

FEMINISTIC SENSIBILITY IN HAROLD PINTER'S SELECTED PLAYS

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Abstract

In this article I have discussed about Feminist sensibility in Harold Pinter's Play. Harold Pinter was one of the best absurd playwrights of 20th century. Feminism is very important trend in modern Literature most of the writers have focused on women problems in their works. It has started from 20th century, most of writer's focuses on women problems, their importance in society and women position in society. Virginia Woolf and Simone De Beavoir are most important feminists who have focused on women problems. They have written wonderful works like *The Room of One's own* and *The Second Sex*. They have shown how different society has their own rules and regulations for women and how women are treated by men in particular society.

Discrimination still exists today in the unconscious and conscious mind of male and female alike. These moods and inspiration are prejudiced by the woman's consciousness of her twice role of being at once a mother and a whore. The nature of a woman may be divided into two roles as a mother and that of whore. The first one replicates the maternal side of the woman whereas the second talks about the sexual aspects of the woman. The primary and second aspects are studied by Helen Diner in *Mothers and Amazons: The first Feminine History of Culture*, by Erich Neumann in *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* and by Esther Harding in *The Way of All Women*. In study about the nature and psycho of a woman Neumann propounds that woman in the elementary stage is married to a man and sees herself as a projection of that man, almost an extension of him. She lives vicariously through him and her sole job is to keep him satisfied and happy through-out the life.

Keywords: Feminism, Discrimination, sensibility, Harold Pinter, patriarchy and Stereotypes and women in society.

Full Length paper

Harold Pinter has placed himself in the challenging position of examines woman at the versatile centre of their essence, recitation all aspects of the mother and the whore, and integrating the two as mother-whore. Harold Pinter investigates man coping with the inconsistent images of the mother-whore figure. In literature and art the woman is represented as being a vessel, for she can enclose the child before and after birth by virtue of its dependence on her. Woman was worshipped for her intrinsic ability to bring forth life into the world. This occurrence granted her respect and fear from the people around her, who existed by virtue of her reproductive power. Thus woman had a convinced amount of control over others. The goddess' authorities of fertility link her with the essentials of the universe, the changing of the seasons, the animal and plant life,

the rotation of the very earth itself. Man, who wishes to be in harmony with these often intimidating elements, must prove himself to be in harmony with the woman who controls these essentials. Thus a man shows his admiration of women in a number of ways. In classical times, Man worshipped the fruitfulness goddess by a “frenzied and orgiastic ritual”. In this observe, Neumann comments: It is a very important feature of the ancient epitome that it unites positive and negative attributes and groups of attributes. This union of resistance in the primitive archetype, its ambivalence, is attributing of the original situation of the insensate, which consciousness has not yet dissected into its contrast. Early man experienced this inconsistent simultaneity of good and evil, friendly and terrible, in the godhead as a unity; while as awareness developed, the good goddess and the bad goddess, for example, usually came to be worshipped as different beings.

Neumann further comments: Those woman in whom the basic character is dominant are related only together to their mate; they have no individual relation to him and experience only a representative situation in him. In a patriarchate, for example, the woman sees man as the archetypal father who begets children, who provides sanctuary preferably also in the economic sense for herself and her brood, and lends her a social persona position in the community. Like Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, Chekov’s *Three Sisters*, Joyce’s *Dubliners*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the plays of Harold Pinter gives the figure of woman as a mother and also as a whore. Martin Esslin in *The People Wounded: The work of Harold Pinter writes*: The image itself the women as mother and as whore, split asunder into two complementary characters or simultaneous in the same person-is indeed, one of the basic archetypes of all literature.

The first group of Harold Pinter’s plays *The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, *A Night Out*, *A Slight Ache*, *Night School*, *A Night Out* dealt with mother type of woman behavior. The mother-figure shows in his works such as in *The Dumb Waiter*, *The Caretaker* and *The Dwarfs*. In *the Dumb Waiter*, throughout the kettle discussion between Gus and Ben, Gus makes mention of his mother as a powerful figure when he says’ “I got my mother used to say it”.

In *The Caretaker* Mick is infatuated with his mother’s bed, while Aston is still annoying to figure out why his mother permitted the doctrine to manage either shock therapy or a lobotomy to him. Same way Len, in *The Dwarfs*, tries to mother both Mark and Petey. He sees himself as “the charlady” comments on new clothes, and offers food. Thus, Pinter presents a picture of the variety of attributes of the mother in his early drama. *A Slight Ache* provides as a transitional play between the mother groups. Pinter’s other set of plays deals with marital couples or couples living together in an appearance of marriage. In *The Collection*, *The Tea Party*, *The Basement*, and *The Lover*, Pinter discovers the pressure of marriage and the means whereby dissimilar couples work out their exceptional solutions to the challenging marriages. In doing this Harold Pinter delineates the association a woman has to herself and to others as woman, wife, and sometime mother. The significance throughout is on sexual principle of the woman, who is seen playing the role of the whore in a number of ways.

In his later phase of dramas like *Landscape, Silence, Night, Old Times, No Man's Land*, he gives a different picture of a woman. In *A Night Out (1960)*, Albert Stokes, a mild-mannered clerk in the firm of Hislop lives at home with his mother. Albert has always fostered sexual approach for his dominating mother, who has never allowed him to socialize with other women. Albert is quite aware that his mother knows precisely where his tie is, as it is her job to know where everything is.

He knows stalling, trying to stop him from going, but he will not give way to this blackmail. Albert's mother, who is patiently waiting for him, typically forgives him all his trespasses and allows him back into the home. She straight away plans a distraction from the bad memory of the time, when Albert raised his hand to his mum. The mother has productively been able to keep him to herself and thus emerges as the most powerful character of play. Albert is not clever to escape from his mother nor is he able to carry out fit heterosexual relations. As she is still the child in the depiction, or a mother in his fantasies, and thus does not have an sovereign life either.

Albert, in his mania with his oedipal love for his mother, has not been clever to deal with woman usually. Thus, she goes from one extreme to another, from his mother to a whore who turns out to be very much like his mother. Martin Esslin in his book *The People Wounded: The Work Of Harold Pinter* explains: Albert hates both feature of the womanly principle: the sexual authority of the prostitute, i.e. woman as a confront to his sexual strength, and the mother's claim to dominance over him as head of her family as a person allowable to his respect, thankfulness and servitude. Thus we view that Pinter does not limit himself to portraying solely mothers as central figures in his plays. In his first play, *The Room (1960)* he presents a mother replacement. Ronald Hayman in his book *Harold Pinter* explains: Rose isn't a protect, but she's the example of all Pinter's chattering, fussing, nagging mother – figures: women never stop to listen, but they also never stop asking implicitly for the goodwill of the husband or son or nephew or lodger.

In his *The Birthday Party (1958)*, Meg is a conservatory of the type of mothering portrayed by Rose in *The Room*. Meg relocates her feelings of mothering on a replacement son rather than on her husband. while she does treat Petey, her husband, like a child, by arranging his cornflakes and making sure he eats them, Meg is able to discharge most of her maternal feelings on Stanley.

Meg states her favorite for "little boys" when Petey reads out a birth statement from the paper:

Meg: What is it?

Petey: (studying the paper). Er..... a girl.

Meg: Not a boy?

Petey: No.

Meg: Oh, What a shame. I'd be sorry. I'd much rather have a little boy.

Petey: A little girl's all right.

Meg: I'd much rather have a little boy. (The Birthday Party, p.11)

When the two men, McCann and Goldberg, appear they waste no time in getting information from Meg about Stanley. It becomes understandable that they have come to get him for incredible he has done in the past. Meg projects her mother image when she discusses Stanley. At the same time the sexual undertone outside; to such an extent that Meg makes sure to verify that her husband sleeps with her in case McCann and Goldberg would think otherwise.

In *Night School* (1960), Harold Pinter's first radio play, the role of the mother is split among two aunts, Annie and Milley. The role of the whore is played by their tenant, Sally. The two aunts vie for supremacy all through the play, but it is evident that, "Milley is the foremost one, Annie the one who is dominated but does all the work, and derive some happiness from ritual protests against her subordination. Walter feels his position in the family is being challenged. He has lost tenure of his room, and his aunts have substituted him with a girl. He speaks like:

WALTER: I can't believe it. I came home after nine months in a dungeon.

ANNIE: The money's been a great help.

WALTER: Have I ever left you short of money?

MILLEY: Yes!

WALTER: Well.... Not through my own fault I've always done my best.

MILLEY: And where's it got you?

WALTER: What's this, you reproaching me?

Harold Pinter follows up this bump into by showing Sally in her role as nightclub hostess, where she must obey the instructions of her boss Tully. An old friend of Solto, Tully introduces Sally to Solto. In their discussion, Sally wonders how Solto was able to ask for her specially. Solto explain about photo, enlightening Walter's name in the process. Even though she makes no external reaction, one feels she has already determined to change lodgings. As soon as Walter is told by Solto that he could not position the girl, his aunts reveal to him the fact that she has left. Annie and Milley are incapable to find a wife for their Walter, and Walter is left with a room unfilled of his needs. Thus once more the 'son' rests beneath the influence of the substitute 'mother', and is incapable to carry through a connection with women other than his 'mother'.

In *The Caretaker* (1960) no women characters are there still their reminiscence affect other characters like Mick and Aston. The mother of Mick and Aston seems to corroborate the pattern of the other mothers of Pinter's Plays. In *The Caretaker*, the whore like aspect of women is represented by Davies's wife and by a woman who proposals Aston here, the men are powerless of accepting sexual connection. We examine that Aston has had complexity treatment with women. These disclose the sexual or whore side of the woman,

and involvement separate from his mother. Aston tells Davies the fairy-tale of the time when he was meeting in a cafe, minding his own commerce, when a lady struck up a discussion with him. Through discussion with her, he got an offer of sex which disturbs his peace of mind. The sexual honesty is too real for him. It seems that he is unsettled. Since he has already been punished by his mother for his oedipal desires, he is unable of accepting or sympathetic or aggressive sexual proposition.

It seems that Davies is evenly debilitated. A week or so after they had been married, he exposed a pile of his wife's unwashed under-clothing lying in the saucepan used for cooking vegetables. He too could not totally accept the sexuality of his wife, symbolized here by her "tainted" underwear. Davies had a related aversion to "dirt" and to sex and he vegetation his wife as soon as she displays any bad habits. He obviously could not adjust to a "normal" heterosexual connection.

We find that Aston and Mick are motionless ruled by the memory of a authoritative mother, which prevents them from establishing any healthy heterosexual association. Thus, all three men in *The Caretaker* had an extraordinary contact which leaves them distrustful of the opposite sex. as a result, they are irritating to put order into their lives by other means; Davies says he will go to Sidcup in order to obtain his papers so that he can qualify for the position of caretaker, Aston says he will build a shed, which he is powerless of doing, and Mick says he will turn the house from a scruffy place into a palace, which is also next to unfeasible. At the end Davies is bowed out of the house when he loses his position with both brothers, who are left with the reminiscence of their mother and with the fancy that they will fix up the house.

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