

Existentialist Reading of Harold Pinter's *Slight Ache* in the lens of Sartre

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to discuss use of language, existential anguish and despair and man's self-quest for identity demonstrate lack of meaning in life in characters in the Slight Ache. Choice and responsibility are two important factors for human life.

Keywords:

Existentialism; language; Anxiety; Absurdity; lack of identity

I. Introduction

The present study is an investigation of Pinter's *A Slight Ache* through the lens of Existentialism. The researcher thus investigates Lack of communication, absurdity, lack of identity, fear and anxiety in Pinter's play where characters along with the text show it. Harold Pinter, playwright, poet, film writer, actor, political writer, scriptwriter, and theater director was born in 1930, and grew up the only child of working-class Jewish parents in North-East London. Pinter is widely regarded as one of the two or "three most important anglophone playwrights of the second half of the 20th century, and is probably the subject of more academic commentary than any other living playwright"(Wyllie 2). He is credited with the invention of a new dramatic style known as the comedy of menace, and his name has been adopted as descriptive of a type of theatre under the blanket term "Pinteresque". Pinteresque theatre has often been described as belonging to the theatre of the absurd, although it is more accurately considered sui generis. It is a "kind of psychological drama in which supposedly secure space is contested by characters who may or may not be the embodiment of each other's fears, insecurities or latent sexuality"(3). Pinter says in *A Slight Ache* "What I try to do in my plays is to get to this recognizable reality of the absurdity of what we do, how we behave, and how we speak, echoing the perennial fixation with the problem of human (mis)communication (Esslin, *Absurd* 198).

Thus, "either linguistic collapse or even a careful reproduction of reality as often found in Pinter can be used to expose the "self-evident limitations of language" (Cornwell 8). However, one of the most intriguing aspects of *A Slight Ache* is the flawless synergy between form and substance that is so common in absurdist theatre (Esslin, *Absurd* 6). "The stage of radio is darkness and stillness, the blackness of the listener's brain" (Gray 49), therefore *A Slight Ache* does not require any "physical circumstances" compromises (Gray 61). This is

especially visible in the matchseller's ethereal because wordless aspect which many critics have noticed, considerably undercuts its dramatic intensity (Esslin, Pinter 87–90).

II. Research Method

Existentialism attempts to liberate humans from the daily life by focusing on the famous statement of Rene Descartes, "I think; therefore, I am," and to direct them toward well-grounded relationships with others and with themselves. Descartes uses "I" instead of any other pronouns just for concentrating on individual; so, does an existentialist. He always advises an individual to search within for truth. The common premise upon which various philosophers of existentialism base their ideas and theories is that existence is linked to choose. Even when one chooses not to choose, he makes a choice. Consequently, most existentialists reject any philosophy that defines reality as an objective thing, rather, reality for them is totally subjective and it is created by each individual; because man is free to choose and determine his own destiny. (Miller 41)

World War II had negative effects on Europe's perception of values. Everything was destroyed by war. So many innocent people were killed for nothing. Thus, the stability of the values especially those were dictated by Christianity- was threatened. The Europe's destruction of social, physical and economical condition led to the destruction of most spiritual values. As the result, romantic and optimistic portrayals of the world were rejected. The previous state of believes gave its place to a pessimistic and negative one.

The current movement, however, emerged in France after the horrors of World War II, as a rebellion against essential beliefs and values both of traditional culture and traditional literature. This earlier tradition had included the assumptions that human beings are fairly rational creatures who live in an at least partially-intelligible universe, that they are part of an ordered social structure, and that they may be capable of heroism and dignity even in defeat. (Abrams 1)

In this case the existentialism became a popular philosophy in the mid-twentieth century. Existentialism tries to see the man as an isolated existent who is "cast into an alien universe, to conceive the universe as possessing no inherent truth, value, or meaning, and to present human life, as it moves from nothingness whence it came toward the nothingness" (Abrams, 1969:1). Thus, existentialism contains a sort of absurdity mixed with a feeling of estrangement. So, like many other terms, existentialism is a type of historical movement. Mostly the term is devoted to what Jean-Paul Sartre had done as a man of letter. The present thesis is going to focus on Sartre ideas of existentialism; so, the researcher tries to let alone all other existential philosophers and just concentrates on the French one, Jean –Paul Sartre.

Angst is a German word which means simply anxiety or fear, yet in existential philosophy it has acquired the more specific sense of having anxiety or fear. Concerning the idea, Sartre states in his *Existentialism is Humanism* (1946) that:

The existentialist frankly states that man is anguish. His meaning is as follows when a man commits himself to anything, fully the same time a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind- in such a moment a man cannot escape from the sense of complete and profound responsibility.

Human being faces an uncertain future, and he must fill his life with his own choices. The dual problems of constant choices and the responsibility for those choices can produce angst in him. Sartre usually uses the word anguish to describe the said situation. Sartre believes that all men are in anguish but some show it and some disguising their anguish or are in flight from it. Some think that by doing anything, they are just committing an action which is totally related to them, but the truth is that one ought always to ask oneself what happen if everyone did as one is doing, surely a sense of anguish will occupy one's thought. Sartre continues that "everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So, every man ought to say, 'am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulates itself by what I do'. If a man does not say that, he is dissembling his anguish."(1946). Sartre gives an example while explaining what he means by anguish:

When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for the attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses to do it and at bottom he alone chooses. No doubt under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life or ten, fourteen or twenty men. In making the decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting; on the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realize that it has value only because it is chosen. (86)

Sartre focuses on anguish as "the condition of action itself" (1946). In fact, the concept of anguish involves the realization that the choices and decisions a person makes not only affect the self, but they affect everyone.

Anguish arises because human knows that out of an infinite number of possibilities, the one possibility that is chosen has value simply because it is chosen over others. Sartre clarifies the idea in his *Being and Nothingness*:

It follows that my freedom is the unique foundation of values and that nothing, absolutely nothing, justifies me in adopting this or that particular value, this or that particular scale of values. As a being by whom values exist, I am unjustifiable. My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values while itself without foundation. It is anguished in addition because values, due to the fact that they are essentially revealed to a freedom [the self], can not disclose themselves without being at the same time "put into question," for the possibility of overturning the scale of values appears complementarily as my possibility. (76)

Here Sartre argues that the human who denies being in anguish is guilty of self-deception because anguish is a part of the subjective human condition. It justifies the freedom of human being. Of course, dealing with the responsibility as the output of the decision made by man is just one form of anguish. Sartre saw anguish as a necessary component of life. It is what makes a person aware of their choices and responsibilities. Adding to what mentioned above, the researcher refers to what Hayim notes about Sartre's ideas on anguish:

Anguish is not fear. Fear is apprehension of situation acting n me, while anguish is the apprehension of me acting upon a situation. Fear is therefore an attitude toward the contingencies of the in-itself; it is directed toward the object feared. ...anguish is, then, a reflective attitude toward my possibilities. (17)

Regarding the idea of anguish, Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* says: "I make an appointment with myself on the other side of that hour, of that day, or of that month. Anguish is the fear of not finding myself at that appointment, of no longer even wishing to bring myself there". (73)

The concept of forlornness in Sartre's view is connected with acceptance of the existentialism idea that man is alone in his decision making. Human being has "no excuses, determinism or omens", which influence his decision. Human being is alone because some existentialists such as Sartre believe that there is no god. They believe that the decision made by man is only up to him. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, man is free to make his own choices. Sartre states in his *Existentialism is Humanism*: "everything is choice" (1945).

2.1 Absurdity

The experience of anxiety leads to the existential theme of the absurd. Austin Cline announces her ideas regarding the concept of absurdity in existentialism as:

An important component of existentialist philosophy is the portrayal of existence as being fundamentally irrational in nature...According to atheist existentialist like Sartre, the 'absurdity' of human existence is the necessary result of our attempts to live a life of meaning and purpose in an indifferent, uncaring universe. There is no God, so there is no perfect and absolute vantage point from which human actions or choices can be said to be rational.

The point which will be made is that Sartre does not primarily deal with the ideas of "the absurd" or "the irrationality" aspects of human life. Hayim notes that "one should of course pay attention to notions of the absurd or the irrational, since they inescapable aspects of every reflective existence, but they are not the specific subject matter of *Being and Nothingness*"(1980:1).

Yet, the idea of the absurd is a common theme in many existentialist works. Absurdity is the notion of contrast between two things. Albert Camus (1965), Sartre's *Contemporary*, explores absurdity and suicide through the mythical figure of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was condemned by the gods to eternally carry out the task of rolling a rock up a mountain then it would roll down to the bottom of it, Sisyphus has to roll it again and again and continue the meaningless and empty existence seems to have.

Camus explains that "imagine Sisyphus happy" (1976:91) because since Sisyphus is aware of his plight, he is not pitiful; rather he is absurd. Because of being condemned to do an absurd activity. Yet, he would not aware of his situation, he would deserve our pity. Camus sates that he is not aware of his plight, since each time, he does not carry the rock hopelessly. If life is meaningless, why should he go on? Why he does not commit suicide if life is pointless? Camus believes that "life is not absurd in itself; absurdity is found in the relationship between the human's desire for understanding and a world that does not yield understanding"(qtd in Melton, 35). Camus explains: "The absurd is born out of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world." (Quoted by Bob Lane, 1996). This view is also shared by Sartre. He believed that humanity must live in a world which is hostile to and indifferent toward him. (66) The universe is and will never truly match with what humanity expected it to. The atheist view – such as Sartre- of this statement is that people create stories, or gods, by which they can fill this void and attempts to satisfy their needs. Yet, the universe is empty and without purpose. Searching for a purpose

end with absurdity. Absurdity may be considered as a branch of existentialism.

Christopher Wink (2007) in an essay under the title of *Reality's Absurdity to Existentialists* refers to Camus' ideas on absurdity by referring to his *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) and says that:

While in no way did Camus originate absurdism, his use of it reached a pinnacle in the Myth. It was there that Camus set his foundation of life's dualisms- his paradox of the absurd- acquiring the title of 'philosopher of the absurd', a label of which he openly disapproved. The pleasures of existence are fleeting, Camus demonstrated in his works, and, instead, the central quality of humanity is death. Rather than for morbidity, he aimed to help his readers find a greater appreciation for happiness, understanding its temporal home in our forgettable time in this world. (90)

Camus refers to the certainty of death and adds that "the beginning of existence, our living seemingly meaningless lives: this is absurdity." (2007) He somehow tied the idea of absurdity to the main idea of existentialism free choice and results: "The only hope is to know there is no (ultimate) hope" (Flynn, 1984: 48). This idea concluded from Greek Myth of Sisyphus; Camus uses as an example for deliberate choice:

Camus offers existential solace in his interpretation of the Greek myth of Sisyphus, the mortal condemned by the gods to push a stone up a mountain only to see it roll back down repeatedly for all eternity. And yet Camus claims to consider Sisyphus happy at the moment he turns to retrieve the rock once more at the base of the hill. Why happy? Because Sisyphus has risen above his fate, not by dull resignation but by *deliberate choice*. He thereby shows himself superior to this inanimate rock. Faced with this parable of the ultimate futility of life, Camus counsels that our only hope is to acknowledge that there is no ultimate hope. Like the Ancient Stoics, we must limit our expectations in view of our mortality. (Flynn, 48)

Thus, living in a meaningless world, human being can rise above his fate and creates meaning with some sort of hope out of this meaninglessness. It seems man despairs when he holds on hope that the world will ultimately provide meaning and value to his life. Despair is one of the other main terms of the existentialism which will be referred to in the next part.

2.2. Despair

In his *Existentialism is Humanism* (1946), Sartre refers to the term despair and says "the meaning of this expression [despair] is extremely simple. It merely means that we limit ourselves to a reliance upon that which is within our wills, or within the sum of the probabilities which render our action feasible."(1946). As Sartre believes, since "there is no God and no prevenient design", man has to disinterest himself and act without any hope. In this case man is in despair. He continues that:

Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently atheistic position. Its intention is not in the least that of plunging men into despair. And if by despair one means as the Christians do- any attitude of unbelief, the despair of the existentialists is something different. Existentialism is not atheist in the sense that it would exhaust itself in demonstrations of the non-existence of God. It declares, rather, that even if God existed that would make no difference from its point of view. Not that we believe God does not exist, but we think that the real problem is not that of His existence; what man needs is to find himself again and to understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God. In this sense existentialism is optimistic. It is a doctrine of action, and it is only by self- deception, by confining their own despair with ours that Christians can describe us as without hope. (102)

In a simple language, despair is the realization that one cannot ultimately count on anyone or anything outside of one's own will and one's own field of action. Since there is no God, there can be no ultimate hope and confidence to a desire that everything goes well. When there is no God, we cannot hope for anything beyond what our actions may bring. Existential despair is the giving up of all hopes outside of those which we ourselves create through our own decisions and actions. It is the acceptance of one's full and awful responsibility for one's choices and actions, for one's own life and world.

III. Results and Discussion

Edward and Flora, a middle-aged married couple, live in a country house in *A Slight Ache*. Edward is represented as a superficial and insensitive man who is unconcerned with his wife's interest for their garden flowers. Flora is a flower. Edward has left her disappointed since he does not listen to her and does not satisfy her expectations. While one day a wasp flies into a marmalade pot while they eat breakfast in the garden. The wasp is killed by Edward putting boiling water on it. The pair is having a disagreement. Whether wasps bite or sting is a point of contention. Edward's ruthless method of assassinating the wasp and the spider. Their frivolous quarrels show that something is wrong with their relationship.

Edward claims to have a minor discomfort in his eyes, as if he hasn't slept in a long time. The presence of a matchseller who has been waiting at their rear gate for two months irritates him. Despite Flora's belief that he is a harmless elderly man, her husband expresses his desire to speak with the matchseller in order to free himself of his bothersome presence. Edward requests that Flora invite the matchseller to his study room so he may find out why he has been standing there for so long. During his talks with the matchmaker, Edward is met with the matchmaker's remorseless silence, and his queries go unanswered. He attempts and fails to define the matchseller by imposing several identities on him. Edward's doubts and worry become worse, as does the agony in his eyes. Edward eventually disintegrates as a result of the inspection and the match seller's silence. He steps outside, hesitant to confront the menace, and Flora begins conversing with the matchseller. She begins wooing him by assigning him several roles (a lover or a son). Edward becomes increasingly anxious and insecure as he fears being shunned and losing everything he owns. Finally, he weakens and falls to the ground, whereas the matchseller rises up metaphorically. Flora dispenses Edward the matchmaker takes the man's tray and departs for lunch. Edward is abandoned outside, without a home, identity, or connection. The matchseller now serves as a stand-in for Edward due to the role reversal.

A Slight Ache depicts an invader disturbing a private domain, this time in the form of a matchseller standing at the rear gate of a couple's home. Within the ordinary occupations of Pinter's characters, they are visited by threat and overpowered by existential fears. According to Esslin, Man's existential uneasiness is depicted in *A Slight Ache* "not as an abstraction, not as a strange phantasmagoria, but as something genuine, ordinary, and acceptable as an everyday occurrence," (Pinter 28). The play unfolds Pinter's brutal world which ultimately overcomes the characters. The play opens with Edward and Flora at the breakfast table, engrossed in their household routine and estranged from one another. Edward, engrossed in his book, avoids having a true conversation with his wife, Flora, who, as her name implies, is fascinated by the flora in their yard. She understands its blooms, and is in desperate need of annoying Edward's interest and enlisting his help. asks him whether he noticed the honeysuckle in her own world. However, her husband does not take notice of it:

FLORA. That's convolvulus.

EDWARD. That?

FLORA. Yes.

EDWARD. Oh.

[Pause.]

I thought it was japonica.

FLORA. Oh, good Lord no.

EDWARD. Pass the teapot, please.

Pause. She pours tea for him.

I don't see why I should be expected to distinguish between these plants. It's not my job.

(Slight 170)

Edward does not pay attention to her, as seen by his evasive responses. He is unable to recognize the flowers in his own yard, indicating his inability to comprehend the emotional gap in his marriage with his wife. He doesn't have a true grasp of his and Flora's inner life. "Edward understands little about the quality and depth of his wife's more intimate problems," according to Cahn, "and this ignorance makes Edward defensive" (12). He is aware of his shallowness, but attempts to hide it since he does not want to be judged for it. To keep his self-esteem, he has to feel powerful at all times. Edward, like Davies in *The Caretaker*, is hypersensitive to criticism and tries to deflect attention away from any implication of his flaws and shortcomings. While excusing his lack of interest in her flowers, he demonstrates hidden hatred to his wife. Edward is completely absorbed in himself and believes he has complete control over his environment. A wasp strays on the breakfast table, revealing the stress produced by Edward's dictatorial nature. Edward gives his wife orders to keep the wasp out of the marmalade pot in order to establish his dominance over the situation. Ironically, it is he who, in the end, allows the wasp to enter the pot.

EDWARD. Cover the pot. There's a wasp. [He puts the paper down on the table.] Don't move. Keep still. What are you doing?

FLORA. Covering the pot. . .

EDWARD. Give me the lid.

FLORA. It's in. . .

EDWARD. Give it to me! Now...Slowly....

FLORA. What are you doing?

EDWARD. Be quiet. Slowly...carefully...on ...thepot! Ha-ha-ha. Very good. He sits on a chair to the right of the table.

FLORA. Now he's in the marmalade.

EDWARD. Precisely. (Slight 171)

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Edward has a strong desire to maintain his status as the house's authority figure. He considers his wife's comments and remarks regarding the wasp to be "nonsense" or "rubbish" (Slight 171- 172). Edward and Flora decide to kill the wasp because the sight of it irritates them both. Edward now complains about a minor soreness in his eyes, which Cahn describes as "a symptom of psychological suffering and emotional fragility."

EDWARD. . . . Aah...down here...right down...blinding him...that"s ...it.

FLORA. Is it?

EDWARD. Lift the lid. All right, I will. There he is! Dead. What a monster.

[He squashes it on a plate.]

FLORA. What an awful experience.

EDWARD. What a beautiful day it is. Beautiful. (Slight 174)

Edward's reaction to any outside force that penetrates and undermines his security is revealed by the small matter of killing the wasp. "[i]n a world where meaning is ambiguous, when items and territory are all that is definite," he clings to his surroundings and possessions (Cahn 5). His inauthentic responses to existential distress are his fixation with the protection of his area and his brutality. Only in this way can he forget about his inner emptiness, express his self-created image, and give his life significance.

Edward's brief win over the wasp, however, is shattered when he spots the matchseller at the back gate. For the past two months, the old man has been trying to sell matches to passers-by. Edward is wary of the visitor, feeling that he may pose a threat to his domain. Flora, on the other hand, is unaffected by his presence, implying that she is seeking human contact with another individual because Edward cannot meet her emotional demands. Flora is interested in the old man, and she feels compassion for him:

FLORA. Do you find him interesting, Edward?

EDWARD [casually]. Interesting? No. No, I...don"t finds him interesting.

FLORA. He is a very nice old man, really.

EDWARD. You"ve spoken to him?

FLORA. No. No, I haven"t spoken to him. I"ve nodded. (Slight 175)

Edward's terror and anxiousness are mixed in his response to the presence of a prospective intruder. He is terrified of the unknown and the threats to his already precarious existence.

EDWARD [pacing up and down]. For two months he"s been standing on that spot, do you realize that? Two months. I haven"t been able to step outside the back gate.

FLORA. Why on earth not?

EDWARD [to himself]. It used to give me great pleasure, such pleasure, to stroll along through the long grass, out through the back gate, pass into the lane. That pleasure is now denied me. It"s my own house, isn"t it? It"s my own gate. (Slight 175-176)

For Edward, the matchseller represents a mystery threat. Though "menace may take the shape of certain characters; it is typically unspecific or unexplained, thus more ominous," as in most of Pinter's plays, "menace may take the shape of particular characters; it is usually unspecific or unexplained, so more ominous" (Dukore 26). At Edward's rear gate lies the threat that looms in his life. Edward is dubious of the matchmaker, who waits on a lonely lane

where no one passes, and asserts that "the entire thing is absurd" (Slight 176) and that "there's something quite fake about that man" (Slight 179).

He has the impression that he is being watched by a stranger with nefarious intentions. Edward is afraid that his rights and possessions will be taken away from him, making him even more alienated and isolated than before. Pinter's characters are deeply embroiled in an existential struggle to gain a foothold in a world that is alienating, ambiguous, and menacing. Edward's aching in his eyes worsens as a result of his nervousness, and Flora sees right through his underlying fears:

FLORA. You're frightened of him.

EDWARD. I'm not.

FLORA. You're frightened of a poor old man. Why?

EDWARD. I am not!

FLORA. He's a poor, harmless old man.

EDWARD. Aaah my eyes.

FLORA. Let me bathe them.

EDWARD. Keep away. (Slight 178)

Edward is afraid of being rendered helpless if others see his physical or psychological flaws. He is neither integrated inside himself nor with others, so when he is reminded of this, he reacts violently. "He looks bigger," Flora says, attracted by the ancient man. Edward is upset by her interest in another male who exhibits evidence of power and endurance, and asks, "Have you been watching him?" (Slight 177). "Get out," he screams angrily. "Don't bother me" (Slight 178). In a frenzy, he wants to expel everybody who makes him feel more insecure.

Edward resolves to speak with the matchmaker in order to learn more about his true motives, as he suspects the man is a fraud. "I truly can't stand something so... stupid, right on my doorway," he argues (Slight 178-179). He describes the circumstance as "absurd," implying that the absurdity of the situation scares him severely, which speaks to his worry created by the world's unpredictability. He's made up his mind to "find out what's going on" and "get rid of him" (Slight 179).

He focuses his efforts on evicting the stranger. "Certainly not!" he insists when Flora asks whether he will go out to him. Should you reach out to him? Certainly...not. I'm going to invite him in" (Slight 179). Edward considers himself superior and wishes to deal with the intruder on his own turf in order to gain the upper hand. Flora recommends calling the cops, but Edward dismisses her suggestion, saying, "No, you're a woman, you don't know anything" (Slight 189). Edward uses his macho protest once more to alleviate his terrible sense of powerlessness. He orders his wife to go get the matchmaker. Edward tries to demonstrate his superiority over a homeless elderly guy who is his social inferior when he meets the matchseller, who is practically deaf and blind.

Edward, on the other hand, is the one who is blind; he is blind to the nothingness that exists within him. He doesn't have a genuine I. He can only define his identity by the roles that others or himself have assigned to him. "I entertain the villagers annually, as a matter of fact," he says, attempting to establish his self-worth. Despite the fact that I am not the squire, they hold me in high regard" (Slight 182). This remark demonstrates that he is unsure about his own social standing. When his attempts to engage the matchseller in conversation fail, he

is gradually overcome by a psychological and bodily weakness; nonetheless, he renounces his weakness by expressing his superiority over the matchseller:

You could believe I was scared by your appearance. You'd be completely wrong. I was not startled by your appearance. You did not frighten me in the least. No, no, no. Nothing has ever worried me outside of this place. If you want to know the truth, you disgusted me rather forcefully. (Slight 187)

Because he can't take being scared by someone who is inferior to him in every way, Edward attacks the match seller's self-worth with nasty remarks about his appearance and social rank.

Furthermore, Edward perceives him as someone who cares about his predicament: "You're crying. You're trembling with sadness. It's for me. I can't believe what I'm hearing. For the sake of my predicament" (Slight 197). To put it another way, he assigns the man any position he wants in order to gain the upper hand and decrease his uneasiness. Finally, he recognizes the old man as an attacker who is mocking him and his predicament. "As a trigger for the projection of the other's deepest sentiments," the matchmaker says. Edward "disintegrates" while projecting his ideas. (Esslin, Theatre 208)

Through the matchseller, he externalizes his inner flaws. He is broken by the revelation that his existence and identity are useless. Edward, who is progressively losing his strength, appears much stronger and younger than the matchseller. "Your face," he exclaims, horrified. Your body. [I'm sick to my stomach and terrified.] You're making fun of me! You appear to be younger. You appear to be incredibly...young." (Slight 199.) He is unable to form a genuine bond with another person, notably the matchmaker and, to a lesser extent, Flora. Furthermore, he responds to his inner problems in an inauthentic way by claiming authority over others, which leads to defeat, isolation, and insecurity. "Pinter has regularly indicated the breakdown of people's games by exposing their concealed inner aggression eruptions" (Merritt 114). Edward chooses to play the game of dominating the other, but this act of hostility causes him to become even more alienated and lose his identity.

IV. Conclusion

The characters in the aforementioned plays are imprisoned in the middle of their own insignificance and finiteness, the prospect of dispossession and disintegration, and the anxiety of confronting oneself and losing one's freedom. This sensation of powerlessness and helplessness prompts individuals to reject life and protect themselves by engaging in active and passive inauthentic responses that help them confirm their existence and dispel their deep sense of powerlessness. The characters' nervousness and isolation are highlighted by the use of language as a weapon to evade and exert power rather than as a means of communication. Pinter gives voice to existentialist ideas of freedom and consciousness in his play. He believes that man's confrontation with the nature of his existence can lead to existential redemption and real existence. personal self-awareness and existential choices are attempting to elicit a response in this way. personal perspective about living authentically. He portrays illusions as enslaving forces. This heightens the sense of alienation between people and the experience of being lost.

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