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Comedy of Menace in Harold Pinters' *The Room*

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Dedication

I dedicate this work

To my beloved mother, Naziha,

To my dear brothers, Adel and kossai,

To my dear sisters, Soumia, Souhila, Asma, Fadila, Sabrina, Karima, and Radwa,

To my little birds, Aziza and Arslan ,

To all my beloved friends.

Khaoula

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to

my parents, although I know that no word of thanks or success can describe my love for

you both, for making me strong despite everything,

To my only brother,

To my friends, Woudjoud, Asma, Kaouter, Hawa, and Romaissa, with whom I spent

enjoyable time

Wiam

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Abstract

The present study deals with comedy of menace in Harold Pinter's *The Room*. The play belongs to the modern theatre where the playwright, Pinter, introduces his pinteresque style. Comedy of menace is a new technique that conveys implicitly the theme of the working-class oppression after World World II. So, this research raises the problem of how Harold Pinter conveys the themes of comedy of menace in this play. It aims at highlighting comedy of menace and the pintersesque style as new terms in modern theatre. To achieve this objective, the researchers followed a descriptive, analytical type of research, supported by the qualitative approach via analyzing his main literary techniques in *The Room*. The outcomes reveal that Harold Pinter uses symbolism, silence, and pauses in his special style.

Keywords: comedy of menace, pinteresque style, *The Room*, working-class characters.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The Room is one of the plays of modern theatre which is written by Harlod Pinter and published in 1957. Critics claim that it is the first appearance of Pinter's "Comedy of Menace." This kind of comedy contains reflections and surprises that may be both humorous and emotionally touching, as well as the open end that raises certain unresolved issues. It threatens the characters' mood like the English tragicomedy of the middle of the 20th century. *The Room*, a play full of threats and violence, is the subject of the present study.

So, the present study deals with comedy of menace in Harold Pinter's, *The Room*. Through this play, the playwright portrays the situation of the working-class members after the World War II. Pinter uses a unique modern style, the pinteresque, to express implicitly the suffering of this part of society. In this study, the researchers will highlight this new term in modern theatre implicitly.

Harold Pinter's *The Room* (1957) is considered as an early example of menace plays where it includes absurd humor, and the implicit sense of unease and anxiety that permeates the narrative. These plays and films are characterized by their juxtaposition of black humor and characters who are trapped in seemingly hopeless situations.

2. Rationale

Our rationale behind choosing this topic is to respond to our curiosity about the new term of "comedy of menace" in the field of theatre. Also, we seek to have background about its main characteristics. In addition, we try to recognize its relationship with modern theatre. Moreover, we intend to highlight the main themes of this kind of comedy.

3. Statement of the Problem

This dissertation deals with the following main problem:

How does Harold Pinter convey the themes of comedy of menace in his play, *The Room*?

4. Research Questions

1. What is comedy of menace?
2. What is the relationship between comedy of menace and the working-class characters in *The Room*?
3. What is the nature of the pinteresque style?

Hypotheses

Concerning the main problem of this dissertation, we hypothesize that Harold Pinter uses his pinteresque style techniques to present the themes of comedy of menace in *The Room*.

For the sub-questions above, we suggest the following hypotheses:

1. Comedy of menace is part of the absurd theatre.

2. Comedy of menace helps the working-class characters to express their suffering implicitly.

3. The pinteresque style is related to Harold Pinter's unique modern plays.

Aims of the Study

This research aims at studying modern theatre and comparing it to the old one. Also, we seek to highlight one of its main features and techniques which is "comedy of menace" that reflects the working-class characters' circumstances implicitly. In addition, we will explain how the playwright, Harold Pinter, presents comedy of menace via his specific and unique style. Furthermore, we will study deeply his pinteresque style.

Methodology

This dissertation follows a descriptive, analytical type of research; it studies the new concept of "comedy of menace" or the pintereque style in the play. We will use the qualitative approach to analyze the expressions, sentences, and the characters' behavior that reveal comedy of menace. The working-class characters dialogues and behavior will be described and interpreted deeply.

Research Design

This dissertation contains three chapters. The first chapter presents the evolution of theatre from the old one till the modern writings, to which *The Room* belongs. In addition, it highlights the notions of realism and social criticism in literature, especially the modern one. However, the second chapter is devoted to the explanation of the term of "comedy of menace." Moereover, it describes the pinteresque style in details and the significance of symbolism in this style of literary writings. The third chapter represents the practical part of this dissertation where we analyze the play of The Room in terms of comedy of menace themes and techniques.

Chapter One

Chapter One

Modernism in the History of Theatre: Overview

Introduction

Many famous literature authors have paved their way into the journey of play and poetry writing. Through their frequent contributions in this field, various innovative concepts were added to their literary careers. Harold Pinter, a playwright,is one of the major figures who introduced and portrayed different theatrical scenesvia his modern plays. In the light of this, this chapter will highlight first the origins and the emergence of English theatre till the modern period. In this way, the reader will be able to recognize and compare the old theatre to the modern one related to Harold Pinter's writings, the sample to be studied throughout this dissertation.

In addition, the characteristics of modern literature, especially theatre and to which Harold Pinter's *The Room* belongs will be explained in details. Here, realism and social criticism is tackled to clarify the playwright's themes of the working class members suffer after the World War II. This theme is conveyed Pinter's special style under the absurd theatre or his innovative concept, –comedy of menace.

History of Theatre

Theatre: Definition and Origins

Theater is one of the most often used forms of entertainment. Drama, comedy, music, and other types of entertainment have been appreciated for ages. However, the earliest dramatic performances were made by the Ancient Greeks in the 6th century B.C., which marks the beginning of theater (Jarmillo, 2017, p.01).

The word ‒theatre‖ originates from an old Greek word called ‒*theatron,"* which literally means "an instrument for *(-tron)* viewing *(thea-)*-a difficult definition in and of itself. According to this definition, a *theatron* simply refers to the area of a theater where the audience is seated, which is the actual "instrument for viewing," or the location from where the audience saw the drama. That ignores the orchestra (the dancing area), the*skene* (the tent behind the stage), and the *parodoi*, the other areas of the Greek theater where the performance is mostly held (the side entrances into the orchestra) (ibid).

Theatron is therefore too limited, a concept to be very helpful in defining "theatre," considerably less helpful than *historia*was in clarifying "history." "Theatre" is actually more difficult to define than "history." Theater nowadays offers a huge variety of opportunities, both in theory and in practice. According to the American composer John Cage (date unknown), *"theatre occurs constantly wherever one or more human beings, isolated in time and/or space, present themselves to another or others."*(Quoted in Carlson,1960, p.77). For the critic Bernard Beckerman (date unknown), theater occurs for both cases and it does not fit the very narrowed definition. The search for a conclusive definition is not over when it is impossible to distinguish between theater and a lecture, tennis match, or astronauts on the moon (Carlson,1960, p.77).

At least as far back society can be traced, theater has existed for what seems like forever. Theatre is so much more than just a venue for dramatic performances, which is what the name "theatre" itself denotes. Theater is more than simply a structure; it's also the act of telling stories and putting on a performance. It is the transformation of a crowd into an audience and the fostering of community via performing arts (Ali, 2016, p.01)

Before Christopher Columbus' explorations in the second half of the 15th century, the civilizations of the Mediterranean basin in general, the Far East, northern Europe, and the

Western Hemisphere all left behind signs of buildings whose connection to religious ritual activity relates them to the theater. The campfire circles that members of a prehistoric community would congregate around to take part in tribal rites are thought to represent their ancestors, according to anthropological studies. Examples of architectural structures with a size and arrangement ideal for huge audiences include *Karnak* in ancient Egypt, Persepolis in Persia, and Knossos in Crete. They served as gathering places where a priestly caste would make contact with supernatural beings. So, we don't fully understand the shift from ritual requiring widespread participation to something more akin to drama, where there is a clear separation between active players and passive observers. However, the priestly caste and the performance eventually separated themselves from the audience on a physical level. Theatre as a location then developed (Barker *et al.*,2020, p.01)

When considering the origins of theater, it is common to assume that they can be traced back to Ancient Greece and its amphitheatres, which is correct since they are the oldest theaters known to exist in Europe and date back to 600 B.C. However, this would be fitting theater into a box, and it is far too big for that. It is possible that theater originated as early as 8500 B.C., when taking into account tribal dancing and religious rites. Depending on how you define it, theater is closely related to society because performing and expressing *onesel* f has always been a part of daily life (Ali,2016, p.01).

Theatrical performances have long been a part of human culture in some way, and there are many indications that the Ancient Egyptians were particularly interested in them. However, despite the fact that the history of theater dates back more than 2500 years, many people think that the Ancient Greeks are responsible for the modern conception of it. According to the archives, it began with a religious celebration during which they honored the god Dionysus, just like in earlier times. (God of wine and fertility). Through dancing

and singing, the Dionysians created the more organized type of drama that has impacted modern drama. (ibid)

Many of the Greeks' cultural legacies are still evident today, such as the masks that they frequently utilize as a sign of theater and that they used to express emotion and character. Thespis, a poet who won a dramatic play competition and the inspiration for the moniker "thespian" given to players today, invented these masks. Their specialty was tragedies, many of which are still played and interpreted today. They told Greek stories. The Greek theater served as an inspiration for the Romans as well, and like everything else, they modified it to fit their needs. They liked comedies and translated Greek plays into Latin. Due to the exciting public executions that were taking place in 300 B.C. and the intense competition it faced, Roman Theater had to become more extravagant and daring. As a result, the Romans built some 125 large, magnificent public theaters over the course of the following two centuries (ibid)

Despite the objections that Christians brought to the theater, which included violence, closing down theaters, theatre finally rebounded with religious plays, once again. (although it took them a good 1000 years to get back on track). The growth of theater was gradual but steady as it spread over the world, with professional performers finally making a comeback and new theaters emerging everywhere. (ibid)

Shakespeare's arrival and the establishment of the Globe Theatre in England during the 1500s greatly influenced modern theater. Despite all the greats Shakespeare has given us, theater has faced many challenges over the years, including closing and reopening, allowing women to perform, the middle class predominating in the audience, and the introduction of new styles in both the play and the costumes and sets. History and the history of theater have both influenced and are influencing theater. Its history of arriving

here and enduring its upheavals has shaped it into what it is now. Thanks to everything that came before it, it is now more accessible than ever and makes up a larger portion of our culture than ever (ibid, p.02).

Figure 1.1: the scene in ancient theatre (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_architectura)

Theatre in Ancient Greece (550 and 220 BC)

1.1.3.1Visual and Spatial Aspects

The first performances of theatre in ancient Greece were held in the agora (i.e., the marketplace), with wooden stands for audience seating; in 498, the stands collapsed and killed several spectators. The poet Thespis, who is credited with both creating tragedy and being the first actor, arrived in Athens with his troupe on wagons in 534 BCE. *Dearchitecturalibridecem,* written by the Roman author Vitruvius in the first century BCE, and the *Onomasticon*, written by the Greek scholar Julius*Pollux* in the second century CE, both provide in-depth literary accounts of theater and scenery in ancient Greece. The veracity of these treatises' descriptions, however, is in question because they were written some hundred years after classical theater(Izenour*et al.,* 2020, p. 01).

Also,*tchorus*, whose size appears to have changed significantly throughout the earliest period of Greek play, was the main component of the production. There were 50

chorus members in Aeschylus' Suppliants, compared to only 12 in his other plays and 15 in Sophocles. As the ritual component of theatre waned in the fifth century, the chorus size shrank. Roles had to be doubled since there were more players needed as the chorus got smaller and the dramas' stories got more complicated. Such swaps were delayed on an entirely open stage, which diminished the drama's suspense. In addition, the background decor was made up of a temporary wooden framework that was draped with movable screens and leant up against the *stoa's* front wall. These were red-tinted dried animal skin screens; it wasn't until Aeschylus that wooden-framed canvases were embellished to suit the requirements of a given play. Aristotle attributes scene painting to Sophocles, a development that some have credited to Aeschylus. It is noteworthy that Aeschylus showed attention in staging and is attributed with creating the traditional outfit. Simple Greek scenery was equivalent to that of the 20th century, and a great want to envision and specifically describe the action's background developed (ibid, pp. 02-03).

1.1.3.2 Acoustics

The issue of acoustics in the antique theater has been the subject of extensive recent research. When thousands of people were seated around three-fifths to two-thirds of a full circular orchestra outside, the challenge of being audible to them seemed insurmountable as long as the artist was inside the orchestra. Therefore, a more direct route between speaker and audience was necessary if the unaided voice was to be heard by the vast majority of audience members. Some researchers claim that when the actor was moved behind and above the orchestra onto the raised platform, more of the audience was placed in direct line of sight and sound with him, which to some extent improved the acoustical issues (Izenour*et al.,* 2020, p.04).

Theater in Ancient Rome

The main difference between Roman and Greek stage performances is that the Roman theatre expressed no deep religious convictions. Although the spectacles were being technically connected with the festivals in honor of the gods, the Roman audience dealt with the theatre for entertainment. The circus was the first permanent public building for spectacles, and it was slower to develop in Rome than in Athens(ibid, p.05)

1.1.4 .1Stage Design

The raised stage was the most significant aspect that set the Roman Theater apart from the Greek theater. The seating area *(cavea)* could only be a semicircle because every seat has to have a view of the stage. The <u>*scaenae frons*</u>, the set structure behind the stage, served as both the back scene and the performers' dressing room in Greek theater. It was no longer painted in the Greek style, but instead preferred to combine opulent adornment with architectural features. The spectators were seated on levels of wooden benches that were held up by scaffolding. The back scene, which included three doors, was facing the audience and had no curtain. Furthermore, the actors at Roman theaters used the stage exclusively. They did so by entering by one of the house doors or the side entrances in the wings. The side door on the audience's right indicated the close proximity, while the one on their left indicated the distant proximity. If a scene was set in a town, for example, it was assumed that an actor leaving the audience on their right was heading to the forum; on their left, he might be going to the country or the harbor. The scenery in the immediate area was indicated by *periaktoi* at the side entrances (Izenour *et al.,* 2020, pp.05-03).

Figure 1.2: Theatre of ancient Rome (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_architectura)

1.1.4 .2 Vitruvius' *On Architecture*

Another place to learn about Roman theater is in literature. Three books in Vitruvius'*De architecturalibridecem* (*Ten Books on Architecture*), written in the first century BCE, are devoted to the planning and building of Greek and Roman theaters. The author provides a general set of guidelines for locating outdoor theaters as well as for creating the stage, orchestra, and auditorium. In terms of design and proportion, these guidelines are based on Euclidian geometry. His recommendations for ensuring clear sightlines from the audience to the stage are generally sound. But aside than that, his work is not particularly useful. Although he makes reference to changing surroundings, he is evasive about the specifics (ibid, p.07).

Figure 1.3: a 1521 Italian edition of *De architecture*(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_architectura)

So, the figure above shows the a 1521 Italian edition of *De architecture* that was translated and illustrated by Cesare di Lorenzo Cesariano (December 10, 1475 – March 30, 1543) who was an Italian painter, architect and architectural theorist. He wrote the first Italian-language version of Vitruvius'*De architectura*.

.3 Bali

As a representation of theatre in smaller Asian countries like Thailand, Kampuchea (Cambodia), Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, where drama is nearly entirely dance-based, Balinese theater is included here. Balinese dances can be performed anywhere, but they are typically performed in front of temples or community gathering pavilions. The performers are surrounded by the audience on three sides, or occasionally in a circle. On one side of the performance space, the gamelan, or group of musicians, perform. Also, Location is implied by the speech or by the characters' facial expressions and gestures; there are no scenery or obvious signs of scene changes. At the start of each portion of the dance, a scenic "device" is used; for example, the dancer makes a motion known as "opening the curtain." When the full, formal posture of a Balinese dance is attained, the hands stop separating on a diagonal line to show the figure and are palms out in front of the face. (Izenour*et al.,* 2020, p.12).

Figure 1.4 : Bali stage (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_architectura)

The Middle Ages Theatre (500–1050)

Roman drama reached its pinnacle in terms of performances and theaters in the 4th century CE, but it had already run into resistance that would eventually lead to its destruction. The church made attempts to discourage Christians from traveling to the theater starting from 300 CE, and the fifth Council of Carthage issued an excommunication decree in 401 for anyone who attended performances on holy days. In many regions, the prohibition against actors receiving the sacraments unless they gave up their profession did not end until the 18th century (Alexander, 2013, p.99).

In addition, it is currently believed that even though theaters were not used and governmental recognition and sponsorship of performances were discontinued, at least the mime tradition persisted throughout the Middle Ages. Christian writings imply that entertainers were well-known individuals. As an illustration, two well-known proverbs were "It is better to please God than the actors" and "It is better to feed paupers at your table than actors." Aside from the mime tradition, Terence, a writer from Rome, maintained his reputation far into the early Middle Ages. This was likely due to his writing style (ibid, p.101).

Renaissance Theatre (1600s)

Characteristics

There were two different types of theatrical productions at the start of the Renaissance. The first was of the kind that Julius *Laetus*, a humanist who formed the *AccademiaRomana* in the middle of the 15thcentury with the aim of resurrecting classical principles, presented. In terms of staging, a number of homes in the medieval style were grouped together to make one very huge unit. But there were two components that hadn't been discovered before. One was the likelihood that ornamental columns framed the homes (Compton-Ricket, date unknown, p.189).

This was the initial step in the development of the proscenium arch, the structure that encloses the curtain and frames the stage from the audience's point of view.(The*Teatro* Farnese in Parma, Italy, created the first permanent proscenium in 1618–1619; Francesco*Salviati* had built a temporary one 50 years before.) The mansions were classified as parts of a typical city street since they were connected, which was the second novelty. The mansions were replaced in 1508 at Ferrara by a background painted in accordance with the principles of perspective; the picture had homes, churches, towers, and gardens (ibid).

Staging Development

The angled wings have to be replaced due to the needs of scene switching. It took until 1600 to figure out how to successfully translate a perspective image to a number of flat wings. Angled wings had fully lost their utility by 1650, when flats were arranged one behind the other at each wing point. By eliminating the visible wings and exposing the set

in back, the scene was altered. The stage floor was grooved to support the flats and make movement easier (Alexander, 2013, p.115).

On two flat surfaces known as shutters that met in the middle of the stage, the background was painted, and rolled-up fabrics were occasionally utilized.Also,Special effects and elaborating on medieval customs were particularly appealing to the Italians. The majority of the special effects was related to the intermezzi and incorporated pagan gods in place of biblical figures from the Middle Ages. It's possible to utilize machines that can fly up to 50 characters. According to *Serlio*, invisible wires were used to move mechanical figures that were carved out of pasteboard and represented persons, animals, and objects across a scene. In several productions, the activity of dropping painted flats and cloths would be concealed by clouds that enveloped the stage (ibid, p.117).

The front curtain was employed to block the stage and heighten the audience's awe at the start of a performance. The curtain was initially drawn back. In addition, the commedia *dell'arte* is best known as a stock type theater that over the years captured and held the attention of audiences before degenerating into pantomime clowns. The *commedia' s*greatest significance has actually frequently gone unnoticed; its emergence as a distinct theatrical genre in the 16th century signifies a significant shift in the development of Western theater as a whole. Performance in pre-commercial theater was characterized by the audience and actors' shared participation (Izenour*et al.,* 2020, pp.20-21).

The Elizabethan Stage

Different kinds of theater appeared in England in the first half of the 16th century. One was portrayed by small ensembles of trained performers who gave performances in public spaces like halls, inns, or markets. A play's setting was formed by the players'

words and body language. Similar to the commedia *dell'arte*, these locations weren't particularly important. The second kind of theater, which was prevalent in the London area, featured amateur actors—typically college students—who performed for the royal court and various nobles. Both the actors and the audience had a high level of education, were familiar with the classics, and were aware of other nations' theater, particularly French theater.The stage was most likely set with painted canvas-covered buildings built of laths, with cloud borders concealing the acting area's upper portion (ibid, p.22).

Neoclassical Theatre (18th Century)

Neoclassicism Definition

Neoclassical theatre, or theater as it is frequently called, is a term used to describe a period between the mid-17th and early-18th century when the dramatic arts were influenced by the concepts and fashions of classical Greek and Roman society. People at the time were very concerned with decorum, or proper conduct, and realism, and they thought that the main purposes of a play were to amuse and instruct. The movement was distinguished by grand, ornate scenery, elaborate drama, and strict adherence to the classics. Most works were also distinguished by the usage of five acts, sparse performances, and a high degree of improvisation. Though it started in France, then swiftly expanded over all of Europe (Baran ,2023, p. 01).

Origin of Neoclassicism

The Enlightenment, a philosophical and cultural movement that advocated a critical review of the dominant beliefs and values, had a significant impact on the development of Neoclassical art in the 18th century, which is why it is often referred to as the "Age of Enlightenment" because it sought to put an end to the religious and irrational obscurantism of earlier centuries. As a result, rationalism and empiricism were the two major intellectual

currents that fed neoclassicism. In the first, reason is separated from divine traditions and revelations and seen as a pillar of human understanding. This movement holds that nothing can be taken for granted and must first pass a critical examination. Furthermore, Empiricism, on the other hand, is a school of thought that bases its knowledge on experimentation and observation, or on generating a hypothesis and then verifying it. (Alexander, 2023, pp. 02-03)

Guiding Principle of the Era

The prevalent belief during the 18th century era was that earlier times had been far too permissive, placing an excessive amount of emphasis on the individual and their feelings. Because of this, people at the period thought it was important to practice some restraint and to focus more on what each individual might provide the larger society. They attempted to revert to the ways in which the original classicists, the ancient Greeks and Romans, had approached life and the arts and looked to them for guidance on how to do this (Baran, 2023, p. 01).

Characteristics

Neoclassical theater was characterized by the requirement that its performances serve as both moralizing and educational tools. Therefore, if it was an epic, the people were educated about the great virtues and vices of men, inspiring them to love the former and despise the latter; in the event of tragedy, it had to teach the populace that vices never go unpunished. In terms of comedy, this needs to be a portrayal of everyday life that, via humor, corrects vices that are widespread (ibid, p. 04)

Neoclassical theater focused on honoring three specific units from a formal standpoint: the unit of time, the unit of place, and the unit of action. The rule of the unit of place required that there be only one stage through which the performers entered and exited, while the rule of the unit of time mandated that the internal duration of a performance may not exceed twenty-four hours. Finally, the unit of action established that just three acts—the presentation or beginning, the middle, and the end—could be created. Neoclassical theater adhered to other classical standards as well, such as the separation of comedy and tragedy. This implies that Tragicomedy is not a literary genre that is accepted by neoclassical playwrights (ibid, P. 05).

Neoclassical drama aimed to educate people from all socioeconomic strata, yet its themes always dealt with the concerns of everyday bourgeois life. To put it another way, bourgeois characters who were typically well-off and educated were chosen as heroes or protagonists by neoclassical writers (ibid).

The Stage, Sets and Costumes

Dramatic, complex, and lavish sets characterized Neoclassical theater. They were created to create a luxuriant backdrop for each scene and to engross the viewer in the drama. Another objective was to create a convincing illusion of perception and depth. During this time, the actual stages underwent a redesign, adding dramatic arches to accent the sceneries and several entry points. Particularly since the development of pulley systems, which made it possible for actors to travel around the stage more swiftly, the idea of altering the theater's backdrops and scenery has grown in popularity. The dramatic experience was improved by the use of lighting and sound effects, which raised the tone and message of each scene. In addition, in the backdrop of these brand-new sets and stage designs, dull attire would have naturally appeared a little out of place. Costumes were

extremely bright and frequently adorned with lace and other details to make them more enticing, even though they did maintain a sense of realism. As part of the commedia *dell'arte* aesthetic, characters in the play occasionally also wore masks (Baran ,2023, p. 02).

Modern Theatre (19th and 20th Century)

Theatre Development in the 19th Century

Little changed in Napoleon's France from the theatre of the 1780s, which specialized in Neoclassical play. Romanticism made its theatrical début in 1830, when the *Comédie-Française* was compelled by public pressure to stage Victor *Hugo's Hernani. Hugo's Bohemian Claque* overpowered the stuffy regular theatergoers in a lively opening, but Romanticism emerged victorious and dominated the Parisian stage for the next 50 years. The grandiose bombast of Romanticism did not destroy the Baroque; rather, it rather diluted it. The formal artificial structure was broken up into sentimental, melodramatic scenes that showed the distressed hero being buffeted by an uncaring world and the terrifying elements. So that emphasis could be focused on special effects and spectacle, the melodramas included natural disasters that were important to the plot. In order to keep the audience's interest while presenting a variety of historical eras and amazing scenery, dramatists frequently purposefully used exotic locations or local color. Architectural perspective was supplanted by neo-Gothic sentimentalization of nature throughout the 19th century. In France, painted romantic landscapes in the Loutherbourg fashion were very popular (Bay, 2020, pp. 28-29).

Germany's 19th century was a study in contrasts. The early decades saw the rise of Romanticism, which was still prevalent 50 years later, most notably in the persona of the composer Richard Wagner. The middle decades of the century, marked by political and

economic disappointment prior to Germany's unification, were favorable to the emergence of the Naturalist school, whose philosophy was initially expressed in the *Meiningen* Players, founded in 1866 by George II, duke of Saxe-*Meiningen*. Also, after Napoleon was defeated, political unrest in Germany by the middle of the 1820s resulted in stringent censorship and municipal control over the theater. The repertoires were made up of uninspiring new plays and "safe" classics, producing competent theater. The staging demonstrated this ability. Karl Friedrich *Schinkel*, a designer who received his education in both Germany and Italy, was one of the few significant designers of the time. In 1827, he debuted the diorama in Berlin.In addition, Later, two schools of romanticism emerged. The first of these, known as historical Romanticism, asserted that history is ongoing and that, if its significance is understood, the present can be seen to be just as "historical" as anything that has taken place in the past. The second Romantic faction, with whom Wagner was affiliated, was only interested in using history to arrive at unchanging truths. According to Wagner, the study of history ultimately leads to the study of prehistory and thereafter to transhistorical mythology, the domain of unchanging truths. It's particularly intriguing that historical Romanticism, the first kind, eventually found a home in the realist school's theater. By the late 1800s, Wagner's mysticism had lost its luster (Barker *et al.,* 2020, p. 29).

Due to rigorous government censorship, especially after 1825, Russian play in the 19th century likewise got off to a delayed start. Similar to Germany, this environment let Romanticism blossom, especially as it appeared in patriotic performances. Up until the 1830s, Shakespeare, musicals, and melodramas were the core of Russian repertory. The plays by Aleksandr Ostrovsky, Nikolay Gogol, and Ivan Turgenev are the most well-known examples of the new realistic style. Furthermore, due to rigorous government censorship, especially after 1825, Russian play in the 19th century likewise got off to a

delayed start. Similar to Germany, this environment let Romanticism blossom, especially as it appeared in patriotic performances. Up until the 1830s, Shakespeare, musicals, and melodramas were the core of Russian repertory. The plays by Aleksandr Ostrovsky, Nikolay Gogol, and Ivan Turgenev are the most well-known examples of the new realistic style. Moreover , each theater had a small selection of stock settings throughout the 1850s. Although the box set had been released in the 1830s, it would take several decades for it to gain popularity. By the 1850s, realism had taken over scenic design, especially at Moscow's Maly Theatre. When one theater employed a historian to assist the designer of Aleksey Tolstoy's The Death of Ivan the Terrible in the 1860s, historically correct settings started to emerge in plays. In the past, the principal set designers for the state theaters had used the neutral aesthetic of German designer Alfred Roller. It wasn't until the early 20th century, when the Moscow Art Theatre blossomed, that the unified production methods of *Meiningen* were observed in Russia (ibid, p.30).

The 20th Century Modern Theatre

There were many changes and upheavals during the 20th century. Technology advanced relatively quickly in the 19th century as a result of the growth of ideas. The world also entered a period of protracted conflicts during this time. Not every war was a significant global struggle. Every day, somewhere in the world, there was small-scale violence. Different political, social, economic, and religious beliefs were at stake in these conflicts. Also, significant wars of the 20th century involve: World War I, Russian Revolution, World War II, Korean War, Vietnamese War, Arab-Israeli conflicts, Afghanistan (Russia and U.S.),Persian Gulf, and Iraq. In addition to that technology advanced incredibly quickly, sometimes even as a result of the wars. The first 100 years of the 20th century saw a boom in communications and transportation technology after

millennia of only modest advancement. Horse-drawn carriages gave way to modern cars. We transitioned from hot air balloons to supersonic airplanes in the air. The telegraph greatly accelerated communication in the 19th century, but in the 20th century we went from Alexander Graham Bell's basic telephone to the cell phone that is in everyone's pocke .(Ray, date unknown , p. 01).

The Impact on Theatre

All these fresh concepts and innovations were mirrored in theater during the 20th century. In fact, it wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that theater started to be seen as a reflection of reality and an opportunity for the audience to think about the society in which we all live. The new philosophical concepts were adopted in the plays and performance techniques. One of the earliest developments of the 20th century was the evolution and decline of religion as a significant effect on theatre and society. Theatre was increasingly influenced by new ideologies, psychology, and its study of how people think and how the brain works. Theatre was impacted by the numerous new economic theories and practices (ibid, p. 02)

Beginnings of Realism

The 20th century is probably most notable for the advent of what became known as "realism" in theater. The plays, the acting, and the production values all convey this theme. The study and writings of Stanislavski, whose methods we looked at in an earlier supplement, are most renowned for their impact on acting, thus they won't be discussed again here. Also, the beginning of modern theatre marked three major playwrights :Henrik Ibsen , August Strindberg , and Anton Chekhov; These writers hail from nations outside of central Europe. For a while, those nations kept the Romantic era alive. In the theater,

change first occurs on the periphery before "new" ideas make their way into the mainstream (ibid, pp. 02-03)

Realism & Naturalism

The goal of theater is to "mirror" what the audience believes to be reality by reflecting real life. In other words, by adopting the appearance of reality, it is intended to "look real" and give the audience the impression that it is real. Additionally, it aims to mimic real life by mimicking how people speak, walk, dress, etc. Additionally, the majority of non-realistic aspects and deviations from reality such as the supernatural, the use of poetry in dialogue, songs sung by the characters (like in musicals), the inclusion of fantasy or dream components were purposefully left out (ibid , P. 03).

An extreme kind of realism known as "hyper realism" or "hyperrealism" called Naturalism emerged concurrently with realism. Naturalism developed realism to the point that it produced reality on stage rather than just reflecting it or giving it the impression of doing so. This kind of theater is sometimes referred to as "cutlery in the drawer" or slice of life. The staging and production elements would be so authentic, in essence, that silverware would be present in a kitchen set's drawer even if the drawer was never opened during the play. This kind of theater emphasizes the material aspects of life by attempting to create a picture-perfect reality. The characters in these plays are typically from lower social classes, and they frequently examine the darkest aspects of human nature, frequently in the context of satire. (ibid, P. 04)

Departures from Realism

The following is a list of some further 20th-century style innovations that are seen as non-realistic or veering away from realism.

- Symbolism – spirituality, imagination, dreams.

- Theatricalism – emphasized ‒theatre-ness‖ and conventions.

- Expressionism – explore spiritual awakening and suffering, episodic, often anti-father, heightened language/dialogue.

- Futurism - emphasized the mechanization of society and machinery.

- Surrealism – rejects conventions and explores the working of the subconscious – mystical/metaphysical ritual event – dream-like.

- Theatre of cruelty – similar to Surrealism but deals more with the physicality of mystic and metaphysic ritual – violent and erotic impulses.

- Epic theatre – rejected the ‒illusion‖ and ‒escapism‖ of Realism – emphasized ‒the play‖ and the intellect – associated with Bertolt Brecht (Ray, date unknown, pp. 04-05).

Totalitarianism and Theatre

The governments of the various nations made attempts to censor and regulate theater, as they have throughout most times of theater history. However, a number of governments in the 20th century that were effectively totalitarian tyrannies both restricted theater and employed it as a tool for social control. Although Nazi Germany and the former Soviet Union are frequently mentioned when discussing these measures, they were not exclusive to those two powerful countries in the 20th century. Theater was widely subject to this control, or attempts to control it. Theater was frequently utilized as propaganda in these

totalitarian regimes, with government sponsorship, to try and persuade audiences by presenting the totalitarian leaders and ideologies in a favorable light. Additionally, they would make an effort to stifle and censor opposing viewpoints and ‒free thinking‖ (ibid, p.05)

Experimentation

The theatre of the 20th century was rife with experiments with novel concepts, genres, and forms. There were more of them than the ones that finally succeeded, some of which we have covered in past supplements. Many of these resulted from the psychological and social strains of the early 20th century, which saw numerous conflicts, the development of nuclear technology, and the use of nuclear bombs. These are typically categorized as "avant-garde" or "cutting edge" theater. The forms listed below were developed from similar philosophical movements of philosophers and academics (ibid, p.06)

Popular Theatre

Theatre found itself having to compete more and more often for the audiences it needs to exist as the variety of entertainment increased in the 20th century. That pattern is still evident today, perhaps even more so given the abundance of online possibilities. As a result, there was a stronger effort to cater to the audience's trendy tastes. They should also directly appeal to what the audience wants and values in their entertainment, not only to mirror their reality. A deliberate effort is made to genuinely appeal to the audience's amusement, frequently at the sacrifice of some of the other goals of theatre, and this ends up being the main focus of popular theater (ibid).

1.1.8.2.7 Globalization

The internationalization of theater is another tendency that started in the 20th century. Other cultural and socio-political influences on theater came into contact as transportation and communication technologies advanced. As a result, the world of theatre experienced an increase in the cross-cultural flow of ideas, goods and services, language, and art in the latter half of the 20th century. All cultures, from east to west and north to south, share these concepts (ibid, P.07).

Modernism in Literature

Modernism was a literary movement that emerged From the late 19[th]century until about the middle of the 20th century, mainly in Europe and North America ,and embraced a number of developing writing methods that had an impact on the development of literature. Also, it was breaking with the past while also looking for new ways to express oneself. In an era of industrialization, fast social changes, and developments in the social sciences are generally defined by optimism and convention. Imagism, symbolism, vorticism, Acmeist poetry, futurism, cubism, surrealism, and expressionism are all part of this literary and aesthetic trend (Kuiper, 2023, p.01).

In addition, literary modernism gave authors more freedom to express themselves creatively than in the past. The experiences and feelings of the individual are frequently highlighted in non-linear narratives and free-flowing interior monologues found in modernist works. Franz Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Joseph Conrad, Samuel Beckett, William Carlos Williams, and W.B. Yeats are examples of modernist authors (Peck and Coyle, 2013, p. 246).

The search for an honest reaction to a drastically altered reality, as well as industrialization and urbanization, feed the modernist urge in a variety of literary works. Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and other authors' prewar writings are considered modernist, but modernism as a literary trend is primarily connected to the years following World War I. Postwar Modernist literature represented a sense of disappointment and fragmentation as a result of how seriously the war had taken the foundations of Western civilization and culture. The quest for rebirth and redemption in a barren and spiritually empty terrain is a central theme of T.S. Eliot's epic poem The Waste Land (1922), a key work of Modernism. The poem is typical of Modernism in that it necessitates the reader's active participation in the interpretation of the text due to its shattered images and cryptic allusions (ibid, pp. 146-147).

The majority of Modernist poets did not share Eliot's perspective. Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg both vividly depicted their home states' regions-New England and the Midwest, respectively-in the United States. A talented group of poets emerged from the Harlem Renaissance, including Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Alice Dunbar Nelson. In 1912, Harriet Monroe established Poetry magazine in Chicago, making it the most significant publication for poetry throughout the English-speaking world as well as the United States. Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marianne Moore, and E.E. Cummings all wrote poetry in the 1920s that reflected a spirit of exploration and change (Kuiper, 2023, p.02).

Many works of American Modernist fiction are marked by a sense of loss and disappointment. It is possible for such perception to be focused on particular people, on American society, or on civilization in general. It might inspire a destructive, nihilistic urge, or it might represent optimism for the possibility of transformation. In *The Great Gatsby* (1925), F. Scott Fitzgerald mocked the American dream; in *Native Son* (1940),

Richard Wright exposed and denounced American racism; in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Zora Neale Hurston detailed a Black woman's three marriages; and in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Ernest Hemingway expressed the disillusionment of the lost generation. However, John Steinbeck depicted the challenging lives of migrant workers in *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Willa Cather told upbeat tales of the American frontier, mostly set on the *Great Plains*, in *O Pioneers!* (1913) and *My Antonia* (1918), and William Faulkner broke with established literary conventions in *The Sound and the Fury* by using stream-of-consciousness monologues and other formal devices (ibid).

The release of *Ulysses* by Irish author James Joyce in 1922 was a turning point for Modernist literature on the other side of the Atlantic. The dense, protracted, and contentious book uses the stream-of-consciousness writing style, which typically omits orderly sentence structure and incorporates thought fragments in an effort to capture the flow of characters' thoughts, to describe the events of one day in the lives of three Dubliners. Because of the book's indecent content, *Ulysses* was outlawed in English-speaking nations for a very long time. Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, and American exile Gertrude Stein were among the other European Modernist writers whose works ignored chronological and narrative coherence (Kuiper,2023,pp.03-04).

Realism and Social Criticism in Literature

The topic of social realism requires paying attention to political and social issues through art, mainly visual art. A society's poverty, injustice, and corruption are examined critically by social realism. The art movement socialist realism, which emerged in the middle of the 20th century and was supported by Joseph Stalin to portray an idealized view of daily life in the Soviet Union, is distinct from social realism (Blumberg, 2023,p.01).

In its narrowest sense, the term ‒Social Realism,‖ which first appeared in American art about 1930, refers to paintings that approach social protest issues in a naturalistic or nearly expressionist fashion. The phrase ‒American Scene painting‖ is frequently used more broadly to refer to more generic depictions of American life that are typically classified as Regionalism and American Scene painting, which may or may not contain socially critical commentary (ibid).

The Ashcan School of painters, who in the early 20th century captured the banal, grim, and unglamorous reality of city life, are credited with giving birth to social realism. Among this eclectic group of painters who depicted scenes from daily life were John Sloan, Robert Henri, George Bellows, and George Luks. Later, Reginald Marsh carried on this tradition even though he was not a part of the Ashcan School, using the Bowery and lower Manhattan as his themes (Sanders, 1994, p.162).

The Great Depression's onset in 1929 and the implementation of the New Deal's policies starting in 1933 sparked a significant tendency toward sociopolitical criticism in American painting. With the help of the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), the Treasury Department, and the Works Progress (later Projects) Administration (WPA), many artists were hired to create murals for public buildings in the 1930s that featured American themes. This was part of the federal government's massive expansion of job patronage. The politically charged and occasionally explicitly propagandistic murals by Mexican artists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco had a significant impact on many American artists in the 1930s. One famous example of these American public decorations is George Biddle's Sweatshop (about 1935), a study for a fresco in the Justice Department Building in Washington, D.C. It is also one of the few to have remained intact (ibid, pp.166-167).

American artists started to openly address issues like unemployment and poverty, political corruption and injustice, labor-management conflict, and the excesses of American materialism during the Great Depression. This kind of art by WPA employees Ben Shahn, Philip Evergood, William Gropper, Charles White, and Jack Levine is famous for its overt and occasionally harsh graphic critiques of American society. Shahn's scathing commentary on the outcome of the well-known case in which two Italian anarchists were sentenced to death in a politically motivated trial may be found in his picture The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti (1931-1922). The Senate is a prime example of Gropper's brilliantly simplistic caricatures of American public life (1935). The Feast of Pure Reason is an example of how Levine used a more complex expressionist method to depict what he perceived to be the degeneration of some areas of the national scene (1937) (Blumberg, 2023,p.02).

Between World Wars I and II, an American painting movement known as social Realism flourished during the depression. Filmmakers, writers, photographers, painters, cartoonists, and other artists who were committed to depicting real-life subject matter in their own art forms were all part of the movement. With American Regionalism, a rural working-class-focused art style made popular by creators like Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton, the Social Realism movement flourished.

Understanding European realism, the predecessor to social realism, is necessary to comprehend social realism history. French upheaval in the 1840s gave rise to European Realism. People, like the aforementioned Hugo Victor, had become weary of the way the working class and lower classes were depicted in Romantic art, which was at the time a prominent art form. Romanticism was characterized by idyllic settings and a focus on the emotional expression of the artists, whether those emotions were positive (happiness, love, serenity) or negative (fear, grief, rage). The observer was compelled to see the details we

might want to ignore in art because realism aimed to produce works of art exactly as they would have appeared to the unaided eye (Wilkerson and Mantooth, 2021, p.01).

During the Great Depression, social realism was a prominent artistic movement in America, particularly in the field of photography. You read about a well-known photograph of a migrant woman taken by Dorothea Lange in the class. Steve McCurry's 1984 image of an Afghan girl, which was featured on the cover of National Geographic in 1985, is another well-known example of a portrait of a specific person standing in for a larger issue. Search for this image and other ones shot by National Geographic photojournalists online. Consider how a single image might symbolize a much bigger subject like war or poverty (or discuss this in a group) (ibid).

Different forms of art can take part in the idea of addressing social issues visually. Salvador Dali was a surrealist painter and sculptor who frequently used imagery from people's subconscious minds to comment on social concerns in his works. Examine a few of his works that deal with the subject of war, such as Face of War and Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man. These two works were produced in reaction to the artist's thoughts on World War II. Learn more about Dali's thoughts on the events taking place in Europe, particularly in his own Spain, around the middle of the 20th century. (Wilkerson and Mantooth, 2021, p.03).

However the authors of Modern literature express social reality through many new literary techniques as stream of consciousness (see chapter 2), monologue, symbolism, and different language aesthetics. Harold Pinter deals with the miserable situation of his working class characters via his innovative techniques in theatre, comedy of menace. He also focuses on symbolism to convey this theme in his play, *The Room*. In the next chapter, comedy of menace style will be clarified deeply.

Theatre of The Absurd

Martin Esslin, a theater critic, created the term ‒theater of the absurd‖ or ‒absurdism‖ to describe a group of specific plays written in the middle of the 20th century, as well as the plays written in the same vein. Esslin used these plays as examples of Albert Camus' philosophy, which holds that there is no inherent value to existence. The majority of plays in this movement have a few things in common, like gibberish dialogue, repetitious or pointless action, and unrealistic or impossible narratives (Swindle, 2021, p.01).

During the 1950s through the late 1980s, there was a dramatic movement in Europe called the Theatre of the Absurd. It is addressed via a dramatic lens the basic premise that life was essentially meaningless and humans were fundamentally incapable of managing their fates in a harsh and cruel cosmos, evolving from the burgeoning philosophical doctrine of Existentialism. The Theatre of the Absurd had a significant influence on the development of modern theater, and many of the plays connected to the movement are still well-liked and frequently staged today (ibid).

On the other hand, the Theatre of the Absurd aims at severing devaluation of language and poetry that will emerge from the tangible and objectified images of the stage itself. In this paradigm, language is still very important, but what occurs on stage transcends and frequently contradicts what the characters say. For instance, in Ionesco's play The Chairs, the poetic meaning lies not in the commonplace words spoken, but rather in the fact that they are spoken to an increasing number of empty chairs (Swindle,2021, p.02)

The Theatre of the Absurd explores the underlying absurdity of choosing to live a regular life in the face of an uncaring and meaningless existence. The characters in absurdist plays act either ordinarily in absurd situation, ordinarily in absurd settings, or in any mix of the two, decontextualizing these two sides of existence. Although Theatre of

the Absurd is by definition ludicrous, themes of futility, anxiety, and loneliness are frequently evident throughout these works, and there is still a great deal of critical discussion devoted to understanding and interpreting these plays(ibid, p.03).Esslin (1960) states:

> The term −Literature of the Absurd‖ is currently used to refer to a variety of works in play and prose that explore the idea that the human situation is fundamentally ludicrous, including the Theatre of the Absurd. The claim that the absurd in life can only be effectively reflected in works that are absurd itself justifies the unorthodox nature. In a world torn apart by war, when logic and reason no longer made sense, the Theatre of the Absurd as we know it today emerged as a protest against fundamental principles of traditional culture and literature (Esslin, 1960,p.03).

So, the advent of existential philosophy through the writings of Sartre and Camus gave rise to the idea that people are alone creatures compelled to live in an unfamiliar world. The Theatre of the Absurd provides a graphic representation of this meaningless search.

The Theatre of the Absurd aimed to depict the disconnection between people and their surroundings, the performer and his stage, and how this adds to the overall sense of absurdity. Absurdism holds that there are no fundamental truths, values, or meanings in the world. The Theatre of the Absurd and the Absurd literature as a whole attempted to depict existence as being characterized by nothingness and our fruitless pursuit of an ultimate reality or goal. (ibid,p.09).

Figure 1.5: a stage of the absurd

theatre(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_architectura)
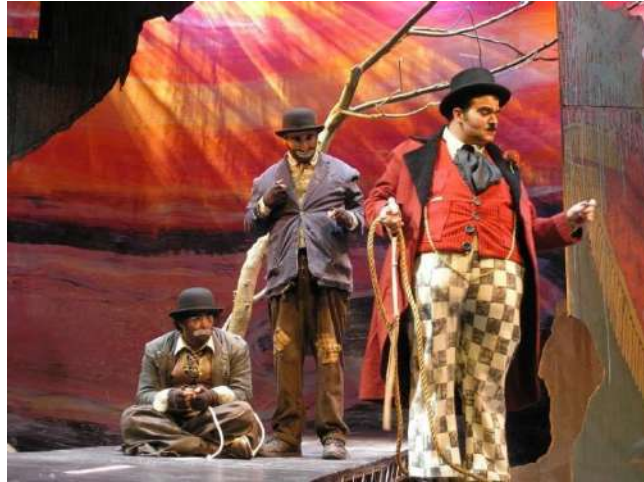
Hence, comedy of menace represents one of the aspects of the absurd theatre; it is part of it where the characters feel always insecure and disconnected of the surrounding environment. They prefer isolation at their homes instead of facing the danger of the upper class society members. The room itself in Pinter's play, *The Room*, represents security that prevents them from what happens outside. The characters dialogue is disconnected and could not be easily understood (for more explanation, see chapter 2).

Conclusion

Through this chapter, the reader can deduce that the beginning and the subsequent evolution of theatre, as an independent activity, are the main topics of theatre history. More importantly, various writers have their own style to apply multiple features that are included in different types of literary forms. Harold Pinter is one of the famous playwrights that tried to depict the characters' social reality via his new style of comedy of menace. This style is useful for expressing the characters' inner conflicts that are represented in their behavior, dialogues, and daily use of language.

In the next chapter, we will highlight comedy of menace in details. In addition, the psychological fiction will be introduced via the pinteresque style that is coined by Harold Pinter. The reader can also recognize the main features and techniques of this modern style in the world of theater.

Chapter Two

Chapter two

Comedy of Menace and the Pinteresque Style

Introduction

The phrase "comedy of menace," as a standalone description, inspires both positive and negative feelings. Comedy is used during a dangerous situation to cause audiences to draw judgments about a particular character or communication. In this regard, we study the comedy of menace by Harold Pinter, who is distinguished by his special and magnificent use of language.

Thus his style of writing was named after him painteresque. Also, he was famous of the psychological drama that characterizes the characters he creates, which are characterized by the sharp collision of their feelings. More importantly, *The Room* is considered as part of the modern theatre, this necessitates the presence of symbolism (we will discuss it deeply in this chapter).

2.1 Comedy of Menace

Emerging in mid-20th century Britain, this genre is a style of comedy that uses humor to explore darker themes and evoke a sense of unease and discomfort. A play-on-words derived from the restoration-era comedy of manners, the term comedy of menace was first used by British playwright David Campton in the title of his play *The Lantic View*.

Harold Pinter's *The Room* (1957) is considered an early example of menace play because it includes absurd humor, and the implicit sense of unease and anxiety that permeates the narrative. These plays and films are characterized by their juxtaposition of black humor and characters who are trapped in seemingly hopeless situations. In comedy

of menace, humor can be used not to distract from but to explore serious and disturbing themes, this means that the feeling of danger, loneliness, and alienation hangs over this comedy, and this one of its most prominent features.

Humor in these works often arises from the absurdity of situations, where we find that the characters cannot communicate effectively with each other, at the same time, the feeling of threat itself creates tension and suspense in the events when narrating.

A sense of danger can arise from a variety of sources, including the environment, other personalities, or the characters' psychological state. The audience is often left unsure of what will happen next or why something will happen, leading them to confront uncomfortable realities as they try to make sense of the scenarios.

"Comedy of Menace" describes the early plays of Harold Pinter. These plays include an image of the external world and that it is a threat to the characters, that is the circumstances seem normal, but there is a danger between the events and a collision of feelings and facts, and their appearance is that they address the external environment, but they work to address the internal subconscious of the mind. We have said previously that Harold Pinter's comedy of menace The Room is the best example of embodying the meaning of danger, The Room was Pinter's first play written in 1957, and is a tragicomic play about an anxious woman whose humble life is a disrupted by the arrival of a mysterious messenger whose presence portends death.

The film revolves around a woman sixty-year old Rose Hood, who lives with her taciturn husband, Bert, in a large one-room house, which speaks of her desire to avoid the cold and dark outside. And there is Mr. Kid in charge of the building in which the couple live, as well as the young couple, and the blind Mr. Riley, whom we previously called the messenger of death.

The characters in *The Room* suffer from turmoil and uncertainty, and fear of the outside world, as well as, the loneliness that pervades the place, panic from the dark, evasion from living in a normal way, and the feeling of permanent threat and imminent danger at every moment. The comedies of menace are described by Esslin as the plays that may be so comical that the absurdity of the mess of characters grows terrifying, pitiable and catastrophic.

The characters in such uncertainty are scared of everything waiting outside the room in which they live, in that the author himself ascertains when asked what the characters of the play are scared of, he answered that they are clearly scared of the external frightening world outside the place they live in which is represented by the room, the world that scares all of us (Esslin, 1973, p. 232).

Pinter's source for this play was his coming across two men in a small room at a party in London. One of them, a little man with bare feet, was carrying on a lively conversation, and at the table next to him sat an enormous lorry driver who had his cap on and never spoke a word. The little man was feeding the big man. Hence, Pinter decided to walk this path, and he told his friend Henry Wolf, who was studying in the Drama Department at Brest University, that he would write a play about these two men, the later encouraged Pinter to do so, and Pinter wrote it within four days.

The Pinteresque Style

Definition

The concept "pinteresque" describes the characteristic features of Harold Pinter's artistic output. Harold Pinter is a famous British playwright who has his own unique style that is called pinteresque, his language, in addition how he uses silences and pauses in his play, *The Room*. *The Room* portrays a lack of communication among the characters of the

play which refers to the condition of modern man, this lack of communication led Harold Pinter to use a lot of pauses and silences in all the plays he wrote instead of words. The best way to express the bewilderment and confusion of the modern man of the 20ᵗʰ century was not to use language in the dramatic works (Gassner & Dukore, 1970, p.1182.).

Language is no longer important to modern man. However, we see him silent in all his situations and not expressing his feelings, silence is more powerful than the words themselves; this is what makes as see the long and short pauses in the work of Harold Pinter. The Room in Pinter's plays stands for the modern age, also the complicated life brought about by the industrial revolution, furthermore, represents the rapid changes in society and the transition from rural and simple life to modern life, the language used by Harold Pinter is simple but at the same time goes beyond the ordinary and describes reality in a unique and different way.

The language that he used is the means by which he wanted to communicate with the audience. Moreover, the language that the characters dealt with is the language of silence and gestures, and this is to make the audience more suspense, to create an effort, also to read between the lines, and to absorb the idea. Pinter is well-known for his distinguished use of dialogue which exposes his characters alienation from each other, and explores the layers of meaning produced by pauses and silences. The characters that Pinter deals with are not only unable to communicate with each other, but rather avoid communication by themselves, and this is what makes his language a mysterious language. That is why Pinter's language hides as well as reveals, as he said: *"A language…where under what is said, another thing is being said."* (Gassner&Dukore, 1970, p.1183.).

Pinter is distinguished by using economical style in all his plays. He did that through the use of a lot of pauses in his works more than any other writer. The pauses in Pinter's

plays are as prominent and suggestive as words, he worked out his dramatic dialogue according to the idea that real life conversations do not proceed smoothly and logically, they are full of unfinished sentences, repetitions and inconsistencies. Some may think that Pinter used silence to fail his language, but this is not true, as the silence between the characters is caused by the refusal to communicate (ibid).

The Dramatic Value of Pauses in *The Room*

The Room contains a many basic themes and a great deal of the very personal style and idiom of Pinter, this play is the earliest example of Pinter's so-called comedy of menace. In this play and in his previous plays, Pinter also used pauses, and this was his unique style that distinguished him from others. These pauses were not used in vain or as if they came spontaneously, but Pinter intended that and intended their presence in the play, also this expresses the lack of communication between the characters and that real life sometimes forces us to silence, silence is more eloquent than words. He felt that theatre neither accurately depicted the unpredictability of human discourse, nor the complexities found in carefully constructing an utterance. Reality is not perfect, and sometimes we do not have the right words to deal with the situation and remain completely silent. This is exactly what Pinter sought; he wanted to clarify the hidden picture of people's daily lives and the realities behind closed doors (Gassner & Dukore, 1970, p.1184).

There are three different types of silence that can be categorized under Pinter pauses and they are referred to as: an ellipsis, a pause, and silence. In a Pinter script, an ellipsis is denoted by three dots and was used by the playwright to indicate or to express slight hesitation. A pause was a much longer hesitation used by Pinter, during a pause, the character is in the middle of a deep thought process and the use of device helped Pinter to create tension. A full-on silence, it is a moment in which a pause is made, and the character

does not utter a word because she faced a struggle that made her realize that the words are absurd and have no need for them (ibid).

By the use of silence and pauses, he gives a precise and deep form to what seems ordinary and emotional. Through his style, which is called painteresque, Pinter shows that under the spoken word is the known thing, but it is not the utterance. In other words, we must understand what is under the lines and between the words. That is the deep meaning that lies within the personality, that is between the words is her feeling that we must pay attention to, for Pinter silence is communication (Gassner & Dukore, 1970, p.1185).

Harold Pinter's style is applied to any situation that hints more than it appears, any conversation that says less than it means. This is what we discussed earlier, and early critics of his work noted that the unease in his plays corresponded to the tension of the post-war era, where people lived in slavery to governments, sudden violence, and inhumane behavior, this is what made Pinter's characters lack communication and always try to protect themselves with silence and withdraw into loneliness and depression. From the excess of Pinter's talent, Kenneth Tynan (date unknown) wrote about him:

> Mr. Pinter is a superb manipulator of language, which he sees not as a barrier that keeps them apart. Ideas and emotions, in the larger sense, are not his province; he plays with words, and he plays on our nerves, and it is thus that he grips us (Kenneth Tynan, date unknown, p.02).

So, Pinter's use of pauses made him create a wealth of psychological dramas full of suspense, pathos, anxiety and tension that set him miles apart from the playwrights of his day. Pinter has a specific technique to explore and elicit the mystery of human relationships, his plays are characteristic of minimal plots and limited characters, but the dialogues filled with powerful tension

The Psychological Drama

Drama is popularly understood as a performing, is one of the major modes of representation of fiction. However, drama in literature is characterized by a narrative with dialogues and performance. Drama is strongly linked to literature, so much so that the two are practically inseparable, drama can reach an audience in two ways, hearing and sight.

Tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, and melodrama are the four main types of drama? Although these genres emerged at separate times, each has its own distinct qualities. However play important roles in contemporary culture. So, drama includes the following types:

- *Tragedy:* it is a genre of drama based on human suffering, and mainly, the terrible or sorrowful events that befall a main character. In the modern era, tragedy has also been defined against drama, melodrama, the tragicomic and epic theatre.

- *Comedy:* is a type or genre of drama that aims to make people laugh; the sub-genres of comedy include romantic comedies, sentimental comedies and others.

- *Tragic-Comedy:* is a literary genre that blends aspects of both tragic and comic forms. Tragic comedy, as its name implies, invokes the intended response of both the tragedy and the comedy in the audience.

- *Melodrama:* is a dramatic work in which the plot is suspenseful and has strong emotional appeal, and the melodrama focuses on dialogue that is often overly emotional (Esslin, 1982, p.50).

As mentioned earlier, in Harold Pinter's *The Room*, the characters are suffering from a special psychological condition, which we will study and address under this heading.

The *Psychological drama* or *psychodrama* is a sub-genre of drama that places emphasis on psychological elements. It often overlaps with other genres, such as crime, fantasy, black comedy: it is closely related with the psychological horror and psychological thriller genres. Harold Pinter has been a writer whose fictional creativity presentation of his characters, and the unique way of using the language make him one of the most significant figures of the post war British drama. The characters in his plays tend to have psychological instability, as if their minds were subjected to a severe shock that made themselves to a certain environment, and put themselves in a dark room. Also, do not admit or allow sunlight to encroach on that room, as if they lock themselves in the prison of depression. In addition, do not want to recover from it; this expresses people in reality and in real life (ibid). Pinter (date unknown) said:

> I think we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid and that what take place are continual evading desperate regarded attempts to keep our selves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming to enter into someone else's life is too frightening (Esslin, 1982, p.51).

So, the human being in modern life has become victim of frustration, loneliness, loss of communication and isolation. This is the effect of the events that occurred before and after the war. Pinter's plays present the intruder who disturbs the privacy of the characters, meaning that the characters are forced into this situation and are not happy with this intrusion.

The Working-Class Characters in *The Room*

Historical Background: World War II

World War II, or the Second World War, is a global conflict that lasted from 1939 to 1945. This war was by far the bloodiest conflict in history, with an estimated 70 to 85

million deaths, most of them civilians. The vast majority of the world's nations, including all the great powers, participated or fought as part of two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis.

When World War 1 officially ended in 1919, it was thought that this conflict would be the wars to end all wars. Twenty years later, Nazi Germany invaded Poland on the first of September 1939, which led to the outbreak of a war whose destruction exceeded the devastation left by the First World War And just as there were reasons and factors for the outbreak of the first World War, there are also reasons and factors that made the Second World War ignite, and we will briefly mention the most important of them (Firstly, the Treaty of Versailles following WW1. Secondly, economic depression happened across the world. Thirdly, rise of Nazism. Finally, failure of the League of Nations did so . This are the factors that were the cause of the outbreak of the war, and as usual, if there are reasons, there are results, that we will not go into too much about (ibid).

The Soviet Union and the United States are two world powers, which rose in the aftermath of World War 2. Their power has caused many consequences, including World War 2 was a bad tragedy for mankind, about 12 million soldiers were killed and 25 million civilians were killed due to hunger, disease, etc., and the atomic bombs dropped by the United States in Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted in 160,000 victims. The Second World War destroyed a huge amount of property, whether in whole or in part, destroying buildings, roads, infrastructure, combat aircraft and warships. World War 2 led to the division of the world into two blocs, capitalism and communism. Capitalism was led by United States, while communism was led by Russia, and their criticism of each other resulted in the Cold War.

People of many countries became aware against the undemocratic system, and fought for democracy and independence. Most countries gained freedom and democracy after World War 2, also the end of imperialism. After the war, Harry Truman then president of the USA, declared to support war victim countries of Europe economically so as to stop the influence of communism. This is called Truman's declaration. After the Second World War, when Truman's declaration was done, George Marshall, the US foreign minister made a plan to support war victim countries (ibid).There are still many other results, but we gave the most important ones that deal with the working-class situation after World War II because Harold Pinter conveyed this theme via his play, *the Room*.

Harold Pinter's Working-Class Characters: Significance

"Working-class" is a socioeconomic term used to describe persons in a social class marked by jobs that provide low pay, require limited skill, or physical labor. What makes us take a look at World War 2 is that Harold Pinter employs the working class in his plays; this is what made us touch on the subject.

In Pinter's plays the capitalist system has no importance attached to it. Neither is there a shared recognition of collective identity; nor a community regulating attitudes. In his play called *The Room*, there is no doubt that the characters created by the writer are from the working class, just like his other plays that we mentioned earlier, what makes the reader notice that the play's characters are from the working class are some indications such as Bert's clothes is stereotypical working-class, dress with his cap and muffler (his job as a van driver). At the opening of the play his partner Rose serves him what for many is traditional drivers, bacon and eggs with sauce, bread and a cup of tea.

Pinter was different from his generation because he was more realistic, he used touches of real life in the play, and perhaps at some point in the show we will not call it a

play but excerpts from reality. They are working class, *The Room* itself shows or we say it is an indication of the working class, as it does not have the comforts of the middle class; it is a poor and mean room. This is what Pinter embodied in this play, that is, he took all the details of the real life that this class lives in. it is worth bearing in mind that the working-class every day speech of the characters, except for the silent Bert, forms a dialogue which in fact communicates little, at the beginning of the play, Rose tries to talk to her husband Bert, but he is not interested, reads a magazine and ignores her in cold blood, as if these hidden touches in the dialogue give us the truth behind this picture, as if they indicate that the woman is in a constant struggle to preserve the marital relationship.

It seems clear that these working-class personalities fail to communicate with each other to the point of absurdity. So after studies, we deduce that the character structure of the working class people in *The Room* contain contradictions which are really inexplicable. Overriding these contradictions, however, is the present atmosphere of disturbance, anxiety, insecurity and fear. This is the post-war world, a world devoid of calm and peace, certainty and security; this is what we find in the working class (ibid).

Symbolism in Modern Theater

Symbolism as a Literary Device

Symbolism is the use of a symbol, which can be a word or an image, to communicate a distinct idea. Symbolism in literature works the same way, it is a language used by writers to convey the message to the mind of the reader visually. Also, is the use of words or images to symbolize specific concepts, people, objects, or events.

Is one of the elements of literary devices; writers use it to make their works more vivid. Literary devices are the technique writers, use communicate ideas and themes beyond what they can express or describe literally, this is what makes the idea profound

and has a great impact. Researchers believe the difficulty of interpreting literary texts is related to the use of symbolism by the author to transmit a specific message implicitly (Yahia, 2021, p.48).

How to Recognize Symbolism?

One can recognize symbolism when an image in a piece of text seems to indicate something other than its literal meaning, it may be repeated or somewhat contradictory, this makes you think that the writer is referring to it on purpose. Also can be obvious, or can be so subtle that you miss it. However, recognizing symbolism as part of language aesthetics needs the readers' development of his/her literary competence (Yahia, 2020, p. 1657).

Symbolism is used when literal language is not strong enough to express what the author needs to express. Writer can use symbolism to express a broader meaning of the idea, or to present the idea in a complex and non-express way (ibid).

Types of Symbolism in Literature

The types of symbolism are useful for the different genres of literature. Common types of symbolism include the following items.

Romantic Symbolism

It becomes a popular movement in literature after its birth as an artistic movement. The symbolists see that art achieves an ideal world of beauty for them, so they moved away from realism in art, photography, and beauty. Shakespeare's sonnets are a great example of romantic symbolism, as he talks of beauty and ugliness through symbols like flowers and weeds.

Emotional Symbolism

It is like using an object to represent the evolution of emotion in a text.

Religious Symbolism

It is the method used by literary authors to express their point of view on religion, or using well-known symbols to represent something in a godly context.

Symbolic Colors

Colors are used as a symbol in all cultures; they have an impact on human feelings and behavior. The red color, for example, typically symbolizes anger, passion, and danger. So, symbolism is always related to the culture of societies because literary texts reflect the culture of the author and the characters as well (Yahia, 2017, p. 425).

Symbolic Objects

It's like wedding rings typically symbolic commitment; brides have traditionally worn white to symbolic purity.

Animal Symbolism

Authors use animal symbolism in literature as a literary device, to create a deeper space for their stories. e.g., owls, typically symbolize wisdom.

Weather Conditions

The regional weather during a defined time period, is describing typical weather phenomena. e.g.: storms, typically symbolize turmoil.

Common Symbols in Literature

Common symbols in literature include colors, seasons, weather, and animals. Landscapes are also common symbols in literature. Here are some examples of the conventional meanings of symbols in these categories:

- *Color:* black: death, evil**.** Blue: calm, peace**.** Green: nature, growth.

- *Seasons:* spring: fertility, rejuvenation**.** Summer: freedom, joy**.** Autumn: aging, nearing death**.** Winter: death, hardship.

- *Weather:* Fog: uncertainty, mystery**.** Rain: sadness, transformation**.** Storms and storm clouds: violent emotions, danger.

- *Animals:* owl: wisdom, knowledge**.** Peacock: pride, vanity**.** Vulture: death**.** Snakes: evil

Writers use symbols to help them communicate ideas quickly and effectively. Also, they create some luxury and beauty in the topic at hand. This is one of the ways that makes the reader excited about events, and to create energy to overcome boredom, as well as it is like a game to read between the lines. It acts as visual aid for readers to better understand complex ideas of concepts, it adds emotional weight to a work of literature, and also it allows writers to write their ideas more creatively and artfully (ibid).

The Modern Symbolist Movement in Theatre

In theatre, symbolism is the use of one or more objects to represent something else. The object may represent an idea, a feeling, or a physical entity. Symbols allow playwrights to convey messages to audiences that are difficult to describe or communicate through dialogue. In addition, there are common and universal symbols, and there are symbols specific to a particular culture, era, or period.

The choice of symbols depends on the playwright's idea or intention. The use of symbolism can create a mood of tension and turmoil in the play, as well as advance the plot. Using them effectively adds depth and richness to the play in detail.

The symbolist movement in theatre emerged in the late-19th century in France,. The movement sought to replace the naturalistic realism of the previous century with more suggestive, it was their intention to eliminate all traces of naturalistic or imitative acting, as well as romance and melodrama.

Symbolism is an important part of plays because it can add depth and meaning to the story. Symbolism can be used to represent thought, emotions, and personalities as well as it can be used to predict events.

Since the heart of our conversation is Harold Pinter and how is his style, also we talk about symbolism; Pinter's plays must be read many times in order to realize the extent of the symbolism that he uses.

He uses the symbols to reflect that the modern world is in a state of absurdity and mess, and man as a part of his world becomes a real reflection of this absurdity and mess in all its kinds, modern man loses his belief and certainty in such things as love, charity, and understanding as Pinter argues that every man encounters violence in some way or other (Nadia, 2017, p.841).

Conclusion

Through this chapter, we notice that Pinter tries to insist that Menace is everywhere, by using his unique style, the pinteresque, as pauses to emphasize the idea of tapering communication between the characters, or the non-existent communication between them. Via his plays and the conversations that take place between the characters and their

reactions, Pinter shows their psychological state, their rank as a working-class that has no status, as well as their psychological suffering. In other words, the current and tragic that was due to the war made fear dwell in their lives and prevented them from living a normal life. His use of symbolism made the performance more profound and impactful.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three
Comedy of Menace in *the Room*: a Literary Analysis

Introduction

This chapter provides a deep analysis of Harold Pinter's The Room. We will focus on the main themes of the play and the description of its characteristics. In addition, a full presentation of Pinter's biography is included to recognize its relationship with his intention of writing this play.

The signs of comedy of menace and the different literary techniques to introduce it by the playwright are also explained in this chapter. The reader will understand this new term in the field of modern theatre and discover the main features of the pinteresque style.

The Characters

Rose Hudd

The protagonist of the play, Rose Hudd is a sixty-year-old woman who rents an apartment in a house with her husband. Rose is insecure about the outside world, anxious and obsessed with the dangers of being out in the cold, while appreciating the warmth and safety of her room.

Bert Hudd

Bert Hudd is a fifty-year-old man who drives a van for work, he is a man of few words who spends the entire opening scene without talking to his wife as she tries to talk to him, instead of talking to her he concentrates on eating his food and reading the magazine.

Mr. Kidd

Mr. Kidd is an old man who owns the building in which the Hudds rent a bedsit flat, during the events of the play we find that Mr. Kidd's memory is failing, he claims that his memory is not in a good condition and that he cannot remember some things, meaning that he may suffer from mental illness or that he is an old dementia.

The Sands Couple

They are a young couple looking for an apartment to rent, and there happens to be a man in the bassment who tells them that Rose's room is available.

Riley

Riley is the mysterious man who was in the basement and told the couple about Rose' private room, a black and blind man who visits Rose in the absence of her husband Bert as an envoy claiming that he has a message for her from her father, to return home, also later he says that he is the one who wants her to come back, calling her "Sal". With the succession of events, this man is finally thrown dead by Bert.

Mr. Kidd's Sister

Midway through the play, Mr. Kidd tells Rose about his dead sister who had been helping him tidy up the house, yet when Mr. Kidd Rose left she said she did not think he had a sister at all. This indicates that Kidd may have invented this idea.

Rose's Father

This character did not go out to the stage. Riley hinted to Rose's father when he sent a message to her that it was "time to go home", and then Riley moved on to say" I "as he was referring to Rose's father. This indicates that Riley may be Rose's father.

Themes of *the Room*

One of Harold Pinter's early plays, *The Room*, is hazy and quite evocative. The opening play by Pinter is called by John Brown. The subtle and subliminal nature of *The Room* makes it an internal play. Brown contends that interior drama contains deep subtext and is very suggestive even if it appears straightforward. The viewer is not given all the information by the characters; instead, they are left to fill in the blanks. They analyze moments of stillness and repetition to derive hidden meanings. They are able to interpret the symbols for things and behaviors. Brown draws the conclusion that Pinter's early play *The Room* is similar to "a silent tableau" because he relies more on the actions of the characters than their language (Hashish, 2015, P.51).

Notably, since the end of World War II, silence has evolved into a characteristic of contemporary theatre.

After World War I, the 1920s generation was dubbed "lost," and after World War II, "silent," according to Martha Heasley Cox (371). One of the traits of the Theatre of the Absurd that became popular after World War II and continues to be so today is silence. Some commentators label Pinter as being absurdist. *The Room*, his play, heavily emphasizes *silence* (ibid).

In the movie "The Room," a married couple named "Rose" and "Bert" lives in one of the rooms in a big building. Rose is a devoted wife who always tends to her partner's needs

by feeding and comforting him. She is happy with the space a lot. Mr. Kid, the building's owner, is another person. He's a bewildered elderly man. Along with a man residing in the cellar, Mr. and Mrs. Sands are foreigners looking to rent a room. Martin Esslin depicted Pinter's ludicrous and naive setting as a typical circumstance that eventually acquired ambiguity, dread, and other negative emotions. Because of this, the author's ludicrous comedies have earned the moniker "comedies of menace." This phrase was first used by David Campton in 1957, then Irving Wardle applied it to Pinter's plays in 1958 (Esslin, 1970, p.51).

According to Esslin, comedies of menace are plays that may be so absurdly funny that the chaos of the cast of characters becomes frightful, pitiful, and catastrophic. (Ibid)

The main sources of danger in "The Room" are unidentified and undetermined. The characters are not the only ones who are in the dark. The characters and the audience are considered to be bothered by these plays' irritating problems that don't get resolved or answered (Schechner, 1966, p. 177).

When asked what the characters of the play are afraid of, the author responded that they are obviously afraid of the external frightening world outside the place they live, which is represented by the room, the world that scares all of us. The characters are scared of everything waiting outside the room in which they live (Esslin, 1973, p. 232)

The protagonists in these plays isolate themselves from the outside world

because they are afraid of it. Because of their fear of leaving their small world, they, as Dukore puts it, "live in a closed environment that looks like a womb." This is especially evident in the character "Rose," who makes an effort to isolate herself completely from the outside world in her room (Dukore, 1962, P.47).

3.2.1 Security

A key subject in The Room is security, or the state of not being threatened. Pinter largely examines the issue through Rose's relationship to her bedsit apartment, which serves as the play's titular "room." The room serves as Rose's haven from the dangers and ambiguity of the uncharted outside world. The theme of how much she appreciates their room, which is warm and promotes well-being, comes up again as Rose rambles at Bert. The thought of living in the wet basement or even leaving their chamber to venture outside in the cold makes her shiver. However, Rose's sense of security is put in jeopardy when the Sands claim that a man in the basement informed them that Rose's room, number 7, is becoming empty. Riley asks Rose to leave her room and "come home," which is equivalent to dying, when he first shows there, endangering her safety even more.

3.2.2 Mundanity

In The Room, Pinter also extensively examines the subject of mundanity. Mundanity, which is defined as the mundane aspects of daily existence, serves as the background against which the play's dread and otherworldly elements might emerge. Rose and Bert's routine lives is established through their protracted one-sided dialogue at the play's opening. Rose putters around the apartment, arranging their few possessions and musing on life outside their home as she talks about how she loves her mundane but secure life in the bedsit. While the play's opening may appear to be an exercise in tedium to the audience,

Pinter contrasts Rose's unremarkable life with Riley's unsettling arrival, a mysterious stranger whose presence portends death. In the end, Pinter employs tedium to lull the audience into a false sense of security. Pinter ultimately used banality to lure the audience into a false sense of security before upending the story.

3.2.3 Alienation

Another major issue in The Room is alienation, which is defined as being excluded from a group to which one should belong. Through Rose's rambling remarks about how she prefers her solitary life in her chamber over the chilly, unknown world outside the apartment, Pinter tackles the issue. Early on in the play, Rose rushes to the window and thinks she sees someone outside, but she immediately realizes she didn't see anyone and remarks later that nobody is around. Pinter uses this specificity to highlight how she is cooped up in her house and unable to do anything other than observe traffic. She also tells Bert that they remain private, as though their seclusion were something to be proud of. Pinter ultimately demonstrates how Rose's need for protection leads to her estrangement from the outer world because she finds it to be too dangerous to interact with.

3.2.4 Miscommunication

Pinter employs the idea of misunderstanding to create humor and unease throughout The Room. In the first scene, Rose and Bert are having a one-sided chat. Bert doesn't respond while Rose continues to talk about the weather, seemingly having learnt to ignore everything his adoring wife says. The idea returns when Mr. Kidd takes the stage; even though he converses with Rose, their conversation is peppered with misunderstandings and unanswered queries. Rose's talk with the Sands is likewise hampered by communication problems, and it takes a while for them to explain how they came to think that room seven (Rose's room) was becoming vacant. Pinter skillfully transitions from misinformation that creates humor to miscommunication that endangers Rose's safety in this way. Conversation

between Riley and Rose brings up the theme once more. The two exchange lines in brief utterances, as if both were taking turns reciting passages from their respective monologues, rarely responding directly to what the other has said. However, Pinter enables the audience to make their own interpretations about what precisely Riley and Rose's connection means in the ambiguous space left by their broken communication.

3.2.5 Uncertainty

Another key topic in the play is uncertainty. When Rose worries about the perils of the cold outside world and the dark basement, it contrasts with the notion of security and creates uncertainty. Rose groans as she talks of Bert's recent illness and imagines what may have occurred if they had been residing in the basement, where the wet walls might have "finished [Bert] off." Rose frequently states, "You know where you are" in a setting like theirs, implying that anything other than the well-known area of the room runs the potential of an uncertain future. Pinter also makes it obvious that Rose associates their apartment with certainty. The Sands' admission that they were informed Rose's room was becoming empty brings up the theme once more. Rose feels threatened by the looming unknown of whether her landlord intends to evict her. This uncertainty, though, only serves as a taster for the bigger uncertainty Riley's presence will bring. Rose is forced to face the doom Riley is presenting to her with his suggestion that she "come home."

3.2.6 Fear

The subject of fear runs parallel to the concepts of security and ambiguity. Rose displays fear of the outside world, which is icy, hazardous, and enclosed within her little bedsit. Rose must tell herself throughout her one-sided talk with Bert that he is a safe driver to allay her concerns that he may cause an accident on the slick roads. Pinter also highlights the tedium of Rose's existence by demonstrating how fear drives her actions and gives her routine existence a feeling of anxiety-driven significance. Rose's worry changes at the

play's conclusion from little things to Riley and his invitation to "come home," which poses a very real *threat*. Rose is severely shaken by what he says, possibly thinking he is inviting her to join him in the afterlife. She starts to stroke Riley's head, though. This behavior implies that Rose chose to accept the danger rather than the security that has paradoxically kept her hostage in a state of fear.

3.2.7 Bewilderment

Another significant topic in The Room is bewilderment, or a state of complete confusion. While Pinter spends the most of the play portraying Rose's superficial obsessions and alienated existence, a growing disquiet gradually shakes Rose's routine existence to its very core. While there are many moments of uncertainty brought on by misunderstandings, the discovery that a man in the basement informed the Sands that Rose's room is becoming vacant marks the first significant incident of bewilderment. After learning this knowledge, Rose is confused, and when she confronts Mr. Kidd and discovers that the enigmatic basement occupant has addressed her by name. With this perplexing turn, Pinter shifts the story into a surrealist mode, confusing the audience with the play's climactic events. Pinter, however, challenges the audience to interpret the correlations he has offered in this utterly perplexing setting. In this approach, the story's underlying symbolism is explored through perplexity.

Menaces of the Play

The Room is one of the playwright's earliest works, deals with deciphering the symbols of objects and actions. It is ambiguous and highly evocative, and the characters don't tell the audience everything; instead, they leave them to figure out the missing details (Brown, 1982, p. 9).

Rose talks and discusses nonstop throughout The Room, and Bert mostly just silently listens without interjecting. She reflects in her protracted monologue on the play's use of silence as a technical device. She is compared to Bert's persona. She is outgoing and chatty. She expresses her appreciation for her space while also subtly expressing her anxieties about losing her safe haven. Bert, on the other hand, is tactful. He appears frigid and keeps his emotions hidden. His lack of response could imply that he concurs with all Rose says. But he becomes a mysterious man because of his secret ideas. It is difficult to guess why he becomes aggressive towards the play's conclusion.(Hashish, 2015, P.52)

The Room leaves the spectator with a lot of unanswered questions. The person in the basement is who? Why does Rose fear going down into the basement? Is Rose and Bert's apartment complex truly owned by Mr. Kidd? Do Mr. and Mrs. Sands assist the man in the basement in reaching Rose with a message? Why did the Black man dress as a blind man? What's Rose's history with the black people? Why does Bert perceive the Negro as a threat? To encourage the audiences to consider the subtext and look for the solutions on their own, Harold Pinter purposefully leaves the questions in the play unanswered. (ibid)

So, *The Room* covers a wide range of topics, including *alienation, hostility, terror, threat, and menace*. Both the setting and the description serve as examples of the theme of disaffection. As a person who enjoys being imprisoned in the chamber, Rose is described.

When the Negro begs her to leave the room at the end of the play, she yells at him, repeatedly repeating that she loves the room and would never leave it (Pinter, 1960, P.114).

Rose and Bert are modest enough to blend in with their underprivileged surroundings. Like many contemporary individuals, they experience loneliness and social alienation. Don't know who currently resides down there [in the basement], Rose tells her husband. … They might be foreigners. Mr. and Mrs. Sands, who are searching to rent an empty flat, are people Rose encounters. While Rose identifies Mr. Kidd as the building's proprietor, she is unsure of the location of his own apartment. She then admits to them that she knows nothing about Mr. Kidd. We don't say much. I never get in the way. Why should I, exactly? This speech demonstrates how the main characters, Rose and Bert, made the decision to avoid interacting with strangers of their own free will. When Rose has visitors like Mr. Kidd, the Sands, or the Negro, she becomes agitated, anxious, and uneasy until they go from her room. (Hashish, 2015, P.52)

The character of Rose is problematic. She resembles a *psychotic patient*. She frequently compliments her room and boasts about it in the performance. She exclusively discusses its benefits. It sounds cozy and comforting to her. It's fortunate that you weren't in the basement, she informs Bert. I'm content where I am right now. We're calm, and everything is well. You seem content up here. When you enter from outside, it's not that high. We don't care, either. Nobody disturbs us (ibid)

Bert has a hazy personality and a quiet demeanor, so it's difficult to tell what he is thinking. He tends to be quite a lot of the time. His talkative wife seems to be well-heard by him. He is always depressed and bizarre. The only thing that makes him happy throughout the entire play is when he successfully drives his van through the snow. He

only has one thing that makes him crazy: seeing his wife with the black man (Pinter 1960, p. 116).

When Bert sees the black man his emotions immediately go from excitement to fury. Without even hearing what the black man has to say, he beats him to death. This is uncalled for and unreasonable hostility on his part. Pinter uses a theater setting to depict this violence. (Hashish 2015, P. 53)

On the left side, Bert takes a seat near to the black man's chair. He stares at the black man for a while. Then, lifting the armchair with his foot, he causes the Black man to tumble to the ground. Bert slowly rises. He knocks the black man to the ground with one blow before repeatedly hitting the gas heater with his head. Bert leaves while the Negro stays still (Pinter, 1960, p.116).

Pinter wants the spectator to speculate and create assumptions about the plot by hiding the reason behind Bert's violent action. The idea that Riley, a Negro, may have once had an affair with Rose is one solution to the enigma. Another theory is that Rose may have been abused by Riley or Rose's father before she managed to flee from them. Kohzadi et al. further contend that Rose's insistence on being restrained in the room is directly connected to her sense of regret and guilt. She is referred to as "Sal" by the Negro, which underlines the reality that she once went by a different name. She goes by the assumed name "Rose" and resides with her partner. She may have once been a prostitute, and she doesn't want to hear about it anymore. Her fear of being exposed to others and her internal shame may be the causes of her fear from the outside. (Hashish, 2015, p. 53)

Bert is a psycho-patient, to the extent that is suggestively relevant. He is too ill to deal with the rigors of society and the economy. City dwellers like Bert are at risk from social problems like capitalism, poverty, and utilitarianism. Bert is an urban poor,

miserable man who struggles to make ends meet while living in a run-down home. He maintains his truck in inclement weather. He lacks the ability to become amiable or friendly. Rose is not his spouse in a legal sense. Rose, on the other hand, is his soul mate and the one person who accepts him for who he is. (ibid)

Nightingale (date unknown) *says, "The duty of the audience is to hear, consider and arrive at understanding the play and comprehending it. For this reason the author of the play does not give any explanation for the violence of Bert."* (Nightingale, date unknown, pp.137-38).

Violence is an age-old and frequently-present theme in plays, so it goes without saying. This theme is prevalent in both classical and Renaissance dramas where killing and murdering are the main concerns. In addition, a lot of contemporary playwrights, like Pinter, emphasize the prevalence of violence in modern communities. (Qais, 2019, P.6)

Mr. and Mrs. Sands tell Rose they saw a man in the cellar while looking for an empty room, but they were unable to see his face since it was dark and he was hiding behind something. He didn't turn on any lights there. He promised that the building had a vacant room and that the owner is above. Rose was alarmed after they mentioned seeing a strange man in the cellar, especially after Mrs. Sands said the man's voice startled her a little (Thornely and Roberts, 1984, P.173)

After Mr. and Mrs. Sands have left, Mr. Kidd goes to her and tells her that she must meet the alien in the cellar without her husband. The stranger knows her, so she must know him, Mr. Kidd tells her. Rose asks Mr. Kidd if he is actually the owner of the building since she is confused and afraid but he avoids replying. She starts to have concerns about him as a result, and her fears grow when he threatens to let the stranger

approach her in front of her husband if she refuses to meet him now. (Pinter, 1960, pp. 109-10).

Rose is told by Riley that her father wants her to go back to their house. He says very little, which creates a sense of mystery and danger. Rose's horrified response that no one knows who she is, where she lives, or what she is doing shows that she has been hiding from her father for a long time and that she eloped with Bert against his wishes. (Qais, 2019, PP.08-09)

The alienation theme is explained in this section. Fuchs states that " *Sociologists believe that human beings cannot develop in the absence of the social environment, an environment where group interaction and socialization do not take place.*" (Qais, 2019, PP.08-09).

In the play, Rose opted to live alone and voluntarily cut herself apart from her family. She takes painful memories around with her. She chooses to be with Bert and rejects her awful and intolerable history. She appreciates her husband and is able to deal with his silence. She interprets his silence as representing harmony, tranquility, peace, and satisfaction. She starts the play by making meals for her husband and complaining about how chilly the weather is (Pinter, 1960, p. 91).

Riley irritates her when he surveys the space and calls it "large" (Pinter, 1960, p. 113). His remark is seen as a subliminal threat to her. Mr. Kidd is regarded by her as yet another foreigner who is not welcome. She extends an invitation to him since she believes he is the building's owner. She finds him intimidating and annoying. He focuses on her rocking chair and wonders if it was brought into the room or if it was originally hers (Pinter, 1960, pp. 96–97).

The play makes it clear that all of the *aliens*, including Riley, Mr. Kidd, and the Sands, pose a threat to the main characters and make Rose fearful of losing her room, which serves as her safe and secure haven (Hashish, 2015, p.55).

3.7 The Signs of Comedy of Menace in *the Room*

As mentioned earlier, Harold Pinter's play, *The Room,* is considered as a comedy of menace and absurd work; in his unique style, Pinter uses different signs that indicate comedy of menace.

He portrays the signs of comedy of menace from the beginning of the play, as it has a calm exposition, it means, calm beginning, when Rose said: *"It"s very cold out, I can tell you. It's murder*." (Pinter, 1966, p.90). These are the words with which the play begins; they are the words that Rose always repeats to her husband, and she employs the expression *it's murder* to emphasize how cold it is outside, as if Rose is trying to say that leaving the safe confines of a room is tantamount to death.

„*"No this room"s all eight for me. I mean, you know where you are. When it's cold, for instance."* (Pinter, 1966, p.91): here, Rose makes sure that she is attached to the place, which makes the scene painful when Rose fears being expelled from the room.

In the second scene, Pinter contributes to the growing mood of unease and unreality in the play when Mr. Kidd said:

> Oh, I used to count them, once. Never got tired of it. I used to keep a tack on everything in this house. I had a lot to keep my eye on, then. I was able for it too. That was when my sister was alive. But I lost track a bit, after she died. She's been dead some time now, my sister. It was a good house then. She was a capable woman. Yes. Fine size of a woman too. I think she took after my mum. Yes, I think she took after my old mum, from what I can recollect. I think my mum

was a Jewess. She didn't have many babies
(Pinter, 1966, p.97).

Also, Pinter employs the elements of surprise to make hope suspenseful and frightening when Rose learns of a visitor eagerly awaiting her to deliver a message in her husband Bert's absence:

> The man. He's downstairs now. He's been there
> the whole week-end. He said that when Mr Hudd
> went out I was to tell him. That's why I came up
> before. I said he hasn't gone yet. I said, well when
> he goes, I said, you can go up, go up, have done
> with it. No, he says, you must ask her if she'll see
> me. So I came up again, to ask you if you'll see
> him (Pinter, 1966, p. 107).

Pinter also expresses comedy of menace through the open end and the sad and dangerous one:

> He strikes the Negro, Knocking him down, and then kicks
> his head against the gas-stove several times. The Negro lies
> still. Bert walks away. Silence. ROSE stands clutching her
> eyes. ROSE. Can't see. I can't see. I can't see (Pinter, 1966,
> p.113).

Furthermore, the playwright uses lots of pauses, in the play. His character Bert is always silent where there is misunderstanding with him and Roze:

> ROSE. No, not exactly.
> MR. SANDS. But he does live here, doesn"t he?
> ***Pause.***
> MRS. SANDS. This is a very big house, today.
> MR. SANDS. Yes, I know it is. But Mrs. Hudd seems
> to know Mr.Kidd very well (Pinter, 1966, p.95)

The play contains symbolism to convey implicitly the oppression and insecurity of the characters. He uses *the room* as a symbol of security from outside dangers. Also, the *cold weather* and *the basement* are signs of the suffering of the working-class members in society after World War II.

Conclusion

The Second World War was a fatal blow to the world, as it changed a lot and had several results in all fields and sectors, whether health, economic, or social. The war affected all levels, all races, and people. And looking at the social aspect, we find that the working class is the most affected from wars, this class suffers from wars, and this class suffers from all kinds of misery, as the war did not leave a stone or a person that did not affect it. In the plays of Harold Pinter, he relied on characters from the working class to convey the truth to the minds of people, or perhaps to paint a picture of the tragic life that this class lives after War, whether this is through the tangible, i.e. the feelings, or through the tangible, which is the image. His play The Room proved that the war reaped even feelings of safety and mental peace for this class, also was the cause of the failure of communication between them, made darkness of life.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research dealt with theatre, its history and its developments, especially the theatre of the absurd as it has received great popularity and admiration recently. After the Second World War, many destinations changed also had a great impact on every field, even the field of art. Artists adopted the absurd and the comedy of menace in the theatre, in addition Harold Pinter was one of them, from them, he mastered and gave a new and striking look to the theatre so he was creative in creating terror between the events and linking them to the lived reality, he proved his prowess through his distinctive style as his works arouse suspense in the same audience or the reader.

Imagine and draw its end as you want, the open end will not leave your subconscious mind alone but will possess your curiosity to draw a specific end, this is what makes Pinter and the Absurd Theatre have an amazing touch in making silence expressive and more important than words. Just as his use of pauses and symbolism added splendor and depth to the play, those pauses showed the nature of the characters in the play also revealed their secret which is represented in lack of communication.

This is what distinguishes the comedy of menace. The play depicted all aspects of fear, confusion, hesitation, and confusion that hover around the characters, they are unstable personalities as if there is something that steals safety from their lives, their fear of the outside world encloses their families within the walls of that room, believing that its warmth will protect them from the evil of the world. And the almost non-existent conversations created avoid and a large space between them, so that misunderstandings are formed without trouble. In short, Pinter focused on the side this is what we see today in the life of modern man.

After the radical changes that took place in the world after the Second World War, modern man no longer appreciates feelings or perhaps he cannot express them because of the abuse and the tragic circumstances that erased his identity, although technology has developed and science no longer has something called the impossible but it failed to bring man out. From his inner suffering with himself, he could not overcome the psychological state this is what made Pinter's characters always fail to communicate although the language of dialogue is distinct, but the characters do not have a special language to express their emotions and he uses silence to suggest what cannot be communicated with words, this is what symbolizes the human failure in expression. Pinter's character are known to be unable they are able to understand themselves, but they are all distinguished by a tremendous sense of the aura of the place or region to which they belong and therefore the conflict always takes place between the man who sits in the room and owns it and the person who resides in it.

One of the most important topics that Pinter's plays deal with is the unsuccessful or distracted marital relations, The Room play has this aspect, that is, the aspect of the marital relationship, they do not talk especially Bert and this makes you feel that the play is devoid of expression or feelings but on the contrary, the expressions of the characters are between the pauses and between the lines. They need feeling not a solution to the problem, as if they are begging someone to save them from the quagmire of silence that has swallowed up words, and nothing remains but silence or a look to express pain, brokenness, or any feeling that needs to be made public.

Harold Pinter tried through his subtle touches, to touch the subconscious of the audience by making characters from the working class, threatened with a tragic life and this is to communicate with the social ideas and realities that this class lives in, which makes us feel the insecurity and the constant struggle of these people who are afraid even

their shadow that appears from through the sunlight, also we see the instability in their thinking, and the lack of reassurance in a world outside their world, so every external address and whatever they imagined it as an intruder wanting to take away their safety represented in a room of four walls, as if they were a patient who does not recover except with the warmth of his cover and his support on his pillow.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix01: Plays of Harold Pinter

Pinter dramas are absurd and dark. Let us take a look at some of them.

1 The Birthday Party (1958)

Is a three-act play written in 1957, it premiered in May 1958 at the Lyric Hammersmith theatre in London, The play falls under the category of absurdist drama. It explores themes of loss of identity and absurdity of existence, obstacles and barriers in communication. The play revolves around a guy named Stanley, who lives in a boarding house hosted by an elderly couple, the wife called Meg and the husband called Petey. At some point two evil men arrive at the house unexpectedly, called McCann and Goldberg, they claim they are throwing a party for Stanley on the occasion of his birthday, also, in reality they are torturing him for no apparent or particular reason. At the end of the play, these two intruders take Stanley away, and the pair cannot stop them.

2 The Caretaker (1960)

It is a three-act drama. It was published in 1960 and first performed on April 27th 1960 at the Arts Theatre in London. The play is about two estranged brothers, one named Mick and the other Aston, who meet a tramp named Davies. They try to help him, offering him the job of caretaker, but Davies greed never made him satisfied with what they offer him and he wanted more. Davies manages to play and deceive the weak Aston, but he cannot deceive Mick because of his intelligence, so Davies loses the game of manipulation in front of him and is forced to leave the two brothers alone.

This play discussed topics such as family relationships and power struggles. It was Pinter's first major success, drawing attention to him in the contex of the Theater of the

Absurd.

3 The Homecoming (1965)

Is a two-act play written in 1964. It premiered on June 3rd 1965 at the Aldwych Theatre in London. The drama revolves around a university professor in the United States from London, named Teddy, and his wife, Ruth. After six years of marriage, Teddy returned with his wife to his homeland, to north London, to make his wife meet his family for the first time and get to know them. Teddy comes from a male-only family that is it consists only of males. His father Max, his Uncle Sam, and his brothers Lenny and Joey, like a dysfunctional family, are all infatuated by Ruth, Teddy's wife, who uses her beauty, charms, and sexuality to make men submit to her. The play ends with Teddy's return to America, as Ruth remains in London. This ending is ambiguous because it is not clear what will happen next. The Homecoming explores power, sexuality and family relations.

Appendix02: Harold Pinter's Influence

Throughout his life, Harold Pinter wrote over 30 plays and a number of screenplays, poems and essays. In his work, Pinter explores the absurd state of human life. He addresses the struggle of people and their continuous struggle for domination, the difficulty of communicating with each other, and depicts the absurd psychological state of his characters, as characters who have experienced all kinds of suffering, and despite the presence of a lot of violence and darkness in his plays, but his political message that he is trying to convey is rebellion against violent forces. His works are open and unpredictable, which keeps the audience showing signs of bewilderment, and some of his dramas are filled with a sense of black humor, also they have been classified as comedies based on danger such as The Birthday Party, or *The Room*, which is the subject we are now dealing with.

Appendix03: Summary of *the Room*

The Room is about a room in a large house; Harold Pinter's The Room opens within the protagonist, sixty-years- old Rose Hudd, cooking bacon and eggs for her husband, Bert, before he goes out to drive his van for work. Without a response from Bert, who reads a magazine, Rose talks about the cold and darkness outside. She is happy that their room is light and warm, unlike the damp basement. Rose is unable to stay still and moves turbulently around the room.

The elderly landlord, Mr. Kidd, stops by to check that there is not any issue with the pips freezing. Kidd asks Rose about when Bert is going out, Rose answers. Kidd feigns signs of having a poor memory, claiming that he does not remember the number of floors in the house; he invents the idea that there was a sister who helped him run the place before her death. After Kidd and then Bert exit, Rose takes out the rubbish to find a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. sands, standing outside her door. The couple are polite to Rose but also openly bicker as if she does not there, know Rose knows they've come to talk to the landlord. They say that they went to the dark basement and some man told them that room number seven is available for rent. Rose is unnerved because that is her room.

Kidd returns. He does not know what Rose is talking about, when she mentions the couple and that her room is available for rent, which makes her angry. Kidd explains that there is a man who has been waiting in the bassment all weekend to deliver a message to her, the man has been eager to know when Bert would be out so he can speak with Rose, to be clear the man doesn't want Bert to know that he spoke to Rose. Reluctantly Rose tells Kidd to bring the strange man over to talk to him, lest he come to the house when Bert is there if she does not see him now. Kidd exits. Soon Riley, a blind black man, enters. Rose tells him she doesn't know him and he does not know her, so she cannot imagine what he has come to tell her. Riley begins referring to Rose as "Sal" and reveals that he has brought a message from her father that it is time to come home. Rose is strained and tries to reject

what Riley grows insistent, switching from saying her father wants her to come home to saying that he himself wants her to come home. He also says that he wants to touch her. Eventually, Rose touches Riley's face tenderly and fondly.

Bert arrives home, catching Rose and Riley in their intimate moment. Bert did not comprehend the scene he had fallen into, another word he was in shock that made his brain stop working, Bert speaks for the first time in the play, delivering a monologue about how well he drove on the icy roads, Bert then tips Riley out of his chair. Riley tries to say something about Rose, but Bert shouts "Lice!"And strikes Riley down, kicking his head against the stove until Riley lies inert, possibly dead. The play ends with Rose saying, "I can't see. I can't see. I can't see.

As we see *The Room* is about a married man and woman whose names are "Rose" and "Bert" living in one of the rooms of a large building. Rose is a diligent wife in taking care of her life partner all the time, feeding and reassuring him. She is very content with the room. There is also Mr. Kidd the owner of the building. He is a confused old person. Mr. and Mrs. Sands are aliens from abroad who want to lease a room, as well as a guy living in the cellar (Esslin, 1973, p.232).

Résumé

La présente étude traite de la comédie de la menace dans *la Chambre* de Harold Pinter. La pièce appartient au théâtre moderne où le dramaturge, Pinter, introduit son style pinteresque. La comédie de la menace est une nouvelle technique qui véhicule implicitement le thème de l'oppression ouvrière après la deuxième guerre mondiale. Ainsi, cette recherche pose le problème de la façon dont Harold Pinter transmet les thèmes de la comédie de la menace dans cette pièce. Il vise à mettre en lumière la comédie de la menace et le style pintersesque comme nouveaux termes du théâtre moderne. Pour atteindre cet objectif, les chercheurs ont suivi une recherche de type descriptive et analytique, soutenue par l'approche qualitative via l'analyse de ses principales techniques littéraires dans *la chambre*. Les résultats révèlent que Harold Pinter utilise le symbolisme, le silence et les pauses dans son style particulier.

Mots-clés: comédie de la menace, style pinteresque, la chambre, personnages ouvriers.

ملخص

تتناول هاته الدراسة كوميديا الخطر في مسرحية هارلود بنتر "الحجرة" والتي تنتمي الى المسرح الحديث قدم فيها بنتر أسلوبه الخاص. تعكس كوميديا الرعب كتقنية جديدة الإضطهاد الذي تعرض له أصحاب الطبقة الكادحة بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية، حيث عبر هارلود بنتر في مسرحيته "الحجرة" على كوميديا الخطر وسلط الضوء علىها وكذا أسلوبه الخاص في المسرح الحديث كمفهوم جديد. يستخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي ويتبع فيه المقاربة النوعية وذلك، بتحليل أهم التقنيات الأدبية في المسرح . تفيد مخرجات هذا البحث أن بنتر أورد الرمزية والصمت والوقفات وأسلوبه الخاص في مسرحيته "الحجرة."، حيث

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحجرة ، كوميديا الخطر ، أسلوب بنتر الخاص.