The subjects and techniques of the eight novels that Pinter has adapted for cinema exhibit consistencies as a group and with Pinter's original writing. Certain themes figure centrally in each of the novels: the distortion of time, sequence, and the past; the discrepancy between cause and effect or motive and action; the difficulties of both articulation and verification; the tension between the impulse to fix (order) and the condition of flux (chaos); the strategies of dominance and subservience; and the ascendancy of newcomers over the old guard. Each of these thematic factors holds a common ground in Pinter's original work, and each receives emphatic development in his adaptations for the screen.

Several familiar leitmotifs, such as the iconographic "room" or "house," also recur in the novels, and Pinter makes capital use of these in his versions. Prominent among these devices is the game, which assumes both literal and figurative proportions in the bulk of Pinter's literature. From Hide and Seek in The Servant to Real Tennis in The French Lieutenant's Woman, the artifice of game playing is explicit in the screenplays. As a conspicuous artifice, the games sensitize us to similar dynamics on subtler levels of the action. Such dynamics do, in fact, exist, and they warrant consideration as the formative principle in Pinter's work.

In their rather uneven study of the collaboration between Pinter and Losey, Houston and Kinder also conclude that the idea of games attains pivotal significance in the films undertaken by this screenwriter-director team.

Human interaction is dominated by competitive games. The goal is always survival, power, or control over one's own experience. The source of this
power (and its rewards) may involve social ascendance, sex, superior knowledge, or aesthetic power. Each work emphasizes a different dimension of gaming, which is indicated by the title and by the literal games being played, and which is developed both narratively and visually.¹

The application of this thesis to The Servant (which Houston and Kinder perceive as a sadomasochistic game of role reversal), Accident (which they interpret as a manipulation of misfortune), and The Go-Between (which they see as a direct address of a game present in all four collaborations) succeeds in revealing central tensions in these texts, but their appraisal of The Proust Screenplay in these terms elucidates only peripheral circumstances and suffers from an apparently weak understanding of both the novel and the adaptation. In the case of The Proust Screenplay, the principal game occurs between Marcel and the empirical developments depicted in the screenplay. As the very structure of the adaptation indicates, Marcel’s struggle to recreate the past as coherent, as art, becomes the game. Houston and Kinder’s discussion, in its exclusive delineation of external competitions among characters, overlooks the crucial premise of this epistemological contest between Marcel and his experience. Games in Pinter infest the whole spectrum of existence, and they extend far beyond his collaborations with Losey.

Over the course of his career, the game has become progressively intrinsic in Pinter’s original writing, and it has changed in nature to accommodate his evolving vision. The escalation of the game parallels a three-phase erosion of external reality: as Pinter shifts his scrutiny from the dynamics between self and other, to the dynamics between self and self, to the dynamics between self and nothing, game contexts necessarily expand to include more dimensions of experience.²

In the first phase of his playwriting, including The Birthday Party, The Dumb Waiter, and The Caretaker, games exist primarily as strategies to obtain or protect sanctuary, and the threat materializes from potential interruptions of the game routine. Games of homemaking are afflicted by games of menace; but, however much these two sets of tactics adumbrate each other, they are distinct, and threat remains fundamentally extrinsic to the protagonist’s game. In this phase games attack or defend against a perceived adversary; they neither invent nor contain it.

The extroverted nature of this contest inspires Pinter’s focus on interpersonal relationships as vehicles for advancing self-interests. Domination, sycophancy, menace, intrusion, and exclusion, themes that transmogrify throughout Pinter’s work, originate here as games of selfish interaction. In The Caretaker, for example, a three-way relationship among two brothers and an old tramp forms the pretext for Pinter’s
exploration of interpersonal strategies as manifest in the artifice of games. If we disqualify the triangle formed by Stanley, Goldberg, and McCann in *The Birthday Party*, since the latter two operate in tandem during these scenes, then *The Caretaker* advances this game beyond the simplicity of his earlier plays, in which principal relationships occurred in pairs; interference by third-party dynamics appears only in secondary situations, such as among Meg, Petey, and Stanley in *The Birthday Party* and among Gus, Ben, and "the operator" in *The Dumb Waiter*. This triangular configuration and its familiar games of jockeying and exclusion become the subject, however, in *The Caretaker*. Because these plays invariably proclaim the inefficacy and futility of relationships based on alliance, and because of their shift toward the problem of exclusion, Pinter's subsequent attraction to the individual apart seems predictable and sensible enough.

The danger has relocated inside the game in Pinter's second phase, and the characters of *A Slight Ache* (chronologically, an earlier play, but one that augurs later themes) and *The Homecoming*, for example, outwit menace only by remaining aloof from the proceedings. In *The Homecoming* Ruth stays with Teddy's family because she can exploit them through her immunity to their game. Teddy leaves because his game neither accommodates nor exempts him from theirs: predetermined familial configurations prescribe Teddy's role in the interminable domestic contest, and he can win only by escaping it. Ruth encounters a similar trap in her relationship with Teddy, but she eludes all of the clan's efforts at assigning her a specified role. Her potency derives from her dislocation in the family, from her evasion of codification in this new context. She prefers her ambiguity in this new game to her inalterable casting in the old one with Teddy. The family's desire for Ruth grounds in two motives: they vie for her as a sign of victory in the game with Teddy, and they crave her as a substitute for the disintegrating image of mother Jessie. In the former respect, they lack any structure for accommodating the fact of her person beyond its insignia of triumph, and, in the latter, Ruth will clearly thwart their scheme. Her escape of definition produces Max's lamentations and the mood of tentativeness at the conclusion of the play.

If, in earlier plays, the games attempt and fail to control eventuality, in this second phase, defeat is inherent and inevitable in the nature of all shared games. Where previous games served to integrate certain strategies into common reality, victory now occurs only outside communal experience, in private games of solitaire that immunize and isolate the self. The success of these solitary games depends on their effectiveness at coexistence with the menace of collective games: the protagonist
must create myths of existence and of self that are capable of sustaining each other through the contradictions of experience. In *A Slight Ache*, Edward’s myth cannot account for the Matchseller, but Flora manages to impose hers without immediate dissonance. Accordingly, Edward fails, and Flora temporarily succeeds, but the characters in *The Homecoming* end in a state of unresolved tension.

All forms of harmonious relationship depend on mutual subscription to myths or codes of living. Pinter’s first phase of writing chronicled the disintegration of relationships due to the inevitable breach of such shared faith. His subjects chiefly focused the absence or failure of relationship where it had been presumed or attempted. The shift in his writing that stamps this middle period of plays consequently displaces the dramatic stress from between selves to within them. Having unmasked and depleted the mutually exploitative premises of relationship, Pinter henceforth subordinates interpersonal dynamics to the conflicts and movements within individuals themselves. Electricity has transferred from the external situation to the internal ones. The characters’ autistic considerations dictate their courses of action, and relationships among figures operate chiefly as catalysts on these intrapersonal transformations. As relationships deteriorate the games replace other contexts as a device for interaction and for unification of the situation.

For the characters in *Landscape*, *Old Times*, *No Man’s Land*, and *Betrayal*, possibilities for victory no longer exist outside the game: nothing does. The games become the solitary exercise and evidence of living in this world where all other forms of action are absent.

The physical and conversational stasis that paralyzes the characters in *Landscape* derives from their obsessions with the past. These figures, immobile throughout the play, have retired from all activity in order to remember, codify, and fix their lives. The futility of relationship and the elusiveness of self have driven them from the threatening exterior landscapes of the volatile present into the secure interior landscapes of the inert past. Here, to the extent that they can escape external contradiction or internal doubt, they enjoy a freedom to embroider “reality” at will. Beth achieves perfect insular harmony because she resolves doubt with “principles” and never refers her versions of the past to external verification (“BETH never looks at DUFF, and does not appear to hear his voice”). Duff suffers both from doubt, regarding Beth’s unconfirmable affair with Sykes, and from an unsatisfiable need for outside validation (“DUFF refers normally to BETH, but does not appear to hear her voice”); hence his mental landscapes contain an abrasiveness absent in those of his wife. Because no possibility exists in this disposition for any change in the situation through interaction, the play lacks dramatic
tension; even Duff’s internal chafing must remain exempt from externally produced mutation, inevitably static.

By withdrawing the conditions of almost total insularity that exist in *Landscape*, and by creating characters who, although they dwell in the past, are condemned to self-doubt and to mutual affirmation, Pinter, in *Old Times*, infuses the situation of *Landscape* with the drama of conflict. Here, the episodes of history become actively charged in and by the present. The games among the three characters fuse both spheres of time inseparably, so that the situations, stakes, and weapons of the conflict acquire the dimensions of both periods simultaneously. Without actually shifting the materials of concern and disputation from the past, Pinter plants the locus of tension in the present by endowing the supposedly factual preterite with the threat of mutability and with the potential to confiscate the future.

*No Man’s Land* involves similar games of remembrance and invention that are likewise connected to the characters’ efforts to create themselves and their lives. For Spooner nothing remains but the possibility of insinuating himself into the elaborate pageant that sustains Hirst’s illusions of vitality and dignity. Although Hirst readily affirms Spooner to the extent necessary for preservation of certain claims about the past, he maliciously denies Spooner’s pleas for recognition in the present and in the future. Hirst experiences security in his relationship with Foster and Briggs because of their indifference to him, but he simultaneously craves and loathes Spooner because of the man’s interest in him. The potency of such a relationship proves too dangerous to risk, and Hirst ends by literally deleting Spooner from his dream: “I say to myself, I saw a body, drowning. But I am mistaken. There is nothing there.” In the schematics of the dream and in the schematics of the play’s action, Hirst invents the role, Spooner claims the role, and then Hirst obliterates the role. Hirst specifies the role for a drowning person, but Spooner insists he is not drowned, and Hirst can only revert to his earlier trick of rescinding the situation: of denying Spooner’s participation in his dream as he has, when necessary, deleted Spooner from his revisions of the past. In retaliation for this exclusion, Spooner repeats Hirst’s lamentation back to him, confirming the old poet’s sentence to “no man’s land. Which never moves, which never changes, which never grows old, but which remains forever, icy and silent” (p. 95).

Here, as in *Old Times*, the whims of language have inherited omnipotence in the absence of alternative structures for reality, and when Hirst absent-mindedly changes the subject “for the last time,” Foster is empowered to announce ever-lasting winter. The metaphoric invocations of winter, its sterile, silent, uninhabitable landscapes, reflect the themes of
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"no man's land," both place and play, and of Pinter's work, generally. In Pinter's universe regenerative prospects have vanished, and life has entered into a permanent process of decay. Characters erase themselves as they proceed, accumulating only the spectres of remembrance and artifice, and retreating with these into an ambiguous, infinite present. Where the external world and relationship were matters for control by games in Pinter's earlier work, they are matters of invention through games in these recent plays.

No Man's Land reverses Pinter's customary pattern of action. In the two earlier groups of plays, initial situations of precarious stability move toward violence and radical change. In No Man's Land, however, the situation commences unstable and develops into permanence; it moves away from intrusion rather than toward it. Pinter condemns his characters to solitude and stasis, where he had previously condemned them to intrusion and upheaval. Landscape and Old Times exhibit certain features of this reversal, but their progressions lack the suggestion of diminishing possibilities that distinguishes No Man's Land; in Landscape the situation begins as fundamentally static, but in Old Times it remains potentially unsettled. The subjects of conversation, which provided the sole prospect of vitality in a world commissioned by language, become permanently fixed in the final moments of No Man's Land, revealing a gradual, and now complete, acquisition by stasis. Remarkably, the subject achieves permanence by expanding to include all possible topics: "There is no possibility of changing the subject since the subject has now been changed" (p. 93). This restriction through expansion parallels Pinter's view of the present, which becomes a simultaneous containment of all things real and imagined, past, present, and future. By validating language as the cardinal signifier of reality, Pinter infuses the finite with the infinite, reduces infinity to zero, and converts potentiality into stasis. In these respects No Man's Land marks a distinct turn in Pinter's writing which, while evolving consistently from recent work, posits an unmistakable, if predictable, contradiction of his earlier work; he has moved, like the pendulum, to his opposite.

Although the past is empirically manifest in Betrayal, the play does not deviate essentially from these themes. Significantly, its reverse direction of time seems an apt consequence of the temporal stasis in the preceding plays. We have noted previously that the regressive structure operates as a conspicuous artifice that reveals a matrix of deceptions in various moments of time. Because the games, deceits, and ambiguities are resolved only through the theatrical conceit of retrospection, the opacity of the present remains, practically speaking, intact. The play
serves only to confirm the inscrutability of the apparent, and to adumbrate future maneuvers and stalemates similar to the ones we have observed in its predecessors. If *Betrayal*, through its backward movement in time, depicts the past imbedded in the present, it also, through this preponderantly one-way time flow, proclaims a condition of stasis and absence that reveals its "no man's land."

The ascendancy of games to the place of action derives also from Pinter's sympathy with sensibilities of pictures, his primary source of inspiration and frustration. In the picture or the photograph, form provides name, appearance provides substance, and nothing exists beneath the masquerade. The frame defines its subject and activity, and duration is absent. Pinter, however, must develop some form of temporal narrative due to the nature of his media: theatre and cinema transpire in time. Gradually, though, Pinter's concept of duration grows to resemble that of a photograph: he comes to view the present as vastly static and unyielding. As his plays lose the evidence of irreversibility and progress that time schemes normally stipulate, all action becomes a function of games. These games provide a suspended context, an exemption from the properties of time, which moves the plays yet closer to the aesthetics of the photograph. Pinter resorts to games as a device for occupying time without actually evoking or exhausting it. In his work for the cinema, as in his conceit for *Betrayal*, Pinter has evolved other structural vehicles for this dissolution of time, although the game remains prominent as an emblem of this phenomenon.

Pinter's appropriation of the game as his chief dramatic technique satisfies the temporal, behavioral, and existential characteristics of his world. The opaque surfaces of the game emerge from subtextual objectives of the characters and, like the photograph, simultaneously reveal and conceal truth. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the actor's task has consisted largely in discovery and depiction of subtextual truths. Pinter's style capitalizes on this acting process by pursuing to an extreme the logic that dialogue often conceals motive. Himself a seasoned actor, Pinter formulates his dramatic reality from the orientation of an actor; he focuses and exploits the dynamics between text and subtext. The discourse in his plays amounts almost to a game in itself of concurrently skirting and exposing the characters' concerns. The degree of apparent disparity between text and subtext distinguishes Pinter's work from that of other playwrights. We have observed, for example, that much of his work on the screen adaptations consisted in conversion of the explicit into the implicit. Pinter's foremost talent lies in this ability to capture in obliquely articulated images and dialogue the unarticulated spheres of living. In his derivation of this discipline and sen-
sitivity from the craft of acting, itself, Pinter mirrors the trends in other art forms, such as Photo Realism and electronic music, which also elevate matters of craft to matters of subject.

The game-like operations of obfuscated motive evolve not only from professional practices, but from contemporary vision, as well; obfuscation has become a hallmark of modern life. In recent years we have recognized that political, social, economic, educational, and religious policies aim in varying degrees at obscuring actualities. Most theories of psychology now view behavior as a symptomatic and attempt to discern the statements hidden behind various surface patterns. The trend toward artistic replication of an opaque and inscrutable reality has become prominent in contemporary practice of various disciplines. Certain movements in modern literature, painting, film, and criticism have imitated the conclusions of modern scientific theory, focusing scrutiny on the surface characteristics of their subjects, treating the observable with minimal prejudice, interpretation, or insight. Even the observable has obtained a precondition of inaccessibility; art has adopted the stance of Werner Heisenberg, a physicist who postulated that the very process of observation alters the object of its scrutiny. Although Heisenberg's Principle pertains to activity on a subatomic level, it has produced a radical revision of our conception of the universe and our epistemological relation to it. The mandate of impenetrability implicit in this thinking brings surface properties to the fore. It not only implicates them, but also activates them; even the visible is no longer certain, but responsive. The fascination in all this lies not beneath the surface, where no footholds exist for any conclusions, but in the tension between the observable and the hypothetical: in the clues by which the surface surrenders its secrets. Thus people have come to view their lives much as actors view their scripts; the strategy of the visible consists in obfuscation, and the substance of the invisible is inaccessible, except through its surface manifestations. When we add to this condition the contention that even the perceptible suffers contamination by the perceiver, we have described the rudimentary tension and mechanism of Pinter's work.

Looking back to the screenplays, we can anticipate and parallel Pinter's pattern of development as a playwright according to his choices and treatment of source material. The succession of Pinter's alterations and augmentations of the eight novels becomes particularly significant with respect to the themes under discussion. The Servant, for example, tallies with Pinter's initial phase of writing; it exhibits the chief characteristic of this period, a focus on relationship, and it correlates generally with other dramatic values in Pinter's early work. Its linear plot corre-
responds to the more conventional treatment of time and sequence during this period of his writing. Pinter does not choose, in *The Servant*, to deviate from a chronological sequence of events, despite the presence of a narrator in the source work who provides temporal distortion. Instead, Pinter entirely omits the narrative figure and concentrates on the strategies of relationship among the central characters in the novel. The development of games in this film script toward the inclusion of threat and the acquisition of external dimensions of reality, however, anticipates Pinter's later phases of work: Barrett and Tony have initiated a retreat from the world outside.

In *The Pumpkin Eater*, *The Quiller Memorandum*, and *Accident*, we detect that Pinter's adaptations tend to isolate and focus the individual in a contest with herself or himself. The three novels on which the screenplays are based do indeed facilitate such a shift, but, except for his approach to *The Quiller Memorandum*, Pinter has altered them to place even more stress on the conditions of solitude that afflict the central figures. As we have noted previously, Adam Hall's narrative for *The Quiller Memorandum* posed special problems of interiority, and Pinter's primary task in rendering the work cinematically legible lay in extroversion of the action. Even this extroversion, including the recreation of Inga as ambiguity rather than enemy, however, maintains intact Quiller's fundamental alienation from others: most of his interaction serves only to accentuate his condemnation to solitude.

Pinter's contributions of the two exiled sons and of their two visits home, for example, function to delineate Jo's alienation in *The Pumpkin Eater*, as does his relegation of her to a victim's role in Conway's discovery of Jake's adultery. Jo's utter displacement by the children at the conclusion of the story, also Pinter's invention, completes our sense of her exclusion. Pinter's characterization of Charley, who enjoys close rapport with Stephen in Mosley's *Accident*, but none in Pinter's screenplay, likewise serves to interrupt the bonds between the protagonist and others. Anna and William become, in Pinter's version, similarly remote and inaccessible, as does Stephen's wife. In both of these scripts, Pinter has revamped conditions to underscore the dynamic within the self by diminishing possibilities for relationships with others, just as he has done in his second phase of playwriting.

Furthermore, Pinter now adopts the quirks of temporal development that exist in the source novels. Although he continues to discard the narrator as such, he has discovered a cinematic rendering on nonsequential time. In both *The Pumpkin Eater* and *Accident*, time acquires nonlinear characteristics, but in *Accident* it closely approaches the condition of nonduration that informs the photograph, hence generating
the problems of hindsight that dominate the third phase of Pinter's writing.

All four of Pinter's most recent screenplays belong to the third group of concerns. In both subject and technique, his script for *The Go-Between* marks a conspicuous shift to the matter of recapturing the past. Pinter reshapes Hartley's novel by instituting alterations and overlays of time sequence to draw more pronounced disparities and comparisons between past and present; he maintains the dynamics between the current and the absent continuously in focus. In developing this theme, Pinter takes advantage of temporal values peculiar to the film medium, because, as Noel King observes, "Film renders action in only one tense—the present—and therefore is suited to Pinter's obsession with the presentness of the past."6

The past appears in Pinter only as an aspect of the present; its substance remains vulnerable to the whims of current needs or provocations. Otherwise, it no longer exists. As the past progressively hardens and objectifies, the present undermines memory, reconstituting it as a mental embroidery, a function of inhabiting the present. We can readily discern thematic and structural evidence of this process in Pinter's adaptation of Proust, where he converts the substantial narration of the novels into basically a study of its own genesis. Here Pinter excises the preceptual crisis that underlies the lengthy narrative episodes of Proust's work and elevates it almost to the function of plot. Both of these screenplays adopt a temporal scheme that is essentially photographic; they initiate and conclude in an almost identical moment in time, evoking the simultaneous presence and absence of the past: "a kind of ever-present quality in life."7

Pinter's version of *The Last Tycoon* deviates in form and in subject from the trends in *The Go-Between* and *The Proust Screenplay*, but it remains consistent with them in nature. As he did for *The Servant*, Pinter chooses against suggestion of narrative circularity, although both novels construct their stories through the device of a narrator from the perspective of a fixed point in time. According to the identification of past with fiction that permeates Pinter's work, the alternative world of movie illusions that exists in Fitzgerald's novel qualifies to replace memory as the source of tension in the action. Pinter deploys the novel's conflict between fabricated and intractable realities as a surrogate for his more typical friction between compliant, inaccessible pasts and incompliant, preemptive presents. Episodes of fiction alternate here with episodes of life to produce a clash between the elusive and the ineluctable similar to the ones that occur in *The Go-Between* and *The Proust Screenplay*. Time slips gears according to the dual dimensions of existence, outside and inside of fiction, that formulate Stahr's routine.
In his screenplay for *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Pinter accomplishes a total identification of past with fiction, merging the statements of *The Go-Between* and *The Proust Screenplay* with that of *The Last Tycoon* to form an explicit condition. The attempt to recapture the past achieves a fundamental unity with the drive to imitate the world of fiction. Past/fiction coincides with present/“non-fiction” as irreconcilable entities, plainly, but inscrutably, derived from each other. Again, we note the self-conscious accentuation of craft that appears also in *The Last Tycoon* and, variously, in *The Proust Screenplay*. The temporal qualities in Pinter’s adaptation of the Fowles novel resemble, in their linear complexity, those in his screenplay for *The Last Tycoon*, progressing generally in chronological sequence, but acquiring distortion through the intermingling of fictional and “nonfictional” events. In each of these screenplays, as in his third group of stage plays, Pinter reveals a preoccupation with figures who inhabit a world both outside of and condemned by time.

In his screenplays and in his stage plays, Pinter shifts the locus of menace from the threat of change to the condition of stasis. Insularity has passed from the ideal to the real, and where his characters previously feared challenge, they now invite it: where the posture was formerly invulnerability, it is now vulnerability. As the dominion of human artifice, initially a contrivance for perpetuating stability against the prospect of upheaval and finally a strategy for enduring in time, envelops and cancels out increasing spheres of experience, the human condition and its remedy become interchangeable; and Pinter reverses their natures. His worlds become sealed systems; intrusion becomes an impossible dream. Condemned to an interminable, impregnable monotony, the characters now invent and define their own oppositions. These illusions fail, however, just as the earlier illusions of security failed, when they are tested against the phenomenal world. The attempt to inscribe the controls of fiction on the mysteries of experience is never successful in Pinter’s work.

During an interview concerning his work on *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Karel Reisz stated his views on the subject of screen adaptation:

That’s the hardy perennial: Do you have to be faithful to the novel? My answer is no. You don’t have to be faithful to anything, you have to make a variation on the themes of the novel which, a., is a film, not a filmed novel, and b., is a film in which you can put your feelings and your associations. By making the movie, you don’t change the novel; it continues to exist! The whole business of being faithful is a nonsensical aim. A novel is capable of taking you inside a person; it gives you their speculations, their feelings, their historic associations and so on. That’s something that movies can only hint at.
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But the moment you've accepted that fact, then the whole notion of being faithful becomes meaningless because in cinema you have to substitute something filmic—Surprise, surprise!—for the things you can't do. You can't just leave yourself with the things that are left, the fag-end of what the medium can absorb. And the moment you realize that, you're out of the business of translating and you're into the business of making it mean what you want it to mean. 8

Pinter's achievement as an adapter consists precisely in this transformation of material according to the special dynamics of the film medium and of his personal milieu. Each of the eight scripts testifies to his skill at converting language into image and to his success at distilling ideas into essence and form. We have seen that the significance of visual images has been seminal in Pinter's work for stage and screen throughout his career, and that his aptitude for stating theme in form has been a consistent feature of his writing. Economy of expression distinguishes all of Pinter's scripts, and he has acknowledged that, whatever the difference in degree, both stage and screen require a knack for the succinct. These characteristics commend Pinter to the cinema as a singularly appropriate talent.

The disciplines are similar, for a writer, in that although you need, let's say, less words on the screen than you do on the stage, nevertheless—although I don't really believe this to be true—say that you needed twenty words for a particular scene on the stage, you can do with six for a similar scene on the screen. The point is, that if you write eight for the screen, two words too many, you're overloading the thing, and you're breaking your discipline; precisely the same discipline, the same economy, whatever the medium you're writing for. 9

If Pinter's unique bias and method have contributed generously to his success as a screenwriter, we may also theorize that his screenwriting has influenced his bias and method. Noel King has attributed Pinter's redefinition of "menace" to his experience with the temporal values of film, 10 and Enoch Brater has suggested that Pinter's manipulation of images and arrangement of time in Betrayal reveal "the profound effect his work in the movies has had on his dramatic technique." 11 Pinter, himself, while speaking about his adaptation of Betrayal for film, speculated that his work for cinema may have opened new avenues in his playwriting. "It was originally written for the stage in a kind of cinematic way, with a structure that possibly owes something to the films I've worked on for the last twenty years. My early plays started at the beginning and went to the end; they were linear. Then I did more and more films, and I felt that 'Betrayal'—even the stage version—comes as much out of film as it does out of the stage." 12

Whether Pinter's screenwriting experience inspired or was merely
conducive to these developments is impossible, and probably unneces-
sary, to evaluate; but his work in both media, stage and screen, has
progressed along similar lines. Ironically perhaps, Pinter, who spoke on
his high school debating team, once supported the resolution that “in
view of its progress in the last decade, the Film is more promising in its
future as an art form than the Theatre.” His own career, in its pro-
gressively frequent essays into screenwriting, may attest to the inevi-
tability of that contention. For Pinter, in any case, the penchant for
ambiguity that courts subterfuge in some of his stage plays becomes a
genuine asset in his approach to the fully evolved works of compatible
writers. Where his original writing seems occasionally contrived, the
opacity in the screenplays thrives on elaborate underpinnings and some-
times obtains superior resonance and cogency. Pinter’s adaptations of
these novels into the medium of film are exemplary accomplishments in
sensitive, imaginative transmutation of material; he is an incisive maker
of pictures.