

The Unspoken Voices in the Harold Pinter's plays *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Room*

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Abstract

The unspoken voices and silences used by Harold Pinter in his plays clearly show his understanding of these effective dramatic techniques. Silence is not when people are silent and the audience does not hear their words. There is a time when people are so obsessed with culture that the media can't find the way to the final culture. Silence in Pinter's play is never sustained. It will spread, and people should really think about it at that time. And when people stop talking, you need to think about their unspoken thoughts. This research paper explores the concepts of fear, uncertainty, anger, and death that emerge when the characters pause or remain silent in Pinter's *Silence* and the *Dumb Waiter* and the *Room*.

Keywords: Silence, Unspoken voices, fear, uncertainty.

Introduction

Harold Pinter clearly portrays a lack of communication among the characters of the play which refers to the condition of modern man. Because of this lack of communication, Harold Painter used many pauses and silences instead of words in all the plays he wrote. Samuel Beckett did this in his plays before *The Painter* and one of the ways to express the confusion of modern man in the 20th century is to not use language in the acting. Language is not important to modern man. Instead, he uses silence to express his feelings. Silence speaks louder than words. This is why long and short pauses can be found in all of Pinter's plays. In this play, the characters choose not to speak. Instead, they remain silent because they cannot interact with each other. That's the way people are today, there's no room for things like understanding or sharing, and that's probably one of the reasons why the female characters are not physically present in this show. Pauses are used to illustrate the concept that language is a simple and meaningless tool that people use to hide their sadness. The pauses represent the filling of a silent space, and one must think of the words to fill them. More can be said in pauses and silences than real stories.

Discussions

Harold Pinter's "**The Dumb Waiter**" (1957) and "**The Room**" (1957) are both classic examples of his signature style, often referred to as "comedies of menace." In these plays, **unspoken voices**—those of unseen characters, unarticulated threats, or unexpressed emotions—play a significant role in building tension and highlighting the uncertainty that characterizes Pinter's dramatic world. In *The Dumb Waiter* (1957), the unspoken voices are implied through the use of offstage characters and the titular dumbwaiter. The play follows two hit men, Ben and Gus, who are waiting for orders in a basement

room. The dumbwaiter, which sends down absurd food orders, acts as a conduit for an unseen presence, a voice of authority and power that dictates their actions. When we think about silence in relation to Harold Pinter's plays, we think directly about his short play *Silence*, and especially about Ellen's words, as she clearly shows her uncertainty, uncertainty and fear. Ellen remarkably comments on silence and her need for someone to break the silence and tell her.

Around me sits the night. Such a silence. I can hear myself. Cup my ear. My heart beats in my ear. Such a silence. Is it me? Am I silent or speaking? How can I know? Can I know such things? No-one has ever told me. I need to be told things. I seem to be old. Am I old now? No one will tell me. I must find a person to tell me these things. (Pinter 200)

There is no direct appearance of the protagonist in the play, the unseen boss who is responsible for sending the food orders and eventually the target holds enormous control over Ben and Gus. The ambiguity of this authority figure creates tension, as the characters receive orders but are left to speculate about the logic or motivations behind them. This absence of a direct voice leaves the characters in a state of uncertainty and anxiety, contributing to the menacing atmosphere.

The Dumbwaiter as a Voice

The dumbwaiter itself becomes a kind of voice. Although it doesn't "speak," the increasingly absurd food orders communicate an irrational, controlling force. These orders are never explained, but they exert pressure on the characters, especially Gus, who questions their purpose. The dumbwaiter's silence and sudden activity create a space for the audience to project their own interpretations of the unseen forces controlling the action. The first moment of silence that appears in the font is closely followed by a long conversation between Ellen and Bates, in which he tries to persuade her to accept his proposal. She doesn't want to go out with him, she doesn't want him to buy her a drink, and she doesn't know what he wants to do. The silence shown by the Painter after his rebuttal shows his nervousness and fear. His meaningful words, "I'll go back, I'll change." I spin I eat I spin Moving in the blinding light on the horizon from the sun. I'll crush the light' (Pinter, 1976, p. 208) followed by a silence that accentuates his sadness. Bates calls it a "funny moment." "the quiet time" (Pinter, 1976 - 209). But the moment he puts his hand on his forehead and forgets all the troubles. This is the only time he feels good, and it's a very short time.

Rumsey: Find a young man.

Ellen: There aren't any

Rumsey: Don't be stupid

Ellen: I don't like them

Rumsey: you're stupid

Ellen: I hate them. Pause.

Rumsey: find one – Silence (Pinter 212-213)

Gus's Silence

Gus represents an unspoken desire for clarity, justice, or fairness. His questioning of Ben throughout the play signals a deeper, unarticulated dissatisfaction with his role. His inability to directly voice these concerns reflects the play's themes of powerlessness and submission to authority.

The Unspoken Voices in the Room

In *The Room*, Pinter explores the theme of alienation through the unspoken voices of both offstage characters and the suppressed emotions of the central character, Rose. She talks and chats all the time while Brett listens quietly without speaking. His long speech reflects the technical device of silence in the play. He was placed next to Burt's figure. He is talkative and open. He talks about his love for his room and indirectly expresses his fear of losing his safe house. But, Brett is cautious. He hides his feelings and seems cold. Her silence made her agree with everything Rose said. However, his secret thoughts are that he is a secret person. It's hard to imagine why he turns violent at the end of the show. There are many questions in the minds of the audience. Who is the man downstairs? Why is Rose afraid of the basement? Mr. Is Kidd still the owner of the house where Rose and Brett live? Are you the boss and the boss lady? Will Sands work with Underground Man to deliver a message to Rose? Why does a black man disguise himself as blind? What about Rose who has black skin? Why does Brett fear the black man? In the play, Harold Pinter leaves questions unanswered to encourage the audience to think about the subtext and find answers for themselves.

The Outside World

Throughout the play, Rose is sheltered in her room, a space that seems to represent safety from the ambiguous threats outside. The "outside" world is filled with unspoken dangers, represented by characters who visit or are mentioned but remain unseen. These characters—including the landlord and the dark presence of the blind man—hint at unknown forces that lie beyond Rose's control. Their unspoken influence heightens the play's sense of menace.

Rose's Internal Voices

Rose herself is haunted by unspoken fears and unresolved emotions. While she engages in surface-level conversations with her husband, Bert, her real thoughts and anxieties remain unarticulated. The arrival of the blind man (who symbolizes a past or fate she has tried to ignore) forces her to confront these unspoken fears. The blind man's prophetic words, along with his sudden appearance, disrupt the illusion of safety that Rose has built within her room, suggesting that her internal fears cannot be kept at bay.

The Blind Man

As a character, the blind man embodies an unspoken past or future threat. His presence is enigmatic, and his words are not fully explained, leaving much to interpretation. His blindness could symbolize the unknown, fate, or an inability to escape one's past. His dialogue forces Rose to confront what she has avoided, but much of what he represents remains unsaid, creating a sense of impending doom.

Conclusion

To sum up, this research study unveils the more profound implications of Pinter's early drama *The Room*. It presents several readings of the event and exemplifies the play's primary themes and symbols. It also clarifies the four key themes, which are fear, abuse, peril, and isolation. It also highlights how Pinter encourages nuanced expression by using pauses and quiet to fill in the blanks in his play. Pinter creates a discursive text in which the characters are unable to fully converse. Characters steer clear of appropriate situations and frequently don't answer each other's enquiries. Rose, the main character, is kept in the dark about the actual identities of Mr. Kidd, Mr. Sands, and Mrs. Sands. In both plays,

Pinter's use of unspoken voices whether through unseen characters, implied authority, or internal fears generates a pervasive atmosphere of menace. The silence between characters, as well as the things they don't say or can't say, becomes just as powerful as spoken dialogue. This manipulation of language and silence is central to Pinter's exploration of power, control, and the fragility of human relationships in a world filled with uncertainty.

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