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MEMORY PLAYS: HAROLD PINTER'S *OLD TIMES* AND ANTHONY NEILSON'S *PENETRATOR*

Mustafa BAL*

Abstract

As a much-discussed part of the human mind, memory today is an interdisciplinary subject studied by a variety of academic fields such as psychology, sociology, psychiatry, cultural studies, and literature. In British drama, it finds a reflection with the term "memory plays" whose representative playwright in the twentieth century is Harold Pinter. On the other hand, it can be observed that Anthony Neilson, emerging as a voice of the British In-Yer-Face drama of the 1990s, makes an emphatic use of memory in his plays like his predecessor. In this sense, this paper argues that Anthony Neilson's playwriting shows resemblances to Harold Pinter's, which is acknowledged as the *Pinteresque*, that, more specifically, Pinter's *Old Times* (1971) and Neilson's *Penetrator* (1993) share much in their use of memory, and analyses the particularities each playwright employs in their utilisation of this concept within their plays.

Key Words: *Memory, Memory Plays, Harold Pinter, Old Times, Anthony Neilson, Penetrator*.

BELLEK OYUNLARI: HAROLD PINTER'IN *ESKİ ZAMANLAR* VE ANTHONY NEILSON'IN *DELİCİ* ADLI OYUNLARI

Özet

İnsan aklının çokça tartışılan bir bölümü olan bellek günümüzde psikoloji, sosyoloji, psikiyatri, kültürel çalışmalar ve edebiyat gibi çeşitli akademik alanlarda çalışılmakta olan disiplinler arası bir konudur. İngiliz tiyatrosunda, yirminci yüzyılda, Harold Pinter'ın temsilcisi olduğu "bellek oyunları" kavramıyla bir yansıma bulur. Öte yandan İngiltere'de 1990'lı yılların Yüzevurumcu Tiyatro'sunun yükselen sesi Anthony Neilson'ın da belleği selefi Pinter gibi oyunlarının önemli bir unsuru haline getirdiğini gözlemliyoruz. Buradan hareketle bu çalışmamızda, Anthony Neilson'ın oyun yazımının *Pintervari* diye adlandırılan Harold Pinter'ın oyun yazım üslubuna benzerlikler taşıdığını, daha özelde Pinter'ın *Eski Zamanlar* (1971) adlı oyunu ile Neilson'ın *Delici* (1993) adlı oyununun bellek kullanımları bakımından çokça ortak özelliğe sahip olduklarını tartışıyor ve yazarların bu oyunlarında bellek kavramı kullanımlarında ortaya koydukları özellikleri inceliyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bellek, Bellek Oyunları, Harold Pinter, Eski Zamanlar, Anthony Neilson, Delici.*

* Assist. Prof. Dr., Department of English Language and Literature, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, ANKARA.
e-mail: dr.mustafabal@gmail.com, (orcid.org/0000-0002-4839-1800)

> "If any one faculty of our nature may be called more wonderful than the rest, I do think it is memory. There seems something more speakingly incomprehensible in the powers, the failures, the inequalities of memory, than in any other of our intelligences. The memory is sometimes so retentive, so serviceable, so obedient; at others, so bewildered and so weak; and at others again, so tyrannic, so beyond control! We are, to be sure, a miracle every way; but our powers of recollecting and of forgetting do seem peculiarly past finding out" (Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 149).

A sudden appearance of a third party from the past is mostly an unwelcome intrusion into the zone of the other two in the present; yet, the situation might be even more unpleasant and more complex if each of these three people gather in that zone for a struggle of dominance over one another by trying to manipulate the past and the present each for their own benefit: this is the idea at the core of both Harold Pinter's *Old Times* (1971) and Anthony Neilson's *Penetrator* (1993). Harold Pinter, as it is well known, is a writer of memory plays. Most of Pinter's plays refuse to present a clear past for their characters or events. Pinter sees the past as a misty place and reflects it accordingly in his plays. He blurs the line between the past and the present and displays the past as it is perceived by his characters in the present. Therefore, for Pinter, past experiences shape the present situations of characters. Anthony Neilson, too, is a *memorist*. *Normal: The Düsseldorf Ripper* (1991), which can easily be considered as the play that pulled attractions on Neilson, follows a retrospective representation, and it is, as Wehner, the lawyer and also the narrator in the play, tells the audience in his opening speech, "only the memory of a memory" (Neilson, 1998: 3). Considering these, this paper examine Harold Pinter's and Anthony Neilson's use of memory in their *Old Times* and *Penetrator*, respectively, and studies the particularities each playwright employs in their utilisation of the concept.

To begin with, it should be noted that Neilson, who, with his confrontational, taboo-breaking and disturbing dramatic aesthetics; that is, as an in-yer-face playwright of the 1990s, treads in the footsteps of Pinter, whose oeuvre had already won him a unique place in British drama, with the set of dramatic practices summarized in the term *Pinteresque*. Neilson continues the eerie, menacing, Pinteresque atmospheres by adopting settings, contexts and dialogues, which are even more restraining and suffocating: the chill of the last scene of Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*, when the hitman Ben points the gun towards his friend Gus feels not that cold when contrasted with the coldblooded killings of Peter Kurten; the unfeeling, monstrous serial-killer character of Neilson's *Normal*.[1] As for the two particular plays this paper studies, it would not be wrong to note that

[1] Neilson's employment of outside menace and pauses further contribute to the Pinteresque in his playwriting as the following dialogues from *Penetrator* illustrate:

…*And then the door bell rings. They look at each other, horrified*.
Alan: Who's that?
Max: *I* don't know, do I? I haven't got X-ray fucking eyes!
Alan: Are you expecting anybody?
Max shakes his head.
Max: Answer it, then.
Alan: *You* answer it.
Max (pause): What if it's Laura?
They stare at each other. Pause.
You answer it.
Alan: I *always* have to answer it!
It rings again. (Neilson, 1998: 76-77)

And here is an example of the Pinteresque pauses in *Penetrator*:

Tadge: Have you had your hair cut?
Pause. Alan *looks puzzled*.
Alan (*pause*. *Nods*) Not recently.
A long pause.
Max: But maybe since you last saw Tadge.
Alan: (*pause*. *Nods*) Probably.
Tadge: It suits you.
Pause. Alan nods.
Alan: D'you take sugar?
Pause. Tadge looks at Max.
Max: You used to take about four.
Pause. Tadge looks back at Alan.
Tadge: Four.
Pause… (Neilson, 1998: 79)

Neilson's adherence to the Pinteresque is first seen in terms of the setting as both *Old Times* and *Penetrator* are one-room plays. Observing this Pinteresque quality of Neilson's play, Marc Shaw in his article "Unpacking the Pinteresque in *The Dumb Waiter* and Beyond" details the relation between the two plays with the following words: "In *Penetrator*, Neilson mirrors the room play motif of Pinter's early plays like *The Dumb Waiter*. However, Neilson refashions Pinter's model to create a room that changes from dystopian horror to a hopeful final conclusion. *Penetrator's* resolution is a clearing that we arrive to *after* experiencing components of the *Pinteresque*: the ambiguities, the menace, the terror and threats from authority, all drift away like fog" (2009: 221). John Bull also addresses the Pinteresque one-room quality found in *Penetrator* when he sees the play as "a version of the 'invaded room' theatre" (2011: 349). In addition to these, Neilson's placing the haunting past and its reflections and consequences in the present into the core of *Penetrator*, and his choice of the use of memory as the driving force of the action of his play are also what brings him so close to the principles of the Pinteresque in general and especially in *Old Times*. Hereafter, it is this common characteristic – the use of memory – found in both *Penetrator* and *Old Times* that this paper examines in detail.

That memory creates a sense of ambiguity both in *Old Times* and *Penetrator* may be the starting point for the analysis in this study. Memories of the characters in both plays are blurred or clouded. To start with, in *Old Times*, it is significant to observe that Pinter's playing with his characters' memories makes ambiguity a keystone for the play as there are three different memories about the same past. It is a past in which the only link for the only three characters of the play (Deeley, Kate, and Anna) seems to be Anna – Deeley's wife – whose only friend and ex-roommate surprisingly is unknown to Deeley's knowledge. Moreover, it is a past in which Kate poses differently in Anna's and Deeley's memories. Anna summarizes this ambiguous confusion about the past as she says, "[t]here are some things one remembers even though they never happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them they take place" (Pinter, 1971: 31-32). James L. McClelland in his article "Memory as a Constructive Process: The Parallel Distributed Processing Approach" observes this dubiousness of memory in Pinter's *Old Times* by addressing the equivocality of the reminiscences each character reflects from his or her perspective: "For each, these reminiscences have become embedded in a complex, inconsistent, and self-serving personal history that does not stand up well to the reminiscences of the other. […] Cloudlike, forever changing, memories are clearly not like snapshots taken on a day long ago and pulled out years later from the back of a drawer" (2010: 129). Thus, Pinter in *Old Times* works on the idea that people, no matter if they are husbands or wives or close friends to each other, may have artificial and superficial relationships without openly shared experiences from the past. Each of the three characters seems to have put up walls against one another, thus creating their loneliness, instead of forming bridges to communicate well with each other. Therefore, the whole play becomes a construction arena for these quarrelsome characters; the one who builds the best bridge between the past and the present against his/her opponent(s) will be the winner.

In *Penetrator*, on the other hand, there is even more ambiguity created by means of memories. Observing this uncertainty in the play, Trish Reid, including *Penetrator* into her observation about three of Neilson's plays, writes, "Finally, the action of all three plays unfolds on unstable ground: witnesses are often unreliable; memories, because they are so radically subjective, are unverifiable; chronologies are uncertain" (2017: 27). To explain this uncertainty, it can be claimed that the clouded memory functions twofold in *Penetrator*: the foundations of memory is constructed sometimes on a mental zone of fantasy and other times on a place that harbours cryptic events for which the play functions as a medium of revelation. For example, the play presents no clues for the mind-confusing identity problem of Tadge's real father, whether it is Ronnie as Max knows it or not as Tadge claims to have "[seen] it written on [his] file" (Neilson, 1998: 80). It neither supports Tadge's cryptic memory about a "visit" by "[Max) and [his] dad" in "the barracks" (88). In the same vein, the play does not verify if all that Tadge narrates about the penetrators, such as the violent tortures they would perform in the "black room," with the "wooden pole," (85) is true or he is simply making it all up as his narration of what they did to him is discontinuous and the stage directions reveal that "He stands, trying to remember. He begins to half-act the events as if they are not clear in his mind and he seeks to clarify them" (85). Furthermore, Tadge's confusion about the amount of the money he would be paid for being discharged from the army (first eighty thousand, then twenty thousand, and later half a million pounds) is another example of the clouded memory that creates a sense of ambiguity. Alison Winter's observations in the following extract, and the terms she uses as "repressed memory syndrome" and "false memory syndrome" shed further light on all these examples as well as the memory that reveals the details of sexual overtones in Max and Tadge's doctor game in the woods as they were children, and on the sense of ambiguity that all these create in *Penetrator*:

> The surge in allegations of long-forgotten childhood sexual abuse during the 1980s sparked a period of intense controversy that came to be known as the memory wars. What made them so fierce was the emergence of a coherent movement skeptical about the memory claims. At first the opposition to "repressed memory syndrome" had been disorganized and lacked a theme. But from 1992 it became wedded to a directly competing rival concept: "false memory syndrome." The new concept redefined the experiences of people who described an abusive past: their so-called memories were certainly powerful and consequential, but they were also false. (2012: 225)

There are also unclouded, sharp memories in *Penetrator*. The first memories ever mentioned in the play illustrate such memories. Anthony Neilson in the notes to his play asserts, "…disillusionment with childhood is a theme of the play, especially in Max's case" (1998: 118). These sharp memories are rooted in the disillusioned childhood of Max against which he obviously has set some distance. His distaste of his childhood past is apparent when he says:

> *Rrrriiinnngg*!! This Is Your Wake-Up Call. It was *shite*. It was shite *then* and it's shite *now*. It was all shite. *The Persuaders, The Protectors, The Invaders, The Avengers, The* fucking *Waltons*, *Thunder*-fucking-*birds*, *The Man from Bollocks, The Hair-Bear Fucks, Mary Mango and* fucking *Midge*, *all* of it – *shite*. (66)

Elements of the popular culture of his childhood years are disturbing for Max. His sudden revival of a memory about a bet is another example of a sharp memory. When Tadge tells Max that he was discharged from the army and would be paid eighty thousand pounds, this makes Max suddenly remember the bet they once had: "You bet me five grand that Ally's Tartan Army would win the World Cup, remember? A bet's a bet." (79).

Both *Old Times* and *Penetrator* are memory plays whose plots seem to be consisting only the resolution parts of larger experiences in life that have been acted out for many years. The plays are so rife with memories that there is seldom a scene where a memory does not dominate the feelings and the moods of the characters. Even the name of the central problematic character of *Penetrator* – Tadge – is associated with a memory recited by Max to Alan. According to this memory, Tadge, whose real name is never revealed in the play, gets an unintentional erection while some of his friends bullyrag him during his shower after his swimming exercise. After this event, he is called "Tadger", and the name Tadge has followed up to the present day. (Neilson, 1998: 91-92) More, another memory Max narrates to Alan is about how he and Tadge became friends. According to this, he was five years old and had a toy rifle. Tadge asks him for a try, Max does not allow this, and gets a punch from Tadge in return. This is how their friendship started years ago. (93) Still, another memory that follows these two immediately is about "the thing called plugging", which was based on a kind of another practical joke among friends. (ibid.) *Old Times*, too, is almost from beginning to the end is made up of memories: memories of the stealing the underwear, Covent Garden, Albert Hall, lunchtimes in Green Park, songs, the Odd Man Out, and the like.

Another significant argument relating to the use of memory in *Old Times* and *Penetrator* is to do with the relation between knowledge as the power of hegemony and memory as a vehicle that takes the characters to it. At this point, it can be first argued that the major characters of both plays, by diving deep into their histories, are actually seeking after arguably the most valuable knowledge that grants one power; that is the knowledge and understanding of the self. Mark Freeman observes this as: "Memory … which often has to do not merely with recounting the past but with making sense of it … is an interpretive act the end of which is an enlarged understanding of the self" (1993: 29). Tadge's questioning of his identity in *Penetrator* as well as Kate's hysteria through the end of *Old Times* about her relation to Anna, and all through memories, might be seen as illustrations of this search for the self. Then it can be argued that in *Old Times*, both Anna and Deeley, unlike Kate who remains quite quiet until the end of the play, seem to be pursuing after such knowledge. Deeley acts inquisitively especially at the beginning of the play as he asks many questions. It is through these questions that he wants to know more, and thus, have more control over Kate and her soon coming friend Anna. "Was [Anna] your best friend?" (Pinter, 1971: 8); "But you remember her. She remembers you. Or why would she be coming here tonight?" (ibid.); "Is that what attracted you to her?" (11); "Are you looking forward to seeing her?" (ibid.); "Why isn't she married? I mean, why isn't she bringing her husband?" (12); "Did she mention a husband in her letter?" (13); "You must have some ideas. What kind of man would he be?" (14); "Did she have many friends?" (ibid.); "You lived together?" (16); and some more of his similar questions can clearly be seen as his thirst for knowledge of the past shared by Kate and Anna. In fact, Deeley openly declares his curiosity with such

questions as he says, "I'll be watching you" (11) to Kate by which he subconsciously reveals his intention of domination over Kate.

Likewise, in *Penetrator*, knowing the past is a big game changer. Affairs, experiences, or memories of the past with impacts on the present endow the possessor of these with the power of knowledge, making it possible for the possessor to have a larger perspective on the present contexts. Reaching up to the correct information, finding out truth from among the misty memories from the past requires so much mental effort. Annette Kuhn likens this to detective work or archaeology:

> The past is gone for ever. We cannot return to it, nor can we reclaim it now as it was. But that does not mean it is lost to us. The past is like the scene of a crime: if the deed itself is unrecoverable, its traces may still remain. From these traces, markers that point towards a past presence, to something that has happened in this place, a (re)construction, if not a simulacrum, of the event can be pieced together. Memory work has a great deal in common with forms of inquiry which – like detective work and archaeology, say – involve working backwards – searching for clues, deciphering signs and traces, making deductions, patching together reconstructions out of fragments of evidence. (1999: 3-4)

It is because of his lack of knowledge about the past, the experiences, happenings and events that took place without him (but between Max and Tadge), hence, his lack of a larger vision and perspective that Alan feels more anxious and outcast with the sudden entrance of Tadge into his and Max's life:

> Max: Look. Look. I *know*, and it was a fucking in*sane* thing to do I *agree* – but there were many reasons why he joined up and he's been dis*charged* now and he's obviously a bit fucked-up about this about this *news*. He's our *friend*.
>
> Alan: Speak for yourself.
>
> Max: What?
>
> Alan: I've only known him a few years.
>
> Max: You've only known *me* a few years.
>
> Alan: But I hardly know him at all. You've got a history with him. I don't. (Neilson, 1998: 81-82)

Actually, the first glimpses of Alan's feeling of desertedness from the realm of the past had occurred some moments earlier in the play when he was speaking to Max about Laura's leaving: "I can't really comment. I don't know the full story" (75). The result is that Tadge – a person of the past shared mutually by Tadge and Max – comes into the present, where Alan suddenly becomes weak, and penetrates into his relationship with Max, as is symbolically implied through his choice of the bedroom – Alan's bedroom – he uses to take a nap.

It is important to note that the knowledge of the past obtained through characters' rather apocryphal memories is far from being verifiable, thereby causing characters to develop subjective, emotional reflexes rather than rational responses. It is by means of such emotional reflexes that characters feel that they get the upper hand over one another. For example, in *Old Times*, as one part of their emotional reflexes, characters form alliances in order to share their subjectivity out of which they expect to gain power. As the play proceeds, alliances shift between Deeley and Kate, Kate and Anna, and Deeley and Anna; Kate being the major link between the ally parties, as she is both the wife of Deeley and a close friend to Anna. Likewise, in *Penetrator*, although there seems to be strong alliance – one formed against the intruder and threat Tadge – between Max and Alan throughout the play, the end of the play comes with the formation of a new alliance – one based on older but stronger ties – between Max and Tadge, with Alan's ostracization from the flat.

To illustrate in detail, in *Old Times*, the first alliance is formed between Kate and Deeley at the beginning of the play while the couple is waiting for their guest. Deeley's constant questions in this group is a search for knowledge, hence an indirect attempt to have superiority over his wife but to no avail because Kate still holds the power against the attacks of Deeley's as she knows more than her husband does about Anna. The dialogue below shows Deeley's ulterior struggle for knowledge and attaining power against Kate:

> Deeley: What do you think he would be like? I mean, what sort of man would she have married? After all, she was your best – your only – friend. You must have some idea. What kind of man would he be?
>
> Kate: I have no idea.
>
> Deeley: Haven't you any curiosity?
>
> Kate: You forget. I know her.
>
> Deeley: You haven't seen her for twenty years.
>
> Kate: You've never seen her. There is a difference. (Pinter, 1971: 14)

Thus, Kate overcomes Deeley who is in search of a way for power for manipulating first his wife and later his wife's friend, Anna. Furthermore, he feels less powerless when he realizes to what extent his knowledge about his own wife falls short:

> Deeley: You lived together?
>
> Kate: Of course.
>
> Deeley: I didn't know that.
>
> Kate: Didn't you?
>
> Deeley: You never told me that. I thought you just knew each other.
>
> Kate: We did.
>
> Deeley: But in fact you lived with each other.
>
> Kate: Of course we did. How else would she steal my underwear from me? In the street?
>
> Deeley: I knew you shared with someone at one time…But I didn't know it was her. (16-17)

The first alliance for power struggle is shattered with Anna's arrival. She loses no time for joining the struggle for dominance and uses one of the most powerful and power-granting weapons in the play – memory – to gain control of the other two:

> Anna : Queuing all night, the rain, do you remember? my goodness, the Albert Hall, Covent Garden, what did we eat? to look back, half the night, to do things we loved, we were young then of course, but what stamina, and to work in the morning, and to a concert or the opera, or the ballet that night, you haven't forgotten? and then riding on top of the bus down Kensington High Street, and the bus conductors, and then dashing for the matches for the gasfire and then I suppose for the scrambled eggs, or did we? we cooked? both giggling and chattering, both huddling to the heat, then bed and sleeping, and all the hustle and bustle in the morning, rushing for the bus again for work, lunchtimes in Green Park, exchanging all our news, with our very own sandwiches, innocent girls, innocent secretaries, and then the night to come, and goodness knows what excitement in store, I mean the sheer expectation of it all, the looking-forwardness of it all, and so poor, but to be poor and young, and a girl in London then…and the cafes we found, almost private ones, weren't they? where artists and writers and sometimes actors collected, and others with dancers, we sat hardly breathing with our coffee, heads bent, so as not to be seen, so as not to disturb, so as not to distract, and listened and listened to all those words, all those cafes and all those people, creative undoubtedly, and does it still exist I wonder? do you know? can you tell me? (17-18)

Anna presents details of bits and pieces from the old days to show off her knowledge about a common past with Kate, thus excluding Deeley from their zone. Anna at this point of the play seems to be holding the power or at least trying to hold it in her own hand through the use of a *shared* past with Kate. Therefore, a strong polarity emerges between Deeley, who wants to know more about his wife's past, and Anna, who boasts of her common past with Kate, thus weighing the power scale on her own side. This causes an intense polarisation between Deeley and Anna. Deeley tries to catch up in the power struggle and uses the tactic of talking about the present life of Kate, against Anna's move of the narratives of the past, about which Anna might not have as much knowledge as Deeley. As Braunmuller asserts, "[c]ertain characters gradually realize that narration allows them to control facts; they exploit that authority more and more consciously as Pinter's drama develops"

(1979: 54). Accordingly, Deeley inserts present situations from his and his wife's life as Anna goes on with the past:

> Anna: She was always a dreamer.
>
> Deeley: She likes taking long walks. All that. You know. Raincoat on. Off down the lane, hands deep in pockets. All that kind of thing.
>
> Anna: Yes.
>
> Deeley: Sometimes I take her face in my hands and look at it.
>
> Anna: Really?
>
> Deeley: Yes, I look at it, holding it in my hands. Then I kind of let it go, take my hands away, leave it floating.
>
> . . .
>
> Anna: She was always a dreamer. Sometimes, walking, in the park, I'd say to her, you are dreaming, wake up, what are you dreaming? and she'd look around me, flicking her hair, and look at me as if I were part of her dream… (Pinter, 1971: 23-25)

In *Penetrator*, on the other hand, the first alliance, no matter how fragile it eventually proves to be, is formed between Max and Alan. Yet, this alliance is not based on strong foundations, as they have known each other only for a few years. The arrival of Tadge – someone from Max's past – poses a natural threat to the relationship between Max and Alan. Sensing the threat, Alan objects, with mimics and gestures, to Tadge's wish to stay the night in their flat, yet to no avail. As the play proceeds, the tension of taking sides that had been going on secretly rises up to a point where Tadge with a knife in his hand threatens Alan by holding the knife to his throat and asks Max to denounce Alan as "not [his] friend" (Neilson, 1998: 107). With this act, Tadge openly wants to rearrange the alliances by leaving Alan completely out of the picture. Although Max tries to calm Tadge down by trying to explain that Alan still can be their friends as much as he has ever been, especially back then when they "the three wasters… went camping, and … found those mushrooms in that ruin and…" (108), Tadge is determined to deport Alan:

> But what about *us*? It was *better* before! You were the brains, I was the brawn! We were friends, we were *real* friends, tell me about *that*, tell me what you remember about *that*! (ibid.)

Singing is another characteristic that both *Old Times* and *Penetrator* employ as a means for characters' obtaining control over one another, and the act of it by the characters is also associated with the use of memory in the plays. In *Old Times*, Deeley and Anna, the two poles of the main polarization in the play, sing fragments from songs whose lyrics are used for sending implicit messages to one another. The lyrics[2] once again illustrate and highlight the conflict between these characters. They function as arrows that Deeley and Anna shoot to one another in order to hit the other and win a victory for the actual ownership of Kate. Deeley's "Lovely to look at" suggests that he has Kate in the present while Anna with "Smoke gets in your eyes" might

[2] Deeley: In Lovely to look at, delightful to know?
Kate: (To Anna.) I don't know that song. Did we have it?
Deeley: (*Singing*, to Kate.) You are lovely to look at, delightful to know…
Anna: Oh we did. Yes, of course, we had them all.
Deeley: (*Singing*.) Blue moon, I see you standing alone…
Anna: (*Singing*.) The way you comb your hair…
Deeley: (*Singing*.) Oh no they can't take that away from me…
Anna: (*Singing*.) Oh but you're lovely, with your smile so warm…
Deeley: (*Singing*.) I've got a woman crazy for me. She's funny that way.
Anna: (*Singing*.) You are the promised kiss of springtime…
Deeley: (*Singing*.) And someday I'll know that moment divine, / When all the things you are, are mine!
Anna: (*Singing*.) I get no kick from champagne, / Mere alcohol doesn't thrill me at all, / So tell me why should it be true –
Deeley: (*Singing*.) That I get a kick out of you?
Anna: (*Singing*.) They asked me how I knew / My true love was true, / I of course replied, / Something here inside / Cannot be denied.
Deeley: (*Singing*.) When a lovely flame dies…
Anna: (*Singing*.) Smoke gets in your eyes. (Pinter, 1971: 26-28)

be suggesting that Deeley's perception of the events both in the past and the present is clouded and blurry. Their singing, filled with messages and implications of information about their past with Kate, becomes another tool they utilize to establish a certain hierarchy over one another and get the upper hand for the possession of Kate. Diana Deutsch in her article "Memory and Attention in Music" observes a link between hierarchy of information in memory and music when she notes: "Several theories of the organization of memory have assumed that information is retained along an internal hierarchy, and that it is retrieved by a systematic traversal of this hierarchy. This type of speculation can be usefully applied to music" (1977: 117). Yet, the memories uttered through the fragments of the songs are not able to break the tie for the struggle of hierarchy between Anna and Deeley, and, in the second act, they have no choice but perform a duet before the eyes of Kate whom each of them is trying to win.[3] In *Penetrator*, on the other hand, Max and Alan sing for amusement but the lyrics of their song[4] trigger nostalgic feelings as if they bring to surface a memory of a long-lost love from the mind of one of the characters. Contrarily, unlike the peaceful nostalgia hidden in Max and Alan's song, the song Tadge sings is a song of negative and violent memories of wounding an Arab girl and raping her. (Neilson, 1998: 109)

What is more, other than the metaphoric, symbolic songs through which characters give one another indirect, implicit messages, both *Old Times* and *Penetrator* feature more explicit, more straightforward if not more physical and violent expressions and action again through memories. In *Old Times*, the first act closes as Kate decides to retreat to bathroom while Anna and Deeley stare at each other as an indication of the beginning of a one-on-one duel. At the beginning of the second act, Deeley attacks Anna saying that he remembers her from The Wayfarers Tavern, thus challenging Anna this time through her own weapon – memories:

> Oh yes, it was you, no question. I never forget a face. You sat in the corner, quite often, sometimes alone, sometimes with others. And here you are, sitting in my house in the country. The same woman… (Pinter, 1971: 49)

Then, he claims to have bought her a drink in every now and then, and even to have gazed her thighs for a long time. With this claim, Deeley seems to be trying to form another way of domination over Anna, this time rather through a memory that gets almost physical. What Deeley attempts to do here can be seen as trapping Anna through one of her unwanted memories for moulding the past to a desired shape in the present. The President's Council on Bioethics in their report called *Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness* explains this issue as:

> We actively choose paths and do deeds fit to be remembered. But we also live through memorable experiences that we would never have chosen—experiences we often wish never happened at all. To some extent, these unchosen memories constrain us; though we may regret the shadows they cast over our pursuit of happiness, we cannot simply escape them while remaining who we really are. And yet, through the act of remembering—the act of discerning and giving meaning to the past as it really was—we can shape, to some degree, the meaning of our memories, both good and bad. (2020: 214)

Penetrator itself is the very realization of physical (bodily) memories due to the act of penetration that gives the play its title. The deeds that gave Tadge such graphic memories are so violently physical. There actually is found a relation between memory and physical conditions. Alison Winter narrates this link in the following words:

> In the late 1980s and 1990s, psychiatrists and some neuroscientists saw the neurophysiology of stress hormones as providing the route to understanding the characteristic symptoms attributed to posttraumatic stress disorder. That is, they envisaged providing a physiological

[3] Deeley (*Singing*): The memory of all that…
Anna (*Singing*): No, no, they can't take that away from me…
…
Anna (*Singing*): The way you haunt my dreams…
Deeley (*Singing*): No, no, they can't take that away from me… (Pinter, 1971: 58)

[4] Max/Alan (*sing*): In the pale moonshine, / Our hearts entwine, / Where she carved her name / And I carved mine O June, / Like the mountains are blue, / Like the pine / I am lonesome for you. (Neilson, 1998: 72)

> underpinning (and validation) for the central and controversial psychological explanation of PTSD: the notion that traumatic memories were stored differently from other memories, in a way that caused them to be repeated and relieved over and over, long after the event itself, as if the event became "literally" part of the brain. (2012: 262)

Tadge's violently physical experiences in the army with the penetrators seem to have almost literally engraved those memories onto his brain. What is more, the concept of penetration functions twofold in the play. The first and more obvious one is about physical penetration. This comes to fore, though in the form of a mental picture, when Tadge dramatizes how he escapes from the hands of the penetrators who were about to penetrate him with a pole. The second level of penetration takes place on the mental level through memories. It seems that the biggest harm the penetrators gave Tadge was through penetrating his memories. It is obvious that the horror the penetrators inflicted on Tadge had a long lasting negative effects similar to the ones explained by The President's Council on Bioethics: "With time, the memories grow more recurrent and intrusive, and the response – fear, helplessness, horror – more incapacitating" (2020: 220-221). Tadge's denouncing his real father, his confusion of the amount of money he says he will be paid by the army, and not remembering well how long he was held in the black room all signify a harmed consciousness. After all, liquidating the past is a major task of the penetrators. Tadge believes that they can turn a person into a non-person who has never existed:

> They'll find me and they'll kill me so I can never tell. And then they'll destroy all my files like I was never here. They can do that. That's how powerful they are. They can make it so you were never here. (Neilson, 1998: 84)

At last, being physically violent reaches up to a point that first Tadge, with a knife, threatens Alan and then vice versa. It is either Tadge or Alan that Max has to decide between for friendship and intimacy during the ongoing war of memories. When words and memories speak only for the favour of their possessors, violence takes up to resolve the problem.

All in all, at the end of *Old Times*, the winner of the memory battles and of the whole struggle for domination becomes the quiet wife Kate: her quietness means something active rather than passive, something more expressive and sometimes more meaningful than spoken words, reflecting her interior more powerfully, thus also giving her the power. Kate was the target of Deeley and Anna who led most of the action to gain control over Kate in the play. Yet, especially through the end of the play, as the clash between Anna and Deeley gets tenser, Kate interferes with the situation and holds the power more strongly in her hands. She makes the last speech of the play, which finalizes the power struggle and announces herself as the actual owner of the power as Pinter does not add any more speeches to the play after hers. A. R. Braunmuller summarizes this victory of Kate's with the following words: "Kate, so long their floating, abstract, even 'dead' object, now seizes narrative control and destroys them both… Kate has indeed profited from others' teaching; where they used her as an object in their own struggles, she now achieves a self-detachment that frees her from the emotional and verbal control of their memories" (1979: 70-71).

But unlike the victory of the tritagonist Kate as the most easy-going character of the group in *Old Times*, it is Alan, again the tritagonist that unexpectedly turns to be the loser at the end of *Penetrator*. Suspect Tadge, who may be even considered as a violence-oriented parody of *miles gloriosus* on the modern stage, is cleansed but the innocent-looking Alan comes to fore as the plotter. The victory for domination over Max, then, is given to Tadge. Both plays, however, share one thing in common for their ends: the character that comes from the past (Anna in *Old Times* and Tadge in *Penetrator*) is able to push the character of the present (Deeley in *Old Times* and Alan in *Penetrator*) out of the scene. This can also be seen as the victory of memory/the past over the present.

Considering all the tension and psychological ups and downs that Tadge in *Penetrator* and Kate in *Old Times* face and undergo, it can be claimed that both of these characters experienced serious traumas, and are now suffering from, in different degrees, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and that the origins of their PTSD are found in their past, whose several significant unknown parts gradually unravel within the plays through reminiscences. Anna Radström views the relation between trauma and memory with the following words:

> Trauma means 'wound' in the original Greek, and this wound can be physical as well as psychological, individual as well as collective. When inflicted on the mind, it collapses the structures of time and memory. It creates gaps between what is lived and what is experienced. It challenges knowledge. (2018: 167)

Moreover, observing the relation between the past/history and the PTSD, Cathy Caruth asserts that: "If PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history. The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (1995: 5). In *Old Times*, one indication that reveals Kate's PTSD is her remembering, just by the end of the plot, Anna as dead:

> I remember you lying dead. You didn't know I was watching you. I leaned over you. Your face was dirty. You lay dead, your face scrawled with dirt… (Pinter, 1971: 71-72)

If this is the hidden and surprising truth of the play, then the whole play suddenly turns out to be the memory zone of two delusional characters, Kate and Deeley; Anna being physically non-existing but a mental construct of the two. In *Penetrator*, Tadge's PTSD, on the other hand, is evident in his delusional attitudes and expressions about the identity of his father, about the cruelty of penetrators and the cruelty he himself committed, to list a few. It is obvious that his mental health is so poor, and his sudden arrival can be interpreted as his search of a cure to heal the mental wounds (traumas) opened in the recent past in his consciousness by means of the cosy memories of the farther past. In this sense, Tadge's seeking of a refuge around Max matches with what Alison Winter expresses in the following extract:

> One of the most tenacious themes of twentieth-century memory research was the idea that people tormented by memories of terrible experiences could benefit from remembering them, and from remembering them *better*. The assumption – broadly indebted to psychoanalysis – was that psychological records of traumatic events often failed to be fully "integrated" into conscious memories. As long as these memories remained "dissociated," the sufferer was compelled to "relieve" them instead of benignly remembering them. The more fully and appropriately one remembered terrible events, the more attenuated would be their emotional power. (2012: 261)

In line with this, it can be argued that both Tadge and Max display signs of confused and complex records of traumatic, disturbing events. Tadge reminds Max the past he wishes to forget. It is apparent that for Max memories like the one in the woods with Tadge when Tadge touches his balls are traumatic. Max tries to repress such terrible experiences whereas Tadge is in search of attenuating the emotional burden his traumatic memories have loaded in him. While Max wishes to escape, Tadge prefers to push forward.

Besides, from a more sociological perspective, what all three characters in *Penetrator* (especially Tadge) are suffering from is a fragmentation of society that resonates in and redefines their individuality. In this sense, it is not possible to fully grasp and follow the traces of Tadge's dispersed identity, the fragmentation of thoughts and expressions and the split consciousness he suffers from without considering the deconstructive, anti-humanitarian, and post-humanising zeitgeist of the 1990s. Victor Burgin's following observations about the age further illustrate this point, and Tadge's plight:

> From a Western world in which images were once limited in number, circumscribed in meaning, and contemplated at length, we have today arrived at a society inundated with images consumed 'on the fly' – from glossy magazines, from photomats, video rental stores, broadcast and cable TV, communication satellites, and increasingly realistic computer simulations. Flipping and 'zapping' through avalanches of books and journals, TV channels and CD-ROM, we are in turn bombarded by pictures not only of hopelessly unattainable images of idealized identities but also images of past and present suffering, images of destruction, of bodies quite literally in pieces. We are ourselves 'torn' in the process, not only emotionally and morally but in the fragmentary structure of the act of looking itself. (1996: 120-121)

In addition to these, Bessel A. Van Der Kolk and Onno Van Der Hart, in their article "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma" asserts that "Traumatic memories are the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language. It appears that, in order for this to occur successfully, the traumatized person has to return to the memory often in order to complete it" (1995: 176). It appears that neither Tadge nor Kate can dare return to their traumatizing memories. As such, they cannot transform their memories into well-expressed and organized narrative language, cannot express their stories well, and hence the fragmentation of consciousness they experience is unavoidable. The lack of such "narrative reflection" is what prevents them from "[opening] the way toward a more comprehensive and expansive conception of truth," as in the terms of Mark Freeman (1993: 32). Nevertheless, the end of *Penetrator*, when Tadge, having

excommunicated Alan from the flat, unites with Max, promises some hope for such integration as he and Max can now freely return to the memories of the traumatic events in their childhood and try to form a unity back in the present. Otherwise, until this end, the play mostly stages what Kolk and Hart observes as two different realms: "Many traumatized persons . . . experience long periods of time in which they live, as it were, in two different worlds: the realm of the trauma and the realm of their current, ordinary life. Very often, it is impossible to bridge these worlds" (1995: 176). In relation to this, Cathy Caruth asserts that "since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time" (1995: 8). Considering these, it can be claimed that the present time and setting of *Penetrator* and *Old Times* function as the above-mentioned "another place," "another time" and the "two different worlds" where and when the characters confront their traumatizing past events.

All in all, memory as an interdisciplinary concept with ties to the fields like medicine, literature, philosophy, sociology, and psychology appears in multi-dimensional forms in the two works by Harold Pinter and Anthony Neilson studied in this paper. At this point, John Frow's observations on memory that argue two different conceptualisations of memory are particularly important. According to him, the first type of memory is "a series of versions of the archive . . . is a logic of the inscription (or deposit) and the storage of information in systematically articulated space, and of ready retrieval on the basis of that articulation" (2007: 152), whereas the second sort is to do with the idea that memory "rather than being the repetition of physical traces of the past, is a construction of it under conditions and constraints determined by the present" (153-154). As this paper examined, memory, as reflected in *Old Times* and *Penetrator*, should not be merely viewed as the faculty that harbors solid and stable records of the experiences of the past but be seen as a dynamic storage place of the mind whose archives may be reinterpreted and reshaped according to present conditions, motives and situations. While *Old Times* seems to be complying more with the first conception of memory, *Penetrator*, a play written two decades later, displays features of the second type of memory mentioned above. The falsity of memory, traumatic memory, PTSD, memory wars for power and domination, and the relation between memory and physical conditions have been the major points of argument and illustration within this paper that work to address this multi-dimensional nature of memory.

To conclude, it can be claimed that it is not possible to imagine *Old Times* and *Penetrator* without the memory component that pervades almost each and every part of these plays. The plays are so rife with memories that no matter if they are seen on the stage or read as dramatic texts, it is always the memories that make up the scenes and images for the viewer or the reader. Attilio Favorini observes this correlation between memory and drama/theatre with the flowing words:

> Memory scenes do not picture the past, they order, bind, and correlate. Likewise, a dramatic scene organizes stage action-in-time, and it implies and correlates between what comes before it and what comes after in a way that pictures do not, causing us to reevaluate and reconstruct what we "remember" of previous scenes. Scene has the further advantage over image as a descriptor of memory in that it more readily accommodates intensity and energy, as well as olfactory, tactile, and gustatory events, among its sensuous discriminations." (2010: 318-319)

Prominent playwrights such as Henrik Ibsen, Tennessee Williams, and Samuel Beckett dealt with the intricacies of memory as much as (and sometimes even much earlier than) scientists such as Freud, Bruner, and Edelman. (Favorini, 2010: 315-334) Sigmund Freud, too, compares memory to the stage when he links childhood memories to representations on the dramatic stage: "… in my own case the earliest childhood memories are … regular scenes worked out in plastic form, comparable only to representations on the stage" (1957: 47). In this strong correlation, Anthony Neilson surely emerges as a "memographer" (Favorini, 2010: 315) of the 1990s British drama, following a line of memographers from Shakespeare to Pinter.

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