

Topic
For
DISSERTATION

Harold Pinter's use of speech in his
The Caretaker and *The Dumb Waiter*



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EAST WEST UNIVERSITY

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To
The Chairman
English Department
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Sub: Application for the submission of Dissertation paper.

Sir,

Here is my dissertation paper that fulfills partial requirement of my MA in English. It is helpful as a student of MA to undergo this thesis paper writing.

I am pleased to submit my dissertation paper on Harold Pinter's use of speech in *The Caretaker* and *The Dumb Waiter* that you have assigned to submit on August 15, 2007.

In this paper, I have tried to cover most of my theoretical knowledge, which will help me in future. I also tried to accommodate your valuable comments and suggestions in my report.

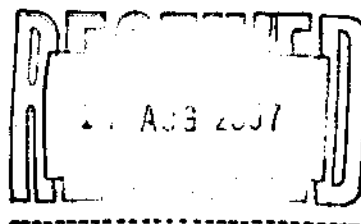
Thank you Sir for your kind cooperation, without which this dissertation paper would not be done. So I am going to submit my final version to my Department and requesting you, sir to accept it.

Thanking you

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z. Sultana', with a horizontal line underneath.

Zakia Sultana
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P r e f a c e

This paper is prepared is partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts in English. The idea of dealing with the language by Harold Pinter caused my mind when I took a course on modern literature. A concern on research methodology also helped me become mere familiar with Harold Pinter. Then I decided to work further on him and sought the suggestion of my guide. I had several sessions with him which made me rewrite portion of my work. It is difficult to negotiate a playwright like Pinter and I am aware of my limitation. However, I have tried to accomplish as much as I can achieve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to Asist Roy Chowdhury, my supervisor and Chairperson in English Department of East West University for assigning me this dissertation paper on the topic of **Harold Pinter's use of speech in his *The Caretaker* and *The Dumb Waiter***. I can not complete this thesis without his all time supervision. He gave me his valuable time despite his tight schedule.

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Harold Pinter: An Introduction

Harold Pinter: An Introduction:

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The topic of my dissertation paper is the use of speech of Harold Pinter in his *The Caretaker* and *The Dumb Waiter*. In the plays of Harold Pinter, language is the predominant medium through which the characters negotiate their relationships. I selected two of these famous writing for analyzing his use of language. Here language is used differently but thoughtfully. I find his use of real life language by his characters in these writing. Harold Pinter is very active and modern play writer. I find his true voice of reality in his writing.

Language is a social-culture-geographical phenomenon. There is a deep relationship between language and society. It is in society that man acquires and uses language. It is an important and necessary medium to express the meaning thought. Language is a changeable process. It contains such kind of power that can be used to change the society. Men are living in the society. Therefore, it is their duty to make it as suitable as they can stay properly.

Harold Pinter is widely regarded as one the most important Anglophone British playwright of the second half of the 20th century. He was born in 1930 and educated in East London and studied briefly in Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and educated in East London and from the age of nineteen to the age of twenty-seven acted in a repertory

company. Pinter was clearly influenced by the fashionable philosophic review of human condition that was prominent in the 1950's and 1960's-existentialism. He is regarded as "a complete man of theatre" (Bold,7) for he is equally proficient as an actor, director or playwright. Critics often remarked that Pinter's early life has had great impact upon his writing. For this, his writings are different from other writers of his age.

Pinter has written in different genres and his work displays his expertise in 'various voices'. His brilliant presentation of the characters and setting invests his plays with an atmosphere of fear, horror, and mystery. He creates a peculiar tension through the dialogue of the characters by using long silence in the mind of the characters. His austere language is extremely distinctive. His plays always concern themselves with struggle for power on unknowing situation or reasons. A common aphorism about Pinter's play is "A film with the final reel missing". (Copeland, unnumbered)

Apart from traditional plays, Pinter's characters are often ordinary, unrecognized working class-social class other than ruling class. He finds out the proper figure and dialogue in a perfect situation without mentioning the history of the characters, "I can sum up none of them, except to say: that is what happened. That is why they said. That is what they did". (Pinter, V.V pg-34). Pinter actually presents the psychology of the character through language accurately and it varies from person to person. In a society different speaker's style of thinking and expression are different. Their speech habits are assigned a positive or a negative value in their environment. So understanding language in the society means that one also has to understand the social networks in which language is

embedded. Then we find class and occupation is found in the society. Members of working class tend to speak less standard language, while the lower, middle, and upper middle class will in turn speak closer to the standard. Moreover, I find these entire themes in Pinter's play as a subject matter of characters language.

Pinter's concern for language is paramount. He helped his readers or audiences to feel the power of the imagination of the modern working class people. Niaz Zaman notes, "though Pinter began writing in the shadow of Beckett and was initially known as an absurdist, there are subtle but important difference between Pinter and Beckett". (New Age). 'The anxiety of tradition' (theory of Harold Bloom) has always been a fact to consider in Pinter's plays but the originality of tune proves him as an 'individual talent'. He is credited with the invention of a new dramatic style known as the comedy of menance and the tone of this new art is so unusual that it has led to the epithet 'Pinteresque'.

The purpose of the analysis of this study to find out the truth of nature and realities of language of human life in view of the characters presentation in *The Caretaker* and *The Dumb Waiter*. His dialogue is dotted with pauses, silences, repeated sentences and often a long speech. Pinter well knew the rhythm and quirkiness of English speech specially as used by lower class and less educated people in London. The odd cadences, pauses, repetition, and non-sequiturs contributed to the claim that 'Pinter's language has a tape recorder accuracy.' According to Porter Anderson "Harold Pinter is to late 20th century



British theatre what Tennessee Williams is to mid-century American stages.” Pinter plays including “The Birthday Party”, “The Dumb waiter”, “The Caretaker”, “Betrayal”, caught a linguistic rhythm- the legendary “Pinter pause”-and an air of social unease that restored throughout the English speaking world and in myriad translation. Pinter is one of the most reticent to talk about his work and his language does not seem to have special poetic qualities. But there certainly is something unique about his language. His language shares some qualities with those of poetic dramatists such as Eliot, Yeats, and Fry who have attracted critical dissection.

In Pinter’s play, communication is too alarming. He has revolutionized dramatic language through his use of demotic speech. In a famous remark he claims, ‘One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness’ and he goes on ‘ I think that we communicate only too well, in our silence in what is unsaid , and that what takes place is a continual evasion, disparate rear guarded attempts ourselves to ourselves. To enter into someone else’s life is too fearsome possibility’ (V.V p-20). The dialogue of the characters in Pinter’s play is so prominently strategic, a means of self-protection. The characters have to obey the limit, which is prescribed for them. They are like the marginalized ‘subaltern classes who never permitted to ‘ask’ or ‘narrate’. As G.C Spivak argues that there is no subaltern voice that can speak, if they speak, they will be the registers’ or ‘criminals’. In addition, if they resist, finally they will be punished in the process of any ethical relation.

Pinter has captured the theme of domination and submission hidden in the mundane of conversation in *The Dumb Waiter* and in *The Caretaker*. The ending of *The Dumb Waiter* indicates Ben has killed the Gus. Ben is ordered by unspecified 'authority'. Because Gus's questioning threatens the will of the 'authority'.

Gus: I ask you a question.

Ben Enough!

Gus [With growing agitation.] I asked you before. Who moved in? I asked you. You said the people who had it before moved out. Well, who moved in?

Ben [Hunched.] Shut up.

Gus I told you, didn't I?

Ben [Standing.] Shut up!

Gus [Feverishly.] I told you before who owned this place, didn't I? I told you. [Ben hits him viciously on the shoulder.]

I told you who run this place, didn't I?

[Ben hits him viciously on the shoulder.]

[Violently.] Well, what's he playing all these games for? That's what I want to know. What's he doing it for?

Ben What games?

Gus [Passionately, advancing.] What's he doing it for? We've been through our tests, haven't we?

Most of the critics view this as metaphors for political aggression against individual. Further more Pinter's refusal to join the army, so soon after the war, is indicative of his independent spirit and moral awareness. It does not matter whether it is political aggression or not. But the expressions and conversations of both characters suddenly create tension of threat. Because questioning against 'system' or 'authority' is the

indication of violence. Everyone in every system is bound to follow the consisting principles. And finally Gus's on going agitation through advancing dialogues determines his fate.

The storyline in *The Caretaker* is different. Here ineffectual Aston brings Davies, the rootless tramp into his house. Aston's streetwise brother Mick appears as threat to Davies. Later both the brothers offer an opportunist, he demands from one to another and he gradually tries to access more to the brothers separately. He crosses his limit and loses his position before two brothers. Finally he is thrown out from the house. He starts demanding from a pair of shoes and ends ordering Aston to leave the house. In Act -3 the conversation follows as: Davies to be the caretaker of the house. As he is

Aston I...I think it's about time you found somewhere else. I don't think we are hitting it off.

Davies Find somewhere else?

Aston Yes.

Davies Me? You talking to me? Not me, man! You!

Aston What?

Davies You! You better find somewhere else!

Aston I live here. You don't.

Davies Don't I? Well, I live here. I been offered a job here.

Aston Yes.....well, I don't think you're really suitable.

Davies Not suitable? Well, I can tell you, theirs is some one here thinks I am suitable. And I'll tell you. I'm staying on here as caretaker! Get it! Your brother, he's told me, see, he's told me the job is mine. Mine! So that's where I am. I am going to be his caretaker.

From the above conversation Davies tries to exploit two brothers. At the end Aston remains still standing with his back to Davies and never replies to Davies's ongoing bargaining. It can be viewed as the social rejection.

Pinter's major plays originate often from a single, powerful visual image. They are usually set in a single room, whose occupants are threatened and by forces or people. The struggle for survival or identity dominates the action of his characters. Language is not only used as a means of communication but as a weapon. Beneath the words, there is a silence of fear, rage and domination, fear of intimacy.

"Pinter's dialogue is as tightly – perhaps more tightly – controlled than verse," Martin Esslin writes in *The People Wound* (1970). "Every syllable, every inflection, the succession of long and short sounds, words and sentence is calculated to nicety. And precisely the repetitiousness, the discontinuity, the circularity vernacular speech are here used as formal elements with which the poet can compose his linguistic ballet." Pinter refuses to provide rational justifications for action, but offers existential glimpses of bizarre or terrible moments in people's lives.

Aston You said you wanted me to get you up.
Davies What for?
Aston You said you were thinking of going to Sidcup.
Davies Ay, that'd be a good thing, if I got there.
Aston Doesn't look like much of a day
Davies Ay, well, that's shot it, en't it?

(from *The Caretaker*)

This is true of a writer because great writers portray not only what they see but what they would like to see and thus often peep into the future. That is what exactly Harold Pinter has done. And there lies his greatness.

“Pinter did what Auden said a poet should do. He cleaned the gutters of the English language, so that it ever afterwards flowed more easily and more cleanly. We can also say that over his work and over his person hovers a sort of leonine, predatory spirit which is all the more powerful for being held under in a rigid discipline of form, or in a black suit.....The essence of his singular appeal is that you sit down to every play he writes in certain expectation of the unexpected. In sum, this tribute from one writer to another : you never know what the hell’s coming next.”

(David hare in Harold Pinter: A Celebration Faber and Faber 2000 p 21)

In Pinter's *The Caretaker* and *The Dumb Waiter* we find language plays a vital role. In his play we see everything ha a particular language whether it is alive or not. Characters of his play are always busy solving their basis problem – whether they will be able to confront and come to terms with reality at all. Even of the setting of his plays have a particular language. The upcoming chapters will examine how the characters of these two selected plays are used their language as a social and personal weapon and how the room is related to the physical and verbal reactions of the characters.

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The Caretaker: Communication for Searching Security



The Caretaker:

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The language of *The Caretaker* deals with a new context where individuality and isolation become the basic question. *The Caretaker* is an anti-utopian play, which presents an uncomfortable world through the bizarre window of absurdity where people are unable to develop meaningful relationships because of their innate pride and selfishness. This failure results in the inevitable isolation of human beings as Naismith comments in his *A Faber Critical Guide: Harold Pinter*, “*The Caretaker* might be seen as presenting a very bleak vision of the isolation of mid-century urban man” (125). This isolation is not imposed on people; rather, Pinter perceives this isolation as vital human behavior to avoid communication with the outside world. So people concentrate on their own privacy and interests. When they feel that their private space is interfered somehow, they become busy in power struggle through language, motion, noise and silence. The three characters in *The Caretaker* project such vulnerability of the human condition where people are “defending themselves against intrusion or their own impulses by entrenching themselves in a reduced and controlled existence” (The Swedish Academy Citation, 2005). And like most other plays, the game of defiance is happened through language.

Pinter’s language is preoccupied by unknown fear and thoughts by outer world. And it is working in Pinter’s second full length play, which brought his first success with the public - *The Caretaker*. Here personal power and the tussle over the preoccupation of space between three characters – Davies, Aston and Mick – are explored. All of these characters are placed in awkward positions. The setting of this play has also a language

like the other characters. Both Aston and Davies use one room and this room is also expressionless, seems frustrated, full of fear, darkness, threat, and identity less uneasiness, uncomfortable. It is easy to find out the idea of the characters mentality from the description of the room of Pinter's *The Caretaker*. In the beginning, Aston willingly invites Davies – a poor, but fastidious drifter whom he chooses to rescue out of a fight at some café and provides him with a bed, a key and money. But Davies wanted a very warm welcome by Aston. But Aston looked at him very simply and gave him a little importance. In Act-1 Davies responded very unhappily after telling him a simple 'sit down'. Davies replies, "Sit down? Huh.... I haven't had a good sit down.... I haven't had a proper sit down.... Well, I couldn't tell you...." (Pinter, *The Caretaker*, 7)

Davies is talkative and always tries to move forward through his speech. But Aston is not reciprocal. He always observed and tried to understand the situation. So dialogues are in a circle. In addition, nothing new in the speech all of the characters in this play. Aston's tolerance of Davies, which in turn reveals his own generosity of spirit, is shown in his acceptance of the many occasions on which Davies changed the topic even though he shows his disregard for Aston's interests and self-concern by refusing to respond appropriately to his comment. For example:

Aston : I went into the pub the other day. Ordered a Guinness. They gave it to me in a thick mug. I sat down, but I couldn't drink it. I can't Guinness from thick mug. I only like it on a thin glass. I had a few sips but I couldn't finish it.

Davies: If only the weather would break then I'd be able to get down to Sidcup.

(*The Caretaker*; 19)

The suppression of the basic desire for power leads to a feeling of inferiority and incompetence which demands compensation in the form of “maximization of ego-consciousness”. This inflated ego is an illusion which is eventually shattered in the face of actualities. Davies in *The Caretaker* inflates his ego to neutralize his sense of insignificance but his ego then threatens Mick and Aston, who throw him out (52).

The predatory, territorial instincts of Davies are recognized by Mick. His rejection of Davies and his right to the room is revealed in the following exchange, which follows Mick telling Davies that he will share the penthouse with his with his brother:

“Davies: What about me?

Mick : All this junk here, it’s no good to anyone.”

(The Caretaker: 61)

From the above conversation, we find that Davies is excluded from the penthouse. We can infer that he is part of the useless junk Aston accumulates.

Davies’ interior motives are sharply perceived by Mick, as is revealed in the utterance that follows. He says, with regard to Davies’ working abilities:

“ Mick : Christ I must have been under a false impression.”

(The Caretaker: 72)

The dramatic significance of the pragmatic inferences arising from the characters’

observation and flouting of conservation is seen in the insights thus gained into their personalities and relationships. It is through conversational implicature raised from Davies' speech that his feeling too is manifested. His fear of Mick emerges clearly and his own inferior position is reinforced. For example:

"Mick : What's your name?"

Davies : I don't know you. I don't know who you are."

Davies' response gives rise to the generalized conversation that he is unwilling to reveal his identity to a stranger. His weariness indicates his recognition of Mick as a potentially powerful adversary as well as his profound mistrust of others and his desire for self-concealment.

Aston's desire to meet Davies' physical wants is in striking contrast with his reluctance to negotiate an emotional relationship. Davies' pleas for psychological empathy are responded to with purely physical support. In their initial exchange, Aston offers Davies a seat, tobacco, a bed, to pick up his bag from the café and later, a smoking jacket and the caretaker job. His language use therefore establishes Aston as a provider, and hence in a dominant position. These utterances are all made in the declarative form, for example:

"Aston: I'll pop down and pick them up for you."

((The Caretaker: 11))

This reinforces Aston's superior role, as he assumes the authority to complete an action.

on Davies' behalf without his prior consent.

Aston also withholds, or fails to volunteer, information to Davies. For example, when Davies seeks reassurance about the blacks next door:

"Davies: They don't come in?"

Aston does not supply the information requested, but responds with "you see a blue case?" (*The Caretaker*: 19) Davies' complaints about Aston's withholding of information and failure to communicate further illuminate his position. He complains that Aston "don't say a word" to him (*The Caretaker*: 58) and "don't have any conversation" (*The Caretaker*: 60). Aston controls the structure of their conversation.

Mick uses many directives to Davies, most of which monitor or direct his behaviors. For example, Davies is instructed with: "don't get too perky" (*The Caretaker*: 35), "Don't get out of your depth" (*The Caretaker*: 35), "Don't overstep the mark, son" (*The Caretaker*: 38) and "Don't get too glib" (*The Caretaker*: 50)

These directives reveal Mick understands of Davies's character, that he foresees that Davies will "overstep the mark" and try to take advantage of Aston. Mick reinforces his dominant position over Davies on a number of occasions, monitoring even his thoughts and claiming to be able to read his mind with declarations such as "I know what you want." (*The Caretaker*: 59) He also controls Davies' past by creating it for him, and Davies indicates his subordination by accepting this fictitious past history in the colonies. Mick makes judgments about Davies' linguistics abilities and deliberately misinterprets

him, as can be seen in the following example. When Davies claims, Aston is “no particular friend” of his, Mick responds with:

“I’m sorry to hear my brother’s not friendly.” (*The Caretaker*: 47)

Davies again shows his subordinate position in the relationship by accepting Mick’s interpretation.

Mick further questions Davies’ usage when he uses the adjective “funny” to describe Aston:

“Mick: What’s funny about this?

Pause

Davies: Not linking word.

Mick: What is funny about this?

Davies: Nothing.”

When Davies reacts his statement above and follows with an attempt to re-explain his meaning, he implies his acknowledgement of linguistic incompetence and inferiority.

The spoken word, however simple, is charged with a tremendous significance because of its intimate relationship with human mind. At the same time pause, repetition and silence are infinity. Davies in *The Caretaker*, talking about his wife’s slovenliness, mentions the saucepan, in which he found some of her undergarments, repeat him,

The pan for vegetables, it was. The vegetable pan....

The repetition here shows man’s struggle to articulate clumsy, painful thoughts, a struggle for the correct word. At times, the thought is so complex we do not find the words at all. Even language fails to express that thought. That is what Pinter has done: we see the person’s trouble mind-in the very dramatis act of struggling for communication,

sometimes succeeding, often failing.

On the other hand, though Aston and Mick are brothers, they appear as two different and isolated individuals. Their dream about their single roomed house proves their individuality. Aston says to Davies in Act-2, "Once I get that shed up outsideI'll be able to give a bit more thought to the flat, you see" (*The Caretaker*: 40). Mick informs Davies about his wish in Act-3, "...I could turn this place into a pent house...." (*The Caretaker*: 60). It's the same room they live in, but they are isolated from each other. They never converse with each other. The play starts with Mick, all alone in the room. The ending shows that Aston remains silent and alone. The room seems to be a dystopia where there is complete absence of harmony and this is the place where isolation is prominent rather than togetherness.

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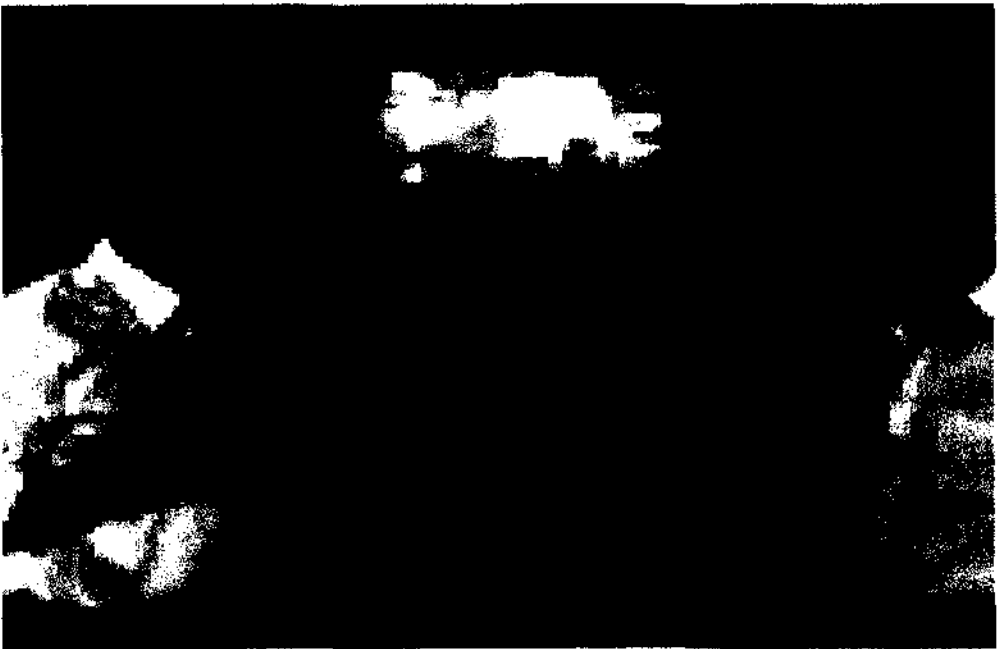
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The Dumb Waiter: Communication is too alarming

The Dumb Waiter:

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Pinter's use of language in *The Dumb Waiter* is rhythmic which is easy on the ear of the audiences. The use of word carries information. Here we find no emotional impact in his use of speech through the characters. The characters are manipulated by someone more powerful (Gus by Ben or Ben by Wilson). In this play, we find the Pinter's actual art of using language that deals as nothing but an emotionally silent conveyor of something out of the speakers' control. If we compare the silences between Ben and Gus, we notice Pinter's own thought that speech of the characters cover the nakedness of the silence. Here Pinter points out the dark outside or social threat by introducing two killers, Gus and Ben in this play. *The Dumb Waiter* wields an unrelenting humor and horror. The writer brings out the softness and cruelty of human mind side by side. Man can tolerate everything but if a possibly foolish person tries to understand more than comparatively powerful person; he has no place in the world. When Ben concerns about his position somehow, he becomes arrogant in power struggle by showing gun towards Gus. In addition, like most other plays, the game of defense happens in this play.

The Dumb Waiter is one act play By Harold Pinter, written in 1957. But it is more absurd than *The Caretaker*. It is an excellent case in point. The two Killers, Ben and Gus, staying in a basement room and awaiting order for their next assignment. They must contend with a dumb waiter that begins to exchange notes of requesting food. The

trapped nature of Gus and Ben lends that Pinter menace of the story. They are staying together but they have no sharing tendency. They do not believe each other. When their different demands and interests confront each other, the environment turns into mess. The characters ultimately fail to develop a relationship.

The play takes place in a basement room with a kitchen in Birmingham, Great Britain.

Gus and Ben are both lower-class criminals. Ben is more dominant between two of them. *At the very beginning of the drama, Ben broods and reads newspaper and the silences are important characteristic.* He runs their outfit, but pays strict attention to the demands of Wilson, their boss. The main thing is that he can easily adjust in any situation but Gus cannot. Gus is frustrated and talkative. He is junior partner in crime to Ben. He is used to ask so many questions. He is somewhat child like and used to irritates Ben with numerous requests, complaints about their environments. Here Ben is practical and crueller than Gus who is busy with his own comfort and total disrespect about his own work.

Gus is disgusted with his job. He is sensitive and bored to the dull routine of life and the nature of the elusive employer Wilson. He is haunted by the image of their messy murder of their last victim, a girl. *He remembers the job was a "mess". He wonders who "clears up" after they leave.* Ben reminds him that there are many "departments" in their "organization" that take care of other matters. He actually tried to leave this kind of job because he has a sense of humanity. In this play we find Ben and Gus always argue vehemently over a trifling matter. Gus dares to find fault with his senior partner's use of



“light the kettle,” and Ben reacts as if a major rebellion had ensued. He objects to Ben’s illogical usage. The following dialogues express the fact conditions one’s responses to

Ben:

Ben: Go and light it.

Gus: Light what?

Ben: The Kettle.

Gus: You mean the gas.

Ben: Who does?

Gus: You do.

Ben: (his Eyes narrowing). What do you mean, I mean the gas?

Gus: Well, that is what you mean, don’t you? The gas.

Ben: (powerfully). If I say go and light the kettle, I mean go and light the kettle.

Gus: How can you light the kettle?

[Pinter, *The Dumb Waiter*, 36]

Both Ben and Gus use broken speech without a complete theme. However, the reader/ audience can feel that something is going to happen. And the dialogues creates this fear and threat in the mind of the audience. In *The Dumb Waiter*, we find the characters play a waiting game through the following dialogues in which Ben and Gus kill time.

Ben: You’ll have to wait.

Gus: What for?

Ben: For Wilson

Gus: He might not come. He might just send a message...

Ben: Well, you'll have to do without it, won't you?

Gus: Blimey.

[Pinter, *The Dumb Waiter*, 39]

Here Pinter creates certain tension in the mind of the audiences. Actually what for they are waiting. Is it only for money or next assignment to kill someone?

Correspondingly, Gus and Ben never have an open dialogue. Whenever Gus tries to bring up something emotional, Ben refuses to speak with him. This disconnection is the essence of their relationship. They do not speak with, but to each other. They are like the Dumb Waiter-mute carriers of information. We find an early tension in this play that underlines the reciprocal nature of the character's difficulties. As Gus insists on thinking up new questions, Ben struggles to sidetrack them before they are asked. Even Ben is used to change the topic very tactfully while talking with Gus.

Gus: Go on! That didn't occur to me.

Gus wonders to his bed and presses the mattress.

I didn't have a restful sleep today, did you? It's not much of a bed. I could have done with another blanket too.

Ben: What about that tea?

Pinter's use of repetition in language points to violence and the nearness of death. Gus always has to repeat and rephrase his important questions to Ben. Ben's mechanical

instructions to Gus on how to execute their murder are repeated by Gus. When Ben echoes through the speaking tube his own mission to kill Gus, it echoes through the speaking tube his own mission with Gus. The following dialogue between Ben and Gus shows the repetition in language:

Ben: When the bloke comes in -

Gus: When the bloke comes in -

Ben: Shut the door behind him.

Gus: Shut the door behind him.

Ben: Without divulging your presence.

Gus: Without divulging my presence.

Ben: He stops in his tracks,

Gus: He stops in his tracks.

Ben: If he turns round -

Gus: If he turns round -

Ben: You're there.

Gus: I'm here.

Pinter, *The Dumb Waiter*, 53]

Ben's most prominent response to Gus's constant question about the nature of their jobs is silence. The silence is always the threat of violence- the play ends as Ben trains his gun on Gus in silence.

[Ben] takes out a comb and combs his hair, adjusts his jacket to diminish the bulge of the revolver. The lavatory flushes off left.

(Forgetting its bad habits) Ben goes quickly to the door... [And calls Gus]

The door right opens sharply. Ben turns, his revolver leveled at the door.

Gus stumbles in.

He is stripped of his jacket, waistcoat, tie, hoister, and revolver.

He stops, body stooping, his arms at his sider.

He raises his head and looks at Ben.

They stare at each other.

Curtain

The relationships between Ben and Gus reflect their desperate attempts at investing their chaotic world with a meaningful form. Nevertheless, they fail to form a meaningful relationship. The serenity of the language is dealt a fatal blow by attempting to kill Gus. The play opens with Ben's calmness that is old and jaded. More tired than he cares to admit, he seems to be carefully guarding his own secrets- not those concerning the present job but ones, which are much deeper and instinct. But Gus might have a certain youthful outlook. He is starting to think for himself - is too open to mask the fact – too open to survive. However, looking down on the stage from 21st century, it is hard not to see the production through cynical eyes. In fact, *The Dumb Waiter* represents crude version of the modern world where sense of togetherness is a vague idea. The play gives us a bitter commentary on particular dark side of the society.

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Conclusion:

Harold Pinter is no more an unknown name to the readers of literary world. He is now considered as a classic playwright and dramatist. For more than forty years English theatre has been gifted by his brilliant, arresting and challenging plays. Pinter possesses the talent of rousing expectation among the readers/audiences which many advent-grade writers lack in their writings. Humor, violence, characters and atmosphere all of consider Pinter as today's Harold Pinter. A view of life, an individual world is indeed. Pinter successfully provides them in his plays.

In his plays, "Instead of providing rational justifications for action, Pinter offers glimpses of bizarre or terrible moments of people's lives" (Zaman, unnumbered). Unlike traditional playwrights, Pinter focuses on uncertain moments or situations of human lives where past and future have no function. Only the present dominates the total atmosphere of the stage. And the readers/audiences observe how people react or approach of the present uncertainty. It is important to note that Pinter is influenced by 'existentialism' - a philosophic view of the human condition that was popular in the 1950's and 1960's. His characters are found at the edge of their living and longing desperately to sustain their existence in a purposeless universe. Thus, the question of rationality/ irrationality becomes invaluable. To project such ambiguous human condition Pinter uses 'language' as an effective setting in his plays.

The use of speech of Pinter's plays offers more than mere stage setting. This language works as a weapon of working class people through which the readers/ audiences are supposed to look at a different world, to some realities are traditionally overlooked. The readers/ audiences have no other option to think anything else beyond the drama in the stage. Language of the Harold Pinter's plays acts not like an action but as a pre-dominant medium through which the characters negotiate their relationships. In *The Caretaker*, the use of language by Davies, Aston, and Mick is acted in a different way. We find the class-consciousness of these characters. Here language fails to bring the three characters under an agreement of meaningful relationship. And in *The Dumb Waiter* Harold Pinter's use of language is found in the use of silence. In this play, silence plays a vital role to sum up every thing in a life even though the end of one's life. Here Pinter presents the dark side of some people though strong, powerful and dominant speech of Ben and Gus.

The language is a predominant medium of the people. Man's personality holds on the use of language and the present condition can be marked by the use of language.

Therefore, the language as things turns out, is not just the dialogue of the characters but the way to summarize the real condition of human being in different stage of the society.

Therefore, Pinter's originality lies in the use speech in his plays.



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Pictures:

Pictures are collected from-

<<http://www.haroldpinter.org/home/index.shtml>>