

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Strategies of Dialogic Realism, Shakespeare to Pinter

by

Janine M. Falck

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CALGARY, ALBERTA

DECEMBER, 1992

© Janine M. Falck, 1992.



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-83141-3

Name

JANINE M. FALCK

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided:

ENGLISH (DRAMATIC LITERATURE)

SUBJECT TERM

0593

SUBJECT CODE

U·M·I

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0729
Art History 0377
Cinema 0900
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0723
Journalism 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0708
Music 0413
Speech Communication 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0273
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0688
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0727
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0520
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0998
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0535
Religious 0527
Sciences 0714
Secondary 0533
Social Sciences 0534
Sociology of 0340
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0530
Technology 0710
Tests and Measurements 0288
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language 0679
Ancient 0289
Linguistics 0290
Modern 0291
Literature 0401
Classical 0294
Comparative 0295
Medieval 0297
Modern 0298
African 0316
American 0591
Asian 0305
Canadian (English) 0352
Canadian (French) 0355
English 0593
Germanic 0311
Latin American 0312
Middle Eastern 0315
Romance 0313
Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0422
Religion 0318
General 0321
Biblical Studies 0319
Clergy 0320
History of 0322
Philosophy of 0469
Theology 0323

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies 0323
Anthropology 0324
Archaeology 0326
Cultural 0327
Physical 0310
Business Administration 0272
General 0770
Accounting 0454
Banking 0338
Management 0385
Marketing 0501
Canadian Studies 0503
Economics 0505
General 0508
Agricultural 0509
Commerce-Business 0510
Finance 0511
History 0358
Labor 0366
Theory 0351
Folklore 0578
Geography 0346
Gerontology 0351
History 0579
General 0579

Ancient 0579
Medieval 0581
Modern 0582
Black 0328
African 0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
Canadian 0334
European 0335
Latin American 0336
Middle Eastern 0333
United States 0337
History of Science 0585
Law 0398
Political Science 0615
General 0616
International Law and Relations 0617
Public Administration 0814
Recreation 0452
Social Work 0626
Sociology 0627
General 0938
Criminology and Penology 0631
Demography 0628
Ethnic and Racial Studies 0629
Individual and Family Studies 0630
Industrial and Labor Relations 0629
Public and Social Welfare 0700
Social Structure and Development 0344
Theory and Methods 0709
Transportation 0999
Urban and Regional Planning 0453
Women's Studies

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture 0473
General 0285
Agronomy 0475
Animal Culture and Nutrition 0476
Animal Pathology 0359
Food Science and Technology 0478
Forestry and Wildlife 0479
Plant Culture 0480
Plant Pathology 0817
Plant Physiology 0777
Range Management 0746
Wood Technology 0306
Biology 0287
General 0308
Anatomy 0309
Biostatistics 0379
Botany 0329
Cell 0353
Ecology 0369
Entomology 0793
Genetics 0410
Limnology 0307
Microbiology 0317
Molecular 0416
Neuroscience 0433
Oceanography 0821
Physiology 0778
Radiation 0472
Veterinary Science 0786
Zoology 0760
Biophysics 0425
General 0996
Medical

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry 0425
Geochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0370
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Palynology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences 0566
General 0300
Audiology 0992
Chemotherapy 0567
Dentistry 0350
Education 0769
Hospital Management 0758
Human Development 0982
Immunology 0564
Medicine and Surgery 0347
Mental Health 0569
Nursing 0570
Nutrition 0380
Obstetrics and Gynecology 0354
Occupational Health and Therapy 0381
Ophthalmology 0571
Pathology 0419
Pharmacology 0572
Pharmacy 0382
Physical Therapy 0573
Public Health 0574
Radiology 0575
Recreation

Speech Pathology 0460
Toxicology 0383
Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences

Chemistry 0485
General 0749
Agricultural 0486
Analytical 0487
Biochemistry 0488
Inorganic 0738
Nuclear 0490
Organic 0491
Pharmaceutical 0494
Physical 0495
Polymer 0754
Radiation 0405
Mathematics 0605
Physics 0986
General 0606
Acoustics 0608
Astronomy and Astrophysics 0748
Atmospheric Science 0607
Atomic 0607
Electronics and Electricity 0798
Elementary Particles and High Energy 0759
Fluid and Plasma 0609
Molecular 0610
Nuclear 0752
Optics 0756
Radiation 0611
Solid State 0463
Statistics

Applied Sciences

Applied Mechanics 0346
Computer Science 0984

Engineering 0537
General 0538
Aerospace 0539
Agricultural 0540
Automotive 0541
Biomedical 0542
Chemical 0543
Civil 0544
Electronics and Electrical 0348
Heat and Thermodynamics 0545
Hydraulic 0546
Industrial 0547
Marine 0794
Materials Science 0548
Mechanical 0743
Metallurgy 0551
Mining 0552
Nuclear 0549
Packaging 0765
Petroleum 0554
Sanitary and Municipal 0790
System Science 0428
Geotechnology 0796
Operations Research 0795
Plastics Technology 0994
Textile Technology

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0621
Behavioral 0384
Clinical 0622
Developmental 0620
Experimental 0623
Industrial 0624
Personality 0625
Physiological 0989
Psychobiology 0349
Psychometrics 0632
Social 0451



Nom _____

Dissertation Abstracts International est organisé en catégories de sujets. Veuillez s.v.p. choisir le sujet qui décrit le mieux votre thèse et inscrivez le code numérique approprié dans l'espace réservé ci-dessous.



SUJET

CODE DE SUJET

Catégories par sujets

HUMANITÉS ET SCIENCES SOCIALES

COMMUNICATIONS ET LES ARTS

Architecture	0729
Beaux-arts	0357
Bibliothéconomie	0399
Cinéma	0900
Communication verbale	0459
Communications	0708
Danse	0378
Histoire de l'art	0377
Journalisme	0391
Musique	0413
Sciences de l'information	0723
Théâtre	0465

ÉDUCATION

Généralités	515
Administration	0514
Art	0273
Collèges communautaires	0275
Commerce	0688
Économie domestique	0278
Éducation permanente	0516
Éducation préscolaire	0518
Éducation sanitaire	0680
Enseignement agricole	0517
Enseignement bilingue et multiculturel	0282
Enseignement industriel	0521
Enseignement primaire	0524
Enseignement professionnel	0747
Enseignement religieux	0527
Enseignement secondaire	0533
Enseignement spécial	0529
Enseignement supérieur	0745
Évaluation	0288
Finances	0277
Formation des enseignants	0530
Histoire de l'éducation	0520
Langues et littérature	0279

Lecture	0535
Mathématiques	0280
Musique	0522
Orientation et consultation	0519
Philosophie de l'éducation	0998
Physique	0523
Programmes d'études et enseignement	0727
Psychologie	0525
Sciences	0714
Sciences sociales	0534
Sociologie de l'éducation	0340
Technologie	0710

LANGUE, LITTÉRATURE ET LINGUISTIQUE

Langues	
Généralités	0679
Anciennes	0289
Linguistique	0290
Modernes	0291
Littérature	
Généralités	0401
Anciennes	0294
Comparée	0295
Médiévale	0297
Moderne	0298
Africaine	0316
Américaine	0591
Anglaise	0593
Asiatique	0305
Canadienne (Anglaise)	0352
Canadienne (Française)	0355
Germanique	0311
Latino-américaine	0312
Moyen-orientale	0315
Romane	0313
Slave et est-européenne	0314

PHILOSOPHIE, RELIGION ET THÉOLOGIE

Philosophie	0422
Religion	
Généralités	0318
Clergé	0319
Études bibliques	0321
Histoire des religions	0320
Philosophie de la religion	0322
Théologie	0469

SCIENCES SOCIALES

Anthropologie	
Archéologie	0324
Culturelle	0326
Physique	0327
Droit	0398
Économie	
Généralités	0501
Commerce-Affaires	0505
Économie agricole	0503
Économie du travail	0510
Finances	0508
Histoire	0509
Théorie	0511
Études américaines	0323
Études canadiennes	0385
Études féministes	0453
Folklore	0358
Géographie	0366
Gérontologie	0351
Gestion des affaires	
Généralités	0310
Administration	0454
Banques	0770
Comptabilité	0272
Marketing	0338
Histoire	
Histoire générale	0578

Ancienne	0579
Médiévale	0581
Moderne	0582
Histoire des noirs	0328
Africaine	0331
Canadienne	0334
États-Unis	0337
Européenne	0335
Moyen-orientale	0333
Latino-américaine	0336
Asie, Australie et Océanie	0332
Histoire des sciences	0585
Loisirs	0814
Planification urbaine et régionale	0999
Science politique	
Généralités	0615
Administration publique	0617
Droit et relations internationales	0616
Sociologie	
Généralités	0626
Aide et bien-être social	0630
Criminologie et établissements pénitentiaires	0627
Démographie	0938
Études de l'individu et de la famille	0628
Études des relations interethniques et des relations raciales	0631
Structure et développement social	0700
Théorie et méthodes	0344
Travail et relations industrielles	0629
Transports	0709
Travail social	0452

SCIENCES ET INGÉNIERIE

SCIENCES BIOLOGIQUES

Agriculture	
Généralités	0473
Agronomie	0285
Alimentation et technologie alimentaire	0359
Culture	0479
Élevage et alimentation	0475
Exploitation des pâturages	0777
Pathologie animale	0476
Pathologie végétale	0480
Physiologie végétale	0817
Sylviculture et faune	0478
Technologie du bois	0746
Biologie	
Généralités	0306
Anatomie	0287
Biologie (Statistiques)	0308
Biologie moléculaire	0307
Botanique	0309
Cellule	0379
Écologie	0329
Entomologie	0353
Génétique	0369
Limnologie	0793
Microbiologie	0410
Neurologie	0317
Océanographie	0416
Physiologie	0433
Radiation	0821
Science vétérinaire	0778
Zoologie	0472
Biophysique	
Généralités	0786
Médicale	0760

SCIENCES DE LA TERRE

Biogéochimie	0425
Géochimie	0996
Géodésie	0370
Géographie physique	0368

Géologie	0372
Géophysique	0373
Hydrologie	0388
Minéralogie	0411
Océanographie physique	0415
Paléobotanique	0345
Paléocologie	0426
Paléontologie	0418
Paléozoologie	0985
Palynologie	0427

SCIENCES DE LA SANTÉ ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Économie domestique	0386
Sciences de l'environnement	0768
Sciences de la santé	
Généralités	0566
Administration des hôpitaux	0769
Alimentation et nutrition	0570
Audiologie	0300
Chimiothérapie	0992
Dentisterie	0567
Développement humain	0758
Enseignement	0350
Immunologie	0982
Loisirs	0575
Médecine du travail et thérapie	0354
Médecine et chirurgie	0564
Obstétrique et gynécologie	0380
Ophtalmologie	0381
Orthophonie	0460
Pathologie	0571
Pharmacie	0572
Pharmacologie	0419
Physiothérapie	0382
Radiologie	0574
Santé mentale	0347
Santé publique	0573
Soins infirmiers	0569
Toxicologie	0383

SCIENCES PHYSIQUES

Sciences Pures

Chimie	
Généralités	0485
Biochimie	487
Chimie agricole	0749
Chimie analytique	0486
Chimie minérale	0488
Chimie nucléaire	0738
Chimie organique	0490
Chimie pharmaceutique	0491
Physique	0494
Polymères	0495
Radiation	0754
Mathématiques	0405
Physique	
Généralités	0605
Acoustique	0986
Astronomie et astrophysique	0606
Électronique et électricité	0607
Fluides et plasma	0759
Météorologie	0608
Optique	0752
Particules (Physique nucléaire)	0798
Physique atomique	0748
Physique de l'état solide	0611
Physique moléculaire	0609
Physique nucléaire	0610
Radiation	0756
Statistiques	0463

Sciences Appliquées Et Technologie

Informatique	0984
Ingénierie	
Généralités	0537
Agriculture	0539
Automobile	0540

Biomédicale	0541
Chaleur et thermodynamique	0348
Conditionnement (Emballage)	0549
Génie aérospatial	0538
Génie chimique	0542
Génie civil	0543
Génie électronique et électrique	0544
Génie industriel	0546
Génie mécanique	0548
Génie nucléaire	0552
Ingénierie des systèmes	0790
Mécanique navale	0547
Métallurgie	0743
Science des matériaux	0794
Technique du pétrole	0765
Technique minière	0551
Techniques sanitaires et municipales	0554
Technologie hydraulique	0545
Mécanique appliquée	0346
Géotechnologie	0428
Matériaux plastiques (Technologie)	0795
Recherche opérationnelle	0796
Textiles et tissus (Technologie)	0794

PSYCHOLOGIE


Généralités	0621
Personnalité	0625
Psychobiologie	0349
Psychologie clinique	0622
Psychologie du comportement	0384
Psychologie du développement	0620
Psychologie expérimentale	0623
Psychologie industrielle	0624
Psychologie physiologique	0989
Psychologie sociale	0451
Psychométrie	0632



THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

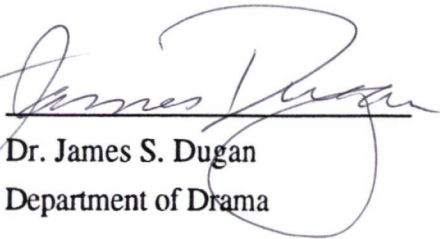
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Strategies of Dialogic Realism, Shakespeare to Pinter" submitted by Janine M. Falck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



Supervisor, Dr. James Black
Department of English



Dr. Susan B. Stone-Blackburn
Department of English



Dr. James S. Dugan
Department of Drama

Date Dec. 18, 1992

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of discontinuous dialogue and fragmented narrative as dialogic strategies of realism from Renaissance to modern ('Absurdist') plays. While not searching for lines of influence, the study notes the existence of dialogic strategies common to playwrights as historically and culturally diverse as Shakespeare, Büchner, Chekhov, Beckett, and Pinter. Though it is unavoidable that the conceptions or theories of realism will vary with each distinct period of theatrical representation, it is nevertheless possible to examine the 'realistic' nature of specific dialogic patterns of drama, that is, to explore the developing ways in which dialogue presents itself as being representative of 'the real'. Despite ideological arguments by Barthesian and other postmodern critics who resist the notion of realism, my study is predicated on A.D. Nuttall's speculative theory of "discontinuous dialogue", and incorporates ideas from discourse analysis, Bakhtinian dialogic criticism, Russian formalism, and theatre semiotics, as well as Brechtian and representational theory such as Howard Felperin's.

Acknowledgements

I am appreciative of the financial aid accorded me through a Province of Alberta Government Scholarship and The University of Calgary's A.T.J. Cairns Memorial Scholarship. I would also like to thank the Department of English at The University of Calgary for awarding me Teaching and Research Assistantships during the course of my graduate studies.

For their academic and moral support I am indebted to Donna Coates, Kwang-Sok Han, and Max Foran. Thanks to Fiona whose friendship has kept things in perspective, and to Helen Black for her kindness and cheerful attendance at countless plays during my crash-course in drama.

Without the encouragement of my Mom and Dad I would never have considered -- and certainly would never have completed -- this degree. This brief mention does no justice to their contribution.

To Dr. Black, who got me into -- and, more importantly at this point, out of -- this fine mess, I am grateful. His patience, gentle prompting, and delight in sharing with his students his knowledge and love of literature have been inspirational. I suspect that he, like W. S., knows everything, and it is to him that I dedicate this thesis.

It is not theory but life that matters, not knowledge but reality.

Michel Foucault
Knowledge/Power

Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One	17
Chapter Two	43
Chapter Three	67
Conclusion	105
Works Consulted	108

Introduction

For twenty-five years he has been chewing over other men's ideas about realism, naturalism, and all the rest of that nonsense; twenty-five years lecturing and writing about what intelligent people already know and stupid people aren't interested in -- which means twenty-five years of milling the wind. (Chekhov, Uncle Vanya)

To propose a study of the 'realistic' in dramatic discourse seems a perverse endeavor in light of critical theory that renders 'realism' both unattainable and unevaluatable, since reality is a construct unique to each individual's (never objective) perception of it, and even then is fluctuating and untranslatable. 'Realism' then becomes an abstract concept that cannot be represented; nor can the success of 'realistic' representation be judged since the criteria for evaluating it do not exist, or at least do not exist as a 'concrete', employable standard for more than one person at one place and time in any given instance. Many voices have spoken against theatre that purports to be presenting 'reality' -- a 'slice of life' -- to, it is argued, a diverse and presumably gullible audience apparently unaware that they are being subjected to and indoctrinated with a single, often privileged, and generally patriarchal view of reality, and that this 'reality's' very presentation and audience acceptance ensures the maintenance of the political or power structure. Alison Lee, for example, in her work on the novel, challenges "the assumptions that Realism and its related ideology -- that which we usually call liberal humanism -- have encouraged readers and teachers of literature to think of as 'natural', 'normal', and 'neutral'" (x). She notes the argument that "Realism has little to do with reality. It is, rather, a critical construct which developed in a particular social and ideological context" (3).¹ My thesis does not engage with either the philosophical or ideological debates concerning Realism and its (politically incorrect) representation and evaluation.² Nor does it address "the Realist assumption that truth and reality are absolutes" (Lee, 3). I do not intend to re-evaluate Realism, though I examine the 'realistic', or at least the (or a) perception of the 'realistic,' in dramatic dialogue. I realize that it is possible to overanalyze these matters, as one finds many critics doing -- for example, Terry Eagleton on Brecht:

The dramatic gesture, by miming routine behaviour in contrivedly hollow ways, represents in all its lack, in its suppression of material conditions and historical possibilities, and thus represents an absence which it at the same time produces. What the stage action represents is the routine action as differenced through the former's non-self-identity, which nevertheless remains self-identical -- recognizable -- enough to do all this representing rather than merely to "reflect" a "given" non-identity in the world. A certain structure of presence must, in other words, be preserved: "verisimilitude" between stage and society can be disrupted only if it is posited. ("Brecht" 412)

To a certain degree my discussion of 'realism' -- which only glancingly incorporates the notion of the "sociological and psychological credibility" of characters within the 'realistic' play, since my focus is on dialogic form rather than content -- conforms to its fairly traditional definition as described by Brenda Murphy:

The rhythm of life, these plays constantly suggest, is not a movement towards transcendence or harmony but a continual return to the mundane; not resolution or closure but irresolution and open-ended action; not spectacular, world-rending moments of truth but gradual processes of partial revelation, which may or may not effect some limited change in character or environment. The distinguishing characteristic of realism in dramatic structure is its lack of closure. Realistic dramatic action opens up into the larger and wider rhythms of life that surround and interpenetrate it but can only be hinted at in the space of a realistic play. The action is not "an action" in the conventional Aristotelian sense but a convergence in a particular space and time of the many "actions" of several lives being lived. Realistic theoretic form in drama is precisely the refusal to reduce the complex rhythms of human life to the paradigm of a generically conventionalized "action". (xii)

Like Ruby Cohn, who "understand[s] realism as the mimetic representation of contemporary middle-class reality" (1),³ my own definition of the realistic in dramatic dialogue rests on a broad conception of the 'everyday' speech of average (lower- or working-class) persons: neither literary nor worldly, their discourse relates to their day-to-day concerns of making a living, maintaining a household, and interacting with those around them. Their 'ordinary' dialogue opposes that in Steiner's observation: "Where men speak verse, they are not prone to catching colds or suffering from indigestion. They do not concern themselves with the next meal or train time-tables" (243). In many ways the discourse that I am studying falls into Eric Bentley's somewhat-dated category of Naturalistic dialogue which "drift[s]"

toward mere life, toward nonart. The dialogue tends to be unimproved and all but unedited talk, and, interestingly enough, it seems proportionately harder for the playwright to create a play to which the dialogue can be subordinated; hence the tendency of Naturalism toward the episodic -- which is nothing more than a tendency to meander, a tendency to lose track, a tendency, in short, to formlessness. (84)

I recognize, however, that these general parameters -- "unedited talk" of the "lower middle class" -- are not entirely useful because they are at once too vague and too restrictive, for Bentley continues: "Naturalistic dialogue is homey, and says: 'Please note how close our playwright has stayed to the ordinary conversation of ordinary people.' The rationale could be called democratic: 'This is *your* theatre.' Rhetorical dialogue, in prose or verse, is aristocratic. It is an ideal speech, and will tend to consort with plots and characters above

the ordinary" (93). My study of realistic dialogue contradicts the accepted idiom of Naturalism as Bentley describes it, as the discourse of upper class characters, for example, would have to be discounted, and so would discourse relating to 'important' or extraordinary circumstances. Naturalism's narrow guidelines would exclude the speech of King Berenger in Eugène Ionesco's *Exit the King*, whose extraordinary past accomplishments as well as present experience are discussed in common language which neither lends credibility to the discourse nor takes credibility away from it. Of course Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* refutes Bentley's theory of dramatic language: see for example the elevated rhetoric of the tramp Vladimir -- "Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us" (51). My study is not limited by a character's social status or the perceived (in)significance of his or her speech. Elevated or archaic rhetoric, if appropriate to the character, or if an effective means of expression of the playwright, could be classified as realistic. Corrigan reminds us,

it was the desire for more expressive language that caused realistic dialogue to be introduced into the theatre in the first place. Ibsen, Strindberg, and Chekhov didn't write the way they did because they had theories about language; they wrote realistic dialogue partly in reaction to the hollow rhetoric of the romantic play, but chiefly because they had created characters who could best express themselves with this kind of speech. (262)

In addition, while realistic dialogue might incorporate 'local' events, the settings and times of the plays that I am studying are far removed from my own; strictly speaking, they are neither contemporary nor familiar. Though I analyze particular passages of dialogue, I discuss their realism not by comparison with other texts, or between text and 'life', but as the discourse relates specifically to that around it -- that is, as it is voiced within the text itself. A more workable definition, then, depends less on examining the content of the speaker's discourse than on exploring the 'realistic' in terms of the specific structure of a character's speech. In this way, particular dialogic⁴ techniques that carefully craft a character's speech to make it seem unself-consciously realistic become evident, and it is such strategies of realism that are the focus of my thesis. Such apparently 'unadorned' or 'simple' language (one would be tempted to say 'natural' but for Ferdinand de Saussure's statement that no language is natural because "linguistic structures determine our perception of reality so that meaning cannot exist independently of language" qtd. in Lee, 21),⁵ gives the appearance of unaffectedness, or conversation 'overheard'. In a sense, this study is an analysis of the achievement of Zola's "illusion of reality" (renamed by Howard Felperin as "fiction of authenticity," 183; and by Bernard Beckerman as "artifice of reality"⁶) through dialogue (subtext, silence, discontinuity) that approaches 'familiar' speech.

All analyses of realistic dialogue proceed from the recognition that most speech, unlike Realism's "purity of diction,"⁷ is neither grammatically correct (at least not consistently) nor well thought-out. The (re)use of simple words takes preference over a more sophisticated vocabulary, and commonplace expressions, including local idiom or slang, often punctuate speech. Dialogue itself is unpredictable: a speaker may stammer, repeat him- or herself, be at a loss for words, use expressions incorrectly or inappropriately, or express an idea only half-articulated, leaving meaning unclear and apparently non-sensical. My study of strategic realism is confined specifically to dramatic voices -- audible from Renaissance and contemporary theatre -- that will not directly communicate, that do not, in Bentley's terms, engage "in dialogue as opposed to monologue, verbal intercourse as opposed to verbal discourse" (78).

A. D. Nuttall defines "discontinuous dialogue" as that in which a line of narrative is interrupted, circumlocuted, avoided, creating fragmented or dislocated speech.⁸ From non-sequitur to illogical or circumambulatory phrases, discontinuity entails not merely a changing of the subject, but a completely interruptive, disruptive discourse. Discontinuity creates gaps in dialogue that must be filled, silences that must be heard. The security of an audience is shaken as the narrative is disturbed through an enactment of Viktor Sklovskij's (Shklovsky) *priëm ostranenija* -- "the device of making it strange": "People living at the seashore," wrote Sklovskij, "grow so accustomed to the murmur of the waves that they never hear it. By the same token, we scarcely ever hear the words which we utter. ... We look at each other, but we do not see each other anymore. Our perception of the world has withered away, what has remained is mere recognition" (qtd. in Erlich, 176-77).⁹ The very notion of presenting and examining the 'everyday' or the ultra- or hyper- realistic as a literary form(at) is rooted in Sklovskij's Formalist theory:

One may wonder how Sklovskij managed to reconcile his enthusiasm for reportage with a literary theory which saw the chief aim of art in the creative deformation of reality. The fact of the matter is that Sklovskij's theorizing was often more ingenious than consistent. There are periods in the history of literature, he argued, when age-old esthetic formulae lose their effectiveness, when traditional art forms such as the novel seem to have exhausted their potentialities. At such moments, literature, threatened with paralysis, must reach beyond itself in order to recover its vitality: it must "invade non-literature," by drawing into its orbit 'raw materials of life', by making use of 'extra-esthetic' designs. (Erlich, 121)¹⁰

Of course Brecht adopted in specific terms this defamiliarizing technique and referred to it as the "Alienation effect" (*Verfremdungseffekt*); it is in these terms that elliptic and

dissonant dialogue can be read and heard: "The A-effect consists in turning the object of which one is to be made aware, to which one's attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected" (*Brecht* 143). Interestingly, George Steiner's description of verse in the theatre, which he sets against prose -- "a leveller [that] gets very close to its object" (242) -- can be used to explain the effect of discontinuous dialogue which, both colloquial ('naturalistic') and defamiliarizing, "creates [a] sense of distance and strangeness" (242). Steiner writes, "the difference of languages ... alters the perspective and gives to the characters and their actions a special magnitude. And by compelling the mind to surmount a momentary barrier of formality, verse arrests and ripens our emotions" (242). Discontinuous dialogue likewise interposes itself between the audience and the action of the play; while it may not make the same emotional effect on an audience, it does challenge our comprehension and engage our intellect. Unlike Naturalistic dialogue it does not seduce its audience into complacently accepting the likelihood of logically progressive conversations, where "the way the dialogue unfolds appears necessary, inevitable" (Veltrusky, 111). Discontinuous dialogue startles its audience, jars their perception, and by presenting the unexpected, forces its listeners not only to pay attention but in doing so to evaluate and critique the action or the speech both from moment to moment and in its relation to the scene or even the play as a whole. If we are not increasingly conscious of the technique, at least we are aware of the dissonance that it effects; "language is used to draw attention to itself" (Kennedy, *Six Dramatists* 16). Nuttall writes that "the prime purpose of 'making it strange' is to induce an innocent vision, unmediated by preconceptions" (*New Mimesis* 96); he describes this perception as the "innocent eye", and explains that "poetic language, in particular, may be seen as 'negatively truthful' in the way it deliberately forces the means of expression on our attention, so that we cannot mistake them for realities which have, so to speak, been transcribed without any alteration" (96).¹¹ While we no longer accept the idea of an 'unmediated vision', the effect of this abrupt dialogue is disorienting. When an audience bumps up against a non-sequitur in the dialogue, the continuity is postponed, protracted. Though the dialogue continues, the audience may be temporarily and involuntarily left behind by the distraction, or may find itself returning to the discontinuities in the hope of realizing some clarification. In this way discontinuous dialogue functions specifically as Sklovskij's "'deliberately impeded form' (*zatrudnënnaja forma*) ... -- a set of contrivances superimposed upon ordinary speech" (Erich, 178); here the Formalist's term refers to "the poet's 'twisted', oblique mode of discourse [that] hinders communication and forces the reader to come to grips with the world in a more strenuous

and, thus, more rewarding fashion" (Erlich, 178). Often, of course, the progression of drama that employs this technique, such as Chekhov's and Pinter's, is not linear, though these playwrights nonetheless craft playtexts that progress from their opening to their 'closing' scenes. Discontinuous dialogue not only resists but refuses closure, thereby leaving not just a conversation, but perhaps an entire scene or even a play's 'meaning', open to analysis and interpretation. Using these Formalist and Brechtian references to define discontinuous dialogue would seem to admit a paradox in that I propose this discursive technique to be at once paradigmatic of 'real speech' while at the same time a 'poetic strategy'; that is, discontinuous dialogue is both the norm and the deviation from the norm. I can only answer that this style is both 'natural' ('everyday') and contrived ('poetic'): it is a 'realistic' form noted and exploited (poeticized) as a strategy of 'realism'.

Context is central in determining the condition of disconnectedness: "context confers meaning" (*New Mimesis* 7) in a simultaneous confirmation and inversion of Saussure's claim that "an individual word [makes] sense only in relation to a system of language; an individual action, in relation to a system of conventions" (qtd. in Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* 285).¹² Discontinuous dialogue does *not* make sense only in relation to the system around it. By definition, it is random and seemingly non-sensical, neither relating to the immediately-preceding discourse nor introducing further discourse. But it is the very quality of dislocation and isolation that creates or bestows meaning on these fragments through the absence of Lévi-Strauss's "relational logic"; as Nuttall explains, "to institute a running comparison, of whatever kind, is to create genuine meaning" (*New Mimesis* 4). Discontinuous dialogue seems anti-structural, but its very formlessness constitutes its own form. From Shakespeare to Pinter, playwrights' attempts to show, or at least to explore a less visible and less easily expressed 'reality' are undertaken in part through seemingly 'non-realistic' dialogue, dialogue that does not necessarily 'make sense', or, on the surface, 'say' anything. The phenomenon of discontinuous dialogue is usually associated with the Absurdists,¹³ as an opposition to the unsatisfying 'surface reality' (superficiality, artificiality) of Realism's 'everyday' language.

'From Chekhov to Pinter' is generally the spectrum across which critics range when discussing Realism or 'realism' in theatrical speech. Like Martin Esslin, Leslie Kane believes that the use of 'everyday language' in drama reflected specific social and psychological conditions: "the shifting ground of the late nineteenth century -- the nihilism, uncertainty, alienation, and despair which emanated from the world of scientific, political, and social upheaval [that] emerged in the 1890's as a viable dramatic technique" (14-15).

Esslin and others have been wrestling with Absurdism, dissonance, discontinuity and 'speaking silences' for half a century and in fact have given the impression that these elements are only "postwar" phenomena. Nuttall speculates -- and this thesis will illustrate -- that in fact discontinuous dialogue in drama, if it does not originate with Shakespeare, at least has one of its earliest uses there.

To trace particular 'modern' techniques to their earlier uses -- that is, to base a study on similarity rather than difference -- begins with the admission of the arbitrariness of the starting point or source; it also must confront the problematics, as Felperin is careful to point out, of the term 'modern', which he understands as "not a matter of chronology or period" but "a function of the mimetic process itself": "Modernity and mimesis are both inextricably implicated in the traditional, and if we stop to think about it, root sense of literature as 'representation'. In any *re*-presentation, that is, an idea of imitation, repetition, and continuity is combined with a contrary idea of innovation, differentiation, and discontinuity" (7). Felperin denies "the [post-modernist] view of literature as a self-referential structure, in which mimesis and modernity are incompatible concepts, [a]s based on a misunderstanding of the former as well as the latter" (7). He defines "modernity" as that which subverts and surpasses convention in an effort to be, consciously or not, "mimetic" -- that is, to be more directly representative of "life", "experience", "nature" by superseding the art that came immediately before it; by showing up its immediate predecessor as "artificial" the 'new' art thereby proclaims itself as closer to "the real". "The most truly modern work would thus, in theory, also and simultaneously be the most truly mimetic, since both modernity and mimesis seek ultimately to break through or away from the mediations of art and become spontaneous and unprecedented 'life'" (Felperin, 8).

The progression of literature, then, is propelled by the recognition of and subsequent disassociation from the immediate past as (inadequate) convention, so that "what begins as a revelation of the mediated status of prior art in the interest of engaging life directly becomes one more mediation to be revealed and repudiated as such" (Felperin, 9-10). Each successive literary or dramatic movement argues its own validity through its predecessors' failure to be 'realistic'. Theatre once regarded as 'authentic' is now seen as conventional (and, thus, according to Felperin, antimimetic). Raymond Williams explains:

In a naturalist play, for example, the convention is that the speech and action should as closely as possible appear to be those of everyday life; but few who watch such a play realize that this is a convention: to the majority it is merely "what a play is like", "the sort of thing a play tries to do". Yet it is, in fact, a

very remarkable convention that actors should represent people behaving naturally, and usually privately, before a large audience, while all the time maintaining the illusion that, as characters, these persons are unaware of the audience's presence. (*Ibsen to Brecht* 13)

Or as the Philosopher in Brecht's "Der Messingkauf" *Dialogues* replies to the Worker's endorsement of "realistic acting": "But it's also a reality that you are sitting in a theatre, and not with your eye glued to a keyhole. How can it be realistic to try and gloss that over?" (*Brecht* 172). That Realism and Naturalism, for example, are now discussed as particular periods or movements of drama is evidence of their perceived artificiality, their innovative strategies such as the fourth wall, and the reproduction of 'everyday' speech and action, mere (and accepted, if only to be rejected) convention. J. L. Styan says, "It is axiomatic that each generation feels that its theatre is in some way more 'real' than the last" (*Modern Drama* 1), and John Gassner writes that "in all periods, playwrights and players have been realistic *for their times* and within dramaturgic and theatrical conventions -- that is, within limits more or less agreed to by their audiences" (218).

In many respects realism is located outside of convention, but this statement does not necessarily translate into Nuttall's observation in *A New Mimesis* that

it becomes the specifying mark of the real to divagate from the rule. Thus 'quirkiness' becomes a paradigm of realism. Then, later still, since all linguistic operations ... have a conventional aspect, this shift also, to the aberrant as typically realistic, can be reduced to its increasingly perceptible convention and -- if you are that way inclined -- relegated to the category of the unreal (by the way of the ubiquitous fallacy, 'Whatever is conventional is unreal'). (61)

As a strategy of realism, playwrights from Shakespeare to Pinter exploit the dramatic technique of discontinuity -- dialogical and structural -- through their use of interrupted dialogue, broken stories, and fragmented relations. While the function of defamiliarization in specific terms of dialogue has been noted, this technique is also used in a larger and historical context of promoting 'authenticity'. Felperin explains:

Cervantes invents the "realistic" novel not by including the windmills and barber's basins of "reality" in a narrative where they would previously have no place -- the fallacy that the novel achieves its characteristic realism by sheer inclusiveness or "thinginess" is still current -- but by superimposing on them the forms of romance, giants and golden helmets, and showing that they do not fit. The giants and golden helmets of romance have in the process been demystified or made prosaic, but the windmills and barber's basins (not of "reality" but of the picaresque tale) have been remystified or made poetic. (42)

Studying 'realism by contrast' through analyzing some of the disparate 'languages' which lie within certain playtexts is the basis of this thesis, which does not evaluate 'realism' solely on the 'truth to life' alleged by the text. In its comparative respects, my study is antithetical to Brecht's theorizing of drama: "One cannot decide if a work is realist or not by finding out whether it resembles existing, reputedly realist works which must be counted realist for their time. In each individual case the picture of life must be compared, not with another picture, but with the actual life portrayed" ("Popular" 44). I also leave out Barthes' view, which dismisses 'realism' in literature as merely a new verisimilitude (147), in that 'realistic' elements or details do not denote but only signify 'the real':

Eliminated from the realist speech-act as a signified of denotation, the "real" returns to it as a signified of connotation; for just when these details are reputed to *denote* the real directly, all that they do -- without saying so -- is *signify* it; Flaubert's barometer, Michelet's little door finally say nothing but this: *we are the real*; it is the category of "the real" (and not its contingent contents) which is then signified; in other words, the very absence of the signified, to the advantage of the referent alone, becomes the very signifier of realism: the *reality effect* is produced, the basis of that unavowed verisimilitude which forms the aesthetic of all the standard works of modernity. (148)

Barthes' skepticism -- the argument that literature or art or drama can function only as a representation of the real -- is self-evident and limiting. Representation must inherently consist of or incorporate an element of artifice: "Any artist, in order to represent life, must resort to the conventions of art, and in doing so, falsify life in so far as art creates a world rival to life's" (Felperin, 66). Jindrich Honzl writes, "Everything that makes up reality on the stage -- the playwright's text, the actor's acting, the stage lighting -- all these things in every case stand for other things. In other words, dramatic performance is a set of signs" (74). A playtext, no matter how apparently realistic or recognizable and therefore interpretable as 'real' (familiar) its dialogue, is nonetheless artificial: constructed and structured, and perhaps necessarily so, for as Michael Chekhov notes, "to portray life without an element of fantasy is to make a photographic copy of it, not to recreate it" (qtd. in Gassner, 28),¹⁴ or as Styan reminds us, "Realism is never enough in itself: it must always be artfully unreal" (*Modern Drama* 156). Any representation is always and is only a re-presentation ("since there is no reason why life should have to be *represented* if it could be presented directly," Felperin, 40), and is by definition not 'real' in that it is to some degree necessarily removed, in the Platonic sense, from that which it depicts.

There is, of course, the doubt that specific dialogic patterns can be treated -- even recognized and separated -- by textual analysis alone. The objection to this sort of critical

analysis is argued, for example, by John Russell Brown in "The Nature of Speech in Shakespeare's Plays". He points to the factors of variability of every production -- from set design to director -- that collaborate in a play's refusal to "be defined or confined" (48). In discussing dramatic dialogue as "a crucial element, dividing and yet connecting a text and its performance" (49), Brown warns against "consider[ing] the speaker as a disembodied functionary" (51), and reminds us that "speech originates from words on a page, but it also introduces the individual performer, idiosyncratic, specific, and always changing. Speech involves us as members of an audience and not as independent readers" (49). In "Shakespeare and Beckett: What the Words Know", Homer Swander asks,

Beckett's or Pinter's, Shakespeare's or Marston's "play": what is it? *Catastrophe* and *The Tempest* only play out, in an open use of the medium, what is true of every "play": the script is not the play. A poem is a poem, a novel is a novel, a play is a play; but a play is not a set of words on a collection of pages. Which performance of *Catastrophe* is Beckett's play? (60)

As numerous dramatic semioticians point out, paralinguistic systems, kinesic and proxemic codes all affect the presentation and audience acceptance and response to a playtext: I acknowledge Deirdre Burton's reminder of "the problems of discussing drama dialogue as written language rather than as written-to-be-spoken language" (8). Dialogue that reads as discontinuous may be rationalized or justified in performance by stage action or more subtly by individual delivery of speech; its dissonance depends upon being received as such by an audience, and the suspicion of incongruity is more pronounced when only reading a play, where gestures, pauses, or other stage business cannot account for the dialogic suspension. This is partly what Anne Ubersfeld means in suggesting that "the written text is incomplete (*troué*)" (qtd. in Bassnett-McGuire, 52),¹⁵ or what Lee refers to as the "indeterminacy of the playtext" (81): the reader often "knows nothing about the contextual situation from the text alone" (Bassnett-McGuire, 52). In modern editions of Renaissance texts such as *Macbeth* or *The Changeling* abrupt variations in speech by a single character are signalled by specific stage directions or printed-text conventions (usually a long dash) indicating 'asides', where reflection, meditation, or confession -- thoughts heard by the audience but not necessarily by other characters on stage -- are clearly marked off from the dialogue. In modern playtexts, this separation is not made: discontinuity is incorporated into the spoken dialogue and thus is more pronounced as an inconsistency within the discourse. In the plays that I have chosen for discussion, no stage directions signify that a discontinuous remark is made 'absentmindedly' or within a contextual frame that would clarify its actual stage utterance: each performance might treat

the occasion differently. Because of this inevitable variability the production of a play is not necessarily its authoritative 'reading': performance is not alone privileged with the ability to reveal the 'text-within-a-text' or "inner text, that is read intuitively by actors and directors as they begin to build the performance" (Bassnett-McGuire, 50). Though my study of these plays has developed from having read them and not necessarily from having seen all of them performed, my understanding of the phenomenon of discontinuous dialogue is not "limited to the content and organization of some words upon the page" (Brown, "Nature of Speech" 52), but attempts to incorporate through actual viewing when possible, or through close reading, how this dramatic technique is realized in terms of performance. As Cohn explains,

My examination is schizophrenic, first of all, because drama supposes and yet opposes theatre. That is to say, these dramas were written for performance, and yet the texts are printed, available to readers. Although inventive and/or rebellious young men (and a very few women) wrote these recent plays for performance, and although I have attended most of the performances, I comment mainly on published texts. A tension between text and performance is endemic to all investigations of drama... (*Retreats from Realism* 1-2)

Of course what an audience believes or intuits to be realistic dialogue will vary. An audience has its own version of reality, and is, according to post-Saussurian critics like Barthes, a participant in the "cocreative relationship between the text and the reader" (Lee, 22) which produces that text's "meaning": "since texts do not 'mean' by themselves, 'meaning' has to be brought to them by a shared creative process between text and reader. Each reader will bring to a text different, culturally and pedagogically determined, knowledges, and thus interpret a text in a variety of ways" (Lee, 23-24). In this study I do not oppose text and performance, though admittedly I privilege the former, but, when possible, attempt to study the two in conjunction with one another. In order to curb the foregrounding of textual analysis, punctuation will be addressed only when it can be 'heard' (as in specified pauses, for example) by an audience. In the context of evaluating realistic dialogue, it is rather the lack of punctuation, and the effect of this absence on its delivery, that becomes significant.

My idea of realism in dramatic dialogue recognizes that unless the personages on a stage improvise their script (and even if they do) their dialogue is contrived and 'theatrical', for even language which seems arbitrary or non-sensical is always ordered and contained. Unarguably, the only real dialogue is that which occurs spontaneously between real people, and even then, of course, all language is ultimately artificial: it is a construct substituting or

translating emotion, thought, experience into form, a process that Pirandello refers to in his Preface to *Six Characters in Search of an Author* as "the inherent tragic conflict between life (which is always moving and changing) and form (which fixes it, immutable)" (*Naked Masks* 367). Yet the desire and the effort of playwrights to (re)create realistic dialogue (and this term is distinct from 'naturalistic' dialogue as defined by Bentley when he remarks on "the age of the tape recorder," 81) is ever-present; what is valued as artistically real depends, as Mordecai Gorelik notes, "on the prevailing culture and temper of the times" (qtd. in Gassner, 113),¹⁶ and in the end, Styan observes, "It is, of course, the conception of dramatic reality which changes, and realism must finally be evaluated, not by the style of a play or a performance, but by the image of truth its audience perceives" (*Modern Drama* 1). Thus Ibsen proclaims his re-creation on stage of "'genuine, plain language spoken in real life'" (qtd. in Styan, *Modern Drama* 5),¹⁷ and Edward Albee in his essay "Which Theatre is the Absurd One?" argues that verisimilitude is not necessarily realistic: "I would submit that The Theatre of the Absurd, in the sense that it is truly the contemporary theatre, facing as it does man's condition as it is, is the Realistic theatre of our time" (qtd. in Gassner, 334).¹⁸ Victor Erlich sums up the representation and the study of realism from Shakespeare to Beckett: "Each school of poetry, no matter how unconcerned it professes to be with 'life', feels compelled, in its bid for an audience, to claim for itself and for poetic art a singularly effective mode of dealing with reality" (180).

My first chapter will examine dialogic strategies in selected texts from Shakespeare through Georg Büchner. The following two chapters will concentrate on Samuel Beckett's and Harold Pinter's techniques of realism. Since certain of Beckett's texts were written originally in French (though Beckett himself wrote the English versions) and since I will be examining plays by Chekhov, a word on the use of translated playtexts is necessary. Assessing realism in diction, determining the authenticity in the representation of 'the way people really talk', presents a particular difficulty when studying texts written in disparate times and cultures. For example, discussing the realism of Chekhov's dramatic dialogue, as I will be doing in Chapter One, seems especially problematic in that my reading is of a translated text. I am not judging the realism of the Russian text, but of an English version. While I cannot determine the textual fidelity of the translation or transliteration, such consideration is not altogether crucial: Chekhov's translated text, and Beckett's, and Büchner's, are here treated as appropriated English texts. I must also draw attention to the parameters within which I define realistic dialogue, for it would be easy enough to dismiss not only Chekhov's, but also Shakespeare's, and even Pinter's and Beckett's texts, as

'unrealistic' because 'unfamiliar': all of these plays were written during times and within cultures different from mine; not surprisingly, their language therefore would be removed from the conversation that I recognize and discuss as 'everyday'. In the case of Shakespeare and Chekhov, the linguistic differences are not only of idiom, but of language (as cultural construct) itself. Because of these significant deviations, the 'realistic' nature of specific discourse is judged by "internal comparison,"¹⁹ that is, within a playtext; however, the structure of realistic dialogue can, I feel, be determined through external (across playtexts, cultures, and ages) comparison, and therefore it is dialogic form that is my primary focus.

A prominent feature of realistic dialogue is its colloquialism. The difficulty in assessing this factor, in, say, Chekhov's translated work lies in the potential stylization of the original text, or the 'artificiality' of the translated words that, in the interest of precise transcription, assume a flavor of formality. Achieving the nuances of the original text may be at the expense of literal accuracy or, in order to accomplish a 'correct' translation, the linguistic texture of the original may be affected. A speech by Olga that occurs early in *The Three Sisters* illustrates the refractory nature of an analysis of its dialogic realism:

It's so warm today we can keep the windows wide open, but the birches are not yet in leaf. ... Father was given a brigade and left Moscow eleven years ago, and I remember perfectly that by this time, at the beginning of May in Moscow, everything was in bloom, it was warm, all bathed in sunshine. Eleven years have passed, but I remember it all as though we had left there yesterday. Oh God! This morning I woke up, I saw this flood of sunlight, saw the spring, and joy stirred in my soul, I had a passionate longing to go home again. (236)

Eloquent and poetic phraseology such as "not yet in leaf," and "bathed in sunshine" distances Olga's speech from what is elsewhere in this study considered 'everyday' or 'ordinary' discourse, as do the sentiments expressed -- "joy stirred in my soul". Such quibbling over vocabulary, however, is not entirely valid. 'Artificial' or 'artful' language may be seen as 'realistic' if it is appropriate to the character who speaks it; that is, if the utterance is something that that character would conceivably say. Olga's precise and elevated diction is 'true' to her 'oppressed-with-education' (248), school-mistress character. Likewise Irina's enthusiastic speech is reflective of her lively and somewhat child-like personality; equally appropriate are Masha's querulous complaining and criticisms, Andrei's impatience, Vershinin's prophecies, Tuzenbach's philosophizing, Chebutykin's careless directness, Ferapont's "How's that?" deafness. Even Kulygin's pedantic "*O, fallacem hominum spem!* Accusative case exclamatory" (278) is appropriate

to him, as are Solyony's inane comments, quotations, and "peep, peep, peep" interjections. But having acknowledged these paradigms, characteristic of each specific speaker, one can also justify changes in speech patterns as realistic, as plausibly motivated, credible expression. Natasha, for example, -- "so unused to being in company" (256) -- enters as a frantic and insecure outsider, a position reflected in her distracted comments directed at no one in particular -- "They're already sitting down to lunch. ... I'm late" (254); "They are very informal" (255). Her later acquired eloquence and forcefulness, though artfully employed, is realistic in fitting with her affected manner: determined to assume control, she uses (French) language to argue her superiority and to gain and maintain power in the community. The limits of this study, then, necessitate the acceptance of speech as appropriate to the speaker's emotion and character, that is, as being true to the situation or the reality as the speaking character perceives it. The study does not necessarily address the justification of the emotion itself, for within the specific boundaries or terms of reference of the drama, a case can always be made for answering the question 'is it real?' in the affirmative.

Within the limits just mentioned, I will be examining the dialogue of anxious and 'othered' characters such as Shakespeare's Falstaff and Shallow, Chekhov's Firs and Büchner's Woyzeck in Chapter One. Chapters Two and Three analyze nostalgic, narrative, 'power' and self-protective dialogues in Beckett and Pinter. In the third chapter, which is mainly on Pinter, I will argue that *Family Voices*, for example, is constructed or 'narrated' like a post-modernist story, and that in this and other plays Pinter deliberately over-uses circumstantial detail. Part of my conclusion will be that the details of 'everyday' experience that are used by earlier playwrights to 'authenticate' their plays are subversively employed by Pinter to provoke audiences into questioning the reality of what they are seeing on-stage. But Pinter's undermining of a familiar 'realistic' technique need not mean that all techniques for encouraging audience belief are discredited. The thesis shows that over a long historical period in drama, playwrights have relied, independently and derivatively, on specific strategies to signal 'the real'.

Notes

¹ This position would seem to substitute one "critical construct" (Realism) for another (post-modernism). It may be that "Realism [i]s a tool of ideological control, precisely *because* it pretends to be normal and neutral" (Lee, 27), but such postmodern accusations function in precisely the same fashion. Noting that "every text -- theoretical, critical, biographical, or historical -- will ultimately subvert its rhetorical strategies" (27), Lee acknowledges this critical pitfall: "Postmodern texts are both the inheritors and the perpetrators of this radical undermining. Like linguistic theorists, they posit a straw man of Realism, while at the same time, they unravel the fabric of their own language through the discourses of history, performance, visual art, and film" (27-28).

² Elin Diamond in "Mimesis, Mimicry, and the 'True-Real'", writes that "Realism is more than an interpretation of reality passing as reality; it *produces* 'reality' by positioning its spectator to recognize and verify its truths: this *escritoire*, this spirit lamp affirms the typicality, the universality of this and all bourgeois drawing rooms" (60). For an explanation of this position as claimed earlier by Barthes, see Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory* 135-37. See also Linda Hutcheon, "Telling Stories: Fiction and History" in *Modernism/Postmodernism* for an example of the postmodernist view of realism, and Richard Rorty's reminder in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* that, contrary to the Romantic idea that "truth is made rather than found, [it is] *languages* that are made rather than found, and that truth is a property of linguistic entities, of sentences" (6-7).

³ Cohn approaches her study of realism cautiously: "since both words - reality and realism - are today under investigation (when not under Derridian erasure), I abide by Katherine Worth's broad embrace: 'I am using [realism] in its widest possible sense, to take in at one end the meticulously 'accurate' slice of life play and at the other the play which only just keeps within the boundaries of ordinary ... probability'" (2). Cohn cites Worth's *Revolutions in Modern English Drama* (London: G. Bell, 1973) vii-viii.

⁴ "Dialogic" is used in its merely adjectival sense, and does not carry the ideology of Bakhtin's use of the term as explained by McDonald: "While dialogue in its traditional, monological sense can be described and defined, for example, in purely linguistic terms, the dialogic is not reducible to logical or what Bakhtin calls concrete relationships, and one gains access to a definition of the dialogic only through translanguistics" (6).

⁵ Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Methuen, 1982) 4; and Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1915) Trans. Wade Baskin, eds. Charles Bailey, Albert Sechehayé, and Albert Reidlinger (London: Peter Owen, 1974) 65.

⁶ This phrase is taken from the title of Bernard Beckerman's article "'Artifice of Reality' in Chekhov and Pinter," *Modern Drama* 21.2 (June 1978): 153-61.

⁷ Kennedy is referring specifically to Ibsen, in "Natural, Parodic, and Mannered Dialogue," 44.

⁸ See Nuttall's "Gospel Truth," 46. (Nuttall begins his search with the New Testament: Jesus' 'conversation' with Pilate, John 18. 33-38.)

⁹ Viktor Sklovskij, *Literatura i kinematograf* (Berlin, 1923) 11.

¹⁰ Viktor Sklovskij, *Tret 'ja fabrika*, (Moscow, 1926) 99; and *Gamburgskij scët* (Moscow, 1928) 19.

¹¹ Nuttall describes the formalist response (citing Barthes' "L'Effet de réel") to defamiliarization in terms of 'realism': "Making it strange" is, now, not the isolation of an unmediated, unconditioned perception, but the substitution of one set of (artistic) governing conditions for the usual set. The artist may think he is giving the reader a stark, immediate reality, but the formalist critic, by turning a similar

searchlight on the artist's means of expression, by making them strange, reveals the fact that he is doing no such thing" (*New Mimesis* 97).

¹² "Even more fundamentally, words themselves gain significance only by virtue of the total linguistic system to which they belong; so declared Ferdinand de Saussure in a series of lectures delivered at the University of Geneva between 1906 and 1911, posthumously published as *Cours de linguistique générale* (1915)" (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* 285).

¹³ In *Around the Absurd* Raymond Williams writes, "What Chekhov's realism, Maeterlinck's symbolism, and Strindberg's intimate and less intimate theatre shared was a de-emphasis on plot and a fragmentation of dialogue that would become the *lingua franca* of the absurdists" (5).

¹⁴ Gassner is quoting from Michael Chekhov's "notes, made in 1922 while he was a member of the Second Moscow Art Theatre Studio" (28).

¹⁵ Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre* (Paris: Editions sociales, 1978) 24.

¹⁶ Mordecai Gorelik, "The Conquest of Stage Space," *Theatre Arts* (March 1934): 213-18.

¹⁷ Ibsen's letter to Lucie Wolf, 25 May, 1883.

¹⁸ Albee's essay is printed in Gassner's text (329-36), reprinted from *The New York Times*, 25 February, 1962.

¹⁹ I borrow this term from Andrew Kennedy's "Natural, Mannered, and Parodic Dialogue," 37.

Chapter One

But don't you see that the whole trouble lies here. In words, words. Each one of us has within him a whole world of things, each man of us his own special world. And how can we ever come to an understanding if I put in the words I utter the sense and value of things as I see them; while you who listen to me must inevitably translate them according to the conception of things each one of you has within himself. We think we understand each other, but we never really do.

(Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*)

In Renaissance drama, realism is conventionally found in the comic presentation of the everyday lives of 'lower' characters, who speak, appropriately, 'common' prose rather than the verse reserved for royal and heroic characters, whose elevated station is reflected in their style of utterance. The form of speech used to be viewed as "the prime divider between the world of high tragedy and that of ordinary existence" (Steiner, 241) because it was accepted that "the comedy and the prose belong to low life, the grief and the poetry to high" (249). Shakespeare's *1* and *2 Henry IV* have as a theme the exploration of the overlap and disparities between 'real life' and 'appearance' -- between actuality and performance. Along with *Richard II*, these are pioneering works in this context, or at least Shakespeare is a pioneering worker: his theory is his art, his artifice his theorizing; he *does* what critics try to say, and works in a simultaneity of practical and theoretical modes. It is tempting to locate the realism of the *Henry IV* plays in the vernacular prose of Falstaff and in the comic scenes. Steiner sees Shakespeare's use of prose as specifically "modern", and in *Henry IV* typifying or embodying the "manifold dialect" of "the clash between the chivalric ideal of conduct, already tainted with decay, and the new mercantile empiricism foreshadowed in Falstaff" (253). The "high-flown verse" of Hotspur is challenged and defeated by the "carnal prose" of Falstaff, who is "allow[ed] a parting word: 'Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound'. The line is prose and the matter is money. It speaks of modern life, whereas there shines on Henry V, as he sets off to France and the last of medieval wars, the glory of a passing age" (255). Having drawn attention to this kind of contrast, Steiner and the older critics explore the issue of the "carnal prose [of] modern life" no further.

The realism found in the Eastcheap and Gloucestershire scenes in *Henry IV* is the result of a combination of a variety of dialogic methods that render speech 'common' or 'everyday', or at least remove it from the 'higher' rhetoric surrounding it. One recognizable sign of realism in dialogue is its content, which tends to reflect the mundane, the trivial, the quotidian concerns or observations that typically constitute 'real' conversation. Implicit in this notion of commonplaceness is the idea that a great deal of

'ordinary' conversation takes place not for the purpose of exchanging information, but seemingly as a means of 'filling up' time. Within this broad context of the 'realistic' it is possible to explore specific dialogic techniques used to persuade an audience (be it onstage or off) of the unpremeditated quality of the utterance, that is, of its 'naturalness'.

What James Eliopoulos, writing on Beckett, refers to as "disjointed dialogue" and credits Chekhov with inventing, Nuttall in an article entitled "Gospel Truth" labels "discontinuous dialogue". Nuttall traces discontinuous dialogue to Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* (3.2.199-210)¹ -- "thus far back and no further" (47). He cites an exchange between Shallow and Falstaff, rather than Chekhovian discourse, as the rightful beginning of dialogue in which there is a "systematic absence of 'logical fit'" (47). In tracing this mode of dialogue, Nuttall should actually have gone a step further back, to the exchange between Prince Hal and Falstaff in *1 Henry IV* 1.2. where the evasive capability of discontinuous dialogue is illustrated. Falstaff's circumambulatory contributions to the exchange try to extract from Hal the Prince's plans, while the Prince responds or retaliates with what Falstaff somewhat impatiently calls "quips and quiddities". Their circumventory duologue is a theatrical exercise in the countering of verbal exploration by verbal evasion. It betrays a sense of mutual awareness of the unspoken undercurrent of Falstaff's legitimately fearful concern over what will happen to him when Hal is king. This is a question that Falstaff does not want to ask, nor Hal to directly answer. Neither Falstaff nor Hal is here able to admit with seriousness the inevitable but unspeakable and unhearable answer; Northumberland in *2 Henry IV* explicates the dilemma: "He that but fears the thing he would not know / Hath by instinct knowledge from others' eyes / That what he feared is chanced" (1.1.85-87). The comic "discourse of evasion, of (to use Falstaff's and Quickly's word) 'fubbing off'" (Black, 30) is paralleled in *1 Henry IV* by Hotspur's technique of deferral with his wife, as he deliberately ignores (2.3.61-69) and then rhetorically dodges (2.3.72-98) her appeals for information. Hotspur's method of postponement is mimicked by Prince Hal: "'O my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou killed today?' 'Give my roan horse a drench,' says he, and answers 'Some fourteen,' an hour after, 'a trifle, a trifle'" (2.4.100-104). The grammatical structure of Hal's recitation of this exchange ambiguously reflects the 'putting off' that the passage depicts: the positioning of "an hour after" leaves us in doubt as to whether the entire phrase, "Some fourteen, ... a trifle a trifle", is uttered at once -- but an hour after the instructions regarding his horse are given -- or whether he completes the response, "a trifle, a trifle" an hour after giving the number, "Some fourteen".

Nuttall could even have taken discontinuous dialogue back to an earlier Shakespearean play than *1* or *2 Henry IV*. In a demonstration of evasion like Falstaff's and Hal's, the newly-crowned Richard III suspends Buckingham's claim to be rewarded for helping Richard to the throne:

Buckingham.	What says your highness to my just request?
King Richard.	I do remember me Henry the Sixth Did prophesy that Richmond should be king When Richmond was a little peevish boy. A king! -- perhaps -- perhaps --
Buckingham.	My lord --
King Richard.	How chance the prophet could not at that time Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?
Buckingham.	My lord, your promise for the earldom!
King Richard.	Richmond! When last I was at Exeter, The Mayor in courtesy showed me the castle, And called it Rouge-mount; at which name I started, Because a bard of Ireland told me once I should not live long after I saw Richmond.
Buckingham.	My lord --
King Richard.	Ay, what's a clock?
Buckingham.	I am thus bold to put your grace in mind Of what you promised me.
King Richard.	Well, but what's a clock?
Buckingham.	Upon the stroke of ten.
King Richard.	Well, let it strike.
Buckingham.	Why let it strike?
King Richard.	Because that like a Jack thou keep'st the stroke Betwixt thy begging and my meditation. I am not in the giving vein to-day.

(Richard III 4.2.93-115)

While King Richard's response is not the one Buckingham desires, it *is* a response; that is, though Buckingham's appeal seems to be ignored, his discourse obviously is not. Richard is communicating quite clearly, albeit indirectly, though Buckingham is reluctant to receive the reply that is offered. Richard's reflections on prophecies in one sense substitute for the

outright dismissal of Buckingham's suit, but also function to convey just that message: he negates Buckingham's claim by negating his discourse. The 'real' communication is enacted below the surface dialogue. Such covert discourse, like the 'dialogue' between Falstaff and Prince Hal, conforms to Andrew Kennedy's observation of "the all-but-universal need for a taboo on what can be said, socially/personally and stylistically, in a given dialogue within a given dramatic convention":

Clearly, what is left unspoken -- and what is felt to be unspeakable -- varies from period to period, and is usually implicit rather than 'advertised' in the text of the dialogue. A good deal of what we now call subtext (best understood as a director's term, as Stanislavski meant it, and especially needed to interpret the often cryptic, oblique or understated communicative language of naturalistic dialogue) is made up of taboos. (*Dramatic Dialogue* 25)

Kennedy argues that this "underlying tension" acts as an "invigorating" force in dialogic exchange, so that "when characters say things too easily to one another... dialogue is impoverished. It is certain that a hesitant awareness of inner and/or outer taboo... is an enriching ingredient in interpersonal dialogue" (*Dramatic Dialogue* 26). A sense of forbidden or unspeakable elements in discourse is in playtexts from Shakespeare to Pinter. Falstaff's and Hal's dialogue is a precursor of the fragmented exchanges in *The Homecoming* or *Family Voices*.

Like Buckingham, Falstaff is anxious for assurance about his place in a new reign. He cannot immediately challenge Prince Hal's intentions through questioning him, yet he is equally unable to endure the burden of silence. As we later see, Henry IV's death and Hal's consequent inheritance are intensely fraught topics to both father and son (*Pt. 1* 5.4.48-51, *Pt. 2* 2.2.46-54, 4.5.91-96). In questioning Hal, Falstaff is breaking the taboo, and so is Hal if he answers. The discontinuous dialogue becomes a twofold evasion -- evasion first of the unspeakable, then of silence itself. Paradoxically, silence approaches direct confrontation too closely. Falstaff's labyrinthine exchange with Prince Hal distances both speakers from their dangerous proximity to direct and explicit encounter with the truth. They are engaged in non-confrontational, calculated escapism that is deliberately (overtly) non-communicative, yet which, like desultory dialogue, actually communicates a great deal through what is self- or mutually-censored.

Justice Shallow's dislocations in *2 Henry IV* 3.2. are similarly evasive of 'unspeakable reality': his non-sequiturs are framed by a discussion of aging, and circumambulate the ultimate taboo, death. Again, though Shallow initiates and persists

with the macabre dialogue, neither he nor his interlocutor, Silence (!), is able to sustain the discomfiting 'colloquy'; it is repeatedly suspended by abrupt, dislocated and dislocating comments. Shakespeare disturbs or breaks through the controlled artifice of the theatrical by interposing Justice Shallow's 'naturalistic' -- that is, random, discontinuous -- discourse. I quote the dialogue at some length in order to illustrate the pattern of discontinuity, and not merely its occurrence, in Shallow's speech. In this 'familiar' verbal banter note also Shallow's 'realistic' grammatical and phraseological abbreviations, frequent and protractive repetitions, exclamatory emphases, and recurring disregard for, or at least lack of response to, the information which he himself has requested. On Silence's part, 'realism' lies respectively in his clichéd responses, oaths, elliptical phrases, and finally his sudden departure or escape from the topic that threatens to terminally echo itself to infinity.

Shallow. ... Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent! And to see how many of my old acquaintance are dead!

Silence. We shall all follow, cousin.

Shallow. Certain, 'tis certain, very sure, very sure. Death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all, all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?

Silence. By my troth, I was not there.

Shallow. Death is certain. Is old Double of your town living yet ?

Silence. Dead, sir.

Shallow. Jesu, Jesu, dead! 'A drew a good bow, and dead! 'A shot a fine shoot. John a Gaunt loved him well and betted much money on his head. Dead! 'A would have clapped 'i the clout at twelve score, and carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see. How a score of ewes now?

Silence. Thereafter as they be. A score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

Shallow. And is old Double dead?

Silence. Here come two of Sir John Falstaff's men, as I think.

(3.2.31-52)

This discourse is much more clearly discontinuous (or, perhaps, monocontinuous) than Falstaff's and Prince Hal's or the dialogue between Shallow and Falstaff (2 *Henry IV*

3.2.100-210) that Nuttall cites. The latter dialogue, though roundabout and apparently aimless, is nonetheless loosely coherent in that, however tangled the conversation, each articulation does follow that which preceded it. Such dialogue may conform to Nuttall's idea of discontinuity, but it is not, as he claims it is, desultory or dislocated in the same sense as are Justice Shallow's discrete utterances that I have quoted above. A broad definition of discontinuous dialogue allows discourse which, although perhaps not progressive, or even sensical, enacts a 'conversation' between designated speaker and listener, constituting an act of communication. Throughout my discussion of realistic dialogue I include roundabout dialogue such as Falstaff's for comparative purposes; the label 'discontinuous dialogue' here is limited to more strictly desultory discourse. My focus is on discourse that inhibits, without necessarily prohibiting, reasonably clear communication.

Shallow's exchange with Silence stalls communication. The 'conversation' is not conducted as a two-sided, progressive exchange of information, but is entrapped in Shallow's stream-of-consciousness reminiscences and concerns. Shallow solicits information only to apparently disregard it, and self-indulgently recounts (protractedly and with doubtful verity) anecdotes of interest only to himself. His abstract discourse is undertaken not as an effort at conversation, but as a reaction against the fact of aging and the thought of death approaching: to anyone Shallow's age, someone called Silence might be a *memento mori* (compare *1 Henry IV* 3.3.29-31 and *2 Henry IV* 2.4. 217-218); Shallow reacts against silence. Shallow's rambling and eclectic discourse seems to force Silence to say the words Shallow both prompts and dreads: "We shall all follow", "Dead, sir". Shallow blurs the distinction between high and low character and appropriate expression: though a bumbling and frightened old man, he does hold a position of some authority under Henry IV. But more important for this study is his seemingly 'common' mode of speaking that at once relegates him through his prose to low-life, yet paradoxically raises him to the 'higher' plane of the poetic.

Shallow may not speak poetry, but his one-note discourse is poetic.² I am referring to his speech not in any specialized terms of cadence or imagery, nor in general terms of sentiment, though in discussing "the subtle realistic language of the Falstaff scenes" B. Ifor Evans states that "much of the invention and originality of the prose lies not in imagery but in the capturing of moods, sometimes comic but often poignant, made from the simplest elements of colloquial speech" (*Shakespeare's Plays* 96-97). I acknowledge Cohn's warning in *Retreats from Realism* that

[p]oetic is a treacherous adjective for drama. Long a term of praise, "poetic" by the late twentieth century hints at escape from reality. But reality itself has disintegrated into a problematic concept that is barely represented by familiar surface detail. ... Poetic drama is elusive of definition; does the poetry lie in the lexicon, the stage image, the reach toward myth or mystery? ... Through rhythm, the playwright tries to impose depth, mystery, or mythic connection and thereby estranges his work from the everyday quality of realism. (70)

Shallow's dialogue is 'poetic' simply in its being different from the formal verse (here, the standard speech) that surrounds it. This uniqueness sets the 'realistic' dialogue apart, and, paradoxically, makes it seem 'stylized'. Steiner would no doubt disagree, for though "it is held that all manner of reality can be given suitable poetic form", Steiner "wonder[s] whether this is really so": "Certain styles of action are more appropriate to poetic incarnation than others. Because we have denied the fact, so much of what passes for modern poetry is merely inflated or bewildered prose" (244). Shallow's diction does not purport to be poetry; it is in fact "bewildered prose," poetic in its disorder, its discord. It achieves what Steiner expects from verse: "The syntax of prose embodies the central role which causal relationships and temporal logic play in the proceedings of ordinary thought. The syntax of verse is, in part, liberated from causality and time" (245).

Thus what makes Shallow's discourse realistic on one level makes it poetic on another; it is the standard or norm against which it is placed and judged that helps to determine its effect, and not the intent of the speaker. Of course Shallow's speech is not self-consciously poetic; rather, as Kennedy comments on *King Lear* 4.7, "here we see the achievement of a dialogue that is poetic through being colloquially dramatic, not through richly imagistic language" (*Dramatic Dialogue* 65). 'Realism' in the prose dialogues of *Henry IV* seems a reasonable designation when these conversations are framed by the highly rhetorical verse around them; the low-life dialogues are closer to 'naturally-occurring' speech simply through their form and, on closer examination, their content. But when looking specifically at Shallow's speech against the prose that surrounds it -- that is, by changing the 'norm' or 'standard' from verse to prose³ -- it remains eclectic, incoherent, for it is not the individual words but their apparently disorderly execution as phrasal fragments that is foregrounded. These passages vary from the unpredictable and unexpected to the seemingly unending. The fact that Shallow's speech can be foregrounded -- can be seen as a deviation from both verse and 'ordinary' prose -- renders it poetic, its communicative ('extraesthetic') function concealed. As semiotic theorist Jan Mukarovsky explains, "The violation of the norm of the standard, its systematic violation,

is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language"(18); "The distortion of the norm of the standard is, however, of the very essence of poetry" (27).

The defamiliarizing effect already discussed as an integral aspect of discontinuous dialogue plays a similar role in poetic language⁴: the utterance is extraordinary compared to the background of logical (thereby predictable) discourse. Discontinuous utterances may be an 'automatic' exercise of the speaker, but their reception involves some concentration on the part of the audience, which more easily comprehends an articulate (grammatically correct) utterance than an 'automatic' one that must be encoded (its blanks filled in) before it can be decoded. Of course an audience is not necessarily aware of specific sentence construction, whose aural effect and significance are cumulative. Unlike 'traditional' communicative speech, where "words and sentences appear to follow each other with obvious necessity, as determined only by the nature of the message", poetic language foregrounds "the relationship between the meanings of the individual words and the subject matter of the sentence": "The words here do not succeed each other naturally and inconspicuously, but within the sentence there occur semantic jumps, breaks, which are not conditioned by the requirements of communication, but given in the language itself" (Mukarovsky, 29). The discourse that is being discussed, then, is unique in its literary unconventionality, in its informal disregard for the 'rules' of transcribed dialogue. And because it stands in opposition to the accepted discourse (sequential, formal, 'scripted'), it is the language of the street, of 'carnival', of madness or the encoded 'reason in madness' that playwrights often require audiences to decode.

Discontinuity in dialogue is subversive of form -- especially Renaissance dramatic form in which even supposed inarticulateness is expressed highly articulately. In *The Changeling*, for example, Alsemero eloquently professes that he is at a loss for words: "I want more words to express me further, / And must be forc'd to repetition" (1.1.69-71). Othello tells the Venetian senate that he is next to inarticulate: "Rude am I in my speech / And little blest with the soft phrase of peace" (1.3.81-82). Then he goes on to speak so eloquently that he wins his judges over. Only Iago's campaign of subversion can reduce Othello's language to "Lie with her? lie on her? ... Pish! Noses, ears, and lips? Is't possible? -- Confess? -- handkerchief? -- O devil!" (*Othello* 4.1.35-43). By Michael Bristol's definition Shallow's speech is carnivalesque, for it involves "the language of day to day productive life and the interaction among disparate linguistic communities [that] come[s] into familiar contact with the 'ennobled language' of official ideology, official religion, and high literature" ("Carnival" 638). Through dislocated speech, Shallow, and

Othello too, inadvertently and indirectly participate in what Mikhail Bakhtin calls "parodic-travesty" discourse (*Dialogic Imagination* 60); Shallow mocks and offends organized, authorized discourse, and through it, the power of the 'old order' that he (mis)represents. Like Falstaff, Shallow, isolated in his orchard, inhabits liminal space and time; his respectability is a façade, resembling Carnival tradition in which "costumes, masks, heraldic insignia and practical objects are all used to confuse the relationship between signifier and signified" (Bristol, *Carnival* 65). As a lesser representative of Carnival than Falstaff, Shallow is neither a collective nor an unruly mass nor even a conscientious objector. He is not of the lower class. But he is disruptive of authority in that he speaks an unconventional language, and through that language he subverts his (and, by implication, the social Establishment's) position. From his initial entrance in the play he personifies what Falstaff refers to as "old father antic the law" (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.56); and when he speaks, his authority deconstructs itself. Shallow as a character also deconstructs Stephen Greenblatt's and Jonathan Goldberg's theory that sovereign authority deliberately produces or at least encourages Carnavalesque behavior, creating a deviant 'Other' as a strategy to maintain power by containing subversion.⁵ When unconventional language such as discontinuous dialogue assumes a distinction or autonomy that renders it threatening because it is different, not understood and not subject to regulation, it must be confined, repressed, suppressed: if possible, simply ignored -- if not, dismissed. In *Political Shakespeare* Jonathan Dollimore explains the subordination of the 'unruly' by the norm:

Legitimation further works to efface the fact of social contradiction, dissent and struggle. Where these things present themselves unavoidably they are often demonised as attempts to subvert the social order. Therefore, if the very conflicts which the existing order generates from within itself are construed as attempts to subvert it from without (by the 'alien'), that order strengthens itself by simultaneously repressing dissenting elements and eliciting consent for this action: the protecting of society from subversion. (7)

Dissenting discourse is explained away through a 'political technique to confirm' the normal order. The de-centering of the aged becomes the marginalization of the senile, the othering of the discontinuous, the demonizing of the mad. "The Other is only a figure in the discourse of the Same; shaping the Other becomes a cultural priority" (Folena, 221). As 'inversion becomes subversion', the merely confused becomes the unassimilated 'enemy of the culture' -- singularized, externalized -- and following the Bakhtinian model, "the Other in the text of the Same speaks the language of carnival and inversion" (Folena, 225). Bristol, Greenblatt, et al do not engage with *Henry IV*'s verbal technique, which shows through Shallow that authority does not consciously grant the absurd a brief

carnival-time reign but instead entrenches it in office. Dogs *are* obeyed in office (see *King Lear* 4.6.155-6). Shallow embodies the more-than-possibility that authority does not just tolerate carnival but in fact *is* carnival. Bristol does get near this point when he says that as a man of 'position', Shallow typifies the carnival tradition whereby "secular authority, in both its majestic, charismatic and its practical, administrative manifestations, has been changed into a festive effigy and symbolically destroyed" (*Carnival* 212). Shallow's end is not disclosed in *Henry IV*, but with the death of the old King his Justice's appointment hangs in limbo; and with the banishment of Falstaff his thousand pounds are irretrievable; he has bet on a loser. The relative devastation of Shallow is wholly appropriate to this play about rebellion and the quashing of rebellion, a play ostensibly about the confirmation (conformation) of order over chaos, but in fact about the *incorporation* of misrule into rule.

The Carnival that Falstaff and Shallow represent reinstates or affirms social order: "'misrule' ... implie[s] rule" (Barber, 10). Falstaff's denial of Shallow's discourse, coupled with the Justice's self-betraying conduct, confirms Shallow's 'subversion' of himself -- of the social position which determines his 'identity' (his sense of himself, his identification by others). Shallow offers "a displaced reaffirmation of legitimate power" (Folena, 226). In this theory, carnival unifies, providing a context which shows "conflict and social dissonance as a positive feature of productive life" (Bristol, *Carnival* 58).

However, C.L. Barber's observation of the difficulty of ousting Falstaff suggests that the neat triumph of order and the establishment of the new king cannot erase the fact of past, and potential for future, non-conformity. Despite the overthrow of dissent, the suggestion or possibility of deviance has been planted. Bristol says of *Henry IV* (4.2.194-5) that "Shakespeare's play presents the audience with scenes of official retribution, but the expression of popular resentment nevertheless escapes being totally repressed" (*Carnival* 90); borrowing from Bakhtin's *Dialogic Imagination* (7), Bristol writes, "Carnival inserts into these structures 'an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality'" (*Carnival* 22). For instance, it has been shown that Henry V's banishment speech to a silent Falstaff is in fact a one-voice dialogue between the King and Falstaff, in which the King simultaneously rejects and employs the running joke that has passed back and forth between them since their first appearance in *Pt. I* (Black, 29-30, 40-41). Thus Falstaff's voice is incorporated in the King's and the King speaks for, as well as at, Falstaff: what seems to be monologue is really polyphony.

More appropriate to Shallow's particular discourse, then, is the Bakhtinian view of Carnival, which denies the ability of the Establishment to restrain the laughter provoked by Carnival. Carnival discourse on stage disturbs authority and is difficult, perhaps impossible, to control: language and laughter deconstruct power, and through Carnival the theatre is used as a vehicle for the expression of the alternative or dissenting -- the plural or 'realistic' -- voice of rebellion.

A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a *plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world*, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event.

(Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky* 6)

Bakhtin's theoretical viewpoint concerns itself not only with the polyphony of communally-shared speech but also with the importance and prominence of "carnival laughter". His theory of voices is particularly relevant to Shallow's discontinuous discourse, which is simultaneously comic, pathetic, and rebellious. The comedy arises not only from the 'anti-climax' of the discourse that shifts between the death of old Double and the price of bullocks at Stamford fair, but also in the subversion of the audience's expectations of dialogue from a supposedly learned and articulate judge from whom it hears only wandering conversations. Barber points out that "the Henry IV plays are masterpieces of the popular theater whose plays were, in Sidney's words, 'neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns'" (195) -- merging, one might say, justice and fool within the person of Justice Shallow.

The type of dialogue in which Shallow and Justice Silence engage is specifically 'everyday', and filled with the rhythms and banalities of realistic speech: abrupt changes of topic that demonstrate Shallow's short attention span, his inconsequential questions and his inability to heed answers. This 'dialogue', which Styan refers to as the "ramblings of two old men", assumes the appearance of 'the realistic' through its sharp contrast, both in its content and in its apparent lack of structure, to the more controlled discourse of the play's 'higher' characters.

On one level [Shallow and Silence] are comic because they are utterly serious about themselves. But on another they are serious for us too because we know we have that within us which can find two pathetic old men comic. In these two creations Shakespeare displays his delicious sense of people growing old and thinking of their lusty youth; but they are also aware that their acquaintances are dying, and that 'we shall all follow'. However, punctuating these troubled

thoughts on the great eternal verity are other more material troubles like the price to be fetched by 'a good score of ewes'. ...in the Shallow and Silence exchanges Shakespeare touches exquisitely a true nerve of comedy.

(Styan, *Dark Comedy* 14).

Shallow and his discourse are discontinued or fractured between two aspects of experience. The first, that of 'dream', is based in Shallow's comfortable environment -- his secure position; sinecure appointment; his commodities such as farm, orchard, cattle, money; and of course his exciting 'memories' (fantasies) of his youth spent in the green world of the Inns of Court. These recollections are imposed upon his dependents -- servants and poorer cousin -- who are compelled to listen to them. The second aspect of experience, however, with which Shallow must contend is that of 'reality': a civil war rages and prices are volatile; in a change of reign he could lose everything; he is an aging man who fears death and gropes for reassurance that he is not alone. In discussing the 'freedom of laughter' posited by Bakhtin (who writes, "*Death is inseparable from laughter*", *Dialogic Imagination* 196), David Patterson rather ambiguously observes, "If the fear defeated by laughter is the fear of death, then laughter associated with madness and literature is born on the day that we discover that we shall surely die... While the prosaic word flees from death, the poetic word confronts death and defeats it with laughter that echoes between the lines and in the margins" (7). Of course it is the audience, not Shallow, that finds laughter in his discourse. Shallow cannot afford, and does not dare, to connect for long with 'reality', so he thinks and speaks discontinuously, almost schizophrenically, in his isolation. This unique type of comedy is almost Absurdist: Robert W. Corrigan refers to this "comedy of the grotesque" as that which is "so aware of the absurdity of experience, [it] is also extremely conscious of its sufferings, struggle, and failure. It is best described as a kind of tragicomedy" (255):

Tragedy doesn't seem to flourish in the world of the absurd. When man is forced to admit that the absurd is more than ever inherent in human existence, when he sees his existence as essentially governed by the irrational, the inexplicable, and the nonsensical, he moves into the realm of the comic. For comedy supposes an unformed world, a world being made and turned upside down. (254-55)

Shallow's discourse anticipates the dialogic doctrine of Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter: in a mad world, in a world without reason, the only authentic voice must be located in the appropriate (non-sequitur) dialogue: the "discourse of otherness" (Folena, 220).

Yet the comic dislocations of Shallow, or of Poor Tom in *King Lear*, are only an audience's interpretation away from the tragic discontinuity of either the genuinely mad Ophelia and Lear, or the possibly 'unbalanced' Ruth in *The Homecoming* and Aston in *The Caretaker*. In Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, labeled a comedy, the initial reaction of laughter at Firs' illogical, often non-sensical interjections is overturned by the tragedy of his final abandonment.

- Lyubov. But I must drink my coffee. Thank you, Firs, thank you, my dear old friend. I'm so glad you're still alive.
- Firs. The day before yesterday.
- Gayev. He's hard of hearing. (324; see also 326, 344, 348, 361)

Second-childhood puerilities of old age are heard in the speech of Firs, Ferapont (*The Three Sisters*), and Shallow. Their "pathologically inarticulate speech" (Kennedy, *Six Dramatists* 24-25) is either disregarded or impatiently tolerated as that of senility.

- Firs. The gentleman stayed with us during Holy Week ... ate half a bucket of pickles... [*Mumbles.*]
- Lyubov. What is he saying?
- Varya. He's been muttering like that for three years now. We've grown used to it.
- Yasha. He's in his dotage. (328)

Here Chekhov writes dialogue that lacks strict grammatical correctness or 'order' (in terms of absolute coherence of and clear transition between verbalizations) and thereby sounds closer to conversation that one might 'overhear'. Chekhov does not give discontinuity of this kind to elderly characters only. In the opening passage of *The Three Sisters*, quoted in my Introduction, Olga's reflections do not follow a chronological pattern, but are organized by impressions and reminiscences. The mood and observation of the weather generate the memory of their father, which becomes the focus of the discourse; the recollection is plausibly (disjunctively, though not arbitrarily) located, is itself interrupted by interjectory exclamations -- "Oh God!", -- is succeeded by an account of the morning's events, and finally is resurrected indirectly with the desire "to go home again". While the controlled and formalized diction -- the verbal artifice -- of much of the speech in *The Three Sisters* removes it from 'common' or 'ordinary' discourse, locating it more comfortably within the traditional 'sitting room' of Realism than with the simpler

(albeit sparer) language more typical of this study, the discourse does approach my definition of the 'realistic' in terms of its structure. A clearer example in Chekhov of grammatically 'natural' speech is provided by Tuzenbach's informal, telegraphically elliptical sentences, delivered as a straightforward reply to Irina's "Is he old?": "No, not particularly. Forty or forty-five at most. Seems to be a nice fellow. Not stupid, that's certain. Only he talks a lot" (*Three Sisters* 237). Again, the usefulness of disputing the stilted quality of words like "particularly", "at most", "fellow", and "certain" is negligible because subjective; in terms of "internal comparison" this excerpt is closer to the 'real' than that of the more rhetorical (formally organized) or poetic (in terms of images, sentiments) speech around it because of its incomplete sentences and utterances that build upon each other and seem to follow Tuzenbach's train of thought. This particular observation can be extended to describe Chekhov's work as a 'modern' playwright. The movement of his dialogue and drama does not follow a strictly linear pattern; Eliopulos notes that as the playwright credited with "the death of linear plot sequence", Chekhov "was not interested in presenting an action in any Aristotelian sense, but like the modern dramatists of existential revolt he was interested in *dramatizing a condition*" (37), whether that condition is as broad as "estrangement -- man's insignificance in a gigantic and impersonal universe" (37) or as specific as an individual character's state of mind. "What emerges then with the modern stream of consciousness development is a movement from *praxis* to *lexis* -- from an emphasis of linear action in the drama to a disjointed dialogue" (Eliopulos, 35).

The idea of 'the unspeakable' in dramatic dialogue has recently generated much critical writing, and again the attention is often focused on Chekhov as innovator. Kane observes that Chekhov's "reliance on silent response" is the only means of communicating "emotions, essentially untranslatable, which would be immeasurably reduced in significance, complexity, and verisimilitude if verbally defined and delimited" (58). However, the inherent difficulty in Kane's type of critical assessment, her 'filling the silences', is evident in the necessarily interpretive verbs that riddle her discussion on Chekhov, terms like "eliciting", "conveying", "emphasizes", "reinforces the impression," "we surmise," "underscores", "suggests", "the pauses reveal". The much commented-on feature of Chekhov's theatre is that it does not make statements, but suggestions; it evokes essence, and does not describe existence.⁶ The perception of this 'minimalist' style as 'poetic' is understood in the same terms that Beckett's work is 'poetic': "What the adjective really points to in Beckett's plays (a context in which it is pejorative if it replaces the honorific qualification 'dramatic') is the extra-ordinary ability of the language and stage-

craft to imply, suggest, connote, evoke, and set off expressive nuances. ... it was Mallarmé's principle that 'to name is to destroy; to suggest is to create'" (Easthope, 69).⁷

Chekhov produces a 'life-like', because apparently banal, text, attempting to portray 'real life' in which people do not "deliver themselves of clever sayings every minute. They spend most of their time eating, drinking, running after women or men, talking nonsense" (Kane, 51).⁸ Much of the discourse in *The Three Sisters* seems trivial or superficial. The disagreement between Solyóny and Chebutykin (272) over *chekhartma* (Chebutykin: "lamb") and *cheremsha* (Solyony: "onion"), followed by the discrepancy between Solyony's and Andrei's counts of the number of universities in Moscow, are 'realistic' because of their insignificance, but as elsewhere in the play, surface comments substitute discussion for, and suggest, underlying ('real') issues. The chiding of Natasha for wearing an inappropriate sash is taken as a criticism of her presence at the celebration; late in the play Natasha uses the same issue to exert her authority over Irina: "That sash doesn't suit you at all, dear ... it's not in good taste" (310). The fear of direct communication involves the dialogic evasion of such unimportant events as the dismissal of the masquers, the more consequential issue of Andrei's gambling and debts, and perhaps the ultimate concern expressed throughout the play: the desire for and lack of control, which encompasses Irina's longing for Moscow, Natasha's for acceptance, Masha's for love. The avoidance of discussing 'real' issues does not, obviously, result in silence, but in 'realistic' dialogue that skirts and may help to define the subtext -- as does Shallow's simultaneous shrinking from the idea of death and obsessive naming of it.

Overtly non-communicative discourse, then, in which characters seem not to be interacting with each other, creates an absence that communicates a great deal to the audience. The predilection of many of Chekhov's characters involves missing out on the discourse of other characters because of a preoccupation with their own voices (desires, memories). This tendency results in dislocations within and between Chekhovian speech. Masha, for example, speaks to no one in particular as she expresses aloud private ruminations: "'A green oak by a curved seashore, upon that oak a golden chain ... upon that oak a golden chain.' . . . [*Plaintively*] Why do I keep saying that? This phrase has been haunting me ever since morning. . . ." (*Three Sisters* 256). Personalized discourse in which each character is absorbed in his or her own thoughts and is interested only in discussing his or her own concerns is displayed in *The Three Sisters* (268-69), where Masha complains of the weather, Anfisa serves tea, Irina longs for Moscow, Chebutykin reads from the newspaper -- "Tsitsikar. Smallpox is raging there", Natasha praises the

superior intelligence of Bobik, Vershinin contemplates the meaning of happiness, and Tuzenbach wonders, "But where's the candy?" Conversation is propelled by and consists of various unconnected contributions, a Chekhovian trademark that has prompted many critics to listen to his dialogue as music: "The characteristic gatherings -- the theatrical *soirée* in *The Sea-Gull*, the party at the house of the three sisters, the outing in *The Cherry Orchard* -- are ensembles in which the various melodies combine or clash in dissonance" (Steiner, 300-01). Williams sees such aspects of Chekhov's dialogue as able to "express disintegration without weakening the sense of a common condition" (*Ibsen to Brecht* 109): "An unfamiliar rhythm is developed, in which what is being said, essentially, is not said by any one of the characters, but, as it were inadvertently, by the group. This is not easy to illustrate, since printed convention, separating and assigning the speeches, usually breaks it up" (109). He views the second act of *The Cherry Orchard* as "a theme for voices, a condition and an atmosphere created by hesitation, implication, unconnected confession" (109). Similar comments have been made by Strindberg in his Preface to *Miss Julie* concerning the seemingly undirected lyricism of his own drama:

As for the dialogue, I have broken with tradition somewhat by not making my characters catechists who ask stupid questions in order to elicit clever replies. I have avoided the symmetrical, mathematical, constructed dialogue of French drama and let characters' minds function irregularly, as they do in real-life conversation, where no topic of discussion is exhausted entirely and one mind by chance finds a cog in another mind in which to engage. Consequently, the dialogue also wanders, presenting material in the opening scenes that is later taken up, reworked, repeated, expanded, and developed, like the theme in a musical composition. (71)

Of course this limited connectedness (only certain characters interact, and only to a limited degree) is an 'Absurdist' technique that Corrigan credits to Chekhov (134) as Chekhov

manifests his modernity by his awareness of man's essential fragmentation and isolation. Chekhovian characters escape to the relative security of memory or the relative promise of philosophy in order to forge a link in time and meaning. But ... Chekhov, more than any other dramatist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, was very conscious of the existential loneliness of the human condition. In order for him to portray life as it is, Chekhov had to define his characters by their 'solitude and estrangement from life' and not by their participation in it. Chekhov employs restricted settings to underscore the fact that his characters are always in close physical contact, but rarely, if ever, in emotional contact. Efforts to break out of the imprisonment of isolation are foiled or gently mocked: confidences are ignored, confessions fall on deaf ears. (Kane, 55)

The attempt "to dramatize a stagnant group, in which consciousness has turned inward and become, if not wholly inarticulate, at least unconnecting" (Williams, *Ibsen to Brecht* 108) contradicts the traditional 'realist' approach to dialogue, which held that "players who give a clear-cut impression that they are in active communication with each other ... are likely to seem most real" (qtd. in Gassner, 167).⁹

Chekhov thus is noted for his carefully structured 'realistic' (circuitous and discontinuous) dialogue. Nuttall says that "the mimetic faithfulness of Chekhov to the aimlessness of desultory conversation was always the matter of a higher art, and thus the aimlessness was only superficial; behind it lay the rule and principle of drama" (*New Mimesis* 89). And Kane argues: "So convincing is the Chekhovian linguistic artifice that it may appear to be an irrational choice and accidental arrangement of words. But Chekhov is a consummate craftsman; what appears alternately fluid and fixed is in fact achieved by the intricate counterpointing of speech and silent response" (54). Discontinuous dialogue is 'realistic' in its display of more than one train or process of thought, its breaking up of artificially imposed form or structure, 'natural' in that thought does not always (or not often) proceed logically or even linearly but rather through interruptions, digressions, sidetracks. Disorganization is mimetic of life: "To be is to have sensations invade the consciousness in no particular order" (Ghose, 21). As Pirandello's 'six characters' demonstrate, the attempt to order experience betrays and becomes contrived, 'unnatural', 'unreal'. Organization can be an artificial 'distortion of reality', of our often insignificant, flitting, fleeting, distracted, detractive thoughts. The language of discontinuity adheres to its own pattern of logic: it traces closely and faithfully the speaker's thoughts. Without explicating or censoring, the communicative process is consequently more 'honest', 'truthful', 'real'. Kane remarks of Chekhov, "what [his] dialogue lacks in continuity, it gains in authenticity" (55).

Discontinuity in dialogue can be seen as an attempt to retrieve (re-present) an 'old order'. Shallow's preoccupation with the past and his non-sequitur inquiries into the current price of livestock reflect, as suggested, the disorientation and anxiety caused by a time of transition. Fearing age and ineffectuality, characters like Shallow and Firs must reach back to retain a sense of control and stability that is slipping away. Despite its contrary effect on other characters or on the audience who 'overhear' it, their fragmented speech is a means of centering, locating, or grounding themselves. Discontinuous dialogue -- be it fragmented narratives or disjunctive non-sequiturs -- becomes a means of coping with 'facts': at once a bid for attention (through repetition) and an avoidance of it (by

abrupt changes of subject). The past is recalled to validate their presence and their place in the social structure -- to struggle against being othered. Ironically, the idealized past in which they still live and which they ceaselessly narrate may never have existed at all. "The past", says Lucia Folea, "is only a figure of the desire of the present" (221). The past that constructs one's identity must be continually reconstructed. Shallow's attempt to recover the past through revising history is convincingly contradicted by Falstaff, problematizing for the audience the notion or reception of the past and its representation. Shallow's speeches are 'truthful' in that they echo the rhythms, topics, and anxieties of old-age discourse. Falstaff's objections -- that the speech is not 'factual' -- merely re-emphasize that this is the way old men talk: "Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying!" (2 *Henry IV* 3.2.282-83).

Discontinuous dialogue is a "paralytic" ¹⁰ suspension or retardation of the discourse (often challenging its audience, whose attention and possible complacency are arrested as the 'action' is disturbed) that itself becomes a narrative, a fragmentary glimpse of the past externalized and foregrounded. For characters like Shallow and Firs, who still live largely in the past (or on some back-projection thereof), it is the present -- marginally accommodated -- that impinges upon and interrupts their narrative. Their 'regressions' provide a diversion from the immediate crises going on around them.¹¹ Firs, who refers to the Emancipation as "the troubles" -- "I was already head footman when the Emancipation came. At that time I wouldn't consent to my freedom, I stayed with the masters" (344) -- is also confronted with a changing order in which he has no place, and which dismisses him as deaf and senile. The 'harmlessness' perceived in these characters is evident: in *The Three Sisters* Ferapont's deafness hampers his conversational ability, and he becomes a 'safe' because powerless interlocutor; Andrei tells him, "If you could hear well, I probably wouldn't be talking to you" (259).

Despite its temporary status as a discourse of power through carnival, discontinuous dialogue is often in practical terms the language of disempowerment. It is both symptomatic of that disempowered condition and is a precursor to it (in for example the case of madness and the consequent dismantling or loss of control/power, identity). The inability to use language effectively is immediately disadvantageous because power is inscribed in language. For all of its deficiencies and inadequacies, the spoken word is the primary means of communication. Those with the ability and capability to command language assume a certain degree of authority, especially when considered against the

consequently disprivileged person unable to exercise the same type of (authorized) control over language. Intelligence is judged by articulateness.

A talking animal, man is not a success as a talking animal. And in each of us, except the glib, a sense of inarticulateness, of verbal ineffectiveness, is a potent, if negative, force -- the linguistic component of our human portion of suffering. A sense of inarticulateness argues a respect for articulateness. The more inarticulate we are, the more reason we have to covet articulateness. ... From a sense of inadequacy within, and a sense that somewhere, without, there is adequacy, comes our respect for eloquence. (Bentley, 74)

Inarticulateness does not necessarily denote stupidity, but rather may constitute a circuitous route, or even a short-cut, to logic. The inability to adequately express oneself suggests merely a different (non-conventional) processing (possibly unexpressed) of thought. In discontinuous dialogue, thought is shown to precede words; by the time a character expresses a thought, he or she is on to another, often completely different and unrelated, one thus leaving the first not necessarily uncompleted but perhaps not completely expressed. We as audience may simply be unable to keep pace with the thought process, rather than the thought process itself being flawed, random, or disorganized.

Discontinuous dialogue can be judged authentic discourse when the breakdown of reason translates into a breakdown of language. Typically non-sensical, the language of 'unreason' is too varied to warrant or allow its examination by content: monologues of madness, usually contextually elliptical, often describe the actions within the speaker's fantastical world. Madness may involve a private understanding of meaning necessitating a willful distortion of language. The dialectic of madness, the corruption of words, is perhaps not a language in that it is as unique to each speaker as are his or her thoughts, but rather an alternative voice. Wittgenstein argues the impossibility of a 'private language': "the fact that rule-following is essentially a community-based activity entails that nothing can count as a 'private' observance of a rule" (Grayling, 82). This 'private language argument' insists that "there can be no such thing as a language invented by and intelligible to a single individual only. That this is so follows immediately from Wittgenstein's view that language is essentially public" (Grayling, 85)¹²; the constructivism of Wittgenstein insists upon "the idea that language is a social activity rather than some abstract logical entity" (Richardson, 47).

In Renaissance texts such as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *The Changeling*, "antic dispositions" tend to be introduced by a character's digression from verse to prose. Just as Antonio in *The Changeling* uses verse -- the discourse of order -- to convince

Isabella of his sanity (or perhaps more importantly, of his breeding: the language of the asylum, including its keeper, is prose), Isabella descends to the position of 'madwoman' and identifies herself as such by speaking her first lines in prose. In *King Lear*, Edgar speaks prose in his role as Poor Tom, and of course Lear slips from verse into prose as he retreats into madness. Ophelia, too, in her madness digresses to prose when she is not singing. But whether feigned or genuine, madness is defined more by the content of the speech (as bizarre monologue) than by disjointed structure. Discontinuous dialogue may connote but does not necessarily denote madness; the anarchic nature of such discourse may be viewed as representative of the freedom from the conventions of sanity, or the throwing off of conformity demanded by rationality.

Discontinuities occur within these speeches of madness -- "matter and impertinency mixed" (*King Lear* 4.6.171) -- only on a fairly limited scale. King Lear's performance provides a succinct example:

Nature's above art in that respect. There's your press money. That fellow handles his bow like a crowkeeper. Draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O, well flown, bird. I' th' clout, i' th' clout - hewgh! Give the word. (4.4. 86-92)

Following this outburst, Lear 'converses', albeit in a very one-sided fashion, with Gloucester. Poor Tom may chant nonsense and recite Bedlam curses, but he too carries on logically-progressive conversations. Hamlet's discourse of pretended madness contains few disjunctive interruptions, the most notable being for Polonius's benefit: "For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion -- Have you a daughter?" (2.2.181-82). In *The Changeling* an example of non-sequitur dialogue occurs in the initial exchange between Lollio and Antonio:

Lollio. Tony, Tony; 'tis enough, and a very good name for a fool;
 What's your name, Tony?

Antonio. He, he, he! well, I thank you, cousin; he, he, he! (1.2.102-05)

Antonio's 'response' or non-answer is the only dialogic sign of his pretended distraction. The interview that follows proves him to be a worthy Fool; far from lacking the ability to manipulate language, he shows himself to be a skillful 'corrupter of words'. For the most part these mad characters discourse successfully with those sympathetic and receptive to them.

Thus while discontinuous dialogue may suggest mental illness (as with Hamlet in his pretense of madness or in the same context Poor Tom in *King Lear*), disjunctive discourse is more typically indicative of a mental state in which "the mind seeks to loosen the bonds of rational syntax" (275). This is Steiner's description of the discourse of the protagonist of *Woyzeck*, a play that he compares to *King Lear* in terms of its ability to graphically depict through language "the extremity of suffering": the protagonist struggles against not only his limited skill in using language to express his anguish, but the limited ability -- the inadequacy -- of language itself to allow such expression. In discussing plays in which "the author is depicting people who talk badly but manages to do so without writing bad dialogue" -- in which the discipline of the playwright succeeds in suggesting the disorder of the speaker -- Bentley acknowledges that "eloquent and expressive pages of dialogue can be made out of the stammerings of semiarticulate people" (76). Kennedy goes a step further by stating that "what is needed is a critical awareness of the power of the inarticulate, its intensity and immediacy"; he cites *Woyzeck* (1836) as "probably the first play to make an inarticulate character central" (*Six Dramatists* 24-25). Of this controlled confusion, this carefully manipulated disorder that threatens to break out of its form, Steiner states that "Büchner's was the most radical break with the linguistic and social conventions of poetic tragedy" (281); he "revolutionized the language of the theatre" (273). A great deal of Steiner's praise stems from his assertion that "*Woyzeck* is the first real tragedy of low life. It repudiates an assumption implicit in Greek, Elizabethan, and neo-classic drama: the assumption that tragic suffering is the sombre privilege of those who are in high places" (274), and this assumption is challenged without the classic "grotesque or comic note" in the portrayal of tragedy in low life. Richard Hornby believes that it is precisely this 'realism' that renders *Woyzeck* so "frank", and he discusses the text's "fragmentation and crudeness" as a "major deconstructive device": "By these means, the hostile and sexual material, instead of being disguised behind a façade of beautiful poetry and a smoothly linear plot, is laid bare. Instead of blank verse, there is verbal awkwardness, parataxis, inarticulateness. Instead of a linear plot, there is an episodic, fragmented, disorganized jumble" (*Drama* 151).

In *Woyzeck*, discontinuous dialogue has two functions which are dependent upon the degree and type of disjunctiveness. Throughout the play almost all of the characters speak, to varying degrees, telegraphically elliptical discourse,¹³ which lends 'realism' to the text. Specific discourse is authentically 'colloquial', as in the abbreviated speech of Marie -- "You c'n see lots'v things, if you've eyes 'nd the sun shining 'nd you're not

blind" (22) -- or even of the Drum-Major: "A man! D'you hear? -- Who's looking fr a fight? If y're not 's pissed 's creeping Jesus keep away from me. I'll ram y'r nose up your arse!" (27). Many characters also fracture the dialogue as they jump from one topic or thought to another; this distraction is manifest even in the discourse of the Doctor, who often speaks in a stark, note-taking fashion:

Pissing up against the wall, though! And I've a written undertaking, in your own handwriting! I saw it, saw it with these two eyes -- I'd just stuck my nose out of the window and was letting the sunbeams play on it in order to observe the phenomenon of the sneeze. -- Have you got me any frogs? Or spawn? Fresh water polyps? No snakes? Vestillae? Crystatellae? -- Be careful of the microscope, Woyzeck, I've a germ's tooth under there. I'm going to blow the whole lot sky-high!
 No spiders' eggs? Toads'?
 Oh, but pissing down the wall! I *saw* you. (13-14)

The Captain exploits 'shorthand' disconnectiveness in throwing out innuendo:

The one about finding a hair from someone else's beard in your soup. --
 You take my meaning?
 Or perhaps we should say in this case, from someone else's moustache --
 A sapper's, or a sergeant's, or, maybe, a drum-major's?
 Eh, Woyzeck?
 But then, your wife's a good woman, isn't she? Not like some. (19-20)

This splintered speech is most notable in Woyzeck himself, not only because of its unpolished roughness but because the dialogic breaks are more severe: content is dislocated as the connections that bind his crazed discourse are less obvious. Patterson, following Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, writes: "Madness is not simply a state of mind signified by discourse but is the chain of signifiers that constitutes a discourse out of joint. In the midst of 'the freest, the openest of routes' madness freely takes the signifiers of discourse along new and deviant paths, making no 'common cause with any single one of the existing categories'" (23). Yet for all of the fragmentation of the text, in performance it is not necessarily this disjunctiveness that is pronounced, but the experience of language as a whirl of superficially unconnected, rather than disconnective, utterances -- what Steiner, in comparing the similarities in the prose of Lear and Woyzeck, refers to as "the same shortness of breath and unflagging drive" (279). The discourse is not disjointed, but illogically meshed, and the effect of such speech is a confusing and volatile energy rather than a halting or interruptive stammering.

Kennedy argues that Büchner's play "show[s] the experience of breakdown through language", that "Woyzeck is seen to be reduced to madness, step by step, by the

voices of the other characters, in a psycho-social framework that illuminates the process of disintegration" (*Six Dramatists* 24). In fact, from the outset Woyzeck betrays through his contextually elliptical speech an irrationality suggestive of mental imbalance. The first scene, for example, is filled with repetition that, instead of clarifying or concretizing the speech, destabilizes it, undermining both meaning and intent. As well as the incantatory, rhythmic essence of Woyzeck's speech, the script itself is arcane: suspicions of curses, Masonic activity, subterranean menace, and apocalyptic visions compose the first scene, and superstition reappears, for example, in the discourse of the two journeymen in Scene 23. From the beginning, the world of *Woyzeck* is precariously 'irreal', a state that is suggested through language and yet transcends language, for while Woyzeck may be an extreme example, his inarticulateness is shared by most of the play's characters.

Apart from the cryptic first scene, Woyzeck's disjointed or merely elliptical comments, such as his remarks over his sleeping child, are usually decipherable: "Shiny drops, all over his forehead. -- Nothing but work under the sun; we even sweat in our sleep. The poor" (10). In decoding Woyzeck's speech we often rely on conjecturing his train of thought; the assumptions may be easily arrived at or may be more elusive. In such instances, as with most of the discontinuous discourse of the other characters, we can 'fill in' the missing links, or justify the digressions. We are less readily able, however, to make sense of certain passages of Woyzeck's speech, and may be surprised at the calmness with which it is received by his listeners. While Woyzeck raves at Marie, or rambles to the Doctor about "Nature", his respective dialogic partner imposes on the discourse some semblance of normality or stability by maintaining the 'conversation' -- by continuing to engage with Woyzeck's speech (often, in effect, by cutting his diatribes short). Those with authority over Woyzeck easily subdue his discourse by changing the subject or by simply ending the dialogue -- dismissing the speech and its speaker. Marie is adept at controlling the conversation by picking up on Woyzeck's words and re-directing or at least challenging and sometimes taking over the discussion, as she does in Scene Ten (21-22).

The fragments become more pronounced and difficult to assemble when their content concerns Marie's infidelity, as if her loyalty were the only force holding Woyzeck and his discourse together.

The earth's hotter th'n hell.. and I'm cold.
Ice. Ice.
Hell must be cold, I'm sure. -- It's not possible!
Slut! Slut! -- Not possible. (20)

One of the most disturbing passages in the play is an unchecked monologue of Woyzeck's, interrupted (repeatedly) only by his psychotic imaginings:

On and on! For ever! On, on, on!
 Stop the music. --Shh.
 (*Throws himself down.*) What's that? --What's that you say?
 What're you saying?
 .. Stab. ..Stab the she-wolf, dead.
 Shall I?
 Must I?
 -- Is it there, too? In the wind even.
 (*Stands up.*) It's all round me. Everywhere. Round, round, on and on
 and on...
 Stab her. Dead, dead -- dead!! (*Runs out.*) (26)

Of such near-inarticulate expression Steiner writes,

Compulsive repetition and discontinuity belong not only to the language of children, but also to that of nightmares. It is the effect of nightmare which Büchner strives for. Woyzeck's anguish crowds to the surface of speech, and there it is somehow arrested; only nervous, strident flashes break through. ... It is as if a man had composed a great opera on the theme of deafness. (280)

Though Kane speculates on "the increasing tendency of the drama, the most social and communal of the arts, to refuse to speak about man's relationship to himself, his world, and his God" (16), it seems apparent that through even disjunctive speech much is 'said' about the human condition. The presence of the voice -- no matter how inarticulate or disjunctive or apparently non-sensical -- is a decided denial of silence. Büchner's reliance on a non-conventional mode of fragmented discourse has itself become a convention: discontinuity becomes the norm, the staple of dialogic exchange as the subversion of one form becomes the creation of another. As Williams explains, "an artist only leaves one convention to follow or create another; this is the whole basis of his communication" (*Ibsen to Brecht* 13). By seemingly refuting and refusing the *langue*, competence, or code ("conventions are a code", notes Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* 233), the 'discontinuous' *parole* develops into its own code, its own *langue*. So-called non-communication becomes the rule rather than the exception of 'conversation' in post-modern drama as that which had been an element of chaos now becomes 'structured'. While it may be that the alternative voice seems to "often know no language but a cry,"¹⁴ not even "howl, howl, howl" (*King Lear* 5.3.258) is silent, only 'inarticulate'. Despite the plurality of silence -- Kane describes it as "multidimensional, nonverbal expression" (14) -- and the limits of language -- Corrigan refers to "the tyranny of words in the modern

theatre" (260) -- characters in Absurdist drama do not surrender the possibilities of language. Expression is not abandoned for silence, but is modified, adapted, 'corrupted'.

In general terms, then, discontinuous dialogue is typical of characters who are contextually detached, cut-off. Psychic isolation is reflected in linguistic alienation. Speakers of this different voice are Other: outside, dispossessed, non-conformative, disruptive/corruptive, uncivil. Living, as it were, in their 'own little worlds', their language at once reflects and, to a degree, creates their privative condition. "Like the rogue, the clown, and the fool, the madman departs from the common discourse of men by moving outside -- or inside - the existing categories that life makes available. In an overflowing of meaning by nonsense, madness penetrates the horizon of what is defined by common discourse to open up a realm of unlimited possibility" (Patterson, 14). Though effectively marginalized, these voices persist into the 'modern' drama of Beckett and Pinter, where the play is not constructed around such discourse, but upon it.

Notes

¹ In my text, *The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*. in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. Ed. Alfred Harbage. (New York: Viking Press, 1969), the lines are 193-204.

² I do not intend, obviously, to conduct the kind of linguistic analysis of poetic language as undertaken by Mukarovsky, nor to follow Samuel R. Levin's discussion of poetic language in terms of statistical analyses of grammar: phonology and syntax. Levin defines 'poetic' language through grammar, "with the explicit underlying hypothesis that deviancy, in itself, is a marker of poeticalness, and the more measurably deviant a text can be shown to be, the more 'poetic' it is in its effect" (Burton, 6). My response to Shallow's discourse as 'poetic' is subjective and intuitive, and is mentioned only to take into account that though his discourse is 'realistic', it is not 'commonplace'.

³ "The condition of the norm of the standard language is not without its significance to poetry, since the norm of the standard is precisely the background against which the structure of the work of poetry is projected, and in regard to which it is perceived as a distortion; the structure of a work of poetry can change completely from its origin if it is, after a certain time, projected against the background of a norm of the standard which has since changed" (Mukarovsky, 27).

⁴ "The function of poetic language consists in the maximum of foregrounding of the utterance. Foregrounding is the opposite of automatization, that is, the deautomatization of an act; the more an act is automatized, the less it is consciously executed; the more it is foregrounded, the more completely conscious does it become" (Mukarovsky, 19).

⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988); and Jonathan Goldberg *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and their Contemporaries* (London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983).

⁶ "[Realism] endowed [man] with 'existence' if not 'essence', whereas in antirealistic drama he is likely to have essence without existence" (Gassner, 93). "Art in the theatre, [Robert Edmond] Jones declared, should be 'not descriptive, but evocative'" (Gassner, 99).

⁷ Hornby declares Pinter a poet because a 'versifier'. In this context, Evans writes: "Older critics would claim that his work is poetic because it uses, though in ways that are often covert or disguised, many of the conventional resources of poetic communication -- rhythm, associative value of words, image-making, tonal effect. He is poetic in the deeper sense that no specific and clear literal meaning can be abstracted from the majority of his plays. In a very obvious sense you not only change a Pinter play if you try to translate it into different terms, you destroy it in the way you would destroy any work of art and, moreover, you find you are no nearer the heart of the mystery" (*Language of Modern Drama* 175).

⁸ Kane's quotation of Chekhov comes from David Magarshak, *Chekhov the Dramatist* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960) 84.

⁹ H.D. Albright, William Halstead and Lee Mitchell, *Principles of Theatre Art* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955) 120.

¹⁰ I borrow Mieke Bal's use of "paralipsis" to mean "concealing information" (93).

¹¹ See Auerbach, *Mimesis* 11.

¹² Wittgenstein is arguing the concept of a logically private language; in addition to his argument that there can be no such thing as "private rule-following", he believes that "to speak a language is ... to participate in a form of life; coming to share a form of life consists in being trained to share it; such training obviously has to take place in public, for otherwise it is not a training in the sharing of the form of life which gives meaning to language. From this it follows that both 'private' experience and the language we use to speak of it are in fact neither of them private; there are and have to be public criteria for the application of expressions about pain, moods, and the rest, in order for there to be such expression at all" (Grayling, 86-87).

¹³ For a thorough explanation of telegraphic versus contextual ellipses, see Richard Gunter's "Elliptical Sentences in American English." *Lingua* 12 (1963): 137-150. My understanding of the distinction between the terms is that telegraphic ellipses are basically grammatic omissions in a speech that do not necessarily affect the reception of that speech; contextual ellipses are more prone to codifying a message in that the audience may be unaware of the preceding context of the speech.

¹⁴ Lord Alfred Tennyson, "In Memoriam A.H.H.", 54.20. This phrase is borrowed (without attribution) by Ewbank in her discussion of 'the unspeakable' in Ibsen (5).

Chapter Two

Clov. *What is there to keep me here?*
 Hamm. *The dialogue.* (Beckett, *Endgame*)

In contradiction to Esslin's description in his article, "The Theatre of the Absurd"¹, of the "anti-literary character" (331) of such drama in which "the real content of the play lies in the action [, and] language may be discarded altogether" (330), Vannier writes, "The fact is that language, by its nature, is made *for others*; to speak is to come out of oneself, to attempt a social relationship, to pass from subjectivity to a beginning of a human universe" (185). Critics like Andrew Kennedy, Leslie Kane, and Inga-Stina Ewbank have discussed the breakdown or 'sickness' (Kennedy, *Six Dramatists* 24) of language in modern existential drama; but for characters in such plays -- King Berenger (*Exit the King*), Hamm (*Endgame*), Winnie (*Happy Days*) -- language, both dialogic and narrative, is stubbornly preserved and employed in the effort to regain or maintain some sense of 'reality' or validity in their decaying worlds. Esslin concedes that "if Beckett's use of language is designed to devalue language as a vehicle of conceptual thought or as an instrument for the communication of ready-made answers to the problems of the human condition, his continued use of language must, paradoxically, be regarded as an attempt to communicate on his own part, to communicate the incommunicable" (87-88). This position is echoed frequently in discussions of Absurdist, and particularly Beckett's, theatre, as critics argue that he is exploring and portraying a 'deeper reality'² (Eliopoulos refers to his "substitut[ion of] *situation* for *story* and *direct experience* for *indirect description*", 46) through drama that refuses to explain itself -- or be explained -- in any clear-cut or absolute terms.

Waiting for Godot, *Endgame*, and *Happy Days* have been labeled Absurdist in part because, like later plays such as Ionesco's *Exit the King*, they refute the more readily inferred or conferred 'realism' of firmly situated texts such as the narrative histories of Shakespeare or Chekhov's social dramas by refusing to locate themselves in any recognizable time or setting. The situations in which these dramas unfold are, quite literally, absurd, as ellipses become increasingly contextual. In *Exit the King*, Berenger is centuries old -- the guard catalogues the King's achievements, which include everything from having "stolen fire from the gods" through having 'written' Shakespeare to inventing the tractor; he has recently split the atom. Berenger's kingdom, once enormous and prosperous, is now shrinking and literally crumbling: with his manipulated demise even the planets are colliding and collapsing. Amidst this chaos and his own dissolution, Berenger's surreal struggle for existence is manifest in a search for context. This search is,

I think, a trademark of Absurdist drama, where existentialism demands counter (or consequent) reaction: characters try to find some 'grounding' or meaning in their 'unreal' conditions through the vehicle of dialogue, and frequently of narrative monologue. "We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist?" (*Godot* 44). In the turmoil of *Woyzeck* the grandmother contextualizes the drama through storytelling, though her bleak mythologizing, like Hamm's chronicle or Winnie's stories, is an embedded narrative more depressing than the text around it. Gassner notes that "a histrionic orientation has appeared in the modern theatre ever since the beginning of a reaction to naturalism" (339). "Sometimes," he adds, "the technique is of a 'play within a play'" (339). Certainly *Exit the King* points to itself as theatre -- "You're going to die in an hour and a half, you're going to die at the end of the show" (24). And there is a self-proclaimed concern with performance, which I will discuss later, in plays like *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, and *Happy Days*. But while Gassner feels that "the histrionic mode may be especially linked with absurdist playwrights because it reflects the absurdist's inclination to treat truth as relative and to reduce life to illusion" (340), I would argue that narrative dialogue (storytelling within the play) is employed at least locally as an attempt not to magnify the illusory nature of the drama but to find some 'reality' within (or beyond) it. The need of certain characters to contextualize their existence frequently takes the form of monologue that interrupts the discontinuous -- often chaotic -- dialogue around it. As conditions around and within him deteriorate, Berenger testifies to or invokes his 'reality' through an extended monologic narrative on his "ginger cat" that interrupts the commentary around (and about) him; but this digression is singular and only a temporary escape from the progression of the drama. The need to situate himself -- context is usually located in the past -- is encouraged (though here with the intent of promoting his acceptance of his impending expiration) through recollection:

Marie (*in a tone of supplication*). I implore you to remember that morning in June we spent together by the sea, when happiness raced through you and inflamed you. You knew then what joy meant: rich, changeless and undying. If you knew it once, you can know it now. You found that fiery radiance within you. If it *was* there *once*, it is *still* there *now*. Find it again. Look for it, in yourself. (51-52)

In trying to "find something familiar" (56), with Juliette's help the King does manage to remember ("*Dreamily*") his fondness for "Gravy ... hot potatoes ... and carrots to lead me by the nose... (65) -- "Send for some stew!" (64). But in gradually accepting his death, Berenger relinquishes this memory:

King (*wearily*). Till now, I'd never noticed how beautiful carrots were. (*To Juliette*): Quick! Go and kill the two spiders in my bedroom! I don't want them to survive me. No, don't kill them! Perhaps in *them* there's something still of *me* ... it's dead, that stew ... vanished from the universe. There never was such a thing as stew.

Guard (*announcing*). Stew has been banished from the length and breadth of the land. (65)

At the play's conclusion Marguerite divests the King of intellectual and physical self-rule, and finally, "Now you've lost the power of speech, there's no need for your heart to beat, no more need to breathe" (94-95).

Likewise, in the enclosed 'cell' of *Endgame* where the blind and immobile yet imperious Hamm discourses the time away with his servant Clov and his ashcanned parents Nagg and Nell, words are evidence of survival -- "Outside of here it's death" (9). Silence is dreaded -- "It's finished, we're finished. (*Pause.*) Nearly finished. (*Pause.*) There'll be no more speech" (50) -- and, for the duration of the play, resisted. It is only at the play's conclusion that Hamm will "speak no more" (84); until then, verbal exchange is not only sought but demanded. Of course, as in *Waiting for Godot* and *Happy Days*, there is little else for the characters to do but engage in 'conversation' (frequently monologue-disguised-as-dialogue). While such discourse may seem little more than the effort of the drama's characters to kill or fill up the time -- "That's the idea, let's contradict each other" (*Godot* 41); "let's ask each other questions" (41), "let's abuse each other" (48), dialogic patterns emerge in these plays which appear specifically realistic as they argue, paradoxically, for the drama's artificiality.

While I have up until now argued the 'realism' of more random discourse, even such fragments can be seen as monologic narrative, albeit disrupted, when we recognize, as in the example of *Shallow*, that even when broken up the speech is attempting to communicate a 'story'. In many cases that story relates to the speaker's past, or to a version of it, and this paradigm clearly represents the speaker's urge to locate or maintain context. In Absurdist plays this 'context' -- the situating of oneself in time (particularly the past) and place may not be as (in)validatable as *Shallow*'s tales of Clement's Inn. In Beckett's plays reference to specific or recognizable locations is rare. In *Waiting for Godot* the refusal to orient the audience is temporarily lifted by Estragon's desire to "go to the Pyrenees ... "I've always wanted to wander in the Pyrenees" (52), but such a geographic foothold is undermined by a persistent uncertainty of context (except in "Cackon country"):

- Vladimir. All the same, you can't tell me that this (*gesture*) bears any resemblance to . . . (*he hesitates*) . . . to the Macon country for example. You can't deny there's a big difference.
- Estragon. The Macon country! Who's talking to you about the Macon country?
- Vladimir. But you were there yourself, in the Macon country.
- Estragon. No I was never in the Macon country! I've puked my puke of a life away here, I tell you! Here! In the Cackon country!
- Vladimir. But we were there together, I could swear to it! Picking grapes for a man called . . . (*he snaps his fingers*) . . . can't think of the name of the man, at a place called . . . (*snaps his fingers*) . . . can't think of the name of the place, do you not remember? (57)

Estragon can no more recollect his location from day to day than recognize Pozzo and Lucky, or remember when he had met them; his confusion is infectious as Vladimir begins to doubt what day it is, and later is hesitant before assuring Pozzo that it is in fact dusk and not dawn. Pozzo too, in his second appearance, admits, "I don't remember having met anyone yesterday. But tomorrow I won't remember having met anyone to-day. So don't count on me to enlighten you" (56-57). It is Pozzo who finally and explicitly calls into doubt the relevance or legitimacy of context:

Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (*Calmer.*) They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more. (*He jerks the rope.*) On! (57)

Cohn notes similar examples in *Endgame*, where "specific places ... are relegated to the past (or to fictional Kov): Nagg and Nell were engaged at Lake Como, and their legs were amputated in an accident on the road to Sedan. The more recent past, however, touches on present ambiguity. Hamm mentions his kingdom and his paupers, which Clov visited on horse or bicycle, but where is this kingdom?" (*Just Play* 21). In *Happy Days* the half-buried Winnie, who exists 'by habit' -- rituals of repeated gestures ("There is of course the bag", 14) and words ("Pray your old prayer, Winnie", 22) -- refers several times to "that day", which may or may not be references to the same occasion. She calls into question the whole notion of there being a past: "that day [...] What day?" (29). This philosophical doubt regarding the unvalidatable past and its tenuous recollection, about the existence of only the present, is anticipated earlier and voiced repeatedly in the play. The following

example is broken up between Act I, where Winnie is buried up to her waist, and Act II, where only her head is visible.

Winnie. And should one day the earth cover my breasts, then I shall
never have seen my breasts, no one ever seen my breasts. (17)

My arms.[*Pause.*] My breasts.[*Pause.*] What arms? [*Pause.*]
What breasts? (24)

Similar temporal concerns are found in *Endgame*. Though the past inscribes the play (largely through its bewildering absence, which acontextualizes the drama), Hamm also at one point questions the concept -- "Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!" (43), and is reminded by Clov "(*violently*): That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day" (43-44). The past remains, for the most part, an ever-present, inescapable ideal.

Hamm. You loved me once.
Clov. Once! (6)

Nagg. Yesterday you scratched me there.
Nell. (*elegiac*): Ah yesterday! (20)

Clov. You've asked me these questions millions of times.
Hamm. I love the old questions. (38)

Though Antony Easthope sees the effect of this pattern as a "parody [of] sentimental evocation" (66), and Ross Chambers complains that "a language that uses terms like 'yesterday' seems almost meaningless" (77), this last passage is of course similar to Winnie's comforting "old style" notations. The past may not be remembered clearly or completely, but it is not -- and must not be -- abandoned or forgotten altogether. Though Winnie finds solace (or at least activity) in remembrances, the past that comforts also haunts, for even good memories may be a reminder of lost youth, wasted potential, or the bleakness of the present, compared to the past. Vladimir reprimands Estragon's impatience with the silent Pozzo: "Let him alone. Can't you see he's thinking of the days when he was happy. (*Pause.*) *Memoria praeteritorum bonorum* -- that must be unpleasant" (*Godot* 55). Notably, the most elliptical moments in Winnie's speeches occur when her 'dialogue' loses its optimism and inadequately confronts such reality: "All I can say is for my part is that for me they are not what they were when I was young and ... foolish and ... [*faltering, head down*] ... beautiful ... possibly ... lovely ... in a way ... to look at. [*Pause. Head up.*] Forgive me, Willie, sorrow keeps breaking in" (15). But while the uncertainty that

pervades Beckett's drama may show the groundlessness of such 'realism', it also reveals that the hunger for context (through dialogue and through narrative) cannot be resisted.

Any speech, on-stage or elsewhere, is subject to suspicion; narratives of the past especially lend themselves to embellishment, censorship, or at the very least subjectivity. Coe observes that "because words 'take time,' they are fundamentally ill-adapted to the task of defining any aspect of absolute reality, since all 'reality' -- in any metaphysical sense -- is in the present, that is, is instantaneous" (17). In *Foucault's Pendulum* Umberto Eco writes that "truth is brief (afterward, all is commentary)" (633). The characters of the plays that I am examining share, with countless other characters from different plays, a preoccupation with the past -- or their particular version of it. Recovery of the past is always selective, and the 'truth' of such accounts usually cannot be determined. The incongruity between the past being narrated and the present being confronted (or evaded) is the recurrent basis of desultory discourse. In a sense, the aimlessness of discontinuous dialogue reflects a character's own stasis or stagnation or aberration. Shallow, Firs, Berenger, and Hamm repeatedly attempt to evoke (invoke) and revive (re-create) memories of a time when each believed himself to have held positions of relative power or at least security, positions now being challenged and eroded (or as in *Exit the King*, literally dismantled).

But unlike the rambling speech of Shallow or the fragmentary offerings of Firs, monologic narrations on the past are relatively ordered. While they may seem out of place or discontinuous with the dialogue surrounding them, the passages themselves are, on the whole, coherent. Because memories are selectively recalled and ordered, these constructs lack the confusion, the hesitant working out of ideas, the changing of mind, thought, direction that is discernible in immediate (present) speech. "Since written sentences can only work in a succession of horizontal lines while what is seen or experienced or contained by a consciousness at any given moment is a multiplicity of thoughts, images and sensations, therefore a narrative is obliged to produce a highly edited version of reality" (Ghose, 13). When discoursing the past, the narrative structure is prominent: the sense of story-telling, with its decided outcome, lends, however falsely or artificially, a structure to the exposition.

As alluded to earlier, the propensity to engage in storytelling is not only an existential reaction, but also entails to a significant degree the element of performance. *Endgame*, for instance, is a play with a "master text" -- Hamm's story, which he has "been

telling [himself] all [his] days" and still must "[get] on with" (58-59). There is of course a physical aspect to the overt theatricality of *Endgame*: Clov's careful actions that open the play, for example, or his almost ritualized 'silent movie' process of meticulous surveillance through each of the windows in turn, constitute repetitive and cumbersome stage business that draws attention to itself as performance, or at least performed compulsiveness; Hugh Kenner sees the initial uncovering and final discarding or re-covering of the 'props' (namely, Hamm) as a reminder "that what we are to witness is a dusty dramatic exhibition, repeated and repeatable" (53).

But this mime does not displace speech (and silence) at the centre of theatre: in Beckett's radio plays *All That Fall*, *Embers*, *Words and Music*, and *Cascando*, in which the spectator *qua* spectator plays a limited role, it is the audience to whom the play plays. The same would be true of three 'theatre' plays described by Esslin: *Not I* -- "a short stage play" in which "a mouth [is] suspended in mid-stage, surrounded by total darkness, from which the voice of an old woman emerges" (43) --, *Footfalls* -- "the eyes of the audience are concentrated on a strip of light on the floor, over which the feet of an elderly woman are seen passing to and fro, while her voice and that of her mother (who remains invisible) are heard" (43) --, or *That Time* -- "the audience sees the head of an old man... suspended in darkness; he is listening to his own voice" (43). (Obviously in drama such as *Act Without Words, I* and *Act Without Words, II*, in which the only aural signifier is the whistle, the verbal-visual emphasis would be reversed.) In addition, plays like *Happy Days*, *Play*, and *Eh, Joe* are also largely 'verbal' theatre. In the first example, of course, Winnie's facial expressions and, at least in Act I, (upper) body movements, and her use of props such as the mirror, toothbrush, and parasol, constitute an important aspect of the drama. In *Eh, Joe*, the positioning of the speaker[s] is relevant -- though I have seen one production in which no speaker is visible: a recorded voice is projected into the auditorium as a 'minimalist' black and white video of a man in a bedroom is shown on a screen. In *Play* the situating of the three speakers, and in urns, is again not arbitrary but significant to the drama -- "The possibility of interest straying to non-foregrounded or unintentional signs is virtually removed, and the minimal fictive world is thus likely to result in a concentration of intense decoding activity around the few signs available. Audiences in this way are encouraged to decode blackouts and silence or the three voices and faces simultaneously displayed as moments of particular significance" (Bennett, 161). But with Beckett's stage directions stipulating "*faces impassive throughout. Voices toneless except where an expression is indicated*", the degree of 'signing' conducted is negligible. And while the

gestures and expressions of the speaker in *Cascando* were a visual focus of one production of the play I have seen, in another only the speaker's voice was heard as the theatre was completely blackened. The emphasis, then, that Beckett places on the word in these and other plays must not be undervalued, and is reminiscent of Renaissance theatre in which a relatively minimal setting -- an auditorium -- demands the attention to language as the predominant vehicle of dramatic expression. The primacy of the word is taken up in Beckett's drama in the examples already cited, in which there is a minimum of action or of physical movement of any kind, where verbal expression is the foremost means of 'speaking' to the audience. But whether the word as such is capable of sustaining drama or of euphemistically sustaining what some see as our depleting and decaying social condition is another matter, and it is one that is suggested by Beckett as he singles out and seems to celebrate the word only to debunk its supposed superiority as a communicative instrument.

The dialogic performance emphasis of *Endgame* is not, of course, absent from the discourse of *Waiting for Godot*: Vladimir's and Estragon's 'conversations' -- "the peculiar repetitive quality of the cross-talk comedians' patter" (Esslin, 47), and the speeches of Pozzo and Lucky are nothing if not theatrical. Cohn describes this play's self-conscious theatricality:

Estragon and Vladimir frequently introduce irony into their comments. Estragon's "I find this really most extraordinarily interesting," and "Some diversion!" and Vladimir's "How time flies when one has fun" and "This is becoming really insignificant" are detached from the action, as though Vladimir and Estragon are themselves spectators at the play. But there are even more explicit reminders that the play is a play. Estragon directs Vladimir to an unnamed Men's Room, "End of the corridor, on the left," and Vladimir requests, "Keep my seat." There are of course neither seats nor corridors on stage. Vladimir cries to Estragon when he seeks to escape backstage, "Imbecile! There's no way out there." (*Comic Gamut* 218)

Similar self-references are found in *Endgame*, as both Hamm and Clov offer comments on the progression of events -- of the play or (same thing) Hamm's story. Kenner believes that "in *Endgame* (which here differs radically from *Godot*) no one is supposed to be improvising; the script has been well committed to memory and well-rehearsed" (58). Insofar as 'rehearse' means 'to recite' or 'say over', Kenner is correct: Hamm's is a memorially reconstructed tale. It is perhaps due in part to his restricted movement that Hamm's performative outlet is verbal. As a conductor of dialogue, Hamm is very conscious and critical of his own oratorical skill:

Hamm. A little poetry.
 (Pause.)
 You prayed --
 (Pause. *He corrects himself.*)
 You CRIED for night; it comes --
 (Pause. *He corrects himself.*)
 It FALLS: now cry in darkness.
 (*He repeats, chanting.*)
 You cried for night; it falls: now cry in darkness.
 (Pause.)
 Nicely put, that. (83)

As Kane notes, Hamm is preoccupied with "the quality of the performance" (112). He is well-versed in theatrics: he speaks "An aside, ape! Did you never hear an aside before?" (77) as he "warm[s] up for [his] last soliloquy" (78) and is reminded by Clov, "This is what we call making an exit" (81). We know by his name that Hamm is an actor; several commentators have affiliated him with the "histrionic, self and word-conscious" (Kennedy, *Dramatic Dialogue* 68) Hamlet -- "Hamm is responsible for a play within the play -- his chronicle" (Cohn, *Comic Gamut* 238) -- and with Prospero (*Comic Gamut* 236), Richard III, and Richard II (Kenner, 56). *Endgame* is overtly concerned with performance, and in this respect the play conforms to Kane's observation that "essentially, in the Beckettian universe, characters perform for others and for themselves while waiting" (112).

Winnie's performance in *Happy Days* is perhaps less obvious than Hamm's. In one sense Winnie is merely thinking aloud -- she begins alone, and since Willie's presence, much less his attentiveness, is uncertain, to all intents and purposes she addresses only herself. Winnie's disjunctive speech is not, really, discontinuous dialogue: it is fragmented interior monologue, just past the edge of expression and not always assembled from pre-verbal thought into articulate utterance. In fact, considering our conditioned tendency to censor and order our thoughts before articulating them, to speak so continuously and 'naturally' is quite an accomplishment; indeed, Winnie's speech is almost artificial and contrived. This complaint would seem to once again acknowledge the practice of theatre that necessarily exposes the private realm to public exhibition. But to present soliloquies as naturalistic dialogue goes against most modern drama, in light of Gassner's remark that "soliloquies and asides became obsolete in the realistic theatre" (30), or Williams's discussion of the outdated perception which thought it "very strange if a character spoke in soliloquy, whether this was thought of as 'thinking aloud' or 'directly addressing the audience'. The complaint would be that this was 'artificial', or 'not true to life', or even 'undramatic'; yet it is surely as natural, and as 'true to life' when one is on a

stage before a thousand people, to address them, as to pretend to carry on as if they were not there" (*Ibsen to Brecht* 14). Cohn writes, "In [tragedy and comedy] soliloquy is an obviously artificial convention: an actor plays a character who externalizes his inmost thoughts as though no one can hear them, in a theater full of auditors" (*Just Play* 61). She sees Hamm and Winnie, particularly the latter, as "trying to avoid soliloquy", as Winnie "addresses most of her remarks to Willie" (68) and "in her own brave way Winnie achieves counter-soliloquy as do the characters of *Godot*, and against greater odds" (68). Cohn also points out that though "dramatized fictions resemble soliloquies, ... [i]n a deeper respect, however, fiction is a strategy to circumvent soliloquy" (77). Beckett here seems to be deliberately unrealistic, or rather, non-realistic: Winnie's extended and (presumably spontaneously) fragmented discourse, her stream of consciousness narration, is a dramatic method pointing to theatrical depiction as artifice (and thereby, realism as convention). It is, in a sense, almost theatricalist³ -- free from the pretense of reality.

In more specific terms, *Happy Days* holds itself up as 'theatre', in that, like Hamm, Winnie is clearly conscious of her role as performer. She is aware of and acknowledges her rambling, supranatural discourse as performance: "I hope you caught something of that, Willie, I should be sorry to think you had caught nothing of all that, it is not every day I rise to such heights" (17). Her dialogue is sustained only by her belief that she has an audience -- "the spoken word presupposes a listener" (Coe, 109); "Ergo, you are there" (23) -- that Willie is listening, or at least, is alive.

Ah yes, if only I could bear to be alone, I mean prattle away with not a soul to hear. [Pause.] Not that I flatter myself you hear much, no Willie, God forbid. [Pause.] Days perhaps when you hear nothing. [Pause.] But days too when you answer. [Pause.] So that I may say at all times, even when you do not answer and perhaps hear nothing, something of this is being heard, I am not merely talking to myself, that is in the wilderness, a thing I could never bear to do -- for any length of time. [Pause.] That is what enables me to go on, go on talking that is. [Pause.] Whereas if you were to die - [smile] - to speak in the old style -- [smile off] -- or go away and leave me, then what would I do, what *could* I do, all day long, I mean between the bell for waking and the bell for sleep? [Pause.] Simply gaze before me with compressed lips. (8)

Winnie opens the first act and the second by talking to an audience that she knows or suspects is not listening (in Act I Willie is sleeping; in Act II she fears he is dead or has left her), though her greatest fear is that "the time will come when before I can utter a word I must make sure you heard the one that went before and then no doubt another come another time when I must learn to talk to myself a thing I could never bear to do such wilderness" (11). Kennedy details how "Winnie's monologue, with all its inwardness, is turned

outward" (*Six Dramatists* 161) as her "solo voice is energised by her meagre prospects of dialogue, [while Willie's contributions] amount to a parody of dialogue" (160). Kennedy concludes that "all the devices are given a natural human motivation: the solitary person's need to dramatise, to split into voices, to compel an otherwise inaccessible dialogue" (162).

This need for and cognizance of an audience or interlocutor is also present for Hamm, who displays a craving for an audience as he wakens and bribes Nagg and repeatedly summons Clov to listen to him speak. As Hamm commences his "story" or "chronicle", he assumes the appropriate "*narrative tone*" when necessary, and a critical 'voice' as well: "A bit feeble, that" (52) and "That should do it" (52). Similarly, Nagg tells *his* "story" in an appropriate alternation of "*raconteur's voice*" and "*tailor's voice*", and likewise interrupts his performance with his critique: "I never told it worse. (*Pause. Gloomy.*) I tell this story worse and worse" (22). From Nagg's own disappointment in his delivery is evident his awareness of the potential (here, waning) power of the narrator, and the consequent concern over the success of the performance. This concern is demonstrated also in *Waiting for Godot*. Following his oration on "the night" which he relates in the appropriate "*lyric*" or "*prosaic*" tones, Pozzo quizzes his audience:

Pozzo. How did you find me? (*Vladimir and Estragon look at him blankly.*) Good? Fair? Middling? Poor? Positively bad?

Vladimir (*first to understand*). Oh very good, very very good.

Pozzo (*to Estragon*). And you, Sir?

Estragon. Oh tray bong, tray tray tray bong.

Pozzo (*fervently*). Bless you, gentlemen, bless you! (*Pause.*) I have such need of encouragement. (*Pause.*) I weakened a little towards the end, you didn't notice?

Vladimir. Oh perhaps just a teeny weeny little bit.

Estragon. I thought it was intentional. (25)

As Shallow commands the discourse with Silence (not a difficult accomplishment) through perseverance, characters like Pozzo and Hamm dominate (through) speech: they exercise control over their audience through narrative that demands attentiveness from the compelled listener. Speech itself, especially narrative, is used as an instrument of power.

Vladimir. He's about to speak.
Estragon goes over beside Vladimir. Motionless, side by side, they wait.

Pozzo. Good. Is everybody ready? Is everybody looking at me? (*He looks at Lucky, jerks the rope. Lucky raises his head.*) Will you look at me, pig! (*Lucky looks at him.*) Good. (*He puts the pipe in his pocket, takes out a little vaporizer and sprays his throat, puts back the vaporizer in his pocket, clears his throat, spits, takes out the vaporizer again, sprays his throat again, puts back the vaporizer in his pocket.*) I am ready. Is everybody listening? Is everybody ready? (*He looks at them all in turn, jerks the rope.*) Hog! (*Lucky raises his head.*) I don't like talking in a vacuum. Good. Let me see.
He reflects. (20)

Hamm, of course, initiates and controls the speeches of *Endgame*. In orchestrating or directing the discourse Hamm is not only, comically and courageously, fending off silence but is displaying and entrenching his position of author(ity):

Hamm. I've got on with my story.
(Pause.)
 I've got on with it well.
(Pause. Irritably.)
 Ask me where I've got to.

Clov. Oh, by the way, your story?

Hamm (*surprised*). What story?

Clov. The one you've been telling yourself all your days.

Hamm. Ah you mean my chronicle?

Clov. That's the one.
(Pause.)

Hamm (*angrily*). Keep going, can't you, keep going! (58-59)

While Nagg's tale is clearly fiction, Hamm's narratives are more difficult to classify. They seem theatrical, but they also hint at 'truth'; this destabilization is effected through Beckett's mixture of realistic and non-realistic techniques. Both Hamm's madman story and his chronicle have some believability. Critics have speculated on their possible autobiographical significance in offering an idea of the unexplained past of *Endgame* that has left Hamm, Clov, Nagg, and Nell in their present state. Bell Gale Chevigny describes Hamm's chronicle as "an attempt to wrest his own confession from his fiction" (7). Easthope writes that Hamm's chronicle "may be a fictional extension of his role, demonstrating clearly how conscious he is of the part he plays" (63); he continues: "This fantasy account of the exercise of power seems no more than a perfect opportunity for

Hamm to practise his histrionic talents. Yet there are many suggestions in the telling of the story which imply that Hamm is seriously involved and that his fiction reflects real anxiety and suffering" (63).⁴ Easthope notes Hamm's persistent return to his story, and suspects that this "obsession" is more than "a raconteur's concern with and polishing of his art"; he argues that

Hamm has a double nature, existing both as consciously played role and as real character. His role as king and master seems to be unbroken and self-contained. Any subject to which he directs his attention, even his own suffering, becomes falsified through absorption into conscious rhetoric and turned into the performance of an actor. Yet there is something more about Hamm, which escapes his attention, a network of possibilities, a string of metaphorical connections and repeated phrases, leading beyond the role he knows he is playing. This implies obliquely a psychological reality in him, one which perhaps would evaporate into fiction if Hamm were able to give it explicit articulation. (65)

Easthope's and Chevigny's uncertainty over Hamm comes from their not separating what they call fiction from 'narration': Hamm the narrator may or may not be telling fiction, but what is most important is that he is exerting mastery through narrative.

We might usefully compare Hamm's stories and the power they give him to Winnie's two 'narratives': one about the visit from the Cookers or Showers and the other, of particular interest here, about Mildred and the mouse. In both plays, despite Winnie's protagonist being referred to as Mildred and Hamm's chronicle narrated through the pronoun "I", these seemingly personal, possibly autobiographical narrations are removed, and remove both narrator and audience, from the play. It is tempting to see these 'inner texts' as offering some insight or 'background' to the drama (and the character-narrator who relates them). Although these monologues have here been considered as separate discourse, they are not, in fact, told in whole or complete 'units'. Hamm's chronicle is a 'story in progress', subject to critique and amendments. Winnie's story of Milly -- also 'corrected' as it is told, in the interest of precision -- is stopped almost at its climax as the 'author' calls out to Willie (26), and it is forgotten as Winnie meditates on the "sadness after song" and returns to her Shower/Cooker narrative. In its first recitation, the rhythm is achieved with Winnie's speech fragmented by gesture: the filing of her nails punctuates her discourse. The mouse 'anecdote' is finally resumed after an unanswered plea to Willie: "Help". The refusal of these 'authors' to communicate their narratives concisely or even consistently gives 'realism' to their discourse (whether or not it lends credibility to their actual material): these narrators will proceed only as quickly as they choose, thus

frustrating a potential audience's "single" and impatient desire to, as David Mamet puts it, discover "WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?" (76). These speakers have a great deal of time to fill. Their only answerability to time is to recognize that each happy day or each 'game' will end. This temporal freedom is in perpetual conflict with the expectations that a play will last about two hours and that that is what audiences will give to the performance.

The fact that the histories are broken in upon by pauses or silences destabilizes the structure of the narratives, and to an extent promotes or intensifies their reception as 'confession', or 'truth'. Hamm and Winnie share with Joe in *Eh, Joe* the "compulsion [Cohn adds, "penance", *Just Play* 76] to tell [one]self [one's] own story" (Esslin, 84), whether or not that narration is self-consciously representative of the 'whole truth' or only of some part or combination thereof. Cohn sees these narrator-authors like Hamm and Winnie who "feel their evanescence" as trying to "ground themselves through [the] fiction [of their *alter egos*", *Just Play* 81]"; the result is "a surface lie and a search for truth" (*Just Play* 76-77). But whether or not Winnie's, Hamm's, or Nagg's and Nell's (discussed below) autobiographical stories are mere self-consoling fabrications, their need for self-justification is recognizably authentic.

It is possible, for instance, to see Winnie's narratives as a repetitive exercise deliberately designed to 'help her through the day' so that she may claim a minor triumph or assert a major self-delusion at having enjoyed or passed another "happy day". By her narrations, she 'makes her day', such as it is; as Pirandello writes in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, "Isn't everyone consoled when faced with a trouble or fact he doesn't understand, by a word, some simple word, which tells us nothing and yet calms us?" (222). And certainly she, like Hamm, recognizes and points to her role as narrator, even taking on a "*narrative tone*" when she resumes her 'Milly and the Mouse' story. From such a perspective, these orators are at once "perceiver and perceived, the teller of the tale and the listener to the tale" (Esslin, 91). But while the authenticity of Winnie's narratives is ambiguous (we have no reason to doubt them, but we do suspect them), Hamm insists upon the artifice of his text, from which, ironically, we are eager to extract some 'truth'.

I'll soon have finished with this story.
 (Pause.)
 Unless I bring in other characters.
 (Pause.)
 But where would I find them?
 (Pause.)
 Where would I look for them? (54)

As well as this explicit commentary, in which he openly acknowledges his story as construct, Hamm also suggests the unreality of his discourse more subtly through the commentary's comparative spontaneity that frames (contains?) the story, and it is this relative naturalness that likewise provokes the suspicion surrounding Winnie's stories. The more structured the narrative, the more contrived, and less 'real' it appears. Mediated by art, the account becomes presentational, rather than representational, theatrical rather than mimetic.

But performance, as Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (or Jaques's philosophizing in *As You Like It*) argues, is in itself 'realistic': "we spend most of our time not engaged in giving information but in giving shows" (7). I am not, then, arguing that rhetoric as practiced by Hamm or Winnie is 'unnatural', that histrionic necessarily reduces to presentational. Such a statement would presuppose the 'realist assumption' "that life off stage was totally unrhetorical, unmarked by the awareness of roleplaying" (Eliopoulos, 38). As Gassner reminds us,

rhetoric can be regarded as an essential ingredient of theatre. As long as a play offers a histrionic view of character and situation, rhetoric is its natural concomitant and means of expression. It is natural, that is, for characters to speak eloquently when they take an exalted or excited view of themselves and others, when they dramatize themselves to themselves and to others (as does Hamlet), and when they see themselves as significant characters in some perspective of history, politics, or simple worth. Rhetoric in all such instances is actually more "natural" than incoherence dignified as art under the rubric of naturalism. Articulateness and inarticulateness, it is to be noted, are not necessarily associated with social status; characters rise or fall in expressiveness in accordance with the sensibility imparted to them by the playwright. (237-8)

Recognizing the public discourse of rhetoric as separate from the more private speech of the unpractised or 'involuntary' utterances which seem to disregard the presence or absence of an audience provides a comparative basis for an examination of realistic dialogue, though this does entail relegating the former to the realm of the 'theatrical'. The longer and more elaborate histrionic displays by Winnie (I distinguish her narratives as separate from the less structured text around them), or those by Hamm, are markedly different from the narrations of regression of such characters as Nell in *Endgame*, where the introduction of Nagg's narrative sparks her fragmented recollections, and illustrates the almost binary nature of the two modes of narration. Nagg's is an extended and practised -- "Let me tell it again" (22) -- joke, anticipating his son's ongoing "chronicle" that suggests the realism of Nell's ad-libbed anecdote against which it is juxtaposed.

Nell. It was on Lake Como.
(Pause.)
 One April afternoon.
(Pause.)
 Can you believe it?

Nagg. What?

Nell. That we once went out rowing on Lake Como.
(Pause.)
 One April afternoon. (21)

Nell appears quite lost in her remembrance, so much so that she apparently, according to stage directions, does not hear Nagg's tale: "*He looks at Nell who has remained impassive, her eyes unseeing*" (23); she responds to Hamm's command of "Silence!" with, "You could see down to the bottom" (23), and to his threats of disposing of them in the sea with, "So white" (23). Coe refers to her speech here as "involuntary memory" (18), and certainly its transmission would seem unpremeditated. There is, however, the possibility that the story is a collusive rather than a shared reminiscence. In either case, the account can be seen as a self-consoling effort: agreeing to recall only the 'good things' is an authentic way of handling the calamities that have since happened. Their story is biphonic in voice as well as singular in theme. Interestingly, though, this 'recollection' is rather like chewing over "pap" as compared to the hard, indigestible facts, Nell participates in rumination only reluctantly:

Nagg. Will I tell you the story of the tailor?

Nell. No.
(Pause.)
 What for?

Nagg. To cheer you up.

Nell. It's not funny.

Nagg. It always made you laugh.
(Pause.)
 The first time I thought you'd die. (20-21)

In *Waiting for Godot* Estragon tries to invoke this type of reassuring, and potentially fictive, remembrance. The more pragmatic -- or perhaps the more disillusioned -- Vladimir likewise resists the offered solace:

Estragon. How long have we been together all the time now?
 Vladimir. I don't know. Fifty years maybe.
 Estragon. Do you remember the day I threw myself into the Rhone?
 Vladimir. We were grape harvesting.
 Estragon. You fished me out.
 Vladimir. That's all dead and buried.
 Estragon. My clothes dried in the sun.
 Vladimir. There's no good harking back on that. Come on. (35)

Whether or not Nell's and Nagg's, or Estragon's and Vladimir's, tales of the past are accurate or 'truthful', their choppy delivery -- particularly the delayed transmission by Nell -- promotes their reception as 'natural' discourse. This fragmentation-as-spontaneity effect of Beckett's may well be borrowed by Pinter. In *The Homecoming*, which follows *Endgame* by seven years (*Endgame* 1958, *The Homecoming* 1965), Ruth professes to recount an incident from her youth:

Once or twice we went to a place in the country, by train. Oh, six or seven times. We used to pass a . . . a large white water tower. This place . . . this house . . . was very big . . . the trees . . . there was a lake, you see . . . we used to change and walk down towards the lake . . . we went down a path . . . on stones . . . there were . . . on this path. Oh, just . . . wait . . . yes . . . when we changed in the house we had a drink. There was a cold buffet. (57)

The idea that spontaneity denotes 'naturalism', and, in turn, 'realism', because it is unpremeditated -- 'instinctiveness lends authenticity' -- is my assumption. The possibility exists, of course, that even the supposed spontaneity is deliberate and calculated, that Ruth's pauses reveal her as a narrator fabricating a story, and that we are witness to "the fictionalizing process at work" (Hutcheon, 237) as she pauses for inspiration rather than recollection. But the particularly fragmentary narratives that Ruth offers seem less self-consciously structured than, say, Max's discordant utterances in other places in *The Homecoming*. Her desultory expositions seem more representative of the paradigm of fragmented speech as a 'sign' of fragmented thought -- genuine confusion or uncertainty, what Kennedy refers to in describing Aston in *The Caretaker* as "symptomatic" (*Six Dramatists* 25).

Ruth. I was born quite near here.

Pause.

Then . . . six years ago, I went to America.

Pause.

It's all rock. And sand. It stretches . . . so far . . . everywhere you look. And there's lots of insects there.

Pause.

And there's lots of insects there. (53)

Such distracted discourse may be indicative of Ruth's state of mind at the moment of speaking and is conceivably the projection or result of her condition at the time of the episode she relates. It is possible that Ruth's distracted manner of speaking betrays some mental illness -- Teddy refers to her being "not well" (69), though I would hesitate to group her with those speakers of 'madness' in Chapter One. Her mode of speech, like Nell's, suggests the highly personal content of her narrative. It appears 'realistic' (unrehearsed): memory -- "A heap of broken images" ⁵ -- as discourse. The discontinuity of Ruth's exposition resembles an interior monologue in a stream of consciousness narration, which "converts the story of outer action and events into a drama of the life of the mind" (Abrams, 121), as "we are invited to attend to the sheer associative freedom of consciousness, its odd little leaps of memory, the scraps of song and written texts that cling to it like flotsam and jetsam" (Alter, 201). Like Nell, Ruth is too closely involved in her 'story' to be able to separate and thereby to structure or to judge the effect(iveness) of her narration. These characters' stories of their past seem to be uttered as they are remembered: that is, the expression of a thought occurs almost simultaneously with -- or at least is not far behind -- its taking shape in their minds, and the narration presumably reflects exactly what is held as memory. Winnie undergoes such a process in *Happy Days* as her memories are triggered by Willie's reading of an announcement in the newspaper:

Winnie. (*Gazing front, hat in hand, tone of fervent reminiscence.*)
 Charlie Hunter! [*Pause.*] I close my eyes -- [*she takes off spectacles and does so, hat in one hand, spectacles in other, Willie turns page*] -- and am sitting on his knees again, in the back garden at Borough Green, under the horse-beech. [*Pause. She opens eyes, puts on spectacles, fiddles with hat.*] Oh the happy memories! [*Pause. She raises hat towards head, arrests gesture as Willie reads.*]

- Willie. Opening for smart youth.
[Pause. She raises hat towards head, arrests gesture, takes off spectacles, gazes front, hat in one hand, spectacles in other.]
- Winnie. My first ball! *[Long pause.]* My second ball! *[Long pause. Closes eyes.]* My first kiss! *[Pause. Willie turns page. Winnie opens eyes.]* A Mr Johnson, or Johnston, or perhaps I should say Johnstone. Very bushy moustache, very tawny. *[Reverently.]* Almost ginger! *[Pause.]* Within a toolshed, though whose I cannot conceive. We had no toolshed and he most certainly had no toolshed. *[Closes eyes.]* I see the piles of pots. *[Pause.]* The tangles of bast. *[Pause.]* The shadows deepening among the rafters. (5-6)

Through Beckett's explicit stage directions, Winnie's delivery of her memories is convincingly "involuntary" as one memory after another "floats up, one day, out the blue" (*Happy Days* 7). While specific, circumstantial details argue the validity of the recollection, this precision is coupled with a stubborn vagueness that excludes all but Winnie from locating and appreciating the reminiscence. For example, she professes an ability to recall the exact words of the Cooker/Shower couple but cannot remember their name -- "ends in 'er anyway" (19), and dismisses some of their talk with, "and so on -- lot more stuff like that -- usual drivell" (19), "and so on -- usual tosh" (20). Winnie is adamant about what she remembers, vague about what she may not. And the entire reminiscence starts with sitting under a "horse-beech", which may be a tree species that Winnie has made up: the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists "horse-chesnut" but not "horse-beech". Perhaps horse-beeches grow in *Endgame*'s fictional Kov or in Cackon country.

The past which furnishes Beckett's characters with hiding places but also haunts them is similarly dual-natured in Pinter. Like Beckett's characters, and possibly because of them, Pinter's characters are renowned for alluding to some aspect of their ambiguous history: Davies' references to Sidcup (*The Caretaker*), Max's remembered career as a butcher and horseman (*The Homecoming*), Stanley's memories of his concert (*The Birthday Party*). The 'histories' (herstories) of female characters in these plays are believable not just because they are less fantastic (Max's tales of 'family life' or Goldberg's of his boyhood are equally prosaic), but because they lack the insistence on truth that punctuates the masculine expositions. These women tend to be less practised storytellers than the male characters are, and as a result their discourse is more 'realistic'. More readily labeled as memory and, as such, subjective, these stories are self-admittedly reconstructions, recreations. Exemplary of this less self-conscious mode of narration are Deborah's expositions in one of the most 'Beckettian' of Pinter's plays, *A Kind of Alaska*:

Strikingly like Beckett's Winnie, Deborah articulates 'random' reminiscences, almost a retrieval of memory through voice, to an audience of which she is aware, but whose need for coherence does not outweigh the speaker's need for immediate expression. She speaks aloud for her own benefit, testing her long-silenced voice, verbally working through her disorientation, panic, and excitement. Her thoughts, memories, and fantasies, appearing at a rate which threatens to surpass her ability to express them, are relayed and released through linguistic short-cuts -- telegraphic and contextual ellipses -- at the expense of logical or complete utterance:

I certainly don't want to see Pauline. People don't want to see their sisters. They're only their sisters. They're so witty. All I hear is chump chump. The side teeth. Eating everything in sight. Gold chocolate. So greedy eat it with the paper on. Munch all the ratshit on the sideboard. Someone has to polish it off. Been there for years. Statues of excrement. Wrapped in gold. I've never got used to it. Sisters are diabolical. Brothers are worse. One day I prayed I would see no-one ever again, none of them ever again. All that eating, all that wit. (320)

In her confused monologues of sensations and remembrances, Deborah is talking more to herself than to her audience. Her discourse of 'everyday' events in such extraordinary circumstances results in episodes that are unintentionally comic and pathetic, and as in *Endgame* -- whose very rhythm is borrowed in the excerpt below -- serve to emphasise the absurdity of her situation:

Deborah. Did you ever see . . . tears . . . well in my eyes?

Hornby. No.

Deborah. And when I laughed . . . did you laugh with me?

Hornby. You never laughed.

Deborah. Of course I laughed. I have a laughing nature. (325)

While Hamm, though preferring a 'real' audience (Clov, Nagg, Nell) is able to entertain and be entertained by his own voice, and while Winnie's extended speech is inspired by and can continue with an 'imagined' listener, Deborah openly confronts the fears of a narrator or speaker: "No-one hears what I say. No-one is listening to me" (308). This basic insecurity or anxiety over isolation is also expressed by the female voice (Voice 2) in Pinter's *Family Voices* as she repeatedly but unsuccessfully solicits assurances that she is being heard. The sheer length of any speech suggests the distribution of power -- the listener is subject to the speaker -- within the drama. The female voice and the fantasies

she expresses tend to be short; the brief 'stage time' she is allotted seems to be in deliberate accordance with the limited time and attention the 'on-stage' audience is prepared to devote to her discourse. Her contributions consist largely of inquiries as to the whereabouts (or existence) of her son; frequently her 'correspondence' entails one-line appeals: "Sometimes I wonder if you remember that you have a mother" (14); "Darling?" (17); "I am ill" (21); "Come to me" (21); "I wait for you" (22). The primary male voice, by contrast, discourses at length and without concern about his audience, of whose commitment he seems confident. The wealth of circumstantial detail he employs in his consciously constructed narrative is, again, a strategy of conversational manipulation, a poetics of power as he works to persuade his listener of the 'truth' of his discourse. In distinguishing narrative from dramatic dialogue, Jiri Veltrusky explains that "narrative dialogue differs from the dramatic chiefly in that it emphasizes the succession of speeches rather than the simultaneous unfolding and interplay of the contents from which they spring" (96). In this way, the expositions of such characters as Goldberg and Max -- with their specific (persuasive) intentions and decided awareness of audience -- function as rhetoric: "organized by a logical progression of ideas" (Eliopoulos, 21)⁶ and are clearly distinct from the discourse of Shallow, Ruth, Winnie, or even Meg, which are more readily labeled 'poetic': "its order may be quite random and apparently dissociative as in the stream of consciousness technique. ... The method of the poet often involves an imaginative reconstruction of experience " (Eliopoulos, 21). Although theirs may seem the private language of 'dream', there is of course (as mentioned earlier) the possibility that this seeming disregard or under-regard for audience is a strategy of power, and as Eliopoulos notes, "in reality, there are few speeches which are not in some way poetic, or poems which are not in some way rhetorical" (14).⁷ Voice 2's speech in *Family Voices* is admittedly memory or fantasy:

I sometimes walk the cliff path and think of you. I think of the times you walked the cliff path, with your father, with cheese sandwiches. Didn't you? You both sat on the clifftop and ate my cheese sandwiches together. Do you remember our little joke? Munch, munch. We had a damn good walk, your father would say. You mean you had a good munch munch, I would say. And you would both laugh. (12)

Or perhaps you will arrive here in a handsome new car, one day, in the not too distant future, in a nice new suit, quite out of the blue, and hold me in your arms. (17)

It is possible to speculate here on the manner in which female narratives have been "discredited", a thesis put forward by Nancy K. Miller in "Emphasis Added: Plots and

Plausibilities in Women's Fiction". But in the examples of female narratives that I have noted their story goes largely untold; and while the issue of gender in discourse and in narrative is an important one, one should approach it cautiously, keeping in mind that in this study the 'women's texts' are written by male playwrights. For instance, when I discuss Pinter's *The Birthday Party* at length, I will be arguing that Meg's speech is actually self-empowering. But it is easy to see her as an anxious victim. The conversations in her boarding house seem helplessly dysfunctional as characters speak not with one another but at or over or around one another, and do not listen or do not hear. Communication, albeit of an indirect sort, is nonetheless taking place. Meg's seemingly pointless and inane 'questions' -- "Petey, is that you?"; "What? ... Are you back?" (9) -- at first suggest harmless though tiresome phatic communion⁸; such redundant talk is certainly 'realistic' in that most audiences would recognize it as 'everyday' speech. For Meg, this mode of discourse, while it may be 'natural conversation', also functions as a security device. In querying why "Vladimir and Estragon talk incessantly" (60), Esslin cites a passage from *Waiting for Godot*:

- Estragon. In the meantime let us try and converse calmly, since we are incapable of keeping silent.
- Vladimir. You are right, we're inexhaustible.
- Estragon. It's so we won't think.
- Vladimir. We have that excuse.
- Estragon. It's so we won't hear. (40)

In protecting herself (her ears) from outside encroachment, Meg -- like Winnie -- seems to be cowering in the safety of ritual, both verbal and physical. Meg consistently engages in what Eliopulos, discussing Winnie in *Happy Days*, refers to as "intra-personal communication": "She will ask herself a question fully aware there will be no response other than the one she provides" (83). Meg shields herself from unpleasantness by soliciting confirmation of her already formulated opinion -- "Are they nice [...] I thought they'd be nice" (9); she looks for validation of her preconceived ideas of how she wants things to be. She may realize that the world she has constructed is not the 'real' world, but she refuses any attempt at intrusion. She hears what she is predisposed to hear. Though Meg does involve and 'get answers' from other characters, her questions are such that the replies are anticipated, the dialogue practically pre-scripted. Any deviation from the 'text' -- whether that descriptive refers to the immediate conversation or the routine-laden and

dictated way of life -- upsets her: see for example the reprimand given Stanley when he denies that his cornflakes were "nice", or, in a larger context, Meg's fear that Stanley will leave. This fragile world of non-reality (or 'created' reality, unique, it seems, to each character) must be safeguarded. To this extent it is Beckett's world as well as Pinter's; Pinter's development of Meg's strength-through-weakness will be discussed below.

The degree to which discourse is judged as realistic or artificial depends largely on its perceived 'naturalness', an indicator not necessarily reliable or revelatory. One makes, discourses, and defends one's own reality, and suspects that of others. The idea of speech as (contrived) performance challenges its reception as 'everyday' discourse, and is a persistent theme in the drama analyzed in this study, where characters attempt to locate or situate themselves, often through narratives of the (reconstructed) past. The narrators' search for context is frequently translated into a discourse of power -- whoever commands speech commands authority -- though the author-narrator is always dependent upon the attention of an audience. We have relatively little commentary from Beckett on his own plays, but we know from Pinter's reflections on dramatic writing that he is interested in aspects of realism that can be seen in Beckett. Some more technical parallels between Beckett's and Pinter's deployment of silence, verbal disjunctiveness, and narrative will be noted in my next chapter's discussion of Pinter's dialogic method.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise noted, Esslin references are from his expanded text, *The Theatre of the Absurd*.

² "The defiant rejection of language as the main vehicle of the dramatic is by no means the equivalent of a total rejection of all meaning... On the contrary, it constitutes an earnest endeavor to penetrate into deeper layers of meaning and to give a truer, because more complex, picture of reality" (Esslin, "Theatre" 331). Coe remarks of Beckett: "His subject matter begins to drift further and further away from the realms of common 'reality' towards that Nothingness which is ultimate reality. And that Nothing is that which, by definition, *cannot* be expressed directly in terms of language" (13). Corrigan writes: "For the Absurdist playwrights, as for Sartre and Camus, the absurd alone bears the stamp of truth; logic is a pattern imposed by a dishonest philosophy pandering to the comfort of those who dare not face reality" (254). Of Symbolism and its "illusion of unreality", Gassner says: "Indefinite, irrational feelings and visions, allegedly more real than observed phenomena and issues rationally discussed, became the special province of the art theatres" (97).

³ "Non-realism in the theatre has several synonyms -- expressionism, presentation, theatricalism. Since Expressionism is a particular Central European movement about the time of World War I, its indiscriminate extension promulgates confusion. During the second half of the twentieth century, realism was submerged under the more general term "representation", and its opposite became "presentation." Another antonym for realism is theatricalism, the foregrounding of theatre in performance" (Cohn, *Retreats from Realism* 95).

⁴ Easthope sees "latent beneath the surface of [Hamm's] chronicle, a tenuous connection of metaphors and phrases repeated in different contexts that renders Hamm's relationship with Clov as the hidden subject of his story" (63-64); Cohn says of *Endgame* and *Happy Days*: "the authors create characters who concretize aspects of themselves. Hamm's protagonist clearly mirrors his own hesitation, but the suppliant too derives from him. Milly resembles Willie physically, but she embodies the dread that Winnie tries to hide on her 'happy' days" (*Just Play* 82).

⁵ T. S. Eliot, "The Wasteland: I The Burial of the Dead." *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot, 1909-1950*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1971) 38.

⁶ Eliopulos notes that this argument is earlier expressed by H. Hudson, "Rhetoric and Poetic", *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 10 (April, 1924): 143-154.

⁷ Eliopulos cites Longinus *On the Sublime*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge 1907) X, 1.

⁸ "Phatic communion is defined by Bronislaw Malinowski as that speech which is used to establish the bonds of social communion between individuals" (Eliopulos, 82; no reference given). Burton says that such speech is "by definition phatic, in that [the discourse is] not referentially interesting or important in anything other than the social-solidarity sense" (21); "phatic communion co-occurs with psychological insecurity" (22).

Chapter Three

*I can only assume Kullus was aware, on these occasions, of the scrutiny of which he was the object, and was persuaded to resist it, and to act against it. He did so by deepening the intensity of his silence, and by taking courses I could by no means follow, so that I remained isolated, and outside his silence, and thus of negligible influence. (Pinter, *The Examination*)*

Pinter's poetics of dialogic realism has been cited and recited as numerous critics comment on "the uncannily cruel accuracy of his production of the inflections and rambling irrelevancy of everyday speech" (Esslin, 235). John Russell Taylor observes that "the structure of [Pinter's] characters' conversations, and even the very forms of expression they use, are meticulously exact in their notation of the way people really speak" (357). Burton has undertaken a stylistic analysis of the dialogue in "Last to Go" and *The Dumb Waiter*, showing the "linguistic mechanisms" behind Pinter's natural-sounding dialogue. She traces the precisely engineered pattern of language (what Taylor refers to as Pinter's "orchestration") that assumes the appearance of everyday discourse. Of course seemingly overheard conversations are deliberately constructed: that critics must insist on the design of this dialogic 'spontaneity' says a great deal about Pinter's success in achieving the appearance of the realistic. Elin Diamond, in "Parody Play in Pinter", argues that Pinter "exposes and playfully recasts" the conventions of realism, specifically that of "naively mimetic art", and "in exposing the limitations of his models he comments on the form of his own creation" (478). Self-reflexivity aside for the moment, in showing up the 'unreality' of his 'targets' Pinter employs specific strategies of realism that can be identified (certainly they are imitated). Pinter's plays assume a kind of 'realism by contrast' by demonstrating how convention *is* only that. Pinter's drama, however ironically, is often perceived and received as bearing some more profound 'reality' or 'authenticity' than that which purports to be or advertises itself as 'real'.

Often regarded as "the purveyor of dramatic fantasy" (Taylor, *Anger* 356), Pinter is renowned for plays that puzzle and intrigue with their seemingly non-sensical or at least incomprehensible (non)action. Hornby describes Pinter's theatre as one in which "the banal offstage world becomes mysterious, [and] the mysterious acts we see *onstage* become banal" (*Script* 177). The much-discussed undefined and understated menace that lurks behind and intrudes upon Pinter's drama is only part of what makes his plays mysterious and unsettling (even somewhat frightening for an audience unsure of exactly what is happening in a particular stage action, or why). That this nebulous threat is imposed upon or elicited from such otherwise or at least superficially 'ordinary' circumstances and characters (Taylor refers to the "mundane considerations of likelihood"

and "the normality of those who menace", *Anger* 335-56) amplifies the strangeness or surreality of the drama. Such distortion, along with the magnification of insignificant details and the downplaying of the extraordinary, leads Taylor to suggest that Pinter employs realistic devices in order that "the whole external world of everyday realities is thrown into question" (*Anger* 326).

The realism of Pinter's drama is both achieved and deconstructed through the playwright's calculated use of discontinuity -- both in linguistic contradiction and, in a wider sense of the definition, performative (situational or plot) contrast, where one aspect of the drama appears discordant with another. An audience's perception is dislocated both cumulatively and immediately through discontinuous dialogue, a significant tool of realism in Pinter's drama that can be studied in several of its distinct aspects, the most obvious of which entail abrupt changes of subject within a conversation, and pauses within a monologue. In both these cases, the ever-audible silences that result are recurrently re-interpreted as critics cannot resist offering their own explanations of the intent and effect of the "brief pauses", "full pauses", and "silences" of Pinter's drama.¹ Pinter himself remarks sardonically that critics can "tell a dot from a dash a mile off" (9) -- as if the typography of the pauses sends messages in Morse code. While I agree that "silence is communication; the unexpressed is an integral element of the linguistic function" (Kane, 132), for my purposes these active voids are relevant only in combination with their surrounding text; that is, I consider silences not necessarily for the subtext they compose, but as they contribute to discontinuity within the dialogue.

The physical spaces (in printed playtexts, dots indicating elapsed time) between words caused by a speaker's hesitation are the most common determinants of fragmented discourse, and may suggest, through the impression of vagueness created, the 'inauthenticity' of a speaker's script, while attesting to the 'realism' of the discourse. Davies' hesitant speech in *The Caretaker* is 'authenticized' in this way:

Aston. Where were you born?

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

Mick. You been in the services. You can tell by your stance.

Davies. Oh . . . yes. Spent half my life there, man. Overseas . . . like
. . . serving . . . I was. (50)

Desultory speech may arise when a speaker is anxious or threatened: the resulting discourse, intended to function as a testimony of confidence or authority, becomes frantic and irregular. In *A Slight Ache*, when Edward realizes his usurpation by the matchseller his typically self-congratulatory discourse becomes distracted:

You want to examine the garden? It must be very bright, in the moonlight.
[Becoming weaker.] I would like to join you . . . explain . . . show you . . .
 the garden . . . explain . . . The plants . . . where I run . . . my track . . . in
 training . . . I was number one sprinter at Howells . . . when a stripling . . . no
 more than a stripling . . . licked . . . men twice my strength . . . when a
 stripling . . . like yourself. (199)

The awkwardness of Edward's speech likely reflects to some degree his state of mind -- the breakdown of language signifying his at least temporary mental deterioration as his discourse literally begins to decompose with his weakened physical state -- but it also is appropriate to his defeat in the power struggle as his impotence in the social situation is translated into an inability to manipulate language. The same is true of Davies' verbal faltering. Of course Davies' rank in the household is always dubious; he tends to "get a bit out of [his] depth" (71) in verbal encounters with Mick, and in a familiar Pinteresque 'mind triangle' of divided and entrenched loyalties must frequently backpedal from the self-entrapping remarks he has made against Aston, seemingly at Mick's invitation. Finding himself in the uncomfortable position of being estranged from both the brothers, Davies' panic is verbally manifest in his attempt to re-establish his relationship with the one he perceives to be the more pliant of the two:

I got out and . . . half way down I . . . I suddenly . . . found out . . . you see
 . . . that I hadn't got my pipe. So I come back to get it. . . .
Pause. He moves to Aston.
 That ain't the same plug, is it, you been . . . ?
Pause.
 Still can't get anywhere with it, eh?
Pause.
 Well, if you . . . persevere, in my opinion, you'll probably . . .
Pause.
 Listen. . . .
Pause.
 You didn't mean that, did you, about me stinking, did you? (75)

Despite its ellipses, this fragmented speech resists silence; even Davies is able to discourse subtext. Pinter says that "instead of any inability to communicate there is a deliberate evasion of communication. Communication itself between people is so frightening that rather than do that there is a continual cross-talk, a continual talking about

other things, rather than what is at the root of their relationship" (qtd. in Esslin, 244).² The tendency to talk around the subject at hand has been noted above in the 'conversation' between Falstaff and Hal (*1 Henry IV* 1.2) as an instance of circumventory and discontinuous, though not desultory dialogue; the practice is employed by Davies earlier in *The Caretaker* as he tries to get information about his new surroundings. The length of the following quotation is suggestive of the time needed to engage in this type of roundabout duologue:

Davies. I noticed that there was someone was living in the house next door.

Aston. What?

Davies (*gesturing*). I noticed. . . .

Aston. Yes. There's people living all along the road.

Davies. Yes, I noticed the curtains pulled down there next door as we came along.

Aston. They're neighbours.

Pause.

Davies. This your house then, is it?

Pause.

Aston. I'm in charge.

Davies. You the landlord, are you?
He puts a pipe in his mouth and puffs without lighting it.
 Yes, I noticed them heavy curtains pulled across next door as we came along. I noticed them heavy big curtains right across the window down there. I thought there must be someone living there.

Aston. Family of Indians live there.

Davies. Blacks?

Aston. I don't see much of them.

Davies. Blacks, eh? (12-13)

Borrowing Jean Vannier's definition, Andrew Kennedy describes Pinter's drama as a "*theatre of language*... which, unlike the traditional theatre, presents not just 'the psychological relationships which language only translates...' but sets up 'a dramaturgy of

human relations at the level of language itself" (*Six Dramatists* 4). Pinter's dialogue is dense (condensed), and like 'real' speech it is cryptic. Dialogic exchange (or lack of it) is more vital than Gareth Lloyd Evans's reference to "Pinter pauses bracketed by words" (xi) would suggest. It is not what Kane calls "a conscious retreat from the word, considered by many to be an inferior, limited, devalued, and prostituted mode of communication" (13). And it certainly invalidates Esslin's view of the Absurdist's (a category in which he places Pinter) "radical devaluation of language" (26). Pinter's characters are not merely killing time through dialogue. Words are used (often sparingly) for specific purposes, even if one of the purposes is the avoidance of direct communication, which is "too alarming. To enter into someone else's life is too frightening. To disclose to others the poverty within us is too fearsome a possibility" (Pinter, 15). The last sentence just quoted could be describing a dialogic principle of any of the playwrights discussed in this study.

Interspersed with an account of his begging for shoes at a monastery, Davies returns repeatedly to unanswered queries regarding the racial makeup of the neighborhood. The dialogue becomes more strictly discontinuous as Aston deflects or simply ignores Davies's inquiries, thus fragmenting the 'conversation'.

Davies. I used to know a bootmaker in Acton. He was a good mate to me.

Pause.

You know what that bastard monk said to me?

Pause.

How many more Blacks you got around here then?

Aston. What?

Davies. You got any more Blacks around here?

Aston (*holding out the shoes*). See if these are any good. (14)

Davies's contributions are nearly monologic, although at least one of his questions provokes a 'response' from Aston. Diamond writes that traditionally, "sequential logic ... hinges on the rhetoric of the question. Correctly posed questions yield answers that establish facts and become truths" ("Parody Play" 483). While she is referring to *The Birthday Party* and *No Man's Land* as instances where "Pinter parodies the interrogation process ..., using questions not to elicit answers but to intimidate and victimize characters" (483), the (unsuccessful) question and answer technique is more subtly parodied in *The Caretaker*, where the most mundane ('realistic') conversational attempts are repelled. The non-answering of questions provokes an ironic suspense or sense of mystery (concerning

the relationship of the speakers, not the particular subject of their discourse) disproportionate to the speech or circumstances. The openendedness of such disconnective discourse fosters the perception of individual utterances as intertwined and unending monologues that refuse or are incapable of resolution, and that can be silenced only by what Diamond sees as Pinter's answer to "contrived endings": the "ambiguous tableaux" (479). *The Caretaker* ends with Davies's entreaty:

But . . . but . . . look . . . listen . . . listen here . . . I mean. . . .

Aston turns back to the window.

What am I going to do?

Pause.

What shall I do?

Pause.

Where am I going to go?

Pause.

If you want me to go . . . I'll go. You just say the word.

Pause.

I'll tell you what though . . . them shoes . . . them shoes you give me . . . they're working out all right . . . they're all right. Maybe I could . . . get down.

. . .

Aston remains still, his back to him, at the window.

Listen . . . if I . . . got down . . . if I was to . . . get my papers . . . would you . . . would you let . . . would you . . . if I got down . . . and got my. . . .

Long silence.

Curtain.

(77-78)

Of course this desperate last attempt resembles that in *The Homecoming*, which also ends with an old man's pathetic pleas for attention: Max "*begins to stammer*" (81). Davies' case for deserving respect is built upon his insistence that "I'm old man" (10), and that, having "been around", he possesses useful wisdom through experience. In *The Homecoming* Max, like Shallow in *Henry IV* or Firs in *The Cherry Orchard*, is also being overthrown or discarded. His impending or actual impotency apparent, Max argues his worth by denying his age:

I'm too old, I suppose. She thinks I'm an old man.

Pause.

I'm not such an old man.

Pause

(*To Ruth*) You think I'm too old for you?

.

I'm not an old man.

Pause.

Do you hear me?

He raises his face to her.

Kiss me.

*She continues to touch Joey's head, lightly.
Lenny stands, watching.*

Curtain

(80-81)

The refusal of these characters to engage in explicit discourse does not translate into communicative failure. The difficulty for an audience is not that the characters do not communicate with each other, but that in their subtextual and often ironic dialogue they seem to impede the audience's comprehension of their discourse or their relationships. Paul Rogers, who played Max in *The Homecoming*'s 1965 production directed by Pinter, explains,

I said to Harold fairly early on, "One thing this play is not about is noncommunication. These characters know only too bloody well how to communicate." And Harold said yes. They communicate only too well because their very method of communication presumes a knowledge of the other. The silence or the pause is active and fulfills many purposes. From the simplest kind, where you leave a pool and say, "Fill it". "There it is, put something in it." "Let's see what we can make out of this one." Even the pauses are, in many places, malicious. Nobody else writes silences in that way. Pinter writes silences as a musician orchestrates pauses. The silences between bunches of notes are as important as the notes themselves. Most playwrights leave it to chance. (*Casebook* 156)³

The evasion of candid expression is frequently enacted in *The Homecoming*, as, for example, in the exchange between Max and Lenny where Lenny insinuates but never explicitly says that Max is not his father:

Max. Stop calling me Dad. Just stop all that calling me Dad, do you understand?

Lenny. But I'm your son. You used to tuck me up in bed every night. He tucked you up, too, didn't he, Joey?

Pause.

He used to like tucking up his sons.

Lenny turns and goes towards the front door.

Max. Lenny.

Lenny (*turning*). What?

Max. I'll give you a proper tuck up one of these nights, son. You mark my word.

They look at each other.

Lenny opens the front door and goes out.

Silence. (17)

Critics go to great lengths to infer (since it cannot really be explained) the 'psychological realism' of Pinter's words and the silences that lie between and beneath them. Recent stylistic discourse analyses show, for example, that Max's entrance into and commencement of *The Homecoming* with repeated requests to Lenny for the scissors and then for a cigarette may constitute merely an opening or starting point for conversation. According to Pinter,

There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed. This speech is speaking of a language locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant strategem to cover nakedness. (14-15)

Burton's stylistic examination of "Last to Go" makes particular ("cultural-specific") reference to the dangerous discomfort produced by silence -- a tension that must be alleviated by being broken. S.I. Hayakawa remarks that "the prevention of silence is itself an important function of speech, and it is completely impossible for us in society to talk only 'when we have something to say'" (qtd. in Burton, 23).⁴ Linguistic studies support this possibility, noting the onus placed on

the incomer to initiate the exchange of phatic communion... the speaker realises that in some sense the static listener can be acknowledged as the owner of the territory ... he acknowledges his own awareness of his invasion of the listener's territory ... he declares in effect that his intentions are pacific, and offers a propitiatory token. (Burton, 20)⁵

After all, Lenny (predictably?) makes no move to respond, and Max readily abandons both projects to attempt a new dialogue by beginning a monologue on his 'younger days'. This exposition is also curious, for presumably Lenny has heard of MacGregor many times

before, yet Max commences his reminiscing with a distanced, almost formal introduction, "I used to knock about with a man called MacGregor. I called him Mac" (8). Such an announcement seems to presuppose no prior knowledge on Lenny's part of this man, yet Max continues with, "You remember Mac? Eh?" (8). The idea of denied "shared knowledge" (it is feasible that Mac is Lenny's father, and that Lenny is aware of or at least suspects this possibility) characterizes the conversation of the men in the household, and is a dynamic of the much-discussed Pinter subtext.

That questions may be asked with no intention or expectation of their being answered, as could be the case with Max's introduction, is illustrated when Lenny later elects to use words rather than silence against his father. He solicits Max's opinion about the horse race only to demonstrate his complete uninterest in his father's reply (9), and then starts in with:

Dad, do you mind if I change the subject?

Pause.

I want to ask you something. The dinner we had before, what was the name of it? What do you call it?

Pause.

Why don't you buy a dog? You're a dog cook. Honest. You think you're cooking for a lot of dogs. (10-11)

This type of harassment functions as a weapon in power negotiation that reveals and results in a continually shifting pattern of disempowerment and, according to Quigley, enacts the essence of Pinter's drama:

The point to be grasped about a Pinter play is that language is not so much a means of referring to structure in personal relationships, as a means of creating it. Characters are constantly engaged in exploring or reinforcing or changing the relationship that obtains between them and the current situation. ... Pinter has created a new dynamic of dialogue in which the coercive power of social conversation becomes the focus of character confrontation. The conflict that is essential to all drama is generated by interrelational coercive dialogue of characters who are at crucial points of adjustment between themselves and the environment to which they are currently exposed. (qtd. in Burton, 70)⁶

The patterns of power-positioning through conversation that Burton examines in *The Dumb Waiter* are applicable to *The Homecoming* as "language itself becomes the site of tension and struggle" (Stallybrass *Politics* 196). Burton describes the child-parent (or inferior-

superior participant) relationship set up through the dialogue of Ben and Gus (*The Dumb Waiter*), in which Gus, the 'child-like' figure, tenaciously questions his 'superior': "In a sense, of course, it is also Ben's refusal to answer these questions that makes Gus sound annoyingly persistent. It is interesting, though, that although a more adult participant might realize that Ben is deliberately avoiding involvement, Gus refuses to give way" (Burton, 87). In *The Homecoming*, it is obvious that Max, although the parent, occupies the inferior position; at Lenny's insistence, this is made apparent both to the audience and to Max himself. Not only does Lenny have no interest in pursuing conversation with his father, he also uses his seemingly apathetic silence and vocal abruptness as aggressive instruments of power which deny Max any authority. The 'realistic' manner in which the speaker is dependent upon the listener is described by Laver:

By conceding the initiative to the listener, to accept or reject the token (by replying or declining to reply) the speaker puts himself momentarily in the power of the listener ... the speaker asserts a claim to sociolinguistic solidarity with the listener. If the listener accepts the invitation he gives the speaker safe-conduct to enter his territory without making him suffer a counter-display of hostility. (qtd. in Burton, 21)⁷

It may be that Max is aware that Lenny (or any other 'listener') is "deliberately avoiding involvement", but it is an aspect or indication of his (losing) struggle to retain some position of power that he refuses to acknowledge it, thereby denying his listener the option or opportunity to escape the conversation. And when it is pathetically apparent that his traditional position of command is being challenged, Max, like Ben, resorts to threats of physical violence. Having lost the duologue with Lenny, Max exercises what remains of his power over Sam by exactly the same technique used on him by Lenny. Notably, Max engages in this verbal assault only after Lenny, who uses an interest in conversation with Sam as a further instrument of disempowering Max, has left.

Max. It's funny you never got married, isn't it? A man with all your gifts.
 Pause.

Isn't it? A man like you?

Sam. There's still time.

Max. Is there? (14)

The ability to control discourse is an evident strategy of power. In the relative non-action of Pinter's drama, characters assert themselves primarily through verbal display.

The wielding of language is clearly related to the manipulation of opponents, or victims, or prey. If it is true, as Hornby suggests, that in *The Homecoming* there is a "single, overriding objective, which forms a unifying principle for the playscript: 'to dominate'" (*Script* 181) and that this goal is attempted specifically through language, then Lenny certainly loses the struggle in his initial conversation with Ruth. His bid for control, attempted through sexually violent narratives presumably designed to attest to his aggressiveness and linguistic as well as physical potency, is countered by Ruth's challenge, "How did you know she was diseased?" (31). She abruptly invalidates Lenny's story, robbing it of its power or intention to shock and intimidate, and denying the storyteller his assumed superiority. The destabilizing of the narrative is also a deliberate (parodic) undermining of the drama's 'realism', another defamiliarizing effect that pulls us up short and makes us question what, exactly, is going on. Nonetheless, stylistic analysis provides plausible 'explanations'. A closely related example of disempowerment in *The Dumb Waiter* is cited by Burton as a technique used by Ben to discourage Gus's attempts at dialogue by making "it clear that he thinks they are foolish, unfounded, uninteresting, unclear or otherwise suspect as contributions to an orderly conversation" (Burton, 72):

Gus. I thought these sheets didn't look too bright. I thought they ponged a bit. I was too tired to notice when I got in this morning. Eh, that's taking a bit of a liberty isn't it? I don't want to share my bed-sheets. I told you things were going down the drain. I mean, we've always had clean sheets laid on up until now. I've noticed it.

Ben. How do you know those sheets weren't clean?

A less immediate rebuttal of a speaker's self-empowering or self-reassuring narrative occurs when the solidity of Max's marriage -- doubtful throughout *The Homecoming* -- is denied by Sam's "MacGregor had Jessie in the back of my cab as I drove them along" (78). And in *The Caretaker* even Aston is capable of destabilizing Davies's story with an unexpected question:

Davies. If only I could get down to Sidcup! I've been waiting for the weather to break. He's got my papers, this man I left them with, it's got it all down there, I could prove everything.

Aston. How long's he had them?

Davies. What?

Aston. How long's he had them?

Davies. Oh, must be . . . it was in the war . . . must be . . . about near on fifteen year ago. (20-21)

Whether Davies might have had an answer ready for "Who has your papers?" is of course hypothetical and unanswerable. The authenticity of his narrative is thrown into doubt, and, more importantly, power is shifted to the (skeptical) listener. The veracity of the exposition is practically insignificant since it cannot be determined. Hornby suggests that statements made by Pinter's characters be treated "as ammunition rather than as 'the truth'" (*Script* 181), for "the truth or the untruth of the exposition is simply irrelevant to the play, because in every case it simply exists as raw material for the character to use in pursuit of some tangible goal *in the present*" (180).

The 'facts' within or communicated by any dialogue are precarious. In her preface to the investigation of "the manner in which dialogue founds, or confounds, objective truth as the basis for social communication", Christie McDonald writes, "Dialogue 'inhibits' us daily" (xi). The 'realism' of 'everyday dialogue' often transgresses or transcends 'fact', concerning itself instead with the performance of discourse, be it physical, sexual, or dramatic. The point is made more simply by Robert Alter: "how a story is told always interacts with what is told in the story" (193). Though Alter is here discussing narration in the novel, I extend his criticism to the dialogic narration present in playtexts.

The bravura tales of violence that Lenny narrates in his first conversation with Ruth, then, like other linguistic 'performances' in *The Homecoming* (or in most drama) could be considered endomimetic and almost metadramatic: drama inside drama, and drama about drama, theatrical language representing and engrossed in performance. In Pinter's texts language is not only privileged over, but in conforming to Vannier's definition of 'theatre of language' is held up as, spectacle.

Well, this lady was very insistent and started taking liberties with me down under this arch, liberties which by any criterion I couldn't be expected to tolerate, the facts being what they were, so I clumped her one. It was on my mind at the time to do away with her, you know, to kill her [...] But . . . in the end I thought . . . Aaah, why go to all the bother . . . [...] So I just gave her another belt in the nose and a couple of turns of the boot and sort of left it at that. (30-31)

In a second instance almost immediately following, after revelling in the snow-shovelling that "just appealed to something inside [him] (32)" Lenny is imposed upon by an old lady to "give her a hand with her iron mangle" (32): "I had a good mind to give her a workover

there and then, but as I was feeling jubilant with the snow-clearing I just gave her a short-arm jab to the belly and jumped on a bus outside" (33). Whether or not their plots are realistic (the fortuitous appearance of the bus, for example, is a perfect bathetic ending to the 'heroic' encounter with an old lady and mangle), these speeches are startling in their own right; they are made more shocking by their apparently acontextual utterance (putting aside subtext for the moment, Lenny voluntarily and 'uninvitedly' offers up his stories) and by the disparate styles of discourse used in their narration. Lenny's deliberate use of discursively strategic shock tactics allows us to see his discourse as conforming to Hornby's partial definition of "the metadramatic experience for the audience [a]s one of unease, a dislocation of perception" (*Drama* 32). That his expositions cause uncertain critical reaction is shown, for example, by John Lahr's reference to Lenny's "specific fantasy of violence" (*Fourth Wall* 178), though we have no reason to suspect that Lenny is lying, and Taylor sees "no real hint in the text that we should take what is said on the matter at anything but its face value" (*Anger* 354). In support of the assertion of Lenny's discourse as performance Peter Hall explains of *The Homecoming*: "one of the fatal things to do in that jungle is to be honest or to be candid or sincere, because if you do you immediately become vulnerable. The characters destroy any sign of actual truth in each other" (*Casebook* 18). A skepticism toward language ensures that our distance from, or the gap between, the supposed event and its communication offers Lenny the freedom to experiment with language in its performative capacity. He pursues his (possible) intention of impressing his listener, perhaps though not necessarily through conveying a sense of the authenticity of his discourse -- the 'fact' of his actions -- as his casual depictions suggest that such scenes of cruelty are commonplace. The self-consciously related exposition suggests that Lenny's challenge to Ruth is not only performative but primarily discursive: his talent lies in his ability and willingness to narrate a story and (re)construct its events, rather than in his participation in the violence. His discourse resembles but does not explicitly announce itself as the type of postmodern fiction that Linda Hutcheon labels "historiographic metafiction" which "self-consciously problematizes the making of fiction and history"⁸: "Its irony and use of paradox signal a critical distance within this world of representations, prompting questions not about 'the' truth, but 'whose' truth prevails. The political effect of this fiction therefore lies in the double action by which it inscribes and intervenes in a given discursive order" (229). While this definition is obviously intended for a much broader application, I think it is useful in suggesting the tactics and poetics of Lenny's discourse or of Pinter's dialogue -- discourse and dialogue that we presume represents 'the real' despite its being (often openly) presentational.

Lenny shifts from the removed, artificial expressions of the reporter-fabulizer to immediate, onomatopoeic suggestions of one directly involved in the action. At once above and yet completely active in the events, Lenny's account of his unwillingness to "subscribe" to a "certain proposal" is related in a mixture of language -- formal and colloquial, or 'literary' and 'everyday' -- that invites us to ponder which, if any, of the styles renders the tale most believable or whether both styles provoke disbelief. Though his presentation does not consist of "two sharply distinguishable layers of performance" (Hornby, *Drama* 35), Lenny's overtly theatrical discourse, like the theatrical dialogue in "The Mousetrap" endoplay in *Hamlet*, functions as a framing device intended to promote, but in fact calling into question, the realism of the action and of the discourse. Madelaine Doran notes of "The Murder of Gonzago" "the sharp differentiation between the styles of the play within the play and the play itself. The conspicuous artfulness of the one enhances the seeming naturalness of the other" (35). Winnie's classical echoes in *Happy Days* constitute the most obvious example of the use of conscious theatricalism (recognizably artificial language) to show up and authenticate 'real' (everyday) dialogue: "Oh fleeting joys -- [lips] -- oh something lasting woe" (4); "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" (11); "laughing wild . . . something something laughing wild amid severest woe" (13); "Hail holy light" (23); "Eyes on my eyes. [Pause.] What is that unforgettable line?" (23). As Felperin writes, "all poetry, not just classical poetry -- is always a dead language in so far as it is a self-contained system operating by conventions of form that have no immediate connection with the human and living present" (36). Of course such echoing -- "That is what I find so wonderful, a part remains, of one's classics, to help one through the day" (*Happy Days* 27) -- can also have the opposite effect, where we note the 'realism' not of the everyday, but of the poetic utterance as 'truth', and where we acknowledge Kennedy's warning that "we must bear in mind the risk that 'normal' speech -- supposing we accept the concept of linguistic norms -- may come to be exhausted for the purposes of drama, may come to be heard as banal or inauthentic" (*Six Dramatists* 25).

It seems likely that the 'theatrical' is deliberately inserted to suggest the 'everyday realism' with which it is juxtaposed, and we are made aware of the "dichotomy between conventional, clichéd language and experimental linguistic forms [here, 'theatrical' discourse] that dislodge those clichés" (Bürger, viii). The raw, unembellished force of the side of Lenny's account that uses such words as "clumped", "belt", "boot", "jab", may not bring the report closer to the 'real' -- to the event it describes -- than the mannered discourse that uses terms like "criterion" and "jubilant". It is possible that the more clearly

imitative descriptives relate the event more 'theatrically', rendering the action 'artificial', 'unrealistic'. The problem lies in deciding which is the 'theatrical' or 'artificial' element of Lenny's speech that renders the other aspect more authentic, an unanswerable query if Lenny is, as he appears to be, the "stylemonger" that Kennedy sees him as: both discourses would then be affected or mannered, and our uncertainty about the 'reality' of either discourse a calculated Pinteresque effect. Since we are informed by and borrow from a variety of linguistic influences -- we are, according to Bakhtin, "polyglot" -- it may be the tension or play between 'everyday' or 'street' language and more traditionally dramatic or 'standard' discourse that creates 'realistic' dialogue. The more eloquent rhetoric does not function only as counterpoint to the colloquial: it offsets, complements, defines, and creates it. The juxtaposition of levels of discourse -- "sparkling dialogue [treated] in a spirit of realism" ⁹ -- is usually regarded as a major characteristic of 17th-century comedy of manners; in "Pinter's Hideous Comedy" Margaret Croyden compares *The Homecoming* with this tradition:

By confronting and reversing the comedy of manners technique, Pinter shows to what extent the modern middle-class family use manners as ritual and as guises for other things. Pinter starts with language. He converts high comedy "aristocratic" prose into low-comedy middle-class rhythms; then he reverses the ambiance: instead of an upper-class drawing room, he depicts a middle-class parlor; and instead of romanticizing the conventional "gay couple", he presents the calculating "shrewd couple". In all cases, he retains the amusing verbal banter as the foundation of the action. (*Casebook* 50).

Felperin discloses the use of foils as a 'classical' strategy of 'realism' as he quotes *I Henry IV*: "Realism is always a relative matter. Like Prince Hal's reformation, it works by foils and 'Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes / Than that which hath no foil to set it off'" (152). Interestingly, the multi-level discourses of Shakespeare and Pinter deny an assertion of Bakhtin's, that

[t]he whole concept of a dramatic action, as that which resolves all dialogic oppositions, is purely monologic. A true multiplicity of levels would destroy drama, because dramatic action, relying as it does upon the unity of the world, could not link those two levels together or resolve them. In drama, it is impossible to combine several integral fields of vision in a unity that encompasses and stands above them all, because the structure of drama offers no support for such a unity. (*Dostoevsky* 17)

The idea of 'realism by contrast' can be applied broadly to Pinter's drama, extending beyond specific linguistic examples to incorporate major stylistic 'events' occurring in most of his plays -- that is, instances where unexpected behaviour or discourse

is superimposed on a surface of 'normality', thereby rendering the 'unusual' that much more fantastic and disorienting. Striking instances of verbal aggression occur (as displays of power, I would argue) in the outbursts by Lenny in *The Homecoming*, from Mick in *The Caretaker*, in the reported verbal attack on Davies by the monk in the same play, and in the literally incredible (again, reported) display by Riley in *Family Voices*. In all cases, imposed upon or juxtaposed with the mundane or clichéd is an extraordinary and often mysterious narration (or occasional exhibition) of violence. Fooled by the appearance of realism, we are persuaded that there is more going on than meets the eye in the absurdity of eruptions such as Mick's diatribe to Davies on the cost of leasing the flat, and his concluding question to him: "Who do you bank with?" (36).

Like Lenny, Mick exercises control by manipulating language. *The Caretaker* is another Pinter play in which violence is associated with virility (Aston rescues Davies at the café: "If you hadn't come out and stopped that Scotch git I'd be inside the hospital now. I'd have cracked my head on that pavement if he'd have landed", 10), though Mick's assertions of power, with the exception of his menacing vacuuming display, tend to be linguistic rather than physical. He threatens Davies by speaking to him precisely at Davies's own level. Mick establishes himself as the superior speaker by proving his right to the room, and repeatedly questions the identity and intentions of this stranger, thereby making Davies a victim of his own race-phobia:

Mick.	You a foreigner?
Davies.	No.
Mick.	Born and bred in the British Isles?
Davies.	I was!
Mick.	What did they teach you? (33)
.....	
	You intending to settle down here? (34)

Mick makes it known to Davies that he is suspected as an intruder and a threat, leaving Davies to deny his trespass: "I was brought here!" (34). (Only when he feels his own position is more secure, and perhaps to reinforce it, does Davies resume his racist discourse.) The technique that Mick uses in identifying and securing his 'aboriginality' is to verbally and meticulously map out the neighborhood (32): carefully naming specific

locations with an abundance of circumstantial detail tends to authenticate Mick's account and thereby entrench his position of power. He exploits the same method of establishing credibility in assuring Davies that "You remind me of my uncle's brother" (31) as he pours forth 'facts' about the man he "called Sid". (Lenny's method in *The Homecoming* is the same: details are brought in to make his stories more believable, as when later in the play he coaches Joey in the narration of violence, carefully pointing out the circumstantial detail that Joey has omitted, 67-68.) There are times when Davies likewise insists on specificity, presumably to bolster the plausibility of his speech: his papers are at Sidcup; he was unable to get shoes from a monastery in Luton, though a friend in Shepherd's Bush can supply him with soap, and he should be able to get a job at a café in Wembley. Details that should make the stories more likely, however, are interspersed with a persistent vagueness that undermines their credibility. Of his papers, for example, Davies 'explains', "A man I know has got them. I left them with him" (20). But it is not that Davies is holding out on us: he has given us too much information, not too little. He could easily have said that his papers are simply "in Sidcup", but by offering the extra "a man I know has got them" he arouses our suspicions about the existence or role of this now mysterious man.

But physical force or verbal aggression are not the only means by which power is deployed in Pinter. In *The Birthday Party*, Goldberg's discourse seems a constant attempt to justify or validate his position, to add credibility and thereby power to his own character; likewise Max in *The Homecoming* is so anxious that his narrative be regarded or held up as truth -- 'this is the way it really was' -- that we seem to be prompted to doubt its credibility. It is therefore not only the manner in which the histories are disclosed that affects their reception: the content of the speech is also telling. Generally, though with exceptions, the disempowered speaker's is not a bravura tale of the past. Compare, for example, the braggadocio of Max's or Lenny's accounts (both are actually unsuccessful means of validating and maintaining authority) with Ruth's reminiscences, or Goldberg's with McCann's. Goldberg's dismissal of McCann's remembrance of Carrikmacross is the ultimate assertion of his power: McCann loses his past to Goldberg's superior reminiscences. For Pinter's characters the (subjectively constructed) past informs and pervades the present. Digressions become text; they do not suspend the narrative, but compose it. In *The Birthday Party* in particular, almost every character (Petey being the possible exception) is snug in his or her own little world which they memorially reconstruct: Meg's and Lulu's childhood, McCann's days (and nights) at Mother Nolan's,

Goldberg's boyhood and later role as husband, and, as mentioned, Stanley's debut as pianist. But the ways in which these pasts are (re-)presented are distinctive.

Meg refers to her childhood in acontextual snippets of dialogue that are interspersed, though unconnected, with speech of the other characters:

Meg. (*to McCann*). My father was going to take me to Ireland once. But then
he went away by himself.

Lulu (*to Goldberg*). Do you think you knew me when I was a little girl?

Goldberg. Were you a nice little girl?

Lulu. I was.

Meg. I don't know if he went to Ireland.

Goldberg. Maybe I played piggy-back with you.

Lulu. Maybe you did.

Meg. He didn't take me. (59-60)

Although McCann eventually asks Meg why her father didn't take her to Ireland (attempting to break through the Absurdist insistence on non-communication and isolation), the question is never answered: Meg has progressed (or regressed) to another memory. This 'conversation' between McCann and Meg, Goldberg and Lulu, is a quasi-quartet of four intersecting monologues similar to the Chekhovian discourse discussed in Chapter One. In what might seem a thwarting of realism, Pinter exposes dialogue as an often ineffective and mismanaged vehicle of communication; the speaker's real interest is with his or her own discourse, own memories, own reality, often admitting no other.

McCann. I know a place. Roscrea. Mother Nolan's.

Meg. There was a night-light in my room, when I was a little girl.

McCann. One time I stayed there all night with the boys. Singing and
drinking all night.

Meg. And my Nanny used to sit up with me, and sing songs to me.

McCann. And a plate of fry in the morning. Now where am I?

Meg. My little room was pink. I had a pink carpet and pink curtains,
and I had musical boxes all over the room. And they played me
to sleep. And my father was a very big doctor. That's why I

never had any complaints. I was cared for, and I had little sisters and brothers in other rooms, all different colours.

McCann. Tullamore, where are you? (60)

McCann's similarly disjointed and fragmented speech, which is more typical of Pinter's female characters, confirms his subjugated position. The women's narratives usually are disjunctive; they are denied the more extended and extensive 'past' of their male counterparts. At the same time, however, their histories -- discontinuous excerpts that do not conform to the convention of either dialogue or monologue -- are not contained in or by structured passages of narrative. To say that the disempowered characters speak typically disjunctively seems simplistic, yet it is verifiable that language is employed as an instrument of power-- both in obtaining it and reflecting it. Goldberg, for example, is permitted reams of historical narrative, as are Max and Lenny in *The Homecoming*, and Hamm in *Endgame*. These characters invent or develop structured stories, and tell them as testimonies, reflections, and displays of control.

But though Goldberg as 'intruder' in *The Birthday Party* appears the most menacing character, he is not, contrary to the evidence just presented through his extended narratives, the most 'powerful'. That position, ironically, belongs to Meg. While her discontinuous dialogue is, as I have suggested, typical of disempowerment, her pedestrian discourse elsewhere in the play is employed to specific and deliberate effect. Through realistic speech, Meg acts her role of innocence while exercising the most insidious form of control in the play, a control more effective than Goldberg's rhetoric-disguised-as-realism because it is less conspicuously manipulative. As Miller points out, "The inscription of this power is not always easy to decipher, because, as has been noted, 'the most essential form of accommodation for the weak is to conceal what power they do have'" (348-49).¹¹ (Only in the clear separation between stage life and real life does Meg allow herself to dress up, to 'play games'.) McCann, too, is wary of anyone interfering -- "Mind that" -- with his carefully shredded newspaper (fragmented 'reality' or 'truth'). The fear of having one's pattern or ritual disrupted is experienced even by Goldberg, as his and McCann's interrogation of Stanley is broken up by McCann's accidental repetition of the word "animals". With this miscue, the rhythm of the text is noticeably interrupted, the momentum of and control over the discourse disturbed. Of course the cumulative effect of Goldberg's and McCann's obfuscating questions is the upsetting of 'reality', for both Stanley and the audience.

A less overt manner of controlling discourse and thus circumstances is shared by Meg (as mentioned earlier in a Beckettian context) and, less surprisingly, Ruth (*The Homecoming*). Of course Ruth's independence is evident from her arrival, in her apparent disregard for her husband's anxiety, and in her noncompliance with his nervous entreaties first that she go to bed and then that she accompany him upstairs rather than go for "a stroll" "at this time of night" (24). Lenny, as mentioned, is also anxious and inferior next to Ruth as she takes charge of their conversation and relationship in a simultaneously sexual and mothering way.

Lenny. And now perhaps I'll relieve you of your glass.

Ruth. I haven't quite finished.

Lenny. You've consumed quite enough, in my opinion.

Ruth. No, I haven't.

Lenny. Quite sufficient, in my own opinion.

Ruth. Not in mine, Leonard.

Pause.

Lenny. Don't call me that, please.

Ruth. Why not?

Lenny. That's the name my mother gave me.

Pause.

Just give me the glass.

Ruth. No.

Pause.

Lenny. I'll take it, then.

Ruth. If you take the glass . . . I'll take you. (33-34)

Ruth soon removes herself from the discourse and the room, leaving Lenny to impotently shout after her -- thus waking Max and provoking an argument with him -- "What was that supposed to be? Some kind of proposal?" (35). Ruth's speech seems less confident when she discusses her past:

Ruth. I was . . .

Max. What?

Pause.

What she say?

They all look at her.

Ruth. I was . . . different . . . when I met Teddy . . . first.

Teddy. No you weren't. You were the same.

Ruth. I wasn't. (50)

But in fact it is Teddy's over- yet hesitantly stated assurances of her success that suggest Ruth's frailty:

She's a great help to me over there. She's a wonderful wife and mother. She's a very popular woman. She's got lots of friends. It's a great life, at the University . . . you know . . . it's a very good life. We've got a lovely house . . . we've got all . . . we've got everything we want. It's a very stimulating environment. (50)

When allowed to speak for herself, Ruth clearly demonstrates her capabilities in manipulating even a 'philosophical' discussion. Her power is certainly not unconnected to the fact that she is the only female in a masculine household.

Look at me. I . . . move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear . . . underwear . . . which moves with me . . . it . . . captures your attention. Perhaps you misinterpret. The action is simple. It's a leg . . . moving. My lips move. Why don't you restrict . . . your observations to that? Perhaps the fact that they move is more significant . . . than the words which come through them. You must bear that . . . possibility . . . in mind. (52-53)

Her speech may be disjointed and its ellipses protracted, but Ruth commands the attention of her listeners, and her quiet control is eventually obvious as she sets the terms for employment.

Teddy's inability to intellectually defend life at his American university (see his failed -- or deliberately avoided -- discussion with Lenny that precedes and leads up to Ruth's intervention, 52) suggests to his audiences inside and outside the play that he is fantasizing -- though of course fantasizing is a common activity. When Ruth draws attention to her leg, underwear, lips, she empowers herself through erotic circumstantial

detail. As mentioned, in *The Caretaker* Mick overwhelms Davies with points of local geography. Circumstantial detail is an instrument of realism; whether or not it succeeds in convincing the listener of the 'reality' of the discourse, it is employed often with the intent of such persuasion. Yet in Pinter's drama, the abundance, minuteness, and acontextuality of detail point decisively to its ridiculousness or 'unreality', its inadequacy as a device promoting 'the real'. Pinter argues by illustration Barthes' objection to the versimilitude -- the 'thinginess' -- of the supposedly 'realistic' (the 'realistic' objects of the novel becoming the parodied mundaneness of dialogue). Frequently the transparency of circumstantial detail undermines its effectiveness. The volunteering of a small bit of information makes us want and demand to know more, and, in so asking, it is we who create the gaps and the mystery in Pinter's texts. Of course we do so at the invitation of the playwright, for as we distrust apparent facts because of their 'contrived' credibility, we realize that it is for precisely the same reason that we are suspicious of Pinter's portrayals: they are, for some critics, too 'realistic'. As many of Pinter's characters exploit techniques of realism in their narratives, Pinter uses the same methods in convincing us of the realism of his drama: he uses meticulous detail -- from speech patterns to subtle psychology to banal situations -- that remind us of the 'everyday'; he 'tells his stories' in fragments that we must piece together as we do postmodern narrative. He refuses to give into our desire for verifiability of the narratives of and within his drama. Coe (2) refers to Beckett's statement:

What is "abstraction", [Beckett] retorts, if not the ultimate degree of naturalism, or "realism", in the sense in which Ionesco, for instance, would argue that *he* is a realist: a realism which includes the unseen as well as the seen, the dream in addition to the waking vision, the artist as well as the canvas? "Total object, with missing parts," he argues, "instead of partial object. Question of degree."¹²

It is tempting to see Pinter's texts as containing a story or underlying narrative concealed at the core of the play, as if Pinter as omniscient narrator re-shapes the play-tale, fragmenting and distorting it as he re-tells it. The non-linear dialogue is of course perfectly suited to his plays. In postmodern fashion, Pinter "confounds conventional narrative sequence as an organizing principle" (Lyons, 108). When a Pinter production opens we are immediately in its midst, and struggling to find a way around or through it. As Pinter draws us into the 'chaos' we grope about for an edge to hold on to, even if that means 'creating' that edge, for "only fragments are to be observed, and the human intellect is obliged to deduce a reality from that partial observation" (Ghose, 136). But while the drama may be fragmented or not quite assembled, it is not totally formless. Pinter's characters create and react to their own realities, which we as audience must decipher for ourselves. In an

unavoidably circular manner, the audience both creates and reacts to the 'reality' of the play: we react to the play which we create, and in turn we create the play to which we react. Pinter deliberately provokes undecided response. As in Pirandello's *Six Characters*, the story is relayed in a series of non-cohering fragments which we as the audience must assemble in whatever way we see fit in order to satisfactorily complete the story. We are compelled to share or participate in the fiction and the event, to creatively insert ourselves into the text to impose meaning. As audience or as readers we are accustomed to some degree to filling in textual blanks,¹³ but in Pinter's drama the process becomes so extensive as to be noticeable; that is, we apprehend our role as 'co-author'.

Just as we suspect the authenticity of the discourse of his insistent story-tellers, so we distrust the apparent realism that Pinter persuasively stages. Pinter's work, even more than that of other so-called Absurdist (if indeed such a categorization usefully exists) prompts us to question at every turn the 'reality' that he *seems* to be portraying: it is the very 'realistic' nature of his plays, their almost self-labelled 'everydayness', that sparks or demands our (critical) attention. Pinter invites us to doubt what is presented by presenting it as though it were 'real', or more accurately, *as though* it were real. Where else but in a Pinter text would we suspect every object, utterance, and silence for its motivation, intent, or authenticity? In reading *The Homecoming* we scrutinize the wording of the stage directions before the dialogue commences: "[Max] wears an old cardigan and a cap, and carries a stick" (7) not, "Max walks with a stick", or "Max walks with a cane". Every detail is (self)interrogated for potential improbability or invalidation that might lead to a clue as to what is *really* being (not) said (suggested, implied) as we look for "the drama behind the words" (Hornby, *Script* 179).

While our suspicion about Pinter's characters is provoked by the reactions of other characters (Lenny to Ruth, Stanley to Goldberg, Mick to Davies, Davies to Aston), once our distrust is aroused it becomes a disturbingly easy matter to justify and augment it through scrutinizing a character's speech. As shown above, such evidence is readily obtainable. As Eco puts it, "When you assume an attitude of suspicion, you overlook no clue" (381): "Any fact becomes important when it's connected to another. The connection challenges the perspective; it leads you to think that every detail of the world, every voice, every word written or spoken has more than its literal meaning, that it tells us of a Secret. The rule is simple: Suspect, only suspect" (Eco, 377-78). In *The Caretaker* Aston stimulates our distrust as he remarks on his Buddha: "Yes, I quite like it. Picked it up in a . . . in a shop" (17); and later: "I think I'll take a stroll down the road. A little . . . kind of

shop. Man there'd got a jig saw the other day. I quite liked the look of it" (24). If a character seems unsure of his discourse, we are doubly unsure. As we delve for subtext, we see characters being 'tripped up' (we know that Davies does make noise in his sleep, and that Aston is not "shy of work") no matter how innocent (banal, and 'realistic') the apparent contradiction. With Pinter's drama we suspect both what is and what is not said.

In *Family Voices*, a 'radio play' created in epistolary form, Voice 1, a young man, enacts exactly the role of an audience and especially the critics of Pinter's drama: he himself concocts the mystery, and then struggles to (re)solve it. (In creating the sense of mystery, it is helpful and only fitting that the narrator himself becomes mysterious -- and a fugitive: "Nobody knows your whereabouts. Nobody knows if you are alive or dead. Nobody can find you. Have you changed your name?" 16.) From what appear to be quite ordinary circumstances, Voice 1 constructs a scenario of intrigue into or for which we 'fall'. Again, the 'reality' is both invoked and (self)deconstructed as we are given not too little information, but too much. In the most obvious example of this technique, Voice 1 produces the impression of a situation of abnormality as he gives a blow-by-blow account of a fairly uneventful visit with Lady Withers and Jane that begins with the ominous, "Something has happened" (15). The meeting assumes a dream-like surreality as ordinary events are discoursed or 'signified' out of proportion. The incident itself is preceded by terms that mark the direction of the narrative -- "investigate", "discovery", "coincidence", "truth" (14) -- and the account is decorated with phrases like "One quick glance told me" (15). Voice 1 creates the sensation that he is composing or at least embellishing a story, an absurd mystery -- "I recalled that, in an earlier exchange between us, she had told me she wanted to be an acrobat" (16) -- starring himself as the detective who gathers (invents) the clues and the reporter who relays them. The abundance of circumstantial detail is combined with the speaker's insistence on the veracity of his text: "That I am convinced is the truth" (13), "I asked Mrs. Withers what the truth of this was" (14), "These are midnight thoughts, mother, although the time is ten twenty-three, precisely" (17). Voice 1's apparent interest in 'just the facts' presumes to give his narrative an objectivity, but of course this analytic uninvolvedness is betrayed by his selective reconstruction of events (the technique of magnifying the smallest detail to 'make it' significant, thus distorting the 'bigger picture') and by subjective give-aways such as his final musing on the reported appearance at his doorstep of two women claiming to be his mother and sister: "It interests me that my father wasn't bothered to make the trip" (18).

In *The Birthday Party*, Meg less obviously declares the authenticity of her discourse through repetition that convinces Petey and herself of her version of reality, or makes it 'real': 'This is how we will remember it'. The effect on the audience is to make the account *less* real, to cast doubt upon the 'reality' of what we have just seen. While repetition may be intended as emphatic, it is, as Cohn points out, characteristic of "insecure authors": she cites for example Hamm, who range[s] through repetitive devices, as [he] range[s] through rhetorical techniques" ("Words" 202). Meg's "it's true", like Goldberg's "it's a fact", makes us question, where we normally might not have, whether the discourse is indeed true. We become suspicious if we are made to feel that we are being convinced of something, or if a doubt is raised for us. We can go only by what is presented to us on the stage or in the text, what we see happen, what we hear said. While we cannot confirm or deny Goldberg's story, we were witness to the party, where Meg was not, really, "the belle of the ball". Like Goldberg, Meg writes her own version of events and distributes them as the 'facts' (insistence upon one's own reception/perception of reality as 'truth' is in itself 'realistic'). Meg has the last word on 'reality', its creation, its manipulation, and, importantly, its recordance (traditionally a male prerogative, just like 'storytelling'). Nothing -- no outside 'reality' -- can touch Meg. In *Waiting for Godot*, says Esslin, "the hope, the habit of hoping, that Godot might come after all is the last illusion that keeps Vladimir and Estragon from facing the human condition and themselves in the harsh light of fully conscious awareness" (59). This "passivity of illusion" (59) is what Meg suffers from, or employs in avoidance of suffering -- like Winnie, "not to know, not to know for sure, great mercy, all I ask" (*Happy Days* 24). Meg will admit only the knowledge that pleases her: Petey is instructed to read only "the nice bits" from the newspaper; Meg does not remember the drum being broken, and says that, anyway, the most important thing is that Stanley had it on his birthday, as she had wanted. She is conveniently absent during Stanley's departure. Of course, Petey is co-conspirator in sequestering Meg from the 'truth'. He reads to her the 'good news' of Lady Mary Splatt's new baby (Meg would have preferred a boy); he says the milk is not "off", as Stanley complains it is; he assures Meg that the drum can be replaced; and in the end, tells her that Stanley is still upstairs asleep. We suspect that Meg not only has some awareness of her seclusion from 'truth', but that that is the way she wants -- demands -- it. Unlike in Act I, Meg does not insist on going up to wake Stanley at the play's end.

From the strangely detailed information we are given on Pinter's characters -- through their own narration or through reported encounters -- we construct our own

theories about their ambiguous lives. In *Family Voices* the difficulty of the task arises not only from the distortion of specific and vague exposition by Voice 1, but also the contradictions within his narrative and between the three 'speakers'. The letters are separate but related, as specific discourse is coincidentally or accidentally overlapped, and we realize that the letters, if sent, are not getting through. Voice 1 claims not to know that his father is dead, despite the assurance from Voice 2 (presumably his mother) that "I wrote to you three months ago, telling you of your father's death. Did you receive my letter?" (13); and while Voice 1 apparently writes to his mother at length, she complains, "Why do you never write?" (12). Whether or not the compositions are intended for distribution is uncertain.

Pinter begins with and remains close to acceptable or plausible circumstance; if the drama were too 'unreal' we would not be proving and disproving its 'reality'. *Family Voices* is 'about' everyday circumstances; generally speaking, it is related in 'everyday' language, and it holds a subtext of 'everyday' issues (family strife and tensions). Yet in Pinteresque fashion it is bizarre (and that term may be equated with 'unrealistic'). *Family Voices'* segments present dialogue formalized through and transcribed into written text and translated (back) into a verbal medium which is then published as written (-to-be-spoken) text. We are given 'the story' from three different, literally disembodied perspectives (voices) -- faceless identities known only by number. The narratives -- thoughts 'set down' as potential dialogue -- are fragmented as they interrupt one another; Voice 1's story in particular becomes episodic as it is intruded upon by Voice 2's appeal for contact. The various contributions are disorienting because we are not being given a one-sided account, but are placed in the midst of a panoramic vision of 'reality' that changes as we turn to attend to and assimilate its distinct components and interpretations. The three voices are all in close conjunction, though not in conversation, with one another. Such realistic dialogic techniques work against the play's 'superficial reality'. Taylor writes, "In effect this is reality turned against itself, for showing something so closely, with such fanatical accuracy, makes it seem far less real and familiar than the conventional simplifications of our normal dilatory middle view" (*Anger* 343). As in Beckett's *Play* or certain group scenes already noted from Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Three Sisters*, the monologues are at once disconnected and intertwined; that is, each discourse is distinct but works as part of the 'whole' from which we try to deduce a plot or underlying narrative. The 'authenticity' of this polyphony is questioned as discontinuities are manifest not only in its structural fragmentation, but within single accounts as well. 'Reality' or 'veracity' is

further compromised in that the voices tend to rationalize themselves (to themselves), and are aimed at or performed for hypothetical audiences or intended listeners. Obviously there is no 'one' truth, or one constant perception of truth for any character. Reality changes from sentence to sentence, not merely from voice to voice or from time to time.

'Writing in' the blanks or reading between the lines of these letters is complicated not only by the possible time lapse between them -- the play's uncertain time frame -- but also by the fact that if dialogue is often censored, letters also lend themselves to censorship, or at least revision. To some degree the tone and content of the letters seem like realistic family correspondence -- Voice 1's contribution (his written voice) is cordial and pleasant yet informal: he writes of 'ordinary' subjects such as the weather and a concern for his mother's health. But his speech turns flippant, or even sinister, almost immediately with, "At the moment I am dead drunk" (9). With this announcement he momentarily oversteps the boundary of filial discourse. Such transgressions are committed carefully, through suggestion and innuendo most often manifest in contradiction. We wonder whether *Family Voices* is a correspondence, an epistolary novella, or an epistolary playlet? Can audiences receive a play by post -- reading other people's mail much as audiences for 'conventional' plays overhear characters' speech? The mystery of Pinter's theatre is constructed from contradiction and contrast in both the styles of discourse (its form, context, or mode of delivery) and its message or content.

Conflicting elements both within the 'monologues' (though strictly speaking each 'letter' has an addressee) and in the 'dialogue' (though the three voices do not engage with one another and we can only assume that the three speakers are related) work to destabilize and unsettle our perception of the characters and of the drama itself. So numerous are these 'irregularities' that even the slightest of them becomes (or rather is judged to be) significant. Contradictions include the blatant and admitted, as in the opening remarks of Voice 1: "At the moment I am dead drunk" (9); "When I said I was drunk I was of course making a joke. [...] You know I never touch alcohol" (10); "I have a drink with [Mrs. Withers] at lunchtime and another one at teatime and then take her for a couple in the evening at The Fishmongers Arms" (11). A character may 'change her story' (or her attitude) as Voice 2 does: "As your father grew closer to his death he spoke more and more of you, with tenderness and bewilderment" (14); "On his deathbed your father cursed you" (16). And differences occur, as has been suggested, between the versions of the 'story' as told by the various characters. These disagreements most often take the form of ironic insinuation, as when Voice 3 begins his 'letter' with, "It is you who have prayed for my

death" (24) and concludes with, "Lots of love, son. Keep up the good work" (24). Judging by the letters, which is the only material we have to go by, the son, if it is Voice 1, is not engaged in any type of "good work" to "keep up". Such barely subtextual accusations of neglect arise from all sides of the correspondence: Voice 2 most obviously expresses her resentment at being 'abandoned' as she shifts from concern to anger. Voice 1 offers repeated assurances of devotion -- "And so I shall end this letter to you, dear mother, with my love" (11) -- while making every effort, it seems, to overstate his improved condition away from her: "I took a seat. I took it and sat in it. I am in it. I will never leave it" (19). He constructs the narrative of his very agreeable life in Mrs. Withers's household -- of his life, that is, surrounded by prostitution, alcoholism, perversion, insanity, and the fear and suspicion of conspiracy. "Oh mother, I have found my home, my family. Little did I ever dream I could know such happiness" (20). While his manipulative discourse praises his surrogate mother -- "Sometimes she gives me a cuddle, as if she were my mother" (14) -- whom he looks after and pays attention to -- "She tells me I am her solace" (11) -- the intended irony of his speech is apparent: "But I haven't forgotten that I have a mother and that you are my mother" (14). The renowned baths in which he indulges are vulnerable to intruders -- Voice 1 is 'protected' from visitors by a pervert; he is later advised by a potential lunatic.

All of the speakers know how to 'play' each other, as family strife that cannot be verbalized in dialogue is enacted in writing as a kind of family therapy. Again, there is the conscious danger of too much being said, rather than too little, according to ideas of familial 'taboos' that dictate boundaries of discourse. The dysfunction of the family is thus implied rather than stated, through allusions to a past happy family life -- Voice 2 remembers the cheese sandwiches; Voice 3 writes of having had such a loving son; Voice 1 promises that memories of his childhood keep him company -- recollections that are undermined by intimations of a less perfect 'reality' that is evaded by being re-written, as even Mrs. Withers relates her incredible tale of her lover being "murdered because they didn't want us to know happiness" (21). While Pinter's characters share a propensity to 'write their own stories', they also have a tendency to reveal their fictionalizing through overstatement. As Ghose suggests, "My own reality is made bearable by the reality I posit for myself. I care less for what I am; and more for what I could become. The truth about my reality is mundane; but as a character in the fictions of myself I possess a fascinating complexity" (73).

Of course contrasts also exist within the discourse of a single speaker. As seen in *The Homecoming*, the juxtaposition of two distinct styles of language undermines the speaker's discourse and credibility. Voice 2 writes, "I have declared in my affidavit that you have never possessed any strength of character whatsoever and that you are palpably susceptible to even the most blatant form of flattery and blandishment. Women were your downfall, even as a nipper" (25). When seemingly realistic ('everyday') expression is combined with more affected language (as in Lenny's speeches discussed above), the narrator becomes untrustworthy: we tend to doubt the honesty of the discourse, to distrust the speaker's intent, to suspect manipulation and menace. If for no other reason, the discrepancy in linguistic or stylistic expression provides an opening or excuse for suspicion because it grabs our attention: the defamiliarizing effect encourages us to notice and to evaluate the realism of the speech. Extending this pattern of disparate discourse, we are more obviously aware of jargonic contradictions between the voices. While Voice 1 speculates on his father's 'disappearance' in a curiously mannered tone -- "That would be inexpressibly skittish a gesture, on his part" (26), Voice 2 counters with the very colloquial, "I've given you up as a very bad job" (26). The seeming pretense of performance in Voice 1's discourse as compared to the direct and simple speech of Voice 2 lends obvious credibility and sympathy to the latter. The absence of contrived speech marks Voice 2's discourse as authentic -- that is, unrehearsed and uncalculated -- and of course is realistic in the manner that Esslin describes: "If the dialogue in these plays consists of meaningless clichés and the mechanical, circular repetition of stereotyped phrases -- how many meaningless clichés and stereotyped phrases do we use in our day-to-day conversation?" ("Theatre" 323). The inability, or at least the reduced desire, of articulate or elaborate expression seems typical of moments of crisis, where clichéd discourse becomes a preferred means of expression in extraordinary situations when a character is at a loss for words -- "Words fail, there are times when even they fail" (*Happy Days* 10) -- or cannot express a thought in its own terms. As Williams explains, "Major human crises are resolved in silence, or are indicated by the slightest of commonplace gestures" (*Ibsen to Brecht* 104). Referring to the dialogue in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*, Ghose observes that characters are "incapable of using language in any real personal context. Language has become a collection of hackneyed quotations in their minds" (34). "The characters repeat similar old quotations, nursery rhymes, street songs, and other half-remembered fragments from an earlier time; but they do not commit themselves to a speech which would reveal themselves, they do not use a language which would expose their emotions" (35).

But the persistence and the insistence of clichéd expression -- repetition -- in *Family Voices* leads me to think that it has a greater function (at least a greater effect) than as a substitute for original expression. While Pinter exploits this tradition through assigning simplified speech to certain characters and contrasting that dialogue with utterances more obviously 'thought about', he also undermines the realism of the former by suggesting the menace of cliché. In *Family Voices*, once we realize the safety in cliché, it becomes threatening, for if it does not conceal, it also will not reveal. Cliché, writes Ghose, "gives people something to talk about without having to enter each other's lives" (37). This transformation can be most readily perceived in such speeches as Goldberg's and McCann's duet of menacing, rehearsed bafflegab that brings on (47-52) and completes (81-84) Stanley's collapse in *The Birthday Party*, or the old man's in *Family Voices*, as reported by Voice 1:

You know where you are? he said. You're in my room. It's not Euston station. Get me? It's a true oasis. This is the only room in this house where you can pick up a caravanserai to all points West. Compris? Comprene? Get me? Are you prepared to follow me down the mountain? Look at me. My name's Withers. I'm there or thereabouts. Follow? Embargo on all duff terminology. With me? Embargo on all things redundant. All areas in that connection verboten. You're in a diseaseridden land, boxer. Keep your weight on all the left feet you can lay your hands on. Keep dancing. The old foxtrot is the classical response but that's not the response I'm talking about. Nor am I talking about the other response. Up the slaves. Get me? This is a place of creatures, up and down stairs. Creatures of the rhythmic splits, the rhythmic sidesweeps, the rums and roulettes, the macaroni tatters, the dumplings in jam mayonnaise, a catapulting ordure of gross and ramshackle shenanigans, openended paraphernalia. Follow me? It all adds up. It's before you and behind you. I'm the only saviour of the grace you find yourself wanting in. Mind how you go. Look sharp. Get my drift? Don't let it get too mouldy. Watch the mould. Get the feel of it, sonny, get the density. Look at me. (20-21)

Ostensibly, putting the dialogue in understandable (familiar because repeated or common) terms is shorthand communication. But its insistent, perverse, or threatening repetition, intended to authenticate or at least make accessible the narrative, here serves to undermine the discourse. The apparently ordinary is, ironically, made extraordinary, the known becomes mysterious, the real becomes uncertain. Paradoxically, the words (and ideas behind them) are 'made strange' by being repeatedly restated in familiar terms.

[Sklovskij's] 'Making it strange' did not necessarily entail substituting the elaborate for the simple; it could mean just as well the reverse -- the use of the profane or earthy term instead of the learned or genteel one, provided that the latter represented in the given case the accepted usage. What mattered was not the direction of the 'semantic shift', but the very fact that such a shift had occurred, that a deviation from the norm had been made. (Erich, 178)

Thus a general truth becomes a particular lie as Pinter robs the text not only of its familiarity (and therefore acceptance as common discourse), but also of its meaning, "since commonplaces never present anything more than a mere semblance of meaning" (Vannier, 184). Vannier says of Ionesco, and I think the same can be said of Pinter though his strategy is more subtle, that the playwright "is attacking a clearly defined language: a language made up of clichés and ready-made formulas, which is that of an alienated society, and is ours also insofar as we belong to that society and insofar as the stupidity which it secretes, whatever our efforts to free ourselves from it, contaminates all our daily behavior" (182). Vannier adds that the purpose of this method of writing 'hollow' language "where meanings are devoured by signs" (183) "is never to take away the sense from a pre-existing language, but to oblige it to betray to us by itself its own absurdity" (183). Using familiarized discourse in an extraordinary setting also, of course, makes the situation that much more eerie -- unsettling in its uncertainty. In *Family Voices* Voice 3 attempts to create a believable though unlikely 'reality':

Well, that is not entirely true, not entirely the case. I'm lying. I'm leading you up the garden path, I'm playing about, I'm having my bit of fun, that's what. Because I am dead. As dead as a doornail. I'm writing to you from my grave. A quick word for old time's sake. Just to keep in touch. An old hullo out of the dark. A last kiss from Dad. (24)

Voice 1 is disturbed by the old man who speaks, as does Voice 3 (or Voice 1's remembrance of Voice 3) in clichés. By the conclusion of the play Voice 1 is also speaking (at least reporting) in clichés; he has adopted the menace that now becomes exclusionary toward the old man who "calls me nothing. I call him nothing" (25). The rest of the household is apparently more garrulous:

Good morning, Bobo, they say, or See you in the morning, Bobo, or, Don't drop a goolie, Bobo, or, Don't forget the diver, Bobo, or, Keep your eye on the ball, Bobo, or Keep this side of the tramlines, Bobo, or, How's the lead in your pencil, Bobo, or, How's tricks in the sticks, Bobo, or, Don't get too much gum in your gumboots, Bobo. (25)

The precariousness of assigning any interpretations to Pinter's drama or to actions of individual characters is evident if only by the fact that we do not even know or cannot be sure of a character's identity: as in *Waiting for Godot*, where Vladimir (Didi) responds to the Boy's "Mister Albert...?" (32); in *The Birthday Party* Goldberg (Nat) is also called Simey -- but "NEVER" by McCann; McCann is referred to as Dermot by Goldberg, who is taken by surprise -- "(sharply) Who?" -- when Petey uses that name; and Stanley (Webber) gives his name, although under duress, as "Joe Soap". In *The Homecoming* there is an

urgency to re-name Ruth; in *The Caretaker* Davies goes by the assumed name of Jenkins; and in *Family Voices* the question of identity is pondered by Voice 1, known later ("They have decided on a name for me", 25) as Bobo:

Is Lady Withers Jane's mother or sister?

If either is the case why isn't Jane called Lady Jane Withers? Or perhaps she is. Or perhaps neither is the case? Or perhaps Mrs. Withers is actually the Honourable Mrs. Withers? But if that is the case what does that make Mr. Withers? And which Withers is he anyway? I mean what relation is he to the rest of the Witherses? And who is Riley? (23).

This "unverifiability" that characterizes Pinter's drama has been singled out and discussed endlessly as an integral aspect of his 'realism'. His refusal to explain the unexplainable -- because unknowable -- is a frustrating and potentially alienating strategy that Pinter himself insists is realistic:

I suggest there can be no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false. A character on the stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experience, his present behaviour or his aspirations, nor give a comprehensive analysis of his motives is as legitimate and as worthy of attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all these things. The more acute the experience the less articulate its expression. (11)

Pinter does not reduce his plays by engaging in the (impossible) struggle of depicting the (even 'a') 'truth' or 'reality': in presenting 'only so much', he opens up and insists upon the plurality of meaning (and of 'truth', and of 'reality'). Pinter may hint at 'underlying meanings' through the strangeness or uncertainty of his drama, but his plays are not so Absurd (and this is in part the result of their apparent banality) that we as audience are completely left out of understanding or attempting to decipher them. That we are able to comprehend his plays at all, even enough to guess at what we think they might be saying, and to individualize or personalize the drama through our own response to it, marks Pinter's drama as (democratically) distinct from that of, for example, Ionesco, where we might concede our inability to 'get' what we might be more likely to see as 'single' (because inaccessible) 'meaning' or 'message' that the play holds just beyond our grasp. Pinter does not limit his texts or our reception of them by any adherence to or suggestion of Ionesco's statement that "a work of art is the expression of an incommunicable reality that one tries to communicate -- and which sometimes can be communicated. That is its paradox and its truth" (Esslin, 130)¹⁵.

Hornby warns of *The Homecoming* that "nothing could be worse in production than to take this Naturalistic facade seriously" (*Script* 176). He cites Max's bizarre account of the 'family history' in which he refers to having experienced "the pain of childbirth", and Lenny's convincing (because 'elaborate') musing on not having been 'a soldier in the last war': "We are made to realize something that rarely occurs to us in watching Ibsen, which is that every bit of offstage detail could be wrong; the character in making his description could always be mistaken, or confused, or lying, or distorting the truth for his own purpose. The concrete, banal quality of the offstage world is only an illusion" (177). Taylor illustrates the uncertainty about Pinter's playworld as he refers to Teddy having arrived "*allegedly* from America with a woman he *alleges* to be his wife and talking about three children and a good job teaching philosophy at a university", and wonders whether "he is in fact telling the truth, or whether it is just a convenient fantasy in which he may even believe himself" (*Anger* 353-4, *emphases mine*). Such skepticism is similar to Brown's distrust of exposition in *The Caretaker*, where "actions and speech...often sound factual when they are not. (The clearest example is Aston's long speech about his experience in a mental hospital at the end of Act Two.)" (*Theatre Language* 103). The same critic also refers to "Stanley's fantasy about playing in a concert" (49) in *The Birthday Party*. Lahr concludes that "Pinter constructs a situation where fantasy has the weight of fact; and fact has the metaphoric potential of fantasy. ... The 'subjective' world and the 'real' are not simply confused; they are combined" (*Fourth Wall* 189). It is this blurring of realities that bewilders an audience: the unreal becomes real as metaphor is concretized or treated as reality; the real becomes unreal as it is metaphORIZED.

In *Family Voices* the father 'writing' and 'watching' from the "glassy grave", for example, seems a metaphor, though he is treated by the playwright as real -- he is given a voice. Voice 3 was presumably once a 'reality' that has become a persistent metaphor, perhaps a fictional construction of either of the speakers -- whoever's story is being told -- whose existence and demise have not been resolved. Though he seems an afterthought (by Voice 1 and Voice 2, 13-14, and his place in the text, 18, 26), Voice 3 actually governs and controls the drama, as the family tensions that incorporate or revolve around the father haunt the texts. This posthumous contribution literally reflects the Death of the Author, and in so doing serves as metaphor for Pinter's "impossibility-of-verification theme" (Diamond, "Parody Play" 486). Determined to reconstruct from the fragments a plausible if not 'truthful' narrative, to find the 'disguised reality' behind the metaphor, we end up searching for clues to tell us what the barking dog signifies, and evaluating the 'realism' of

a dead man's language. Did Jane really catch the bun with her toes? Was there even such a meeting? So much of the play deals with fantasy, or with contrived or manipulating discourse, that we cannot tell for sure what, if anything, is real; we doubt even the ordinary. It may be that Mrs. Withers's house does not have a bathtub. It is the layering of realities that propels Pinter's drama, and each layer opposes the one that came before as it is opposed by that which comes next. Part of our confusion lies in a temptation to 'read' the play as poem, as metaphors -- to translate and reduce Pinter's ambiguities -- and in trying to distinguish metaphor from reality without realizing that each incorporates aspects, even essences, of the other, and that neither is absolute.

Since no one, not the characters, the audience, or the playwright, knows what the 'reality' of or behind the text is -- Brown observes the onus on actors to create a "subtextual reality" (*Theatre Language* 31) -- any attempt to describe, discuss, portray, or evaluate it may be regarded as pointless, and we are left at the impasse that Pirandello and Ionesco illuminate in their theatre: that we can know neither ourselves nor one another; that reality is indistinguishable, because inseparable, from illusion; that there is no 'truth' to be discovered. This doctrine leaves us to pursue 'essence' or some elusive quality, ironically, I think, alluded to in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* as "less real perhaps, but nearer the truth" (*Three Plays* 78). And it is precisely this entity that, Pinter's texts argue, cannot be determined, or at least cannot be 'fixed'. Pinter gives us the appearance of reality because that is all we can be given (thus Lahr's comment on the 'true to life' obscurity in which Pinter's drama "seems elusive where it is merely being realistic; it refuses to offer up experience to the audience from one point of view", *Fourth Wall* 181). But rather than see this condition as a limitation on the study of his texts, this caveat insists that we examine Pinter's plays on their own terms, on the apparent realism that they do achieve, and the techniques used to accomplish and then to cast doubt upon that illusion.

Critics may recognize the "the autonomy of the object world" in Pinter, in which "the audience experiences only what the characters do. They are privy to no extra information, no other choices. ... The character has no significance beyond what is presented on stage; he simply *exists*" (Lahr, *Fourth Wall* 188-89), but there is still the tendency to construct meaning in and for the drama. From Lahr's comments we would presume that he automatically distrusts, or at least does not buy into any of the characters' narrations, though in practice his doubts are selective: not only does he assign psychological motivation to characters -- "Hating women and fearing them, [Max] lives in a perpetual state of siege and yet longs for contact" (*Fourth Wall* 181) -- but he also supposes

authorial intent -- "Pinter does not intend [Ruth] to be a whore" (181) (Esslin, interestingly, labels Ruth "a nymphomaniac, as she is clearly shown to be", 256). I single out inconsistencies in criticism of Pinter to illustrate the seemingly inescapable urges of spectators to adjudicate or create their own versions of the 'reality' staged in his plays. (Obviously this study is no exception.) Taylor also realizes that "the probability of what happens, indeed, is never at issue: it is clear from the outset that this is a private world we have been permitted to enter, and as such, whatever relations with any outside world of objective reality we may imagine we perceive, it has its own consistency and carries its own conviction" (*Anger* 335). But this statement does not prevent him from inferring or interpolating motive and meaning in Pinter's work. Each interpretation is made on the grounds and from the position of what is familiar and therefore plausible to the critic; one imposes one's own reality on the play, appropriating the stage action to fit in with one's view of its meaning. Lahr compares this relationship between audience and the play with

the effect of spectators entering a room of minimal sculpture. Speaking of "literalist" (minimal) art, art critic Michael Fried has discussed sculpture as theater:

The beholder is confronted by a literalist work within a situation that he experiences as *his* ... The work in question exists for him alone, even if he is not actually alone with the work at the time ... Someone has merely to enter the room in which the literalist work has been placed to *become* the beholder, that audience of one, almost as though the work in question had been *waiting for him* ... And once he is in the room the work refuses obstinately to let him alone -- which is to say, it refuses to stop confronting him, distancing him, isolating him... (*Fourth Wall* 67)¹⁶

The propensity to interpret Pinter's plays, or more correctly, to project an interpretation on to Pinter's plays, not only points to our realization of "the frailty of the conventions of appearance upon which everyday life is based" (Taylor, *Casebook* 59), but of course suggests the playwright's success in seducing an audience into accepting that there is in fact an underlying reality to be discovered: the surface realism is sufficiently convincing that we are tempted to subscribe to Cardullo's statement that "Pinter has seduced us with the mask of realism, then shocked us with the face of reality" (74). But with Pinter such evaluations or filling in of the blanks are always tentative and undeniably subjective (hence the abundance of critical assessments involving words like "implied" and "presumed"). That any interpretation of his work is theoretical is stated by Pinter himself:

Who are we to say that this happens because that happened, that one thing is the consequence of another? How do we know? What reason have we to suppose that life is so neat and tidy? The most we know for sure is that the things which

have happened have happened in a certain order: any connections we think we see, or choose to make, are pure guesswork. Life is much more mysterious than plays make it out to be. And it is this mystery which fascinates me.

(qtd. in Cardullo, 72)¹⁷

Pinter at once suggests, only to deny, the 'authenticity' of his theatre. Through deliberate 'flaws' in the realism of his drama, he undermines or deconstructs the whole notion of reality and its (re)presentation. From the amplification of the trivial and the 'passing over' of the extraordinary, to the unverifiability of his drama, to specific "mannerist"¹⁸ techniques that Kennedy sees as "a too-muchness on the surface" (*Six Dramatists* 187), Pinter's drama is deceptively realistic. While it persuades the audience, through language which is convincingly ordinary or everyday, of its 'truth to life', it simultaneously arouses our suspicions of its realism, ironically, both through the deliberate strangeness that invades the stage and through the 'excessiveness' of the 'realism' itself. But of course this disruption of the 'illusion of reality' that would otherwise be achieved points to the inadequacy -- the absurdity -- of portraying 'reality' on stage. In order to displace realism, Pinter enters into the convention and subverts it from within, just as "[Shakespeare] invalidates older modes even as he includes them, supersedes them, in the very act of subsuming them" (Felperin, 60). Alison Lee argues, "To deconstruct a text or discourse is to show how it undermines the 'philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed grounds of argument, the key concept or premise'" (Lee, 27).²⁰ Ironically, in repudiating not only the convention but the notion of realism, Pinter is celebrated as a realistic (or mimetic or modern) playwright. That situations and dialogue in subsequent drama, however, are now labelled Pinteresque points to the acceptance of his own theatre as convention. And so continues

[t]his restless dialectic between convention and the repudiation of convention in the name of reality, between imitation and innovation, [which] may thus be seen as the basis of literary history, since these fluctuations can be traced not only within Shakespeare's plays but in relation to the drama that precedes and follows them, the drama they inscribe and the drama that inscribes them.

(Felperin, 10)

Notes

¹ John Lahr, for example, writes that "the silences emphasize the element of perception. The characters are making decisions, weighing the balance, as the action is in the process of unfolding. These are *active* silences underscoring the intense inner life of Pinter's drama" (*Fourth Wall* 186); Martin Esslin suggests that "[Pinter] registers the delayed-action effect resulting from differences in the speed of thinking between people-- the slower-witted character is constantly replying to the penultimate question while the faster one is already two jumps ahead" (243). Kane delineates several functions of Pinter's silences: "a metaphor for isolation", "a metaphor for absence" (140), and a technique used to "intensify the impression of stasis" (136).

² Harold Pinter, interview with Kenneth Tynan, B.B.C. Home Service, 28 October 1960.

³ With these points of reference in mind, Keir Elam's rules for dramatic exchange that would seem to contradict Pinteresque dialogue are still valid: "the same dialogue must be re-utterable in a potentially unlimited number of performances, a factor that serves to distinguish the dramatic exchange from the often hesitant, inconclusive, reiterative and discordant progress of our 'natural' talk, with all its false starts, fillers, re-thinks, non-sentences and the like" (187).

⁴ S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1952) 70.

⁵ John Laver, "Communicative Functions in Phatic Communion," *Work in Progress* 7, (Department of Linguistics, U of Edinburgh, 1974) 1-18.

⁶ Austin Quigley, *The Pinter Problem* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1969) N. pag.

⁷ John Laver, "Communicative Functions".

⁸ Introduction to Linda Hutcheon's "Telling Stories: Fiction and History," *Modernism/Postmodernism* 229.

⁹ Joseph Wood Krutch, *Comedy and Conscience After the Restoration* (New York: Columbia UP, 1961) 9. Krutch's definition of comedy of manners is on pp. 6-9.

¹⁰ Corrigan says that playwrights like Beckett and Ionesco "share the conviction that the theatre must express the senselessness and irrationality of all human actions. They believe the theatre must confront audiences with that sense of isolation, the sense of man's being encircled in a void, which is an irremediable part of the human condition. In such a universe communication with others is almost impossible, and the language of these plays is symptomatic of their authors' belief in man's inability to communicate and express his basic thoughts and feelings" (253-54).

¹¹ Miller cites Barbara B. Watson, "On Power and the Literary Text," *Signs* 1 (Fall 1975): 113.

¹² Coe writes, "In 1949, however, for the first and last time [Beckett] broke this silence, and published in Eugene Jolas' perennially *avant-garde* review, *Transition*, a series of three 'Dialogues' with the French art critic Georges Duthuit. *Transition Forty-Nine*, No. 5 (97-103)".

¹³ See Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974. And *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.

¹⁴ In *Just Play* Cohn provides an exhaustive analysis of Beckett's varied use of repetition, including characters, gestures, props, and, of course words: from "simple doublets" to "echo doublets,

pounders to volleys, and monosemic and polysemic refrains". (See in particular her chapter, "The Churn of Stale Words: Repetition" 96-142). In "Words Working Overtime", Cohn sees simple doublets in *Endgame* and *No Man's Land* as mimetic of 'everyday speech' (195).

15 Eugène Ionesco, 'The Playwright's Role', *Observer*, 29 June 1958, N. pag.

16 Michael Fried, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*. ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968) 140.

17 From John Russell Taylor, "Accident," *Sight and Sound* 35.4 (1966): 84.

18 Cohn also sees evidence of "mannerism" in Pinter's drama: "the artifice of his dialogue soon distinguished his plays as deviants from realism. ...Pinter's characters jockey with an infra-language lying below the telling rhythms that we hear. At first mistakenly admired for a tape-recorder ear, Pinter is now recognized as a master-stylist, whose stripped dialogue has seeded the contemporary English comedy of manners, a genre that adheres to realistic tenets. With few exceptions, Pinter's plays present a realistic surface, for all the mystery at their core" (*Retreats from Realism* 8).

19 Evans feels that Pinter has created "a language which to a degree 'impersonates' the real, but which very often has its own ritual and rules, its own life" (171): "We begin to draw away from a confusion between Pinter's language and real speech when we learn that actors who have appeared in Pinter's plays do not find this confusion. ... Actors, time and time again, testify to the resemblance between a Pinter script and a piece of music; if anything is left out in the process of memorizing, its absence is felt like a vanished tooth" (169). He goes on to quote Hall on the resemblance between studying a Pinter text and learning to play Mozart; Hornby also makes the comparison between learning to deliver Pinter's lines and learning to play music, in specific terms of "tempo" (*Script into Performance*, 187-9).

20 Lee cites Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction* (Ithaca New York: Cornell UP, 1982) 86.

Conclusion

Oh sir, you know well that life is full of infinite absurdities, which, strangely enough, do not even need to appear plausible, since they are true.

(Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*)

The theatre's search for a 'true voice' has taken its writers from verse to poetic, even musical, prose; modern theatre has brought drama from the 'everyday language' of Naturalism to the so-called "self-conscious antinaturalism of avant-garde playwriting" (Lyons, 98). To look at a present-day playtext and discover in it dramatic techniques of the past is neither to undervalue the newer text nor to privilege the source from which those particular elements might have been derived. We occupy the position that we do -- whatever that position may be -- because of that which came before: whether we are trying to emulate, improve upon, retrieve, or dissent from the past, it is always present, even to postmodernists, in its absence. To acknowledge that the 'new' is never wholly original, that postmodernism is essentially (self)deluding, is not to present a nihilistic view of drama or of literature. The movement of literature through time, as Felperin explains, is inevitable, though its direction is un(pre)determined.

This study, as indicated, grew out of a provocative but not fully developed observation of A.D. Nuttall's -- that "discontinuous dialogue" can be found in Shakespeare as well as in Chekhov and that its presence in a play may help the play appear 'realistic'. I have surveyed a critical range from Bakhtin to Cohn, and found that there is still no definitive definition of realism. Commenting on the trends and perceptions of realism in dramatic dialogue Eric Bentley suggests that "traditionally, the playwrights have not worked with the language of the street, but with language as rendered more expressive by predecessors and colleagues in a specially eloquent medium that belongs, not to life, but to literature" (78). Language theory does not help us greatly in deciding what realism is. Barthes in "The Reality Effect", like many postmodern critics who take up his position, dismisses the concept of realism as being both erroneous and ideologically suspect (to postmodernists, not only presumptuous, but potentially oppressive). Critics who do address the realistic -- and more specifically, who apply the idea to dramatic dialogue -- are relatively few, and fewer still are those who touch on fragmented dialogues in drama. As argued above, the Absurdist critics do not account for broken dialogue. Neither do various generations of Realist critics. Nor do Bakhtinians/Carnivalists, who also (like Bakhtin himself) do not notice that Bakhtin's 'polyphony' theories *do* apply to drama as well as the novel. The plays I have analyzed are at least either polyphonic, or narrative, or both, and

therefore it is possible to link Bakhtinian theory with theatrical dialogue as well as with the theatrical spectacle to which it has too narrowly been applied. In drama, discontinuous dialogue is, as certain of the plays analyzed show, the speech of the disprivileged or the mad, or both -- the discourse of the Other(ed): in earlier texts the disempowered speaker is often senescent; in modern drama such as Pinter's, the dialogic paradigm is exploited -- subverted and possibly used to advantage -- by women. Discontinuous dialogue begins, presumably, as a comic device: the (prose) speech -- usually about trivial matters, and often disjointed or aimlessly protracted -- of the clown or 'low-life' character acts as counterpoint to the controlled and eloquent discourse, usually verse, of the hero. 'Naturalistic' playwrights such as Chekhov use discontinuous dialogue to enhance realism: pauses in conversation or in monologue plausibly represent a speaker's hesitation, as he or she contemplates -- or avoids -- the discourse. 'Writing silences', however, is a technique for inscribing communication and meaning that antedates Chekhov, for it is in Shakespeare and Middleton and Büchner. And just as subtext is present in Renaissance plays such as Shakespeare's, so too is the realistic device of fragmentation-as-spontaneity (the externalization of the internal voice) seen in Büchner as well as in modern drama. Discourse of avoidance is in Shakespeare's playtexts and in Pinter's.

In Beckett's and Pinter's theatre, disconnective 'monologues' become extended, contextualizing narrative: Pinter's technical roots probably are in Beckett, especially in the matter of digressions becoming text. We can only infer that Pinter might have learned from Chekhov, but can actually hear Deborah in *A Kind of Alaska* speak the rhythms of *Endgame*. Both Beckett and Pinter make "play-tales" through the use of insidious and fragmented narratives, to which the non-linear dialogue of their plays is uniquely suited. The ambiguous nature of these play-narratives -- a feature that is at once non-realistic in its performance aspect and 'true to life' in its unverifiability -- is enhanced by their circumstantial detail, which is *not* a device to persuade us the play is realistic, but in fact is there to subvert the 'truthfulness' of the tale-tellers. Overtly in Beckett and more subtly in Pinter, discontinuous dialogue becomes a strategy of anti-realism, denying, by defamiliarizing, the 'realism' of the text and the credibility of the speaker. In part, the sheer authenticity of such dialogue is turned against itself. Pinter shows us 'real life' by presenting it as representational, through simultaneously real and contrived dialogue. He seems to want us to see and hear the conscious representation that obviously lies behind or below the technique or veneer of non-representationality -- the artificial realism of his presentation of reality. A playwright writes for audiences, not for critics, and sets up with

that audience a direct negotiation that excludes the brokering critic. Pinter's negotiation with the audience is made in the consciousness of the presence of critics past and present. His playscripts are 'classical' in that they use, without pre- or intertextuality, techniques of earlier dramatists to denote 'realism'; they are 'realistic' in that they promote their reception as texts using 'everyday' dialogic convention; and they are (post)modern in that they are consciously subversive of the conventions, namely, the re-presentation of 'reality', that they employ.

Beckett and, to a greater degree, Pinter urge us as audience to question and speculate on the veracity of their drama (we are prompted to do so by the 'surface reality' in their plays, particularly Pinter's), but only with the strong suggestion that our speculations and constructions (construings) may be as wrong as the speculations of the on-stage characters. The openendedness of discontinuous dialogue is paradigmatic of the 'unfixability' of the playtexts that I explore. The playwrights in this thesis bring discontinuous dialogue to a high art, but no matter how skillful that art, all theatrical reality is only apparent reality, and the theatre itself undermines and deconstructs the whole notion of reality. In this context of theatrical 'realism', my study of playwrights' strategies and critics' readings persuades me that audiences are invited to create their own versions of the 'realities' on stage, and that critics impose their readings of reality on the playtexts both where these texts speak and where they are silent.

Works Consulted

Primary Sources

- Beckett, Samuel. *Endgame*. New York: Grove Press, 1958.
- . *Waiting for Godot*. New York: Grove Press, 1954.
- . *Happy Days*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- Büchner, Georg. *Woyzeck*. Trans. John Mackendrick. London: Eyre Methuen, 1979.
- Chekhov. *Chekhov: The Major Plays*. Trans. Ann Dunnigan. New York: Signet, 1964.
- Ionesco, Eugène. *Exit the King*. Trans. Donald Watson. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Middleton, Thomas, and William Rowley. *The Changeling*. Ed. Patricia Thomson. London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1964.
- Pinter, Harold. *The Birthday Party*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1959.
- . *The Caretaker*. London: Methuen, 1960.
- . *The Homecoming*. London: Methuen, 1965.
- . *Family Voices*. London: Next Editions, 1981.
- . *A Kind of Alaska*. *Harold Pinter, Plays: Four*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991. 305-342.
- . *A Slight Ache*. *Pinter, Plays: One*. London: Methuen, 1986. 167-200.
- . *The Examination*. *Pinter, Plays: One*. London: Methuen, 1986. 329-334.
- Pirandello, Luigi. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. *Pirandello: Three Plays*. Trans. John Linstrum. London: Methuen, 1985. 71-134.
- . *Naked Masks: Five Plays by Luigi Pirandello*. Ed. Eric Bentley. Trans. Edward Storer. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1952. 211-276.
- Shakespeare, William. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. *The Complete Works*. Ed. Alfred Harbage. New York: Viking Press, 1969.

Secondary Sources

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 5th Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988.
- Alter, Robert. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.
- Armstrong, Nancy, and Leonard Tennenhouse, eds. *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1953.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990.
- . *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Theory and History of Literature, Vol. 8. Ed. and Trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- Bal, Mieke. *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1987.
- Barber, C. L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom*. Cleveland and New York: Meridian, 1959.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Reality Effect." *French Literary Theory Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982. 11-17.
- . *The Rustle of Language*. Trans. Richard Howard. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1986. 141-148.
- Bassnett-McGuire, Susan. "An Introduction to Theatre Semiotics." *Theatre Quarterly* 10.38 (Summer 1980): 47-53.
- Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice*. London and New York: Routledge, 1980.
- Bennett, Susan. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Bentley, Eric. *The Life of the Drama*. New York: Atheneum, 1975.
- Black, James. "Anon, anon, sir: Discourse of Occasion in *Henry IV*." *Cahiers Elisabethains* 37 (April 1990): 27-42.
- Bogard, Travis, and William I. Oliver, eds. *Modern Drama: Essays in Criticism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1965.
- Boyd, John D. *The Function of Mimesis and Its Decline*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1968.
- Bradbury, Malcolm, and James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism 1890-1930*. New York: Penguin, 1976.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Ed. and trans. John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.
- . "The Popular and the Realistic." Reprinted in *Modernism/Postmodernism*. Ed. Peter Brooker. London and New York: Longman, 1992. 42-44.
- Bristol, Michael. *Carnival and Theatre: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England*. New York and London: Methuen, 1985.

- . "Carnival and the Institutions of Theatre in Elizabethan England." *ELH* 50 (1983): 637-654.
- Brown, John Russell. *Theatre Language*. London: Penguin, 1972.
- . "The Nature of Speech in Shakespeare's Plays." *Shakespeare and the Sense of Performance*. Ed. Marvin and Ruth Thompson. Newark: U of Delaware P; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1989. 48-59.
- Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Theory and History of Literature, Vol. 4. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- Burton, Deirdre. *Dialogue and Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Modern Drama Dialogue and Naturally Occurring Conversation*. London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Calderwood, James L. *Metadrama in Shakespeare's Henriad: Richard II to Henry IV*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1979.
- Cardullo, Bert. "Life in the Foreground: Dramatic Method in *The Homecoming*." *Ariel* 18.3 (July 1987): 67-74.
- Chambers, Ross. "An Approach to *Endgame*." *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Endgame*. Ed. Bell Gale Chevigny. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969. 71-81.
- Chevigny, Bell Gale, ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Endgame*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.
- Coe, Richard. *Beckett*. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964.
- Cohn, Ruby. *Retreats from Realism in Modern English Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- . *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1962.
- . *Just Play: Beckett's Theatre*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1980.
- . "Words Working Overtime: *Endgame* and *No Man's Land*." *Yearbook of English Studies* 9 (1979): 188-203.
- Corrigan, Robert W. *The Theatre in Search of a Fix*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1973.
- Courtney, W.L. *Old Saws and Modern Instances*. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969.
- Croyden, Margaret. "Pinter's Hideous Comedy." *Casebook on Harold Pinter's The Homecoming*. Ed. John Lahr. New York: Grove Press, 1971. 45-56.
- Davies, Hugh Sykes. *Realism in the Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1934.
- Diamond, Elin. "Parody Play in Pinter." *Modern Drama* 25.4 (December 1982): 477-488.

- . "Mimesis, Mimicry, and the 'True-Real'." *Modern Drama* 32 (March 1989): 58-72.
- . *Pinter's Comic Play*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1985.
- Dollimore, Jonathan and Alan Sinfield, eds. *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Doran, Madelaine. *Shakespeare's Dramatic Language*. Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1976.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983.
- . "Brecht and Rhetoric." *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*. Robert C. Davis and Ronald Schleifer, eds. New York and London: Longman. 2nd Ed., 1989. 412-416.
- Easthope, Antony. "Hamm, Clov, and Dramatic Method in *Endgame*." *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Endgame*. Ed. Bell Gale Chevigny. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969. 61-70.
- Eco, Umberto. "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance." *The Drama Review* 21.1 (March 1977): 107-117.
- . *Foucault's Pendulum*. Trans. William Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989.
- Elam, Keir. *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Eliopoulos, James. *Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Language*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975.
- Erlich, Victor. *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine*. 4th Ed. New York: Mouton, 1980.
- Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. 3rd Ed. London: Penguin, 1980.
- . "The Theatre of the Absurd." Reprinted in *Essays in the Modern Drama*. Ed. Morris Freedman. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1964. 320-334.
- Evans, Gareth Lloyd. *The Language of Modern Drama*. London, Melbourne and Toronto: Dent, 1977.
- Evans, B. Ifor. *The Language of Shakespeare's Plays*. London: Methuen, 1964.
- Ewbank, Inga-Stina. *Shakespeare, Ibsen and the Unspeakable*. An Inaugural Lecture. London: Bedford College, 1976.
- Felperin, Howard. *Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1977.
- Fogelin, Robert J. *Wittgenstein*. 2nd Ed. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.

- Folena, Lucia. "Figures of Violence: Philologists, Witches, and Stalinistas." *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence*. Ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. 219-237.
- Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon, 1965.
- . *Knowledge/Power: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Ed. and trans. Colin Gordon. Brighton, England: Harvester Press, 1980.
- Garmon, Gerald M. *Tragic Realism in English Literature, 1720-1820*. New York: Lang, 1988.
- Gassner, John. *Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama*. (An expanded edition of *Form and Idea in Modern Theatre*.) New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.
- Ghose, Zulfikar. *The Fiction of Reality*. London: Macmillan, 1983.
- Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1959.
- Grayling, A. C. *Wittgenstein*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Gunter, Richard. "Elliptical Sentences in American English." *Lingua* 12 (1963): 137-150.
- Hill, Lee. "The Harold Pinter Movie Show." *Forewords* 2.1 (March/April 1991): 12-14.
- Hinchliffe, Arnold. *Harold Pinter*. Rev. Ed. Boston: Twayne, 1981.
- Honzl, Jindrich. "Dynamics of the Sign in the Theatre." *Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions*. Ed. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976. 74-93.
- Hornby, Richard. *Script into Performance: A Structuralist Approach*. New York: Paragon, 1987.
- . *Drama, Metadrama and Perception*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1986.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "Telling Stories: Fiction and History." *Modernism/Postmodernism*. Ed. Peter Brooker. London and New York: Longman, 1992. 229-242.
- Kane, Leslie. *The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama*. London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1984.
- Kennedy, Andrew. *Dramatic Dialogue: The Duologue of Personal Encounter*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- . *Six Dramatists in Search of a Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- . "Natural, Mannered, and Parodic Dialogue." *Yearbook of English Studies* 9 (1979): 28-54.

- Kenner, Hugh. "Life in the Box." *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Endgame*. Ed. Bell Gale Chevigny. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969. 53-60.
- Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. Trans. Boleslaw Taborski. New York: Norton, 1974.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. Ed. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1980.
- Lahr, John. *Up Against the Fourth Wall: Essays on Modern Theatre*. New York: Grove Press, 1970.
- , ed. *A Casebook on Harold Pinter's The Homecoming*. New York: Grove Press, 1971.
- Lee, Alison. *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Levin, Samuel R. "Deviation -- Statistical and Determinate -- in Poetic Language." *Lingua* 12 (1963): 276-290.
- Levin, Harry. *Contexts of Criticism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1958.
- Lyons, Charles R. "Beckett, Shakespeare, and the Making of Theory." *Around the Absurd: Essays on Modern and Postmodern Drama*. Eds. Enoch Brater and Ruby Cohn. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1990. 97-127.
- Mamet, David. *Writing in Restaurants*. New York: Viking, 1986.
- McDonald, Christie V. *The Dialogue of Writing: Essays in Eighteenth-Century French Literature*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1984.
- Miller, Nancy K. "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction." *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*. Ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon, 1985. 339-360.
- Mukarovsky, Jan. "Standard Language and Poetic Language." Reprinted (abridged) in *A Prague School Reader of Esthetics, Literary Structure and Style*. Ed. P. Garvin. Washington: Georgetown UP, 1964. 17-30.
- Murphy, Brenda. *American Realism and American Drama, 1880-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Nash, Christopher. *World-Games: The Tradition of Anti-Realist Revolt*. London and New York: Methuen, 1987.

- Nightingale, Benedict. "Harold Pinter/Politics." *Around the Absurd: Essays on Modern and Postmodern Drama*. Ed. Enoch Brater and Ruby Cohn. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1990. 129-154.
- Nuttall, A. D. *A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality*. London and New York: Methuen, 1983.
- . "Gospel Truth." *Ways of Reading the Bible*. Ed. Michael Wadsworth. Sussex: Harvester Press, 1981. 41-54.
- Patterson, David. *Literature and Spirit: Essays on Bakhtin and his Contemporaries*. Kentucky UP, 1988.
- Pavis, Patrice. *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of the Theatre*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.
- Pinter, Harold. "Writing for the Theatre." (A speech made by Harold Pinter at the National Student Drama Festival in Bristol in 1962.) *Plays: One*. London: Methuen, 1989. 9-16.
- Pirandello, Luigi. "Spoken Action." Trans. Fabrizio Melano. *The Theory of the Modern Stage*. Ed. Eric Bentley. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972.
- Richardson, John T. E. *The Grammar of Justification: An Interpretation of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language*. London: Sussex UP, 1976.
- Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Rosenberg, Marvin. "Subtext in Shakespeare." *Shakespeare and the Sense of Performance*. Ed. Marvin and Ruth Thompson. Newark: U of Delaware P; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1989. 79-90.
- Scholes, Robert and Kellogg, Robert. *The Nature of Narrative*. New York: Oxford UP, 1966.
- Stallybrass, Peter. "'Drunk with the Cup of Liberty': Robin Hood, the Carnavalesque, and the Rhetoric of Violence in Early Modern England." *The Violence of Representation: Literature and the History of Violence*. Ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. 45-76.
- Stallybrass, Peter and Allan White. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. New York: Cornell UP, 1986.
- Steiner, George. *The Death of Tragedy*. New York: Oxford UP, 1961.
- Strindberg, August. "The Author's Preface to *Miss Julie*." *Strindberg: Five Plays*. Trans. Harry G. Carlson. Berkeley: U of California P, 1983. 63-75.
- Styan, J. L. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Vol 1, Realism and Naturalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.

- . *The Dark Comedy: The Development of Modern Comic Tragedy*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968.
- Swander, Homer. "Beckett and Shakespeare: What the Words Know." *Shakespeare and the Sense of Performance*. Ed. Marvin and Ruth Thompson. Newark: U of Delaware P; London and Toronto: Associated UP, 1989. 60-78.
- Swingewood, Alan. *Sociological Poetics and Aesthetic Theory*. London: Macmillan, 1986.
- Taylor, Gary. *Reinventing Shakespeare*. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.
- Taylor, John Russell. *Anger and After: A Guide to the New British Drama*. London: Methuen, 1962.
- . "Pinter's Game of Happy Families." *A Casebook on Harold Pinter's The Homecoming*. Ed. John Lahr. New York: Grove Press, 1971, 57-66.
- Vannier, Jean. "A Theatre of Language." Trans. Leonard C. Pronko. *Tulane Drama Review* 7.3 (Spring 1963): 180-186.
- Veltrusky, Jiri. "Dramatic Text as a Component of Theatre." *Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions*. Ed. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976. 94-117.
- Williams, Raymond. *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*. New York: Oxford UP, 1969.
- . *Drama in Performance*. New York: Basic Books, 1968.