

Carolyn Funder,

*The Room*

1957

THE ROOM

May 1957

FOR SELECTION OF LISTS

BY THE BOARD OF LISTS

1957

THE ROOM

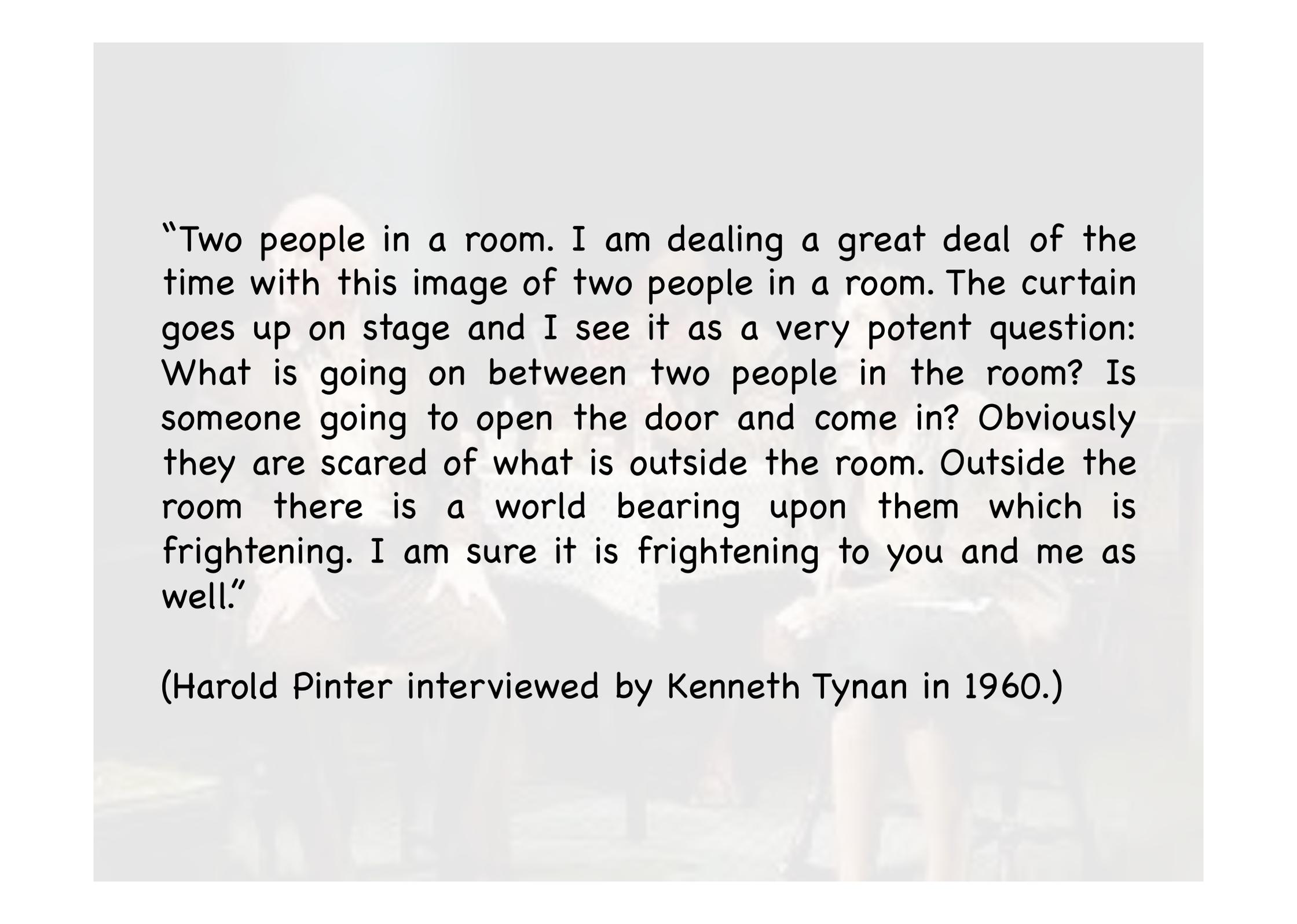
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*The Room* was first presented at the University of Bristol Department of Drama on 15 May 1957 and subsequently at The Hampstead Theatre Club (21 January 1960) and at The Royal Court Theatre on 8 March 1960.





“Two people in a room. I am dealing a great deal of the time with this image of two people in a room. The curtain goes up on stage and I see it as a very potent question: What is going on between two people in the room? Is someone going to open the door and come in? Obviously they are scared of what is outside the room. Outside the room there is a world bearing upon them which is frightening. I am sure it is frightening to you and me as well.”

(Harold Pinter interviewed by Kenneth Tynan in 1960.)

"[...] *The Room* by Harold Pinter was presented by the Old Vic Theatre School and the Department of Drama of the University. It was a revelation and the directors of the London Arts Theatre and of the English Stage Company should be after Mr Pinter before they eat their lunch today. It is a brief excursion, in a slum room, into the nightmare world of insecurity and uncertainty. It has touches of Ionesco and echoes of Beckett; [...] What exactly the plot is, where the elusive landlord really lived, who are the unexplained couple seeking lodgings, why the lorry-driver husband is so long mute, what is the parentage of the woman who clings so desperately to shabby respectability, are questions that do not admit of precise solutions. They do not need to. The play makes one stir uneasily in one's shoes, and doubt, for a moment, the comforting solidity of the earth. Duncan Ross directs it with the unstoppable speed of an Olympic runner, and students of the Old Vic School act it memorably, especially Susan Engel as the wife and Neville Gaha as the husband who suddenly leaps into a Niagara of brutal and sadistic rhetoric. Michael Ackland's set is excellent in itself as an exercise in realism, but does it fit the indeterminate and shifting boundaries of the play? No matter; *The Room* is an experience. I believe it was discovered, directly or indirectly, by the Department of Drama. It is a matter for them of pride." (Harold Hobson, *Sunday Times*, January 1958)

“ [...] If the archetypal Pinter situation is one of space-invasion, then you see its origins in *The Room*, first performed at Bristol University in 1957. Here the immured [enclosed, imprisoned within or as if within walls] heroine, Rose, finds the rooted privacy which she shares with her silent husband successively threatened by her talkative landlord, a pair of married flat-hunters and by a blind black man call Riley who mysteriously bids her to come home. The milieu may be miles away from that of *Celebration* but in both womb-like retreats are opened up and anything “foreign” is seen as a potential menace. [...]”

Michael Billington, *Guardian*, March 2000





13 Ottobre 2000, Spazio Zero dei Cantieri Culturali della Zisa a  
Palermo: Harold Pinter dirige Marina Gonfalone ne' *La stanza*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiZQNRhSmwY>



In 1987 Robert Altman directed a two-part special entitled "Basements," with both halves being adaptations of Pinter's one act plays *The Room* (1957) and *The Dumb Waiter* (1959).

Watch it at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfpPn2ayEgc>

