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HAROLD PINTER'S FEMALE PROVOCATEURS IN:  
*A NIGHT OUT, THE HOMECOMING, and OLD TIMES*

presented by

JALAIN CATHERINE ONSGARD

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HAROLD PINTER'S FEMALE PROVOCATEURS IN:  
*A NIGHT OUT, THE HOMECOMING, AND OLD TIMES*

By

Jalain Catherine Onsgard

A THESIS

Submitted to  
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## ABSTRACT

### HAROLD PINTER'S FEMALE PROVOCATEURS IN: *A NIGHT OUT*, *THE HOMECOMING*, and *OLD TIMES*

By

Jalain Catherine Onsgard

The purpose of this thesis is to apply elements of James Thomas' "Action Analysis" to three of Harold Pinter's plays: *A Night Out*, *The Homecoming*, and *Old Times* in order to demonstrate and support an interpretation that Pinter's females function as provocateurs, characters that provoke, incite, and excite. The critical Mother in *A Night Out*, the absent female in *The Homecoming*, and the memory tool in *Old Times* drove the selection.

The elements of analysis are "External Events", "Three Climaxes", "Seed", and line of "Through-Action". This system exposes the function of Pinter's women through the "External Events". Female characters that provoke, excite, or incite reveal "Three Climaxes". A "Seed" and line of "Through-Action" strengthen the interpretation that Pinter's females function as provocateurs.

To mom and dad, my heroes.

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I am grateful to a number of people for their various contributions to this project. First and foremost I would like to thank my soul mate, Jeremy for his unwavering support and brilliant sense of humor; my family for reminding me I can do “anything I put my mind to”; and my friends J.J. Spalding, Brian Adams, Nicole Paquette and Zach Donaldson for offering time and candid readings of my chapters. In addition, I am grateful to Professor Frank Rutledge for always being right, for challenging my mind, and for being the major contributor to my intellectual blossoming. I would like to thank the members of my committee, Professors Gretel Geist and Nick Tamarkin for committing themselves to this project. Finally, I would like to thank all my students who validated my efforts by cheering me on.

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# Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to apply elements of James Thomas' "Action Analysis" to three of Harold Pinter's plays: *A Night Out*, *The Homecoming*, and *Old Times* in order to demonstrate and support an interpretation that Pinter's females function as provocateurs; characters that provoke, incite, and excite. Complexities such as the critical Mother in *A Night Out*, the absent female in *The Homecoming*, and the memory tool in *Old Times* drove the selection of the plays.

To support the interpretation that Pinter's females function as provocateurs, it is necessary to bring forth the synonymous meaning of the words provocateur, excite, and incite. These terms will be used to evaluate the actions, functions, and qualities of the female roles in the selected plays. The terms are defined as:

Provocateur (*n*): a person who provokes trouble, causes dissension, or the like, agitator.

Incite (*v*): to stir, encourage, urge on: stimulate or prompt to action; to incite a crowd to riot.

Excite (*v*): 1. to arouse or stir up the emotions or feelings of: *to excite a person to anger*. 2. to arouse or stir up. 3. to cause; awaken. 4. to stir to action; to provoke or stir up.

(*Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. March 2007. <<http://dictionary.reference.com>> "incite", "excite", "provocateur".

Provocateur (*n*): one who provokes a disturbance, an agitator; an agent provocateur.

Incite (*v*): To urge or spur on; to stir up, animate, instigate, stimulate. Const. *to do* something; *to* or *unto* some action. To urge or provoke (some action).

Excite (v): 1. To set in motion, stir up. a. To move, stir up, instigate, incite. b. To provoke, challenge. c. In physical sense: To set in motion, stir up 2. To rouse, awaken 3. To induce, elicit, provoke (actions, manifestations); to bring about, occasion (active conditions)

(*Oxford English Dictionary, second edition. 1989. March 2007.*  
<<http://dictionary.oed.com>> “incite”, “provocateur”, “excite”).

The three selected plays, *A Night Out*, *The Homecoming*, and *Old Times* are analyzed using elements of James Thomas’ “Action Analysis”. The analysis comes from the third edition of his book, “Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers” published in 2005 by Focal Press. James Thomas is a professor of Theatre at Wayne State University and Head of its PhD. Program in Directing and Theatre Scholarship. Also, he was the Associate Dean at Florida State University. In addition, Thomas works as a translator of texts about modern Russian acting and directing and is the Director of Wayne State’s Study Abroad Program with the Moscow Art Theatre School.

A variety of professors, such as Barbara Anger of Ithaca College and Perry Crafton of A&M University recommend Thomas’ method of analysis as a simple breakdown for understanding and interpreting a play, no matter how complex the subject matter. The system is by no means a formalistic approach to script analysis. It is an abridged reference for discovering and presenting clues for producing a play.

In Thomas’, Action Analysis, the focus is on plot. Thomas credits Aristotle’s original methods for script analysis and suggests separating the basic

principles of dramatic potentials in order to make determinations of the play as a whole. Action Analysis consists of “External Events”, “Internal Events”, “Three Climaxes”, “Seed”, “Through – Action,” and “Counter Through – Action”. Thomas warns:

The decision to divide plays into topics and categories is a subjective one made for teaching purposes, and dividing each category into even smaller categories is even more so. Like all categories, they are by no means rigid in actual practice. Intelligent readers will notice many categories could be placed under more than one heading covered somewhere else in this book. One thing experienced actors, directors and designers can't help but notice is the way that many of these issues mix together, bump into each other, explain and fine-tune one another. Whether a certain passage fits into one category or another is important for learning purposes, of course. But equally important is learning that a passage could belong to several categories at the same time (xii).

By narrowing the point of view, demonstrating strictly “External Events”, “Three Climaxes”, “Seed”, and “Through – Action”, support for the interpretation that females function as provocateurs will emerge.

The first step in Action Analysis is identifying the “External Events”. In simpler terms, it is a review of the actions. Listing the External Events provides a reference for establishing patterns in the actions of the characters. Thomas says:

By “external event”, we mean the simple social activity that is taking place, for example, arrivals or departures, meetings, announcements, discussions, quarrels, etc. While we're on the subject, according to Stanislavski an event consists of the intersection of two conflicting actions that cause the social activity in the first place (3).

The next step of analysis is conceptualizing the “Seed” of the play. The “Seed” should be an abstraction that establishes a basic concept for production. The “Seed” emerges in a pattern already established within the “External Events”. Thomas defines:

A seed is a source of development of growth and the Seed of a play is the source of its development and growth as a creative work. Understanding the Seed helps to build a production according to the harmonious unity of all its parts. According to Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, the Seed should resonate in every event. He believed it necessary for all participants of the production, whether they play a large role or a small role, to be connected to everyone else by means of the Seed (7).

The third step of analysis is finding Three Major Climaxes in each play. Thomas clarifies:

A climax is an event of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action. The beginning, middle, and end comprise the Three Major Climaxes, which by definition are the three most important events in the play. Movement from one climax to another is what drives the play and gives it a sense of momentum. Michael Chekov taught that defining the Three Major Climaxes is vital because it exposes the basic outline of the play, which is also the goal of Action Analysis. (13)

Action Analysis instructs us to establish the line of Through-Action in each play. The Through-Action needs to be an account of what happens in the play. A one-sentence description should contain all the parts of Action Analysis in synoptic form. Thomas suggests that in order for Through-Action to be valid, it must unify with the “External Events”, “Seed”, and “Climaxes”. Thomas claims that:

The Through-Action has often been discussed in the writing of Stanislavski and his followers. The description Sharon Carnicke provides in her informative book, *Stanislavski in Focus*, is representative. She defines the Through-Action as “A unifying, overall action that relates all moment-to-moment actions throughout the play to each other” (20, 21).

James Thomas’ method of Action Analysis, which includes the identification of the “External Events”, determining a “Seed”, identifying “Three Climaxes”, and determining a line of “Through – Action” for each play, will provide a template of actions to support the interpretation that females function as provocateur.

In addition to individual script analysis, evidence from a variety of critical sources examining Pinter’s works, provide support for the idea that females function as provocateurs. The sources include *Complete Works* by Harold Pinter, Volumes One through Four, *Conversations with Pinter* by Mel Gussow, *Pinter’s Female Portraits* by Elizabeth Sakellaridou, *Gender and Power in the Plays of Harold Pinter* by Victor L. Cahn, and *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter* by Michael Billington.

Particularly, *Pinter’s Female Portraits* justifies an interpretation that women may function as provocateurs. From the inside jacket, noting:

Pinter “. . . fills up the stage with anachronistic images/projections of male memory/fantasy and causes nightmarish dreams of male catatonia, mental and physical collapse while visualizing women as omnipotent primal figures – harbingers of life and death, creatures of simultaneous fascination and destruction. Such mental distortion gradually get under control and Pinter’s characters return to a realistic modern setting where the male discourse loses part of its

power and the female voice is strengthened accordingly (Unknown).

This statement provides analogous images of women who provoke, incite, and excite.

Within Victor L. Cahn's, *Gender and Power in the Plays of Harold Pinter*, there are examinations of *A Night Out*, *The Homecoming* and *Old Times* supporting that contention found between the characters may be triggered by a female provocateur. Cahn suggests that:

Many of the women in these plays operate with an understanding of their own bodies and minds and therefore of their own desires. The women also have insight into male behavior and thought. Pinter's men, on the other hand, are constantly perplexed by what women know and, even more, by what women want. Thus the overall comic tension is increased by the male realization that although men have the physical capacity to exert dominance, they are emotionally weaker than the women with whom they are in conflict (7).

Cahn refers to Pinter's own words regarding *The Homecoming* saying his characters "do not act arbitrarily, but for very deep-seated reasons" (5).

In a world where meaning is uncertain, where objects and territory are all that are definable, where language is a vehicle for protection rather than communication, where doubt in many forms is ever present, supremacy over the other people guarantees a measure of knowledge and identity. When characters are secure in their authority, when they control others, when they are confident that their own status is certain, then they are spared some of the anguish intrinsic to Pinter's dramatic world (Cahn 5).

*Conversations with Pinter* by Mel Gussow provides a foundation in making interpretations within the scripts based on Pinter's own definitions, boundaries, and purposes. The possibilities that lie in Pinter's words support the interpretation that females excite and provoke a disturbance and/or transformation, even through silence.

So often, below the word spoken, is the thing known and unspoken. My characters tell me so much and no more, with reference to their experience, their aspirations, their motives, their history. Between my lack of biographical data about them and the ambiguity of what they say lies a territory which is not only worthy of exploration but which it is compulsory to explore. . . You arrange *and* you listen, following the clues you leave for yourself through the characters. And sometimes a balance is found, where image can freely engender image and where at the same time you are able to keep you sights on the place where the characters are silent and in hiding. It is in the silence that they are most evident to me (Pinter, CW1 12, 13, 14).

Harold Pinter's female characters are emphatic in nature. Whether sexually charged, profoundly driven, gracefully manipulative, utterly overbearing, or silently bold, the mysteries of Pinter's females are worthy of exploration. Without provocation by women, Pinter's men would seem to lack desire, status, and drive and impulses would stagnate or implode. Pinter makes it difficult to dislike his female characters even in the most unsympathetic scenarios. The women are alluring regardless of any perceived evil, immoral, nagging qualities they may possess. With every female action, there is a powerful reaction. With every reaction, there lies a hint that transformation will ensue.

There are images to relish with conflicting emotions: In "A Night Out" Mother sits at the table ironically playing the game of patience. Albert drops a

cigarette on the Girl's carpet before he forces her to lace his shoes. Mother stroking Albert's hand as he slouches, submissively in a chair, shows the manipulative power a mother possesses. In *The Homecoming* the first kiss between Lenny and Ruth, Joey escorting and laying on top of Ruth; Ruth, triumphantly sitting with Max and Joey at her feet. In *Old Times* Anna and Kate allude to a lesbian relationship stimulating the images of women blushing, and sharing underwear. Kate stands in her bathrobe, adored by Anna and Deeley.

Pinter admits ambiguity of his characters "worthy of exploration" (CW1 13). This thesis will demonstrate that women are not merely subjects, but characters essential for provoking, exciting, and inciting dramatic tension. Chapter One will demonstrate the Mother and Girl instigating and provoking the barbaric actions of Albert in *A Night Out*. Chapter Two will demonstrate the presence of Ruth instigating and exciting the men, driving the action and challenging power in *The Homecoming*. Chapter Three will examine the characters of Kate and Anna exciting, provoking, and instigating battles of affection in *Old Times*.

Each play analysis identifies "External Events", "Three Climaxes", "and Seed "and" Through – Action". A sub-heading throughout the list of "External Events" prefaces each "Climax". The "Seed" and "Through – Action" are discussed lastly and connected to the "External Event" and "Seed" as support to the interpretation that females function as provocateur as a concept for production.



## Chapter One: *A Night Out*

“A Night Out”, originally presented on television in 1960, premiered almost simultaneously with the release of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*. Given that proximity, Pinter could not have been influenced by the movie. Yet the two works share the theme of a dominating mother whose love is all – encompassing. In *Psycho* that love survives even the mother’s death, ultimately usurping, then destroying, Norman Bates’s personality. The situation in this play is not so extreme, but Mrs. Stokes’s feelings for her son clearly go beyond maternal (Cahn 20).

The theory of whatever can go wrong, will go wrong, and at the worst possible time, adequately describes Albert Stokes’ destiny in Harold Pinter’s *A Night Out*. A twenty eight year old man, living with his critical mother, begins to act impulsively, and by the end, violently towards women. Insecurities from being nagged, made to feel inadequate, and responsible for his mother’s loneliness, Albert’s actions become bold, impulsive, and, at times, with no remorse. Sakellaridou says:

The figures of mother and whore in reality remain two separate personalities in “A Night Out”. Yet their fusion in the male consciousness into one being can be a positive step towards a better understanding of the complexities of the female psyche and a restoration of the fragmented female image into one whole. What still lingers in the play is the male’s strong mistrust, hate and fear of women that give “A Night Out” its unmistakable masculine tone (55).

The rage of Albert’s actions in *A Night Out* progress as the interactions with women unfolds. The following, from *Harold Pinter, Complete Works One* pages 203-247, are “External Events” leading to the first “Climax”:

- In the kitchen, Albert is combing his hair in a mirror ignoring his mother's voice calling him. He begins to polish his shoes.
- Mrs. Stokes descends the stairs and enters the kitchen.
- Mother asks what Albert is doing and he replies he is looking for his tie.
- Mother asks Albert to change a light bulb in grandmother's room.
- Albert says "irritably" that grandma has been dead for ten years.
- Mother and Albert argue about changing the bulb and going into the cellar. He is in his best clothes and she says "anyone would think you are going to the Ritz".
- Albert insists he told Mother three times he was attending Mr. Ryan's send off party.
- Mother asks, "What about your dinner"?
- Albert says, "I'd much rather stay with you".
- Mother asks Albert to replace the bulb again and they argue about going into the cellar.
- Mother says, "Your father would turn in his grave if he heard you raise your voice to me. You're all I've got, Albert. I want you to remember that. I haven't got anyone else. I want . . . I want you to bear that in mind".
- Albert apologizes.
- Mother says, "Are you leading a clean life?"
- Albert asks what she is talking about and Mother asks if he is "messing about with girls".
- Mother makes Albert promise he won't upset his father.
- Albert says, "You're always talking about upsetting people who are dead".
- Mother says his father lives in her heart. (*Touching her breast*)
- Albert tells her he is in a hurry and runs upstairs.
- Mother calls after him asking about their game of cards and who will replace the light bulb in grandma's room.

- SCENE TWO

- Seeley and Kedge, *both about Albert's age, are at the counter, talking to the barman. An old man leans at the corner of the counter.*
- Seeley and Kedge order food and tea.
- Old Man tells the men Albert was in the coffee stall 45 minutes ago, went home to change, and asked him to tell the men that he would be back.
- Old Man says, "He sat there looking very compressed with himself".
- The barman corrects him and says he means depressed.
- Seeley says it's because of the game on Saturday and Albert didn't play his normal game and that Gidney was after him.
- Old Man says again that Albert was "looking very compressed with himself".

- SCENE THREE

- *Albert is coming down the stairs. He is wearing his jacket. He goes towards the door. His mother calls from the kitchen and goes into the hall.*
- Mother asks where he is going.
- Albert responds, "Out".
- Mother gets a brush from the kitchen to brush his suit. She tells him he needs a handkerchief and that his father was always properly dressed.

- SCENE FOUR

- *The coffee stall. Kedge is returning from the counter with two teas.*
- Kedge says, "I bet his Mum's combing his hair for him, eh"?
- The men talk about Albert's Mother and talk about how Albert gets "niggly" when she is mentioned and that he is quiet and secretive.
- Seeley says, "I said he was deep. I didn't say he was secretive".
- *Albert walks through the railway arch across to the bench.*

- Albert says he has a headache and probably won't go to the party tonight.
- Seeley and Kedge tell Albert that Joyce, Eileen and Betty will be there.
- Kedge says, "You frightened Gidney'll be after you, then , because of the game"? (215)
- Albert says he is not frightened of Gidney and now he will go to the party.
- Kedge asks Albert how his mom is.
- Albert replies, "What do you mean, how's my Mum"?
- Albert, Kedge and Seeley argue about the purpose of the question.
- Albert says, "She's fine. What about yours"?
- Seeley asks the men if they're coming.
- Kedge says, "I'm coming". Albert (*following*) "I'm coming".
- SCENE FIVE
- *The kitchen. The Mother is putting Albert's dinner into the oven. She takes the alarm clock from the mantelpiece and puts it on the table. She takes out a pack of cards, sits at the table and begins to lay out a game of patience. Close up of her, broodingly setting out the cards. Close up of the clock. It is seven forty – five.*
- Act Two, SCENE ONE
- *The lounge of Mr. King's house. The party is in progress. Kedge and Betty are dancing. Mr. King, Gidney, Seeley and Albert are standing in a group. Joyce and Eileen are at the table. Horne and Borrow stand by the door. Mr. Ryan, sits in the center of the room, smiling.*
- Joyce and Eileen regard Mr. Ryan.
- King, Seeley and Gidney talk about riding a bike to work.
- Betty and Kedge are dancing.
- Albert laughs at a joke Gidney made in conversation with Mr. King.
- Mr. King excuses himself leaving Albert, Seeley, and Gidney.

- Seeley says Gidney has nice shoes and goes to dance with Eileen.
- Gidney asks if Albert dances, then excuses himself, leaving Albert standing.
- Joyce and Gidney talk about getting Eileen to lead Albert in a dance just to see what he does. Gidney says, "I want to see his reaction, that's all, I just want to see how he takes it". "No, he just irritates me, that bloke". "Well, see if you can wake him up".
- *He sees Albert at the bar.* Gidney says he could work anywhere with his qualifications and says, "Couldn't I, Stokes".
- Albert and Gidney talk about qualifications and Gidney says he could be a professional cricketer.
- Gidney says talk about qualifications makes him laugh.
- Mr. King talks about the company team and says it gives a sense of belonging.
- Joyce and Eileen *whispering*.
- Joyce and Eileen *sit on either side of Albert on a divan*.
- Joyce asks what Albert is gloomy about and he says he is just sitting and drinking and that he is tired from work.
- Joyce and Eileen ask him to make room, mind his drink and says he's been living it up.
- Joyce and Eileen tell him he's nice and good looking.
- Joyce asks, "You live with your mother, don't you"?
- Albert says yes and excuses himself to the bar.
- Joyce and Eileen follow him.
- Mr. King asks for everyone's attention to make a speech.
- Albert, Eileen, Joyce, Seeley, and Gidney *stand in a group around Mr. Ryan's chair*.
- Mr. King continues his speech honoring Mr. Ryan.
- *A sharp scream and stiffening from Eileen. All turn to her.*

- Eileen says someone touched her and stares at Albert.
- Albert says, "What are you looking at me for"?
- Seeley asks how she knows it was Albert.
- Albert denies the allegation.
- *The camera closes on Mr. Ryan's hand, resting comfortably on his knee, and then to his face which, smiling vaguely, is inclined to the ceiling. It must be quite clear from the expression that it was his hand which strayed.*
- Gidney confronts Albert while Seeley defends Albert.
- The girls sit together in shock while Mr. King continues his speech.
- Gidney wants to take Albert outside and Albert says he's leaving anyway.
- *Albert goes into the hall, followed by Gidney and Seeley. The door shuts behind them.*
- Gidney confronts Albert again and tells Seeley to stay out of it.
- Gidney says, "I was telling you, Albert, that if you're going to behave like a boy of ten in mixed company – "
- Albert says, "I told you my name's Stokes"!
- Gidney demands that Albert apologize for insulting a lady.
- Albert asks him to get out of his way so he can leave.
- Gidney says, "You're a mother's boy. That's what you are. That's your trouble. You're a mother's boy".
- *Albert hits him. There is a scuffle. Seeley tries to part them. The three rock back and forth in the hall: confused blows, words and grunts.*
- Mr. King says, "What in heaven's name is going on here"!
- *The scuffle stops. A short silence. Albert opens the front door, goes out and slams it behind him. He stands on the doorstep, breathing heavily, his face set.*

**The preceding “External Events” conclude Climax 1:** The scuffle is the first climax incited by the relationship between Albert and his mother. Her entrance and incessant nagging makes Albert question whether he wants to attend the company party. His co-workers take notice to Albert’s odd behavior when his mother is mentioned. Albert’s defensive responses display excitement provoked by his relationship with her. As Cahn notes:

Albert’s inability to mix in a normal social setting is dramatized in the first scene of act 2, where amid flirting and dancing he is alienated. We feel this estrangement particularly when Eileen and Joyce sit on either side of him. Albert can barely acknowledge their coquettish jibes, and when they mention his mother he walks away. His incipient violence moves closer . . . When Eileen shouts in dismay about being touched, and suspicion is falsely cast on Albert, rebellion begins. He fights back verbally when Gidney calls him by his first name, as Albert’s mother might do. Then when Gidney openly labels Albert a “mother’s boy”, Albert’s retaliation is his initial physical response (22).

The following “External Events” lead to the second “Climax”:

- **SCENE TWO**
- *The kitchen. Mrs. Stokes is asleep, her head resting on the table, the cards disordered. The clock ticks. It is twelve o’clock. The front door opens slowly. Albert comes in, closes the door softly, stops, looks across to the open kitchen door, sees his mother, and begins to creep up the stairs with great stealth. The camera follows him. Her voice stops him.*
- Mother asks why he is creeping up the stairs and he descends slowly.
- Mother asks many questions.
- *He walks past her into the kitchen, goes to the sink pours himself a glass of water. She follows him.*
- Mother says, “What have you been doing, mucking about with girls?” (231)

- Mother says Albert is probably drunk, his dinner is ruined, and that it does not “count for much” that she’s his mother.
- *She takes his dinner out of the oven.*
- *She places a plate on the table and gets knife and fork. He stands by the sink, sipping water.*
- Mother says, “I wouldn’t mind if you found a really nice girl and brought her home and introduced her to your mother, brought her home for dinner, I’d know you were sincere, if she was a really nice girl, she’d be like a daughter to me. But you’ve never brought a girl home here in your life. I suppose you’re ashamed of your mother. (Pause) Come on, it’s all dried up. I kept it on a low light. I couldn’t even go up to Grandma’s room and have a look round because there wasn’t any bulb, you might as well eat it” (232).
- *He stands.*
- Mother continues, “I keep a lovely home, I bet there’s none of the boys in your firm better fed than you are. I’m not asking gratitude. But one thing hurts me, Albert, and I’ll tell you what it is. Not for years, not for years, have you come up to me and said, Mum, I love you, like you did when you were a little boy. You’ve never said it to me without me having to ask you. Not since before your father died. And he was a good man. He had high hopes of you. I don’t know what you do with all your money. But don’t forget what it cost us to rear you, my boy, I’ve never told you about the sacrifices we made, you wouldn’t care, anyway. Telling me lies about going to the firm’s party. They’ve got a bit of respect at that firm, that’s why we sent you there, to start off your career, they wouldn’t let you carry on like that at one of their functions. Mr. King would have his eye on you. I don’t know where you’ve been. Well, if you don’t want to lead a clean life it’s your lookout, if you want to go mucking about with all sorts of bits of girls, if you’re content to leave your own mother sitting here till midnight, and I wasn’t feeling well, anyway, I didn’t tell you because I didn’t want to upset you, I keep things from you, you’re the only one I’ve got, but what do you care, you don’t care, you don’t care, the least you can do is sit down and eat the dinner I cooked for you, specially for you, it’s Shepherd’s Pie – “ (233).
- *Albert lunges to the table, picks up the clock and violently raises it above his head. A stifled scream from Mother.*



**The preceding “External Events” conclude Climax 2:** The second climax is Albert picking up the clock and raising it above his head. This is his response to Mother’s instigating monologue trying to elicit pity. Mother nags Albert about being drunk, and the house being dark and how she could have broken her neck. She says she “keeps quiet about what you expect me to manage on” (CW1 33).

The following “External Events” lead to the third “Climax”:

- Act Three, SCENE ONE
- *The coffee stall, shuttered. Albert is leaning against it. He is sweating. He is holding the butt of a cigarette. There is a sound of a foot on gravel. He starts, the butt burns in his hand, he drops it and turns. A Girl is looking at him. She smiles.*
- Girl moves in on Albert and ask him to come to her room.
- *He goes with her.*
- SCENE TWO
- *The Girl's room. The door opens. She comes in. Her manner has changed from the seductive. She is brisk and nervous.*
- Girl asks Albert not to slam the door, lights a fire, asks him not to walk so heavily and to take his shoes off. “Really, I can’t bear . . . noisy . . . people”.
- *He looks at his shoes, begins to untie one. The Girl searches for matches on the mantelpiece, upon which are a number of articles and objects, including a large alarm clock.*
- The girl lights a fire with matches, and picks up a photo claiming it is her little girl.
- Girl says, “You do look idiotic standing there with one shoe on and one shoe off. All lop – sided”.

- *Albert pulls at the lace of his other shoe. The lace breaks. He swears shortly under his breath.*
- Girl asks him not to curse, chastises him for sitting in the wrong seat, and asks him which fire he prefers, gas, or electric.
- *Albert (holding his forehead, muttering):* I don't know.
- Girl asks if he has a headache, and goes on about liking wine and cigarettes after dinner. She asks about his profession and says she used to be a continuity girl, but gave it up.
- *Alberts says, "What a pity".*
- Girl says, "I'm extremely particular you see. I do like a certain amount of delicacy in men . . . a certain amount . . . a certain degree . . . a certain amount of refinement. You do see my point? Some men I couldn't possibly entertain. Not even if I was . . . starving. I don't want to be personal, but that word you used, when you broke your lace, it made me shiver, I'm just not that type, made me wonder if you were as well bred as I thought . . ."
- *He wipes his face with his hand.*
- Girl asks if he is hot or if he was in a fight and she doesn't want someone else's blood on her carpet.
- *Albert looks up at the mantelpiece. His gaze rests there.*
- *Albert says, (ruminatively):* That's a nice big clock. *It is twenty past two.*
- Girl looks for a cigarette, finds one and lights it. She says she is thinking of moving and that people tell her she could do anything and go anywhere.
- *Albert coughs violently.*
- Girl asks him not to do that without using a handkerchief. She asks, "What have you been doing tonight"?
- *He looks at her and smiles.*
- *She throws him a cigarette, which he slowly lights.*
- Girl talks about "so – called respectable girls" and that all the continuity girls and secretaries are "very loose".

- Albert says, "You're a bit . . . worried about continuity girls, aren't you"?
- *She goes to the window.*
- *Albert stands and picks up the clock.*
- Girl asks what he is doing with the clock.
- *He looks at her slowly.* He says he is admiring it.
- Girl asks him to hand it to her, because people steal things.
- Girl offers him an ashtray and tells him to use it.
- *He sits. She studies him.*
- Girl says he "amuses" her and she is a "bit of a psychologist". She claims to be a respectable mother with a child in boarding school. "All I do, I just entertain a few gentlemen, of my own choice, now and again. What girl doesn't"?
- *His hand screws the cigarette. He lets it fall on the carpet.*
- Girl yells at him to pick it up and attempts to go for it herself.
- *She lunges towards it. His hand closes upon hers as she reaches for it.*
- Albert quietly tells her to sit down.
- Girl is struggling and Albert (*erratically, trembling, but with quiet command*) says, "Don't scream. I'm warning you".
- Albert *seizing the clock from the mantelpiece* yells, "DON'T MUCK ME ABOUT"!
- *She freezes with terror.*
- Albert (viciously) says, "Who do you think you are? You talk too much, you know that. You never stop talking. Just because you're a woman you think you can get away with it. (*Bending over her*) You've made a mistake, this time. You've picked the wrong man. *He begins to grow in stature and excitement, passing the clock from hand to hand.* You're all the same, you see, you're all the same, you're just a dead weight around my neck. What makes you think . . . (*He begins to move about the room, at one point half crouching, at another standing upright, as if exercising his body.*) . . . What makes you think you can . . . tell me . . . yes . . . It's the same as this business about the light in Grandma's

room. Always something. Always something. ( *To her.*) My ash? I'll put it where I like! You see this clock? Watch your step. Just watch your step.

- *Albert (seizing her wrist, with trembling, controlled violence):* Watch your step! (*Stammering*) I've had – I've had – I've had – just about enough. Get it? . . . You know what I did?"
- *He looks at her and chuckles. He squats by her, still holding the clock.*
- Albert tells the girl not to be frightened and that he didn't touch that girl at the party.
- Albert says, "And I got the answer to her. I got the answer to her, you see, tonight . . . I finished the conversation . . . I finished it . . . I finished her . . . *She squirms. He raises the clock. With this clock! (Trembling)* One . . . crack . . . with . . . this . . . clock . . . finished! Of course, I loved her, really.
- Albert sees the frame on the mantelpiece, breaks it and holds the photo.
- Albert accuses the girl of lying about having a daughter.
- Girl calls Albert filthy scum
- Albert twists her wrist and tells her to mind how she talks to him.
- Albert orders her to walk to the wall, keep her mouth shut, and cover her face.
- Albert orders her to pick up his shoes, put them on his feet, and lace them.
- *He stands. She crouches. Silence. He shivers and murmurs with the cold. He looks about the room.*
- *He shivers and drops the clock. He looks down at it. She too. He kicks it across the room.*
- (*With a smile, softly.*) So . . . bear that in mind. Mind how you talk to me. *He goes to the door, then turns.*
- Albert flips her a coin and tells her to buy herself a seat at the circus before he leaves.
- SCENE THREE

- *The house. The front door opens. Albert comes in, a slight smile on his face. He saunters across the hall into the kitchen, takes off his jacket and throws it across the room. The same with his tie. He sits heavily, loosely, in a chair, his legs stretched out. Stretching his arms, he yawns, luxuriously, scratches his head with both hands and stares ruminatively at the ceiling, a smile on his face. His mother's voice calls his name.*
- *His body freezes. His gaze comes down. His legs slowly come together. He looks in front of him. His Mother comes into the room, in her dressing gown. She stands, looking at him.*
- Mother asks if she's a good mother to him, and says the clock would have hurt her. "You're all I've got".
- *She looks at his slumped figure. Her reproach turns to solicitude. She takes a chair and sits close to him. She strokes his hand.*
- Mother says, "You're good, you're not bad, you're a good boy . . . I know you are . . . you are, aren't you"?

**The preceding "External Events" conclude Climax 3:** The third climax is Albert's violent response to Girl, passing the clock from hand to hand, then physically grabbing her. This climax is incited by Girl's similar traits to Albert's mother.

As shown through *A Night Out's* "External Events", each climax is provided by a female provocateur. In summary, Mother and Eileen trigger the first climax, Mother triggers the second climax, and Mother and Girl trigger the third climax. Albert's relationship with his mother is a heavy emotional weight, which drives him to physical action in each climax. Overall, Mother is the character who excites Albert. His emotions boil at the simple mention of his mother. When Girl acts so similar to his mother, she is unsuspecting of the consequences of her words and actions. Sakellaridou supports that Mother functions as provocateur

in that "*A Night Out* closes with the mother's monologue, a sort of lullaby, hypnotizing Albert into eternal infantilism and submission" (55).

The "Seed" of *A Night Out* could be repression. Regarding Mother, Girl and Albert, their repression resonates in every event. It is also the quality that provokes and excites Albert. Mother tries to gain peace through Albert by keeping him as the man of the house, and persistently probing him. Albert attempts to gain solitude through silence, escape, and ultimately violence. Repressed, and desperate to find lasting, unrestrained love, repression resonates in Albert's life and in the "External Events". Girl's social choices repress her from having true love and companionship. Her inadequacies excite Albert to violence. The line of "Through – Action" is that repression and critical women drive a man to barbaric actions.

Overall, a female functioning as a provocateur proves to be a valid concept in that each climax is shown to be provided by a female who excites, provokes, and causes a disturbance in Albert.

## **Chapter Two: *The Homecoming***

“The Homecoming” takes place in an old house in North London during the summer. In this play, a retired butcher, a crook, a boxer, and a chauffeur verbally combat for domination of the household. Max, the butcher and Lenny, the crook, are father and son with the rapport of enemies. Since the death of wife and mother, Jessie, the familial relationship has disintegrated through belittling and challenging one another. Lenny’s contribution to society is dubiously respectable with a history of odd jobs. Max reminds everyone who he used to be while his brother, Sam, the chauffeur, seems to balance out the dysfunction with his calm and subtle demeanor. When Max and Sam share memories of Jessie, her lingering presence seems to trigger desire, resentment, and hostility which forever looms over them. Max’s youngest son, Joey keeps his focus on boxing while living under his father’s roof. Teddy, the eldest brother, and his wife, Ruth, visit the family. The family, ultimately surprised by their unannounced visit, discovers that the battle for domination shifts. The family whose status is constantly questioned faces the belittling affect of their scholarly kin, Teddy. The physical and personal distance among the men begins to transform upon Ruth’s arrival. Ruth exhibits her femininity to the men prompting them to respond with primal instincts. Prostitution and pimping are suggested as the means of domestic support and societal contributions for the family in the past. Implications of role-playing and virility seem to be the foundation of status in this household. While Teddy seems resistant to his family’s rituals, he is anxious to greet his father and introduce his wife. His successes as a doctor of

philosophy demean the achievements of his family while Ruth embraces the circumstances and molds them to her benefit. Her presence excites and transforms the dynamic in the household. Her philosophic contributions couched with sexual innuendos are sadistic and attractive at the same time. As the men plot to make Ruth a commodity, Ruth makes her own demands, instigating the challenges for the upper hand. In the end, despite the perpetual power struggles, Teddy leaves to continue his American life in academia, while Lenny and Ruth are the new royalty with Max and Joey beneath them.

Cahn comments on Ruth's qualities supporting the function of her character as provocateur:

She is, in fact, completely adaptable, able to do whatever is necessary to maintain authority. Such is the manner of her survival in the jungle of the family, in the eternal tension between the male and female divisions of our species, here presented with uncompromising savagery and wit (74).

The following "External Events" are interpreted from *Harold Pinter, Complete Works Three*, pages 19-98 leading to the first "Climax":

- Lenny sits on the sofa reading the newspaper as Max enters from the other side (kitchen).
- Lenny ignores Max question about where the scissors are
- Max defends his authority: *Lifts his stick and points it at him*
- Max mentions his friend Mac and the memory of Jessie. "Mind you, she wasn't such a bad woman. Even though it made me sick just to look at her rotten stinking face, she wasn't such a bad bitch. I gave her the best years of my life, anyway".
- Lenny ignores him and belittles Max's manhood.



- Max tells a story about his knowledge with horses.
- Max says, "But I was always able to tell a good filly by one particular trick. I'd look her in the eye. You see? I'd stand in front of her and look her straight in the eye, it was a kind of hypnotism, and by the look, deep down in her eye I could tell whether she was a strayer or not. It was a gift".
- Lenny threatens and mocks Max.
- Max and Lenny sit in silence.
- Sam enters and recounts the events of his successful day.
- Max ridicules Sam's professionalism and tells him to get a wife.
- Max says, "You can bring her to live here; she can keep us all happy. We'd take it in turns to give her a walk round the park".
- Sam reminisces about Jessie and says, "After all I escorted her once or twice, didn't I? She was a charming woman. All the same she was your wife. But still, . . . they were some of the most delightful evening I've ever had. Used to just drive her about. It was my pleasure". "She was a very nice companion to be with".
- *Silence*
- Joey enters after training at the gym and says he's hungry.
- Max refuses to acknowledge himself as a motherly figure in the household. He assumes no dutiful, motherly role, which implies resentment toward the female gender and takes offense to requests such as cooking. As his son enters and claims to be hungry Max responds, "Who do you think I am, your mother? Eh? Honest. They walk in here every time of the day and night like bloody animals. Go and find yourself a mother".
- Lenny antagonizes Max and his ability to cook.
- Max asks Sam to get out of his way.
- *Pause*
- Sam says he wants to clarify some things about Jessie. "I want to make something clear about Jessie, Max. I want to. I do. When I took her out in the cab, round the town, I was taking care of her, for you. I was looking after her for you, when you were busy, wasn't I? I was

showing her the West End. (*Pause*) You wouldn't have trusted any of your other brothers. You wouldn't have trusted Mac, would you? But you trusted me. I want to remind you"

- Sam recalls, "He was very fond of your mother, Mac was. Very fond. He always had a good word for her".
- *Pause*
- Sam claims his right to be in the house and Max talks about their father.
- BLACKOUT

**The preceding "External Events" conclude Climax 1:** The inciting incident to the first climax is when Max speaks about his friend Mac's fondness of Jessie. The absent Jessie is a provocateur in her spiritual presence. The first climax emerges from Max encouraging Sam to find a bride to "keep us all happy". Sam's responds by saying he will never find a bride like Max's wife. He reminisces about the time they spent together. Max's earlier statement introduces that Jessie is dead. The hostility, resentment, and lingering frustrations reveal Jessie as a provocateur, spiritually. Max's brutal statement about his wife is evidence of a strong difference in sentiment. Infidelity, incest, and prostitution are undertones filling Pinter's silence that follows Sam's comment. The sudden spiritual presence of Jessie arouses an asperous response in Max. It is as if he is compelled to prove the masculine role and fervently defends himself. As opposed to the verbal power struggles of the men in the household, the non-existent female drives the action of the play toward the first climax.

It is possible Sam is the instigator by mentioning Jessie; however, he conveys innocence. Its intention is to justify honest actions with her rather than to gain domination. The scripted pauses, silences, and absent provocateur elicit the moments of dramatic tension. Jessie dominates the house with her obscure spirit and ambiguous role in life. It is as though she is the void that needs to be filled in the men's lives and happiness.

The following "External Events" lead to the second "Climax":

- Teddy and Ruth *stand at the threshold of the room. They look at the room.*
- Teddy says, "You don't have to go to bed. I'm not saying you have to. I mean, you can stay up with me. Perhaps I'll make a cup of tea or something. The only thing is we don't want to make too much noise, we don't want to wake anyone up".
- Ruth: I'm not making any noise.
- Teddy: I know you're not.
- *He goes to her. (Gently.)* Look, it's all right, really. I'm here. I mean...I'm with you. There's no need to be nervous. Are you nervous?
- Ruth: No.
- Teddy: There's no need to be.
- *Pause.*
- Teddy says, "They're very warm people, really. Very warm. They're my family. They're not ogres".
- *Pause.*
- Teddy says, Well, perhaps we should go to bed. After all, we have to be up early, see Dad. Wouldn't be quite right if he found us in bed, I think. *(He chuckles.)* Have to be up before six, come down, say hullo.
- *Pause.*

- Ruth: I think I'll have a breath of air.
- Teddy: Air?
- *Pause.*
- What do you mean?
- Ruth leaves to take a walk for a "breath of air".
- Lenny enters and acknowledges Teddy's return.
- Teddy goes to bed and Ruth enters.
- Ruth enters from her walk and Lenny smiles at her.
- Lenny and Ruth converse.
- Lenny recounts his violent encounters with women.
- Lenny decides to take Ruth's glass.
- Ruth challenges Lenny and calls him Leonard
- Lenny says that is the name his mother gave him.
- Lenny says he will take her glass.
- Ruth says, "If you take the glass...I'll take you".
- *Pause*
- Lenny says, "How about me taking the glass without you taking me?"
- Ruth: Why don't I just take you?
- *Pause.*
- *She picks up the glass and lifts it toward him.*
- *He is still. She pats her lap.*
- *Pause.*
- *She stands, moves to him with the glass.*
- *She laughs shortly, drains the glass.*

- *She smiles at him, puts the glass down, goes into the hall up the stairs.*
- *He follows into the hall and shouts up the stairs.*

**The preceding “External Events” conclude Climax 2:** Upon their arrival, Teddy appears to be submissive to Ruth. He repeats his questions in an attempt to control or change her mind. His efforts to dominate are by accommodating her. She maintains poise, which signifies confidence and ultimately reveals her power. Ruth and Lenny meet for the first time and are alone in the room together. To Lenny, she is a stranger, and she stands still while he smiles at her. Lenny, similarly to Teddy, talks excessively about the ticking clock that might be keeping him awake. His own logic solves his question and he makes an effort to offer her water. The second climax is incited by the interaction between Lenny and Ruth when she enters. One moment of dramatic tension is when Lenny asks to hold Ruth’s hand. She responds simply, and matter-of-factly, “Why?” The sexual tension in the air puts Lenny, normally an arrogant man, in a position of inferiority. Thrown off guard, Lenny reverts to excessively talking, only this time, with arrogance and the intent to subjugate. Lenny desires to tempt and trap Ruth and to prove his manhood he tells a story about how he assaulted a woman with desires to kill her. “Aaah, why go to all the bother...you know, getting rid of the corpse and all that, getting yourself into a state of tension”.

Ruth’s unaffected response triggers Lenny. The silence that follows validates her triumphant as provocateur. Lenny attempts to preserve his ego, yet begins to babble again about another incident with a woman whom he overpowered. This time he attempts to compensate for his brutish behavior and

trivializes his violence saying “but as I was feeling jubilant with the snow-clearing I just gave her short-arm jab to the belly and jumped on a bus outside”. Feeling as though he has stabilized his image, and acting chivalrously, he offers to take the ashtray out of Ruth’s way. Ruth is defiant when Lenny wants to take her drink away. The interactions between two sexes preying on each other create the highest point of dramatic tension. Whether it is a power struggle for domination or sensual foreplay, Ruth is the provocateur in which the second climax is her statement “Why don’t I just take you”.

Ruth’s tactics are cunning to say the least. Lenny states clearly that Ruth is an instigator. “Then you come here without a word of warning and start to make trouble”. She tells Lenny to sit on her lap. She stands up, moves towards Lenny, and laughs. This provocation is powerful and teasing. With confidence, manipulation, grace, and surety, Ruth gains control as she leaves Lenny wondering if she has made a pass at him. With strength and surety, Ruth rebuts Lenny and his pompous advances, which results in Lenny questioning her motives.

The character motive of Ruth is revealed, of course, in her qualities, conflicts, willpower, and values. Ruth enters with Teddy and wants to dominate the household in order to gain their affection. She entices Lenny in order to gain superiority. Later, she manipulates all the men to gain a position in the house.

The following “External Events” lead to the third “Climax”:

- Max enters and confronts Lenny about the noise.

- Lenny lies and changes the subject asking about his conception and mother.
- Max says, “You’ll drown in your own blood”.
- Max spits on Lenny after he mentions his dead mother.
- Max goes to bed and Lenny sits alone.
- Max enters and sees Joey shadowboxing in the mirror.
- Sam enters from the kitchen after washing up and making breakfast.
- Teddy and Ruth enter.
- *Silence*
- Teddy introduces Ruth and Max says, “I’ve never had a whore under this roof before. Ever since your mother died”.
- Lenny enters, Max punches Joey and Joey collapses at Ruth’s feet.
- Max walks past Joey toward Ruth and she walks towards him.
- Max announces “He still loves his father”!
- Everyone sits in the living room with coffee.
- Max mentions Jessie and says “That woman was the backbone of this family”.
- Max ends his story saying “I remember the boys came down, in their pyjamas, all their hair shining, their faces pink, it was before they started shaving, and they knelt down at our feet, Jessie’s and mine. I tell you, it was like Christmas”.
- *Pause*
- Max contradicts his story by saying “A crippled family, three bastard sons, a slutbitch of a wife...”
- Sam and Max argue about Sam’s job and Sam exits.
- Ruth begins to talk about her past and Teddy interrupts.
- Lenny questions Teddy’s philosophies.

- Ruth adds to the conversation: "You've forgotten something. Look at me. I ... move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear...underwear...which moves with me...it...captures you attention. Perhaps you misinterpret. The action is simple. It's a leg...moving. My lips move. Why don't you restrict... your observations to that? Perhaps the fact that they move is more significant...than words which come through them. You must bear that...possibility...in mind".
- Max, Lenny, and Joey exit.
- Teddy talks to Ruth about going back home.
- Teddy exits up stairs.
- Lenny enters and sits near Ruth
- *Silence*
- Lenny asks Ruth if she likes clothes and they converse.
- Teddy enters with the luggage.
- Lenny and Ruth dance.
- Max and Joey enter.
- Lenny kisses Ruth. *They stand, kissing.*
- Joey takes Ruth to the sofa and kisses her while Lenny rubs her hair.
- Joey and Ruth fall to the floor then get up.
- Ruth orders Lenny to get her whisky in a tumbler.
- Teddy is sitting in his coat next to the luggage
- Sam tells Teddy "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 love".
- Sam exits. Lenny enters.
- Lenny tells Teddy his family looks up to him.
- Joey enters and says, "I didn't get all the way".
- Max and Sam enter. Max says, "Where's the whore"?



- Max presents the idea to keep Ruth in the house. "You know something maybe it's not a bad idea to have a woman in the house. Perhaps it's a good thing. Who knows? Maybe we should keep her".
- Teddy and Sam debate with Max, Lenny and Joey.
- Max says "But I think you're concentrating too much on the economic considerations. There are other considerations. You understand what I mean. There are human considerations. Don't forget them".
- Ted, Max, and Lenny negotiate the idea. Lenny gives his "professional" opinion.
- Ruth enters and sits among the gathering of men.
- Teddy tells Ruth she is invited to stay at the house permanently.
- Ruth negotiates the offer and refuses to be financed. "You would have to regard your original outlay simply as a capital investment".
- Teddy and Lenny tell her about her duties. "Keep everyone company".
- Sam croaks and collapses after revealing, "MacGregor had Jessie in the back of my cab as I drove them along".
- Teddy announces his departure and shakes hands with Max and Lenny.
- Teddy exits.
- *The three men stand. Ruth sits relaxed in her chair. Sam lies still. Joey walks slowly across the room. He kneels at her chair. She touches his head, lightly. He puts his head in her lap. Max begins to move about them, backwards and forwards. Lenny stands still. Max turns to Lenny.*
- *Max begins to groan, clutches his stick, falls on to his knees by the side of her chair. His body sags. The groaning stops. His body straightens. He looks at her still kneeling. He raises his face to her. She continues to touch Joey's head, lightly. Lenny stands, watching.*

**The preceding "External Events" conclude Climax 3:** "Teddy virtually begs her to return to America with him, but his urgings are laughably inadequate" (Cahn 67). The inciting incident is Ruth dancing with Lenny and willingly letting

Joey and Lenny advance sexually with her. The third climax is Ruth's amendments to the agreement. It is her terms of the contract, which provoke restoration in the household. Presumably, Ruth is taking Jessie's role in the house now. Becoming "ruthless" (Cahn 71) she says, "All aspects of the agreement and conditions of employment would have to be clarified to our mutual satisfaction before we finalize the contract" (CW3 93). Never sacrificing her willpower, Ruth functioning as provocateur demonstrates her domination. She makes restrictions and demands which the men agree to. It is evident that this is not a new relationship for the men. Max says to Ruth,

"Trouble? What are you talking about? What trouble? Listen, I'll tell you something. Since poor Jessie died, eh, Sam? We haven't had a woman in the house. Not one. Inside this house. And I'll tell you why. Because their mother's image was so dear any other woman would have. . . tarnished it. But you. . . Ruth. . . you're not only lovely and beautiful, but you're kin. You're kith. You belong here" (CW3 91).

Ruth is seated in her throne, metaphorically, while Max stumbles about, falling at her feet begging her to take him while Joey rests his head on her lap. Lenny stands above them like an accomplished pimp, plotting and relishing in organizing the next course of events. The distance between the men that was unavoidable when the story began has reformed into happiness because of Ruth. "At the end of the play she's in possession of a certain kind of freedom" (Cahn 72). If the territorial struggle was the prominent conflict for the men, the result lies within Ruth's domination. She gains the affections of the men, a position in the house, and monetary gains which makes her the totalitarian and ends the battle for power. Playing the provocateur, enticing the men, and instigating

change prove successful in fulfilling her desires. The men discover success in the comforts of a familiar female once again. The picture Pinter gives us validates Ruth's triumph as provocateur.

Using Action Analysis, Ruth and Jessie are discovered as provocateurs that drive the action to three climactic moments. The "Seed" is concluded to be Superiority as it resonates in every event, as well as placing the absent role of Jessie and Ruth as women who enable the restoration of the previous status quo.

At the beginning of the play, the men remain distant on stage and in verbal battles with one another; each man competes to prove virility and superiority. The mention of Jessie stirs a memory and/or emotional transformation in the men. As the play reaches climactic moments, the men become closer in proximity on stage and turn their attention toward a woman rather than each other. In the end, a physical and emotional transformation has taken place. Sam leaves the world with his last words being about Jessie and Teddy leaves for America after offering his wife as a consolation for his lack of visits. Lenny stands to represent his authority in the matter while Max and Joey are cuddled at Ruth's feet. The emotional and physical proximity has made a significant change because of the arrival of a woman who fills the void that pained them.

Ruth's strength of will is admirable in her speech and in silence. In moments of tension, she gracefully backs down, or is silent. She is sensitive to the affect of her words and actions on the others. Every action is provokingly

calculated and alluring. It is as though she had a premonition of what to expect when she arrived. Her female intuition sensed the need for her presence, which fuels her willpower to make a transformation. Sexy, not racy, suggestive, charming, subtle, assertive, not aggressive, and undaunted to act as she sees fit are evident in her actions. Ruth's willpower is unaffected by the actions of the men. The roots of the relationships she establishes have objectifying undertones. Despite the efforts of Max and Lenny to subjugate her, she turns the tables to make it happen by her own will. Even with her husband, Teddy, she controls her fate and actions with her personality and willpower.

It is evident the female provocateur is essential to the play. The essence of Jessie proves essential in that her spirit triggers the men to restore a life they once had. Overall, the line of "Through-Action" for *The Homecoming* is: The woman, as provocateur, asserts superiority through her sexuality, creating a sexual kingdom where there was a void in the family.

## Chapter Three: *Old Times*

*Old Times* [sic] is set in a converted farmhouse on an autumn night, somewhere on the British coast. When the curtain rises, three still figures can be discerned. The still and seemingly calm images of these three characters, all in their early forties, do little to prepare the audience for the verbal bullying and psychological battles that will ensue during the course of this one evening.

The exploration of the past leads to a sequence of shifting alliances, as the three align themselves in several confrontations. Most of these alliances--in which Deeley and Anna, Deeley and Kate, and Anna and Kate all face off against the odd one out - revolve around the recollection and control of the past. It is only in this way that the characters seem able to define the present, which seems ever changing. From having no memory at all of his wife's past, Deeley then recounts his first meeting with her many years before, after both had seen the film *Odd Man Out*. According to Deeley, they came together over a shared appreciation of the film.

After more discussion, Anna's relationship with Kate and Deeley seems to falter. Efforts to share a past, or to maintain control over recollections, become increasingly fraught. Anna insists that "I would like you to understand that I came here not to disrupt but to celebrate." Yet, disrupt she does, and Deeley and Kate respond to this disruption by dismissing Anna and her memories of the past. Kate recounts a vicarious killing of Anna. When Kate finishes her story, Anna walks to the door, and Deeley begins to sob. The three arrange themselves in a final tableau, and the lights come up sharply on this image--an image that both echoes and contrasts with the opening scene. Or is our memory of even that now suspect? (Court Theatre. Play Notes. March 2007. <<http://www.courttheatre.org>>. Path: *Old Times*).

In 1962, at the National Student Drama Festival, Pinter waxed philosophical about memory, positioning:

". . . the immense difficulty, if not the impossibility, of verifying the past. I don't mean merely years ago, but yesterday, this morning. What took place, what was the nature of what took place, what happened? If one can speak of the difficulty of knowing what in fact took place yesterday, one can I think treat the present in the same way. What's happening now? We won't know until tomorrow or in six months' time, and we won't know then, we'll have forgotten, or

our imagination will have attributed quite false characteristics of today. A moment is sucked away and distorted, often even at the time of its birth" (CW 1 11).

The limited physical action leaves the memories to define the External Events. The beautifully allusive language in which the characters personalize their relationships is the dramatic development. Despite the use of memory, and what is reliable as truth, Pinter states, in *Conversations With Pinter* "I'll tell you one thing about *Old Times*. It happens. It all happens" (Gussow 43). The scripted actions are as simple as, Kate serves coffee, Deeley pours brandy, and Kate enters after her bath, leaving the memories as the External Events.

The interpreted "External Events" are taken from *Harold Pinter, Complete Works Four* pages 3-71, and lead to the first "Climax":

- *Deeley slumped in armchair, still. Kate curled on a sofa, still. Anna standing at a window, looking out.*
- *Silence*
- *Lights up on Deeley and Kate, smoking cigarettes. Anna's figure remains still in dim light at the window.*
- Kate and Deeley talk about Kate's friend, Anna, her only friend.
- Kate says, "She was a thief. She used to steal things". "Bits and pieces. Underwear".
- Kate and Deeley talk about whether her friend has a husband.
- Deeley says, "You haven't seen her for twenty years". Kate says, "You've never seen her. There's a difference".
- *Pause*
- Kate and Deeley talk about Anna having many friends that Kate has met.

- Kate says “Not all, I think. But after all, we were living together. There were visitors, from time to time. I met them”.
- Deeley: *(abruptly)* “You lived together”. Deeley goes on to say “Anyway, none of this matters”.
- *Anna turns from the window, speaking, and moves down to them, eventually sitting on the second sofa.*
- Anna recounts the times at the opera, concerts, café’s and asks if Kate remembers.
- Anna: “Queuing all night, the rain, do you remember? My goodness, the Albert Hall, Covent Gardens, what did we eat? To look back, half the night, to do things we loved, we were young then of course, but what stamina, and to work in the morning, and to a concert, or the opera, or the ballet, that night, you haven’t forgotten”?....”both giggling and chattering”.
- Kate pours coffee, sits, and says, “Yes, I remember”.
- Deeley pours brandy and remains standing.
- Deeley and Anna talk about London.
- Deeley says, “I wish I had known you both then”.
- Anna talks about Kate’s cooking and staying up reading Yeats.
- Anna stands and walks to the window.
- *Pause*
- Deeley says it is nice to have Anna there and that Kate does not have many friends.
- Anna says, “Perhaps she’s happy”.
- *Pause*
- Kate says, “Are you talking about me”.
- Anna and Deeley continue to talk about Kate being a dreamer and share affectionate opinions of her company.
- Deeley says “Lovely to look at, delightful to know”.

- Deeley and Anna start to alternate in singing lyrics of songs about Kate.
- Deeley sings the last lyric, "Oh, how the ghost of you clings..."
- *Pause*
- Deeley says, "They don't make them like that anymore".
- Deeley recalls his initial meeting with Kate at a film, *Odd Man Out*.
- Deeley says, "And then at a slightly later stage our naked bodies met, hers cool, warm, highly agreeable, and I wondered what Robert Newton would think of this. What would he think of this I wondered as I touched her profoundly all over. (To Anna) What do you think he'd think"?
- Anna replies, "I never met Robert Newton but I do know I know what you mean. 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".
- Deeley responds, "What"?

**The preceding "External Events" conclude Climax 1: Billington**

regards the "veneer of civilisation [*sic*] being stripped away, saying, "That process starts from the very moment of Anna's eruption in to the lives of Deeley and Kate by a simple move downstage: no messing with doors and entrances" (215). Anna making her way from the window down to Kate and Deeley is the external event inciting the first climax. Anna's recollection of London and vivid details of Kate suggest a superior knowledge of Kate, which excites Deeley to defend and protect. Deeley's recollection of the usherettes, the viewing of *Odd Man Out*, and the physical encounter with Kate is an attempt to prove his masculine affection to challenge Anna. However, Anna's provoking statement



about memory is the first climax. Her theory trumps Deeley as well as being significant to the core of the play. As Cahn declares:

...Anna turns his story upside down by recalling a man she discovered in Kate's apartment. At first he was "all crumpled in the armchair", as Deeley is now. Anna describes him as crying, then after Kate's rejection advancing towards Anna: "[. . .] but I would have absolutely nothing to do with him, nothing". She thereby trumps Deeley's narrative about his sexual boldness. Furthermore, Anna's confidence in her ability to triumph in a contest of will grows (109).

The following "External Events" lead to the second "Climax":

- *Kate stands. She goes to a small table, takes a cigarette from a box and lights it. She looks down at Anna.*
- *Deeley stands, goes to cigarette box, picks it up, smiles at Kate. Kate looks at him, watches him light a cigarette, takes the box from him, crosses to Anna, offers her a cigarette. Anna takes one.*
- Kate says "I said you talk about me as if I *am* dead. Now".
- Anna says, "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 on me – "
- Deeley says, "Stop that"!
- *Pause*
- Deeley talks about his decision to marry Kate
- Anna talks about her theory of Kate's decision to marry Deeley and mentions many personal experiences with Kate.
- Anna: "For example, I remember one Sunday she said to me, looking up from the paper, come quick, quick, come with me, quickly, and we seized our handbags and went, on a bus, to some totally obscure, some totally unfamiliar district and, almost alone, saw a wonderful film called *Odd Man Out*.
- *Silence*
- Deeley talks about traveling for his job.

- Anna says to Kate “I think I must come and keep you company when he’s away”.
- Deeley asks if her husband would miss her and continues about his job travels.
- Kate and Anna begin a conversation excluding Deeley.
- Deeley attempts to contribute to the conversation.
- Anna says “Don’t lets go out tonight, don’t let’s go anywhere tonight, let’s stay in. I’ll cook something, you can wash your hair, you can relax, we’ll put on some records”. (39)
- Kate denies Anna’s suggestions of activities and inviting guests over. She decides to take a bath.
- *Kate slowly walks to the bedroom door, goes out, closes it. Deeley stands looking at Anna. Anna turns her head towards him. They look at each other.*
- Fade

**The preceding “External Events” conclude Climax 2:** The actions of Kate and her acknowledging statement incite the second climax. The second climax is when Kate leaves Deeley and Anna staring at one another. Her silence triggers another battle of fantasy that turns sexually charged and unavoidably awkward in the second act.

Anna’s dismissals of Deeley’s detailed memories are provocative and excite Deeley to desperation and crudity. Where Deeley is clearly Kate’s husband, Anna has managed to intrude and challenge Deeley into believing she is, has, and always will be, more closely connected to Kate than he.

The following “External Events” in Act two lead to the third climax:

- *Anna discerned sitting on divan.*
- *Silence*
- *Deeley comes into the room, places the tray on a table.*
- Deeley offers Anna coffee and describes the room where they sleep.
- Deeley claims he knew Anna from The Wayfarers twenty years ago.
- Deeley says "...but nobody but I had a thigh-kissing view, nobody but you had the thighs which kissed. And here you are. Same woman. Same thighs".
- *Pause*
- Deeley says, ..."Then a friend of yours came in, a girl, a girl friend. She sat on the sofa with you, you both chatted and chuckled, sitting together, and I settled lower to gaze at you both, at both your thighs, squealing and hissing, you aware, she unaware, but then a great multitude of men surrounded me, and demanded my opinion about death, or about China, or whatever it was, and they would not let me be but bent down over me, so that what with their stinking breath and their broken teeth and the hair in their noses and China and death in their arses on the arms of my chair I was forced to get up and plunge my way through them, followed by them with ferocity, as if I were the cause of their argument, looking back through smoke, rushing to the table with the linoleum cover to look for one more full bottle of light ale, looking back through smoke, glimpsing two girls on the sofa, one of them you, heads close, whispering, no longer able to see anything, no longer able to see stocking or thigh, and then you were gone. I wandered over to the sofa. There was no one on it. I gazed at the indentations of four buttocks. Two of which were yours".
- *Pause*
- Anna says "I've rarely heard a sadder story".
- Anna denies knowing Deeley and talks about Kate's lengthy bath.
- Anna and Deeley talk about drying Kate after her bath.
- Anna and Deeley juggle the theories of who would dry her better.

- *The bathroom door opens. Kate comes into the bedroom. She wears a bathrobe.*
- *She smiles at Deeley and Anna.*
- *(With pleasure) Aaahh.*
- *She walks to the window and looks out into the night. Deeley and Anna watch her.*
- *Deeley begins to sing softly.*
- *Deeley and Anna start singing lyrics to "That Can't Take That Away From Me" to Kate.*
- *Kate walks down toward them and stands, smiling. Anna and Deeley sing again, faster on cue, and more perfunctorily.*
- *Anna asks Kate about her bath.*
- *Kate says she chooses to stay in tonight and Anna asks to accommodate her needs.*
- *Anna and Deeley talk about Kate's smile.*
- *Kate asks about men to be invited over.*
- *Kate says, "He's so gentle, isn't he? And his humour. Hasn't he got a lovely sense of humor? And I think he's. . . so sensitive. Why don't you ask him around"?*
- *Deeley responds, "He can't make it. He's out of town".*
- *Silence*
- *Deeley asks if Anna finds Kate changed.*
- *Anna states Kate is Bronte in being so "stubbornly private".*
- *Anna describes borrowing Kate's underwear and her first blush.*
- *Anna recalls, "I had borrowed some of her underwear, to go to a party. Later that night I confessed. It was naughty of me. She stared at me, nonplussed, perhaps, is the word. But I told her that in fact I had been punished for my sin, for a man at the party had spent the whole evening looking up my skirt".*

- Anna continues, “But, from that night she insisted, from time to time, that I borrow her underwear –...and each time she proposed this she would blush...” (61) “...I would come in late and find her reading under the lamp, and begin to tell her, but she would say no, turn off the light, and I would tell her in the dark. She preferred to be told in the dark....I would chose 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.

Cahn suggests that:

The detail recalls Deeley’s earlier story, so that he is now objectified in narrative and weakened further. What intimidates him most is the sexual intimacy between the women, thus his only remaining tactic is to become more abusive (114).

- Deeley says, “Sounds a perfect marriage”. He continues to pity Anna’s husband who is home alone and pities himself for listening to the women talking.
- Kate replies, “If you don’t like it go”.
- *Pause*
- Anna tries to invite both Kate and Deeley to her home in Sicily.
- *Silence. Kate and Deeley stare at her.*
- Anna says she came here “not to disrupt but to celebrate”.
- Anna continues to say, “All I wanted for her was her happiness. That is all I want for her still”.
- *Pause*
- Deeley tells Kate that he and Anna met before.
- Kate *looks at him.*
- Deeley tells Kate how she was pretending to be her.
- Deeley says, “She was pretending to be you at the time. Did it pretty well. Wearing your underwear she was too, at the time. Amiably allowed me a gander.”
- *Pause*

- Kate asks what he thinks attracted her to him and goes on to ask if she wanted to comfort his face in the way only a woman can and maybe she fell in love with him.
- Deeley asks if he was crass for looking up her skirt.
- Kate says it's not crass
- Deeley retracts his statement and says, "If it was her skirt. If it was her".
- Anna confirms it was she. "Oh, it was my skirt. It was me. I remember your look . . . very well. I remember you well".
- *(To Anna.):*

"But, I remember you. I remember you dead. *Pause.* I remember you lying dead. You didn't know I was watching you. I leaned over you. Your face was dirty. You lay dead, your face scrawled with dirt, all kinds of earnest inscriptions, but unblotted, so that they had run, all over your face, down to your throat. Your sheets were immaculate. I was glad. I would have been unhappy if your corpse had lain in an unwholesome sheet. It would have been graceless. I mean as far as I was concerned. As far as my room was concerned. After all, you were dead in my room. When you woke my eyes were above you, staring down at you. You tried to do my little trick, one of my tricks you had borrowed, my little slow smile, my little slow shy smile, my bend of the head, my half closing of the eyes, that we knew so well, but it didn't work, the grin only split the dirt at the sides of your mouth and stuck. You stuck in your grin. I looked for tears but could see none. Your pupils weren't in your eyes. Your bones were breaking through your face. But all was serene. There was no suffering. It had all happened elsewhere. Last rites I did not feel necessary. Or any celebration. I felt the time and season appropriate and that by dying alone and dirty you had acted with proper decorum. It was time for my bath. I had quite a lengthy bath, got out, walked about the room, glistening, drew up a chair, sat naked beside you and watched you. *Pause.* When I brought him into the room your body of course had gone. What a relief it was to have a different body in my room, a male body behaving quite differently, doing all those things they do and which they think are good, like sitting with one leg over the arm of an armchair. We had a choice of two beds. Your bed or my bed. To lie in, or on. To grind noses together, in or on. He liked your bed, and thought he was different in it because he was a man. But one night I said let me do something, a little thing, a little trick. He lay there in your bed. He looked up at me with great expectation.

He was gratified. He thought I had profited from his teaching. He thought I was going to be sexually forthcoming, that I was about to take a long promised initiative. I dug about in the windowbox, where you had planted our pretty pansies, scooped, filled the bowl, and plastered his face with dirt. He was bemused, aghast, resisted, resisted with force. He would not let me dirty his face, or smudge it, he wouldn't let me. He suggested a wedding instead, and a change of environment. *Slight pause.* Neither mattered. *Pause.* He asked me once, at about that time, who had slept in that bed before him. I told him no one. No one at all".

- *Long silence.*
- *Anna stands, walks towards the door, stops, her back to them.*
- *Silence*
- *Deeley starts to sob, very quietly.*
- *Anna stands still.*
- *Anna turns, switches off the lamp, sits on her divan, and lies down.*
- *The sobbing stops.*
- *Silence.*
- *Deeley stands. He walks a few paces, looks at both divans. He goes to Anna's divan, looks down at her. She is still.*
- *Silence.*
- *Deeley moves towards the door, stops, his back to them.*
- *Silence.*
- *Deeley turns. He goes towards Kate's divan. He sits on her divan, lies across her lap.*
- *Long silence.*
- *Deeley very slowly sits up. He gets off the divan. He walks slowly to the armchair. He sits, slumped.*
- *Silence.*
- *Lights up full sharply. Very bright.*

- *Deeley in armchair. Anna lying on divan. Kate sitting on divan.*

**The preceding “External Events” conclude Climax 3:** The inciting incident of the third climax is when Anna describes Kate’s first blush. The third climax is Kate’s final speech, silencing them both. Sakellaridou notices that,

Deeley stresses the archetypal kinship between the two women which Anna firmly rejects with her answer ‘No two women are the same’. Anna protests against Deeley’s masculine tendency to see women collectively and she stresses female individuality, which resists Deeley’s fantasy of perfect fusion (166).

All preceding “External Events” demonstrate the moments in which Anna and/or Kate drive the action and excite, in dialogue or silence. The events are in specific moments of dialogue, as well as the sparse stage directions provided by Pinter.

Altered - Realities is the “Seed”, or abstraction for *Old Times*. The play resonates with biased memories, dark secrets, desires, and experiences involving these characters. The questionable truths force the characters to juggle provocation between them. As Cahn suggests:

. . .”Kate remains silent, a pose that in Pinter’s works is almost always a manifestation of strength (109). Kate’s opening word “Dark”, is at the thematic core of the play, suggesting the recesses of mind and memory that the characters probe (104).

Anna’s sensual bond with Kate excites and rejects Deeley’s attempts to be superior to Anna. Kate’s silence and last words provoke Anna and Deeley to



withdrawal their battle of affection. Thus, Pinter's females prove to function as a provocateur, and provide three climaxes. Sakellaridou says:

The erotic triangle is a familiar pattern in Pinter's world but it has so far involved two men and a woman. Having two women versus one man is a totally new – one could even say revolutionary – form. Female duets were earlier suggested in "The Hothouse" and "Tea Party" but they were rather kept in the wings since they were never any consequence to the play. The close relationship between Kate and Anna gains a central position in "Old Times" as the playwright examines both its purely feminine origin, placed in the past, and its impact on Deeley's and Kate's marriage in the present (168).

The line of "Through-Action" for *Old Times* is that altered realities emanate quickly when a female friend comes for a visit. This supports that Anna functions as a provocateur in the sense that her entrance excites both Kate and Deeley. Kate's last monologue, interpreted as an altered reality demonstrates that she is intentionally creating dissention between Anna and Deeley. Therefore, the "External Events" present the significant moments leading to "Three Climaxes" provided by a female functioning as provocateur. The "Seed", altered realities, and line of "Through – Action" are congruent with the idea that Kate and Anna function as provocateurs.

## Chapter Four: Conclusion

Harold Pinter has refined his female characters over the years. They have evolved from an obvious instigator into sophisticated, elusive provocateurs. Consider the images Pinter gives at the end of the plays analyzed. Mother sits next to slumping Albert, stroking his hand in *A Night Out*. Ruth sits in a chair with Max and Joey at her feet in *The Homecoming*. Anna is lying on a divan, and Kate seated on a divan while Deeley slumps in an armchair in *Old Times*. The progression in images alone suggests the dominant, provocative qualities women possess in his plays. As Sakellaridou notes,

When Pinter writes he always has in mind the visual and acoustic possibilities of the stage. As he has often said, his plays originate either in a visual image or in a verbal utterance (9).

In *A Night Out*, the first climax occurs when Albert fights with a co-worker due to Eileen's accusation that Albert touched her inappropriately. The second climax occurs when his resentment towards his mother turns violent and he lunges toward her with a clock. The third climax occurs when he, again, grabs a clock, threatening to hit Girl with it. Creating a template of actions show these specific moments of dramatic tension demonstrating female characters as one who provokes, excites, and incites. As Cahn concludes:

From the first scene Albert Stokes is dominated by his mother, and even as he plans his evening at a party given by a business associate, she expresses so much doubt and fear that Albert is forced to comfort her. . . (21).

The events of *The Homecoming* resonate with incipient superiority. The climaxes emerge through female provocation whether the female is absent or present. The exalting behaviors of the men are not immune to the provocative qualities of Ruth and Jessie. Ruth's superiority is a result of exciting and dominating the men, which ultimately restores the household chemistry. In *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter*, Michael Billington states:

*[The Homecoming]* dealt with the duality and the strength of the female psyche, as against the sexual and emotional insecurity of the average male. Pinter doesn't work to a preconceived programme; but the same themes recur in play after play, particularly the notion that women are more easily able than men to reconcile their sexual and social selves (133).

Examining the most critical statements in *Old Times*, Anna's challenging statements, and the final climax of Kate's monologue, it is clear that these female roles function as provocateurs. In regards to Pinter's use of memory Billington says:

*[Old Times]* unforgettably shows how we create the past as a weapon of psychological domination. You could argue there is a strong element of accident and chance in all this, but there is also a consistent pattern to Pinter's work in this period as he himself acknowledged in a *New York Times* interview with Mel Gussow in 1971: 'I think I'm more conscious of a kind of ever-present quality in life. . . I certainly feel more and more that the past is not past, that it never was past. It's present (206).

Billington describes Kate's last monologue, saying:

These are the last chilling words spoken (words that demolish both Anna's friendship and the whole history of Kate's marriage to

Deeley) before the final graphic image which contains a re-enactment of the bedroom scene described in Act One... Some critics take this to symbolize a return to reality and enlightenment; others to mean that the characters are all dead. I take it to signify that although Kate has triumphed on the temporal level and proved her own ultimate unpossessability, all three characters are locked, like the rest of humanity, into a frozen, permanent solitude (218).

Sakellaridou concludes about *Old Times*:

The dramatist has already done due justice to female sexuality in its heterosexual manifestation in plays like "The Homecoming", "Landscape" and "Silence". He is now proceeding discreetly into more forbidden areas, hinting at other forms of love that only his men had been allowed to experience (168).

*Old Times* poses the most challenges in using James Thomas' method of analysis due to Pinter's use of memory and lack of action. The facts and most crucial announcements as "External Events" were chosen based on the shifts in power between the characters. The template created for *Old Times* clearly demonstrates a valid interpretation that females may function as provocateurs.

Play analysis in conjunction with the examinations from various authors presented a number of areas worthy of exploration. A theory that emerges in this process is whether Pinter's men are, in actuality, feminine characters. Another possible literary examination might lie in Pinter's loyalty between characters. Either in union or in connection to the plot, the characters seem loyal throughout. Additionally, while examining the female roles in this thesis, there is use of double feminine imagery, which presents another area of study with Pinter's works. Moreover, there is an abundance of information about Harold Pinter, which presents a research topic in regards to what Pinter tells us about his plays, and what the plays tell us about Pinter.

Harold Pinter's treatment of women in his plays aroused the interpretation of females functioning as provocateurs. Questions regarding "provocateur" drove the desire to explore definitions, and methods of script analysis that may demonstrate this possibility. Researching analytical methods to expose facts and actions while leaving room for interpretation, James Thomas' script analysis deemed useful in composing a comprehensive template of action. It exposed the provoking, exciting, and inciting events that demonstrate that the females may function as provocateurs. It also resulted in identifying "Three Climaxes" linking to females. Furthermore, identifying "Seeds" and lines of "Through-Action" can strengthen the interpretation.

Interpretations of plays are equivocal. In order to support the idea that Pinter's females function as provocateurs in the selected plays, James Thomas' "Action Analysis" served ably in creating a template of moments where females are revealed to provoke, excite, and incite change in *A Night Out*, *The Homecoming*, and *Old Times*.

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