CHAPTER V

THE THEME OF INCEST
Since the pioneering work of Freud, Jung, Adler and Havelock Ellis human behaviour has been explained from different points of view. There is the behaviourist point of view which is based on observation but which disregards psychic mechanisms of the individual. There is the psychoanalytical school which investigates the workings of the unconscious. There are also studies which explain the aberrations of sexual desire otherwise called sexual perversions and anomalies which are based on a biological point of view. These various approaches have identified several aberrations of human beings and designated them as homosexuality, sadism, masochism, exhibitionism, voyeurism, frotteurism, sodomy, fetishism, scopophilia, fellatio, coprophagia. The psychiatrists have given one of the above names to persons given to sexual perversion of one type or other. To quote Clifford Allen, "... in the sexual perversions that it is the modes of expression and the objects which are at fault... that the perversions are a combination of abnormal modes of expression and sexual objects and that various abnormal modes of expression can be directed against different objects in order to produce different perversions."^1 The psychologists however are not yet certain whether abnormal modes of expression are fundamentally erotic as Freud and psychoanalytical school insist, or whether they are merely patterns of behaviour
which become sexually conditioned to environmental circumstances. However, with the available theories perversions are divided into three degrees: 1. those who commit perversions in fantasy only, 2. those who perform perversions only under abnormal conditions (when drunk or under the influence of drunk) 3. active perverts. Pinter's characters belong to one of the three degrees.

In addition to psychological hypotheses Pinter fulfills Hulme's prophesy that a preoccupation with discontinuities will be characteristic of the twentieth century. Though Hulme merely made the suggestion without foreseeing the consequences Pinter dramatizes the anguish that accompanied the discontinuities. Hulme in his Speculations stated: "One of the main achievements of the nineteenth century was the elaboration and universal application of the principle of continuity. The destruction of this conception is, on the contrary, an urgent necessity of the present." The achievement that Hulme mentions is the theory of evolution the nineteenth century biologists and geologists developed that man is continuous with nature is basic to Darwinism and Marxism. This assumption manifests itself in literature as Naturalism and the disappearance of God. Pinter seems to reflect Hulme's speculations when he presents situations in which characters behave like animals.
There are no sanctities in human relationships, devoid as they are of ethical, moral and spiritual values. At the level of family, at the level of society human beings behave as no better than predators. Survival alone seems to be the end for the members comprising the society. Everyone seems to base his behaviour on the principle of utility. Survive at the expense of your neighbour, even if he be your kith and kin or friend. The lack of moral absolutes reduced human relations to the relationships obtaining in the natural world. In *Night School*, for example, there is not a human quality in any of the characters. Mothers exploit the son. One tenant tries to exploit another tenant. The landlord blackmails the tenant. One criminal is undone by another criminal. There are threats used, insinuations thrown although people wear the mask of friendship and respectability. It is ironical that Sally in *Night School* gives a slip to everyone and by her action proves that she is one better than everyone else. Pinter's resolution of this play in Sally's quiet escape suggests that there are occasions when mean tactics like blackmailing will not work. By approximating the civilised society to the natural world Pinter shows the anguish consequent upon the scientific belief that man is continuous with nature and needs no moral values.
The distinguishing feature that marks Pinter's work is his eye for the unfamiliar, the abnormal, the strange, the unconventional. Common relationships and conventional attitudes, stock situations, familiar themes do not seem to interest him. It is the odd in the midst of conventional that he chooses for representation. Incest has no religious or moral sanction since it is forbidden. Nevertheless, incestuous relationships are there, though rare. In literature there have been a few works which dealt with the theme of incest, the majority of them being written in the seventeenth century England. Incestuous love between brother and sister is the central situation in Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. Similar theme can be found in Rosset's Histoires Tragiques (1615), the love-romances of Parthenios, in Thomas Heywood's Gunaikeion (1624), in the Italian play by Sperone Speroni called Canace e Macareo (1546). There was also a Spanish drama La Venganza de Tamar by Molina.

'Tis Pity She's a Whore had earned for the author only a faint praise but much condemnation. Ford was called a deliberate perverter of morality, a worshipper of the supreme value of the love, which deserves to triumph over convention and morality. Sympathetic criticism dismissed the rash assumption that the play's attitudes are the playwright's attitudes. Ford more recently has been looked upon as more
balanced and less unorthodox in his treatment of morality. Whatever the truth, whether Ford was an apologist for immorality or a stern moralist, the question which begs is why did Ford choose incest for his central theme. Probably he wanted to portray extreme situations as an alternative to theatrical sensationalism to which his audience had been used to. In all his plays that he wrote Ford dealt with the brother and sister relationship. In 'Tis Pity She's a Whore the relationship in its most extreme form is represented.

As has been pointed out Ford was not the first to employ this theme. Tourneur in The Revenger's Tragedy, Beaumont and Fletcher in A King and No King and Middleton's Women Beware Women presented incest with horror and revulsion. Ford's treatment of lovers with fair degree of sympathy and pity and description of the lovers as highly gifted whose love springs more from the intense admiration for each other than from mere sensuality makes his play less repulsive. The theme of the effects of fate and destiny on the lives of human beings and that the theme of the wages of sin of death embodied in the play redeem it from condemnation.

Exploration of incestuous relationships might be an intellectual effort to rationalise human conduct. It is
the intellectualism which made the unorthodox Shelley remark after reading Calderon's *Los Cabellos de Absolon*:

Incest is like many other incorrect things a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or of hate. It may be that defiance of everything for the sake of another which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism, or it may be that cynical rage which confounding the good and bad in existing opinions breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness and antipathy.³

Shelley seems to suggest that incest is often committed for wrong reasons. In Ford's play the love is passionate and spontaneous.

Defoe's *Moll Flanders* narrates the story of an incestuous marriage, a relationship formed without knowledge. Moll, the daughter of a mistress born in the New Gate prison while serving her imprisonment, gets away from her mother and grows to become a prostitute. She meets her brother but does not know that he is her brother. They marry and some time later they go to his mother. It is there that Moll gets the shock of recognition that her mother-in-law is her own mother
and her husband is her brother. Unable to bear the truth Moll leaves the house never to return. Here in this novel Defoe shows how chance has married brother and sister and probably he is suggesting that there is an unconscious incestuous longing between a brother and a sister. In essentials it is not unlike *Oedipus Rex* in which the king Oedipus marries his own mother Jocasta.

More recently Osborne in his play *A Bond Honoured* deals with the theme of incest. In that play Leonido fights society by deliberately opposing its faith, morals, conventions. His fears of individualism prevents him from becoming stereotype and in his quest for the unique he has taken on a negative identity while assuming an identity based on perversity. He sets himself as a solo-fighter against all the values of his age. He rejects social morality and its taboos. He revels in incest with an obsessive drive and asserts his identity by multiple incest and rape. He is guilty of three incestuous relationships with his mother, daughter and sister. Not only he is guilty of incestuous crime he claims also to have raped about thirty women. Osborne used incest to focus attention on the debasement of marriage relationship by social convention.

Pinter's observation of abnormal people situated in abnormal situations preoccupied with abnormal actions has
given him material to dramatise them. The society torn by two global wars affected the social relations, familial relations and the individual himself. Neurosis caused by the fear of another war and loss of faith reduced man to a schizophrenic wreck. Pinter has found many to be gloomy, eccentric and sick. The root cause is a diseased psyche which affected the sexual life. Heterosexual relationships are replaced by other modes which are perverse. The destructive nature of aberrations is the main subject of plays like *Tea Party*, *The Homecoming* and many other plays of Pinter.

Harold Pinter's eye for the odd, hypocritical and the impudent may have been responsible for plays like *Tea Party* and *The Homecoming*. With the strength of tradition dating back to sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the clinical experiences of psychologists and psychoanalysts he must have been convinced about the dual nature of human beings. That man has not left behind his bestiality, that he has the instincts of an animal, that human relationships are not always sacred are some of the inferences that he must have drawn from his own experiences with people. Moral control and the injunction against adultery are often violated. Consequently extra-marital relationships are sought which in turn resulted in marital disaster. But the illicit relationships continue until they are discovered.
That is the end of the relationship. They separate and newer relationships are formed which once again meet the same end.

If marital infidelity is the bane of some couples certain others have to encounter very unusual kinds of diseases which are not always physical but are psychological. Some men are homosexuals who have little interest in heterosexual relationships. There are also women who are similarly disposed to men. Such people do not have healthy relationships with the opposite sex. There are others who are sadists who victimise the opposite sex by their verbal and physical cruelty. They are intolerable and they terrorise by their actions. Psychologists also speak of hypersexuals who are so selfish that they are indifferent to the emotions and moods of the others. They have their way with the other sex. They are perverts who derive pleasure by watching others undressing and by seeing others in sexual act. Also there are people who gratify their desires by constantly touching others rubbing against them and jostling with crowds.

In *Tea Party* Harold Pinter has represented people in whom one or other of the diseases and sometimes more perversions are found in one person. To begin with the central character Disson is suspicious, hypocritical and also he seems to be impotent. His hypocrisy consists in his
attempt to carry on with his newly wedded wife and his newly appointed secretary. He is suspicious which makes him distrust his own brother-in-law's relationship with his wife. His myopia is symbolic. Worse than Disson is his wife Diana who exploits her husband's weaknesses. The worst specimen of sexual perversion is Willy who has an incestuous longing for his sister. There is Wendy, the secretary, who tries to sexually please both Disson and Willy. The doctor to whom Disson goes for treatment is again an impotent person but his wife instead of seeking sexual gratification outside marriage seeks asylum in rearing up birds. In a nutshell we might say Harold Pinter is depicting a set of sick people who suffer from a variety of psychological disorders including incest. In the following pages of this chapter is an elaborate discussion of *Tea Party* and *The Homecoming*.

Robert Disson, the protagonist, an industrial tycoon is worried about his frequent failing eyesight. He is like Rose in *The Room* and Edward in *A Slight Ache* who too have poor eyesight. Willy, his own brother-in-law employed in his office becomes his partner in the firm and who engineers his downfall. He successfully victimizes Disson by exploiting a couple of significant women in the play. Wendy, Disson's personal secretary, an executive mistress, plays her professional role. "The bed-sitter-style secretary Wendy"
can be compared with many of Pinter's prostitutes. She identifies with Rose, Meg, Lulu, Ruth, Flora and Sally. Willy behaves obnoxiously with his sister in the play. Disson's two teenaged sons, Tom and John, through his last wife attend a public school. He has old working-class parents with him. He lost his wife sometime ago and is getting married second time to Diana now.

The play opens in spring season with the arrival of Wendy, Disson's new secretary. Disson manufactures excellent sanitary ware like bidets, cantilever units, hidden cisterns and footpedals. First rate sanitary engineers have been appointed in the firm. Disson appoints Wendy as his personal secretary. He is pleased with her pleasant demeanour and also her marvellous credentials besides her active and inquisitorial intelligence. Wendy had resigned her previous job because it was quite embarrassing with her boss whose attentions were quite sexual and lustful. The following exchange of dialogue reveals Disson's vicariousness:

WENDY: He never stopped touching me, Mr Disson, that's all.

DISSON: Touching you?

WENDY: Yes.
DISSON: Where? (quickly.) That must have been very disturbing for you.

WENDY: Well, quite frankly, it is disturbing, to be touched all the time.

DISSON: Do you mean at every opportunity?

WENDY: Yes, sir. (p.11)

While talking to Disson, she observes "her elaborate leg-crossing ritual." Wendy crosses, uncrosses and recrosses her legs and also straightens her skirt over her knees once. Disson tells her that he is "getting married tomorrow" and "this is quite a good week for me, what with one thing and another" (p.12). He expresses his pleasure over "one thing and another" in the sense, the two women, his personal secretary and his wife. When he reaches home he is introduced to Willy, his brother-in-law by Diana. Disson has lost his best man, an old friend called Disley, who is expected to deliver a speech in honour of the groom at the wedding reception. Willy will play the best man and is prepared to make a speech in honour of both groom and bride. Moreover, he is proposed by his sister, Diana.

At the wedding reception Willy makes a wonderful speech. His speech reveals his close attachment with his sister. He used to play with her. They spent number of
quiet summer evenings together. He is still fond of his sister. His excessive love for his sister is ambiguous and sinister and unnatural. His speech reveals the marvellous, gracious and self-righteous background of Diana and also their childhood memories which he still remembers:

I remember the days my sister and I used to swim together in the lake at Sunderley. The grace of her crawl, even then, as a young girl. I can remember those long summer evenings at Sunderley, my mother and I crossing the lawn towards the terrace and through the great windows hearing my sister play Brahms. The delicacy of her touch. My mother and I would, upon entering the music room, gaze in silence at Diana's long fingers moving in exquisite motion on the keys.... (p.14)

He narrates how his father was also fond of Diana. She was the only solace for her father who was a busy business magnet. She is a kind of rare pleasure to her father:

.... As for our father, our father knew no pleasure keener than watching his daughter at
her needle-work. A man whose business was the State's, a man eternally active, his one great solace from the busy world would be to sit for hours on end at a time watching his beloved daughter ply her needle.... (p.14)

According to Willy, Diana is an angel and household goddess. She has been heroine-worshipped at home by her father and brother. He adds: "Diana - my sister - was the dear grace of our household, the flower, the blossom, and the bloom. One can only say to the groom: Groom, your fortune is immeasurable" (p.14).

In the speech given in honour of Disson he pays good compliments to his brother-in-law even though he does not know much about him. He eulogizes him for his excellence in business establishment. He is a successful industrial tycoon who has come up gradually. He hopes that his sister is a suitable match for him. She is nowhere inferior to her husband. Willy and Diana have lost their parents. Since childhood they have been loving and fond of each other. His relation with his sister is so ambiguous that we cannot define it in no uncertain terms. As orphan-children, it might be inferred, that Willy and Diana would have developed a kind of abnormal intimacy between them. One can understand that Diana is young, dynamic, healthy and also socially
superior, whereas Disson comes from socially inferior family and also father of two teenage sons. Willy's speech continues:

... I have found him to be a man of integrity, honesty and humility. After a modest beginning, he has built his business up into one of the proudest and most vigorous in the land. And this — almost alone. Now he has married a girl who equals, if not surpasses, his own austere standards of integrity. He has married my sister, who possesses within her that rare and uncommon attribute known as inner beauty, not to mention the loveliness of her exterior. Par excellence as a woman with a needle, beyond excellence as a woman of taste, discernment, sensibility and imagination. An excellent swimmer who, in all probability, has the beating of her husband in the two hundred metres breast stroke.

(pp.14-15)

Disson's achievement in business is praiseworthy. Willy pays extravagant compliments to his sister Diana. As her joy knows no bounds she kisses Willy twice at the reception. Out
of happiness Disson invites Willy to hold the office as his "second in command."

The honeymooning Diana and Disson go to Italy and stay in a magnificent hotel room. It is the second honeymoon for Disson who is physically weak and incapable. He is seen suffering from psychological disorders. He lacks self-confidence and positive way of thinking. He is not sure what he is and whether he is making his second wife happy. He has his own doubts. He is socially inferior and feels insecure but claims his assertions as if he is potential and capable. He knows that his wife is not satisfied with him. He wants reassurance from Diana. One can see his anxiety and inquisitiveness. She is prepared to answer him in short answers. There are hesitations and silences between them. Disson and Diana are like Sybil and Elyot in Noel Coward's Private Lives. Women require reassurance from men in Coward's plays whereas men require the same from women in the works of Pinter. Pinter stands antithetical to Coward in this particular concept.

DISSON: Are you happy?
DIANA: Yes.
DISSON: Very happy?
DIANA: Yes.
DISSON: Have you ever been happier?
with any other man?
DIANA: Never.
Pause.
DISSON: I make you happy, don't I? Happier
than you've ever been ... with any
other man.
DIANA: Yes. You do.
Pause.
Yes.
Silence. (p.16)

Disson made a model yacht with great satisfaction which is used specifically for racing. The yacht may be substitute for his wife. Disson closely identifies with Bert in The Room who derives pleasure by taking his beloved Van out instead of his wife Rose Hudd. Disson imagines that his wife's eyes are shining every morning in contrast to his own defective eye sight. Between Disson and Diana differences can be seen in many aspects. They are contrary to each other. Diana was supposed to marry Jerry but she did not because "he was weak." To hide his physical weakness he assures himself that he is not weak. Disson wants his wife to say that he is strong. It is a kind of unseen force,
misguided zeal and sense of hypocrisy which he tries to impose on his wife.

DISSON: I'm not weak.
DIANA: No.
DISSON: Am I?

He takes her hand.

DIANA: You're strong. (p.17)

The cryptic conversation between wife and husband is disturbed when John and Tom step into their room. When John addresses his father as "sir" Disson gets angry with his boy: "Now don't be silly. You've never called me sir before. That's rather a daft way to address your father" (p.18).

At his office Disson seems to be very strict in his business affairs and enforces discipline in the office. Disson's office and the adjoining office which is occupied by Willy are completely separated from the rest of the staff. He observes strict punctuality. He does not like "fraternization" between the offices and the rest of his staff and even between his chamber and Willy's chamber. He has made excellent arrangements for quick service and better progress. He wants work to be done rapidly. For him, "living is a matter of active and willing participation" (p.19).
He explains plainly what he is, to his brother-in-law who is his business executive. "I'm a thorough man. I like things to be done and done well. I don't like dithering. I don't like indulgence. I don't like self-doubt. I don't like fuzziness. I like clarity. Clear intention. Precise execution" (p.19). The words reveal his perfection, business tact and also his industriousness. To grow and achieve better progress in trade as an industrial tycoon he successfully builds up and maintains a balanced kinship with his business executives and associates.

Since Willy becomes Disson's executive he requires his sister to be his secretary. His attitude towards his sister is highly suspicious and ambiguous. Diana is also interested to serve in the office rather than remain a housewife. Willy's intention is very clear. Willy and Diana soon begin to establish themselves and start to boss-over Disson. Wendy maintains her personal relation with Disson so that she does not have difficulties in meeting his requirements. Diana tries to please her step-sons, John and Tom who assure that they are "very good at making adjustments" with Diana. She wants to become a secretary to her brother against her husband's inclination. On one hand Diana and the other hand Wendy try to cheat Disson. Wendy's behaviour with Disson in the office is quite seductive and unhealthy. When she is taking dictation from Disson she does not feel comfortable in
her chair. She flickers in the chair. Her oscillations in mood can make a man mad. When he suggests her to sit on the leather desk, she gets up on to the desk by putting her feet on the chair wearing high-heeled shoes. One can find her liberated lifestyle and taking lenience with her boss. She "is a very competent secretary and in this she is far superior to Miss Cutts in *The Hothouse*, who excelled in her feminine role but failed as a professional women."

The playwright keeps shifting his audiences from Disson's office to his house. One day Disson and Willy are seen playing ping-pong at home in his games room. The twins are watching. Willy serves twice but he says that he has served only once. Disson knows the fact but he cannot prove it. Mentally he becomes weak. When the ball bounces under the table Disson loses his eyesight. Disley examines his eyes and finds nothing wrong with them. The complaint reveals that he is physically weak and psychologically unsound. Disson's defective eyesight troubles him off and on "Most of the time ... my eyesight is excellent. It always has been. But ... it's become unreliable. It's become ... erratic. Sometimes, quite suddenly, very occasionally, something happens ... something ... goes wrong ... with my eyes (p.26). Disson and Disley are good friends. Disley is his family doctor. "Sexily bourgeois wife," Lois seems to be
unhappy with her husband Disley. She turns her love and affection towards birds. It reveals her frustration in her life. She expresses her joy while the birds are at the bird-bath taking bath. She loves and worships the birds instead of Disley. She remarks: "They're so happy. They love my bath. They do, really. They love it. They make me so happy, my birds. And they seem to know, instinctively, that I adore them. They do, really" (p.26).

Diana plays a dual role in the play as a housewife and also a secretary. She likes working. But Disson does not like her idea of working under others including his brother-in-law, Willy. If she is employed, her employer may take liberty with her. He quotes Wendy's case. But Diana's version is different. She says: "... being your employee I can help to further your interests, our interests. That's what I want to do" (p.29). Diana tries sincerely to persuade her husband. The next morning Wendy comes to office late by putting on her new dress. Disson does not observe and never plays any compliment. She feels hurt.

In the workroom Tom is seen holding a piece of wood to be chipped off. Disson takes the saw and saws nearly Tom's fingers off. Tom was afraid of his father's action. It also indicates Disson's defective eyesight. Off and on his eyes give him trouble. He goes to office where Wendy
ties a bandage round his eyes to protect them. Disson asks Wendy to make a call to Newcastle and while she is conversing telephonically, Disson touches her body as did her former employer. She neither protests nor condemns his liberty. She does not have a word against him. It reveals her loose morals. She has a habit of changing her bosses. Her complaint against her last boss is merely pretension. Meanwhile Diana goes to Willey's chamber for taking dictation with Disson's permission. Though Disson permits her to go to Willey's chamber he suspects them. He suspects Willy, Diana and Wendy. Willy and Wendy are seen and heard flirting. "He hears giggles, hissing, gurgles, squeals" (p.33). He tries to peep into their room through the keyhole by raising the chiffon. The sounds which indicate sexual tones still continue. He tears the bondage and finds his wife at the door. Diana is very rash and talks to him impetuously. Disson lies to her that he is searching for pencil. His hypocrisy is clear. He gets angry with Diana: "Don't speak to me like that. How dare you speak to me like that? I'll knock your teeth out" (p.33). He cannot dictate to his wife. He is like a castrated bull. From the beginning he is being dominated by his wife and brother-in-law. We are told Diana has not gone home. Wendy is a disguised prostitute and Diana also is a disguised adultress. The two women have amorous relationship with Willy. Disson also has a sexual rapport.
with Lois, and Wendy. Keeping a seductive desire in his mind he calls Wendy into his chamber requiring her services for five minutes. Diana straight away comes to Disson's office, where Disson is caught red-handed while he is peeping into Willy's office through the keyhole. Disson knows that his wife is also being seduced by Willy. He is helpless, but he cannot dismiss his brother-in-law from his office. Gradually he loses grip over his wife and his secretary. Wendy is also being influenced by Willy and Diana. Willy, Diana and Wendy stand together and at the end of the play Disson is victimised.

Disson evinces interest in Wendy's personal life. He makes enquiries about her accommodation whether it is comfortable and cozy. The following exchange of dialogue shows Disson's intimacy with Wendy:

DISSON: What kind of flat do you have, Wendy?
WENDY: Quite a small one, Mr Disson.
    Quite pleasant.
DISSON: Not too big for you, then?
    Too lonely?
WENDY: Oh no, it's quite small. Quite cosy.
DISSON: Bathroom fittings any good?
WENDY: Adequate, Mr Disson. Not up to our standard.
He is ready to lose his wife but does not want to give up his secretary Wendy who is after all his secretary. She shares the flat with her girl friend who is an air hostess. Wendy is just like Sally, a night club hostess in *Night School* who also accompanies her girl friend, a history teacher to enjoy some music. In *Night School* Sally takes prostitution under the name of teaching profession. Wendy’s friend has asked her to become an air hostess. Disson discourages Wendy because he does not want her to leave him. He is jealous, selfish and also hypocritical. Disson talks about his friends who are well settled to create the impression that he too has number of friends and has good relationship with them. To feel social security he himself boasts. Disson resembles Edward in *A Slight Ache* and Walter and Solto in *Night School*. They boast about their own achievements and abilities to hide their impotence and other weaknesses. Disson narrates:

.... I had quite a lot of friends. True friends. Most of them live abroad now, of course - banana planters, oil engineers, Jamaica, the Persian Gulf ... but if I were to
meet them tomorrow, you know ... just like that ... there'd be no strangeness, no awkwardness at all. We'd continue where we left off, quite naturally .... It's a matter of a core of affection, you see ... a core of undying affection ... (pp.34-35)

As Disson grasps the desirous Wendy firmly she is tempted, and when she responds he withdraws himself. They play with the lighter on the floor which is symbolic. Her words are exotic: "Come on, come on. Tackle me, tackle me. Come on, tackle me! Get the ball! Fight for the ball! (p.36). He hesitates. This incident also reveals his sexual failures. He seems to be sexually weak whereas Wendy is a highly sexed female. He tempts her but cannot satisfy her. Probably she would understand him. He sinks to the floor due to his psychological insufficiency. She might be terribly disappointed this time. He begins to treat her coolly and praise her:

.... You're very valuable in this office. Good worker. Excellent. If you have any complaints, just tell me. I'll soon put them right. You're a very efficient secretary. Something I've always needed. Have you
everything you want? Are your working conditions satisfactory? (p.36)

In the sitting room of Disson's house Willy explains about the beauty of the Sunderley lake. He enjoyed the excellent summer nights with melodious "music playing" (p.40). The lake has wild swans and owls. Diana married Disson because he is kind and she likes his positive way of thinking. She says: "I found you admirable in your clarity of mind, your surety of purpose, your will, the strength your achievements had given you -" (p.41). Willy pleases and impresses Disson with his cleverness. He offers Willy partnership, "I want you to be my partner. Hear me? I want you to share full responsibility ... with me" (p.41). All these days he was only an administrator now he becomes Disson's partner to share the entire business transactions. On one hand relationship and the other hand partnership, Willy becomes stronger and stronger whereas Disson loses his grip over his wife as well as his secretary. Gradually Willy attains the status of Disson.

Diana and Wendy meet together in the absence of Disson and Willy. Both of them express their satisfaction over their employment. Diana enquires about Wendy's embarrassing experience with her last employer. She left the
job because he never stopped her touching. Diana is interested to discuss the matter with her. But Wendy does not like and cuts it short. Diana asks Wendy, "why men will persist in touching women?" (p.42). She does not answer it. It is a personal affair and cannot be generalized. It shows Diana's curiosity and intention to know about man and his interest in women.

Once again Wendy ties the bandage round Disson's eyes in the office. the chiffon which she ties stinks this time. Disson tears it off. Wendy is hurt. The first time he is impudent and flippant to her. The stinking chiffon is symbolic of her character. When his eyes are dressed with her chiffon he can see nothing and feels nothing. There she enjoys him. Her sense of imagination and treatment are very peculiar. "I always feel like kissing you when you've got that on round your eyes," (p.45) says she. Once he was in Disley's clinic, where he kissed Lois. Mrs Tidy sends him her love through his mother. Esslin comments on Disson's psychologically disordered imagination and treatment with women:

*Tea Party* is unusual in Pinter's oeuvre in that the age-old English theme of the upstart who feels uneasy in his new upper-class surroundings comes so much to the fore. Yet
it is characteristic of Pinter that even here the social theme coalesces with a sexual one. Disson does not only feel himself socially, but also sexually inadequate when he is with his wife; her social superiority deprives him of his manhood; for virility to him equals dominance; hence he feels more manly, more at home, with Wendy, his social inferior.

He is familiar with many women of the kind. When Wendy, a ministering angel leans forward to tie the chiffon round his eyes by giving him an opportunity he touches her once again. She warns him slightly. "No - you mustn't touch me, if you're not wearing your chiffon" (p.45). She wants Disson to wear the chiffon so that he can touch her. Actually Wendy offers herself to him through her stinking chiffon. He enjoys the feeling of sexual game with her. Later she tries to control him by closing his eyes with her chiffon. Bernard F. Dukore comments on Disson's loss of power:

... His questions during his honeymoon, the sexual games he plays with Wendy, and the combinations of sex, blindness, and power ...
suggest links between potency, sight, and authority; and his loss of one suggests loss of the others ....

The thoroughly disappointed sexy symbol, Wendy identifies with Ruth in *The Homecoming* who offers Lenny a glass of water before taking him for playing sexual game. To relieve sex-starved Lenny from his sexual thirst temporarily Ruth offers a glass of water. Instead of snaring Wendy Disson ignores her. Furthermore, he hurts her feelings by dropping her chiffon. Disley the ophthalmologist comes and ties the bandage round his eyes tightly. It becomes darker and he cannot see anything but he can feel and perceive the sound and whispering. He wants to see in the darkness. He himself says, "that's what I want" (p.46). Hereafter he never utters a single word. He is speechless till the play ends. He maintains silence and keeps watching everybody.

The catastrophe comes when he understands that Wendy is interested to go to Spain and she will be taken away by Diana and Willy. Disson collapses. He resembles Teddy in *The Homecoming*. The two protagonists become isolated. Teddy leaves the place silently but never collapses because he is an intellectual whereas Disson is weak. The breakdown comes when he overhears their conversation:
WENDY: What, me? Come to Spain?
DIANA: Yes, why not?

...  
WILLY: Yes, of course you must come.
   Of course you must come.
WENDY: How wonderful. (pp.50-51)

Martin Esslin remarks:

Albert Stokes in *A Night Out* goes berserk when he discovers that the prostitute who has taken him home has the same social pretensions as his mother; Disson's collapse comes when he suspects that the vulgar and willing Wendy will rise to the social status of his upper-class wife and brother-in-law. While he sits with bandaged eyes at the tea party Disson can hear the vulgar working-class accents of his parents on one side, the polished public school talk of his sons on the other. It is the tension between these two worlds that reduces him to paralysis and blindness.¹⁸

Disson arranges a tiny tea party to celebrates his first wedding anniversary with Diana. He invites Mr and
Mrs Disley, the twins, his parents, Diana, Willy and Wendy. All are gathered in the afternoon in Disley's office. No reception and no formalities. The protagonist is unvoiced and the entire picture is invisible to him because his eyes are still bandaged. What he hears is "soft clunks of door opening and closing, muffled steps, an odd cough, slight rattle of teacups" (p.47). He hears those different sounds in the office repeatedly five times respectively when the expected guests arrive couple by couple and Wendy arrives alone at the end. Disley tells the guests that to rest his eyes, they are tied with chiffon and also informs them not to disturb Disson. All have their tea and relax. Wendy puts a warm cup of tea in Disson's hands. Two elderly ladies, his parents, the twins and the Disleys and Willy, Wendy and Diana are divided into four groups who begin to whisper among themselves. Disson "... is attacked by doubts and blindness. He finally collapses at the office tea party and retreats into a catatonic trance, the most complete sanctuary,..."11

Disson is terribly upset and suspects his parents, sons, wife, brother-in-law and secretary and friend. He is alone with his eyes bandaged and a ping-pong ball in his hands. He is defenceless when Wendy, Diana and Willy are growing increasingly against him. Willy places his hands around Wendy's and Diana's waists, and leads them to Wendy's desk on which cushions are arranged for them. Diana and
Wendy never protest. They giggle and lie on the desk in front of all the guests. Elizabeth Sakellaridou remarks:

The discovery, through anthropological studies, of unilateral sexual myths, myths created by men about woman and not vice versa, can explain the frequent presence of archetypal patterns in Pinter's plays, in which the woman occupies a disadvantageous, defenseless position against a set male mythology and ideology. In certain plays this is felt to the extreme. In *A Slight Ache* and *Tea Party* the image of the woman is unaccountably subordinated to the wild activities of male fantasy ....12

The lustful temptation between siblings is quite contrary, awkward and more painful to the human soul. This is the most unfortunate and unexpected incident in the play. In this play some parts are funny and some parts are sexy. Wendy's relation with Disson and Willy is purely sexual. She becomes amorous at the office with Disson. Disson mistrusts his wife and brother-in-law in the beginning itself. Willy's relation with his own sister is a terrific experience. They neither regret, nor feel ashamed for their obscenity.
Willy victimizes Disson as well as his secretary and his wife. Still they are lying. A shoe is dropped from Wendy's desk. Disson could not cope with the misfortune. All of a sudden the chair cracks and he collapses from his chair. His teacup is broken. Disley removes the bandage. His eyes are seen open. They try to lift him from the broken chair but they cannot. All gather around Disson. He never moves. One can feel that he is almost all dying. Diana comes and kneels by him.

DIANA: This is ... Diana

Pause.

Can you hear me?

Pause.

Can he see me?

Pause.

Robert.

Pause.

Can you hear me?

Pause.

Robert, can you see me?

Pause.

It's me. It's me, darling.

Slight pause.

It's your wife. (pp.53-54)
He maintains a death-like silence. He never utters a single word. He is identified with Hamm in Beckett's *Endgame*, who "covers his face with handkerchief, lowers his arms to armrests (and) remains motionless." Disson's parents are also like Hamm's silent parents, Nagg and Nell who too are silent at Disson's breakdown sitting and dozing.

The play, *Tea Party* is closely connected with *A Slight Ache*. Disson is helpless like Edward. Diana identifies with Flora. Diana has intimacies with her own brother right from the beginning. Diana isolates her husband by developing a sense of abnormal intimacy with her brother. Pinter technically splits the image of women into two possible terms by taking their psychological problems, frailties and subordination into consideration. One is chastity of woman (mother) and other is indecency of woman (prostitute). We find the two female images clearly and separately in his plays like *The Birthday Party*, *A Night Out*, *Night School*, *Tea Party*, *The Basement* and *The Hothouse*. Two different parts, mother and prostitute are created on the stage successfully in his plays. But in a play like *The Homecoming*, the heroine plays the role of sharing her husband's kith and kin. Even though *Tea Party* is a short play it spans a period of one year unfolding subtleties of characters and convincing audiences as to the need for
lengthy exposure. As in *The Birthday Party*, the two intruders Diana and Willy enter into Disson's sanctum and occupy his home and office. With their intrusion Disson's career begins to taper and disintegrate. This time the intruders become permanent members at home who never leave. Wendy resembles Sally in *Night School*. Willy resembles the matchseller in *A Slight Ache*. The matchseller, purely an outsider with no relationship with Edward, comes home and takes Flora away with him in her husband's presence. Disson and Edward resemble Teddy in *The Homecoming*. In *The Homecoming* Lenny takes liberty with Ruth in front of Teddy, who is merely silent. Ruth follows him voluntarily. Diana resembles Ruth, both of them flirt with their lovers in front of their husbands. *Tea Party* covers one-year duration whereas *The Homecoming* twenty-four hours.

The ending is the most confused and confusing of all. It is reminiscent of *The Birthday Party*. The blindfolding of Disson harks back to the game of blindman's buff, and the culmination of the whole play is the reduction of Disson to helpless passivity. But in *The Birthday Party*, the demolition of Stanley had a kind of rightness about it; it was a continuation in external terms of a tendency
that had started inside Stanley, so that the choice of him as a victim was not entirely arbitrary. Disson, however, would never choose himself as a victim or see himself as a failure. No doubt there would be levels in such a man on which he does do both, but the play doesn't concern itself with exploring or explaining them.14

It is possible to read the play as a dramatization of class conflict as some critics did:

In some ways Disson's emergence from the squalor of his working-class youth into the antiseptic respectability of upper-class life (beautifully symbolized by the spotless water closets and bidets) parallels Len's loss of the warm squalor of his life with the dwarfs, Aston's loss of the wild exuberance of the period before he underwent electric shock treatment, Stanley's squalid existence in Meg's boarding house in The Birthday Party; and Stanley too is propelled into respectability - and speechlessness - by an assault on his eyesight: his glasses are broken, he is reduced to nearblindness.
Blindness is the punishment which Oedipus inflicted upon himself for having lusted after his mother. Is it Disson's punishment for having aspired to the bed of the chaste, madonna-like Diana?15

The play like King Lear abounds in images of light and darkness and the central character is made to lose his eyesight so that he cannot see the truth. As a critic comments:

Verbally and visually Pinter connects the play's scenes. Ironically Disson's dialogue in the first scene - 'You've heard of us' and 'I see' (iii, 103-4) - forecasts his inability to hear or see in the last scene when his wife asks if he can hear or see her. In an early scene Disson tells Willy that their offices are cut off from those of the other staff and from each other, and he asserts his dislike of fraternisation between offices. At the end of the play the blinded Disson is cut off from everyone and, immobile, cannot fraternise.16
The Homecoming is a summer play which is set in an old slightly seedy Victorian house somewhere in the industrial area of North London. And there lives a family of men of two pairs of brothers of two generations. Max, a man of seventy, former butcher, head of the family but still quarrelsome and offensive. Sam, a man of sixty three, ineffectual brother of Max who now works for a respectable hire-car firm, might, in his youth, have been a driver for the prostitutes run by Max and his bedfellow MacGregor. Max's two sons out of three, Lenny and Joey are neither married nor employed nor settled in life. The second son, Lenny, a man in his early 'thirties, is a pimp and the younger brother, Joey, a man in his middle 'twenties, part-time boxer, who always thinks and dreams of his success as a boxer and simply does nothing. Sam is single and by vocation a chauffeur. Teddy, the elder son, a man in his middle 'thirties is a professor of philosophy in an American university, who has been teaching for six years in the University campus, brings his wife Ruth, to visit the family she has never met previously.

The play The Homecoming begins with a one-sided conversation of Max, who has taken over the role of a mother. Max is a big bore for Lenny his son. His continued nagging, repetitive way of talking and his unfriendly and
unsympathetic indifference are obvious right from the beginning:

MAX: What have you 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 of the paper.

LENNY: I'm 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 look 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 prat? (p.7)'

'Home' is the first subject in the play. But it is not the lovely home of Pinter. There is in it a struggle for power and existence. Lenny's arrogant tone of voice nonpluses the readers. Toward Max, Lenny's offensive
treatment is insurmountable and unavoidable. Lenny is an ill-bread, ironic, manipulative and destructive person who never loves and respects his father. Max is no better. He is domineering, treacherous and aggressive, and establishes headship authoritatively upon his sons. He tells that he was something great in the past and he wants his son to recognize it. "I'm still strong. You ask your Uncle Sam what I was" (p.8). And then he talks about his co-partner, who was also a butcher. Once they used to fetch the prostitutes where they were needed and made money. So, Pinter's characters in the play could also be members of the world of pimps and gangsters. Max is being insulted and ignored but he goes on reminiscing, filling in a good deal more plot background of past history than is usual in Pinter. Max talks about his companion MacGregor: "We were two of the worst hated men in the West End of London. I tell you, I still got the soars. We'd walk into a place, the whole room'd stand up, they'd make way to let us pass. You never heard such silence .... He was very fond of your mother, Mac was. Very fond. He always had a good word for her" (pp.8-9).

Lenny who is still reading the paper is neither communicative nor responsive. Max is ignored and is hurt. Max is a clear reminiscent of Davies in *The Caretaker* particularly in the way he talks about missed opportunities in his past. He lost the rugged bachelor-philanderer,
MacGregor. And he talks about his dead wife, Jessie who was a prostitute and might have had physical contacts with MacGregor and Sam, his brother. She would satisfy the entire family. Jessie would have ruled the family with her body. He describes her:

MAX: Mind you, she wasn't such a bad woman.

Even though it made me sick just to look at her rotten stinking face, she wasn't such a bad bitch. I gave her the best bleeding years of my life, anyway.

LENNY: Plug it, will you, you stupid sod, I'm trying to read the paper.

MAX: Listen! I'll chop your spine off, you talk to me like that! You understand? Talking to your lousy filthy father like that! (p.9)

Max starts shifting from subject to subject and time to time as the play progresses. Lenny is uninterested and is being disturbed again, and so gets ready for verbal attack. Being a father figure Max is the most indignant. He clearly lacks the physical ability to impose his will on Lenny: "The first indication of the difference between the two characters is their dress. Lenny wears a dark suit, and Max enters in an old cardigan and a cap; as the play develops it becomes
apparent that the differences in dress of each member of the family reflect, the relationship each has established between the world inside this house and the world outside it."1

Lenny comments: "Why don't you buy a dog? You're a dog cook. Honest. You think you're cooking for a lot of dogs" (p.11). When Lenny taunts his father, Max raises his stick pointing at him, but Lenny is not defenceless. Lenny mocks the gesture with a little boy's voice: "Oh, Daddy, you're not going to use your stick on me, are you? Eh? Don't use your stick on me, Daddy. No, please. It wasn't my fault, it was one of the others. I haven't done anything wrong, Dad, honest. Don't clout me with that stick, Dad" (p.11). It is a ridiculous pretension. He pretends innocence, hoping to avoid being beaten, for insulting his father. Max's violence is ineffectual, and he comes down from his heights of anger easily. Both Max and Lenny use the weapon of offence and defence. Meanwhile the aged Sam, an unmarried adult male appears in the scene. He is polite, courteous and a little bit experienced as a driver. Sam says himself that he was driving a dust cart at the age of nineteen. He has been a taxi-driver for ten years and a private chauffeur for five years. Many ask for him and say that he is "the best chauffeur in the firm" (p.13). He is a self boaster but not a good driver. Comparing him with Davies in The Caretaker Ronald Hayman says:

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The 63-year-old Uncle Sam also reminds us of Davies, with his self-important fantasies. He boasts of being the best chauffeur in the firm, the one that everybody asks for. The gentlest, weakest creature in this menagerie of a menage, he is the butt of incessant raillery from Max, just as Max is from Lenny, but with the difference that Sam is a homosexual who has been sexually frustrated all his life, which makes him vulnerable to jokes about weddings.19

To tickle Sam, Max brings the discussion of his marriage. Sam defends himself by hiding his feelings of homosexuality:

MAX: It's funny you never got married, isn't it? A man with all your gifts.

Pause.

Isn't it? A man like you?

SAM: There's still time.

...

MAX: When you find the right girl, Sam, let your family know, don't forget, we'll give you a number one send-off, I promise you. You can bring her to
live here, she can keep us all happy.  
We'd take it in turns to give her a  
walk round the park.  
SAM: I wouldn't bring her here.  
MAX: Sam, it's your decision. You're welcome  
to bring your bride here, to the place  
where you live, or on the other hand  
you can take a suite at the Dorchester.  
It's entirely up to you.  
SAM: I haven't got a bride. (pp.14-15)

Max knows why Sam has not got married. Being a homosexual he  
could not have dared to have a wife. If he had a wife she  
should have been compelled and forced to take to  
prostitution, victimized and exploited sexually, demoralised  
socially and destroyed domestically. Being a wife of Max,  
Jessie was sexually exploited to become prostitute. She  
could not be a decent housewife. She symbolizes  
victimization and debauchery. Jessie was a house wife,  
licensed prostitute, had sex with others publicly. Max could  
not save his wife. He suffers from the feelings of  
hopelessness and helplessness. All these made him funny and  
quarrelsome.
Lenny is clever and cunning whereas Joey, Max's another son, is for strength and sexual potency. At home all are dependents on Max for food. Since the death of Jessie, Max became the mother-substitute at home. He is compelled to take over the role of his wife Jessie to feed the household. Max criticizes Joey that he illsuits the profession: "Boxing's a gentleman's game" (p.17). His statement apparently shows that Joey is neither trained nor experienced in that particular art and has not reached to the mark of his expectation. Before going to bed, Max recollects the past events of his father and shares them with Sam. Talking about the dead persons is a common element in Pinter's works:

.... Our father? I remember him. Don't worry. Your kid yourself. He used to come over to me and look down at me. My old man did. He'd bend right over me, then he'd pick me up. I was only that big. Then he'd handle me. Give me the bottle. Wipe me clean. Give me a smile. Pat me on the bum. Pass me around, pass me from hand to hand. Toss me up in the air. Catch me coming down. I remember my father. (p.19)
Here Pinter brings the unsuspected character into the scene and introduces him to the audience with a special effort under the whimsical circumstances. The victim comes from outside with his wife, Ruth. Teddy, the oldest son of Max, once he was an insider but ran away from home. Now he is a Professor of Philosophy in an American University. He has three sons. He has been there teaching Philosophy for six years and has succeeded professionally, well settled domestically and achieved the good status socially.

In the midnight Teddy reaches home with his wife. He does not like to disturb anybody at home. His former room at home is still vacant. Ruth is worried thinking about her children in America.

TEDDY: ....We've come to stay. We're bound to stay ... for a few days.
RUTH: I think ... the children ... might be missing us.
TEDDY: Don't be silly.
RUTH: They might.
TEDDY: Look, we'll be back in a few days, won't we? (p.22)
He assures his wife that she will be at home in the new setup. "They're my family. They're not ogres" (p.23). In the scene which brings Ruth and Lenny, the former begins to taste the family's ethos:

LENNY: You must be connected with my brother in some way. The one who's been abroad.
RUTH: I'm his wife. (p.28)

He explains how he is being disturbed particularly at night times with the objects like tick and other sorts. Neither in the day nor in the night does he sleep. But Lenny's complaint is unnatural. He is mentally disordered. Reasons are many. He is influenced and intoxicated by his past. The past, which is full of sin, besides the family background and the surroundings. Discussions during the night time shows the abnormality, unnaturality, meaninglessness and ill-health.

The conversation between Lenny and Ruth continues. Tick of a clock is the first subject. "The tick's been keeping me up. The trouble is I'm not all that convinced it was the clock. I mean there are lots of things which tick in the night, don't you find that? All sorts of objects, which, in the day, you wouldn't call anything else but commonplace. They give you no trouble. But in the night any given one of
a number of them is liable to start letting out a bit of a
tick .... So ... all things being equal ... this question of
me saying it was the clock that woke me up, well, that could
very easily prove something of a false hypothesis" (p.28).
Here Lenny understands that Teddy and Ruth have come to pay a
visit to Venice in Italy. In the childhood Lenny's ideas and
plans were different. He wanted to be a soldier in the last
war: I've always had a feeling that if I'd been a soldier in
the last war—say in the Italian campaign - I'd probably have
found myself in Venice. I've always had that feeling. The
trouble was I was too young to serve" (p.30). Ruth is given
a glass of water which she has not asked for. Then he wants
to hold Ruth's hand.

LENNY: .... Do you mind if I hold your hand?
RUTH: Why?
LENNY: Just a touch.

He stands and goes to her.
Just a tickle.
RUTH: Why?

He looks down at her.
LENNY: I'll tell you why. (p.30)

His first long speech with Ruth is full of suspensions and
the conversation is unbalanced. Pinter cleverly designs the
incoherent conversations. According to him, in the
particular night he had been to harbour and stood under an arch. "I was standing alone under an arch, watching all the men jibbing the boom" (p.30). Here the 'arch' may be a centre or shelter for heterosexuals, homosexuals, transexuals, bisexuals and lesbians. Lenny might have gone there to pick up prostitutes, "when a certain lady came up to me and made me a certain proposal. This lady had been searching for me for days. She'd lost track of my whereabouts" (p.30). Lenny narrates his experiences with the prostitute to judge Ruth's morality. An unknown diseased prostitute had been driven to there by the chauffeur. She met Lenny and made a proposal. Then he realized that she was suffering from syphilis. The lady would seek compelling attention from Lenny: "Well, this lady was very insistent and started taking liberties with me down under the arch, liberties which by any criterion I couldn't be expected to tolerate, the facts being what they were, so I clumped her one" (pp.30-31). The chauffeur drove this diseased prostitute to Lenny and left the place, arranging the client for her. "He was an old friend of the family" (p.31). Birds of same feather flock together, the proverb is proved. All these characters belong to the world of pimps and gangsters. Undoubtedly Lenny is a seductive and immoral character in the play. With much patience Ruth listens to his surprising and irrelevant two big monologues. Ruth is not allowed to react
or question why she is being disturbed in the late night. She is not allowed to sleep. Lenny says that he is very sensitive but he wants to get desensitized. To hold Ruth's hand he strengthens his proposal by revealing another experience with a different woman. It was winter in Europe full of snow-covering for the Borough Council. He reached the allotted area by lorry to remove the snow. While he was having a cup of tea in a neighbouring cafe, an unknown lady met and asked him to help her to shift an iron mangle to another room where actually she wanted it, which was left by her brother-in-law. They yielded to each other mentally, prepared to commit physically. The act of accidental introductory leads Ruth and Lenny to be arrested immorally and physically. He thinks that Ruth is a third lady like the previous two whom he met already, and hers is a proposal. They would have started the sexual game with the glass of water. Glass of water symbolizes the instigation of sexual desire. The arbitrariness can be found clearly in the characters of Pinter:

RUTH: If you take the glass... I'll take you.

    Pause.

LENNY: How about me taking the glass without you taking me?

RUTH: Why don't I just take you?
LENNY: .... You're in love, anyway, with another man. You've had a secret liaison with another man. His family didn't even know. Then you come here without a word of warning and start to make trouble.

...

RUTH: Have a sip. Go on. Have a sip from my glass.

He is still.

Sit on my lap. Take a long cool sip.

...

LENNY: What are you doing, making me some kind of proposal?

...

RUTH: Oh, I was thirsty.

...

LENNY: What was that supposed to be?

Some kind of proposal? (pp.34-35)

Max wakes up from his bed disturbed, comes down and scolds Lenny. "I think we got burglars here" (p.35). It is understood that the burglars or intruders are in fact Teddy and Ruth. He finds Lenny with a woman but he does not know who the person is. All are sleeping. Lenny pretends that he
was thinking aloud in front of his father. Here Lenny lies and hesitates to tell the fact to his father. If Lenny is confident that Ruth is his sister-in-law he would have told the fact happily. But Lenny has still doubts. He is not sure whether she is Teddy’s wife or a prostitute. Even if Lenny tells, Max may not believe it. As a result Lenny will be punished for having brought a prostitute home. Ruth is hidden. The scene in which Lenny and Ruth meet is full of doubts, mysteries. The ‘rhythm of procrastination’ can be heard particularly in this scene.

The next morning Max is with his two sons Lenny and Joey and brother Sam. Max tells that he has been running the home with the blessings of his father. Max was asked to look after his brothers. He follows the last sacred words of his father by allowing Sam with him. He allowed MacGregor also to run the butcher’s shop. He says that he respects his dead father not only as a man but as a number one butcher. To prove his deference toward his father he decided to run the butcher’s shop. "I learned to carve a carcass at his knee. I commemorated his name in blood. I gave birth to three grown men!" (p.40). Here it is proved that the family is all-male-family for three generations. Tradition continues. Jessie, wife of Max looked after the family and satisfied all the men sexually. Jessie won the all-male-household physically and run the family under her control.
As a result Teddy's wife, Ruth is expected and required to look after the entire family as Jessie did. Ruth is to follow her mother-in-law. Max listened to his father's words and followed him. Teddy has to obey his father's proposal to lose his wife and Ruth has to look after the family as did Jessie. Pinter never allows some of his characters to react.

When Teddy introduces Ruth to the family Max never trusts him. Max reacts and uses wild words. "Who asked you to bring dirty tarts into this house?" (p. 41). Lenny's silent observation the last night and Max's reaction reveal that Ruth is a tart. Their abode is a symbol for prostitution. They have been swimming in the pool of mud water with diseased prostitutes right from the beginning. Their minds are polluted. It is impossible to change them. They cannot be persuaded. Teddy is astonished but not shocked at his father's behaviour.

TEDDY: Yes, we arrived from Venice -
MAX: We've had a smelly scrubber in my house all night. We've had a stinking pox-ridden slut in my house all night.
TEDDY: Stop it! What are you talking about?
MAX: I haven't seen the bitch for six years, he comes home without a ward, he brings
If Teddy had communicated the message about their arrival, Max would have received them well. Teddy committed a blunder. Without a word he intruded into the home with his wife in the midnight. Besides, the household does not know that Teddy has been married for six years. Due to these two reasons they suspected Ruth. Max adds that he has never had a whore since the death of his wife Jessie under that roof. Max commands Joey to "chuck them out" (p.42). Joey never responds. Max gets angry and hits him at the stomach with all his might. Joey is twisted and collapses. Sam tries to give his helping hand. Max hits him across the head with his stick. He sits head in hands. Max insults Ruth severely treating and calling her as a tart, a slut, a scrubber, a whore, a slopbucket, a bedpan and a diseased. Ruth never reacts, though she is ill-treated. He comes to know that she is a mother of three sons like Jessie. "All yours, Ted?" (p.43). His ridiculous question shocks the normal man. Despite his father's cruel treatment and insulting remarks Teddy cuddles and kisses his father. It shows that Teddy still loves his old father.
After six years of gap all meet together and spend a quiet morning. Max reminds his sons about their dead mother Jessie. He tells that if she had lived, she would have enjoyed the happiest moments and shared her love with her three grown-up lads and lovely daughter-in-law. "She'd have fuzzed over them (grand children) and played with them, told them stories, tickled them - I tell you she'd have been hysterical" (p.45). Max expresses his inner agony, the loss of happiness and pleasure. Talking about the dead people and absent children is a peculiar element of Pinter. He feels sorry for not having his grand children with him. He is worried about his dead wife and isolated kids. Teddy knows that his father is worried but he never allows his father to come and stay with children. Max talks how great his wife was then, how she would serve at home and maintain the family. Jessie was the backbone of the family and Max had a soft corner for her. Max reminisces about his early days with wife and his three sons in this pleasant manner: "... boys came down, in their pyjamas, all their hair shining, their faces pink, it was before they started shaving, and they knelt down at our feet, Jessie's and mine" (p.46). They were brought up conventionally. This was past. Now they are not together at home. Jessie passed away without having a look of her son's children.
Max tells that if he had known about his son's marriage he would have given him a white wedding and it was his pleasure "to bear the expense, my word of honour", and Sam would have driven Teddy to the reception in the Snipe, Lenny would have been his best man and they would have all seen him off on the boat. Anyway he compliments on his choice of Ruth, "you made a wonderful choice, you've got a wonderful family, a marvellous career" (p.49). He loves Teddy a lot. "You're my own flesh and blood. You're my first born" and though the family missed his marriage Max wants to forgive Teddy saying that "bygones be bygones?" (p.49).

Commenting on this scene a critic observes:

One of the most effectively dramatic moments comes when Teddy, sensing that something is going to go wrong, tries to persuade Ruth to cut the visit short and go back with him to the States. But again Teddy's manner of handling Ruth is very odd indeed, without coming into focus as indicative in any way of his relationship with her.20

Ruth is happy because Max is pleased with her. Teddy's description about his wife shows that Ruth is a lovely wife and she is a source of strength to him. "She's a great help
to me over there. She's a wonderful wife and mother. She's a very popular woman. She's got lots of friends. It's a great life, at the University ... you know ... it's a very good life. We've got a lovely house ... we've got all ... we've got everything we want. It's a very stimulating environment" (p.50). Teddy cannot lead his life without Ruth in America. He has three kids who have to be looked after by her. So, Teddy hurries his wife to get ready to go back to America. Moreover, he suspects that his father and brothers have spoilt her by diverting her mind to the kind of life that her mother-in-law had been used to. But Ruth gets ready to lose her husband and children for the sake of Max, Lenny and Joey. In fact she protests:

TEDDY: .... Look, I just brought you back to meet the family, didn't I? You've met them, we can go. The fall semester will be starting soon.

RUTH: You find it dirty here?

TEDDY: I didn't say I found it dirty here.

Pause.

I didn't say that.

Pause.

Look. I'll go and pack. You rest for a while. Will you? They won't be back
for at least an hour. You can sleep. 
Rest. Please. 
*She looks at him.* 
You can help me with my lectures when we get back. I'd love that. I'd be so grateful for it, really. We can bathe till October. You know that. Here, there's nowhere to bathe, except the swimming bath down the road. You know what it's like? It's like a urinal. 
A filthy urinal! (p.55)

Lenny requests Teddy to allow him to dance with Ruth before leaving. Teddy keeps watching them. They dance, stand and kiss each other. Then Joey comes to the place with Max and finds the scene. He too takes Ruth's arm, sits on the sofa with her, embraces and kisses her. Lenny gives loving affectionate touches and Joey embraces her in front of Teddy and Max. Instead of listening to her husband she has given in to her brothers-in-law. All the same it is a shameful act and hideous behaviour she practises. It shows that she is not homely but anti-domestic protagonist. Teddy's fateful choice of taking Ruth as his wife crushes his marital, domestic, professional and social life. He is a perpetual victim both in the hands of Jessie in his juvenility and in
prime of life with Ruth. The marriage is a wrong choice for Ruth. By suppressing her instinctive sensual desires she got married, depressed and finally joined in the main stream of prostitution. Esslin remarks:

For Ruth sees herself - has resigned herself to be seen - as a passive object of desire. That is the significance of her speech about herself as a moving object in response to the discussion about the real nature of a table. Having failed in her marriage, Ruth is in a state of existential despair, a deep accidie, which is both fully understandable and completely motivates her behaviour. She has tried to fight her own nature and she has been defeated by it. Now she yields to it, and surrenders beyond caring.\textsuperscript{21}

Ruth ridiculously enquires Teddy whether his father and brothers have read his critical works. Nobody has read his works at home. He never asked them because he knew that they cannot understand his works, his intellectual way of thinking, clean mind and thoughts. The following answer is very transparent to Ruth:
You wouldn't understand my works. You wouldn't have the faintest idea of what they were about. You wouldn't appreciate the points of reference. You're way behind. All of you. There's no point in my sending you my works. You'd be lost. It's nothing to do with the question of intelligence. It's a way of being able to look at the world. It's a question of how far you can operate on things and not in things. I mean it's a question of your capacity to ally the two, to relate the two, to balance the two. To see, to be able to see! I'm the one who can see. That's why I can write my critical works. Might do you good ... have a look at them ... see how certain people can view ... things ... how certain people can maintain ... intellectual equilibrium. Intellectual equilibrium. You're just objects. You just ... move about. I can observe it. I can see what you do. It's the same as I do. But you're lost in it. You won't get me being ... I won't be lost in it. (pp.61-62)
Teddy is entirely different from others. The above passage shows how his kith and kin are far off from him naturally, culturally and literally. Sam tells that Teddy is her mother's favourite son. Teddy was the main object of Jessie's love. Sam proposes Teddy to be with them for a couple of weeks more. But he hesitates. He deliberately takes Lenny's piece of cheese and eats which has been preserved for him in the cup-board. Lenny tells that Teddy is a great source of pride to them. He adds that they lead a less rich life than Teddy does over in America. They are busy, Joey with boxing, Lenny with occupation. Max still plays a good game of poker and Sam the best chauffeur in the firm. Teddy is an integral part of their made up unit. "When we all sit round the backyard having a quiet gander at the night sky, there's always an empty chair standing in the circle, which is in fact yours" (p.65). While Sam and others are attempting to persuade Teddy to stay for some more days, Ruth has been upstairs for two hours with Joey.

Teddy is ineffective and inexpressive while his father and brothers propose that Ruth stay at home by preventing her from going to America with her husband. They try to set her up at home to fulfill their sexual
pleasures with her and also try to convince Teddy altogether by keeping aside the human and moral values. It is an indication of human exploitation. Nobody thinks of Teddy and his three children except Sam. He protects him at every step against their aggression.

The kith and kin of Teddy have planned and decided to trade in with Ruth's flesh and blood except Sam. It is a "professional opinion" (p.73) of Lenny. These men are accustomed to lead their life depending upon women at home, by allowing and encouraging them into prostitution. Max and Lenny ask Teddy unashamedly to contact the clients by giving them the information and telephone numbers of Ruth in America. For this service Teddy is offered the percentage of it. Teddy is expected to act as a mediator between Ruth and her clients. Hereafter Ruth is called by different names like Dolores, Spanish Jacky, Cynthia and Gillian. He need not tell that Ruth is his wife. He is expected to act as representative of a professional prostitute in the States. Teddy, as before, remains silent. So, they are going to introduce Ruth as global entertainer in the field of prostitution - a couple of hours per night, through this she will make enough money to keep her going. Ruth accepts to be engaged with pleasure and satisfaction. A new flat will be allotted for Ruth with a dressing-room, a rest room, a
bedroom, and a bathroom. A personal maid is also provided. A room is made with all facilities for Ruth.

... with agreement finalized on the flat, attention switches to Ruth's role in domestic affairs. Once again Max raises the issue of Ruth doing the cooking, and this time he is supported by Lenny. Ruth, as before, remains silent. In keeping with her role as a "model for the body" Ruth allows promises to be read into her: promises that she makes no commitment to keep. As she has already demonstrated in her sexual episode with Joey, Ruth seeks to control the family by appearing to promise more than she ever intends to deliver.22

Ruth is used by the family and misinterpreted deliberately and eventually she decides to stay at home with whip. Austin E. Quigley comments:

Just as the opening of the play revealed fixities and instabilities in the domestic scene, so, too, does the closing situation. As everyone else is still and silent and
grouped around the new family focus, Ruth, a new figure wanders uncircumscribed on the periphery of family affairs: "Max begins to move above them, backwards and forwards" (p.80). In growing fright, Max reacts to a sudden awareness that Ruth's resemblance to Jessie in some beneficial areas might extend also to a resemblance in less desirable areas. Fearing that unpleasant domestic duties might once more devolve upon him, he gives voice to fears that Ruth might indeed seem to promise more than she ever intends to deliver.13

At the end of the play the entire household is ruled by Ruth as it had been by Jessie. The whole play is dominated by a lady with flesh. The title 'Homecoming' is proved justified and suitable. It is Jessie who has come back home in the personification of Ruth but not Teddy. The great victimized Teddy is seen a permanent voiceless and silent man. Max is no better, becomes dirty and immoral:

MAX: ... I've got a funny idea she'll do the dirty on us, you want to bet? She'll use us, she'll make use of us, I can tell you! I can smell it! You want to bet?
Pause.

She won’t ... be adaptable!

_He falls to his knees, whimpers, begins to moan and sob. He stops sobbing, crawls past Sam’s body round her chair, to the other side of her._

_I’m not an old man._

_He looks up at her._

Do you hear me?

_He raises his face to her._

Kiss me.

_She continues to touch Joey’s head, lightly._

LENNY stands, watching. (pp.81-82)

Teddy’s entire life is absurd and meaningless. He may be sensitive. The foul behaviour of mother, arrogant nature of father and filthy atmosphere at home inside and outside might have troubled and vexed him. He would have had bitter experiences with them. The life at home might be a hell for him. He has enjoyed only the six years of university life without scars. He has planned to pay a short visit to Europe via Italy with his wife Ruth, leaving his three sons in America. He comes to his father’s home in the
late night where again he has landed himself in troubles. He experiences the bitter life. Now he has become a permanent sufferer in the hands of his diseased father and his incestuous brothers.

The darkness, and ugliness occupy the majority of his life-time. Six year-fruity domestic life is a bit between two major dirty parts of his career. Though his life is dominated by frustration, hopelessness and helplessness the bit of six years of American life with Ruth breaks its continuity of broken life. So his stay in America symbolizes "relief" whereas the tree symbolizes "hope" in Beckett's Waiting for Godot. He was suppressed morally with his mother in the boyhood, destroyed domestically with his wife later and became permanent victim between the prostitute mother and the adulteress wife. In Tea Party, Willy cheats his brother-in-law Disson by seducing his own sister, who too was Disson's best man at his wedding. In The Homecoming, Lenny exploits his own brother, Teddy by seducing his sister-in-law. If Teddy had invited Lenny, he would have been his best man according to Max. Similar situations are found in these two plays.

The lengthy discussion of Tea Party and The Homecoming focusing on the minutest details will make it amply clear that every sexual perversion identified by
psychoanalysts is found in the characters of these two plays. None is free from aberrations. It is to be remembered that perverts are to be found in the other plays of Pinter but the number does not exceed one in them. But in *Tea Party* and *The Homecoming* all the characters are perverts. Pinter introduces the incest theme in both the plays and shows that human beings are not even improved apes. In the beginning of the chapter an account of incest literature has been given. In the works of Ford the motive for incest is intense mutual admiration between the lovers. In Defoe's *Moll Flanders* incest is committed unconsciously. In Osborne's play *A Bond Honoured* an obsessive desire to get recognition causes incest. But in contrast to them Pinter's characters are neither ignorant, nor anti-heroic nor victims of chance. They consciously and deliberately commit the heinous act of incest. Pinter is once again focusing on the bestial nature of man.
NOTES


20. Ibid., p. 110.


23. Ibid., p. 223.