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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANA BİLİM DALI

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ ADI : HAROLD PINTER VE

SAÇMA TİYATRO YA KATKISI

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HAROLD PINTER AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE
THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

BY

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PREFACE

From the most primitive up to the modern societies of the present day, drama has been the only way for human beings to validate existence and to bring about explanations for the natural phenomena. This kind of expression, therefore, can be considered as the oldest form of expression among the other art forms. Drama on the other hand, deals with human beings in their environments, so it has to do with society. But societies are always subjected to change and as a result, the ways of expression have undergone changes. Drama, while keeping its traditional characteristic, has changed with the changes in the societies.

The contemporary theatre which has found its true expression in the works of Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov, Genet, Pinter and a number of avant, garde writers involves those characteristics which in a way covers all the procedures and the processes of the development of drama as an art form. In spite of the fact that this type of drama is considered as novel, on a closer examination, it

is not totally new. The novelty of this type of theatre called the Theatre of the Absurd, lies on the handling of the old, even archaic traditions.

Harold Pinter is one of the exponents of the Absurd Theatre . Apart from the features he shares with the other dramatists of the Theatre of the Absurd, he is often distinguished for his use of dialogue, and in general language. What I try to do in this thesis is to show Pinter's contribution to the development of the contemporary theatre, namely the Theatre of the Absurd .His first full length play The Birthday Party and his first play, The Room are the examples that are given in this research. The dramatists like Pinter, with their fresh, and original approaches will make and keep theatre be alive on different dimensions as long as the societies will survive.

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INTRODUCTION

THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

Cheat and be cheated and die,
Who knows ? We are ashes and dust.

(Tennyson, Maud 1855)

Ontological solitude of the being is the very situation which characterizes the private drama of the contemporary man. And that private drama which is enacted every day in the random apparently meaningless and undramatic events of man's common routine can be conceived as basic to each individual. To become weary of life, to fail in all of attempts to find meaningful relationships and meaningful action, boredom, the absurdity of action, misery, the nakedness of what is said are the phenomena that underline to a certain extent, the scope of the so-called 'Absurd Drama'. Contrary to what has sometimes been thought, this type of drama which has begun to gain popularity among the contemporary literary fields is not entirely novel. The Theatre of the Absurd that has found its true expression especially in the plays of Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco, Genet, Pinter and

some others, can be traced back or can be evaluated as a return to old traditions. However, what makes the Theatre of the Absurd unusual or different is the combination, integration, evaluation, and expansion of the features of the old, even archaic traditions.

As the Theatre of the Absurd basically relies on dream and fantasy reality, it is not surprising that this new convention has taken an anti-literary attitude. Such a theatre which attempts to penetrate to the deepest layers of the meaning adopts rather the earlier non-verbal forms of theatre. The Mystery and Morality Plays of the medieval period provide a base for the anti-literary expression since these plays, rituals contain powerful abstract scenic effects which express more than language could. And that is why the Theatre of the Absurd tends toward devaluation of language. Language does not constitute the integral part of theatre. It is the performance that makes theatre manifest. However, language can not be dismissed for such a reason that it is not capable of expressing certain abstractions. Language does serve but yet it is not the only element of

theatre. As Nietzsche points out in his 'The Birth of Tragedy' :

" The myth by no means finds its adequate objectification in the spoken word. The structure of the scenes and the visible imagery reveal a deeper wisdom than that which the poet himself is able to put into words and concepts. " I

Theatre or more specifically the Theatre of the Absurd uses another tradition that has displayed a vital role on stage, that is the Latin 'mimus'. Originally, the tradition of mimus was based on the representation of different characters in a semi-improvised condition. What is special to this tradition was the use of clowning, clowns together with dancing, singing, and juggling. Its input to the Theatre of the Absurd is the representation of the lackness of logic. Actually, this new type of drama is not interested in logic, causality in Aristotelian term, reason, and the rational. Its basic concern is the dramatization of the absurdity of human condition. Therefore, the Theatre of the

Absurd rejects the use of rational devices and approaches from the very start. There is indeed a close relationship between the form of the Theatre of the Absurd and its basic assumptions. What clowns of the mimeplays of antiquity meet and achieve is the satisfaction of the need for liberation from the constraints of logic and this is what the Theatre of the Absurd strives for.

The function of the clown of the mimeplays is to show his inability to comprehend simple logical relations thereby arousing spontaneous laughter through his absurd behavior. And this absurd behavior requires verbal nonsense which is in the truest sense, a metaphysical nonsense to transcend the limits of the material universe and its logic.

There has always been a magic about nonsense and this was fulfilled in later antiquity, with fantastic plots with dreamlike themes. At the roots of fantasy and dream lies the paradoxical as in clowning and fooling. Thus in the mimus the elements of comedy and fantasy are blended into an organic whole which partly characterize the Theatre of the Absurd.

Hermann Reich, the great historian and partial rediscoverer of the mimus from its remote sources, draws a parallel between the mimus and the comic characters of the medieval drama, and the Italian commedia dell'arte and finally Shakespeare's clowns.

Shakespeare is one of the greatest dramatist who dealt with the absurdity of the human condition, and was able to delve into the realms of the irrational with his ruffians, clowns, and fools that later has had great impact on the development of the Theatre of the Absurd.

The improvised commedia dell'arte resembles the mimeplays of antiquity in many respects such as the gags, the meeting of the same demand for fooling and deliverance of the jokes which require superhuman dexterity of tongue. The tradition of commedia dellarte still survives up today through the comedies of French dramatists, Moliere and Marivaux, the pantomimes, the harlequinade in the nineteenth century which kept the tradition alive and later formed English pantomime.

The English music hall and American vaudeville traditions also share and contain a number of aspects of the harlequinade. It will probably be right to

assume that the Theatre of the Absurd stems from these old traditions which survive now in a coherent, reevaluated form. The same cross talk of comedians, gags, and vulgar comedy were present in the music hall and vaudeville traditions which have regained their values and places by means of this new convention.

Clowning that becomes the inevitable concern of most of the traditions has given an opportunity to the Theatre of the Absurd to present and signify the absurdity and futility of the human condition. To do so, such a theatre especially when the inexpressible is encountered needs concrete images that become flesh on the stage and that is at the same time broadly comic and deeply tragic. What the Theatre of the Absurd supports is that the futility of human existence can be relieved only by the ability to see oneself as absurd. Therefore, this is what all the traditions mentioned so far add to the Theatre of the Absurd.

Plato had stated that human language had to be consistent with human behavior. This statement

to some degree, illuminates the relationship between the use of verbal nonsense and the human situation in the contemporary world and its reflections on the Theatre of the Absurd. Especially in the transition periods, individuals have to face with many changes and outlooks. When there is a constant flow, all the value systems and institutions subject to change. Because of the decline of all sorts of belief, man feels himself alone and consequently he can not find any other alternative than turning inwards and evading from the outside demands. So the true relationship between individuals is broken since basically all the others are alone and in the same situation. The words uttered become clichés and speech in the final analysis comes to the point of nothingness. The world has lost its central explanation and meaning. All the values lose their validity. While stumbling into a misty future without having trust and certainty, man vainly strives for grasping the moral law which has in fact declined long ago, which is now beyond man's comprehension. Showing man vainly striving, The Theatre of the Absurd pinpoints the other face of absurdity.

From the ancient up to the modern times, man has always found himself in a quest. The quality of this quest has changed and has been determined by the expectations , fears, hopes , and anxieties of men. In the ancient periods, when logic had not developed yet, people attributed illogical explanations to universal events. Lightning and thunder happened because Zeus wanted so. They simply believed in gods that they had created. Then Christianity became the centre of the explanations for creation and natural phenomena. After a while, logic became the dominant power and Christianity began to collapse with the scientific discoveries. So the quest took the form of science which proved that the answers given in terms of Christian belief were incorrect. Due to mental reasons and states, man continued to look for a higher authority and as a result, politics, ideologies were considered as the authorities that shaped and explained the societies and the value systems. On the one hand Capitalism was given the authority of some vaguely defined power and on the other hand, Marxist ideology was assumed to be the

dominant power. Through such symbolic constructs, individuals have sought and also validated their existence. But man is no longer free to choose, to think, to act. Man is lost. He is surrounded with the demanding, destroying forces. Having been a puppet, he pretends to live in absurdity. Nothing is certain and he is not aware of even his existence which is wholly absurd. What the Theatre of the Absurd does is to challenge man who has lost his sense of being, to make an effort to be aware of the ultimate realities of his condition. That is, the quest for holy grail now becomes the quest for laughing, singing, weeping, growling, in short, the quest is to sense his absurd as well as tragic condition. And that represents that the Theatre of the Absurd functions as a means to the religious reality which has been a return to the original theatre.

Man in every age has a tendency to create myths for psychological reasons and needs. The sphere of myths is the sphere of dreams since both of them belong to the realm of irrational. For myths hide

nothing due to its nature and appeal to emotional field, they are not questionable.

Myth is a dramatic vision of life and people never cease making myths, accepting myths, believing in myths. In addition to these, people always see life dramatically through the myths offered them by the commercial advertisements, by politics, by the detective story or even by the international diplomacy. There seems to be a close link between allegory and myth. What they have in common is the expression through symbolic constructs. But yet what makes them different is their point of views. Myth on the one hand, does not offer an intellectual system. That is, the dominion of myth is the illogical. On the other hand, allegory as a total system, is much more concerned with the intellect. Nevertheless, dreams which occur in the form of symbolic thought have the allegorical elements in it and the Theatre of the Absurd contains both while approaching to the individual experience.

The tendency to see experience in allegorical terms illuminates how men in the Middle Ages perceived the universe. Everyman is a play consisting of allegorical elements. Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyda involves the allegorical spirit in it in spite of the fact that it is not explicit. Such implicit allegory extended into much Renaissance drama e.g. Shakespeare's plays. Since 17th Century deliberate and consistent allegory has continued to decline yet the greatest of all English allegories The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan, is a 17th Century work. Moreover, allegory has continued into modern times, partly because it has become an indispensable habit of explanation. It has been used as a resource in the expression of mysterious psychological experience incommunicable in direct terms. With the use of mythical and allegorical elements the Theatre of the Absurd finds a way to delve into the subjective reality which basically represents the longings, dreams, and fantasies of modern man.

Fantasy is another element that has influenced the Theatre of the Absurd in many respects.

Swift's Gulliver's Travels is a perfect example that concentrates mainly on fantasies. Such fantasies open up a glimpse into the infinite without restrictions, transcending the relative poverty of the real world. The realm of the imagination thus offers an unlimited amount of material that enables the Theatre of the Absurd to project mental realities of which the modern man is unaware.

The Mystery Play in its form and content has reached its utmost development in the Autos Sacramentales of the Spanish Baroque Theatre. While retaining allegorical elements, it contains at the same time the mythical, dreamlike features. The Spanish baroque period can be associated with the name of Pedro Calderon. The theatre of Calderon shows life as a dream and a stage from an allegorical standpoint. Stage is the panoramic vision of world and the Creator is the Author of the world. On the stage the characters play the roles which are assigned to them by the author of the world. There is no doubt that the exponents of the Theatre of the

Absurd have been influenced by such writers like Calderon, who have accomplished to present world as a dream which is likely to be the reality at the level of individual experience.

August Strindberg has contributed a great deal to the development of psychological subjectivism that had later led to naturalism. Strindberg has attempted to capture subjective reality of inner states of consciousness from the Expressionist point of view which is different from the traditional, representational attitude in projecting mental realities. To Damascus, A dream Play, and the Ghost Sonata have manifested Strindberg's approach towards a new kind of universe in which there are no secrets, no law, no incongruities. That is to say, it is the universe that constitutes the barest reality, and at the same time it is the universe for which Ionesco has been longing in his plays.

It is obvious that when descriptive details are suggested, realism is likely to be inevitable. Kafka's short stories are assumed to have such power. In his works, even the most improbable,

and strangest situations are given with such rich details so that they seem to be as if they were real. If the case were not so, the human condition characterized with horror, anxieties, guilt feelings would be something different than nightmares and obsessions. Realistic detail can be supposed to be a prerequisite for conveying a sense of absurdity. In fact, realism with details exaggerated is a way to deny the reality described and this dialectical process determines the presentation, structure and comprehensibility of the subject matter of Kafka's vivid inventions.

Kafka is one of the writers who has achieved to reach the universal with his own obsessions, subjective reality thus offering a richness and influencing the Theatre of the Absurd in its formation.

The development of psychological subjectivism has manifested itself on another plane - the novel form -. French Marcel Proust uses the faculty of memory in a new, original way. His basic assumption is that an incident is, at the time of experiencing it, definite and insignificant when compared with the importance it may come to have in the memory.

He also points out that the incidents which are recalled are infinite so that they form a key to open new vistas. Proust's subtle minuteness rendering the human consciousness subjectively recalls both Henry James and James Joyce and also Virginia Woolf.

James Joyce, whose impact on the development of the Theatre of the Absurd is direct and powerful, especially with his great novel, Ulysses with episodes in the form of dreamplay, has penetrated into the consciousness capturing total reality. His technique called stream of consciousness has enabled him to create imaginatively a whole individual set against the background of the oldest extended portrait of a man -Odysseus- in European literature. In his Finnegan's Wake, Joyce establishes a dream experience which has fully represented the Theatre of the Absurd. Here the influence of the psychological ideas of Sigmund Freud can be perceived from the angles of the mechanism of repression and the characteristics of dream association. Finnegans Wake has importance particularly for its language. As how Lewis Carroll has used language, Joyce fusing together words, has

caused them as in dreams, to suggest several levels of significance simultaneously.

The Dada movement aimed at destruction of conventional art of the bourgeois era was also impressive for the Theatre of the Absurd in terms of its features containing nonsense poems in dialogue form, and the use of bizarre masks and costumes. One of the masters of Dadaist plays was Tristan Zara. His three act play called Le Coer a Gaz is considered as a perfect example of pure theatre especially for its nonsensical dialogue with a subtle rhythm.

Surrealism in its assumption that it is an art form which is more real than reality expressing essences rather than surface appearances have attracted the advocates of the Theatre of the Absurd.

Another movement that has had a common tendency with the Theatre of the Absurd was German Expressionist movement. Yvan Goll who belongs to that movement has stated that stage becomes surreal when it is aware of the things behind the things. To objectify thought and feeling and to project

inner realities, that is, to probe into a world beyond the senses, such an approach is more appropriate and is needed. In addition to these, he suggests that the stupidity of human beings can be conveyed only by enormities since man's situation has enormous dimensions. Goll, from this angle, is assumed to be one of the antecedent of the Theatre of the Absurd .

The theatre of the Absurd rejects the possibility of knowing one's motivation and for this reason the audience is confronted with characters whose motives and actions , most of the time are incomprehensible and unknown. By this very nature the Theatre of the Absurd fulfills a purpose, that is to say, it prevents the audience from identifying themselves with the characters presented.

Bertolt Brecht , in his didactic, socialist theatre has tried to achieve this aim however, his brilliantly drawn characters have made him fail. Through identification the audience is made to adopt the points of view of the characters, therefore, they are prevented from seeing actions critically.

What Brecht fails in experience is achieved by the dramatists of the Absurd. With comic characters the Theatre of the Absurd makes identification completely impossible. An audience when faced with such comic characters are not able to identify themselves but just laugh at them. Although the Theatre of the Absurd deals with something bitter and violent, it is a comic theatre, hence the audience remains as an outsider throughout the play. However this is not the only function of this special genre. A kind of critical value is inherited in the plays of the Theatre of the Absurd.

Comedy as Mortimer defines in his defence of farce:

"Comedy is the only thing worth writing in this despairing world... It may be that only in the most secure and optimistic ages can good tragedies be written. Our present situation..... is far too serious to be described in terms that give us no opportunity to laugh. "

2

A universe that has lost its unifying principle

its meaning and purpose, in short a disintegrating world as well as an absurd one can be conveyed with laughter and with horror. Harold Pinter defines his own works:

" Everything is funny, the greater earnestness is funny, even tragedy is funny, And I think what I try to do in my plays is to get to this recognizable reality of the absurdity of what we do and how we behave and how we speak." 3

Pinter adds telling that a play is not an essay and for this issue he compromises with Ionesco's thoughts:

"I do not write plays to tell a story. The theatre can not be epic...because it is dramatic." 4

Both of the writers seem to share a common ground that their practice is to report without explanation or judgement. Pinter criticizes adding:

" ...nor should a playwright under any exhortation damage the consistency of his characters by injecting a remedy or apology for their actions into the last act, simply

because we have been brought up to expect, rain or sunshine, the last act 'resolution'. To supply an explicit moral tag to an evolving and compulsive dramatic image seems to be facile, impertinent and dishonest. " 5

The playwright can not be a prophet is what Pinter tries to convey. And thus in the Theatre of the Absurd the whole of the action is mysterious, unmotivated, and at first sight nonsensical. Therefore the difference between Brechtian epic and Absurd Theatre can be explained from the points that in the former the audience's critical, intellectual attitude is activated and in the latter in contrast, a more deeper level of the audience's mind is worked out. The Theatre of the Absurd releases and liberates hidden fears and repressed aggressions and activates psychological forces. Ionesco defends humour stating:

" Humour makes us conscious, with a free lucidity, of the tragic or desultory condition of man... To become conscious of what is horrifying and to laugh at it is to become master of that which is horrifying."

Civilizations have opened umbrellas to shadow the chaos of life. But now the umbrella has many big holes. Absurd dramatists prefer to throw the umbrella away. To face with the absurdity of life in its true bareness is the only way for salvation and liberation of the humanbeings, otherwise I may not exist.

Adamov and Ionesco have been the most successful writers in the Theatre of the Absurd. Ionesco denies every kind of moral in his theatre that is basically against the Aristotalian theatre. ~~His morality seems to be~~ self discovery .He insists on telling that theatre is not a place for ideologies logic, psychology, and philosophy. For this reason he never analyzes but just presents and makes use of satirical aspects. The Chairs and The Killer are the plays which demonstrate what it feels like to be in those human situations.

On the other hand, Adamov compared with Ionesco seems to be giving some lessons. In his Invasion he uses dream motif and kafka like details. Being one of the exponents of the Theatre of the Absurd, he has contributed a great deal.

In terms of contribution, the most effective of the dramatists has been Harold Pinter. He was born in 1930 in London, the son of a Jewish tailor, and grew up at a time when fascism both in England and abroad was its most dangerous. At seventeen he went to drama school but dropped out. His first play The Room was first performed at Bristol University in 1957. His other plays are The Dumb waiter, The Birthday Party - A slight Ache, Revue Sketches, A night Out, The Caretaker, Night School, The Collection, The Lover, Tea Party, The Homecoming, Silence, Old Times, Landscape, No Man's Land, Night, Betrayal, Family Voices and Monologue.

He is the most creative of the contemporary writers and has contributed much to the Theatre of the Absurd.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

• Human kind

Can not bear very much reality. •

(Eliot, Burnt Norton, I)

The three main characters of The Birthday Party , Meg, Petey, and Stanley represent somehow the situation in which the modern man finds himself. They are the individuals who are made to choose a life apart from the outside world. When outside demands become too much , too great, individuals tend to evade from them and form a world in which they find peace and feel themselves free. This escape works out as a defense mechanism due to psychological requirements.

Meg and Petey, the old couple of Pinter's first full length play, pretend to live in such a way that they are happy and comfortable in their boarding house. For years, the only visitor in this boarding house has been a young out- of- work pianist , Stanley. These three, together form a womblike world for themselves even to the extent that they do not know much about the outer world and they pretend to be

interested in the news :

" Meg: You get your paper ?

Petey: Yes.

Meg: Is it good ?

Petey: Not bad.

Meg: what does it say ?

Petey: Nothing much.

Meg: You read me out some nice bits
yesterday.

Petey: Yes, well, I haven't finished this
one yet.

Meg: Will you tell me when you come to
something good ?

Petey: Yes. " I

Meg's husband Petey is rather a kind man who works on the promenade as a deck chair attendant. Although he is silent all the time, he, relatively can be supposed to be the most social one among the others since he still keeps his ties with the other world. Furthermore, he is much more aware of the things around him . On the other hand Meg, who is too lazy to read the newspaper, up to the point of

stupidity, comments earnestly:

" Meg: What time did you go out this morning, Petey ?

Petey: Same time as usual.

Meg: Was it dark?

Petey: No, it was light.

Meg: But sometimes you go out in the morning and it is dark.

Petey: That's in the winter.

Meg: Oh, in winter.

Petey: Yes, it gets light later in winter.

Meg: Oh. " 2

She is totally unaware of the facts and even of the natural phenomena. Her world is now a closed world in which she builds up her dreams, works out her fantasies. One of her dreams is perhaps to have a child. And probably that's why she treats the other member of the house, Stanley as if he were her son and she is interested in the news about one who has got a child. Moreover, Stanley responds to her motherliness in such a way that he teases her in every chance he has taken. The reason for why they have constructed such a mutual relationship between themselves is that they lack an independent identity. There is no way for them to get rid of their hopeless

situation, but yet both of them play the roles that are assigned to them by their own fantasies. Meg's stifling attitude is very obvious in these lines :

" Petey: Did he drink it ?

Meg: I made him. I stood there till he did. I'm going to call him. Stan. Stanny. Stan. Iam coming up to fetch you if you don't come down. I'm coming up. I'm going to count three. One. Two. Three. I'm coming to get you. " 3

All of a sudden, the peace will be destroyed because of the visitors who are expected to come to Meg's boarding house. Why Stanley becomes that much irritated, nervous and aggressive is not clear. Perhaps his long repressed guilts and unspoken fears are and will be forced to come up to the surface so that his past may catch up with him. Such interpretations are possible, however, the only thing that is obvious is that Stanley is no longer comfortable in this seemingly warm house.

"Stanley: But who are they ?

Meg: You'll see when they come.

Stanley: They won't come.

Meg: Why not?

Stanley: I tell you they won't come. Why

didn't they come last night, if they were coming.?

Meg: Perhaps they couldn't find the place in the dark.

Stanley: They won't come. Someone's taking the Michael. Forget all about it. It is a false alarm. A false alarm. Where is my tea ? " 4

~~It is indeed an alarm for Stanley. He is~~
trying to deceive himself but he knows very well that they will come soon. On another plane, Stanley signifies in his personality the weaknesses of human kind. As he lacks self discipline, and basically all the others do, the true relationship between them seems to be impossible at least unhealthy. Meg often talks about her boarding house as though it were on the list and wants the others to assert it. Her dream of a big hotel is her pretence. And also Stanley though there is not much evidence about the extent of his profession, claims to be a good pianist. Whether he tells lies or not, it is clear that he is living in a world of illusions. Although he has given a concert and as he claims it was a great success, when he was supposed to give the next concert, the

circumstances did not allow him to show his artistic ability and finally he has rejected this grim world. Now he has been idle for months and he does not have the strength to face with the outside world, in general, the utmost realities. He is in fact, scared of something and that prevents him to get into relation with the others. When Lulu from the next door tries to tempt him, he is unable to respond in a healthy manner :

" Stanley: How would you like to go away with me ?

Lulu: Where ?

Stanley: Nowhere. Still, we could go.

Lulu: But where could we go ?

Stanley: Nowhere. There's nowhere to go.

So we could just go. It would't matter.

Lulu: We might as well stay here.

Stanley: No it is no good hereb " 5

As it is seen, fear has made him live without feelings or at least, it has prevented him to go on and take part in action and also to make sense out of the things around him. He is living pretty much alone while he seems to have lost his identity as well. As a result, he becomes possessive

of the others. In a sense he is obliged to be so because there is always the danger of being deprived of what matters to him and this constant danger is extremely influential down to his very identity. Although he is totally lost and at the same time does not have the power to strive, it is necessary to point out that Stanley to some degree, seems to be aware of his hopeless situation and mental state :

" Lulu: Why don't you have a wash ?

Stanley: A wash wouldn't make any
difference. " 6

What has forced him to leave dependant on others and in particular on Meg , and what has caused him to crawl down on his bended knees is obscure and yet it is something with such a great power hence Stanley comes to an end with his inadequacies exposed, his confidence gone, if he ever had his house and wife lost. However, it is clear that there is no way to know one's motivation. And the vagueness of the situation in which Stanley finds himself with a sense of sin, somehow represents what Pinter tries to pinpoint. The impossibility

of knowing one's motivation while life is in a constant flux is the fact which is indicated on Pinter's characters.

When two men appear from nowhere, Stanley who is idling away his days in seaside longings, is disturbed by the arrival of the menacing strangers. Mccann and Goldberg whose background is not known but can be just guessed at, in a mysterious way, seem to be after Stanley. They have come to this place in order to fulfill sort of a secret task:

" Mccann: Sure I trust you, Nak .

Goldberg: But why is it that before you do a job, you're all over the place, and when you're doing the job you're as cool as a whistle. ? " 7

At first hand, the quality of their task is not that much clear but in a sense it may somehow represent a kind of vengeance that will be exacted, or punishment for what Stanley has done or is thought by someone to have done.

As the opening scene goes on, the mystery element becomes much more visible and is introduced

with an important function in the play. On the one hand the curiosity for the spectator and reader is evoked and also it furthers the action. On the other hand this element presents seriously the danger of disaster when control is lost and the demanding, menacing forces of the world gain the upper hand. In this respect, the appearance of Goldberg and McCann displays a kind of warning that soon a confusion will be created. However the opposite of the case is also probable. Nothing can happen and at the same time is certain. ~~And something can happen and be certain.~~ In the final analysis, life is a continuous process as well as there is no central action in it. So life as it is lacks the direction, the cathartic effects of completed events and the external causality.

Before the end of the first act, Meg plans to prepare a birthday party for Stanley. Why Goldberg insists on having a party for him is not explicit but Meg enjoys the idea. Before the party, she gives her present, a boy's drum to Stanley. Meg selects such a present partly because she has considered him as her child, and partly Pinter

does it deliberately to show that Stanley has lost his artistic ability thus reduced to nothingness.

Stanley does not want to accept that it is his birthday. Probably, he denies his existence that has been denied long ago. His very being is no longer significant and the attitude he has taken in order to cope with the world of illusions provides a complementary element to deny the external reality. Another explanation for Stanley's case can be given from another viewpoint. Perhaps he is forced to grow up and he has growing up problems with which he is supposed to face. From the start, he is shown as a child, and while the play is proceeding, he is perhaps seen as a mature being. The development of the psychological make up of the being may end up with decay. This can be an appropriate interpretation for the situation which Stanley is made to experience. But as often with Pinter, to define the play too closely is to limit it and lose something.

The first act is concluded with Stanley's violent behavior. In a way he is reduced to a

level that his inner world is no longer private and the core is destructed. Now step by step, he gets closer to his destruction.

The second acts begins with the preparations for the birthday party. As consciousness gives lots of pain, Stanley tries to escape once again but his efforts are made to be useless. The impossibility of escaping from one's consciousness is what Pinter tries to reveal. As a result, Stanley should experience the fear and the pain since his consciousness is the only thing that is alive in him. And it is brought up to the surface.

The characterization of Mccann and Goldberg is of great importance and is drawn in such a way that they are shown as parasites and in the meantime as destructive, harmful forces. Especially simple-minded Goldberg draws a grea deal attention. Obviously, behind this kind of characterization lies sort of intent. From this angle, Pinter seems to present individuals who are disregarded by those who consider themselves as superior to others. Such pseudo- superior persons think that they have the right to enter

other's inner depths and to penetrate inside the people. It seems that Pinter is criticizing those who are after the destruction of individual's privacy. Even if an individual allows one to enter his very being, this also means that his being is in danger. To know one that much in detail, demonstrates that he is not himself at all and finally he becomes a puppet in the hands of the superiors. In addition to these, Pinter by drawing unsympathetic characters like Goldberg and McCann is likely to show the other side of the case, that is, he is at the same time criticizing those like Stanley, who have not acquired the right to say no. If it is thought from the Existentialist point of view, man is nothing other than what he makes himself, and he has total responsibility for his acts. As an example, Stanley claims that his second concert has been cancelled because of some others. Blaming others for such a reason can be considered wrong. If he did not really want it to be so, the case would be different. Only if he has made the decision to be free, will he be free. Such interpretations and comments on Stanley's psychological and existential collapse

can vary according to the perspectives adopted. Elaboration could be made on the issue and yet the area seems to be very proliferating. For this reason, to limit criticism may lead to the distortion of the play.

When an external code is put on an individual, that being is made to live quite passively. Here total isolation is usually desired and even preferred as in the case of Stanley. Instead of being courages in actions and thoughts, Stanley and in general the others, should choose to be brave in bearing and experiencing the troubles as well as the utmost reality. By means of this approach toward life individual to some degree can validate his own presence and therefore his own sense of reality. So the hideous uncertainties of existence can be faced with pluck, resilience and humour. To bear those exposed to the individual and the action limited cause active momentum in drama to be eliminated. As a result, experience or life which is not able to find a room in the outside world tends to turn inwards. Moreover, the pressures from the past do not allow

the individual to further action and live the moment. Like Stanley who is trying to get rid of the situation to which he has subjected, individual is not capable of going on action and even trial to further action is made to be impossible thus the result happens to be deeply tragic for the isolated individual. When Stanley is tormented with bizarre questions and ends up with mental ruin, his tragic as much as absurd situation shows how an individual life can be destroyed by the egocentric powers that are always in want of domination. Still, Pinter appears to demonstrate a new kind of heroism on the part of his characters. In spite of the fact that Stanley or the others are not supposed to be heroes but just victims, Pinter wants to evoke a sense of courage and heroism that is executed by facing the troubles of life and the world.

From another perspective, Mccann and more specifically Goldberg may represent fears, sins, evil thoughts that are created by and in the mind of a person. Most of the time these are beneath the surface since man seeks to push them into the depths

of his mind sometimes consciously and sometimes intuitively. The hidden side of personality illustrated by Goldberg seeks immediate gratification of needs. Although Goldberg pretends to be highly social, he corresponds to the antisocial side of personality which involves such characteristics to be irresponsible, emotionally shallow, egocentric and impulsive. The apparent struggle between Stanley and Goldberg may somehow express symbolically the struggle between Stanley's consciousness and his unconscious part. Once control or self discipline is lost, presumably, the ugliness, the shapeless, formless thing will flow out of the depth. Evil thoughts, sins will then constitute the integral part of personality. Here Goldberg the evil side of Stanley wins the battle and the other side experiences the feelings of hopelessness, ugliness in severe depression. Such psychological outlook may add something to the analysis and interpretation of the play although there is the problem of verification that should be taken for granted.

Goldberg and Mccann try to steal something that they do not own. Stanley's identity in the form of rape is taken from him. They join an expedition into the unknown, to the limits of being. As a result, situation and the play itself grow more and more dense, become intensified by the cross-talk :

" Mccann: Why did you leave the organization ?

Goldberg: What would your old mum say, Webber ?

Mccann: Why did you betray us ?

⋮

Goldberg: When did you come to this place ?

Stanley: Last year

Goldberg: Where did you come from ?

Stanley: somewhere else.

Goldberg: Why did you come here ?

Stanley: My feet hurt.

⋮

Mccann: You betrayed the organization.
I know him.

Stanley: You don't.

Goldberg: What can you see without your glasses ?

Stanley: Anything.

Goldberg: Take of his glasses. " 8

Without his glasses, Stanley goes blind. In a world when an individual does not want to see anything around him anymore, he separates himself and vainly put restrictions around his being not to be disturbed by the outsiders. However this escape does not work since the powerful, evil forces will not let the individual who already goes blind, live in illusion. Man also is not given the chance to say 'no' as in the case of Stanley. Furthermore, man is used as a tool or just an object that has no meaning on its own. Thus the integrity and dignity are split apart revealing the weaknesses inherited in man as his constituent element. What is more significant is that blindness is what the authority desires to see in those passive objects. When one becomes blind, to shape and direct him is much more easier therefore he becomes possessive of both the authority and territory. And this is also what the modern man suffers from in the technological world. Man surrounded with unknown, eventually reaches to the point of being none other than himself.

Before the party takes place, Petey goes out because he has to go to his chess club. He is not likely to be involved in the dramatic situation which will occur and reach to its peak soon, partly because he, relatively, does not have so much in common with the others. That is, he is made to be an outsider who is not interested in what's going on, and does not want to take responsibilities at all even to the extent that he deliberately escapes in order not to see and experience pain and keep up pace with reality.

In the course of the party, Lulu tries to tempt Goldberg and by the effect of alcohol, Goldberg, with a nostalgic sentimentalism remembers and talks about his past, particularly about his family relationships. Afterwards, they decide to play a game of blind man's buff. Up to that moment, Stanley sits silent as if he were ready for grave or for something else.

While the play is continuing, Stanley's eyes are bandaged for it is his turn. Mccann, one of the representatives of the power which aims at

turning Stanley into an everyday robot , breaks his glasses. During the process, Stanley steps into his new drum. As Martin Esslin points out, the destruction of his drum may mean putting an end to his status as an artist and as Meg's little child. Stanley, blinded, finds Meg as the lights go out. At this very moment the play forms its climax. Then in the darkness as everything becomes dark in Stanley's mind, with a wilderness he intends to rape Lulu. Finally, he goes totally mad. What is left in the end is a personal failure to retain a sense of his own existence and an eventually total failure to retain a sense of reciprocity in any of his human relationships. And now it becomes impossible to work out his salvation. Stanley gives up the struggle which is actually lost in the very beginning. So his body is driven to upstairs by the two sinister visitors. And that in fact completes the play, in other words, it brings the end to the point where it is started. The way Stanley selects is by no means a salvation for him and the result is inevitable if there is any kind of

result.

The final tablau is completed by the third act. Throughout Stanley's hysterical depression, Meg in her own illusions, is not able to comprehend what's going on. But the next morning Petey feels the strangeness and tries to prevent Meg from waking up Stanley :

" Meg: But you say he stays in bed too much.

Petey: Let him sleep...this morning.

Leave him. " 9

Suddenly Meg asks about the big car outside. Always in fear of death, Meg thinks with a paranoid suspicion that it contains a wheelbarrow in it. After it is asserted by Petey's account that it does not have one, she thinks herself secure. However, the messengers from the death land do offer somebody. Indeed the black car is a means to enter that dark death land.

The enormous gap between the intent and action shows itself once again while Goldberg and Petey is talking about Stanley.:

Mccann: He tried to fit the eyeholes into his eyes. I left him doing it.

Petey: There is some sellotape somewhere. We can stick them together.

Goldberg: Sellotape. No, no, that's all right, Mr Boles. It'll keep him quiet for the time being, keep his mind off other things.

Petey: What about a doctor ?

Goldberg: It's all taken care of. " IO

As it is clearly seen, nothing is attempted as well as actualized. Stanley, Meg, and Petey look like shabby clowns. Although they feel the constant danger of losing what matters to them , in practice there is nothing in hand. Their situation is a trap and there are walls everywhere. To climb up that wall offers both courage and action. For they have neither of them, security is thus made impossible.

Stanley and the other characters are in a way, introduced with hell. If it is assumed that hell is other people, when individual comes face to face with others, he is severely pushed into hell. So, introduced with Goldberg and Mccann

the protagonist is also pushed to hell for his punishment.

In the third act, Mccann and Goldberg appears to be rather uncomfortable and nervous. They quarrel with each other as they are talking. They are not at ease for they have completed their given tasks successfully. Their conscience does not allow them to feel comfort. Especially, Goldberg gets very angry when his fellow man calls him 'Simey'.

" Goldberg: What- did-you- call- me ?

Mccann: Who ?

Goldberg: (murderously) Don't call me that. (he seizes Mccann by the throat)
NEVER CALL ME THAT?

Mccann: Nat, Nat, Nat, NAT. I called you Mat. I was asking you, Nat. Honest to God. Just a question, that's all, just a question, do you see, do you follow me ? " II

At that moment Goldberg is not able to bear anything because he is very weak. He often changes his name in order not to be identified or recognized by some others. As a matter of fact, to be an important person is what he wishes but his

weaknesses lead him to failure.

In this chaotic and hellish situation they are made to be each other's torturer. On the other hand, both the torturer and tortured need each other because of the dependency. They are bound to each other forever. And this is a striking illustration of man's double imprisonment in the self and through the presence of others. Each of the characters is trapped in a private world of guilt and shame, the sexual pervert, the coward. The self torturing potential of the mind and the self, punishing working of the intellect are what the characters possess whether they like them or not. At the end, there is no solution but to get on with it.

Thus the play ends with giving Stanley a new kind of identity which in essence is not very different from his former one. He will again be an instrument for those who desire for more power :

"Goldberg: From now on, we'll be the hub
of your wheel.

Mccann: We'll renew your season ticket.

Goldberg: We'll take tuppence off your
morning tea.

Mccann: We'll give you a discount on all
inflammable goods.

Goldberg: We'll watch over you,

Mccann: Advise you.

Goldberg: Give you proper care and treatment.

Mccann: Let you use the club bar.

Goldberg: Keep a table reserved. " I2

They will give all the things that an individual needs to live in a conventional world but in return they want the freedom, and in particular his conscience that means his very essence , the core. Therefore, like a robot, a mechanical person will be recreated he will be given a shape deformed, he will continue to be consumed in trap which is also in another trap.

The name of the play ironically reveals that reborn is not a possible phenomena since birth requires a new identity. To get rid of the old identity, a person should relief from consciousness and this can be attained only when the person is no longer conscious, that is when he is dead.

Such a play like The Birthday Party can be interpreted on many levels However, it is not that easy to make any kind of generalization about

the structure, the plot, the characters, the subject matter, especially in Pinter's case. His distinctiveness among contemporary dramatists arises from his use of dialogue. Words are used less for communication than for justification by the speaker's self to himself and as weapons against others who exist not for relationship but in order that each may find assurance that he exists himself.

(Pinter's work has the) ability to express the inexpressible to transcend the scope of language itself..." 13

His works having a poetic value, as an overall structure , usually require an audience which is expected to have an extraordinary alertness since the power the characters exert over one another may shift from speech to speech or even from word to word.

There has always been discussions about the quality of language that Pinter uses. Much of the problem eventually arises from the fact that language is considered to have only one range of application and consequently it is surroun-

ded with such boundaries that a word is assumed to have a limited number of purposes and meaning. The barrier to progress in this area can be eliminated if language is given a status which is highly flexible in terms of usage and which has no finite range of meaning. As language is something arbitrary, fresh and alive, to put into a strict form leads to the distortion of the system. A multifunctional approach to language should be preferred because a single function one has its own shortcomings that entirely contradict with the true nature of language.

Technically speaking, communication process can be defined as the whole of procedures by which one mind can affect another by reproducing at one point, either exactly or approximately, a message selected at another point, that is, at his own brain, mind. Some of the critics have interpreted Pinter as if he were dealing with the impossibility of communication. In fact, contrary to what has been said, Pinter believes in communicability. Ionesco has pointed out that:

" If he truly believed in incommunicability the profession of writer would be a curious choice." I4

Pinter does not employ language to describe the failure of it. He strongly denies that:

" We have heard many times that tired, grimmy phrase: ' Failure of communication'.. and this phrase has been fixed to my work quite consistently. I believe the contrary. I think that we communicate only too well in our silence, in what is unsaid, and that what takes place is a continual evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming. To enter into someone else's life is too frightening. To disclose to others the poverty within us is too fearsome a possibility." 15

Pinter's ~~characters communicate pretty~~ effectively but the manifestation is not an obvious one at the surface level. He brings about an explanation:

" Language..., is a highly ambiguous business. So often, below the word spoken, is the think known and unspoken. My characters tell me so much and no more, with reference to their experience, their aspirations,

their motives, their history.You and I, the characters which grow on a page, most of the time we're inexpressive giving little away, unreliable, elusive, evasive, obstructive, unwilling.. But it is out of these attributes that a language arises. A language, I repeat, where under what is said, another thing is being said. " 16

The major criterion for the psychological analysis of communication is neither the message nor the medium but the expectation of the person receiving the message. Either positive or negative, the expectation of the person determines the meaning of words that are uttered :

"Stanley: A big wheelbarrow. And when the van stops they wheel it out, and they wheel it up the garden path, and then they knock at the front door.

Meg: They don't.

Stanley: They are looking for someone.

Meg: They are not.

Stanley: They are looking for someone.

A certain person.

Meg: No, they aren't.

Stanley: Shall I tell you who they are looking for ?

Meg: No.

Stanley: You don't want me to tell you ?

Meg: you are a liar. " I7

In this particular instance, both Stanley and Meg manifest their oppressed fears about death and to be driven away from the seeming warm climate of the refuge. And yet what is noteworthy here is that both of them talk separately from their point of views and evaluations. No two people bring precisely the same associations to the same words and therefore differ from each other in their expectations in terms of language being used. But yet this does not mean that they are not able to communicate. A kind of integrity and harmony, however unique, can be perceived in the dialogue. They are aware of what is going on so the communication process is perfectly achieved despite of the fact that it takes place at the deeper level in their internal selves. Stanley seems very anxious about his dreadful situation. Projecting his own perception of fear he poses his basic anxiety to Meg. As a result, their psychological tension almost reaches the unbearable and comes up to the surface. In addition, although

the words seem to be inadequate, the overall structure of the dialogue enables the states of anxiety to be intensively concretized.

Pinter has often been accused of needlessly withholding information from his audiences, of making mannerism of mystery. At first, a kind of obscurity and mystery about either the characters or the situations, characterizes Pinter's plays but yet the audience as the plays proceed, is led to a clearer and deeper knowledge of the characters. Still a sense of obscurity is preserved. This is due to the fact that life as it is, is arbitrary and everything is uncertain and relative in the present day world. So, to know the human beings and the reasons for their actions always remain obscure and unverifiable.

As mentioned before, Pinter's individuality lies largely on his distinguished use of dialogue :

" Stanley: I don't know what I'd do without you.

Meg: You don't deserve it though.

Stanley: Why not ?

Meg: Go on. Calling me that.

Stanley: How long has that tea been in the pot ?

Meg: It 's good tea. Good strong tea.

Stanley: This isn 't tea. It 's gravy.

Meg: It 's not.

Stanley: Get out of it. You succelent old washing bag.

Meg: I 'm not. And it is not your place to tell me if I 'm.

Stanley: And it isn 't your place to come into a man 's bedroom and- wake him up.

Meg: Stanny. Don 't you like your cup of tea of a morning - the one Ibring you ?

Stanley: I can 't drink this muck. Didn 't anyone ever tell you to warm the pot, at least ? " 18

By means of such a trivial dialogue, Pinter attracts attention toward apparantly small details. His use of relatively small details reveals much about characters ' inner truths. Broken rhythm is felt when Stanley accuses meg that she is an intruder. It is remarkable that Stanley is critisizing Meg 's sexuality and this is basically one of Meg 's inner truth. So as not to talk on this particular subject Meg suddenly shifts the subject to another unrelated one and with an unconscious reaction she says: Don 't you like your cup of tea of a morning - the one I bring you ? "

However trivial , by doing so, Pinter impresses the character. So the representational impotence of the detail works out well for the benefit of the audience. And therefore the audience is unconsciously involved with much more hints and cues about the characters 'inner selves in spite of the fact that the motivations behind the actions can not be explained and known. The trivia thus works indirectly but in the meantime it has its own effects and expresses more than any considered speech might do.

One characteristic of Pinter 's dramatic language has been his artistic creation and achievement on dialogue. It needs to be stressed that Pinter , exhibiting absurd potentiality, makes use of dialogue at two levels. In the first place his dialogue is ~~precise enough to provide the differences~~ in the awareness of the characters upon the stage. Because of the varying levels of consciousness between the characters, sort of delayed - action effect is made apparent. While one character who is assumed to be a slower witted one is constantly replying to the punultimate question or repeating

the same things, the other one may jump ahead.

Another thing that should be taken into consideration is that there are always misunderstandings, false anticipations, incomprehension, mishearings due to the psychological and physiological states in real life conversation. Pinter's subtle observation enables him to exploit and show the gulf between what is said and what is unsaid. As an example to this particular level :

Mccann: Let 's finish and go . Let 's
get it over and go. Get the thing
done . Let's finish the bloody thing.
Let's get the thing done and go.

Pause

Will I go up ?

Pause . .

Nat.

Goldberg sits humped. Maccann slips
to his side.

Simey.

Goldberg: (Opening his eyes , regarding
Mccann)

What - did - you - call - me ?

Mccann : Who ?

Goldberg: (Murderously) . . . Don't
call me that.

(he seizes Mccann by the throat) NEVER

CALL ME THAT ?

Mccann : (Writhing) . Nat. Nat, Nat. NAT.

I call you Nat. I was asking you ,
Nat. Honest to God. Just a question,
that's all, just a question, do you
see, do you follow me ?

Goldberg: (Jeking him away). What question ?

Mccann : Will I go up ? 19

On the other hand Pinter treats the words
as keeping several flows of consciousness alive in a
single conversation and this shows the other level of
dialogue treatment .

Pinter's characters comonly say very little ,
or even nothing when they mean very much . Often ,
too , the y camouflage their real meaning,
substituting a sort of code for direct statement.
But sometimes the metaphor is visial , not verbal.

" She watches him , uncertainly.

He hangs the drum around his neck ,
taps it gently with the sticks ,
then marches round the table ,
beating it regularly . NIEG, pleased
watches him . Still beating it regularly,

he begins to go round the table a second time . Halfway round the beat becomes erratic , uncontrolled. MEG expresses dismay . He arrives at her chair , banging the drum , his face and the drumbeat now savage and possessed ." 20

In order to give powerful abstract scenic effects and to release the inner compulsions , visual imagery is required otherwise language or particularly words will not be adequate and also enough to reveal the hidden tension and contradictions . So the action , gestures , movements make these much more manifest on the stage . In the meantime the audience who may miss some points and clues about the characters on the stage will be able to keep up the contact from the other perspective . Another instance that is repeated a few times can explain much :

"McCann : Is sitting at the table
tearing a sheet of newspaper into

five equal strips ." 21

"He exits . Goldbergx rises , goes to the window and looks after him . Mccann crosses to the table , left, sits , picks up up the paper and begins to tear it into strips ." 22

And the very idea about Mccann can thus be concretized expressing more than language could do . for this specific instance . However this activity , or in general the visual imagery is linked with the dialogue so that a more subtle impression is left . The combination of that silent language and sound is the peculiarity that makes Pinter distinguished . John Russell Brown talks aboutx this peculiarity as typical and adds:

"Pinter's dialogue intimately relates words and gestures and often progresses from words to gestures." 23

Pinter chooses action instead of wordsx when inarticulate feelings are to be expressed but yet this is by no means a kind of inadequacy as John Russell Brown points out :

" He does not introduce stage business because he has a situation he can not handle precisely , but because it has developed beyond words: It needs concentration surprise , strong rhythm, noise , instinctiveness, physical relief and and activity, metaphorical reverberations .For Pinter gesture is a precise and powerful expression, not away of passing the whole play over to the actor: it is a language which he tries to make precise." 24

Such devices can be seen and read in a number of writers' works such as in Chekhov's plays. Ionesco also uses this kind of device but it is often used in a relatively different manner. What Ionesco wants to visualize on stage is the fantasies of individual characters. His action although highly elaborated as in the case of Pinter , are often strange and exaggerated . In sum, Pinter's dialogue contains gestures as well as words, must be seen as well as heard .

In his most authentic works Pinter succeeds in reconciling spontaneity and design in his dialogue . or language. On the one hand he gives a fragmented , banal conversation which also consists of a comic aggressive smokescreen. On the other hand , despite of the irregularities in the dialogue , there is a sort of regularity in terms of overall design. And by doing so Pinter creates a kind of poetry which can be perceived in the overall structure , not in the words .Cliche and self repetition often characterize Pinter's dialogue but beneath those usually associative thinking is present. And yet the rhythm is employed by the use of these cliches and repetitions.

Pinter's dialogue has sometimes been accused for being unnaturalistic.

James Medmond and Hallam Tennyson suggest that:

"..We do not pause , stumble,
leave loose ends, repeat ourselves
or follow our own inner thought

patterns to quite the some degree
as Pinter's characters." 25

Still they give an explanation for the
kind of exaggeration Pinter makes use of :

"In heightening these elements
in the way he does, Pinter creates
a poetry of the commonplace." 26

The brilliantly comic use of language,
the banal pathos of the dialogue, the repetitiveness
in the final analysis , are all employed with wit
economy, and masterly sense of timing. And this is
one of Pinter's great gifts.

" You know what ? I've never lost
a tooth. Not since the day I was
born. Nothing's changed. (he gets
up) That's why I've reached my po-
sition, Mccann. Because I've always
been as fit as a fiddle. All my
life I've said the same. Play up,
play up, and play the game. Honour
thy father and thy mother. All along
the line. Follow the line, the line,
Mccann, and you can't go wrong.
What do you think, I'm a self made

man ? No. I sat where I was told to sit.
I kept my eye on the ball. School ? Don't
talk to me about school. Top in all subjects.
And for why ? Because I'm telling you,
I'm telling you, follow my line ? Follow
my mental ? Learn by heart. Never write
down a thing. And don't go too near the
water. " 27

The cliches and rhythms of a semi-educated Jewish can be recognized as having a cumulative effect during the course of the play. Goldberg's speeches have a deliberate meaning on its own, that is to say, they tend to parody a sort of culture patter. Goldberg speaks as if he were a successful member of the society and businessman. Full with idiomatic and idiosyncratic phrases, Goldberg's individual language represents another kind of language that Pinter himself calls that other silence, a ' torrent of language ' .

Chekhov in a sense was the first dramatist who pointed out that speech usually serves to hide true thoughts and feelings, rather than to reveal

gulf and he brings about an explanation from his own experience :

" The best way (to get out) was to talk to them, you know, sort of ' Are you all right ? '. 'Yes, I'm all right. ' 'Well, that's all right then, isn't it ? ' and all the time keep walking towards the lights of the main road. " 28

In order to avoid the consequences of a threatening situation Pinter suggests two approaches, claiming that one could either fight one's way through or do something with words. The key thing is the neutralization of the threat. In other words, he proposes to communicate indirectly in language that is soothing and even submissive. And this is the very trick that is employed by his dramatic characters.

CHAPTER II

THE ROOM

Pinter's the first one-act play 'The Room' is not that much complicated and mature when compared with his plays in the later phase of his development as a dramatist of the Absurd. But yet it is worthwhile to examine it because there are a number of points in it that formulate Pinter's attitude and ideas toward and for drama and language.

Bert and Rose the old couple of this play resemble to the couple of The Birthday Party. Bert is almost silent as Petey. And also he is as social as Petey since he keeps his ties with the society which is not that much threatening for him. But yet the possessiveness can still be felt.

Partly because these two plays were written successively, the resemblances are not accidental. The opening scene in The Room begins with an ordinary chat. Rose is presented as leading a dull middle class housewife's life, which indeed Pinter uses as an inevitable element when he is dealing with women characters either in this particular

play or in many others.

There is something noteworthy in Rose's speech in the very beginning. In a striking, mysterious way, she talks about the basement :

"That's right. You eat that. You'll need it. You can feel it in here. Still the room keeps warm. It's better than the basement, anyway." I

The coldness outside is the thing which apparently characterize perhaps symbolically, the fear of being driven out the warm room, the refuge. Still, what's happening outside is a matter of concern for Rose, because she is not able not to think about the basement.

Martin Esslin puts it :

" The starting point of Pinter's theatre is thus a return to some of the basic elements of drama - the suspense created by the elementary ingredients of pure preliterate theatre: a stage, two people, a door: a poetic image of an undefined fear and expectation. "

Rose is not certain about the shape of the house as is the uncertainty of the situation the couple is exposed. She goes on stifling Bert with her own anxieties and fears and wants to feel that she is secure in her own room.

" If they ever ask you Bert, I'm quite happy where I'm. We're quiet, we're all right. You're happy up here. It is not far up either, when you come in from outside. And we're not bothered. And nobody bothers us." ₃

As Meg is very much dependant on others, Rose is also dependant on Bert, wanting him not to go out. The increasing poetic terror proceeds when Mr. Kidd who is assumed to be the landlord of the house appears at the door. Mr. Kidd is also another figure who does not know about even his own origins. Memory works when he tries to clarify his own situation :

"She's been dead some time now, my sister. It was a good house then. She was a capable woman. Yes. Fine size of

a woman too. I think she took after my mum. Yes, I think she took after my old mum, from what I recollect. I think my mum was a Jewess. Yes, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that she was a Jewess. She didn't have many babies. "4

It is clear that Mr. Kidd wants to belong to somewhere or somebody. His explanation for his origins is revealed in the form of fragments and this makes the situation much more uncertain. Whether his account is real or a fantasy that his mind elaborates is not verifiable. Pinter usually stresses on the point that most of the time people are faced with persons whose background and origin are not known. And it is also impossible to make a distinction between what is real and what is unreal, nor what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily, either true or false; it can be both true and false. As exemplified in Mr. Kidd's speech memories are unverifiable medium par excellence. There is no need to know whether someone's memory is fiction or some ingenious mixture. Memory's very pliability makes it both refuge and weapon.

To create an atmosphere of poetic terror, Pinter at first makes use of action instead of verbal language. :

" She stands and listens , goes to the fire, bends, lights the fire and warms her hands. She stands and looks about the room. She looks at the window and listens, goes quickly to the window, stops and straightens the curtain. She comes to the centre of the room, and looks toward the door. She goes to the bed, puts on a shawl, goes to the sink, takes a bin from under the sink, goes to the door and opens it. "

5

The moment of panic heightens the tension of the play. The door has become an object of threat and demand. Mr. and Mrs. Sands who are looking for the owner of the house stand in front of the door. Although they don't seem to be sort of people who give a sense of fright, Pinter achieves to give that sense in a profound mysteries way.

At moments of panic individuals usually act in a nonsense , absurd manner without knowing

for replacing Rose's place in this world. Perhaps they can be explained as being the substitutes messengers from death land. On another level, world. And the strangers in a way represent the to assume that Rose will be driven out her little If this is considered as a metaphor, it is right Number 7 is free. And it is in fact Rose's room. are looking for a room to let. It is said that The strangers presumably Rose's fears,

pante.

a natural response that can be given in times of person the couple is asking about. But yet it is rationally and does not want to understand the In fear of something unknown Rose responds

someone else. " 6

Rose: Well, you must be looking for

we're looking for.

Mrp Sands: Well, that's not the bloke

Rose: Mr. Kidd. That's his name.

" Mrs. Sands: Kidd? No, that's not it.

a dialogue with intense feelings in it :

on such conditions enables him to write down such

what to do and what to say. Pinter's acute observation

they are the new victims who seek refuge in that place.

After a while they go out. And Mr. Kidd comes and talks about a man who is waiting to see Rose. He is waiting in the basement for Rose's husband to leave. Apparently, Bert is externalized and not involved in the situation as Petey is externalized in The Birthday Party. So in the final analysis basement is associated with that stranger whose appearance will menace Rose.

Finally the unexpected visitor comes.

A blind negro named Riley enters through the door which constitutes a means to the other world. Rose unconsciously refuses that the negro's name is Riley. This is the moment which reveals Rose's inner thoughts and feelings :

" Riley: My name is Riley.

Rose: I don't care if it's - What ?

That's not your name. That's not your name. You've got a grown up woman in this room, do you hear ? Or are you deaf too ? You're not deaf too, are you ? You're all deaf and dumb and blind, the lot of you. A bunch of cripples. 7

Rose refers to the word 'name' in her speech for several times. This repeated reference conveys that name as defined by language means identity. And to name things or persons is to put restrictions on them. Therefore by means of those boundaries control on the individuals is accomplished. That is to say, to know one's name or to name somebody is to control him so the identity is finally at risk. And Rose notices that:

"..... and you come in and drive him up the wall, and drag my name into it. What did you mean by dragging my name into it, and my husband's name? How did you know what our name was?" 8

Riley insists on taking her to her father. She refuses to go with him to 'home'. At that moment Bert returns. Very surprisingly, Bert begins to talk. for the first time throughout the play. Finally he notices the negro and all of a sudden he kills him. And the play ends with Rose's blindness. Whether she is dead, or driven to somewhere else, is not significant. Pinter does not seem to communicate that death is inevitable.

Perhaps he is trying to demonstrate an experience rather than to communicate a preconceived, formulated idea with ready-made solutions or in general a conceptual moral. What and why type of questions for the end of the play is not adequate since Pinter in a way tries to transmit a radiant cluster, an image and what it feels like to be in the situation concerned. At this point Pinter shows that Absurd Theatre is not concerned with expounding a thesis and it is a theatre which basically deals with situations rather than events in sequence.

As an overall structure the play presents an image. By using the language of common speech, and employing the exact word instead of decorative word Pinter reflects some of the features of 'Imagism'. As in Imagist poetry he develops a way to present sharp visual and verbal perceptions on the stage, which preserve the emotional experience by a rigid exclusion of all elements of discourse.

It needs to be emphasized that Pinter's language is not deceptive. He uses it directly but the effect is indirect. For example,

when Bert turns back he says ' I got back all right'. And Rose answers by saying 'Yes '. Bert once again repeats his words. Saying the first thing that comes into his mind expresses more than any considered speech might do. Here the triviality of his speech seems to be less directly meaningful and less poetical. But it is in fact a kind of self-revelation. and although he uses words directly still there may be some unnoticed details in them. But it is through these unnoticed details of speech he can let a penetrating eye at once into a man's soul.

As it is seen, the play is coherent enough to give consistency of feeling since the coherence does not depend on a fixed sequence of idea or event. In this term, a kind of comparison or rather a similarity can be perceived in Eliot's ' The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock '. The isolated couplet,

' In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.'

seems to be meaningless. But it contains a state of mind in it. Here it is not necessary to ask where

this room is or what it stands for. And Pinter like Eliot attempts to project and universalize a state of mind. For this reason, there is no need to ask what the play means, but only what it is, and what it feels like.

CONCLUSION

The everlasting debate between prose and verse has begun in the Restoration period in England. The Restoration comedy was in prose and achieved success. In the nineteenth century prose continued to be successful on the English stage. With realism, prose drama has gained strength in spite of the fact that there have been some great dramatists who have adopted verse drama. In the twentieth century with the development of technology, verse drama has lost its strength and the playwrights like Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, Shaw have brought about a new outlook and freshness to the theatre with their poetic theatre. Yeats, Auden, Fry and Eliot have been the dramatists who used verse in drama partly because they were against realism. With Beckett, Whiting, Osborne, Wesker, Arden, and Pinter and so many others have achieved to create intense and poetic works of art although some of them like Pinter seem to be far from realism, they make use of realism in their works.

Pinter by a kind of condensation or intensification of states of mind, of a situation, brings about a poetic value together with his seemingly banal, nonsense, absurd dialogue. For this reason, he is considered to be one of the greatest dramatists of the contemporary drama. In addition, what is new in his language is his trial to break the determinism of meaning and significance. Despite of this he uses many theatrical devices especially when he is to present the inexpressible. His stage is not made up of only verbal devices but also action.

Another element that underlies his theatre is the use of humour. His plays can not be assumed as written to be funny. If there had not been some other issues at stake, he would not have spent time to evoke just laughter. But through comedy the audience can be prevented from identification. As to move inwards towards identification is the move towards tragedy the audience tends to seek for lessons. What the Absurd Theatre rejects in general is this peculiarity.

Lives lived unaware is what Pinter pinpoints in a satirical way. Although he hasn't got any

preconceived idea that can be solved in the end,
his only motto may be 'be watchful'.

Pinter has been attracted by Beckett,
Chekhov and Ionesco in a number of ways. He is
different from Beckett in terms of the attitude
towards language. Beckett denies the meaning of
action and speech therefore language and the action
are denied. Language becomes a sound that operates
between nothing and nothing. His masterpiece
Waiting for Godot has become very effective on
the English playwrights. As Beckett has said: 'the
play's spirit is that ' nothing is more grotesque
than the tragic '. It is written, one might say, scored
, with a poet's sensitivity a musician's skill.
Its tragicomic tone is the tone of the contemporary
age.

Pinter is a poet and the Theatre of the
Absurd merely communicates one poet's perception
of the world , most intimate subjective reality
of the human situation.

NOTES

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