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## Samuel Beckett's Iconoclastic Deviation in the Implications of Language

**Dr. Ashish Kumar Gupta**

Assistant Professor of English

Govt. Degree College,

Muwani, Pithoragarh, UK, India,

Email: [keys2020@gmail.com](mailto:keys2020@gmail.com)

ORCID Id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0436-3744>

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### Abstract

The goal of this research is to look into the effects of the language used in the study of silences and inexpressibility in the theatre of absurd plays especially in the oeuvre of Samuel Beckett. Consideration will be given to various aspects and qualities of this kind of drama, including things like silence, pause, repetitions, the lack of a narrative or plot, the lack of recognisable or definable decor, the unorthodox nature of the dialogue, and the focus on global and universal issues rather than current problems. There was a global sense of meaninglessness and

nothingness as a result of the changing state of the world, particularly as a result of the destructive effects of the Second World War. This brought about a sense of despair and disenchantment with the values that were traditionally upheld.

**Keywords:** Absurdity, Meaninglessness, Nothingness, Pause, Inexpressibility, Silence

“The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.”

Samuel Beckett, *Three Dialogues*

There is a great deal of debate on the efficacy of language as a medium of communication, with many people arguing for and against its usage. There is little question that the stage of acceptable articulation is a significant milestone in the development of human consciousness. This is the point at which man has been separated from his fellow creatures by the abstract, utilitarian, and aesthetic use of language. This is the one and only really unparalleled possession that man has ever known (Babaee et al. 113). It is the basis for his sense of entitlement and pride in himself. A clever and versatile playwright like Stoppard, whose whole life depends on the creative manipulation of the language, should be able to provide such an evaluation, and it is perfectly natural to anticipate such an evaluation from such a person. The same may be said of John Osborne, who is another playwright who writes in a distinct style. He, too, believes that words are the last link with God, and he expresses this belief in the same way. It might be archaic, but they are the only thing that matters. Michel Foucault, in his exploration of language and the human mind, defines sense and harmony in this world so long as there is a synthesis between the sign and object, the signifier and the signified. This is the condition under which sense and harmony may exist. As soon as this essential component is lacking, all subsequent states will devolve into anarchy. His justification of the development of language through history places emphasis on the profound philosophical consequences.

The havoc of World Wars with shocking effects made people stunned and paved the way for silence and the inability to express the experience in words. Thousands of troops were stranded in muddy, flooded trenches for lengthy periods of time—hours, days, even weeks—where disease and illness thrived. Even worse, men were being torn apart by bullets and shrapnel outside the trench.

The human condition being what it is, with man small, helpless, insecure, and unable ever to fathom the world in all its hopelessness, death, and absurdity, the theatre has to confront him with the bitter truth that most human endeavor is irrational and senseless, that communication between human beings is well-nigh impossible, and that the world will forever remain an impenetrable mystery. (Esslin 13)

The interior monologues of profoundly solipsistic characters who attempt to construct a unifying concept of self in Beckett's novels examine alienation and estrangement. In his works, Beckett finds himself good at bad expression, bad communication, and bad reflection according to the oscillating alienated condition of modern man. For all these inexpression,

silence is the best medium to communicate whatever is to convey without words and effort. Gesticulation plays an essential role in transmitting the proper meaning of silence.

Silence operates on many levels in these plays. The authors are concerned with portraying the alienation of individuals, the breakdown of communication and the disintegration of language itself. Underlying the gaps in conversation and the meaningless repetition is the universal, metaphysical silence, the inexplicable abyss. This silence looms behind all plays which fall into the category of the absurd, whether or not they have a specific silent character. (Stein 424)

Language was an unmistakable and unmistakable symbol for things in its original form, when it was given to humans by God Himself. This was because language resembled the things it was supposed to signify. The names of things were inscribed into the objects that they indicated, similar to how ferocity is written into the body of a lion and regality is written into the eye of an eagle... by way of an analogy or comparison.

One of the most significant issues in both phenomenology and existential philosophy is the problem of the nature of the subjective experience of disharmony with reality, commonly known as the feeling of absurdity. Phenomenology has struggled with this issue for a long time. Camus believed that man was born without purpose and must spend his life searching for it, which search might come on unexpectedly and for no apparent reason. When an individual loses trust in the possibility of a harmonious relationship between man and the world, he or she finds themselves in a predicament that might result in incongruous remedies, which in and of itself may be evidence of how significant the underlying issue is. The remedies vary from death by one's own hand, as Kirillov did in *The Possessed* when he realised that God did not exist. Suicide is one of the options. This issue is not just of significance from a historical perspective; it is also relevant to philosophical discussions today (Baldwin123).

Since the beginning of existential philosophy, there have been a number of different views about the epistemological foundation of the ridiculous. Camus asserted that the ridiculous is a fact and the basis of the relationship that people have with the rest of the world. In his search for an ontological understanding of the issue, Sartre constructed the categories of the *en-soi* and *pour-soi* as two distinct varieties of being. The person, in Sartre's view, is the only thing that can uncover his or her own existential openness and freedom; everything and everyone else appears to be lacking in this regard (Kaluza). Sartre opines on the arbitrary human condition that "Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does" (Mittal).

It is not at all complicated to trace absurdity back to trends that occurred in the early 20th century, such as surrealism and expressionism, which were both incorporated into the acceptance statements of modernism. As stated in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the term absurdity refers to a situation or circumstance in which human beings live in a cosmos that is senseless and meaningless, and in which the significance of human life does not lie in any higher purpose. During that historical period, absurdity was the norm in many aspects of life, including behaviour, etiquette, living, and language. The absurdity of language has a significant impact on the particular era in question. The absurdity of language reveals the insignificance of the individuals who lived during that period. The term absurdity of language refers to a

language that is either unclear for the purpose of comprehending or a language that does not make any sense. Around the time of the 1950s, it was highly frequent in plays. It's possible that dramatists used the absurdity of language as a form of catharsis in their work. These are the most significant disasters that occurred during that time period for a variety of reasons, including the Great Depression, World War II, the miseries of life, and the loss of human beings. The following is what Brooks has to say about the inner workings of one's mind: Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* predicts the obsession of the Theatre of the Absurd with language and the endeavour to access the inner workings of one's mind.

Despite the fact that absurdity is the subject of a great deal of criticism, its significance, whether expressed via action or words, is universally acknowledged. Language has to be able to communicate something to both the speaker and the listener. If it does not communicate anything, then there is no use in continuing with it for anyone. When both the listener and the speaker have a distinct understanding of the language that they are employing, communication may take place (Vairavan and Dhanavel 163).

Going into further detail on the significance of language Oteiwy argues that it is necessary for leading a comfortable existence. He is of the opinion that language is what drives people to live and that language not only deals with the inability of human beings to know the motivation behind their actions but also raises the issue of interpersonal communication, which is something that takes over Beckett, Jean Genet, Adamov, Edward Albee, Ionesco, and Pinter. He believes that language is what drives people to live. Talking is a common activity in their daily lives, much like waiting. They are unable to continue living without them. They must communicate with one another in order to continue living. As a matter of fact, their conversation helps to reduce the terrible waiting, which in turn is utilised as a painkiller to help them cope with the hopelessness of the life they lead. The dialogues that take place between the characters in these authors' stories are, at their core, an effort to make touch with one another. In the end, they come to the realisation that such interaction is impossible, even in the midst of the struggle (Yuan 74).

It is called 'Theatre of the Absurd' because it shows the incongruity of human behaviour in its various manifestations and incorporates elements like silences, repeats, strange speech, no recognised set, no plot, no development, and no conclusion. Exposing the absurdity of the human condition and presenting the absurdity of the human condition are other traits of this kind of theatre. Martin Esslin, in his book titled *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961) asserts that *The Myth of Sisyphus* and other absurdist plays are manifestations of Albert Camus's philosophy and conception of the absurd. Esslin bases this claim on this particular play by Camus. Camus uses the unending and fruitless labour of Sisyphus as a metaphor for the life of modern people who spend their days toiling away at meaningless jobs to maintain their livelihood. " 'Absurd is that which has no purpose, or goal, or objective', the definition given by Ionesco in a note on Kafka, certainly applies to the play of Beckett and Ionesco" (Esslin 4).

This sense of absurdity is obviously connected to the Second World War, the terrible impacts it had all over the world, and the sense of meaninglessness it engendered in people as a result of those effects. And the existentialist views of Camus "that see human beings as moving from the nothingness from which they came to the nothingness in which they will end

through an existence marked by anguish and absurdity” (Harmon and Holman) can be thought of as the philosophical basis of absurdism. Camus was a French existentialist who lived during the 20th century. “The plays of the theatre of the absurd, in a certain sense, not only deal with the depression and disillusionment with the popularly held values and beliefs, but also deal with the process of travelling through emptiness and through an existence that is incomprehensible” (Esslin 5).

Samuel Beckett was an Irish author, dramatist, theatre director, and poet. His works have been translated into over twenty different languages, and he is regarded as one of the most notable absurdist playwrights. In most of his plays, he addresses universal themes such as human suffering, the theme of hopelessness, and the struggle to survive. The protagonists in his plays typically struggle to find meaning in a world that is beyond their comprehension. The conversation between the characters or the dialectical monologues they have are pointless. As Greenblatt says, “there is no progression, no development, no resolution.” The primary method that Beckett employs in order to illustrate the void and estrangement that characterise today’s society is the use of absurdity. According to Beckett, absurdity is the essence of human life. In addition, Beckett does not write his plays in accordance with the conventional conventions of theatrical structure and process. His plays are centred on silences and repetitions. Worton provides the following explanation for Beckett’s writing style: Rather than “following the tradition which demands that a play have an exposition, a climax, and a denouement, Beckett’s plays have a cyclical structure that might indeed be better described as a diminishing spiral” (Zhu1462). In other words, Beckett’s plays do not follow the convention that requires a “play to have an exposition, a climax, and a denouement.” [...] In this downward spiral toward “an ultimate resolution that will never be attainable in the Beckettian cosmos, the characters seek solace in repetition, both of their own acts and words and frequently those of others. This is because a final closure can never be found in the Beckettian universe” (69).

Beckett began writing short poems and also authored short tales, although he is most famous for his plays. The majority of his plays were originally written in French, but they were eventually translated into English. His plays; *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *Krapp’s Last Tape* and *Happy Days* are among his most well-known theatrical adventures. These plays are frequently cited as outstanding illustrations of absurdist theatre, an art form in which Samuel Beckett was a leading exponent and one of the genre’s forebears. In his pioneer play *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett used ‘Silence’ 118 times, ‘Pause’ 84 times and ‘Dash’ 58 times. This laconism represents the inexpressibility of the human condition and feeling, the situation defies the expressionistic outcome of human behaviour and existence.

A man of literature should never use the same vocabulary repeatedly since language should vary constantly. This was the opinion of Beckett who was also considered a modern creative author with bizarre and unconventional theme and structure. Beckett was influenced by French discussions on the use of language in literature. The fact that conversations in French regarding the function of language in literature were taking place at the same time during conversation the idea originated. Samuel Beckett was given the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 “for his writing, which—in new forms for the novel and drama—in the destitution of

modern man acquires its elevation” (nobelprize). His experiments with forms and language brought recognition to him as an avant-garde writer.

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