

## Harold Pinter's Celebration: Alterity and Public Level

Ansam Riyadh A. Almaarouf<sup>1</sup>, Yousif Omer Babiker<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer-College of Education for Humanities- English Department Tikrit University – Republic of Iraq

<sup>2</sup> English Department- College of Languages- Sudan University of Science and Technology Republic of Sudan

### **ABSTRACT :**

This paper tackles the concept of alterity and the relation with "the other" in Harold Pinter's last written play, *Celebration* (2000). The paper hypothesizes that Pinter combines modernism and postmodernism in his plays by using modernist and postmodernist characters together, and he has implied that the private level predisposed the public one. The paper divides the characters in a Pinter play into modernist limited → controlled and postmodernist controlled → controlling characters. The paper takes the character analysis as a method of discussion. Using the concept of alterity as the German philosopher, Emanuel Livenas puts it will help understand the construction of each of the aforementioned characters. The paper is limited to Pinter's *Celebration* as a representative of his final stage of writing. The paper ends with the conclusion that sums up the results that support the previously put hypothesis.

**Key Words:** *Modernism, Postmodernism, Alterity, The Other*

### **المستخلص :**

تقدم هذه الورقة مفهوم الآخر عند هارولد بنتر و كما يظهر في اخر مسرحية كتبها ، "احتفال" (2000). تفترض الورقة ان بنتر يجمع الحداثة وما بعد الحداثة في مسرحياته عن طريق وضع شخوص حداثيين جنباً الى جنب معشخوص ما بعد حداثيين، وان مفهوم الآخر على المستوى الشخصي يؤثر على المستوى العام. تقسم الورقة الشخصيات الى مجموعتين الاولى هي الشخصيات الحداثية المحددة ← المسيطر عليها. والمجموعة الثانية هي الشخصيات لما بعد حداثية المسيطر عليها ← المسيطرة. كما تفترض الدراسة ان استعمال مفهوم "الغيرية" والعلاقة بالآخر كما وضعه الفيلسوف الالمانى ايمانويل ليفيناس سيكون ذا فائدة لفهم الشخصيات في اعمال بنتر. تتخذ الورقة من تحليل الشخوص وسيلة للمناقشة .. الورقة محددة بمسرحية "احتفال" لهارولد بنتر والتي تمثل المرحلة الاخيرة من كتاباته. تنتهي الورقة بالخلاصة التي تجمع النتائج التي تؤيد الفرضية التي سبق ووضعتها الورقة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحداثة، ما بعد الحداثة، الغيرية، الاخر

### **INTRODUCTION :**

Harold Pinter has won the Nobel Award for Literature in 2005. He is known world-wide as one of the greatest writers of a body of literary work that includes thirty-two plays, twenty-one

film scripts, one novel, and numerous poems. Besides being a prolific writer, he has been a director, an actor, and a political activist in the second half of the twentieth century. Pinter's contribution is

of such a distinctive quality that he was described by Brigitte Gauthier, in her preface to *Viva Pinter*, as 'Harold Pinter was the Shakespeare of our century'(2007, N.P.) Her opinion is definitely correct as Gussow (1994, 123) rightly observed, 'is essentially exploratory. [...] theatre has always been a critical act'. One important element in Pinter's plays is the construction of identity. Pinter's world has frequently been described as profoundly ambiguous, full of uncertainty, and menace. From the first his characters are isolated, withdrawn, vulnerable, and passive victims in retreat from communication and human connection, they are wary, edgy, and unpredictable. All of them are obscurely anguished, suffering, from personal psychic wounds. They are often not only friendless but identity-less. Anxiety surrounds them. They are creatures caught in what is certainly the uneasy amber of the moment, but they are still suffering, still writhing, because of some imprisonment of the spirit which, it turns out, took place long ago (Johnson, 1958, 2) This could be valid if one sees the Pinter-ish character without connecting them to the concept of alterity and otherness. It is Pinter's presentation of the importance of encounters with alterity and "the other" as fundamental to any character's identity and subjectivity that may give a different view for Pinter's characters. In this regard, it is useful to consider the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas whose centre is a similar recognition. *Celebration* (2000) is Pinter's last full-length play. It is chronologically falls in postmodern era. Following the appearance of public and the private levels, it discloses a concern

in the public level though it noticeably deals with a private affairs. Unlike the first and the second stages, Pinter's third stage which is represented by *Celebration* in this paper is obviously devoted for reflecting the idea that the private and the public levels could not be separated. Some people think that they can be safe if they keep themselves far from any open or public view. Nevertheless, they cannot be safe because of the fact that the public side influences the private one and vice versa. This idea can be regarded as a core of Pinter's concern with public level. This paper is devoted for handling *Celebration*, which is regarded by Sheridan Morely (2000, N.P.) as "Pinter's funniest and also perhaps his most accessible script". *Celebration's* title echoes the dramatic irony of other sarcastically congratulatory titles throughout Pinter's catalog from *The Birthday Party*(1957) and *Homecoming*(1974) to *New World Order*(1991), and *Party Time* (1991), all dramatizing characters' qualities contradict the titles to shed light on those opposites as superseding truth. For examples: *The Birthday Party* ends with the deconstructionist birthday, Stanley's seemingly psychological destruction. The play starts with a list of characters that shows names without any details. This sort of characterization gives the readers the impression that the relation these people have are not clearly defined. This is postmodernist way of characterization helps create open suggestions for the relations. The scene begins as an apparently ordinary celebratory meal for the diners developing into a complex weaving of more menacing premise,

including undercurrents of love/hate relationships and incest. The play ends with a mysterious, and incomplete speech from the waiter, which hints at a possible way to escape the pain of everyday life which may reflect every ordinary man's pain.

### Methodology

This paper takes character analyses as the method of discussion. It is the most suitable approach since the aim of the paper is to distinguish the characters by dividing them into two groups. These groups are: modernist limited→ controlled and postmodernist controlled→ controlling characters. Following Levinas's concept of alterity and "the other" will be of great benefit for this study. In an essay written in 1957, a few years before the publication of the work which was to gain him international recognition, *Totality and Infinity* (1961), Levinas describes philosophy as a search for truth (Levinas, 1961, 88). This search, he continues, has two implications for the philosopher: firstly, the truth is considered by the thinker as a reality, something other, separate and distinct from himself (Ibid., 88-89); secondly, the thinker seeks to protect his own identity despite his investigation of this otherness, "despite the unknown lands into which thought seems to lead" (Ibid., 91). Philosophy thus conceived, Levinas asserts, is "engaged in reducing to the Same all that is opposed to it as other" (ibid.), and consequently neglects "the other" and the notion of responsibility to alterity. Autonomy, the philosophy which aims to ensure the freedom, or the identity of beings, presupposes that freedom itself is sure of its right, is justified without

recourse to anything further .... When, in the philosophical life that realizes this freedom, there arises a term foreign to the philosophical life, other .. it becomes an obstacle; it has to be surmounted and integrated into this life ... truth is just this victory and this integration. ( 94) . In this sense, realizing the truth as "the other", accepting it and dealing with it in the correct way is regarded as a success for the character. By accepting "the other", the character can protect him/herself. The foreign being, instead of supporting itself in the secure stronghold of its singularity ... becomes a theme and an object...It falls into the network of a prior ideas, which I bring to bear so as to capture it. (97)Ethically, Levinas thinks "the other" is superior or prior to the self; the mere presence of "the Other" makes demands before one can respond by helping them or ignoring them. This idea and that of the face-to-face encounter were re-written later, taking on Derrida's points which he made about the impossibility of a pure presence of "the Other" ("the Other" could be other than this pure alterity first encountered), and so the issues of language and representation arose. This "re-write" was accomplished in part with Levinas' analysis of the distinction between the saying and the said but still maintaining a priority of ethics over metaphysics. Levinas talks of "the other" in terms of 'insomnia' and 'wakefulness'. It is an ecstasy, or exteriority toward "the other" that forever remains beyond any attempt at full capture. This otherness is everlasting (or infinite); even in murdering another, the otherness remains, it has not been negated or controlled. This infiniteness of "the

other" will allow Levinas to derive other aspects of philosophy and science as secondary to this ethic. Thus, Levinas(1984,1) expresses his point of view:"The others that obsess me in the other do not affect me as examples of the same genus united with my neighbor by resemblance or common nature, individuations of the human race, or chips off the old block... The others concern me from the first. Here fraternity precedes the commonness of a genus. My relationship with the Other as neighbor gives meaning to my relations with all the others". The "other", as a general term in philosophy, can also be used to mean the unconscious, silence, insanity, the other of language i.e., what it refers to and what is unsaid. These representations for "the other" are quite obviously used in Pinter's plays. Following "the other" and the concept of alterity in a formalist, psychological and post-structural ways will help give Pinter's characters and Pinter himself their right position between modernism and postmodernism. For Levinas, however, "the other" is precisely 'impregnable', irreducibly strange and utterly beyond one's comprehension. He seeks to analyze the possibilities and conditions of its appearance in one's life, and to formulate the ethical significance of the encounter with it, and the response which it demands. In this sense, presenting the postmodernist controlled-controlling character side by side with the modernist limited→ controlling character throughout the Pinter-ish text will help demonstrate the confrontation between the self and "the other". The confrontation exposes the ethical formulation the postmodernist and the

modernist characters use to be their choices. Levinas's thought developed in response to a study of and eventual disaffection with the work of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Levinas was instrumental in introducing their phenomenology into France; his *La Theorie de l'intuition dans la phenomenologie de Husserl* (1930) being the first complete work on Husserl in French (Levinas,1981, 52). Husserl had sought to examine the role of a perceiving consciousness in the constitution of the perceived world: "The equivalence of thought and knowledge in relation to being is ... formulated by Husserl in the most direct manner" (Ibid., 78). Husserl developed the notion of "intentionality", adopting a method of phenomenological reduction to reveal a transcendental Ego constituting the knowable through its intentional acts.(Davis, 1996, 10-13)Levinas explains that "Husserl...describes [knowing] as intentionality, which is understood as 'consciousness of something', and so is inseparable from its 'intentional object'" (1981, 77).In Husserlian 'intentionality', the idea that meaning is completely given by the subject in its intentional engagement with the world implies to Levinas that what is engaged with is completely within consciousness. Husserl "continues to base his theory on representation, the objectivizing act", which "suspends all independence in the world other than that of consciousness itself" (Livenas, 78-9). Nothing truly other can be encountered by the Husserlian subject, because everything encountered is already within consciousness.What Levinas (Ibid., 79-80) calls the "non-intentional", "non-



reflective" or "pre-reflective" consciousness-that which, in its passivity "precedes the formulation of any metaphysical ideas on the subject" (Ibid., 82) - threatens Husserl's 'intentionality' idea. The problem is primarily (and stated here simplistically) that if intentionality presents to the subject a world already the subject's own possession, that world cannot be shared with anyone else. Husserl sees "the Other" as a reflection of the self, for whom the existence of others is ascertained by analogy: if the world is constituted for someone by intentionality, it must be so for others too. So, Husserl would claim, "[a]lthough the Other is never fully present to me, he or she is known by empathy and assimilated because it is conceived as a reflection of myself' (Davis,1996, 28). While Levinas(1981, 52) gained several important insights from Heidegger's phenomenology, which he credits with showing him the temporal and historical situatedness of the phenomenological encounters, similar problems presented themselves. Heidegger continues to consider meaning being obtainable completely through an intentional engagement with the world, an idea which Levinas increasingly disagrees with. Levinas (Ibid., 62)thinks that Heidegger's attempts are to overcome the solipsism of Husserl's phenomenology by introducing the notion of a shared world, and though Heidegger's concept of Dasein or (being here) is qualified by the term Mitsein or 'Being-with', he is but ultimately making the same mistake as Husserl, because an actual encounter with "the other" is not important for his concept of Mitsein. Levinas draws

attention to the fact that, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes the concept of "mineness" as one of the chief characteristics of Dasein. He interprets this as implying that regarding others "I become I only because I possess my own Being as primary". On the other hand, Levinas (Ibid., 62-63)claims that in regard "to myself, I am defined as a subjectivity, as a singular person, as an 'I', precisely because I am exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual 'I' .... Ethical subjectivity dispenses with the idealizing subjectivity of ontology which reduces everything to itself. The "supremacy of "the Same" over "the other" seems to be integrally maintained in the philosophy of Heidegger" (Levinas, 1993, 99-100). Levinas increasingly sees subjectivity as demanding an engagement with "the Other" which does not seek to absorb it into some category of knowledge or representation. This requires a redefinition of intentionality through which consciousness encounters an unknowable, rather than transparent, world. Having drawn attention to the implication of intentionality in the possessive, totalizing imperative of Western philosophy, in which things are conceived of as ideas to be "conquered, dominated, possessed" (Ibid., 95), Levinas (Ibid., 109) concedes that this may be the case with objects, but the encounter with "the other" - which he likens to the concept of an infinity - is an encounter with something the nature of which cannot be grasped in such a manner: "the alterity of the infinite is not cancelled, is not extinguished in the

thought that thinks it. .. The infinite does not enter into the idea of the infinite, is not grasped; this idea is not a concept. The infinite is the radically, absolutely, other. (Ibid., 107)

### Discussion

*Celebration* is centered on three couples dining in the most expensive restaurant in town. At one table are sat two brothers, Lambert and Matt, and two sisters, Prue and Julie. Lambert and Julie are married, as are Matt and Prue. They are celebrating Lambert and Julie's wedding anniversary. They are at their forties. Seated at another table are Russell and Suki, who later join the other party of diners. The diners' conversations are intersected by: the existential thoughts of Richard, the restaurateur, Sonia the mattresses d', and an unnamed Waiter. The plot revolves around these things. In *Celebration* nothing seems to happen. The play is distinctive in that it is empty of any action except almost every statement is edged with a rapier wit designed to destroy a previous speaker and slash others with a continuous tension. The play brilliantly dramatizes how the loveless destruct. In destroying what they cannot create, they destroy others, community and almost unnoticeably the self. Alterity, or otherness in this play is shifted by Pinter to the public level. He tries to create a play that seems to be of private relation of couples of the same family, two sisters whose husbands are brothers. However, as Michael Billington (2007, 27) argues "no one ever gets a Pinter play on a single viewing or reading" In this sense, it is the public affair that matters for Pinter. As the play continues, the audiences are able to find out the inter-

textuality Pinter uses of *Celebration's* two brothers who work as "strategy consultants" with his early works, such as *Precisely's* two strategy consultant's discussion. Their discussion is about the number of the civilian deaths following a nuclear bombing. On the other hand, another inter-textuality occurs in calling these two criminals as peace-speakers as *Party Time*'s peace-speakers. Yet these people hardly seem evil embodied. Nobody dies in the end. And the audience grin and laugh all the way up to the final Slow Fade—"not...a bang but a whimper." Yet what happens before their eyes is not funny but horrifying, at depth, only if audiences allow themselves to look beneath the surface. These, the power-brokers of the world, grocery clerk bureaucrats who deliver the guns and design strategies of destruction in exchange for millions, scarcely hint at their work. And for good reason, like Goldberg and McCann in *The Birthday Party*, their "job" is conducted secretly. *Celebration*, apparently celebrating a wedding anniversary as social commitment to marriage, reveals human relationships to be a facade, commitment to community, country, even to self, as nonexistent except as practiced at the primal edges of power among the recently moneyed privileged: those who run the guns, drugs and money of the world. Power, as the raw assertion of the self when money as power replaces desire for all else, dramatizes the invasive destruction that results when such power asserts itself for its own sake with no ethical basis, no real power over the self. In this case, all the characters become modernist limited→ controlled characters. All the characters try to get

control over the other. nobody accepts to loss the battle, because there is only the emptiness of ethics and values. "The other" is an enemy who must be destroyed. These modernist limited→ controlled characters exceed the destructive limits of fanatics driven by personal vision. As David Mamet(1999, N.P.) said, "Political corruption in pursuit of a personal vision of the public good is limited by nothing at all and ends in murder and chaos." These are people, however, who have no vision aside from a reflexive response to support power. Without consciousness of that lack of vision they are without conscience. As such, they are extremely dangerous, perhaps the most dangerous of all Pinter's modernist limited→ controlled characters. They can destroy, just like robots, the whole world. The American critic, Penelope Prentice (2000, 370) discusses that the sexually brutal language of Pinter's recent torturers has assimilated itself into the largely upper-bureaucratic classes in the play: "men and women calling one another *fuck-pigs*, men calling each other *cunts*—this from the writer who once insisted "we use such words sparingly because we have so few vivid intensifiers". This decline mirrors the wedding of the erotic with destruction among these characters and parallels, but in a reverse-out, the divine descent in the epic over centuries, the fall from the earliest heroes as gods to the most recent ordinary men: from Gilgamesh, two-thirds a god, through Achilles, immortal save for his heel, to Odysseus, offered immortality, down to Joyce's Leopold Bloom, mere ordinary mortal". Any simple reader for Pinter's work can conclude that Pinter's

characters, begun among outcasts in *The Room*, have steadily risen out of the lowest classes to the comfortable middle class in *Betrayal* and, beginning with *Party Time*, to power-brokers. But as their fortunes continued to rise, here soaring to unimagined heights, the characters have declined in virtue. They increase only in absolute malicious intent. But they have great fun along the way, can make the audience join them in their laughter. Psychologically speaking, their motives remain the same as that of Pinter's earliest characters: to maintain their status and what they possess. These characters cling fiercely to position and possession. Prentice(371) claims that Pinter's work wields a comic tone, but he unmasks more than hypocrisy, foibles and corruption. she continues to say that: "He shows the audiences the faces of complete destructors, laughing at their deals in the name of "peace-keeping." He shows the audiences how comedy in recent time can be more deadly serious than tragedy. Pinter's modernist limited→ controlled characters are caught not in the act of irresistible destruction but of playing. Pinter's comedy remains in the service of making the terror bearable: to expose evil as annihilation committed by quite ordinary people, not so different from the audiences. To talk about the public level again, *Celebration* implies that the audiences as people are more likely to cling steadfastly like these celebrants to their familiar room, restaurant or estate, getting news of the outside world at second hand, or remaining ignorant. Yet, even with his many insights into why characters act as they do, at a larger level puzzling questions of this play for the

first time knock against the mystery of life, a phrase that the audience are to raise at the end of the play: "What do these characters want?" Pinter focuses on inspiring implicitly and explicitly that question which remains central to all else and in the course of the play becomes the audiences': What do we as audiences want? among these characters, a clear, dominant desire remains trivial. misused from productive ends, power is diverted to destruction. But without consciousness of that desire, every act becomes a brutal exercise of power to put down "the other". The modernist limited→ controlled characters of *Celebration* are all unconscious of their lack of self-knowledge. They run an ordinary life, their lives. This is the very dangerous thing about this play. It reflects the condition under which people live in recent time. Committing crimes as a matter of ordinary life is unbearably happens in recent time. Pinter presents a plea to stop this sort of living. His plea for the play characters as well as for the audience is to get self-knowledge by giving enough space for "the other" in the life. These characters represent the modernist limited→ controlled characters of the play whose quest-line is to destroy "the other". Power for power's sake becomes each character's main objective. On the other hand, the postmodernist controlled→ controlling characters in this play are: Richard, the restaurant owner in his fifties, the hostess, in her thirties, and the Waiter acquiesce to assuming subservient positions. They consistently return lackey politeness to shocking proposal, taking on the chin barbs aimed at them, or running from confrontation altogether.

And among those three, only the Waiter, to keep from being invisible, interjects into conversations his own brand of self: "recollections" of his grandfather's acquaintance/ friendship with early-twentieth-century household-name greats in literature, Hollywood, the arts and politics. Although the Waiter here is brushed aside as an annoying insect by this restaurant's customers, who all hint at or disturbingly recount violently abusive families, only the Waiter and Richard register fond recollections of family: a grandfather and father. Clearly apparent that these characters do not intend any harm to anybody. Their quest-line is to keep peace and calmness by accepting "the other" in spite of the other's bad behaviours. The postmodernist controlled→ controlling characters, as *Celebration* exposes, are of two types: the ethical and the non ethical. Only the waiter keeps to behave according to the ethics of alterity and accepting "the other" without causing them any harm. Whereas Richard and Sonia have changed their attitude as they find something that serves their self-indulgence. They are non ethical, so that they are worse than the modernist limited→ controlled. They accept their surrounding, unlike the modernist characters, rather than trying to change it. But there is a difference between the ethical and the non-ethical in that the ethical accept the surrounding and "the other" without changing, because they promote "the other" a great value. Whereas, the non ethical accepts "the other" because they have certain voracity that might be achieved by "the other", thus, their only valid ethics is pragmatism and expediency. Among

the diners, however, even the most ordinary exchange deepens character and delightfully drives the audiences to darker corners of illuminated insight and always forwards conflict. But they go nowhere. And that seems to be the point. Pinter exposes the idea that without an overarching desire, a purpose aimed at a productive end, people stroll toward destruction. And they take everything in their wake. But no one seems to notice, perhaps, at first glance, not even the audience. But for an audience the cumulative effect permanently writes powerful messages in the soul. Pinter has portrayed a foggy image about memory for these characters. The Waiter opens with a simple, familiar,

The Waiter: "Who's having duck?"

Lambert: "The duck's for me,"

Julie: No it isn't.

Lambert: No it isn't. Who's it for?

Julie: Me (5; all references are to this version) This conversation reveals that the men running the show may not remember what they ordered for dinner less than hour ago. Nor does the Waiter remember what his customers ordered, although that's his job. When Matt announces, "Chicken for my wife, steak for me," the Waiter no sooner serves the chicken than he asks, "And who's having steak?" (5) It's funny and scary, faulty memory, inattention, not listening, only the first of many failings, as dialogue quickly sharpens itself to weaponry to target several at once.

Lambert: "What did I order?" Julie: "Who cares?" (6) This dialogue brings to surface *Celebration's* central theme and technique. *Who cares?* for anyone, self or other, is played out at an accelerating pitch by each character attempting to

one-up "the other". This statement becomes a central statement in the play that reflects the concept of alterity as Pinter tries to show. These characters do not have good relation with each other, because they do not care about each other nor about anyone else. All of them are limited→ controlled characters means that they are only copies of other modern characters in the society whose only valid ethics is power and it is the only thing all the modernist limited→ controlled characters have been trying to gain all the time throughout the play. Aside from temporary alliances formed by the men against the women, the two women in self-defense and vengeance, it's everyone for the self. As Dilek Inan (2011, N.P.) suggests, "Almost every exchange suggests more than what it really pronounces." When Prue, Julie's sister, says Lambert ordered "Osso Bucco" [*sic*], Lambert asks, "Osso what?" (6) Matt, the straight man, Lambert's brother, explains, "It's an old Italian dish." Lambert sets the tone for the rest of the play by introducing the literal translation of "osso buco" as "bone with a hole," to freely associate to "arsehole": "Well I knew Osso was Italian but I know bugger all about bucco." (7) When Matt translates, "I didn't know arsehole was Italian," Lambert asks, "Yes but on the other hand what's the Italian for arsehole?" Prue's "Julie, Lambert" zeugmas as both an answer to Lambert's *What's the Italian for arsehole?* and a breakup of the impending conflict with a "peacekeeper" toast: "Happy anniversary." (7) The opening conflict promises fireworks and violence. The most important motive for the promised destruction to come



announces itself at the other table in Russell's opening gambit to Suki: "They believe in me." (8) Russell's declaration of confidence, like Pinter's earlier character's self-referential assertions, refutes what's asserted by dramatizing the opposite: his desperate need to be believed in by others because he does not believe in himself. That pervasive lack of belief in the self in all the characters reveals itself in the bullying of the others. Lack of self-trust, self-respect, self-acceptance and self-love discloses yet again how dangerous is a little insecurity. (8) Russell's requiring respect from Suki, a woman he can't respect bespeaks Russell's basic insecurity that Suki twists to her advantage. She plays up to Russell, setting him up only to tear him down. "I'm sure they believe in you," she says, then takes deadly aim at his weakness that she uses as her hold on him. Candidly expressing the love/money equation that bonds all these couples, she uses her knowledge that he needs (not wants or loves or even accepts) her, and wants what she wants—an assured, secure, comfortable financial future—to get what else she wants: "I mean, listen, I want you to be rich, believe me, I want you to be rich so that you can buy me houses and panties and I'll know that you really love me." (8) lovelessness quickly links with lust, and with revenge, joining the destructive quest for power. "Panties" sounds vulnerably innocent enough to play Suki as straight, innocent of deliberate, calculated, malicious intent but consciously sense. Russell returns fire, registering his knowledge of her jealousy, anger and pain, the real reason for her malicious joke: "Listen, she was

just a secretary. That's all." (8) She has him on the defensive. His "just a secretary" intended to proclaim his own power and innocence, merely in a very deconstructionist way reveals, in the destructive links between sex and power, his powerlessness. "She was a scrubber.... They're all the same, these secretaries, these scrubbers. They're like politicians. They love power," he says, pleading innocence in terms of his powerlessness. (9) He blames the secretary for her power over him! When Suki attempts to disarm him with, "Like me," admitting she was once a secretary, Russell denies her equation, Russell : "You don't know what these girls are like,"

Suki: "I've been behind a few filing cabinets." (9)

Here, Suki counters his insult by prizing in herself the lust he depreciates, flaunting her knowledge of her way around beds. *Celebration* shows that in a world where money is power, and women remain without power except as adjuncts to men, Suki's task is bolstering Russell's confidence: "Listen. I would invest in you myself if I had any money [...] Because I believe in you." (10) But with sex as her primary currency, Russell wants but cannot demand assurances of her fidelity: "What's all this about filing cabinets?" Suki's sexual prowess, her ability to incite jealousy, is also largely in her past, driven by former hormonal excitability: "Their excitement," she says, "made me so excited, sometimes I could hardly walk from one filing cabinet to another, I was so excited, I was so plump and wobbly it was terrible, men simply couldn't keep their hands off me, their demands were outrageous

but,”(10) she says, returning Russell to center stage, “coming back to more important things, they’re right to believe in you.” Her candor and vulnerability, tacit acknowledgment that she too needs him, allow the audiences some sympathy for her. Her repeating, “why shouldn’t they believe in you,” echoes at the next table. (10) “I tell him all the time. But he doesn’t listen” could be a continuation of Suki’s ego-bolstering speech but is Julie’s complaint to Prue in a crosscut that reiterates and underscores the marginalized position of all the women: their required buttressing of a male partner’s sense of self goes unheeded. (11) How is it possible to fill a bottomless well? Yet, Pinter’s characters can always be counted on to rise to rather than neutralize, mediate or ignore provocative comments. Billington (169) notes in the biography that nobody ever registers a blow. True, but they almost always retaliate. When Prue castigates Lambert for not listening to Julie, “You’ve got a loyal wife there and never forget it,” (11) Lambert subverts Prue’s compliment to diminish Julie and keep her in her place as a sex toy, “She’s really loyal under the table.” Julie slams back, “Why don’t you go and buy a new car and drive it into a brick wall.” Unflappable, Lambert exclaims, “She loves me.” (11) With this second mention of “love,” Matt’s reading of Julie nicely parallels Suki’s assessment of her relationship with Russell, that a man’s sexual prowess is in his assets—for what they purchase her: Matt: “No, she loves new cars,” Lambert: “with soft leather seats.” (12) The sexually infused language rarely strays far from vulgar intent. Matt’s ditty, “Ain’t she neat?/As

she’s walking up the street./She’s got a lovely bubbly pair of tits/And soft leather seat,”(13) signals his and Lambert’s desires as elsewhere engaged. And they are out of wine. Russell, at the other table, invites more ego-inflating with, Russell: “Do you think I have a nice character?”

Suki: “I think you do,” “but the trouble is that when you come down to it you haven’t actually got any character to begin with—I mean as such, that’s the thing.” (14) Little she could have said could be more devastating or provoke his full frontal assault. Although she softens her candid appraisal by admitting she’s the same, Suki: “But I wouldn’t worry..., look at me. I don’t have any character either. I’m just a reed. I’m just a reed in the wind. Aren’t I? You know I am.” Russell: “You’re a whore,” he lashes out, “with the wind blowing up your skirt.” (14) Taking no comfort in the downgrade to her class or sex. All the women here have in common the ability to stay their ground. Not one shies away, backs off, freezes or breaks down in tears. Undaunted, Suki replies, “How did you know the sensation...? Men don’t wear skirts,” reducing Russell to name calling: “You’re a prick.” (15) The assault on women continues at the first table on a more generalized level with Matt’s singing, “Wash me in the water/Where you washed your dirty daughter.” (15) Asked if she knows the song, Julie recognizes the insult to women: “It’s not in my repertoire, darling.” (16) “Darling,” throughout is hardly a term of endearment. Lambert, having scored his hit, terminates the topic announcing, “This is the best restaurant in town.” *Best*, equated with

*most expensive*, registers in his next, “Do you know how much money I made last year?” (16) Where Lambert expresses pride in his identity that rests in his money-making prowess, Prue conversely airs her self-loathing by airing grievances against her mother-in-law’s disapproval of her: “She never gave me one present in the whole of her life. Nothing. She wouldn’t give me the drippings off her nose.” (16) Pinter, here, has intertextualized Prue with her short on caution with Miss Prue in William Congreve’s *Love for Love*, and recalls perhaps Thomas D’Urfey’s more obviously aristocratic play *Love for Money*. *Celebration* shares Restoration comedy’s guiding trinity of power, sex and money conjoined on the marriage market, a comedy that exposes lies, disguises and deception by dissolving them in laughter. (ibid, ) But as in all Pinter plays, the laughter ends—at the deep hole—where the audiences stand facing themselves nakedly. For the men to maintain such full power the women are diminished to inconsequence. Inter-textuality appears again when Julie sides with Prue, joining her self-deprecating complaint, which she transforms into weaponry targeting both the mother and her sons: their own husbands. Julie sympathizes and then with a dollop of sex on a barb mounts a counterattack equally at both their men. Julie : “All mothers-in-law are like that. They love their sons..., their boys. They don’t want their sons to be fucked by other girls.” Prue: “All mothers want their sons to be fucked by themselves,” (17)

The men join together to top the women with assertions that exhaust the ridiculous. Matt: “All mothers want to be

fucked by their mother,” says Lambert. “Or by themselves,”(18)

Yet some embedded truth abides, akin to Jocasta’s assurance to Oedipus that all boys have desired to marry their mother’s—in dreams.

The men’s polite replies to Richard’s obligatory, rhetorical inquiries, “Good dinner?” halt when Lambert, flexing his power, gets in a double dig at his wife and at Richard with, “My wife wasn’t impressed.” Julie counters with a thrust to both her husband and Richard: “I liked the waiter.” When Richard asks: “Which one?” she says: “The one with the fur-lined jockstrap.” Lambert holds his ground, “He takes it off for breakfast.” But Julie turns it to her advantage, attacking his sexuality, “Which is more than you do.” (21) Richard clings to his professional charm, “Well how nice to see you all.” (21) But not to deflect the point, Prue enters to defend her sister and defeat the men. Although she opens with fact, “She wasn’t impressed with her food,” she quickly slips into the outrageous, “She said [...] she’s my sister [...] she said she could cook better than that with one hand stuffed between her legs [...]. She said she could make a better sauce than the one on the plate if she pissed into it.” (22) She vouches for her sister’s veracity by saying, “I’ve known her all my life [...] since we were little innocent girls [...]” “when we used to lie in the nursery and hear mummy beating the shit out of daddy.” “We saw the blood on the sheets,” (22). There is a reminder that no innocence remains, and an intimation that these women have been trained in abuse from childhood, having also learned how to “dis” at their mother’s knee. The slot-slipping comic

tirade “one hand stuffed between her legs” for “hand tied behind her back”, aimed at an underling, only registers her own impotence and ends unregistered by Matt: “Well, it’s lovely to be here, I’ll say that.” (22)

Prue, undeterred and not to be dismissed by her husband, walks to Richard to thank him personally, then cuts all the men by announcing, “I’d like to kiss you on the mouth.” Her forward move, like Lenny’s, intertextuality continues: “Do you mind if I hold your hand?” (22) to Ruth in *The Homecoming*, is intended to send him reeling back. Julie, too, would like to kiss him, “Because I never said I didn’t like your sauce. I love your sauce.” (23) But when Prue complains, “We can’t both kiss him on the mouth at the same time,” (23) Lambert meets her thrust with his parry to end the match, “You could tickle his arse with a feather.” (23) Richard, ever professionally charming, takes the subservient, coward’s way, and ducks out, “Well I’m so glad [...] See you later I hope.” (23) Lambert and Matt solidify their male bond by heaping praise on Richard as a: “Charming man who [...] insists [...] [t]hat standards are maintained up to the highest standards, up to the very highest fucking standards—,” (23) reintroducing the question of values where the highest standards equate merely with the most expensive. These modernist limited→controlled characters are all arrested by their deceptive life. Their own vicious values continue to drive the conflict as Prue scores the final point of this round with, “I knew him in the old days.” Suggestive of a connection that parallels Suki’s behind-the-filing-cabinet past, she scores again with, “When he was a chef.”

(24) Suki picks up her recitative on her usual male bolstering note, “I’m so proud of you,” and Russell’s encouraging, “Yes?” registers his need to be proud of. (26) there is always a hint that these characters are in great need for positive support. They need to be accepted by the other for their good virtues. The problem is that they, in fact, have lost all their virtues as they lead a modernist style of living by using power to get comfort. The deconstruction occurs here in that as these characters seek to get a full-options respectable life, they missed the life as respectable human beings. Suki wonders if the unspecified *they* are “good people. [...] And when I meet them, when you introduce me to them, they’ll treat me with respect, won’t they? They won’t want to fuck me behind a filing cabinet?” (26)

The audiences soon learn that *they* already have fucked her behind the filing cabinet, yet, it is *she* who introduces Russell to more of *them*. She seeks for respectable life. Sonia, as a good hostess, comes to chat them up and recognize their existence as she pushes dessert, Sonia: “Are you going to try our bread and butter pudding?”

Russell: “Did I ever tell you about my mother’s bread and butter pudding?” (28) Sonia is one of the postmodernist controlled→controlling characters of the play. She is echoing the sons-and-mothers’ lover talk at the other table. In their most intimate moment Suki says: “Darling. Give me your hand [...]. Please tell me about your mother’s bread and butter pudding. What was it like?” (29) His faintly sexual response, “It was like drowning in an ocean of richness,” elicits Suki’s praise, “How beautiful. You’re a

poet.” But Russell chooses to counter her compliment with complaint; he blames parental rejection as the source that justifies his ongoing, wound-licking insecurity. “I wanted to be a poet once. But I got no encouragement from my dad. He thought I was an asshole.” (29) The seeming compliments and compassion flow in only one direction, from female to male, as Suki, seemingly entrained with the other table’s conversation echoes, “He was jealous of you, that’s all. He saw you as a threat. He thought you wanted to steal his wife.”(29)

The Waiter, one of the postmodernist controlled→controlling characters of the play, enters to ask “if I may make an interjection,” and commenting that he overheard them mention T.S. Eliot, claims his grandfather “knew T S Eliot quite well.” (29) here, inter-textuality is used again. The Waiter lists others, a roster of acclaimed British and American writers his grandfather knew in the early three decades of the twentieth century, many of Pinter’s acknowledged favorites: Ezra Pound, W.H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender, George Barker, Dylan Thomas, D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, Ford Maddox Ford, W.B. Yeats, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf and Thomas Hardy. He claims his grandfather might have been slated for “Chancellor of the exchequer or [. . .] first Lord of the Admiralty [...], but as things turned out he spent most of his spare time in the United States where he was a very close pal of Ernest Hemingway.” (31)As his list grows to offensive section to include, “William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald, Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos—you

know—that whole vivid Chicago gang—not to mention John Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell, Carson McCullers and other members of the old Deep south conglomerate,” he ends with a wonderful impossibility: “he was James Joyce’s godmother.” His secondhand and invented self-importance by association, the power of the powerless, reveals, in this context, fame as another species of power. Inan(2011,N.P.) suggests that "Here the Waiter’s phantasmagoria of grand literary names and the British heritage in fact romanticizes Englishness and reminds the audience of lost values at the dawn of a new millennium." in this sense, the waiter is the ethical postmodernist controlled→controlling character of the play. Russell brushes aside his interjection with, “Have you been working here long?” and asks, “You going to stay until it changes hands?” The Waiter takes it as a threat, “Are you suggesting that I’m about to get the boot?” (31) Unlike Russell, who requires assurances of his identity, the Waiter admits inadequacies, “To be brutally honest, I don’t think I’d recover if they did a thing like that.” This second, rare disclosure of vulnerability from a Pinter character (which generally can come only from one who accepts subservience), evokes some sympathy in its honesty. But when he says, “This place is like a womb to me [...]. I strongly prefer that to being born,”(32) the Waiter, links himself to the long and oldest line of Pinter’s characters, Rose in *The Room* and Stanley in *The Birthday Party* , postmodernist controlled→controlling characters who prefer to remain powerless rather than venture out into life by using power the wrong way



to harm the other. By getting self-knowledge, the waiter is reborn. Russell, who may recognize unwelcome reminders of his own insecurities in the Waiter's admission, easily dismisses him, "Listen, next time we're talking about T S Eliot I'll drop you a card." (32) The Waiter, taking him literally, further accepts his position as a protector rather than a defender, "You would make me a very happy man [...]. You are incredibly gracious people." (32) His answer exposes clearly his way of thinking as an ethical postmodernist controlled→controlling character. He seems to be controlled by the owner of the restaurant and the clients, but he has made his own decision not to take violence as a choice. Lambert picks up a variant of Russell's self-congratulatory refrain and need for flattering assurances, bouncing off the others with fulsome self-praise, "I know I'm well liked. [...] I trust my family and my friends [...]. Deep down they trust me [...] they respect me—otherwise I wouldn't say this. I wouldn't take you all into my confidence if I thought you all hated my guts [...] if I thought you thought I was a pile of dog shit [...] I could never be frank and honest with you if that was the truth..." (33) After this windy prelude, he entrusts them with a confession: "you won't believe this, I fell in love once and this girl I fell in love with loved me back. I know she did." (33) Accepting by the other, here, in a form of love, a fleeting possibility for all even for Lambert, in an earlier and other incarnation, remains the otherwise unspoken desire that all share, but he uses this trusted confession to erase his wife. When Julie asks, "Wasn't that me, darling?" Lambert, dazed, asks, "Who?"

Matt brings him back to the present: "Her." Lambert, responding, "Her? No, not her. A girl. I used to take her for walks along the river," obliterates his wife and love for her. (34) Lambert's response here is inter-textualized Andy's in Pinter's *Moonlight* when, as Bridget stands before him in the dark, his wife approaches and he says, "A woman walked towards me in a darkening room." When his wife says, "That was me," he says, "Who?" Julie ignores his recollection by offering her own: "Lambert fell in love with me on top of a bus. It was a short journey. Fulham Broadway to Shepherd's Bush, but it was enough. He was trembling all over." (34) She verifies with Prue: "When I got home I came and sat on your bed didn't I?" (34) The buses and neighborhood suggest that they may have all taken a quick ride up the social ladder, from buses to the best restaurant in town. Lambert, oblivious of his wife's digression, continues to cancel her out, "I used to take this girl for walks along the river." Matt protests that he never knew about that. But Lambert suggests Matt never knew his real self, implying the real self is the self who loves:

Lambert: "You knew nothing about me. You know nothing about me. Who the fuck are you anyway?" Matt's: "I'm your big brother," Lambert: "I'm talking about love, mate [...], real fucking love." (34-35) It is this self-knowledge that Pinter demands from his audiences as well as readers. Throughout, *fucking* appears as an intensifying adjective signaling veracity: what is real, and links almost all topics with sex. Everything is sex. But with this third mention of acceptance in a form of love, all ties begin to unravel as

each speaks from his own memory but remains deaf to the others. While Matt insists he knows his brother Lambert, saw him the day he was born, Prue's for, insist upon, verification, yet set the sibling relationship in the past. Ignoring her question, Julie only recalls, "He was trembling like a leaf on top of that bus,"(35) bespeaking, perhaps, Lambert's earlier insecurity and forgotten level of passion. In a contrapuntal recitative, Lambert, on his own track, insists, "This girl was in love with me—I'm trying to tell you," as Prue, on her separate track, asks Julie, "Do you remember what you said?" (35) We never learn what Julie said about Lambert in the past, but she now uses that memory to put him down. The only love in any of the characters' lives is long dead. At this low point of discord and total alienation, Richard visits the other table as Suki observes the opposite: "Everyone is so happy in your restaurant. I mean women *and* men. You make people so happy." (36) This reminder that food has become a pastime, dining out, an entertainment, and restaurants, a retreat, a sanctuary providing a rare moment of community where people face one another and talk, reveals here only false, ferociously combative fronts. Yet, these people face the audiences so that the audiences can face themselves. Even as Richard assents, "Well we do like to feel that it's a happy restaurant." (36) Russell accedes and then undercuts them both. He describes himself as "basically a totally disordered personality, some people would describe me as a psychopath"(37) at which he turns to Suki for verification. Russell adds, "But when I'm sitting in

attempt to reinforce her bond to Julie, "I mean we were sisters, weren't we?" becomes a comically terrifying assertion—that she should ask this restaurant," "I suddenly find I have no psychopathic tendencies at all. I don't feel like killing everyone in sight, I don't feel like putting a bomb under everyone's arse." (37) Although the audiences later learn he is a banker, the introduction of a *bomb* ties his work metaphorically, and later literally, to violence. But, enraptured, he speaks of the restaurant as a spiritual place of communion: "I feel something quite different, I have a sense of equilibrium, of harmony, I love my fellow diners." (37) This won't last long. On the heels of Lambert's confession of love, Russell admits, "Now this is very unusual for me. Normally I feel—as I've just said—absolutely malice and hatred towards everyone within spitting distance—but here I feel love. How do you explain it?"(37) Suki replies with abandoned but comic banality, to register the level of Russell's love: "It's the ambience," (37) It is perhaps that outside the restaurant, there is the world where the two brothers work as strategy consultants to enforce peace. The critic, Pamela Fisher, underlines the fact that the outside world is threatening and it is "held at bay while the restaurant sanctuary caters to every mood and whim"(Fisher, 2001, N.P.)

As a modernist limited→ controlled character, Russell honestly, if horrifyingly, admits his violent desires and speaks to the audiences all at odd moments if the audiences are honest with themselves. With the mention of acceptance in a form of love, he recollects his "old school master [who]

used to say that ambience surrounds you.” But he sets limits on human connection and acceptance: “but none of us boys were ever invited to tea.” (37) Offering a connection, Richard free associates to his own childhood visits with his father to “our village pub,” looking in from outside. Lambert: “To my wife. To our anniversary,” Julie: “Oh darling! You remembered [...]. I’m so touched by this, honestly.” (40) Lambert cuts her off with, “Raise your fucking glass and shut up!” (40) Julie, in one of the rarest calls from a Pinter character, acknowledges another character’s point-blank attack: Julie: “But darling, that’s naked aggression. He doesn’t normally go in for naked aggression. He usually disguises it under honeyed words.” Lambert: “We’ve been married for more bloody years than I can remember and it don’t seem a day too long.” (40) Lambert returns with honeyed words no less brutal for their obvious opposite intention. Acceptance by the other in a form of love again reappear in the play when Julie and Prue, protecting themselves from their men, retreat into sentimental reminiscences of their children, each competitively claiming their love from their children as what love they’ve known in life: “It’s funny our children aren’t here. When they were young we spent so much time with them, the little things, looking after them [...]. They always loved me much more than they loved him.” (41) But again, what love once existed is past, the men claim, faded away. Matt quashes their remembered love, disavowing their claim by disparaging the children in the present, their ingratitude: “They have no memory [...]. They don’t remember who

their father was or who their mother was.” (41) Only the Waiter and Richard fondly recall family, the Waiter, his grandfather, Richard, his father. Matt’s use of past tense “who their father was,” like Prue’s insistence that Julie “was my sister,” suggests that family bonds don’t strengthen in time but dissolve. Otherness for the limited → controlled character is a matter of memory and past. For the time being, nobody cares about the other. The observation of British psychologist, Frederick Bartlett (1997, 81) whose research on memory concludes that one remembers only fragmentary portions of a past occurrence but supply the rest from what he invents or recalls from other past experiences, in accordance with this observation, Pinter’s characters seem to wander through a past equally invented and remembered, but additionally here used in the present as an arsenal: weaponry to inflict wounds and nearly destroy others. But the target must not be terminated, or the game’s over. But fact remembered quickly moves to invention when Lambert says:

Lambert: “I was just about to fuck her at the altar when somebody stopped me”  
Matt: “I stopped him. His zip went down and I kicked him up the arse. It would have been a scandal. The world’s press was on the doorstep.” (43) Sonia, one of the postmodernist controlled → controlling characters, professionally, unflinchingly straight-faced, dismisses Matt’s description of Lambert unzipping at the altar quite simply with, “We get so many different kinds of people in here, people from all walks of life.” ““You don’t have to speak English to enjoy good food,” “You don’t have to speak

English to enjoy sex.” (43) She quotes herself as saying, and joins in peripherally likening food to sex, Sonia, from Bethnal Green, attempts to reveal her own “worldly” sexual adventures, raising another epistemological question about how the audiences know and how they form generalities, opinions and judgments of the world. She reveals how they come frequently from firsthand, subjective, and limited information, limited often to a single, unreliable remembered window on the world. She asks only sympathy, “Can you see how tragic my life has been?” (45) No current love touches any of these lives. Sonia, registers an *Old Times* moment when the pleasures of the “looking forwardness,” now lost, rob all pleasure in the present moment. Sonia exits with a variant of that smiley-faced farewell heard round the English speaking world, “Have a happy night.” (45) The other for Sonia could be the past memory which she accepts and deals with it by becoming a whore. The derive for her acceptance is non ethical, so that her result is being sexy woman. The Waiter, at this moment, returns to continue his cultural history lesson, moving forward in the twentieth century with a second interjection about his grandfather, who he claims was familiar with 1930s Hollywood: “Clark Gable, Elisha Cook Jr. [...] one of the very few native born Englishman to have had it off with Hedy Lamarr.” (46) The Waiter’s reintroduction of violence and of brutality in his mention of Hollywood’s “Irish Mafia” and their friendships among “famous Irish gangsters in Chicago. Al Capone and Victor Mature [...]. John Dillinger, the celebrated

gangster and Gary Cooper the celebrated film star,” reflects Pinter’s own youthful fascination with gangster films, and his ongoing exploration of violence and its causes in his plays. “They were Jewish,” may also recall attacks upon him as a youthful Jew, along with resonance to the World War II Holocaust. Lambert wrests the spotlight from the nameless waiter by indicating Suki, “You see that girl at that table?” “I know her. I fucked her when she was eighteen.” (47) His wife, Julie’s, confused angry reply, “What, by the banks of the river?” dismisses Suki as a candidate for Lambert’s recalled love. Talking in this sexy way reflects the absence of ethics from the thoughts, behaviours, and as a result the decline of the lives of these modernist limited→ controlled characters. Prue attempts to detoxify the lethality of these past remembrances, “Oh don’t get excited. It’s all in the past,” when Suki repeats another *Old Times*’ line, “I sometimes feel that the past is never past.” (52) This is another reference that the other for these characters could be the past events which they cannot change but they can modify their memories about them. Hence, they destroy them to keep living. However, they in a very deconstructionist style the spoil their lives for they live in un real world. Here, a very important question arises: What would they do if they could live life over? Nothing very different. Although Julie says: “I wouldn’t like to live again, though [...]. Once is more than enough,” (53) Lambert insists he would: “In fact I’m going to make it my job to live again.” (53) In a rare accurate awareness and assessment of a present

self for a Pinter character, Lambert proposes: Lambert: "I'm going to come back as a better person, a more civilized person, a gentler person, a nicer person." Julie: "Impossible." (53) He means that he will have another life in which he might be accepted by the others and he accepts others as well. It is a self-confrontation moment. Destroying the other is not only a strategy that is adopted by the modernist limited→ controlled characters but a target and a quest line for them. Each character of them tries to destroy even the other's ability of dreaming and hoping. To get control, for them, means to marginalize the other even in his dreams. The inability to dream of a better life is a target because, to dream is to progress. To progress means to build. The only ethics the modernist limited→ controlled characters holds is destruction. Pinter has shown that jealousy is one of the worst ethics that wreaks revenge on all fronts in *Celebration*. When Prue wonders where Lambert and Suki met, Russell finally strikes his delayed revenge at Suki, "Behind a filing cabinet." (53) The main table joins forces behind Julie's, "What's a filing cabinet?" (54) However, Julie also reveals she knows very well, when she asks what Suki does and Suki says she's a schoolteacher: "I teach infants," a comic surprise in this context and indicative of the future, the values these people promote to their children. Prue and Julie join together by one-upping her in class, "We run charities" (54) —the women's work in the class that does the cleanup following their husband's "peace-keeping" efforts and economics. When Matt guesses by the way he stands

that Russell is a banker, the men begin to dance together even as Lambert mocks, "With a big future before him," (55) and Matt joins in, "Well that's what he reckons." (55) When Suki asks what they do, Matt and Lambert remain elusive: "Well, we're consultants. Matt and me. Strategy consultants [...]. It means we don't carry guns." (56) Here, the denial reveals as Matt says, "We don't have to." They broke them. That of course must remain unspoken. "We're peaceful strategy consultants," (56) says Matt, and Lambert concurs with another self-referential descriptor that concludes the reverse. "Worldwide. Keeping the peace" dramatizes, Prentice (2000, 1) assures: "the main point of Pinter's 25 June 1999 speech to the Confederation of Analytical Psychologists, delivered only months before *Celebration* was written, when he denounced the NATO "peacekeeping" action in Serbia as "yet another blatant and brutal assertion of US power." Elated, Russell says, "wonderful," and, as a banker with money behind guns brokering, he insists, in double speak cliché, "We need a few more of you about [...]. Taking responsibility. Taking charge. Keeping the peace." (57) He wastes no time. Networking to promote his own economic advantage, he attempts to bond with them. "I think I'll have a word with my bank. I'm moving any minute to a more substantial bank. I'll have a word with them." "I'll suggest lunch. In the City. I know the ideal restaurant. All the waitresses have big tits." (57) His ego inflated with this brush with power, he confidently proposes. This final move, mrrying "peace-keeping" with guns, money and sex, puts



all the men in bed together. Any disturbances caused by their women now or in earlier liaisons can be dismissed or ed to advantage by an upwardly mobile, insecure young man like Russell now bonding with the more powerful. Then Russell asks, "So how is the strategic consultancy business these days?" Matt answers with a nicely ambiguous, "Very good. We're at the receiving end of some of the best team in China," signaling the third component of their arms and money connections: drugs. Richard then enters with a legal drug of choice, a magnum of champagne, the Waiter, following with glasses as "Everyone gasps," and Richard toasts, "To celebrate a treasured wedding anniversary," (58) furthering the comic effect with what seems furthest from the truth. Matt exclaims the champagne "the best of the best," as Lambert salutes his ongoing vision of life as a contest, "May the best man win!" (58) Only the worst win here. Julie and Prue counter his insult in accord with one another: "The woman always wins." Suki finds that "that's really good news." (58) In what sense can this possibly be true? Pinter may give this as another self-referential assertion thrown in to call it into absolute doubt and utterly dismiss it. At some level, these women, as kept women, ignorant and perhaps necessarily kept in the dark about their men's financial dealings, seem to live comfortably padded, safe existences, tolerating their marginalization by holding ground, deflecting their husbands' attacks, the primary form of attention and engagement the people in these marriages seem to accord one another.

And the women play nearly as well as the men. But they initiate little action. And they accept themselves as powerless to command their men, to halt or reverse their action or to direct their own in the larger world. At another level, however, Pinter seems to be dramatizing the necessary responsibility of women, these women, which can allow, even encourage these men to carry out their affairs of the world. The reward is wealth and power. Pinter has faced the audiences with a question: Who would willingly or easily give up such comfort and safety that these women and men enjoy? Does Pinter suggest what might be done? No more than he suggests how people might address the question of how they might stop the ongoing "peace-keeping" conflicts and the slaughter these men are responsible for. While even the precise nature of their work in the world must no doubt elude, puzzle or certainly seem a mystery to many in Pinter's audiences, again, Pinter trusts his audiences. If he has deliberately tapped into mystery, one main reason for the puzzle would seem to ask the audiences to question, and in questioning to begin to seek answers. It is through getting the answer that self-knowledge is achieved for the characters as well as for the audiences.

Lambert indicates the beginning of the end, offering Richard a cuddle in boozy affection, a thanks and farewell, a reversal of Julie's and Prue's earlier threat to kiss Richard. He cuddles Sonia, commends them both, "This is so totally rare, you see. None of this normally happens". (59) This statement can be seen as a comment on the whole play. He discourses on the estrangement of

people, “normally-you know- people normally are so distant from each other [...] this given bloke doesn’t know that another given bloke exists.” (59) Nor does Lambert seem to know anyone else exists, except as target practice. His observation and excuse: “It goes down through history, doesn’t it?” (59) Prentice (2000, 47) suggests: “both exonerates his own license to kill and recognizes self-absorbed, individual isolation as a major contributing factor in global conflict which requires addressing through a knowledge that includes history, politics, economics, psychology, and both chaos and power theory.

Paying no attention to Lambert’s larger point, Sonia points up his point exactly. She is doing so by taking this trivial pretext for mentioning an estrangement of her own. She tells Julie and Prue, Sonia: “I’m so touched that you’re sisters,” “I had a sister. But she married a foreigner and I haven’t seen her since.” Prue grudges, “Some foreigners are all right.”

Sonia: “Oh I think foreigners are charming.” They’re her source of revenue: “Most people in this restaurant tonight are foreigners.” (60) She covers her racism claiming her reasons for rejecting her sister’s husband were personal, not prejudiced, his “enormous moustache. I had to kiss him at the wedding. I can’t describe how awful it was.” (60) This is a very important statement which reflects that there is no direct personal benefit for Sonia to accept her sister’s husband, thus she shows her bigotry frankly. In this sense, she is a non ethical postmodernist controlled → controlling character who

exhibits acceptance to others only if they form direct expedience for her regardless ethics and values. Her foremost value is for money and power and not for family relation or love. This time in front of his employer, the Waiter interjects, moving through the century’s wars with his references to “the Austro-Hungarian Empire” again, hauling out his grandfather this time as “an incredibly close friend of the Archduke himself [...] who] once had a cup of tea with Benito Mussolini.” (60) Suggesting that the world leaders are all in bed together, he even implicates his own family, and by association, himself as well: “They all played poker together, Winston Churchill included.” (61) He admits his grandfather had “a really strange life.” He says, “The palms of his hands always seemed to be burning,” a reference perhaps to avarice and greed. But as a commentary on the brevity of acceptance and love and life, he admits, in echo of Lambert’s story of lost love and Sonia’s of lost lust that prefigures his final story of his own lost grandfather whom he loved: “He was in love, he told me once, with the woman who turned out to be my grandmother, but he lost her somewhere.” (61) The grandfather is the only one of the bunch the audiences see or hear about here who married for love. The Waiter reflects a postmodern complexity in the character of his grandfather, an invented yet collective of all grandfathers, whether or not they visited in the halls of fame and power with men who shaped the century in this peculiarly end-of-the-century, turn-of-the-millennium play. What these many men and few women stood for valued and acted upon resonates

throughout the Waiter's summary catalogs, and his reminiscence of invented remembrance suggests some measure of forgiveness, for they, like all of the people, knew not what they did. The waiter insists that his grandfather was an ideal, even Christ-like, "everything men aspired to be in those days [...], tall, dark and handsome. He was full of good will. He'd even give a cripple with no legs crawling on his belly [...] a helping hand [...] He was like Jesus Christ in that respect. And he loved the society of his fellows," (61) the only character in this play, offstage and long dead who does. Pinter, here, has conveyed the idea that acceptance the other, loving the other, respecting the other is far from the recent society and modern characters. It is a matter of past. The only postmodernist ethical controlled→ controlling character is the waiter who has valued the past good ethics but cannot but to speak about past ideal of them. He initiates his excessive summary end of twentieth-century poets, playwrights, cricket players, pop musicians, singers, writers and comics his grandfather knew: "W B Yeats, T S Eliot, Igor Stravinsky, Picasso, Ezra Pound, Bertholt Brecht, Don Bradman, the Beverley Sisters, the Ink-spots, Franz Kafka and the Three Stooges." (61) The Waiter claims his grandfather knew them in their wounds. "He knew these people where they were isolated, where they were alone, where they fought against savage and pitiless odds,"(61) At some level the Waiter's declamations remind the audience that these people in this play, for whatever power they possess, don't even have a shot at such fame. When the Waiter claims his

grandfather knew them: "where they suffered vast wounds to their bodies, their bellies, their legs, their trunks, their eyes, their throats, their breasts, their balls—,"(61) Standing, Lambert cuts him off at this sexual juncture, rendering him invisible by turning to his host: "Well, Richard—what a great dinner!" (61) Behaving in a very modernist style, showing control over others, addressing him familiarly and condescendingly by his first name, a liberty Richard dare not take in return—but an action indicative of hierarchy's firm hold. Lambert's next gesture of even greater condescension solidifies his position as he tosses tips of fifty pound notes, two to Richard regardless for the custom of not to tip the owner, then dangles notes in front of Sonia's cleavage, and even stuffs a note in the Waiter's pocket, punctuating his ostentation with, "Great dinner. Great restaurant. Best in the country." To which Matt adds, "Best in the world." Money ensures position, purchases the assurance that they'll be treated royally upon their return and serves as a weapon to keep those serving at a distance, in their place. When Lambert demands "their bill," taking Suki and Russell's with the announcement "It's for old time's sake," and Suki assents, "Right," Lambert has effectively marked her as his turf. Richard, disregarding all insult, says, "See you again soon?"(63) Lambert assures him, "Plenty of celebrations to come." For these men who are responsible for the "peace-keeping" lives and deaths of others, he remarks in death imagery: "Rest assured," and "Dead right." Matt and Lambert cap off the evening with a bonding duet that manages to slash out

one last time at the women and describe the plays's powerplays in a comic echo of Abbot and Costello's "Who's on first":(Ibid.)

"Who's in front?

Who's in front.

Get out of the bloody way. You silly old cunt!" (64)Suki, puts in her place, turns on Russell, putting him in place: "How sweet of him to take the bill, wasn't it?" (64) Russell reads Suki correctly as insulting him as well as Lambert's wife, Julie: "He must have been very fond of you."(64) Sonia says, "See you soon," only to be met with Matt's comic, "I'll be here for breakfast tomorrow morning." (65) Julie and Suki, with the last words from the group, exit as each says to the other what can only be a honeyed lie: "Lovely to meet you." (66) The Waiter, alone, has the final word, the first fully human, touchingly warm and genuinely puzzled words of the evening as he recalls perhaps his real grandfather who "used to take me to the edge of the cliffs and we'd look out to sea" with a telescope. He recalls seeing people on a boat, a man, sometimes, and a woman, or sometimes two men. That image of people viewed from a great distance, reinforces a dominant metaphor for the play's dramatization of the bonds between people—as distant, almost, but not quite, nonexistent. Pinter, in this slight reference, may indicate that ethical postmodernist controlled→controlling characters have to do something to strengthen the relations in order not to live in a deserted world. The waiter claims, "My grandfather introduced me to the mystery of life and I'm still in the middle of it," but then he says, "I can't find the door to get out."

His reverse echo of Bridget, the dead sister and daughter in *Moonlight* who can't get into the door at the party, becomes an image of death. Here, it is life that the Waiter cannot exit: "My grandfather got out of it. He got right out of it. He left it behind and he didn't look back." (67) But the Waiter as an ethical postmodernist controlled→controlling character can neither find his way out of life nor participate fully in it. Nor can any of the other modernist limited→controlled characters. The waiter's comic fantasies, hints K. Burkman (2008, N.P.) suggests a lost culture and lost values that he longs to recapture. At the end of the play, the waiter occupies the stage alone. He is lost as ever. His final words are addressed to the audience as he confesses that he is in the middle of a mysterious life. This last view hints that the ethical postmodernist controlled→controlling character is the one who, as Pinter views, can keep ethics in this world. He is the character who is given the last existence in Pinter's drama. He is the character who has the last words. The addressed audience are demanded to think about what is going in the world around them. *Celebration* suggests as a final plea that accepting the other and having a relation that is built on the philosophy of alterity is the only solution that can get the world out of the hole inside which the global age puts it. Harold Hobson (1958, N.P.) was right those many years ago when he observed, "Mr. Pinter has got hold of a primary fact of existence. We live on the verge of disaster." Because in *Celebration* Pinter has brought the audiences as close as they have come in his work to those picnicking on the global precipice and

this time the audiences are laughing all the way through as long as they can avoid looking at their own pain and truth that ignites the flash of comic laughter and the insight they are happier to avoid. *Celebration* is written with such extraordinary economy that close attention is required not to miss the significance of the destructive wit. This play, another about power and the lack of power, is equally about what almost all Pinter's work is about: otherness, acceptance by others, alterity, the desperate desire for it and the resulting destructiveness in the lack of alterity. But this time he's given the audiences a closer and, in its comedy, a more compassionate look at those more fully responsible for trafficking in the destruction of this planet and its people to awaken them to the primal terror and the delight that illuminates how they are all complicit. At another level *Celebration* reveals the source of conflict as embedded in the most intimate of human relationships, between questions about the mystery of life. He both dramatizes and asks the audience: Why do they act as they do? He sends them on a quest to seek the most effective means to confront conflict, realizing that their task, like his, is not just that remedial work necessary to effect change, but that the harder task

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of discovering, implementing change remains theirs. The slow fade on the Waiter's unfinished last line, "And I'd like to make one further interjection," coming in agreement with Thomas Docherty's (1991, 54) opinion about the open end of the postmodernist text is the tossing of the final word to the audiences to ask and answer that conflict with their lives.

### Conclusion

With *Celebration*, Pinter exposes his final view regarding life and human relations. He shows that modernist characters are always there side by side with the postmodernists. Their conflict is what determines their existence and diversity. And the concept of alterity and the relation with "the other" as Levinas put it is very helpful in understanding how these two types of characters are different. Their difference is shifted in this play which represents in this study Pinter's final stage, to the public level. These characters are in a very inevitable way intermingled, so that the private conflict influences the public one. Pinter calls for deep insight for the whole image in order not to let those who embody power and money to destroy the whole world. Keeping peace and goodness is the responsibility for all and not for only one.

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