



SVENSKA AKADEMIEN

Biobibliographical notes

Harold Pinter was born on 10 October 1930 in the London borough of Hackney, son of a Jewish dressmaker. Growing up, Pinter was met with the expressions of anti-Semitism, and has indicated its importance for his becoming a dramatist. At the outbreak of the Second World War, he was evacuated from London at the age of nine, returning when twelve. He has said that the experience of wartime bombing has never lost its hold on him. Back in London, he attended Hackney Grammar School where he played Macbeth and Romeo among other characters in productions directed by Joseph Brearley. This prompted him to choose a career in acting. In 1948 he was accepted at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In 1950, he published his first poems. In 1951 he was accepted at the Central School of Speech and Drama. That same year, he won a place in Anew McMaster's famous Irish repertory company, renowned for its performances of Shakespeare. Pinter toured again between 1954 and 1957, using the stage name of David Baron. Between 1956 and 1980 he was married to actor Vivien Merchant. In 1980 he married the author and historian Lady Antonia Fraser.

Pinter made his playwriting debut in 1957 with *The Room*, presented in Bristol. Other early plays were *The Birthday Party* (1957), at first a fiasco of legendary dimensions but later one of his most performed plays, and *The Dumb Waiter* (1957). His conclusive breakthrough came with *The Caretaker* (1959), followed by *The Homecoming* (1964) and other plays.

Harold Pinter is generally seen as the foremost representative of British drama in the second half of the 20th century. That he occupies a position as a modern classic is illustrated by his name entering the language as an adjective used to describe a particular atmosphere and environment in drama: "Pinteresque".

Pinter restored theatre to its basic elements: an enclosed space and unpredictable dialogue, where people are at the mercy of each other and pretence crumbles. With a minimum of plot, drama emerges from the power struggle and hide-and-seek of interlocution. Pinter's drama was first perceived as a variation of absurd theatre, but has later more aptly been characterised as "comedy of menace", a genre where the writer allows us to eavesdrop on the play of domination and submission hidden in the most mundane of conversations. In a typical Pinter play, we meet people defending themselves against intrusion or their own impulses by entrenching themselves in a reduced and controlled existence. Another principal theme is the volatility and elusiveness of the past.

It is said of Harold Pinter that following an initial period of psychological realism he proceeded to a second, more lyrical phase with plays such as *Landscape* (1967) and *Silence* (1968) and finally to a third, political phase with *One for the Road* (1984), *Mountain Language* (1988), *The New World Order* (1991) and other plays. But this division into periods seems oversimplified and ignores some of his strongest writing, such as *No Man's Land* (1974) and *Ashes to Ashes* (1996). In fact, the continuity in his work is remarkable, and his

political themes can be seen as a development of the early Pinter's analysing of threat and injustice.

Since 1973, Pinter has won recognition as a fighter for human rights, alongside his writing. He has often taken stands seen as controversial. Pinter has also written radio plays and screenplays for film and television. Among his best-known screenplays are those for *The Servant* (1963), *The Accident* (1967), *The Go-Between* (1971) and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981, based on the John Fowles novel). Pinter has also made a pioneering contribution as a director.

This bibliography includes published works only.

Works in English

1. Plays (year of writing; year of publication; year of first performance)

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A Slight Ache (1958). – in *A Slight Ache and Other Plays*. – London : Methuen, 1961. – (Broadcast 1959)

The Hothouse (1958). – in *The Hothouse*. – London : Eyre Methuen, 1980. – (Hampstead Theatre, London, 24 April 1980)

The Caretaker (1959). – in *The Caretaker*. – London : Methuen, 1960. – (Arts Theatre, London, 27 April 1960)

A Night Out (1959). – in *Slight Ache and Other Plays*. – London : Methuen, 1961. – (Broadcast on the BBC Third Programme, 1 March 1960)

Night School (1960). – in *Tea Party and Other Plays*. – London : Methuen, 1967. – (Broadcast on Associated Rediffusion Television, 21 July 1960)

The Dwarfs (1960). – in *Slight Ache and Other Plays*. – London : Methuen, 1961. – (Broadcast 1960 ; New Arts Theatre, London, 18 September 1963)

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The Lover (1962). – in *The Collection, and The Lover*. – London : Methuen, 1963. – (Televised 1961)

Tea Party (1964). – in *Tea Party and Other Plays*. – London : Methuen, 1967. – (Eastside Playhouse, New York, October 1968)

The Homecoming (1964). – in *The Homecoming*. – London : Methuen, 1965. – (Aldwych Theatre, London, 3 June 1965)

The Basement (1966). – in *Tea Party and Other Plays*. – London : Methuen, 1967. – (Televised 1967)

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Silence (1968). – in *Landscape, and Silence*. – London : Methuen, 1969. – (Aldwych Theatre, London, 2 July 1969)

Old Times (1970). – in *Old Times*. – London : Methuen, 1971. – (Aldwych Theatre, London, 1 June 1971)

Monologue (1972). – in *Monologue*. – London : Covent Garden Press, 1973. – (Televised on the BBC Television, 13 April 1973)

No Man's Land (1974). – in *No Man's Land*. – London : Methuen, 1975. – (Old Vic, London 23 April, 1975)

Betrayal (1978). – in *Betrayal*. – London : Eyre Methuen, 1978. – (National Theatre, London, November 1978)

Family Voices (1980). – in *Family Voices*. – London : Next Editions, 1981. – (Broadcast on Radio 3, 22 January 1981)

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Mountain Language (1988). – in *Mountain Language*. – London : French, 1988 ; in *Mountain Language*. – London : Faber, 1988. – (National Theatre, London, 20 October 1988)

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2. Additional

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Poems and Prose 1949–1977. – London : Methuen, 1978

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Various Voices : Poetry, Prose, Politics, 1948–1998. – London : Faber, 1998

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Collected Screenplays. 2. – London : Faber, 2000. – Content: The Go-Between ; The Proust Screenplay ; Victory ; Turtle Diary ; Reunion

Collected Screenplays. 3. – London : Faber, 2000. – Content: The French Lieutenant's Woman ; The Heat of the Day ; The Comfort of Strangers ; The Trial ; The Dreaming Child

The Disappeared and Other Poems. – London : Enitharmon, 2002

Press Conference. – London : Faber, 2002

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Le retour / trad. de l'anglais par Éric Kahane. – Paris: Gallimard, 1985. – Traduction de: *The Homecoming*
Trahisons ; suivi de *Hothouse* ; *Un pour la route* : et autres pièces / adapt. française d'Éric Kahane. –
Paris: Gallimard, 1987

La lune se couche ; suivi de *Ashes to Ashes* ; *Langue de la montagne* ; *Une soirée entre amis* : et autres
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La guerre / trad. de l'anglais par Jean Pavans. – Paris: Gallimard, 2003. – Traduction de: *War*

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Works in Swedish

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