, and Stanley, a man in his 30s. The relationship between the two is not well-defined all through, but from time to time the manner by which Meg approaches Stanley reminds one of a mother's treatment of a child. She feels responsible for Stanley's sleep and for his "cornflakes" and tea. She intimately hails him as "Stan" or "Stanny" and, once Stanley does not get up, the mother figure rushes to his room to "fetch" him, or "ruffles his hair as she passes" by him. All through the play, she in her adopted as the mother figure struggles to have a motherly approach to him though he recurrently humiliates her by informing her that the cornflakes are "horrible" and "the milk's off", and that she is "a bad wife" and "succulent," and that the tea is resembling "gravy" and "muck." Additionally, he teases the woman's capability to keep the house neat while he is witness to her act of using the duster. He brashly tells her that his room is a "pigsty" and that "it needs sweeping" and "papering" (8- 13).

Stanley's insults do not preclude her from giving affection to him. She even guards her own maternal love in front of him. She defends the quality of her cornflakes by marking them out as "refreshing," and she informs him that "you won't find many better wives than me" when she faces his accusation of being a bad wife. Besides, she is not moved by his insults about her incompetence in keeping the house clean, emphasizing that "[she] keeps a very nice house and that [she] keeps it clean" (8- 13). His behavior is reminiscent of a spoiled child, and yet he is given what he desires. She even inquires if he needs some tea after he declines to have the "horrible" cornflakes. He is a man in his 30s who is clearly in need of being taught good manners. Meg instructs him to use the words "please" and "sorry," a characteristic way of training young children those magic words that get everything done for them (11).

In the relationship between Meg, Stanley, and Petty, the mind and action of all of the three are decided by psychological forces beyond their control. They act and behave not based on their conscious mind, but based on their unconscious inclinations. The Oedipus complex is the driving force behind their consciousness, taking them to the state of antihuman. Meg is interested in having Stanley as her object of desire. Meg's approach to Stanley is similar to the unbridled inclination of "id." Petey may represent the "superego" who acts as the barrier to achieve the Oedipus complex resolved. Meg seems to be indifferent to Petey, but this superego is relatively a source of anxiety for Stanley. Due to his neurosis, and as result his disinclination to be assimilated into social relationships, Stanley remains aloof in this process of Oedipal involvement. What is noteworthy all through is the psychological antihuman state that such an Oedipal relationship takes the characters into.

4. Conclusion

It was discussed that all the characters in *The Birthday Party*, including Goldberg and McCann, are disindividualized through an externally dominated institution that deprives all the subjects of their free will. It was shown how what Althusser called Repressive State Apparatus with the agency of Goldberg and McCann was the dominant ideology of the play and how Meg represented "id", Petey the "superego", and the relationship between Stanley and Petey symbolized Oedipus complex. All these happenings, it was revealed, take characters into antihumanistic situation. Pinter's *The Birthday Party* represents characters who are deprived of their free will. They are in fact entities who have been taken into antihuman situation. The sources of Antihumanism comes from state-run establishment, domestic ideology, and psychological drives. The main target of antihumanism is Stanley whose Burkman considers as a "caged animal waiting for the slaughter at the hands of the representatives of the establishment" (31). The whole forces in the play are at work to take him into antihuman situation, while the young man, who is seemingly afflicted with neurosis, struggles to keep his individuality and to resist assimilation. Yet, the end of the play reveals that resistance against external forces are futile and the resisting character is finally de-humanized and taken away.

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