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The Conflict of Gender Performance in
Harold Pinter *The Birthday Part 1957* and
THE Homocomic 1965

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Dedication

- To my family
- To my dearest friends(Asma& Saliha)
- To my cousin Timoucha

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Abstract

This dissertation has explored the representation of gender conflict within the theatre of Harold Pinter. What is sought is a literary analysis of the Absurd representation of male and female as well as the conflict that appears between them in two magnificent plays. It outlines the most influential philosophers, namely the French Simon de Beauvoir and the American Judith Butler. As these two figures provide us with a better understanding of the notion of Gender, Masculinity and Femininity, that facilitate the analytical phase of Pinter's works. This study points out the dramatic change of woman position in the second half of the twentieth century British society. This study aims at exploring the way Pinter's characters are struggling to gain power and dominance, as well as The main objective of this paper is to show the battle that Pinter established between the two genders parties on his stage.

Key terms: Gender, The Absurd theatre, Masculinity, Femininity.

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General Introduction

Since the creation of Adam and Eve, the position of woman with man has been an important issue that has no final solution. The conflict is about unequal situation between the two genders up rose in various occasions. Women have the desire to be treated as men, the fact that established the concept of gender conflict. This later, became an area of interest in several works and domains such as philosophy, politics and literature.

The expansion of gender concept caused by second wave feminism that dated back to the period from mid-1960 to late 1970's. Feminist criticism reacted against the suppression and subjugation of women in society. It was utilized as an analytical

category to draw a separation line between biological sex differences and social constructions that is related with behaviors and competencies. These are significant allotted with "masculine" or "feminine".

The French existentialist Simone De Beauvoir produced her seminal book "le deuxième sexe" (the Second Sex) in which she spreads her philosophical ideas about the true existence of woman and her role in society. De Beauvoir argues that women have been considered as "the other" a subservient to the chauvinist male in the patriarchal society. "He is the subject, he is the absolute, she is the other.."(De Beauvoir, Introduction)

In this respect, woman's tongue prescribes the dominance of man over woman as they are non-existence figures in gendered society, which depends on evaluating a person regarding to its biological features. The Second Sex came to break with the Victorian values of women marginalization and the ideas that refers to women as a Wight angel in the house, in order to establish a modern woman who has the ability to draw her career by her own.

Another philosophical figure shapes the modern understanding of gender, the eminent Judith Butler expanded in De Beauvoir assumption about Gender/Sex division, hence, she strongly believed that if gender is socially constructed, then it happens as a result of repeated

acts that harden into appearance “[T]he task is not whether to repeat n but how to repeat , or, indeed to repeat and through a radical profiler-action of gender, to displace the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself”(Butler.p148)

The two feminist philosophers are the woman’s tongue in post-war society , the first addresses a message of an independent and free woman to break her from the patriarchal bonds as the second clarifies the meaning of gender on which masculinity and femininity are the production of the social interaction through various repeated acts as these genders are an independent category from sex.

During the post-war era , women were regarded to inferior position to men , their status has been regarded the emergence of gender division encourage women to improve their situation in the chauvinist system. Besides , The demands for equal rights and responsibilities in all significant aspects of social and political life. Various authors depicted men and women relationship as they portray the Victorian image of the ideal wife or woman expected by man. Hence, others tend to draw the perfect encaustic that depends on independency, freedom and supremacy.

Theatre has been a fertile platform in which gender insinuated itself on. Several playwrights tend to portray masculine/feminine existence and the dynamic role of female in the post-war social

structure .Harold Pinter , Eungene Ionesco and many others depict females position within family , society and even political phase depending on the basis of the absurd theatre , which express an illogical vision of reality.

Harold Pinter is one of the pillars of the absurd theatre and a Nobel prize laureate (2005) who produces an successful magnificent plays, as theme of patriarchal society was present in Pinter works. In fact *The Birthday Party* is a major example where Pinter sheds a light on family relationship within the chauvinist company. Women were the corpses of men's crime in this system. This dramaturgy produces in time when people remain with the Victorian norms and were stuck in the domestic sphere, they were striving for an equal representation with men. Man marginalized the woman's voice as it is the voice which he is able to neglect. As Ann Smitow points out: "In a cruel irony that is nor mark of women's oppression , when women speak as women they run a special risk of not being heard because the female voice is the voice by our culture's definition that voice- you -can ignore"(1994).

In other play of Pinter *The Homecoming* that produced in 1965, where the permissiveness of acts believes and choices emerges. In this core, Pinter paints out the remarkable changes in woman situation . the only female figure appears as a queen on the stage , who obtain power and control the kingdom of feminine males. Ruth in

The Homecoming occupied a specific position in her husband house as she enjoyed a well freedom on supremacy by which she over dominated the males under her feats.

In order to achieve the previous goals the following questions should be answered:

How Harold Pinter presents the conflict of gender performance through the Birthday Party 1957 and the Homecoming 1965?

To what extent the characters in both plays are portraying the aspects of either masculinity or femininity?

How Harold Pinter paints out a specific image for his females characters?

From an over reading of Pinter's works the following hypothesis could be the answer of this problematic

Pinter's first play deals with inequality between males and females character through various measures such as language, interaction and even number of characters in each play.

Perhaps, the character in both plays are representing something far from their real personalities the matter that creates a conflict in gender level.

Maybe the image of females in Pinter's plays present manhood aspects by which she challenges man.

This dissertation is divided in this way: The first chapter explores the meaning of Gender in philosophy focusing on Simon De Beauvoir and Judith Butler theories. It attempts also to explain the depiction of this constructed concept through various literary products in a relation to the artistic play writer Harold Pinter and his position within the modern dramatic movement. The second chapter draws upon a literary analysis of Pinter's *The Birthday Party* 1957 from both masculine and feminine perspectives, as it discusses the conflicts of the two genders that Pinter established within this stage. The final chapter opens with a literary analysis of Pinter's *The Homecoming* 1965 including a critical analysis about the portrayal of masculinity and femininity in Pinter's stage, besides a descriptive analysis about the crush between males and female on the stage of this theoretical-piece.

Chapter one: Gender: a Philosophical Inquiry

1.1 Introduction

Gender is embodied our lives, daily conversation and conflict. It is ever embed so thoroughly in our institution, actions and beliefs; gender is something we perform as butler's assumption. The notion of gender refers not to male and female, but to masculine and feminine perspectives. It is important to explore gender concept in order to demonstrate the role of each person in society and establish such balance between the two genders that lead to an equal society.

Gender has been a conventional term especially when its context has been changed by the feminist philosopher Simone De Beauvoir during the second wave of feminism in twentieth century. She defines gender as a social construct rather than a biological category equal

with sex in her book *the Second Sex*. she profess that gender roles have been socially construct ,therefore subjected to change .However, the American theorist Judith Butler expanded in the same theory. She brings a developed vision of gender in her work *Gender Trouble* which is *gender performativity*.

In this respect, several writers depict and portray gender diversity and conflict trough their literary product, such as Harold Pinter who dramatized this great struggle on his stage through two master pieces *The Birthday Party 1957* and *The Homecoming1965*.

1.2Gender

1.2.1The Origins of Gender

Fourteenth century England was marked by numerous changes in the English language, which were more extensive and fundamental than those that have taken place at any time before or since. These changes of this period affected English in both levels grammar and vocabulary, this latter remarked widely by the addition of thousands of words from French and Latin. one major example is The linguistic unit "gender" that came to the English usage from the old French "gender, genrer, engender, that has been based on the Aristotle's Greek grammatical term *genos*. whereas the earliest meanings were "kind, sort, "genos" and "type or class of noun"¹, However, its functional was as a polite way to refer to the sexes, in another word "Gender" acts as an alternative term to sexor the biological categories(chromosomes, genitalia or the physical appearance)of either male or female. Plus, The American Heritage Dictionary (5th ed.) states that gender may be defined by identity as "neither entirely female nor entirely male, these Biological definitions of gender arose where they did not exist before,

¹ Encyclopedia.com 2017-05-11

drawing on Victorian values². The essentialist ideas that people attach to man and woman exist only because of this cultural history where men and women's role became more clearly defined as separate sphere.

The concept of gender came into common English parlance in the last two decades of the twentieth century as a significant response to the feminist reaction against the suppression and subjugation of women in society. More precisely, the expansion of gender dated back to the period from mid-1960's to late 1970's that is considered as the second wave of feminism (Pitcher & Whelehan: 56).

The feminists took the mission of shifting the traditional involvement of women in British society from a domestic old woman living under the control of the patriarchal man who took the lion share in managing her life and limiting her choices, that shaped her suffering from marginalisation and dissimulation to modern vision about women who have the ability to establish their own career and enjoy the freedom of practices, where feminists agree that both man and woman might be treated equally.

From a philosophical perspective women's tongue "Simon De Beauvoir" a French philosophical writer published her book *Le Deuxième Sexe* 1989 (*The Second Sex*) through which she sends a message of freedom and independence. She creates a demarcation bridge between biological sex differences and social constructions that is related with behaviours and competencies, to contend that the real physical or mental impacts of the biological difference had been overstated to maintain a patriarchal arrangement of force and to

² The American Heritage Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin company, June 26-2012

create an awareness among women, in connection she stated that “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”(De Beauvoir :295).It is a clear diversion of gender from sex ,where the first time gender had been defined as an independent unit from the biological identity ,to argue that it is a social and cultural construction.

1.2.2Definition of Gender

Gender strongly embodied our institutions, actions, values and whims that is completely natural .thus, the analysis of the term “Gender” was integral to the feminist movements of second post war era , as it was transformed and shaped by their feminists leaders. Simone de Beauvoir was one of the most preeminent French existentialist philosophers and writers who stated the diversity between sex and Gender by examining the reasons that women have been forced to accept a place in society under men’s control who was assessed by society. De Beauvoir published an important philosophical piece of writing under the title *The Second Sex*³ in 1949, which raised a dilemma issue on the intellectual stage as biological interpretations that diverge concept of sex from Gender laying the ground to the legislation of European women’s rights.

Beauvoir’s assumption in the first chapter of the second sex entitled “ Childhood” that “One is not born, but rather becomes ,women”¹, is a key statement by which she developed a western feminist understanding of gendered identity. As she explained that the one becomes a woman, because of social expectations and pressures that create a society on which one becomes a woman out of choice.

³ A book produced by De Beauvoir in 1949 and translated to English by Borde and Sheila in November 2009.

Status of sexual difference has been the focal point in her book, she defined Gender as a social construct imposed on a sexed body.

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being... For him she is sex, absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other. (De Beauvoir: 26)

On this shore, De Beauvoir related humanity with male and man as well as she describes the domination of man's total power upon woman as a reference to gender, and its societal cultural construction that implicated the existence of one gender. Therefore, She emphasizes the negativity of being woman and branded 'the Other' and the development of this throughout childhood by societal custom depicting feminine characteristics, as a forced identity despite that Albert Camus argue that De Beauvoir made the Frenchman look ridiculous, while the novelist Philip Wylie complemented "the Second Sex as one of the few great books of our era"⁴.

Throughout the course of her work De Beauvoir addresses a message of women's freedom and independence, as she asserts on the distinction of the two concepts sex and gender as this latter determines the social and cultural which is commonly based on sex. De Beauvoir formulation enabled her to explore the argument that woman's biology has no attribution on her social and cultural identification as she could implies that gender is the cultural interpretation of that sex and is culturally constructed.

⁴ Philip Wylie (1902-1971) is an American writer who explores gender's issues and sexual identity

In contrast, the barriers that De Beauvoir shaped between sex and gender appears to establish the second body non- applicable to the individual's gender social identity, the American feminists Judith Butler, advocates her book "Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity" in 1990, where she asserts that both sex and gender are established through personal choices. "[T]he mundane way in which bodily gestures movements and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self"(Butler:519) .Butler's collapses on the distinction of sex and gender theory is an argument in order to clarify that there is no sex, that is not already gender. Which lead to the fact that gender is related to once discourse as it established his position and social identity, more precisely gender is a script of acts on which person acted out every day, he consolidated and construct our gender identity.

Butler proposed the *Perfomative theory about gender* that Bodies *that matter* from 1993 she argues that sex and gender are not able to distinguish through analyzing various context about gender. She thoughtfully tempts to reject the sex and gender division simply because sex itself is socially constructed she provides claims with an argument as biologic is also a social construction and is the starting point of gender-gender subsumes sex.

[T]he sex/gender distinction founder...if gender is the social significance that sex assume within a given culture ...then what ,if anything, is left of 'sex' once it has assumed its social character as gender?...if gender consists of the social meanings that sex assumes, then sex does not accrue social meaning as additive properties, but rather is replaced by the social meaning it takes on; sex is relinquished in the course of that assumption, and gender emerges, not as a term in a continued relationship of opposition to sex, but as the term which absorbs and displaces 'sex (Butler: 6)

Through the course of her work, Butler has profoundly expanded on interpreting the term gender as she theorizes the performativity of gender; gender is created through various repetitive activities, where the production of series of acts that consolidate a specific impression about woman or a girl and how should their notion of gender performativity changes the way we look at gender “ The act that one does, the act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that’s been going on before one arrived on the scene”⁵

Moreover, Butler related performativity to the speech act theory of J.L Austin’s *How to do things with words*. As she tries to clarify the relation between gender performativity and language in which she claims that gender is constructed and constituted only by language. In this respect language is always prior to gender identity and this latter considers as a significant activity that could bring intelligibility of subject which are the result rather than the reasons of discourse. “[W]thin the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative, that is ,constituting the identity it is purported to be”(Butler:24-5).

In her work Butler explores the idea that gender is fluid approach, as she stats; gender is not a stable identity, but a changeable identity constitute, through an artificial and stylized repeated body practices over period of time.

5 An interview with Judith Butler on what does it mean that gender is performative ?

Question: What does it mean that gender is performative?

Judith Butler: It's one thing to say that gender is performed and that is a little different from saying gender is performative. When we say gender is performed we usually mean that we've taken on a role or we're acting in some way and that our acting or our role playing is crucial to the gender that we are and the gender that we present to the world. To say that gender is performative is a little different because for something to be performative means that it produces a series of effects. We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman..

The two philosophical pillars associate with the alternative situation of women during twentieth century, as Simone De Beauvoir succeed in exploring the distinction between sex the biological faction and gender the cultural interpretation or signification of that faction , the American Butler expanded this theory when she asserts that gender related to fluidity and performativity as it reflects a series of repeated practices germane to a certain discourse.

1.2.3Femininity and masculinity

One's gender identity refers to the way on which person considers himself as masculine or feminine as to be a man or woman in a social sphere. Femininity and masculinity are quite germane to the social construct gender rather than the biological notion sex. According to social definition one is able to be male and sees himself as feminine and vice versa.

The concept of femininity has been considered as a series of various behavior and acts that are imposed by society and roles associated with the female individuals "[N]ote every female human being is necessarily a women; in order to be a women, one must participate in the mysterious and threatened reality which is femininity"(De Beauvoir:11).Moreover , the context of femininity relates to the arrangement of practices , traits and roles associated with females in the general public. Hence several philosophers consider this concept as a social construct despite its relations with some biological features. As a relation to behaviors femininity attributes moral characteristics of empathy, submissiveness, compassion and gentleness.

Simon De Beauvoir conveys the context of femininity to the immanence of activities that merely sustain life, as she suggests that in order to define the nature of womanhood , one must conceptualize it

relationally, She contends that the self/other division, when all is said in done and the male/female paired specifically is major to western thought. “she is condemned to domestic labor, which locks her into repetition and immanence; day after day it repeats itself in identical form from century to century; it produces nothing new”(De Beauvoir:98)

Beauvoir associates feminine with dominance of the patriarchal power of man, who limited woman’s choices and freedom, by which she defined as feminine gender that belongs to w certain sphere, as that measures through as sense of sympathy and tenderness.

On the shores of masculinity, Joan Roughgarden⁶ states that masculinity defies the physical appearance of male species as well as behaviors; he suggests that if a female possesses male characteristics it is acceptable to refer to her as a masculine female⁷. The concept of masculinity refers to the fact that one’s social attitude is a reflection of whom he is , as De Beauvoir implies that the man has the power to control woman’s life where the masculine is the normative default in western society “ he is the absolute, she is the other (De Beauvoir :5).

The French philosopher relates the masculine with transcendent activities that move beyond the maintenance of life itself. Thus traditionally masculinity entails being independent, dominant as well as strong and act as assertive and leadership person. “[M]ale and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being”(De Beauvoir:04)

6

Joan Roughgarden , evolution’s Rainbow : Diversity, gender and sexuality in nature and people; Berkey:university of California 2004

Beauvoir attribution of this quotation is that man is the patriarchal roller of the human being that consider him as masculine, where the relative woman as feminine is always the other who can't contribute unless in the domestic sphere as a passive participant .

1.3 Gender and literature

Throughout history, literature plays a crucial role in transmitting society's culture as it bonders us with a clearer images and information at every turn. Gender took the lion share in this phase; therefore, The ones tend to portray gender roles as reflection of his/her own sexuality or as a way to depict an ongoing conflict for equality.

The portrayal of man and woman relationship through literary product witnessed an extremely spread. Gender issues is the focal point in which any literary product depends on even though , it wasn't the subject matter of the writer to deal with gender; the depiction or the neglecting of man/ women in literature is in fact a representation of gender issue.

Despite, the emergence of "Gender" as an independent term till the twentieth century ; second wave of feminism where feminists rebel against the traditional roles of females , but several writer from the old decades and the classical literature took the mission of portraying the role of males and females relationship.

William Shakespeare the father of literature presents the most world-wide read play in the western society *Hamlet*. The play characterizes an image of woman who hangs for revenge from man. " Shakespeare has to the texts that bear his name, or the narrower issue of whether these texts prove Shakespeare as a feminist, a sexist, or something in between"(Lenz;9,10)

The French Guy De Maupassant *The Necklace* 1881. This novel portrays the place of woman from the very beginning "She was one of those pretty and charming girls.." , he creates an image of proper fascinated woman an image that lead to the realization that this text is a representation of gender role and how woman was treated in the French public setting.

Poetry also participates in the depiction of gender roles, as well males/ females relationship. Several eminent poets attempts to investigate the construction of feminine figures. John Milton *paradise lost*; creates a controversial debate in the representation of gender roles and sexual identity, as he demonstrates gender and power issues.

1.3.1 Gender portrayal in twentieth century British literature

Gender has been a subject matter for philosophers, politicians and even writers, this later focus on gender practices and conflict of masculinity and femininity through their works.

Since the philosophers create the bridge between gender's context and sex; by referring to gender as an independent category and a social constructed term from the biological sex. The competition between male and female has been raised .During post war era, authors such as James Joyce , Virginia Wolf and Harold Pinter tackled this issue of the categories of sex and gender function and roles . Thus, in Adrian Mitchell's poem, poetry is an exclusively male pursuit, its history a history of male competition.

In Ackroyd's *English Music*, the death of the mother empowers the protagonist to enter the realm of English culture, which is again represented as an exclusively male space. As in traditional histories, literature here is an eminently masculine affair. This is not so in Woolf's novel. Orlando writes first as a man, then as a woman. Literary life is described in *Orlando* in terms of hetero- and homosexual love. The protagonist begins as a young man who admires literature, is the patron of writers and writes a long poem himself, and then, around 1700, changes into a woman, as this highlights how gender is the most important and complex than it is often considered. As Craps puts it, "human subjectivity is not unified and coherent but shifting and fluid" (Craps, 55).

According to a feminist reading to James Joyce works that lead to the fact that Joyce's presentations of gender were influenced by the historical twin heritage of social realism and the avant-garde,. The forms of female labor in Joyce's texts are found not only in what is represented-washerwomen, for example but in the shape of literary language that gives women "the last word of modern literature."

Harold Pinter, also represented gender conflict within his plays; The struggle is largely portrayed between male and female. The birthday party and the homecoming are two significant works for gender presentation on his stage , were women enter a range of competition with men to gain power and secure identity as well as to reserve an independent place in the patriarchal society.

1.3.2 Harold Pinter's Theatre and Gender

1.3.2.1 Pinter's theatre

The post-war era gives birth to a new kind of theatre under the so called " the Theatre of Absurd" , the philosopher Martin Esslin used

this phase to describe the plays that has been performed between 1950s and 1960s. Esslin derives the term "Absurd" from the French Albert Camus's essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942). he tends to analyze the various aspects of this theatre, in which he claimed "The feeling of The Absurd can strike anyone round the corner of any street".

Esslin in his essay refers to the Absurd as meaninglessness and ridiculousness with no hope or faith. "Absurd is that which has no purpose or goal, or object" (4), He contends that the absurd theatre addresses a sense of the pointlessness of human condition as the miss of communication is highly characterized among the characters.

The Theatre of the Absurd shows the world as an incomprehensible place. The spectators see the happenings on the stage entirely from the outside, without ever understanding the full meaning of these strange patterns of events, as newly arrived visitors might watch life in a country of which they have not yet mastered the language(Esslin:5)

The foundation of this drama traced back to the traumatic experiences of horrors and fair of the Second World War. That influenced deeply human life , besides the association with the threat of nuclear and it outcomes also acted as a focal point in the emergence of the new theatre as it goes together with the existentialism of ninetieth century. On this modern drama expresses the unreliability of everything even language where the common speech acts as a barriers between characters as their actions and performance on stage contradict with what they said as Esslin reports: "[a] yawning gulf has opened between language and reality"(Esslin.49)

In this respect, Esslin conceives that the theatre of the absurd is a religious quest that describes the loss of man's faith and values,

where the dramatist trying to break the bridge of complacency and create a sense of consciousness among people of their own situation. As those dramatists tend to criticize and mock the individual as well as the society. This theatre presents the black reality, issues related to life and death, isolation and the pessimism vision of life.

Several playwrights are associated with this new dramatist wave and played a great role in drawing up their name in the literary board , Samuel Becket introduced his master piece *Waiting for Godot* , Ionesco and the stylistic Harold Pinter produce a great drama that still celebrate its glorious.

Harold Pinter performs as prominent figure of the dramatist's modern age . he is considered as one of the pillar and most active practitioner of the Absurd Theatre, because he followed Becket footsteps on the avant-garde Theatre of the Absurd .Esslin considers Pinter "one of the most promising exponents of the Theatre of the Absurd . . . in the English speaking world" (205) and examines his works in the light of the absurdist conventions, which are as old as literature and cover all human conditions, leaving their earlier footprints in mythology and the myth of human existence.

The plays of Pinter signifies the various aspects of the Absurd drama, as he plays a great contribution in modern British drama , he produced a master pieces from the Birthday Party , the Room ,the Caretaker and the Homecoming .The absurdity of Pinter's drama doesn't rely only on his depiction of the futile and bare of human condition, where he express the fear from the outside as the characters isolated themselves in a closed place (room), but also his use of unconventional and distorted language as his characters invade a mundane conversation , in fact they convey meaning through repetition pauses and silence. Pinter once said 'Silence speaks' ,

which are recognized as *Pinteresque*. Though, Pinter's stage characterize by a specific genre *The comedy of menace* where the writer gives us the chance to eavesdrop on the play of domination and submission hidden in sterile dialogue

1.3.2.2 Pinter's theatre and gender

Pinter's plays address the individual experiences and their social status within the group they belong to or the society they live in. where the central theme of his works is the dominant theme of twentieth century art; "The struggle for meaning"

As George Wellwarth mentioned "The conflict in Pinter's plays occurs when one of the outside forces penetrates in the room and disrupts the security of its occupations" (Wellwarth:225). Pinter shapes a battle of survival through his characters conversations not only as a result of war state, but he create also a conflict on the level of language. On his stage, the audiences and the performers had the responsibility to pay attention to every word, because the characters speak minimally with a frequent exploitation of pauses and silence. "The dialogue in Pinter's plays fascinates by its very monotony and repetitiousness because audience recognizes it .they have heard this sort to talk before" (Wellwarth, 204-225)

Yet, Pinter throughout his plays such as *The Birthday Party* and *The Homecoming* dramatized the male-female character as a social construct, struggling to secure their identity as they have the ability to satisfy the very needs of human being nature .the competition of Pinter's men and women is not just one against the other, but it also exacerbated by the sexual desire, repulsion and jealousy. Furthermore the battleground in these two plays is the home , as a woman strives for an equal goals with man include power and security ,However, in the Birthday Party Meg chooses to retreat behind the traditional

womanly tasks playing the role of mother for the young children, where the power is in the man's hands who dominates her life. The Homecoming presents a new face of woman; she seems strongly independent and confident, controlling her life far from man's practices as well as the usually domestic sphere. Hence, Pinter's woman hardly tries to avoid letting gender limit their territorial right.

Woman is preoccupied with her desire and her own body and mind, as she insight to man's behavior and attitude, which makes man confused about woman's knowledge and wants that lead him to conclude that even he exerts dominance he is emotionally weak with woman who is in conflict with. Thus, Pinter implies that most of behavior of men and women is the product of their nature, as the feminist Elizabeth Sakellaribou suggests in her book: *Pinter's female portrait*, "This initial biased sexist attitude follows a steady, though often uneven, evolution, until it eventually crystallized into a gender, totally, androgynous vision" (Sakellaribou.11).

1.4 Conclusion

Overall, Gender is the social significant term that appears as a result of various repeated acts; gender is constructed by language and performative actions. the diversity that De Beauvoir creates between sex and gender in which she defines it as a social construction, as Butler expands on the performativity of this category leads in the establishment of a great consciousness about gender's representation among western members society.

The both philosophical theories play a crucial roles in transforming females position in the social structure, as it takes a new range in literary product where Harold Pinter's theatre succeed in

dramatizing the struggle between masculinity and femininity in his master pieces of post-war stage *The Birthday Party* and *The Homecoming*.

Chapter two : The Conflict of Gender Performance in *The Birthday Party* 1957

2.1Introduction

In his book, *Harold Pinter: Theatre of Power*, Robert Gordon suggests that Pinter's plays are concerned with primary four recurrent notions. As he shifts upon different thematic motifs, thus, one of these four concerns is sex, gender and the construction of identity (Gordon.2-3).

This chapter examines the notion of gender and its position within Pinter's stage of the birthday party .Hence, this chapter explores the absurd representation of masculinity and femininity through magnificent and talented characters of the Birthday Party which reflects the gendered patriarchal society, as a significant response ,the great conflict appears on the stage, a conflicts of gender and in post - war western setting in which Pinter alternates the focus from the masculine men discourse to a discourse in which the female figure is given or demands for and snatches the dominant position.

The female character in the Birthday Party has a great desire to escape from the chauvinists male, who dominate her life and limits her choices, where she has to remain in the domestic labor rather than being a part of society, sharing her ideas and taking her decisions far from his authority and dictatorship. The modern woman performs every aspects of masculinity through various occasions, which is a chance to make her voice dominate over the male character and presents her powerful status.

2.2 Summary of the Play

The Birthday Party is Pinter's first full length play, he wrote it in 1957 when he was working as an actor in England as he stayed briefly at a dilapidated boarding-house which would serve as an inspiration for this play. the earliest play of Harold Pinter generates the various features of the new theater in which Martin Esslin points out that however realistic the situations which arise appear to be, Pinter's play is essentially reflections on, And it is also be interpreted as an allegory surrounding the nature of conformity.(Esslin,1963).

The play opens with Meg, the wife owner of the boarding-house serves her husband Petey breakfast, while refers him with repeated questions concerning his food and job. Petey informs his wife that he met two gentlemen the night before and they are coming soon to boarder a room, Meg flustered with the news and quickly promises she will prepare a room for them.

Meg calls out Stanley Webber who is the only boarder in the Boles boarding- house, Stanley doesn't respond to her , she quickly goes upstairs to fetch him, then she comes back to prepare his breakfast. The young man comes down to the living-room unshaven wearing pajama, as soon as Petey goes out Meg starts flirting with Stanley and ordering him to eat his breakfast as a little boy, even though he yells on her and called her with un proper names such as "succulent" and "bad wife", she

still practice her magic of dominance over him as she can control every conversation she enters it with him. Meanwhile, Meg tells Stanley about the gentlemen who are coming soon to take a room in her house, the fact that astonished Stanley as he accused her of lying.

The young girl Lulu arrives with a package and Meg goes to shop. Lulu starts mocking Stanley for his appearance and the lack of enthusiasm, Stanley asked Lulu to run away with him but the girl refused because she loves the place and the world she lives in, then she leaves.

Goldenberg and MacCan enter the living-room; meantime Meg arrives where Goldenberg starts his detection by asking Meg about Stanley, who took this chance to talk more about her boy who was a successful pianist as she mentioned that his birthday is this night.

Goldenberg suggests that they have to organize a party for him, she accepts the idea, then the two gentlemen go to their room, while Meg and Stanley are in the living-room, she tells him about the two strangers' names, he becomes visibly upset. The landlady produced Stanley's birthday gift, but he insists that it is not his birthday. Meg opens her present, he took the toy drum and hangs it around his neck and starts beating it merrily with a crazed expression on his face.

Later, MacCan sits at the living-room table shredding a newspaper into five equal strips. When Stanley enters they congratulate him, but Stanley replies that he wants to spend the evening alone and he tries to

leave while MacCan doesn't let him to, and he hits him off. The situation becomes complicated , Goldenberg and MacCan accused Stanley that he was betrayed their organization and they start beating him that interrupted by Meg's arrival , she is well dressed for the birthday party , Goldenberg starts complimenting her. Lulu arrives and gets Goldenberg's attention who starts flirting with her. The people start drinking and they suggest playing a blind man's bluff game but the light goes out. Goldenberg leaves with Lulu to his room.

In the morning, Petey sits in the living-room, Meg as usual in the kitchen preparing the breakfast and talking about last night party, where Petey keeps silent, Goldenberg enters the room Meg asked him about his car but he ignores her, Stanley enters with nice shaven and proper suit, MacCan and Goldenberg take Stanley away, Meg comes asking about Stanley where Petey lies and tells her he is asleep.

2.3 The Representation of Masculinity in the *Birthday Party*

An academic interest in the cores of masculinity has grown remarkably since the emergence of the "new man's movement" of late eighties. This group evolved as response to second wave feminism and its outcomes (New York time ,2017-05-11). The literary phase took the lion share in the increase portrayal of masculinity where several writers and authors took the mission of sharing the ideologies concern of

gender discourses and critiquing the power relations that are at play in patriarchal society. Harold Pinter twentieth century playwright of the absurd theatre characterize this important discipline as a constructed theme in various plays such as the Birthday Party , which mirrors the real vision of masculinity through its characters relationships and performance.

Sex, gender and the construction of identity: focuses on how the performance of gender is formative in the construction of identity, and how sexuality manifests itself through, between and across gendered identities, manifesting its force in language and behaviour. Exploiting the sophisticated wordplay of the English comedy of manners in a postmodern context, the play challenges realist assumptions about behaviour, revealing character as performance, whose truth is relative to the context and form of enactment (R. Gordon 2-3).

Harold Pinter in his play the Birthday Party represents the various aspects of masculinity, through a multiple six characters that succeeded in reflecting the ideology of British society about gender in general and masculinity in particular. One of these magnificent characters is the house-boarder 'Stanley Webber' who for some reason was given a feminine name besides the way that the landlady 'Meg' was treating him that could defined as a mother-child relationship

during the first act of the play . Meg was cuddling Stanley like a little baby, calling him Stan and waking him up for breakfast. Meg uses her powerful higher voice that reflects her strong personality and desire to gain a place among the chauvinist men.

Petey: Didn't you take him up his cup of tea?

Meg: I always take him up his cup of tea. But that was a long time ago .

Petey: Did he drink it?

Meg: I made him. I stood there till he did. I'm going to call him.
(She goes to the door) Stan! Stanny!(She listens) Stan! I'm coming up to fetch you if you don't come down! I'm coming up! I'm going to count three! One! Two! Three! I'm coming to get you!(Pinter.6)

Pinter produces Stanley to us using Meg's words the audience creates an image for a little boy on their mind who needs someone to fetch him up and take care of him all the time, which was Meg's job as Martin Esslin points out in his book "The theatre of the Absurd" 'Meg treats him with a motherliness so stifling as to be almost incestuous (p.239)

The use of the name Stanley by Pinter is seen by critics as a smart choice. This name is considered much more feminine than masculine, where numerous philosophers related this name to a person

who has a sense of responsibility and an appreciation of the finer things of life. However, Stanley Webber present the opposite of what have been said that goes hand in hand with Pinter's protagonist character who loses its true meaning and identity.

Stanly as a protagonist in this play is recognized less-masculine starting from his name, which various scholars considered it as more feminine than masculine one. The fact that Meg wake him up, feed him when Stanley acts as surrogate who must behave according to her wishes. In this respect Pinter's character "Stanley" presented much more feminine aspects rather than a masculine one as he responded to Meg's commands and orders performing as a woman who belongs to a particular man or husband.

Meg: Do you want some tea? (Stanley reads the paper) Say please.

Stanley: Please

Meg: Say sorry first.

Stanley: Sorry first.

Meg: No, just sorry

Stanley: just sorry.

Meg: You deserve the strap.

Stanley: Don't do that.(Pinter,11)

“One is not born, but rather becomes a woman...it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature...only the interview of someone else can establish an individual as an other” (Simone de Beauvoir.130) a declaration from de Beauvoir that shows the European society and the British one in particular as a patriarchal land man is the “One” and woman is the “Other». Womanhood is socio-culturally constructed and she is the “someone else” ,her place is in the house as subservient to men ;in this respect Stanley a house boarder is regarded by several scholars as an angel in the house as he never get out of his peaceful place.

Stanley: What's it like out today?

Petey: Very nice.

Stanley: Warm?

Petey: Well, there's a good breeze blowing.

Stanley: cold?

Petey: No, no, I wouldn't say it was cold.(Pinter.7)

.....later

Stanley: Me! I was in the sea at half past six

Lulu: Were you?

Stanley: I went right out to the headland and back before breakfast. Don't you believe me!(Pinter.19)

The first act of the play shows Meg as more dominance and powerful figure over males (Petey, Stanley) through, several aspects including her voice, actions as well as the way she treats her husband and the boarder Stanley.

Meg: is that you Petey?

Pause

Petey, is that you?

Pause

Petey?

Petey: What?

Meg: is that you?

Petey: yes it's me.(1)

Meg's vocabulary is an arm used to confirm her presence as an owner of the house through which she insists on Petey to answer her questions in a way that shows her strong personality. Meg's

performance in the Birthday Party entails her independent and dominance as well as she emerges as a leader and an assertive figure, Thus, we can safely maintain that Meg's character is the nearest representation of masculinity in Pinter, the Birthday Party as she generated the aspect of this discipline through her various actions language, which consider as a sort of absurdity, creation of masculinity within a feminine character.

The fact that Meg is threatening Stanley brings her more authority on him as she is the one and he is the other, which is a personification of Meg's masculinity. The landlady's desire to be visible to the people around her, She has a great ambition to reserve a place among them besides obtaining more attention to prolific her self-image more masculine and less feminine. "[S]he only needs the attention from other people to define herself and feel special" (Sandra beez.4)

Stanley: But who are they?

Meg: You'll see when they come.

Stanley :(decisively) they won't come.

Meg: Why not.

Stanley: (quickly) I tell you they won't come. Why didn't they come last night, if they were coming? (Pinter.14)

During the examination of the play, the arrival of the two strangers Goldenberg and MacCan, who play a significant role in Pinter's fiction; they are important figures, before they even appear physically on the stage where Meg uses these figures initially to subtly threaten Stanley and as a form of self gratification.

The two gentlemen enters the house with a great self confidence and strong personalities that is shining from their appearances and the way they behave in the foreign house as if they own it, which is a clear portrayal of every essential aspect of masculinity starting by the over control on the other people in that house, the higher voice and phase of independent man who make orders and commands to others, in fact this two strangers appears to practice their power and authority by which they lead the others according to their whim. The first man Goldenberg has the ability to make all the persons around him feel his important and specific presence.

McCann: What now?

Goldenberg: Don't worry yourself, MacCann.take a seat.

MacCann: What about you?

Goldenberg: What about me?

MacCann: Are you going to take a seat.

Goldenberg: Well both take a seat.(Pinter,21)

2.4 The Portrayal of Femininity in the *Birthday Party*

The thread of femininity and femininity codes witnessed significant growth during the twentieth century. For instance, several writers start depicting the various standers of femininity and the middle-upper class woman as opposed to men. The dramatic representation of females and femininity goes hand in hand with the progression toward the greater subjugation of woman that is encapsulated and preserved through literature.

Harold Pinter highlighted femininity through his characters the fact of drawing femininity codes depending on his female protagonist characters is a smart act by this eminent writer. Hence, he connects the society's vision about woman with absurdity considered man's objectification of women as being absurd. Women may become conscious of their absurdity as well as that of the social world surrounding. Consequently, the social construction of women is offhand and worthless as much as the world around. "Does Pinter say anything more about women than that they are mothers, wives and whores? Not, I think, a great deal. His young women characters have a lot in common. They seem to be sophisticated, attractive, highly sexed...for the most part Pinter's women are supremely controlled, supremely enigmatic" (Alrene.106).

Meg, the first female character in this absurdist drama, portrays the various aspects of femininity and womanhood during the scene when Stanley becomes angry from Meg's gestures, as she gets closer to him and stroke his arm. The atmosphere shifts and he pushes her away, meantime, Meg appears as a weak and helpless person, which make Stanley performs his masculinity that dominated over Meg. In this respect Meg's personality goes parallels with her gender needs and norms as she becomes more feminine and shows more concerns with her domestic labor rather than interesting with manhood aspects that preceded this scene when she demands a cigarette from Stanley.

The word "succulent" hurts Meg's feelings as any respectful woman cares about her situation in the patriarchal gendered-society. Moreover, Meg needs to escape from the marginalization and ignorance that men practice over her all the time; she dressed for Stanley's party to full her gap of femininity that was neglected by the chauvinist male. The innocent Meg repeatedly wants to know how she looks through male eyes. The fact that Meg dressed well to impressive a man is a clear declaration from her that he wants to project herself as a queen in that inferior society.

Meg: I brought the drum down. I'm dressed for the part

Goldenberg: Wonderful.

Meg: You like my dress?

Goldenberg: Wonderful. Out of this world.

Meg: I know . My father gave it to me.(Pinter.45)

Pinter tends to portray femininity through Lulu's character, the young vibrant beautiful girl. During the course of the birthday party, Lulu has a sexual flirtation with Stanley, as he supposedly rapes her as much as Goldenberg did. Through the lens of femininity, Lulu summarizes the features of a feminine figure that is associated with the shining woman who impressed man in very specific way.

Goldenberg: Lulu, you are a big bouncy girl.come and sit on my lap.

MacCann: Why not?

Lulu: Do you think I should?

Goldenberg: Try it.

Meg:(sipping) very nice.

Lulu: I'll bounce up to the ceiling. (Pinter.27)

Pinter's portrayal of female character wearing a masculine dress. As the feminine character appears to perform masculine codes in gendered environment establish a cold battle between the two genders in which every figure want to win the race of dominance and gain more power than the other.

2.5 The conflicts of masculinity and femininity in Pinter's the Birthday Party

Harold Pinter explores a great trouble between the two genders through the Birthday Party stage. Pinter play deals with the hypocrisy and the male chauvinist in the so-called patriarchal gendered society, the absurdity of Pinter's drama in this play is highly portrayed as the meaningless world around where women are maltreated subordinated and marginalized which established a sense of curiosity and awareness to demand for equality with men in order to create their own independent world.

The Birthday Party recognize as an allegoric play that reflects the British Identity during the years of fifties where women occupied the domestic sphere serving the patriarchal male hangs for a way to escape from this unfair situation and show their presence as well as to make their voice clear to the world of males.

Meg, in this play creates great conflicts with Stanley by performing the masculine norms more than he did. In fact Stanley in the

first act of the play seems less masculine than the female character Meg who was more authoritative powerful and strong enough to perfume her masculinity on the stage of a male character. The fact that a feminine character appears with a masculine dress is a declaration for a war against the other gender and against masculinity as Pinter uses the absurdity of Meg's language as a weapon against males.

Women are regarded as mere appendage to men; they are relegated to an inferior position in the social sphere, where men were treated with honor and respect. The first act of this play produces a very expressive scene of gender divisions. Meg believes in traditional gender divisions that depend on physiological differences between males and females including primary sex characteristics, whereas, gender is such a primary dimension of identity. Meg wishes that the news of the new born is a boy as she was clearly disappointed because the new born baby is a girl, even though she has no relation with this matter, but Pinter tends to mirror the society's desire of a boy rather than a girl through Meg's wish.

Pety: Someone's just had a baby.

Meg: Oh, they haven't! who?

Petey: Some girl.

Meg: who, Petey, who?

Petey: I don't think you'd know her.

Meg: What is her name?

Petey: Lady Mary Splatt.

Meg: I don't know her.

Petey: No.

Meg: What is it?

Petey: (Studying the paper) Er-a girl.

Meg: Not a boy?

Petey: No.

Meg: Oh, what a shame. I'd be sorry. I'd much rather have a little boy. (Pinter.3)

The importance of being male rather than female in gendered society established a cold struggle which pushes Meg to peel from her femininity toward masculinity in several occasions during the play's events, in order to impose her presence in the scenes of life and to gain more attention and show her vital role in that society.

Male's power dictatorship becomes a colossal range that paves the way for Meg to charge her brigade of masculinity and protect herself and establish a proper place and situation among men. As the male character driven by a profound feeling of fear and angst which always accompanied by anger. Hence, men's character consider as an object

that create women's power as it is slowly turning the world against them with changing in the mental base ,which is automatically not accommodates males structure and mental influence.

The eminent pillar of the absurd theatre Harold Pinter succeeds in presenting a condensed and poignant study of the dramatic transformation in the relationship between men and women that was just starting to pick up pace in society while he was writing his first plays. He portrays a divergent presentation of males and females that paves the way to a great cold struggle between the two genders (masculinity and femininity).

2.6Conclusion

The chauvinist society of post-war era forced females to participate in a specific way, where male control their lives and limit their choices. Through the course of the Birthday Party, Pinter succeeded in depicting men and women relationship depending on specific element and techniques of the absurdist movement.

The Birthday party deals with a great conflicts of genders , Pinter's unique dramaturgy produced the greatest notion in the western setting, as women are always the other suffering from marginalization .Those females are seeking to improve their situation

in the public phase regarding to their specific role in society which is always equal to men .in this regard, the following chapter will investigate the representation of genders in other play of Pinter *the Homecoming*, which was produced ten years later after this one.

Chapter three: The Struggle of Gender Performance in *The Homecoming* 1965

3.1.Introduction

Harold Pinter produced in 1965 a controversial play under the title “the Homecoming». This dramaturgy coincides the cusp of second wave of feminism, which associated with the women’s liberation movement and the struggle to limit men’s discrimination. Pinter paints out the new image of women on the stage of “The Homecoming”. The protagonist Ruth appears as queen in a kingdom of males. She is asserting her existence and challenging the masculine chauvinist ideology.

“She is the image of the modern woman, Ruth belongs to those women’s progressive world .her placement in the middle of the prevention male manager of the Homecoming is an achromatic”(Sakellaridon.p117).

Certainly, Pinter creates a wilder struggle between the chauvinists male and the strong dreamer women, in which every side

hangs to achieve dominance and obtain power as well as supremacy .Hence, the only female character used by Pinter as a weapon to end the discrimination and marginalization that practiced by men over her. Ruth plays a significant complex role in this drama ,then Pinter succeed in depicting reality nor realism.

3.2. Summary of the play

The noble prize laureate and the playwright, Harold Pinter presents a masterpiece in 1965 under the title “ The Homecoming”, which has remained the most controversial of his plays as Walter Kerr wrote “ [T]he dramatist has dragged us all , aching through a half-drugged dream”(Kerr.1967)

Pinter’s dramaturgy in this play has fascinated the audience and critics regarding on the relation between gender, power and identity. The Homecoming is a play of two acts; the first act opens with a conversation between Max and his son Lenny. Primarily, the two gentlemen were discussing the paper as Max was searching for a scissors to cut out a coupon for clothing. However, Lenny doesn’t respond to his father questions. As soon the topic of conversation shifted to horses where Max recalls for his glory at Epsom with his friend Mac. Meanwhile, Max’s brother Sam enters the room, surprisingly Sam starts insisting that he is one of the best in the business while, Max doesn’t give a clear interest. Max start playing the role of an ideal

mother as he goes on to say that Sam could bring a bride home to live and take care of him.

Sam responds to his brother's proposal that he has no bride; the conflict between the two brothers is heightened when Max says that someday Sam will have to move away as he can't earn rents, and then they create another conflict about Max's character. The young son Joey enters, he has been at a boxing training session.

The second portion of the first act, Teddy the immigrant son enters the house with his wife Ruth. The couple stopped in England as a part of a tour of Europe as they left their three children behind in America. The conversation between them indicates their tense and disparate relationship. Ruth ignores her husband's demands for going to bed with him because she was interested in taking a walk to get a breath of air, which is pointless for Teddy.

The same time, Ruth was out Lenny arrives and greets Teddy for going to sleep. A few hours later Lenny and Ruth share a long conversation. Lenny narrates several stories about his job as a pimp, he tells her that he murdered a prostitute in a fit of rage, besides he punched an old woman in the stomach. Ruth seems comfortable and unfazed by his predisposition to violence as she goes so far to proposition him when he offers her some water. As she dances with him and kisses him in the end. Meanwhile, Max wakes up, he assumes that

Ruth is a tart, Teddy appear to deafened on his wife and clarify to everybody that she is his wife.

The second act opens with the family sharing a meal. Max delivers a morally about his deceased wife Jessie and how she would love to see that happy scene .the member of family start discussing teddy occupation in America as a professor of philosophy. Lenny makes Teddy stuck with a philosophical questions about Christianity; Teddy couldn't answer on these questions and Ruth interrupted this discussion comment about her beautiful body. Teddy admits his decision to come back to America while Ruth refuses and decides to stay in her home England. Lenny and his father start talking about Ruth's sexual remarks which associated only with a prostitute.

Hours later, Teddy declares that he stole Lenny's cheese role deliberately as much his family has stolen Ruth from him. Joey declares his pure relation to Ruth despite the fact that they were in bed for long two hours.

Meantime, Teddy decided to leave Ruth with his family and return to his life in America. Max and Lenny start draft the terms by which Ruth could stay Ruth them as they agree that she will bring them money through prostitution, while Ruth was interesting on drawing her own future which more than showing her body in Greek street. In this timev Sam confess an old secret about the sexual affairs between

Max's wife and his friend Mac. The final scene closed with Max crawling to Ruth insisting the he is not an old man as she should kiss him.

3.3 The portrayal of masculinity in *The Homecoming*

The Homecoming was produced during the second half of the twentieth century , on the cusp of second wave feminism, the movement that focuses mainly on the legal and social equality of women, as the actual events of the Homecoming address the norms of the permissive society .It demonstrates the suffering of human being from absurdity caused by the second world war. The prominent playwright Pinter portrays in this magnificent drama the chaotic life of families in England as he tends to present the society in extreme absurdity.

Pinter's characters in The Homecoming experienced threats, pain, failure commands, identity crisis and much more gender-power conflict. Manhood as a subject matter is present in this play, in which Pinter depicted every aspects of masculinity through his characters. The stage of The Homecoming reflects the codes that highlighted British society in the sixties. Thus, the female role witnessed an extreme expansion by which she occupied a great position and enjoy freedom of practices and choices where the patriarchal men despair in their era to give birth to new women on stage.

During the first act of this drama, the head of family Max characterizes by Pinter as a person who is striving to achieve importance and make himself obvious. Max hangs for being the more authoritative person and the dominative voice in the house.

Pinter presents Max as dispossessed male fighting in great battle to retain his power unsuccessfully, because his question demands and insults were totally ignored. The householder become subordinated, as he lost his dominance and power over the family members, which is a clear shifting of the male's role in British family. Thus, Max degradation of masculinity is signified when he tries to feminize his brother and sons.

From a Freudian perspective, the scene when Max's cigar going out could be recognize as he loses his glory and alpha role. He lost the masculine voice among his family members. Max: This is a lousy cigar (Gussow.1971).

However, Lenny appears with a strong personality that is a personification of every feature of masculinity. Through the examination of the play, Lenny shows an independent dominated higher voice with which he controls the world around him according to his whim. The reflection of Lenny's manhood emerges in his conversation with his father as he gives no much importance to his father's questions

MAX: What have done with the scissors?

Pause

I said I'm looking for the scissors? What have you done with them?

Pause

Did you hear me? I want to cut something out from the paper

Lenny: I am reading the paper.

Max: not that paper? I haven't even read that paper. I'm talking about last Sunday's paper. I was just having a lot at it in the kitchen.

Pause

Do you hear what I'm saying? , I'm talking to you where's the scissors?

Lenny (looking up quietly) why don't you shut up, you daft part?

Max lifts his stick and points it at him

Max: Don't you talking to me like that am warning you(Pinter.07).

The fact that Lenny expresses unsympathetic language while talking to his father, Max who remains silent is an evidence for Lenny's

inclination towards dominance and supremacy, because of his pimping business that considers him as the principal breadwinner in the house.

...Lenny: What did you say?

Max: I said shove off out of it, that's what I said.

Lenny: You will go before me, if you talked to me in that tone of voice.

Max: Will I, you bitch?

Max grapes his stick

Lenny: Oh Daddy, you are not going to use your stick on me, are you? Eh? Don't use your stick on me Day? No, it wasn't my fault, it was one of the other, I haven't done anything wrong, Dad honest don't clout me with stick Dad. (Pinter.11)

The uncle Sam's title of best driver and the first man in his business seems as sign of threatens to Lenny's powerful and important position in the house. Hence, he appears making a general conversation about the colonel, implying that he is the patron not one of their servants like Sam. Once again Lenny is projecting the characteristics of masculinity that everybody is seeking for. He is the successful and the powerful in the house because no one is threatening him in his position.

The young brother Joey paints by Pinter in very realistic way nor realism, Joey as a boxer should represent male strength and physical power, but he seems the less masculine the elegant among the other characters.

Through out the play's events, Teddy who has a P.H.D in philosophy appeared as a weak character. The fact that Teddy accepts the family's proposition to his wife whom supposed to work as a whore in Greek Street shows his madness as well as weak personality that degrades his masculinity. Teddy becomes more distant from manhood morals. The act of giving Ruth the house key, having his cigar goes out and going to bed prior to Ruth culminates into his eventual emasculation and loss of power among his brothers".

Ruth's vital presence shifted the dramatist's characterization of women. The family proposed to Ruth to remain with them as Teddy leaves for America without his wife. The family including Teddy himself encourage Ruth to stay with them in England and own a property under working as a prostitution, However, Ruth has own plans. As there is no clear evidence that she accepts their offer as Henry Hewes points out "At the end of the play she is in possession of a certain kind of freedom. She can do what she wants, and it is not at all certain she will go off to Greek Street. But even if she did, she would not be a harlot in her own mind" (2011).

Ruth. I would want at least three rooms and a bathroom.

Lenny. You wouldn't need three rooms and a bathroom.

Max. She'd need a bathroom.

Lenny. But not. Three rooms

Pause.

Ruth. Oh, I would really.

Lenny. Two would do.

Ruth. No. two wouldn't be enough.

Then, she demands room, bed room, rest room, personal maid and denies for returning any money. Even she warns:

Ruth: I'd need an awful lot. Otherwise I wouldn't be content (Pinter.76).

Pinter builds up a masculine figure within a feminine one. Ruth a female character represents the norms of masculinity as she is seeking toward independence and freedom in her motherland.

The only female in the family challenges the five males and success in establishing her own decision with strong independent personality which creates an upheaval shift from the chauvinists' controller to the subordinated male by the stronger Ruth. She leaves her career of frustration as a mother and takes up what provides her with a better financial standing and independence as Guide Almansi and Simon Henderson in their book *contemporary writer: Pinter* remark: "By agreeing to satisfy the household's sexual needs...Ruth

also gains a paradoxical independence, since by becoming a whore she is able to break free from the academic straitjacket of the philosopher's lowly life" (69).

The representation of masculinity through the stage of the homecoming creates a dilemma issue as every member of the family is hanging to achieve manhood codes by practicing authority and power over the others. The degradation of masculinity is clearly depicted in Pinter's *The Homecoming* as males as the female beats all the males around her, she takes the queen chare in which she defies her identity and power within the social taboo and the traditional family. Ruth imposes a masculine figure by which she posses the individual feminine strength and the ability to achieve great goals.

3.4 The representation of femininity in *The Homecoming*

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a dramatic change in the position of female in society. Woman's role has been shifted from an "Angel in the house" to "the Angel out of the house" in order to establish their independent career from men. Woman enjoys a greater autonomy by which she practices her sexuality without shame that companies her fantasy.

The depiction of women role in social structure and femininity codes was one of the concerns of second wave of feminism, as Sue-

Ellen Case notes in *Feminism and Theatre*, not the main priority of the feminist literary criticism any long (2008).

Harold Pinter points out “In my plays, women have always come out in one way or another as people I feel something towards which I don’t feel toward men”(Faber and Faber.80)

Max as one of the protagonist within Pinter’s stage of *The Homecoming* signifies the femininity values which are associated with motherhood codes .Pinter paints out a particular personality for the old man as house cooker. The father chooses the kitchen to be his land of happiness. “[T]he old man acts as housewife and cook and has to listen to a great deal of sarcasm about his cooking” (Esslin.126)

The need of acting a soul af woman in the house leads Max to participates as a mother in domestic space which over-determined his identity .Max appears in the first act yelling on his brother Sam because this later enters his kingdom (the kitchen), the act that makes Max upset who considers it as a threaten for his position as a caretaker of the family.

Sam: What?

Max: What are you doing in there?

Sam: Washing up.

Max: What else?

Sam: Getting rid of your leavings.

Max: Putting them in the bin, eh?

Sam: Right in.

Max: What point you trying to prove?

Sam: No point.

Max: Oh yes, you are. You recent making my breakfast, that's what it is, isn't it?

That's why you bang round the kitchen like that , scraping the frying-pan, scraping all the leavings into the bin, scraping all the plates, scraping all the tea out of the teapot....(Pinter.39)

The absence of women in the house of five males lead the family to a pessimism atmosphere full of despair and obsession .despite the arrival of female to the house Max was upset because he was jealous from Ruth who must peels his position in the family and threaten his existence as caretaker for the residents of the house; the emergence of Ruth is considered as a degradation of Max's dominance and power while he is the representative figure of femininity.

Max: you still love your old Dad, eh?

They face each other

Teddy: come on Dad, I'm ready for the cuddle.

Max begins chuckle gurgling. he turns the family and addresses them.

Max: He still loves his father! (Pinter. 44)

Harold Pinter portrays some aspects of femininity through Max' character, who chooses the alternate role of mother for his boys. The

father attitude towards the family members associated with womanhood characteristics from cooking and cuddling his children as a tenderness mother.

Moreover, Pinter creates the only female figure in his drama; that gathered all the aspects of womanhood and femininity as it relates to the modern woman of second wave feminism. Ruth shows a strong independent personality among the males, her overall presence in the house establish a dynamic atmosphere .The episode when Lenny tries to over dominate her with extra-ordinary stories as a pimp the woman remains passive without showing any interest about what he is saying Lenny tries to take her glass as she defends herself. The comfortable with the powerful character Lenny opens her ascension to power.

“Don’t be too sure though. You’ve forgotten something. Look at me. I ... move

my leg. That’s all it is. But I wear ... underwear ... which moves with me

... it captures your attention. Perhaps you misinterpret. The action is simple.

It’s a leg...moving. My lips move. Why don’t you restrict...your observations

to that? Perhaps the fact that they move is more significant...than the words

which come through them. You must bear that ... possibility ... in mind.”(61)

Father more, Pinter makes Ruth in a queen position who wakes orders and demands where all her retime obey her. on the stage of the Homecoming Ruth appears demanding some food and drink from. As Joey and Lenny were striving to serve her.

Ruth is the most significant character of all assets of femininity as she inspects her body in front of the four males who have a great sexual greed; the episode when everybody was interested in studying the significant of the table through a philosophical lens .Ruth starts talking about every inch in her body her beautiful skin, lips and legs which purely feminine task. The woman was inspecting her beautiful body.

In The end of the play, Ruth makes her decision to stay in England the place she can practice her freedom and escape a life where she was restricted to certain norms and values of marriage and family. A very expressive scene that reflected the extremely dominance of female over male the second wave of feminism is when the head of the family is begging Ruth for a kiss.

Through Ruth character Pinter smooth the patriarchal as she takes charge of her own situation is beyond male comprehension. The fact that she flirted with Lenny in sexual dance and kiss him as she fools around with Joey that ends with a rolling scene in the couch with

him, which is a proof for her past as prostitute before she flurried Teddy, which Pinter explains it as “[T]here are thousands of women in this country who at this every moment are rolling off couches with their brother , or cousins or their next-door neighbors .The most respectable woman do this it is a splendid , it is a little curious certainly ,when your husband is looking on , but it doesn’t mean you’re a harlot”(Prentice.463).

Particularly, in this episode of the play, Ruth’s behaviors as an unconventional relationship are similar to *the Oedipal dream* is a trivial fact in this permissive society which is a reflection of her femininity. Ruth’s femininity is germane to her independency and sexual freedom. The liberality to express herself through sexuality without being restricted by her wifhood or motherhood, the norms that the chauvinist society draws upon women. Pinter says “she is possession of a kind of freedom”(prentice. P458)

The noble prize playwright challenges the place of morals in family life through the Homecoming, he establish emasculate character. Through Max, Pinter reflected the weakness of males in front of females who gain more freedom and supremacy. the permissive setting allowed women to behave in a specific way which turns the rule of the game against men.

Pinter’s portray every aspect of men feminism through the Homecoming as he succeed in creating a feminine theory .Max who

performs as housewife and caretaker of his children who imitates a female's role besides Ruth who presents the new feminine values through her over-determined feminine identity. She was the queen in the house.

3.5 The Struggle of Masculinity and Femininity in *the Homecoming*

The production of Pinter's *The Homecoming* concurrence with the cusp of second wave of feminism. as the movement mainly focuses on the shifting of females roles from the subordination marginalization and male discrimination to a free women who occupied a particular role in society according to their whims on which Betty Frieden suggests the concept of "equality feminism", that demands " the freedom of men's lives should be equally available to women, and that both men and women should have equal rights and responsibilities in all significant aspects of social life"(Bowden Peta and Mummery,2009) then reflected the legal and social equality of women on which Pinter address a paradigm feminist theory.

The *Homecoming* events seem absurd as the situation at the first sight, beyond the analysis of the play's aspects that presents a specific ideology about the position of gender within the social structure. It creates a dilemma issue on the stage os sixties , as it remained a centerpiece in Pinter's canon(Almaarroof.p876).The play presents an extra-ordinary crush between the two genders in modern drama .the

struggle in *The Homecoming* is evidence between males and the only female figure as everyone strive to have the power over the other.

In this shore, Ruth performs in a destructive way that allowed her to have a great position over the male character as she established her own kingdom that depends on her own rules. In fact, Ruth in America occupied two roles wife/mother but when she return home she choose to act as a mother/ whore for the old boys.

Lenny: You'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 (Pinter.77).

The ironed woman makes her decision to remain in England as she neglected her husband's demands to comeback to America. The conversation between Ruth and Teddy could recognize as a gender conflict between the one who supposed to be masculine (Teddy) and the feminine one (Ruth) as she was the upper hand and won the war.

The conflict in this dramaturgy starts becoming thornier as the discussion between Lenny and his sister-in law turns on a derby to gain power. Ruth challenges Lenny's threats and appears as the victor .the mistress of the family Lenny losses this round of struggle when Ruth respectably refuses his offer of relieving her glass,

“to maintain self-respect and to gain Lenny’s respect she must avoid slipping into subservience”

The fact of reacting in a particular way in a gendered society which recognizes women as a sex object; hence, the sexual revolution embodied the public thoughts as De Beauvoir states: “Woman is the object through which the male subject creates himself”(de Beauvoir ,Introduction),However, the female is not an object in the hand of the subject as they thought , Ruth used all the males around her as an objects to fulfill her needs and desire for dominance and supremacy .

The males character in Pinter’s stage were striving to obtain power and dominance one over the other. The struggle in this drama appears between the five men only one women who defends on herself on very smart way as she determined her identity according to her values and desires.

Ruth initially neglected her husband demands to return home for her children , she satisfied her appetites in which she choose to settle with Teddy’s family that demonstration of the female’s control over the masculine figure as she gain a paradoxical independence and supremacy.AS Guindo Almani and Simon Henderson remark “ By agreeing to satisfy the household’s sexual needs ..”

Ruth, the independent dominated woman, refuses to satisfy her husband and being merely his servant. This refusal recognized as she

breaks with the Victorian values of the angel in the house .Ruth limits the over control of chauvinists males on women. Hence, she turns the role of the game against him. The woman becomes much stronger as an active person in the British setting; she has the ability to make decisions and practices her liberality and freedom.

The final scene when the householder is begging Ruth for a kiss is the closes episode that signified the great role female realized in this conflict on gender presentation in post-war British social structure .Ruth sits in a central position as a glorious queen , where every male is waiting for her decision and begging for her contentedness. “She fulfills different needs for the various men in her family in order to fulfill her own needs” (Steven Gale. 155).

3.6Conclusion

Through The Homecoming, Harold Pinter denies all the claims that classify him as misogynists. He creates the image of modern independent women on the stage who can challenge all the man around her in order to fulfill her needs and desire. The female character in this plays succeeds in determining the rule of the game by which she defeats the chauvinist selfish man.

The Homecoming is the mirror that reflects a range of changes in woman’s role within the social structure during the second half of the twentieth century. “Ruth's comments foreground the female body's

capacity to escape the (masculine) systems of representation that attempt to produce an appropriate - ie., unthreatening - femininity. ... When Ruth suggests that men "misinterpret" the female body, she emphasizes that the representational fashioning and coding of the body remains quite distinct from the body's actual existence, even as the author(izer)s of such coding attempt to deny the distinction by forcing the body to live out its representation in a socially palpable form."(Silverstein.94)

Pinter blurred the traditional roles of the family in which he tends to criticize the patriarchal system in post-war setting in an absurdist way. It is mainly a play that deals with gendered subjects.

General conclusion

This dissertation opens an investigation about the conflict of gender in Harold Pinter *The Birthday Party* and *The Homecoming*. Philosophical analysis aims to highlight the struggle that Pinter creates on his stage between masculinity and femininity. Accordingly, the analytical of the core of the Birthday party that presents a great conflict between the chauvinist male and the female's greed to achieve power and dominance in the public phase . The masculine figures have the authority to control females who were striving to gain power and assess their presence, whereas , the conflict mainly is within the characters themselves ,besides, a literary examination of the *Homecoming*, that demonstrates an establishment of modern women on stage by whom Pinter produces the crush between the patriarchal men and a new strong woman.

Harold Pinter has made a great contribution to the modern drama. He expresses the principles of the absurd theatre, as he alludes to Albert Camus "Myth of Sisyphus" where the character lives in a chaotic absurd situation; he experiences the despair, meaningless and emptiness of the world around them. The language also failed in the mission of communication.

The *Birthday Party* presents a great conflict between the patriarchal male who over-control woman and limited her choices in life. Woman in this drama is striving to taste the sweetness of

obtaining power and dominance. Pinter characterizes woman as victim to the chauvinist patriarchal man. She is subordinated, marginalized and maltreated the fact that creates a wild battle between the two gender where the masculine man was striving to prove his power and dominance whereas the feminine figure desired to an equal position with the monsters.

About ten years after the production of the *Birthday Party*, Pinter gives birth to a controversial dramatic work under the name *The Homecoming*, the stage of this play shows an image modern woman who peels from the bonds of the chauvinist system and draws for herself an extra-ordinary orientations. The fact that Pinter established a crush between the two genders. The males refuse the over-control of female on them, as they tends to use her femininity as well beautiful body details in order to degrade her authority . the intelligent woman turns the rules of the game that they already created by which they were obliged to treat her according to her whim.

Obviously, the two plays reflect a great struggle between males and females in the so called gendered society. Although, the both dramatic works represent an extreme change in Pinter's work, as his depiction of women situation. The first play woman is mainly fragile person and only played a minor role, whereas, in the *Homecoming* the female appears as strong and self determined figure.

Throughout time; Pinter presents a dramatic change in the depiction of women. Certainly, Meg is not weak is just present in a fragmentation imagery as she was hanging to achieve what Ruth signifies, although, Ruth is the sample of the fatal women who defines herself through her sexual freedom. and Meg is the ideal housewife who is neglected by people who initially rely on her .the change of Pinter's vision about women position is highlighted in the two plays, where Ruth is the central of the play, she struggles with men to protect her strong position , Meg is seeking to figure out her place among the chauvinist males (Stanley ,Glodenberg and MacCan).

Women's role witnessed an upheaval change through the sixties as Pinter tends to characterize this change in the Birthday Party , that sheds a light on the traditional image of ideal housewife. The ole role of woman is initially part of the Victorian values as "an angel in the house". Whereas, the *Homecoming* shows a great progress in the female position within the social structure. It signifies all the aspects of an independent strong woman who enjoys supremacy and the freedom of choices.

Certainly, the prominent figure of the absurd theatre succeeds in portraying the real position that women occupied in a particular period of time. Through an impressive separated dramaturgy. As he has a chance to deny the claims that classify him as a misogynist person.

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