

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE – FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA  
ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

**Wives and Whores:  
Female Characters in the Plays of Harold Pinter**

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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**Anglistika a amerikanistika**

Praha, 30.7.2014

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## Acknowledgements

Děkuji doc. Clare Wallace, PhD, M.A., cenné za připomínky a vedení při psaní této práce a Janu Kačerovi za ochotu k osobnímu rozhovoru.

I would like to thank doc. Clare Wallace, PhD, M.A., for her valuable observations and guidance during the writing of this thesis and Jan Kačer for the willingness to meet me for a personal interview.

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	ii
Permission .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: Traditions of Depicting ‘The Feminine’ .....	6
2.1 Being ‘The Other’ .....	7
2.2 The Fictional Woman .....	9
2.3 The Onstage Feminine.....	12
2.4 Searching For A ‘New Poetics’ .....	16
Chapter 3: Pinter’s Women .....	18
3.1 “Why don’t I just take you?”: Ruth and Male Dominance .....	19
3.2 “I remember your look well”: Kate, Anna and the Male Gaze .....	28
3.3 “We wouldn’t want a woman around”: Emma and Male Bonding.....	37
Chapter 4: Pinter in Practice: Czech Stagings of Pinter .....	47
4.2 <i>Betrayal</i> in Divadlo v Celetné .....	50
4.3 <i>Betrayal</i> in Činoherní klub .....	53
Chapter 5: Conclusion .....	58
Bibliography.....	63
Abstract .....	66
Key words .....	68
Abstrakt .....	69
Klíčová slova.....	71

## Chapter 1: Introduction

“In my plays, women have always come out in one way or another as people I feel something towards which I don’t feel towards men,”<sup>1</sup> claimed Harold Pinter in an interview discussing his play *Ashes to Ashes* (1996). The British author, one of the most successful modern playwrights and Nobel Prize laureate, admits in this interview that his plays express a male point of view.<sup>2</sup> It is true that seven of his plays even lack any female character whatsoever: *The Dumb Waiter* (1957), *The Caretaker* (1959), *The Dwarfs* (1960), *Monologue* (1972), *No Man’s Land* (1974), *Victoria Station* (1982) and *The New World Order* (1991). Although in the context of Pinter’s life work this is a very minor part, the nature of gender relations in other plays is ambiguous. When female characters appear they often represent what Marc Silverstein calls the “patriarchal construction of classic female figure.”<sup>3</sup>

However, to blame Pinter for the inaccuracy of his female characters would not be justifiable. Pinter does not attempt to portray the world as it is or should be – as he himself claims: “What I am doing is not realism.”<sup>4</sup> He does not aspire to naturalistically represent the nuances of human psychology. As Martin Esslin explains in his book about Pinter:

We do not know, with any semblance of certainty, what motivates our own wives, parents, our own children – why then should we be furnished with a

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Pinter, *Various Voices: Prose, Poetry, Politics 1948-2008* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999) 80.

<sup>2</sup> Pinter, *Various Voices* 80.

<sup>3</sup> Marc Silverstein, *Harold Pinter and the Language of Cultural Power* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1993) 159.

<sup>4</sup> Drew Milne, “Pinter’s sexual politics” in *The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter*, ed. Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 234.

complete dossier about the motivations of any character we casually encounter on the stage?<sup>5</sup>

None of the Pinter's characters, whether male or female, is intended to be a mimetic representation of a human being. The problem is something other than inaccuracy – an all-male situation is often presented as universal. Elizabeth Sakellaridou claims that in most of Pinter's plays, this causes that “the specific male characters turn into spokesmen for humanity.”<sup>6</sup> Not only that – in contrast to the male bonding, so valued and appreciated by Pinter's male characters, women often stand alone in the (man's) world. They generally behave in very stereotypical ways, fulfilling the roles expected by the patriarchal society, and embody “the oscillation of the image of woman between that of mother/madonna/housewife and that of whore/maenad.”<sup>7</sup>

It was this aspect that caused that Pinter himself or his plays to be sometimes labelled as ‘misogynist.’ However, to judge Pinter's ideas about women from his female characters is an oversimplification – as Drew Milne notes: “Many of Pinter's plays concern male-centred perspectives focused on struggles of male bonding and female exclusion. This does not make the plays inherently misogynist.”<sup>8</sup> He uses the term “persistent dramatization of misogyny”<sup>9</sup> but adds, that (especially in connection with specific plays) one might question the purpose of it.<sup>10</sup> The question arises, whether Pinter uses the misogynist structure to confirm it or aims rather, as Elaine Aston defines a feminist drama, “to powerfully *demonstrate* oppressive gender norms in the interests of agency and change.”<sup>11</sup> Marc Silverstein warns that “Pinter's works

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* (London: Methuen, 1984) 31.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Sakellaridou, *Pinter's Female Portraits: A Study of Female Characters in the Plays of Harold Pinter* (London: Faber, 1996) 120.

<sup>7</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 140.

<sup>8</sup> Milne 240.

<sup>9</sup> Milne 238.

<sup>10</sup> Milne 238.

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Aston, “Foreword” in Sue Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre* (London: Macmillan, 1988) xv.

enter a strange and disturbing complicity with the object of their critique,”<sup>12</sup> and adds that Pinter’s analysis of cultural power concretize that power because he leaves minimum space for “resistance or the elaboration of oppositional practices.”<sup>13</sup> Although that might seem like an argument supporting Pinter’s intentional support for misogynist structures, Silverstein himself admits that although “we should not equate *recognition* of this process with *resistance* to this process,”<sup>14</sup> resistance is not possible without the identification of the problem – and Pinter provides in this area a “complex investigation and intensive exploration.”<sup>15</sup>

There is one more aspect to be taken into consideration which can determine the final shape of a character. It is the aspect that Elaine Aston highlights as often neglected – performance. As she notes: “Unlike its literary sister, [...] the feminist study of theatre had not only to resist or re-read the written text, but also needed to find ways of reading the performance context.”<sup>16</sup> This is a crucial point to the understanding of Pinter’s plays. As he claims in an interview, after seeing a production of *The Homecoming* in France (it was the 1994 production in of *Le Retour* in Théâtre de l’Atelier), he had to confront the director and protest against the director’s understanding the play. The reason of Pinter’s objections was one gesture of the male actor, which supposedly signified that he had power over the female character. As Pinter commented: “That’s ridiculous. He doesn’t possess her in any sense. They’d really misunderstood that.”<sup>17</sup> Pinter, an actor himself, was well aware, that the performance (which is necessarily based on a specific interpretation) can change the message of a play completely. This is especially important for a play as

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<sup>12</sup> Silverstein 152.

<sup>13</sup> Silverstein 160.

<sup>14</sup> Silverstein 160.

<sup>15</sup> Silverstein 160.

<sup>16</sup> Elaine Aston, *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1995) 5.

<sup>17</sup> Anna-Marie Cusac, “Harold Pinter Interview,” *The Progressive.org*, *The Progressive Magazine*, 26 Dec 2008 <<http://progressive.org/mag/pinter.html>> 7.1. 2014.

controversial and variously understood as *The Homecoming* – which Pinter himself, in contrast to many critics, calls “a truly feminist play.”<sup>18</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is not to resolve whether Pinter can be definitely called a misogynist or a feminist, but rather to analyse his vision of female characters and the way in which they correspond or do not correspond with the wide notion of female characters in the dramatic – predominantly male – tradition. This theoretical background, the tradition of depicting ‘the Feminine,’ or, in other words, ‘the sign of Woman,’ will be described in the following chapter. Because of the large number of critical approaches to this topic, the chapter is highly selective. The starting concept will be Simone de Beauvoir’s understanding of the concept of ‘the Other’ for wider background and the texts of Elaine Aston and Sue-Ellen Case in the specific case of theatre studies. As Elaine Aston claims, understanding how woman are represented is one of the aims of feminist theatre studies,<sup>19</sup> therefore rather than talking about feminism or feminisms directly, the thesis will use methods employed by this approach. In the third chapter, rather than the diachronic approach to the female characters in Pinter’s plays which would show his evolution during his writing, I will concentrate on close textual analysis of specific characters and selected topics. These are Ruth from *The Homecoming* (male dominance), Kate and Anna from *Old Times* (the male gaze) and Emma from *The Betrayal* (male bonding). The critical background of this chapter will be provided mainly by Marc Silverstein, Martin Esslin and Elizabeth Sakellaridou. This thesis will also take into consideration the specifics of a dramatic text in performance, therefore, in the fourth chapter, examples of stagings of Pinter’s plays will be discussed. First, the background of Czech stagings of Pinter will be provided, including comments from a personal interview with Jan

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<sup>18</sup> Cusac, “Harold Pinter Interview.”

<sup>19</sup> Aston, *An Introduction* 5.

Kačer, who directed a production of *The Homecoming* in 1972. From the contemporary production context, the chosen performances are two stagings of the same play, *The Betrayal*, in theatres Divadlo v Celetné and Činoherní klub. The focus of attention will be upon the interpretation and choices employed by the director and actors to create the female characters in order to see whether they reflected the ambiguity in Pinter's depiction of women. This ambiguity is created by the dramatization of misogyny and Pinter's recognition of misogynist structures: Emma, as well as Kate, Anna and Ruth both embody and challenge the stereotypical notion of 'Woman.'

## Chapter 2: Traditions of Depicting ‘The Feminine’

For exploring the nature of depicting ‘the Feminine,’ it is necessary to go beyond the mimetic function of art. As Pam Morris, writing from the context of feminist literary criticism, explains not only has reality an impact on fiction, but fiction has impact on reality.<sup>1</sup> She argues that although it might seem that media or fiction just mirror reality they actually create what later becomes perceived as real – as the notion of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity.’<sup>2</sup> Fiction shapes reality and the way we see it, it creates values and determines the cultural discourse.

Although the depiction of women in fiction was one of the concerns of the first and second wave feminist critics, focusing on female characters is, as Sue-Ellen Case notes in *Feminism and Theatre*, not the main priority of the feminist literary criticism any longer.<sup>3</sup> The subsequent development of feminist criticism explored the idea of unique female experience or re-visioning of ‘male’ texts, or drew on psychoanalysis. As Morris notes, there have even been opinions that the constant search for female stereotypes in male fiction merely helps to confirm this position of women.<sup>4</sup> But no search is needed – while encountering mainstream culture, the problem cannot be avoided – Gretchen Mieszkowski claims that “the images of much of Western art cannot nourish a woman’s sense of herself.”<sup>5</sup> She also defines the core problem: when confronted with “the great literature of the past”, the vast majority of the texts comes from male authors, therefore the reader is forced to “identify with a

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<sup>1</sup>Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993) 38.

<sup>2</sup> Morris 38.

<sup>3</sup> Sue-Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre* (London: Macmillan, 2008) 5.

<sup>4</sup> Morris 37.

<sup>5</sup> Gretchen Mieszkowski, “No Longer “By Miracle, a Twin”: Helen Vendler’s Reviews of Adrienne Rich Recent Poetry,” *South Central Review* 5.2 (1988): 76.

male perspective and respond from a male point of view.”<sup>6</sup> It is therefore necessary to approach the texts critically and not automatically adopt the male view and perspective. The focus on female characters of a specific writer is part of this process – firstly, the reader must understand, in what tradition the writer’s vision of women is rooted and what stereotypes s/he follows or intentionally goes against. This chapter therefore sketches the theoretical background for the depiction of female characters in order to prove that ‘Woman’ in fiction and especially in theatre is a sign, which is determined by her position as ‘the Other.’

## 2.1 Being ‘The Other’

Although the concept of ‘the Other’ is one of the key philosophical concepts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in relation to male/female dynamics it was first thoroughly discussed in one of the most crucial works of feminism, Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (published 1949). As she writes, the duality Self-Other can be found in most primitive societies and mythologies, however, it is not always a division between the sexes.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, it is a fundamental category: “No group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself.”<sup>8</sup> One might become ‘Self’ only through something that is different. This category is relative – one would be ‘the Same/Self’ within his group but ‘the Other’ in another one. This, according to de Beauvoir, is valid for all groups. Apart from women:

It is understood that being a man is not a particularity; a man is in his right by virtue of being man; it is the woman who is in the wrong. In fact, just as for

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<sup>6</sup> Mieszkowski 75.

<sup>7</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010) 21.

<sup>8</sup> de Beauvoir 21.

the ancients there was an absolute vertical that defined the oblique, there is an absolute human type that is masculine.<sup>9</sup>

Man is the ultimate Self, something a woman never is: “She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her. [...] He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other.”<sup>10</sup> As de Beauvoir attempts to prove, the ‘otherness’ of women is not a question of biology, but of culture.<sup>11</sup>

There is an interesting connection here between the notion of stereotype and the concept of ‘the Other.’ ‘The Other’ is typically stereotyped. Susan Fiske’s model of stereotypes is divided in four categories according to the feeling the particular group arouses: Pity, Envy, Admiration, Contempt.<sup>12</sup> The stereotypes about women are either based on Pity (so-called ‘Paternalistic stereotype’) or Envy, if they are competing for the same accomplishments.<sup>13</sup> De Beauvoir quotes a male student: “Every woman student who takes a position as a doctor or lawyer is stealing a place from us.”<sup>14</sup> A perfect manifestation of the mainstream discourse – ‘us’ are the men with the exclusive rights to be in a prestigious position, while a woman in the same position would be an exception, she would be just ‘stealing’ it. This reflects Fiske’s model – in case of woman in the place of ‘the Other,’ the stereotype helps to universalise the paternalistic approach or, if women dare to compete for the same set of resources, it ridicules their attempts. The key aspect is competence.<sup>15</sup> Women, being equally competent, especially in tasks requiring mental abilities, had to be disqualified from the competition – through force, or more durably, through culture.

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<sup>9</sup> Beauvoir 20.

<sup>10</sup> Beauvoir 21.

<sup>11</sup> Beauvoir 80.

<sup>12</sup> Susan T. Fiske, Amy J.C. Cuddy, Peter Glick, Jun Xu, “A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow From Perceived Status and Competition.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 82. 6. (2002): 890.

<sup>13</sup> Fiske 893.

<sup>14</sup> Beauvoir 25.

<sup>15</sup> Fiske 897.

In culture, the position of women was limited. Not being a Subject, women would have: “neither religion nor poetry that belongs to them alone: they would still dream through men’s dreams.”<sup>16</sup> The result of women being invisible in socio-economic histories was that “the representation of the world as the world itself is the work of men.”<sup>17</sup> As Mieszkowski explains, “If a culture considers women very limited beings, then its art will ordinarily portray them as such.”<sup>18</sup> Male representation of women was evolved – the result was, according to Case, that “this fictional ‘Woman’ appeared on stage, in the myths and in the plastic arts, representing the patriarchal values attached to the gender while suppressing the experiences, stories, feelings and fantasies of actual women.”<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2 The Fictional Woman

Because the fictional woman constructed by men, she was, according to Kate Millet, “fashioned to suit their needs.”<sup>20</sup> Morris claims that in contrast to men who were always depicted as creative and mighty, the traditional attributes of woman are fragility, emotionality and compliance.<sup>21</sup> This shows what the dominant culture would want her to be. The other side of the spectrum is the aspect of a female character patriarchal society would be afraid of, which is, in most cases of literary depiction, female sexuality.<sup>22</sup> This is closely connected to de Beauvoir’s basic dichotomy – she notes the two fundamental figures, shaped by the Christian Church: The first is the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ. The contradiction in the label fits in the masculine

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<sup>16</sup> Beauvoir 136.

<sup>17</sup> Beauvoir 136.

<sup>18</sup> Mieszkowski 76.

<sup>19</sup> Case 7.

<sup>20</sup> Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (Champaign: Illinois, 2000) 33.

<sup>21</sup> Morris 127.

<sup>22</sup> Morris 128.

ideology: As de Beauvoir claims, a young boy wants to see his mother as pure, he does not want to be reminded that he came from her body and was conceived.<sup>23</sup> Similar tendencies could be found in ancient Greece, when the role of Athena as a goddess – with no mother and being a virgin – replaced the earlier female goddesses of fertility and sexuality.<sup>24</sup> The ideal of the Virgin Mary connects two patriarchal ideals: the pure virgin and the kind mother, who “has been neither touched nor possessed.”<sup>25</sup> As a second figure in this dichotomy, there is Eve, the impure sinner who seduced Adam. She is the “mediator of damnation” whereas Mary that of salvation.<sup>26</sup>

While de Beauvoir noted the ‘double nature of women,’ Marc Silverstein, among others, goes on to explain why this Judeo-Christian dichotomy (also noted in Roman and Greek cultures and other ancient cultures) was so important for patriarchal culture and still is even today. According to him, the two position women are allowed to occupy are ‘wife’ and ‘whore.’<sup>27</sup>

On the one hand, patriarchy demands that women recognize masculine authority by becoming wives so that they may become mothers, reproducing the dominant culture both physically and ideologically, transmitting the socially legitimated desires and values that will transform their children into appropriate social subjects. On the other hand, patriarchal ideology insistently constructs women as whores, sexually transgressive beings who refuse either to acknowledge the imperatives of masculine power or recognize the ‘natural’ legitimacy of masculine power.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Beauvoir 171.

<sup>24</sup> Case 9.

<sup>25</sup> Beauvoir 155.

<sup>26</sup> Beauvoir 155.

<sup>27</sup> Silverstein 50.

<sup>28</sup> Silverstein 50.

The reason why patriarchal culture needs a clear distinction between these two categories is that “the wife’s slide into a whore would undermine the status of the family as a site for the reproduction of both the dominant ideology and the dominant economy of power relations.”<sup>29</sup> If the two categories collapse into each other, it poses not only a threat for the “ideological role of the family,”<sup>30</sup> but it also “threatens to confront patriarchy with the fundamentally *homosexual* desire that must never acknowledge as the constitutive of social reality.”<sup>31</sup>

According to Kate Millet, ‘wife/whore’ distinction differentiation might be also connected to class – she claims that in the past, this contrast was created between “whore and matron, and in the present between career woman and housewife.”<sup>32</sup> Another dichotomy worth at least a short note is general association of woman with sexuality, while man with spirituality – this dates, according to Case, to Medieval Period.<sup>33</sup> This corresponds to de Beauvoir’s account of woman as a ‘flesh’: “Woman makes man dream, yet she is concerned with comfort and stews; one speaks to her about her soul, but she is only a body.”<sup>34</sup>

Virginia Woolf adds another important attribute of this queer, composite being – she is “without exception shown in relation to men.”<sup>35</sup> This might be, according to Woolf, one of the reasons for her fictionality.<sup>36</sup> She also notes how little this view captures actual women:

Suppose, for instance, that men were only represented in literature as the lovers of women, and were never the friends of men, soldiers, thinkers,

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<sup>29</sup> Silverstein 50.

<sup>30</sup> Silverstein 50.

<sup>31</sup> Silverstein 50.

<sup>32</sup> Millet 39.

<sup>33</sup> Case 20.

<sup>34</sup> Beauvoir 165.

<sup>35</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2001) 98.

<sup>36</sup> Woolf 98.

dreamers; how few parts in the plays of Shakespeare could be allotted to them; how literature would suffer!<sup>37</sup>

She also adds that literature would be impoverished in the same way it is impoverished now by absence of truthful accounts of women. Although they were, as Woolf admits, strong female characters in the history of literature, these pictures did not mirror everyday reality:

She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband.<sup>38</sup>

Woolf wrote her famous essay *A Room of One's Own* about women and fiction 85 years ago – undeniably, the situation has changed since then. But the influence of different idealized or demonized images of women – from monsters endangering men with their castrating power to domestic, passive beings, the ‘angels of the house’ are still prominent even today. The misrepresentation, however, changes its nature in theatre.

### **2.3 The Onstage Feminine**

The reason why the representation of women would be different onstage than on the page is due to the one key aspect of theatre – performance. For the shaping of the theatrical female stereotypes, performance was crucial: In some of the most significant periods of the Western theatre (e.g. Classical drama or Elizabethan drama),

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<sup>37</sup> Woolf 99.

<sup>38</sup> Woolf 99.

‘Woman’ was played by male actor in a drag; the representation on the stage was therefore a patriarchal construct. Case claims that “the practice of male actors playing women probably encouraged the creation of female roles which lent themselves to generalisation and stereotype.”<sup>39</sup>

Performance was, according to Elaine Aston, an overlooked issue for a long time, as “theatre studies continued to rely heavily on the published playtext.”<sup>40</sup> In the Western world, this changed in the post war era, with the rapid rise of performance studies. In contrast to English studies, where plays were approached as dramatic literature, new ‘reading’ of texts was needed.<sup>41</sup> Feminist theatre studies was inspired by early feminist approaches to male-authored images of women in the ‘classic’ literature. This led the feminist scholars to develop “a conceptual and methodological framework for critiquing how women are ‘imaged’ in dramatic texts.”<sup>42</sup> However, the aim was not only to ‘resist’ or re-read the written text, but it was also needed to find ways of ‘reading’ the performance context. In this area, feminist theatre studies found inspiration in film and media studies, “where feminist scholarship focused on the construction of ‘woman’ as a sign: an approach in which feminism, psychoanalysis and semiotics was and is being used to understand how women are represented in cinematic texts and other cultural contexts.”<sup>43</sup> The interest in the way the sign of ‘woman’ was constructed in the ‘malestream’ production gradually sank; it is, however, as mentioned earlier, still a crucial part of critical reading of the male writers – first of all while reading the canonical authors from the ‘classic’ periods.

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<sup>39</sup> Case 11.

<sup>40</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 4.

<sup>41</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 4.

<sup>42</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 5.

<sup>43</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 5.

The reason is that the ‘classic’ periods of Western theatre “by definition excluded women.”<sup>44</sup> The object of the feminist critique was idea of ‘universal’ or the concept of ‘everyman.’<sup>45</sup> As Aston claims, the understanding of the periods of theatre when women have been absent from the stage is the key point because this way “it has been possible to understand how the female has been constructed as a man-made sign in her absence.”<sup>46</sup>

The mentioned example with male actors playing female characters is highly significant for the (mis)representation of women. A specific language had to be developed: “How does the male actor signal to the audience that he is playing a female character? Besides wearing the female costume and the female mask, he might have indicated gender through gesture, movement and intonation.”<sup>47</sup> As Aston points out, the critics can only speculate how exactly was the gender performed, but it definitely helped to “suppress actual woman and replace them with the mask of patriarchal production.”<sup>48</sup> The connection with the historical context cannot be overlooked here: woman was absent from the stage as from any aspect of public life: “Female characters are derived from the absence of actual women on the stage and from the reason of their absence.”<sup>49</sup>

The other significant period of women absent from the stage is Elizabethan drama. There have been lengthy discussions on Shakespeare’s female characters. However, the point relevant to the representation of women would be the question of cross-dressing, not unusual in Shakespeare’s plays. Aston asks, what the audience actually saw, when “Rosalind in *As you Like It*, for example, played by a boy,

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<sup>44</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 16.

<sup>45</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 16.

<sup>46</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 16.

<sup>47</sup> Case 11.

<sup>48</sup> Case 133.

<sup>49</sup> Case 110.

distinguished herself as a boy, and then pretended to play the part of a woman in a mock-wooing scene.”<sup>50</sup> Case notes an interesting connection: “Boys, by virtue of their age, were cast in a similar social role to that of women – dependent on and inferior to the adult male.”<sup>51</sup> Even without cross-dressing, the fact that female roles were played by men undermines the idea of Shakespeare’s “strong female characters”.<sup>52</sup>

When women were finally allowed to represent themselves onstage, the damage was done already: “The fiction of the female gender had been securely inscribed on real women.”<sup>53</sup> Even if they were physically present on the stage (and also, importantly, in the audience), they were still caught in the patriarchal constructs of themselves. This is the reason of the feminist critique of realism. The forms follow constructed pattern, leading to ultimate resolution: “The subject of the narrative is male and its discourse is phallogentric: is expressive of male experience, emotions, etc.”<sup>54</sup> Women have the subject position, being an “object of exchange in a heterosexual, male economy.”<sup>55</sup> Case even claims that realism is “a stage partner of heterosexist ideology, directed against women...it strangles the play of symbols, the possibility of seduction.”<sup>56</sup> As Case comments, those play and theatrical conventions “can now be regarded as allies in the project of suppressing real women and replacing them with masks of patriarchal production.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 21.

<sup>51</sup> Case 22.

<sup>52</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 21.

<sup>53</sup> Case 27.

<sup>54</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 21.

<sup>55</sup> Aston, *Introduction* 40.

<sup>56</sup> Case in Aston, *Introduction* 41.

<sup>57</sup> Case 7.

## 2.4 Searching For A 'New Poetics'

In contrast to the basic text of Western theatre, Aristotle's *Poetics*, which is distinctively misogynistic, the feminist critics and performers started to search for the new ways and approaches on how to 'read' and perform theatre. The aim was "to deconstruct the traditional system of representation and perception of women and posit women in the position of the subject."<sup>58</sup>

There are many ways to re-read and re-create plays which depict women as flat characters or do not present any women at all. One of the methods is cross-gendered cast. Other critics have focused on the 'female' canon. However, a separate canon with separate critics might lead to additional marginalisation, as Morris points out.<sup>59</sup> In the ideal situation, the criticism should go beyond gender and see performers, readers, authors and characters as individualities. However, the situation today when a woman artist is still disadvantaged in comparison to her male counterpart is still not ideal. Theatre, however, has one significant advantage in contrast to literature. What we see on the page is not the final product– the final shape is always a question of the staging. Even the most misogynist plays can be re-read and re-cast. However, with contemporary plays, the distinctions of definite approaches have blurred and many people reject definite labels.

Harold Pinter's drama provides a fine example – his work has been seen as both feminist and misogynist, and has been both praised and condemned by feminist critics. There are certain aspects of his work which would fit into the category of 'feminist drama': one of Janet Brown's features of a feminist play is "satire of traditional sex roles" which is present in Pinter's work, but the feature we most find in

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<sup>58</sup> Case 115.

<sup>59</sup> Morris 95.

his plays is “the direct portrayal of women in oppressive situations.”<sup>60</sup> But, as it was already mentioned in the introductory chapter, recognition and portrayal of misogyny is not the same as resistance towards it. However, to try to ‘squeeze’ Pinter’s work into one would category mean to reduce all of his 32 plays (not including sketches, screenplays and other works) into one definition. Therefore, rather than making any universal claims, the thesis aims to look at specific characters to demonstrate the ways they challenge the dominant cultural representations of gender roles.

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<sup>60</sup> Brown in Aston, *Introduction* 59.

### Chapter 3: Pinter's Women

Female characters from three plays will be presented in this chapter. They are arranged chronologically – Ruth from *The Homecoming*, Kate and Anna from *Old Times* and Emma from *Betrayal*. *The Homecoming* was chosen because of its controversial treatment of the main female character, which was claimed by both feminist and anti-feminist critics. *Old Times* is exceptional within Pinter's work, because it dramatizes a relationship of two female characters. *Betrayal* was an obvious choice, because the analysis of performance is an important part of writing on female characters from a play, and there are currently two productions of this play in the Czech Republic. One might object that all the plays are from the relatively same time of Pinter's writing career – *The Homecoming* from 1964, *Old Times* 1970 and *Betrayal* 1978. However, the aim was not to present a diachronic approach which would focus on Pinter's development, categorizing his characters into artificial categories. Rather I hope to illuminate the nature of gender relations in these three provocative works.

The chosen characters all face dominant, patriarchal power in various forms (Ruth in the form of a fight for dominance, Kate and Anna in the form of the male gaze and Emma in the form of the male bonding). The aim is to demonstrate that although Pinter allows his female characters to challenge the patriarchal structure, they cannot dismantle it because they are trapped in the traditional depiction and schemas of a 'Woman.'

### 3.1 “Why don’t I just take you?”: Ruth and Male Dominance

*The Homecoming*, one of Pinter’s most widely known plays, is considered controversial even today. Ruth, the main character, has been labelled differently by various critics. No matter what the ‘right interpretation’ of the play is (it was mentioned that Pinter does not attempt to be realistic – looking for the ‘objective truth’ in Pinter’s world is therefore futile), one of the key concepts in the play is power and its shifts. Ruth has to defy men who are trying to assert their authority over her. According to William S. Haney, Ruth “succeeds in converting her prostitution from a form of male exploitation to an instrument of power and dominance.”<sup>1</sup> She is the one dictating the terms and making men financially dependent on her. However, this victory is ambiguous. Firstly, as a whore she becomes a commodity, and secondly, her success reinforces rather than challenges the patriarchal structures. As Haney puts it, “the power she wields is not her own but that of the symbolic father working through her.”<sup>2</sup> In order to dominate, Ruth must occupy the symbolic male position.

To succeed in the world dominated by men, women conventionally have been obliged to adopt certain masculine traits. In extreme cases, this also leads to cross-dressing, which has numerous examples in the theatrical tradition (many Shakespeare’s characters, i.e. Viola or Portia) who adopt masculine identities to protect themselves or to be allowed things that they would be denied as women. The idea of a woman who must be more ‘male’ in order to succeed is not an unusual concept even today – the word ‘feminine’ still has negative connotations – at worst it can just be a synonym for ‘weak.’ The qualities traditionally associated with

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<sup>1</sup> William S. Haney, *Culture and Consciousness: Literature Reagined* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2002) 121.

<sup>2</sup> Haney 122.

masculinity (which is, of course, itself a complex concept and it is full of culturally enforced stereotypes) are seen as a key to success. According to Mark Silverstein, this concept is paradoxical, because it attempts to “invert cultural norms while preserving the forms of the larger patriarchal order – the order privileging the masculine subject even if a woman should occupy the place of that subject.”<sup>3</sup> If Ruth’s succeeds by adopting a male role, the patriarchal order in the family is restored rather than challenged.

In contrast to this interpretation, it has been argued, most prominently by Martin Esslin, that ‘homecoming’ is the homecoming of matriarchy: “It is not Teddy who has come back home but the mother who has returned.”<sup>4</sup> There are indeed aspects in which Ruth is identified with Jessie, the mother of the boys. As one of the examples, Ruth addresses Lenny as “Leonard:”

LENNY. Don’t call me that, please.

RUTH. Why not?

LENNY. That’s the name my mother gave me.<sup>5</sup>

This similarity is stressed throughout the play. She often adopts a motherly – or mock-motherly – tone when she talks to Jessie’s sons: “Sit on my lap. Take a long cool sip” (42). When Teddy and Ruth first come to the house and she decides to go outside, Teddy is left in the dark room with a child-like gesture; according to the stage directions, he “goes to the window, peers out after her, half turns from the window, stands, suddenly chews his knuckles” (32). Teddy’s position as a child is stressed by his relationship to his real mother. “SAM: You were always your mother’s favourite. She told me. It’s true. You were always the ... you were always the main object of her

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<sup>3</sup> Silverstein 76.

<sup>4</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 143.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Pinter, *Plays 3* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997) 74. All subsequent cited references to the play are from this edition.

love” (71). Ruth is also, as well as the real mother, talked about or addressed exactly in the framework of the ‘wife/whore’ symbolic – either as a respectable mother, “MAX: She’s an intelligent and sympathetic woman. Eh, tell me, do you think the children are missing their mother?” (59) or a whore: “We’ve had a smelly scrubber in my house all night. We’ve had a stinking pox-ridden slut in my house all night” (50). Paradoxically, Max praises Ruth’s motherly qualities the most when she is kissing Lenny and later on lying on the sofa with Joey: “She’s a lovely girl. A beautiful woman. And a mother too“ (67). Haney even claims that Ruth can be seen as the “duplicate of the mother, Jessie.”<sup>6</sup> But the fact that Ruth is similar to Jessie does not prove Esslin’s ‘homecoming of matriarchy.’ Ruth’s identification with Jessie does not have to mean her identification with matriarchy. It is necessary to distinguish between actual, biological mother and ‘Mother,’ the ideological function she should fulfil in the patriarchal order. And Jessie, despite being the first, was not the latter.

In order to find out about Jessie’s role within the family, it is necessary to see how she is presented. Max is trying to present her as the obedient, perfect wife, in his clichéd narrative:

Then I came downstairs and I made Jessie put her feet up on a pouffe – what happened to that pouffe, I haven’t seen it for years – she put her feet up on the pouffe and I said to her, Jessie, I think our ship is going to come home, I’m going to treat you to a couple of items, I’m going to buy you a dress in pale corded blue silk, heavily encrusted in pearls, and for casual wear, a pair of pantaloons in lilac flowered taffeta. Then I gave her a drop of cherry brandy. I remember the boys came down, in their pyjamas, all their hair shining, their

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<sup>6</sup> Haney 119.

faces pink, it was before they started shaving, and they knelt down at our feet,  
Jessie's and mine. (54)

This is however, only Max's fantasy in which Jessie fulfils the ideological expectations. The role she is given, the 'Mother' role, is a concept, "ideological stability of the subject position, [...], terms that encode the values of patriarchal structure."<sup>7</sup> Max, only a moment later grumbles: "A crippled family, three bastard sons, a slutbitch of a wife" (55). Sam claims that Jessie had committed adultery: "MacGregor had Jessie in the back of my cab as I drove them along" (86). This undermines the whole family structure, as Silverstein notes: "Patriarchy depends for its reproduction on achieving a fit between the actual wife and the ideological function of the wife."<sup>8</sup> If Jessie had disrupted the distinction between the categories of 'wife' and 'whore', Max's status as father is shattered – he might not even be the biological father. This might be hinted by the fact that Sam, stating that Teddy was Jessie's favourite, asks Teddy about MacGregor: "What did you think of him? Did you take to him?" (70)

The blurring of the traditional roles within the family was a part of this play from the start. In his Nobel lecture, Pinter describes the process of creating *The Homecoming*. He explains that he first so two figures, A and B:

It seemed to me reasonable to assume that they were father and son. A was also clearly the cook and his cooking did not seem to be held in high regard.

Did this mean that there was no mother?<sup>9</sup>

Jessie as the biological mother is missing from the household, but there is the 'Mother.' It is Max, the feminized father. Max overtook the role traditionally

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<sup>7</sup> Silverstein 84.

<sup>8</sup> Silverstein 82.

<sup>9</sup> "Harold Pinter Nobel Lecture: Art, Truth & Politics," *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Media AB 2014. Web. <[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2005/pinter-lecture-e.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2005/pinter-lecture-e.html)> May 3 2014.

associated with the mother, cooking serves a good example. He identifies himself even with the physical mother – “Don’t talk to me about the pain of childbirth – I suffered the pain, I’ve still got the pangs – when I give a little cough my back collapse” (55).

When Max adopts the role of the ‘Mother,’ from which subject position does Ruth act? To identify it, Silverstein borrows a Lacanian term ‘symbolic father.’ This does not have anything to do with actual fatherhood but it is an “ideological representation, an ‘identity’ articulated through the cultural codes.”<sup>10</sup> He claims that the attributes of the ‘symbolic father’ are (in terms of Roland Barthes) “power, fascination, instituting authority, terror, power to castrate.”<sup>11</sup> (Interestingly, according to Laura Mulvey’s view on phallogocentric psychoanalysis, it is a woman who “first symbolises the castration threat by her real absence of a penis.”<sup>12</sup>) Ruth’s power to castrate is clearly demonstrated in her encounter with the youngest brother, Joey.

JOEY. I didn’t get all the way.

LENNY. You didn’t get all the way? You didn’t get all the way? But you’ve had her up there for two hours.

[...]

LENNY. Are you telling me she’s a tease? (74)

According to Haney, “by withholding her desire first from Joey and then from Max, Ruth effects a redistribution of power by usurping the law of the father for herself.”<sup>13</sup>

Apart from other distinctions that mark Ruth as a ‘symbolic father’ (as fascination) her dialogues with Lenny are especially important. It is because Lenny, not Max, is

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<sup>10</sup> Silverstein 77.

<sup>11</sup> Silverstein 77.

<sup>12</sup> Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford UP 1999) 833.

<sup>13</sup> Haney 71.

the ultimate male figure in the household and in order to be dominant, Ruth must assert her power over him.

LENNY: And now perhaps I'll relieve you of your glass.

RUTH: I haven't quite finished.

LENNY: You've consumed quite enough, in my opinion.

RUTH: No, I haven't.

LENNY: Quite sufficient, in my opinion.

RUTH: Not in mine, Leonard.

[...]

LENNY: Just give me the glass.

RUTH: No.

LENNY: I'll take it, then.

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

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

RUTH: Why don't I just take you? (42)

Ruth's authority is asserted already when they arrive with Teddy. He is trying to force her to go to bed but she leaves the house and – symbolically – takes the key (32). Teddy loses domination during the play completely – he sounds ridiculous when he offers Ruth, at the end of the play: “You can help me with my lectures when we get back. I'd love that. I'd be so grateful for it, really” (63).

But apart from taking the role of the ‘symbolic father,’ Ruth has more roles to perform – although being in the male position of power, she is a woman and there are only two positions she is allowed to occupy – she changes from the category of the ‘wife’ to the ‘whore’ category. But, according to Silverstein, Ruth's position of both subject and object of exchange “quite literally deconstructs the opposition between

wife and whore.”<sup>14</sup> The blurring of those two categories poses a threat for patriarchy. Ruth’s rules of exchange – “I would want at least three rooms and a bathroom” (84), “You’d supply my wardrobe, of course?” (85) – might be similar to what she was promised in the marriage with Teddy. She also says: “I would naturally want to draw up an inventory of everything I would need, which would require your signatures in the presence of witnesses” (85), which again reminds the reader about the signing of the wedding register. By setting the rules this time, she “reveals the ideological rhetoric and social practices that produce women’s subjection.”<sup>15</sup>

The focus of the play is on the crisis within patriarchy, on the level of the family: “Family constitutes a site of ideological production in *The Homecoming*, a site for producing appropriate gendered subjects, ready to assume their place in the system of social relation that supports the perpetuation of patriarchy.”<sup>16</sup> This is examined in one of the most important feminist works, *Sexual Politics* by Kate Millett. In this book, Millett claims that “patriarchy’s chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole.”<sup>17</sup> The traditional family, in her view, serves as an agent, it “not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state.”<sup>18</sup> In the play, Max tells Ruth that Jessie “taught those boys everything they know. She taught them all the morality they know. Every single bit of the moral code they live by – was taught to them by their mother” (54). In the context of the play, this is rather an ironic statement. Silverstein also claims that the collapse of Max’s authority is the fault of the wife, who failed to reinforce this

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<sup>14</sup> Silverstein 79.

<sup>15</sup> Silverstein 79.

<sup>16</sup> Silverstein 81.

<sup>17</sup> Millett 31.

<sup>18</sup> Millett 33.

structure and the “Father’s World as Law.”<sup>19</sup> Millett argues that the man is still seen as the head of the family/household, which comes from the Judeo-Christian background and it still confirmed today (The book was first published in 1970): “Female heads of household tend to be regarded as undesirable; the phenomenon is a trait of poverty or misfortune.”<sup>20</sup> And this is what happens in the play – a house led by a feminized father needs somebody, embodying a masculine position, to claim authority and dominance over them – the fact that it is a woman is, according to Silverstein, “both ironic inversion and subversion of patriarchal norms.”<sup>21</sup>

But what does Ruth gain from her power? Why does she accept the given role?

As Elizabeth Sakellaridou notes:

By agreeing to satisfy the household needs (while driving a hard bargain and remaining a ‘tease’), Ruth also gains a paradoxical independence, since by becoming a whore she is able to break free from the straitjacket of the philosopher’s lowly wife.<sup>22</sup>

But as Milne points out, “the freedom of the whore is an unlikely feminist revision of the critique of bourgeois marriage as a property relation which legalises prostitution.”<sup>23</sup> Martin Esslin also suggests a realistic explanation. He stresses that she was possibly a prostitute before she married Teddy, when she was “model for the body” (65). In that interpretation, Ruth actually *wants* to be a whore and it explains “the very ease with which Ruth is persuaded to take up a life of prostitution.”<sup>24</sup> He underlines Ruth’s passivity – she is “the object of male desires, and, being an image

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<sup>19</sup> Silverstein 86.

<sup>20</sup> Millett 33.

<sup>21</sup> Silverstein 77.

<sup>22</sup> Sakellaridou in Milne 244.

<sup>23</sup> Milne 244.

<sup>24</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 144.

in a dream, yields to these desires without putting up any resistance.”<sup>25</sup> As Milne claims, both Esslin’s and Sakellaridou’s account show that “the play’s form undermines the possibility of interpreting the image in positive terms without making significant concessions to implicitly misogynist structures of identity.”<sup>26</sup>

There is, however, one more important aspect – the use of conditional. While discussing her contract, Ruth never directly says she will accept the position she is to be given. She always uses the conditional: “How many rooms would this flat have? [...] You would supply my wardrobe, of course? [...] All aspects of the agreement and conditions of employment would have to be clarified to our mutual satisfaction before we finalized the contract” (85). This might partly explain Pinter’s mysterious comment about Ruth “not being a harlot in her own mind.”<sup>27</sup>

To conclude, it is crucial to distinguish between, as Silverstein has it, “structures of power and *forms* of power that those structures seek to embody.”<sup>28</sup> Even though Ruth attempts to deconstruct the family as a basic patriarchal unit, she does so only with “phallic power: the power to castrate and the power to fascinate.”<sup>29</sup> In the final scene, we see Ruth in the centre of the family – the homecoming has been more hers than her husband’s, she converted “Teddy’s homecoming into permanent exile.”<sup>30</sup> She is sitting in an armchair with everybody else surrounding her. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Pinter strongly objected to a production in 1994 in Théâtre de l’Atelier.

I went on the stage after and met the actors and director and actually protested, said they'd gotten something totally wrong. And they didn't seem to

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<sup>25</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 145.

<sup>26</sup> Milne 244.

<sup>27</sup> Sakellaridou 111.

<sup>28</sup> Silverstein 105.

<sup>29</sup> Silverstein 105.

<sup>30</sup> Silverstein 99.

understand it. Because, what happened in this case, she was sitting here [indicates where Ruth would sit] and this Lenny fellow came behind her and put his hands on her shoulders: a possession. And I said, ‘That’s ridiculous. He doesn’t possess her in any sense.’ They’d really misunderstood that.<sup>31</sup>

Ruth’s position is the end of the illusion that there is the unity between the actual and the symbolic father, which, according to Haney, reveals the fact that “the association of the symbolic father with power and law is nothing more than an arbitrary social construction, and that symbolic power is available to any subject within the social system.”<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, there is no change in the patriarchal order. The default family has been fixed, having now both ‘Father’ and ‘Mother’ – the patriarchal structure remains unshattered.

### **3.2 “I remember your look well”: Kate, Anna and the Male Gaze**

Kate, Anna, Deeley. Already the list of characters in *Old Times* shows something rather untypical for Pinter – the majority of female characters. “In Pinter’s work, most women are isolated,”<sup>33</sup> notes Sakellaridou. With the exception of *Tea Party*, *Old Times* is the first play with the theme of female ties and this theme even becomes “the centre of dramatist’s concern.”<sup>34</sup> It replaces the “male-centred perspectives focused on struggles of male bonding and female exclusion,”<sup>35</sup> which we can see later on in *Betrayal*. The presence of the female bonding is important, because, according to Sarah Gamble, it “demonstrates the endurance of significant emotional, spiritual

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<sup>31</sup> Cusac, “Harold Pinter Interview.”

<sup>32</sup> Haney 121.

<sup>33</sup> Sakellaridou 63.

<sup>34</sup> Sakellaridou 63.

<sup>35</sup> Milne 240.

and intellectual bonds outside of marriage,”<sup>36</sup> which is something unusual for not only Pinter, but also the history of depicting women – and a source of threat for the husband in this play.

The story takes place in a farmhouse of a middle-age couple, Kate and Deeley, who are awaiting an arrival of Kate’s old friend, Anna, whom Kate has not seen for twenty years. Anna is, however, already present – she is standing at the window, “still and dim”<sup>37</sup> while the two other characters talk about her. She ‘arrives’ simply by turning from the window and joining the conversation, making herself ‘visible’ for the other two. This is significant for the whole play where ‘seeing’ and ‘being seen’ are the key concepts. The characters in the play are talking about past, whether real or imagined. When Anna says: “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” (270), she talks about the main method she and Deeley are employing: re-creating the past according to what they are trying to achieve. Silverstein claims that “the action of *Old Times* centres around the battle for possession of a woman, a battle in which Anna and Deeley vie for control of Kate, Deeley’s wife.”<sup>38</sup> The ‘male gaze’ has a prominent role in their attempts. Interestingly, the essay which first elaborated on this concept was published in 1975, four years after *Old Times* were first produced. However, the issue is conceptualized in the play because it is directly linked with power and its shifts. Deeley and Anna are trying to assert their power over Kate – with a male gaze of Deeley, Anna’s adopted male gaze and the help of popular culture, represented by the cinema and the song.

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<sup>36</sup> Sarah Gamble, *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism* (London: Taylor and Francis 2001) 34.

<sup>37</sup> Harold Pinter, *Plays 3* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997) 270. All subsequent references to the play are cited in text.

<sup>38</sup> Silverstein 109.

The 'male gaze,' men looking at women, is linked to the concept of 'the Other,' discussed in the second chapter. Man is the subject and from his position, he sees woman as an object. As Laura Mulvey writes in her essay which is primarily dedicated to film theory, but the principles she is describing have universal validity: "Pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female."<sup>39</sup> In a mainstream movie, woman would be important for what she represents (e.g. love she evokes in the hero) and as an erotic object for both the protagonist and the spectators, she would not have any value in herself.<sup>40</sup> Similarly as in other areas of male dominance, women are through culture, education, environment and other influences persuaded to confirm this structure themselves – according to John Berger, they "watch themselves to be looked at."<sup>41</sup> Both the male gaze and woman's consent are clearly visible in Deeley's memory of his encounter with Anna:

DEELEY: I simply sat sipping my light ale and gazed ... gazed up your skirt.  
You didn't object, you found my gaze perfectly acceptable.

ANNA: I was aware of your gaze, was I? (289)

Deeley is narrating his version of the past, Anna is doubtful towards it. But by making her 'aware' of the gaze, the gaze itself changes to some kind of a social interchange, rather than a perverse action. When she confirms his story towards the end of the play, she uses the ambiguity of the word 'look' – "I remember your look ... very well. I remember you well" (309). Is she saying she remembers the way he looked? More probably, in concord with the patriarchal tradition, she would remember her look *at her* – thus she confirms the stereotype about women who "watch themselves to be looked at."<sup>42</sup> But gaze has one more function which Deeley relies upon in the first

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<sup>39</sup> Mulvey 837.

<sup>40</sup> Mulvey 837

<sup>41</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1990) 45.

<sup>42</sup> Berger 45.

scene, when he and Kate are discussing Anna's arrival – control. Deeley says to Kate: “I'll be watching you” (249). By watching he gains a form of control – and he, as a patriarchal figure, wants to control Kate from the beginning of the play. But even when he watches, his powers over Kate are very limited:

DEELEY: Sometimes I take her face in my hands and look at it.

ANNA: Really?

DEELEY: Yes, I look at it, holding it in my hands. Then I kind of let it go, take my hands away, leave it floating. (262)

In this passage, he expresses his frustration over not being able to fix Kate by the means of power of patriarchy – the gaze.

The dramatization of female gaze in this play is much more complex and problematic. This concerns both women looking at women and women looking at men. Men are, according to Mulvey, “reluctant to gaze.”<sup>43</sup> She gives her opinion following reasoning: “According to the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychological structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification.”<sup>44</sup> Deeley is not the object of the gaze in the play – even when he is watched, as a sobbing man, it is recalled by Anna as something abstract: “I never saw his face clearly.” (272) It is the opposite – the unknown man is watching *them*: “He looked at us both, at our beds.” (270) Women in this play are not allowed to invent any form of a ‘female gaze.’ But the strategy that is often employed is to *adopt* the male gaze. Here we can see that, as in *The Homecoming*, in order to obtain power, woman must put herself in position, culturally reserved for male. That woman is not able to obtain her own gaze is demonstrated in the following dialogue.

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<sup>43</sup> Mulvey 838.

<sup>44</sup> Mulvey 838.

ANNA: Sometimes I'd look at her face, but she was quite unaware of my gaze.

DEELEY: Gaze?

ANNA: What?

DEELEY: The word gaze. Don't hear it very often.

ANNA: Yes, quite unaware of it. She was totally absorbed. (264)

Although Sakellaridou reduces Deeley's reaction to an "ironic comment"<sup>45</sup> which should help Deeley to gain control, it is first of all the word 'gaze' itself. Deeley's surprise cannot be explained by the unusualness of the word (he uses it himself in the play). He reacts because he feels that the word and all that it stands for is typically male. Anna, on the other hand, does not take his amazement into account. This conversation has its predecessor in the beginning of the play when Anna talks to Kate:

ANNA: How can you say that? How can you say that, when I'm looking at you now, seeing you so shyly poised over me, looking down at me –

DEELEY: Stop that! (273)

Anna is using her power to look, to see Kate, and this is clearly threatening for Deeley. Throughout the play, Anna's identification with the male role can be seen on her desire to see but not to be seen:

ANNA: 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.

DEELEY: Sounds a perfect marriage. (304)

It is obvious from Deeley's response that he is quite aware of this male-female dichotomy in the gaze and Anna's position in it. Woman taking over the male gaze is

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<sup>45</sup> Sakellaridou 171.

the woman taking over the male role – Anna might occupy his position in Kate’s life. As Silverstein claims: “The challenge to Deeley’s authority issues not only from Anna-as-rival, but from lesbianism as a rival form of sexuality that threatens to undermine the patriarchal sexual economy.”<sup>46</sup> But, as Silverstein adds, Pinter uses lesbianism in the Freudian way – it means, it is always somehow disguised heterosexual desire.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, if Anna takes the male role in order to ‘own’ Kate, it is not challenging the patriarchal structure but rather reinforcing it.

For the issue of the male gaze in the play, there are some more interesting connections to be mentioned – for example the fact that (in Deeley’s version) he and Kate met in a cinema. He describes it in a following manner:

And there was only one other person in the cinema, one other person in the whole of the whole cinema, and there she is. And there she was, very dim, very still, placed more or less I would say at the dead centre of the auditorium.  
(267)

This corresponds to Mulvey description of the cinema where “darkness in the auditorium isolates the spectators from one another.”<sup>48</sup> She stresses the cinema as a place of “voyeuristic separation. [...] Although the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world.”<sup>49</sup> The spectator’s position in this process is “one of repression of their exhibitionism and projection of the repressed desire on to the performer.”<sup>50</sup> This is visible on Deeley’s fascination with one of the characters in the movie they saw, *Odd Man Out*, Robert Newton. Newton is also the initial point of his conversation with Kate: “This girl came out and I think looked about her and I

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<sup>46</sup> Silverstein, 129.

<sup>47</sup> Silverstein 132.

<sup>48</sup> Mulvey 836.

<sup>49</sup> Mulvey 836.

<sup>50</sup> Mulvey 836.

said wasn't Robert Newton fantastic." (267) He keeps mentioning him: "So it was Robert Newton who brought us together and it is only Robert Newton who can tear us apart" (268). He even says: "I wondered what Robert Newton would think of this" (269), when he describes their physical contact. Fascination with movie stars, caused by the spectator's identification with the (male) hero and his point of view (his gaze) is strengthened by the fact that, as was already said, the spectator and the hero have the same erotic object. In the dynamics of the play, cinema is also an issue Anna wants to overtake – she introduces similar memory: "We went, on a bus, to some totally obscure, some totally unfamiliar district and, almost alone, saw a wonderful film called *Odd Man Out*" (276). She longs to be the one to share this experience with Kate. But Deeley has also other links to the world of the visual art – it is suggested he works "in the arts" (275). At one point he even claims:

I had a great crew in Sicily. A marvellous cameraman. Irving Shultz. Best in the business. We took a pretty austere look at the women in black. The little old women in black. I wrote the film and directed it. (280)

Deeley stresses on the visual forms – the cameraman, the 'austere look.' If Deeley would indeed be a director, he would have additional position in the whole system of gaze – the gaze would be originally his, through his vision and his cameraman.

The superficially funny, playful song Anna and Deeley are singing is trying to force Kate in the role of an observed object and re-assert her as a "classic female figure" (274). Deeley starts with the basic distinction of the male gaze – man look, women are being looked at: "You are lovely to look at, delightful to know" (265). Anna confirms this while singing: "Oh but you're lovely, with your smile so warm" (265). The lyrics of the song (which compiles more actually existing songs) take a patriarchal approach towards women as aesthetically pleasing objects and men as

their owners: “And someday I’ll know that moment divine, When all the things you are, are mine” (265). Silverstein comments on the fact that the song unifies Deeley and Anna in her common desire to ‘own’ Kate: “We can regard it as a duet, or ether, a kind of sung monologue in which two voices divide in a single ‘I,’ a single *gendered* subject position, between them.”<sup>51</sup> They both represent the threatening masculine power which seeks to preserve the order of things, “the patriarchal model of sexual difference that privileges the ideological solidarity between the masculine/the gaze/power at the expense of equally ideological solidarity between the feminine/spectacle/powerlessness.”<sup>52</sup>

Kate herself is, however, not only an object of either Deeley or Anna. Esslin claims that the reason of Kate’s victory is her being “the frigid wife for whom sensuality has no meaning,”<sup>53</sup> but, considering details as the bath imagery, which show Kate’s sensual pleasure, this is highly arguable. Rather than being frigid, Kate does not fall into any prepared, stereotypical categories others would like to fit her in: “Unlike Anna and Deeley, who associate power with a culturally privileged identity, Kate embraces the dissolution of boundaries both social and ontological.”<sup>54</sup> In contrast to the other two characters who are trying to establish their version of reality, Kate is the one who “conceptualizes subjectivity as an excess. While Anna and Deeley voice an urgent desire to see, Kate embraces the failure of vision.”<sup>55</sup> Her final speech grants her victory, because the other two “accept the equivalence between memory and absolute power informing this narrative.”<sup>56</sup> In this speech, she is the one who is watching:

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<sup>51</sup> Silverstein 132.

<sup>52</sup> Silverstein 133.

<sup>53</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 177.

<sup>54</sup> Silverstein 133.

<sup>55</sup> Silverstein 134.

<sup>56</sup> Silverstein 135.

I remember you lying dead. You didn't know I was watching you. (...)When you woke my eyes were above you, staring down at you.(...) I had quite a lengthy bath, got out, walked about the room, glistening, drew up a chair, sat naked beside you and watched you.<sup>57</sup>

She combines the role of the subject, watching, and the seeming object, naked on display. However, by 'killing' Anna, Kate gets rid of the male gaze, therefore her nudity is no longer watched and she is no longer objectified.

The male gaze is an important strategy both Anna and Deeley employ in order to make Kate an object, with the help of memories and popular culture – its dissemination participates, according to Silverstein, in the construction of “classic female figure.”<sup>58</sup> They are attempting “to reassert the integrity of this cultural construction by invoking the patriarchal version of the ‘look-looked-at,’ in which the woman looks beautiful for an approving male gaze.”<sup>59</sup> Kate is, however, able to stay out of this game. In the beginning of the play, Deeley controls Kate – he is disturbed when he finds out there is a chapter of Kate's life he does not know about: that Kate had been living with Anna. He later describes Kate as “a classic female figure, I said to myself, or is it a classic female posture, one way or the other long outworn” (274). He is trying to put Kate in “the patriarchal construction of acceptable Femininity in terms of silence and powerlessness, as opposed to equivalence of masculinity, language and power,”<sup>60</sup> the construction of the world where woman's virtue is her silence (273). Silverstein comments on it:

The description of Kate as a 'classic' example of The Female, with its implicit invocation of the ensemble of codes, discourses, and values that constitute the

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<sup>57</sup> Silverstein 204.

<sup>58</sup> Silverstein 156.

<sup>59</sup> Silverstein 127.

<sup>60</sup> Silverstein 22.

symbolic order of patriarchy, reminds us that, Deeley serves as a ‘mouthpiece’ for these codes, which he is both an effect of and a vehicle for a power that he can never possess.<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, Deeley does not possess power over Kate. Silverstein goes as far as stating that, by undermining Deeley’s representation, Kate “would effectively undermine the symbolic and cultural codes of patriarchy itself – the ‘voice’ of the cultural ‘Other’ speaking through Deeley as its ‘mouthpiece.’”<sup>62</sup> But, it is not only Deeley’s position that needs to be undermined in order to undermine the ruling cultural codes – Anna is also trying to occupy the position of ‘masculinity, language and power.’ This is nothing new under Pinter’s sun – as most prominently dramatized in *The Homecoming*, in competition with men, a woman adopts strategies culturally associated with masculinity – and therefore reinforcing patriarchal structures. However, Kate has the power to be neither a ‘Woman,’ the classical female figure Deeley would wish her to be, nor to adapt to any masculine role. The whole play ends with Kate in the centre of the picture and the stage direction: “*Silence. Lights up full sharply. Very bright.*” (313) In this moment, the whole concept of the gaze is relativized – the ultimate holder of the gaze is the audience who has been silently watching the whole time.

### **3.3 “We wouldn’t want a woman around”: Emma and Male Bonding**

*Betrayal* (1978) is one of Pinter’s best known plays, also due to the adaptation as a screenplay for a movie in 1983. There is a simple explanation, why *Betrayal* is so popular with the public and why it is so often produced (last major production started

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<sup>61</sup> Silverstein 119.

<sup>62</sup> Silverstein 199.

in October 2013 in Barrymore Theatre, New York, starring Hollywood stars Daniel Craig, Rachel Weisz, and Rafe Spall). Unlike other Pinter's plays, it is easy to understand, at least on the surface. It takes place in London of the seventies, in an attractive environment of well-situated middle class intellectuals with artistic tendencies, featuring every day characters. It is basically, as Martin Esslin writes, a comedy of menace.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, it is a well-known fact that Pinter's love life was complicated and the play is semi-autobiographical (inspired by an affair with Joan Bakewell). But, most importantly, it has an attractive main theme – a love triangle.

As Robert, the cuckolded husband, says about a novel he read and Emma is reading: “Not much more to say on that subject, really, is there?”<sup>64</sup> Emma wants to know, what the subject is, according to him:

ROBERT: Betrayal.

EMMA: No, it isn't. (42)

This dialogue foreshadows one of the most important questions of the play: It is a betrayal at all? Or, more specifically, who is the betrayed one?

Paradoxically, given that it is the latest of the three plays presented, the dramatisation of misogyny is the strongest in this play. The realist mode of the play can be one of the factors – as stated in the previous chapter, realist drama as such tends to present the world from the perspective of male emotions and experience<sup>65</sup> and women are often reduced in mere objects of male exchange.<sup>66</sup> Emma might seem to be a modern, empowered character – she balances her family life and work, runs a

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<sup>63</sup> Pinter, *the Playwright* 188.

<sup>64</sup> Harold Pinter, *Plays 4* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005) 63. All subsequent references to the play are cited in text.

<sup>65</sup> Aston *Introduction* 21.

<sup>66</sup> Aston *Introduction* 40.

successful gallery, and has a new lover – but simultaneously she is struggling in the patriarchal world. Her affair can be, from de Beauvoir’s perspective, seen as a form of self-liberating attempt: “It is only through lies and adultery that woman can prove that she is nobody’s thing, that she refutes male claims on her.”<sup>67</sup> The problem is not as much her portrayal as the basic dramatic situation itself. Emma is subjected to a patriarchal fantasy, her position of power is taken from her and most importantly, she is a victim of a male bond – she is the third one in the triangle.

When Robert and Jerry first talk about Jerry’s affair with Robert’s wife Emma, Robert’s comment is: “I hope she looked after you all right” (34). Unexpected comment, given the situation, but it shows quite clearly how Robert sees Emma’s place in a relationship. And really, in the framework of her affair, Emma is building another home. In scene eight, taking place in 1971, Jerry comes to the flat and Emma comes out of kitchen, wearing an apron. The scene is almost as a 1950’s advertisement of a perfect household – ironically, because it is taking place in a rented flat with two people, each married to somebody else.

EMMA I’ve only just got here. I meant to be here ages ago. I’m making this stew. It’ll be hours. *He kisses her.* Are you starving?

JERRY: Yes. *He kisses her.*

EMMA: No really. I’ll never do it. You sit down. I’ll get it on.

JERRY: What a lovely apron. (102)

Both Emma and Jerry are participating in a patriarchal fantasy. Emma is fulfilling her double role – despite the fact that she is a mistress in this relationship, she is still

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<sup>67</sup> Beauvoir 167.

playing the obedient housewife. When she returns from Venice, (scene 6, taking place in 1973), the scene in the flat represents some type of domestic idyll again:

*Emma puts basket on table.*

JERRY: What's in it?

EMMA: Lunch.

JERRY: What?

EMMA: Things you like. (74)

In a flirtatious conversation, she is asking to be praised for qualities the fictional woman would possess – combining good looks and good food.

EMMA: How do I look?

JERRY: Beautiful.

EMMA: Do I look well?

JERRY: You do. (75)

This bears some resemblance to another of Pinter's female characters, Sarah from *The Lover*. In Sarah's case, the lover and the husband are one person and she embodies a wish fulfilment for the male character, Richard, being both 'whore' and the 'wife' to him. Emma is trying to fit in the 'wife' category even in her adulterous relationship, but her actual role in the relationship is different. Although she participates in this fantasy, she begins to be aware of the falsity of it, when she says: "I cook and slave for you" (81). She is almost ridiculous in her attempts to transform the flat into a real home, as when she buys a tablecloth "for the house" (82). Emma is willing to spend time, money and energy on the flat – which mirrors also her approach to the

relationship. The flat as the meeting point of the two lovers shows the state of the affair exactly:

EMMA: It's a waste. Nobody comes here. I just can't bear to think about it, actually. Just ... empty. All day and night. Day after day and night after night. I mean the crockery and the curtains and the bedspread and everything. And the tablecloth I brought from Venice. (*Laughs.*) It's ridiculous. (43)

In this scene, Emma also reveals what she hoped for the flat – and possibly for the relationship – to be:

EMMA: It's just ... an empty home.

JERRY It's not a home. *Pause.* I know ... I know what you wanted ... but it could never ... actually be a home. You have a home. I have a home. With curtains, et cetera. And children. Two children in two homes. There are no children here, so it's not the same kind of home. (43)

Jerry's intention with both the flat and the relationship is different from Emma's. In the early stage of the relationship (and later stage of the play) Emma asks:

EMMA: Tell me ... have you ever thought ... of changing your life?

JERRY: Changing?

EMMA: Mmmn. *Pause.*

JERRY: It's impossible. (78)

This question is mirrored later on in the relationship when Emma asks "Do you think we'll ever go to Venice together?" (82), she but soon enough realizes this cannot be

done. The relationship ends when Emma is no longer willing to play her given role of the 'whore' and still maintain their common household:

JERRY: Well, things have changed. You've been so busy, your job, and everything.

EMMA: Well, I know. But I mean, I like it. I want to do it.

JERRY: No, it's great. It's marvellous for you. But you're not –

EMMA: If you're running a gallery you've got to run it, you've got to be there.

JERRY: But you're not free in the afternoons. Are you? (40)

Obviously, Jerry is blaming the failure of the relationship on Emma's occupation. It is still not seen as something usual, rather a leisure activity of hers, and she feels she needs to justify herself. Interestingly, as in *The Homecoming*, there is a scene with a key. While the key in *The Homecoming* signified the change of balance between Ruth and Teddy, here it elaborates on the metaphor of the flat as a relationship. Emma, by returning the key to Jerry, is not taking over the control: she is trying to escape. And she struggles with it: EMMA: Oh here's my key. *Takes out keyring, tries to take key from ring.* Oh Christ. *Struggles to take key from ring. Throws him the ring.* You take it off (47).

Knowledge is the power in this play: Jerry thought he knows more than Robert but in the end it turns out Robert knew for a long time and he did not share the knowledge. This makes Jerry the betrayed one and discontinues his advantage as a lover (the advantage of a lover is that the lover knows about the husband but not vice versa). Esslin claims that the important essence of an adulterous relationship is "the

feeling of power, of superiority, it gives to the one who knows what is happening over the victim who is totally oblivious to it.”<sup>68</sup> However, Emma’s position in the end is the worst – she possessed the ultimate power by knowing the truth (and not sharing it with Jerry) but when she finds out Robert has been cheating on her the whole time, she is deprived of this power. Her affair, interestingly, continues even after Robert knows about it (he serves as a kind of confidant to Emma when she weeps after Jerry leaves their house in the Scene four). The reason, why Robert did not want Emma to stop seeing Jerry is never explained. Is it de Beauvoir’s idea that “marriage kills love?”<sup>69</sup> But more probably – although he claims something else: “You don’t seem to understand that I don’t give a shit about any of this” (33), – he enjoys the power given to him by the knowledge. This is illustrated in the scene in the Italian restaurant when he intentionally tortures Jerry by continually mentioning Emma – “You know what you and Emma have in common?” (97) and “I respect that in you. So does Emma” (100). He also mocks Jerry: “You didn’t know very much about anything, really, did you” (33). Rather than destroyed by his wife’s infidelity, the character is bitter and also slightly amused. The tragic elements of Emma’s situation is that she thinks she has them both when she actually does have neither Robert, nor Jerry.

The other initial reaction to the fact that Emma has been having an affair with Robert’s best friend is also surprising: “I have always liked Jerry. To be honest, I’ve always liked him more than I liked you. Maybe I should have had affair with him myself” (72). The fact that not the relationship to Emma but their mutual relationship seems to matter to both men the most, creates a world of male bonding where the woman is no longer needed. This is demonstrated in Robert’s speech when Emma suggests she would take both Robert and Jerry to lunch.

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<sup>68</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 192.

<sup>69</sup> Beauvoir 166.

ROBERT: Well, to be brutally honest, we wouldn't actually want a woman around, would we, Jerry? I mean a game of squash isn't 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 then 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? (57)

Emma, when offering the lunch, relies on her ultimate position in both of the relationships, only to find out that she is, indeed, the third one. Also Jerry seems to be more interested in his relationship with Robert. In the initial scene, when Emma confirms (although, as we later find out, she changed some facts) that she told Robert about the affair, Jerry is deeply disturbed. He later confronts Robert:

JERRY: The evening. Just now. Wondering whether to phone you. I had to phone you. And then you were with the kids...I'd go mad. I'm very grateful to you...for coming. ([.] I don't know why she told you. I don't know how she could tell you... The fact is I can't understand...why she thought it necessary...after all these years...to tell you...so suddenly...last night...Without consulting me. Without even warning me. After all, you and me...(27)

His rhetoric in this speech reminds more of speaking to a lover than to a friend. When Jerry finds out Emma has a new lover, he claims that “the funny thing was that the only thing I really felt was irritation” (35). In a certain sense, there are some similarities between *Betrayal* and the traditional quest narrative, as defined by Teresa De Laurentis – instead of transition between father and husband<sup>70</sup>, we have the transition between the husband and the lover, and again, “both the action and desire are male-determined and male-centred, and are privileged at the expense of the female.”<sup>71</sup>

One might think that the interpretation of Emma being a pawn between the two men is quite an obvious, however, it is not. Elizabeth Sakellaridou mentions several male critics who had shown their biased attitudes: from T. E. Kalem’s Emma as “catalyst of male discord”<sup>72</sup> to John Barber’s opinion that Emma “entangles both men in painful lies and fausse bonhomie.”<sup>73</sup> Martin Esslin even claims that “Emma has yielded to Jerry because she resents Robert’s physical intimacy with Jerry, because she is jealous of Jerry’s relationship with her husband.”<sup>74</sup> Sakellaridou mentions another text from Esslin, where he writes that “Emma makes us wonder if she is really worth the fuss – until you realize that what Pinter is saying is that she really isn’t.”<sup>75</sup> The problem is, there is no fuss. Out of all the relationships in the play, Emma’s relationships are the ones not surviving – Jerry’s marriage and the Robert-Jerry relationship are not harmed. This is not untypical for adulterous narrative, women often pay for being unfaithful in narratives centred about this topic (there are many famous examples: Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina, Edna from Kate Chopin’s

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<sup>70</sup> De Laurentis in Aston, *Introduction* 39.

<sup>71</sup> De Laurentis in Aston, *Introduction* 40.

<sup>72</sup> Sakellaridou 186.

<sup>73</sup> Sakellaridou 186.

<sup>74</sup> Esslin, *Pinter the Playwright* 190.

<sup>75</sup> Martin Esslin, “Betrayal,” *Plays and Players* 26 Jan. 1979: 15.

*The Awakening*...). The reason why female adultery (defined as the slide into the ‘whore’ category) is judged much more harshly is the threat that, in consequence, a man could raise another man’s children which would shatter his leader-figure in the family and the inheritance rules (and therefore the whole patriarchal system).<sup>76</sup> It is the reason why the very first thing Robert is interested in when he finds out Emma has an affair with his best friend, is his fatherhood: “Five years? *Pause*. Ned is one year old” (72). Robert cares much more about his role, his position within the family and society which would be destroyed if he would be raising someone else’s children. In contrast to *The Homecoming* and *Old Times*, the play does not offer any obvious deconstruction of a concept of power. The patriarchal world is a given setting which is not as seriously challenged as in the other two plays (this is also due to the more realistic mode of *Betrayal*, in comparison to the other two). However, there are many interesting issues about the character of Emma – her exclusive occupation, the fact that she is depicted as educated and interested in cultural issues and most prominently the fact, that she is the only active character; she is on the move, evolving, trying to change relationships she is not happy with, undergoing a process of maturing. However, she remains isolated in a patriarchal world, excluded from the most perfect and pure, holy and Platonic male friendship.

Emma, Anna, Kate and Ruth are placed in a world dominated by men where they fight for the right to be recognized. Pinter’s plays acknowledge the existence of culturally enforced stereotypes. But all the same, the female characters always have to deal with their ‘femininity.’ As all three works are plays, written to be performed, it is also necessary look at particular productions, as every production, necessarily based on a certain interpretation of the text, re-creates the message of the play.

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<sup>76</sup> Beauvoir 231.

## Chapter 4: Pinter in Practice: Czech Stagings of Pinter

In the theatre programme of *Betrayal* in Činoherní klub it is stated that “Pinter is not staged much in the Czech Republic. Maybe it is because his plays, characterised by minimalism and ambiguity at the same time, do not offer easy solutions.”<sup>1</sup> However, in the case of the first Pinter staging, *The Birthday Party* in 1967, it seemed that Pinter was very appropriate for the political situation of that time. Jaroslav Vostrý, the founder and principal of Činoherní klub theatre, and the director of this production, claimed that he did not find the subject absurd in the sense of being distant or impossible in the everyday world of the audience. “Suddenly, two men appear: to imagine that kind of situation was entirely real, even without Kafkaesque inspiration.”<sup>2</sup> He describes that he was particularly drawn to the subject of guilt and its use in ‘brainwashing.’ The production used Milan Lukeš’s translation (the Czech title of the play is *Narozeniny*). The difficulty was to find a director – Vostrý writes that all the directors to whom he offered the play refused, so he had to stage it himself. “We went towards the need of the audience to laugh, but precisely to this moment when they are left with the laugh frozen on their lips.”<sup>3</sup> According to Roman Císař, the production was seen as an “act of citizen courage”<sup>4</sup>. It was because the play spoke about the practices of totalitarian regime and the whole play was in a sharp contrast to the realistic mode of art, demanded from the official regime. In the enthusiastic atmosphere of the Prague Spring, the play served reportedly also as a

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<sup>1</sup>Roman Císař, *Zrada* (Praha: Činoherní klub) 2014. Theatre programme. Translated from Czech by the author of the thesis.

<sup>2</sup>Jaroslav Vostrý, *Činoherní klub 1965-1972: Dramaturgie v praxi* (Praha: Divadelní ústav, 1996). Translated from Czech by the author of the thesis.

<sup>3</sup>Vostrý 72.

<sup>4</sup>Císař 2.

“memento of the thread of occupation”<sup>5</sup> – and the Russian occupation really came shortly afterwards.

The situation in early seventies was very different from the sixties – many artists were forbidden to work and many authors banned. Even one ‘wrong’ production could cause problems and ‘personnel changes’ in the whole theatre. In such a situation, in 1972, Jan Kačer came to Jaroslav Vostrý with the request to stage *The Homecoming*. Vostrý, responsible for the whole theatre, was reluctant at first. One could ask why Pinter would be the ‘wrong’ author because at that time his plays were not political in any specific sense. However, it was because Pinter was associated with the Theatre of Absurd, which was, in Czechoslovakia of the 1970s, an “ideological nightmare.”<sup>6</sup> Vostrý cites the congress of “Svaz národních umělců” (“Association of Dramatic Artists”) where it was said that the true socialist artist does not need to express himself in allegories and that orientation towards absurd drama means the denial of socialism and “a proof that he or she went to the other side of the barricade.”<sup>7</sup>

The production took place but Vostrý’s worries proved justified – Kačer’s staging of *The Homecoming* was banned just after three performances. Kačer himself states, that although his production was not trying to be deliberately provocative, he thought that the role of the theatre was to ask questions. The regime, however, was not willing or able to answer.<sup>8</sup> He admits that “the only thing that we wanted was to stage the human fate in its plasticity and colourfulness – and already this was controversial, in grey mist of the official regime.”<sup>9</sup> He appreciated the play, because,

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<sup>5</sup>Císař 2.

<sup>6</sup>Vostrý 168.

<sup>7</sup>Vostrý 168.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Kačer, Personal Interview, 29 May 2014. Translated from Czech by the author of the thesis.

<sup>9</sup> Kačer, Personal Interview.

according to him, it was depicting “what people think, their reality,”<sup>10</sup> which created a contrast to the double lives most people were leading. He seemed surprised when he was asked about his version of the play: “We didn’t interpret anything. That was the way we did theatre – we decided to trust Pinter. It was risky.”<sup>11</sup> His reaction to possible feminist interpretations was not welcoming: “It’s become fashionable word, feminism. That’s not how we worked. All the actors – including Nina Divíšková, my wife, who played Ruth – were simply lead by the text and the text only.”<sup>12</sup> He claims that the end was ambiguous for them as well as for the audience, which was one of the reasons he liked the play so much.<sup>13</sup> “It was a pity that the production was banned so soon. I felt sorry especially for my wife; it could have been an amazing chance for her.”<sup>14</sup> Shortly after this production, both Vostrý and Kačer were victims of the mentioned ‘personnel changes.’ They had to leave Činoherní klub and work in smaller regional theatres.

Perhaps unsurprisingly no other Pinter play was produced until the regime change in 1989. Afterwards, apart from small theatre companies, the more notable productions were *The Homecoming* (*Návrat domů*, trans. Milan Lukeš), staged in 1994 by Ivo Krobot who also staged *The Caretaker* (*Správce*, transl. Milan Lukeš) ten years later, and a programme consisting of pieces of plays and Pinter’s poetry called *Krajina Harolda Pintera* (*The Landscape of Harold Pinter*) in Klicperovo divadlo in Hradec Králové. Although Pinter may have become more recognised in the Czech Republic in part due to the Nobel Prize he won in 2005, according to Ivo Krobot the reason why Pinter first became more popular at the beginning of the new millennium might be that Pinter’s plays are based on experiences of England in the 1950s and 60s,

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<sup>10</sup> Kačer, Personal Interview.

<sup>11</sup> Kačer, Personal Interview.

<sup>12</sup> Kačer, Personal Interview.

<sup>13</sup> Kačer, Personal Interview.

<sup>14</sup> Kačer, Personal Interview

which were easier for Czech audiences to relate to when they were exposed to “the hard phase of capitalism transition.”<sup>15</sup>

Some of Pinter’s plays have been staged together, as in 1998 when director Karel Kříž did *The Lover* and *Ashes to Ashes* (*Mileneč/...a v prach se obrátíš*, transl. František Fröhlich) in Divadlo Kolowrat. Another example of a double staging was the production of *Betrayal* and *Old Times* (*Zrada, Staré časy*, transl. František Fröhlich) in 2012. Temporarily, only the first part, *Betrayal* is being played there. This play is the most produced of Pinter’s plays in the Czech Republic; recent productions include the 2001 production in Městské divadlo Zlín, Městské divadlo v Kladně in 2005, and most recently, the production in Činoherní klub (2014). All productions used František Fröhlich’s translation. In the following part, both currently available productions of *Betrayal* from Divadlo v Celetné and Činoherní klub will be analysed.

#### 4.2 *Betrayal* in Divadlo v Celetné



(Michal Hladík, *Zrada* – photograph from the production, 2012, *Divadlo v Celetné official website*. Web. 10. Jul 2014)

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<sup>15</sup> Pavel Nesvatba, *Správce* (Praha: Činoherní klub, 2004). Theatre programme. Translated from Czech by the author of the thesis.

Divadlo v Celetné is a small theatre in Prague, resided by a small theatre company called Kašpar. The three characters in *Betrayal* were portrayed by Jitka Nerudová (Emma), Adrian Jastraban (Robert) and Jan Přeučil (Jerry). The play was directed by Filip Nuckolls. The premiere took place on the 16 April 2012.

“When three people meet, there is always one too many... What happened then, anyway?!”<sup>16</sup> This is the motto of this production. It foreshadows the whole interpretation. The one who is ‘too many’ is obviously Emma. The production focus on the male bonding and exclusion of a woman, sometimes even in the *mise-en-scène*, as in the last scene (or first, in chronological order) – the two men are on one side facing the woman alone on the other. It is clear how much their friendship means to them, how much they value it, even in comparison to their love relationships. This aspect being already stressed in the play, here is underscored by gestures and by diction. The love between two men is definitely the stronger force here than the romantic love they feel or felt towards Emma.

The account of Emma’s position is clear. What about her portrayal? She is portrayed as a strong female character, sometimes slightly cynical. She does not display great emotion. As a result she is the character, who gains the least sympathy from the audience: she seems to be very ambitious and bitter (which was stressed by a specific tone of the actor’s voice), traits which are rarely forgiven in a female character for reasons discussed in chapter 2. Also her costumes were very preppy, checked pencil skirts with high heels and hair in a tight bun, which she loosens only when she goes to bed. Her portrayal in the play corresponded with the description of Emma in the text by Martin Esslin:

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<sup>16</sup> Lucie Čížková, *Zrada* (Praha: Divadlo v Celetné, 2012). Theatre programme. Translated from Czech by the author of the thesis.

We have all met this woman: bright, well dressed, efficient in running her household and her art-gallery; and yet strangely helpless, almost passive in the way she drifts into emotional or sexual adventure; intelligent, well-mannered and yet without passion, dried-up and immature, a victim of the men in her life, but perhaps not without reason, because at the core of her personality, there is a void.<sup>17</sup>

Yet, Esslin's description implies that there is something wrong with a woman, "running her household and her art-gallery." The same is, however, in the text and in this production as well – Emma is defensive when she 'justifies' that she has to be in her gallery. The audience might even secretly agree with Esslin's question – "Is she is really worth the fuss?"<sup>18</sup> But again, one must realize that the only fuss going on in the play does not involve her. Robert's real frustration is not Emma's betrayal, it is Jerry's. And Jerry wants to keep Robert much more than he ever wanted to keep Emma.

By stressing the male friendship to such an extent, the world where the relationship with woman is always the impure and imperfect one is created. Woman stands aside. Emma in this production is portrayed as a strong character; however, in her portrayal, there is still a stereotypical misrepresentation. She is depicted as a woman who thinks she can 'have it all' and therefore ruins her personal life. This critical attitude towards women with both careers and families, visible in Esslin's 1979 critique of *Betrayal* quoted above, was connected with the change of economic status of women and the threat this shift into the 'competing' category posed, especially in 1980s and 1990s. Despite being outdated in the Anglo-American world,

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<sup>17</sup>Esslin, "Betrayal" 15.

<sup>18</sup>Esslin, "Betrayal" 15.

in the Czech Republic, where the capitalist market was first introduced in 1990s, the stereotype is still alive. That is why Emma, portrayed as a career-ridden woman, is perceived with antipathy and shifts the sympathy of the audience towards the two men and their 'ideal' male friendship.

### 4.3 *Betrayal* in Činoherní klub



(Pavel Nesvadba, *Zrada* – photograph from the production, 2014, ČT 24. Web. 10. July 2014)

The second production premiered 7 March 2014 in Činoherní klub, which is a small theatre in Prague. The theatre nowadays focuses mainly on 20<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-American drama, as one of the directors, Ondřej Sokol, has translated many of the plays himself (e.g. David Mamet or Martin McDonagh). He also directed this production, although the Czech translation is by František Fröhlich. Emma is played by Kateřina Lojdová, Jerry by Martin Finger and Robert by the director himself. As he says,

Honestly, I always avoided Pinter. It never thrilled me, but all the authors I have done so far talked about Pinter as an amazing author, so when Vladimír

Procházka [the principal of Činoherní klub] came and showed me this play, it was the first time I started to be interested.<sup>19</sup>

Procházka states that the reason they decided to stage *Betrayal* is not only the topic but also the way it was written: “One is not usually in the mood for these formalistic jokes, at least not in our theatre. But here I have the feeling that Pinter’s decision to set the play backwards was genial.”<sup>20</sup> He explains that it is unusual to see a typical ending of a relationship and work back towards the beautiful beginning of it. In his view, it “illuminates the relationships much more deeply than the usual chronology.”<sup>21</sup>

The creators decided rely on personal experience, as Sokol says: “We all agreed during the rehearsals that we have all experienced every scene in our own lives ten times with different partners and the play is so minimalistic, I have the feeling I know it from my own life.”<sup>22</sup> Martin Finger, who plays Jerry, also adds: “Pinter based the play on his experience and I think that he is not the only one who knows these things. There will be not many people in the auditorium who would not know it at least a bit or who would not be affected by it.”<sup>23</sup>

This is supported by the contemporary setting of the play. The main feature of this change is the use of mobile phones. “It feels like the icon of the modern age, text messages and similar things and the disgusting things people commit with their help,”<sup>24</sup> comments Sokol. The text messages are often the only visible demonstration of character’s emotions. The messages themselves even add some motifs, not present in the original text. The whole play starts with a message after the events of the

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<sup>19</sup> *Autor hry Zrada se inspiroval vlastní mimomanželskou aférou*, ČRo Vltava, Praha, 7 Mar. 2014. Translated from Czech by the author of this thesis.

<sup>20</sup> *Autor hry Zrada*.

<sup>21</sup> *Autor hry Zrada*.

<sup>22</sup> *Autor hry Zrada*.

<sup>23</sup> *Autor hry Zrada*.

<sup>24</sup> *Autor hry Zrada*.

original have happened and, before the last scene, it also adds some of the missing context of how Emma and Jerry started their affair. What the production uses very well are pauses in the text. Overall, the language seems very natural – as the director says, “I suddenly had the feeling that the original is simpler, the language is simpler than it is usually done here, so I tried hard to draw closer to the absolute minimalism of Pinter. We tried to be absolutely faithful to him.”<sup>25</sup> Finger agrees: “Pinter’s dialogues give a true picture of the real-life communication.”<sup>26</sup>

But dialogue and text messages are not the only means of communication in this production – when Jerry is having a conversation with Robert, we see pictures Emma sends him at the same time, on a big screen above the stage. The actor playing Emma is completely naked in a very provocative position in them. In spite of the claims about faithfulness to Pinter, this is the most visible sign of significant shifts concerning Emma. In this scene, her body becomes an object for both Jerry and the audience. The supposed theatrical effect it has is also dubious in its message – the use of the pictures should create the comical contrast between serious conversation Jerry and Robert are leading and vulgar pictures Jerry receives from Emma at the same time. The fact that it is Emma who deliberately puts her body on display is the confirmation of the stereotype that women *want* to be looked at. It is significant for the production that in one of the rare additions to the original, the female characters is misrepresented in so many ways – she is frivolous (sending naked pictures in a serious situation), she is a sex-object and she wants to be one.

Generally, Emma is presented very differently. In the first scene, when she informs Jerry about her and Robert’s divorce, she is very nervous and she would even want Jerry back. Compared to the other production where Emma is very reasonable,

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<sup>25</sup> *Autor hry Zrada.*

<sup>26</sup> *Autor hry Zrada.*

matter-of-fact and also a bit cynical about the whole affair, this version shows Emma as being unable to escape the past – she wants Jerry back. Throughout the whole play, she is often seen drinking alcohol (also briefly before declaring that she is pregnant) with other characters commenting on it. Apart from the initial/last scene when she is courted by Jerry, she seems to be the one who is more encouraging in the relationship – this is present in the original text, but the production stresses it. The added text messages show Emma luring Jerry into the house even when Robert is there and then enjoying Robert and Jerry talking. The portrayal of Emma is very stereotypical – it corresponds with Morris’s traditional attributes of woman.<sup>27</sup> It is even hinted that Emma might have started the affair with Casey just to take revenge on both Robert and Jerry – simply from her nature, revengefulness being one of the other traits of the ‘Woman’<sup>28</sup>. With Emma adopting the stereotypical traits of a ‘Woman,’ the men treat her accordingly – Jerry has a patronizing attitude towards her and the audience witnesses two scenes when she is violently attacked by Robert, which is accepted as an inevitable part of marriage. The production elaborates on Robert’s casual remark in the original text, that he “hit Emma once or twice” (29). This corresponds to the depiction of Robert in this production – as an over-sensitive, sometimes even tragic figure. He, in contrast to the slightly cynical Robert of the original, demonstrates his feelings very clearly – for example, after he finds out about the affair, he dramatically chews Jerry’s letter to Emma and then spits it out, lies down on the bed and sobs loudly. It is therefore even more unclear, than in the original text, how he could bear the affair of his wife for another two years.

Emma’s costumes are a visible manifestation of her inner development. Rather than the career-woman of the other production, she obviously cares about the way she

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<sup>27</sup> Morris 127.

<sup>28</sup> Beauvoir 179.

looks very much and she is dressed accordingly. All the costumes are stereotypically feminine – high heels, soft colours and fabrics, sunglasses, expensive purses.

What is crucial for this production is, however, the shift of the relationship. Instead of stressing Jerry's and Robert's relationship as does the original text and the production in *Divadlo v Celetné*, this production focuses predominantly on the love-triangle. In the programme, *Betrayal* is described as:

A play about long-term relationships, about falling in love and subsequent disillusion, about the time during which intimate relationships become mechanical, desire fades and loverly infatuation becomes a matrimonial routine.”<sup>29</sup>

The focus on the male bonding is minimal. The play is therefore deprived of the motif of male bonding and the exclusion of woman, and reduces it to a conventional adultery drama. This interpretation flattened the original play and also, by the stereotypical portrayal of Emma, made the play more misogynist.

Both interpretations of Emma are very different, but none of them avoided a certain stereotypization. In the original play, the character is much more complex, she is only one of the three characters who finally steps out of the circle of betrayal. In *Divadlo v Celetné*, we have the portrait of a strong woman, but it seems that it is her ambition which destroys the lives around her. While in *Činoherní klub*, Emma represents the traditional attributes of woman, she is fragile, emotional, but in the same time she is seen as ‘the body.’ The productions depict traditional views on femininity and masculinity without the challenging element the original play has.

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<sup>29</sup> Císař 5.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Ruth, Kate, Anna and Emma are still the ‘fictional women,’ and not only because they are fictitious characters. They challenge the power structures of patriarchy, but the deconstruction is never accomplished, perhaps because it is not the main aim – the power structures generally are examined. Silverstein claims, despite the characters resistance to subjection, “Pinter cannot imagine a form of mastery that departs from the dominant paradigm of cultural power.”<sup>1</sup> Often, the only way for his female characters to claim power is to take the masculine position. In his portrayal of misogyny, Pinter does not offer solution – only dubious (Ruth) or only partial (Kate) ones.

The reason for this accusation is not the lack of female characters, nor their bad qualities (as to create a female character having problems and being badly treated does not inherently mean being misogynist) – but the “persistent dramatisation of misogyny”<sup>2</sup> in his plays leads to a question, whether the aim is to reinforce misogynist structures, or to demonstrate the oppressive actions towards women to explore it.

Pinter claims that the ‘realistic’ accuracy was never an intention.<sup>3</sup> But as a writer associated with the Theatre of the Absurd his work challenges the basic power structures. As Mark Ravenhill explained in his recent open lecture in Prague, writers of certain generation – including Pinter – challenged patriarchal power only insofar as

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<sup>1</sup> Silverstein 141.

<sup>2</sup> Milne 238.

<sup>3</sup> Milne 234.

it was an intrinsic part of their fight against ‘the Great Father,’ the ultimate figure of might and authority.<sup>4</sup>

All four female characters – Ruth, Kate, Anna and Emma – face situations which petrify or objectify or reduce them. The fact that they, especially Ruth, Emma and Anna, slide from the category of ‘wife’ to the category of ‘whore’ is (apart from taking the male place) the only way they threaten patriarchy but is still in the framework of the categories patriarchy has created for them. They are portrayed in stereotypically female situations – cast aside, alone, or as objects of desire. As Sakellaridou puts it, “the woman is always presented in solitary isolation and has to put up solitary battle for the assertion of her separate personality solely assisted by the dramatist’s approbation and sympathy.”<sup>5</sup> Their situation is always specific, in contrast to the universal, male world. They become a vehicle to demonstrate the oppressive power and to some extent, they are still more signs than characters. As in the ‘real world,’ in Pinter’s plays are women still objects, divided into stereotypical categories.

The fact that they are in oppressive situations might not yet be significant; one can claim however, that Pinter’s female characters are not liberated from the ‘sign of Woman.’ The characters are all “unmistakably feminine.”<sup>6</sup> All the four women are seen as sexual objects in the first place – objects men can treat as they desire. Apart from Kate and Anna, they do not have any relationship with other women and, as was stated, the Anna-Kate dynamic is much more similar to man-woman relationship. They are defined by the men around them who are mainly husbands and lovers. Infidelity is part of their nature. Emma has an affair with her husband’s best friend, Ruth with her husband’s brothers, while Kate and Anna are depicted as promiscuous.

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<sup>4</sup>Mark Ravenhill, “Lecture,” Divadelní fakulta Akademie múzických umění, Prague, 29 May 2014. Public lecture.

<sup>5</sup> Sakellaridou 72.

<sup>6</sup> Sakellaridou 120.

In contrast to men, they all make references to their looks; they need male confirmation and praise: “What do you think of my shoes?”<sup>7</sup> (Ruth), “What shall I wear tomorrow?”<sup>8</sup> (Kate), “How do I look? Do I look well?”<sup>9</sup> (Emma).

However, it is not only a “collective vision,” Pinter also aims at “individual and objective portrayal.”<sup>10</sup> At the end of *The Homecoming*, Ruth stands victorious (although the value of the victory and the position from which she reached it is dubious). Kate is able to free herself from the gaze/the attempts to possess her by both her husband and her friend by employing the same structures they did in order to possess her. Emma, despite being not the ultimate prize but ultimate victim of a bond between two men, is the only one who is able to escape the toxic relationship and start anew. However, as Sakellaridou adds, they “always stand as representatives for the feminine cause.”<sup>11</sup> Their liberation is still ‘only’ liberation from men who are defying them.

The message of the plays is, however, always somehow re-shaped when being performed. In every production, it is possible to interpret the text anew. As it was mentioned, there are many possibilities how to change the gender relations in a particular play or draw attention to them. Pinter’s plays do not need any radical solutions as they are ambiguous as such. It is, however, disappointing when this ambiguity is lost completely. This happened in the Czech productions of *Betrayal*, analysed in the previous chapter, especially in the case of the production in Činoherní klub. In this production, the play was reduced to a conventional adultery drama with a stereotypical male/female dynamics.

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<sup>7</sup> Pinter, *The Homecoming* 31.

<sup>8</sup> Pinter, *Old Times* 299.

<sup>9</sup> Pinter, *Betrayal* 75.

<sup>10</sup> Sakellaridou 71.

<sup>11</sup> Sakellaridou 120.

In regard of the limited extent of the thesis, it was impossible to analyse all of Pinter's interesting female characters. The areas that would deserve closer observation are first of all Pinter's late works, especially *Ashes to Ashes* with its preoccupation with violence towards women and the basic metaphor of men as Nazis (one cannot but think of Sylvia Plath's use of Holocaust imagery). Men in Pinter's work are also presented in a way that offers the recognition/resistance dichotomy in the way masculinity is treated. Although in Pinter 'stage men' are less prominent than 'stage women,' perhaps because men represent the "universal human condition,"<sup>12</sup> further research in this field would also be very interesting, especially in context of the development of men's studies, gender studies and Judith Butler's work on gender performativity.

Ideally, the writing on fictitious characters should go 'beyond gender' and judge them as individualities. This is, however, impossible with regard to Pinter's works. Milne admits that Pinter criticizes the patriarchal structures as a part of dominant cultural power, but he stresses that but the space for resistance in Pinter's plays is very small.<sup>13</sup> Silverstein agrees: to challenge patriarchal structures, the character would not merely seek for the means to transfer power but they would have to "actively seek to invalidate all associations between specularly and power."<sup>14</sup> Although the plays attempt to "demystify patriarchal hegemony" they also make "a curiously ambiguous gesture towards recuperating the patriarchal construction of sexual difference that privileges the former term in the masculine/feminine dichotomy."<sup>15</sup> Ruth, Kate, Anna and Emma can try as they may, but their example only shows the "alarming capacity of cultural order to resist resistance, to 'remain in

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<sup>12</sup> Sakellaridou 120.

<sup>13</sup> Milne 240.

<sup>14</sup> Silverstein 108.

<sup>15</sup> Silverstein 130.

place' by reconstituting itself within the sites of otherness."<sup>16</sup> To paraphrase a quote from *The Homecoming* – the structure remains unaffected.

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<sup>16</sup> Silverstein 143.

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## Abstract

This BA thesis discusses four female characters from three plays of the British dramatist Harold Pinter, placing them in context of depicting 'The Feminine.' Pinter's female characters must not only be seen in the tradition of stereotypical depicting women, but also in context of the patriarchal concepts they have to face – the male dominance, male gaze and male bonding.

The second chapter provides background for discussing female characters – reasons why to do so are provided and the idea of woman as 'the Other' is introduced. This concept led to the stereotyping of women and subsequently to their misrepresentation in fiction. The basic dichotomy of 'wife/whore' is investigated. The chapter also examines the specifics of representation on the stage with references to the development of drama. It concludes with placing Pinter within this context.

The third chapter contains close reading of three Pinter's plays – *The Homecoming*, *Old Times* and *Betrayal*. The roles of female characters are examined in relationship to the power structures they are trying to dismantle. The chapter argues that even if they manage it, the victory does not challenge the patriarchal structure as such.

The fourth chapter is focused on realisation of Pinter on Czech stages. It provides the history of the stagings, focusing especially on two productions which took place long before the political change and were seen as a threat to the official regime. It also analyses two contemporary stagings of *Betrayal*, in Divadlo v Celetné and in Činoherní klub, with the focus on the female roles in these productions.

In conclusion, it is stated that Pinter's plays are not liberated from the 'fictional woman.' Although the female characters challenge the patriarchal structures

and fight for their place in the world, it is a masculine world which they cannot escape or change, so they must play according to its rules. Therefore, although the deconstruction of patriarchy is a part of Pinter's deconstruction of the dominant power, it is never fully accomplished.

## Key words

- Harold Pinter
- *The Homecoming*
- *Old Times*
- *Betrayal*
- Femininity in fiction
- Patriarchy
- Female characters
- Malestream
- Sue-Ellen Case
- Elaine Aston
- Simone De Beauvoir
- Marc Silverstein
- Martin Esslin
- Misogyny
- Činoherní klub
- Divadlo v Celetné

## Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá čtyřmi postavami ze tří her britského dramatika Harolda Pinter v kontextu zobrazování ‚Ženy.‘ Na Pinterovy ženské postavy se musíme dívat nejen v tradici stereotypního ztvárnění žen, ale také v kontextu patriarchálních konceptů, kterým musí čelit – mužské dominanci, mužskému pohledu a mužskému sbližování.

Druhá kapitola dodává pozadí pro zkoumání ženských postav – uvedeny jsou důvody, proč je zkoumat, a také koncept ženy jako ‚toho Druhého.‘ Tento koncept vedl ke stereotypizaci žen a jejich následnému zkreslení ve fikci, kam zapadá i základní dichotomie manželka/děvka. Tato kapitola také představuje specifika reprezentace na jevišti, s odkazy na vývoj dramatu. Uzavřena je uvedením Pintera do tohoto kontextu.

Třetí kapitola obsahuje kritické čtení tří Pinterových her – *The Homecoming*, *Old Times* a *Betrayal*. Role ženských postav je zkoumána ve vztahu k mocenským strukturám, které se snaží dekonstruovat. Kapitola poukazuje na skutečnost, že i v případě, že uspějí, jejich vítězství nijak neohrozí patriarchální struktury.

Čtvrtá kapitola se zaměřuje na české inscenace podle Pinterovy předlohy. Uvádí jejich historii, zvláště pak se věnuje dvěma produkcím, které vznikly dlouho před změnou politických poměrů a byly oficiálním režimem viděny jako hrozba. Také komentuje dvě současné inscenace hry *Betrayal*, která je pod názvem *Zrada* uváděna v Divadle v Celetné a Činoherním klubu. Komentář je zaměřen na ženské postavy v rámci těchto produkcí.

V závěru je uvedeno, že se Pinterovy hry nevyhnou stereotypnímu ztvárnění ženy. Přestože tyto ženské postavy zpochybňují patriarchální struktury a bojují o své

místo ve světě, jedná se o mužský svět, kterému nemohou uniknout či ho změnit, a proto musí hrát podle jeho pravidel. To je důvodem, proč není nikdy dosaženo plné dekonstrukce patriarchy, přestože je součástí Pinterovy dekonstrukce dominantních mocenských struktur.

## Klíčová slova

- Harold Pinter
- *The Homecoming*
- *Old Times*
- *Betrayal*
- Feminita ve fikci
- Patriarchát
- Ženské postavy
- Malestream
- Sue-Allen Case
- Elaine Aston
- Simone de Beauvoir
- Marc Silverstein
- Martin Esslin
- Misogynie
- Činoherní klub
- Divadlo v Celetné