

## The Absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett: A Comparative Study

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### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon underlying this study is the increasing crisis of meaning and existential uncertainty in modern human life. This condition is reflected in *Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot and Endgame*, both of which portray characters trapped in cycles of waiting, repetition, and existential emptiness. Although previous studies have examined these plays individually within the Theatre of the Absurd, there is a lack of comparative research that systematically analyzes how absurdity is differently constructed in both works. This study addresses that gap. This research aims to analyze the forms and representations of absurdity through a comparative approach. Using a descriptive-qualitative method, the study applies textual analysis focusing on dialogue, dramatic structure, characterization, and setting. The findings reveal that *Waiting for Godot* represents absurdity through endless waiting, repetitive dialogue, and unclear identity and purpose. In contrast, *Endgame* depicts a static, post-apocalyptic environment shaped by dominance, dependency, and the awareness of an inevitable ending. While both plays convey existential meaninglessness, they differ in the intensity of their conflicts, the dynamics of their relationships, and their symbolic representations of space and time. This study contributes by offering a comparative perspective that deepens understanding of absurdity in Beckett's works and highlights their critique of post-World War II existential conditions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Absurdity in contemporary drama is understood as a representation of the crisis of meaning arising from the discrepancy between humanity's expectation of rational structure and a fragmented, unstable reality. In recent scholarship, the Theatre of the Absurd represents the existential condition of meaninglessness through nonlinear structures,

repetitive actions, and the breakdown of language as a reliable medium of communication. Contemporary studies emphasize that absurd theatre has evolved beyond its post–World War II origins into a dynamic aesthetic form that critiques modern socio-political conditions such as alienation, identity disorientation, and existential uncertainty (Bennett, [1]; Martin, [2]).

Contemporary perspectives on the Theatre of the Absurd no longer define it solely as a representation of nihilism or the absence of meaning, but rather as a transnational and politically engaged dramatic practice. In *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Theatre* (2025), Morin [3] argues that absurd theatre should be understood as a broader, context-dependent phenomenon that emerges across diverse cultural settings and is closely linked to global socio-political dynamics. From this viewpoint, absurdity functions not merely as an expression of existential crisis but as an aesthetic strategy for representing the complexity of modern reality, including power relations, historical experience, and cultural transformation.

In contemporary performance theory, absurd theatre is not only interpreted as a representation of existential crisis or meaninglessness, but also as a performative strategy that exposes the instability of social structures and embodied human experience. Recent scholarship emphasizes that modern absurd drama operates through the disruption of theatrical conventions, highlighting the materiality of performance, audience perception, and the socio-political conditions embedded in staging practices. From this perspective, absurdity is understood as an active mode of theatrical production that interrogates how meaning is constructed and destabilized within live performance contexts (Lehmann, [4]; Morin, [3]).

Textually, absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* is manifested through indefinite waiting, repetitive dialogue, and the ambiguity surrounding the identities and purposes of Vladimir and Estragon. In contrast, *Endgame* portrays a stagnant post-apocalyptic world, an ambiguous power dynamic between Hamm and Clov, and an acute awareness of an inevitable end. Both plays depict a nonprogressive cycle of existence and underscore human powerlessness within static configurations of space and time.

Over the past five years, scholarly investigations into absurdity in Samuel Beckett's works have remained highly relevant. Sadiq [5], in an article published in the *European Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sciences*, argues that the repetition of dialogue and the absence of resolution in *Waiting for Godot* function as deliberate dramatic strategies to affirm existential nihilism. Rahmawati [6] further reveals that repetitive dialogue structures and nonlinear plots in absurd drama operate as aesthetic strategies to represent contemporary alienation and the crisis of meaning. These findings affirm that absurdity is not merely a deviation from conventional dramatic structure but rather a reflection of humanity's existential condition, marked by confusion about values and life's purpose.

Moreover, Pratama and Lestari [7], employing a comparative literature approach, examine two absurd dramas from different cultural backgrounds and identify shared thematic patterns of uncertainty, stagnation, and the search for meaning. Their study demonstrates that despite differing socio-cultural contexts, the structural and thematic elements of absurdity reveal universal tendencies. This reinforces the relevance of a comparative approach in identifying similarities and differences in the representation of meaning across texts.

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An intertextual study conducted by Sari [8] also emphasizes the importance of dialogic relationships among works in understanding the development of absurd theatre. The research indicates that absurd dramatic texts do not exist in isolation; rather, they form interconnected networks of meaning. Such an approach opens broader possibilities for comprehensive cross-textual analysis within comparative literary studies.

In a more recent social context, Hidayat [9] examines the relevance of absurd theatre in post-pandemic circumstances and finds that themes of alienation, spatial limitation, and uncertainty about the future have become increasingly contextual. This study demonstrates that absurdity in drama possesses reflective power in relation to contemporary social conditions, thereby maintaining its significance within present-day critical discourse.

Finally, Wulandari [10] investigates the representation of existentialism in Beckett's drama and concludes that repetitive dialogue patterns and minimal plot development serve as dramatic strategies to depict the existential impasse of modern humanity. Collectively, these five studies indicate that research on absurdity and comparative literature continues to offer substantial opportunities for further development, particularly through more in-depth comparative analyses of two dramatic works in order to uncover their similarities, differences, and philosophical implications.

Although numerous studies have examined absurdity in each play separately, comparative research that specifically analyzes the form, function, and intensity of absurdity in both works remains relatively limited. However, such a comparison is crucial for understanding how Beckett develops the concept of absurdity from an open-ended mode of waiting to a closed and stagnant final situation.

Therefore, this study is relevant in undertaking a comparative analysis of the representation of absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, and in contributing to modern literary scholarship, particularly in deepening our understanding of the aesthetic and philosophical dynamics of absurd theatre within a contemporary context.

## 2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach, focusing on dramatic texts as the primary object of analysis. The qualitative approach is selected because the research seeks to understand and interpret the representation of absurdity through dialogue, dramatic structure, characterization, and the symbolism of space and time in two works by Samuel Beckett, namely *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. In literary research, qualitative methods enable in-depth and contextual exploration of meaning within texts (Creswell & Poth) [11].

This study adopts a comparative literature framework to identify similarities and differences in the representation of absurdity in the two plays. To strengthen the analytical framework, this research formulates explicit indicators of absurdity, including: (1) nonlinear and nonprogressive plot structure, (2) repetitive and circular dialogue patterns, (3) ambiguity and instability of meaning, (4) fragmentation or uncertainty of identity, (5) purposeless or mechanical actions, (6) power relations and dependency among characters, and (7) symbolism of space and time, such as confinement and endless waiting. These indicators

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function as systematic analytical categories to guide textual interpretation and ensure consistency in comparison.

Data were collected through library research using a close reading method. The data consist of excerpts from dialogues, monologues, and stage directions that reflect the identified indicators. In addition, the study incorporates recent scholarly sources to contextualize the findings.

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, categorization, and interpretation. To strengthen methodological rigor, this study applies theoretical triangulation, systematic coding based on predefined indicators, and iterative reading to ensure interpretive consistency. Furthermore, transparency in analytical procedures and the use of recent peer-reviewed sources enhance the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, ensuring that the interpretations are both academically grounded and methodologically robust.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on a comparative analysis of *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, both plays represent absurdity through nonprogressive structures, repetitive dialogue, and stagnant character relationships. However, they differ in the intensity and form of absurdity they portray. In *Waiting for Godot*, absurdity appears as an open-ended and continually recurring act of waiting, whereas in *Endgame*, absurdity develops into a closed situation that moves toward total emptiness.

These differences arise from distinct dramatic constructions and philosophical orientations in each work. *Waiting for Godot* presents absurdity as an existential condition that still allows the illusion of hope, reflected in the perpetual act of waiting that never resolves. In contrast, *Endgame* represents a more advanced stage of absurdity in which hope has completely collapsed and is replaced by an acute awareness of an inevitable ending. Furthermore, the contrast in symbolic settings, an ambiguous open space in *Waiting for Godot* versus a confined and isolated interior in *Endgame*, reinforces these differences, resulting in a more enclosed and terminal expression of existential crisis in *Endgame*.

Ultimately, this study's findings demonstrate that both plays not only articulate the core principles of absurdity but also reveal a progressive intensification of existential despair, thereby underscoring Samuel Beckett's profound critique of meaninglessness and the human condition in the post-war era.

#### **3.1. Definition of Comparative Study**

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field that examines texts across cultures by considering literary contexts in terms of space and time. In terms of temporality, comparative literature enables the analysis of literary works from two or more different periods. Meanwhile, the spatial dimension connects this field to geographical aspects in literature, encompassing the influence of location and cultural environment on literary works (Widyanigrum & Sondari, [12]).

On the other hand, Hosilos (as cited in Ambarwati et al., [13]) proposes two concepts of comparative literature studies. First, comparative literature investigates the comparison

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between the literary works of one author and those of other authors from different countries. Second, it examines the relationship between literary works and other forms of art, such as painting, music, and other artistic expressions. Within this second concept, literature may also be compared with other fields of knowledge, belief systems, or even domains beyond literature. Furthermore, according to Suaka (as cited in Marlina et al., [14]), the primary objective of comparative literature is to identify both differences and similarities between two or more literary works. This type of study generally focuses on the relationship between works originating from different cultural backgrounds but sharing similarities in form and content.

In addition, Damono (as cited in Fariztina et al., [15]) argues that comparative literature enables researchers to explore cross-cultural relationships reflected in literary elements, particularly in the works' settings. Damrosch [16] argues that comparative literature operates within a global circulation of texts, where literary works gain new meanings as they move across linguistic and cultural boundaries. From this perspective, comparative study emphasizes that meaning is not fixed within a single work but continuously reshaped through transnational reading practices. Behdad and Thomas further emphasize that comparative analysis enables scholars to examine how literary texts function within global systems of cultural production. They highlight that similarities and differences between texts often reveal underlying ideological structures shaped by historical and geopolitical contexts.

Apter [18] offers a more critical perspective, arguing that comparative literature should engage with translation as a form of epistemological negotiation. In her view, comparison is not only about identifying equivalence but also about understanding linguistic and cultural incommensurability that shapes literary meaning. Bassnett [19] emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of comparative study, stating that it bridges literature with cultural and historical analysis. She argues that comparative approaches are essential for understanding how texts travel and transform across different literary systems. Finally, Damrosch and Apter [20] jointly argue that comparative study provides a framework for understanding how literature responds to universal human concerns such as identity, existence, and meaning, while still being shaped by specific cultural and historical conditions. This reinforces the idea that literature is both globally connected and locally situated.

In conclusion, comparative study in literary research is a dynamic, interdisciplinary methodological approach that enables scholars to analyze similarities, differences, and interactions among texts within broader cultural, historical, and ideological frameworks. Contemporary scholarship demonstrates that comparative literature is no longer limited to simple textual juxtaposition but functions as a relational and global framework in which meaning is continuously constructed and reconstructed through cross-cultural circulation, translation, and interpretation. By integrating perspectives from transnational literary theory, postcolonial studies, and cultural analysis, comparative study provides a comprehensive tool for understanding literature as an interconnected system of meanings shaped by diverse socio-historical contexts. Ultimately, this approach not only deepens textual interpretation

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but also highlights the evolving nature of literature in response to global intellectual and cultural transformations.

### **3.2. Synopsis of a Drama Script *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

Drama [21] *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, both written by Samuel Beckett, present representations of existential absurdity through dramatic structures characterized by minimal plot progression, repetitive dialogue, and stagnant situations. Both plays portray characters trapped in conditions marked by uncertainty and the absence of meaningful development. The circular plot patterns and conversations that frequently appear illogical reinforce the impression that life unfolds without a clear direction or purpose.

However, *Waiting for Godot* places particular emphasis on absurdity through the motif of waiting for an absent figure who never arrives. Vladimir and Estragon sustain their hope that Godot will eventually come, even though this expectation is repeatedly deferred. The absurdity in the play emerges from the tension between hope and uncertainty, transforming the act of waiting into a metaphor for the human condition, one that persistently seeks meaning amid existential emptiness.

In contrast, [22] *Endgame* presents absurdity within a more enclosed and terminal situation. Its characters inhabit a confined space resembling a post-apocalyptic world, devoid of hope for change or the arrival of anything new. Whereas *Waiting for Godot* unfolds within an unfinished cycle of waiting, *Endgame* conveys a bleak and stagnant sense of finality. Thus, the two plays represent two distinct modes of absurdity: the former grounded in perpetually deferred hope, and the latter rooted in an acute awareness of limitation and existential impasse, as conceived by Samuel Beckett.

### **3.3. Analysis of Absurdity in Drama *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

#### **3.3.1. Analysis of Absurdity in Drama *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett**

##### **3.3.1.1 Absurdity as Waiting Without Certainty in *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett**

The analysis indicates that the dramatic structure of *Waiting for Godot* is cyclical and nonprogressive. The conflict does not develop toward resolution; instead, it returns to its initial point. This is evident in the following dialogue:

*Estragon*: “Nothing to be done.”

*Vladimir*: “I’m beginning to come round to that opinion.”

This opening exchange immediately foregrounds existential nihilism. The statement “Nothing to be done” conveys human powerlessness in the face of an unalterable situation. The repeated act of waiting for Godot, without certainty of his arrival, further reinforces the absurdity of existence:

*Vladimir*: “We’re waiting for Godot.”

*Estragon*: “Ah!”

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Godot never appears; consequently, the act of waiting becomes a symbol of illusory hope. The two-act structure, which is nearly identical in composition, underscores temporal stagnation. Thus, the absurdity in this play is that open-ended hope persists, yet it is never fulfilled.

Thematically, the relationship between Vladimir and Estragon reflects existential interdependence. They remain together not because of a clearly defined purpose, but out of fear of solitude. This fear of emptiness intensifies the concept of absurdity as a condition in which human beings continuously seek meaning amid uncertainty.

### **3.3.1.2 Absurdity as Repetition in *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett**

In Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, repetition serves as a central device in constructing absurdity. Repetition appears not only in dialogue but also in the dramatic structure, character actions, and recurring situations that unfold without meaningful progression. Through this technique, Beckett represents human life as a monotonous cycle devoid of direction and purpose.

One of the most prominent forms of repetition is reflected in recurring dialogue, such as:

*“Nothing to be done.”*

This line appears multiple times throughout the play and symbolizes human helplessness in confronting an unchangeable condition. Rather than generating new insight, its repetition reinforces the stagnation of thought experienced by the characters. Within the framework of absurdity, this repetition suggests that human beings are trapped in an awareness of their own powerlessness, yet remain unable to escape it.

Repetition is also evident in circular conversations that fail to produce meaningful development, instead returning to their starting point. This can be observed in the following exchange:

*Vladimir: “What do we do now?”*

*Estragon: “Wait.”*

*Vladimir: “Yes, but while waiting?”*

*Estragon: “What about hanging ourselves?”*

This dialogue does not lead to any concrete decision or action; instead, it collapses back into the act of waiting. Such patterns recur throughout the play, indicating that communication does not function as a means of resolution, but rather as a way to fill the emptiness of time.

Furthermore, repetition is manifested in the characters' actions, particularly in the continuous act of waiting for Godot:

*Vladimir: “We’re waiting for Godot.”*

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This statement is reiterated in different contexts, yet it never results in any change in the characters' situation. Since Godot never arrives, the repeated act of waiting becomes a powerful symbol of existential absurdity, in which human beings persist in actions that yield neither meaning nor certainty.

Moreover, repetition is reinforced by the two-act structure of the play, which is nearly identical in composition. Events in the first act, waiting, repetitive dialogue, and the arrival and departure of Pozzo and Lucky are echoed in the second act with only slight variations. This structural symmetry emphasizes that time in the play is not linear but cyclical. As a result, repetition functions not merely as a dramatic technique but as a representation of temporal stagnation and the absence of progress in human existence.

In conclusion, repetition in *Waiting for Godot* serves as a fundamental expression of absurdity. The recurrence of dialogue, actions, and structural patterns creates a portrayal of human beings trapped in a meaningless routine, where every attempt to act or to understand ultimately returns to the point of origin. Through this technique, Beckett underscores the idea that human life does not move toward a clear purpose but instead revolves within an endless cycle.

### **3.3.1.3 Absurdity as Existential Emptiness in *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett**

In *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, existential emptiness is a key aspect of absurdity, reflecting the absence of meaning, identity, and purpose in human existence. This condition is primarily expressed through the characters' uncertainty, fragmented memory, and reliance on illusory hope.

One clear example is Vladimir's doubt about reality:

*"Am I sleeping now?"*

This line reveals uncertainty about existence and consciousness, indicating a disconnection between the self and reality. Similarly, Estragon's statement:

*"I don't remember."*

Demonstrates the instability of memory, suggesting that identity cannot be firmly established. As a result, the characters exist without continuity or clear self-understanding. Existential emptiness is further emphasized in expressions of despair, such as:

*"I can't go on!"*

This reflects the burden of existence, yet the characters continue living, highlighting the paradox of absurdity. Their dependence on Godot also reinforces this emptiness:

*"We're waiting for Godot."*

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Since Godot never arrives, waiting becomes a symbol of false hope and of the human tendency to seek meaning externally. In conclusion, existential emptiness in *Waiting for Godot* is constructed through uncertainty, loss of identity, and unfulfilled hope, portraying human existence as fundamentally lacking in meaning.

### **3.3.2. Analysis of Absurdity in Drama *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

#### **3.3.2.1 Absurdity as Waiting Without Certainty in *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

In *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, absurdity as waiting without certainty is no longer represented through the expectation of someone's arrival, as in *Waiting for Godot*, but rather through a condition of waiting for an inevitable yet temporally uncertain end. The characters do not wait for an external figure; instead, they endure prolonged anticipation of the termination of life, meaning, or existence itself, without any clear indication of when it will occur.

This condition is reflected in the characters' awareness of stagnation and entrapment within an unchanging situation. Clov, for instance, repeatedly expresses his intention to leave, yet never actualizes it:

*Clov: "I'll leave you."*

This statement recurs without fulfillment, creating a form of absurd waiting for a change that never materializes. The repetition underscores the impossibility of action, suggesting that even the desire to alter one's condition is rendered ineffective.

Similarly, Hamm articulates a paradoxical awareness of existence and its inevitable conclusion:

*Hamm: "The end is in the beginning, and yet you go on."*

This line encapsulates the existential paradox at the play's core: although the end is already inscribed in the beginning, existence continues without clear purpose or resolution. Waiting in *Endgame*, therefore, is not oriented toward hope or transformation, but toward an unavoidable conclusion whose timing remains uncertain.

Furthermore, the enclosed and claustrophobic setting reinforces the sense of waiting without certainty. The absence of a defined external world and the ambiguity of temporal progression contribute to an atmosphere of suspension. Time appears either static or moving imperceptibly toward decay, while the characters remain confined within repetitive routines that offer no possibility of escape. In this context, waiting becomes not an action directed toward a future event, but a permanent condition of existence.

In conclusion, absurdity in *Endgame* is constructed through the notion of waiting for an inevitable yet indeterminate end. Unlike *Waiting for Godot*, which emphasizes deferred hope, *Endgame* presents a world in which hope has already collapsed, and waiting persists as an expression of existential emptiness. Beckett thus portrays human existence as a state of enduring uncertainty, in which individuals remain trapped in the continuation of life despite the absence of meaning and the inevitability of its end.

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### 3.3.2.2 Absurdity as Repetition in *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett

In *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, repetition is a key element in constructing absurdity, reflecting a condition of stagnation and the absence of meaningful progress. The characters are trapped in repetitive actions and dialogues that do not lead to change or resolution.

This is evident in Clov's repeated statements about the unchanging world:

*Clov: "There's no more nature."*

The recurrence of such lines emphasizes a static environment where nothing develops. Similarly, Hamm's repeated calls create a mechanical pattern of interaction that reinforces routine rather than purpose.

*Hamm: "Clov!"*

Repetition is also seen in Clov's unfulfilled intention:

*Clov: "I'll leave you."*

Although stated multiple times, it is never realized, highlighting the impossibility of action and change. Thus, repetition in *Endgame* represents absurdity by portraying existence as a continuous cycle of actions and words that lack development, meaning, and resolution.

### 3.3.2.3 Absurdity as Existential Emptiness in *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett

In *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, absurdity is strongly manifested through existential emptiness, depicting a condition in which human life lacks meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. The characters exist in a confined, lifeless environment that symbolizes a world devoid of hope and possibility.

This emptiness is reflected in Clov's statement:

*Clov: "There's no more nature."*

The line suggests not only the destruction of the external world but also the loss of renewal and meaning in human existence. Life no longer offers development or change, reinforcing a sense of stagnation.

Hamm further expresses existential emptiness through his reflection:

*Hamm: "The end is in the beginning, and yet you go on."*

This statement highlights the paradox of existence. Although life inevitably leads to an end, it continues without a clear purpose. The characters persist, not out of meaning, but because they are unable to escape their condition. Additionally, the relationship between Hamm and Clov reflects emotional emptiness. Their interaction is based on dependency rather than genuine connection, emphasizing isolation even in companionship. Thus,

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existential emptiness in *Endgame* represents absurdity as a state in which individuals continue to exist within a void of meaning, unable to find purpose or resolution.

### **3.4. Comparative Analysis of the Representation of Absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

#### **3.4.1. Similarities in the Representation of Absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

From a comparative perspective, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* similarly represent absurdity through nonlinear, repetitive, and unresolved dramatic structures. In *Waiting for Godot*, the recurring cycle of waiting without Godot's arrival reflects existential stagnation, underscoring the absence of definitive meaning in human life. The repetitive patterns of dialogue and recurring actions function as a dramatic manifestation of existential nihilism. As Sadiq [5] argues, repetition in the play is not merely an aesthetic device but a strategy to reveal the impasse of meaning in modern existence.

A comparable pattern is evident in *Endgame*, where the routines of Hamm and Clov proceed mechanically without substantive conflict development. Demir [23] explains that repetition in *Endgame* reinforces the depiction of a stagnant world that offers no possibility of renewal. Furthermore, both plays portray forms of existential interdependence among their characters. Vladimir and Estragon remain together out of fear of solitude, while Hamm and Clov are trapped in a mutually dependent yet contradictory relationship. Khan dan Abdullah [24] emphasize that such relational patterns constitute relational absurdity, a condition in which human beings are unable to live in isolation, yet fail to find meaning within togetherness. Thus, the primary similarity between the two works lies in their representation of temporal stagnation, dialogic repetition, and the ambiguity of life's purpose as central elements of absurdity.

These findings can be more explicitly understood through the theoretical framework of the Theatre of the Absurd, which posits that human existence is inherently meaningless and that dramatic form must reflect this condition through fragmentation, circularity, and the breakdown of logical communication. In this context, the nonlinear structure and repetitive dialogue in both plays align with the principles articulated by absurdist theorists, in which language fails to convey stable meaning, and action becomes purposeless. Moreover, from a comparative literature perspective, these shared elements demonstrate what is often described as thematic convergence, in which different texts articulate similar existential concerns through analogous formal strategies. By situating the analysis within this theoretical framework, the similarities between *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are not merely descriptive but reflect a broader aesthetic and philosophical paradigm that defines absurdist drama in modern literature.

#### **3.4.2. Differences in the Representation of Absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

Despite their structural similarities, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* demonstrate significant differences in both the intensity and orientation of their absurdity. In *Waiting for Godot*, absurdity manifests in the form of open-ended waiting that still retains the possibility

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of hope, even though such hope is never fulfilled. The relatively open setting and minimal stage properties create the impression that the world continues to exist and that change remains conceivable. Rahman [25] suggests that the play's open structure represents absurdity as “sustained uncertainty,” rather than total devastation.

In contrast, *Endgame* presents absurdity within a closed, post-apocalyptic atmosphere, where the external world is depicted as destroyed, and no future can be anticipated. The repeated awareness of an ending, articulated in lines such as “Finished, it’s finished...,” portrays absurdity as a final condition. According to Demir, the enclosed space in *Endgame* symbolizes humanity’s entrapment in a cycle of emptiness devoid of transformative possibility. Whereas in *Waiting for Godot* absurdity is potential, *waiting for something that might arrive*, in *Endgame* absurdity is definitive, consisting in the endurance of existence under the certainty of ruin.

These differences stem from shifts in dramaturgical strategy and philosophical emphasis in Samuel Beckett’s works. *Waiting for Godot* reflects an earlier phase of absurdist representation in which uncertainty and indeterminacy still allow for interpretive openness and the illusion of meaning. By contrast, *Endgame* represents a more radical stage in which the collapse of meaning is totalized, and the dramatic form itself becomes more confined, static, and terminal. This progression can also be linked to broader post-war existential thought, where initial disorientation evolves into a deeper confrontation with nihilism and finality.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explicitly linked to the principles of the Theatre of the Absurd, which emphasize the breakdown of linear temporality, the futility of human action, and the failure of language to produce stable meaning. While both plays adhere to these principles, *Waiting for Godot* exemplifies what may be termed “open absurdity,” characterized by cyclical time and deferred meaning, whereas *Endgame* embodies “closed absurdity,” marked by entropic time and existential closure. Furthermore, within the framework of comparative literature, these differences illustrate a process of thematic transformation, in which similar existential concerns are rearticulated through evolving formal and symbolic strategies (Damrosch [12]; Behdad & Thomas [13]). Thus, the comparative analysis not only highlights contrast but also reveals a developmental trajectory of absurdity in Beckett’s dramaturgy from indeterminate waiting to definitive existential finality, thereby reinforcing the theoretical understanding of absurdism as a dynamic and historically situated literary mode.

### **3.5. Philosophical Implications of the Representation of Absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett**

The representation of absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* extends beyond dramatic aesthetics and carries profound philosophical implications for understanding modern human existence. In *Waiting for Godot*, waiting without certainty reflects the human condition of continually suspending hope upon something indeterminate. Philosophically, this condition corresponds to the existential concept of absurdity as the tension between humanity’s need for meaning and the world’s inability to provide it. Sadiq [5] argues that the patterns of repetition and seemingly empty dialogue in the play signify the failure of

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language as a vehicle for meaning-making, leaving human beings to persist through the illusion of hope.

Furthermore, Rahman [26] maintains that *Waiting for Godot* represents absurdity as the “continuity of existence without certainty,” in which individuals endure not because they have discovered meaning, but because they fear confronting emptiness. The philosophical implication is that human existence is a conditional life that unfolds in the deferral of meaning rather than in its attainment. Consequently, hope in the play is inherently ambiguous: it functions simultaneously as a support for existence and as a source of irony.

In *Endgame*, however, absurdity develops in a more radical direction. The enclosed, post-apocalyptic world portrays a condition in which no hope or possibility of renewal remains. Demir [24] interprets the closed setting of *Endgame* as a symbol of humanity’s ontological entrapment, in which individuals are alienated not only from the external world but also from themselves. The opening dialogue, with its emphatic repetition of the word “finished,” implies an awareness of ending as a permanent rather than temporary state.

Khan and Abdullah [25] further contend that the relationship between Hamm and Clov embodies a dimension of relational absurdity dependency sustained despite the absence of emotional or moral meaning. Philosophically, this suggests that modern individuals inhabit a paradox: they recognize emptiness, yet continue to exist. In *Endgame*, the continuation of life is grounded not in hope, but in habit and existential compulsion.

Thus, the philosophical implications of the two plays reveal two phases of absurd consciousness. *Waiting for Godot* depicts a phase of searching and waiting for meaning, whereas *Endgame* portrays a phase of accepting total emptiness. Recent scholarly perspectives over the past five years demonstrate that both works remain relevant for interpreting the contemporary human condition, marked by crises of meaning, global uncertainty, and social alienation. Ultimately, absurdity in Beckett’s plays is not merely a reflection of pessimism, but a profound meditation on how human beings endure within a world that offers no definitive answers to their existential questions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the comparative analysis of *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, it can be concluded that both plays consistently represent absurdity as a reflection of the existential condition of modern humanity. In both works, absurdity is articulated through nonlinear dramatic structures, repetitive dialogue, temporal stagnation, and interdependent relationships among characters that do not lead to clear resolution. Thus, absurdity functions not merely as an aesthetic technique but also as a philosophical medium through which crises of meaning and human alienation are portrayed.

Comparatively, the analysis reveals that *Waiting for Godot* represents absurdity in the form of open-ended waiting that still retains the possibility of hope, even though such hope is never realized. The act of waiting for Godot becomes a symbol of the perpetually deferred search for meaning. In contrast, *Endgame* presents absurdity in a darker, more definitive form, an awareness of the ending and total stagnation within a closed space that offers no possibility of change. If the first play depicts absurdity as the “deferral of meaning,” the second portrays it as the “certainty of emptiness.”

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Accordingly, this study demonstrates a conceptual development of absurdity across the two works, moving from an ambiguous phase of waiting to a definitive consciousness of destruction. The research affirms that a comparative literary approach is effective in uncovering the dynamics of ideas and the transformation of concepts within an author's oeuvre. Furthermore, the theme of absurdity in both plays remains contextually relevant for understanding the existential crises of contemporary humanity, characterized by uncertainty, alienation, and the ongoing search for meaning in life.

Nevertheless, this study is not without limitations. In terms of textual scope, the analysis is confined to only two plays, which may not fully represent the broader spectrum of Samuel Beckett's dramaturgy or the wider tradition of absurdist theatre. In terms of a theoretical lens, the study primarily relies on the framework of the theatre of the Absurd and comparative literature, without incorporating other potentially enriching perspectives such as psychoanalytic, post-structuralist, or performance-based approaches.

Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the corpus by including additional works, either from Beckett or other playwrights within the Theatre of the Absurd, to allow for a more comprehensive comparative analysis. Further studies may also integrate interdisciplinary approaches, such as performance studies or cultural theory, to examine how absurdity is not only constructed in texts but also realized in theatrical practice. Additionally, exploring the reception of these plays in contemporary contexts could provide deeper insight into the ongoing relevance of absurdity in interpreting modern existential conditions.

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