Man is a complex being who evades analysis. Since the dawn of civilization philosophers have tried to analyse man in terms of his mind and heart, body and soul, matter and spirit to find a clue to his conduct and often concluded that the dualities in man result in disharmony. Since Socrates and Plato the emphasis has been on the purity of the soul and man's effort should be directed to its preservation. The body which is sensual becomes a hurdle ordering man's emotions, feelings, actions which might result in pollution of the soul. This Platonic analysis however has come to be replaced with the advent of rationalism and empiricism. The new discoveries in science belied the biblical account of the creation of man. The existential philosophy of Nietzsche which pronounced the death of God denied the divine operation in human affairs. Freud's analysis of human consciousness into conscious, subconscious and unconscious categories offered a new knowledge of human nature. With his findings man's personality has been analysed. The importance of subconscious and the unconscious and their struggle against the conscious lies in the fact that all human disorders are located in it. Going further Jung, Homerlane and others have tried to explain human behaviour in terms of the regressive tendencies in man.
The findings of the psychologists are so influential that there is a body of literature written based on them. Writers such as Lawrence, James Joyce, O'Neill Miller, Tennessee Williams have written literature using psychological findings. Among the themes shaped by these writers are the Oedipus Complex and Electra Complex. The unusual and strange relationship between the mother and a son is rooted in the sexual motive just as the father's love for the daughter is similarly rooted. This unconscious attachment between the parents and children explains frigidity in woman and impotency in man. If a young man fails as a lover the reason could be his unconscious attachment to the mother and if a young woman fails to respond to the romantic advances of a young man it could be a sexual attachment to her father. Thus sons become lovers for their mothers and fathers to their daughters. The unconscious becomes more pronounced if there is a discord in the family. If a wife is disappointed with her husband in such a woman the desire for the husband substitute is more pronounced. She even becomes possessive and prevents her son from taking to a woman. This might sometimes result in tensions that would ruin the family.

Infertility leading to childlessness or Oedipus Complex leading to impotence are some of the themes in literature. Intellectual that Pinter is he might have been
aware of developments in philosophy and psychology. He must have also been aware of literature based on them. Convinced that those findings help analyse the conduct of people, whom he encountered he began to present characters in whom there is the regressive tendency. In the plays like *A Night Out*, *The Birthday Party* and *Night School* there are women in whom there is a psychological disorder. In *A Night Out*, the regressive tendency in Mrs Stokes makes her define life for her son. The memories of her husband are so strong that they become the guidelines of every action of her son who has been under his mother's shadow for too long and hence remains stunted emotionally. He fails in his relation with a young woman of his age. He often becomes miserable unable to live by himself and give up his mother. In *The Birthday Party* Meg, the childless woman is reluctant to discharge Stanley, her boarder who had become for her a substitute son and a substitute husband. Her strong desire to be a mother, for child bearing is suggested in her holding on to Stanley and refusing to send him out of the house. The impotence of her husband might be due to his conception of purity in women which he did not find in his wife. The abduction of Stanley by Goldberg and McCann has all the warnings of an abortion for Meg. The play therefore might have been written based on psychological analyses of childless women, impotent husbands and exploiting children. In *Night School* there are two women
both childless and who are dependent on Walter. They are so dependent on him that they turn a blind eye to his criminal conduct. They are afraid that any attempt at correction will result in their losing their adopted son.

Albert Stokes, an assistant director in a Film Institute, needs to be assisted by his mother in everything he requires which makes her dominate and control his body and soul. He is still childish and looks younger than his years. Mrs Stokes, his mother, is a nagging harpy, domineering, dominating and loquacious who realising her son's weakness tries to have hold or grip on her grown-up son. The crippled protagonist, Albert is pained and disgusted with her fussy and overmothering which reduce him a prisoner and convict of her care and affection. Thanks to his mother's long dominance over him he has developed psychological problems and now he wishes to make himself free from the protective womb of his mother by staying out of home in the nights. He attempts twice in this effort but fails and returns home encountering similar experience of disappointment and disillusionment outside.

The play straight away introduces the problem with Mrs Stokes calling from the upstairs her son many times and Mr Stokes ignoring them. Evidently, he is indifferent to her calls used as he has been to such mumbling. She is always
after him leaving him little privacy. Taking everyone
decision for him she has denied him a mind and a will which
he might call his own. He is watched over every moment and
cannot have a private life without his mother's knowledge.

She has become quite amorous and fond of her son
since she has lost her husband. She might have been terribly
disappointed with her husband. The possessive mother expects
at least her son, to be obedient and bound to her. She does
not want him to go out leaving her alone at home. She is
like Rose and Meg who play double roles, Pinter's best
example, for parental domination and possession. These
domineering mother-figures stand for maternal assertion or
possessiveness and protectiveness against the intrusion and
interference from the world outside. They seem to be
protecting their husbands, sons or lovers or lodgers from
others out of the door as if that is the only motif of their
lives, dedicating themselves to them.

The amorous and possessive mother Mrs Stokes wants
her son's company in the night. The moment she hears his
leaving for a party she is shocked, surprised and bewildered.
Albert understands his mother's extreme sense of
disappointment, and tries to convince her with his arm round
her by making the promise, "I won't be late. I don't want to
go. I'd much rather stay with you" (p.6).1 Mother and son
seem for a while become wife and husband and the latter promising to play game of cards.

Mrs Stokes is possessive and is even jealous of the girls from her son's office who he would meet in the party tonight. Albert is indirectly warned not to stumble in love with his office girls. She cannot bear the idea of her son falling in love with others. She is afraid of his going outside and meeting people. He is her dream world, life and everything. Without Albert she becomes mad. The following conversation with her son is an evidence that she is ever possessive, captive and jealous:

MOTHER: Your father would turn in his grave if he heard you raise your voice to me. You're all I've got, Albert. I want you to remember that. I haven't got anyone else. I want you ... I want you to bear that in mind.

ALBERT: I'm sorry ... I raised my voice.

He goes to the door.

(Mumbling.) I've got to go.

MOTHER (following): Albert!

ALBERT: What?

MOTHER: I want to ask you a question.
ALBERT: What?
MOTHER: Are you leading a clean life?
ALBERT: A clean life?
MOTHER: You're not leading an unclean life, are you?
ALBERT: What are you talking about?
MOTHER: You're not messing about with girls, are you? You're not going to go messing about with girls tonight?
ALBERT: Don't be so ridiculous.
MOTHER: Answer me, Albert. I'm your mother.
ALBERT: I don't know any girls.
MOTHER: If you're going to the firm's party, there'll be girls there, won't there? Girls from the office?
ALBERT: I don't like them, any of them.
MOTHER: You promise?
ALBERT: Promise what?
MOTHER: That ... that you won't upset your father.
ALBERT: My father? How can I upset my father? You're always talking about upsetting people who are dead!
MOTHER: Oh, Albert, you don't know how you hurt me, you don't know the hurtful way
you've got, speaking of your poor father like that.

ALBERT: But he is dead.

MOTHER: He's not! He's living! (Touching her breast.) In here! And this is his house!

(Pause.)

ALBERT: Look, Mum, I won't be late ... and I won't ...

MOTHER: But what about your dinner? It's nearly ready.

ALBERT: Seeley and Kedge are waiting for me. I told you not to cook dinner this morning. (He goes to the stairs.) Just because you never listen ...

He runs up the stairs and disappears.

She calls after him from the hall.

(pp.6-7)

Mrs Stokes devises many modes to bind her son - sometimes by reminding him about his widowhood which left her forlorn and alone. Playing card games with him might relieve her for a time. But this is a ploy to detain the son. Another ploy is invoking her husband's character and imposing
it on him. This is to ensure that her son does not flirt with women who will wean him away from her. The concern for her son's personal needs, his private life are a mask for her unconscious attachment to her son. Psychologically speaking she substitutes her son for her husband.

Mrs Stokes never says that she has complaints against her husband. She has respect for him even though he has passed away physically. He is living in her temple of heart and she would see her husband in the personification of her son. When Albert gets ready to go to attend a party, she dusts his suit, straightens his tie and arranges a nice clean handkerchief in his pocket. She still treats him as a child and takes too much care of him as she did to her husband.

Mr Stokes on his part adopts willing to wound but afraid to strike method. He hurts her by being indifferent but tries to soothen her feelings. His decision to go to the party is not given up but when he actually leaves he gives the assurance that he will return early in the night to play rummy with his mother.

In a scene in which Albert meets his friends, Kedge and Seeley, there is enough to suggest that Albert is 'deep' and 'depressed.' Though a footballer with them he has lost his boldness. This emasculation has been due to his
mother and Albert knows that his friends know his mother-obsession.

When the party is in progress the typist girls tease. Eileen all of a sudden screams sharply complaining that Albert has taken liberty with her. He is asked to apologize to his lady colleague for insulting her. Gidney deliberately comments that he is "a mother's boy" (p.30). He is terribly upset. The teasing experience makes him return to his mother.

If Albert escapes his mother's fondling at home he cannot runaway from his friends. Everyone knows him as a mother's boy and say so to his face. At the party hosted by Mr King which is attended by several of his office colleagues, Kedge, Seeley, Gidney, Joyce, Eileen. As usual they all tease Albert enquiring about his mother but Albert resents their curiosity and fun. In fact he becomes victim of their gameplan and is accused of piercing Eileen's bottom. He pleads not guilty but is pressurised to accept his guilt and apologize. When Albert refuses to do so they diagnose his trouble as being 'mother's boy' and in fury he hits Gidney leading to a scuffle.

When he comes back home in the late night again he is caught by his possessive mother. She is trying to capture
Albert by isolating him from meeting girls of his age where as the son wants to escape and free himself from the strong grip of his amorous mother. She treats Albert as a substitute for her husband unconsciously. She might have wanted him as her lover in her mind. The disordered cards are evident that she would have awaited him to play. She does not like him to have a girl friend of his won. She denies his freedom and disturbs his natural growth. Her expectations, demands and observations are unnatural and reveal her Oedipus Complex. Albert is really pained with her: "What have you been doing, mucking about with girls? Mucking about with girls, I suppose. Do you know what the time is? I feel asleep, right here at this table, waiting for you. I don't know what your father would say. Coming in this time of night. It's after twelve O' clock. In a state like that. Drunk, I suppose. I suppose your dinner's ruined. Well, if you want to make a convenience out of her own home, that's your business. I'm only your mother, I don't suppose that counts for much these days. I'm not saying any more. If you want to go mucking about with girls, that's your business" (pp.31-32).

Mrs Stokes knows that her son is immature and at one point in her long monologue she permits her son to bring his girl friend home if he has one. The note of permission
has sprung not out of her heart but her widespread disgust and disappointment. As a matter of fact, by no means she tolerates another woman at home between her and her son. She cannot sacrifice her pleasure for another lady. That is impossible while she is alive. The following words might be incredible and pretentious even though literal. "I wouldn't mind if you found a really nice girl and brought her home and introduced her to your mother, brought her home for dinner, I'd know you were sincere, if she was a really nice girl, she'd be like a daughter to me. But you've never brought a girl home here in your life. I suppose you're ashamed of your mother" (p.32). Even if Albert finds really a nice girl and bring her home, she must suit his mother's expectations. The mother has all rights over her son's soul and body, because she gave him birth and brought him up. She claims that she is his mother and moreover her son's flesh and blood are part of her own. Nobody can separate her son from her physically and psychologically. She might be thinking seriously in that way. If she is disturbed by another girl she might become a psychotic. He is warned, threatened and restricted to that effect. In fact, Albert is neither stubborn nor rebellious nor obstinate nor disobedient. He neither loves nor hates his mother. He is not allowed to muck about with the girls, enjoy his food and drink outside and not even to spend evenings outside leaving
his mother. He speaks less because he is fed up with her possessive and aggressive nature.

One can understood that she feels insecure and she is totally a dependent upon her son. Her possessive love and affection should not be questioned. Her regret, agony, fear and the feeling of insecurity are apparent in the following:

I keep a lovely home, I bet there's none of the boys in your firm better fed than you are. I'm not asking for gratitude. But one thing hurts me, Albert, and I'll tell you what it is. Not for years, not for years, have you come upto me and said, Mum, I love you, like you did when you were a little boy. You've never said it without me having to ask you. Not since before your father died. And he was a good man. He had high hopes of you. I've never told you, Albert, about the high hopes he had of you. I don't know what you do with all your money. But don't forget what it cost us to rear you, my boy, I've never told you about the sacrifices we made, you wouldn't care, anyway. Telling me lies about going to the firm's party. They've got a bit of respect at that firm, that's why we sent you
there, to start off your career, they wouldn't let you carry on like that at one of their functions. Mr King would have his eye on you. I don't know where you've been. Well, if you don't want to lead a clean life it's your lookout, if you want to go mucking about with all sorts of bits of girls, if you're content to leave your own mother sitting here till midnight, and I wasn't feeling well, anyway, I didn't tell you because I didn't want to upset you, I keep things from you, you're the only one I've got, but what do you care, you don't care, you don't care, the least you can do is sit down and eat the dinner I cooked for you, specially for you, it's Shepherd's Pie —

ALBERT lunes to the table, picks up the clock and violently raises it above his head. A stifled scream from the MOTHER. (p.33)

Albert, who is teased by a typist girl returns home in the midnight with a sense of frustration. His mother would have consoled him but he finds home and mother are impossible. The seductive mother blames him with the reproaches and abuses. He fails to endure the flow of maternal monologue.
He is upset and gets irritated. In a fit of frenzy, he takes an alarm clock and hits his mother. He rushes out into the street leaving his unconscious mother alone.

After he runs out of home in disgust he goes to a coffee stall. He is sweating and has been in fright from his previous incident. Now an unknown girl, a professional prostitute encounters and talks to him, who is silent and rather preoccupied with strong obsession. The girl sensing him as her client picks him up home and Albert follows her as if getting back home. The following is evident that hers is a one-sided enquiry with his utter silence.

GIRL: Good evening.

(Pause.)

What are you doing?

(Pause.)

What are you doing out at this time of night?

*She moves closer to him.*

I live just round the corner.

*He stares at her.*

Like to? Chilly out here, isn't it? Come on.

(Pause.)

Come on.

*He goes with her.* (p.34)
At first the tart behaves gently and shows lady like manners. She shows her own photograph to Albert and tells him that it is her daughter's who is staying with friends in the boarding school near Hereford. She talks proudly about the aristocratic features of the photograph, which she took in her youth giving the impression that she is excellent, powerful and superior. Albert is allowed neither to sit on her stool nor to drop the ash on her carpet in front of the fire. He is hurt slightly. Being a tart she has the habit of drinking and smoking. "I'm very fond of a smoke. After dinner. With a glass of wine. Or before dinner, with sherry" (p.36). Albert tells that he works in the films as an assistant director. The tart was a continuity girl in the past. She tries to pull more information from Albert. She complains that "the neighbourhood is full of people of no class at all" (p.38). As a professional tart, she tells that she is better than many respected girls. Basically she has no right to talk about the morality of other girls, but she assails.

GIRL: .... I mean, I'm no different from any other girl. In fact, I'm better. These so-called respectable girls, for instance, I'm, sure they're much worse
than I am. Well, You're an assistant director - all your continuity girls and secretaries, I'll bet they're ... very loose.

ALBERT: Uh.

GIRL: Do you know what I've actually heard? I've heard that respectable married women, solicitors' wives, go out and pick men up when their husbands are out on business! Isn't that fantastic? I mean, they're supposed to be ... they're supposed to be respectable! (p.39).

When Albert picks up the alarm clock she hurts him that she has seen many people who slip the things into their pockets. She replaces the clock. Albert is instructed to drop the ash into ashtray and comments that he has an expression of childishness in his face.

Albert's behaviour is ridiculous. Both Albert and the tart have not known each other previously. He has come out of home seriously to spend the night out and followed the tart innocently. Albert might have thought that the tart and her room are better than his destructive mother and his own house. Albert and the tart have been unsuccessful in their attempts. He feels that again he is being teased. "DON'T
MUCK ME ABOUT!" (p.42). The feelings of shyness and impotency return. Later he realises that he is a wrong man in a wrong place: "You've made a mistake, this time. You've picked the wrong man" (p.42). Her reckless behaviour and condescending attitude make him angry, intolerable, indignated and disgusted. At her demeanour he becomes violent once again, picks up the clock and frightens the tart.

The alarm at his home symbolizes violence, revolt and aggression and the clock in the tart's room recalls the previous incident with his mother. He wants to take revenge as a hazardous intruder against the tart's monologues. Albert hides his feelings of impotence, incapability and inferiority in the presence of the quarrelsome, loose and sexy-whore. The girl and Albert cannot appear as a prostitute and a client. Martin Esslin rightly observes:

The parallels with The Birthday Party are fairly clear: not only the analogy between Albert's dependence on his mother and Stanley's on Meg, but also the resulting fear of sex with other women. Albert too is being tormented by men who do know how one gets on with girls and who tease him about his
innocence and bashfulness. Albert's aggression against first his mother and then the tart, exactly corresponds to Stanley's attacks on Meg and Lulu during his party. There is a difference, however: Stanley attacks Lulu as the embodiment of the sexuality he fears, while Albert raises his hand against the tart because she turns out to be exactly as nagging as his mother. But, on the other hand, it is equally clear that the attack on the prostitute also arises from Albert's feelings of inferiority, his rage about his inability to approach the prostitute as a sexual object. Albert hates both aspects of the feminine principle: the sexual demand of the prostitute, i.e. woman as a challenge to his sexual potency; and the mother's claim to dominance over him as head of her family, as a person entitled to his respect, gratitude and servitude. The girls who tease him during the party can thus be seen as further embodiments of the first challenge, painful reminders of Albert's sexual inadequacy.2
Pinter has succeeded in designing unhealthy or broken families by shaping the domineering mother or wife or whore. *A Night Out* does not have a father. Max is the best mother substitute in *The Homecoming*. In this play Pinter is more particular and careful when writing about an aggressive mother and still more particular of a mother-substitute or tart. Pinter's interest and focus are on mother-substitute rather than a real mother. Albert finds his nagging mother in tart. The tart is like a young dominating mother, more talkative, nagging and recalls the inner violence in Albert. He tempts, reacts spontaneously and takes revenge by terrorizing her. The critic Ronald Hayman comments: "Once he's made her knuckle under to his will power, he celebrates in the same way as Wally does with girl in *Night School* - by giving her orders. He makes her walk to the wall, cover her face, pick her shoes up, and put them on. Like Wally and Stanley, he doesn't know what he wants from the girl, and he leaves without sleeping with her." Albert is just like a ball in the court of his mother and when she hits him he bounces back to her. He cannot go anywhere. According to Simon Trussler:

The play's long penultimate scene takes place later the same night, in the room of a prostitute who has picked up Albert as he
gravitates back to the closed coffee-stall. The two swop morale-boosting fantasies until the girl's pernickety concern to keep the cigarette ash off her carpet, too reminiscent of the motherly nagging Albert thought to have escaped, drives him into a second frenzy: he terrorises the girl for a while-indulging in petty bossing-about rather than overtly sexual assertion-then leaves. Returning home, he finds his mother, on whom the impending blow had evidently not fallen after all, waiting up for him — reproachful, forgiving, overwhelming. Like most nights out, this, too, has arrived at its morning after.

He leaves home to escape, but receives a bitter experience with the tart and gets back home once again. It is surprising that mother is alive and even she tells him that let bygones be bygones. Mother is seen offended but unhurt. Both mother and son can lead their life neither together nor separated. It is already late night when he returns home. Mother has again a nonstop touching monologue that anything and everything she does is for his own good. There is the likeness to an absurd play as has been pointed out by Ronald Hayman:
This is writing which succeeds by breaking all the rules of writing. It's good because it's so realistically full of bad syntax, tautologies, pleonasms, repetitions, non sequiturs and self-contradictions. The characters are not only uninterested in listening, they are hardly interested in what they themselves are saying.\footnote{5}

We can find the needless repetitions of a mother with her child-like grown-up son in the end of the play. The above mentioned expression like bad syntax, tautologies, pleonasms, repetitions, non-sequiturs and self-contradictions are the basic devices for Pinter. "It's not as if you're a bad boy ... you're a good boy ... I know you are ... it's not as if you're really bad, Albert, You're not ... you're not bad, you're good ... You're not a bad boy, Albert, I know you're not ... (Pause.) You're good, you're not bad, you're a good boy... I know you are ... you are, aren't you? (p.47). Albert is so silent. He is seen neither active nor inactive. He is absolutely mysterious toward his mother. As Martin Esslin comments on Albert: "But there is no reaction from Albert. As the play ends, we are left in the dark as to whether the power situation in the household has changed or not. Has Albert's show of domination over the prostitute

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given him the confidence to dominate his mother too? His silence could imply that. But, equally, it might mean that he has surrendered and resigned himself to a life of dependence."

Albert's reaction with the tart is appreciable but not admirable. In fact Albert has not hit his mother. The impression has been given that to make it convenient in bringing off it on radio and television that as if he hits and she falls unconscious, but it becomes ineffective when it is transformed on to the stage. Simon Trussler puts it: "Albert's failure to kill his mother—just as Stanley had failed to strangle Meg in The Birthday Party—nevertheless encourages him to exercise a little brief authority. From this, however, he learns nothing." Pinter's intentional choice of simple words and common incidents and situations show his 'Psychological insight' and dramatic talent. Commenting on the play Pinter himself says: "A play I wrote called A Night Out did, I think, successfully integrate the picture and the words .........."
desire he fails to entertain his girl friend and finally dies for his mother. Even after his death Mrs Morel never realises and the amorous mother chooses the next son, Mr Paul as her sexual object. Paul is the substitute lover to her husband. Both are fond of each other in non-physical sense. Mrs Morel's choice of her son is thanks to her husband's failure. Paul is fond of his mother because he is jealous of his father. In A Night Out Mrs Stokes is fond of her son. She is possessive and domineering like Mrs Morel. Nevertheless Albert is not fond of his mother, yet we cannot say that he does not like her. Because he is lovable, sincere and obedient to his mother. Like Paul he too returns home with a sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction from the loose girl. Paul is torn between his mother and the girls. Albert is teased by his lady colleague and then, when he is picked up by the prostitute, once again he has experienced the same ill-treatment. The prostitute neither consoles him nor gives him pleasure but irritates him by giving the impression that she is a decent continuity girl. She considers him that he is immature and incapable who cannot entertain a woman. She is also aggressive and domineering like his mother and she could not accommodate him. Albert, who is vexed, finds his mother once again in her demeanour, threatens her and comes back home with the same sense of feeling of frustration. Osborne's play A Bond
Honoured is the best example of Oedipus and Electra complexes. The protagonist, Leonido has sexual contacts with his mother resulting in the birth of a child. Taking an extreme step, he questions and argues with his father that what he did is right. Later the same protagonist gives his sex to his daughter, Marcela. Here we can find the Electra complex with him. Indian myth Sarangadharudu dramatises the incestuous relationship between foster mother and foster son.

The Birthday Party with its predecessor The Room has many things in common: the domineering wife, the emasculated husband and mysterious visitors. Just as Rose knows very little about the room in which she lives, in which she has lived long, Stanley knows nothing about the party or the birthday that everyone in the play talks about. Just as Rose is threatened by Kidd about a visitor waiting, Stanley threatens Meg about the mysterious men waiting to break into the house. Just as there is violence leading to the death of Riley in The Room, there is violence in the play at the end, Stanley trying to strangle Petey. In both the plays women have doubtful integrity and men run away from them.

The absurdity of human condition has been presented very truthfully in this play. Pinter himself admitted in a dialogue, that "the play is a comedy because
the whole state of affairs is absurd and inglorious." About the words which he used intellectually and psychologically Pinter said, "... Meaning begins in the words, in action, continues in your head and ends nowhere. There is no end to meaning. Meaning which is resolved, parcelled, labelled and ready for export is dead, impertinent - and meaningless." It may be of some interest that in this as well as other plays Pinter is fond of making combinations of Jewish-Irish relationships. It only suggests his painful childhood days in East End. Ruby Cohn suggests that the "Jewish-Irish names and dialects suggest a vaudeville skit, and it is not long before we realise that that skit is the Judaeo-Christian tradition as it appears in our present civilization...."

Woman or women with loose morals are authentic in Pinter. In this play Lulu is so perverse that she makes love to young men and old alike. She carries a gift to Stanley to get his attention or compels his amorous attention but sleeps with a father figure. Sex knows no age consciousness. There is no place for convention or tradition. The playwright terribly responds to the prostitution by introducing many prostitutes. Even Stanley appears to be abnormal. Goldberg recognizes male homosexuality in Stanley as revealed in his breakdown. He is heterosexual as well which is revealed in
his attempt to rape Lulu. The most complex character is Meg herself who has a dual relationship with Stanley. For being the wife of an impotent husband she looks to Stanley for husband substitute and as a childless mother she treats him as her son.

The childless and aging couple Petey and Meg live at a dilapidated shabby seedy boarding house in a seaside town, where Stanley Webber has found refuge. Meg, the hostess by excessive care treats Stanley as her son. Stanley, the young lodger, still childish and inarticulate, fulfills for Meg what might have been her maternal duties. The Irish Petey, Meg’s husband, is a deck-chair attendant, who usually spends his time outside carefully neglecting his ambitious and desirous wife at home. The usual-absence of Petey makes his wife Meg develop a close affinity with the young man, Stanley. The birthday party is arranged for Stanley by the strange unidentified guests Goldberg and McCann, which he himself does not know. Lulu, a loose juvenile girl, neighbour from next door arrives with Stanley’s birthday present and proposes to him but as a young man Stanley fails. Of the two men who have come from a mysterious organisation to fetch Stanley away from Meg, the Jew Goldberg rapes Lulu. Despite Petey’s efforts, Stanley is taken away by the cryptic and undefinable militants. The
play ends with Meg's return from market who is left under the impression that Stanley is still in his bed.

The play opens with the couple and Meg preparing to serve tea to her husband and Stanley. She enquires with Petey and learns that Stanley is not yet up from his bed. When Petey starts to read out from the newspaper for Meg, the item regarding the birth of a child Meg shows a lot of interest. She instantly and impulsively responds to the happy event. Her curiosity suggests the reaction of a woman who has been without a child. In her case the prospect of motherhood is ruled out, old that she is. Meg is not just content to know about the birth but is eager for the sex of the child. She is disappointed that it is a girl, and not a boy:

PETEY: 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's 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.
PETEY: A little girl's all right.
MEG: I'd much rather have a little boy.

From the above we can infer that Meg has always wanted to be a mother and wanted to be the mother of a son. This brief reaction to the news serves as a comment on the earlier scene in which she has made enquiries about Stanley. Her lodger partly fulfils the psychological need Meg feels and her case for him is an unconscious drive.

MEG: Is Stanley up yet?
PETEY: I don't know. Is he?
MEG: I don't know. I haven't seen him down yet.
PETEY: Well then, he can't be up.
MEG: Haven't you seen him down?
PETEY: I've only just come in.
MEG: He must be still asleep. (p.10)

...
MEG: .... I'm going to call that boy.

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! (She exits and goes upstairs. In a moment, shouts from STANLEY, wild laughter from MEG, PETEY takes his plate to the hatch. Shouts. Laughter. (p.13)

Moments later when Stanley comes out of his bedroom after repeated calls, Meg behaves both as a mother and a wife. This is evident from her keenness to know whether Stanley takes the cornflakes and the tea just as she has done with Petey, her husband. We might compare the two passages, one between Meg and Petey, and the other between Meg and Stanley.
PETEY: I’ve finished my cornflakes.

MEG: Were they nice?

PETEY: Very nice.

MEG: I’ve got something else for you.

PETEY: Good.

*She rises, takes his plate and exits into the kitchen. She then appears at the hatch with two pieces of fried bread on a plate.*

MEG: Here you are, Petey.

*He rises, collects the plate, looks at it, sits at the table. MEG re-enters.*

Is it nice?

PETEY: I haven’t tasted it yet.

MEG: I bet you don’t know what it is.

PETEY: Yes, I do.

MEG: What is it, then?

PETEY: Fried bread.

MEG: That’s right.

*He begins to eat. She watches him eat.*

PETEY: Very nice.

MEG: I knew it was. (pp.11-12)

*...

MEG: What are the cornflakes like, Stan?*
STANLEY: Horrible.

MEG: Those flakes? Those lovely flakes?
    You're a liar, a little liar. They're refreshing. It says so. For people when they get up late.

STANLEY: The milk's off.

MEG: It's not. Petey ate his, didn't you, Petey?

PETEY: That's right.

MEG: There you are then.

STANLEY: All right, I'll go on to the second course.

MEG: He hasn't finished the first course and he wants to go on to the second course!

STANLEY: I feel like something cooked.

MEG: Well, I'm not going to give it to you.

PETEY: Give it to him.

MEG (sitting at the table, right). I'm not going to.

Pause.

STANLEY: No breakfast.

Pause. (pp.14-15)

The two passages representing Meg's dealing with her husband and Stanley show her treatment of the two. Stanley is no
outsider treated alike as Petey and in fact he has greater authority over the woman. This is revealed in Petey going away without tea, possibly as a reaction to Meg's fondness for Stanley. Stanley himself, aware of his position in the family, says to Meg, "You're a bad wife....". She has dismissed him with sour milk. Meg's defence of herself cannot convince Stanley for whom her conduct is "terrible" and "disgraceful."

In another scene which is revealing, Meg's amorous and erotic intentions can be seen. In reply to Meg's query whether the fried bread she has served is "nice," Stanley describes it as "succulent." Meg appears to be offended by the word which should not be said to "a married woman."

MEG: The fried bread.
STANLEY: Succulent.
MEG: You shouldn't say that word.
STANLEY: What word?
MEG: That word you said.
STANLEY: What, succulent-?
MEG: Don't say it!
STANLEY: What's the matter with it?
MEG: You shouldn't say that word to a married woman.
STANLEY: Is that a fact?

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MEG: Yes.
STANLEY: Well, I never knew that.
MEG: Well, it's true.
STANLEY: Who told you that?
MEG: Never you mind.
STANLEY: Well, if I can't say it to a married woman who can I say it to?
MEG: You're bad.
STANLEY: What about some tea?
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! (pp.17-18)
...  
MEG: It's good tea. Good strong tea.
STANLEY: This isn't tea. It's gravy!
MEG: It's not.
STANLEY: Get out of it. You succulent old washing bag.
MEG: I am not! And it isn't your place to tell me if I am!

STANLEY: And it isn't your place to come into a man's bedroom and—wake him up.

MEG: Stanny! Don't you like your cup of tea of a morning—the one I bring you?

STANLEY: I can't drink this muck. Didn't anyone ever tell you to warm the pot, at least?

MEG: That's good strong tea, that's all.

STANLEY (putting his head in his hands). Oh God, I'm tired.

Silence, MEG goes to the sideboard, collects a duster, and vaguely dusts the room, watching him. She comes to the table and dusts it.

Not the bloody table!

Pause. (p.18)

That her anger is easily mollified is known in her offer of tea as a condition to his expression of regret. Soonafter, as she goes into the kitchen she "ruffles his hair" which itself constitutes her erotic feelings. Her pouring tea "coyly" and her desire to be reassured, "Am I really
succulent?" and her allotment of Stanley's room where she had "some lovely afternoons" - all these go to prove that her attitude to Stanley is less holy than a mother's. She is "sensual" as she "strokes his arm." Her sensual nature is noticed by Stanley himself as when he says "And it isn't, your place to come into a man's bedroom and - wake him up." And when she strokes his arm Stanley "recoils from her hand in disgust, stands and exits quickly" (p.19). Again when Stanley "stands at the window, smoking. She crosses behind him and tickles the back of his neck" (p.19).

STANLEY (punishing her). Get away from me.
MEG: Are you going out?
STANLEY: Not with you.
MEG: But I'm going shopping in a minute.
STANLEY: Go.
MEG: You'll be lonely, all by yourself.
STANLEY: Will I?
MEG: Without your old Meg.... (p.19)

Psychoanalysts describe those who obtain sexual excitement by contact with another person as a frotteur: "The infantile reaction to cuddle and rub against ... seems to become a perversion in some cases, and when it does so the sexual satisfaction is obtained by rubbing against objects in crowds
and so on. It is not uncommon to find young men who feel intense sexual excitement when caressing a girl and ejaculate in so doing. Should they attempt to have intercourse they invariably have a premature ejaculation or else are impotent. From the behaviouristic point of view this is really a case of over-excitation, and indeed it may be found to occur temporarily in those who have been deprived of intercourse overlong."13 Besides psychoanalysts, Freud himself has written upon frotteurism as a "fore-pleasure", or one of the pleasures which increase sexual tension and the urge the partners on to the final culmination of the sexual act. That contact could be a partly acquired reaction through nursing and cuddling in infancy was pointed out by Darwin: "Hence we long to clasp in our arms those whom we tenderly love. We probably owe this desire to inherited habit, in association with the nursing and tending of our children, and with the mutual caresses of lovers. With the lower animals we see the same principle of pleasure derived from contact in association with love."14

If psychoanalysis can be invoked to interpret human actions, we can categorise Meg as a frotteurist who gets sexual pleasure by ruffling Stanley's hair, stroking his hand, tickling the back of his neck. Meg may be suffering from some sexual perversion and her acts are an indication of
the absence of sex for long. All her acts are a fore
pleasure for the final culmination.

The Stanley-Meg relationship is very difficult to
define. The textual evidence points to an extra-ordinary and
unusual intimacy that is found in mother-son and lovers
relationship. In the absence of other characters' comment on
the relationship, and the characters not left to muse on a
just concluded exchange, the reader is left to imagine, guess
and draw his own conclusions. Stanley's conduct appears to
be anything but exemplary. He has been rude to Meg in spite
of her supplication and what is more, vulgar and mean. Here
is an instance of his rudeness. Annoyed at the news of
strangers arriving at the lodge, he tries to conceal it by
accusing Meg of not serving him tea.

STANLEY: .... Where's my tea?
MEG: I took it away. You didn't want it.
STANLEY: What do you mean, you took it away?
MEG: I took it away.
STANLEY: What did you take it away for?
MEG: You didn't want it!
STANLEY: Who said I didn't want it?
MEG: You did!
STANLEY: Who gave you the right to take away
my tea?

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MEG: You wouldn't drink it.

STANLEY stares at her.

STANLEY (quietly): Who do you think you're talking to?

MEG (uncertainly): What?

STANLEY: Come here.

MEG: What do you mean?

STANLEY: Come over here.

MEG: No.

STANLEY: I want to ask you something. (MEG fidgets nervously. She does not go to him.) Come on. (Pause.) All right. I can ask it from here just as well. (Deliberately.) Tell me, Mrs Boles, when you address yourself to me, do you ever ask yourself who exactly you are talking to? Eh?

Silence. He groans, his trunk falls forward, his head falls into his hands.

MEG (in a small voice): Didn't you enjoy your breakfast, Stan? (She approaches the table.) Stan? When are you going to play the piano again? (STANLEY grunts.) Like you used to? (STANLEY grunts.)
used to like watching you play the piano. When are you going to play it again?

STANLEY: I can't, can I?

MEG: Why not? (p.21)

One is tempted to ask whether the situation demanded such an anger. How does a lodger gain such power and authority over a hostess? Is Stanley a normal person? Or is he merely exploiting Meg's love for him? It may not be totally wrong to describe Stanley as a bully, especially in the light of the interrogation and a trial conducted on him by Goldberg and McCann later in the play. They charge him with killing his wife, leaving another woman in the lurch, changing his name, neglecting his mother but Stanley does not refute them. There is nothing in the play to suggest that Stanley is innocent, that he is more sinned against than sinning. That he was a talented musician invited to play his piano at concerts until his career abruptly came to an end by a conspiracy appears to be a partial truth. His skill at piano is recognised by Meg herself but he is not absolved of his moral weaknesses.

His attitude to Lulu is no better. His clumsy appearance is noticed by her and refuses to wash when asked
to. When he refuses to open the door for her she herself does it. She cannot understand why he stays at home all the time.

MEG: All right, but ... (Whispers.)

VOICE: I won't ... (Whispers.) Ta-ta, Mrs Boles.

STANLEY quickly sits at the table.

Enter LULU

LULU: Oh, hullo.

STANLEY: Ay-ay.

LULU: I just want to leave this in here.

STANLEY: Do. (LULU crosses to the side-board and puts a solid, round parcel upon it.) That's a bulky object.

LULU: You're not to touch it.

STANLEY: Why would I want to touch it?

LULU: Well, you're not to, anyway.

LULU walks upstage.

LULU: Why don't you open the door? It's all stuffy in here.

She opens the back door.

STANLEY (rising): Stuffy? I disinfected the place this morning.

LULU (at the door). Oh, that's better.
STANLEY: I think it's going to rain to-day. What do you think?
LULU: I hope so. You could do with it.
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!

She sits, takes out a compact and powders her nose.

LULU (offering him the compact): Do you want to have a look at your face? (STANLEY withdraws from the table.) You could do with a shave, do you know that? (STANLEY sits, right at the table.) Don't you ever go out? (He does not answer.) I mean, what do you do, just sit around the house like this all day long? (Pause.) Hasn't Mrs Boles got enough to do without having you under her feet all day long? (p.25)
She suggests that they go out but he rejects it in favour of staying in. He is in Lulu's words a 'workout'.

Talking about Meg and her choice of seaside boarding house to live, Pinter himself says in an interview: "It was sparked off from a very distinct situation in digs when I was on tour. In fact the other day a friend of mine gave me a letter I wrote him in nineteen-fifty something, Christ knows when it was. This is what it says, "I have filthy insane digs, a great bulging scrag of a woman with breasts rolling at her belly, an obscene household, cats, dogs, filth, tea-strainers, mess, oh bullocks, talk, chat rubbish shit scratch dung poison, infantility, deficient order in the upper fretwork, fucking roll on ...." Now the thing about this is that was The Birthday Party - I was in those digs and this woman was Meg in the play, and there was a fellow staying there in Eastbourne, on the coast."¹⁵

Pinter's comments quoted above are in no way helpful to understand neither Meg's character nor the play. Nowhere in the play do we get such a picture of Meg. It is true that she is given to Frotteurism which is unconscious. She does not indulge in any sexual misconduct although she exceeds in her world as a hostess. This is in instance of the distance between the writer and his work. It also shows
how unhelpful the writer is to clear the confusion that the play creates.

The play *Night School* opens with the unexpected arrival of the protagonist, Walter in the living room of his aunts' home. Walter has been gaol for nine months and has just returned. He has been living with his two surrogate mothers Milly and Annie who treat him as their own son. Milly dominates Annie who is submissive. Differences can be seen between them. But both treat Walter well. Milly and Annie resemble Meg and Walter likens Stanley in *The Birthday Party*. Annie, Milly and Walter are tenants. Mr Solto, the landlord, is almost one of the members of the household. The aunts languish to win Walter's love and sympathy.

Milly as a mother-substitute suggests to Walter to borrow some money from their landlord, Solto to start business. Walter's criminality is unremunerative, if it is beneficial Milly could certainly have encouraged him to continue his profession. "When you going back?" Meanwhile Walter learns to his dismay that his aunts have let his room to Sally, an apparently genteel and respectable young woman. Sally has been with them for four months. The two old motherly women like her much. They trust her. "She pays thirty-five and six a week..." (p.56) They start talking about the girl to impress Walter. She is teaching at a
school for the infants. Sally creates good atmosphere in her room. She has made her room a sanctum. The old women have formed a good opinion about Sally.

MILLY: She's always studying books...
ANNIE: She goes out to night school three nights a week.
MILLY: She's a young girl.
ANNIE: She's a very clean girl.
MILLY: She's quiet...
ANNIE: She's a homely girl... (p.56)

Sally is very beautiful and also quite an attractive girl. She has occupied his room and also she is sleeping in his bed. Milly and Annie the old age pensioners supplement their meagre income by letting Walter’s room to Sally Gibbs. Walter is supposed to protect them financially but off and on he is sent to goal. Economic realities are very transparent in the play. Besides her teaching at school Sally attends night school three nights a week. "She's studying foreign languages there. She's learning to speak two more languages" (p.59). Walter seems to be interested in Sally. He does not like Sally to know the reason why he has been to prison. He learns that his aunts did not tell Sally the truth of his imprisonment. Walter, the ineffectual and impotent young man encounters Sally at the staircase and goes to her room to
collect something personal from his belongings which he had kept carefully in the cupboard. To collect it he asks Sally to leave him alone for two minutes. Sally obliges and waits outside till he finishes his work. Walter finds a photograph of her with some men dancing in a club. When he pursues the matter Sally strongly denies it but Walter is determined to find out the truth and he steals the photograph.

Part Two introduces Solto, the landlord, an old age pensioner and also a scrap merchant, who has not been to tea for months with Milly and Annie. Milly pays a compliment that Solto is still energetic. Solto tells that he has opened up the Northern Territory for the people who live in the remote inland areas in Australia. When Milly reminds him that he never got married, Solto replies: "I've always been a lone wolf. The first time I was seduced, I said to myself, Solto, watch your step, mind how you go, go so far but no further. If they want to seduce you, let them seduce you, but marry them?" (p.65) and then he adds "If I wanted to get married, I could clinch it tomorrow — like that! But I'm like Wally; I'm a lone wolf" (p.65). And he reveals that he killed a Lascar from Madagascar who was a six-foot-ten. He is an inveterate boaster so we cannot believe his words. He never got married in his life and he compares himself with Walter. Walter is also unmarried though he is interested in girls. When Solto hears about a young lady-lodger who
occupied Walter's room, he reveals his experience with a lady who had seduced him. "The lady who first seduced me, in Australia - she kicked her own husband out and gave me his room" (p.66).

Walter shows Sally's photograph as a dance hostess to Solto, to find out and to locate the club. So far, Solto has not seen Sally but is impressed by Sally's photograph. He is determined to know the truth behind the lovely photograph. Walter's second visit to Sally's bedroom is quite interesting and also remarkable. "...Walter playing up his criminal record for all it's worth and trying to impress Sally with the pretence that he's a gunman, while the girl puts on her cultured face."17 It is a kind of bargaining or contract scene. Walter offers Sally wine. While enjoying the drink Sally proposes "we could share the room, in - in a kind of way .... I mean, you could use it when I'm not here, or something" (p.72). If he is interested he can use her room during day time and also for three nights a week in her absence. Sally suggests indirectly that Walter has partial ownership of herself, not as a husband with total authority but as a lover with limited relationship. But Walter fails to take the offer which reveals his defective sexual potential. "I've never been in this room with a lady before" (p.72). He further says: "I was running the prison library.
I was the best librarian they ever had. The day I left the Governor gave me a personal send-off. Saw me all the way to the gate" (p.73).

Based on her accent Walter finds out that Sally is a Northerner. Moreover her eyes also reveal that she is a Lancashire girl. He pays a compliment. "Your eyes, they're Northern eyes. They're full of soot" (p.75). He knows that his aunts are proposing Sally to him. The same he lets her know. She neither blushes nor reacts. She does not express her feelings even when he lies that he has been married to three women. But she responds to him. The following exchange reveals that they appear to be attracted to each other. Moreover Walter gives the impression that he is a gentle gunman, even though he was arrested several times as a thief, a forger and an armed robber. His claims to gentlemanliness cannot hide his hypocrisy. Sally proves that she is a match to him. She pretends to be innocent and quite good. Hiding her foul life as a prostitute she pretends as if she is a school teacher. They try to cheat each other.

SALLY: I lead a quiet life, a very quiet life,
I don't mix with people.

WALTER: Except me. You're mixing with me.

SALLY: I don't have any kind of social life.
WALTER: I'll have to take you round a few of the clubs I know, show you the sights.

SALLY: No, I don't like that.

WALTER: What do you like?

Pause.

SALLY: Lying here ... by myself...

WALTER: On my bed.

SALLY: Yes.

WALTER: Doing what?

SALLY: Thinking.

WALTER: Think about me last night?

SALLY: You? (p.76)

In fact he is not married. He is "looking for Miss Right" (p.77), says he. He wishes her to be detained. "We could go together. Or, on the other hand, we could stay here. We could stay where we are" (p.77). This proposal is reasonable and meaningful. But all of a sudden one can find a tremendous change in his behaviour. The change may be thanks to his psychological disorder. He is seen dictating terms to Sally. In this particular scene Walter's aggressiveness and offensiveness to Sally hurts her feelings.

WALTER: Sit down.

SALLY: What?

WALTER: Sit down, (Pause.) Cross your legs.
SALLY: Mmmmm?

WALTER: Cross your legs.

Pause.

Uncross them.

Pause.

Stand up.

Pause.

Turn round.

Pause.

Stop.

Pause.

Sit down.

Pause.

Cross your legs.

Pause.

Uncross your legs.

Silence. (pp. 77-78)

His second meeting with Sally is a remarkable one. It is a kind of bitter experience for Sally which makes her come to conclusion about him. It is a turning point in the play. A strong decision has been taken by her but she never reveals. The moment she was teased, she decided strongly to leave the place to hide herself. If Walter had treated her properly things would have been different.
In Part Three Solto visits the night club where Sally is currently employed. Solto and Tully are friends. Tully is familiar with clubs. He is a regular visitor to night clubs. He talks about clientele, musicians, business executives who come from Hampton Court, Twickenham and Datchet. He mentions "resident birds" (p.79) and "high-class dolls" (p.80), in night clubs which reveal prostitutes and night club hostesses. Tully introduces Ambrose Solto to Sally in the Night Club. He is attracted by her looks. Sally is known as Katina in the club. She passes from club to club by changing the places with different names to hide her identity. When Sally proposes wine, Solto invites her to wine and dine with him in his beach hut at the weekend. He boasts about his possessions. He wants to seduce her. Knowingly she is being influenced. She is attracted to him.

To impress her Solto shows her photograph and says that he has come especially to see her but we know that "he's more interested in securing her sexual favours than in solving Walter's mystery."18 He is jealous of Wally Street and he does not want him to continue his acquaintance with Sally. He admits it to her: "I wouldn't let a man like that get hold of a lovely girl like you" (p.84). And when he meets Walter he strongly affirms that he could not locate the club and find the girl. He says "the photo's a fake.
There's no such club. There's no girl. They don't exist" (p. 86). He suggests to him simply to forget about her. While Walter is talking to Solto he hears the footsteps. He guesses that it would be Sally. He knocks the door to see her. It is locked and he requests her to open the door. No response. Annie learns that Sally has left the room leaving a note of gratitude and also a photograph of her with the volleyball team.

The play ends with Sally's escape. She disappears suddenly in the night without telling a word to any soul. We know that she is a disguised prostitute who attends night clubs regularly. She is connected with teaching profession and also with the institution of prostitution. It is difficult to define the relationship between the teacher and the whore. Nobody knows where she has come from and where she will go to. Her background is enigmatic. She is a mysterious prostitute. She never reveals her original identity. The mystery of her underworld is unsolved. All these days she carefully pretended to be a school teacher. With Walter's arrival she has landed in troubles. When he begins watching her movements, she feels uncomfortable and uneasy. "Like many of Pinter's females she remains elusive, a creature beyond definition, an insoluble mystery to the male mind."19 In fact, Sally is caught between Walter and Solto. Both are criminals, Solto is senior and Walter is
junior. They are like Goldberg and McCann, professional killers. Goldberg and McCann succeeded in their attempt in *The Birthday Party* and the lodger is caught and victimized. But in *Night School* the lodger, Sally cleverly escapes and Solto and Wally fail in their individual attempts. In closing in on the lodger the two plays *Night School* and *The Birthday Party* stand antithetical. Sally attracts Walter as well as Solto physically. Both of them desire to seduce her in their own way but she gives them a slip and the criminals are outwitted. The two men are duped. All the characters are liars who exploit one another. They do not have any relationship except dependency. They struggle to survive by hiding their real background. Everything is pretension and hypocrisy. Their relationship is only a fake. Ellen Schiffe comments on it:

> The proclivity of the characters for using one another to satisfy needs works to free Pinter from the necessity of creating any special characters as villains. The bogey man can be anybody.\(^2\)

Sally is a professional tart who keeps moving from place to place. Solto is like Goldberg who seduces the girl, Lulu as a father-figure. In this play Solto is also like a
father-figure who plans to seduce. Sally also misleads Walter. It is unfair. This time Pinter saves the lodger or victim. It is difficult to learn his intention of saving the lady lodger in this play. Simon Trussler remarks:

... to the amazement of the aunts and the frustration of Walter. Sally leaves, silently, in the night. Walter will, presumably, get his room back: but, for the first time in one of Pinter's plays this doesn't seem to matter as much as the wilful departure of the outsider.21

Pinter has not established the relationship between any of the two characters in the play. Between Walter and Sally, between Walter and Solto, and between Solto and Sally they do not trust and respect each other. The three pairs pretend to each other. Milly and Annie are also unfriendly, one dominates and the other does all the work. All these characters cheat and deceive one another in their struggle for existence. Even though Walter is deceived by his two surrogate mothers and Sally, he is not victimized. There is no question of violence in the play.

Walter and Sally lie to each other by hiding their true identities. They suspect each other instead of being
attracted. He threatened Sally by exercising his masculine authority to hide his impotency. Her photograph reveals that she is a night club hostess. To avoid Walter Sally disappears from the scene. Martin Esslin comments on the two protagonists in the play:

.... Neither of them can face the other in the knowledge that they know the truth. Had they had the courage to be frank about themselves, they might have found each other: after all, they are ideally suited to each other: a small-time crook who wants to go straight would be just the right partner for a girl who wants to get out of being a near-prostitute. In fact their real identities match each other far better than their fantasy personalities of the big gangster and the demure little schoolmarm.22

Martin Esslin's comparison of the characters is as follows:

Night School may be minor Pinter, yet it is a highly polished example of his technique and contains some of his funniest dialogue; it is also very characteristic of some of his main
preoccupations. The character of Sally, who oscillates between school teacher and whore, foreshadows the double nature of Sarah in *The Lover* and, above all, Ruth in *The Homecoming* who also fuse the respectable woman and the prostitute. Solto is the direct continuation of Goldberg character in *The Birthday Party* and the two aunts are expansions of the simple-minded motherliness of Rose in *The Room* and Meg in *The Birthday Party*. Walter, the small time crook, is clearly related to the two gunmen in *The Dumb Waiter* but also contains elements of Albert Stokes, the impotent clerk of *A Night Out*. The plot with its tissue of deceptions foreshadows the much more mature treatment of the same theme in *The Collection*.23

Talking about the role of women characters in the plays of Pinter, Sakellaridou lists out various women and their roles:

....Flora in *A Slight Ache* lays claim on female sexuality. Sally in *Night School* establishes a woman's dual nature. Stella in *The Collection* is a striking though mute
protest against men's neglect of the woman. Ruth in *The Homecoming* has a more unified personality and holds a strong position in a hostile male world. Beth's portrayal in *Landscape* is a penetrating, though equivocal, study of extreme femininity. Ellen in *Silence* is the first heroine of Pinter to emerge as a somewhat androgynous character. Kate and Anna in *Old Times* represent the complementary sides of female nature. Emma in *Betrayal* sets up explicit feminist banners that distance her emotionally from the male world. Deborah in *A Kind of Alaska* is a softer presence, masterfully portrayed in her tragic conflict between a frozen adolescent's consciousness and a mature woman's physical reality.24

Sakellaridou comments on Sally:

.... Sally has been placed in an inimical environment and is engaged in a solitary battle for her survival. The woman's difficult position in a patriarchal society is tackled seriously in *The Homecoming*. Through the parody of *Night School* we can discern the same grave situation. The prevailing view about
women in the play is the conventional split between the virtuous mother/wife and the disreputable whore, an attitude which eventually results in the axiom that all women are whores ....

From specific issues of women, the play rises to a higher level where the theme of failure of communication is suggested:

The play dramatises a situation among strangers. Each wants the other person to be drawn out into communicating something personal and intimate but communication does not really take place. All want to talk, and not listen, as strangers do out of fear and distrust.

Ronald Hayman compares the play and its technique with the other plays.

It's a neat idea for a plot — a bit like A Slight Ache, perhaps, in being rather too patterned, and once again you only have to scratch the nice girl to find the tart underneath. Sally is made to behave so
differently with the aunts from the way she behaves in the club that she's hardly the same person. But a lot of the dialogue is very good, and Pinter has a great deal of fun on the way with names (Milly, Sally, Wally, Tully), and with rhymes (Lascar from Madagascar). What is more important, though, is that he's developing the technique of the bravura boasting fantasy, putting in some very bizarre touches that look forward to both Harry and Bill in The Collection and to Lenny in The Homecoming. Walter's fantasies are very much more elaborate than Albert's lies to the tart in A Night Out about being an assistant director in films.27

Comparing Sally with Katina a critic observes:

....'Sally Gibbs' identifies the respectable teacher and student of foreign languages in Night School, but 'Katina' identifies the brash night-club hostess whose very coarseness reveals the day-time role to be a pretence. The prostitute of A Night Out still tries in the course of soliciting to pass herself off
as a respectable middle-class mother, by confounding psychological defensiveness with rationalization.28

Commenting on the fortunes of the play on the stage Hinchliffe says:

_Night School_ was intended to be the first of a new kind of Pinter play—light comedy with new realism. Its failure stems from the fact that no author can put old wine in new bottles; it re-exploits too heavily the old themes—conflict for possession of a room (which stands for peace and security for both Wally and Sally) and lying. Wally lies to achieve his various purposes, and the contradictions tell us something about him; Solto lies, or romances, but the truth or otherwise of those stories never comes into question; Sally also lies. The question posed by the play remains: What is Sally? That question is answered by the end of the play unless the last photograph is also phony; she is both teacher and night-club hostess. She is also a girl who might have helped Wally if he had not
frightened her away. The problem of a girl who is both Sally and Katina is explored by Pinter later in *The Lover.*²⁹

The misogynist Somerset Maugham in his characteristic way said that women bear with tragic happenings better than men not because they are stronger than men but they feel less. This seems to be true of many women characters in twentieth century literature. Women are shown to be responsible for the emasculation of men. Pinter in all his plays created women who are stronger than male characters who are also utter dependents on women. In the plays that are discussed in this chapter it has been shown how mothers dominate and dictate to their grown-up sons and how the latter submit to the wills of their mothers. Pinter explores Oedipus Complex in these plays just as Lawrence had done in *Fiction.*
NOTES


18. Ibid., p.90.


20. Ibid., p.84.


23. Ibid., p.105.


25. Ibid., p.86.


