Preface

The idea of attempting a comparative study of Harold Pinter and Sam Shepard occurred to me while I was reading Shepard's The Unseen Hand. The play reminded me of Pinter's early plays which had gained popularity as 'comedies of menace.' This vaguely felt similarity prompted me to do a detailed study of these two mainstream playwrights belonging to different cultural backgrounds. The study has revealed certain comparable and contrasting elements regarding the playwrights and their plays. I believe it has been a rewarding study inasmuch as it also provides an insight into anxiety—one of the fast growing ills of modern life—and its effects on human personality.

At the inception of the study, I had two options in the method of pursuing it: one, to study the subjects of 'anxiety' and 'menace' taking the playwrights together, and the other, to study these elements taking each playwright separately. And finally I opted for the latter.

Regarding the style of documenting sources, I have stuck to the rules stipulated in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Fourth Edition), with some marginal variations for practical convenience. Interviews are given in parenthesis with a prefix 'Interview' with a view to distinguishing them from other materials.

Titles of books and articles are generally abbreviated by taking the first letters of the title (excluding articles, prepositions and conjunctions) and interviews are given with 'shortened titles' followed by an ellipse. However, the interviews popularly known by the interviewer's name are given as such.