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## **Repetition as a means of verbal and psychological violence in interrogation scenes from contemporary drama**

### 1 Introduction

Repetition is a common linguistic element in literary as well as non-literary discourse. In *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, Katie Wales draws attention to the two sets of effects it can produce in everyday use: it can be an unwanted redundancy as well as a “powerful resource of interpersonal involvement and rapport” (2014, 366). While the former is not characteristic of quality literature, the latter can be a potent stylistic tool for achieving a range of effects. Paul Simpson (2004, 50) refers to repetition as one of the main principles in forming textual patterns (e.g., foregrounding), thus bringing certain features of the text to the front of the reader’s or – in the case of staged drama – viewer’s attention. Similarly, Michael Burke (2014, 25-28) sees repetition as one of the significant features in stylistics, next to parallelism and deviation, but suggests that the concepts concerning its function need to be further developed and researched. John Cuddon credits repetition in literature with a structural function, denoting it an “essential unifying element in nearly all poetry and much prose” (1999, 742), while understanding it in broad terms: as repetition of words, phrases, stanzas or longer excerpts, even sounds and other stylistic or linguistic phenomena. Edward Quinn (2006, 359-60) extends this definition to the employment of repeated images with an impact on the imagery of the work, as well as to visual context, by acknowledging repetition as a technique in film. This makes repetition applicable to all absolute genres, in Szondi’s (2000, 30-31) sense, and most particularly to drama.

An extensive overview of research about repetition in spoken conversation was provided by Deborah Tannen (2007). Several authors she mentions (e.g., Schegloff, 1997; Rieger, 2003; Linell, 1982; Svennevig, 2004, and others, cit. in Tannen (15-16)) as well as Tannen herself emphasize the importance of considering the sound aspect – particularly intonation – in the analysis of repetition patterns: “the very notion that the repetition of words spoken in conversation is ‘exact’ repetition holds only if we think of words as they would appear in a dictionary, stripped of their sound” (2007, 16). This suggests that the semantic potential of voice quality, i.e., volume, intonation, stress and other phonetic aspects, is too often ignored. These findings are particularly



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relevant for a study like ours that deals with drama, since in the case of dramatic and film genres the audience perceives the subject matter directly from the stage or screen action, where the spoken text is perceived by hearing and comprises all the phonetic qualities referred to earlier.<sup>1</sup> All repetition can (and must) thus be considered as new text: “we see that a word ‘repeated’ with a different phonetic or intonational realization is, in fact, a different word, even though their written forms are identical” (Tannen, 2007, 16). The same idea was proposed by de Beaugrande (1991, 18), who claims that absolute recurrence is rare, since direct repetition inevitably suggests a change in the speaker’s intention; for this reason, he introduces the term *recurrence* instead of *repetition*. Since the written image of the repeated phrase is identical to its original appearance, the divergence normally materializes in the sound image of the repeated word or phrase, a concept that was upheld by Traci Curl’s (2005) study of conversational utterances repeated because the listeners indicated a lack of comprehension, where the repeated utterance always differs from the original one in pronunciation.

Several categories of repetition are introduced by de Beaugrande and Dressler (2001, 52), who see repetitive patterns as crucial features of cohesion: *recurrence* is defined as straightforward repetition; *partial recurrence* as a less strict variation, where different parts of speech from the same root repeat; *parallelism* is the repetition of syntactic structure with new content; *paraphrase* occurs when the content is repeated with different linguistic means; *pro-forms* are short words or phrases that replace content-carrying words; and *ellipsis* is defined as the repetition of content and structure while omitting some surface words or phrases. In this study we will consider de Beaugrande and Dressler’s understanding of the variety of repetitive patterns, since it has proven useful in previous studies (cf. Onič, Prajnč Kacijan, 2019; Kusovac, Pralas 2016; Zupan, 2006), as well as selected studies looking into repetition patterns in non-literary spoken discourse that resembles the discourse of drama in many ways – not in all of them, as pointed out by Short (2013, 173-181), but in several that are relevant for this analysis.

This study investigates dialogue in interrogation scenes, which – owing to the frequent choice of darker and more troubled subject matter – are often found in drama emerging in the 1950s and after. The plays were selected from among the canonical British, American and Slovene award-winning authors. Harold Pinter’s opus contains several plays featuring sinister interrogation scenes, *The Birthday Party* (1996) being

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1 This is, of course, based on the assumption that the audience experiences the play (or film) by watching it on stage or screen, not by reading the text or the screenplay. A separate issue, yet closely connected to this one, is a finding by Janko Trupej (2015, 25; 2019, 62) that offensive language in Slovene television subtitling is frequently modified to the extent that multiple spoken repetitions of an offensive expression often receive just one appearance of their translation in the subtitles. So not only does the viewer in such cases miss the chance of perceiving the full sound image of this expression through the subtitles, but is also not given the chance to be exposed to its repetition.





one of the most salient examples, while *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller (1987) and *Dissident Arnož and His Followers*<sup>2</sup> (1982) by Drago Jančar are of particular interest because they were written in repressive political circumstances, the former under the threat of McCarthyism in the USA and the latter during Communist rule in Yugoslavia. From a discourse-analytical perspective, violence can be seen as an element of evaluative meaning, which is the focus of the theory of appraisal by Martin and White (2005). The theory of appraisal can show how the expression of violence functions in a political context, for example, in Plemenitaš and Krajnc (2018). In the theory of appraisal, realizations of violence are treated as negative judgments within the subsystem of attitude. Repetitions of evaluative expressions, on the other hand, are treated as resources for intensification within the subsystem of graduation.

The scenes investigated in this research may not always contain formal interrogations *per se*, but are reminiscent of them in their crucial features. Our research focuses on verbal repetition in the questions of the interrogator (or a character in the corresponding role), which as a rule intensify psychological pressure and contribute to the creation of an unpleasant atmosphere. Repeated questions, directly or slightly varied, are posed to extort information from the interrogated individuals but also to weaken and break their resistance. The analysis will focus on the instances of repetition that make a major contribution to creating such situations and relationships. We will identify and analyse the traditional patterns of repetition and examine their contribution to the intensity of perceived violence.

## 2 Verbal and Psychological Violence Enhanced by Repetition Patterns

The selected passages containing notable repetition were analysed according to the severity of verbal and psychological violence, as potentially perceived by the oppressed characters as well as the audience. The excerpts were thus classified as demonstrating implicit or explicit violence – the former when the pressure is exerted on the victim in a subtle way, formally mainly through repetition patterns, and the latter when they are openly hostile and express a direct insult, threat, (false) accusation, mockery, or similar negative attitude, thus exhibiting explicit violence. It must be noted, however, that the division between the two categories is never absolute, and that the oppressor will often proceed from the implicit to the explicit form of abuse within the same scene.

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2 *Dissident Arnož and His Followers* (Slov. *Dissident Arnož in njegovih*, 1982) is based on the biography of the utopian socialist Andrej Smolnikar, who set off to America in attempt of peacefully reorganizing the society and establishing a new world order. The play is set in the 1830s and opens in Slovenia, while the setting later moves to the USA. The idea of the new world order promoted by Arnož fails, as his followers turn against him. The play addresses socially critical and existential motifs, and it is – according to de Brea (2015) – an extremely relevant account of the universal state of mind.





## 2.1 Implicit Verbal and Psychological Violence

Even though explicit violence is more likely to catch the audience's attention, implicit pressure can be just as forceful, or even more. The oppressors in the following excerpts develop a powerful psychological hold on their victims, and simultaneously do everything to protect their status. Jasna Podreka (2018, 37) observes that – in traditional as well as neopatriarchal societies – men would often secure their position through various violent practices. Similarly, Darja Zaviršek (2018) sees female subordination in traditional binary gender roles. Miller's *The Crucible*, being set in a traditional Puritan society, frequently brings such practices to the forefront. In the following dialogue, Judge Danforth occupies the superior position towards Mary Warren, not only as a supreme court authority versus a defendant, but also as an older male, competent in his field, versus a younger inexperienced female. After so many people have been imprisoned or sentenced to death by hanging, it is in Danforth's interest to protect the institution he presides over and identifies with, and thus to avoid public acknowledgement that the whole process has been based on false accusations. Upon reading Mary's deposition, he questions her:

Danforth: [...] Has Mr. Proctor threatened you for this deposition?  
 Mary Warren: No, sir.  
 Danforth: Has he ever threatened you?  
 Mary Warren [*weaker*]: No, sir.  
 Danforth [*sensing a weakening*]: Has he threatened you?  
 Mary Warren: No, sir. (Miller, 1987, 91)

Danforth's question in this excerpt appears three times with slight variation, attempting to elicit and then force from the victim the answer he wants. The repetition creates additional pressure on her, and the didascalia support the notion that the authority is aware of his influence, since after "*sensing a weakening*", he repeats his question again, thus intimidating Mary Warren. A similar sequence of intimidation and forced confession can be found in *Dissident Arnož*:

Vončina: Kaj sta **počela** v zakristiji?  
 Ksaver: Nič nisva **počela**. Po čaščenju sva bila tam. **Kronarce so pele**, jaz sem igral na orgle. **Potem sva bila še malo v zakristiji**.  
 Vončina: **Potem sva bila še malo v zakristiji. Kronarce so pa pele**, kaj?  
 Ksaver: Ja, **pele**.  
 Vončina: Na skrivaj ste se zbrali.





Ksaver: Zvečer se večkrat dobimo.  
 Kronarca: **Petje vadimo.**  
 Vončina: [*tipom*]: **Petje vadijo.** [...] **Kaj pa imate z Arnožem?**  
 Ksaver: **Z Arnožem?**  
 Vončina: **Kaj imajo te kurbe z Arnožem?**<sup>3</sup> (Jančar, 1982, 46)

This powerful scene showing Vončina's hostile interrogation of Kronarca and Ksaver begins with implicit verbal aggression but then grows into explicitly violent discourse. The dialogue is a mixture of psychological, verbal and eventually physical aggression. The exertion of pressure is initiated and then intensified through multiple carefully constructed patterns of recurrence, with which the authority consolidates his superior position by repeating the (occasionally slightly varied) statements of his victims: "Potem sva bila še malo v zakristiji." (Eng. "Then we stayed a bit longer in the vestry.") or "Petje vadijo." (Eng. "They rehearse singing."). The effect of such recurrences can partly be attributed to qualities like irony, ambiguity, or mockery that this technique enhances, but also to the doubt and confusion of the victims, which additionally strengthens the interrogator's dominance. It should be noted that not only the authority's but also the victim's utterances contain full or partial repetition – although with a different effect: the latter do it in confusion and fear, which is probably the effect Vončina wants to achieve.

Another example of repetition occurs when Ana is questioned by Arnož about her relationship with the governor. In this dialogue, Arnož, who can be considered the main victim on the plot level, transforms into an oppressor, using a similar method and repetition technique for abusing and subduing Ana. The emphasis in this instance is on the imitation of the victim with the aim to mock and implicitly humiliate:

Arnož: [...] Kako se le moreš obnašati tako **servilno**?  
 Ana: Vljudno!  
 Arnož: **Servilno.** Kaj pa tak kravar ve o vljudnosti. [...] Hvala, **gospod guverner**; da, **gospod guverner**; že odhajate, **gospod guverner**? **Servilno**, poniževalno! [...] Izvolite, **gospod guverner**. Seveda bom prišla, kadar si me boste poželeli, **gospod guverner**, vaša vdana ... (Jančar, 1982, 62)

Firstly, there is an occurrence of exact repetition when Arnož mocks Ana by describing her behaviour as "servilno" (Eng. "servile") and repeating the word, thus judging it as inappropriate. He implies that she is too loyal to the governor in an improper way,

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3 Bold type in all excerpts is added for emphasis.





and that such behaviour means she has lost her self-respect: “Servilno, poniževalno!” (Eng. “Servilely, humiliatingly!”). Ironically, while Arnož is accusing Ana of acting in such a way he is the one humiliating and disrespecting her. This is shown through the parallel structure of sentences, where Arnož imitates his victim, trying to expose her supposedly inappropriate behaviour. The parallel structure of the sentences and use of epiphora (repeated phrase endings) contribute to the mocking tone of the imitation, as if everything that Ana said was in the service of pleasing Mr. Governor: “Hvala, **gospod guverner**; da, **gospod guverner** ... [...] Seveda bom prišla, kadar si me boste pozeleli, **gospod guverner**, vaša vdana ...” (Eng. “Thank you, **Mr. Governor**; yes, **Mr. Governor**... [...] I will certainly come when you desire me, **Mr. Governor**...”).

This pattern echoes Tannen’s (2007, 58) observation that the repetitive structure, i.e., parallelism, enables the speaker to establish a paradigm and vary only a part of it, while keeping the frame structure unchanged – as in an example she provides: “And he knows Spanish, and he knows French, and he knows English, and he knows German, and he is a gentleman” (ibid.). In our case, the unchanged repetend is “Mr. Governor”. The paradigm starts off as exaggerated imitation and even has humorous elements, since in the first two occurrences the repeated part is longer than the new information, but then what initially seems teasing grows into degrading, accusatory mockery, with Arnož’s implying that Ana would even be willing to please the governor sexually. Moreover, since the imitated utterances are fluent as well as parallel in structure, they appear as lacking originality, which supports Arnož’s opinion of Ana’s thoughtless subordination to Mr. Governor. Therefore, he implicitly humiliates her, trying to secure his own dominance by making her feel less worthy.

Another scene where Tannen’s concept of a paradigm applies is Goldberg and McCann’s interrogation from Pinter’s *The Birthday Party* (1996). The paradigm of parallel utterances can be spotted even with a mere glance at the page; however, anaphora (repeated phrase openings) and stichomythia (alternating utterances between two speakers) emerge even more clearly in the staged performance. Only an excerpt is provided here; the whole stichomythic exchange goes on for 71 lines, which adds a sense of humour and absurdity to the prevailing feeling of oppression:

Goldberg:	We’ll make a man of you.
McCann:	And a woman.
Goldberg:	You’ll be re-oriented.
McCann:	You’ll be rich.
Goldberg:	You’ll be adjusted.
McCann:	You’ll be our pride and joy.
Goldberg:	You’ll be a mensch.
McCann:	You’ll be a success.





Goldberg: You'll be integrated.  
McCann: You'll give orders.  
Goldberg: You'll make decisions.  
McCann: You'll be a magnate.  
Goldberg: A statesman.  
McCann: You'll own yachts.  
Goldberg: Animals.  
McCann: Animals. (Pinter, 1996, 42)

This scene is frequently staged so that the sitting Stanley is positioned between the two interrogators, who thus appear above and slightly behind him, in the strategic position, which makes it difficult for Stanley to follow the quick exchange and consequently to defend himself. Even though potential defence is not a realistic option, it is still crucial for the scene, since the feeling of helplessness and the inability to act contribute to the overall anxiety of the mood, felt not only by the victim but also by the audience. Stichomythia, therefore, considerably increases the verbal and psychological pressure on the victim, owing to the simple fact that the hostile utterances are directed at the victim from two sources, both in a position of power. Despite the mostly non-threatening but praising and stimulating utterances, their coming from two directions as well as their brisk and energetic alternation increases the tension and achieves the opposite effect. The menace, however, also seems to stem from the occasionally disturbing suggestions by Goldberg and McCann, for example, the opening few utterances in this excerpt (“We’ll make a man of you. [...] And a woman. [...] You’ll be re-oriented. [...]”), which seem to suggest that something as unquestionable as Stanley’s gender could easily be changed. This is reminiscent of an observation by the literary scholar Anamarija Šporčič about how in some genres of fiction gender might, in fact, be imposed on a person – “through the act of repetition” (2018, 62) – which confronts the reader or the audience with the growing horror of identity through insinuation.

Similarly, in the following excerpt from *The Crucible*, the effect of the utterance is enhanced by the form: parallelism is used as a tool for supporting and conveying verbal violence and psychological pressure:

Abigail: She made me do it! She made Betty do it! [...] She makes me drink blood! [...] She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer! [...] She comes to me every night to go and drink blood! [...] Don't lie! [*To Hale*]: She comes to me while I sleep; she's always making me dream corruptions! (Miller, 1987, 45-46)





This sequence of parallel exclamatory remarks allows Abigail to establish herself as an authority, divert attention from herself and her own guilt, and channel it to Tituba, the most vulnerable member of the group of females who danced in the forest. As soon as Tituba enters the room, Abigail points at her “[*Mrs Putnam enters with Tituba, and instantly Abigail points at Tituba.*]” (Miller, 1987, 45) and starts with the accusations, since it seems likely that a young girl will be sooner trusted than a slave from Barbados. She follows the climactic parallel structure (the only point where she interrupts the pattern is when she addresses Tituba with the ironic imperative “Don’t lie!”), and by falsely accusing another, she switches from the role of victim to that of authority. At the same time, she implicitly subordinates Betty, who is in bed (possibly) listening, showing her that the same false accusation could happen to her if she says something that might not please the new authority.

## 2.2 Explicit Verbal and Psychological Violence

Unlike implicit violence, where the aggression is undisclosed, the instances of explicit hostility are, according to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, expressed “in a way that is very clear and direct” (2010, 595). All the selected examples are both clear and direct, but what additionally amplifies the strength of the oppressors is their expressing themselves through repetition. In the first example, Judge Danforth needs Mary Warren’s confession of her involvement with the devil, otherwise his position could be at stake, since he has already signed and issued many death sentences, based on the (potentially false) accusations of a group of young women:

Danforth:           [...] **You have seen the Devil, have you not?** [...] **You have seen the Devil**, you have made compact with Lucifer, **have you not?** [...] I cannot hear you. What do you say? You will confess yourself or **you will hang!** [*He turns her roughly to face him.*] Do you know who I am? I say **you will hang** if you do not open with me! (Miller, 1987, 103)

Earlier in the third act, the young women start pretending that they can see Mary’s spirit. This chaotic moment is probably the only real chance for Proctor and Mary Warren to maintain that no supernatural forces are at work. Danforth, however, is aware that this claim could threaten his position, so in his effort to obtain this crucial confession he begins to pressure the victim, first by repeating a suggestive, slightly varied question, and then, after a climactic sequence of tension-increasing utterances, with two repetitions of an explicit threat (“...you will hang! [...] I say you will hang...”). In this pivotal moment, he thus proceeds from implicit to explicit violence,





clearly trying to safeguard his position by imposing his power on the victim, whom he has already identified as weak earlier in this act: “Mary Warren [*weaker*]: No, sir. Danforth [*sensing a weakening*]: Has he threatened you?” (Miller, 1987, 91). So, by using repetitive patterns Danforth achieves the desired outcome, and since he is a formal authority, Mary is repressed and has no real choice to answer freely.

In the next example, Jančar combines two antithetic polyptotons, i.e., opposing concepts with varying prefixes and suffixes but the same root, to construct a pattern of explicit verbal and psychological violence. Vončina, in the position of an authority, uses them to humiliate his victims Ksaver and particularly Kronarca with the repeated insult *kurba* (Eng. *whore*) and its antipode *moliti* (Eng. *pray*):

Vončina: Kaj imajo te **kurbe** z Arnožem? [...] [*Hodi po prostoru, spotoma razmeče posteljo, vrže kak predmet na tla.*] **Bordel** imate tukaj. Vaš prerok in učitelj ima tukaj **kurbišče**. [*Stopi h Kronarci.*] No, pa ti povej, kaj sta počela v zakristiji? [...] [*ji vleče roke narazen*]: Ne boš **molila**, tukaj ne boš **molila**. Če v cerkvi ne znaš **moliti**. **Kurba**. Zbor neporočenih **kurb**, ne pa kronaric Device Marije. [...] Ne bosta se **kurbala** v zakristiji. Tukaj se bosta **kurbala**, pri svojem **kurbirskem** profesorju, pri Satanovem poslancu. [*Tišči ju skupaj, tolče, pljuva.*] [...] Dajta se, tu se dajta v tem **bordelu**. [...] (Jančar 1982, 46-47)

The seven-fold polyptoton of the insult *kurba* (Eng. *whore*), which is the most salient iterative figure in this excerpt, densely fills Vončina's utterance, yet it shows a considerable diversity of form. Partly, this can be attributed to the inflectional nature of the Slovene language, but also to the playwright's choice. The parts of speech expand from a singular noun insulting Kronarca and plural noun referring to all of Arnož's supporters to the adjective *kurbirski profesor* (Eng. *whoring professor*), also used for Arnož, and verb *kurbati* (Eng. *to whore*). Among seven recurrences of this polyptoton, only two are the same, the rest are varied. This adds to the multiplicative effect of the repetition, since diversity of vocabulary by definition enriches the textual potential, in this case in a negative way. Moreover, the expression *bordel* (Eng. *brothel*) is used, which is technically not part of the polyptoton, but as a synonym it expands the repetition semantically. Finally, the stylistic element to enhance this range of insults is the antithetic polyptoton based on the verb *moliti* (Eng. *pray*), which is semantically on the opposite side of the spectrum. All three of its occurrences that emerge in three consecutive sentences are in the negative verb form, thus supporting the speaker's main aim to humiliate and subdue the victims. The clauses are short and parallel: “Ne boš molila, tukaj ne boš molila. Če v cerkvi ne znaš moliti.” (Eng. “You shall not pray, you shall not pray





here. Since you cannot pray in church.”), and they could also be viewed as a litotes, which is a rhetorical figure of claiming or stressing something by denying its opposite. Since Kronarca’s *praying* is in contrast with the insult *whore* and is now negated, this is, in fact, used to semantically repeat the insult. This double polyptoton thus enhances malicious atmosphere not only with its clustered density and meticulously planned word variety, but also with the synergic effect of two contrasting series of recurrences.

Explicit verbal violence can also be seen in Vončina’s utterance directed at Arnož. The audience learns that the latter used to be Vončina’s teacher, and exercised both physical and verbal violence over him at that time. Now, the roles are reversed, Vončina is in the position of authority and threatens Arnož with what seems personal revenge:

Vončina: Arnož, **jaz** si tega ne dovoljujem. **Jaz** se vam lahko **grdo maščujem**. **Jaz** vam še nisem odpustil tiste klofute. (Jančar 1982, 36)

The threat in the central sentence of this parallelly structured utterance is explicit: “Jaz se vam lahko grdo maščujem.” (Eng. “I can take severe revenge against you.”). The anaphora that links the three draws attention not only because of the repetition itself, but to a large extent because of the unusual use of the personal pronoun *jaz* (Eng. *I*) in the subject position, which is regular in English syntax, but not in Slovene.<sup>4</sup> So, its unusual use brings the speaker and his self-consciousness into the foreground, while he himself underlines his newly gained authority and the concomitant possibility of revenge.

Finally, let us look closely at the figure of polysyndeton in the following utterance by Abigail from *The Crucible*, enhanced by the short sentences introduced with the repeated conjunction:

Abigail: Now look you. All of you. We danced. **And** Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam’s dead sisters. **And** that is all. **And** mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, **and** I will come to you in the black of some terrible night, **and** I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. **And** you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents’ heads on the pillow next

4 The neutral formulation in Slovene would be “Lahko se vam grdo maščujem”, since the suffix *-m* of the conjugated verb *se maščujem* indicates the first person singular subject. This is similar to some other European languages (e.g., Italian, French, German), where the verb suffix changes according to the grammatical person and number; however, in Slovene the personal pronoun (in this case “jaz”) is dropped, while in French or German it remains part of the structure.





to mine, **and** I have seen some reddish work done at night,  
**and** I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go  
down! (Miller, 1987, 26-27)

The threat in the passage is explicit, and polysyndeton gives it climactic strength. Combined with the personal pronoun *I* (“[...] and **I** will come to you... [...] and **I** will bring... [...] and **I** have seen... [...] and **I** can make you...”), the parallel structure supports Abigail in establishing her superiority over other girls. Each addition she makes increases both the explicit threat and pressure on the girls, which are enhanced by the rhetorical scheme of polysyndeton.

### 3 Conclusion

Repetition as a rhetorical scheme has the potential to achieve a range of effects, from acting as a mere aesthetic accessory to playing a salient role in various segments of the dramatic structure.

As we have shown in this article, repetition in a range of forms can effectively contribute to building a malicious atmosphere in interrogation or torture scenes. These frequently start in a seemingly mild tone and progress to openly menacing and hostile incidents, possibly even combined with physical action. Repetition proves efficient at all stages of this process: in the early phases, when the threat in the interrogators’ utterances is still merely implicit, the role of repetition is substantial, since the majority of the pressure-creating potential comes from the iterative utterances (e.g., questions) of the interrogator. When threatening, scolding and other forms of abuse become overt, repetition multiplies their strength and arouses the impression of ongoing verbal and psychological pressure. This phenomenon contributes considerably to the hostile mood and is, therefore, a vital stylistic element of the dramatic structure.

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## **Repetition as a means of verbal and psychological violence in interrogation scenes from contemporary drama**

**Keywords:** repetition, recurrence, verbal violence, psychological violence, modern drama

The psychological and verbal pressure that often saturates the atmosphere in the interrogation scenes of certain subgenres of post-WWII drama can be achieved through various stylistic means. Among these are repetition and recurrence, which conveniently suit the nature of vicious interrogations, where questions (often illogical) are posed repeatedly, partly to extort information from the victim but predominantly to break the victim's resistance. Used in the utterances of the speaker, these repetitive questions or parts thereof intensify the distressing mood





and strengthen the superiority of the speaker who intimidates, humiliates or otherwise degrades the victim. In this study, the focus will be on those instances of repetition and recurrence that contribute strongly to creating such situations and relationships in contemporary drama. The traditional iteration patterns will be identified, analysed and categorized according to the potential intensity of the repression and the schematic type of recurrence. The examples are taken from plays by Arthur Miller, Harold Pinter and Drago Jančar.

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## **Ponavljanje kot sredstvo besednega in psihološkega nasilja v zasliševalnih prizorih v sodobni drami**

**Ključne besede:** ponavljanje, ponovna pojavitev, besedno nasilje, psihološko nasilje, sodobna drama

Psihološke in verbalne pritiske, s katerimi so pogosto prežeti prizori zasliševanja v nekaterih dramskih delih iz obdobja po drugi svetovni vojni, dramatik pogosto doseže z različnimi slogovnimi sredstvi. Med njimi sta ponavljanje in ponovna pojavitev, ki kot besedni figuri ustreza ta naravi zlovesčih zasliševanj, na katerih zasliševalci (pogosto nelogična) vprašanja zastavljajo znova in znova – včasih zato, da bi od žrtve izsilili določene informacije, večinoma pa zato, da bi zlomili njen odpor. Ta ponavljajoča se vprašanja ali njihovi deli stopnjujejo napetost in krepijo nadvlado govorca, ki žrtev ustrahuje, ponižuje ali kako drugače degradira. Pričujoči prispevek se osredinja na tiste primere ponovitev in ponovnih pojavitev, ki znatno prispevajo k ustvarjanju takšnih situacij in odnosov v sodobni drami. Nadalje raziskava analizira tradicionalne iteracijske vzorce ter jih kategorizira glede na potencialno intenzivnost represije in figurativni vzorec ponovitve. Primeri so prevzeti iz iger Arthurja Millerja, Harolda Pinterja in Draga Jančarja.

### **O avtorjih**

**Tomaž Onič** je izredni profesor za angleško književnost na Oddelku za anglistiko in amerikanistiko Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Mariboru. Poučuje različne predmete s področja književnosti in književnega prevajanja. Njegovo raziskovalno delo obsega britansko in ameriško dramo v tesni povezavi s prevajanjem in kulturološkimi študijami ter literarno stilistiko. V zadnjih letih se raziskovalno osredotoča na igre Harolda Pinterja in njihovo dojetje v slovenskem kulturnem prostoru ter na prevajanje Shakespearjevih iger v slovenščino.

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