

MAN AND HIS PLACE IN THE WORLD IN HAROLD PINTER'S PLAYS

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Harold Pinter is one of the most admired and prolific playwrights to appear in the English-speaking theatre since 1957 when he began his career with *The Room*. After three decades of playwriting, Pinter is now acknowledged as one of the major playwrights of the world. Like many of his contemporaries Pinter is a playwright who deals with the existential problems of man in a hostile universe.

In his first play, *The Room*, Pinter implanted the seeds of his major themes that would be pursued and developed in his plays to follow. Pinter presents man living in a world of uncertainty. Man is capable of knowing neither himself nor others. While he conceals himself from others he is frightened to reveal himself to himself. More particularly, Rose in *The Room* hides her true self, and background. She fears of being found in her relatively secure haven, in her room. Trying to bury her past, her memories, and her true identity. Rose hardly ever steps out of her supposedly protective cocoon. With her husband Bert she has built an order for herself. Living inside, although she feels herself secure, she cannot help fearing from the outside. Thus, while the inside signifies security, the outside signifies menace and danger. The outside is a constant threat to the inside and to its inhabitant. However, the inside is confining whereas the outside is not. On the other hand, the door to the room is a bridge between security and insecurity. Sooner or later, the one inside is subject to the menacing outside world by the opening of the door. In other words, the door which is a gateway between the hunter and the hunted opens and the former upon entering the room breaks down the order of its inhabitant/ s. When the order is destroyed, in Pinter's world it has to be restored. In *The Room* the door opens and Riley, the blind negro appears as the intruder. Not only does he prove to be the contender to Rose's "shell" but also he provokes her fears concerning her self

and past. Why he comes or who he is is never verified in the play as verification is impossible for Pinter. In other words, time past is past and it is unimportant. What takes place in the present is determining and worth dealing with. Besides past is only important as far as it shapes up the present. Rose may be Riley's daughter, former mistress or she may have been a woman of notorious fame. Rdey may be signifying only the things tshe wants to conceal. Riley being black and rising up from the basement room brings along the symbol of a dark past life Rose wishes to forget. No matter what he signifies or who he really is, Riley shatters Rose's world. He pursues Rose and catches her in her shelter. Thus her haven does not protect her. Likewise, she fails to keep her mask on her face. Riley calls her Sal. She does not deny that her name is Sal but she wishes not to be called by that name. Both her name and her room cannot provide her with the identity she has been seeking. The restoration of the order is through Rose's husband Bert. When Bert first appears he is a silent man who lets his wife mother him. The second time he is seen, he is articulate and brutal. His language on how he handled his van communicates verbal violence. Without asking who Riley is he hits him severely, most probably to death. Thus, Bert does not hesitate being violent physically either. He manages to reestablish the order in the room. However, once the order is shattered it is difficult to restore it. Rose is blinded. She will not be able to dismiss the haunting experiences of time past. Nor will she be able to live in peace in her sheel. The hope for the light through the crack has been lost for her. Riley, on the other hand, loses his hopes of vicarious projection, even if he is not dead, for Bert will never let him take Rose back "home". Although it is never explicit in the play, his pleading Rose to go back home means that, he depends on Rose in order to live a liveable life. Despite the fact that most probably unintentionally, Rdey has spoiled Rose's life and proved to be the usurper, he is equally usurped by Bert. In the fight over Rose the usurper is usurped. Thus, the hunter and the hunted or the usurper and the usurped are one and the same. In Pinter's world, man can never bu sure on "which grounds he stands. The wheel of Fortune turns mercilessly. Reality is subject to change. Only change is the only unchanging truth. As a result of this, not only the characters are disoriented by also the reader/ spectator. A minor yet functional character -Mr. Kidd- whde defining himself, in fact, summarizes the outstanding theme of the play. He does not remember whether he had a sister or whether his mother was a Jewess. He cannot tell how many floors there are in the house. Mr. Kidd communicates the fact that man is the prisoner of the

web of nonverification, incomprehensibility, and uncertainty. Thus, man experiences a death-in-life in a mere wasteland. Like Rose, he looks, for solace in the warmth of a room. The room provides him with a temporary escape. But isolation is not a remedy.

Pinter in *The Room* not only presents the unanswerable questions and explores the unexplorable territories of human experience theiriatially, but also he implants the seeds of his dramatic devices technically. *The Room* is a one-act short but a compact play. In his plays to follow *The Room*, he continues to write one-act plays as well as full-length ones of two or three acts. He uses silence masterfully. For him silences are to be avoided by his characters and by man as they are revealing. It is in silences that man communicates. To avoid silences his characters talk nonsense or tell stories. In *The Room* Bert's silence in the opening scene is remarkable. Because later it proves to be not a silence of weakness. In the closing scene it is understood that his silence reinforces the theme of nonverification. Nothing should be perceived by its face value. Bert's silence is menacing. On the other hand, in his very fist play Pinter uses a character, Rose, uttering a monologue, Pinter, especially in his late plays, uses monologues very effectively and appropriately. Bert's silence and articulateness are contrasted with those of Rose's. Because when Bert is silent. Rose is not. When she talks freely, Rose is silent. Similarities and contrasts are also drawn between characters. Mr. Kidd, the Sands couple (who come to Rose's room claiming that they have heard it is vacant), Riley Rose and Bert are compared and contrasted due to their positions to the door, to their marital status, to their relationship to one another and to their manipulation of language. Furthermore, Pinter uses Mr. Kidd and the Sands couple as preliminary intruders to Rose's room and order. The continuity during the short play is provided through the repetitive opening and closing of the door. Besides, these openings and closings of the door help create the tension reminiscent of a thriller. Pinter uses the element of suspense intrinsically in his plays to follow *The Room*.

The Room is not Pinter's masterpiece. However, in the introduction of themes, motifs and patterns the play proves to have been written by a master. As in *The Room* despite *Monologue*, in all of his plays, Pinter depicts his characters at a decisive or turning point in their lives. In other words, his heroes are at a threshold of existence and non-existence, identity and non-identity. Thus, while displaying the clash between the inside and the outside, Pinter draws another contrast which is the either

sides of the threshold. On this threshold Pinter's characters are pretty much alone and desperate. They are clumsy casualties trying to establish an order to make life liveable for themselves. But the more they try the more they sink into the void. In his plays after *The Room*, Pinter elaborates on the themes already present in his first play. In his plays, during the struggle between the inside and the outside -and naturally between the one / s inside and the one / s outside- the opposing parties may be battling over a room or a house; over a person; over power and over all or one of these. In the struggle between the one / s inside and the one / s outside the outsider is always the intruder who shatters the order of the one / s inside. However, the outsider does not have a fixed face. The outsider may appear as some person / s, as unidentified powers, as the past of the character in question, or his other self, as society in general or as more danger and threat unnamed. During those struggles the characters try not to appear defenceless, they don masks and conceal their true selves. Alliances change, several weapons are used, deceit is acceptable, and strategy is a must. The characters struggle to cover up their nakedness and vulnerability. The ritual of existence or the bitter game of life is carried on incessantly and persistently. As in *The Room* the struggle over a person, over a room / house, over power and the merciless struggle between the inside and the outside with the intrusion pattern appear in *The Birthday Party*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *A Slight Ache*, *The Caretaker*, *Night School*; *The Dwarfs*, *The Collection*, *The Lover*, *Tea Party*, *The Homecoming*, *The Basement*, *Old Times*, *No Man's Land* and in *Betrayal* in various degrees of intensification, emphasis and dimensions. In *The Birthday Party* the outsiders and the intruders are Goldberg and Mc Cann. With the mission of having to fetch Stanley to Monty they pursue and find Stanley in his shelter and claim that they will make a man out of Stanley. Although they appear as emissaries of a mysterious underground organization they are more likely surrogates of society. Having somehow rebelled against the norms of the established order Stanley has to pay the price. After passing the initiation rites he will be reborn according to the wishes of society. Neither his haven nor the motherly Meg can protect him. He cannot escape from the fate of every man and is dragged out of his shelter to look into the world. Aston, in *The Caretaker* and Gus, in *The Dumb Waiter* experience more or less the same fate with Stanley. Gus is not forgiven when he questions the order of Wilson, who is most probably the representative of society. Aston, on the other hand, is a direct mirror image of Stanley. In a way, his situation of having undergone shock treatment in a mental

institution alludes to what may happen to Stanley in Monty's organization. After all, Stanley may be a patient of Monty's institution at large". After the shock treatment Aston is turned into an invalid but lives in harmony with society. Stanley, at the end of the play, appears in a dark suit which signifies the uniform of uniformity.

In *A Night Out*, Albert flees out of his over-protective and suffocating shell to see how it is outside. Realizing that it is dangerous and equally demanding like his mother at home he returns home. Moreover, he reaches recognition that he is not the man society wants him to be. He is an outcast outside. He will be crushed like Stanley, Aston or Gus if he stays out. So he prefers his confining but at least secure home. He loses the battle in his first trial but at least he is not removed.

In *The Dwarfs* Len wins the battle against the intruder. But his experience is a totally different one. He is not crushed like Albert though. As Albert gains insight into the mechanism of the outside world, Len recognizes the meaning of existence. Len realizes that there can be no fixed identity. Identity and human relations are subject to change as is the room. At the end of the play Len welcomes his new barren room which will soon be loitered and his new existence in it. He knows that he will experience an endless sequence of existences in an endless chain of rooms, in the flux of time. Like Stanley and Aston he goes through the initiation rites. However, while Stanley and Aston are castrated socially, he is totally reborn to play the game of life. Unlike Albert who is frightened to go through the rites he is eager to live in the new reality.

As in *The Room*, in *The Birthday Party* and in *The Dumb Waiter*, one of the ones inside loses the battle against the outside. In *The Room* and in *The Birthday Party* the room, the haven fads to protect its inhabitant. In *The Dumb Waiter* the one inside is caught in the room. However, in *A Night Out* the room/ house remains safe. Yet in it the motif of the shelter being confining is clearer. In *The Dwarfs* the room is not only protective and a source of identity but also a source of changing identities as man dons new masks.

Like Rdey in *The Room*, the Matchseller in *A Slight Ache* and the triad of Diana, Wendy and Willie in *Tea Party* as intruders from the outside provoke the insecurities of the one inside. The Matchseller causes Edward's buried fears regarding his self emerge. Facing his unmasked self and inability to resist the threatening outside Edward gallops towards his annihilation. In *Tea Party* Disson is already insecure when he

meets the outsiders. He is of an inferior class to Diana and Willie and he is sexually impotent in front of both Diana and Wendy. Moreover, he is capable of knowing neither himself nor others. As a result, he is denied of his potency, authority and business kingdom which are all signified by the deterioration in his vision. Similarly, Edward complains about a slight ache in his eyes. Like Riley, while Stanley's glasses are crashed, Rose gets blinded, and Edward and Disson lose sight. Having a perfect sight stands for security, authority and vitality. Therefore, poor vision means loss of these values, and thus ending up in total deprivation.

In *Night School* and in *The Homecoming* it is hard to differentiate the one/ s inside from the one/ s outside. In the former Sally moves into Walter's room when he is away. On his return Walter finds out that his room is occupied and makes Sally leave the room. If they could, however, establish any kind of a humane relationship they could share both love and the room. In *The Homecoming*, Ruth and Teddy are the outsiders at the start of the play but then relationships change. Perceiving what Ruth has to offer (mainly sexuality) to them the all-male household accepts her as one of them. On the other hand, Ruth realizes that they would give her what she has been thirsty for (sexuality, home, power). Unlike Sally and Walter, Ruth and her in-laws meet on a common ground which satisfies both sides.

In *The Basement* the one inside and the one outside are caught in a vicious circle. At the start of the play, Stott is the outsider. At the end of it, Law is the outsider about to enter inside. Jane is the outsider in the beginning or in the end. In *The Basement* the change in the furniture of the room due to the one in power is remarkable as the room stands for the identity of its owner. While the owner imposes his identity upon the nature of the room, he, at the same time, depends on it for his identity. Thus, starting out with *The Room* Pinter treats the "room" as a source of identity and security in most of his plays to follow. The room which is a confining and protecting shelter provides man with the sense of belonging he lacks.

In Pinter's plays the opposing parties not only fight over the room/ house but they also fight over a person. As Riley and Bert in *The Room* fight for Rose, Harry and James in *The Collection* fight for Bill and Stella, Deeley and Anna in *Old Times* for Kate; Man and his friend in *Monologue* for the black lady; Foster/ Briggs and Spooner for Hirst, and Teddy (although feebly) and his family fight for Ruth. The result of these batt-

les may be divided into three groups: The one inside wins (Bert, Foster/Briggs, Teddy's family); the one who is fought for wins (Bill/ Stella, Kate, Buth) or at the end of the fight the outsider is determined (Man).

The parties may be fighting for mere power. Bert proves that he is superior to both Rose and Riley; the Matchseller is powerful in his silence; Mick in *The Caretaker* plays games against Davies to intimidate him whereas Davies tries to assert his power over Aston; Harry and James try to suppress their partners' Bill, Stella in *The Collection*, and Robert in *Betrayal* use the knowledge or truth to enjoy power; Richard in *The Lover* tries to make Sarah recognize him as the boss; Wendy, Diana and Willie force Disson to accept their dominance; Lenny, Ruth and Max want the others to obey them; Stott and Law successively want the other to submit; Deeley, Anna and Kate battle to announce their power and Briggs/ Foster and Spooner fight to take the control in the house in their hands. Thus, in the plays in question transfer of power is one of the major concerns of the playwright. Gaining territory (bed/ room/ house), a person, and power is the prerequisite condition of existence.

When Pinter looks at the problematic of existence he does not fail to see the dialectical relationship between the victor and the victim. In the merciless strife to exist the hunter and the hunted, the usurper and the usurped, in other words the victor and the victim prove to be one and the same. In *The Room* Biley, the usurper becomes the usurped. In *The Birthday Party* Goldberg and McCann are the hunters and the victors as they pinpoint the place of Stanley and take him away. However, as the servants of higher powers (Wilson; society), they have to watch their steps. Moreover, Goldberg is exhausted and has to be reinvigorated by the kiss of life McCann gives him. Likewise, in *The Dumb Waiter* Gus is most probably shot dead by Ben. But, Ben can equally be victimized if he proves to be as disobedient as Gus. In *A Slight Ache*, Edward is the victor when he kills the wasp. But against the Marthseller he is the loser. However, the Matchseller bears similar traits as Edward. While Edward has a slight ache in his eyes, the Matchseller's one eye is glass. Moreover, Flora reinforces this possibility of victimization when she talks how she will nurse him on his death-bed. In *A Night Out*, Albert is victorious over the prostitute but he is the victim inside, at home as well as outside, in society, Aston, in *The Caretaker* is reduced to a state of a casualty in the outside world but he does not give Davies a second

chance and sends him to the outside. In *Night School*, Walter is the victor as he does not lose his bed or room to Sally. Sally, on the other hand; confuses Walter by leaving a photograph behind. But they are both the victims of their inability and avoidance of human contact. In *The Collection*, Harry and James seem to be the victors because they are patronizing over Bill and Stella. However, the latter two are triumphant as they never reveal the truth. In *The Lover*, Sarah and Richard are both the victims and the victors. They are the victims and victors of their sensual beings. In *Tea Party*, Disson has founded an industrial empire but he loses it to his wife, brother-in-law and secretary. In *The Homecoming*, Ruth is the victor. But he will have to serve her in-laws sexually, domestically and financially. She will also be deprived of her sons. Although he loses the grounds to Ruth for the time being, he is sure to win soon. Sam, Joey and Max are already victimized as although Ruth will stay she will be domineering and will not show any affection to them. Teddy loses his wife but he seems not to be affected. In *The Basement* Law and Stott will no doubt don the mask of the victor and victim in turns. In *Old Times*, Anna and Deeley victimize one another but both lose the fight against Kate. In *No Man's Land*, Hirst is the victim of Foster and Briggs while the latter are the victim of former. However, all three are triumphant over Spooner. In *Silence* and *Landscape*, the characters may have been either the victims or the victors in the past but in the present they are all the victims of their memories. In *Betrayal*, Emma, Jerry and Robert take their turns to play the victor and the victim in the flux of time due to the types of betrayal.

Pinter betrays his reader/ spectator as he does not reveal much about his characters. Who they are, why they are escaping or hiding are never explained. Only basic and necessary characteristics of them are presented. Claiming that verification is most of the time difficult, Pinter deliberately paints such figures. Sometimes the characters have more than one name (*The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *Night School*, *The Lover*, *No Man's Land* and *Family Voices*) and sometimes they have no names at all (*Monologue*, *Family Voices*). Several names and namelessness both reinforce the motif of non-verification. But still, to which class they belong is almost always clear. Most Pinterian characters are of lower or lower-middle class apart from Edward and Flora (*A Slight Ache*); Len, Mark and Pete (*The Dwarfs*); Harry, James and Stella (*The Collection*); Sarah and Richard (*The Lower*); Diana and Willie (*Tea Party*); Law and Stott (*The Basement*); Hirst (*No Man's Land*),

and Jerry, Emma and Robert (*Betrayal*). Besides in *Betrayal* the characters are drawn in more detail when compared to all others.

In Pinter's plays men and women are surrounded by a complex web of human relations in which they have several roles. While in *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *The Basement*, *No Man's Land* and in *Betrayal* homosexuality is a recurrent motif, in *Old Times* lesbian tendencies are communicated. In *Tea Party* and *Monologue* incest is implicitly reflected. Men are either important (Stanley, Albert, Aston, Walter, Disson, Deeley and Voice 1), or brutes (Bert, Lenny, Goldberg, Mick and Max) and rapists (Lenny, Joey, the poacher in *A Slight Ache*). They may also be lovers ("Max" in *The Lover*, Hirst and Spooner). As fathers the male figures in Pinter's plays are either too strong (Goldberg; Solto in *Night School*) or too weak (Riley; Max, Disson; Davies; Petey in *The Birthday Party*). On the other hand, woman plays three roles: mother, wife and whore. All Pinterian women, who either physically appear on the stage or whom the other characters talk about or remember possess one, two or all of these characteristics. Rose is Bert's wife, she mothers her husband and she is most probably a former whore. Meg is Petey's wife. She enjoys mothering Stanley and flirting with him. She also innocently flirts with McCann. Lulu, the neighbour in the same play, tries to seduce Stanley and does not hesitate sleeping with Goldberg the day she meets him. Flora is a wife and mother to Edward. But she needs a man to whom she may be a mistress. Mrs. Stokes is Albert's mother, the former wife of the late Mr. Stokes, the girls at the party act like whores whereas the girl Albert meets at the pub is a prostitute by profession. Davies's ex-wife and Aston's mother are negatively drawn woman types. Walter's aunts Millie and Annie are motherly towards Walter whereas Sally is a prostitute. Stella is a wife whose fidelity is questioned. Sarah is a mother and wife and the mistress at home. Diana is Disson's wife. She is a step-mother to his children by a former marriage. Wendy meets Disson's sexual needs. Jessie and Ruth both don all the masks of a woman. Jane easily change her beds. She sleeps both with Stott and Law. Likewise Beth in *Landscape* and Ellen in *Silence* can sleep with various men. Similarly, Anna and Kate had several men before they married. The black lady is also a whore, mother and wife. In *No Man's Land* the women remembered all possess the three masks. In *Family Voices* Voice 1 writes about similar women.

Pinter's women have a significant role in the plot arrangement. In the combat between the inside and the outside due to the one who

opens the door to the intruders / outsiders the characters may be divided into two as the enemy inside and as the one who prepared his own victimization. The first group are all women. Meg welcomes Goldberg and McCann; Flora conspires with the Matchseller against Edward; Stella and Bill, the inferior partner in the homosexual liasion, deceive James and Harry; Diana and Wendy play the faithful wife and secretary respectively but co-work with Willie against Disson; Aston's mother hands him to the doctors at the mental institution and Ruth sides with the more promising side against her husband. In the second group Rose and Law open the door to Riley and Stott respectively; Edward invites the Matchseller inside; Gus discovers the dumb waiter; Aston and Hirst bring Davies and Spooner to their homes respectively; Disson marries Diana, employs Wendy and offers Willie partnership; Kate and Deeley have waited for Anna's visit; Teddy hands the key to the house to Ruth and the in-laws long for a woman to replace the late Jessie.

Pinter's heroes, men or women, who are in deep conflict with one another use various weapons to reach their goals. In fact, there are two major weapons: language and memory. The one who manipulates language of words or silence best wins the battle. Likewise, the one who remembers the past more vividly or the one who imposes his interpretation of past events on the other hand becomes triumphant. Bert, Goldberg, Mick, Larry, Willie, Lenny, Ruth, Kate, Anna and Deeley use the language of words eloquently. To keep the other at bay, to avoid showing what they have in their hands or on their mind, or to avoid being hurt the former either tell absurd stories and talk nonsense or question the other. Thus, disoriented like Stanley, Davies and Disson, the other loses his entity. The language of silence is equally irritating. Bert, the Matchseller, Aston and Kate victimize Riley, Edward, Davies and Deeley and Anna respectively. On the other hand, mystery of memories, in other words, nonverification makes its beholder powerful. For instance, while Mick uses his memories to disorient and to dislocate Davies in *The Creaker*. In *The Collection* different versions of an event which took place in time past are used by Stella and Bill to defeat their dominant partners, James and Harry respectively. However, *Landcape*, *Silence*, *Old Times* and *Monologue* are absolute memory plays. In these plays different and various interpretations of the past reflect the fact that there is no one common past. Besides, the past is a weapon. It is also definite in these plays that memory enslaves man. Moreover as time passes memories fade away. In *No Man's Land* Hirst and Spooner attack each other by revealing

the "real" past to one another. In *Betrayal* how in the flux of time people betray one another is presented. In this play the time span is given not as memories. The backward movement in time explains the how of the interpretations of past events affect one's whole life.

Memories remembrances, backgrounds and past events are always vague in Pinter's plays. But his characters cannot stand reminiscing. Beginning with *The Room* and ending with *Family Voices* time past is always behind a smoke screen. The questions who, why, where or how are never answered.

Mystery, menace, threat or danger is the medium. But yet, Pinter's plays almost always begin at a familiar milieu. Besides, most of his plays take place in realistical and well-defined rooms. Sometimes there are two people in that room (*The Room, The Caretaker, The Dumb Waiter, Night School, The Dwarfs, A Slight Ache, The Lower, The Basement, Landscape, Betrayal*), sometimes there are more than two (*The Birthday Party, Tea Party, The Homecoming, Silence, Old Times, No Man's Land*) and sometimes there is only one (*Monologue, Family Voices*). The departure from the room to the outside in Pinter's plays begins with *A Night Out* but apart from *Night School, Tea Party, The Basement* and *Betrayal* the main action always takes place in a room / house which slightly changes shape in the course of the play.

Inside or outside rooms Pinter's characters play the game of life. In fact, in his plays almost all his characters are seen playing or being interested in games, such as chess (*The Room, The Birthday Party, The Dwarfs*); blind man's buff (*The Birthday Party*); football (*The Dumb Waiter, A Slight Ache, A Night Out*); mock-duels (*The Collection, The Basement*); sex games (*The Lover, The Homecoming*); cricket (*A Slight Ache, No Man's Land*); squash (*The Basement, Betrayal*); odd man out (*Old Times*); ping-pong (*The Party*) and racing (*The Basement*). As in most games characters enact the patterns of races, chases, attacks, captures, harassments, hunts and seductions. However, Pinter's characters seem to be unaware of the fact that in games the partners are not at each other's throats. Pinter's characters inevitably and irresistibly play the game of their lives to expel one another from life.

In the game of play writing Pinter uses the room / house as the microcosm to reflect the macrocosm. In the smallest of all territories he probes into the largest of all territories, the human experience. He, presents man's unchanging destiny. Taking up similar themes, motifs, patterns

and characters the master playwright, as in a neurosis of dramatic existence questions the meaning of human existence in the world. In *Family Voices* he "steals" bits and pieces from his earlier plays and terminates a phase which begins with *The Room*. In other words, familiar voices are heard in *Family Voices*, most of which are introduced in *The Room*. To begin with, the basic situation is reminiscent of *The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *A Night Out*, *The Homecoming* and *A Slight Ache*. There are also names, motifs and images that recall the plays like *Night School*, *The Basement*, *The Collection*, *Landscape*, *Silence*, *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Dwarfs*. The young man in *Family Voices* lives in a room in a boarding house. Mrs. Withers pampers him like a mother (*The Room*, *The Birthday Party*). His mother and sister appear at the door as the intruders (*The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Basement*, *Landscape*, *A Slight Ache*). The man, who dismisses them turns out to be the menacing intruder. Moreover, his name is Riley (*The Room*, *The Birthday Party*). Riley and Mr. Withers question the young man (*The Birthday Party*). The mother wants his son to be with her and she advises him not to be with ill-famed girls (*A Night Out*). The son eventually decides to go back home (*The Birthday Party*, *The Homecoming*, *A Night Out*). His memories keep the young man company (*Silence*, *Landscape*). But now he has a different name (*The Birthday Party*, *Night School*, *The Caretaker*, *The Room*, *The Lover*, *No Man's Land*). He likes his room but it is rather a mysterious house (*The Room*, *The Caretaker*). Yet, he is happy that he has a room to himself (*Silence*). There is not only a tense relationship between the mother and the son but there is also a conflict between the father and the son (*The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*). There are minute details that remind other plays: Flowers (*A Slight Ache*, *Landscape*), cliff path (*The Basement*), cheese sandwiches (*The Homecoming*, *The Caretaker*), the china teaset (*The Collection*), Millie (*Night School*), uncle (*The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*), a new car, a new suit (*The Birthday Party*), tutor (*Night School*), door (*The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *The Basement*, *A Slight Ache*, *The Homecoming*) fire (*The Basement*), closed curtains (*The Basement*), night winter (*The Room*, *The Basement*), soft towel (*The Basement*), the piano (*The Birthday Party*), the articulate Mr. Withers (*The Homecoming*, *The Caretaker*), the extraordinary meals (*The Dumbwaiter*), the creatures in Riley's soul (*The Dwarfs*), Riley's homosexual tendencies (*The Basement*, *The Collection*, *The Homecoming*), Riley not being respected (*Silence* and dog (*Landscape*), all take the reader/audience to other Pinter plays.

In the twenty plays between 1957 and 1981 Pinter draws landscape of human experience. Man is presented to be the prisoner of the web of uncertainties, ambiguities and ambivalences. The more questions he asks about the nature of time, reality, memory and identity the fewer answers he gets. The existential uncertainties diminish man to a total state of dehumanization and deprevation as he is helpless, lonely, isolated and detached. Man experiences a vacuous existence. The haven does not protect him, the past provides no fixed reality, and the future promises nothing. Imprisoned in the gloomy present man realizes that there is no hope, escape or peace for him. Hence Pinter defines man's existence in the universe as a tragic and pathetic experience.