

## Rose: A Pinter's Character in Plato's Cave

### Pinter's *The Room* and Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*

*Dr. Mona Gad Sayed Gad*

Associate Prof., Basic Science Department, Faculty of engineering, Delta University for Science and Technology,  
Gamasa, Coastal International Road, Dakahlia, Egypt

Copyright © 2014 ISSR Journals. This is an open access article distributed under the **Creative Commons Attribution License**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

**ABSTRACT:** Plato's *The Allegory of the Cave*, Book VII of *The Republic* and Pinter's *The Room* (1957) show not only much similarity but also fundamental differences. This paper analyzes the similarities between *Rose*, Pinter's character and the shackled prisoners in Plato's allegory. Both works have the same beginning and the same ending. In the two works Both Plato and Pinter share the existentialist point of view that man is a stranger in the world. In addition, both works are introducing the idea of art for truth's sake and consequently art for life's sake. The play has nearly the same plot structure of the Allegory and *Rose*, the protagonist of the play becomes "A Pinter's character in Plato's cave".

**KEYWORDS:** Plato, Pinter, existentialism.

Harold Pinter (1930-2008) wrote several works throughout his theatrical career that share a common plot structure in which the protagonist of the play begins and ends his/ her life in a room which resembles the cave in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*. In a note at an early London production of *The Room* and *The Dumb Waiter* at the Royal Court in 1960 Pinter wrote: "there is no hard distinction between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false" (Ganz, 3). This distinction between what is true and what is false is the main theme in most of Pinter's plays, as well as in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*.

In addition, in a radio interview with Kenneth Tynan, Pinter was asked about his characters, he said:

I'm dealing with these characters at the extreme edge of their living, where they are living pretty much alone. ... Before you manage to adjust yourself to living alone in your room ... you are not terribly fit and equipped to go out and fight the battles ... which are fought mostly in abstractions in the outside world

(qtd in Esslin, 34).

Reading his plays, specially the *comedies of menace*, it is evident that Pinter's characters do not share in the battles of the outside world. Rather, they retreat to their rooms and stay in an illusionary safety and stability the rest of their lives. These characters confined within the walls of their rooms are the main preoccupation in Pinter's drama, and their lonely lives are liable to different literary, social, political, and philosophical interpretations.

This paper aims at analyzing the similarities between *Rose*, Pinter's character in *The Room* (1957) and the shackled prisoners in Plato's *The Allegory of the Cave*, Book VII of *The Republic*, focusing specifically on the image of the room/cave and its residents in the play to better understand how the dramatic setting functions. Both spaces; Plato's cave and Pinter's room manifest themselves as shelters for their inhabitants. They represent focal points in the stories and mark the turning points where extraordinary transformations might take place. In addition, their settings are spaces whose boundaries are limited to the womb/ tomb lines as people start and have their lives ended in these spaces.

The paper also points out the similarities between Pinter's room and Plato's cave showing the relation between characters and settings. The paper shows that both Pinter's protagonist and Plato's prisoners share the labyrinths of illusion, and they only conceive of these labyrinths in terms of the many false impressions that occur in their settings. It also emphasizes that the common background between Pinter and Plato is their conception of humanity as subject to an

overpowering reality of illusion. Whereas Plato is preoccupied with the manners of perception inside and outside the cave, Pinter is preoccupied with how the outside looks from inside his room. Like Plato's cave prisoners, Pinter's Rose has imprisoned herself within the walls of her room and is ignorant of her status in life. Therefore, this paper aims at showing these similarities and little differences in the two works.

For the accomplishment of this aim, it is worth referring, first, to *The Allegory of the Cave*. In the manner of a dramatic dialogue Plato introduces Socrates addressing Glaucon, Plato's brother, telling him the allegory which represents the idea of truth and philosophical education. The Allegory pictures people as dwelling in dark underground cave, and are in chains. These people are thus in a state of ignorance and lack of enlightenment, and are imprisoned (Crome, 6).

Behind the prisoners there is a wall that separates the prisoners from a set fire. That fire reflects the shadows of the people who pass across a pathway behind the wall. The prisoners perceive the shadows on the walls as the only reality in their life. One of the prisoners is unwillingly freed and forced to go out of the prison and face the sunlight and the outside reality of life and beings. There, he suffers all types of pain and is unable to open his eyes in the sunlight. After a while, the unshackled prisoner becomes accustomed to the sunlight, the daily life and the real people, and he knows the seasons and the reality of life. He remembers his fellow prisoners and feels it his duty to go back to the cave to enlighten them and tell them about the lies they hold as truths. The shackled prisoners do not believe him, react violently, and kill him.

Plato explains the prisoners' situation saying that "the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and ... the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world." In *Pathmarks*, Martin Heidegger explains the situation saying that "the vault of the cave represents the dome of the heavens. People live under this dome; assigned to the earth and bound to it ... in this cave-like dwelling they feel they are in the world and at home" (McNeill, 161). The light of the fire is man-made, and the illumination coming out of it is a human delusion and a symbol of total alienation from the outside world. Having passed outside the cave, the sunlight is not man-made; rather it is the reality that man tries to avoid because it is painful both to the eye and to the soul.

In *A Modern Worldview From Plato's Cave*, Bryce Haymond comments on the allegory trying to reach its meaning. He says:

The cave therefore, represents the world, while the prisoners are the people who inhabit the world. The shadows that the prisoners see are everything that people see in the present world, with its objects, environments, events, and so on. As a result, Plato interprets the physical world as only an illusion – an imperfect representation of a perfect Form. The chains might represent human ignorance (8).

The story then, does not present truth, but portrays the human situation and Man's search for/ denial of the truth. Hence, we, as the Allegory's readers, are implicated in it. It is an attempt to push us towards truth taking hold of those who are resistant to what it says (Crome, 8).

What is notable in The Allegory is the assertion that the prisoners in the cave are, in Socrates' words, "like ourselves" (Denton, 338), or as in Heidegger's translation, "they are very much like us" (22). In the Allegory Socrates assures that "the allegory depicts precisely the everyday situation of man, who, in so far as he does not possess any standard other than everydayness, can not see its strangeness" (Heidegger, 22). If we, as readers, become able to recognize in ourselves a likeness to the prisoners, as we consequently deny what Socrates says, in so doing, we cease to be what we were. In the Allegory, Plato want us to see ourselves reflected, externalized, and reject what we see, but then we cease to be what is reflected and therefore, change (Crome, 8).

That likeness does not belong to Plato's time only; rather "it is historically present ... as the all- dominating fundamental reality ... of the ever- advancing world history of the planet in this most modern of modern times" (McNeill, 176-77). The story recounted in the Allegory provides a picture of the real events in the history of the West whether in the past, present, or the future.

According to Bryce Haymond, "Plato's concepts, and particularly his depiction of our situation in the world in his Allegory of the Cave, are reflected today in modern pop culture, including ... literature. ... This may explain why humanity remains fascinated with the concept of leaving the cave" (3). In literature, the plays of Harold Pinter are the best example of the search for truth and reality that are meant by Plato in his Allegory. In his plays, specially *The Room*, Pinter plays the role of the philosopher who delivers his ideas to the audience, who tries to liberate his characters by "laying hold of them violently and dragging them away. This is admittedly what Plato himself dictates" (Van Deurzen, 195). But in both cases, man is resistant and his denial is completely violent.

Plato presents the Allegory in four stages (Heidegger, 28), and it is notable that each stage has a resonance in Pinter's play. In his Noble Lecture Pinter expresses his view towards modern man which echoes the situation of the cave prisoners, specially in the first stage of the Allegory. He says: "you don't need to think. Just lie back on the cushion. The cushion may

be suffocating your intelligence and your critical faculties but it's very comfortable" (7). According to Plato, in the cave people are satisfied with their torture and do not question their critical situation. Rather, they are "in the habit of conferring honors among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows" (Denton, 340). Pinter notices the same about human beings, he says: "one sometimes forgets that tortures become easily bored they need a bit of laugh to keep their spirit up" (The Noble Lecture, 3), and these ideas are previously confirmed in his plays which express humanity's illusion and alienation.

In *The Room* Pinter is able to produce exact pictures of alienation in the American society; man's alienation from himself, from his fellow men, and from the world in which he lives (Pappenheim, 3). Roger Copeland analyzes the elements of Pinter's drama as follows:

[In Pinter's plays] the essential ingredients rarely change: A room, safe enclosed space of some sort. Characters who feel not only secure, but at home in that space. An unexpected visitor whose very presence evokes a sense of dread, of inexplicable threat—a fear that seems at first, unfounded, even paranoid. Then ... an invasion begins; and the boundaries between inside/outside, familiar/unfamiliar, safe/unsafe, self/other to blur (22).

Such description completely fits with Socrates' description of the prisoners' condition in the cave; the same setting, the same characters, and the same attitudes and conceptions regarding the world, life, and the truth. This is emphasized again by Pinter himself, a year after writing *The Room*. In 1958 he wrote: "you have asked me to discuss the lines I myself am working on ... Given a man in a room and he will sooner or later receive a visitor ... A man in a room who receives a visit is likely to be illuminated or horrified by it. The visitor himself might as easily be horrified or illuminated" (qtd in Weales, 607 and in Esslin, 40). This horror/illumination is first reflected in *The Room*.

*The Room* (1957) is Pinter's first play, written when he was twenty seven and was first produced in the same year by the Drama Department of Bristol University. When asked about the source of his plays Pinter said: "I went into a room and saw one person standing up and one person sitting down, and few weeks later I wrote *The Room*" (qtd in Hinchliffe, 80). In this one act play, Pinter "creates figures that live in isolation in a menacing world. They don't revolt against a hostile abstract world. Instead, they look for shelter, be it physically defined, as a room" (Rahimipour, 2011, 593).

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND STAGES:

Like Plato's Allegory, *The Room* is set in a bed sit. Two persons inhabit it, a couple, Rose and Bert. Rose never leaves the room which she considers her entire world, and Bert works as a van driver. A couple arrives and inquires if the room would be vacant soon, and Rose becomes nervous because she has no intentions to leave the room. Then Mr. Kidd, the landlord arrives and tells Rose that someone is waiting in the basement, eager to deliver her a message. With the entrance of the stranger, who is a blind Negro named Riley; Rose starts to be anxious and violent. Basically, Riley's entrance irritates Rose, but later on it is Bert who reacts violently and kills him. The play ends with Rose crying that she has become blind.

Resembling the first stage of the Allegory, the room, setting of the play, "is comfortable, representing as it does, her only security ... Also no one bothers her" (Hinchliffe, 41). Rose tells Bert: "this room's all right for me ... If they ever ask you, Bert, I'm quite happy where I am. We're quite, we're all right. ... And we're not bothered. And nobody bothers us." But when the stranger, the outsider, comes to deliver her a message, the play becomes totally pinteresque "about people bothering people who want to keep themselves, who find communication too alarming" (Hinchliffe, 41).

In an interview with John Sherwood in the BBC, March 1960, Pinter tried to give a summary of *The Room*. He said:

This old woman [Rose] is living within a room which, she is convinced is the best in the house, and she refuses to know anything about the basement downstairs. She says it's damp and nasty and the world outside is cold and icy, and that in her warm and comfortable room her security is complete. But of course it isn't; an intruder comes to upset the balance of everything, in other words points to the delusion on which she is basing her life

(qtd in Esslin, 35-6).

This refers to the beginning of the play when Rose tells Bert: "it's very cold out, I can tell you, it's murder" (91). But with the progression of events it becomes clear that "murder" is not outside. Rather, as in the Allegory, "murder" is basically inside the walls of the room/ cave in which the character confines herself.

In his analysis of the atmosphere and setting of the play, Martin Esslin points out that "a warm room surrounded by a cold and hostile world is, in Pinter's case, already itself a dangerous situation" (61). It is also notable that Rose violently denies the fact that the room, her room, is going to be vacant, which means her insistence to remain in her illusion away from the reality of the outside world, just like Plato's prisoners who are satisfied with their residence in the cave. Thus Pinter is introducing the common thread in his plays which is "the opening sense or illusion of security, which is defined in each play as a function of the protagonist's sense of identity, his knowing who he is" (Berkowitz, 83).

Hence, Pinter makes his setting a microcosm of the world. In this setting there are only, as in Plato's cave, existential anxieties; unknown fear with unknown reasons (Kohzadi, et-al, 1690). In both settings, man encounters all types of alienation and is not really secure. This is clear in Rose's assertion to Bert that "this is a good room, you've got a chance in a place like this" (95), and then in her reaffirmation to Mr. Kidd when she says: "well, Mr. Kidd, I must say this is a very nice room. It's a very comfortable room" (98). Most notable is the fact that Rose is like Plato's prisoners in the cave, they take the shadows in front of them as truth or Plato's "unhidden." "There is no question they can raise about the truth of that truth" (Heidegger, 20). They are unaware that their truth is only a self reality they have created by themselves, and they perceive these shadows/self realities as the only truth in their life. Pinter affirms this idea in his Noble Lecture when he points out that "when we look into a mirror we think the image that confronts us is accurate. But move a millimeter and the image changes – we are looking at a never-ending range of reflections. But sometimes a writer has to smash the mirror – for it is on the other side of that mirror that the truth stares at us" (12), and this exactly what both Pinter and Plato try to do with their characters/prisoners.

Rose plays a double role in her room. Partially, she symbolizes the prisoner who feels pain when confronted with the truth of the outside world in the second stage of the Allegory; and then she perfectly symbolizes the shackled prisoners who refuse any intruders or confusion about their real being. Kohzadi, et-al explains this likeliness in the following quotation that is quoted at length:

Let alone, Rose would be content simply to exist, feeling confidence in the flimsy security of her own created world presented by the comfortable and cozy room she lives in. But Rose is not let alone; life for her, as the play proceeds, becomes a succession of anxieties and restraints imposed upon her by the other selves or by her own hidden dreads. These hidden dreads are the results of the struggle of the self with other selves which disturb her being by showing the reality of non-being. The first disturbing factor is the inexplicable world outside (1690).

Rose completely ignores the outside world because she knows nothing other than her room/cave. She tells Bert: "I've never seen who it is. Who is it? Who lives down there? ... But whoever it is, it can't be too cosy" (92). In this case, she is reminiscent of the dialogue between Glaucon and Socrates in the Allegory. Glaucon asks Socrates saying "how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?" and Socrates replies: "to them, I said, the truth would be nothing but the shadows of the images" (Denton, 339). Most emphatically, "the prisoners have no relationship to themselves and each other; they see only shadows of themselves" (Heidegger, 22). Bert and Rose also have no relationship to each other. The only thing that unites them is the room/cave in which they live and hide from the world.

Rose is a prisoner of her room, totally alienated and delusional. According to Plato, to be prisoned and delusional "is the absence of circumspection and insight, where man is in every respect removed from truth, where he has no familiarity" (Heidegger, 28). Bert plays the role of the puppeteers in Plato's cave. He seems to understand Rose's state of ignorance. He delivers her the image of the physical world which is fake or an illusion to the real thing, just as in Plato's cave the puppeteers "thrive on tricking to keep the prisoners under a leash of ignorance. ... we can posit that they may be anyone in the world who may be keeping mankind from knowledge of the true reality" (Haymond, 8). Thus, Rose's room becomes a trap, a prison, a wall that blocks her access to the outside world.

#### **THE THIRD STAGE:**

The third stage in the allegory is absent in Pinter's play, and this is a fundamental difference between the two works. In Plato's Allegory, the third stage involves one of the prisoners' realization of the truth and his understanding of the essence of life and beings outside the cave. But In Pinter's play neither Bert nor Rose understands or even has the intentions to understand the hidden reality of life outside the room. Consequently no one of them plays the role of the unshackled prisoner in the Allegory. This difference does not prevent the actions of the play from passing to the fourth stage of the Allegory and having the same end just as it has the same beginning.

#### **THE FOURTH STAGE:**

The fourth stage is illustrated in the play by the arrival of the strangers whom Rose does not welcome and reacts to violently. The only difference in this stage is that the intruder, the messenger of truth, comes late after some introductions. First, Mr. Kidd comes to Rose's room and the conversation between them becomes a series of attacks and counter-attacks. Like Plato's unshackled prisoner, Mr. Kidd seems very perceptive regarding Rose's vulnerabilities and tries to remind her of her situation as only a tenant of the room (Kohzadi, et-al, 1692).

Then, Rose's vulnerability and anxiety are again revealed with the intrusion of the Sands. But this can not be compared with her feelings when Mr. Kidd returns to tell her that there is a man in the basement waiting to see her. With his entrance to the room, it is obvious that the man, Riley, has come to make Rose aware of the "delusion on which she is basing her life" as Pinter cites in Esslin, p.36.

Now, the arrival of the blind Negro – symbolic of the freed prisoner who has just come from sunlight to the darkness of the room – represents the fourth stage of the Allegory. "And now is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of Man, when they returned to the den they would see much worse than those who had never left it" (Denton, 342). And this may be the reason of Riley's blindness. He might be blind just because he has spent a long time in the basement and then enters Rose's room with its human darkness.

The character of Riley is liable to many interpretations. "The Negro is not merely feared but also desired by Rose [as every man has a hidden instinctual tendency towards truth and light] and the play explores both fear and curiosity, change and resistance to change" (Hinchliffe, 44). Most critics define Riley as an omen of Rose's near death, and this is asserted again in Plato's Allegory. It is an omen of a death, but not Rose's, it is Riley's death that will happen in the room as death takes place in Plato's cave. As Socrates points out, "Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if anyone tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death" (Denton, 341).

In *A Room and Some Views: Harold Pinter*, John Russel Taylor quotes Pinter's comment on the character of Riley. Pinter says: "I don't think there's anything radically wrong with the character in himself, but he behaves too differently from the other characters" (Ganz, 105-06). This recalls Plato's unshackled prisoner who, after perceiving the sunlight, essence of truth, behaves differently from the other prisoners. That is why Riley is considered a source of menace to the room's residents/prisoners, and the play is dealt with as a comedy of menace.

In addition, in his article; *The World of Harold Pinter*, Ruby Cohn comments on Pinter's victims and villains in his first four plays. According to his point of view, Riley is a villain/victim in *The Room* (Ganz, 78). In the play, the villain/ messenger is also a victim. He is mysterious because he comes from the outside world which the characters in the room can not see. Then, Riley is not a Pinteresque villain, but the villain is the one that keeps the victim confined within the room/cave. In the room the villain is Bert, the patriarchal figure, head of the system. This is evident as he attacks Riley because Riley symbolizes truth and the awakening while Bert "would hold [Rose] a willing prisoner" (Ganz, 125).

Thus, Riley is perceived as Plato's unshackled prisoner who tries to preach his fellows and help them see the hidden truth behind the walls. Like the prisoner, Riley "speaks to Rose always tenderly, never insidiously; Rose's insults and Bert's attack seem undeserved" (Ganz, 125). If Riley is to be linked to the cave's prisoner, he is a victim twice: first when he is left a prisoner in the basement as Plato's is left in the cave, and secondly when he tries to enlighten Rose, the prisoner of the room, and is attacked violently in denial to what he says. Moreover, in an interview with Cary Perloff, Pinter describes Riley as "Rose's savior, arriving to release her from her imprisonment with Bert," and he comments on Riley's knowledge of Rose's life by saying: "I think releasing her from imprisonment is all right, but it's an imprisonment she doesn't know she's enduring" (Perloff, 25).

Echoing the reaction of Plato's prisoners, Rose insists on her delusions, and her reaction is completely aggressive:

Riley: I have a message for

Rose: you've got what? How could you have a message for me, Mister Riley,... well, why don't you give it up as a bad job? Get off out of it ... you're not only a nut, you're a blind nut and you can get out the way you come (114).

Then, she yells at him as "she touches his eyes, the back of his head and temples with her hands" (115). It is clear that this is "the action of a blind person rather than a seeing one" (Hinchliffe, 43), the thing which refers to her total illusion and alienation.

Then, to end the fourth stage of the play/Allegory, Bert, Rose's fellow resident, attacks Riley and kills him:

Riley: Mr. Hudd, your wife—

Bert: Lice

He strikes the Negro, knocking him down, and then kicks his head against the gas stove several times. The Negro lies still. Bert walks away.

Rose stands clutching her eyes.

Rose: Can't see, I can't see

Blackout

Curtain (116).

Rose's final blindness is the natural result of refusing to listen to the message, a message of awakening that is brought to her room/ cave. This means her inability to see the light of truth forever. Rose and Bert are like "the people in the cave

[who] are so passionately attached to their view that they are incapable of even suspecting the possibility that they take for the real what might have the consistency of mere shadows" (McNeill, 162). They, then, refuse to look at reality in the room/cave or the reality outside it which represents the highest truth of human beings.

In that fourth stage, Pinter creates his unusual "atmosphere of menace and silence, as though that were the sum total of human condition" (Pryce-Jones, 31). His closed room hides "terror stricken beings, clinging to the last remnants of security and happiness ... [Rose] lives isolated from any contact with the outside world ... her isolation follows lack of communication with others," so she fails to communicate with Riley who symbolizes that other (Sahai, 10).

In the light of this analysis of both Pinter's *The Room* and Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* it safe now to conclude that Plato's Allegory has a resonance in Pinter's play. Consequently, Pinter's, like Plato's, are characters who suffer from xenophobia and seek refuge within the four walls of a room/prison. William Baker stresses the same idea when he says that "there is certainly xenophobia in the room" (42). The characters are doomed to stay forever in their prisons, and the only action they can do –according to Pinter in an interview with Lary Bensky, published in *The Paris Review* – is to "walk out of a door, or come in through a door, and that's all about they can do" (9).

It turns out that liberation fails in Pinter's play just as it does in Plato's Allegory. Liberation is violent and "attaining what is now unhidden involves violence ... resistance, such that the one to be freed is forced up along a rugged path" (Heidegger, 32). Characters in the play and in the Allegory are persistent upon darkness. They do not have enough courage to endure the suffering and pain resulted from adaptation to reality, and the fail to have "genuine liberation" (Heidegger, 33). A violent step is needed to be taken towards them. This violent step is to make them aware of the potential untruth of their recent lives. It is important for the character/prisoner to realize what the shadows are (Powell, 42), then she/he will be ready to accept the change. Both Plato's Allegory and Pinter's play express the concepts of truth and absolute reality as Socrates explains to Glaucon and as seen in the demonstration of Rose's character and life (Hunt, et-al, 156).

Pinter, like Plato, has found that humanity is trapped in a cave like world and it must be freed to experience the truth. Like the significance of Plato's cave, Pinter's room "can be seen on multiple levels. The aching of the human soul for something more in this world, or the intuition that there is something missing in our existence" (Haymond, 38). Inside the room it is like a world without philosophers, without the realists, and outside is the world or the light of reality. So in the room it is like Plato's cave and outside is the world which is inexplicable to the characters/prisoners. Moreover, Pinter's characters are people like us as "we are all in this, all in a room" (Esslin, 35).

The essence of Pinter's strategy in functioning the setting of *The Room* might be introduced as follows: "if you really want to tug the rug out from under your audience's perceptions, it helps to begin with a real rug. For Pinter knows that the deepest terrors, the profoundest mysteries, hover in and around the most realist- looking of details," and here, the most realist looking of details as perceived by the character and by the audience is the closed room with solid walls (Copeland, 25). Pinter seems to be saying in his "claustrophobic room" that if you want to free humanity from suffering and oppression, start there, in the room (Dorfman, 54).

Pinter shares Plato the existentialist point of view that man is a stranger in the world. *The Room* presents much of the themes that are popularly associated with existentialism namely "alienation," "the absurd," "anxiety," and "nothingness" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 3). In his play, Pinter is preoccupied with what James A. Herne calls "Art for truth's sake" that emphasizes humanity and its appellation of truth that is not always beautiful (Meserve, 127). To see the difference between what is false and what is true is Pinter's aim through his drama. Pinter points out that "most of what we are told is false, and the truth is on the whole, hidden and has to be excavated and presented and confronted, all along the line," and this is exactly what Pinter does in *The Room* (Causac, 36).

It is meaningful now to say that the two works; *Allegory of the Cave* and *The Room* are set in the same cave, and Rose in *The Room* is another prisoner in Plato's cave. The two works show not only much similarity but also fundamental differences. Both works share the first and second stages of the Allegory as man is chained with ignorance and torture without being aware of his miserable state. The fourth stage in the Allegory is also echoed in the play to show human resistance to all attempts of enlightenment and awakening. Both works have the same beginning and the same ending. They start within enclosed walls and end with murder in the same setting.

Rose shares Plato's prisoners the same attitude and point of view towards life. Both are claustrophobic and xenophobic. They are quiet and stable as much as they are alone in their shelters, but once they encounter any strangers – the messengers of truth – they turn into violence and become murderers.

In the two works Both Plato and Pinter share the existentialist point of view that man is a stranger in the world. Both works illustrate existentialist themes of nothingness, alienation, anxiety, and the absurd, and the philosophers'/artists' efforts to drag humanity out of this circle. In addition, both works are introducing the idea of art for truth's sake and consequently art for life's sake.

The considerable difference between the two works is the absence of the third stage of the Allegory from Pinter's play. In the third stage one of Plato's prisoners realizes the truth of life and is awakened from his past illusion, and becomes the messenger of truth. But in Pinter's play the messenger is not one of the room's prisoners, and Rose does not have the courage to step out of the room's door. But this absence of the third stage does not prevent the play from having nearly the same plot structure of the Allegory and Rose, the protagonist of the play becomes "A Pinter's character in Plato's cave".

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Plato, 'The Myth of the Cave', in Lesely Denton (ed.), *75 Reading: An Anthology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. ( McGrow 1991), 341. (All the subsequent quotations from the Allegory will be taken from this edition).

<sup>1</sup> Harold Pinter, 'The Room', in *Title 17*, (U.S: F 4717, 1960), 92-3 [www.Neu.edu/~circill/f4717.pdf](http://www.Neu.edu/~circill/f4717.pdf) (All the subsequent quotations from the play will be taken from the same edition).

## WORKS CITED

William Baker, *Harold Pinter*, (G.B: Continuum, 2008)

Larry Bensky, 'Harold Pinter: The Art of Theater No. 3', *The Paris Review*, [www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4351/the-art-of-theater-no-3-harold-pinter.pdf](http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4351/the-art-of-theater-no-3-harold-pinter.pdf)

Gerald M Berkowitz, 'The Destruction of Identity in Pinter's Early Plays', *Ariel*, 9.2 ( 1978)

Ann-Marie Causac, 'Harold Pinter', *Progressive*, 65.3 (Mar 2001), 32-8 [www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com).

Roger Copeland, 'A Room of His Own', *American Theater*, 18.8 ( Oct 2001), 22-30 [www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com)

Keith Crome, 'Plato and the Institution of Philosophy', *Richmond Journal of Philosophy*, 2 (Autumn 2002), 1-9

Plato, 'The Myth of the Cave', in Lesely Denton (ed.), *75 Reading: An Anthology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. ( McGrow 1991), 338-42

Ariel Dorfman, 'Appreciation: You Want to Free the World From Oppression? Look Inside, at the Hidden Violence of Language', *New Statesman*, 138, 4931(12 Jan 2009) 54

Martin Esslin, *Pinter: A Study of His Plays*, (N.Y: Norton & Company, 1976)

Arthur Ganz (ed.) , *Pinter: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New Jersey: Prentice- Hall, Inc, 1972)

Bryce Haymond, *A Modern World View from Plato's Cave*, (USA: Bryce Haymond, Temple Study, 2009)

Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, tr. Ted Sadler ( London/ New York: Continuum, 2002)

Arnold P. Hinchliffe, *Harold Pinter* in Kinley Roby (ed), 7<sup>th</sup> edn (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981)

Alex Hunt, 'Cromac McCarthy's The Road and Plato's Simile of the Sun', *Explicator* 66.3 ( Spring 2008), 155-58

Michael Karwowski, 'Harold Pinter- A Political Playwright', *Contemporary Review*, 283. 1654 ( Nov 2003), 291-96

Kohzadi, Hamedreza, et-al. 'Alienation in Harold Pinter's The Room', *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*. 2.2, (2012), 1690-95

William McNeill (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Pathmarks*, tr. Thomas Sheehan (Cambridge, UK& N.Y: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998). 155-82

Walter J Meserve (ed), *Art for Truth's Sake in the Drama*, ( Boston, D.C: Heath and Company, 1966)

Fritz Pappenheim, 'Alienation in the American Society', *Monthly Review*, 52.2 (2 June 2000), 22-30

Carey Perloff, 'My Lunches with Harold', *American Theater*, 18.8 (Oct 2001), 24-7

Harold Pinter, 'Art, Truth & Politics: The Nobel Lecture', (The Nobel Foundation 2005), <[www. Noble prize.org/noble.../pinter-lecture-e.pdf](http://www.Noble prize.org/noble.../pinter-lecture-e.pdf)>

-----'. 'The Room', *Title 17*, (U.S: F4717, 1960), [www.neiu.edu/~circill/f4717.pdf](http://www.neiu.edu/~circill/f4717.pdf)

Sally Powell, 'Discovering the Unhidden: Heidegger's Interpretation of Plato's Allegory of the Cave & Its Implication for Psychotherapy', *Existential Analysis*, 22.1 ( Jan 2011), 39-49

David Pryce- Jones, 'How Low Can They Go? II.'. *National Review*, 57.20, (7 Nov 2005), 31-2

Rahimipoor, Saeid. "The Ambiguity of Self & Identity in Pinter's Comedy of Menace." *European Journal of Scientific Research*. 58.4. 2011: 593-98.

Surendra Sahai, *Harold Pinter: A Critical Evaluation*, James Hogg, ed. (Astria: Universitat Salsburg), 1981

'Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy', *Existentialism*. <[plato.Stanford.edu/ entries/existentialism/html](http://plato.Stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/html)>

Emmy Van Deurzen, 'Review of The Essence of Truth', *Existential Analysis*, 17.1 ( Jan 2006) 192-200

Gerald Weales, "The State of Letters: Harold Pinter and the Noble Priz", *Sewanee Review*, 114. 4 ( Fall 2006), 603-09