



Signatures

III SEMESTER BA/B.SC
Common Course - AO5

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Course Objectives

- Understand major issues in the contemporary world and respond empathetically
- Develop and enhance intellectual ability and aesthetic ability inculcating human values
- Understand “how personal narratives intersect with the larger social realities”

Module 2 : Speeches and Testimonies

- Harold Pinter
Art, Truth and Politics
- Charlie Chaplin
Final Speech in the movie “The Great Dictator”
- Svetlana Alexievich
A Solitary Human Voices from Chernobyl : The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster
- Janice Miri Kitani
Breaking Silence

Harold Pinter (1930 -2008)



- Poet and playwright





- ❑ Born in east London, the son of a Jewish tailor, and educated at Hackney Downs Grammar School.
- ❑ He began to publish poetry in periodicals before he was 20, then became a professional actor, working mainly in repertory.
- ❑ His first play, *The Room*, was performed in Bristol in 1957, followed in 1958 by a London production of *The Birthday Party*, in which Stanley, an out of- work pianist in a seaside boarding house, is mysteriously threatened and taken over by two intruders, an Irishman and a Jew, who present him with a Kafkaesque indictment of unexplained crimes



- Pinter's distinctive voice was soon recognized, and many critical and commercial successes followed, including *The Caretaker* (1960), *The Lover* (1963), *The Homecoming* (1965), *Old Times* (1971), and *No Man's Land* (1975).
- *Betrayal* (1978; film, 1982) is an ironic tragedy which ends in beginning and traces with a reversed chronology the development of a love affair between a man and his best friend's wife.



Pinter's gift for portraying, by means of dialogue which realistically produces the nuances of colloquial speech, the difficulties of communication and the many layers of meaning in language, pause, and silence, have created a style labelled by the popular imagination as 'Pinteresque', and his themes—nameless menace, erotic fantasy, obsession and jealousy, family hatreds, and mental disturbance—are equally recognizable



- Pinter has also written extensively for radio and television, directed plays, and written several screenplays, which include versions of L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1969), *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1978) and J. Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1982).



Art, Truth and Politics

- ❑ Nobel lecture by Harold Pinter
- ❑ Videotaped and projected on three large screens at the Swedish Academy
- ❑ Pinter's concern for the victims of the oppression
- ❑ Accused of "anti-Americanism."
- ❑ Critique of U. S. Foreign Policy since World War II
- ❑ Criticizes the policies and practices of American Administration
 - Iraq war
 - Imperialism in the Balkans, Central America etc.



Idea of Truth

- He begins the speech by distinguishing between real and unreal, true and false in the realm of art.
- But in everyday life it is important for a citizen to know the truth. In art, as he says, truth is “**elusive**”.
- The idea of a real truth can not be found in dramatic art.
- One come across many truths and they may challenge or reflect or critique the idea of a single truth.
- Therefore the function of language is ambiguous in art.



Political Theatre

- For political theatre the situation is different.
- It has to be objective and should not take the form of a sermon.
- But as a dramatic form it should represent multiple perspective.
- The dramatist should be ready to present a number of perspective and keep away his own prejudices.
- But this does not work in most cases.



Invasion on Iraq

- ✓ He mentions how the war on Iraq was initiated on the basis of an allegation that Saddam Hussain possessed dangerous weapons.
- ✓ Similarly it was alleged that Iraq shared the responsibility with Al Qaeda for 9/11 attack and declared as a threat to the US.
- ✓ But later it became clear that these two were not true.
- ✓ Therefore truth here is what US understood and wanted to present before the world.



US Foreign Policies since Second World War

- ❑ Though the war atrocities committed by Soviet Union has been documented well, not much has been discussed about US government's war crimes and foreign policies.
- ❑ He says that direct attack on countries has never been a policy of the US.
- ❑ Instead it preferred 'low intensity conflict' which meant a slow and a gradual intervention by planting a "malignant growth" and allow it to grow and then intervene with military.
- ❑ In the end proclaim that for protecting democracy military intervention was needed.
- ❑ Harold Pinter argues that similar pattern can be found in most of the military interventions done by the US across the world



Example of Nicaragua

US supported the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua for forty years. Later The Sandinistas, supported by the people of Nicaragua, established a government which was “stable, decent and pluralistic”. It was a welfare oriented government. The US after persistent attempts and bloodshed managed to overthrow the government thereby restored ‘Democracy’.




Other Examples :

Pinter cites several instances like this in Central and South America and countries like Indonesia, Turkey Greece, Chile etc.. In all these cases the death tolls of civilians were high. But there was never any mention of the war crimes and atrocities of the US anywhere. He says, “ It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn’t happening”.




Violations by the US

He raises questions regarding the collective conscience against these atrocities. He then mentions about the violations done by the US at Guantanamo Bay prison. The tortures and physical violations committed against the prisoners at Guantanamo are against the Geneva conventions. He then questions how international community has responded to this. Millions of people across the world has been tortured by the brutal violence committed by the US. The case of Iraq invasion is a clear example of such violations and the number of deaths of Iraqi civilians were irrelevant and never counted. Pinter there criticises British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his association with US President George Bush in these invasions.



Role of a Writer

He ends the speech by explaining the role of the writer in these political turmoil and how vulnerable an artist in these situations. He argues that as a citizen, it is their responsibility ‘to define the real truth of their society’ with great ‘intellectual determination’. Such a responsibility is required to restore the “dignity of man” which is being violated in these war crimes.



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