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The Price of Civilization Under Surveillance in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter* and *The Hothouse*

"Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing"

(George Orwell,1984)

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Abstract

In the light of Harold Pinter's plays, civilization serves as the main source of man's suffering as each individual lives among the stresses and criteria of demands in his cultural tradition, conventional law as well as social norms. As a matter of fact, Pinter's earliest plays The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter and The Hothouse describe the vital and furious stand against malign authority that victimizes characters labeled deviants due to their failure to adhere to norms. This paper aims to study the conflict between individual privacy and modern society. As Sigmund Freud states, men are controlled by the organizations of society and subjected to the most rigorous surveillance at all times. Pinter presents unequivocally how civilization is actually responsible for our misery and restricts us from pursuing pleasures or our own unalienable rights. In all, Pinter exposes the urgent and compelling appeal to contemplate the overwhelming price people pay for a better society, which is reflected in the loss of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Keywords: civilization, individuality, power, surveillance, violence.

Harold Pinter, widely known and regarded as one of Britain's foremost playwrights won the 2005 Nobel Prize in literature for addressing the fear, isolation and brutality of mankind's life under the stress and control of government. Pinter's work has had such an acknowledged influence that the term "Pinteresque," derived from the content and style of his work, became current to designate the themes of silence, menace, and neglect shown in his writing. Pinter was a visionary playwright ahead of his time and, in its citation, The Nobel Foundation said Pinter was an artist "who in his plays uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms."Per Wästberg, in the Nobel Award Ceremony, the chairman of the committee, described how Pinter's early writings expose:

> the power of the state, the power of the family, the power of religion – all undermining the individual's critical questions. Pinter uncovers the reasons for wanting to destroy the identity of others and the fear disguised as violence against those who stand outside the party, club or nation. (Wästberg, "Nobel")

Wästberg points out how *The Dumb Waiter, The Birthday Party,* and *The Hothouse* are political plays in a sense and present to the reader the reality of man's daily life when coerced by overwhelming forces. These three plays feature the theme of power, domination and the ultimate breakdown of the individual. As a result, the long-oppressed victim seeks to vent his spleen on someone in an even lower position and make him/her his victim; this abuse toward others becomes a vicious cycle when the power of the group is omnipotent. Thus, the real threat to our society is the lurking violence hidden in surveillance of the government which destroys the individuality of human life. Anyone can be an enemy of the state when they behave on behalf of their natural self–interest and individual inclinations. Civilization is a burden, in a sense, because individuality has no value nor voice when the state feels entitled to supersede the claims of the former as it extends itself over and beyond the individual.

To speak of his opposition to government dominance, Pinter's Nobel Prize acceptance

speech "Art, Truth and Politics" raises a strong voice on the rights and duties of each individual to speak truth to power. In his speech, Pinter notes how humans live under political manipulation. That is to say, authority and power fear the rise of all individuality. Pinter points out the hidden dangers of government intrusion into our decision-making power which in some ways has become overly offensive. Obviously, the government has the power to decide what it will allow or disallow. Pinter shows no fear as he strongly speaks against the depredations of American Imperialism, referring to Britain as its partner. He boldly delivers a scalding critique of the United States and Britain's government policy in Iraq. Pinter's works themselves warn of the abuse of the power of authorities against the individual and the gross invasions into our daily life. The prevailing themes among his plays demonstrate powerful parties oppressing the weaker ones and the subordination of one's happiness to please others. Hence, Pinter is horrified about the human condition under tightly constraining regulations of the government.

At the age of eighteen, Pinter opposed to the cold war and rejected compliance with the National Service. Pinter joined the Campaign of Nuclear Disarmament and supported the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. Later in 1991, Pinter was against the 1991 Gulf war, 2001 war in Afghanistan, and 2003 invasion of Iraq. Pinter was outspoken about his opposition to US foreign policy regarding war in Iraq. Pinter's works focus precisely on the strained social relations embedded in the interaction of the individual and authority. Apparently, Pinter reveals the attacks and abuse of state power in his works, which mostly reflect issues of censorship, repression and torture. Overtly, plays such as *One for the Road,* written in 1984, presents an unnamed totalitarian state interrogating a victim by using cruel methods. Later, in 1988, *Mountain Language* reveals how the Turkish were forbidden to speak their own language. Sadly, most people don't understand the jeopardy we face in placing our faith in the government, which, once we thought, would take care of us from cradle to grave. Hence, Pinter points to the evidence that mankind cannot completely trust the government when it embraces extensive, abusive power.

Charles Grime's*Harold Pinter's Politics: A Silence Beyond Echo* discusses, Pinter's

political beliefs among the different stages of his writing career. Chapter Two "Early Plays and Retroactive Readings," states that *The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter* and *The Hothouse* are plays that reflect the power of the surveillance of the government. Pinter exposes how violence and persecution have existed throughout the past, though people try to forget about or avoid the pain generated by them, "In this sense, *The Birthday Party* becomes 'political' in that the play explores a histrionically specific oppression that we in the present have apparently been fated to experience, *mutatis mutandis*, again and again" (Grimes 39). *The Dumb Waiter* implies how ideas are already implanted in our mind and how easily people can be brainwashed: "The system of power represented in *The Dumb Waiter* seems already to know what Gus was thinking before he says it, before he fully thinks it, perhaps" (Grimes 57). Everyone is spied on and in this sense, even the supervisors must themselves be constantly watched.

Next, Yu Yuan's "Power from Pinteresque Discourse in *The Birthday Party*" portrays the power tussle among Goldberg, McCann and Stanley. Yuan observes that Pinter's writing relates to authority and oppression while the sense of a power struggle is also reflected throughout the whole play. What's more, menace intimidates the characters enough to keep them from fighting back. The manipulators desire to gain something at no cost so that they feel in control. Goldberg and McCann use their force and rage to victimize Stanley into submission. Ironically, they even rationalize their actions and give reasons to justify them by claiming that Stanley with their help can become a better man for the sake of society. Meg blindly charmed by Goldberg and McCann can't even see how Stanley is being mistreated. Goldberg and McCann make coercing Stanley seem innocuous and do it in such a subtle way that nobody knows what is actually happening. Placing their own priorities foremost, Goldberg and McCanndon't care what may eventually happen to Stanley at all. Meanwhile, their only worry is to be loyal and faithful to the organization.

Ian Almond denotes in "Absorbed into the Other: A Neoplatonic Reading of *The Birthday Party*" that freedom of individuality is a threat; in this sense humans must

work and live in obedience to corporations within society. In other words, individuality harms and threatens the community because individuality can be highly overweighed. Thus, in order to maintain a stable society, individuality must be oppressed to prevent undue diversity. Individuality needs to blindly yield itself to the values of the majority. There is no room for humans to exercise their human right of choice when one's place is within a larger group. Almond states the importance of the need to strip away Stanley's right of individuality. Stanley's birthday can be referred as the birth of new citizen that completely follows the rules and commands of the community. The truth here implies that Goldberg and McCann the spokesmen of the government, exercise full dominance over Stanley's life.

Thus, Ben and Gus represent what Nietzsche calls the "herd" or "slave morality", which is characterized by conformity and the adherence of the majority to an ethic that supports and furthers the interests of their "masters" or the leaders of their society. Such moralities "generally perform the function of strengthening the hand of the groups which develop them in their dealings with others, or at least of heightening their sense of their superiority in relation to others" (Schacht 281). The power and wealth of the masters are enhanced as they impose—sometimes whether it is needed or not--ever stricter control over the majority, or herd. Above all, the latter cannot be allowed to harbor and develop their own thoughts, a taboo that runs directly counter to Aristotle's ideal of the highest service one can perform for oneself and one's country. Needless, to say one can hardly engage in contemplation if one is not allowed to think freely.

Nonetheless, Western thinkers, beginning with Plato and Aristotle, saw organized society and the state as anything from a necessary evil to something benevolent, not to mention something essential to a fulfilled life on earth. In other words, man, the social animal, was much better off with it than without it. On the other hand, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the major and most influential philosophers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, is derived the idea of the Noble Savage, a concept echoed in Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. The concept implies uncivilized men

were free from the plagues of humans living in civilized nations. In fact, the term expresses how the so-called natural man remained untouched by and unexposed to the corrupting influences of civilization. Mankind, in this sense, is essentially good while evil actions arise from societal stresses and negative influences. Rousseau regards those who live in harmony with nature and free from the straitjacket of countless social constraints as innately pristine and good. Hence, innocence is lost due to civilized demands, while personal sacrifices must often be made for the greater good.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud, leaning halfway between the two extremes of the extremely divergent views described above, identifies the three sources of human suffering as the human body - the decay of the body, the world-destruction of nature, and social relations - relations to others. Of the three sufferings, the human body and the world are largely beyond human control. Thus, humans must accept the reality of an aging body and the demolition of their material world. In this regard, our relationship with society should bring us happiness and pleasure; instead, community life causes us mental distress and tedious emotional pain. Social relations restrict the satisfaction of our inner pleasures, so natural desires and human instincts are oppressed. Freud explains how misguided and nefarious regulations make people unhappy and even miserable. Not least, for instance, is the fact that humans are forced to restrain their innate impulses and drives. Freud points out that in the development of civilization, the urge towards personal happiness eventually conflicts with the desire for union with other beings. Freud sees the appeal of a return to the primitive stage, when personal desires and sexual instincts were free. The truth is that human instincts have been eviscerated by the rules of the majority. In a nutshell, the evolution of civilization proves to be a struggle between the individual and the community. Civilization, insists Freud, is the source of our misery and a trap that buries our sensations. In other words, the greater the need for limiting human freedom, the greater is the cost in human neurotic pain and extreme anxiety.

Civilization in Pinter’s view implies the process of a society developing into a

centralized and stratified community. Civilization can only be achieved by the limitation of the individual meaning he or she is closely watched by the authorities at all times. This is what is called "organization" in Pinter's plays, leading to a restriction of our impulses, instincts and sexual needs. The impact of civilization acts as a way of diminishing and even deleting our sexual aggressions: "It is any institution which demands sacrifice of individuals or parts of individual so that order may be maintained" (Gillen 94). In short, men learn to control their inner aggressive impulses and anti-social instincts. In the long run, the delete of individual happiness is necessary for the greater benefits of mankind; "this contention holds that what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions" (Freud 33). Inevitably, human privacy is violated, and humans would be happier in a primitive state without the rules of civilization because human suffering and pain mainly comes from the external world. Freud defines man as being a general mass of violence, anti-social and full of aggressive impulses. Consequently, civilization must place boundaries on sexuality desires and needs. As Freud states:

> It was discovered that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals, and it was inferred from this that the abolition or reduction of those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness. (34)

To illustrate, society insists on monogamy, loyalty to a single partner and the confinement of sexual expression according to gender roles. To be a member in good standing in society, we must give up a portion of our happiness in the interest of the greater good. These repressions finally result in personal frustration. The characters in Pinter's play feel inhibited. In such a sense, to achieve modern social acceptance man must give up the pleasures of the individual to serve others, thus men become neurotic. The schemes of civilization make people unhappy as they restrict their choices and suppress the needs and values of meaningful individuality. As Freud denotes how civilization concentrates all power in the government while individual needs become a

threat: "the liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization" (Freud 42). Our desires and pleasures are compelled to become delimited by our commitments to society.

The Birthday Party, written in 1957, is one of Pinter's most well-known plays. The play's debut was well-received on 28 April 1958 at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge. However, on 19 May 1958, when the play was performed at the Lyric Opera House, it was deemed a failure and gained poor reviews. However, later Harold Hobson gave high regards that eventually rescued the reputation of the play and it went on to become one of the classics of the modern stage. In talking about this work *The Birthday Party*, Pinter was aware of the danger people faced and how their lives were more at risk. Stanley teaches the people a lesson by implying how nowhere is safe anymore.Goldberg and McCann torture Stanley through a long interrogation filled with ridiculous questions. In such a word game, actually Goldberg is accusing Stanley of many unsolved crimes. Later, Stanley begins to really feel the pressure of the dialogues and becomes nervous and even hysterical, but: "What doesn't fit into the scheme of things must be ignored, modified, or sacrificed. Reality is the institution" (Gillen 91). As the interrogation continues, Stanley turns agitated by the continually silly questions and begins attacking others in his state of near-madness. Goldberg and McCann have had an insatiable hunger to hunt down and control Stanley.

In the beginning of the play, Stanley is unshaven in his pajama and wears glasses. Lulu even tells Stanley to shave and get cleaned up, whereupon: "His immaculate dress reveals a defeated and deindividualized man, and neatness in this case inspires revulsion" (Dukore 12). However, Stanley replies that a good wash would not make any difference to him. Lulu encourages him to get up and leave the house with her but the question is:

> LULU: Where?
>
> STANLEY: Nowhere. Still, we could go.
>
> LULU: But where could we go?
>
> STANLEY: Nowhere. There's nowhere to go. So we could just go. It wouldn't matter. (36)

Stanley knows that he can't hide.In order to save the world from the destruction of aggressive instincts, many people propose concessions on an individual basis to meet the needs of society because without the structure of law and order, society would fall apart and break down, thus: "From the beginning of the play, Stanley behaves somewhat like a caged animal waiting for the slaughter" (Burkman 25). Ironically, Pinter dictates a simple path to happiness through the sacrifice and withdrawal of individuality from society.

> GOLDBERG: Your skin's crabby, you need a shave, your eyes are full of muck, your mouth is like a hoghouse, the palms of your hands are full of sweat, your nose is clogged up, your feet stink, what are you but a corpse waiting to be washed? (55)

Stanley is considered a threat because he has no concern about his cleanliness or that of others either. His uncleanliness leads to a bad condition whereby disease can spread and harm society. Keeping one's surroundings clean can contribute to the betterment of society. Thus, Stanley is like a germ that cannot be allowed to grow any stronger.

During their meeting, Goldberg and McCann take turns interrogating him. They blame him for many things and together oppress poor Stanley mercilessly. Needless to say, the trust that they place in Stanley's forthrightness is very fragile. Stanley, moreover, becomes their target and a prize over which they compete. In their long investigation they bury him in questions and accuse him of double-crossing the organization. His attempt to run way from "Big Brother" signifies his disloyalty:

> GOLDBERG: Don't lie.
>
> MCCANN: You betrayed the organization. I know him!
>
> STANLEY: You don't!
>
> GOLDBERG: What can you see without your glasses?
>
> STANLEY: Anything.
>
> GOLDBERG: Take off his glasses. (58-59)

At the center of the fight, Stanley is said to have abandoned his organization and people. Goldberg forces Stanley "to tell the truth and nothing but the truth"—a formulaic oath

sworn by those about to give testimony in American courts. For deceiving the community, he is punished by Goldberg and McCann who take away his glasses, leaving him blind. Without his glasses, Stanley becomes not only sightless but helpless. With his vision gone, Stanley becomes useless. That is to say, Stanley loses his value for the group and can be kicked out of the game of life at any moment. Moreover, without his glasses, and with the lights turned out, Stanley returns to the primitive impulses of human nature.

In the party game, blind man's bluff, once again Stanley can't see anything. In such a black moment of disorder, Stanley attacks Lulu out of animal lust:

> GOLDBERG: She must be somewhere.
>
> MCCANN: She's not here.
>
> GOLDBERG: (moving downstage, left). She must be.
>
> MCCANN: She's gone.
>
> McCann finds the torch on the floor, shines it on the table and Stanley. Lulu is lying spread-eagled on the table; Stanley bent over her. Stanley, as soon as the torchlight hits him, begins to giggle. Goldberg and McCann move towards him. He backs away, giggling, the torch on his face. (75)

Stanley seems to be acting on drives repressed based on a need to survive. Unable to channel his natural desires in a positive way or express himself freely, he regresses to a more animal level. Both Nietzsche and Freud were aware that instincts driven underground do not remain there:

> Instincts so inhibited by the pressure of circumstances from
>
> discharging themselves "naturally" do not (as Freud was also to observe) simply dissipate. Rather, Nietzsche suggests, they "seek new and,
>
> as it were, subterranean gratifications." When they take such
>
> modifiedand sublimated forms as "the bad conscience"…
>
> their impact upon human life tends to be negative and sublimation
>
> self-destructive.(Schacht 219)

When the light finally locates him, Stanley has violently molested Lulu after having

gone insane. By refusing to return with Goldberg and McCann, Stanley manifests that he is a lunatic, thereby escaping from the control of the community. The only way out of this game is to return to the days of pure happiness and live trouble-free. To reach that stage, one must forget the rules and laws of civilization to pursue his or her real desires. Wordless and unable to speak, Stanley can only giggle. From the giggles, Stanley, we presume, has changed into a demented adult or a child. He retrieves the pristine memories of his early childhood when the will of the self was the master of his soul. Before taking Stanley away, they proudly present him as a new man:

> MCCANN (at the table): He looks better, doesn't he?
>
> GOLDBERG: Much better.
>
> MCCANN: A new man.
>
> GOLDBERG: You know what we'll do?
>
> MCCANN: What?
>
> GOLDBERG: We'll buy him another pair [of glasses]. (91)

So bedecked, from Goldberg and McCann's point of view Stanley can become a new man in their hands. For him to become a new and better man, Goldberg suggests giving Stanley a new pair of glasses, for "Stanley's role as scapegoat clearly relates in some way to his defiance of the system and his betrayal of the organization" (Burkman 31).With this new pair of glasses, Stanley will see the world from another viewpoint and no longer from his own perspective. As a reward, the glasses that they give him will be a different pair. Unlike the old glasses, Stanley will look at things according to Big Brother's outlook upstairs.

In a superficial sense, for Stanley to be better he must be sophisticated into a civilized gentleman; "In fact, [however,] primitive man was better off in knowing no restrictions of instinct. To counterbalance this, his prospects of enjoying this happiness for any length of time were very slender. Civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness [and freedom] for a portion of security" (Freud 62). The larger community must be strictly sustained in order to become a utopia. In their speech,

Goldberg and McCann proudly state that they will make Stanley into a new and changed person:

GOLDBERG: We'll make a man of you.

MCCANN: And a woman.

GOLDBERG: You'll be re-oriented.

MCCANN: You'll be rich.

GOLDBERG: You'll be adjusted.

MCCANN: You'll be our pride and joy.

GOLDBERG: You'll be a mensch.

MCCANN: You'll be a success. (93)

In this regard, Stanley will be reformed, rebuilt, remodeled, remade, reconstructed and reborn. Most important, moreover, Stanley will be changed to suit the standards of the community: "There is also ample evidence that Goldberg and McCann represent the ideals of society, with Stan filling the role of the artist forced back into the mold of conventionality" (Gale 55). With the change in his nature, Stanley will be a transformed man. He will be a symbol of success in the new world:"When Stanley appears in the last act the very sight of him indicates the intruders' triumph and his conformity" (Dukore 37). For Goldberg and McCann, to achieve and make their dream come true, Stanley must be converted according to the law of the community.

The Birthday Party portrays Meg and Petty as unable to do anything while Stanley is being terrorized by Goldberg and McCann who have come to the seaside boarding-house to take him away. Pinter depicts a terrifying fact: how two people out of nowhere, knocking on the door politely at first, turn out to be from a mysterious organization that questions the loyalty of people targeted for who knows what reason. In this regard, such an event can happen in any political situation when people are taken into custody. Similar incidents can occur repeatedly, echoing how prosecution can precede the crime, meaning a person is convicted before he has made a statement: this means "Stanley is a tragic figure" (Sakellaridou 35). Such power in a community will enslave human individuality:"The institution senses danger and has found a scapegoat

to bear the blame for anything which interferes with its operation" (Gillen 91). Apparently, no one can prevent Stanley from being eviscerated by Goldberg and McCann. Sadly, Stanley's last escape fails and there is no solace for him at all.Notwithstanding, Pinter's play denotes the dilemma of the conflict between self and community. In *The Birthday Party*, Stanley escapes to Meg's house but is still tracked down by Goldberg and McCann, who represent society's vast reach. As a result, the originally uncooperative man, Stanley, becomes not only marginalized but erased as he grows homogenized. His new conformity and return to civilized values clearly represent a defeat for Stanley, as recognized by Nietzsche who observed that civilized manper se is far from being a man of internal strength and spiritual superiority:

> Being thoroughly 'civilized,' for Nietzsche, does not as such endow human beings with high status on his scheme of revaluation; for by itself it means only that they have been well tamed and socially integrated, and thus turned into good 'herd animals.' So he suggests that 'the *meaning of all culture* is the reduction of the beast of prey "man" to a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic animal*,' and contends that those subdued 'represent the *regression* of mankind,' rather than its elevation to the highest rank attainable. (Schacht 389)

After a struggle and fight, Goldberg defeats Stanley and brings him back to civilized values. Out of the concern for the betterment of society, Stanley gives in and surrenders himself as an offering.

Next, *The Dumb Waiter* is a one-act play written in 1957 depicting Ben and Gus willingly and silently waiting for instructions from their boss in a basement, i.e., an imprisoning location that was once a restaurant kitchen. The first presentation of the play was at the Hampstead Theatre Club in 1960 and immediately established a high reputation for this contemporary theater. The play echoes the awesome feeling of comic menace prevalent in Pinter's work. The dumb waiter used in the play represents a higher power upstairs giving commands to the basement dwellers downstairs in their lowly position. One point of significance in the play lies in the uncertainty of the task that the

two above-mentioned killers are given to complete. They are in the basement silently waiting for orders to kill the target or victim. The basement gives a strong sense of a nerve-jangling atmosphere as they can do nothing but obey the orders of the vast, unknown power pulling all the strings from above.

The play begins from the middle of nowhere and oddly ends at nowhere, too. According to Freudian theory, many men are destined to adopt an aggressive manner. The implication is clear; we can definitely say that some men harbor a horrible rage inside their blood. The fury in Gus seems to be beyond his control. The news in the paper is bloody and violent just like the characters of the play. Ben tells Gus how a little girl killed a cat:

> GUS: What's that?
>
> BEN: A child of eight killed a cat!
>
> GUS: Get away.
>
> BEN: It's a fact. What about that, eh? A child of eight killing a cat!
>
> GUS: How did he do it?
>
> BEN: It was a girl. (132)

The cruelty of the little girl reveals that not only are adults' offensive at times but even children may have a propensity for violence within them. Whether the child is a boy or a girl, all human beings possess an aggressive side. The general theme is that humans can be frighteningly depraved when even a little girl of eight can harm and destroy as well. Hence, this dreadful worm lies in each and every one of us.

On top of this pervasive idea, in *The Dumb Waiter,* Gus asks Ben why he has never met their boss from upstairs. Every time they are about to embark on a mysterious mission, they can only hear his voice or receive his command to act, but never have they seen him in person under any circumstances:

> GUS: Half the time he doesn't even bother to put in an appearance, Wilson.
>
> BEN: Why should he? He's a busy man.
>
> GUS (thoughtfully): I find him hard to talk to, Wilson (145).

Wilson, the big brother, symbolizes the power of the unknown from upstairs. Ben and Gus are only his pawns for him to play with and move. In fact, Ben and Gus must silently wait for his commands before taking the next step. The trouble is, "When Gus appears discontented with his function he disturbs the organization" (Dukore 38). This discontent arises precisely because they must always wait for Wilson to speak and instruct them. Wilson stands for authority gone bad; as we have seen in both these plays, mechanisms of control are in place internally and externally as well: "civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city" (Freud 71). While civilizations seek to curb natural human aggression toward socially destructive ends, Wilson imposes his authority autocratically to direct and channel Ben and Gus' aggression towards ends violent but useful for the organization. In a larger view, Wilson at all times keeps watch over them while controlling the whole situation. Remarkably, what may appear like dramatic chaos is in fact a well-designed plot.Nothing is pure coincidence. Nonetheless, the fate of one's life depends upon the will of the community. The eyes of Big Brother see everything. There is nowhere to hide and all humanity is stripped naked under the watch of someone looking down, from the heights. Nowhere is safe as Pinter believes that the horror of being spied upon pervades our world. The party seeks power for its own sake and is not concerned about the goods or benefits it brings to others. As Gus shouts at the tube, it "…may be conjectured as leading directly, along with other signs of his growing independence, to the moment at the end when he faces Ben [not only] as fellow killer but selected victim" (Worth 261). Thus, individual thoughts are not allowed when one works for the system. All mankind is under the control of a privileged group known as the elite of the inner party:

> BEN: You mutt. Do you think we're the only branch of this organization? Have a bit of common sense. They got departments for everything. (146)

The organization is well developed and imposes secret surveillance upon everyone. Gus questions why the people from upstairs would send them matches if there was gas. Continuously, Gus urges Ben to help find out who is upstairs giving commands, which

leads to his death, thus:"… presenting a threat to society because he questions rather than accepts, and who must therefore be destroyed before he destroys" (Gale 59). No matter what Gus or Ben do, it will never please Wilson, implying that his demands are never satisfactorily fulfilled: "Not only has Gus felt uneasy about his job and surroundings, as well as the whole system; he has also dared to question the very god he serves" (Burkman 42). No one should doubt or fail to meet the demands placed upon him because there is always something more to be done.

As mentioned above, the organization stretches beyond the eye. Though it might seem that Gus and Ben have control, yet their passive waiting in the basement shows how they are actually not powerful at all. A camera records their actions and moves:

> GUS: Who clears up after we've gone? I'm curious about that.Who does the clearing up? Maybe they don't clear up. Maybe they just leave them there, eh? What do you think? (146)

Every breath they take and every move they make are noted down.Ben and Gus only represent a small division of the organization: in any case, "Gus questions power; Ben conforms to it" (Knowles 28). In a sense, the community seems to be built up of hundreds and thousands of departments, each section having its function and purpose. As Ben reveals, the work is divided and everyone takes his/her part: "Whereas Ben accepts orders and is an almost perfect cog in the larger machine, Gus is becoming an individual and must be eliminated. Ironically, this very elimination might in turn unsettle Ben, who might, in turn, have to be eliminated also" (Hinchliffe 58). For a team to be successful, the needs of the self must be sacrificed. In order to complete a task, each department must devote itself to it completely. Obviously, *The Dumb Waiter,* presents the dangers of governments and the dubious decisions made by political leaders in the name of a better society.

Similarly, the theme of order and civilization appears in *The Hothouse*to present the ridiculous condition of people being blind-folded to prevent their seeing the faults of the community in which they live. The patients in the madhouse are referred to by numbers,

remaining nameless. In an attempt to improve upon this, Roote complains that the system isn't working and, indeed, the whole idea is silly:

> ROOTE: The whole thing's ridiculous! The system's wrong. (He walks across the room.) We shouldn't use these stupid numbers at all. Only confuses things. Why don't we use their names, for God's sake? They've got names, haven't they? (8)

In essence, numbers or signs used to refer to a person make us inhuman. Numbers are just marks that name people as an item, however: "Although Root doubts the wisdom of using numbers, he won't change things because that is the way things have always been done" (Gillen 88). At best, these numbers categorize man into products sold on the shelf. Numbers instead of helping man to organize a task, make the work even more complicated. Thus, Roote suggests the usage of names. Preferably, the name of a person will remind us that we are human inside. Not only is the system of numbers an improper method, it also reflects the stupidity of mankind:

> ROOTE: But I sometimes think I've been a bit slow in making changes. Change is the order of things, after all. I mean it's in the order of things, it's not the order of things, it's in the order of things. (9)

Changes can improve the conditions of the madhouse, but people are harshly tortured if they say so. Pinter denotes the resistance to change can be deadly (Merritt 78). Thus, all things must go according to old habits and a fixed order means nothing can be changed. As he had stated earlier:

> ROOTE: You know damn well we can't. That was one of the rules of procedure laid down in the original constitution. The patients are to be given numbers and called by those numbers. And that's how it's got to remain. You understand. (10)

Clearly, people are afraid to challenge old laws. Roote even argues that the tradition of using numbers is better and more correct. Gibbs doubts Lamb but Lamb is naïve to believe that he is a member of this group while actually he is not. Eventually, Lamb is sacrificed just as his name implies, having deceived himself:

> GIBBS: Do you ever feel you would like to join a group of people in which

group common assumptions are shared and common principles observed?

LAMB: Well, I am a member of such a group, here, in this establishment. (56)

Sadly, the only way out of this mad game is to blame someone. The horror is that we realize how pointless it is to resist or fight against the will of the organization.The madhouse is actually a place where the slightest deviations of thoughts arestrictly prohibited. To ensure this, people are not given freedom of thought:

LUSH: On whose authority? With what power are you entrusted? By whom were you appointed? Of what are you a delegate?

Roote hits Lush in the stomach.

ROOTE: I am a delegate. *(He hits him in the stomach.)*

I was entrusted! *(He hits him in the stomach.)*

I am a delegate! *(He hits him in the stomach.)*

I was appointed! *(He hits him in the stomach.)*

The institution is the only place that can distinguish between right and wrong.As a member of the institution everyone must obey: "The whole system we encounter is depersonalized, rigid, resisting change, and it is strictly hierarchical" (Stamm 292). The system presents the community as a false image of a better and more ideal world. In addition, those who state that the system doesn't work are killed. In addition, the play demonstrates how words can be used to inflict bodily harm or physical damage: "Language is a weapon that is used for exciting tactics in a series of human encounters" (Brown 26). No one is irreplaceable, thus to gain an advantage for oneself words are deliberately used to injure others.

Unable to meet the needs of the community, those who are meaningless will be eliminated. The slaughter of the whole crew implies a new era to come. With the death of the whole staff, a new group of employees will take their place:

GIBBS: The whole staff was slaughtered, sir.

LOBB: The whole staff?

GIBBS: With one exception, of course.

LOBB: Who was that?

GIBBS: Me, sir. (116)

The whole committee has been crossed out of the game. Mr. Roote and Miss Cutts were stabbed in their bed. Lush, Hogg, Beck, Budd, Tuck, Dodds, Tate and Pett, Sir, were hanged or strangled, variously. Everyone is dispensable: "Society, the organization as Pinter shows it here, has no place for the full human personality" (Gillen 95).Once a person loses his or her value, they will be obliterated from the team. Almost all of the members are killed except for the one that wins the decisive battle. Not surprisingly, for the community to become an even greater domain, individuals at any time can be substituted by those more suitable. The ending of *The Hothouse* implies that torture and cruelty continue to rule this systemic organization.Gibbs is the only one that survives, probably because he is always on the alert.

GIBBS: "I was engaged on some research, sir, alone. I was probably the only member to the staff awake, so was able to take measures to protect myself. (119)

Gibbs is the only one left alive because he knows how the system works. To stay alive, he plays along with the game and then even becomes smarter till he becomes the new leader:

GIBBS: I can carry on, sir.

LOBB: You'll be in charge, of course.

GIBBS: Thank you, sir.

LOBB: Don't thank me. It's we who have to thank you. (119)

Now, as the new director in charge, Gibbs has won this round but perhaps will be replaced in the future when he begins to doubt the system. As Franics Gillen states, "… the play shows us how many an organization or society, not simply an asylum, eventually runs on its own momentum and demands the sacrifice or denial of the human personality" (87). Those who don't submit to the group-think will be removed. This idea reflects that the self-acts as a tool by which the society may operate and "this replacement of the power of the individual by the power of a community constitutes the decisive step pf civilization" (Freud 42). All this is merely to say, to reach the top of the heap in a civilized world, the self cannot exist "… the goal is always the same: to

destroy the individual's belief in himself and his own vision of life, to make him doubt himself by placing impossible demands upon him, and thus to reduce him to an automaton" (Gillen 94). The deconstruction of the self is necessary to form a strong communal bond. No doubt, the characters in Pinter's play are eavesdropped and spied on as civilization takes away their liberty, which in all senses denies any privacy or respect for human rights. Thus, in Pinter's play, nothing can be assumed to be private or personal anymore. The totalitarian of authority implies the extreme of mind control without room for either individual freedom or happiness.

In all, this paper has expanded on the notion of social misery and, furthermore, looked into the hidden problems of civilization. Thereby, this research study hopes to have opened up a key question for the reader to reflect upon: "the fateful question for human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbances of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self destruction" (Freud 92). At the heart of this struggle is whether civilization, if it doesn't bring harmony, instead keeps men from attaining greater happiness. Obviously, Pinter insinuates that not only the individual but also the masses sustain constant surveillance and he would, no doubt, agree that they are nowadays sustaining more than ever. Pinter questions the extent of surveillance and raises our awareness of the need to defend our human rights without sacrificing liberty, equality and fraternity. For, even though he recognized the need for rules and laws to live by, he repeatedly makes us wonder: if we are being watched by forces greater than each of us individually, who is watching the watchers?

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