CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION
The award of the David Cohen British Literary Prize, the most lucrative literary prize in the U.K. awarded every two years in honour of a lifetime's achievements, in 1995 is a just recognition of Pinter's work in a career spanning nearly five decades. The award is a tribute to his multiple roles of an actor, writer and director in all of which he made very significant mark. From early description of him as "enigmatic, taciturn, terse, prickly, explosive and forbidding," there have been positive perspectives as authentic, affable and friendly in recent criticism. Some of his plays which have catastrophic receptions have in subsequent revivals gained wider audience giving the author fame and fortune. His inroads into radio and television made him a household name in England because his radio and television plays ran for months on end with millions of audience viewing them. No wonder Pinter is today regarded as a giant in the world of entertainment.

It has been shown in the body of the thesis how Pinter's art developed or evolved. His primary sources are the images of life drawn from his teenage years in the East End of London. The Jewish community, its faiths and traditions, its isolation from the rest of the world, its fears in the wake of the Fascist uprising, the world war and its effects, his evacuation from the East End, his fight as a
conscientious objector - all of these served as a quarry for the copplestones for the high way of literary structure he has built. The ethos of Hackney Downs where his youth was spent forms the backdrop for most of his plays. Since the characters and situations are drawn from the familiar and the true the plays acquire an authenticity and charm.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Pinter’s world is its intellectualism which goes against the tradition of psychological and sentimental dramatic literature which was the main stay of English drama. As opposed to the dominance of emotion his plays are anything but emotional. All characters are cool, level-headed and devoid of emotions. Even in the face of injustice, betrayal, suffering the men and women by and large are not given to violent emotional outbursts. The description of his plays as comedies of menace is not fully justified because the menace is intellectual and executed at rational level through persuasion and discussion. Violent action is committed only in The Room at the end. In all other plays all kinds of problems are sought to be resolved without any wild justice. Therefore Irwing Wardle’s description of Pinter’s plays as comedies of menace needs to be modified because most of the characters are urbane and the solutions sought are part of the civilized society.
It has been shown that Pinter work has embodied the best thought of the time. The Existentialist and absurdist thought are so woven into the structures of the plays that is hard to realise at first glance. In Pinter's plays the characters are ordinary, the scenes are familiar, the situations are common. One might dismiss them as plays of no consequence and deny any philosophical or poetic value. However, on a closer examination the plays reveal their depth and Pinter is shown to be as serious a thinker as Kafka, Camus, Beckett and other predecessors beginning with Aeschylus. Very cunningly Pinter structures his plays in the Aeschylian fashion.

In the chapter in which it is shown that the plays *The Birthday Party, The Room, The Dumb Waiter* and *A Slight Ache* have a mythic pattern the Existential thought is found to be the texture. The guilty being chased and caught is a structure introduced by Aeschylus and ever since this myth of the Chorus of furies has become the framework for many works. In this chapter the four plays discussed are shown to conform to the mythic pattern. This shows that Pinter is traditional because he goes back to the tradition like many modernists early in the century. The play *The Birthday Party* received critical attention and praise for patterning a suspense thriller on the mythic structure.
In the chapter on territorial aggression an attempt was made to study Pinter's plays in terms of Faustian over-reaching ambition of man. At the macroscopic level man's landing on the moon and at the microscopic level man's attempt to impose his will on others and violating in the process established norms are facts of history. In all myths there is the territorial aggression. No doubt it became a pattern or a structure for some of his plays.

The theme of Oedipus Complex is a popular concept attracting creative writers to itself. It has been very helpful to probe the psychological workings of parents and children. No wonder Pinter made use of it in The Birthday Party which heralded his success in the theatre and a few other plays with the similar theme. Pinter intensifies the theme by making a childless woman develop a fondness for a son like lodger. Mrs Stokes in A Night Out is more possessive than even Mrs Morel in Lawrence's Sons and Lovers because she does not allow him to go out of the house. Moreover, drawing on his own experiences and combining with his reading of Kafka, Camus, Pinter shows man as essentially aggressive. That man is basically predatory and bestial always wanting to possess men and materials is dramatised in comic and tragic forms. The three plays chosen for discussion under this category are the best of Pinter because
they are philosophical, poetic, symbolic. The predicament of man in his old age, of the unaccommodated man a cyclical view of life are all so well accommodated into the plays that they may be regarded as modern classics.

In the chapter which dealt with sexual perversions of Pinter's characters it has been shown that nearly every character suffers from one kind of psychological disorder or other. It was suggested to the point of exaggeration that there are no healthy people in Pinter at all. This is no false reading. Characters suffer from homosexuality, sadism, masochism, exhibitionism, voyeurism, frotteurism, sodomy, fetishism, scoptophilia, fellatio, coprophagia. Pinter like W.H. Auden in the 'thirties and Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes in the 'fifties made use of psychoanalysis to identify the disorders. Like Eliot who had juxtaposed the past and the present, filling the wasteland with maimed people Pinter has peopled his plays with perverts. In this sense he is more significant than his contemporaries Osborne and Wesker who are often banded together with Pinter. Therefore Pinter may be regarded as a surrealist who based his characters not on the external conduct but on their deeper consciousness.

In a chapter on adulterous relationships it has been shown that Pinter is obsessed with marital disharmony and domestic discord leading to adultery. There is a whole
literature dealing with adulterous men and women but what is novel about Pinter's women and men is that such relationships are formed consciously and boldly. Pinter's women reject impotent and homosexuals by an open adultery. Pinter does focus on suspicious husbands who fantasy that their wives are unfaithful. What is interesting is that male inadequacy of ten turns into suspicion. The playwright seems to draw a distinction between real and imaginary adultery and suggest the latter is more dangerous than the former. The temptation to relate Pinter's two marriages and his seven-year-long relationship with Joan Bakewell with his plays has been resisted.

In the chapter on language it has been shown that Pinter's contribution to the medium of drama is the most durable. He revolutionised the medium by totally disregarding the rhetorical, the poetic and the symbolic use of it for five centuries or more. His suspicion of centuries old practice of employing the rhetorical mode has resulted in realistic language of his characters. For him the traditional dialogue is a language of lies and is suitable to hypocritical characters. In real life people do not argue logically, rationally, symbolically, poetically. For this reason Pinter's dialogue and monologue follow a technique of deviance. This no doubt contributes to the difficulty of
understanding the plays. In a sense Pinter is a crooked playwright whose works require crooked and oblique reading. By using pauses and repetitions Pinter forces attention to the malice of his characters.

The greatest importance of Pinter seems to be his definition of a play and the role of a playwright. By his example he suggests that even the greatest genius cannot fathom man's actions and his relationships with society. He may see people and he may listen to people but he may miss the truth. It is nothing short of arrogance for a creative writer to assume that with his omniscience has probed human relations and society. It is this complacency that Pinter questions because his plays merely present human beings in certain situations.