

## Picturesque of Validity, Simplicity and Strength in the characters of Pinter's *The Homecoming*

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### Abstract

Raymond Williams' one of the dramatic ideas is 'structures of feeling'. It is based on the social and political context of the theatrical text. It is set within an individual psyche and filled with theatrical entertainment such as despair, contempt, illusion, alienation, rejection, violence and degradation. Likewise Absurdity, power, ambiguity, and brutality are reflected in the Pinteresque characters. Both of them used identical way of approaching human beings and freed from tortured life. The characters are dispersed in different angles by him. He depicts the character's thoughts and feelings and frees to live their innocent life. The following ideas are analyzed in Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming* (1965) theatrical point of view the characters behavior inside British cultural and social approach about sexuality, validity, simplicity and strength of their feelings.

**Keywords:** *Absurdity; Ambiguity; Brutality; Sexuality; Simplicity; Validity.*

### 1. Introduction

Raymond Williams's theatrical spot is 'the Structure of feeling'. He focused on political and social context of the dramatic textual relationship. He cherished the dramatist as a successful artist, in a richer, more rounded manner, than context or social context could convey. Williams identified the originality of man and woman relationship in different perception on cultural and emotional. From this way the dramatist has brought everyday dialogue in a dramatic way to submit their personal experience to the audience. The characters are some sort of sensibility in his/her life. The characters understand the real world or real personality of the person deeply set in his/her mind finally deliberate the audience. Williams proves that the sensibility of human mind is an 'equivalent to the formation of a particular mind: a whole activity, a whole way of perceiving and responding' which could not 'be reduced to either 'thought' or feeling' (William 1976: 282-3). Williams feels that the dramatist 'the structure of feeling' and 'the materiality of culture' criticized his dramatic works of *Preface to Film* (1954), *Modern Tragedy* (1992), *The Country and the City* (1993), and *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (1970). Williams does succeed in the structure of feeling in these works of *Drama in Performance* (1954a), *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (1964), and *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (1976).

Williams first attempt to find the 'structure of feeling' in T.S Eliot in *Modern Tragedy*. T.S. Eliot mostly distinct that the works of Christian's life. The real life of Christians reveals that in his *Murder in Cathedral* and *The Cocktail Party*. Raymond Williams found the originality of Christian believes in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* "The blood of the martyr not only fertilizes the world, but also cleanses the world of its ordinary filth, and marks the head of the believers, as a permanent reminder of the sin of their normal condition": "The sin of the world is upon our heads... the blood of the martyrs and the agony of the saints is upon our heads". Williams bear out 'the structure of feeling' in his *Modern Tragedy* is the simplest form of sacrifice, in which a man is eradicated so that the body of men may live or live more fully, we have almost abandoned. Whoever accepted the Lord Savior, he has alive in their soul and pave the way to everyday. The people know the idea, from other cultures and periods, but it retains emotional significance in one case only: at the centre of Christian belief. There, the manner of its retention proves the distance of the people have moved away from the idea as such, since the man Jesus is also, for believers, the Son of God, and the action, if it is to be significant, must be seen as part of a divine rather than a merely human history. Other apparently comparable cases, deprived of this sanction, are seen as essentially primitive the scattering of the body for fertility, the sharing of the blood of the man who died. If it is not a divine action, it is a primitive magical action, and flat comparison of one with the other is even offensive. Here the decisive importance of context is most ironically proved (1992: 156-7).

Raymond Williams "Structure of feeling' means of expressing the significance of social relationships in the constitution of the experience of a work of art, and in the experience that the successful artist reproduces, in a richer, more rounded manner, than 'context' or 'social context' could convey" (Williams1992:81). Longhurst (1990) discussed the theory of Williams 'structure of feeling' and 'knowable community' and he examined in his paper identify the culture and stress on cultural struggle. Williams has given more responsibility to the social experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings. From this point of view William dealt with the personal qualities of cultural and emotional refinement as evident and unexamined social facts. He expected for another dimensions of the word including the sense of an organized response to experience. The necessity of structure of feeling, it is linking structure with feeling and he has analyzed the sense of an elusive, yet discoverable, organization of feeling, which extended beyond the merely person aspect of feeling. Williams first introduced the expression 'structure of feeling' in 1954 in *Preface to Film*. He deals with the introductory part of the human beings understood themselves and their fundamental relationships with each other, with nature, the firmament, and with God. From this way this paper analyzed the Pinter's *The Homecoming*. Pinter is also peculiar in his dramatic work and helps the suppressed people. He precisely said different part of culture and language introduced the audience. In the Second World War period most of the people are suppressed by the elite. Pinter felt that to get a freedom for the people that's why he brought this idea theatrical way and ease the people and overtly interacted with the audience. Harold Pinter is also mentioned all the oeuvre about Christian and Buddhist thoughts in his *The Birthday Party*,

*The Homecoming*, *One for the Road*, *Old Times* and *The Caretaker* etc. Milligan proved that Harold Pinter's 'familiar' structure of feeling with its 'precarious hold on reality'.

Williams also criticized about Pinter in his work of *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (1968). The good instances of 'the structure of absurdity' are Gissing's *Demos* and Eliot's *Felix Holt*. Both the plays are theatrical play; Milligan portrays that "if you get involved' in the struggle for reform 'you get into trouble' is plainly absurd". It is true in the real global because the involvement of struggle for improvement on behalf of the working class got essential into trouble. Shaw's *Pygmalion* is an example of feelings between the teacher and students feelings into highly motivated the audience. The student came from the middle class Shaw's thought she might be known many things from the social milieu that why he creates the person rather than internal virtue. Hammond demonstrated that the structure of feeling in the plays *The Homecoming*, "an uncannily accurate mimesis of ordinary conversation is formed to conceal and to belie the extreme structure of feeling that supports it". Esslin proved that the structure of feeling through "the Theatre of the Absurd strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought" (Esslin 2004: 24).

Gillen claims that the structure of feelings of Pinter's character in *The Homecoming* Teddy, who possesses normal way of life of which the others "wouldn't have the faintest idea", (Gillen 1970:61) abandons his wife to a life of prostitution so that he may return to his abstract theorizing. Pinter's most of the plays present moreover a quite secure world threatened by the unknown people, or a world of fact which cannot merge with the world of meaning. Lenny, in *The Homecoming*, probably best expresses the dilemma of the majority of Pinter's characters when he asks: "apart from the known and the unknown, what else is there?" (1965:52).

Pinter's *The Homecoming* is called a stage play. The play setting for the stage is an old house in North London. On the stage however you only see the one room and this large room becomes the centre for the Pinter's play. Max is the father to three grown sons; he was worked as a retired butcher. Now he is taking care of the house and his sons. Sam is Max's brother; he is a fussy little man, a private chauffeur who drives a Humber Super Snipe. Teddy is the oldest son; he is a Professor of Philosophy. He is living in America with his wife Ruth. Lenny is the middle son of Max. He is a pimp. Joey is the youngest son; Joey is a demolition man but he would love to be a boxer. Ruth is the only daughter-in-law; Ruth is happily married to Teddy. Maybe Pinter had family matters on his mind when he put pen to paper, it has often been said that *The Homecoming* is centred on a Jewish family. Pinter feels that family members' habitual life and understanding of their innocent structure of life live in the global world. The only woman's life is happy and tortured moment happened in her earlier life captured by Pinter and shows to the audience. The play takes place is naturally the family. The characters are quite and stable behaviors become serious violence happened, when one of the brothers with his wife returns home from America. All the men's sexual obsessions in this family are channeled upon the only woman in the house. In the desire of the men, in their behavior, she becomes a whore and cannot

but appeal to revenge by accepting the role and over satisfying their cravings. The final scene shows an imposing woman with whining men begging at her feet and nobody on stage or in the audience knows that really will happen.

In this paper examine the picturesque of the characters feelings in Pinter's most controversial play, *The Homecoming*, in hope of finding a practical approach to Pinter's treatment of character. First, some general principles of characters feelings are discussed. Pinter used the character in his drama consists of an order of impressions communicated from the character to the audience. His characters are interesting and dramatically significant when the sequence of his actions gives the impression of being inconsistent. The audiences are forced to restore unity by perceiving the causes of the inconsistency. Most of the time Pinter forced the audience to see the play. Let us suppose, for example, that a character in a play appears in two successive scenes. In the first he talks and acts like a rational person; in the second, he is irrational. The audience must seek an explanation for the change in conduct from sanity to madness.

Pinter's play is entirely different from other dramatists because he mainly focussed on suppressed group of people life delivered into the audience mind. *The Homecoming* is also clearly stated that one woman has affected by many person. The play is focused on the Jewish family life. The Jewishes behaves like only group of people genius in the global world. At the same time analysed in this paper the character validity, simplicity, strength and sexuality. Every one of the character are some sort of identification in their mind. Here, five men's are interrogate with one woman. Esslin described "a character on stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experience, his present behaviour or his aspirations, nor give a comprehensive analysis of his motives, is as legitimate and as worthy of attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all these things" (1961:206). Styan established "true irony of the drama" as "the steady and insistent communication to the privileged spectator of a meaning hidden from the characters" (1963:49-51). Most critics focus on his use of language. Esslin says that "Pinter presents a heightened, yet clinically accurate, picture of everyday life which emphasizes the absurdity of colloquial speech" (1961:198-217).

## 2. Validity of Lenny

How will Lenny convince the others while assuring himself of the validity of his assumed role? Theatrical element common to the pre-literary spectacle "is the basic simplicity which the shows personify, "with the minimum of effort they achieve the maximum of effect" (Pinter 1965:9). It only makes him a bigger target for characters like Lenny, whose push to Teddy's knowledge is only met by a weak attempt at escape:

Teddy: I'm afraid I'm the wrong person to ask.

Lenny: But you're a philosopher. Come on, be frank. What do you make of all this business of being and not-being? (Pinter 1965:68).

On the other hand, Teddy's weak point is not his pride in his education. Teddy's focus is a resistance to direct conflict. Teddy is planned to attack indirectly in which his target is forced to react:

Lenny: You mean you didn't stumble on it [the cheeseroll] by mistake?

Teddy: No, I saw you put it there. I was hungry, so I ate it. (Pinter 1965:80)

Since Teddy is not able to act directly, Ruth proves to be more than a match by playing to this unwillingness. She waited to see others action after that only she shows her power over to other in the mean time Teddy is only person more competitive with her. She never asking any question to other from the beginning itself. From the beginning itself Teddy is the only person has to plan to be the more dominant, and he control over the conversation with him.

### 3. Simplicity of Teddy

The simplicity of the confrontation commands attention and because of the possibility that a character may be ousted by another at any time, interest is held almost regardless of the words which the characters throw at each other. Attention is grabbed by a motion and held there by the succession of one motion only to another. The scenes don't follow each other in a predictable fashion in both Punch and Pinter shows; they take over from each other almost violently. Pinter maintains simplicity throughout his plays as the technique serves to intensify the relationships between the stage characters. Trite conversations or ordinary daily activities become engrossing because they are presented without any elaboration or complex accompaniment. In this way, one standard situational setting can be utilized repeatedly in different plays and produce an assortment of effects. The fact that the plays are complete despite the openness of situation and deliberate withdrawal of material can be seen to be a result of their basic simplicity. A stage, two characters, and a door. The essentials of Pinter's drama are all the elements that were vital in the Punch and Judy shows.

*The Homecoming* (1965) is one of Pinter plays that works largely on this sequential pattern. "Pinter tells us that he wants to write plays which tell a story, chronicle a series of happenings, without the artificial because and therefore of drama but simply in the basic childhood terms of land then...and then ...and then. This simplicity emphasizes the activities on the stage and the ideas which are projected from them rather than the narrative which often repetitive and secondary".

### 4. Strength of Joey

The power struggle among the characters, who try to win dominance over another, provides the moment-to-moment dramatic tension to the audience who keep on guessing the ultimate winner in the power game. Max, his two younger sons, Lenny and Joey, and his bachelor brother Sam, control the family. The reception of Ruth in this male domain is very ambiguous. Their male chauvinism dictates hate, abuse and sexual requests of the woman; their childishness instigates them to argue for her motherly care and fondness. Ruth's power is not just abusive, negative, it is likewise positive, productive of knowledge. Foucault's (1977) reveals that

“cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces areas of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that he may have picked up of him have a place with this position”.

## 5. Ruth’s Liberation

Pinter, in his plays, analyzes this ‘verbal and visual’ power of language. Most of the critics argue that Pinter’s woman characters symbolize power with themselves, as well as they dominated others through their voices. The main goal of Pinter’s characters, irrespective of whether they situate themselves on the side of conventionality or on that of abnormality, is to attain power by imposing their singular space position as the supreme law. Therefore, it is this strong clash of bodily expressions which gives the concept of power an ambiguous status to be constantly submitted to a harsh process of negotiation.

When the play starts there is conflicted between Lenny and his father, Max. Max requests that Teddy and Ruth leave his house, yet by the end of the play, he is sobbing and yearning for attention from Ruth. The abuse and disparaging terms used within the family are not so much an element of power as a way of life. As there was no real mother figure inside the household, the men have passed into a lifestyle in which they can demonstrate no affection to each other. Rather they insult each other in ways generally saved for women: bitch and slag. In spite of the fact that they fight, they work together to devise plans for establishing Ruth as a whore. Teddy avoids himself from the procedures by declining to add to the arrangement and is therefore excluded from the unity of power that the other men now hold. By clubbing together in this way, the men think that they have found a way to control Ruth how they like. At this point however, they do not expect to be overpowered once again by Ruth. Her sexual dominance and quick wits were the power that ensures her demands of a three roomed flat and a personal house keeper.

Ruth’s speech is marked by a shift between confidence and diffidence. When imposing her terms on the male managers, her speech is compelling.

Ruth: You would have to regard your original outlay simply as a capital investment. Pause.  
 Lenny: I see. All right.  
 Ruth: You’d supply my wardrobe, of course?  
 Lenny: We’d supply everything. Everything you need.  
 Ruth: I’d need an awful lot. Otherwise I wouldn’t be content.  
 Lenny: You’d have everything.  
 Ruth: I would naturally want to draw up an inventory of everything I would need, which would require your signatures in the presence of witnesses.



Lenny: Naturally.

Ruth: All aspects of the agreement and conditions of employment would have to be clarified to our mutual satisfaction before we finalized the contract.

Lenny: Of course. (Pinter 1965:85)

Ruth's in-laws who take her to be a docile character exercise power over her. She is asked to live in the house and earn her livelihood as a prostitute. She has to be controlled over others through her voice.

Ruth is the central character in the play. It is she, in reality, who is returning home. She redefines the family relationships and establishes a new order with herself at the center. At the same time, she is the most ambiguous and difficult character in the play. Ruth enters a situation in which the normal family relationships have failed. It is a parody of a family. Father and son, brother and brother, are set snarling against each other. In the scenes before the first blackout in Act I, Pinter establishes an atmosphere of hostility. Lenny and Max quarrel over cutting something out of the paper, over the food, over Lenny's knowledge of horses; Max and Lenny ridicule Sam's pride in being a good driver and Max baits him over his love life; Max rebuffs Joey when the latter comes home hungry and later over his prowess as a boxer. These arguments are overlaid with a cynical pose of loving family ties. Ruth's first appearance conveys the impression of stillness and quiet. Her inactivity is set in contrast to Teddy's agitated excitement.

## 6. Conclusion

Surveying Pinter's drama, one observes that his plays attempt to explore and question the received and established attitudes of men and society towards women: sex, gender and the role of male-female in society. Equally, *The Homecoming* (1965) portrays the received attitudes of the male characters toward the female, Ruth. They deliberately try to overpower and abuse her as the embodiment male-dominated society try to misinterpret Ruth. Max, as the father of the house uses the most vicious words against Ruth calling her tart, slut, and whore in order to disgrace and disregard her. However, Ruth is so witty and intelligent that she can neutralize the effects of their masculine plots to the extent that she not only tactfully rejects falling into their dominance but also succeeds in dominating them and taking control of the house. In this light, Ruth is the only cleverest character in the play who takes advantages of the others, because they seem to be merely funny or threatening.

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