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VERBAL REPRESENTATION OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN HAROLD PINTER'S PLAYS *A NIGHT OUT* AND *THE HOMECOMING*

Summary. Harold Pinter was the playwright who always focused on a human life and all topics relevant to it in his plays. Among problems he raised in his works are alienation, loneliness, violence, fear, menace, threat, absurdity, uncertainty and senselessness of human life. This article is dedicated to the theme of family relationships in Harold Pinter's plays *A Night Out* and *The Homecoming*. The aim of this research is to analyze this issue in terms of stylistics. The object of our investigation is the text of these plays and its subject is verbal representation of family relationships in the above-mentioned plays. In both plays the author describes difficult, unharmonious relationships within a family – between parents and children, among children and among older generation. Harold Pinter shows repressive, authoritative parents who restrict their children's freedom asserting dominance over them and controlling their lives. It is manifested in frequent use of parallel constructions with anaphoric repetition of personal pronoun "I", imperative mood with exclamation mark at the end and strings of homogeneous predicates, thus, ironically imitating the process of interrogation. In order to influence their children parents often manipulate them evoking guilt and shame. The playwright also depicts crudeness within such families when family members use offensive swear words and vulgarisms towards each other. They constantly ignore communicational and emotional needs of each other being silent and not answering the questions of their interlocutors. The unwillingness to talk to each other is verbalized in numerous pauses. The consequences of such failed relationships are dire. Firstly, everyone in a family feels utter loneliness reflected in emotional monologues of characters with break-in-the-narrative where all sentences merge into one with the help of numerous commas. Secondly, seeing and experiencing such violence and rudeness children imitate their parents revealing aggressive, crude and authoritative behaviour towards others.

Key words: Theatre of the Absurd, Existentialism, failed family relationships, repressive parents, dominance.

Formulation of the problem. H. Pinter represented Theatre of the Absurd whose ideology is based on Existentialism and whose focus is on senseless human existence. In his plays, Harold Pinter always depicted a human being, a complex, contradictory human nature and a miserable human life. The issues he raised were of immense social importance. Among them were the themes of alienation, loneliness, violence, fear, menace, threat, absurdity, uncertainty and senselessness of human life.

The aim of this research is to analyze family relationships in Pinter's plays *A Night Out* and *The Homecoming* in terms of stylistics. **The object of our investigation** is the text of these plays and **its subject** is verbal representation of family relationships in the above-mentioned plays.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Not many research papers have been dedicated to the issue of family and relationships within the family. Among such works are "Repressive mothers and subjected sons in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* and *A Night Out*" by S. Odashima [1]; "The conflict of gender performance in Pinter's *The Birthday party* and *The Homecoming*" by A. Chafia [2]; "Harold Pinter's *A Night Out*: A study in the political connotations and the abuse of power" by L. Bseiso [3]; "Family and sexuality in H. Pinter's *The Birthday party* and *The Homecoming*" by R. Tabassum [4]; "Power struggle in three plays of Harold Pinter" (*The Homecoming*, *Old Times* and *Betrayal*) by P. Özütemiz [5] and "Harold Pinter's portrayal of woman in *The Homecoming*" by A.R.A. Almaarof [6]. Nevertheless, none of them provides a thorough stylistic analysis of this issue. **The novelty of our study** lies in a detailed comparative stylistic analysis of both plays.

The presentation of the main research material. In the three-act play "*A Night Out*", Pinter describes difficult, devoid of harmony, relationship between a mother, Mrs. Stokes, and her son Albert Stokes, who is in his late twenties. Mrs. Stokes is shown as a repressive mother who restricts her son's freedom asserting dominance over him. In order to control him she applies a diversity of psychological tactics. When Albert is in a hurry for the office party he is invited to, she ignores this fact and tries to delay him:

Albert: Look, Mum, where's my tie? The blue one, the blue tie, where is it?...

Mother: What do you want your tie for?

Albert: I want to put it on...

(She goes to the gas stove, examines the vegetables, opens the oven and looks into it.)

Mother (gently): Well, your dinner'll be ready soon. You can look for it afterwards. Lay the table, there's a good boy.

Albert: Why should I look for it afterwards? You know where it is now.

Mother: You've got five minutes. Go down to the cellar, Albert, get a bulb and put it in Grandma's room, go on [7, 204]

The playwright describes her as an authoritative mother. At first she ignores Albert's question pretending to be busy in the kitchen. She is gentle to her son addressing him as "a good boy" expecting him to obey to her. Afterwards, seeing his unwillingness to do it, she becomes stricter and ruder using imperative mood and a string of homogeneous predicates in her last cue – *you've got; go down; get; put; go on*. After an unsuccessful attempt at forcing Albert to obey to her, she does her best to intrude into his private life: "*You're going out?; Where are you going?; You are going to Mr. King's?; Are you leading a clean life?; You're not leading an unclean life,*

are you?; You're not messing about with girls, are you?; If you're going to the firm's party, there'll be girls there, won't there? Girls from the office" [7, 205-207]. Throughout her conversation with Albert she constantly asks him questions which Pinter ironically shows as an interrogation. Finally, her purpose is to manipulate him and play on his feelings to his family evoking guilt and shame when she recalls his deceased father and grandmother:

Albert: *I don't know why you keep calling that room Grandma's room, she's been dead ten years.*

Mother: *Albert!.. That's no way to speak about your Grandma....*

Albert: *I'm not saying a word against Grandma –*

Mother: *You will upset me in a minute, you go on like that* [7, 204].

Mother: *Your father would turn in his grave if he heard you raise your voice to me. You're all I've got, Albert. I want you to remember that. I haven't got anyone else. I want you... I want you to bear that in mind.*

Albert: *I'm sorry... I raised my voice.* [7, 206]

Mother: *You promise that you won't upset your father?*

Albert: *My father? How can I upset my father? You're always talking about upsetting people who are dead!*

Mother: *Oh, Albert, you don't know how you hurt me, you don't know the hurtful way you've got, speaking of your poor father like that.*

Albert: *But he is dead.*

Mother: *He's not! He's living! (Touching her breast.) In here! And this is his house!*

Albert: *Look, Mum, I won't be late... and I won't...* [7, 207]

Mother: *...I don't know what your father would say. Coming in this time of night. It's after twelve o'clock... [7, 232]*

Mother: *...Your father was a good man. He had high hopes of you... [7, 233]*

In these three examples, we can see how Albert's mother manages to manipulate him by using 1) morphological and lexical repetition of key words "upset"; "hurt"; "your father"; "your grandma"; 2) an idiom "turn in his grave"; 3) an epithet "poor" referring to his father and 4) verbs/phrases like "remember", "bear in mind", "raise voice", "that's no way to speak about" – all aiming at putting him to shame. Moreover, the author ironically mentions that while saying that Albert's deceased father is still living she touches her breast, and a reader understands how artificial her speech is. Finally, we see that she achieves what she wants – Albert softens, apologizes and promises not to be late. Among further reproaches of hers are the following rebukes: "I keep quiet about what you expect me to manage on. I never grumble. I keep a lovely home, I bet there's none of the boys in your firm better fed than you are... Don't forget what it cost us to rear you, my boy, I've never told you about the sacrifices we made, you wouldn't care, anyway... If you aren't content to leave your own mother sitting here till midnight, and I wasn't feeling well, anyway, I didn't tell you because I didn't want to upset you, I keep things from you, you're the only one I've got, but what do you care, you don't care, you don't care, the least you can do is sit down and eat the dinner I cooked for you, specially for you" [7, 233]. All the sentences in this monologue merge into one thanks to numerous commas, thus intensifying emotionality. Each parallel construction starts with personal pronoun "I" with the help of which Albert's mother wants to remind him how much she does and has done for him.

Mrs. Stokes even wants to decide herself what her son should wear and what he should look like: "Turn round. No, stand still. You can't go out and disgrace me, Albert. If you've got to go out

you've got to look nice. There, that's better. (She dusts his jacket with her hand and straightens his tie.)... (She takes a handkerchief from a drawer.) Here you are. A nice clean one. (She arranges it in his pocket.) You mustn't let me down, you know. You've got to be properly dressed. Your father was always properly dressed. You'd never see him out without a handkerchief in his breast pocket. He always looked like a gentleman" [7, 212–213].

The result of this constant control and overprotection is that Albert's colleagues consider him "a mother's boy" and mock at him, which is obvious in the following ironic characters' lines and author's remark:

Kedge: *I bet his Mum's combing his hair for him, eh? (He chuckles and sits.)* [7, 213]

(Kedge regards Albert.) Kedge: *How's your Mum, Albert?* [7, 216].

Eileen: *You got a flat of your own?*

Albert: *No. Have you?*

Eileen (forlornly): *No.*

Joyce: *You live with your mother, don't you?*

Albert: *Yes.*

Joyce: *Does she look after you all right, then?* [7, 224].

Gidney (very deliberately): *You're a mother's boy. That's what you are. That's your trouble. You're a mother's boy.* [7, 230].

Characters' sharp, ironic words, questions are intentionally used to offend Albert and Pinter's remarks only prove it and strengthen the effect. Later, on next pages, a reader understands the reason for such behaviour of Albert's mother – Albert is all she has and she does not want to lose him. In one of the conversations with Albert she herself explains her loneliness without him and her love for him: "You leave me in this house all alone..." [7, 231]; "But one thing hurts me, Albert... Not for years, not for years, have you come up to me and said, Mum, I love you, like you did when you were a little boy. You've never said it without me having to ask you. Not since before your father died. ... you're the only one I've got..." [7, 233]. This confession becomes a climax of the play. Moreover, when Albert is away, the playwright shows us how nervous his mother is. The author's remark highlights her multiple and unnecessary actions: "The kitchen. The mother is putting Albert's dinner into the oven. She takes the alarm clock from the mantelpiece and puts it on the table. She takes out a pack of cards, sits at the table. And begins to lay out a game of patience. Close up of her, broodingly setting out the cards. Close up of the clock. It is seven forty-five" [7, 217]. Pinter draws our attention to the detail that Mrs. Stokes puts the alarm clock closer – he twice uses detachment to emphasize it. Thus, we understand that she is worried, does everything mechanically, without much thinking and wants to see the time.

Closer to the end of the play in act three when Albert meets a girl a reader has a breach of expectations. Albert, who was always meek and soft, suddenly becomes cruel, rude, violent and authoritative: "...My ash? I'll put it where I like!... (warningly) Mind how you talk to me. (He crumples the photo.) ... Get up... Get up! Up!... Walk over there, to the wall. Go on! Get over there. Do as you're told. Do as I'm telling you. I'm giving the orders here. ... Come on, come on, pick up those shoes. Those shoes! Pick them up! Bring them over here. Put them on" [7, 243–245].

We understand that his behaviour is the consequence of his relationship with his mother – he copies her in giving orders and trying to control the situation. All the sentences are imperative and the majority of them have an exclamation mark at the end, thus underlining Albert's aggressiveness.

The final scene of the play, scene three, is predictable by the reader. Eventually Albert returns home to his mother. He is speechless but Mrs. Stokes is talkative. Actually, the playwright builds this scene on Mrs. Stokes' monologue. At first she questions Albert ("Do you know what the time is?"; "Where have you been?"), then Mrs. Stokes reproaches him ("I don't know what to say to you, Albert. To raise your hand to your own mother. You've never done that before in your life. To threaten your own mother. Aren't I a good mother to you?") and ultimately, she soothes him and expresses her care and love ("Everything I do is xxx is for your own good. You should know that. You're all I've got."; "I'm going to forget it. I'm going to forget all about it. You looked washed out. We'll have your holiday in a fortnight. We can go away. We'll go away xxx together. It's not as if you're a bad boy ... you're a good boy xxx I know you are xxx it's not as if you're really bad, Albert, you're not xxx you're not bad, you're good xxx you're not a bad boy, Albert, I know you're not xxx") [7, 246–247]. The emotionality of this scene is achieved through syntactic and lexical repetition (numerous parallel constructions and repetition of pronouns "I" / "you" / "we", adjectives "good" / "bad" and verbs "know" / "forget" / "go away"), plentiful break-in-the-narrative and author's remark (five "pauses" which follow excerpts of the monologue and author's remarks denoting emotions / feelings – "reproachfully, near to tears"; "her reproach turns to solicitude"; "gently"; "she strokes his hand"). It becomes clear to a reader that submissive Albert will never leave his dominating mother.

The Homecoming, a two-act play, is another Pinter's work which deals with family relationships but in comparison with the previous play it highlights relationships not only between a parent and a child but also among children. It describes the homecoming of Teddy and his wife Ruth to Teddy's family – his father Max, his uncle Sam and his brothers Lenny and Joey.

From the very beginning of the play a reader notices quite unusual relationships within a family. All family members do not understand and cannot hear each other:

Max: What have you done with the scissors? **Pause.** I said I'm looking for the scissors. What have you done with them? **Pause.** Did you hear me? I want to cut something out of the paper. **Pause.** Do you hear what I'm saying? I'm talking to you! Where's the scissors? [7, 23].

In this example Max addresses Lenny asking to give him a pair of scissors but Lenny is deaf to Max's request and does not say a word. The emotional tone of this conversation is achieved by a number of repetitious interrogative sentences and also an exclamatory one. One more illustrative example is the following excerpt:

Max: There's an advertisement in the paper about flannel vests. Cut price. Navy surplus. I could do with a few of them. **Pause.** I think I'll have a fag. Give me a fag. **Pause.** I just asked you to give me a cigarette. **Pause.** Look what I'm lumbered with. I'm getting old, my word of honour. You think I wasn't a tearaway? I could have taken care of you, twice over. I'm still strong. You ask your Uncle Sam I was. But at the same time I always had a kind heart. Always. **Pause.** I used to knock about with a man called MacGregor. I called him Mac. You remember Mac? Eh? **Pause.** Huhh! We were two of the worst hated men in the West End of London. I tell you, I still got the scars. We'd walk into a place, the whole room'd stand up, they'd make way to let us pass... **Pause.** [7, 24].

We can observe another attempt of Max to strike a conversation with his son Lenny but numerous pauses, as in the previous example, clearly show that Lenny is unwilling to talk to his father

though Max seems to feel solitary and needs a good listener while recalling his past.

One more striking feature of this family relationship is crudeness. All family members can easily use such offensive swear words towards each other as: a bad bitch; you stupid sod; I'll chop your spine off; your lousy filthy father; you bitch; you paralyzed prat; bloody animals; a lousy stinking rotten loudmouth; a bastard uncouth sodding runt; an old grub; a crippled family; three bastard sons; bleeding years [7, 23–63]. Moreover, when Max sees Ruth, his daughter-in-law, he starts insulting her using vulgarisms – "tart"; "stinking pox-ridden slut"; "smelly scrubber"; "bitch"; "filthy scrubber"; "whore"; "slopbucket" and "disease" [7, 57–58].

Brothers Max and Sam (the older generation) have strained relationship. Noticing that Sam "is getting rid of Max's leavings, putting them in the bin" [7, 54], Max lets out a cry of bitterness: "You resent making my breakfast, that's what it is, isn't it? That's why you bang round the kitchen like that, scraping the frying-pan, scraping all the leavings into the bin, scraping all the plates, scraping all the tea out of the teapot... that's why you do that, every single stinking morning. I know. Listen, Sam. I want to say something to you. From my heart. I want you to get rid of these feelings of resentment you've got towards me. I wish I could understand them [7, 55]." This monologue reveals Max's deep hurt. The author emphasizes this feeling with the help of various stylistic devices – asyndetically joined parallel constructions with anaphoric repetition of the word "scraping", affective epithet "stinking morning" and also detachment "from my heart" which hints at his sincerity at this moment.

Gradually the reader discovers one more shocking detail. Having been married for six years, Teddy returns home wishing to introduce his wife. The paradox is that his family does not even suspect that he has been married, has a wife and children. Thus, in conversation with Ruth, Lenny is surprised to find out the following information:

Lenny: You must be connected with my brother in some way. The one who's been abroad.

Ruth: I'm his wife...

Lenny: Yes, it's funny seeing my old brother again after all these years. It's just the sort of tonic my Dad needs, **you know**. I was surprised myself when I saw Teddy, **you know**. Old Ted. I thought he was in America.

Ruth: We're on a visit to Europe.

Lenny: What, both of you?

Ruth: Yes.

Lenny: What, you sort of live with him over there, do you?

Ruth: We're married.

Lenny: On a visit to Europe, eh? Seen much of it?

Ruth: We've just come from Italy.

Lenny: **Oh**, you went to Italy first, did you? And then he brought you over here to meet the family, did he? **Well**, the old man'll be pleased to see you, **I can tell you**.

Silence. You and my brother are newly-weds, are you?

Ruth: We've been married six years [7, 44–47].

Lenny constantly reasks Ruth in the form of general and disjunctive questions and his utterance is full of discourse markers which clearly indicates his astonishment and revelation.

This play bears a striking similarity to the play "A Night Out" – Pinter presents an authoritative parent and his/her influence on children. In act two Max makes an important decision instead of Ruth and Teddy – Teddy returns to his children while Ruth stays in this

family and earns money as a prostitute: “It’s not a bad idea to have a woman in the house. Maybe we should keep her. We’ll put her on the game. She can earn the money herself – on her back. The only thing is, it’ll have to be short hours. We don’t want her out of the house all night. After all, the last thing we want to do is wear the girl out. She’s going to have her obligations this end as well” [7, 85–88]. Teddy is so much controlled by his father that he has nothing against this decision. What is more, before a departure Teddy gives Ruth the last instruction: “But Ruth, I should tell you... that you’ll have to pull your weight a little, if you stay. Financially. My father isn’t very well off” [7, 91].

Conclusion. Thus, as one can see, both plays *A Night Out* and *The Homecoming* highlight broken family relationships based on restriction of freedom, dominance, control, intrusion into private life, manipulation, overprotection, loneliness, misunderstanding and crudeness. The playwright shows that, as a result of these failed relationships within a family, the younger generation imitates the behaviour of the older one and shows authoritative, rude and suppressive conduct towards others. The idea of such poor relationships is manifested in various stylistic devices and expressive means – imperative mood, clusters of interrogative sentences, irony, morphological and lexical repetition, parallel constructions, epithets, break-in-the-narrative, detachment and swear words. Also, Pinter often employs the form of emotional monologue and plentiful author’s remark aiming at revealing characters’ feelings of solitude and being ignored, misunderstood.

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Бернар Г. Б. Вербальна репрезентація сімейних стосунків у п’єсах Гарольда Пінтера «Нічний вихід» та «Повернення додому»

Анотація. Гарольд Пінтер був драматургом, який у своїх п’єсах завжди фокусував увагу на житті людини та усіх дотичних до цього темах. Зокрема, він піднімав такі теми як: відчуження, самотність, жорстокість, страх, загроза, погроза, абсурдність, непевність та безмістовність людського життя. Цю статтю присвячено проблемі сімейних стосунків у п’єсах Гарольда Пінтера «Нічний вихід» та «Повернення додому». Метою дослідження є стилістичний аналіз цієї проблеми. Об’єктом нашого дослідження є текст цих п’єс, тоді як предметом є вербальна репрезентація сімейних стосунків у вищезгаданих п’єсах. У обох творах автор описує складні, позбавлені гармонії стосунки у межах сім’ї – між батьками та дітьми, серед дітей та серед старшого покоління. Гарольд Пінтер зображає репресивних, авторитарних батьків, які обмежують свободу своїх дітей, утверджуючи домінування над ними та контролюючи їхні життя. Це виявляється у частому використанні паралельних конструкцій з анафоричним повтором особового займенника «я», наказового способу зі знаком оклику у кінці та низок однорідних присудків, іронічно імітуючи у такий спосіб процес допиту. Аби вплинути на своїх дітей, батьки часто маніпулюють ними, викликаючи у них почуття провини та сорому. Драматург також вказує на те, що таким сім’ям притаманна грубість, яка виявляється у образливих, лайливих, вульгарних словах, сказаних одне одному. Члени сім’ї постійно ігнорують комунікативні та емоційні потреби одне одного, тримаючи мовчанку та не відповідаючи на питання своїх співрозмовників. Небажання розмовляти одне з одним вербалізується у численних паузах. Наслідки таких зруйнованих стосунків є жахливими. По-перше, кожен у родині відчуває цілковиту самотність, відображену у емоційних монологах персонажів із апосіопезою, де усі речення зливаються в одне за допомогою численних ком. По-друге, відчуваючи таку грубість, жорстокість, діти починають імітувати своїх батьків, виявляючи агресивну, авторитарну поведінку до інших.

Ключові слова: театр абсурду, екзистенціалізм, зруйновані сімейні стосунки, репресивні батьки, домінування.