

## HAROLD PINTER: HUMAN PREDICAMENT TO LIFE THROUGH HIS PLAYS

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### ABSTRACT

*“This is the real human predicament. This universe is only to be tolerated; it’s not to be solved.”  
Leonard Cohen*

*Humans are capable of immense love and sensitivity, but we have also been capable of greed, hatred, brutality, rape, murder and war. While the universally accepted ideals are to be cooperative, loving and selfless, humans are variously competitive, aggressive and selfish. The subconscious sense of guilt and agony of being unable to explain this contradictory capacity has been the burden of human life: the human condition. There has been spirited debate on the treatment of human values in Pinter’s plays. The paper addresses the intricacy of human relationship and answers many such questions. The objective, purpose rises or falls with change people, which is a matter of clinging to illusion, so to rephrase: what do we want out of life? To be happy, of course, yet he sees happiness as a matter of fulfillment of pent-up desires, meaning it’s by its nature temporary. Yet we can’t shake off its pursuit, and so we’re in a bind, and have a number of strategies for obtaining some satisfaction: some compensation for what we have to repress in order to live in a society that forces us to repress our innate desires.*

*Keywords- Human predicament, illusion and human subconscious.*

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Today, Harold Pinter is regarded as one of the finest dramatists in English literature. He is mainly read because of the human predicament in our time. One is attracted to Pinter for his deep awareness of the precarious human existence and the treatment of basic issues in his plays. From the very beginning of his career as a playwright Pinter has been very popular and his plays have received considerable critical attention. Besides, critics of Pinter have subjected his plays to rigorous scrutiny to analyze his major concerns and preoccupations since his appearance in English theatre in 1957. Pinter has been highly praised as well as fiercely condemned. A rich variety of criticism available on his plays reveals controversial nature of his dramatic art along with his valuable contribution to the contemporary English theatre. In spite of the doubts

expressed by hostile critics regarding the relevance of Pinter's plays in the future, he has held a major place among contemporary English playwrights.

Pinter's criticism can be studied under three heads, (i) *hostile criticism*, (ii) *psychological and mythical criticism* and (iii) *moderate or flexible criticism*. Hostile criticism stems from a puzzling ambiguity of Pinter's plays. These critics feel irritated about the lack of realistic details and the impossibility of verification in his plays. Critics like *Nigel Dennis* and *Ronald Bryden* see Pinter's theatre as mere stagecraft, a theatre of situation and accuse him of even not having an interest in character development. Despite Pinter's own reluctance to accept the label of Freudian, a group of critics have noted a close similarity between Pinter's techniques of portraying his characters and the methods of psychoanalysis and myth criticism. As a result of psychoanalytical and mythical interpretation of his plays have come to existence. A Freudian approach to Pinter's plays is initiated by *Martin Esslin*. *Esslin's* analysis of oedipal relations is seen in Pinter's three major plays *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker* and *The Homecoming*. It has a very mild tinge of Freudian theory. *L. P. Gabbard* gives an exhaustive Freudian reading of Pinter's plays a few years later. An American psychiatrist *Dr. F. Franzblat* subjected *The Birthday Party* and *The Homecoming* to clinical observations. Though Pinter was very unhappy about the psychological studies of his plays and described it as rubbish. Critical analysis of Pinter's plays from psychological point of view continued.

The psychological and myth critics studied Pinter's plays in the light of their pre-conceived theory. There is another group of critics who are liberal in their approach to Pinter's plays. These critics take into consideration Pinter's statement that he never writes with any systematic ideas in his mind. *Steven H. Gale* marks an evolution in Pinter's treatment of menace which runs through all his plays. *Walter Kerr's* approach to Pinter is existential. *W. Baker* and *S. E. Tabachnick* consider Pinter's Jewishness as an essential influence in most of his plays. Critics like *James Hollis* and *Austin Quigley* concentrate on close scrutiny of Pinter's language and find it safer than the application of psychological or philosophical theory. Lately *Guido Almansi* and *Simon Henderson* follow the trends of post-structuralist criticism in their interpretation of Pinter's plays. They take Pinter's plays as gameplay where nothing should be taken at its face value, where anything said at one moment can be made, and the next moment, to stand on its head.

The linguistic approach of *Austin Quigley* and the deconstructionist approach of *G. Almansi* and *S.Henderson* are the most recent trends in Pinter's criticism and are in line with Pinter's method of writing and his mistrust of systematic conceptualization in his works. However, it is wrong to think that Pinter's plays are mere stage happenings. Pinter's characters are free to develop and create situations but they are never '*uncontrolled or anarchic*'. Pinter is a careful artist. His plays have order and structure. His language is marked by the use of dot, dash, pause and silence which serve a particular purpose.

As a conscious playwright, Pinter was always aware of what he was doing in his drama even if he professes ignorance. The absence of direct message does not mean moral indifference or vacuum of values. As a matter of fact, Pinter was keen to project the workings of the human mind. He was interested in portraying the personal life of the individual in relation to few other people usually belonging to his own close and immediate environment. The world of his characters is never a public world. A human being lives alone in his private world which has little relevance to social structure and moral codes. Early in his career as a playwright Pinter explained his concern with the individual private worlds of people rather than wider sociological and political issues: "*Before you manage to adjust yourself to living alone in your room.....you are not terribly fit and equipped to go out and fight battles which are fought mostly in abstractions in the outside worlds.*" Pinter's plays focus on the precariousness of human existence in the present century. Human beings must suffer on account of the unbridgeable gulf between their aspiration and attainment. By nature man is never satisfied with what he has. He always yearns for something that is unattainable because he lives in the universe which is arbitrary, indifferent and at times hostile. The present work attempts to discuss Pinter's characters and stress the pattern of dualism between aspiration and attainment so as to explain and appreciate Pinter's vision of human predicament. A brief look at certain significant facts in the dramatist's own life and his age will be very relevant and useful to understand impression of human life.

Harold Pinter was born on 10 October 1930 in Hackney, a working class neighborhood in London's East end. His parents, both Jewish, were *Hyman* and *Francis Pinter*. He spent his first nine years in Lower Clapton, a short walk from the school in Hackney Downs that he would later

attend. In Germany and Italy during 1930's, fascist governments took hold, and their racial policies, favored by English fascists, threatened Jews in England.

At the start of England's war with Germany, in 1939, Pinter was evacuated, with other London children, to the country side. After a year or so in Cornwall, an unfamiliar terrain to a city boy, he returned to his parents in London, then left with his mother for an area closer to the city. On the day they returned, in 1944, the Germans staged V-2 rocket attack which was a painful experience for Pinter. Rockets raid continued, while Pinter evacuated their homes several times, fortunately it was not destroyed. After the war, Pinter recalls, *Sir Oswald Mosley's* fascists were coming back to life in England. If one was Jewish, as he was, or looked as if he were communist for carrying books, as he was not, he might be accosted by a group of fascists thugs. "I got into few fights there", says Pinter, and adds, "There was a good deal of violence there, in those days." Pinter thus grew up during the world war II when Nazis overran Europe and for a time seemed likely to overrun England herself and he wrote his first play during the post atomic era when nuclear holocaust was a realistic not a paranoid threat. Pinter's outlook is sensitive to the society of which he is a part.

Born and brought up in Jewish environment in East London. Pinter was painfully aware of his Jewishness. As a teenager youth in post-war London. Pinter was deliberately silent about the negative influence of his background. The experience of violence and racial prejudice deeply influenced him as it was evident from his interviews and plays. Despite Pinter's denial, the playwright's Jewishness is an important influence on his vision of human suffering. The influence may be subconscious but it is clearly noticeable in his plays up to *The Homecoming*. In *The Room* Mr. Kidd's mother is Jewish. In *The Birthday Party*, Goldberg is a Jewish. Max's household in the *The Homecoming* has been considered as a Jewish family. His early plays remind us of the Jewish mother who hold a very significant positioning the Jewish family. Moreover, the frustration the characters in his plays, is obviously based on the experience of a Jewish boy in the East End of London, or a Jew in the Europe of Hitler. Commenting on his first play, *The Room*, Pinter states:

*This old woman is living in the room which, she is convinced, is the best in the house and she refuses to know anything about the basement downstairs. She says its 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 and the intruder comes to upset the balance of everything, in other words points to the delusion on which she is pacing her life. I think same thing applies in **The Birthday Party**, again this man is hidden away in the seaside boarding house.....then two men arrive out of nowhere and I don't consider this an unnatural happening. I don't think it is all that surrealistic and curious because surely this thing of people arriving at the doors has been happening in Europe in the last twenty years. Not only in the last twenty years but in last two to three hundred years.*

Pinter's works as an actor and his plays have very close connections. These connections are creatively related to Pinter's distinctive vision of the world. He has made number of general observations on the fundamental influence of his acting upon his art:

*Yes, my experience as an actor has influenced my plays- it must have- though it's impossible for me to put a finger on it exactly. I think I certainly developed some feeling for construction which believe it or not, is important to me and for speakable dialogue.*

Out of work as an actor Harold Pinter has to accept the short lived jobs as a caretaker, a waiter, a street hawker, a door man at a dance hall, a door-to-door book salesman, a dishwasher and a snow- shoveller. Some aspects of these experiences have been used in his plays like **The Caretaker** and **The Homecoming**. Pinter's own rise to success as a playwright has a great impact on his plays. The plays like **The Room**, **The Birthday Party** and **The Dumb Waiter** have humble rather sordid settings. He wrote these plays when he was a poor actor and lodged in miserable digs. One can trace the social upgrading of his characters in his later plays. The characters of the plays like **Old Times** and **Betrayal** are rich and sophisticated. Pinter's own social and financial position had improved with his success as a playwright. His play **Tea Party** deals with the social climbing of a man of humble origin. It corresponds to Pinter's own admission to higher social circles. Pinter's experience of unemployment, running from one place to another in search of work and shelter, that induced rootlessness and insecurity, had a great impact on Pinter's early themes.

Pinter's two successive marriages, first to a stage actress *Vivien Merchant* in 1956 and then to a biographer *Lady Antonia Fraser* in 1980 is another aspect of Pinter's life which left an impact on certain aspects of his works. As regards the impact of his first wife, Pinter emphatically denies that she inspired the creation of any female character: 'No I've never written any part for any actor and the same applies to my wife.' But Vivien Merchant after the failure of their marriage made announcement in the press laying claim on Pinter's success. she insisted that, 'There is a lot of me in many of his character. We're still married in spirits. He knows that we're tied by an umbilical cord.' One may be least interested in the hidden truths of such remarks. However, it is acceptable that a woman who lived with the playwright for about twenty years would appear in his work may be in disguised form.

Pinter's affair and marriage with *Antonia* may or may not have influenced his recent plays. As usual, Pinter denies any connection between his life and his art and contends that the writer and his work are two completely isolated things, two worlds apart. However, many critics associate his living with *Antonia* with the theme of adultery in *Betrayal* and hint that the plays is in a way of a reflection of Pinter's personal life and affairs.

Pinter's work came along during the collapse of Empire and the development of the new consumer capitalism of an electronic age. Pinter grew up in a working class environment. His work confronts that new age and the utopian aspirations which at first surrounded it. His theatre is one of dislocation, of the lack of connection in the modern city. He goes against the grain of optimism of the decade, against the liberalist matching of affluence and reason. Pinter conceived life in a city as both a comic and tragic experience. It is hilarious in the failures of his members to define their aspirations and their compulsive marking of intention, tragic in victimization of like by like, in the impulsive cruelty of underprivileged. He conveys an abiding sense of human frailty of the capacity of people to become trapped in their own strategies, to follow the logic of the games they play until it becomes self-defeating. Often the game starts as the illusion of playfulness without strings but then turns into a nightmare where all true feeling is suffocated.

Although Pinter has not consciously looked to any particular dramatist for the guidance, he acknowledges the influence of a number of writers: 'I read *Hemingway*, *Dostoevski*, *Joyce* and *Henry Miller* at a very early age and *Kafka* I'd read *Beckett's* novels too but I'd never heard of *Ionesco* until I'd written the first few plays. Of these he

says *Kafka* and *Beckett* had made the greatest impression on him.' When I read them it rang a bell, that's all within me. I thought: something is going on here which is going on in me too.' Admitting his longstanding admiration of *Samuel Beckett* Pinter comments: 'You don't write in a vacuum; you're bound to absorb and digest other writing and I admire Beckett's so much that something of its texture might appear in my own. I myself have no idea whether this is so, but if it is, then I am grateful for it.' But whereas *Kafka* and *Beckett* portray a world of fantasy and dream, Pinter remains on the firm ground of reality. Though in some of his early plays, symbolic or supernatural elements are present in the action the blind Negro in *The Room*, the match seller in *A Slight Ache*, the starting point is a real situation with real and natural dialogue. Pinter concentrates on the dramatization of real characters dreams and anxieties. Gradually Pinter abandons the elements of fantasy and prefers to remain within a frame work of real events. Pinter's plays reflect the mood of frustration prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s. People sensed that they were caught up in some action where the causes were too large or remote to be useful either in life or theatre.

Pinter was neither under the influence nor even aware of the philosophy of existentialism of *Martin Heidegger* and *Jean Paul Sartre*. But as Pinter's plays are the reactions to the same milieu which gave rise to the philosophy of existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre, Pinter's preoccupation with selfhood bears some similarity with that of existential philosophers. *Martin Heidegger's* concern with man's confrontation with himself and the nature of his own being and the experience of dread which is nothing less than a living being's basic awareness of the threat of non-being, of annihilation. Heidegger differentiates man as existed from being man. The latter is aware of a vague but very real sense of threat, a sense which increases his sense of isolation. In *Being and Time* the treatment of dread introduces the phenomenological description of 'care.' In his essay 'What is Metaphysics' Heidegger introduces the experience of nothingness which discloses being. In any case, for Heidegger, *Dasein* is shot through with care. Man's continuous object is his being in the world as such. Mood succeeds mood, but pervading each is a sense of cosmic uneasiness and man's very capacity as a being in advance of him makes this uneasiness inescapable. Heidegger has insisted that the solitary person, confronted by the inauthentic 'they' can achieve a life of authenticity

only through living in the expectation of death. For him the primal and joyless modalities of human existence are anxiety, guilt and care. These force one into resoluteness (Heidegger) or an engagement (Sartre) in which Dasein takes on its own authentic being.

For *Heidegger* the particular Being who partakes of authentic being, in this way becomes an agent of being's revelation. Sartre sees human consciousness as the void of nothing surrounded by objects of being in the world at large. For that very reason the self must be the foundation of all action and value. In so far as it s consciousness chose to act it confronts the very consciousness, its own which had previously been void. *Sartre's* forging of an existential dualism out of the void of self paradoxically gives to self hood an ontological status which it lacks in *Heidegger*. He replaces the celebration of the oneness of being with the self conscious knowledge of nothingness.

Pinter was unwilling to accept the label of being a Freudian. In two interviews he had explicitly stated to have never read Freud. For a well informed writer like Pinter, denial of familiarity with Freud's work sound strange. From Pinter's method of portraying characters which is closely related to psychological and psychoanalytic methods and his interest in psychology of his characters, critics have come to believe that the label of Freudian in respect of Pinter is inevitable, *Katherine Worth* rightly asserts:

*His interest gathers round the revelation of character: He focuses attention on the subtext, the Freudian slips, compulsive repetitions and so on that give the character away: We are drawn into 'reading' them.*

Pinter's chief concern with man's experience of pain and suffering on account of the unfulfilment of his material, libidinous or spiritual needs, that the present research undertakes to discuss, is comparable to Freud's concern with life's ultimate disjunction between passion and morality. Freud is a full-blooded romantic. His romanticism consists of an ultimate disjunction between individual and society. He represents our life as a constant tension between the ethical code installed in us by society and the ever unsatisfied demands of our own libido. As with all romantics, Freud sees no method of overcoming this tension. The ethical code and the libido are the fundamental aspects of



the self which are irreconcilable opposed to one another. Indeed, Freud regards human life as constructed out of a fragile artifice designed to deal with this inevitable tension.

The individual's behavior results from an interaction of three key systems within the personality: id, ego and super ego. The id consists of primitive biological drives which are two types (i) constructive drives, primarily of a sexual nature which constitutes the libido or basic energy of life and (ii) destructive drives which tends towards aggression, destruction and eventual death. Thus life or constructive instincts are opposed by death or destructive instincts. Here it may be noted that Freud used the term sex in a broad sense to refer to almost everything of a pleasurable nature from eating to creativity.

The idea operates in the terms of the pleasures principle and is concerned only with the immediate gratification of instinctual needs. It is completely selfish and unconcerned with reality or moral consideration. Consequently the second key system- the ego develops and mediates between the demands of the id and the realities of the external world. Here it may be emphasized that Freud viewed id demands- especially sexual and aggressive strivings as reflecting an inherent conflict between the animal instincts of the individual and the inhibitions and regulations imposed by society. Since the id-ego relationship is merely one of expediency, Freud introduces a third key system – the super ego, which is the growth of learning the taboos and the moral values of the society. As the super ego develops, we find an additional inner control system coming into operation to cope with the uninhibited desires of the id. The relationship between these sub-systems of id, ego and super ego are of crucial significance in determining behavior. Often the instinctual desires and the demands of the id are in conflict with super ego demands of the social world. As the result the individuals finds himself in the state of unresolved tension.

The purpose of this brief reference to the existential philosophy of *Heidegger* and Sartre and to psychology of *Freud* is never to suggest that Pinter in any way was under the influence of contemporary philosophy and psychology. This reference is made only to point out that Pinter's vision was just an outcome of contemporary cultural milieu. It also seeks to confirm the universality of the problem Pinter has taken up in his plays. It is a matter of universal acceptance that human condition is permanently and irremediably

unsatisfactory. Man can never be completely at home in the world because his true self in one way or another is compromised by the circumstances of his existence. His life involves ultimate disjunction between what he is and what he wishes to be. Harold Pinter takes up this fundamental problem of human life in his plays. His characters who can be discussed in three groups in accordance with their dominant needs, material, libidinous or spiritual, contribute to the projection of his vision of life. The pattern of dualism between intention and the result that informs the existence of two worlds, the world of hard reality and the world of dream and vision obviously communicates Pinter's impression of the strange world of patterns and structures and also of beings that move by mysterious and unpredictable impulses.

Pinter's characters, both proletariat and bourgeois of the plays like *The Caretaker*, *No Man's Land*, *Night School*, *The Dumb Waiter*, and *Tea Party* have material aspirations in terms of sustenance, comforts and status. The character in *The Caretaker* has very modest aspiration. *Davies* desires food and shelter. *Aston* wants to build a shed for himself with his own hands. *Mick* who is in the building trade aspires to transform his flat into a palace. The aspirations of these characters do not materialize on account of their own shortcomings and not due to the twist of their fate. *Davies* is thrown out of the caretaker's job because he is quarrelsome, he is lazy, ill-tempered and he deceives himself and others. *Aston* fails in his mission due to his mental disorders and *Mick* does nothing except talking big and making tall claims. *Spooner* of *No Man's Land* is a refined version of *Davies* who, like *Davies* aspires for food and shelter. *Spooner* has had humiliating experience of hunger and unemployment in alien lands. The prospects of realizing his aspirations come his way when he is picked up from a pub by *Hirst*, a rich and successful man of letters. But his hope to get shelter in the hospitable household are shattered on account of his pride and arrogance. He is ungrateful and ill-tempered. He bites the hand that feeds. Had he played his cards properly, he could have won the favour of lonely *Hirst* who was in need of a friend and companion. Thus his frustration arises from his own misdeeds. Frustration in *Night School* arises from unwise decision and misplaced faith. *Walter* who is tired of his criminal ways and the ignominy it brings, desires to open a small business and lead an honest life. He pins his hope on two people – *Solto*, his friend and *Sally*, the mistress. Both of them betray him. *Solto* betrays him by

being selfish. Scared by *Solto's* lecherous moves Sally walks out in disgust. Sally's aspirations for a comfortable living are frustrated on account of the twist of fate. She quits the job of a hostess in a night-club as well as the teaching job under embarrassing situations so as to escape sexual exploitation by an old lecher. Walter on the other hand is himself responsible for his frustration. He makes the mistake of depending on a man who is selfish and undependable. The dualistic pattern is obvious in *The Dumb Waiter* unlike *Avies, Spooner and Walter*, *Gus* the protagonist, is materially well-off. He aspires for the comforts and leisure of a bourgeois life. Working for a mysterious underworld organization, he is subjected to a process of alienation. The ruthless employer denies him all that he aspires for. It engenders frustration which erupts into violence. *Gus* digs his own grave by acting foolishly, shouting slogans of protest in disobedience of the code of conduct the organization maintains. *Gus* continues to argue and refuses to obey the instructions of the organization which takes recourse to a remedial measure. The result is catastrophic for *Gus*. *Disson* of *Tea Party* aspires for a respectable position in society that will wipe out his plebian memories and give him an elitist image. He thinks he can achieve his goal of climbing the ladders of social hierarchy by arranging the public school education for his twin sons and marrying *Diana*, the daughter of state official of distinction. But both his marriage as well as his sons' public school education was unsatisfying result. Aware of his wife's social superiority *Disson* feels socially and sexually inadequate. With his flagging self-confidence he seeks fulfillment in a voluptuous secretary *Wendy*. The guilt of conjugal betrayal and his unfulfilled sexual urges prove disastrous. Besides, he experiences tension between crude working-class world of his parents and the polished worlds of his sons with public education. *Disson* is thus a victim of psychological distress. The pursuit of material satisfaction is thus the goal of Pinter's characters like *Davies, Aston, Walter, Gus and Disson*. Some of these characters aspire for food and shelter whereas others strive for comfort, leisure or a respectable position in society. But their aspirations do not materialize. They fail to attain the fulfillment of even the most modest needs sometimes on account of their own weakness or unwise decision and sometimes due to the twist of the fate. The discussion of the characters' aspirations and the results bring out a dualistic framework that is very important features of Pinter's plays. It informs Pinter's interpretation of human life.

Pinter's characters in the play like *A Slight Ache*, *The Hot House*, *The Lover*, *The Collection*, *The Basement*, *Landscape*, *Silence*, *Old Times*, *Family Voices*, *A Kind of Alaska* and *Victoria Station* are basically libidinous. In these plays one comes across a large variety of sexual manifestations from purely heterosexual and homosexual to the bisexual. The characters are materially well-off. Some of them are sexually desperate and some are keen about the modalities of sexual nicety. But all characters show deep impression in matters of the libido. Sexual desire in respect of individual characters is contradictory and their fulfillment is unattainable. The gulf between the aspirations and attainment suggests a dualistic pattern in Pinter's vision of reality and it is presented in totality. It is evident that all the characters, sexually desperate as well as those who are interested in erotic elegance, fail in their pursuit of happiness through sex. In *A Slight Ache* *Flora's* search for sexual satisfaction through acceptance of the match-seller as her husband is disappointing experience. Her, seeking liberations from her impotent husband and accepting a lover is a wrong choice. Sexuality is not full attainable and reckless sexuality is inhuman and even destructive. This is clearly brought out in *The Hothouse*, *Roote's* libidinous thrust and its aberration point out the destructive nature of sexuality. *Richard and Sarah* in *The Lover* are confused and frustrated. The passionate sexual needs and formalized sexual expression are irreconcilable in respect of this couple. The basic division reflected in this couple shows the pattern of dualism in Pinter's perception of reality. *Stella* in *The Collection* cannot achieve sexual fulfillment from her homosexual husband. As *Las* in *The Basement* lacks the traits of virility, his sexual aspiration along the line of illustration of Persian love Manual remain unfulfilled. The experience of *Beth and Duff* in *Landscape* arises from their incompatibility. *Duff* is coarse, clumsy and unimaginative. *Beth* is his opposite, her needs are irreconcilable. Neither *Bate* nor *Rumsey* in *Silence* can fulfill the sexual needs of *Ellen* because both of them are incomplete and inadequate. In *Old Times*, *Kate's* own rigidity spoils the chance of sexual fulfillment. The idea of reconciliation with the world of men is unacceptable to her. In *Family Voices* the young man runs away from his mother's repressive clutches to fulfill his libidos urge. Unfortunately he lands himself in a land where prostitutes and homosexuals frequent regularly. The disease ridden place shatters his confidence. In *A Kind of Alaska* *Deborah's* suffering from sleeping sickness for twenty years stands in her

way of sexual fulfillment. In *Victoria Station* the driver has to make a difficult choice between his sexual fulfillment and his job. The discrepancy between intention and result in the matters of the libido is Pinter's main concern in the characters discussed here. It is due to the claims of society which are contradictorily and irreconcilable. Man is a passionate being and sex is his basic need which must be fulfilled. Individuals are emotionally upset if their sex desire is not properly satisfied. As a passionate being, the individual may desire unrestrained sexuality which is unattainable in the framework of the society. As a result he lives in a state of unresolved tension between the inner world of unsatisfied sex impulse and the narrow rigid framework. Pinter's plays thus exemplify and confirm the pattern of duality which obviously informs his tragic worldly outlook.

Human suffering arises from failures and frustration of man's search for love, warmth, belonging, independence or self-expression is Pinter's chief concern in, *The Room*, *The Dwarfs*, *Betrayal*, *The Birthday Part*, *A Night Out*, and *The Homecoming*, *One For The Road*, *Mountain Language*, *Party Time*, *Moonlight* and *Ashes to Ashes*. The protagonists of these plays have dominant spiritual aspirations which do not materialize. The need for the love and affiliation, like the needs of sustenance and sexuality, is basic. The fulfillment of the need of love and to receive love is very crucial for human happiness. It warrants peace and contentment. Unlike the material libidinous aspirations, spiritual aspirations for love and warmth or self-expression are not overtly expressed in verbal terms, yet they are deeply rooted in the psyche of characters. However, these aspirations motivate and determine the behavior of characters and interpersonal relationships of the characters. The characters having spiritual aspirations may be broadly classified into two groups- one group long for love and human contact and other group seek satisfaction through self-expression in art. The gap between the characters' aspirations and their attainments suggest the dualism in terms of Pinter's view of love in the world. *Rose* desires to maintain the sweet loving relationship with her husband who remains cold and indifferent. Her longing for love and friendship is never reciprocated. In *The Dwarfs*, *Len's* hopes for genuine human contact are shattered on account of duplicity of friends. Even superficial ties of contact are missing. The play stresses the lack of genuine friendship in a world of shifting relationships. Genuine friendship is a world of shifting relationships. *Betrayal* dramatizes the disruption of fraternal and marital

relationship. Genuine friendship and marital happiness can be attained only on terms of equality. *Robert's* friendship with *Jerry* and his marriage with *Emma* dissolve because characters are lecherous. They are neither themselves nor to others. *The Birthday Party* presents a conflict between the irreconcilable claims of the individual and society. *Stanley*, the artist is subjugated to the pressures of social conformity. Oppressive forces of society represented by *Goldberg* and *McCann* in the play are bent destroying the artist. The plight of a young man of twenty eight is the main theme of *A Night Out*. *Albert* is keen to live independent without his mother but gets captured in the spirit of his mother's possessiveness love, he always feels insecure and uncertain of his powers. He is stifled and constrained and even an act of violence cannot set him free. He finds it hard to move away from his mother's love. The protagonist of *The Homecoming* suffers on account of his inability to form contact with others. *Teddy*, an exponent of ideas and a doctor of philosophy fails to enter into inter-personal with the sexually maladjusted and instinctive members of his family who prefers degeneration of refinement. He lacks strength of passion to sustain marital bond. *Ruth*, who remains unsatisfied with her husband and children, seeks fulfillment in her husband's family. *Teddy*, looks for shelter in his works of philosophy. In *One for the Road*, *Victor*, an intellect who is sensitive to human rights issues and voices his concern is subjected to physical, psychological and spiritual brutalities at the hand of an interrogator who happens to represent the absolutist state. His struggle for freedom ends in torture and humiliation for himself and rape of his wife and the murder of his little son. *Mountain Language* dramatizes the freedom struggle of a section of the society led by a young woman who is forced to compromise her respect to get husband and others released from the jail who have been branded as the enemies of the state. The effort of the people tends to be futile. *Party Time*, deals with young idealist *Jimmy's* dreams of an utopian society that abounds in sunshine, love peace and freedom of the people. But the idealist finds himself in a solitary confinement sucking the darkness of the cell *Moonlight*, presents the *Schism in Andy's* aspirations and his attainment. His relationship with his wife and children deteriorates to a state of indifference, disgust and bitterness and the children refuse to meet their dying father. *Ashes to Ashes* dramatizes the disillusionment and sufferings of *Rebecca* whose aspirations of love, respect and social status from her lover-husband are frustrated. She

turns insane on discovering her love to be sex-maniac and homicide. Thus, like the characters with material aspirations or like those with libidinous aspirations, characters aspiring for love or belonging also frustrated in their search. Characters like *Rose*, *Len*, *Robert* and *Teddy* seek fulfillment through love warmth and genuine relationship. *Albert* strives for independence whereas *Stanley* longs for satisfaction in art. But the mission of life is the pursuit of happiness in the case of all these characters is unattainable. Hence their suffering in human life is inevitable. Pinter's worldwide view is obviously tragic.

Pinter's characters thus contribute to the projection of a common human satisfaction. All of us go through experiences in life which are painful and disappointing because things do not work out the way we expect them to work. The characters enact their hope and despair and illustrate Pinter's sense of the strange world of patterns and structures of beings that move by mysterious and unpredictable impulses. The situation dramatized in the plays communicated something about the stress, the violence, the heart-break of life in the modern world. It is important as an expression of the mood and the atmosphere of the time. It is also important as a metaphor for all the happiness and the tragedy of human condition. A sensitive man who can react to the emotional climate of Pinter's plays can gain a deep insight and a greater awareness of its true nature.

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