

**T. C.**  
**BALIKESİR ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
**YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI**

**THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND TRAUMA IN HAROLD  
PINTER'S *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY* AND *ASHES TO ASHES***

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

**Fatih ÇELİKASLAN**

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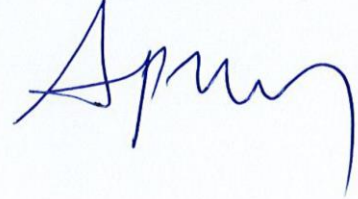
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## FOREWORD

This paper aims to inspect the Nobel laureate Harold Pinter's two representative plays, one of which from his earlier writing career and the latter being his subsequent work. Pinter's works have been inspected and close read for a host of purposes, from the manifestations of misogyny to time and place in his created settings. However, the scarcity of reading of his plays in the light of the literary trauma theory creates a motivation to write this thesis.

The thesis comprises of three sections. First, to understand the real magnitude of the writing genius of Harold Pinter, a concise sum of information will be presented in Harold Pinter and His Literary Style: Pinteresque part. Then, the literary theory which is a relatively new term for the literary critics which comes to prominence in the first half of the nineties as a consequence of interdisciplinary works of English literature and clinical psychology will be explained with the references to the founders and opponents of the theory. The third section will be allotted for analysing two of Harold Pinter's plays in the projection of pluralistic model of the trauma theory through which the use of both of the opposing theories of trauma can be possible.

Harold Pinter portrays characters in such a powerful and real manner that their traumas are also real. He uses the language, pauses and silences in such a professional way that the representation or, in some cases, the unrepresentation of their traumas deserve a close reading. The significance of this thesis stems from the fact that Harold Pinter's works have not been examined in the projection of the literary trauma theory. This research makes a deep analysis of two of renowned plays by Pinter and presents the traces of trauma in the textual level.

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Fatih ÇELİKASLAN

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND TRAUMA IN HAROLD PINTER'S *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY* AND *ASHES TO ASHES***

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**MA Thesis, Department of English Language Teaching,**

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Harold Pinter has been a writer whose fictional creativity, presentation of his characters and the unique way of using the language make him one of the most significant figures of the post war British drama. The characters in his plays tend to have psychic instabilities or highly traumatized minds which Pinter depicts in such a powerful and lively manner that their traumas can also be identified with those of real people. Cathy Caruth, a professor at Cornell University, embarks on investigating the figures of fictional works in the light of clinical psychology and she has founded the literary trauma theory. Yet, although Caruth has based her theory on the clinical findings of van der Kolk and his colleagues, Richard McNally, another clinical psychiatrist, opposes the initial theory on the grounds that the trauma can be represented by the survivors, yet they may opt for not mentioning about the atrocities they witnessed. This idea clashes with Caruth's foundational theory. This thesis will make a pluralistic model of reading of Harold Pinter's two plays which will scrutinize textual references to both the speakability and unspeakability of the traumatic experience and the feeling of trauma that comes along.

**Key Words: The Literary Trauma Theory, Cathy Caruth, Richard McNally, *The Birthday Party*, *Ashes to Ashes***

## ÖZET

### HAROLD PİNTER'İN *BİRTHDAY PARTY* VE *ASHES TO ASHES* İSİMLİ OYUNLARINDA TRAVMA VE DİLİN ROLÜ

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Harold Pinter kurgusal yaratıcılığı, karakter sunumu ve dili özgün kullanma biçimi ile savaş sonrası Britanya tiyatrosunun en önemli figürlerinden biri olmuştur. Oyunlarındaki karakterlerin psişik düzensizlikleri ya da zihinlerinde travmatik eğilimler olabilir; ancak Pinter bunları o kadar güçlü ve gerçekçi bir şekilde anlatmıştır ki, bu kişilerin travmaları da gerçek insanların travmaları gibi incelenebilir hale gelmiştir. Cornell Üniversitesi'nde Profesör olan Cathy Caruth köklerini psikiyatrist van der Kolk ve çalışma arkadaşlarının klinik psikoloji bulgularına dayandırdığı Edebi Travma Teorisi'ni kurmuştur. Ancak başka bir klinik psikiyatrist olan Richard McNally, baştaki teoriye karşı çıkmış ve travma kurbanlarının travmalarını ifade edebileceklerini ancak şahit oldukları travmaları bahse uygun görmediklerini ifade etmiştir. Bu tez Harold Pinter'in iki oyununu travma teorisinin çoğulcu bir modeli ile inceleyecek olup metinlerde travmanın ifade edilebilirlik ya da ifade edilemezliği üzerine metinsel referansları irdeleyecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Edebi Travma Teorisi, Cathy Caruth, *The Birthday Party*, *Ashes to Ashes*, Richard McNally



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

DSM-5 : Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition

SAMHSA : Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Objectives

This paper aims to propose a framework on the trauma theory and a close reading of two of Harold Pinter's most renowned plays "The Birthday Party" and "Ashes to Ashes".

Initially, brief information about the life and works of Harold Pinter will be presented. Then his unique writing style and his contributions to British drama and the World drama will be introduced. In this part, the prior reactions he has received from the press and the critics will also be included. Then, the definition of trauma will be delivered on the basis of different disciplines; by this way, the analysis of its projections on the literature can be actualised, in a narrower sense on Pinter's chosen plays.

The latter part of the thesis is allotted for the analytical reading of the plays in the light of two different camps on the literary trauma theory: the first one is the classical view led by Cathy Caruth and the second one is hailed as revisionists' view led by Richard McNally. As the behaviours and the remembering processes are concerned in each play, *Ashes to Ashes* is a more suitable candidate for being read in the framework of the classical view, as the main character Rebecca denies what she has gone through and claims that nothing has ever happened to her. This coincides with the framework of the classical approach because it suggests that the person who goes through trauma is in an amnesic haze and the memory is fragmented rather than a linear one. On the other hand, *The Birthday Party* can be read in the light of the Revisionists' view, which suggests that trauma can be remembered but the survivor of the trauma can opt for not talking about what s/he has gone through. In the same token, *The Birthday Party* can also be analysed in the light that is shed by the classical view in that the victim is unable to make sense of what is happening around

his whereabouts and is drowned in an amnesic haze. Therefore, a pluralistic model of the literary trauma theory will serve the purpose of an intertextual reading of both of the texts.

## **1.2. Method**

This research incorporates the literary trauma theory into the interpretation of two of Harold Pinter's works. The study will be limited to the written versions of the plays excluding the performances of either of them. The study includes two mainstream school of thoughts related to literary trauma theory, which means it excludes the ones not succeeding to become one of the norms of the fields.

In the first section of the thesis, in order to grasp the real magnitude of Harold Pinter's universalism and psychogeography, Harold Pinter's own and critics' thoughts about the plays and his style are elaborated.

In the second part, a general-to-specific approach to the trauma theory is adopted so as to relate the medical situation and its projections on people's reactions. By doing this relation, the analysis of the protagonists of the play according to the trauma theory can be facilitated.

In the third part, the close-reading of *The Birthday Party* and *Ashes to Ashes* is actualised with the scope of the literary trauma theory; the classical view and the revisionists' view in the specific sense.

## **2. HAROLD PINTER AND HIS LITERARY STYLE: PINTERESQUE**

### **2.1. Harold Pinter: Biodata and Earlier Life**

Harold Pinter was a multi-faceted artist whose skills spanned screenwriting, poetry, directing and acting. He has been considered as one of the most prominent British dramatists and his career lasted more than fifty years. Evidently, Harold Pinter created a non-ignorable phenomenon in the history of the Post-War British Drama.

He was born and educated in Hackney, London in 1930; his puberty years passed with the end-of-the war experience, which aggravates with Pinter's Jewish identity.

He was very good at sprinting and playing cricket at school. He was especially interested in acting and poetry even at an earlier age. Then he went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, but did not cease it. He was penalized for declining to conduct military service. He had two marriages from the first of which he had a son named Daniel.

Even when the evolution of his style as the political critic has not emerged Austin E. Quigley's remarks have left less to say about Harold Pinter. He suggests a high regard related to the way Harold Pinter is taken into account. He even mentions about Pinter as the most outstanding playwright who is currently alive. (Quigley, 1975 p.4).

He is best known for *The Birthday Party* (1957), *The Homecoming* (1964), and *Betrayal* (1978), and he adapted each of them for the screen. He also adapted

*The Servant* (1963), *The Go-Between* (1971), *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), *The Trial* (1993), and *Sleuth* (2007).

His career started with *The Room* in 1957, but it was with *The Birthday Party* that his reputation came. His prior works were cited as “Comedy of Menace” and the latter ones as “Memory Plays”. His career also included his acting both in his plays and screen plays. Pinter had over fifty awards ranging from Nobel Prize in the field of Literature in 2005 to French Légion d'honneur in 2007. In 2001, he was diagnosed with cancer and he died from liver cancer in 2008.

Earlier in his career, Pinter has received harsh criticism and poor reception for his plays. He has distorted the foundation of the concept which had been descended from Aristotle's times. That conviction requires, as Hobson expressed, that every play be perfect and we must have a solid understanding of what has happened and the result of the play (Hobson, 1978, p. 258).

Harold Hobson put forward that 1958 critics were accustomed to be presented with plays that ends with a clear-cut finale, yet Pinter did not fit into the mainstream outlook which requires the author know everything about the components of the play s/he has written, but Pinter portrayed a type of writer who implied to know nothing but what he wrote down as a text (Hobson, 1978, p.259).

## **2.2. Harold Pinter as a Dramatist: “Harold Pinter’s not me.”**

Martin Esslin's argument of absurd has its roots in “The Myth of Sisyphus” by Albert Camus (1942). Camus tried to explain how the dramatist seeks the ways to convey the absurdity and meaninglessness of human behaviours through the essay (Camus, 2000). Esslin has the formative components of the definition of the absurdist theatre from the translation of the definition of comments by Eugene Ionesco by referring to the term as lacking a clear purpose and disconnecting from man's foundational roots such as religion, metaphysics; thus making his actions pointless, illogical and impractical. (Esslin, 1961, p.23).

Camus defines absurdity as a cosmos without the lights of illusion and because of this, man feels like a stranger. This loss of connection that is between the man and his life and between the actor and the setting creates the sense of absurdity (Camus, 2000, p.13).

With critical responses starting with *The Birthday Party*, the inseparable relationship with the press has begun for Harold Pinter. Pinter's rapport with the press is not either direct or completely benignant. As he stated in one of the interviews with Mel Gussow in 1971, he feels desolate to the persona created in the critics' claims on papers:

[Harold Pinter]'s not me. He's someone else's creation. Quite often when people shake me warmly by the hand and say they're pleased to meet me, I have very mixed feelings- because I'm not quite sure who it is they think they're meeting... Sometimes I feel in others an awful kind of respect which distresses me (Gussow, 1994 p.25).

In a lecture at an international session about "Harold Pinter" Michael Billington noted that:

Pinter's overtly political plays have also been roughly received in Britain; yet I'm struck by the extent to which these plays are constantly revived abroad... I suspect that in Britain there is a strange bias against writers who seem to be intervening in political affairs, particularly when their intervention comes from the left. (The Pinter Review: Collected Essays 1999 and 2000, p.49).

Harold Pinter made acquainted with Samuel Beckett in the early fifties during the time he was working as an actor in Ireland (Billington, 2014). He was amazed by his style and desperate to find one of his works. He was able to acquire *Murphy* and *Waiting for Godot* in the Arts Theatre in London. Pinter, then, hailed Beckett as the 'paramount writer of our era' (Raby, 2009, p.76).

The resemblance that was made in the earlier receptions of Harold Pinter's works to Samuel Beckett's style was described as of disturbing, it was later by the recognition of Martin Esslin as the foremost practitioner of The Theatre of Absurd in his pivotal text of 1961 that the prior misperception was changed. With Pinter's work appeared in the British drama, especially the early critics associated Pinter's work

with Beckett's. They used "the school of random dottiness from Beckett" to describe the resemblance to Beckett's style (Bennet, 2001, p.54). In the third edition of the same text, Esslin announced Harold Pinter as the key dramatist. Nonetheless, the critics still continue to discuss the standards that were set out about Pinter as being an absurdist.

Pinter and Beckett were in contact. From time to time he used to send his work to Beckett who actually proposed some alterations. Pinter also mentioned that Beckett told him to have a relook at one of the speeches of a specific act. Pinter reported that in the rehearsal, it became obvious that Beckett was entirely veracious on the commentary (Gussow, 1994, p.106). In his interview with Gussow, he admitted that a discernible influence of Beckett can be felt through his plays but later added that "If I suddenly thought 'This is like Beckett', it might have stopped me dead in my tracks" (Gussow, 1994, p.162-163).

The director Peter Hall puts forward the fact that there is a stylistic affinity between Pinter's 'pauses and Beckett theatre style by expressing that:

I have always supposed that Pinter gained confidence in this technique because of Beckett's use of pauses. Certainly Beckett is the first dramatist to use silence as a written form of pronunciation (Gussow, 1994, p.163).

The affinity between Pinter and Beckett has been observed by scholars and critics. The relationship is liable to be described as of a teacher and student relationship, where Pinter facilitates from the more prolific and older Beckett to perfect his style. Of course, it is Esslin who lays the foundation for referencing the two of the artist; namely Pinter and Beckett, together. Zarhy- Levo advocates that the connection that Esslin makes has aided the critics to have a better understanding and to have a larger scope to evaluate the works of Pinter (Zarhy- Levo, 2001, p.315-326).

Critics agree on the intrication of finding the compatible definition of Pinter's peculiar and disorientating style. As Zarhy-Levo suggests, the ultimate name to define Pinter's unique style Pinteresque evolved from "Pinterism" to its definitive version (Zarhy-Levo, 2001, p.35-36). Although the term Pinteresque is a name which



abets the critics to define his unique style that otherwise cannot easily be termed, Pinter, himself, discarded it by referring to it by saying:

Oh this dread word... It makes people to reach for their guns...It is highly regrettable (Batty, 2005 p.11).

In spite of the objection made by Pinter himself as to the usage of the term ‘Pinteresque’, Pinter is obviously bestowed with a special phrase which hasn’t been bequeathed other than Shakespeare. This fact aided the theatrical circles to refer to Pinter’s unique style without the obligation of using the restrictive labels such as ‘absurdist’ or ‘political’.

With a differential comparison between Pinter’s Harry Thompson interview (1961) and Mireia Aragay interview (1995), there has been little disagreement as to Pinter’s whole spectrum of works in terms of being highly political. In his 1995 interview, Pinter acknowledged his later plays to be ‘overtly’ political; hence, acknowledging the former ones as covertly political. In his earlier career, he was unable to accept his plays to be written by politically induced stimulus. The discovery of the political tint in his earlier plays may even have given him advantages to build on. In his editor’s column, Steven H. Gale (1989) noted in “The Pinter Review” that:

Early in his career Pinter stated publicly that he was not interested in writing plays about political or social subjects. Still, he has been politically active for much of his life...Now Pinter claims that even his earliest dramas are politically charged (p. 6-8).

Pinter’s obsession with political and social subjects can be traced in each play directly or indirectly. His characters’ memories, present thoughts and feelings are described through a language of trauma which will be interpreted in detail after the theoretical chapter on trauma.

### 3. TRAUMA THEORY IN LITERATURE

#### 3.1. The Definition of Trauma

Trauma is a modern malady which stems from an event or a series of events and affects the people experiencing them in their physical, emotional and social functions (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014, p.2). According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5), trauma is described as a person being exposed to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence. Literary trauma theorists differ from each other on the effect of trauma on memory and how to register the traumatic events. They have a settlement about the defining characteristics of trauma. In order for an overwhelming event to be described as a trauma, it must have a repeated effect of the victim's life either in a delayed or an immediate commencement. As Caruth suggests, trauma defines overpowering events, where the responses of the survivors reveal themselves in a delayed, repeated and uncontrolled way through hallucinations and manifestations of fragmented memories.

As human beings, our avid need to speak about past events, stories of our own and collective stories as well, helps create countless stories and also the formation of history as a scientific branch. The word *trauma* is used in such a wide range that it is challenging to squeeze it into a single definition. The trauma theory in literature; however, which is inspired and fostered by sociology, neurobiology, psychology and psychiatry has generated a relatively succinct description of trauma despite incorporating conflicting schools of thoughts. In the widest definition, trauma theory in literary studies engages itself in either the representability or the unrepresentability of traumatic occurrences in literary texts. With the link to the representations of the trauma in literary texts, trauma denotes the abrupt incursion of

new and unforeseen knowledge in the sufferer's mind, occasionally because of an unexpected confrontation with violence and death.

The studies on trauma in a literary sense comes to light in the middle of the nineties as a reaction to the poststructuralist approach. Criticizing the use of poststructuralism, Caruth puts forward that the poststructuralist approach pushes us into a dogmatic and moral inertia (Caruth, 1995, p.10). She claims, by adopting a textual approach, restating the traumatizing event in our minds to grasp and letting history to ascend to a status where our imminent understanding cannot (p.11). In her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth reiterates that "the language of trauma, and the silence of its mute repetition of suffering, profoundly and imperatively demand" a "new mode of reading and of listening" (p.9), by which she gives a voice to the unrepresentable quality of trauma and suggests a new way of perceiving the trauma of the survivors.

When explicating the genuine eminence of trauma studies, Caruth makes a clear point by highlighting trauma's role on *Bridging Between The Cultures* (Caruth, 1995). She even makes a further assertion by noting that the way we implicate of each other's traumas defines history (*Unclaimed Experience*, p.24).

In the *Journal of Human Psychology* (2018), Gumb clarifies a different way of reading of the fictive narrations of trauma victims. She describes three components of a trauma narrative as resilience, reconciliation and resistance (p.460). She suggests that other than adopting a destructive and degenerative approach to the narration of trauma, a new way of reading can be embraced and the narrations of the survivors can be read as an epic story.

Caruth puts the emphasis on linguistic indeterminacy, ambiguous referentiality and aporia. It is also expressed by the Freudian and Lacanian trauma theorists that trauma creates and irreversible damage to the psyche as a result of dissociation and suffering from an outside effect.

The cause can either be an individual perpetrator or a collective social practice as in the holocaust. These terminologies are helpful and productive in

defining the nature of trauma. Michelle Balaev states that the early scholars have accepted trauma as an unrepresentable phenomenon (Balaev, 2014, p.12). A psychoanalytic approach to trauma pioneered by Caruth, claims trauma to be an unclaimed experience which cannot simply be put into words, so the language of the trauma is to be somewhat contracted. As Greg Forster (2007 p.260), defines traumas are the shocks which inhibit the psychic systems. Because of the occurrences with which the survivors are inflicted, they go through a psychic short-circuit impeding the survivor's ability to comprehend what s/he has gone through in a linear and coherent way. The mind's influx on the previously dissociated consciousness is performed in order to digest what has hitherto been unclaimed.

Trauma is considered as a phenomenon that is transcended to the next generations with its own peculiar manner. Fromm (2012) points out that: "the way that trauma to one generation falls out upon, the next simultaneously seems to demand from future generations, a new form of witness" (p.106). He continues to implicate the a daughter's story of embarking on an cataleptic undertaking of helping his traumatic father to recover from a lost relationship and concurrently having the same name as her grandmother, which brings her the silent obligation to heal her father.

In Freudian view, trauma is considered as a phenomenon which stems from an incident that causes a psychic consequence and that consequence is either too soon or too late. Freud labels this situation as *Nachträglichkeit* or in James Strachey's translation as "deferred action". John Brenkman proposes an alternative translation to Freud's term as retrodetermination. (Brenkman, 1996 p.21). "Too soon" refers to the earliness of the traumatizing event and this earliness hinders the infant to grasp the real magnitude of the event. Accordingly, "too late" refers to the belatedness of the victim's understanding of what has happened to him. But the scale of the event is so enormous that it becomes inadmissible and incomprehensible on the traumatized person's side.

In Freud's retrodetermined trauma exemplification, Freud (1918, p.28-29) refers to his theory of the primal scene, which is to be used in the deeper analysis of the close reading of Pinter's chosen plays in this thesis. This primal scene theory is

disturbing for most of the readers, yet it is necessary to understand the working functions behind it to implicate on it in an effective manner. Within this theory, Freud argues that he has a patient who, at the age of one and a half witnessed his parents' coitus and only at the age of four, he was able to grasp the pathogenic act and caused him to have debilitating symptoms and he had recurrent dreams which could be interpreted as the disguised form of the primal scene. Freud's contemplation about the primal scene is important because according to this theory, the real primal scenes observed in the prehistoric times by the earlier humans have a vital impact on psychic status of the modern people and the scenes are "remembered" by people who have not witnessed the primal scene in person. (Freud, 1918 p.31). The modern clinicians such as Abraham and Torok (Abraham et al., 1994) claim that children can receive "memories" and "traumas" from their parents even if they were not subjected to it directly. Abraham suggests that the transgenerational transmission of the traumatizing memories is not necessarily transmitted to the children via hereditary legacy but via the body language and emotional manifestation of the parents (p. 171-176).

Freud designates the traumatic nightmare in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as a dream "from which one wakes up in another fight" (1953-1974, p.13). By this, he advocates that the mind is not traumatized because of the encounter with a death-like experience but because of the astonishment of waking up from it. This brings the incomprehensibility of survival. As a result of the incomprehensibility of survival, Freud's central concept when defining trauma, deferred action (Nachtraglichkeit) enacts a role in defining the main components of trauma and its applications in the conception of traumatic delay and repetition, also in memory and its dismissal. Therefore, trauma lingers in the twenty-first century which may be a deferred representation of the previous atrocities and suffering.

Trauma and its explorations in memory helps us to understand the correlations between the history and rethinking the references along with the aims "not at eliminating history" but at "resituating it in our understanding, that is, at permitting history to arise where immediate understanding may not" (Caruth, 1996 p.11). Another attempt from the acclaimed scholar of the field to define the boundaries of trauma is elaborated with her words as "history is precisely the way we

are implicated in each other's traumas" (Caruth, 1996, p.192). By giving such an inclusionary explanation to trauma and understanding where it culminates to incorporate the new concepts has become a modern dilemma.

The feminist psychotherapist Laura S. Brown has emphasized that the traumatic experiences of people of different colour, women, gay and lesbians, lower-class people and people with disabilities often lay so low that the trauma theory radar cannot detect them (Brown, 1995 p.112). She has argued that the contemporary definitions of trauma are constructed with the scrutiny of dominant groups of the Western society; that is where the effect of literature comes to prominence in that by resonating the traumas of ordinary people or outliers, literary works give voice to the real life trauma of the real people with the reflections of fictional characters. On the other hand, the relations among trauma, dissociation and amnesia have been rivalled by the trauma theorists Bessel van der Kolk, Laurence Kirmayer, and Richard McNally. Led by McNally, these trauma theorists support the notion that trauma can be remembered by the survivors; however, the victims may not want to refer to the incident as they might not be in favour of remembering what has happened to them. Recent scholars, who can be labelled as neoLacanian/neoFreudian trauma critics, explore the rhetorical uses of neurotic detachment or silence by converging on the rhetorical, semiotic and social implications of trauma. This model as to exploring the nature of trauma is called as pluralistic model of trauma on account of the multiplicity of theories employed.

Do we forget traumas we suffer, losing them in an amnesic haze, or do our moments of deepest pain remain available to us? The question in Tim O'Brien's novel *In the Lake of Woods* can be answered by proposing the two camps led by McNally and Caruth. Each of the camps has different views as to the representability of trauma.

### 3.2. The Classical View

People are inclined to talk about their individual and collective distresses as a suffering or grief. These symptoms are grouped under the heading of trauma in the contemporary sense. Even throughout the previous century, trauma was considered as a pathological disease and on account of the unspeakable nature of trauma, the phenomenon is elusive and unrepresentable (Caruth, 1995). Therefore, Caruth maintains that trauma induces the lack of linguistic output and makes the experience unclaimed. As Foucault finds people ‘imprisoned’ in their language (Roth, 1981 p.34), the traumatized person is confined to the bounds drawn by the psychological patterns created by trauma. Caruth considers trauma as an incident which shocks the psychic system of the victim.

With the references to Freud’s *Studies in Hysteria* (1957) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1955), trauma is an incident or series of incidents that occurs too instantaneously to be comprehended in its fullest scale. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, traumatic memories are represented as the traumatic recurrence that turns into a memory that wipes itself away rather than creating a mindful reminiscence of the events lived.

Cathy Caruth, who is currently a Professor at Cornell University, concurs that trauma cannot be perceived in its fullest size and magnitude at the time it occurs, yet it haunts the survivor only belatedly. This phenomenon is made even more articulate by Caruth’s definition of this specified quality of trauma by referring to its being ‘both the truth of an event and the truth of its incomprehensibility’ (Caruth and Trauma, 1995, p.152). This incomprehensibility stems from the fact that, according to Caruth’s assertion, the trauma cannot be remembered in its historical context and it cannot be expressed in a proper way. The near-to-death experience hinders the mind from grasping what has happened in the fullest scale. Even if there are some produced language about the traumatizing event, they lack the chronological sequence and a linear explanation.

The classical view which is pioneered by Cathy Caruth with her well known paper *Unclaimed Experience 'Trauma and the Possibility of History'* holds the trauma in a place that the person who has gone through trauma cannot remember what has happened to them in a chronological manner; therefore, what s/he may recall ends up with being fragmented and 'unclaimed'. Due to the incidences such as wars, disastrous experiences and the ones that have been brought by the innovations of the twentieth century; car accidents, industrial accidents to name a few, the psychologists have had to reform their understanding on the possible outcomes of such events on the survivors. Quite recently, psychologists have proposed post-traumatic stress disorder to interpret what the survivors have gone through.

The Literary Trauma Theory is pioneered by the theoretic structure that was put forward two decades ago by Cathy Caruth (Wyatt, 2011, p.31). Caruth maintains that trauma is a kind of experience in the traumatized person's life cycle that because of the intensity of the incident, the victim's mind cannot process it in a normal and coherent way. As a result of this, the victim is likely to forget the event entirely or partially. If the memories related to the trauma returns in some way, they are unspeakable; that is the victim cannot express the remembrances with words. Just at this point, what Caruth claims is that literature can give a voice to the victims where their discursive language is incapable and; moreover, fictive language can speak for the unclaimed experience of traumatized persons and populations.

Caruth has constructed her theory of trauma as being unspeakable on the works of acclaimed and up-to-date psychiatrists Judith Herman and Bessel van der Kolk, who are one of the most leading theorists on trauma studies in the mid-nineties. Their main theory on trauma supports Caruth's foundational theory in supporting that trauma is amnesic, unspeakable thus unclaimed. Her theory has been undisputed for almost two decades in that the theory has its roots in the related scientific field which were laid by the foremost scholars of the topic.

The traumatic experience is defined as unclaimed by Caruth which she refers to in the title of her own work. She asserts that the effect of the trauma is so immense that the brain cannot render what has happened in a functioning manner yet the victim's sensory system keeps recording. However, the survivor's brain cannot work



them out the way it does in a nonthreatening ambience. The trauma is “an event whose force is marked by its lack of registration” (Caruth, 1995). Caruth benefits from van der Kolk’s work whose name and related work is visible in the references of *Unclaimed Experience and Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Kolk focuses on Pierre Janet’s observations about the resistance of the brain to record the traumatic incident. Janet (1909), claims that “Forgetting the event which precipitated the emotion [. . .] has frequently been found to accompany intense emotional experiences in the form of continuous and retrograde amnesia” (p.285). The neurobiologist Bessel van der Kolk embraces the notion that “people who undergo psychological trauma suffer speechless terror . . . the experience cannot be organized on a linguistic level” and thus becomes not only inaccessible but also unrepresentable” (Kolk et al., 1995).

Nicholas Abraham argues for an explanatory theory for Caruth’s literary trauma theory in his *The Shell and the Kernel* (Abraham, 1994). The term ‘phantom’ is used to connote the phenomenon coined by the psychology professor Abraham. If the parents are unable to explain a shocking or traumatizing event with clear words, the child tries to find the gaps in the parent’s speech patterns. The child also finds the words s/he associates with the gap words. Abraham holds that ‘the words used by the phantom to carry out its return (and which the child sensed in the parent) do not refer to a source of speech in the parent. Instead they point to a gap, they refer to the unspeakable’ (p.174). Therefore, it is obvious that the person can even inherit their parents’ traumas by creating the phantoms they borrow from the parents’ speech styles. Abraham maintains that these inherited traumas are unregistered and thus unspeakable, which are the qualities referring to the characteristics set forth by Caruth.

Forster (2007), exemplifies the victims of the Holocaust about the unrepresentability of trauma. He claims that “the trauma short-circuited the capacity to process the traumatizing psychic concussion” (p. 259). He points out to the annexation of the mind and the unprocessed memory, hence the creation of the ‘dissociated consciousness’. The delayed effect of the trauma takes place in order to internalize the unclaimed experience.

Forter (2007), clarifies the psychic expression *repetition compulsion* coined by Freud with a link to the literary trauma theory. He notes that:

those reenactments in the present of psychic events that have not been safely consigned to the past, that retain the visual and affective intensity of lived (rather than remembered) experience, and that disrupt the unruffled present with flashbacks and terrifying nightmares, intrusive fragments of an unknown past that exceeds the self's (relatively) coherent and integrated story about itself (p.260).

By this kind of perspective, Forter seeks for a way to reconcile the imperfectly represented trauma narratives with the ones that can perform what is to be said other than trying to represent it with textual references; and mostly with a futile effort.

Judith Herman, whose 'Trauma and Recovery' Caruth referenced twice in her *Unclaimed Experience* states that the harshest traumas are sometimes impossible to remember. In a study with Emily Schatzow, Herman (1987 p.45), has worked with a group of incest victims and more than a quarter of whom have nearly no recollection about the traumatic event they have gone through. These patients reiterated that they were entirely unaware of their abuse until memories lately came to surface in or outside of therapy and Herman accepts these presumptions as confirmable clinical data as the evidence of the total traumatic amnesia.

Caruth adopts trauma as a cyclical phenomenon that cannot be left or moved away. Rather she reiterates it as "the experience of a trauma (that) repeats itself... through the unknowing acts of the survivor" and so "emerges as the unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind" (Caruth, 1994). Freud, in accordance with Caruth's point of view, suggests in his work *Studies of Hysteria* (1895, p.324), that hysteria is caused by traumatic experiences that have not been fully integrated into the personality. This insight of the early trauma theory can be expanded so as to incorporate the shocks not as big as holocaust and Nazi persecution but the social disturbances, lynching, rape and racism into the description of the trauma.

Caruth claims that the memories of the victim are latent which is a term coined by Freud. She claims that the memories of the trauma stay latent and temporarily unreachable in the victim's mind. Caruth thinks that latent traumatic memory is a nightmare which haunts the victim whenever it returns as an image or a speck of memory. She says that "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in a repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (Caruth, 1995, p.4-5).

In her reading of *Moses and Monotheism* by Freud, Caruth makes up the notion that trauma is totally unspeakable. She comes to this point by revealing Freud's own travel from Vienna and his being only the witness of that traumatizing event. She interprets the vague references to the departures from Vienna as the traumatic nature of the event as Freud's inability to speak about the trauma. Caruth asserts that Freud cannot understand what has happened in its entirety and he is not able to describe the process in detail. The prominent psychiatrist van der Kolk agrees with Caruth judgement by saying:

What may most complicate the capacity to communicate about traumatic experiences is that memories of trauma may have no verbal (explicit) component whatsoever. [ . . . They are organized] without any accompanying narrative about what happened" (Van Der Kolk, et al., 1996, p. 287)

Therefore, it is logical to say that Caruth as well as the clinical psychiatrists share the opinion that the survivors of trauma are not able to express their own trauma.

Caruth's endeavour was to structuralise trauma in order to found a conceptual extraction which can capacitate the trauma to be represented and known by the readers not having experienced it directly. Caruth's trauma theory demands the trauma to be induced to the readers via the text. The memories of traumatized survivors are resurfaced in disguise and their ability to be formed properly is limited by the defences that are so strong as to inhibit the expressions to be linguistically clear enough to be comprehended plainly. Therefore, for the survivors of the traumatized events, it is essential to aid them to 'abreact' what has been inside them staying undeciphered and assimilated.

Caruth expresses her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History* that “history is the history of trauma and history is exactly what we are implicated on the traumas of each other.” (p.192). This way of approach to trauma can speculatively be read with the reference to her understanding of the holocaust. Her perspective can be referenced; of course hypothetically, as her involuntariness to know the difference between the perpetrator and the victim.

In an argument with Lockean tradition of empiricism (1991 p.408), Caruth reflects on the fact of the mind’s inability to dissociate itself from physical sensation and accomplish the deed of self-reflection. By this refutation, she uses the importance of the traumatised mind’s ineffectiveness to explain what has happened to the physical being of the person. Because of this claim, according to Caruthian view, trauma is a phenomenon which cannot be explained and should stay as linguistically undetermined due to its nature.

Freud argues that the trauma leading to neurosis is either sexual in essence and sex can be labelled as traumatic in part due to its social restrictions. The psychic apparatus is non-functional because it turns out to be insufficient to comprehend what has been experienced or witnessed.

In Freud’s terms, which paved the way for Caruth to form her literary trauma theory, trauma seems to be the cognitive product of a knowledge which comes either too soon or too late. That is because the traumatized person cannot understand the significance when it was befallen on her/him and it becomes too late when it is lodged in the past experience of the person and it turns out to be incomprehensible thus inadmissible phenomenon.

A good number of clinicians claim that the children can inherit the dispositions and memories which they have not experienced directly. Nonetheless, the inheritance does not take place in the process of genetics but with the emotional and the body language of their progenitors. The parents convey the traumatic experiences towards their children and the trauma the children are inflicted with is immense enough for them to neither verbalize nor comprehend. Therefore, the

trauma is implanted to them and retro determination or deterred action may be needed to express the trauma even in a fragmented way.

Fromm (2012), pointed out in his study on the transmission of trauma that a woman's life can be re-enacted not on account of an abandoned husband but her father's desertion of her mother. Accordingly, a man can relive the demolition that his grandfather once lived. In *Ashes to Ashes*, Rebecca may not have lived the traumas and atrocities she retells between the lines. However, as Fromm expresses, they can be the traumas that are transferred onto her. She tells an unconscious story she cannot possibly know of. Nicolas Abraham (1987), calls this phenomenon as the phantom. He refers to it as a creation of a subconscious that passes down from the parent's unconscious mind to the child's (p.289).

### **3.3. The Revisionists' View**

The trauma theorists who can be labelled as the future inquirers of trauma theory are not limited by the previous scholarship, but rather they dynamically shape, outspread and dare. Trauma was viewed as something pathological and related with psychosis and due to its very indefinable nature; as unspeakable in the twentieth century. Trauma was viewed as a phenomenon which was dissociative and incomprehensible; thus unrepresentable. However, this seems to be a paradox for writers on the grounds that trauma should be presentable to be handed down to the paper.

The assumption about the traumatic person forgetting or to be unable to precisely recall is an initial outlook of the first wave trauma theorists Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman and most importantly, Cathy Caruth. These scholars maintain that the survivor of a trauma cannot recall what has happened to him on account of the intensity of the highly painful event and this notion lays the ground for the literary trauma theory which has been put forward by Cathy Caruth. Yet, with his 2003 publication *Remembering Trauma* and his work with a research team at Harvard University, Richard McNally has correlated memory and trauma in a way that is different from the former studies. His work on trauma is termed as 'sceptics'

bible' (Brewin, 2005, p.149). By these works, McNally points out that the primarily irrefutable notions of the field can be disproved since Caruth's description of survivors' traumatized memories as being unclaimed can actually be deviated.

McNally criticizes van der Kolk on the grounds that his "theory is plagued by conceptual and empirical problems" (McNally, 2003). He claims that van Kolk's notion that the survivor of a trauma has an unregistering mind; thus he or she has a traumatic amnesia is not validated by experimental studies. Besides, McNally asserts that "Neuroscience research does not support van der Kolk's claim that high levels of stress hormones impair memory for traumatic experience" (p. 180). As a final point, McNally proclaims that the victims of a trauma may remember about the traumatizing event, yet can opt for not talking about it. Also, he adds that "one cannot conclude that a person who does not think about something for a long period of time-who has 'forgotten' it, in everyday parlance-is suffering from amnesia. Amnesia is an inability to recall information that has been encoded. We cannot assume that people have been unable to recall their abuse during the years when they did not think about it" (p. 184). McNally also undercut the experiment done with a group of incest victims in that no confirmation of the incest occurrence was actualised. McNally noted this fact by saying "[S]ocial pressure to come up with abuse memories might have fostered formulation of illusory memories of events that never happened" (p. 200).

Gumb (2018), notes that it is true that some of the survivors cannot engage in leading an ordinary life due to the intensity of the incident. However, there are innumerable examples on the type of victims who continue their existence in an 'altered yet undiminished' way (p.464). Therefore, as the survivor of a trauma can alter the ordinary aftermath of the traumatizing event, so can the fiction narrators change dominion over the landscape of trauma narratives. Gumb, by referring to the alteration of the landscape of trauma, points out that the survivors do not necessarily go through a bleak phase through their life circle, therefore the narration should be normalized and representable.

Since Caruth's two books *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), were issued, her authority on the literary of trauma

theory has prevailed. However, more recent clinical studies have challenged the scientific data that Caruth once used to put forward the preliminary trauma theory. Richard McNally from Harvard University has published *Remembering Trauma* where he summarizes his own and several other researchers' opinions. By these novel assertions, he challenges the pillars of the field. McNally's main argument is that the traumatic amnesia is an illusion and the victims, contrary to the former claim that they are unable to speak about their traumas, may choose not to mention about the atrocities and undesirable incidents they have gone through. McNally relates this in his ground-breaking book *Remembering Trauma* that there is little evidence that the victims cannot speak about their traumas. His work is important both for the field of psychology and also it is crucial for Caruth's literary trauma theory because of its challenging quality of the main allegations of the former grounds of the literary trauma theory. McNally suggests that trauma is memorable and explainable. What McNally proposes about the speakability of trauma elevates inquiries about the scientific foundations of literary trauma theory that Caruth has constructed. Due to the newly proposed data about the clinical definition of the representations of trauma, recent scholars incline to reassess Caruth's previous model.

Rather than a reportedly loss of register and amnesia, As McNally proposes, the recording process of the incident by the survivor is intensified. He articulates his doubts as:

It is ironic that so much has been written about the biological mechanisms of traumatic psychological amnesia when the very existence of the phenomenon is in doubt. What we have here is a set of theories in search of a phenomenon (p. 182).

McNally boldly opposes the indication set forth by Kolk that the victim cannot narrate the traumatizing event. Kolk maintains that the survivor can dream of the traumatizing event in his or her dreams, referenced to Freud's belated effect, but they cannot verbalize them when asked to do so. However, McNally clashes with this theory by saying:

Contrary to van der Kolk's theory, trauma does not block the formation of narrative memory. That memory for trauma can be expressed as physiologic reactivity to traumatic reminders does not preclude its being expressed in narrative as well (p.180).

Therefore, it is plausible not to mingle the disinclination to speak about trauma with the inability to speak about trauma. McNally asserts that “People who have experienced harrowingly close brushes with death (such as falling off a mountain) often report extreme dissociative alterations of consciousness (time slowing down, everything seeming unreal), yet they remain fully capable of providing detailed accounts of their experiences” (p.182). Additionally, As Susan Brison states in line with McNally’s theory, the written narratives of trauma have a healing power (Brison, 2002, p.79). It is evident from Brison’s statements that to talk about whether trauma is memorable and speakable is beside the point on account of the clinical foundations that support the healing power of representable trauma.

Brison’s statement about the healing power of the trauma has established the context prior to McNally’s revolutionary theory about the narratability of trauma. On his *Remembering Trauma*, McNally provides an overview about the narrative effect of the trauma:

In contrast to the involuntary experiencing of traumatic memories, narrating memories to others [ . . . ] enables survivors to gain more control over the traces left by trauma. Narrative memory is not passively endured; rather, it is an act on the part of the narrator, a speech act that defuses traumatic memory, giving shape and a temporal order to the events recalled, establishing more control over their recalling, and helping the survivor to remake a self. (McNally, 2003, p.71)

It has been also noted that the victims can go through a peritraumatic dissociation, which incorporates the bending in time and misperception in place, yet these do not necessarily synonymize with the inability to register.

One of the most traumatizing event in the human history is unequivocally the wars. The post-traumatic stress disorder is the coinage in an effort to categorize the symptomatic disorder that was seen prevalent throughout the post-war era. The doctors of the World-War I devised a term as ‘shell shocked’ to denote the trauma after the explosion of a bomb, after which the shells of the bomb scatter everywhere and causing the physical trauma. Pinter’s protagonists also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, which will be traced in the characters’ utterances.



Gump (2018), proposes a new way of rereading the survivors. She mentions about an “extension, an enrichment, of the narrative trajectory” in relation to the representations of trauma (p. 462). The victims of each trauma can be regarded as a life-affirming subject, a survivor. She highlights that the stories of trauma can be read as the stories of resilience, reconciliation and resistance.

The studies carried out in cognitive, behavioural physiological, and psychological fields open a contemporary way of looking at the subject. A great instance to the feasibility of the representability of trauma is the excerpt written by a Holocaust survivor who has a recurrent dream, which is described as a latent dream in Freudian theory. Although the classical view on the unrepresentability of trauma holds that the traumatic event cannot be put into words in a linear and chronical manner, it is evident in this excerpt that the survivor is able to write even the finest element of the dream which haunts him recurrently:

One night when the nightmare was particularly intimidating, I arose, switched on the light, found an old notebook and pen, and started to write. Night and day I wrote, like a man possessed. . . . Like a viper, the nightmare tried to sneak by, but, with pen in hand, I stabbed it repeatedly, pushing it back. Gradually, the nightmare receded until it disappeared completely. I had begun my journey back to sanity (Stabholz,1990, p.291).

Leys is also among the scholars who resonate a challenging idea against the theory of unrepresentability of trauma. She posits this by referencing to the deficient number of clinical studies supporting the theories which were brought to prominence by van der Kolk. She confronts the idea that the trauma is unrepresentable on the ground that even the sharing of the distorted memories, flashbacks and the unchronological utterances are of the examples of the trauma as being claimed and speakable. Leys speculates that:

in Caruth’s account the experience (or nonexperience) of trauma is characterized as something that can be shared by victims and non-victims alike, and the unbearable sufferings of the survivor as a pathos that can and must be appropriated by others (Leys, 2000 p. 305).

The literary trauma theory as suggested by Caruth is also criticized on account of the political and ethical problems (Grandison, 2010, p.771). To locate trauma in a place of ‘unclaimed experience’ can bring up the unsolicited result of

obliterating the communal memory of the oppressed group. Moreover, to label the utterances of tormented people as unclaimed or unrepresentable may help to the apotheosis of racial politics and their deeds.

Benn Michaels (1996), asserts that by trying to remember the 'disremembered', we set out to make the forgotten history to be an integral part of us. He also adds that pondering history as something learnt or unlearnt hinders 'to make the past present'. Furthermore, "it allows a controlled and empowering revision of the traumatic event's anachronistic return" (p.7).

Azmi (2018), argues in his paper that the approaches to reading of the traumas of the people should be updated in accordance with the breakthroughs in neurobiological, social psychological theories in the field (p.57). He suggests a new way of reading the literary texts during which a blending of critical thinking and trauma theory is applied. He observes that by taking a modernist look at the traumas of ordinary people in literary works, the readers can gain a new outlook towards the analysis and appreciation of literature.

The revisionists disparage classical view on the grounds of Caruth's reading of Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras's film *Hiroshima mon amour* as one-sided (Craps, p.47).

Ananya Jahanara Kabir (2013) states that the prominence exerted through trauma theory that is originated from Freud's talking cure is a precondition for healing and reconciliation (p. 66). She emphasizes that the most definitive quality of the trauma theory should be its engagement with the complexities of the traumas and their analysis.

## **4. ANALYSIS OF *ASHES TO ASHES* AND *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY* THROUGH PLURALISTIC MODEL OF THE LITERARY TRAUMA THEORY**

### **4.1. The Birthday Party**

Described as a “fascinating puzzle”, “bad farce with alternates with stale misery”, “the comedy of menace at its most explosively theatrical”, “original, disturbing and arresting” and “powerful and shattering” in its 1959 advertisement (Encore, Dec., 1959), the debut of the play in London came with fierce criticism from reviewers. Initially, the play was received with unappreciative manner and antagonism. It was thought of as an unsuccessful replica of another absurd comedy *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett (1956). This could be attributed to the inability to understand the magnitude of the movement shift that was about to happen. However, in the Midlands the play was acclaimed in the earliest phase. Two years had to pass for the critics to digest the new way of resonating and appreciating the original. Robert Miller from *Daily Mail* reiterated that “it is the fashion to over-praise Mr. Pinter and it is tempting to do so”. In response to the earlier criticism that was widespread then, Pinter replied:

*The Birthday Party* did not succeed when put out in London two years ago. Very possibly if *The Caretaker* had been put on two years ago the same thing would have applied. There has been some change of climate that I cannot define; some change in the theatre-going public itself or an adjustment of the public taste to contain developments in the Drama (HP Interview with Harry Thompson, *New Theatre Magazine*, II, 2, Jan, 1961, 8).

The early reviews related to *The Birthday Party* are considered as tarnished. Billington considers them as ‘not just bad but catastrophic. Hobson (1978) seems to be the sole expresser of the foreseen appraisal by remarking “absorbing, witty and first rate” (p.84). What is more, Lord Chamberlain’s Office, which is a British formal governmental agency dealing with the protocols and prior to 1968 dealing with a censorship for every play staged in Britain, labels the play as an insanely, pointless

play where Pinter mixes the tricks of Ionesco and Beckett. The report which was written on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1958 stated that the profanity which was prevailing at the time was used in the play which failed to lessen the stupidity of it.

Harold Pinter has referred to the incomprehensibility of *The Birthday Party* in one of his interviews with Mel Gussow as:

In 1958, *The Birthday Party* was generally found to be incomprehensible. It's now been done throughout the world; it is clearly comprehensible. Some things change. The play hasn't changed. It's exactly the same (New York Times 6 December 1988, SEC III, 22).

John Elsom has solemnly resituated the volatility of the theatrical perceptions by referencing the fact that even *The Caretaker* had made its debut two months earlier, it would, as in *The Birthday Party*, have been 'a complete failure' (Elsom, 1976). Additionally, he adds in one of the reviews that the critics dismiss *The Birthday Party* on the grounds of it being too obscure.

Pinter's plays go through a transformational process from implicitly political to explicitly political. In *The Birthday Party*, Pinter demands the characters to struggle against the domineering political forces. This aspiration is apparent in Pinter's letter to Peter Wood on 30 March 1958 which is later reproduced in *Various Voices*. Pinter, thereby, implies that Stanley has every right to be himself and to battle against the outside forces that requires him to be somebody other than himself.

One of the points that has got the critics to pour thoughts over the implied political commentary as to whether Pinter's plays could be viewed as the Holocaust narrative or a Jewish experience which is written down after being politicised. This concern has been examined by Arnold Wesker in *The Jewish Chronicle* as:

Pinter is a Jewish writer and this play puts of his experience in Jewish community... The real weakness of *The Birthday Party* is that Pinter has used the right character in the wrong setting... It is not enough to say Goldberg is universal- people are only universal in their own setting (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 12 February 1960, 23, 29).

William Baker and Stephen Ely Tabachnick attempt to peg Harold Pinter's works under the heading of Jewish writings. In their book *Harold Pinter* (1973), they incline to compare Petey in *The Birthday Party* to Harry Khan in Wesker's *trilogy*. Accordingly, they designate the relationship as such:

What we suspect clearly is that Stanley is the victim of a kind of scapegoat persecution, and that Goldberg's relationship to him is that of a Jewish kapo in a concentration camp to a Jewish prisoner.

#### **4.1.1. The Synopsis of *The Birthday Party***

*The Birthday Party* is a drama work which demonstrates the difficulties experienced by the post-war era people. It depicts the people who lost their hope about the life and secluded themselves somewhere they feel safe. The post-war period throughout the globe is bleak in general terms of the standards of living. Stanley is one of the members of such a community who has existential delinquencies.

Stanley is described as paranoiac protagonist (Mir, 2018), who does not want to be in contact with the external world and abstains from any contact with the outsiders (p. 2). Because of this, he voluntarily accommodates in a filthy pension where he has contact with as few people as possible. In other words, he creates his microcosm where he feels safe. He stays at the boarding house since he deems it as a shelter. When Meg informs him about the visit of two intruders to his so-called immune world, he becomes disoriented and starts to act in a hostile and weird manner. His reaction has opened a gap in the reader's understanding that Stanley may have committed a crime and the probability of being caught makes him to act in such a weird mode. Goldberg and McCann's intrusion causes a feeling of terror and anxiety.

Stanley, who is interrogated in the play, seems to be an overweight, waddling and barely representable man moved to the ruinous seaside town where he gains acknowledgement as a concert pianist, a prodigious triumph. However, even in this sheltered setting, he cannot get away from himself, bringing the malevolent

memories in mind, as one of them being arriving at a concert hall and finding it locked.

*The Birthday Party* incorporates banal and superficial dialogues between Petey and Meg, an old couple. Their communication pattern lacks the possibility of any kind of improvement and they are just bound together in a habitual way. Meg asks irrelevant and silly questions and Petey answers them with an obvious listlessness. The reader may have an idea from the shallowness of the questions that Meg may have a mental problem.

Meg constantly asks questions whose answers are obvious from just a superficial gaze at the context. This type of behaviour is in the scope of the literary trauma theory and will be analysed through the lens of the pluralistic model of trauma theory.

Petey says that there will be two gentlemen to be staying in the boarding house and Meg interprets this piece of news as a sign of her 'landlady' skills. However, it seems plain that the food she serves would not appear on the breakfast menu of a decent boarding house.

Another action to note in this phase of the play might be the behaviour pattern Meg does to wake Stanley up. Other than taking him as a tenant in her boarding house, Meg seems to adopt the behaviour pattern of a mother who has endless compassion for her 'big boy'. Whereas Petey is a polite, nice gentleman with a lot of patience, Stanley seems to be an extremely discourteous and malignant man who incessantly speaks unkindly to Meg. That fact might also stem from Stanley's adoption of Meg as her mother who is not currently there for him. This perspective is also in the realm of the trauma theory.

After Petey's exit to care the duties of the boarding house, Meg uses Stanley's expression of 'succulent' to make sexual references. In fact, Stanley uses the word to describe the bread, yet Meg prefers to make an amorous connotation out of it. She continues to mix up his hair and touch his arm in a stimulating way, which

are the symptoms that Meg has intermingled emotions for him, both maternally and seductively.

Stanley, who is subject to harsh criticism and word games which exert power over him, disparages Meg over trivial matters. Upon learning about the arrival of the two gentlemen, Stanley gets shocked probably on account of the initial thought of being in the safe place yet the possibility of being exposed by the forces which may traumatize him lingers. Then, Stanley quickly makes up a job prospect for himself in a night club. He may be using this to give the fear of losing to Meg. Thinking about Meg's mixed feelings toward him, he finds the terror he intends to create on Meg. It is not clear why Meg is so terrified by this job offer, yet the way she reacts creates a space where the reader can fill with their thoughts.

While Stanley keeps mocking Meg, Lulu enters the scene, who is a naïve and playful young girl. She brings a big box and leaves it on the sideboard warning Stanley not to touch it. During the conversation with Lulu, Stanley portrays an insecure character who does not know what to do and where to go, yet he is unexpectedly sure that he does not want to stay there as well. This confusion about his life and his uneasiness to stay there show that he is under a constant stress about something which does not reveal itself.

Goldberg and McCann enter the scene and Stanley leaves synchronously from the back door. He starts to talk about the expected qualities of a gentleman which oxymoronically collides with the place they are currently in. Goldberg is represented as a self-assured character compared to McCann who seems tense probably because of the lack of the experience needed for 'the job'. The vagueness of 'the job' creates a sinister menace and makes Goldberg and McCann intimidating figures of the play.

Goldberg courteously interrogates Meg, who has just come back from the shopping and tries to find out who the tenant is. She gives details about him and the job he has recently been offered, yet she is not able to remember the specifics of the job, which makes Meg's memory less trustable. Meg, possibly in an effort to cheer her beloved Stanley up, says it is his birthday out of blue.

After showing the guests to their rooms and filling with the pride of having tenants, Meg and Stanley start a dialogue which in fact lacks communication. Stanley is impatient to know more about who these two strangers are. Finally, Meg succeeds in remembering the guests' name, which Stanley also disparages in that she even could memorise such a small number of lodgers' names. However, after hearing out the name 'Goldberg', he does not show any reaction and goes on sitting, which makes the reader/audience even more curious because he behaves he understands the magnitude of the menace, about which the reader/audience knows nothing of.

Stanley, then, is informed about his birthday, which he instantly denies. Yet lacking his initial confidence, he docilely accepts to open the gift he is given. It is a drum and Stanley starts to play it and marching around at the same time. He starts to play the drum in a crazy manner till he bursts it up, which is actually a foreshadowing of the violence he will commit at the end of the Act II.

Act II incorporates the details of Stanley's attempts to get to know of McCann during for whom Stanley is obviously full of fear and psychologically terrorized. McCann tears the sheet of the newspaper in a disturbing way and this can be suggestive of McCann's lack of imagination and even in a diversion activity how damaging he can be. McCann's untraditionally long handshake (physical) and his declaration of his own inability to join the party and (verbal) expression of the menace can give details about the real personality of one of the evil protagonists of the play. Defined by some critics as a comedy of menace, the play naturally includes comedy elements. Stanley and McCann's whistling the same song concurrently can be regarded as a comic moment of the play, yet with a second look it can be seen as a fight between two men which primarily intends to determine which of the men has the more power. Pinter creates a representation of the primitive fight in a verbal and more modern way.

McCann and Stanley continue the verbal game through which Stanley tries every possible means to know more about McCann. There are some hints in their dialogues about the possibility of their knowing each other. Stanley persistently tries to conciliate with McCann and he tries to show that he is not a problematic person. The more Stanley tries to persuade McCann to explain himself as to posing no harm



to anybody, the more McCann becomes savage and uncompromising. By this lack of reconciliation, Stanley's initial assumption about their coming to get him away is highlighted.

Stanley tries to get away with the uncomfortable setting, yet with no obvious success. His efforts to get away from Goldberg are interrupted by Goldberg's long speech about his own health and his hyperbolic congratulation of Stanley on his birthday. Stanley tries to explain himself but is ordered to sit down in each of the attempts. This display of menace and violence makes Stanley more unable to come up with an answer or reaction to each of the nonsense questions and acts aimed at him.

Goldberg and McCann bombard Stanley with series of questions, some of which are absurd and some bear viciousness and menace at utmost level. Stanley cannot reach an answer and tries to defend himself in vain. They claim that Stanley deceives 'the organization' he works for. The reader/audience is not informed about the mysterious organization. Then the interrogation shifts into an even more nightmarish level after Goldberg orders McCann to take Stanley's chair and his glasses away. By these two acts, Stanley is downgraded and he becomes nearly blind. Just after this humiliation and stripping Stanley of his most important perceptive organ, they continue their harsh questioning. From this point, the length of the questions decreases to one line, which enable the two sinister protagonists to overpower Stanley with their successive questions. Stanley's first cry to get away from this absurd interrogation actually aggravates things for him: Stanley has to deal with even more intensified questions and now he is threatened to death. Yet the audience cannot know what sin Stanley has committed to be indicted with such huge punishment.

Meg's arrival in the night dress changes the mood of the play. Goldberg instantly turns into the gentleman he is primarily in the play and starts to talk about ceremonies. Meg suggests they toast to Stanley and starts a highly absurd conversation. Even though her narration turns into an intense prattle, she could put forward her candid feelings for Stanley. Goldberg, on the other hand, proposes to close up all the lights and put a torchlight onto Stanley's face. This act might show Stanley that there is no way out and he is now exposed.

Lulu, who criticizes Stanley on his uncommunicativeness, seems to be interested in Goldberg and she openly expresses her reverence for Goldberg's eloquence. Goldberg, just in Stanley's case in Act I about his Lower Edmonton job prospect, says that he has a talk at the Ethical Hall, which seems equally improbable. Goldberg's fabrication could be due to his seeking of an approval in a 'Christian world' with his Jewish identity. On the other hand, Stanley is left aside and the characters talk to each other. Some of them; namely Lulu and Goldberg, turn their dialogue into an odd one, Lulu sitting on Goldberg's lap. Meg and McCann talk about their past, not as a dialogue but as an internal monologue from time to time. The mutual point of all the characters seems to be the fact that their comfort place is not the current time but their past.

The Blind Man's Buff in Act II can be a different version of Stanley's half blindness in the first act. McCann, just as in Act I, takes Stanley's glasses and thus reminding him of the ongoing interrogation. McCann breaks Stanley's glasses, which makes him permanently half blind. His eyes tied up Stanley trips onto the drum he plays to perforate earlier in the play. The menace that is felt goes up to the climax when the electricity suddenly goes off. It, then, turns out the depletion of the money on the electricity meter. Yet, when the electricity comes back, Lulu is seen on the table with her legs and arms opened and Stanley is curved on her which could be a misunderstanding from Lulu's side as mistaking Stanley for Goldberg who was flirtatious with her earlier. Act II ends with the scene that Stanley is caught and giggling while taking the wall at his backside and Goldberg and McCann approach him in a threatening way.

The morning after the party starts with serenity. Meg seems to remember little about the party and wants to check with Stanley. Petey immediately stops her and says he may know something she does not know. Goldberg enters the hall and makes generous compliments to Meg. No matter how obvious Meg's insinuations are for Goldberg to give a ride to her to the shops, he clearly wants to be in the house. Goldberg states that Stanley has a nervous breakdown, or PTSD in our case, and is being tended by McCann.

When McCann comes downstairs, he shows a sullen face to Goldberg which leaves the reader in suspension about what may have gone wrong upstairs. The reader/audience is left in suspense as to what may have happened to Stanley upstairs. Petey is also suspicious about how Stanley will leave the boarding house; therefore, even if he is told to care daily works, he calmly states he will be around the house.

McCann asks Goldberg about the 'instructions' about which Goldberg seems to be unsure. He appears to be in a dilemma when in fact the audience knows his powerful personality. Then McCann makes a dire mistake of calling Goldberg as 'Simey' and that drives Goldberg insane. He demands that he never be called as 'Simey' again. After that, Goldberg strangely starts to talk about how healthy he is. He opens his mouth and shows his teeth as a proof of how healthy he is. Then he wants McCann to blow into his mouth twice which can be a ritual or an act with a deeper meaning, yet again the reader/audience is left in suspense.

Lulu enters the scene with an expressed self-disgust because she says she slept with Goldberg that night. This shows Goldberg's usurping others in any possible way. McCann reacts to this and this shows McCann's moral side. Goldberg's mention of McCann as a former friend could either be a joke or a manifestation of a reality in that McCann demands Lulu to confess her sins to him.

Lulu exists and then Stanley is brought to the room by McCann. He seems to be shaven and clean. He is also spruced up. He wears his glasses which were broken earlier and Goldberg and McCann start their consolation of one line sentences, most of which carry no logical meaning at all. When trying to utter a few words, Stanley can only say a few words which can be likened to those of a child. It is clear that Stanley is deprived of his qualities of a self-controlling person.

When Goldberg and McCann take Stanley away, Petey shows up, understanding something is wrong, he suggests Stanley to be left behind. Goldberg says he has to be taken to the doctor and suggests Petey to join them, yet in a menacing way. The question is a test for Petey to stand up to the concept of 'right'. Petey opts for doing nothing when Stanley is taken. Then, as if nothing has happened, Petey goes on with his daily routine and starts reading the paper. Meg,

having just returned from shopping, starts talking about petty things that she has been talking since the beginning of the play. She talks about how she was the belle of the ball and gives details about the party as if Petey himself was not there. Petey tries to behave as though Stanley is upstairs sleeping because he does not want to see Meg upset. The play ceases with the same kind of prattle and the reader is not aware of Meg's reaction to Stanley's departure.

#### **4.1.1.1. Interpreting *The Birthday Party* in the light of Trauma Literary Theory**

*The Birthday Party* is a play that is full of representable and unrepresentable examples of trauma. There are also examples of trauma inducing events, and also the traumatizing incidents can be observed and analysed throughout the play. The usage of language as an instrument of exerting menace and overpowering apparatus makes the play even more a worthwhile text to delve into. Unlike the analysis of *Ashes to Ashes* in the latter sections of the dissertations, the stage directions and dialogues are used to analyse the language of trauma in the play. The stage directions and characters' utterances include examples of traumatizing language and its consequential effects on the characters throughout the play. The inspection will be done by the textual analysis of the chosen parts of the play:

MEG . . .(STANLEY stares at the cornflakes.) Did you sleep well?  
STANLEY I didn't sleep at all.  
MEG You didn't sleep at all? Did you hear that, Petey? Too tired to eat your breakfast, I suppose? Now you eat up those cornflakes like a good boy. Go on. He begins to eat (p.7)

Meg is the naïve 'landlady' who is inflicted with a very weak memory. She has an intermingling relationship and connotations with Stanley which oscillates between a motherly behaviour pattern to latently sexual one. Petey, being aware of both of the inclinations, uses Meg's approach as a shield to act freely, recklessly and perhaps rudely. Meg may have lost a child we do not know of and may be adopting Stanley as a long lost son, or she can be deflecting the apathy from her husband and tries to seek it the only other person in her daily routine: Stanley. Stanley uses a

harsh tone of language because he can be pathologically dissociated from the society and does not adhere to the standards of a social conversation rules.

STANLEY This isn't tea. It's gravy!

MEG It's not.

STANLEY Get out of it. You succulent old washing bag (p.11).

Although Meg portrays a docile character, she does her best to satisfy Stanley who is the sole lodger in the boarding house and whom Meg has attributed some other roles to. Stanley uses an antagonistic language and he is utterly unsatisfied with his current status. Knowing that he was not content with his previous life and comes to this boarding house in search for a better and more secure life, his status quo does not seem to be gratifying him either. His anger doesn't hint about the nature of his trauma thus making the reading of his trauma plausible with Caruth's classical view. His word choices and expressive language shows that there is too huge a problem to be overseen, yet it couldn't be clear because of the unrepresentable character of his trauma.

STANLEY (putting his head in his hands.) Oh God, I'm tired.

Silence. MEG goes to the sideboard, collects a duster, and vaguely dusts the room, watching him. She comes to the table and dusts it.

Not the bloody table! (p.12).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) reveals itself with being tired of life and unconnectedness with the society. Even with a breakfast table conversation, Stanley states he is tired of continuing conversation with one of the two people of his everyday setting. Also his usage of the language lacks the politeness and constructive functions of the language.

MEG Without your old Meg. I've got to get things in for the two gentlemen.

A pause. STANLEY slowly raises his head. He speaks without turning.

STANLEY What two gentlemen?

MEG I'm expecting visitors.

STANLEY What?

MEG You didn't know that, did you?

STANLEY What are you talking about?

MEG Two gentlemen asked Petey if they could come and stay for a couple of nights. I'm expecting them. (She picks up the duster and begins to wipe the cloth on the table.)

STANLEY I don't believe it.

MEG It's true.

STANLEY (moving to her.) You're saying it on purpose.  
MEG Petey told me this morning.  
STANLEY (grinding his cigarette.) When was it? When did he see them?  
MEG Last night.  
STANLEY Who are they?  
MEG I don't know.  
STANLEY Didn't he tell you their names?  
MEG No.  
STANLEY (pacing the room.) here? They wanted to come here?  
MEG Yes, they did. (She takes the curlers out of her hair.)  
STANLEY Why?  
MEG This house is on the list.  
STANLEY but who are they?  
MEG You'll see when they come.  
STANLEY (decisively.) They won't come.  
MEG Why not.  
STANLEY (quickly.) I tell you they won't come. Why didn't they come last night, if they were coming?  
MEG Perhaps they couldn't find the place in the dark. It's not easy to find in the dark (p.14).

Stanley tries to dissociate himself from his previous life and tries to get away from the troubles of his previous life. He has found a security in this boarding house. However, the recent news about the arrival of two strangers causes a sense of fear and ambiguity. He uses an elusive language which doesn't accept the traumatizing situation and he defies to reconcile with his previous traumatizing events. This could be due to the anachronistic return of the traumatic event. This may leave Stanley powerless, so as a last resort Stanley prefers to deny insistently the arrival of the the new lodgers.

STANLEY (to himself.) I had a unique touch. Absolutely unique. They came up to me. They came up to me and said they were grateful. Champagne we had that night, the lot. (Pause.) My father nearly came down to hear me. Well, I dropped him a card anyway. But I don't think he could make it. No, I - I lost the address, that was it. (Pause.) Yes? Lower Edmonton. Then, after that, you know what they did? They carved me up. They carved me up. It was all arranged, it was all worked out. My next concert. Somewhere else it was. In winter. I went down there to play. Then, when I got there, the hall was closed, the place was shuttered up, not even a caretaker. They'd locked it up. (Takes off his glasses and wipes them on his pyjama jacket.) A fast one. They pulled a fast one. I'd like to know who was responsible for that. (Bitterly.) All right, Jack, I can take a tip. They want me to crawl down on my bended

knees. Well, I can take a tip... any day of the week. (He replaces his glasses, then looks at MEG.) Look at her. You're just an old piece of rock cake, aren't you? (he rises and leans across the table to her.) That's what you are, aren't you? (p. 16-17).

Stanley is in a dire need to create an acceptable past for himself. He tries to show that even once upon a time he was a compatible person of the society. Then, he implicates on the incident that caused him to run away from his earlier life and to end up in this boarding house. By saying 'they carved me up', he may mean that they ridiculed and humiliated him in such a manner that he had no other chance but to escape from the concert hall.

MEG Don't you go away Stan. You stay here. You'll be better off. You stay with your old Meg. (He groans and lies across the table.) Aren't you feeling well, this morning, Stan. Did you pay a visit this morning? (p.17).

Meg's question about Stanley's visit to lavatory invokes the idea that she may be taking him as her little boy and she clearly doesn't want him to leave her, which was brought by Stanley's fabricated job offer. She is sure that he will be in a better status if he opts for staying with Meg. Meg portrays an altered mind which embraces different roles for her unsociable and restless tenant.

MEG They don't.  
STANLEY They're looking for someone.  
MEG They're not.  
STANLEY They're looking for someone. a certain person.  
MEG (hoarsely.) No, they're not!  
STANLEY Shall I tell you who they're looking for?  
MEG No!  
STANLEY You don't want me to tell you?  
MEG You're a liar (p.18).

Stanley has a clear-cut idea about the probability of his being followed. He may have committed a crime or he can be someone who wants to be exterminated by 'the organisation'. He appears to be capable of giving full details of the traumatizing situation. He is so aware of the situation that he can even inform others about it.

LULU (offering him the compact.) Do you want to have a look at your face? (STANLEY withdraws from the table.) You could do with a shave, do you know that? (STANLEY sits, right at the

table.) Don't you ever go out? (He does not answer.) I mean, what do you do, just sit around the house like this all day long? (Pause.) Hasn't Mrs Boles got enough to do without having you under her feet all day long?

STANLEY I always stand on the table when she sweeps the floor.

LULU Why don't you have a wash? you look terrible.

STANLEY A wash wouldn't make any difference (p.19).

Lulu's account of how Stanley looks gives the reader a detailed picture about his physical appearance. She also inquires why he is not going out and she actually asks the questions the reader/audience wants to know. Stanley says the physical alteration on his look doesn't change the reality. He implies there are bigger problems than the superficial outlook. By saying this, he references to the trauma he is in and he may be unable to find a proper way to change his current situation.

STANLEY Who are they?

MEG (sitting.) They're very nice, Stanley.

STANLEY I said, who are they?

MEG I've told you, the two gentlemen.

STANLEY I didn't think they'd come (p.29).

As earlier in a dialogue with Meg, Stanley has rejected and denied the idea that these two strangers are coming. When confronted with them, he asks who they are in an unbelieving tone twice. He succumbs to accepting that the guests have arrived. It seems obvious that he cannot get away from his traumatizing past.

She watches him, uncertainly. He hangs the drum around his neck, taps it gently with the sticks, then marches round the table, beating it regularly. MEG, pleased, watches him. Still beating it regularly, he begins to go round the table a second time. Halfway round the beat becomes erratic, uncontrolled. MEG expresses dismay. he arrives at her chair, banging the drum, his face and the drumbeat now savage and possessed (p.31).

There is a narration of a traumatizing event in the stage directions. Stanley, as a consequence of all the insurmountable stress that he has recently been inflicted with, does some erratic movements and expresses his trauma in his body language. He does some antagonistic movements and manifests the post traumatic symptoms in a delirium especially when he beats and bangs the drum erratically and savagely.

MCCANN Oh, is that so? I'm sorry.

STANLEY Yes, I'm going out to celebrate quietly, on my own.

MCCANN That's a shame.



[They stand.]

STANLEY Well, if you'd move out of my way-

MCCANN But everything's laid on. The guests are expected.

STANLEY Guests? What guests?

MCCANN Myself for one. I had the honour of an invitation  
(p.32).

Understanding that they are at the boarding house to cause some kind of harm to him, Stanley tries to get away from 'his own birthday party'. But he is objected to physical confrontation by McCann, who presumably is appointed to stop Stanley from fleeing away. McCann is nervous about his duties, but he is told to trust his 'superior' and he also tries to complete the job he is given.

STANLEY No. I think I'll give it up. I've got a small private income, you see. I think I'll give it up. Don't like being away from home. I used to live very quietly- played records, that's about all. Everything delivered to the door. Then I started a little private business, in a small way, and it compelled me to come down here- kept me longer than I expected. You never get used to living in someone else's house. Don't you agree? I lived so quietly. You can only appreciate what you've had when things change. That's what they say, isn't it? Cigarette? (p.34).

Stanley tries to portray a totally different outlook for who he is. He tries to affect Goldberg in a positive way to refrain himself from the tragic finale that he knows of. His remarks are aimed to reassure Goldberg that he is a fitting and coherent member of the society.

MCCANN No. [As STANLEY picks up a strip of paper.] Mind that (p.34).

McCann is depicted as a character who has his own obsessions. His strip of papers seems most valuable to him and their evenness explains he seeks for order and organisation in his life.

MCCANN Don't touch me.

STANLEY Look. Listen a minute.

MCCANN Let go my arm.

STANLEY Look. Sit down a minute.

MCCANN [savagely, hitting his arm.] Don't do that! (p.35).

Pinter's use of the language to exert power becomes plainly visible in this dialogue. The usage of language as a weapon has its shift towards an imminent physical violence. By urging Stanley to sit down is to overpower Stanley by using the language. In the prior requests to sit down, Stanley rebels, but with the latter incessant absurd questions, Stanley becomes stupefied and obeys the instructions without questioning them.

GOLDBERG Mr Webber, sit down.  
STANLEY It's no good starting any kind of trouble.  
GOLDBERG Sit down.  
STANLEY Why should I?  
GOLDBERG If you want to know the truth, Webber, you're beginning to get on my breasts.  
STANLEY Really? Well, that's-  
GOLDBERG Sit down.  
STANLEY No.  
[GOLDBERG sighs, and sits at the table right.]  
GOLDBERG McCann.  
MCCANN Nat?  
GOLDBERG Ask him to sit down.  
MCCANN Yes, Nat. [MCCANN moves to STANLEY.]  
Do you mind sitting down?  
STANLEY Yes, I do mind.  
MCCANN Yes now, but-it'd be better if you did.  
STANLEY Why don't you sit down?  
MCCANN No, not me- you.  
STANLEY No thanks.  
[Pause.]  
MCCANN Nat.  
GOLDBERG What?  
MCCANN He won't sit down.  
GOLDBERG Well, ask him.  
MCCANN I've asked him.  
GOLDBERG Ask him again.  
MCCANN [to STANLEY.] Sit down (p.38-39).

Goldberg's insistence for Stanley to sit down is closely related to his desire to show his superiority and to make Stanley a more obedient person. Because he is well aware of the fact that if he cannot make him perform the simple instructions, he cannot 'carve him up' in the way he wishes.

GOLDBERG Why do you treat that young lady like a leper? She's not the leper, Webber!

STANLEY What the-

GOLDBERG What did you wear last week, Webber? Where do you keep your suits?

MCCANN Why did you leave the organization?

GOLDBERG What would your old mum say, Webber?

MCCANN Why did you betray us?

GOLDBERG You hurt me, Webber. You're playing a dirty game.

MCCANN That's a Black and Tan fact.

GOLDBERG Who does he think he is?

MCCANN Who do you think you are?

STANLEY You're on the wrong horse.

GOLDBERG When did you come to this place?

STANLEY Last year.

GOLDBERG Where did you come from?

STANLEY Somewhere else.

GOLDBERG Why did you come here?

STANLEY My feet hurt!

GOLDBERG Why did you stay?

STANLEY I had a headache!

GOLDBERG did you take anything for it?

STANLEY Yes.

GOLDBERG What?

STANLEY Fruit salts!

GOLDBERG Enos or Andrews?

STANLEY En- An-

GOLDBERG Did you stir properly? did they fizz? (p.40).

Goldberg and McCann bombard Stanley with extremely absurd questions. Stanley tries to give answers to these questions just to show that he is a kind of person who doesn't create problems. The menace by the questioning of his past creates a high amount of strain over Stanley.

MCCANN He's killed his wife!

GOLDBERG Why did you kill your wife?

STANLEY [sitting, his back to the audience.] What wife?

MCCANN How did he kill her?

GOLDBERG How did you kill her?

MCCANN You throttled her.

GOLDBERG with arsenic.

MCCANN There's your man!

GOLDBERG Where's your old mum?

STANLEY In the sanatorium (p.41).

The allegations, having probably no roots at all, stumbles Stanley into an oblivion where he cannot even reply with simple sentences. His utterances are the reflection of his incredulous mind.

GOLDBERG You verminate the sheet of your birth.  
MCCANN What about the Albigensienist heresy?  
GOLDBERG Who watered the wicket in Melbourne?  
MCCANN What about the blessed Oliver Plunkett?  
GOLDBERG Speak up, Webber. Why did the chicken cross the road?  
STANLEY He wanted to-he wanted to-he wanted to....  
MCCANN He doesn't know!  
GOLDBERG Why did the chicken cross the road?  
STANLEY He wanted to-he wanted to....  
GOLDBERG Why did the chicken cross the road?  
STANLEY He wanted....  
MCCANN He doesn't know. He doesn't know which came first!  
GOLDBERG Which came first?  
MCCANN Chicken? Egg? Which came first?  
GOLDBERG and MC Which came first? Which came first?  
Which came first?  
[STANLEY screams.]  
GOLDBERG He doesn't know. Do you know your own face?  
MCCANN wake him up. Stick a needle in his eye.  
GOLDBERG You're a plague, Webber. You're an overthrow.  
MCCANN You're what's left!  
GOLDBERG But we've got the answer to you. We can sterilise you.  
MCCANN What about Drogheda?  
GOLDBERG Your bite is dead. Only your pong is left.  
MCCANN You betrayed our land.  
GOLDBERG You betray our breed.  
MCCANN Who are you, Webber?  
GOLDBERG What makes you think you exist?  
MCCANN You're dead (p.43-44).

The two of the interrogators' fluent and frighteningly irrelevant questions falter Stanley in such a way that he cannot come up with a word. Their questions aim at his personality, his sanity and even his existence. This kind of verbal abuse triggers the traumatic symptoms and drops Stanley deep into the well of traumatic amnesia from where we cannot hear a word. Along with the play the reader/audience will realize that Stanley is silenced, victimized and cannot come up with a sensible utterance. This might be his second massive trauma and he couldn't recuperate from it with a sane mind which was initially sufficing to him to lead a self-sufficient life.

[STANLEY stands blindfold. MCCANN backs slowly across the stage to the left. He breaks STANLEY's glasses, snapping the frames. MEG is downstage, left, LULU and GOLDBERG upstage center, close together. STANLEY begins to move, very slowly, across the stage to the left. MCCANN picks up the drum and places it sideways in STANLEY's path. STANLEY walks into the drum and falls over with his foot caught in it.

MEG Ooh!

GOLDBERG Sssh!

[STANLEY rises. He begins to move towards MEG, dragging the drum on his foot. He reaches her and stops. His hands move towards her and they reach her throat. He begins to strangle her. MCCANN and GOLDBERG rush forward and throw him off (p.53).

McCann's breaking of Stanley's glasses might have a representative meaning of stripping Stanley of his last connection to the outside world in that McCann is well informed of the fact that Stanley cannot see properly without the glasses. At the end of the First Act, Stanley plays the drum in a ferocious manner, now the same drum, by which he scatters fear through the room, makes him trip over and fall to the ground. These sequence of traumatic events create an amnesic haze which later inhibits Stanley to utter a meaningful word.

PETEY What came over him?

GOLDBERG [sharply.] What came over him? Breakdown, Mr Boles. Pure and simple. Nervous breakdown.

PETEY But what brought it on so suddenly?

GOLDBERG [rising, and moving upstage.] Well, Mr Boles, it can happen in all sorts of ways. A friend of mine was telling me about it only the other day. We'd both been concerned with another case-not entirely similar, of course, but... quite alike. [He pauses.] Anyway, he was telling me, you see, this friend of mine, that sometimes it happens gradual-day by day it grows and grows and grows... day by day. And then other times it happens all at once. Poof! Like that! The nerves break. There's no guarantee how it's going to happen, but with certain people... it's a foregone conclusion (p.58).

Goldberg defines PTSD or trauma with his peculiar way. He also explains that the job involves getting the victims to be traumatized because he finds it decent to talk about his previous experiences about people being traumatic when they are

doing their job on them. He refers to Stanley as in the group for whom the nervous breakdown is a 'foregone conclusion'.

Simey!

GOLDBERG [opening his eyes, regarding MCCANN.] What-did-you-call-me?

MCCANN Who?

GOLDBERG [murderously.] Don't call me that! [He seizes MCCANN by the throat.] NEVER CALL ME THAT!

MCCANN [writhing.] Nat, Nat, Nat, NAT! I called you Nat. I was asking you, Nat. Honest to God. Just a question, that's all, just a question, do you see, do you follow me? (p.62).

Goldberg certainly doesn't fancy being called as Simey. It could be a trigger word for his own traumatic past. We have been informed earlier in the play that he is of Jewish origin and he is now operating in the Christian society. Therefore, he may not want to expose himself to the society. He actually represents his trauma in accordance with the Revisionists' view, but he is separated from most of the trauma survivors in that he is not passive but rather violent and aggressive.

GOLDBERG We'll buy him another pair.

[They begin to woo him, gently and with relish. During the following sequence STANLEY shows no reaction. He remains, with no movement, where he sits] (p.66).

As an initially traumatized man, Stanley was a person who couldn't express himself in an efficient way, yet after the traumatizing and verbally abusing interview, his trauma got even worse and he becomes totally mute and cannot express even his basic need to see. He doesn't show any reaction, he cannot speak a word, he just sits and these symptoms coincide with the unrepresentability of trauma. His trauma is so acute that, he even cannot speak anything let alone speak about the trauma.

GOLDBERG From now on, we'll be the hub of your wheel.

MCCANN We'll renew your season ticket.

GOLDBERG We'll take tuppence off your morning tea.

MCCANN We'll give you a discount on all inflammable goods.

GOLDBERG We'll watch over you.

MCCANN Advise you.

GOLDBERG Give you proper care and treatment.

MCCANN Let you use the club bar.

GOLDBERG Keep a table reserved.

MCCANN Help you acknowledge the fast days.  
 GOLDBERG Bake your cakes.  
 MCCANN Help you kneel on kneeling days.  
 GOLDBERG Give you a free pass.  
 MCCANN Take you for constitutionals.  
 GOLDBERG Give you hot tips.  
 MCCANN We'll provide the skipping rope.  
 GOLDBERG The vest and pants.  
 MCCANN The ointment.  
 GOLDBERG The hot poultice.  
 MCCANN The fingerstall.  
 GOLDBERG The abdomen belt.  
 MCCANN The ear plugs.  
 GOLDBERG The baby powder.  
 MCCANN The back scratcher.  
 GOLDBERG The spare tyre.  
 MCCANN The stomach pump.  
 GOLDBERG The oxygen tent.  
 MCCANN The prayer wheel.  
 GOLDBERG The plaster of Paris.  
 MCCANN The crash helmet.  
 GOLDBERG The crutches.  
 MCCANN A day and night service.  
 GOLDBERG All on the house.  
 MCCANN That's all.  
 GOLDBERG That's it (p.67).

Goldberg and McCann start their nonsensical dialogue where they say unconnected and context free words the sum of which barely mean anything. They speak these words to assure Stanley, yet this gets the situation worse for Stanley who cannot speak after his birthday party.

[STANLEY's hands clutching his glasses begin to tremble.]  
 What's your opinion of such a prospect? Eh, Stanley?  
 [STANLEY concentrates, his mouth opens, he attempts to speak, fails and emits sounds from his throat.]  
 STANLEY Uh-gug...uh-gug...eehhh-gag... [On the breath.]  
 Caahh...caahh...  
 [They watch him. he draws a long breath which shudders down his body. He concentrates.]  
 GOLDBERG Well, Stanny boy, what do you say, eh?  
 [They watch. He concentrates. His head lowers, his chin draws into his chest, he crutches.]  
 STANLEY Ug-gughh...uh-gughh...  
 MCCANN What's your opinion, sir?  
 STANLEY Caaahhh...caaahhh... (p.68).

Stanley becomes highly traumatized and actually what he has gone through makes such a big impact on him that he has to be hospitalized and cared for medically. His traumatic amnesia has reached such a level that he even cannot remember his mother tongue to speak. The experience he has at the birthday party causes him to undergo a psychic concussion and his trauma gets even worse. He seems to have no opinion at all and this might be the 'organisation's utmost ambition. Stanley is in a way killed on his birthday.

GOLDBERG [insidiously.] Why don't you come with us, Mr Boles?

MCCANN Yes, why don't you come with us?

GOLDBERG Come with us to Monty. There's plenty of room in the car.

[PETEY makes no move. They pass him and reach the door.

MCCANN opens the door and picks up the suitcases.]

PETEY [broken.] Stan, don't let them tell you what to do! (p.69).

Petey represents the people who wants to stand up to the atrocities they witness. Initially, he tries to question Goldberg and McCann about where they are taking Stanley, but when suggested he can also join them to the hospital in a menacing way, he gets scared and opts for not leaving his comfort zone. He shouts behind the highly traumatized Stanley, who seems to be drown in aporia, not to let them tell him what to do.

Stanley's inability to utter a word finally is a consequence of the traumatized self. He has lived through a psychic short-circuit. Pinter actually depicts how the authority abuses the power and victimizes the individuals until they are silenced and submit to orders.

#### **4.2. Ashes to Ashes**

*Ashes to Ashes* is the play which was written in 1996 by Harold Pinter and can be labelled as an overtly political play. Billington categorises the play as a 'classic Pinter power-play' and suggests that the echoes from Pinter's earlier plays can be observed. The play is a blend of Pinter's earlier Pinteresque enigmatic plays



and his later overtly political plays. The reception of the play evokes various opinions. For instance, Alastair Macaulay in *The Financial Times* (21 September 1996) has put *Ashes to Ashes* into rank of 'the most remarkable he has ever written'. Charles Spencer has judged the play on the grounds that: 'his vision of a totalitarian Britain is so far-fetched- and in my view so offensive to those who really do live in such states- that one sincerely wishes he hadn't bothered developed his thesis at all.' Paul Taylor also emphasizes that the play reflects the interrelation of a sado-masochistic sexual violence with the cruelties perpetrated by totalitarian states. Moreover, Rebecca, the female character in *Ashes to Ashes*, falls into the stereotype of Harold Pinter's female characters who are robust women but entangled by tyrannical men.

In his essay 'Harold Pinter's *Ashes to Ashes*', Charles Grimes focuses on the fact of bearing witnesses to the Holocaust is highly difficult and even a self-conscious witness can alienate himself or herself from the incident and keep the distance from it to be able to exist and it seems the only way possible (Grimes, 2005, p14).

The play takes the reader into an enigmatic, menacing and probing excursion. On the surface, it seems that the characters only expose themselves in an obscure manner, yet a profounder aspect will get the reader to realise that the characters' disclosure happens in synch with their exposition to the writer himself. No matter how sure Rebecca of herself is, it seems as if there are things that are too excruciating to mention. Therefore, the way she tries to explain what has happened turns into a piece of art, which doesn't innately reveal itself.

When asked about whether he would write about the 'Shoah' by Gussow (p. 137) in his 1993 interview, Pinter answered: "I don't know. There's something in me that wants to do something about it. It's so difficult." By writing *Ashes to Ashes*, he shows the expected reader his preference on not to write the Shoah but to write about the memories of the Shoah. But it is also important to note that "to stay at the level of a simple equation between sexual domination and Nazism is not to grasp the full meaning of the play" (Jensen, 1996).

Pinter has been excessively revealing, which is aberrant of him, about the debut of the play. He informs Billington about the incentive which drove him to write 'Ashes to Ashes' by mentioning about Gitta Sereny's biography of Albert Speer. Pinter reveals that he has been so affected by the image of Speer's visitation to the concentration camps for which he was responsible. He adds further that:

Reading the book also triggered lots of other associations. I've always been haunted by the image of the Nazis picking up babies on bayonet-spikes and throwing them out of windows (Billington, p.384).

Taking these statements as a starting point and as one of the several lines of evidence, it can be deduced that Pinter may have told the story of Speer's wife and her interrogation. During the interrogation, Devlin asks about the profession of Rebecca's lover and she replies as 'He was a guide, you see. A guide,'. In German, guide means Führer. Other than directly referencing to Hitler, the word also bears a meaning denoted to the ranks in SS. Albert Speer has been given the rank of 'Oberstgruppenführer'. What's more, he has been in charge of the transportation and namely the railway system. The words Rebecca uses to describe the occupation of her husband coincide with Albert Speer. Rebecca goes on to give details about what her husband does as: "He did work for a travel agency. He was a guide. He used to go to the local railway station and walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers" (p. 27). This description evokes the transportation processes that took place in the World War II. Even by not mentioning them in a solemn and direct way, Pinter is successful in filling a 1996 room with the terror of the extermination camps.

The story may sound peculiar, though the play was written right after Pinter finished reading Gitta Sereny's biography of Albert Speer (Reiter, 1997). Speer was the minister for Armaments and he was the one who expanded the slave labour which was supplied from the concentration camps. Pinter said the reading of Speer's biography "triggered lots of other associations" (qtd. in Billington, p.375). Although *Ashes to Ashes* was written about the Holocaust, it is not restricted to the Holocaust only, it rather represents all forms of atrocities and hostilities that cause severe traumatic states.

Pinter portrays a surrealistic scene where Rebecca is looking southward to the sea and toward the continent where all atrocities have taken place. Rebecca also describes a scene where the people are carrying their suitcases towards the sea as in the Israelis into the Red Sea with the exception of this instance on the grounds that for this instance no miracles happen and people are drowned.

With a simple calculation, it is obvious that Rebecca cannot experience the massacre she designates. In the same token, she reiterates this fact by saying: “Oh no, you weren’t there. I don’t think anyone else was there. No, I was all by myself. I was alone” (p. 49). Just as the hallmark characteristics of Pinter, the inner world of the character is much vaster than what is projected to the reader. The spectator as well as the reader of the play can easily detect the motifs such as the winter, factories, people in heavy coats and carrying their belongings only in a suitcase and the relevance of each of them with the Shoah. Rebecca starts the song ‘Ashes to Ashes’ and Devlin continues the song as ‘Dust to Dust’ (p.69), the connotation was made between the funerary rites and Jews’ cremation in extermination camps. The remainders from the people massacred in the war are mainly the ashes that Rebecca indicates and the memories that have been brought to surface by recounts.

In a 1996 interview at the University of Barcelona, Pinter clarified that Rebecca is a person who was affected deeply by the bitter incidents happening around the world and she has by some means ‘become part of her own experience’. According to John Smith’s article (1999) on New York Times Theater, despite Pinter’s explanation about Rebecca, she is ‘mostly sitting in a chair and clearly mad, is driving Devlin, mostly pacing about and steadily drinking, equally mad’. Smith sees the characters without gazing through the perspective of trauma theory; therefore, what is seemingly happening can be seen as a total madness. Nonetheless, a new outlook on the play with the scope of Literary Trauma Theory will shed a light to the inner beings of the characters and what Pinter wants to reflect on the reader/spectator.

*Ashes to Ashes* is a one-act performance, which has its debut in 1996 at the Royal Court Theatre on 12 September 1996. The play was directed by Harold Pinter himself. The design was created by Eileen Diss; whom Pinter had worked with

several times before. It is a play which combines the qualities that are attributed to Pinter's works together. Therefore, *Ashes to Ashes* is a mixture of Pinter's comedy of menace, memory plays, and his political style.

The play commences with a duality in a calm living room of a country dwelling. This claim is maintained by the sum of the characters in the play; being Devlin and Rebecca, the directions of the stage. What is more, there are two armchairs and two lamps. These traits bring the play to the realms of an elliptical work, which results in the audience's inability to comprehend it fully yet "if you have listened closely, you should come out soaked in sweat" (Jensen, 1996 p.23). Because of this fact, the total comprehension of the play requires a deep immersion by the side of the audience; that is, the audience needs to participate in the play in a very active manner.

*Ashes to Ashes* shows a pattern where the dialogues show no evident connections, yet as the play progresses, a broader image becomes obvious to the careful audience. As for the language of the play, it is lyrical and repetitions, rhyme, allusions and cessations are observable throughout the play. Also there are pauses and echoes which add to the revelation of the deeper meaning on the whole.

#### **4.2.1. The Synopsis of *Ashes to Ashes***

*Ashes to Ashes* is a play which was inscribed on the basis of duality. There are two characters, two armchairs and two lamps. With Pinter's own terms, Pinter is inclined to start his plays with a pair in a certain setting (Pinter et al., Feb. 1961, p.10). As for the dramatic action, very little is observed. The continuum of the drama is sustained through the dialogue along the play. The atmosphere of the play is a menacing one and the menace is exerted in a psychological manner which makes the play in the realms of this thesis investigating the literary trauma theory between the lines.

The play starts in accordance with Pinter's citation above with a couple. The reader can only know the name of the figures by reading the text. The male character's name is Devlin, which seems to be a fictional name and which can be perceived as an

anagram for devil. The female character is Rebecca, which is very widespread among Jewish families. The name also alludes to the Old Testament figure. The setting is a house in the countryside in Dorset. The room is on the ground floor and there is a large window which has a landscape over the garden beyond. Through the play the room darkens and at the same manner, the lamplight increases. As the play progresses, the garden becomes virtually invisible and the lamplight becomes very bright but doesn't give a proper illumination to the room.

As of the characters' prior positions, Rebecca is settled and Devlin stands with a drink. At the former stages of the play, it seems as if Rebecca speaks about an ex-lover and the ill relationship patterns with him. Her initial utterances are actually in the form of answers to the questions poised by Devlin and the questions are seemingly about the ordeals caused by her ex-lover's unpropitious sexual and violent acts. Devlin's slender approach and the way he asks questions swerve the reader/audience into believing that he is her psychiatrist, yet later on the reader bears another possibility in their mind as to Devlin's being her husband.

Devlin incessantly asks questions and tries to clarify the points he wants to be informed on. One example of this is "What did you say? Did you say what?" (p.395). Even without waiting for an answer for the first question, there comes an unnecessary follow-up question because Rebecca, throughout the play, is determined to talk about what she has to say regardless of the questions in the interrogation process.

Devlin tries to get the details of the physical assault of Rebecca's ex-lover by asking questions as "Did he put his hand round your throat?" (p.396). Rebecca answers positively to this question. The initial assumption from the audience/reader side is to speculate that Rebecca explains the physical violence she is exposed to. Yet, Rebecca continues with the reply "*He adored me, you see*" (p.396), which reminds Pinteresque readers to be alert to grasp the physiological subtext of the play.

Rebecca goes on to give details about the violence by her ex-lover and there are references to sexual assault as well. Devlin asks Rebecca if she is being hypnotised or not. As the passive tense is used in its progressive form, Rebecca feels

the urge to ask “When?” (p.398). Then Devlin clarifies he is asking about the status quo; that connotes the interrogation which is in progress. Rebecca doesn’t think she is being hypnotised and then when asked about what she thinks she replies with a derogatively strong language and insults Devlin by saying: “I think you are a fuckpig” (p.398).

Devlin tries to justify his situation and explain that he should know the answers to the questions. He wants Rebecca to empathize with him and understand the burden on him. Yet, it is not clear in the audience/reader side why Devlin should get the answers. He says he needs to be illuminated by the answers. Then he asks whether the questions he is asking are appropriate or not. Rebecca asks “What questions?” (p. 399). By this question, the audience/reader has the impression that Rebecca is in her own world cut off from her immediate physical world, therefore, doesn’t seem affected and feel obliged to answer the questions she is bombarded with.

Devlin asks for a clear physical definition of ‘him’ and his personal qualities. He floods questions one after another in a hysterical way. He even asks such a trivial question as: “Did he have any eyes?” (p.400). Through this unsuccessful part of the questioning, Devlin uses the word ‘darling’ to call on Rebecca. Rebecca finds it odd to be called as ‘darling’ because she says she has never been called as darling by someone except for her lover. She also shows her reaction in a passive manner by finding Devlin to call her ‘darling’ as funny.

Rebecca makes the point by saying she is nobody’s darling. Then Devlin deviates the topic to change the words of Rebecca’s last sentence to a line of a popular song of the time ‘I’m nobody’s baby now’. Rebecca corrects the conjugation as ‘You’re’ instead of ‘I’m’.

All of a sudden, Rebecca starts to give details about her ex-lover. She uses the transition word “Anyway” (p.402) which is generally used for changing the present topic. By this confident diversion of the topic, Rebecca starts to give details about the ex-lover that Devlin tries to know more about. Rebecca mentions that in the past he had a job and it took him away. Then, Rebecca explains the particulars about that

job. She explains that he worked for a travel agency and he was ranked in a high position.

According to Fischer's analysis of the play (1997), it can be divided into seven different parts as two short ones and four main scenes (p.319). There is also the final scene, which can also be divided to two short ones. This taxonomy helps the analysis be a clearer one and allows the key words to be counted in different parts of the play.

Throughout the play, Devlin incessantly requires Rebecca to crystalize the questions he persistently asks. He seems to be obsessed with the clearance of the description of the words and situations he asks about. In spite of the demanding questions, Rebecca changes the flow of conversation by the usage of the phrases such as "did I ever tell you (...)?", "oh yes, there's something I've forgotten to tell you," or "don't you want to know why?" (p.407). Rebecca's utmost desire to change the subject stems from her intense craving to tell what she has to say. Devlin, on the other hand, rationalises his insistence by saying he is in the dark and he needs light. When related with his allusion to the devil, his quest for the light seems justifiable; on the ground that he lost his grace searches for the lost light.

One of the terms that they have a discussion about is 'darling'. Devlin's addressing Rebecca with the word 'darling' triggers more reminiscences and Rebecca talks about past threats and somatic abuse and the linked eroticism. She goes on to elaborate on their visit to the factory he works for and Rebecca also gives a vivid description of the factory and the railway station. She even reiterates a striking scene where she claims she watches babies torn from their screaming mothers' arms. Then she tells about people in their dresses and they are led to the sea to get drowned. Devlin's call Rebecca as darling, which Rebecca reacts by saying 'I'm nobody's darling' is one of the turning points of the play. Then, Devlin tries to handle the situation by changing the title of the song "I'm nobody's baby now," by Benny Davis, Milton Ager, and Lester Stanley (1921), with her original remark. By saying this, Rebecca reiterates that she is nobody's baby. But with this reference to the word 'baby', the remembrances about the babies that have been taken away from the mothers' arms. Thus, the repetition of certain words has an interrelation with

Rebecca's inner communication system. The repetition becomes a trigger for her to remember the traumatic memories which are normally buried in the past.

Devlin incessantly asks for a physical description of her ex-lover, to which she answers by saying it is of no relevance in that he was taken off from that position. Rebecca perceives her ex-lover's job as a kind of travel agency. She states that the people where her ex-lover works, she later calls that place as a factory, used to wear soft caps (which may also represent the skullcap the male Jewish people wear while praying). She also adds that the workers in the factory revered him immensely and "They would follow him over a cliff and into the sea, if he asked them, he said. And sing in a chorus, as long as he led them. They were in fact very musical, he said." (p.403).

In the interrogation process, Devlin has an uncaring attitude and he seems to be focusing on his interrogative post. Throughout the procedure, he tries to recapture the control of the conversation and to reclaim the control by forcing Rebecca to kiss his fist.

Rebecca's description of her ex-lover's factory sounds unusual as there was no bathroom in the place. Her portrayal of the factory clarifies with the following quote, reminding the contemporary audiences of the Holocaust when babies were taken away from their mothers at the train station before going to the concentration camps:

He did work for a travel agency. He was a guide. He used to go to the local railway station and walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers (p.406).

The reference to the bathroom has a dual meaning. First of which is to define the vilest conditions of the extermination camps and the second is to refer to the euphemistic usage of extermination rooms as bathroom. If these references are made, the subsequent relevance becomes apparent in that the usage of the word 'guide' might be the translation of the word 'Führer' in German, which is a title that associates with Hitler.



After the reference to the railway station and violent acts of tearing the babies from their mothers, Rebecca shifts the subject abruptly and starts to talk about police siren and says that she is sorry. This sudden change to an irrelevant topic maybe because of the psychological burden created on account of giving voice and reiterating the cruel atrocities. She goes on to give the reason for her being sorry. She says that if the siren fades away for herself, it is louder for someone else (p.408).

There is a prolonged conversation about a pen. The conversation, of course, bears a lot of references and latent meanings, which is discussed in the analysis section. Devlin has a long monologue that involves a series of questions about Rebecca's ex-lover. It then turns into a tirade of Devlin's interrogative journey into his own life. Then the monologue ends with an unconnected but defining line which describes Devlin as a man who doesn't care and who has an unbending sense of duty (p. 415).

After Devlin has finished his long monologue, Rebecca starts by reminding him that she has something she has disremembered to tell (p. 416). She describes a highly disturbing scene where people are guided through a cliff into the sea. The bags of people who are led to the sea float on the surface of the sea.

Rebecca's mind is occupied with a series of atrocities. She mentions about a disorder called mental elephantiasis. She exemplifies the condition by likening it to spilling an ounce of gravy, which instantly enlarges and turns into a sea of gravy and this sea of gravy can suffocate the person. Rebecca also says that it is the fault of whoever brings gravy in the first place.

Later in the play, Rebecca proclaims that the person who takes babies from their screaming mothers' arms is her ex-lover (p. 419). Then she sharply changes the topic and mentions about her 'visit' to Kim and the children. Devlin and Rebecca start a menial conversation about the state of the kids. Then the audience/reader learns that Kim is Rebecca' sister and she and her husband are separated because of an illegitimate affair and the husband wants to reconcile and adds he wants to give 'the other one' up because he has never been serious with the other one.

The final part of the play incorporates Rebecca's story of her trip to a train station in an icy night. She details the scene she sees there as a man carrying a suitcase along with a boy whose hand is held by the man. There is also, according to Rebecca's account, a woman carrying her baby girl in her arms. As the lights of the stage darkens, Rebecca becomes that woman and she impersonates the woman with a shift in roles. Rebecca is not the witness of the atrocities anymore, but she becomes the subject herself, hence the alteration of the pronunciation 'she' into 'I'.

#### **4.2.1.1. Interpretion of *Ashes to Ashes* in the light of the Pluralistic Model of The Literary Trauma Theory**

Rebecca is a strong woman on the whole and she manages to grasp her status quo as being ensnared and coerced by a man, nonetheless she defies the foundation of that oppression.

The main characters Devlin and Rebecca are either a married couple or their relationship is that of a between a doctor and a patient at a therapy session. Apparently they have a comfortable middle-class life in the countryside. Devlin interrogates Rebecca and she narrates appalling memories of her ex-lover who was also her best friend. Devlin is no different from Rebecca's former lover in terms of his sadomasochistic dominance. Devlin seems to be helping her decipher her fragmentary thoughts, but his questioning aims at her hypnosis. The state of hypnosis indicates the power of the lover and Devlin, who both want Rebecca's co-operation. But Rebecca refuses to be overpowered by his questions when Devlin wants Rebecca to draw him a concrete shape of her ex-lover. He is searching for a single potential culprit for all the atrocities Rebecca is describing. Her memory is distorted so she is unable to describe an ex-lover. There is the sense of a lack of specific knowledge on Rebecca's side; presumably she was not prepared to confront what was really going on in the 'factory' where her lover worked. At this point the play's past-time location crystallises; it is a slave labour camp in Nazi Germany and her lover 'did work for a travel agency. He was a guide. He used to go to the local railway station and walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers' (p. 407). Here Rebecca displays signs of disarticulation, memory problems, and

amnesia. The dark psyche of Rebecca unravels in the sequences of discrete parts of horrifying recollections. She is haunted by the traumatic past memories and narrates fragments which remind the contemporary audience of the atrocities of World War Two and the Holocaust, Bosnia, Kosovo and the Middle East. Her recollections involve images of people leaving with suitcases, masses walking into the water and the snatching of babies from their mothers' arms at a train station. All her fragmented narratives bear clear signs of traumatic disorder. She recounts many of the memories as if they were half her own experience, half others. She is mostly detached from physical surrounding-and dwells in a world of daydreaming. Devlin applies resilience strategies so that Rebecca could cope with trauma and differentiate between real and traumatic events.

The setting of the play is evocative of trauma and for an eye looking for traces of trauma, *Ashes to Ashes* is a priceless piece of art. The room dims throughout the progression of the play. This may be due to Pinter's way of resonating the loss of the protagonist, Rebecca, in the amnesic haze which occurs due to the trauma she has gone through. The lamplight in the setting is very bright but doesn't illuminate the room. This can be read as a symbol of resilience Rebecca shows throughout the play, yet the inability of the light in illuminating the room is to be Rebecca's mind which cannot save itself from the blurring effect of the trauma.

The play starts with a detailed description of the physical abuse Rebecca goes through by her lover. She is able to explain all the atrocities she was through. Devlin seems to be the emotionless interrogator whose constraint seems to be aimless. He seems to ask not to know but to overpower Rebecca; however, one of the strongest protagonists Pinter has come up with, Rebecca seems to be dealing with the endless questions in her own peculiar way. She, as Gumb (2018) notes, goes on her existence 'altered but undiminished way' (p.464). Especially at the former part of the play, Rebecca can narrate about her trauma in detail, which seems to support McNally's view on the representability of trauma.

As the play continues, Rebecca utters certain explanations which lack the linear narration and coherence. She seems to be lost in the amnesic haze which

happens due to the traumatizing events she experiences. Rebecca says “Oh yes. He did. And he held it there, very gently, so gently. He adored me, you see” (p. 396). The physical assault she experiences may trigger the trauma and because of the traumatizing incident she may lose the linguistic determinacy and could create logically irrelevant concepts respectively. Since putting hand through somebody’s throat can easily be related to a physical attack, yet just after explaining the attack, Rebecca says her ex-lover adored her. She experiences dissociated consciousness which lacks the normal processing of an untraumatized mind.

There is a relatively open reference to the sexual assault and Rebecca, though she is the victim in this case, is able to explain the aspects of the event. Devlin, on the other hand, incessantly asks erotic questions about the incident and wants to have a power on her by asking questions one after another. Then, Devlin asks if Rebecca is hypnotized by him or not. Rebecca doesn’t accept to be hypnotized and when asked about what she thinks. She says to Devlin that he is a “fuckpig” (p. 398). Rebecca seems to be fully capable of providing the interrogator with detailed accounts of her experience, yet by using an explicit language, she wants to show she is in control of her own mind and she doesn’t let the interrogator to overpower her. She shows a resilient stance even if a host of symptoms of trauma are apparent on Rebecca’s acts and remarks.

Because Devlin adopts the role of a mean interrogator, the audience/reader doesn’t think of him as a victim and also may not want to be involved in his trauma between the lines. However, it seems plain that he is also a trauma-inflicted man. He says he doesn’t know anything and he feels in the dark and he needs light (p. 399). What he utters seems to be in the same manner with Caruth’s description of trauma. Caruth refers to the way “the language of trauma, and the silence of its mute repetition of suffering” (Trauma: Explorations in Memory, p.9) presents itself. Devlin may be in such a dilemma. His suppressive manner may result from his being oppressed ‘by the powers’ who enabled him to label himself as ‘a man with a rigid sense of duty’ (p. 415). He may be the victim of some other traumatized events.

Throughout the play, Rebecca answers the questions with a fragments of disconcerted response and mostly by another irrelevant question. It may be because

she wants to divert the topic of the conversation to what she has to say or it may be because of her fragmented memory and misconception of the current time. In both cases, this disconcerted answer deserves a reading with the literary trauma theory. The trauma theorists, who support the evidences put forward by McNally, claim that the survivor of a traumatizing incident can remember and talk about the incident and may not want to remember and moreover may want to 'forget' the event in everyday parlance. However, this forgetting process doesn't necessarily mean the disremembering which turns into a total amnesia and the erasure of the event from the survivor's mind. Still other theorists such as (Gumb, 2018, p.466) claims that the narratives of trauma are the narratives of healing and reconciliation. Therefore, the victim may opt for talking about the traumatizing event to speak the trauma out of herself.

Rebecca is obviously a survivor of a massive traumatizing event, and her confused answers and unsettled psychic posture are worthy of reading them with the classical view of literary trauma theory. She seems to be in a peritraumatic dissociation, because she has a lot of misperception of time. Although Pinter is unwilling to accept any allusions to historical legacies, there are several images which are taken from the biography of Albert Speer who was in a 'high up' position where 'people had a great respect for him' in Hitler's hierarchy (p.405). He was the Minister for Weaponries and he was Hitler's architect who was known for the design of the 'Gas Chambers' where many innocent people were sent to death. Pinter also states that he was terrified of the atrocity of babies being taken from their bayonet-spikes and thrown out of the window (Billington, 1996, p.374). Although Pinter doesn't approve of any references to a particular place or time, the effect of the atrocities he is informed about in the Shoah urges him to write about the remembrances of the Holocaust.

As a woman in her mid-forties, Rebecca could not have experienced the mayhems she means to tell (p.426). However, this bending of the time can be read with Freud's primal scene theory where the victim who shows the symptoms of infliction with a traumatizing event doesn't experience the incident by first person. (Freud, 1918). As Abraham and Torok state, the children can inherit the traumas from their parents even if they, themselves, experience the primal scene directly.

Rebecca may be one of the relatives of a Holocaust survivor who inherits the previous trauma. This transgenerational transmission is scientifically possible according to Abraham (Abraham et al., 1994, p.171-176). Rebecca oscillates between now, the time she is being interrogated in a Dorset house, and the time when all these atrocities have happened. She is so much affected and has internalized all the trauma, eventually she adopts the role of the screaming mother and her baby is torn away from her (p.429).

As the supposed mother of the baby, Rebecca abstains from the usage of the word 'baby' before she lets her memory flood the ears of the audiences with her trauma narrative in the latter section of the play (p.402). She says she didn't use the word 'baby' in a solemn way. This aberration can be read with Freud's deferred action theory where the victim doesn't aspire to talk about the traumatizing event because it is either too soon or too late. Since all the genocide has long gone in the stained shelves of the history, Rebecca may think it is too late to talk about it as far as she has a control over her mind.

Rebecca's diversion of the course of conversation when asked about what the ex-lover looks like indicates that she doesn't want to talk about the person who has caused the traumas in the first place. She says she hasn't forgotten but that is irrelevant and he went away years ago (p.402). She doesn't intend to ascribe a special meaning to the person who caused severe harassment to other people. Then she elaborates on the description of 'the job'. It seems that she doesn't have comprehensive knowledge about the job. She says it has something to do with a travel agency and he has a lot of responsibilities. When asked incessantly, she replies as 'He was a guide, you see. A guide' (p.403). She resituates her trauma in the magnitude of her understanding. By this she permits the history to arise where our understanding cannot reach, just as Caruth states in her *Trauma and Experience* (1995).

Rebecca yearns for elucidating the details of the traumatizing event she is inflicted with. She asks if she has ever told about 'that place'... about the time when she was taken to that place (p. 404). As McNally states, the stressful event doesn't impair the registration process in the memory, it, inversely, sharpens the senses to

register the traumatizing event (McNally, 2003 p.45-79). McNally states that narrating the traumatizing events enables the survivor to gain control over the traces of trauma and enables the survivor to remake herself. Rebecca may seek ways to heal herself and reconcile with her past traumas by trying to narrate what she dies to tell Devlin.

They were sweet. I smiled at them. And immediately every single one of them smiled back.

The only thing was- the place was so damp. It was exceedingly damp (p.406).

These lines are in conformity with McNally's view on the literary trauma theory. He claims that the five senses sharpen during the period of the trauma and because of this fact, the survivors can produce narrations which are ample in details and use an expressive language.

Rebecca repeatedly reiterates that she is terribly upset (p.407). Unceasing depression and stress, both of which have an immense effect and their prolonged status leads to trauma, are considered as the precursors of the formation of trauma. By giving enough attention to the way Rebecca linguistically represents herself, it can be evidenced that Rebecca is a survivor of a massive trauma and she sometimes can present her trauma and at some points of the play her mind becomes hazy and her narration turns into fragmented and disorganized. Therefore, the trauma she has gone through is suitable for reading with both the classical and the revisionists' view of the literary trauma theory.

Rebecca's expressive language oscillates between the past and the present tense. Without any proper warning, her account shifts to the past and then directly turns to the present. This could be due to her traumatic mind and the stress she has been through because of the endless and persistent interrogation. She seems to feel exceeding concern about the police sirens. It could be perceived as 'a signal of distress and help on its way or it may be the sound of repression' (Inan, 2000, p.229). Either way fosters the idea that she is intensely traumatized and restless in her current position. Her expressive language cries for help to be saved from the

atrocities she has been through. Devlin, on the other hand, tries to reassure her either for the purpose of getting the answer he incessantly asks or another hidden agenda:

They're very busy people, the police. There's so much for them to do. They've got so much to take care of, to keep their eye on. They keep getting signals, mostly in code. There isn't one minute of the day when they're not charging around one corner or another in the world, in their police cars, ringing their sirens. So you can take comfort from that, at least. Can't you? You'll never be lonely again. You'll never be without a police siren. I promise you (p. 409).

Rebecca continues to talk about 'an innocent pen'. She references to it as a tool by which she was writing a laundry list (p.410). As mentioning the laundry list, Rebecca may be metaphorically denoting to the dirty memories she wants to wash away, yet the pen, or the writers as the doer of the writing via pen, reminds her of the unwanted incidents. Devlin; on the other hand, says that no one can know if the pen is innocent or not.

Because you don't know where it had been. You don't know how many other hands have held it, how many other hands have written with it, what other people have been doing with it. You know nothing of its history. You know nothing of its parents' history (p. 410).

Devlin's approach to Rebecca is authoritative and domineering yet Rebecca knows how to divert the power exerted on her to somewhere else; she doesn't portray a weak protagonist character.

You think God is sinking into a quicksand? That's what I would call a truly disgusting perception. If it can be dignified by the word perception. Be careful how you talk about God. He's the only God we have. If you let him go he won't come back. He won't even look back over his shoulder. And then what will you do? You know what it'll be like, such a vacuum? It'll be like England playing Brazil at Wembley and not a soul in the stadium. Can you imagine? Playing both halves to a totally empty house. The game of the century. Absolute silence. Apart from the referee's whistle and a fair bit of fucking and blinding. If you turn away from God it



means that the great and noble game of soccer will fall into permanent oblivion. No score for extra time after extra time after extra time, no score for time everlasting, for time without end. Absence. Stalemate. Paralysis. A world without a winner.

Pause.

I hope you get the picture (p. 412).

Devlin presupposes God's nonexistence to a football match which is between renowned teams and where there are no spectators to watch it. That is, Devlin tries to make a point by relating the presence of the spectators to the presence of God. Devlin says God will not come back if she lets Him go. Devlin subtextually implies not to lose on religious faith. By doing this, he tries to show a way out for Rebecca from her traumas. He does this by giving a worldly example which has worldly utmost importance.

Devlin

Now let me say this. A little while ago you made... shall we say... you made a somewhat oblique reference to your bloke... your lover? ... and babies and mothers, et cetera. And platforms. I inferred from this that you were talking about some kind of atrocity. Now let me ask you this. What authority you think you yourself possess which would give you the right to discuss such an atrocity?

Rebecca

I have no such authority. Nothing has ever happened to me. Nothing has ever happened to any of my friends. I have never suffered. Nor have my friends. I have never suffered. Nor have my friends (p. 413).

Devlin wants to investigate into the delicate topic of the atrocities that Rebecca mentions during the aforementioned conversation and asks on what grounds she can talk about the atrocity. Actually, he may want to inquire her relation to the atrocities and her ex-lover's involvement. Rebecca; on the other hand, disavows the idea of being affected by the atrocities and she claims that she has never suffered and neither have her friends. As Caruth (1995, p.299-301) states the language of trauma is elusive and unrepresentable. Caruth describes trauma as a phenomenon whose effects are seen as a lack of registrations of the events into the memory. Janet (1909

p.285) also puts forward the notion that the trauma through which the emotions are precipitated causes retrograde amnesia. The survivor of the trauma, as identically in Rebecca's case, forgets what she has gone through as a defense mechanism of the mind to be able to continue to function properly.

Rebecca

No, no. He didn't try to murder me. He didn't want to murder me.

Devlin

He suffocated you and strangled you. As near as makes no difference.

According to your account. Didn't he?

Rebecca

No, no. He felt compassion for me. He adored me (p. 414).

The verb 'suffocate' may have a reference to the murders in the 'gas chambers' in the WWII. Because trauma can be described as a near death experience and Rebecca may be a survived victim of the holocaust, she may be mistaking 'love' with the 'to be saved from death by a pure coincidence'. As Judith Herman suggests the harshest traumas are impossible to remember. (Herman, 1987).

Rebecca

Oh yes, there's something I've forgotten to tell you. It was funny. I looked out of the garden window, out of the window into the garden, in the middle of summer, in that house in Dorset, do you remember? Oh no, you weren't there. I don't think anyone else was there (p.416).

These lines precede Rebecca's account of the people being ushered to the sea. Rebecca asks if Devlin was also there or not. This may be a flashing and a fleshing of Rebecca's fragmented memory. She may remember him as the same person as her ex-lover. Then, her memory fades again and she refutes the idea of the presence of somebody there on the grounds that she may want to believe that if any other person were there, they would surely react to the traumatizing scene, so they wouldn't have happened.

This mental elephantiasis means that when you spill an ounce of gravy, for example, it immediately expands and becomes a vast sea of gravy. It becomes a sea of gravy which surrounds you on all sides and you suffocate in a voluminous sea of gravy. It's terrible. But it's all your own fault. You brought it upon yourself. You are

not the victim of it, you are the cause of it. Because it was you who spilt the gravy in the first place, it was you who handed over the bundle (p. 417).

Rebecca mentions about a mental status called mental elephantiasis. This condition, as understood from Rebecca's remarks, puts the blame of the traumatizing event to the traumatized person in the first place, which means the victim and the torturer are the same person. Just as the first appearance of the word 'baby' as a cue word to remember the traumatizing events for Rebecca, 'bundle' appears for the first time during the course of their conversation. The fragmented memory, which is the definition put forward by Caruth and fits the definition of the unrepresentability of trauma, is observed from this part of the play. Rebecca's trauma-inflicted mind starts to bring some of the undesirable memories back in a nonlinear way and in an amnesic haze. Therefore, this monologue can be regarded as a suitable example for the classical view of the literary trauma theory.

Rebecca:

I walked out into the frozen city. Even the mud was frozen. And the snow was a funny colour. It wasn't white. [...] It was as if there were veins running through it. And it wasn't smooth, as snow is, as snow should be. It was bumpy. And when I got to the railway station I saw the train. Other people were there. [...] I watched him walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers (p. 418).

This picture that Rebecca portrays with words seems to be an image of the atrocities which may cause trauma in Rebecca's mind. Her narration is fragmented and her expression of the events is not organized. Her narrative is linguistically undetermined. Her account here and through the rest of the play doesn't show a semiotic coherence. Just after giving detailed description about the place, she goes on to narrate one of the prompters of her trauma:

Rebecca

And my best friend, the man I had given my heart to, the man I knew was the man for me the moment we met, my dear, my most precious companion, I watched him walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers (p. 418-19).

Rebecca's traumatic state, as said earlier, can be read in a pluralistic approach to the literary trauma theory. In this excerpt, Rebecca was able to give the details and narrate the traumatizing event in detail. It may be true that Rebecca seems to uneasy to talk about the traumatizing sequence of events. But, when looked through McNally's regard, it seems plausible that Rebecca can talk about the highly stressful event, yet she abstains from it because she may want to 'forget' about it.

Devlin  
Did you see Kim and the kids?  
She looks at him.  
You were going to see Kim and the kids today.  
She stares at him  
Your sister Kim and the kids (p.419).

Devlin may be uneasy about crystallization of Rebecca's memory about the atrocity she witnesses. He instantly changes the topic by asking Rebecca a totally irrelevant question. Rebecca's answers bear Pinter's opinions about the usage of the language in that Rebecca explains how the children's use of language can be so simplistic. Carey Perloff (1993) makes the point even clearer: 'Even when setting work in nonspecific locations, and exploring generically named characters, what always interests Pinter is the English language and how that language, his own language, can be manipulated and distorted to inflict violence on another person.' (Perloff, 1993, p.15).

Rebecca  
Guess where I went after tea? To the cinema. I saw a film.  
Devlin  
Oh? What?  
Rebecca  
A comedy.  
Devlin  
Uh-huh? Was it funny? Did you laugh?  
Rebecca  
Other people laughed. Other members of the audience.  
Devlin  
But you didn't laugh?  
Rebecca  
Other people did. It was a comedy. There was a girl... you know... and a man. They were having lunch in a smart New York Restaurant. He made her smile.  
Rebecca

And then in the next scene he took her on an expedition to the desert, in a caravan. She'd never lived in a desert before, you see. She had to learn how to do it.  
Pause (p. 422-23).

Rebecca scales the humor level of the film by evaluating other people's reactions. Rebecca shows the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), because even while watching a comedy film, she cannot laugh or she only focuses on the parts which are evocative of her trauma. She mentions about the desert and the caravan, both of which can be linked to the extermination camps. Moreover, in the Bible, desert is defined as a place where the Devil lives. The caravan may also be reminiscent of the burning cabins and trigger the retrieval of the traumatic memories.

Rebecca

But there was a man sitting in front of me, to my right. He was absolutely still throughout the whole film. He never moved, he was rigid, like a body with rigor mortis, he never laughed once, he just sat like a corpse. I moved far away from him as I possibly could.

Silence (p. 424)

Rebecca withdraws herself from the man who was sitting still in that she resembles his unmoving posture to those who are as still as him because they are killed in the atrocity she has described earlier. From whatever she concentrates on, it can be deduced that Rebecca, as a traumatized survivor of a massive atrocity, has an attention span which mostly incorporates the items and ideas that are connected with the traumatizing incident.

Devlin

Now look, let's start again. We live here. You don't live...in Dorset... or anywhere else. You live here with me. This is our house. You have a very nice sister. She lives close to you. She has two lovely kids. You're their aunt. You like that (p. 424).

Devlin tries to divert the subject and the Rebecca's quotidian perceptions about herself. He tries to overpower her by correcting her convictions about herself. These lines are also a good example of comedy of menace which is a term used to describe Pinteresque. Devlin attacks Rebecca's mind in order to gain physical superiority above her.

Rebecca  
 I don't think we can start again. We started... a long time ago. We started. We can't start again. We can end again.  
 Devlin  
 But we've never ended.  
 Rebecca  
 Oh, we have. Again and again and again. And we can end again. And again and again. And again.  
 Devlin  
 Aren't you misusing the word 'end'? End means end. You can't end 'again'. You can only end once.  
 Rebecca  
 No. You can end once and then you can end again (p. 425).

There is a linguistic inefficiency in Rebecca's remarks. She appears to be expressing more but she only repeats the same word. As Kolk and his team state "people who undergo psychological trauma suffer speechless terror . . . the experience cannot be organized on a linguistic level and thus becomes not only inaccessible but also unrepresentable" (Kolk et al., 1995 p.40).

Rebecca  
 He stretched out his hand for the bundle  
 Echo for the bundle  
 Rebecca  
 And I gave him the bundle  
 Echo  
 the bundle  
 Rebecca  
 And that's the last time I held the bundle  
 Echo the bundle (p. 431).  
 She gets on the train and a woman asks her what had happened to her baby:  
 Rebecca  
 I don't have a baby.  
 Echo a baby  
 Rebecca  
 I don't know of any baby.  
 Echo of any baby  
 Pause  
 Rebecca  
 I don't know of any baby.  
 Long silence  
 Blackout (pp. 432-33)

The play finishes with the climax point of the incident which causes the trauma to ingrain into Rebecca's mind. Rebecca denies having a baby and tries to get

away from the ghastly image of the baby being torn from her. The reader/audience learns that the point where Rebecca or the woman Rebecca observed while these atrocities happen gets into the train is the time and place of the traumatizing event that have been described through the analysis. It is easily observable that Rebecca cannot reconcile with her trauma and she experiences the incomprehensibility of the survival, which fits Caruth's definition of the literary trauma theory.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has made use of the trauma terminology mainly coined by Caruth to represent the classical view, and McNally to represent the revisionist view. Interpreting the two plays through a pluralistic model has proven productive. In both plays the protagonists are victimized. They try to survive the trauma and the horror of their past lives. While Stanley is metaphorically killed when McCann and Goldberg break his eye glasses and eventually he is left in a state of inability to articulate his agony. In Rebecca's case in *Ashes to Ashes*, it is evidenced that she is more articulate than Stanley. Although she has moments of 'deferred action' in defining her feelings, she speaks the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust with clear references to the migrating people, separation of babies and mothers at train stations, and the concentration camps.

Stanley in *The Birthday Party* experiences blindness and represents the amnesic and unspeakable quality of trauma. Although there are instances when Rebecca depicts moments of denial, Devlin becomes a means for her to remember and articulate the horror. Rebecca is never totally amnesic. In McNally's view the reader/audience can still deduce a narrative account based on Rebecca's fragments of traumatic memories. In both cases, however, one cannot talk about rehabilitation. Although Rebecca is a survivor, in Caruth's terms "survival itself can be a crisis" in itself (Caruth 1995, p.155). Rebecca denies what has happened to her. In both plays the traumatic experience devastates the identity of the protagonists who are victimized by the mysterious outsiders in *The Birthday Party* and the consequences of the Holocaust in *Ashes to Ashes*. The fragmented narrations produced by the traumatized mindscapes have been re-interpreted through trauma theory. While the trauma is mostly unrepresentable in *The Birthday Party*, in *Ashes to Ashes* the protagonist can overcome her melancholia and grievance from time to time and represents her memories about crowd of people leaving with suitcases, masses walking into the sea and all the atrocities at the train stations and concentration camps.



Stanley and Rebecca portray highly traumatized protagonists; however, Stanley's representation of the trauma transforms into a deeper and less inarticulate one because he has been through a victimization process through the so called birthday party. Stanley, who presumably stays at the lodging house in the hope of reconciliation with his previous trauma, is tortured and goes through a near-death experience. Stanley's symbolical death subjugates his working mind and makes him an unclaimed victim. On the other hand, Rebecca's success in the articulation of her trauma supports McNally's opinion on the representability of trauma.

The verbal torture apparent in *The Birthday Party* hinders Stanley to create an explanatory language on neither his trauma nor his existing being. Nonetheless, Devlin portrays an interrogator who incessantly asks questions and seeks answers, thus prompting Rebecca to speak about her trauma. Therefore, Rebecca's ability to articulate the scenes of horrors with intact details can be affiliated with the representability of trauma in accordance with McNally's view.

In both of the plays, the survivors cannot explicate themselves in a coherent and chronological manner. This is suggestive of the unclaimed nature of trauma, which is a definition given by Caruth. Yet, Rebecca seems a more suitable example of the representability of the trauma because she has shown a perceptible degree of reconciliation and becomes more resilient about the traumatic incidences she has witnessed.

It is true that Pinter has not written the most joyous stories of the humankind but he has touched the sinister parts of human psyche and put a mirror in front of us to see into ourselves in a clear way. He says that he has never written a joyous play, yet he has been able to lead a very happy life. (Dodds, 2008).

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