This study is based on the assumption that the dramatic abilities of a modern playwright like Harold Pinter is an extraordinary experience. While pursuing my M.Phil. degree course under Dr. P. K. Mehta, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU, Delhi, made me read the plays of Harold Pinter.

Over the past forty years or so, it has become clear that a decisive change has taken place in the spirit and character of contemporary writing. In the nineteen fifties it seemed that, somewhere amidst the dark realities of the second world war, the great modernist impulse of the early years of this century had exhausted itself. Some indeed doubted the ability of literature to survive the experience of holocaust. By Nineteen sixties the sense of Avant-garde returned, the talents multiplied, and there was a growing hunger to define the appropriate styles, tendencies and forms, traditions, systems or political, economical, psychological impressions on human beings.

There are a number of modern playwrights, but I have selected Harold Pinter for study of the thesis because he is somewhat different, different from other contemporary dramatists. His characters move around like real characters, feel pain, anguish and anger as we do in our day to day life.
Further more, these characters are victims of either traditions, or systems or psychological maladies. They endeavour hard to look for an identity in the society, but the system of the society is bent upon hunting them out. They are either lost in the wilderness of the concrete world or vanish abruptly. The nebulous world turns to them nefarious, detrimental and vicious.

Who are they? Why are they here? Where do they go ultimately? are the futile questions to be asked here. Because it is a dramatic art of the dramatist, i.e. Harold Pinter. Looking to the vast varieties of the plays Pinter has written, I have chosen and confined my this research work to his six plays, The Birthday Party, The Room, The Dumb Waiter, The Caretaker, A Slight Ache, The Home-coming. These plays as per my understanding have the manifestation of crisis of Identity and as a result, the search for an Identity emerges.

And it is my humble effort to investigate the above questions in the realms of economical, sociological, political and psychological levels. It is an attempt to search for their past identities on the above basis.

I humbly admit that I have endeavoured hard to reach out to Harold Pinter himself through correspondence. When in London recently; I faxed him to interview him, but unfortunately, Mr. Harold Pinter was unwell and down with serious illness. He wished me his good wishes through a
letter dated June 17, 2002. His critics say that the author is
a recluse, reticent and mysterious.

I wonder if I could precisely define my relationship with Dr. D. S. Mishra, the Dean – Arts Faculty and Head – Department of English. Dr. Mishra readily accepted my request to guide me for this research work. I am really thankful to him and his colleagues of the department.

I had faced lots of challenges to get the feedback, material on Harold Pinter in the nineteen nineties. But, somehow I was fortunate enough to have the right kind of guidance from Dr. P. K. Mehta, ASC. Library, Hyderabad, and CIEFL Hyderabad.

I thank my wife Prof. Sharda L. Joshi, whose inspiration has been my sole strength. My two sons, Siddharth and Yasho have been a source of my inner strength in pursuing this thesis. Finally, my thanks are due to Mr. Ajit Dave, who has typed out the manuscript on computer and made it fairly presentable.

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Vallabh Vidyanagar

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— Joshi Lalit Shanker