Pinter *Et Cetera*

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Edited by

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CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS
P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

OTHER THINGS

CRAIG N. OWENS

Pinter Et Cetera is perhaps an imperfect title for this volume. For Pinter, as a playwright, is hardly a *ceterum*—an other thing—with which we must contend. Rather, he is an author whose aesthetic has allowed us to think of a whole subcategory of the absurd, the Pinteresque, as somehow his (and perhaps his alone) and whose personal history and political opinions have been repeatedly adduced to demonstrate the validity of various readings of his work. The idea of Pinter has outlived his corporeal being in the recognizability of his drama, poetry, and prose as somehow fundamentally of him, the human agent. And yet, the danger of thinking of the playwright, any playwright, as bearing so intimate a relationship to his own work that the texts are allowed to speak only for him is that the many voices, influences, and possibilities that emerge in his works become reducible to the author's biography or his most recent letter in the most recent edition of the newspaper.

This volume attempts, then, to counter the predominant current of Pinter criticism, in which the author's particularity continues to play an overweening role in circumscribing interpretive possibility in the first place (despite Pinter's oft-cited refusals to make definitive claims about what a piece "actually means"). *Pinter Et Cetera* wants to offer ways of reading a text by Harold Pinter as something more than a text by Harold Pinter; instead, the approach each of the contributors has taken to understanding this or that aspect of Pinter's *oeuvre* has been to put it in communication with other plays, other artworks, and with cultural phenomena beyond the stage altogether. Doing so, they have helped to bring about a volume that both diffuses the idea of Pinter-the-man, and helps to clarify something we might call the Pinter-effect.

The Pinter effect names the way that the Pinter's dramatic, poetic, and prose work tends to accrue artifacts and influences; it is marked by what M.M. Bakhtin thought of as one of the hallmarks of novelistic discourse: a

kind of radical heteroglossia. The "different voices" that speak in Pinter's works often seem to come out of stable, recognizable subjects. But, under scrutiny, Rebecca's "memories," Stanley's "Paranoia," and Teddy's "Philosophy" seem to capture discourses and histories that precede and exceed them and the plays they find themselves in. How much more characteristic is this heteroglossia in the overtly political works of the 1980s and '90s, where contemporary, real-world political discourse is heightened and repeated on stage. And, without question, Pinter's works draw toward them a whole range of literary, dramatic, and cultural texts, making his *oeuvre* richly and suggestively intertextual. Pinter, then, emerges in this regard as a phenomenon, literally an effect, whereby the delineation of |one voice from another, between extra-theatrical history and on-stage fiction, between text and paratext, and between influence and derivative becomes permeable and blurred.

Hence the *Et Cetera* of the title: For if Pinter emerges in this volume as an effect, as a locus at which certain kinds of literary and dramatic phenomena occur, then it is *cetera*, other things, with which it is appropriate to group him and his work. If the title is not *Pinter Et Al.* or *Pinter and Others*, or *Pinter and Friends*, it is because the essays in the volume finally are not about playwrights, poets, politicians, and artists as people, but about the means by which we represent and interpret their works as objects and phenomena in relation to one another.

The essays that compose this volume fall roughly into two sections, though it may be tempting to think of this book as having three sections. Readers who think of Pinter primarily as a playwright among playwrights will see a first half, comprising five essays dealing with Pinter's dramatic work in comparison with the dramatic work of other playwrights, and a second half, dealing with Pinter's work in a non-dramatic cultural or historical context. Others, who think of Pinter's oeuvre less in terms of a dramatic/non-dramatic binary might recognize that a third middle section seems to take shape in which Pinter's work is dealt with politically and ethnographically, preceded by a more properly dramatic reading of his work and followed by a more trans-generic aesthetic consideration. I have ordered the essays in this book precisely to make such comforting taxonomies possible for those who find them useful. But, I have resisted marking such possible sections of the book for two reasons: First, the fact that two valid organizing paradigms present themselves suggests the extent to which any such categorization means that other possibilities for thinking about these various approaches to Pinter criticism in relation to one another get foreclosed, or at least put under erasure. But more important, from my perspective, is that such organizing rubrics tend to

suggest that the work of understanding a cultural phenomenon as complex as absurdist drama or a practitioner as accomplished as Pinter must begin with a concerted act of simplification. For myself, I prefer to let these essays bleed or blur into one another, to talk across methodological and thematic borders, to contradict one another, to resonate with one another, and to raise a kind of fruitful cacophony of literary and cultural criticism untamed by the conventions of academic publishing.

It would, however, be absurd not to acknowledge that the first four essays—by Judith Roof, Christopher Wixson, Kyounghye Kwon, and Andrew Wyllie—investigate Pinter's drama in relationship to the work of other playwrights. The most obvious comparison might appear to be one between Pinter and Samuel Beckett, for whom he expressed admiration, and with whose works numerous critics have noted an aesthetic affinity. The title of Roof's essay—"The Absent One: Harold Pinter's Influence on Samuel Beckett"—suggests a reversal of the usual trajectory of influence, however, the trajectory that privileges Beckett's chronological primacy as the source of inspiration for and the foundation of Pinter's aesthetic. The essay itself, though, does more than merely reverse the chronology of influence. Instead, it reads the several monologues written by Beckett and Pinter as ripostes and reprisals in a complex interplay of addresses and absences. For Roof, it is as if the logic of aesthetic influence were always a failed logic, an artificial narrative, already. Pinter and Beckett's exchange of monologues enacts in a peculiar way precisely this failure, a failure that emerges as a constitutive feature of staged representation itself.

We find Roof's essay at the beginning of this volume because it suggests the broader project of the book to rethink, complicate, and even deconstruct the way we imagine aesthetic artifacts engage with, connect themselves to, and distance themselves from other works. Wixson's essay, "That Was the Play: Harold Pinter and Noël Coward," continues this project in a different register by reading the narrative closure Pinter's *A Slight Ache* (1959) against Noël Coward's drama and its disport with openings, middle spaces, and play. "That Was the Play" argues, in part, that Pinter's play works as a heterosexual, masculine recuperation of the sexual ambivalences of Coward's plays, and in doing both takes Coward as a point of departure and revises the sexually ambivalent dynamic of his work.

Kwon's essay "Absurd Jokers: Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and Edward Albee," revisits Beckett in relationship to Pinter, triangulating the pair with an investigation of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. Kwon reads the dynamic of fun-making, joking, teasing, and play in the works of these three playwrights—a dynamic often employed

vengefully or tendentiously—through Sigmund Freud's formal and psychological theory of jokes. In doing so, her essay does not simply *apply* Freudian analysis to the study of Absurdist drama; rather, it engages in a *complication* of the relationship among Pinter, Beckett, and Albee—a relationship oversimplified by the rubric "absurdist" under which they are often grouped. Moreover, Kwon puts Freud's theory into a dramatic, enactive context that both complicates its and recovers its salience for contemporary critical use.

Andrew Wyllie explores the aesthetics of Philip Ridley's recent so-called in-yer-face drama in his essay. In "The Politics of Violence after In-Yer-Face: Harold Pinter and Philip Ridley," Wyllie asks if Ridley's often violent and shocking representations of culture at its margins offers a version of a recognizably "Pinteresque" body of work, or whether it might, in fact, represent a profound enough departure from, and a more attenuated and nuanced relation to Pinter's staged aesthetics to warrant a distinct term: the "Pinterian." His essay resists the temptation to choose between either term, but rather uses the question as a way of examining Ridley's and Pinter's works alike as part of a dynamic system of representation and staging. "The Politics of In-Yer-Face" thus begins the work of mapping a field of aesthetic, dramatic, narrative, and characterological possibilities that itself resists the terminology with which Wyllie leverages his essay's critical project.

Jeanne Colleran's contribution to this volume, "States of Exception: Women, Torture, and Witness in Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden* and Harold Pinter's *Ashes to Ashes*" serves as a transitional essay, a hinge between the what might be considered the first section of the book—the theatrical one—and the second, more broadly trans-theatrical one. For she reads Pinter's play *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) in relationship to other staged work, in this case, Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*, a play that Pinter himself championed. But Colleran's essay moves the volume beyond the strictly intertextual, toward an historically situated reading of Pinter and Dorfman's relationship as playwrights. For Colleran suggests that the two playwrights share not only a *métier* and an aesthetic, but a project of social justice, using the stage as a public place where the important work of witness and reconciliation can be modeled, if not begun in earnest. In doing so, Colleran deploys the Giorgio Agamben's theories of witness and trauma, borrowing his formulation of the status of the victim for her title. The essay, however, eschews a facile understanding of stage speech as authentic testimony, and of the stage as an unconstructed place of pure experience. Rather, Colleran's piece acknowledges that staging itself, and the work of theatre, complicates the work of testimony.

The socio-historical contextualizing of Pinter's work continues with Mark Taylor-Batty's essay "What Remains?: *Ashes to Ashes,* Popular Culture, Memory and Atrocity." In it, Taylor-Batty also investigates Pinter's *Ashes to Ashes*. But, instead of thinking of it as a play in concert with the work of other socially active playwrights, his essay situates it in the context of popular depictions of the Holocaust. The project of "What Remains?" is thus to measure the distance between Pinter's complex and serious engagement with the fraught questions of memory and atrocity—particularly as they are staged in the dynamic of an apparently domestic relationship—and the more problematically simple filmic and novelistic heroic tragedies through which a great deal of Holocaust lore has been represented and transmitted. In Taylor-Batty's view, the political commitment of Pinter's play attempts to reanimate conversation about the deeply complex issues surrounding cultural production and history, and to resist the compartmentalization of history as past-ness, arguing for a reading of Holocaust literature as also about other, more recent atrocities, as well.

This expansion of the volume's discussion of Pinter as a primarily literary-critical or dramaturgical phenomenon into a cultural formation in conversation—and sometimes in conflict—with other cultural phenomena develops with Michael Stuart Lynch's piece "Epistemes: Harold Pinter's Positions of Subjectivity and Case Study by Claude Lévi-Strauss," which complicates conventional understandings of Pinter's *Birthday Party* by introducing Claude Levi-Strauss's investigation of Zuni tribal rituals of justice. "Epistemes" finds itself dissatisfied with readings of *The Birthday Party* that uncritically accept the surface narrative of unjust persecution and undeserved victimization of Stanley by Goldberg and McCann. By reading the play closely, Lynch demonstrates that much of the plot and speech of the play refuse to accord with the dominant reading of the play, a reading which often takes Pinter's later, more explicitly political work as its touchstone. The Zuni of Levi-Strauss's anthropological case study offer an alternative logic, an epistemology whereby we can understand Stanley on the one hand and Goldberg and McCann on the other as both constructed by and constructing a provisional, flexional narrative within which each helps to position the others. For Lynch, then, Pinter's stage is one on which the very notion of the facts of character and situation find themselves continually deconstructed.

Lynch's essay investigates one alternative to staged verisimilitude in its exploration of the ritual nature of truth-telling; Lance Norman's essay "'It *is* a Bit Over-Elaborate,' or, Dumb Waiters, Dead Children, and Martinizing the Pinteresque" considers another: film. Reflecting the

similarities in situation and plot that seem to make at least the first half of Martin McDonagh's film *In Bruges* an homage, if not an outright transposition, of Pinter's *Dumb Waiter*, Norman discusses how the film's narrative interplay of aural and visual presence threatens to undermine the productive indeterminacies of staged performances. Not satisfied, however, to hold McDonagh up to a Pinteresque standard alone, Norman also considers the filmic limitations and liberties in relation to McDonagh's earlier stage play, *Pillowman*. Triangulating these three works, which share an absurdist sense of claustrophobia and which put into practice precisely the kind of wry humor Kwon's essay earlier in this volume theorizes, Norman's essay helps us understand not only Pinter as a dramatist, but Pinter's drama as answering to, and making the most of, generic narrative conventions.

Ubiratan Paiva de Oliveira's essay "The Creative Interplay between Harold Pinter and the Plastic Arts" fittingly ends this volume. Less interested in making demonstrable and defensible theoretical claims about Pinter's work, Oliveira instead presents us with a field of artistic interplays that span media, genre, and even historical time periods. Pinter's work, under Oliveira's deeply researched and perceptive analysis, emerges as a kind of crossroads, if not an entanglement, where various traditions of European and non-European art-making—film, painting, sculpture, and installa-tion—seem to merge, if only momentarily. Moreover, as his essay shows, Pinter's work has evolved from being a clearinghouse for major and minor artistic traditions to becoming the source of inspiration for contemporary pictorial and plastic artists. Oliveira's is a challenging essay, despite its straightforward aims, because it indicates to the engaged reader that a great deal of work remains to be done if we are fully to understand Pinter's engagement with forms and phenomena beyond his own *oeuvre*.

Thus, in ending this volume, Oliveira's essay gives the lie to the project *Pinter Et Cetera* has set out for itself, a project it does not, finally accomplish. One cannot help but sense that, in failing to tie up all the loose ends of Pinter's work, such an ending is, formally, a fitting tribute to Pinter's life. Since Pinter's death, on 24 December 2008, writing about him has been largely published *in memoriam*, often obsessively so, as if a definitive end were required to the life of a playwright who refused to provide definitive endings in his own writing. Indeed, so soon after the passing of so accomplished and important a literary and, in the last decades of his life, political figure, even literary critical and scholarly responses to his work are likely to take the place of an obituary or tribute, as much as a result of circumstance as of editorial or scholarly intent. Understandably, though, a personal sense of delicacy may impinge ever so

slightly upon an otherwise unflinching examination of his legacy, lest a volume of critical essays become unwittingly a bloodless post-mortem.

Besides the personal grief it evokes in those who knew him and were inspired by his work, the loss of Pinter the man inspires another reaction, itself a hybrid of scholarly curiosity and aesthetic longing: a sense of melancholy, the feeling that an age has come to an end. Perhaps we have seen the last of the main-line absurdist tradition (begging the pardon of Edward Albee, who is really not, even in his most absurd moments, terribly absurd anyway). Perhaps Pinter has stood all along for a particular idea of theatre more broadly, anyway: the simplicity of two people in a room, and the complexity of what can emerge in and from their conversation. In this light, Pinter emerges not as an absurdist, or even a modern, but rather classical in his stage economy.

For my own part, I think of Pinter as a shorthand artist, a dramatic stenographer, a writer of plays that themselves are palimpsests of other plays, situations that never quite speak fully for themselves, characters whose depth is at odds with the playful and menacing surfaces of their speech and actions. Somehow, it is as if Pinter were always writing a distilled version, a *précis*, of another play, another text never to be written. And so, perhaps, with the death of Pinter, it may be that the kind of restraint and heady concentration of effect he mastered has left us, as well. Or more melancholic still, perhaps we have lost the hope of those other plays, of ever expiencing the fullness of the extant *oeuvre*.

Pinter's own renunciation of theatre as his *métier*, however, relieves us a little of the notion that it was his somehow untimely death that ended a career as varied as it was long. Indeed, a kind of fortuity, if not good fortune, brought Pinter a particularly timely death. Unlike most authors—Beckett being a notable exception here—he outlasted his oeuvre. His uncannily fitting appearance in Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* near the end of his life seems to draw an uncanny critical attention to this fact.

The synthesis of his life's work he offered in his speech accepting the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature, and the development of his commitment to art and to politics, perhaps oversimplifies the complexity of the imaginative work he produced. Conveniently styled by scholars and critics as "Pinteresque," his work's fifty-year aesthetic development brought to the page and to the stage naturalism, realism, surrealism, absurdism, farce, docudrama, memory plays, monologues, and monodramas. His poetry ranges from the ironical to the earnestly angry, and from lyrical to cacophonous. His screenplays disturb, touch, and compel. And from the silver screen Pinter himself seemed to wink at us, as the ghost of the title tailor's fictitious uncle in *The Tailor of Panama*, or more pointedly as Sir

Thomas who, in *Mansfield Park*, forbids the performance of plays at his home. If themselves sometimes too simple, his outcries against systematic social injustices of all kinds, and particularly those perpetrated against forgotten peoples—the Kurdish population of Turkey and the nameless disappeared of Nicaragua—were brutal in their honesty and in their condemnation of crimes perpetrated by global actors, including The United States, Great Britain, and their allies. This volume owes much of its content to the causes, however unfortunate their origins, to which Pinter lent his voice and the voice of the characters he created.

More materially, this volume would not have been possible without the generosity of a number of individuals and organizations. First, and perhaps most obvious, are the contributors themselves: They have had the patience not only to continue the thinking and writing necessary for turning conference presentations into fully articulated essays, but also to respond (not always in agreement with) an editor whose tendency, for better or worse, has been to over-manage his collaborators. For their forbearance, and indeed for their occadional resistance, I am grateful. I have learned a great deal from their work, and have found my own scholarly energies renewed by the questions they have raised in their essays. The Harold Pinter Society sponsored the meetings at which the papers that would become these essays were first presented. The essays that compose this volume acknowledge the scholarly work of many who were instrumental in founding and sustaining the Society, including Katherine H. Burkman, Stephen Gale, Frank Gillen, and the journal the Society has supported: *The Pinter Review*. The Midwest Modern Language Association, and especially its former director Kathleen Diffley, at the University of Iowa, were instrumental in offering the Harold Pinter Society a home for its annual Mini-Conference at the M/MLA Annual Convention, the context in which the papers from which these essays emerged were first presented. Steinsemble Performance Group generously produced and performed several of the works discussed in this volume at the Pinter Mini-Conference, including *Landscape* and *Monologue*, adding the dynamic of stage performance to the otherwise textbound discussions taking place. Finally, the Drake University Center for the Humanities and College of Arts and Sciences funded much of the research, travel, and conference participation that made it possible for this editor to bring together these essays in this volume.

Drake University

CHAPTER ONE

THE ABSENT ONE:
HAROLD PINTER'S INFLUENCE
ON SAMUEL BECKETT

JUDITH ROOF

Theories of influence are premised on imagined author psychology, fashioned upon an oedipal economy operating in a uni-directional, linear manner. In his influential *The Anxiety of Influence* Harold Bloom posits a complex psychological legacy in writers' responses to the writing that has preceded them. He sees the relations among poets as a "[b]attle between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads" (11). Bloom's treatise cannily distills as an aesthetic impetus the oedipal assumptions bound to be made when authors and literary works are understood biographically and psychologically within a historical matrix comprehended as a series of cause/effect chronologies. Writing is perceived to have an interpersonal dimension deeply rooted in the psyches of all of the filial players, and works of art exist in conversation with one another as synecdoches of their creators and representative products of intergenerational struggles.

This narrative of artistic family history may provide a certain insight into the relations among artists and their work in periods when the disseminations of texts and the geographical possibilities of community permitted only slow communications and limited interactions. It assumes as well a specific form of individual engagement with the works of a precursor as a kind of imaginary fixation which stimulates admiration and/or revision. A notion of history as oedipal generation, however, may not accord with a cultural scenario that is less clearly generational, singular, and meditative. The possibilities engendered by more rapid communications and travel, wider disseminations, and the complex, systemic, and ultimately relativistic inter-relations of artists through multiple media enable more changeable communities and more varied investments.

In the twentieth century, linear chronologies give way to systemic progressions and two-way histories such as envisioned by Michel Foucault in which a single cause is no longer possible to locate and children are as likely to influence parents as the other way around.[1] What, in other words, do we imagine happens among the groups of contemporaneous writers working from the twentieth century forward?

Those who study literary history and the complex inter-relationships of modernist era artists involved with one another such as occurred in Dada, Surrealism, the Bloomsbury Group, and the American expatriates of Gertrude Stein's circle characterize the artists' dynamic as more a sharing in contrast to an oedipal model of influence. Lacking clear-cut generations, (in fact, avowing membership in a single "lost" generation), and absent the meditative lapses produced by the need for publication and distribution, modernist and *avant-garde* writers begin to lose this oedipal dynamic and its resentful baggage. Writers become cooperative and/or competitive, feeding off of a shared vision and living within the vortex of an energetic *Zeitgeist*. This second account of influence is productive as long as artists share an immediate context—a city such as Paris, for example, or a social milieu or a common project. It works very well for the self-conscious movements of the first part of the twentieth century.[2]

But how do we understand the work of post-World-War-II artists such as Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett, who belong to no such group or movement, whose lives overlap both as different generations and as contemporaries, and whose work is resonant and suggestive of one another's? The resonances, echoes, mutual practices, and divergences of the dramatic works of Beckett and Pinter exemplify a different model of artistic relation. Their plays play out a model of exchange, redefining influence (and history) as multidirectional, recasting influence as the complexities of absence, the imaginary, and delusions of selfhood. Influence in their plays is a matter of the "absent one," whose brooding omnipresence and impossible address provides the occasion for drama, the impetus for fecund angst and comic sufferings, and defines the plays ultimately as intrasubjective struggles about the very nature of being in time.

Nowhere is this reconfiguration of influence as exchange more evident than in Beckett's and Pinter's monologue plays, themselves about absence,

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[1] In his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault suggests that cause/effect may move both ways.
[2] See, for example, Roger Shattuck's accounts of avant-gardist Paris in *The Banquet Years* or the innumerable studies of Gertrude Stein's circle, such as James R. Mellows's *Charmed Circle*.

anxiety, and influence. Beckett and Pinter trade monologues, not explicitly with one another, but through a history of literary production in which new plays continually redefine an open set of plays in which the work of each serves as the possibility for the other, but also in which all plays constitute an imaginary field of play. Beckett begins this imaginary exchange with several monologues: *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) in which the absent addressee is the ever-recursive Krapp himself; and *Embers* (1959), a radio play in which Henry speaks with various voices emanating from his own mind or from his past, or both. Pinter devises his own monologic piece, *Landscape* (1967) in which two characters, Beth and Duff speak to themselves, unaware of the presence of the other, playing out the possibility that every co-present statement is a monologue addressed multiply, but rarely to the evident listener. Beckett writes another staged monologue in 1972: *Not I*, a confused and perpetual spoken repression of the ever insufficiently repressed. Pinter returns in 1973 with his television monologue, *Monologue*, in which the angry Man addresses the absent other. Beckett continues with more staged monologues: the triadic *That Time* (1976), *A Piece of Monologue* (1978), and *Rockaby* (1980). Characters in these three monologues address "another like themselves" (*Rockaby*), either as a series of past manifestations (*That Time*), or in a species of self-narration, either simultaneous as in *A Piece of Monologue*, or in the machinic doubling of a present character re-marking the discourse of another time and space (*Rockaby*).

Intershuffled as these monologues are through twenty-five years and several different media, they enact the character of influence between Beckett and Pinter as circular, multidirectional, indirect, and unconscious even as they also reflect Pinter's well-documented admiration of Beckett's work. Although the plays do not respond directly to one another nor provide any locus for previous address, they do enact a species of exchange that addresses absence as presence and presence as absence. The plays are not necessarily in conversation with one another about the nature of dramatic monologue, though all of the plays explore what it means to speak as well as engaging self-consciously the issue of what might make a play. All of the plays cultivate visions of a theatre whose nagging preoccupation is the absent one, where drama derives from the effects of absence, and absence emanates from the effects of time and the marvelous delusion of self, where absence may just as well be the lack of self as the absence of someone else, and where the absence that matters is finally the delusive quality of presence.

The Influence of Influence

From the beginning of attempts to account for the theatrical practice Martin Esslin dubbed "absurd," critics have regarded Beckett as a species of absurdist forefather. Esslin himself locates Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as a "breakthrough into the public consciousness of a new convention of drama" ("Godot" 128). Declaring that the play breaks all of the conventions of drama, Esslin describes the Beckett phenomenon as "a pattern of uncertainties and questions, and action demonstrating an absence of action—here we have the essence of Beckett's play" (132). Absence is already center stage, even if derived from an analysis of the play that would not be very convincing today. Esslin emphasizes the way Beckett's dramas shift the onus of meaning to the spectator, particularly in their dramatization of the elusive character of identity and the empty searchings of human existence. Linking Pinter's drama to Beckett's via this thematic nodule, Esslin notes that, superficially, Pinter's "naturalistic" language would seem to make him a "social realist" (139-140). Relying on Pinter's own acknowledgment of his debt to Beckett—"Harold Pinter," Esslin notes, "acknowledges Beckett, together with Franz Kafka, as the main influence on his work"—Esslin presumes a scenario in which Pinter joins Beckett in writing plays that constitute a culturally-defined reflection of "the precariousness, the stark comfortlessness of the human condition" (145). They do so by also reflecting the tendencies of what Esslin dubs "modern psychology": "If Beckett and Pinter fight shy of providing their characters with neat motivations, so does modern psychology" (144).

Esslin's inaugural exploration of the relations between Beckett and Pinter provides two clues to the problem of influence these playwrights raise. Although Esslin never questions Beckett's "paternal" primacy, (and in 1963 when his essay "Godot and his Children" was published, there was certainly no textual body to challenge that assumption), the idea that Beckett and Pinter's joint endeavor is linked to an issue of linguistic possibility and the problem of human existence locates the issue of influence as a conceptual function linked to a *Zeitgeist* rather than being matter of individual imitation or rebellion. In addition, Esslin notes Pinter's different, more realistic and poetic use of language, so that, if disciple, Pinter nonetheless goes his own way, not in rebellion or reaction, but as an effect of a different ability and dramatic ear.

Critics sustain the conceptual link between Beckett and Pinter through several decades of reconsiderations of "absurd" theatre. The existentialistic cell comprising Albert Camus, Beckett, Pinter, and others produces a post-war version of the movement model of modernist artistic

production based on an "organic presentation" of concept merged with form (Cohn 234). Agreeing with Esslin that *Godot* is the first play to bring absurd drama into public consciousness, Ruby Cohn understands Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* (1960) as a resonant recapitulation of "the basic pattern of *Godot*" (235). Noting Pinter's play's echo of the word "wait" and its metaphysical similarities, Cohn distinguishes Pinter's method from Beckett's as a matter of Pinter's movement from the trivial to the existential, while she sees Beckett as showing "his metaphysical hand from the opening scene of his plays" (236). Pinter begins with realism, while Beckett starts with the existential dilemma of human existence itself.

The idea that Beckett is both progenitor and more purely to the point relies on a model of influence in which the follower, Pinter, stays true to the progenitor's metaphysical register, but practices a more indirect deviation of originary purity. In a 1975 essay on alienation in Bertolt Brecht, Beckett, and Pinter, Esslin envisions Pinter's plays of the 60s as moving toward questions about "the validity of memories" and the problem of the "self" (17). Comparing modes of alienation catalyzes the clarity of these issues, but as in Cohn's essay, Esslin's comparison also situates Beckett as the most "profound" interrogator of the "self," because Beckett is, according to Esslin, "probably one of the greatest writers alive in the world today" (18). Again situating the relation between Beckett and Pinter as one of shared issues, Esslin moves more towards Cohn's model of apprentice recapitulation in which Pinter shares a vision, but chooses a deviant, superficially realist mode of expression.

In another 1975 comparison, Andrew Kennedy echoes the sense that Beckett is pure form and Pinter his wordier apprentice. "Pinter," Kennedy argues, "has little of Beckett's intense 'metaphysical' anguish and, again, little of the sheer intensity of feeling—that to speak is to suffer and that all language is exhausted. But," Kennedy continues, "Pinter has learnt to exploit his own sense of language-nausea" (qtd. in Geraldine Hammond, 42). Not only is Beckett the originator, he is now also the locus of authentic feeling and artistic anguish. Pinter, in contrast, is an exploiter of language, something one might perceive as a slightly lesser endeavor than Beckett's weighty angst. Austin Quigley's 1975 study of Pinter, *The Pinter Problem*, also focuses on the centrality of Pinter's use of language, seeing "an inquiry into the function of language un the plays" as one of the most important aspects of any study of Pinter's work (qtd. in Hammond 45). Beckett is all metaphysics, Pinter is language, and we all know from Plato which of these is the more significant.

Critics in the 1980s continue to assume this model of metaphysical master / linguistic apprentice to understand the relation between Beckett's

and Pinter's plays. Robert Mayberry, who notes again that Pinter is a "professed admirer" of Beckett, develops another shared strain of Beckett's and Pinter's work, namely the ways in which plays enact a battle of media "dissonance" (8). Relying upon Beckett's own description of *Play* (1964) as "a battle between light and voices," (8), Mayberry understands Pinter's subsequent works *Landscape* and *Silence* (1968) as also experimenting "with the disjunction of the visual and the verbal" (8). Situating this discord as yet another version of Darrell's "organic presentation" where "their discord parallels the jangle of experiences we call living" (11), Mayberry relies heavily on Beckett's own disquisitions on the nature of theatre. Focusing on a critical tradition constituted by a concept of authorial intention gleaned from writers' statements, Mayberry understands Beckett's 70s dramatic projects as a "search for a new form," which, according to Beckett, whom Mayberry quotes, will be "'of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else […] To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now'"(11). According to Mayberry, the master (Beckett) is in search of a species of new critical innovation (form equals content), while his disciples (Pinter and Edward Albee) "have been less persistent in their pursuit of new dramatic forms" (11).

 Although Mayberry's author-centered model presents a more conservative version of the master/apprentice paradigm in that he indeed reverts to statements of authorial intention as a primary source of evidence, he does credit the plays themselves with reconfiguring a dramatic art that aims at an organicism, noting that "Beckett, Albee, and Pinter find the principle of cause and effect, which informs the conventional plot, and the notion of linear time inappropriate models for representing the mind's processes" (13). Citing Beth in Pinter's *Landscape—*"The cause of the shadow cannot be found"—Mayberry suggests that these playwrights tell us that "while we may know effects, causes are often unknowable" (13). This may be equally valid as a way of reconfiguring the complex business of influence.

 The causes of complex phenomena such as literary production, of course, are always unknowable, and issues of influence invite speculation, textual comparison, and authorial testimony. But, as Beckett and Pinter have both protested, neither always knows what he is doing; and even if one may admire the other, such admiration does not always equate either with imitation or oedipal rebellion.[3] Instead, works by artists engaged in a

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[3] In his Nobel Acceptance Speech, Harold Pinter noted that "I have often been asked how my plays come about. I cannot say. Nor can I ever sum up my plays, except to say that this is what happened. That is what they said. That is what they

common project or world view may, as Katherine H. Burkman points out, share some qualities and diverge in others, not as the "disciple's" failure in art, but as a significant difference in practice. Burkman begins her essay "Hirst as Godot: Pinter in Beckett's Land" with a resounding endorsement of Beckett's influence—"[O]ne feels the influence of Samuel Beckett's drama in every pause and in every understated line of Harold Pinter's dramatic dialogue"—but is careful to draw attention immediately to a "significant difference" between their dramatic worlds (5). Unlike previous critics who have seen language in Pinter's plays as a trivializing distinction, for Burkman a significant difference between the playwrights' work is Pinter's characters' "lack […] of a relationship to an exterior force or God" (5). This lack of relationship means, according to Burkman, that characters in Pinter's plays tend to take on the role of outside force themselves, "fighting out the battles of existence to decisive ends" (5).

The exception to this tendency for Burkman is Pinter's *No Man's Land* (1975) in which Pinter's dramatic world joins Beckett's "purgatorial arena," focusing on slow expiration instead of renewal (5). Pinter's Beckettian play, however, neither proves nor defines the relationship between Beckett's and Pinter's work, but instead suggests another model for that relationship: "The resemblance of Hirst to Beckett's Godot is surely not a conscious choice on Pinter's part and may be pure accident: the two playwrights do inhabit and depict the same world. Godot, however, has become such a potent image for our times that it would be surprising if Pinter had not unconsciously been influenced to explore Godot's nature from his own perspective" (14). The two playwrights dip from the same well; their shared vision is an effect of an unconscious influence deriving as much from a "modern consciousness" permeated by "Eliot's wasteland," as by the powerful lacuna of the absent figure of Godot (14). This unconscious influence, according to Burkman, works variously. "There is no doubt, however," Burkman notes, "that Beckett has charted the lands that Pinter explores here, just as there is no doubt that Pinter has shed some new light on the enigma of Godot" (14). Influence is a two-way condition, a given of the dramatic environment**,** and a writer's relation to other writers is both unconscious and inevitable. What the two writers relate to is, in the end, the absent one, whether that is another author or a field of meanings and practices. This absent one is not simply a specific triangulating other from which both playwrights derive, but a circulation among others, the larger field of Otherness, and the medium of

did." When asked about who Godot was, Beckett responded that "If I knew who Godot was, I would have said so in the play;" when pressed about what he meant in *Waiting for Godot*, he responded "I meant what I said." (qtd. in Bair 382-383).

an absent other who is both really absent and an imaginary presence.

Pinter's "new light" on the absent one—the Godot figure, or the absent addressee, or the hole in consciousness, or the lack in being—is both more and less than the work of a disciple. The unconscious, whether cultural or individual, is a large field, though its mechanisms might aid an escape from the kinds of literal assumptions that typically attend declarations of influence. If the unconscious is that which cannot be known, then influence becomes an effect occurring outside of consciousness and intention. If, in addition, that unconscious includes a larger cultural *Zeitgeist* unconsciously acquired and accepted, as Burkman suggests, then influence derives simultaneously from the styles, ideas, and insights of a cultural context as well as from the idiosyncratic vagaries of individual unconscious processes. In neither case is influence as a *cause* at all chartable, but instead becomes something more like a contagion of spirit or the haunting by a question or a pervasive structure—in this case the quintessential (and existential) absence of the other—any other.

Burkman's understanding of influence as deriving at least partially unconsciously from an established cultural condition contrasts with the continued insistence on influence as familial indebtedness in another 1980s era review essay on the plays of Pinter, Tom Stoppard, and Sam Shepard. Michael Hinden heartily reaffirms Burkman's assessment of Beckett's centrality: "Yet behind each [Pinter, Stoppard, Shepard] looms the nimble, brooding presence of Beckett, the progenitor of postmodern theater. All fully acknowledge their indebtedness to Beckett, having absorbed from him a variety of dramatic techniques" (400-01). Borrowing, according to Hinden, everything from new conceptions of plot, dialogue, and character (and what else is there?), Beckett's three admiring sons are simultaneously "indebted" to Beckett and begin to go their own ways, as "progenitor" Beckett's influence wanes. But Hinden also deploys spatial imagery as a means of describing degrees of influence. As Pinter's work develops, it seems to "have moved some distance beyond Beckett" (402). In Hinden's scenario, the sons don't kill the father or pay him back, they simply move away. At the same time, Hinden observes, critics discern the same larger, more comprehensive modernist *Zeitgeist* to which Burkman refers as equally influential. Moving away means not only distancing from a presumed parents from whom one has gained just about everything; it also means enlarging the field of influence itself from a single figure to the entire field of modernist angst.

Exchange in the Failure of Exchange

Between Beckett and Pinter the notion of influence is a mixed phenomenon. For some it is familial, but not quite oedipal. For others it takes on the complexities of the unconscious and a world view inaugurated with Eliot. The plays themselves, however, tell us a different story. As Mayberry hints in passing, Pinter's *Landscape* models the co-presence of speakers and the failure of exchange that redefines the monologic possibilities of postmodern drama. It also typifies influence itself as a question of an absent auditor in its figuration of failed exchange, the paradoxes of language and presence, and the ways Beckett's and Pinter's works share in yet another postmodern *Zeitgeist*—that of an understanding of the delusive subject itself as comprised in relation to the inaccessible Other who is by definition always the Absent One.

Beckett's radio play, *Embers*, the first in this series of monologues which enact a paradigm of influence, presents a character, Henry, who narrates to himself imaginary conversations with figures from memory—his father, his wife, Ada--along with the repeated story of two old men, Bolton and Holloway. Although Henry addresses his dead father, his father refuses to respond. Henry is, however, able to conjure his wife, Ada, who is either physically present and responsive or responding in Henry's imagination. Henry also metatheatrically produces the play's setting by ordering sounds—the beat of hooves, the sounds of his daughter, Addie, struggling at her piano and horseback riding lessons. Seemingly beyond Henry's control the sea resounds throughout the play, making a sound more evident when Henry is not speaking, and "so strange, so unlike the sound of the sea, that if you didn't see what it was you wouldn't know what it was" (93).

Embers is a monologue, even though there is more than one voice. We do not know whether or not there is ever any character other than Henry present. Sitting on the side of the bay opposite the one his father had favored, Henry talks, addressing first his absent father, then commencing the Bolton/Holloway story, which he interrupts three times to hail his father again. Giving up on his father temporarily, he calls for his wife, Ada, who responds. Henry asks, "Have you been there long?" indicating, again ambiguously, either a physical presence of which he was unaware, or a metaphorically psychical presence. In any case, Henry's comments suggest that they both can and cannot see one another. Ada describes putting her shawl under Henry, but then asks him if he has "put on his jaegers" (97). Henry smiles for Ada, and asks if the smile has any of "the old charm" (98).

Henry and Ada's conversation focuses on the difficulties of their communication and the occasion of the sexual encounter on the shore. During this interlude Henry conjures the sounds of their daughter's piano and riding lessons, and the pair's sexual interlude twenty years before. But Ada's responses and queries have to do primarily with the processes by which Henry evokes presence and the reasons he must do so. Noting their solitude, Ada asks Henry who he was with "Before you spoke to me" (101), suggesting more her imaginary than her physical presence. She tells him there must be "something wrong with your brain" (100), because he talks incessantly. When Henry tells her he "was trying to be with my father" or "trying to get him to be with me"(102), Ada supposes he has "worn him out" (102).

Although he talks incessantly, Henry begs Ada to continue her talking: "Drive on, drive on! Why do people always stop in the middle of what they are saying?" (102). Ada, however, says she has no more to say and departs, though Henry begs her to stay: "You needn't speak. Just listen. Not even. Be with me" (103). Without the illusion of a more present auditor, Henry returns to his narrative of Bolton and Holloway, a story, it turns out about Holloway coming to give Bolton a euthanasiac injection. The story ends ambiguously with Bolton giving Holloway "just the look" (104) and Henry ends by taking out his "little book" to check for appointments—"Plumber at nine? . . . Saturday . . . Nothing. Sunday . . . Sunday . . . nothing all day. [*Pause*] Nothing, all day nothing. [*Pause*]. All day all night nothing. [*pause*]. Not a sound" (104).

Henry and Ada's shared environment, either the product of Henry's imagination or actually shared constitutes the setting of the play. The issue is not whether Henry imagines all of this or actually evokes the presence of the horses, and wives, and children whose sounds he orders, but why he needs to elicit a listener at all. Certainly, as several critics have noted, *Embers* plays on the possibilities of aurality, both in the contrapuntal poetry of Henry's words against the persistent sound of the sea and in his repetitions. Louise Cleveland has envisioned the play as a "perceptual struggle" (267) in which listeners must try and discern the sound-generated world through the interference of sea noise and radio medium. *Embers* is, according to Cleveland, a battle against time in which the illusion of presence and the play's "dramatic tension" are sustained by the difficulties in "differentiation" and "continuity" associated with "audial perception" (269). Joshua Pederson reads the play as producing the possibility of a visualization or even a staging, while it simultaneously comments "on the difficulty of doing so" (9). Thomas Cousineau interprets the play's repetitions as a version of the "fort/da" game Sigmund Freud

observed his grandson playing when his mother was absent, seeing *Embers* as Henry's struggle for mastery over the absence of others. Eric Prince reads the play as "a profound aesthetic exploration of the subject of invention (imagination) and memory (forgetting) through a solitary protagonist" (264) which meditates upon "the subject of memory, forgetting, and identity" (265).

Whether or not Henry is alone, the play enacts the angst of address in Henry's constant evocation of the other, whether that other is his father, his wife, or even Christ (a word he mouths four times). *Embers* is a drama of address and ontology, as the subject Henry, in his fading, calls to the other to certify his continued existence, a certification necessary to enact an ending. Although it would seem that Henry is trying to drown out the sounds of the sea with his talking, his talking is also like the sound of the sea, and like the sea, is embers, memories glowing and not gone out. Henry is like *Endgame*'s (1957) Hamm, needing a listener to his narrative, needing the narrative to forestall and evoke both presence and absence, both being parts of the same phenomenon. Henry elicits the other by setting the stage, making a dialogue out of a monologue, splitting himself into voices and sounds that when heard by an imaginary auditor, produce the scenario of Henry's own presence—and hence the possibility of his own eventual absence. The absent one, though absent, is never absent, since the absent one—the other—is and always has been a part of the subject's own constitution. Whether the other is the father or Christ or even Ada, the other is an introjected guarantor projected onto the stage as the drama of the subject itself—of its perpetual coming into being, even if reduced only to a voice—a voice then witnessed by many others. Attempting through address to elicit the presence of the other, Henry's address also shows the other's absence. At the same time, of course, there is another other present in the audience of the play.

What *Embers* suggests about the nature of literary influence, then, is that drama itself is an address to the other, whoever that other is. In a Lacanian scheme that other can be both cultural and individual—the Other and others—but the point is that a subject always reforms itself in relation to the others that it imagines see or hear it, addressing itself to itself via this "other" witness.[4] In this scheme there is really no need for any biographical specificity to understand the function of the other. As Henry's

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[4] Jacques Lacan's notion of the ego is that it exists as a complex set of reflections-- with one's own form, with one's relation to others as objects--on multiple, complex, interactive planes. See his "Seminar on the *Purloined Letter*" in *The Purloined Poe.*

monologue suggests, the other can even be the sea; the subject and the play are capable of a range of address where even the paradox of saying "there is not a sound" produces the presence provoked by address. Although Marjorie Perloff recaptures the oedipal dynamics of influence by interpreting Henry's relation to his father "as an autobiographical drama of filial guilt" (qtd. in Prince 272), the play itself enacts the subject casting a much wider net, calling into nothing and needing no response to produce a quite functional illusion of an other, enough to produce just the scenario of speaker/listener that seems both to fail and succeed in *Embers*' audial landscape. The absent other is the influence, no matter who that other is imagined to be.

Structuring the monologue as an address to an absent other who is simultaneously an intrinsic element of the character's own psychic structure produces a sense of the theatre as the locus of this process. The play is the thing wherein characters play out simultaneously the role of the absent other in their own constitution as subjects via a specific address to this other and demonstrate the ways this other is never there. The drama of Beckett's monologues—and this includes not only the monologic plays such as *Not I* and *Rockaby*, but also *Endgame* and *Happy Days* (1961) where protagonists devote much conscious energy to an anxiety about being heard or seen--is, thus, a matter of a character whose very ontology is on the brink. These plays are intra-subjective dramas projected onto and beyond the stage in multiple layers of address—to another character who may or may not respond, to an absent other, to the unacknowledged audience itself, always, finally, the other to the play itself.

As Mayberry suggests, Pinter's *Landscape*'s structure, in which two characters speak without any hint that they are aware of another's presence, may be the archetype for the dynamics of the dramatic monologue. The co-presence of two voices in *Embers*, Prince points out, makes listeners "conscious of the separation of these two figures," a separation that enacts Henry's essential solitude as well as the existential dilemma of humanity (270). *Landscape* employs a similar structure, first as a separation between radio play and auditor, then as it was later staged. In the stage version, two middle-aged characters, Beth and Duff, sit at opposite ends of a very large kitchen table. Each speaks. Beth begins and ends the play, her evocation of a love scene at the beach interspersed with Duff's more brusque and pragmatic ruminations on producing, maintaining, and recognizing the quality of various elements of their environment—their positions as servants to the absent Sykes, the caliber of beer in the local pub, the possibilities of multiple sexual partners, the desperation of a forced sexual encounter. The dual monologues differ not

only in content, but in the cast of their imagery and delivery.

Beth's monologue, often understood as "interior," and as memory, works through a poetic syntax of short, often incomplete sentences with variations on typical word order that evokes nostalgic reverie. "Very far away a man was sitting, on a breakwater"(181). Beth's speech occupies an apparently different time—what Burkman calls "transcendent, mythical time," signaled by its comparative lack of pragmatic detail (145). Beth, however, is present on stage and speaking aloud, so her speech is not entirely of another world, nor is it "interior" nor any more a matter of memory than Duff's. Duff's disquisitions are delivered more as conversational speech and recounted as a series of anecdotes—the stranger's critique of beer at the pub, the walk with the dog to the pond, their relation to Sykes. Both characters deliver ruminations derived from their past, evoking everyday circumstances that contain some subtle point of crisis—of being seen or witnessed as Beth describes being stared at by the women at the shore, of attempting to gain mastery over others as Duff conveys his experience in the pub or describes his attempt at rough, perhaps unwilling sexual intercourse.

Landscape enacts a monologic structure similar to that played out in *Embers* in which characters address an absent one, remaining unheard and unacknowledged, which address itself produces the illusion of the other that guarantees their continued existence—and produces the play. Although Henry gets a response from Ada, she may or may not be present. Beth and Duff are present, but not inter-responsive even though they may be talking at least partially about one another. Their talk, as several critics have observed is musical, fugue-like, repeating the same motifs in one form or another—Beth's blue dress, the dog, the kitchen.[5] Beth and Duff seem distanced in time, though contiguous in space, producing simultaneously both disjunctive speeches and an interwoven text/performance of complex juxtaposition. Frank Gillen describes their circumstance as a structure in which "repeated images suggest what may have been a single world becomes two impenetrable ones" (59).

Critics, too, struggle to find some meaning or unity in their monologues, worrying about the identity of Beth's beach lover, who may be Duff or Sykes or some one else, trying to reassemble the pieces into a coherent narrative. Nena Whittemore compares the play to James Joyce's "The Dead," seeing the two monologues as relating in "abstract geometric patterns" (43). Gillen reads the play as enacting the "confinement of the

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[5] Both Prapasseree Kramer and Brian Richardson read Beth's monologue as an interior monologue.

male, patriarchal world due to its lack of imagination" (59), understanding Beth as the "tragic" female and Duff as the entrapped male. Ralph Allison and Charles Wellborn also see the play as contrasting female and male as well as past and present. Prapassaree Kramer sees the two monologues as an interdependent commentary on sexual politics, even if causally unrelated. "Duff's monologue," she declares, "exists *in order* to let us see what Beth wants to shelter herself against" (70).

The desire to unify the play pushes against the play itself whose set-up may work to enact separation, the desperations of evoking the absent other, and the impossibility of communication, while of course paradoxically combining, fulfilling, and communicating such impossibilities. The characters, existing in different registers, both address an absent other who may or may not be the present other whom they do not even bother to misrecognize as the other they are not addressing. Instead of talking at cross purposes or enacting threatening dialogue or communicating some set of latent meanings, Beth and Duff do what people do—talk to themselves to certify their own continued existence while imagining an other who listens. The play's dual monologues do not duel, but coexist in a universe of such monologues. Beth and Duff carry on their own processes of addressing the other as themselves or the other in themselves without pretending to take the present other into account. They enact the essential separateness of human beings, even people who share histories. They enact the lack of consensus and communication, not as a simple negation, but as an elaborate and poetic endeavor to address the absent one. Brian Richardson considers the play a harbinger of a new notion of narrative, the two "independent" speeches resonating "parallels and symmetries" (41) and concluding that "the drama is about the suspension, deferral, or transgression of narrative" (42).

Landscape also enacts the fecundity of the address to the absent other as the libidinal source of dramatic energy and tension. In so doing it also suggests, as did *Embers,* that even in the politics of artistic influence, each playwright speaks to an absent one who is simultaneously other and Other, part of self and guarantor of self, provisional, evanescent, and produced in the very act of addressing it. Even if *Landscape* does not biographically, historically, or even psychically respond specifically to *Embers*, *Landscape* responds to *Embers* in so far as *Embers* had already begun the conversation—the dramatic monologue about monologue—into which Pinter enters via monologue. The on-going conversation is not about any specific other—not about Beckett *per se*—but becomes an exploration of the power of address to produce the delusion of ontology as itself both method and matter of theatre.

The Absent One

Landscape may hint at a love triangle if we imagine Beth's lover to be someone other than Duff, or perhaps even if her former lover is Duff, in light of the kind of character Duff has become. Beth's dreamy address produces a present vision of the past as one of the play's three scenes: the visible tableau of the two at either end of a large kitchen table, the aural geographies of Duff's ramblings through the neighborhood, and Beth's beach idyl. The one to whom these reminiscences are recounted is just as much the character who reminisces as some other in some other place and time. The question of address is a question of the addressing subject; the absent one interpellated by this address ranges and morphs, overtly in Duff's disquisitions, less materially so in Beth's. The ambiguity of her last line, "Oh my true love I said" (198), gathers these illusive others within a specific economy of desire, whether such economy is romantic as it is for Beth, or competitive as it is for Duff.

The absent one who may be both subject and object of address, however, is always mediated by yet others, who are, at the time of the play, equally absent. Beth's absent love, whoever he is, is mediated by Sykes and Duff and dogs. Duff's addressees mediate one another— publican and complaining patron, Sykes, the dog, Beth, the recipients of his infidelities. The absent one, though always singular in any given appeal, is one element in a system of reflexive address that requires not only the initiating speaker, but also other figures through and around whom the speaker much speak in order to force the delusion of the other's presence and ultimately its regard. This mechanism of triangulated reference is quite clear in *Embers* where it succeeds by failing—Henry never succeeds in resurrecting the sense of his father's presence. In *Landscape* the triangulations of address are more entwined and varied in time and place. To produce the lover, Beth needs the regard of the women and the limitations of Duff and Sykes, though she succeeds in regaining some possibly gratifying sense of feeling. Duff's attempts to secure Beth's regard require another woman and an employer, while his sense of manhood rests on his competitive ability to wrest the best from the bunghole. Although the absence evoked by monologic speech is aimed at an absent figure—the father, the lover, some past manifestation of Beth-- the dynamic of its rousal requires indirection, displacement, mediation, and the evocation of multiple times, spaces, and circumstances.

The systemic dynamics of addressing the absent one are even more evident in Pinter's next monologue, *Monologue*. The single Man on stage, alone in a chair, referring to another chair, talks to an absent other about

their past friendship. The tone of his monologue is bitter, disappointed, fearful, sardonic, and aggressive. Absence evident, the Man attacks: "The thing I like, I mean quite immeasurably, is this kind of conversation, this kind of exchange, this class of mutual reminiscence" (272). Sarcastic meta-commentary on the play's monological method, the exchange—and the mutuality—is a one-sided display of a rather tottering sense of self exhibited to a now imaginary other evoked to shore him up. Cast in terms of competition—"Fancy a game?" (271)—the Man's address to his friend indirectly maps some past love triangle with the other other, his friend's black woman lover in relation to whom the Man lost out, whether the loss was the collapse of a love triangle or some failure of acceptance, or the effect of jealousy and hostility. The Man is jealous still, his comments about his friend's appearance and his friend's girlfriend's being "Black as the Ace of Spades" (272), hinting at the kind of hostility and pettiness displayed by the rejected.

At the same time, the Man still addresses his friend as an absent other who guarantees the Man as man. Though it is long past, he still craves the regard of the other, who has taken an other other—the black woman—instead of the Man he has left behind. The Man still lives out the feelings of this relationship; it is still present to him, the play enacting the Man's loneliness, disappointment, and aggression as the Man casts about for debts, reminders, and small victories that, in their retelling, produce the relationship he has lost. Asking rhetorically, "Who was your best mate, who was your truest mate?" the Man reminds the absent one that he introduced him to "Tristan Tzara, Breton, Giacommeti and all that lot" (272). He grants his friend superior looks, but claims ascendance in his relationship to his friend's girlfriend: "But I'll tell you one thing you don't know. She loved my soul. It was my soul she loved" (273). Using the absent one's other as guarantor of his own intrinsic value, the Man exhibits to this absent other/self the value of self as reflected in the absent one's other's projected evaluation of himself. This economy is not simply one of the Man and his other, but of the man proving his worth to himself by proving it to the absent friend via the projected regard of his friend's partner.

What this complex triangulation of addresses and projections enacts, finally, is the intrinsic set of addresses necessary to theatre itself as a phenomenon locked in the present. Like the Man, we are the witnesses of other scenes evoked for us by the stage. These scenes, which, like the one evoked in *Monologue*, are yet other scenes in which triangles produce simultaneously an ontological guarantee and a failure of the other's regard. In theatre, the stage does not look back, yet we, like the Man, witness and