

CHAPTER: II



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Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*: An Assessment in Terms of the Absurdism

The analysis and interpretation of the play is attempted here in terms of the major tenants of the theater of the Absurd, mentioned in the chapter first.

With the performance of *Waiting For Godot*, Beckett's highly distinctive³ and despairing voice reached a wide audience. Beckett became widely known as a playwright associated with the Theater of the Absurd. Many later playwrights followed him in the use of stage, dramatic narrative technique and symbolism. Beckett's second play, *Endgame*, was published in February 1957. The first performance was staged in the Studio des Champs-Élysées in May 1957 by Roger Blin. *Endgame* is a one-act play with four characters. It was originally written in French, entitled *Fin de partie*; and was translated into English by Beckett himself. The French title *Fin de partie* can be applied to games besides Chess, but in the fact there was no precise English equivalent to this term therefore Beckett chose this one.

The English title *Endgame* is taken from the final part of a Chess game, when there are very few pieces left. The Endgame of the chess is the series of moves at the end merely as a formality of the end of the game. In this stage of game the outcome is usually decided before and what left is only a formality to complete the play. Beckett resembles this end game with the human life. *Endgame* parallels the conceit of chess to the human life. In

Hamm and Clov's *Endgame* too, the end is already decided and what remain is the last moves towards the end. All the characters in the play, behave like a losing player who must carry out the final move even though he knows that he has lost the game. *Endgame* depicts the approach to ritualistic 'end'. This happens to be the principal theme of all of his writings. Many critics assumed Beckett's plays as a no-man's-land, a place at the end of the world, devoid of any humanity, and an empty figure on an empty stage. The play is haunted by the scene of universal death.

All the characters are handicapped in some way or the other. Hamm is the protagonist of the play. He controls every one in the play, but he himself is not having the control over himself or any external factors. His condition makes him the antagonist to his servant Clov. He is blind, immobilized by old age. He appears on the stage in a wheeled chair and can't do any thing without the help of Clov. He believes that no one suffers more than he does. He bosses Clov and silences his parents, Nagg and Nell but in the real sense he is powerless. As the title of the play in game denote the technical concept from the game of Chess, one can identify Hamm as a king in this game who is served by others but at the same time who is also the most vulnerable. Even without painkiller he can not bear his life:

Hamm: In the morning they brace you up and in the evening
they calm you down. Unless it's the other way round
(pause). That old doctor, he's dead naturally.
(Beckett, 1976: 23)

He thinks that no one on the earth suffered like him. He questions “whether any one – his parents, his dog – suffers as much as he does”. His great fear is that existence is cyclical; he assumes that life will spring up again. Similar to other absurd characters he has confused desires he is terrified of the flea and rat and in contrast he proposes Clov to go south to other mammals. He wants to be alone, yet desires Clov to be with him. Whenever Clov leaves the room he asks him to come again. Another fact revealed by his father that he is afraid of being alone in the dark. All the characters in the *Endgame* enact repetitive, ritualistic. This repetitive and ritualistic routine of their life is the part of their end game. Hamm asks similar questions to Clov for several times and Clov repeats the same answers. These repetitions in the action are one of the characteristics of Beckett’s plays. It stands for the human journey during the life and death.

Hamm is incapacitated but holds sway over Clov, who can perform simple duties for him. He asks Clov to bring him under the window, so he can feel the light on his face. The light in the play symbolizes the hope and life. This action of the Hamm reveals that there is hope somewhere still in his mind. Though he is blind, he is very much curious about the outer world.

His cruelty is revealed through the reference of the character Mother Pegg who died of darkness because Hamm withheld light from her. He wants others to share the same miserable fate. In the course of action he polishes his dark glasses; it is a futile routine of his dead life. Through these repetitive routine actions of the characters Beckett conveys the idea that what human beings call life is just a futile routine actions they perform in-between the birth and death. He suggests that each day of life is the same:

Hamm: One of these days I'll show them to you. (Pause).
 It seems they've gone all white. (Pause) what
 time is it?

Clov: the same as usual. (ibid: 13)

Even the weather presented in the play is static; and through textual references suggests as repetitive. Hamm is curious about the end but at the same time hesitates to finish. In *Waiting For Godot* Valdimir and Estragon wait for Godot and this waiting is futile and never-ending. Similarly in the *Endgame* Hamm and Clov, though there is nothing to wait, they wait for end. Their routine life and repetitive actions staving off death while drawing it ever closer. The name of the character Hamm also resembles a hammer. There is identical similarity between the actions of Hamm and hammer, both drive action from a distance. Another resemblance to his name is actor and he proves this characteristic while narrating the story.

Another important character in the play is Hamm's submissive servant Clov. Clov might be considered as the queen or knight of this play as he is constant companion to Hamm. He performs various tasks for his master, like wheeling him around and reporting on the landscape outside the windows. Clov is deeply sad compared to Hamm and the intensity of his sadness one can assume in the very first dialogue of the play:

Clov: (fixed gaze, tonelessly). Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (pause). I can't be punished any more... (ibid: 12)

He is a part of Hamm's routine life; he performs errands and let Hamm to ride on him. Many critics assume that the story Hamm tells about the beggar and his child is the story of Clov and his father. Clov wonders repeatedly why he stays with Hamm. Both of them want to be alone but are afraid to be alone. In *Waiting For Godot* Estragon suggests to Valdimir that they hang themselves, but they quickly abandon the idea when it seems that they might not both die and this would leave one of them alone, an intolerable notion. Despite the constant declaration of leaving Hamm he cannot leave his master. Perhaps because he is compassionate to him.

Clov could be identified with his master Hamm for his another characteristic that his afraid of the cyclical nature of existence. He tries to kill the flea and rats because they are 'potential regenerators' and even at the end he wants to kill a boy because he is 'potential procreator'. In the beginning dialogue he recites the word 'finished' and 'grain upon grain'. This dialogue underscores the plays idea of repetitions. He suggests that life is a series of moments and death makes it a heap. Whatever Hamm asks for, Clov's answer is 'no', there are no more bicycles, no more biscuits, no more painkiller and no more nature. Clov wants to create a little order by which he means clearing everything away. He wants every 'thing in its last place, under the last dust'. He is afraid that there is only repetition without finality. At the end of the play Clov appears, dressed for departure, but when curtain falls he is still there. It remains open whether he will really leave, like in *Waiting For Godot*, will Godot come tomorrow?

Hamm and Clov's life reflect that world is a repetitive, cyclical world in a constant state of flux. Conclusion in such world is unattainable due to this fusion of begging and ending. Clov is unable to leave Hamm at the end. His leaving would imply that ones tenure in one place and begging a new one elsewhere. Albert Camus in his philosophical discussion on Absurd philosophy proposes that the meaning of suicide is the acceptance of the Absurd. According to him only definable option is acceptance of life. Clov's leaving Hamm is some kind of a suicide; and 'there is no one else' for Hamm and 'there's no where else' for the Clov.

The relationships represented by Hamm and Clov are multifarious. Simultaneously Hamm plays as a friend, a master, a slave, and perhaps a father and a son. Martine Essline comments on the relationship between the Clov and Hamm:

“Hamm and Clov in some ways resemble Pozzo and Lucky. Hamm is the master, Clov the servant. Hamm is selfish, sensuous, domineering. Clov hates Hamm and want to leave him, but he must obey orders”. (Esslin, 2001: 62)

There is ambiguity in the relationship between Hamm and Clov. Hamm's biographical story reveals that Clov is not his son. Hamm on the one point treats him as a slave and on the other as a friend. He threatens him that he will give him just enough food to keep him from dying; and on the other occasion he asks about his health.

Martin Esslin describes Clov and Hamm as two halves of a single personality. Clov represents the intellectual self of the personality and

Hamm as the emotional self of the personality. Clov as an intellectual self is bound to serve the emotional self of Hamm. But at the same time Esslién himself asserts that such kind of assumptions may be wrong because *Endgame* is not a preplanned play. But with many evidences from the play it is clear that this resemblance can be proved. Hamm is emotional one when he asks Clov that 'You don't love me'; and Clov is interested in the order which suggests the intellect.

Other minor characters in this one act play are Nagg and Nell. Nagg is Nell's husband and Hamm's father. They resemble the pawns from this endgame that can emerge only with the king's consent. This couple on the stage contained in the ashbin. They both suggest the trapped condition of human being on the earth. Nell's role in this play is very short but seems to be the one of the reasons why Nagg keeps living. In the course of the action Nagg repeatedly attempts to kiss Nell and fails to do so. She calls this action as a 'farce'. Through her dialogues it seems that she resigns to their lives of routine. The pair Nagg and Nell stands in the play for the sole example of healthy love:

Nell: What is it, my pet? (pause) Time for love?

Nagg: Where you asleep?

Nell: Oh no!

Nagg: Kiss me.

Nell: We can't ... (Beckett, 1976: 18)

Nagg performs such 'farcical' activity daily to affirm their existence. The routine and repetitive nature of their actions denotes the existence on the

earth. Nagg keeps three quarters of his biscuit to Nell, and for so many times asks Nell about her health indicts his love. He cries at last when he comes to know that Nell is dead. About the relationship between Nagg and Nell, Gerald Weales comments:

“Nell is a kind of embodiment of sentimental reminiscence and Nagg, in the bit of biscuit he keeps for her, in his attempt to get her a sugarplum, is still the husband and lover, though legless in an ashcan”.(Weales, 1962:108)

Hamm, Nagg and Clov represent the three generations, Nagg is Hamm’s father and Hamm is a surrogate father to Clov, and these three generations are near to the end of their lives, and no new beginnings will issue from them. Beckett waxes the sentiments from the affectionate bond between the father and son. Nagg ask for bribe to listen the story of his own son. Nagg remembers Hamm would call him when he was scared as a child in the dark, instead of his mother. Hamm didn't want to be born and Nagg didn't want to have him. Nagg recognizes the randomness of creation and points out that, if he weren't Hamm's father, someone else would be.

The position of Nagg and Nell in the separate ashbins represents the separateness or individuality of the married couples. Through presenting these two characters Beckett achieves theatrical goal to create laughter from misery. It is very difficult to place normal or traditional rules of conduct on its characters. The play is absurd and thus the characters are absurd, their motivations and behaviors are absurd. These characters struggle to move on or take action, and the actions they take are often stagnant and repetitive. All

movements in the *Endgame* have slowed down indicating the decline of the every sector of the humanity. Hamm is paralyzed and confined to his chair. Clov walks with difficulty. Nagg and Nell are legless and occupy little space in their ash cans. All these situations remain same at the end of the play. All the characters strive for the end, but to no one the end is granted. When Hamm threatens to give him nothing more to eat, Clov seems happy with the hope of starving to death. Hamm quickly comes up with a crueller threat: 'I'll give you just enough to keep you from dying' (Beckett, 1976: 14). Although Nell appears to be dead by the end of the play, this cannot be seen as any sort of closure. It may be another time that they thought she was dead. Beckett denies his characters, and even to the audience, the comfort of a conclusion. Hamm asks Clov 'Have you not had enough?'(ibid: 13), 'Will this never finish?'(ibid: 22) Each time Clov mechanically replies 'Yes!' But there is no end, because in the end there is beginning.

In *Waiting For Godot* Beckett uses the technique of absent character and presents the mysterious character Godot through the dialogues; in *Endgame* he again uses the absent characters. The emergence of the boy at the end and the character Mother Pegg presented on the stage through the conversations of other characters. The boy emerged at the end has been interpreted by many critics as a symbol of resurrection. The resurrection reincarnated or resurrected after death is one of the greatest fear that all the characters share. The characters from this drama resemble those who dream their own death.

The setting of the play is a bare interior with gray light. Two windows at the back wall with drawn curtains, two ashbins and Hamm on an armchair

with wheels appears on the stage when the curtain opens the stage. The stage setting of *Endgame* is very symbolic. It suggests a skull. Two windows on the back wall form the eye sockets of this skull. The character represented the brain and memory. Many critics assume Hamm's central position as the mouth of this skull and; the two ashbins as the nostrils. The skull like setting he uses as a metaphor for an aging mind. Many critics of this play complimented this setting by several textual references to Dante's Inferno. One window opens towards the earth and another opens towards the sea. It means that the place where all these characters are is between the sea and earth. Dante's Inferno is also situated at the same place which is neither earth nor sea. There are numerous textual references to prove this comparison. Hamm observes 'that here we're down in a hole'. Another reference that son is sinking 'down among the dead', suggests that they are beyond certain hills. Hamm adds that beyond walls is theother hell. Beckett's implication of placing the characters in Dante's Inferno is that he wants to show the repetition of the action. It means that they are doomed to repeat life forever.

While comparing the setting with *Waiting For Godot*, Martine Essline comments, "*Waiting For Godot* takes place on a terrifying empty open road, *Endgame* in a claustrophobic interior". (Esslin, 2001:62)

Thus, there are the identical resemblances between the setting of the play and three principal symbols; one is the human skull, second is the metaphor of aging mind and the third is the Dante's Inferno. Beckett uses this setting to depict the futility of the human action and meaninglessness of the life. He defines life as a meaningless game during the birth and death.

Beckett makes use of the stage directions, which is very important in the *Endgame*, to suggest the relationship between the characters and the things they require to live, Hamm needs an armchair and Nagg and Nell can not live without their ashbins.

Two windows from this setting smuggle the outer world in the closed interior. The outer world is described as 'zero' by Clov. All these characters believe that they are the last survival on the earth. Many textual references and dialogues suggest that earth is destroyed. Clov tries to sow a seed but it does not grow up. It suggests that nature is totally destroyed:

Hamm: Did your seeds come up?

Clov: No.

Hamm: Did you scratch round them to see if they had
sprouted?

Clov: They haven't sprouted.

Hamm: perhaps it's still too early.

Clov: If they were going to sprout they would have
Sprouted (violently). They'll never sprout!

(Beckett, 1976: 17)

The dramatics persona in the play resembles those who dream their own death. In *Endgame* without any direct references Beckett mentions the nuclear disaster of the Second World War. After the Second World War every thing is destroyed, even the survivors cannot really survive. *Endgame* not only depicts the end of outer world but also depict the temporality of human life. What appears on the stage transcends the temporality. In this connection Theodor W. Adorno comments:

“He does not leave out the temporality of existence – all existence, after all, is temporal – but rather removes from existence what time, the historical tendency, attempts to quash in reality”.(Adorno, Theodor W.1982: 124)

Similar to other absurd plays it reflects the static state of the human condition in the irrational, cold world. Similar to other absurd playwrights, three traditional unities of the drama time, place and action are over ruled by Samuel Beckett. The unity of time is always invalid in absurd plays. Hamm inquires about the time to Clov and Clov’s answer ‘as usual’ indicates futility of time. The light reported by Clov is ‘gray’; it means it stands between light and dark which foreshadows the death. Thus even the light presented in the play implies the motif of the death.

The structure of *Endgame* is presented in less clearly defined sections. These sections are 'played without a break'. The sections were recognized not from the change in action but with the pauses in the conversation. The structure of the play resembles with a musical piece. The plot is developed by the irrational exchanges between the characters. Content of the plot focuses on the negative and fatalistic side of life; and shows the negative aspect of life. There is a departure from the realistic characters, situations and the traditional theatrical conventions.

There is much similarity between the beginning and the end of the play. It seems that the play is going to begin again instead of ending. Characters are doomed to repeat the same day over again. Neither death nor

a willful escape will ever arrive in their cyclical existence. Nothing in the plot is going to end, Clov has not left after all, Hamm is heisted to end the game. Even he can't complete his story because he keeps adding. This circular structure solidifies the idea of circularity in the human life. Every period reflected in the play is similar to the previous one. Even the positions of the characters are similar in beginning and ending. Hamm's position in the beginning, covered face with handkerchief and motionless, is the same at the end of the play. He appropriately uses the miserable staging in a grey room to supports the futile plot line of the play. Beckett has made a successful attempt to unify the theme and the plot structure of the play which reflects upon the futility of human life on the earth.

The major theme depicted in the play is the Absurdity of life. All the repetitive and routine actions and dialogues of the play emphasize the futility of human existence. Similar to many other absurd plays, *Endgame* uses the absurd or meaningless medium to express the absurdity. The play tries to convey the concept of circularity in action and non-meaning in communication. *Endgame* underscores the meaninglessness of human life. In absurd plays characters are depicted in trapped situation and without solution. Albert Camus shows Sisyphus as trapped in the eternal punishment. He carried out his existence with the repetitive and routine actions of the punishment. All four characters from *Endgame*, similar to Sisyphus, are engaged in ritualistic action of their routine life. The setting of *Endgame* resembles with the purgatory, in which all these four characters are waiting for the end.

Endgame strives to express the sense of senselessness of the human condition by using irrational and discursive thought. Another characteristic feature of the Absurd play is that it strives to achieve an uniformity between the philosophical assumptions and the form of expression. It assumes that the human existence is absurd on this irrational and illogical world and tries to explore it with the same absurdity in the medium. *Endgame* is one of the best examples of this uniformity; it not only shows the futility of human action but also expresses it by using the futile actions and irrational plot line. Due to the absurdity in the presentation audiences are not able to understand the play without commentary. The conventional devices of the theater were banished and new form was set to express the new philosophy. Absurd plays present their characters with confused desires. Estragon and Vladimir in *Waiting For Godot* want to leave the place, but again wait for Godot. In *Endgame* Clov wants to leave Hamm but remain with him till the end of the play. Hamm wants to kill the fleas and rats because he fears that humanity can start from them again and on the other hand desires to go south towards the other mammals.

Absurd plays project the static state of human life from which the mechanical activities were ruled out and what remains there is the consciousness, which gives birth to Absurdity. In *Endgame* only the mechanical and routine activities were left to be worked out to keep death away. Many critics describe *Endgame* as a play hours before death. It reflects upon the decline of rationality, humanity and love from the world. *Endgame* underscores the futility of human communication too, which is one of the major themes dealt in many with other absurd plays. Clov remarks:

Hamm: Yestarday! What does that mean? Yestarday!

Clov: (violently) That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean any thing any more, teach me others. Or let me silent.

(Beckett, 1976:32)

This exchange suggests us not only the temporality of the human life but the futility of human communication.

Endgame also strives to express the theme of Cyclical and repitative nature of beginning and endings. Repitative actions and dialogues explore the intertwined nature of beginning and ending. The structure of the play suggests that the death-related endings in the play are one and the same. Hamm and Clov share similar fear that existence is cyclical. They try to kill the flies and rats because "humanity might start from there all over again". To point out the repitative nature of the beginning and end Beckett uses the language and action of the play in a repetitive or cyclical mode. Exchanges between the characters are not revealing. The dialogues create the wordplay without meaning.

There are numerous references to Christ, whose death becomes a beginning of new religion. Hamm wanted end and the same time hesisted for it. Clov can not leave the Hamm and close one existence and open another. Clov's departure suggests the suicide of all the characters because Clov is the only mobile person in this trapped world. In absurd philosophy suicide means the aggering with absurdity. The routine actions stand for the existence and assert the disagreement with the Absurdity.

Several other Beckett's dramatic designs reveal this notion of a circular existence. Similar to the Dante's *Inferno* the setting of Beckett's *Endgame* emphasizes the eternal misery of its inhabitants. Characters are situated in an eternally static situation without end. Beckett minutely repeats the details of the movements like how many knocks Hamm makes on a wall or how many steps Clov takes. These repetitions are not meant for the exact understanding of the dialogues but to gain the exact effect of the repetition. *Endgame* suggests that life is not some thing complete within it. In the beginning of the play Clov argues in his dialogue that the heap is impossible. Just like the heap of grain, human life cannot be realized since it is made up of discrete moments.

The dramatic tension of *Waiting For Godot* is whether Godot will come or not; and the play ends without any change in the situation. In *Endgame* Beckett uses the same structure, the dramatic tension is whether Clov will leave Hamm or not; but at the end of this play it doesn't happen. Without any change in situation *Endgame* ends and suggests that the conclusion is impossible in such a world.

One of the less emphasized or unspoken theme of the play is the emptiness and loneliness. Many references from the play suggest that there is the end of the humanity outside the room. The characters represent the last survivors of the earth. The Clov's dialogues are suggestive of the emptiness of the outerworld. He describes the outer world as a 'zero'. The situation Hamm and Clov depict as 'there's no one else' and 'there's no where else' (ibid:14) speaks of the above fact. The pair Nagg and Nell in their separate

asbin stands for the individuality and they both accept that they can't rely on each other. Both the characters are afraid to be alone on the earth as Hamm often says there is no cure for being on the earth. Hamm and Clov the dominant-submissive pairing highlight their interdependency. Clov hates Hamm and Hamm also wants to be alone but both of them cannot live without each other.

Endgame is an extended example of Black Humour. Beckett's approach depicted in the dialogue of Nell – "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness" (ibid: 20) shows that he is never serious about unhappiness in life, which, otherwise happens to be the major concern of a common man.

Beckett believes that if the idea is extremely offensive it becomes funny. In the context of *Endgame* the humour itself becomes foolish and ridiculous. The play reflects the jokes of the damaged people. Declined, static state of the setting and characters admittedly a part of all jokes. Beckett wipes out the rationality from the humour and adds the absurd anguish in to it. Many exchanges in the play project the humour but at the same time signify the monstrous reality. Hamm's mother and father become babies in their ashcans and Hamm as a father threatens them:

Nagg: Me pap!

Hamm: Accused progenitor!

Nagg: Me pap!

Hamm: The old folks at home! No decency left! Guzzle, guzzle, that's all theythink of ... (ibid: 15)

Dramatic categories used in *Endgame* were humoured and parodied. Beckett's plays are concerned with the nature of the absurd and which is proved undoubtedly comic at first. All the activities on the stage appear to be funny at first. Later they get the gradual apprehension of the subject matter and realize the tragic importance of the same. All the symbols and means used in the absurd play primarily signify fun but on the deeper level they signify the terrifying realities. See for instance Clov's dialogue – "If I don't kill that rat he'll die" (ibid: 44). This sentence is funny but on a deeper level it suggests the universality of the end. In black humour the topics and events that are exploited are usually taboo related. *Endgame* presents the juxtaposition of morbid reality and farcical elements to give a disturbing effect: Clov's dialogue about the alarm clock "Fit to wake the dead! Did you hear it?" (ibid: 34) relieves monstrous reality with comical effect. In *Endgame* communication provokes the reaction of disgust, shock, and fear, or similar negative emotions.

Beckett uses humour as a shock value, audiences shocked when they get the denotative meaning of the symbols. Hamm is presented as a childish; he plays with the toy of a dog. This fact may seem funny but it connotes the fear of loneliness. The condition of Nagg and Nell also provokes humour. An old couple confined in ashcans may be the subject for humour. But on the setting of the *Endgame* they resemble the sole example of the real love. Beckett's humor underscores the senselessness or futility of life. In fact, the characters in *Endgame* comment on the farcical nature of their unhappy existence. To underline the Absurdity of life, Beckett introduces many moments of farcical actions. He emphatically depicts the characters in a

worse state, Nagg and Nell, human waste confined to a dustbin. Beckett makes us consider the tragedy of man in his most degenerate state.

Theater of the Absurd is well known for its use of nonsense language. The motifs of these plays are to reflect the meaninglessness of the life; and these absurd playwrights believe that the absurdity of life can be presented through only the absurd form itself. Thus, they rule out the conventional forms of the traditional theater. A meaning and an order which is clearly lacking in Beckett's absurd universe through which he represents the disbelief on the traditional values of life and art and uses the irrational or illogical medium of expression. To show the illogical and irrational universe of Hamm and Clov, he uses the same illogical and irrational patterns of speech. There is no connection between the exchanges of the characters. Characters switch on from one subject to another without any indication in speech. For instance,

Clov: What about that pee?

Hamm: I'm having it.

Clov: Ah that's the spirit, that's the spirit!(Pause)

Hamm: Let's go from here, the two of us! South! You can make
a raft and the currents will carry us away.

(ibid: 27, 28)

Clov and Hamm get from one idea to the next without any indication in speech and even in gestures. The flow of the perceptions or the thinking is depicted in language without any coherency. The language of *Endgame* lacks the coherency and the logic of the thought which strike uniformity with the

theme and medium. There is no connection between one exchange and the other.

Despite the nonsensical use of language their language frequently gains a certain phonetic, rhythmic, and almost musical quality. Beckett in *Endgame* indicates accurately the pauses between speeches, as if he were writing a musical score. In textual references Beckett himself suggests the rhythm of the play: hamminess of Hamm, and the tonelessness of Clov. Long speeches and the soliloquies gain the poetic effect. Hamm's painful recital, "one day you'll say to yourself. I'm tired, I'll sit down..." (ibid: 28) seems like an instrument in a piece of music. Hamm with the different voices recites his soliloquies adding into the poetic quality of the drama.

Clov's "I'll leave you" and Hamm's "we're getting on" serves in the play as a kind of refrain. These refrains were not only used to add into the poetic effect to the play but they used to tie up the illogical and inchoate speeches into a single piece. They also suggest the ending of one subject and opening of another. These refrains are severely used in the beginnings and the endings of the exchanges. They are repeated to suggest the repetitive and cyclical structure of the play.

Another language device used in the play is the echo effect. In this device the sound of one sentence echoes another:

Hamm: Why do you stay with me?

Clov: Why do you keep me?

Hamm: There's no one else.

Clovo: There's nowhere else.(ibid: 14)

There is an echo of the sound of one sentence to the other sentence: and these sentences were recited on the stage like poetry.

Beckett uses many symbols to reflect his motif of the absurd. The setting of the play itself stands as a symbol in *Endgame*. The setting suggests the skull which connotes many themes expressed by the play. It underscores the influence of death in the play. In *Endgame* light stands for life and darkness stands for death; but in the play there is no reference of the clear light. Clov described the light as a 'gray' which suggests the life despairing under the shade of death. Many references suggest the decline of the light; Clov says he watches his light dying in his kitchen. The unseen character Mother Pegg died of light-deprivation. Hamm Desired to be under the window to feel the light on his face. Hamm's desire suggests that there is still a will somewhere in his mind. Crippled characters represent the trapped condition of human being in his irrational existence. The symbols used in the play modify the theme of absurdity and death.

Endgame was not intended by Beckett to explore the harmonious aesthetic meaning, which is one of the characteristics of the traditional theater. *Endgame* organizes the meaninglessness of the human existence through organizing the irrational plot, ritualistic action, trapped and crippled characters, senseless construction and the nonsensical use of the language. Many critics relate the play with the subject of nuclear warfare and the annihilation of life on earth. To understand *Endgame* means understanding

nothing, because there is no moral to reflect or teach any ethic in Beckett's absurd world. In this connection Theodor W. Adorno writes:

“The interpretation of the *Endgame* therefore cannot chase the chimera of expressing its meaning with the help of philosophical mediation. Understanding it can mean nothing other than understanding its incomprehensibility, or concretely reconstructing its meaning structure – that it has none.”
(Adorno, 1982: 120)

Many critics interpret *Endgame* according to their own concern, and point out various implications of the play. But all those implications might be wrong because it was not the pre-designed play. *Endgame* is the product of Samuel Beckett's fictional world, where the play denies meaning and organizes the meaninglessness of human existence. Absurdity can be faced only through struggling with it, characters from *Endgame* struggle with life without finality. In conventional dramas dramatists aim at audiences' sense of relief at the end of the play. The characters' troubles are finally over; but in *Endgame* the end is cyclical and repetitive. *Endgame* is a parody of the philosophy represented through the dialogues and parody of the form represented through the structure of the play. Structure and the repetitive actions of the play reflect it upon the essence as a riddle. Existence of human being is itself parodied, nothing remains to speak about, all is over and characters are marching towards the already decided end. The impression audiences are left with at the end of this play is that of a 'timeless theatre'.

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