CHAPTER VI

THE THEME OF ADULTERY
Ever since Christ created one man one woman relationships prescriptive and sacramental, adulterous relationships were not only regarded sinful but also primitive. The institution of marriage has since become a divine sanction with the participation of the church which solemnized it. That the church was so influential in deciding matters relating to the government that marriage has acquired a legal status. The church and the crown together forced the one man one woman norm on the society and none could go against it without being punished. Adultery, therefore, was regarded as not only a transgression of a divine law but also man made laws. Even so man with his primitive instincts and predatory conduct has always negated them.

In literature we find writers glorifying man woman relationships which is chaste and women are warned against temptations leading to their fall. Nevertheless, writers are never unaware of men and women who have defiled the sanctity of marriage and met with tragic consequences. In Chaucer there are hints of woman's indiscretion and in Shakespeare there are repeated references to adulterous men and women. In King Lear, for example, the king's daughters brazenly enter into adulterous relationship with Edmund. In Othello Desdemona is killed because of suspected illicit
relationship. Milton celebrates the ideal marital relationship in *Paradise Lost* with, "He for God only, and She for God in him." His *Comus* is a long debate on chastity and the poet assures that God himself will go to the rescue of the virtuous. In the Auguston literature marital infidelity was satirised by a number of playwrights. Inspired by their king, the Restoration society indulged in immoral ways in the name of fashion. Husbands betray the wives and wives betray the husbands. Congreve, Wycherley, Etheredge in the Restoration Age and Sheridan later exposed adulterous relationships in their plays.

Betrayal and faithlessness continued to be the theme in Browning who in series of dramatic monologues expressed his anguish at the attitude of woman. His successors in the twentieth century continued to focus on the inviolability of marriage vows. With the liberation of women and the consequent challenge to male authority the institution of marriage has begun to crumble. Neither the man nor the woman is assured of loyalty and devotion. More and more men and women have begun to indulge in illicit relationships. It is this situation where virtue is more an exception than a rule that man feels insecure and begins to entertain fears of being betrayed. Sometimes the suspicion is grounded in truth and sometimes it is only fantasy. Pinter therefore must have thought it necessary to represent
those who are really betrayed and those who live in fantasy. In *The Collection* it is fantasy and not real. Interestingly in *Old Times* it is two women who try to betray the man who plans to betray the women. In *Betrayal* the betrayal is real and everyone knows about it. The following is the discussion of the three plays.

*The Collection* is a typical Pinteresque play with the stock-in-trade of menace, fear, suspicion, jealousy, violence, common to many plays. The characters are both heterosexual and homosexual and the action issues from fear of losing the sexual partners. Although the play closes with issues being resolved to everybody’s satisfaction, we cannot help wondering whether they are resolved at all. The changing stances of characters are so quick that there is scope for thinking that truth has been sacrificed to resolve the crisis. At the same time it cannot be asserted with certainty that only lies have been invented to save themselves from the threat of punishment. This Pinteresque ingenuity is done to a perfection and the conclusion is as teasing as an unresolved puzzle.

Stella in *The Collection* tells her husband James after she has returned from a business tour that she had met Bill Lloyd briefly at Leeds. Stella and Bill are in textile business and are designers. They often go out on business
tours but never have these two known each other and met. James, who has been married to Stella for two years digs deep into their chance meeting. He suspects his wife and Bill and in fantasies that Stella has slept with Bill. On her part Stella never suspects that her husband has taken the matter so seriously.

James like a detective pursues the matter and runs after Bill. He cannot meet the latter alone because there is another lodger Harry in Bill’s flat. He rings up Bill at 4 A.M. but he cannot talk to him because Harry refuses to wake up the sleeping man. He refuses to disclose his identity to Harry but assures that he will meet Bill later. Later he does go to Bill’s house and finds that he has gone out. Here again he refuses to reveal anything about himself to Harry. The second time James goes to Bill’s house and finds him there. Bill is reluctant to meet him and even asks him to get out. But when James perseveres Bill allows him. James then begins to pay compliments to Bill but Bill is indifferent to James’s stuff. He is disgusted with him because he has started to telephone to him at all odd hours and has come to his house without an appointment and has intruded in his house without disclosing neither his identify nor purpose for which he has come. He even threatens to call police but James quietly dismisses those threats.
It is typical of a Pinteresque play where in people barge in, seat themselves comfortably and entertain themselves. James unsettled by these threats begins to have a drink and interrogates Bill. He asks him whether he had a good time in Leeds the previous week, whether his stay at Westbury Hotel was comfortable. To Bill’s amazement he mentions the room number in which he stayed, the dress he wore and so on. James shocks Bill with the charge that he had slept with his wife in that Leeds Hotel. Bill outright rejects James’ information. "I was nowhere near Leeds last week, old chap. Nowhere near your wife either, I’m quite sure of that. Apart from that, I ... just don’t do such things" (p.119). But James gives every minute detail ending unto the seduction of his wife:

.... You met her at ten O’ clock last Friday in the lounge. You fell into conversation, you bought her a couple of drinks, you went upstairs together in the lift. In the lift you never took your eyes from her, you found you were both on the same floor, you helped her out, by her arm. You stood with her in the corridor, looking at her. You touched her shoulder, said good night, went to your room,
she went to hers, you changed into your yellow Pyjamas and black dressing-gown, you went down the passage and knocked on her door, you'd left your toothpaste in town. She opened the door, you went in, she was still dressed. You admired the room, it was so feminine, you felt awake, didn't feel like sleeping, you sat down, on the bed. She wanted you to go, you wouldn't. She became upset, you sympathized, away from home, on a business trip, horrible life, especially for a woman, you comforted her, you gave her solace, you stayed. (p.120)

Bill rejects the entire story and makes a counter accusation whether she was not aware of her being a married woman and whether she should not resist at all. When James says that his wife scratched Bill to resist him, Bill offers to be examined by anybody for the scars. In the following moments James and Bill fall into a lighter conversation and begin to drink when Bill slips and falls. James takes the opportunity, stands over him and threatens him to come out with the truth. Bill now alters his earlier stand and admits to have met Stella in the lift. He says that she suddenly fell into his arms and that he did not refuse. They kissed a bit and got separated. He accuses Stella of being naughty
and living in pure fantasy. Probably James has not understood his wife properly, her fantastic imagination. But James continues the story left off by Bill. He says that Bill has gone into Stella's room in the midnight and was sitting on her bed. Bill this time confirms what James has said: "Not sitting. Lying" (p.125).

In the scene in which James and Stella are seen James says that he will meet Bill and when Stella does not understand what purpose the meeting will serve James says that he wants to know Bill's attitude and wants to see whether he has changed since he last saw him. Just as he has threatened Bill to admit his crime now he bullies his wife to admit her share in it. In fact he accuses her that she led him on to the crime.

It is at this stage of James's syphilitic imagination which uses coercion to admit an uncommitted sin that Harry intercedes in the matter. He meets Stella and tells her about Bill and the trouble he has been facing from James. James has so disturbed Bill that he has lost his concentration. Stella says that her husband has "suddenly dreamed up such a fantastic story, for no reason at all" (p.136). Harry asks Stella whether the husband trusts her but she has found some change in her husband only recently and she attributes the change to overwork. Harry advises
Stella to take her husband for a long holiday out of France. Simultaneously the action shows Bill and James with drinks and James returns to the subject which looked like closed. James is still worried that Bill tries to dismiss the matter as trivial and the wound will be healed once the truth is known and guilty have apologised. "What's there left to think about? It's a thing regretted, never to be repeated. No past, no future. Do you see what I mean? You're a chap who's been married for two years, aren't you happily? There's a bond of iron between you and your wife. It can't be corroded by a trivial thing like this. I've apologized, she's apologized. Honestly, what more can you want?" (p.139). In his anxiety to help Stella out of her troubles Bill generalises the woman's outburst of sensuality. "Every woman is bound to have an outburst of... wild sensuality at one time or another. That's the way I look at it, any way. It's part of their nature. Even though it may be the kind of sensuality of which you yourself have never been the fortunate recipient. What? (He laughs.) That's a husband's fate, I suppose. Mind you, I think it's the system that's at fault, not you. Perhaps she will never need to do it again, who knows" (p.139). James is only more angry at hearing Bill's justification of Stella. He shows it when he throws a knife at Bill. At this moment Harry comes and clarifies that neither Bill nor Stella is guilty. "What she
confessed was ... that she'd made the whole thing up. She'd made the whole damn thing up. For some odd reason of her own. They never met, you see, Bill and your wife; they never even spoke. This is what Bill says, and this is now what your wife admits. They had nothing whatever to do with each other; they don't know each other. Women are very strange. But I suppose you know more about that than I do; she's your wife. If I were you I'd go home and knock her over the head with a saucepan and tell her not to make up such stories again" (p.142). James is made to realise that his wife has narrated the whole thing and Bill has confirmed this story. If overwork had made her to a pure fantasy the slum sense of humour made Bill confirm "stupid sordid little stories just to amuse himself, while everyone else has to run round in circles to get to the root of the matter and smooth the whole thing out" (p.143).

The play Old Times is a major achievement of Pinter because he has created very enigmatic characters who live simultaneously in the present and in the past. The past follows like a shadow and conditions the behaviour of the characters. Kate and Anna are both heterosexual as well as homosexual. All of them begin as rakes, dwindle into married situation and finally plan to return to the beginning. In a way the movement is circular the characters trying to return
to where they had started. Anna and Kate have lesbian relationship besides sexual relationships with a number of men. They get married and get separated from each other. After a gap of twenty years they meet and try to renew their relationship. Anna is married to a very rich man but her desire to return to Kate after twenty years of married life shows that it has been a failure. Kate has been married for twenty years but her husband Deeley tries to have an adulterous relationship with her friend Anna. It is in her very presence that her husband talks amorously as if she were dead. She is disillusioned with her husband as well as her friend. As far as Deeley is concerned he is no less cynical in being unfaithful to his wife twenty years after marriage. Of the three he is downright immoral and lecherous because he blackmails both Anna and Kate to silence his wife and to bully her friend.

The play opens in a converted farmhouse somewhere in England, where Deeley and Kate live. It is autumn night in September. The four-walled room is furnished with modern furniture. Two sofas and two armchairs are seen. Husband and wife keep waiting for the arrival of Anna, Kate's former friend. About twenty years ago Kate and Anna worked as private secretaries and also shared an apartment together. They were close friends and Deeley also knew Anna. While Deeley and Kate are talking about the guest, Anna is seen
standing at the window under the dim light, suggesting the distant memory. They have never seen her for twenty years so they do not know whether Anna is plum or lean. Anna is a seductress and a sex symbol whereas Kate looks like a respectable housewife. Anna was Kate’s best and only friend in London in the ’fifties. Anna used to steal Kate’s pieces of underwear. Deeley thinks that Anna is a vegetarian but Kate has cooked a casserole. Deeley is very curious to know whether Anna is married. Indirectly he wants his wife to ask Anna for him. But Anna has not mentioned anything about her husband. In fact Anna had innumerable male friends whom Kate also met. It seems Deeley desires Anna as well as Kate just as Anna desires Kate as well as Deeley for her sexual desires.

Abruptly Anna enters and sits on the other sofa. Memory and desire turn real. Anna arrives alone. She comes from Sicily to see her dearest friend and her husband. As soon as she arrives, she recalls details about how she and Kate spent in London twenty years ago, about their day-to-day activities, food habits, entertainments, cafes and professional artists. When they were young they lived free. Anna narrates:
Queuing all night, the rain, do you remember? my goodness, the Albert Hall, Covent Garden, what did we eat? to look back, half the night, to do things we loved, we were young then of course, but what stamina, and to work in the morning, and to a concert, or the opera, or the ballet, that night, you haven’t forgotten? and then riding on top of the bus down Kensington High Street, and the bus conductors, and then dashing for the matches for the gasfire and then I suppose scrambled eggs, or did we? who cooked? both giggling and chattering, both huddling to the heat, then bed and sleeping, and all the hustle and bustle in the morning, rushing for the bus again for work, lunchtimes in Green park, exchanging all our news, with our very own sandwiches, innocent girls, innocent secretaries, and then the night to come, and goodness knows what excitement in store, I mean the sheer expectation of it all, the looking forwardness of it all, and so poor, but to be poor and young, and a girl, in London then ... and the cafes we found, almost private ones, weren’t they? where artists and
writers and sometimes actors collected, and others with dancers, we sat hardly breathing with our coffee, heads bent, so as not to be seen, so as not to disturb, so as not to distract, and listened and listened to all those words, all those cafes and all those people, creative undoubtedly, and does it still exist I wonder? do you know? can you tell me? (pp.17-18)

Kate and Anna reminisce the past while they share brandy. After marriage Kate is removed to a silent place from the noisy and busy part of London. They present a contrast to the past. Martin Esslin comments:

... if Landscape and Silence are purely lyrical and static, Old Times contains drama in presenting a clash of personalities, a battle for the affections of a woman by her husband and best friend; and while this is a deadly serious affair the dialogue sparkles with amusing lines; moreover, although the mood of the play is one of recall of things past, one of Pinter's main earlier themes reemerges: the theme of the intruder who
disturbs the peace of a home and a safe relationship.3

One can find the naked difference between the girlhood and the womanhood, between the noisy world and the silent world and between the active past and the dull present. There is a tremendous change in Kate's life which is reduced to a tasteless routine. Anna tries her best to pull Kate into the filthy past once again. As a Sales Executive, Deeley is on frequent tours and Kate is compelled to stay alone feeling lonely in that isolated part of the world. In the past with Anna she was a highly sociable girl in that tremendously sophisticated part of noisy London. To avoid silence Kate now goes to the sea-shore where she cannot find many people. Even though it is a long beach it cannot stimulate her. Deeley for his part wishes that he knew Anna. Anna made a lot of friends whereas Kate did not. She is brought up and has come up in silence. Silence is her well-known world. She is a contrast to Anna and Deeley in certain things. She has always been a dreamer. When Anna used to wake her up Kate would look at her as if she was dreaming. Anna would gaze at her. It reveals that they are fond of each other. Kate was her delight. They used to sing songs lying on the floor at late nights.
Deeley and Anna sing in praise of Kate. Their song reveals that both are still fond of Kate. Kate is a 'blue moon' for Deeley whereas she is "the promised kiss of springtime" for Anna. He thinks that his wife is his own who is an embodiment of the angel having obtained all divine qualities. The remaining part of their song indicates the sense of sad note and the feeling of desperation. Anna's arrival shatters the quietness of the family. Deeley would have imagined the forthcoming changes in his life and also his future:

DEELEY (Singing.) When a lovely flame dies ...
ANNA (Singing.) Smoke gets in your eyes.

Pause.

DEELEY (Singing.) The sign of midnight trains
in empty stations...

Pause. (p.28)

Deeley recollects and reminisces his encounter with two usherettes in a theatre in hot summer afternoon when he went there to see the film Odd Man Out. He found that one of the usherettes "was stroking her breasts and the other one was saying 'dirty bitch' and the one stroking her breasts was
saying 'mmnnn' with a very sensual relish and smiling at her fellow usherette" (p.29). Here Deeley perceives that Anna and Kate flirt with each other to arouse sexual desires. He narrates an ugly story about an indecent lesbian usherette. When the film was over he met the girl outside whom he saw alone in the auditorium and they went to a cafe to have a cup of tea. He says: "...she looked into her cup and then up at me and told me she thought Robert Newton was remarkable. So it was Robert Newton who brought us together and it is only Robert Newton who can tear us apart" (p.30). Deeley and the girl both thought that Robert Newton was marvellous. They formed the opinion by showing their individual interests which were the same. His passion for Newton's performance and the hero-worship reveal his homosexual tendency. He himself declares that "I would commit murder for him, even now" (p.29). The two usherettes are presented in the lesbian relationship. He met her again and says "our naked bodies met, hers cool, warm, highly agreeable" (p.31). Anna talks about certain things which are uncertain. She says that "there are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place" (pp.31-32). As Guido Almansi and Simon Henderson put it, "Time is created as we remember the past; it disappears as we forget it." Sakellaridou quotes Proust who calls the past
Anna and Kate are former room-mates. Anna tells Deeley on a certain night when she returned to her flat late she found a man weeping in her bed-room. She undressed, switched out the light and got into her bed. They never spoke to Anna and she did not pursue the matter with Kate. After sometime he stopped crying. She adds: "He looked at us both, at our beds. Then he turned towards me. He approached my bed. He bent down over me. But I would have nothing to do with him, absolutely nothing" (p.32). He disappeared, and again came back to their room after sometime in the midnight. Anna found the two shapes on Kate's bed. "He was lying across her lap on her bed" (p.33). In the early morning Deeley left the flat giving the impression to Anna that he had not been there. Bernard F. Dukore points out three remarkable points:

... first, Anna’s recollection directly follows her statement that what she remembers might not have happened but does happen as she recalls it; second, the re-enactment occurs well after she recalls it; third, it does not follow her story in every detail. The major difference is the conclusion ...."
Deeley might be under the impression that he had used both the girls without letting them know each other. But Anna knew the fact that the man had shared both of them. She reveals the obscenities of Kate’s personal life to her husband in front of her. Kate never loses her cool and temperament. She neither confirms nor denies Anna’s words about her darker side of life. She coolly says: "You talk of me as if I were dead" (p.34). Anna narrates the stories of Kate’s past without Deeley’s reactions of Kate’s defences. Their silence may be a true admission. While Deeley and Anna struggle to possess Kate, she remains uncommunicative. She is like Ruth and Flora who look like respectable housewives.

Kate fell in love truly with Deeley, when he was a student then ‘juggling with’ his future and later they got married. According to Anna, Kate is very careful in taking decisions. She says: "Some people throw a stone into a river to see if the water’s too cold for jumping, others, a few others, will always wait for the ripples before they will jump" (p.36). Kate belongs to second type who does things always carefully. The two women travelled in London extensively, visited all the old churches and old buildings and several important places pertaining to the arts. And on one Sunday they went to some totally unfamiliar district alone and saw an excellent film called *Odd Man Out*.  

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Deeley and Kate are frustrated who resemble Rose and Bert in *The Room*. Deeley is not happy with this world. He prefers to use the word globe. For him "the word world possesses emotional political sociological and psychological pretensions and resonances" (p.40). Deeley is more keen to know what Anna throws of the husband. But Anna is very particular about it and never lets him know about her husband.

Deeley says that he directs a film in Sicily which he himself wrote. He adds: "As a matter of fact I am at the top of profession, as a matter of fact, and I have indeed been associated with substantial numbers of articulate and sensitive people, mainly prostitutes of all kinds" (p.42). It is clear that his association is with professionals and he deals with all kinds of prostitutes. When Kate suggests going out for a walk Anna opposes and advises them to stay at home. She wants to cook something for them. She says that the park will be full of criminals, professionals, policemen and also all sorts of unhealthy men and women. Talking about the men lurking behind bushes is "an image of sexual menace and disgust," remarks Martin Esslin. Anna describes the horrible park:
The park is dirty at night, all sorts of horrible people, men hiding behind trees and women with terrible voices, they scream at you as you go fast, and people come out suddenly from behind trees and bushes and there are shadows everywhere and there are policemen, and you'll have a horrible walk, and you'll see all the traffic and the noise of the traffic and you'll see all the hotels, and you know you hate looking through all those swing doors, you hate it, to see all that, all those people in the lights in the lobbies all talking and moving ... and all the chandeliers ...

... (pp.43-44)

Act Two begins with Deeley and Anna in a bedroom upstairs and Kate is in bathroom where as Act One began with wife and husband with Anna in the background. Both the beginnings are remarkable and more meaningful. Deeley is present throughout the play. Deeley engages the two women one by one to collect more factual information and hidden secrets. He knows Anna well, but as a professional prostitute, having number of clients Anna might have forgotten one of the clients Deeley who was not a regular customer. He asserts his masculine superiority by telling
stories that he is capable of doing things. He tries to make Anna remember him by giving her all the details of places, hotels where they met before. He tells her the special features and the comfortability of beds on which he and his wife sleep. It is a sort of offer for Anna. Talking about the impressionable beds he says: "They can be separated as they are now. Or placed at right angles, or one can bisect the other, or you can sleep feet to feet, or head to head, or side by side. It's the castors that make all this possible" (p.48). It is his trial to impress her. He digs Anna's past and tells one by one what he remembers about her. About twenty years ago Anna was the regular visitor at the Wayfarers Tavern who used to sit in the corner of the pub sometimes alone and sometimes with others. The pub was always crowded with poets, jockeys and standup comedians. He still remembers her way of dressing and tells her how she was fond of that saloon bar where he used to buy her drinks. In that pub he looked up her skirt sitting on the sofa opposite to her. Her things were so white which he kissed amorously. He also refers to her girl friend in the pub who must be Kate. He absorbed himself totally in gazing their black stockings and white things. He adds:

.... Then a friend of yours came in, a girl, a
girl friend. She sat on the sofa with you,
you both chatted and chuckled, sitting together, and I settled lower to gaze at you both, at both your thighs, squealing and hissing, you aware, she unaware, ... glimpsing two girls on the sofa, one of them you, heads close, whispering, no longer able to see anything, no longer able to see stocking or thigh, and then you were gone. I wandered over to the sofa. There was no one on it. I gazed at the indentations of four buttocks. Two of which were yours. (pp.51-52)

When Kate is back Anna and Deeley propose to dry Kate’s body with her bath towel. He talks about the inexplicable relationship between the two. He says that a woman knows "how and where and in what density moisture collects on women’s bodies" (p.56). Anna dismisses it saying that "no two women are the same" (p.56). The typical male female discussion about another woman shows their intimacy with each other. "Anna protests against Deeley’s masculine tendency to see women collectively and she stresses female individuality, which resists Deeley’s fantasy of perfect fusion."? He invites Anna to watch him dry his wife’s body and then powder her. His idea is to tease his wife by drying her body in front of Anna and at the same time tease Anna of her
voyeuristic attitude, "kill two birds with one stone" (p.56). Kate comes to them in her bathrobe and looks into the night through the widow. Deeley and Anna sing watching her mood and movements. For Kate they sing a second time. Anna's song reveals a little bit of frustration and disappointment at having lost a bosom friend:

ANNA: *(Singing.)* The way you haunt my dreams...

DEELEY: *(Singing.)* No, no, they can't take that away from me...

...

ANNA: *(Singing.)* The way you've changed my life-

DEELEY: No, no, they can't take that away from me. (p.58)

She prefers to live in the country side, because the water is softer in the country than London. In London it is hard. Now she is close to the sea. For her the country is better and more comfortable than London. Kate sounds philosophical when she compares her being with the sea: "You can't say where it begins or ends. That appeals to me. I don't care for harsh lines" (p.59). Her fondness for exotic experiences is revealed in the following lines:
I'd like to go to the East, or somewhere like that, somewhere very hot, where you can lie under a mosquito net and breathe quite slowly. You know ... somewhere where you can look through the flap of a tent and see sand, that kind of thing. The only nice thing about a big city is that when it rains it blurs everything, and it blurs the lights from the cars, doesn't it, and blurs your eyes, and you have rain on your lashes. That's the only nice thing about a big city. (p.59)
regrets. Kate discriminates against London favouring the life in country side.

Kate now is seen in a good mood and smiling pleasantly. The smile she smiles takes Deeley to the theatre where he first met Kate twenty years ago. There he encountered Kate when she was a young girl. Kate is still as she was. Of course he has a certain understanding and feeling about his wife. "That's the same smile she smiled when I was walking down the street with her, after Odd Man Out (p.61). Kate partially resembles Beth in Landscape and Ellen and Rumsey in Silence. Kate observes the technique of silence repeatedly and like Rumsey, Kate seems to have lost nothing. Katharine Burkman points out the psychologically stable personality of Kate:

Although attracted now to one, now to the other, Kate's final rejection of both is not, as some critics have suggested, a measure of her coldness or detachment so much as it is the measure of her emerging selfhood and her renewal.8

She even remembers Anna's few visitors, Charley McCabe and Duncan. Kate likes McCabe's funny things, Duncan's poetry and Christy's "lovely sense of humour." Once Kate was very

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shy and modest and would hesitate to meet people. If visitors came she would bury her face and folded herself from their sight. She was such a shy girl in the beginning.

Reminiscing the past Anna narrates an incident. To attend a private party she borrowed Kate’s underwear and after returning from it she narrated her experience: “I had been punished for my sin, for a man at the party had spent the whole evening looking up skirt” (p.65). It is her version of the incident, another version has been given us by Deeley. The two women were abnormally free birds and they took liberty to do what they pleased. Old Times is very much closer to James Joyce’s play Exiles in its style and mood showing a neat contrast between Bertha and Beatrice. Anna by wearing Kate’s underwear gets pleasure. Kate being a voyeur, encourages Anna to do so and enjoys the voyeuristic pleasures. Anna gives a neat gist of Kate’s interest and intentness:

... she insisted, from time to time, that I borrow her underwear - she had more of it than I, and a far greater range - and each time she proposed this she would blush, but propose it she did, nevertheless. And when there was anything to tell her, when I got back,
anything of interest to tell her, I told her

(p.65)

Anna always came back and narrated her experiences with others at the parties and hotels. She had a vast range of friendship with various people outside the world. She met all sorts of people, shared their experiences and revealed everything which interested Kate. Anna used to come home late in the night and narrated her experiences. Kate liked to be told in the dark "... knowing her preference, I would choose a position in the room from which I could see her face, although she could not see mine. She could hear my voice only. And so she listened and I watched her listening." (p.66)

Deeley is ignorant and has known nothing about Kate's feelings, emotions and passions though he has spent twenty years with her. Kate seems to be interested to continue her past filthy life. Anna appears to have given up her husband and come to Kate to reestablish her lesbian relationship ignoring Deeley. The inseparable friendship between the two women defeats Deeley and destroys his life. He is thinking of Anna's husband who is left alone and this imaginary experience threatens him with fatal consequences. Deeley's profession took him to various places in the world
and afforded a quite number of experiences. His attempts to divert Anna's mind to her husband, so that he can save his wife from her but never succeeded. He is fated to be victimized in the hands of the two women:

... you're here, with us. He's there, alone, lurching up and down the terrace, waiting for a speedboat, waiting for a speedboat to spill out beautiful people, at least. Beautiful Mediterranean people. Waiting for all that, a kind of elegance we know nothing about, a slim-bellied Cote d'Azur thing we know absolutely nothing about, a lobster and lobster sauce ideology we know fuck all about, the longest legs in the world, the most phenomenally soft voices. I can hear them now. I mean let's put it on the table, I have my eye on a number of pulses, pulses all round the globe, deprivations and insults, why should I waste valuable space listening to two - (p.67)

Kate understands that her husband does not want to listen to them. She immediately reacts and tells her husband bluntly, "If you don't like it go" (p.67). If he goes to China he says, "they'd bloodywell kill me" (p.68). His
intention is unclear. Anna has revisited Kate to celebrate their long treasured kinship. To achieve their everfading relationship once again they are ready to sacrifice anything. Anna explains Kate's interests:

.... She grew to know wonderful people, through my introduction. I took her to cafes, almost private ones, where artists and writers and sometimes actors collected, and others with dancers, and we sat hardly breathing with our coffee, listening to the life around us. All I wanted for her was her happiness. That is all I want for her still. (p.69)

Deeley has not risen to Kate's expectations. Her life with Deeley is neither peaceful nor warm. But all these years Kate has compromised and adjusted with her husband. Deeley tells his wife how he had met Anna in a Pub and his interest in attending the functions and parties of philosophers, writers and actors:

Yes, we met in the Wayfarers Tavern. In the corner. She took a fancy to me. Of course I was slimhipped in those days. Pretty nifty. A bit squinky, quite honestly. Curly hair. The lot. We had a scene together. She
freaked out. She didn't have any bread, so I bought her a drink. She looked at me with big eyes, shy, all that bit. She was pretending to be you at the time. Did it pretty well. Wearing your underwear she was too, at the time. Amiably allowed me a gander. Trueblue generosity. Admirable in a woman. We went to a party. Given by philosophers. Not a bad bunch. Edgware road gang. Nice lot. Haven't seen any of them for years. Old friends. Always thinking. Spoke their thoughts. Those are the people I miss. They're all dead, anyway I've never seen them again. The Maida Vale group. Big Eric and little Tony. They lived somewhere near Paddington library. On the way to the party I took her into a cafe, bought her a cup of coffee, beards with faces. She thought she was you, said little, so little. Maybe she was you. Maybe it was you, having coffee with me, saying little, so little. (p.69)

Deeley is sensitive and "vulnerable," that is why Anna loved him. Kate still thinks that Anna is dead. Ronald Hayman remarks:
.... One interpretation is that Kate and Anna are two different sides of the same woman, Anna representing whatever survives of that part of the girlish self which seems to be put aside on marrying. Another is that Anna is really dead but lives on in the memories of the other two ....

Past and present, consciousness and subconsciousness and life and death mingle on the stage. Kate thought of Anna's deathbed scene and her corpse and then she sat beside watching her. Anna's dead body was waiting to be cleared. Her death is only Kate's psychological imagination and it is interpreted in dramatic terms. Kate describes Anna as a thief who stole her underwear. She even accuses her for having tried to steal her smile. Katharine H. Burkman comments that Anna "is buried in dirt, and Kate, her other part, re-emerges with new life." He further says that "for Pinter death is both an enemy and a friend." Kate's statement 'I remember you dead,' indicates, her anger against Anna, who spoke of Kate as if she were dead in Act One. While Anna tells Deeley that she remembers him, Kate tells that she remembers her dead:

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I remember you lying dead. You didn't know I was watching you. I leaned over you. Your face was dirty. You lay dead, your face scrawled with dirt, all kinds of earnest inscriptions, but unblotted, so that they had run, all over your face, down to your throat. Your sheets were immaculate. I was glad. I would have been unhappy if your corpse had lain in an unwholesome sheet. It would have been graceless. I mean as far as I was concerned. As far as my room was concerned. After all, you were dead in my room. When you woke my eyes were above you, staring down at you. You tried to do my little trick, one of my tricks you had borrowed, my little slow smile, my little slow shy smile, my bend of the head, my half closing of the eyes, that we knew so well, but it didn't work, the grin only split the dirt at the sides of your mouth and stuck. You stuck in your grin. I looked for tears but could see none. Your pupils weren't in your eyes. Your bones were breaking through your face. But all was serene. There was no suffering. It had all happened elsewhere. Last rites I did not feel necessary. Or any
celebration. I felt the time and season appropriate and that by dying alone and dirty you had acted with proper decorum. It was time for my bath. I had quite a lengthy bath, got out, walked about the room, glistening, drew up a chair, sat naked beside you and watched you. (pp.71-72)

When Kate got back to the room with Deeley Anna’s body had been cleared. Now he occupied the place of Anna and behaved quite differently. They had two beds to lie in or on and also to grind noses together in or on. All these days she had the company of another female partner. Now it seems new to share life with a male body. Kate started a new life with Deeley by forgetting her lesbian relationship with Anna. Sharing sexual life with Deeley is another kind of experiment in her life. This kind of life also might be new to Deeley, because all these days he too was a homosexual and used to adore his male friend Robert Newton. Such a man married Kate. Deeley is rejected by Kate and Anna who insists on his fantasy. Kate wants to finish him off. She dreams of his ritual death which is symbolical. Kate continues her talk to Anna about her husband:
.... He lay there in your bed. He looked up at me with great expectation. He was gratified. He thought I had profited from his teaching. He thought I was going to be sexually forthcoming, that I was about to take a long promised initiative. I dug about in the windowbox, where you had planted our pretty pansies, scooped, filled the bowl, and plastered his face with dirt. He was bemused, aghast, resisted, resisted with force. He would not let me dirty his face, or smudge it, he wouldn't let me. He suggested a wedding instead, and a change of environment.

(pp.72-73)

Anna goes to the door and stands her back to them. Deeley bursts into tears when he loses his hope about his inscrutable Kate for the second time just as he did in Act One. Anna comes back to her divan and sits on it. Deeley stops sobbing, comes towards Kate's divan and sits on her divan lying across her lap. When the lights come up sharply and brightly Deeley is seen dropped heavily in his divan. The play ends with the presence of the three characters seated in their respective chairs. Deeley cries because he is frustrated and disappointed from his sexual inadequacies.
Women are isolated and condemned not only from the male world but also from the rest of the womankind. Pinter talks about the relationship between the two sisters in *A Kind of Alaska* and the strong bonds of psycho-sociological relationship between the two girl friends in *Old Times* and also the two typical women in *The Tea Party*. The nature of friendship between women remains cryptic and suspicious to men as well as women. Pinter's women are still searching for their identities and they are unwilling to make confidences. They are extremely unscrupulous that is why they prefer silence. Elizabeth Sakellaridou comments: "The play is constructed on a circular pattern. The end is very much like the beginning and several incidents are narrated or dramatised twice with just small variation."¹²

At the end Deeley and Kate do not communicate. No struggle, no escape and nothing. Their recollections are obscure illusions and they hesitate to take a firm decision. The past is incredible to them. They are not faithful to one another. The secrets ruled their lives. Despite two inadequacies they are quasi-allegorical and have missed what they should not have missed in their life. Anna's death in the play is a broken image. Her death and Deeley's marriage are accidental in the play. In the last scene, long silence takes place even though the playwright ends the play quite
successfully. The silences repeatedly occupy the stage which link the theme effectively to be continued till the end. The language which is used by the playwright for effective communication links and delinks between past and present and between the lesbians and the homosexuals. The relation has been cut off between the two women and two men. But the happy family is once again disturbed by the arrival of Anna. Anna tries to possess Kate again by revealing her physical intimacy with Kate. Kate is unclear in her decision which makes Deeley sobbing a second time in the play. Nobody wins, nobody defeats but the sanctity of the home is highly disturbed. To win Kate, Anna struggles with Deeley unearthing their past. Deeley, sitting in his armchair between the two female sexual competitors, symbolizes his fondness for both the women sexually. Elizabeth Sakellaridou finds the resemblance between Old Times and Proust's novel The Past Recaptured. Anna and Kate's mental and emotional vibrations at their reacquaintance after a couple of decades are similar to Marcel Proust's undergoing the recollections of a dubious past in The Past Recaptured. As Proust himself says in the novel:

... life is perpetually weaving fresh threads which link one individual and one event to another, and ... these threads are crossed and
recrossed, doubled and redoubled to thicken the web, so that between any slightest point of our past and all the others, a rich network of memories gives us an almost infinite variety of communicating paths to choose from.  

Pinter goes deeper and deeper into the forbidden areas of love, lesbianism and homosexuality in the institution of sex. Talking about Deeley's male fears about the strong bonds of kinship between the women by hinting 'Swann's suspicions about Odette' and 'Marcel's fears about Albertine', Harold Hobson puts it: 'The kind of male complex is "the awful, helpless male horror of Lesbianism."' Deeley and Kate exhibit their hostile attitude toward each other instead of exchanging their confidences. Kate is torn between Deeley and Anna. The differences between them are not resolved. Deeley carefully asserts his male egoism throughout the play by narrating fairy episodes of his life. At the same time his growing male fears are clear about his wife's lesbian kinship. Like Deeley all the husbands in Pinter's plays are failures. They may either be impotent or sexually weak or unable to give a sense of security to their wives. One way or the other the wives feel insecurity and they are forced to require substitutes for their husbands to fulfill their sexual maladjustments. Their longings and discontents are
undefined, and inexpensive. Moreover they deeply involve the readers to share their anxiety and tension.

This is yet another play of Pinter in which sexual perversions of people are dramatised. The characters have the habit of reliving an earlier experience vicariously. Evoking the scene in which he looked at the white thighs and the black underwears of Anna, Deeley experiences pleasure. Anna herself gets sexual pleasure by recalling the same scene. The habit of using her friend's underwear indicates their physical intimacy. Kate's weakness for long baths, her desire to have the body powdered by her husband are uncommon in a normal one.

While Anna and Deeley are talkative Kate is not. Most of the time she is silent and appears to live in fantasy. May be she has changed totally after marriage having had a surfeit of sexual life before marriage. It may not be wrong to suggest that Deeley may have been responsible for her silence. Bully that he is he has probably intimidated and tyrannised over her.

With Betrayal Pinter breaks a new ground in the sense that he returns to the traditional drama and to the realistic mode. In style and theme, in the art of characterization, the structure of plot it is nearer manners
comedy. Marital infidelity in the guise of fashionable manners was the main theme in the Restoration and eighteenth century drama. In the plays of Wycherley, Etherege, Congreve there are tensions in domestic life due to real or suspected betrayal. The fear of being cuckolded makes Pinchwife choose a country woman because society woman cannot be trusted. There are Horners who deceive husbands and trap the women. In *The Way of the World*, again the manners comedy, with fashionable men and women parading in it there is the theme of betrayal. Fainall, though married has extra marital relationship with Mrs Marwood. His wife Mrs Fainall is after Mirabell. Thus in the Restoration comedies men and women excel each other in the art of betrayal and outwit each other.

The theme of strained marital relations is once again seen in the sentimental comedies of Sheridan. In a play like *School For Scandal* Mr Teazle is always threatened by the fear of betrayal by his wife. Joseph Surface, that hypocritical lover, while trying to marry Maria, nevertheless carries on with his plan to seduce Lady Teazle. The whole set of women belonging to the fashionable society of *School for Scandal* is preoccupied with murdered the reputations of married couples.
Though not drama proper Browning's monologues have the theme of marital betrayal or the theme of domestic disharmony caused by sexual betrayal. Even in a modern play like *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot focuses on discord and distrust in the families. Edward and Lavinia suspect each other and the couple has been shown chasing a mirage Eliot makes use of the psychiatrist to cure the characters of their illusions. Finally the husband and wife are reconciled and give up the attempt to betray each other. Pinter's *Betrayal* is reminiscent of the manners comedy and for once Pinter relates his art to the long tradition of English comedy. But his play is more complex because the characters betray each other at more than one level. It is not only that the husbands betray wives, wives betray husbands, friends betray friends and the whole play is a series of betrayals.

The first two scenes take place in 1977 and later scenes go back in time to 1968, beginning with the end of the love affair to the beginning of the love affair. This reverse chronological order suggests Pinter's usual preference for an unverifiable past. Each scene is dated, and each scene change is punctuated by one revelation of a composite set, where the mysteries of characters, their ages, occupations cannot be verified nor the motives of the characters known. We are given mysteries to contemplate, how
people are in the world. In the words of Diamond: "In Betrayal, Pinter comes close to expressing what he feels about the manners of the times, holding up an artifact of the 1970's ..."\textsuperscript{15}

The theme of adultery is not new to Pinter since he has dealt with the subject in many of his plays. In The Room, A Slight Ache, The Lover, The Homecoming the same theme is worked out.

Marital betrayal is important in Pinter's work because it links three recurring themes: the impossibility of verification, the invasion of territory, and the masking of emotion in the deployment of language. In The Collection, Jamie's inability to verify Stella's story means that he cannot account for her behaviour; She is his wife but essentially a stranger to him. In A Slight Ache and Old Times and parodistically in The Lover, a third party invades the territory of the husband by taking possession of the wife. And in all the plays, the pain and anger of betrayal, in what is assumed to be an intimate relationship, draw attention to that subtextual language of feeling below the surface of dialogue.\textsuperscript{16}
The fact that Pinter has used adultery as a theme in many plays suggest that he is not merely parodying adultery but exposes it as domestic. In *Betrayal* Jerry and Emma have even rented a flat for their sexual activities. They even walk through the parks and gaze at the rivers. Emma refers to the flat a second home which is furnished and where she cooks. The lovers have so managed to buy and live in the flat that they managed to see married. In *The Homecoming* Teddy has to give up his wife at the instance of his family because adultery is not new to them. His mother had been a mistress for the family and so Teddy appears to have no choice in the matter. This is reinforced in Ruth's. *Tea Party* is an another play in which the same theme recurs. Disson in the play accepts marriage proposal. Instead of rejecting the proposal he merely accepts it as given.

Closely related to the theme of adultery is female domestic rapacity. Many Pinter's women come under this category. It is not only that they dominate men in the domestic sphere but also they destroy the world of men. It is this recognition of woman's destructiveness which makes Robert in *Betrayal* to dismiss Emma's desire to watch a squash game.
Well, to be brutally honest, we wouldn't actually want a woman around, would we, Jerry? I mean a game of squash is not simply a game of squash it's rather more than that. You see, first there's the game. And then there's the shower. And then there's the Pint. And their there's lunch. After all, you've been at it. You've had your battle. What you want is your pint and your lunch. You really don't want a woman buying you lunch. You don't actually want a woman within a mile of the place, any of the places, really. You don't want her in the squash court, you don't want her in the shower, or the pub, or the restaurant. You see, at lunch you want to talk about squash, or cricket, or books, or even women, with your friend, and be able to warm to your theme without fear of improper interruption. That's what it's all about.

What do you think, Jerry? (pp.69-70)17

This speech is like Horner's in The Country Wife where he compares women to spaniels that "fawn, lie down, suffer beating, and fawn the more; barks at your friends when they come to see you; makes your bed hard; gives you fleas, and
the mange sometimes. And all the difference is, the spaniel's the more faithful animal, and fawns but upon one master." It has been suggested that in Pinter wives manipulate and men, even adulterers, dwindle into cuckolds. By emphasizing and dramatising adulterous relationships in play after play Pinter has succeeded in making the theme domestic. What has become domestic to the reader is the domesticity of adultery. One might infer from the plays and Pinter's emphasis on the domesticity of adultery in them that Pinter has caught the essential element in society. Marriage as an institution is no longer a sanctity and the marriage vows are easily broken. Any slight difference leads to separation which is an easier alternative. Adultery in Pinter therefore focuses on the highly relevant subject. If in plays like Betrayal adultery is literal and true it is imaginary in The Collection. The play represents the fear of men about the possible betrayal by the women. James in The Collection goes to the extent of investigating in Hitchcockian way his wife's relationship with men.

Robert and Jerry are born in 1937, studied at Oxford and Cambridge respectively and worked as editors of Poetry magazines during their student days. Robert is interested in Yeats and squash and Jerry in modern literature. Robert married to Emma in 1962, at whose wedding ceremony Jerry was best man and Jerry married to Jadith.
Each couple has a couple of children. Robert is now a publisher, Jerry is a literary agent. Emma runs a gallery and Jadith serves as doctor in a hospital.

In 1968 in the bedroom of Emma and Robert, Jerry praises Emma's beauty to the skies. Her beauty makes him mad and her looks kill him. He even tells her that he should have blackened her in her white bridal dress before wedding as her best man. For him she is "... where the reigning prince is the prince of emptiness, the prince of absence, the prince of desolation" (p.136). When Emma tells him that her husband is at the other side of the door he is unaffected and what is worse tries to justify his claim as legitimate. "Everyone knows. The world knows. It knows" (p.136). When Robert encounters him Jerry begins to tell him how beautiful his wife is. Robert looks cool, leaves home silently saying to him "quite right" (p.138). In the next scene Emma and Jerry are seen at their rented flat 31 Wessex Grove, Kilburn. She tells Jerry that she has been to Fortnum and Mason's with Judith and had lunch with her friend, a lady. He is under the impression that his wife does not know about his extramarital affair with Emma. He suspects that his wife has an admirer who takes her for drinks off and on. "He likes her, she's fond of him, ... perhaps that's what I find irritating. I don't know exactly what's going on" (p.127). But he is
confident that his wife is faithful to him and it is impossible to think of giving up his wife. In the next scene Robert meets Jerry and tells him that he has been to Torcello alone and enjoyed reading Yeats on the grass. Talking about the unique critical judgement of a publisher Robert blames himself that he is a foolish publisher. He hates books because modern prose literature and new novels by Casey and Spinks all come under the name of literature in which Jerry and Emma have common interests. It thrills both the lovers. Anyway Robert considers Casey as an excellent writer and he announces that he will publish him for which Emma and Jerry will be happy.

The next scene takes place in a hotel room at Venice. Robert tells his wife about Spinks who was discovered by Jerry. Jerry wants Robert to publish Spinks giving the title 'Betrayal'. Emma also says it is excellent but he hates it. Emma tells her husband that she has been in love with Jerry for five years. Talking about Ned to her husband she assures him saying that "he's your son. Jerry was in America. For two months" (p.86). In the next scene again Jerry is seen at Robert's house wining. Robert tells him that that Casey lives alone on the other side of London isolating his wife, Susannah and children to write a novel about a man who has left his wife and three children. Jerry leaves the place saying that he has not played squash for
years. In the next scene the lovers are seen enjoying in their flat in which they have spent seven years of afternoons. They feel that it is an empty home. It is unlike their happy homes. The affair ends here. Emma leaves Jerry saying that "I think we've made absolutely the right decision" (p.58). After two years' gap Robert comes to Jerry's house. Jerry is seen a little bit worried thinking that whether Robert has come to know about his affair with Emma. At last he learns that Robert has known about it for four years. Robert on his part confesses that he has betrayed his wife. Moreover he also knows about his wife's affair with Casey.

In the next scene in a London pub in the Spring of 1977 the ex-lovers meet and make enquiries about their respective mates. Emma tells him that she has found differences with her husband. She wants to be separated from Robert, a decision after a long talk the previous night, when she accuses him that he has betrayed her. He has had affairs with other women for years.

Though thematically the play is related to many of Pinter's plays, it's technique makes it distinct from them all. In fact the play is only one of its kind in the use of this technique. Instead of linear progression with a forward movement, the causality necessary for a plot, the play begins
with the end and what follows is a rewinding of the past. The decision of Emma to separate from her husband in the opening scene of the play is only a culmination of series of encounters with her lover. The enactment of the past is not once again linear but its opposite. It is a reversal of calendar, one episode taking into the predecessor which in turn takes to its predecessor and finally to the beginning of the relationship. It is a method of narration, a backward narration we may call, which compels the audiences undivided attention. Though novel, the playwright appears to be subscribing to the traditional realistic mode. The play is a comment on the illusion of illicit lovers that they are undefeated. Robert’s decision to publish a novel which deals with a man who writes a novel about his leaving his wife and children makes it clear. Robert also tells his wife that she will like it although he does not.

Though condemned as sinful adultery has continued to be an aberration in men and women. Marriage has been given religious sanction by all established faiths and regarded as holy. Even so human beings have erred and committed acts of adultery. Adultery has been a very fascinating theme for creative writers and there are discussions of adulterous women in literature. Anna Karenina, Madam Bovary, Hester Prynne, Lady Chatterly, for
example, are fascinating adulterous women. As a keen observer of homes, rooms, basements Pinter has known too well the predicament of betrayed husbands. Unlike the heroines of Tolstoy, Flaubert, Hawthorne and Lawrence whose adultery is treated romantically, Pinter's women are shown to be devoid of any moral or spiritual feelings. It is not force of circumstances that make these women adulterous but it is perversity that dictates their conduct. Pinter seems to be drawing our attention to the fact that marriage as an institution has failed to insure against immorality and holiness of heart's affections. If Larkin came up with "Church-Going" as an indication of disappearance of religion Pinter has come up with plays which might be described as "Marriage-Going."
NOTES


7. Sakellaridou, Elizabeth, *Pinter's Female Portraits*, p.166.


17. Pinter, Harold, *Betrayal* (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd, 1979), pp.69-70. All references to the text are from this edition.