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The Room as Mandala:
The Problem of Dissociation and Individuation
in the Plays of Harold Pinter

Demetrios James Hrisohoidis

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The Room as Mandala:

The Problem of Dissociation and Individuation in the Plays of Harold Pinter

Demetrios James Hrisohordis

In this thesis, I utilize the Jungian/Blake-ian theories of the harmonious balance between the four functions of the "psyche" and their "fall" from unity to examine the central, recurring conflict in Pinter. This thesis demonstrates that Pinter's characters, in that they are incapable of making the necessary adjustment to their psychic deficiencies ("dissociation"), which would permit them to function effectively within a social context, attempt to impose their individual need for a sense of "wholeness," equilibrium ("individuation"), on one another by attempting to secure the room ("mandala").

The contention of this thesis is that Pinter, like Jung and William Blake, is interested in a very fundamental human predicament: man's inability to come to terms with himself prevents him from achieving a personal and "collective" equilibrium. In order to assert this contention, the thesis examines the room as a symbolic and thematic setting and

metaphor that is at the heart of Pinter's plays; the possibility that Pinter's characters suffer from psychological disorders; and the correlation between Jung's theory of a psychic dissociation and individuation, Blake's theory of the four "Zoas," and the essential conflict in Pinter. In particular, three plays, No Man's Land, The Caretaker, and The Birthday Party, are examined.

To Mr. Sam Goldberg

"Understanding is so rare, so dear."

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D. J. H.

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"And blessed are those whose blood and judgement are so well commingled that they are not a pipe for fortune's finger."

Hamlet, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

"The most that we can hope to do is to train every individual to realize all his potentialities and become completely himself."

Aldous Huxley, Proper Studies

"The world is a pretty violent place, it's as simple as that, so any violence in the plays comes out quite naturally. It seems to me an essential and inevitable factor. /.../ The violence is really only an expression of the question of dominance and subservience, which is possibly a repeated theme in my plays. /.../ I wouldn't call this violence so much as a battle for positions, it's a very common, everyday thing."

Harold Pinter, "Harold Pinter: An Interview" (with Lawrence M. Bensky)

INTRODUCTION

What a remarkably pleasant room. I feel
at peace here. Safe from all danger.

Spooner, No Man's Land

I've explained to you, damn you, that all
those years I lived in Basingstoke I never
stepped outside the door.

Stanley, The Birthday Party

This is a good room. You've got a chance
in a place like this.

Rose, The Room

But what does that mean? What does it mean?

Hirst, No Man's Land

It depends how you regard this room.

Mick, The Caretaker

Thomas Hobbes and René Descartes shared the opinion that man is essentially motivated by "thirst, fear, and hunger."¹ They, furthermore, expounded the hedonist view that the essential "springs of passion are pleasure and pain;"² that love is an emotion associated with positive affect, with pleasure, while hate is associated with "unpleasure"—we do what we do because we try to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. In Harold Pinter's plays, one

¹Michael Wertheimer, A Brief History of Psychology (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), p. 33.

²Loc. cit.

finds characters who are involved in a bitter struggle for emotional, and possibly physical, survival. These characters, in a relentless effort to avoid pain and achieve pleasure, attempt to isolate themselves from the capriciousness and malevolence of the everyday world of ordinary life. One sees that Pinter's characters struggle to control their existence, if not destiny, and, in the process, to liberate themselves from the elements that threaten to disrupt their lives by exiling themselves to the sanctity of the "room."

In Pinter's plays, it is not Beckett's tortured "Everyman" who attempts to eke out an existence in isolation. Instead, as Arnold Hinchliffe suggests, Pinter focuses on an everyman who exists in ordinary activity, making decisions about the cornflakes and living in an emotional chaos that is not a disorder born of cosmic or political confrontations, but rather the product of everyday life. As Hinchliffe notes:

A Pinter character can always be taken out of the play and traditional reasons for his existence discussed, and there is little, if any, of Beckett's intense metaphysical anguish. What anguish there is is rooted in Pinter's life and times in Hackney, on the road to Regent's Park. 1

The implication of this is that these characters face not so much disorder in the universe as disorder in themselves. As

¹Arnold P. Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, rev. ed., Twayne's English Authors Series 51 (Boston: Twayne, 1981), p. 29.

Lois Gordon says:

They [Pinter's characters] try constantly to structure their lives but, unaware that their actions and behavior revolve around deeper sources than conscious ones, they are constantly confronted by chaos. But again, this is a disorder of the self, not the universe. 1

In a radio interview in 1970, Pinter said that he was dealing with his characters "at the extreme edge of their living, where they are living pretty much alone;"² that is, where they are back in their rooms, confronted with the basic problem of being—being in a visceral, rather than a metaphysical, sense. One sees Pinter's characters in the process of their essential adjustment to the world, at a point when they have to solve their basic problem—whether they will be able to confront and come to terms with reality at all. It is only after they have made this fundamental adjustment, as Martin Esslin notes, that they will "be able to become a part of society and share in the games of sex and politics."³

As Chesley Taylor notes, life is in part built on alternatives that are both irreconcilable and inseparable, so that while one cannot resolve these conflicts, one can at

¹Lois Gordon, Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1970), pp. 10-11.

²Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 33.

³Martin Esslin, The Theatre of The Absurd (New York: Pelican, 1983), p. 262.

4

least learn to live with them—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, that because one cannot resolve such conflicts, one must learn to live with them.¹ Pinter's characters are possessed by a desire for self-aggrandizement, dominance, fulfillment, yet are forever held back in a state of psychological paralysis. Like Ibsen's Hedda Gabler, the characters in Pinter's plays are able neither to resolve their conflicts nor to live with them. Simply, the classical idea that suffering ennobles the individual is repudiated in Pinter's work. Instead, one sees that suffering brings out the worst in man, drives him to despair, or destroys him.

In that Pinter's characters are incapable of making an adjustment to the world, they attempt to retreat to the sanctity of the room. Davies (The Caretaker) seeks refuge in Aston's and Mick's room. Spooner (No Man's Land) desires to ensconce himself within the seemingly comfortable confines of Hirst's household. Stanley (The Birthday Party) struggles to retain possession of his room. Rose (The Room) attempts, as well, to retain her room. Yet, why are these characters incapable of making this adjustment to the world beyond the room?

¹ Chesley J. Taylor and G.R. Thompson, Ritual, Realism, and Revolt: Major Traditions in Drama (New York: Scribners, 1972), p. 246.

Critics, particularly Lucina Gabbard and Lois Gordon, have used psychological, if not Freudian, terminology to describe the condition of these characters. In Gabbard's book, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays, and in Gordon's Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness, one finds that Pinter's characters suffer from libidinal problems, oedipus complexes, and suppressed dream wishes, such as "the wish to be rid of someone," "the wish to have mother," and "the wish to kill." One has characters who suffer from the fear of castration; from guilt complexes; from all types of ego and superego disturbances. For instance, in The Birthday Party, we have, according to Gabbard, an "overlapping of the anal anxieties and the phallic anxieties," until Stanley's "phallic concerns grow into oedipal and primal-scene fantasies that increase castration fears."¹ Gordon suggests that the play "builds upon the Freudian interpretation of the Oedipus myth."² According to Gabbard, Aston (The Caretaker) exhibits "many signs of problems in the phallic and oedipal stages of development."³ Gabbard contends that the three characters of The Caretaker suffer from "impotence." No Man's Land is "clearly a punishment dream for the forbidden wish to have

¹Lucina Paquet Gabbard, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays (Granbury, N.J.: Associated University Press, 1976), p. 53.

²Gordon, Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness, p. 21.

³Gabbard, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays, p. 106.

mother," says Gabbard.¹ Gordon and, especially, Gabbard appear to be guilty of the modern sin of reducing all conflicts to symbols of sexual anxiety. To say that the roots of the various conflicts in Pinter's plays are founded solely on sexual retardation is to presuppose that all of Pinter's characters suffered through a Calvinist upbringing or something of that nature.² Yet, Pinter's characters may very well be motivated, as Gabbard notes, "as people in real life are motivated, by the psychological phenomena of the unconscious."³ And it is because these characters may suffer from a diseased "psyche" that they fervently desire to escape from the world, and construct a protective wall of isolation around themselves—the room.

Gabbard and Gordon speak in detail of the psychological problems that may afflict Pinter's characters. Critics, such as Hinchliffe and Esslin, for the most part, are guilty of merely reiterating most of Gabbard's and Gordon's theories. The problem of "reiteration" and "new insights" into Pinter's

¹Ibid., p. 262.

²A Freudian understanding presupposes that one has a prior knowledge of a person's history. Since Pinter gives us unreliable information concerning a character's past, he prevents us from knowing this history. This precludes the possibility of a Freudian interpretation.

³Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 28.

work is of major concern, in particular to critic Austin Quigley. As Quigley notes in his book The Pinter Problem:

Esslin's effort, The Peopled Wound, is undermined by the very praise of Time's review: "The Peopled Wound is valuable, not because it makes some intuitive new leap of insight but because it gathers in one convenient place most of what has been said and thought about Pinter." It is precisely that "new leap of insight" that has evaded critics for more than a decade. 1

Quigley goes on to say:

Most of the accepted generalizations about Pinter's work were established in the first few years of his career, and a subsequent decade of criticism has done little to modify, much less advance, our understanding of Pinter's work. 2

Taking this problem of reiteration and insight into consideration, these critics offer what can be described as trite and facile generalizations concerning the purpose, or significance, of the "room" in Pinter's plays. The room is not only a recurring motif, but is, as well, the center and chief setting and poetic image of the plays and thus merits consideration and analysis. As Pinter says:

People in a room—I am dealing a great deal of the time with this image of people in a room. The curtain goes up on the stage, and I see it as a very potent question: What is going to happen to these people in the room? 3

¹Austin E. Quigley, The Pinter Problem (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 3.

²Ibid., p. xvii.

³Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 80.

Martin Esslin says that the room represents "security in a hostile world."¹ Bernard Dukore says that the rooms are "insulated" and represent a "sanctuary."² John Pesta sees Pinter's rooms as a "situation of isolated security."³ Lois Gordon believes that the rooms are "womblike," and that the characters choose to "measure out their lives in their room." Should they face confrontation, they will "find another room in which to live."⁴ Lucina Gabbard, in keeping with her Freudian interpretations, sees the room as a "vagina, a womb, a tomb."⁵ John Russell Taylor says that the rooms are "a comfortable world bound by four walls;"⁶ that they shield the characters from "the invading dark forces and disruption of the outside world."⁷

To simply say that Pinter's rooms are "womblike" and "comfortable" is not sufficient in that it begs the question:

¹Esslin, The Theatre of The Absurd, p. 235.

²Bernard F. Dukore, Harold Pinter (New York: Grove Press, 1982), p. 48.

³John Pesta, "Pinter's Usurpers," Pinter: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Ganz (Englewoods Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 129.

⁴Gordon, Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness, p. 6.

⁵Gabbard, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays, p. 22.

⁶John Russell Taylor, Anger and After (London: Methuen, 1962), p. 326.

⁷Ibid., p. 334.

why are the rooms "womblike" or how do they project this sense of comfort? What does the womblike room tell us about the characters—about the "deeper sources" of character? It also fails to explain what happens when other people come into the room or compete for it. To simply say the obvious, that the room is a comfortable sanctuary, begs elaboration and negates the possibility of discerning more about the essence of character, for the significance of the room can be regarded as an essential clue to uncovering character motivation.

It appears that Pinter's characters not only hide in rooms, but fight vigorously for them as well. They use language (communication), menace, and memory as "gambits"—as tools to be used in the effort to win their respective "games." Language, menace, and memory are used to create and destroy "masks," personas, while masks are used to protect the motivations, emotions, and insecurities of the characters. The nature of the game usually calls for the characters to displace each other—to attempt to usurp one another's position within the room. Spooner plays his game in an effort to establish himself within Hirst's room. Briggs and Foster play their game with Spooner because they feel that it is Spooner's intention to usurp their positions within the room. Davies plays his game of pitting brother against brother in order to usurp one of their positions within the room.

Goldberg and McCann play their game in an effort to exile Stanley from the room. Stanley plays his game with Meg and Lulu in order to maintain his supremacy in the room. Yet, prior to the emergence of the character(s) who threatens positions, the incumbent(s) is the dominant governing force of the room. Prior to Spooner's emergence, Briggs and Foster were the central governing force of Hirst's household. Prior to Davies's entrance, Mick and Aston dictated over the room. Stanley stood as the main force in the room prior to Goldberg's and McCann's appearance. In many of Pinter's plays, once the internal and external forces meet, that is precisely when the game, or battle, for the room begins.

Pinter's characters, although they are apparently not consciously aware of it, subordinate external reality to the internal reality of the psychological self and/or "psyche." As both Gordon and Gabbard have suggested, their actions revolve around deeper sources than conscious ones. Taking this into account, the characters are incapable of making an adjustment to the world beyond the room and seek out a "comfortable" sanctuary because they are incapable of making an adjustment to their own psychological dilemmas. As Gabbard and Gordon use Freudian concepts to explain the psychological paralysis of the characters, one can say, in Jungian terms, that the "wholeness" of the characters is insecure. The characters are engaged in a bitter struggle to attain or

retain the room because this "womblike" room, in its absolute essence, can be seen in terms of Jung's concept of the "mandala." In that they are deficient, or not "whole," they seek out the mandala which can offer them the sense of wholeness and order they desire.

According to Jung, the mandala is summoned up in periods of nervous crisis, and has the effect of reducing confusion to order. The mandala expresses order, balance, and wholeness and is regarded as an instinctive attempt at self-healing. It is indicative of the attempt to heal a fractured psyche. Jung called this attempt towards wholeness, "individuation." To this end, since the characters may suffer from psychic paralysis, they seek out the mandala. Thus, one can hypothesize that the internal psychological strife between the four "functions" of the psyche, or the "Zoas" as William Blake referred to them, is given expression in the plays. One can compare the harmonious balance between the four functions of the psyche hypothesized by both Jung and Blake with the characters in Pinter's plays.

Pinter's characters are dominated by one of the four functions of the psyche. Due to the preponderance of the one function, the other three functions remain suppressed and/or alienated within each character. This psychic "dissociation" inhibits them from achieving meaningful relationships.

In that Pinter's characters are possessed by a desire

for self-aggrandizement and dominance, they are, in a sense, not content with merely being a component part and insist that they be greater than the total sum of the parts. Because the characters cannot achieve an internal equilibrium, they are incapable of functioning effectively in the everyday world of ordinary life. The inability to achieve a social equilibrium, or symbiotic relationships, can be seen as an external manifestation of internal dissonance. In that they cannot achieve an internal "psychic" equilibrium, they are incapable of achieving an external, "collective" equilibrium. And the room can be seen as the means by which the characters attempt to escape this dissonance.

In exploring the problems of dissociation and individuation in Pinter, this thesis will examine three plays: No Man's Land, The Caretaker, and The Birthday Party. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate, through these three plays, that Pinter's characters suffer from a psychic dissociation; how and why they suffer; how it affects them and others; and, ultimately, how and why the attempt to secure the mandala (room) represents nothing more than an impotent effort to achieve a sense of personal wholeness—individuation. It will demonstrate how the attempt to attain, what is in fact, a "false" sense of personal individuation negates the possibility of achieving a group, or collective, equilibrium. Thus, the room comes to represent an illusion of

a mandala. The illusion of the mandala is indicative of the characters' needs to transcend their internal dissonance by re-creating setting—by attempting to bring their surroundings into harmony with themselves without having to make an adjustment to both their internal problems and the environment around them. In that Pinter's characters are incapable of achieving an actual individuation, it becomes imperative that they create an illusion of wholeness. Consequently, this illusion serves to intensify further the sense of personal and collective dissociation. In effect, this thesis, like Jung, is concerned with a very fundamental human predicament: the attempt of "everyman" to "achieve pleasure and avoid pain."

THE PINTER PROBLEM

Understanding is so rare, so dear.

Sarah, The Lover

In Pinter's plays, events and actions are seemingly unexplained and apparently illogical or unmotivated. In that everything creates a sense of uncertainty, one can rely upon very little, if anything at all. Language (communication), for instance, is apparently used by the characters to protect themselves by concealing their true nature. As Pinter says:

I feel that instead of any inability to communicate there is a deliberate evasion of communication. Communication itself between people is so frightening that rather than do that there is continual cross-talk, a continual talking about other things, rather than what is at the root of their relationship. 1

Pinter goes on to say:

A character on the stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experience, his present behaviour or his aspirations, nor gives a comprehensive analysis of his motives, is as legitimate and as worthy of

¹Esslin, The Theatre of The Absurd, p. 244.

attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all these things. The more acute the experience, the less articulate its expression. 1

Ambiguities, contradictions, evasion are used by the characters in an effort to obfuscate the truth—to create and fortify the mask, persona, that protects their motivations, emotions, fears, and insecurities. Pinter's characters are compelled to wear masks, for, as Peter Hall suggests:

To show emotion in Pinter's world is... a weakness, which is mercilessly punished by the other characters. You have to construct the mask of the character—because all Pinter's characters have masks.... But the mask almost never slips. When it does, the result can be catastrophic. 2

This willingness to obfuscate the truth, to construct masks, is nothing more than a smoke screen that Pinter calls "a strategem to cover nakedness."³ Yet, how can one penetrate this smoke screen? Can one successfully penetrate this smoke screen?

Verification is, indeed, the major problem of the plays. Pinter says:

The desire for verification is understandable but cannot always be satisfied. There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true

¹ Ibid., p. 243.

² Dukore, Harold Pinter, p. 59.

³ Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 34.

and what is false. The thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false. 1

One can never be certain that one has discerned the definitive answer, the absolute truth, concerning the essence of the plays. In that subterfuge and obfuscation are synonymous with the plays, can one ever be certain that one has uncovered the coveted treasure of truth? As Esslin notes:

There is the possibility of never knowing the real motivation behind the actions of human beings who are complex and whose psychological make-up is contradictory and unverifiable. 2

Pinter himself avoids commenting on the meanings of his plays. He does not consider himself obliged to forward a solution or thematic summary in the final act "simply because we have been brought up to expect, rain or sunshine, the last act 'resolution'." 3 "To supply an explicit moral tag to an evolving and dramatic image," says Pinter, "seems to be facile, impertinent and dishonest." 4 Simply, Pinter does not consider it as part of his role as playwright to advance information, to assist audiences in understanding his plays.

¹Esslin, The Theatre of The Absurd, p. 243.

²Loc. cit.

³Dukore, Harold Pinter, p. 6.

⁴Loc. cit.

This, of course, does not mean that he does not want their understanding.

Due to the problem of willful obfuscation and the near impossibility of verification, one can only hope to establish some sort of meaning by attacking the salient illustrative detail that may very well go to the heart of the plays.

Guido Almansì and Simon Henderson, in their book Harold Pinter, claim that Pinter is a "crooked playwright who therefore requires a crooked, oblique reading."¹ A "crooked, oblique reading" can only offer one a crooked and oblique interpretation. For instance, Lucina Gabbard says that:

...approaching Pinter's plays as dreams unlocks many of their secrets. Much of the obscurity in the plays can be illuminated by applying the mechanisms that Freud attributes to the dream-work. The ambiguity can be understood as the result of the over determination so typical of dreams. 2

It is feasible to say that Pinter's characters suffer from psychological disorders. But to attempt to discern the origin of the problems is almost impossible for the very essence of willful obfuscation, on both Pinter's and the characters' part, negates all possibilities. One can say that the

¹Guido Almansì and Simon Henderson, Harold Pinter (New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 21.

²Gabbard, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays, p. 16.

characters are, but it is difficult to say that they are because.... To say that, in The Birthday Party, we have an "overlapping of the anal anxieties and the phallic anxieties," until Stanley's "phallic concerns grow into oedipal and primal-scene fantasies that increase castration fears," is to offer a crooked and oblique interpretation. This interpretation can be viewed as a product of "over determination" rather than a pragmatic delineation of the salient points. To reduce all conflicts to symbols of sexual anxiety is absurd. In Pinter's plays, it is difficult to attempt to discern what is happening in the present, let alone what has happened in the distant past. To claim that the roots of the problems are founded in the "anal" and/or "phallic" stages of the characters' development, based on the questionable information that the characters offer, is to base one's argument on conjecture. The point is that Pinter invents dramatic characters and one needs dramatic evidence for them. One cannot simply assume their psychological dispositions as if they are real people without such dramatic evidence.

In regarding Pinter's plays, one can only maintain a pragmatic approach if one is to achieve a certain degree of understanding. The essential problem in Pinter, and with various Pinter criticism, is summed up in the comment by John Seldon, as quoted by Keith Thomas in his book, Religion

and the Decline of Magic: "The reason of a thing is not to be enquired after, till you are sure the thing be so. We commonly are at what's the reason of it? before we are sure of the thing."¹

Descartes and Locke believed that the indisputably real features of the world are those which science can measure and that truth will be discovered not by faith but by logical analysis. This is not to say that, in relation to Pinter's plays, the ultimate truth of the plays can be discerned. But by a logical analysis of the salient points, one can formulate a reasonable semblance, or approximation, of truth. One must stick to analysis of facts in the plays and avoid the conjecture and pre-suppositions that serve as assertions and interpretations for many critics. Since there is a certain interrelationship between many of the plays, one must attempt to find the common denominator that binds them to each other. The same characters and situations resurface, as Gabbard acknowledges, from play to play but in various forms: "the dramas seem to utilize the same themes and ideas but with altering emphases."² Yet, Gabbard believes that this link is "Freud." The conflicts that link the plays, in relation to Freudian conflicts, can be perceived as fundamental, if not universal.

¹Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 517

²Gabbard, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays, p. 16.

PLATO, BLAKE, JUNG, AND PINTER

For I, was: I was alive: I could feel: I could guard my personality, the imprint of that mysterious unity from which my being was derived. 1

There is an interesting parallel between Socrates' recommendation, "know thyself," Plato's notion of discerning the truth about one's self through the harmonious balance of the subdivisions of the "analytical" mind, William Blake's notion of achieving a sense of "oneness" through the integration of the four "Zoas," the efforts of some of today's psychotherapeutic methods, in particular those based upon Carl Jung's notion of "self-realization," and the predominant conflict of many of Pinter's plays.

Plato believed that one can discern "truth" and can get to know one's self through rational reflection, meditation, and introspection. He believed that it is difficult to achieve a certain degree of truth or "genuineness" in what is apprehended if one's knowledge is confined to "shadows" or images of the contemplated object—to its superficial appearance.

¹St. Augustine, preface, The Integrity of the Personality, by Anthony Storr (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 49.

In The Republic, Plato expounds his theory that man can indeed achieve a sense of truth only if the four subdivisions of the discerning mind, Pure thought, Reason, Belief, and Illusion, are maintained in a state of equilibrium. An inbalance, or disharmony, between these subdivisions can only obscure one's perception of the desired object, in this instance the self. As a consequence, any notion of attaining any semblance of truth would be lost. Furthermore, the neutralization of one or more of these component parts can precipitate, in the individual, undesirable, or ignoble, feelings, emotions, and/or attitudes:

Then what about the element of spirit? Isn't it inevitably the same story again, when a man seeks his fill of honour or success or ambition without sense or reason, and in the achievement of satisfaction the desire for honour and success leads to envy and violence, ambition to discontent.... 1

Then if the mind as a whole will follow the lead of its philosophic element, without internal division, each element will be just and in all other respects perform its own function, and in addition will enjoy its own particular pleasures, which are the best and truest available to it, 2

Each function will receive its particular "pleasure" only if

¹Plato, The Republic, trans. Desmond Lee. (New York: Penguin, 1983), pp. 412-413.

²Ibid., p. 413.

it works in conjunction with the others—so long as there is a harmony, equilibrium, between these elements.

In his epic poem, Vala, or the Four Zoas, William Blake expounds his theory that man is composed by four "Zoas": Urizen (Reason), Luvah (Passion), Tharmas (Sensation), and Los (Imagination). Blake believes that while in Eden, the Zoas lived in unity. As soon as man was exiled from Eden, the Zoas divided and man became passive instead of active. In the poem, one sees that Urizen and Luvah each have attempted to seize absolute power—Urizen by refusing to serve Man, Luvah by seducing him, and by usurping Urizen's steeds of light. All four Zoas "fall" and carry man with them. Yet, this Fall is not a moral lapse from "good" to "evil." Morality, for Blake, is merely something Urizen attempts to impose on others. Rather, the Fall signifies a lapse from unity, vigour, and the life of the imagination, to alienation, compulsion, or passivity. Blake believed that man must synthesize these four Zoas, and thus return to "divine unity."

Carl Jung believed that the "psyche"¹ has four basic

¹In Jungian psychology the personality as a whole is called the psyche. This Latin word originally meant 'spirit' or 'soul,' but in modern times it has come to mean 'mind,' as in psychology, the science of mind. The psyche embraces all thought, feeling, and behavior, both conscious and unconscious. It functions as a guide which regulates and adapts the individual to his social and physical environment." Calvin S. Hall and Vernon J. Nordby, A Primer of Jungian Psychology (New York: Mentor, 1973), p. 32.

functions: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition.

This is to say, as Jung points out, that these four criteria of types of human behavior are just four viewpoints among many others, like will power, temperament, imagination and memory. These four basic functions of consciousness equip man to deal with the impressions of the world he receives from within and without. As Aniela Jaffé notes, it is "by means of these functions that man understands and assimilates his experience; it is by means of them that he can respond."¹ Jung believed that it is imperative that man must integrate these four functions if he is to function effectively and efficiently. Discord between these functions would eventually resemble an internal dictatorship where the effects would be manifested in one's outward behavior; for one or two of the functions would become dominant, while the others would become dormant, suppressed. As Jung says:

The capacity to isolate part of one's mind, indeed, is a valuable characteristic. It enables us to concentrate upon one thing at a time, excluding everything else that may claim our attention. But there is a world of difference between a conscious decision to split off and temporarily suppress a part of one's psyche, and a condition in which this happens spontaneously, without one's knowledge or consent and even against

¹ Aniela Jaffé, "Symbolism in the Visual Arts," Man and His Symbols, ed. Carl Jung (New York: Dell, 1984), p. 267.

one's intention. The former is a civilized achievement, the latter a primitive "loss of soul," or even the pathological cause of neurosis. ¹

Jung goes on to describe how one functions ineffectively when one becomes dominated by one function of the psyche:

I had always been impressed by the fact that there are a surprising amount of people who never use their minds if they can avoid it, and an equal number who do use their minds, but in an amazingly stupid way. I was also surprised to find many intelligent and wide-awake people who lived (as far as one could make out) as if they had never learned to use their sense organs: They did not see the things before their eyes, hear the words sounding in their ears, or notice the things they touched or tasted. Some lived without being aware of the state of their own bodies.

There are others who seemed to live in a most curious condition of consciousness, as if the state they had arrived at today were final, with no possibility of change, or as if the world and the psyche were static and would remain so forever. They seemed devoid of all imagination, and they entirely and exclusively depended upon their sense-perception. Chances and possibilities did not exist in their world, and in "today" there was no real "tomorrow." The future was just the repetition of the past. ²

Plato, Blake, and Jung recognize the existence of an internal fourfold system in man, and whose harmony is absolutely essential if man is to achieve a purposeful and full, if not "healthy," existence. Plato sees this system as an integral factor in one's search for the truth of virtually

¹Carl Jung, "Approaching The Unconscious." Jung, ed. p. 8.

²Ibid., pp. 48-49.

anything. Blake and Jung see this system as an integral factor in man's search for the truth of the "Self"¹—in his search for wholeness, or "oneness." It must be noted that the strongest correlation between the three systems lies between Blake's and Jung's. As has been noted earlier, Jung's four criteria of types of human behaviour are just four viewpoints among others. The function of "thinking," coupled with "feeling" (not in the sense of emotion, but in the sense of "rational judgement"), can find its equivalent in Blake's Urizen; "sensation" in Tharmas; "intuition" and "imagination" in Los; and "temperament," in lieu of feeling, in Luvah.

In Plato's case, in a sense, if the "truth" is that one is given more to one function than to another, one must remain true to that particular function and take advantage of it. This, quite clearly, contradicts Jung's and Blake's philosophy. For instance, he who should have the lowest status in an ideal society, according to Plato, is the man concerned with bodily functions and the satisfaction of bodily needs: the slave or servant. Next comes the man of

1. "The organizing principle of the personality is an archetype which Jung called the 'self.' The self is the central archetype in the collective unconscious, much as the sun is the center of the solar system. The self is the archetype of order, organization, and unification; it draws to itself and harmonizes all the archetypes and their manifestations in complexes and consciousness. It unites the personality, giving it a sense of 'oneness.'" Hall and Nordby, A Primer of Jungian Psychology, p. 51.

emotion, of "heart," of courage: the soldier. The highest position, that of ruler, is reserved for the contemplator, the thinker, the man of intellect and ideas. For Jung and Blake, to surrender the three functions to the one dominant function is to relinquish one's sense of wholeness, to precipitate a sense of fragmentation.

As well, Jung believed that society, or social pressures, can have a profound effect on one's psyche. He believed that due to the often stringent demands that society places on the individual, the individual, in an effort to assimilate or escape, can very well be induced to unconsciously alter his psychic make-up. As a consequence, the totality, or wholeness, of the psyche and, by extension, the individual would be jeopardized. Ronald Gaskell, as well, recognizes this problem:

Isolated, the self begins to doubt its own identity. Our aim is to be true to our inmost being, yet we slip from role to role without reflection. We even adopt, tacitly, the images that others project on us, so that the parts we play in society mingle with the person we really are!... 1

Eugene Ionesco directly or indirectly recognized that society and its demands can have a detrimental effect on the psyche:

¹Ronald Gaskell, Drama and Reality: The European Theatre Since Ibsen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) p. 45.

Several times I have said that it is in our fundamental solitude that we rediscover ourselves and that the more I am alone, the more I am in communion with others; whereas in organized society, which is an organization of functions, man is merely reduced to his function, which alienates him from the rest. 1

And does not social organization alienate us all? It is just for this reason that there are "asocial" people. When I am most profoundly myself, I join a forgotten community. Often society (external) alienates me, that is to say it estranges me both from myself and from other people. 2

The result of fragmentation, or "dissociation" as Jung called it, signifies a loss of identity and delusion, or, as Blake saw it, alienation, compulsion, and/or apathy—all symptoms of neurosis. As Jung says:

We too can become dissociated and lose our identity. We can become possessed and altered by moods, or become unreasonable and unable to recall important facts about ourselves or others, so that people ask: "What the devil has got into you?" We talk about being able to "control ourselves," but self-control is a rare and remarkable virtue. We may think we have ourselves under control; yet a friend can easily tell us things about ourselves of which we have no knowledge....

An ability to control one's emotions that may be very desirable from one point of view would be questionable from another, for it would deprive social intercourse of variety, color, and warmth. 3

¹Eugene Ionesco, Notes and Counter Notes (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 78.

²Ibid., p. 111.

³Jung, "Approaching The Unconscious," p. 8.

In this instance, the Self, in that it interacts with a fragmented psyche, may unconsciously be induced to awaken its "dark side." The results of this can only prove to be devastating. As Dr. M.L. von Franz notes:

It /the dark side of the Self/ can cause people to spin megalomaniac or other delusory fantasies that catch them up and "possess" them. A person in this state thinks with mounting excitement that he has grasped and solved the great cosmic riddles; he therefore loses all touch with human reality. A reliable symptom of this condition is the loss of one's sense of human contacts. 1

What was of primary importance to Jung was the process of "individuation," in which the individual seeks personal wholeness by attempting to synthesize the functions of the psyche and then integrating the psyche as a unified whole with the Self. "Become the person you are" may be seen as the basis of Jung's philosophy. Jung said that the goal of individuation is:

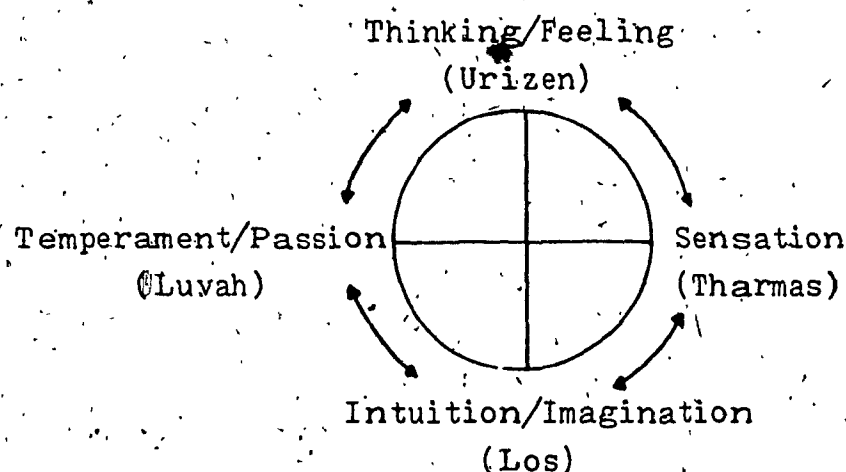
...to detach consciousness from the object so that the individual no longer places the guarantee of his happiness, or of his life even, in factors outside himself, but comes to realize that everything depends on whether he holds the treasure or not.... 2

One of the essential therapeutic aspects of Jung's theory of individuation is the "mandala." As Dr. von Franz

¹ M.L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation." Jung, ed. p. 234.

² Reuben Fine, A History of Psychoanalysis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 459.

notes, among the "mythological representations of the Self one finds much emphases on the four corners of the world, and in many pictures the 'Great Man' is represented in the center of a circle divided into four."¹ Jung uses the Hindu word "mandala" (magic circle) to designate a structure of this order, which is a symbolic representation of the psyche with the Self placed at the center:



The above illustration is taken from Man and His Symbols (1969) p. 60.

¹von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," p. 230.

Jung calls this structure the "quadratura circuli" and considers it a highly important and influential archetype.

He believes that the basic motif of this age-old prehistoric symbol is the premonition of the center of personality:

...a psychic center-point which should be a deity, but in modern times it is the wholeness of man. A mandala is usually summoned up in periods of nervous crisis, and has the effect of reducing confusion to order.... 1

The mandala signifies a concern for ordering a certain area— for bringing order into chaos. As Cirlot notes:

...it excludes disorder and all related symbolisms, because by its very nature, it must surmount disorder. It is, then, the visual expression of the struggle to achieve order, even within diversity. 2

The dweller in the mandala, as Jung notes, is, in a sense, protected within a magic circle:

The experience formulated by the mandala is typical of people who cannot project the divine image any longer. They are in actual danger of inflation and dissociation. The round or square inclosures, therefore, have the value of magic means to produce protective walls or a *vas hermeticum* to prevent an outburst and a disintegration.... This state /.../ is a much needed self-control with the purpose of avoiding inflation and dissociation. 3

¹Colin Duckworth, Angels of Darkness (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972), p. 91.

²J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 201.

³Duckworth, Angels of Darkness, p. 90.

In effect, the contemplation of a mandala is meant to bring an inner harmony, a feeling that life has again found its meaning and order. In this way, it fulfills its function as an aid to man in his efforts to regroup all that is dispersed around a single axis—to regroup a fragmented psyche around the Self. As John Freeman notes, when the process of individuation is complete, man becomes "whole, integrated, calm, fertile, and happy."¹

In Pinter's plays, we will see that it may be precisely this problem of dissociation and the attempt towards a sense of individuation, on both a personal and collective level, that precipitates the essential conflicts. We will see that a Pinter character tries to possess, aggressively and materially, a mandala rather than contemplate and synthesize. We will see that the room comes to represent a mandala in that, for the characters, it represents the only place where they can function with their deficiencies, while not having to make the necessary adjustment to them—without having to make the necessary adjustment that would enable them to co-exist peacefully and purposefully in the world beyond the mandala (room).

¹John Freeman, Introduction to Man and His Symbols, p. xi.

NO MAN'S LAND

One of the most difficult things for a man to do is to realize that he does not stand at the center of things, but at the circumference. ¹

Lucina Gabbard claims that No Man's Land is, "by displacement, no woman's land," for there are no female characters in the play.² In that there are only memories of past lovers, wives—"mother images"—the play, according to Gabbard, "intensifies the image of loss."³ In effect, No Man's Land intensifies the image of Los...Luvah, Urizen, and Tharmas, and their efforts to displace each other from the center of the mandala (room).

The difficulty of achieving positive relationships is a theme which Pinter relentlessly examines and which has been examined by many writers, among them Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, Edward Albee, James Joyce, and Albert Camus. Where the attempt to establish these relationships ends in

¹W. Somerset Maugham, A Writer's Notebook (Toronto: Heinemann, 1949), p. 51.

²Gabbard, The Dream Structure of Pinter's Plays, p. 252.

³Loc. cit.

failure, as John Pesta suggests, we have, in effect, a peculiar modern tragedy: "A hostile world and man's very nature prevent the solace of love or friendship from being found."¹ Given this threatening, hostile world, the fearful insecurities of characters like Spooner, Briggs, and Foster causes them to seek security at the expense of others. Yet, in No Man's Land, the usurper(s) is not merely an external agent endangering a situation of seemingly secure withdrawal. The implication of this, as Pesta says, is that:

...men are prevented from reaching rewarding relationships, wherein the truest security lies, by their own selfishness, pride, or weaknesses. The loneliness of man roots from his own faults and fears. 2

As a means of isolating their faults and fears, the characters in the play seek to build a wall of isolation around themselves. In effect, they attempt to isolate, if not suppress, their deficiencies by erecting a "threefold" wall: they create a wall between themselves and the world which comes in the form of a room/mandala; between themselves and the other characters in the room which comes in the form of a "mask," persona;³ and between the persona and the Self.

¹ John Pesta, "Pinter's Usurpers," p. 133.

² Loc. cit.

³ "The persona is the mask or facade one exhibits publicly, with the intention of presenting a favorable impression so that society will accept him." Hall and Nordby, A Primer of Jungian Psychology, p. 44.

In other words, they create a labyrinth in which they can only become lost. Walls are constructed with the intention of shielding the Self, wherein the deficiency lies.

What we have in the play, as Jung put it, are characters who consciously attempt to "isolate" part of their psyche in that it "enables them to concentrate upon one thing at a time, excluding everything else that may claim their attention." This ability to control their emotions deprives social intercourse of "variety, color, warmth," and meaning. Spooner, Foster, and, to a lesser degree, Briggs attempt to distance themselves from their Self in an effort to achieve their objectives—to attain or retain the room and the control and security that comes with it. Hirst, on the other hand, is reduced to functioning on a purely "imaginative" level without the possibility of achieving a sense of "wholeness." He suppresses the other functions of his psyche in an effort to escape. Yet, should Hirst desire an integration, a sense of wholeness, Briggs and Foster and, to a degree, Spooner are there to ensure that he does not attain it. An existence through imagination, the past, is all that Hirst desires. Simply, he does not want to think; does not want to know; and does not want to feel.

As Gaskell has noted, the characters negate their "inmost being" by slipping from role to role. Yet, it is this inmost being which is responsible for their anguish

and prevents them from achieving an equilibrium. In effect, the characters attempt to "estrangle" themselves from their Self in an effort to estrange their Self from the other characters. In that they create walls, personas, and play "games" with the intention of achieving the necessary distance that would enable them to protect their deficiencies and which would enable them to secure the desired "sanctum," the characters are in danger of "dissociation." The play No Man's Land, as well as the plays The Caretaker, The Birthday Party, The Room, and A Slight Ache, gives expression to the problem of dissociation and the characters' impotent efforts to achieve a sense of "individuation."

Spooner creates an image of himself, a "doppelgänger,"¹ in an effort to secure a place in Hirst's room. In that he needs to gain access to this room and must create a persona in order to realize this goal, this signifies an intense insecurity on his part. The conviction and vigour with which he plays out his role of "free man" can be seen as evidence of dissociation.

At the beginning of the play, Spooner provides Hirst, and us, with a most revealing, yet unprovoked, monologue about himself:

¹Doppelgänger is a German word meaning a person's double, or the apparition of a person supposedly seen before death. The word is especially appropriate in relation to Spooner, for it is, in a sense, an apparition of Spooner that is presented to the characters prior to his expulsion from the room.

Yes. I was about to say, you see, that there are people who appear to be strong, whose idea of what strength consists of is persuasive, but who inhabit the idea and not the fact. What they possess is not strength but expertise. They have nurtured and maintain what is in fact a calculated posture. Half the time it works. It takes a man of intelligence and perception to stick a needle through that posture and discern the essential flabbiness of the stance. I am such a man.... What a remarkably pleasant room. I feel at peace here. Safe from all danger. But please don't be alarmed. I shan't stay long. I never stay long. I never stay long, with others. They do not wish it. And that, for me, is a happy state of affairs. My only security, you see, my true comfort and solace, rests in the confirmation that I elicit from people of all kinds a common and constant level of indifference.... To show interest in me, good gracious, anything tending towards a positive liking of me, would cause in me a condition of the acutest alarm: 1

Spooner goes on to say in Act I:

When my twigs happen shall I say rest their peep on sexual conjugations, however periphratic, I see only whites of eyes, so close, they glut me, no distance possible, and when you can't keep the proper distance between yourself and others, when you can no longer maintain an objective relation to matter, the game's not worth the candle; so forget it and remember that what is obligatory to keep in your vision is space, space in moonlight particularly, and lots of it. (p. 19)

¹Harold Pinter, No Man's Land (London: Methuen, 1975), p. 16. All subsequent references to No Man's Land will appear parenthetically within my text.

Spooner, due to this condition, or "conditioning," deems himself a "free man." Yet, what is Spooner really saying and doing?

Spooner portrays himself to Hirst as a loner, an intellectual, and as a man who wants nothing from anyone. This, quite simply, is Spooner's subterfuge. At the conclusion of the play, one realizes that what the monologue has revealed, in effect, is that Spooner is really a circumspect, conniving, cunning, lonely person in dire need of security and companionship. He is, underneath all that conditioning, the antithesis of the persona of reason and detachment that he has projected. What Spooner possesses is not a "strength," as he claims, but a "calculated posture" which has been "nurtured and maintained" with the hope that it, the subterfuge, the persona, will elicit from men such as Hirst, the Hungarian aristocrat of Spooner's past, and Lord Lancer, his supposed patron, the very benevolence that he claims he cannot tolerate. And for the very same reason that Spooner plays out his "role," it will be Briggs and Foster who will implicitly, to use Spooner's words, "stick a needle through that posture and discern the essential flabbiness of the stance."

For Spooner, the "game" is not "worth the candle" unless he can keep space in his "vision;" unless he can keep a "proper distance" between himself and Hirst, Briggs

and Foster. Maintaining objectivity, Spooner believes, makes the game worthwhile. What game? Spooner's game. For Spooner to assume a purely subjective posture can only jeopardize his chance of winning the game; to ingratiate himself with his host and thereby to install himself in Hirst's household, replacing the lower-class Briggs and Foster. Spooner's gambit is based on deceit and the success of that gambit relies on his ability to remain detached from subjectivity. Much like Goldberg and McCann of The Birthday Party, Spooner must remain cool, composed, devoid of emotion, almost mechanical if he is to succeed in attaining his objective (in more ways than one).

Maintaining a purely objective posture permits Spooner to repel any attacks from Briggs and Foster. In that he is able to divorce himself from his emotions, he can meet all challenges coolly, calmly, rationally, without the fear of giving away his true objective. Briggs and Foster, like Goldberg and McCann, attempt to break Spooner down to his bare essence. When overt hostility fails to place a dent in Spooner's protective "wall," they decide to take a subtle, if not more cunning, approach by testing him—his authenticity. Yet Spooner's wall, unlike Stanley Webber's, is apparently impregnable. For instance, Briggs's superficial, or artificial, affability does not deceive Spooner, who, in Act II, calls Briggs's "offer of alms" the equivalent of

"The shark in the harbour" (p. 60). On several occasions, Briggs and Spooner goad each other, or, to put it in Briggs's vernacular, take the "piss out" of each other:

SPOONER: ...I am a poet.

BRIGGS: I thought poets were young.

SPOONER: I am young. (pp. 63-64)

SPOONER: Yes. The landlord is a friend of mine. It is on that account that he has favoured us with a private room. It is true of course that I informed him Lord Lancer would be attending....

BRIGGS: Lord Lancer?

SPOONER: Our patron.

BRIGGS: He's not of the Bengal Lancers, is he?

SPOONER: No, no. He's of Norman descent.

BRIGGS: A man of culture?

SPOONER: Impeccable credentials.

BRIGGS: Some of these aristocrats hate the arts.

SPOONER: Lord Lancer is a man of honour. He loves the arts. (p. 66)

In another instance, when Spooner goes on at some length about his work as a poet, his newly formed poetry magazine, and the patronage of Lord Lancer, Briggs tests this by pointing out that Foster is a poet in need of patronage since Hirst will not help him. Spooner responds quickly and in full:

A poet? Really? Well, if he'd like to send me some examples of his work, double spaced on quatro, with copies in a separate folder by separate post in case of loss or misappropriation, stamped addressed envelope enclosed, I'll read them. (p. 67)

Spooner's objective is to gain entry into Hirst's household and the realization of that objective depends on his ability to remain "detached." If Spooner remembers the

past it is only because it suits his present needs—to create a common bond between himself and Hirst. As Dukore notes, "what happens in Pinter's plays is more important than what happened."¹ In Act I, Spooner tells Hirst of his "gracious past"—keeping open house in the country for young poets, his wife pouring glasses of squash on summer evenings. Hirst quickly replies that he too has done the same. Spooner quickly grasps at a connection—"a memory of bucolic life"—which Hirst continues to explore briefly. Hirst soon withdraws from this image of "blameless life" and Spooner, possibly for fear that he will lose the connection, is compelled to pursue the topic. Is Spooner's memory of a past "bucolic life" real, or is it a fabrication? Chances are that Spooner uses the memory of a past stereotypical pastoral existence as a means of ingratiating himself with Hirst. After all, Spooner is very quick to say that Hirst and he "share something" in regard to the past. Yet, it is feasible that Spooner has, as well, seen better days, and this is why he now seeks the comfort and security that Hirst has to offer.

There is an aspect of Spooner's past at which he only hints, yet, nonetheless, serves to confirm his underlying

¹Dukore, Harold Pinter, p. 49.

motivation. When he, for instance, says several times in Act II that he has "known this before," he implies that the situation is hardly foreign to him. Possibly, Spooner has, at least twice before, attempted to ingratiate himself with men such as Hirst (the Hungarian aristocrat and Lord Lancer), and has failed. By repeating the phrase at the moments he feels most threatened by Briggs and Foster, he reveals to us something about his past which permits us an insight into the man and, by extension, his motivation. By repeating the phrase, Spooner indicates that he has been in that particular situation before, has been threatened before, and that it is not the first time that his integrity has been challenged. In essence, one can say that Spooner is a cunning opportunist whose willingness to remember the past is perpetuated by a desire to fulfill his present needs.

Succumbing to passion, his true inner feelings, will only spell defeat for Spooner in that it would bring him "so close" to his Self that he would be "glutted" by the passion to fulfill his goal. As Dukore says, "Whatever their passions, characters try to present a facade of coolness and detachment."¹ In essence, Spooner must distance himself not only from the other characters, but from himself as well.

¹Ibid., p. 59.

As we see at the conclusion of the play, once Spooner loses the distance between himself and objectivity, he loses, as a result, the distance between himself and the other characters. He becomes himself, passionate and pleading. In effect, he ceases to be his antithetical "free man." And it is precisely then that the "game" comes to an end for him: he is exiled from his much desired haven.

Briggs and Foster appear to be loveless and cold. They are crude, abrupt, and menacing—they constantly verbally attack Spooner without being provoked. Why, then, are they menacing? Their speech and actions may be but a protective mechanism. They, like Spooner, have sought to establish a place in Hirst's home. They, unlike Spooner, have managed to attain the much sought after haven and any aggressive feeling emanated toward Spooner may be but a means of masking their insecurity, and, by extension, of protecting what they have attained. The creation of their "menacing" persona may be seen as the means by which they distance the other characters from their deficient, insecure Self—a deficiency which, like Spooner's, precipitates a profound need for the room.

The major objective for Briggs and Foster is to secure their place in the room. In an effort to accomplish this, they attempt to strip Spooner of his protective walls. Essentially, what Spooner tries to do is precisely what

Foster warns against: "drive a wedge into a happy household" (p. 50) (although it appears to be an "unhappy" household). This suspicion worries Briggs and Foster and, as a result, they feel compelled to protect themselves: they try to intimidate and disorient the stranger who threatens their position. For instance, although Foster's initial words to Spooner are "What are you drinking," his pressing question—"Who are you?"—is balanced by such taunts as "Have you met your host?" (p. 35). The conclusion of Act I encapsulates the menace directed against Spooner: Foster quietly asks him, "You know what it's like when you're in a room with the lights on and then suddenly the light goes out? I'll show you. It's like this" (p. 53). He then turns out the light, darkening the stage (somewhat reminiscent of The Birthday Party and The Caretaker). Regardless of this act, Briggs is more overtly threatening than Foster. Making no effort to conceal his feelings, he refers to Spooner as a "pisshole collector," "a shithouse operator," "a jamrag vendor," "a mingejuice bottler," and "a fucking shitcake baker" (p. 88). Furthermore, it is Briggs who recognizes Spooner as a man who collects dirty beer mugs from the tables at the Bull's Head Pub in Chalk Farm.

Briggs and Foster are there to protect Hirst from outside encroachment as much as they are there to protect themselves. Judging by the way they speak, one gets the

impression that they are lower-class individuals from, possibly, a lower-class area like Chalk Farm. Judging by the stories they tell about their travels and by what Foster says in Act I, "But I still like a nice lighthouse like this one" (p. 35) (a haven of luxury and security), both Briggs and Foster may have been, prior to finding Hirst, nothing more than vagabonds or "drifters"—men without purpose and direction. In a sense, whereas Spooner has been downwardly mobile, Briggs and Foster have been upwardly mobile. And now, not only have they found their security, but they control it as well. This is precisely why it represents a "happy household" to them. For instance, in Act II, when Hirst threatens to fire them, they simply laugh at him and say that they will not leave. Hirst does not pursue the matter. In one sense, Hirst is not a "free man" because of the control that Briggs and Foster have over the household. And it is precisely this household and its control that they do not want to relinquish.

Although it is never overtly stated, Briggs and Foster have found a sense of security that they do not want to lose. They recognize, although it is only an assumption on their part, that Spooner's motive is to find a place in the room, and, as a result, to consciously or unconsciously usurp their authority and security—their existence. They possibly recognize that Spooner threatens the relationship in the

house, and the "family," in that he is the same age as Hirst, is supposedly an "artist" like Hirst, can talk like Hirst, and can match memory for memory. They may fear that the companionship offered by Spooner may be seen by Hirst as being more favourable than the security that they have to offer. Thus, their only recourse is to expose Spooner in order to save themselves. They attempt to intimidate him verbally, psychologically (the turning off of lights), and by a more subtle testing of both his patience and the authenticity of his claims. Yet, Spooner, unlike Stanley Webber, does not offer silences and does not hesitate to react, but responds successfully to each challenge with his "distance" intact.

Briggs and Foster force Hirst, who is Spooner's psychological inferior, deeper into "no man's land" in an effort to get to Spooner. At the conclusion of the play, Spooner, having sensed that Hirst is standing more precariously than ever on the edge of the precipice, the borderland between past and present, reality and illusion, launches into an impassioned plea for a place in Hirst's home, offering prudence, loyalty, liberality and goodness, piety, and even a poetry reading for Hirst at the Bull's Head Pub. But Hirst casually suggests that they change the subject for the last time. Briggs and Foster, who realize that the words trap Hirst philosophically and semantically, enact, as

Hinchliffe suggests, what amounts to a ceremony of entombment, sealing Hirst, possibly forever, in that land where "nothing ever changes" (p. 95). In distancing Hirst from Spooner, Briggs and Foster have not only guaranteed Spooner's expulsion, but have also gained complete control over Hirst, the household, and, in effect, their lives. It is absolutely integral to their well-being that Briggs and Foster distance Spooner and Hirst from their motivations. As well, Briggs and Foster, like Spooner, must alienate themselves from their Self for fear that their fears and insecurities will be discovered. Foster remains more cunningly affable, while Briggs is not as successful and remains susceptible to passion.

Like Spooner, Briggs and Foster, Hirst must distance himself as well. Yet, Hirst must distance himself because Briggs and Foster do not offer him any other alternative. Essentially, every indication is that Hirst cannot come to terms with his present reality; that he fervently desires to escape from his present existence—from the Spooners, Briggses, and Fosters of the world who would stop him from becoming the "free man" he possibly once was. As he says in Act I: "They're blotting me out. Who is doing it? I'm suffocating. Someone is doing me to death" (p. 46). As Hinchliffe says of Hirst: "Wealth has brought security, even luxury, but old age has brought on impotence and the

need for society, friends, a family, grows more urgent."¹ What Hirst has in Briggs and Foster and could have in Spooner can hardly be considered friendship, for it is the security that Hirst has to offer that attracts them like a shark in the harbour, and not Hirst the human being. It is clear that Hirst lacks the psychological and physical strength to expel Briggs and Foster from the house. Thus, his only recourse is to escape into a time when he had his "world" and his "true friends." To this end, drinking permits him the opportunity to grasp the "bucolic life" of the "gracious" past. Hirst, in a sense, attempts, much like Gustave Aschenbach of Thomas Mann's Death In Venice, to recapture the "blithe laissez aller" of his youth. As Hirst says, "We're talking of my youth which can never leave me" (p. 45). In essence, Hirst attempts to recapture the supposed ideality of his youth, past, in an effort to escape the oppression and alienation of his present existence. Yet, how well does Hirst remember the past?

At one point in Act I, Hirst, without being provoked, says of his past: "Don't think now that it's gone I'll choose to sneer at it, to cast doubt on it, to wonder if it properly existed" (p. 45). In that it is an unprovoked

¹Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 153.

comment, it may indicate that Hirst himself realizes, to a degree, that he has a certain amount of difficulty remembering the past. In Act II, Hirst and Spooner, as if they were old friends, reminisce at some length about the past. At one point, Hirst claims that he had an affair with Spooner's (whom he calls Charles) wife. Spooner retaliates by claiming that he deceived Hirst several times and was outraged by Hirst's "insane and corrosive sexual absolutism" which had not been restricted to women. He also attacks Hirst's literary abilities, particularly his failure to master the "terza rima" (p. 77). Hirst, who is outraged by this, claims that this is not the Charles Weatherby he knew. It is possible that Spooner has mistaken Hirst for someone else. It is possible that Spooner wants Hirst to believe that he is an old friend of his. It is possible that Spooner wants to force Hirst deeper into no man's land. It is possible that Hirst only remembers what best suits his present needs. Hirst lives in an emotionally oppressing environment and it is essential to his well-being that he has something to sustain him. It is possible that Hirst does not wish to remember the past clearly. For Hirst, the past must remain almost stereotypically pastoral, completely devoid of anomalies, for it is the only thing that sustains him. And the constant attempt to recapture this past is what gives his life purpose and which protects him from reality.

V.

Pinter does not believe that communication is impossible, but fearful. Unlike Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, Pinter's characters never ask: "When am I going to get to the heart?"¹ Rather than get to the "heart" of matters, Pinter's characters would prefer to evade the issue. This failure to communicate, as Pesta notes, is "a sign of man's isolation within himself."² Ronald Gaskell notes: "The imperfection of language, in short, is a corollary of our isolation."³ The characters in *No Man's Land*, as in many other plays, avoid communicating honestly and meaningfully in an effort to isolate themselves, just as they create personas to distance themselves. It is not that they refuse to communicate on the whole, rather they refuse to reveal their insecurities. They communicate, but, as Pinter says, "...under what is said, another thing is being said."⁴ For instance, in Act I, Foster tells Spooner that he has been to Siam and Bali. Foster then asks Spooner if he has ever been "out there." Spooner meets the challenge by quickly, yet calmly, telling him that he has been to Amsterdam. Foster, realizing that

¹Henrik Ibsen, *Peer Gynt* as in Drama and Reality: The European Theatre Since Ibsen, p. 37.

²Pesta, "Pinter's Usurpers," p. 134.

³Gaskell, Drama and Reality: The European Theatre Since Ibsen, p. 44.

⁴Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 34.

Spooner has met the challenge, goes on to offer an anecdote about his visit to the "East," where a tramp who had rejected the coin thrown to him made it disappear. Spooner, without hesitation, and rather ~~matter-of-factly~~, dismisses the mystery as a trick. Foster has possibly elicited the desired response from Spooner. It is fitting that the con artist Spooner should know that it is a trick. Rather than allow Spooner's remark to pass, Foster goes on to toy with him:

FOSTER : Do you think so?

SPOONER: You would be wise to grant the event, no integrity whatsoever.

FOSTER : You don't subscribe to the mystery of the Orient?

SPOONER: A typical Eastern contrick.

FOSTER : Double Dutch, you mean?

SPOONER: Certainly. Your good health. (pp. 42-43)

In Act II, Briggs explains to Spooner how he met Foster, who, at the time, was asking the way to "Bolsover street" (part of a one-way traffic system so complicated that once one gets on one can never get off). Why would Briggs then say that Foster will deny this story? It is possible that Briggs reconstructed at least part of the story so that it could purposely be directed towards Spooner. As Foster toys with Spooner, so does Briggs. Briggs says of Bolsover street:

The people who live there, their faces are grey, they're in a state of despair, but nobody pays any attention, you see. All people are worried about is their illgotten gains. (p. 62)

Briggs then supposedly remembers having said to Foster: "This trip you've got in mind [to Bolsover street] drop it, it could prove fatal" (p. 62). This, in fact, may be Briggs's way of telling Spooner quite bluntly that he is supremely aware of what Spooner is attempting to do and that if Spooner insists on playing the game to its conclusion, the result may prove to be fatal for him. What the story indicates, as well, is that Briggs may very well have lived on Bolsover street, which he refers to as "Life at a Dead End" (p. 62). If he had not lived there, why would he have been so concerned and so intent on writing an article about it? How else could he have known about the "state of despair," unless he had experienced it? If Briggs had lived at some point in the despair of Bolsover street, it would certainly explain his need to maintain the security and luxury that he now has.

Both the failure to communicate honestly and the creation of personas can be seen as the means by which the characters attempt to distance, or dissociate, each other from their insecurities. The creation of "grey areas" is evidence of a sense of dissociation.¹ Yet, can a personal

¹By "grey areas," I mean the ground created by distance that lies between the Self and persona, Self and the other characters, and persona and the other characters.

and collective equilibrium be achieved?

Dr. Anthony Storr notes:

The interests of the individual may clash with the society in which he lives. A society of individualists each pursuing his own ends regardless of the needs of others is an impossibility. Self-realization cannot be the end of man, for it is inconsistent with his social existence. This is the point of view put forward by Bertrand Russell in his History of Western Philosophy: "Man is not a solitary animal, and so long as social life survives, self-realization cannot be the supreme principle of ethics." 1

But if man is not a solitary animal, his efforts to realize his own personality, his attempts at individuation, must include relationships with others. /.../ But Byronic self-seeking, which Russell rightly condemns, is immature, childish behaviour which is very far from self-realization just because it results in the alienation of others and consequently in isolation. If men could develop their own personalities only by disregarding the needs of others, self-realization would indeed be a hopeless and evil principle. 2

The characters in No Man's Land are clearly engaged in a "Byronic" sense of individuation. It is evident that their personal needs "clash" with those of the other characters. In that these characters place the "guarantee" of their happiness in "factors outside themselves" (the attainment of the room/mandala), they perpetuate further their sense of isolation.

¹Storr, The Integrity of the Personality, p. 31.

²Ibid., pp. 31-32.

A collective dissociation precipitates the need for a collective individuation. Individuation is the attempt to attain a harmonious balance, an equilibrium. In the play, the attempt to achieve a personal individuation necessitates the need to become further dissociated from the Self and the other characters. To become further dissociated intensifies the need for personal individuation, and creates, by extension, a collective dissociation, which precipitates the need for a collective individuation. A collective individuation cannot be achieved in that each character is attempting to achieve a personal, "individualistic," sense of pleasure, while avoiding pain. In other words, it is through each character's personal attempt at a sense of individuation that a collective dissociation is achieved. In a Byronic sense, their notion of individuation excludes the other characters. Yet, if there is no personal individuation, there can be no collective individuation; for if the characters cannot establish a sense of wholeness within themselves, they certainly cannot achieve it as a collective unit.

The characters, in that they insist on creating walls of isolation, throw themselves into an inevitable channel of futility, where they go round and round, like squirrels in a cage, arriving nowhere. To this end, the characters, in that they insist on creating a somewhat convoluted, if not

self-negating network of invisible walls and trenches that are intended to function as outer and inner sanctums, construct prisons, as is the case with Spooner and, particularly, Hirst. This willingness to distance and obfuscate intensifies further the sense of dissociation. Consequently, they inhibit, if not stifle, any attempts towards a personal and collective individuation.

The characters in Pinter's plays, as Pinter himself has said, are at the extreme edge of their living. In Jungian terms, the wholeness of the characters is insecure in that they need to escape from the world beyond the room. The inability to make an adjustment to the world is the direct result of the inability to make an adjustment to the Self. It is possible that due to a deficiency in their psychic make-up, the characters cannot come to terms with the world of reality—that they lack the necessary components integral to living a peaceful and purposeful life. And it is precisely this psychic deficiency that may prevent them from achieving a personal and collective individuation.

The insecurity of the deficiency, coupled with the fear that it will be discovered by the other characters, induces the need to protect the Self by creating distance. Yet, distance propagates dissociation. Since dissociation permeates the scene, and since the characters cannot achieve

a sense of equilibrium within themselves and with the other characters, one can logically hypothesize that the characters are dominated by at least one function of the psyche. In other words, the characters are reduced to a single function which alienates them from the rest; which isolates them from themselves, the other characters, and the world outside. For instance, Hirst becomes the embodiment of "Los" (Imagination) in that he lives in the past—in a purely imaginative state. Spooner is the embodiment of "Urizen" (Thought/Reason) in that he exhibits a great self-control, or self-discipline, and can, for the most part, successfully place a "distance" between himself and the other characters, and between himself and his emotions, motivations, and insecurities—he prides himself on his ability to remain "detached" (this is not to say that the other characters do not; it is just that Spooner makes an issue of it). Briggs is the embodiment of "Luvah" (Passion) in that he is blunt, abrupt, overtly hostile, almost primitive in relation to the other characters—he is incapable of successfully concealing his emotions. Foster is the embodiment of "Tharmas" (Sensations) in that he is the one who plunges the room into darkness; he wants people to like him, or "love" him as Briggs says in Act I; and he prides himself on the supposed fact that people do like him the first time they meet him. Foster, as well, is fond of a

"giggle and a cuddle," and is somewhat of a "gigolo" of the Orient (as witnessed in his recollections of Siam and Bali). As he says in Act I: "Sometimes my ambitions extend no further than that /a giggle and a cuddle/" (p. 52). In that the characters are reduced to one function, they are incapable of adjustment. Hence, the need to attain the room/mandala.

In Act I of the play, Spooner says: "What a remarkably pleasant room. I feel at peace here. Safe from all danger." In the same Act, Foster says: "But I still like a nice lighthouse like this one." Hirst says of the room: "You're tucked up, the shutters closed, gaining a march on the world" (p. 44). For the characters, it is quite clear that the room represents a haven from the brutality and uncertainty of the world of reality which lies beyond its walls. It is, after all, a no man's land where nothing ever changes—where there exists a sense of consistency, permanence, and security, albeit sterile. The room becomes a mandala in that, for the characters, it is the only place where they can achieve a sense of security and purpose. Their deficiencies will not permit them to achieve this in the outside world. A psychic deficiency can be viewed as a weakness which can, in some instances, inhibit one from functioning effectively, and from achieving social relationships.¹ As Jung notes, a

¹See pp. 23-24 of thesis.

psychic deficiency may result in neurosis.¹ In that they are incapable of making an adjustment to the Self, the mandala/room permits the characters to transcend their deficiencies without having to make an adjustment to them. In reality, the room has become a harbour for refugees from reality—a sort of lighthouse in the darkness. The mandala, in that it expresses order, balance, and wholeness, is a sort of lighthouse in the darkness.

It appears, though, that there is anything but a sense of wholeness, order, and balance in the room. If anything, a sense of disorder, instability, and fragmentation permeates the scene. The problem, in the room, might best be described by an observation that Ionesco made concerning the problem of existence:

A curtain, an impassable wall stands between me and the world, between me and myself; matter fills every corner, takes up all the space and its weight annihilates all freedom; the horizon closes in and the world becomes a stifling dungeon. /.../ I feel I am invaded by heavy forces, against which I can only fight a losing battle. 2

The characters struggle, if not fight, to gain control of the room, and by extension of significance, the mandala. The

¹See p. 23 of thesis.

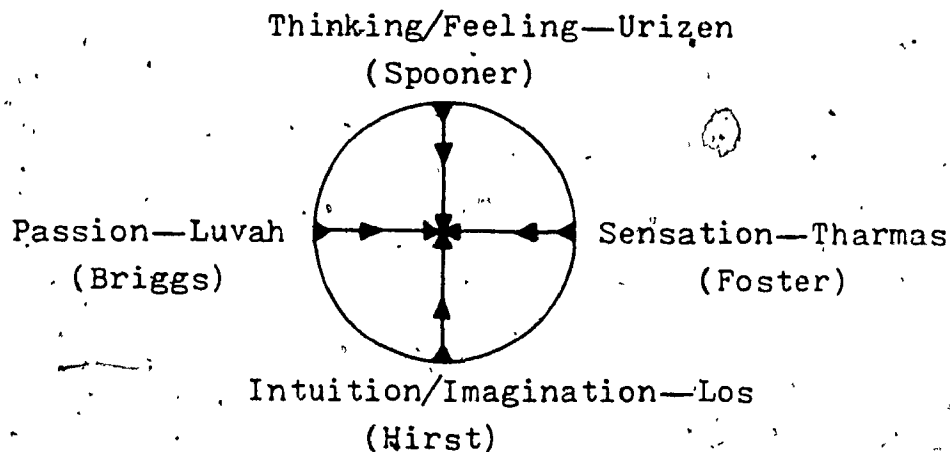
²Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 24.

Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "no man's land" as "a piece of unowned or debatable ground; space between opposed trenches; area not clearly belonging to any one subject."

In the First World War, it was the name given to the area between the trenches which belonged to neither of the sides fighting but which shifted as one side got the advantage over the other. The characters in the play attempt to gain an advantage over each other. The internal psychic conflict that afflicts each character is given expression through the external conflict that is waged between the characters.

Disorder is created in that the characters, who become the physical manifestation of the psychic "function" that governs their respective psyche, play games with each other as they fiercely jockey for the center of the mandala. What one has is the four diverse functions of the psyche battling for the position of god, or "deity"—for the position of the dominant governing force. But it is Briggs and Foster who ultimately displace Hirst from the center and who stifle Spooner's intention of becoming a part of the "nucleus," in that they feel that it is Spooner's desire to usurp their position at the center and the security and control that comes with it. Briggs and Foster are not content with merely being a component part of the center, but intend to be the center, thus ensuring their security. Spooner is ultimately expelled from

the mandala. And Hirst is forced into retreating into its completely imaginative form (the past). This conflict that is waged between the four characters in the room finds its parallel in Jung's mandala, which is a symbolic representation of the psyche:



In Jung's diagram of the mandala, one sees that the four functions of the psyche revolve contrapuntally around the center, much like the planets around the sun.¹ In No Man's Land, there is no harmonious orbit, equilibrium; instead one sees that the center of the mandala is under a constant bombardment by the four characters/functions.

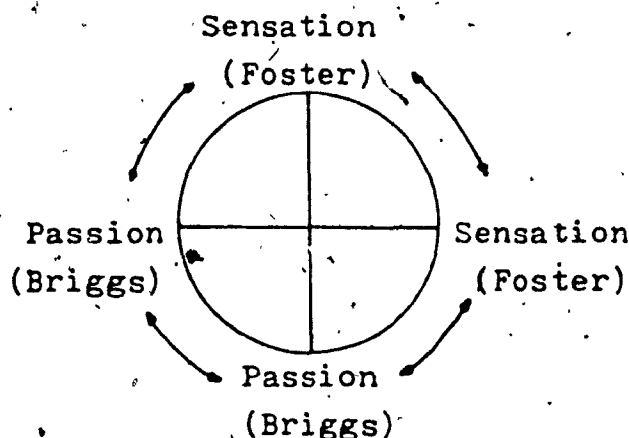
As a collective unit, the characters comprise a "whole"

¹See p. 29 of thesis.

psyche. As individuals, they represent component parts—a fragmented psyche. And it is these component parts of one psyche that fight each other in the war to gain complete domination and, by extension, sovereignty. The result of the internal conflict has been realized in each character in that they each have been reduced to a single function. Now, the result of the external conflict, which becomes the manifestation of the internal conflict, must be realized as well. We see in the play that disorder is brought into the mandala as soon as "reason" appears. Prior to the entrance of reason, "passion" and "sensation" dominated over "imagination." The emergence of reason, by attempting to link itself to imagination, threatens to defuse the power that passion and sensation have over imagination. Passion overtly attacks reason, while sensation is more passive, affable, cunning. Reason repels all attacks in that it is the power of rationality—"objectivity." At the conclusion of the play, we see that Foster (sensation) and Briggs (passion) trap Hirst (imagination). In a sense, sensation and passion enslave imagination; for it is the sensation of the words and the brutality of the intent which destroys Hirst. In effect, the imagination has been rendered impotent. As well, it is sensation and passion which destroy reason. Through the enslavement of imagination (Hirst), they force reason (Spooner) to

succumb to passion; Spooner's "distance" is destroyed, and in an impassioned outburst he reveals himself. Spooner surrenders to passion, revealing the passion behind the reason. In effect, Spooner is exposed, as Hamlet says, as "a beast that wants discourse of reason."¹

What remains is a neutralized, "paralyzed" imagination, passion and sensation, with reason being destroyed. What one has is an incomplete, deficient psyche which can only function, and thus exist within the protective walls of the mandala:



In essence, passion and sensation, without imagination and reason, cannot function and succeed effectively in the

¹William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark as in The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (London: Abbey Library, 1977), p. 849.

"outside" world of reality. Reason alone cannot function effectively in the world. Imagination alone cannot function effectively in the world. For instance, one can assume that Spooner, in that he has been exiled from the mandala, has no choice, due to his psychic deficiency, but to find another mandala in which he can exist. In that Spooner, most probably, was exiled from Lord Lancer's room, the Hungarian aristocrat's room, and now Hirst's room, one can assume that he has no choice but to maintain his quest for the elusive mandala. As Gordon has noted, should Pinter's characters face confrontation, they will find another room in which to live. To this end, one can say that the characters in the play represent aspects of a whole psyche. And it is due to the preponderance of the one psychic function within each character, and that particular function's desire for self-aggrandizement and dominance, that the characters are unable to make the fundamental adjustment to co-exist as a unit and thus achieve an equilibrium. The external conflict becomes a re-enactment of an internal conflict, but with different results. It is this inability to achieve an internal and external equilibrium that drives them out of the world and into the room.

There are no absolutes in Pinter—no black areas, no white areas, only grey areas. The problem of verification is

evident. In effect, "distance" becomes synonymous with his work. Pinter creates distance by not offering insights into his plays. He, furthermore, creates distance by having his characters behave in an evasive and contradictory way. Characters create distance between their persona and their Self. As well, they create distance between themselves and the other characters. Critic Vivian Mercier notes: "The dramatic character, in most cases, merely plays a role, like the people around us who evade their own existence."¹ In effect, in an effort to evade and obfuscate the reality of their existence, the characters, by assuming "roles," person-as, and by creating "grey areas" between the Self and persona, Self and the other characters, create a series of "no man's lands"—a sort of "wall between me and myself," and "between me and the world." And this wall can be viewed as evidence of dissociation, or the product of dissociation, in that the characters may indeed understand that they are psychically impaired—that they lack an internal equilibrium that would permit them to live a purposeful existence within society. It is evidence of dissociation in that, as Dr. Storr has noted, the wall serves as a means of isolation, which, evidently,

¹Vivian Mercier, Beckett/Beckett (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 85.

negates the possibility of achieving relationships. As Erich Fromm notes, in his book, The Fear of Freedom:

To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death. One might add that to be completely related to another person is to be most oneself, to affirm one's personality in its totality. 1

In that no man's land never changes, as the characters acknowledge at the conclusion of the play, there can never be hope for a successful integration within the characters, and, as a result, with society. For if the characters were indeed capable of achieving an equilibrium, there would not be such a profound need to create grey areas—there would be no grey areas. There would not be such a profound desire for the room/mandala.

The essence of the conflict in No Man's Land, and the idea of an internal and external no man's land where nothing ever changes, is best summed up by Jung's observation:

There are those who seemed to live in a most curious condition of consciousness, as if the state that they had arrived at today were final, with no possibility of change, or as if the world and the psyche were static and would remain so forever. They seemed devoid of all imagination.... Chances and possibilities did not exist in their world, and in "today" there was no real "tomorrow." The future was just the repetition of the past. 2

¹Erich Fromm, The Fear of Freedom (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), p. 15.

²See p. 24 of thesis.

THE CARETAKER

The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to ourselves. 1

The struggle for a room/mandala of one's own is also the focal point of the play, The Caretaker. The play traces the futile efforts of a scurrilous and prejudiced tramp, Davies, to pit brother against brother in an effort to secure a place for himself within the room.

Despite the fact that The Caretaker was first performed in 1960 and No Man's Land in 1975, The Caretaker picks up where No Man's Land leaves off in terms of the situation.²

In No Man's Land, on one level, we see that there is a possibility of achieving a collective individuation if only in that the four functions of the psyche are represented. In that the four characters are incapable of making an adjustment to their deficiencies, they attempt to secure the mandala. Once within the mandala, they impose their needs

¹ Michel de Montaigne, The Essays of Montaigne, The Integrity of the Personality, Anthony Storr, p. 165.

² This is not to say that Pinter necessarily intended it to be this way. It is just that in terms of the continuity of the situation, from a Jungian point of view, one can say that The Caretaker picks up where No Man's Land leaves off.

for personal individuation on one another. This imposition creates a conflict that precipitates a collective dissociation. Ultimately, the play concludes with the expulsion of two of the diverse functions of the psyche from the mandala, negating the possibility of both a personal and collective individuation. Whereas No Man's Land concludes with the neutralization of two functions of the psyche, The Caretaker begins with two characters whose psyches have been "neutralized"—Aston and Davies. From the outset of the play, we realize that the chance for a personal and collective individuation is non-existent, for Aston and Davies have been rendered "impotent" long before the play begins. In effect, Aston can be seen as the extension of the "paralyzed" Hirst of the conclusion of No Man's Land, while Davies becomes the extension of the "desperate," "exiled" Spooner.

Throughout No Man's Land, the characters expend their energy perpetuating dissociation in an effort to achieve individuation. What they create is a series of implacable voids that can never be bridged. With the exception of Hirst, the characters, in a sense, stand precariously on the edge of a precipice, looking down into a "grey" abyss. In The Caretaker, Aston and, to a degree, Davies have slipped from the edge of the precipice and have fallen headlong into

the void. For them, there is no possibility of a personal, let alone collective, individuation.

The fact that Davies has no identity is in itself indicative of dissociation. Who is Davies? Is he Davies? Is he Davies? Is he MacDavies? Is he Bernard Jenkins? Is he the "bloke" that Mick remembers from Aldgate? Is he Mick's "uncle's brother," or is he Mick's uncle Sid? It appears that Davies himself is not quite certain who he really is, or where he is from. In Act I, when Davies makes an issue of having to go to Sidcup to "get his papers," Aston asks him:

ASTON : What are they doing in Sidcup?

DAVIES: A man I know has got them. I left them with him. You see? They prove who I am! I can't move without them papers. They tell you who I am. You see! I'm stuck without them.

ASTON : Why's that?

DAVIES: You see, what it is, you see, I changed my name! Years ago, I been going under an assumed name! That's not my real name.

ASTON : What name you been going under?

DAVIES: Jenkins. Bernard Jenkins. That's my name. That's the name I'm known, anyway. But it's no good me going on with that name. I got no rights. I got an insurance card here. (He takes a card from his pocket.) Under the name of Jenkins. See? Bernard Jenkins. Look. /.../ That's not my real name, they'd find out, they'd have me in the nick. 1

¹Harold Pinter, The Caretaker (London: Methuen, 1976), pp. 19-20. All subsequent references to The Caretaker will appear parenthetically within my text.

Aston then asks him what his real name is. Davies replies, "Davies. MacDavies. That was before I changed my name" (p.20). Several minutes later, Aston, as if to test him, asks Davies again what his name is. Davies replies that Bernard Jenkins is his assumed name, while MacDavies is his actual name. When Aston then asks him where he is from, Davies fumbles:

ASTON : Welsh, are you?

DAVIES: Eh?

ASTON : You Welsh?

PAUSE.

DAVIES: Well, I been around, you know...what I mean...I been...about....

ASTON : Where were you born then?

DAVIES: (darkly) What do you mean?

ASTON : Where were you born?

DAVIES: I was...uh...oh, it's a bit hard, like, to set your mind back...see what I mean...going back...a good way...lose a bit of track, like...you know.... (p. 25)

What this indicates is that Davies has not only lost his identity, but is homeless, or "rootless," as well. To verify his identity, possibly to himself as well as to Aston and Mick, Davies would have to go to Sidcup to retrieve his papers, assuming that there are papers there. Yet, he can never get to Sidcup—either the weather is wrong (p. 20), or the shoes are wrong (p. 15), or the shoelaces are the wrong color for the shoes (p. 65). If he "can't move without them /the papers/," as Davies claims, then he cannot very well "move" to get them. Davies cunningly creates a "catch-22" type of situation. This prompts the question: are there

papers that would prove his identity? Does the evidence for his existence depend on papers? Can Davies regain his identity? Considering his reluctance to go to Sidcup and the feeble excuses that he offers for not going, one can assume that there are no papers in Sidcup and that Davies may, in fact, be somewhat disoriented in that he himself may not really know for certain whether he is Davies, MacDavies, or Bernard Jenkins.

For one reason or another, Davies lives in constant fear. He hates, if not fears, "Poles, Greeks, and Blacks" (p. 8). In Act I, when Aston tells Davies that a Black family lives next door, Davies says, "They don't come in?" (p. 18). When Aston tells Davies about the noises that Davies makes while asleep, Davies replies, "Them you got. Next door. Maybe it were them Blacks making noises, coming up through the walls" (p. 23). When Aston offers him a job as caretaker, he tells Davies that he will have to answer inquiries at the door, and that he will have his name on a card. Davies reacts in a nervous and evasive manner, returning once again to his speech about his name:

DAVIES: Oh, I don't know about that.

ASTON: Why not?

DAVIES: Well, I mean, you don't know who might come up them front steps, do you? I got to be a bit careful.

ASTON: Why, someone after you?

DAVIES: After me? Well, I could have that Scotch git coming looking after me, couldn't I? All I'd do, I'd hear the bell, I'd go down there, open the door, who might be there, any. /Tom, Dick, or/ Harry might be there. I could be buggered as easy as that, man. They might be there after my card.... Of course, I got plenty of cards lying about, but they don't know that, and I can't tell them, can I, because then they'd find out I was going under an assumed name. You see, the name I call myself now, that's not my real name. My real name's not the one I'm using, you see. It's different. You see, the name I go under now ain't my real one. It's assumed. (pp. 43-44)

Davies is evidently afraid of people. He is afraid that someone might come into his room, or "come up through the walls," to "bugger" him and/or ask him for his "papers" and "cards." Davies, in effect, may be afraid of society. By losing his identity, he does not have to deal with people; for people, society, do not know that he exists. To Davies, anonymity may signify non-existence, or invisibility. Non-existence becomes synonymous with transcendence. Transcendence, in Davies's case, intensifies dissociation. In effect, Davies is a paranoid neurotic who does not have an identity and home.

Davies is an irrational man who is afraid of virtually everything—from a gas stove that has been disconnected (p. 59), to a fear of the dark (pp. 44-45). In that the other functions of his psyche have been repressed, he is reduced

to functioning on the level of "passion." He is a man given to emotional outbursts, as witnessed, for examples, by his bitter tirades against ethnic groups, or "aliens" as he refers to them, and against Aston at the conclusion of the play. It is because he is excessively "passionate" that he is incapable of achieving meaningful relationships. Martin Esslin sees Davies as a man who is incapable of "transcending such primitive emotions of racial hatred."¹ It is this passionate disposition that negates the possibility of attaining the room. At the conclusion of the play, Davies, in an impassioned outburst, calls Aston "nutty" (p. 73). Mick quickly turns on Davies, expelling him from the room.

Lois Gordon says that Davies plays the role of the "unfortunate Everyman whose forsaken nature demands kindness and charity."² In one sense, Davies may very well play the role of "unfortunate Everyman." In another sense, Davies may, in actuality, be an Everyman, or a rendition of an Everyman. Camus sees his "Sisyphus" as an Everyman who is engaged in a relentless, yet seemingly futile, struggle. Yet, Camus says, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy."³ Davies, as well, is

¹Martin Esslin, The Peopled Wound (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 105.

²Gordon, Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness, p. 142.

³Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus (New York: Vintage, 1955), p. 91.

engaged in a relentless, futile struggle. Whereas Sisyphus's efforts to push the boulder to the summit of the hill are realized, although briefly, Davies's efforts to secure the room are negated from the very beginning by his nature. Sisyphus is happy, while Davies is not. Whereas Sisyphus endeavors to push the boulder to the summit, Davies endeavors to secure his invisibility by gaining access to the room. To a degree, they both share in a common sense of futility.

Poles are Poles. Greeks are Greeks. Blacks are Blacks. The "Scotch git" is a Scotch git. Who and/or what is Davies? He is a hackneyed rendering of an "Everyman." He is a "non-man." He is an apparition—a doppelgänger. He is an "extinct" man. He is, as Esslin concurs, a primitive man, aggressive and emotional, living in constant fear. From the moment we are introduced to him, Davies, in a relentless jabbering, quickly emerges as an unscrupulous, pompous, irascible, purposeless, evasive bigot, whose constant talk is the antithesis of Aston's taciturnity. Davies is a man without "papers," name, identity, roots, occupation, friends, purpose, compassion, reason, feeling and imagination. As Esslin notes: "Had Davies been able to show true kindness, genuine sympathy towards Aston after he had been made aware of his past history, he could have benefited from the offer

of friendship."¹ Davies, to borrow from Hamlet, is, in effect, "passion's slave."² And it is this passionate disposition, coupled with his fear of everything, that compels him to secure the room.

Aston's psyche, much like Hirst's, has been rendered impotent. As Hirst has been brutally forced to function on a purely imaginative level, Aston has been forcibly induced to function on a purely "sensational" level. Yet, this existence through the senses is in itself sterile, for Aston, whose position is that of "handy man," never accomplishes anything—he merely goes through the motions. For instance, there is a leak in the ceiling, yet he does not repair it. The entire building is in disrepair, as Mick tells Davies, yet Aston does nothing about it. His aspirations of building a "shed in the garden" are never realized. Aston finds the light in the room "glaring," but does nothing about it. Aston attempts to "mend" an electric plug. Two weeks pass and he still has not repaired it. Yet, Aston, like Davies, has intentions of doing something.

Aston "likes" things because they are "well made." He

¹Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 105.

²Shakespeare, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, p. 863.

likes the statue of Buddha because it is a "well made" creation (p. 18). He wants to purchase the "jig saw" because he "quite liked the look of it" (p. 24). Aston may like the look of the jig saw because it is an instrument to be used in the creation of something. Davies has no idea what a jig saw is. This is not to say that Aston has any real idea as to the specific function of a jig saw. When Davies asks him what it is, Aston responds ambiguously: "But it's an appliance, you see. You have to fix it on a portable drill" (p. 24). Aston recognizes that it is to be used to "fix" something. But what its exact function is, he does not appear to know. At one point, Davies wants to know why Aston keeps cans of paint in the room: "Paint. What's he going to paint?" (p. 28). Aston most likely is not going to paint anything. Nor is he going to "fix" anything with the jig saw. Aston has been psychically paralyzed. He is, essentially, incapable of functioning in any purposeful way. Therefore, he takes on, or is given, the position of a sort of handy man, for possibly the same reason he likes "tools:" they both offer him the illusion of creation. Aston may be seen as the sterile hands in which Mick has placed his extravagant dreams of remodeling his house.

Aston lives in a no-man's land in terms of both his psychic and physical existence. At one point it appears that

Aston was capable of functioning relatively effectively in the world. He had both friends and a job. Then something went wrong:

The trouble was, I [Aston] used to have kind of hallucinations. They weren't hallucinations, they...I used to get the feeling I could see things...very clearly...everything...was so clear...everything used...everything got very quiet...all this quiet...and...this clear-sight...it was...but maybe I was wrong. Anyway, someone must have said something. (pp. 54-55)

Aston may have suffered from a psychic dissociation in which the intuitive/imaginative function of his psyche assumed total control. Jung described this type of character as "introverted intuitive:"

The artist is a representative of this type, but it contains dreamers, prophets, visionaries.... An introverted intuitive type is often regarded as an enigma by his friends. [...] He is isolated in a world of primordial images whose meaning he does not understand. 1

If Aston was this type of personality, it would certainly explain his hallucinations; his friends' confusion and willingness to "say something;" his own confusion; and his present obsession to fulfill a frustrated need to create. Aston may have represented a sort of stereotypical "mad artist" to those who were unable to empathize with him.

¹Hall and Nordby, A Primer of Jungian Psychology, p. 104.

Consequently, Aston may have been hospitalized in an effort to "correct" this problem of dissociation. Much like Hirst and Stanley Webber, Aston was forcibly "desensitized:"

So I did get out /of the hospital/. I got out of the place...but I couldn't walk very well. I don't think my spine was damaged. That was perfectly all right. The trouble was...my thoughts...had become very slow...I couldn't think at all...I couldn't...get...my thoughts...together...uuuhh...I could never...quite get it...together. The trouble was, I couldn't hear what people were saying. I couldn't look to the right or the left, I had to look straight in front of me, because if I turned my head round... I couldn't keep...upright. And I had headaches.
(p. 57)

Esslin notes:

The reason why Aston was taken to hospital was that he talked too much and too volubly, to the point of having hallucinations; in other words, he was living a life of heightened sensibility and imagination; he was, in some sense, an artistic personality who had to be forcibly reduced to sober respectability. 1

Both Davies and Aston have been reduced to the status of "non-entity." Whereas Davies's denial of personal existence may be precipitated by choice, Aston's is not. In an effort to correct Aston's psychic "problem" and, thus, successfully integrate him into society (shades of Stanley, Goldberg, and McCann), the doctors may have destroyed his

¹Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 106.

psyche, rendering him psychically static, if not sterile. As Davies says of Aston: "He's got no feelings" (p. 62). In suppressing the intuitive/imaginative function of the psyche, they suppressed his entire psyche. As Hirst and Stanley are neutralized through "words," Aston is neutralized through electric shock treatment. It appears that Aston has been reduced to the level of "autistic child," functioning solely through visual and tactile sensations.

On one hand, Aston's room becomes the external realization of an internal condition. The room becomes a symbolic extension of Aston, for, as Davies proclaims, there is no clock in the room, no mirror, no working gas stove, just an accumulation of what appears to be "junk." It appears to be an uninhabitable and/or uninhabited environment—a sort of sterile, "grey area." The room becomes a no man's land in that there is no sense of time (no clock), identity (no mirror), and warmth (the gas stove is not operational). Yet, on the other hand, the room becomes a sort of mandala because it is the place where Aston can achieve a semblance of existence. What appears to be junk—the Buddha, the broken toaster, the sink—represents, to Aston, a sense of purpose and duty, for the items are either "well made," or have to become well made—a state of being that Aston can only hope to achieve within himself.

Lois Gordon says that Mick and Aston "seem to be two halves of a single personality."¹ She sees Mick as "rational" and "bourgeois." Aston, she says, "can function predominantly as a man of feeling rather than reason."² She, furthermore, sees it as seemingly paradoxical that the "rational Mick lives with dreams of grandeur," while "the emotional Aston lacks any illusions whatsoever."³ She then goes on to say that Mick thrives on unrealistic schemes of building new things, while Aston "devotes himself to repairing old, broken ones—for examples, the toaster and the electric plug."⁴ Esslin suggests: "...ultimately Mick and Aston—like Didi and Gogo /in Waiting For Godot/—could be seen as different sides of the same personality. Mick could stand for the worldly, Aston for the deeper emotional aspects of the same man."⁵

According to Jung, reason and emotion do not constitute a "whole" personality, but half of a personality. If this is the case, Mick and Aston each represent one quarter of a

¹Gordon, Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness, p. 41.

²Loc. cit.

³Loc. cit.

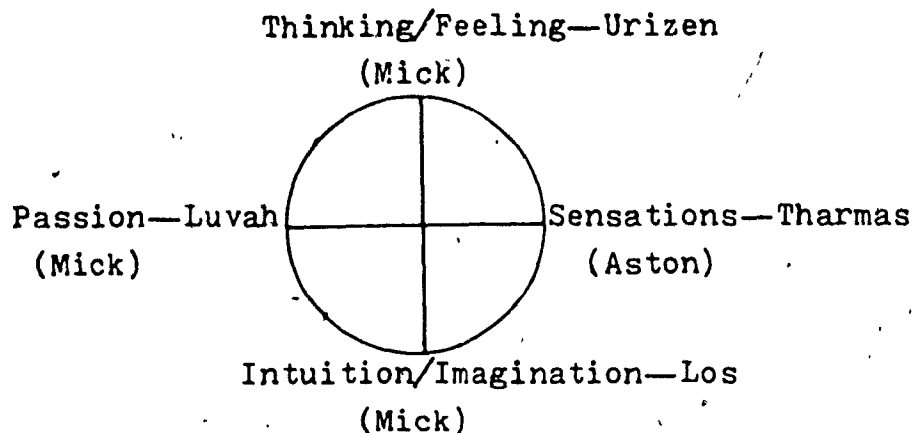
⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 107.

personality. In actuality, it appears that Aston is devoid of emotion. He functions purely by visual and tactile sensation, if he functions at all. Mick, on the other hand, is rational, emotional, and imaginative. Mick is rational and practical in that, as Gordon concurs, he is interested in "profit," bank accounts and recommendation papers. In effect, he is concerned about his future. More significantly, he is rational in that he understands that Aston is incapable of functioning effectively and must therefore be taken care of—he is, in actuality, Aston's caretaker (whether he accepts Aston's problem is entirely another question). As well, he recognizes that Davies poses a threat to Aston. Mick is emotional in that, in relation to Davies, he can be both threatening, menacing and pleasantly affable. It is Mick, after all, who smashes Aston's statue of Buddha in a fit of anger (p. 74). He is imaginative in that he visualizes the room as a "palace," a sort of "penthouse" in the latest style (p. 60). Mick, much like anyone, must have his "dreams" to sustain him. In relation to Aston, it is Mick who is pragmatic, emotional, and imaginative. He is everything that Aston cannot be.

Collectively, Mick, in that he is rational, emotional, and imaginative, and Aston, who is, to a degree, a "sensational" person, represent a "whole" psyche, or "personality,"

as Gordon and Esslin referred to them:



Yet, "it is a psyche whose wholeness is jeopardized by Aston. On one level, it is Aston, and not Mick, who thrives on "illusions." As has been noted earlier, Aston needs the illusion of both "creation" and the "act" of creating. In that he is actually incapable of using his hands to "fix" anything, including the toaster and the electric plug, he must at least go through the motions, achieving an illusion of purposefulness. Thus, Aston represents a semblance of the function of sensation. To this end, one has the illusion of a collective whole psyche.

Aston, as an individual, has a completely repressed psyche. In Mick, the function of sensation may be seen as repressed. Mick's dreams of renovating the house can never be materialized, for the realization of this dream depends

on either Aston or Davies. Aston and/or Davies are, in a sense, to become the hands that will create a reality out of a dream. Mick can visualize the "palace," but he cannot build it. To this end, Mick and Aston complement one another. Aston offers Mick the illusion of the possibility of achieving his dreams. While Mick offers Aston the illusion of "purpose" and "creation" by giving him, in a sense, the position of "master builder." As a unit, they form the illusion of a psychic wholeness. They become the "caretaker" of one another's illusions.

Davies, who recognizes that Aston is impotent, attempts to usurp his position in the room. In doing so, he inadvertently destroys the illusion of a collective wholeness. Davies, like Spooner, Goldberg, and McCann, defuses the false sense of equilibrium in the room. By attempting to realize his own sense of individuation by attempting to gain a position in the room, he creates a collective dissociation. By telling Mick that Aston is "nutty," Davies awakens Mick to the fact that there is something wrong with Aston. In effect, Davies destroys Mick's illusion of the possibility of realizing his dream. Then, in a fit of anger, possibly at himself for maintaining the illusion, Davies for confirming it, and Aston for being impotent, Mick washes his hands of the house (p. 74) and smashes the statue of Buddha on the

floor.

In that Mick may implicitly recognize that Aston's psyche is completely repressed, he offers Aston a "sense" of psyche by giving him a "position" and by making him an integral part of his own psyche. Yet, Aston is not, nor can he ever be, in actuality, a part of Mick's psyche. By attempting to make Aston a part of his psyche, or by seeing Aston as an emanation of the missing aspect of his psyche, Mick attempts to fill the void within himself and Aston, thus creating a false sense of equilibrium.¹ Even Davies could have filled the void in Mick and the house/mandala had he not been a "slave" to passion. Even if Davies had assumed a "position" within the mandala, the result could have only been the same as having Aston assume the position, for both Aston and Davies are non-entities, incapable of functioning in any purposeful way.

The statue of Buddha represents a "well made," if not perfect, creation to Aston. In Eastern religions, Buddha is

¹Esslin claims that "in terms of their creator—after all every character an author brings to life can be regarded as an emanation of one aspect of his personality—Mick might stand for the actor, Aston for the poet." Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 107. By the same token, if Mick and Aston represent two halves of a single personality, as Gordon and Esslin believe, and if they can be seen as an emanation of Pinter's personality, then, from a Jungian point of view, Aston can be seen as being representative of the missing or suppressed component of Mick's psyche.

regarded as a perfect creation. Both Jung and Eastern philosophy acknowledge that the mandala is symbolic of psychic wholeness and/or a sense of perfection. Buddha and Aston's statue of Buddha become synonymous with the mandala. The destruction of the statue can be seen as the destruction of the illusion of perfection; of the illusion of a psychic wholeness; and of the illusion of the possibility of the realization of Mick's dreams. It can be perceived as the recognition of the "fall" from unity. The Buddha has now been rendered imperfect, symbolizing the reality of the dissociation between Aston and Mick, and within Aston and Mick. It becomes the symbolic representation of both an internal and external dissonance.

In No Man's Land, there is a constant attempt to create distance—a sense of dissociation. In The Caretaker, Mick dissociates himself from the reality of his internal deficiencies by creating illusions. When Davies destroys the illusion, Mick is confronted with the reality of his internal and external problem. The realization of a personal individuation involves Aston. By reaffirming Aston's impotency, Davies destroys an integral aspect of Mick's psyche, confirming the void that exists between and within Aston and Mick.

In The Caretaker, we have two characters, Aston and

Davies, who, like Hirst, are trapped within the void between the Self and the psyche. In that they are hopelessly trapped, the possibility of achieving a personal and collective individuation is non-existent. Mick, on the other hand, like Foster, Briggs, and Spooner, must attempt to make an adjustment to his problem if he is to transcend the reality of his dissociation—if he is to fully achieve his aspirations and potentialities. In effect, Mick must learn to become the "caretaker" of both his internal and external world.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

The most conspicuous mark of the moral level of any community is the value it sets on human personality. ¹

In No Man's Land and The Caretaker, the room's incumbents successfully repel all attempts to displace them from their haven. In The Birthday Party, the effort to defuse these threats represents an impotent and futile effort to maintain supremacy within and of a sterile environment.

Stanley Webber, much like Hirst, Aston, and Davies, does not exist, but merely subsists. It would appear that he is incapable of accomplishing anything purposeful. Yet, in a sense, Stanley, like Aston and Davies, does have aspirations. The fact that he has spent some part of his life sequestered in boarding houses, supposedly never venturing into the world beyond, suggests that he has attempted to achieve a state of "invisibility." Stanley, to a degree, has achieved his goal. Like Davies, it may be by choice that he

¹B.H. Streeter, Reality (Toronto: Macmillan, 1945), pp. 313-14.

becomes a non-entity. And, like Davies, the decision may have been precipitated by an intense fear of people, society, which, by extension, is indicative of an inability to co-exist with others. This inability to achieve an equilibrium may be seen as evidence of internal dissonance.

Stanley may perceive the various boarding houses that he has "lived" in, particularly Meg's, as a sort of wall "between me and myself," "me and the world," and "me" and "The Organization." Ultimately, it is Goldberg and McCann who tear down these walls in an attempt to "integrate" Stanley into society, and by extension of significance, "The Organization."

It appears that, at least for part of his life, Stanley has gone from boarding house to boarding house, living a relatively secluded existence. As he tells McCann: "I've explained to you, damn you, that all those years I lived in Basingstoke I never stepped outside the door."¹ Lulu confirms his state of isolation when she asks him: "Don't you ever go out? I mean, what do you do, just sit around the house like this all day long?" (p. 25). Possibly, like a Spooner or

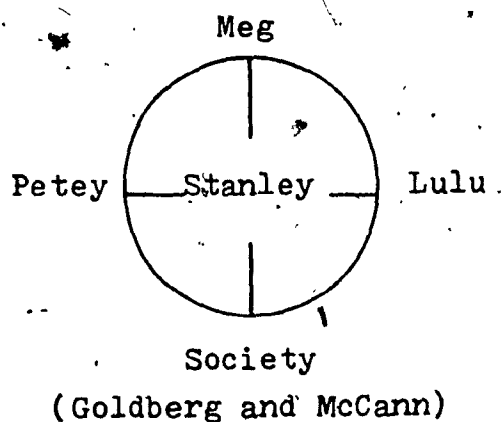
¹Harold Pinter, The Birthday Party (London: Methuen, 1978), p. 42. All subsequent references to The Birthday Party will appear parenthetically within my text.

Davies, Stanley has attempted on several occasions to secure a mandala of his own, only to be expelled. Now, Stanley has not only found his mandala, but he controls it as well.

There is no fear of expulsion, for the other characters who share in his mandala are passive and/or stagnant. In other words, he is able to impose himself on the other characters without resistance, and without having to make an adjustment to his personal dilemma and to the other inhabitants of the room. He does not have to make the necessary adjustment to his psychic dilemma that would permit him to co-exist peacefully and meaningfully outside of the room. For instance, a dull-witted and illiterate Meg can easily be controlled and manipulated, whereas a Briggs and Foster cannot. Meg, essentially, has no "function" in the room apart from "caretaker" or concierge. It is part of her duty to make certain that the room is kept clean and that Stanley is fed. As Stanley orders: "Look, why don't you get this place cleared up! It's a pigsty. And another thing, what about my room? It needs sweeping. It needs papering. I need a new room!" (p. 19). It is her "job" to make certain that Stanley is satisfied, possibly in every way. Petey's function is that of complacent "repressed laborer," whose wages go towards the maintenance of Stanley's mandala. Lulu, implicitly, plays out the role of naive, frustrated, "peasant friend"

of the caretaker, Meg.

The room, in effect, becomes a sort of world within a world—a sort of sordid, static society within a society, whose creator/dictator/king/president is Stanley Webber. Stanley's sense of superiority over his subordinate, Meg, is confirmed when he says: "Tell me, Mrs. Boles, when you address yourself to me, do you ever ask yourself who exactly you are talking to?" (p. 21). In a Platonic sense, Stanley creates a sort of "ideal" society, where everyone is reduced to the function of "slave" or "servant." Stanley, of course, reserves the highest position, that of "ruler," "thinker," "contemplator," for himself. Yet, Stanley is hardly a contemplator. If anything, in a Platonic sense, he has confined himself to "shadows," illusions—to a no man's land. In essence, Stanley achieves what Spooner and Davies cannot—he becomes the benign center, nucleus, of the mandala, around which the designated functions revolve:



Stanley's isolation and false sense of supremacy is confirmed in a stanza of the poem "A View of the Party," which Pinter wrote in 1958 (the year of the first performance of The Birthday Party):

And Stanley sat—alone,
A man he might have known,
Triumphant on his hearth,
Which never was his own. 1

In society, which can be seen as an organization of functions, as Ionesco notes, Stanley may have been reduced, both psychically and socially, to a single function which alienated him from the rest. In terms of his psyche, Stanley may suffer from a dissociation in which one function is alienated from the others. This dissociation prohibits him from achieving a personal and collective equilibrium. Thus, he seeks out the mandala. Once within the room, he does exactly what society may have done to him: in creating his own "order" where he is able to function with his deficiency, he reduces everyone else to a function, or role. Stanley must attempt to achieve a sense of individuation if he is to function effectively within a social context. In that he is incapable of achieving an equilibrium, of making that fundamental adjustment to his problem, he attempts to

¹Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 82.

transcend it by dissociating himself further—by creating an illusion of equilibrium and/or existence. Thus, the room serves as a wall between his Self and his psyche, and between his Self and the world that may have induced the sense of dissociation. By creating his own "order," he attempts to compensate for his "disorder." In doing so, he stifles any notion of individuation by propagating dissociation. Stanley, by isolating himself from the reality of his problem, alienates himself from people, negating any possibility of achieving meaningful relationships. His "order" becomes a disorder in that it is a static and sterile facsimile of individuation. In other words, by ignoring the problem, by refusing to confront it, he behaves like a child in that, in a sense, he hopes that it will disappear. As Dr. Anthony Storr says:

.../an/ inquiry into the interpersonal relationships of neurotics reveals a lack of maturity, a failure to progress beyond a childish preoccupation with being worse than, or better than, others; an inability to love and be lovable; a failure to achieve that relationship of whole person to whole person which is the outward sign of inward integration. 1

Which function of the psyche has Stanley been reduced

¹Storr, The Integrity of the Personality, p. 167.

to? He certainly is not a rational, thinking man. If anything, he would rather not think. He would rather not consider the world outside the room, his predicament, and/or the men in the "van" with the "wheelbarrow." Stanley lives, to paraphrase Jung, without being aware of the state of his body, let alone what is happening in the room. As Lulu says to him: "Do you want to have a look at your face? You could do with a shave, do you know that?" (p. 25). She then says: "Why don't you have a wash? You look terrible" (p. 26). "Come out and get a bit of air. You depress me, looking like that" (p. 26). Obfuscation and dissociation is the name of Stanley's "game." Obfuscation of the original dissociation perpetuates a dissociation which obfuscates the dissociation created by the original dissociation. Stanley, consciously or not, plays a game of "broken telephone" with himself, where he starts with the fact and ends up with a completely distorted re-creation of the fact.¹ Stanley certainly does not want to think. He merely wants to "lose" himself. He is not an imaginative man. He is devoid of emotion. As Goldberg says to him: "You can't live, you can't think, you can't love" (p. 52). Much like

¹Meg plays a similar game when she recalls, to Goldberg, the story that Stanley had told her about his past (p. 32).

Aston, Stanley functions on a quasi-"sensational" level.

As Aston cannot use his hands effectively to "repair" and/or create, Stanley cannot use his eyes effectively to see. Without his glasses, he is virtually blind (pp. 26, 49). As the old man, Hamm, of Beckett's Endgame, is physically blind and paralyzed, Stanley is visually, as well as psychologically, blind. His visual "myopia" can be seen as the external manifestation of an internal psychic myopia. This inability to see things clearly, to see the "things before his eyes," in both a Platonic and Jungian sense, is in itself indicative of dissociation. Goldberg and McCann recognize this problem:

GOLDBERG: /.../ Between you and me, Stan, it's about time you had a new pair of glasses.

MCCANN: You can't see straight.

GOLDBERG: It's true. You've been cockeyed for years.

MCCANN: Now you're even more cockeyed.

GOLDBERG: He's right. You've gone from bad to worse.

MCCANN: Worse than worse.

GOLDBERG: You need a long convalescence. (p. 82)

Yet, it is imperative for Stanley not to see clearly in order to transcend the reality of his dilemma. This inability permits him to create an illusion of existence. In effect, Stanley can only see "images of things." In a sense, Stanley's life has become the realization of the game "blind man's buff" (p. 61). When Goldberg and McCann destroy Stanley's glasses, they symbolically destroy what little sense of

perception that Stanley has—they render him visually and psychically impotent. The destruction of the glasses has its parallel in the blinding of Rose in The Room. The destruction of the glasses, and by extension of significance, Stanley, is given expression in the last stanza of the poem "A View of the Party:"

man they never knew
In the centre of the room,
And Stanley's final eyes
Broken by McCann. 1

Much like Briggs and Foster, and more significantly, Goldberg and McCann, Stanley uses the "sensation" of words to establish a sense of distance and superiority by disorienting the inhabitants of his static world:

STANLEY (advancing): They're coming today.
They're coming in a van.

MEG: Who.

STANLEY: And do you know what they've got in the van?

MEG: What?

STANLEY: They've got a wheelbarrow in that van.

MEG (breathlessly): They haven't.

STANLEY: Oh yes they have.

MEG: You're a liar.

STANLEY (advancing upon her): A big wheelbarrow. And when the van stops they wheel it out, and they wheel it up the garden path, and then they knock at the front door.

MEG: They don't.

STANLEY: They're looking for someone. / Stanley?
Davies? Both? /

¹Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 82.

MEG: They're not.

STANLEY: They're looking for someone. A certain person.

MEG (hoarsely): No, they're not!

STANLEY: Shall I tell you who they're looking for?

MEG: No! (p. 24)

STANLEY (abruptly): How would you like to go away with me?

LULU: Where.

STANLEY: Nowhere. Still, we could

LULU: But where could we go?

STANLEY: Nowhere. There's nowhere to go. So we could just go. It wouldn't matter.

LULU: We might as well stay here.

STANLEY: No. It's no good here.

LULU: Well, where else is there?

STANLEY: Nowhere. (p. 26)

His dialogues with Meg and Lulu, although brief in comparison, mirror the lengthier dialogues that McCann and Goldberg have with him. For Stanley, in certain instances, words become part of the game that he uses to "toy" with, or "muck about," his subordinates. But when it comes to Goldberg and McCann, this part of his game is ineffectual.

Goldberg asks Stanley: "Is it a good game?" (p. 44). Stanley replies: "I run the house." It obviously is a good game. Stanley plays the game of "broken telephone," "blind man's buff," and, in a sense, "Scrabble" with the purpose of isolating himself from both his Self and the world beyond his Self. He creates a delusive, stagnant world in which he can seemingly function. He is, like the characters of No Man's Land and The Caretaker, a refugee from both the

brutal reality of the world and the Self. In effect, Stanley has created a no man's land where nothing ever changes. Yet, Goldberg recognizes that Stanley is, in actuality, playing a "dirty game" (p. 48). Enter Goldberg and McCann.

Goldberg's and McCann's function, like Aston's doctor, is to act as "social assimilators" and/or psychic assassins. They use shock treatment to stabilize, or desensitize, Stanley and by extension of significance, his psyche. "All is dependent on the attitude of our subject," says Goldberg. "I can assure you McCann that the assignment will be carried out and the mission accomplished" (p. 30). Their mission is accomplished when they transform their "subject" into an "object." Their purpose is to demolish the walls that Stanley has created. Like Davies, they destroy the illusion of the wholeness of the mandala. Consequently, Stanley, stripped of his protective walls, is rendered completely psychically and physically sterile. Like Aston, Stanley cannot look to the left or right of him, but must look straight ahead into the society, or "Organization of Society," that may have initially caused his dissociation.

McCann asks Stanley: "Why did you betray the organization?" (p. 48). He then asks him: "Why did you betray us?" Several minutes later, McCann says: "You betrayed the organization. I know you Stanley!" (p. 48). Goldberg then

says to Stanley: "No society would touch you. Not even a building society" (p. 51). "But we can save you," says Goldberg (p. 82). "We can sterilize you" (p. 52). The "organization" that Stanley may have betrayed is society. As Ionesco says, organized society is an organization of functions where man is reduced to his function. There is no greater organization and/or organizing organization than society.

W. Somerset Maugham notes:

Society makes rules for its own preservation, but the individual can have no duty toward society; there is nothing to restrain him but prudence. He can go his own way, freely, doing what he wills, but he must not complain if society punishes him when he does not act in accordance with its dictates. 1

Our conduct toward our fellow-man is determined by the principle of self-preservation. The individual acts toward his fellows in such and such a manner so as to obtain advantages which otherwise he could not get or to avoid evils which they might inflict upon him. [.../ Society rewards him for the good he does and punishes him for the harm. 2

As has been noted earlier, society, for one reason or another, may have implicitly or explicitly reduced Stanley to both a single social and psychic function, which alienated him from the rest. To this end, the "Organization of Society"

¹Maugham, A Writer's Notebook, p. 67.

²Ibid., p. 23.

may have been instrumental in creating an internal dissonance in Stanley, which, in turn, alienated him from the "organization" (society) and his Self. In an effort to achieve pleasure and avoid pain, to avoid the "evil" that society has inflicted upon him, Stanley must attempt to escape, to isolate himself from the source of this "evil." Esslin sees Goldberg as "the agent of the evil power pursuing Stanley; he might be that power itself."¹ In that Stanley has "estranged" himself from this organization of functions, Goldberg and McCann have come to destroy his illusions, or delusions, and integrate him back into the "organization." They offer him recovery, treatment, recuperation, and success in society:

GOLDBERG: You'll be re-orientated.

MCCANN: You'll be rich.*

GOLDBERG: You'll be adjusted.

MCCANN: You'll be our pride and joy.

GOLDBERG: You'll be a mensch /an upright and honourable adult/.

MCCANN: You'll be a success.

GOLDBERG: You'll be integrated.

MCCANN: You'll give orders.

GOLDBERG: You'll make decisions.

MCCANN: You'll be a magnate.

GOLDBERG: A statesman.

MCCANN: You'll own yachts. (pp. 83-84)

Esslin sees Stanley as "the artist whom society claims back

¹Esslin, The Peopled Wound, p. 81.

from a comfortable, bohemian, 'opt-out' existence."¹ Stanley may, in actuality, be an uncompromising "individual" whom society, the "organization," claims back from a delusive, "hedonistic," opt-out sub-existence. For rejecting this organization of functions, for standing apart from the crowd, the "evil" of society returns to "punish" Stanley by reducing him to the non-status of "object."

Dr. von Franz says:

The actual process of individuation—the conscious coming-to-terms with one's own inner center or Self—generally begins with a wounding of the personality and the suffering that accompanies it. This initial shock amounts to a sort of "call," although it is not often recognized as such. On the contrary, the ego feels hampered in its will or its desire and usually projects the obstruction onto something external. That is, the ego accuses God or the economic situation or the boss or the marriage partner of being responsible for whatever is obstructing it. 2

In the first "cross-examination," Goldberg and McCann attempt to "wound" Stanley's personality, psyche. Yet, instead of attempting to discern what exactly it is that is obstructing Stanley from achieving an individuation, they insist on creating "obstacles." They attempt to project the obstruction

¹Ibid., p. 82.

²von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," p. 169.

onto "God," Stanley's wife, and mother¹:

GOLDBERG: Where was your wife?

STANLEY: In—

GOLDBERG: Answer.

STANLEY (turning, crouched): What wife?

GOLDBERG: What have you done with your wife?

MCCANN: He's killed his wife!

GOLDBERG: Why did you kill your wife?

STANLEY (sitting, his back to the audience): What wife?

MCCANN: How did he kill her?

GOLDBERG: How did you kill her?

MCCANN: You throttled her.

GOLDBERG: With arsenic.

MCCANN: There's your man!

GOLDBERG: Where's your mum?

STANLEY: In the sanatorium.

MCCANN: Yes!

GOLDBERG: Why did you never get married?

MCCANN: She was waiting at the porch.

GOLDBERG: You skeddadled from the wedding. (p. 49)

GOLDBERG: You stink of sin.

MCCANN: I can smell it.

GOLDBERG: Do you recognize an external force?

STANLEY: What?

GOLDBERG: Do you recognize an external force?

MCCANN: That's the question!

GOLDBERG: Do you recognize an external force, responsible for you.... (p. 50)

Their goal is not to achieve a positive individuation. By creating obstacles, "projections," they attempt to dissociate Stanley further. As Dr. von Franz says: "...this initial shock amounts to a sort of 'call,' although it is not often

¹Many critics, in particular Gordon and Gabbard, see Meg as a mother-whore symbol. It might have been Meg who McCann had in mind when he accused Stanley of being a "Mother defiler" (p. 51).

recognized as such." In this instance, the shock that Stanley suffers is a "call" towards dissociation, and not individuation. It is a call for a forcible and painful integration, much like the "call" to force a square peg into a round slot. If the peg does not fit, one makes it fit by altering its shape. One alters it so much so that it loses its original form. In effect, Goldberg and McCann draw Stanley into the "grey" abyss between the Self and psyche. As a result, Stanley loses his persona and mandala. But more importantly, he loses any connections to the Self and psyche. Stanley, much like Kafka's Gregor Samsa, does not undergo a sublimation, but a vulgar transmutation from apparent "subject" to "object," losing, as a result, any vestige of identity that he may have been able to maintain.

At one point, Goldberg asks Stanley if the number 846 is possible or necessary. Stanley responds:

STANLEY: Both.

GOLDBERG: Wrong! It's necessary but not possible.

STANLEY: Both.

GOLDBERG: Wrong! Why do you think the number 846 is necessarily possible?

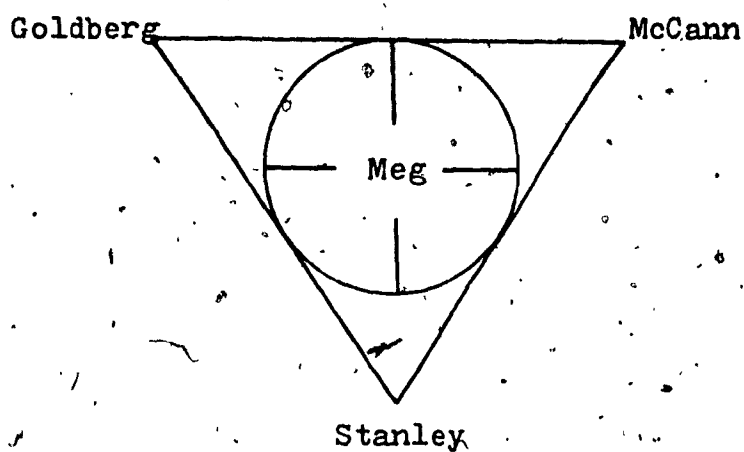
STANLEY: Must be.

GOLDBERG: Wrong! It's only necessarily necessary. We admit possibility only after we grant necessity. It is possible because necessary but by no means necessary through possibility. The possibility can only be assumed after the proof of necessity.

(p. 50)

By the same token, one can ask: Is the integration of Stanley Webber possible or necessary? Is it necessary that round peg number 845, alias Stanley Webber, be placed back into its slot? "We admit possibility only after we grant necessity," says Goldberg. It is necessary, but is it possible to place round peg number 846 into its slot? "The possibility can only be assumed after the proof of necessity," says Goldberg. He has "betrayed the organization," says McCann. He is in danger of inflation and dissociation, says Jung. He has become a square peg. The proof of necessity has been met. It is necessary, but is it possible to place square peg Stanley Webber, alias round peg number 846, into its former round slot? We will "integrate" him by "sterilizing" him, say Goldberg and McCann. They do. And he is.

At the conclusion of the play, we see that Meg becomes Stanley's successor to the "throne." In that Stanley, due to his dissociation, may have originally usurped Meg's position as the center of the room/mandala, Meg, upon Stanley's expulsion, returns as the rightful owner. It is only fitting that the dull-witted Meg should return to her static "kingdom." After all, she was the "belle of the ball" (p. 87). Now, she is the "queen" of the room.



In effect, The Birthday Party celebrates the psychic death of Stanley Webber and, not rebirth, re-creation of round peg number "846."

CONCLUSION

There are those whose sense of humour is so ill developed that they still bear a grudge against Copernicus because he dethroned them from the central position in the universe. They feel it a personal affront that they can no longer consider themselves the pivot upon which turns the whole of created things. 1

"Directly or indirectly the conscious life is determined by the position of the individual in the universe, and by his need to make acquaintance with his surroundings, and either bring them into harmony with him, or himself with them." 2 The "conscious life" of Pinter's characters directly and indirectly determines, and is determined by, their surroundings. In that his characters may very well suffer from a psychic dissociation that prohibits them from achieving a harmonious co-existence in the world, they re-create setting in an effort to attain a sense of transcendence and, by extension of significance, existence, as witnessed in No Man's Land, The Caretaker, and The Birthday Party. This re-creation of setting, the transformation of room to

¹Maugham, A Writer's Notebook, p. 63.

²Ibid., p. 78.

mandala, represents an attempt by Pinter's characters to bring their surroundings into harmony with their Self. The need to transform the room to mandala represents the Self's inability to achieve a sense of harmony with the world beyond the room. Thus, the wall of isolation that the characters seek to build around themselves as a means of security, whether it be in the form of a "persona" or mandala, represents only an illusion of individuation. In effect, it intensifies the problem of dissociation. As in No Man's Land, The Caretaker, and The Birthday Party, it represents both a futile effort to transcend an internal dissonance, and a sterile, passive condition which, in itself, is representative of an internal psychic condition. In a Blake-ian sense, the room as mandala represents an illusion of "paradise regained."

Dr. Storr says: "...men need relationships with each other on equal terms as whole people in order to realize their full potentialities...."¹ Lois Gordon says: "Pinter sets aside the specifically sexual and the bizarre and concentrates upon the difficulty of maintaining human relationships because of the self-interest that prompts

¹Storr, The Integrity of the Personality, p. 142.

most communication."¹ Hinchliffe says: "Pinter's plays are simply about people bothering people who want to keep to themselves."² In that Pinter's characters are not "whole," they are incapable of achieving relationships, let alone "maintaining" them. Due to their "fragmentation," they impose themselves on others in an attempt to achieve a sense of individuation. This attempt, which is perceived as a sort of encroachment and/or threat by the other characters, creates a collective dissociation that negates the possibility of establishing meaningful relationships, as seen in No Man's Land and The Caretaker.

Camus says: "What contradicts itself nevertheless joins in him /man/."³ This is not the case in Pinter. What contradicts itself in Pinter's characters does not "join" in them. On the contrary, as seen in the three plays, it creates dissociation. It creates a profound need to escape; to create illusions; to impose on others. It is precisely their "self-interest" that inadvertently prompts a collective dissociation and intensifies personal dissociation. In

¹Gordon, Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness, p. 40.

²Hinchliffe, Harold Pinter, p. 43.

³Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 61.

effect, Pinter's plays are not merely about "people bothering people." They are about selfish, "hedonistic" people who, rather than make an adjustment to their deficiencies, would rather create a sense of dissociation by attempting to achieve an illusion of pleasure, while avoiding pain.

Dr. Storr states: "Self-realization, so far as anyone ever achieves it, is manifested by the widest exercise of the individual's potentialities combined with the attainment of a mature relationship with others."¹ In a Platonic sense, because Pinter's characters confine themselves to "images" of things in an effort to transcend the reality behind the image, they refuse to realize potentialities and negate any possibility of attaining mature relationships with others.

The contention of this thesis has been that Pinter, like Jung and Blake, is interested in a very fundamental human predicament: man's inability to come to terms with himself prevents him from achieving a personal and collective equilibrium. Man's failure to make the essential adjustment to his problem causes him to become passive, evasive, ignominious, obsessive, insecure, fearful and/or domineering.

¹Storr, The Integrity of the Personality, p. 174.

Due to this deficiency, Pinter's characters cease to exist. They merely subsist in a delusive, self-negating "no man's land," where "chances and possibilities do not exist." In a sense, Jung, Blake, and Pinter share Polonius's view: "...above all: to thine own self be true,/And it must follow, as the night the day,/Thou canst not then be false to any man."¹ It is the inability to be "true" to one's Self that negates any sense of purposeful existence and which is of major concern to Jung, Blake, and Pinter. Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* asks: "What does it mean to be yourself?"² Rather than ask themselves this, Pinter's characters spend their lives running away from the question.

The aim of this thesis, to paraphrase Hamlet, has been to attempt to discern a method, and not the method, to the apparent "madness" in Pinter's plays. As Pinter says of his characters: "I don't conceptualize in any way. Once I've got the clues I follow them—that's my job, really, to follow the clues."³ Like Pinter and his characters, to use Spooner's words, we must attempt to stick a needle through the

¹Shakespeare, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, p. 851.

²Henrik Ibsen, Peer Gynt, Drama and Reality: The European Theatre Since Ibsen, Ronald Gaskell, p. 45.

³Lawrence M. Bensky, "Harold Pinter: An Interview," Pinter: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Ganz, p. 25.

characters' postures in an effort to discern the essential flabbiness of their stance. To follow the Jungian/Blake-ian "clues" in these three plays, and in others, is enlightening. For to do so, I feel, can only help one to discern one of the many "truths" to Pinter's plays.

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