

## Language notes on the play

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Play about intruders and power relationships. The room provides a sense of claustrophobia and adds intensity to the situation. It is symbolic of a territory and can be representative of something larger. Thus the piece is more complex than three characters in a room. That is why to fully understand, one must analyse the interaction.

Aston is dependent on Mick. They are oddballs, characters on the fringe of society. We recognise them as types but are reluctant to associate ourselves with them.

**After the silences**    who speaks first?  
                                  why do they speak?

**Phatic talk**                when talk means nothing, you're just establishing that the other person is there.

There is a subtext of misunderstanding, which leads to the incorrect response from the characters, or a lack of real communication between them.

Conversation is a means of establishing control of the situation and the territory. It is a means of fighting, either through use, misuse or lack of use.

There is a strong sense of three, which means someone will be left out. This dynamic creates a sense of **paranoia** and audience and characters have to decide whom they trust. At times, characters intrude and their presence is like an invasion.

If a character leaves the room, how do they get back in? Why did they leave? The answers to these questions give the audience an insight into the power relationships.

Play questions brotherly love and how it works. It also reflects the reversion to childish behaviour in certain situations.

There is a **musical dimension** to the language, which is broken by silences. The rhythm and flow of the words creates tone: can be soothing, can be aggressive etc.

Sidcup, despite the ordinary name, is suggested as a spiritual place. Everything will be all right for Davies if he can just get there. Of course he never does, so the audience could consider possible religious messages that are being implied.

The play is intense and violent. However, as an audience, you need to be active to isolate this violence, as it is not always overt.

Mick is an imitator; he imitates human behaviour. Thus, he often mimics or repeats language. This is disconcerting for others, as well as being frustrating. (Think of how little children do this and consider the response if it were done by an adult). He is unpredictable and his mood swings violently.

Aston is a collector; he finds security in it. He's introverted, possibly because of his experiences. At first, an audience might see his silence as a sign of weakness; however, it becomes apparent that he finds strength in it. Eventually Davies' **incessant chatter** becomes representative of weakness.

Aston extends the arm of friendship and Davies tries to exploit this because he **misinterprets** Aston's **silences** and **utterances**.

Aston wants a friend; he wants conversations new and pastures new. Thus he tries to share some of his experiences with Davies.

**Ordinary language is shown to be banal.** However, it exists over a subtext. **Questions are power.** Rarely, do we directly answer a question, or we add extra information or lie.

The Caretaker has unusual characters, who, seemingly spout nonsense and don't directly tell us any information. (Except Aston's long and painful account of his treatment). However, by analysing the conversation and the interaction, we begin to make sense of it all.