

them for pleasure. Etta tried to expose her sexuality in order to induce the sexual hunger in men. "A huge white straw hat reigned over layers of gold and pearl beads draped over too much bosom and too little dress. You plan on dazzling the Lord, Etta?" (62) Etta was tired of moving with guys, she now tried to avoid all sorts of enjoyments and she liked to settle in life with a good man. She thought Reverend Mr. Moreland Woods was right for her. He seemed "well-off", with his "manicured hands and a diamond pinkie ring" but he turned out to be a hypocritical opportunist, he knew that Etta Mae was a "worldly" woman whom he could use and discard with no fear of entanglement:

Moreland Woods knew Etta was the type of woman who not only knew which way to turn, but, more often than not, had built her own roads when nothing else was accessible. But he was enjoying this game immensely almost as much as the growing heat creeping into his groin. (68)

Etta Mae finally understood that her friendship with Mattie might be the only abiding relationship left to her. Naylor defines Etta Mae by sexual pursuit. Etta Mae equates sex with love and never finds a suitable mate. Through Etta's character Naylor justifies the statement that men long for pleasure and he won't be in a position to support her at hard times whereas woman needs love, affection and support from men but she can get it only from another woman. The next character was Ciel, Mattie's young friend (Miss Eva's granddaughter) dating back to their days in North Carolina married Eugene and had a baby girl, Serena. When Ciel was pregnant a second time Eugene felt trapped. He lost his job and blamed Ciel for all his trouble. He was a whiner and an emotional abuser who took flight whenever the going was tough: "So now, how in the hell I'm gonna make it with no money, huh? And another brat comin' here, huh?" "I'm fuckin' sick of never getting ahead. Babies and bills, that's all you good for." (94) Ciel, out of love for him, aborts the baby which depressed her and caused her to be unhealthily focused on Serena. Sex had caused Ciel to suffer because the result of the sexual encounter, her children, had been taken from her. Ciel tried to stop Eugene from going away from her but he did not pay ears to her words. Ciel lost interest in stopping him because she aborted the baby for him and he did not have any love for her and his daughter Serena. Finally Ciel saw him as a tall and skinny black man with arrogance and selfishness. The day Eugene decided to leave, ostensibly to take an out-of-town job, Serena was accidentally and fatally electrocuted when she struck a fork into an electrical outlet. Ciel nearly died of despair, but Mattie helped to pull her out of her painful despondency. In the fifth chapter, Naylor showcased a unique character, Cora Lee. She had some psychological problem, which was her excessive interest in newly born babies. When she was young she loved baby dolls, every birthday she received one new doll from her parents. Her father worried a lot because of the unique nature of his daughter. Cora Lee's life turned out to be a painful story when she attained puberty. The male shadow in the society used the innocence of Cora Lee for their sexual hungers. Her mother had warned her not to go with the Murphy boy to see the thing that felt good at dark because she could

produce children now. But Cora Lee was happy to get real baby. Even though she realized her mistake, she was not able to change her mentality because the women had been treated as a sexual image for centuries, so it will take time for her to change the notion.

She entered her bedroom in the dark and the shadow, who had let himself in with his key, moved in the bed. He didn't ask where they had been and she didn't care to tell him. She went over and silently peeked in the crib at her sleeping daughter and let out a long sigh. Then she turned and firmly folded her evening like gold and lavender gauze deep within the creases of her dreams, and let her clothes drop to the floor. (127)

Naylor symbolically criticizes the sexual urge of men by stating; even though Cora Lee has a psychological problem, men do not come to solve her problem instead they try to use her for their sexual urge. The chapter "The Two" refers to the lesbian couple. They are denied from the female friendship with the other women in Brewster Place because of their sexuality. They are named as "The Two" instead of their personal name Lorraine and Theresa. Sophie comments on the two to Mattie:

"What they doin'-livin' there like that-is wrong, and you know it." She turned to appeal to Mattie. "Now, you a Christian woman. The Good Book say that them things is an abomination against the Lord. We shouldn't be havin' that here on Brewster and the association should do something about it." (140)

Sophie's illogical assumption and rules had plagued the couple's life. When Lorraine first mentioned to Theresa that the other women were no longer friendly, Theresa immediately launched a verbal attack, stating to Lorraine that she need not broach this subject, because if Lorraine was leading up to a suggestion of moving again, she could simply abandon the thought. Lorraine and Theresa are defined only by their sexuality, as though society can define them only as one dimensional creature because they are lesbian. Through the lesbian couple Naylor created a heated debate about the role of sexual orientation in defining one's identity. As a means of making them both dynamic characters, Naylor showcases the validity of both women's point of view. Lorraine believes that she should not have to live in a world where her every move is suspect simply because she is lesbian. Yet Theresa argues that they, as lesbians, are very different, mainly because those who define difference are the ones who are in power: socially, politically, and economically. Women are defined by their ability to serve in the sexual gratification of men is made evident in the scene of Lorraine's rape by C.C. Baker and his gang. To highlight the phallogocentric world that women must try to function and survive in, the narrative voice in "The Two" offers the following description of the gang:

These young men wouldn't be called upon to thrust a bayonet into an Asian farmer, target a torpedo, scatter their iron seed from a B-52 into the moon—and they knew it. They only had that three-hundred foot alley to serve them as stateroom, armored tank, and executioner's chamber. So Lorraine found herself, on her knees, surrounded by the most dangerous species in existence—human

males with an erection to validate in a world that was only six feet wide (170).

The description in the above passage is sexual in nature. Here Naylor is turning the tables by defining men as sexual image. Naylor confines all men to the role of sexual predator. At this juncture race, class, and social status as distinct entities collapse, as all women become grouped together in an antagonistic stance against all men. Though C.C. Baker and his gang are to be despised for their actions, Naylor is careful not to place their dehumanized nature only on black men, or poor men. She reminds the reader that the most "civilized" of European men must act out the same fantasies. The only difference is that they have the resources and the power to execute their desires. Even an action supposedly as patriotic as planting a pole on the moon is construed as suspect. No male power, then, is left unaffected by the depictions illustrated here.

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A Complex Journey of Peace and Violence in the Plays of Harold Pinter (*The Birthday Party, The Caretaker, The Room, The Dumb Waiter*)

- Vijay Z. Chaudhari

Abstract: Harold Pinter (1930-2008) is regarded as one of the leading dramatists in absurdist tradition of contemporary period, who also won Noble Prize for literature in 2005. To his credit Harold Hobson of *The Sunday Times* has described Pinter as “the most original, disturbing, and arresting talent in theatrical London.” (Dasgupta, 84). For Contemporary society, the World War II brought despair and rootless life to be lived. The dehumanization overwhelmingly executed in the society in the post-war period. Reality lingered over man's emotion leading him isolated. Industrialization also promotes rationalism and mitigates the faith in destiny. Consequently, men survive under insecurity which ultimately leads life without peace. Thus, this explains his identity crisis and problem of alienation. Pinter's dramaturgy aims to delineate purposelessness and loss of peace in life leading to mental, physical and social violence through his characters. Pinter has always been in favour of humanity and peace as he rejected to participate in the war in his early phase of life and was considered as 'Conscientious Objector' to refuse to comply with National Service. (Billington, 21)

Keywords: Harold Pinter, violence, purposelessness, humanity.

Peace and Violence: Since absurdity of life is observed in Pinter's plays, the characters live inharmonious life. The impact of World War II and witness of bombing in the childhood is reflected in Pinter's plays. Peace refers to a state of quiet or tranquility. Peace means freedom from disturbance or agitation; calm; repose. (Mohapatra, 19) Man endeavours to gain mental, physical and social peace out of the complexities of life. On the contrary, violence is the state of being violent; highly excited action, whether physical or moral; force. Violence occurs only in the encounter of two freedoms. It is not a natural force; it is on the contrary manifestation of human freedom. Violence is as a means both to create and to annihilate identities, individual or collective. Pinter's early plays are characterized by unverifiable violence.

Post-War Drama and Pinter: Post-war drama exposed the realities of the society which disillusioned people and psychologically prepare platform to face brutality and predicament of working class. The contribution of T.S.Eliot, Arnold Wesker, John Osborne, Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter is immensely great in portraying the truth about complexities and anxieties of individuals in the post-war drama. For instance, Samuel Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' tagi-comedy of two

tramps is a series picture of nothingness of man's life which leads to identity violence. Sartre and Camus believe that violence is a characteristic of our age; hence in the plays of both isolation and violence is introduced as major themes. Many critics describe the type of drama as 'Kitchen Sink' Angry Theatre. It is Martin Esslin who drew the label 'The Theatre of the Absurd' in the book of same title in 1962.

Absurdism and Existentialism : The movement 'Absurdism' emerged in France after the horrors of World War II, as a rebellion against essential beliefs and traditional culture which included the assumptions that human beings are fairly rational creatures who live in an at least partially intelligible universe. 'Absurd' originally means 'out of harmony', in a musical context. In common usage, 'absurd' may simply mean 'ridiculous'. (Esslin, 23) In After 1940's however, there was a widespread tendency, prominent in existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus to show a human being as an isolated existent who is cast into an alien universe, to represent human life in its fruitless search for purpose and meaning. The views connotatively describe human condition which makes man's life without peace and he struggles create his place in inharmonious world. In this context Ionesco in an essay on Kafka defines the word Absurd thus:

Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose...cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless. (Abrams, 1)

Thus in the light of modern movements absurdism and existentialism, Pinter's well known plays as *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *The Room* and *The Dumb Waiter* can be seen where his characters survive under the burden of past memories and becomes the victims of insecurity, sex and violence created by outside forces entering their life.

Pinter's Theatre of Insecurity: Harold Pinter, who died at the age of 78, was the most influential dramatist of his generation. In his earliest plays, including *The Room* (1957) and *The Birthday Party* (1958), certain theatrical techniques and themes are observed which commentators have described as 'Pinteresque'. This term refers to dramatic scenarios that take place in a fixed setting and involve a few characters, whose motivations are obscure, no less to themselves than to the audience, but whose actions plainly illustrate both the subtle and overt violence of human relationships and conveys a well-controlled atmosphere of psychological discomfort. His plays are characterized with tension, full of obsession, erotic fantasies, hatred and jealousy. Since critics interpreted Pinter's exclusive masterpieces "the theatre of insecurity". In this context Pinter stated that "I've never been able to write a happy play, but I've been able to enjoy a happy life". (Wade, 1) Undoubtedly, Pinter's plays produce a gruesome sense of awe and fear. The menace emanates from a collision of man's basic needs for security, recognition and acceptance on the one hand and the pressures of society for deadening conformity on the other. (Shanthi, 17) The term 'comedy of menace' was used for Pinter's early plays e.g. *The Birthday Party* and *The Room*. It provokes menacing atmosphere in vague and undefined

way. In *The Birthday Party* Stanley, the guest in Meg's sea side boarding house, after hearing the news from Meg about the arrival of the two outsiders suffers from ontological insecurity which disturbs his peace and he frightens Meg revealing that two men with a wheel barrow are coming to carry her away. Again in *'The Room'* the action moves round an inexplicable couple i.e. Rose, a woman of sixty and Bert, a man of fifty. Danger is inherent in a warm room surrounded by a hostile world. Rose constantly refers to the coziness and warmth of the room, as against the dampness and obscurity of the basement flat. Symbolically, the room stands for peace and basement flat source of insecurity for Rose. As she tries to question Mr.Kidd about the tenant down in the basement, he does not answer her perhaps because he is dead or perhaps for some other sinister reason that creates an atmosphere of menace and uncertainty. So, she is terrified to find a young man and a young girl standing outside. But her terror proves baseless, as the young couple was looking for accommodation. Rose's encounter with the blind Negro also shows the feeling of disgust and fear (Misra, 121). Since, she was unknown with insistence of blind Negro to meet her in the absence of Bert. *'The Dumb Waiter'* (1960) uses the same situation as *The Room*. Ben and Gus are professional murderers look at the door; wait for the victim to walk into the trap. Of course, they do not know the identity of the victim. This leads to suspense and creates fear in the audience. Philosophically, the peace of Ben and Gus is lost when Ben receives the order to kill his companion. As they become victim of their own trap. The situation in *The Caretaker* (1960) is slightly different. The two brothers Aston and Mick go against Davies's, a homeless tramp, desire. Davies' insecurity gets aggravated in the end pleads for shelter which he loses due to his manipulation between two brothers who are emotionally discharged. Aston's insecurity develops when Davies pulls out his knife and threatens him. Psychologically, insecurity turns man's actions on back which brings anxiety in him. Anxiety causes restlessness and life without peace. Pinter's characters also become the victim of insecurity leading fragmented life and struggle for their real existence ultimately.

Pinter's Theatre of Violence: Pinter's early plays are mostly dominated by both mental and physical violence. Most Critics has labeled his characters "sinister" and "malevolent". Pinter was influenced by Kafka, Beckett, Sartre and Camus; on the tradition of these masters he could execute violence in his works effectively. The action within his plays are bleak, dire and purposely without purpose. The language in Pinter seems to be a convincing proof that he has assimilated and used the 'absurd' techniques to portray human condition and violence with which they may dash anytime. Sigmund Freud in his essay *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) contains that the conflict between sexual needs and societal mores is the source of mankind's propensity for dissatisfaction, aggression, hostility and ultimately, violence. The greatest struggle in life is the connection between our inner world and the society into which we are born. Thus harmony and inner peace can only be attained when we have learned to control our aggressive impulses by resolving this incongruity. (Freud, 1) It is Pinter's use of violent language, creates the