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**Investigation of Luigi Pirandol's Six Character in Search of an Author
In the light of Susan Sontage's Post Structuralist of Against Interpretation**

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1]. Introduction:

Pirandello's influence on modern theatre resulted from his experimentation with the concept of realism that dominated drama from the time of Ibsen and Strindberg. He questioned all thought of norms by bringing the very idea of reality under philosophical scrutiny. His questioning helped playwrights to open themselves up with new approaches to theatre in the early part of the 20th century. Pirandello was one of the first and the best experimentalist. *Henry IV* is one of Pirandello's most significant works, and it had a profound impact on the development of twentieth century theatre. Pirandello brought modernist themes and methods into the theatre, including a rejection of linear, realistic storytelling, a deconstruction of concepts of identity and perception, and exploration of the isolation inherent in the human experience. This style would be the foundation for avant-garde playwrights and later for the Theatre of the Absurd playwrights in the middle of the twentieth century.

The Author:

Luigi Pirandello's 1921 play "Six Characters in Search of an Author" ("Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore") has the deserved reputation of being the first existentialist drama and having a profound effect on later playwrights, especially those practitioners of the Theater of the Absurd such as Samuel Beckett ("Waiting for Godot"), Eugene Ionesco ("Rhinoceros"), and Jean Genet ("The Maids"). Pirandello's writing often focuses on elements of madness, illusion and isolation, all of which are inspired by the tragic aspects of his personal life in which his wife went insane and his daughter tried to commit suicide. In 1921 during a five week period



Pirandello wrote his two acknowledged masterpieces, "Six Characters in Search of an Author" and "Henry IV." While "Six Characters" was successful when it opened in Rome it was also considered scandalous. However, it was soon being performed in Milan, London, New York, and Germany.

The Story of the drama 'Six Characters in Search of an Author':

The setting for "Six Characters in Search of an Author" is a rehearsal for a play (By Pirandello) in the daytime on a theatre stage, *The Rules of the Game*. that is interrupted by the arrival of six characters. Their leader, the father, tells the manager that they are looking for an author. It seems that the author who created them never finished their story and they are unrealized characters who have not yet been fully brought to life. The father insists that they are not real people but characters, and the manager and his cast can only laugh at the idea. But then they become intrigued by the bits and pieces of the story the six characters have to tell. The manager agrees to produce their story and become the author for whom they have been searching. He tries to stage the scene where the father meets the step-daughter in the dress shop but both characters insist that what the actors are doing is not realistic. The manager allows them to finish out the scene instead. This sets up the basic juxtaposition of "drama" and "reality" for the rest of the play, with the key scenes in the lives of these characters providing more questions than they answer about what happened and what it means. At the point when the manager can no longer tell the difference between acting and reality he becomes fed up with the entire thing and ends the rehearsal, providing an audience that has already been challenged by these changing notions of reality with an abrupt ending to the



drama. There may or may not be a real story here, but the ultimate point of this play is that the tradition of reality in the theater no longer holds true.

2. The Against interpretation: The Essay:

Susan Sontag begins her essay by putting the basic ground of interpretation of art due to its ancient count-parts were ritual, magic, and later considered as mimetic. She writes, “The earliest experience of art must have been that it was incantatory, magical; art was an instrument of ritual. The earliest theory of art, that of the Greek philosophers, proposed that art was mimesis, imitation of reality (p 10).

Hence, this was the beginning point for interpretation of the work of art in terms of its underlying values through mimetic theory. She proves her point by postulating Platos’ theory of imitation and art is thrice removed from the reality.

Aristotle’s defensive argument was also confined towards the usability of art for its therapeutic purpose and provided relief to the readers. However, Aristotle’s theory was somewhat worth full according to Sontag.

Hence, due to the founding belief system that all art must have some purpose and so called moral values has been carried by the generation of writers, critics and readers. Here, Sontag advocates defending art work against such interpretations. She discusses the difference of ‘content’ ad ‘form’.

We have learned to call “form” is separated off from something we have learned to call “content,” and to the well-intentioned move . . . But it is still assumed that a work of art is its



content. Or, as it's usually put today, that a work of art by definition says something. ("What X is saying is...," "What X is trying to say is...," "What X said is..." etc., etc.) (p 11-12).

She praises **Nietzsche (Ni Zaa)** and his views on interpretation by stating as: Of course, I don't mean interpretation in the broadest sense, the sense in which Nietzsche (rightly) says, "There are no facts, only interpretations." By interpretation, I mean here a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain "rules" of interpretation.(p.12).

She gives an example of an erotic poem which was interpreted spiritually. interpreters alter the text (another notorious example is the Rabbinic and Christian "spiritual" interpretations of the clearly erotic Song of Songs), they must claim to be reading off a sense that is already there (14).

Song of Songs is one of the more mysterious books of the Hebrew Bible. It is probably *the* book that gave rise to a 'plethora of interpretations' Fantasy plays an essential role in sexual activities. This article investigates (erotic) fantasy from a literary text perspective according to Song of Songs in the Christian Bible. The Song, according to many commentaries, starts with a reference to sex in Canticle 1:2, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine'. (as qtd. In Dirk Van, (Tanner 1997:23).

She also compares today's interpretation with the pollutions, by writing:

Today is such a time, when the project of interpretation is largely reactionary, stifling. Like the fumes of the automobile and of heavy industry which befoul the urban atmosphere, the effusion of interpretations of art today poisons our sensibilities(16).



She also expresses her anguish by saying that by interpreting in this or that way, we change our real 'World' into some other 'world as: Even more. It is the revenge of the intellect upon the world. To interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world—in order to set up a shadow world of “meanings.” It is to turn the world into this world. (“This world”! As if there were any other.) (16).

Moreover, she also calls such interpretation “philistinism of interpretation is more rife in literature than in any other art “ (p.13).

She calls Thomas Mann is an example of such an over cooperative author. In the case of more stubborn authors, the critic is only too happy to perform the job) for he put touch of the good taste of irony- the clear and explicit interpretation of it. She gives another example of the work of Kafka, as his works are attractive due to three armies of interpreters. These are three angels to interpret : Social angle, psychological angel, and religious angle (p. 16).

Those who read Kafka as a religious allegory explain that K. in The Castle is trying to gain access to heaven, that Joseph K. in The Trial is being judged by the inexorable and mysterious justice of God.... (p.17).

She states that the same has been done with most of authors like,” Proust, Joyce, Faulkner, Rilke, Lawrence, Gide ... one could go on citing author after author; the list is endless of those around whom thick encrustations of interpretation have taken hold (p. 17).

She says that however, “But the merit of these works certainly lies elsewhere than in their “meanings.” Moreover, It is always the case that interpretation of this type indicates a



dissatisfaction (conscious or unconscious) with the work, a wish to replace it by something else (p.18-19).

She regrets that all this violates artistic works. The most recent revolution in contemporary taste in poetry—the revolution that has deposed Eliot and elevated Pound—represents a turning away from content in poetry in the old sense, an impatience with what made modern poetry prey to the zeal of interpreters. (p. 20).

Her Views on the Film/Cinema:

Is this possible now? It does happen in films, I believe. This is why cinema is the most alive, the most exciting, the most important of all art forms right now. Perhaps the way one tells how alive a particular art form is, is by the latitude it gives for making mistakes in it, and still being good.

The fact that films have not been overrun by interpreters is in part due simply to the newness of cinema as an art. It also owes to the happy accident that films for such a long time were just movies; in other words, that they were understood to be part of mass, as opposed to high, culture, and were left alone by most people with minds. Then, too, there is always something other than content in the cinema to grab hold of, for those who want to analyze. For the cinema, unlike the novel, possesses a vocabulary of forms—the explicit, complex, and discussable technology of camera movements, cutting, and composition of the frame that goes into the making of a film (p.21).

Interpretation:



Sontag lays stress on the form rather than content. She writes:

What kind of criticism, of commentary on the arts, is desirable today? For I am not saying that works of art are ineffable, that they cannot be described or paraphrased. They can be. The question is how. What would criticism look like: What is needed, first, is more attention **to form in art**. Because, excessive stress on content provokes the arrogance of interpretation, more extended and more thorough descriptions of form would silence (p.22).

In literature, literary form is the organization, arrangement, or framework of a literary work; the manner or style of constructing, arranging, and coordinating the parts of a composition for a pleasing or effective result. Whereas, the content refers to the plot, characters, setting, and themes. The content basically refers to what a text says while the form refers to how it is said.

Here in the play, Six characters in search of an author, the author has presented his drama through nameless characters. In addition, meta theater effects, in which we have elements whose meaning depends on the difference between the represented time and place of the drama (the fictional world) and the time and place of its theatrical presentation (the reality of the theatre event); plays-within-plays. We find it in this play, as the characters are going to perform a play within play called, the mixing it up. We find absurdity everywhere in various forms. It is namelessness, timelessness, a quest for an author, absurdity and even mention of 'game or play and so on.

In addition, we have centreless opening scene in which six characters enter at the stage and have direct confrontation with the actual manager and actors. This makes the audience feel



something unpredictable. The play seems to the audience, not yet began, but it has already begun on its own from the very first scene. Here, we have absence in the form of present that might later be realized by the audience. Thus, the spectators have presence as absence within absence presence of the play. After those six characters, there are several actors, who are to rehearsal a play and not to perform a drama, that's also absence of them.

In the daytime on a theatre stage, the acting company prepares for the rehearsal of Pirandello's *The Rules of the Game*, which was given as *Mix It Up* name in this play.

In the words of McDonald,

The Six Characters insist on their "real presence." They exist in –**between as fictive creatures, as presence and absence, as poetic or theatrical** creatures. They are neither here nor there. They are the presence of **their own absence**. . . Before the play "begins," the audience is confronted with absence. When the spectator enters the theatre, he sees "nothing"- he sees the empty space- and then, the play begins. The emptiness within the theatre functions as a source for identity - discourse and action- in *Six Characters* (p.4).

See for example, the mention of game, play and art in the play.

The Father I understand; but you, perhaps, do not understand us. Forgive me! You see...here for you and your actors, the thing is only—and rightly so...a kind of game ...

The Leading Lady [interrupting indignantly]. A game! We're not children here, if you please!

We are serious actors.



The Father I don't deny it. What I mean is **the game, or play**, of your art, which has to give, as the gentleman says, a perfect illusion of reality.

(p.71).

Pirandello's work has been described as "metatheater." In metatheater, the characters are "aware of their own theatricality," in the phrase of Lionel Abel. Abel finds the roots of metatheater going all the way back to Shakespeare (as in the play within a play in Hamlet); modern metatheater begins with the futurists and Dadaists and reaches the mainstream with Pirandello. (as qtd. In Pericles Lewis n.pag.)

In the play, content is not of important as they don't convey any meanings. Even the title of the play, in the word of Mc Donald, "indicates, is about written-beings and being-written. The "whole being" of the Six Characters, as in Foucault's image of Don Quixote, "is nothing but language, text, printed pages" that call attention to themselves as such: "made up of interwoven words." The Six Characters are like "writing itself, wandering through the world (p.3).

The play in which the six characters' dramas are depicted is an illusion presented in the form of reality, and on the other side the play in which the actors rehearse Pirandello's *Mixing It Up* is an illusion. In this way, it can be noticed that Pirandello mixes reality and illusion to create a new genre of writing drama that is the metatheatrical drama. The acting company prepares for the rehearsal of Pirandello's *Mixing It Up*, that's in real *The Rules of the Game*, while the six characters just interrupt and start arguing with the play's director.



Hence, searching for interpretation of content and meaning seem absurd and of no use here, we have various unorganized happening here that plunge us into wonder. As Sontag's view form is more important than that of content in this play.

We have in the act II, the real name of the Mother is disclosed as Amalia. But Pirandello treats this name in a dramatic way.

The Manager. You're not going to pretend that you can act? It makes me laugh! [*The ACTORS laugh.*] There, you see, they are laughing at the notion. But, by the way, I must cast the parts. That won't be difficult. They cast themselves. [*To the SECOND LADY LEAD.*] You play the Mother. [*To the FATHER.*] We must find her a name.

The Father. Amalia, sir.

The Manager. But that is the real name of your wife. We don't want to call her by her real name.

The Father. Why ever not, if it is her name? . . . Still, perhaps, if that lady must . . . [*Makes a slight motion of the hand to indicate the SECOND LADY LEAD.*] I see this woman here [*Means the MOTHER.*] as Amalia. But do as you like. [*Gets more and more confused.*] I don't know what to say to you. Already, I begin to hear my own words ring false, as if they had another sound . . .

The Manager. Don't you worry about it. It'll be our job to find the right tones. And as for her name, if you want her Amalia, Amalia it shall be; and if you don't like it, we'll find another! For the moment though, we'll call the characters in this way: [*To JUVENILE LEAD.*] You are the Son.



[To the LEADING LADY.] You naturally are the Step-Daughter.

Sontag prescribes to use vocabulary—a descriptive, rather than prescriptive, vocabulary—for forms. (Use of Descriptive Vocabulary)

“What is needed, first, is more attention to form in art. If excessive stress on content provokes the arrogance of interpretation, more extended and more thorough descriptions of form would silence. What is needed is a vocabulary—a descriptive, rather than prescriptive, vocabulary—for forms (p.8).

Here, Sontag wants to convey that Prescriptive advice tends to be conservative, descriptive, telling of the language as it is, not as it should be.

We find ample use of descriptive vocabulary with reference of some eternal fictional characters. We have beginning of the play with a setting description in very clear way as:

The Opening scene of the play:

Six Characters in Search of an Author begins by defying the conventions of theater:

The spectators will find the curtain raised and the stage as it usually is during the day time. It will be half dark, and empty, so that from the beginning the public may have the impression of an impromptu performance. Prompter's box and a small table and chair for the manager. Two other small tables and several chairs scattered about as during rehearsals.

*“The ACTORS and ACTRESSES of the company enter from the back of the stage: first one, then another, then two together; nine or ten in all. They are about to rehearse a **Pirandello play:***



Mixing it Up. *Some of the company move off towards their dressing rooms. The PROMPTER who has the "book" under his arm, is waiting for the manager in order to begin the rehearsal".*
(p.3)

Moreover, see how the characters of **the FATHER**, describe 'illusion' word! We have mentions of the word **illusion in 15 times** in the entire play. The company's leading actress explains that audiences today are not as good as they once were at accepting theatrical illusion. At this word, the characters of the Father objects and says:

FATHER (jumping up suddenly): **Illusion?** I would ask you not to speak of **illusion!** I would beg you not to use that word. For us **it has a particularly cruel ring!**

PRODUCER (astonished): For heaven's sake, why?

FATHER: Oh, yes, cruel, cruel! You really ought to understand.

PRODUCER: What are we supposed to say? **Illusion** is our stock-in-trade [...]

FATHER: I entirely understand [...] As artists [...], you have to create **a perfect illusion of reality.**

PRODUCER: That's right. **FATHER:** But what if you stop to consider that we, the six of us (he gestures briefly to indicate the six characters) have no other reality; that we don't exist outside this **illusion!**

Transparence is the highest, most liberating value in art.

Sontag postulates that **transparence** is the highest, most liberating value in art— and in criticism—today. **Transparence** means experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of



things being what they are. This is the greatness of, for example, the films of Bresson and Ozu and Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* (p.23).

Here, transparency is a quality of being able to see through (or partially see through) one or more layers in an artwork. The opposite of transparency is opacity, it's as form and content.

Opacity is that when we read in this way, we understand the content of the work (the fictional world) *only* in terms of the particular way in which it is described. Whereas, **transparency** is a way of reading that construes (interpret) the events and characters as though they were part of a fictional world that we see through a particular work of literature but where the language used to open up the world to us is purely a means to the end: our interest in what is being described (Harold).

Here in the play, Pirandello presents transparency everywhere. The title itself is transparent: Six characters in search of an author. Here, an author means, they need any author. There is no any definite article 'the' before 'Six characters' indicate uncertainty or generality.

The first sentence of the play is 'I can't see'. And 'Let's have a little light, please'.

The Manager [*throwing a letter down on the table*]. I can't see [To PROPERTY MAN.] Let's have a little light, please!

Property Man. Yes sir, yes, at once. [*A light comes down on to the stage.*]

The Manager [*clapping his hands*]. Come along! Come along! Second act of "Mixing It Up."

[*Sits down.*] [*The ACTORS and ACTRESSES go from the front of the stage to the wings, all except the three who are to begin the rehearsal.*]



(1:6)

We can see this how simply, wonderfully and dramatically the dramatist has uncovered the title of the play in Act I.

Door-keeper [cap in hand]. Excuse me, sir. . .

The Manager [rudely]. Eh? What is it?

Door-keeper [timidly]. These people are asking for you, sir.

The Manager [furious]. I am rehearsing, and you know perfectly well no one's allowed to come in during rehearsals! [Turning to the CHARACTERS.] Who are you, please? What do you want?

The Father [coming forward a little, followed by the others who seem embarrassed]. As a matter of fact...we have come here in search of an author. . .

The Manager [half angry, half amazed]. An author? What author?

The Father. Any author, sir.

The Manager. But there's no author here. We are not rehearsing a new piece.

The Step-Daughter [vivaciously]. So much the better, so much the better! We can be your new piece.

An Actor [coming forward from the others]. Oh, do you hear that?

The Father [to STEP-DAUGHTER]. Yes, but if the author isn't here. . . [To MANAGER.] unless you would be willing. . .

The Manager. You are trying to be funny.

The Father. No, for Heaven's sake, what are you saying? We bring you a drama, sir.



The Step-Daughter. We may be your fortune.

The Manager. Will you oblige me by going away? We haven't time to waste with mad people.

The Father [mellifluously]. Oh sir, you know well that **life is full of infinite absurdities**, which, strangely enough, do not even need to appear plausible, since they are true.

The Manager. What the devil is he talking about?

(1. Pp. 7-8)

So it's really fascinating to the reader.

The setting for "Six Characters in Search of an Author" is a rehearsal for a play (By Pirandello) that is interrupted by the arrival of six characters. Their leader, the father, tells the manager that they are looking for an author. It seems that the author who created them never finished their story and they are unrealized characters who have not yet been fully brought to life.

The father insists that they are not real people but characters, and the manager and his cast can only laugh at the idea. But then they become intrigued by the bits and pieces of the story the six characters have to tell. The manager agrees to produce their story and become the author for whom they have been searching. He tries to stage the scene where the father meets the step-daughter in the dress shop but both characters insist that what the actors are doing is not realistic. The manager allows them to finish out the scene instead. This sets up the basic juxtaposition of "drama" and "reality" for the rest of the play, with the key scenes in the lives of these characters providing more questions than they answer about what happened and what



it means. At the point when the manager can no longer tell the difference between acting and reality he becomes fed up with the entire thing and ends the rehearsal, providing an audience that has already been challenged by these changing notions of reality with an abrupt ending to the drama. There may or may not be a real story here, but the ultimate point of this play is that the tradition of reality in the theater no longer holds true.

The philosophical transparency through the discourse of the characters: The character, father, we speaks of eternity of dramatic characters as:

The Father. Yes, that is the word! [To MANAGER all at once.] In the sense, that is, that the author who created us alive no longer wished, or was no longer able, materially to put us into a work of art. And this was a real crime, sir; because he who has had the luck to be born a character can laugh even at death. He cannot die. The man, the writer, the instrument of the creation will die, but his creation does not die. And to live for ever, it does not need to have extraordinary gifts or to be able to work wonders. Who was **Sancho Panza**? Who was **Don Abbondio**? Yet they live eternally because—live germs as they were—they had the fortune to find a fecundating matrix, a fantasy which could raise and nourish them: make them live for ever!

The Manager. That is quite all right. But what do you want here, all of you?

The Father. We want to live.

The Manager [ironically]. For Eternity?

The Father. No, sir, only for a moment. . . in You

(p.11).



This also remind us that of Raj Kapoor's 1970 Bolywood romantic drama *Mera Naam Joker*.

Here, Pirandelo mentioned the two characters Sancho Panza and Don Abbondios. He wrote an essay in which he mentions **Don Abbondio** not a comic but a **humorous** character. (**Humor** is the intelligent and subtle ability to detect and represent the comic aspect of reality). From this context, he might hase taken the references. **Sancho Panza** a fictional character in the novel *Don Quixote* written by Spanish author Don Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra in 1605. Panza was indeed Don Quixote's Sancho servant.

Don Abbondio is one of the main characters of *I promessi sposi* , the best known novel by Alessandro Manzoni . In fact, the figure of the religious, after the preamble, opens the narration of the famous novel. He is a hesitant, mean, cowardly person who buries himself in the face of the difficulties and obstacles he encounters and as Manzoni/

What is important now is to recover our **senses**. We must learn to *see more, to hear more, to feel more*. Sontag writes on recovering our senses as:

What we decidedly do not need now is further to assimilate Art into Thought, or (worse yet) Art into Culture She is against the cultural and subjective thoughtable interpretation ours is a culture based on excess, on overproduction; the result is a steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience (p.23).

She further argues that, "Interpretation takes the sensory experience of the work of Art. And it is in the light of the condition of our senses, our capacities (rather than those of another age), that the task of the critic must be assessed. What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more. Our task is not to find the



maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all.

The aim of all commentary on art now should be to make works of art—and, by analogy, our own experience—more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show how it is what it is, even that it is what it is, rather than to show what it means (p.24).

In his article entitled 'Reading Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation" for Film Studies: Transcendence and the 'Vocabulary for Forms' Ian Bryce Jones argues: "Film has given us a way out of the Greek hermeneutic tradition, with its obsessions over art as a representation, a reduction of its content. It puts the art before you, on a thirty-by-ninety-foot screen, and takes control of your perception. This art involves no elitist interpretations—to understand it, you must only sit back, and put your senses to work. To understand *Rear Window*, you need only feel suspense at the growing case against Thorwall. To understand *Gatsby*, you need only watch the titular character's pain in the fantastic bourgeois world set out before him. Narrative alone cannot communicate the story of these films, nor sound, nor still image, nor cinematography. It is the transience of experiencing them all together, ultimately that provides the work of film its meaning" (Jones, p. 2).

Drama is alike a film it appeals more to our senses. In the play, the end itself is meaningless; however, there is no need to find the ultimate meanings.

We need a special use of our senses in order to understand, not interpret, the relationship between the audience and actors vs characters in the play *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.



The Manager [*slowly observing the glance and turning towards the SON with increasing apprehension*]. The baby?

The Son. There in the fountain . . .

The Father [*pointing with tender pity to the MOTHER*]. She was following him at the moment

. . **The Manager** [*to the SON anxiously*]. And then you . . .

The Son. I ran over to her; I was jumping in to drag her out when I saw something that froze my blood . . . The boy standing stock still, with eyes like a madman's, watching his little drowned sister, in the fountain! [*The STEP-DAUGHTER bends over the fountain to hide the CHILD. She sobs.*] Then . . . [*A revolver shot rings out behind the trees where the BOY is hidden.*]

The Mother [*with a cry of terror runs over in that direction together with several of the ACTORS amid general confusion*]. My son! My son! [*Then amid the cries and exclamations one hears her voice.*] Help! Help!

The Manager [*pushing the ACTORS aside while THEY lift up the BOY and carry him off.*] Is he really wounded?

Some Actors. He's dead! Dead!

Other Actors. No, no, it's only make believe, it's only pretence!

The Father [*with a terrible cry*]. Pretence? Reality, sir, reality!

The Manager. Pretence? Reality? To hell with it all! Never in my life has such a thing happened to me. **I've lost a whole day over these people, a whole day!**

If we try to interpret with certain meanings might be meaningless. Instead we can use our senses to feel it.



“In place of a **hermeneutics** we need an erotics of art”.

Sontag has coined the term **erotics** as a kind of harmony to the word hermeneutics. She is saying that instead of a branch of knowledge that deals with the interpretation of art, we should have a branch of knowledge that deals with the erotic aspects of art.

Hermeneutics is the branch of knowledge that deals with the interpretation of literature. In the course of my present research paper, I have come across to a number of interesting and insightful research papers on this single ending line of Sontag.

The titles are:

1. Title: Is the Hermeneutic Interpretation of Art Erotic? A Reader of Hans-Georg Gadamer Responds to Sontag’s Challenge”: By Dominika Czakon “

The starting point of the discussion is Susan Sontag’s essay ‘Against interpretation’, How the phrase ‘erotics of art’ should be understood in the context of Sontag’s essay, and what is the hermeneutic interpretation of art and on what might its eroticism depend?

(Czakon 15).

2. **The Erotic in the Theatre of Peter Zadek : By Andreas Höfele (1991).**

Zadek never allowed a character to assume fixed contours: he orchestrated a constant changing of register from shrill, deliberate ham-acting to the most subtle nuances. He took his company on a journey of discovery which in turn became the audience's journey of discovery. The linearity



of story was discarded in favour of a network of correlated situations, a multilayered 'scenic text' constantly opening up references to other possible texts. In 'corrupting' *Hamlet*, in obliterating the canonized distinctions between tragedy and comedy, Zadek played a game of carnivalesque intertextuality showing that – to rephrase Susan Sontag²⁹ - a hermeneutics and an erotics of art can be one and the same thing (Andrea Hofele, p.236).

Hermeneutics : is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts.

The terms hermeneutics **and exegesis** are sometimes used interchangeably. Hermeneutics is a wider discipline which includes written, verbal, and non-verbal communication. Exegesis focuses primarily upon the word and grammar of texts.

Folk etymology places its origin with Hermes, the mythological Greek deity who was the 'messenger of the gods'. **Hermes** was also considered to be the inventor of language and speech, an interpreter, a liar, a thief and a trickster. (Hoy, David Couzens (1981). *The Critical Circle*. University of California Press).

Here are some of erotic portrayals in the play:

i. How, Pirandello has mentioned the prostitute leader Madame Pace and her shop:

The Son [to the STEP-DAUGHTER]. This is vile.

The Step-Daughter. Vile? There they were in a pale blue envelope on a little mahogany table in the back of Madame Pace's shop. You know Madame Pace – one of those ladies who attract poor girls of good family into their ateliers, under the pretext of their selling *robes et manteaux*.



The Son. And he thinks he has bought the right to tyrannize over us all with those hundred lire he was going to pay; but which, fortunately – note this, gentlemen – he had no chance of paying.

ii. When the father describes how her wife, the mother gets to another man, and in reply the mother says that it's father who drove her towards illicit relationships with that clerk, a man.

The Manager. I don't understand this at all.

The Father. Naturally enough. I would ask you, sir, to exercise your authority a little here, and let me speak before you believe all she is trying to blame me with. Let me explain.

The Step-Daughter. Ah yes, explain it in your own way.

The Father. But don't you see that the whole trouble lies here. In words, words. Each one of us has within him a whole world of things, each man of us his own special world. And how can we ever come to an understanding if I put in the words I utter the sense and value of things as I see them; while you who listen to me must inevitably translate them according to the conception of things each one of you has within himself. We think we understand each other, but we never really do. Look here! This woman [*Indicating the MOTHER.*] takes all my pity for her as a specially



ferocious form of cruelty.

The Mother. But you drove me away.

The Father. Do you hear her? I drove her away! She believes I really sent her away.

See for example, the father admits his decision to free her wife and go with other man:

The Manager. Yes, please stop it, for heaven's sake.

The Step-Daughter. But imagine moral sanity from him, if you please – the client of certain ateliers like that of Madame Pace!

The Father. Fool! That is the proof that I am a man! This seeming contradiction, gentlemen, is the strongest proof that I stand here a live man before you. Why, it is just for this very incongruity in my nature that I have had to suffer what I have. I could not live by the side of that woman [Indicating the MOTHER.] any longer; but not so much for the boredom she inspired me with as for the pity I felt for her.

The Mother. And so he turned me out – .

The Father. – well provided for! Yes, I sent her to that man, gentlemen . . . To let her go free of me.

The Mother. And to free himself.

The Father. Yes, I admit it. It was also a liberation for me.

iii. Here is the erotic description of the Step-Daughter and the father confessed as :

“That's the way it really happened”.



The Father. Just so! This is my punishment: the passion in all of us

that must culminate in her final cry.

The Step-Daughter. I can hear it still in my ears. It's driven me mad, that cry! – You can put me on as you like; it doesn't matter. Fully dressed, if you like – provided I have at least the arm bare; because, standing like this [*She goes close to the FATHER and leans her head on his breast.*] with my head so, and my arms round his neck, I saw a vein pulsing in my arm here;

and then, as if that live vein had awakened disgust in me, I closed my eyes like this, and let my head sink on his breast. [*Turning to the MOTHER.*] Cry out mother! Cry out! [*Buries head in FATHER'S breast, and with her shoulders raised as if to prevent her hearing the cry, adds in tones of intense emotion.*] Cry out as you did then!

The Mother [*coming forward to separate them*]. No! My daughter, my daughter! [*And after having pulled her away from him.*] You brute! You brute! She is my daughter! Don't you see she's my daughter?

The Manager [*walking backwards towards footlights*]. Fine! Fine! Damned good! And then, of course – curtain!

The Father [*going towards him excitedly*]. Yes, of course, because **that's the way it really happened.**

(p.44)

Conclusion:



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The human life on this earth is unpredictable and so the nature. In the post structuralist analysis of the present play using Susan Sontag's against interpretation has opened a new look at the play. As Alfred Korzybski, in his book Science and Sanity, advises us not to judge any event, object that's using the form 'to be' am, is, are, etc.

Hence, we find that the play writer has given more attention to the form and laid stress on the content in the play. There is open ending in the play against that of closed. The readers and audience are confused and tensed. We are compelled to engage all of our senses to see it as it is. We wonder after reading or watching this play, *are the* characters of the play characters or actors or real human! or hero or villain or neither or either! Hence, Pirandello succeeded in achieving absurdity, uncertainty and post structuralism in this play , Six characters in the search of an author.



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