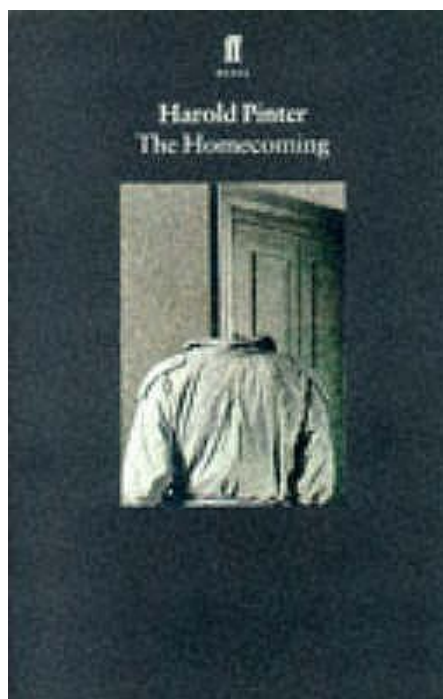




The Homecoming

Harold Pinter

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The Homecoming

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The Homecoming Harold Pinter

'An exultant night - a man in total command of his talent.' *Observer*

'The most intense expression of compressed violence to be found anywhere in Pinter's plays.' *The Times*

When Teddy, a professor in an American university, brings his wife Ruth to visit his old home in London, he finds his family still living in the house. In the conflict that follows, it is Ruth who becomes the focus of the family's struggle for supremacy.

The Homecoming Details

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From Reader Review The Homecoming for online ebook

Sarah says

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"who the ... gave you the noble prize, you pervert ... of the, we are not at all interested in you sexual fantasies"

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Koen Kop says

Quite a few books you read/movies and plays you watched in your youth tend to disappoint when you are of a "ripe/mature" age - but this play, which I saw on stage in London at age eighteen, had not lost any of its riveting qualities when I read it tonight, thirty-six years later - within the space of less than two hours. In less than a hundred pages Pinter manages to turn the grotesque into the plausible by making an eerily antisocial milieu come to life. "Chapeau"!

Teresa says

I reread this after reading The Birthday Party & The Room: Two Plays just the other day and it's a natural progression for both Pinter and the reader. The decrepit boardinghouses of the two earlier plays have become an old family home; the characters are more developed; the dialogue is richer and both more and less nuanced. The woman is still a focal point, but she no longer jabbars to herself because the men in her life tune her out: she is reflective, quietly assertive, and silent on her own behalf when their sordid needs arise and they want an answer from her.

I first read this in college for a class over thirty years ago and I have no memory of what my 18- or 19-year-old self thought of it (or what I was told to think of it), though I reread my now cover-less (due to this read) copy from then. I had bracketed a few lines (even back then I hated the look of underlining or, even worse, highlighting) and made a minimal amount of notes in the margins. Next to a speech by Teddy (the homecoming son) I'd written "he's like Clov, not Hamm" -- a reference to Beckett's Endgame, which maybe I read for the same class.

This was the first Pinter I read, but not the last, and I consider him one of my favorite playwrights, so something must've gone right in the course, whatever it was called and whoever the professor was. Perhaps he was the old Jesuit priest from Ireland that also taught me Joyce. He loved James Joyce and disliked Joyce Cary -- we only read The Horse's Mouth so he could criticize it, it seemed to me -- or was that me who didn't like the Cary, or was that me because of him. Sorry for the ramble, as this is not one of Pinter's so-called memory plays, but even here truth is malleable and memory does not unlock it.

my mistake. In the afterlife. Hopefully this strange imagination of yours didnt go with you... rest in peace.

Adam says

The Homecoming is an entertaining play and I enjoyed reading it. While the story is slow at times the interaction and struggle between the characters makes up for it. I like how Pinter criticized how men just assume women will play certain roles in the world and how women puzzlingly go along with them. The final scene was quite powerful with Ruth in a position of power over all of the male characters. Albeit vulgar at times, Pinter's use of crude references and profanity make the play seem much more realistic. The main themes are gender equality and a dysfunctional family dynamic and is a truly thought provoking and a discussion sparking piece of literature. I would recommend reading it.

Petra X says

Max is the self-glorifying, violent old patriarch of the house in which lives his mild-mannered, ineffectual brother, a psychopathic pimp of a son, and the youngest son, whose violence is legal, he's a boxer. They trade taunts and insults and menace and there is nothing positive in their relationships. The old man is widowed, the others all single, there is nothing in even one of them to attract a woman.

One night, sneaking into the house he left six years before comes the oldest son and his wife. He's the brilliant one, the PhD, the teacher of philosophy in an American university. He's brought with him his wife, a woman from close by but whom he never told his family about.

At first they think she is a prostitute and speak to her in vile ways, but although she starts out as strong and in control, she uses her seductive power on the sons, and thinks nothing of sexual play short of intercourse with a brother in law. And strangely neither does her husband who had sensed something was amiss before that episode and wanted to leave and return home to their suburban American life.

Ruth, the wife, discloses she was a body model, a glamour model, or maybe that was a euphemism, and by the end of the play, she's left her husband to accept their offer to be woman of the house, sexual favours for all and a little housework thrown in, and to prostitute herself to bring in money for the household. All she asks for is the trappings of a high-class whore. The husband accepted all this, didn't really try and persuade her out of it, didn't rail at his family for suggesting such things. He just lectured them on what it meant to be a philosopher and see life clearly. He decides to return to the US and look after his now motherless three sons.

This to me is what the play was all about. That the eldest son, Teddy, might have escaped, might have the brains, but his mother had been a whore, his uncle had driven her to appointments, his father had lived off her money, one of his brothers was a pimp, and both of his brothers raped women and this is how he saw life. His wife might have been a whore and was certainly going to be one...

One cannot escape one's early life, the culture, that is the true way in which we see the world. It doesn't matter how far you go, how tall the tree grows into the sunshine, the roots, your roots, are buried in the dank earth and whatever decays and creeps around down there is who you really are.

Ok sure Ruth likes to get around. Yes this might never happen and yes the play is very twisted. It includes profanity and just plain wrong scenes, conversations, actions etc; but I don't see the need to label it as horrible or the worst ever. It has its beauty: complex plot and amazing characters that kept true to themselves from beginning to end. I spend a lot of time trying to figure out what they would say next and I was always wrong. Well it did make me kind of sick and embarrassed but that was because we were forced to read it in class and there were some parts in which I wish we would have stopped reading, but I enjoyed it. Amazingly enough this is one of the plays I best understood. I tap into mankind's dark side and I don't know after struggling through I grew to enjoy it. I think it was just to go against the whole class but it just plain has its own beauty and art in it -its just not that easy to find it.

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<http://naqderooz.ir/17w>

What the actual eff.
I'm curious about what my professor is going to say about this because wtf.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Homecoming?, Harold Pinter

The Homecoming is a two-act play written in 1964 by Nobel laureate Harold Pinter and it was first published in 1965.

Characters: Max, Sam, Lenny, Joey, Ruth, Teddy

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Brian says

"The Homecoming" was labeled by one early critic as a "comedy of menace", and I feel that sums it up better than anything else I have heard. This is a dark, deeply ambiguous, and funny play. I first read this play in college, and then again recently, soon after seeing an excellent production of it at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario Canada starring Brian Dennehy. Being older and more experienced, I feel much better about the play then I did when I first encountered it years ago.

I am hesitant to say what the play is about, because even after seeing a very good production, and reading the text closely, there are a myriad of possibilities about how to interpret the script, and the nuances therein. The play certainly is about family relationships, sexual jealousy, gender power dynamics, and many other things to boot. And yet, Pinter never gives us an insight into what he really thinks about these things, and at times I am not even sure the characters do. And it works!

A strength of the play are the characters Max and Lenny. In Lenny especially Pinter has created a daunting and very intriguing character that can make the audience squirm in their seats. He is dark, funny, smart, and a pimp. A wonderful role for a talented performer to sink his teeth into. In fact, all of the roles have wonderful possibilities in performance.

However, the greatest power in the play lies not in what is said, but rather in what is NOT said. It is there that the reader is stimulated into following up on hints in the text, and making up most of the story for themselves in their head. The infamous "Pinter pause" is certainly on display in this work. I can imagine many interesting conversations to be had while arguing about what the play is really saying.

Some readers hate that ambiguity, I love it. It is a personal preference so be warned, if you pick up "The Homecoming" you will be left with more questions than answers.

tomwrote says

I didn't like this play. It's seedy and mean, full of horrible characters treating each other badly. That doesn't mean that it's not a good play, maybe even a great one, because that was exactly what Pinter was going for, in his so called comedy menace period.

There are power plays and power shifts. There are threats and responses, as well as sparse pointed dialogue, increasingly absurd behaviour and a nasty spin in the tail.

Jon Catherwood-Ginn says

Incredibly disturbing...

Without painting broad strokes of flagrant violence, obscene language, or the like, Pinter still manages to create an environment of unparalleled menace. His tools are simply language (or, rather, what isn't said) and layers of paradox that rise from a triumviri of inconsistent character behaviors, statuses, and conceptions of the past.

While reading, I found myself continually doubting the "validity" of what nearly every character did and said. Did I mention this play is also incredibly funny?

Though "The Homecoming" is a major mind-warper in terms of characters' behavior, it's ultimately very transparent. The facts are stated, quite clearly; it's simply unthinkable to the viewer that what's going on is unchallenged.

Unsurprisingly, critics lambasted "The Homecoming" for various reasons -- my favorite being its "amorality" and "thematic ambiguity." I mean, how can a play be so riveting yet still make you ask, "what was the 'point' of that story?" Pinter's a unique talent who will certainly be missed.
