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Entrapment in Relationships in August Strindberg's *The Father* and Harold Pinter's *The Collection*

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The way out is via the door. Why is it that no one will use this method?
Confucius (qouted in Laing, 1961, p. xii)

ABSTRACT

Modern drama is replete with different forms of entrapment in relationships and that is August Strindberg. Some authors have acknowledged their indebtedness to him and some have never mentioned it; Pinter is among the latter group. Though this paper does not investigate the influence of Strindberg on Pinter, studying these two plays, one can see the footsteps of Strindberg in Pinter's play. Employing Watzlawick and Laing's communication theory, this paper tries to investigate the shared concept of entrapment in relationships and the resemblance between these two playwrights.

Keywords: August Strindberg; Harold Pinter; communication theory; *The Father*; *The Collection*

INTRODUCTION

August Strindberg's influence on modern drama is indisputable. Many critics have studied his influence on modern drama especially from a technical point of view. Strindberg introduced symbolist and expressionistic techniques that were influential for the later existentialist plays by Jean-Paul Sartre, the absurdist plays by Maeterlinck or Beckett, or the realist/ absurdist plays by Pinter.

Esslin (1964) believes that in comparison to the absurdist playwrights, Pinter is looking for "a higher degree of realism in the theatre" (p. 206). Pinter scholars frequently have compared Pinter with Beckett but not that much work has been done on the influence of Strindberg on Pinter. Truly, Strindberg has influenced modern dramatists, some of them have acknowledged their indebtedness to Strindberg like Eugene O'Neill, and some, like Harold Pinter, have not. Roken (2009) argues that some dramatists "have drawn more from Strindberg than from any other playwright (like Eugene O'Neill and Lars Norén); those who have more or less unconsciously integrated something from his work or technique (like Harold Pinter); and those who have, in one way or another, tried to avoid Strindberg's influence (like jean-Paul Sartre, Heiner Müller, and Tom Stoppard)" (p. 164).

Investigating Pinter's different works, we found that Pinter has never acknowledged his indebtedness to Strindberg, though he got influence from him consciously or unconsciously. Actually, Harold Bloom (2011), in his influential book called *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a way of life*, stipulates: "Influence anxiety, in literature, need not be an affect in the writer who arrives late in a tradition. It always is an anxiety achieved in a literary work, whether or not its author ever felt it. (p. 6) In his view, influence stalks us all as influenza and we can suffer an anguish of contamination whether we are partakers of influence or victims of influenza (p. 12). However in *Anatomy of Influence*, he discusses about Shakespeare's plays and considers Shakespeare as the source of influence for all poets and generally speaking for all people. Pinter has never acknowledged his debt to Strindberg but his plays are very much like Strindberg's family plays in which the characters are entrapped in their relationships. This paper tries to investigate this shared concept through the light of communication theory of Watzlawick and Laing.

Pinter, very much like Strindberg, delineates different forms of entrapment in relationships. Like Strindberg, he shows characters who are entrapped in their relationships and the more they try, the less they can

clarify the situation. In both Strindberg and Pinter's plays, the characters are nice when they are considered on their own but they change to devils when they are put in each other's company and they are truly unable to step out of the situation they are engulfed in. This very characteristic of Strindberg and later on Pinter's characters, entrapment in relationships, is one of the main issues anti-psychiatrists and communication theorists are focusing on and discussing about.

METHOD

In communication theory of Watzlawick and Laing, people are studied in relation with other people and not in solitude. Communication theory posits a systematic view of interaction; it investigates how people get entrapped in their relationships and how they are unable to step out of it. So their definition of madness, for instance, is different from psychiatrists. For them, madness is created by the character imprisoned by the rules of his own interaction or his wrong perception of others in his relationships. For the communication theorists Schizophrenia, to give another example, is a social phenomenon. Laing (1967), the anti-psychiatrist, argues:

> In using the term schizophrenia, I am not referring to any condition that I suppose to be mental rather than physical, or to an illness, like pneumonia, but to a label that some people pin on other people under certain *social* circumstances (italics mine, p.103).

This new perspective of madness tries to answer this question that how it is possible that the people who are so nice when considered on their own, can be such devils when they are in one another's company. How is it that these people are entrapped in their relationships and cannot step out of it? The patterns studied here to show *how* the characters in both Strindberg and Pinter's plays are entrapped are the instances of pathological interactions. Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson (1967), in *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, assert:

> What we can *observe* in virtually all these cases of pathological communication is that they are vicious circles that cannot be broken unless and until communication itself becomes the subject of communication, in other words, until the communicants are able to metacommunicate. But to this they have to step *outside* the circle. (p. 96)

An example, given by Laing (2002), may clarify the situation better:

> This is how many people describe their experience of being unable to leave 'home', or the original other or nexus of persons in their life. They feel that their mother or family is smothering them. They are frightened and want to run away. But the more frightened they are, the more frightened and frightening their family becomes. They cling for security to what frightens them, like someone with a hand on a hot plate who presses his hand harder against it instead of drawing it away; or like someone, who begins to step on a bus just when it begins to move away and 'instinctively' clutches the bus, the nearest and most dangerous object, although the 'sensible' thing to do is to let go. (p. 130)

This is the case in both Strindberg and Pinter's plays. In their plays, the more the characters try to untie the knot, the more the noose tightens. The more the characters discuss their problems, the less they are able to solve them. The more they share their views with one another, the more they become isolated. In Strindberg's family plays, Luc Gilleman (2010) argues:

> The more cohesive a family, the more isolated from the outside world, the more prone it is to produce aberrant behavior. In Strindberg's time it was called the folie a` deux, or better still, the folie a` plusieurs– a sort of group departure from reality. (p. 219)

Watzlawick—in a chapter of his book named: "Paradoxical Communication"—traces the roots of this kind of pathological interaction leading to people's inevitable engulfment. He comes to this conclusion that it can also be originated from paradoxical injunction or double bind. Watzlawick,

Bavelas and Jackson (1967) believe that "paradox not only can invade interaction and affect our behavior and our sanity, but also it challenges our belief in the consistency, and therefore, the ultimate soundness of our universe" (p. 187). In paradoxical injunction, whatever choice a man chooses is wrong, he has no other choice other than badness or madness. He clarifies this "untenable situation" by comparing this situation with the condition of a man caught on the sixth floor of the burning house, left only with the alternatives of dying either in the fire or of jumping out the window (p. 216).

DISCUSSION

In Strindberg's *The Father*, the untenable situation happens to Captain who is not able to step out of the problem he is engulfed in. He is the victim, the bad or mad character of the play. Whatever he chooses to do is wrong and is the proof of his badness or madness.

The main conflict is raised by Captain himself and it is Laura who cultivates it deceitfully in a way that Captain is helplessly trapped and is labeled as crazy. Is Captain treacherously labeled mad, or he is truly mad? Krasner (2012) argues that Strindberg, like Chekhov and Ibsen, carries "the banner of realism to its ascendency, probing the falsehoods of bourgeois hegemony and drawing away the circumambience of deceit that permeated the middle class's arrogant self-perception" (p. 16). The play starts with doubt about the child issue in relation to its father. What's going on at the beginning of the play affects Captain and puts the seeds of doubt in his mind which is aggravated by the game his wife plays against him. Concerning the relationship between Emma and Nojd, captain asks Nodj whether he would finally marry Emma. He also asks Nojd if he is truly the child's father. Nojd answers that he will marry her but he is not sure and can never be quite sure about the child's root. He says that the child who is in the way of coming can be his own child or Ludwig's.

Doubt has already buried in the dark and deep parts of Captain's mind and plays a main role in the play; though it is delineated in the shape of concern for Bertha's future and education. Fahlgren (2009) in "Strindberg and the Woman Question" considers the decision making for Bertha's future as the maneuver of power, "the fight over Bertha's future is therefore a fight about power, about the right to define the laws of society and control financial matters." (p. 26).

Captain wants to dominate his daughter and her future; very similarly it is what her mother, Laura wants to do. Nietzsche analogizes the relationship between the characters in *The Father* to war; in his letter to Strindberg he admits: "I have twice read your tragedy with great emotion, it surprised me beyond all measure to become acquainted with a work in which my own conception of love—in its means, war; ay its heart, the hatred unto death of the sexes has been given such magnificent expression" (qtd in Rokem, 2010, pp. 95-96).

The subject of the game of power between Captain and Laura is Bertha. Captain is standing on one side and other women of the house are standing on the other side, taking Laura's side. Captain is not satisfied with the people he lives with; he feels that he is not safe among them. Very much like Edgar in *The Dance of Death*, he thinks all people around him are his enemies: "it is like going into a cage full of tigers, and if I [Captain] did not hold red-hot irons under their noses they might tear me to pieces at any moment!" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 54). Pinter, very similarly, shows characters whose perspectives are the same.

In his family plays, Strindberg asks himself how it is that two characters who are nice when considered on their own can be such devils when they are put in each other's company. In *The Father*, Strindberg depicts a situation in which one person's position is rendered "untenable" by others. Watzlawick argues that in double bind situation or paradoxical injunction, no change can be generated from within. He believes that people can change the situation if they step outside the pattern, while it is not possible in the untenable situation in which the people are engaged. It is impossible for the characters to stop the game once it is under way. Such situation Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson (1967) label "games without end" (pp.232-33).

The first time Laura and Captain face with each other in the play, they immediately start the power game and quarrel about Bertha's future. Captain believes that it is surely the father's right to bring up his child how he really wants and grants no right for his wife. On the other hand—as she says—Laura wants to break the knot which cannot be untied. She purposefully asks about Nojd while she knows about him completely and it is just a trick to draw Captain to the point she has planned before. Captain asks her what her judgment of Nojd's case is; she says "My judgment is the laws judgment". This statement may suggest, very tacitly, that she betrays her plan to Captain; though Captain unknowingly responds: "It is not written in 'the judgment of the law' who the child's father is" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 59). Laura now hears what she really wants to hear. So, as she says, what she hears is surely "remarkable" to her (Strindberg, 1953, p. 59).

This is the beginning of the torturing game. By fostering emotional conflict in the other person—as Laing says in the chapter called "Driving the other Crazy"—Laura tries to drive Captain crazy, which is very much identical with Laing's formula. Captain is unable to step out of the paradoxical injunction he is engulfed in. Again, the pathological relationship between this couple leads to entrapment in their interaction. They neither quit the relationship, nor are indifferent to it. They more and more submerge in the relationship and make it worse. The more they try to seemingly make the situation better and clarify it, the more they are trapped in their interaction and it becomes more enigmatic to the audience, as well. Margret, the nurse, astonishingly asks Captain "but, my God, why should two people torment the life out of one another; two people who are otherwise so good and wish all others well" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 65).

For making decision about Bertha's future, using Captain's own sayings, Laura repeatedly reminds Captain that the mother is nearer to the child, since "it has been discovered that no one can tell for certain who is the father of a child". She tells him "you do not know whether you are Bertha's father . . . how can you tell that I have not been unfaithful to you?" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 70). These remarks nourishes the seeds of doubt in Captain's mind about his true position in relation to his child. Captain is very much obsessed with Laura's sayings about the child issue. On the other hand, Laura had previously talked with the Doctor about Captain's strange deeds in his job. As she had found, from the doctor, that an insane person loses his civil and family rights, she asks the doctor now to examine Captain of any suspicion of insanity. She tells the doctor that "he [Captain] talked in the wildest way about the most extraordinary things. Such fancies, for instance, as that he [Captain] is not the father of his child" and that he once "confessed, in his own letter to the doctor, that he feared for his reason" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 73).

Thus, Laura is trying to drive Captain crazy switching from one emotional wave-length to another while on the same topic. Once she says that he is Bertha's father and once again she says that he is not. Laura, who is the exact example of what Laing discusses in his book, creates a paradoxical situation for Captain which leads to Captain's inevitable madness. Laing quotes from Searles who believes that there are six modes of driving the other person crazy or as Laing confirms six modes of "schizogenesis". The common factor in all of these modes is people's pathological interaction with others, which activates various areas of one's personality which are in opposition to one another. "Switching from one emotional wave-length to another while on the same topic" is one way out of the six ways Searles proposes. In other words, as Laing argues, one can interact with others with two or more possible courses of action that are in contrast with one another. And this is one of the ways of driving somebody mad. (qtd in Laing,1961,p. 132).

Laura's reaction to Captain's quarrel, for gaining power over her, fosters confusion for Captain. It is no longer easy for him to know 'who' he is, 'who' the other is and what is the situation they are 'in'. In this kind of seductive interactions, the more the characters try to solve the problem, the more serious it becomes. Confusion and befuddlement is the very characteristic of engulfment in the relationships from which characters are unable to step out. In Strindberg's relationship plays, the inverted reality in the seductive interactions leads to the untenable situation and the befuddlement not only of the characters but also of the audience.

Learning that Laura spreads reports about his mental condition everywhere and that she intercepts his letters which are vital for the progress of his job, Captain tries to stop her by offering her peace if she accepts a condition; that is to deliver him from his suspicions, so he will throw up the struggle. This time when Laura asks Captain what his suspicions are and when he tells her that they are about Bertha's origin, she assuredly declares that there is no doubt about this matter and Captain is surely Bertha's father. She tells Captain "you really can't expect me to take upon myself a sin that I have not committed" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 81). But Captain tells Laura that she has awakened these ceaseless suspicions in him and that he is in ambivalent situation. He has reasons and at the same time doesn't have reasons for his suspicions. He cannot take what Laura says for granted. Now he is in a condition that he hopes that his suspicions be true. Deception or more specifically, collusion has a big role in this play. Captain from the very beginning tries to authoritatively deceive Laura saying that he is in control of the game and she has no right in making decision for Bertha's future. Laura, on the other hand, resorts to contradictory sayings, a strategy which ultimately drives Captain crazy.

Laura accuses Captain of plotting against her to prove that she is guilty of infidelity, "so that you [Captain] can get rid of me and have absolute control over the child. But you [Captain] won't lure me into any such snare" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 81). Captain, on the other hand, tells her that he could not adopt another man's child if he were convinced of her guilt. In return, very surprisingly, Laura accuses him of lying: "you [Captain] lied just now when you said that you forgave me in advance" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 81). It is as if Laura tacitly accepts her guilt and again reinforces suspicions in Captain's mind. Captain, Laura, and also the audience are now very much befuddled and do not know how to untie the knot. Who is deceiving who? and why? The characters are truly entrapped in their relationships and cannot step out of it. At this part of the play, it seems that Laura herself gets confused and is engulfed in her own plot, trying to acquit herself of the scandal of infidelity.

Suddenly, hatred, accusation, suspicion, and fraud change to love and sweet remembrance of things past. Comparing Strindberg's works to music, critics call these frequent changes of characters' emotion, Syncopation. It represents Strindberg's ability to create quick and adroit changes when they are least expected. Both Captain and Laura confess that they both love each other; however Captain adds "when I was about to stretch out my hand and gather in its fruits, you suddenly cut off my arm" (Strindberg,

1953, p. 84). After all of these admirations and compliments, Captain frankly asks Laura if she hates him and she replies: "Yes, sometimes, when you are a man" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 85). The love and hate syncopations continue and love again changes to hatred and power struggle in which the weaker, as they say, should go "under in this struggle" and the stronger "will be in the right" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 85). When Laura's emotion changes to hatred again, she emphasizes that she will put Captain under control by the help of power of the law. Therefore, the torturing game begins again. Laura reveals her plot to Captain and tells him that she will show Captain's declaration of his insanity to the doctor. Captain gets angry so much that he throws a lighted lamp at Laura.

In spite of all Pastor's warnings to Laura, concerning Captain's love towards Laura and Bertha, Laura insists on her will to convince the doctor that Captain is not sane. Pastor tries to warn her of her doing, asking her: "Laura, tell me, are you blameless in all this?" but Laura very recklessly acquits herself saying "why should I be to blame because a man goes out of his mind?" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 88). Laura undermines the fact that it is she, who drives Captain mad with her contradictory sayings. The only thing she is thinking about is her triumph over Captain, to be the winner of the power game. Fahlgren (2009) argues:

> Her primitive will triumphs over the male intellect when she succeeds in making the Captain believe that he is not Bertha's father. Strindberg even makes her say that her actions were unplanned and that she never considered the consequences for her husband. (p. 26)

It is Laura who should determine about Captain's punishment, whether he deserves imprisonment, fine or detention in an asylum, since, as the doctor says, the act of violence committed by Captain can be considered as an outbreak of anger or of monomaniac by Laura. It is up to Laura how she interprets it. Laura interprets it as an evidence of his madness. And all the people in the house, in addition to the doctor, are preparing themselves for trapping Captain in the strait-waistcoat and putting him in the asylum. Though, it is not an approved madness by the doctor, it is advantageous for almost all parties that he should immediately be treated as insane. Clark (1925) argues that "there is a certain relief when the Captain is taken away; we are sure he will be better off away from his wife—indeed it is rather disappointing that Laura is not sent to a sanitarium" (p. 38). Even Captain himself accepts that he is crazy; though he sarcastically asks Pastor a question which shows that he knows how he has driven to this point:

> Pastor: Do you know, Adolf, that you are insane?
> Captain: Yes; I know that well enough. . . . I am mad but how did I become so? (Strindberg, 1953, p. 93)

Near the end of the play, when Bertha sees that Laura's health is not important for her father, she warns him that he is not her father if he talks like that about her mother. What Bertha says, again provokes Captain's paradoxical feelings towards her, love and hatred, and makes him very much angry. Again, Bertha unknowingly puts Captain in double bind, in paradoxical situation, in an untenable situation Laura for the first time put him in. Bertha puts him in a situation which inevitably leads to his madness or badness. Breuer (1980) believes: "schizophrenia is a contradictory response to a contradictory situation" (p. 111). It is "a response to certain kinds of interaction, namely to so-called untenable situations" which is truly seen in Captain (Breuer, 1980, p. 108).

Captain's contradictory attitude emanates from Laura's contradictory attitude towards Captain's fatherhood. Captain loves Bertha and at the same time hates her. Captain very nervously talks to Bertha and repeatedly notes that she is his daughter and he has power to dominate her. What he says is in complete contradiction to his previous sayings when he rejected Bertha and did not accept her as his daughter. So, the paradoxical love-hate relationship is not only between Captain and Laura but also between Captain and Bertha. He justifies his violence towards Bertha as the sign of love since he believes that life is a hell and death a heaven and children belong to heaven. Like Edgar, in *The Dance of Death*, he is the victim of entrapment in double bind, of engulfment in untenable situation from which he is unable to escape.

It is not a fair game between Captain and Laura, since Laura is stronger and wiser and both know it from the very beginning of the game. At the end of the play, when Captain is bound in a strait-jacket and is taken to the asylum, Laura sympathizes with him. She gets kind towards him again and tries to assure him that he is truly Bertha's father: "And with regard to your suspicions about the child, they are quite without foundation" (Strindberg, 1953, p. 98). But it is the very problem of Captain; he is oscillating between truths without foundations. This very ambivalent situation can lead him to madness or badness. Whatever he does is wrong since there is no proof for rightness of what he chooses. He himself is aware of the situation he is entrapped in:

> That is just what is so appalling! If at least there was any foundation for them, it would be something to take hold of, to cling to. Now there are only shadows that hide themselves in the bushes, and stick out their heads to grin; it is like fighting with the air, or firing blank cartridges at a sham fight. (Strindberg, 1953, p. 98)

If Captain accepts simply that he is Bertha's true father, what should he do with Laura's declaration that he is not? Since, nobody can prove it either scientifically or legally. If Laura is right, he will be bad. If he does not accept Bertha as his own true daughter, what should he do with Laura's notification that he is truly her father? If she is right, she will be mad. He chooses the second choice since Laura's insistence on the latter possibility may, from his point of view, be originated from her fear of scandal and consequently of losing control over Bertha. In the double bind situation or the untenable situation, Laing (1961) argues "the victim is caught in a cross-current of contradictory injunctions, or of attributions having the force of injunctions, in the midst of which he can do nothing right. There is no move he can make that will meet with unqualified confirmation by the other(s)" (p. 136). Entrapment of Strindberg's characters in their interactions is mostly because they cannot stay in ambiguity and on the other hand, neither can they transcend it nor be indifferent to it. As the very natural outcome of the pathological relationship between this couples who has paradoxical interaction, the more Captain tries to solve the problem and discovers the truth, the more he is befuddled and entrapped in the relationship and the tighter the noose will be.

In "The Collection", Pinter very much like Strindberg, depicts a character who is engulfed in a relationship from which there is no way out. The more James craves for the truth, the more he gets befuddled and entrapped in deceptions; and the more he thinks he knows, the more he gets distance from reality. He is the victim in the game whose main players are Stella (his wife), Bill and himself. Stella, very much like Laura, says contradictory sayings about her affair with Bill. Once she rejects, later on she moderates the story and reiterates it in another version. The same process repeats with Bill when James several times asks him to tell him the truth. What James gets from their sayings is totally in contrast with what they had said to him before. "One of the most initially puzzling aspects of 'The Collection' is the proliferation of different versions of 'the truth' which appears throughout the play", Morgan (1978) states (p. 165). Like Captain in *The Father*, James is entrapped in the game of contradictions which he cannot transcend nor can be indifferent to. He thinks that if he sees Bill he will understand the truth but paradoxically the more he sees Bill, the less he knows.

The first time James visits Bill, he asks him about the love affair happened in Leeds when he was there for the dress collection, but Bill completely denies his going to Leeds. James continues explaining to him about the details of what had happened in the hotel. He even mentions the number of the rooms in which Bill and his wife were. James tells Bill that his wife, Stella, has told him the entire story about their affair. In return, Bill firmly refuses:

> Bill: I was nowhere near Leeds last week, old chap. No where near your wife either, I'm quite sure of that. (Pinter, 1996, p. 119)

James is sure of what is claiming since his wife told him about her love affair with Bill. James refers to every detail of the event even what Bill had put on and the time exactly when he telephoned his wife that night. Bill now accepts that there was a love affair between him and her:

> Bill: She must have known she was married, too. Why did she feel it necessary . . . to do that? (Pinter, 1996, p. 119)

James craves for the truth to hear it from Bill's mouth, but the more he struggles, the more he faces contradictions and gets distance from the truth. The next time he visits Bill, he gets angry and bits Bill to the ground. This time Bill pleads him not to hurt him so he will tell James the whole truth. Bill then adds that what his wife has told him is just pure fantasy and that she has made up all that. James cannot believe what he tells him and continues interrogating him. The more he asks, the less he understands. The more he tries to clarify the situation, the more he is entrapped in deceptions and gets befuddled. Bill once denies seeing his wife but now confesses that he kisses her and then when James reminds him that Bill was sitting next to her when he called his wife, Bill very surprisingly corrects him and says: "not sitting. Lying" (Pinter, 1996, p. 25).

Bill and Stella are manipulating a game in which James unknowingly plays the role of a victim. James thinks that he knows more than the others and is resolutely after discovering the truth. When Harry talks about the man who came the day before to see Bill, Bill even deceives Harry and pretends that he does not know James and has not ever talked to him. Stella also plays her role well and tells James that what she had told him about her affair is the only truth. But when James tells Stella that he wants to

visit Bill again, Stella suddenly changes her story and says that she just met him in Leeds and nothing else happened. This time, James confusingly warns Stella that Bill has entirely confirmed her previous story.

Dukore (1974) believes that the play's chief concerns consist "of the revelation of patterns of character and behavior. Put another way, what happens is more important than what happened" (p. 83). The more James meets Bill, the more complicated the issue becomes; though very unwisely James repeats: "I do understand, but only after meeting him" (Pinter, 1996, p. 31). James is entrapped in a 'double bind' and it will be difficult for a person to remain sane while he is exposed to such a situation. Laing (1961) believes that a person in this situation "cannot make a single move without evoking a threatened catastrophe" (p. 138). Laing and Lee, Luc Gilleman (2008) says, "developed a simple notation system to represent the process of reciprocal monitoring whereby each partner in an interaction anticipates the other's moves and the account for the dialogues' apparent disconnectedness" (p. 82). The winner in interpersonal perception, like the game of chess, is a player who is not only able to predict every possible move but also responses to an antagonist's responses to each of those moves.

So as an ascending series of logical levels, the superiority is for one who achieves the highest level of insight. Laing (2002) proposes this very concise formula of Spiral Interpersonal Perception: (p. 99)

A(B)	how A sees B
A(B(A))	how A sees B seeing A
A(B(A(B)))	how A sees B seeing A seeing B

So as Luc Gilleman (2008) says, this view of interaction results in a "'vortex' or system of interlocking spiral perspectives" (p. 83). Of course, Pinter is not the only one who writes plays including games of mutual monitoring but it is Pinter who plots these games one or two steps further than "I know that you know." Bill warns James that reliance on other's reflections may not be useful for finding the truth by referring symbolically to mirrors.

> Bill: They are deceptive.
> James: Mirrors?
> Bill: Very. (Pinter, 1996, p. 34)

But James, the victim of the game, does not believe in it. He takes others' reflections as the only truth. Entrapped in their games and deceptions he gets more and more confused. As the stage direction reads:

> Bill stands by him [James] and looks. They look together, and then James goes to the left of the mirror, and looks again at Bill's reflection.
> James: I don't think mirrors are deceptive. (Pinter, 1996, p. 34)

When Harry, Bill's friend, goes to Stella and warns him that her husband has been bothering Bill with some fantastic stories, she apologizes Harry without letting him know that it was she who has plotted this fantasy and has planted these seeds in his mind. Meanwhile, James who is in Bill's house and is very much befuddled of all these contradictions nervously offers Bill to start a game, a muck duel symbolizing a power game. In the middle of the game just when Bill is hurt by the knife James throws at him, Harry enters the room and informs James of his wife's confession which makes the situation much more complicated for James. James confronts different contradictory reflections and he does not know which one is correct. Morgan (1978) correctly says that the stronger one in this relationship is the one who can face minimal illusions and the weaker one is the character who nurtures illusions (p. 169).

James assures them that he accepts what Harry and Bill told him and that he does not talk about this issue with his wife any longer. He is now at the verge of accepting the new expression when Bill again restarts the game of deception and insists that he wants to tell him the truth now and confesses that he never went to her room: "just talked about what we would do . . . if we did get to her room . . . two hours . . . we never touched . . . we just talked about it" (Pinter, 1996, p. 45). He is actually trapped between two realities or perhaps fantasies, that of his wife and that of Bill. James is oscillating between these contradictions or as he sees, between these truths. At the very end of the play when he helplessly asks Stella: "That's the truth, isn't it?", as the stage direction reads, "she just looks at him, neither confirming nor denying. Her face is friendly, sympathetic" (Pinter, 1996, p. 45). "Like Ruth, Stella controls in part because she knows and others do not know", Dukore (1974) says (p. 83). "Now faced with Stella herself, rather than his own constructed image of her, James renders himself vulnerable to resistance", Bean (1994) believes (p. 62). James very much like Captain in Strindberg's *The Father*, entrapped in the relationship in which the more he tries to clarify the situation, the more he is engulfed in. Accordingly, there is no truth in Pinter's plays and what matters and is the source of entrapment is characters' own perspective of others which is the source of their knowledge.

The related algorithm of spiral interpersonal perspective clearly shows that James meta-perspective of what Bill thinks of him is not correct and it is Bill whose meta-meta-perspective is operating correctly:

> J (B (J)) # B (J)
> But:
> B (J (B (J))) = J (B (J))

Bill and Stella have the superior insight. They are the main players starting and manipulating the game. So they are at least one level ahead of James.

S (J (S (J))) = J (S (J))

Thus, it is James who heedlessly plays the power game and is unknowingly entrapped in the game-like relationship they have plotted against him.

CONCLUSION

The role knowledge plays in the power game is inevitable. In Pinter's plays knowledge does not emanate from a specific truth the wiser one has access to, rather it originates from other's reflections and the winner is the one who is not the puppet in the hands of other players; a person who does not rely on others' reflections. Thus, the winner is a person who is at least one level ahead. In other words, the winner is the one whose insight is superior to others or as the algorithm of spiral interpersonal perspective demonstrates, his meta or meta-meta-perspective include other's perspectives or their meta-perspectives.

Luc Gilleman (2008) suggests, in Pinter's plays 'knowledge consists of a correct guessing and successful parrying of another's knowledge of one's own perceptions" (p. 89). So, the cause of entrapment of Pinter's characters can be traced in their own perception, their own perspectives of others, and their own interpretations. In his confusing games, the winner is the one whose perspective of the others' perspective is at least one level ahead. Pinter like Strindberg shows how characters are engulfed in their pathological interactions and how the noose tightens while the characters try to untie it. As it is investigated, entrapment in relationships is the shared characteristic in Strindberg and Pinter's plays, though a little bit difference originates from the cause of entrapment in their relationships. Paradoxical relationship in Strindberg's relationship plays is the cause of "inversion of reality" and consequently "double bind" or "paradoxical injunction" and finally entrapment in relationships, while in Pinter's plays the "spiral perspectives" or "reflections of reality" is the cause of "paradoxical injunction" and consequently the entrapment.

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