

The Innovative Methods of Contemporary Theatre: *The Six Characters in Search of an Author* as a Model

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Abstract

Objectives: This study analyzes *Six Characters in Search of an Author* as a pioneering work in experimental stage techniques and thematic exploration. It examines how the play challenges traditional theatrical norms through audience engagement and metatheatrical elements, addressing complex themes such as illusion versus reality, the relationship between life and art, and the challenges of artistic creation.

Methods: A qualitative approach was used to analyze *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, focusing on its structure, themes, and innovative techniques. Contextual insights were drawn from literature on Luigi Pirandello and his work, highlighting how the play subverts conventions through audience participation and metatheatricality.

Results: The study finds that *Six Characters in Search of an Author* uniquely challenges boundaries between reality and fiction. Through metatheatrical devices and interactive elements, the play probes the nature of art and existence, blending styles from commedia dell'arte to teatro grotesco. This approach compels audiences to reconsider assumptions about theatricality and representation.

Conclusion: *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is a landmark in theater, disrupting traditional conventions and inviting audiences to engage with philosophical questions about art and reality. Its innovative use of audience interaction and metatheatrical techniques reflects an evolution in theatrical form, demonstrating the power of theater to provoke thought and challenge norms.

Keywords: *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Luigi Pirandello, Contemporary Theater, Metatheater, Experimental Stage Techniques.

الأساليب الابتكارية للمسرح المعاصر "الشخصيات الست تبحث عن مؤلف" أنموذجاً

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ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل الشخصيات الستة التي تبحث عن مؤلف باعتباره عملاً مهمًا في تقنيات المسرح التجريبي والموضوعات الموضوعية. يستكشف كيف تتحدى المسرحية المعايير المسرحية التقليدية من خلال دمج مشاركة الجمهور وعناصر الدراماتورجيا. كذلك تهدف إلى كيفية استكشاف الشخصيات لموضوعات معقدة مثل: الوهم مقابل الحقيقة، والعلاقة بين الحياة والفن، وتحديات الإبداع الفني.

المنهجية: قامت الدراسة بتحليل مسرحية الشخصيات الستة التي تبحث عن مؤلف للتعرف إلى بنيته وموضوعاته وتقنياته. تم مراجعة الأدبيات المتعلقة (بلويجي بيرانديللو) والمسرحية لتوفير معلومات أدبية. سلط التحليل الضوء على كيفية تقويض المسرحية للأعراف التقليدية من خلال مشاركة الجمهور والعناصر ما بعد المسرحية. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج النوعي لتفسير النص والربط بين شكل المسرحية والمحتوى الموضوعي.

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج أن الشخصيات الستة التي تبحث عن مؤلف هي مسرحية فريدة من نوعها تتحدى المفاهيم التقليدية للواقع والخيال. يستخدم مشاركة الجمهور وتقنيات ما بعد المسرح لاستكشاف طبيعة الفن والوجود. المسرحية، التي تجمع بين عناصر الكوميديا ديلاوتي والمسرح البشع، تتحدى التصنيف السهل، وتدعو الجمهور إلى إعادة النظر في افتراضاتهم حول المسرحية والتمثيل.

الخلاصة: إن مسرحية الشخصيات الستة التي تبحث عن مؤلف هي مسرحية رائدة تتحدى التقاليد المسرحية التقليدية وتدعو الجماهير لاستكشاف الأسئلة الفلسفية. حيث تم اشراك الجمهور لأول مرة في تقديم المسرحية، وتقنيات ما بعد المسرح، ويستكشف موضوعات أساسية، مما يدل على تطور المسرح من خلال تلاعبه الماهر بالشكل والمحتوى الدراميين. وتظهر المسرحية قوة المسرح في تحفيز الفكر وتحدي الأعراف.

الكلمات الدالة: البحث عن الشخصيات الستة للمؤلف، لويجي بيرانديللو، المسرح المعاصر.

1. Introduction

Many people rank "Search of an Author..." among the most significant works of the twentieth century. As so, it exemplifies the ways in which contemporary play has been pushing the envelope. Its intricate technique and tragic human tragedy shocked the theatrical professionals (Eldridge, 1998: 81). They place the two theatrical forms next to one other. The new shape began to incorporate elements of the old, and vice versa. As a consequence, confusion ensues and there is general anarchy. There is a merging of several approaches, including the meta-theatrical method, play-within-a-play, the idea of separate personalities, masks, and many more (Sogliuzzo, 1966: 224).

While Pirandello's use of masks was distinctive, Brecht's was not. Pirandello used masks to show several sides of the same character and to differentiate between the two groups of actors onstage, whereas Brecht aimed for concealment by having Shen Te play the role of Shui Ta. The author has given each of the six characters a mask to hide their true feelings (Bose, 1998: 63). The author presents them as the parents, the stepdaughter, the son, the little boy, and the little girl. An author developed these fictional characters and then left them to fend for themselves. The frantic hunt for an author has brought the 'visitor' to the stage. Claiming to be the author's discarded fantasies, these lively inventions of the author's mind are adamant on putting on their play (Leskosky, 1988).

Play inside a play was a technique the playwright used to get their drama to the stage. Thus, Pirandello deftly displays his themes of truth vs. appearance, art vs. life, and the difficulties of creative production by contrasting the traditional realistic theatre with the unusual spontaneous experimentation with commedia dell'arte and teatro grottesco (Richtarik, 1995:65).

This study aims to analyze *The Six Characters in Search of an Author* as a significant work in experimental stage techniques and thematic motifs. The study analyzed *The Six Characters in Search of an Author* to identify its structure, themes, and techniques.

2. Pirandello's Reputation in Modern Theater

Although Pirandello is well recognised as a famous playwright, there has been a scarcity of studies and translation in English of his extensive collection of essays, novels, poetry, and tragedies. Although the Nobel Prize excluded Pirandello, he remains one of the most exceptional authors in the annals of Italian literature (Kernan, 1958:101). Pirandello's plays are highly acclaimed by both the general audience and critics, and they continue to be performed in several countries in various languages. The playwright's achievement of worldwide recognition is really astounding (Karimi-Hakak, 2013: 57).

Thomas Bishop describes his works as "tough" (Bishop xvii), and notes that it is uncommon for such a complex playwright to receive widespread acclaim (White, 1961:437). To support his view, he further states that the subject matter of Pirandellian play is focused on intelligence. The plays consistently explore themes of truth and illusion, the fluidity and diversity of human personality, the clash between life and art, and the fundamental challenge of creating a work of art. This notion is supported by Davies et al. (1983) who found that Pirandello skillfully merged the contrivance of the theatre with the actuality of life. His plays introduced unique concepts to the domain of contemporary theatre.

Concerning the people in Italy, especially during the 80s, Fletcher (1998:136) concludes that the Italian audiences have lost interest in the dramatic notions that formerly supported in-depth portrayals of modern life and culture from all socioeconomic backgrounds. They were already used to the excitement of the "Grotesques" and its many auguries from their time in the military. Out of the dramatists wrath, the futurist became adversarial and harshly criticised the past (Smith, 2018:129). The most solemn of them all, Pirandello vehemently opposed the traditional standards of romantic, bygone theatre. His macabre comedies rang the death knell for traditional theatre. Starkie spoke highly of him, praising his unique philosophical perspective and describing him as a "giant among these Lilliputians" because of it (Fletcher, 1998:136).

In the context mentioned, the authors address the synonymous meaning of the theatre, which is "Teatro". The "Teatro grottesque" movement arose as a backlash against the emotional drama that had long dominated the theatre. By being so literal, Pirandello had pushed the notion of the "grotesque theatre" and futuristic ideologies all throughout the theatre world (Ben-Zvi, 1998). And in every nation, a new critical idiom is emerging as a product of the mindset of modern theatre,

coinciding with the demise of well-made bourgeois plays (MacClintock & Bishop, 1960:298).

Shifting to the 19th century, the idiom of 'intellectualism' emerged; intellectualism is a defining feature of the cerebral drama that Pirandello introduced to Europe (Wallace & Bishop, 1960:184). The "Encyclopaedia Britannica" describes the well-made play as a kind of nineteenth-century American and European theatre that followed certain technical rules. The technological formulae necessitated an artificially convoluted narrative involving a secret that was known to the viewers but kept from certain characters (Bergin & Oliver, 1981:55).

2.1 Pirandello Life and the Success of his Plays

An insight into the troubled existence of Pirandello reveals significant financial hardships intertwined with the psychological collapse of his spouse. However, the challenges of his personal life did not impede him. Prior to achieving renown as a renowned playwright, he authored a plethora of popular novels and short tales. His dramatic method includes a mastery of crisp compression, skillful characterisation, and sudden climaxes (Smith, 2018:129).

The fluctuations and changes in Pirandello's life directly influenced his paintings. Distinguishing Pirandello as an artist from Pirandello as an individual is a challenging task. The artist's work is so tightly unified that a careful examination requires a deep comprehension of the playwright. Pirandello first started his creative journey as a poet, then advanced to writing short stories and novels, and ultimately achieved great success in the field of theatre, where his artistic brilliance can be seen (Leskosky, 1988:460). Following the period of detachment and objectivity seen in realism and naturalism throughout the early part of his career, Pirandello shifted his focus towards the serious exploration of humour and the grotesque. The combination of the sad and comedic elements in his work gives rise to the fundamental nature of humour (Yun, 2022). He believed that when a humorist laughs, there is a trace of sorrow in his laughter. The dramatist's compositions were founded on the psychological characteristics of laughter and sadness, thereby blurring the distinction between the two in the human brain. Walter Starkie argues that the central character in Pirandellian drama is the concept of King thinking (Kimmel, 1999:238).

Starkie, in his lecture in 1934 in Barcelona, cited Pirandello while discussing the theatrical method he had taken. The writer observed the following : "People say that my drama is obscure and they call it cerebral drama. The new drama possesses a distinct character from the old: whereas the latter had as its basis passion, the former is the expression of the intellect" (Fisher, 1998: 33). One of the innovations I have brought to contemporary play is the transformation of intelligence into emotion. In the past, the audience was mostly captivated by emotionally charged plays, however today they eagerly go to see intellectually stimulating performances (Fisher, 1998: 68).

2.2 Pirandello's Ideology

Through Pirandello's exceptional intelligence, knowledge, and profound imagination, he skillfully transformed his characters, immersing them into the serene realm of his art. In order to express his ideology, he resurrected the ancient tradition of *commedia dell'arte*, which had its origins in Italy in 1550. The usage of stock characters was a defining characteristic of it. *Commedia dell'arte*, a kind of impromptu theatrical performance, may be described as a type of theatre centred on the skills and abilities of the actors (Sendyka, 2017).

Pirandello presented a framework, called the 'scenari', which serves as a structure for the performers to enhance the performance with their expertise and competency, using pre-established words and movements. The response of the audience is likewise included into the theatrical framework. In order to captivate the audience, the creators of the scenario devised unconventional storylines that were so intricate that finding a solution seemed almost impossible (Crick, 2018:198).

However, to the astonishment of the audience, the truth is revealed in the conclusion. Pirandello used the structure of *commedia dell'arte*, but his plays progressed beyond that level. Therefore, in Pirandello's plays, the players have significant significance. Pirandello has always been concerned with the issue of individual identity. He demonstrated that the number of logics and reasons is equal to the number of persons. The persons manifest to him in many forms, including double, triple, and numerous, due to the absence of a stable personality (Newberry, 1967:253).

In *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the readers identify the most striking depiction of the illusion of individual identity. The culpable father states: "For the drama lies all in this - in the conscience that I have, that each one of us has.

We believe this conscience to be a single thing, but it is many-sided. There is one for this person, and another for that. Diverse consciences. So we have this illusion of being one person for all, of having a personality that is unique in all our acts. But it isn't true" (Crick, 2018:16). He is suggesting that the audience experience this feeling of being suspended when, unfortunately, they find themselves in a catastrophic situation due to their actions. Suspended in mid-air by a kind of hook, it is evident that not all human were involved in that conduct, and it would be a gross injustice to condemn only based on one action, as if the whole life could be defined by that single deed (Crick, 2018:205)

2.3 Illusion and Reality in Pirandello's Technique

The researchers, in this study, believe that Pirandello's style revolves on the contrast between reality and illusion, which serves as the foundation for exploring the issue of the relativity of truth. This juxtaposition of illusion and reality, which presents two different forms of theatre and two distinct groups of people, is a clear demonstration of the approach.

The characters, who are trapped in a single feeling, claim their existence as more genuine than the performers, whose actuality is susceptible to change. Art is more immutable than life, since it remains unaffected by the fluctuations that define existence (Ben-Zvi, 1998: 269). For example, the author explains in the Preface the terrible confrontation that takes place at Madame Pace's involving the Father and the Step-daughter "If the father and the daughter began their scene over one hundred thousand times in succession, always, at the appointed moment, at the instant when the life of the work of art must be expressed with that cry, it would always be heard, unaltered and alterable in its form, not as a mechanical repetition, as a return determined by external necessities" (ibid, 19).

However, in contrast, it is always alive and rejuvenated, abruptly bursting out and enduring indefinitely! Preserved while still alive in its uncorrupted state... Every living thing, by virtue of its existence, has a physical structure, and thus, it is destined to perish - with the exception of a work of art, which endures eternally due to its inherent form (May, 1964:378).

2.4 Changing Reality Through Realistic Drama

The dynamic and fluid nature of existence is captured and encapsulated inside certain instances, which are then translated into theatrical performances. Due to the challenges of portraying the always shifting reality via realistic drama, he opted for adlib, which allows for the inclusion of truth and the portrayal of different personalities of individuals. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Pirandello's most renowned theatrical work, impressed theatre professionals with its unique method, intricate and intellectual nature, and profoundly tragic portrayal of human suffering. The writer presents the central point or essence of the play in the 'Preface' (Vittorini & Pirandello, 1935: 231).

The performance starts with a rehearsals of one of Pirandello's original dramas entitled "Mixing it up." A dissatisfied ensemble of performers is attempting to practice for the previously stated play. The scene takes place at a theatre where the performers, producer, prompter, and light man have gathered to rehearse their roles. Without warning, the rehearsal is abruptly disrupted by the appearance of six individuals on the stage (Yun, 2022:159). They self-identify as 'characters' and assert that they possess an inherent sense of drama. They possess a mysterious atmosphere that amplifies the bewilderment. Pirandello presented the six individuals as "the Father, the Mother, the Stepdaughter, the Son, the Young Boy, and the Little Girl" (ibid, 161).

The six individuals are fictional characters brought into existence by an author who entrusted them with the responsibility of safeguarding themselves (Richards, 2004:18). They want permission to stage their play, claiming that they are figments of the author's imagination who were brought into existence, then neglected and left unfinished. They sought an author who could fulfil them and insist on reenacting the event that caused them to become immobile. The drama that unfolds is a metatheatrical performance, where the skill of the playwright is showcased through his exploration of themes such as illusion versus truth, the relationship between life and art, and the challenges of artistic creation (Paolucci, 1998:92).

The researchers, in this study, recognized that this is achieved by juxtaposing the traditional realistic theatre with the unconventional and spontaneous experimentation of *commedia dell'arte* and *teatro grottesco*. The characters possess an inherent liveliness. From the outset, it is evident that a fabricated illusion is being meticulously crafted by an actor using a well written screenplay and conventional props (Sendyka, 2017).

3. Play Within a Play in Luigi Pirandello's Work

The concept of a "play inside a play," sometimes known as a "in-set play," is a theatrical gimmick in which certain characters on stage assume the roles of actors and perform a play for the other characters, who become the audience ((Ben-Zvi, 1998). Kenneth Pickering notes that meta-theatre is now recognised as a kind of theatre that focuses on the essence of theatre itself " It is intriguing to investigate the frequency with which theatre has studied and praised its own nature in different ways" (Pickering, 2010: 40). The first documented instances of metatheatricality may be traced back to Kyd's Spanish Tragedy (1589) and subsequently Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595) (Jernigan, 2020).

The method may be traced back to the metaphorical concept of the world being like to a theatrical stage. The notion illustrates the obstacles that are experienced during the production of a play. The actual spectators are observing an on-stage crowd as they see the same theatrical performance that the actual spectators are viewing. The author strives to urge the audience to notice and analyse their own part. Heightened realism is attained when the audience observes performers engaged in the act of producing a play (MacClintock & Bishop, 1960:291). This dual theatricality serves to highlight the meta-theatrical essence of the action and explores the moments when it becomes difficult to distinguish between life and art "When a play contains a play, it is as if we are examining the notion of theatre itself in great detail" (Jernigan, 2020 :42). The play exemplifies the mechanical characteristics of a well-structured play, highlighting its artificiality and lack of moral depth in contrast to the spontaneity of improvisation (ibid: 35).

The researchers believe that improvisation of undeveloped characters is an essential component of the play. These creations of imagination have values and emotions that are similar to human desires, fears, and conflicts. According to Pirandello, if they were given the opportunity to exist on stage, they would possess a greater sense of reality than actual life.

3.1 Their Resemblance to Nineteenth Century Romantic Play

The prelude to the play describes the author's imagination giving birth to people, with the playwright, Gogol, referring to this process as "This tiny maidservant of mind, Fantasy, many years ago, had the unfortunate idea or ill-fated whim to introduce a family into my home " (Gogol, 1961: 63). He said that she was unable to determine where she obtained or how she acquired them, but she believed that I might discover inside them the material for an exceptional book.

Ultimately, after going through the whole process, the characters have reached a degree of existence that is so real and concrete that the dramatist gives them a physical shape in a short story, book, or play. However, they were not completed. Although they have not yet acquired a distinct artistic structure, they possess an inherent dramatic quality that transforms them into compelling characters. Every imaginative and creative creation requires a narrative, a narrative in which it may live and fulfil its role as a character (Sendyka, 2017:24).

This drama serves as the character's *raison d'être*, their essential purpose that is crucial for their existence. Their theatre has similarities to late nineteenth century love plays, both in terms of storyline and atmosphere. Pirandello characterises the Father as a middle-aged man of fifty, with a pale, prominent forehead, thinning reddish hair, and piercing, distinct eyes. He serves as the focal point of the family's final tragic events and the clash of personalities among the players. The Mother seems to be anxious and fearful, overwhelmed by her feelings of disgrace and humiliation. Clad in mourning attire and with a perpetually lowered gaze, she displays full passivity. Pirandello refers to her as "nature" (Bergin & Oliver, 1981:58).

The Stepdaughter is an eighteen-year-old individual who displays arrogance and aggression. She has an exquisite appearance and is well aware of it, confidently expressing her views. The Son, who is twenty-two years old, openly displays his disdain for the family throughout the play. The Young Boy seems to be on par intellectually with the Little Girl, although being fourteen years old. Little information is available about them and they communicate in a quiet manner (Paolucci, 1998:96).

3.2 The Nature of The Characters in The Play

The narrative of these vivid creations of the playwright's mind unfolds intermittently via the outbursts of the Father and the Stepdaughter, and sometimes the Mother and the Son. The husband who wedded this impoverished and unsophisticated lady quickly comes to recognise that he is no longer able to effectively interact with her. After sending his kid to the country,

he gradually distances himself from the family. The father makes a significant gesture by accompanying the mother with the secretary (Richards, 2004:23).

One explanation was the tacit mutual agreement between the mother and the secretary. However, he persists in displaying interest in the broader family. Upon learning about the family and the stepdaughter's school, he progressively derives satisfaction by bestowing presents. The Mother becomes more alarmed by this growing proximity and decides to relocate to a different city. Due to the Secretary's untimely death, the family is compelled to return to their hometown. In response to a dire economic situation, the Mother secures employment as a seamstress at Madame Pace's ostensibly reputable retail establishment specialising in high-end clothing. The establishment functions as a brothel, where the Stepdaughter is coerced into engaging in prostitution as a means of securing the family's sustenance. The culmination of the characters' calamity occurs when the Father meets the Stepdaughter. The father, acting as a suitor to the stepdaughter, is interrupted by the mother, who rescues them from disgrace (Yun, 2022:162).

Following the finding, the Father escorts them back to their home. The adult son displays apathy towards his mother and disapproves of the two children, supposing them to be born out of wedlock. He also maintains a distant and reserved attitude towards his father. The Mother's anguish is palpable to her two young children, who tightly grip her hands. The little girl perishes by drowning and the young boy takes his own life, however the plight of others remains unanswered (Ben-Zvi, 1998). Pirandello explores the blurred lines between reality and fantasy.

Their distressing narrative develops intermittently over the three acts. The initially hesitant producer ultimately consents to allow the characters to embody their parts on stage, and thereafter the performers adopt the identities of six characters throughout the performance. However, the endeavour is unsuccessful since the performers just pretend to be characters, whereas the characters had really experienced their lives in those roles (Ibid: 262).

The actuality of the latter is really a facade of the former. Therefore, the original play, in which the characters themselves played spontaneously, is now being reenacted with a new twist. In this reenactment, the characters take on the role of the audience, while the actors perform the play with a distinct variation. The script has been specifically created for them and the stage has been meticulously arranged. The play started in a state of disorder and finishes in a state of disorder. The Boy's suicide is perplexing, and only the Father has knowledge of his true circumstances - the exact moment at which he becomes immobilised by the author.

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? (Pirandello, 1922: 23)

3.3 The Isolated Characters with Self-Contained Domain

From a dramaturgical perspective, the genre intentionally introduces a tension. Every member of the estranged family is a solitary person functioning inside their own self-contained sphere. These separate boundaries intrude onto or overlap the shared spaces of interconnected human actions and create an interaction that serves as a fundamental functional component of any dramatic composition (Crick, 2018:209).

The play also includes a variety of strategically choreographed conflicts between the six characters and the performers. This intrinsic disharmony is seen in the layers of delusion and reality that are continuously vying to eradicate the opposing element. The confrontational conflicts between characters and actors, as well as among the improvisers themselves, allow the playwright to utilise inversion as a theatrical technique (Smith, 2018:125). This technique juxtaposes art with life, illusion with reality, rationality with irrationality, and cold logic with frenzied outbursts. These tensions highlight the simultaneous presence of several types of drama. The performance starts when the curtain rises, revealing a stage in a state of disarray, which is immediately noticed by the audience. The rehearsals for Pirandello's play "Mixing It Up" are under way (Newberry, 1967:259).

This seems to be intentional and significant since the playwright integrated the two styles of theatre in the play. The performers were practicing the play, which was designed to resemble a traditional, well-structured drama from the

bourgeois era. The narrative is often disrupted by the characters, whose dramatic actions are spontaneous and unplanned. The subtitle suggests that there will be growth and development among the actors and characters as they engage in an unsolved undertaking, resulting in the creation of humour. The writer subverts the conventional practice of assigning parts according to the written script, prompter's book, props, lighting, sets, furniture, action, exits, entrances, and actors who coordinate to achieve the flawless appearance of reality. The introduction of the Six Characters disrupts the genuine portrayal of the original performers in the drama (Crick, 2018:210).

4. The Nature of Dialogue in The Play

The stage is set up with the necessary requirements for a genuine traditional play. The first conversation between the management and the principal actor conveys the importance of the screenplay and the writer.

Leading Man to the manager: "Excuse me, but must I absolutely wear a cook's cap? "

The Manager "Annoyed". "I imagine so. It says so there anyway (Pirandello, 1922:3)

In addition, the producer and his staff, who are apparently experienced in traditional emotional and romantic plays from the bourgeois theatre of the turn of the century, are unable to understand the avant-garde "Pirandellian theatre". The management expresses dissatisfaction:

The Manager: " Ridiculous? Ridiculous? Is it my fault if France won't send us any more good comedies, and we are reduced to putting on Pirandello's works, where nobody understands anything, and where the author plays the fool with us all? (The actors grin. The Manager goes to the Leading Man and shouts) Yes sir, you put on the cook's cap and beat eggs". (Pirandello, 1922:86).

At this point, the six characters make their entrance onto the stage. The author's imagination gives rise to these inventions, resulting in a 'dream-like' ambiance portrayed by the presence of green light on the stage. The purpose was to differentiate between the two groups of individuals in attendance: "A tenuous light surrounds them, almost as if irradiated by them - the faint breath of their fantastic reality. "

The Manager: " Do you suppose that with all this egg-beating business you are on an ordinary stage? Get that out of your head. You represent the shell of the eggs you are beating! {Laughter and comments among the actors.} Silence! And listen to my explanation, please! {To Leading Man} "The empty form of reason without the fullness of instinct, which is blind" - You stand for reason, your wife is instinct. It's a mixing up of the parts, according to which you who act your own part become the puppet of yourself. Do you understand? "

Leading Man. " I'm hanged if I do. "

The Manager. " Neither do I (2). " (Pirandello, 1922: 89)

They have an immutable perception of reality. Each individual is firmly entrenched in a single feeling, representing a distinct facet of their identity. Pirandello used the concept of dividing various elements of a complex personality, in which several characters represent unique facets of a single personality, known as the 'roleplaying technique'. The Father personifies regret, the Mother represents guilt and genuine emotions, the Daughter symbolises rebellion, the Son expresses contempt, and the two children are unaware. The approach is similar to commedia dell'arte. The characters on stage extemporise while being locked in a single feeling. They generate their own repertoire of stock acts and stock utterances inside the given 'scenario', according to the assigned role (Sendyka, 2017:29).s. The feeling stays constant regardless of how many times the characters do their roles.

4.1 Demolishing the Concept of Author

In order to deconstruct the idea of an author, the characters claim to be more genuine and attempt to seize the stage in order to play out the drama that they claim to be carrying inside themselves:

"The Manager (furious): I am rehearsing, and you know perfectly well no one's allowed to come in during rehearsal! (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 manner of act... 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 other). 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 " (Pirandello, 1922: 4)

The reader gets reminded of the art of *commedia dell'arte*, its archetypal characters, and the scripted scenarios that the players are given. Following this, conflict arises as a prominent element of theatre, as characters spontaneously express their differences on stage. The Father engaged in an intense emotional fight with the Mother, Step-Daughter, and Son, while the Mother is also in a state of disagreement with the Son and Step-Daughter (Fisher, 1998:78). Step-Daughter delivers a lengthy and erratic speech that reveals a physical altercation and provides insight into a story of suffering.

The Step-Daughter (to Manager).” Worse? Worse? Listen! Stage this drama for us at once! Then you will see that at a certain moment I ... when this little darling here ... (takes the Child by the hand and leads her to the Manager) Isn't she a dear? (Takes her up and kisses her). Darling! Darling! (Puts her down again and adds feelingly) Well, when God suddenly takes this dear little child away from that poor mother there; and this imbecile here (seizing hold of the Boy roughly and pushing him forward) does the stupidest things, like the fool he is, you will see me run away. Yes, gentlemen, I shall be off. But the moment hasn't arrived yet. After what has taken place between him and me (indicates the Father with a horrible wink), I can't remain any longer in this society, to have to witness the anguish of this mother here for that fool. {Indicates the Son “ (Pirandello, 1922 :7)

The speech might be seen as an introductory section to the play involving the six characters. Upon hearing her words, the Mother loses consciousness. The performers curiously ask: Is it veracious? Has she really lost consciousness? Therefore, the readers see the formidable influence of imagination. The performers struggle to distinguish between illusion and reality due to the subtle distinction that exists between the two. The author skillfully crafts the semblance of verisimilitude on the stage (Leskosky, 1988:463).

Moreover, the performers express doubt over the Mother's grieving process. "However, since you are still living, how can she be considered a widow?" inquires the Manager. The response begets another narrative. Over time, the characters take control of the stage and performers get engrossed in their performance (Pickering, 2010).

5. The Results

The first aim tackled the theme reality and illusion, which is used to search for identity of the characters. The characters lost their identity, thus, Pirandello use reality and illusion. The significance of Pirandello's play is to search for identity that all the people at that time (end of World War 1) suffer from, the loss of one's identity was presented in a comparison method between reality (what the people actually live) and the illusion (what the people like to be). An example of this is the appearance of the six characters in the play without names, and the writer did this to show the audience that the characters lack identity and are incomplete. Regarding the character of the "father" in the play, he confirms that the real characters of the actors in their real life have a drama like the drama that they are used to presenting as actors on stage. It can be inferred that the integration between reality and illusion that Pirandello created in drama is the new convention of dramatic presentation and this created for us the theatre of the absurd.

While, the second aim tackled "life-art relationship". Pirandello introduced the theme of life-art relationship through the search of the six characters for their identity in finding an author who would help them complete their life stories. During the search, the six characters completed the story of the play themselves, convinced that the actors of drama in reality, i.e.

the person who lives the drama of his life, are more efficient than the actors in performance. Here, the reality of life was combined with art, so the relationship was strong and represented a new direction for drama.

The third aim related to the "artistic creation challenges". The play was written at the end of the World War 1, thus the majority of people felt loss of life, and this is reality. Modernist artists responded to the feeling of losing identity and living in illusion as they searched for reality by representing more experimental and reality-challenging pieces of art. Theatre artists began to deal with the struggle between reality and illusion. Here, Pirandello wrote a play that provoked controversy by challenging audience expectations as well as theatre conventions. The events in the prologue of the play were a play within a play, actors rehearsing a play. The aim was to encourage the audience to realize the imaginative nature of both theatre and acting.

6. Conclusion

The play has been functioning on two distinct levels. The playwright examines the process and challenges of creative production, including the comparison between life and art. On another level, readers see the deterioration of values and communication, feelings of shame, existential challenges, and moral conflicts. The dramatist revitalised the antiquated Italian dramatic style known as *commedia dell'arte* and juxtaposed it with the prevailing conventional drama. The assessment of the two divergent methods contributes to the ludicrous nature. Pirandello's use of the method of play inside a play enabled him to be more original and adapt the peculiar drama of the six characters in a very inventive manner. To emphasise the distinctions between the two types of drama, the playwright developed many conflicts within the genre. The entities conjured by the dramatist's imagination manifest with a realism comparable to that of live beings. They possess the ability to communicate and even protect themselves.

This duality does not only criticize creativity in writing and new style, but we find that Pirandello reversed what is called existential contradictions experienced by those interested in modern theater. Pirandello proved that the characters of the play showed the phenomenon of fantasy and reality, which makes the audience of modern theater confused about the truth of the reality they live through what they touched from the characters of the play. We find that the plays written by Pirandello have a controversial subject for the audience that shows the truth of the reality they live and highlights the aspects of ambiguity and areas of confusion that the individual doubts in the society in which he lives, as well as distancing the audience from the traditional pattern by narrating stories or events presented on stage, and integrating the audience into a real art that is a mirror of the life of every individual in society.

The authors concluded that the play, since its premiere in 1921, a good example of the paradox of life, that is, the paradoxes that people experience in their lives, which are the result of escaping from reality or the circumstances surrounding them. Here in this play, the situational paradox was the result of the contradiction between the reality in which the characters live and their expectations, as the six characters in the play claim that they are looking for an author for their literary work, and this author is unknown, but in reality these six characters have a famous and very well-known author, the writer Pirandello.

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