

Theatre of the absurd in endgame (proposal)



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General Background Samuel Barclay Beckett was born in Dublin in 1906, the son of a quantity surveyor. Like Shaw, Wilde, and Yeats he came from the Protestant Irish middle class and later he lost his faith, brought up ??? almost a Quaker??? as he himself put it. According to Esslin Beckett??'s absorption with problem of the being and identity of the self might have emerged from the Anglo-Irishman??'s inexorable and constant concern with finding his own answer to the question ??? who am I??? (Esslin 29-30). In Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett McDonald discusses that the key to understand Beckett according to his friend and doctor Geoffrey Thomson, was his close relationship with his mother. She was both loving and overbearing, perceptive and strict, and Beckett??'s love-hate relation with his mother is at the center of his extreme feeling of anxiety and guilt. Even though Beckett declares that he have no ??? religious feeling???, he mentioned that his mother was ??? deeply religious.

??? Many biblical allusions in his work may derive from this influence. In addition Beckett describes his childhood as being often lonely which we see loneliness, solitude, alienation would become recurrent themes in his later works (McDonald 7). McDaniel argues that Samuel writing is very puzzling also there was no absolute interpretation and ending. However Endgame is a unique masterpiece ??? with an intricate dramatic structure that runs contrary to traditional theatrical structure.

??? Beckett chooses his words carefully, and the nature of the dialogue is circular. The language that Beckett uses shows the hazardous balance between ??? cognition and bewilderment.??? Then he continues to discuss that the breakdown of language demonstrates the breakdown of the ability of

characters to perceive the world around them. Endgames structure breaks from the theory that shaped centuries of dramas and tragedies. Becketts use of dramatic motivation is also "very little. In traditional drama, a characters motivations are clear to the audience, but the characters actions in Endgame are strange and odd.

One may go to the theater to encounter with conclusions and answers, but Beckett presents a fictional world as complex as the real world and there conclusions are uncertain and answers cannot be easily defined (McDaniel 1). In addition Esslin defines the characters and motives of The Theatre of the Absurd as: In the Theatre of the Absurd, on the other hand, the audience is confronted with characters whose motives and actions remain largely incomprehensible. With such characters it is almost impossible to identify; the more mysterious their action and their nature, the less human their character become, the more difficult it is to be carried away into whom the audience fails to identify are inevitably comic. (401)Statement of problemThe researcher tries to highlight some elements of Theatre of the Absurd that the main themes of this genre are lack of communication, alienation and absurd condition of human being. The other aspect which the researcher examines is significance of these absurd elements on Endgame which is one of the masterpieces of Samuel Beckett.

Meanwhile this research elaborates upon two main characters of Endgame, Hamm and Clov. The symbolic language as well as Biblical allusions is another factor that is analyzed in deep outlook. Through investigating all these crucial elements these questions occur spontaneously: ??? ??? ??? What is human condition in our modern society What are the absurd

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elements of Endgame What are the characteristic of Hamm and Clov? What are the allusions used in Beckett's Endgame What are the significances of language in Endgame How does Endgame's stage illustrate absurd atmosphere Through explaining these questions we could figure out that how Beckett's style and language represent elements of Theatre of the Absurd, in addition, we understand how his Modernist perspective affects his works. Significance of the Problem According to McDonald Beckett is one of the most creative and difficult writers of twentieth century (6). In addition, many critics declare that Samuel Beckett is one of the dominant figures in twentieth century who had a great influence upon Modernist as well as Postmodernist movements. As McDaniel explains, Aristotle said the Tragedy is an imitation of an action but Beckett neither imitates nor follows realist methods (1).

His play, Endgame, became one of the most important plays on account of the fact that Beckett did not follow conventional rules of his time and he used defamiliarization to draw audience attention to his subject-matter. The fact that Beckett could address these important questions of life in a short play is what makes it as a great play. In his plays Beckett points out to unknown aspects of human life, also it focuses upon the philosophy of human existence which associate Beckett to Existentialist Approach. Now we could figure out that how Beckett's works concern different controversial issues of his time in which broadens and deepened our understanding of life.

3 Delimitation In Samuel Beckett's Endgame as a good example of Theatre of the Absurd, we could analyze Existentialist approach, due to the fact that it has a close relationship to absurd writers' philosophy. In

addition, we could find some roots of absurd elements in that theory.

Furthermore, we could focus upon human quest in search for ego in modern context in which is the main concern of absurd play writers. In the Theatre of the Absurd we are able to observe Historical approach as well.

As we are aware World War II has strong impact on the Theatre of the Absurd also help it to emerge. A modernist element is another aspect that can be examine in Endgame. But the researcher will examine fundamental factors of this genre including, absurd condition of human being, lack of communication, and alienation.

Moreover, this research gives the critical overview on two main characters of this play also biblical allusions and symbolic language in Endgame is discussed in detail. Methodology and ApproachThe plays such as Beckett??™s Endgame which regarded as an example of Theatre of the Absurd unlike conventional plays do not follow dramatic rules. As Esslin explains in his book, The Theater of the Absurd, works of absurd theatre have no story or plot: these plays are often without recognizable characters also they often have neither a beginning nor an end and they often consist of incoherent babblings. So these plays end quite different from conventional plays and therefore they have different methods (21-22). This is not to say that Endgame is representing mass attitudes. Esslin introduces that Absurd originally means ??? out of harmony,??? in a musical context. In common usage absurd4"may mean ??? ridiculous??? (23).

In an essay of Kafka, Ionesco defined his understanding of the term as following: Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose??!. Cut off from his

religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless. (qtd. in Esslin 23) Martin Esslin discusses that Theatre of the Absurd endeavors to communicate its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the insufficiency of the rational approach by the open desists from rational devices and digressive thought (24). Then he continues to highlight that striving for a combination between the subject-matter and the form which Theatre of the Absurd expressed, separates it from the Existentialist theatre (25). The age-old traditions that the Theatre of the Absurd shows in new and individually varied combinations might be classified under the headings of: Pure theatre; i.

e. abstract scenic effects as they are familiar in the circus or revue, in the work of jugglers, acrobats, bullfighters, or mimes Clowning, fooling, and mad-scenes Verbal nonsense The literature of dream and fantasy, which often has a strong allegorical component. (Esslin 318) Esslin analyzes that these headings always overlap, but the distinction between them works to clarify the issue in many examples and are useful in isolating the different factors of development. The element of pure in the Theatre of the Absurd is an aspect of its anti-literary attitude, its leaving language as a vehicle for the expression of the deepest levels of meaning (318).

Abrams explains the hero of Theatre of the Absurd as baleful, naive, or inept characters in a fantasy or nightmarish modern world that play their roles in what Ionesco called a tragic farce and in that world the events are concurrently comic, horrifying, and absurd (M. H.

Abrams 2). By concerning this explanation as basic aspects of Absurd heroes, the characters like Hamm and Clov in Samuel Beckett's Endgame

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are the good illustration of this type. So by following Esslin, Ionesco as well as Abrams we could prove that Endgame is an example of Theatre of the Absurd that contains of all elements of this genre. The document for this achievement is Beckett's unique style of writing, allegories, and Biblical allusions which he used in his works. However, Esslin in Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays urges that we should keep in our mind the very fact that Beckett's general refusal to give comments about his works could be an organic connection between the critics' great insistence to provide an explanation and his unwillingness to do it (1). The following part in Endgame demonstrates his attitude clearly: HAMM: Were not beginning to...

to...

mean something CLOV: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (Brief laugh.) Ah that's a good one! (Beckett 32-33) So, simultaneously Beckett's works communicate deep meaning and mean nothing that shows the aspect of double meaning of this great writer's works. Literature Review Doherty at his book, Samuel Beckett, highlights Samuel Beckett's novels and plays; in addition, it draws attention upon controversial issues of Beckett's works also offers possible explanation for them. Moreover he focuses on Beckett's style also elaborates on plays and drama's characterization.

Doherty at third chapter of his book which had a title as Theatre of Suffering underlines plays by Beckett and emphasizes on absurdism, characterization, and especial language that Beckett convey through his

plays. Martin Esslin at chapters of this book, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, discusses elements of theatre of the absurd also analyzes in detail ??? the tradition of the Absurd.??? In addition he examines the major works of writers of this genre which has great effect upon literature such as Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov, Genet and many others whose works presents new point of view for theatre and new understanding of surrounding world of new man. The plays Esslin concerns use different methods from those of the conventional play, which can be judged only by the standards of the theatre of the absurd. Individual philosophy, writer??™s narrow and deep perspective is the other purpose of the author to define and clarify absurdism in Endgame. Lyons at very beginning of his book *Samuel Beckett* represents a general introduction over Beckett??™s plays.

In addition he continues to focus upon plays by Beckett individually as well as in full detail point of view. Moreover, the author at third chapter of his book points out different aspects of Endgame in which he analyses four characters and themes of the play. 7"Also he tries to bold the Beckett??™s usage of time and the aspect of uncertainty of meaning throughout the play. Another matter which is discussed in Lyons??™ book is Endgame??™s symbolic language and its stage significance. *Cambridge Companion to Beckett* by Pilling is collection of different essays in which focuses on critical overview at Beckett??™s plays and novels. These essays try to analyze Beckett??™s work from different vision.

Michael Worton??™s essay ??? *Waiting for Godot and Endgame: Theatre as a Text*??? is a critical essay that the author examines these two famous plays of Beckett. Worton at his research compare two plays in respect to their

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characterization, theme, and stage significant. In addition he has a very narrow and deep view-point that enables him to represent to the readers different dimension of Waiting for Godot and Endgame. The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett by Ronan McDonald is an introduction about Samuel Beckett as one of the most important writers of twentieth century. It provides biographical as well as critical information upon his works. At the beginning McDonald describes Beckett's life, intellectual and cultural background, and then he continues to highlight plays, prose and represents critical views concerning Beckett's works.

In addition, the author provides analysis of the major plays of Beckett including Waiting for Godot, Endgame and Happy Days and his major prose is discussed in full detail. Furthermore his famous novels such as Molly, Mallon Dies and The Unnamable are analyzed. Samuel Becket: A Collection of Critical Essays by Martin Esslin is a series of critical essays on major works of Samuel Beckett. In addition, it presents a review of Beckett's works from modern perspective, provides explanation upon Beckett's style of writing, his language and voice within his works, and analyzes his heroes as well. Esslin at introduction of this book explains Beckett's attitude toward giving comments about his own works and the author highlights the fact that Beckett's works are full of different unknown aspects to be discussed.

Tentative Outline. Absurd Condition of Human Beings A. Lack of Communication B. Alienation II. Absurd Elements in Endgame A. Absurdist Hero B.

Endgame??™ s Stage Significant III. Symbolic Language of Endgame A.

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