A Marxist Reading of Albee’s The Zoo Story

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Abstract
Marxism is the school based on Karl Marx’s idea on the political and economic conditions governing the world. Marx considers the economic motivations present behind all decisions in the capitalist society. The aim of this article is to analyze Marxist ideas present in Albee’s The Zoo Story, and to consider the effects of the Capitalist society on the life of the citizens that the two characters of the play represent. In The Zoo Story, Peter could be considered as the representative of the petty bourgeoisie or the middle class and Jerry as the one representing the proletariat. Marx believed that in the capitalist society the two classes are the victims of the bourgeoisie, as the latter one uses them for its goals. Peter and Jerry are the victims in the society, one through his poverty and being alienated, and the other by being interpellated and brainwashed. Althusser defines interpellation as the way that the hegemony makes the subjects believe in its ideology and consider it as their own. Althusser also introduces the sources of interpellation as the education and religion system and the media. Therefore, Peter as the one who works for the publishing company and reads books and watches the TV is at the center on interpellation. The findings of the article show that the characters are both alienated from each other and from themselves. Jerry is alienated from other people and lives in a place that resembles the zoo, and Peter is alienated from himself as he is not aware of his situation as the victim of the interpellation of the capitalist ideology.

Keywords: Marxism, Interpellation, Alienation, Hegemony

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