



Harold Pinter: The Theatre of Power (Michigan Modern Dramatists)

By Robert Gordon

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The latest volume in the Michigan Modern Dramatists series offers an authoritative but accessible look at Harold Pinter, one of the greatest and most influential postwar British playwrights and author of classic works such as *The Birthday Party* and *The Homecoming*. Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005 for his remarkable body of work and plays that "uncover the precipice under everyday prattle and force entry into oppression's closed rooms."

Harold Pinter: The Theatre of Power focuses on the playwright's continuously innovative experiments in theatrical form while tracing the recurrence of a consistent set of ethical and epistemological concerns. Exploring important plays from across this prolific writer's career, author Robert Gordon argues that the motivating force in almost all of Pinter's drama is the ceaseless desire for power, represented in his work as a compulsive drive to achieve or maintain dominance--whether it be the struggle to defend one's own territory from intruders, the father's battle with his sons to assert his patriarchal position in the family, the manipulation of erotic feelings in the gender warfare that motivates sexual relationships, the abuse of brute force by dictatorships and democracies, or simply the masculine obsession to dominate. Gordon demonstrates the adventurousness of Pinter's experimentation with form while at the same time exposing the ethical, epistemological, and aesthetic preoccupations that have persisted with remarkable consistency throughout his career.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Gordon's *Harold Pinter: The Theater of Power* ... is both a deft homage and a useful guidebook to Pinter's now-complete oeuvre, written by an eminently authoritative, unabashed admirer of the plays."

—*Comparative Drama*

(William Hutchings, University of Alabama at Birmingham *Comparative Drama* 2013-08-15)

"Robert Gordon's exploration of Pinter's stage works is a major critical achievement. He produces ever-surprising insights, and his own rhetoric and erudition are impressive. The book will be of great use not only to theatregoers attempting to understand what they have seen onstage, but to actors and directors who are seeking the most theatrically productive approaches to these challenging plays. *Harold Pinter: The Theatre of Power* is quite simply a brilliantly conceived and exceptionally well-written academic text. It is certain to become one of the major critical works about the preeminent English playwright of the late twentieth century."

—*Theatre Survey*

(Samuel T. Shanks *Theatre Survey* 2014-10-02)

"For those getting newly acquainted with Pinter's work, this is ideal. Gordon provides a range of focused instruction, crucial to first-timers. If more experienced readers of Pinter find these plantings to be well-furrowed already, then know there's something fresh in the fertilizer."

- Doug Phillips, University of St. Thomas, *Text and Presentation*

(Doug Phillips *Text & Presentation 2014 (The Comparative Drama Conf. Series)*)

"[Gordon's book] is an enlightening examination of Pinter's obsession with power in both the personal and political spheres, from the intimate struggles for power in parent-child and marital relationships to the oppressive force of dictatorships."

—*Times Literary Supplement*

(*Times Literary Supplement* 2013-08-15)

About the Author

Robert Gordon is Professor of Drama and Director of the Pinter Centre for Performance and Creative Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London. His other books include *The Purpose of Playing: Modern Acting Theories in Perspective* and *Stoppard: Text and Performance*.

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