Chapter 3

The Uncertainty of the End: *Endgame*
THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE END: ENDGAME

*Endgame*, a one-act play whose French title is *Fin de partie*, was premiered first in French in 1957 at London’s Royal Court Theatre under the direction of Roger Blin (Connor 71). The structure opted for the play is simple with a new dramatic dimension where the characters are immobile and few of them are confined within human-sized dust-bins. Here, the “creative exploitation of a language collapse” (Al-Udayli 97) is apparent, and the dramatist succeeded in projecting the perfect image of Absurd drama into the psyches of the readers by this language exploitation. It is Beckett’s language and his precise selection of words which renders this play unique stripped as it is from traditional paraphernalia of host of characters, plot, and effective décor. It is also devoid of the conventions of a well made play like Peripeteia, the reversal of fortune, catharsis accompanied with denouement. Furthermore the techniques he employs at the levels of setting, plot and language form some of the marked features that help in defining the characteristics of an Absurd drama. The play is typically Beckettinian; irrational, explicitly implicit, loose ended and (un)exhaustive in its meaning. Beckett undoubtedly emerges through *Endgame* a playwright of extraordinary aptitude, especially the way in which he manipulates language to maximum dramaturgic effects. It demands special acumen to comprehend the psycho-dynamics of the language he used, as it is highly suggestive, symbolic, and ambiguous. Its thread bare analysis is essential for the total theatre experience.

Against a background of grey light, bare interior, high windows the characters endowed with an atypical demeanour and appearance appear stark and startling. All seemingly are sufferers to some extent, Hamm is blind and views his surroundings through the dying sight of his servant Clov. And ‘if Hamm cannot stand then Clov cannot sit’. Hamm’s parents Nagg and Nell have also lost their legs and subsist in “dustbins” where during the course of the play Nell dies. Clov looking into the anonymity of the horizon, the expansive vacuity of time and space, is weary of existence and finds everything a farce. The mental proclivities resulting from physical constraints bear a direct reflection on the linguistic capabilities of the characters. Hamm and Clov are depressed, contentious and inconsolable so their speech is:
incoherent, repetitive, chaotic, labyrinthine, halting and fragmentary as is seen in Hamm’s statement

If you must hit me, hit me with the axe.[Pause.] Or with the gaff, hit me with the gaff. Not with the dog. With the gaff. Or with the axe. (Beckett 130)

Their language is also the criss-cross game of their vision, apocryphal imaginative and intuitive. Consequently the reader easily loses track of the sinuous trail while visualizing the play and as easily sinks into bewilderment because their dialogues lead nowhere. This forms a part of dramaturgy to locate a ‘non-ent’ on stage.

Language is able to depict the claustrophobia essential to the play by choice of specific words especially names of the characters which reminds of instruments and machinery. The name of the protagonist– Hamm is similar to a hammer, also one of his name's numerous suggestions. Hamm is probably a French name, synonymous with Hammer, whereas Nagg in German Nagel and Nell in English mean nail. Clov in French means nail and the pronoun of Nell is homophonous to nail. The pair of Hamm and Clov, like hammer and nail share the oxymoronic relationship of attraction and repulsion, and Nell and Nagg are species of the same kind. If Nell and Nagg are confined to dustbins, Hamm and Clov also meander in the same circumscribed space seemingly obsessed with their territory. Hamm is specially fussy about the positioning of his chair at an exact spot and place. He directs the action from remoteness and others, like nails, move in and out of their places. His blow on the wall elucidates this image (repeating Nagg's double strike of Nell's trashbin), as do his commands for Clov to screw down the lids to the trashbin. Another meaning behind his name is that of a "ham" ‘actor, (an aggressive, attention-getting actor’). When Nagg tells his story and switches three voices, it is to prompt that Hamm is the leading actor, a virtual speaker who guides the three characters around him. Just as Hamm's life is one of suspensions and aversion for the world around him, Nagg's story is about delays and discontent over natural creation. The speech of Clov is but a group of words taught by Hamm, made explicit by Clov's statement to Hamm: "I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything anymore, teach me others. Or let me be silent" (Endgame). Therefore, it can be said that the choice of character names intend to restructure, but fails because of lack of harmony and co-ordination.
The language experiment on the contrary implies a collapse of the family and society. The characters -

in *Endgame* represent figures who are just exercising particular physical gesture, exchanging, or most probably incapacitating, some “patterns of language that hold an equivocal and puzzling relationship to our previous notions of drama and narrative. (Lyons 61)

*Endgame* is a term used to designate a series of moves in the game of chess where the ending is no surprise because it is unavoidably apparent and obvious. The strategy is ostensible in Beckett's structuring of *Endgame*. The bare-bone form recall a skull, with the two windows as eyes, the two trash bins as nostrils, and Hamm's position in the exact centre as the mouth. The persistent pictorial motif is of death and heralds death in subtle ways. The moves committed to memory are a mere convention for skilled chess players, and the contestant with plus point in the endgame is presumably the winner in any case. Beckett, himself a chess player, draws a parallel with the endgame of life, in which death is the inescapable consequence. This skull-like setting is complemented by several textual references to Dante's Inferno. For instance, Clou comments at one point that they are in a suspension between the earth and the sea, while Hamm observes, "That here we're down in a hole." The construct later elaborates that the sun is sinking, "down among the dead," and beyond the hills and the walls, "is the...other hell." The implication of placing the characters in Dante's inferno is to establish their doom till eternity. The incessant repetition of the same follies and crimes trap them into a meaningless hell of negation. In typical Beckettian fashion, the crime can be viewed as "life," meaning that they are doomed to repeat life forever. The ensemble or the players– perform their rituals again and again, becoming a part of their endgame. Recurrences are the basis of much of Beckett's theatrical work, exposing the ways time is spent before death (*Waiting for Godot* repeats most of its first act in its second act), but *Endgame* expands the playwright's technique of repetitions.

The play begins with the image of thing(s) being finished “*Finished, it’s finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished*” (Beckett 93) uttered by Clou attributing a unique language facet to the tableau-pantomime string. The dialogue is absolutely toneless articulated with a fixed gaze at the audience. The opening of the drama has four repetitive recurrences of ‘Finished’ followed by a pause.
“Finished”, /‘it’s finished’, /‘nearly finished’, /‘it must be nearly finished’. (Pause). (Beckett 93)

The first finished has emerged as a participle, which is indicative of being dependent on verb and has no identity without the verb. Therefore this participle is pointing to the existence of doubling (Hamm and Clov, and Nagg and Nell) in the play, and the second finished serves as a complement where it justifies “its finished” and then modified through an adverb and ends with an emphatic ‘it must be’ to the participle form (Al-Udayli 107). This language dramaturgy at the level of a single word ‘finished’ points the playwright’s tendency to employ existentialist concepts of ‘despair and anxiety’. Thus ‘Finished’ is acting as a signifier and these words are a “parody of Jesus words on the cross: ‘it is finished’ ” (Liao 393). The above lines are followed by “Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there’s a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap.[ Pause.]” (Beckett 93).

The philosophical notions are not only responsible for creating the drama in Endgame. Beckett’s meticulous awareness towards language leads him to create a unique language dramaturgy. The dramaturgy does not exist only through verbalised dialogues. Instead the real drama comes through the unsaid and unvoiced actions, either through silence, pause or yawn. Here in Endgame the opening dialogue from Clov sets the mood of the play by connecting the title with the utterance of “Finished, it’s finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished” (Beckett 93). The dialogue of Clov prohibits action, though it sums up the entire range of drama in it. This opening dialogue is followed by Hamm’s first discourse which contains eleven pauses and five yawns. The placement of ‘yawn’ is synchronised between the “pre and post situations” of Hamm’s dialogue. The situations are mentioned below-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-situation</th>
<th>YAWN</th>
<th>Post-situation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Me—”</td>
<td>“(heyawns)”</td>
<td>“—to play”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Can there be misery—”</td>
<td>“(he yawns)”</td>
<td>“— loftier than mine? No bt. doubt. Formerly. But now?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No, all is a—”</td>
<td>“(he yawns)”</td>
<td>“— absolute”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And yet I hesitate, I hesitate to...to end. Yes, there it it is, it’s time it ended and yet I hesitate to—”</td>
<td>“(he yawns)”</td>
<td>“—to end”</td>
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</table>
Yawn is serving as a tool for bringing boredom and futility on stage. The first stance of Hamm is the pronouncement of himself as a grand hero “me” but this immediately comes to an end as it is interrupted by yawn, and brings a diversion in tone. The second situation clubbed with yawn is about his misery which incorporates his past and present with the articulation of “formerly” and “but now”. The parody of the grand hero is displayed with misery on a loftier scale but the continuity is broken by yawn. The third yawn is placed in a word “absolute”, the process of articulation has taken place with the sound “a—” and then yawn is dramatically inserted by discontinuing the sense of absolute. This cessation asserts that there is no place for the existence of ‘absolute’. The idea of “the bigger a man the fuller he is” brought to an absurd end where man is incapable of pronouncing the word “absolute” with intrusion by an involuntarily action. The illusion of a bigger man is dwarfed by the yawn. The final placement of yawn is in between “And yet I hesitate, I hesitate to...to end. Yes, there it is, it’s time it ended and yet I hesitate to—” and “—to end”. This end is a dramaturgic move and conclusion of the above language exercise which ultimately culminates at ‘end’. The yawns in the dialogue are acting as dramatic tether which binds the drama with language ontology. The language is simple but ominously tragic in its context.

The aim of more philosophical use of the recurrences in the drama is to establish the stasis in the world of Endgame. While repetitions achieved the same purpose in Beckett's earlier work, here he improves his ideas through the conflation of beginnings and endings, the opening words of the play are Clov's proclamation that it's finished. As discussed aforesaid Jesus's last words are also "It is finished," also conveyed with a bowed head (John 19:30), and his death marked a historic blend 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 activity without an explicit beginning or ending, and as such creates a sense of repetitive stasis that is reflected in the language of drama. Clov's definition of the "impossible heap" couches this idea in paradoxical terms. Since one grain is not a heap, when does an accretion of separate grains become a single heap? While it will at some point be informally considered a heap, the mass will always be composed of distinct grains. It is, therefore, an "impossible" heap. The grains keep recurring, growing larger, but never form a final heap, and in the same way, an existence comprising of distinct moments will never turn out to be a
final "life." This lack of conclusion is why Clov keeps altering his initial description of "finished" to "it is finished" to "nearly finished" to "it must be nearly finished"—nothing is ever truly finished until death. Our repetitive actions are simply cyclic about and later become static, just as the "Same as usual"-world of "Zero" changes,

Hamm: What time is it?
Clov: The same as usual.
Hamm (gesture towards window right): Have you looked?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: Well?
Clov: Zero. (Beckett 94)

The set of repetition is found in the drama, the dialogues do not individually recur but the conversation repeats itself for the purpose of monotony.

Clov: ............ I’ll leave you, I have things to do.
Hamm: In your kitchen?
Clov: Yes. (Beckett 96)

The above structure is encountered by reader/audience again in the text,

Clov: ............ I’ll leave you, I have things to do.
Hamm: In your kitchen?
Clov: Yes. (Beckett 97)

This is not a mere repetition or recurrence of the same words or same idea; instead it announces the inability of the Beckett’s character who are confined in a limited set of circumstances shackled and bound. Here, the language employed is in such a fashion that a small scene is clubbed between the aforesaid repetitions, and a new character makes his entry into the drama. Nagg raises himself from dust-bin and asks for pap and later is bottled again in the human-size trash box. And the same situation takes its course where Hamm and Clov are found involved with each other in mundane language exercise. The discourse attempts to disclose philosophical notions with language experimentations, setting the tone for the rest of the play. A sense of termination with the connotation of ‘end’ lingers throughout the course of
the drama. The word end occurs at least nine times in the text having already been fore grounded in the title,

in chess and chess-like games, the endgame (or end game or ending) is the stage of the game when few pieces are left on the board. The line between middle game and endgame is often not clear, and may occur gradually or with the quick exchange of a few pairs of pieces. (Wikipedia)

The physical decrepitude (of being maimed, blind, handicapped) of the characters in correspondence with the dismal décor of the stage, its bareness and grey light conjure a picture of a world coming to its end, as if some catastrophe has hit the world leaving the survivors haplessly waiting for their dismal death. Jean Alison Hale maintains that-

the time and space of Endgame, as announced by its title, are those of an ending; the form and content of the play convey the impression of a world that is in gradual decline, where everything and everybody are weakening, winding down, running out. In spite of this progressive diminishment, however, the end toward which all seems to be moving is uncertain, unknown because unknowable, and perhaps unattainable. Endgame portrays a universe which is nearing its end but which seems likely to continue repeating itself, in an increasingly contracted form, forever. Beckett uses a variety of dramatic techniques to structure this picture of an ending, yet endless, time and space. (Connor 72)

The play focuses on a monotonous and endlessly futile and inane existence. Depiction of its meaninglessness requires a specific set of words and requisite language. In such a situation repetition becomes an important tool. Reiteration of the same sentences, or words, robs them of meaning and reduces them to mechanical robotic exercises, eroding their power as instruments of communication. Repetition first used as a dramatic device in Godot and Happy Days, highlighted the dependency among characters.

Hamm: Why do you stay with me?
Clov: Why do you keep me?
Hamm: There's no one else.
Clov: There’s nowhere else.

[Pause.] (Beckett 95)

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The above language sequence argues with each other’s questions and answers. The questioned replies through a question and answer with an answer. This set of conversation took place at the inception of the play and demonstrates the interdependency of Clov and Hamm. The scene portrays the moment when Clov is about to leave Hamm but is unable to do so. Thus presenting before the readers the existential imbroglio in which each is trapped. Clov is the only character who sustains the physical action on stage. Towards the end of the play he takes the initiative to depict by dressing up as if he would really go, yet continues to stand at the door of the kitchen. Hamm persistently requests from some words which could aid him in the future days. However their co-dependency makes the probability of exit almost implausible.

Clov: I’ll leave you. [He goes towards the door.]

Hamm: Before you go... [CLOV halts near door] ... say something.

Clov: There is nothing to say.

Hamm: A few words ...to ponder ... in my heart.

Clov: Your heart! (Beckett 131)

Feeling and emotions are mocked. This long exercise reveals the weakness of the human being, and Clov’s exclamation “your heart” sums up the situation with appropriate irony. Repetitions are not always at linguistic level but they occur thematically, where language is moulded in such a fashion that though the words are the same but their placement in the sentence not only alters the meaning but corresponds to the existential impasse. Not only does Beckett use and re-use stereotypical jokes, he employed them consistently to create black humour. A single word is made to occur in sentence after sentence. Apparently monotonous and trite the ‘single word’ gains semantically each time it is repeated. The most extended
example comes when Hamm insists that Clov use the telescope to look out the window:

Clov: I've looked.
Hamm: With the glass?
Clov: No need of the glass.
Hamm: Look at it with the glass.
Clov: I'll go and get the glass. (Exit CLOV).
Hamm: No need of the glass!
(Enter CLOV) with telescope.
Clov: I'm back again, with the glass. (Beckett 105)

The strategy of repetition simultaneously signifies the tedious nature of human existence and provides rhythm to the construct. In the above mentioned instance the recurrence of the word glass gives a frame on which Beckett has built its rhythm. There is a necessary hesitation before Clov's last line (there will be a small break even if the telescope is ready for him just beyond the eyes of the audience) which allows the passage apparently to end on Hamm's lines, only to be revived on Clov's return to the stage. The effect is a double one. Clov's line recalls the sound of glass, which has only just stopped tinkling, and so offers the possibility of a laugh (a smile) of reminiscence; but, since the hesitation suggests that the line may be a beginning as well as an end, it promises a new run of lines full of 'glass', a promise that is not kept, providing the comedy of cheated expectation. Both effects are standard to comedy, as anyone who has watched a silent film comedian knows: there are two successful comic gestures– the one that goes where you expect it to and the one that does not. Endgame is an illustration of Beckettian cosmos in which, “...the characters take refuge in repetition, repeating their own actions and words and often those of others in order to pass the time”. (Worton 69)

Language specifically works to create a harmony in nothingness through its vivid reiterations and pauses. Whatever path Hamm's life takes, it will be less of an arc and more of a circle; and since even a dot is a circle, then his static position in the centre of his room can itself be considered a cyclical journey. Healthier, in Hamm's opinion, is to be like his engraver friend (whom some critics compare to English
Romantic poet William Blake) and see everything as already finished. At least the engraver can make some meaning out of the world, as he works with a finished product; in Hamm's circular existence, there is never the closure necessary to make a final statement. This is why he feels it is "beginning" to mean something; each day he starts to see significance, but because of the endless repetitions, he can never finish ascribing meaning. Clov's definition of routine as a "farce" (something Nell also says) makes it evident that, in Beckett's view, only absurdity can result from repetition, not significance. Consider the following passage:

Hamm: We're not beginning to......mean something?

Clov: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (Brief laugh.) Ah that's a good one!

Hamm: I wonder. (Pause.) Imagine if a rational being came back to earth, wouldn't he be liable to get ideas into his head if he observed us long enough. (Voice of rational being.) Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they're at! (Clov starts, drops the telescope and begins to scratch his belly with both hands. Normal voice.) And without going so far as that, we ourselves ... (with emotion) ... we ourselves ... at certain moments ...

(Vehemently.) To think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing!

Clov: (anguished, scratching himself) I have a flea. (Beckett 108)

While this passage indicates the desire for meaning, the possibility of meaning is immediately dismissed by Clov. Hamm's response suggests that at a certain moments one possesses a sense that lives should have meaning and their existence be meaningful and gives a sense of hope—"to think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing." The passage seems to mock at the audience and the reader who are trying to "understand what they're at." But the existential impasse is incomprehensive.

The cyclic pattern of repetition is suggestive of non-attainment of the desired result thus after a brief language exercise in the play the reader/spectator come across the “Zero”. Three verbal exercises are done at the language level performed by Hamm and Clov which resulted in zero. They are as follows:

Hamm: .......... What time is it ?

Clov: The same as usual.
Hamm: [Gesture towards window right.] Have you looked?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: Well?
Clov: Zero. (Beckett 94)

Clov: .......... Well? Don’t we laugh?
Hamm: [After reflection.] I don’t.
Clov: [After reflection.] Nor I.[ He gets up on ladder, turns the telescope on the without.] Lets see. [He looks, moving the telescope.] Zero... [he looks] ... zero... [he looks]... and zero.
Hamm: Nothing stirs. All is -
Clov: Zer--(Beckett 106)

And finally the third verbal exercise is,
Hamm: Look at the ocean!
Clov: Never seen anything like that!
Clov: [Looking.] The light is sunk.
Hamm: [Relieved.] Pah! We all knew that.
Clov: [Looking.] There was a bit left.
Hamm: The base.
Clov: [Looking.] Yes.
Hamm: And now?
Clov: [Looking.] All gone.
Hamm: No gulls?
Clov: Gulls!
Hamm: And the horizon? Nothing on the horizon?
Clov: [Lowering the telescope, turning towards HAMM, exasperated.] What in God’s name could there be on the horizon?
[Pause.]
Hamm: The waves, how are the waves?

Clov: The waves? [He turns the telescope on the waves.] Lead.

Hamm: And the sun?

Clov: [Looking.] Zero. (Beckett 107)

The above series of conversation relate to the idea that everything ultimately comes to an end at ‘Zero’ representing a standstill. There is a linear progression in words and thoughts leading to nothingness or a non-entity situation. Language promotes the dramaturgic absurd content by providing a platform for Beckett’s drama to breathe and enunciate the existentialist disillusionment and frustration through extensive language mechanics, Jennifer Jeffers opines, “Endgame articulates itself as a series of repetitions.” (Jeffers 44)

Beckett’s bilingualism led him to play with language. Another principal component of Beckett’s drama is his use of frequent pauses, which speak volumes about his characters' alienation and their gradual, silent decline into death.

The silence at times is such that the earth seems to be uninhabited. That is what comes of the taste for generalization. You have only to hear nothing for a few days, in your hole, nothing but the sound of things, and you begin to fancy yourself the last of human kind. (Beckett, Malone Dies, 81)

Pauses interrupt the rhythm perpetually with scanty movement, and even then, it is noticeable and prolonged with typical specifications as pause followed by ‘coldly’ and later with ‘louder’ and finally alone.

Hamm: [Relieved.] Ah you gave me a fright! [Pause. Coldly.] Forgive me. [Pause. Louder.] I said forgive me.

Clov: I heard you. [Pause.] Have you bled?

Hamm: Less. [Pause.] Is it not time for my pain-killer? (Beckett 95)

Pauses display the empty units where actor’s acting is seized by the dramatist and an interiorized monologue is in progress, transformed to reach the spectators through facial expressions. They serve as a halt for readers to re-analyse the situation, as words are economically used by Beckett thereby condensing the meaning. Pauses
also serve as relief for actors. Hamm’s dialogue replaces the action, with a subtext through punctuated recurrent pauses making the speech rhythmic.

Hamm: [Wearily.] Quiet, quiet, you’re keeping me awake. [Pause.] Talk softer.[Pause.] If I could sleep I might take love. I’d go into wood. My eyes would see... the sky, the earth.I’d run, run, they wouldn’t catch me. [Pause.] Nature [Pause.] There’s something dripping in my head. [Pause.] A heart, a heart in my head.

[Pause.] (Beckett 100)

Beckett has taken proper care while the dialogues are uttered in high pitch and the pauses are ‘carefully respected’ for the easy flow of meaning. He operates pauses between dialogues with exactness and displays

silences of inadequacy, when characters cannot find the words they need;
silences off repression, when they are struck dumb by the attitude of their interlocutor or by their sense that they might be breaking a social taboo; and
silences of anticipation, when they await the response of the other which will give them a temporary sense of existence. (Worton 75)

Pauses are designed in such a way that when incidents are omitted, even then the gap it forms is not perceived. The action is carried forward by pauses affirming the existence of characters. Pauses mainly serve as language or dialogue extensions. The apparent aim of the pauses is to underscore the idea that sometime language withdraws and silence replaces the polemic giving a unified meaning, as the concluding speech of Hamm demonstrates “Old stancher! [Pause.] You... remain. [Pause. He covers his face with handkerchief, lowers his arms to armrests, remains motionless.] [Brief tableau.]”. (Beckett 134)

The arrangement of pauses is not mere placement to halt the dialogue, instead it is an accurate precisely designed mechanism of Beckett. The pauses are placed systematically so that they can create cadence and rhythm in the drama. The table below shows the placement of pauses contracted within the yawns of the first dialogue of Hamm. The utterance of Hamm is punctuated with yawns and pauses. These pauses are situated at the centre of the dialogue, exactly placed before and after two yawn sessions. The pauses correspond to each other by the equal number of
occurrence. There are eleven pauses in the first dialogue of Hamm, the eleventh pause is the final halt to the language exercise. The dramatic language is woven into the thread of pauses and yawns. In the first column the pauses are followed by interrogatives. First two pauses positioned between “My father?” and “My mother” are innocuous but the third interrogative is derogatory and therefore elliptic “My...dog?” The value of relations is diminished as they are immediately followed by the reference to dog. The reference to the dog not only imprecates the value of relation but humanity also. The concluding block of the last pause summarises the existential misery. The pause intensifies the semantic dynamics of the blocks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Pause.)</th>
<th>(Pause. Gloomily.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My father?</td>
<td>And the emptier. (He sniffs.) Clov!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mother?</td>
<td>No, alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My...dog?</td>
<td>What dreams! Those forests!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh I am willing to believe they suffer as much as such creatures can suffer. But does that mean their sufferings equal mine? No doubt.</td>
<td>Enough, it’s time it ended, in the shelter, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
<td>(Pause.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The second column also symmetrically places the pauses in drama. The first pause is succeeded by “Gloomily”. The language of Beckett is attributing drama by instilling melancholy and disenchantment into an ‘unvoiced action’ a “pause.”. This is followed by an utterance of “And the emptier”. The idea of “the bigger a man the fuller he is” cancelled by the idea of emptiness.

The narrative in the play moves forward by fits and starts and ‘pause’ is the most frequently used word in the text. Perhaps the pause allows the audience or reader to step back, or it breaks the momentum by which the feeling of despair is spread. Stories and dialogue are constantly interrupted, losing their original
momentum. However, the interruptions at times may increase the despair and tension experienced by the audience. For example, during the crucial moment when Hamm considers whether they are beginning to mean something, the thought is interrupted when Clov realizes there is a flea in his pants. The pauses may also create a devitalized mood. Simon Bennet, is of the view that the frustration, impotence, and thwarted yearnings of the characters are replicated in the audience like a virus. He attributes the transmission of the virus to the use of the pause. He states:

These pauses do not mark 'pregnant silences'; rather, they are a means of cutting short or interrupting the full development of a feeling. The frequent pauses are also of a piece with the thematic content—the break in continuity of generations. The pauses concretize the fatigue of the characters but also convey the vague hope that there will be a continuation. (Bennet 228-229).

Much of the verbal play in Endgame, suggests an entertaining programme or the music hall. The idea of pain and sorrow is tethered to laughter; the text of *Endgame* prompts the reader into a laughing mode, but the laughter in Beckett like Synge and O'Casey is generated from sorrow. The physical comedy and music hall is quite apparent in the play, songs and comedians are not incorporated in text, but the conversation itself creates the ring of laughter out of the choice of words. Clov's business with the ladder and the long routine in which he tries to get Hamm's chair exactly in the middle of the room have the solemnity and purpose of humour; the gag with the flea, like most of the sexual and scatological double entendre, would not be out of place in burlesque. A typical example of Beckett's use of the obviousness of the music hall is in the following conversation:

Nagg: Can you hear me?
Nell: Yes. And you?
Nagg: Yes. Our hearing hasn't failed.
Nell: Our what? (Beckett 99)

Another routine that Beckett uses is funny only by virtue of the verbal innuendo and it can be successful only if the first lines are removed, giving the audience no time to try to find sense in what is said. It is an exchange that suggests, dimly, the old Abbott-and- Costello routine about "Who's on first?"
Hamm: He comes crawling on his belly-
Clov: Who?
Hamm: What?
Clov: Who do you mean, he?
Hamm: Who do I mean! Yet another.
Clov: Ah him! I wasn't sure. (Beckett 121)

Beckett also uses, several times, the standard business of the delayed question, the verbal equivalent of the double take, as in:

Hamm: Have you not had enough?
Clov: Yes! Pause. Of what? (Beckett 94)

Hamm and Clov do this routine twice with the same words whereas Nagg and Nell play a variation on it. Beckett obviously knows what the old vaudeville and radio comedian knew, that audiences build a possessive affection for gags that are repeated, but he knows, beyond that, he can use the repetition not only for its comic effect but for what it suggests about the ritual repetitiveness (the empty sameness, he might say) of life that represents through the specific mode of language implemented in the drama.

Hamm: We're not beginning to... ...mean something?
Clov: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (Brieflaugh.) Ah that’s goodone!

Hamm: I wonder. (Pause.) Imagine if a rational being came back to earth, wouldn't he be liable to get ideas into his head if he observed us long enough. (Voice of rational being.) Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they're at! (Clov starts, drops the telescope and begins to scratch his belly with both hands. Normal voice.)And without going so far as that, we ourselves ... (with emotion) ... we ourselves ... at certain moments ... (Vehemently.) To think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing!
Clov: (anguished, scratching himself): I have a flea. (Beckett 108)
Beckett offers a good description of his kind of absurd comedy when Nell says, "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness." (101). It is a characteristic of Beckett’s dramaturgy to extract amusement from pain and misery.

The quasi irrational and seemingly illogical dialogues form the basis of the language in *Endgame* which is aphoristic in its approach. For instance, Hamm conjectures “the bigger a man is the fuller he is” (93) and “I love the old questions. Ah the old questions, the old answers, there’s nothing like them” (110), whereas Nell surmises that “Nothing is funnier than unhappiness” (101). The characters in the play may narrate philosophical hypothesis through their dialogues also adding to it a flavour of slang and abuses. Hamm out of the four characters has the more vacuous, vulgar and crass tongue: “you pollute the air” (93), “old stancher!” (93), “Accursed fornicator!” (96), “Accursed Progenitor!” (96), “Clear away the muck!” (103), “why did you engender me?” (103), “To hell with the Universe” (114). A certain emotive impetus is evident in the abusive language used by Hamm. John Fletcher views Beckett’s language thus

Apart from informal, even slangy, aspect, Beckett’s dialogue is characterized by the high incidence of question-asking that goes on. Hamm is particularly assiduous questioner, plaguing Clov like a precocious child its harassed parent. ‘All life long’, Clov is moved to complain, ‘the same questions, the same answers’, but for Hamm ‘the old questions, the same answers, there’s nothing like them!’ They fill his life and give him something to say; so that when Clov asks, ‘what is there to keep me here? Hamm can truthfully reply, ‘The dialogue’. (Fletcher 106)

Their dialogues in the play are brusque, succinct and condensed. Sometime Clov’s response to the queries raised by Hamm has the quality of being antithetical, for example:

Hamm: It’d need to rain.
Clov: It won’t rain. (Beckett 94)

Hamm: Sit on him.
Clov: I can’t sit. (Beckett 97)
Hamm: With the glass?
Clov: No need of the glass. (Beckett 105)

Hamm: [Violently.] But you have the glass!
Clov: [Halting, violently.] No I haven’t the glass! (Beckett 106)

Hamm: But you’ll bury me
Clov: No I shan’t bury you. (Beckett 112)

Hamm: I can’t leave you
Clov: I know. And you can’t follow me. (Beckett 114)

Hamm: I want to hear the sea.
Clov: You wouldn’t. (Beckett 124)

Hamm: He can’t go far. [Pause. Anxious.] Eh?
Clov: He doesn’t need to go far. (Beckett 126)

The most striking feature of language depicted through dialogues is the ease with which Hamm and Clov contradict each other. Their conversation consists of minimal words repeated with a slight variation brought in through the use of a word of negation, like ‘no’, ‘not’. The alliance between the two is reminiscent of the symbiotic relationship between Valdimir and Estragon. Like them they are bound to each other with an intricate link of mutual cooperation of attraction and repulsion, gratitude and thanklessness, warmth and vexation. On the other hand Nell and Nagg in most of their exchange refute each other yet remain in agreement with each other. Their asymmetrical congruity of thoughts is an interesting case of linguistics study.

Most striking is the constant introduction of new topics, accompanied by the recurrence of nearly identical sequence of dialogue, though sometimes with the roles of the speakers reversed. The characters seem to be involved in a language-game, in which speech units can be moved around like chess piece. (Schwab 90)
Beckett’s reference to the mad painter through Hamm’s dialogue sums up the entire gamut of absurd philosophy. Hamm and Clov describe the world outside the “refuge” as dead, another hell, nothing stirring, no sun, no light, no darkness --- just grey. It is characterized by nothingness and timelessness --- time is zero and everything is zero. Hamm states:

I once knew a madman who thought the end of the world had come. He was a painter—and engraver. I had a great fondness for him. I used to go and see him, in the asylum. I'd take him by the hand and drag him to the window. Look! There! All that rising corn! And there! Look! The sails of the herring fleet! All that loveliness! (Pause.) He'd snatch away his hand and go back into his corner. Appalled. All he had seen was ashes. (Pause.) He alone had been spared. (Pause.) Forgotten. (Pause.) It appears the case is ... was not so ... so unusual. (Beckett 113)

The parley in the play is sometime read as inconsequential, where the termination of the idea is visible and reminiscent of a disjointed phantasmagoria of a dream world. The function of the dialogue at the very onset is to expose, then it incorporates action to assist speech and later it registers emotions along with exposure of character and finally leads the advancement of thought. But Beckett being experimental with theatrical conventions shapes a new theatre which is endowed with inherent drama in its language. His dialogues emerge as individual language exercises which at the end gives drama, and uniqueness lies in their inconsequential string. There are set of such instances in the play, for example,

Clov: If I would kill him I’d die happy.[ Pause.]
Hamm: What’s the weather like? (Beckett 105)

Hamm: Let us pray to God
Nagg: Me sugar-plum! (Beckett 118)

Hamm: Why don’t you kill me?
Clov: I don’t know the combination of larder (Beckett 96)

The dialogue, then, is cautiously designed to suit the need of the situation, ranging from Nell’s elegiac utterances to Hamm and Clov’s aggressive discussions.
Language is acting as the only tool for the dramatization, creating levels of communication among characters. The single most contribution of Beckett in dramaturgy is the impression he creates of collapse of language though contrary to it language is attributed such power and life that it subsumes the need of action. The language of the characters in *Endgame* is also replete with suggestive religious symbolism. As far as the Biblical hermeneutics is concerned Hamm’s dialogue has references to scriptures.

One of the standard understandings of Beckett's plays is that they lack order and sequence in the speeches, and although an exchange may make sense of a sort there is not likely to be any connection between one exchange and another. Beckett's connections may be oblique, but exist. When Clov says, "It won't rain," and, after a pause, Hamm says, "Apart from that, how do you feel?" it is simple enough to realize the jump that Hamm's mind has made. Sometimes a more sophisticated sense of connection is called for. When Clov says, "There's no more tide," and, after a pause, Hamm says, of his mother, "Go and see is she dead," the symbolic relation of womb to water is implicit. A laboured illustration example is found in the following passage:

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... (Beckett 108-109)

Nagg's first words, "It's natural," following Hamm's "There are no more sugarplums," encompass the whole concept of expected disappointment. The next step, "After all I'm your father," makes the disappointment as old as that of Cronus in Zeus. From these opening words, Nagg moves through whining discontent, reminiscence, and confusion between Hamm's fear as a child and his own fear now, making his meandering way to the final moment when he knows his own need and cries out, "Nell! Nell!" Although this speech lacks the flamboyance of Hamm’s discourse and the wit and fun of the gag exchanges, it is, in its way, the most impressive speech in the play.
Amidst the contrapuntal speech by the characters it is easy to decipher the traits of absurd drama, the elliptical discourse especially and the unanswered question. Whereas hypophora in the language prove that everyone (Hamm, Clov, Nell and Nagg) is so preoccupied and impatient that they do not give chance to the listener to answer back. For example, “What does that mean? [Pause.] That means nothing”, “Do you hear? Hollow bricks! [He strikes again.] All that’s hollow!”, “Where was I? [Pause. Gloomily.] It’s finished, we’re finished.[Pause]Nearly finished” and so on. In the language exercise of Endgame a kind of parallelism is created with repetition or echoing of successive phrases or lines forming a kind of litany:

one day you’ll say to yourself, I’m tired, I’ll sit down, and you’ll go and sit down. Then you’ll say, I’m hungry, I’ll get up and get something to eat. But you won’t get up. You’ll say, I shouldn’t have sat down, but since I have I’ll sit on a little longer, then I’ll get up and get something to eat. [Pause.] (Beckett 109)

The characters continuously vacillate between different layers of language games, clichés, repetition and reverberations that are in abundance. Like, “Why this farce, day after day?”, “life goes on”, “To hell with the Universe”. Though the discourse appear commonplace or inane the idiomatic expressions make the language at the same time more intriguing, reflective marking it with expansiveness: “ill wind blows (Beckett 117), “the dead go fast”(Beckett 125). Expansiveness is a property in language that elicits images of mental peculiarities and proclivities of the characters: disorientation, skepticism, haplessness with the support of graphic verbal images. Synesthesia is a neurological condition and a technique adopted by writers to present ideas with the evocation of senses, like Hamm feels like “I want to feel the light on my face” (Beckett 123).“I want to hear the sea” (Beckett 124), “There’s something dripping in my head”, (Beckett 100). “Do you hear? Hollow bricks?”: This invocation of feelings and senses in the same sentence, phrase or word is exclusive of Absurd drama, where pain can be heard, vacuity can be smelt and feelings can be seen in the world where corpses stink and imperfection is the order of the time.

The interpretation of Endgame requires sensitivity on the part of the readers to understand the inane yet profound dialogues which hint at mysteries beyond average perception. Against the motley crowd of characters’ frustration, aspiration, longing,
sense of guilt, sense of lost, frenzied state of mind and existence their activities through their body language and speech make it all the more enigmatic. Clov sprinkles insecticide in his trousers and his master’s pee for him is symbolic of the presence of spirit in his life, then Hamm’s mentioning of the possible meters like thermometer, heliometers, anemometer, hygrometer followed by weird interrogation stand testimony for stream of consciousness. It is this highly designed quality of stream of consciousness which gets expression through complimentary techniques of aside and soliloquy: “Did you never hear an aside before? [Pause.] I’m warming up for my last soliloquy” (Beckett 130). Hamm’s speech usually has hyperbolic elements exemplifying the fact that he gets delighted by his raconteur passion. Also through his speech and similar instances, it is evident that Beckett has applied the technique of stream of consciousness: their mumbo jumbo, plethora of convictions, aspirations and constant dwelling into past and present accompanied by the recurrence of varied topics are suggestive of that. Concrete things are referred to through conventional word(s) that enumerate several of its constituents: corpse, coffin, nail, for death and sand, waves, raft, currents, sharks for sea; the former implies death and latter signifies life, the technique of merism backs up the stream of consciousness.

More important, finally, the way he plays with the sound of words is the way Beckett deals with meaning. By insisting on the literal meaning of words and by setting up his dialogue so that apparently pointless commonplaces are considered seriously, Beckett ends by demanding that his audience listen exactly to what is being said. Some-times the result is simply comic as in Clov's "If I don't kill that rat he'll die," but more often the implications are painful. For instance, Hamm's answer to Clov's "Do you believe in the life to come?" "Mine was always that." This is to be played as a gag and as a game familiar to both of the characters, as Hamm's next line, "Got him that time!" indicates, but it also says much that the whole play says about man and his relationship to his expectations, natural and supernatural.

The same kind of effect can be achieved from a line as simple as Clov's about the alarm clock— "Fit to wake the dead! Did you hear it?" -as soon as the voice italicizes the you. The longing that Clov has for dissolution, made so explicit in speeches such as the one about "each thing in its last place, under the last dust," is immediately clear when he picks up Hamm's cliché, "Better than nothing," repeats it in wonder and adds, "Is it possible?" In some of the exchanges, such as-
Hamm: What's he doing?
Clov: He's crying.
Hamm: Then he's living. (Beckett 122-123)

There is a surface logic that for a split second underscores what is being said, just as in others there is a surface nonsense that does the same job:

Hamm: Last night I saw inside my breast. There was a big sore.
Clov: Pah! You saw your heart.
Hamm: No, it was living. (Beckett 107)

There is the conscious ambiguity of lines such as those which Clov and Hamm interject into the discussion of the progress of Hamm's story:

Clov: Will it not soon be the end?
Hamm: I'm afraid it will.” (Beckett 122)

Beckett hardly allows the audience time to travel from the meaning of these lines in relation to the discussion in which they appear to their meaning in relation to the play, the action of the play and life in general before he retracts to the original, circumscribed meaning with Clov's "Pah! You'll make up another."

Since the habit of listening carefully is almost dead among theatre-goers, a single hearing of Endgame is unlikely to make obvious the richness in the verbal simplicity of the play. Each new reading draws attention to another line. One needs to go through several times before she/ he comprehends the horror of the line in which Hamm, as the narrator-hero of his story speaks to the begging father about his child: "He doesn't realize, all he knows is hunger, and cold, and death to crown it all. But you! You ought to know what the earth is like, nowadays.". The line appears a standard exhortation, demanding a realistic view of life; at second, thought it is a monstrous parody of such an exhortation. Similarly, it is at first easy to ignore Hamm's words "Imagine if a rational being came back to earth," accepting them as a device of argumentation leading into his discussion of whether or not he and Clov "mean something". Later the same sentence, announces a contrary message cancelling the possibility that Hamm and Clov are rational making the irrational and Absurd...
triumph. Yet, another speech of Hamm to the imaginary beggar: "But what in God's name do you imagine? That the earth will awake in spring? That the rivers and seas will run with fish again? That there's manna in heaven still for imbeciles like you?"
In context, the speech is about the hopelessness of human condition, in which the first two questions about the natural world emphasize darkness and nihilism and later about supernatural.

In connection with Endgame, Beckett observes it is "rather difficult and elliptic, mostly depending on the power of the text to claw". He also pointed out that it is less hopeful than Waiting for Godot. As one critic noted, Waiting for Godot is a despairing play about hope, Endgame is a despairing play about despair. A further difference is that the ambiguous "thing" replaces Godot in terms of tormenting the characters. Hamm asks, "Do you not think this has gone on long enough?... This...this...thing." Endgame stands out as one of Beckett's best plays, and it happened to also be Beckett's favourite play. The language throughout the course of the play attempts to fill that 'infinite emptiness' which Clov has been trying to explain to Hamm, “Infinite emptiness will be all around you,”(Beckett 109). Therefore, it can be concluded that language is conforming to the theme of absurdity through the visible platform of drama.
Work Cited


