

"ASHES FOR ASHES" And "ENDGAME"

Rita Fayeze and Dr. Nayera Al Miniawi (Associate Professor)

Al Balqaa Applied University-Princess Alia University College, Amman, Jordan

Abstract

The researcher in this paper tackled the theme of violence and reality in both plays; Harold Pinter's *Ashes for Ashes* and Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*. The theme of Violence was clear in the *Ashes for Ashes* play where masculine qualities have metastasized into something horrifying that are first manifested between the female protagonist Rebecca and her former lover and later more symbolically between the "he" and the "she". Devlin, Rebecca's present partner, is being portrayed as the fact finder, who is full of curiosity and sense of reason. On the hand, The thematic territory, in *Endgame* is bleak. In a cement room, the limping Clov (Luke Mullins) performs daily rituals of opening windows, killing rats and tending to the blind, immobile Hamm (Colin Friels), who berates and controls him.

Introduction

Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* which was born in 1957 still has endless critical discussions searching for its meaning. The critics argue that the dialogue and the content are not new they are from the past rewritten in the present language and style to present characters that are eager to know the meaning. Even the title itself presents our world as a stage. Having the same style, issues, and language Harold Pinter presents *Ashes for Ashes* to reflect the past issues in the present language. Pinter was influenced by Beckett whom the later influenced many dramatists and novelists to tackle the religious, social, political issues with an attempt to show the uncertainty in the theatre which he means the world.

Beckett and Pinter examine the human violence, the game playing themes, companionship, and considering the world as a stage where the characters are players and spectators at the same time. Both of them present characters who have past memories which influence their present and future decisions.

Although "*Ashes for Ashes*" does not contain any agit-prop purpose or overt message, it reflects a violent past and present a world where people just try to live? To present this world he show that the governments endorse oppression and murder of humans. Just like the real world he puts on stage characters that argue and talk about political, social and religious issues. In the play the political aspect is not moralistic judgment on society it is only one aspect of the human nature.

Many critics said that Pinter and Beckett with other dramatists who write drama dealing with bizarre, grotesque, meaningless and negative existence. Both of them refers to the absurd theatre this attaches to a pessimistic and hopeless mood. Also Pinter's and Beckett's plays have been also called Tragicomedy – which combines tragedy and comic elements.

Beckett's and Pinter's works embrace the transformation of characters and portray the experience of human play in the world. Their drama moves beyond the weak heroes in tragicomedy and the irrational attitudes of absurdity. So the plays deserve that wide analysis. The critic John Fuegi says that "Beckett's and Pinter's plays are true representations of reality because they astutely allude to twentieth century thought and show its influence in undermining certainty". (Fuegi, 2003). Both of them create a mimetic fragment of reality but it is not "realistic".

In the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, vision takes a central place in defining the human subject. In their works, the significance of vision in the process of subject formation is visually expressed through creative uses of light, sets, and the actor's body. In analyzing Beckett, I approach the problem of the relation between the subject and vision and the subject-object relationship by using the cogito (from cogito, ergo sum, I think, therefore, I am) as an anchor, which posits man as essentially a thinking thing (res cognitions), setting mind over body. The man-in-a-room situation often found in Beckett's works reflects both the traditional and changed understanding of the human condition. Pinter also approaches the understanding of subject formation in heavily visual ways. Pinter deals with the subject as an encounter between the two parts of a divided subject.

While the two playwrights use visual elements effectively as an expressive medium in the theatre and deal with fundamental questions about identity and the human condition, they are not the only ones to do so. For example, Jean Genet and Eugène Ionesco also deal with those questions using visual language. Sets, lighting, and actor's body each began to be used as an important medium of expression and communication, challenging the former dominance of verbal language. With a literal visualization of the expression "buried in life," Beckett presents the audience and unforgettable image of the human condition as he sees it: a life full of sufferings with one thing certain – that one must go on living however hard it might be.

Pinter seems to enjoy misleading his audience as his Beckett-like dramas unfold in darkness, and *Ashes to Ashes* is a perfect representation of this point. This one act play is fantastic, and I suspect that many people walk away confused, disappointed, or somehow feeling that they've missed the point. I would also suspect that those who walk away with confidence in their understanding are in disagreement over the meaning of the play with those who also feel the same way. With this in mind, I think it is safe to say that Pinter, in this very short, one-act drama is representing in a private relationship something of the horror of the twentieth century. The dialogue takes place between a man and a woman, with the woman clearly having endured some sort of psychological trauma, and the man questioning her about her past. He is intelligent, probing, and cold. With terrifying precision, the audience questions his purpose, helpless to stop him. It is unclear if they are husband/wife, as one could interpret his question also as if he is a therapist, but his emotional response, while calculated, would indicate that becomes an echo of the horrors of the twentieth century, with her memories getting tied up with those suffering Nazi-like persecution. In this way, the man becomes the echo of the cruel repressor, who goads his victim into her demise.

Ashes for Ashes; The one-act play opens with Devlin and Rebecca, described as "Both in their forties", talking in what appears to be a home living room on an early summer evening. As the play develops, it becomes clear that Devlin and Rebecca are probably married, although their relationship to each other is not defined explicitly; it must be inferred. Initially, Devlin seems Rebecca's husband or lover, her therapist, and potentially her murderer. Some critics have described their discussion as more between a therapist and his patient than between two lovers or between a husband and a wife. Devlin questions Rebecca in forceful ways, and she reveals personal information and dream-like sequence to him. In their first exchange, Rebecca tells of a man who appears to be sexually abusing her and threatening to strangle her (1-27). Rebecca tells Devlin that she told the killer, "Put your hand round my throat" (3) and act which Devlin acts out directly towards the end of the play (73-75), asking Rebecca to "Speak. Say it. Say 'Put your hand round my throat'." (75). The first exchanging is followed immediately by Devlin asking "Do you feel you're being hypnotized?" "Who by?" asks Rebecca. "By me," answers Devlin, adding "What do you think?". To which Rebecca retorts, "I think you're a fuckpig" (7-9).

In responses to Devlin's further inquires about her "lover", Rebecca relates several dream-like sequences involving the man who she has quoted initially (7-27). She tells Devlin that this "lover" worked as a "guide" for a "travel agency" (19). She goes on to ask, "Did I ever tell you about that place... about the time he took me to that place?" This place turns out to be "a kind of factory" peopled by this "workpeople" who "represented his.... Purity, his.... Conviction" (-23-25). But then she tells Devlin, "He used to go to the local railway station and walk down the platform and tear all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers" (7). After a "Silence", Rebecca changes the subject abruptly with: "By the way, I'm terribly upset" (27). She complains that a police siren which she had just heard has disappeared into the distance. Devlin replies that the police are always busy, and thus another siren will start up at any time and "you can take comfort in that at least. Can't you? You'll never be lonely again. You'll never be without a police siren. I promise you" (29-30). Rebecca says that while the sound of the siren is "fading away," she "knew it was becoming louder and louder for somebody else" (29) and while its doing so made her "feel insecure! Terribly insecure" (31), she hates the siren's "fading away; I hate it echoing away" (31). (At the end of the play, and "Echo" of her words occurs).

In another monologue Rebecca describes herself looking out the window of a summer house and seeing a crowd of people being led by "guides" toward the ocean, which they disappear into like lemmings (47-49). That leads to her description of a condition that she calls "mental elephantiasis" (49), in which "when you spill and ounce of gravy, for example, it immediately expands and becomes a vast sea of gravy, "Rebecca says that "You are not the victim [of such and event], you are the cause of it" (51). Referring both to the "pen" and anticipating the references to "the bundle" later in the play, she explains, "Because it way you who split the gravy in the first place, it was you who handed over the bundle" (51).

After an exchange about family matters relating to "Kim and the kids" – Rebecca's sister, Kim, Kim's children, and Kim's estranged husband (55-63), in which Rebecca may be conveying her own attitude toward Devlin in commenting on Kim's attitude toward her own husband – "She'll never have him back. Never. She says she'll never share a bed with him again. Never. Ever." (61) there is another "Silence" (65). Devlin says,

"Now look, let's start again" (65). Rebecca tells Devlin, "I don't think we can start again. We started.... a long time ago. We started. we can't start again. We can end again" (67). "But we've never ended," Devlin protests (67). Rebecca responds, "Oh, we have. Again and again and again. And we can end again. And again and again. And again" (67). That exchange and Rebecca's reference to him earlier as a "fuckpig" demonstrate Rebecca's strong hostility toward Devlin.

After another "Silence" and Rebecca's and Devlin's singing the refrain from song alluded to in the play's title 'Ashes to ashes' – 'And dust to dust' – 'if the women don't get you' – 'The liquor must' "(69). After a "pause", Devlin says "I always knew you loved me. [...] Because we like the same tunes", followed by another "Silence" (60).

After it, Devlin asks Rebecca why she has never told him about "this lover of yours" and says how he has "a right to be very angry indeed" that she did not, "Do you understand that?" (69-70).

After another "Silence" (71), instead of responding, Rebecca describes another sequence, where she is standing at the top of a building and sees a man, a boy, and a woman with a child in her arms in a snowy street below (71-73). In her monologue, she shifts suddenly from the third-person "she" to the first-person "I", and Rebecca (not the woman) is "held" in Rebecca's own "arms": "I held her to me," and she listens to its "heart [...]" beating" (73).

At that point (73), Devlin approaches Rebecca and begins to enact the scene described by Rebecca at the beginning of the play, directing her to "Ask me to put my hand round your throat" as she has earlier described her "lover: as doing (73-75).

The last scene of the play recalls cultural representations of Nazi soldiers selecting women and children at train stations en route to concentration camps (73-85). She begins by narrating the events in the third person: "She stood still. She kissed her baby. The baby was a girl" (73), but she switches from the third person to the first person to the first person in continuing her narrative. As this narration develops, and "Echo" repeats some of Rebecca's words as she recounts the experience of the woman who has walked onto a train platform with a "baby" wrapped up "in a bundle," beginning with: "They took us to the trains" ("ECHO: the babies away"), and then Rebecca shifts from using the third person "she" to using the first-person "I" (77): "I took my baby and wrapped it in my shawl" (77). Finally, Rebecca (or the woman or women with whom she has identified from such past historical events) is forced to give her baby wrapped in "the bundle" ("the bundle" being a synecdoche for the baby wrapped up in a shawl) to one of the men. As if Rebecca were such a woman, she recalls getting on the train, describing how "we arrived at this place" – this recalling the other "place" about which she asks Devlin early in the play, the "factory": "Did I ever tell you about that place... about the time he [her purported lover] took me to that place?" (21).

In the final lines of the play, as if the woman's experience were her own, Rebecca shifts again significantly from the third-person "she" used earlier relating to the woman to the first-person "I", while denying that she ever had or ever knew of "any baby".

Rebecca's topics of love affair, God, life maxims, kids, movies, factories with no bathrooms, and the violence of killing babies are allusions to Nazi Germany.

In his speech when awarded the Wilfred Owen Award, Pinter made a very strong criticism to the Americans as well as the British governments pertaining the war on Iraq, saying, "We have brought torture, cluster bombs, depleted uranium innumerable acts of random murder, misery, and degradation to the Iraqi people call it 'bringing freedom and democracy to the Middle East' (2005). "He despises governments that rely on the point of the gun to maintain their power – the masculine power that seeks to silence resistance from the feminine "Other." This fascist atrocity and how resentment is generated as a reaction to it are expressed in *Ashes to Ashes*, a play published in 1996.

In 2005, following Pinter's achievement as a Nobel Prize winner in literature, *Ashes to Ashes* was republished as part of a collection called *Death etc.*, a volume that contains some of his more recent political speeches, poems, and sketches. The patriarchal home in Pinter's plays puts the husbands superior to the wives. The domestic confinement often leads the wife to release her desire through infidelity. Paolo Caponi, in his book *Adultery in the high Canon: Forms of Infidelity in Joyce, Beckett and Pinter*, addresses this theme specifically, focusing on European literature, more specifically in the works of the three writers.

The concept of adultery is, in its very essence, a double-edged weapon because it separates and conjugates – it evokes, on the one hand, and idea of deviation, transgression and erring while on the other it reinstates, albeit "illicitly", certain paradigms sanctioned in the other, "real" world. Like the contemporary conception of gender, the status of the adulterer cannot be defined per se, but it must be necessarily deduced by

comparison, rooted as it is on a difference with respect to what we consider as the norm or simply as the other side of the moon. Adultery is inherently subversive, transversal, asocial, apolitical. (Caponi 17).

Pinter goes back and forth from Devlin, the husband, to Rebecca, the wife, to show the struggle that these two characters are going through to get their standpoint across to each other in a series of approach and avoidance, which ends without any sense of closure. The wife remains stuck in her ambivalent love/hate sentiment towards her husband, and the husband remains the lover/dictator on whom her life depends.

Devlin represents more masculine power. He is rigid, has a very strong sense of duty, far from being affectionate to his wife. "Fuck the best man. That's always been my motto," says Devlin describing his attitude to life. He does not take into consideration whether what he does is ethically right or not; what matters to him is getting the job done as he's been told to do so. Rebecca says, "How odd to be called darling," after Devlin calls her so, which may indicate that the word has never belonged to his identity or been part of his vocabulary. This can be seen from the way he uses the word "darling" as part of his interrogational techniques to get to what he wants (to get the image of Rebecca's lover) and how Rebecca reacts upon the use of the term.

DEVLIN. So what's the question? Are you prepared to drown in your own gravy? Are you prepared to die for your country? Look. What do you say, sweetheart? Why don't we go out and drive into town and take in a movie?

REBECCA. That's funny, somewhere in a dream.... A long time ago... I heard someone calling me sweetheart. (107)

We can see the contrast between the cold, uncompromising conviction about duty that Devlin is so much into and his sudden offer of comfort by use of the endearing term sweetheart. Rebecca's response may mean that she used to want Devlin to have that warm quality, to be more soft and romantic. But she probably gave up the dream long ago realizing that Devlin has never been that way. In the play, the dialogues between this husband and wife are partly in an interrogational style – the way a police officer interrogating a suspect. The authority figure Devlin treats Rebecca as a suspect, in his quest to find out about his wife's lover. Most likely this is the way he interrogates his other suspects. Rebecca, used to be repressed, seems to speak in a crying language, never answering him in a direct manner because of this fear.

Another point still related to the first, is the situation she has been put into as a consequence of what Devlin does. Considering Pinter's inclination to political activities and active condemnation of political "buttering-up" done by politicians by the time *Ashes to Ashes* was written, it is most likely that Devlin was created to represent the official figure – the law which gives punishments to those who do not abide by it. Lacan in *The Good and the Beautiful*, as quoted by Eleanor Kaufman in her essay "Why the Family is Beautiful," says "To exercise control over one's goods, as everyone knows, entails a certain disorder" (Lacan, 2000) that reveals its true nature, i.e., to exercise control over one's goods is to have the right to deprive others of them... For this function of the good engenders, of course, a dialectic. I mean that the power to deprive others is a very solid link from which will emerge as such.

The "good" in its operation often neglects ethical considerations. Devlin represents the "good" while Rebecca represents the conscience – the repressed one. However, when confronted by Devlin about her "authority" to talk about atrocities, Rebecca cannot do anything but cower.

REBECCA. I have no such authority. Nothing has ever happened to me. Nothing has ever happened to any of my friends. I have never suffered. Nor have my friends.

Devlin adopts the politics of provision to Rebecca in his attempt to make her stay in the picture. As the other patriarchal husbands, he is the one who decide what should and what should not be in that picture and directs his wife to see it the way he does.

DEVLIN. Now look, let's start again. We live here. You don't live... in Dorset... or anywhere else. You live here with me. This is our house. You have a very nice sister. She lives close to you. She has two lovely Pause.

You have a wonderful garden. You love your garden. You created it all by yourself. You have truly green fingers. You also have beautiful fingers. (112)

Devlin is trying to direct Rebecca's perception, to make her feel positive about their marriage, by reminding her of the positive aspects of it. He wants the beautiful picture to replace all the negative sentiment that the Rebecca has had.

In *Ashes to Ashes*, Rebecca's "victory" is represented by her final act of putting herself physically and figuratively motionless upon Devlin's order at the end of the play. Realizing that she cannot really escape from the system, she lives in it with apathy. She resembles death – a "body with rigor mortis" she referred to previously suggesting that Devlin's words will not affect her anymore because she is "dead" anyway. Her silence, motionlessness, and withdrawal from "commonsense" are all her way to demean the patriarchal power.

Another point; The choice of Pinter's the theatre as the ground for my landscape analysis entails dealing with a "canonical" dramatist, on whose work voluminous criticism has been published⁽⁴⁾. Pinter's theatre has been theorized through many lenses – Mythic⁽⁵⁾, Existentialist⁽⁶⁾, New Critical⁽⁷⁾, Marxist⁽⁸⁾, Freudian⁽⁹⁾, Lacanian⁽¹⁰⁾, Foucauldian⁽¹¹⁾, Wittgensteinian⁽¹²⁾, and Feminist in diverse theoretical combinations⁽¹³⁾.

Pinter creates an artful surrealist picture, in which the window of the English house, looking southward, towards the sea and the continent, opens onto a nightmare vision of the Holocaust. The people walk into the sea

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- ⁽⁴⁾ Susan Hollis Merritt's *Pinter in Play* (1990) is a thorough study of Pinter criticism until the late 1980s.
- ⁽⁵⁾ A mythic line of research has been predominantly carried out by Katherine Burkman, starting with her book *The Dramatic World of Harold Pinter: Its Basis in Ritual* (1971). Building upon J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Burkman argues that Pinter's secular dramaturgy enacts the ritual sacrifice of a scapegoat. While his male characters regularly must suffer death or characters' dwelling rooms function as mythical spaces of a "cyclic transfer of power".
- ⁽⁶⁾ Martin Esslin (in *The Theatre of the Absurd*, as well as in other critical studies written in the light of Existentialist Philosophy).
- ⁽⁷⁾ In his essays and book, *"Butter's Going Up: A Critical Analysis of Harold Pinter's Work"* (1977), Stephen Gale identifies four stages in Pinter's "thematic evolution" (from generalized to particularized "menace"), and interrelates them with five "basic concepts" of his drama: love, loneliness, menace, communication, and verification of truth.
- ⁽⁸⁾ In their essays on Pinter's work, Marxist critics Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne consider that oppositional practices to the dominant political order; as a result, they are not politically effective or suggestive of potential social change.
- ⁽⁹⁾ See Lois Gordon in *Stratagems to Uncover Nakedness* (1969).
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ From a Lacanian perspective, Marc Silberstein's *Harold Pinter and the Language of Cultural Power* (1993) holds that it is language that produces Pinter's characters' subjectivity – that determines their desires, their political and ethical values, and their gender identities. More recently, Ann Lecercle also approaches Pinter's oeuvre from a Lacanian lens, in *Le théâtre d'Harold Pinter: stratégies de l'indicible, regard, parole, image* (2006).
- ⁽¹¹⁾ From a Foucauldian perspective, Charles Grimes's *Harold Pinter's Politics: A Silence Beyond Echo* (2005) argues that Pinter's plays denounce the "insidious process of self-silencing at work in our societies." Although this silence seems permanent or "beyond echo," for Grimes it also conveys the necessity of resistance, and the idea that an oppositional ethics cannot be explained nor articulated by language.
- ⁽¹²⁾ Austin Quality was one of the first critics to investigate Pinter's work from a linguistic theory perspective, in *The Pinter Problem* (1975). In his study, Quigley argued for an investigation of the interrelation function of language, thus opposing reference theory, and breaking away from the trend of "thematic criticism." Building upon Wittgenstein's notion of language games, Quigley claims that Pinter's characters utilize sentences as instruments, and thereby create (not just refer to) the structure that regulates their own reality, truth, and personal relationships.
- ⁽¹³⁾ Basing her study of Pinter's *Female Portraits* (1988) on Jungian theory, Elizabeth Sakellaridou claims that although Pinter's initial sexist attitude produced stereotypical female characters in the models set by patriarchal society, in his later plays his characterization of women has become more "androgynous," leading the reader/spectator to identify with the male and female figures equally. Within a biological approach to gender, Victor Cahn's study *Gender and Power in the Plays of Harold Pinter* (1993) argues that Pinter's female characters have greater awareness of their own "nature" as well as of the "nature" of men; as a result they are emotionally stronger in their capacity for survival, in spite of the physical dominance of males. Drawing upon Luce Irigaray's feminist concepts, Anne Hall, in *A Kind of Alaska: Women in the Plays of O'Neill, Pinter, and Shepard* (1003), insists that Pinter's female characters disrupt the male gaze that objectifies them, thus suggesting that gender ideologies can be dismantled through women's exercise of power, agency, and desire. In *Staging the Rage* (1998), both Katherine Burkman and Judith Roof claim that Pinter's dramas provide a critical anatomy of misogyny. In *The Pinter Ethic: The Erotic Aesthetic* (2000), Penelope Prentice suggests that Pinter combines "aesthetic and ethic" to convey the dominant/subservient conflict of human beings at the private, public, and global levels of life; his characters engage in this "struggle for survival" in order to obtain the respect and the love of others.

carrying all their bags like the children of Israel into the Red Sea, except that no miracle occurs and they are drowned.

Rebecca, and Devlin may share an English house, but Devlin has no share in Rebecca's inner world. As is customary in Pinter plays, this inner world is of infinitely greater significance than the external reality, and it is made up of Rebecca's memories. Those spectators and readers who have grown up in the shadow of the Shoah recognize in these reveries the essential features common to countless stories they have heard: the railways, the snatched babies, the factories, the heavy winter, people in coats carrying bags on endless marches through the woods and, above all, the ashes. When Rebecca sings "Ashes to Ashes" and Devlin carries on the song with "Dust to dust" (p.69), they underline the funerary associations of the title. But "ashes" in this play has a more precise denotation: the ashes of the Jews cremated in the death camps. All that remains of these people are memories, and Rebecca's memories evoke our own. The place of memory in our consciousness is one of the major themes of Pinter's plays. In *Ashes to Ashes* he succeeds in relating his own curiosity about the workings of memory to the question of how to deal with the trauma of the Holocaust in the theatre. The present surge of interest in recording and preserving the memory of the Holocaust has occasioned frantic, last minute attempts to record the testimonials of survivors still alive. Pinter takes this material at second remove. He deals not with the memories of survivors but with their effect on people, especially Jews, who have not been directly touched by the horrors, but are sensitive enough to be scarred by them for life.

Let's move now to another point, The play *Ashes to Ashes* seems to centre around duality, there are only two characters in the play, Devlin and Rebecca, the stage directions, "Two armchairs. Two lamps" seem to suggest the idea that the stage action exists solely around these two characters, however this proves to be false as the conversation into something much more sinister.

The play consists of lots of questions as well as repetition, which has the effect of almost searching for something but returning unanswered, wants to know more information, we also emphasize with him, Devlin's questions are a tool to find out more about this unexplained man.

Endgame Play

Beckett was one of the lynchpins behind the French theatrical called the Theatre of the Absurd. The absurdist took a page from Existentialist philosophy, believing that life was absurd, beyond human rationality, meaningless, a sentiment to which Endgame subscribes, with its conception of circularity and non-meaning. Beckett's own brand of Absurdist melds tragedy and comedy in new ways; Winnie gives a good definition of his tragicomedy when she says, "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness" (Beckett believes this was the most important line of the play). Self-conscious form in the theater was another feature of Absurdist, and there's no shortage in Endgame, from Clove's turning the telescope on the audience to Hamm's showy references to his own acting. But Beckett's self-consciousness is not merely for laughs. Just as the characters cannot escape the room or themselves, trapped in self-conscious cage, neither can't the audience escape their lives for a night of theatrical diversion.

Beckett's treatment of the human condition has triggered a number of humanistic readings, which later post structural readings (in an anti-humanist vein) sharply criticized. Humanism has a number of assumptions about literature such as: literary texts timeless truths about human nature, the self, and the human condition, and they can be found through close analyses of the literary text at hand. The self is something unique and essential in defining each of us while meaning can be revealed to the reader through close readings. The belief in the universal truth and interest in the essence of the self defines important aspects of humanism.

Post-structuralists question the validity of such assumptions and emphasize relativity, uncertainty, and the impossibility of finding the truth about anything including the meaning of a text. In such a view, language cannot lead a reader to the truth hidden in the text, but itself become a system of unreliable signs, into which we are born. At the extreme, text becomes a language game, and discussing the human condition using such an approach becomes a rather futile exercise.

The way Beckett deals with such concepts as the self or its obliteration is through strongly visual elements. However, in examining his works, the majority of scholarly analysis focuses on Beckett's verbal language, more specifically the text as written by the author. While this may not be surprising when critics are analyzing Beckett's prose works, even when they are dealing with non-prose works such as plays or scripts for film and television, and emphasis has been placed on verbal language as dialogues are quoted and analyzed from virtually every angle. Beckett's drama and works in a variety of performance genres are a crucial part of his oeuvre, and to adequately understand these works, the analysis of verbal language alone is "Not enough." As May says in *Footfalls*.

For example, as scholars have pointed out, Beckett's drama *Play* cannot be completely understood in literary terms alone (Knowlson and Pilling 116).

Summary

The setting is a bare interior with gray lighting. There are two small windows with drawn curtains, a door, and two ashbins covered by an old sheet. Hamm sits on an armchair with wheels, covered by an old sheet. Clov stares at Hamm, motionless. They stay like this for a moment, then Clov, with a bowed head, surveys the room – he looks at Hamm, then out the window facing the sea, then out the one facing land. He staggers off-stage and returns with a stepladder, which he sets under the sea window. He climbs it, draws open the curtains, looks out, and laughs briefly. He repeats this for the land window. He removes the sheet from the ashbins, raises the lid of one and looks within, briefly laughs, and closes the lid. He repeats this for the other bin. Trailing the sheet, he walks to Hamm and removes his sheet. Hamm, in his dressing gown, a whistle hanging around his neck, and a handkerchief over his face, appears to be asleep. Clov returns to his original spot and turns to the audience. Clov says "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's heap, a little heap, the impossible heap." He says he'll go to his kitchen and wait for Hamm to whistle him. He leaves, then comes back, takes the ladder and carries it out. Hamm awakens and removes the handkerchief. He wears dark glasses.

Hamm removes and then replaces his glasses and folds away his handkerchief. He questions whether anyone – his parents, his dog – suffers as much as he does. He calls for Clov, but gets no response and believes he's alone. He says "it's time it ended," but he "hesitate[s]" to end. He whistles and Clov enters. Hamm insults him and orders Clov to prepare for bed. Clov argues that he just woke Hamm up. Hamm asks if Clov has ever looked at his eyes while he sleeps – Clov hasn't – as they've turned white. He asks what time it is, and Clov replies "Same as usual." Hamm asks if he looked out the window, and Clov gives his report: "Zero." Hamm asks Clov if he's had enough of "this thing." Clov says he always had, and Hamm agrees.

Clov laments their life of the same, repetitive questions and answers. Hamm commands him to get him ready, but Clov doesn't move. Hamm threatens to hold back food from him, and Clov goes for Hamm's sheet. Hamm stops him and asks why Clov stays with him; Clov asks why Hamm keeps him. For Hamm, there's no one else; and for Clov, nowhere else. Hamm accuses Clov of leaving him – Clov concedes that he's trying to do so – and that Clov doesn't love him. When Clov says he doesn't, Hamm says he did once, which Clov admits to. Hamm asks if he's made Clov suffer too much, a sentiment Clov finally supports, to Hamm's relief. Hamm asks for forgiveness, and inquires about Clov's bad health. He tells him to move around and come back. He asks why Clov doesn't kill him; Clov replies that he doesn't know the combination of the ladder.

Two designs should be apparent with Beckett's set. The bare-bones construction recalls a skull, with the two windows as eyes, the two ashbins as nostrils, and Hamm's central position as the mouth. The constant visual is of death, and the second design feature also heralds death in subtler ways. *Endgame* is named for the series of moves that constitute the end of a chess game. The outcome is usually inevitable; the memorized moves are a mere formality for experienced chess players, and the player with the advantage coming into the endgame will almost always win. Beckett, a chess player himself, draws a parallel to the endgame of life, in which death is the inevitable outcome. The characters – or players – enact repetitive rituals that are part of their endgame. Repetitions are the basis of much of Beckett's dramatic work, exposing the ways we while away time before death (*Waiting for Godot* repeats most of its first act in its second act), but *Endgame* expands the playwright's view of repetitions.

The more philosophical use of the repetitions is to demonstrate the stasis in the world of *Endgame*. While repetitions performed the same purpose in Beckett's earlier work, here he refines his ideas through the conflation of beginnings and endings; the opening words of the play are Clov's announcement that it's finished. Jesus's last words are also "It is finished," also delivered with a bowed head (Jong 19:30), and his death marked a momentous fusion of ending and beginning, the end of his life with the birth of Christianity. The major theme of *Endgame* is that life is a circular existence without a specific beginning or ending, and as such creates a sense of repetitive stasis. Clov's definition of the "impossible heap" couches this idea in paradoxical terms. Since one grain is not a heap, when does and accumulation of distinct grains become a single heap? While it will at some point be informally considered a heap, the mass of grains will always be composed of individual grains. It is, therefore, and "impossible" heap. The grains keep repeating, growing larger, but never become a final heap, and in the same way, an existence consisting of individual moments will never become a final "life." This lack of closure is why Clov keeps amending his initial definition of "finished" to "it is finished" to "nearly finished" to "it must be nearly finished" – nothing is ever truly finished until death says so. Our repetitive actions, then, cycle around and become static, just as the "Same as usual" – world of "Zero" change it.

The word "once" is often used ambiguously; does it mean "one time or formerly" (i.e., was the sawdust used one time, or was it previously used all the time)? In other words, is "once" an indicator of a single instance or of an entire collection of instances? The question is similar to Clov's grain/heap question; is a pile of grains simply an accumulation of distinct grains, or is it a heap? This tension seems less important for Nagg and Nell's example (although sand and sawdust, of course, are also composed of grains). It is more crucial to Hamm and Clov's relationship. First, can love truly be so fleeting as to exist at one point only? Second, once love has existed, how can it be extinguished? In Endgame's miserable landscape, it's easy to see how hatred can overtake love, but it is not so clear that Clov has truly stopped loving Hamm. He complains incessantly about servicing Hamm's every whim and even goes so far as to hit him with the toy dog, but there must be something beyond obligation, fear of solitude, and a cyclical universe that prohibits departures and arrivals keeps Clov next to Hamm. Near the end of play, Hamm suggests it is compassion. While Clov doesn't openly agree with this, he doesn't reject it either. Perhaps, then, the "once" has overcome its state of singularity ("one time") and past tense ("formerly") and flows through time after all.

Most obviously, the toy dog shows that Hamm can show affection only to that which is inanimate. Even in a ravaged world with little remaining life, he is afraid to devote himself openly to other humans. Later, however, he rejects the toy dog, throwing it away with his whistle at the end of the play. The whistle, of course, was his tie to Clov, the real object of Hamm's affections – though he was loathed to admit it. The dog also plays a role in Clov's life. Though he doesn't admit it, Clov seems jealous of the attention Hamm lavishes on the dog. At first, Clov holds up the dog and pretends it is standing up for Hamm, letting the old man believe it is a functional pet. But later he waits before retrieving the dog for Hamm, who believes it has gone away. Finally, he hits Hamm with the dog after being sent on one errand too many. Hamm bitterly says Clov should not hit him with the dog; he'd rather Clov used the gaff or an axe. His point is clear: Clov has used the one object that gives Hamm some human joy against him.

CONCLUSION

Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter each present a close link between vision and the definition of the human subject in their plays. Not only do they examine the significance of vision in the content of the plays, they also present the issues of identity visually. Their works examine the subject-object relationship and the positioning of the subject together with various factors that define one's identity. While they share a number of similarities, each of them presents different aspects of these relations. Beckett's works examine the human condition in close associations with Cartesian philosophy. The ways in which Beckett uses Cartesian elements in his works indicate that he takes the fundamentally Cartesian elements such as the cogito and the mind-body division to question the validity of the original philosophical ideas. Moving further into the direction of a Geulincxian division of mind and body, Beckett indicates that his view of the human condition is much grimmer than that of the two philosophers.

Beckett turned the Cartesian system upside down in his works, thus leaving recognizable Cartesian elements only to assert that they are no longer tenable in explaining the subject's position. To support my discussion I relied on Martin Jay's notion of Cartesian perspective alism and Jonathan Crary's emphasis on the camera obscura as a device that was "imbedded in a much larger and denser organization of knowledge and of the observing subject" (Crary 27).

Using these concepts as a framework, I argue that Beckett presents a reversed camera obscura structure in his works. The original structure is based upon the division between darkness inside and light outside of the box, presenting the observing subject a clear picture of object. The reversal of this structural principle in Beckett's works creates a new relationship between light and darkness. In a structure where the inside of the box is lit while the outside remains dark, knowledge of the world is no longer possible, and for the subject, the only possible object of knowledge becomes his or her own self. The subject turns his or her gaze away from the outside world toward the innermost mind where memories and the imagination welcome the solitary subject. Where the only object for the observing subject is the subject him/herself, the problem of self-perception becomes a central issue.

Pinter, sharing characteristics with the other two playwrights, makes the relation between the subject and the object and the distance between them central issues in his plays. The encounter between the subject placed in a room and visitors to that room. In *Ashes to Ashes*, the subject, Rose, is placed under a light while surrounded by outside darkness. Uncertainty and the lack of knowledge regarding what is outside of her room lead to her vulnerability. In analyzing Pinter's play I applied several conceptual frameworks. Foucault's discussion of the Panoptic on provided a presentation of the ways of understanding the relationship between the observer and the observed through the mechanism of power and surveillance. Sartre's notion of being-for-others as well as his examination of the power of the gaze further explicated the significance of vision in the formation

of the subject and presented man as truly a *res videns*. The structure of the reversed camera obscura presented a model for understanding the importance of the distance and detachment between the subject and the object.

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