CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Among the twentieth-century playwrights influenced by Absurdism and the New Theatre Movement with an eye to experiments in dramatic language Pinter emerges as most remarkable. Since John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* was staged in 1956, language has become the central concern of a number of significant playwrights from whom a whole new phase of modern drama has emerged. British drama came to be reckoned as a theatre of language, rather than of performance. These new playwrights attempted a deeply ironic dismantling of assumptions about conventional language of drama as a vital ingredient of dramaturgy. Pinter has produced highly compressed "minimalist" dramatic texts which preserve their strangeness beyond casual reading or off-hand performance. Most of his plays evoke a nameless sense of menace underlining human condition from the standpoint of existentialism. His characters are made to exude this menace chiefly by means of a carefully constructed verbal medium. The strength of Pinter’s plays lies in this verbal aspect which conditions their structure and characters. The plays are successful exercises in presenting the least and evoking the most, and they are remarkably suggestive about confused, shifting, screaming and agonising states of mind. Dramatic dialogue is the pulse-beat of a Pinter play.
Pinter's plays have all the familiar ingredients of the Theatre of the Absurd such as absence of communication, problems of identity, cruelty, illusory reality, menace, and disturbing existential torment. Pinter's drama is an amalgam of these diversified factors attaining a dramatic totality and a consummate theatrical craftsmanship. A close scrutiny of his dramatic dialogue gives us an insight into the well-demarcated territory of his dramatic world. In his theatre, perception itself is a kind of subverted action. Pinter is one of the few English playwrights to display an interest in investigating the process of a very subtle perception especially attained through his highly sensitive dramatic dialogue. As Bigsby points out, "it is arguably non-revolutionary to wish to insert the word between the self and its realization, between the action and the reaction." The assumption that all meaning must be transmitted through language does not hold good in Pinter's theatre. In Pinter we find that language is a way of saying which shapes the nature of not only the thing said, but eventually of the thing perceived at the mental level. As such language in Pinter gives the audience an access to an ultimate reality.

A trained and seasoned stage actor, Pinter has created a dramatic dialogue of theatrically effective communicative value. In his unique way he has made the theatre speak to the contemporary people in the
contemporary idiom, and controlled theatrical reality in words, in space, in time, in action, in sound, in gesture and in movement. His dramatic language is not restricted to mere words; it includes every means of controllable expression at the disposal of theatre as an art form. Drama differs from other literary forms in that it communicates visually as well as verbally. In order to grasp a play's meaning, what we visualize on the stage is as important as what we hear. Setting, stage-decor, costumes, spacing of on-stage characters, facial expressions, etc. convey to the spectator what words alone do not. Pinter's dramatic dialogue is blended with these composite lingual agents which deserve attention for a full understanding of his plays. These diverse lingual ingredients of Pinter's plays reveal various subtle shades or nuances of meaning, and move unfailingly to a visible point of convergence.

Pinter's special use of language, his unique way of handling dramatic dialogue so as to attain an amazing dimension of theatre language causes Hollis to observe that "the single issue which every student of Pinter must confront is the playwright's relationship to and utilization of language." The words are detached by the playwright from their context and are allowed to collapse as their meaning disintegrates. Pinter's
characters inhabit separate linguistic provinces of their own, and often there occurs territorial struggle over linguistic strategies. In his plays language seldom flows smoothly; it develops a viscosity ridden all over by ambiguities, often slipping into cul-de-sac of meaninglessness.

Pinter's plays are different from the traditional plays wherein plot and characters are of great importance, and a conviction of reality or logical verifiability is primarily needed. Pinter on his part refuses to pin down events and characters in a contrived way. His attempt is always to let the character be viewed through a precise lingual idiom in a more universal, and sometimes even symbolic way. He stands aloof from the insistent expository devices to chalk out the details about character and incident which may serve as a pointer to the audience in one way or the other. Pinter also maintains his detachment. He presents the audience with the evidence, then withdraws, leaving it for them to draw their own inference. However, he leaves some vital clues in his dialogue for the spectators. Words that look flat have fissures of feeling beneath them. The talks which sound banal become meaningfully resonant at an in-depth level. In Pinter, every dialogue, every word is aimed at fulfilling some function or other. In the entire
range of Pinter's dramatic idiom there is no dialogue which does not express alarm, suppressed rage, dread, hurt, or a sense of defeat. There is a communication in Pinter's theatre which is beyond ordinary words and is actually concerned with direct feeling. In Pinterian drama the audience is expected to read between the lines. Spooner in No Man's Land seems to speak for Pinter: "Experience is a paltry thing. Everyone has it and will tell his tale of it. I leave experience to psychological interpreters, the wetdream world. I myself can do any graph of experience you wish, to suit your taste or mine. Child's play. The present will not be distorted" (IV, p.82).

For Pinter there lies below the spoken words a vast territory of meaning known, yet unspoken. In a conventional play whatever the author wants to be conveyed to the audience is communicated through the words he employs for this specific purpose. In Pinter, however, the communication lies in between or under the words uttered by the characters on the stage. While a conventional play dispenses with sub-text, Pinter's play is built on subtext. The real life of throbbing animation cannot be transcribed through a set pattern underlined by ravelling and unravelling of a naturalistic situation. Hence the purpose of the play is lost to a considerable
extent as far as the genuine experiences of the spectators are concerned. Styan rightly says that: "recreating a genuine experience is the purpose of the theatre, and when this purpose is lost sight of, the theatre itself is in jeopardy."³ Pinter's theatre tried to recreate such genuine experience. He brought into the theatre a new sense of reality. In his plays the basic assumptions of the contemporary society are called in question in contemporary idiom. This reminds us of Jean Cocteau's observation that "it is not the business of the dramatist to bring life into the theatre but to bring the theatre to life."⁴ Pinter's characters are never pre-conceived. "I don't know" says he "what kind of characters my plays will have ... well, until they are. Until they indicate to me what they are."⁵ Pinter's characters are never cardboard ones. They have their own dimensions to move about and grow entirely through the words they exchange on the stage. Pinter by means of his dramatic dialogue, creates those characters who "spring into life on the stage face to face with each other,"⁶ as Pirandello's character, Father, finds in Six Characters in Search of an Author.

Pinter has an acute concern for the visualization of characters in his theatre. This he achieves only through the spoken interactions aided by gesture. What
Pinter is interested in does not lie in the mere factual details about men and women around us; rather he concerns himself with the cosmic or universal truth, which cuts in the human condition inexorably in any time-oriented sequence in our life in this world. In his plays words throw light on the most obscure areas of life. Pinter is not concerned with manipulating a chaste language of rational enlightenment. He creates his own language in order to boldly underline the existential anguish of modern man.

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), a Marxist poet, playwright, producer and director, exercised a considerable influence over this new drama through his dramatic theories and production technique. He created epic theatre, distinguishing between the "dramatic" and the "epic" theatres. Accordingly, dramatic theatre implicates the spectators in a particular stage situation, lessening their capacity for any independent reaction, whereas epic theatre, by focusing on the course of action, insists on "argument". Brechtian sense of reality brought to the western theatre world a new conceptual angle, enriching the cult of expressionism. He asked the audience to think on its own so as to become more responsible for accepting what it witnesses, and to accept only if it
becomes convinced to the extent that it feels persuaded to do so. Pinter's dialogue is significantly aided by meaningful short pauses indicated by Pinterian three-dots, pauses and silences, requiring the audience to penetrate the smokescreen of the language of obfuscation. Brechtian "dialectical" and "scientific" theatre, intended the spectators to critically examine the causes and processes underlining the dramatic happenings. The playwright acted only as a catalyst in the form of a narrator, while the audience-response revolves round the spoken interaction of the characters. Pinter, like Brecht, tried to bring drama to a level where it sought to redefine life in no uncertain terms.

Following Brecht the unmistakable change came with John Osborne's Look Back in Anger (1956). With Osborne something happened, and, as Russell Brown points out, "a dramatist had arrived who had put what he knew and felt into a play." Following Brecht the unmistakable change came with John Osborne's Look Back in Anger (1956). With Osborne something happened, and, as Russell Brown points out, "a dramatist had arrived who had put what he knew and felt into a play." Following Brecht the unmistakable change came with John Osborne's Look Back in Anger (1956). With Osborne something happened, and, as Russell Brown points out, "a dramatist had arrived who had put what he knew and felt into a play."7 Something did happen in the annals of the theatre, asserting itself more stubbornly, confirming the individual reality of the characters. A new and exciting dramatic concept emerged. Russell Taylor observes that "the battle of the New Drama is won."8 Like Osborne, Pinter too put into his drama what he felt and the "newness" he brought in, has been a powerful dramatic idiom of extraordinary significance whereby he tried to
reveal the inner man in his existential predicament.

Pinter's dramatic dialogue transcends farcical level and stirs the obscure corners of human consciousness, which had been inhibited by age-old traditional way of thinking. The meaning: emanates in a Pinter play by degrees, activated by word deployment of the author. This brings to the fore psychological forces, releasing hidden fears and repressed aggressions in the mind. Pinter's dramatic dialogue confronts the audience with a picture of distortion of the well-guarded images of society, thereby setting space intense climactic situation into which the characters are thrown. A Pinter play uncovers a world of diminishing human communication and a growing absurdity in life. The plays show menacing existential reality with texts of minimized dialogue. Pinter's theatre works at that level where "less" stands for "more". Visual effects and a razor-sharp dialogue get the upper hand over logical arguments or rational analysis. Novelty was achieved significantly in the outspokenness of its language. In Pinter density of meaning is the distinctive feature of his dramatic dialogue. As he observes: "Meaning begins in the words, in action, continues in your head and ends nowhere. There is no end to meaning. Meaning which is resolved, parcelled, labelled and ready for export is dead, impertinent — and meaningless."
Pinter liberated the theatre from many of the past shackles and introduced new style of dramatic language, raising the issue of the purity of language, in the context of the contemporary twentieth century awareness influenced by the surrealist literary movements. Here the word "purity" is synonymous with "authenticity". The truth of language, evident in Pinter's plays, runs parallel to the truth of experience, truth of perception and truth of feeling. The criteria for such an evaluation relate to qualities quite internal to the work, such as imaginative and dramatic vividness, vitality, ironical tension and the coherence of the world of the work itself. It then becomes feasible to get at the level of communication Dialogue in a Pinter play contains falsehood, half-truth, contradiction, innuendoes, gibberishes and whispers with intended clauses and phrases. All meaningful looks, gestures and movements, aided by careful stage-decor, contribute to the dialogue. Purity of language refers to the irrationality of everyday conversation plastered all over with well-scattered heterogeneous mixture of bad syntax, tautologies, pleonasms, repetitions, non-sequiturs and self-contradictions. In Pinter's dramatic dialogue there are a wide range of examples as to how the playwright uses such devices as repetition, association, shifts in levels of diction, pauses as well as silences to achieve a very compact and highly compressive linguistic style. This makes Arthur Ganz remark that: "Pinter is neither a
theatrical trickster nor an abstruse metaphysician; he is an artist whose special style expresses his meaning, whose subject is a significant part of human experience."

Pinter has systematically patterned his dialogue with meticulous care along the route of disintegrated, defiled, incongruous day-to-day conversation used by living human beings. Pinter's special use of dramatic language in this respect makes Almansi observe that "in twenty years of playwriting", and now it is more than thirty years, "he has never stooped to use the degraded language of honesty, sincerity, or innocence which has contaminated the theatre for so long .... His language isn't never chaste, but corrupt from birth .... Pinter's idiom is essentially human because it is an idiom of lies." In his dialogue, Pinter stresses those moments of life when we perform a word-jugglery in our day-to-day conversations, not knowing exactly what we are doing. Our thought surpasses our senses, our senses defy our thought. Pinter's dialogue lays bare this human trauma.

What Pinter projects through his dialogue is not exactly an imitation of reality, but a theatrical extension of reality. Conversations that take place in a Pinter play are quite different from those of real life. In dramatic dialogue there are fewer interruptions than in real life, because drama is a heightened representation
of life. Therefore, a carbon-copy portrayal would not serve a dramatist's purpose of putting things across. When a play is witnessed, the audience are required to be given the illusion of reality. Whiting believes that dramatic dialogue needs to be much richer in texture than what he calls "the direct unornamented speech of everyday life."Murdoch pertinently observes that even a novelist's "humble medium is on the side of truth. Whereas the theatre, even at its most "realistic", is connected with the level at which, and the methods by which, we tell our everyday lies." She advocates that drama must create a designedly got up, highly attractive present moment, which is often charged with ambiguities. According to her the present is factitious or artificial "because it lacks the free aura of personal reflection." Pinter's theatre at its verbal level especially transcribes the profound truth that men and women are extended beings who, however, can only exist in the present, when they are living and breathing.

It is perhaps the authenticity of language which the French theoretician, Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), refers to as the "concrete language" of the stage. Artaud was one of the exponents of surrealism in drama, wherein the action proceeds through a series of savagely grotesque, absurd and poetic images. Artaud is the founder of the new anti-literary theatre movement. He
has written about the special kind of language which should be the basis of the modern theatre: "this concrete language, intended for the senses and independent of speech, has first to satisfy the senses, as there is a poetry of the senses, there is a poetry of language, and that this concrete physical language ... is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language." Artaud has conceived of a language-oriented theatre which would shock its audience into a comprehensive awareness of the human predicament of the time. Similarly, Pinter's stage dialogue creates an implausible background. For an understanding of his plays, the audience is to get at the inner meaning. If analysed from this standpoint, a Pinter play approaches the ideal of a self-contained microcosm. All important interpretative clues and hints lie within the work itself reminding us of the theory of New Criticism which discards historical, biographical or sociological study of a literary work, and makes only an objective analysis.

Pinter insisted that his plays have no significance outside themselves. This means that his plays are required to be read within their own premises which is blue-printed by his particular and resourceful verbal idiom. Action of his plays consists entirely of words and sounds. In
a Pinter play intra-character relationships are not
dramatised in any other way, but evoked by words and
phrases. This again refers to the density of meaning
which is a very potent factor in Pinter's dramatic
dialogue, with distinctive feature of many-levelled
controlledly ambiguous and specifically metaphorical
use of language. With reference to Pinter's drama we
agree with Keyssar that "after all the dialogue is the
action in the theatre." Pinter’s minimalist dialogue
controls his absurdistic play in its own way.

A language is born out of the human need to find
out effective verbal symbols capable of corresponding
and communicating experience and feeling. It should
reflect a vital response to life containing a core of
meaning involving the author. Infallible communication
is hardly ever possible. We gather our individual
experience of life at different degrees, and our respective
impressions are neither homogeneous nor interchangeable.
We may, nevertheless, come close to communicate fairly
closely with one another with regard to our actual or
potential experience. To that extent communication is
possible, and John Elsom rightly points out that: "by
using words with as much accuracy as we can muster, we
are maintaining the purity of language." Pinter's dramatic dialogue shows that the author's
communication may be recovered through the qualities
internal to the work. Whether our resulting experience is actually rewarding depends on the senses, associations, images, emotional qualities and, above all, those specially employed words capable of evoking their complex combination-oriented meaning. Pinter's dialogue connects mutually remote, endlessly numerous, areas of human experience at various degrees. Pinter has become increasingly experimental in exploring the complex relationships between language, human reality, and psychologically subtle personal relationships. In his plays we discern a language-related human issue, embedded in the sub-conscious. His plays such as *The Hothouse*, *Family Voices*, *Victoria Station*, *A Kind of Alaska*, *One for the Road*, or *Mountain Language* may be cited as instances.

Pinter's theatre has a special flexibility of its own, which refers to Artaud's theory that as an independent and autonomous art, theatre must break away from text, pure speech and all other fixed or written literary means. Artaud considered it essential to: "put an end to the subjugation of theatre to the text, and to recover the notion of a kind of a unique language half-way between gesture and thought."¹⁸ This conception of a theatre is discerned in Pinter's drama both in letter and spirit. So, what Artaud speaks of, and what Pinter wants to achieve rather objectively, is a theatrical dynamism
capable of creating a structure of its own, along with a definite texture, to contrast language with events. Drama as a composite structure must create a well-designed present moment to captivate the audience.

Pinter's dramatic language performs a major role, in which the present moment is crucially charged with ambiguities. There is an area half way between gesture and thought and this area is space — an area left behind or in between spoken, written or printed words in theatre. For Pinter, the existence of this space creates a potential, a possibility, for the theatrical events to get expanded to fulfil it. Though it occurs in time, its own time is regarded as relating only analogically to that which its audience experiences. Chapter IV of this study examines how Pinter has theatrically made effective use of the spatial time through his dialogue in *Old Times*. Evans has observed that: "Artaud's pronouncement has been echoed and reechoed in the century since he made it and a good deal of contemporary drama has tried to put it into practice. He adds that "an emphasis is now placed on the proposition that non-verbal communication ... (and that can only mean aural, physical or extra sensory) offers a far greater range and flexibility of expression." Pinter's dramatic dialogue tries to attain this whole range and flexibility of expression.
A language does not consist only in the sum-total of words. It originates in the systematic organisation of these words, and a sequence must be maintained at all time. But more often than not the logical, syntactical rules and conventional style become an obstacle rather than a help in communicating our mind. The cogs of one mind tend to ill-fit into the other, as we use our vocabulary in a logical, rational way. This is far from an effective method for the absurdists, working in the existential world of modern drama.

Kierkegaard, expounding existential philosophy, insisted that our world "is not a world of tendencies and ideas but of men, each of whom is a mystery both in and to himself." Pinter's plays move around this same "mystery", with its stupefying dimension and volume. Pinter's plays are developed along the concept of dread and anxiety. Through his dramatic dialogue, Pinter shows as Ionesco does, willed irrationalism of man ensnared by his fatal passion for logic and consistency, dealing with, as Taylor has said, "the basic human situation of the time."

Pinter uses verbal and mimical patterns in the theatre. A pattern may help in holding together diverse impressions in the mind. When the pattern is disarranged, related impressions may be lost or spoilt. The actual meaning of a work of art may be lost without that order
and sequence, which may be provided by a set pattern, including subsidiary patterns, if any. In literature, patterns often have direct links with the overall forms, in which many such patterns may be accommodated and adjusted. Hence the main ingredients of language are vocabulary, syntax, pattern and form. In Pinter's theatre all these ingredients of language are put to a critical test.

Elsom rightly observes that "the theatre can be said both to have and to be a language." It obviously has a language when words are used for dialogue. It is also a language in itself, when it provides a vocabulary of symbols which are not always verbal at all. A symbol, here, means the word which tries to symbolise the experience or the contemplated idea. The theatre language, as Pinter's dialogue shows, ensconces human expressions in its macrocosmic as well as microcosmic shapes.

An average word has about three significant components: the sound it creates with all tonal variations, its denotation and its connotation. The subtle shades of connotative nuances are too complex for an analysis. It involves situation-oriented association, the past history of the word and the sensibility it arouses immediately in us. The word "room", for example, is a familiar word to denote a space of limited extent for the purpose of living or staying in a human habitat; at
its connotative level it carries with it a suggestion of safety, comfort, love, partial self-concealment, security and a sense of family life human nature is prone to possess. It is difficult to define Pinter's words against a given context.

In his plays we are continually reminded that words, to a startling extent, have ceased to be vital any longer, and so communication is badly impaired. Pinter has endeavoured to show how men and women today suffer in their daily life from non-communication or inadequacy of expression. Language fails them. The words they utter at a given moment play hide-and-seek with them, and an effective meaning at the communicative level remains elusive. In fact, Pinter possesses the subtle understanding of man's interior self, existing in the sub-strata of spoken thought. Words as his characters speak are buried deep at three or four levels. They may be construed from three, four or sometimes more angles. His pauses, repetitions and silences, ridden by very few words, strongly suggest an undercurrent of latent, heavily condensed and highly charged dramatic meaning. Director Peter Hall aptly comments that Pinter "scrutinizes life unyieldingly."23

Sub-text is of cardinal importance for a Pinter play. The stage is illumined in a particular way, the
theatre-hall is dark, extraneous noises are shut out, and silence is prevailing. In such an atmosphere the words, actions, movements, a measured pause or silence confront the spectators in a special way, making it easy for them to detect meaning. Words, pauses, silences, movements and gestures, knitted together, make for Pinter's powerful dramatic idiom. His speech rhythms are an integral part of his drama. When Kennedy says that, "it is impossible to think of a Pinter play in terms of mime," he obviously alludes to this word-weaving in a Pinter play, with its unique speech rhythm. Pinter creates a doubleness in drama by "tying the words", as the playwright explains himself, "to the image of the character standing on the stage."25

There is a difference in Pinter between a pause, a silence and three-dots. A "pause" should be considered a bridge where the audience thinks that the character is poised on one side of the river. Then when their dialogue is delivered, a character crosses the river by means of that pause-bridge and reaches the very other side. A pause in Pinter, therefore, is important subtextually, for it is such a hiatus which is required to get retrospectively filled in by the audience with the help of the dialogue.

A Pinterian pause is a remarkable landmark in modern play-writing. It causes the mind to hold its
comprehensive process for some quiet moments during which manifold shades of suggestions flash across the mind of the listener. The audience holds its breath at the cross-section of perplexing, insulated meaning, which inheres only in the direct impact of on-stage action. The audience then proceeds with caution, without any discursive dialogue at hand to follow the right track of comprehension. In Pinter "dramatic pause is essentially a means of implanting a dramatic impression." Instead of giving any details of a character's inner-goings, a pause is used to denote the silent interplay of the conscious and the sub-conscious. In television a pause becomes particularly useful where camera technique, of close-up and zooming, helps significantly to divulge the interior of the concerned character in the given context. Pinter has to his credit a close personal knowledge of television.

A "silence" is a dead stop. It falls when confrontation at the psychological level becomes quite extremely heated up. Nothing can be spoken by anyone until the dramatic tension dissipates or mounts up in such a way that something quite new happens. "Three dots" indicates a very tiny hesitation, but it is there and perceptible. It is different from a semi-colon, which is seldom or never used by Pinter in a play. It is also different from a comma. A comma is something
that is to catch up on for a while, to go through it the very next moment. A "full-stop" requires a stop in the process, and puts an end to the issue for the time being. Pinter's dialogue refers to this continuous scrutiny: In _The Lover_ we read: "Understanding is so rare, so dear" (II, p.190). In _No Man's Land_ the playwright says: "But what does that mean? What does it mean? (IV, p.92). Pinter writes in _Tea Party:_ "I've often wondered what 'mean' means? (III, p.115). As an absurdist Pinter does not think that any meaning is final and complete. In his plays he puts before the audience certain occurrences which have any number of implications. The audience in witnessing the show is to draw according to their individual capacity such implication from the dramatic progression. Pinter believes that "meaning begins in the words, in action, continues in your head and ends nowhere. There is no end to meaning. Meaning which is resolved, parcelled, labelled and ready for export is dead, impertinent - and meaningless."28

Pinter's characters do not inform us anything. A Stanley or an Aston, a Teddy or a Jerry, a Spooner or a Deeley — by their economy of words, tonal variations, movement and gesture — help us to sense and feel the presence of another beneath-the-surface reality, a submerged existential archipelago under the surface personality. Pinter's dramatic dialogue conveys to us
the inward life of the characters where they are primarily concerned with their inner self. They confront, as Albee sees, "a world which makes no sense because the moral, religious, political and social structures man has created to 'illusion' himself have collapsed." Pinter tries to resort to the creation, through his dialogue, of effective iconic scenes and references to throw light on this agonising state of human mind — its vacancy, lack of motivation and utter dissatisfaction.

Pinter's quest is like that of Marcel Proust (1871-1922) who, as Beckett observes, "was incapable of recording surface.... The copiable he does not see. He searches for a relation, a common factor, substrata." Pinter too seems less interested, while framing his dialogue, in what apparently is said than in the way in which it is said creating ripples of implications. Davies speaks for Pinter in The Caretaker: "I can take nothing you say at face value. Every word you speak is open to any number of different interpretations" (II, p.82). In The Homecoming Pinter himself raises a question: "Apart from the known and the unknown, what else is there?" (III, p.68). In his plays we face this interspace between the known and the unknown. His characters use words which refer only to the partly known. The insinuated but unverified world, even the unverifiable world, remains underneath the dialogue.
In Pinter's theatre we find that phantasy over language is woven round the inexactitude of what has been expressed. His plays reveal the acute insolvency of the contemporary lingual gibberish. Russell Brown has discovered that at the centre of Pinter's plays there is a "scepticism about language of unusual tenacity." Pinter's dialogue is formidably retentive in giving a clear meaning. Listening to the words in the play the audience is confused over the question whether anything can ever be stated correctly by words. Almost every statement, made by his characters, is open to more than one meaning. His characters can neither say what they know, nor know what they say. Neither they, nor the audience can trust words. Pinter affirms that "there are at least twenty-four possible aspects of any single statement," and that a categorical statement will "never stay where it is and be finite." Pinter's dialogue in Victoria Station, One for the Road or The Hothouse reveals that from the state of verbal primacy man's communicative urge is leading him to post-linguistic forms and even to partial silence. After examining Pinter's dialogue, one cannot but agree with Dukore that "framed by dialogue, and achieving their effects in relationship to words, are various types of silence." 

When Pinter's characters try to explain themselves, they fail to clarify. In The Collection (1961), co-directed by Peter Hall and Pinter, we read:
Do I know you?  
You'll know me when you see me.  
Do you know me? (II, p.126).

The playwright knows that life is far from being neat, tidy, carefully groomed, iron-pressed and buttoned up. Life is a mess, an enigma over and above being a cheat and a disappointment. Man continually passes from "unreality to unreality" as Eliot wrote towards the close of Part I of Murder in the Cathedral. Dialogue in Pinter's play implies that solutions to various human complexities are simply not possible. Pinter's stage dialogue underlines a disintegrating society, by giving a grotesque and distorted picture of a world which is out of tune with the national equipoise. It is a world completely irrational and gratuitous. Pinter's characters are unmotivated and vague. Their actions are largely incomprehensible, mysterious and unpredictable. Their verbal idiom registers the frivolity and frailty of their existence.

Life, the basic raw material of all art, consists of people, incidents, scenes, sense impressions, bits of conversations and what they transmit to us directly or indirectly. Pinter as a playwright is concerned with this life, which, as Virginia Woolf observes in To The Lighthouse, "never builds itself into the convenient symmetry of a plot.... Experience is made from "the silt of innumerable instants of consciousness, fusing
the present with memories of the past; blending thought and action and sensation; expanding into the widest contemplation of the human situation in its universal aspects or contracting into the observation of some small objects around us, or into fragments of talk, gestures, some fleeting association. It's all discontinuous, inconclusive, fugitive flickering. This at last, is life."

As a playwright Pinter makes his dialogue a definite means to an end which is a vivid representation of the ache in the psyche of modern man, projected through grotesque, unconventional stage devices.

Our constant failure of understanding each other, our frustrations, irritations and suppressed anger, find an unmistakable echo in Pinter's dramatic language, which, as Esslin points out, "bristles with the difficulties of communication."33a His characters "become entangled in lingual knots which they are unable to unravel."34 Conflict between contrasted wills, between different points of views, between opposite temperaments is registered and manifested through deftly contrasted language patterns. For example, the dialogue in Pinter's anti-clockwise backward-looking play, Betrayal gives out a clear instance of conflict between contrasted wills of Jerry and Emma for whom the present is a void, the future is uncertain, and the past, for all its narrowness,
imprudence or betrayals, is something to be recalled not only with impatience but also with baffled affection, not only with mortification but also with adoration. Pinter's dialogue is able to encompass this tragi-comic trawl of ambiguity inherent in the action.

Such a drama refers to a movement towards pure art or "dehumanised art" as Gasset puts it. For the absurdists, emancipated from the conventional mode of realism and representationalism, strive to come up with their creations which broadly reflect what they, in their own individual way, make out of life. This adds to the qualitative change of the dramatic expressionism of the Absurd Theatre, such as Pinter's. The spate of dehumanized verbiage of commercial terminology helps in creating part of the symbolic meaning of Mick's character in The Caretaker. In the following speech, which occurs near the beginning of Act II of the play, Mick is utilizing the verbal debris of the commercial world as a weapon to attack Davies:

So what do you say? Eight hundred odd for this room or three thousand down for the whole upper storey. On the other hand, if you prefer to approach it in the long-term way I know an insurance firm in West Ham 'll be pleased to handle the deal for you.... untarnished record; twenty percent interest, fifty percent deposit; down payments, back payments, family allowances, bonus schemes, remission of term for good behaviour, six months lease, yearly examination of the relevant archives, tea laid on, disposal of shares, benefit extension, compensation on cessation, comprehensive indemnity against Riot, Civil Commotion, Labour Disturbances, Storm, Tempest, Thunderbolt, Larceny or Cattle all subject to a daily check or double check (II, p. 45).
Mick's humour is indeed dark and sinister which he showers on Davies, the downtrodden, desperate, shabby tramp he has found in his house. Mick abuses Davies, threatens him with arrest, cruelly offers him increasingly exorbitant and complicated arrangements for leasing part of the house. At the climax of this speech, Mick's language soars beyond the colloquial and the psychologically appropriate talk into a violent outburst of business jargon. Here occurs Pinter's de-humanising of language which has continued all along as a deluge of terms drawn from robbery, law, lock-ups and lodging-houses. This dramatic dialogue also suggests Mick's world with the institutional and materialistic references as ironic weapons against the broken and indigent Davies. This dehumanisation of language gives us tragi-comedy where laughter stops. With all their ultimate grimness, Pinter's plays have an appealing humour which affirms the playwright's delicate control over the dramatic action through an apt dramatic dialogue.

It may be interesting to note that such Pinterish passages seem to have some affinity with the basic surrealistic conception of using language with the purpose of revolutionaryizing the reality. For, surrealism at the very outset, as enunciated by André Breton (1896-1966), its prominent theoretician, considered language important because it was considered to be an ideal medium for fusing
the material world with the inward or the psychological world, having myriads of sense impressions. Pinterish dialogue often confirms what Breton has observed: "There are words which work against the idea which they try to express. Finally, even the meaning of words is not without admixture, and it is difficult to determine to what degree the figurative meaning progressively affects the proper meaning." In Pinter's dramatic dialogue there are many such words. In this connexion, we may refer to a significant passage in Beckett's novel *Murphy* (1938). Here Celia says to Murphy: "Spattered with words that went dead as soon as they sounded; each word obliterated, before it had time to make sense by the word that came next; so that in the end she did not know what had been said." This sense of non-communication has been very dextrously incorporated by Pinter in his stage dialogue, as shown in the following chapters of this study.

Pinter's theatrical language demonstrates how much the dialogue reveals and how much it conceals. We are uneasy about words, we cannot place any reliance on them. When we cannot but use them, we are afraid lest "the weasel" appear from "under the cocktail cabinet." The absurdist distrust of language in the presentational drama as a means of defining our thought process or as an instrument of communication refers to an uncertainty
and absurdity. This is brilliantly recorded by Samuel Beckett in his plays concerned with the existential meaninglessness of life, which may be vividly defined in the light of Albert Camus' analysis of the negative satiric gesture of the dramatist in The Myth of Sisyphus (1942), considered by Esslin as the "seminal heart-searchings of our time." Referring to the impossibility of ever getting at any certainty as regards life's essential predicament, Camus wrote:

In certain hours of lucidity, the mechanical aspect of their gestures, their senseless pantomime, makes stupid everything around them. A man speaking on the telephone behind a glass partition—one cannot hear him but observes his trivial gesturing. One asks oneself, why is he alive? This malaise in front of man's own inhumanity, this incalculable let down when faced with the image of what we are ... is the Absurd.  

Pinter's dramatic dialogue, in its essence, continually endeavours to underline this absurdity in the human situation.

In his plays Pinter demonstrates what Ionesco calls "collapse of reality" in language, which happens when words are "turned into sounding shells devoid of meaning." In Pinter, language is reduced to its lowest common denominator wherein words are emptied of any content and the sound emanating from their utterance strikes us as meaningless, such as in the following
Passage from his *The Dwarfs*:

Len: Who's driving the tank?
Pete: What?
Len: Who's driving the tank?
Pete: Don't ask me. We've been walking up the road back to back.
Len: You've what? (pause) You've been walking up the road, back to back? (pause) (II, p. 115).

This basic movement of language towards reducing and emptying of itself appears in Pinter's different plays in different degrees. Along with Pinter's gradual development as a playwright, the language used by him shows a steady minimisation. He confesses "My plays are getting shorter ... words are so tender .... I doubt if I will ever write something mammoth."\(^{14}\) He has not written anything mammoth till his last play, *Mountain Language* (1988) wherein a breakdown of language system has been hinted at the level of linguistic failure both within the area of conversation and within words themselves. The following short passages from this play (dealt with in Chapter V below) may be cited:

Sergeant: Name?
Young woman: We've given our names.

Sergeant: Name?
Young woman: We've given our names.
Sergeant: Name?

Or
Officer : Who did this? Who bit you?
Young Woman: A Dobermann pinscher.
Officer : Which one?
   (Pause)
Which one? ....
Who did this?

Young Woman: A big dog.
Officer : What was his name?
   (Pause)
What was his name?
   (Pause)
Every dog has a name! ....
Before they bite, they state their name.... They state their name and then they bite.44

In his dramatic dialogue Pinter has shown that along the track-line of civilized human conversation fish-plates are removed to a formidable extent so much so that no train of balance and congruity can run on it without running the risk of getting dangerously derailed. With his remarkably sharp ears the playwright pin-points the illogicality and irrational senselessness of the everyday conversation in and around London life, often turning out to be grossly absurd. Pinter is "pretty well obsessed with words when they get going,"45 and what he does is that he grips and squeezes the words very hard, then lets them go. The words fall flat, drained-out of all coherent meaning and roll further down into the pit of inconsequentiality. Pinter admits that he has "mixed feelings about words" and adds that
"moving among them, sorting them out ... I derive a considerable pleasure .... But ... I have another strong feeling about words which amounts to nothing less than nausea. Such a weight of words confronts us ... the bulk of it a stale and dead terminology; ideas endlessly repeated and permutated, become platitudinous, trite, meaningless. Given this nausea, it's very easy to be overcome by it and step back into paralysis." 

In this statement we find an unmistakable echo of Camus: "This malaise in front of man's own inhumanity, this incalculable let down when faced with the image of what we are, this 'nausea' ... also is the absurd."

At our first encounter with a Pinter play, we find it utterly illogical, uncanny and absurd, but with a difference. Though initially, like Shulman, Darlington, or Brien, we tend to be baffled by the play, yet we are significantly moved by the fact that the play is quite capable of creating a magnetic world of its own with a distinctly theatrical idiom. Thornton, therefore, rightly observes that "it is possible to be Baffled by a Pinter play and yet to leave the theatre with the feeling of having had an important and memorable experience." 

Dramatic dialogue seems to align itself with that of a cross-word puzzle or some kind of an acrostic. Gradually, we get used to Pinter's theatre and start comprehending
that the illogicality inherent in life has been brought forward by an appropriately contrived language pattern.

Man's confrontation with absurdity, the senselessness of life, the distinctly felt devaluation of human values, beliefs, convictions, ideals and purpose, has been surfaced in the absurdist writers not through some lucid, logically constructed dialogue, but it is expressed in a way which discards discursive thought and rational meaning. When Alan Schneider, who was to direct the first American production of *En attendant Godot* (1948-9), asked its author who Godot was and what Godot meant, received the reply: "if I knew, I would have said so in the play." Similarly, when Terence Rattigan asked the author of *The Caretaker*: "It's the Old Testament God and the New Testament God, with the Caretaker as humanity — that's what it's about, isn't it?", Pinter's reply was hardly more helpful: "It's about two brothers and a caretaker." In Pinter, there is that point of intersection where thematic absurdity cuts the absurd pattern, and this is primarily achieved through his dramatic dialogue. In Pinter, as in Beckett, the subject-matter of the absurd is telescoped into an appropriate theatre-craft conceived on the line of the absurd, especially at the lingual angle. The philosophic genus of the Theatre of the Absurd perfectly blends with the stylistic breed in a Pinter
Playwrights like Sartre (1905-80), Camus (1913-60), Armand Salacrou (1899), Jean Anouilh (1910), Hippolyte Jean Giraudoux (1882-1944) wanted to deal with the meaninglessness or absurdity of life; but they could only put their abstract philosophy of life, underlined by the irrationality of human condition, through a neatly diagrammed style based on discursive reasoning. Their new content could hardly fit into the required form. It failed on that count, especially at the lingual level. Their plays highlighted their ideas, but failed to make much impact on the audience in the absence of an appropriate lingual idiom. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Arnold, Browning and Tennyson too chose the Beckett theme for their poetic plays. But whereas their plays, such as Merope (1858), Strafford (1837) and Beckett (1884) were frigid failures, T.S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral (1935) on the same theme became a landmark because of its lingual idiom which was in tune with the contemporary ethos. On the other hand, playwrights like Arthur Adamov (1908-70), Samuel Beckett (1906-89), Genet (1910-1986), Ionesco (1912), Edward Albee (1928) and Pinter (1930) tried to project the meaninglessness of life, the absurdity of human situation and the formidable inadequacy of the rational approach to the highly complicated issues of life, by a deliberate and "open abandonment of rational devices and discursive
thought." While Sartre or Camus expresses the new content through the old conventional form, the Theatre of the Absurd moves "further in trying to achieve a unity between its basic assumptions and the form in which these are expressed." Pinter has coped with this incommunicable essence of the Theatre of the Absurd mainly from the linguistic standpoint.

Pinter's plays deal with the communicative efficacy of language, demonstrating its inadequacy and sometimes its total collapse. A Pinter play ushers in the post-linguistic era in modern drama. Sometimes it does slip into an exercise in pure mime, as shown by the opening scene of The Caretaker and the concluding scenes of The Birthday Party, The Homecoming and Old Times. In Pinter's theatre we are reminded of the question raised by George Steiner: "Are we passing out of an historical era of verbal primacy, out of the classic period of literary expression, into a phase of decayed language of 'post-linguistic' forms and, perhaps of partial silence."

The form of a Pinter play has its origin in some wider linguistic context involving the structure as well as the texture. The playwright tends to puzzle the audience right from his very first venture, The Room (1957). In The Dumb Waiter written in the same year, the dialogue makes it clear that Pinter brings in a new conversational tonality in which phrases and rhythms of day-to-day talk
are reproduced with startling accuracy. The way the playwright handles the ordinariness of the tonal conversation, its repetition and inconsequentiality carries unmistakable overtones of uncertainty, menace and cruelty. In Pinter's work the Theatre of the Absurd coalesces into an exact expression to unite form and content into one perfect pattern. There are clear suggestions of the two levels of language: the surface level, and the undersurface one. The dialogue shows that underneath the flow of cliches, repetitions and interjections, the characters are feeling and perceiving far more profoundly than what they are able to express. Verbally Pinter's dialogue conveys to us more than what the words and phrases carry forward at their face value.

Characters on the traditional stage use dialogue as a definite theatrical strategy for pushing the action forward. They reveal their true selves in the monologues which reveal to the audience what is inside them. This, however, does not happen in a Pinter play where dialogue, duologue and monologue defy easy comprehension. Pinter refuses to accept Arnold Wesker's claim: "Language is words.... It's bridges, so that you can get safely from one place to another."57 Pinterian characters can hardly be trusted whether they are talking to others or to themselves. There is no soliloquy or aside. This is why Old Times,
Landscape or No Man's Land is difficult to decipher as a play. Guido Almansi rightly points out: "Characters shift position crab-like, move forward like knights on a chess-board, an oblique tentative step rather than a bold progress."

As such Pinter's dramatic dialogue continually penetrates between the reality of the thing and the reality of the word. The key of any clear lucid meaning never gets a full turn inside the Pinterian padlock of obtuseness. The effect is that dramatic dialogue in Pinter tingles with an odd ring, while his characters play the game of not understanding one another. The playwright pin-points the danger of communication rather than the difficulty of communication: "that what takes place is continual evasion desperate ... attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming."

Pinter's dramatic dialogue always underlines that it is language which puts up the major obstacle in the process of human communication.

A playwright requires a word to be utilized as much as possible in all its dimensions — sound, overt sense, undertones and overtones, intonation of the speaker and his meaningful gestures at the time of delivery. All these are necessary for the theatre-writer in re-inforcing dramatic meaning. For him denotations and filaments of all possible connotations are important for conveying his dramatic message. Pinter's characters indulge in playing
word-game, as Beckett's characters do. In *Waiting for Godot* (1954), Luckey's long "think" is an example of word-game he plays with himself. In their role of playing games — where each has agreed to a specific scenario with implicit limits and taboos — they often say one thing but really feel and often communicate another. So during their exchange of dialogue, the verbal is only the most superficial level of communication. The connotations of their words, idioms and accompanying gestures, or pauses, or double-entendres (that is, intending doubly, meaning doubly or knowing doubly) including their explicit hesitations and silences, do really communicate a second level of potential meaning often opposed to the first. Pinter in his plays adheres to his belief that "the speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear."

What happens in a Pinter play is that the inner voice becomes more halting under the burden of words. Pinter's dramatic dialogue boldly underlines the fact that verbal language happens to be the most sophisticated form of language, especially when it is not only verbalised but vocalised at the same time. With gesture, colour, lighting, dance as well as the inarticulate range of whisper and intonation, words become capable of integrating impulse and thought. Pinter's dramatic dialogue also demonstrates how adroitly the playwright exploits the gaps in language communicating by non-communication. Thereby he also
shows that language itself has become the active barrier to communication in spite of which communication is an unending process. Like Beckett's, Pinter's speeches, as used in his plays, rest on great gaps resembling a pattern of no-speech like the Japanese no-action. This refers to the Nōh plays of Japan - a theatre art form created in the Muromachi period of 14th century by the father and son team of Kanami (1332-1384) and Zeami (1363-1443) — where highly stylised and symbolic movements are made by the actors. The three drummers emit shrill calls which are the means by which the tempo is measured. These calls are an indispensable factor in establishing the relationship between the music, the song and the dance. The rhythm is very slow in both chant and movement, perhaps slower than the normal human heart-beat. The words are repetitive and the spectator is very gradually drawn in and hypnotized. Zeami says that the moments of no action are the most enjoyable, adding that this is one of the actor's secret arts.

In Pinter's Landscape (1967), as shown in Chapter V below, it can be seen how near Pinter has come to this Beckettian technique of using gaps in speech, as found in Happy Days (1961). For example, we may cite this language of the gaps from the words of Winnie, the heroine of Happy Days, who is buried in sand up to her neck:

Pinter similarly uses this language of the gaps in the following passage in *Landscape*:

Beth: I would like to stand by the sea. It is there. (pause) I have. Many times. It's something I cared for. I've done it. (pause) I'll stand on the beach. On the beach. Well... it was very fresh. But it was hot, in the dunes. But it was so fresh, on the shore. I loved it very much. (pause) Lots of people. (pause) People move so easily. Men. Men move. (pause) I walked from the dune to the shore. My man slept in the dune. He turned over as I stood. His eyelids. Belly button. Snoozing how lovely. (pause) Would you like a baby? I said. Children? Babies? Of our own? Would be nice. (pause) Women turn, look at me. (pause) Our own child? Would you like that? (pause) (III, p. 177).

However, it is very difficult to choose quotations, from a Pinter play to provide explicit summations of the play's thematic concerns. Pinter's characters do not come forward with any explicitly cut and dried statements. In dealing with his plays, it should be borne in mind that the dialogue provides sequence-oriented possible interpretations. The dialogue takes into account and
displays the unusual degree of ambiguity which is a noticeable feature of the spoken language. The inter­
relationships of the characters are hinted by the dialogue, which also helps in organizing our perception of the dramatic sequence, leading to the thematic develop­
ment.

Vannier rightly observes that Pinter creates a drama of "human relations at the level of language itself."\textsuperscript{63} By means of dialogue Pinter seeks to draw our attention to the tension of what remains inarticulate and unsaid. His characters interact emotionally through language. What matters most for Pinter is not the content of what one says, but the reaction that it evokes. Through inarticulate, incoherent and repetitive speech, Pinter brings forth the tedium of life, having discovered the new potentiality of dramatic language.

The main points made in this chapter about Pinter's virtuosity in using language as a vehicle of dramatic action and his ability to work on multiple levels, can now be examined at length by analysing the dialogue in his major plays.
Notes and References


15. New Criticism was a major critical movement in America during the 1930s and 1940s. John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* (1941) fixed the label and summed up the issues. The New Critics included Allen Tate, W.K. Wimsatt, Cleanth Brooks, R.P. Blackmur and Robert Penn Warren. The vital tenet of New Criticism is the autonomy of literature, which holds that a literary work must essentially be studied as a poem, not as something having either a biographical or sociological evidence. It should not be considered as a literary-historical material or anything pertaining to a
psychological theory of literature or for any other reason whatever. These critics have been considerably influenced by I.A. Richards' idea that literature is written in a special non-referential language.


34. Ibid., p.77.

35. José Ortega Y Gasset, The De-Humanisation of Art (New York, 1961). Quoted in Modern Drama: Essays in Criticism, ed., Travis Bogard & William I. Oliver (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p.6. Andre Breton is recognised as one of the leading exponents of the idea that language is a crucial force in the creation of thought, and in defining reality. In his views linguistic experimentation is inevitable as a part of the Surrealist programme. Surrealism, we may remember, advocates the liberation of the mind from logic; asserting the tenet that art should grow out of confrontation with the unconscious or sub-conscious mind. Breton adopted the technique of exposing the world of sub-conscious ideas through using such a language which, he believed, is capable of making contributions beyond its ability, in recording sub-conscious thoughts. Breton has elaborately defined his views in Les Manifestes du Surrealisme (Paris, 1946). See Manifestoes of Surrealism, trans. R. Seaver and H. R. Lane (Ann Arbor: Michigan Univ. Press, 1969), p.297.

36. Quoted in Language in Modern Literature: Innovation and Experiment, ed. Jacob Corg Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1979), p.82. André Breton is recognised as one of the leading exponents of the idea that language is a crucial force in the creation of thought, and in defining reality. In his views linguistic experimentation is inevitable as a part of the Surrealist programme. Surrealism, we may remember, advocates the liberation of the mind from logic; asserting the tenet that art should grow out of confrontation with the unconscious or sub-conscious mind. Breton adopted the technique of exposing the world of sub-conscious ideas through using such a language which, he believed, is capable of making contributions beyond its ability, in recording sub-conscious thoughts. Breton has elaborately defined his views in Les Manifestes du Surrealisme (Paris, 1946). See Manifestoes of Surrealism, trans. R. Seaver and H. R. Lane (Ann Arbor: Michigan Univ. Press, 1969), p.297.

38. In his speech, delivered in Hamburg, F R G, 1970 on receiving the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize, Pinter said: "Once many years ago, I found myself engaged uneasily in a public discussion on theatre. Someone asked me what my work was 'about'. I replied with no thought at all and merely to frustrate this line of enquiry: 'The weasel under the cocktail cabinet.' That was a great mistake. Over the years I have seen that remark quoted in a number of learned columns. It has now seemingly acquired a profound significance, and is seen to be a highly relevant and meaningful observation about my own work. But for me the remark meant precisely nothing." See Pinter Plays: Four. Harold Pinter (London: Methuen, 1984), p. ix. The metaphor "weasel under the cocktail cabinet" suggests much that is central to Pinter's work as a whole. His dramatic dialogue denies us direct information, but indeed insists that we look intently at what it evokes at a symbolic level. The cocktail cabinet may refer to the surface elegances of the modern social life, and the weasel lurking somewhere underneath its furniture-fixtures may also point to the violence and brutality which remains embedded in the under-surface reality of human society and human self.


48. *Evening Standard* (20 May 1958). It reads: "Sorry, Mr. Pinter, You're just not funny enough. Sitting through *The Birthday Party* at the Lyric ... is like trying to solve a crossword puzzle where every vertical clue is designed to put you off the horizontal. It will be best enjoyed by those who believe that obscurity is its own reward.... its appeal is based upon ... irrelevant verbal anarchy ..." Quoted by Martin Esslin, *Pinter: The Playwright*, op.cit., p.20.

49. *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 May 1958: It reads:
"Disappointment was my lot at the Lyric ... last night .... it turned out to be one of those plays in which an author wallows in symbols and revels in obscurity .... The author never got down to earth long enough to explain what his play was about, so I can't tell you .... there is Meg ... she is mad ....
her unsavoury lodger Stanley ... is mad too ....
a couple of very sinister (and quite mad) characters
arrive .... there is also a mad girl ... nymphomania
being her fancy ..." Quoted by Gareth and Barbara
Lloyd Evans, eds., Plays in Review 1956-1980 (London:

50. The Spectator, 30 May 1958: It says: "The Birthday
Party is like a vintage Hitchcock thriller which has
been, in the immortal tear-stained words of Orson
Welles, 'edited by a cross-eyed studio janitor with
a lawn-mower'." Quoted in Plays in Review 1956-1980,
op.cit., p.65.

51. P.C. Thornton, "Blindness and the Confrontation with
Death: Three plays by Harold Pinter", Die Neueren
Sprachen, 17 (May 1968), 213.

52. Quoted by Martin Esslin, op.cit., p.43.

53. Quoted in Bernard F. Dukore, Harold Pinter (London:

54. Quoted by Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd,
op.cit., p.24.

55. Ibid., p.24.

56. George Steiner, Language of Silence (London: Heinemann,


58. Guido Almansi, "Harold Pinter's Idiom of Lies,"
Contemporary English Drama, Ed. C W E Bigstby (London:


61. Zeami, the greatest writer of Nōh plays, says that the moment of no action are the most enjoyable, adding that this is one of the actor's secret arts: "When we examine why such moments without action are enjoyable, we find that it is due to the underlying spiritual strength of the actor which unremittingly holds the attention.... This feeling of inner strength will faintly reveal itself and bring enjoyment .... The action before and after an interval of 'no action' must be linked by entering the state of mindlessness in which the actor conceals even from himself his own intent." See Donald Keene, *An Anthology of Japanese Literature* (Tokyo: Charles E Tuttle Co., 1956), pp. 258-59.
