

THE USE OF MEMORY IN HAROLD PINTER'S *LANDSCAPE, SILENCE, NIGHT,*  
*OLD TIMES, AND NO MAN'S LAND.*

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## ABSTRACT

THE USE OF MEMORY IN HAROLD PINTER'S *LANDSCAPE, SILENCE, NIGHT, OLD TIMES, AND NO MAN'S LAND*.

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Harold Pinter's concern with memory and the verification of the past have been ever-present since his early writings. Although these themes have been explored by Pinter in his early works, they have become dominant in his interim plays, which have been named by critics as his memory plays. In these plays, the characters evoke the past to such an extent that the past virtually co-exists with and influences the present. The characters' recollections of the past may be real, or they may be partially or even completely altered during the process of remembering. However, since verification of the past is impossible, whether these memories are real or confabulated remains unknown. The motives underlying these characters' utilization of memories deserves investigation. This paper ventures to examine the reasons why the characters in the memory plays exploit recollections of the past. It focuses on the characters' use of memory with the aim of asserting and perpetuating identity and existence, of exerting dominance over others, and of coping with their dissatisfaction with the present. To this end, the characters in Pinter's *Landscape, Silence, Night, Old Times, and No Man's Land* will be studied respectively.

Keywords: Memory, Identity, Existence, Dominance, Dissatisfaction

## ÖZ

HAROLD PINTER' IN *LANDSCAPE, SILENCE, NIGHT, OLD TIMES*, VE *NO MAN'S LAND* ADLI OYUNLARINDA GEÇMİŞİN VE ANILARIN KULLANIM AMACI.

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Harold Pinter'in hafızaya ve geçmişin ispatına duyduğu merak, yazarlığının erken dönemlerinden beri süregelmiştir. Bu temalar, Pinter tarafından erken dönem eserlerinde irdelenmiş olmasına rağmen, eleştirmenlerin hafıza oyunları olarak adlandırdıkları ara dönem oyunlarına hakim olmuştur. Bu oyunlarda, karakterler, geçmişini öyle bir dereceye kadar harekete geçirirler ki, geçmiş, şimdiki zamanla hemen hemen bir arada yaşar ve şimdiki zamanı etkiler. Karakterlerin geçmişle ilgili hatıraları gerçek olabilir, ya da hatırlama sürecinde kısmen, hatta tamamen başka bir şekle girebilir. Ne var ki, geçmişini ispatlamak mümkün olmadığı için, bu anıların gerçek olup olmadığı veya bu anılar üzerinde sadece konuşulup konuşulmadığı hala bilinmemektedir. Bu karakterlerin hafıza kullanımlarının temelini oluşturan sebepler, incelenmeyi hak eder. Bu araştırma, hafıza oyunlarındaki karakterlerin geçmişin hatıralarından faydalanmalarının nedenini inceleme girişiminde bulunmaktadır. Karakterlerin kimlik ile varoluşu ileri sürme ve yaşatma, diğerleri üzerinde hakimiyet kurma ve geçmişle ilgili memnuniyetsizlikleriyle başa çıkma amacıyla hatıra kullanımlarına odaklanmaktadır. Bu amaçla, Pinter'in *Landscape, Silence, Night, Old Times*, ve *No Man's Land* eserlerindeki karakterler sırasıyla incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hatıralar, Geçmiş, Kişilik, Kimlik, Varoluş, Hakimiyet Kurma, Doyumsuzluk

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PLAGIARISM</b> .....	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>ÖZ</b> .....	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1. Harold Pinter and His Use of Memory .....	1
1.2. Aim of the Study.....	7
<b>2. ASSERTING AND PERPETUATING IDENTITY AND EXISTENCE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. Asserting and Maintaining a Sense of Identity .....	8
2.2. Connecting with Others and Establishing Personal Relationships .....	23
<b>3. EXERTING DOMINANCE OVER OTHERS.....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1. Subjugating One's Antagonist .....	43
3.2. Compensating for One's Insecurities and Inadequacies .....	66
<b>4. COPING WITH DISSATISFACTION.....</b>	<b>75</b>
4.1. Coping with Dissatisfaction with One's Present State and Social Circle ...	75
<b>5. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>6. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>103</b>

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Harold Pinter and His Use of Memory

Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature, Harold Pinter (1930 - ), embarked on his journey that has led him to become one of the world's most renowned playwrights as a professional actor. While he was acting in a Shakespearean company under the stage name of David Baron, he also took up writing. Until he wrote his first play, *The Room*, in 1957, Pinter wrote numerous poems, short prose pieces, and a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Dwarfs*, which he later adapted into a radio play. An incredibly versatile playwright, since writing *The Room*, Pinter has produced a variety of works including stage plays, television plays, radio plays, revue sketches, and screenplays (Esslin: 1980 234; Sakellaridou 1; Taylor 323, 324) all of which have added to his stature as a legendary literary figure. Besides establishing an unparalleled reputation as a literary figure, Pinter has also gained a reputation as an influential political activist through "his sense of responsibility to speak out on political matters" ranging from government policies to issues such as torture and freedom of speech (Smith 35, 36).

The variety that can be observed in both his standing as an actor, playwright, director, and political activist and in his exploration of different literary genres can also be observed in the themes of Pinter's plays. Steven Gale refers to Pinter's plays as "complex collections of interrelated themes" (17). Indeed, fear, loneliness, menace, communication, verification, fulfillment of psychological needs, the struggle for power,

time, and memory are employed interconnectedly as thematic elements in Pinter's plays (Gale 19-21; Prentice xix). Though most of these thematic elements are ubiquitous, the focus tends to shift from one theme to another, depending on the era in which the plays were written. For instance, Pinter's early plays, *The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *The Caretaker*, *A Slight Ache*, and *The Homecoming*, are deemed as "signature 'Pinteresque' (the room, a menacing intruder, and the subsequent disintegration of character...)"; his interim plays, *Landscape*, *Silence*, *Night*, *Old Times*, *No Man's Land*, *Betrayal*, *Family Voices*, and *A Kind of Alaska*, are considered as "more lyrical reflections on time and memory". Furthermore, his more recent plays, *One for the Road* and *Mountain Language*, are considered as "overtly political" (Gordon xii) though they also encompass Pinter's fundamental themes.

The themes of memory and the verification of the past have been prevalent since Pinter's early plays. Bernard Dukore points out the past is unclear in most of Pinter's plays and gives some examples such as "Stanley's transgression" in *The Birthday Party*, "Aston's experience in the mental asylum" in *The Caretaker*, and "adultery" in *The Collection*" (85). Though these themes have been explored by Pinter in his early writings, they have become dominant in his plays, *Landscape*, *Silence*, *Night*, *Old Times*, and *No Man's Land*, which have been named by critics as his memory plays. Therefore, even though the theme of memory is not new for Pinter, the emphasis placed on it is (Gale 21).

Pinter's main concern in his memory plays is with the "immense difficulty, if not the impossibility, of verifying the past" (qtd. in Dukore 9). Therefore, in these plays,

[a]s in life, Pinter's characters either cannot remember, are uncertain of the accuracy of their memory, or recognize that whatever they recall is

true mainly for the present, however false it may be for the past (Dukore 9, 10).

However, Pinter's concern is not with what really took place in the past. It is rather with "how each character tells of the past and what motives lie behind such contradictory and fantastical accounts" (Martineau 11). Moreover,

Pinter recognizes that the past is essentially dramatic when explored through conflicting memories both because the range of possible action is further extended and because the uncertainty of outcome holds the audience in continuous suspense (11).

Therefore, his memory plays have been deemed as intricate games, diversions structured around the concept of a past that is not stationary but is capable of interfering in and influencing the present, a past that can be constructed and reconstructed in accordance with the needs and desires of the individual (Peacock 112). Thus, while Pinter's characters' memories are "unverifiable guides to the past, they create a dramatic present that affects others" (Dukore 9, 10). That is, whether real or constructed, verifiable or unverifiable, in Pinter's plays of memory, the memories of the characters interfere in their present lives. This interference is to such an extent that these characters "cohabit" with their memories (Almansi & Henderson 85).

Critics put forward that Pinter's fascination with the notion of the interrelation of the past and the present stems from his in depth study of Marcel Proust's novel, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu, In Search of Lost Time*. In 1972, Pinter wrote *The Proust Screenplay*, an adaptation of Proust's novel that still remains unfiled (Prentice 203; Rusinko 65). The influence of *Recherche* on Pinter's works can be observed in his portrayal of time as a non-linear concept in which "the past and the present seem to occur simultaneously" (Almansi & Henderson 85, 86). Pinter indeed shares Proust's concern

with “the indivisibility of the past and present, the homogeneity of time” (Peacock 100). However, there is one main element that sets apart Pinter’s utilization of memory from that of Proust’s. The type of memory that Proust focuses on in *Recherche* is involuntary memory, which is a term coined by the writer in order to denote flashbacks instigated by visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile stimuli. These recollections are “spontaneously elicited by some cue such as a phrase, a smell, a tune, or when we are reminded of them by a similar current experience ... these passive or involuntary memories are not essentially available on demand” (Cohen 156). However, for Pinter’s characters, remembering is an active process in which they willingly and knowingly invoke recollections of the past without being prompted by sensory stimuli. Thus, the type of memory that Pinter deals with is autobiographical memory which, at its simplest, is defined by psychologists Koriat, Goldsmith, and Pansky as “our recollections of events that happened in our life and when those events took place” (in Morris & Maisto 249). As the term denotes,

autobiographical memory is distinct from memories of other people’s experiences, memories of public events, general knowledge, and skills. The defining characteristic of autobiographical memory is its relationship to the self: The remembered events are of personal significance and are the building blocks from which the self is constructed. Paradoxically, the self is both the experiencer and the product of the experiences” (Cohen 147).

Thus, the fundamental importance of autobiographical memory lies in the fact that it is “central to self, to identity, to emotional experience, and to all those attributes that define an individual” (Conway qtd. in Morris & Maisto 249).

Psychologists also share Pinter’s concern with “the mistiness of memory” (Dukore 9). Robinson puts forward that “an awareness of the fallibility of memory ... is

as old as man's fascination with memory itself" (19). Saul Kassin also ponders on the unstable nature of memory:

Can remembrances of the past be trusted? Human memory is often the subject of controversy. Sometimes we seem to be able to recall a face, a voice, the contents of a lecture, a foreign language, a news event, the birth of a first child, or the death of a loved one with precision and certainty. Yet at other times, memory is limited, flawed, and biased ... How accurate are our recollections of the past? (214).

The results of experiments conducted by cognitive psychologists point to the fact that the inaccuracy of memory is a natural phenomenon. Carlson, Martin, and Buskist put forward that

Much of what we remember from long term-memory [which autobiographical memory is a sub-category of] may not be an accurate representation of what actually happened previously. One view of memory is that it is a plausible account of what might have happened or even of what we think should have happened (292).

Empirical evidence shows that, as memory is "an imaginative reconstruction, or construction" of the past (292), reality can be partially or completely altered during the process of remembering (Morris & Maisto 253; Kassin 246-249).

The construction of memories, whether partially or as a whole, is linked by some psychologists to a phenomenon referred to as false memory. False memory can, in essence, be defined as the confabulation of the details of real memories or the confabulation of imaginary memories (Cohen 163). Investigations on false memory have commonly linked this phenomenon to Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome and Multiple Personality Disorder. In such cases, false memories generally involve accounts of sexual abuse, alien abduction, and satanic ritual abuse (Ofshe & Watters 1, 2). However, the fabrication of false memories does not necessarily indicate the presence of a psychological disorder, since "[r]emembering is an active process in which we

reconstruct our memories according to our beliefs, wishes, needs, and information received from outside sources” (Kassin 244). Thus, the term, false memory, is actually a misnomer as “it implies a dichotomy – true versus false” (Neath & Surprenant 289). Actually, all memories can be considered as false because “all memories are constructed and ... the construction process draws on many types of information” (280, 281).

In Pinter’s memory plays, the characters dwell in a world in which the line between their past and present lives is blurred by their constant recollection of past events. Whether these memories are distorted accounts of real occurrences, purely fictitious episodes, or actual events can neither be verified by the characters nor by the audiences. Moreover, the fact that the past is “explored through [the] conflicting memories” of the characters (Peacock 112), that is, since each character has his or her own account of what took place in the past, verification is further obstructed. Though the accuracy of the characters’ accounts of the past is unverifiable, it is obvious that they have a motive in utilizing recollections of the past. This study is going to shed a light on the underlying reasons which motivate these characters to exploit memories.

## **1.2. Aim of the Study**

This dissertation aims to analyze how the characters of Pinter’s memory plays exploit memory in order to assert and perpetuate their identity and existence, to exert dominance over others, and to cope with their dissatisfaction with their present state. To this end, the characters in Harold Pinter’s *Landscape* (1968), *Silence* (1969), *Night* (1969), *Old Times* (1971), and *No Man’s Land* (1975) will be scrutinized. When in brackets, the plays will be referred to as *L*, *S*, *N*, *OT*, *NML* throughout this study.

Furthermore, the terms “memory”, “recollection”, “remembrance”, “recollections of the past”, “remembrances of the past” will be used interchangeably.

## CHAPTER 2

### ASSERTING AND PERPETUATING IDENTITY AND EXISTENCE

Pinter's characters inhabit a world in which "meaning is uncertain, where objects and territory are all that are definable, where language is a vehicle for protection rather than communication, where doubt in many forms is ever present" (Cahn 5). In such a perplexing world full of ambiguities, these characters struggle to attain and maintain a definite sense of identity and to assert their existence. To this end, they employ remembrances of the past.

#### 2.1. Asserting and Maintaining a Sense of Identity

Kassin puts forward that, as they connect our present to our past and provide us with a feeling of "inner continuity", our memories are essential components of our identity and "self-concept" (253). Thus, in Pinter's memory plays, the recollections employed by the characters, whether they are authentic or fabricated, or partially fabricated, aid them in attaining and perpetuating a sense of identity.

*Landscape*, Pinter's first memory play, depicts the desolate life of a middle-aged couple, Beth and Duff. Throughout the play, Beth and Duff tell narratives regarding their past experiences and invoke recollections of the way they were in the past. Whereas Beth calls upon memories in order to challenge her husband's perception of her and to maintain her identity, Duff, who has lost touch with his identity, employs remembrances with the aim of restoring his sense of self.

Beth has “divorced herself” from the present in which she is a middle-aged housekeeper (Gale 177) and dwells in the days of her youth in order to “defy and cast off her husband’s stereotyped image of her” (Sakellaridou 149). Duff incessantly paints a domestic image of Beth, the image of “a good housekeeper and servant and a good wife who can forgive him his infidelities with a kiss” (Burkman 143). For instance, he tells her that she was “a first-rate housekeeper” when she was young (*L* 186) and expresses his pride in the fact that she “never made a fuss”, “never got into a state”, and just “went about [her] work” (186). However, Beth’s mental image of herself is not that of a docile housekeeper, it is of “a beautiful, childbearing, flower watering, adored woman – in fact, a goddess” (Burkman 143). In order not to allow Duff to disrupt her ponderings and alter her self-concept, Beth shuns his attempts at communication and immerses herself into the memories of a day spent at the beach with her lover:

I walked from the dune to the shore. My man slept in the dune. He turned over as I stood. His eyelids. Belly button. Snoozing how lovely.

*Pause*

Would you like a baby? I said. Children? Babies? Of our own? Would be nice.

*Pause*

Women turn, look at me.

*Pause*

Our own child? Would you like that?

*Pause*

Two women looked at me, turned and stared [...]

*Pause*

Why do you look?

*Pause*

I didn’t say that, I stared. Then I was looking at them.

*Pause*

I am beautiful. (*L* 167, 168)

Her account of what took place at the beach projects anything but the image of a middle-aged housekeeper who is confined to carrying out domestic chores. Beth’s

depiction of her lover as he wakes up from a nap is quite sensual as she muses over his “eyelids” and “belly button” (167). This picture, along with her incessant questioning of her lover about having children, her depiction of how other women stared at her with jealousy, and her proclamation of her beauty, conveys how Beth views herself as a beautiful, sexual, and fertile woman.

Sakellaridou points out that Beth is “obsessed with her beauty and sensuality” (149). Indeed, Beth’s recollections portray her fascination with her beauty as she continuously refers to herself as beautiful and gives numerous accounts of women looking at her with envy. For instance, assuming a façade of modesty, she says “Did those women know me?” [...] “Why were they looking at me? There’s nothing strange about me. There’s nothing strange about the way I look. I look like anyone” (L 169). However, right after this pretentious account, in one of the rare instances in which she refers to the present, her fixation surfaces as she asserts “I dress differently, but I am beautiful” (170).

Beth’s obsession with her sensuality is also made obvious in her description of her day at the beach with her lover:

Suddenly I stood. I walked to the shore and into the water. I didn’t swim. I don’t swim. I let the water billow me. I rested in the water. The waves were very light, delicate. They touched the back of my neck. (174)

Her description of how she “let” the water lift her up, how the waves “touched” the back of her neck, and the adjectives she uses when describing the waves, “light”, “delicate” (174) carry sexual undertones and are employed by Beth to project the image of a sensual woman. Beth’s speech becomes rather overtly sexual as she continues to narrate her day at the beach with her lover:

I slipped out of my costume and put on my beachrobe. Underneath I was naked. There wasn't a soul on the beach. Except for an elderly man, far away on a breakwater. I lay down beside him and whispered. Would you like a baby? A child of our own? Would be nice. (175)

Her reference to her nudity, her association of childbearing with sexuality, her sensual descriptions of her relationship with her lover all cater to her need to keep in touch with the Beth of the past, a sensual, sexual, and fertile woman, and thus, to perpetuate her sense of identity.

Beth does not only view herself as “the embodiment of sexuality and fecundity” but she also “makes claims to art that enrich and revitalize her personality, which would be otherwise confined to a flat and arid female archetype” (Sakellaridou 149). Indeed, Beth's self image is that of a refined and artistic woman. Though she is a housekeeper “her mind is not confined to her serving role in the kitchen” (151). Thus, she invokes recollections that aid her in maintaining the self-image of a genteel woman who engages in activities like watering and arranging flowers rather than carrying out domestic activities such as cooking and cleaning:

When I watered the flowers he stood, watching me, and watched me arrange them. My gravity, he said. I was so grave attending to the flowers. I'm going to arrange the flowers, I said. He followed me and watched, standing at a distance from me. When the arrangement was done I stayed still. I heard him moving. He didn't touch me. I listened. I looked at the flowers, blue and white, in the bowl.

*Pause*

Then he touched me.

*Pause*

He touched the back of my neck. His fingers, lightly, touching, lightly, touching, the back, of my neck. (L 170, 171)

Beth believes that engaging in the rather genteel activities of life enhance her personality and add a romantic touch to her character. Therefore, besides bringing into play her

recollections of arranging flowers, she also utilizes her memories regarding her artistic disposition and abilities with the aim of dissociating herself from her present role in life:

But I was up early. There was still plenty to be done and cleared up. I had put the plates in the sink to soak. They had soaked overnight. They were easy to wash. The dog was up. He followed me. Misty morning. Comes from the river.

[...]

I opened the door and went out. The sun was shining. Wet, I mean wetness, all over the ground.

[...]

Still misty, but thinner, thinning.

[...]

Wetness all over the air. Sunny. Trees like feathers.

[...]

I wore my blue dress.

[...]

It was a beautiful autumn morning.

[...]

I stood in the mist.

[...]

In the sun.

[...]

Then I went back into the kitchen and sat down.

[...]

The dog sat down by me. I stroked him. Through the window I could see down into the valley. I saw children in the valley. They were running through the grass. They ran up the hill.

[...]

I remembered always, in drawing, the basic principles of shadow and light. Objects intercepting the light cast shadows. Shadow is deprivation of light. The shape of the shadow is determined by that of the object. But not always. Not always directly. Sometimes the cause of the shadow cannot be found.

*Pause*

But I always bore in mind the basic principles of drawing. (183-186)

The poetic cadence of her depiction of the misty autumn morning and the details she gives concerning the mist, the sun, the trees, and the color of her dress draw attention to the fact that, though she is a mere housekeeper, “[h]er sensitive eye soars beyond the plates soaking in the sink” (Sakellaridou 151). Therefore, even when she goes back into

the kitchen to do her chores, the sight of the children running in the valley reminds her of her former affiliation with art, of “the basic principles of shadow and light” and “the basic principles of drawing” (L 185, 186) which she appears to have internalized. The artistic disposition that Beth struggles to maintain aids her in asserting and perpetuating her identity by means of distancing her from “the yearningly domestic picture of her which her husband paints” (Burkman 143).

In *Landscape*, Duff also struggles to attain and maintain a definite sense of identity. His wife’s disinterestedness in life and her complete lack of interest in him has resulted in Duff’s isolation. His isolation, coupled with his sense of uselessness brought about by the fact that his services are no longer required since their employer, Mr. Sykes, has passed away, has led him to lose touch with his sense of self. Therefore, like Beth, Duff utilizes recollections of the past to restore his identity. Duff’s focus, however, is on his professional abilities since being a knowledgeable, diligent, and handy employee comprises an integral part of his self-concept. For instance, he boasts of his versatility when talking about how valuable an aide he had been to Mr. Sykes: “I could drive well, I could polish his shoes well, I earned my keep. Turn my hand to anything.” (L 178) The image that Duff tries to portray at this point is that of a resourceful employee who does his job with commitment.

Duff’s need to view himself as an expert and his eagerness to project the image of a knowledgeable man resurfaces in his account of how he described the proper manufacture of beer and the responsibilities of a cellarman to the man he met at the pub. Claiming that he had received cellarman’s training, Duff stresses the significant role a cellarman plays in the manufacture of beer by saying “A cellarman is the man

responsible. He's the earliest up in the morning" (183). Then, he goes on to give a thorough description of a cellarman's responsibilities:

Give the drayman a hand with the barrels. Down the side through the cellarflaps. Lower them by rope to the racks. Rock them on the belly and, put a rim up them, use balance and leverage, hike them up onto the racks.

[...]

The bung is on the vertical, in the bunghole. Spile the bung. Hammer the spile through the centre of the bung. That lets the air through the bung, down the bunghole, lets the beer breathe.

[...]

Then you hammer the tap in.

[...]

Let it stand for three days. Keep wet sacks over the barrels. Hose the cellar floor daily. Hose the barrels daily.

[...]

Run water through the pipes to the bar pumps daily.

[...]

Pull off. Pull off. Stop pulling just before you get to the dregs. The dregs'll give you the shits. You've got an ullage barrel. Feed the slops back to the ullage barrel, send them back to the brewery.

[...]

Dip the barrels daily with a brass rod. Know your gallonage. Chalk it up. Then you're tidy. Then you never get caught short. (183, 184)

Duff's repetitive usage of brewery jargon such as "bung", "bunghole", "spile", "spile the bung", "ullage", and "ullage barrel" (183, 184) is a clear indicator of his need to appear as a skilled and proficient man. Duff's self-inflated recollections regarding his professionalism as a domestic aide and his competence as a cellerman aid him in attaining a sense of importance and accomplishment. Thus, he is able to regain the sense of identity that he has lost touch with.

In his first full-length memory play, *Old Times*, Pinter displays his most detailed analysis of his characters' intentions in making use of their memories. In the play, a middle-aged couple, Kate and Deeley, anticipate the arrival of Anna, Kate's old roommate. With her arrival, all three characters find themselves immersed into the past.

Throughout the play, Anna and Deeley utilize self-inflated memories so as to assert and flaunt their intricately tailored identities at each other and at Kate.

Anna, who had shared a flat with Kate twenty years ago, exploits remembrances of the past in order to preserve her past identity. Therefore, she struggles to assert herself as a “poor and innocent young woman with culturally refined tastes” (Prentice 186). In order to attest her identity, Anna makes frequent references to her and Kate’s mutual past as roommates. For instance, her opening lines in which she breathlessly speaks of the carefree days of their youth cater to her need to project the image of an underprivileged, yet cultivated young woman with a penchant for the arts:

Queuing all night, the rain, do you remember? My goodness, the Albert Hall, Covent Garden, what did we eat? to look back, half the night, to do things we loved, we were young then of course, but what stamina, and to work in the morning, and to a concert or opera, or the ballet that night, you haven’t forgotten? and then riding on top of the bus down Kensington High Street, and the bus conductors, and then dashing for the matches for the gasfire and then I suppose scrambled eggs, or did we? who cooked? both giggling and chattering, both huddling to the heat (*OT* 13)

Dukore draws attention to the fact that Anna’s speech is “sprinkled with questions appended to assertions” and puts forward that she employs these questions because she seeks “confirmation of [the] past and therefore of self” (93).

All the cafés we found, almost private, ones, weren’t they? where artists and writers and sometimes actors collected, and others with dancers, we sat hardly breathing with our coffee, heads bent, so as not to be seen, so as not to disturb, so as not to distract, and listened and listened to all those words, all those cafés and all those people, creative undoubtedly, and does it still exist I wonder? do you know? can you tell me? (13, 14)

By repeatedly inquiring whether Kate remembers their intellectually stimulating activities or not, Anna is actually testing the validity of the identity that she has created for herself. In order to maintain this identity, she articulates memories of the intimate evenings they

spent in their flat reading poetry and of the times they visited museums and “explored London and all the old churches and all the old buildings” (34).

Anna tries so hard to keep up the innocent and cultured image she has created for herself that, when Deeley claims to remember her from The Wayfarers Tavern, she pretends as if she does not know what he is talking about:

DEELEY. Yes, I remember you quite clearly from The Wayfarers.

ANNA. The what?

DEELEY. The Wayfarers Tavern, just off the Brompton Road.

ANNA. When was that?

DEELEY. Years ago.

ANNA. I don't think so. (44)

Deeley goes on to give a detailed account of the tavern and its regular customers and he even describes how Anna used to dress. Moreover, he claims to have bought her drinks. Unwilling to disrupt the image that she has been struggling to project, Anna denies the possibility of a past association with Deeley. However, as Deeley insists on having known her and asks her why she stopped coming to the tavern Anna “asserts her more genteel identity, without now, however, wholly denying her past affiliation with him” (Prentice 194) and tells him that she was probably “at concerts [...] or the ballet.” (*OT* 49).

Disturbed by Anna's complacent accounts of the past, Deeley, too, voices his own share of self-inflated remembrances in order to appear as if he were prestigious, carefree, and refined. For instance, in an attempt to present himself as a “globe-trotting filmmaker” (Esslin 1977: 185), Deeley tells Anna that he has been to the island she lives on:

DEELEY. You live on a very different coast.

ANNA. Oh, very different. I live on a volcanic island.

DEELEY. I know it.

ANNA. Oh, do you?

DEELEY. I've been there. (*OT* 18)

As Anna changes the subject rather than cooperating in his chit chat regarding the island, Deeley does not get a chance to boast about the fact that he had been to Sicily on account of his work. Therefore, he later tries to re-initiate a conversation regarding his job: "My work took me to Sicily. My work concerns itself with life all over, you see, in every part of the globe. With people all over the globe." (36) Thinking that his accounts so far have been insufficient in portraying his successful career, Deeley goes into the details of the film they shot in Sicily:

I had a great crew in Sicily. A marvelous cameraman. Irving Shultz. Best in the business. We took a pretty austere look at the women in black. The little old women in black. I wrote the film and directed it. My name is Orson Welles. (38)

Deeley tries to make out that he is such a renowned filmmaker that he can only work with "[t]he best in the business." (38) Finally, his self-importance escalates and erupts as he goes as far as to declare himself as "Orson Welles" (38).

Deeley also conjures recollections of the past to attest his bold and youthful side. To this end, he gives an account of the lesbian usherettes he came across when he went to see *Odd Man Out*:

Anyway, there was the bicycle shop and there was the old fleapit showing *Odd Man Out* and there were two usherettes standing in the foyer and one of them was stroking her breasts and the other one was saying 'dirty bitch' and the one stroking her breasts was saying 'mmnnn' with a very sensual relish and smiling at her fellow usherette, so I marched in on this excruciatingly hot summer afternoon in the middle of nowhere and watched *Odd Man Out* and thought Robert Newton was fantastic. (25)

Cahn states that, by means of his lascivious story, Deeley is implying that "he interpreted the two usherettes as a sexual challenge and that his walking into the theater was evidence of a willingness to confront these two women" (108). Thus, his narrative draws

attention to the fact that he is sexually uninhibited, and emphasizes his sassy side. Deeley also tries to project a youthful and trendy image. Therefore, when he tells Kate of his past acquaintance with Anna, he uses the colloquial language of 1970 (Esslin: 1977 186):

Of course I was slimhipped in those days. Pretty nifty. A bit squinky, quite honestly. Curly hair. The lot. We had a scene together. She freaked out. She didn't have any bread, so I bought her a drink. (OT 65)

However, he fails in his attempts as the “hippy slang” he uses sounds quite ridiculous and merely emphasizes the fact that he is no longer a young man (Prentice 199).

Besides trying to paint a successful and youthful self-portrait, Deeley also struggles to display his intellectual side. When giving Anna an account of how his job enables him to travel all over the world, he purposefully uses the word “globe” (OT 36) and then explains to her why he prefers this word over “world” (36):

I use the world globe because the word world possesses emotional political sociological and psychological pretensions and resonances which I prefer as a matter of choice to do without, or shall I say to steer clear of, or if you like to reject. (36, 37)

In his attempt to give the impression of a learned man, Deeley makes claims to politics, sociology, and psychology all at once. However, as he merely jabbars on these disciplines without elaborating on their significance, he fails in transmitting the image of a cultured man. Finally, he makes one last desperate attempt to display his intellectual side by referring to the memories of his past social circle:

We went to a party. Given by philosophers. Not a bad bunch. Edgware road gang. Nice lot. Haven't seen any of them for years. Old friends. Always thinking. Spoke their thoughts. Those are the people I miss. They're all dead, anyway I've never seen them again. The Maida Vale group. Big Eric and little Tony. (65)

Although he tries to insert himself into an intellectual circle by claiming to have rubbed elbows with philosophers, it is obvious that such a social circle never existed. First of all,

he first refers to his friends as the “Edgware road gang”, however, he later speaks of them as the “Maida Vale group” (65). Secondly, the nicknames he uses for his friends, “Big Eric” and “little Tony” (65) are extremely cliché adjectives which do not connote creativity and give the impression that that they have been made up by Deeley at the spur of the moment. Finally, the fact that he announces that “[t]hey’re all dead” (65) also suggests that Deeley is conjuring a fake memory as there is no one else left from the group who can validate the reliability of his account. Deeley’s attempts to assert and maintain his identity prove to be fruitless as he is unable to project the image of a successful, youthful, and sophisticated man.

In Pinter’s second full length memory play, *No Man’s Land*, two old friends, the failed poet, Spooner, and the once successful but now forgotten poet, Hirst, have come across each other at a pub, and Hirst has invited Spooner to his house for a drink. The play opens with their conversation over whisky and vodka at Hirst’s home. From the beginning of the play onwards, Spooner tries to portray the image of a strong, independent, self-sufficient man who has devoted himself to the arts.

Spooner, who is described in the *dramatis personae* as “a man in his sixties” (*NML* 74), is clad in “a very old and shabby suit, dark faded shirt, creased spotted tie” (79) and appears as if he is the embodiment of failure. Both his appearance and the current state in which Hirst found him, collecting mugs at a local pub, make it clear that he has failed as a poet and leads a destitute and isolated life. However, the impression that Spooner tries to make is quite the opposite. For instance, his opening lines reveal his struggle to portray himself as a man of strength:

Yes, I was about to say, you see, that there are some people who appear to be strong, whose idea of what strength consists of is persuasive, but who

inhabit the idea and not the fact. What they possess is not strength but expertise. They have nurtured and maintain what is in fact a calculated posture. Half the time it works. It takes a man of intelligence and perception to stick a needle through that posture and to discern the essential flabbiness of the stance. I am such a man. (80)

It is rather ironic that, while he is expressing his disrespect for people who assume a calculated appearance of strength, Spooner is actually trying to maintain such a posture himself. In order to prove that his strength is not a premeditated pose and that it emanates from his formative years, Spooner tells an anecdote regarding the time he had wet his pants at the age of twenty eight and his mother's reaction to that:

SPOONER. Have you any idea from what I derive my strength?

HIRST. Strength? No.

SPOONER. I have never been loved. From this I derive my strength.

[...]

I looked up once into my mother's face. What I saw there was nothing less than pure malevolence. I was fortunate to escape with my life. You will want to know what I had done to provoke such hatred in my own mother.

HIRST: You'd pissed yourself.

SPOONER. Quite right. (90)

The image he tries to project is that of a man who derives his strength from not having been loved. Noticing that he has been unsuccessful in projecting this image, he changes the subject.

Spoooner also tries to assert himself as a self-sufficient and independent man who has willingly chosen to keep a distance between himself and others. His aim in doing so is to conceal the fact that he is no longer sought after, neither as a poet nor as a companion. After making it clear that he does not intend to stay for long in Hirst's home, he states "I never stay long with others. They do not wish it." (81) However, rather than being disappointed because he is unwanted and unwelcome, he pretends to be contented with this situation:

And that, for me, is a happy state of affairs. My only security, you see, my true comfort and solace, rests in the confirmation that I elicit from people of all kinds a common and constant level of indifference. It assures me that I am as I think myself to be, that I am fixed, concrete. (81)

Spooner views others' lack of interest in him as a verification of the identity he has created for himself. As long as people continue to treat him with an unvarying level of indifference, he can maintain the image of a strong, independent, self-sufficient man. Finally, his inflated self-concept is manifested as he overtly proclaims "The point I'm trying to make, in case you missed it, is that I am a free man" (85).

Spooner goes on to boast about the fact that he is able to live contentedly without having to endure relationships and without expecting anything from others. He depicts himself as a man who observes life from a distance instead of actively participating in it, as a self-governing person who is freed from expectations, and as an independent man who is unaffected by the unforeseen events of life (Quigley 37). In order to explain how he acquired this identity, Spooner delves into another memory, that of the Hungarian émigré who had changed his life:

I refer to a midsummer night, when I shared a drink with a Hungarian émigré, lately retired from Paris.

[...]

On that summer evening, led by him, I first appreciated how quiet life can be, in the midst of yahoos and hullabaloes. He exerted on me a quite uniquely ... calming influence, without exertion, without any ... desire to influence.

[...]

I was impressed, more or less at that point, by an intuition that he possessed a measure of serenity the like of which I had never encountered. (NML 87-89)

The validity of Spooner's account is questionable as he is unable to recall what it was that the émigré had told him that had changed his perspective in life:

HIRST. What did he say?

SPOONER. You expect me to remember what he said?

HIRST. No.

SPOONER. What he said ... all those years ago ... is neither here nor there. It was not what he said but possibly the way he sat which has remained with me all my life and has, I am quite sure, made me what I am. (89)

The details of such a life-changing experience are most likely to be remembered with precision and certainty as autobiographical memory involves “issues relating to the self, personally relevant goals, and ultimately, personal meanings” (Conway & Rubin 112). Spooner has conjured a false memory with the aim of authenticating and maintaining the identity that he has created for himself.

Though Spooner is “obviously down at heel, almost a tramp, [...] he is boastful about his past [connections]” (Esslin 1977: 192). For instance, when he is telling Hirst about a visit to the pub where he had met the Hungarian émigré, he asks “You’ve guessed, I would imagine, that he was an erstwhile member of the Hungarian aristocracy?” (*NML* 88). Moreover, he refers to the regular customers of the pub as “a particularly repellent lickspittling herd of literati” (88). Spooner tries to prove that, though he has chosen to “abandon the pursuit of relationships” at present (Quigley 37), he used to move in aristocratic and intellectual circles in the past.

Spooner does not only boast about his association with aristocrats. He also takes pride in being “a fatherly friend and guide to poets [...] keeping open house for them in a country cottage” (Esslin: 1977 193). He says, “I am a staunch friend of the arts, particularly the art of poetry, and a guide to the young” (*NML* 91), and goes on to emphasize the important role he plays as a mentor in the lives of young poets: “Young poets come to me. They read me their verses. I comment, give them coffee, make no

charge. Women are admitted, some of whom are also poets.” (91, 92) He uses the present tense while giving an account of his selfless commitment to young artists in an attempt to sustain the image of a devout benefactor of the arts. However, he later switches to the past tense, sadly saying, “When we had our cottage ... when we had our cottage ... we gave our visitors tea on the lawn” (92), in a way, admitting that it was “in some dim past” that he was a patron of young poets (Esslin 1977: 193), thus, admitting that he is no longer the man who he believes himself to be.

## **2.2. Connecting with Others and Establishing Personal Relationships**

Pinter’s characters also exploit the past with the aim of securing a place in the lives of others. Besides constituting identity, memory “structures the characters’ relation with their physical and human environments” (Braunmuller, 155, 156). These characters tell narratives concerning their past as a means of connecting with others and establishing personal relationships (Engel in Kassin 254). By means of invoking memories, they make an effort to prove that they once occupied, and are still occupying, an integral place in the life of others. It is a struggle to assert their existence.

The prefatory note of *Landscape* portrays the current state of Beth and Duff’s relationship in a nutshell: “DUFF *refers normally to Beth, but does not appear to hear her voice. BETH never looks at DUFF, and does not appear to hear his voice*” (L 166). According to Prentice, the only thing that Beth and Duff share as a married couple is “a breathing space” as they have fallen “out of touch with each other” (171; 176). Though Beth has completely detached herself from the present and from Duff, she appears to be rather content with this arrangement. Duff, on the other hand, yearns to re-establish the

position he once occupied in Beth's life and incessantly tries to make contact with her throughout the play. In order to attest his existence, Duff seeks the assistance of memories.

Duff initiates his attempts at making Beth acknowledge his existence by telling her about his recollections of his trivial daily activities. These include the walk he took to the pond, how he took shelter under a tree on a rainy day, and how he fed the sparrows. By adhering to the more recent events of his life, Duff tries to get Beth involved in the present which she has become alienated from (Sakellaridou 141). However, even the news of their dog's death, which Gale views as a premeditated attempt to "startle her into awareness" (181), fails to disengage Beth from her reflection upon the past:

DUFF. The dog's gone. I didn't tell you.

[...]

I meant to tell you.

[...]

BETH. He felt my shadow. He looked up at me standing above him.

[...]

DUFF. The dog wouldn't have minded me feeding the birds. Anyway, as soon as we got in the shelter he fell asleep. But even if he'd been awake...

[...]

BETH. They all held my arm lightly, as I stepped out of the car, or out of the door, or down the steps. [...] (L 168 -170)

Duff's failed attempts "grow in intensity" as Beth ignores him and continues to relive the experiences of her past (Burkman 143):

BETH. Snoozing how lovely I said to him. But I wasn't a fool, on that occasion. I lay quiet, by his side.

*Silence*

DUFF. Anyway...

BETH. My skin...

DUFF. I'm sleeping all right these days.

BETH. Was stinging.

DUFF. Right through the night, every night.

BETH. I'd been to the sea.

DUFF. Maybe it's something to do with the fishing. Getting to learn more about fish.

BETH. Stinging in the sea by myself.

DUFF. They're very shy creatures. You've got to woo them. You must never get excited with them. Or flurried. Never.

BETH. I knew there must be a hotel near, where we could get some tea.

(L 172)

Beth's indifference prompts Duff to try a new tactic. He tries to prove to Beth that he exists by giving an account of how he went to the pub and interacted with two people:

Anyway... luck was on my side for a change. By the time I got out of the park the pubs were open.

*Pause*

So I thought I might as well pop in and have a pint. I wanted to tell you. I met some nut in there. First of all I had a word with the landlord. He knows me.

[...]

Then the man asked the landlord and me if we would have a drink with him. The landlord said he'd have a pint. I didn't answer at first, but the man came over to me and said: Have one with *me*. Have one with *me*.

*Pause*

He put down a ten bob note and said he'd have a pint as well. (173 – 174)

Duff emphasizes that he is on familiar terms with the landlord. He aims to show Beth that there are people who know him well enough to want to chat with him even though she refuses to acknowledge his existence. Moreover, by bringing up how the “nut” (173) he had just met insisted he have a drink with him, Duff tries to show that there are other people who almost beg for his companionship, whereas Beth is indifferent towards him.

Duff's recent recollections of the insignificant details of his daily life “take on something of the ridiculous in the light of her [Beth's] indifference and preoccupation” (Burkman 143, 144). Unable to elicit a response or reaction from his wife, but still hopeful, Duff brings into play the remembrances of their mutual past so as to attract her attention. For instance, in an attempt to “force Beth to [...] come out of her shell” (Gale 180), he tries to remind her of the time he had confessed his infidelity to her:

Do you remember when I took him on that trip to the north? That long trip. When we got back he thanked you for looking after the place so well, everything running like clockwork.

*Pause*

You'd missed me. When I came into this room you stopped still. I had to walk all the way over the floor towards you.

*Pause*

I touched you.

*Pause*

But I had something to say to you, didn't I? I waited, I didn't say it then, but I'd made up my mind to say it, I'd decided I would say it, and I did say it, the next morning. Didn't I?

*Pause*

I told you that I'd let you down. I'd been unfaithful to you.

*Pause*

You didn't cry.

[...]

When we got back into this room you put your hands on my face and you kissed me. (*L* 177)

Duff's prolonged narrative clarifies why Beth "chooses to ignore Duff's presence altogether" and why she is so "hard and merciless in her attitude to her pleading husband" (Sakellaridou 141; 143). Duff had cheated on her while he was away for business. By bringing up how she had forgiven his infidelity with a kiss, Duff implicitly pleads with Beth to allow him back into her life. Even though Beth is "sensitive and artistic" and Duff is clumsy and crude, he is the one who is longing for tenderness and communication in this relationship (143).

Yet again, unable to attract Beth's attention, Duff's tone changes, perhaps reflecting his resignation" (Cahn 95):

I never saw your face. You were standing by the windows. One of those black nights. A downfall. All I could hear was the rain on the glass, smacking on the glass. You knew I'd come but you didn't move. I stood close to you. What were you looking at? It was black outside. I could just see your shape in the window, your reflection. There must have been some kind of light somewhere. Perhaps just your face reflected, lighter than all the rest. I stood close to you. Perhaps you were just thinking, in a dream. Without touching you, I could feel your bottom. (*L* 185)

Cahn interprets Duff's speech as "his recollection of an attempt to grow close to her, but apparently she resisted, as she does at this moment" (94). Duff's vivid memory of being shunned by Beth makes it clear that her indifference towards him has been going on for quite a while. In fact, it appears as if it will continue forever as Duff's continual attempts to make Beth acknowledge his existence have so far proved to be futile.

Frustrated by his total inability to make contact, Duff makes one final attempt to make Beth acknowledge his existence. As a "last resort against a partner who has banished him for ever from her self-centered world" (Sakellaridou 144), he tells Beth of how he thought she was willing to give herself to him, and he would have had her, "in front of the dog, like a man, in the hall, on the stone" (L 187). Just as she had shattered his hopes of establishing physical contact by refusing to offer herself to him that day, Beth destroys his final chance to establish emotional contact by remaining indifferent to his brutal account. She lingers in the past memories of a man she was close to and enjoyed being with:

He lay above me and looked down at me. He supported my shoulder.

*Pause*

So tender his touch on my neck. So softly his kiss on my cheek.

*Pause*

My hand on his rib.

*Pause*

So sweetly the sand over me. Tiny the sand on my skin.

*Pause*

So silent the sky in my eyes. Gently the sound of the tide.

*Pause*

Oh my true love I said. (187, 188)

The juxtaposition of "Beth's gentle memory of fulfillment" with Duff's "fantasy of violence and rape" (Burkman 144) symbolizes her perpetual alienation from her husband.

Thus, Duff's attempts at establishing a connection are completely futile as Beth clearly refuses to acknowledge his existence.

*Silence*, like *Landscape*, depicts the desperate struggles put forth by two characters, Ellen and Bates, to make their existence felt. Whereas Ellen, who had had liaisons with both Rumsey and Bates and is still in love with Rumsey, yearns to re-occupy the place she once held in his life, Bates longs to reinstate a relationship with Ellen. In an attempt to restore the personal relationships they have failed to maintain, both characters invoke recollections of the past.

Ellen's opening lines in which she speaks of the past portray her inclination towards Rumsey, the gentler, more sensitive of the two men who once occupied a place in her life:

There are two. One who is with me sometimes, and another. He listens to me. I tell him what I know. We walk by the dogs. Sometimes the wind is so high he does not hear me. I lead him to a tree, clasp closely to him and whisper to him, wind going, dogs stop, and he hears me.

The other hears me. (S 191, 192)

The "other" (191) who merely heard Ellen is Bates, the less sensitive and cruder of the two men. The one who actually listened to her is Rumsey. Therefore, he is the one who Ellen longs to reinstate a relationship with. However, Rumsey makes it clear by means of his monologue that he is content with the isolated life he leads in his farm:

I watch the clouds. Pleasant the ribs and tendons of cloud.

I've lost nothing.

Pleasant alone and watch the folding light. My animals are quiet. My heart never bangs. I read in the evenings. There is no-one to tell me what is expected or not expected of me. There is nothing required of me. (193)

By declaring that he has “lost nothing”, Rumsey makes it clear that he does not miss Ellen’s presence. Moreover, he makes it clear that he does not want or need her in his life.

Rumsey, who is described in the *dramatis personae* as “a man of forty” (190), has ended his relationship with Ellen, “a girl in her twenties” (190), on account of the age difference between them. The reason why Rumsey spurns Ellen is uncovered in one of the rare instances in the play in which the characters make contact in the present:

ELLEN *moves to* RUMSEY

RUMSEY. Find a young man.

ELLEN. There aren’t any.

RUMSEY. Don’t be stupid.

ELLEN. I don’t like them.

RUMSEY. You’re stupid.

ELLEN. I hate them.

*Pause*

RUMSEY. Find one.

*Silence* (202, 203)

This brief conversation highlights their separateness (Prentice 173) and Ellen’s inability to establish a connection with Rumsey as he virtually orders her to find another man.

However, Ellen does not want to find another man as she is still in love with Rumsey. Thus, in an attempt to convince him to take her back, she invokes the remembrances of the time they spent together in the countryside:

I go by myself with the milk to the top, the clouds racing, all the blue changes, I’m dizzy sometimes, meet with him under some place.

One time visited his house. He put a light on, it reflected the window, it reflected in the window. (S 192)

Though her accounts of the past are frequently interrupted by both Rumsey and Bates’s monologues, Ellen goes on to reflect upon the details of her past intimacy with Rumsey:

He sat me on his knee, by the window, and asked if he could kiss my right cheek. I nodded he could. He did. Then he asked, if, having kissed my right, he could do the same with my left. I said yes. He did. (201)

Although Rumsey clearly rejects Ellen, he does not shun her like Beth shuns Duff in *Landscape*. He even cooperates with her in invoking the memory of their lovemaking to a certain extent:

ELLEN. When I run ... when I run ... when I run ... over the grass ...  
RUMSEY. She floats ... under me. Floating ... under me.  
ELLEN. I turn. I turn. I wheel. I glide. I wheel. In stunning light. The horizon moves from the sun. I am crushed by the light. (198)

However, Rumsey changes the subject, and starts to talk about the people he occasionally comes across in the countryside (198). This shows that he remains unmoved even by this euphoric account of their intimate experience. Thus, the fruitlessness of Ellen's attempts to re-establish her position in his life is yet again emphasized.

Another character in *Silence* who fruitlessly struggles to reinstate a past relationship is Bates. As Ellen is preoccupied with finding a way to get back into Rumsey's life, she is extremely indifferent towards Bates's attempts to reach her. Her callous attitude towards Bates is reflected in the occasion of their brief contact in the present in which Bates virtually begs her to go out with him:

BATES *moves to* ELLEN:  
BATES. Will we meet to-night?  
ELLEN. I don't know.  
*Pause*  
BATES. Come with me to-night.  
ELLEN. Where?  
BATES. Anywhere. For a walk.  
*Pause*  
ELLEN. I don't want to walk.  
[...]  
BATES. What's wrong with a walk?  
ELLEN. I don't want to walk.  
BATES. Do you want me to buy you a drink?

ELLEN. No. (195, 196)

Being thus spurned by Ellen in the present, Bates struggles to attract her attention by trying to remind her of the time when they were in a relationship. For instance, in a gentle tone, he tells a story about the time he had eased Ellen's worries about the horses when they were in the countryside:

I can't hear you. Yes you can, I said.

[...]

I didn't. I didn't hear you, she said. I didn't hear what you said.

[...]

The little girl looked up at me. I said: at night horses are quite happy. They stand about, and after a bit of time they go to sleep. In the morning they wake up, snort a bit, canter, sometimes, and eat. You've no cause to worry about them. (201, 202)

The pseudo-paternal tone Bates utilizes can be considered as an effort to imitate Rumsey. Although Bates is not much younger than Rumsey, he is clearly not as mature and affectionate as he is. Since he is aware of the fact that Ellen is drawn to Rumsey's maturity, he assumes Rumsey's fatherly tone in a desperate attempt to attract her attention. However, he fails to have her acknowledge his existence since Ellen, who is clearly repulsed by this memory, "*moves to RUMSEY*", as indicated in the stage directions (202), shattering Bates's hopes of re-establishing a place in her life.

In *Night*, a married couple in their forties "reminisce amusingly over their meeting" (Burkman 150). Their aim in reminding each other of the past is to re-connect with each other and maintain a good rapport as husband and wife. Having put the children to sleep, over a cup of coffee, they start talking about the night that they had met for the first time. The fallibility of memory becomes evident as they give contradictory accounts regarding that night:

WOMAN. I remember walking. Walking with you.

MAN. The first time? Our first walk?

WOMAN. Yes, of course I remember that.

*Pause*

We walked down a road into a field, through some railings. We walked to the corner of the field and then we stood by the railings.

MAN. No. It was on the bridge that we stopped. (*N* 213, 214)

Another point that they cannot agree on is whether they had had intimate physical contact or not. Whereas the woman remembers only holding hands, the man remembers touching his wife's breasts:

MAN. I put my hands under your sweater, I undid your brassière, I felt your breasts.

WOMAN. Another night perhaps. Another girl.

MAN. You don't remember my hands on your skin?

WOMAN. Were they in your hands? My breasts? Fully in your hands?  
(217, 218)

Since their aim in talking about the past is to maintain their rapport with each other, instead of dwelling on whose account of the past reflects what actually took place that night, the couple make "mutual concessions" (Sakellaridou 159). For instance, they both agree that they saw each other for the first time at a party given by the Doughtys:

MAN. A man called Doughty gave the party. You knew him. I had met him. I knew his wife. I met you there.

WOMAN. We had been to a party. Given by the Doughtys. You had known his wife. (*N* 215)

Having reached a common ground, "the woman makes the first move to approach the man's memory" (Sakellaridou 160) by incorporating the river, which was previously mentioned by the man, into her account of how they had left the party together:

They had a lovely house. By a river. I went to collect my coat, leaving you waiting for me. [...] I slipped my coat on and looked out of the window, knowing you were waiting. I looked down over the garden into the river, and saw the lamplight on the water. Then I joined you and we and we walked down the road through railings into a field, must have been some kind of park. (*N* 216)

By including the river in her own recollection and, at the same time, remaining faithful to her memory regarding the railings, the woman shows respect and sympathy towards her husband without losing her individuality (Sakellaridou 159). Moreover, although she has difficulty in believing that her husband had touched her breasts, she later accepts that they had had an intimate physical contact:

WOMAN. But my back was against the railings. I felt the railings .. behind me. You were facing me. I was looking into your eyes. My coat was closed. It was cold.  
MAN. I undid your coat.  
WOMAN. It was very late. Chilly.  
[...]  
you told me [...] my thighs, my breasts were incomparable (N 218)

The man collaborates with his wife in reaching a compromise regarding the past as he complements her remembrances (Cahn 90):

WOMAN. And then we had children and we sat and talked and you remembered women on bridges and towpaths and rubbish dumps.  
MAN. And you remembered your bottom against railings and men holding your hands and men looking into your eyes.  
WOMAN. And talking to me softly.  
MAN. And your soft voice. Talking to them softly at night.  
WOMAN. And they say I will adore you always.  
MAN. Saying I will adore you always. (N 219)

By cooperating in her confabulation of memories, the man “allows the woman to retain her sense of herself as eternally desirable, while he acknowledges that he accepts that need and loves her anyway” (Cahn 90). The couple’s mutual concessions aid them in maintaining their rapport with each other as “they put aside their differences” and “join in marital contentment” (90) which, according to Sakellaridou, is “so strange in Pinter’s unhappy universe of broken relationships” (160). Thus, unlike in *Landscape* and *Silence*, the utilization of the past with the intention of establishing and maintaining personal relationships has proved to be fruitful in *Night*.

In *Old Times*, Anna and Deeley exploit the remembrances of their past lives with Kate. Anna struggles to “wedge between” Kate and Deeley (Prentice 186) and re-establish the position she once occupied in Kate’s life. On the other hand, Deeley, who is disturbed by the possibility of an alliance growing between Kate and Anna, tries to secure his position in his wife’s life.

In order to gain Kate’s affection and re-construct their former relationship, Anna bombards her with recollections of the life they shared in London as roommates. By means of her vivacious monologues, she “does all the reminiscing for both Kate and herself”, desperately trying to draw Kate into the past (Sakellaridou 169). For instance, while giving detailed accounts of their mutual past, Anna showers Kate with questions such as “do you remember?”, “you haven’t forgotten?” (*OT* 13), or “Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten our days at the Tate?” (34), in an attempt to make Kate acknowledge how special their friendship was. However, Kate either does not reply, or gives rather short replies like “Yes, I remember” (14), to her questions. It is obvious that Kate is not as excited about either recreating the past or re-establishing their relationship as Anna.

Desperate to have Kate acknowledge her existence, Anna struggles to remind her of their life in London. For instance, pretending to praise Kate and Deeley for having moved to the countryside, she says, “How wise you were to choose this part of the world, and how sensible and courageous of you both to stay permanently in such a silence.” (15), suggesting that they are leading a monotonous life. When Kate implies that she likes living in the countryside as she sometimes takes walks to the seaside (16), Anna comments “But I would miss London, nevertheless. I was a girl in London. We were girls together.” (16) Even though her attempts to prompt Kate to reminisce with her about their

life in the city are frequently undercut by Deeley's questions and comments, Anna continues to narrate recollections of the life they shared:

We weren't terribly elaborate in cooking, didn't have the time, but every so often dished up an incredibly enormous stew, guzzled the lot, and then more often than not sat up half the night reading Yeats. (18)

Yet again, unable to initiate a conversation with Kate, Anna tries to remind her of the times they sat at home, listening to the popular songs of the post-war era: "All those songs. We used to play them, all of them, all the time, late at night, lying on the floor, lovely old things." (22) However, her efforts to gain Kate's attention are fruitless as Deeley once again interrupts her speech and Kate remains completely indifferent to her accounts.

Finally, Anna succeeds in initiating a conversation with Kate regarding her own life in Sicily. Seeing that Kate is genuinely interested in what she has to say, Anna changes the subject. Quietly, she says "Don't let's go out tonight, don't let's go anywhere tonight, let's stay in. I'll cook you something, you can wash your hair, you can relax, we'll put on some records." (34) After making this suggestion, in an overprotective manner, she rejects Kate's offer to go to the park by giving her an account of the dangers lurking in the park. Then, in an attempt to recreate a typical night they used to have as two young bachelorettes, she showers Kate with questions and suggestions on how they can spend the night:

KATE. What shall we do then?

ANNA. Stay in. shall I read to you? Would you like that?

KATE. I don't know.

[...]

ANNA. Would you like me to ask someone over?

[...]

KATE. I'll think about it in the bath.

ANNA. Shall I run your bath for you?

KATE. (*Standing*) No. I'll run it myself tonight (40-42)

The offers made by Anna are now Deeley's province as he is the one who Kate shares her life with; therefore, they are rather inappropriate. However, they convey the extent to which Anna will go to establish a place in Kate's life as she is virtually offering to occupy her husband's position (Cahn 111).

Aware of the fact that Anna is trying to intrude into Kate's life, Deeley struggles to attest and maintain the significant place he occupies in his wife's life. To this end, he exploits recollections of his and Kate's premarital days. For instance, after he tells Anna how he first met Kate at a screening of *Odd Man Out*, he goes on to give an account of how their relationship flourished:

I think I am right in saying the next time we met we held hands. I held her cool hand, as she walked by me, and I said something which made her smile, and she looked at me, didn't you, flicking her hair back, I thought she was even more fantastic than Robert Newton.

*Pause*

And then at a slightly later stage our naked bodies met, hers cool, warm, highly agreeable, and I wondered what Robert Newton would think of this. What would he think of this I wondered as I touched her profoundly all over. (27)

Deeley includes certain details in his account in order to make sure that it sounds credible. For instance, he draws attention to the fact that Kate's hand felt "cool" and her naked body felt "cool, warm". He also stresses the fact that he "touched her profoundly all over" (27). Deeley emphasizes the tactile details of their liaison to validate the authenticity of his account. Moreover, by trying to prove that he established physical contact with Kate, he is trying to assert his existence. While giving the details of their intimacy, Deeley seeks confirmation from Kate by saying "and she looked at me, didn't you" (27). An affirmative answer from his wife would serve to verify his account, hence,

validate his place in her life. Deeley is struggling to keep the significant place he once occupied and still occupies in her life.

Despite Deeley's desperate attempts to assert his existence, Kate remains indifferent towards him. Her lack of interest in Deeley is manifested in the comment she makes after Anna expresses her delight in the fact that Kate has chosen to marry an artistic man like Deeley:

ANNA. And later when I found out the kind of man you were I was doubly delighted because I knew Katey had always been interested in the arts.

KATE. I was interested once in the arts, but I can't remember which ones they were. (33)

Kate makes it clear that Deeley's artistic disposition, which had attracted her to him, no longer stimulates her, thus, neither does Deeley (Cahn 110).

Neither Anna nor Deeley succeed in making Kate acknowledge the important position they allegedly occupy in her life. In fact, by not participating in their reminiscences and by refusing to confirm their accounts, Kate has used "lack of memory to disengage herself from both Deeley and Anna" (Knowles 134). Their attempts to assert their importance to her have ended up reducing them rather than enlarging them in Kate's eyes (Cahn 116). Their failure to connect with Kate is made clear at the end of the play as they each sit separately, "DEELEY *in armchair*", "ANNA *lying on divan*", "KATE *sitting on divan*" (OT 71).

In *No Man's Land*, Spooner tries to intrude into the symbiotic relationship between Hirst and his aides, Briggs and Foster. His aim is to convince Hirst to become his patron, and secure a position in his household. To clinch his intention, he utilizes remembrances of the past. Viewing Spooner as a threat to their position in Hirst's life,

Briggs and Foster also use memory in order to prove to both Spooner and Hirst that they occupy an integral and indispensable place in Hirst's life.

As he is in a destitute and lonely state, "[o]n being invited back from a pub to Hirst's evidently well-off household, Spooner opportunistically recognizes the short- and long-term possibilities of patronage—drink and food, a job with a salary, and perhaps a home" (Knowles 135). Therefore, to establish himself a place in the Hirst household, he employs different tactics. For instance, in order to attract Hirst's attention and make him notice his existence, he continuously talks about himself from the moment he sets foot in the house. However, his "self-advertised" accounts of his personality and perspective in life fail to arouse Hirst's interest and are met by silence (Prentice 209). Seeing that his attempts to attract attention by talking about his virtues are fruitless, Spooner tries to gain Hirst's sympathy by flattering him:

I speak to you with this startling candour because you are clearly a reticent man, which appeals, and because you are a stranger to me, and because you are clearly kindness itself. (*NML* 81)

As the only reaction he can elicit from Hirst is monosyllabic responses, Spooner's flattery also fails. Therefore, he reverts to his past memories. In a desperate need to gain Hirst's affection, Spooner makes an analogy between Hirst and the Hungarian émigré. After giving an account of how his encounter with the émigré had changed his life, Spooner says "And I met you at the same pub tonight, although at a different table." (*NML* 89), implying that Hirst also has the power to change his life. However, like his previous attempts, this implication does not move Hirst either.

Unwilling to yield to Hirst's silence, Spooner resorts to a different tactic. This time, he tries to attract his attention by narrating his recollections of the open house he

and his wife kept for young poets in their cottage. To his apparent surprise, Hirst is interested and responds to Spooner's memory of serving tea to his visitors on the lawn:

HIRST. I did the same.

SPOONER. On the lawn?

HIRST. I did the same.

SPOONER. You had a cottage?

HIRST. Tea on the lawn.

SPOONER. What happened to them? What happened to our cottages? What happened to our lawns?

*Pause*

Be frank. Tell me. You've revealed something. You've made an unequivocal reference to your past. Don't go back on it. We share something. A memory of the bucolic life. We're both English. (92, 93)

Seeing that he has been able to somewhat puncture Hirst's shield of indifference, Spooner showers him with questions regarding his past, perhaps in an attempt to find something that they have in common and can talk about. However, Hirst is in a drunken stupor and is unable to carry out a conversation.

Seeing that he cannot succeed in establishing a place in Hirst's life by means of implicit attempts aimed at arousing his interest, Spooner "openly and even blatantly offers himself as a friend" (Esslin 1977: 194):

You need a friend, You have a long hike, my lad, up which, presently, you slog unfriended. Let me perhaps be your boatman. [...] I offer myself to you as a friend. Think before you speak. (*NML* 97)

Hirst's blunt response to Spooner's offer is a clear indication of his unwillingness to allow Spooner, or anyone else, into his life:

No.

*Pause*

No man's land ... does not move ... or change ... or grow old ... remains forever ... icy ... silent. (98)

However, Spooner is not willing to give up. His determination to creep into Hirst's life does not waver as he interprets Hirst's dream regarding a drowning man. "I am your true

friend. That is why your dream ... was so distressing. You saw me drowning in your dream. But have no fear. I am not drowned” (112) Spooner tells Hirst. He wants to lead Hirst into believing that he occupies a significant and indispensable place in his life.

The other members of the household, Foster and Briggs, are against Spooner joining them since they do not want to jeopardize their long-standing acquaintance with their employer. At first, the two openly and aggressively spurn him, making it clear that he is unwanted and unwelcome in Hirst’s house. For instance, Foster warns him by saying “Don’t try to drive a wedge into a happy household. You understand me? Don’t try to make a nonsense out of family life.” (114) Prentice puts forward that “Briggs and Foster jealously guard Hirst’s world because their only entrance and continued commerce in this world may be as servants in this man’s household” (215). They may be lower-class men, but due to their position in Hirst’s service, they have become “upwardly mobile” (Peacock 113). Therefore, their disinclination to allow Spooner into their “family life” (*NML* 114) is perfectly explicable as they feel the need to secure their place in Hirst’s household.

After Hirst remembers his previous acquaintance with Spooner from Oxford, Briggs and Foster can no longer rebuff the intruder. Therefore, they employ recollections regarding Hirst so as to display the important and indispensable role they play as his aides. Foster tells Spooner how he was called to Hirst’s service:

I was in Bali when sent for me. I didn’t have to leave, I didn’t have to come here. [...] I didn’t have to leave that beautiful isle. [...] But I was intrigued. [...] A famous writer wanted me. He wanted me to be his secretary, his chauffeur, his housekeeper, his amanuensis. (148)

By stressing the fact that he did not have to come to England, Foster tries to draw attention to the fact that he is irreplaceable. It was he, not another, who had been

summoned all the way from Bali to serve Hirst. Briggs also gets a chance to flaunt his significance in Hirst's life at Spooner when Foster ponders on how Hirst had heard of him and decided to hire him:

FOSTER. How did he know of me? Who told him?

[...]

BRIGGS. You came on my recommendation. I've always liked youth because you can use it. But it has to be open and honest. If it isn't open and honest, you can't use it. I recommended you. You were open, the whole world before you. (148, 149)

By mentioning twice that Foster had been hired on his recommendation, Briggs underlines the fact that he is capable of influencing Hirst's decisions. Furthermore, Foster compliments both Hirst and Briggs. First, he refers to Hirst's intelligence as "nourishing" and claims that the poet's intellect has "enlarged" him. Then, he refers to Briggs as his "guide" and a man that he has "learnt a great deal from" (149). Thus, Foster re-emphasizes the fact that there is no place for Spooner in the perfect symbiotic relationship that the three men are leading.

Seeing that it is nearly impossible to secure a place in Hirst's household by means of intricately planned schemes, Spooner virtually begs Hirst to be his patron: "Let me live with you and be your secretary." (150). Hirst's response to Spooner's plea is very disheartening: "Is there a big fly in here? I hear buzzing." (150) Hirst makes it clear that Spooner's "constant entreaty has no more meaning than a fly's buzzing" (Gale, 220, 221). As a final resort, Spooner offers himself to Hirst's service. This time, he uses the recollections of his misfortune as a failed poet so as to appeal to Hirst's pity:

My career, I admit it freely, has been chequered. I was one of the golden of my generation. Something happened. I don't know what it was. Nevertheless I am I and I have survived insult and deprivation. I am I. I offer myself not abjectly but with ancient pride. I come to you as a

warrior. I shall be happy to serve you as a master. I bend my knee to your excellence. (*NML* 151)

Hirst cuts off Spooner's self-sacrificial monologue with a cold and indifferent "Let's change the subject. [...] For the last time." (153) Now fully aware that he will never be able to become a member of Hirst's ménage, Spooner utters his final lines in the play, which emphasize his failure and stagnant state:

You are in no man's land. Which never moves, which never changes, which never grows older, but which remains forever, icy and silent. (157)

Since Pinter's characters exist in a world where verification of the past is impossible, they have a tendency to view memory as "a play-arena" in which they can assume different identities and create and test new personalities (Braunmuller 156). By means of molding the events of the past, the characters struggle to verify their position in life and to remodel their personal relationships to suit their desires. Thus, whether they are real or fabricated, the characters' accounts of the past cater to their need to assert and perpetuate a definite sense of identity and to have their existence acknowledged.

## CHAPTER 3

### EXERTING DOMINANCE OVER OTHERS

Pinter views human relationships as “a quest for dominance and control” (Billington 56). His characters exist in a world that lacks definition and certainty, a world in which doubt and instability are all-pervading. Due to the obscure and volatile nature of their world, these characters are prone to experiencing feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Furthermore, they often find themselves in a power struggle in which they have to resist attacks aimed at destroying their security, undermining their authority, and endangering their relationships with others. In the hostile world that they live in, Pinter’s characters exert dominance over others in order to subjugate and overpower their antagonists and to compensate for their feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. In their struggle to dominate over others, “[m]emory becomes a strategic campaign” (Almansi & Henderson 26).

#### 3.1. Subjugating One’s Antagonist

Pinter’s characters are in a constant struggle to “defend themselves from what they perceive, often rightly, as very real threats to their autonomy and their personal relationships” (Peacock 56). In the battle for self-sufficiency and the preservation of relationships, exerting dominance in order to subjugate one’s antagonist becomes the key weapon. Hence, “the past becomes a competitive arena” (Martineau 12) in which the characters use memories as weapons in order to undermine others.

The act of exerting dominance so as to subjugate one’s antagonist is intricately portrayed in *Old Times* in which all three characters utilize recollections of the past with

the aim of overpowering each other. Deeley, who is alarmed by the threat that Anna poses against his seemingly secure and dominant position in Kate's life, exploits the past so as to subjugate her. Anna, on the other hand, employs remembrances with the aim of reclaiming the integral position she once held in Kate's life. Reduced to an almost inanimate object of desire through Deeley and Anna's attempts to subdue each other, Kate retaliates by giving her own account of the past. By means of her outburst at the end of the play, she subjugates and overpowers both Anna and Deeley by making it clear that, all along, it was she who had complete dominance over them.

From the onset of the play, it is made obvious by Deeley's incessant questioning of Kate that he views Anna as a potential threat to his marriage and to the dominance he believes to have established over Kate. In order to collect as much information as he can about Anna before she arrives, Deeley showers Kate with questions. These questions range from the simple "Fat or thin?" (OT 3) to the more intrusive and insistent "Was she your best friend?" (4), "Did you *think* of her as your best friend?" (5), and "Why her?" (6). Midway through his interrogation, Deeley tells Kate that he will be watching her in order to find out whether Anna has changed or not:

DEELEY. Are you looking forward to seeing her?

KATE. No.

DEELEY. I am. I shall be very interested.

KATE. In what?

DEELEY. In you. I'll be watching you.

KATE. Me? Why?

DEELEY. To see if she's the same person.

KATE. You think you'll find that out through me?

DEELEY. Definitely. (7, 8)

Deeley's assertive "Definitely" (8) serves to manifest his dominance over Kate. By reminding Kate that he knows her so well that he can virtually read her mind by

observing her actions, Deeley is trying to secure his position and authority in Kate's life before Anna's arrival.

As Deeley pries deeper into Kate's relationship with Anna, he faces certain facts about their mutual past that cause him to be alarmed by Anna's expected arrival. When Kate tells him that Anna used to steal her underwear (6), Deeley finds this quite amusing and chuckles; however, he is rather upset when he finds out that that the two women had lived together:

DEELEY. (*Abruptly*) You lived together?

KATE. Mmmnn?

DEELEY. You lived together?

KATE. Of course.

DEELEY. I didn't know that.

KATE. Didn't you?

DEELEY. You never told me that. I thought you just knew each other.

KATE. We did.

DEELEY. But in fact you lived with each other.

KATE. Of course we did. How else would she steal my underwear from me? In the street?

DEELEY. I now you had shared with someone at one time ...

*Pause*

But I didn't know it was her. (12, 13)

Deeley's "repeated attempts to clarify the bond the two women shared" are a revelation of "his jealousy, his doubts about his wife's fidelity, and perhaps his fears about his masculinity" (Cahn 104). After all, Kate's account of their intimacy implies a sexual relationship. Moreover, Deeley is aware of the fact that "women, by their very nature, share an understanding of one another's physical and emotional needs that men cannot fathom and certainly cannot duplicate" (104). Therefore, even though Kate and Anna's relationship is now in the past, for Deeley, it still "poses a great threat to his marriage and his possession of Kate's affection" (Peacock 111).

With Anna's arrival, Deeley's fears increase and the main battle in the play is initiated. In this competition, the prize is the "possession of Kate" (Peacock 110); and the moment Anna starts to give a detailed account of the days she and Kate shared together in the city, the rules of the game are set: "memories and histories can be invented and used to assert authority over others" (Cahn 105). Anna and Deeley initiate their game of one-upmanship by exchanging their memories regarding Kate. Their initial aim is to undermine each other by making claims to being closer to Kate than the other. To this end, they subjugate Kate by using her as a weapon against each other:

ANNA. She was always a dreamer

DEELEY. She likes taking long walks. All that. You know. Raincoat on. Off the lane, hands deep in pockets. All that kind of thing.

ANNA *turns to look at KATE*

ANNA. Yes.

DEELEY. Sometimes I take her face in my hands and look at it.

ANNA. Really?

DEELEY. Yes, I look at it, holding it in my hands. Then I kind of let it go, take my hands away, leave it floating. (OT 19, 20)

Kate, who has been silently listening to their conversation, reacts by saying "My head is quite fixed. I have it on." (20) However, as they are busy trying to overpower each other, Anna and Deeley disregard Kate's comment and continue to talk about her as if she were a heedless child:

ANNA. She was always a dreamer.

[...]

Sometimes, walking, in the park, I'd say to her, you're dreaming, you're dreaming, wake up, what are you dreaming? and she'd look round at me, flicking her hair, and look at me as if I were part of her dream. (20)

Their comments about Kate become demeaning as Anna not only deems Kate a dreamer but also tells Deeley about the time she had lost her notion of time:

One day she said to me, I've slept through Friday. No you haven't, I said, what do you mean? I've slept right through Friday she said. But today is Friday, I said, it's been Friday all day, it's now Friday night, you haven't slept through Friday. Yes I have, she said, I've slept right through it, today is Saturday.

DEELEY. You mean she literally didn't know what day it was?

ANNA. No. (21)

Amused by Anna's anecdote, Deeley mockingly asks Kate "What month are we in?" (21) When Kate replies "September." (20), Deeley comments "We're forcing her to think. We must see you more often. You're a healthy influence." (21) As each one's past memories of Kate begin to overwhelm the other, Anna and Deeley revert to trying to reduce Kate to a state in which she can be easily manipulated. Meanwhile, Kate, who appears to be unmoved by Anna and Deeley's comments, chooses to remain silent.

Another instance in which Anna and Deeley struggle to overpower each other by exploiting their memories of Kate is when they wait for her to come out of her bath. While Kate is having a bath, Anna and Deeley share details about her bathing habits:

ANNA. Katey's taking a long time over her bath.

DEELEY. Well, you know what she's like when she gets in the bath.

ANNA. Yes.

DEELEY. Enjoys it. Takes a long time over it.

ANNA. She does, yes. A hell of a long time. Luxuriates in it. Gives herself a great soaping all over. (49)

Anna and Deeley's conversation takes a somewhat distasteful turn as their recollections begin to carry sexual undertones:

DEELEY. Really soaps herself all over, and then washes the soap off, sud by sud. Meticulously. She's both thorough and, I must say it, sensuous. Gives herself a comprehensive going over

[...]

ANNA. She floats from the bath. Like a dream. Unaware of anyone standing, with her towel, waiting for her, waiting to wrap it round her. Quite absorbed.

*Pause*

Until the towel is placed on her shoulders. (49, 50)

By sharing the most intimate details of Kate's bathing habits, Anna and Deeley are struggling to show to each other the extent of their intimacy with her. In an attempt to undermine Anna's account of drying Kate after her bath, Deeley speaks of how incapable Kate is of drying herself, thus, once again subjugating Kate:

Of course she's so totally incompetent at drying herself properly, did you find that? She gives herself a really good *scrub*, but can she with the same efficiency give herself a good *rub*? I have found, in my experience of her, that this is not in fact the case. You'll always find a few odd unexpected unwanted cheeky globules dripping about. (50)

While Anna and Deeley go as far to contemplate drying and powdering Kate after her bath, Kate comes into the bedroom wearing a bathrobe. She "*walks to the window and looks out into the night.*" (53), thus, asserting her "strength and independence" (Prentice 195). At this point, Anna and Deeley are actually the ones who are subjugated since Kate's indifference throws them into yet another power struggle and they start to sing nostalgic songs under the pretence of reminiscing about the past:

DEELEY. (*Singing*) The way you wear your hat ...  
ANNA. (*Singing*) The way you sip your tea ...  
DEELEY. (*Singing*) The memory of all that ...  
ANNA. (*Singing*) No, no, they can't take that away from me...  
[...]  
ANNA. (*Singing*) The way your smile just beams ...  
DEELEY. (*Singing*) The way you sing off key ...  
ANNA. (*Singing*) The way you haunt my dreams ...  
DEELEY. (*Singing*) No, no, they can't take that away from me ...  
[...]  
ANNA. (*Singing*) The way you hold your knife ...  
DEELEY. (*Singing*) The way we danced till three ...  
ANNA. (*Singing*) The way you've changed my life ...  
DEELEY. No, no, they can't take that away from me ... (OT 53, 54)

Each line is selected intentionally to emphasize each character's claim to ownership of Kate. Their aim is not to reminisce but to undermine and warn each other. This is made

obvious as Deeley utters the line “No, no, they can’t take that away from me ...” (54) rather than singing it for the second time in an attempt to show Anna that he will not allow her to disrupt their marriage.

Anna and Deeley also try to overpower each other by distorting the events of the past so as to undermine each other’s recollections. “Memories arouse rivalry and battles for domination through participation in a past or through one’s ability to persuade another to accept an interpretation of it” (Dukore 90). To exemplify, Anna excludes Deeley from her memories regarding her and Kate’s London days. In retaliation, Deeley excludes Anna from his recollection of meeting Kate at a showing of *Odd Man Out* (91). After giving a prolonged account of the lesbian usherettes and expressing his fondness of Robert Newton, he tells Anna how they had met:

And there was only one other person in the cinema, one other person in the whole of the whole cinema, and there she is. And there she was, very dim, very still, placed more or less I would say at the dead centre of the auditorium. [...] And I left when the film was over [...] and I stood for a moment in the sun, thinking I suppose something and this girl came out and I think looked about her and I said wasn’t Robert Newton fantastic, and she said something or other, Christ knows what, but looked at me, and I thought Jesus this is it, I’ve made a catch, this is a trueblue pickup,. And when we had sat down in the café with tea she looked into her cup and then up at me and told me she thought Robert Newton was remarkable. So it was Robert Newton who brought us together and it is only Robert Newton who can tear us apart. (*OT* 25, 26)

By pointing out that “only Robert Newton can tear us [them] apart” (26), Deeley is clearly telling Anna to back off, and he is emphasizing the unassailability of their marriage. However, Anna, who has no intention of yielding to Deeley, recognizes his strategy and challenges the stability of their marriage by suggesting that someone might succeed in tearing them apart (Dukore 92). Referring to another actor in the film, she says, “F.J. McCormick was good too.” (*OT* 26) Deeley, too, recognizes Anna’s

implication and answers “I know F.J. McCormick was good too. But he didn’t bring us together.” (26)

However, Deeley’s victory is short-lived as Anna fights back by asserting that memory may be fallible:

There are some things that one remembers even though they may have never happened. There are things that I remember which may never have happened but I recall them so they take place. (27, 28)

Anna is implying that Deeley is distorting the past in order to assert his authority over the present. Without giving Deeley a chance to reply, Anna starts to tell the story of a man whom she had seen crying in her and Kate’s room:

This man crying in our room. One night late I returned and found him sobbing, his hand over his face, sitting in the armchair, all crumpled in the armchair and Katey sitting on the bed with a mug of coffee [...] The man came over to me, quickly, looked down at me, but I would have absolutely nothing to do with him, nothing. (28)

Anna’s narrative has two purposes: “to make Deeley jealous of some former lover of Kate’s and at the same time, by implying that the lover was Deeley, [to oust] Deeley from her shared past with Kate” (Prentice 191). In order to make her account reliable, Anna changes it, claiming that she had recalled the details of the incident incorrectly: “No, no, I’m quite wrong ... he didn’t move quickly ... that’s quite wrong ... he moved ... very slowly, the light was bad, and stopped.” (28) By readjusting the details of her recollection, Anna is also trying to undermine Deeley’s accounts of the past by suggesting that her memory is more powerful than his as she is able to recall even the minutest details of the event. However, Deeley does not notice her insinuation as he is intrigued and intimidated by the strange man in his wife’s room. He showers Anna with questions about the man, and he is relieved to find out that he had left in the morning. “It

is as if he had never been” (29) says Anna about the man. Her “implication is that no male [even Deeley] can ever truly matter to Kate” (Cahn 109). However, Deeley does not notice this implication either and continues to ask questions about the man. By leaving his questions unanswered, thus, leaving him in the dark, Anna gains her supremacy over Deeley.

Anna gets another chance to overpower Deeley as she gives her account of going to see *Odd Man Out* with Kate. Just as Deeley had excluded her from his account of seeing the movie with Kate, Anna excludes Deeley from her version:

I remember one Sunday she said to me, looking up from the paper, come quick, quick, come with me quickly, and we seized our handbags and went, on a bus, to some totally obscure, some totally unfamiliar district and, almost alone, saw a wonderful film called *Odd Man Out*. (34)

After a period of silence, Deeley gives an extremely irrelevant reply: “Yes, I do quite a bit of traveling in my job.” (34) His desperate need to change the subject suggests that his account of meeting Kate at a showing of *Odd Man Out* was in fact fabricated. Once again, Anna has succeeded in gaining one-upmanship over Deeley.

Desperate to regain his authority, Deeley reverts to his own share of memories. He claims to know Anna from The Wayfarers Tavern. The portrait he paints of Anna is exactly the opposite of the image she has been trying to perpetuate since the onset of the play. That is, whereas Anna claims to have been an innocent and culturally refined young woman, the young woman Deeley remembers is anything but:

You used to wear a scarf, that’s right, a black scarf, and a black sweater, and a skirt.  
[...]  
And black stockings. Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten The Wayfarer’s Tavern? You might have forgotten the name but you must remember the pub. You were the darling of the saloon bar. (45, 46)

By means of the vivid details he provides, Deeley “intends to characterize her, thereby limiting her imaginative memory and powers of self-definition” (Cahn 111, 112). In order not to yield to his attacks, Anna denies her affiliation with the tavern: “I wasn’t rich you know. I didn’t have money for alcohol.” (OT 46) However, she is unsuccessful in her attempt as Deeley claims that she did not have to pay since she was provided for: “You had escorts. You didn’t have to pay. You were looked after. I bought you a few drinks myself.” (46) Anna’s bewildered response, “Never” (46), encourages Deeley to take up a bolder approach. He claims to have exploited Anna sexually by looking up her skirt at a party:

You sat on a very low sofa, I sat opposite and looked up your skirt. Your black stockings were very black because your thighs were so white. [...] I simply sat sipping my ale and gazed ... gazed up your skirt. You didn’t object, you found my gaze perfectly acceptable. (47)

Claiming that Anna did not object to his gaze, Deeley tries to reduce her to the position of a cheap and immoral woman who allows men to look up her skirt, thus demeaning her.

Desperate to subjugate Anna, Deeley makes a cheap attack on her age:

You must be about forty, I should think, by now.

*Pause*

If I walked into The Wayfarers Tavern now, and saw you sitting in the corner, I wouldn’t recognize you. (53)

Even though Deeley appears to have gained advantage over Anna at this point, he is aware of the fact that “in the struggle for power and possession of territory he is being supplanted.” As a result, “he is reduced to mindless insult” (Cahn 113).

Indeed, Anna seems to have the upper hand in this battle for dominance as she strikes back at Deeley by exploiting his memory to her advantage. That is, she uses bits and pieces of Deeley’s account to fabricate her own memory. First, she tells him how she

had stolen Kate's underwear, worn it to a party, and subsequently, made Kate blush by giving her the particulars of that night:

ANNA. I remember her first blush.

DEELEY. What? What was it? I mean why was it?

ANNA. I had borrowed some of her underwear, to go to a party. Later that night I confessed. It was naughty of me. She stared at me, nonplussed, perhaps, is the word. But I told her that I had been punished for my sin, for a man at the party had spent the whole evening looking up my skirt. (*OT* 61)

Anna's recollection fails to create the impact she had expected as Deeley finds this piece of information amusing rather than disturbing: "Looking up your skirt in her underwear. Mmnn." (61) Anna goes on to tell Deeley that, after that night, Kate urged her to borrow her underwear and tell her about what she did while wearing her lingerie:

I would come in late and find her reading under the lamp, and begin to tell her, but she would say no, turn off the light, and I would tell her in the dark. She preferred to be told in the dark. But of course it was never completely dark, what with the light from the gasfire or the light through the curtains, and what she didn't know was that, knowing her preference, I would choose a position in the room from which I could see her face, although she could not see mine. She could hear my voice only. And so she listened and I watched her listening. (61, 62)

Cahn puts forward that the underlying implication of Anna's speech is that "she and Kate were so close as to share not only clothes but experiences, a sensation Kate can never share with Deeley" (114). Deeley's ironic response, "Sounds a perfect marriage" (*OT* 62) is a manifestation of his defeat. However, as he is alarmed by the possibility of a lesbian relationship between Kate and Anna, rather than admitting defeat, he asks "You say she was a Brontë in secrecy but not in passion. What was she in passion?" (62), to which Anna replies "I feel that is your province." (62). Deeley's reply reflects his need to make Anna acknowledge his authority and position in Kate's life:

You feel it's my province? Well, you're damn right. It is my province. I'm glad someone's showing a bit of taste at last. Of course it's my bloody province. I'm her husband. (62)

Deeley is losing his temper, and he is gradually beginning to crack under the pressure Anna has been exerting on him. Unable to cope with this pressure, Deeley inquires "Am I alone in beginning to find all this distasteful?" (62) Anna challenges Deeley by saying,

But what can you possibly find distasteful? I've flown all the way from Rome to see my oldest friend, after twenty years, and to meet her husband. What is it that worries you? (63)

Deeley's reply reflects his frustration:

What worries me is the thought of your husband rumbling about alone in his enormous villa living hand to mouth on a few hardboiled eggs and unable to speak a damn word of English.

[...]

I mean let's put it on the table, I have my eye on a number of pulses, pulses all round the globe, deprivations and insults, why should I waste valuable space listening to two- (63)

The overwhelming impact of Anna's mockery is doubled as Deeley's speech is cut off by Kate who sides with Anna and dismisses him: "If you don't like it go." (63) Anna is contented with Kate's reaction and believes that she has finally succeeded in overpowering Deeley.

However, Deeley evens the score by telling Kate that he and Anna had met in the past in The Wayfarers Tavern:

I bought her a drink. She looked at me with big eyes, shy, all that bit. She was pretending to be you at the time. Did it pretty well. Wearing your underwear she was too, at that time. Amiably allowed me a gander. Trueblue generosity. Admirable in a woman. (65)

Deeley's "ugly memory of her allowing him to look up her skirt crushes the image of artistic sensibility that Anna has cultivated" (Cahn 115). Moreover, Kate now appears to have sided with Deeley as she asks him "What do you think attracted her to you?" (*OT*

66) At this point, whether Deeley's account is real or fabricated is beside the question. "What matters is that Kate accepts it as truth and in doing so casts doubts on Anna's purity" (Cahn 115). Unable to conceal her former involvement with Deeley, Anna finally admits her defeat: "Oh, it was my skirt. It was me. I remember your look ... very well. I remember you well." (*OT* 67)

From the onset of the play, Kate had been observing Anna and Deeley, who had been fighting to gain dominance over her and over each other, silently contemplating her attack on them. Anna's revelation initiates Kate's retaliation. First, she victimizes Anna by saying "But I remember you. I remember you dead. [...] I remember you lying dead" (67), metaphorically killing her relationship with Anna (Regal 81). She goes on to tell her how she watched her as she lay dead in her bed: "You didn't know I was watching you. I leaned over you." (*OT* 67) Anna had previously mentioned secretly watching Kate as she listened to her stories. Now, Kate speaks of watching Anna without her knowing it, asserting that it was she who all along had control over her (Cahn 115). Kate continues her story by giving a description of Anna's dead body:

Your face was dirty. You lay dead, your face scrawled with dirt, all kinds of earnest inscriptions, but unblotted, so that they had run, all over your face, down to your throat. (*OT* 67, 68)

The dirt that Anna's face is covered with symbolizes Kate's true feelings for her. Kate makes it clear that she views Anna as a corrupt, immoral woman with dirty thoughts. Then, Kate recounts that Anna had woken up and smiled at her with the aim of gaining her affection:

You tried to do my little trick, one of my ticks you had borrowed, my little slow smile, my little slow shy smile, my bend of the head, my half closing of the eyes, that we knew so well, but it didn't work, the grin only split the

dirt at the sides of your mouth and stuck. You stuck in your grin. I looked for tears but could see none. (68)

Anna's attempts to appear innocent and affectionate by adopting Kate's facial expressions had actually had an adverse effect as they clashed with Anna's true personality and did not become her. Moreover, Kate underlines Anna's insincerity by saying that she was unable to see tears in her eyes. She goes on to tell Anna that she had gotten what she truly deserved by dying in such a way: "I felt the time and season appropriate and that by dying alone and dirty you had acted with proper decorum." (68) Then, she tells Anna what she did after her death: "It was time for my bath. I had quite a lengthy bath, got out, walked about the room, glistening" (68). Cahn suggests that Kate's bath is a "self-purification after the soil Anna has brought into her life" (115). Kate further subjugates Anna when she tells her what she felt when she brought Deeley home after getting rid of her:

When I brought him into the room your body of course had gone. What a relief it was to have a different body in my room, a male body behaving quite differently (*OT* 68)

The fact that she was relieved to have a different person, a man, in her room serves to emphasize that Kate had had as much as she could stand of Anna and their apparently lesbian relationship. Finally, she devastates Anna by denying her existence: "He asked me once, at about that time, who had slept in that bed. I told him no one. No one at all." (69)

Deeley is also at the receiving end of Kate's merciless persecution. First, she belittles him by likening their lovemaking to nose grinding: "We had a choice of two beds [...] To lie in, or on. To grind noses together, in or on." (68) Then, she gives a detailed account of how she had subjugated him when he had least expected it:

But one night I said let me do something, a little thing, a little trick. He lay there in our bed. He looked at me with great expectation. He was gratified. He thought I had profited from his teaching. He thought I was going to be sexually forthcoming, that I was about to take a long promised initiative. I dug in the windowbox, where you had planted our pretty pansies, scooped, filled the bowl, and plastered his face with dirt. He was bemused, aghast, resisted, resisted with force. He would not let me dirty his face, or smudge it, he wouldn't let me. He suggested a wedding instead, and a change of environment. (68, 69)

Kate suggests that Deeley had thought he could dominate her sexually. However, she had refused to submit to his carnal desires. By saying that she had smeared his face with dirt while he was expecting to have a sexual encounter, Kate manifests her control over Deeley. Even though Deeley had put forth a physical struggle, he was unable to resist her emotionally and ended up submitting to her by proposing. This further reflects the dominance Kate has established over him. Kate delivers her final blow by saying "Neither mattered." (73), implying that his proposal of marriage and change of environment had meant nothing to her.

Throughout the play, the possession of power has shifted from one character to another. However, in the end, Kate, the object of Anna and Deeley's desire, and at times, their victim, turns out to be the victor in the struggle to attain authority and dominance as she makes it evident that it was she who, all along, had had complete control over Deeley and Anna.

Similar to Anna and Deeley's battle for possession of Kate in *Old Times*, the main conflict in *No Man's Land* arises from the struggle between Spooner, Foster and Briggs for possession of Hirst. However, the battle in *No Man's Land* also involves a battle for territory as the person who is able to establish control over Hirst will consequently be able to secure a place or perpetuate his existing place in the poet's household. Well aware

of the fact that Spooner is trying to worm his way into Hirst's life, Foster and Briggs try to ward him off. Foster's hostile attitude towards Spooner is revealed immediately after his entrance as he announces: "I'm defenseless. I don't carry a gun in London." (*NML* 99) His aim is to warn Spooner by insinuating that he normally carries a weapon. "But I'm not bothered", he goes on; "Once you've done the East you've done it all. I've done the East" (99). He shows off by making out that he had traveled to the Far East. At this point, the malleable nature of memory is once again revealed. That is, the past can be tailored to suit the individual's current needs, which, in Foster's case, is the need to project a commanding and experienced image so as to overpower Spooner.

Foster and Briggs also use memory as a tool for debasing Spooner. For instance, when Briggs joins in on Foster and Spooner's conversation, he claims that he has seen Spooner before:

BRIGGS. I've seen Mr. Friend [Spooner] before.

FOSTER. Seen him before?

BRIGGS. I know him.

FOSTER. Do you really?

BRIGGS. I've seen you before

SPOONER. Possibly, possibly.

BRIGGS. You collect the beer mugs from the tables in a pub in Chalk Farm. (*NML* 100, 101)

Briggs is clearly trying to degrade Spooner by suggesting that he is a sixty year old busboy. Spooner fights back by claiming that he was only helping out the landlord: "The landlord's a friend of mine. When he's shorthanded, I give him a helping hand." (101) However, in an attempt to undermine Spooner's explanation, Foster also makes claims to knowing the landlord: "I know the Bull's Head. The landlord's a friend of mine. [...] A firstclass pub. I've known the landlord for years." (101) Foster's inference is that Spooner's explanation is a cover-up. Since the past is unverifiable, it is impossible to

identify who is telling the truth. However, it is certain that Foster and Briggs have the upper hand in this scuffle as they collaborate in ridiculing Spooner:

BRIGGS. He says he's a friend of the landlord.

FOSTER. He says he's a friend of our friend too.

[...]

BRIGGS. He's a bloody friend of everyone then.

FOSTER. He's everybody's bloody friend. How many friends have you got altogether, Mr. Friend? (101, 102)

Without giving Spooner a chance to answer, Briggs comments "He probably couldn't count them." (102) Subdued by Foster and Briggs's cruel mockery, Spooner is unable to fight back.

Spooner gets the chance to make an attempt at evening the score after Foster brags about having been to Siam and Bali. When Foster, referring to the Far East, asks him "Ever been out there?" (103), Spooner announces "I've been to Amsterdam. [...] I mean, the last place ... I visited. I know Europe well." (103), in an attempt to "regain his superior position, lost when he was outdistanced by the underclass men on the topic of travel" (Prentice 212). Then, he goes on to give an account of an afternoon he had spent sitting at an outdoor café in Amsterdam :

I was sitting outside a café by a canal. The weather was superb. At another table, in shadow was a man whistling under his breath, sitting very still, almost rigid. At the side of the canal was a fisherman. He caught a fish. He lifted it high. The waiter cheered and applauded, the two men, the waiter and the fisherman laughed. A little girl, passing, laughed. Two lovers, passing, kissed. The fish was lofted, on the rod. The fish and the rod glinted in the sun, as they swayed. The fisherman's cheeks were flushed, with pleasure. (*NML* 103)

A café scene in Amsterdam and the concept of a traveler in Europe sound sophisticated.

This serves to emphasize Spooner's supremacy over Foster and Briggs who are socially

inferior to him. Spooner also tells them that he had intended to paint a picture of the vibrant scene:

I decided to paint a picture – of the canal, the waiter, the child, the fisherman, the lovers, the fish, and in background, in shadow, the man at the other table, and to call it *The Whistler*. *The Whistler*. (103)

Thus, Spooner makes claims to the arts, suggesting that he possesses artistic sensibility, a sensibility he is certain that Foster and Briggs do not possess. In an attempt to overshadow the two men with his artistic awareness, Spooner asks “If you had seen the picture, and the title, would the title have baffled you?” (103) Foster’s reply shatters Spooner’s hopes of overpowering his antagonists:

Well, speaking for myself, I think I would have been baffled by that title. But I might appreciate the picture. I might even have been grateful for it.

*Pause*

Did you hear what I said? I might have been grateful for the picture. A good work of art tends to move me. You follow me? I’m not a cunt, you know? (104)

As a counter attack, Foster shows an appreciation of the arts, and becomes indignant because Spooner thinks he does not. Once more, Spooner fails to gain supremacy over him.

In order to warn Spooner that he is on to him, Foster tells an anecdote regarding a tramp he had come across in one of his travels:

What do you make of this? When I was out East ... once ... a kind of old stinking tramp, bullock naked, asked me for a few bob. I didn’t know him. He was a complete stranger. But I could see immediately he wasn’t a man to trust. He had a dog with him. They only had about one eye between them. So threw him some sort of coin. He caught this bloody coin, looked at it with a bit of distaste, and then threw the coin back. Well, automatically, I went to catch it, I clutched at it, but the bloody coin disappeared into thin air. It just disappeared ... into thin air ... on its way towards me. He then let out a few curses and pissed off, with his dog. [...] What do you make of that incident? (106)

Foster's fabricated memory helps him tell Spooner what he truly thinks of him. Foster insinuates that Spooner is a pathetic stranger that cannot be trusted. Moreover, by likening him to a beggar, he makes it clear that he thinks Spooner has an ulterior motive in being there. In short, "Foster's intention seems to be to warn an intruder that he recognizes him as someone to be wary of" (Gale 210). Finally, by saying that the tramp had "pissed off" (*NML* 106), he makes it clear that Spooner has no chance of establishing a position in Hirst's household.

Even though Spooner even receives explicit verbal threats from Foster such as "Bugger off" (111), "Keep it tidy. You follow." (113), and the intimidating "Why don't I kick his head off and have done with it?"(114), he struggles so as not to yield to his oppressors. In the morning, while he is enjoying his breakfast of eggs and champagne, Briggs mockingly asks him "When did you last have champagne for breakfast?" (125). Spooner's reply shows that he is unwilling to accept defeat:

Well, to be quite honest, I'm a champagne drinker.

[...]

I know my wines. [...] Dijon. In the thirties. I made many trips to Dijon, for the winetasting, with my French translator. Even after his death, I continued to go to Dijon, until I could go no longer. (125)

Once again, Spooner is trying to emphasize his superiority over Foster and Briggs by claiming that he is a wine aficionado. In an attempt to assert his intellectual superiority over the two domestic aides, Spooner, referring to his French translator in Dijon, says "You will wonder what he translated. The answer is my verse. I am a poet." (125) However, his plan backfires as Briggs puts him down by making a cruel remark about his age: "I thought poets were young." (125). Spooner feebly mutters "I am young." (126)

and offers Briggs a glass of champagne, perhaps as a symbol of his acceptance of his defeat.

The battle for dominance is not only fought between Spooner and the two domestic aides, Foster and Briggs. Spooner and Hirst also struggle to “control each other through a manipulation of the past” (Almansi 94). The struggle to gain dominance over the other is initiated by Hirst who, out of the blue, tells Spooner that he had had an affair with his wife. Whereas Foster and Briggs had a perfectly justifiable reason for wanting to overpower Spooner, Hirst’s sudden attack against his old friend is rather unreasonable as Spooner has not done anything to elicit such an aggressive reaction. The only plausible explanation for Hirst’s assault can be that it was “motivated by some deeply felt need to assert his superiority through battle, through any battle” (Prentice 218). Spooner, the unfortunate and failed poet who is desperate to secure a position in his household, makes a perfect victim for Hirst. Under the pretence of asking Spooner how his wife is doing, Hirst proceeds to give an account of how he seduced Spooner’s wife, Emily:

How’s Emily? What a woman. [...] What a woman. I must tell you I fell in love with her once upon a time. Have to confess it to you. Took her out to tea in Dorchester. Told her of my yearnings. Decided to take the bull by its horns. Proposed that she betray you. [...] Plied her with buttered scones, Wiltshire cream, crumpets and strawberries. Eventually she succumbed. (*NML* 131)

Hirst integrates myriad vivid details into his account of his liaison with Emily in order to sound convincing:

I rented a little cottage for the summer. [...] She would come to me at tea-time, or at coffee-time, the innocent hours.  
[...]  
She loved the cottage. She loved the flowers. As did I. Narcissi, crocus, dog’s tooth violets, fuchsia, jonquils, pinks, verbena.  
[...]

Do you remember once, was it in '37, you took her to France? I was on the same boat. Kept to my cabin. While you were doing your exercises she came to me. (131, 132)

“[T]he flowers are duly catalogued; the course of the seduction is carefully outlined – dates, locations, all are listed” (Gale 216) by Hirst in order to ensure the credibility of his story. Hirst ends his account by pretending to ponder on why he and Spooner had not seen much of each other after Oxford:

You were a literary man. As was I. Yes, yes, I know we shared the occasional picnic, with Tubby Wells and all that crowd, we shared the occasional whisky and soda at the club, but we were never close, were we? I wonder why. Of course I was successful awfully early. (*NML* 132)

Emphasizing the fact that he was “successful awfully early” (132), Hirst “explicitly connects his seduction, and betrayal with the privilege of power as an acclaimed artist” (Prentice 218). Thus, he cherishes the chance to highlight his success while underlining Spooner’s failure as a poet as well as a husband.

However, Spooner is unwilling to yield to his oppressor. First, pretending to reminisce about the old days, he casually inquires about Stella Winstanly, a girl who Hirst had seduced when they were young:

SPOONER. Do you ever see Stella?

*Pause*

HIRST. Stella?

SPOONER. You can’t have forgotten.

[...]

You were rather taken with her.

HIRST. Was I, old chap? How did you know?

SPOONER. I was terribly fond of Bunty. He was most dreadfully annoyed with you. Wanted to punch you on the nose.

HIRST. What for?

SPOONER. For seducing his sister.

[...]

He threatened to horsewhip you. (*NML* 134 - 136)

Spooner shows Hirst that he views him as a corrupt and immoral man who went around seducing innocent women. Then, he attacks him by implying that he had had a relationship with Arabella, a woman whom Hirst was smitten with in their youth:

SPOONER. Arabella was very fond of me. Bunty was never sure of precisely how fond she was of me, nor of what form her fondness took.

HIRST. What in God's name do you mean?

SPOONER. Bunty trusted me. I was best man at their wedding. He also trusted Arabella.

HIRST. I should warn you that I was extremely fond of Arabella.

[...]

Arabella was a girl of the most refined and organized sensibilities.

SPOONER. I agree. (136 – 138)

Stunned by Spooner's insinuation, Hirst asks "Are you trying to tell me that you had an affair with Arabella?" (138) Spooner's vulgar reply comes as a blow to Hirst:

A form of an affair. She had no wish for full consummation. She was content with her particular predilection. Consuming the male member. (138)

Astounded, Hirst rises to his feet and threatens Spooner:

I'm beginning to believe that you are a scoundrel. How dare you speak of Arabella Hinscott in such a fashion. I'll have you blackballed from the club! (138)

Spooner has now been successful in luring Hirst into a vulnerable position. He revels in the chance to overpower Hirst:

Oh my dear sir, may I remind you that you betrayed Stella Winstanly with Emily Spooner, my own wife, throughout a long and soiled summer, a fact known at the time throughout the Home Counties? May I further remind you that Muriel Blackwood and Doreen Busby have never recovered from your insane and corrosive sexual absolutism. May I further remind you that your friendship and corruption of Geoffrey Ramsden at Oxford was the talk of Balliol and Christchurch Cathedral? (138)

At this point, it is clear how "[a]utobiography becomes subservient to the necessity of survival, to the requirements of polemics" (Almansi 94). Characters can make any claim

regarding each others' pasts as long as they can use these claims to humiliate their rivals (94). Hence, Spooner has declared that Hirst is a stanch womanizer, a sexual deviant, and a homosexual so as to debase and overpower him. Hirst is appalled by Spooner's accusations and proclaims "This is scandalous! How dare you?" (*NML* 139) which elicits another outburst from Spooner:

It is you, sir, who has behaved scandalously. To the fairest of sexes, of which my wife was the fairest representative. It is you who has behaved unnaturally and scandalously, to the woman who was joined to me in God. (139)

Whereas Hirst had blatantly admitted having had an affair with Spooner's wife, he now denies it as a defense mechanism:

HIRST. I sir? Unnaturally? Scandalously?  
SPOONER. Scandalously. She told me all.  
HIRST. You listen to the drivellings of a farmer's wife?  
SPOONER. Since I was the farmer, yes.  
HIRST. You were no farmer sir. A weekend wanker. (139)

Hirst's derogatory insult goes amiss as Spooner denies his accusation: "I wrote my Homage to Wessex in the summerhouse at West Upfield" (139). When Hirst, clearly subdued by Spooner, ingratiatingly announces "I have never had the good fortune to read it" (139), Spooner takes the opportunity to make a jab at Hirst's poetic talents:

It's written in terza rima, a form which, if you will forgive my saying so, you have never been able to master. (139)

"Spooner has diminished Hirst's character by attacking his manhood (he seduced Hirst's Arabella and knew about the supposedly secret adultery) and now denigrates the other man's [Hirst's] poetic ability" (Gale 207). Hirst's anger finally erupts and he bursts out, "This is outrageous! Who are you? What are you doing in my house?" (*NML* 140) "The intensity of his reaction indicates that something vital has been touched upon" (Gale

218). Indeed, Spooner has succeeded in overpowering Hirst by taking his story of seducing Emily, twisting it, and using it against him.

Even though Spooner has subjugated Hirst by exploiting recollections of the past to his advantage, his victory is short-lived as he is unable to realize his fundamental aim which is to establish himself a place in Hirst's ménage. In his struggle to resist being dominated by Hirst, Spooner has "overstepped his bounds as guest and groveler" (Prentice 219), thus, destroying his chances of securing a part in Hirst's hearth and home.

### **3.2. Compensating for One's Insecurities and Inadequacies**

Pinter's characters lack confidence in themselves, in their abilities, and in their relationships with others. However, when they are "secure in their authority" and "confident that their own status is certain", they are saved from the pain and suffering inherent in the world they inhabit (Cahn 5). Thus, in order to overcome their feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, they struggle to gain supremacy over others. To this end, they utilize recollections of the past.

In *Landscape*, Duff, who has not been able to succeed in his career, in his relationships with others, and, most importantly, in his relationship with his wife, utters profanities and tells tales of gaining superiority over others and of contemplating to rape Beth. His aim in doing so is to assert his authority so as to compensate for his feelings of incompetence.

Beth and Duff's marriage has collapsed a long time ago due to Duff's infidelity. Their relationship is devoid of both physical and emotional contact as Beth has withdrawn into the past after Duff's confession of his transgression. Overwhelmed by

Beth's indifference towards him, Duff struggles to regain his authority by subjugating her. To this end, he utilizes crude and violent recollections of the past. For instance, when his account of how he had had to take shelter from the rain the previous day is undercut by Beth's tender reflection on the past, "They all held my arm lightly, as I stepped out of the car, or out of the door, or down the steps." (L 170), he retaliates by saying

Mind you, there was a lot of shit all over the place, all along the paths, by the pond. Dogshit, duckshit ... all kinds of shit ... all over the paths. The rain didn't clean it up. It made it even more treacherous. (170)

By painting such an ugly scene packed with profanities, Duff is trying to cast a shadow over Beth's gentle accounts of the past with the aim of compensating for his lack of confidence brought about by her apathy towards him.

As Duff finds himself "unable to conquer Beth emotionally" he tries to "dominate her physically, to find his security in her subjugation" (Cahn 96). To this end, he exploits the violent memory of the day he had contemplated raping her. Duff vividly remembers the details of how they had met in the empty hallway:

You used to wear a chain around your waist. On the chain you carried your keys, your thimble, your notebook, your pencil, your scissors.

*Pause*

You stood in the hall and banged the gong. (L 186)

That day, Beth had banged the dinner gong as she always did when Mr. Sykes was around. However, her action was extremely unnecessary as Mr. Sykes had died. The fact that Beth mourned Mr. Sykes's demise had made Duff furious as he had thought she would turn to him in his absence (Cahn 95). However, Beth had remained as indifferent to Duff as always and this infuriated him:

What the bloody hell are you doing by banging that bloody gong?

*Pause*

It's bullshit. Standing in the empty hall banging a bloody gong. There's no one to listen. No one'll hear. There's not a soul in the house. Except me. (L 186)

Not only had Beth remained indifferent to Duff, but she had also neglected her conventional duties to him. Her absence in the relationship has left Duff feeling insecure about his position in their marriage. Therefore, he tries to exert dominance over Beth with the aim of claiming his position as the man of the house:

There's nothing for lunch. There's nothing cooked. No stew. No pie. No greens. No joint. Fuck all. (186)

His desperate need to establish dominance over Beth is further reflected as his anger escalates and he gives her a detailed account of how he had planned to rape her:

I took the chain off and the thimble, the keys, the scissors slid off it and clattered down. I booted the gong down the hall. (L 187)

Esslin puts forward that, by saying that he got rid of her chain which carried her thimble, keys, and scissors, Duff is trying to tear down "Beth's insignia of her office of housekeeper" (1977: 172). By suggesting that he has the power to strip her off the symbols of her position, Duff is aiming to assert his authority and superiority over Beth. His aim to attest his manliness by subjugating Beth is also revealed as he continues to give the intricately planned details of his brutal attack:

I thought you would come to me, I thought you would come into my arms and kiss me, even ... offer yourself to me. I would have had you in front of the dog, like a man, in the hall, on the stone, banging the gong, mind you don't get the scissors up your arse, or the thimble [...] you'll plead with me like a woman, I'll bang the gong on the floor, if the sound is too flat, lacks resonance, I'll hang it back on its hook, bang you against it swinging, gonging, waking the place up, calling them all for dinner, lunch is up, bring out the bacon, bang your lovely head, mind the dog doesn't swallow the thimble, slam – (187)

Although Duff declares his desire to “take Beth by force, expressed in commanding, raucous terms, he seems oddly unsure of his ability to have her ‘like a man’ and describes how he ‘would’ have liked to behave with her and have her respond to him” (Prentice 172). That is, as he had been unable to put his vicious plan into action, he can only tell Beth how he had contemplated raping her. As a result, his brutal and profane account designed to emphasize his supremacy fails to serve its purpose.

Duff has not only failed in his relationship with his wife but he has also failed in establishing relationships with others. His inability to make contact with people is revealed as he tells Beth about the youngsters he had met when he was sheltering under a tree:

Of course the youngsters I met under the first tree, during the first shower, they were larking about and laughing. I tried to listen, to find out what they were laughing about, but I couldn’t work it out. They were whispering. I tried to listen, to find out what the joke was.

*Pause*

Anyway I didn’t find out. (175)

The picture that he unintentionally paints of himself is that of an isolated man. Just as he is unable to enter Beth’s world, he is unable to enter the youngsters’ world as he fails in his attempt to understand their joke (Burkman 144). However, in order to cope with and conceal the fact that he is a social outcast, he tells a story regarding the row he had about the quality of the beer with the man at the pub:

Then this nut came in. He ordered a pint and he made a criticism of the beer. I had no patience with it. (L 173)

By belittling the man by calling him a “nut” and by mentioning the fact that he could not tolerate his criticism of the beer, Duff is trying to assert his masculinity and power. Subsequently, he tells Beth that the landlord of the pub had also joined the argument:

The landlord threw a half of a crown on the bar and told him to take it. The pint's only two and three, the man said, I owe you three pence, but I haven't got any change. Give the threepence to your son, the landlord said, with my compliments. I haven't got a son, the man said, I've never had any children. I bet you're not even married, the landlord said. This man said: I'm not married. No-one'll marry me. (173, 174)

By giving the particulars of the exchange between the two men, Duff is trying to show how he and the landlord had collaborated in overpowering the man. Moreover, by relaying the defeated man's heartrending final words, he is aiming to show the extent to which they had lowered him. This anecdote serves both to cater to Duff's need to cope with his insecurity brought about by his inability to make social contact and to his need to emphasize his authority.

Another area in which Duff experiences feelings of insecurity and inadequacy is his job. These feelings stem from the subservient position he held as an aide to Mr. Sykes. Duff speaks respectfully of his boss and expresses how fortunate they were, and still are, to have been employed by him. For instance, "That's why we're lucky, in my opinion. To live in Mr. Sykes' house in peace." (175) he announces. He also expresses his pride in having taken good care of the old man: "He never lacked for anything, in the way of being looked after." (178) However, his frequent expressions of his loyalty and dedication to his employer fail to conceal his true feelings, and his hatred of Mr. Sykes is revealed: "Mind you, he was a gloomy bugger. [...] I was never sorry for him, at any time, for his lonely life." (178) Duff resents the subservient position he holds in Mr. Sykes's service (Prentice 172). Therefore, by disparaging his former employer, he is trying to compensate for his sense of inferiority.

In order to cope with his inadequacies and gain and convey a sense of superiority, Duff recalls "his one area of mastery, his position as a trained cellarman" (172). Again,

he utilizes the recollections of his discussion with the stranger at the pub. After their argument, the man and Duff had ended up drinking together and conversing on beer manufacture. Duff starts his account of their exchange by emphasizing the man's lack of knowledge on the subject of beer and highlighting the fact that he had been trained as a cellerman: "This fellow knew bugger all about beer. He didn't know I'd been trained as a cellerman. That's why I could speak with authority" (183). Then, he goes on to flaunt his expertise in beer manufacturing:

This chap in the pub said he was surprised to hear it. [...] He said he thought keg beer was fed with oxygen through a cylinder. I said I wasn't talking about keg beer, I was talking about normal draught beer. He said he thought they piped the beer from a tanker into metal containers. I said they may do, but he wasn't talking about the quality of beer I was. He accepted that point. (185)

Duff takes pride in having the know-how to correct the man's lack of information on the subject. In addition, he revels in the fact that the man had ended up accepting his point. By means of this anecdote, he strives to salvage the memories of a time when he actually felt competent and powerful rather than feeling useless and insecure. Moreover, by highlighting his authoritative and assertive side, he struggles to establish dominance over Beth, the main source of his insecurities.

In *Silence*, Bates has failed to re-establish a place in Ellen's life due to her complete indifference toward him. Ellen's indifference, coupled with her partiality towards Rumsey, the more privileged of the two men, has left Bates experiencing feelings of failure, inferiority, and jealousy. In order to compensate for these feelings, Bates struggles to overpower Ellen by exploiting recollections of the past.

Ellen has had a relationship with both Rumsey and Bates in the past. However, it is Rumsey who she is still smitten with. Moreover, Rumsey, who has retired to the

countryside to seek solace, is both emotionally and financially superior to Bates. That is, he has found comfort in country life, and he lives in his own cottage and keeps horses. Bates, on the other hand, is constantly being shunned by Ellen. In addition, he has to endure the commotion of the urban life and lives in a second-rate apartment full of noisy neighbors. As a result, he tries to compensate for his inadequacies by subjugating Ellen. For instance, when Rumsey gently reflects on how he and Ellen used to meet in his house, Bates retaliates by giving a crude account of how he and Ellen used to meet outside:

RUMSEY. She walks from the door to the window to see the way she has come [...] When I stand beside her and smile at her, she looks at me and smiles.

BATES. How many times standing clenched in the pissing dark waiting?

The mud, the cows, the river.

You cross the field out of darkness. You arrive. (§ 192, 193)

Rumsey's account of meeting Ellen is pleasant. Bates's account, on the contrary, is rather distasteful. His jealousy of the tenderness between Ellen and Rumsey and his resentment of having to meet outdoors are reflected in his description of erasing Ellen's smile off her face:

You stand breathing before me. You smile.

I put my hands on your shoulders and press. Press the smile off your face.  
(193)

Bates cannot endure Ellen's joyful mood as he supports a gloomy and aggressive disposition. Therefore, he tries to compensate for his inability to be happy by exerting dominance over Ellen. His "impulse to smother the beauty and tenderness which clashed with his crude, violent nature" (Sakellaridou 155) proves that he is not only jealous of

Rumsey or the warmth between Rumsey and Ellen, but he is also jealous of Ellen's happiness.

Bates's insecurities, in fact, stem from his failure to establish a relationship with Ellen. Whenever he tries to grow close to her, he is left being spurned:

BATES. Come for a walk.

ELLEN. No.

*Pause*

BATES. All right. I'll take you on a bus to town. I know the place. My cousin runs it.

ELLEN. No. (S 197)

Frustrated by her constant rejection, Bates conjures up the memory of a night they had spent together in the city in a monologue:

Caught a bus to town. Crowds. Lights round the market., rain and stinking. Showed her the bumping lights. Took her down around the dumps. Black roads and girders. She clutching me. This way the way I bring you. Pubs throw the doors smack into the night. Cars barking and the lights. She with me, clutching. (192)

Bates is trying to re-establish the dominance he once had over Ellen. He is clearly the dominant figure of the anecdote as he is the one who guides Ellen around the city, showing her around and teaching her new things. Ellen, on the other hand, is the weak and submissive figure who desperately hangs on to Bates for protection. Bates continues his story with the particulars of their lovemaking:

Brought her into this place, my cousin runs it. Undressed her, placed my hand. (192)

The crudeness of his account of their lovemaking is similar to Duff's fantasy of raping Beth in *Landscape*. Like Duff, Bates also thinks that he can "find his security in her [Ellen's] subjugation" (Cahn 96). However, he is left feeling even more insecure as Ellen,

utterly indifferent to Bates's account, goes on to recall how she and Rumsey used to meet in the countryside:

I go by myself with the milk to the top, the clouds racing, all the blue changes, I'm dizzy sometimes, meet with him under some place.

One time visited his house. He put a light on, it reflected the window, it reflected in the window (*S* 192)

Gale puts forward that the past "can be used to substantiate or negate any claim any character wants to draw upon it" (198). Accordingly, Pinter's characters exploit the past with the aim of subjugating and overpowering their antagonists and with the aim of compensating for their feelings of insufficiency and inadequacy. The memories employed by the characters may be genuine remembrances of the past, they may be distorted or completely fabricated, or they may be in the form of unverifiable bits and pieces of information; however, they all cater to the characters' need to establish dominance and authority (Cahn 4, 103; Regal 3).

## CHAPTER 4

### COPING WITH DISSATISFACTION

Dukore refers to Pinter's theatre as "a picture of contemporary man beaten down by the social forces around him" (qtd. in Gale 17). Dissatisfied with their present lives, with their current standing, and with their contemporary social circle, the characters in the memory plays are oppressed by the present and, as a result, view the past as "a secure retreat in which one can idealize and embellish as one pleases" (Martineau 12). Thus, to be able to cope with the present, they reclaim "an Edenic memory of past happiness" (Billington 384).

#### **4.1. Coping with Dissatisfaction with One's Present State and Social Circle**

Sociologists put forward that an individual who dwells in the past might not be finding satisfaction in his or her present life and may be longing for a time that was more blissful and colorful, usually his or her youth (Halbwachs 48). Indeed, "Pinter's characters live as much in the past as in the present, and are haunted by a recollection, however fallible, manipulative or imaginary, of some lost and vanished world in which everything was secure, certain, fixed" (Billington 387). For these characters, their memories become a means of handling an undesirable, frustrating, and oppressive present.

Pinter's characters call upon their memories in order to deal with their current close society with which they are dissatisfied. They do this by pitting their past social circle against their present one (Halbwachs 49). According to Halbwachs, by means of our memories,

[w]e are free to choose from the past the period into which we wish to immerse ourselves. Since the kinds of people we have known at different times either were not the same or presented varying aspects of themselves, it is up to us to choose the society in which we wish to find ourselves. Whereas in our present society we occupy a definite position and are subject to the constraints that go with it, memory gives us the illusion of living in the midst of groups which do not imprison us, which impose themselves on us only so far and so long as we accept them.

(Halbwachs 50)

Discontented with their roles in their present state, and with the current roles and behaviors of the people around them, Pinter's characters seek asylum in a past which they remember as being safe, familiar, and satisfying.

In *Landscape*, Beth and Duff revert to the past to be able to make the embittered state of their marriage bearable. The relationship between Beth and Duff is described by Dukore, in a nutshell, as “[t]wo incompatible people, once loving, are isolated from each other, implicitly rejecting each other, uncommunicative in an unchanging landscape” (87). Beth and Duff merely “share a breathing space [...] without intimacy or even relationship” (Prentice 171, 172).

The disintegration of Beth and Duff's relationship stems from the fact that they have both changed from the loving and caring Beth and Duff of their youth. Beth has turned into an uncaring and uncommunicative woman, and Duff has turned into a boorish and hostile man. Fed up with the crudeness of Duff, who frequently employs vulgarisms such as “shit” (*L* 170), “piss”, “boghole” (173), “bloody hell”, and “fuck” (186) in his speech, and spends his time drinking beer and picking fights at the pub, Beth withdraws from the present and immerses herself into the memories of a time when he was a gentle and adoring husband. For instance, referring to Duff as “My man” (167), she refers to the day he had taken her to a secluded spot on the beach:

That's why he'd picked such a desolate place. So that I could draw in peace. I had my sketch book with me. I took it out. I took my drawing pencil out. But there was nothing to draw. Only the beach, the sea.

*Pause*

Could have drawn him. He didn't want it. He laughed.

*Pause*

I laughed with him.

*Pause*

I waited for him to laugh, then I would smile, turn away, he would touch my back, turn me, to him, My nose.. creased. I would laugh with him, a little.

*Pause*

He laughed. I am sure of it. So I didn't draw him. (176)

The Duff in Beth's memory is a gentle and considerate man who, knowing Beth's penchant for drawing, had taken her to a private spot so that she could "draw in peace" (176). Moreover, her repeated references to laughter suggest that she longs for the days in which she and Duff would jovially mess about, and were actually able to share a laugh.

As their current relationship is devoid of physical contact as well as emotional contact, Beth pines for the days when they were affectionate towards each other. That is why her remembrances include the details of the sensual nature of their relationship

I drew a face in the sand, then a body. [...] The sand kept on slipping, mixing the contours. I crept close to him and put my head on his arm, and closed my eyes. All those darting red and black flecks, under my eyelid. I moved my cheek on his skin. And all those darting red and black flecks, moving about under my eyelid. I buried my face in his side and shut the light out. (182)

Besides suggesting that she misses the tactile nature of their relationship, she also suggests that she misses the old Duff who used to protect her from the inconsistencies of the world, and make her feel at peace as she could "shut the light out" (182) by snuggling up to him.

Beth's longing for affection is once again revealed as she disregards Duff's attempts to remind her of the blue dress that their late employer, Mr. Sykes, had bought for her, and dwells in her memories of how Duff used to touch her:

DUFF. That nice blue dress he chose for you, for the house, that was very nice of him. Of course it was in his own interests for you to look good about the house, for guests.

BETH. He moved the sand and put his arm around me.

[...]

And cuddled me. (178, 179)

Beth misses the attention Duff used to pay her. Aware of this fact, Duff tries to "fill in the void" (Cahn 94) by asking her if she likes him talking to her:

Do you like me to talk to you?

*Pause*

Do you like me to tell you all the things I've been doing?

*Pause*

About all the things I've been thinking?

*Pause*

Mmmnn? (179)

However, Beth does not care if her crude and clumsy husband is sensitive to her needs or not. Her unresponsiveness implies that she misses the kind of tender attention she used to receive from the gentle and affectionate Duff of their youth whom she has romanticized in her mind:

All it is, you see ...I said ... is the lightness of your touch, the lightness of your look, my neck, your eyes, the silence, that is my meaning, the loveliness of my flowers, my hands touching my flowers, that is my meaning. (182)

"Duff was her tender love, yet he has declined so grossly, while Beth's lover in memory is like [one of] her drawing[s], a selective idealized figure in a landscape of the mind, providing psychological compensation for her unhappiness" (Knowles 125).

Duff is rebuffed by Beth's indifference and lack of interest in the man he has become now. He may be a coarse, aggressive, and unimaginative man; however, he really strives to be loved by Beth (Sakellaridou 145). Therefore, he struggles to win her affection by trying to get her involved in activities he thinks she will enjoy. However, his attempts are undercut by her reflections on the past:

DUFF. One day when the weather's good you could go out in the garden and sit down. You'd like that. The open air. I'm often out there. The dog liked it.

*Pause*

I've put in some flowers. You'd find it pleasant. Looking at the flowers. You could cut a few if you liked. Bring them in.

[...]

You know what we get quite a lot of out in the garden? Butterflies.

BETH. I slipped out of my costume and put on my beachrobe. (L 174, 175)

Even the mention of flowers and gardening, which is one of Beth's favorite pastimes, fails to lure her out of her reverie. She is lost in a past world of her own. Frustrated by her utter lack of interest and lack of sympathy towards him, Duff tries to revivify the memories of a time when they were happy together. His memory of Beth and Duff is anything but that of the unhappy and alienated couple of the present:

Mr. Sykes took to us from the very first interview, didn't he?

*Pause*

He said I've got the feeling you'll make a very good team. Do you remember? And that's what we proved to be. (178)

They were a good team once. Duff misses those days, and tries to bring them back. On the other hand, Beth has been neglecting her duties as a wife and housekeeper, which is another one of Duff's chagrins. He points out what a "first-rate housekeeper" (176) Beth used to be, and how Mr. Sykes used to compliment her on her "cooking and the service" (181). Duff is "well meaning" in his attempts to revive a past in which Beth was a good

wife and a good housekeeper; however, he is “blunt and crass, and for that reason can never fulfill Beth’s needs” (Cahn 97). As a result, he is constantly shunned by Beth, and they are left being perpetually alienated from each other. Duff, unsuccessfully, brings the past into play in order to amend this situation.

In *Silence*, Rumsey, Bates, and Ellen have chosen to lead solitary lives; however, they can no longer endure the isolation and alienation brought about by their decisions. As a coping strategy, they rely on their memories, and “remember the past when they were together” (Dukore 88).

Rumsey, who claims to have found solace in the countryside, is, in fact, experiencing “a terrible isolation grown out of a choice he made when he spurned Ellen” (Prentice 174). He has become devoid of social contacts:

Sometimes I see people. They walk towards me, no, not so, they walk in my direction, but never reaching me, turning left, or disappearing, and then reappearing, to disappear into the wood. (S 198)

He misses the warmth of their relationship. Looking back on the past with nostalgia helps him to bear this present sorry state. He remembers the long walks he and Ellen used to take in the country:

I walk with my girl who wears a grey blouse when she walks and grey shoes and walks with me readily wearing her shoes considered for me.

She holds my arm.

[...]

When it’s chilly I stop her and slip her raincoat over her shoulders or rainy slip arms into the arms, she twisting her arms. And talk to her and tell her everything.

She dresses for my eyes.

I tell her my thoughts. Now I am ready to walk, her arm in me her hand in me.

I tell her my life's thoughts, clouds racing. She looks up at me or listens looking down. She stops in midsentence, my sentence, to look up at me. (191)

The details about Ellen's clothes, the weather, the way they walked, talked, and were close to each other are so vivid that Rumsey seems to be reliving the past in the present.

Bates has also chosen to lead a solitary existence by not allowing anyone else into his life after Ellen, and he has to suffer the consequences of his decision. Unlike Rumsey, he openly expresses his dissatisfaction with the desolate life he is leading. His only social contact is his landlady, and he is clearly disturbed by this situation.

My landlady asks me for a drink. Stupid conversation. [...] You can smile, surely, at something? Surely you have smiled, at a thing in your life? At something? Has there been no pleasantness in your life? No kind of loveliness in your life?  
[...]  
I've had all that. I've got all that. I said. (201)

Bates's reply reflects his unwillingness to disclose his private life to someone who is thoughtlessly prying into his past. More importantly, it reflects his regret at having lost the "pleasantness" and "loveliness" (201) that once was a part of his life.

Bates also resents living in the city "where his youthful neighbors make too much noise and too much love" (Prentice 175), keeping him up at night:

It's a question of sleep. I need something of it, or how can I remain alive, without any true rest, having no solace, no constant solace not even any damn inconsistant [*sic*] solace. (S 193, 194)

Bates feels lonely and aggravated in the midst of unpleasant people. He goes back to his memories of the country, and of living in the country with Ellen. He desperately tries to bring back the peaceful and idyllic atmosphere of the past:

Once I had a little girl. I took it for walks. I held it by its hand. It looked up at me and said, I see something in a tree, a shape, a shadow. It is leaning down. It is looking at us.

Maybe it's a bird, I said, a big bird, resting. Birds grow tired, after they've flown all over the country, up and down in the wind, looking down on all the sights, so sometimes, when they reach a tree, with good solid branches, they rest. (198)

“Bates's comments about the birds emphasize their finding comfort and refuge, whereas he has been unable to do so” (Cahn 99). Both Bates and Rumsey, who appear to be strong from the outside, are actually “inwardly wounded” (99) in the sense that they can only tolerate the painful effects of their choices by reverting to the past.

Ellen also utilizes memories in order to handle the distressing outcome of her decision to distance herself from people. She has refused to allow another person into her life after the failure of her relationship with Rumsey. Her only contact is an old woman who, like Bates's landlady, prods into her private life:

Now and again I meet my drinking companion and have a drink with her. She is a friendly woman, quite elderly, quite friendly.  
[...]  
She asks me about my early life, when I was young, never departing from her chosen subject, but I have nothing to tell her about the sexual part of my youth. I'm old, I tell her, my youth was somewhere else, anyway I don't remember. She does the talking anyway.

I like to get back to my room. (S 194)

Ellen vividly remembers the details of her liaisons with both Rumsey and Bates; however, she does not feel like sharing them with her companion. Her association with the woman is superficial. Ellen's eagerness to get back to her room indicates that she prefers to be on her own. Even though her isolation is a result of her own choice, its impact on her state of mind is very upsetting. She sits at night, listening to her heartbeat: “Around me sits the night. Such a silence. I can hear myself. Cup my ear. My heart beats in my ear. Such a silence.” (201) The extent of her alienation from people is also revealed when she describes how she walks home after work every day:

After my work each day I walk back through people but I don't notice them. I'm not in a dream or anything of that sort. On the contrary. I'm quite awake to the world around me. But not to the people. There must be something in them to notice, to pay attention to, something of interest in them. In fact I know there is. I'm certain of it. But I pass through them noticing nothing. (204)

The commotion and coldness of urban life has taken its toll on Ellen. In a struggle to put up with the solitary life she leads amidst the crowds of people, she takes refuge in her memories of the rustic warmth of the countryside:

I go up with the milk. The sky hits me. I walk in this wind to collide with them waiting.

There are two. They halt to laugh and bellow in the yard. They dig and punch and cackle where they stand. They turn to move, look round at me to grin. I turn my eyes from one, and from the other to him. (203)

The two men in her memory are Rumsey and Bates. "Ellen was both attracted to Rumsey's bucolic, gentle manner and the more aggressive nature of Bates" (Cahn 102), and the two men were attracted to her. However, she has ended up losing both of them by choosing Rumsey over Bates. She now looks back on the days when the two men made her the center of their attentions. Her memories make her present isolation somewhat bearable.

In *Night*, Woman and Man struggle to cope with the fact that their relationship has become monotonous. The once passionate and uninhibited young couple who blatantly flirted with each other in parties and on bridges now has different concerns in life such as taking care of their children and having to get up early in the morning. As they sit in their kitchen drinking coffee and reflecting on the past, their conversation is disrupted when the woman thinks she has heard a voice:

WOMAN. What was that?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. I thought I heard a child crying.

MAN. There was no sound.

WOMAN. I thought it was a child, crying, waking up.

MAN. The house is silent

*Pause*

It's very late. We're sitting here. We should be in bed. I have to be up early. I have things to do. Why do you argue?

WOMAN. I don't. I'm not. I'm willing to go to bed. I have things to do. I have to be up in the morning. (N 215)

The trivialities of everyday life have caused them to lose touch with the affectionate and sexually active couple they once were. In order to be able to tolerate the arid and routine nature of their marriage, they try to remind each other of how they used to be in the past.

The Man in Woman's memory is an idealized figure. He is a gentle lover whose touch she used to anticipate with excitement:

You took my face in your hands, standing by the railings. You were very gentle, you were very caring. You cared. Your eyes searched my face. I wondered who you were. I wondered what you thought. I wondered what you would do. (214)

The Man in her memory is passionate and bold, unlike the reserved man he has become in years. He is a man who used to flirt with her by suggestively touching her hand:

You touched my hand. You asked me who I was, and what I was, and whether I was aware that you were touching my hand, that your fingers were touching mine, that your fingers were moving up and down between mine. (216)

By revivifying the memory of her husband's playful temperament, and that of the physical nature of their relationship, the woman tries to compensate for the lack of passion in their present relationship.

The recollections the man employs so as to endure the current monotony of their marriage are carnal compared to his wife's gentler recollections. He tries to make his wife remember how he had touched her breasts the first night they had met:

MAN. I touched your breasts.  
WOMAN. Where?  
MAN. On the bridge.  
WOMAN. Really?  
MAN. Standing behind you.  
WOMAN. I wondered whether you would, whether you wanted to,  
sufficiently. (217)

The woman's comments about wondering if he would touch her or not insinuate that the couple may be playing a game. That is, "the responses given by one partner derive from the story being told by the other" (Gale 184). Her first reaction to his statement about having touched her breasts was a surprised "Really?" (N 217). When the man goes into the particulars of the event; however, she claims that she had anticipated his touch. Another instance in which the couple appears to be playing a game is at the end of the play when the woman remembers what her husband had said to her after they had made love for the first time:

WOMAN. And you had me and you told me you had fallen in love with me, and you said you would take care of me always, and you told me my voice, my eyes, my thighs, my breasts were incomparable, and that you would adore me always.  
MAN. Yes I did.  
WOMAN. And you do adore me always.  
MAN. Yes I do. (218, 219)

Neither the woman's nor the man's recollections can be verified. However, their participation in each other's reminiscences makes it certain that "their memories have been altered by time according to their needs or a desire to produce the tale which seems most romantic to them" (Cahn 184). Playing games with their memories helps them to put up with the mundane life they are leading.

In *Old Times*, Anna struggles to fend off her loneliness, and compensate for the years she has spent away from Kate by bringing into play her memories of their mutual

past. Deeley, whose safe relationship with Kate is disrupted by Anna's intrusion, also reverts to the past in order to be able to deal with the unhappiness and instability she has brought into his life.

Anna is dissatisfied with the isolated life she chose to lead when she married her Italian husband. The couple lives on a secluded island in Sicily, in a house "very high up on the cliffs" (*OT* 36). Even though Anna tells Kate and Deeley that they "live in a rather fine villa" (36) with "marble floors" (37) and a "terrace" (38), and expresses her contentment with her husband who is "something of a gourmet" (36), her continual references to her and Kate's mutual past imply that she is actually discontented with her current life. The only way Anna can escape her unexciting life is to retreat into a past which she remembers as being exhilarating. She vividly remembers the details of a typical day in the lives of the Kate and Anna of the past:

the hustle and bustle in the morning, rushing for the bus again for work, lunchtimes in Green Park, exchanging all our news, with our very own sandwiches, innocent girls, innocent secretaries, and then the night to come, and goodness knows what excitement in store, I mean, the sheer excitement of it all, the looking-forwardness of it all, and so poor, but to be poor and young, and a girl in London then ... (14)

The dynamic life of the two young secretaries of the past is exactly the opposite of the mundane lives they now lead as lonely housewives. In an attempt to recreate this lively past, Anna frequently brings up the days she and Kate used to wander the streets of London, visiting "that gallery, or this theater, or that chamber concert" (34). Even though the two old friends have been estranged for twenty years, she refuses to accept the fact that their relationship has changed, and she frequents the past:

I took her to cafés, almost private ones, where artists and writers and sometimes actors collected, and others with dancers, and we sat hardly

breathing with our coffee, listening to the life around us. All I wanted for her was her happiness. That is all I want for her still. (65)

However, Kate's recollections of their past life together are not as pleasant as Anna's. She excludes Anna from her life forever as she kills her in her memory by saying, "you were dead in my room" (*OT* 68). As a result, Anna, whose aim was to ward off her loneliness and unhappiness, ends up being even more isolated and discontented as she has lost her only friend, her only link to a past which she viewed through rose-tinted glasses.

Until Anna's intrusion, Deeley had been leading a fulfilling and tranquil life with Kate. However, her arrival and her claims to possession of Kate have caused him to doubt the stability of their marriage and the stability of his central position in Kate's life. When Anna succeeds in getting Kate to collaborate with her in recreating the London of their memories, Deeley becomes increasingly aware of the threat that she poses against his relationship with Kate:

ANNA. [To Kate] Are you hungry?

KATE. No.

DEELEY. Hungry? After that casserole?

*Pause*

KATE. What shall I wear tomorrow? I can't make up my mind.

ANNA. Wear your green.

KATE. I haven't got the right top.

ANNA. You have. You have your turquoise blouse.

KATE. Do they go?

ANNA. Yes they do go. Of course they go.

KATE. I'll try it. (40, 41)

The two women have retreated into the past, "leaving Deeley by himself in the present" (Gale 92) by ignoring him. Anna's arrival has caused Deeley to be shunned by Kate, thus, has disrupted the rapport between the couple. In order to be able to cope with the discord Anna has brought into his life, Deeley regresses into a past which does not include her.

He recalls the days when he and Kate were dating. Deeley was a young student then, and he was intrigued by Kate's mysterious disposition:

Myself I was a student then, juggling with my future, wondering should I bejasus saddle myself with a slip of a girl not long out of her swaddling clothes whose only claim to virtue was silence but who lacked any sense of fixedness, any sense of decisiveness, but was compliant only to the shifting winds, with which she went, but not *the* winds, and certainly not my winds, such as they are, but I supposed winds that only she understood (OT 31, 32)

As he is threatened by Anna's determination to gain Kate's affections, Deeley seeks comfort in the memory of the days when he used to make Kate happy. When Anna makes a comment about how cheerful Kate was in the past, Deeley undercuts her recollection:

ANNA [to Kate]. you were so lively, so animated, you used to laugh -  
DEELEY. Of course you did. I made you smile myself, didn't I? walking along the street, holding hands. You smiled fit to bust. (30)

Deeley seeks confirmation from Kate by asking "I made you smile myself, didn't I?" (30). He believes that he can make Kate admit the significant role he plays in her life by making her acknowledge his memory. However, Kate is as reserved as always, and remains indifferent to Deeley's recollection. In a desperate attempt to revivify the memory of their blissful days, Deeley tries to make Kate smile like she did when they were young. Kate has just taken a bath, and Deeley's comment, "I don't want you sitting damply all over the place" (57), has made her smile:

DEELEY. See that smile? That's the same smile she smiled when I was walking down the street with her, after *Odd Man Out*, well, quite some time after that.  
[...]  
Do it again.  
KATE. I'm still smiling.  
DEELEY. You're not. Not like you were a moment ago, not like you did then. (57)

Deeley's dream of reviving the past is shattered as Kate refuses to smile, and changes the subject by saying, "This coffee's cold" (57). Kate's unwillingness to recreate the past goes to show that "what is lost in youth can never be wholly recovered, even in memory" (Prentice 184). Thus, Deeley, like Anna, cannot succeed in warding off his discontentment with the present by seeking comfort in the past.

In *No Man's Land*, both Spooner and Hirst, who have "reached an age where there is no true creativity or passion left, only garrulity and sterile word games" (Gale 202), call upon the past when they were men of action rather than words to be able to bear the present. Hirst's butler, Foster, also yearns for the past as he resents his current position in the Hirst household.

Spooner, the penniless, lonely, and unsuccessful poet, fails to ingratiate himself into Hirst's household. Disheartened by his current situation and by Hirst's indifference towards him, Spooner recalls the times when he was a patron of the arts who kept an open house for young poets:

With the windows open to the garden, my wife pouring long glasses of squash, with ice, on a summer evening, young voices occasionally lifted in unaccompanied ballad, young bodies lying in the dying light, my wife moving through the shadows in her long gown, what can ail? I mean who can gainsay us? What quarrel can be found with what is, au fond, a gesture towards the sustenance and preservation of art, and through art to virtue? (*NML* 92)

He brings back the memories of the bucolic life he spent surrounded by his family and young artists, the times when he actually did something for the arts, in order to compensate for not being able to do anything artistic now.

Hirst who was once a renowned poet, also utilizes remembrances of the past in order to cope with the fact that he has lost his popularity and has become an alcoholic

whose social circle merely consists of his domestic aides, Foster and Briggs. Even though Foster claims that they protect Hirst “against corruption, against men of craft, against men of evil”, and that they take care of him “out of love” (113), they actually treat him badly. When Hirst finishes his drink and, holding his glass up, asks “Who is the kindest among you?” (109), Briggs offers to pour him a drink. Hirst gratefully says, “Thank you” (109), and asks:

What would I do without the two of you? I’d sit here forever, waiting for a stranger to fill up my glass. What would I do while I waited? Look through my album? Make plans for the future? (109)

While bringing Hirst’s drink, Briggs makes fun of Hirst’s alcoholism: “You’d crawl to the bottle and stuff it between your teeth.” (109) Even though they are employed by him, Foster and Briggs treat Hirst as if he is their prisoner, or as if he is a mentally incapacitated patient, and order him around:

FOSTER. It’s time for your morning walk.

*Pause*

I said it’s time for your morning walk.

HIRST. My morning walk? No, no. I’m afraid I don’t have the time this morning.

FOSTER. It’s time for your walk across the Heath. (143, 144)

This is a sorry state of affairs for Hirst:

Something is depressing me. What is it? It was the dream, yes. Waterfalls. No, no, a lake. Water. Drowning. Not me. Someone else. How nice to have company. Can you imagine waking up, finding no-one here, just furniture, staring at you? Most unpleasant. (108)

Hirst throws himself into a state of rumination to be able to put up with his depression:

In the past I knew remarkable people. I’ve a photograph album somewhere. I’ll find it. You’ll be impressed by the faces. Very handsome. Sitting on grass with hampers. I had a moustache. Quite a few of my friends had moustaches. What was it informed the scene? A tenderness towards our fellows, perhaps. The sun shone. The girls had lovely hair, dark, sometimes red. Under their dresses their bodies were white. It’s all

in my album. I'll find it. You'll be struck by the charm of the girls, their grace, the ease with which they sit, pour tea, loll. It's all in my album. (108)

Hirst's recollections of fellowship and beautiful girls show that he is trying to revive the old days in which he was blissfully surrounded by friends. The importance he attaches to the memories of his youth, and his unwillingness to let go of them is revealed as he denies having known Spooner:

HIRST. Who is this man? Do I know him?

FOSTER. He says he's a friend of yours.

HIRST. My true friends look out at me from my album. I had my world. [...] We're talking about my youth, which can never leave me. No. It existed. It was solid, the people in it were solid, while ... transformed by light, while being sensitive ... to all the changing light.

When I stood my shadow fell upon her. She looked up. Give me the bottle. Give me the bottle. (109, 110).

The intensity with which Hirst begs for the bottle explains why he has turned into a "parched dipsomaniac" (Almansi 94). In an attempt to cope with the fact that he has lost his popularity and, as a result, has become isolated, Hirst seeks refuge in a past which he remembers as being idyllic and secure. Unable to resurrect this past, he seeks comfort in alcohol.

Spooner and Hirst do not explicitly state their discontent with the current state of their lives, Foster; however, openly announces his exasperation with his position as a butler in Hirst's ménage:

I must clean the house. No-one else'll do it. Your financial adviser is coming to breakfast. I've got to think about that. His taste changes from day to day. One day he wants boiled eggs and toast, the next day orange juice and poached eggs, the next scrambled eggs and smoked salmon, the next a mushroom omelette and champagne. [...] I'm exhausted. I've been up all night. But it never stops. Nothing stops. It's all fizz. This is my life. (NML 115)

The only way he can carry on in this household is to remember the life he used to lead when he was a young sailor who traveled to the exotic parts of the world:

I miss the Siamese girls. I miss the girls in Bali. You don't come across them over here. [...] I could do something else. I could make another life. I don't have to waste my time looking after a pisshound. I could find the right niche and be happy. The right niche, the right happiness. (115, 116)

Event though Foster claims that he “could make another life” (116), this is rather unlikely to happen as he, along with Spooner, Hirst, and Briggs, inhabits “no man's land [...] which never changes [...] which remains forever” (157).

In their attempt to cope with their dissatisfaction with their present lives, Pinter's characters bring into play recollections of the past. As the past cannot be verified, they are free to manipulate it as they wish so as to make it suit their current needs. These characters exploit memories in order to deal with their discontent with their current positions in life and their social circle.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to analyze how the characters in Harold Pinter's memory plays exploit memory so as to assert and perpetuate their identity and existence, to exert dominance over others, and to cope with their dissatisfaction with their current state. These reasons have been expanded on by referring to Pinter's plays of memory, *Landscape*, *Silence*, *Night*, *Old Times*, and *No Man's Land* respectively.

The characters of Pinter's memory plays employ recollections of the past with the aim of asserting and perpetuating a sense of identity. These characters dwell in an elusive world plagued by uncertainties. Thus, they strive to pin down and maintain a definite sense of self so as to attain a sense of certainty and security. Their memories become a means of achieving their goal as one's past is an integral constituent of one's identity and self-image. Since the verification of the past is impossible in Pinter's universe, these characters are free to manipulate it to suit their needs. Hence, they can alter their true identity or even construct a new and totally different identity. What is noteworthy is that, in their attempt to maintain a definite sense of self, these characters are "motivated to distort the past in a manner that is self-inflated or egocentric" (Kassin 254).

Beth, in *Landscape*, is the only character examined in this study that succeeds in maintaining the identity she has created for herself. By withdrawing into the past completely, she is able to ward off the domestic role, which clashes with her self-concept as an artistic and genteel woman, her husband struggles to ascribe to her. She seems to stop trying to exert herself in the present and has chosen to escape and live in the past. In

contrast to Beth, all the other characters that have been analyzed in the study fail to assert and sustain their identities. This stems from the fact that they are still involved in the present, and are in an interaction with the other characters. These characters depend on others to “validate their own self-conceptions” (Kreps qtd. in Sakellaridou). Thus, when the other characters remain indifferent to their recollections, they are unable to have their identities verified. Moreover, their self-satisfied accounts of the past are often met by the even more complacent accounts of others, who are also in a struggle to assert and uphold their identities. As their recollections are challenged or undermined by the other characters’ own memories, they are unable to assert and maintain their sense of self. Duff, in *Landscape*, for instance, cannot succeed in restoring the identity he has lost touch with. As Beth remains utterly indifferent to his attempts to project the image of a knowledgeable and hard-working man, he fails to sustain his self-concept. In *Old Times*, Anna exploits the recollections of her mutual past with Kate in order to uphold her past identity as a genteel and cultivated young woman. Deeley struggles to project an impressive image so as not to be weighed down by Anna’s self-righteous claims regarding the past. To this end, he assumes a youthful, bold, and successful personality by distorting the events of the past. However, neither Anna nor Deeley are able to have their made-up images validated since Kate refuses to take part in their confabulation of the past. Furthermore, they are unable to assert a definite identity as they are left having to assume different personalities in order not to be overwhelmed by each others’ self-important recollections. In *No Man’s Land*, Spooner utilizes recollections of his past life with the aim of concealing the fact that he has fallen on hard times. He struggles to appear as a strong and self-sufficient man by claiming that he takes pleasure in the fact

that others do not pay attention to him. However, it is Hirst's utter lack of attention towards Spooner that makes it impossible for him to validate, thus, maintain the identity he has created for himself.

Pinter's characters also utilize memories with the intention of asserting their existence. In the unfriendly world they inhabit, these characters are ignored and rejected by others. As they are disheartened by this situation, they strive to connect with others and modify their personal relationships to suit their current needs. Some of the characters invoke the past with the aim of re-establishing the place they once held in another character's life. Others use memories so as to ingratiate themselves into the lives of others. Some characters, on the other hand, become aware of the fact that another character is trying to intrude into their lives, and use the past as a means to preserve their current positions in their social circle.

In *Night*, Man and Woman succeed in their attempts to re-connect with each other and strengthen their bond as husband and wife. This stems from the fact that they do not compete for power in their relationship (Cahn 90). Instead, they collaborate in recalling how affectionate they were towards each other in the past. In the other memory plays, "memories do not blend, [...] they clash, creating a psychological competition" between the characters to assert their existence (90). In *Landscape*, Duff struggles to make Beth acknowledge his existence by continuously talking about the past. However, he is unable to reach his goal as he is unable to penetrate into Beth's ceaseless ruminations on an idyllic past. In *Silence*, Ellen tries to re-initiate a relationship with Rumsey by recalling their past liaison. Bates, on the other hand, strives to re-establish a relationship with Ellen by reminding her of their shared past. However, Ellen is left being

rejected by Rumsey who seems contented with being alone. Bates, on the other hand, is spurned by Ellen who refuses to recognize his existence. In *Old Times*, both Anna and Deeley struggle to get Kate to affirm their existence. Anna creeps into Kate and Deeley's marriage with the intent of restoring the significant position she once held in Kate's life. To this end, she tries to remind Kate of their mutual past as young women in London. Deeley, who is disturbed by Anna's intrusion into their marriage, struggles to preserve his position in Kate's life by bringing up the memories of their pre-marital relationship. They both fail to reach their goals as they end up being rejected by Kate, who is frustrated by their oppressive attempts to grow close to her. In *No Man's Land*, Spooner tries to attract Hirst's attention so that he can secure a position in his household. Hirst's drunken stupor, and his unwillingness to acknowledge Spooner's existence by likening him to a buzzing fly (*NML* 150), disallows him to realize his intention. Foster and Briggs, on the other hand, do not want to include Spooner in their relationship with Hirst. Therefore, they struggle to preserve their existence in Hirst's household by means of their memories. However, Spooner is so determined to ingratiate himself into Hirst's home that he remains indifferent to the two men's accounts regarding their indispensable role in their employer's life.

Another reason for the characters to exploit the past is to exert dominance over others. In Pinter's hostile world, the characters are most likely to get into a power struggle with others. In these struggles, they have to fight against their antagonists who aim to destroy their security, challenge their authority, and disrupt their relationships with others. In the battle to overpower one's antagonist, they use memory as a weapon to establish their authority over the present.

The memory plays portray a world of shifting power balances. Whereas one character might appear to have gained one-upmanship over the other, the delicate balance of power can shift; and the dominant character can be left being overpowered by the seemingly subjugated one. For instance, in *Old Times*, Anna and Deeley's stronghold on the central position in Kate's life keeps changing. One minute the upper hand is Anna's, the next minute Deeley's. As they both battle for possession of Kate, they also try to subjugate her. However, at the end, "it is the apparently passive character, Kate, whom [Anna and Deeley] thought they could control, who finally dominates the situation" (Peacock 111) by turning the past against her oppressors. Similarly, in *No Man's Land*, sometimes Spooner, and sometimes Foster and Brigs have the upper-hand in the battle for possession of Hirst. The second battle for dominance in *No Man's Land* takes place between Spooner and Hirst. Hirst views Spooner as an easy target for his need to assert his authority. Spooner refuses to be victimized by Hirst, and he puts up a fight by using the recollections of their shared past. However, in the end, Spooner, who is "one of the most subservient of all [of Pinter's subservient characters]" (Prentice 215), ends up being overpowered by Hirst who openly rejects his offer to serve as his secretary.

Pinter's characters feel the need to exert dominance over others so that they can compensate for their insecurities and inadequacies. As they lead their lives in an unstable world of shifting power balances and uncertainties, they often experience feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Furthermore, these characters have experienced failure in their personal relationships, in their relationships with society, and in their careers. The only way they can struggle with the feelings of insecurity and inadequacy brought about by

these failures, and regain their autonomy and self-confidence is by gaining supremacy over others.

In *Landscape*, Duff strives to make up for his feelings of incompetence caused by his unhappy marriage and unsuccessful career by telling tales of subjugating Beth, and anecdotes of undermining random people he meets in pubs. Yet again, he is unable to realize his aim as Beth retaliates against his crude and violent memories with her indifference, and with her recollections of a gentle and peaceful past, and of a love fulfilled. In *Silence*, Bates has not been able to succeed in having Ellen acknowledge his existence. Moreover, he has not been able to find happiness in his life. Therefore, he strives to overpower Ellen in order to compensate for his feelings of failure, inferiority, and jealousy. Like Duff, Bates ends up feeling even more insecure as he is shunned by Ellen who refuses to have any contact with him whatsoever, and who, like Beth, fights his ugly memories with her own recollections of an idealized past, and of a satisfying love.

Another reason why these characters invoke the past is to cope with their dissatisfaction with their present lives. They cannot find satisfaction in the lives they are leading. This is due to the fact that they are displeased with their current standing in life, and with the current status and behaviors of their immediate social circle. Their disenchantment with their lives may stem from the consequences of the choices that they have made, or it may stem from the inevitable turns their lives have taken due to the passing of time. In order to cope with their discontent, these characters try to reclaim the memory of a past they view as being more blissful and fulfilling than the oppressive present.

In *Night*, Man and Woman, who are fed up with the monotonous nature of their marriage, collaborate in recreating a past in which they led a more exciting life, and when they were more affectionate towards each other. “The bitter truth is that they are both betrayed by their memory and their different natures and, were they not determined to compromise, they would have ended up in Duff and Beth’s miserable and desolate state” (Sakellaridou 160). In *Landscape*, Beth regresses into the past so that she can bear to share a life with her unsophisticated and aggressive husband. She succeeds in coping with the boorish man Duff has turned into by shutting off the Duff of the present, and clinging to the memory of a gentle, loving, and caring Duff. Several characters analyzed in this study fail to attain happiness. Duff, for instance, struggles to revive the memories of a time when he and Beth made a happy couple as he can no longer tolerate her reticence. However, her unwillingness to cooperate in recreating the past leaves Duff feeling even more discontented with his present life. In *Silence*, all three characters resort to the memories of their bucolic past in order to cope with the consequences of their decisions to lead solitary lives. Even though they are clearly unhappy, Rumsey and Ellen refuse to acknowledge their disillusionment. Bates is the only one in the play who admits his disappointment; however, he refuses to act upon it. As a result, Rumsey, Ellen, and Bates “suffer from un-lived lives, failure to choose, inability to act [which] consigns them to a living purgatory they choose to interpret as contentment” (Prentice 176). In *Old Times*, Anna also utilizes the past to cope with the results of her own choices. By marrying her Italian husband, she has chosen to lead an isolated life away from her motherland. She tries to ward off her loneliness by revivifying the memories of her and Kate’s shared past. Deeley, whose seemingly happy life has been disrupted, desperately tries to recreate his

and Kate's blissful past. He employs recollections that do not include Anna. However, "Kate the silent [...] lives alone and self-sufficient in a private world to which neither husband nor friend is admitted any farther than the periphery" (Kreps qtd. in Sakellaridou). Therefore, Anna and Deeley fail to attain the contentment that they yearned for. In *No Man's Land*, Spooner tries to cope with his loneliness by reviving a past in which he was surrounded by people. Hirst is also unhappy with the present as his only contacts are Foster and Briggs who mistreat him. He, too, regresses into the memories of a gratifying past. Foster, who is immensely dissatisfied with the life he leads as Hirst's butler, remembers a lively past so as to cope with his discontentment. However, due to the stagnant nature of the world they inhabit, neither one of the characters in *No Man's Land* succeeds in finding contentment.

In Pinter's memory plays, the past has the power to intrude into, and change the present. "In these works the shape of the present is determined by memories that characters are compelled to recall, by memories that the characters choose to recall, and by memories that characters claim to recall" (Cahn 90). Whether used in order to assert and perpetuate identity and existence, to establish dominance over others, or to cope with dissatisfaction, memories are utilized by all of the characters in these plays so as to attain a desired present. However, the characters' recollections of the past cease to function unless others collaborate in evoking or recreating them, or unless they are validated by others. This is why Man and Woman, in *Night*, are able to reach their goal, which is to rekindle their relationship and maintain their rapport with each other, as they work together in reaching a compromise regarding the past. One exception to this implication is Beth, in *Landscape*, who is not only able to cling to her past identity but also to bear to

share a life with the crude Duff. Beth has detached herself from the present to such an extent that she virtually resides in the past, along with her gentle lover. Therefore, unlike the other characters of the memory plays, she does not seek validation regarding the past. This goes to show that all characters in Pinter's universe are not the same and they cannot be put into strict categories. In all of the memory plays studied in this thesis, with *Night* as an exception, "the past becomes a competitive arena, a matter of life and death" (Martineau 12). Individual memory is again a key to the past; however, "this time there are those around who can dispute [or eschew] that memory by setting up alternate versions of the past" (12). Therefore, "*Night* remains just a beautiful interlude in Pinter's unhappy universe" (Sakellaridou 161).

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the recollections employed by the male and female characters of the memory plays differ in nature. That is, unlike the female characters who mostly yearn for "the romantic memories of tender love", the men recollect "the more sensual and physical aspects" of the past (Sakellaridou 160). Moreover, whereas the female characters make claims to the gentler aspects of life such as the arts, flowers, childbearing, and beautiful landscapes, the male characters' memories mainly contain elements of "coarseness, obscenity, and crude sex" (Knowles 140). Although the male characters seek recognition, and yearn to gain supremacy over their fellows and their partners, women seek attention, love, and protection from their friends and significant others. Hence, the subject of a further study could be a feminist analysis of how the traditional roles ascribed to woman and men in the patriarchal society affect the nature of the recollections employed by the female and male characters of Pinter's memory plays, and how characters like Anna, from *Old Times*, and Rumsey,

from *Silence*, are able to defy these traditional roles by assuming characteristics attributed to the opposite sex in their recollections.

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