ABSTRACT

Harold Pinter (1930-2008), has been an ace and a firmly established theatre personality and playwright who needs no introduction. About the dramatist, Simon Tussler once remarked: “There has been a lot of fluff and dust blowing about Pinter and getting up critical noses.” Indeed, at the beginning of his writing career Pinter’s plays generated a lot of confusion, which baffled the critics, who argued variously about assigning a clearly demarcated rubric to his drama. Yet all agree that Pinter can be termed as one of the precursors of postmodernism in the genre of British Drama. This is due to the fact that his work heralds dissolution of neatly sutured categories of the various isms or movements in the field of drama. In fact, what we see in Pinter’s plays, is a drama plotted in ‘moments’— or what, in the words of Ihab Hasan, can be called “postmodern turns” that can be mutually presentational and deconstructive.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to advocate the reading of Pinter’s drama within broader inter-texts of contemporary culture, which sometimes includes influential theorizing of postmodernism. This has been done in terms of social organization of the relations between the texts within specific conditions of reading them. Yet mostly, the analyses pay less attention to textual strategies of preference that might lead to presenting any form of closure to a drama, which is open ended. The concentration has therefore been on the gaps, which call for attention, in the act of author’s and characters’ making up reality or hyper-reality, which would lead to a construction of meaning that is comprehensible. This act is not just proffered by the content or the structure of the texts, but also one which results from a reader’s social, political, and geographical and even the historical experiences, in their relation and response on both the hermeneutical and phenomenological levels.

The thesis comprises seven chapters, five of which deal with seven plays of Pinter in detail, notwithstanding the Introduction and the Conclusion which make the First and the Seventh chapters respectively. Only those plays have been chosen, which were found viable for the study of Pinter’s technique, as a dramatist who has evolved chronologically, and one kept refining his art as a playwright.

Pinter has consistently proved himself as one of the best English playwrights, who has constructed highly dramatic plays, which have been effective not only
onstage, but also on radio, television and as screenplays. Perhaps the author’s consummate virtuosity springs from the influence of diverse experiences he had as an actor, a playwright and also as a theatre director. This gave him an objective and detailed first hand insight into the empirical situation of the theatre world from various dimensions. The choice here has however, been restricted to the study of the plays that Pinter wrote for the proscenium, since the focus has been the development of the dramatist’s stagecraft technique.

As has been pointed out by Austin Quigley, one of the most enigmatic and fascinating qualities of Pinter’s plays has been their ability to leave the audience/reader intrigued, without ever being quite fully enlightened. Therefore dealing with Pinter can be a very dicey experience, since it involves a delicate task of increasing this sense of enlightenment without diminishing the intrigue. The trick has been to strike a balance between an edification that seeks to enhance subtly, while at the same time ‘somewhat’ clarify the intrigue. This is not to be done by an explaining away, but rather by teasing out the possibilities of the processes called Pinter’s plays.

Upon someone’s query put to Pinter, regarding the subject of his plays, Pinter had replied (apparently to frustrate the line of enquiry): “The weasel under the cocktail cabinet.” Later the playwright talked several times about the personal grouse that he underwent over the amount of twisting that this ‘casual remark’ went through. Yet, from one’s position as a researcher one would attempt a similar ‘twisting’, since it appears that Pinter’s work is exactly that: a ‘cocktail’ of complex structures and textures which have invited a varied dubbing as ‘realistic’, ‘hyper-naturalistic’, ‘absurdist’, ‘kitchen sink’ and ‘Mannerist Comedy of Menace’. The writing comes across as an amalgam of all these, resulting in a kind of ‘meta-gestalt- in- flux’ underneath which runs other texts of bare animalistic instincts (just like the weasel under the cocktail cabinet), and of constantly seething melodrama which is full of intense passions and forbidden lusts.

As Martin Esslin remarks, Pinter’s plays are steeped in the principle of ‘un-verifiability’, which is a deliberately propagated befuddlement on the part of the playwright, in order to sabotage any form of totalizing explanations. This is one of the main features of postmodern writings. And this is one of the reasons too, why one can take Pinter’s statement, (‘weasel under the cocktail cabinet’ as being a ‘meaningless
expression’ (as he called it)) as one which was made outside the box, and therefore with a pinch of salt.

The second point which defines Pinter’s drama is its ‘momentariness’. Traditional drama of ‘mimetic action’ had a beginning, middle and an end. Conversely for Pinter, the word ‘time’ outlines somewhat fluid boundaries of a given field. Therefore his drama begins with an ambiguous middle, going on to becoming a concrete middle, and finally reaching another ambiguous middle just before its open ends. Esslin’s analogy of a Pinter play involves a scene of two people arguing on a street, which suddenly a crowd or audience gathers to watch, before the police car comes to sweep the fighters away. The unknown beginning and the end become relevant, in that momentary scene witnessed by the crowd; one which offers a charged and an intense moment of awareness and a deep insight. Pinter’s plays are therefore an experience of his positing various hyper-realistic situations, which are bereft of any kind of transparency or penetrability into the characters’ lives, or of a chance of ever knowing or being able to verify their true feelings and motivations.

Since the basic concern of this thesis is Pinter’s dramaturgy, the first chapter, which is the Introduction, deals with briefly analysing different aspects of the construction of meaning in theatre, which includes various modes and methods that determine the specificity of play’s reception by the audience/reader. A very short survey of various stagecraft techniques has been made, emphasizing the ones which have been used by Pinter to present information, as well as the structures of space and time in his theatre. Beginning with distinguishing between the dramatic and narrative genres, it has been discussed how narration supports drama with the aid of the secondary text, which sets the process of characterization and naming, the details of the performance along with the operations of the paralinguistic devices which are used on the stage. Tadenz Kowzan’s table for the demarcation if the thirteen signs and codes of theatrical performance, which are situated in two levels of what he calls “inside the actor” and “outside the actor” has been examined. Further, an association of Pinter’s use of these devices in his dramaturgical process has been made. Pinter’s economy has also been discussed both at the level of language as well as for his use of stage devices like the props, which in Pinter’s drama, acquire a multifarious significance along with the linear and the sub-linear movements of his plays. There
has been, a going into some detail (by using examples from his plays) of examining
Pinter’s art of making objects ‘live’ not just as symbols, metaphors or metonyms,
but also as signs of dynamic ‘change’ as can be seen in different lights and from
differing perspectives. This method lends to his plays a multi-linear texture which
serves to enrich their dramatic experience.

Also, by using illustrations from his plays, it has been examined how the
playwright uses a gamut of symbolically charged icons, language and ritualistic
actions to stylize and build up larger patterns of association, which he makes to work,
by impregnating the plays with a continuous middle-in-a-flux, that keeps changing
with added significances, and which renders it as becoming constantly reborn as
extended metaphors.

The Introduction, also examines how Pinter, as in a typically postmodern
condition, recycles the existing elements of modern drama of the Enlightenment
Period; and after adopting them, subverts these very conventional methods, especially
the ones of dramatic irony and legitimating. The playwright’s dramaturgic technique
involves innovative methods of using ambivalence and ambiguity, disjuncture and
fragmentation, montage and bricolage, de-familiarisation and subversion, which led
the critically reviewing community to advocate an adjectival term for his work,
namely, Pintersque. This label came to function as a substitute for the apparently
incoherent elements which are so unique to Pinter’s style. Pinter’s technique of
dramatic construction, presented his stylistic attributes as components of a new
dramaturgic mode of presentation and positing, which made him a precursor of a new
paradigm in the world of drama. This served the critics, a new landmark of accepting
a dramatist who represented the postmodern condition as manifested in the
phenomena of his plays.

Pinter’s most notable innovative technique has been one which alters the norms
of using language that is spoken on the stage. This he did by developing methods of
technical refinement of the traditional dialogue, and which became “a language
where, under what is said, another thing is being said.” Actual dialogue thus became
‘a mask’ or ‘a smokescreen’ in the light of which, a new ‘theatre of language’ came
into being. The playwright’s ingenuity stems from effecting a fusion of the polar
extremities representation and novel expression. At the pole of representation, the
dramatist seems to aim at a mimetic technique to the extent of tape recording fidelity. Both speech and action together seem to represent the smallest of details; of recording even the length of gaps in conversation, which points to a hyper-naturalistic method. Yet Pinter’s brilliant ‘shaping’ of such dialogue is a technique that has moved consistently towards aspiring to the condition of poetry and music. The author imposes deliberate patterns and rhythms on the language that he uses, for the sake of intense expressiveness, without totally diminishing that which is denotable by language. Andrew Kennedy has called this kind of idiom as “patterned mimesis” or the ‘comedy of Mannerism’.

Pinter’s shaping technique endorses a variety of styles developed to match the various themes of his plays. Thematically, his plays can be broadly categorised into four kinds: the comedies of menace; (beginning from 1957-1960, which include *The Room, The Hothouse, The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter, A Slight Ache, The Caretaker*) the memory plays; (from late 1960s-1980, which included *Landscape, Silence, Old Times, No Man’s Land, Betrayal*) comedies of Mannerism; (1961-1966 a term given by Andrew Kennedy to almost Pinter’s entire oeuvre, but which mainly included *The Collection, The Lover Tea Party, The Homecoming, The Basement*) and the political plays (written after 1980s, which consisted *Party Time, One for the Road, The Mountain Language, New World Order, and Ashes to Ashes*).

The Chapters II to VI of the Thesis research of some of Pinter’s stage drama selected from different phases of his dramatic career. Although, these phases are grouped more or less thematically, there is a marked difference in the treatment of their plots and their dialogue structure, which are identifiable in their uniqueness. It is however to be made clear that such a classification of Pinter’s plays are arbitrary to a certain extent, since the themes of menace, memory, power and politics pervade throughout his entire work. Yet, such a grouping becomes contingent for the aim of gaining an insight into how the subject and form have progressed and developed throughout Pinter’s career as a dramatist.

Chapter II deals with the first two plays of Pinter, namely *The Room* (1957) and *The Birthday Party* (1958). It was essential to study Pinter’s first play since it establishes some of the major themes and techniques that Pinter continued to use and refine subsequently in the rest of his oeuvre.
It is a well know fact about Pinter that his plays are about what the title is. Therefore, in The Room the physical environment is central to the action of the play. The room represents more than just an accommodation for a middle aged couple Rose and Bert; especially for Rose it is a recluse for something very menacing that exists in the outside world. In a short while after the play begins, Rose is left alone by Bert, (who goes out after taking his breakfast) in the room they inhabit in a boarding lodge. Thereafter, she comes face to face with various visitors who include a nervy landlord Mr, Kidd, a couple named Sands who arrive as an expulsion threat for Rose, hinting at the impending doom awaiting her in the basement of the house in the shape of someone called Riley. At the climax of the play, Riley, who is a blind Negro, visits her, exhorting Rose to return to her ‘father’. It is unclear who Riley may be, but the fact that he is a Negro who has been waiting in the dark basement for her, to approach her at the ‘appropriate moment’ makes him come across as the Grim Reaper, having arrived with the final call from the ‘heavenly father’ from the world beyond, which is hinted at lying at the other side of ‘the never ending staircase’ of the boarding lodge. Pinter’s stagecraft of establishing the off stage spaces of a cold dark and menacing world of the street and the basement, shows that death can be as close as sitting in our own house. Such a situation becomes, at once threatening and intensely surcharged. Pinter’s strategic use of language, pauses and silences has been the devices he has employed for the climactic build up of the play, which leads to Riley being killed brutally by none other than Bert, who is Rose’s husband. Using subversion Pinter establishes, how what seems to be Life (here Bert; for Rose) can be more threatening and dangerous than the death itself, a fact (and the shock of which), renders Rose blind and crawling in the end.

Pinter’s adroit shaping of the intense situation comes from his crafty and brilliant use of speech rhythms and ritualistic repetition, the ‘phatic’ speech of association and non sequiturs and the use of extended soliloquies by the characters, as a ‘smokescreen’ in order to cover their true feelings, and also to evade passing information about themselves and their past. The unverifiable situations in Pinter’s plays are usually a representation of the unease and the insecurity, which plagued the minds of the people in Europe, specially the Jews, in the post World War II environment. Thus the disturbance, disruption and perturbation is seen as an
undercurrent that runs under the characters’ speeches, which are fragmentary and full of non sequiturs, and that seem to have had their genesis elsewhere.

In *The Birthday Party* (which is Pinter’s first full length play) the setting is a boarding house by seaside, which harbours three people: an aging couple in their sixties and their tenant Stanley who is thirty. The theme is an extension from that of *The Room*; but with a variation. The threat arrives at the door of the lodging, not in the shape of an impending death, but from an organised and dark institution, in the shape of two of its agents Goldberg (a Jew) and McCann (an Irishman). The two arrive to break Stanley’s apparently non-conformist spirit, and then carry him away to some ‘Monty’ (who or which is as vague as the name is). The process takes place during Stanley’s birthday celebration party, which actually subverts to becoming Stanley’s rebirth party; of him being reborn as a reified being. Pinter’s use of the language within this play is economically brilliant as in providing ‘more in less’. The patterning of the dialogue and the scenes, and Pinter’s exploitation of rhythmic form, in the instances of interrogation scenes is remarkable. Here the rhythms of rituals and repetitions and responses in the catechistic cross examinations and the litanies are used as parodies. There is also a comic instance in the play that requires mentioning, since it is crucial to the genesis of the failure-of-memory theme which has been explored in the Memory plays later. This instance is played out in Meg’s grotesque distortion of the information about Stanley’s life; from the way she received it from Stanley’s own account, to the manner in which she imparts it to Goldberg, for mere asking. This scene is a brilliant presentation of Pinter’s belief that “a moment is sucked away and distorted often even at the time of its birth.”

Another character named Lulu is introduced in the play as Pinter’s strategic ‘device’ that brings about Stanley’s first catatonic breakdown, which is concretized in the act of attempted rape of the girl in the dark. One can see that in Pinter’s drama, there are no excesses as far as the characters and props as stage devices are concerned. On the contrary, each of these devices serves a multiple purpose on varied levels during the plays’ linear as well as paradigmatic progression. In juxtaposition to the interrogation scene is the ‘telos’ scene which projects images of an idealistic life style and promises that resonate like empty markers (just like a broken toy drum which is another prop used in the play, would.) This scene reminds one of Baudrillard’s
postmodern cultural Images of empty perfection. The abstract idea of voicing the capability of libidinal investments, ingeniously arranged by the agents, rings as untrue, as that in institutionalized capitalism, and which Pinter often castigates, both in his plays and his writings as a political activist. The scene is remarkable in parodying ideological discursive practices, which tend to legitimate and rationalize repression in an as-yet-unfinished teleology towards utopian promises.

Chapter III deals with *The Caretaker* which is a step away from Pinter’s world of dramatically theatrical and absurdist menace, to replace it with a more grounded and realistic one. This play offers a closer locale of a very personal and realistic expression by the author. Here, the local context of the working class milieu is examined. Pinter’s preoccupation once again remains confined to an enclosed room, which is a closely cluttered attic space. This stage set up is quite symbolic in its presenting the constraining circumstances, as well as the cluttered and neurotic mental states, in the situational events that take place in the play. The drama marks an exploration by two brothers, Aston and Mick, the complexity and instability of their relationship; something which is presented by the author in the very hesitancy of their broken interactions. Here again, Pinter introduces as theatrical device, a character (much more complex and important than the Lulu of *The Birthday Party*) named Davies. This tramp has been used by Pinter as a catalyst, who helps in bringing about a substantial and noticeable change in the mental condition of a slightly lunatic Aston. He also serves to forge a bond between the two brothers (in subversion to the wedge that he proposes and works on, and drive between them). Like the basic catalyst’s property, Davies’ own condition, despite forging the change, remains status quo. This is in spite of his numerous efforts to ingratiate himself to the owner of the house (Mick) and seeking influx in the house, by edging Aston out. What marks the play’s success is Pinter’s perfect use of ‘language of the lived encounter’ which was created by the author on two levels—first, the fragmentary speech of two inarticulate beings (Aston and Davies) that is characterized by numerous instances of unfinished sentences, tautological repetitions, bad syntax and pleonasms, as well as in their use of non-sequiturs and self contradictions. This kind of speech is set against quite elaborate and sadistically violent speech used by Mick, which marks a freemasonry type exclusion of the tramp, leading to his final expulsion. *The Caretaker* affects,
Pinter’s perfectly brilliant fusion of both human and abstract attributes of a dramatic language, which expresses a unified whole of what can be called ‘shapes of listening’.

Pinter’s stage props; from shoes to a bucket hanging from the ceiling to catch dripping rainwater from a leaky roof, the Electrolux Hoover and the omnipotent statue of Buddha, all have been ingeniously put to use in the play as they express multiple and changing significances. Also the lights and the blackouts, and the strategically arranged beds by the attic window—each have a purpose to serve.

Chapter IV deals with plays that mark Pinter’s breakaway from hyper-realistic drama and his step into the dubious world of memory, where he seeks to explore as well as to expose the un-verifiability of the time-past. This chapter researches two short plays entitled *Landscape* and *Silence*. On the theatrical level, these plays have been characterized as exhibiting a structural transformation: from dramatic to lyrical. Here Pinter has adopted an innovative method of doing to drama, what the stream of consciousness novelist did to the narrative prose. In these plays, the playwright concerns himself with sketching and assigning monologues to the characters, which are entrapped in their own time capsules.

In *Landscape*, the monologues run parallel, and any verbal interaction between the characters is non-existent. The play invites the audience/reader’s participation, in order to glue together the events that are constructed as contraposed images evoked by Duff’s and Beth’s (interior) monologues. The play’s secondary text makes the attitude of the two characters (to each other) very clear: Duff refers normally to Beth but seems not to hear her voice, whereas Beth neither appears to hear him nor look at him as she speaks, as if thinking aloud, to herself. Both, sitting upon a kitchen table in a countryside house, are relaxed. With the dim background of the stage setting, a blur impressionistic effect is created to symbolize a turning inwards into their subconsciousness. The couple, who speak past each other, reminisce about their shared past, but their attitude to each other is one of a two world tangent that sometimes merges in the world of memory about a life that they shared in the past. In their process of recalling their past, the word images that they construct lose their sharpness at times, to become interwoven as a dream. The two monologues are two different ‘voices’ that follow separate tracks, yet in their process of running parallel, expose shreds in their relationship.
Beth’s memory pattern, expressed in soft and lyrical tones, leave loose and flowing threads as if let on towards the audience/ readers to decipher a past that is unverifiable. Duff, in contrast, uses coarse language, which builds pictures that are more in tandem with his crude instincts. The play’s structure involves a process where Duff seems to make various attempts to bring Beth out of her incarceration in her (mental) romantic time-capsule. Yet just before he begins to succeed, his frustration that has been building up, makes him lose patience, leading him to use such a violent speech, that it results in Beth’s tragic fallback into her memory trap once again.

In *Silence*, Pinter moves on to a more abstract setting where three characters are shown sitting in three absolutely and separately demarcated areas. Jeremy Kingston *Punch* Review (‘At the Theatre’, CCLVII, 9th July, 1969) describes Peter Hall’s London production stage setting, where three characters were seated on black chairs, set diagonally across a stage made up of tiled glass. With the setting lit strongly from above, and with shadows against the back of stage, the stagecraft effect created was that of three people “trapped in a block of ice”. The note of the director described them as ‘sometimes old, sometimes young’. The speech in the play is again in the form of monologues; barring three times in the play, where these figures are shown to move into each others’ space and interact briefly. Twice, Ellen moves to Rumsey’s area, while Bates moves once onto Ellen’s space as they exchange short conversations. This movement spells an act that concretizes the existence of a shared past. Perhaps this is Pinter’s strategy to show that the recollection of the three is not just a figment of their imagination. The time structure of the play has been deliberately befuddled by the playwright, in order to create an ambiguity regarding the order in which the events took place. Pinter goes a step further, to elaborate the chronological structure of the events as referring to three different periods in their lives: Ellen’s childhood, her life as a young woman and her present old age. However, their appearance on the stage dates back to when Ellen was twenty, Rumsey forty and Bates in his thirties. The events are summed up as; Ellen’s love for Rumsey since her childhood (spent in the countryside), their love affair in her youth, Rumsey’s break up with Ellen, exhorting her to find a younger man for herself, followed by Ellen settling in with the younger Bates (who has always admired her), in the city. Yet finding it hard to forget Rumsey, she eventually breaks off her relationship with Bates and finally Bates and Ellen are seen as leading separate lives in the city and pining for the
countryside. Rumsey, on the other hand, leads a contended life of bachelorhood at his horse farm in the country. Pinter’s ‘shaping’ of the minimalistic dialogue of this play is very intricate. The three fragmented ‘episodes’ that occur in their separate boxes are given a separate tone each, of the three minds that run on parallel lines.

As the play progresses, the fragments of the characters’ monologues become split further and are replayed; first as phrases, and then words and word traces that are gradually erased altogether to fall into and become engulfed in an abysmal pit of silence. As each one’s speech progresses in the play towards a diminishing length, the frequency of silences, written as the secondary text of the play, increases. This goes on, until the speech falls completely into a death like quietus of a resounding deafness in space and time, which is written by the author as ‘Long Silence’. Thus, within these two twin memory plays, Pinter experiments with ‘infolding’ of language till it becomes musical rhythm reaching to its crescendo with the final silence which evokes an intense poignancy among the audience/readers.

Chapter V discusses one of Pinter’s most successful of memory plays: *Old Times* (1970). Again, as the title suggests, the plays involves Pinter’s preoccupation with memory. The play deals with a triangular dispute for a credible vision of the past that remains as elusive as ever. The major difference with the other memory plays herein lies in that in this play, the memory fragments are displayed as a more fluid concern, inasmuch as they are witnessed to change and acquire new interpretations. This too depends upon who is telling them. In the sequence of the play, revolving around Kate, are the characters Anna (probably a lesbian and Kate’s old roommate) and Deeley (Kate’s husband), who remember events, that recall a shared past with Kate. This nostalgic reminiscence soon morphs into a battle of possession for Kate, which includes a pastiche, of snatches from old songs that have been carefully chosen and arranged by the dramatist, to become variously suggestive. Also there are appropriations of each other’s recalled versions of the past events, which are followed by re-interpretations. These memory patterns thus become subject freely to any chosen amount of permutations, just like the modular beds, used as symbolic props, in the play. The play thus concerns with a contingent and a relativistic construction of subjectivity, in a postmodern crafting by Pinter. In the minimalistic patterns of their exchanges, the three characters are seen to form an ever moving flux of alliance and
estrangement that result from their conflicting interpretations and reinterpretations. The truth, being contingent upon the discursive position of each character, remains always, a will-o’-the-wisp.

Right from the absorbing dimness of the first scene to the theatrical brightness of the last, the dialectic proceeds apace, sometimes affirming an integral unity of personality and at other times denying the same through the theatrical disruptions of contextual reminders. The plot structure of this play is thus, more implicit than that of the other memory plays of Pinter, although the verbal texture resembles in the juxtaposition, of the intersecting memories as in the former plays. Old Times does not suggest any truth behind the stories that the characters tell. Yet all the versions are equally relevant in that they are all likely to lead to the same ‘present’ situation, as at the end of the play.

In Chapter VI, Ashes to Ashes has been chosen for researching. In this play, the playwright attempts a very unique and innovative technical procedure, where he succeeds in amalgamating a smallest private local situation, (a married couple’s discussion in a drawing room) with a context that exceeds the limits of one single human’s lifetime experience. In juxtaposing the two apparently incompatible modes of his previous writings: those of the early unverifiable Pinter, and the later directly candid Pinter of the political plays; Pinter strikes a dialectical structuring, which is similar to the single gestalt of a meta-picture which presents two images in one (what has been called, the ‘duck-rabbit’ gestalt). From the domestic conflict and an image of ‘kissing a fist’, the play emerges as a meta-play which seeks an examination in the light of other critical discourse. This dominant image of fist kissing becomes both a metaphor and a metonymy in two different aspects. Insofar as it reads as a private sexual foreplay of a sadomasochist patriarchal heterosexuality, it becomes a metaphor of the same; while as an implicit drama of public political domination by both totalitarian and the capitalist regimes in the later-half of the twentieth century, the play reads as a metonymy.

Using a number of fragmentarily disjunctured images which the playwright constructs through Rebecca’s imagination, Pinter builds the play using a montage/bricolage technique. These isolated and non-contextualized segments are joined together to operate syntagmatically, announcing themselves as artificial
constructs, which posit (rather than derive) the meaning in the play. The collage thus constructed, challenges the audience to find a frame of reference and construct its various meanings. Such a complex technique sets the meaning in a dynamic process of relocating itself (just like the nomadic subjectivity of postmodern condition) and shifts with the cues given in the dramatic text from one scene to the next. The semantics of the play also becomes manifested, with the theatrical performance from an unspecified location to a cultural context. Therefore, what one witnesses in Ashes to Ashes is not just a domestic horror story unfolding itself, in which the female protagonist gives away her baby to a Nazi guard at a railway station, at the time of the holocaust. The play also echoes and re-echoes horror scenes of death by drowning and atrocities inflicted, on people with various sectarian issues throughout the history of mankind.

Through this play, Pinter evokes and challenges the collective consciousness of the human race, exhorting us to face our faults and the ensuing guilt, and take the responsibility collectively, for the recurrent violence and wars that humankind has inflicted upon itself since times immemorial. The play is also a lesson in awareness and a constant remembering, and thus in keeping such violence at bay while working towards world peace. Thus Ashes to Ashes, in its ‘showing’, is an appeal to humanity for deflecting from taking a self-destructive stance of committing the blunder of forgetting and re-doing the same mistakes that we have kept on making in the past, again and again. The technique of ‘exposing’ in the play is again with the use of characteristic Pinteresque interrogation. The speeches of the two protagonists, Rebecca and Devlin, are defined by their contrasting textures; one as lyrical and the other as use of meta-language, respectively. The silences are used by the playwright, to demarcate the various scenes in this one act play.

Coming to the conclusion, it becomes clear how Pinter uses various dramatic stage devices. The use of language and plot structuring and stylization and shaping techniques in his plays are brought to life by using fragmentation and disjuncture, recycling and rebuilding, and the montage and cinematic technique of yoking together the varied types of idioms. The author also uses inter-textual and intra-textual references for a parodic build ups. Pinter has thus been an ingenious innovator, who posited the postmodern condition and situations, which defy legitimization and totalizing explanations; through his flexible processes that are called, his drama.